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Items for the next edition should be sent to the Editor by 10 November 2017. *The*

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Editorial

This is the 250th issue of *The Villager*, an achievement we are celebrating with a special colour cover and a 'look back' to some of the past issues in the centre pages. Two hundred and fifty continuous editions is an achievement I feel we should be rightly proud of, especially as it is produced wholly in the village by a team of volunteers and relies on your contributions.

Hopefully, the cover is easily recognisable as an update of the original images used in the first issue and continued to be used until 2015 (thank you Susanne Tuffrey for putting this together). *The Villager's* cover has been one of the few changes made to *The Villager* in its lifetime. It is still the modest publication it was at the beginning though it has a more modern appearance nowadays partly due to technology which makes the process of collating copy, editing and printing much easier than when it had to be typed and duplicated by hand. Interestingly, it carries fewer letters to the Editor from residents 'venting off' frustrations or offering opinions on local matters or telling us about their holidays; and it has become much more a vehicle for publicising events and providing information on what's going on in the village and surrounds.

I hope you enjoy our look back, but I stress it is only a taster, focusing on one issue in each of the last four decades. Thank you Lesley Dore for looking through lots of back issues to help write this. We did struggle to keep it brief as there is so much that we could have included – enough to write a social history thesis! So if anyone wants to take that on just let me know.

Within this issue we have the important results of the Referendum held on 14 September. A resounding 'Yes' - 95.5% in favour of adopting the Neighbourhood Plan. You can read more about the Plan and what happens next in the Parish Council article on pages 4 and 5.

We congratulate the school on their test results this year, some of the best for a long time. Read more on this and the changes taking place in the school on page 10.

The summer seems to be slipping away now and I'm reminded of this by some of the events coming up - the Apple Day on 15 October, always a popular event, see page 8; and the Harvest Festival at St Agatha's on Sunday 1 October. And if its not too far ahead to think about, there is to be a big New Year's Eve Party in the village hall, as advertised on page 16.

Helen Connor

Letters

The Red Lion – use it or lose it

A startling fact is that in the region of twenty - yes 20 - pubs go out of business every week and we are very lucky to still have a village pub. Mark and his team offer a valuable community service providing a venue for charity quiz nights and for various groups that meet regularly in the mornings and evenings. Also, there is live music on Sunday evenings and Jazz Suppers to name a few of the events hosted.

In July we held a summer party in the pub. Typically following some lovely weather and balmy evenings we endured heavy rain! However, although we could not enjoy the garden, we moved the party inside which turned out to be a great success. Mark's chefs, Sally and Kat, prepared a BBQ with a difference: instead of the usual fare we had delicious Moroccan style salads, marinated trout fillets and lamb koftas; dessert was brownie and cherry pavlova. The bar and serving staff were very attentive, refreshing glasses and re-filling plates. Al Jenkins, a very talented musician, entertained us throughout the evening. Incidentally he regularly plays in the pub on Sunday evenings; details can be found on the website www.redlion.biz.

We all know the old saying – ‘A puppy is for life, not just for Christmas’. Well that applies to the pub too. The Red Lion is so much more than a place to have a drink on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. If you have a celebration coming up think about using the Red Lion. Not only will you be supporting your local but you will not need to arrange transport (a bonus!). Mark can host all sorts of celebrations/parties - 40/50 seated or more for standing buffets; birthday parties, either evening dinner or afternoon; champagne teas; christenings, wakes or even small wedding receptions. A marquee can be erected in the garden in summer or cosy up inside during the colder months.

The Red Lion is a valuable village asset and needs your support.

Corinne Jones

The Referendum Results

- 602 votes in favour of adopting the Neighbourhood Plan (95.5%)
- 25 votes against adopting the Neighbourhood plan (3.9%)
- Turnout 51.9%

Parish Council

In 2014 the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Led Parish Plan was published recommending 50 separate actions. A good percentage of these actions were the responsibility of the Parish Council to deliver and we have been working hard to do so ever since. For example, the new 20 mph signs went up in the village earlier this year and a solution has been found to maintain transport links at Shillingford Hill – both being in the Parish Plan as priorities. We are now working with the community on another Parish Plan project to raise the money to upgrade play facilities at the Rec and Kings Meadow. By far the most daunting task however was the action to complete a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) setting out local planning policies to guide development until 2032.

As we move towards the final stage of this, we are delighted that the parish voted 95.5% in favour of our NP in the recent referendum. All that is left now is for South Oxfordshire District Council to formally adopt the plan at their October meeting.

The NP proposes 17 separate planning policies to protect and enhance what is special about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell including the re-introduction of a village boundary (or edge of settlement) around the main village and policies to ensure that the village does not merge with Wallingford or Mackney through a Local Gaps policy. These were both key considerations in the 2014 Parish Plan to retain our ‘ruralness’. Further policies set out ways to ensure that development proposals have understood and responded to the character of the parish whilst Policy BCS 8 identifies ways that the ‘Green Heart’ of the village between Kings Meadow and Wellsprings can be conserved. There is a policy setting out a series of design principles to be followed by all subsequent planning applications (including extensions to existing houses) with additional details for the Conservation Areas and their setting. Key local green spaces are protected with consideration to the conservation of our natural heritage outlined in Policy 12 for ‘Biodiversity, Trees, Hedgerows and Wildlife Corridors’. A policy to help maintain the character of the footpaths and bridleways is included and a policy to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities such as the shop, the Red Lion, the village hall and the school.

The most difficult choice that the parish had to make however regarded the proposal for up to 65 new houses. Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is not an island and our NP had to be in line with all Government and District policy which set out a requirement for us to find space for many more houses than were

originally envisaged. The exact number had to be based on the local plan policy for smaller villages and what is known as ‘constraints’ – things such as flood risk, access to services, availability of land for housing and transport links. To guide us, the Parish Council carried out a spatial strategy looking at various options for housing on many different sites. An independent planning consultant helped with this task who strongly recommended that (following the spatial strategy) we found space for at least 50 new houses with an additional 10 or so to act as a buffer if any of the allocated houses did not get built. This new housing target was put to the village at an open meeting and having been agreed, housing was allocated at four sites. Two of the larger sites (Little Martins and Bosley’s Orchard) were already subject to planning applications and were likely to be passed before our NP was completed. It therefore made a lot of sense to include these places particularly as they conformed with the preferred spatial strategy. By including these sites in the plan we have also been able to argue for more affordable houses and properties that are suitable for downsizing and starter families.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is not perfect and some people are more affected than others. It is a document however that the parish should be immensely proud of – a real opportunity to protect and enhance all those things that make Brightwell-cum-Sotwell so special. Until SODC gets back what is known as its ‘five year land supply’, it is also the only way that we can ensure that we grow in a planned way and it is not just down to the developers. Already we are faced with planning applications for over 80 un-planned houses (on top of those 65 allocated) and we anticipate that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Back to the play equipment. You will have noticed that some of the play equipment at the Rec and Kings Meadow has had to be removed or fenced off. It does urgently need to be replaced. A small group has started to raise the funding for this but more is needed. The Deckchair Cinema raised £2.8k towards this and many more fund raising activities are planned over the coming months.

Non-Household waste

Important changes are taking place in Oxfordshire County Council’s Household Waste Recycling Centres. From 1 October 2017 there will be a fee per item of £1.50 for most non-household or DIY items. Residents can still deposit household waste for free.

More information about the changes can be found online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/chargeablewaste

Community Association

Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 26 September 7.30pm

As I am writing this slightly in advance, a big thank you to everybody who came to the AGM of the Community Association in the village hall. I will provide more details in the next edition. I will also report on the **5k Fun Run** which took place last Sunday, 24 September. Thank you to all that took part.

Fete funds distribution

I am pleased to report that this year’s surplus profits have been distributed to the following organisations in response to their requests for help with capital projects and other funding:

Football Club	- £250	Lunch Club	- £78
PCC	- £300	Preschool Group	- £336
Scouts	- £1000	Toddlers	- £100
Village Hall	- £300	WI	- £250
Rowing Club	- £200	Orchard Group	- £200
Cricket Club	- £250	St James Churchyard	- £300
Kings Meadow Playground Appeal - £500			

James Davys - Chairman

Shop News

Brightwell Village Stores welcome a wonderful new addition.

Thanks to incredible generosity, we have been able to purchase recently our new EPOS till system. The system will enable us to take a leap forward and ensure we are providing the top quality service the community expects and deserves. With its intuitive front-end and data rich back-end functionality the system will be a great asset to us all.

We are all very excited and are working hard to get the system up and running in the very near future.

Sam and the team

The Parish Church of St Agatha's & St James'

We begin October with our Harvest Festival on the first of the month which is also a Sunday. Our harvest gifts will be given to the Wallingford Food Bank. This will be a Family Service and we will be permanently moving our Family Service to the first Sunday of every month, beginning at 9.30am and lasting for approximately 40-45 minutes, followed by tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits. We hope that this will be easy to remember... so if it is a new month, please come with the children to St Agatha's on Sunday. The more we have, the more activities we can do!

Looking forward to November, the month of remembrance, we have our Annual Memorial 'All Souls' Service at 4pm in St Agatha's on Sunday 5 November at which we particularly remember those who have died in recent years. The Village's Act of Remembrance around the War Memorial is on Sunday 12 November, followed by the rest of the service in church, where we will be thinking particularly about the centenary of Passchendaele.

Building Work

External repairs to St Agatha's should begin soon, repointing with specialist lime mortar. Whilst we have scaffolding around the walls, we would ask villagers to be extra vigilant in reporting any suspicious activity to the police – we would much prefer false alarms than a huge repair bill. Although we have only a small amount of lead on our roof which is marked with 'SmartWater', the lead flashing does a vital role in keeping the rain on the outside! The second phase of the work will be at low-level; the damage to the internal plaster has been traced to the deterioration in the cement lining of the drainage gully around the church. However, further specialist advice is now being sought as to the best solution.

Funding

We are grateful to Claire Booth for her concert in September, in aid of the church and also the Playground Appeal. We also remember the generosity of the late Hugh Armstrong who donated 24 of his paintings to the church for an Art Sale. This will be held in the village hall over the weekend of 14/15 October (timings to be confirmed on the village website).

Vacancies

In a village like Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, I suspect that there must be quite a few accountants, perhaps in early retirement, who could fill a vital role for our PCC (Parish Church Council) as our Treasurer, mainly preparing quarterly reports for the meetings (rather than the weekly banking which is already covered). We also need a PCC Secretary to take the minutes and deal with any correspondence. So, if this sounds like you, then please do get in touch with me or Margot Shawyer.

Rev Kevin Beer

Apple Day in Brightwell-cum- Sotwell



Come and celebrate autumn at the 5th Apple Day on Sunday 15 October from 12 noon at the Red Lion.

Highlights will be Paul Chilton's giant display of over 80 different heritage varieties of apple. You will never have seen or tried these before. Watch the village press in action and taste the juice as it flows. Why not bring some of your own apples to juice?



In the popup food market you can taste as many as 10 different types of apples, buy cakes, juice, jams, chutneys and more. Paul will be happy to try to identify any apple you have.

This is a great family day out; children can have fun bobbing for apples or make chocolate apples or help to make juice themselves.

Apple Day is very popular and so are the Red Lion Sunday lunches - to book call Mark 01491 837373 – www.redlionbrightwell.co.uk - OX10 6SP.

Alison Bloomfield

An Evening for Alex

Tickets (£12.50 including supper) for this evening of music, song and dance with entertainment by 'Steve' at the village hall on Saturday 28 October (7.30pm), in memory of Alex Lewis and in aid of BCRT, are available from Janice Chilton on 01491 836661 and Cynthia Hurley 01491 836509 or via Andy & Angela Lewis lewisanda@gmail.com.

Ann Caistor

Save the Children

2017 is proving to be another successful fundraising year for our branch. So far we have raised over £7,000. Our fund raising events in the village to finish off the year are as follows:-

- **Monday 30 October** 8pm - Pub Quiz at the Red Lion
- **Saturday 4 November** 9.30am to 11.30am – Christmas cards etc + coffee/cakes in the Red Lion
- **Christmas Eve** – Carols around the Christmas tree in the Square.

Because Save the Children is involved in long-term projects all over the world, it enables them to respond quickly to emergency situations, even in war torn countries. Being on the ground they have built up trust within communities worldwide, and work with other reputable charities and agencies to ensure aid is delivered quickly, fairly and efficiently. The generosity of our supporters enables this work to continue.....thank you so much.

*Celia Collett
Chairman, Wallingford & District Branch*

Lament for Site B

(With apologies to John McCrae and “In Flanders Fields”)

In Site B’s fields the houses grow,
To SODC’s delight, row by row.
No more poppies no more larks
No grain for loaves and pies and tarts

Five hundred houses maybe more
Polluting cars and trucks galore
Expanding Wallingford at what cost,
Great King Alfred would be aghast.

John Rodda

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School

Although the children have had the summer holidays since the last edition of *The Villager* the school has changed dramatically.

The first big change to be seen was in our test results. Compared with 2016, Reading has jumped from 33% of our children meeting the Expected Standard to 83%, Writing from 50% to 83% and Maths from 67% to 75%. A very impressive 33% of our children achieved the benchmark for high attainment. They look like the best KS2 results the school has had in a very long time, possibly ever. Our little ones have done well in their Phonics too. A score of 89% is very encouraging. We hope the families are pleased and thank them for the work they do with their children at home to support these high standards.

A lot of hard work was done over the summer resulting in a bright, cheery and personal environment that enables us to quickly build upon the great progress made before the summer break. It’s been a pleasure welcoming our children back and enjoying every minute of their reactions to this work as they discover the changes made to our library, appreciate any one of the beautiful photos up around the school or wonder at the building work undertaken in our Gala Room. We have also extended a very warm welcome to the newest members of the school community in Foundation Stage who have wasted no time at all in settling in. It’s hard to imagine our school without these children already.

We have used financial support from the Merchant Taylors’ Company to employ some brilliant extra teaching staff, both for leadership and the classroom. This is the most obvious sign of our conversion to an academy and joining of the Merchant Taylors’ Oxfordshire Academy Trust, alongside Wallingford School. New people always increase the level of energy and there is such a lovely purposeful feel about the school this term.

Have a look at our new website and/or Facebook page and I am sure you will smile and share in the joy of our new year.

Fin Lewis, Headteacher

Sad news - Villagers who were associated with the school between late 1992 and 1996 will be saddened to learn that Rhona Tomlyn, former Headteacher, passed away in hospital in Lincolnshire on 16 September.

Jan Stevens

The Villager – a brief look back over 250 issues

The very beginning...

A free community magazine, to replace the defunct Parish Magazine, was the inspiration of John Griggs, who owned a publishing company in Abingdon. He enlisted Eric Dore for advice on local advertising to fund the project, and for ideas on a front cover, which was then designed in the Oxford Mail studios. Fred Heyworth, the Headmaster, agreed to become Editor, a post he held for the following ten years. Led by John Griggs' enthusiasm and publishing expertise, *The Villager* was then printed, assembled and distributed by teams of willing volunteers as it still is today.

The first issue came out in February 1976, with an editorial by Fred urging the villagers to supply him with lively and interesting copy: he suggested it could be on anything from gardening and holidays to DIY or bringing up children! Matters of complaint or controversial issues would be in Letters to the Editor (together with names and addresses, of course).

In May/June's Editorial he said that the first edition of *The Villager* had been received very quietly, with one of the village personalities asserting that *'anything delivered free is promptly thrown away un-read'*. However, this rather pessimistic view of the fate of the new magazine proved incorrect and within a couple of years the articles and reports covered 20 pages with 38 advertisements filling the 4 coloured page inserts.

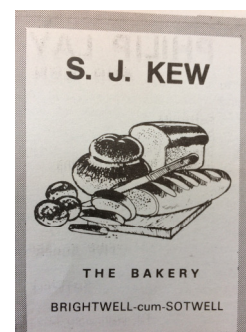
A closer look at *The Villager's* content over the last 40 years tells the story of a community committed to preserving its identity through the restoration of its historic buildings and its support for new projects that improve amenities for its residents; a community that forms and joins clubs and societies to reflect its many interests from tennis to the environment, and values good fellowship and fun in its fund raising activities. National events - VE Day, the Millennium, the Queen's Golden Jubilee - were marked with special *Villager* supplements and celebrated in style, with flaming beacons on Brightwell Barrow and wedding gowns at the Red Lion.

What follows is a taste of the content of *The Villager* during each decade of its 250 issues, beginning in April/May 1978, when it had become firmly established as B-cum-S's official mouthpiece. Fred Hayworth is Editor.

From the April/May 1978 issue

The Evergreen Club was meeting in Datchet Green Fellowship Hall to hear a talk on the founding of a hospital in Zambia. Earlier, in February, 57 members went to the Day Centre for their annual luncheon where they enjoyed a real Christmas dinner *'cooked to perfection. Conversation took the place of formal entertainment'*. The **Brightwell Guild** went to London to see a production of Agatha Christie's *Mousetrap*.

Fruit farmer Paul Chilton wrote on the impact of EEC regulations on the grading of apples. At that time there were no grades for cooking apples as Bramleys were unique to Britain. Fortunately, EEC attempts to prevent the growing of Bramleys were quickly squashed which was a relief as the Chiltons had nearly 50 acres of them.



Do you remember this?

The Cricket Club *'enjoyed a successful season'* in the previous year: *'We played 25 matches, won 11, lost 9, drew 5 and abandoned 4 due to bad weather'*.

The **Women's Institute** gave the schedule for the Annual Flower and Produce Show at the village fete. Hints were given for exhibitors. *'In preserve classes all types of tops are acceptable but no commercial name is to appear that might identify the owner. Judges will look for fingerprints - wipe wine bottles clean with methylated spirit.'*

From April/May 1986...

Editor Fred Heyworth comments on *'the damage being done by wicked tennis club members parking their cars on the grass by the tennis courts'*. He also asked if *'anyone had noticed the real damage done to the once flourishing and secure hedges...which border Kings Meadow and now have great gaps in them – I wonder how this has happened?'*

The **Community Association** reported that despite freezing weather 60 villagers attended a meeting at the village hall to discuss *'Youth in the Village'*. It was decided to form a youth club to meet every Monday evening. At the same meeting, a further donation was made to the village hall heating fund (!).

The village **History Group** appealed for photographs of each house and the people living in it to get a complete photographic record of the village at that time.

The Parish Council launched 'Litter Blitz '86' supporting the SODC campaign. The school, Community Association, Scouts and Youth Club joined councillors to collect litter.

Brightwell Free Church and St Agatha's organised a **Hunger Lunch** in the village hall to raise funds for Christian Aid. Adults £1.25 - children 50p.



From the February /March 1996 issue...

Annabel Rodda is now Editor, having taken over from John Biggs: she confesses she has made no new year resolutions, but *'we are now looking further ahead to the Millenium'*, and draws readers' attention to the meeting in the village hall to discuss how it will be celebrated.

Letters were more common in early issues and here in a letter entitled *'A murder of crows'*, **Paul Chilton** 'an active ornithologist' informs an exasperated correspondent that the noisy birds she wished to be culled were actually rooks, and could not be safely shot in a built up area. However, he offered a recipe for Rook Pie if she was able to lay hands on 4 or 6 of the offending birds: *'Cut meat from bones, breast and legs only, and boil carcasses for 5 hours to make a rich stock....'*

In a farming update from North Farm **Paul Warburton** wrote about the conservation work undertaken to pollard the remaining crack willows on the river bank, commenting on it being *'a very difficult and dangerous job'*. He also put in a request – *'should there be snow, could we all refrain from tobogganing on Green Hill this year, as this would damage the rape crop which has been sown there'*.

The **Badminton Club** looked back on a successful year and reminisced *'Many New Year's Eve functions at the Hall have been organised by the Club - great fun with fancy dress themes, dancing and good food'*.

Wallingford District Scouts sorted and delivered 22,178 Christmas cards on their local postal service raising £2,300 to help towards their activities in 1996, and thanked the Baldwins for having the collection box in the shop. Their annual compost sale would again take place at Sheard's garden centre.

On a sadder note, the **Women's Institute** served mulled wine *'to cheer us all, being the last meeting before going into suspension. The WI has been a popular and useful organisation in the village since 1923'*.



This is certainly missed!

From the February/March, 2006 issue

Liz McGivan writes to say thank you and good luck to Paul Jackson, for many years the owner of Brightwell Garage, as he leaves the village. *'When accident, mechanical breakdown or technical incompetence left us stranded he would come to the rescue like a knight on a white charger (or more probably in a white van).'*

The death of **John Butterfield**, founder of Sotwell Hill House, the residential home, was reported. He joined the Household Cavalry at 17, and continuing his love of horses, *'bred Paliminos from his brood mares....remembered also for bonfires on Brightwell Beacon, and organising the Brightwell Horse Show and Gymkhanas for 12 years'*.

The **Community Association** reported on its Carol Evening, which this year had been *'compered single-handedly by Andy Lewis. Able assistance was provided by Malcolm Sutcliffe leading the singing, Chris and Helen Baines on the production side and Norman Large on the piano. Derek Brooker, who slaves all evening over a hot stove, produced mulled wine to keep everyone warm and happy'*.

Brightwell Brownies raised £84. 72 for the Red Cross when they performed songs from Mary Poppins, Sound of Music, Oliver! and Grease. *'It is part of their promise to do their best and help other people'*.

A Matter of Convenience! - The Parochial Church Council reported on its investigations into building an extension to St Agatha's Church to house a toilet and washing facilities. The need for a small but improved kitchen area was also identified. Meetings at the church with representatives from English Heritage, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and SODC were encouraging.

The recently re-formed **WI** celebrated its second birthday with a buffet and announced the start of Middle Eastern dancing classes wearing *'shimmy shawls'*.

The **B-cum-S Post Office** announced it was opening in the Red Lion on Wednesday and Friday mornings. A full page of services was advertised and a reminder not to lose the chance of the £250 voucher from the Government available for all new born children.

And finally, from February/March 2016

A change to *The Villager* cover and a new colour! It has a photograph of Wassailing dancers and villagers outside the Red Lion. The editor is **Helen Connor**.

There are two letters on the relocation of the Post Office to the Village Stores, neither of which favours the plan. The Management Committee of the **Village Stores**, which writes in support of the relocation, announces that a secret ballot will take place to vote on the issue.

Save our Bells: Tony Lascelles wrote '*Although the Bells Restoration Appeal reached its initial target of £45,000 in November, financial support has continued to be received which is very encouraging*' He thanked everyone who has contributed to the project.

The Neighbourhood Plan was moving forward. Jason Debney wrote about future consultations and public meetings.

Allsorts announced a village garden trail in May to top up the pot of £20,000 '*to create a beautiful play-garden to replace the very tired existing one*'.

The Villager today is 24 pages long, carries over 50 advertisements and seldom struggles for copy. Societies, clubs, our farmers and local businesses, the schools and preschool, fundraisers and campaigners send in reports to the Editor - only the fifth person in post since 1976. Important village events are announced, take place but then sometimes don't feature in the magazine; national events can come and go unmentioned unless a letter is written to the Editor. Arguments in the Letters pages raged during the Falklands War in 1982 after Fred aired his views in the Editorial but little of this ilk is written now; social changes and modern technology have changed the way we communicate and *The Villager* magazine now has rivals in the village Facebook page and websites.

This review of our 250 issues has given only a flavour of the hundreds of events that have taken place, and the thousands of words the people of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell have written about them. The future of *The Villager* looks secure!

Lesley Dore & Helen Connor

Stewart Village Hall

Please join us in the village hall for the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 8pm.

Secretary: We have a vacancy for a secretary to support the Trustees of the Stewart Village Hall, either as a trustee and secretary or solely as a minute secretary. The trustees meet on a bi-monthly basis usually on a Wednesday evening. If you can help with this or would like more information please call Annette on 01491 834050 or email annette.k@hotmail.co.uk.

New website: We are pleased to present a new website for the Stewart Village Hall - <http://stewartvillagehall.btck.co.uk>. Please take a few minutes to browse the site. We would appreciate your feedback and suggestions for developing the site further using the Guest Book or Contact Us pages.

Annette Kilworth

New Year's Eve Party

in the Village Hall
and in aid of the Village Hall

Sunday 31st December 2017, 7.30 for 8pm

Good food, good music and good company - what a brilliant way to welcome in the New Year.

Save the date in your diary, more information to follow nearer the time.

Environment Group

I mentioned in the last edition that the group wanted to engage further with locals of all ages and as a start, two of our members, Lizzie Rhymes and Chris Hollebhone have set up a Facebook page for the group and have been busily posting pictures, articles and notes relating to local issues and sightings together with more general topics. There is a lot of interesting stuff including where you can go to try and spot an otter (Cholsey Marsh), how to eat stinging nettles, a video of the harvest and an article on sustainable textiles. Why not have a look - just search for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Environment Group and add your own comments, photos etc. Lizzie is secretary to the group and can be contacted at lizrhymes@hotmail.com.

We are also hoping to purchase some equipment to allow anyone who is interested to survey bats, moths and ponds/streams. It is amazing what can be found – a small garden in July revealed 15 species of moth with unlikely names such as Hoary Footman, Single-dotted Wave, Nut-tree Tussock and Dark-barred twin-spot Carpet! We also plan to survey key local sites such as the Millennium Wood on an on-going basis to give a long-term record.



Elephant Hawk moth caterpillar

Our autumn meeting talk will be given by Graham Scholey from the Environment Agency on the local river environment. It is open to all and will be held in the village hall at 8 pm on Tuesday 7 November with free entry.

Finally, a note on the weather – after the earlier reports noted one of the driest springs/early summers which left many wanting rain, the Great British weather did indeed deliver with 77.4 and 66.6 mm of rainfall recorded at Highlands Farm in July and August respectively. The area's rain was around 20% above the long-term average for the summer as a whole. Temperature and sunshine were at or just above average.



Nearly Murmuration season!
Starlings gathering above Sotwell

Steve Capel-Davies

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell INSPIRING WOMEN

Halfway through our programme already and it has been most satisfactory. We have had June weddings, followed by Circle Dancing in July, but our 'piece de resistance' was our excursion in August when we went to Ham House and Richmond beside the river. Our first, and I have to say, very successful, excursion could not have been accomplished without our very own tour guide, Jason Debney. He enthusiastically explained his involvement in the maintaining of what is a lovely stretch of the River Thames. It was all so pleasant and a good day enjoyed by all. We hope we can match it next year.



We continue now with our programme for the rest of the year. On Tuesday 10 October, Dr Sue Ledger is our guest speaker. It is an open meeting which means anyone can come for a small visitor donation of £3.50. Do come along if you are interested. The subject title is 'My Life in Music'. If you want to find out more about us do look on our website: www.brightwellcumsotwellwi.com.

Margaret Smith

Allsorts Preschool

We ran a successful holiday club over the summer and have welcomed 9 new starters this September with more to follow in the coming months. We will be looking at 'our families', and setting up some preschool rules.

There has been a change of committee, so a big thank you from the children, staff and families to those volunteers who have given up their precious time to keep the preschool running. If anyone would like to volunteer to read or do craft or other activities with the children they would be welcomed.

Saffron Nowinska

Wassail 2018

The annual village Wassail will take place from 3pm on Saturday 6 January. Our Wassail is now one of the biggest in the country and we are delighted that we will be joined again by Armaleggan Morris Men who will perform their usual fire dances. As this year's Wassail falls on Twelfth Night (the traditional evening for Wassailing to take place round these parts) activities will continue well into the night with a Barn Dance and Mummer's Play in the village hall to raise funds for the play equipment at the Rec and Kings Meadow. Full details in the next *Villager*.

Jason Debney

The Bach Centre

It may be a difficult month to find a bed & breakfast berth in the village. We have no fewer than six courses pencilled in to start in October: two Level 1s, two Level 2s and two Level 3s.

Level 1 is as the name suggests an introductory course. It teaches the basics of Dr Bach's system: when to choose each remedy and how to make up a personal mix. Level 2 develops a deeper understanding of the subtler aspects of using the remedies and explores some of Dr Bach's philosophy of health. And Level 3 is for people who want to work professionally with the system, its focus mainly being on consultation and listening skills.

We started teaching here back in 1991. The first courses were simply called "the practitioner course", entry being restricted to people who already knew the Bach remedies well. The Register of Practitioners that we maintain also started that year. Since then both the courses and the Register have grown and gone international. As well as running our own courses here in Sotwell, we also approve courses run by independent providers elsewhere in the UK and in about 40 other countries around the world. And we have registered practitioners in more than 60 countries.

If you see our students wandering the lanes this autumn they are probably looking for the Centre, the Red Lion, the Root One Cafe, or their bed & breakfast hosts. Please point them in the appropriate direction!

Stefan Ball

Sad news from Llareggub - we are number 2

We recently visited the Boat House at Laugharne in deepest, and on the day, the very wettest bit of Wales. In Dylan Thomas's parlour two ladies sat either side of his fireplace, eyes closed, listening to the great man reciting his works on an endless loop. Warm and dry with notebooks in hand they were a bit disconcerting. We dripped water, steamed gently in the warmth of the house, and rather patriotically were beginning to smell of leek dumplings. The few other visitors hastily moved on. Being the annoying man I am I stayed, demanding to know of the ladies, were they part of the tourist experience or simply fellow travellers sheltering from the rain. I was wrong on both. One lady gave me her name in the way people do when you are expected to recognise it, which I didn't, and explained they were poets researching a forthcoming programme.

She asked what brought us there on such a day, and from whence we came. In a moment of rare poetic inspiration, thinking if its good enough for him, I wrote "Llewtyos-muc-Llewthgirb". It lead-ballooned. Lady number two, who by now I decided must be a BBC Wales producer, didn't get it, thought it was Scottish, and clearly did not like it or me. To recover my position I eventually gave them 'Brightwell-cum-Sotwell', explaining that to the best of my knowledge, ours was the longest place name in England. This was based on moving carefully through Phillip's Navigator Gazetteer of place names. I was up to 'P', and our twenty letters plus two hyphens, clearly led the field.

Number two lady by this time was busy wondering whether our name might once have appealed to John Betjeman, or that Flanders and Swann could have set it to music. The literary merits of being hyphenated appeared central in her mind. At that moment Dylan Thomas spoke to us. He was reading his Birthday Poem and quite clearly referring to village names said 'Beastly Hyphens'. The poets liked that. The 'famous' one then took another tack destroying any confidence I might have had in her artistic calling. 'Either it is or it isn't the longest, I will Google'. She dropped her notebook and grabbed a mobile phone. The situation was recovered a little when she asked would I mind knowing - by which time it was clear from the smirks that we had lost. So take your hats off to a clear winner, and by a Yorkshire mile, I give you the quite delightful - Sutton-under-Whitestonecliffe.

As for the village, well to the best of my knowledge we are the second longest place name in England. Since returning from Wales I have searched "Q" in my gazetteer, visiting en-route Quinton from whence I hail, and the rather

delightful Queen Adelaide. My intention, as time and the mood dictates, is to complete my paper trail through every place in this lovely country.

I will not "Google it" being firmly of the view that the prodding finger of a tablet threatens to destroy the process of reasoned thought, whilst continually clamping a mobile phone between ear and mouth clearly short circuits the brain. As for the 'Beastly Hyphens', I hope you can work it out, one has just had a go at our fish pond! And if you haven't visited Laugharne do so, but be sure to go on a day when the ladies of the village open their Boat House Tea Room. Their Welsh rarebit served with minted cucumber and homemade chutney is worth a visit all on its own.

Tony Debney

Earth Trust

Our annual **Autumn Water Festival**, an autumnal celebration of water and wetlands, will be held on Sunday 1 October, 11am–4pm. £6 adult, £3 child, £15 family. See more details and book online at www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson.

Intermediate Wildlife Photography, Sunday 8 October, 10am–3pm. This is one of three planned workshops, where professional photographer Andrew Walmsley will cover a different aspect of photography so you can build up a more in-depth knowledge. This workshop will cover macro photography. £80 adult, £70 child (14–16 yrs), subsequent workshops 15% off. Booking essential: 01865 407792 or online at www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson (incurs a booking fee).

Three craft workshops will be held on Saturday 14 and 21 October – leatherwork (14th), natural dyeing (14th) and basket weaving (21st). Booking essential 01865 407792 or online at www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson (incurs a booking fee) and for more details.

There are also various **half term activities** -

- Build a Bat Box Monday 23 October, 10.30–12 and 1.30–3
- Mud Pie Mania, Tuesday 24 October, 10–11.30
- Woodland adventure, Wednesday 25 October 10–12
- Family bushcraft, Thursday 26 October, 10–4
- Tree climbing, Friday 27 October, 10–5
- Spooky dusk discovery walk, Friday 27 October 5.30–7.30pm

Some of these need to be booked so check on 01865 407792 or online at www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson (incurs a booking fee).

All events take place at the Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, OX14 4QZ unless otherwise stated.

Isabel Hauer

Brightwell Toddlers

A 'Make time for tea' morning will be held on Thursday 2 November, in aid of the Eve Appeal. There will be a lovely cake sale in addition to our normal Toddlers set up, to raise some cash for a great cause. (And perhaps additional fund raising such as a tombola). Village hall, 9.15–11.15 am.

Charlotte Todd

Musical evenings

Two very different forms of musical entertainment will be taking place at Wallingford Methodist Church in October and November.

First is a charity concert by the versatile and lively Pandemonium on Saturday 21 October. Their programme includes traditional folk music, popular chorus songs for audience participation, foot tapping tunes and amusing recitations. The Wantage based band will be helping to raise funds to educate disadvantaged children in Kenya and support struggling families in and around Didcot.

Then on Saturday 25 November the church will be hosting the talented local capella choir, Cat's Chorus, who will be performing a mixture of their normal repertoire - from pop to jazz and blues to show tunes - together with some festive tunes, all of which are arranged for them in four part harmony.

Tickets for each concert cost £10 and include light refreshments in the interval. They are available from the Wallingford information office, or from Nicky Lidstone at Marjoram Cottage, The Street, Brightwell, tel 836649.

Nicky Lidstone

In Brief – Round and about

Wallingford Country Market – new location

Due to the sudden and unexpected closure of the Regal Centre, the market has relocated to St. Mary-le-More Church until further notice. The church is situated behind the Town Hall. Opening times will be 9.30am–12 noon. We are very grateful to the Rector David Rice for enabling us to use this lovely building for our market. As usual on Fridays, church volunteers will still be serving coffee/tea etc during the morning. We hope you will visit us in our new home very soon.

Talk on Art & Design in the Chilterns

Dr Graham Twemlow, a local retired university academic, will talk at The Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society (TWHAS) about 'Art & Design in the Chilterns'.

Being designated an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, the Chilterns has played host to many artists and craftsmen. Graham's illustrated talk will investigate 20th century artists and designers who lived and worked in this part of the world. Key works by Eric Gill, John Piper, Paul & John Nash, Clare Leighton, Marion Dorn and E. McKnight Kauffer will be discussed, highlighting the contribution they made to the design world. Wednesday 11 October, 7.45 for 8pm at St Mary's Church, Wallingford. Visitors (£4) are most welcome. www.twhas.org.uk



A Night at the Museum

Wallingford Museum will have a special one-off evening opening at half price (adults £2.50, children free as usual) on Friday 27 October (6pm to 9pm), offering a chance to see our current exhibitions and also take a look 'behind the scenes' at a time when we are usually closed. You can also find out more about how the museum is run and what opportunities there are to join the team of volunteers! www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

Going for Gold at Chelsea

At the October meeting of the Wallingford Gardening Club, Dr Stephen Head returns to talk to us about exhibiting and competing at the Chelsea Flower Show. Steve is particularly proud of leading a team that won Gold and 'Best in Show' for a Courtyard Garden at Chelsea 2010. Thursday 12 October 7.30 pm at Ridgeway Community Church, Wallingford. Visitors very welcome £3. On Thursday 9 November, Paul Patton will talk on Autumn Aspirations: looking forward to Spring.

VILLAGE DIARY

October

1	Harvest Festival	St Agatha's	9.30am
10	WI Open meeting: 'My Life in Music' by Sue Ledger	VH	7.30pm
11	Village Hall AGM	VH	8pm
14/15	Art Sale of Hugh Armstrong Paintings	VH	TBC
15	Apple Day	Red Lion	12noon
19	Brightwell Supporting Refugees Open Meeting	Church Rm	8pm
28	An Evening for Alex	VH	7.30pm
30	Save the Children pub quiz	Red Lion	8pm

November

2	Toddlers Eve Appeal cake stall	VH	9.15
4	Save the Children card sale and coffee morning	Red Lion	9.30
5	All Souls Service	St Agatha's	4pm
7	Environment Group Meeting	VH	8pm
12	Village's Act of Remembrance – War Memorial		10.45am
14	WI meeting 'Every picture tells a story'	VH	7.30pm
27	Brightwell Supporting Refugees Pub quiz	Red Lion	8pm

Advance Notice

11 December	BSR Carol Evening at St James'
31 December	New Year's Eve Party VH
6 January	Wassail

Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	6 & 20 October 3 & 17 November
Green (& brown) bins	13 & 27 October (extra garden waste on 27 th) 10 & 24 November

Village website

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