

# THE VILLAGER



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Many events postponed and cancelled

River Thames - Keen Edge Ferry

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Environment news and bees

# THE VILLAGER

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**Items for the next edition should be sent to the Editor by 7 May 2020.** *The Villager* is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village.

## Editorial

I hope that this finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

We took a decision earlier in the week to abandon printing and distributing the Villager as a result of measures being taken to limit the spread of the coronavirus. We felt the gathering together required for collating and stapling the copies and then distributing them was not a good use of the voluntary workforce which is better deployed on essentials like delivery of food from the shop and helping those in need. So, you are seeing it only online. There is a link to our advertisers on the Home and Villager pages of the website as we couldn't incorporate them well into this document, but have also listed them here on pages 25-27.

I have had to make changes to many of the dates and published events as the emergency developed. Some might have changed again since writing this, so do look out for updates on the Brightwell Community Facebook page and village website, and if you can go out, on notices around the village. It is a fast-moving picture, but I thought it best to keep in the details of many events in the coming months so that we have all something to look forward to when hopefully this is over.

As you will know by now, the Parish Council is coordinating a parish wide response to the emergency based on the advice from Public Health England. An update, from Sue Robson, Chair of the Parish Council, is on the next page. In addition, the village shop has introduced a home delivery service, contact is 01491 835551, and the Red Lion is offering a takeaway drinks service (see page 8). I would like to thank everyone who is working or volunteering to help at this very difficult time; you are all very much appreciated.

You might think our cover picture is rather strange at this time - it's the Home Guard marching past the war memorial on VE day 1945 (from the history group archives). With hindsight perhaps we should have chosen something else, but it is an interesting glimpse of the centre of the village 75 years ago and may invoke some memories for some of you. It's there because we had hoped to focus on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (VE75) in this issue. At the time, of writing, we are not sure how much of our planned celebrations will take place, if any, but have left them in for now (see page 12).

Keep well, keep social distancing and keep washing your hands – I already feel like Lady Macbeth!

*Helen Connor*

## Corona update from the Parish Council

Hopefully by now everyone will have received a letter with information about how the village is aiming to cope with Corona. If you haven't, please email [covid19bcs@outlook.com](mailto:covid19bcs@outlook.com) or ring 01491826968 and we will get one to you. We were overwhelmed and delighted with the level of response we received from our call for volunteers.

We have spent the last few days dividing the village into geographical areas with a champion leading each group and a team of volunteers helping. Once these are up and running we anticipate that each team will have a WhatsApp group so if a need arises they can, between them, quickly provide assistance. If anyone needs help they should contact us by email COVID-19 or telephone 01491826968 or a letter in the parish mailbox. These will all be checked daily on a rota basis by another team of volunteers (the admins). Please can we reiterate that this system is to provide vital support in an emergency - it is not to replace any measures you already have in place.

We know we have a very caring village and expect that everyone will be paying particular attention to neighbours who may need help at this odd time. We are also aware that some folk may be finding this time particularly stressful, so if you need to talk to someone, we have trained professionals on our volunteer list who could help, please let us know.

I think the most important advice that's coming through loud and clear is stay home or stay away from other people. We are so lucky to live here where at least we can go for a walk.

*Sue Robson*

## Parish Council News

### Planning applications

The Parish Council continues to monitor planning applications that are submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and comment accordingly. Do remember, however, that all villagers are invited to respond to planning application on the SODC website and the more comments that are received the more notice is likely to be taken of the opinions. If anyone has any questions or queries regarding the Parish Council, you are welcome to come to the public participation section of the Council's monthly meetings. Please let our parish clerk know in advance if you would like to come.

## Weather damage

Hopefully we are coming to the end of a winter which has brought more than its fair share of wind and rain related issues in the village. We are lucky not to have experienced the terrible flooding problems experienced by some, but our roads have periodically been flooded. We would like to thank Sam from the garage and other villagers who helped to clear the ditches and gulleys to alleviate the problems. We also had several trees blown down by Storms Ciara and Dennis – thanks must also go to the villagers who quickly cleared the trees and made the areas safe. Hopefully spring will arrive soon!

## Annual Parish Meeting

By the time you get this *Villager*, the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting will be on the Parish Council web site. The date has been changed from Tuesday 28 April to 26 May at 7.30pm in the village hall and it's a chance for you to come along to hear about what the Parish Council gets up to and ask questions as well as sampling the delicious wine from Brightwell Vineyard and snacks from our Village Stores.

## VE 75 day

We were also very much looking forward to the village VE75day celebrations on Friday 8 May, though this will not take place as planned.

*Sue Robson*

## Community Association

### Pub Quiz in The Red Lion - 24 February

Many thanks to everybody who attended this very successful evening: to Mike who set the questions, the CA team who organised the event and to the Red Lion who generously allowed us to host the event.

### Village Quiz in the village hall - 7 March

Once again, many thanks to everybody who came along to this fun evening. We are very grateful to the "Well Spring Snails" who set a very interesting and enjoyable quiz, with many new innovations including a cheese tasting round.

After a very closely fought competition, many congratulations to the "Universally Challenged" team on winning the silver salver this year. We are very grateful to Tom who once again organized the evening and to the Community Association team for all their hard work in making the evening such a success.

## Village fete at Sotwell House - postponed

Sadly, due to the latest Government Covid-19 advice and the duty of care that we have to our community, the CA Committee have regrettably reached the decision to **postpone the Fete** until later in the year.

This was a very difficult decision but it is our firm intention that this much-loved event will take place later in the summer. We will provide updates on the village website and full details to follow in the next *Villager*.

In September, we will be holding the **Safari Supper** but the date is yet to be confirmed.

*James Davys - Chairman*

## Save the Children

Sadly, it is very unlikely that this year's house to house collection will take place in the Village from Sunday 26 April to Saturday 2 May. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal collectors and hope they will lend us a hand next year.

Our annual Plant Stall in the Square was going to be held on 16 May. This again is looking very unlikely. However, depending where we are in May with the Coronavirus pandemic, we may do an impromptu sell of plants on the Green, where people could leave their unwanted plants and seedlings. We may have an honesty box for people to donate to Save the Children, if we are still social-distancing. So keep gardening and enjoy all the sunshine we have, we will keep you posted. Stay safe.

*Celia Collett*

## Save the Bone weekend 3-4 July

The Summer Ball on 4 July will now be postponed to 26 June 2021. If social gathering is possible by then, we may still be able to put on a scaled down version of the planned Band Night on 3 July. We will keep you informed.

## Rocketman Sing-Along - postponed

*Rocketman*, the epic musical fantasy about Sir Elton John's breakthrough years, due to be shown in the village hall on Saturday 18 April has been **postponed**. All tickets already purchased will be valid for a future date that is still to be decided.



The film tells the extraordinary story of the transformation of shy piano prodigy Reginald Dwight into international superstar Elton John. Lead actor Taron Egerton recently won a Golden Globe award for his performance.

Come dressed in your finest 70s/80s clothes (not obligatory!) and sing your heart out to Elton's classic songs with the on-screen lyrics. The film will be screened in cinema quality 4K High Definition with surround sound, using the village hall's fantastic new projection system.

On the new date, the hall will be arranged with tables to enjoy the film with drinks. A licensed bar will serve beer, wine and soft drinks and there will be a prize for the best costume!

*Shena Luck*

## The vicar writes...

We are living through unprecedented times and, as the situation develops, it is important that we all look out for one another and our neighbours. My thanks to the Parish Council in organising the community response, which I know many church members will naturally be supporting. Continued support for the Food Bank will be very important in the weeks to come, so please leave any donations in the box under the welcome desk at St Agatha's.

As I write, the Church of England is just beginning to respond both nationally and locally to these challenging circumstances. Our usual pattern of Sunday services at St Agatha's & St James' and other mid-week gatherings (including bellringing, choir practice and the Wednesday coffee morning) have all been suspended until further notice.

St Agatha's church building will remain open for those who wish to use it for private prayer. Many people value this and find it a great source of comfort. Prayer resources are available at the welcome desk which you may take home. You are also welcome to leave the names of any you wish to be included in the church's intercessions (with their permission).

I shall continue to say Morning Prayer in St Agatha's at 9.15am on Wednesday and will pray particularly for our local community, our nation and our world. The church is big enough for others to join me whilst avoiding close contact. You may find helpful the online prayer resources which are available on the Church of England website at [www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-liturgy-and-prayer-resources](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-liturgy-and-prayer-resources). It is likely that this will be expanded considerably over the coming days and weeks. These will be especially helpful to those self-isolating.

Please stay in touch via our website [www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk](http://www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk) notices and calendar and the Village Facebook group. Do feel free to contact me via [teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk](mailto:teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk) or by phone 01491 599873.

As our Archbishops said: "Please, therefore, join us in this great challenge; and pray for our Government and nation, for each other, and especially for those who work in our health and emergency services."

Keep the faith,

*Rev Kev*



*Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.*

## The Red Lion

Firstly, Mouse and I would like to thank everyone in the village that has supported us through our first two months of trade. It has certainly been a very busy time for us and we simply cannot thank the locals enough. We have been made to feel really welcome in the village and are already feeling well and truly at home in BcS.

As many of you know, our kitchen was closed for refurbishment in early March and after a few days of hard work, our lovely builders completely transformed it. We now have a non-slip floor, white rocked walls and ceiling which gives the kitchen the make-over it very much needed. We also installed heat lamps that hang down from the ceiling to keep food hot at all times and replaced the old windows. As the final part of this refurbishment, we made the decision that whilst the kitchen was closed, we would also decorate the dining area and it really has brightened up the room. As you can imagine, this upgrade of the kitchen/dining room came at a cost but we felt the investment was very much needed for us to take the Red Lion in the right direction. Stage 2 of the upgrade which will consist of the bar area décor and the area directly outside the kitchen will now be done later in the year when funds allow.

Last week, sadly we had to close because of the spread of the virus. We are hoping to re-open when we can but please keep an eye on social media for any updates on this. We will be guided by government guidelines and of course follow all requirements. To try and help the villagers, we have started a drinks takeaway service between 2 and 9pm, and hope to have a food service running soon so keep your eyes peeled for more information. Please come to the back entrance of the pub.

Before we sign off for this issue, we would personally like to thank Phil & Corinne Jones who are currently lovingly restoring our dining room & bar chairs. We simply could not afford to replace them all but to go along with the new decoration, they kindly offered to give the furniture a new lease of life. We will have an array of colours when we re-open which I hope you will all love as much as we do.. Warmest regards.

*Corinne, Mouse and Immy*

## BcS Environment Group

### Environment Group Talk

We were very pleased to be holding a talk by leading environmental expert and campaigner Richard Benwell entitled “Will this be the year we save the world?” on 1 May in the village hall but it is likely to be postponed. Confirmation of new date will be in the next *Villager*.

*From Extinction Rebellion invasions of the London Underground to teenage climate warriors skipping school, public demand for action on climate change and nature have become more visible and vocal. These protests come alongside more conventional scientific warnings of the urgency of action, but their demands be enough to avert dangerous climate change and halt hundreds of years of decline in our natural environment?*

In this talk about global deals on oceans, nature and climate, we will discuss whether the UK will be a leader or laggard, whether world leaders will be brave enough to agree real change, and whether anyone will notice in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell.

### Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm was 58mm for January and 95.9mm for February. Three named storms crossed the UK during February - Ciara, Dennis and Jorge - which led to the Met Office declaring this to be the wettest February and fifth wettest winter on record (since 1862) for the UK as a whole. Although this area did not receive the full brunt of the storms, the rainfall was 2 to 2.5 times the month average. It certainly felt pretty damp and the progress of the spring line can be seen moving up Church Lane although it has yet to reach as far as achieved in 2014.

It has also been the fifth warmest winter on record, although the persistent winds, especially when combined with rain, often made it feel colder. The absence of snow and minimal frost events was noticeable.

## Thermal Imaging

Several people took advantage of the camera we borrowed from SODC. It gave good insights to where improvements could be made to house insulation. As a side effect it was ideal for spotting underfloor central heating pipes and would be perfect for picking up leaks in solid floors. I once had such a problem and it cost several hundred pounds to have the system drained and gas put in to be 'sniffed' by specialist equipment. If only I had known then...

## Honeybees

We also used the camera to survey beehives which produced dramatic images of bright yellow (warm) hives glowing in a dark (cold) field. In fact, the hives were recorded to be 6-8 degrees C warmer than the surrounding environment! Honeybees keep active throughout the winter; they vibrate their wings and abdomens to generate heat and keep the colony alive. In the process of keeping warm each hive can consume around 25kg of their honey stores over the winter! During the spring and summer worker bees replenish these stores by collecting nectar from flowering plants to make honey.

Establishing a garden which supports both early and late flowering plants can make a huge difference for the survival of our honeybees. It minimises the duration of time that bees are solely dependent on their stores for survival, and prevents worker bees from wasting their energy foraging with limited results.

## Millennium Wood

As I write this, the wood is showing signs of spring with birdsong filling the air. Although still early days we hope that the planting of understorey scrub last year will soon lead to an increase of habitat to encourage not only birds but other wildlife. The ongoing threat due to ash dieback remains a major concern across the country and within the wood as the greater proportion of trees are ash. Not only are the trees threatened but also the 46 species of plants and animals that can only live on the ash tree. We will monitor the situation in our village woodland. The Sylva Foundation, which is based in Long Wittenham, has predicted the cost to the nation of the disease could be an astonishing £15 billion. They also highlight the need for vigilance for this and other invasive diseases.

We are making good progress with the creation of a pond/wetland. With the help of local scout groups, we plan to have this work complete before the end of March. I hope it doesn't mean the start of a long drought!

*Steve Capel-Davies*

## Brightwell Bees

There is just time before the end of the month to look in at the display that Viv Moll of Brightwell Bees has done in the Red Box Gallery.



She has also written these 10 Tips for Helping the Bees in 2020:

1. Plant bee-friendly flowers in your garden (check out which ones on the RHS website)
2. Better still plant a (pollinator-friendly) tree
3. Install a bee box for solitary bees - most garden centres have them
4. Be tolerant of solitary bees taking up residence in your lawn – they won't stay long!
5. Leave an area of your garden uncultivated for all wildlife, and explore what happens...
6. Keep ivy – bees love it for its nectar and pollen
7. Plant an area of your garden with wildflower seeds and watch it grow!
8. Support your local nature reserve - Earth Trust on Wittenham Clumps is our nearest with lots of great activities
9. Watch out for swarms of bees – help them by checking out local collectors on the British Beekeepers website
10. Finally, please buy local honey, it supports your local beekeeper who helps the bees

For more info, please go to: [www.brightwellbees.co.uk/](http://www.brightwellbees.co.uk/).

Happy bees make for a happier world.

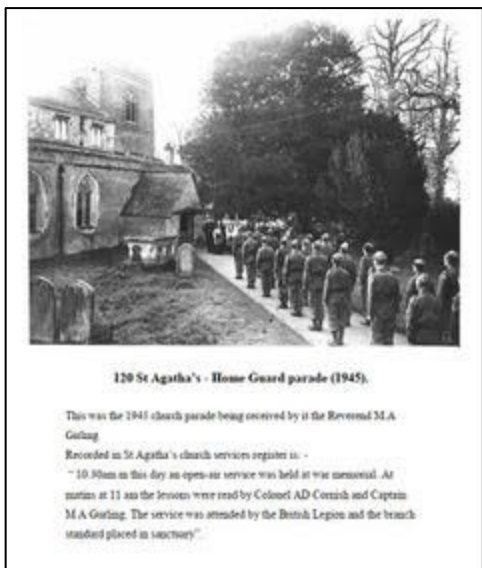
*Robert Seater*

## VE75 Day 8 May 2020 - change of plans

### Village celebrations

There is still no official advice regarding the VE Day celebrations but it is unlikely that the plans in place to celebrate it in the village will go ahead. We may not want to gather together in a single place or be allowed to, so some alternative suggestions have been made (a Plan B) for a series of happenings perhaps in people's front gardens, if it is still on.

The bagpipes could still be played down at the Rec at 3pm to the tune of 'The battle is o'er', part of the national commemoration to mark the end of the war (if that itself still goes ahead) and the VE Day plaque re-dedicated. This could be relayed live for people to watch at home. We are not sure if the flypast will take place, but it would be great if resources made that possible. Other suggestions are to download the national poem to be read out by us all at home at the allotted time 6.55pm, and the lighting of candles in our windows later in the evening.



*Home Guard Parade also pictured on our cover page*

On the Sunday, it might be possible to stream a live service of remembrance from St Agatha's to people at home in self isolation, and a small group lay wreaths on the war memorial as the last post is played. This also could be filmed live into people's homes via the internet.

All food for thought – any other ideas welcome. And, to stress again, we do not know how much of the national commemorations will be cancelled or postponed.

## WW2 Memories



It was mentioned in the last *Villager* that in the run up to the VE75 celebrations, villagers will be encouraged to write up or speak about their memories about WW2 or VE Day for these to be shared with others, in a display in the church or pub. These could be about your experiences as a child or teenager as an evacuee or being bombed, or a memory of a relative who is no longer with you, or other family stories about the war. You may have some memorabilia – model planes, gasmasks, medals, photos, letters, etc – you would like to show.

We hope that these displays could still go ahead, though it may have to be delayed till after the summer or relocated.

If you would like to take part please contact Alison Zalinski ([fastzee@yahoo.com](mailto:fastzee@yahoo.com)) or Amanda Wood ([amandawood2004@btinternet.com](mailto:amandawood2004@btinternet.com)). It might be something to think about or to do while you are having to stay home in the next few weeks!

Further information on VE75 will be coming out in due course but if you have any suggestions or want more information contact Jason on 07761 169343.



*(Also our cover picture)*

## Lewis to Lewes!

On a date to be confirmed this year (originally planned for May) Steve Luck will be riding 800 miles from Lewis to Lewes for the Bone Cancer Research Trust (BCRT). The ride will be in memory of Alex Lewis who died from bone cancer in 2011 aged 22. You can read more about his story and the reason we are riding at [bcrt.org.uk/AlexLewis](http://bcrt.org.uk/AlexLewis).

Steve, a 67-year-old cancer survivor himself, is a serious cyclist and an old family friend of the Lewis's. His son Andy was also a close friend of Alex. When Alex was going through 4 years of grueling treatment, he thought about doing some fund raising. He considered a sponsored bike ride and thought about linking up the two places he had lived (a village near Bath and here in BcS) but this wasn't an ambitious enough project for him. So how about using his surname? The idea of the Lewis to Lewes bike ride was born. Sadly, he was never able to take on this demanding ride himself, so huge thanks to Steve for picking up the baton.

The ride will also provide funds for research into a particularly rare form of bone cancer, adamantinoma, inspired by the struggle of one of BCRT's supporters, UK Paralympic cyclist, Liz Clarke-Saul. Liz's story can be seen here: [bcrt.org.uk/LizClarkeSaul](http://bcrt.org.uk/LizClarkeSaul).

If you wish to support Steve and the Bone Cancer Research Trust, please donate on <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-portal/fundraiserPage?pageId=1153327>. If you wish to ride with us for any of the stages, please get in touch at [andy.lewis@bcrt.org.uk](mailto:andy.lewis@bcrt.org.uk). We can provide details of the stages and routes, and how to set up associated donation pages if you wish to fundraise separately for this BCRT appeal.

In brief, there are 9 stages, beginning at the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, and culminating in Lewes, Sussex; averaging 94.4 miles a day. There will be a shorter version of the penultimate stage (Chipping Norton to Alex and Steve's home village Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, about 36 miles) for those keen but less experienced cyclists.

There are too many beautiful young lives cut short by this dreadful disease; a disease which has had little research investment and no improvements in outcomes almost 40 years. Please help us change this by supporting the magnificent efforts of Steve and his fellow riders. Thank you.

*Andy Lewis*

## Village Stores and Post Office

Coronavirus is dominating the news and affecting all of our lives in one way or another. In the Village Stores and Post Office we are doing all we can to protect our staff, volunteers and customers: washing hands frequently, wiping down all surfaces, limiting the number of customers in the shop and ensuring we do everything we can to support the people in the community that are having to self-isolate. This means we constantly have to review our opening hours to ensure we have everything organised to provide the vital services the community needs.

In these unprecedented times it means we will need more help from our healthy younger members of the community to enable us to provide our service. Please let us know if you are able to help, phone 01491 835551.

I am sure, although hard, we will become an even stronger community than we are now.

Stay safe and very best wishes to you all.

*Celia Collett  
Chairman Management Committee*

## Brightfest20 postponed

Following government advice, regarding Covid-19 the Brightfest Organising Committee (BOC) has decided to POSTPONE this year's Brightfest Music Festival until Saturday 12 September 2020. Members of BOC will contact suppliers to discuss the change of date. Please can bands advise Werner De Jong, the festival Music Director their availability for the new date on [info@brightfest.org.uk](mailto:info@brightfest.org.uk).

The online shop, on the Brightfest website <https://www.brightfest.org.uk/>, will remain open so that T-shirts can be ordered for collection from the Red Lion pub or, new this year, by a postal delivery service. Brightfest branded pint cups (reusable and recyclable) can also be ordered from the online shop and collected on the day at Brightfest, from a dedicated stall.

Many thanks to all Brightfest supporters for their understanding and we look forward to seeing you at the festival in September.

*Brightfest Organising Committee*

## Stewart Village Hall

The trustees have embarked on the first phase of planning for the future of the hall, following the survey of opinions carried out in 2017. We have been lucky enough to secure financial support for this exercise from both the Parish Council and from our ward councillors.

The trustees sought proposals from three firms of architects, interviewed each of them, and decided to work with Anderson Orr who designed the Village Stores. The first step, which was to commission a full measured and topographical survey of the existing buildings, has already been carried out. Anderson Orr are working on a feasibility study - in other words, what can (and what cannot) be done to make the facility secure and serviceable for the next fifty years. The trustees hope to see the results of this work during the course of this month. We are working in close partnership with the Parish Council and look forward to being able to present the whole village with a range of options for the hall in the coming months.

This is only the very beginning of a long journey, however, and the trustees will be very keen to hear views from all villagers as each stage of the project progresses.

As always, we thank you for all your support. It is very much appreciated. 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 suggestions book in the kitchen of the hall, or pop them in to the mail box on the outside wall at the rear of the hall. <http://stewartvillagehall.btck.co.uk/>.

*Annette Kilworth*

## Village hall quiz

The village hall is now out of action, but still open for the shop to use its facilities. There are ongoing costs but no income so I have acquired permission from Jennifer Gay to use the quiz that she compiled as a fund raiser for Cholsey day centre. It is based on LOVE and rather apt. There will be a bottle of fizz as a prize and you have until 30 April to work out the answers. If you would like a copy for £2, all proceeds to the village hall, please contact me on 834543 or email [shenaluck@btconnect.com](mailto:shenaluck@btconnect.com) and I can drop one off and find a way to pick up your money. They will also be available at the Village Store. Thank you for your support.

*Shena Luck*

## Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

BcS WI's Annual Meeting on 10 March was opened by our President Helen and saw the committee re-elected for another year. This will be Helen's final year so the hunt is on for a new president! The proceedings were enlivened by a film (using the new equipment in the village hall), “Bombshell”, a documentary about the life of Hedy Lemarr, Hollywood film star and inventor.

The three garden visits planned for April have all been cancelled but, the WI bulb catalogues are now available from Anne Brooker.

The next two meetings in April and May are cancelled. Members will be contacted about the June meeting, and notices will be put up on our website, [brightwellcumsotwellwi.com](http://brightwellcumsotwellwi.com). We also now have a Facebook page Brightwell-cum-Sotwell WI.

*Anne Brooker*

## Support for the unpaid carers

After living in Brightwell for nineteen years I have now found myself in a position where, despite no longer being part of the village, I can still have a positive impact on the community. If you are looking after a loved one or friend who could not cope without your help, then the team at Action for Carers Oxfordshire are here to support you. We are an independent charity whose sole purpose is to support and advise the unpaid carers of Oxfordshire. We work within communities such as Brightwell-cum-Sotwell to help unpaid carers to stay independent and live life to the full.

We currently have a carers' support group which runs in St Mary's church in Wallingford on the second Tuesday of each month between 2pm-3.30pm as well as a team of knowledgeable staff who can also carry out home visits to assess the carer's needs and offer advice.

If you would like more information on the FREE advice and support we can offer or would like to book a seat at one of our local carers' support groups please feel free to call me on 07468862181 or email [mattcarter@carersoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:mattcarter@carersoxfordshire.org.uk).

*Matt Carter*



# River Thames - Keen Edge Ferry

The Thames has been used for navigation for centuries, but it was not until the late 18th century that trade increased dramatically following the connection of the river to various canals. The river barges could be 100 to 200 tons and were initially hauled by gangs of some 50 men although horses became more common during this period. There was no formal towpath until the Thames Commissioners obtained powers and allowed for their creation. Where landowners would not make agreements or there was a natural obstruction, it was sometimes necessary to switch the towpath to the opposite bank. Where there was no bridge then ferries were introduced.

Locally, there were towpath ferries close to Day's and Benson locks and also one called Keen Edge Ferry which was located about ¾ mile upstream of Shillingford Bridge. Navigators travelling upstream from Shillingford would have been on the Berkshire (Brightwell-cum-Sotwell) bank and used the ferry to cross to the Oxfordshire bank to continue their journey towards Dorchester.



This is an extract from Ordnance Survey map 1897. The site can be seen today just before the footpath diverts away from the river through the River of Life to join the path along the old Roman Road towards the village. A grassy ramp leads down to the river whilst on the north bank there is also a ramp and a large shaped timber mooring post on the top of the bank. There are also the remains of the ferryman's house buried in the undergrowth.

The ferry started in 1793 and a house was built in 1843 being extended in 1889 and 1906. The first ferryman was William Lafford who started on 15 shillings (75pence) per month. By the time the Thames Conservancy took over the river in 1866 a Mrs Hannah Patrick was in charge of the ferry at 40 shillings (£2) per month and, although declared 'incompetent' in 1870 remained until 1884! A tragedy took place in March 1892 when the ferryman and his wife, Mr and Mrs C Clutterbuck, were both

drowned. Two ferryboats were latterly used, one for horses and animals the other for people.

Trade on the Thames started to decline soon after the construction of the railways in the 1840s and all but ceased by WWII. Furthermore, what trade there was had been motorised for many years and the Thames Conservancy tried to close the ferries in the 1930s but were frustrated by objections and the arrival of the war. Consequently, Keen Edge Ferry lasted until around 1953 although one suspects the service may have been rather intermittent for several years prior to this. The house, which was single storey, was demolished in 1961.

A proposal to erect a towpath bridge at this site gained planning permission in 2002 but at £700,000 did not proceed. The creation of a permissive footpath through to Wittenham Clumps and so to Day's lock means hikers don't have to cross the river to continue their journey.

*Steve Capel-Davies*

## Brightwell Preschool

"What special day will it be on Friday?" we asked the children. "Tuesday!" someone shouted in delight. "Yes, Tuesday." said another. Who would have thought that Tuesday would be the next Friday? In a child's world, anything is possible and that is why every day is different here at Brightwell preschool. Each day must be planned, but fluid. Each day must be structured, yet flexible. The delight and wonder of children is always present, even on the darkest, wettest of days.

Despite the awfully wet weather this winter, we have been out and about in the community to experience the wonder of the world around us. You would be surprised the adventures we can get up to in a very small area of our village. We have visited the stream (yes, again), but this time we ran up and down until our wellies filled with water. We visited the park and played "The Three Little Pigs" on the mounds next to the tennis courts. We visited the park (yes, again) and found plastic bugs in the blustery wind that had magically appeared overnight. We visited the village stores to collect our grapes that we had forgotten to collect with our weekly shop. On the way there, we splashed in every puddle we could find and on the way back we found the old bakery

and village shops. We visited the ducks to give them some peas, much to the children's disappointment at having the opportunity to nibble some stale bread taken away from them. We went on a natural treasure hunt to find the sticky buds, new leaves and fresh flowers of spring. A huge thank you to Rosemary and David Greasby for our wonderful visit to meet the lambs, climb on hay bales, chase chickens and sit on tractors this year. The weather was very kind, allowing us the opportunity to enjoy some sunshine for our excursion.

We have been looking at Fairy Tales this term, which the children always enjoy. Red Riding Hood has uncovered some interesting questions about talking to wolves in the woods and The Little Red Hen posed some even more interesting questions about sharing. Aladdin is now in the playroom, with the magic carpet and wishes galore. Wishes have included: all the gold in the world, all of the stars, a big tractor, a genie for more wishes, a T-rex, some grapes and a saxophone. We can't wait to see what they wish for next (a bit of good weather would be nice).

As part of our re-brand to Brightwell preschool we now have a new website that we would love you to take a look at to see our exciting new look:  
[www.brightwellpreschool.org](http://www.brightwellpreschool.org).

*Natasha Hillier  
Preschool manager*

## Waste and recycling – temporary closures

Local Household Waste Recycling centres are now closed. During April, they were due to close for two days to carry out a deep clean and essential maintenance., so look out for when they might re-open again in April or May.

Full details can be found at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste). Thank you in advance for your patience.

*Rachel Townsend  
Technical Officer – (Waste Contracts)*

## Modern Jive evenings

On Thursday 13 February, Brightwell village hall hosted a Modern Jive dance evening. Sarah and Mark, our hosts and teachers for the evening have many years of experience and are in fact celebrating ten years as “Jive Temptation”. It was a great success; all who attended had fun and learnt new moves. Most of us were beginners and thoroughly enjoyed Sarah and Mark's style of teaching, meeting new people and having a social drink; all without having to go out of the village.

It was so enjoyable that those who attended want to do it again, so we have booked a further 3 sessions. Unfortunately, two of them – on 2 April and 5 May – have now had to be cancelled but the third on Tuesday 23 June is going ahead at the moment. It will begin at 7.30 with the first lesson at 7.45. Once again there will be a licensed bar selling wine, beer, soft drinks and snacks throughout the evening.

Modern Jive is a fusion of salsa and rock 'n roll which is an easy-to-learn partner dance, although you don't need to come with a partner. It's a fun session for all ages and abilities. Neither do you need any previous experience, as all tuition is given on the night.

More details in next *Villager* or from Shena Luck 01491834543 or Trisha Halstead 07968801556.

*Shena Luck*

## Summer Concert

Last year and the year before, many devotees of the Summer Concert came away saying it was the best yet. This year's show is already looking as though it will raise the bar higher still. We've two new instruments that have not surfaced before, a very impressive junior choir you are going to love, an array of soloists that few villages could match and after the Hallelujah Chorus last year there will be another blast of Handel with Zadok the Priest sung at the Queen's coronation.

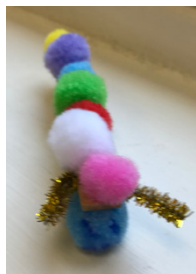
It's all good stuff! So it is particularly disappointing that it will have to be postponed from Sunday 14 June until later in the summer. I will let you know new date in the next *Villager*.

*Alec McGivan*



## Brightwell Toddlers

We have been having lots of fun at Toddlers recently and have loved having lots of new babies joining us! We have been busy doing some lovely crafts including Valentine's Day cards, Hungry Caterpillars turning into butterflies (for World Book Day), flower mirrors and wildlife masks. If you would like to see what we get up to, please visit our Brightwell Toddlers Facebook page. Thanks as always to our volunteers and to everyone who brings delicious home baking and snacks for us to enjoy each week.



Toddlers has now had to close due to the current situation but when it's back come along and join is in the village hall on Thursday mornings 9.15-11am (term time only).

If you would like any further information or would like to volunteer to help us, please email [brightwelltoddlers@gmail.com](mailto:brightwelltoddlers@gmail.com).

*Laura Woodford*

## Brightwell Supporting Refugees

We had our AGM on the 12 March and since our beginnings in 2016 we have made a massive £34,738! Thank you all for your amazing generosity and valued support. It is not getting any easier for refugees worldwide, so we need to continue with our efforts to try and help. We are particularly concerned about the deteriorating situation for refugees on the Greek island of Lesbos. Sadly, we had to cancel our Bistro night in March but are working on a new date for it.

Look out for us at Brightfest, now rescheduled for 12 September – the BSR team will be running the tea tent so we look forward to offering you delicious cakes and soothing cups of tea in between... or during the great music acts performing on the day!

Future events will be publicised in the next issue of the *Villager*.

With best wishes from

*The Trustees*

## English Wine and Food Festival at Brightwell Vineyard



Saturday 30th May &  
Sunday 31st May 2020

- Vineyard walks
- Wine tastings and sales
- Local Artisan Food and Catering
- Ample parking and seating available
- Pay bar

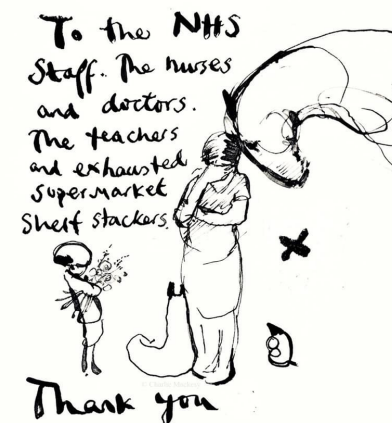
[www.englishwineandfoodfestival.co.uk](http://www.englishwineandfoodfestival.co.uk)  
[www.thameschilternsvineyards.org.uk](http://www.thameschilternsvineyards.org.uk)

## Astons Online

Astons Online Free IT advice to local communities will now be available remotely instead of at Aston village hall. Due to unprecedented demand, please email to request help to [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com) or, if this is impossible, by phone to 07780958249. You will then be given an appointment time when a helper will call you back. Our aim is to help everyone in self isolation using online shopping and other services but also to give them confidence to use digital communications to reduce loneliness.

More volunteers, with knowledge in any aspects of IT, would be welcome.

We're here to support you; please make no apology when asking for help



# VILLAGE DIARY

## April

All events postponed due to Coronavirus

## May

Events which may happen

- 8 VE75 Day
- 16 Possible Save the Children impromptu plant sale

## Advance Notice

16 June	Village Lunch	VH	12.15pm
23 June	Modern Jive	VH	7.30pm
12 Sept	Brightfest	The Rec	

## Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursdays 2 & 30, <b>Friday 17</b> April
	Thursdays 14 & <b>Friday 29</b> May
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 9 & 23 April
	Thursdays 7 & 21 May (21st extra garden waste)

At present these are still continuing but there may be delays.

## Village website

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

There is also the Facebook page *Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Web Group*

**Produced by *The Villager*, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell.**

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