



Oakley Newsletter



**Summer 2026
Number 107**

Vacancy for Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Oakley Parish Council

Booking Secretary Needed for Village Hall

Village Hall Committee Minute Taker Needed

Good Neighbour Scheme Launched p12 News from Oakley Village Agent p4



Front Page Picture : Peonies in Bloom

Photographer : Bill Chalker

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. Available online at the village website

<http://www.oakleybedford-pc.gov.uk/>

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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The publishing date is 1st Sept 2026

Advertising rates

Colour Advertisements
Quarter page: £30
Half page: £60
Whole page: £120
Four consecutive quarter page adverts - discount 10%
Black & white advert rates are available upon request.

Loose inserts, any size up to A4: £100
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Hello Children

look out for
Eleven more
little ones

Parish Council News

Summer 2026

Dear Resident

We held the annual parish meeting in early April. Thank you to all those that turned out. The meeting gives us a chance to report back to you, the parishioner, on the activity of the Parish Council. Much like any annual appraisal it is good to take stock, review achievements and see if there are areas for improvement.

On your behalf I was pleased to thank all volunteers within the village for their efforts, all councillors for the work they do and our parish Clerk Ann Paice who does a sterling job for all of us.

Now it is a new term for the Parish Council. At the May meeting I was lucky enough to be nominated again to stand as chair and I was delighted to accept. I continue to be supported by Robert Saunders as vice chair and the rest of the Parish Council.

Additionally, we are pleased to say that we have filled our vacancy on the Parish Council, and we offer a warm welcome to villager Amber Hine.

Thank you, Amber for wanting to get involved and giving back to the village.

A few points to bring to residents' attention.

1) **New email addresses.** All parish councillors have [new email addresses](#) which you can see listed in alongside this page. These are Parish Council email addresses and will keep all Parish Council business contained in one space, rather than councillors using their own personal email addresses.

2) **Housing development.** One of the most significant developments coming to fruition now is the housing development on Station Road. The land will be developed by Guinness Housing Trust who wish to build up to 40 homes (subject to planning permission). The proposal is for 21 homes with shared ownership and 19 with social rent (for those people on the Borough Councils waiting list).

Continued on page 3

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Housing development - continued

The Parish Council met with the agents of the site in mid-March to discuss proposed plans and give feedback. Residents have now received a flyer through their door inviting views. Although planning permission still must be granted we did not object to a request that site preparation work may start, although we did request the Borough to consider and impose certain conditions around the site access to minimize issues with the school day. The Trust will shortly be seeking planning permission, and we know that the housing development goes towards fulfilling the quota for Oakley. Unfortunately, we all know that there is significant pressure around this area as school children arrive and leave. We are all too aware that it will increase traffic and parking issues and we do not have any easy solution to that. We are grateful to the residents on the Neighborhood Development Plan Group who support the Parish Council in these matters. [info at stationroadoakley.co.uk]



3) Parking Restrictions In our May meeting we have been asked by the Borough Council to consider parking restrictions in Station Road.

These take the form of “no waiting” restrictions at certain hours the day south of Flax Close and on Station Road just north of Reynes Drive. The reason for these restrictions is that Bedford Borough Council who want to keep the road as clear as possible to allow traffic to pass through safely and to allow better visibility from Flax Close and Reynes Drive.

We did consider and will be talking further at our next meeting about the knock-on traffic effects that this causes because people who can't park on Station Road will probably park on other streets within the village.

If you do drop off children at school time, then is it worth considering if this needs to be done rather than walking? If so, then are you aware that

the car park at the church is open (provided there are no services weddings, funerals etcetera).

In due course work will be done on Lovell Road to enhance the footpath and therefore we'd really encourage pupils who are living in Oakley or Clapham to walk to school.

Pupils who live in Bromham can take advantage of the bus service provided by Bedford Borough Council. The parking as we know causes problems for everyone and you can do your bit wherever possible by supporting walking to school.

4) First Aid in the Village. A resident recently contacted the Parish Council to suggest that we look at a scheme being run by St John's ambulance. Known as **First Aid Village** the project is built on a simple but powerful principle: at least one person on every street is trained and confident in essential life-saving skills. This has been running as a pilot in one village.

As you know, we have several defibrillators within Oakley, but we felt that this was a good suggestion and we want to hear from those interested in learning more. In the pilot session over 61 residents took part over six training sessions, learning how to respond when it matters most.

Participants learned CPR, how to use a defibrillator, how to manage choking and severe bleeding, how to place someone in the recovery position and how to respond to a suspected heart attack. Each household received a window sticker to display, proudly showing they were a first aid household. This helps neighbours quickly identify where help can be found.

This is innovation rooted in people not technology. The residents in the pilot shared how much more prepared they now feel to help someone nearby. This pilot has inspired a wider ambition, and this simple idea is now being rolled out on a much wider basis. Many people will be able to gain the confidence and skills to step in when it matters most and of course this may be in other scenarios than within Oakley village.

We liked the idea and so I'm calling for you: - if you feel inspired you may wish to have a look at the St John's Ambulance pages and read about this pilot and you may like to volunteer.

Please drop a line to the parish clerk as an expression of interest in order that we can see if there are enough volunteers to start this initiative. You can email Ann Paice at parishclerk@oakleybedford-pc.gov.uk

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.

Chairs Report - Continued

5) Youth Club – Challenges and Commitment.

The Youth Club has remained an important and ongoing focus for the Parish Council. As a Council, we recognise how vital youth provision is in Oakley – not only as a safe place for young people to spend time, but also as a positive part of village life that supports families and community cohesion.

Over the past 18 months or so youth club performance has been spasmodic. We found it hard to resource regularly and this year, we have found it difficult to attract young people. As such, we have kept the Youth Club under review, discussed the position openly, and explored other options for management (which proved too expensive to pursue). We have agreed to pause activity for the immediate future and revisit and review the youth club over time to see what provision young people in Oakley need. Accordingly, the Youth Club has not opened after this Easter Break. Thanks to the current team of employees who have worked extremely hard to offer an attractive night out for young people in Oakley.

6) **Communications and the Parish Newsletter.** There is a lot going on in Oakley and the parish newsletter continues to be an effective way of keeping residents informed about council business, village news, and upcoming events. We wish to record thanks to Bill Chalker for his hard work and commitment to producing the newsletter. His contribution has made a genuine difference to

communication within the village, and we are incredibly grateful for his time and effort.

7) **Retirement.** Parish Clerk Ann Paice has decided to retire. She will be leaving at the end of August. Ann has been our Clerk since 2008. Exceptionally experienced she has worked tirelessly on behalf of Oakley. The Parish Council runs smoothly due to her experience and organisational skills. We have been very lucky as a parish to benefit from Ann's expertise, and we are sorry to see her go. On behalf of the whole village of Oakley, we would like to express our appreciation for all that Ann has done.

8) **Parish Clerk Vacancy** As such we are now recruiting for a new Parish Clerk and there is an advert later in the newsletter. If you know of a suitable candidate or would like to apply yourself then please do. (See Page)

9) Parish Council Meetings

As ever, the residents are very welcome to join any parish council meeting - the public open session is at the beginning when you can come and raise topics. Residents can also sit and observe the Parish Council action and stay for the whole meeting.

Thank you as ever for all the good deeds done by many on behalf of the village of Oakley - it makes it a lovely place to live.

Sara Fardon, Chair



Bedford Borough
Council

News from Oakley Village Agent

Village Agents provide a free, confidential service and are here to help people over 60 with a variety of issues – large or small. We are funded by Bedford Borough Council. We are all DBS checked and operate in the strictest confidence. Andrea is the Village Agent for Oakley.

Support with Blue Badges - if you have a permanent disability or illness that limits your walking ability then you may be entitled to apply for a Blue Badge. This enables you to park in disabled bays closer to your destination. You don't have to be a driver to apply, you can use the badge in any vehicle as long as you are a passenger. Andrea can help you apply.

Attendance Allowance – is a non-means tested benefit for people over state retirement age to help with extra costs incurred because of a severe illness, condition or disability. You could get as much as £114.60 per week. Andrea can help you to claim if you think you might qualify.

Disabled toilet access key - Some disabled toilets can only be used by people who have a special RADAR key. If you have a disability that means you need to use a disabled toilet, call Andrea for a free RADAR key

Help with form filling – many people aren't claiming the benefits they are entitled to. Andrea can help identify which benefits you can claim by doing a confidential benefits check. We can also help you fill in those complicated forms such as Attendance Allowance forms, Carer's Allowance (working age people), Council Tax Support and Blue Badges.

Please contact Andrea, your **Village Agent on**

Freephone 0800 039 1234

email: andream@bedsrcc.org.uk

This is an answerphone service, so please leave your name address & telephone number, & we aim to call you back within 48 hours



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Borough Council Report



East West Rail (EWR) Update

EWR has launched its final route-wide public consultation, running from 14th April to 9th June 2026. This is an important opportunity for communities to review the latest plans and provide feedback before final proposals are submitted to Government in 2027.

They are holding a series of public events, webinars and an online consultation portal where residents can view plans and provide feedback. A local event will take place in Bedford on 23 May at King's House, Amphill Road.

What is being proposed:

- A rebuilt Bedford station, including new platforms, improved access, a western entrance, and a public plaza.
- A new station at Bedford St Johns, relocated closer to Bedford Hospital.
- Changes to infrastructure to reduce disruption, including potential avoidance of major bridge works.
- A relocated multi-storey car park to the west of Bedford station (Ford End Road)
- Upgrades to the Marston Vale Line, including fewer, larger stations and improved services.
- A new station at Tempsford, planned earlier than previously expected.
- Up to four trains per hour, with a potential fifth service at peak times.
- Longer trains to meet future demand.
- Use of hybrid electric/battery trains to support environmental goals.

While EWR is presenting updated designs and revised construction plans, the core issues remain unchanged. The Borough council will be considering its response to the consultation at a special meeting on 27th May. Everyone is welcome to go along to listen to the debate or you can watch the live stream on line.

Further information on the consultation can be found here: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/east-west-rail-announces-details-of-final-consultation>.

Flood Risk Management Update

Flood resilience has continued to be a priority across Bedford Borough, with only one property affected by internal flooding during Storm Claudia, and with fewer road and bridge closures this past year. This is in part due to the flood team's

management of the river bank. They have been advising landowners whose property runs beside the river, to keep the area free from debris such as fallen branches and weeds. This is so that when the river floods it is less likely to carry items down stream which in turn then blocks the bridges

For when we do have bad weather, the Council has improved flood warning signs, made road closure updates quicker and clearer, and strengthened how teams work together so communities can get information faster.

In addition, Local community Flood Groups have increased to 11 groups across the Borough. They are supported by the Council with training, equipment and an extra £10,000 of grant funding for additional flood kits.

The Council continues to check planning applications carefully to help make sure new development manages water properly and does not increase flood risk.

Support for residents facing higher heating oil costs

There will be an additional £121,109 boost to the Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund to help households struggling with rising heating oil costs. This extra funding is especially good news for rural communities, where many households rely on heating oil and can be hit hard by sudden price rises.

The Council has identified 549 Bedford Borough residents who rely on oil for heating and hot water, and targeted letters will be issued to help make sure support reaches those most in need. Eligible households will receive a fixed payment of around £220.

Household Support Fund changes

Support for families during the school holidays is changing, as the previous Government-funded (Household Support Grant) food voucher scheme has now ended. There is no replacement Government funding for this available. Despite this, the Council will still provide support for eligible children and families in Bedford Borough.

Children who qualify can access the Council's Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides free holiday activities and a free hot meal at every session.

Families facing genuine hardship can also apply to the Council for support through Local Welfare Provision and Crisis Grants, which can help with essentials such as food, heating and items for children.

Continued on Page 9

OAKLEY JUMBLE TRAIL!

12th JULY

£5 TO ADD YOUR HOUSE TO THE MAP!

Sell all your unwanted things on your doorstep!

SIGN UP BEFORE 21st JUNE!

Held in association with **Oakley Primary Academy PTA**

To join the trail, email:
★ **ebishop2012@hotmail.com** ★

Maps available nearer the time!

OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY QUIZ

Run by Oakley Parish Council and held in Oakley Village Hall

Friday 19 JUNE 2026

Friday 17 JULY 2026

Friday 21 AUGUST 2026

Friday 18 SEPTEMBER 2026

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

Bromham Show 2026

Bromham Show
Bromham's Community Event of the Year

Defying Gravity – freestyle BMX and mountainboarding display

Black Eagles – a trio of acrobats that have performed all over Europe

Wonder Wheelers – weird and wacky bicycles to ride

Plus, many other activities around the field

Sunday 12th July
Gates open from 12.00pm

On the playing field at:
The Village Hall
Village Road
Bromham MK43 8JP

Defying Gravity

WONDER WHEELERS

BLACK EAGLES

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Bedfordshire Police offers a career that gives you the opportunity to make a real difference within the community.

Every day is different. We are a small and busy force that offers a lot of experience due to the wide range of crimes we see compared to other forces in the UK.

You are not just a number at Bedfordshire Police. You will develop with close-knit teams and there will always be someone to support you through the ups and downs of policing.

As a police officer, you will handle things most people never experience in their lives.

Your mental, emotional, and physical capabilities will be tested and you must maintain a professional approach throughout, no matter what the situation.

It's a challenging 24/7 service and you will work a range of shifts, including nights.

You might miss celebrations, birthdays, or holidays, but you will get the satisfaction of working in a job like no other.

You'll be part of a unique organisation, working with inspiring colleagues who understand the risks and rewards of the job.

You'll be highly trained and well-supported throughout your service as you help people through some of the most difficult situations in their life.

You will support victims and witnesses and provide reassurance in your community.

Everyone at Bedfordshire Police takes personal responsibility to help create an inclusive workplace, where police officers and staff respect one another, feel valued for their differences and can be themselves.

We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments, wherever needed so everyone feels welcome and can flourish.

As a frontline officer you could make the difference to someone every day.

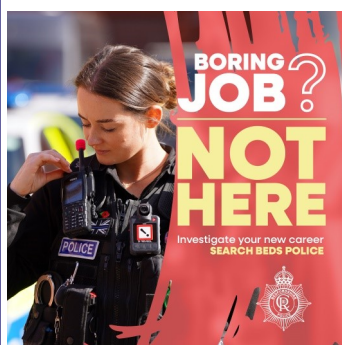
If you think being part of a team that helps to keep the public safe and tackles crime day-to-day is for you, then a role with Bedfordshire Police could be your next career step.

We're recruiting now.

To find out about the different routes into policing and apply to join, visit our website:

www.beds.police.uk

You can also follow us on Facebook by searching Bedfordshire Police for more news and recruitment updates.



Borough Council Report

- Continued



Planning Update: New Government Direction on Major Housing Applications

An important change to the planning system is coming into effect from 11th May 2026 under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2026 that affects planning applications for 150 or more homes. Under the Government's new direction, where a local planning authority is minded to refuse an application of this size, it must first refer the application to the Secretary of State before a decision can be issued. What this means is:

Applications for 150+ homes would require Government sign-off before refusal, giving Whitehall greater ability to overturn refusals.

Councils cannot issue a refusal until at least 21 days after notifying Government, introducing delays and an additional layer of national oversight.

This will restrict councillors' ability to scrutinise planning applications and create a system where decisions are increasingly controlled nationally.

While the Council will continue to assess applications against planning policy and local considerations, this change means that some decisions, particularly refusals, will now be subject to further review beyond the local authority.

Bedford Athletics Stadium

In April the Council celebrated the official opening of the new track at Bedford Athletics Stadium. Funded by Bedford Borough Council in partnership with GLL, it means high level athletics can return to the Borough.

The new track is already being put to good use by young athletes and after the facilities were assessed by the UK Athletics, competitive events can now return to the stadium.

Bedford Park Bandstand

After being out of use for more than 10 years, Bedford Park's historic bandstand has now been beautifully restored. This investment by the Council, in one of Bedford's most treasured public assets, means that residents can once again enjoy the bandstand for music and community events for years to come.

Town Centre Update

Part of the former Beales unit, which has been vacant, is set to come back into use as it becomes the home of a new dance and performing arts facility, helping to bring fresh energy and activity into the town centre. This will make better use of

an empty unit, improve the look and feel of the area, and support wider use of nearby spaces such as the Corn Exchange during quieter times.

Support for Unpaid Carers

Bedford Borough Council is working with two new partners, Mobilise and Blue Sky Carers Support, to improve support for unpaid carers across the borough.

Mobilise offers free digital support, including practical online resources, wellbeing information, benefits guidance, online group sessions, and one-to-one support calls with a carers coach.

Blue Sky Carers Support provides face-to-face advice and guidance for adult carers, including support for those who may not be confident using digital services. It will also continue the Bedford Hospital Carers' Hub, offering help in a safe and confidential setting when loved ones are admitted to hospital.

Carers will also be able to access the Blue Sky Social Care Card, which can help them identify themselves as a carer and access practical benefits from participating businesses.

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

We are always looking for more families to help look after our most vulnerable children. A home environment rather than an institution, gives them the best chance of overcoming any trauma or loss they may have experienced.

The Borough Council supports our own carers with a scheme called Mockingbird which aims to provide a community of carers who can offer respite care, advice and a friend to call on whenever you need it. See our new web page for more information on this <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/mockingbird> Bedford Borough Council also offers help with Council tax charges and subsidised entry to our leisure facilities along with all of the usual support you receive as a foster parent.

If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@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.

Facebook @CllrJaneWalker.

Jon Abbott 07784 549180

Email: jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com

Facebook: Clapham & Oakley Liberal Democrats

Booking Secretary needed for Oakley Village Hall

The Village Hall needs a volunteer to help with managing the hires. The role includes checking our phone and email, and confirming details on a simple system.



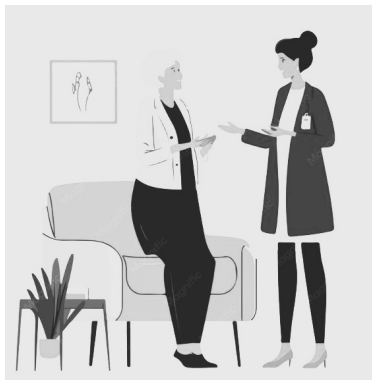
If you might be interested in this, please contact Julia Nicholas via oakleyvillagehall@gmail.com to find out more.

Oakley Village Hall is used by so many people throughout the month. Here is a listing of some of our regular groups – they would be very pleased to hear from you if you're interested in finding out more. We also have Monday sessions in Line Dancing and in Pilates

Activity	When	Contact
Baby & Toddler group	Wednesday morning	Instagram/Facebook Tums, Bums and Walking ones; 07444061604
Under 5s Play & Learn	2 nd Monday morning of the month	www.familyhubs.bedford.gov.uk admin@ecpbedford.org 0300 323 0245
Bowls (indoor)	Wednesday evening	07773 970771; jet.jthomas@googlemail.com
Dance – ballet & other	Monday, Tuesday & Thursday evening	Miss Holly's School of Dance 07840 492178; misshollysdance@gmail.com http://www.misshollyschoolofdance.co.uk
Music 4 Memory (Tibbs Dementia Foundation)	Thursday morning	jeni@tibbsdementia.co.uk
Quiz (monthly)	3rd Friday night of the month	richworker@hotmail.co.uk
Sound bath	4th Sunday of each month	Mindlight Sound Bath 07848855570 & 01234 405024 berni@mindlightmeditation.com ;
Tai Chi (run though U3a)	Tuesday morning	https://bedford.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/tai-chi/
Yoga (Chair-based yoga)	Friday morning	Sarah Westbrook – 07702898773 sarahwyoga79@gmail.com

Companionship, Connection and Support

Do you have a family member who lives alone and would benefit from a friendly visit during the day?



I offer companionship and support, whether it's a chat over a cup of tea, a game of Scrabble, or a helping hand with light cleaning or gardening—bringing connection and reassurance to each day.

Based in Oakley, I visit locally and in surrounding villages. I hold a fully enhanced DBS for adults and children.

If you or a loved one could benefit from a little extra support, please get in touch—I'd love to have a chat about how I can help.

Get in touch to find out more!

Email: beckysouthern2905@gmail.com
or 07715822824

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Oakley Good Neighbours Scheme Launched

We have made great progress in working to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme in Oakley with the support of the Parish Council and a team of volunteers from the village.





The scheme launched in March, offering local residents help with hospital or doctor appointments, small gardening/DIY job, collecting prescriptions and companionship. We have a team of volunteers who are insured and DBS checked.


As you can see the Launch was opened by the Lord-Lieutenant Susan Lousada and attended by the organising Committee, Telephone Handlers and the Volunteers. We would also like to thank members of the Bromham Good Neighbours Scheme who supported the event and answered some of questions of their three years experience of running their group.


Do YOU need help?

Good Neighbour volunteers can help with

 Lifts to hospital / doctor appointments

  Small gardening / DIY jobs

 Collecting prescriptions

 Have a chat with a volunteer

YES? Call us on : 07761 665314 Line is open Mon-Fri (10am - 3pm)

Anything one neighbour might do for another.

All volunteers are insured and have a DBS check.

Minute-taker needed for Oakley Village Hall

Oakley Village Hall is looking for a new Secretary to join the Committee. The role involves taking minutes at meetings, and helping run the Hall.



For more information, please contact the current Secretary, Ruth Bender, via oakleyvillagehall@gmail.com

Pioneering, police stations, pancakes and... *phaseout*

Since the last village newsletter, Oakley Cub Scouts have taken part in archery, learning how to tie different knots, and pioneering, including playing a human knot game! We've had lots of messy fun with our science experiments, including making a cola fountain and blowing up a balloon with baking powder and vinegar. Pancake night didn't quite go to plan. More pancake making practice is needed before next year's attempt.

One of the highlights of recent activities was a fantastic look behind the scenes at Milton Keynes police station. We even got to have a look at the cells! The police officer who showed us around came along to our Cub evening the following week to teach us lifesaving CPR.

Three more of our amazing Cubs have achieved their Chief Scout's Silver Award. A very well done to them!

As ever, all these activities take a lot of time for the Leaders to organise and supervise, to ensure all the Cubs have great fun and are safe. Extra help, however small the amount, would help us to continue running these activities and would also allow us to reopen the Beaver and Scout sections, once thriving in the village.

But here is the sad truth...

Without more adult helpers, we are under the very real threat of losing ALL Scouting in the village! That would mean our children having to travel further or losing out on valuable life skills and a lot of fun. Of the 2500 or so people living in Oakley, apparently about 1600 are between 19 and 74 years of age. All we need, to keep Scouting in Oakley, is about 6 people. And we need them now! The entry requirement... be over 18 years old. If you can, please help.

To explore volunteering opportunities with Oakley Scout Group, from becoming a leader, assistant leader, trustee or occasional help behind the scenes, please do have a chat with Janet, on 07758 872172 or at janetscoutbits@outlook.com. Many hands make light work!

Scouts 
Oakley (Bedford)



The Oakley Show 6th Sept



We are busy preparing for this year's Show and look forward to seeing you on the 6th September with all of your entries. You should

receive your Show programme along with this newsletter but please let us know if you haven't and we will get one to you. We are grateful to Whites ES Ltd and RJ Roofing Ltd for sponsoring our programme this year and to Milton Ernest Garden Centre for providing the prize vouchers.

We will have the mini craft fair again this year which has proved to be very popular. There will also be a raffle for prizes donated by local Oakley businesses and the chance to buy some lovely local produce in the auction. Even if you don't want to enter anything you can always come to see what has been entered and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and some lovely cake while you are there.

We are also pleased to announce that Nikki Fox from BBC TV has kindly agreed to present the prizes again this year.

David Exon won the Best In Show trophy for the first time in 2025 and he has written some words about the show for us:

"I have tried to support the show by entering exhibits since it relaunched in 2016 . It's never really been about the winning, its about supporting the show by entering what I can. I also try to encourage my grandchildren to enter things they might have made or painted. The more entries there are the better the show. If I win a category or two that is of course great.

I have had a half plot on the Oakley allotment site since 2019 when I retired. I would not regard myself as any sort of expert, I took it on just for a bit of fun. Some things grow, some things don't. Every year is different, What grew well last year might not grow well this year. Sometimes there are mishaps! I planned to enter some nice sweet corn in last year's show, the cobs were ripening nicely – Then the Parakeets stripped every one of them! I like to try and enter something in as many categories as I can. If you don't enter anything you're guaranteed not to get any points, enter something and you might. Even if you think "Oh my courgettes are not very good" – give it as go, chances are no one else's courgettes are much different.

Here are some (I can't give them all away!) of the tricks I've learned over the years:

If you're entering a group of something it's not about the biggest its more about finding a matching set, size, colour, etc. My carrots were all rather small last year.

Think about how to best present each entry. I try to place my entries on an appropriately sized white china plate. (don't forget to collect up your plates before they get auctioned off!)

Nice neat labels detailing the variety etc are helpful. I type mine.

If entering art work, you might be surprized how much better it looks when mounted and framed.

Remember that you can enter two items in each category, so why not do so. Doubles your chances, and, the more entries the better the show!

So come on, don't be shy, give it a go, enter something. Get your kids to enter something. Get your Mum to enter something. Its all about supporting the community."

Great advice there from David, let's hope that he has plenty of competition this year and maybe we will see another new name on the trophy.

You can follow us on our Facebook page 'Oakley Show' or telephone 07778 537427 if you have any questions or suggestions.

Oakley Show Committee



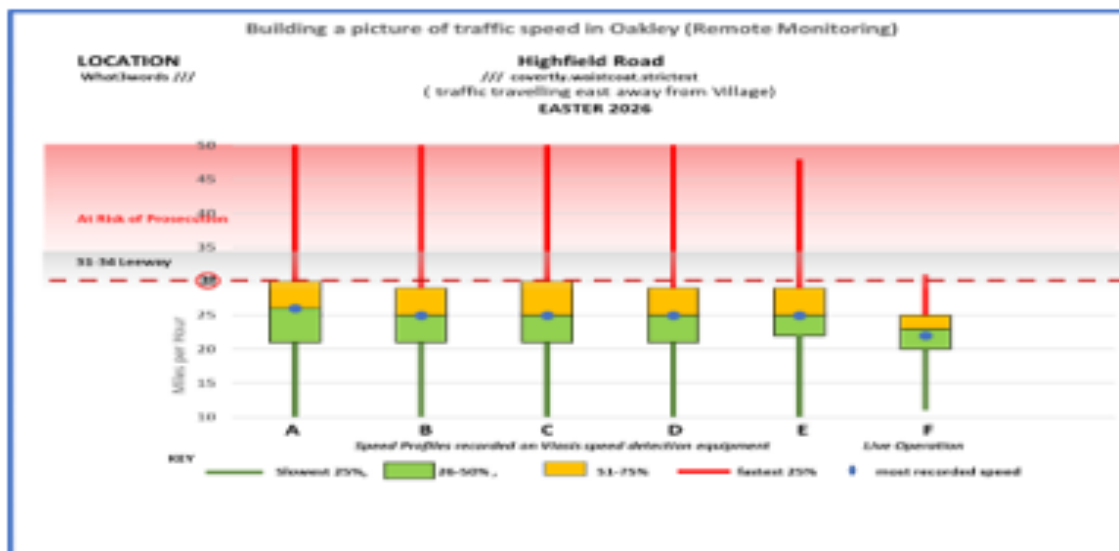
Since our last report we have completed operations in Reynes Drive and Pavenham Road where the speeds observed were much the same as before. We often wonder how representative what we see on our operations is regarding what happens when we are not there. We

reported last time on some early data collected from the Viacount equipment in the High Street and how it would need new batteries before we could continue on our research surrounding speeds 24/7 in the various locations using the new posts already erected around the village. Whilst awaiting these batteries we took a look at the speeds of traffic departing the village at the mid-point of Highfield Road, (between the crossroads and the by-pass roundabout) during the Easter weekend.

COUNT	2568	2532	2113	2180	148	186
31-34	330	296	249	227	16	1
31-34%	12.9	11.7	11.8	10.4	10.8	0.5
35+	285	227	208	196	14	0
35+	11.1	9.0	9.8	9.0	9.5	0.0
<=14	121	106	116	105	6	7
<=14 %	4.7	4.2	5.5	4.8	4.1	3.8
	A	B	C	D	E	F

The first 4 columns of the table above, A,B,C, and D show results on Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday. Results showing that of 9,393 vehicles, one in eight exceeded the limit up to 34mph and 1 in 12 would be likely to be subject to prosecution must be a matter of concern.

We thought it would be interesting to see the degree to which these results would be reflected in one of our operations. So, on Tuesday 7th between 1445 and 1545, we mounted a live operation (Column F) to compare it with the same period the previous day (Column E).



This graph gives a good visual indication of a) the effectiveness of Speedwatch operations in slowing traffic and b) how important it is for us to

collect 24hour data of speeds around the village, having noted maximum speeds in excess of 55mph on each day and a recorded 68mph on Easter Monday. It is also concerning that the average speed over Easter was 25.5mph compared to 23.5 in January 2024.

Now we have the batteries we are set to move the Viacount speed recorder around the various locations of the new poles provided by the Parish Council and will report back over the next months.

Several individuals have expressed concerns that the speed data display sometimes flashes whilst in the 40 limit by Highfield Park. We use ways of ignoring such data which are too complicated to explain here but if you are interested in how we do this please let me know.

Paul Phillips – Speedwatch Co-ordinator

Phantom Sprayer

Unfortunately, I do not walk a far as I used to, but seeing a few nasty piles on my travels recently I thought with summer approaching I should once again appeal to dog owners to pick up bag and bin their dog's messes.



Firstly, I should thank those that do pick up as that is a great contribution to keeping our Village clean and healthy, and from what I have seen it is much better that it used to be.

But with summer approaching and longer country walks, I appeal to you that you keep up that habit even when in the fields and country foot-paths. Please do not forget, if your children walk the dog, then show them how to pick up and tell them about the red bins or black rubbish bins to dispose of the bag.



Please make your mantra – BAG it and BIN IT

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Down Memory Lane

The Oakley Witch

I must admit to feeling a bit of a fraud again. Having written about the Oakley Mill in the last edition of this Newsletter I am now writing another article where I cannot include any personal memories. Mind you I am grateful for that as you will understand if you read on !!!

Britain has a dark history of witch trials and executions of women believed to be practising witchcraft. In England, witch trials were conducted from the 15th century until the 18th century and at the most intense during the English Civil War (1642–1651) and the Puritan era of the mid-17th century. In 1722 the last woman to be legally executed for witchcraft, Janet Horne, was burned to death in Scotland. The "1735 Witchcraft Act" ended the legal prosecution for practicing witchcraft with the crime being classed as fraud or deception rather than witchcraft.

While this should have ended the suffering, the practice of persecuting women for supposed witchery continued. In 1735, the year of the new Act, a witch "trial" took place in Oakley becoming one of the most disturbing incidents in Bedfordshire's history. It wasn't an official court trial but a "local mob test" showing how strong rural superstition still was.

News of the incident made it all the way to America where it featured in a letter published in *The Virginia Gazette*. It described the people of Oakley as "prejudiced in the belief of witches".

According to the letter a married, unnamed Oakley woman aged over 60 had long been under suspicion of witchcraft. She decided to clear her name and agreed to be "ducked", meaning she would be stripped naked, tied up and thrown in water. If she sank, she was deemed innocent, if she floated she would be guilty. The spot selected for her trial by parish officers was by the river Mill that I covered in my last article. Despite the village population being no more than 200, 500 spectators were present. She was tied up in a wet sheet, her face left uncovered, her feet and hands tied together, and a rope was fastened round her body. *The Virginia Gazette* reported that "she was thrown in she floated; tho' her head was all the while under water. She was in the water about one minute and a half; and was then taken out half drown'd; when she had recovered breath, the experiment was repeated twice more. She floated each time; which was a plain demonstration of guilt to the ignorant multitude".



The Virginia Gazette reported that "she was thrown in she floated; tho' her head was all the while under water. She was in the water about one minute and a half; and was then taken out half drown'd; when she had recovered breath, the experiment was repeated twice more. She floated each time; which was a plain demonstration of guilt to the ignorant multitude".



Spectators shouted "A witch! Drown her! Hang her!". She was shown little compassion or pity but her persecutors proposed to try her by another experiment, that of weighing her against a Church Bible, a common English practice for suspected witches during the 1700's. Based on the belief that witches were unnaturally light, if the accused was heavier than the bible, they were innocent, if lighter, they were guilty.

She was weighed against the Oakley Church Bible, which weighed about twelve pounds. Not surprisingly she was heavier and, therefore in theory, innocent. However, some of the villagers, including the Vicar, still believed she was a witch but fortunately records show that nothing further happened and no record of her being legally punished afterwards.

The practice of 'swimming' witches continued even though a belief in witchcraft was already declining with reports showing a woman being "tried" as a witch in 1825. Indeed our village story was featured again as late as 16 January 1892 in the *Bedfordshire Times* under the headline "TESTING WITCHES AT OAKLEY IN 1735" which referenced an article from W. C. Sydney's *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century* published in 1891. The event that happened in Oakley is remembered as one of the last examples of a "witch test" carried out by villagers in England.

Richard Worker

Oakley Village Monthly Quiz

The monthly quizzes continue to be extremely well supported so many thanks to all those who attend. February marked the end of the Parish Council Financial Year. Although not the primary aim of the quizzes we were pleased to announce, that due to the great support received, once again a fantastic annual profit of £**2928** was raised. A year-on-year increase of £369. At Christmas we donated £200 to each of the Day Centre and the Home for the Disabled in the High Street. In March the balance of £2528 was donated to AFC Oakley Junior Football, Methodist Messy Church, St Mary's Messy Church, Air Training Corps, Oakley Brownies and Rainbows and Oakley Scouts and Cubs. All received £400. We were also able to make a small donation of £128 to the Oakley Good Neighbour Scheme which launched on 24 March. Our use of the Village Hall has also contributed £588 to their finances. At the March Quiz it was our pleasure to present cheques to representatives from the group's mentioned, see photograph.

In terms of the quizzes themselves the February winners were "*The Village People*" who won for the first time. "*The Avengers*" secured a tie break win to emerge as victors in March and "*The Green Team*" won by two points in April. All three teams are pictured.

Remember anyone can enter the quiz to have a great time and catch up with friends and neighbours. A genuine, fantastic community spirit is always guaranteed. The next **FOUR** quizzes will be held on: **19 June, 17 July, 21 August and 18 September**. If anyone wishes to enter a team, maximum 6 people, then please email me at richworker@hotmail.co.uk Richard Worker

**"The Village People" –
Winners of the February Quiz**



**"The Avengers" –
Winners of the March Quiz**



**"The Green Team" –
Winners of the April Quiz**



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Vacancy for Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Oakley Parish Council

Part-time Parish Clerk: 14 hours per week to be worked flexibly, mainly from home but working in The Old School in Oakley for four hours, one day per week.

Oakley Parish Council seeks a highly motivated and enthusiastic person to take on the post of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer. Our current Clerk will step down on 31st August 2026.

The successful candidate will be employed for 14 hours per week to be worked on a flexible basis, including attendance in person at the monthly Parish Council meeting which is held in the evening on the first Tuesday of the month at Oakley Village Hall and Neighbourhood Plan and other meetings as and when required.

The role of the Clerk is to ensure that the Council conducts its administrative functions and services professionally and in accordance with all relevant statutory obligations. The Clerk is the main point of contact for all other authorities, contractors, suppliers and the public and plays an important role in Council meetings.

Duties will include, but are not limited to:

Acting as an impartial advisor to the Parish Council;

Arranging and attending Parish Council and other meetings including preparing agendas, meeting papers, taking minutes and undertaking all actions arising from the meeting;

Providing legal, procedural and administrative guidance to the Council;

Receiving and dealing with enquiries and all correspondence from members of the public and other bodies;

Liaising with Councillors, outside bodies and residents as required;

Management of budget, day to day finances, payment of invoices, management of online banking, production of monthly financial and budgeting reports for the Council;

Preparing the Annual Accounts for audit and completion of statutory returns as required; and

Management of Council staff and assets.

The ideal candidate will have the following skills and experience:

The applicant to hold a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) or be prepared to obtain the qualification;

A good understanding of Local Council administration and the legal framework;

Competent use of email, Microsoft Office, Word and Excel;

A high degree of literacy and numeracy;

Excellent written and verbal communication skills; and

Very good organisational skills.

Terms and Conditions

Remuneration will be in accordance with National Local Government Pay Scales LC2 depending on qualifications and experience.

For more information, please contact Ann Paice on 07873 887370 or email her at parishclerk@oakleybedford-pc.gov.uk

To apply, please send your CV along with a short covering note and your contact details to parishclerk@oakleybedford-pc.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is Friday 26th June 2026 and interviews will be held shortly afterwards

BRING TROPICAL COLOURS TO YOUR GARDEN THIS SUMMER

Although summer in England can be hot we are unlikely to reach the temperature and rainfall of tropical regions where most flowers are brilliantly coloured. However we can create similar spectacles by selecting plants that together give a tropical feel to our gardens but will happily grow in our climate.



Alstromerias produce nonstop flowers from June to October in a vast range of bright hot colours. A gorgeous new variety to look out for is Indian Summer. It has vivid orange outer petals and yellow inner with striking dark markings.



Dahlias are lovely perennials which although subject to frost damage if planted six inches deep in the ground and covered with thick mulch in winter will survive and thrive. By continually cutting the flowers for indoor displays encourages more flowers. Strawberry Bon Bon and Amazon are two stunning small decorative varieties while Bishop of Lancaster is bright red.

Crocasmias produce vibrant flowers growing well in sun or shady places in normal well drained soil and are pest and disease free. They flower from July until a really hard frost often into December. The

These two pages are published as a Thank You to the Milton Ernest Garden Centre for their support with the Prizes at the Oakley Show



dazzling range of colours becomes more and more tropical. Columbus and Buttercup are both good shining golden yellow varieties with Emily Mckenzie a dramatic orange with red centres.



Rudbeckias are very hardy daisy like flowers which are also very easy to grow in normal well drained soil in full sun. There are annual and perennial types and if the annual seeds are sown in March they will be flowering by July until October. The vibrant yellow and orange flowers are now accompanied by new red varieties like Cherry Brandy. Butterscotch is the honey orange colour that the name suggests.

Canna Lilies are perhaps the most tropical plants we can grow. Flowering from July onwards when the foliage turns yellow and droops down stop watering and allow the plant to dry completely to over winter successfully. Protect with a thick layer of mulch and start watering and feeding again the following. Tropicana Black is a must variety to grow with the electrifying contrast of the orange flowers and very dark purple leaves.

Milton Ernest Garden Centre

~ Upcoming events ~

- Car Boot Sales

First Saturday of each
month

- Dog Show

Sun 20th September,
11am - 4pm

- 1940's Day

Sun 12th July
11am - 4pm

- 'Yarnaholics
Anonymous'

Work through current crafty
projects, or just come for a chat
and a stitch!

- Horticultural Show

Sat 29th August,
Registration from 9am

Second Thursday of
every month
2pm - 4pm

For more information please refer to our website-
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Locals with Interesting Lives - Hazel Moir

The support we don't talk about after birth

By Hazel Moir, Midwife & Founder of The Bedford Birth & Wellbeing Co.

When I brought my own baby home, I remember thinking - why does no one really talk about this part? Not the birth. Not the hospital. But the quiet days and weeks afterwards.

As a midwife, I had supported many women through pregnancy and birth.

But even I felt the shift when the visits slowed and the reality of new motherhood gently settled in.

The world carries on as normal, but everything has changed.

In a time where families are often more spread out, those early weeks can feel both tender, and at times, overwhelming.

It's something I've seen time and again; women doing their very best while adjusting to a completely new rhythm of life, often with less support than they truly need.

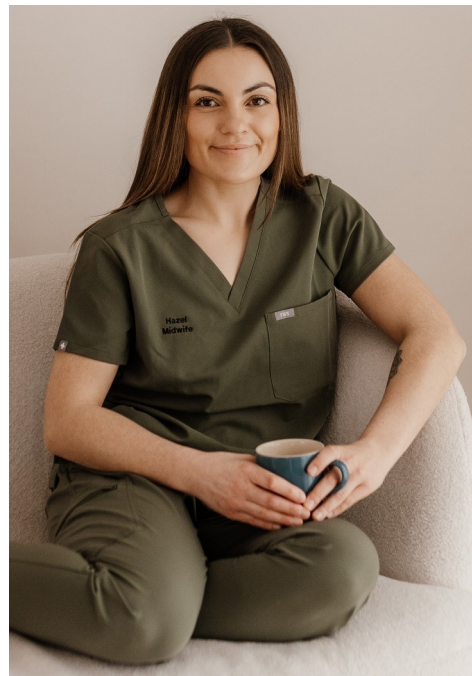
That experience is what led me to create The Bedford Birth & Wellbeing Co here in Oakley.

A way of bringing thoughtful, reliable support into those early weeks at home; in a way that feels steady and well considered.

I work with a small number of families at a time, alongside a carefully selected team, so that care remains personal and consistent.

Everything is designed to help those early weeks feel calmer, more supported, and easier to move through.

Perhaps it's simply about returning to something we've always known - that mothers were never meant to do this part alone.



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I'll try my best to keep everyone updated with what's left in the shed on facebook, but you've got to be quick – once it's gone, it's gone! It's gone!

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A piece of cake not enough? Why not order a whole chocolate toothpaste, Victoria sponge, carrot cake, red velvet, chocolate fudge cake, old school cake – message me for details

Thank you all for your support
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SUMMER 2026

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

TRUSTEE REQUIRED

Our day centre is looking for a new Trustee. For details contact our chair at andrea@virgo-associates.co.uk

ACTIVITIES

Clients have been carrying out various activities which have included making Greeting Cards, decorating Terracotta pots for planting, Easter Display Kits and painting Tea Pots.

Clients also took part in games week which included Darts, Pool, Dominoes, Card Games, Scrabble, Skittles, Bagatelle and Connect Four!

Kempston Hammers Community Choir came to sing for us in April. They are a fantastic support to our centre and clients love to have a sing along to some old classics.

It has been an incredibly exciting period for Oakley Sports & Social Club, most notably with the completion of our extension and full refurbishment project. Beginning at the end of November 2025 and completed at the start of March 2026, the project transformed the Club whilst requiring closure for just a single day – a remarkable achievement. We celebrated the completion with a packed Grand Opening event, complete with live music – and apologies once again for briefly interrupting everyone's enjoyment with my speech!

The World Cup is also shaping up to be a huge occasion at the Club this year, with all England matches shown across our five screens. Even with the additional space, we still expect England fixtures to reach capacity, with attendance operating on a members-only, first-come, first-served basis. Memberships will be checked on entry and at the bar. Let's hope football finally comes home – without putting us through penalties first.

We have also launched a new "Saturday Sessions" initiative, bringing free live entertainment to members on the first Saturday of each month, starting on Saturday 6th June with vocalist Lyndsey Crosby performing from 6pm.

Looking ahead, our members-exclusive School's Out event returns on 17th July and continues to grow each year. This year we will be joined by saxophonist Mr Stixx, performing Ibiza classics whilst children enjoy the bouncy castles and families kick off the summer holidays.

Oakfest26 then arrives over 29th – 30th August. Saturday's RnB & Garage themed event is headlined by internationally renowned DJ Spoony – one



Oakley Sports & Social Club **Family & Sports Bar**

of the pioneering names of UK Garage, former member of the legendary Dreem Teem and a BBC Radio presenter who helped bring the genre into the mainstream. Tickets go on sale from the start of June. Sunday then switches pace with Soul Sunday – a free members-exclusive event featuring Sophia Soul and Soul DJs, with street food and entertainment for all the family.

Our Fireworks event returns on 7th November and continues our ambition of bringing nationally recognised entertainment to Oakley. Following Baby D last year, we are proud to welcome Sweet Female Attitude as our headline act. Their iconic hit Flowers reached No.2 in the UK charts and became one of the defining songs of the UK Garage era. They will be joined by club favourites; singer Cameo, and Hollie Marie & Tom on Sax, plus our fireworks and laser displays.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who continues to support Oakley Sports & Social Club – our members, volunteers, committee, local businesses and wider community. Your support continues to help us grow and strive to make Oakley Sports & Social Club one of the very best social clubs in Bedfordshire – and perhaps even a little beyond.

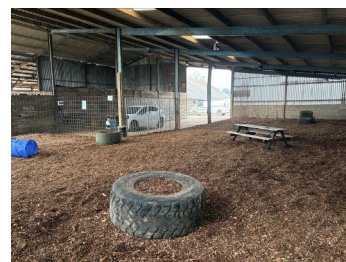
Robbie Bays OSSC & ORA Chair
On behalf of the

Oakley Sports & Social Club Committee

Oakley Dog Barn: New Indoor Dog Play Barn Opens in Oakley

We are thrilled to announce the opening of Oakley Dog Barn at College Farm, Oakley, Bedfordshire, MK43 7RX. A new indoor dog play barn which is open Monday to Sunday from 6am until 9pm.

Step into an innovative world where indoor dog parks are redefining pet leisure. The beauty of the concept is consistent play opportunities for your dog, regardless of the weather! The secure dog barn features a 1.8-metre-high fencing which allows your pet to play in a controlled setting.



The indoor dog play barn is great for a variety of dog owners, but especially for those who would like to...

Train their dog in a controlled, weather proof environment. Let their dog off a lead in a secure environment which is not possible otherwise. Be able to exercise their dog for longer than they are currently able. Exercise their dog in a well-lit, safe environment instead of walking their dog in the dark before or after work. Allow their dog to play with other dogs in a controlled environment. Let their dog play regardless of the weather. Increase their dogs exercise routine

Our indoor dog play facility offers a secure, controlled environment that supports the overall well-being of your dogs. By situating our play space in a barn, pet owners can ensure that their dogs remain safe from unpredictable weather and high traffic areas.

For more information then please visit <https://oakleydogbarn.co.uk/>

Laura Saunders

Run for Emmaus Village Carlton at Bedford Running Festival and Bedford Charity Chase!

Homelessness charity Emmaus Village Carlton is thrilled to announce it has been chosen as a charity partner for both the Bedford Running Festival and the Bedford Charity Chase – both being held in September 2026.

This is an incredible opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of people who have experienced homelessness by running at these fantastic community events and supporting the charity.

Emmaus Village Carlton provides people with a home, individual support, training and work opportunities within a community setting, giving them the opportunity to regain lost self-esteem and rebuild their lives after homelessness.

The charity is appealing for support at both events to help them make a real difference for people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness, in Bedfordshire and beyond.

The charity invites supporters to get involved in two ways:

Take part in the events

The Bedford Running Festival

Whether you're a seasoned runner or a first-time participant, there are races for every level. Distances at the Bedford Running Festival include the Bedford 5K, Twilight 10K, Bedford Half Marathon and a 20-mile race.

As well as the running distances, there will be live music, a bar, food, kids' activities and festivities across the weekend from 5-6 September in Russell Park, Bedford. Don't forget to visit the Emmaus Village Carlton charity stand at the event and say hello! Every step taken will help raise awareness and vital funds to support people who have experienced homelessness.

The Bedford Charity Chase

The Bedford Charity Chase is a 5-mile run for everyone – from club runners chasing a personal best to those taking their first steps in an organised event. The run starts and finishes at the Wild Camping Field on the Turvey House Estate on Sunday 27 September 2026.

This isn't just a run it's a celebration of community spirit. With the beautiful backdrop of Turvey House, the event will once again feature local business stalls, delicious refreshments and entertainment throughout the morning.

As well as Emmaus Village Carlton, the charities benefiting from this event are Creating Memories and The Road Victims Trust.

Sponsor the Emmaus Village Carlton team

If running isn't your thing, you can still make an impact by sponsoring Emmaus Village Carlton's team of runners. Your support will contribute directly to helping those in need and will give their team the motivation to cross the finish line with pride.

Donna-Louise and fellow runners from Emmaus Village Carlton got into stride ahead of September's events at Saturday's Harrold Pit Run. Joined by volunteer Richard and companions Luke and Mike, the group tackled the three-mile course through Harrold and the surrounding countryside.

If you would like to run for Emmaus Village Carlton, or sponsor their team, please email: office@emmausvc.org



For more details on Bedford Running Festival, click here: <https://www.bedfordrunfest.co.uk/>

For more details on the Bedford Charity Chase, click here: <https://thebedfordcharitychase.org/>

Emmaus Village Carlton are hoping to make September 2026 a month to remember – running, fundraising and changing lives!

North Beds Ramblers

North Beds Ramblers Walk every Saturday:

Please note change of start time for afternoon walks – Winter start 13:00

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

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729 Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

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

June Walks

4th Evening, Northill, 5 miles

6th am "Ramble", Sorry no Ramble this month, pm Amphill West Car Park, 6 miles,

13th am Pegsden Hills, 11 miles, pm Wootton Village Hall, 6.5 miles

18th Evening, Bedford Bridges, 5 miles

20th pm Great Denham, 7 miles, Birthday walk No 6

27th am Castle Ashby, 11.5 miles, pm Stony Stratford, 7 miles

July Walks

2nd Evening, Biddenham, 4.5 miles

4th am "**Ramble**", **Stagsden** 5 miles, pm Stagsden, 6.5 miles, Birthday walk No 7

11th am Ravensden – three walks available, 8.6, 6 and 4.5 miles

16th Evening, Maulden Woods, 5 miles

18th pm Riseley, 7.5 miles,

25th am Fotheringhay, 12 miles, pm Woburn Sands, 6.5 miles

16th Evening, Mowsbury Park, 5 miles

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Oakley Allotments

The wind at North and East
Was never good for man nor beast
So never think to cast a clout
Until the month of May be out

Published in F. K. Robertson's Whitby Gazette in 1855

Often shortened to, "Ne'er cast a clout 'til May is out", this old saying is still quoted as a salutary warning to not be too hasty with your planting-out, just in case late frosts sabotage your efforts.

The message is clear, but the details have been the subject of many lively discussions: is "May" referring to the month or to hawthorn blossom...and, what is a "clout"?

Well, this year has demonstrated that the month of May is the safer interpretation – this May we have seen temperatures as low as minus 1.5 degrees C in our allotment polytunnel; neighbouring allotments have seen potatoes and other early plantings frostbitten. Some plants might recover, but some will be ruined.

I used to think that "clout" might refer to a clod of earth, but a clout is a coat or warm clothing. So, there it is, all explained, and nothing about it refers directly to gardening at all.

This issue's contribution is from a fellow gardener in a different location:-

I've had an allotment for quite a number of years now and watched a number of people over the years take on a plot. Here's the scenario of a one year plot holder. (Where I am the plot is given to you with the ground turned over).

Everyone starts off with lots of optimism: here's the lovely sight of bare ground, so what can I do? Week 2 they come back to their plot. Lots of tiny weeds. The ground was turned over, that means anything on the plot is buried in the ground. A bit of rain and those weed seeds are away.

I'm going to create raised beds! Ah, but the cost of purchasing compost is going to be a kicker. With the cost of the plot for a year and now the cost of the compost will this still be cheaper than the supermarket? Hmmm.

Lots of new tools purchased. We are not allowed sheds or greenhouses, so you need to bring them back and forth or buy a box to store them.

Hey ho, we've sown our seeds, cleared ground again and in the plants go or perhaps they have bought those tiny sprinkles of seedlings, shivering in the garden centre. Not read the back of the



seed packets, not thought about last frost. (I'm in Guernsey so actually that was some time back.)

Frost hits. That's them all dead. Ah, but those hardy weeds didn't worry about it.

Ground cleared, start again.... So finally stuff is growing but the realisation hits that this is hard work.

Summer holidays off we go for two weeks in the sun. Guess what, suns baking here and those plants are ready for harvest. The beans are groaning under the weight, the ten courgette plants are now marrows. By September you've had enough. It's hard work, you've got gluts of stuff you don't really like and that's it. They walk away.

The one thing they forgot is that having an allotment is a marathon, a way of life and never ever a sprint. Its also a reflection of life. There are ups and downs, there are failures and the joy of finding the slugs have left you one strawberry!

The ones that stay have learnt to relax, take pleasure in what they are doing, grow only what they want to eat and understand that ten courgette plants are enough to feed a street. Each year they learn the seasons without even realising it.

Not everything will work and don't believe anyone who says they don't have failures, they have and still do.

Good luck to you!

We have just enjoyed some rain, much needed after a good period of drought here, whilst all around us other parts of the country are receiving a fairly good rainfall. I'm left wondering what I will be able to report in the next issue...

We have a waiting-list of six at the moment, three are from neighbouring villages. Oakley residents will get priority if/when allotments become available.

Steve Nicholas

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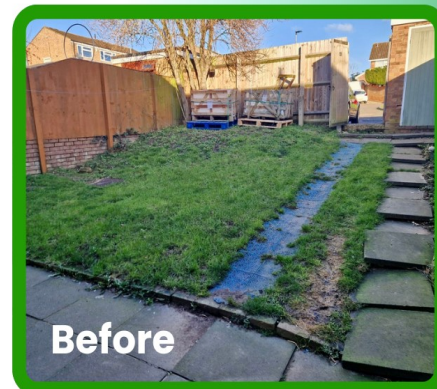
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Bill Sellars 07980 745292

Email: billsellars@theoldschooloakley.org.uk

Web : www.theoldschooloakley.org.uk



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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)

Unit contact: Kathy Jones

snowyowloakleybrownies@outlook.com

News from the Bell Tower

Bell ringing is a unique blend of physical sport, mathematical puzzle, and rich cultural heritage.

More than just a melody

Unlike playing a piano or guitar, a bell ringer does not play a melody. Instead, each ringer controls a single, massive bell, and the entire team works together to change the order in which the bells sound with every pull of the rope. This mathematical approach to music is called 'change ringing'.

A Centuries-old tradition

Change ringing is uniquely rooted in English history, dating back to the 17th century. The first recorded secular ringing society, the Schollers of Cheapeside, was formed in 1603. They practiced change ringing at the famous London church of St Mary-le-Bow (Bow Bells). Since then, bell towers have provided the soundtrack to historic moments - from marking royal jubilees, coronations and funerals to sounding out to celebrate peace.

Physical exercise meets mental agility

Often referred to as the ultimate mental workout, bell ringing is incredibly rewarding:

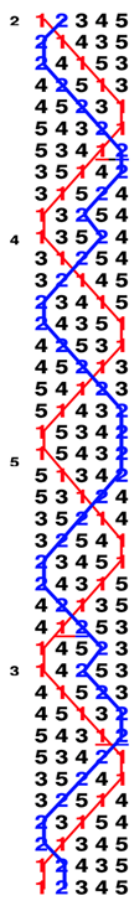
The mental challenge: Instead of reading traditional sheet music, ringers memorise mathematical patterns, like the one pictured which is called Bob Doubles (Plain Course), and this keeps the brain sharp and focused.

Physical fitness: It requires whole-body coordination, using the arms and shoulders to control bells that can weigh anywhere from a few hundred pounds to several tons.

The social side: Bell ringers are usually a welcoming lot. If you are a visiting ringer, you can walk into almost any tower in the country and be invited to join the practice.

The Oakley Band of Bell Ringers are no exception. We welcome experienced bell ringers as well as complete beginners. We practice on Friday evenings from 8pm to 9:15pm and ring on Sunday mornings before the services at St Mary's Church. Please contact our Tower Captain, Bill Sellars on 07980 745292 or email thesellars@btinternet.com for more information.

Shelley Eden





MESSY CHURCH FOR ALL SUMMER PICNIC

Join us for our Messy Church for All Summer Picnic on Tues 16th June 3.30pm at Lynch Furlong, Oakley Picnic food provided—bring a rug to sit on! Please contact: Michael on 07799 4726865 to let us know you are coming



OPEN AIR SERVICE

Sunday 12th July 10.30am on the grass at Oakley Methodist church, followed by a Bring & Share lunch. All welcome!

MESSY CHURCH PLUS!

Long school summer holiday to fill??

Why not come along to Messy Church Plus! On Monday 10th August at 11.30am in St Owen's Bromham.

Crafts, activities and fun — snack lunch provided.

Children of all ages welcome with a well behaved adult.

Free event, donations welcome.



TEAS IN CHURCH

St Mary's popular 'Teas in Church' is back! Every Sunday from 3.30pm to 5pm, begins 5th July- 30th August. Enjoy delicious refreshments in beautiful surroundings, supporting your local church.

Contactless payment available.

Would you or your group like to offer to run one of our Teas in Church sessions next year? The sessions are major fundraisers for St Mary's and we are in need of more offers of help. Please do get in touch with Sarah (details below) if you would like to sign up for 2027.



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

Facebook: CofE Benefice for Bromham, Oakley & Stagsden

Instagram: bromhambenefice



CONTACTS

St Mary's: Church Wardens:
Administrator Sarah:

Hilarie Worley 262166 & Graham Palmer 07710 462535
07494 069540 administrator@bromhambenefice.org

Oakley Methodist Church:
Revd Paulette Tedd:
Church Steward:

07591 139940 paulette.tedd@methodist.org.uk
Jeanette Letch 825204 jenletch@hotmail.co.uk

Oakley Kindergarten News



Another busy and successful term is well underway!

We had our first Ofsted inspection in the new building at the beginning of May. We were inspected under the new Ofsted Early Years Toolkit, which was a different experience to previous inspections that I have been a part of. We have received our draft Inspection Grade Card but are unable to share our results yet, as due to the new way of inspecting all gradings will have to go through a Quality Assurance process. We will publish our report as soon as we are able to.



We continue to strive to improve the facilities and experiences that we offer at kindergarten and have recently had planning approved to extend the hours that the children are able to access the outside area during the day. Some of our children do not have big back gardens and they need space to play safely, and the kindergarten provides this for them daily.

The additional hours will mean that in the summer months, we are able to take advantage of the cooler parts of the day in the morning and afternoon to enable us to keep safe in the sun.

The pergola that we are proposing is now at the planning stage and will mean that in extreme summer weather, the children and staff can find shade from the hot sun whilst not being reliant on the natural shade from the trees located near to the rear fences of the adjacent residents. Should you wish to view our most recent planning application **APPLICATION NO : 26/00761/FUL** please go to www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-applicants-agents to find out more about any of the above.

At Oakley Kindergarten we pride ourselves on our partnerships with the local universities and colleges and we mentor many students throughout the year. Two of our recent Level 2 students have impressed us so much during their placements with us and we are going to employ them both. From June 2026 Katie Nottingham and Gracey Neale will be joining our growing team.

Mrs Smith is now retiring, and we wish her well and thank her for the time and knowledge she has given and shared with us at kindergarten. Mrs Hale and Miss Alice have returned from their Maternity Leave this term too and we have said goodbye to Mrs Campbell and Miss Lynsey who have been with us to cover their positions over the last year. We will miss them and wish them both well.



We are again busy preparing our eldest children for their transition to their chosen primary schools and are welcoming their new teachers to our setting to ensure a smooth transition for all on their educational journey. We are currently operating a waiting list for all our rooms and if you would like your child to start with us, please do make contact as early as possible.

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

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Harrold-Odell Country Park

If you have been to the woods in the park recently, you may have had a surprise! No, not a teddy bears picnic, but we have begun installing a wild play area for children. Located in what we call the 'shelter belt', which is the area of woodland near the café, and just beyond the skate park are some logs to balance on, branches to use to create dens and some logs to step on. This is a work in progress, but we think this will be a great addition to the park.



It is hard to sit here and predict what the weather will be like when you are reading this article, but from our perspective in the park, we are hoping for a reasonable dose of sunshine and rain. April came and went with no sign of the April showers again this year and we started early watering the trees that we planted this winter as well as those in recent winters in the anticipation of another dry summer. In dry conditions, newly planted trees find it



hard to get established and mature trees feel the stress and sometimes become more susceptible to diseases dying during these times. Our fantastic volunteers do their best week in, week out to try and make sure they survive.

In May (at the time of writing), we have had some rain at least and are taking a break from watering trees and have started refilling some of our gabions where the stone has washed out into the lake. These will be the gabions at a few of the viewpoints near the Troll bridge and we are using larger stone and even repurposing rubble to backfill them. We will also take measures to stop the smaller stone from escaping the lower gabions as there is no way we can access them to get larger stones in them to fill the holes!

Thank you if you entered our recent poetry competition, we had lots of creative entries and it really was difficult to judge the winners! We were delighted that we had a lot of entries from Harrold Primary and there really were some great individual lines in some of the poems! Later in the year we hope to share some poems with you when we publish the winners and selected others from the competition which will be made available to read in The Dragonfly Café.

As usual, our popular I Spot, Children's Activity and Crossword booklets are 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 June 4th & 18th, July 2nd, 16th & 30th and August 13th & 27th. More info can be found at <https://hocp.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.

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

oakley Motorcycle club

The OMC AGM was held on 12th March at OSSC. It was no surprise that nobody else stood for any of the Officer positions on the committee, so for the 21st year Roger Bays is Chair! The other positions remain the same with Derek Brown as Vice Chair, Bernice Russell as Secretary and Graham Hardman as Treasurer. Two committee members stood down; Barry Williams having served 3 years and founder member Colin Measures who, like the Chair, has been on the committee since the start date of the club on 27th January 2005. Colin was presented with various items to signify his input and both Colin and Barry were made Honorary Members.

Presentations were also made to the OMC Leading Ladies; our Secretary Bernice and committee member Jemma Grayson for her work in formatting our new membership database. A £75 donation was made to the large breed dog rescue charity on behalf of Julie Ward who oversees and assists in the OMC accounts.

The OMC Member of the Year Award, which was voted on the night, went to Mrs Jean Hay for all her hard work. She ran our bike jumble stall at the anniversary event and got the best possible prices, which contributed £1800 for the EAAA.

On Easter Sunday OMC did its annual Easter Egg run with 25 bikes meeting at St Pauls Square. We headed off to donate eggs to residents at Brain-kind (formerly Sue Ryder) at Stagenhoe, Herts, St Johns Hospice at Moggerhanger and Lovell Homes, Oakley



Sadly on Easter Sunday afternoon, unexpectedly, long term and regular OMC member Richard "Dickie" Galka passed away aged 72. Dickie was a very active member who masterminded and managed our 2014 Bike Festival at Oakley. This was a huge success raising thousands of pounds for the EAAA and putting OMC firmly on the biking

map. He was also behind the legendary OMC bike quizzes, not only setting the questions but taking the role of Quizmaster. Due to his in-depth knowledge of all things two wheeled he was a regular Judge for our Bike of the Year Award as well.

Since the start of the OMC Member of the Year Award there has not been a year where he was not nominated resulting in winning the award on four occasions. Most recently Dickie organised the "Triples Night" featuring BSA Rocket 3's and Triumph Tridents.

There has been much, much more that Dickie did to promote OMC and he has been a major influence on the success of our motorcycle club. His funeral was held on 7th May when his hearse was escorted from the undertakers to the Crematorium by 22 OMC motorcyclists. RIP Richard



So far this year we have had visits from OMC sponsors St Neots Motorcycles, with a selection of Suzuki bikes. BMW Motorrad Wollaston (Northampton) brought along 9 different BMW bike models for test riding and actually sold one on the night! By the time you read this we will also have had a visit from Grafton Honda (Milton Keynes) with a selection of machines from the Honda factory fitted with the new E clutch system.

OMC have also had ride outs to Finchingfield, Suffolk, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, Stroud, Gloucestershire and the National Motorcycle Museum.

The Distinguished Gentlemen's Ride descended on Oakley Sports & Social Club early afternoon Sunday 17th May. You may have heard them and perhaps turned out to see them.

The ride which started in Milton Keynes before ending at Oakley is an annual event held nationally raising tens of thousands of pounds for mental health and prostate cancer charities. Riders are expected to dress dapper and this year they did not disappoint, with 190 riders arriving in one ride out at Oakley Club!

Finally just to say that you do not have to be a member of OMC to come along on a Thursday evening. So why not pop down with the kids, have a drink, grab a bite to eat from the club menu. Then see a vast array of motorcycles of all ages and styles and finish it off with an ice cream from Mr Ice Cream Man who is always there when the sun is shining!

Roger "Baysie" Bays



Bedfordshire Classics & Customs

We have had some very kind weather on our last two meets on 14th April and 12th May with plenty of show cars attending and also many on their first visit to Oakley!

Do not forget our next three dates at Oakley

Tuesday 9th June, Tuesday 14th July and 11th August. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Luke and the Classic & Custom Team





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