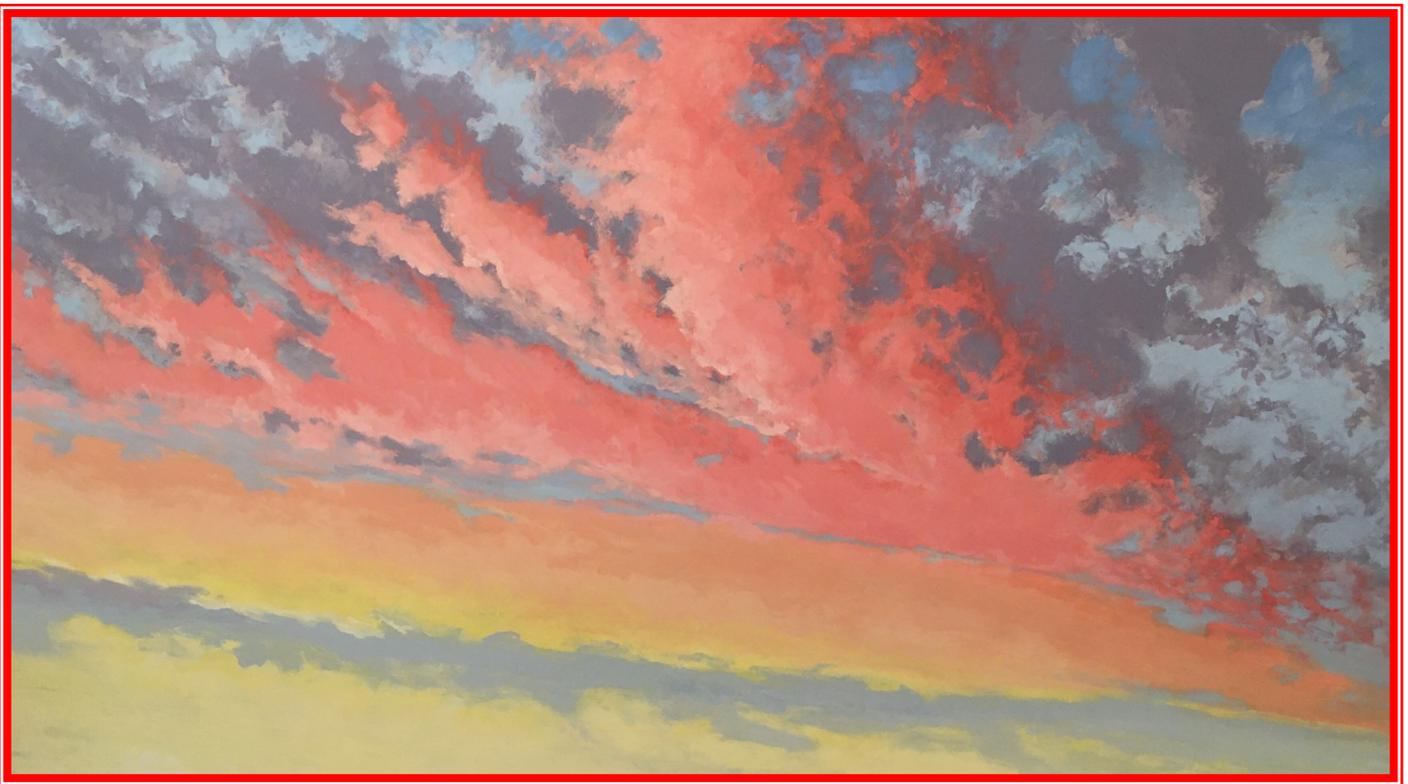




Oakley Newsletter



Winter 2023

Number 97

Look inside for

**Locals with Interesting Lives Hedgehogs! Oakley Village Quiz Update
Churches Together Christmas Events Speed Watch Volunteers Needed
Down Memory Lane Oakley Show 2023 Results Beavers are Coming**



Front Page Picture : Fountain Sky
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

Winter 2023

Dear Residents,
I am writing this just after Remembrance Sunday. I have been to the service for over 20 years but of course this year was my first as Chair, representing all villagers. It was a very moving experience. Firstly, I would like to thank Chris and John Cooper and Pat Knight for the work done on the war memorial. It looks good all year round. The poppies that decorate the village and the war memorial are spectacular and thanks go to the ladies within the village for their knitting prowess. Many of us have had a living connection to the second world war and it will not be long before that too ceases to be a living memory. With so much conflict in the world I hope you can indulge me if we take the time to set out once again the names of the men of this parish who gave their lives that we may be free.

From the First World War

Roland John Prothero
Stanley John Bowyer
Reginald Charles Eaton
Harry James Watson Hart
Thomas Edgar Hulatt
Charles William Hurst
William John Knight
Frank Goodman Line
Thomas Charles Line
Frederick Panter
Artimus William Parker
Arthur Charles Pepper

From the Second World War

Norman William Bowden
Harold Burgess
Roland Clewer
Herbert Dixey
Wilfred Charles Goldsmith
Edgar William Thomas Keech
Richard George Labrum
Raymond Eric Leslie
Frederick Charles Wolseley Timmins
Stanley William Trigwell
Frederick Arthur Wilson
Robert Brian Wright

We will remember them and those who continue to pay the ultimate sacrifice.

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Oakley continues to surprise and delight. The village show being a great example of this. The standard of entries was exceptionally high. It was a joy to look at the eclectic range of entries. I was delighted to come away with my own prize-winning card, along with spoils from the auction later – some delicious blackcurrant and damson jams, home grown fruit, and spicy scones. Thank you to the organising committee who bring this whole event together. We are a very productive village.

The litter pick in September was well supported by the Scouts, Beavers, Cubs and ATC. There were 32 participants and over 20 bags of rubbish were collected. Thanks to all participants and Jane Walker who ran the event.

Parish Councillors Richard Worker and Caroline Worker have been organising a village quiz. Great fun has been had and you can read more about it later in the newsletter. Thank you, to both of you, for your efforts in putting on what has quickly become a very popular event.

In the last issue I wrote about the housing developments for the two identified plots in the village. The developers who are interested in the plot on the High Street have resubmitted their design. This reflects the conversation we had with their agents and now includes bungalows and a reduction in the number of properties to 10. This is encouraging, but we know that the first stage of the process is to obtain outline planning permission. This does not mean that this design will be the final one and so we are aware that this is a "suggested" view only. We have agreed that we will discuss our NDP, its application and how it reflects the wishes of the village with Jon Shortland, Chief Officer – Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Growth at Bedford Borough Council, once the application is submitted. We are also meeting with Richard Fuller MP, to set out our views around the NDP.

At our October meeting Mayor Tom Wootton joined the Parish Council for a short while. We discussed the NDP and our views. The mayor indicated that they take rural issues very seriously and he heard our concerns. He did explain that the planning department at Bedford Brough Council had been severely depleted but was now back to full strength.

The mayor hosted a meeting in Clapham on the 12th October about East West rail. Several Oakley residents were in attendance. It was very worthwhile and was aimed at informing the public of the approach the mayor was taking. In summary, the mayor and his team are opposed to the route that East West rail have chosen. Accordingly, they are seeking to gather evidence to challenge East West rail and have commissioned work to help build a case. Richard Fuller was not able to attend, but you may have seen in the Times and Citizen that he and the mayor attended a meeting with the Transport Minister Hugh Merriman to look at and walk the proposed route. We understand that as evidence is gathered the Minister will be kept up to date on our progress.

The Parish Council see the detail of the correspondence the Parish Clerk receives. One of the key themes that dominates the post bag is parking.

We have received several photos of vehicles parked on the pavements. Parking like this blocks the path for pedestrians! We do pass on every photo to the police, for them to engage with the inconsiderate individuals. Please do not be one of them. In our November meeting we resolved, on grounds of safety, to request that the Borough implements double yellow lines at the corner of Reynes Drive and Station Road and the corner of Flax Close and Station Road. This is because vehicles are parking right to the edges of the junction (and this is of course is against the Highway Code).

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council I want to send a thank you to everyone in Oakley who contributes to the village - there are many people who do this in different ways. Time given freely in a busy world is very valuable. Engagement from so many people really makes village life very special and it is a pleasure to be a resident of the village.

On behalf of the Parish Council, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

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.

Borough Council News

Oakley Road Railway bridge

We are aware that the issue with flooding under the bridge on Oakley Road appears to be getting worse. When the water is particularly deep the Borough Council are sending out vehicles to pump the water away but it is filling up again as fast as it can be pumped away. Our children are constantly arriving at school with wet feet which is unacceptable.



Unfortunately apart from trying to pump away the water, the Borough council can do nothing to fix the problem as the broken drain is on Network rail land. For the last two years the council has been lobbying them to either fix it themselves or allow us access to fix it. As yet, they have agreed to neither, so the council is now in the process of issuing legal enforcement action under the Land drainage act. As this will take some time, officers have agreed to construct a temporary bridge/footway under the bridge to lift pedestrians out of the water. This is currently being designed and I will let you know when it is ready to be installed.

Christmas events in the Borough

This year we hope that Christmas in the Borough will be more exciting than ever. In partnership with Bedford Bid and a number of local organisations and businesses, the Borough council have added lots of new experiences and events to enjoy.

In both Bedford and Kempston town centres, there will be a wide range of performances supported by the UK governments shared propensity fund, which has given grants to performers of all types. We have invested in more Christmas trees and brand new lights whilst Christmas music will be playing across the areas whilst you shop.

The Christmas lights switch on will be on 25th November in Harpur Square (26th in Kempston) from 12 to 6pm, with the switch on happening at 5pm. During this time the town will be filled with live music, dance performances, food and drink plus a seasonal market. We will have free Christmas crazy golf in Silver street and a snow globe for family photos.

On 2nd and 3rd December we will have the Very Merry Bedford Christmas market, thanks to the Bedford Bid and Bedford Flea market plus the return of the free Love Bedford Express land train rides.

Throughout the festive period, The Higgins and

Central library will be hosting various family events. Winter Wonderland in Bedford park will be open from 25th November to 3rd January and for the first time features a real ice rink along with the usual activities including a giant Ferris wheel.

Do not forget there is 4 hours free parking at All Hallows car park plus 2 hours free at other council car parks. Parking is free all day on Sunday in council car parks.

More information can be found on the Borough Council website at www.bedford.gov.uk/christmas

New Leisure provider

Bedford Borough Council has signed a new, 2-year contract with charitable social enterprise Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) for the management and operation of leisure facilities and programmes across the borough. GLL operates services under the 'Better' brand.

The new partnership means customers and staff will transfer from the current provider, Fusion, to the new provider from Thursday 1 February 2024. The centres this will affect are: Robinson Pool, Kempston Pool, Oasis, Bunyan Centre, Mowsbury park golf course, Bedford International athletics stadium, The Kempston outdoor centre and Blue Peris.

As the largest operator in the leisure sector, we hope that GLL will bring their experience and expertise to increase services on offer. Along with this Mayor Tom Wootton's cabinet has unveiled its new leisure strategy which proposes to invest money in a new purpose-built Leisure village. This will include a range of sports, health and well being activities, developed in conjunction with local sports clubs and organisations.

Green waste

Green waste collections will pause at the end of November until 1st March 2024. The new annual waste collection calendar will be available online on the Borough council website from 1st December 2023.

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

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Oakley Allotments

As we enter another winter and the allotment inevitably becomes much less productive, I asked Google the question:

Are gardeners optimists?

A number of responses appeared, and here is one...

"Vita Sackville-West, the owner and co-creator of the great English garden Sissinghurst, wrote, 'The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before'."

I think that optimism is essential, as is being enterprising, as well as inventive and inquisitive. I disagree with never being satisfied, because success such as we have enjoyed this year, in often challenging conditions, is deeply satisfying. However, we always strive to learn more and to do better every year.

This issue's contributor is Marie, who took on a half-plot and was not confident at first. However, her confidence has grown and the rewards are increasing:-

After taking over my half plot earlier this year, I have been working on clearing it and getting it set up ready to plant this coming spring.

The first step was to work out the layout. I have decided to go with raised beds on either side of a central path, with a small shed to the side of one of the central areas, for easy access to tools.

I work full time, so have set the plot up to be low-maintenance and am in the process of creating paths from bark chippings so I can walk around the plot and avoid the mud in winter and have less weeding to do in summer.

The allotment has become a bit of a family affair with my husband helping to build the shed and raised beds, while my 7 year old son has claimed part of the plot as his and is helping me plan what we'll grow next year.

I am a novice gardener, but there is plenty of advice available online (and from my fellow allotment holders), so if you're thinking of taking the plunge and getting a plot, I would thoroughly recommend it!

Thank you Marie.



Our greatest success this year was a 5.25 kilogram, perfectly formed butternut squash, which won first prize in its class in the Oakley Show – quite satisfying! It may end its days in about two gallons of butternut squash soup.

At the allotments I have deposited a tonne of ballast in the main gateway, thereby replacing the paddling pool which appears after much rain, with dry land. I felt I needed the exercise and our allotment gives me much enthusiasm and a fitness boost.

Other jobs I have done include turning off the water and draining-down the system. This will eliminate any risk of frost-damage as the weather gets colder. We have hardly needed any water in past weeks anyway, as it has been wet enough. As I put the system into hibernation for the winter months I remove and check all of the taps: they have non-return valves fitted, as required by regulations, and I need to replace any defective valves before turning back on next year. This year everything was in order, so after a few minor repairs all should be good for next spring's heatwave. That is optimism.

Finally, a big "Thank You" to all of those tenants who assist with occasional grass-cutting and other management tasks every year, often unasked but not unappreciated. Thanks also to Oakley Parish Council, which continues to support the allotments and fund essential maintenance.

Steve Nicholas



VOLUNTEERS of all ages wanted to PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

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

Are you someone who is concerned about the safety of our children from speeding vehicles. Can commit to one hour per month as part of a team of three to keep our families safe?

Training is done at your own pace and in your own home followed by joining a speed watch session in the village to see how it is done in practice.

Please call Paul Phillips on 07968 122301 and talk it through with him or email him at paulphillips65@gmail.com

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News from the Tower

The Oakley Band of Bell Ringers proudly rang the half-muffled bells of St Mary's on Remembrance Sunday to honour those who have lost their lives during conflicts. When church bells are half-muffled, the sound does not ring out nearly as much as when they are not muffled, making the ringing sound more solemn and befitting of the occasion. A muffle is a pad of resilient material, usually leather, that is strapped to the ball of the clapper (the bit that hits the side of the bell) in such a way that the impact of the clapper against the side of the bell is greatly reduced, leading to a 'hum' instead of a sharp 'clang'.



Three of our band members recently joined other local bell ringers on a tour of three 12-bell towers – St Mary's in Hitchin, St Michael's in Bishop's Stortford and All Saints in Waltham Abbey, all very different towers to ring in.

Last month we said goodbye to one of our young ringers who has moved away to start a new job, and we have welcomed back another of our young ringers who is using learning to ring church bells as one of her Duke of Edinburgh Award activities.

We gave a demonstration of bell ringing to the Oakley Beaver Scouts on their recent visit to St Mary's Church. Hopefully some of them will be keen to learn to ring when they get a bit taller!

A few of the band have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Oakley Village Quiz. Our team came fifth on our first attempt and forth on our second, which surprised us! It's such a fun, well organised event and raises valuable funds for Oakley's local groups.
Shelley Abbott

Steve's Snippet No. 68

Hedgehogs have been very much in urban wildlife news recently. They are an indicator of how wildlife is fairing in our seemingly more hostile world; ironically, hedgehogs were common roadkill some years ago, which suggested that their numbers were doing well enough. However, sightings of hedgehogs, dead or alive, have become much more rare.



We hadn't seen or heard any in our garden for some time. Sadly, we had found two very small hedgehogs drowned in our tiny wildlife pond in 2022, despite the fact that I had made the pond with sloping sides to help prevent such a tragedy. So, I was very pleased to see two, very healthy, large hedgehogs feeding at an ant nest in the garden in mid-summer this year.

I have had a set of wildlife/trail cameras for some years so I dusted them off and placed them around the garden to cover possible access places, such as a scrape we had noticed under a fence. Where we deliberately or accidentally provide even minimal pathways between our gardens, wildlife of all kinds can use them as a valuable range in which to live, feed and breed, away from the dangers of roads and many other hazards.

We have been delighted to discover that there is a nightly party of wildlife occurring just metres from our back door. A wood mouse lives in the woodpile I left by a water butt at the bottom of the garden, and it ventures out throughout the night on its expeditions. There seem to be at least three different hedgehogs visiting regularly – they forage around the garden and drink from the pond. The pond is home to at least two frogs.

We also see a female rat passing through occasionally and it has had the audacity to attempt to feed at the bird-feeders in daylight. I'm hoping that neighbours' cats, which also regularly pose for the cameras, are keen ratters.

I have built a hedgehog house, mainly from old decking boards, which appears in one of the pictures here. We put food in the house regularly and it has been quite well-used by the various hedgehogs, although it hasn't been adopted for hibernation.



One hedgehog has been seen passing by with nesting materials in its mouth, so they may soon disappear to hibernate over winter, hopefully to return for the cameras next year.

Locals with Interesting Lives -

Liz Barras, Artist & Actor

Our front-page picture Fountain Sky (acrylic on hand stretched cotton canvas) is part of a series of which five are permanently installed in Bedford Hospital in the Tavistock Ward. "I found myself looking up and seeing beautiful clouds or colours in the sky. I thought, this needs capturing! The collection is called 'The Open Window Series'. Creating work that celebrates things in life that everyone shares is an important part of my process."

Collaborations are also part of Liz's process. Together with fellow Oakley resident Katrina Hyden of Bee and Bottle Ceramics mobile paint-your-own studio, the two created a mug celebrating life in Oakley. "We both loved using our creativity to work together and create something we felt many could enjoy and use to kindle appreciation for the village." Liz has been spotted around Oakley sketching buildings and homes for her latest project using the working title, "Villages of Bedfordshire". "Like the ever-changing skies, you don't know when the landscape around us may change. I want to continue capturing the special places that people treasure or find culturally significant or special. I suppose it's a documentary style of creating art. My processes can be educational as well as expressive in this way." For the project she is relying on a technique called urban sketching which uses ink and watercolour in a fast way of recording expressively. "It's more like illustration rather than using the

accuracy of an architectural designer." Liz is originally from Oklahoma and studied fine art, graphic design and theatre at Oklahoma City University. During her 22 years of living in Bedfordshire, she has created a small art gallery still in operation at King's House on Amptill Road, run community art groups and taught art lessons because she values helping others find their creative abilities. "I'm helping one of my children to apply to study fine art and graphics for A-levels now. It's wonderful to see emerging new talent."

When commissions are quiet, Liz supplements with background acting. Although she can be seen clearly in several films and tv shows, mostly the work is about providing production with moments that move the story along or create depth in the shot. "I've been a very visible reporter with dialogue and also 'that pair of hands' holding an object on screen. When working as a background actor, no matter how you are cast and filmed on the day, the result may show you reduced to a blur or just a body part. I was hired to draw on camera once. A Panavision camera was placed over my shoulder to capture the action of fine pencil work for literally just seconds of the story but it was magic to make."



Paula Radcliffe Way Update

Bedford Borough Council is pleased to announce that the Paula Radcliffe Way works are entering their final phase. The Council remains on schedule to finish the project for the revised completion date of Friday 15 December 2023. Originally these works were expected to end by November, however following a more detailed inspection of the safety barriers it was decided that they would need full replacements, adding time to the project.

These essential works are designed to create a safer environment for both motorists and pedestrians, aligning with the Council's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of infrastructure and improving safety standards along Paula Radcliffe Way.

The completion of this project will not only enhance safety but contribute to the overall improvement of our community infrastructure.

Steve's Snippet No. 69

More competitions next year – I'm sorry to say that I have run out of time this issue due to retirement causing me to be busier than ever!

Coming in spring 2024 :-

More exciting (obscure, annoying, vaguely credible) competitions and puzzles (such as, how do I get away with it), and more serious material, including, "On Electric Bicycles".

Best wishes to everyone and a big Thank You for the kind comments I receive occasionally – my efforts are intended to entertain.

Linch Furlong, Allotments and the Community Orchard

The Trees are looking lovely in their Autumn colours. I saw a kite hovering over the nature reserve during the summer. If you have the app to identify bird song you will have detected linnets, blackbirds and sparrows. If you have the app we would be delighted to know which birds you have identified over the summer. Perhaps we could have a competition in the next newsletter. It has been a lovely summer for all the flowers and insects. I have seen bumble bees, hoverflies and butterflies. I have also seen deer and fox tracks.



I saw a resident carrying sloes for making either sloe gin or chutney. Many people have been picking the blackberries. The crab apples have had a poor harvest although there was a good harvest last year.

The Community Orchard has had the best year for fruit as it is now getting established. I have had it reported to me how the delicious the apples and pears are. A resident has said that the quince tree bore fruit this year. "The king of Spain's daughter" picked a golden pear, it was really a quince. The Spanish make jelly out of the quince fruit which is lovely with meat or cheese.

The allotment holders have reported that they have had a much better year this year. Many of the plots very tidy and sometimes the allotmenters are captured relaxing! The other day I was down there and spoke to an allotment holder and asked what he was looking at. He has a small pond in his allotment and he was looking at a small frog. It had borrowed in his compost and he had disturbed it when he was laying the compost on the soil. He said he had had a slug problem and he hoped that as part of the food chain the frogs would eat them.

Pat Olney



Oakley Educational Foundation

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

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

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

Phantom Sprayer

Christmas is around the corner so Happy Christmas and enjoy your winter walks. Do not forget to take a supply of poo bags so you can pick up your dogs droppings and leave the footpaths and muddy fields clean of nasty surprises for the other walkers. Particularly as many people **now need to exercise their dog in the**



dark. Do not forget to plonk the full bags in the nearest bin on your way home, **not in the field or hanging in the hedge.** For those who still think all this is not necessary I appeal to you to make a New Year's resolution to do so in future for the sake of other people walking and also for the cleanliness and look of our lovely village.



Some people may wonder why clear up in a muddy field? But of course other people walk those fields and muddy paths and they do not want to take smelly dog mess mixed with the mud home with them.



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



NEWSLETTER Winter 2023

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

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

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.

ACTIVITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Since our last newsletter we have been taking part in many crafts and games. We have decorated wooden butterflies, made poppies for remembrance day, ghost cakes and witchy fingers on Halloween, bookmarks and playing various word games which everyone enjoys. We have chair based exercise classes over three days. Our clients really enjoy taking part and we are seeing benefits in their movement and strength, especially standing from sitting positions.

We are now planning for our Christmas celebrations. On the run up to the festive season clients make various Christmas items and it all builds up to our final week where we play games and all clients and staff have Christmas lunch together.

We continue to receive the support of Kempston Hammer Choir and the Wells Hollow Band.

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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Oakley Village Monthly Quiz

Thanks to all of those who have attended the Village Quiz nights. We have held three so far and over 80 people have attended each evening. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves and taken the opportunity to mix and socialise with fellow villagers.

The success of those held to date has resulted in the decision to continue into 2024 and the details are shown in the adjacent "poster".

Well done to the winners to date, pictured, who were "2nd again", "The Cheesy Puffs" and "Prize Hall".

All profits made will be collected and in March 2024 donated to village based organisations.

Please advise Richard Worker at richworker@hotmail.co.uk if you intend entering a team.

Richard Worker



OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY



Being held in Oakley Village Hall

Friday 19 January

Friday 16 February

Friday 15 March

Friday 19 April

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 are entering 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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SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Sunday 10th December	10.30am	Joint Advent Service – Oakley Methodist Church (OMC)
	3.30pm	Christmas Teas in Church – St Mary’s
Tuesday 12th December	3.30pm	Messy Christmas Christingle – OMC
Sunday 17th December	10.30am	Your Favourite Carols – OMC
	6.30pm	Carols by Candlelight– St Mary’s
Tuesday 19th December	8.00pm	Carol Singing – Bedford Arms
Christmas Eve	10.30am	Christmas Eve Carols – OMC
	4.30pm	Crib Service – St Mary’s*
	11.00pm	Midnight Communion – St Mary’s
Christmas Day	10.00am	Family Communion Service– St Mary’s*

* Donations of GIFT CARDS to the Bedford Refuge greatly appreciated



Christmas Teas in Church

Please drop in to St Mary’s between 3.30pm and 5pm on Sunday 10th Dec for a seasonal Teas in Church. There will be hot drinks, home made cakes and a warm welcome. All donations to the upkeep of the church, contactless payment available

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

CONTACTS

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

Down Memory Lane

Lincroft School - an integral part of our village impacting many Oakley families



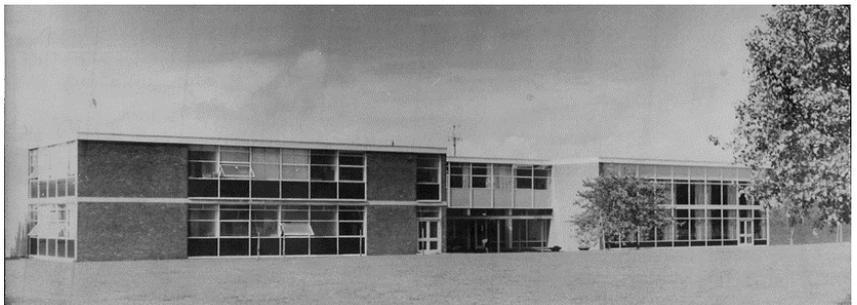
The winter of 1962-3 was referred to as "The Big Freeze of 1963" and was the coldest for 223 years. The River Thames froze over and a car rally was held on the ice and the sea froze for a mile off the Kent coast !! However, despite the challenges Lincroft County Secondary School, as it was known to the Ministry of Education, was opened on 8 January 1963.

Since that day there are very few Oakley families that have not been impacted by Lincroft School. Many current villagers either attended the school or have family members who have done so or currently do so. I attended the school between 1971 - 6 and many of my family members have been educated there, to varying degrees I might add !!

The school opened its doors to 148 pupils who made up 6 forms. 117 pupils came from Clapham and the remainder from Felmersham, Stevington, Pavenham,, Milton Ernest and of course Oakley. Mr E.G.W. Dean was the Headmaster supported by 8 teachers including two senior teachers in Mrs E Hesk and Mr A.P.F. "Waddy" Waddington. Mr G Cox was the Caretaker and his wife, Mrs S Cox, the "School Meals Supervisor".

The name "Lincroft" was taken from a medieval map of Oakley and the name of the field that the school was built on - "Lincroft Ley". The school badge, as shown, was created to include elements of the "arms" of two families who were major Oakley landowners throughout the centuries, the Reynes and Ashburnham families. Wavy blue lines are the heraldic way of showing water, representing the Great Ouse, which plays a major part in the geography of Oakley and surrounding villages. The oak leaf and acorns are included with their associations with the past, strength, growth and endurance.

When I joined in 1971 Mr Dean, Mrs Hesk and Mr Waddington were still key figures within the teaching staff and during my time other teachers that many will recognise included Mr Galley, Mr "Benny" Hill, Mrs Spridgeon, Mr "Taffy" Williams and Mr Wisson. Much of school life revolved around the "house" you were in. When I joined Churchill, Keller and Shaftesbury existed and due to the growing number of pupils Grenfell was created. I was moved from Shaftesbury to Grenfell. At the time it seemed as though I was joined by all the "smart" kids but very few with sporting ability which was a major blow to me as a keen sportsman. Consequently we won very few inter-house sporting events and the summer Sports Day was a disaster but we regularly won the "House Credit Shield" which was awarded for academic achievements !!!



To stimulate memories; we had "all school assemblies" every morning in the Main Hall, annual school cross country races and exercise books self covered in wall paper. Today's politically correct people would have been exasperated as the cane was a constant threat, after school detention common place and at lunch times tables of 6-8 pupils of varying ages would be headed up by a "5th year" while a "1st year" girl would be required to collect the lunch from a serving hatch and serve out the food to the table of hungry fellow pupils !!!

As the old saying goes "your school days are the best days of your life". That maybe the case for many and I must say that I enjoyed my time at Lincroft. Relatively speaking our school days are such a short period in our lives but those years have a great impact, hopefully positively, on us. As can be seen from the photo Lincroft has certainly changed from 1963 to today. The school has gone full circle starting as a secondary, becoming a middle school in the mid 1970's and back to the bustling secondary "academy" of today. Over the years the school has expanded in size considerably and the facilities offered have changed significantly, including the Sports Hall, and development continues to include a new dining hall and dance studio.

Lincroft has changed significantly during the past 60 years but it has proved to be a major and integral part of Oakley life and will no doubt continue to do so long into the future. Richard Worker

Oakley Show 2023

September 2023 brought another lovely show, despite a power cut. Luckily the scones for the refreshments were out of the oven and the scoresheet updated just before we lost power.

We had more entries this year and they were better than ever; not quite as much produce, possibly due to the weather giving us a very slow start to the growing season, but some amazing craft entries.

We had the return of a previous winner for the Best in Show shield; Ian Percival won for the third time. In addition, Ian won the best vegetable and best photograph categories - very well done.



It was a close competition, Yvonne Keyte won the flowers and preserves categories, Pete Blackwell grew the best fruit, Ruth Bender was the best home cook. Willow Exon was the best artist while Alwyn Etheridge, Mary Randell and Rosemary Smart were joint winners of the craft cup. The Childrens' cup was won by Eleanor Goodall.



The Wendy Gater Award for the Best Kept Allotment was presented for the first time and the winner was John Jackson.

We could not put on the show without the help of so many people in our village - Whites ES for sponsoring the programmes, Milton Ernest Garden Centre for the prize vouchers, Central Dental Lab Ltd, Hazel Kaye, Merri Flowers, Tudor Rose, O for coffee, the Tattoo Studio, Miasthetics and Leigh Beavon for our raffle prizes, Bali from the Oakley Post Office for coming to present the prizes, and the Village Hall committee. We must also give a big thank you to the judges as we could not award any prizes without them. Thank you everyone.

To finish things off nicely, we raised the sum of £752 for the Village Hall. In the meantime if you have any ideas or suggestions for next year's show please let us know. We will announce the date for the 2024 show in the Spring.
Oakley Show Committee



Oakley Show 2023



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North Beds Ramblers walk every Saturday

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

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

December Walks

2nd pm Sundon Hill, 6 miles

9th am Woburn 14 miles , or pm Clapham Park 6.5 miles,

16th pm Blunham Church Mince Pie Walk 4.5 miles

23rd am Clapham Park 9.5 miles or pm Elstow 6 miles

30th pm Hail Weston 6.5 miles

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729 Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

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



Walking Festival Success

The rebranded Festival was hosted by The Bedfordshire Ramblers groups and ran between the 9th and 17th September 2023.

The festival was a great success with the 4 Bedfordshire Ramblers Groups hosting 38 walks during the period and attracting over 525 walkers. Walks ran all over the county and comprised Wellbeing Walks of various lengths as well as short walks, long walks and interest walks. There was even a litter pick run in Dunstable which attracted 25 children. It is always lovely to encourage the youngsters to join in! One of the highlights of the festival was a day walking along the River Great Ouse followed by the John Bunyan boat, which after lunch carried us all home again up the Ouse.

Whilst we would always expect to have our own Ramblers join our walks, the Festival allows us to publicise our activities to a wider audience and we are delighted to announce that 40% of the walkers were new to us. As a Ramblers Group we are very proud of our beautiful little county and it is always a pleasure to introduce others to the hidden gems and beautiful countryside that we have discovered and explore regularly. Let's hope that we have inspired more people to get outside and explore the area.

We are already starting to plan the Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks 2024, which will run from 7th - 15th Sept 2024. So put the dates in your diaries and come and join us. With special thanks to all the walk leaders from Leighton Buzzard Ramblers, North Beds Ramblers, Lea & Icknield Ramblers and Ivel Valley Walkers - we couldn't have done it without you.

Photo courtesy of Pamela Bates (Leighton Buzzard Ramblers) Sandra Kelsey - North Beds Ramblers

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Please contact :

Bill Sellars 07980 745292

Email: billsellars@theoldschooloakley.org.uk

Web : www.theoldschooloakley.org.uk



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Or contact the Clerk :

Mandy Newton

On 07736 466965

Registered Charity Number : 200480

Oakley Kindergarten News



This year has really whizzed by! We have been enjoying ourselves so much and we cannot believe that we are already well into the most exciting term of all to work with young children! Christmas preparations are in full swing and we are looking forward to a party for all the children and a traditional Christmas dinner too.

Unfortunately, we did not hold our annual pumpkin/Halloween trail around the village this October Half Term, but we do hope to reintroduce it again next year. Apologies to those who have asked about this.

The changing of the seasons, albeit a tad later than usual, have inspired awe and wonder in the children. From our beautifully placed kindergarten building we can view all the delights that nature has to offer, particularly in the autumn with the abundance of seeds, nuts and leaves that are falling from the trees.

The children and staff spend lots of time in nature, which we know is so good for our own well-being.

We have had another new staff member join us in October. Miss Jessica Everett has started with us as a Level 3 Practitioner. This takes our number of staff to ten and we are so pleased with this, as in our original business plan for the new building, our aim was to create more jobs for the local community. We are now looking for just one more member of staff to join our team from January 2024 and are currently searching for the right person to lead our Rosebuds (Baby room).

Merri Christmas Trees in Oakley have again included us in their charity Christmas tree sales. Thanks once again to Rachelle and Julian for including us in this initiative. Please nominate Oakley Kindergarten, at the checkout, if you are thinking of having a real tree this year.

We still have a waiting list for our Rosebuds (Baby Room) but we do still have 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.

Admissions

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



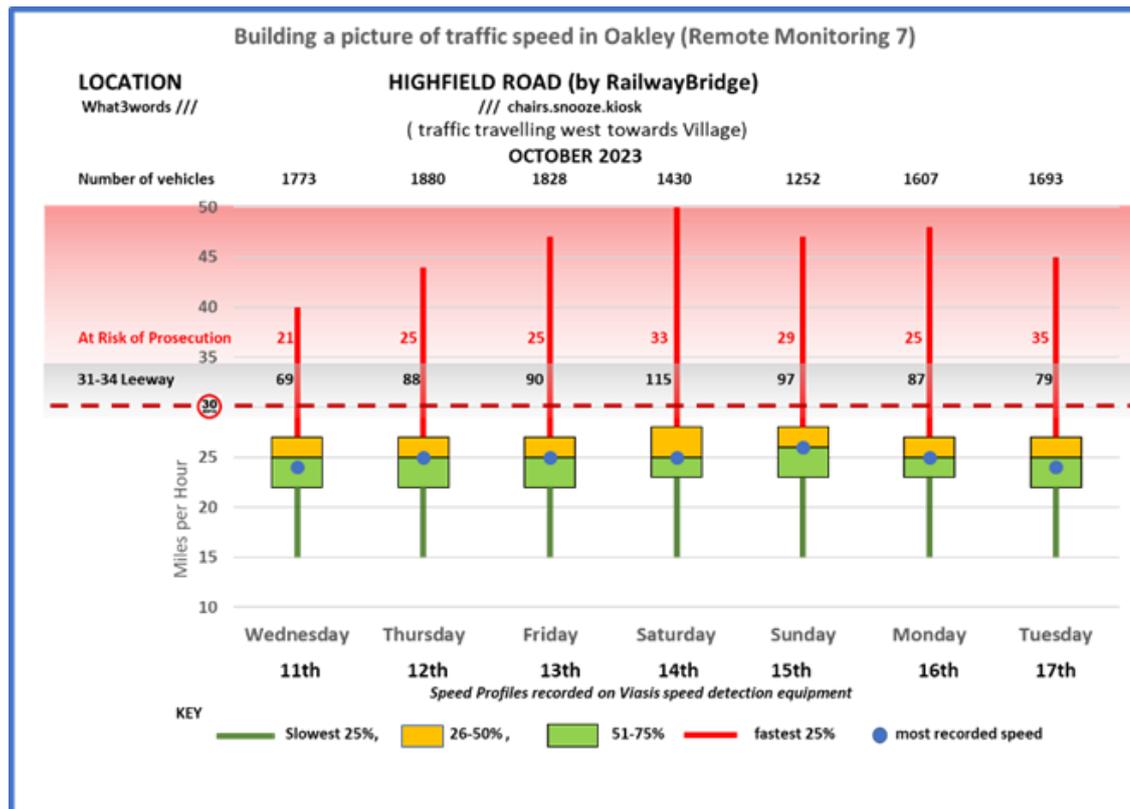
Oakley Speedwatch Winter Report

Our 2023-2024 Season began after a slightly delayed start as our Speed Indication Device (SID) had not returned from its summer break with the manufacturer, being serviced and recalibrated. We had determined to concentrate our first sessions of the season on Pavenham and Highfield Roads, the two areas causing most concern just before our summer break.



Whereas we aim to do two operations per month our only September session was in Pavenham Road on the 27th. The majority of traffic was travelling below 29 mph but 5 vehicles were reported to the Police, one clocked at 50mph which the Police promised to visit that evening.

The 40mph limit in the top portion of Highfield Road has been a concern for a while so we visited twice.



On our operation on 5th October monitoring traffic approaching the village, as a result of the roadworks an unusually high number of 172 vehicles in the hour from 10.30am were seen, with 39 exceeding 41mph 9 vehicles were subsequently reported, 5 exceeding 50mph and one exceeding 70! It is worth remembering that speeds we observe on operations are subject

to the HiViz dayglo jacket effect, and the speeds recorded are on average 3mph slower than when we are not there.

It is therefore useful that in addition to our operations we have two sources of data from our Viacount unit, which records the number, time, speed and type of vehicle in both directions as they pass the unit and another from a Viasis unit, currently at Highfield Road railway bridge. This displays speeds of traffic approaching the village. to make drivers aware of their speed, beginning its display as they leave the roundabout and updating every 1.5 seconds until they pass the panel. Each indication is recorded and in addition the device also records, without displaying, the speeds of vehicles leaving the village. The data can be downloaded and the graph shows a snapshot of speed profiles for a week in October. This shows 75% of the just under 11,500 vehicles (those doing under 15mph have been ignored) was well within the speed limit. An average of nearly 30 vehicles a day were at risk of prosecution, the highest speed of these being 51mph.

As we collect more data, we are realising that we need to look at a number of weeks to be able to say with confidence that our data is typical. For example, further analysis of Viacount data from Pavenham Road has shown the week described in our last report (being the week leading up to the Coronation) was atypical. The number of two-wheelers recorded was unusually high. Unwittingly we described all of the two-wheeler data as motorbikes. We would like to apologise to Oakley Motorcycle Club committee who were concerned there was suggestion the Club might have been implicated and assure everyone that the data we have does not support this.

Meanwhile we will continue our quest to keep you updated on traffic speeds around the village.

MERRI CHRISTMAS TREES

Where has this year gone? Our flower season finished in mid-October and our Dahlia tubers are all dug up and in storage until next year. Our Spring flower seedlings are beginning to flourish in our polytunnel, and we are making plans for lots of events in 2024, with our Easter Egg Hunt most definitely back for 2024 too.

Rewind to the end of October, and we had the most amazing start to our Christmas Tree Tagging season. This was carefully monitored by designating areas within plots for tagging to ensure masses of trees are still available for the next stage of our season. Choosing trees to take away on the same day started on 25th November.

Christmas started earlier than 2022 for some of our customers this year. The first Christmas Tree of the season left our farm on the 15th October. By mid-November our quota of Nordmann branches for Wreath Making was fully booked, because there are only a certain number of trees we are willing to cull for wreaths.

We are now in our 4th Year of selling trees and we definitely are not going anywhere soon. We started the next phase of our business last October by re-planting half of our first plot and all of the Nordmanns we replanted are going strong and predicted to be ready for sale in six years time. YES! You read that correctly. It can take up to six years to grow a five foot tree. With another five plots of trees on our farm we have the next five years covered. So fear not, we are not going to run out of trees anytime soon!

'Word of mouth' recommendations still remain in first place for our farm, yet we are still amazed when people from Oakley visit for the first time and say they did not know we were here. Hence I still continue to create articles to capture new Oakley residents who do not know they have a Christmas Tree Farm within walking distance.



So....if you have never visited your very local Christmas Tree Farm please walk up Queens Close - opposite Oakley Post Office. We do not just sell trees, we also sell decorations and wreaths, created by me, from Nordmann branches and foliage grown on our farm.

Wishing you all a MERRI Christmas from Rachele, Julian, Luke and Josh and our amazing team of seasonal workers.

Contact us on 07946 519737 or email info.merrichristmastrees@gmail.com



Beavers coming to Rushden Lakes

The Wildlife Trust are excited to announce news of a planned reintroduction of beavers at the Nene Wetlands nature reserve, expected at some point during the winter of 2024/2025.

As well as a fantastic opportunity to see beavers return to Northamptonshire for the first time in centuries, this hardworking species will play a role managing the wet woodland habitat in an enclosed area around Delta Pit, helping to continue reedbed restoration work and creating a dynamic and diverse wetland habitat that will benefit a range of other species.

Excitingly, this also means having a population of these distinctive, charismatic rodents very close to people, bringing the opportunity for observation and education via the Trust's visitor centre at Rushden Lakes.

Needless to say a lot of planning goes into the release of any native species, especially beavers. The area will need fully protecting with adequate fencing to enclose them, plus interpretation signage for visitors. The Trust will work closely with partners, including the Beaver Trust, to ensure the highest welfare standards.

Matt Johnson, Wildlife Trust in Northamptonshire Conservation Manager, says: "This is an exciting



and unique opportunity to see this iconic species return to the Nene Valley, bringing back both its natural habitat restoration skills as well as providing an opportunity for the visitors to see beavers in the wild at our most visited reserve."

Excellent habitat engineers, in October 2022 beavers were officially recognised as a native species in England and a European protected species. Many Wildlife Trusts around the country now have beaver release schemes – through extensive research they have found that beavers and the landscapes that they generate benefit both people and wildlife for a wide variety of reasons.

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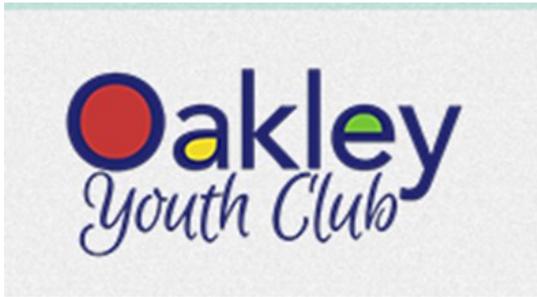
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Thank you to everyone who has supported the youth club this term

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.



Oakley Youth Club

There are have been some changes to the Trustees of the Youth Club.

Firstly I must thank Emma for her long service managing our accounts. Emma is standing down as she has taken a new job and she can no longer give her full attention to the accounts. The Trustees wish to thank her for not only taking on the accounts but for her long service, with Dawn, in supporting her in the running of the youth club where she put in long hours.

Fortunately we have found Virgo Associates to draw up the accounts. They were so impressed by the way that every one including the Parish Council supported the youth club that they have waived their fee.

Thank you to the Parish Council for funding the youth club, our staff for managing the youth club and to Virgo Associates for waiving the fee.

Pat Olney Chair of the Youth Club.

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Girlguiding in Oakley



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

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

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



1st Oakley Rainbows (Wednesdays)

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



1st Oakley Brownies (Fridays)

This term in Brownies they have become excellent innovators and have completed their innovate stage 3 badge! We have had fun, junk modelling, creating, and improving our own zip wires for our speedy explorers, looking at materials that work best for different jobs, creating our own works of art using various different media

and designing and making our own top trumps cards!!

We also looked at different types of leaves, the trees they came from and the fruit they produce. Then we made some Autumnal art as a group on a large roll of paper (see picture).

On Children in Need Day, we decorated Pudsey Bear shaped biscuits, complete with spots and eye patch and played Pudsey-style beetle drive!! The Brownies certainly enjoyed eating the biscuits at the end of the meeting!

A big thank you to those Brownies who joined us on Remembrance Sunday, at the methodist church. They were perfectly behaved and conducted themselves appropriately for the occasion. We had two excellent flag bearers and three others who carefully helped lay a wreath inside the memorial. It was lovely to be a part of it.

The Brownies are now looking forward to their Christmas party on 1st December! 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



The Brownies became engineers when they made their own buildings in their sixes. They had to look at the best materials to use, how to make their structure secure and sturdy using trusses and how they could make it individual and stand out. They did a fantastic job!!



Autumnal Art

Created by all the Brownies. A real joint effort! This particular picture was made on Friday 13th...look out for the four-leaf clovers and black cats, hidden amongst the leaves!!



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



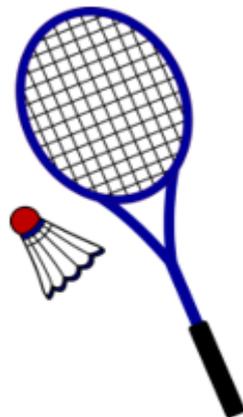
For all Pre-School Children
At St Mary's Church Oakley on
Thursdays during School Term 10am to 11.45

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.

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At this time of year, we can be affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) with the lack of sunlight and the long winter evenings affecting our mood. Getting outdoors, taking advantage of the natural sunlight and partaking in exercise are all recommended to help with this. You don't have to get up early or stay out late to see wonderful sunrises or sunsets and at Harrold-Odell Country Park, there are some spectacular views!



Sunset at Harrold-Odell Country Park

December and January are tough months for our wildlife. Not only is it cold, it can also be a time where food and water are scarce. You can help by providing feeding stations in your garden (remember to clean them regularly) and defrosting bird baths daily, leaving piles of logs for animals to hibernate in, grow dense bushes for birds to roost in and grow bushes and trees with winter berries on for them to feast on.

As always, the volunteers have been busy in the park with coppicing in the nature reserve, cutting and removing the grass on the wildflower areas in the park, clearing ditches out in preparation for the winter rise in water levels, doing the last of the grass cutting of the amenity areas and generally fixing things and maintaining the park. They can always be relied upon to do a brilliant job!

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 14th & 28th December 2023 and 11 & 25th January 2024. More info can be found at <https://hocp.co.uk/get-involved/health-walks/>

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!

Season's greetings and we hope you enjoy your visits to Harrold-Odell Country Park!

Ed Green Country Park Officer

oakley Motorcycle club

Despite a somewhat damp, but busy and eventful Summer, OMC has increased it's membership and we are now back to pre COVID membership numbers of over 500!

On Sunday 15th October we held our annual Memorial Ride which is in memory of all those OMC members who are no longer with us. Members met at Oakley Club and, following refreshments, 29 bikes left Oakley for a ride out. They returned to Oakley Club in the early afternoon for complimentary sausage & chips. Thankfully the weather was dry, sunny and very pleasant for the time of year.

On the 30th November OMC committee member Martin Young (MHFA), who is the volunteer regional co-ordinator for Mental Health Motorbike, will be giving a short presentation about this charity at Oakley Club. Their aim is to have a national network of 1000 mental health first aiders by the end of 2024 to support bikers and their families through difficult times. Their aim is also to make people aware of the situation and why there is a need for a charity such as this. They hope to encourage individuals to become mental health first aiders. For more information please go to <http://www.mhmotorbike.com/>



On 7th December we will be holding our annual Christmas Fun general knowledge Quiz at OSSC. On 14th December is the OMC & OSSC Christmas Draw which will have around £2,000 worth of prizes! As in



Annual Memorial Ride

previous years all profits from both these events will be donated to the East Anglian Air Ambulance.



2022 Xmas Quiz winning team

With regards to the Air Ambulance we are very excited to have received an invitation for OMC members to ride over to their HQ at Norwich Airport for a 2 hour tour of their facilities and hopefully a look around their aircraft. This is pencilled in for mid April so I look forward to posting pictures of it in the 2024 OPC Summer edition.

Next February we will be returning to holding a traditional OMC AGM at Oakley Club. This is something we have not been able to do since Feb 2020 due to COVID. It will be nice to get back with 100 plus OMC members for presentations including the legendary "Pillock of the Year" Award. Have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year

Roger "Baysie" Bays Chair - OMC

CLASSIC CAR MEET BEDFORDSHIRE

The April and May evenings were both cancelled due to heavy rain and a waterlogged field. The July, August and September events although they went ahead due to the inclement weather conditions on the respective days very few show cars turned out. So the only successful night we had was the June event. We are really hoping for better weather in 2024 and look forward to seeing you all in April

Unfortunately there is very little to report on as 2023 has in the main been a complete wash out for us.



Luke and the Classic Car Team



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