

Zorranow

COMMUNITY EVENTS & SERVICES MAGAZINE

Winter 2023



Zorra Maintenance Facility ...Page 10

Photo Credit: Doris Weir



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Message from the Mayor

We are now into winter weather and are all happy to have the new Zorra Maintenance Facility (ZMF) to better house and maintain our staff and

equipment that are keeping our roads clear and safe every day.

The ZMF delivers a suitable work environment that:

- allows staff to properly maintain equipment
- appropriately houses tens of millions of dollars of equipment
- uses solar and geothermal to cost us all less in energy than the natural gas alternative over the life of the building
- advances towards our goal of 100% renewable energy
- pollutes less

The budgeted cost of the project was \$10,084,600.

The total cost of the completed project was \$10,094,917.

A cost overrun of \$10,317 or 0.1%.

But staff found another savings and it is now actually \$7840.48, or 0.08% UNDER total budget.

This project was financed by obtaining a debenture (loan) through the County of Oxford with Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (OILC) for \$8,641,600 with an interest rate of 4.44%, over twenty-five years. The remaining \$1,442,903 was contributed from the township's reserves (savings). There are no additional tax implications for the project as it is complete under budget and as financed.

Zorra staff did a phenomenal job delivering a large, complex project under budget and advancing our collective goals.

Zorra has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the TVDSB to explore future co-build

opportunities. We now have the opportunity to work together to complete a construction or renovation project, with the goal of meeting the needs of students, their families and the greater community.

Zorra will consult with the TVDSB if considering building any new recreation or community spaces, and the TVDSB will consult with Zorra if contemplating any new builds or renovations to area schools (Thamesford P.S., Zorra Highland Park P.S. or AJ Baker P.S.).

Whether it's libraries, recreation spaces, or schools, we need to maximize the community use of the facilities our communities pay for. Where there are institutional barriers to that, it is our job to break them down and ensure effective and efficient use of tax dollars to maximize the services our residents use. Our children don't care if the municipality or school board owns the soccer field. Their parents paid for it either way. I believe this model has the potential to be transformational for our communities.

These are two projects that combined advance all three pillars of our new Strategic Plan:

- A Sustainable Community
- A Livable, Healthy Community
- A Fiscally Sustainable Community

Check in on the website, follow the Township on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, phone or email Staff or Council: we want to hear from you.

Join us and add to your community by doing your part!

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

Marcus Ryan

Mayor, Zorra Township (and Warden, Oxford County)

email: mryan@zorra.ca

Phone: 1.519.425.2338

Zorra Now Magazine is published electronically and paper copies are available at all Township Facilities. If you have any questions or comments or would like to advertise in the magazine, please contact:



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Ingersoll, ON N5C 3K5
Ph. 519-485-2490 ext. 7228 Toll Free 1-888-699-3868
kmartin@zorra.ca www.zorra.ca



Township Holiday Closures

The Township office will be closed starting Monday December 25, 2023 and will reopen at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. In case of an emergency requiring staff, please call 519-485-2490 and leave a message at extension 7226. Messages will be monitored on a daily basis and forwarded to a contact person.

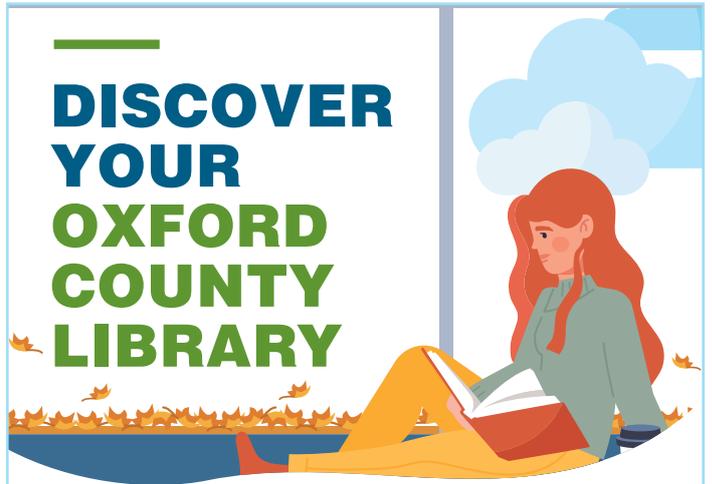
The Thamesford District Recreation Centre and the Embro Zorra Community Centre will close at 3:00 p.m. on December 24, 2023 and will reopen on December 27, 2023. They will also be closed on January 1, 2024 and will reopen on January 2, 2024.

Happy holidays from the Township of Zorra!



If you would like to receive future issues of Zorra Now by email, send an email to admin@zorra.ca to get added to our list!

Hard copies will also be available at our local libraries and arenas.



DISCOVER YOUR OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY



Oxford Reads: This year's book is *The Maid* by Nita Prose. The author will join us for our in-person Oxford Reads Gala at Theatre Woodstock on Friday, November 3.

Stay tuned to www.oxfordreads.ca for gala details as well as a full list of programs including an Oxford Reads Paint Night at the Harrington Branch on Wednesday, October 18 at 6:30 p.m. Adult program and space is limited. Please register.



Brainfuse is an online homework help resource for students in grades K-12. Offering help with math, reading, science, social studies, history, geography and language arts, the resource uses professional tutors who communicate with students using an interactive whiteboard

to write, draw, and copy/paste text or images relating to homework problems. Access this resource with your library card number and PIN.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Say it with Flowers

Make a decorative item using a flower pounding technique

When: Thursday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Harrington Branch

Adult program and space is limited. Please register.

Cooking demonstration with Chef Jed Lau

When: Tuesday, October 3 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Thamesford Branch

Adult program and space is limited. Please register.

Do you need a library card? Send an email with your name, address (including postal code), phone number, and birth date to myaccount@ocl.net.

For up-to-date library information and hours, call your local branch or visit www.ocl.net.



connect. discover. share. become.

Public Works Department

REDUCED LOAD SEASON - February 15 - April 30

An early reminder to all drivers of heavy trucks and equipment that the reduced load season takes effect for the period of February 15 to April 30 inclusive each year. In accordance with By-law 21-03, signs will be posted on applicable Township roadways.

HALF LOAD SEASON RATIONALE

- Minimize long term damage to infrastructure
 - Problems caused when roads are soft often require major repairs
 - Prevent additional damage to culverts and bridges
 - Heavy loads do damage to road sub-base that is difficult to detect
 - Changes in the size of agricultural equipment i.e. large liquid manure trailers
 - Multiple aggregate producers in Township
 - Infrastructure repair costs borne directly or indirectly by residents
- All of the above lead to safety issues during Half Load Season.

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS...

WINTER ROADWAY MAINTENANCE ON TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA ROADS

The winter level of service to be delivered is prescribed in the Minimum Maintenance Standards – Ontario Regulation 239/02 regarding snow and ice control. The Minimum Maintenance Standards are a regulation of the Municipal Act, 2001. Service will be delivered during the following hours:

Monday to Friday - 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with additional hours as determined by weather conditions
Saturday, Sunday, holidays - as determined by weather conditions.

Any roads questions should be addressed to

Steve Oliver, Director of Public Works 519-485-2490 ext. 7227 or soliver@zorra.ca

BATTERY RECYCLING



The Township of Zorra has a free program for the recycling of household batteries through Raw Materials Company Inc. (RMC). The program is being offered at four locations throughout the Township:

- Township of Zorra Municipal Office, 274620 27th Line, RR 3, Ingersoll, ON N5C 3J6 – phone 519-485-2490 ext. 7221
- Thamesford Community Centre, 85 Middleton Street, Thamesford, ON NOM 2M0 – phone 519-485-2490 ext. 7245
- Embro Zorra Community Centre, 355644 35th Line, Embro, ON NOJ 1J0 – phone 519-485-2490 ext. 7251

Please feel free to drop off your batteries at any of the above locations.

Since the start of this program in September 2012, the Township of Zorra has collected and returned 3,193 lbs of batteries to Raw Materials Company for Recycling.



Keep up to date on news and events in Zorra Township

www.zorra.ca



Find us on Facebook!
Township of Zorra



Follow us on Twitter!
@ZorraTwp



Follow us on Instagram!
@ZorraTwp

Building Department

Did You Know?

All electrical installations, renovations, and alterations are required to have an electrical inspection.

Electrical inspections are required by law and help protect the people in your home or building from electrical hazards. Electrical inspections are required to comply with the requirements of the Electricity Act 1998 and the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (Ontario Regulation 10/02).

All electrical inspections are handled by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA).

Examples of work that require an electrical inspection:

- New Homes, additions, renovations
- Electrical service upgrades
- Installation of equipment such as water heaters, heat pumps, air conditioning, swimming pools, hot tubs, etc.
- Installation of outlets, switches, new lightning, smoke detectors (excluding battery-operated types)

Please remember, you may still require a Zorra Township building permit for your project, but it is important that you do your research and contact the Electrical Safety Authority if required.

To contact an Electrical Safety Authority representative, or to apply for an inspection, please call 1-877-ESA-SAFE or visit the ESA website at www.esasafe.com.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs)

ARUs are smaller, self-contained dwelling units (i.e., with their own kitchen, bathroom and sleeping areas) that are inside, attached to, or in a detached accessory building on the same property as a single detached house, semi-detached house or street fronting townhouse. ARUs can take many forms, such as basement apartments, attached suites, tiny homes and coach houses, but they must be smaller than the primary residential unit, within a permanent building (i.e., not a mobile home or recreational vehicle), and connected to municipal water and sewage services, where available.

You can find more information about ARUs on the Township of Zorra and Oxford County websites.

- zorra.ca/en/our-services/building.aspx
- oxfordcounty.ca/en/services-for-you/additional-residential-units.aspx

If you are thinking about building an ARU, early consultation with the Building Department is recommended to help ensure that your project meets all the provisions and requirements. Please contact Mike Hughes, Chief Building Official at ext. 7224.

Thinking about doing an interior renovation this winter?

Examples of projects that require a building permit:

- Interior alterations for non-residential units
- Interior alterations for residential units if; a bedroom is created that will require an egress and smoke detector/carbon monoxide detectors, a garage is converted to a living space etc.
- Finishing an unfinished basement and adding/removing plumbing fixtures and insulation.
- Installation of solid fuel appliances (i.e. woodstoves and fire places)
- Plumbing systems, heating, ventilation
- Any structural changes or repairs (i.e. moving a structural wall)

For a more detailed list of projects that require a building permit and projects that do not require a building permit, please visit the Building Department webpage at www.zorra.ca or contact us at 519-485-2490 x 7231



Any building or drainage questions should be addressed to

Mike Hughes, Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent
519-485-2490 ext. 7224 mhughes@zorra.ca



Winter Fire Safety Tips

Heating, cooking, decorations and candles all contribute to an increased risk of fire in your home during the holiday season and winter months. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), home fires occur more in the winter than in any other season. As the snowflakes start to fall and the temperatures drop, it's important that you follow our winter fire safety tips and take the proper steps to make sure your family and home are protected from fire hazards.



PLAY IT SAFE IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home injuries, so it's important to know what you can do to help keep your friends and family safe while entertaining during the holidays and winter season (NFPA). The primary cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended stovetops and ovens. If you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the kitchen and use a timer for reminders. When cooking for longer periods of time, don't forget to use the exhaust fan or vent above your stove to help prevent carbon monoxide (CO) from collecting inside your home.



BE CAUTIOUS OF SPACE HEATERS

December, January and February are the peak months for heating fires, and space heaters account for many of our home heating fires, according to the NFPA. Space heaters should be placed a minimum of three feet away from anything flammable, such as upholstered furniture, tapestries, mattresses or bedding, and must be turned off when you leave the room or go to sleep to help prevent a fire. In addition, never store clothing on or around the unit, and never cover the cord or put anything on top of it. Also have a three-foot kid-free zone around space heaters.



DECORATE WITH CARE

As decorations come in and out of storage during the winter months, they also come with potential fire hazards. Nearly two-thirds of fires involving decorative lights are due to electrical failures or malfunctions. An important winter fire safety tip is to check light strings for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Also, avoid plugging too many lights into an outlet; overloaded circuits can overheat and cause an electrical fire. In addition, place any festive holiday decorations no closer than three feet from open flames, lamps and other sources of heat.

Please contact the Township's Fire Chief/CEMC, Deanna Kirwin at 519-485-2490 ext. 7240 or at dkirwin@zorrap.ca if you have any questions.



Winter Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas. Common sources of carbon monoxide include any fuel burning devices, such as your stove, furnace or water heater. As outside temperatures drop during the winter months, things start to heat up indoors. Winter is a peak time for carbon monoxide poisoning as more people start to utilize their fuel burning devices. Learn how to help protect your home and family from an emergency this winter with our simple carbon monoxide safety tips.



NEVER USE GENERATORS INDOORS

In the event of a power outage, never use a generator indoors. Place the generator a safe distance from the home, at least 10-15 feet.



INSPECT YOUR FUEL BURNING DEVICES

Furnaces and other fuel-burning appliances can produce carbon monoxide if they are not working properly or maintained. Make sure to have your devices inspected regularly by professionals to help protect your home and family.



CLEAN OUT YOUR FIREPLACE FLUE

Make sure to clean out or have your fireplace's flue inspected before you light a fire. This will help prevent the flue from becoming clogged and prevent carbon monoxide from being trapped in your home.



USE KITCHEN VENTS ANYTIME THE STOVE IS IN USE

The kitchen stove is among the most frequent sources of carbon monoxide in the home. To help eliminate danger of overexposure, always run exhaust fans when cooking, especially during the holidays and winter season when stoves are left on for longer periods of time. Also, open a nearby window periodically when cooking to allow fresh air to circulate, and never use your stove to heat your home.



INSTALL AND TEST YOUR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Your first line of defense against a CO emergency is early detection. Make sure to install CO alarms on every level of the home and in every bedroom. It is important to regularly test your detectors and replace them every 5 to 7 years. Keep your home and family safe this winter season by following these 5 simple carbon monoxide safety tips.

Zorra Fire & Emergency Services

Township of Zorra Fire Chief Deanna Kirwin
519-485-2490 ext. 7240





The 12 Days of Holiday Safety

In the true spirit of the season, and to help keep family and friends out of harm's way, here are some tips and helpful hints for The 12 Days of Holiday Safety:

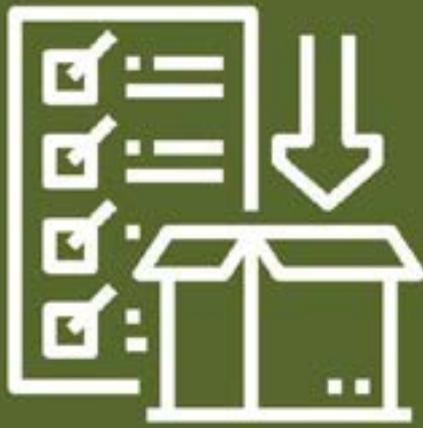
- 1 On the First Day ...** prepare your home for the holidays – and safety. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector, smoke alarm, fire extinguisher and a first aid kit. If you live in an apartment or are staying in a hotel, know where the fire alarms and emergency exits are located.
- 2 On the Second Day ...** make a plan. Your family may not be together when an emergency occurs. Plan how to meet or how to contact one another, and discuss what you would do in different situations.
- 3 On the Third day ...** think about special needs. Establish a personal support network of friends, relatives, health-care providers, and neighbours who understand your personal needs. Write down details about accommodation needs, allergies, family medical history, medical conditions, etc.
- 4 On the Fourth Day ...** decorate with safety in mind. Never leave burning candles unattended and keep them away from children and pets, decorations and wrapping paper. Cut candle wicks short to prevent a high flame, and if candles are used in a centerpiece, make sure they don't burn low enough to ignite the decoration.
- 5 On the Fifth Day ...** make your tree safe. When buying a real tree, check that it is fresh (needles are hard to pull off). Water the tree daily - trees can consume up to four litres of water a day. Place the tree away from high traffic areas, doorways, heating vents, radiators, stoves, fireplaces and burning candles. If young children are around, use safe decorations. Health Canada has some great holiday safety tips.
- 6 On the Sixth Day ...** keep lights bright. Only use lights that have been certified by a recognized organization such as CSA, UL or C-UL. Make sure you use indoor lights inside your home and outdoor lights outside. Check the light strings and extension cords, throwing out any that are frayed or have exposed wires, loose connections or broken sockets. Never run electrical cords through doorways or under carpets.
- 7 On the Seventh Day ...** choose appropriate toys. Always follow age recommendations when choosing toys for children. Pay attention to Health Canada's recalls and safety alerts.
- 8 On the Eighth Day ...** get ready for severe winter weather. Blizzards, ice storms, and high winds can develop quickly. Listen to local radio or television stations for severe weather warnings and advice.
- 9 On the Ninth Day ...** prepare your car for an emergency. Install winter tires and make sure windshield washer fluid is always topped up. Prepare a kit to keep in your vehicle in case of an emergency, with items such as a blanket, a candle in a deep can and matches, and first aid kit with a seat belt cutter. Use this list to help you.
- 10 On the 10th Day ...** prevent illness. Protect yourself and others from getting the flu. A flu shot is the safest and most effective way to prevent infection, to reduce the severity of your symptoms if you do get sick, and to keep from spreading the virus to others.
- 11 On the 11th Day ...** learn first aid. Knowing first aid could save a life. Contact your local Canadian Red Cross or St. John Ambulance office to find out about first aid courses in your area.
- 12 On the 12th Day ...** know the risks. Across Canada, we face a number of hazards, such as earthquakes in BC, blizzards in Nunavut and ice storms in Ontario. Knowing the risks where you are can help you better prepare and eliminate stress... especially during the holiday season.

Zorra Fire & Emergency Services

Township of Zorra Fire Chief Deanna Kirwin

519-485-2490 ext. 7240





72-Hour Kit Emergency Ready

STORE YOUR KIT IN A SPOT THAT CAN BE GRABBED IN A HURRY

- Important papers-passports, copies of birth certificate, drivers license
- Copy of emergency contact list
- Copy of emergency family plan
- Mobile phone (solar charge or spare battery back)
- Extra keys and cash
- Flashlight, radio, batteries and spares
- Whistle
- Playing cards
- First aid kit
- Medications/prescriptions
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Manual can opener
- Toilet paper, hand sanitizer and personal hygiene items
- Non-perishable food (canned fruit vegetables and meat)
- Bottled water - 6L per person
- Clothing and shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Necessities for babies and pets



Zorra Fire & Emergency Services

Township of Zorra Fire Chief Deanna Kirwin
519-485 2490 ext. 7240



Zorra Maintenance Facility



In December 2011, a Public Works Housing Committee was established to review options for renovating Zorra’s two existing Public Woks Shops or constructing one centralized facility. The Committee carried out its due diligence in reviewing all options and made the recommendation to build a new centralized facility. A review of potential sites was carried out and ultimately it was determined the most economically feasible location was the Kintore Shop property.

The Township then purchased 6.5 acres from an adjacent landowner in 2014 with a plan to begin construction in 2018. Design began in 2018 and for budgetary reasons construction of the project was delayed until 2021. The project was tendered in late 2020, and the contract was awarded to Elgin Construction. Ground was broken in April 2021 and occupancy was granted in early September 2023. The last phase of the project concluded in November of 2023 with the commissioning of the geothermal bore field.

Public Works Staff have moved in and are now working out of the new facility on Road 78. The building is large enough to store all equipment inside the building, allowing Staff a sheltered place for vehicle maintenance and repairs.



A summary of budget and actual costs is noted below.

Description	Budget	Actual
Engineering/Architect	\$ 484,429	\$ 102,596
Project Engineer		\$ 44,755
Owner Supplied		\$192,166
General Contract	\$ 8,800,171	\$ 8,918,631
Solar Component	\$ 800,000	\$ 836,769
Total	\$ 10,084,600	\$ 10,094,917

This project was financed by obtaining a debenture through the County of Oxford with Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (OILC) for \$8,641,600 with an interest rate of 4.44%, over twenty-five years. The remaining \$1,442,903 was contributed from the Township's reserves. The all-in cost, not including solar panels worked out to \$251.62/sq. ft.

Township Council praised Director of Public Works, Steve Oliver, for his oversight on this project. Coordination with SPH Engineering was key to keeping this project on budget.



By-Law Enforcement Department

WINTER PARKING

Please be advised that the winter parking restrictions will be enforced starting November 15, 2023 and remain in place until March 31, 2024.

Parking is not permitted on any road or street from 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. 7 days a week during this period. Any vehicle owner found in violation of this by-law could be fined or have their vehicle removed/towed at owners' expense. The fine for this violation is set at \$50.

RECREATION VEHICLES

Notice to all RV/boat owners. The Zoning By-law allows front yard driveway storage of RVs and boats from May 1 – October 31. After October 31, front driveway storage of these vehicles shall be removed and stored elsewhere. The vehicles may be stored on your side lot or rear lot provided that they meet the 5ft setback.

LEAVES AND SNOW:

Did you know that it is a By-law infraction to push your leaves and snow onto the roadway or neighbouring properties? Depositing your leaves on the road or private property is considered dumping and is may result in a significant fine of \$700. Also depositing snow or ice onto public or private property carries a fine of \$200 and up to \$700! If you wish to review the Clean and Clear By-law it can be found on our website at www.zorra.ca

Dave Robertson, By-law
Enforcement Officer
226-374-6795
drobertson@zorra.ca

ZORRA HUNTING REGULATIONS

Sunday Gun Hunting in the Township of Zorra is prohibited. For further information visit the Ministry of Natural Resources website: www.mnr.gov.on.ca In accordance with Township By-law #43-09, Municipal licenses are not required for hunting rabbit and pheasant in the Township of Zorra.



Congratulations to the **Thamesford Minor Hockey U11 Yellow Team**

who won the Silverstick tournament in Parkhill in November! These kids are off to Silverstick Internationals in January!



R.R. #3 Embro, Ontario N0J 1J0
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Living in a beautiful rural community like Zorra means living in close proximity with wildlife. That's usually something we enjoy, but from time-to-time wildlife can pose concerns.

We've been getting a lot of calls into the office about raccoons lately. Here are a few things to remember:

- If you see a raccoon behaving strangely, do not approach it. Give it ample space, and make sure to keep children and pets well away. The raccoon will most likely move along on its own, given time.
- If you have a raccoon that is hanging around and not moving on from your property, you will need to contact a pest control company to have it removed. The municipality does not remove raccoons (or skunks, etc.) from private property.
- The Humane Society will pick up injured wildlife from private properties and there is no fee for this service.

To help keep your kids and pets safe:

- Don't encourage raccoons to visit your yard. Don't leave any food out, and keep your recycling and waste containers secure until your collection day.
- Talk to your children and tell them not to approach wild animals.
- Walk your dog on a leash, and make sure to check for raccoons before you let your pets outside in your yard.
- As raccoons may carry distemper, make sure that your pets have been vaccinated against the disease.

Animal Control

LOW-COST PET SERVICES AT THE STRATFORD PERTH HUMANE SOCIETY

Did you know that Zorra Township pet owners can access a variety of services at the Stratford Perth Humane Society? They include:

- Weekly low-cost microchip appointments
- Monthly rabies vaccination and microchip appointments
- Low-cost spay neuter clinic for cats (no income or geography restrictions)
- TNR services for community cats/barn cats
- And more!

Check out kwsphumane.ca for more information or to register today!

LOST OR FOUND A PET?

Please contact our Animal Services provider, the Stratford Perth Humane Society, ASAP and file a lost/found report. Also check out the stray pets in care page to see if your pet is currently at the shelter (pets will show for the first five days from intake, so please always call). Call 519-273-6600.



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Tax Department

Property assessment for the 2024 taxation year will continue to be based on the January 1, 2016 valuation date and will remain the same as 2023 unless there has been a change to the property.

The **Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)** is responsible for accurately assessing and classifying all properties in Ontario in accordance with the Assessment Act and Regulations established by the Ontario Government. If you feel that your property assessment is not a reasonable reflection of your property's value and/or classification, you can ask MPAC for a review. This review is free of charge. Visit **MPAC's AboutMyProperty** at www.mpac.ca if you have inquiries and to learn more about how your property was assessed, see the information MPAC has on file and compare it to others in your neighbourhood.

The Township is responsible to collect taxes on behalf of the County of Oxford and the school boards within our municipal jurisdiction. The Township also collects taxes on behalf of our policing and conservation authority partners. Property taxes are calculated based on the property's assessed value using the established tax rate for the property's classification.

PROPERTY TAXES ARE BILLED TWICE EACH CALENDAR YEAR on an interim tax bill and a final tax bill. The interim tax bill will be mailed the first week of February 2024 and will contain 2 instalments, with the first instalment being due on February 29th and the second instalment being due on May 31st. The interim tax bill is calculated at 50% of the previous year's total taxes billed on the property. The final tax bill will be mailed in July 2024 and will contain 2 instalments, with the first instalment being due on August 30th and the second instalment being due on October 31st. The final tax bill amount is determined following Council's adoption of the Township's budget, the passage of the tax rating by-law for 2024, notification from the County of Oxford of the county tax rates for 2024 and notification from the Province of Ontario of the education tax rates for 2024. The final tax bill reflects the total taxes assessed on the property for the year less the amount already charged on the interim tax bill.

WHAT IS A SUPPLEMENTARY TAX BILL/NOTICE?

A supplementary tax notice is a tax bill issued by the Township which reflects any additions, improvements or changes in classification that have been made to your property as determined by MPAC. For example, owners of newly constructed homes will receive a supplementary tax notice pertaining to the assessed value of their house effective from their occupancy date. Owners may receive multiple bills for more than one tax year. Supplementary tax bills can also be issued for omissions of assessment. The supplementary tax notice is in addition to what may have been previously billed on the property. This tax notice does not include payments already made to your tax account or future instalments that have been previously billed and are still outstanding. Prior to receiving a supplementary tax bill, you should have already received a Notice of Assessment from MPAC indicating the reason for your supplementary/omitted tax bill(s). If you feel that your supplementary/omitted assessment is incorrect, a Request for Reconsideration (RFR) process is available. Please refer to the Notice of Assessment sent by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) for the deadline to file an RFR.

Please contact MPAC at 1-866-296-6722 or visit www.MPAC.ca for more details.

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NOW CHOOSE TO RECEIVE YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL BY EMAIL?

By signing up for e-Billing you will receive your property tax in a PDF format, to the email address of your choice, rather than a copy through the mail. The bill is considered delivered if the e-Bill is not returned as an undeliverable email. Visit our forms page at www.zorra.ca to sign up online.

There is a fee to have a tax statement or duplicate copy of your bill printed or emailed to you.

DID YOU KNOW THAT WE OFFER 3 PRE-AUTHORIZED PAYMENT PLAN OPTIONS FOR THE PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES?

Now is the perfect time to enrol in this free service! Payment options include: 4 instalments with payments being withdrawn on the regular instalment due dates for the amounts indicated on your tax bill; 10 instalments with payments being withdrawn from your account on the last business day of the month from January to October; or 12 instalments with payments being withdrawn from your account on the last business day of the month from January to December. Please visit the Forms page at www.zorra.ca and complete a Pre-Authorized Payment Application form if you are interested. Remember that if, for any reason, you wish to be removed from this payment plan, or if your banking information changes, you must notify the tax office in writing at least thirty (30) days before the next pre-authorized payment is due. If you are currently enrolled in the pre-authorized payment plan, you DO NOT have to re-apply each year.

WE ACCEPT PAYMENTS USING INTERNET OR TELEPHONE BANKING.

Remember to use your 15-digit property roll number indicated on your tax bill to register. To setup your property taxes as a bill payment through your online banking, go to "add a bill" and search for "Zorra". Select Zorra Township Tax and enter the Roll Number from your tax bill as your account number. Use your roll number starting after the 3227 and eliminating any dashes. If you own multiple properties, please set up a separate bill for each property. Please ensure that you have allowed at least 3 business days for the payment to reach our office to avoid being charged penalty/interest.

Penalty charges of 1.25% will be added to instalments not paid and received by the due date. Interest charges of 1.25% are applied on the first day of each month until the balance is paid. Failure to receive a tax bill or arrears notice does not exempt the taxpayer from late payment charges.

Happy Holidays and all the best in 2024!

Kim Grogan, Tax Collector/Deputy Treasurer
519-485-2490 x 7222 kgrogan@zorrap.ca

ZORRA MULTI-USE COURTS COMMITTEE

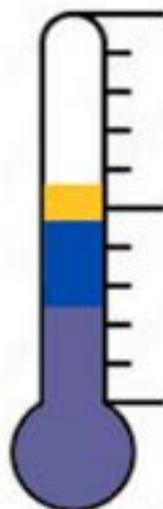


The Zorra Multi-Use Courts Committee (ZMCC) is still working hard on bringing multi-use courts to Thamesford! Thanks to ZMCC and the community's help, Thamesford will eventually be the home to courts that all Zorra residents can use to play basketball, ball hockey, pickleball, and tennis.

Committee members Andrew Goodwin, Brenda Camahan, Kate Lockhart, Julie Riley, Rebecca Ruddy, Libby Wilkinson, and Deputy Mayor Katie Grigg have been busy organizing a Halloween pickleball event, Christmas vendor market, and many other fundraisers in order to engage the community and get closer to their fundraising goal! Take a look at the fundraising thermometer to see how far the Committee has come! In addition to the fundraising efforts, the Committee also chose their preferred site location behind the Thamesford District Recreation Centre. This location may change as the Committee begins the tendering process.

Zorra Multi-Use Courts
\$266,500 Goal

Fundraising Update as of November 09, 2023



- The Township has committed **\$79,950** to the project*
- The Thamesford Lions Club has donated **\$50,000**
- The community has donated **\$22,495.29**

\$152,445.29
TOTAL RAISED

*Once the remaining funds have been raised

Do you want to DO YOUR PART to bring these courts to Zorra? Try one of the following:

Donate

Community donations go a long way in helping the Committee reach their goal. If you are able to donate, the form to do so can be emailed or delivered to you from any of the committee members or from the Zorra Township Office.

Participate

Take part in ZMCC events and initiatives!

Connect

Do you know a business that might like to donate? Do you know of available grants or other funding opportunities that may be able to support ZMCC? Let the committee members know!

Make sure to check out **ZORRA MULTI-USE COURTS COMMITTEE** on Facebook for updates on the ZMCC and their fundraising initiatives! For all ZMCC related inquiries, please reach out to any member of the Zorra Multi-Use Courts Committee or contact the Township of Zorra Office.

Recreation Department

WINTER PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES 2023/2024

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Embro Zorra Community Centre	<p>Shinny 1:00pm-2:00pm</p> <p>Public Skating 2:00pm-3:00pm</p>	<p>Pickleball 9:00am-12:00pm</p> <p>Walking Track 1:00pm-5:00pm</p>	<p>Adult Skate 9:30am-10:30am</p> <p>Parent & Tot Skate 10:30am-11:30am</p>	<p>Pickleball 9:00am-12:00pm</p> <p>Walking Track 1:00pm-5:00pm</p>	<p>Pickleball 5:00pm-10:00pm</p>

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Thamesford District Community Centre	<p>Public Skating 2:00pm-3:00pm</p>	<p>Walking Track 1:00pm-5:00pm</p>	<p>Pickleball 8:00am-1:00pm</p>	<p>Carpet Bowling 9:00am-12:00pm</p> <p>Walking Track 1:00pm-5:00pm</p> <p>Pickleball 5:00pm-10:00pm</p> <p>Shinny 5:00pm-6:00pm</p>	<p>Adult Skate 9:30am-10:30am</p> <p>Parent & Tot Skate 10:30am-11:30am</p> <p>Pickleball 5:00pm-10:00pm</p>

Walking Track

Looking for a dry and warm area to reach your daily step count this Winter? Come out to Zorra's large halls this Winter! Free

Pickleball

All are welcome to join in our drop-in pickleball program! Pickleball is a game that combines elements of tennis, basketball and ping-pong. Beginners welcome. Equipment provided. \$3.00/person

Carpet Bowling

An indoor variation of Lawn Bowling, which can be enjoyed by all ages and abilities. Drop-in and test your skills. \$3.00/person



Public Skating

Skating is a skill you can enjoy for a lifetime. All ages and skill levels are welcome. \$3.00/person or \$8.00/family

Parent & Tot Skate

This special skating time is for parents and tots to have fun on the ice together. Strollers permitted. \$3.00/person, pre-school age free

Adult Skate

A great way to get your exercise in and meet new people. \$3.00/person

Shinny

Non-competitive 'pick-up' hockey for all ages and abilities. Players will play respectfully with small nets and no goalies. Skates, helmet, gloves and stick required. \$5.00/person or \$12.00 family



<https://calendar.zorra.ca/>

FREE HOLIDAY PUBLIC SKATING



EMBRO
2:00pm-3:00pm

THAMESFORD
1:00pm-2:00pm

available for sponsorship!

DECEMBER 27

COOPER CUSTOM EXTERIORS

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA

DECEMBER 28

TODD'S DOGS

available for sponsorship!

DECEMBER 29

COOPER CUSTOM EXTERIORS

available for sponsorship!

JANUARY 2

COOPER CUSTOM EXTERIORS

available for sponsorship!

JANUARY 3

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA

available for sponsorship!

JANUARY 4

available for sponsorship!

available for sponsorship!

JANUARY 5

available for sponsorship!

If you / your organization would like to sponsor a holiday public skate, please contact Ally Thompson at athompson@zorra.ca or call 519-485-2490 ext. 7242.

EMBRO
3:00pm-4:00pm

SHINNY

THAMESFORD
2:00pm-3:00pm

DECEMBER 27, 28, 29
JANUARY 2, 3, 4, 5

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA

MARCH BREAK

CAMP!

FULL DAY CAMP FOR
KIDS 4-11 YEARS

ACTIVITIES:

- GAMES
- CRAFTS
- SKATING
- SPECIAL GUESTS

MARCH
11-15, 2024

WWW.ZORRA.CA

INSURANCE REQUIREMENT UPDATE

As recommended by our insurance broker, effective January 1st of 2024, Zorra will be requiring insurance for all municipal rentals. If you/your group doesn't have any insurance coverage, then no problem, we have an easy and affordable way for you to get an insurance certificate. DUUO is underwritten by Co-operators and is a program where you can obtain an insurance certificate for your event. Recreation staff is available to help you/your group through this process to get your insurance so please be sure to reach out to us for any questions or concerns.



Zorra Photo Contest 2023

Honourable mentions
to our runners up:

We challenged our residents to send us their best Zorra photos and they didn't disappoint! We received 115 submissions and staff voted on their favourites to come up with a winner.

Congratulations to **Doris Weir** for receiving the most votes for her Eclipse 2021 photo. Doris wins some Zorra swag and 2 tickets to a Thamesford Trojans hockey game!



Christina Shelly for Orange Sky

Adriana Docherty for Bales in Field



Thanks to everyone for participating in our contest!

JOIN OUR TEAM!

WE ARE HIRING!

CAMP & POOL STAFF FOR SUMMER 2024

FULL AND PART TIME POSITIONS INCLUDE:

- Camp Leaders (Embrow & Thamesford)
- Camp Counselors (Embrow & Thamesford)
- Lifeguards (Thamesford)
- Swim Instructors (Thamesford) &
- Volunteers (Embrow & Thamesford)

Applicant must be 16 years of age

Email athompson@zorra.ca for more information

Township Contacts

Council



Mayor Marcus Ryan
Email: mryan@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-425-2338



Ward 1 Councillor
Kevin Stewart
Email: kstewart@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-808-7839



**Ward 2 Councillor/
Deputy Mayor**
Katie Grigg
Email: kgrigg@zorra.ca
Tel: 226-268-4495



Ward 3 Councillor
Paul Mitchell
Email: pmitchell@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-349-2271



Ward 4 Councillor
Crystal Finch
Email: cfinch@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-532-9037

Upcoming Council Meetings

Council meetings are held the first WEDNESDAY of the month at 9:30 a.m. and the third WEDNESDAY of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Dec 6 at 9:30am
Dec 20 at 6:00pm

Employees

Building/Drainage Department

*Chief Building Official/
Drainage Superintendent* - Mike Hughes
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7224
Email: mhughes@zorra.ca

*Deputy Chief Building Official/
Building Inspector* - Mathew Paul
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext 7230
Email: mpaul@zorra.ca

Building Services Coordinator
Nicole van Breda
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext 7231
Email: nvanbreda@zorra.ca

Corporate Services
Chief Administrative Officer - Don MacLeod
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7226
Email: dmacleod@zorra.ca

Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Karen Martin
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext. 7228
Email: kmartin@zorra.ca

Planner - Spencer McDonald
Phone: 519-539-0015 ext. 3205
Email: jsmcdonald@oxfordcounty.ca

By-law Enforcement Officer - Dave Robertson
Phone: 226-374-6795
Email: drobertson@zorra.ca

*Records Management Coordinator/
Executive Assistant* - Lisa Teeple
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7229
Email: lteeple@zorra.ca

Legislative Coordinator/Deputy Clerk
Maggie McLaughlin
Email: mmclaughlin@zorra.ca
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext. 7250

Finance Department
Director of Finance - Diane Larder
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7225
Email: dlarder@zorra.ca

Tax Collector/Deputy Treasurer - Kim Grogan
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7222
Email: kgrogan@zorra.ca

Financial Services Clerk - Pauline Todd
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7237
Email: ptodd@zorra.ca

Public Works Department

Director of Public Works - Steve Oliver
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7227
Email: soliver@zorra.ca

Zorra Maintenance Facility -
Foreman - Derek Collins
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7260
Email: dcollins@zorra.ca

Foreman - Vacant Position

Protective Services
Fire Chief/CEMC - Deanna Kirwin
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext. 7240
Email: dkirwin@zorra.ca

Fire Prevention Officer – Geoff Hayman
Phone: 519-536-5428
Email: ghayman@ezt.ca

Embro District Chief - Matthew Cockle
Email: embrofire@zorra.ca

Thamesford District Chief - Andy Martin
Email: thamesfordfire@zorra.ca

Uniondale Deputy District Chief – Scott Matheson
Email: uniondalefire@zorra.ca

Recreation Department
Director of Recreation and Facilities
Michelle Smibert
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7243
Email: msmibert@zorra.ca

Recreation and Facilities Supervisor
Jason McEachnie
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7244
Email: jmceachnie@zorra.ca

Recreation Programs & Services Coordinator
Ally Thompson
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext 7242
Email: athompson@zorra.ca

Facility Booking
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7223
Email: booking@zorra.ca

Recreation Facilities
Thamesford District Recreation Centre
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7245
Email: tdrc@zorra.ca

Embro Zorra Community Centre
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7251

Thamesford Area Swimming Pool
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7285

Keep up to date on news and events in Zorra Township www.zorra.ca



Like us on Facebook!
Township of Zorra



Find us on Instagram!
ZorraTwp



Follow us on Twitter!
@ZorraTwp

Community Contact Listing

Minor Sports

Embroid Minor Hockey Club www.embrohockey.com
 Zorra Skating Club www.zorraskatingclub.ca
 Embroid Minor Baseball Association
www.embrominorbaseball.com
 Embroid Minor Soccer Association www.embrosoccer.ca
 Kintore Optimist Soccer League
www.leaguelineup.com/kintoresoccer
 Thamesford Area Minor Hockey Association
www.tamha.net
 Zorra Skating Club (Thamesford)
www.zorraskatingclub.ca
 Thamesford Minor Baseball Association
www.thamesfordminorbaseball.ca
 Thamesford Minor Soccer
www.leaguelineup.com/thamesfordsoccer
 West Oxford Girls Hockey Assoc. www.wogha.ca

Other Organizations

Thamesford Jr. PJHL Hockey Club
www.thamesfordtrojans.pjhl.on.hockeytech.com
 Thamesford NBC Hockey
www.tnhl.hockeyleaguestats.com
 Embroid NBC Hockey www.embroonbc.ca
 Thamesford Men's Slo-Pitch
www.thamesfordslopitch.com
 Thamesford Beach Volleyball Club
www.thamesfordvolleyball.com

Schools (Elementary)

Zorra Highland Public School 519-475-4121
 A.J. Baker Public School 519-283-1098
 Thamesford Public School 519-285-2043
 Roch Carrier French Immersion 519-537-7321
 John Knox Christian School 519-539-1492

School Boards

Thames Valley District School Board 519-452-2000
 1-888-224-3354
 London District Catholic School Board 519-663-2088

Service Clubs & Community Groups

Embroid & Zorra Agricultural Society
 Nicole Barnett 519-533-2208
 Embroid Highland Games/
 Zorra Caledonian Society 519-475-4451
 Thamesford Lion's Club
 Sheldon Wade, President 519-859-4348
 Thamesford Scouts
 Jackie Van Daele 519-283-6159
 Kintore Optimist Club 519-283-6321
 Harrington & Area Community Association
 Michael Kukhta 905-599-2151
michael.kukhta@gmail.com
 Harrington Grist Mill Restoration Project
 Tim Van de Kemp 519-801-5810
timbetvdk@gmail.com
 Oxford County 4-H oxford4-h@xplornet.com

Other

Alzheimers Society 519-421-2466
 1-877-594-2368
 Beachville District Museum 519-423-6497
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ingersoll, Tillsonburg & Area
 519-485-1801 or 519-842-9000
ingtburg@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca
www.sharethefun.org
 Calithumpian Committee 519-535-9198
 Canadian Blood Services 888-236-6283
 Canadian Cancer Society 888-939-3333
 Canadian Red Cross 519-539-0265
 Children's Aid Society, Oxford County 519-539-6176
 Crime Stoppers 800-222-TIPS
 Cuckoos Nest Folk Music 519-473-2099
 Embroid Pond Association
 Brian McCowan, President 519-301-4893
 Embroid West Zorra History Book
 Helen Brenneman 519-535-4728
 Embroid Library 519-475-4172
 Fanshawe Pioneer Village 519-457-1296
 Girl Guides - Thamesford 519-285-1126
 Harrington Public Library 519-475-6909
 Hardeman, Ernie, MPP. 519-537-5222
 Horticultural Society (Ingersoll) 519-485-1808
 Ingersoll Choral Society 519-902-4007
 Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre 519-485-4691
 Ingersoll Services for Seniors 519-485-3869
 Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts 519-485-3070
 Lawn Bowling Embroid 519-475-4729
 MacKenzie, Dave MP 519-421-7608
 North Embroid Cemetery
 Darwin Cooper 519-475-4385
 Ontario Early Years Programs 800-539-9800
 OPP 800-265-7191
 Oxford County Jr. Farmers 519-469-3281
 Oxford County Federation of Agriculture 519-852-8856
 Oxford District Women's Institute
 Shelia Greason 519-349-2768
 South West Community Care Access Centre 519-539-1284
info-woodstock@sw.ccac-ont.ca
 Thamesford Block Parents 519-285-1126
 Thamesford Business Association 519-285-3249
 Thamesford Public Library 519-285-3219
 Thamesford Snowmobile Club
 Harold Hacon (trails) 519-461-0855
 David Blight (President) 519-432-2729
 Thistle Theatre - Box Office 519-475-4201
infothistletheatre@gmail.com
 Tiny Paws Dog Rescue - Linda Collier www.tpdrc.ca
 VON Oxford 519-539-1231
 VON Sakura House 519-537-8515
 Welcome Wagon 519-485-2990
 Wienerfest - Linda Collier 519-285-5123
 Women's Canadian Club 519-471-8924

Places of Worship

St. Andrew's United Church
 924044 Road 92, Brooksdale, Ontario
 519-475-6011
 Chalmers United Church
 842993 Road 84, Kintore, Ontario
 519-283-6376
 Crossroads Alliance Church
 194552 19th Line, R.R. 3
 Ingersoll, Ontario
 519-485-4440
 Knox Presbyterian Church
 115 St. Andrews Street
 Embroid, Ontario
 519-475-4816
 Knox Presbyterian Church
 963727 Road 96, Harrington, Ontario
 519-475-4011
 Knox United Church
 116 Kincardine Street, Embroid, Ontario
 519-475-4060
 Maple Grove Christian Retreat
 194936 19th Line
 Thamesford, Ontario
 519-285-3334
 St. John's Anglican Church
 220 Dundas Street
 Thamesford, Ontario
 519-285-3218
 Truth Community Church
 154978 15th Line (Banner Rd.)
 Thamesford, Ontario
 519-285-2112
www.truthcommunitychurch.ca
 Westminster United Church
 115 George Street
 Thamesford, Ontario
 519-285-3212
www.makingconnections.com
 East Missouri Union Church
 519-349-2333

CULTURAL MAPPING TASKFORCE



JOIN NOW!

The Township's Cultural Mapping Taskforce (CMTF) has been hard at work!

This Taskforce was set up by Council to create an interactive map of all Zorra's cultural assets. Once completed, residents and visitors will be able to reference it and get the location and information behind Zorra's cultural and historical resources, sites, and assets in the Township.

The Taskforce is currently in the process of collecting and compiling the information that will be used to create the interactive map. Their current focus is on churches, festivals, and events. Let them know if you come across any information that could be useful!

If you have an idea, suggestion, or would like to help with information gathering for the project, please contact the Township or attend an upcoming Taskforce meeting. Keep an eye on the Township website for more information on when and where the next meeting will be!

Additionally, any arts and culture providers or creators who would like to be included in the inventory are also encouraged to contact the Township. For all inquiries or suggestions, please contact the Deputy Clerk, Maggie McLaughlin at mmclaughlin@zorra.ca or call 519-485-2490 ext. 7250.



Local Government Week

Township Staff and Council know that municipal government is often the level of government closest to the people. Local Government Week was developed to celebrate the key role that Ontario local governments play in helping to define the character, priorities, amenities, and physical make-up of communities. The activities that take place for this week are used to educate students on the importance and operation of municipal government, engage youth in the community, and create an interest in community leadership, while putting a face to local government staff and elected officials.

Local Government Week was scheduled for October 15th to October 21st. Previously, the Township would host their Council meetings at the local schools in Zorra for Local Government Week, or during the COVID-19 restrictions, the Township would set up a virtual meeting with students for a question-and-answer period. This year, the Township decided to try something new. Schools were invited to the Township office building to take part in an office tour, question-and-answer session, as well as a budgeting activity. Students were given the challenge of allocating \$1,000,000 of the Township's budget between various projects, and then presenting and defending their choices to Council and Staff members.

Throughout the day, Mayor Marcus Ryan was joined by Deputy Mayor Katie Grigg, Ward 4 Councillor Crystal Finch, Steve Oliver, Director of Public Works, Michelle Smibert, Interim Director of Recreation and Facilities, Jason McEachnie, Supervisor of Recreation and Facilities, and Maggie McLaughlin, Legislative Coordinator/Deputy Clerk. Township staff and Council were very impressed by the thoughtfulness that the students showed in the budgeting activity as well as the intelligent questions they posed. Students from Zorra Highland Park and A.J. Baker asked questions about a day-in-the-life of the Mayor, how taxes are collected, and asked if they could get a jumbotron in the Embro arena. A student from Zorra Highland Park also presented a delegation to Township staff and Council regarding a memorial banner initiative. Council members and staff were very impressed!



Students from Zorra Highland Park at the Township Office

Earlier in the fall, Mayor Ryan also visited Thamesford Public School where he was, once again, very impressed by the questions the students had prepared for him!

It was clear that the classes put a lot of hard work and effort into preparing for the Local Government Week activities. On behalf of Council and staff, we would like to thank all the students and teachers for participating in the Local Government Week activities. Thank you for doing your part!!

Cross-country skiing draws to a close at Windy Hill Farm

Wildwood Polecats community recognizes efforts of Pete Baldwin, Steve and Cobi Sauder

By Stew Slater

More than 20 years of Zorra Township cross-country skiing tradition came to an end in the spring of 2023 as Pete Baldwin and his trail-grooming team made the difficult decision to cease maintaining a network of trails on his 27th Line farm that had provided both a training ground for top-level athletes and a local venue for recreational skiers since the early 1990s.

“It’s going to seem weird not having the trails and not having folks pulling in the lane after we get that first good snowfall,” Baldwin said in a recent interview. “But over the last few years, we just haven’t had enough snow to make it worthwhile.”

Baldwin first started making recreational trails at Windy Hill Farm in 1984 – around the same time as he put in the first plantation of hillside trees on the 190-acre property, in a part of the former dairy farm that had been used for pasture and hay. He eventually planted about 70 acres of trees, to go along with some existing hardwood woodlot.

The Baldwin family were avid downhill skiers, with all three of Pete and his late wife Marge’s kids spending time working at the nearby Ski-Hi facility. But Colin, his youngest son, decided one year that he wanted to try nordic skiing and announced that participating in the annual Wildwood Loppet would be a good place to start.

The Wildwood Polecats had formed as a provincially and nationally-sanctioned nordic ski club based at Wildwood Conservation Area during the half-dozen years that the 25-kilometre Wildwood Loppet was held there. It was a volunteer-run event but eventually attracted some higher-level participants for its around-the-lake course.

Pete declared he would join Colin. He had read that top-level cross-country skiers boasted a lower resting heart rate, on average, than any other elite athletes. He figured this would be a good athletic pursuit to take up.

Pete had been a competitive cross-country runner in his youth, including as a member of the varsity team at what was then known as the University of Western Ontario in London. He had also played football at Medway High School and, later, spent many evenings playing recreational men’s soccer in Woodstock and London.

When Colin and Pete arrived on that late 1980s January day to participate in the Loppet, “we didn’t know there were going to be serious racers there.” These racers took off from the start line and left the Baldwins – along with the other novices and newcomers – in their wake. It was, he remembers, humbling for both father and son.

“It was much harder than we thought. In the end, it just turned into ‘do whatever you thought you had to do to finish.’ I think we almost died!”



The trail network was used on a members-only basis by members of the Wildwood Polecats club. Inconsistent snow conditions led to the difficult decision to stop maintaining the trails this winter.

It was, certainly, not the most triumphant debut. But buoyed by the sense of exhilaration he felt as he eventually strided across the finish line, Pete Baldwin was hooked.

“I got the (cross-country skiing) bug. Colin didn’t. But I did”

Over the next 15 years, Pete – who took up the sport when he was in his late 40s – participated in dozens of long-distance ski races across North America. For a few consecutive years in the 1990s, he joined the Great American Ski Chase – a series of approximately 50-kilometre competitions that started in the late fall in New Hampshire, progressed through events in New York State and Michigan, and on to the largest of all Nordic skiing events in North America, the American Birkebeiner in Hayward, Wisconsin.

“The Ski Chase always wrapped up its season out on the west coast in California but I never managed to make it out there,” he noted.

He also qualified for and participated in World Master’s Championships races in Canmore, Alberta in 1995 and Lake Placid, New York in 2001.

But before he could even consider participating in any of those high-level competitions, Baldwin needed a place to train. And, with limited options this far south in Ontario (Circle R Ranch near Delaware has maintained a nordic ski trail network for decades but the snow cover is typically unreliable; the next closest commercial operations with good groomed trails are near Orangeville, Collingwood, Owen Sound and Barrie), he decided the trail network he had already begun on his farm would be the ideal location.

It happened that Baldwin took up the sport precisely when a transformation was underway – from the old-style “parallel stride” method of skiing to the newfangled “skating” approach. Inspired by Olympic athletes who shaved minutes off their finish times by kicking their feet diagonally to the side rather than back-and-forth in a set track, Nordic skiers around the world gradually moved towards requiring an entirely different type of groomed trail than what was needed in the past.

At Wildwood, the groomed trail consisted of two parallel tracks. In some spots, these tracks passed through narrow stretches of tree-lined trail originally designed for walking.

Skate-style skiing required wider trails over the entire distance of the loop. But it didn’t require the creation of two hard-packed parallel tracks. A well-packed – but not necessarily hard-packed – surface across the entire width of the path was the ideal surface.

The organizers of the Wildwood Polecats, mainly Steve and Cobi Sauder, gradually slowed down in maintaining the trails at Wildwood for recreational and racing use because they were impractical for skating. The annual Loppet ceased to run for similar reasons.

Pete Baldwin, who credits the Sauders for teaching him to ski in the newfangled style, approached them with his offer. They eagerly accepted, and were equally enthusiastic about helping him bring the dream into reality.

The first “groomer” was a 50-horsepower, all-wheel-drive tractor driven backwards along the trail network with a loader bucket lowered strategically to pack down the snow. “The neighbours got a kick out of seeing me do that,” Baldwin remembers.

They soon switched to “a good-sized log” towed behind the tractor, eventually with a few old tires dragging at the back to smooth out the trail behind the log. “That was a lot easier on the neck,” he admits.

He remembers some mornings after heavy, wet snowfalls when the tractor got into trouble. “Yeah, we got stuck a few times. But one way or another, we always got unstuck.”



Pete Baldwin at the entrance to the nordic skiing trail network on his 25th Line farm. The photo on the sign shows the three daughters of Steve and Cobi Sauder, fellow Zorra Township residents who helped maintain the trails.

In 2000, Baldwin and Steve Sauder purchased a professional six-foot groomer in Vermont. They pulled it first with the tractor, before eventually buying a tracked utility vehicle that was still in use when they made the decision to cease grooming the trails last spring.

Baldwin notes the Sauders, as well as other members of the Wildwood Polecats – which continued as a sanctioned club, switching its home base to Windy Hill Farm – for hours of help in maintaining the trails. The Sauders, especially, handled Polecats administrative duties, including very affordable membership fees and insurance, that have allowed Baldwin to make his trails available on a members-only basis without worrying about non-trail issues.

He has certainly done many hours of pruning over the years to keep the trails in good condition. But the Polecats also hosted Pruning Days each fall so all members and friends had the opportunity to help out.

High school teachers Mark Dewan (Stratford St. Mikes), Annette Wrigley (St. Marys DCVI) and Janet Thompson (Woodstock CI) also deserve credit, Baldwin says. These three brought dozens of young athletes to Windy Hill Farm to learn and train. Some of those athletes went on to glory at the WOSSAA (western Ontario) and OFSAA (all-Ontario) levels, and represent varsity teams at various universities in subsequent years.

The farm even hosted a couple of WOSSAA championship meets.

“That was fun. Blowing out the (farm) lane to get all those buses and cars on site at the same time as we needed to be grooming the trails – that was interesting,” he remembers. “I’m not sure if I’ll miss that.”

But it’s clear Baldwin is proud of what those young athletes accomplished. Three of them, the Sauders’ three daughters, Marlee, Joanna and Janel, are featured in a photo attached to a tree at the entrance to the trail network off the Windy Hill Farm parking area. That section of the trail was given the name “Green Grove.”

Elsewhere on the network, you’ll find signs (and photos) advising that you’re



Pete Baldwin is shown on a sign leading to a tricky downhill section of the trail. He competed in the World Masters Championships in Canmore, Alberta in 1995.

approaching sections of the trail named “Zig Zag”, “Rat Maze”, “Pete’s Peril”, and “Mount Baldwin.”

“It was the kids that named those trails. And some of them went on to great things.”

Baldwin estimates there were years in the 1990s when area skiers could rely on sufficient snow cover at Windy Hill Farm through most of the weeks from mid-December to mid-March. For the past few years, however, the season has been limited to approximately three weeks. And some of those days the conditions were less than ideal.

Two things he refuses to estimate, though, are how many hours he has devoted to providing well-groomed trails for the area’s nordic skiing enthusiasts, and how much of his own money he spent making it all happen.

“I don’t even think about it,” he said. “It’s fun grooming. It’s a nice way to spend an evening.” “And it has been so nice having a way of using the farm. It’s hard to think of not doing it.”

Despite the loss of cross-country skiing, Pete and his wife Penny will continue offering outdoor sporting activities at their farm. As a “Millennium project” in 2000, Baldwin created a four-hole golf course on the property that two separate groups of golfers utilize on a weekly basis through the summer. And a cyclocross racing club based in Woodstock and London continues to use the trails for training.



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On September 28th, Zorra staff observed National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by taking time to gather and reflect to honour Survivors, their families, and their communities. Staff also watched informative videos in order to better understand the history of Residential Schools and Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.

Thank You!



An agency of the Government of Ontario
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Congratulations to the EZCC Pavilion Project on receiving a \$90,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation! Thanks to the generosity of the OTF, Embro will soon have a covered, outdoor space for all of the community to enjoy year-round!





Beachville District Museum: Winter Events

Thank you to all who joined us this fall for our many events onsite including Digitization Day, Halloween Night at the Museum, and our Speaker Series events!

Upcoming Events

Christmas Carol Sing

Join us on Sunday, December 10 from 2-4pm for a reminder of Christmases past as we sing classic Christmas carols in the Program Room. We provide the hymn songbooks and snacks, and you lend us your voice. Arrive with some requests for your favourite Christmas songs. This event is open to the public, free of charge, and a whole lot of fun. We look forward to seeing you there!

Holiday Closure

Please note that the museum will be closed for the holidays from December 23-January 2, reopening on January 3rd. As we head into the chillier months, we invite you to join us for a tour of the museum during regular hours Tuesday-Saturday 10am-4pm. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Discovering Zorra's Past

Both residents and non-residents wishing to look into Zorra's rich past are invited to join the **Zorra Heritage Committee**, which meets at 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Beachville District Museum.

The first meeting of 2024 will be in the form of a behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum on January 3, including artifact storage areas.

Through projects, field trips and wide-ranging group discussions, members can expand their knowledge of Township lore. The Committee's formal aims are to:

- * Uncover resources and stories relating to the Township's past
- * Enhance access to, and spark interest in Zorra's rich heritage
- * Advocate for the preservation of this heritage

In 2023, activities included formal presentations during Oxford History Day and exhibits of Zorra artifacts at the Embro Highland Games and Embro Fair in co-operation with the Museum.

The group is part of the Beachville District Historical Society.



5 Ways to Love Local This Winter



Yes there is plenty to do near home to make the most of winter.

Shop Oxford Fresh Farms: Farms still have plenty to offer in the winter months, particularly for cozy winter meals. Beef, pork, chicken, garlic, root vegetables, honey, maple syrup, grains and dairy products are all available from local producers. Berry farms also have preserves and frozen berries available for your smoothies and desserts. Find local farmers on OxfordFresh.ca

Take in Local Theatre: Oxford County is home to 4 local theatres offering fun affordable entertainment. Catch Miss Supertest the Bob Haward Story at Thistle Theatre or head to Ingersoll, Tillsonburg or Woodstock for a show.

Explore the Outdoors: Take an Alpaca for a walk at Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life, take the self-guided outdoor tour at the Beachville Museum or if you have a fat bike hit a groomed trail at Wildwood or the Pines (trail passes required).

Warm up Outdoors: If the cold makes you shudder enjoy a sunny day outdoors at Terra Nova Nordic Spa or Wave Nordic Spa. Enjoy the whirlpools, saunas and if you want the true Nordic experience try the cold plunge.

Visit your local library: Oxford County Library offers a wide variety of activities and great books to cozy up with (off the shelf or on your tablet). You will also find great children's programming. Explore the world through books this winter.

Don't forget to visit our website TourismOxford.ca for upcoming events, special offers and to sign-up for our newsletter full of inspiration to make winter wonderful.

Your Team at Tourism Oxford



Happy Holidays!

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COMMUNITY EVENTS & SERVICES MAGAZINE

We would love to hear from YOU!!!

If you have a story, pictures or ANYTHING that you would like to share about your community please contact Karen Martin at kmartin@zorranow.ca or 519-485-2490 ext. 7228 to have it appear in an upcoming Zorra Now Edition.



Oxford 4-H Club

The Oxford Cloverbud 4-H Club eighteen enthusiastic youth ages 6-8 explored what 4-H is all about with touring the Woodstock Art Gallery then making items with clay, scrapbooking at the maker center at the Ingersoll Library, helping at the 4-H pancake fundraiser at Jakeman's Maple Products, getting up-close to the goats & alpaca at Udderly Ridiculous, seeing bees making honey at Klassen Bee & Honey, attending Discovery Days in Dorchester. They also participated at the Oxford 4-H booth at the Ingersoll Harvest Festival learning about composting, beef anatomy, parts of a rabbit. Then in October they learned about buffalo at Buffalo Ben's Bison and apples at Apple Land Station and celebrated Show Your 4-H Colours with their new green 4-H t-shirts with funds from the Pizza booth fundraiser at the Embro Truck & Tractor Pull. The year finished off with the youth receiving their award at the Oxford 4-H Awards Night in Embro.

Cloverbuds is open to youth ages 6-8 by January 1st with a new curriculum each year to explore different aspects of 4-H. If you are interested in being part of the 2024 Oxford Cloverbud 4-H Club, please contact Shonna at oxfordcounty4h@gmail.com. The club is also looking for volunteers to help make it a rewarding experience for the youth.

The Brooksdale 4-H Club started the year off with a Pizza 4-H project where they explored the different types of pizza with making various pizzas throughout the project. They finished the project with cooking pizza on an open fire. Next came the Niche 4-H project where they toured different crops—garlic, flowers, lavender, hops, leeks and other vegetables. They did the 'soil your undies' test with underwear discovering how

healthy the soil is. Now the club youth are now exploring the Potato 4-H project with harvesting, cooking and playing games with potatoes.

It might seem like a long time away, but March will be here and so will the 4-H Pancake Fundraiser at Jakeman's Maple Products. Mark your calendar to come and see 4-H youth during this fun 'learn to do by doing' experience on the weekends of March.

The 4-H Ontario youth participant fee is paid online directly with 4-H Ontario. The Oxford County 4-H Association will be subsidizing the provincial youth participant fee by \$25.00 for Oxford 4-H youth members for 2024 with the George Thornton Bequest Funds. Oxford 4-H youth members will pay \$75 to join 4-H in 2024—registration opened Nov 16th on the 4-H Ontario website. Please contact the club volunteer or oxfordcounty4h@gmail.com to confirm the project you are interested in is running in 2024 before registering.

The 4-H program is a leadership development program for youth ages 6-21 from urban and rural areas learning about health, environment, technology, agriculture, science, food, community and communication in a hands-on learning atmosphere.

To know more about the 4-H program, please contact the Oxford 4-H Communications Coordinator, Shonna Ward, by email oxfordcounty4h@gmail.com or call/text 519-854-6919 or check out Oxford County 4-H Facebook.





Thamesford Lions Club

Thamesford Lions Community Events

"Catch The Ace" Progressive Raffle

Weekly Prize Draws - jackpot grows each week if Ace of Spades is not found
8PM Tuesday evenings streamed LIVE on Facebook at Brunny's Bar and Grill

Tickets can be purchased in Thamesford from:
Dewy's Auto • Village Catering & Deli • JC Graphics
Mc Farlan Rowlands Insurance • Shell Gas Station
Brunny's Bar and Grill

Tickets can be purchased in Embro from: Highland Restaurant
Contact: Lion Tony, 519-285-3618

2024 Thamesford Lions Calendars

Available for Sale \$10 each
Photos were taken by Zorra Township residents around the township. Available at the Christmas Carol Sing OR
Contact: Lion Doris, 519-808-6197
thamesfordlionscontest@gmail.com

Photos With Santa

Saturday, Dec 2, 2023
10AM - 12:30PM - Thamesford Recreation Centre

Contact: Lion Doris, 519-808-6197

Christmas Carol Sing

Saturday, Dec 2, 2023
6:30PM - Doors Open @ 6 - Thamesford Recreation Centre

Contact: Lion Jim, email: jrkeron5461@rogers.com

Christmas Tree Pick-Up

Saturday, Jan 6, 2024
Real trees to be collected for recycling from the curbside
Starting 9AM

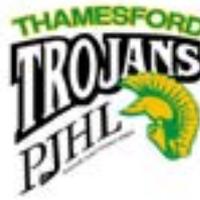
Family Day Event

Monday, Feb 19, 2024
11AM - 4PM - Thamesford Recreation Centre
Contact: Lion Mike, email: mike.anderson141210@gmail.com

Electronics, Metal, Batteries Recycling Day

Saturday April 20, 2024
8AM-2PM Thamesford Community Centre Parking Lot

Look For The Latest On Thamesford Lions Club Events on the "Thamesford Lions" Facebook page!



TROJANS NEWS

Wow! The Trojans won their first eleven game straight getting them to first place in the whole PJHL with 3 other teams out of 64 teams. Oops; then the wheels fell off when they fell to Port Stanley on Halloween night. This is Jr. Hockey, but like I have said before, this is a tough division and if you don't bring your "A" game you can lose to anyone. Fortunately, the team seems to have turned things around in spite of the fact that we are experiencing injuries and illness. The team has depth and speed and this is the result of good scouting and great coaching.

We are very pleased with the attendance this year and when the weather gets colder outside we should have the heaters turned on to make it comfy.

The Thamesford Lions have licensed the arena and if you are one who likes to have a beer while watching the game, the Lions will be glad to serve. The Lions also operate the arena canteen and by the looks of the orders of fries and chicken fingers, it is well attended.



For those of you who have not been to one of our games lately may I suggest that

you get a group of friends together and come out to a game, have a beer and some fries, sit back and enjoy a real live hockey game. Get excited! Families are most welcome. This year we have young local skaters carrying the Canada flag and Trojans flag around the ice prior to the National Anthem. If your child is interested in being a flag bearer, they can enter their name in our weekly draw. Child must be between 6-12 years of age and must be registered with any local skating organization (minor hockey, skating, etc.).

Check out our schedule in the Village Voice or online at the PJHL (Provincial Jr. Hockey League) website. We are in the Yeck division. Like our Facebook page "Thamesford Trojans Hockey Club" for all the team news and updates.

Hope to see you at a game and as usual keep your head up and stick on the ice.

Tony Redix, *President*
Thamesford Trojans



Oxford Historical Society Events

Wednesday, January 31, 2024:

AGM & Presentation*

Please join us for the Society's AGM, which will be held at the Woodstock Museum, NHS, meeting will begin at 6:30pm.

At this meeting the 2024 Executive will be voted in, all paying members will have a chance to vote for this year's Executive. For a complete list of our 2023 Executive please visit our Committee Members page. If you wish to serve on the Executive Board, contact the Society by Saturday, January 20, 2024, info@oxhs.ca.

Membership fees are due at this time. Annual memberships run from January to December. A single membership is \$25 and a family membership is \$30.

To become a member complete the Membership Form

AGM Presentation: Elaine Becker & Don Wilson - Lake Erie Shipwrecks

Wednesday, February 28, 2024:
Public Meeting at the Woodstock Museum NHS - Presentation & Time TBD*

Wednesday, March 27, 2024:
Public Meeting at the Woodstock Museum NHS - Presentation & Time TBD*

OxHS events are free and open to the public, Society membership is not required.

**For the latest information visit our website: <https://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.ca/upcoming-events/>; we can be reached by email at info@oxhs.ca or by phone at 226-242-4774.*

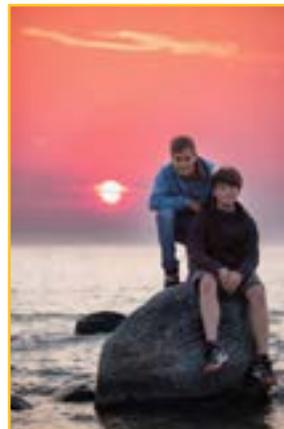
Winter can be Warm

ISE wants to warm up some students' winters by whisking them to welcoming homes in Europe. Sure, the snow-clad Alps are in our mind's eye, but even in the valleys of Switzerland, France or Italy, it is sweater weather. With ISE's exchanges, teens from 13 to 17 can leave their parkas parked at home.

In Spain, even in February, even a sweater may be unnecessary. Not all ISE exchanges, however, happen during the winter term in school. Ireland invites students to Dublin and area in the summer as do all 5 other partners.

Get to know great people who share your interests and personality. See your home community through their eyes, and open your eyes wide to their countries. Explore the world. Explore your interests be they sport, science, music, people...

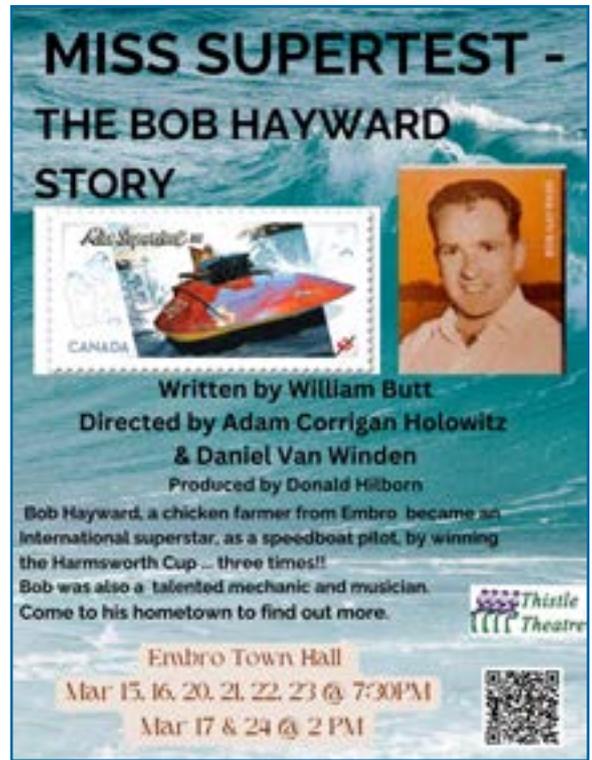
For more information visit www.iseontario.on.ca





Miss Supertest The Bob Hayward Story

Miss Supertest - The Bob Hayward Story is a go! Auditions have taken place and 14 local people have been cast. This show, which includes much Jazz and 50's music, will take you through Bob's interesting life. Bob Hayward, a chicken farmer from Embro, became an international superstar, as a speedboat pilot, by winning the Hamsworth Cup – three times!! Bob was also a talented mechanic and musician. Come to his hometown of Embro to find out more. The play is written by William Butt; directed by Adam Corrigan Holowitz and Daniel Van Winden; and, produced by Donald Hilborn. Show dates are March 15 through March 24, 2024. Contact the Thistle Theatre website, thistle-theatre.com, or text 519-537-3756 for information on getting tickets.



Thistle Theatre - Dramarama 2024

Join us at the Embro Town Hall for 10 days of imagination and creativity! Dramarama is our 2-week summer day camp for young people ages 7 to 14. Two sessions will be held in July 2024.

A 2-week session at Dramarama is all about creativity and self-expression! Workshops in drama, dance, arts and crafts, and theatre

production take place each morning while the afternoon is spent working in small groups to collectively create short plays.

Registration will occur in March 2024. More details will be available on the Thistle Theatre website (www.thistle-theatre.com) or email dramarama.thistletheatre@gmail.com with any questions.

Zorra Municipal Office Sold

Thank you to The Lori Goldhawk Team for their hard work in quickly selling the Zorra Municipal Office! The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario will take possession of the office in June 2024. Staff will be moving into the new Zorra Municipal and Child Care Centre at 163 Brock Street in Thamesford. The Township issued a news release regarding the sale and it is available for viewing on our website: www.zorra.ca/en/our-township/newsroom



REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE CHRIST CHURCH – 2023



Program Presenters:

Monika Kelly, Jeff Enright, Joan Hryniw,
Richard Hryniw

Organist: Ruth Calder

Piper: Dylan Powell

Crew : Jewel Haynes, Joyce Day,
De Boer(s) - Jolene, Austin, Owen, Aiden

Sound System: Mike Eckert

Welcome

O God Our Help In Ages Past
O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:
O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guide while troubles last,
And our eternal home!

Opening Prayer

O Canada

Prayer for Peace

Reading: 1st Thessalonians 5:13-18

Prayer of Peace for the present

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
And where there is doubt true faith in You:

Refrain

O Spirit grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console
to be understood as to understand
to be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy

Refrain

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Refrain

The Old Man

Reading of Honour Roll

Placing of Remembrance Wreaths

Last Post.....Piper.....Reveille

In Flanders Fields

Mission Bound

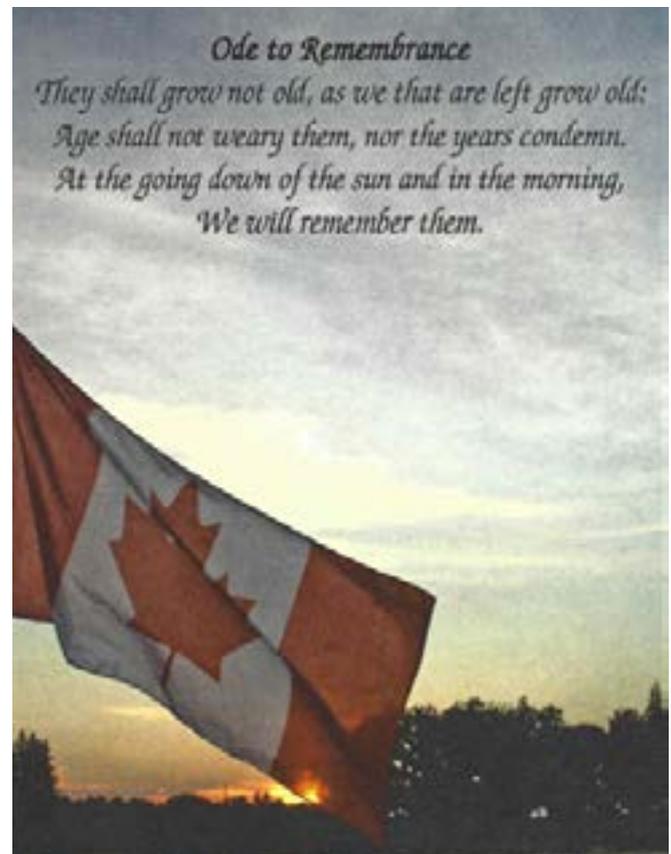
Let There Be Peace On Earth
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me

Let There Be Peace on Earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God as our Father
Brothers all are we
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment and live
Each moment in peace eternally

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

Closing Prayers



Ode to Remembrance

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.*



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Ronda Stewart
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