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**Items for the next edition should be sent to the Editor by 10 Sept 2020.** *The Villager* is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village.

## Editorial

Another *Villager* to print and get out to you, though easier this time round I hope as some restrictions have been lifted. I am very grateful to all the volunteers who helped last time, especially the Luck family who did the whole assembly themselves in their family 'bubble', and Angela Lewis and Steve Luck who printed the text and adverts respectively, on their own to keep safe. By using the main hall to spread out and so keep our social distance, I hope we can manage the assembly process for this issue safely.

It's good to be able to enjoy the greater freedoms that the easing of lockdown brings for most of us. Being able to meet up again with friends and family has been a joy, even if it has been at a distance and only outside. It is so good to see some re-openings in the village, especially the Red Lion (see page 19 for their opening hours), also cricket and tennis, the play equipment, the churches, garden centres and health and beauty businesses, and longer opening hours at the post office. Many of the articles in this issue show life getting back to something more like normal, though without the village hall, some groups' meetings are still suspended or taking place virtually. And what a fantastic job the school has done, re-opening for all children and providing childcare for key workers (see page 11). Well done everyone there.

Whilst we have missed our usual summer events, like the fete, flower and produce show and the summer concert at St Agatha's (moved to Sunday 27 September but now cancelled, sadly), they will all be back again next year. And all the work we have done in our gardens during lockdown should make next year's flower and produce show a bumper one.

Life in the last few months has been hard at times but several positives can be taken out of the crisis. More community spirit is evident, not just knowing neighbours better and helping them out but also more people saying hello when you pass them in the street, which I hope will continue. Fitness levels have improved too for many – I have never seen so many walkers, cyclists and runners out and about - and we have been learning some new words like zoom, bubbling, furlough, social distancing, and getting much better with IT.

The Great Village Date Hunt, Treasure Trails and the Scarecrow competition have all been great successes. Pictures of the fabulous scarecrows are on the village website ([brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk](http://brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk)), and a few here on page 12. Thank you Keith Brooks for the cover photo.

Stay safe, stay well

*Helen Connor*

## Letter from our MP, David Johnston

I spent lockdown in the constituency, in the home we got in the Didcot area in February. Whilst none of us have enjoyed lockdown, it was nice to spend an extended time in our new home. Having lived in Oxford for 6 years I was already somewhat familiar with Didcot, but spending an extended period here – rather than just the Friday-Sunday as is usually the case when parliament is sitting normally – helped us to get to know it better still.

Virtual parliament was smoother than I had expected – despite me thinking it would feel strange speaking into a webcam and having it beamed into the House of Commons. You get used to asking questions and even giving speeches from your desk, as I did on legislation such as the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Agriculture Bill.

But parliament has now returned. We still can't have more than 50 people in the House of Commons at any one time and our staff are not allowed to return yet. Some of you will have seen the very long queues when we first had to vote, but they have now come up with a much better system. Our staff can't return yet and like a lot of people they miss being in a different environment to home and seeing their colleagues, but for MPs it has been nice to be back for the same reasons.

There is plenty on our plates. We have been debating a number of pieces of legislation, including the Counter-terrorism and Sentencing Bill, designed to prevent the sort of attacks we saw at the end of last year and beginning of this year. There are ongoing debates both in the House of Commons and in the Education Committee (I am a member) about the reopening of schools. I am firmly on the side of seeing all schools open for all children as soon as possible: the Children's Commissioner told our Committee that we are on course for 8 million children to be out of school for 6 months which will be damaging to all children and the most disadvantaged will suffer most.

As shops start to reopen, I'll be returning to spending at least every Friday visiting local businesses, charities and, if we can make it work, schools – keeping my distance, of course. I'd encourage everyone to try and support our local shops if they can, so they can hopefully survive what has been a very tough time.

I recently invited people to nominate their volunteer hero – the individual or organisation they feel has really made a difference lately. I was pleased to see such a huge range of people and organisations nominated. The top three were

the Ray Collins Charitable Trust, Helping Hands and Maymessy – congratulations to them all.

As ever, do get in touch if I can help via [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

*David Johnston, MP Wantage (June 2020)*

## Community Association

On behalf of the Community Association I hope that you are all keeping well.

Sadly, due to the corona virus restrictions we are still unable to organise any social gatherings for the foreseeable future. However, we are planning a programme of events for next year, fully confident that the current situation will have been resolved by then (but keeping our fingers crossed as well!).

At this time of year, we normally ask for applications from charitable bodies within the community for grants to support their worthy causes.

Unfortunately, like many charities, we have been unable to raise funds due to the lockdown restrictions. This includes our main fundraising event, the village fete, and although we do have some reserves built up from previous years, the Association's committee has taken the view that we are not in the position to distribute grants as normal.

That said, if local charities or other organisations we have given to in the past have an urgent and essential need for funding, then we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact our treasurer Tom Rogerson at [tacrogeron@aol.co.uk](mailto:tacrogeron@aol.co.uk). The committee plan to review any applications at the end of August and distribute any available funds in September. We regret the need to have to take this approach this year and look forward to serving our local community next year as normal.

*James Davys – Chairman*

### **Dog poo**

While there are many conscientious dog owners, one or two are letting their dogs poo on the footpaths and even in the children's play areas. The situation has got much worse lately. Please clean up after your dog and please don't leave poo bags hanging on trees.

# Parish Council news

## **Covid19 action plan**

The Parish Council are extremely grateful to everybody who contributed to the success of this project. It is a great tribute to our village that the whole community can come together and ensure all those affected or impacted by the Covid19 pandemic are protected. The need has dropped considerably now but we are not complacent and will keep the system in place so it can be easily revived if there is a second spike, which obviously we hope will not be necessary.

## **Grass cutting**

Due to the Covid19 pandemic, the Parish Council had difficulty arranging the maintenance of the grass verges in the village. We are pleased to report that this situation has been resolved and the verges are now being cut once the wild spring flowers have bloomed. We are delighted that Ed Morgan has taken on the task.

## **Little Martins**

Over half of the houses at Little Martins are now sold and we are working with Kingerlee to design a public open space for the area, to be open before Christmas. Following feedback received during the preparation of the Parish Plan, we intend this to be a natural space with a sarsen standing stone at its centre. We have managed to acquire an authentic standing stone that was rescued from a development site on the North Wessex Downs near Avebury. Sarsen is the same stone as the outer ring of Stonehenge and was once common in our parish being used as boundary markers. The archaeologists found lots of sarsen stones at Little Martins when they did their dig before the build started. We feel that this will be a great addition to the village.

## **Opening of play areas and outdoor gym**

We are pleased to report that we are now allowed to open the outdoor gym and play areas, though due to government regulations we have to apply certain restrictions. These are posted at the relevant sites. Please ensure that the younger family members are aware of them. Please bring your own sanitiser to use as the Parish Council cannot provide this.

## **The Red Lion**

The Parish Council applied to South Oxfordshire District Council to list the Red Lion as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). An ACV can be anything that the community considers important for the local community and should be given additional protection from being developed. We are delighted to announce that the Red Lion was given this special status (although this can be challenged by the property owners). This important designation has been used to save many local pubs, including the Crown at South Moreton for example, from being turned into houses. Hopefully we will never have to use it but by just having it, the Red Lion's future is far more secure.

## **School parking**

The Parish Council is aware that there are issues periodically with parking around the school gates at the beginning and the end of the school day. We are in discussion with Mrs Lewis about this. The position of the school so near to houses does present a challenge. Please park considerately and preferably not too near the school gates.

## **Kings Meadow tennis courts**

Work started on 8 July to resurface the tennis courts at Kings Meadow, together with the basketball practice area which will be made larger. A new practice wall will also be installed in the existing tennis practice area in the south west corner of the courts. The work was originally scheduled to be carried out in March/April ahead of the normal tennis season. However, the Covid19 crisis made this logistically impossible. Although it might seem sensible to wait until the autumn, the main constraint is that we have timing commitments to the grant providers. Having already given us extensions, we really need to complete the work as soon as we can. More information on the funding can be found on the Parish Council website.

Although the resurfacing and erection of the practice wall will take approximately a week, the tarmac then needs a further four weeks to 'cure'. Then, the courts will need to be painted to LTA standards and the important non-slip coating applied. So, we expect the courts to re-open in mid-August. We are sorry that it's not the best time, particularly as its now summer when the courts are in demand, but hope you'll agree that these last few months have presented us all with unique challenges. The village now has a thriving tennis club, with the courts used by villagers and the village school outside of this. We're sure that the new surface and wall will give the village a facility for enjoyment over many years to come.

## Village Stores and Post Office

Thank you for all the lovely comments we have received on how the community has appreciated the effort put in by the management committee, staff and volunteer team to keep the shop and post office open during lockdown. It has meant the whole team stepping up. I am very proud to say that together the team has not only met this challenge but new procedures, ideas and improvements have either been implemented or are continuing to be explored.

Like all businesses, even our own small social enterprise has had to think hard and quickly about how to make sure we are fit for an uncertain future. With the community working with us, I am sure it can only make us even stronger.

All of the management committee members are volunteers. Part of my role as chairman of the management committee is the responsibility of being post mistress. When I took this on over four years ago, I knew it would be challenging, having the responsibility for the back office, staffing (both paid and unpaid), training, plus dealing with the Post Office on a regular basis. However, Covid19 has escalated the changes and support that the Post Office organisation gives small rural post offices. The Post Office area manager sends out regular (sometimes daily) emails with updates, advice and support. Weekly, there are meetings on teams/zoom/whatsapp. With so much being moved online, the role is becoming much easier, which will be great for my successor (I know you are out there somewhere!!).

It is great that the Post Office has recognised the team and has given the shop extra remuneration this year for the service we give. With so much of the work in Brightwell shop and post office done by volunteers, supported by paid part-time staff, it means extra funds for improvements, equipment and maintenance.

Customer feedback helps us in both the shop and post office. If you think we do a good job and go the extra mile, please go online to [www.postoffice.co.uk/feedback](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/feedback) quoting branch code No 4001370. Remember, there is a chance to win £100 gift card. Within the Oxfordshire post offices network, we have been in the top three for several weeks.

We will celebrate our 10th anniversary in August. It still looks unlikely that we will be able to have the planned get together to celebrate. However, the community and everyone involved, from the start to now, can give themselves a pat on the back for supporting and working hard to ensure this thriving

community enterprise is kept going. With renewed drive and energy long may it continue for years to come.

Best wishes and stay safe

*Celia Collett  
Chairman Management Committee*

## The village website

The Brightwell-cum-Sotwell website has recently been redesigned (you have no doubt seen the posters around the village announcing the relaunch). Do look at the new site at <https://www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk/> and if you have any comments or suggestions please send them to us either through the contact form on the website or email to [mackney4@btinternet.com](mailto:mackney4@btinternet.com).

The website was created 17 years ago, and has a depth of news and information about our village. It includes details of forthcoming events, descriptions of local clubs and societies, and comprehensive directories of local services and businesses. It also offers a fascinating archive of colourful memories and images from villagers past and present.

The website and its companion Facebook group have had a special role to play during the lockdown, carrying vital information from the Parish Council, Village Stores & Post Office and others, as well as more fun content such as the galleries of Brightwell art club lockdown paintings and the Save the Children scarecrow competition. We relaxed our advertising rules to put *The Villager's* advertisers online when there was no print edition and also post the weekly takeaway menu from the Red Lion.

The website can be accessed easily via the internet, so you don't need to be a social media user. But if you are, it also complements the Brightwell community Facebook group.

As well as feedback about the revamped site, it would be really good if you can provide any information or news to help fellow villagers at any time. Again, please contact us to help improve content on the site.

*Wendy Roderick*

# Stewart Village Hall

## Re-opening

As we wait for news as to when the hall can be re-opened, we are busy ensuring the safety of our users by putting some systems in place, for example hand sanitising and cleaning stations and reviewing the number of people who could safely use the hall. Information on this will be displayed in the hall and provided to all who enquire about bookings. They will, of course, be reviewed regularly as the situation changes.

The worry over the loss of income for the hall was alleviated when we were lucky enough to be awarded a £10,000 grant made possible through the Government's grant scheme during Covid19. This has ensured that the running costs of the hall could be met without eating into our valuable reserves fund which would have left the hall in a very vulnerable position.

## Fundraising quiz

A big thank you must go to Shena Luck for organising the monthly fundraising quizzes, a total of £125 was raised to boost hall funds. Thank you to everyone who took part and to those who made donations to the hall. The lucky winners were:

April - Eastlyn Horsfield

May - Gris & John Davies

June - Lesley Dore

## Film night

We hope to be able to rearrange the showing of Rocket Man as a fundraising film night in October. More information will be shared as soon as we know we can go ahead.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the hall, if you have any questions, comments or feedback please contact the trustees using the contact us page on our website, or leave a note in the village hall mailbox at the rear of the hall. <http://stewartvillagehall.btck.co.uk/>.

Finally, the hourly chiming of the clock at the front of the village hall is a familiar part of our village life. Derek Brooker, shares a fascinating insight over the page, on the workings of the clock.

*Annette Kilworth*

# A clock winder's musings

The village hall is such an important part of the village and has been for a little over 150 years. In its original form, it was the village school, founded in 1870. The clock tower was an addition some four years later.

The clock mechanism is located behind the clock faces. It is activated by two hefty weights on steel hawsers – the weights drop from above the mechanism almost to ground level. They are housed in a wooden enclosure just inside the hall front door. The mechanism was made by Thwaites and Reed of London in 1873, and is a fairly unusual movement in that it has a dual action. The bell chimes the hour via an external hammer. An internal clapper was originally rung via a rope to summon children to school. I know there are a number of people in the village who like me will remember the school bell along with other memories.

Because of its simplicity, the mechanism keeps fairly good time considering its age. Its wooden pendulum is about 4ft (120cms) in length and can be adjusted by a screw at its base. This is a trifle hair-raising as it means leaning over one of the towers - three ladders up, the drop is a long way down!

The clock needs to be wound every 7 days using a large handle. Failure to do this means it will stop when the weights reach ground level. As head winder, I am ably supported by Steve Luck and Chris Baines who step in when I can't.

I have been winding the clock for 40 plus years. I have now decided to step down from this role next year – I am hoping to hand over on 24 April 2021 which just happens to be the day before my 80th birthday!!

*Derek Brooker*

# The Old Bakery

Would anyone like tins from the old village bakery? When it shut Norah Kew gave my mother, Viola Crowe, four very solid tins which were well used until a few years ago when Mum (now 95) gave up making her own bread. It would be fitting if they were returned to the village, which I will happily do if anyone would like them. Many thanks,

*Julia Kent 07887-597879*

# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School

Challenge presents opportunity here at Brightwell School and there's no doubt that this has been an incredibly challenging time for everyone. As shared with you in the last edition, our dedicated and community-serving staff team have ensured that our school has always been open; and it has been a privilege to provide what school and wider community has needed throughout this time.

Having already welcomed back our Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in line with the Government requirement, we were determined that a later announcement that the remaining year groups would not return to school before the summer would not divide our community; and so we invited all children in every year group back to school.

We have been able to offer every child a return to school, in every year group, since early June. With 85 to 100 per cent of children in all classes returning, staggered starts, handwashing and cleaning routines, and zoned playground areas are now embedded. The ongoing changing advice on social distancing means we look forward to bringing our whole school community back together again in September.

In addition to this we have continued to provide childcare for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is regularly at capacity and we have offered an 8am-5pm day of care, including a school lunch. Having provided this throughout the Easter holidays, this support is not required by our families throughout the summer holiday and we are incredibly grateful for this opportunity to give staff a chance to rest and recharge ahead of the challenges and opportunities the new academic year presents.

Within the wider community, the Fairthorne Trust has provided a further opportunity to support the well-being and mental health of our children by providing a donation that has seen each child receive a game, puzzle or activity. We were delighted to recently receive a card of thanks for our cards and flowers from the wonderful team and residents at Sotwell Hill House, who have been in our thoughts throughout and we enjoyed creating our very own scarecrow for the village competition having enjoyed the VE Day anniversary events so much.

We would also like to thank everyone within Brightwell who helped to cut our grass, hedging and general tidying up of the grounds – it was hugely appreciated by us all with former and current parents coming together. Our thanks also go to the wider community for your support in managing our staggered starts and finishes. With all children required to return to school in

September this will continue to present us with plentiful challenges, and opportunities, but we have valued each and every “Good Morning”, enquiry on how we are managing and words of encouragement and motivation as you pass by our school gates. Thank you everyone.

*Fin Lewis  
Headteacher*

## Save the Children Fund

### Scarecrow Competition

Many thanks to all the villagers that ‘made a scarecrow’ plus a big thank you to Tim Bartlett for arranging the competition. We had over 20 around the village, all truly amazing. The effort that you all went to was really impressive and so inspiring! There is so much talent and creativity in the village, it made the judges’ decision so much more difficult.

Every scarecrow was ‘highly commended’ but after much wandering, head scratching and deliberation, the winners (in no particular order) were:

The Tea Party in Church Lane (Rose Sutton)  
The Dog in the Street (Lidstones) and  
The Sheep in field above the High Road (Greasbys).



The lucky winners each received a £20 voucher to spend at The Red Lion.

It has given pleasure to both young and old and also raised £220.56p. We intend to do this again in some format, hopefully next year.

## Fundraising

The Save the Children committee are exploring more ideas on how to raise funds in these difficult times and welcome any suggestions. Unfortunately, the work and ongoing projects of the charity in the UK and around the world is only increasing whilst the funding streams are decreasing.

I am sure you share the fear for the futures of our children and grandchildren. We can only imagine what it must be like for those people who can see a hopeless future for themselves and their families. You need only look at what is happening in Cox's Bazar and the Yemen. Save the Children and other agencies are working tirelessly to help the situation there.

We can only hope that the humanity shown by so many in this crisis will ensure a better future for every child.

Thank you for the support you give to Save the Children and stay safe.

*Celia Collett*

## Cricket on the Rec

A sunny Sunday afternoon in mid-July saw the return of cricket to the Recreational Ground, with BcS cricket club taking on the Invalids CC. The ground was turned out beautifully, thanks to Steve Metcalf and James Pargeter. Red Lion teas were enjoyed by all and the club was delighted to see so many spectators enjoying the live sport. Two 'rusty' teams traded 'blows', with a close fought game eventually going the way of the Invalids.

Hope to see many of you at the next game – look out for postings on social media.

*Eliot Forster*

## Church opening

I am delighted that St Agatha's is open for 'private prayer' at various times on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Thank you to all who have volunteered to act as stewards for this. Rather than trying to deep clean the building between sessions, we will rely on 72 hours of closure during which time any virus breaks down. This means that any funerals will take place on a Wednesday, taking priority over any midweek private prayers.

We have only recently received the national and diocesan guidelines for Sunday worship and the PCC are currently digesting these prior to passing each church's risk assessment. We are planning to resume Sunday worship on 2 August, initially with a Family Service at St James' at 4pm, followed by a socially distanced picnic (weather permitting). There are some changes that you should expect relating to good hygiene and cleaning, no handshaking, no singing together, no communal cup, and restrictions on numbers.

As many of our congregation will continue to be shielding or have family members who are vulnerable or who may be hesitant about returning to public worship, we will endeavour to provide online streaming of at least one Sunday service to be accessible by anyone staying at home. Given that none of our churches have broadband, we are experimenting with different mobile networks as a reasonable 4G signal is needed.

We are also delighted that the wedding of Kathy Mangion and Michael Garner can now go ahead on Saturday 1 August, albeit with limited guest numbers.

## Church giving

With the loss of our weekly service collections and fundraising events, our church income has been significantly reduced. Even when corporate worship is allowed again, we need to avoid handling cash and so there is now a new way to sustain our ministry and mission. Online giving is now simple and easy from any smart phone or internet-connected device. Donors are given the choice of giving with the benefit of Gift Aid or completely anonymously. The website address is <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/3e88a01c-8262-478e-8bdf-1dc1cbc1d1f1> which is rather complex so this QR code may be simpler to use from a smart phone.

Blessings,

*Rev Kevin Beer*

# The Environment Group

## Millennium Wood

There is not much to report other than the pond/wetland has been holding water following recent rain and so will hopefully develop into an interesting new habitat. In May there was a fine display of forget-me-nots throughout the wood which looked very good in the dappled shade.

## Allotment stream

The BcS Environment Group have been asked by the Swan Allotment Trust to help with assessing the feasibility of replacing the currently piped outlet from the moat of Sotwell House (see page 17). The pipe runs along the eastern border of the Swan allotments before discharging into the open channel on the recreation ground. It gets blocked with debris catching on roots growing into the pipe which have led to flooding of the path above the pipe. It is a problem that is getting worse and requires significant effort to clear the pipe. Additionally, there is an ambition to improve the water quality of the headwaters of this catchment.

A possible solution would be to replace the pipe with an open channel or stream as this was historically the way the water from the moat was managed. A stream would potentially be more attractive, creating a further interesting habitat and so increase the biodiversity of the area. The permissive footpath would remain. Furthermore, water is a great attraction for children and a clean stream could provide an area for play and exploration if safely designed and managed.

Investigations are underway but some form of small stream looks quite possible. Once ideas have progressed, it is our understanding that there will be a consultation exercise to allow comments and further ideas to be considered.

## Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm was: May 0.2mm; June 51.7mm. Unsurprisingly, May is about as dry as it could be with June around average for the area. However, the spring (March, April and May) will be remembered for the sunshine, and most welcome it was too when we were largely confined to our homes. Below is the Met Office summary:

- *It has been the sunniest spring on record for the UK and all the home nations and the driest May on record in England. 626 hours of bright*

*sunshine were recorded in spring 2020 for the UK, exceeding the previous high (555 hours, set in 1948) by over 70 hours. Spring 2020 also exceeds the sunshine amount for most summer seasons, with only three summers being sunnier (1976, 1995, and 1989).*

- *The figure for England is even higher. Spring 2020 recorded 696 hours of sunshine, exceeding the previous record set of 594.3 hours.*
- *All UK countries have recorded their sunniest spring on record in a series stretching back to 1929.*
- *It has been the eighth warmest spring on record for the UK, with both England and Wales having their fifth warmest spring on record.*
- *It has been the fifth driest spring for the UK overall, but some counties in north east England and eastern Scotland have recorded their driest spring in a rainfall series from 1862.*

As I write this the weather has reverted to its more traditional summer being overcast and cool invoking memories of shivering on the beach trying to pretend to be enjoying the holiday!

However, of concern is the continual breaking of records for maximum temperatures around the world with a report of 38 deg C (100 deg F) being recorded in the Arctic Circle in June. The Arctic is thought to be warming at twice the global average which will have major repercussions due to ice melt and the release of carbon dioxide and methane with the thawing of the permafrost.

*Steve Capel-Davies*

## News from the Bach Centre

The Bach Centre reopened in a limited way in July. Visitors can walk around the garden and we are still responding to emails and the online shop is open as usual. Admission to the house and real-world shop is by prior appointment. See the web site <https://bachcentre.com> to get in touch.

The training rooms and Nora's Cafe remain shut but we hope they will be open again by September. Meantime, like many trainers around the world we are looking at whether we can offer courses online, without a drop in quality. Most of us are working from home most of the time.

Our best wishes to all in the village at this weird time!

*Stefan Ball*



## The Orchard

Have you been to the orchard for your daily exercise? Isn't it looking amazing? The wild flowers are stunning.

There are two benches that are conveniently the correct social distancing measurement and also two perfectly separated picnic tables.

You could while away an afternoon with friends whilst the kids climb the tree, play in the stream or get lost with the dog in the waist high flowers.

The apples are well set so it should be a good harvest. Fingers crossed for an Apple Day at the Red Lion this October.

*Alison Bloomfiled*

## News from the Allotment Club

Due to Covid19 we were unable to hold our AGM in March. At the moment, the current committee still stands, with Roger Gill as chair in waiting.

The Allotments, the Community Orchard and the wild area is owned by the Swan Allotment Trust with the Swan Allotmenters Club overseeing the day-to-day running of the allotments. Myself, Adrian Morrison, Paul Berrisford and Bob Sherwood keep the permissive path open and deal with the flooding from time to time, which is caused by blocked pipes. The old stream was piped years ago but over time, roots have penetrated and it is becoming an increasingly difficult job to keep the drains clear. We have come up with the idea of reinstating the old stream to run next to the Permissive Path and have enlisted the help of the Environment Group, chaired by Steve Capel-Davies (see their article on page 15). This is an exciting project which will involve lots of people.

There has been increased activity on the allotments through the lockdown. The extra interest for an allotment means that currently all allotments are taken with two people on the waiting list. If you are interested in taking on an allotment next year let us know (contact [collett.c.2@gmail.com](mailto:collett.c.2@gmail.com)) and we can add your name to the list.

*Clive Collett*

## Hello from The Natural Beauty Rooms

Well what a strange 4 months - no lovely clients, no treatments, no salon... BUT don't despair, I am now open!

For those of you who know me well, you will not be surprised to hear the salon was put to good use over lockdown. It was filled with seeds, cuttings, soil, new plants and all manner of gardening paraphernalia. It's now been completely repainted inside and out, new equipment installed, steamed cleaned, scrubbed and polished, and is now ready for the off.

I can't wait to welcome you all back. I'm so looking forward to giving you your well deserved treatments and pampering.

Sending virtual hugs

*Donna Huckin*

## Sinodun Players and Corn Exchange

Congratulations to the Sinodun Players and the Corn Exchange Wallingford which have been given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest possible honour for voluntary groups in the UK. *'Described by its users as "the heart of the community", not only is it a cultural landmark but importantly it serves as a cross generational meeting hub where people of all backgrounds are welcome to both enjoy the experience as well as to volunteer their own unique skills.'*

Currently, the Corn Exchange is still closed for both cinema and theatre but hopes to re-open for films some time after the beginning of September. Re-opening for live performances will depend on the status of the virus and government guidelines at the time.

The Corn Exchange management board are totally committed to the health, safety and well-being of both volunteers and its loyal and supportive audiences. Professional health & safety advice needs to be taken on how best to modify the building, create Covid19-safe procedures and ensure everyone is fully trained.

## Brightwell Toddlers



We hope everyone is having a good summer; we are missing you all! We can't wait to see you again and catch up with all your news; however we are unsure when we will be able to restart the Toddlers group. Keep an eye on the Facebook page for any updates!



Here are a few of the crafts we have been doing at home:

Best wishes to everyone until we see you again!!

*Laura Woodford*

## Red Lion update

Thank you to everyone who came to see us on our opening week whether it was for a takeaway, a quick drink or to eat in the restaurant. It was lovely to see you all back again and not just for a 5 minute chat whilst you collect your takeaway.

For evening food service, we will continue to offer our takeaway menu for a while or you could join us in the pub and book a table in the restaurant or out in the garden. The week's menu is posted on Facebook and on the village website. To book dinner as a takeaway or to dine in, please email with your full order, best contact phone number, any dietary requirements and your preferred time of collection or sit down in the restaurant.

The opening hours going forward will be:

Monday - closed all day

Tuesday - 4-10pm no food available

Wednesday & Thursday - 12-3pm & 6-10.00pm (we will stay open later if busy)

Friday & Saturday - 12-3pm & 6-11pm

Sunday - 12-9pm

Lunch service on all days will be 12-2pm and evening takeaways & eating in will be 6.15-8.30pm.

We will review our opening hours on a weekly basis and increase/decrease if needed whilst we get through these next few months.

If you are not yet receiving updates, please email us at [info@theredlionbrightwell.co.uk](mailto:info@theredlionbrightwell.co.uk) and request to be added to our mailing list.

Thank you once again for everybody's continued support and we hope to see you back in the pub soon. Warmest regards

*Corinne & Mouse*

## Walking with cows

Isn't it lovely to see the cows in the buttercups? For those who are unused to cows and a little nervous of them, here is some advice from someone who has been walking through fields of cows for more than 60 years.

- Cows like to stay together, so it is best not to separate one or two from the herd.
- Cows, especially young ones, are curious about the world. They may well look up and stare at you. They are wondering if you are a threat. If you ignore them, they will usually ignore you. If a bold one takes a step towards you, simply look at it and take a step or two towards it. They will back away.
- Cows can feel threatened by a dog, so keep it on the lead and walk it rapidly past them. If you know that your dog is going to show a great interest in them, wait until the cows are grazing away from the path. If the cows feel threatened they will move together towards the threat, to try to intimidate it. Stepping towards them usually stops them, but if you feel threatened by the cows it is time to let your dog off the lead. The cows are more interested in the dog than in you and most dogs run for the gate as fast as they can. By the time the cows get moving towards it, it will be out of the field and the cows will just go back to grazing. (I have only had to do this once, in a field with a lot of young bullocks in it, years ago. Never saw our dog run so fast.)

Enjoy your walks in the meadows and keep the Countryside Code <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>.

*Amanda Griffin*

Well, the WI group is still here and using zoom for our meetings while the hall is not open. So far we have had 2 talks – one on the Microbiome and the second on a 1500k walk in India, both enjoyable and up to 28 members managing to ‘get online’! Another, planned for 14 July was less successful but is being rescheduled. Its ‘Fishy Tales’ – from a fishmonger of 40 years who now has a small menagerie in Devon. It should be entertaining.

The link up coffee meets have also gone zooming! And we had Esther Large join us for one from her care home in Birmingham which was lovely. The swimmers and the knitters have similarly kept in touch, but as things ease, bike rides and walks have replaced swimming. We hope to be back in the pool at the beginning of August (some of us at least).

The Garden Safari which was planned for August will now be on 8 September – a date for the diary as we hope to make this an open event. Obviously, planning will be needed to ensure safety. In place of the planned August meeting on the 11th, we have booked a crafter on zoom who will show us some clever things to make with paper and material. Visitors/potential new members are welcome to join us for these online sessions, just get in touch in advance so that we can invite you in. You can email us at [brightwellcumstowellwi@gmail.com](mailto:brightwellcumstowellwi@gmail.com) or ring on 835109.

Online virtual tours (of gardens and museums) have been taken and Denman (the WI college) has now made some of its courses available to book online – several members have done cookery and history courses which sounded fun!

*Anne Brooker*

## Our travel correspondent writes...

As a travel writer, being grounded for this long - the longest time since I was at university - has been a little bit strange. Being cocooned in this lovely little village has been a welcome respite, but it made my first travel experience since the beginning of this pandemic quite a culture shock.

On Saturday 4 July, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office lifted the travel ban to around 59 countries across the world, and so The Telegraph and BBC

sent me to Spain to find out what the travel experience would be like for Brits this summer.

Needless to say, everything is a little bit different. Masks are mandatory in the airport and on the plane, hand sanitiser stations are dotted about the terminal and the vast majority of shops and restaurants are closed inside the airport. There are traffic light systems for using the toilets, and one-way systems through duty free. I had to buy a pair of sunglasses en route to Mallorca, and so a staff member followed me around the store cleaning everything I touched and tried on. I have a lot of odd experiences in my job, but this was by far the most surreal, that's for sure.

By some strange coincidence, Mallorca was the last place I visited for work before the lockdown came, and now it's the first place I travelled post-peak pandemic. In January, it was certainly quiet, but the capital city of Palma was still abuzz with tourists milling about outside its enormous Gothic cathedral. This time around, in the sweltering heat of a July Monday morning, it all felt all but abandoned.

*Lottie Gross*

(You can hear Lottie's full report on Radio 4 broadcast on Saturday 11 July in 'From our own correspondent', at [BBCSounds](#).)

## Brightwell Supporting Refugees

Thank you to everyone involved in ‘The Great Village Date Hunt’ on the weekend of 30 May: the creators, organisers and most of all the participants. It was the perfect activity for a warm weekend and interesting to discover parts of the village in such a fun way. BSR is very grateful for the £500 the hunt raised. Thank you so much for your generosity. The money went immediately towards education and food packs to the school children and their families in Azraq and Amman as well as sanitisation for refugee children able to return to schools in Uganda. We are also, with further donations, able to continue with paying the salaries of two teachers up to February next year.

We have just been told too that a mobile library is up and running now in Azraq and work is ongoing to do the same for the Hope School children. We were able to fund the Azraq mobile library from previous donations but the Hope School one will need more support from us with books.

I am sure you will have seen the display in the Red Box Gallery, which David Dugan worked very hard on putting together for BSR. It shows where and what we have been up to over the last year.



With your much valued help the charity is thriving, allowing BSR to assist those who have suffered so much to try to make new lives for themselves. Please do continue to support us if you can, and watch out for forthcoming events being scheduled in when we are allowed to do so! We can be contacted at [brightwellrefugees@gmail.com](mailto:brightwellrefugees@gmail.com).

Wishing you well from all the *BSR team*

## Round & about

### Wallingford Hockey Club

We are back on the pitch and recruiting for next season. Remaining vigilant on social distancing and adhering to current guidance on numbers exercising together, pre-season training will start soon. Contact Richard Chamberlain at [wallingfordhc.co.uk](http://wallingfordhc.co.uk).

### Wallingford Museum quiz and jigsaws

Whilst temporarily closed, the museum has been offering quizzes each week on the town history, locations, etc. Go to their website, [wallingfordmuseum.org.uk](http://wallingfordmuseum.org.uk), where you can also now download some Wallingford jigsaws.

### Aston online

Free IT advice to computer users, 10-12 noon every Tuesday morning remotely instead of in the Astons village hall. Please request help by email to [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com) or, if this is impossible, by phone to 07780958249.

### Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Open Day

Sunday 2 August. Come and see the reconstruction of the Victorian Maidenhead Canopy, a project started 5 years ago.

Also at this site is a new coffee shop, which has moved from Cholsey (was previously in a vintage 2CV outside Cholsey railway station). Opened on 21 July, Tuesday to Saturday 8.30 -3pm.

# VILLAGE DIARY

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## August

- |    |  |           |        |
|----|--|-----------|--------|
| 2  | Sunday worship resumes - Family Service & picnic | St James' | 4pm    |
| 2  | Cholsey & Wallingford Railway Open Day           |           |        |
| 11 | WI zoom - Felicity Spa craft workshop            |           | 7.30pm |

## September

- |   |                  |  |     |
|---|------------------|--|-----|
| 8 | WI Garden Safari |  | TBA |
|---|------------------|--|-----|

## Advance Notice

### Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Grey bins            | Thursdays 6 & 20 August                 |
|                      | <b>Friday 4</b> & Thursday 17 September |
| Green (& brown) bins | Thursdays 13 & 27 August                |
|                      | Thursdays 10 & 24 September             |

## Village website

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