



Oakley Newsletter



Spring 2023

Number 94

Look inside for

Paula Radcliffe Way Roadworks Photo ID needed to Vote More Memories

Twinwoods Festival Oakley Show 2023 Date St Mary's Church Open Day

Oakley Scouts Needs You Oakley Speedwatch Results News from the Tower



Front Cover : Frosty Start
Photo : Shelley Abbott

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

Spring 2023

Spring seems to be on the way at last with warmer weather and more daylight in the evenings. Hopefully all of the bulb and tree planting that was carried out last year will soon burst into life. We will be planting more trees around the village this year plus there are grants available in partnership with the Forest of Marston Vale and DEFRA, to anyone who has at least 0.1 hectares of land available i.e., space for 100 trees, as part of the governments Nature for Climate fund. The grants will cover the cost of the trees, tree protection and on-going maintenance. If you would like more information on this, you can find it on the Marston Vale website at www.marstonvale.org/trees-for-climate.

Brockwell meadow

Brockwell meadow is another project that the parish council has taken on as part of our drive to increase biodiversity in the village. It will join the River meadow and Linch Furlong as places open to the whole village that have been planted to encourage wildlife.

We had intended to organise a community tree planting event on Brockwell meadow but unfortunately the trees were not available until the end of January and needed to be planted quickly so we did not have time. However, the Brownies have helped us by putting the mulch and tree guards around the trees so thank you to them. The trees are woodland and fruit trees and will be part of a complete scheme being managed for the Parish Council by environment expert, Patrick Knight.

Keeping pavements clear

Please can you ensure that your wheelie bin is moved back onto your drive as soon as possible after they have been emptied. On the High Street and where pavements are narrow, this is causing problems for residents with buggies, wheel chairs or mobility aids.

Continued on page 3

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Vacancy

Vacancy

Understandably on bin collection day you may not be able to do it until later in the day but in some cases bins are left out for several days causing an on-going nuisance.

We are aware that the pavements on Church Lane have become quite dangerous with a lot of leaves that become slippery when wet. We have asked the Borough Council to clear them and are chasing them now to get it done.

Tennis courts at the Oakley Recreation ground

The parish council is very concerned by the Oakley Recreational Association's decision to remove the tennis court. This was paid for by developer money that was given to the parish council, 13 years ago, to improve sports facilities in the village.

At the time the council looked at various options for places to site the tennis/netball court but decided the Sports field would be the most accessible to the most people. Therefore it is concerning that the ORA committee have now decided to disregard this agreement and have taken down the nets and part of the court to use for parking.

They have assured us that they will look to restore the court for the summer months and the council are doing our best to ensure that this happens. Unfortunately, despite it being public money, we have not found any way yet in which we can insist they do this.

Planning

The Neighbourhood Development Plan, which residents voted on several years ago, has been challenged by potential developers of land at Pavenham Road. We have maintained our objections to this site as its not in the NDP but it is now going to appeal for the planning inspector to determine.

The NDP was reviewed and the review approved by the Parish Council in December 22 and is available on the website at <https://oakleyvillage.co.uk/ndp>. No changes were needed as all policies remained valid.

The Parish Council has adopted a new Environmental policy as recommended by the NDP group and this can be found at <https://oakleyvillage.co.uk/parish-council/minutes-agendas-downloads>.

Reynes Drive Green play area

The roundabout on the Green was an original one, funded by volunteers in the 1990s. It has now come to the end of its useful life after having been repaired several times, so the council is in the process of replacing it with a new one. We hope to have it installed by the summer.

Fly tipping

Fly tipping appears to be on the increase at the moment. We pay a litter picker to collect the everyday litter, but she cannot clear fly tipped waste. The parish council recently had to hire a skip to remove all of the waste which had been dumped on the allotments and car parts have also been left recently on High Street, Lovell Road and Pavenham Road.

Please let us know if you see this happening and we will report it to the police, but if you do see anything that has already been dumped you can report it directly to the Borough Council on their website at <https://Bedford.gov.uk/save-time-do-it> -online or let the parish clerk know and Ann will report it.

Parish Council precept

The council voted in January to increase their part of the council tax by 1.9%. This is below inflation but will allow us to carry on with important projects around the village.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual parish meeting is on Tuesday 4th April starting at 7:00pm in the village hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. You will hear a report from the council on their work over the past year and see the full accounts. At the end of the meeting there is the opportunity for residents to pass on their views and question councillors on anything that is going on in the village.

May elections

All parish councillors will all be up for election on 4th May. The council consists of 11 councillors, and we currently have some vacancies although there are residents interested in joining us. If you would like to consider standing for election please contact the clerk, Ann Paice, and she can give you more details and a nomination form.

If you would like to find out more about what being a councillor involves please speak to any of the councillors on the contact list in this newsletter or call the parish clerk and she can explain more. We meet once a month on the first Tuesday of the month, in the village hall. If you would like to see us in action, please come along to any meeting, as residents are always welcome to attend.
Jane Walker Chair

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.

Borough Council News

This is my last Borough Council report as the Councillor for the current Oakley Ward (including Oakley, Pavenham & Stevington), from May 4th Oakley will be part of the new Clapham Oakley Ward, represented by two Borough Councillors.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to have been your Borough Councillor for the last four years, having followed in the giant footsteps of Pat Olney who served the Oakley as Ward Councillor for 38 years, and still serves the village as a Parish Councillor.

In these last four years we have lived through some unprecedented times. When I was elected in 2019 none would have foreseen that we would need to spend nearly a year indoors avoiding even our closest friends and family. The way the residents of Oakley rallied round and supported each other has been amazing to see.

Resurfacing planned for Paula Radcliffe Way in Summer 2023

Resurfacing works are planned for Paula Radcliffe Way in summer 2023. Signs will soon be put in place to give advance warning of the dates of the roadworks. The works will see the dual carriageway resurfaced between Great Ouse Way and Bedford Road, Clapham.

The work will also provide the opportunity to review and repair the bridges, street lights and crash barriers along this stretch of road, minimising the need for future disruption and keeping this route safe for all road users.

The contractor will soon carry out an investigation to confirm the full scope of these works. This will involve some lane closures on the dual carriageway.



Residents will need photo ID to vote in person at elections in May

For the first time, electors voting in person at polling stations will need to show photographic ID to vote at this year's local elec-

tions, including electors in Bedford Borough. Residents are being urged to make sure they are ready to vote in May by not only checking they are registered to vote but also making sure they have an accepted form of ID.

Accepted forms of ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth drivers' licence; some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card. Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online at www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/ or by completing a paper form.

Residents who do not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply for free ID either online via Gov.uk or by completing a paper application form and sending this to Bedford Borough Council's electoral services team. If you need any help with applying for the free ID or want to request an application form, contact the electoral services team by phoning 01234 718078 or by emailing elections@bedford.gov.uk.

Anyone who wants to have their say in the elections this May must also be registered to vote. It only takes five minutes to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Voters wishing to apply to their council for free ID should first make sure they are registered to vote.

The requirement to show photo ID at the polling station, is a new requirement, introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act which was passed last year and comes into effect for the first time this May.

Council Tax

The Borough Council are continuing to support residents by keeping Council Tax down, freezing charges and protecting key services so that our most vulnerable can get support when they need it most and ensures no libraries or Children's Centres close.

The key headlines are:

- Core Council Tax will rise by 0.9% as well as a 2% rise for the government's Adult Social Care precept. In total 2.9% – well below inflation and below the maximum allowed by government.
- Key services that residents rely on will be protected yet again.
- Council charges to residents, such as car park charges, will be frozen.

Councillor Jon Abbott

Telephone: 07784 549180

Email : jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com



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Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity Celebrates Its 70th Anniversary Year

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (Beds RCC) is the leading community development agency working across Bedfordshire, with a proven track record built over 70 years. 2023 is the 70th Anniversary Year of Beds RCC, and it is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the charity's achievements during this time.



Beds RCC have a wide range of projects and services that benefit local communities across Bedfordshire.

The work is carried out in four main areas: Supporting Communities, Rural Development, Community and Wellbeing, and Community Transport. The charity also owns three non-profit businesses: The Barn – Cardington, Ridgemont Station Heritage Centre and Tea Room, and Warden Abbey Community Vineyard.

Over the past 70 years, both past and current staff and volunteers at Beds RCC have been an integral part of improving the lives of those living in Bedfordshire.

Beds RCC was originally set up in 1953 as part of the Rural Community Councils set up across the United Kingdom. During the first three years, they became associated with many social aspects of rural life – such as playgrounds and playing fields; clubs and services for the elderly; village halls and Parish Councils - which promoted improvements to their local communities. Many of this work still continues today, alongside new projects and services which have evolved over the years.

Chief Executive Tracy Cowan said:

"I am incredibly proud of our wonderful staff and volunteer teams – both past and present - for all their hard work over the past 70 years. The fact that we can celebrate the year as the SME Awards 'Community Business of the Year' makes the achievement even greater and I am looking forward to celebrating the year!"

2023 will be a busy year for the Charity as they celebrate their anniversary. Plans for the year include a ball, staff celebration, 70th Anniversary AGM, and more commemorative events. Keep an eye out on Beds RCC's Social Media for more information on these.

If you would like to find out more about Beds RCC, please contact us:

The Old School, Cardington, Bedford MK44 3SX (registered office).

Tel: 01234 838771 / Email info@bedsrcc.org.uk www.bedsrcc.org.uk

Follow us on Social Media: Facebook: @bedsrcc Twitter: @bedsrcc

Instagram: @bedsrcc LinkedIn: Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

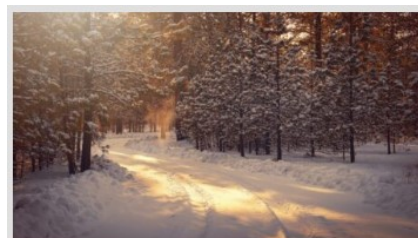


Village Halls Week 2023

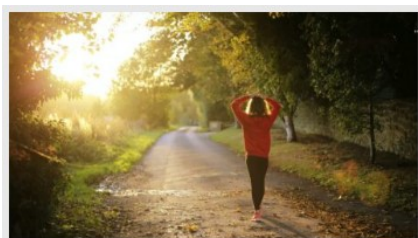


'MEET: Men, Exercise, Engage, Talk' project launches in Bedford

Some of our 2023 Initiatives



Wellbeing this Winter



Cost of living impact on mental health

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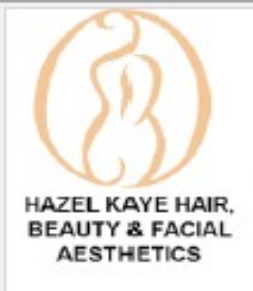
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Oakley Show 2023



Please put **Sunday 10th September** in your diaries for this year's Oakley Show.

We are just about to start our show preparations so now is the time to let us know if you have any suggestions for show classes this year.

You can keep up to date by visiting our facebook page, contact us on messenger or give us a call on 07778537427 if you have any questions or ideas or if you would like to **volunteer to help us**.

Oakley Show Committee

St Mary's Church Oakley Open Day Sunday June 25th 2pm



You are invited to the Church Open Day a chance to see the pipe organ in action, a presentation on the restored church clock, bell ringing, a history of the church and a look at some of the artefacts.

**Teas in Church from 3.30 onwards will be part of the Open Day.
Graham Palmer Church Warden 07710462535**



Oakley Educational Foundation

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

Applications are accepted in the months of May and November and must be accompanied by receipts of purchase. Application forms can be obtained from the Clerk, Louise Tunley.

For further information, or for an application form, please contact Louise Tunley on 07917 462213, by post at 19 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY or by email at louise_tunley@yahoo.co.uk.

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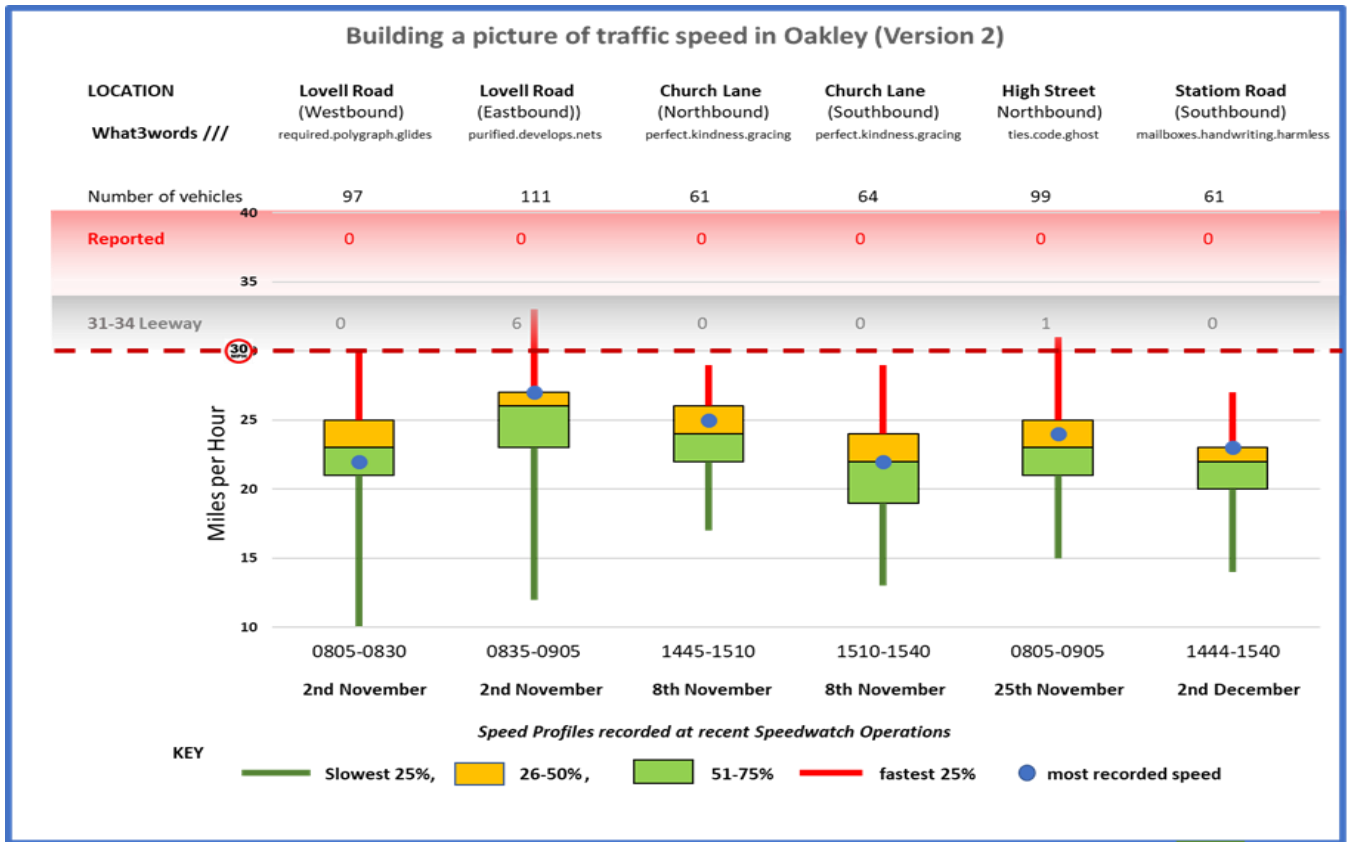
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LOTS OF LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS
CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

Oakley Speedwatch Since our last report we have continued our plan to use the speed data we have collected on operations to give us a better understanding of where the community is most at risk from speeding traffic. In the last months we have been concentrating our efforts around school opening and closure times. As is usual we did not need to report any drivers to the police but you can see from the graph below Lovell Road eastbound is the fastest location we visited having 6 vehicles breaking the limit in a 30 minute session and is therefore very much on our 'watch list.'

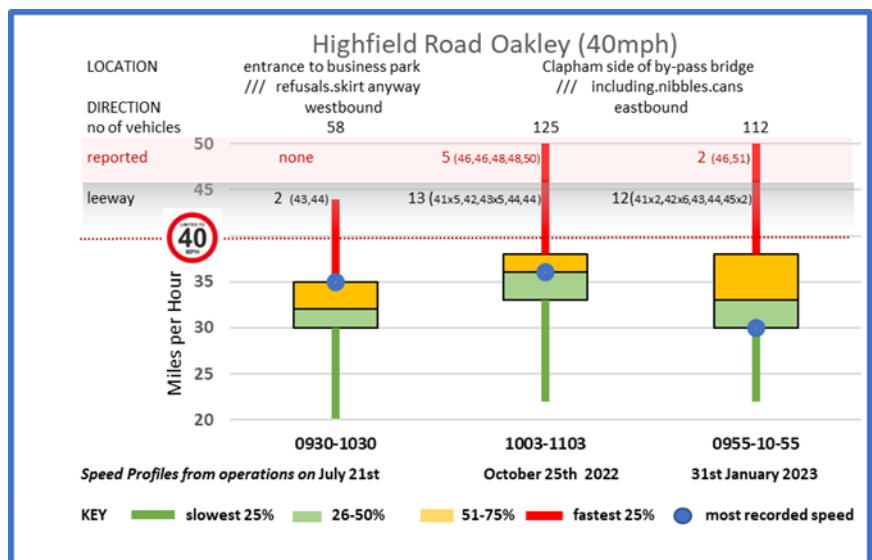


The speed profiles generally paint a positive picture of speeds around the village. The range shown by the green and yellow boxes represents the speeds between which half the drivers feel comfortable. The length of the red line is noteworthy as it shows the extent to which those at the top end are driving faster than the norm. The longer the line the greater the concern. The average speed hovers around the mid twenties but could be higher if the speed of the one in ten or so drivers held up by the vehicle in front and all of the vehicles below 15mph were ignored.

Our real concern at the moment is the 40mph limit in Highfield Road. Our operation in July last year outside the oil terminal seemed to be going as expected when two walkers politely suggested we were looking the wrong way as they had just had a near miss with a speeding car leaving the village. How right they were! Our operation in October looking westbound found 5 vehicles to report, more than we have reported in the previous two years of operations.

We therefore revisited a few weeks ago and another two vehicles were reported. In addition 25 vehicles were over the limit but not sufficiently to be reported. This westbound stretch up towards Clapham is particularly hazardous as despite the fact there is no footpath, and is frequented by walkers (often with dogs) on their way to Browns Wood. It is therefore a location we will be revisiting.

Paul Phillips



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Oakley Youth Club

Oakley Youth Club

Invites all year 7 and 8 Lincroft Academy children to attend. We have lots of fun activities planned every week and it's a safe place to hang out with friends and socialise. It is also a great opportunity to make new friends also.

This month coming back with popular demand wrestling and outdoor football, pizza nights, dance offs.

The tuck shop is fully restocked 😊

The club runs term time only
Entry £2

Interested?

Contact Sonya for more information
oakleyyouthclub@gmail.com
all team members
are trained and DBS checked

Thank you to everyone who has supported the youth club this term

We have a wonderful group of children.

We look forward to opening up the outside as spring approaches and have lots of activities planned.

We have spaces available for new members too, please contact us.

7-9pm every Friday during term time.

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Volunteers Of All Ages Wanted to Protect our Children

Our present volunteers mostly come from the older age bracket and to ensure we continue in to the future we would like to appeal to other volunteers (over eighteen) to join Oakley Speed Watch.

Are you one of several concerned villagers or maybe in an existing village group who are happy to diversify and would like to commit to one hour a month, in sets of three, to keep our families safe?

Would you like to go together to the 2 hours of training at Police HQ in Kempston?

Then why not contact Paul Phillips on paulphillips65@gmail.com or call him on 07968 122 301 and talk it through with him.

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Penny Mann (Secretary) on 01234 781660

Steve's Snippet – No. 63

The previous cryptic clue:- Sounds like Weatherfield's 50s matriarch earned a nickname performing on stage. (10,8) Answer: Concertina Sharples The prize remains unclaimed, but one person came close.

The next one is a bit easier:- "I hear a tree lapped by sea." (5 letters) Contact me by email, the first correct email I see wins – the prize is real.

Phantom Sprayer

We seem to take a step forward and then a step backward, there have been many complaints on Oakley Village Facebook regarding dog mess from a large dog being regularly walked in High Street, where the owner just leaves the mess and walks on.



I notice other places where we still find this nasty stuff left around, Ruffs Furze Green has had a few piles lately, where it had been spotless for a long while, keeping it clean and nice for our local children to play.

Spring is just around the corner, it would be lovely if I could report next time that we had a beautiful dog mess free village.

I have not walked the muddy fields so much recently but I have noticed that they do seem to be a lot cleaner and more pleasant to walk – and much cleaner and safer for the school children running round the Station Road field.

Steve's Snippet - No. 64

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the talk of the present age and promises (or threatens) so much.

(There is the argument that Real Intelligence has not been discovered yet, but that is a different discussion).

I was about to invite ChatGPT to assist me with writing an article for this newsletter but it is currently at full capacity, so you have been spared... for now.

There are many articles available to study, ranging from deeply technical to generally informative and downright scary. I like to think (more on that in a later Snippet) that the "downright scary" is sensationalist nonsense for the most part, and that AI will never resemble the scenarios portrayed in the Terminator film series.

No, AI looks as if it could contain minefields of a different sort, as previously unrecognised problems arise: one of the major issues is that of the use of copyrighted materials used to train AI systems.

Getty Images has instigated a lawsuit against an AI company which they claim has accessed many of Getty's images in order to train its system. The system uses AI to generate pictures, some of which contain distorted renditions of the original owner's watermarks etc. The initial claim is for damages of 1.8 trillion dollars – yes, trillion.

Also, if AI develops in its ability to enable us, say, to compose literary masterpieces (eg, homework essays), is that merely plagiarism and not any real contribution to learning?

Regurgitating processed information does not demonstrate learning or understanding, so just how useful will AI be in information systems? Let the debates begin!

Steve Nicholas



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News from the tower

The St Mary's Church bells are getting new bell ropes.

Church bell ropes are traditionally made from hemp fibres, although flax is now the most widely used natural fibre for bell ropes. Interestingly, because these natural fibres absorb moisture, the ropes are affected by weather conditions. When damp and cold, the ropes become stiffer. The weather also makes them lengthen or constrict so a bell rope that is the perfect length for a particular ringer one day, might be too short for that ringer the next time they ring that bell!

Rope makers, of which there are not many left in the UK, need a long workspace for winding the long strands of fibre together and these are called 'ropewalks'. Perhaps that is where Rope Walk in Bedford got its name?!

The thick woollen grip on the bottom of the bell rope is called the 'sally'. The sallies can come in many different colours and those of St Mary's are currently burgundy.

Our bell ropes at St Mary's come in two halves nowadays. The top half of the rope (the part that attaches to the bell wheel) is made of polyester and is more hard-wearing than the natural fibres. The bottom half of the rope (the part we pull) is still made from the natural fibres and the two parts are spliced together. Several of the bell ropes at St Mary's are wearing out or becoming stiff with grime from years of use so we have made the decision to replace them all. This means that the bells of St Mary's will fall silent for a few weeks. Thankfully, we will not miss our practice nights as we have been invited to practice at St James Church in Biddenham.

But before that happens, you may have heard a prolonged bit of ringing by the St Mary's Band on Saturday 25th February as we rang a quarter peal, roughly taking between 35-45 minutes.

We are also planning to join in with Ring for the King, to celebrate the King's coronation.

We practice on Friday evenings from 8pm to 9:15pm and ring on Sunday mornings before the services at St Mary's Church. If you would like to come along on a practice night to see what it is all about and to have a go, please contact our Tower Captain, Bill Sellars on 07980 745292 or email the-sellars@btinternet.com.

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Down Memory Lane

From little acorns



Car enthusiasts are more likely to be interested in the background scenery in this photograph. However, the main focus is the goalmouth action involving Oakley Rangers Football Club during a match at Pavenham Playing Field. The photograph was taken in 1974 and me and a schoolmate are standing behind the goal as Oakley, in the dark shirts, are on the attack.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's the development of the new housing estate in the centre of the village resulted in a large number of young men and their families moving in. At that time there were no football facilities available to the rapidly expanding population. Local footballers had to travel outside of the village to Bedford, Clapham, Stevington or Harrold to get a game. As a result three new villagers, Terry Youngman, Martin Sutherland and Jeff Winrow, decided to form Oakley Rangers. A single side started in the 1972-3 season playing in the Bedford and District Sunday League which itself had only been founded in 1962. With no facilities in the village all home games were played at Pavenham.

In their first season the club won the league's Fourth Division only losing 2 of the 30 games played scoring 177 goals and conceding just 38. The following season, 1973-4, the club won the Third Division and soon village based players and a number of prominent players from outside the village were attracted to play. This enabled a reserve team to be formed and success on the field continued as both teams progressed through the divisions winning trophies along the way.

In the late 1970's the new recreational facilities with a cricket and football pitch, basic changing and bar facilities was created in Church Lane enabling Oakley Rangers to move to a "home ground". Over the years the Oakley Sports and Social Club and the sporting facilities have changed beyond recognition and the football club has evolved too as captured in the numerous black and white and colour photos hanging on the walls in the clubhouse. Myself, my two younger brothers Jamie and Neil, and many villagers have played for and benefited from the village football club and today AFC Oakley represent the village's football interests. With around 400 registered players two senior men's teams play in the local Bedford and District Saturday League and there are numerous junior sides spanning various age groups.

From the humble beginnings and as a result of the enthusiasm and dedication of three young men in particular an Oakley village football team has existed for 50 years or so. The current senior team are often referred to as "The Oaks". As the old saying goes - "from little acorns"

Richard Worker

Ps - one of the Oakley attackers pictured is Pete Scott who still lives in the village. I have spoken to him but neither of us, nearly 50 years on, can remember if the ball ended up in the back of the net or not !!!!



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Down Memory Lane

The Big Snow of '82

On the 7 January 2023 Channel 5 aired a program titled "The Big Snow of '82". Disruptive snowstorms in recent years can be counted on the fingers of one hand but during the 1980's they were frequent. One severe cold wave was formed in early December 1981 and lasted until mid January 1982.

On the 8 & 9 January 1982 a "snow bomb" accompanied by gale force winds produced one of the most severe blizzards of the century across southern England and the Midlands. The snowfall lasted over 36 hours and temperatures plummeted to -2 - -4c.

As can be seen from these two photographs, taken in Church Lane, in comparison to other areas of the country Oakley was not as badly affected. However, I had just started dating a young lady, Kate, from Olney, and the snow prevented me from travelling to visit her.

Clearly my inability to overcome a few snow drifts did not put her off and the current Mrs Worker has somehow managed to put up with me during 39 years of marriage !!!!

Richard Worker





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SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS COMING UP

Sun 19th March	10.30am	Joint Mothering Sunday Service– Oakley Methodist Church (OMC)
Tues 21st March	3.30pm	Messy Church for all– OMC
Weds 5th April	6.30pm	Reflective Service– OMC
Thurs 6th April	6.30pm	Maundy Thursday Service & Meal– St Mary's
Fri 7th April	10.00am	Good Friday Craft Workshop– St Owen's Bromham
	2.00pm	Good Friday Service– St Mary's
Easter Sunday 9th April	10.30am	Family Communion Service & Egg Hunt–St Mary's
	10.30am	Easter Sunday Service– OMC
Sunday 7th May	10.30am	Joint Service to mark the King's Coronation– St Mary's
Tues 16th May	3.30pm	Messy Church for all– OMC

MESSY CHURCH

Messy church runs on Thursday mornings at 10am during termtime in St Mary's for preschool children and their carers.

Messy Church For All is for all ages and is meeting on Tues 21st Mar and 16th May at 3.30pm at Oakley Methodist Church.

Both events have refreshments and craft activities. Please do come along!

*For more details on all our events visit www.bromhambenefice.org or www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk

CELEBRATING THE KING'S CORONATION

On Sunday 7th May at 10.30am we will be holding a joint Coronation Service in St Mary's for the whole village to celebrate the coronation. Please do join us special day.



STOP PRESS Sunday June 25th Church Open Day at St Mary's - save the date!

CONTACTS

St Mary's: Revd. Catherine Wilson: 01234 825665 vicar@bromhambenefice.org
 Church Wardens: Hilarie Worley 262166 & Graham Palmer 07710 462535
 Administrator Sarah: 07494 069540 administrator@bromhambenefice.org
 Oakley Methodist Church:
 Revd Chris Sandy: 01234 860484 christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk
 Church Steward: Jeanette Letch 825204

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Oakley Scout Group Needs You!

I start by saying a massive Thank You! to Sara Davey for all her hard work improving the group and the facilities. She decided at Christmas after 5 years in charge that it was time to step back from and take a new role in Scouting where she lives. The group is very grateful for all that she has done.

Unfortunately, a reoccurring theme common with many Scout Groups is the need for more adults to come forward to assist.

We are looking for leaders, assistants, and executive members. Being a leader or assistant in Scouting can be fitted around the busy life that you lead. If you can only help every couple of weeks or believe that all you can do is successfully boil a kettle, but would like to get involved in some way, have a chat.

The executive work behind the scenes and enable the leaders & assistants to get on with Scouting. Oakley Scout Group is a charity and so the executive are also trustees. We currently have a treasurer, but are looking for a chair, secretary, and general executive members.

The executive meets every couple of months and looks after the finances and assists with the upkeep of the hut. If you have some skills that you feel might be of use, we'd love the talk to you.



How Do I Get Involved?

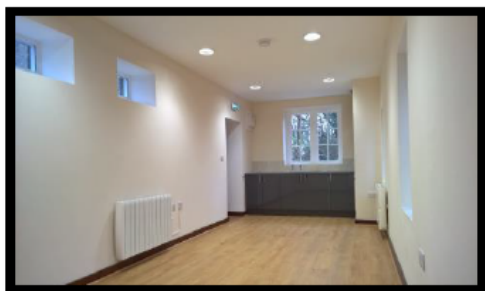
If you would like more information on Scouting in Oakley or to get involved as an adult; please contact

Jon Abbott, Group Scout Leader, 07784 549180 or
jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com.

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Or contact the Clerk :

Mandy Newton

On 07736 466965

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Merri Flowers

Welcome to our round up of the Merri months of December through to February. First of all we want to say a big THANK YOU to everyone in the village who visited our farm in October, November or December to tag or choose their 2022 Christmas Tree. Your support in our business is much appreciated & it is always good to see returning & new customers alike.



You may think that there is not much to do at this time of year, but you would be wrong. During January and February, we tend to base and side prune thousands of trees (by hand!) for sale this year. We have the return of our Easter Egg Hunt (5th to 9th April), which proved to be a real success last year. On the flowery side of the business, February is the key month for pruning roses, checking our overwintered plants (some of which did not survive our colder than normal winter) planting overwintered hardy annuals and kickstarting the process of sowing hardy annual cut flower seeds so they are ready for picking in July. Once March is here it is all systems go with sowing half-hardy seeds, so we can fill our Pick Your Own plots with even more plants. We also clear out our polytunnel to make way for sweet peas and whatever flowers we believe might tolerate the heat (assuming we must cope with heatwaves again which made for a challenging 2022).

We have our fingers crossed that Easter will coincide with our Daffodil crop this year, which tends to occur at the end of March/early April. I am not putting money on it, because if last year's weather is anything to go by, they will either be over or not ready, but that is Mother Nature for you!

Wishing you a successful seed sowing and growing season, Rachelle

Bedfordshire homelessness charity overwhelmed by generous donations to its 'Rucksack Stomp' appeal

Big-hearted companies and members of the public have rallied around to help Bedfordshire homelessness charity Emmaus Village Carlton support homeless people through its 'Rucksack Stomps'.

The 'Rucksack Stomp' is the name given to a group of formerly homeless people who have been supported by Emmaus (known as companions), who volunteer in Bedford, Northampton and Wellingborough town centres every week, offering a life-line to people sleeping on the streets.



The Sock Shop kindly donated socks, underwear and thermal underclothes, while glove wholesalers, Just 1 Source & Supply in York and Troy (Exeter), donated 30 pairs of thermal and waterproof gloves to the team of volunteers supporting homeless people this winter. Global business Unilever kindly donated a palette of over 500 Fusions Thai Green Curry Pot Noodles which will help the team keep vulnerable people warm and energised during the cold weather.

If you would like to contribute sleeping bags, socks or wet wipes to the Rucksack Stomp, please visit Emmaus Village Carlton's dedicated Amazon Wishlist here: <https://amzn.to/3lmw6JQ> You can also drop off sleeping bags and warm clothing such as hats and gloves from Wednesday – Saturday, 10am – 4.30pm and Sunday 10am – 4pm at the Emmaus Village Carlton reception in the Dom Gregory building, School Lane, Carlton MK43 7LQ. Ring 01234 720826 for more details. Anyone wishing to support the work of the Emmaus Village Carlton Rucksack Stomp can donate to our Appeal online: <https://emmaus.org.uk/village-carlton/help-homeless-appeal/>

Oakley Kindergarten News

Our second term in the new building has seen the kindergarten grow into a bustling learning environment, filled with the sound of children happily playing and learning.

We are welcoming new starters throughout the year and are building up the numbers of our under twos children.



Our feeding stations, for the wild birds, have been well used over the cold winter and we have seen a variety of different birds visit our garden. The children, once again, took part in the Big Bird-watch. As part of their Understanding the World development, we are supporting them to identify the different species of birds that they observe in the garden.

For our nature ramble in January, we ventured back to Brockwell Meadow to see the fruit tree saplings that have been planted. With the help of the children and some volunteers, we have also been busy clearing our own forest area. The children have helped to plant the saplings that we received from the Queen's Green Canopy and the Woodland trust. We helped Patrick Knight plant them and place spiral guards around them to prevent mice, rabbits, and deer from nibbling at the young plants.



To enhance our Literacy provision in the Forest school area, we have added a 'Troll Bridge' and Wood Pile House. A donation of some rustic chairs and tables has created a great place to sit and chat in the shade of the trees. Some willow deer, which were also donated, have been given a home amongst the trees. We are slowly creating an Enchanted Forest to inspire the children's imagination and love of the outdoors!



Admissions

If you would like to register your child for a place at pre-school, please contact us on 01234 826452 or by email: info@oakleypreschool.com Our website is: www.oakleypreschool.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



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Web: www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com
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NEWSLETTER Spring 2023

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. If anyone has access to the internet please visit our website, 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 are also producing articles in various publications throughout Bedford and surrounding areas to raise the profile of the centre.

After a cold winter we now look forward to the spring and hopefully some warmer weather where we can enjoy the sunshine and have short walks.

PLACES AVAILABLE

Our Day Centre provides our older people with a place where they can make friends in a warm and comfortable atmosphere. A range of activities including crafts, entertainment, quizzes and good old conversation are at the heart of our day.

We serve freshly prepared home cooked lunches together with tea, coffee and toast at the start of the day with beverages throughout. The Centre is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. As well as full days we now offer afternoon sessions including a two course lunch.

For details of costs and advice please contact Lynne on **01234 824935** or **07733 227374**.
Enquiries welcome from Bedford and surrounding villages in North Bedfordshire.

ACTIVITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Since the beginning of the New Year clients have been involved with various activities. This included cross stitch and making birthday cards which clients really enjoy. We also held a reminiscence week showing various objects from the past including some mystery items. Other activities have included board games, word searches, bingo and chair based exercise classes.

In February we had the Wells Hollow Band visit. They are a Ceilidh group who play traditional Scottish, Irish and English folk music. Kempston Hammers Choir also visited the centre to entertain us. Oakley resident Terry came to sing and play his saxophone and ukulele for us. Thanks to everyone who came and entertained our clients, they really love it!

SUPPORT THE DAY THROUGH EASY FUNDRAISING

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your small to large purchases – you could be raising free donations for Oakley Rural Day Centre with easyfundraising? There are over 7,000 brands on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to easyfunding.org.uk and register on the site and choose the Oakley Rural Day Centre as your preferred charity.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, the brand will make a donation to Oakley Rural Day Centre at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and Oakley Rural Day Centre will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you for your support.



**OAKLEY RURAL DAY CENTRE WOULD LIKE TO THANK
THE HARPUR TRUST FOR THEIR GRANT AND CONINUED
SUPPORT**



Oakley Allotments

There is no guest contributor for this issue as there is quite a lot to say following an unusual and eventful winter period.

The weather alone has been remarkably different, with exceptionally dry conditions but seasonally anticipated cold temperatures. Sustained freezing over several days has led to the failure of many brassicas which normally survive a winter. Cabbages became deep-frozen and eventually thawed to be fit only for composting.

Sprouting broccoli, planted in late summer, overwinters to provide early spring cropping and is very much enjoyed, but ours all died in the relentless cold. Even our brussels sprouts suffered, and produced poor yields: this is the first winter I have experienced this and others have reported the same failures.

Now, as I write, we are experiencing shortages of a lot of salad and vegetable produce, due not only to exceptional weather conditions worldwide, but also due to transport and fuel-cost issues. European growers have scaled back greenhouse growing because of massive fuel price rises.



This just emphasises the importance of local and seasonal growing. Years ago we did not enjoy the availability of many fruits and vegetables all year round, as we have done...perhaps until now. Tomatoes, as an example, were only available from early springtime until late summer. Channel Islands tomatoes were often the first available in the shops as their climate was more favourable: I remember buses emblazoned with the advertisement in the 60s, "Slice into a Guernsey Tom".



Now, we must be reminded that locally-grown and seasonal produce may become more and more important, arable farmland must be preserved and facilities such as home gardens and allotments will have to be utilised much more.

Our allotments are now nearly fully occupied, with the recently cleared ground near the orchard being taken by three new and enthusiastic tenants. They are keen to try out some different ideas, as well as considering what others have found to be successful gardening techniques.

One of the tenants has looked at the practicality of introducing solitary bees (they do not swarm or sting) as pollinators – something we must also be aware of and help to sustain.

The water system will be possibly be needed earlier than in previous years. Normally switched off and drained between October and March, the water may be turned on in March if the risk of frost has diminished. However, I still need to renew two taps and make a few additional repairs. As we are now in closer touch with our new tenants-only WhatsApp group I can keep those subscribed tenants up-to-date.

If you are a tenant, not yet on the group, and would like to join, then please contact me.

We have one plot available for rent and if it is not taken soon I am considering offering it as smaller, low-rent plots: it is already set-out as raised beds, defined and easily manageable. As always, contact the clerk if interested in joining us and starting your own allotment.

In closing... a tribute:-

We lost a dear fellow tenant just before Christmas. Wendy Gater had suffered a prolonged battle with her health. Wendy was a much-loved allotment management volunteer and member of the village show committee – she will be greatly missed.

Steve Nicholas



I am putting together my proposals for a day out in London on Thursday 22nd June 2023 It is proposed to travel by train to London. I am not sure of the times of the trains for June, but I am assured by railway staff in Bedford that the times are not likely to change significantly.

At the present time there is a train leaving Bedford at 9.04 a.m. and arriving at Farringdon in London after a journey lasting 1 hour 10 minutes. A senior rail card may be used for that train. An off-peak return ticket may be purchased with no restriction on the time of returning to Bedford. The cost of the off-peak day return is £33.90 reducing to £22.90 with a senior rail card. In view of the present situation on the railways, it will be worth checking the time of departure from Bedford and the cost-

Our Guide, Charlie de Wet will meet the group at Farringdon and will take us by foot to Charterhouse. This will take about 8 minutes. Charterhouse is an historic site being the remnants of a medieval monastery. There will be an opportunity to have a cup of tea or coffee and to use the facilities upon arrival.

I am suggesting that the tour of Charterhouse begins at 11.30 a.m. The cost of the tour is £15.00 per person or £12.00 with concessions. The minimum number for the tour is 10 and the tour will last for about one hour. A deposit of £60.00 is required to be paid by the 22nd April. There is sufficient money in the Amigo account for this to be paid by me and this payment can be taken into account when the final payment is made. Please let me know by the 22nd April if you will be coming as I will need to collect the final payment from you which is due to be paid by the 22nd May 2023.



The group will then be led by Charlie to Dr Johnson's House in Gough Square which will take about 30 minutes passing by the building works of the new London Museum.

Dr Johnson's House is just off Fleet Street. There are plenty of the usual places to have lunch in the area including Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, the Punch Tavern and Ye Olde Bell for more substantial meals.

A visit to Dr Johnson's house has been arranged for 2.30 p.m. There is no minimum number and the cost per person will be £7.00. It is proposed to have a guided tour which will involve a one off payment of £25.00 for the group.

After the tour and possibly a final cup of tea or coffee at the nearby Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, the group will walk to the Station at City Thameslink for the journey home.

The cost per person works out as follows:-

The price of the return ticket to Farringdon with the use of a Senior Rail Card)

The price of tea or coffee upon arrival at Charterhouse

The admission charge of £15.00 (or £12.00 concession) to Charterhouse

The cost of lunch

The admission charge of £7.00 to Dr. Johnson's House. The cost of a guided tour will be £25.00 for the group. The individual cost of the tour will depend upon the number of people in the group.

The cost of a possible cup of tea or coffee before the journey home.

Charlie's fee of £10.00 per person.

I look forward to hearing from you as to whether you wish to come on the trip. My address is 30 Hunts Path, Oakley, Bedford, MK43 7SR. My telephone number is 01234 824959 and my e-mail address is jwdixon30 @gmail.com.

John Dixon



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We look forward to welcoming him to the Main Stage. Not to be missed!

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www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.com or Pick-a-Lily, Florists, Sharnbrook, in person

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12 for 12.30pm

Preceded by a two-course lunch, with tea/coffee

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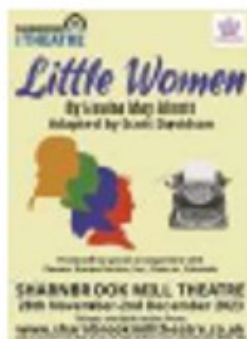
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A Fundraising Performance in aid of
Melanoma UK

Saturday 13th May 2023, 7.30pm

at Sharnbrook Mill Theatre

Wishes & Dreams

A Fundraising Performance at The Mill Theatre
On Saturday 13th May 2023, 7.30pm
in aid of Melanoma UK

Presented by 'Standing in the Wings'

Featuring performers from across Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, this promises to be an exciting evening of entertainment whilst raising awareness and funds for Melanoma UK. The evening will be hosted by Jamie Tyler (whose credits include The RSC, UK and European Tours and The West End) will feature Standing in the Wings soloists, the Weavers Academy Music Department and The CAREL Crew

Tickets £14 from: www.standinginthewings.co.uk/wishedreams or Eventbrite

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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)

Birds and food have been the main focuses in Brownies this term. Brownies earned their Red Kite badge, carrying out a number of bird-related activities. The bird finger puppets were a particular hit and we were very impressed with the Brownies' creativity. Our focus on food started with making bird balls to encourage garden birds in time

for the RSPCA birdwatch. We then made chocolate birds' nests and fajitas.

We were pleased to be invited to help with the tree planting in Brockwell Meadow. Brownies added tree guards and mulch to the sapling trees and we planted a Brownie oak. We are grateful to Pat Knight for organising this event which was greatly enjoyed by the Brownies.

If you have a daughter aged 7-10 and would like to sign up for Brownies, please register on Go

<https://go.girlguiding.org.uk/> Or contact Lindsay for further information by email : oakleybrownies452@gmail.com

Lindsay Saunders

Tree Planting

You have to look carefully to make out the Brownie oak in the picture now. We hope that before long we will be looking up to it!





Oakley Village Hall

Church Lane,
Oakley,
Bedfordshire, MK43 7RJ

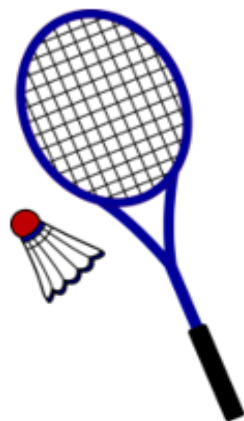
A well-appointed village hall
Main hall with stage and PA system
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Beds Classic Cars will start their season on Tuesday 11th April and will be reverting back to a monthly meeting rather than twice a month.

Each meeting will be the second Tuesday of the month through to September.

Last Summer was very busy for us and it is great to see many villagers coming along to have a look, so why not pop along, bring the family and friends.

There will be the customary Mr Ice Cream man, hot meals, drinks and a fantastic array of vintage, classic, American and assorted other supercars making for a great evening

Luke

Beds Classic Car Team



Oakley Gardening Club

Programme from April to September

18th April Beckworth Emporium

17th May. Wrest Park

15th June. Cotton Manor

11th July. Cambridge Botanical Gardens

23rd August. Lamport Hall

12th September. Kathy Browns Garden

October AGM to be arranged

An Email will be sent to all members in due course.

Denise Hookham

Linch Furlong Update

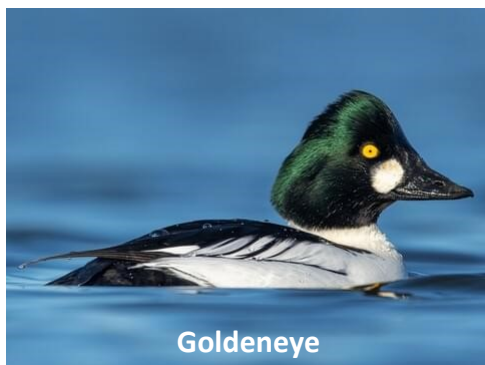


The catkins were fully out in January but because of the wet weather the ground was very wet underfoot. February is very dry and it was pleasure walking there. Sadly no Violets are out yet whereas this time last year there was a carpet of them. The crab apple is budding, the Ash tree has swelling black buds and soon the sloe blossom will appear along the river bank. The birds are singing including the Robin marking its territory. Hopefully the blue tits will start nesting soon. Two black birds are flying in and out of the blackberry vines in the centre of the field presumably building a nest. There are various trails within the grass and the blackberry thorns. Rabbit droppings show that the animals are frequent visitors. I am looking forward to the violet carpet and cowslips by the river and seats. They are already showing their leaves.

Walkers, you can not only visit Linch Furlong, but also follow the path under the viaduct, walk along the river, see the wheat growing and then cross the main road to Browns Wood.

Pat Olney

We have recently had a wonderful spell of calm and sunny weather and the first signs of spring are returning to the park with our first Oystercatcher of the year seen on 10th February (they winter on the coast & come here to breed in the spring) and our first brimstone butterfly on the 15th. The winter aconites and snowdrops have been showy for a while now whilst the daffodils have started flowering.



Goldeneye

The lake still holds some winter wildfowl where there have been up to 6 goldeneye amongst the regulars, with fieldfare and redwings patrolling the grassy areas and woodland for food. During March and April, wintering birds such as fieldfares and redwings will migrate back to their breeding ground on the continent and we will be welcoming our summer migrants like blackcaps and chiffchaffs.



Fieldfare

If anyone is interested in **helping out** in the park, we do lots of practical work on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. You can come for half or a full day, once a week, once a month or all 4 days a week as suits. Please call Ed Green on 01234 720016 or e-mail hocp@bedford.gov.uk

In March, we hope to be planting some hedgerow trees before the planting season is over, we will stop any major habitat works to allow for the nesting season and prepare for the growing season. Looking back, we recently finished laying a 75m section of hedge, we have been filling up the potholes that keep appearing in the bridleway at this time of year, keeping the culvert clear of weed to reduce the risk of flooding, having bonfires and, of course, we have been making sure the trolls by the troll bridge are well fed!!



Redwing

The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park are looking to fill a **voluntary role – Events Officer**, to help organise and administer various events across the year. If you are interested in the role, please call Nina Bransgrove-Knight on 07814 096679 or e-mail nina@theknights.org.uk

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 9th and 23rd March, 6th & 20th April and 4th & 18th May. More

info can be found at <https://hocp.co.uk/get-involved/health-walks/>

Designed by a volunteer and available to buy in the park for £1, we have an **I Spot activity booklet** – ideal for children to take them into different areas of the park & spot various sculptures and wildlife. Points are available for each 'spot' and add them up for a bronze, silver or gold star!

We hope you enjoy your visits to Harrold-Odell Country Park!

Ed Green
Country Park Officer



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oakley *Motorcycle* club

OMC had a busy Winter period with fund raising events starting in December with the OMC General Knowledge Quiz followed by the Xmas Draw which raised over £300 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. On 18th December we held a fancy dress Santa run but due to the icy road conditions it was decided to travel by car rather than two wheels. Undeterred our Santas delivered chocolate selection boxes to vulnerable adults at Lomack House, Kempston and Leonard Cheshire Agate House in Ampthill.



Bike Quiz winning team



The fund raising continued into the New Year with the OMC Bike Quiz on 26th January which raised more money for the EAAA and a donation to OMC Committee member Lizzie Wiggins' sponsored head shave in support of her best friend Sophie Hamilton who has been diagnosed with cancer. Lizzie set up a fund raising page called "Shave it like Soph" and on 2nd February had her head shaved at Oakley Club in aid of Cancer Research UK. This raised £550 cash on the night plus many more donations on the fund raising website taking the total to nearly £9,000!



Sophie and Lizzie

To round off the Winter fund raising Dave and Lesley Brown organised and held the 10th and final Annual Curry Social Night at Indiya Restaurant, The Broadway, Bedford. More than sixty OMC members descended on the location for an evening of quizzes, raffles and challenges all to win a couple of bottles of naff wine!

The evening raised a further £720. The total over the last ten years this has been held is an amazing £6,400 plus raised for the EAAA from this event alone! Many thanks to Dave and Lesley for all their work over the last decade.



OMC are now planning their Spring and Summer evenings and events which again will include our Annual Easter Egg run delivering Easter Eggs to vulnerable adults and children. This will take place on Easter Sunday 9th April.

Here is hoping for a year of decent weather again

Roger "Baysie" Bays Chair - OMC





Oakley Sports & Social Club

Family & Sports Bar

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Situated in the picturesque village of Oakley near Bedford, Oakley Sports & Social Club is a registered charity that is home to AFC Oakley, Oakley Motorcycle Club, Bedfordshire Classic Cars and a lot more.

We offer a large recreational play field, well equipped children's play area, tennis courts & pentanque court.

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HOME OF AFC OAKLEY

Oakley Sports & Social Club is a registered charity who's primary aim is to cater for the local community

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