



# Oakley Newsletter



**Winter 2024  
Number 101**

**Oakley Carpet Bowls Champion  
Christmas Services Details  
Village Quiz Dates**

**Youth Club Assistant Vacancy  
Duke of Bedford Sold The Village!  
Educational Fund Update**



Front Page Picture : Church at Christmas  
Photographer : Shelley Eden

### 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

Final copy date for the  
Spring issue is 21st February 2025  
The publishing date is 1st March 2025

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### Hello Children

look out for  
Ten more  
little ones



## Parish Council News

### Winter 2024

Dear Residents,

I am writing this on Remembrance Sunday.

As ever, the service was very moving and reflective. During that reflection it is hard not to think that the world is a more dangerous place than this time last year, with ever more conflict under-way. 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, and recognise how lucky we are.

### 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  
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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

Continued on page 3

## OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## From the Second World War - Continued

Stanley William Trigwell

Frederick Arthur Wilson

Robert Brian Wright

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



Did you attend the **Oakley show**? It was another year demonstrating the immense productivity and skill set within Oakley – fruit, vegetables, home baking, art, photography, flowers, jams and crafts. It is great to see what has been going on. I came away with my own prize-winning card, which is always rewarding and I have been enjoying someone's delicious apricot jam that I bought in the auction later. Knowing it is home-made seems to add an extra delicious taste dimension!

The **litter pick** in September was well supported. 16 sacks of rubbish were collected – half the amount of this time last year – does that mean there is less litter to pick up, I wonder? I do hope so. Thanks to all participants and to our Parish Clerk Ann Paice who organised the event and Jane Walker who led it on the day, along with the OSCC who welcomed all litter pickers and gave them a good base to work from.

The recent rains caused so many issues all around as we know in Oakley, Bedford and on a greater scale. Rising **flood waters** are very worrying and I know some residents were affected. The Borough Council worked tirelessly to alleviate problems – we had our own issues with two entrances into Oakley being blocked off. I hope you agree that clear information was provided on Facebook and on the Borough newsletters and websites. Clapham Parish worked to support certain areas in Oakley as well, with access to sand and sandbags. There are lessons to be learned inevitably and Jane Walker and Jon

Abbot are co ordinating in more detail, with feedback into the Borough. Jane is looking at where we can store some sand and sandbags in Oakley. They have written more about this later in the newsletter.

For those that wrote about the debris in the river pushing onto the bridges; we had already raised this with the Borough Council who deal with blockages. They have commissioned removal so the work should begin soon. If you want to send in any suggestions or feedback regarding flood waters, help that could be given or changes that could be made to provide better or different support then please do so – the Borough have an email address of [floodrisk@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:floodrisk@bedford.gov.uk)



On a separate note, you may have heard that the new Government has underlined its support for **East West Rail**. As a result, East West Rail has launched a non-statutory consultation to share information and get your views. You may have received a card through your door giving times and locations for the consultation, which takes place over 10 weeks and runs to 24th January 2025. Details are [eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024](http://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024) . A statutory consultation and a business case will come later.

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 the opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Kind regards 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

## Cleat Hill

There is an ongoing response and recovery programme proceeding in the area. A 100-meter cordon remains in place for the time being to allow investigations take place.

The Council is currently offering residents affected by the incident access to a quiet working space at Borough Hall, including free parking and Wi-Fi. The Council is working closely with relevant organisations to monitor and manage the situation.

Over recent days the authorities have been escorting residents to their own homes, enabling them to safely collect personal belongings and essential items. The bore hole has been capped and gas levels are being monitored in all of the affected homes. We hope that as soon as they are deemed safe, residents can start moving back into their homes.

## East West Rail (EWR) update

In the autumn budget the chancellor confirmed the Government's commitment to the East West Rail (EWR) project signalling the route will include plans for a partial electrification of the route with hybrid battery electric trains. In response to the budget announcement EWR Co has announced that there will be a 10-week non-statutory public consultation that will begin on the 14th November 2024.

Dates and venues in and around Bedford Borough include:

30 November (12pm-5pm) – The Grand Hall, The Sixth Form, Bromham Road, Bedford



9 December (2pm-7pm) – Bedford Swan Hotel and Thermal Spa, The Embankment, Bedford

11 December (2pm-7pm) – Wilden Village Hall, High Street, Wilden

## Bedford town centre

The Council has made the decision to purchase the Lloyds bank building to aid the Mayes Yard regeneration project. Lloyds bank will not move out until the lease expires, but this building along with the former Debenhams building, will allow the council to regenerate that whole area of Bedford town.

The Mayes Yard project aims to turn this area into a vibrant, mixed-use space that combines residential, retail, hospitality, and cultural elements.

Additionally, the purchase of Lloyds (because of its extensive yard at the back), specifically facilitates the provision of a public square and can

potentially provide other benefits such as increasing seating capacity for the Corn Exchange and redeveloping the central library.

## Christmas Light Switch On

The light switch on will be taking place on Saturday, 23rd November in Bedford Town Centre.

There will be many activities starting from 12pm noon onwards, the Light Switch on is at approximately 5:45pm with live performances, crazy golf, a craft fare and a Christmas photo booth and more running all day.

There are more festive activities happening in the Town Centre every weekend in December, please keep an eye on social media, for more information.

## Free parking in the town centre

The free parking scheme has been extended over the Christmas and New year period to include 4 hours free parking in Lurke Street car park to add to the current offer of 4 hours free parking every



day in All Hallows multi story.

## Winter Wonderland

Planning permission has been granted for this year's Winter Wonderland attraction in Bedford Park.

Winter Wonderland will run from November 23rd to January 5th 2025.

If you need any further information or assistance with issues at the council, you can call me on 07952 879587 or email [jane@janewalker.co.uk](mailto:jane@janewalker.co.uk). You can also find me and/or message me on Facebook @CllrJaneWalker.

Jane Walker

Borough Councillor for Clapham and Oakley

Jon Abbott

Email: [jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com](mailto:jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com)

07784 549180

Facebook: Clapham & Oakley Liberal Democrats



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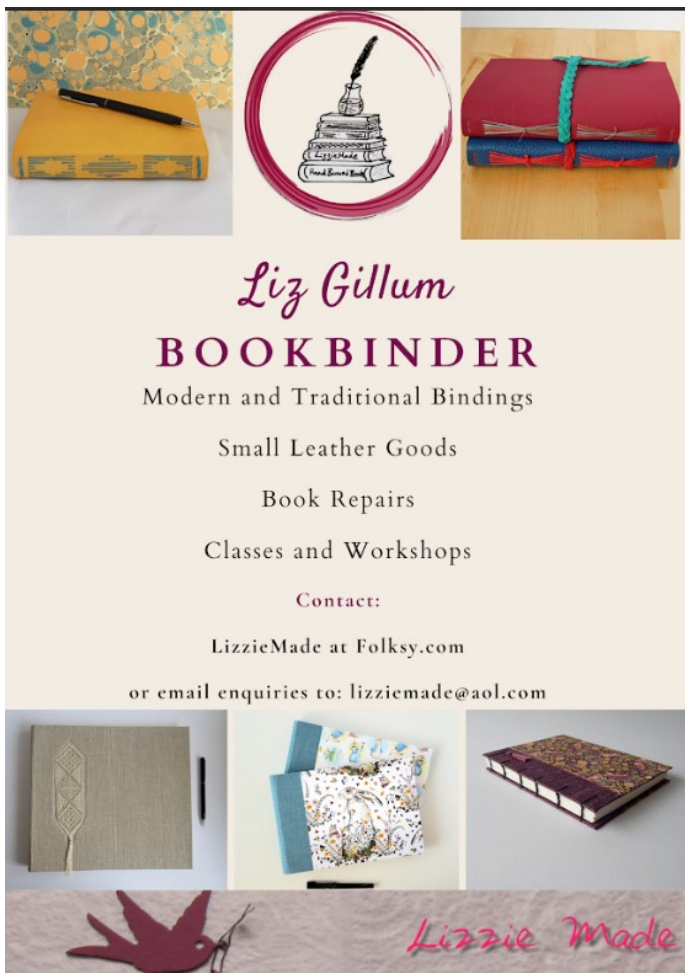
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## OAKLEY VILLAGE MONTHLY



Run by Oakley Parish Council and held in Oakley Village Hall

**Friday 13 DECEMBER 2024**

**Friday 17 JANUARY 2025**

**Friday 28 FEBRUARY 2025**

**Friday 21 MARCH 2025**

7.30pm start

Maximum 6 people per team

£3.00 per person (cash payment only please)

Bring your own snacks and drinks (alcohol allowed)

If you would like to enter a team please advise  
 Richard Worker at [richworker@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richworker@hotmail.co.uk)

Come along and have some fun and socialise with  
 fellow quizzers

## Oakley Carpet Bowls

We are not a large club (membership 18) and we average 14 members each Wednesday evening.

Every year we hold an internal knockout competition to find our Club Champion, drawing lots at our AGM in January to determine who we will play in the first round.

This year our champion is Dave Jones who has been a member for over 17 years and he celebrated his 95th birthday in June! The photos were taken at the time of his birthday when we presented him with the trophy.

You do not have to be 95 to play Carpet Bowls but Dave is testament to the fact that you can continue playing long into older age.



Joan Thomas (Chair)







## SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS FOR CHRISTMAS

<b>Sunday 8th December</b>	10.30am	Joint Advent Service – St Mary's
	3.30pm	Christmas Teas in Church—St Mary's
<b>Saturday 14th December</b>	3.00pm	Quiet Christmas Space— St Owen's Bromham
<b>Tuesday 17th December</b>	3.30pm	Messy Christmas Christingle – Oakley Methodist Church (OMC)
<b>Thursday 19th December</b>	8.00pm	Carol Singing—Bedford Arms
<b>Sunday 22nd December</b>	10.30am	Carol Service – OMC
	6.00pm	Carols by Candlelight– St Mary's
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	4.30pm	Crib Service – St Mary's*
	11.00pm	Midnight Communion – St Mary's
<b>Christmas Day</b>	10.00am	Christmas Day Service– OMC
	10.00am	Family Communion with Carols— St Owen's Bromham*

\*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 8th 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.

### Messy Church for All Christmas Party

Tuesday 17th Dec 3.30pm in Oakley Methodist Church. All ages welcome to come along for food & games and to make a Christingle.



For more details on all our events visit  
[www.bromhambenefice.org](http://www.bromhambenefice.org) or [www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk)

## CONTACTS

St Mary's: Revd. Catherine Wilson:	01234 825665
Church Wardens:	<a href="mailto:vicar@bromhambenefice.org">vicar@bromhambenefice.org</a>
Administrator Sarah:	Hilary Worley 262166 & Graham Palmer 07710 462535
Oakley Methodist Church: Revd Paulette Tedd	<a href="mailto:administrator@bromhambenefice.org">administrator@bromhambenefice.org</a>
Church Steward:	07591 139940 <a href="mailto:paulette.tedd@outlook.com">paulette.tedd@outlook.com</a>
	Jeanette Letch 825204

## Pavenham Tennis Club

We recently held our annual tournament for the Adrienne Cup in memory of a great friend of the club. The turnout was amazing especially as it rained most of the time! In excess of 20 players fought long and hard with 3 players eventually sharing the cup. Well done to Christine, Joanna and Val.

The Monday morning social group continues to be well supported and for the second year have organised a Christmas lunch to be held at the golf club.

The sport of Pickleball is becoming popular amongst both young and old having originated in the United States. It is a cross between tennis and table tennis using special paddles, balls, rules and scoring. Some of us have been giving it a go recently making good use of our mini court and were surprised how enjoyable it was.

If you are thinking about joining a club it is a great way to get fitter and make new friends. We play throughout the year both socially and in the Bedfordshire league.

For more information contact Val Curtis at [valeriecurtis.ptc@gmail.com](mailto:valeriecurtis.ptc@gmail.com) or visit our website

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/pavenhamtennisclub>



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# Would you like to support the Youth Club?

Oakley Youth Club continues with JJ, Jessica and Maddison offering up good fun for all the young people who attend.

They are ready to welcome young people aged between 11 - 13 on a Friday night and the club runs from 7pm to 9pm.

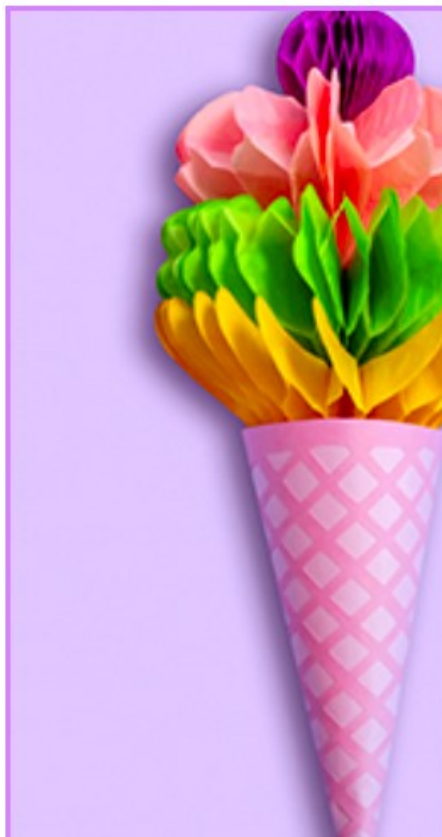
There is lots to do with games, arts and crafts, quizzes, cookery, music and just chilling out on offer.

Entrance fees are £2.50 and bring some more money for tuck.

Membership form must be completed before acceptance.

To find more contact us on **[oakleyyouth-club@gmail.com](mailto:oakleyyouth-club@gmail.com)**

We would also welcome you if you wish to volunteer on an adhoc basis.



## JOB ADVERT

### OAKLEY YOUTH CLUB

### YOUTH CLUB ASSISTANT

Contact

[oycsecretarial@gmail.com](mailto:oycsecretarial@gmail.com)

We are seeking a  
Youth Club Assistant  
to join Oakley Youth Club.  
3 hours per week.

The assistant will supervise activity, organise games, engage and support the Youth Club Leader.

Youth club runs on a Friday night, during term time and is much loved by young people

## Phantom Sprayer

It is the Christmas season approaching once again, I wish all our readers a very happy Christmas. I would like to remind dog owners if your children walk your dog over the school holidays, please remind them to carry their poo bag and pick up after your family pet.



I am pleased that the majority of Oakley dog owners are meticulous about picking up, our village is so much cleaner, unfortunately there are just a few that resist, leaving large patches of dog poo for other people and children to tread in and causing annoyance to other residents.

There have been a few in the alleyways leading to the school, but I have to say, not recently, so hopefully those people have decided it is better for everyone if they do pick up.

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# Oakley Rural Day Centre

Oakley Rural, The Old School, Lovell Road, Oakley, Beds, MK43 7RX

Tel: 01234 824935 Mobile: 07733 227374

Email: [oakleyruraldaycentre@yahoo.com](mailto:oakleyruraldaycentre@yahoo.com)

Web: [www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com](http://www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com)

Registered Charity No: 1060283



## WINTER 2024

**Our Day Centre** provides our older people with a place where they can make friends in a warm and comfortable atmosphere. We provide various activities including crafts, word games, board games, bingo and other mentally stimulating activities. We also provide chair based exercise classes. Our clients really enjoy taking part and we are finding them to be very beneficial. Choirs and entertainers also visit the centre. We serve freshly prepared home cooked lunches and desserts together with tea, coffee and toast at the start of the day with beverages throughout. The Centre is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10.00am to 2.30pm.

For details of costs, advice and to book a visit please contact Lynne on 01234 824935 or 07733 227374.

**Enquiries welcome from Bedford and surrounding villages in North Bedfordshire.**

Please visit our website at [www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com](http://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](https://www.facebook.com/oakleyruraldaycentre)



We have articles in various publications throughout Bedford and surrounding areas to raise the profile of the centre.

## NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Many thanks to all the children at Oakley Primary Academy who donated food for our clients during Harvest festival.

Tsymbal art school visited our centre and held a class on paper marbling. We really enjoyed their visit. Also many thanks to Kempston Hammers choir who are regular visitors.

Other activities have been decorating photo frames, painting bird feeders, making Christmas cards and many other arts and crafts.

We are now on the run up to Christmas where we take part in many festive craft projects ending in our party week which we tell you about in the next edition!



# Oakley Educational Foundation



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

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

For an application form please email [parishclerk@oakleyvillage.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@oakleyvillage.co.uk)

Applications accepted by 2nd May. Itemised receipts for purchases of goods must be provided.

## Village Defibrillators Clarification

In the article on the defibrillators it was stated that the Oakley Sports and Social Club unit was located behind the bar and only accessible during opening hours.

Apparently, **this is not the case** and it is on the outside of the club house and accessible 24/7. The Ambulance Service will guide you through the process.







## Oakley Educational Foundation



The Oakley Educational Foundation is a charity that operates in the village to provide grants for young people aged between 16 to 25 who are currently in education, including apprenticeships. The charity was set up to make grants of money for books and tools relating to the applicant's education.

Since Covid, the charity has struggled to find a clerk who would help manage the applications, however we are very grateful that Tracey Gray, who lives in the village, has now agreed to take on the role. This means that we are once again able to invite young people to apply for money for books and tools to help with their studies.

The next round of applications will open in April 2025 and you must include receipts with your application form to qualify. The Trustees of the charity will make awards for computers and software if it is needed for education, as these are now considered modern tools. Items such as uniforms or travel can not be considered however as they fall outside of the charity's remit. Please contact the clerk if you are unsure if your purchases will be covered.

Oakley parish council has kindly agreed that their clerk, Ann Paice, will be able to provide application forms; contact [parishclerk@oakleyvillage.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@oakleyvillage.co.uk), or you can contact Tracey on [traceygray9@gmail.com](mailto:traceygray9@gmail.com). Next years application forms will be available from the end of March 2025, with a May 2nd closing date.



Jane Walker Trustee

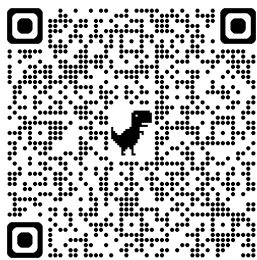
### Snippet 76

For a change, a Snippet combining short updates on some past subjects...

**Hedgehogs** – not surprisingly, hedgehogs have not been seen in our garden for a while. Hopefully, they are hibernating, and will return in spring. We had seen as many as 5 individuals over the past year, including a large veteran with one eye, who we only filmed once.

**Electric bicycles** – I am not so sure that they will enjoy wet weather so much – I know I don't! Also, the cold does affect battery performance and range, but you may see us venturing out on brighter days, and my waistline suggests that I need the exercise!

**Insects** – there has been a bit more insect activity in our later autumn weather, which might compensate to some extent for the hard conditions affecting them in the earlier months. Watch out for the ongoing invasion of Asian Hornets, which might endanger all pollinators, including honeybees. You can find more information on the Asian Hornet and how to report sightings online.



**Allotments** – unless something else interesting grabs the Allotment Headlines, as in this issue, I will report on this year's progress in the spring issue. It seems like a long time away – we have a few cold and difficult months to come, but every season has its delights, and whilst I enjoy warmth, I also enjoy being able to venture out and wrap-up warmly!

Very best wishes to everyone, Steve.

### News from the Tower

Now it is dark and cold outside, it can be difficult to ease oneself off the sofa and get to the church for bell ringing practice on a Friday evening, but it really is worth the effort! We are such a friendly lot, and the ringing room is usually warm because it houses the boilers that heat the church.



Once again, we rang the bells of St Mary's half muffled on Remembrance Sunday. It always feels like an honour to ring for these occasions. We borrowed a few bell ringers from Bromham and, in turn, several of us rang at other churches afterwards, such is the shortage of church bell ringers.

If you have experience of church bell ringing, please come along to a practice night and see if you'd like to join our band. The Oakley Band of Bell Ringers practice on Friday evenings from 8pm to 9:15pm and ring on Sunday mornings before the services at St Mary's Church. New members are very welcome too! If you'd like to come along on a practice night to see what it's all about and to have a go, please contact our Tower Captain, Bill Sellars on 07980 745292 or email [thesellars@btinternet.com](mailto:thesellars@btinternet.com).

Shelley Eden

## Down Memory Lane

### The day the Duke of Bedford "sold the village" .....

Arguably the Great War of 1914 – 18, had an impact on Oakley residents like no other in modern times. The end of the War saw great nationwide change and particularly in Oakley. In 1918 the village population of 300 people all lived in properties or on farms rented on a weekly, quarterly or Michaelmas (annual) basis from Herbrand Arthur Russell, the 11th Duke of Bedford.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 and with a military background the Duke, aged 56, came out of retirement. As Colonel he commanded the Bedfordshire Regiment Training Depot, for which he was "mentioned in dispatches" and was created a Knight of the British Empire (Military). He also set up a military training camp in Ampthill Park at his own expense. This undertaking, together with increased taxation caused by the war and the estate expenditure exceeded his income giving him little option but to sell some of his land holdings and properties. Therefore, on 31 October 1918 at the Bedford Town Hall, parts of the Oakley Estate were sold at auction by Knight, Frank and Rutley auctioneers. Initially the auction was to include Oakley House and the surrounding cottages. However, the Duke decided to keep these in the family, together with what we now call River Meadow, so they were withdrawn from the auction and sold privately to his cousin Lord Ampthill. The rest of the Estate was divided into 39 separate auction lots and a sale catalogue, "The Oakley Estate Bedfordshire", was produced providing extensive details for each lot. John Saunders, whose family have farmed "College Farm" in Lovell Road through five generations since 1928, kindly loaned me a copy of the catalogue to help write this article.



The lots were separated into pieces of land, cottages and farms located in Oakley but also in Clapham and Stevington. Each tenant had the opportunity to bid and those who could afford it did so. Some cottages were sold in blocks such as the Duke of Bedford Cottages in the High Street which were sold in 2 blocks of 4 and 1 of 6. The Duke of Bedford Cottages in Station Road were sold in 4 blocks of 4 cottages. Oakley entrepreneurs Messrs Emmett, Porter, Beard and Quenby bought a block each !! "The Bedford Arms" and the nearby "Smithy" were also sold.

However, the focus was the sale of the 11 farms. Many that were sold no longer exist as farms such as "Town Farm" in Westfield Road. "Hill Farm" that later became "Grange Farm" was sold and the land was later developed to create "the new estate" and Brockwell. "Queen's College Farm" existed in the High Street opposite the current Post Office and has since been developed to include Queen's Close. One property sold was "The Oakley Post Office, Buildings and Land" also located in the High Street which was bought by Edward Newell who had lived in the property since 1890. The property set in 2-acres housed the Post Office of the time and is now known as "Middle Farm", a residential property with a small piece of pastureland attached. Fortunately, two of the farms sold, "Westfield Farm", the biggest with 450 acres and "College Farm" are still in operation today.

After 1918, despite the gradual closure of some farms, many Oakley residents continued to "work on the land". This is highlighted by the building of the Sydney Howard Lovell Memorial Almshouses in Lovell Road which commenced in 1926 for retired agricultural workers as bequeathed by William Lovell in memory of his son Sydney who died tragically aged 13. Even after the Second World War the agricultural industry continued to be a major employer in Oakley. My Dad and many of his peers worked on the Oakley farms whether they be arable, dairy, poultry or market garden. The local farms also provided employment for the wider community with wives, including my Grandma and Mum, working to earn money. Children were also employed and in the 1970's me, my brother Jamie and our friends would spend school holidays and Saturday mornings working on the farm to boost our pocket money. Depending on the season we would pull up weeds and plant and harvest all types of vegetables. Pea picking, and under "piece work" employment, picking up potatoes or "spud bashing" as we called it was common. The Post Office sweet counter reaped the benefits!!!

Unsurprisingly the industry has changed significantly over the last 50 years due to factors such as improved machinery, law changes and alternative food sources. Today only a handful of villagers are employed in agriculture, but it still has a major impact on our village life. There is no doubt that the auction held in October 1918, when the Duke "sold the village", and Oakley ceased to be a ducal estate and went into private ownership, proved to be a major historical milestone. Richard Worker



## Oakley Village Monthly Quiz .....

The Parish Council run Oakley Monthly Village Quiz continues to be extremely well attended, and we had a record number at the November quiz with 100 people attending. Many thanks to those of you who have provided your support. The September Quiz, where we celebrated our first year's anniversary, was won by "The Cheesy Puffs". They also took the honours in October and "The Buzby's" were victorious in November. See below "mug shots" of the two teams.

I am pleased to report that during December we will be making donations from the quiz profits to the Day Centre held in the Old School and to the residential care home for people with learning disabilities, located in the High Street. The donations will be used by both to support their Christmas celebrations. Given the timing of this newsletter's publication, I will provide more detail in the Spring edition.

Remember, anyone can enter the quiz. Everyone has had a great time and takes advantage to catch up with friends and neighbours. The next **FOUR** quizzes will be held on; **13 December, 17 January, 28 February and 21 March**. If anyone wishes to enter a team, maximum 6 people, then please email me at richworker@hotmail.com.

In the meantime, we hope you all have a great Christmas and New Year.

Richard Worker



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## Seasons greetings from the staff and The Friends at Harrold-Odell Country Park!



**HARROLD - ODELL**  
**COUNTRY PARK**

Between September & November, work was undertaken in the park, by contractors, to replace the old ramp up to the café and replace or repair other areas of the decking around the café. The work has made the whole area safe and secure for many years to come whilst additional measures were taken to try and ensure this decking lasts longer. Of course, the flooding and wet weather made this job harder! Thank you for being patient with the works whilst they were undertaken.

The September/October flooding was as high as I have ever seen the water levels since I started working here - but I am told not quite as bad as the December 2020 flood. The river, river meadows, nature reserve and Grebe Lake were all as one body of water. The cattle were checked on a more regular basis during this period and brought extra food (bales of grass) to ensure they were OK.

The Country Park forms part of the flood plain and its capacity to take incredible amounts of flood water, hopefully, leads to fewer local properties being flooded. Where needed, we work most of the year round to ensure that the ditches, drainage channels and culverts are kept free of obstacles, vegetation and weeds to do what we can to increase the capacity of the Country Park to take flood water.

Autumn seems to have been later this year, with much less of a colour display – this is normally because there has been less sun during the summer, which helps the leaves produce more sugars and in turn provide a delightful display of autumnal beauty. Because it has been so wet, there are more fungi to find and enjoy – the wet conditions being ideal for them! Winter weather brings goldeneye and goosanders onto the lakes and we had some rare and special visitors recently with 11 whooper swans stopping briefly on their migration.



The Friends of HOCF have produced a calendar for 2025. The calendar is on sale in The Dragonfly Café (£10 each, cash or card), so please support The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park by purchasing one (or more!) from The Dragonfly Café. The images are wonderful and the calendar makes for good Christmas presents! All the money made from the sales goes towards maintaining and enhancing the park for you to enjoy!

Our popular I Spot, Children's Activity and Crossword booklets are available to buy all year round for just £1 from The Dragonfly Café. They are all great activities to occupy the kids in your life at half term or at weekends and motivate them to learn and get round the 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 12th December (no walk on 26th December), January 2nd, 16th & 30th and February 13th & 27th. More info can be found at <https://hocf.co.uk/get-involved/health-walks/>

We hope you enjoy your visits to our wonderful park.

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



**BEDFORD CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2024**  
Over 65 trees decorated in the theme of...

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**On:**  
Wed 4 Dec to Sat 7 Dec - 10am till 5pm  
Sun 8 Dec - 12 noon till 4pm

**Venue:**  
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**Admission:**  
£3 (children under 16 free)

**Find out more:**  
Bedford Christmas Tree Festival  
E: [treefestival@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk](mailto:treefestival@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk)  
T: 01234 340163

**Festival Concert:**  
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# Oakley Show 2024



Once again the Oakley Show has come and one, it all seems to be over so quickly after months of planning.

We wondered how many entries we would have with the weather being so late to warm up in the spring and everything taking ages to start growing, but you all came through with lots of lovely vegetables on show together with the baking, preserving and crafting, thank you so much to everyone who entered.

Once again Ian Percival won the title of Best in Show but it was a close run thing with only 2 points between him and the 2 runners up. Ian also won the best vegetable class.

There was a 3 way tie in the flower class with Chris Weston, Lindy Chalker and Steve Nicholas.

The fruit class was also a tie with Rob Davies and Ann Rolph.

David Exon won the preserves class and the best photograph class.

Ruth Bender was the best home cook. This was a very well contested class with lots of lovely baking entered.

Ruth Sawford entered the best painting.







Jenny Goodall won the craft cup.

The Childrens' classes also had joint winners Abigail Hamshere and Eleanor Goodall.

The Wendy Gater award for the best kept allotment was won by Rob and Karen Davis.

This year, thanks to comments made at last year's show, we held a mini craft fair alongside the show which seemed to be well liked by our visitors so thanks to the stallholders for coming to sell their crafts.

We give our thanks to everyone who helps us put on the show. Whites ES for sponsoring the programme, Milton Ernest Garden Centre for the prize vouchers, and Hazel Kaye, Tudor Rose, O for coffee, Country Kutz, Inked by Adua, Merri Flowers, Citric Design, Jap Sound, Pure Heart Boutique and Gavin Fleet Care for donating raffle prizes.

Thank you also to the Parish Councillors for delivering the programmes to everyone in the village.

Now it is time for a short rest before we start on next year's show. Any ideas or suggestions will be gratefully received.

Oakley Show Committee







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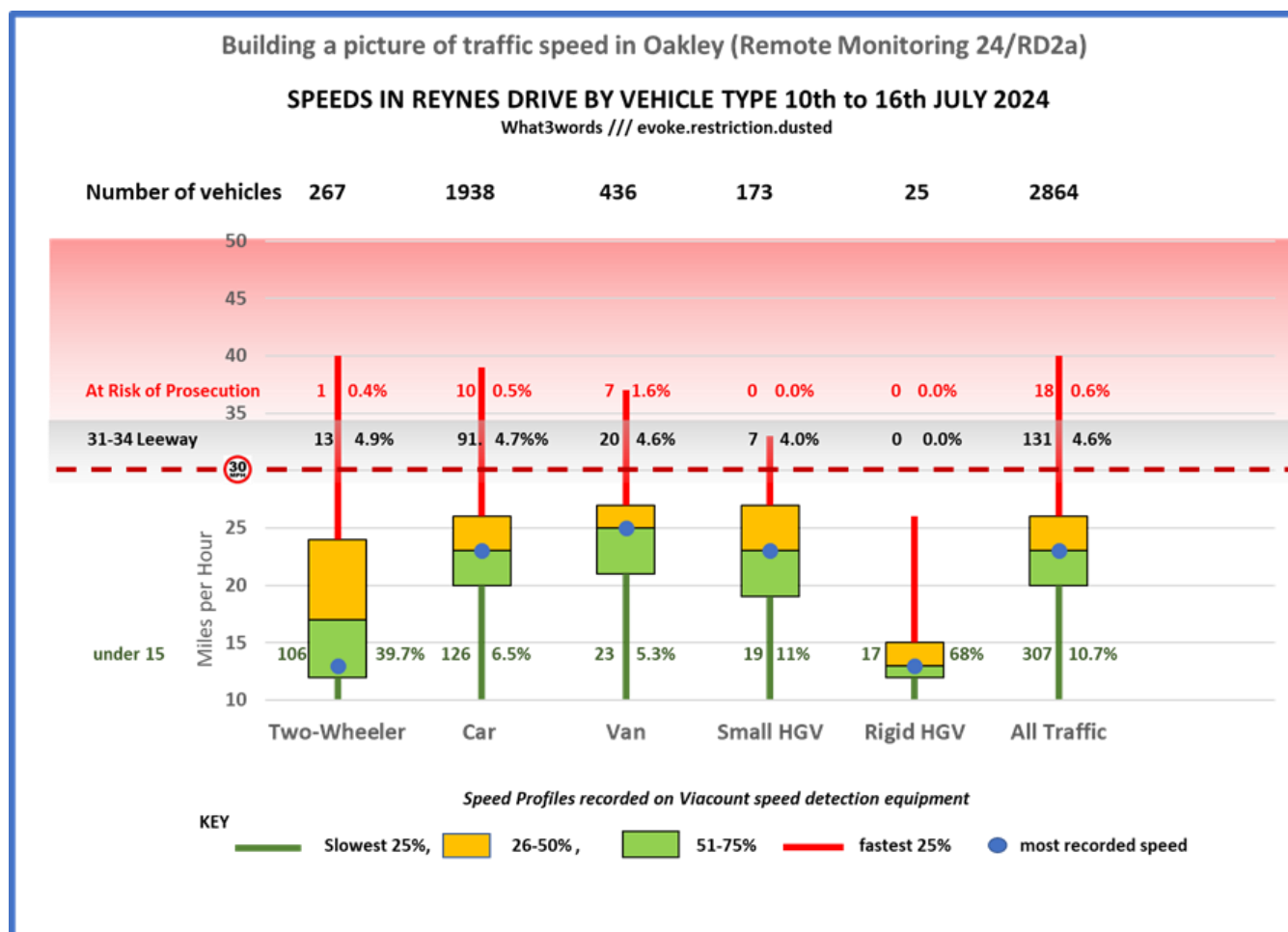
**Oakley Park, Station Road, Oakley - Phone 01234 824113**



In our recent operations we have been concentrating around school arrival and drop off times in Reynes Drive, the High Street and Pavenham Road. We observed 324 vehicles and we are pleased to report that only 1 vehicle in the High Street warranted reporting to the Police. In the County as a whole during October, Speedwatch volunteers completed 146 operations resulting in the Police issuing 510 letters to drivers.



However, we did see a number of vehicles below the threshold for reporting travelling at speeds which were perhaps higher than might be considered appropriate for the location. This is particularly evident in Reynes Drive. For some time a number of residents have been reporting concerns about speeding vehicles in this residential road, particularly in the straighter section from Greenidge Way to the High Street. We have mounted several operations there, the looking at traffic in both directions but speeds observed have always been modest, with the highest speeds being in the mid 20s. However, the recorded data from the Viacount machine mounted at the same location, taken over the week 10th to 16th July, revealed a less positive story. This graph shows the speed profiles for the 10th -16th July



for traffic at the Burleigh Place junction. Bearing in mind that parking almost always reduces the road width at this effectively 90-degree blind bend, and the closeness of a junction, that 18 vehicles over 35mph and 131 between 31 and 34mph were recorded, with a maximum speed of 40mph, is concerning.

We have a further programme of operations planned into the New Year and should you wish to join us as a volunteer you would be very welcome. We have just been issued with super new headgear to keep our brains functioning through the winter weather. There is one for you if you join - an offer you surely cannot refuse!! In the meantime, keep safe and have a Happy Christmas!

Paul Phillips – Speedwatch Co-ordinator

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# Oakley Sports & Social Club

## Family & Sports Bar



It has been a lively and eventful time at Oakley Sports & Social Club since our last update!

Our annual kids' Halloween disco returned for a second year and was once again a huge success. Children of members donned their spookiest costumes, indulged in sweets, danced to music provided by DJ Stevo, and competed for prizes in our fancy dress contest.

Hot on its heels came our spectacular fireworks display – the best yet! Alongside the stunning 20-minute firework show, this year's event featured laser displays, live bands, a funfair, bouncy castles, multiple bars, food stalls, and an indoor kids' disco.

Attendance was carefully managed to match 2022's numbers, and we were grateful to Lincroft Academy for providing parking. The night was a tremendous success and has raised the bar for future displays.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host a Christmas Fête & Market on **14th December**, starting at 12pm. This festive event will include reindeer, meet Santa in his grotto, snow from a snow machine, live music, a funfair, and over 25 stalls to browse. It is a free event open to everyone in the community, so come along and join the festive fun!



On a broader note, our membership numbers have reached an all-time high – a reflection of the club's continued dedication to ensuring that only members benefit from our facilities. If you are not already a member, now is the perfect time to join! Memberships can be purchased easily online via our website, giving you access to this fantastic village hub.

We look forward to welcoming you at the club soon! Robbie Bays





Did you know that the NSPCC are actively recruiting for Community Volunteers across Bedfordshire? Keep on reading to find out more!

### Who?

We are **looking for enthusiastic, creative and organised people**, over the age of 18. Our volunteers come from all walks of life, being able to give their time in different ways. The more diverse our fundraisers are, the wider the range of ideas we will generate together

### Why?

We know that communities talking about safeguarding children and coming together for the cause can help shift thinking and raise awareness, keeping more children safe.

Over 80 per cent of our income comes from our supporters and we couldn't continue doing what we do without them. That means, our community fundraising volunteers play an important part in raising vital funds which help to protect children and prevent abuse.

# NSPCC



We work hard to ensure that our volunteers enjoy what they do. Being part of successful fundraising and thinking about the difference it can make is a wonderful feeling. **If you want to feel good, doing good is a great place to start.**

### When?

You can volunteer without regular time commitments with 'as and when' volunteering. This offers great flexibility. You only need to commit to a couple of hours a month, but if you want to do more you can.

### What?

You could help at events with other volunteers on an ad-hoc basis. Alternatively, you could organise your own small fundraising events (raffle, collection, coffee morning, afternoon tea) or even set up your own fundraising group. Our fundraising groups run small, annual events (quiz night, wreath making workshop, charity walk) or take on more ambitious projects (Christmas Carol Concert, Family Fun Day, Charity Ball). There really is something for everyone.

You'll engage with the public, organisations and local communities, raising awareness and funds – promoting a positive image of the NSPCC. You will learn more about how you're helping to protect children across the UK, and you'll have the opportunity to grow your skills and inspire others to support us. It is also a chance to spend time with like-minded people and make new friends.

### How?

Sound like something you are interested in? If you'd like to get involved, please reach out to your local Community Fundraising Manager, Lisa ([lisa.radcliffe@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:lisa.radcliffe@nspcc.org.uk)) or seek opportunities here: <https://join-us.nspcc.org.uk/volunteers>





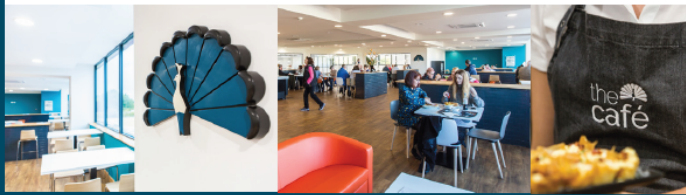


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Web : [www.theoldschooloakley.org.uk](http://www.theoldschooloakley.org.uk)



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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.

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Or contact the Clerk :

Mandy Newton

On 07736 466965

Registered Charity Number : 200480

## Oakley Allotments

We are at the end of another allotment year and it is time for preparation for next year. There is less work to be done, if you choose to stay warm and wait until next year. The past year has been challenging at times, with a late spring and shorter main season, so we have to learn and adapt to changing, less-predictable growing conditions...

In this issue we look at the solution one tenant has thought of for increasing productivity, whilst making work simpler and much more satisfying after an initial investment of time and money. The results have been worth the investment.

*My Allotment Greenhouse*      *On a cold, blustery day in March, my husband and I decided we could not put off any longer, the building of our new wooden greenhouse on my allotment plot.*

*We had come up with this idea of an allotment greenhouse whilst enjoying a meal in London, visiting our son's university exhibition. It seemed like a good idea at the time! Now drill in one hand and instructions in the other, the idea didn't seem as exciting.*

*As we struggled through each section, piece by piece, whilst watching a u-tube video, it became apparent we were missing the middle sections. They had been missed off the delivery last November. Two options, we could wait for the company we purchased it from to sort it, or try to make them ourselves, as this would be the quicker option. So off we went to buy wood and shiplap. Luckily, all the roof panels were there.*

*Many days later of really back breaking work, battling the wind, rain and cold, we finally got the glazing in – plastic laminate – and we were watertight. Many bags of pea shingle tipped on the floor, and a couple of handmade benches, we were up and running at last!*



*The intention was to improve my food production of vegetables we both enjoy, such as tomatoes, peppers, chillies and cucumbers. As soon as I could I started planting. The aim was to fit some sort of eco-friendly irrigation system so as we didn't have to water every day or so.*

*We sourced a relatively inexpensive solar panel watering system on Amazon. Perfect. Now came the experimental phase. I used a small water butt for the water container. All was working well until I couldn't get to the allotment for 5 days. Disaster, nearly lost the chilli plants that were on the very end of the irrigation tube. At that point, we both realised we needed another system to cope with the amount of plants that we had. So, we purchased another system and small water butt.*

*You had to maintain the water levels or you could get into trouble again. We experimented with watering times and found 10 minutes per day about right except on really hot days. The produce grew very quickly. It got very hot in there and humid. The plants flourished and produced fruit very quickly, much faster than my garden greenhouse. I gave them the occasional feed.*

*We went on holiday and our son, who was going to be on water butt duty, decided to come with us. Luckily our allotment neighbours came to the rescue and we came home to large cucumbers, peppers and loads of red tomatoes and chillies.*

*In summary, the hard work paid off. The produce I got was priceless in their content of organic nutrients, vitamins and taste compared with shop bought. Next year I will introduce other plants or different varieties, and I can't wait!*

Thanks to Lindsay Fordham for this useful information – this particular greenhouse was not expensive either, so may be worth considering for some.

We still have a waiting list of five – no allotments are available at the moment.

Steve Nicholas



### How GoodOaks Homecare - Bedford is Supporting Unpaid Carers

Caring for a loved one at home comes with a unique set of challenges and we at GoodOaks believe there isn't enough support available for the millions of people who are balancing the care of a loved one with their own careers and family commitments.

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We are doing this by offering:

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- A telephone helpline for anyone needing extra support or who has questions about care.

To learn more about our services, contact **GoodOaks Homecare - Bedford** on **01234 395100** or visit our website **[www.goodoakshomecare/yna](http://www.goodoakshomecare/yna)**



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**GoodOaks**  
Quality Care at Home



# Oakley Kindergarten News



Another busy year at kindergarten is coming to an end!

Three new staff members have joined us this term. Miss Chloe Lawler has joined us as our new Deputy Manager and Miss Lola Remond has joined us as an Unqualified Assistant and they will be based in our Blossoms (Pre-school) room. Mrs Samantha Seville has joined us as our Outdoor Education Coordinator, based in our Petals (Toddler) room. Sam will continue to extend our Forest School activities and the Fairytale Forest area of our site.

We thought we would take this opportunity to introduce our full current staff team on the following page. In moving to the new setting and extending our provision from 24 to 40 children, as well as extending the age range of the children we accept, we faced challenges to build our staffing numbers up to full capacity. Like many charities and small businesses, it has proved difficult to recruit quality, qualified staff in the current economic climate. The recruitment process must be robust, to ensure that we safeguard the well being of all children in our care and can therefore, be both time consuming and costly.

We have tried to recruit staff from the local communities in North Beds, as much as possible, to build stronger relationships with the community we serve. By employing locally, we also aim to lower our carbon footprint for the building. Over the last two years, we have managed to recruit a staffing team that, logistically, are local to their place of work. In addition, two of our staff members who live in Bedford, do use the local bus service. We will continue to try to be as sustainable as possible as we move forward into the new year.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from us all here at kindergarten.

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 check-out, if you are thinking of having a real tree this year.

We are currently operating a waiting list for all three of our 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 or by email: [info@oakleypreschool.com](mailto:info@oakleypreschool.com) Our website is: [www.oakleypreschool.com](http://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





## Meet the Staff Team at Oakley Kindergarten

**Sally Martiello**



I live in Oakley and I am the Manager. I love being part of the team and work tirelessly in the drive for development and improvement of the provision we offer.

**Chloe Lawler**



I am the Deputy and I live in Bedford. I have gained a wealth of experience across private school settings. My passion is Inclusion and supporting the needs of all children.

**Sravanti Mamidi**



I live in Oakley and I am the Blossoms' Room Leader. I am a Level 3 Qualified Practitioner and specialise in working with young children in a nursery setting.

**Heidi Hale**



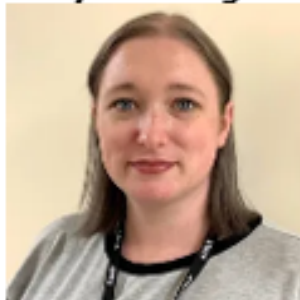
I am the Petals' Room Leader and I live in Pavenham. I adore all things crafty and messy and enjoy preparing sensory activities to share with the children.

**Megan Drury**



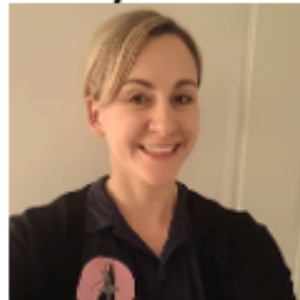
I have an Art degree and am a Qualified Level 3 Practitioner. I live in Bedford and my grandfather was an archaeologist! I love sharing my knowledge with the children.

**Tanya O'Loughlin**



I live in Clapham and lead the Rosebuds' room. I have always wanted to work with the youngest children and that passion has grown since joining Oakley Kindergarten.

**Amy Bowles**



I live in Kempston and I am a qualified dance teacher and also a Level 3 Practitioner. I enjoy helping children develop, whether in dance class or kindergarten.

**Samantha Seville**



I live in Harrold and I am the Outdoor Education Coordinator. I am based in the Petals' room. My speciality is the outdoor environment and Natural History.

**Stephanie Kinns**



I live in Oakley and I am the Nursery Assistant. I enjoy working in all the three rooms within our beautiful rural setting.

**Lola Remond**



I attended Oakley Pre-school as a child, and I now live in Bedford. I am currently studying for my Level 3 in Early Years Education at Oakley Kindergarten. I am based in Blossoms.

**Julie Grimshaw**



I live in Oakley, and I am the Administrator. I am in the office, welcoming visitors and supporting the manager and the practitioners with the varied admin roles.

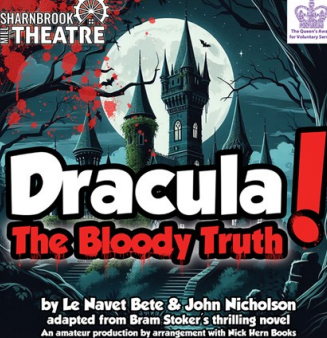
**Alice White Martinez**



I am the Cook, and I live in Oakley. I run the kindergarten kitchen, which is the heart of the setting. I cook fresh, healthy food for the children each day.

# Our 2025 Season

SHARNBROOK  
MILL THEATRE



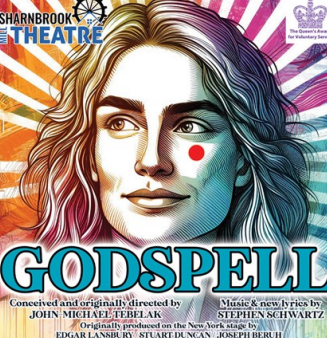
**Dracula!**  
**The Bloody Truth!**

by Le Navet Bete & John Nicholson  
adapted from Bram Stoker's thrilling novel  
An amateur production by arrangement with Mick Kern Books

**Sharnbrook Mill Theatre**  
**11th-15th March 2025**

Tickets available online from:  
[www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk](http://www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk)  
and in person from Pick-a-Lily, 61 High St/Park Lane, Sharnbrook, MK44 1PB  
Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is a registered charity

SHARNBROOK  
MILL THEATRE



**GODSPELL**

Conceived and originally directed by  
JOHN MICHAEL TREFKIN  
Music & new lyrics by  
STEPHEN SCHWARTZ  
Originally produced on the New York stage by  
EDGAR LANSBURY, STUART DUNCAN, JOSEPH BERTH  
This amateur production is presented by Music Theatre International  
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI [www.mti-international.com](http://www.mti-international.com)

**SHARNBROOK MILL THEATRE**  
**13TH-17TH MAY 2025**

Tickets available online from:  
[www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk](http://www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk)  
and in person from Pick-a-Lily, 61 High St/Park Lane, Sharnbrook, MK44 1PB  
Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is a registered charity

SHARNBROOK  
MILL THEATRE



**VANYA  
AND SONIA  
AND MASHA  
AND SPIKE!**

an outrageous comedy  
by Christopher Durang

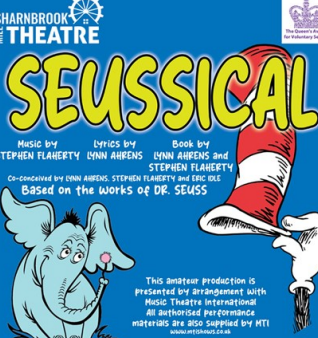
2013 TONY AWARD BEST PLAY

Music and lyrics by  
STEPHEN FLAHERTY, LYNN AHRENS  
Book by LYNN AHRENS and  
STEPHEN FLAHERTY  
Co-conceived by LYNN AHRENS, STEPHEN FLAHERTY and ERIC GLE  
Based on the works of DR. SEUSS

**Sharnbrook Mill Theatre**  
**23rd-27th September 2025**

Tickets available online from:  
[www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk](http://www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk)  
and in person from Pick-a-Lily, 61 High St/Park Lane, Sharnbrook, MK44 1PB  
Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is a registered charity

SHARNBROOK  
MILL THEATRE



**SEUSSICAL**

Music by  
STEPHEN FLAHERTY, LYNN AHRENS  
Lyrics by LYNN AHRENS and  
STEPHEN FLAHERTY  
Book by LYNN AHRENS and  
STEPHEN FLAHERTY  
Co-conceived by LYNN AHRENS, STEPHEN FLAHERTY and ERIC GLE  
Based on the works of DR. SEUSS

This amateur production is  
presented by arrangement with  
Music Theatre International  
All authorized performance  
materials are also supplied by MTI  
[www.mti-international.com](http://www.mti-international.com)

**SHARNBROOK MILL THEATRE**  
**25th-29th November 2025**

Tickets available online from:  
[www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk](http://www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk)  
and in person from Pick-a-Lily, 61 High St/Park Lane, Sharnbrook, MK44 1PB  
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at Sharnbrook Mill Theatre

[www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk](http://www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk)

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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](mailto:oakleyclaphamrainbows@outlook.com)



## 1st Oakley Brownies (Fridays)

This term the Brownies have been learning useful skills for the future, as part of the 'Live Smart Stage 3' badge. They have taken part in 'Tasty Testing' comparing the quality and price of orange juice, rich tea biscuits and milk chocolate, from different supermarkets and voting on their favourite. They have also learnt how to

sew their own felt purses, created some beautiful art using an aboriginal technique and recognised their own skills and abilities in organising and planning a fun party for the unit!

In addition to this, 1<sup>st</sup> Oakley Brownies have taken part in Teas in the Church, the village litter pick and the Remembrance Sunday Service at the Methodist Church. I have been very proud of the way they have conducted themselves at these community events and the enthusiasm they have shown!



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](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk) (register a child) or contact

Kathy Jones - leader at 1st Oakley Brownies by emailing [snowyowloakleybrownies@outlook.com](mailto:snowyowloakleybrownies@outlook.com)

Kathy Jones

# Fantastic Walking Festival

The Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks 2024 ran between 7th and 15th September this year. It is fair to say that the festival was a huge success with 55 walks attracting 850 walkers over the 9 days.

The festival is hosted by the 4 groups that make up Bedfordshire – North Beds, Leighton Buzzard, Lea & Icknield (Luton) and Ivel Valley Walkers. We also had support from our neighbouring Ramblers Groups – Wellingborough Ramblers, Hunts Ramblers and Stag Walkers, but in addition to these we garnered support from local affiliated groups Bedford Rambling Club and Toddington Ramblers together with general walking groups The Northampton Shamblers and U3A. 2024 also saw the return of the Greensand Ridge Challenge, covering 40 miles in two days. All this meant we were able to offer walks from 1 mile to 21 miles across the 9 days! Absolutely something for everyone.

We were delighted to host a Ghost, Murders and Mysteries walk and a Bat walk in the evening where the walkers were provided with bat detectors. We spotted 4 different types of Bats and saw a huge number as they emerged from their roosts to feed around the lake at Harrold and Odell Country Park. There were short town walks and two walks around the Victorian Cemetery in Bedford certainly sparked people's interest. We are proud that our efforts opened up walking to a wider community.

Our dedicated webpage also attracted groups who contacted us to advertise their walks via this medium. Then there were nature walks too – it's the bird migration season and an early morning walk was offered by Marston Vale to see the birds packing their bags to fly south.

Fancy something different? What about a walk and sail? We are privileged in Bedford to have the John Bunyan boat which enables us to offer a walk along the Great Ouse and sail back, but it offers so much more than that because it offers flexibility allowing people to choose how much of the walk they wish to do so opening up the experience to many more people.

Having lots of walks is no use without walkers so here is a big shout out to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes ensuring that our dedicated web page had all the walks' information readily available. Thank you all for your hard work in ensuring our message went far and wide.

Finally, what would a festival be without a course – a map reading course was also open to everyone to help develop map reading skills with an afternoon of practical application.

Bedfordshire Ramblers would like to extend our grateful thanks to all the leaders of the walks and to all those who attended one or more of the activities and also to all those behind the scenes – making 2024 such a success. See you all next year! All in all, I think all would agree it was a fabulous Festival.

Sandra Kelsey – North Beds Ramblers on behalf of Bedfordshire Ramblers

## North Beds Ramblers walk every Saturday

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

Come and join us for a walk. We walk every Saturday afternoon approx. 6 miles and Saturdays twice a month in morning for approx. 12 miles

#### Dec Walks

7th pm Woburn, 6.6 miles

14th pm Blunham Mince Pie Walk, 5 miles

21st am Wilstead, 5.5 miles, pm, Wilstead, 6 miles or do both 11.5 miles

28th am Riseley, 6.3 miles

#### Jan Walks

Jan 4th pm Ampthill, 6 miles

Jan 11th am Mowsbury park 11 miles, pm Bromham 5.8 miles

Jan 18th pm Lidlington, 6 miles

Jan 25th TBA please check website

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729 Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

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





# A Year of Resilience

As we approach the end of 2024, it is a good time to reflect on what has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging years for our farm, particularly in terms of the weather conditions. From unexpected floods to intense heatwaves, the extremes we've faced have tested both our flowers and Christmas trees like never before.

As many of you may know, both flowers and trees thrive under consistent, moderate conditions. However, the temperature swings this year – from intense heatwaves to unseasonably wet spells – made it extremely difficult to keep our crops in top condition. The high heat caused some of our most popular flower varieties to bloom earlier than usual, while others struggled to bloom when we hit a cooler weather spell. Despite these challenges, we adapted and were able to offer our flowers within Thursday Flower Subscriptions and Pick-Your-Own flower experiences on Saturdays.

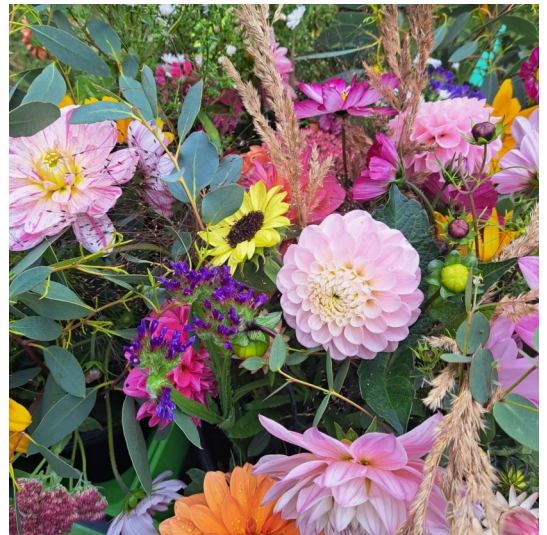
The biggest challenge, however, came for our Christmas trees. These long-term crops require years of careful nurturing, and the unpredictable weather of 2024 put a strain on their growth. We have had to constantly adjust our plans to ensure that our trees remain healthy and ready for the 2024 Christmas season.

Through all these challenges, one thing has become abundantly clear: resilience and adaptability are key. Our commitment to sustainable farming practices has helped us navigate this tough year. We have replaced trees that have perished due to excessive rain and monitored weather patterns to observational levels to give our flowers and trees the best possible care, no matter the conditions.

As we now concentrate on the Christmas season (which we started at the end of October), we are incredibly grateful for the continued support of our Bedfordshire customers. While 2024 has been tough, we are proud of the work we have done to overcome the challenges, and we are confident that the coming years will see even stronger, more resilient trees and flowers.

There are still plenty of trees to purchase straight-from-the-field, and NEW this year are pre-cuts to achieve a quicker visit from 30th November to 22nd December. We wish you all the very best as we head into the final stretch of the year. Contact us at [merriflowers.co.uk](https://merriflowers.co.uk)

Wishing you all a MERRI Christmas, Rachele, Julian, Luke and Josh



and our amazing team of seasonal workers.





# oakley *Motorcycle* club

Since the last OPC Autumn edition things have been slowing down at OMC. Although with the drier mild evenings in October we have seen people still coming out on their bikes to make the most of it before the colder, icier days are upon us.

OMC has done a number of Sunday ride outs, where weather has permitted, with runs to Hatton Locks, Warwickshire, Bourton on the Water, Gloucestershire and Oakham in Rutland. We also had a ride over to the Snetterton Race Circuit, Norfolk, to watch OMC committee member Jemma Grayson race in the Ninja 300 Class of the British Motorcycle Racing Club at the Snetterton race meeting.

Our last outing was the annual OMC Memorial Ride held on Sunday 27th October. This event is to remember all OMC members who have passed since the club started nearly 20 years ago. This year was even more poignant as we also remembered Charlotte Sandin from Bugbrooke, Northants who joined Oakley Motorcycle Club on line on 17th March and sadly died the following day riding her motorcycle when in collision with a car near Whilton, Northants. She was aged just 19 years.

On the day thankfully it was dry, bright and mild with 45 bikes attending Oakley Club for complimentary hot drinks before heading off on a leisurely ride around some the better roads in North Beds and Northants. After a short comfort break at Oundle we returned to Oakley Club for complimentary sausage and chips.

On a more cheerful note OMC has continued to raise money for the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Since our last presentation to them in August we have raised nearly another £500 with special thanks to Peter Neal, Mr Ice Cream Man and OSSC for their contributions.



With the OMC & OSSC Xmas Draw and annual OMC Xmas Quiz coming along in December we are likely to hit £700 for the EAAA by the new year!

Finally, did you realise that on 29th January 2025 it will be the 20th anniversary of Oakley Motorcycle Club! Where have all the years gone??

Roger "Baysie" Bays

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# CLASSIC CAR MEET

## BEDFORDSHIRE

Yet another damp summer has spoilt our monthly attendances at Oakley. From the highs of the 13th August meeting with over 300 show cars we had the wet and chilly 10th September meeting with constant drizzle but somehow still managed 55 show cars



The final Beds Classic Car event was on the morning of Sunday 29th September with another Oakley Club breakfast run. Despite it being overcast and somewhat chilly we had 65 show cars in attendance so not a bad turn out and a nice end of show season morning.



We are looking forward to being back again next year. Meetings will be on the second Tuesday of the month from April to September and we will throw in a couple of Sunday breakfast mornings as well!

Regards from Luke, Tich and The Beds Classic Car Team

## Oakley Village Directory 2025

**Do you want your club/society/business to be in the 2025 Oakley Village Directory?**

It is free to get your details printed, or for a small charge you can advertise. There is no better way to help local people to support you than by telling them you live/work in Oakley!

The Directory is printed once a year in January and distributed free to all residents in the village. To be included in the 2025 directory please contact [oakleyvillagedirectory@gmail.com](mailto:oakleyvillagedirectory@gmail.com)







# Oakley Sports & Social Club

## Family & Sports Bar



Oakley Sports & Social Club  
Family & Sports Bar

# Christmas Fete & Market

14.12.2024

*Market*

HUGE VARIETY OF  
XMAS MARKET  
STALLS

*Reindeer*

SANTA'S  
REINDEER WILL BE  
IN ATTENDANCE

*Santa's Grotto*

MEET SANTA IN HIS NEW  
GROTTO AT  
OAKLEY SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

*Live Music*

LIVE MUSIC AND  
ENTERTAINMENT FOR  
ALL TO ENJOY

*Rides*

FUN FAIR  
RIDES COURTESY  
OF GUMBLES

...AND LOTS MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED!



Oakley Sports & Social Club  
Family & Sports Bar

# 2024

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

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FREE FOR MEMBERS  
INCLUDES FREE GLASS OF PROSECCO

