



# Oakley Newsletter



**Winter 2015**

Number 65



## Front Cover

Wintry Scene  
by Terry Youngman

### 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  
12 more trees



## Parish Council News

### Winter 2015 By PAUL PHILLIPS (Chair)

Can I say a very warm welcome to the Winter edition of Oakley Newsletter 2015. It's hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner when the temperature today whilst I prepare my notes is 15°C. There are a number of important things going on in the village at the moment so I had better get started and tell you about them.

### Yellow No Waiting lines at High Street/Reynes Drive junction.

Many months ago the Parish Council decided to request yellow lines to be put on the road surface immediately around the High Street/Reynes Drive junction and immediately opposite the junction in order to try to prevent those inconsiderate road users who insist on parking on the junction contrary to the advice in the Highway Code. Notices have been displayed at the junction recently inviting residents to comment before 6 November 2015, after which it is hoped that the traffic order will be introduced. It will then be followed by the Borough Council carrying out the necessary work. After this it will be an offence to park on the yellow lines. Please remember that contravention can be enforced by way of camera, Police and Borough Enforcement Wardens.

### Proposed 3 G Football Pitch at New Field Lincroft School.

The Parish Council has no further information to impart on this subject. To date, to our knowledge, no planning application has been submitted. As soon as we become aware of such an application we will communicate by way of email to those who left their email address at the public meeting on 16 September. Also by noticeboard, village website and if the timescale enables by Newsletter.

### Average Speed Cameras

Bedford Borough Council has apologised for the delays and for providing some incorrect information concerning the introduction of our average speed cameras. They have now provided us with a full and clear programme for the completion of the scheme.

Continued on page 3

## OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Average Speed Cameras—continued

Signs have been installed in Station Road and Pavenham Road and variable message boards were displayed in Station Road during week commencing 12 October stating that the Station Road Cameras were operational. The camera which was planned to be positioned in the High Street almost opposite the Bedford Arms, is to be relocated just around the corner in Church Lane for operational reasons, with a link to the camera at the triangle in Church Lane at the Church turn. Another pair of cameras will be sited in Lovell Road between its junction with Station Road and the railway bridge. Pavenham Road cameras are on hold temporarily because a 40mph speed limit is to be introduced between Pavenham and Oakley. The Police have asked that the 30mph speed limit entering Oakley from Pavenham be extended approximately 80 metres to help moderate speeds. Once the Traffic Regulation order is in place the 30mph signs will be moved, the new signs put up, variable message boards will be placed in Pavenham Road for a few days and then those cameras will be live. My advice to all is....to be on the safe side, please make sure you don't exceed 30mph anywhere in our village, then you won't have a problem.

## Annual Bedfordia Schools Cross Country Run

The Annual Bedfordia Schools Cross Country Run will take place at Lincroft School, Station Road on 13 January 2016. The arrangements for the event including parking are being dealt with by staff at Lincroft school. In the past there have been problems with traffic, particularly irresponsible parking. I am taking this opportunity to make residents aware of this forthcoming event which is growing in popularity and will be attended by schools from all over the county. I also make a plea to parents/relatives/friends attending to support the youngsters to arrive in good time and be considerate with your parking. Some members of the Parish Council, together with some staff from Lincroft School, will be monitoring parking behaviour.

## Bedford Borough Local Plan 2032 consultation/Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Bedford Borough Council will be carrying out a consultation on the Local Plan 2032 including housing allocations from 10 October 2015 to 14 December 2015. Between 50 and 150 houses have been included in the consultation for Oakley. Drop in sessions are being held and details have been advertised on the noticeboard and website. Information and comment forms are available at [www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2032](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2032). The consultation seeks views on jobs, retail growth and infrastructure, local green spaces and would include a further call for building sites.

Residents should familiarise themselves with the document and comment accordingly. The Neighbourhood Development Plan Group of the Parish Council, of which Councillor Pat Olney is Chair, is discussing the document in detail. This same group has circulated a comprehensive questionnaire and a youth questionnaire seeking views on the village and how residents see the future of the village. The closing date for the return of the questionnaires was 13 November 2015. Members of the Parish Council hope that as many residents as possible will have completed and submitted them so that we can portray as accurate a picture of peoples views as possible.



## Village Planting.

Residents will know that for many years now the entrances to the village, the bed at the War Memorial and the bed beneath the village sign at the crossroads have been very attractively planted twice a year, initially by Oakley Gardening Club and latterly by a resident who had been a member of the Gardening Club and was a Parish Councillor. Unfortunately this year we have no one prepared to take on this task. The funding for the plants is provided by the Parish Council and the person(s) taking on the task is able to choose the type of plants provided they don't exceed the budget and into the bargain they can choose their own design. The Parish Council really need someone or indeed more than one person to take on this task for the benefit of the village. If you are that person please contact me by telephone or email and my details can be found in the front of this Newsletter.

## Annual Christmas Tree Lights switch on and Carols.

The Annual Christmas Tree Lights switch on and Carols will take place at St Marys Church at 5pm on Saturday 5 December 2015. The date was published in the Autumn Newsletter, so it is hoped that this reminder comes as no surprise to you. Following the switch on we will sing some Carols outside, then enter the Church for more carols and hopefully mince pies and mulled wine. What a great way to start the festive season.

## Parish Council Clerk's Office at Old School.

With effect from Thursday 3 December 2015 between 10am and 2pm and every Thursday thereafter, except over the Christmas/New Year period, the Clerk to the Parish Council Mrs Ann Paice will work from an office at The Old School, Lovell Road, Oakley. We will review its benefits or otherwise in March 2016. By being based in the village for part of one day a week Ann is making herself available should anyone wish to visit her at the office. Approach via the front door and you will be made very welcome. She will eventually be contactable by telephone, the number of which will be displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board and will be put on the website.

### A Thank You to all Contributors

I think I have raised all of the subjects of note and it just remains for me to thank all of the contributors to this newsletter and on your behalf to thank the Editor, Bill Chalker, for his sterling work in putting such excellent Newsletters together for the benefit of the whole village. I would also like to wish all of our readers a Very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Paul Phillips, Chairman.

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**Oakley Youth Club** is up and running at the Old School, Oakley. Two new youth leaders Courtney and Hannah have developed an exciting programme of events.

From quiz nights, to tea parties, to discos, dodge ball, bread making, cake eating, table tennis and football coaching, we can do all this and more!

Every Friday night from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Come along and have fun.

£1 entry and some money for tuck shop.

Youth club runs this year until the 11th December and will start again in 2016 on the 8th January – come and see us.

### **Let's find out more about Courtney and Hannah**

Hannah, is a keen football player and can carry out a mean tackle, so watch out every one.

Courtney is a shopaholic, she has so many handbags she can't count them all.

Both of them are looking forward to seeing you at the Youth Club.

If you would like more information then contact

Courtney on 07731652539 or Hannah on 07593613551 or

Like us on Facebook

 **Oakley**  
Youth Club



## **Borough Council News by Cllr Pat Olney**

Thank you to all the people who have slowed to below 30mph in Pavenham Road and Station Road. Since the cameras have been working 32 drivers have been issued with notices of intended prosecution in Station Road with the highest speed 43mph.

The Borough is changing the speed limit to 40mph between the end of Pavenham Road Oakley, to Pavenham. Amey the contractors will be installing this speed limit in the week beginning the 14th December 2015. So please do not put your foot down too hard after leaving the 30mph limited cameras in Pavenham Road, Oakley.

Many residents in those two roads have said how much they appreciate drivers keeping at or below the 30mph speed limit. Thank you

Amey should be installing and calibrating the two cameras in Church Lane in January 2016 and the Lovell Road in late February 2016. The Lovell Road cameras will be installed on the Oakley side of the Railway Bridge along Lovell Road. Clapham and Oakley Parish Council asked for this to enable the children from Clapham safe access to Lincroft School.

I am sure that once all the cameras are installed then all the residents will feel like the Station and Pavenham Road residents - a sigh of relief that Oakley is a safer place.

### **Consultations**

There seem so many consultations at the moment that I feel that people will get consultation fatigue.

However it is important that you do respond.

### **Bedford Borough Budget consultation.**

The councillors on the borough council have tried to make sure over the last five years that no frontline services would be cut due to the government reducing their contribution to the local authority. However this year there will be cuts. The borough is asking you for your opinions on certain cuts. Please go to the website – consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk and give your views.

### **Bedford Borough Local Plan consultation**

The borough is consulting on the future need for housing in the borough and what the borough should look like by 2032. The borough is suggesting that Oakley should take between 50-150 houses extra by 2032.

### **Local Schools Consultations**

Oakley Lower School are looking for your views on going Primary. Please go to the lower School website.

Sharnbrook Academy Trust are looking for your views on Lincroft changing to 11 to 16 years, Sharnbrook Upper School 11 to 18 years and Harold Middle School and Margaret Beaufort to become Primary Schools. Please go to the Lincroft website for details.



### **Higgins Museum – Turner Paintings**

No, the Higgins it is not consulting, you will be relieved to know, but they would like you to relax and visit their Turner Exhibition.

They have on view their exceptional Turner paintings. They also have paintings from his contemporaries on show. You can book for tours. The exhibition is already creating great interest and we are so lucky to own these wonderful works. I urge you to go to Higgins Bedford and find out about the tours and, more importantly, treat yourselves not only to the visual splendour but also lovely refreshments at the Pantry.


Finally have a lovely Christmas and enjoy the New Year Celebrations.

Cllr Pat Olney

Tel. 01234 824384

email [pat.olney@btopenworld.com](mailto:pat.olney@btopenworld.com),

website [www.patolney.wordpress.com](http://www.patolney.wordpress.com)

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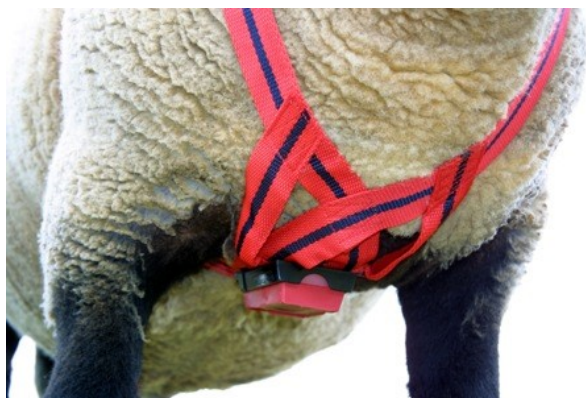
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## Farming and Country – Winter 2015

By John Saunders

Harvest finished on August 29th and there was enough dry weather to ensure that all was safely gathered in. The yields were good but the wheat at one hundred pound per tonne or lower and barley less than that, it is very difficult to cover your costs. You can store the corn all winter, and hope the price might improve but it might go the other way.

It is now fifteen years since we sold our dairy herd, but I do feel for the present day dairy farmers who receive between eighteen and twenty three pence per litre for their milk when the cost of production is thirty pence or more. It annoys me when you hear the supermarkets bragging about their low prices when it is the producer who is suffering. With a bottle of water costing more than milk it makes you think.



As I write it is October. About this time of year the sheep farmers put their rams to the ewes as the darker nights bring the ewes into season. The rams will have a harness attached to them with a marker fixed to it which is called a rad-dle. This will mark the ewes when they have been served and later on you change the colour of the marker which shows up the ewes who did not hold to the first service. The gestation period is five months, so the lambs will be born in March although some farmers lamb earlier. Half-way through their pregnancy the ewes will be scanned to see if they are in lamb and how many lambs they will have. Most of them have one or two and a few will have three. They will have to be fed differently until they lamb depending on the number of lambs they are having. When the lambs are born they spend a few days in pens so they can bond with their mother and after that they go out into the fields as the grass is starting to grow. They do not mind the cold weather but they do not like the wet if there is a lot of rain. When the ewes are having their lambs it is a twenty four hour job so it is quite a busy time for two to three weeks. Most of the lambs are sold at fourteen or fifteen weeks old and some ewe lambs will be kept for breeding.

Years ago all the sheep had to be dipped by law but now it is done by spraying. They can get fly strike which is when they get mucky behinds and if not treated would get maggots which would eat into the ewes.



Regularly the ewes have to have an MOT to check their udders, teeth and feet. Their feet have to be trimmed and they also have to be wormed making it an all year round job.

By the time you all read this it will be December and so I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Saunders

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## Oakley Pre-school news



We had fifteen new starters join us in September and they are all settling in well. The children are enjoying the autumnal weather and embracing all the changes that we see in the environment around us at this time of year. We have enjoyed autumn walks in the field, collecting leaves, conkers and acorns and exploring animals' habitats. We have also discussed Bonfire night and the need to be safe around fire and when we are out on dark nights. We had a bonfire in the pre-school garden, toasted marshmallows and made Schmores (toasted marshmallow squashed between biscuits) for the children's snack.

As part of our Harvest celebrations this year we collected a 'shopping list' of items for the Bedford Food Bank. Our staff and parents were very generous and we collected 34.12kgs of food which equated to 81 meals! Pre-school received a certificate from the staff at the Food Bank to show their appreciation. We have also celebrated Diwali and through role play, craft activities, stories and food enabled the children to experience and learn about The Festival of Light (Diwali.) The next winter festival to prepare for is Christmas. We are busy learning new words to the songs for our Christmas Celebration for parents and carers.

### Fundraising & Community events



We held another successful Bingo Night in September. Thank you to all of you who came to support us.

Our next event is a Crafty Christmas Fun afternoon. This will be held at Pre-school on the afternoon of **Sunday 13th December from 3-5pm**. All ages are welcome and we will have a variety of Christmas Crafts on offer, including making reindeer food and Christmas decorations. Entry fee is £5 per child and includes access to all crafts. You can pay on the door. There will also be homemade refreshments available and a raffle and children's lucky dip. All funds raised will go towards our extension fund.

In addition, we are planning a Bacon Butty breakfast in January (date TBC) and a 'Back in Time Adult Disco' on the 23rd April 2016. Please look out for details of our events on the village noticeboards and also on the calendar on the village website.



**We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at Oakley Pre-school.**

### Admissions

If you would like to register your child for a place at pre-school, please contact us

on 01234 826452 or

by email [grow@oakleypreschool.org.uk](mailto:grow@oakleypreschool.org.uk)

you can also follow us on Facebook.

For information on funding you can contact the Family Information Service 0800 023 2057

Sally Martiello



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## AMIGO

The 2015/16 session got off to a very good start with a lively game of skittles at the Bedford Arms, Souldrop on the 22nd September. After a closely fought game, Tony Ball emerged as the winner. Many congratulations to Tony. A very good buffet was provided with a wide variety of sandwiches and some excellent chips at the cost of £6.00 a head.

A very entertaining evening was spent listening to "home grown" poetry at Oakley Methodist Church on Tuesday 27th October. I appear to have missed a treat, as I was in Barcelona, but from those who were there I hear that it went well.

By the time this newsletter is published, the visit to the Higgins on the 24th November will have taken place. A report will appear in the March issue of the newsletter.

A traditional evening of carol singing with the occasional use of hand bells will take place at the Bedford Arms, Oakley on Tuesday 15th December beginning at 8.00 p.m.

A program of activities up to July 2016 has been published. As an advance notice of the coach trip to Rochester that will be taking place on Thursday 30th June 2016 I am setting out the proposed itinerary with details of the cost involved. If you wish to be sent a copy#, please contact John Dixon on 01234 824959 or by e-mail [jwdixon30@gmail.com](mailto:jwdixon30@gmail.com)

**Tuesday 26th January** A visit to the Observatory at Bedford School has been arranged beginning at 7.00 p.m. Meet outside the gates of the School Playing Field in Pemberley Avenue, nearest to Park Avenue, shortly before 7.00 p.m. Please bring warm clothing. The maximum number for the party is 19. Please let John Dixon know if you wish to come by the 19th January

**Tuesday 23rd February.** A talk by the Rev. Gill Baalham about her life in the Methodist Church. 8.00 p.m. at Oakley Methodist Church.

**Tuesday 22nd March.** An evening of light hearted quizzes and parlour games 8.00 p.m. at Oakley Methodist Church.

**Tuesday 26th April .** A film night (to be confirmed) 8.00 p.m. at Oakley Methodist Church.

**Tuesday 24th May.** You are welcome to a garden party by the kind invitation of Pat Olney at 33 Station Road, Oakley from 6.30 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments will be available

**Thursday 30th June** A day out in Rochester, Kent. Details available see#.

**Tuesday 28th July** An evening ramble led by John Dixon. Details to follow

John Dixon



**MUSIC FOR BEDFORD BOROUGH**

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## Joshua

Orphan & Community Care



Madzuka Bwanji world - Happy Monday morning from Blantyre Malawi...

Back in January Malawi was hit by devastating rains flooding that left many people homeless.

Joshua was overwhelmed by the generosity of well-wishers who sent money to support our emergency response.

In the past months, we have trained more than 70 local artisans (builders) in improved building techniques for low cost yet stronger housing, in partnership with CCODE (<http://www.ccode-mw.org/>).

We have also been undergoing a rigorous identification process to find beneficiary families for stronger home support. A full report will be released very soon.

In the meantime, thanks again for all the donations and support from around the world... With love from Team Joshua in Malawi

Jacky Mould

## WHERE WERE YOU?



We were there, my friend Ruth and I, and so were many other people – young and old-ish. We arrived at 6.30pm; good job really, we did not have to wait long for Tracy to give our order to the ladies toiling hard in the kitchen. Beef burgers and chips, hot and delicious, were soon consumed.

Whilst we waited on that balmy Saturday evening we played "spot how many people we know." We made our count and just reached double figures, where the rest came from we knew not. We met a delightful young lad who could not talk but he conveyed his excitement at the coming spectacle very clearly.

We, Ruth and I, remembered the days of Jumping Jacks, Roman Candles and rockets set off from milk bottles – but that was then. Now it is all gloriously sparkled, with much flashing and banging. We pondered over the sight of the adults being far more spellbound by the sights and sounds than the youngsters. If you could have been there, but were not, you missed a treat. Let's hope there will be a repeat performance next year.

Well-done to everyone who had a hand in the organizing the firework display on Oakley Sports Club ground on Saturday, November 7th.

Thank you, Jean Weston.

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## Oakley Allotments

We have some space available again so please get in touch if you are interested in taking on an allotment. Demand from the village has not been great this year so we made the decision to let allotments to people from neighbouring villages following a number of enquiries. We now have two tenants from Pavenham but priority will always be given to demand from Oakley.

As for neighbouring villages, I mentioned in closing my last allotments article that I had been invited to judge fruit and vegetables at the Dean & Shelton Show at the beginning of September. The task was relatively straightforward as the number of entries was disappointingly low due to a generally poor year for growing - something that I had already concluded from my own observations and results. Not only was the number of entries low but the general quality of the entries was not inspiring.

However, the show was well supported and there were a lot of other entries in a wide range of subjects; from art in all age ranges, to photography, flower-arranging, cakes, preserves and various crafts. The atmosphere was friendly and mildly competitive, as one might hope. I was mistaken for some kind of expert and gave some advice on judging technique where there was nothing obvious to differentiate qualities of entries. Employing some talent for application of logic, I suggested that minor details were important as were first impressions - it is possible to over-think these things.

Inspired, Julia and I returned with ideas for organising a new series of Oakley shows - once a popular annual event, these gradually lost support and were then abandoned. There is some enthusiasm in the village for reviving the Oakley Show and it is something which I will support.

As for my own competition with myself for an improvement in our allotment and home-growing results, we kept records this year and weighed or counted crops as they were gathered for use. In no particular order:-

Aubergines - grown at home, these were a great success with a resident greenhouse snail, which took great delight (presumably) in eating through the stem of each plant at ground level - crop count of 1 aubergine - we'll be back with aubergines and snail-proofing next season.

Tomatoes - this was not a good year for tomatoes either indoors or out, according to others we spoke to as well. Count - a mere 7 kilos.

Runner beans - I put special effort in to these again this year because we love them. The runner beans took pride of place on one half of the



manure heap, part of which I dug in to a trench for their benefit. Crop count - 18 kilos (a lot of runner beans).

Courgettes - from marrow-sized (when we couldn't get to the allotment enough) to more modest in size. Crop count - 33 vegetables.

Strawberries - from one 4-year-old patch (now to be dug-up) and two newer patches grown from runners from the original plants. Crop count - 14 kilos (a lot of jam).

Sweetcorn - a bit disappointing this year, despite transplanting a lot of plants grown from seed. Earwig infestation affected about half of the crop. Crop count - 20 cobs plus associated earwigs.

Raspberries - not as good as in previous years either at the allotment or at home. Crop count - 2 kilos.

Blackberries - a prolific, cultivated variety. Crop count - 15 kilos (from home and allotment combined).

Chard is as good as ever and we have just covered it with fleece in the hope that it will keep going for a while yet as the promised frosts arrive. Celeriac is also doing well and the butter-nut squash are a great success.

Broad beans and peas were a failure. They are an ongoing challenge and will be tried again next season.

Early sprouting broccoli was fairly good and we put in more for cropping early next year plus a variety supposed to crop in the autumn which was not very successful.

Beetroot - easy to grow and this year was no exception. We still await the first frosts before attempting to lift parsnips so they are a surprise yet to enjoy.

Our results this year have been very good overall. When you also consider that we have not spent a great deal of time to achieve this and that the time we have spent there has been very enjoyable, the allotment is a real asset.

Steve Nicholas



**CONSULTATION ON OUR PROPOSAL TO  
EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF  
OAKLEY LOWER SCHOOL, STATION ROAD, BEDFORD, MK43 7RE  
TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION FOR 2017/2018**

Copies of the consultation document can be found on the school website [www.oakleylowerschool.co.uk](http://www.oakleylowerschool.co.uk) on the Governors page (see menu to the right) or collected from the school office.

You can take part and have your say in the following ways:

By completing the response form in the document and returning it to Oakley Lower School

By email to [office@oakley.bedssch.co.uk](mailto:office@oakley.bedssch.co.uk)

By letter to FAO Roz Gray Chair of Governors, c/o Oakley Lower School, Station Road, Oakley, Bedford, MK43 7RE

The consultation will run from 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
until 12 noon on 18 December 2015.

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## Advent Wreaths

Here are photos of the Advent wreaths that village organisations made last year for display at St Mary's Church Oakley throughout Advent.

Many people enjoyed seeing them on the evening of the lighting of the Village Christmas Tree and I hope lots more organisations might submit one to represent them this coming December.

Any offers should be brought to church on the morning of Saturday December 5th from 10am onwards.



Jenny Sudworth





# Oakley Carnival Committee

We hope you have enjoyed the Oakley Carnival held in the summer this year which not only brought the people of Oakley together in celebration of our village and everything it offers us, but raised valuable funds for local clubs and organisations.

Sadly, the majority of the current carnival committee are stepping down. We are therefore looking for more people to join us. Without more volunteers, it is very unlikely that there will be a Carnival in 2017.

To ensure that the Carnival tradition continues, we are looking for people who are passionate about the village, enjoy meeting new people, and feel that they would like to get involved more in the community. You can volunteer to do as much or as little as you want and you are guaranteed to have fun!

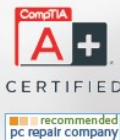
If you would like to be part of this long tradition in our village, please email us at [oakley-carnival@gmail.com](mailto:oakley-carnival@gmail.com). Without you it won't happen.

**Don't delay, join today!**



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## A letter from Revd Linda

In today's world those who celebrate Christmas as a Christian festival may find it hard to reconcile it with the consumerism that surrounds the event. The period that we call Advent, that precedes Christmas Day, is in many ways lost nowadays. There is a tendency to pack the last few weeks before Christmas with as many services and other events as possible: such as nativity plays and Christmas parties.

Advent is an opportunity to reflect, but many are too busy to do this! We are confronted with some serious challenges. How can we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ without succumbing to, and thus appearing to endorse, the frenzy of consumerism that has become the hallmark of a 'happy' Christmas to so many people? And how can we avoid going to the other extreme: countering overspending by miserliness, and overindulgence by abstinence, thereby turning ourselves into Scrooges? Actually it's all right to enjoy Christmas!

Perhaps we could try to recapture the reaction of the shepherds to Jesus' birth. According to the Christmas story in Luke's gospel, the key to a happy Christmas lies not in material preparations but in a wholehearted response to the gift of God. Preparing both to receive this gift and to give in turn is crucial to Advent. Advent is a time of remembering the promises of God, and of waiting for the coming of Christ. We are familiar with many passages from the Old Testament which relate to the promised Messiah: many of which are found in Handel's oratorio the Messiah and are predominantly from the book of Isaiah.

In a way we have lost the traditional emphasis on Christ's return. For example, the Advent Wreath which was probably important from Germany in the nineteenth century together with the Christmas tree, which was introduced in England by Prince Albert. The wreath is used to count down to Christmas and our eyes focus on the candles which remind us of the Patriarchs, the prophets, John the Baptist and Mary. There is however, another symbol: the wreath itself. This may be overlooked because of the prominence of the candles. The wreath is a circle, indicative both of the continuity of the year and the eternity of God: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. (Rev 1:8)



When we go Christmas shopping this year we could consider whether we are really preparing for Jesus' birth and for all that may mean to us. It is not our birth but his. If we say we are celebrating Jesus' coming, surely he should be the recipient of the best gifts we can give. After all, if we attend a birthday party we take gifts for the person whose birthday we are marking. We do not take gifts for the other guests nor do we receive them! There is nothing wrong in exchanging gifts but we could approach it from a different point of view. Our Christmas giving should be primarily to God himself, and therefore to all God's people, in ways that reflect his love for all of us. It is not necessary to spend huge sums of money to have a good Christmas.

In so-called "austerity Britain" many may be wondering how they can afford to celebrate Christmas. If we are in a position to do so, we can give to charities, even if it is just buying charity Christmas cards. This year as we struggle to raise the funds to provide facilities at St. Owen's fit for purpose in this 21st Century, we could give the Church a Christmas gift to thank God for his goodness to us and to move the project nearer to its completion. If everybody in the Benefice gave a little it would be another step in the right direction.

### Prayer

Lord, help me to learn how I may receive you at Christmas, and so to know how to prepare myself for you during Advent. Help me to find ways to spend less time on myself, and more time on you. Help me to apportion my money appropriately, so that you receive the best I have to give. And help me to prepare my own life so that I live with your continued presence in me, once Christmas is over. Like the psalmist, I pray for 'my heart and my flesh [to] sing for joy to the living God'. In so doing, may my longing for you be truly satisfied. Amen.

All blessings

Linda

## Superfast Broadband for Oakley

Most of Oakley Parish now has access to superfast broadband (speeds greater than 24 Mbps) though there are a few exceptions towards the edges of the parish. These areas will need to wait for the Borough Council's second broadband project which will be extended to include further areas. Keep in touch at [www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband).



### Why you should get it?

Having a faster broadband connection allows several people to use internet services in the home at one time. You can view and download from the internet quicker and will have improved access to online shopping, banking and public services and be able to stay in touch with family and friends in new ways. Children may be more able to do their homework or you could do an online training course.

From a business perspective, faster broadband can provide good access to a range of on-line services eg for accounting, transactions, file transfer, data storage/back-up, marketing and support. If you have a job elsewhere you may also find that you could work from home just as effectively. You could also be in a better position to consider setting up your own business and running it from home.

### A wider benefit of high take-up (the number of people using superfast broadband)

Higher take-up means more money back to the Council for further superfast broadband investment which will help reach the more difficult last few premises.

### How to get it?

Contact your internet service provider (or other ISPs).

### How much will it cost?

Information on the broadband packages that different Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are offering and the cost of those packages are available via their websites. Prices are generally affordable and may not be much more than you are currently paying for standard broadband.

### Where can you find out more?

There's loads more information on the Borough Council's website [www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband), including answers to lots of questions.

[Editors Note — I have found that my new fibre service will cost me a little more each month (combined with phone line rental/usage) the main cost is a new VDSL modem. Installation is a two hour visit (no cost) although as this is not until 7 December I cannot yet confirm whether I will go up from 14mbps to 60mbps.]

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## Steve's Snippet No.16

Sweet 16 - and it was, very much, as I remember.

My 16th birthday dawned on a Saturday and I cycled to the village to see a friend, Mark, with whom I had a love-hate relationship. His older brother, John, was a bit of a hard-nut, always picking fights with those he saw as a bit of a challenge but I got on with him quite well and he seemed to like me (thankfully). I remember that morning, standing in the kitchen in their palatial house (the father was a serious and successful businessman and the house was a self-built bargain at a rumoured £12,000) I proudly told their mother that it was my 16th birthday and John said jokingly, "16, and never been kissed eh!", pursing his lips at me. He was actually wrong but I wasn't saying anything - I was in love with his younger sister and didn't want to confess anything that might spoil my chances. Oh, how well I remember the pain of adolescence!

It was a time of self-realisation - the world was at my feet and I would soon be able to claim the independence I craved. My independence so far had been achieved by a recently found love of cycling. I cycled everywhere and in all weathers - in those days there were few parents who had the means or the inclination to drive their offspring hither and thither. Buses were well-used and schools had vast cycle sheds, often rammed with cycles to the point where no space was available for late-comers. Whenever I could I shunned the cramped and slow buses (the traffic queued most mornings from Bromham into Bedford) and cycled the seven miles to school.

I would try to leave early enough to ride in to Queens Park and meet up with another friend and we would then cycle on to school together. I had a racing bike that I had put together myself with hard-earned pocket-money. Every Saturday morning I had to clean my allocated parts of the three-storey Victorian villa in which we lived with my maternal grandparents - we were too far out from the village for me to have a paper-round, otherwise I'd probably have done that too. Anyway, one particular morning, Paul and I took our usual route along Park Avenue towards school and my drop-handlebars interlocked with the straight bars on his bike.

We both laughed as we cycled along, bikes locked together in this bizarre fashion. Suddenly, Paul wrenched his bars free and veered sharply towards the kerb.

I looked back at the hilarious sight of him nose-diving off his bike and disappearing behind the trunk of one of the huge trees that lined the avenue in 1969 - the trees that grow there now are not those original ones. I stopped and went back to help, expecting to see Paul with a few broken bits but he was laughing his head off as he collected his bike and remounted it to continue. His front wheel was slightly buckled but I think we were all made of rubber in those days.

The worry of waiting for the O-Level results lay heavily upon me - I did not take easily to exam-

inations although I had few problems with the term-time work. I also felt that our society expected a lot from me and my fellows and that might be a lot to live up to. The results arrived and I had done rather well, considering. I could contemplate a further two years of A-Levels to come and then university, who knows; I had the summer stretching ahead of me and such momentous decisions could wait - I was going to tour some of England that summer on my beloved bicycle. The route was planned and the Youth Hostels were booked, some for as much as 7s/6d (37.5p) a night.



My best cycling-buddy, Tim, and I set off for Houghton Mill one afternoon, panniers loaded and incapable of using anything except top-gear everywhere as we were so adrenalin-fuelled by the long-awaited escape. We arrived at the mill, the actual Youth Hostel in those days, and I immediately changed in to swimming gear and carefully waded in to the river, so cold and refreshing after a fairly short but hard ride.

The following day we headed for Thetford. The Youth Hostel there was in the old railway station and it was called Thetford Bridge. It is no longer there, the bypass having swallowed up the old railway and station years ago. In following years I would pass through Thetford on my way to racing or testing at Snetterton and wonder where the old station had been, feeling sorry for its loss and the demise of many old sections of railway under the Beeching cuts. There had been a lot of our history bound up in Thetford Bridge - many of my school friends had stayed there due to a progressive schoolmaster being involved with the station's maintenance and getting them to help.

Tim and I returned to another night at Houghton Mill then via home to continue our tour in the south, taking in places such as Salisbury, Swanage and the Isle of Wight, which we rode across in the pouring rain with no mudguards on our bikes. It was a time of joy, freedom and excitement - a pair of lads with adventures before them and a liberty to which we were unaccustomed. I still have the Youth Hostel Association cards full of the stamps from the different hostels we stayed at - some of those hostels are no more but my memories of that special year remain with me as vivid as ever. There is more to tell you and one day I may do that.

One of my favourite songs is Bryan Adams's Summer of 69 - the title says it all for me. The year of my Sweet 16. Steve Nicholas

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## Oakley Neighbourhood Watch



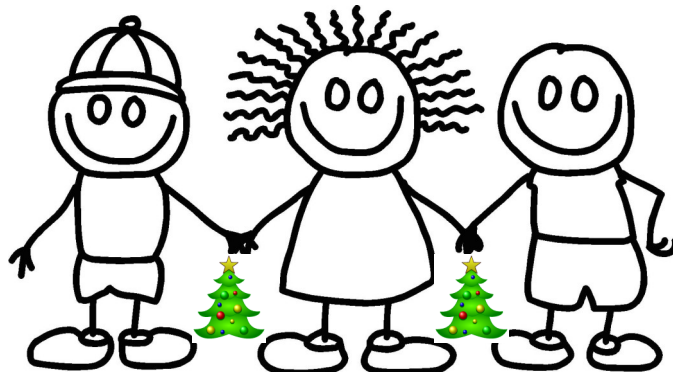
Fraudsters have been phoning victims telling them that they have been placed in the wrong council tax bracket for a number of years and are entitled to a rebate. They normally say that this rebate should be worth about £7,000.

Once the victim is convinced, the fraudster tells them that in order to receive the rebate they will need to pay an administration fee in advance. The payment they ask for varies between £60-£350. The victim provides the details and makes the payment, but then is no longer able to make contact with the person they spoke to on the phone.

When they phone their council about the rebate and the fact that they are in the wrong tax bracket, the council will confirm that they know nothing about it. The fraudsters have been targeting both male and female victims who are aged 60 and over living in the Sussex area, but it is likely that the fraudsters will also start to target victims in other areas.

Protect Yourself:

- Your local council won't ever phone out-of-the-blue to discuss a council tax rebate.
- No legitimate organisation will ask you to pay an advanced fee in order to receive money, so never give them your card details.
- If you believe that you have been a victim of fraud you can report it online [www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or by telephone 0300 123 2040.



## Oakley Toddlers

Monday 9.30-11.00am  
term time only in the Village Hall

£1.50 crafts/toys/singing/drinks & snacks

Oakley Toddlers has been running successfully over the last two decades, providing a warm friendly place for mums, dads, grandparents and carers to meet and play with their children.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help run the group please contact us at [oakleytoddlers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oakleytoddlers@hotmail.co.uk) or drop in to meet us and see what is involved!

# theWI

## OAKLEY WI



We meet at Oakley Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm.

**TUESDAY 12th JANUARY 2016**

Sue Brecknock has devised a light hearted quiz to get the new year off to a good start.

**TUESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2016**

'Shackleton's forgotten men' is the title of Debby Horsman's talk on these brave explorers.

**TUESDAY 8th MARCH 2016**

Brings the AGM, followed by a Beetle drive and a glass of wine.

If any of these take your fancy why not come along as a visitor? A warm welcome awaits you.

For further information tel: 828844 or 824703  
Anne McNab



## OAKLEY GARDENING CLUB

Is happy to welcome new members!

We meet at 7.45pm at Oakley Methodist Hall on the third Monday of the month.

Looking ahead we have



**MONDAY 18th JANUARY 2016**

Nicholas Warliker offers advice on 'Bringing water into the garden.'

(We're thinking features rather than buckets.)

**MONDAY 15th FEBRUARY 2016**

Our annual dinner.

**MONDAY 21st MARCH**

Dale Coleman shares his enthusiasm for auriculas and carnations.

For further information Tel: 822523 or 823344



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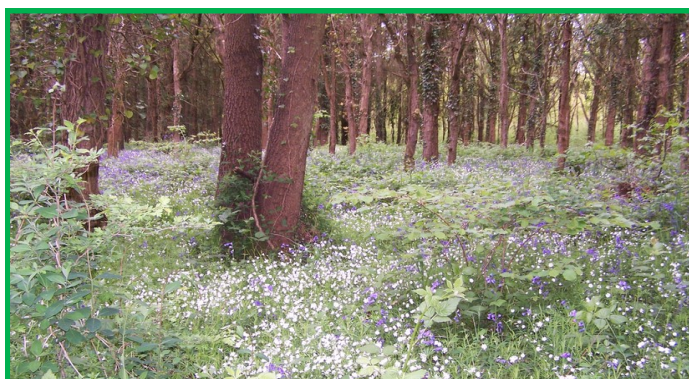
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prioryrangers@bedford.gov.uk 01234 211182 or

ed.burnett@bedford.gov.uk 01234 228759

Jane Moore,

Country Park Ranger, Bedford Borough Council



## Oakley Village Hall

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## Oakley Museum

There are now a number of items that have been loaned or donated to the museum including photographs of pupils at the 'Old School', various documents, newspaper articles and maps. All these items are now being catalogued.

Correction to the article in a previous Oakley newsletter:- Due to a misunderstanding, the watercolour painted by Mrs. Joan Grey of the inside of St Mary's Church, Oakley was not donated to the Oakley Museum by Deirdre Knight, but has been loaned on a long term basis by Bill Knight's four sons.

## Ruth Knight

# 450

YEARS OF ENRICHING LIVES


**HARPUR**  
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## The Harpur Trust 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grants Giveaway

In 2016 The Harpur Trust celebrates 450 years of inspiring, supporting & enriching the lives of people in Bedford Borough. As part of our festivities we are running a one off 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grants Programme. The aim of the fund is to make our grants more accessible to small groups with little fundraising experience, who might find it hard to apply for a grant under our existing programmes.

If your voluntary group works in Bedford Borough and could use a small capital grant of up to £1,000, you may be eligible to apply.

To find out more please contact us on 01234 369500 or email  
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or visit our website [www.harpurtrust.org.uk/450](http://www.harpurtrust.org.uk/450)



# BADMINTON

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## STEVINGTON CINEMA CLUB

In April, Stevington Cinema Club was launched to a packed Village Hall with our first showing - 'West Side Story'. Since then, a variety of films from different genres, chosen to appeal to a wide range of different tastes, has been shown in Stevington Village Hall on the first Thursday of each month.

Films are shown on professional cinema-quality projection and sound systems in a comfortable and relaxed environment. Tickets are £5.00 and there is a licensed bar and other refreshments on sale, including ice-cream and popcorn.

Film nights are popular social occasions and we would love to welcome new friends from neighbouring North Bedfordshire villages at some of our events - do give us a try.

We are also excited about the new satellite broadcasting facility which will shortly enable us to offer live streaming of events including theatre, ballet, opera, sport and music. Keep an eye on the website for updates and publication of our live streamed programme.

Linda Penney



### 2016 Programme

- 7 Jan - Chicago (12A) 2002
- 4 Feb - Cinema Paradiso (PG) 1999
- 3 Mar - Casablanca (U) 1942
- 7 Apr - The Ladykillers (U) 1955

<http://stevingtoncinemaclub.uk>

[ Editors Note - picture example only not Stev CC ]



### Bedfordshire FRS Win Fire Service of the Year

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) was named as Fire Service of the Year in the national Spirit of Fire Awards that were announced in early October. The Awards, organised by The Fire Fighters Charity, are held annually to honour members of the fire and rescue services and the public, by recognising commitment and bravery within the fire community and dedication to The Fire Fighters Charity.

Bedfordshire FRS continually makes a big contribution to the work of The Fire Fighters Charity and their strategic approach to fundraising has resulted in outstanding growth with them appearing in the top five FRS' in the UK in terms of income per head for two years running.

Having set itself an ambitious fundraising target of £70,000 for the Charity's 70th anniversary, Bedfordshire went on to raise a record-breaking £75,000 in 2013/14 and has since gone on to match that in 2014/15, bringing in income significantly above target. This growth has happened despite a reduction in the Service's workforce figures, an increase on everyone's workload and a difficult financial climate.

Paul Fuller, Chief Fire Officer at BFRS, said: "I am honoured that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have won Fire Service of the Year. This award is fitting recognition for all the hard work our firefighters and support staff put in every day to ensure we are ready and able to protect the public and reduce risks to their safety.



"We have an excellent record of supporting The Fire Fighters Charity and many other worthy causes and I'd like to commend everyone that organises fundraising and awareness events and thank the public for their continuing generous contributions.

"I'd also like to congratulate other nominees from Bedfordshire, our three Firefighters who were nominated for awards for their courage and bravery and our staff working with Cambridgeshire FRS who were nominated for Team of the Year."

For more news about the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service visit their website: [www.bedsfire.com](http://www.bedsfire.com) or follow them on Twitter: @bedsfire

Mark Hustwitt



If you are the parent/guardian of a child between the ages of 6 and 14 who may be interested in joining Oakley Scout Group, the relevant contact numbers are below.

**Beavers** 6 - 8 year olds Wednesdays  
18:15-19:30 phone Karen 07918 181815

**Cubs** 8 - 10.5 year olds Thursdays  
18:30-20:00 phone Martin 07917 137179

**Scouts** 10.5 - 14 year olds Tuesdays  
19:00-20:30 phone Dean 07854 312255

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# oakley *Motorcycle* club



Following a hugely successful summer, the biking year drew to a close on Saturday 14th November with the Oakley Motorcycle Club Dinner Dance held at Bedfordshire Golf Club.



With distinguished guests, firstly British Superbike Racer for the Build Base BMW team, number 47 Richard Cooper and his partner Danielle who travelled down from Nottingham to attend. We were also joined by Sean and Leanna Rose. Sean is a World Champion Water Skier, World Cup Gold Downhill Ski racer, Winter XGames medallist, Double Paralympian, Paralympics GB Athlete Ambassador, TV Presenter and Pundit, Wings for Life Spinal Cord Research Foundation Ambassador, Power kite Instructor, Snowkiter, Kite surfer, HQ Kite Team Rider, Motorcyclist and now a qualified N PPL(m) Pilot and member of Oakley Motorcycle Club.



Also present were the area fund raising team from the East Anglian Air Ambulance who again are the chosen charity of OMC. They were presented with a £500 donation from Oakley Motorcycle Club by Chair Roger Bays and a £500 donation from Oakley Sports & Social Club from OSSC Chair Paul Moffat. With other money raised from recent events the EAAA went away over £1230 better off!

The evening was a great success with a three course meal followed by music from the Tom Betts Band. Special thanks to OMC members Kirsty and Maddy Eaton and Colleen Spencer for all the work they put in and the fantastic attention to detail which can be appreciated in the pictures of the event on the photo gallery at [www.oakleymc.net](http://www.oakleymc.net)

Baysie Roger Bays Chair - OMC



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## Oakley Sports & Social Club

### Family & Sports Bar

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**Friendly atmosphere**

The kitchen offers very tasty hot food served on certain days and evenings, homemade pizzas baked in our very own pizza oven. Check our fabulous menus out (download them from our website), pop down and try a bite - you won't be disappointed.



**Fun for the kids**

The Oakley Sports & Social Club house has two large LCD HD screens and a high definition projector, bringing you live sport from terrestrial, Sky Sports and BT - all in HD. Football, rugby, golf, darts, and many other main sporting events covering internationals and home fixtures. We have many football teams across the age groups up to adult teams under the Oakley Football Club (AFC) banner; Cricket teams Youth and Adult; Dart team, Pool team, and a petanque pitch.

As a Club we offer excellent facilities that are available to hire upon request for functions and parties at very competitive rates. The bar offers a large selection of drinks, alcoholic and non alcoholic, with a guest ale provided.



**Fantastic facilities**

Membership of the club is a virtual give away at only £5 per year! You could save that on your first round of drinks compared to the current average pub prices. In order to take advantage of the great facilities at Oakley Sports & Social Club, membership is required. Membership can be completed online using the link below or over the bar in the clubhouse. Current members, please don't forget to renew your membership for 2016

## Latest News & Events



### Join us for Xmas and New Year's

Oakley Sports & Social will be hosting will be hosting Christmas-related events at the club house over December. See your Facebook page for details.. We will also be hosting a New year's Eve party.



### Support your local teams

Come down and watch AFC Oakley football matches

### 2016 Membership Renewal

As of the 1st January 2016, all memberships are due for renewal.

Prices remain at £5/adult and £3/child (under 18)

### OSSC Kitchen

Download the full menus from our website

#### Thursday's

6pm - 9pm  
Full Menu

#### Friday's

5pm - 8pm  
Pizza Night

#### Saturday's

4pm - 6pm  
Full Menu

#### Sunday's

12pm - 3pm  
Sunday Menu



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