



Oakley Newsletter



Spring 2024

Number 98

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Oakley Youth Club Vacancies

Oakley Parish Council AGM 2/4/24

Oakley Show Date

Down Memory Lane - The Old School

Easter Services

Lincroft Academy Developments

Village Quiz Update



Front Page Picture : Oakley Station
Artist : Liz Barras of Reynes Drive

The Oakley Newsletter

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

Opinions and information

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

Next issue

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Hello Children

look out for
Ten more
little ones



Parish Council News

Spring 2024

An Invitation

A date for your diary and an invitation to all villagers. Please come and join us at the Annual Parish Meeting being held at 7.00pm, 2nd April at the Village Hall. It is an opportunity to meet with your parish councillors.

You will be able to hear about the work done in the village and raise questions you may have on any aspect of work that we do, make suggestions, or give your views.

Parish Council Budget.

The Parish Council reviewed our budget at our January meeting. If you ever look at our accounts, you may be under the impression that the council has a lot of money to deploy on projects.

Most of the money in the accounts is ringfenced and has been given under "Section 106" which is money from developers for maintenance. This money is set aside for specific spending on maintenance of the Furlong, the Grange and Parsonage Close plus a sum for the bus shelter near the High Street crossroads.

For 2024 we are planning to invest in new Christmas tree lights. The lights looked lovely at Christmas. However, those at the Highfield Road Junction are now quite old and have a fragility to them. In putting them up, several of the icicles broke and they are really coming to the end of their life.

We will be considering the options in respect of replacement at our meeting in March. They certainly do make the village look great at Christmas.

We have reviewed all expenditure and the Parish Council has agreed a 2.36% increase in the precept to £58,200 which would increase the band D rate by 1.9% from £57.68 to £58.77.

Continued on page 3

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Neighbourhood Development Plan

If you have been following the activities of the Parish Council in the minutes you will be aware that we have met with both Bedford Borough Council planning department, and separately with MP Richard Fuller, to reinforce the importance we put on the Neighbourhood Development Plan and to check that the plan is given the necessary weight when planning applications are considered.

Early in January we had a very positive discussion with Jon Shortland, Chief Planning Officer at Bedford Borough Council. He confirmed that he would meet with Council/NDP Group again for both Station Road and High Street sites once reserved matters applications were submitted. We also agreed that the Parish Council would write to agents requesting meetings due to our interest in the proposals.

Richard Fuller also set out the backing the government gives to Neighbourhood Development Plans and has expressed support for ours.

The application submitted for the High Street is for access only and relates to 10 dwellings. Further planning details will be submitted as the process evolves.

A lot of you will be aware of the changes proposed to Lincroft School. Some members of the Parish Council attended the open evening on the 29th January. We will consider the application in due course, as it will be presented to the council through normal planning channels shortly. You too will be welcome to make comments as you wish on the plans that were laid out.

Parking and Double Yellow Lines

The Parish Council has agreed to request double yellow lines at the entrance to Reynes Drive and to Flax Close. We have done this due to the significant amount of traffic at school times. People park their cars too close to the ends of the junctions making it difficult and dangerous for residents to leave their premises, and for children trying to cross at the end of Reynes Drive. The fact that there is continual movement as people stop for short periods of time also adds to the challenges in these areas.

If you look at some of the comments on Facebook you see that residents regularly complain that cars park over their drives, blocking them from leaving. If this happens every day at school time you can see why residents get fed up with it.

The Parish Council recognises that Oakley is a village environment and we are not keen to agree to ongoing urbanisation of the village. To that end

we are not seeking to implement double yellow lines in the village as a matter of course. Inconsiderate parking, car ownership and volume of traffic are a symptom of today's society for all of us, no matter where we go. We do have our speed cameras in the village and there continue to be notices of intended prosecutions for drivers who exceed the average speed.

Speeding, Consideration for others and our village environment

We are very lucky to have our own Speedwatch team in the village. We met with them at our December Council meeting. They have now built up a significant amount of data, which is helpful for us to see trends of activity over several periods.

A lot of people speed into the village as they come in via Highfield Road and the team have done a lot of work at the part of the village. Speed Watch events follow police approved procedure and results are sent to the police by the Clerk.

I continue to appeal for all drivers to consider where you are parking, whether you could walk and the impact of parking on the pavements, or of driving over grass verges and tearing up the grass. We all live here and we want Oakley to be a lovely environment that can be enjoyed and accessible to all.

See you in April?

Finally, I do note some occasional comments on Facebook saying the Parish Council does nothing!

If you are a doubter, then please do make contact and I would be very willing to take you through the areas, issues and projects that we get involved in and maybe also set out some of the statutory boundaries the Parish Council operates within.

Alternatively, just a quick reminder of the date for the Annual Parish Meeting – 7.00pm, 2nd April – see you there – doubter, detractor or fan. You are all welcome.

Kind regards to everyone in Oakley.

Sara Fardon, Chair

Parish Clerk's Working Hours

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

Oakley Show

Sunday 8th September 2024

fruit - vegetables - flowers
baking - chutneys - preserves
arts - crafts - photography

entries are invited from everyone
any age - any skill
so have a go

a Show Programme will be delivered
with the June Oakley Newsletter

contact: 07778 537427

for more information

follow show news
on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/OakleyShow>
and in the Oakley Newsletter

OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY

?? ? ? ?
QUIZ
? ? ? ? ?

Run by Oakley Parish Council and held in Oakley Village Hall

Friday 15 March 2024

Friday 19 April 2024

Friday 17 May 2024

Friday 21 June 2024

7.30pm start

Maximum 6 people per team

£3.00 per person (cash payment only please)

Bring your own snacks and drinks (alcohol allowed)

Anyone can join but to help with logistics 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**

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Annual Parish Meeting

being held at

7.00pm,

2nd April

at the Village Hall.

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with your Parish councillors**

All are welcome.

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Borough Council News

Footbridge under Lovell Road Railway bridge

The problems caused by flooding under the railway bridge continue, with the water affecting electricity cables, causing power cuts throughout Oakley. However, at the time of writing, the legal process is still underway to try and get Network Rail to repair the broken pipe that is causing the problem, or to allow Borough council engineers access to repair it themselves.

As an interim measure, after two years of trying to find a solution to pedestrians having to wade through inches deep water, the current Deputy mayor, Councillor Jim Weir, authorised the installation of a raised footway to lift people above the flood water. We are extremely grateful to him for doing this and for setting in motion the legal process to try and fix the problem permanently.

Although the walkway has cost the council a lot of money to install, the cost will be added to the claim from Network Rail.

Council Budget agreed

At the Full Council meeting on the 7th February 2024, the Council passed a budget with the proposal receiving cross party support.

The budget includes priorities such as:

Continuing the roll out of 4 hours free parking in Borough car parks in order to encourage more people into our town centre

A regular programme of town centre events, again to draw more visitors into town

An improved cleaning and maintenance regime in the Borough

Improvements to the standard and accessibility of public toilets

Money for school improvement across the Borough

Better maintenance of trees in streets

Improved recycling, including trials for doorstep glass recycling and food waste recycling

Council Tax increase

Councils up and down the country of all political persuasions are facing significant financial pressures for 2024/25.

Bedford Borough Council will be seeking to increase Council Tax by 2.99% and the Adult Social care precept by 2.00% in order to continue to deliver services to residents, whilst ensuring that budgets balance.

Green waste

Green waste collections will resume from 1st March 2024. You can check your bin collection timetable on the Borough council website.

4-hours free parking in Bedford Town Centre

The Council agreed in late 2023 to introduce a trial of 4 hours of free parking at Allhallows. The current statistics point to the trial having a positive impact on the Town Centre with footfall continuing to increase and new shops opening. Further information will be provided after the trial period has concluded and the data has undergone full analysis.

Universal

The Council has been hosting meetings with representatives from Universal Studios since May 2023 and facilitating briefing sessions with local stakeholders including ward councillors and parish councils. Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the discussions it will be confidential. However, the Council have committed to being as transparent as possible during the process.

EWR Routes

Mayor Tom Wootton commissioned research into all proposed routes, including several southern routes proposed by local pressure groups, to enable the council to compare the costs and benefits of each. He held a special meeting of councillors and the groups to explain the results. The meetings webcast and report is now available on the Borough web site along with minutes of the residents meeting that was held in Clapham Village hall in the autumn.

GLL/Leisure sites

The new leisure provider GLL have taken over the leisure sites around the Borough, with all leisure facilities outside Oasis Beach Pool now re-opened.

Our leisure sites have undergone major work to address the over 1000 issues that have built up over the last decade and bring them to a safe and reasonable standard. There are still many improvements planned for the future.

Download the BETTER app at <https://www.better.org.uk/booking> to find out about what will be on offer at:

Bedford International Athletic Stadium

John Bunyan Sports and Fitness

Robinson Pools and Fitness

Kempston Pool and Fitness

Mowsbury Golf and Squash Centre

Continued on Page 8

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Borough Council News

- Continued

Resident Recreation

In an effort to improve the leisure and recreation options available for residents across Bedford Borough, the Council has secured a 12-hole mini golf course that will be opening at Russell Park. The project commences in the coming weeks with an expected duration of 8-12 weeks, aiming for completion by the Easter break.

The John Bunyan Museum will be reopening on Tuesday, 20th February at 11am with a new gift shop and entrance.

The Panacea Museum and "Garden of Eden" has opened in Bedford. This exhibition explains the origins of the Healing, how it became so well-known, and why it finally ended.

Bedford Park Tennis Courts

For a number of years, the Council has not done any significant maintenance work on the Bedford Park Tennis Courts, apart from replacing tennis nets and undertaking chemical treatments for moss. The lack of maintenance has resulted in Bedford Park tennis courts now being considered

dangerous and in serious need of maintenance.

To help address the lack of maintenance the Council has now secured £370,000 from the government and the LTA Tennis Foundation to improve the courts through resurfacing, repainting and the installation of new gate-access technology and an online booking system.

The courts will be reduced from 9 courts to 3 as the council has been advised that they need to be repositioned to protect the trees in the surrounding area.

Jane Walker

Borough Councillor for Oakley

If you need any further information or assistance with issues at the council, you can contact us on

Jane Walker

Email: jane@janewalker.co.uk

07952 879587

Facebook: Cllr Jane Walker

Jon Abbott

Email: jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com

07784 549180

Facebook: Clapham & Oakley Liberal Democrats

Oakley resident publishes first novel.

If the old cliché, 'Everyone has a book inside them.' is actually true, it took decades of procrastination and excuses before mine escaped. I finally put pen to paper in late 2021 and began creating Finding Carla. More than two years later I proudly held a copy of my first novel in my hand, admiring its distinctive cover. It was just as I had imagined it right from the beginning of this long and rewarding project.

They say write about what you know. Despite the many interesting days I spent, back in the day, as part of Folly Stores and plenty of tales I could recite from many an evening spent in the local watering holes, I decided to write a novel drawing on numerous adventures I shared with my husband, Dave, whilst touring around the USA in our eye-catching hot-rod, purchased in Denver, Colorado, in 2007.

I drew on these memories to write a fictional tale about Carla, a prematurely retired 50-something mum and grandmother who jets off to America for the trip of a lifetime along the legendary Route 66, after her husband ups and leaves her out of the blue. All bar one of the characters are fictional, but many of the events happened in real life, with the more outlandish stories actually being true! The book chronicles the background and

landscapes of historic Route 66, which runs from Chicago, Illinois to Santa Monica, California, bringing it to life through Carla's eyes during her exhilarating and sometimes perilous journey, in a classic red Corvette (my dream car!).

I have been delighted by the positive feedback and reviews I have received so far from both men and women alike. This five star review, posted on Amazon, says, 'Great read, Lesley's style of writing takes you along with her for the ride through the twists and turns of the adventure along the famous Route 66. The various characters throughout the story definitely make the book fun and enjoyable. Hoping there is a sequel to come, made me want more adventures...' and has spurred me on to write a sequel.

Finding Carla is published by Wrate's Publishing and can be purchased direct from me for £9. Contact me by phone/text/ WhatsApp 07946 520651 or via my Facebook page Lesley Anne Brown – Finding Carla. The Kindle version is available from Amazon priced at £2.99.



Lesley Anne Brown



SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS COMING UP

Sun 10th Mar	10.30am	Joint Mothering Sunday Service - St Mary's
Sun 24th Mar	10.30am	Palm Sunday Service - Oakley Methodist Church (OMC)
Mon 25th Mar	3.00pm	Holy Communion & Stations of the Cross - St Mary's
Thurs 28th Mar	6.30pm	Maundy Thursday Reflective Service & Supper - OMC
Fri 29th Mar	10.00am	Good Friday Craft Workshop- St Owen's Bromham
	2.00pm	Good Friday Service - St Mary's
Easter Sunday 31st Mar	10.30am	Family Communion Service & Egg Hunt-St Mary's
	10.30am	Easter Sunday Service - OMC

MESSY CHURCH

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

Messy Church For All is for all ages and is meeting on Tuesdays 19th Mar, 21st May & 18th June at 3.30pm at Oakley Methodist Church.



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

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

TEAS IN CHURCH

St Mary's popular 'Teas in Church' is back! Sundays from 3.30pm to 5pm, begins 26th May. Why not come along and enjoy delicious refreshments in beautiful surroundings, while supporting your local church?



COMING SOON

In August we celebrate 50 years of the Oakley Methodist Church 'new' building!

Keep an eye out for our celebration events.

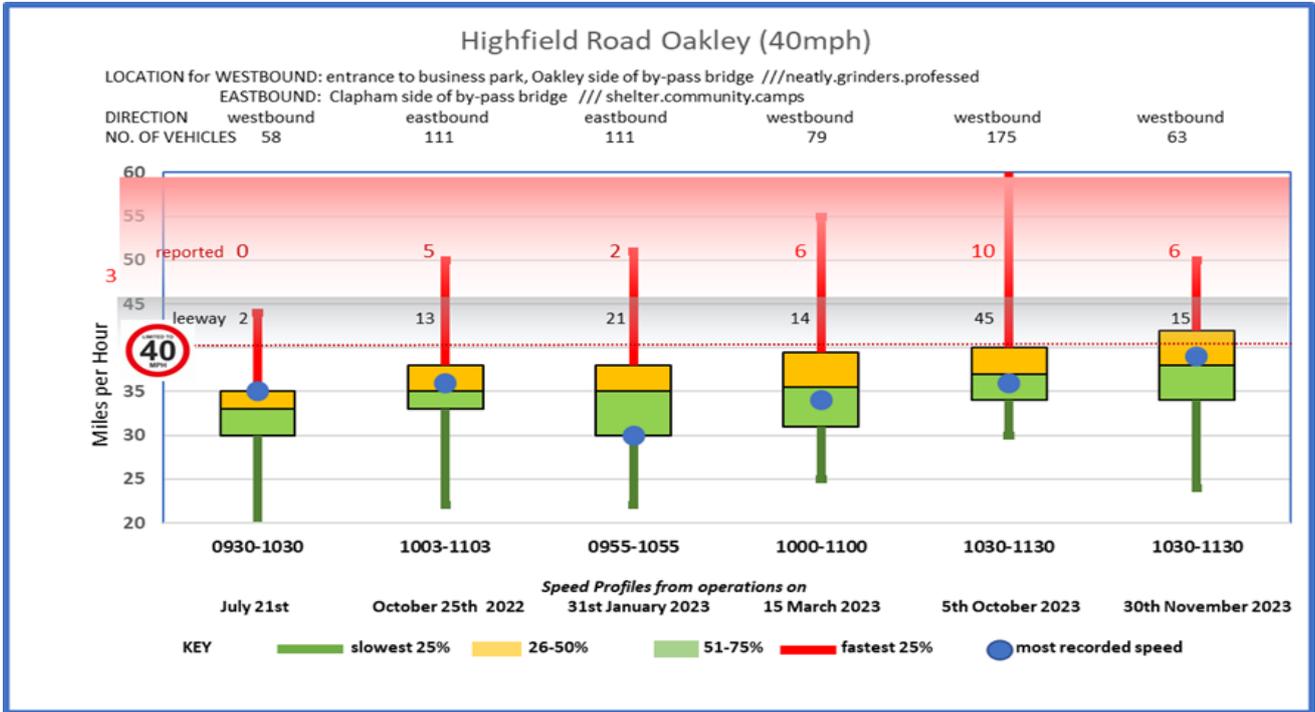


CONTACTS

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

Oakley Speedwatch Report

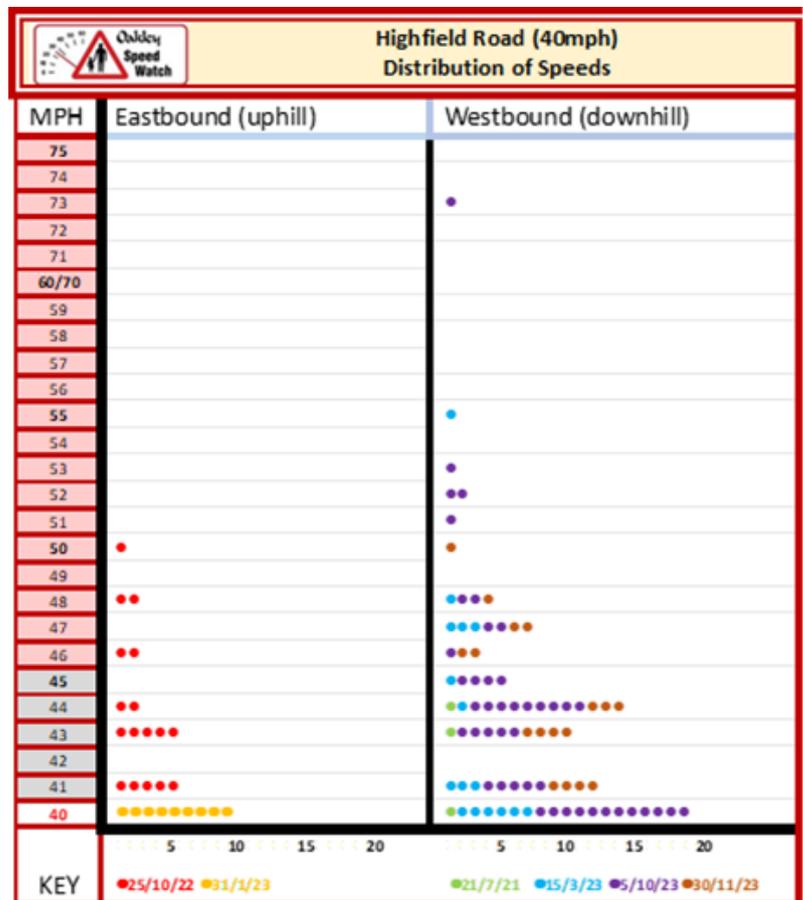
We were delighted to be invited to the Parish Council's December Meeting to give a short presentation of our work and share samples of the data we have collected and analysed. This was well received and in the ensuing discussion and questions we felt that the Council had a real interest in the data. We have subsequently been invited back to the March meeting and look forward to taking part in a further discussion.



One of the locations that is bound to be discussed is the 40mph section of Highfield Road. We mentioned in our last report our recent visits there and the chart below shows all visits up to the end of 2023. The vertical red lines show the range of speeds achieved by the fastest 25% of vehicles in these six hours. We analysed this in more detail to show how the speeds are distributed in this range. As might be expected the fastest speeds are outliers (some way from the majority of the data) though the likelihood of pedestrians walking up hill being confronted by approaching traffic above 50mph is concerning, especially since we know data from our observations is always about 4mph lower than when we are not there.

In our next report we will be looking in more detail at some of the data collected from the remote monitoring equipment. Meanwhile, warmer and dryer conditions for operations is something to look forward to (we hope).

Paul Phillips (Speedwatch Co-Ordinator)



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Oakley Youth Club is looking for staff

Oakley's Youth Club has been running for many years, each Friday night during term time and is much loved by young attendees.

We are seeking a Youth Club Assistant to help supervise activity, organise games, engage and support the Youth Club Leader. Contracted for 3 hours per **week**. One Youth Club Assistant is already in situ.

We may shortly have a vacancy for a Youth Club Leader so if this appeals to you then please get in touch to find out more

Tell Me More..

If YOU like working with children, are creative and responsible and would like to be part of a small friendly team then this role is for you. You may have experience of working with children, be a parent, or just fancy something different.

The team have a great time running the Youth Club and it is a much loved part of the Oakley Village Scene.

We take the governance and safeguarding of the Youth Club very seriously and have a clear set of rules and procedures in place. DBS checks will be carried out.

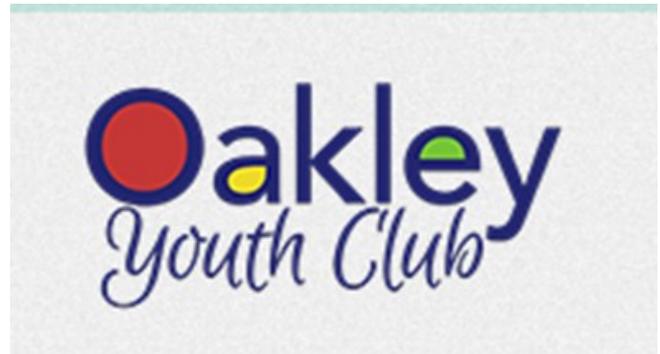
Competitive rates of pay apply.

The Youth Club is fully supported by the Parish Council and there is a small committee, of Chair, Secretary and Finance Manager to help with the running of the Club

How to apply or find out more

Candidates are being sought now.

To find out more please contact Sara Fardon Secretary at oycsecretarial@gmail.com



Phantom Sprayer

Spring is around the corner, and we now have many spring flowers showing, brightening our lives, despite the constant rain and floods.

With all this rain, any dog mess left lying on footpaths can be a source of even more problems than usual, as it could be very slippery and cause someone to fall over. Bad enough falling, but to fall in such a mess a really horrible thought.

I see comments on the local Village Facebook page complaining bitterly about those who still refuse to clean up after their dog. I appeal to you, let us have a perfect Village with absolutely no dog's mess anywhere. The majority do pick up after their dog and we have the red bins and the ordinary black bins all over the village for disposal. They can all take the rubbish and the black bins of course can take the ordinary litter. It is not hard to carry a few plastic bags in your pocket and just pick up the mess and dispose of it in a bin.



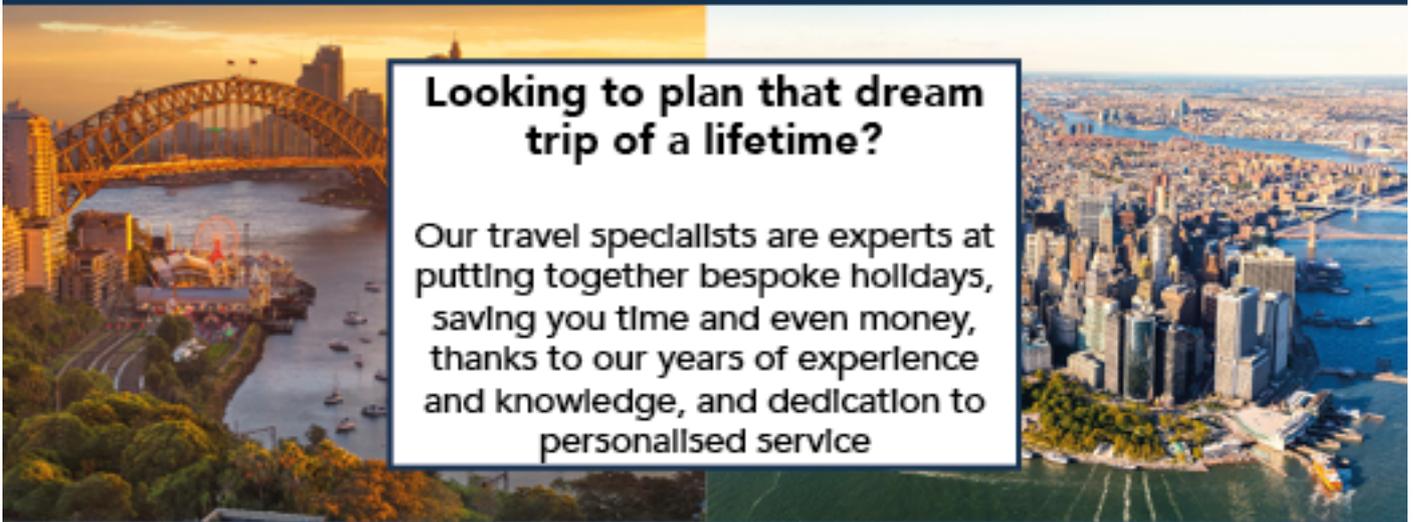
If your children want to walk the family pet, please first train them how to safely pick up in a plastic bag and bin it.



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Oakley Methodist Gift Service and Songs of Praise for Christmas on 17th December 23

Sunday 17th December was the Oakley Methodist Church Gift and Songs of Praise Service where it was lovely to welcome some Oakley visitors and friends to join members of our regular congregation.

During the service people donated items for the Bedford Food Bank including some Christmas treats. The service was led by the Oakley Methodist Worship Group and headed by Sue Plant.

Various Oakley Methodist church members had chosen some of their favourite carols and we sang them not necessarily using the tune that is in common use nowadays. We celebrated two of the tunes for 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' and sang a very different but beautiful tune to 'Away in a Manger'. The Calypso Carol - 'See Him Lying on a bed of Straw' was a favourite of several of the congregation.



Sue shared a couple of very meaningful Christmas Poems as well as her Christmas Message, during the service. The Village Christmas Card is such a great way of reminding us all of the very many activities that are held in our village at this exciting time of the year. Thanks to all who took part in this service, it being the third Sunday in Advent. Carol Singing in the Beds Arms was to follow in three days!

All this might seem quite a long time ago but it is salutary to remind ourselves of the good things that take place in our village during the year.

Jan Follett Oakley Methodist Church

North Bedfordshire Rural Community Policing

We have been given a quantity of these cards to give out at events we attend. The idea is to place it next to your phone to remind you to take steps to ensure that you do not fall victim to fraud. The advice is to STOP. THINK. TELL. If you are not sure what to do, hang up the phone and call someone you trust. Tell them what has happened. You can then take whatever action you feel is appropriate. You may feel you wish to report an attempted fraud. Even if you do not think you need to be told this, you may know someone this advice could help.

When the phone rings



STOP. THINK. TELL.

Do you know who the caller is?

If not it could be a **fraudster!**

Even if the caller is claiming to be from the Police,

a Government Agency or a Bank - it could still be a **fraudster!**

Hang up the phone and call your trusted person.





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Down Memory Lane – The Old School and learning to swim

In the early 1800's Oakley children were educated in two cottages, in ruinous condition, that stood on the entrance to Oakley House owned by the Marquis of Tavistock. In about 1840 he decided to build a new entrance but the cottages were an obstruction.

He demolished the cottages but in return built, on a new site in what is now Lovell Road and at a cost of £480, a solid and attractive school including accommodation for the schoolmaster. Building started in 1841 and the new school opened in 1842 with 40 boys and 10 girls attending.



As a life long Oakley resident my primary and secondary education was undertaken in the village. Living in Station Road opposite the Playing Field I walked 100 metres up Station Road to Lincroft. Prior to that my primary education started in 1964 when I took a similar walk down Lovell Road to what was, by then, the 122 year old building that had become Oakley County Primary School.

I have many happy memories of my time there including using, in the warmer months, an open-air cold water swimming pool built above ground with wooden changing rooms. Built in the mid 1960's such a school facility was unusual at the time. Villager donations covered half of the building costs, the local Council providing the balance. Sited on an area now covered by Flax Close, access was by a footpath that ran from the school through what is now The Spinney. School swimming lessons were provided and many Oakley children, myself included, learned this life long skill in that pool. It was also available outside of school times on the condition that a parent volunteered to supervise.

Many parents did so but one volunteered frequently; Mrs "Paddy" Brown. "Paddy" was our "hero" for volunteering to regularly supervise our sessions and for giving up her time over a number of years to clean and maintain the pool. "Paddy" moved to Oakley with her parents in 1939. Now in her 90's I am not aware of anyone who has lived in the village longer than her.

The late 1960's saw the "new estate" housing development and a rapid increase in the village population. For comparison, in 1961 the village population was 624, in 1971 1335 and in 1981 2296. In 1971 the primary school, with 114 registered children, was deemed unsuitable for the growing numbers of children and in July 1971 was closed and affectionately became known as "The Old School".

On the closure the new Oakley Lower School was opened in Station Road and the swimming pool re sited. The photos show the "Old School" in c1900 and in 2011 showing little has changed !!

Today the now 182 year old Grade 2 listed building is used as a Day Centre for the elderly and by the Youth Club and is available for hire for regular or ad hoc bookings.

Richard Worker



Oakley Allotments

This report only resembles last year's in that I have no guest contributor for this issue. Otherwise, the over-winter story has been totally different, the weather having been much warmer and very much wetter.



Last year very little survived repeated severe frosts. This year we have harvested leeks, carrots, parsnips and some greens throughout winter. We also have brussels sprouts still to pick, although they are smaller than usual and late to develop.

There were some short periods of drought during 2023, but also some very wet periods. We used the mains water at the allotments very little, compared to some past years. We can look at some of the winter numbers as we record our solar power generation figures and rainfall at home daily. The power generated by our 2.2 kilowatt system gives an indication of intensity and duration of sunshine day by day.

2022-3 (average daily generation in kilowatts and total rainfall for month in millimetres):-

November	2.32	104
December	2.13	29 and 10mm of snow
January	3.10	46
February	4.38	5 (yes, only 5mm!)

2023-4:-

November	2.89	55
December	1.24	72
January	2.80	69
February	2.79	78 (up to the 22nd of February)

This February has been a lot wetter than average with flooding in many areas of the country. Although our rainfall has not been as extreme as in other areas of the country, Oakley bridges have been flooded a few times this winter. This has been a rare occurrence in recent years.

With the weather being more unpredictable it is not easy, or possible, to plan much at the allotment. It has been so wet in the past week that it has not been practical to do much work on the ground. However, our allotment will need the soil enriching as soon as the ground dries and warms up a bit. We use a combination of pelleted chicken manure, our own compost and bags of farmyard manure.

Fortunately, our plot is mostly clear of weed cover, so we have been pruning fruit bushes and our blackberry, which produced a massive crop again last year. I have also cut the wild blackberry back that encroaches on the track by Pavenham Road. It seemed to have ambitions to gradually take over completely!

I hope to have contributions from our younger enthusiasts for the next newsletter, as there are a number of allotments where tenants' children, and even grandchildren, are taking an active interest in gardening.

Please contact me or Ann Paice if you are interested in taking on an allotment. We have a short waiting-list at the moment,

Let us hope that 2024 will be a more calm and predictable year for gardening!

Steve Nicholas



LINCROFT
ACADEMY



Meridian
Trust

Lincroft Academy became an 11-16 secondary school in 2019, having previously been a middle school for children aged 8-13. While there were additions to the site to support the change at the time, those of you familiar with our site will know that we have struggled with some temporary buildings in poor condition, and a lack of some of the specialist spaces that the delivery of a secondary school curriculum demands. Our children and staff deserve better spaces and facilities.

Since taking over the operation of Lincroft Academy in September 2021, Meridian Trust have invested over £4 million of capital funding to refurbish much of the school and to build a new kitchen, dining hall, activity studio and parking (due to be completed in May 2024). Working with Bedford Borough Council, we are pleased to be able to announce the next phase of our plans with you.

Bedford is a rapidly growing area with a local plan that outlines the need for more than 20,000 new homes to be built between now and 2040. This will of course require additional school places to be delivered. The local authority would like to expand Lincroft Academy from a pupil admission number (PAN) of 210 a year, to 240 a year from September 2025. This would increase the overall capacity of the school from 1050 to 1200.

Phase One in 2021 saw the internal remodelling of classroom spaces.

Phase Two in 2022 saw further internal remodelling and the formation of a new School Reception.

Phase Three (completion expected in May 2024). Construction of a new Dining Hall, an activity studio and enlarged kitchen facilities. Outside there will be an additional 15 car parking spaces and hard standing areas.

Phase Four we will shortly be make a planning application for site developments to include a new classroom block with 23 teaching rooms including specialist areas such as Music, Art, DT and Food Technology. Heating is planned to be via Air Source Heat Pumps and electrical power augmented by solar photovoltaic panels. This will be created by the demolition of the Oakley, Trust and Finance Block allowing the creation of a further car parking spaces, site wide drainage upgrades, social areas, hard standing and biodiversity areas.

The new development of the site is being delivered with funding support from Bedford Borough Council and the Meridian Trust. Further details are available from the images viewed at the public consultation event which took place on 29th January 2024 and online at <https://lincroft.academy/lincroft-site-development-expansion/>

Ms Appadoo, Principal and Mr Spencer, Executive Principal



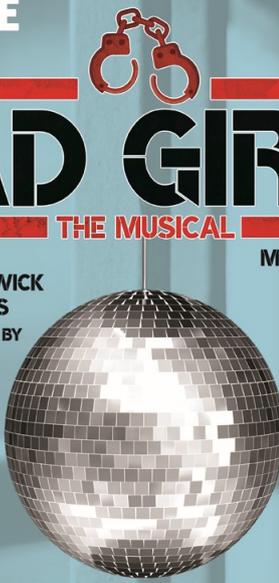
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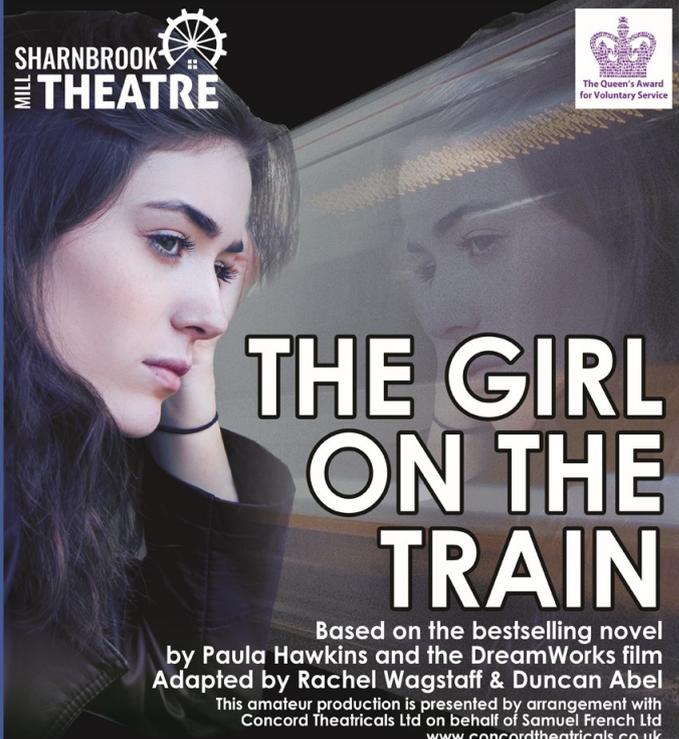


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Email: oakleyruraldaycentre@yahoo.com
Web: www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com
Registered Charity No: 1060283

NEWSLETTER Spring 2024

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. If anyone has access to the internet please visit our website, www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com The site is updated regularly with the latest news from the centre.

We also have a [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/oakleyruraldaycentre) page. This will be updated with the latest news and photographs of events at the centre. The [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/oakleyruraldaycentre) page can be found at www.facebook.com/oakleyruraldaycentre We are also producing articles in various publications throughout Bedford and surrounding areas to raise the profile of the centre.

PLACES AVAILABLE

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

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

For details of costs and advice please contact Lynne on 01234 824935 or 07733 227374.

Enquiries welcome from Bedford and surrounding villages in North Bedfordshire.



NEWS

I think we are all looking forward to some warm spring weather where we can sit out in the garden and go for nice walks.

Many thanks to the Wells Hollow Band, (Pictured right) who entertain our clients on a regular basis. They play traditional folk music and we all love to see them perform. Just before Christmas Kempston Hammers Choir came in and gave a lovely festive performance.

Our Christmas party week went extremely well. We played various games and Father Christmas paid a visit. All the staff, volunteers and clients had a wonderful Christmas lunch together cooked by Angela.

Clients have taken part in various activities including making gift boxes, bird feeders and birthday cards. We have recently held a bring and buy sale. Many thanks to staff, volunteers and clients who contributed.

SUPPORT THE DAY CENTRE THROUGH EASY FUNDRAISING

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

All you need to do is:

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

Thank you for your support.



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The Lovell Homes is a small independent living community comprising two bedroomed bungalows and one/two bedroomed flats

Applicants over the age of 60 are invited to apply to go on the register of interest for a property - priority will be given to those with an agricultural or related background.

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

Or contact the Clerk :

Mandy Newton

On 07736 466965

Registered Charity Number : 200480

Oakley Kindergarten News



Spring feels like it is at least trying to spring and we are busy observing the changes of the seasons in our kindergarten environment. Sheep have appeared in the orchard and we have again taken part in the Big Garden Bird-watch. During our February Half Term Holiday Club, we ventured out into the village, to observe the abundance of blossom and spring flowers.

Do look out for our Easter Egg Hunt, around the village, over the Easter break. It will run from Friday 29th March until Sunday 14th April. Maps available from Oakley Post Office for £3. It is a great opportunity to get some fresh air and support us, as a local charity, at the same time.

As we continue to increase the number of children accessing our setting, we have two new members of staff joining or have joined us this term. Mrs Alice White Martinez has joined us in our kindergarten kitchen and we have another Level 3 qualified practitioner ready to join us in March. Alice is planning to enhance our herb garden, here at kindergarten, to introduce even more flavours to the children at lunch and supper times!

An enforcement officer from Bedford Borough Council visited in January and we received our rating for Food Safety and Hygiene standards within our setting. We are pleased to announce that we received a food hygiene rating of 5, which is classed as 'Very Good'.



The officer was particularly impressed with our kitchen facilities and the healthy menu that we offer. We are now providing up to 150 portions of food per day, including breakfast, lunch, supper, snacks and baby bottles to the children within our care, which shows how much the kindergarten has grown!

From April 2024, one of the biggest changes to funded childcare for working parents will be introduced. All information regarding the funding changes can be found on the Childcare Choices website.

We still have a waiting list for our Rosebuds (Baby Room) but we do still have some spaces in our other rooms. Do get in contact, if you are interested to have a look around or for your child to join our kindergarten. Please see details below.



details below.

Admissions

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

Follow us on Facebook to keep up with our latest news and events.

For information on funding you can see details on our website with a link to Childcare choices or alternatively you can contact the Family Information Service 0800 023 2057



Sally Martiello



Oakley Educational Foundation



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

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

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

Applications accepted in May and November. Receipts for purchases of goods must be provided.

North Beds Ramblers Dates

March Walks

2nd pm Sharpenhoe, 6 miles

9th am Silsoe Church 12 miles, or pm Ampthill, West Car Park 6 miles,

16th pm Willington Dovecote 6.5 miles

23rd am Old Warden Village Hall 12.5 miles or pm Olney 6 miles

30th pm Great Denham Park and Ride 6 miles

April Walks

6th pm Little Staughton, 6 miles

13th am Pegsdon 13 miles, or pm Sherington 6.5 miles,

20th pm Clapham Park 7 miles

27rd am Unlocks Church London 7.5 miles or pm Bromham 6 miles

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729

Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

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



The Humble Way Marker

Have you ever wondered about the bright yellow topped way makers you might encounter on a walk in the Bedfordshire Countryside. How do they get their yellow paint, how do they get into position, what happens when you see one that is either rotten or broken?

Not all counties have yellow topped way markers – certainly none of our northern neighbours do, but if you are a regular walker, you may well be aware that they are so much easier to spot than just a plain post. As part of North Beds Ramblers, we are well used to scanning the horizon for our yellow friends to confirm that we are heading in the correct direction.

Bedford Borough has over 900 km of footpaths, bridleways and byways so imagine how many posts are distributed along those kilometres! Sadly, wooden posts do not last forever and they need to be replaced. This is down to the work of Bedford Borough's Rights of Way team who work hand in hand with local landowners and volunteer groups, including the Ramblers, to try to keep our Rights of Way in good order and well marked.

In the past posts were supplied to the Council pre painted but a few years ago that stopped and in stepped the local Ramblers. A number of local Rambler's members volunteer for RIPPLE (Repairing & Improving Public Paths for Leisure and Exercise). As part of this activity, we are the first step in preparing posts for deployment. A small group mark up the posts for painting and apply three coats of paint – two of which are the bright yellow you will be used to searching out. These posts are then taken out to the various localities where more Rambler's volunteers – along with other volunteer groups and landowners "plant" them in the appropriate positions. Our group of trusty volunteers are in the process of painting the latest batch of 50 posts bring our total to over 400!



So next time you see a lovely yellow topped post – spare a thought for those who spend their time painting and deploying the posts. If you see one that is broken you can report its location on the Borough website, ideally with a picture on "Report a problem on a public right of way". If you would like to get involved, or just walk, please contact North Beds Ramblers on

northbedswalks@gmail.com. We do not just paint and deploy posts, but also carry out path clearance, stile repairs and install gates. It is a great way to help keep all our Rights of Way in good order. Remember Ramblers do not just Ramble!

You can find out more about North Beds Ramblers on our webpage <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-groups/north-bedfordshire-group> or our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/northbedsramblers/> Come and see what you are missing!

Sandra Kelsey



Snippet No. 70

Recent damage (now repaired after closure) to our much-used Oakley Bridge raised questions about its overall condition now.

As early as 1979 there was concern about the bridge's regular use by heavy traffic, there being no weight restriction on it. So, major re-working of Oakley Bridge was undertaken in the summer of 1982 (confirmation of exact date needed). On completion of these major works, a weight limit was put on the bridge.

I cycled to work in Bedford from the time we moved into Oakley in 1978, and chose the Bromham route so that I could take photographs of the work as it progressed over many weeks.

Over 40 years ago, and possibly not remembered by many now, the work to strengthen the bridge included its closure to all traffic except cycles and pedestrians, damming and diversion of the main stream of the river, and provision of a temporary single track beside the bridge for essential motorised traffic.

Some of my photographs are included here – originally taken on 35mm slide film, they have recently been preserved as digital images.

The pictures show something of the extent of the work: installation of extensive concrete foundations, and complete rebuilding of the upstream-side wall, which was finished to be slightly higher than the original wall, presumably to be more resistant to high floods.

I have more photographs if anyone is interested. There is quite a bit of information available on the history of Oakley Bridge, but I could not find any information on the early-80s work. Please contact me if you have any more to add to this part of the bridge's story.

Steve Nicholas



Snippet No. 71 Hedgehog Update

Hedgehogs can occasionally emerge from hibernation throughout milder winters, so I started putting food out for them again in early February. The food started to disappear overnight, so I placed a trail camera out to see what was visiting after dark.

Not one, but two hedgehogs are now visiting regularly throughout the night and starting to cost us a fair amount in Brambles Crunchy Hedgehog Food. This food is formulated to help provide the correct nutrition for hedgehogs – please do not put bread or milk out for them!

There are other foods to avoid putting out for hedgehogs as they are susceptible to bone disease, which is not helped by feeding the wrong foods. Also, try to provide clean water in a shallow bowl.

Our visitors like to drink from our small pond, but it is vital that you provide easy access to the water with sloping sides and a means for them to escape should they fall in. We discovered two baby hedgehogs drowned in our pond a few years ago: I had thought that the sides were adequate, but obviously not, so I installed an additional ramp.



This recent picture shows a hedgehog feeding in the house and another one foraging behind, on the grass. The glass dish enables us to monitor how much they eat, as they visit a few times overnight.

In future Snippets...

The promised competitions.

And, in the next newsletter – Some of our Electric Bicycle experiences.

Oakley Floods

2024



Photographer - Shelley Eden



Oakley Village Monthly Quiz

The Monthly Village Quiz continues to be well supported with over 80 people attending each month. The main aim is to create a social event to enable villagers to get together, socialise and have some fun. You do not need to be "Einstein" or "Mr Clever Cloggs" to take part and I have randomly selected FIVE questions that have been asked and given the answers at the bottom of this article. This will hopefully trigger your interest to come along and take part. **See "poster" opposite for more details.**

1. Which county is known as "The Garden of England" ?
2. What is the capital of Latvia ?
3. What is the largest feline animal ?
4. What was Scrooge's first name ?
5. In "Only Fools and Horses" what was the nickname of the character who mistakenly always called "Rodney" - "Dave" ?

In addition to a visit from Santa the December Quiz featured a raffle and thanks to all those who donated prizes. Profits from the quizzes will be donated to selected village based organisations.

"The Cheesey Puffs" won the December and January quizzes with "The Prawn Crackers" winning in February - well done to both teams, pictured.

Richard Worker

Answers to questions :-

1) Kent 2) Riga 3) The Tiger 4) Ebenezer 5) Trigger



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OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY



Run by Oakley Parish Council and held in Oakley Village Hall

Friday 15 March 2024

Friday 19 April 2024

Friday 17 May 2024

Friday 21 June 2024

7.30pm start

Maximum 6 people per team

£3.00 per person (cash payment only please)

Bring your own snacks and drinks (alcohol allowed)

Anyone can join but to help with logistics 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

CLASSIC CAR MEET

BEDFORDSHIRE

Beds Classic Cars will feature at Oakley Club on the second Tuesday evening of the month from April to September inclusive and are really hopeful that this year is not such a wash out as last year!

So dates for the diary will be

9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July,

13th August and 10th September

Luke and the Classic Car Team



MERRI Flowers As February comes to an end, we find ourselves amidst a weather challenge that is testing our patience and resilience to be self-employed Christmas Tree and Flower Farmers. Mother Nature has most definitely thrown us a weather curveball, presenting us with a series of obstacles to overcome.



The unrelenting February rain has cast very soggy shadows over our fields and whilst the weather has been less than ideal, we want to assure our community that we remain committed to creating memorable Easter, Summer and Christmassy experiences.

Our polytunnels have become sanctuaries, providing us with a dry place to tend to over-wintered hardy annuals and allowing them to thrive despite the challenging conditions outside.

Thankfully, in the face of adversity, there is always a silver lining. This February has reinforced the strength of our UK flower farming community and proved that social media has its benefits. We have gleaned numerous ideas to try at our farm to encourage more people to connect with nature. One such idea is the launch of our 'Lady Gardener's Club' to bring women across the three-countries together to learn new skills, meet new people and consume tea and cake on a Sunday morning. Our Pick Your Own Experiences will most definitely be back and we might even pop in a few evening events!

As we look forward to the arrival of warmer days, we remain optimistic that Spring will bring a renewed sense of vitality to our flower farm. In the meantime, we would love to encourage more people in Oakley to visit our farm in 2024, and perhaps find solace in the simple beauty of our venue that many people in Oakley who visit for the first time say "I never knew existed" and then become regular visitors.

More for information about our farm and our events, visit, www.merriflower.co.uk

Warmest regards, Rachelle Merrill, MERRI Flowers, Oakley.

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)

We have been having lots of fun at Brownies during the Winter months, despite it being quite cold and dark outside! We have enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year, with games using chopsticks and marshmallows. We also sampled some Chinese food, including prawn crackers and fortune cookies. The Brownies enjoyed sharing

their fortunes with the rest of the group!

Our most memorable evening (and probably the loudest!!) was when the Brownies took part in our own version of the Winter Olympics! They played games based on the different sports seen on TV, such as figure skating, bobsleigh, ski-jump, speed skating and cross-country skiing. They were each awarded gold, silver and bronze medals in their teams and the national anthem of their chosen country was played during the awards ceremony!

We have been working on the 'communicate stage 2' badge this term and have enjoyed learning to communicate with others in different ways, through mime, sign language, music, and dance. Exposing the brownies to different types of music such as the 'Flight of the Bumblebee' and 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy!'

On Saturday 2nd of March, we are taking a group of Brownies to 'Thinking Day' at Wrest Park, where they will be meeting with other Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from different units around the local area and taking part in an exciting quest, including a variety of activities and games.

If you think your child would enjoy being a Brownie and taking part in some of these activities and community events, please sign up on the website: www.girlguiding.org.uk (register a child) or contact

Kathy Jones -leader at 1st Oakley Brownies by emailing

snowyowloakleybrownies@outlook.com





Oakley Village Hall

Church Lane,
Oakley,
Bedfordshire, MK43 7RJ

A well-appointed village hall
Main hall with stage and PA system
(Main hall is air conditioned)

Separate meeting room with bar

Well equipped kitchen

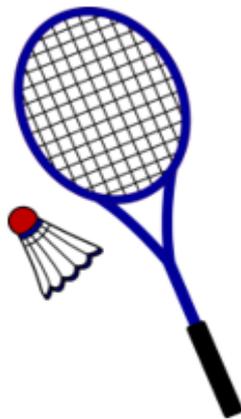
For information and bookings
please telephone 07788 796996



For all Pre-School Children
At St Mary's Church Oakley on
Thursdays during School Term 10am to 11.45
Crafts, Painting, Play, Music, Stories and a
Healthy Snack plus tea/coffee for the adults
More detail from Dorothy Palmer at
01234 823959



OAKLEY BADMINTON CLUB



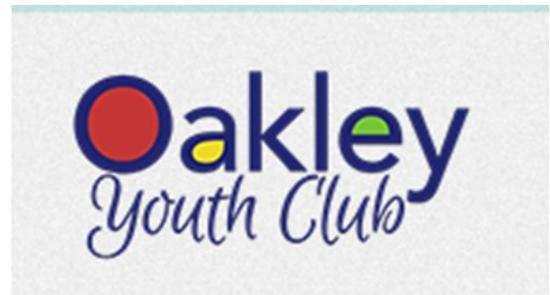
Lincroft Sports Centre

Come and get warm, fixed charge !

Every Wednesday 7.30- 9.00pm

All ages and abilities welcome.

Tel. 07557 441206



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

We have a wonderful group of children.

**We look forward to continue
outside as summer approaches
and have lots of activities planned.**

We have spaces available

for new members too,

please contact us.

7-9pm every Friday during term time.

**£2 entry plus money for our ever growing
tuck shop.**

Sonya, Jules, Maddison and jj.

January and February have been busy months in Harrold-Odell Country Park. The start of the year brought flooding and local reports suggest that water levels almost (but not quite) matched the December 2020 flood levels. For a while at least, it was wellies only around the main lake and, at its worst, waders were needed to pass near the nature reserve! In the same week as the flooding, planned work was undertaken to improve the path surfaces around the entrance to the park, the car park and café.



Photo: Flooding in the river meadow on morning of 03/01/24 looking out from the main car park.

The volunteers have been busy tidying up after the floods, finishing two sections of hedge laying around the main lake, clearing back viewpoints, processing trees that have been brought down by the recent storms, litter picking and managing habitat at some

of our satellite sites such as Bromham Lake Nature Reserve, Pavenham Bury and Stevington Country Walk.

The volunteers are all part of The Friends group and you can join their Facebook group by searching for and following "The Friends of Harrold Odell Country Park".

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 7th & 21st March, 4th & 18th April and 2nd, 16th & 30th May. More information can be found at <https://hocp.co.uk/get-involved/health-walks/>

With half term and easter coming up, and if you have or look after any children, we have two activity booklets available from the café for £1 each. The I Spot booklet takes you round the park to see if you can spot wildlife, sculptures and various other things around the park.

The other booklet contains a wordsearch, maze, nature sudoku and pages to do brass rubbings which can be found in the shelter belt or around the main lake. Great activities to get kids around the lake and entertain them for a while!

At the time of writing, the park is again under excessive water, but that is not going to stop us from looking forward to the months ahead as the signs of spring are already here with tree blossom, snow drops, the first butterflies, hawthorn leaves sprouting and returning spring migrant birds to be enjoyed.

Ed Green, Country Park Officer

oakley Motorcycle club

Since the last OPC newsletter it has been a busy Winter for OMC starting with our annual fun Christmas Quiz on 7th December. The quiz is primarily a fun evening for OMC and is held in aid of the East Anglian Air Ambulance. The winning team were Nick, Nick, Nick, who won last year. They again generously donated their prize back to give a total of £84 raised for EAAA. Thank you to everyone. Nick, Nick, Nick will have their team's name engraved on the coveted OMC Quiz Shield to mark their amazing achievement.



The annual joint OMC & OSSC Grand Christmas Draw took place on 14th December with 100 prizes up for grabs worth over £2,000!

Many thanks to the OMC members who assisted with the draw on the night and to all those who purchased numbers. All draw purchases after 11th December, including those on the night, were donated to the East Anglian Air Ambulance and I am pleased to say that we raised £271.

Many thanks to Dave and Lesley Brown for running the OMC first new Curry Social event in January at the Indiya Restaurant, The Broadway, Bedford. Forty OMC members and guests attended and a thoroughly enjoyable social evening was had by all.

In February we had another motorbike Quiz hosted by Dickie Galka and Bernie Russell. It was enjoyed by all and won by the team Beauty and the Bigots.



The winning team kindly donated their prize back, and with another donation, that meant we raised £51 for our charity The East Anglian Air Ambulance. Over

the Winter months so far we have raised £406 for the EAAA.

We are still **collecting items for our annual bike jumble sale** on a date to be fixed this Spring or Summer. If you have anything motorbike related be it clothing, clothing accessories, tools, memorabilia, books, motorbike accessories, spares etc AND it should not be in the Bedford Tidy Tip, then please bring to OMC as ALL monies raised will go to the EAAA



Delivery does not have to be on a Thursday night. Either leave them at Oakley Club when it is open (3pm weekdays, Midday Saturday and Sunday) as the Stewards know we are collecting and will hold it for me, or ring me (Roger) on 07747 144497 and we can arrange a meet time to transfer it into the OMC lock up.

We have another year packed with trips and events with tours planned to the EAAA HQ at Norwich, the De Havilland Museum, weekend ride outs, the annual American theme night, the Bike of the Year Award plus visits from our dealer sponsors, some offering test rides again.



OMC riders Keith Russell, Maithri Galapitiya, Baz Williams and Jon Thorne with singer Short Straw UK

Last month we had a very unusual request from a Production Company who asked if riders from OMC would be prepared to feature in a music video with members riding around the artist whilst performing. Well never ones to miss a chance of a bit of publicity, on a wet and miserable afternoon on Tuesday 13th February, four OMC members braved the elements to attend Waterbeach Barracks and be filmed with a young Lady called Short Straw UK. She appears to be a kind of rapper, so I am told, but what do I know about music! As payment the company will be sending OMC a donation for the EAAA

Roger "Baysie" Bays Chair - OMC



Oakley Sports & Social Club

Family & Sports Bar

FAMILY FRIENDLY :: OPEN DAILY

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

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

MANY EVENTS HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - SEE OUR WEBSITE & FACEBOOK FOR DETAILS



FANTASTIC FACILITIES



AFFORDABLE FOOD & DRINK



WELL EQUIPPED PLAY AREA



LOCAL + SKY SPORTS & BT

KITCHEN OPEN
THURSDAY & FRIDAY 3PM - 9PM
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 12PM - 7PM



HOME OF AFC OAKLEY

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

OAKLEY SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB, CHURCH LANE, OAKLEY, BEDFORDSHIRE MK43 7RJ :: 01234 824977 :: WWW.OAKLEYSSC.COM