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**Items for the next edition should be sent to the Editor by 7 March 2018.** *The Villager* is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village.

## Editorial

Thank you everyone who made Christmas and New Year in the village such a fun and festive time. The lights round the houses and trees were really pretty this year, while the carols and Christmas services, parties in the hall and Red Lion, and visits from Santa, were well rounded off by Wassail 2018 on Twelfth Night. Brightwell really does know how to celebrate! The Armagellon Morris dancers and local band led a crowd of some 400 through four orchards, beating out spirits and waking up the apples trees for the Spring, ending up in the village hall for a party. (Many thanks to Keith Brooks for the cover picture). Then we had an evening ceilidh which I honestly think was one of the best nights in the hall for years as different generations mingled, ate, drank, danced and laughed the night away. A really fun event which also raised £1200 for the zipwire and playground appeal and £652 towards Maeve's Magical Journey.

But it has not all been fun. Sadly, Jane Dix passed away suddenly just before Christmas. She will be missed by many, and especially her husband Martin who is part of our *Villager* production team. We send our condolences. As you can read on the next page, her memory will be kept alive through a number of donations to village charities.

With this issue comes a flyer about the new Wallingford Corn Exchange. Although all the fundraising is not yet complete, it opened for their traditional pantomime this month. As well as the new roof, heating and ventilation systems, there are new seats and a new décor. So, take a look at 'what's on' in the months ahead and pay it a visit.

Listed in the centre pages (12 and 13) is the Village Annual Diary with the dates of the main events taking place in the village in the year ahead. As well as the usual ones there are some new events, like a charity ball in May for Save the Children and the Bone Cancer Research Trust. Please let us know of any other planned events so that we can give them advance notice here.

We continue our series of famous villagers – In the Spotlight - with an interview with Matt Rodda, son of Annabel and John, and recently elected MP for Reading East (page 20). Finally, there is interesting news about the archaeological dig that has started on Little Martins Field and an update from builders Kingerlee on progress in gaining planning consent (on page 5).

I hope your new year has started better than mine (a week in bed with the flu!), so looking forward to some spring sunshine.

*Helen Connor*

## Jane Dix

I would like to thank everyone who has sent cards, thoughts and sympathy following the sad loss of my dear wife Jane, and all who came to fill St Agatha's for her funeral service on 15 December.

Jane and I spent almost 30 of our 41 years of married life in the village. She was well known through her passions for her garden, which she was proud and happy to open regularly for the National Garden Scheme and other Open Garden days; her painting, especially her exquisite studies of flowers and experiments with Japanese painting techniques as seen at the recent Brightwell Art Club exhibition; and for her stint as Parish Clerk from 2005.

More surprisingly to some, Jane was the first in her school (St Helens in Abingdon) to ever gain a place to read an engineering subject and the only female student in her course at Imperial College London. She later worked for many years as a project engineer at Oxford Instruments, managing the staff, budgeting and production of low temperature cryogenic instruments and magnets for use in medical and physics research. Having a rare mix of both scientific and artistic talents was just one thing that made Jane so special.

It is clear from messages of condolence that people remember Jane as kind and considerate, caring and funny, while always no-nonsense and outspokenly honest. She always liked to stop and chat to those she met at the shop, around the village and in town. Whenever new neighbours came to Wellsprings, she made special efforts to make them welcome, loving to spend time with their children, showing them round the garden and encouraging them to be fond of cats. Many people in the village remember how kind she was to them and the fact that so many people travelled considerable distances to come to her funeral is testimony to Jane's caring nature.

The sympathy and support that I myself have received has been huge. I'm deeply grateful and fortunate to belong in such an extraordinarily caring village community.

Jane, may you rest in peace. I will love and miss you forever.

*Martin Dix*

### Postscript

I understand that in Jane's memory, donations will be made to a number of village causes and charities to include the Art Club, Village Hall Restoration, Save the Children, Brightfest 2018, Community Association, Cats Protection, Village Shop and Maeve's Magical Journey. We hope to report more on this in the next *Villager* – Ed.

## Parish Council

The Parish Council would very much like to thank the DiMassa family for their excellent work clearing the footpath from the street to the school just before Christmas. It was a job that needed to be done and they made an excellent job of it, a sterling effort. Thank you so much.

The new playground plans are progressing and the funds were bolstered by over £1,000 on Twelfth Night when many villagers enjoyed a busy day wassailing several orchards and wakening trees with much music, cider and noise. Around 400 people, twice as many as last year, made it possibly the biggest wassail in the country. In the evening the ceilidh in the village hall was a huge success and great fun. Thank you to everyone involved in making both events so enjoyable and successful.

The Parish Council continues to be involved in the plans for the Little Martins development of houses submitted by Kingerlee homes in order to get the best possible outcome for the village. The following provides some historical background on the development.

The villages of Brightwell and Sotwell date back to at least the ninth century, though we know from archaeological evidence that there has been earlier settlement. At Sotwell between Bell Lane and Wellsprings numerous archaeological finds have indicated Iron Age and Roman settlement, and just to the west of Brightwell, Bronze and Iron Age farms have been unearthed. Recently on Slade End Fields (always ours until Wallingford grabbed it two years ago!), an Iron Age ladder was found.

Our understanding about how our community evolved will be given a massive boost over the coming months as archaeologists move in before development takes place on Little Martins. It was always assumed that Brightwell was founded around the spring located in the garden of the Old Priory on Church Lane. Trial trenches on near-by Little Martins have revealed this to be the case. Evidence has been found of an Iron Age settlement, Roman farming and early Saxon habitation. A possible medieval farm has also been suggested.

This is all very exciting and would place Brightwell firmly on the map of significant historic villages in the area and prove that our village has been settled for over 2000 years. During the next six weeks, archaeologists will be carrying out a sizable dig on the site to reveal just what is underneath. The Parish Council has been working with the developers to ensure that villagers and local school children will be able to find out what is being found and also

to have special guided tours of the dig. Look out for information on the village notice boards, website and facebook pages for a date.

*Sue Robson*

## Little Martins Field – an update from Kingerlee Homes

### Design work

Our consultant team is picking up the pace and we hope to submit a detailed scheme to the district planners at the end of January. This will include details of all the house types, their appearance, materials, road layout, car parking, tree protection (there are tree protection orders on the site), public open space and landscaping of the site. This is for 31 new homes, including 12 affordable in line with the outline planning consent we obtained.

### Archaeology

A planning condition required us to commission an archaeological investigation which was completed some time ago and we now have to do further, more extensive work to investigate two major areas of the site. We have appointed Oxford Archaeology to undertake the site work, analyse the findings and prepare a report. They start on 15 January and will be on site for about four weeks. We expect this work to be of local interest and we hope to make arrangements for the village primary school pupils and residents to visit and see what lies below...or doesn't!

### 'Custom build' housing

Our scheme will include three 'custom build' homes. These will be two and three bed houses as part of the first phase of our development. This is generally where the construction of a new home is commissioned from a builder and the person has an involvement in the specification and internal design. We need to gauge the potential level of interest in this which will be for those living or working in the village or with close family ties. Look out for further details of this initiative and how you can register your interest.

### Contact

If you would like further information about our plans for Little Martins Field please get in touch with David Coates, Planning Director at Kingerlee Homes. [David.Coates@kingerlee.co.uk](mailto:David.Coates@kingerlee.co.uk), telephone 01865 840000.

## Community Association

### Christmas hampers

Some of the money raised by the Community Association goes to help pay for Christmas hampers for our senior residents in the village. The Fairthorne Memorial Trust has made a very generous contribution again this year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them again for this.

We are very grateful to Celia Collet and the Village Stores team for selecting and sourcing the hamper items and to the Scouts and Cubs (especially Hilary Rogerson, Tim Scane and families) for packing and distributing the hampers. I am pleased to report that we are distributing more hampers than ever - if you know anybody who is eligible please let me know so that we can update the list for next year.

### Race evening – Saturday 24 February at 7pm in the Pavilion

Why not chase away the winter blues and come to the races! In conjunction with the Scouts we are running a race evening at the Pavilion; it will be a lot of fun and you might come away richer at the end of the evening. Tickets are £10 from the Village Stores, at the door or please contact Lynn on 01491 833009. As demand is likely to be high, please book early to avoid disappointment. Entry includes a light supper and a cash bar will be available.

### Village quiz evening – Saturday 10 March at 7.30pm in the village hall

Entry forms have been sent to all teams that took part last year. Anyone else who wants to enter a team should contact me on 01491 834195. Numbers are limited because of the event's popularity and fire regulations, so entries will be taken in strict order of the receipt of completed forms. All entry forms were emailed at the same time to ensure everyone has an equal chance of acceptance.

**Advance Dates** for Community Association events in 2018 are shown in the village annual diary on page 12.

*James Davys  
Chairman*

# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School

At this time of year, when many of us arrive at work and set off for home in the dark, it can be all too easy to just want to 'get through'. Not for us! A New Year and a new term at Brightwell Primary School gives further momentum to the strong start made back in September. It was a pleasure, as always, to welcome the children, staff and community back to our school, and continue to enjoy the transition from where we were a year ago. The energy in school every day offsets the gloomy days we often get in the first couple of months of the year.

It's always a delight to spend time in the classroom teaching, supporting or observing, and one of the most significant changes seen in the last year is in the engagement of the children. They relish the opportunities given to them inside and outside of the classroom and voice their appreciation of the changes. They particularly value the increased number of trips and visits such as Young Voices, our whole school theatre trip at Christmas and a visit to the Botanical Gardens in Oxford.

We have spent some precious money on ICT to add to the opportunities for every child in every class as a consequence of the clever planning being done by their teachers. Hard graft by the children, past and present, and the teachers are responsible for this shift in culture and I am grateful to all involved for the path we are now taking. Late December saw the publication of the national league tables with our 'hard graft' recognised. I am beyond pleased to be able to announce that our End of Key Stage 2 Reading results place our progress in the top 1% nationally! In fact of the nearly 17,000 primary schools in England we were 61st. It is a remarkable performance by the children and staff and something we can all be proud of and heartened by. As you can imagine, we are excited about what the future holds for our little school.

*Fin Lewis, Headteacher*

## Lent lunches

Lent soup and bread lunches will be served in the Church Room at St Agatha's on Tuesday 20 February and Tuesday 13 March from 12.30. All are welcome – donations to the Wallingford Food Bank. Please me know if you are coming by emailing [sandra@grainge.org.uk](mailto:sandra@grainge.org.uk) or calling 01491 839166.

*Sandra Grainge*



## Brightwell Art Club

Thank you everyone who came along to our annual exhibition in December. It was well attended and we hope you enjoyed looking at our paintings and also the local craft and charity stalls.

We have an interesting and varied programme for our spring term and have started off with a Still Life to get us in the painting mood.

We are a friendly group of people who welcome beginners as well as more experienced painters. More information can be found about us on the village website, [www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk](http://www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk) under 'Local Services' (just follow the instructions), or you can email me at [brightwellartclub@gmail.com](mailto:brightwellartclub@gmail.com). You could also pop in and see us on a Saturday morning, coffee is about 11 am.

*Veronica Wood, Secretary*

## Save the Children

At the Christmas Eve 'Carols around the Christmas Tree', we raised £614.19. A further £190 has been received bringing the total to £804.19...amazing. This could not happen without the sponsors of this event: Clive Collett Electrical, Root One, Anne Elliott and Slade End Garden Company; also, John Burdass for providing the sound and Alexa Morgan for reading the poem, plus Father Christmas who dropped in again this year and all our supporters... THANK YOU one and all for the generosity shown in our community.

**Save the date:** Sue Butt and Corinne Jones are organising a Charity Spring Ball on Saturday 5 May. This exciting village event will be in aid of both Save the Children and Bone Cancer Research Trust and will take place in a beautiful marquee in the recreation ground. We expect tickets to sell out quickly so please keep an eye out for further information which will be announced shortly.

In addition, you are invited to attend a fundraising Quiz Night at the Red Lion on 29 January. Please come along and support these wonderful charities.

*Celia Collett  
Chairman*

*Save the Children Wallingford & District Branch*

## St Agatha's with St James' Church

In a village like Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, marking the seasons of the year is an enjoyable thing to do together as a community. Some of these activities pre-date Christianity whilst others have been adopted into the church calendar and reach their fulfilment through the Christian gospel. At this time of year, all humanity living in the northern hemisphere is cheered up by the increasing daylight and signs of new life – it is the lengthening days that give us the Christian season of “Lent”, a time of preparation, turning away from the darker things in our lives in readiness to walk in a new light.

You don't have to be overtly Christian to participate in the Lenten tradition of giving something up for 40 days\* – indeed, this is often easier to achieve than New Year's Resolutions which have no end point. So, we tend to give up some luxury: traditionally this would have been meat or eggs (all the fatty things used up on Shrove Tuesday pancakes, hence the quasi-celebration called *Mardi Gras* meaning ‘Fat Tuesday’). More often today we give up chocolate, alcohol or even social media – such abstinences can provide health benefits and help us get control of our lives back from potentially damaging addictions. If we do give something up, it should not make us miserable, but be a positive step. So, I would also encourage you to go a step further and use whatever you gain, whether in fitness, money or time, to do something positive to further motivate you: choose a good cause, community group or charity to benefit from your time and talents.

Of course, Lent ends with the greatest celebration of all. Easter, the pagan celebration of new life, is no longer just the cycle into which we are born but destined to die. The risen Christ gives a firm new hope that there is life after death. Too good to be true? I used to think so, but having weighed all the evidence in the Bible, as well as Roman and Jewish historians, I can find no other plausible explanation of the empty tomb and the new found boldness of a bunch of fishermen than to conclude that CHRIST IS RISEN! I hope you will join us during Holy Week to share this hope, even if you have doubts like Thomas – because that's okay too! We begin Holy Week on 25 March with our Palm Sunday procession with the donkey, this year starting at St Agatha's and going to St James to hear again the story of Christ's Passion – that's his love for you and me.

*The Revd Kevin Beer*

\*You would fast for 46 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Eve if you include Sundays, but Church tradition allows the fast to be broken on a Sunday as the Lord's Day is always a celebration!

## Village Stores and Post Office

The shop and Post Office is an integral part of the community for many people, one of these was Eileen Smith who sadly passed away on August 23 2016.

Eileen moved into Brightwell-cum-Sotwell with husband Peter in 1985 when her employer, CABI, re-located to the outskirts of Wallingford. She was very appreciative of the strong community spirit within the village and a supporter of the campaign to get the village shop re-instated after the old Post Office stores closed down in 2002. Eileen was a regular customer at our new community shop until the time when ill-health and failing eyesight kept her largely confined to the house and she became reliant on friends, neighbours and the local volunteer service for her shopping, paying bills and so on. She always believed that the presence of the shop and post office facilities in the village not only provided a vital service but made an important contribution to the spirit of community within the village, as well as being a factor in making the village such a desirable place to live. She was very appreciative of the time and effort invested by all those who worked so hard to re-establish a retail presence in the village and subsequently by everyone who has contributed to its ongoing success. She remained very interested in all the latest news and developments from the shop and although not able to contribute in a practical way to its day to day running, she was keen to do what she could to ensure its future viability for the benefit of the whole community. Very kindly, Eileen left a bequest in her will of £5,000 to the shop to help ensure that these services remain as she wished.

Sadly, as well as Eileen, the shop and Post Office has lost some of our most loyal customers. In 2017 Cecil Western and Jane Dix passed away. They will all be missed by so many of us. The staff and volunteers will miss their regular visits to the shop when everyone could catch up and share conversation. The village is so lucky to have had all of them living here for so long and for the contributions they made to our community.

*Celia Collett  
Chairman  
Shop Management Committee*

## Stewart Village Hall

It has been a busy festive season in the hall with many varied activities, starting with the Brownies doing an excellent job decorating the Christmas tree. The tree and all decorations were donated by villagers and really looked pretty as you entered the hall. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this. The Community Association lights were then put up in the main hall and it was ready for Christmas parties including the Lunch Club Christmas lunch, the hall fundraising party, New Year's Eve party and Wassail dance.

The fundraising party on 9 December was a success although numbers were low. However everyone who attended had a lot of fun and £225 was raised for the hall funds. The New Year's Eve party was also a great success: 80 people were welcomed with a glass of bubbly and with Tim Valentine on the piano. After a two course meal and raffle there was Scottish Country dancing and then a disco through till midnight when the New Year was welcomed with a hearty rendition of Auld Lang Syne. A very big thank you must be given to the team of people who helped with the set up and clear up of the hall, to those who prepared the delicious food and the donors of all raffle prizes. The party raised £1,100 for the hall funds.

With the kind support of the Community Association we have decorated one wall in the main hall and the redecorating is continuing this month.

The trustees have two main priorities at the moment: firstly incorporating the charity which is currently a private trust and secondly working on the summary of results of a structural survey carried out on the hall which will lead to a village questionnaire to gain your feedback on how you would like to see the future of the hall develop.

*stewartvillagehall.btck.co.uk*

## The Great Paper Chain Challenge

A big thank you to all those who turned up on the afternoon of 2 December to try and make a paper chain to go around the inside walls of St Agatha's church for Christmas. If you were in the church during Christmas time you would have seen that we achieved our aim, and even had enough paper chains to decorate the entrance lobby, the pulpit and the base of the altar in the south aisle. The chain measured at least 96 metres, which is 1,440 individual links, a lot of licking and sticking. Thanks also to those who helped put it up.

*Rev. Janice Chilton*

## Village annual diary 2018

### February

Brightwell School term 3 ends  
Brightwell School term 4 starts  
Community Ass/Scouts Race Evening

Friday 9 February  
Monday 19 February  
Saturday 24 February

### March

Community Association's village quiz  
Mothering Sunday  
Brightwell Supporting Refugees AGM  
Brightwell Supporting Refugees Pop-Up  
Bistro with wine tasting  
Palm Sunday Procession with donkey  
to St James  
Brightwell School term 4 ends  
Good Friday Service at St Agatha's

Saturday 10 March  
Sunday 11 March  
Wednesday 14 March  
  
Saturday 24 March  
  
Sunday 25 March  
Thursday 29 March  
Friday 30 March

### April

Easter Family Communion at St Agatha's  
Brightwell School term 5 starts

Sunday 1 April  
Monday 16 April

### May

Charity Spring Ball  
Wallingford Team Rogation Service,  
Highlands Farm  
Safari Supper  
Brightwell School term 5 ends  
Brightwell Church Spring Fayre

Saturday 5 May  
  
Sunday 6 May  
Saturday 19 May  
Friday 25 May  
Saturday 26 May

### June

Brightwell School term 6 starts  
10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Summer concert  
at St Agatha's  
Annual BCSCC v. Red Lion Cricket  
Charity Match

Monday 4 June  
  
Sunday 17 June  
  
Sunday 24th June

## July

Village fete at Sotwell House  
Brightwell School term 6 ends

Saturday 7 July  
Wednesday 25 July

## August

## September

Community Association Fun Run  
Community Association AGM

Sunday 23 September  
Tuesday 25 September

## October

Harvest Family Service at St Agatha's

Sunday 7 October

## November

Centenary Remembrance Service  
at the War Memorial  
Art Club exhibition

Sunday 11 November  
Saturday 17 November

## December

Christmas Carol Service at St Agatha's  
Crib Service at St Agatha's  
Midnight Communion (venue tbc)  
Christmas Family Communion at St Agatha's

Sunday 16 December  
Monday 24 December  
Monday 24 December  
Tuesday 25 December

### A great opportunity .....

A beautiful marquee will be available for use in the BcS recreation ground on Sunday 6th and Bank Holiday Monday 7 May following the Save the Children/BCRT Spring Ball on Saturday 5th. Any village organisations or individuals who may be interested in making use of this great opportunity to hold an appropriate event should contact Corrine [c.jones@gmail.com](mailto:c.jones@gmail.com) or Sue Butt on [s.e.butt@btinternet.com](mailto:s.e.butt@btinternet.com).

## Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Environment group

### Millennium Wood

We are planning to have an activity day, probably in February, to clear areas of brambles, and prune trees ready for spring. This event will mark the start of the Friends of the Millennium Wood group, and will be open to everyone; thank you those who have already expressed an interest in taking part. Details of the event will be emailed out to members of the Friends Group, and will be on the BcS Environment group Facebook page. Please let our secretary, Lizzie Rhymes know if you would like to join in ([lizrhymes@hotmail.com](mailto:lizrhymes@hotmail.com)). Our Facebook page also has a lot of local, and more general, information on the environment so please have a look, and share any information or photos of wildlife that spot around Brightwell.

We have now purchased the thermal imaging device as well as the camera trap with the aid of the Community Association grant. We will be trying them out in the near future to see what wildlife turns up! We will post images, and video footage, on our Facebook page.

### Recycling

I am sure that most villagers are keen to recycle their waste, but it is surprising that there are some items that cannot generally be recycled and, if put in the Green Bin, effectively contaminate the remainder. This can potentially lead to amounts of Green Bin waste not being recycled. Items that are not suitable for recycling, and can lead to contamination, include glossy wrapping paper and disposable coffee cups. It is also rather disappointing that so much plastic packaging, especially related to food, is not suitable for recycling. Where this is stated on the packaging it can be appropriately disposed of but often there is no indication which probably means that it isn't suitable for recycling. Some items such as plastic plant pots and clingwrap are not suitable for recycling via the Green Bin but, according to information on [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com) they can be taken to a local centre such as Oakley Wood. Trying to work out what to take where can involve a bit of searching!

The long term problems of plastic waste in the oceans has been highlighted recently by Blue Planet 2. This problem could be reduced if 'single use plastic' was all suitable for recycling. Although this change is largely down to the manufacturers and shops, we, as consumers, can try to bring about change by shopping locally and in places where food items are served loose. A lot is being done to try and address this issue; further information can be found on the SODC website and more generally on the WRAP (Waste and Resources

Action Programme) website. This is an important and far reaching topic that involves us all.

## Rainfall

The rainfall at Highlands Farm was 52.4mm (below average) in November and 79.2mm (around average) in December giving a total for 2017 of 594.4mm. This is below average for the year and reflects the dry periods earlier in the year. This low rainfall has meant that groundwater levels are down and it is hoped that we get sufficient rain this winter to avoid a potential problem with water shortages next year. See <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2017/12/13/winter-rain-needed-in-the-south-east/> for more details.

Steve Capel-Davies

## More blooms for your garden

Working as a gardener at the Botanic Garden in Oxford, visitors often ask me questions about their problem plants. I have begun to realise that, although there is much repetition, to its owner every plant in every garden is unique. Many people are nervous about their horticultural skills, and there seems to now be a skills gap developing; we are buying our houses (and gardens) later, and there is little time to absorb our parents and grandparents gardening skills, knowledge, and passion. We all love visiting gardens, but with a bit of guidance anyone can find their green fingers! I have set up Blooming Botany to encourage us out of our back doors, by running courses from Blooming Botany HQ in the village, and by offering a flower border design service (including showing you how to look after it). I want to encourage us to fall in love with our gardens again, and have the confidence to look after them ourselves. Gardening needn't be a chore, nor an expensive monthly bill!

Courses start in early spring; the perfect time to be planning for those wonderful sunny summer days when the whole family can enjoy the garden from dawn to dusk. We begin with *The Gardening Year Ahead – Where Do I Start?* in early February, and then move on to cover *Seed Sowing on a Domestic Scale*, *Natural Staking of Herbaceous Plants*, and how to create *Pretty Pot Displays*. The courses aim to enable you to bring the best bits of your garden indoors, so we will also cover *Easter Table Centrepieces* and *Cutting Flowers for the House*, amongst other indoor subjects.

If you would like to get more from your garden, don't know where to start, would like an impressive statement flower border, or simply want to have fun for two hours learning something new, you can see the full course list at [www.bloomingbotany.co.uk](http://www.bloomingbotany.co.uk), e-mail [alison@bloomingbotany.co.uk](mailto:alison@bloomingbotany.co.uk), or call Alison on 07740 926431. If it helps, we can just spend a day gardening together in your garden.

Alison Quantrell

## Allsorts Preschool

Children in their early years actively seek interaction with others, making connections and piecing together their place in the community. One of the overarching principles of the early years framework is to provide positive relationships to help the children learn to be strong and independent. In the past we have been lucky enough to have continued support from members of our community, such as Bob Howarth and the late Ron Wood, both of whom gave the children at preschool precious connections with their community. The children always remember those who come to share stories, play games or do activities, often a clear celebrity status ensues.

Please remember our younger members of the community who you can help make those important connections. A short visit once a fortnight, once a month, once a term or even as a one-off would be appreciated and valued. In the past volunteers have helped with gardening activities, reading stories, craft, baking, sharing experiences of other countries or occupations, helping prepare and share out snacks. For small people it is only a small thought that can make a real difference, so please help support the next generation and have some fun too!

We have focussed on fairy tales this winter, sharing stories in the cold winter months. Ali from Wallingford book shop is helping to filter and re-vamp our tired collection of books, ending in World Book Day on 1 March when the children can dress up as a favourite character and have stories read to them by children from Brightwell school. As the spring begins, we thank the Greasbys for inviting us to Highlands Farm to meet the lambs, climb on tractors and splash in muddy puddles. So many adventures to have on our own doorstep, and too little time.

Saffron Nowinska



## Brightwell Supporting Refugees

On 11 December Brightwell Supporting Refugees had their Carols for Refugees evening at St James' church. This is turning into a regular annual event which proved to be very popular despite the 'cold and frosty' weather that could easily have put people off venturing out! An immense THANK YOU to all the performers and attendees. We made over £600 which will indeed help bring smiles to the faces of the refugees we support.

During 2017 we have raised an incredible £7800. This has been put to fantastically good use – teachers' salaries, IT equipment, children's winter jackets, heaters and, most recently, funding blankets for children at an orphanage in Jordan as the cold weather set in shortly before Christmas. This year we plan to continue to focus on supporting refugees in Jordan but will also react to urgent needs of refugees locally as Syrian families arrive in Oxfordshire and elsewhere in the world. We have decided to allocate some of our funds to much needed accommodation for a teacher in Uganda educating

BSR events to watch out for:

- 14 March - AGM at the Church Room, St Agatha's
- Lent lunches during February and March, and ....

Come to the POP UP BRIGHTWELL BISTRO for a wonderful evening of wine tasting and a gourmet four course dinner on Saturday 24 March. 7pm at the Brightwell Jubilee Hall.  
**Hurry as tickets are limited!**  
£37.50 per head. Wine available to purchase on the night.

To reserve your place contact Ann Linton on 07885639832, 01491 837228 or [annlinton1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:annlinton1@hotmail.co.uk)

In the meantime should anyone want more information about Brightwell Supporting Refugees do email us at [brightwellrefugees@gmail.com](mailto:brightwellrefugees@gmail.com).

*The trustees at BSR*

## Cricket Club News

Nothing says "English summer" more than the smell of fresh cut grass, a warm breeze, a blue sky broken by clouds, the taste of best bitter and the sound of leather on willow. The well meaning provocation of team mates to 'bat on', 'catch!', and the lusty appeals to the standing umpire of 'howz'at', will shatter the peace at the Recreation Ground on Mackney Lane most summer Sundays. It has been thus since 1897!

The summer of 2018 will be no different. At around 2pm on most Sundays groups of teammates will don their 'whites' and take on opposing village teams from as far away as Moreton and Benson. They will play friendly but competitive cricket to the traditional 'time' format and then when competition is over retire for a review of the day, fines and a beer or two at the Red Lion.

At the same location but at different times a similarly enthused group of young cricketers gather, practice and play. Friday evening and Saturday morning sees the practice and some summer Saturdays and Sundays sees the play!

Sounds idyllic, sounds like fun, so please drop a note to me or Tony Windsor (details at the Red Lion) to share your interest. ALL standards, ages and genders are very welcome. There has been a cricket club at BcS for well over 150 years; come and join us and set out our stall for the next 150!

*Eliot Forster  
BCSCC Club Captain 2018  
07769670894*

## BcS Kings Meadow Tennis Club

Club Wimbledon Ticket Ballot – members must have opted-in with LTA for 2018 by the 18 February and paid their annual club subscription by 30 April 2018 to be eligible to be entered in the ballot.

New members of all ages always welcome – contact Tony Windsor, Chairman BCSKMTTC on 07909 848098, or [tony@bcskingsmeadowtennisclub.org.uk](mailto:tony@bcskingsmeadowtennisclub.org.uk).

January saw the celebration of our fifteenth birthday and the discussion of New Resolutions to be considered by the National Federation of the Womens Institute. There were five to discuss – positive body image, stop female genital mutilation, raising awareness of modern slavery, mental health matters and healthier mouth, healthier body. We also looked back at campaigns of previous years and the resultant benefits to women in society in general.

With Christmas behind us and the spring ahead it is always a good time to regenerate and make new plans. Our programme for 2017 worked out well and now we have to find subjects to compete with that success. That isn't always easy as funds restrict us to a certain extent. However we still have February and March to look forward to as our WI year starts in April and we have some good ideas germinating. In February we have Victoria Wright and her knowledge of the use of herbs in our life style, something we tend to overlook in this technical age; whilst March sees our year end and AGM when we review the past year and elect our committee.

We are always ready to welcome new members and there is no age limit or restriction on this. A once monthly meeting where we meet friends, socialise a bit, learn a bit, enjoy some fun things, for a small annual membership fee. In addition there is the opportunity to join any of our off shoot groups of knitting, reading, quilting, walking etc. If you are interested in joining us come any second Tuesday of the month to the village hall at 7.30pm for a taster or look at our website [brightwellumsotwellwi.com](http://brightwellumsotwellwi.com).

*Margaret Smith*

## WWI Commemorations

As part of the yearlong WWI commemorations, crosses are being placed beneath the flag in the Square, each one represents one of our fallen heroes. To mark when they died a clay poppy will be put by their cross.

News from the front: - *On 17 February 1917 Joseph Butcher was killed in action on the Somme. Joseph was the son of George and Ruth Butcher of Brightwell Street, husband of Mary Butcher and father of Alfred aged 5yrs and Joseph, 1 year.*

*Clive Collett*

## In the spotlight - Matt Rodda MP

It was in the early hours of Friday 9 June, as General Election results came through thick and fast, that the result for the constituency of Reading East was announced. 'Labour Gain' flashed on the TV monitors. A Tory majority of well over 6,000 had been swept aside and the new Labour MP, Matt Rodda was elected with a majority of 3,749. Despite running an effective and energetic campaign the new member was genuinely surprised by the outcome. So much so that when a You Gov poll shortly before polling day showed Labour likely to gain the seat, 'I simply didn't believe it' he said. When he saw the final poll outcome he was 'staggered' and somewhat 'overwhelmed' but above all else he felt it was a great honour.

Born in 1966, Matt is the first son of John and Annabel Rodda who have lived locally since 1964. Matt speaks affectionately of his village childhood, attending the village school then under the headmastership of Fred Heyworth and remembering his trips to Kew's bakery to get a Tommy loaf. He was a regular too at Lynch's, frequently dropping by to purchase his favourite sherbet lemons. .

A direct link between Matt's days living in the village and his subsequent parliamentary aspirations can be found in a strange coincidence back in Reading East. The incumbent Conservative MP before the election was Rob Wilson who had, like Matt, attended Wallingford school. Indeed they had even worked together at the old Waitrose.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell would hardly be top of anyone's list as a hotbed of socialism but rumour has it that quite a few villagers helped Matt in his campaign. He is very grateful to these villagers and to those who sent him congratulations on his election. Along with other new MPs from all parties Matt was summoned to Westminster on the Sunday after polling day for a tour round the parliamentary buildings and to begin the search for an office. Not long after that John and Annabel were invited to Matt's swearing in ceremony in the House of Commons; a special moment for very proud parents.

Another parliamentary tradition that happened early on was a late night vote that involved Matt staying overnight, not it must be said in luxury accommodation but in a sleeping bag under his desk! Unfortunately for Matt in the rush from home he grabbed one of his children's sleeping bags which proved a tad too small for the new MP. Such is parliamentary life.

Although a new MP at the age of 50, Matt already had local government experience, having been elected as a Reading councillor in 2011. After taking

his degree at the University of Sussex he became a journalist, working as the Education correspondent on the Coventry Evening Telegraph and later on The Independent. He also had time as a civil servant in the Department of Education and working alongside the Secretary of State David Blunkett clearly left a positive and lasting impression which almost certainly helped inspire Matt to pursue his own political career.

In October 1999 Matt was unfortunate to be involved in the Paddington rail crash in which 31 people were killed and over 400 injured. Normally he walked to the front of the train as it approached the station so he could make a quick exit to work. On this particular day he didn't - a decision that might well have saved his life. He says surviving the crash also helped make him want to make a contribution to the community.

Matt has been lucky to be appointed recently Shadow Local Transport Minister. He hopes to continue making a contribution on transport and is grateful to have been given this opportunity.

*Alec McGivan*

## The Red Lion

Firstly may I say a huge thank you from myself and the staff at The Red Lion for your support over the past few months. A distant memory now, but we had a wonderful festive period serving Christmas cheer to local companies, village interest groups, friends and families alike. We also thank you for your continued support in the early months of this year.

### New Head Chef

We'd like to welcome Charlie Bell to the Red Lion team as our new Head Chef. Charlie was born and raised locally and has over 10 years experience cooking in renowned restaurants and gastro pubs in London and Brighton. Charlie is introducing his new dishes and we will have a full launch in early February. So watch out for news of this exciting new development, or even better, pop in, meet Charlie and try something new.

As always we have a full diary of music, events, quizzes, so check out our website [redlion.biz](http://redlion.biz), our facebook page [Red Lion Brightwell cum Sotwell](https://www.facebook.com/RedLionBrightwellcumSotwell), or sign up for regular newsletter.

*Mark Brock*

## Wallingford Photographic Club

Wallingford Photographic Club is a friendly and welcoming club for photographers of all levels, and we meet every Thursday evening at 7.30pm for 8pm in Crowmarsh Pavilion. We are always very pleased to welcome visitors and new members.

Our programme for February includes the following: the first 2 Thursdays will be taken up with our monthly club competition, which has the theme of Motion. On 1<sup>st</sup> (Feb), colour and monochrome prints will be judged, and the 8th will be devoted to digital projected images. Competition evenings represent an excellent opportunity to view members work and hear the comments of an independent judge. On the 15<sup>th</sup> we will have a presentation by Ivor Porter on Wildlife in Britain. This will be followed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> with 'A Year in a Suburban Jungle' with Michelle Whitmore. Why not come along on one of these evenings to see what the club has to offer.

Full details of our programme along with information on how to find us can be seen on our website <http://www.wallingfordphoto.club>.

*Michael Parrott*

## Oxfordshire Volunteers

Oxfordshire Volunteers ([oxonvolunteers.org](http://oxonvolunteers.org)) is a brand new countywide volunteering website designed to link you with your perfect volunteering opportunity! Whether it's a regular weekly slot or a one-off opportunity, you'll find them all on the website. You might even want to apply for a position on a trustee board, helping to manage a local charity that you are passionate about. The website is great for groups too, who at last have one central place on the web to advertise their wonderful opportunities.

If you are a volunteer: go to [oxonvolunteers.org](http://oxonvolunteers.org), register yourself using the blue 'Try Volunteering' button and start searching for opportunities. It's as simple as that!

If you are an organisation: use the 'Need Volunteers' button to register as a provider and start posting your opportunities!

This site is run as a partnership by Oxfordshire's three volunteer centres, funded by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire City Council and Cherwell District Council.

*Charlotte Foxhall*  
*OCVA Training Coordinator*

## In Brief – round and about

**Wallingford Museum** is looking for people to help with the running of this popular attraction and would love to hear from you if you have half a day or more to spare once a month. Its band of volunteer custodians are critical to the museum's success. People are needed to greet visitors and be in attendance for a morning or afternoon once a month between March and November. No previous experience necessary other than a desire to meet people! Please contact Gerard Latham on 01491 832224 or email: [Gerard@walcots.co.uk](mailto:Gerard@walcots.co.uk).

**Wallingford Museum exhibitions** for 2018 will include 'Treasures for Tales'; 'Wallingford Castle - the Inside Story'; 'The Wallingford Story'; 'At home with the Queen of Crime - Agatha Christie', and the 'Midsomer Murders' display. If you have a treasure with a tale of your own you'd like to share, please email to [admin@wallingfordmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@wallingfordmuseum.org.uk) or send details by post to 'Treasures', Judy Dewey, Wallingford Museum, 52 High Street, Wallingford OX10 0DB, or phone 01491 651127.

**Didcot and Wallingford District Orchestra** would like more players of all instruments to come and join them. It meets every Monday evening at 7.30 at the Northbourne Centre, Didcot. It is a small, friendly rehearsal orchestra. You don't need to make a regular commitment, just attend when you can; it's quite informal. So if you played an instrument when you were younger and you wish you still had a chance to play it now, then contact: [didcotandwallingfordorchestra@gmail.com](mailto:didcotandwallingfordorchestra@gmail.com) or visit <http://www.didcotorchestra.org.uk/> for more information.

**Earth Trust:** Drop in for a range of half term classes and activities from 12-19 February. Plus lambing weekends 17/18 and 24/25 March. Details at [www.earthtrust.org.uk](http://www.earthtrust.org.uk).

**Wallingford U3A's** next speaker on Wednesday 7 February will be Ian Keable who will talk about James Gillray, the first ever political cartoonist. This meeting is also the AGM. Monthly meetings are held at 2pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Crowmarsh Village Hall.

## VILLAGE DIARY

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### February

13	WI talk - Victoria Wright 'Use of herbs in our lifestyle'	VH	7.30pm
20	Lent lunch in aid of Wallingford food bank	Church Rm	12.30
24	Community Association/Scouts Race Evening	Jubilee Pav	7pm

### March

10	Community Association village quiz	VH	7.30pm
11	Mothering Sunday	St Agatha's	9.30am
13	Lent lunch in aid of Wallingford food bank	Church Rm	12.30
13	WI AGM	VH	7.30pm
14	Brightwell Supporting Refugees AGM	Church Rm	7.30pm
24	Brightwell Supporting Refugees Pop-up Bistro and wine tasting	Jubilee Pav	7pm
25	Palm Sunday procession St Agatha's to St James'		10.15am
30	Good Friday service	St Agatha's	2pm

### Advance Notice

See pages 12 & 13 for Village annual diary 2018

### Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursdays 8 & 22 February
	Thursdays 8 & 22 March
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 1 & 15 February
	Thursdays 1, 15 & 29 March

### Village website

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

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