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## Editorial

After an unusually quiet year, I am cautiously excited about the way village life is reviving. The covid clouds have lifted (but sadly not the rain clouds right now!) and *The Villager* can tell you about lots of events being planned over the summer. Cautious because, as I write, I don't know if we will be back to normal by the end of June so some of the dates here might still change.

We won't have our village fete on its traditional July date this year but it is still taking place, just later, on Saturday 11 September, along with the Flower and Produce show, so save this date. I imagine the tent tables will be groaning with veg then, but what will replace the wonderful array of summer roses I wonder? Another diary date is the Church Fair on Monday 30 August. Coming sooner is the return of the Colour and Clay Exhibition in St Agatha's on the weekend of 3/4 July. Also on the afternoon/evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be another village 'trail' for you to do, followed by food, drink and music down at the Rec, in aid of Brightwell Supporting Refugees.

Cinema and theatre at the Corn Exchange (listings on page 22) and music at Dorchester Abbey plus the opening of the Wallingford Museum and the Wine & Food Festival at Brightwell Vineyard all increase a feeling of returning to some normality. And it is good to see folks sitting outside the Red Lion again and it getting back to normal business (see page 10). What a fantastic job Corrine and Mouse have done keeping it going under difficult circumstances all this time. Also back is Nora's café at the Bach centre and the Root One café. So it will be nice to be able to go in and sit down for a coffee with friends, and not just walk, walk, walk...

A milestone was passed last month, or rather an era ended, when Derek Brooker handed over responsibility for the winding of the village clock after 40 years. You can read more about the clock on pages 12 and 13 from one of his 'apprentices', Steve Luck. It is a fascinating account and one of these jobs in the village that has much more responsibility than you think. Thank you to Chris Baines for the cover photo of the clock on the village hall.

Finally, good news that the new stream at the Allotments has been finished (see page 14). It's a lovely new walk so worth taking a look. I have heard that tadpoles have been seen in the pool at the bottom and I'm sure that other wildlife has taken up new residence. Another great community project executed by a band of volunteers, thank you all.

*Helen Connor*

## In memory of two ladies of Church Lane

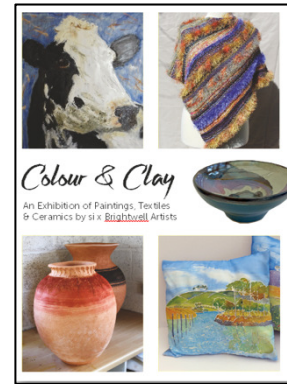
We recently had the very sad news of the deaths of Esther Large and Pat Maughan, neighbours in Church Lane and active participants in village life over the years. They will be missed. Both families would like to thank villagers for the memories they have shared with them and kind words of sympathy.

### Esther Large

Esther moved into Church lane in the village in the 1960s with her husband Norman and two children and worked as a chemistry teacher at Didcot school before retiring. She was a kind and gentle lady, always cheerful. She was involved in many village activities with her husband whom you may remember playing the piano at the Christmas concerts for many years. Since his death ten years ago, she continued to take part in village life, including the WI, one of its book groups, the walking group on Wittenham Clumps, the Wednesday Group (of widows and widowers) and Brightwell Supporting Refugees. Many of you may remember her walking her Jack Russel dog Tigger. Esther left the village a couple of years ago to go into a care home near the family, after suffering from Parkinson's disease for a while. However, she continued to keep in touch even taking part via Zoom in a WI meeting and keep fit sessions. If anyone would like to make a donation in her name to Parkinson's UK or Quaker Social Action the family has set up a tribute page.

### Pat Maughan

Having lived in the village since 1975, Pat passed away sadly in March. Over the years, Pat could be found in such places as: Brightwell School as a class 'helper'; building and running the Kings Meadow tennis courts and club; typesetting the adverts of *The Villager* before word processor days and 'walking round the table' assembling it; and running stalls at the village fete, among many other things. Pat loved village life and took a full part in it with her husband Mike, but was hit hard when he died 11 years ago. However, her sons are proud of the way she regained her vigour for getting on with things in her own way and showed cheerfulness and great strength in the last few years.



## The 4<sup>th</sup> COLOUR and CLAY Exhibition

**Saturday 3 July 10.00am – 5.30pm**  
**Sunday 4 July 10.30am – 4.00pm**

**At St Agatha's Church, Brightwell Cum Sotwell**

COLOUR and CLAY returns to St Agatha's Church in July.

The exhibition includes wood turned pieces, textiles in the form of knitting, paintings and prints, and clay both thrown and hand built!

This year the exhibition will expand interest by offering some 'hands on' craft activities and games.

All funds raised will go to St Agatha's Church projects.

Oh !... and there will be plenty of tea and cake !!!!!!!!

*Jenni Pozzoni, Roger Syme, Rosemary Greasby,  
Marion Syme, Robert Field and Annie Brooker*

## Save the Children Plant Sale



A massive thank you to everyone that donated plants, cakes and pots, all the wonderful volunteers and the many lovely people who have supported us once again! As I write this we are still selling flowers and veggie plants outside my house; the total raised so far is £1253!!

*Celia Collett*

# Brightwell cum Sotwell Primary School

As I write this, the Prime Minister has announced earlier today a lifting of further restrictions in line with Stage 3 of the roadmap and we are looking forward to the opportunities this will bring. Opportunities to look forward are everywhere at this time of year, particularly in relation to what the next academic year holds for us all.

As always, we await the government guidance, but we are optimistic that our Year 6 children will enjoy a transition day at their new secondary school whilst we ensure that their time here at Brightwell is marked in a way that is fitting. We are hopeful also that we can welcome on site our largest cohort yet of Pippin children to start their Brightwell School career. As our numbers continue to grow next year, we will be splitting our Year 3/4 class from September – stay tuned to hear what the extra class will be called!

Restrictions may have made some elements of our wider curriculum less accessible but, nevertheless, continued creative thinking has led us to enjoy a weekly ‘Musical Break’ with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, a virtual visit from GB high jumper Emily Borthwick, and our well-established STEM Week. These have taken place amongst all the day to day business of school.

Our children continue to impress us with their resilience, their optimism and, of course, their learning. The staff team have been truly phenomenal this year and I’m delighted to share with you that they were selected as a finalist of The Oxford Owl Lockdown Hero Awards. I could not be prouder of our school community and everything they have achieved this academic year.

Opportunities await us next year and we can’t wait to see what September brings!

*Fin Lewis*  
*Headteacher*

## The Parish Council

### Appointment of Representation

At a meeting on 20 April we were pleased to report that members of the Planning Committee wish to continue in their roles and that councillors will continue with their representative duties for a further year.

### AGM 4 May 2021 by Zoom

Many thanks to all those who attended the meeting virtually through Zoom. Sue Robson, our Chair, introduced the meeting and outlined the work that the Parish Council does. Although much of our time is devoted to planning issues, the councillors are involved in many other duties. Recently these have included updating and improving the equipment and facilities at the Rec and Kings Meadow play areas. Other projects have included getting the main village area designated as a 20 MPH zone, protecting assets of community value like the Red Lion and supporting the establishment of a Community Orchard. The Parish Council wrote a Neighbourhood Development Plan and organised a referendum to approve it.

Members of the Parish Council also arranged a support network for vulnerable residents during the Covid epidemic and subsequent lockdowns. They are investigating also the potential of a community owned heating project using both ground and water sources and a solar energy scheme.

All this is achieved with the precept funds from the local authority, other grants and a great deal of help from the village community. The Parish Council receives a share of the Community Infrastructure Levy charged on all new developments in the village. These are used for non-current expenditure projects in the village. Helen Baines and Graham Gillgrass outlined how some of this money will be used to help with the improvements and redevelopment of the village hall and the pavilion. These facilities are widely used by villagers and provide a valuable resource for us all.

Jason Debney and Celia Collett gave an excellent presentation on the work of the planning sub-committee and the new design code that will be used to ensure that the character of the village is maintained.

It is hoped that we will have a public meeting in the autumn to further update the village on the work of your Parish Council.

### Outdoor gym

We would like to inform villagers that the outdoor gym at the Rec is now open once again.

*James Davys*

# The Community Association

I am very pleased to say that plans for the fete at Sotwell House on **Saturday 11 September** are taking shape. As usual we will include as many of the favourite stalls as we can. I know many of you, like us, will be looking forward to coming together again as a village. As ever, a few days before the event we will be making a collection of donated items for the white elephant and bottle stall. Full details will be given in the next edition of *The Villager*.

We are also pleased to announce the Flower and Produce Show will take place at the Fete again this year so keep watering those vegetables. Full details of classes and how to apply will also appear in the next *Villager*.

We are working on staging the 2021 Village Quiz in the autumn - I will be able to provide a definite date and contact details next time.

*James Davys*

## The Vicar writes...

As each step out of the lockdown is taken we celebrate the return of our freedom. We may feel however like a domesticated creature being released into the wild and find this journey to be quite challenging, wanting to take very cautious steps out into our new environment. After 15 months of regarding everyone as a potential threat to our health, feelings of agoraphobia may be more prevalent. We may need to encourage those who are struggling to regain their confidence whilst respecting that each person will move at their own speed. For example, even though we are legally allowed to hug again, it is now up to each individual to use their own judgement and common sense to balance the benefits against the risks. So, feel free to hug your nearest and dearest who have been taking all the precautions for months and are now fully-vaccinated. But we may have to wait many more months before we see a repeat of the scenes at the end of the film 'Love Actually' where hugs are shared with people coming through the Arrivals gate at Heathrow!

And what about our spiritual freedom? This is freely offered to all who are carrying the burdens of this life, but many people refuse to let go of these burdens as they have been falsely intertwined with their identity and purpose. We are so much more than our job or profession, property and possessions, status, successes and failures, ailments or regrets. Our true eternal identity is

as a beloved child of God, already intimately known and loved by our creator. In describing his own understanding of his identity and purpose, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament book of Isaiah: 'He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4:18-19)

As we reset our lives after lockdown and rediscover our freedoms, why not also take this opportunity to evaluate your priorities in life – is there something you need to offload to God to experience his release, his recovery, his freedom and his favour? Jesus says '...if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.' (John 8:36)

All are welcome at our worship services which can be found at [www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk/calendar](http://www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk/calendar) (colour-coded as brown/gold). Livestreamed services can be found on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/wallingfordcofe](https://www.facebook.com/wallingfordcofe).

*Blessings, Rev Kev*

P.S. Assuming the unlocking continues on schedule, our Wednesday coffee mornings will resume from 23 June in the Parish Room.



## Stewart village hall

We are delighted to have the village hall open again and look forward to welcoming you back. It has been sad to walk past the hall seeing it locked up and empty, so it will be great to know it is back where it belongs - at the heart of our community.

To ensure the safety of everyone who uses the hall we have put systems in place which we would ask you to follow, for example using the Track and Trace system or providing contact details to your group or event organiser. Hand sanitising and cleaning stations have been provided and we have reviewed the number of people who can safely use the hall.

We appreciate some of your group may not be ready to come back into the hall just yet, so if this is the case then please consider using our excellent video conferencing equipment so they can join in via Zoom. This is a great way to keep everyone engaged and involved in meetings, classes and group activities. It is freely available to all hall users on request, just select 'video conferencing equipment' as a line item on the booking request.

It will be great to see the hall in use again and if you would like to visit to see the facilities available or discuss changes you may need to accommodate your group or event then please do get in touch. We are very happy to help any way we can.

### **New website:**

We have a brand new website to share with you - [stewartvillagehall.org.uk](http://stewartvillagehall.org.uk). It was created by the amazing Creative Haus based here in the village. It was a pleasure to collaborate with them on this project and we are delighted with the finished product. Please visit the site and share your feedback with us via our Contact page.

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

*Annette Kilworth*

## Brightwell-cum-Sotwell WI

We have now had almost a year of not being able to hold meetings in the hall but look forward to getting back there soon. Instead we have met virtually once a month with a wonderful array of zoom speakers – from learning to do a virtual face massage to an adventurer walking to the North Pole. Last month we invited Janet Prescott, an RHS lecturer and plantswoman from North Moreton to tell us about how to get more summer colour in our gardens. She suggested some late summer perennials, shrubs, annuals for fillers and plants for shade, and provided a plants list so we can seek some of them out. She also answered questions from members including concerns about recent frost damage.

Our next meeting will be held outside in Gill's garden on 8 June (fingers crossed). It will be limited to 30 so we will not be able to invite prospective new members but if you were thinking of joining the WI please come along to our coffee mornings at Root One, every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in the month. The next ones are Mondays 21 June and 19 July. There are also garden visits being planned. Please email us at [brightwellcumshotwellwi@gmail.com](mailto:brightwellcumshotwellwi@gmail.com) if you would like to come along to them.

*Helen Connor*

## The Red Lion

Here at The Red Lion we have enjoyed welcoming you all back during the first 5 weeks of the roadmap out of lockdown! We have been busy most evenings and our takeaways are still going strong so thank you all for your continued support.

As I write this, Boris and No 10 have confirmed that from 17 May we are able to once again open the indoors of the pub which is just great news. There are still restrictions we must follow but we could not be happier to finally be fully open albeit with a few rules. For indoors and outdoors, we must operate table service only and for inside, it is the rule of 6 or 2 households per table. Our marquee will stay up all year so when booking a table, please let us know if you would prefer to be inside or outside. If you are yet to download the NHS COVID 19 app for checking into venues, can we please recommend you do this as all adults over the age of 16 must sign in to any pub/restaurant they visit for the time being. For those without smart phones, we can continue to sign you in manually with pen & paper.

Our opening hours have changed slightly and although we will remain closed on Mondays, we will now open on Tuesday evenings for drinks only between 5-10pm. Our food service will remain the same, Wednesday to Sunday lunch and Wednesday to Saturday evening. Booking is highly recommended at all times. We will also be bringing back our Sunday lunch menu from 23 May.

Once again, thank you all for your support and we look forward to getting back to full normality by the end of June!

*Corinne & Mouse*

## The village shop and post office

As life begins to come back to some normality, the team at the community shop and post office are taking a sigh of relief after maintaining our services to the community throughout this last very difficult year. This has only been possible through the dedication and commitment of our volunteers, staff and management committee.

The increased trade in both shop and post office has meant that we have actually made a profit. Assisted by a grant from our district councillor, Anne-Marie Simpson, we are replacing our very slow old laptop and carrying out a much needed refurbishment of the office/store.

However, we have already noticed a drop in trade in the last couple of weeks. We need feedback from the village on how we can keep our services in the community. It can only be maintained through loyal custom as well as the team of loyal and dedicated management committee, volunteers and staff. The last year has proved that local volunteers, services and suppliers are essential through a crisis. The management committee need your help to map the future of the community shop and post office. We will be holding our AGM on **Wednesday 30 June at 8pm**, so please save the date. If you are not a member please consider joining us for as little as £1 (ask in the shop for a membership form).

*The shop team*

## Brightwell Supporting Refugees

Thank you all who joined in 'The Great House Name Hunt' at the beginning of April. As usual you all threw yourselves into the spirit of it and yet again your generosity raised a staggering £540. We added this to some funds we had in bank and sent £1000 out to Jordan to help the Hope Centre who find themselves still caught up in the grip of Covid and all the repercussions it brings with it.

Never ones to sit still for too long we are in planning mode again as the need for funds for Jordan, Uganda and here in the UK has not gone away.

### **Question: Do You know your Village?**

Why not put your knowledge to the test and come along to the Recreation Ground on 3 July from 2pm to register and take part in the trail-quiz to find out? £10 PER FAMILY £5 INDIVIDUAL to enter.

Bring your answers back to the Rec and then enjoy some delicious food and drink from the bar ... and from 5pm onwards you can enjoy your refreshments listening to music, from members of Brightwell's 'Hot Ashes' and 'The Barber Shop Boys'. Perfect for a summer's evening on the Rec!

We really look forward to seeing you there! Best wishes from us all at BSR.

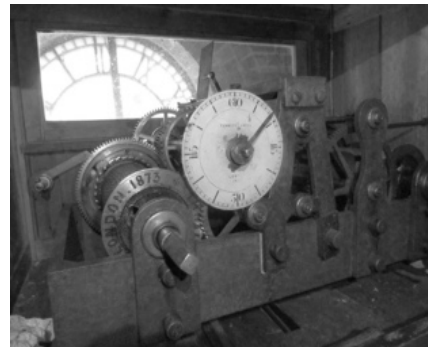
*Ann Linton*

## Derek Brooker – 40 years a Clock Winder of this parish

So much part of village life; but have you ever wondered how the clock in the tower of the village hall (see cover picture) keeps going?

The old village school, now the village hall, was completed and opened in 1868, but the clock tower was a later addition in 1874. The clock movement was made in London in 1873 by Thwaites & Reed, one of the oldest clockmaking companies in the world. We share its heritage with other well-known clocks made by the same company: Horse Guards Parade 1756, Lincoln Cathedral 1775, Fortnum & Mason and the Royal Clock in Sydney are just a few.

Our clock needs to be wound every seven days. Failure to do this can result in the bell striking out of sequence and literally a headache for the person that has to rectify his or her tardiness. The bell is quite large, solid bronze and can be heard from some distance. Standing next to the bell whilst resetting it as you go through twelve hours of chimes certainly brings a ringing to the ears.



To wind the clock and the striking mechanism requires rewinding two heavy weights back up the height of the tower onto two drums, one for the clock and the other for the bell. To do this requires entry through a trap door and then scaling three fixed wooden ladders. Just a quick calculation and I worked out that Derek has, over the 40 years, climbed the equivalent of Mount Everest twice... and all without oxygen!

The clock is adjusted by a lever on the mechanism, but in reverse to the clockface. Fine adjustment is made by a collection of lead weights, a small nut, copper pennies and also a screw collar on the end of the pendulum. Make the pendulum shorter it runs faster and longer slower. Fortunately this adjustment is rarely needed and



requires long arms and a good head for heights. Another factor is heat: in the summer the pendulum can lengthen making the clock run slower.

It is a double action bell and strikes on the hour. The bell has two strikers, one for the clock and the other for the old school bell. The pulleys, the holes in the floorboards and the striker are still there but the rope is long gone. Derek remembers his school years 1946-58 and pulling the rope to ring the bell at the start of the day. Sid Moody, who used to play the bugle on Remembrance Sunday, told a tale of the old headmaster ('Fishy Roe' as he was known to the children) chasing a boy up the tower, but the boy, being lighter of foot, managed to side-step the headmaster, descend the tower and lock the hatch, leaving Ol' Fishy prisoner in the tower!

Derek's talents as a possible timekeeper were first spotted by Frank Castell, the Sexton of Fairthorne Memorial. It was when he was a choirboy, and perhaps due to his height, that he was shown how to wind the clock for the first time. But it wasn't until many years later, around 1980 that he took it on professionally. He was asked by Mike Maughan, then chairman of the village hall trustees, if he would mind taking over from the retiring George Henwood, who lived at Orchard Cottage, The Square.

Because it is so public this must rank as one of the most responsible jobs in the village. Winding the clock is only part of it. BST and GMT adjustment can also be a tense moment. To move to British Summer Time (BST), 'spring forward', wind the hands one hour, no trouble. To move back in the autumn, stop the pendulum for an hour or a headache, see above. To get the bell to chime eleven precisely on the eleventh hour of the eleventh month on Remembrance Sunday is a skill in itself and has been achieved on many occasions. With a mechanical clock made in Victorian times you would not expect to get a villager to telephone and tell you the clock is 38 seconds fast, but it has happened!



Derek leaves his daunting legacy to a merry band of four "apprentice" clock winders, Chris Baines, Richard Harding, John Davies and me, so be gentle with us until we get it right!

*Steve Luck  
Clock Winder apprentice of 30+ years!*

## The Environment Group

### Allotment Stream and Swan Wood Project

Since my last report in March when we had just finished excavating the new stream, I am pleased to say that we have completed most of the work and now it is starting to look part of the scene.



The stepped overfall that drops the stream into the watercourse in the recreation ground was built using generously donated reclaimed stone rather than timber and hence will have a longer life and look more attractive. The area was further enhanced with the addition of new steps and an informal bridge (funded by our Parish Council) linking the Swan Wood to the Recreation Ground. This area is already very popular with budding river and dam engineers and will be a valuable asset, especially when the weather warms up!

Other work carried out included placing gravel on the stream bed which was used to form pools and riffles (where the stream is locally made narrower to speed up the flow) which help to create a better environment for insects and some plants. Stream planting included a range of marginal and in-stream plants some of which were sourced locally, others obtained from a specialist supplier. The newly excavated areas alongside the stream and within the woodland were sown with special wildflower/grass seed mixes. We hope these will all germinate and grow well although the seed was not helped by there being a considerable time without any rain. To help the planting get established it would be appreciated if people could avoid walking on the newly sown areas or within the stream itself for a while.

There is still a small amount of work to do, mainly in finishing off the manholes and final sealing of the pipe plus planting of the trees in the woodland. We are in the process of preparing an information board which will give some background to the project and complement the sign in the orchard. It is impressive again that locals have come forward to help with its design and manufacture.

It has been very gratifying for the many villagers who have been so generous with their time to hear all the positive comments about how much the stream has enhanced the area.

## Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands farm was 46mm in March but just 17.8mm in April (which included 5.9mm of snow and hail).

The spring so far has been colder than average, with only one notable warm spell at the end of March, and there have been regular frosts in many areas with rainfall below average.

April began settled, but soon turned very cold, and a notable feature throughout the month was the number of air frosts. Daytime temperatures did recover from the middle of the month, but it was cold and showery in the closing days. Overall it was an unusually cold, dry and sunny month with rainfall only about 20% of the long term average and sunshine 150%. The wind seems to have had a northerly aspect for much of the period making it feel particularly chilly.

*Steve Capel-Davies*

## Nora's Kitchen at the Bach Centre

We are pleased to announce that we are now open and serving a variety of teas and organic coffees, along with a selection of sweet treats and light bites. All our food is vegetarian and we offer vegan, gluten-free and dairy alternatives. Our current opening times are 10.30-2.30 Tuesday to Friday. We have seating inside as well as on the outside decking which overlooks our peaceful cottage garden.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Nora's Kitchen, and hope to see you soon. You may want to reserve a table, but otherwise feel free to just come on in!

The Bach Centre - home of Dr. Edward Bach and the Bach flower remedy system - is also open once again with two new museum rooms, and our Bach Centre shop. Please see our website to book your visit at [www.bachcentre.com](http://www.bachcentre.com).

The Bach Centre, Mount Vernon, Bakers Lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. 01491 834678 (phone lines open 9.30-12.30 Mon-Fri).

*Judy Howard*

## Brightwell Preschool

At Brightwell Preschool we have been escaping from reality and immersing ourselves in some favourite fairy tales from Rapunzel to The Gingerbread Man. The children have been busy baking, making plate masks of pigs and wolves, icing gingerbread men, creating giant's castles from bricks and boxes, and watching excitedly as runner beans sprout and grow in jars. They have also been planting extra seeds for transplanting into our new vegetable patch when the weather warms up.

We asked some children to recall their favourite stories and here are some of their delightful descriptions: 'she went in a wood and seed a wolf and a wolf pretended to be grandma'. Her friend continued: 'He got in grandma's clothes, he put her in the cupboard'.

Another child's favourite tale was Jack and the Beanstalk. He said of the magic beans: 'His mummy was cross. She threwed them out the window then it growed a beanstalk, I think very fastly'. After climbing up, Jack saw 'a giant, a chicken and golden eggs'. He reflected wistfully: 'I've never had golden eggs'. 'The giant chased Jack shouting 'fee, fie, fo, fum', then the 'giant fell down the beanstalk and crashed and never been seen again'.

Talking about the Three Little Pigs, another four-year-old recalled joyfully: 'The big bad wolf blowed down their houses' but when he got to the brick house 'he couldn't do it. He went down the chimney, he burnt his bum then he ran away!'

As we head towards summer we will continue having lots of fun and preparing 14 of our lovely children for their transition to school. We will have places available from September onwards for two and a half year olds. Out of hours visits are available by appointment only. Please email [admin@brightwellpreschool.org](mailto:admin@brightwellpreschool.org) or ring 826387 to find out more.

*Nickie Lidstone*

## Hollyhocks and Mystery Seed Pods

There are still a few packs of seeds and plenty of pods, available in the village shop. So far sales have raised £70.50 for the village hall project. Thank you for your support.

If you would like more information please contact Shena Luck on 01491 834543.



## English Wine & Food Festival at Brightwell Vineyard

On Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 July from 11am to 5pm each day, the English Wine & Food Festival is happening at Brightwell Vineyard on Shillingford Road.

Visitors will be able to taste, compare and buy award-winning local wines, meet winemakers, growers and experts specialising in English wines, and learn more about the grape varieties that do well in our cool climate. Exotic names like Bacchus, Ortega and Phoenix rub shoulders with classic varieties like Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, producing exciting wines that reflect our local English 'terroir'.

To complement the still and sparkling wines on offer, a range of hot and cold food stalls will provide tastings and sales of locally produced food, allowing you to buy your picnic to enjoy in the vineyard, with music throughout the day. In addition, more than 30 local artisan food and craft suppliers will display and sell their wares.

Activities during this 'stay local, buy local' weekend include: wine tastings from regional vineyards; wine to buy by the glass, bottle or case; tutored tasting sessions; music and a vineyard walk. A great event for wine lovers and foodies alike in Brightwell Parish.

More information and tickets available at:  
[www.englishwineandfoodfestival.co.uk](http://www.englishwineandfoodfestival.co.uk)

*Carol Nielson*

## Bottle Tops

Thank you to those good people who were collecting plastic bottle tops on behalf of the hall and for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Due to the cancellation of the transport link to the recycling plant in Eastleigh, I have had to stop collecting as I had accumulated 12 large black bags full of mixed tops. My husband has kindly offered to deliver the tops, however, I have since found out that the milk bottle tops need to be separated from the rest. So, in future I will only collect PLASTIC milk bottle tops. Please keep collecting only these and you will be able to deposit them in the bag at the rear of the Village Hall, from June.

*Shena Luck*

## Over the hills the donkathon way

It is a shock to lose the sight in one eye especially when flying is one of my passions in life. However, help was not far away in the form of a card from the Vicar of St Melangell, a remote church in North Wales. Lying in hospital feeling sorry for myself after an operation that had gone horribly wrong, this gave me a 'lightbulb moment' and I thought 'I know what I'll do, I will drive my two donkeys from North Moreton to St Melangell' – hence the Donkathon was born.

The planning started then in earnest. First, using our OS mapping system, I was able to plot the 200 mile journey mostly on country roads. Then I had to find a stable at each of our 27 stops for the donkeys to stay in. One farmer passed me on to another and with the help of many friends and social media I have managed to find stabling at each stop. We are working on the human accommodation now!

The route takes us through two fords and donkeys, being desert animals don't like water. Many hours of coaxing have brought success at last and Wizard and Muffin are no longer afraid to venture forth into watery crossings. We had bright yellow raincoats made not only for the donkeys but for the dog and people as well. Hill training is another critical aspect. Going downhill, the 'boys' tend to slip and gain speed - going uphill, well ... donkeys are far more patient than humans and they are quite happy to stand still and say 'hey – that hill is too steep' – so a lot of hill training is on the cards.

The project is supporting Multiple Sclerosis Research as my nephew was diagnosed with this dreadful progressive disease at the tender age of 26. We set off from North Moreton on Friday 25 June.

*Polly Vacher*

## Local climate summit

David Johnston, our MP, is hosting a pre-COP26 consultation for constituents on 1 July via Zoom, an opportunity to talk about some of the key issues needed to make progress. He promises to showcase some local organisations, including Greencore and send ideas generated to Alok Sharma, President of COP26, ahead of the summit. To join and for more information go to his website [david-johnston.org.uk](http://david-johnston.org.uk) where you can also read his monthly newsletter. David is still not doing face-to-face surgeries due to Covid restrictions.



## HENGE21 Latest News

The HENGE21 Settlement celebrates the landscape, history and lives of those who settled in the around the Wittenham Clumps, Brightwell Barrow and the Dyke Hills.

It will take place on the weekend 24-26 September 2021, at the time of the Autumn Equinox.

### Latest News

Various plans are taking shape:

- The glowing double ring henge, decorated with images and poetry nears completion.
- The drama and dance, marking the stages of Birth, Union and Death are in rehearsals, accompanied by the haunting soundscape.
- Six artists are building striking large scale Land Art, to be located in the Dyke Hills.
- School workshops are planned in July and September with Brightwell Primary, Abbey Woods Academy in Berinsfield and Dorchester St Birinus Primary.
- We are in conversation with Berinsfield and Wallingford Libraries and Dorchester Museum.
- Plans are in place to utilise the WW2 Pillbox as a temporary digital galley for community and family artwork.
- And of course, no ancient gathering will be complete without the all-important 'feasting' (well refreshments at least) and an opportunity to meet with friends living around the Clumps and Brightwell Barrow, echoing the social gatherings of our forebears at the double ring henge millennia ago.

### Why not get involved

Save these dates:

**Performances** on Friday 24 September at 5.45pm in the Dyke Hills and a second performance with easier access in Dorchester Abbey on Saturday 25 September. Join the Procession, and enjoy a memorable experience.

**Exhibit your artwork** in the Pillbox gallery: All ages and abilities welcome. Any form of art is eligible on the theme of HENGE21. Full details to follow.

**Join the Writer's Workshop:** a Q&A and performance with award winning author Jill Battson at Wallingford Corn Exchange on Saturday 31 July, 3-5pm and Sunday 1 August 1, 10 -5 pm

**Poetry workshop** with Jill Battson. Dorchester Village Hall. Ticket info and details to follow.

More details will be posted every month. Follow us on Instagram: *henge.21* Facebook: Henge festival and soon on our website - *Henge Festival.com*.

HENGE21 is a non-profitmaking Community Arts Event.

*Adrian Brooks*

## Rosie Runs Far

I am currently on my way to raising £10,000 for a charity called Hope for Children. To raise the funds I have already organised several virtual races and events leading up to my BIG fundraiser - the Marathon des Sables (250k across the Sahara Desert - carrying ALL my own kit and food, which I am going to run in March 2022.

My big event for this summer is the Summer100. On 10 July I will be running the Race to the Stone - 100k race along the Ridgeway - and I am challenging children to cover the same distance this summer. The children can run it, walk it, ride it, swim it or skate it. In fact, they can cover the distance anyway they like! They just need to cover 100km over June, July and August! Easy!

We all know that the last year and a bit has been incredibly hard on our children. As a teacher and runner I know the benefit that exercise has on mental health. Simply being outside is good - if you can combine this with a goal to aim for AND then achieve the goal and increase self-esteem, it will make a wonderful start for many children in September.

The entry fee is £5 and when they have completed the event at the end of August, they will receive a specially designed badge. My aim is to raise £1000. Although I will be happy with any money raised!

It would be wonderful to involve as many children as possible - to find out how, please contact me on 07403 488724.

*Rosie Lanyon*

## In brief - round and about

### Love to Sing Course - June 2021

Do you love to sing? Would you like to try something new this year? Harmony InSpires, the all-female a Cappella chorus based in Marcham (near Abingdon, Oxfordshire), invites women of all ages and all levels of experience to join a FREE online 'Love to Sing' course over three evenings on 2, 9 and 16 June. No need to read music as we provide teach tracks to help you learn as you sing along! For more details email [lovetosing@harmonyinspires.org](mailto:lovetosing@harmonyinspires.org) or visit [www.harmonyinspires.org](http://www.harmonyinspires.org).

### Music at Dorchester Abbey

Violin and Voices, 5 June at 6pm and 8 pm. OSJ Oxford Voices will perform some of English choral music's greatest works, from Tallis to renowned film composer Harry Escott, alongside a choral arrangement of Vaughan Williams' sublime Lark Ascending with international violinist Jan Schmolck. For tickets visit [osj.org.uk](http://osj.org.uk).

### Wallingford Museum

Opens on Tuesday 22 June (the ground floor only in the first instance) where a new exhibit, the new Wallingford castle model, will be on display.

### The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society

Zoom talks for members: 9 June, Elizabeth Popescu 'Excavation of the cemetery of St Augustine's, Stoke Quay, Ipswich' (featured in recent Current Archaeology magazine) and 14 July, Steve Capel-Davies: 'The River Thames - How it Shaped our Region'. Please see the website for further details: <https://www.twhas.org.uk/meetings-programme.html>.

### Wallingford Country Market

The market has been taking place on Friday mornings on the path in front of St Marys Church but the organisers are fairly optimistic that it will be open inside the church from late May. On sale are spring/early summer bedding and herbaceous plants, home baking, preserves, crafts, honey and eggs.

## What's on at the Corn Exchange Wallingford

### Cinema

Good news - the Corn Exchange is open again. A number of films are listed below and more will be added in the next few weeks. Please look on [www.cornexchange.org.uk](http://www.cornexchange.org.uk) for further programme updates.

Tuesday 1 June	Underdogs (15)
Wednesday 2 June	My New York Year (12A)
Friday 11 June	Fargo (18)
Friday 25 – Sunday 27 June	The Father (12A)
Monday 28 June	After Love (12A)
Tuesday 29 and Wednesday 30 June	Cruella (12A)
Thursday 1 July	Cruella (12A)
Friday 2 – Sunday 4 July	In the Heights

All of the above performances normally start at 7:30pm. Tickets £8 for Adults and £5 for under 15s unless otherwise stated.

### Live Theatre

Sinodun Players present:

'Wind in the Willows' by Kenneth Grahame (adapted into a one-act play and directed by Marilyn Johnstone), one of the all-time great animal stories and a true classic of children's literature.

Wednesday 14 July to Saturday 17 July, 7:45pm (all evenings) and 3pm (Saturday). Tickets £8 (adults) and £5 (under 14s).

'A Daughter's a Daughter' published by Agatha Christie under the name Mary Westmacott, and directed by Lucy Pitman-Wallace, an intense family drama.

Wednesday, 22 to Saturday 25 September, 7:45pm.

Tickets £12 (adults) and £8 (under 16s).

### Coming Soon

Arthur Smith's show SYD follows a highly successful season at Soho Theatre and a sell-out and critical acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Saturday 10th September, 7:45pm.

Tickets £15 (with some adult humour).

Under Milk Wood - performed solo by Guy Masterson, celebrating a day in the life of 'Llareggub' – a small sea town somewhere in Wales.

Saturday 20 September, 7:45pm

## Dog-friendly weekends: an exclusive book preview

As a travel writer in a pandemic, I've had to pivot my focus a little during the last 12 months. I've written in *The Villager* before about my experiences as a vaccine trial volunteer for the AstraZeneca drug, and now I'm writing about my latest venture - a book about dog-friendly holidays in Britain.

So as I write this, I'm sitting in the back of a motorhome in the middle of the Brecon Beacons with a snoozing Manchester Terrier next to me. We're here researching and reviewing everything from caves to castles, all for the book. 'Dog-friendly Weekends: 50 Breaks in Britain for You and Your Dog' will be published in May 2022 by Bradt Guides and you can pre-order your copy directly from just £20, including P&P (email me at [lottiecgross@gmail.com](mailto:lottiecgross@gmail.com)).

For now, though, I'll leave you with a little preview of some of the closer-to-home ideas you will find in my upcoming guidebook.

### A perfect weekend around Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

**Go foraging in Goring Heath** Dogs are natural foragers (mine is particularly partial to rabbit poo and cow dung, unfortunately), so it makes sense that they are allowed on Secret Adventures' new foraging trips around Goring Heath. I spent an afternoon picking nettles, tasting bramble buds and snacking on magnolia petals with their resident foraging guide before we retreated to their little patch of woodland nearby to cook up some fresh focaccia in the pizza oven and share stories around the campfire. Book it on [secretadventures.org](http://secretadventures.org).

**Meet nature's giants at Cotswold Wildlife Park** My dog wasn't quite sure what to make of the rhinos at Cotswold Wildlife Park, but watching him discover all their creatures great and small was a real joy. Not only is the park great fun for families with young kids, but it's a brilliant, stimulating walk for the dogs too. The estate is beautiful, and you can get up close with penguins, lions and even giraffes.

**Hike up Wittenham Clumps** My favourite walk in the entire world tracks over the eastern side of Brightwell Barrow, past the home of Norton and Yarrow goats' cheese and then westward through the woods. Rounding it off with views from the top of those iconic hills is the best way. Dog mess bins are scarce on this route, so invest in a Dicky Bag that can attach to your backpack so you can carry that poo hands free until you get to a bin.

Lottie Gross

## VILLAGE DIARY

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### June

8	WI garden meeting at Gill Dexter's		7.30pm
21	WI coffee link-up	Root 1	10.30am
23	Weekly Wednesday coffee mornings resume	St Agatha's	10am
30	Village Stores & Post Office AGM	(TBC)	8pm

### July

3	Clay & Colour Exhibition 10am-5.30pm	St Agatha's	
3	BSR trail/quiz registration (from 2pm) with music, bar & food (from 5pm)	Rec	2pm
4	Clay & Colour Exhibition 10.30am-4pm	St Agatha's	
10	English Wine & Food Festival at		11-5
&11	Brightwell Vineyards		
13	WI meeting	(TBC)	7.30pm
19	WI coffee link-up	Root 1	10.30am

### Advance Notice

Church fair	30 August
Village fete	11 September
HENGE21	24-26 September

### Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursdays 10 and 24 June Thursdays 8 and 22 July
Green (& brown) bins	<b>Friday 4</b> and Thursdays 17 June Thursdays 1,15 and 29 July

### Village website

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