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Editorial

When I sat down to start *The Villager* this time, I thought it was going to be a difficult task because so many of our usual events have not been taking place and the Flower & Produce show's schedule would be missing. But I was wrong. There has been plenty of material sent in to fill the pages, thank you everyone. We have printed it this time, so you have a copy of your 'familiar friend' through your door. It is available also online at the village website (www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk). We have included updates to adverts where businesses have Covid19 restrictions (on page 22).

Sadly, I have news here of four villagers who have passed away in the last two months – Derek Nightingale, Leon Cobb, Trevor Twentyman and Ben Whatley. Derek had been organist and choirmaster at St Agatha's for over 20 years. You can read more about him and his life on page 3. Leon had recently moved out of the village to Wallingford but he had been an active member of the history, art and other village groups for many years. Trevor had recently returned to the area after a long period living abroad. Some older residents may remember his *Villager* contributions, some from Bogato! Ben and his dog Burnham were familiar faces around the Brightwell lanes until a few years ago. We will miss all of them and send our condolences to their families.

Life under lockdown has, for most of us, been strange and challenging. Keeping 'busy' has got a new meaning, no longer about rushing around to be at places or see people, but emails, taking walks, Zooms with family and friends, waiting in queues outside shops, or, like me, knitting or gardening more. For many of you, there has been the additional pressure of balancing demands of home schooling and working from home. Many of us have got fitter, and several fit people have written up their charity challenges. Four contributions came in from my request to share stories of "Life in lockdown", which I have spread over several pages.

The VE75 day celebrations were cancelled inevitably, but the village did not forget the heroes of WW2. A beautiful film was made by Chris and Helen Baines to replace the cancelled events. If you haven't seen it yet, go to <https://youtu.be/hdH95q8mJfQ>. Socially distanced parties were held in front gardens, people wandered through the village under a blue sky and hot sun and we lit candles in the evening. It provided a welcome interruption from the tedium of the last few weeks. A few snaps taken on the day are included on page 13 and in Lisa de Jong's cover collage for those who couldn't get out.

Stay safe and well – hope we can all meet up again soon.

Helen Connor

Derek Nightingale

Tributes to Derek, who died in April, have flooded in saying: he was a gentleman, a lovely man, such an asset to the church, a fine and loyal organist, an inspiring musician, he will be greatly missed.

Derek became organist and choirmaster at St Agatha's in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell in March 1997 and at St Mary Magdalene, Crowmarsh in 2009. Over the years, St Agatha's benefited greatly from his playing for services and encouraging the choir that sings regularly on Sundays. This choir, augmented to 20 or more voices for special performances such as The Crucifixion at Easter, the summer concerts, and carols before Christmas, were landmarks where Derek played and conducted. Over the years his repertoire included duets on the grand piano and organ marathons together with fugues and organ voluntaries. To mark his achievements, in September 2018 he was awarded the Fellowship of St Birinus in Dorchester Abbey

Derek loved St Agatha's organ--- an instrument superior to the instruments found in most parish churches. He practised with Bryn, his dog, who posed like the terrier in the classic HMV advertisement. He was a member of the Oxfordshire Guild of Organists and with other members he visited a number of cities on the continent to listen to and play historic organs.

Derek was educated at Stowe School and at Balliol College, Oxford from 1949 to 1952. National Service, as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Horse Artillery, took him to the Canal Zone in Egypt, Libya and Germany. Until 1967 he was a territorial army captain in the Royal Manchester Artillery. Derek was much involved in the textile industry in the Manchester area. He was managing director of the Walsden Printing Company for 14 years and an officer of the trade association for cotton spinning, weaving and finishing.

Since coming to Brightwell from Wilmslow, Derek and Judith have been active in many facets of village life including the safari suppers, the village stores and the annual fete and produce show where he won the Talbot Rose Bowl on several occasions.

Derek we shall miss you very much!

John Rodda

Parish Council

These are very strange times for everyone, no less the Parish Council – we are coming to terms with meeting through Zoom, a very different sort of meeting but at least we get to see each other and have discussions. Members of the public are still welcome to join the meetings, you can ask for the Zoom code from Katie, the Parish Clerk, by emailing bscparishcouncil@googlemail.com.

The Parish Council was very busy at the beginning of the Covid crisis setting up a system whereby villagers would be able to access help easily and quickly if they needed it. This involved dropping letters through every house in the parish and extensive use of social media. By the time lockdown came we were up and running. We were so impressed and gratified by the speed with which villagers offered to be put on a list of helpers. We divided the village into area groups and each area was assigned a lead person who had a list of local volunteers. A dedicated email was set up and a small team of administrators checked the email as well as the post box and phone messages daily then passed the information to the correct area. The system worked really well and I believe everyone got what they needed within a short time of requesting. This was generally prescriptions or food requests. Of course the system is ongoing and if you do need help you can ring 01491 826968 (there's no one in the office but messages are picked up daily) or email covid19bcs@outlook.com or pop a note in the post box outside the village hall. These are all checked daily.

We would like to remind villagers that although the rules have been eased slightly we do request that people hold off from having fires for a while longer as there is still the risk of the disease and fires can be very harmful to people with respiratory conditions. At the time of writing, the tennis courts are now open to families playing together or with one other friend, but the tennis hut is not open. You can go to the parks and spend time there but remember the 2-metre distancing rule. Unfortunately, the gym equipment and children's playground equipment are still not to be used at the moment. Sadly, the cricket nets were vandalised recently and a 3 x 3 square of matting stolen so they are also out of action for the time being.

We have been lucky that the weather has been so good in the main over the past couple of months and we have been able to walk and exercise in our lovely village. Although hopefully we are over the worst we do need to keep being careful and using our common sense and hopefully we can soon be back to something resembling normal.

Sue Robson, Chairman

“Life in Lockdown”

A letter from France

On 9 March, Jen and I set off for a few days at our house in France to see family and, with the car rattling to the brim with Jen’s pots to be displayed at a local arts and crafts exhibition scheduled for late May, now of course cancelled. So, the pots sit sad and lonely in a spare bedroom waiting to be reloaded in the car and rattled back.

We had a ticket to return with Brittany Ferries on 19 March but on our journey to the port we were waved into a police roadblock and interviewed by a very nice dapper policeman with pretty good English. Our paperwork was found wanting and we were turned back lucky not to be fined as the country was now in lockdown. But we are English and decided we would try to outflank them by getting on the motorway from a different direction. As we paused to get cash for fines we received a text from Brittany Ferries to cancel our sailing and in fact all passenger sailings until further notice. So we went back to our house and have been there in Queaux ever since.

We are fine on lockdown in sunny France. We have to fill in a form called an attestation every time we leave the house. We are allowed 1 hour’s exercise per day within 1 km of the house; we can go shopping to our nearest shops/supermarkets - plenty of lavatory paper on sale from the beginning and no queues to get in but only one person per chariot. We do most of our shopping at the boulangerie/épicerie in the village where Lesley sells a good range of staples and does takeaways most days as her bistro is closed. Langue de boeuf, lapin a l’ail, saumonette sauce crevettes (not as we thought salmon tails but dog fish/rock salmon). We celebrated my birthday and my daughter’s birthday in the bistro with the grandchildren and it transpired we were the last sitting before closure. There is also a regular butchers van for meat and chacuterie which we try and use.

We can go further afield for sante (visits to the doctor or pharmacy). I had to get my prescription medication so we were put in touch with an English speaking lady doctor in Adriers. The English blokes in Queaux said she is very good but very fierce. But I thought she was a pussycat and I fell in love with her. She's 60ish but the surgical hat and the facemask just left her eyes and ringlets to be seen. My passion lasted until I got next door and met the pharmacist with beautiful dark eyes above the facemask. So I transferred my affections. Maybe the burqa is a good idea after all.

Jennie is out in the garden every day, making a vegetable bed, and collecting wood and kindling for the fire. She is also digging trenches for composting. I think.

I walked down to the river this morning and it was like something out of a film like maybe Doomwatch. I looked up the hill to the church, nothing moved, no sign of life. I looked down towards the dechetterie ditto, although there were cars parked by the glamping tents and chalets at the campsite.

We cannot get rid of our glass wine bottles at the moment so we put the empties in one of the sheds. I looked in there yesterday and surely they couldn't be all ours? – people in the village must be using our shed for their empties. So the diet's gone out of the window then.

We are getting quite adept at Zoom meetings with various segments of the family and Jen does her French lessons, the WI and the book clubs. Also Zoom exercise classes with Carl can make you puffed. Sometimes we have sound and sometimes vision and now and then both. Also we listen to books on Audible, we've enjoyed Cormorant Strike stories. We watch TV on Britbox and Netflix and Amazon Prime and listen to BBC Sounds. Bleak House and Inspector Montalbano have been good plus of course Benidorm.

There was a small market in the church car park for the bank holidays on 1 and 8 May. Nothing else really for VE day but we were very impressed with the YouTube Brightwell VE day celebrations. We even stood up for the toast and prayers.

Brittany Ferries having failed again, we are now coming home on Le Shuttle early June. A bientot.

Trevor and Jenni Morgan

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School

If we ever needed a reminder of what a dedicated and community-serving staff team we have here at Brightwell School, then this lockdown has certainly done the job. Since Day 1 of the closure, like many others across the country, the school has been providing support for the families of key workers. This support continued throughout the Easter holidays, the Bank Holidays and we are expecting to be in school for the half term holiday too, and all for good reason.

Meanwhile our supportive parent and wider communities have enabled us to settle families into new routines, check on those who may need a little more

looking after, provide home learning, share stories, fun videos and activities to keep us all going and enjoy our interactions on our virtual class calls.

Our school council virtual meeting revealed what the children were missing about school and how we could all continue to support each other throughout this uncertain time, but perhaps more importantly they were able to share what they were enjoying about lockdown; spending time with family, time to do ‘stuff’ at home, playing in the garden or with toys, helping with gardening, baking and going for walks, playing with siblings, being creative, virtual meetings with friends and the weekly ‘clap for carers’. Just like the reminder shared at the start of this update, it seems fitting to be reminded by the children of Brightwell that there are lots of positives to the current lockdown situation.

Just like you, we wait to hear the ‘what next?’ from the Government, but one thing is for sure, the staff team, parents and children of Brightwell School will continue to do their very best for each other.

Fin Lewis



Brightwell Art Club

The lockdown has not stopped our painters! Due to the circumstances we have in fact been more prolific than normal and we have enjoyed sending our paintings around to each other.

We have set up a gallery of paintings done during the lockdown which you can find under Brightwell Art Club on the new village website. The gallery is under "Arts & Crafts" in the Local Services directory of the website or follow the link below to go straight to the paintings. Do take a look!

<https://www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk/directories-x/brightwell-art-club/lockdown-paintings>

At the moment we have no idea when the Art Club will be able to recommence but you can find out more about us on the website, or you can email me at brightwellartclub@gmail.com.

Veronica Wood, Secretary

Community Association

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

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus restrictions/lockdown, I am unable to report on any recent events or give you dates for future events this year. We have looked at the possibility of organising the fete and produce/flower show at a later date but the Government has not yet mentioned when large scale social events can take place.

As soon as we get some guidance, hopefully we can then make a decision on if we can go ahead. We would be delighted if we could still run the fete later in the summer so let us all keep our fingers crossed. If not, we will ensure that it is a bigger and better occasion next year!

James Davys – Chairman

Summer Concert

For obvious reasons, it was necessary to postpone this year's summer concert which was to have been held in June. But all is not lost!

We are now holding Sunday evening 27 September (7pm) as an alternative date and will decide nearer the time if it is possible to go ahead. The next *Villager* will have up to date details.

Alec McGivan

Brightwell Toddlers

We hope everyone is keeping well and staying safe. We really miss you all and know all those with little ones will be doing an amazing job during this really difficult time. Who knew how important our coffee and chats were until they were taken away?!

I am glad to see lots of you following Brightwell Toddlers on Facebook - a craft post goes out every Thursday, and it is great to see some of you trying these at home. Until we see you again, we are sending lots of remote hugs and smiles to get you through!

Laura Woodford

More “Life in Lockdown”

Getting it sorted

As front doors slammed shut for the lockdown, internally it was time to fling wide the gates. Hoarders and collectors were under threat right from the start. With hindsight they didn't stand a chance. Lockdown 2020 would prove the greatest ever peacetime assault on boxes, drawers and cupboards. As airborne divisions headed for the attic, ground forces ripped open the nearest boxes (some of which hadn't been opened for a generation). Critics of the hoarders were joined by the *money men* promising instant wealth via eBay.

As the official hoarder in our family I have been told many times “it's not just your money you can't take with you when you go...it's all that stuff you've gathered as well”. As days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, the response “I'm too busy to sort all this out” crumbled.

Let me be frank, the safe-haven, which my study has always been, houses not just my own collection but that of my now departed, dearly beloved mother. She was a tad eccentric. Nothing unusual about the stamp collection which went under the hammer a few years back, but I still have the free sugar lumps and the free matches collected wherever she went. Not to mention the wine labels, lovingly soaked off bottles and recording which family members had consumed it and where and when; the celebrated book of those wonderfully colourful date box labels, and her collection of postcards of bridges. “Why bridges?” I hear you say. I have no idea!

There's also her collection of family logs of all our summer caravan holidays painstakingly put together by her two boys under her teacher-trained watchful eye. Her unique carrier bag collection has gone, but not so her wildflower records meticulously noting the location and date she had found wildflowers throughout most of her life. I have all the diaries she kept in retirement, and then there is the family correspondence: my brother's Sunday night letter from Dartington, and my own slightly less reliable output from Wadham College. Now of course these letters have been united with the replies. Inevitably time is spent reading them again. The 1960s and 70s will surely be the end of an era as far as letter writing is concerned.

The book collection remains fairly unscathed but the Oxfam shop beckons for some of it post-lockdown.

A big task still lies ahead as my own ‘treasures’ have barely had a mention. So many programmes.... from 60 years of regular theatre visits and concerts. Of

course, football matches too, reflecting both my devotion to Bristol City FC with regular visits to Ashton Gate at the one end and then the glory of Cup finals, the Champions league and World Cups that came later.

Ah yes... the record collection. No sooner had CDs bit the dust than vinyl made a comeback. The LPs deserve one last play or two, don't they? And a little while ago I did treat myself to a new deck to play my 78s. Well, I found them in a cupboard you see when I was doing some sorting out. Lockdown is not all bad.

Alec McGivan

Vaccine trialling

I'm a travel writer by trade, so to be staying at home so much is a little bit strange for me. But I haven't spent my entire time in Brightwell, as I've had to travel to Oxford and back a fair bit over the last few weeks.

Around six weeks ago I saw a new report on BBC South Today about the Oxford Vaccine Centre's new trial. Excited to see that major efforts to find a Coronavirus vaccine were right by me, on our doorstep, I had a quick search online to learn more.

Fast forward five weeks and there I was, at the Vaccine Centre, sitting in a corridor waiting for my injection. I had initially been searching for information on the vaccine, but when I landed on the centre's website I discovered they were seeking volunteers. You had to be between 18 and 55 years old, healthy and living in the Thames Valley. That was me, so I signed up!

After a pretty intense process of numerous blood tests, inquisitions on my medical history and three (three!) pregnancy tests, I had qualified for the trial and had agreed to be injected.

There were two different drugs I could have been administered: a covid-19 vaccine, previously untested on humans, or a licensed meningitis jab that is used to vaccinate kids. Both present similar side effects (fever, nausea, aches at the vaccination site) but only one might protect against the virus. That means that they will determine its efficacy by comparing the number of coronavirus cases in the group who had the meningitis jab, versus those who were offered the vaccine

As participants, we don't know what we've been given, so I felt a slight sense of trepidation on the day, but after the jab I felt absolutely fine and am pleased to report that I'm still totally normal.

My travel writing work has (obviously) mostly dried up, but I've been able to keep flexing my literary muscles by filling in my online diary for the trial doctors to read and writing articles about the process and experience for The Daily Telegraph's website and, of course, *The Villager*. Here's to hoping this trial is a success!

Lottie Gross

Families connecting through technology

As a family, we might be spread far and wide geographically but Brightwell is a place that connects us. Our parents, Liz & John Witney, have lived there together for over 50 years and my mum was brought up in the village. They have been self-isolating since the start of lockdown.

Technology has played a massive part in keeping our whole family connected from Brightwell, Didcot, Leeds & Vietnam - we have had family quizzes, celebrated birthdays, kept fit and most of all had great support in home schooling.

My mum is online every weekday helping to home school her grandchildren whilst enabling her children to work. Her patience and support have helped so much in this difficult time. If there is one thing we have learnt as a family in lockdown is how we keep in touch, now more than ever: we laugh, we cry, we celebrate and we support - I hope my parents see this in *The Villager* and know how much we as a family appreciate them!

We will also be tuning into You Tube today to watch the VE Day film.

Tracy Elliott

Village shop and post office

We have all had to change and adapt over the last weeks to new ways of living and working. At the shop and post office, we have had to take on new challenges to ensure we keep all our services going for the community. Thanks to our volunteers, new and old, we have managed to keep open plus adding a delivery service for the people having to self-isolate at home. Our suppliers have been brilliant, especially the local ones. They have gone the extra mile to ensure we have our daily and weekly deliveries, despite the difficulties they are themselves experiencing. Also, we would like to publicly thank the village hall committee for allowing us the use of the Stewart Room to give us extra space to carry out the packing and storing of the orders to be delivered.

The Post Office has also been very supportive, providing daily support and information online and through WhatsApp, and supplying us free of charge, with PPE, protective screens, posters etc, together with extra funding. If you haven't already done so, please consider showing your gratitude by going online to www.postoffice.co.uk/feedback quoting branch code No 4001370. There is a chance to win £100 gift card.

So much of the work in Brightwell post office is done by volunteers, supported by paid part-time staff. Over the last four years, having the post office in the shop has not only kept this service in the village but has made the shop more sustainable. However, it is reliant on a team of us volunteers, to ensure we have these services well into the future. We would like to expand our team of trained post office volunteers to help spread the load. It is interesting, keeps your brain active and a good way to meet people. Please contact me if you feel able to help with what the Government terms as an 'essential' service in the village.

It is times like these that accentuate how lucky we are to live in a good community with such caring people. So many of you have said how you value your community shop, and we hope this will continue when life starts to return to some sort of normality. Our shop team is here to welcome new volunteers, so if you have a few hours to spare weekly or monthly please consider serving in the shop, training for the post office, joining the Management Committee or many of the other jobs that need to be done by volunteers. If none of the above is possible then please consider becoming a member for a minimum donation of £1.

Your community shop will celebrate its 10th anniversary in August; let's together ensure that we keep this thriving community enterprise going for the next 10 years.

Best wishes and stay safe.

Celia Collett
Chairman Management Committee

Treasure trail

William and Shena have devised a treasure trail to be done any time during June, suitable for families – voluntary contribution for BCRT. To book your slot contact Shena 01491 834543 or shenaluck@btconnect.com. It's half a km long and takes about 30 minutes; also a timed more complex version for adults.

VE75 day in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell



From older residents who remembered being there to the very young, the village celebrated, at a safe distance, with food and wine (from spam sandwiches to fizz) and put up bunting outside their houses.

After weeks of isolation the community came together to celebrate 75 years since the end of the conflict.

Church Lane had a table outside almost every house. The Street celebrated with bunting and painted stones as well as booze. Wellsprings barbequed and sang till late.



Others walked around the village (at a distance) to see all the fun and the children gathered goose grass (some things never change!).

Even some pets joined in the celebration.



A short video - *VEDay2020 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Remembers* – brings together the different acts of remembrance which would have taken place here in the village on 8 May. It can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/hdH95q8mJfQ>.



The Red Lion

As you know, here at The Red Lion, Mouse and I were forced to close our doors on the evening of 20 March as instructed by the Government. We really didn't know what was around the corner for us and if we would survive after only taking over 8 weeks previously.

After looking at the guidelines of what we were able to do, we quickly started a weekly Friday takeaway service and over the weeks this has now grown to four nights a week and we've recently introduced a Sunday lunch service also. If you do not know about the takeaway service, please email info@theredlionbrightwell.co.uk and request to be added to the mailing list and we will update you each week of our current menu as we change the options regularly. We also post/update our social media pages so be sure to like our page.

As the evenings have proved so popular, we are now opening between 10.30am-2.30pm Tuesday to Saturday offering takeaway tea, coffee and freshly made cakes & sausage rolls which sell out each and every day! We can also offer filled baguettes but these must be booked in advance by 9am the morning of collection.

Mouse and I only moved into the village at the end of January and we are genuinely overwhelmed by the support you are all giving us as without this, the pub simply wouldn't survive this closure. We feel very fortunate that the village love their pub and we are positive with all the support we are receiving, we will make it through this and come out the other side raring and ready to go!

We are really looking forward to opening whenever we are allowed and getting your village pub back in full swing as it should be! The pub isn't the same without all of our locals who are here eating and drinking on a regular basis, or our regular groups. Immy is especially missing her lunchtime buddies Mick, Eddie, John & Dave who every day would sit and feed her although it must be said....she has lost a few kilos since!! In the short 8 weeks we were open we got to know so many of you and have been made to feel so welcome that we cannot wait to get going once again and thank you all as best we can!

For now, we wish you all well, stay safe, stay alert and any support you can give to the pub will always be greatly appreciated.

Corinne, Mouse & Immy xx

The challenge for charities

As a sector, charities have been particularly affected by the current Coronavirus crisis. Some have benefitted from Government subsidies, where they are locally based or instrumental in the fight against the virus, but many have been hard hit by the dramatic downturn in income. In order to provide some relief, many charities took up the 2.6 Challenge as a London Marathon alternative with a variety of supporter led fundraising efforts and activities, all within the bounds of social distancing. Here are two villagers' stories of their 2.6 challenge and a third who ran a family lockdown relay.

The 2.6 Challenge – by bike

Like many charities BCRT (Bone Cancer Research Trust) is struggling because the vast amount of its income relies on events and with social distancing in place and the cancellation of major events such as the London Marathon, BCRT's income will fall by an estimated 65-70%.

The 2.6 Challenge (<https://www.twopointsixchallenge.co.uk/>) aimed to 'Save the UK's charities' and with that in mind, BCRT put out a call to its supporter base to take on any self-inspired challenges. I was asked to encourage the trustees and staff in their own activities by doing something myself, even if it was 'walking around your garden 2.6 times'! As walking or biking 2.6 miles would hardly inspire significant sponsorship, I gave a knee-jerk reply (yes even with my knees!) of saying I would bike 26 miles; I had previously never cycled more than 12 miles so was immediately thinking 'what have I just done'!

Being mindful of the fact that we are self-isolating, I decided to keep within the bounds of the village and if at all possible stay on the flat, so I worked out a circuit of 4.7 miles avoiding Bell Lane and Church Lane, utilizing both ends of the village from Sotwell to Frogs Island and multiple trips down Mackney Lane. Also, to avoid too close contact (and not wanting people to see me puffing and panting), I set off at 6am on the Sunday (25 April).

What a really beautiful morning it was. The sun was up, the mist was across the fields and as I rode down Mackney Lane, a muntjac deer gambolled ahead of me. I then spotted a water station thoughtfully put out by Sue and Bob, complete with hand-santiser! I had originally planned to do the ride in two or three sessions if my legs demanded it, but once I got going and mindful of the fact that if I stopped I might not get going again, I carried on and did six of my laps - somewhat over the 26 miles just in case I had miscalculated! I arrived

back home where Angela had put out the BCRT banner with Alex's smiling face and run a welcome hot bath.

The response from everyone in sponsoring me was quite over-whelming and the village, in typical generosity, was so open-hearted and benevolent that, along with Facebook inspired donations from far and wide, we raised nearly £3,000 including gift aid. Overall that weekend the charity raised around £28,000 nationally – a much needed uplift to us all.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their kindness and altruism, not only in supporting BCRT in Alex's memory now, but consistently over the last 9 years. Thank you all so much.

Andy Lewis

A Brightwell Marathon

On 26 April, I ran for Hope for Children and raised £401. I will be running the London Marathon in October but thought I'd do something on what would have been race-day!

Hope for Children is an international charity which believes that every child deserves a childhood and a right to a life out of poverty, with an education and with choices.

I ran the High Road, down Bell Lane, along Brightwell Street and up Church Lane 8 times = 9 miles, then cycled at home for another 9 miles then ran around the outside of my house for 2 hours... covering 8.2 miles! Over 250 laps round the house! Phew! It took about 4 hours 40 mins.

More information on the route and donations, see the just giving page:
<http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Rosie-s-26-2-challenge2815>

Rosie Lanyon

Lockdown 50k Relay!

On Saturday 2 May, my family and I ran a 50k relay to raise much needed funds for the wonderful Marie Curie. My sister kickstarted the event and set off at 9am in Newcastle-upon-Tyne to do the first 10k leg of the relay. I was next up, running my 10k around Wallingford and the lovely Brightwell-cum-Sotwell on such a beautiful sunny day. Using a GPS tracker, we were able to track everyone's location in order to pass on the virtual baton to the next family member.

Our friends up and down the country also took part on various different legs of the relay to lift our spirits and help to increase donations. We completed 50k in just over 4.5 hours and raised over £4,000!

We are so overwhelmed and grateful to all our friends who took part on the day, and for the incredibly generous donations received. We know that the money will be exceptionally well received at the Marie Curie hospice in Newcastle at such a difficult time. Thank you to everyone who supported us.

Charlotte Todd

Save the Children

Charities have been hugely affected in the current crisis, so many of their funding streams have been lost. Save the Children is no exception, but their much needed work and support for children and their families both in the UK and all around the world is needed more than ever.

Therefore, we felt we had to find a way to hold our annual Plant Stall in the Square on 16 May, after all for nearly 45 years it has become a village tradition. We went ahead following a slightly different format, together with following social distancing guidance, and raised over £1,300. This is thanks to the extraordinary generosity of both the lovely villagers that donate the plants and cakes, plus the generous people who came along and bought them.

The Save the Children committee is continuing to look for ways to fund raise over the coming months, whilst following Government advice. To end the month of May it will be 'Make a Scarecrow'. Hopefully, this will not only raise some extra funds, but also bring pleasure to both young and old. I am sure it will make our daily exercise even more pleasurable. We will keep you updated of any future ideas.

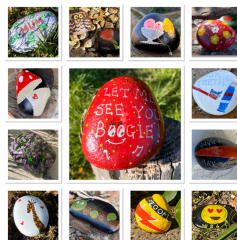
Thank you again and stay safe.

Celia Collett

Brightwell Rocks



Have you seen the painted rocks when out and about on your walks? They are eye-catchingly beautiful and there are lots to find, but please don't touch or remove them.



Brightwell Supporting Refugees (BSR)

In these lockdown days of Covid 19 it is hard to imagine that there is any strife out there in the world other than the virus crisis. However, we woke up yesterday to news of a horrific bombing of a maternity hospital in Kabul leaving new-born babies motherless; utterly despicable acts against humanity in what is already a dreadful time for people.

We at BSR are aware that displaced people are having even more worrying times when they must live in camps in appalling conditions such as Moria on Lesbos, the biggest refugee camp in Europe - social distancing impossible. Jordan, where we have links with the schools at Azraq and Amman, is slowly coming out of lockdown. The needs are great in a country that has a significant proportion of population in poverty, is not self-sufficient in water or food and is offering refuge to large amounts of people from war torn countries surrounding it. We have been able to get some funds to the schools to help with their home learning and also basic food and hygiene needs, but more is needed.

So, whilst we are still staying at home and social distancing, what can we do to raise money to send? Well on Saturday 30 May why not join in with **'The Great Village Date Hunt'** - some fun-filled, social distancing, detective work around the village. Details will be on Facebook, the community website and posters around the village. Please do enter.

Saturday 20 June is World Refugee Day and we plan to have a mobile musical event; details are still being worked out but make a note of the date. In the meantime, it is easy to set up a direct debit for a monthly contribution to BSR or make a one-off donation. Anything you feel you could offer would be gratefully received, just get in touch at brightwellrefugees@gmail.com.

Wishing you well from all the BSR team.

Ann Linton



Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

During lockdown, WI members have been keeping in touch and ensuring everyone is OK through a regular newsletter, phone calls and Zoom meetings. Our planned speaker for our May meeting agreed to give her talk by Zoom and 25 members listened in to hear about the Microbiome – the missing link

between brain and gut health. Keeping healthy through diet seemed a very appropriate topic at this time, though it had been planned months ago. Our groups, such as the swimmers, knitters and book clubs have also all been able to have regular chats online through our Zoom account, and we held our regular monthly coffee meet up that way too (but sadly without cake!).

Our newsletters come out every 7-10 days with WI and village news, gardening advice, recipes, poems, members' photos and info on accessing online theatre or films. If you want to take a look at one, or join the WI, go to our website at www.brightwellcumsotwellwi@gmail.com.

Helen Connor

Stewart Village Hall

Film night

Sadly, as with all village activities, the planned film night had to be cancelled. We will reschedule this as soon as it is safe to do so and we look forward to welcoming you to the show.

The future of the 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 were lucky enough to secure financial support for this exercise from both the Parish Council and from our SODC ward councillors.

The trustees sought proposals from three firms of architects, interviewed each of them, and decided to work with Anderson Orr - the team who designed the village stores. The first step, which was to commission a full measured and topographical survey of the existing buildings, was carried out in February. Anderson Orr have since then been 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 or more. The process has inevitably been delayed by recent events, however the trustees hope to be able to present the results of this work in the coming months. We will be 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 very soon.

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 as it 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 <http://stewartvillagehall.btck.co.uk/> or leave a note in the village hall mailbox at the rear of the hall.

Annette Kilworth

Village hall quiz

A copy of the village hall monthly quiz can be picked opposite the shop door or contact me for a copy, by email or to your door. The entry fee (all proceeds go towards the hall's ongoing costs) is £2, to be paid when you return your completed quiz to the village hall post box (opposite the shop door). There is a bottle of fizz for the winner!

If you are self-isolating, I would be happy to drop a copy off to you and pick up your answer sheet and entry fee from your doorstep. To arrange this, or order an online copy, please call me on 834543 or email me at shenaluck@btconnect.com. Entry closes on the last day of each month!

Thank you for your support and good luck with the quiz.

Shena Luck

The Environment Group

Millennium Wood

The main item to report on the wood is that, finally, a small group installed the pond liner on Sunday 15 March. Because of the size and shape of the pond, we had some surplus pond liner and 'underlay' (which helps protect from stones etc). This allowed us to double up the thickness over the base of the pond so making it a bit more resilient in the long term - or so we hope!

Once the liner was in place we deposited some of the previously excavated soil to conceal and weigh the liner down plus also protect it. There was around an average of about 4 to 5 inches depth of soil. I visited it a couple of weeks later and it looked ok but I could see that probably a deer had walked into the area, so it is good to have the added protection.

Of course, installation of the liner on a damp day marked the end of the wettest winter on record and the start of what would be one of the sunniest and warmest March/April on record. We always knew that without a direct stream feed the area would probably at best be a wetland but even achieving this was not

possible for some time. However, we have had a few heavy downpours and I am pleased to say that there is, for the moment at least, an actual pond with standing water. We will look with interest to see how this additional habitat develops.

Weather

The rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm was 38.4mm for March and 36.2mm for April, both within the normal range for these months. It came mainly in short bursts of heavy rain with much of both months seeing long periods of sunshine – indeed 150 per cent of the long-term average for each month with temperatures around 3 deg C or more above the average. The Met Office have confirmed that April was the sunniest on record. The dry period was a welcome relief for farmers who had not been able to get on the land due to waterlogging.

Another feature is that the sky has been looking very blue in recent weeks. This would appear to be at least in part due to the lack of white vapour trails or contrails left by high flying aircraft. In addition to feeling cleaner, the lack of contrails in clear weather is likely to lead to higher daytime temperatures and lower night time ones. It will be interesting to see the outcome over the coming months.

Wildlife

The fine weather has brought out butterflies in good numbers with peacock, comma, holly blue, yellow tip and brimstone yellow in evidence. Deer also seem to be very active in the area. On the home front, I am glad to say that we have been having up to four hedgehogs visiting our garden at any one time with the males running tight circles round their prospective mates! We hope to see some hoglets in due course. Overall this looks to be a good year for wildlife at least and let's hope it continues.

We are posting photographs on the Environment Group's Facebook page along with links to relevant topics. If you have any pictures or articles you think would be of interest then please contact Lizzie Rhymes on [*lizzrhymes@hotmail.com*](mailto:lizzrhymes@hotmail.com).

Environment Group Talk

Although we had to postpone the May talk, the speaker, Richard Benwell is happy to come on another occasion, hopefully this autumn.

Steve Capel-Davies

News from the Bach Centre

We opened a new cafe in March, with what turned out to be the worst timing imaginable. After an excellent opening week, Nora's Kitchen shut its doors because of COVID-19 restrictions, along with the rest of the Bach Centre.

Nora's Cafe is named after Nora Weeks. Nora was the Head of the Centre from 1936 up to her death in 1978. She lived at our house, Mount Vernon, in Baker's Lane, throughout that time.

A couple of years ago when selecting items for a museum display, we came across Nora's 1940's recipe book. A couple of the team cooked up some of the damson jam and quince jelly as a tester: it was delicious. From selling pots of Nora's jam in our shop to creating a full-fledged cafe seemed a natural progression.

After a lot of work, especially over the last winter, Nora's Cafe will be (or should be again, soon) open to everyone, Monday to Friday from 10am to 3pm. We serve teas, coffees, cakes, snacks and light lunches. All the food is vegetarian and most dishes are vegan, chosen to match Dr Bach's commitment to natural, healthy and kind living. Nature has a role in the cafe too, with carefully chosen wallpaper, exposed wood and live edge wooden tables. From the summer there will be an open-air seating area in the Bach Centre garden. And we have plans for Christmas specials later in the year.

Hopefully by the time you read this (I am writing in April) we will have a better idea of when life will be back to normal. When it is, please come along and check out Nora's Kitchen.

Stefan Ball

Advertisers

The Villager carries some 50 adverts from businesses, most of which are open or have been working under restrictions for the last few months. The following have provided us with their latest information:

Ann Linton Flowers If you would like to give someone some flowers to cheer them up during these difficult times I am only too happy to help. I am able to deliver flowers within the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell area or you can arrange for collection. Do contact me.

Bespoke French If French is your cup of tea, Bespoke French is still running with Group French conversation classes as well as one to one tuition via Zoom. Please see the advert for contact details.

Brightwell Physiotherapy is now open. Online consultancy Monday – Friday. From this, if your need is assessed to be urgent, and following the latest guidelines, we can see you for a face-to-face treatment with PPE provisions.

Brightwell Vineyard: Vineyard tours and wine tastings are having to wait for an easing of the Government's present restrictions but we are open as usual for wine sales - Saturdays and Sundays 12-6pm, and on other days from the vineyard house 10am-8pm. Our online shop should be up and running by Friday 14 May so we will also be able to do Click and Collect orders.

Brightwell's Stewart Village Hall is available for any villager or group who needs to use it.

Blooming Botany is still working and offering socially distanced consultations/advice on garden design and gardening techniques. If you are shielding we can offer initial consultations via phone or over video conferencing, so that you can make the most of the amazing summer of opportunity we have been given and bring your garden back to life.

E&W Plumbing and Heating is continuing to offer a full plumbing & heating service to customers including 24/7 emergency call out. But if you or anyone in your property are currently unwell and are self-isolating due to Covid-19 or, if you are deemed as being vulnerable, please make us aware of this immediately. This will allow us to take appropriate action to protect you and our staff.

K&G Builders is open for business as usual, working within government guidelines.

Sims Solar is open as usual during these difficult times. Customers should email or telephone.

Wallingford Museum is closed until further notice but we have quizzes and jigsaws on our website, wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

Winterbrook Garden Nurseries is open from 10-4 Saturdays & Sundays, 10-5 Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays. We advise customers to wear gloves, no dogs & individual shoppers. We can take contactless payment or cash. A maximum of 6 people can be inside the nursery at one time. We are offering a local delivery service or click & collect from the nursery via our online shop.

VILLAGE DIARY

May

- 30 BSR Great Village Date Hunt – register at The Square (Church Lane) or Red Box Gallery:10-11am or 2-3pm
- 31 Save the Children ‘Make a scarecrow’

June

William & Shena’s Treasure trail: throughout June

- 20 World Refugee Day
BSR’s mobile music event – to be confirmed

July

Advance Notice

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 12 September | Brightfest |
| 27 September | Summer Concert at St Agatha’s (TBC) |

Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Grey bins | Thursdays 11 & 25 June
Thursdays 9 & 23 July |
| Green (& brown) bins | Thursdays 4 & 18 June
Thursdays 2, 16 & 30 July |

Oakley Wood recycling household waste centre is now open (since 18 May) every day from 8am-4pm.

Village website

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