

Contents

Editorial	2
Village Stores & Post Office	3
Parish Council News	3-5
BcS Primary School	5
Meet Mike Bartlett	6-9
St Agatha's & St James'	9-10
Stewart Village Hall	10-11
The Red Lion	11
Fete Flower & Produce Show results	12-14
Distributing The Villager	15
BcS Environment Group	15-16
Cricket	16
Brightwell Toddlers	17
BcS WI	17-18
Save the Children	18
Village Lunch Club	18
Brightwell Supporting Refugees	19
Brightwell Preschool	19
Community Association	20
Brightwell Art Club	20
A modern twist on 'Happy Ever After'	21-22
The Swan Allotments	22
Summer Reading Challenge / Summer at the Earth Trust	23
Cholsey Repair Club / Wallingford Photographic Club	23
Village Diary	24

Editor: Alison Leigh 07983 752 454 (thevillagerbcs@gmail.com)

Chairman: Anne Brooker 835109

Secretary: Angela Lewis

Treasurer: Kat Southwell

Advertising: Martin Dix 07767 864735

Assembly: Shena Luck

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 2025. *The Villager* is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village.

Editorial

A village without a shop is like a pub with no beer. Luckily Brightwell need not worry on either count. The village shop and post office continue to open seven days a week and provides a variety of produce and services carefully chosen to accommodate local tastes. And we all know who we have to thank: Celia Collett, the 2025 winner of the *Plunkett Community Contribution Award*. The *Plunkett Awards* celebrate the outstanding achievements of community-owned businesses and the dedicated and inspiring individuals who make them happen. Congratulations Celia – so well deserved. See page 3.

Meanwhile the Red Lion goes from strength to strength thanks to the boundless energy of another dynamic lady, Corinne Cook. See page 11 for the ever-expanding programme of events at the Red Lion.

For me one of the most moving and memorable village events ever was *Barndance*, Mike Bartlett's play that he wrote a couple of years ago for the village, about the village and starring the villagers. Mike is one of the UK's best known and most prolific playwrights for stage and television; King Charles III, The 47th, Dr Foster and many *many* other award-winning works too numerous to mention. For the last 11 years he and his wife Clare and their three children have lived in Brightwell. I caught up with him recently. See pages 6-9.

One of the many not to be missed village events is the annual fete. Our cover photo is of Florence Gordon with her winning model of Stick Man. The flower and produce show is always a highlight, but this year was especially notable for the quality of the entries to the Creative Writing section. Entries were invited on the theme of a modern take on an old fairy tale. The winning stories are all so entertaining that we've decided to publish them as a series here in *The Villager*. First prize went to Jack and the Beanstalk by Josephine Butterfield (adult section) and Little Red by Audrey Bartlett (junior section), clearly a chip off the old block. See pages 21-22. Toby Egan's interview with his grandpa who keeps bees also won a first prize. You can read that in a future edition.

By the time you read this, the inevitable hosepipe ban will be upon us. Just as well it didn't happen before the fete. Imagine how shrivelled all that glorious produce might have been. May the sun continue to shine for us during the summer holidays.

Alison Leigh

The Village Stores and Post Office

I am truly very gratefully to all those who voted for me in the finals of the 'Community Contribution' Plunkett UK award, and to Anne Browell for nominating me in the first place and going to great lengths to get the votes!

The awards took place in the library of the Royal Society of Chemistry, London. I invited Anna to come with me; it was fitting that she should join me as Anna has been with me on the Management Committee for over 15 years. She is the book keeper, we share the ordering of goods and she helps in the shop and Post Office.

On the awards day, it was wonderful to be with so many other volunteers from Community businesses from around the UK, all with the same shared values and goals, representing the communities we love. It was just a shame there could only be one winner from each category, the room was full of truly inspirational people.

We are so lucky to have such a wonderful shop and Post Office team, Management Committee, volunteers and staff; we all work together tirelessly to keep the services thriving and our customers happy. There is always a warm welcome for anyone who would like to join our friendly team. The time you give can always be tailored to suit your life and circumstances - come in and give it a go.

Celia Collett

Parish Council News

New Councillor

First up we welcome Chris Hollebone onto the council. Chris lives up at Sires Hill which is in the Parish of Brightwell cum Sotwell. He has been involved in community projects for some time, most notably being a key part of the traffic calming signage on Sires Hill. We are delighted he has joined our merry band.

Village Maintenance

It is worth remembering that looking after and maintaining our village is not just the job of the nine volunteers on the Parish Council. We do our best but it

is important that everyone is involved to keep it vibrant and thriving. We cannot just rely on the older people in the village. It can be good fun to get involved, especially if you're doing it with your family and friends. Children too. A case in point is the weeding around the lavender plants in the new area of car park behind the shop. This is a job that will need doing regularly for the first couple of years until the lavender gets established, so please take a look while visiting the shop and feel free to pull up a weed or two while there. Thank you to the people who stepped up and finished the weeding this week, it looks great.

Hedges

Can we also ask that if your boundary hedge borders a footpath or lane, please cut it back so that the way is clear for walkers, prams and cars. The Croft path verges have now been cut, sorry for the delay, but there are a few hedges that are making it quite difficult to get past. As always, if you see something that you think needs the attention of the council please mail Nettie, the Parish Clerk on bcsparishcouncil@googlemail.com and she will alert the appropriate councillor.

Joining the Parish Council

We were disappointed that our call for new Parish Councillors had very little support (thank you to those who did show interest), but more importantly there were no women. It would be a very strange state of affairs if after the election we have a totally male council. There is another vacancy on the council arising soon. Please think about joining- Anyone is welcome to come to the meetings, as an observer, on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Church room to get an idea of what the role entails but it is important to know that, although the role involves more than just attending a meeting once a month, if all the councillors pull their weight it doesn't have to be too onerous and can be really interesting and fulfilling.

Grants

There is a small pot of money which the parish council can give out as a grant for suitable village projects.

Planning

If you are planning a building project it is a good idea to discuss with someone on the planning team of the council for ideas of what is and is not likely to get permission as this can save time and money.

Speed Awareness

The Community Speed Awareness scheme is still moving forward, albeit slowly. We have a team now and are just waiting for the speed monitoring device training. If anyone want to join the team let us know as the more people we have the less onerous the job.

Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Council

Brightwell cum Sotwell Primary School

What a fabulous year it's been at Brightwell Primary School. As another academic year comes to a close, we're looking back with pride on all the wonderful learning opportunities the children have embraced. From the classroom to the great outdoors, it's been a year filled with discovery, creativity and growth. Our pupils have worked exceptionally hard throughout the year and have made super progress; they have so much to be proud of.

One of the highlights of the summer term was our ever-popular Sports Day, which was full of energy, teamwork, and plenty of cheering from the side lines. It was lovely to see so many families come together for the picnic afterwards, enjoying the sunshine and celebrating the children's efforts. Another memorable moment was Discovery Class's first residential trip to Hill End outdoor education centre – a real adventure that supported their independence and resilience in so many ways. They returned with big smiles, tired legs and lots of stories to tell and hopefully are now ready to take on the bigger challenge of Yenworthy next year.

We're saying a fond farewell to our brilliant Year 6 pupils who have been preparing for their move to secondary school, visiting their new settings and getting excited (and maybe a little nervous) about the next step in their learning journey. They've ended their time with us in style, putting on a fabulous performance of *Bugsy Malone* and celebrating at their Hawaiian-themed party. What a send-off!

Meanwhile, the rest of the school have spent time with their new teachers for September. These transition sessions help everyone feel confident and comfortable for the new term ahead. The final days of term included a Sponsored Walk around Wittenham Clumps alongside friends from Wallingford School and Crowmarsh Primary – a great way to come together as a wider community. It's been a busy, brilliant year – now it's time for a well-earned rest before we go again in September. What a fabulous year it's been at Brightwell Primary School.

Sue Potts, Head Teacher

Meet Mike Bartlett, playwright

Mike Bartlett grew up in an academic household in Abingdon, "lots of books and lots of robust discussions" and attended Abingdon School where the drama teachers encouraged the pupils to put on their own plays. After



studying English and Theatre Studies at Leeds he expected to walk into a job as a director. But it didn't gel, so he started writing. His big break came when his first play was picked up by the BBC. It explored issues of bullying in the armed forces and standing up for integrity through the story of his own grandfather who was a conscientious objector in WW2.

I had a call from a brilliant radio producer called Claire Grove, who said we might want to do this on the radio. And then it was one of those amazing moments where she said, who do you see in the main part? And I said, not him but someone like Richard Briers. Oh, she said, I've worked with Richard. We'll give him a call. And then he ended up doing it. And then June Whitfield ended up playing the older woman. So for my first play, I had this amazing cast. It was an incredible experience.

Earlier this year Mike's play Unicorn played at London's Garrick Theatre. On the face of it, it is about a middle-aged couple looking to spice up their flagging sex life but as one reviewer put it "this spicy premise grows into a profound meditation on relationships, aging, honesty and our capacity to change".

It seems like a play about threesomes, but really it's a play about why we have relationships at all. I think there's been a narrative for a long time that relationships with three people are either funny or simply doomed. I wasn't interested in either of those. I wanted to write a play to explore if it could work, and how would it work. What would be the benefits of it working, but also what would be the difficulties.

How does he go about writing a play?

It normally begins with some light research. Often it'll be books. I'll go back to books I've already read, or I'll read something on the subject. I'll get to the point where I feel I've done enough, because there's a danger if you do too much that you feel responsible to the research, and your play ends up full of facts and interesting things you found, and literally no drama or life, it gets swamped. Then sometimes I just start by writing dialogue; I just type, type, type, without putting the character's name next to it. Either I'm following a

plan roughly with that, or I'm improvising what they're saying and listening to it, trying to work out where it's going and asking what is it telling me? The first scene in Unicorn is between an older woman and a younger student that she's teaching. In that scene I can tell that I'm exploring in the writing what the play is going to be about. And then, by the end, I realize that she's got a husband, but she really fancies this young woman. And then you go, well, good - we're getting into the story!

Sometimes, as I'm writing, the characters do things in the scene that surprise me and it ruins my plan. But this is what you want, because what you're trying to do is get them to seem like they have a life and autonomy of their own.

Other times I'll plan the whole play in a notebook with spider diagrams and little character sketches, and just keep redrafting the plan for a long time, like with King Charles III, because it was in the form of a Shakespeare play, written in iambic pentameter so I knew it needed thinking about in more detail than usual - you don't want to do too much rewriting!

King Charles III opened in 2014 when Charles was still Prince of Wales. It explores an imagined future constitutional crisis, King Charles defying Parliament by refusing to sign off on a bill limiting press freedom and ultimately being forced by his son to abdicate. Why did he choose to write in iambic pentameter?

Because it was a tragedy, I guess. As a teenager, I always thought it was remarkable that the monarch could subvert the whole democratic process. At that time Charles was seen as more of a sort of radical with strong opinions, which begged the question - would he really be able to keep his mouth shut once he got into power? It's also the Shakespearean/Greek archetype, the idea of a king who's waited his entire life and knows he's only going to get a few years to make an impact. I thought, there's something really fascinating about that.

Do we know what Charles thought of the play?

Tim Piggott Smith, who played Charles, said that at some point during the first run a message came through from the palace. "His Royal Highness doesn't wear a wedding ring". Tim always took that as a sort of quiet blessing.

In 2023 Mike wrote Barndance, a play specially written for the village. What makes it special?

The great thing about writing for a specific space like that, and also a community, is that it revels in the specific - the people on stage are the same as the people in the audience. Everyone knows each other, so it's a completely

different vernacular of writing and you feel that while anyone can come and see it, actually, this is a community talking amongst itself. One of the great things about it was people coming up to me going, for instance "oh, when I was six I did Brownies in this barn". And you realize this barn meant so much to so many people, and they all had historical experiences and connections with it.

It was partly the appeal of this community that drew Mike and Clare to live in Brightwell.

I remember when we first arrived at that house, there were two boys with their bikes outside the front, and they were, I don't know, 14 or 15. And we just had our one son who was 18 months. You start to imagine living there and now our son is eleven, and he's outside the front of the house on a bike. It is what you imagined. I suppose we were also thinking what an amazing place to grow up and have a community. A village community is something that was entirely new for me. We both need a bit of romance about a place and the whole village gives so much of that. It's sort of full of stories, from the past, but also, potential futures.

When he's not writing plays he loves gardening.

I become completely absorbed. I think that's partly why I enjoy it; the rest of the time, I'm always half thinking about ideas. When you're practically involved with your hands, you can't.

If you could change anything in the world at the moment, what would it be?

I would have governments regulate the Internet. At the moment, there's barely any regulation, and I think it's doing untold damage to everybody's lives, the planet, democracy. The technology is moving so fast, and the governments are so far behind. I think it's weird that when you say "regulate the Internet" people sometimes become a little uneasy. But we regulated newspapers. We regulated television, we've regulated cigarettes, we've regulated every new technology. When these things first appear it's free-for-all but then we realise the dangers and we regulate it. That hasn't happened yet for the Internet but we need to do it because otherwise we're not protecting our children, we're not protecting each other and we're not democratically in control of our lives, which is the whole point of government.

Is drama a better vehicle than documentaries for exploring the issues of our times?

It's a really good question. I love great documentaries. They can do a lot of things. They can move you, and they can inform. For instance, for me, if a

play about climate change simply existed to inform the audience of the causes and dangers then it might well be more effective to make an excellent documentary. But plays can look at subject in many dimensions, engage our imaginations and help us to make unexpected connections, and considered complex issues where there's no clear answer.

I've got a play that's going to come on soon. And it's called Juniper Blood. It's set on an Oxfordshire farm and it's about soil, food production and the environment. And it's full of questions, I don't know the answer to. For instance: the carbon impact of eating beef from a cow that's brought up in a field next to your house grass fed for years far exceeds eating quicker-grown beef raised in less-good conditions shipped plastic-wrapped from South America. So what's the right thing to do? The play is full of questions where it's more complicated than we think.

How does he cope with bad reviews?

Sometimes I agree with them! I've written plays that I didn't think worked. And I've had plays I thought were alright, but the production didn't quite get there. But I think you always want to take a risk. I want to make work I've not made before. The nature of that is that I'm not always going to get it right, but hopefully, even if I get it wrong, it's interesting.

As a writer you're always full of doubt. I think you have to be because what's the alternative? That you rest on your laurels rather than interrogating something. You should always be pushing yourself in some way.

Alison Leigh

(Juniper Blood is on at the Donmar Warehouse from 16 August to 4 October).

St Agatha's & St James'

The summer school holidays are now here, a time for family relaxation and activities. I well remember the difficulties of keeping children entertained during those weeks, and while we will be praying for fine days during the holidays we will also be praying for some much needed rain this year. Our Saviour Jesus spent a lot of his time travelling around the countryside, gathering crowds of people as he went and telling them the good news of God's love for them. If you want to find out more, come and join us for 'Picnic Praise' at our family service on **Sunday 3 August at 12.30pm, St Agatha's**. We hope this will happen outside, so bring your picnic, a rug to sit

on, or if you prefer chairs will be available, and join us to thank God for our lovely village and the food we will eat.

From the beginning of September and into early October the Church celebrates the season of Creationtide. At our family service on **7 September at 9.30am** we hope to be at Wellsprings again, weather permitting, to give thanks for the precious gift of water, without which no life can exist.

Until a new team vicar is appointed there may be some Sundays when there are no services in Brightwell. Details of all services are on the gate at St Agatha's and the notice board at 2 Fairthorne Memorial, next to the Village Hall. Have a lovely summer and I hope you will come and join us here and at our team churches in Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford. All are welcome.

Rev. Janice - Associate Priest

Stewart Village Hall

Why have you decorated the village hall? is the question we have been asked several times over the past few weeks! Firstly, thank you for your patience while this work was going on; we are sorry if it caused you any disruption, but we believe it is essential to keep the hall as an attractive venue while the planning for the restoration project goes ahead. We've literally 'painted over the cracks', purely to improve the aesthetics of the hall and make sure we not only retain existing users but attract new ones. We were very lucky to be awarded a grant to help cover most of the costs of this work.

The other work carried out in and around the Hall over the past few weeks were the 'intrusive surveys'. These involved digging pits outside the hall, lifting some of the floor, going up into the ceiling etc. Again, apologies if this work caused disruption for you, but it was essential to get this work done to allow the contractor to assess the true condition of the building and the scale of the issues. We are awaiting full reports, but first indications are confirming our fears that the fabric of the building needs serious work carried out if we want to save it for future generations. We will share more information when the reports are complete.

It being holiday time, many of the regular activities in the hall take a break over the summer months so availability increases. If you are planning an event and unexpected rain is forecast or if you want to find a cool space as a reprieve from the heatwave being forecast, please do get in touch as the hall may well be available at short notice.

Finally, thank you to all who take part in the Clock Tower Lottery; as

well as bringing in much needed income, this helps to show support from our community and strengthens our case when we apply for grants. As well as supporting the hall you have the chance to win cash prizes: Clare, who won 1st prize in the June draw said *'What fantastic news and completely unexpected. Such a great cause, delighted to be supporting the clock tower fundraising.'* If you haven't already joined in, please do it today, go to www.stewartvillagehall.org.uk/clock-tower-lottery.html.

If you have any comments, questions, or feedback you can use the contact us page on the Hall website, pop a comment in the mailbox at the rear of the Hall, speak to any Trustee or email info@stewartvillagehall.org.uk.

Annette Kilworth

The Red Lion

Wow, what a summer it has been so far here at The Red Lion! The temperatures have soared, the courtyard has been busy and we've had live music galore and a lot more planned whilst the nights are still great!

We know how much you enjoy live music so please check out the diary dates at the back and get the dates marked on your calendar! We have a surprise gig booked for Friday 22 August with details being announced soon and on the Sunday for the bank holiday, we have a great Rock n Roll band called 'Move It' who will be performing for you after the bumper bank holiday meat draw so be sure to arrive before 6pm to get your tickets. We also plan to have live music every Sunday in September.

In July we had the inaugural Scottish music night which was organised by Sue Robson. We had around a dozen musicians show up with their instruments and it really was a fantastic night with plenty of people sitting back and listening. If you'd like to take part or just come and watch, they will be here every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 7.30-9.30pm and they would love to see you. It's more of a get together than a performance and we really think it could grow to be something really big on the local music scene.

I know this is a long way off but I want to get the date in your diary now for this year's Christmas Market Day. It was a huge success last year with 15 stall holders here and with over 200 people on the day buying. This year it'll be Saturday 15 November. I will message out for stall holders soon but if you are in the village and would like to be a part of it, please email me at the pub on info@theredlionbrightwell.co.uk to register your interest early.

Corinne, Mouse and Ruby

Fete results

The Chilton Cup (best exhibit in the fruit & vegetable classes)	India Metcalfe
The Win Glendenning Memorial Salver (best flower arranging entry)	Gina Davis
The Talbot Rose Bowl (best rose exhibit)	James Davys
The Talbot Cup (awarded for most points in show)	John Arbuckle
The Joan Sheard Cup (for the best junior entry in an adult class)	Joseph Bartlett
Junior Trophies	(9-12) Beatrice Gordon (5-8) Florence Gordon
The Swan Allotments Cup (for most improved allotment)	Phil Skipp
The Sally Dugan Cup (for creative writing)	Josephine Butterfield Audrey Bartlett
The Bakers Bowl (for the most points won in cookery)	Alison Hedges Caitriona Woolhouse
Best Entry in Show - £10 Amazon Voucher (judged by popular vote)	Florence Gordon

Distributing *The Villager*

It takes a small army to produce *The Villager*, from content, finance and advertising to printing and then assembly. After the 700 or so copies are collated, they are distributed in Brightwell, Sotwell, Mackney, Sires Hill and parts of Shillingford and Wallingford. Huge thanks to Alison Wood for the Sotwell and Wallingford distribution management, and this band of folks who handle the final deliveries to your door, six times a year, regardless of the weather: Adrian M, Allan H, Alison H, Amanda P, Betty P, Clare L, Donna H, Graham G, Helen F, Janet S, Jennie M, Jim H, Josie M, Lesley D, Liz M, Margaret S, Mike D, Nick, Patricia D, Rob A, Rosemary D, Rosemary G, Sarah M, Sarah P, Sarah W, Shena L, Sophie S, Sue H, another Sue H and Viv M.

Circumstances also sometimes dictate that people have to drop from this rota, so we have distribution vacancies in Church Lane (11 copies) and Sotwell Street (22 copies). If you can help, please call me on 07754 690264. Thanks,

Tony Guntrip

BcS Environment Group

In early July we had a stand at the Village Fete where we had a number of inquiries about the Environment Group and how to join. Given the number of new residents it would be worth briefly giving some background.

The Group was formed in 1995 in response to the call in AGENDA 21 from the 1992 Earth Summit to act locally. Everyone who lives in the parish is automatically a member. There is no subscription and many activities are at no or little cost although we do seek grants for some of the work.

The first main project was the preparation of the Parish Conservation Plan which was published in 1998 and revised in 2013. This helped inform the Community Led Parish Plan 2014 – 2024 which in turn informed the Neighbourhood Plan. The Group has taken on practical projects to improve the village environment, in particular the management of the Millennium Wood and the creation and subsequent management of the Swan Stream and Swan Wood., including awareness raising, development of practical skills, training, recording and monitoring.

We are all fortunate to live in a Parish which has a rich variety of landscapes and habitats and part of which is designated as a National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). We see that the work to raise awareness, especially of the young, through engagement with

the surroundings and ongoing monitoring is important. If you would like to be involved, please contact Steve Capel-Davies (scapeldavies@gmail.com).

Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm was for May, 18.3mm and June, 30.9mm. These continue the pattern of recent months and represent only 33% and 63% of the 1999 to 2012 averages for Highlands Farm. When combined with the March and April figures of 6.1mm and 11.8mm respectively it is clear that we are in an extremely dry spell. Rainfall in the three months to May totalled only 36.2mm. which is only 25% of the average! A line of intense thunderstorms occurred in the area in the middle of May but the village missed out despite very threatening skies while just to the north were torrential downpours. It is interesting how often storms seem to track along the Berkshire downs or the Chilterns and bypass here.

Looking at the Met Office and Environment Agency reports our local area seems to have been drier than the wider area with the Thames area, for the three months to May, having 41% of average rainfall making it the second lowest three months since records began in 1871. The mean daily maximum temperature was about 3degC warmer for both months than the 1991 – 2020 average for the area with sunshine some 30% higher than average.

Steve Capel-Davies

Cricket

With the school term breaking up, the main part of our youth cricket program draws to a close. This year the club has delivered cricket to 99 children with over 2000 hours of playing or training over 30 matches and with one of our U11 teams undefeated all season and the U13s team winning all but one of its fixtures. The children have been brilliant. A massive amount of credit must go to the coaching team led by Alex Pearmain, supported ably by Duncan, Chris, Jonathan and many more. We also have to thank Tony Windsor and Steve Metcalfe for all the work they have done preparing some excellent wickets in very dry conditions. The men's team have a handful of fixtures remaining and have enjoyed some very close matches in the last few weeks, including our annual fixture against Moreton, played since 1858, which was lost by a mere 30 runs.

The arrival of our new deck chairs has been most welcome by parents and supporters and we would encourage more of you to enjoy some sunny cricket lounging at the Rec whilst we finish out the season.

Chris Benarr

Brightwell Toddlers

It's hard to believe that another academic year has come to an end, and so too has another wonderful year of Brightwell Toddler Group. Some highlights of our summer term included running our stall at the village fete, where we spent a very busy couple of hours face painting. We also had a lot of fun for our end of term summer party. We wished farewell and good luck to some of the children who have been coming to toddler group since they were babies and now will be starting school.

Our group always takes a break over the school summer holidays, as we run in term time only, but we will be back at the start of September for a new term. We will also have a new group of volunteers running the group from September! I'd like to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of the existing volunteers who have kept our group running, and also a big thank you to those who have offered to take over from us. It's a very special community of parents and carers who are so willing to work together to keep Brightwell Toddlers going each week.

Our group runs every Thursday morning during term time 09.15-11am and is suitable for children aged 0-5. The cost is £3.50 cash or £4 online per session. We can be contacted at brightwelltoddlers@gmail.com or via our Facebook page @[brightwelltoddlers](https://www.facebook.com/brightwelltoddlers).

Emily Paton Smith

Brightwell cum Sotwell WI

In May we started the evening viewing a short film how to use a defibrillator. There are three located throughout the village ie. the Village Hall, the red phone box in the High Road and the Jubilee Pavillion. This was followed by a talk about the amazing work by the Thames Valley Air Ambulance when we heard TVAA crews have attended over 35,000 incidents during the last 25 years, each averaging £2,300 per mission. As a guideline figure, they receive 9 call outs to urgent care and aftercare situations a day. Interestingly, as well as using the helicopters for remote areas they also have 'critical care response vehicles' for other locations unsuitable for helicopters. All the teams include a doctor and paramedic able to bring the skills and expertise of a hospital to the scene of an emergency. They not only attend to emergencies but follow up with essential emotional support for survivors of critical incidents.

Moving on to sunny June, our members relaxed for a summer party in Anne Brooker's lovely garden. Thank you, Anne, for hosting. At the Brightwell Summer Fete in July, the WI once again provided a stall brimming with

produce and plants plus the ever-popular Jarbola for the children. On 8 July, Sarah Turton, a Medicinal Herbalist, introduced us to 'Medicinal Herbalism and Iridology'.

We meet every second Tuesday at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Guests welcome. 9 September - 'Vineyard in the Village', a talk by Charlotte Wood; 25 September - Christopher Wren's Oxford', a walk with Lizzi Rowe; 14 October - 'Kelmscott Manor', a talk by Robert Seatter. No meeting in August.

Karin Matthews

Save The Children

June was a very successful fundraising month for our branch. We ran the tea tent for Brightfest. We are really grateful to all the lovely people who donated the cakes. Despite the weather, everyone enjoyed the day in true British style!

At the end of June we held the 'Ball in the Hall' which raised an amazing £6,606.00. Thank you to all those people that attend and made it a very enjoyable evening. Well done to Sue, Corinne, Lucy and the team for organising such a special and successful event.

Myself and Sue Lovegrove (our Treasurer) attended a volunteers' day at Save the Children HQ in London on 5 June. It was a very emotional day as we were given reports on the work being done in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and the ongoing work Save the Children does in the UK. Also, updates on some of the amazing work which is happening in other countries around the world in the most difficult and heart rendering circumstances.

Save the Children has been active in the UK since 1926. Right now grants are provided to buy household essentials, such as a cooker, a cot, a desk to do homework etc, supermarket vouchers for food, children's activity packs, workshops to build parents confidence in supporting their child's learning and development at home, and partnering with other children's charities to deliver real improvements to children's lives. The money we raise as a branch goes to help all these things and many more programs around the world.

Celia & the local Save the Children Team

Village Lunch Club

Our next lunch is on Tuesday 9 September, 12.15 in the Village Hall, £5. If you have not already booked and would like to join us, please contact Eastlyn Horsfield, 01491 832014 or Sue Collett, 01491 836617.

Brightwell Supporting Refugees

George Potter, Maff Potts and friends will be playing some great jazz the evening of Friday 3 October to get our feet tapping. If it is anything like the last time they put on an evening for us it will be a brilliant event not to be missed! Friday 3 October at 7.30pm in Brightwell Village Hall - save the date!

The BSR Trustees

Brightwell Preschool

You may have heard the excitement when the children blasted out their favourite tractor song whilst bouncing our way down to Sherwood Farm on the tractor trailer this summer. It was very very loud. In contrast, they were very very quiet when they greeted the beautiful cows with their long eye-lashes and big pink tongues, which by the way, like licking people - a lot. The grain store was a huge hit, hopefully the cows won't find a stray welly in their feed this year, but it's a possibility. The children will be talking about their visit for years to come - thank you Patricia, Julie and the team for organising such a great trip. This is what community is all about!

Talking of community, Brightwell Primary School has been fantastic at letting our little ones explore their soon-to-be new classroom and outdoor area over the summer term, with visits each week and meetings with the teachers. It has been a funny-old term with the anxieties of upcoming change and excitement for new adventures for those staying and those leaving. The Colour Monster book has helped the children to share their feelings, with the ethos that all emotions are good and it's okay if you need some help to process them. We will definitely be feeling blue (sad) to say goodbye to the children and their families as they move on to new schools, but we will be feeling yellow (happy) once we see the children running around having fun in September.

Our community has also provided opportunities for us to sow the seeds for the love of nature in the children, tend to their growth and watch them mature into knowledgeable, confident and caring citizens of nature. Before moving to school, they have learnt to: keep safe, keep each other safe, take care of nature, enjoy and notice the changes of the season, patterns in nature, take care of living things, vocabulary to describe nature, identify specific species of animal, trees and plants. This list is not exhaustive, it is just the start of their journey for the adventures and challenges ahead. We will look forward to September when we can sow some new seeds.

Natasha Hillier, Manager

Community Association

We were delighted that so many people - despite the occasional shower- came and joined us in the afternoon sunshine for our annual Village Fete on 5 July. After expenses the fete raised over £4700; the attendance was approximately 650 – a fantastic result! It was wonderful to be able to welcome so many new residents who have joined our community. We are extremely grateful to Luke and Emma Clancey for allowing us to hold the event in their lovely garden at Moreton House and for being such gracious and welcoming hosts. A big thank you also to everybody who came, enjoyed and supported us on such a lovely afternoon, and to the army of hard working, dedicated volunteers who set up the stalls, ran them and cleared up afterwards

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 or tacrogerson@gmail.com. Applications must be submitted by 28 August 2025 to be considered for a grant.

Due to popular demand we will be running a Jumble Sale on **5 October** at the Pavilion in Mackney Lane, **2-4 30pm**. 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.

James Davys

Brightwell Art Club

Our new term starts on 30 August and runs through to 22 November with a break on 25 October for half-term. We meet on Saturday mornings, at the Brightwell Village Hall from 10am to 12 noon. Each art session is friendly and relaxed, where members either follow a tutor-led workshop, or develop their own work, with as much or as little advice from the tutor as they want/need. If you'd like to join us, or learn more about the Club, please email brightwellart@gmail.com or join us for a free first session on a Saturday during our term time. Our fee per term is £65.

This year, the Club will be holding its 30th Annual Art Exhibition on Saturday, 29 November. Look out for more information around the village closer to the day.

Sunita Sarkar

A modern twist on 'Happy Ever After'

Jack and the Beanstalk

Jack scrambled and slid down the twisted beanstalk, clutching the golden egg – but the giant wasn't far behind; despite his size he was amazingly nimble.

Just as the beanstalk began to wobble the giant pulled out his phone.

“Wait!” he yelled. “I was just gonna offer you a sponsorship deal!”

Jack froze “A what?”

“You stole my goose and harp. But you’ve got followers, kid. We could go viral. ‘The Giant & Jack Show’. Think TikTok. Think merch”

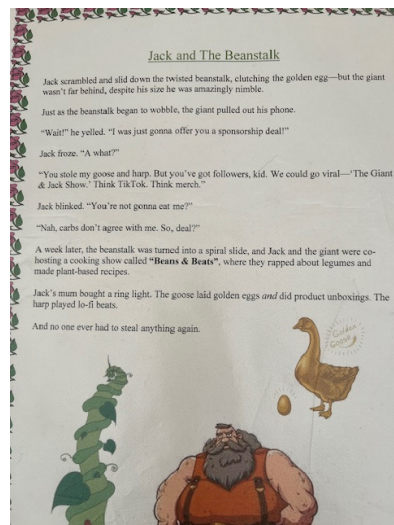
Jack blinked. “You’re not gonna eat me?”

“Nah, carbs don’t agree with me. So, deal?”

A week later the beanstalk was turned into a spiral slide, and Jack and the Giant were co-hosting a cooking show called “Beans & Beats” where they rapped about legumes and made plant-based recipes.

Jac’s mum bought a ring light. The goose laid golden eggs *and* did product unboxings. The harp played lo-fi beats.

And no one ever had to steal anything again.



*Josephine Butterfield, Winner,
Sally Dugan Cup for Creative Writing*

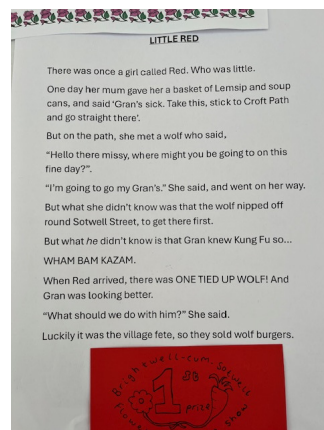
Little Red

There was once a girl called Red. Who was little. One day her mother gave her a basket of Lemsip and soup cans and said “Gran’s sick. Take this, stick to Croft Path and go straight there”.

But on the path she met a wolf who said “Hello there missy, where might you be going on this fine day?”

“I’m going to my Gran’s” she said, and went on her way.

But what she didn’t know was that the wolf nipped off round Sotwell St to get there first.



*Phil Skipp, Winner
Swan Allotments Cup for the most improved allotment*

But what *he* didn’t know was that Gran knew Kung Fu so...

WHAM BAM KAZAM

When Red arrived there was ONE TIED UP WOLF. And gran was looking better.

“What should we do with him?” she said.

Luckily it was the village fete so they sold wolf burgers.

*Audrey Bartlett, Winner (Junior)
Sally Dugan Cup for Creative Writing*

The Swan Allotments

Many plot holders have set aside a corner of their ground for a plant that is often taken for granted but invariably produces a reliable and tasty crop – rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*). Despite being a vegetable, rhubarb is considered one of the earliest fruits of the year, its long red stalks being available to pull from April through to late summer. However, ‘forced’ rhubarb can be ready as early as March. Never eat the leaves, only the stems, as the leaves contain oxalic acid which can cause serious health problems if eaten.

Originally cultivated as a medicinal plant in China and Russia over 2000 years ago, rhubarb’s popularity in Britain was boosted in the 18th century by the falling price of sugar, a common means of offsetting rhubarb’s tartness. The easiest way to grow rhubarb is to plant a ‘crown’ (the undersoil root) during the spring or autumn, in a well manured, free draining, spacious position. It’s best to avoid picking stalks too early as the plant needs a couple of years to establish itself.

Nutritionally, rhubarb is not without benefits. It provides many essential vitamins and minerals including thiamine, niacin, riboflavin, phosphorus potassium, and dietary fibre. It’s also a rich source of vitamin K. Ways to cook and eat rhubarb would require a magazine to itself, but villagers will already have their favourite method. Whether that be stewed, in a crumble, a flan, a cheesecake, pie, cake, cobbler, jam, chutney, trifle, or even pickled – the list goes on. You will also find it in the kitchen of many a ‘posh nosh’ restaurant. How about trying a confit of duck liver with rhubarb compote on sour dough toast at Le Manoir aux Quat’ Saisons!

Phil Skipp, Winner

Summer Reading Challenge

The 2025 Summer Reading Challenge, 'Story Garden', celebrates adventure, fantasy and the great outdoors. Children can collect stickers and rewards as they tap into a world of imagination through reading library books and exploring the magical connection between storytelling and nature.

Children who finish the Challenge at an Oxfordshire library will get a medal and a certificate. Under 4s can take part in a mini challenge with their own special collector's folder and stickers. Ends 6 September. See our Facebook page, see Wallingford Library, Oxfordshire County Council or pop into the branch to see what's happening. Also www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/summer-reading-challenge.

Sharon Hill

Summer Holidays at The Earth Trust

The Earth Trust is offering an action-packed summer programme, including orienteering adventures, family history days, the Field of Fun (hay bale play, mini obstacle course and a musical wall) and a Summer Nature Trail activity pack. Visit <https://earthtrust.org.uk/whats-on>.

Emily Thomas

Cholsey Repair Café

The next bi-monthly session of Cholsey Repair Café will be held on Saturday 20 September at the Cholsey Pavilion, with doors open between 10-12.45. The usual wide range of repair assistance will be available from skilled fixers. Special services may include clock and furniture repairs, replacing watch batteries and ultrasonic cleaning although it's advisable to contact the organisers beforehand if you need this kind of help. For more information, check www.cholseyrepaircafe.com or repaircafe@cholsey.com

Ian Wheeler

Wallingford Photographic Club.

Our 'Summer in Oxfordshire' photography competition is open to all until 30 September with a £100 prize up for grabs. See wallingfordphoto.club for details. Over Bunkfest weekend, 30 August, we will be holding our annual exhibition at St Mary-Le-More Church (behind the Town Hall). We meet on Thursdays from 7.30pm at Crowmarsh Pavilion starting on 18 September.

Phil Swarbrick

VILLAGE DIARY

August

3	Picnic Praise	St Agatha's	12.30
22	Surprise gig – details	Red Lion	TBC
24	Bumper meat draw and band 'Move It'	Red Lion	6pm

September

7	Outdoor church service at Wellsprings		9.30
9	Village Lunch Club	VH	12.15
9	WI talk 'A vineyard in the village' by Charlotte Woods	VH	7.30pm
25	WI - Christopher Wren's Oxford, a walk with Lizzie Rowe		

Advance Notice

3 October	BSR jazz night
5 October	Community Association Jumble Sale
14 October	WI talk – Kelmscott Manor by Robert Seatter
15 November	Red Lion Christmas market
29 November	Art Club Exhibition

Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursday 14 & Friday 29 August
	Thursdays 11 & 25 September
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 7 & 21 August
	Thursdays 4 & 18 September

Village website

For more information about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell visit the village website: www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk.