

News in brief

Bad Penny turn up again for blues festival

BLUES on the Meadow is back, bigger and better than ever.

This year, the Aldermaston event takes place on a new barn stage, on Saturday, July 2, and local band Bad Penny will open at 12.30pm.

Nicky Moore's Blues Corporation are back by popular demand after a couple of year's absence and other acts include the Ben Poole band, fresh from the Glastonbury Festival.

Ben Poole has been nominated best young artist category in the British Blues Awards as well as best original song for *Everything I Want*.

Tickets cost £20. Email neil@bluesonthemeadow.co.uk, telephone 07788 428076 or 07798 802591 or log on to www.bluesonthemeadow.co.uk

White Hart party plans

HAMSTEAD Marshall residents are gearing up for the reopening of the centuries-old village pub next month.

The White Hart Inn, taken over earlier this year by Stella Coulthurst, is set to open in mid-July, with a pre-opening party planned for Hamstead Marshall villagers before the official opening on Wednesday, July 20.

The pub has been closed since May 2010, but Ms Coulthurst said that she was excited about restoring the reputation of the White Hart as being a traditional, top-quality pub.

Villagers take to clearing river as part of effort to reduce flood risk

As a new £600k defence system is unveiled in Bucklebury, residents say they are pleased with the project but still intend to do their bit to make sure their homes stay safe. Eddie van der Walt reports

BUCKLEBURY residents say that they feel much safer now that the new flood defence system has been put in place.

The work was carried out to protect the village from a repeat of the severe flooding which hit the district following heavy rain in July 2007, when 24 homes in the village, as well as 2,000 other properties from Lambourn to Pangbourne, were flooded.

One of the residents who worked closely with the Environment Agency and the council to put the flood defences into place, Piers Allison, said: "Making people feel safe in their own homes was what it was all about."

"It was about people sleeping easier when the rain is falling on the roof, and hopefully we have achieved that."

On July 20, 2007, after three weeks of heavy rain, 10cm of water fell on saturated ground in what the Met Office called a "one in 169-year occurrence".

The River Pang burst its banks, causing flooding in Bucklebury.

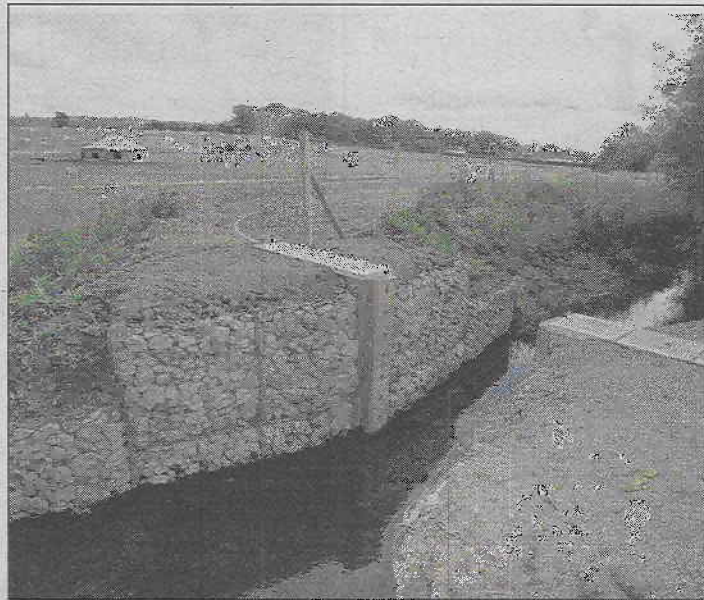
Dorothy Bartholomew, who was 79 at the time of the floods and still lives with her husband in the same house, said: "We hope that our house will be safe now."

"I haven't had a chance to look at the work that has been done, but my husband has and he says it looks very good."

She also said that the floods had brought the villagers closer together.

Mrs Bartholomew, who was recovering from a broken hip, and her husband, Kenneth, who was aged 89 at the time and suffering heart problems, were uninsured when the flood left them without basic necessities.

She said: "People brought us hot food and towels. They all just seemed a little concerned about us. And not just people we knew either, people from all around came to help us."



Part of the £600,000 flood defence system along the River Pang Ref: 25-3411B

"But it's not something we would like to go through again."

Another resident, Barry Keene, agreed, but added that the villagers had now learned to do things for themselves.

At the time, many blamed blockages in the river for the flooding and Mr Keene said the

community has learnt to stand up and be counted.

He said: "We never really looked after the river ourselves, but the floods made us realise that we cannot wait for other people to do these sorts of things, so we are actually cleaning it out ourselves this Sunday."

Newbury scheme plans on show

THE Environment Agency is considering a new flood relief scheme for Newbury to protect more than 400 commercial and residential properties.

A drop-in session will be held between 2pm and 8pm in the West Berkshire Council chambers, Market Street, to showcase the Newbury flood alleviation scheme.

According to the agency, the town has been identified as being at high risk from river flooding.

Areas to benefit include the town centre, homes in Russell Road and Northcroft Lane and around Northcroft Park and Victoria Park, and business premises in Ampere Road and London Road.

The plans include raising the towpath near Russell Road, improved drainage and pumping facilities near Northcroft Park, a low embankment near Bewicks Reach, raised water walls near Northcroft Lane and other improvements around Victoria park, Ampere Road and London Road.

The area flood risk manager for the Environment Agency, said, Ian Tones, said: "The drop-in session is an excellent opportunity for people to see the plans in more detail, discuss concerns with our technical experts, learn how to protect your own home from flooding, and to basically tell us what you think about the scheme."

After the public drop-in session, the Environment Agency will present the scheme's business case to an internal review board.

The funding for the scheme has not yet been guaranteed.



Piers Allison, leader of the Bucklebury residents group involved in the project, councillor Quentin Webb (Con, Bucklebury) and Newbury MP and Minister for the Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon opening the flood defences in Bucklebury Ref: 25-1211A

MP declares Bucklebury defences open

BUCKLEBURY will be much safer from rising water levels following the construction of defences to guard against a repeat of July 2007, when all but two homes in the village were affected by flood water.

The construction scheme includes flood bunds, a new dry ford and a bypass channel that will divert excess water around the village.

The scheme was a partnership between the local community, the Environment Agency and West Berkshire Council. Local people helped raise £65,000, £45,000 came from from West Berkshire Council, with the remaining funds for the £600,000 project coming from the Regional Flood Defence Committee.

It reduces the risk of flooding to 25 homes, the village's

Norman church and the village hall.

The work was carried out following severe flooding in July 2007 when 24 homes were affected following heavy rainfall.

The Parliamentary Undersecretary for the Natural Environment and Fisheries, with special responsibility for flooding, Newbury MP Richard Benyon, was on site on Friday to officially open the defences.

Mr Benyon said: "What was an horrendous series of floods has provided an outcome that has shown this community as one that works together beautifully, and one that shows their community spirit."

"The model they have created

here, where the community works in partnership with other organisations, has already been adopted in other parts of the country. It is a real demonstration of their determination.

"This embodies all the elements of the big society and the spirit of community partnerships which the Government is trying to foster."

Environment Agency spokesman Barry Russell said: "This scheme has shown how communities can work effectively with us and our partners to reduce the risk of flooding."

"We all need to look at innovative approaches to how we reduce the risk of flooding and it is something that whole communities can take an active part in."



New flood defences in Bucklebury Ref: 25-3411E

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