

## Contents

Editorial	2
Barndance	3-4
Summer concert at St Agatha's	5
Upkeep of St Agatha's churchyard	5
Parish Council News & 10 things you should know ....	6-7
Community Association	8
The Orchard Group	9
BcS Environment Group	9-10
Village Stores and Post Office	10-11
Brightwell Preschool	11
Wallingford Food Bank collection	11
Village Fete Flower & Produce Show	12-15
Stewart Village Hall	15
The Red Lion	16-17
Save the Children	17
Bike Sale	17
Book Review	18
Letters to the editor	19
Summer Solstice	19-20
Brightfest 23	20
Brightwell Supporting Refugees	21
Brightwell Art Club	21
Wallingford Photographic Club	22
WANTED Volunteers	22
What's On at the Wallingford Museum	23
The Corn Exchange	23
Village Diary	24

**Editor:** Alison Leigh 07983 752 454 ([thevillagerbcs@gmail.com](mailto:thevillagerbcs@gmail.com))

**Chairman:** Anne Brooker 835109 **Secretary:** Angela Lewis

**Treasurer:** Kat Southwell **Advertising:** Martin Dix 07767 864735

**Assembly:** Shena Luck 834543 **Distribution:** Tony Guntrip 07754 690264

**Production:** Anne Brooker, Angela Lewis, Steve Luck, Jim Sanger, Susanne Tuffrey

Items for the next edition should be sent to the Editor by 10 September 2023. The Villager is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village.

## Editorial

City dwellers are inclined to regard village life as at best quaint and at worst boring. I know. I was one of them. But now I know better. There is never a dull moment in Brightwell. Just look at the diary for June and July. Music, drama, feasting and celebrating; it's all there. And we are talking quality high end entertainment, worthy of anything you would see on the stage in London's West End. Case in point: Mike Bartlett (King Charles III, Dr Foster, 47<sup>th</sup> and other West End successes) wrote *Barndance* for the village, about the village and starring the villagers. Those of us who scored tickets before the village shop sold out know how privileged we were to enjoy the experience. Thanks to Andrew Trythall for front cover photo and see review page 3.

Then there was the summer concert at St Agatha's, a medley of music and drama and comedy that once again exhibited the outstanding talent that the folks of Brightwell have in spades. See reviews on pages 5 and 19. As Rev Kev said on the night, wouldn't it be nice to see the church this full more often.

Brightwell's green fingered talents were on display at the annual Flower and Produce show, the highlight of the village fete. Special congratulations are due to Gina Couper who won the Talbot Cup, awarded for most points in the show. Also to 10 year old Allegra Benarr who won the popular vote for Best Entry in the entire show. See pages 12-14 for all the results.

Talking of produce, are you like me scratching your heads and wondering why your apple and pear trees are devoid of fruit this year? Even the experts can't explain. See page 9.

Finally, what has the Parish Council ever done for us? Well, apart from the neighbourhood plan, building a new children's play area, maintaining our verges and providing AND emptying the 4 'poo tins' in the village. Find out why we have a Parish Council and what they do for us on pages 6-7.

For those of you already on holiday or about to take one, I can recommend an excellent book of short stories, see page 18 and if you are planning to walk locally there is danger lurking in the hedgerows. Clue: it killed Socrates. See page 10.

Happy holidays everyone.

Alison Leigh

# Barndance

The barn at Small's House in Mackney provides the inspiration for **Barndance**, a new play by Mike Bartlett specially written for the village. How lucky we are to have the talent, energy and enthusiasm to stage such a superb production. Performed in the barn on three consecutive nights (16-18 June), the play is a homage to the life and times of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. As the story unfolds, it slips seamlessly back and forth between three eras: the start of the Second World War in 1939, the end of the 90s and the present day; with the barn as the ever-present character that may conceal a secret.

From the hauntingly beautiful plainsong sung by young Grace (Bea Marshall) as she leads the cast of familiar village players into the barn, to the joyous barn dancing finale, the play left an indelible impression on those fortunate enough to share the experience. And it did feel like a shared experience, for we all know in our hearts what it means to belong to this village. Barndance captures the thread of history that underpins our village life.

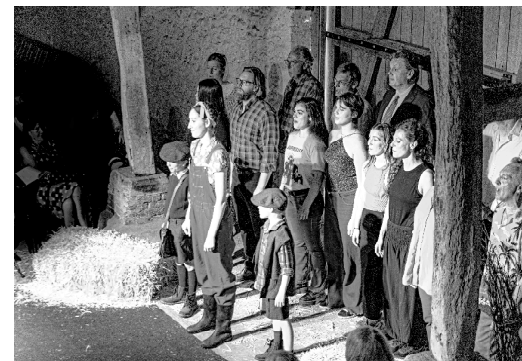
The play begins at the outbreak of war with two young Brightwell lads, Pete (Alistair Luck) and Jim (Casper Good) about to be called up. Jim is fired up by the prospect of a final night in the pub before heading off to fight, like his father and grandfather before him. Pete is not so sure. Grace, his sister, concocts a plan to hide Pete in the barn until the war ends. But of course, we later find out, after all the bombast, it's Jim who stays behind, helping his father on the farm. And Pete? Well, his fate remains uncertain until we've switched to later decades; by which time Grace has become a garrulous granny, played with great zest by Helen Sheppard. By eavesdropping on later conversations in the barn – the audience gradually pieces together what happened in the past – and how life's priorities have shifted.

Fast-forward to 1997 and Grace's granddaughter, Nicky (Salomé Haertel) is plugged into her Walkman, dancing to the music of Supergrass, while her dad (Ben Manning) worries she should be revising for her A levels. Now the concern is not whether to go to war, but whether the family can afford the fees to go to university and more immediately whether to have an 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party.

Granny Grace is the problem. Despite being in her 80s she's still a party-girl. Mid-afternoon – she's already slightly tipsy – and Nicky's worried she will be an embarrassment. To confirm her worst fears, Grace's latest 'squeeze', Bill (Robert Seatter) bursts into the barn, wearing a brash Hawaiian shirt with a loud American accent to match. *"I love the village! Just England isn't it. Windy lanes, country pub!"* He's made his money from video rental and

Granny Grace has seized the chance for some gold digging. But it turns out Grace may have done some digging of her own and buried something in the barn.

Before we can find out more, we blast forward to 2023, when an estate agent (Roy Lines) is showing a prospective buyer round the barn, which by now has undergone a full eco-conversion. Angela (Clare Thomson) enters, speaking into her mobile phone having a deliciously obnoxious conversation. In a brilliant performance – she quickly establishes herself as a loathsome Londoner who would hate Brightwell life.



After an initial frosty encounter with a historian (who turns out to be Grace's granddaughter, Nicky) we see a different side to Angela. Before long she is embracing village life and organising a fund-raising barn dance. By sliding backwards and forwards in time we discover the fate of Grace's brother. In a very moving series of scenes, we find out that Pete had been killed in action and the ashes buried in a golden box he had given to Grace. This is the treasure Nicky has been wanting to recover from the barn, but it turns out Granny Grace had had the wit to dig up the box before the bulldozers went in.

One of the delights of the play is seeing young characters turn old. Nine-year-old Leonard (Samuel Bartlett), becomes old boy Leonard (Andy Lewis). He likes to perform the same old hopeless magic trick. And then after 84 years he finally pulls it off.

In a sublime moment at the end, the big barn doors swing open to the setting sun. There is Pete – standing in his army uniform with the cast. As the sun streams in, they enter the barn and begin to dance. An uplifting transition from heartfelt loss to celebration.

Great credit must go to Chris Baines for coaxing such moving and entertaining performances from his cast; to Dani Brown for generously opening the barn and gardens for the performances and to all the people who helped stage this magnificent production. The proceeds from the play went to Brightwell Supporting Refugees.

## Summer concert at St Agatha's

“Sheer joy from beginning to end” was how one very happy villager expressed their feelings on leaving St Agatha's at the end of July's summer concert. In recent years the audience have often said to me ‘the best yet’. This time I am inclined to agree. So much for unlucky thirteen!

The beautiful opening Seal Lullaby set the tone for everything that followed. The village choir was a revelation as it boldly gave its rendition of ‘Zadok the Priest’ and then that other mighty Coronation number, ‘I Was Glad’. One of the lasting memories of the concert will be the versatility and the range of individual soloists, who then combined for duets, for a barbershop, and even for an octet.

Brightwell is home to an extraordinary array of talent, and here it was on full display. Villagers entertaining villagers in a tradition that has been going on for generations.

As well as the music, several readings also reminded us that this is a coronation year. But quite how ‘Count Dracula’ got on the line up, remains something of a mystery.

The traditional summer concert sketch, provided a Vicar of Dibley reminder, while Stephen Navin received a tremendous ovation for his yearning to be in his beloved Liverpool.

Each summer concert tries to introduce at least one new instrument. This year it was the soprano saxophone played magnificently by Tony V Isaacs. As the first few notes of ‘Summertime’ echoed around the church, the audience was transfixed, anticipating something special. It was not disappointed.

Alex Kingston's dramatic opening, and equally dramatic ending brought a whole new dimension to the evening with extracts from Shakespeare's ‘The Tempest’. Alex lifted us onto a higher plane, one we would never have anticipated when we began these concerts 13 years ago.

My personal thanks to all those involved.

*Alec McGivan*

## Upkeep of St Agatha's churchyard

We urgently need volunteers to help mow the grass, weed and maintain the garden machinery – please contact John Dowling if you can spare some time 07879 260684 [johndowling@hotmail.com](mailto:johndowling@hotmail.com).

## Parish Council News

### Feeding the Kites

We are very lucky to have these magnificent birds living and nesting in and around the village. Unfortunately, we have had complaints of kites stealing from barbeques and other scary close encounters. We would encourage residents not to feed these birds in their gardens. Thank you for your support.

### Hedge-cutting

Residents are reminded that they are responsible for maintenance of roadside hedges adjoining their properties. Many of the streets in our village are very narrow and regular hedge trimming is required for road safety reasons – thanks for your help.

### Pavilion

After over twenty years of use by the many sporting, youth and other groups the Pavilion in Mackney Lane is in need of refurbishment. We wish to use some of our Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) to pay for this but these funds have time and budgetary limitations! It is our intention to do as much of the work with volunteers, if anyone with experience is prepared to help initially with design, grant applications and works programmes, please could you contact Gabrielle our Parish Clerk on [bcsparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:bcsparishcouncil@gmail.com).

*James Davys*

### 10 things you should know about the Parish Council (PC)

1. There are 9 Parish Councillors. They volunteer their time. They meet on the third Tuesday of the month, normally at the Stewart Room. Residents are always welcome to attend. Anybody who wishes to speak at the meeting should contact Gabrielle, the Parish Clerk, in advance so that time can be allocated.
2. For centuries the Parish Councils and the Church managed everything. Then power moved to district and county until along came the Localism Act of Parliament, 2011 -and some of those powers returned to the parish.
3. That led to the Parish Plan, drawn up in consultation with the community. It proposes how the village should change and evolve over the next decade

4. .... not to be confused with the Neighbourhood Plan, drawn up by Councillor Jason Debney for the PC. This plan allows the Parish to write its own planning policy. The trouble with that, according to Jason, is that it raises unrealistic expectations: “We still have to conform with all the legislation at district, regional and national level. The only way to stop a lot of development is to allow *some* development. This strategy has allowed the district council to support us in fighting off all the unwanted development since the plan was published.”
5. The PC inspects, repairs and upgrades the recreation areas and supplies and empties 4 dog bins.
6. The PC maintains the verges. “Instead of a contractor coming on an arbitrary date we respond to how the plants are growing”, says Jason, “it may look like we are growing weeds but our hedges are now full of wild life”.
7. There is a 20mph speed limit in the village thanks to lobbying by the PC. A 20mph limit for the High Road and a crossing on the A4130 have also been approved and are pending implementation.
8. The PC and its operations is funded by a precept which is a levy on the council tax paid by every household.
9. To be a Parish Councillor you don’t need special skills but you need to be at least 18 years old, registered to vote in the area or to have lived, worked, or owned property here for at least 12 months before an election. Chairperson Sue Robson would love to see more people stand for council next time round and for someone to take over the chair.
10. Derren Fisher is the newest member to serve on the PC. He’s lived in the village for 25 years and feels it’s time to put something back to the community. He says if you want to get things done “Don’t moan about it – get up and do something about it. The next opportunity to stand for election will be in 2027.

*Alison Leigh*

PS: In the meantime the PC is looking for volunteers to do simple jobs like sweeping up leaves. Contact Gabrielle, our Parish Clerk on [bcsparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:bcsparishcouncil@gmail.com), if you’d like to put your hand up to join the Parish Council What’s App volunteer group.

## Community Association

### Village Fete 1 July

We were delighted that so many people could join us for our annual fete. A big thank you to everybody who came, enjoyed and supported us on such a lovely afternoon. It was wonderful to be able to welcome so many new residents who have joined our community. We are extremely grateful to Emma and Luke Clancey for allowing us to hold the event in their lovely garden and for being such gracious and welcoming hosts.

An event like this can only take place with an army of hard working, dedicated volunteers to set up the stalls, run them and clear up afterwards - we are so very grateful and thankful for all that they did to create such a happy event for the whole village

I am pleased to report that after expenses the fete raised over £5400, which is a record! The attendance was approximately 600 – a fantastic result!

### Grants

The Community Association makes grants available to village organisations based on need and availability of funds. Grant application forms are available from our Treasurer, Tom at [tacrogerson@aol.co.uk](mailto:tacrogerson@aol.co.uk) or [tacrogerson@gmail.com](mailto:tacrogerson@gmail.com). Applications must be submitted by the 28 August 2023 to be considered for a grant.

Due to the hard work and support of so many people in the village, we are in a much stronger position to help local charities this year.

### Jumble Sale

We are trying out a new event this year and running a Jumble Sale on 30 September 2023, 2-4.30pm at The Pavilion, Mackney Lane. Doors will open from 10am for donations: please provide clean and serviceable clothing only. The sale will begin at 2pm - we will be delighted if you can join us to discover and buy some fashionable bargains at excellent prices! Further details can be obtained from Lynn on [lynnburridge@gmail.com](mailto:lynnburridge@gmail.com).

*James Davys*

## The Orchard Group

Where are all the apples? Have you noticed that some of the apple and pear trees in your garden don't have any fruit this year? It is the same in some of the disused orchards around the village. Quite a few have trees that are over 100 years old but have still been bearing fruit all this time. Even the Community Orchard trees, so lovingly tended, haven't produced the vital fruit that we all enjoy. So why?

Talking to Paul Chilton, our resident retired fruit farmer, and apple expert, he shrugs his shoulders and says that some years the trees just do this. When he farmed (from behind Root One all the way over the hill to Shillingford Bridge), having hardly any fruit on his 17,000 apple, pear, cherry and plum trees was a considerable problem! John Sheard, who has the fabulous old orchard with ducks, geese and a lot of chickens at Mackney, shrugs and says the same.

We had the two really cold snaps in December and January when the trees were dormant; February was dry; March was wet; the blossom was promising and the June drop was normal. No late frosts in May which might damage the blossom. Of the 45 trees in the Community Orchard many do not have any apples.

And yet, not to be thwarted, the Orchard Group plans to have an event in October provisionally on Saturday 14 October 2pm - 4pm. Put it in your diary and watch out for more information on posters around the village and on Facebook.

*Alison Bloomfield*

## BcS Environment Group

### Swan Stream and Woodlands etc

The good news: you may have noticed that the small wooden weir in the orchard area has been replaced by a more robust weir using locally reclaimed natural stone. This will better be able to keep a modest depth of water in the immediate upstream area as the previous structure was very leaky! As we have now come to expect, the vegetation around the stream is rampant and, although we have carried out some minor clearance of the footpath and some areas of the stream, further work will be needed in the coming weeks.

The bad news: hemlock has become quite widespread in the local hedgerows and in some fields and is most unwelcome. It grows to over 2 metres tall, looks like a type of hogweed and is identifiable by the purple spotted stems. This is one of Britain's most poisonous plants with the toxin contained in the sap although even touching it can lead to problems. It has a repellent smell when the leaves are crushed which helps to ensure accidental poisonings are not common. It affects humans, dogs and livestock and should be avoided both when living and when cut and dried. Hemlock has a two-year lifecycle (growing from seed to fruition and then dying). However, the seeds can lay dormant and remain viable for 3-5 years. It has occurred in the Millennium wood over the years and is very hard to keep from returning.

### Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm was 42.6mm and 56.3mm respectively for May and June. The met office indicates that for this area the rainfall was below average. Mean daily maximum temperatures for this area were higher than the 1991 – 2020 average by around 0.5 deg C for May and 3 deg C for June. June is reported as being the warmest June since 1884 when these records started.

The river flows and groundwater levels were in the normal range at the end of May with Farmoor reservoir at 99% capacity. Let us hope there is not a need for a hosepipe ban.

*Steve Capel-Davies*

## Village Stores and Post Office

At the 17 June AGM the Management Committee reported another successful year for the shop and Post Office. We continue to concentrate on stocking good quality local products at reasonable prices. Guest speaker Ben Manning (our new District Councillor) spoke about the new Food initiative being introduced in South Oxfordshire. We are proud to be a part of this venture. More information to come as it progresses.

Our success is due to our very loyal team of volunteers and staff delivering these services to the village. However, to sustain this into the future we need new volunteers, particularly at the moment on the shop side to ensure that the shop and Post Office continues and flourishes.

Our leaflet in the previous edition of *The Villager* explained the opportunities there are. If you enjoy having these services in the village, please remember they are largely provided by volunteers, please consider joining the team.

*Village Shop Management Committee*

## Brightwell Preschool

Although a move to 'Big School' is a huge event in a little one's life, we can see that for most children, it is just a shimmy to another part of our community. Community plays a large part of our preschool as we meet people whilst out and about, visit the local farms, orchard and allotment. Thank you to Julie, Patricia and the team at Sherwood Farm for an amazing time riding on a trailer, meeting the cows, swimming in grain and looking at our reflections in the ever-so-shiny tractors this summer. Our preschool would not be here if it wasn't for the passion of our locals who help as part of our committee, complete maintenance work and assist in heading out into the village for adventures.

However, the little citizens here could do with some more support to stretch their learning through acquiring new equipment and completion of projects. They need you. We need you. If you have just a small amount of time to help us achieve progress and change, it would make a lot of difference to the future of this village. We have money to be spent for a garden project, to buy toys and we also need some village power for maintenance work in our garden. This could mean once or twice a year you give us some time to garden, paint or project manage. Please do get in touch to have a look around or talk through how you could be a part of our community team:  
*admin@brightwellpreschool.org / 01491 826387.*

We will be very busy this autumn with many new starters and our growing after-school care provision. This is good news for our community because we can continue to give some of the smallest members of our community the adventures and care they deserve.

*Natasha Hillier*

## Wallingford Food Bank door collection

Brightwell Beavers, Cubs and Scouts will be going door to door from 6pm on Friday 29 September to collect any items for the Wallingford Food Bank. These should have a 3 month shelf life please. Many thanks. Please support us if you can.

Centre page spread flower show results

## Flower and Produce Show 2023 & 2024

<b>Trophies</b>	
<b>The Chilton Cup</b> (best exhibit in the fruit & vegetable classes)	Jason Debney
<b>The Win Glendenning Memorial Salver</b> (best flower arranging entry)	Gina Coupar
<b>The Talbot Rose Bowl</b> (best rose exhibit)	Helena Varley
<b>The Talbot Cup</b> (awarded for most points in show)	Gina Coupar
<b>The Joan Sheard Cup</b> (for the best junior entry in an adult class)	Fin Hillier
<b>Junior Trophies</b>	(9-12) Allegra Benarr (5-8) Edwin Woolhouse
<b>The Swan Allotments Cup</b> (for most improved allotment)	Maddy Lowe
<b>The Sally Dugan Cup</b> (for creative writing)	Alana Dickinson
<b>The Bakers Bowl</b> (for the most points won in cookery)	Kristen Dudley
<b>Best Entry in Show - £10 Voucher for the Village Stores</b> (judged by popular vote)	Allegra Benarr

Thank you to everyone who entered the Flower & Produce show. There are a lot of very talented people in the village who entered despite difficult growing conditions.

We would like to put a plea out for next year. Entries have to be dropped off between 9am – 10.30am at the Flower & Produce tent, no late entries can be accepted after 10.15am as we have to make sure all entries are properly displayed and labelled. Judging is done anonymously by people from outside the village at 11am.

Room in the tent is limited and we were wondering if anyone has any display boards we could borrow for next year to display the photos.

If anyone would like to get involved in the Flower & Produce Show committee, we would be very grateful for more help. Please contact Helen Satchell at [hvsathell@icloud.com](mailto:hvsathell@icloud.com).

*Alison Hedges*

## Stewart Village Hall

Thank you to everyone who visited our stall at the Spring Fair, Brightfest and the Village Fete. It was great to be present at these events, to have the opportunity to share information on the hall refurbishment project with you and get your feedback and suggestions. The Lego challenge at the fete to 'Build us a new Village Hall' produced some fabulous results, the pictures were posted on the village Facebook page and are displayed in the hall.

The project is moving ahead. We had an initial meeting with the SODC Planning Department who were positive about the direction we were taking, and initial wildlife, tree and heritage surveys have been carried out. We are now reviewing all this information, along with the feedback you gave at meetings and events to formulate the next stage of the planning process.

You may have noticed our advert for the SO Charitable lottery on the back cover of *The Villager*. I am really pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant of £770 from the SO Charity Lottery Community Fund – so thank you to everyone who continues to support the hall by buying tickets in this lottery, your support is really appreciated. Lottery tickets cost £1 each with the chance to win a monthly star prize as well as cash prizes and free tickets to the following weeks draw. To take part in the draw please go to [www.socharitable.co.uk/support/stewart-village-hall](http://www.socharitable.co.uk/support/stewart-village-hall).

We have many regular groups and activities in the hall, these are advertised on our *What's On* posters on the Village Hall noticeboards or you can view these on the *Schedule* page of our website.

If you have any comments, questions, or feedback, you can use the contact page on the hall website, pop a comment in the mailbox at the rear of the hall or speak to any trustee.

To book the hall please visit our website: [stewartvillagehall.org.uk](http://stewartvillagehall.org.uk) or contact Shena at [shenaluck@btinternet.com](mailto:shenaluck@btinternet.com) or on 01491 834543.

*Annette Kilworth*

## The Red Lion

It's a busy time for us at The Red Lion this month which we are loving. The good weather certainly brings a lot more people out so long may it continue.

In the last edition, you would have read how we were trying to move forward with our lease renewal and that it was taking a long time. I am really pleased to let you know that although as I type nothing has been signed, we have moved significantly forward with talks and our landlord has presented us with terms of a new 10 year lease that we are happy to accept. Solicitors have been instructed and we are just finalising a few minor details before anything is signed. However what we have agreed certainly keeps the pub's future strong for another 10 years at least.

For us this is fantastic news and we hope for you also. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has spoken to us about this, offered their services of help and for words of encouragement from our lovely customers showing their support for both Mouse and I going forward. We have invested a lot into the pub and we never wanted to walk away. If we can get this lease signed, you will have us for a while longer yet. Once it is signed we can move forward with plans we have for our beer garden. We hope to open up the space and make it a much nicer place to sit. Our marquee has served us well and we would never have survived without it during the opening/closing of covid but now is the time to build something out there to give us some cover and more open space for people to enjoy during the summer.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our July quiz, we raised £160.00 towards the pub refurb fund and we are looking forward to the next one which will be on Tuesday 1 August. We are fully booked on each quiz night so be sure to book your team in as soon as possible to guarantee your space. The cost is £4pp to enter and we also offer a light supper of chilli & rice for just £10. Mouse and I will once again be writing the quiz and we hope to see you there.

As a reminder, we were asked to hold a coffee morning in the pub and we do this every Friday. The pub now opens at 10.30am where we serve tea/coffee and a selection of homemade cakes so if you are home on a Friday, why not pop down and join us for a cup of coffee or perhaps grab a few slices of cake to takeaway. We would love to continue to offer this service so please do come and support it if you can.



Thank you all again for your continued support, enjoy the summer months and we hope to see you soon.

*Corinne Cook*

## Save the children

The Plant Sale in May raised £1254.50. These funds have gone to the general fund to help support the amazing projects Save the Children does in the UK and around the world.

One of Save the Children's ambassadors is Dom Joly, a comedian and writer. Dom was born in Beirut and lived in Lebanon in his early life where he first witnessed the work of Save the Children. You may have heard Dom recently on BBC Radio 5 or LBC recounting his three-day visit to Ukraine with Save the Children. As a Save the Children ambassador Dom Joly speaks of his experience in the war-torn country. He spent his time in Mykolaiv and surrounding villages, witnessing the consequences of relentless shelling and missile attacks that have forced thousands of families to flee their homes. Reflecting on his own experiences growing up amid war in Lebanon he speaks powerfully about the children and families he met. He explains how Save the Children are working to combat this through mobile online learning centres, teacher training and cash grants.

I met Dom in London 5 years ago. His passion for Save the Children is infectious. He is determined to ensure that his work as an ambassador is 'hands on', and that the knowledge he gathers for Save the children helps to improve children's lives across the world.

Please help us to continue to raise funds for this work by supporting one or more of our events. These are the dates for your diary: 6 October - Air Fryer event, a social evening with a difference, 18 November - Christmas Fair and 24 December - Carols round the Christmas tree.

*Celia & the Save the Children Team*

## Bike Sale

The Treehouse bike sale at the Wallingford Vehicle Rally and Parade in May raised over £5500 towards the building of our new school. We have a few left over that we are still selling, so the total may creep up! Huge thanks to Mark Brett and his team for finding us space to sell the bikes and to all who donated, sold or bought a bike.

## Book Review

### *I need you to be Harold and other stories*, by Peter Adamson

Never under estimate the appeal of a good title. Local author Peter Adamson's latest collection of short stories is suitably intriguing. In *I need you to be Harold* the narrator has a chance encounter with a young woman who asks him to stand in for her boyfriend at a family occasion. But then the real boyfriend shows up. What happens next is not at all what you might expect.

The crux of a good short story is the unexpected twist at the end and this collection is full of them. *The Unposted Letter* has an especially good one, but also demonstrates Peter's knack for observing human behaviour and his way with words, eg the smug university professor at the lectern whose lingering "on methodologies and variables ... seemed to me not so much scholarly thoroughness as a statistical strip tease, building audience anticipation for the big reveal". In *Up on the Downs* Poet Laureate John Masefield and artist Paul Nash exchange greetings on the Wittenham Clumps, a fictitious but utterly plausible meeting.

In *Wine of Forgiveness* Peter draws on his own experience of working for years with Unicef. His protagonist is a retired administrator looking back over her life and times. She reflects on the achievements of her collaboration long ago with a fictitious scientist called Javid. This part of the story is based on fact. Back in 1980 Unicef's Executive Director devoted the bulk of the organisation's efforts and resources to implementing available low cost solutions to address the causes of disease, poor growth and early death among the world's children. This strategy was inspired by the work of an American paediatrician Jon Rohde, and is estimated to have saved the lives of over 25 million children. The collection includes "Sahel", Peter's first ever short story which won the Royal Society of Literature VS Pritchett Memorial Short Story Prize in 2013, and which spurred him on to take on the challenge of mastering the short story genre. This book is the result.

There are 15 stories in all with plenty of variety and surprises – a perfect companion for summer holiday reading. The book is on sale in the Village Stores.

*Alison Leigh*

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I really must set on record and pay tribute to the Summer Concert in St Agatha's. Alec McGivan has been pulling this annual concert together for many years now, raising the bar each time, but this one was so, so good in every respect, dare I say a 'crowning achievement' with its many references to the King's Coronation, from great choral music to comedy sketches. When have we been so uplifted by great choral music and serious acting one moment, then left helpless with laughter, and then clapped and hollered like the crowd at a rock concert?

St Agatha's with its church room facilities, proved yet again its suitability for hosting many events. It's a lovely venue – and, oh yes, hearing that wonderful historic organ at full blast again was a particular joy for me.

Thanks also to the many 'back-stage' people who worked tirelessly over the whole weekend – having been involved in the Village Fete as well. Neither event would have happened without their expertise, hard work – and time!

*Olive Sutcliffe*

*Letters to the Editor are published in part or in full at the Editor's discretion.*

## Summer Solstice

Have you ever visited Stonehenge to see the sunrise on midsummer day and join the celebrations. The effort of getting there at an unearthly hour and coping with the machinations of the druids have put us off. So we thought that this year we would have our own celebrations of the solstice, but on the Clumps and at local noon, which of course is 4 minutes after Greenwich.

When we reached the Clumps car park there were a few dog walkers cars, but no sign of anyone else celebrating the solstice. We had a few minutes before the target time, so we sat back and enjoyed the view to the Berkshire Downs. It was so beautiful with the different shades of green and not too much of Didcot visible. Then it came to 12.04 and the sun continued on its path through the firmament. The car park was empty but for us and we could not see anyone else on either hill. So we made for home.

Time used to be a local phenomenon until Greenwich Mean Time was established in 1884. What time was the village hall clock set at when it was

installed in 1874? By then the influence of the railways had become important, so it may have been railway time which was used. The railways standardised time in 1847 to prevent the chaos which would have arisen if timetables had to accommodate local time. When the parish was so dependent on agriculture, the passage of the seasons was important and hours and minutes were a prerogative of the gentry and the church. Now we have time available on television, radio and in so many ways that we tend to forget how it must have been in years gone by.

Only when we reached home did we realise that we had made a mistake, forgetting British Summer Time. Local noon was 11.04 and not 12.04!

*John Rodda*

Dear John,

You would have found plenty of company had you climbed to the top of the clumps at cocktail hour. I was one of over 500 revellers who came to support the pop-up bar put on by The Five Little Pigs restaurant. Happily the crowd boosted the coffers by drinking copious sundowners which raised money for the Earth Trust. We had a lot of fun. Sounds like you also had a good time.

By the way, it looks as if none of us was celebrating the solstice at the correct time. According to the Royal Museum of Greenwich the official summer solstice was at 3.58pm BST, 2.58 GMT.

*ED*

## Brightfest 2023

Many thanks to the over 70 villagers and friends who worked tirelessly to put on the Brightfest 23 Charity Music Festival, on Saturday 10 June, now in its 16th year. Except for a cloud burst at 7pm, the day was blessed with good weather and the Brightfest Organising Committee (BOC) is pleased to confirm that it was another record year for funds raised – thank you for your generosity. The more varied selection of music and closing with a DJ plus the provision of a Brightfestider selection of food was welcomed by festival goers. The final amount of charitable funds raised, and distribution, will be announced in the next edition of *The Villager*. Diary note: Brightfest 24 to be held on Saturday 8 June 2024.

*Brightfest Organising Committee (BOC) 2023*

## Brightwell Supporting Refugees

The village has given a lot of generous support to BSR this summer. First there was **Brightfest** - and the money raised from the tea-tent. Then there was Mike Bartlett's play, **Barndance**, featuring a large cast from the village. When Mike first conceived the play, he wanted the proceeds to go to BSR. We are very grateful to him and to Dani Brown, who very generously offered the barn at Small's house to stage the play. Dani and Jonathan also provided the wine and refreshments in the garden; and made the cast and audience extremely welcome. Finally, there was this year's **Summer Concert** at St Agatha's Church. Once again Alex McGivan produced a spectacular evening's musical and literary entertainment with some memorable performances. (Proceeds were split between BSR and St Agatha's Church). Coming up in the autumn we will have a new season of talks at the Village Hall. (Details to follow in the next *Villager*.) We thank everyone for their continuing support.

At the last Trustees meeting we were given a first-hand account of the crisis in Sudan by Elisama Daniels, who was visiting the Shawyers in Brightwell with his wife Eva, from the war-torn country. The conflict has forced over 80,000 people to flee into South Sudan creating the largest refugee crisis in Africa. Through Windle International's Big Give programme, BSR will be pledging £3000 to help establish temporary schools there.

On Saturday 2 September Robin Shawyer, Special Envoy for Windle International, will be going on a sponsored Thames Walk on behalf of the charity. He is happy for anyone to join him ([robin@windle.org.uk](mailto:robin@windle.org.uk)) - watch out for his sponsorship page. Funds raised will go to Windle's work in Africa.

*David Dugan*

## Brightwell Art Club

Term starts 9 September. We meet on Saturday mornings at Brightwell Village Hall between about 10am-12 noon during school terms. New members are welcome. Come along and meet us. The fee is £60 a term, but your first session is free.

At present we have four tutors. This gives us a variety of different styles and interests. Tutors run workshops on a subject or technique requested by members. Whether members choose to follow the workshop or to get on with their own work, the tutors go around and assist members as required. There's a chance to chat to other members during our tea/coffee break.

*Anne Honeyball*

## Wallingford Photographic Club

As we prepare for a new season in September we are gearing up for our annual exhibition, which will be on Saturday 2 September (Bunkfest weekend) in Wallingford town centre: St Mary-le-More Church, just off the Market Place. We will be displaying some of our best work, from 10am-5pm, and will be keen to introduce the club to any visitors or curious passers-by, as well as discussing local photography spots, equipment; anything really! Pop by for a drink and a chat.

Then we return for a new season: visit or join our informal and inclusive group of enthusiasts and amateurs as we start our new weekly programme of talks, presentations, competitions and practical sessions. We discuss a wide range of topics- not just technical- including getting feedback on your photos if you're keen to show them. We meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm at Crowmarsh Pavilion, and we'll have a handful of sessions online where we make the most of speakers from far away. Full info on our website ([wallingfordphoto.club](http://wallingfordphoto.club)).

*Phil Swarbrick*

## WANTED Volunteers

The Palliative Care Bereavement Support Service are recruiting bereavement volunteers and volunteer companions to assist at Sobell House Hospice Oxford and Katherine House Hospice Reading. Sobell House also needs volunteer drivers and volunteers to support the Inpatient unit. Training is provided. Contact [PallcareVolunteerServices@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PallcareVolunteerServices@ouh.nhs.uk) or ring 01865 225994 or 225868.

Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice is looking for volunteer advisers and IT specialists to work in our friendly offices in Abingdon, Didcot, Henley or Thame.

We advise on a broad range of topics including debt management, benefits, employment, housing and relationship issues. After comprehensive training advisers will be able to talk to clients in person or via the telephone or webchat. To apply, please follow this link:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/>

Or, if you would like to discuss these volunteering roles, please email: [recruitment@osavcab.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@osavcab.org.uk) and one of our team will contact you.

## What's On at Wallingford Museum

Every Wednesday during the school holidays, 2-4pm, the Museum is offering families a pop in crafty activity, from weaving houses to making a medieval style tile, suitable for ages 5 plus. Please note normal admission charges apply. <https://www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk/events>.

**Sunday 3 September**, during Bunkfest, the museum is offering a free special guided walk around the town, starting at 11am from the Museum. No booking is necessary but donations welcome.

**Agatha Christie** weekend is fast approaching 8-10 September. See Museum website for both BunkFest and Agatha Christie weekend.

**Fabulous Fossils**, Saturday 23 September. See and handle fossils from Oxfordshire and around the world with the Oxfordshire Geology Trust. Make your own Dino-Mask, colour dinosaur pictures, and handle dinosaur teeth, claws and bones. £2 'Lucky dip' for a 60 to 300 million year old fossil! Bring along your own fossils for our experts to identify. **Get your FREE event tickets soon for budding palaeontologists in your family.** Booking essential

**The 2003 House Detectives:** this history behind the door exhibition continues to be popular. The houses in this exhibition have been chosen to reflect the changing development and use of houses in Wallingford, from the medieval period to the 20th century.

## The Corn Exchange, Wallingford

### Cinema:

All regular performances normally start at 7:30pm with subtitled films on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 2:30pm. Tickets £10 adults/£5 for U15s. (Closed 6-20 August for refurbishment) [www.cornexchange.org.uk](http://www.cornexchange.org.uk).

28 July-5 August	Oppenheimer (12A)
21-22 & 24 August	Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Part 1 (12A)
23 August (Wed)	Don Quixote with Rudolf Nureyev (U)
25-27 August	Barbie (12A)

### Coming Soon:

1-2 September	Bunkfest – free events in the auditorium & foyer
8 September	Mark Aldridge, "Hercule Poirot, A Life in Crime"
9 September	Lucy Worsley "Agatha Christie - a very elusive woman"
20 September	'Das Rheingold' - The Royal Opera screening
30 September	Short Drag Roger singing traditional sea shanties

## VILLAGE DIARY

---

### August

1	Red Lion Pub Quiz	7pm start
8	WI Milestone Museum visit – anyone wishing to come, contact <a href="mailto:brightwellcumsotwellwi@gmail.com">brightwellcumsotwellwi@gmail.com</a>	
20	Jazz Jam at the Red Lion	6.30pm

### September

1-3	Wallingford Bunkfest – various activities & venues ( <a href="http://bunkfest.co.uk">bunkfest.co.uk</a> )	
2	Shawyer/Windle Sponsored Thames Walk Oxford to BcS <a href="mailto:robin@windle.org.uk">robin@windle.org.uk</a>	
5	Red Lion pub quiz	7pm start
16	Cholsey Repair Cafe	
24	Wheelyfest (Hithercroft Sports Park)	2-9pm
29	Scouts door to door collection for Food Bank	From 6pm
30	Community Association Jumble Sale	Pavilion 2-4.30pm

### Advance Notice

Save the Children events:

- 6 October – Air Fryer event,
- 18 November - Christmas Fair
- 24 December - Carols round the Christmas tree

### Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursdays 3 & 17 August
	<b>Friday 1</b> , Thursdays 14 & 28 September
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 10 & 24 August
	Thursdays 7 & 21 September

### Village website

For more information about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell visit the village website: [www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk](http://www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk).