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

Editorial

As you can see from the by line at the bottom of the page Helen Connor has stepped aside to let me edit another edition of *The Villager*. As Editor, Helen has been telling our stories for the last eleven years (no wonder she needs a break), so I think it's time she told us her story. See Meet Helen Connor, page 12-13.

Beware the ides of March! Predictably after the sunniest February on record since 1929 Arctic temperatures are forecast. I'm really worried it will kill off many of the gorgeous bulbs and blossoms adorning all of our gardens. I'm even more concerned about the new born lambs at Little Wittenham. After a three year break due to Covid the Earth Trust Lambing festival is back. By the time you read this (I'm writing in the middle of March) the first weekend will be over but you can catch the second weekend of the festival on 1-2 April (see page 21).

No prizes for guessing why we are featuring Brightwell Manor on our front cover this month. The village is agog with the news that Boris is coming to Brightwell. According to the Guardian the Manor has been sold to him, subject to contract, but to date I haven't been able to confirm this. One of the neighbours claims to have spotted special branch doing a recce of the grounds. Clearly a moat with no drawbridge that only goes three quarters way around would not provide enough protection for such a high-profile chap. It's rumoured that some kind of laser security system will be installed on the boundary. Another Brightwell source reports that a busload of tourists came by recently and stopped to take photos. Perhaps by the time we go to press we will know more but for now scurrilous rumours are all we have.

Anyone who saw Clive Collett before his recent haircut will know that he was sporting a mop of hair to rival Boris's own. But no more. See Clive before and after and his fundraising results on page 9.

Special congrats also to the Brightwell Preschool team who achieved rave results from Ofsted. Lucky Brightwell kidlets ☺) See page 18.

It being Easter time, this edition of *The Villager* is packed with information about upcoming events including the Beating of the Bounds see page 6, the Save the Children plant sale page 10, and Coronation celebrations, see page 8. Also, a rich programme of events at the Red Lion, page 18.

Have a happy Easter.

Alison Leigh, Guest Editor

Trevor David Morgan 1942- 2022

Trevor was born to an Irish mother and a Welsh father. However he was completely English. Growing up in Sutton and its environs he loved watching cricket and rugby, weekly comics, later the daily newspaper delivery, the Spectator, milk on the doorstep and the family lunch. As children Trevor and his sister Lee enjoyed holidays in Port Talbot (under the shadow of the steelworks) and some coach trips abroad.

He would always recount fondly his memories of schoolfriends and their escapades: thumbing lifts, sleeping under hedges, boat trips, car rallies. Later the stories revolved around work and as a trainee accountant crossing the Thames on his way to work amid a sea of bowler hatted commuters.

For some years, after he retired, Trevor was the advertising manager for *The Villager* magazine, then treasurer and then helped with the printing. He also volunteered at the village shop and helped organise some memorable New Year's Eve parties in the village hall.



Over to Ed Morgan: Trevor was decent, Trevor was honest, Trevor was good. Above all he was my accountant and it is with a heavy heart I now go alone into the next financial year.

I was fortunate enough to have spent the last year living with Dad and Jen back at Coombe House. Not a bad prospect. Restaurant standard food, wine on tap. But what stands out for me now, and for which I am so grateful were the conversations. Dad loved to discuss, tell stories and debate: books, politics, history. Compound interest not so good!

To sit and have a meal, a bottle of wine and talk was such a pleasure. We didn't always agree. It might get heated, but it was always interesting.

Dad was hugely knowledgeable and a prolific reader, a trait he has passed on to all four of us. As kids on holiday he created the Toc n Me stories. Toc was Lucy's childhood name for me. They were told from her point of view. Dad would make them up on the spot and featured the villainous older sisters Cartomunda (Charlotte) and Bodica (Jo). The stories always ended with Toc n Me sailing to Africa on a pedalo!

Dad in his younger days was a keen photographer. We still have many beautiful photos of us and mum that he took and developed in the make shift

darkroom he set up in the kitchen. He built an amazing climbing frame and slide. He loved a gadget. We were early adopters of the soda stream, the ZX81 and the video recorder; there are hundreds of recorded hours of Auf Wiedershen Pet, Only Fools and Horses and Drop the Dead Donkey.

He was always on the lookout for a dinner party story. The standard was high. "It's good Jen, but is it good enough to tell at a dinner party?" Stories included breaking down in the lion enclosure at Woburn Safari Park, arguing with Dave Stewart from The Eurythmics over a taxi, capsizing a boat on the Serpentine and taking his boss in with him! It's ironic that as a life-long Daily Telegraph reader he should have entered the country for the final time without a passport, gifting us with the best dinner party story ever.

In 1991 Dad was widowed when we lost our mum Rosemary. He had the unenviable task of telling each of his four children aged 20,18,14 and 11 that their mum had died. Despite also commuting to London each day, he made sure we continued to have a safe and loving family life. It must have been a monumental effort but he never asked anything of us or let us know how hard it was for him.

In 1997 Dad met and started 'stepping out' (his words) with Jennie and in 2000 they married. Dad became the man with two mothers in law and also stepfather to Max, Bobby, Mike and Pete, introducing them to coca cola and microwaves.

Dad retired in 2001 from Time Warner after being there for thirteen years. A job he was very committed to, on the social side at least. Reflecting on his career, his advice was always "Turn up every day, keep your head down and hopefully they won't notice you!"

With Jennie's retirement in 2013 they had time to enjoy the house in France, somewhere they both loved (and were willingly imprisoned during the first covid lockdown) plus some more extensive travelling abroad and in their campervan.

Dad would have been thrilled to see so many people at his funeral. Most will have been to one of their parties at Coombe House and will know how much he relished welcoming guests and hosting, making sure everybody was well looked after.

Stoic, honourable, wise, level headed - he was all of these things and more. He enjoyed the good in life and was able to move beyond the bad. His presence, in all of our lives, has enriched them.

Ed Morgan

Parish Council

Parish Council Elections 4 May 2023

As part of the Local Election programme Parish Council Elections will be taking place on 4 May. Voting takes place at the Village Hall between 7am-10pm. **NB it is a new requirement that you must carry valid photo ID with you** – see www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id.

If you would like to stand for election as a Councillor, join our friendly team and be part of this very important first rung in the democratic process, please contact our Parish Council Clerk – Gabrielle McEvoy on email bcsparishcouncil@googlemail.com.

Neighbourhood Plan

In early February Regulation 15 stage was reached, meaning the Council have formally accepted the Plan. The next stage, Regulation 16, was processed at the end of February (which means that the Design Code can be implemented). Posters are placed around the village and a copy of the Plan has been made available in the Red Lion pub, the Village Stores and the Parish Council Office. This stage will finish on 17 April 2023, followed by a 2-week period to appoint an Examiner in Public (funded by SODC). By September 2023 the process should then be complete.

Village Hall Car Park

Work on the car park extension began in March and is due for completion in late April 2023. Please be tolerant when using the existing car park as there may be some intrusion into the existing parking area, until the new access and boundary fences are constructed.

James Davys

Wanted – Poll clerks

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are looking for people to work as poll clerks at the local elections on Thursday 4 May. You will receive £168 for the day, working from 6am until the finish around 10.30pm. Please get in touch as soon as possible by emailing electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk. Or for more information visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs or southoxon.gov.uk/electionjobs.

Beating of the Bounds

It is ten years since we last beat the bounds of Brightwell cum Sotwell. More recently, we have walked around the edge of Brightwell and Sotwell separately but not the whole parish. So as ancient tradition dictates we will be perambulating the 12 miles or so on Rogation Sunday which this year falls on 14 May.

The parish diaries help a lot in planning the walk. These date back many centuries and have detailed descriptions of previous beating the bounds from the 1700s. In those days of course, Sotwell and Brightwell were completely separate parishes, with Clapcot (Shillingford Hill and Rush Court) under the control of Wallingford Castle. Much of the route is the same though, as are many of the landmarks listed on the way. I am sure that Rev Kev would of course recall from the same diaries that the vicar traditionally bought all those that made the whole journey a well-deserved pint in the Red Lion at the end of the walk!

In olden times, beating the bounds had a real significance. It was important to know where the edge of the parish was and there were no maps to help. Young boys were even thrown over ditches to help cement the knowledge in the collective memory of parishioners. These days it is more for fun, so come along and discover parts of the parish you may never have seen before. Gather at 10.15am Sunday 14 May at St Agatha's Church, Brightwell.

There will be a special Rogation Day service at St Agatha's Church before the congregation waves us off. There are prayers to send us on our way before we leave at 10.30am, so make certain that you arrive in plenty of time for our departure. Children are very welcome but please no dogs as many of the landowners have requested this due to unfenced lambs, nesting wild birds etc that will be in the fields, woods and meadows we have to walk through.

Jason Debney

Easter: St Agatha's with St James'

Late spring brings the climax of the Christian year as we journey through Palm Sunday and Holy Week, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. We journey with Jesus as we recall his triumphant entry into Jerusalem soon followed by the last supper with his disciples, his betrayal, arrest, unjust trial, sentencing, abuse and execution. He therefore identifies with all the human pain and suffering in the world.

But then he transforms it, by rising again from death on that first Easter morning, bringing new found hope when all seems lost. This is evidenced by the change in his disciples from despair to overwhelming joy, empowered by the Holy Spirit to change the world as his witnesses, no longer fearing their own death as they knew it was not the end. No-one would give their life for a lie, and theories about body snatchers and some sort of mass-hallucination are a weak explanation by those who prefer to avoid the historical evidence. So, join us as we worship our risen, ascended and glorified Saviour, in the presence and power of his Holy Spirit.

Dates for your diary:

- Sunday 2 April: 10am Palm Sunday Procession (with donkey) from St James' to St Agatha's
- Thursday 6 April: 7pm The Lord's Supper joining with Brightwell Free Church
- Friday 7 April: 11am Good Friday Service in Wallingford Market Place
- Sunday 9 April: 9.30am Easter Festival Communion at St Agatha's
- Sunday 16 April: 9.30am Service at St James' instead of St Agatha's
- Sunday 30 April: 10.45am APCM at St Agatha's
- Thursday 18 May: 8pm Ascension Team Communion at St Agatha's
- Saturday 20 May: 2-4pm Spring Fair at St Agatha's
- Sunday 28 May: 9.30am Pentecost Festival Communion at St Agatha's
- Sunday 2 July: 7pm Summer Concert at St Agatha's

PS. I trust that we can extend a warm welcome to anyone and everyone coming into our village as we do in the church, where building relationships and an inclusive community are at the heart of the Christian faith. Where there is hurt or disagreement, we pray for healing and reconciliation, forgiving as we hope to be forgiven ourselves by the grace of God.

The Revd Kevin Beer

Ring for the King

Would you like to join the bell ringers at St Agatha's to 'Ring for the King', on the day of the Coronation, Saturday 6 May. It will be a challenge for you to learn to handle a bell safely ahead of the big day. And a challenge for us, to give you the practice time to do so. If you are keen and ready for an intensive 3 week course, involving some afternoon sessions, contact me johnedowling@hotmail.com, or call me (after 28 March) on 07979 863649. Or call Rev Kev.

John Dowling

Community Association

Village Quiz 11 March

It was great to restart this event after a three year break due to Covid restrictions. The event was very well attended and an exciting time was had by all. After a closely fought contest, we would like to congratulate The Bells, who were the winning team. A big thank you goes to Tom for organising the event, to the catering team for all their hard work and to the previous winners, Universally Challenged, for setting such an such an interesting and entertaining quiz.

Coronation Street Party - 7 May 2023 12-3pm

With the support of members of the Parish Council and the Red Lion we are organising a street party to celebrate the Coronation. It will have the same format as the Jubilee one last year. The Street will be closed and tables set up, please bring friends, chairs, food and something to drink and enjoy a convivial time together.

Village Fete – 1 July 2023 2-4.30pm at Moreton House

We are working on plans for one of the highlights of the village calendar. Please put the date in your diary and let us hope for pleasant weather! More details to follow in the next *Villager*.

Jumble Sale – 16 September 2023 at Jubilee Pavilion

We are planning to hold a Jumble Sale this autumn, so please hang on to those winter woollies and summer outfits and accessories to donate for this event. More details to follow in the next edition – in the meantime for any advance queries contact Lynn Burridge.

James Davys

Welcome and thank you

Welcome to *The Villager's* new Distribution manager – Tony Guntrip. Tony is taking over from Keith Brooks. Thank you Keith for all your work and commitment to *The Villager* over 12 years. Tony will be dropping off the bundles of *Villagers* to each of the distributors from now on, so if you have any queries please contact Tony on 07754 690264. And thank you to Claire Lynch who has recently taken over the distribution in Mackney Lane.

Helen Connor

Save the Children

Back in September last year Clive Collett made a commitment to grow his hair for Save the Children. What started off as a bit of a joke turned into a long wait and very long hair!! However, the end result was worth it. Clive's Haircut has raised (at the time of writing this article) £2377.00 plus £400.00 in gift aid. An amazing amount thanks to the support of family, friends and the community. Plus, having the haircut by Nick in the Red Lion supported our local pub. Thank you Corinne and Mouse for making it such a good night.



We are truly blessed to live in such a supportive and caring village. You can be assured this money has gone directly to Save the Children to help with their work in Turkey and Syria. Officials estimate 4.6 million children who live in Turkey and more than 2.5 million children in Syria, are affected.

In both countries, Save the Children is prioritising the immediate, lifesaving needs of families by:

- Temporary shelter tents and essential emergency relief items, including blankets, warm clothing, heaters, baby food and nappies to keep children and their families warm and safe in the freezing conditions
- Provide cash to families who have lost their homes and belongings so they can buy food, medicine and other essentials
- Ensure families can keep clean, healthy and protected from illness and diseases by providing access to clean water, and essential hygiene and sanitation items
- Help reunite unaccompanied children with their families or support safe alternative care arrangements
- Provide psychological support to children and their caregivers to help them overcome the traumatic experience they've been through.

As the situation stabilises, Save the Children plan to further support families to recover and rebuild their lives by:

- Helping them to access health services

- Setting up safe spaces for children where they can play, receive emotional support, restore a sense of normality and just be children again
- Strengthening child protection systems, to ensure the most vulnerable children are identified and receiving tailored support where needed
- Supporting children to continue learning, by distributing learning materials and setting up safe learning environments if needed.

We will give an update in the next *Villager* on the work being done by Save the Children and their partners in Ukraine and the displaced people across Europe.

With the conflicts, disasters and famine happening across the world it is good to stop and reflect the wonderful generosity of spirit there is in the world to help in these awful situations.

Spring is coming; please remember when sorting out your gardens our Plant Sale on Saturday 13 May (10am-12 noon – The Square). We promise to turn those spare plants into money to help children both in the UK and across the world. Many thanks.

Celia & the Save the Children Team

Village Stores and Post Office

With Easter fast approaching you can rely on your local Community Shop and Post Office to have lots of Easter goodies, as well as being there to send and returning your parcels, letters, cards, banking services, paying bills, collecting travel money etc.

Our Easter opening hours for both the Shop and Post Office are as follows:

7 April - Good Friday 9am-1pm

8 April – Saturday 9am-1pm

9 April – Easter Sunday closed

10 April – Bank Holiday Monday closed

We are closing Sunday and Monday over Easter to give our team of volunteers and staff a well-earned rest to enjoy Easter.

From all the team we hope you have a happy and restful Easter with your friends and family.

Village Stores Management Committee & the Team

Brightwell cum Sotwell Primary School

The weeks have certainly flown by since the start of the new year.

We have had visitors and trips aplenty over the last few weeks, all of which have really helped enrich our curriculum. KS1 children enjoyed a fantastic afternoon of Science with a workshop that showed them all sorts of fabulous experiments and our Year 1 class had a visit from PCSO Sue Haynes, who came in to share the PC Ben story with them and talk to them about the important job that police officers do to keep us all safe. Year 2 took a trip to Pizza Express in Wallingford to find out just how they make their delicious pizzas as part of their topic 'Around the World'; they even got to bring a pizza home for their tea!

The beginning of February saw the start of Children's Mental Health Week, something we take very seriously at Brightwell. To celebrate it some of our older children took part in some very special challenges: every day of the week our Year 5 and 6 class tackled a different type of challenge, with the idea that it would bring them together as a group. They had a lot of fun making self portraits out of things you could find outside, creating games with limited rules and equipment and special kinds of hats. Meanwhile, our Year 3 class chose to enter the special virtual treasure hunt and did so well, they got their name on the website leader board!

Our biggest event though has been our recent whole-school project based all around The Wizard of Oz. It kicked off with a fabulous theatre show and workshop, which led to all of the children, from the very youngest to the very oldest, all producing some amazing Wizard of Oz themed writing, including diary entries, newspaper articles, wanted posters and adverts for special shoes! The project culminated with a big exhibition of all the work that the children had produced, which we shared with our families. Oh, and of course, our World Book Day was all themed around the Wizard of Oz, with a special visit from a real life Toto and the Wallingford School sixth form cast of their own performance of The Wizard of Oz!

As you see, the staff and children of Brightwell school have packed in much fabulous learning and many great experiences in a very short space of time!

Sue Potts, Headteacher

Meet Helen Connor, Editor – *The Villager*

Helen's by line has been at the bottom of page 2 for 11 years. She has lived in the parish of Brightwell since 1995 and has been playing a prominent role in the village for over a decade, serving on any number of committees. She helped set up Brightwell Supporting Refugees which she co-chairs, and is secretary of the WI although she is about to step down from that role. For the last 12 years she has lived on her own though not by choice. Her husband Mike died in 2010.



"Until then I'd been very fortunate. I'd had a very easy time of it". She grew up in Edinburgh, the youngest of 3, in a very happy, loving family. They didn't have much money but she got into a good high school and from there went to university. "My degree was in maths and geography. I got a job as soon as I left university, got on with things and then I met Mike".

In short – she sailed through. And then the first bombshell. Mike was diagnosed with bowel cancer aged 29, a year after they married. He recovered, but what they didn't know was that he had inherited an altered gene, MSH2, which predisposes you to cancers. The next bombshell was being told that they would never have children, but when Helen was 38, her daughter Lizzie was born - a miracle baby. So life continued to be sweet until the next cancer diagnosis when Mike was turning 60.

They had two years together knowing that the prognosis was bad. Helen nursed him at home right till the end, which is what he wanted. She deeply regrets that he didn't live longer. "He was only 62 and there was loads that we could have done together."

So where does she stand on the current debate about human genome editing? It is now possible, but still illegal, to alter the DNA in a human embryo so that some cancers and other diseases could be avoided not only in the individual about to be born but also in their offspring down the track. If the law were to be changed, people like Mike and his family would be spared the burden of inherited illnesses.

"I've seen the effect of this inherited gene on the Connor family, not just the loss of my husband and his sisters at an early age which has been heart breaking, but also the mental strain on those younger family members who have inherited it (luckily not Lizzie). So on balance I would support human

genome editing in these instances, as long as the scientific evidence is there to show no other negative consequences for the individuals concerned. It would have to be strictly controlled.”

Being busy and uber active in the community has been Helen’s way of coping with her grief. She threw herself into lots of activities after retiring from work, including volunteering at the Pitt Rivers museum, then the Ashmolean which inspired her to do a course in Art History. “It was a big change. My field was policy research but I’ve always liked going to galleries and looking at Art without really knowing about it. It was fabulous to get an understanding of it from pre medieval to present day.”

When several more women in the village lost their husbands, they formed a widows group, a weekly get together that became known as the Wednesday Club. “Talking to someone who has also lost their husband and knows how it feels is definitely helpful. I couldn’t have sat around on my own at home and I do tend to say yes to things, so one thing led to another and when I was invited to edit *The Villager* I thought that sounds interesting I’ll have a go at that.”

So does she enjoy it and if so why?

“Very much so. I enjoy the contact with the contributors and *The Villager* team. I like knowing what’s going on and, I know this sounds very geeky, I actually enjoy moving text around and fitting everything in. It’s a bit like a jigsaw.” As for the editorial policy, Helen focuses on making the content as local as possible, and avoids anything political or too controversial. But she says it is time to give over the editorship to someone else.

I wondered if Mike’s death changed Helen’s outlook on the world in any way?

“I would like to be more measured. Somebody recently said if you can’t say anything nice don’t say anything at all. I can be a bit direct and I do sometimes say things that I regret saying.”

Something else? “I like to help where I can and I’ve learnt not to do things that make me unhappy.” I am quite happy with my life. I have a wonderful daughter and supportive family and friends. I live on my own but I’m not lonely. You see I come from a family where you just get on with life. It’s my presbyterian background. You cope. You pull yourself together. It’s very Scottish.”

Alison Leigh

The Wednesday Group still meets in the pub every Wednesday at 6pm. If anyone wants to know more about it, contact Gill Dexter on 01491 837110.

Stewart Village Hall

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the hall, using it for regular groups, classes and meetings as well as for family parties and celebrations. You will have noticed some new heaters which we were able to install with support from our SODC Councillors, the Community Association and Brightfest. Because of this support we have been able to carry out some essential repairs to our lighting, install a timer on the boiler and install the amazing new radiant heaters in the hall. All of these help to improve efficiency and make the hall a warm and comfortable space. The heaters are very efficient, and most users find they only have them on for short periods to get the benefit of them.

The Trustees continue to move forward with the project to redevelop the hall to safeguard it for the future and to ensure it meets the needs of our growing community. Please come along to our **AGM on 4 April** where, over a glass of wine, we will share some initial drawings and plans with you and seek your feedback and input. **See the enclosed leaflet for more information.**

Finally, thank everyone taking part in the SO Charitable Lottery, we have had several winners of ‘free tickets to the next week’s draw’ but no winners (yet) of the jackpot of £25,000 – we keep our fingers crossed for everyone taking part. This month’s star prize is a Centre Parks holiday worth up to £1000. If you would like to get involved tickets are £1 each. Go to www.socharitable.co.uk/support/stewart-village-hall

If you have any queries or would like to book the hall, please visit our website: stewartvillagehall.org.uk or contact Shena at shenaluck@btinternet.com or on 01491 834543.

Annette Kilworth

Brightwell Art Club

Brightwell Art Club meets on Saturday mornings (10-12 noon, term time) at the Village Hall. We welcome beginners as well as more experienced painters, and usually have a tutor with them helping on a differing theme each week.

25 March - Portrait from a live model (tutor: Pete Annells). 1 April - Mixed media (tutor: Janet Lueck). Next term starts 22 April.

For further information, email: izdarby@icloud.com.

Isabella Darby

Brightwell cum Sotwell Environment group

Swan Stream and Wood

Clearance of dead material and trimming of the hedge has been carried out to make way for new growth. At least two of the goat willows (*salix caprea*) which were planted on the area by the stream opposite the orchard are doing very well. The trees, also known as pussy willows, are very good for birds, butterflies, moths and a wide range of other insects. They are also a good caterpillar food plant and are used for nesting materials, providing a good habitat. We hope they will increase our insect count, a topic for our talk, see below.

I noted frog spawn in my pond at home on 22 February which was 10 days earlier than last year. However, the subsequent cold spell slowed up production. It's encouraging that a barn owl has been sighted quartering the Haycroft (the meadow opposite the garage). The owl boxes are ready to be erected shortly. We hope the tawny owls which have also been active around St Agatha's churchyard will also benefit from them.

Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands farm was 56.6mm and 4.9mm in January and February respectively. By comparison, the local averages for the months are about 54.9mm and 41.3mm based on the records in 'Portrait of a Rural Parish' published by the group in 2013.

Overall, from the Met Office report, the winter (Dec–Feb) was a little below average temperature with a very cold spell in December with the rainfall also being below the 1991–2020 average, mainly due to February which was the driest since 1993 with only around 13% of the average for the general area. Despite the variations in rainfall the Environment Agency report that reservoir levels are above the long term average with groundwater largely normal.

Talk

There will be a talk by John Bloomfield in the Village Hall on Tuesday 28 March starting at 8pm: 'Doorstep safari: Insects in and around Brightwell and the Wittenham Clumps'. John has recorded some rare species and takes amazing photos which he will be showing. All welcome and entry is free.

Steve Capel-Davies
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Environment Group

Brightwell Supporting Refugees

On 24 February, to mark the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Brightwell Supporting Refugees screened the new National Geographic film *Ukraine: War from the Air*, produced and directed by Jobe Lubman for Windfall Films. Our screening was the UK premiere which was in itself a coup, but in addition we got to talk to the Governor of Chernihiv province, Viacheslav Chaus, via a live zoom link to Ukraine. Chernihiv is the largest of the Ukrainian provinces and encompasses the huge swathe of land north of the city of Chernihiv to the Belarus border. 85% of infrastructure in the province was destroyed in first few days of the war. Millions of Ukrainians, mainly women and children, fled to safety overseas. Twelve families found refuge in Brightwell. Viacheslav is Lesya Chaus's husband. Lesya and their children live at The Woodman with David Dugan and Alison Leigh. David is the Executive Producer of the film.

Below you'll find an extract from the conversation with Viacheslav Chaus conducted through an interpreter, Oksana Solomou.

The BSR charity is run by a group of trustees who are elected each year. We are looking for new trustees so if you would be interested in becoming a trustee please contact Ann or Helen at brightwellrefugees@gmail.com and they can tell you more about it.

The Annual Meeting, on Wednesday 29 March at 8pm in the Church Room, St Agatha's, is an opportunity for everyone to hear more about our work.

BSR's next event will be a Barn Dance on Saturday 22 April at 7pm in the village hall. Music from Sow's Ear. Tickets from the shop (adults £15, children £7.50, including food) or contact brightwellrefugees@gmail.com.

Q & A with Viacheslav Chaus from Chernihiv Province, Ukraine

D Dugan (moderator): How are people feeling one year on? How is morale?
V Chaus: The people are strong. What they feel is rage.

D Dugan: What does your ordinary day look like?

V Chaus: Sometimes the day lasts longer than 24 hours. It's non-stop. It's absolutely amazing what you appreciate after the impact of war – for example a cup of coffee. For a month people didn't have light, water, heat. Not only that but after the last bridge was destroyed there were seven days without any food supplies at all from anywhere because nobody could enter the city. It's different now because now we can plan. There are two main tasks, the first is

to provide security, so we are building extra defences – like trenches – to prepare for the next attack and the second is to rebuild all the damaged buildings and accommodate the displaced people. That’s my daily life – procuring whatever is needed.

Audience: A lot of elderly people stayed behind. How are they being provided for?

V Chaus: There is a lot of humanitarian help from outside, plus the state is still paying pensions regularly. Since June we have been constructing pre fabs for temporary accommodation for those who have lost their homes. We have already provided 2,000 homes, but over 11,000 homes have been destroyed.

Audience: How can we help?

V Chaus: You are already helping by taking care of our families. Being able to get on with our work and know that our families are safe is so important; we are so grateful to everyone in the village for providing safe havens for Ukrainian families. Keep supporting us. Keep paying your taxes so that your government can continue sending us military aid.

D Dugan: You beat the Russians once before, but do you think you can withstand the next offensive?

V Chaus: We now have experience. We’ve done it once. We know what it took. We are now better prepared. We have had time to improve our defences. We have more guns and more military assistance, and there is more and more arriving every day from our western allies so we hope we will be able to do it again.

D Dugan: Can you win?

V Chaus: There is no question like that for us. It’s not if we win, it’s when we win. The only solution is victory.

BSR wants to thank Oksana Solomou for interpreting, Jobe Lubman, the director/producer of the film for attending, Windfall Films for supplying this version of the film and most of all a big thankyou to John Burdass for his technical wizardry that made the live cross possible.

Alison Leigh

Win a bottle of FIZZ

The Coronation quiz in aid of our Village Hall (kindly donated by Cholsey Day Centre fundraisers) costs £2 and can be purchased from the shop or from Shena on 01491834543. There really is a bottle of FIZZ for the winner!

Brightwell Preschool

Our little pre-schoolers are always busy, they never stop. They are always investigating, moving, risk-taking, exerting energy - the engine room for the village. The children are busy learning about our core books: having been busy going on expeditions to find bears in caves (We're Going on a Bear Hunt), they are now busy building homes for pigs which are usually blown down by a hungry wolf (The Three Little Pigs). Following their interests, they were busy travelling around the world making trains and boats and planes and buses out of anything they could find, then driving passengers to far off lands, or sometimes just to the shops, equally exciting it would appear. Outside in the community, our little people have visited the Village Stores to buy snacks, they have busily walked to the ducks, the orchard and the stream. Busy, busy.

It is hard to imagine a time when we are able to stand still to reflect, but with the help of an Ofsted inspection last term, we were able to celebrate all we do and the amazing place we are. With so many changes for everyone in the last few years we are delighted that Ofsted acknowledge how our "warm relationships...help children develop a strong sense of belonging" and that they "feel safe, secure and are ready to learn". It is fantastic that they highlight the importance of how we "teach children about kindness and respect" and that we create an environment that is "home-from-home".

We feel passionate about our village and Ofsted note how we offer "good opportunities to be part of, and find out about"... our "own community". We are very lucky to have such an experienced team here at Brightwell Preschool, who "create an exciting curriculum", "plan appropriate, inspiring activities" and always "praise achievements". Indeed, they have said that our children "particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive individual, tailored support". All of our children "reach their full potential".

We are a happy place, a fun place and a nurturing place and we are pleased this has at last been recognised. Well done Team Brightwell Preschool, we know it is all about the people and the community.

Natasha Hillier

Wallingford Country Market

Wallingford Easter Market will take place on Maundy Thursday, 6 April, which replaces our usual Friday market, when Easter bakes and treats will be available.

The Red Lion

With winter soon behind us (fingers crossed), we are looking forward to spring arriving in the village and us having the pub looking great for some outside dining and drinks in the sunshine. We have some events in the pipeline and we would love you to join us.

Coming up first we have our monthly quiz on Tuesday 4 April and we welcome you to enter a team. Any size team from 1-8, the cost is £4pp when we run it and all profits go towards the thatch and also the general repair & upkeep of the pub which I will go into later on. On quiz nights we serve chilli & rice with garlic bread for just £10 with both meat & veggie options available. It's always best to let me know how many people are eating when you book your team to ensure we make enough. We haven't ever run out before but there's always a first time! It's also the return of Boogie Bingo coming up on Friday 14 April. This really is a night not to be missed if you love a laugh, a sing along and just a great night out. I promise you, you will leave with a big smile on your face, have the most amount of fun possible and laugh the night away. BB gets fully booked every time we run it so please *please* book your table if you want to come along. We serve burgers throughout the night with a wide option of varieties so you can come for a night out, have dinner and play the game.

We are also very excited to have booked live music for Sunday 30 April from The Deluded playing the likes of The Who, Ocean Colour Scene, The Kinks and The Small Faces plus much more. If this is your kind of music, you are going to love these guys. We are their first ever gig and without any other performances they have already been booked for festivals in Henley & Jericho to perform in front of thousands of people. We are delighted that they are coming to us first so come and listen before you have to pay a lot of money to watch them live! Come on down for the Meat Draw at 6pm and the band will be starting shortly after.

Now onto the not so great news. As a village pub, we are very lucky that we are well supported by many and that most nights we are busy for food and have a great crowd of regular drinkers. Even with this, however, we find ourselves in the same tricky position as many other pubs: we just aren't viable any more. With a huge 12% increase on our rent, utility bills and the cost of food and drink rising every day, the time has come where we must increase our prices to try and stay afloat. We have always tried to keep our prices fair but with the rising costs we simply have no choice and we trust you all understand. Please do not think we are hiking them up for our benefit. It's the

time we are living in and quality produce, staff costs and all other bills means we have no choice. The pub cannot keep losing money. Our lease is up in September when we hope to negotiate with our landlords to ensure a viable pub going forward for a long time ahead. No-one wants to see this beautiful pub closed and we want to be here for years to come!

Moving on, we want to thank everyone who helped contribute towards the 'Fund the Thatch' fund that we have been doing for just over 2 years. By playing the weekly bonus ball, buying meat draw tickets or attending the quizzes, you helped raise over £3.5k towards the costs of having the ridge done on the roof. We will continue to run these weekly draws and we hope you continue to play. We have another £4k to go towards the roof and, as many know, our landlords do not pay any costs towards the upkeep of the pub. All funds raised from these events go towards the upkeep of this 400 year old building which I'm sure you can all appreciate is never ending and please don't even ask about the water leak!! 😊

To finish, we just ask that you continue to use your local and enjoy your time here. We will have more live music, more events and we would love to see you here. We are planning on attempting Red Lion Sausagefest again this year but the date is yet to be decided. I'd imagine it will be mid-September so keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages or our website and get the date in your diary once confirmed. Thank you as always.

Corinne, Mouse and Ruby

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell WI

Our Annual Meeting took place on 14 March this year (2023). Three members of the committee stood down, Anne Brooker (President), Helen Connor (secretary) and Gill Dexter (refreshment organiser). They were all presented with beautiful pots of spring bulbs and a handmade card. The treasurer presented the accounts and the committee reduced the subscription this coming year by £10. A new committee was elected including 2 new faces, Monica Sheard and Karin Matthews. After the business we enjoyed Scottish Dancing led by our own Helen Connor.

Two book groups, a knit group, a large quilting group continue; the swimmers are down to 3 regulars. Plans are in hand for various garden visits during the summer.

Any enquiries are best sent to brightwellcumshotwellwi@gmail.com.

Annie Brooker - President

Out and About

Wallingford Museum opens for 2023

A new exhibition, 'House Detective: history behind the door', traces the fascinating changes in 12 houses in the High Street and the people who lived there. Also on show: '50 years of TWAS' exhibition which celebrates how a local archaeological society has discovered some of Wallingford's history and the large new model of Wallingford Castle with glimpses of the local life of the 'Queen of Crime', Agatha Christie. Opening hours are 2-5pm Tuesdays-Fridays and 10.30am-5pm Saturdays.

Earth Trust Lambing Festival

Head to Little Wittenham on 1 and 2 April. Visitors can explore the working farmyard where expectant ewes and new born lambs will be keeping cosy in the lambing shed. There will also be tractor-trailer rides, games, stalls, goats and much more. Catering will be provided by a range of suppliers including Earth Trust tenant shepherdess Emma's Ewesful Acres, and local roastery Horsebox Coffee, to ensure everyone is fuelled up for fun. See www.EarthTrust.org.uk for ticket prices and availability.

Wallingford U3A

Wallingford U3A (University of the Third Age) meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm at Crowmarsh Village Hall. We are a non-academic organisation which exists to advance the general education of people who are not in full time employment. Membership is open to all. Speakers cover many topics of interest and members are encouraged to ask questions at the end of the talk. Then we serve tea and biscuits and chat.

Once a month, during Spring and Summer, we organise a day coach outing to places of interest. Annually we ask an agent to arrange a 5 day holiday in the UK. This year we are visiting Chester and North Wales in July.

We also hold monthly group activities including Book Reading, Current Affairs, Scrabble & Poetry Reading usually at members' houses and we regularly organise Sunday pub lunches. We pay an annual subscription of £18. A monthly Newsletter is emailed to members and information is also available on our website u3asites.org.uk/Wallingford. We welcome new members living in Wallingford and the surrounding villages. Do visit one of our monthly Wednesday meetings. Feel free to phone Lee Selman (Chairman) on 01491 838478.

Wallingford Accessible Boat Club WABC

WABC is a charitable, volunteer organisation that makes boating on our particular stretch of the River Thames a reality for disabled people within Wallingford, the surrounding area and beyond. Our Wheelyboat, WOW-one, is a very strong and stable flat-bottomed Power Boat measuring around 6.2m x 2.3m with a drop-down bow door to enable persons with disabilities (wheelchair or ambulant) to easily board and disembark. Trips may be booked on our web page www.wabc.org.uk and are accompanied by a fully qualified crew of two, trained to RYAL2 and IWHC standards.

Voyages are generally bookable for up to 2 hours, although longer cruises for fishing, bird watching, or even just cruising may also become available. Carers will normally travel with their companion(s) and take responsibility for their colleague. We make no charge for bookings although are always very thankful for donations which can also be made via www.wabc.org.uk.

Two WABC founder members will present an illuminating talk planned for an open meeting of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell WI on Tuesday 9 May at 7.30pm.

Andrew Stevens – WABC Trustee

Wallingford Photographic Club

Events and talks are on Thursdays at 7:30pm. 6 April is a journey around Namibia (with Eddy and Pam Lane). Our annual combined portfolio competition is on 13th where members arrange four photos on a theme, and our architecture competition. We will have a members' evening on 20th (guests welcome though). Mark and Judy Buckley-Sharp's Journey in Printing on 27th. Our End of Season Competition is on 4 May and AGM on 11th. We are also pleased to announce that we will be holding an exhibition in Wallingford in early September over Bunkfest weekend! Watch this space...

Phil Swarbrick

Nora's Kitchen at the Bach Centre

Nora's Kitchen is re-opening after our winter break for drinks and cakes Tuesday 4 April 10.30-2.30 and then with our full menu from Tuesday 11 April. We are also recruiting for The Bach Centre/Nora's Kitchen. Please email for details if you are interested in joining us centaury@bachcentre.com.

The Blewbury Community Shed

Every man needs a shed, but if you haven't got a shed, or have no idea how to make the most of the one you have got, the BlewShed could be the place for you. It exists to instruct and enable folk to do practical tasks and develop new skills for themselves.

Recent meetings have included a wonderful talk and demonstration by Peter Cockrell of how to restore 16th century 'wattle and daub' (14 Feb). Peter learned how to do this out of necessity when he and his wife moved into a 16th century home built in the reign of Henry VIII, which needed extensive repair and renewal of its wattle and daub panels between the oak frames. On 14 March member Phil Farrand talked about solar powered cars and the World Solar Challenge, an Australian race for solar-powered cars from Darwin to Adelaide.

A number of people have enquired about DIY courses for beginners. This is on our agenda starting this year. If you are interested, please leave a message on the BlewShed website. <https://blewshed.home.blog/>

Regular Shed opening times are Tuesday and Saturday afternoons 1.30-4.00pm and also Thursday mornings 9.30-12.30 by prior arrangement. 'Club night' meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30-9pm in the Shed (opposite the tennis club) and everyone is welcome, whether or not you are a member. We look forward to seeing you. BlewShed annual membership fee is £25 and is excellent value.

Mike Wrottesley, BlewShed secretary

(I think we need a BRIGHTshed. Ed)

Second-hand Bike Sale

We are looking for any donations for our massive second-hand bike sale on Sunday 14 May as part of Wallingford Car Rally. Contact us at the address below if you have a bike that you would like to donate, and we will arrange to have it collected from you. We accept children's and adult bikes, scooters, bike accessories, wheeled toys etc. If you want to sell a bike then bring it along to the Kinecroft on the morning between 9-10.30am. If it sells you will get 75% of the selling price and The Treehouse School will get 25%. If it doesn't sell it costs you nothing. If you are looking to buy a bike, put the date in your diary! More details from joryman@btinternet.com 07747801264.

VILLAGE DIARY

See page 7 church services

April

1&2	Earth Trust lambing Festival	Earth Trust	
4	Stewart Village Hall AGM	VH	7.30pm
4	Red Lion pub quiz	Red Lion	
6	Wallingford Easter Market		
14	Boogie Bingo	Red Lion	
22	BSR Barn Dance	VH	7pm
24	Apprentice Fair, Didcot Civic Hall		9.30-2.30
30	Live music 'The Deluded'	Red Lion	6pm

May

4	Parish Council elections	VH	7am-10pm
7	Coronation Street Party		12-3pm
9	WI talk by WABC founders (see page 22)	VH	7.30pm
13	Plant Sale	The Square	10-12
14	Beating of the Bounds	St Agatha's	10.15am
14	Second-hand bike sale	Kinecroft	

Advance Notice

1 July	Village Fete, Moreton House
2 July	Summer Concert, St Agatha's Church
16 September	Jumble Sale (Community Association)

Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Friday 14 & Thursday 27 April
	Friday 12 & Thursday 15 May
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 6 & 20 (extra brown) April
	Friday 5 & Thursday 18 May

Village website

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