



Oakley Newsletter



**Autumn 2025
Number 104**

Village Hall 30th Anniversary

Oakley Good Neighbour Scheme Form

St Marys Treasurer Still Needed

Beaver and Scout Leaders Needed

Youth Club Committee Members Needed

New Villager Bus Timetable

East West Rail Update





Front Page Picture : Common Blue
Butterflies (taken in village)
Photographer : Shelley Eden

The Oakley Newsletter

is published quarterly by Oakley Parish Council and delivered by parish councillors free to every house in Oakley – about 1,000 copies.

Opinions and information

in the Newsletter, both text and adverts, may not be endorsed by the Editor or the Parish Council.

Next issue

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Hello Children

look out for
Ten more
little ones



Parish Council News

Autumn 2025

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the late summer into autumn edition of the Oakley Newsletter.

The Parish Council has been attending to village business as you would expect and you can follow all that we do by looking at the minutes on the notice board outside the Post Office, or on the village website which is www.oakleyvillage.co.uk

There you will also be able to see the notice about the vacancy on the parish council. Caroline Walker recently stood down from the council. On behalf of Oakley, we want to send her our thanks for all she has done whilst being a councillor.

Now it is your chance. If you are interested in Oakley and making this village the best it can be for all villagers then this is the role for you! If you wish to find out more, or put your name forward, then please do chat to the Clerk, or any parish councillor.

80th Anniversary of VJ Day



I am writing this the day after the 80th Anniversary of V J Day. I took a photo of the War Memorial on the day. It was a baking hot day, as you can see. The flag

Continued on page 3

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is once again raised to mark a very special occasion, so thank you to Adam Aylott. Additionally, the war memorial always looks in tip top condition and thanks go to Chris and John Cooper for their sterling efforts in this regard.

Traffic and Parking

At the June Parish Council meeting we were joined by Andy Prigmore from Bedford Borough Council. Mr Prigmore is Head of Highways, fleet and traffic operations. We had wanted to have discussion with the Borough over parking in the village at school start and finish time. Mr Prigmore assured us that the Borough were well aware of the parking issues - and unfortunately this is very common around schools in many places. As the expansion of Lincroft continues the Borough are considering further parking restrictions and widening the footway in Station Road.

Their aim is to manage dangerous parking - hence the yellow lines at the entrance at Reynes Drive. We discussed a few different things, such as a one way traffic system around the village - Mr Prigmore feels that this speeds up traffic, whilst parked cars do have the effect of slowing traffic down. The council is not in favour of yellow lines other than at junctions as they cannot be enforced with cameras and it displaces the problem somewhere else.

A proposal is to be prepared by Highways and forwarded to the Council for comment.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are still on the lookout for someone who would like to take care of the planting at the village entrance signs at Highfield Road and the flower bed under the Oakley sign at the cross roads. The cost of new plants is met by the Parish Council so just time, effort, care and attention sought! Please do let the clerk know if you are interested.

Later in the newsletter, you will see the Oakley Youth Club are seeking new committee members. The Youth Club has served the village well for many years. It is fully supported by the Parish Council, making the Youth Club and the village extremely lucky in this regard. If you would like to get involved, then please have a look at the detail later in the magazine. There is a team in place to run the Youth Club on a Friday night, so these volunteer roles are about helping with the overall running structure of the Youth Club.

Thankyou to Bill Chalker

Talking of volunteering, it is time once again to shine a light in the direction of Bill Chalker, the hard-working editor of this magazine. Bill produces the Oakley Newsletter four times per year - and what a good read it is. Managing the con-

tent, layout, printing and publishing leads to the publication we see - always with an enticing front cover as well. The newsletter gives such a good representation of our village, reflects what has been happening and has something for everyone. Thanks, Bill, for all your efforts, which I am sure the whole village appreciates.

Teas In Church

This newsletter should be delivered in time for you to read about how fabulous the teas in the Church are and maybe go and sample them yourself before they finish for another year. I popped in earlier this year, on my way back from cycling and enjoyed a fabulous slice of coffee walnut cake, two refreshing cups of tea, accompanied by afternoon music. It was delightful.

Thank you to Diane Alder, who brings everything together. Diane finds all the various groups and families that run the different Sunday sessions - they in turn bake cakes and make the tea for that afternoon. Diane also organises various music groups to come on two or three of the sessions over the summer. I understand Diane is also the one who bakes most of the scones! Thank you, Diane, for such an amazing contribution to Oakley.

There is nothing like homemade cake!



7th September - Oakley Show. It is a great opportunity to promote a wide range of skills and talent from across the village; so do not hesitate to make and create; to enter the relevant classes and to share and show off your produce, cakes, jams, photographs, chutneys, bakes, arts and crafts! The auction at the end is a bonus and is a lovely way to be able to sample these delights.

Community Litter Pick - 20th September, meeting at 10.00am at the OSSC. No need to wait until then though if you see some litter today! Thank you to everyone who picks up litter on a regular basis already.

9th November - Remembrance Ceremony at the War Memorial and at the Oakley Churches.

Finally, please reserve the **29th November** for **switching on of lights**, community singing and some seasonal fare for that all important time of year. Full details to be published nearer the time.



Come and join us at the Parish Council Meetings

Do not forget residents are always welcome to come and observe Parish Council meetings, or to speak at the open session if you wish to bring something to our attention.

Kind regards to everyone in Oakley.

Sara Fardon

Borough Council Report



Kerbside Glass and Weekly Food Waste Collections

This year there will be several improvements in the household waste collection service. From September, all households will be able to recycle their glass waste in the orange recycling bin. This will include glass bottles and jars. Existing bottle banks will be phased out as households get used to recycling their glass in their orange bins although some central ones may remain to enable residents in flats with limited access to recycling bins, to be able to continue to recycle their glass.

From April 2026, there will also be a kerbside waste food collection. This will be collected weekly and households will be issued with a new tabletop kitchen waste bin to collect the waste in over the week. The aim of this is to reduce black bin waste and increase recycling of organic material.

There has been some publicity about the possibility of a new charge for collecting Green bins (garden waste). Despite the council having to make significant savings in their budget, the Mayor has taken the decision not to introduce a charge on green waste.

Bedford town centre highway improvements

During the summer and through into the autumn, there will be several road closures and improvements in two areas of the town. The St Pauls square improvements will continue to improve access to the town from the river bridges and linking the town and the river for pedestrians.

Around Dame Alice Street and Harpur Street there are overnight closures and lane closures. This is to enable improvements to be made to cycle paths and pedestrian areas to make moving about in that part of the town, safer and easier for cyclists and pedestrians. Please see notices around the town and online at the Bedford Borough council web site for details of times and closures.

Bedford town centre

Just after Easter the Borough council reopened a Tourist Information centre in the town centre. Located in the old Debenhams building by the Silver Street entrance, it also houses the Corn Exchange box office, plus a place for people to meet and plan their visits around the borough. There are leaflets and advice on all types of activity and events. If you would like your event or attraction to be included, please pop in and chat to the staff there who will be happy to help you to promote it.

Work has also started on refurbishing the Corn

Exchange. There will be improvements to the bar areas and entrances plus new seating which will help increase the capacity of the venue. This will then enable the promoters of bigger acts to use it. The Corn exchange will be closed for a short while after Christmas to allow for these changes but then look out for an exciting programme of acts to follow.

Foster carer initiatives

Bedford Borough Council, in partnership with GLL (BETTER), has shown its appreciation for the Borough's foster carers by offering free gym and swim access to them, their household members, and foster children at local leisure centres. This initiative aims to support foster carers by promoting their health and wellbeing.

If you are interested in Fostering for Bedford Borough council, you can find out more at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering>

Rivertree - New SEND School

On 10th February 2025, Bedford Borough's officially opened the new state-of-the-art SEND school in Kempston and welcomed its first 60 pupils.

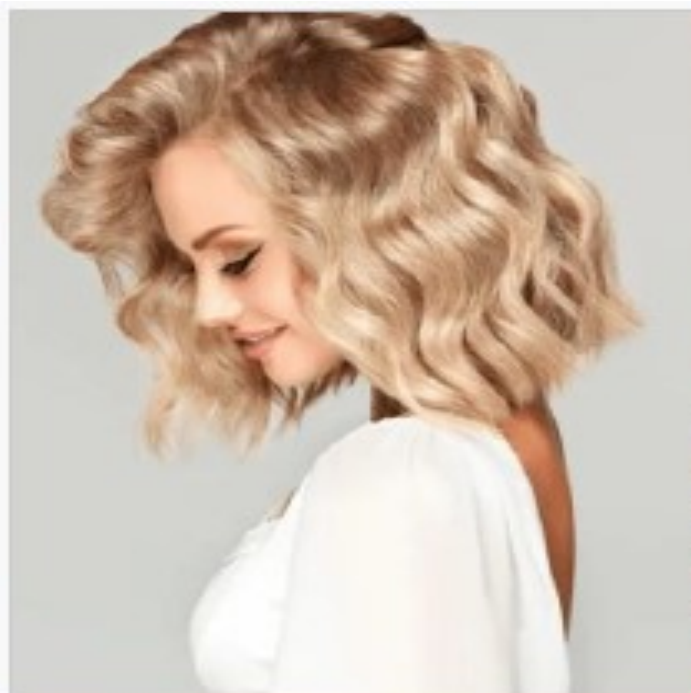
The new school is located on the site of the former Robert Bruce Middle School on Hillgrounds Road and when its full it will have 200 children on roll making it one of the largest purpose built special schools in the country. The facilities are wonderful with an interactive room, sensory room, swimming pool and purpose-built sports hall and classrooms.

If your child has additional needs and you would like them to be considered for a place, please speak to your child's current school or early years setting. It is intended that the children will grow up with the school so currently there are only places for younger school aged children.

Telecare

To ensure the long term sustainability of the Telecare service the council will be introducing charges for the use of the service, to some users. We are aware that Telecare supports vulnerable residents to live independently and safely in their own homes but it comes at an extremely high cost. The new charge will make a contribution of less than half of the cost and virtually all other councils currently pass on the full cost of the service.

Continued on Page 6



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Borough Council Report

- Continued

Telecare - Continued

The most vulnerable users on care packages, just out of hospital or on benefits, will continue to pay nothing.

Family Hubs

In the spring all of the Borough's Childrens centres became Family hubs, which will allow them to support a wider range of families and age groups. Childrens centres were restricted to families with children under 5, but Family hubs can offer programmes and advice to Families with children up to the age of 19 or 25 for Children with additional needs.

The Family Hubs will offer easier access to a wide range of services – including parenting support, early years development, health advice, mental wellbeing, and community activities – all in one place or through digital and outreach support.

With seven main hubs and local 'spokes' across the borough, plus a dedicated web site, families will be able to get help close to home and when they need it most. These hubs will be located at Pine Cones, Queens Park, Eastcotts, Cherry Trees, Daisy Hill, and Bluebells (Bromham).

In September a brand new Family hub designed

for young people and their families will be opened in the old Nat West building on Allhallows. This has been co-designed with young people and will be a hub for teenaged children and their families. Its full programme will start in the autumn term and over the summer holiday there will be free art workshops and the space will be available for youth groups to use as a meeting place. If you are a professional, working with young people and you would like to use this space in the town centre, please email us on familyhubs@bedford.gov.uk.

For more information on the full Family hub programme go to the website at Familyhubs.bedford.gov.uk.

Jane Walker

Borough Councillor for Clapham and Oakley
If you need any further information or assistance with issues at the council, you can call me on 07952 879587

or email jane@janewalker.co.uk.

You can also find me and/or message me on

Facebook @CllrJaneWalker.

Jon Abbott

Email: jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com

07784 549180

Facebook: Clapham & Oakley Liberal Democrats

Dog Owners

Public Safety Reminder

for Dog Owners



As part of our commitment to keeping our rural communities safe, we'd like to remind all dog owners of the importance of keeping dogs on leads in public places. This helps prevent:

- Dog-on-dog attacks
- Dogs biting or intimidating people
- Dogs being dangerously out of control

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, it is an offence for a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes situations where a dog:

- Injures someone
- Makes someone fear they might be injured
- Attacks another dog

To avoid incidents and ensure everyone can enjoy public spaces safely:

- Always keep your dog on a lead unless in a designated off-lead area.

- Make sure your dog is under control at all times.

- Be aware of your surroundings, other dogs, livestock or people nearby.

Let's work together to keep our parks, streets and countryside safe for everyone — including our pets.

Thank you for your cooperation. PC 5729 NAPOLI
North Rural Community
Policing Team Riseley
Bedfordshire





The Villager Bus is a friendly service that runs through many North Bedfordshire villages going to Milton Keynes, Olney, Rushden Lakes, St Ives and Sainsburys in Bedford. All Concession Pass holders travel free and children travel half price.

Do support your local community bus service run and driven by volunteers.

Passengers are strongly advised to book their journeys using our website or by phone.

www.villagerbus.uk

Telephone: 07438 870658

Passengers requiring a single return journey must pre-book.

Our drivers will, on request, pick up or drop off at other points on the route if possible.

Where you see **RR** in the timetable, this means **Ride on Request**. The bus calls for passengers on request when booked.

The Villager Bus Time Table for Oakley (Free with a bus pass)

Route	Day in the Month	DEPARTS	TIME	ARRIVES	TIME	DEPARTS	TIME	ARRIVES	TIME
VL6	4th Tuesday	Oakley High Street	09:05	Milton Keynes Shopping centre	10:00	Milton Keynes Shopping centre	12:25	Oakley Memorial	13:30
		Oakley Memorial	09:07	Milton Keynes Shopping centre	10:00	Milton Keynes Shopping centre	12:25	Oakley High Street	13:27
VL11	2nd & 4th Wednesday	Oakley High Street	10:12	Bedford Sainsbury's	10:25	Bedford Sainsbury's	11:35	Oakley High Street	11:48
		Oakley Memorial	10:10	Bedford Sainsbury's	10:25	Bedford Sainsbury's	11:35	Oakley Memorial	11:50
VL16	3rd Friday	Oakley High Street	09:23	Waitrose/Rushden Lakes	10:25	Waitrose/Rushden Lakes	12:25	Oakley High Street	13:26

You can join the bus at any point along the route by arrangement. To have a guaranteed seat please visit our website and book your seat by following the instructions. We look forward to seeing you soon on one of our trips.

Please visit www.villagerbus.uk for our full time table or call our help line on 07438 870658

Phantom Sprayer

The summer is nearly over, and thankfully the streets remain mostly clean from those unpleasant dog messes, which is wonderful thank you, and so much nicer for those walking around the Village. There are sadly still a few dogwalkers who refuse to pick up and possibly some children walking dogs during the school holiday, I hope Mums and Dads will instruct their children on how to do this job and use the bin, also to train their children not to drop their litter wherever they are but to use the bins. There are plenty around the Village. Some of the new ones the Parish Council have provided are beautifully large, so there is plenty of room for all the rubbish and that helps to keep our Village looking smart and clean and very nice to live in.



There is a new large bin on the little green near the post office, please use this one or the red one on the opposite side of Reynes Drive, to dispose of your dog mess bags. The post office bin gets overfull of sweet wrappers and containers and also they tend to leave a bit of a smell and that is not at all nice next to a post office and shop



Bedford

Clapham and Oakley Ward Report 2024/2025

This report gives a summary of the work we have done for clients of Clapham and Oakley Ward between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. This also provides details of the outcomes achieved following our advice.

During the last reporting year, the number of clients and issues we advised on increased. The financial outcomes achieved for clients in

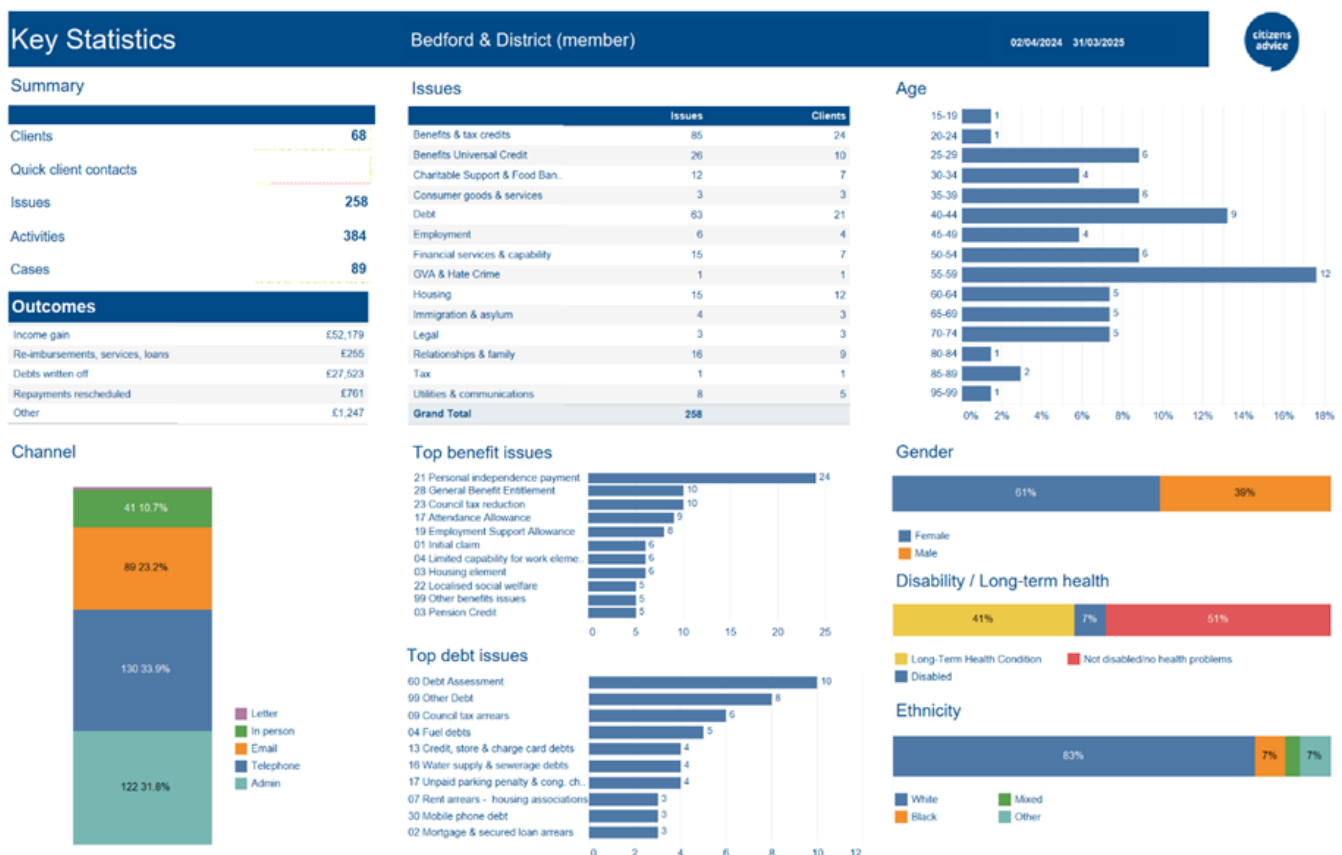
Clapham and Oakley Ward was £81,965, this was a significant increase of 52% on the previous year.

Outcomes 2024/2025 During the year we saw a huge increase in the successful outcomes that we helped clients achieve. This highlights the importance of clients having access to quality professional accredited advice to ensure that benefit applications are done in conjunction with advice and debt solutions are appropriate and sustainable.

We helped our Clapham and Oakley Ward Clients to achieve the following financial outcomes:

- £52,179 of income gained.
- £255 of food parcels were provided by the local foodbanks due to referrals that were made through our service.
- Debts Written Off of £27,523
- Repayment rescheduled of £761
- £1,247 of other outcomes.

The following graphic shows a summary of activity, issues, outcomes and profiles of Clapham and Oakley Ward residents accessing our service during 2024/2025.



This year we have been able to achieve some fantastic outcomes for our clients through providing them with quality advice when they most need it. With further resource we could do so much more. As a charitable organisation we rely on funding to deliver advice and casework that is free to those accessing it. **If you can support the work we do through grants or donations** then we would be most grateful as it will help us to achieve even more for our clients.



Speedwatch Report

How many did you catch?

On July 11th Community Speedwatch schemes from across the UK joined together in a co-ordinated day of action as part of the National Police Chiefs' Council's Operation Spotlight which focuses on tackling the fatal four driving offence: speeding, driving under the influence of drink or drugs, not wearing a seatbelt and mobile phone use. You can see members of the Oakley team playing their part in the Day of Action carrying out an operation in Pavenham Road where we saw 100 vehicles travelling from Pavenham towards the crossroads.

Community Speedwatch is actually a national initiative where proactive members of local communities join with the support of their local police, in an educational scheme aimed at raising awareness of speed restrictions and encouraging drivers to reduce their speed to the legal speed limits, in order to improve the quality of life of those affected by vehicles driving at excessive speeds within their community. Groups first launched across Bedfordshire during 2009 and are now active in over 50 communities across the County.

The basic idea is that a Speedwatch operation shows road users an instant visible notification of the speed at which they are travelling, which encourages awareness and compliance with the relevant speed limit. It is not an enforcement initiative and as volunteers we have no powers to prosecute drivers. However, we are expected to share details of vehicles which are speeding to the Police and drivers initially receive a letter to encourage a change in driving habits. Persistent offenders will receive more targeted advice or prosecution by the Local Policing team.

The Oakley team are very mindful of the educational focus of the scheme and our responsibilities within that and we aim to do this with the reports we share in this magazine. Our data taken from operations and the speed recording devices we have are showing speeds have increased significantly in the last 12 months, to the point where in a week in June, one in four vehicles passing the speed monitor in Highfield Road did so at a speed of more than 30mph, one in 7 in excess of 35mph!

However, it was interesting that national press reports of the Day of Action focused on the number of vehicles caught, and to be honest, it's the question we are asked most often. For example, it was reported that in Kent, 14,264 vehicles were observed, and 959 (6.7%) were caught speeding. In Bedfordshire 105 volunteers carried out 31 sessions and 195 vehicles were caught speeding.

And just so you know, we caught just three!!

Paul Phillips Oakley Speedwatch Co-ordinator



Oakley Newsletter 26 Years Old

Issue No. 1 came out in the Autumn of 1999 under the Editorial of Robin Olney. He was restricted to black and white which meant his natural creativity came to the fore. Ten years later the baton was picked up by Barry Holmes who handed it to me in the Autumn of 2013. All of us volunteers, who wish to keep the village informed of what is going on. Personally I have found that volunteering either as a Scout Leader, School Governor, College Governor or Editor has widened my business skill sets and my circle of friends and contacts.



This column gives me the opportunity to thank Sara for her kind comments but then to pass them on to all our Contributors, who spend time marshalling their thoughts and then put finger to keyboard. Or who additionally create graphics or search their phones or devices for an appropriate picture to bring more colour to our everyday lives. Thank you all.

Bill Chalker, Volunteer Editor



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

This year Remembrance Sunday falls on 9th November. There will be services in both churches at 9.30am, followed by a joint Act of Remembrance at the village War Memorial at 10.50am.



HARVEST SERVICES

Sun 28th Sept 10.30am: St Mary's Family Service with a baptism

Sun 5th Oct 10.30am: Oakley Methodist Church followed by a Harvest Lunch.

These are always joyful events and all are welcome to give thanks for God's goodness to us. Cash for SMART or non perishable food donations for the Foodbank welcome.



Our weekly **Messy Church** sessions will start again as the school term begins in Sept

St Mary's Oakley starts Thurs 4th Sept 10- 11.45am (incl snack)

St Owen's Bromham starts Mon 8th Sept 11.30am-1.30pm (incl lunch)

Messy Church for All dates 16th Sept, 21st Oct, 18th Nov, 16th Dec at 3.30pm in Oakley Methodist Church

**Messy Church Plus (for children of any age)
Mon 27th Oct 11.30am in
St Owen's Bromham. Free, with snack lunch**



SERVICES OF REMEMBERING

During October we will be holding two 'Remembering Services' to remember and give thanks for loved ones who have died. Everyone is welcome to either service:

St Owen's Bromham Sun 12th Oct

St Mary's Oakley Sun 19th Oct (Joint with Oakley Methodist Church)

both at 3pm and followed by refreshments. If you would like the name of a loved one remembered please call Graham or Hilarie.



CONTACTS

St Mary's Oakley (C of E): Rev Catherine Wilson 01234 825665 vicar@bromhambenefice.org

Church Wardens: Hilarie Worley 262166 & Graham Palmer 07710 462535

Administrator: Sarah Smale administrator@bromhambenefice.org Website: www.bromhambenefice.org

Oakley Methodist Church: Rev Paulette Tedd 07591 139940 paulette.tedd@methodist.org.uk

Church Steward: Jeanette Letch 825204



Join Bella & Amy for the 'Douro Discovery' escorted River Cruise in 2026



10 September 2026 7-night river cruise Porto
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FIND OUT MORE: SPECIAL EVENT!

Join us for pastel de natas and refreshments to find out more about
this special Douro Discovery cruise in-store at 2pm on 24 September
2025 -

Contact us to register your interest in this event

Find our shop at 24A Mill Street, Bedford



Call us: 01234 326 758 or email us: sales@selecttravelholidays.co.uk

Visit our website: www.selecttravelholidays.co.uk

Prices are per person, based on two people sharing a twin cabin - please enquire for solo pricing. £100pp sailing is exclusive to Select Travel Holidays and applicable to bookings made by 31 December 2025. Prices subject to availability. Operator terms and conditions apply. Cruise will be escorted subject to minimum numbers.



Coming Soon - from your Award-winning, Local Theatre



VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE!

an outrageous comedy
by Christopher Durang



VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. www.dramatists.com

2013 TONY AWARD BEST PLAY

Sharnbrook Mill Theatre
23rd-27th September 2025

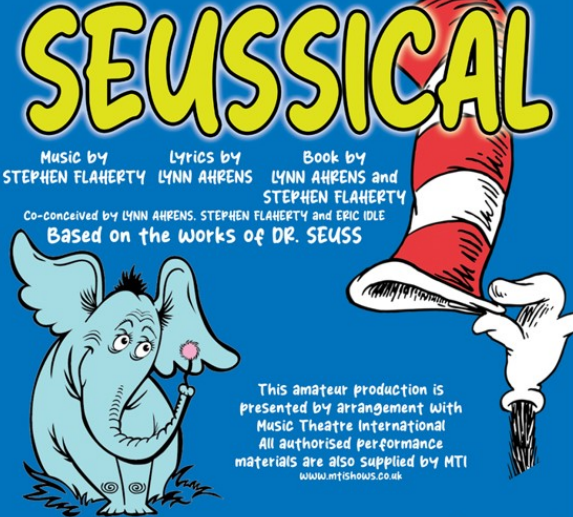
Tickets available online from:
www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk

Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is a registered charity



SEUSSICAL

Music by STEPHEN FLAHERTY Lyrics by LYNN AHRENS Book by LYNN AHRENS and STEPHEN FLAHERTY
Co-conceived by LYNN AHRENS, STEPHEN FLAHERTY and ERIC IDLE
Based on the works of DR. SEUSS



This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International. All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI www.mtishows.co.uk

SHARNBROOK MILL THEATRE
25th-29th November 2025

Tickets available online from:
www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk

Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is a registered charity

www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk

Lost Property

This bike has been left on the Village Hall site. An enquiry as to the owner was placed on Facebook with no response.



If you or someone you know thinks that it is theirs can they please email the Hall to say what make it is, any other identifying details and when they lost it.
oakleyvillagehall@gmail.com

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East West Rail – How much do you know about what it means for us?

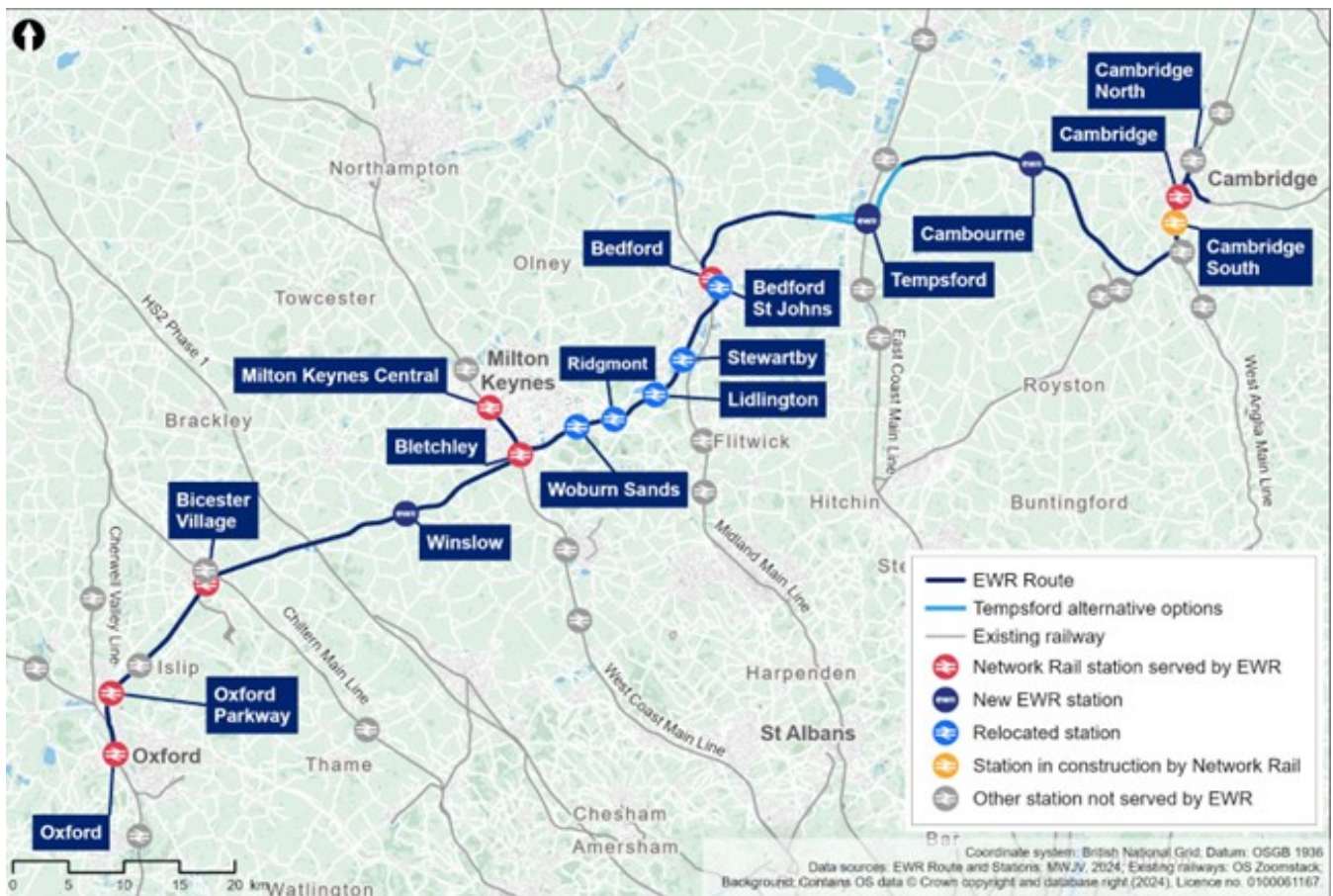
At least five years of construction and travel impacts for you and your community.

This huge rail scheme known as East West Rail (EWR) is currently going through the planning process. If and when it receives consent and starts to be built, it will have a huge impact on our community and our daily lives.

The timeline for the project is always moving and will continue to do so. Depending on the planning permission process (known as the Development Consent Order process), construction could start as early as 2028 and last for years. Wherever you live, this means a huge impact on access along key roads in and around Bedford and noisy and visible construction in the countryside.

There is more information on the EWR website www.eastwestrail.co.uk

East West Rail stretches from Oxford to Cambridge. The section which concerns us, stretches from Bletchley, along the current Marston Vale line, through Bedford, then through or near some of the north Bedfordshire villages, before it heads off towards Cambridge.



There are more maps on the EWR website.

Next step – public consultation – make sure you know what’s happening

The next key phase will be a public consultation which is likely to take place in early 2026 – this is your chance to express your views and ask East West Rail how they are going to mitigate the impacts of the scheme and how they are going to build it. The scheme will affect our environment the landscape and our journeys.

There will be local consultation events and online information about the scheme – and we all need to feed back our responses, as individuals, and as parishes. That is the only way we can influence the scheme.



Celebrating 30 Years of Oakley Village Hall

We are proud to announce that Oakley Village Hall is celebrating its 30th anniversary!

This hall was built to replace the original 1956 hall that - as many of you will remember - had become very cold and structurally vulnerable. The new building made a huge difference, and since its opening on 7th December 1995 the hall has become a cornerstone of our community. Over three decades it has hosted countless events and activities, making it a vibrant hub for village life.

The hall bustles with activity every weekday, offering a variety of classes including dance, exercise, sports, and community group meetings. On weekends, it becomes a venue for parties and other events.

**To mark our Pearl Anniversary, we are
hosting an Open Day on the afternoon of
Sunday 7th December 2025,
and everyone is invited.**



The event will include displays showcasing the hall's history and some of the many events it has hosted over the years. We are planning a range of activities including live performances and demonstrations. And of course there will be cake!

The Village Hall has been a part of many special moments – and we'd like to hear about some of them.

As part of our display, we would like to hear from Oakley current and past residents and other users – *tell us your memories of the Hall.*

It might be a reminiscence of a child's birthday party, an activity class that you loved (or hated!), an eventful WI meeting, its role as a Polling station, or maybe the time one of Oakley's frequent power cuts plunged your event into darkness... all memories are welcome. We will display them at the Open Day (anonymised if you prefer) so that we can all enjoy reminiscing.

Please join us in celebrating this milestone. More details will be available nearer the time on Facebook and the village noticeboards. **We look forward to seeing you there!**

Oakley Rural Day Centre

Oakley Rural, The Old School, Lovell Road, Oakley, Beds, MK43 7RX

Tel: 01234 824935 Mobile: 07733 227374

Email: oakleyruraldaycentre@yahoo.com

Web: www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com

Registered Charity No: 1060283



AUTUMN 2025

Our Day Centre provides our older people with a place where they can make friends in a warm and comfortable atmosphere. We provide various activities including crafts, word games, board games, bingo and other mentally stimulating activities.

We also provide chair based exercise classes. Our clients really enjoy taking part and we are finding them to be very beneficial. Choirs and entertainers also visit the centre.

We serve freshly prepared home cooked lunches and desserts together with tea, coffee and toast at the start of the day with beverages throughout. The Centre is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10.00am to 2.30pm.

For details of costs, advice and to book a visit please contact Lynne on 01234 824935 or 07733 227374.



Enquiries welcome from Bedford and surrounding villages in North Bedfordshire.

Please visit our website at www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com

The site is updated regularly with the latest news from the centre.

We also have a **Facebook** page. This will be updated with the latest news and photographs of events at the centre. The **Facebook** page can be found at www.facebook.com/oakleyruraldaycentre

We have articles in various publications throughout Bedford and surrounding areas to raise the profile of the centre.



NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The day centre was closed for a few weeks due to a ceiling collapse. Hopefully by the time you read this the work will be completed.

We would like to thank Oakley Methodist Church for providing us with temporary accommodation. They have gone above and beyond helping us to continue our vital service to the community!

We presented our volunteers with a beautiful Parker pen as a thank you for volunteers' week. We could not do without their help and continued support.

We are always busy with crafts at the centre. We have made greetings cards, summer wreath, painted ceramic plant pots, tea pots and assembled model cars and trains.

We raised £125 in our bring and buy sale. Many thanks for everyone who purchased.

Down Memory Lane

"Are the Oakley bridges open?"

The River Great Ouse has played a major part in the day to day lives of Oakley residents for thousands of years. Historical evidence of a settlement in our village dates back to c7000–6000 BC and Iron Age (c1200 -c550 BC) evidence was found near the river when excavations for the Lovell Homes were being undertaken. A riverside location inevitably means the presence of bridges and we have Stafford Bridge in Pavenham Road and the two bridges in Church Lane. Stafford Bridge is worthy of a dedicated article, and I will therefore write one for a future edition of the Newsletter. Therefore, this article will solely focus on the Church Lane bridges and briefly my memories of them.



The two Church Lane bridges are known as Oakley Bridges. Records show that the larger of the two, Oakley Bridge, was completed in July 1815 and built of "coursed limestone rubble with five semi-circular arches and no cutwaters". Before this date there was no major bridge at this location, vehicles used a ford just downstream of Oakley Mill which stood on the riverbank on the village end of the newly built Oakley Bridge.

The single arched bridge standing south of Oakley Bridge is



known as Oakley South Bridge. It, too, is made of coursed limestone rubble and has a set of wooden railings which according to the 1997 book "Bridges of Bedfordshire" is the last road bridge in the county to retain them. It can be assumed from records that it, too, was completed in 1815. For context, in 1815 the Battle of Waterloo marked the final defeat of Napoleon leading to his abdication and exile.



Following completion, the bridges' maintenance was undertaken by the Duke of Bedford and work was required as early as 1819 when two arches required repair. Further repairs were necessary following an exceptionally high flood on 1 November 1823, the level of which is indicated by a mark on a limestone pillar on the Oakley side of the bridge. Today, during times of flooding, you will see on social media regular "posts" asking "are the Oakley bridges open?". I am not sure of the communication methods used in the early 1800's but whatever they were on the 1 November 1823 the answer would have been a resounding "NO" !!!

In 1918 the Duke of Bedford sold the vast majority of his Oakley Estate and in 1919 Bedfordshire County Council approved Oakley Bridge as a county bridge and thus took on the responsibility of repairing it and in 1923 the Oakley South Bridge also became a county bridge.

As I write this article I am sitting in my cool study avoiding the third heat wave of the summer. As a child such days would be spent swimming "down the river" opposite Oakley House, near the boat club. The river was like a mill pond, not too deep, and cleaner than it is today providing a great place to swim and us "village kids" would spend hours there. Winters also provided opportunities, and we would earn a few pence pushing cars out of the "causeway" between the two bridges where the drivers gamble of beating the flood water had not paid off.



OAKLEY SOUTH BRIDGE 2011

Both bridges are narrow, wide enough for only one vehicle, but the volume and types of traffic has increased significantly over the last few years. Frequent, extensive repairs have been necessary, as shown in the attached photographs which I believe were taken in the early 1980's. The riverside meadow area with the church and the bridges provides a "beautiful gateway" into our village. This area is arguably Oakley's most attractive, and we must therefore do everything possible to ensure that the bridges stand for at least another century.

Richard Worker

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Dear Resident,

BRCC, with the support of the parish council, is looking at the potential to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme in Oakley.

A Good Neighbour Scheme is a voluntary group run by local residents who recognise the value in having 'good neighbours', particularly where public transport and other local services can be limited and where people's family may not live close by.

Each volunteer decides what sort of help they are able to offer, how much and when. They do not undertake jobs best left to qualified professionals but can help with things like occasional lifts, befriending or shopping. All volunteers are fully insured and have a DBS check for extra peace of mind. Anyone who needs a bit of extra help can ring the group's phone number. Calls are answered by a volunteer phone-handler, who matches the request for assistance with an available volunteer.

Possible Services	I might need this myself	I might be able to help with this
Occasional lifts to doctors, lunch clubs, shops, etc.		
Befriending – popping round for a chat & cup of tea		
Form filling / help with using a computer		
Collecting prescriptions/shopping		
Small household repairs/practical tasks/gardening		
Pet-care / dog-walking		
Being part of the phone rota		
Being part of the organising group – helping with publicity, fundraising, etc.		
Other – please specify		

Name:

Address:

Telephone/ email:

Please return this survey by Friday 2nd October to:



Parish Council Office, 31 Radwell Road, Milton Ernest, Bedford, MK44 1SH

Oakley Post Office, 39 High Street, Oakley, Bedford. MK43 7RB

Tudor Rose Patchwork, Oakley Park Station Rd, Oakley, Bedford MK43 7RB

If you would like further information please contact debra.aitken@bedsrcc.org.uk

You can also send your survey directly to Debra.

Can you help us?

St Mary's Church needs a Treasurer.

You don't have to go to church, just be willing to volunteer a little time on a regular basis to help your local church.

The role includes: attending roughly 6 evening meetings a year, running the church's finances week by week, keeping accurate records, and reporting at the annual meeting.

You would need to be computer literate and have some finance experience. Training and support is provided by the wider church (Diocese of St Albans).

Do you have the skills we need?

Full handover is available from the retiring post holder and there will be plenty of support from the other PCC members and the clergy.

Please get in touch with Sarah Smale on administrator@bromhambenefice.org for more information

Thankyou!



Oakley Village Hall for Hire

Main hall with stage, capacity 100 seated

Air-conditioning

PA system

Smaller meeting room with bar

Well-equipped kitchen with hatch to main hall

Wheelchair-friendly, and accessible toilet

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Perfect for your family events, meetings, clubs & societies



Church Lane, Oakley, Bedford, MK43 7RJ

www.oaklevillagehall.org.uk

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Sunday and Bank Holidays Closed

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- Tenancy beginning & end clean

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Festive Menu

TO START

Crayfish Cocktail

Marie Rose, Gem Lettuce, Buttered Bread

Duck Liver Parfait

Red Onion Chutney, Croutes

Warm Brie & Cranberry Tart

Winter Leaves

Maple Roast Parsnip Soup

Crispy Sage, Pumpkin Seeds, Bread

MAINS

British Bronze Turkey Breast

Slow Braised Blade of Beef

Butternut Squash & Lentil Wellington

*All Served with Roast Potatoes, Honey Roast Root Vegetables,
Braised Red Cabbage, Charred Sprouts, Pigs in Blankets*,
Yorkshire Puddings and Red Wine Gravy*

Pan Roasted Seabass Fillet

Dauphinoise Potato, Cavolo Nero, Crayfish Sauce

8 Oz Rump Steak

Chunky Chips, Confit Tomato, Field Mushroom, Peppercorn Sauce

DESSERTS

Mincemeat and Apple Crumble, Custard

Mulled Cider & Chocolate Trifle

Baileys and White Chocolate Cheesecake

Stilton Wedge, Caramelised Onion, Crackers

Two Course 27
Three Courses 32

Opening Times:

Monday- Friday
12-11pm

Saturday & Sunday
9:30-11pm



CHRIS

Lobster & Crayfish Cock

Sm
Celeriac Remoulade, P

Wild Mushroom, Truff
w

Seared Scallops, Caulifl

Roast British

28 Day Aged Sir

Chefs H

Served with Herb Roast Po
Pancetta*, Sage & Onion S
Cabbage, Yorksh

F
Pomme Dauphine, Tenders

Traditional Christmas P
Chocolate & Salted Caram
British Cheese Plate, C

followed by Mull



CHRISTMAS DAY

STARTERS

Roast Turkey, Gem Lettuce, Bloody Mary Sauce

Roasted Duck Breast
Pickled Cherries, Toasted Hazelnuts.

File & Parmesan Soup, Warm Bread, Whipped Butter

Flower Purée, Pancetta Crisp, Chive Oil.

MAINS

Turkey & Honey Glazed Ham

Roast Beef & Pulled Brisket

Herb Crusted Nut Roast

Potatoes, Honey-glazed Carrots, Sprouts & Stuffing, Pigs in Blankets*, Braised Red Chire Pudding, Red Wine Gravy

Filet of Halibut
Steamed Broccoli, Champagne & Chive Sauce

DESSERTS

Pudding, Brandy Butter, Toffee Sauce
Fruit Delice, Caramelised Almonds, Icecream, Chutney, Grapes, and Artisan Biscuits

Red Wine Truffles to take Home

£95

Supper Club

Monday to Thursday
3pm until 6pm

MAINS

Cumberland Sausages, Mashed Potatoes, Peas & Gravy

Little Haddock, Chunky Chips, Mushy Peas, Tartar Sauce

Hunters Chicken, Bacon, BBQ Sauce, Cheddar, Coleslaw & Fries

Grilled Gammon Steak, Chunky Chips, Fried Egg

Club Sandwich; Chicken, Bacon, Lettuce, Tomato, Mayo & Fries

Philly Cheese Steak Jacket Potato, Dressed Salad

Cesar Salad; Gem Lettuce, Croutons, Bacon, Parmesan, Soft Boiled Egg

Wholesale Scampi, Tartar Sauce, Garden Peas, Fries & Lemon

All Mains
JUST £10

ADD A SMALL PLATE OR DESSERT £5

All Kids Meals £5

**Street food Monday every
Monday from 6pm**

Pie & a pint every Wednesday

Market Night every Friday

**Festive menu live from 14th
November**

**Live music last friday of the
month**



Oakley Sports & Social Club

Family & Sports Bar

As the long summer holidays draw to an end, it has been another lively and well-supported season here at Oakley Sports & Social Club – and we are grateful to everyone who has joined us along the way.



We kicked things off in style with our "School's Out" event on the last day of term. Blessed with sunshine, bouncy castles and live music, it was a brilliant way to mark the start of the summer break. It was great to see so many local families turn out and enjoy the day – smiles all round from both kids and grown-ups alike.



As tradition dictates, we also hosted our ever-popular "Lazy Sundays" across each of the summer bank holidays. These relaxed afternoons of live music and inflatables have once again proved to be a hit with members of all ages. We are proud to keep these community favourites going – and we are already looking ahead to next years.

The warm, dry summer has brought with it some challenges – particularly when it comes to maintaining our football pitches. While the lack of water has made things tricky, we're incredibly proud of the hard work put in by Committee member Chris Marshall, our groundsman Andy Nash, and

volunteers from AFC Oakley. Thanks to their efforts, our pitches are holding up well ahead of the new season – especially when compared with others in the local area.



Looking ahead, the second half of the year has plenty still in store:

Children's Halloween Disco – Friday 31st October

Always a popular one – fancy dress, party games, spooky music and treats for the kids.

Fireworks Night – Saturday 1st November

Our flagship event returns, promising another spectacular evening with fireworks, laser shows, live music, headline artist Baby D, fun fair, food stalls and much more.

Christmas Fayre & Market – Saturday 13th December

A festive day out for the whole family, with stalls, seasonal food & drink, music and more.

New Year's Eve – Wednesday 31st December

We will be ringing in 2026 with a members only party featuring a DJ and photo booth – a great way to end the year in style.

As always, we want to extend our sincere thanks to our members and the local community for your continued support. Without you, we wouldn't be able to offer the facilities, events and welcoming atmosphere that make the Club what it is. Whether you're attending an event, volunteering your time, or just dropping in for a quiet drink, you play a vital part in keeping the Club going.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Robbie Bays

Chairman, Oakley Sports & Social Club

Oakley Village Monthly Quiz

Given the recent fantastic weather "thank the Lord" that the Village Hall has air con!! I for one, and I am sure the many quizzers who attended the Village Quiz during the Summer months, were extremely grateful that we could all enjoy them in relative comfort. Each quiz has continued to be at capacity, and the air con has helped together with copious amounts of whatever tippie the quizzers have brought along with them.

The June quiz was won, for their first time, by "The Avengers" with "The Cheesy Puffs" winning in July and "The Easyjet Rejects" coming out on top in August. All three teams are pictured. The heat has not adversely impacted people's sense of humour, and we have had some cracking team names such as "Did Somebody Say Just HEAT", "Ice Wet", "Coldplay – Kiss Cam" and a regular team made up of, shall we say "mature ladies", recruited a new team member and called themselves "Hurray !!! We have a man !!!".

The quizzes started in September 2023, and we therefore celebrate our second anniversary at the 19 September event. Since the start we have held 23 quizzes with 46 different teams taking part and 2 teams, "The Dinner Ladies" and "The Table Behind You" have attended every quiz. We have made a total of £5,100 in profit all of which has been or will be donated to village-based organisations. In addition, £1,200 had been paid to the Village Hall in hire fees to support a great village amenity. Many thanks to those who have attended over the past couple of years. I would also like to acknowledge the help that my sister-in-law Caroline has given since the start. Caroline and my brother Neil have decided to move out of the area and attended her last quiz in August. She declined the opportunity to travel back to Oakley every month to continue her "scoring duties" – obviously she has no commitment!! However, in all seriousness, on behalf of all those involved I would like to thank her for her support. Maybe when she revisits the village she can "guest" at one of the quizzes.

The quizzes will continue to be held monthly. The dates, all Friday's, until the New Year are; 19 September, 17 October, 21 November and 12 December. If anyone wishes to enter a team, maximum 6 people, then please email me at richworker@hotmail.co.uk Richard Worker



"The Avengers" – Winners of the June Quiz

"The Cheesy Puffs" – Winners of the July Quiz



**"The Easyjet Rejects" –
Winners of the August Quiz**



OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY



Run by Oakley Parish Council and held in Oakley Village Hall

Friday 19 SEPTEMBER 2025

Friday 17 OCTOBER 2025

Friday 21 NOVEMBER 2025

Friday 12 DECEMBER 2025

7.30pm start

Maximum 6 people per team

£3.00 per person (cash payment only please)

Bring your own snacks and drinks (alcohol allowed)

If you would like to enter a team please advise
Richard Worker at richworker@hotmail.co.uk

**Come along and have some fun and socialise with
fellow quizzers**



Oakley parish YOUTH CLUB



FRIDAYS 7PM-9PM



OLD SCHOOL, LOVELL ROAD, OAKLEY

Help please

to find out more contact youth
leader JJ on 07469659826 or email
oycsecretarial@gmail.com

01

entry fee

we do have an entry fee for
the youth club but it is only
£2.50 per person.

02

activities

we have a range of activities that vary
depending on you what to do such as going
outside during the warmer weather and
small football matches. we have indoor
activities and an area you can go and hang
out with your friends.



03

Tuck shop

we have a tuck shop filled with all of your
favourite snacks and treats and if we don't
have anything that you want let us know and
we can add it to the tuck shop so you can
enjoy it with the rest of your friends. The
prices are also cheap!!!!



Oakley Youth Club seeks Committee Volunteers

Only Two Meetings Per Term

The Youth Club has been running for over 20 years and have provided thousands of hours fun and enjoyment to young people during that time. We've been generously supported by the Parish Council since our inception.

We are seeking new committee members to help run the Youth Club. This involves meeting every two months or so and keeping an eye on the overall well being of the youth club, thinking promotion, determining the strategy we should follow and above all else making sure we are providing a safe environment for our young children.

We have a great team in place to run the youth club each week, a lot of equipment, fabulous location – just need a bit more help!

If you are interested in making sure that young people have some good things to do, in their own right and if you want Oakley to be the place that this happens then this role is for you. Please do get in touch
oycsecretarial@gmail.com.

Thank you, Sara Fardon, Secretary

News from the Tower



St Mary's Church has a ring of six bells, the oldest was cast in 1711 and the newest (the treble, and lightest, bell) in 1978 to commemorate the late Queen's Silver Jubilee. When the clock chimes, it is the heaviest bell (the tenor bell) that you hear.

If you have experience of church bell ringing or would just like to have a go, ***please come along to a practice night!*** The Oakley Band of Bell Ringers practice on Friday evenings from 8pm to 9:15pm and ring on Sunday mornings before the services at St Mary's Church.

New members are very welcome! Please contact our Tower Captain, Bill Sellars on 07980 745292 or email thesellars@btinternet.com for more information.

Shelley Eden



Oakley Educational Foundation



The Foundation exists to assist young people between ages 16 - 25, who live in the Parish, with grants towards the cost of books and tools, etc. in furtherance of their education.

Applications and more information can be obtained from the Parish Clerk from the end of March.

For an application form please email parishclerk@oakleyvillage.co.uk

Applications accepted by 2nd May. Itemised receipts for purchases of goods must be provided.

Merri Seasons:

From Flowers to Christmas Trees

Since opening in 2017, we have had a fair few weather hurdles to hop over, but 2025 has truly been the trickiest yet. From relentless rain to scorching sun, this has been the season that tested every plant (and Bedfordshire farmer!) to their limits.



Thankfully, our Pick Your Own sunflower plot swooped in to save August. They stand tall and golden when most things had given up the fight and have brought a lot of smiles to our pick your own customers on Saturday mornings.

As we move towards the end of our flower season, we are pinning our hopes on the dahlias for a colourful grand finale – fingers crossed they bring a blaze of beauty to round things off!

While the flowers have had their highs and lows, our Christmas trees have quietly been thriving. Despite the heat, they have coped brilliantly and are looking fabulous for the festive season.

Right now, we are officially in Christmas Tree Tagging Mode – which mainly means tidying the fields, choosing which plots to open for cutting, and boosting our pre-cut



offerings.

This year, we are especially keen to see more Oakley neighbours choosing a tree with us – whether you are after the adventure of tagging our choosing your own straight from the field or the ease of a pre-cut tree, we have got you covered.

For us, selling Christmas trees is not just about the trees. It is about Oakley families making memories together, supporting a local farm, and keeping festive traditions alive right here at home. Your support makes all the hard work (and the weather battles!) worth it.

Visit our website (www.merrichristmastrees.co.uk) to keep up to date with what is going on at our farm.

Rachelle Merrill

Steve's Snippet No. 79

Answers to last issue's puzzles:

1. This should have been a statement, not a question, so that slipped by the system!
"What" is a word with a small laugh ("Ha") in the middle. The answer would be, "Yes, it is".
2. The letter "r" is in the middle of March and April.
3. FIVE has the Roman numerals IV in it...2 of the four letters in the word, so half.

Now, for the latest offering:

1. What kind of running can often mean walking?
2. What joins two people together but only touches one of them?
3. Turn me on my side and I am everything. Cut me in half and I am nothing. What am I?

Thank you to those who emailed me last time. The same prize is here waiting for the correct answers. Email me and I will pick a correct entry on October the 10th.

Steve Nicholas

Could You Be a Part of the Oakley Scouts Story?

For generations, the Oakley Scout Group has been a place for our village's children to learn new skills, make lifelong friends, and have incredible adventures. Like any community group, we are powered by local people like you who believe in giving children these fantastic opportunities.

This past summer, a few of our dedicated leaders moved on to new adventures of their own. It is a natural part of life, but it means we now have some important roles to fill to keep our Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts running smoothly.

We are Looking for New Leaders!

Right now, we are especially in need of **uniformed leaders** for our Beavers (ages 6-8) and Scouts (ages 10½-14). Our Cubs (ages 8-10½) would also be thrilled to have some extra hands to help out.

If you have ever thought about getting involved, this is the perfect time!

What Can We Offer You?

Volunteering with the Scouts is so much more than just helping out—it is a chance for you to grow, too! You will get:

Award-winning training that provides valuable, transferable skills.

A snappy uniform that looks great at parades (or you can just wear it on Tuesdays!).

The chance to learn new things and discover what you are truly capable of.

A front-row seat to some of the happiest memories in a child's life.

And yes... another WhatsApp group to join!

Do not fancy the uniform? That is completely fine! We are also looking for a couple of adults to join our team of **Trustees**. This is a non-uniformed role, perfect for people who want to contribute behind the scenes.

Ultimately, your reason for helping will be your own, but know that by stepping forward, you will be playing a vital role in our village. Your help ensures that hundreds of children, both now and in the future, can continue to enjoy the fun, growth, and community that the Oakley Scouts provide. Without new volunteers, we risk having to scale back or even close, which would be a huge loss for our community.

Could you help?

If the answer is yes, or even if you are just a little curious, please get in touch! We would love to chat with you and answer any questions you might have.

07758872172

Janetscoutbits@outlook.com



LOOKING FOR A NEW SPORT?

WHY NOT GIVE BOWLS A TRY THIS YEAR?

At SHARNBROOK BOWLS CLUB

Lodge Road, Sharnbrook

This friendly outdoor club offers an opportunity to play this great game. We cordially invite you to our club



We offer coaching for beginners and free membership fees for your first year

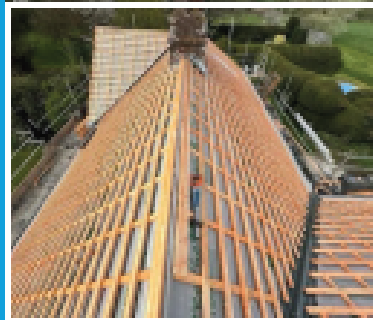
For more details of the club and to arrange a visit

Contact Penny Mann (Secretary) on 01234 781660



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North Beds Ramblers

September may seem a way off but already plans are well advanced for the 2025 Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks.

The 9 day festival will be held from Saturday Sept 6th to Sunday September 14th.

We hope to build on the enormous success of last year, where we saw over 850 walkers attending one of 55 walks.

Bedfordshire Ramblers will be reaching out to our local walking groups and neighbouring Ramblers Groups to bring a variety of walks and locations to suit all walkers. We can already confirm that there will be, the ever popular, John Bunyan Boat walk and sail but you will need to book, as soon as booking opens, as numbers are limited and this year it is being held on a Saturday.

We can also confirm that the Greensand Challenge will be running, offering the opportunity to walk the 40 mile Greensand Ridge over 2 days. For those of a gentler disposition we already have history walks planned during the 9 day festival. There will be lots more to come, short walks, slow walks, interest walks, morning walks, afternoon walks, day walks. I hope that whets your appetite.

To ensure you do not miss out why not join our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1624342594751555> or the webpage <https://www.bedswalkfest.co.uk/>.

This will ensure that as soon as information becomes available you will be the first to know and make sure you have the dates in your diary.

North Beds Ramblers Walk every Saturday:

Please note change of start time for afternoon walks – Summer start 13:30

Come and join us for a walk. We walk every Saturday afternoon approx. 6 miles

and Saturdays twice a month in morning for approx. 12 miles

Or try our "Ramble" on first Saturday morning each month – slightly shorter, slower pace

The Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks 6th – 14th September

Full details are available on <https://www.bedswalkfest.co.uk/> or the dedicated Facebook page Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks.

Regulars September Walks

6th am "Ramble", Riseley, 4.5 miles, pm Riseley, 6.5 miles

13th am Woburn, 14 miles or pm Cranfield, 6 miles

20th pm Husbourne Crawley, 6. miles

27th am Ampthill, 11 miles or pm Henlow, 6.5 miles

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729 Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/north-bedfordshire>

Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks

Hosted by



6th to 14th September 2025

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Sandra Kelsey

Oakley Allotments

Dry and hot – I think that describes the weather over the past few months. Conditions like this leave gardeners wondering just how successful the growing season is going to be.

Spring 2025 has been the warmest and sunniest on record, parts of the UK are experiencing ongoing warmth and drought. These may seem like novel extremes, but the record-breaking driest month in the UK was February 1932, and the driest August was in 1947. The UK's highest recorded temperature was 40.3°C in 2022; 2025's highest temperature so far is 35.8°C.

Rain, promised a few weeks ago, mostly skirted round us. We did receive a few welcome showers, which enabled the parched ground to recover a bit. Plants grow well in the warmth, but need regular watering. Planting new seedlings was a challenge in the hard ground, but of course weeds survived very well.

Faced with the real prospect of increasingly dry and warm summers, we will have to consider options to enable us to continue growing our own produce. The type of plants we grow can change: different, and more drought-resistant varieties can be tried. Another approach is to provide our efforts with a more controllable environment: we have presented previous accounts of successful greenhouse growing.

I recently responded to an advertisement for growing-tunnels, now available at very reasonable prices and in a wide range of sizes. Whilst we have always been against the idea of tenants erecting huge structures at our allotments, smaller and well-maintained greenhouses and tunnels enable best use of our limited space and increase productivity. Any device that enables people with busy lives to enjoy their allotment more efficiently is to be welcomed.

For the past two years we have used a fairly substantial netted structure as a brassica cage. Constructed from cheap garden arches and scaffold netting purchased online, the structure provided an accessible walk-in area protected from butterflies. We provided other sacrificial plants (nasturtiums) elsewhere on our plot for butterflies.

There was a slight disadvantage apparently – the first year we used the cage, slugs proliferated. I wonder if the exclusion of birds from the area contributed to this. We had used more environmentally-conscious slug pellets in the cage, and



still do (sparingly), where birds can be excluded by netting the plants, but we still had slugs... The cheap metal arches lasted 2 seasons before rusting through – I had hoped for longer. Before they are scrapped we are continuing to use them on their sides to support ground-netting, such as over strawberries, newly-planted seedlings etc. Slug control is now the application of copper-wool rings around the stems of new seedlings and is very successful. The copper-wool is obtained by carefully dismembering readily available pan-scourers and I think it should be removed after harvesting, as much as is possible, to prevent accumulation of copper in the soil.



The new polytunnel/greenhouse is reasonably well-designed, consisting of a fairly robust galvanised steel frame and a substantial reinforced polyurethane cover, which also provides some shade to the interior. It is a good working height; 2 metres at the centre of the arched roof, 3 metres long, 2 metres wide. It has a large, zippered door at one end and three netted windows, with zip-close flaps, down each side. So far, it has performed well as a brassica house, and I hope that it will last a good number of seasons. It should provide protection for various crops, year-round, whilst keeping a neat and tidy appearance.

We recently joined Clapham's allotment association, as they have a small shop on the site, which can supply some allotment essentials at very good prices. Visiting their allotments enabled us to have a look at how they are doing things there, as new ideas are always good to see. A lot of their

Continued on Page 27

Oakley Allotments - Continued

tenants are using polytunnels. All sizes are in use there, including quite large ones, but they have full-sized plots in a large area, not like our small field.

Visiting other allotments, or even viewing them as we sit in a passing train, is quite an interest of ours. There are many different things to see and learn from – how well the allotments are kept; how many are in use; how they maintain their access; what sort of structures are permitted, what types of plants are growing...and so on.

I was recently invited to see the allotments in a village close to Oakley. The allotments are a drive away from their village, secluded on previously farmed land, including a few substantial areas of orchard.

The overall area is quite large, rivalling Clapham

allotments, but with amazing views across open countryside. I think if I had an allotment there I would spend most of my time gazing at the views!

With their permission, I may write more about their impressive setup, which also boasts vibrant social interaction.

Social interaction: something we at Oakley Allotments would like to indulge in rather more than we have lately. Hopefully we will hold a few events over the coming months to help encourage more interaction and build a stronger spirit of community. 15 years old on the 1st of October this year – we have something to celebrate!

If you want any more information, or would like to join our short waiting-list, please contact me direct at: sbnicholas@gmail.com.

Steve Nicholas

Reporting A Crime To Bedfordshire Police



Many people still are not sure how to report a crime, especially online. Raising awareness is key, and it helps ensure that incidents are properly documented and responded to. We understand that not everyone is comfortable using computers or online platforms, especially older residents or those without internet access.

Here are some ideas to help spread the word about how to report a crime to Bedfordshire Police and also without needing to go online:

1. Use the Bedfordshire Police Website

Visit: <https://www.beds.police.uk>

From the homepage, you can:

- Report a crime (non-emergency)
- Report a road traffic incident
- Report anti-social behaviour
- Give information anonymously
- Request police support or advice

Look for the "Report" or "Contact us" section.

2. Use the National Police Reporting Service

Visit: <https://www.police.uk>

This site allows you to:

- Report crimes and incidents
- Find your local police station
- Access crime maps and statistics

3. Use 101 Live Chat

Bedfordshire Police offers a 101 Live Chat service for non-emergency queries. You can access it via their website during operating hours.

4. For Emergencies

If it's an emergency (e.g., a crime in progress or immediate danger), always call 999.

5. Social Media

Bedfordshire Police are active on:

- Facebook: facebook.com/bedspolice – North Bedfordshire Rural Community Policing
- Twitter/X: twitter.com/bedspolice

You can follow Bedfordshire Police for updates, **but do not use social media to report crimes.**

Thank you for all your support.

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If you would like to be considered please visit the website www.lovellhomesoakley.co.uk

Or contact the Clerk :

Mandy Newton

On 07736 466965

Registered Charity Number : 200480

Girlguiding in Oakley



Oakley has two guiding units – Rainbows for girls aged 4 -7, and Brownies for girls aged 7-10.

If you would like to enrol your daughter in either of these units or any other units locally, please register your daughter at <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter/>

If you would like more information about the individual units before you register your daughter, you can use the contact details below.



1st Oakley Rainbows (Wednesdays)

Unit contact: Amanda Keen (Assistant Leader) oakleyclaphamrainbows@outlook.com



1st Oakley Brownies (Fridays)

If you think your child would enjoy being a Brownie please sign up on the website: www.girlguiding.org.uk (register a child) or contact Kathy Jones - leader at 1st Oakley Brownies by emailing snowyowl@outlook.com Kathy Jones



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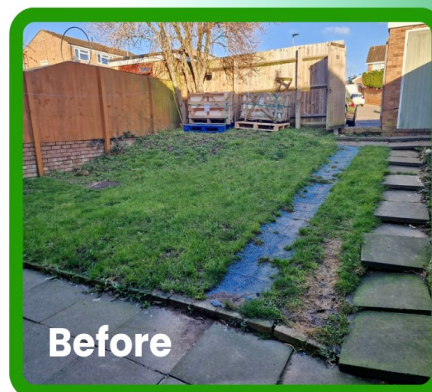
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Oakley Kindergarten News



Summer continued to be very hot and dry and the children sought shade under the established trees around the site. We are lucky to have air conditioning throughout the building, which has helped to keep us all cool on the hottest days.

The Official Opening Ceremony of the Oakley Kindergarten new build took place on the 11th July 2025. It was another extremely hot day! His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Susan Lousada, came along to cut the ribbon and she was expertly assisted by the Mayor of Bedford, Tom Wootton. We invited along representatives from all the organisations who had helped us in the funding of the new build. These included, the



Rural Payments Agency, the Mayor's Fund, Bedford Borough Early Years and Oakley Parish Council who all attended on the day. Patrick Knight was also in attendance, as it is his generosity and vision that has enabled us to diversify farmland for the new building and to create a wonderful outdoor learning environment. The older children watched the ceremony, and everyone cheered when the ribbon was cut! We all then retired to the forest area where the children had prepared an outdoor art gallery and sang one of their favourite songs to our visitors. After a short tour of the facilities that we have on offer, our guests were treated to homemade scones and tea which rounded off a lovely afternoon. The opening ceremony gave us an opportunity to reflect on how far we had come in the three years since the building was delivered in February 2022 after many years of fundraising.

A Graduation Ceremony was held, at the end of term, for the 28 children leaving us to go onto their chosen Primary schools. It was very well attended; the children sang and danced for their families and received a graduation certificate too! We wish them all our best wishes for their futures and hope that we have supported them all to become lifelong learners.



As the summer draws to an end and we begin to think of the new season and the new children starting at kindergarten in September, we have begun planting winter vegetables in our kitchen garden plots. Potatoes, carrots and brussel sprouts have been added to our plots, as well as broccoli and leeks. They are joining some very fine-looking sweetcorn and onions that are growing well. It will be exciting to watch this new crop grow and hopefully the children will be able to harvest them to use for our Christmas dinner! In addition to the vegetables, we have also taken part in the Bedford Borough annual tulip giveaway for community groups this year. We are hoping to brighten up our space with some of the 45,000 tulips that are being replanted by groups around the county from this year's display at the Bedford Embankment.

Admissions If you would like to register your child for a place at kindergarten, please contact us on 01234 826452. Email: info@oakleykindergarten.co.uk Website: www.oakleykindergarten.com Follow us on Facebook to keep up with our latest news and events. For information on funding, you can see details on our website with a link to Childcare Choices or alternatively you can contact the Family Information Service 0800 023 2057

Sally Martiello BEM

Local homecare provider recognised among the best in the UK

GoodOaks
Quality Care at Home



GoodOaks Homecare Bedford is quickly becoming one of the most respected names in care across the Bedford area, and it's not just local families taking notice. The dedicated team has recently been awarded not one, but two prestigious national accolades recognising their commitment to delivering high-quality, compassionate care in the community.

In June, GoodOaks Bedford was named a Top 20 Home Care Provider 2025 by Homecare.co.uk, the UK's leading home care review website. This award is based entirely on reviews from clients and their families, making it a powerful reflection of the trust and appreciation the team has earned through their work. To be ranked among the top providers in the region is a significant achievement and a source of enormous pride for the Bedford team.

In addition, the branch also received the 'Best Start-Up Homecare Service or New Franchisee' award at the 2025 Home Care Awards, an industry-leading event that recognises outstanding performance, innovation, and service in the homecare sector.

Founded on the ethos of providing care "we'd be happy for our own families to receive," GoodOaks Homecare Bedford has made it their mission to support people to live independently, safely, and with dignity in their own homes. Their care professionals are known not just for their professionalism, but also for the warmth, respect, and genuine connection they bring to every visit.

Shaz and Naz Islam, the husband-and-wife team behind the branch, say these awards are a testament to their staff's dedication and passion. "Every member of our team goes above and beyond to support clients and their families. These recognitions mean so much to all of us and show that our hard work is truly making a difference."

With national awards under their belt and a growing reputation for excellence, GoodOaks Homecare Bedford is clearly a name to watch in local care.



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Harrold-Odell Country Park

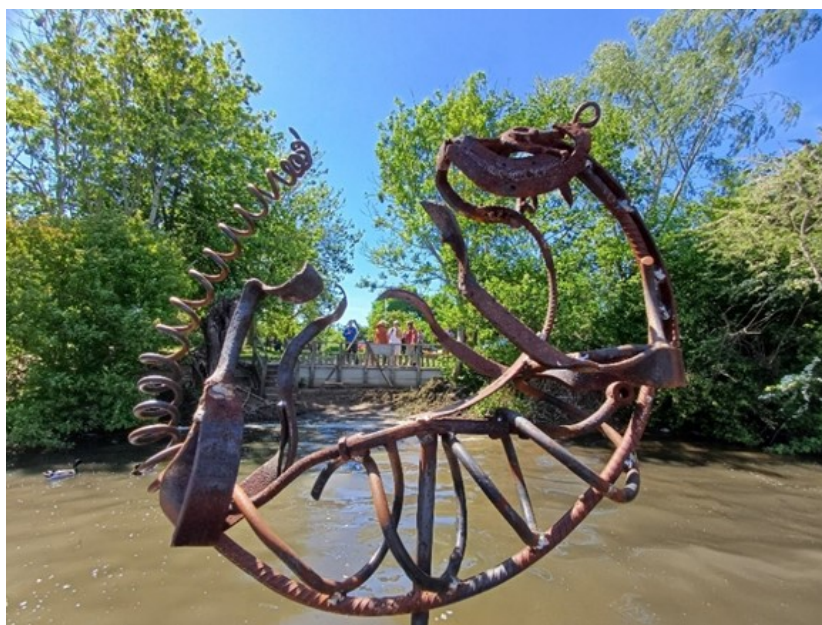
In my last article, I talked about the work we have been doing in the park that will help us retain our Green Flag Award – well the great news is that we have won our Green Flag Award for the 18th year in a row. This is an amazing achievement across all those years and is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our amazing band of volunteers that help week in and week out to make Harrold-Odell Country Park a truly special place for our visitors and a highly desirable residence for our wildlife.



Work varies from season to season and year to year. Taking information from the Met Office, it has been the warmest spring (using average temperatures) and sunniest spring on record and the driest in the last century, so one of the most important jobs we are doing on a regular basis this year is watering the memorial trees and any small saplings that we have planted in recent years! Thankfully for the wildlife here, we have large lakes and a river for them to drink from, but you can help the wildlife in your garden by providing a water source (pond or bird bath for example) and topping it up regularly.

For the wildlife, there are winners and there are losers with these weather conditions. For example, butterflies fare much better in the sunnier conditions, but blackbirds struggle to bring up young successfully as they cannot find many worms in the dry and baked soil. In the opposite conditions (i.e. very wet conditions), butterflies would do a lot worse, but blackbirds would be able to find lots more worms. It is the timing, increasing regularity and the severity of these more extreme weather conditions that is putting the complex interactions throughout nature's food web out of sync and contributing to the crisis that nature finds itself in.

The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park use the funds received from donations to the benefit of the park. They commissioned a sculpture for the park, which has now been installed in the lake by the duck feeding area! The artist is Rachael Long who is probably most well known for the Lifeboat Horse at Wells-next-to-the-Sea and has sculptures on display internationally. Our sculpture depicts 3 otters moving and tumbling around in the water. More about the artist can be found at www.rachaellongsculpture.com



We hope you are still enjoying the 2025 calendar The Friends of HOCF produced – that is if you bought one, though there are 2 calendars on display in the Dragonfly Café if you still want to see the pictures! Some of the calendar competition entries have been printed out and are on display in the café – bringing images of the park and our wildlife into the building whilst you enjoy a cake, coffee or cooked breakfast!

Even though the school holidays are over, our popular I Spot, Children's Activity and Crossword booklets are available all year round and perfect to keep your kids or grandkids entertained - available to buy for just £1 from The Dragonfly Café.

Every other Thursday, there are health walks around the park and/or local area. Meeting at 10:30am at the woodland entrance to the Dragonfly Café, they last about 1 hour. The dates are August 28th, September 11th & 25th, October 9th & 23rd and November 6th & 20th. More info can be found at <https://hocf.co.uk/get-involved/health-walks/>

We hope you enjoy your visits to our wonderful park!

From the Country Park staff and The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park.

oakley Motorcycle club

It has been a busy Summer for OMC with visits on Thursday evenings from our sponsors Flitwick Motorcycles, BMW Wollaston, St Neots Motorcycles and CooperB from Bozeat with the latest machines from the factories of Yamaha, Suzuki, BMW and Royal Enfield.

We have also had ride outs to Long Itchington, Warks, Moreton in the Marsh, Gloucs, Bourton on the Water, Gloucs, Stibbington, Cambs, Kineton, Warks and Wellesbourne Airfield, Warks, home of the Vulcan bomber.



We were also invited to visit Wilstead Manor Care Home in Wixams and Richmond Manor Care Home in Amphill for tea and biscuits as both locations have a number of residents with a love of motorbikes. We duly obliged of course. With hindsight judging by the age of many of the OMC members they could have been touting for business!



Then there was the OMC 20th anniversary event at Oakley Club on 2nd August and what a day it turned out to be!



The winner of the Bike of the Year Award was Adrian Korenika from Denton with his 1952 Tor-nax V200. This impressed our judging panel of Ex Motorbike racing legend Steve Parrish, TV's Guy Willison, OMC Vice Chair Derek Brown and OMC member Richard Galka, enough to take the £100 first prize voucher.



There were four runners up; Keith Hubbard from Bromham with his Honda 400 4, Peter Whitwell from Ramsey with his Silk, James Sherratt from Kettering with his Moto Martin and Ken Corrigan from Bromham with his Greeves. All runners up received a £50 voucher.

We had the biggest bike jumble we have ever had and a first time ever memorabilia stand. Between them they raised over £2,000 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. Together with the raffle and other donations on the day itself OMC raised nearly £3,000 for the EAAA.

We had hoped in our anniversary year to get to the £50,000 target of money raised by OMC for the EAAA since we made them our single charity. Well, we did not just reach it, we smashed it and now have a running total of well over £53,000!

Thanks also go to our sponsors plus all other clubs, charities and emergency services who attended on the day. Flitwick Motorcycles were particularly pleased as their fleet of 6 Yamahas for test riding spent all afternoon out on the roads, being used by potential customers, so they were at OMC to the very end!

A huge thanks to the OMC Secretary Bernie Russell who took the lead on this event which proved to be a fantastic afternoon! Also a huge thanks to all those committee members, family of committee members, OMC members and Air Cadets who helped not only on the day itself but the day before setting up and the day after packing everything away.

Also not forgetting the fabulous bands. The Kopy Katz our opening act and then Glam Rampage our closing act, many thanks guys!



Roger
"Baysie"
Bays

What an amazing Summer for Bedfordshire Classic Cars with sunshine and great temperatures for all the meets held at Oakley Sports & Social Club!



We have seen a huge turnout of show cars with many vehicles never seen before at Oakley.



It has been great to see a heavy footfall of Oakley residents coming along to see the cars and enjoy the atmosphere as well as the food, drink and ice creams!

One of the highlights at the June meet was the appearance of the red Mark 2 Jaguar which appeared in the hugely popular series of Inspector Morse starring the late John Shaw and Kevin



CLASSIC CAR MEET BEDFORDSHIRE

Whately between 1987–2000. It had been sold at auction in 2005 for over £100,000!



The last full meeting of 2025 will be Tuesday 16th September so do not miss out! This is very much a family event with an array of amazing cars from vintage and classic through to modern supercars with Lamborghini, Ferrari and Aston Martin's on display. There will even be a bouncy castle for the kids!

Hope to see you there

Luke, Tich and the Beds Classic Car Team

Parish Clerk's Working Hours

The Parish Clerk is currently working from home Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. She is also in the Old School Meeting Room (at the rear of the building) on Thursdays between 10.00am and 2.00pm if anyone wishes to visit in person. She does not work on Fridays but any messages or emails will be picked up on Monday.



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