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Editorial

We hope you like the new design of our cover. We felt it was time to give it a more contemporary look to go with the other style changes to the printed text that we have been introducing. There will be a different image each issue to reflect the changing seasons or a particular event in the parish. Our grateful thanks to Janita Clamp for help in designing the cover and Eric Dore for this lovely Christmassy picture.

While we have made a change to the front cover (the first in 40 years!) I'm happy to report that it's still the same *Villager* inside – packed as always with information on events and news about goings on in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. All thanks to the many contributors on whom I rely each issue and couldn't produce *The Villager* without. This issue is full of Christmas festivities, starting with the Art Club's annual exhibition on 5 December through to the village Christmas Concert on the 11th (note new day for this, a Friday, and new format), Christmas services in St Agatha's and carols around the tree on Christmas Eve, and rounding off with the Red Lion's New Year's Eve party on the 30th. Opening hours over the Christmas holiday in the village shop and Red Lion are shown in pages 8 and 13 respectively while the last posting dates for your cards and parcels at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's Post Office are given on page 23. There will be news we hope of the plans for the Post Office in our next issue as discussions are still in progress as I write.

This is the season traditionally for giving but it seems that many of you have already been very generous in your support to the Save our Bells appeal (see page 10). The target has been successfully reached in just 3 months. Congratulations on a tremendous effort by all, and especially by Tony Lascelles and his team. I hope that other organisations can continue to benefit from this generous spirit in the village, such as our preschool group Allsorts garden initiative (see update on page 5) and the Playground upgrade next year (page 6).

As we turn into January, look out for our very own Wassail on the afternoon of Sunday 3 January from 3.30 pm (see page 15). Further details of the route and which orchards will be visited will be given nearer the time on the village website (www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk). If it's anything like last year, it promises to be fun, wacky and weird with lots of noise and commotion so come along and join in.

Helen Connor

Community Association

AGM – 29 September 2015

A big thank you to everyone who attended our AGM on 29 September. Our Treasurer Susannah was pleased to be able to report that £4,020 was distributed to various clubs and charities in the village. We also provided hampers for the elderly in the village, with the generous support of the Fairthorne Trust.

We would like to record our sincere thanks to Jim and Madeline Sanger who this year lent us their garden for the Fete.

Our Treasurer Susannah left this year, and we are grateful for all her hard work and dedication over the last four years. We are pleased that Tom Rogerson has kindly agreed to take on the role. Another hard working member of our team, Graham Adlard, has also resigned. We will miss his enthusiasm and all the ideas and commitment he has brought to our committee. We are delighted that Sarah Jackson, Caroline Annets, Bill Horsfield, John Burdass, Andy Lewis, and Charlotte and Mike Woods were all happy to be re-elected. Our Chairman, James Davys, and Secretary, Andy Stevens, were also re-elected. Jim Sanger has kindly agreed to be auditor again this year.

Fun Run – Sunday 27 September 2015

This was a new venture for us and we were lucky to have a beautiful day and ideal running conditions. Congratulations to everybody who took part and thank you to those who came along and supported them. I would also like to thank Charlotte and Mike Woods who came up with the idea and worked tirelessly to make it such a success.

As this was a new enterprise we were fortunate to get sponsorship from a number of local businesses and we are grateful to them and to the Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary who allowed us to hold the event at their premises. I would also like to acknowledge the support that we had from the Didcot Running Group who gave us lots of advice and helped with the marshalling on the day.

Christmas Concert – Friday 11 December 7:30pm Village Hall

Please come and join us for our annual Christmas Concert. There will be a change of format this year; a number of groups in the village will be showcasing their talent to us, with each performance interwoven with carols and Christmas songs. Don't worry, there will still be lots of mulled wine and mince pies.

Christmas Hampers

The profits from the Christmas Concert are used to purchase hampers for older members of the village. If you know of anyone over the age of 70 whom you believe does not currently receive a hamper but would appreciate one, please notify me on 01491 834195.

Village Quiz Evening – Saturday 16 March 2016

We plan to send entry forms to all teams that took part last year. Anyone else who wants to enter a team should contact me on 834195. Numbers are limited because of the event's popularity and fire regulations, so entries will be accepted in strict order of receipt of completed forms. All entry forms will be despatched at the same time to ensure everyone has an equal chance of acceptance.

James Davys, Chairman

Parish Council update

Further cuts ahead: The County Council is seeking further cuts of £50m. The Parish Council is doing what it can in the consultation process to ensure that the best interests of the Parish are protected as far as possible.

News on Site B: The developer's plans for the access to Site B are due to be considered by SODC in the course of the next few months. The Parish Council is still trying to make sure that the visual coalescence with Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is minimised and that there are sensible speed restrictions on the bypass.

The Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan: In the new year the Parish Council will be consulting on several key items that will be used to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. We will be holding an open meeting in February to discuss progress and also to ask you what you think. It is an important meeting and it would be good if as many people as possible could attend. Look out for details in the next *Villager*.

Lucy Dalby, Parish Clerk

Allsorts Preschool - 2015 fundraising round up

2015 has been a big year for Allsorts following the May launch of our garden fundraising campaign, which runs alongside our usual fundraising activities. Fundraising is vital for Allsorts as government-funded hours and fees cover only staff wages and basic running costs. Our fees are much lower than nursery fees so that we keep early years education affordable for all. Special projects, like the garden, tend to get left until they need a lot of attention – and a lot of money too.

Our garden initiative aims to raise £20,000 to create a beautiful garden to replace the existing one, which is very tired and falls short of Ofsted best practice. The fabulous new design is based on creating an environment where every day is an adventure in the natural world for our children. As the year draws to a close, we are very pleased that we now have just over £5,500 in the garden pot. The hugely successful and popular ‘Magical Midsummer Party’ raised around £1,500, which was topped up by our other regular events, with great support from parents. We are also hugely grateful for a number of private donations, including one for £500. We are also very excited that we now have enough to start work on the garden, with phase one kicking off in the spring. The design has been created so that we can work on the garden in phases. The priority areas for development are an outdoor classroom, a willow tunnel, a sensory path, groundworks to create a mound with a tunnel through it, and a new shed.

In 2016, we will be concentrating on securing grant funding and running another village wide event (details to follow in a later issue). If anyone has any experience with grant applications we would be very appreciative of help. Simply email allsortsfundraising@gmail.com or call Sally on 07921 719875 to get in touch.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy new year,

Kristen Dudley and Sally Jackson (fundraising)

Flower power

A big thank you to Brightwell Beavers who helped to tidy up the village verges following the hay cut this autumn. Thanks also to Root One Garden Centre who donated locally sourced wild flower seed that have been sown now in several places around our country lanes.

Playground upgrade

As a result of the community led plan, we are hoping to upgrade the playgrounds in the village (Kings Meadow and the Recreation Ground).

At Kings Meadow, our thoughts so far are to move the younger children's playground so that it is adjacent to the older children's area with a gate through from one to the other. We would also like to redesign the area between the tennis courts and the path from Church Lane (Back Lane) to make a BMX track.

On the Recreation Ground we would like to rethink the area in between the slide and the climbing frame. We are interested in developing the stream area at the Recreation Ground to make it more exciting.

Ideas would be welcome from as many people as possible of all ages. There are grants available but we need to raise some money as well. Look out for events coming up soon. Any offers of help (there will definitely be a digger weekend!!!) gratefully received.

Thank you.

The Playground Team
Sue@hopecottagetours.co.uk

Artist of the month at the Red Lion

In the last issue of *The Villager* I said I would let you know how much had been raised from the monthly exhibition of paintings at the Red Lion. I'm delighted to say that we have raised over £1000 from the sales in the first three months! 20 per cent of all sales go to local causes and Mark has kindly agreed that the first two exhibitions' funds would go to the Save the Bells appeal for St. Agatha's. So £200 will be winging its way to the appeal in due course.

As I write, a wonderful exhibition for November by Victoria Squires, a Brightwell Art Club tutor and talented local textile artist, has just been hung and three paintings sold while we were hanging them! Funds raised from this exhibition will be going to a local trust caring for older people. In January, Laura Templeman, a portrait and landscape artist, will be exhibiting her wonderful paintings and drawings. Look out for some very clever caricatures of well known, local celebrities!

Susan Ganney

Brightwell Art Club & Exhibition

This is an exciting term for the Art Club as we have our annual exhibition on Saturday 5 December, and members are working towards this.



Our term started with a still life of fruit and flowers organised by Janet, and since then we have had an enjoyable and messy mixed media workshop called “Funky Fruits” with Denny, which we were able to continue the following week. In October there was a portrait session with Vickie, and in November, Anthony gave a critique of our paintings and advice on what would be suitable to frame and put into the exhibition.

Our exhibition is on Saturday 5 December, between 10am and 1pm, and as usual there will be very reasonably priced art for sale, cards, local craft stalls and of course refreshments so do come along, have some cake and coffee, and look at our work. Admission is free. If you would like to know a bit more about the Club you can find us on the village website, www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk under 'Local Services'.

Veronica Wood, Secretary

Save the Children

We will be putting up the Save the Children Christmas Tree in the Square again this year. As usual we will hold our ‘Carols around the Christmas Tree’ on Christmas Eve at 5.15pm. If you enjoy the tree and the event please give generously. All contributions will be donated to the children caught up in the Syrian crisis.

I am selling Save the Children Christmas cards from my house (Thistledown, The Square) just call or ring 01491 835988.

Celia Collett

Welcome Packs

If you know of a newcomer to the village, please give their name and address for a Welcome Pack to Bill Horsfield 01491 832041 wthorsfield@yahoo.com or Andy Lewis 01491 82568

The Village Stores

Christmas is fast approaching and, as always, there will be plenty to see and buy in the shop. Our Christmas Evening this year is on **Friday 4 December** between 6 and 8pm. Please put the date in your diary and come along and see what we have to offer. You will be able to try (and buy!) some wine from our supplier, Oxford Wine Company, as well as the chance to place your Christmas order for some of Ray Park's delicious meats. There will also be a selection of unusual gifts and an exciting array of Christmas goodies.

Our Christmas opening hours are:

Christmas Eve – 8.30am - 1 pm

Christmas Day and Boxing Day – Closed
Sunday 27 and Monday 28 December – Closed

Tuesday 29 and Wednesday 30 December – 8.30am - 6pm

Thursday 31 December – 8.30am -1pm

Friday 1 January 2016 – Closed

Saturday 2 January – 9am -1pm

Sunday 3 January – 9am -12 noon

Monday 4 January – Back to normal!

We look forward to seeing you in the shop.

Mandy and Margot

Brightwell School Christmas Fair

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell School will be holding their Christmas Fair at the school on Friday 4 December 2015 from 6pm-8pm.

Come along for a festive evening of shopping and activities. There will be local independent stalls, refreshments, vintage gifts and the opportunity to get crafty with “Busy Brushes”.

Belinda Simpson, FOBS

The Parish Church

This time of year is full of special events – in the last few months we have had a service to remember family and friends we have lost, Remembrance Sunday, the beginning of Advent, and now we have the Christmas season to look forward to. As on the village’s war memorial, it was very good this year to correct the name of Edward Woodgate on the plaque inside St Agatha’s and to add the extra names that had not been included.

In December, interviews are scheduled to take place for appointing a new vicar for the Wallingford Team. May I again thank Rev Janice Chilton for all that she continues to do during this time of vacancy, and also others in the village who have helped with the Sunday services.

With so much going on it can be easy to just focus on our village; however we are daily rightly challenged with what is happening in other parts of the world. Less easy is to know what our response should be as individuals, a church, village or nation – lots to think about, but perhaps also some action is needed! You or your children may have packed a shoe box with necessities for refugee children for distribution by Samaritan’s Purse and co-ordinated by the Free Church here in Sotwell, or donated clothing or bedding for migrants currently in Calais. A new group *Brightwell Supporting Refugees* has been set up aiming to give a local response to the current crisis. Amongst other things, it is looking into supporting teachers in a refugee camp in Jordan. More news of this shortly.

Don’t forget that the Church Room is open for coffee and delicious homemade cakes every Wednesday 10am-12 noon. All are welcome to drop in! The Church Room will soon be enhanced by two beautiful wall hangings, made by villagers, depicting many of the groups within the village. We are very grateful to Cynthia Hurley and the Quilters for their involvement in this project and to all those who have sewn, embroidered or knitted a square (and to ex-vicar Jeremy Goulston for the idea). It will both make the room more attractive and improve the sound quality. This is a village resource, so once hung, do please come and see it.

As well as the regular Sunday services at St Agatha’s and St James’ other dates for your diary are:

29 November 4pm	Advent All Age Communion	St James’
13 December 9:30am	All Age Worship	St Agatha’s

20 December 9:30am	Holy Communion led by Archdeacon Judy French	St Agatha's
20 December 6pm	Carol Service	St Agatha's
24 December 4:30pm	Crib Service	St Agatha's
11.30pm	Midnight Service	St Agatha's
25 December 9:30am	Christmas Day Service	St Agatha's
27 December 10am	Team Communion Service	St Mary's, W'ford

Margot Shawyer

Save Our Bells

Alleluia!

I am delighted to report that the St Agatha's Bells Restoration Appeal has reached its target of £45,000, just three months after the start of the campaign. This is a tremendous reflection on the village and its sterling support of what obviously is considered an important aspect of its heritage. Our sincere thanks to all who have contributed.

The Appeal funds have resulted from a combination of personal pledges and donations, local fundraising events and grants from local and national bodies. Future events planned will now not need to go ahead but the ones already held have proven very successful, not just financially but also in providing enjoyable opportunities for the village to get together.

The sun shone

The first of three recent fundraising events was the Open Garden and Harvest Fayre at Sinodun Hill House on 27 September, at the kind invitation of Anne Elliot. The favourable weather added to a splendid village occasion which raised almost £2,800.

..... the food and wine flowed

On 17 October the community put on its party gear and enjoyed its third Safari Supper. Over 100 of us dined at some twenty venues around the village, a great opportunity to meet new people. There were many comments along the lines of "we have lived near one another for some sixteen years but never really met". The evening raised over £1,800, due to the superb organization of Hilary

Rogerson and her hard working team. Our thanks to everyone who hosted a meal in their home.

..... and the music played on

St Agatha's imposing organ became rather heated on 31 October when Derek Nightingale tackled fifty different pieces of music by fifty different composers over a three hour period. This was a magnificent effort and our sincere thank you to Derek for surviving this challenge intact and raising the mammoth total of £2,500. Derek has asked me to pass on his grateful thanks to all who sponsored him.

What happens next

The first priority is to gather in all the pledges that have been made in support of the appeal.

The actual work on the bells will commence in April next year when the bells will be lowered from the church tower and transported to White's of Appleton, the oldest continuously trading bell-hanging company in the UK, for restoration. Work on the bells and the tower will take five to six months, so the peals should be ringing out again well before Christmas 2016.

My thanks also to the appeal committee for all the hard work undertaken in achieving this result.

Tony Lascelles

Why not grow your own food?

The Allotment Club members had a really successful summer growing everything from unusual crops like Jerusalem artichokes and radicchio to the stalwarts like every variety of potatoes, beans and squashes. The weather was also perfect for fruit like raspberries, gooseberries and currants. We even had three peaches on the tree hidden under a wilderness of honeysuckle. Its good fun growing your own food and very satisfying when you nip down to your patch to pick some veg for your dinner and fruit for your tea.

We have some plots available for new members. Contact our Secretary, Steph for more information - 01491 836899 or stephrorke@gmail.com.

Alison Bloomfield



Christmas Services, Carols and Concerts



St Agatha's

20 December 6pm Carol Service

24 December 4:30pm Crib Service (followed by the annual Save the Children Carols around the Christmas Tree at 5:15pm)

24 December 11:30pm Midnight Service

25 December 9:30am Christmas Day Service

Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary

Carol Service Thursday 17 December at 7:30pm. Benson and Roke Silver Band will be providing the music and Rev Janice Chilton will be leading the service as usual. Live animals will be in attendance and refreshments will be served after the service. Get there early in good time for parking.

Wallingford Town Carols and Festival of Lanterns

Carols at St Mary's Church will be preceded by a procession of lanterns, starting at 6pm at the Regal Centre. Wednesday 16 December.

Dorchester Abbey

Handel's Messiah, Orchestra of St John's and OSJ Oxford Voices, Saturday 19 December at 6pm.

Britten's St Nicolas Cantata, OSJ and OSJ Voices, Saturday 12 December at 7:30pm.

Details and tickets for both from www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk

Cranford Choral Society

Christmas Music with mulled wine, mince pies and merriment. Saturday 12 December, 7:30pm, St Mary's Cholsey. Tickets from www.cranfordchoral.org.uk or on the door.

Didcot Community Gospel Choir

Family Christmas Concert, Sunday 6 December, 4:30 pm,
Church of English Martyrs, Didcot. For tickets contact
didcotgospel@gmail.com





Christmas and New Year at the Red Lion



Christmas Menu

Christmas meals at the Red Lion will start to be served from 1 December and bookings can be made right through to lunchtime on 24th. Parties of up to 35 can be catered for, or the whole restaurant reserved at no extra cost.

3 courses - £27, 2 courses - £22. To see the menu go to the website at www.redlion.biz.net. For enquires or to book a table, call Mark and his team on 01491 837373 or email mark@redlion.biz.

New Year's Eve Party

As usual, the Red Lion will be holding their New Year's Eve Party on Wednesday 30 December 8:30 – late. This year's theme is Best Wig (no food that evening).

Live Music

Every Sunday evening in December (except 27th) and January (except 24th) there will be live music. Don't miss **Al Jenkins** on Sundays 13 Dec and 10 Jan and **Stanley Moon Trio** on Sunday 31 January.

Opening times

There will be no food from the evening of 24th until lunchtime on 27th when Sunday lunch will be served 12-2:30pm. The bar will be open as normal on the 24th. On Christmas Day the bar will be open from 12-2, on Boxing Day from 12 – 11pm and on Sunday 27 12-9pm.



On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, lunch as normal but no food in the evening, bar open as normal.



Burns' Night

Looking further ahead into January is the Red Lion's traditional Burns Supper - Saturday 23 January, with haggis, piper and speeches, look out for notices.

Hannah

The Fifth Apple Day

It was clearly the biggest and best so far. Paul Chilton wowed the crowds with a giant display of apples laid out the full length of the pub garden. He had 91 varieties of apples and pears from the parish all of which were identified and labelled – there were just a few that eluded him which he had found in some gardens in the days before Apple Day.

Taking a straw poll on the day it was clear that news has spread that the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Apple Day is certainly worth visiting. Comments overheard were that it was a great day out, certainly a curiosity, quirky fun for the kids and great food. Money raised on the day helped pay for the village press and contributed to the church bells funds.

People loved tasting the apples and were really surprised that they tasted so different to those few found in the supermarkets. Apart from being good fun, Apple Day is an amazing window on how fruit used to be in the past.

Thank you everyone who helped on the day, helped picking apples, the garden owners who were so generous, and to Paul, of course, for his considerable contribution to making the day so impressive and special.

Why not join in the next traditional apple event at Wassail on Sunday 3 January. Have a look at our video on You Tube to see just how much fun it is.

The Orchard Group



Apple toffee crunch

If you still have lots of apples left, here is Caroline Oakley's recipe for apple toffee crunch, by popular demand - scrumptious!

Ingredients: 3oz butter 3oz brown Demerara sugar 3oz porridge oats
Quantity of stewed apple made from eaters or cookers or best of all a combination of both.

Method: Melt butter on low heat, stir in the brown sugar and oats, mix thoroughly then remove from heat. Leave to cool a little.

Spoon cooled stewed apple into 6 ramekins or small bowls leaving space for the toffee oat topping. Divide and spoon topping equally and put in fridge for about an hour. Serve with cream or creme fraiche.

Wassail 2016

Wassail has become part of our village story and the next one will take place on Sunday 3 January 2016. Our friends from Armaleggan, the Oxfordshire Border Morris side, are keen to join us once again with their very special brand of music and dance. Remember their fire dance outside the Red Lion last year?

As usual we will be creating fun and mayhem in village orchards, including our own Community Orchard. There will also be some surprises, so join us with your singing voices, anything to make a noise, and sticks to beat the trees as we celebrate the coming seasons “in the dark of the year”.

Wassail will start opposite the Red Lion, so join us at the bottom of Wellsprings at 3:30pm on 3 January. Further details will be published in due course: visit the village website or <http://brightwellorchards.blogspot.co.uk>.

Robert Field

Edward Fairthorne Memorial Charity

Over many centuries, trusts were established for various reasons to benefit local communities by benefactors who lived in them. The sole surviving trust for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is the Edward Fairthorne Memorial Charity, named after the individual who was a great philanthropist within the village of Brightwell. All the other bodies – which were many in number but largely without funds – disappeared in the 1990s in a programme of consolidation into this single trust.

This trust exists to help people in the parishes of Brightwell and Sotwell or exceptionally outside those parishes. The trustees have a wide discretion to assist people who are in "need, hardship or distress".

The trust has some assets to use for these purposes and can make gifts or loans to or pay for goods, services or facilities for people it helps. Probably because of the notion of “charity”, individuals have not always felt comfortable with approaching the trust for assistance: but it is an organisation specifically devoted to providing help. Over the years the trust has assisted local people in a quiet and discreet way. The trustees are all associated with the village and understand the importance of discretion. They feel that they could do more with the resources they have and would very much like individuals who have a need to come forward, so that they can be helped if they qualify.

The resources available to the trustees are not great but they can make, and have made, a significant difference.

Please, if you feel you might benefit or you know someone who could benefit, get in touch with me on fnu_snu@msn.com. We always try to help where we can. All applications and communications are treated in the utmost confidence.

Michael Drury



Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

We have been very busy during the summer working on our new website which is now up and running. Thanks must go to Susanne Tuffrey and Anna Bartlett who worked really hard to draw things together and if you would like to check us out just log on to brightwellcumsotwellwi.com. There you will see what we are about and what we get up to over the year.

In October Dr. Anne Borrowdale came to tell us of her work as an examination invigilator and the amusing incidents that can occur in the examination room. Her piece de resistance was of the invigilator who managed to set light to his trousers whilst fiddling with his cigarette lighter. It was all very light hearted. In contrast to the meeting of the Didcot Group, attended by representatives of Brightwell WI, where there was an extremely interesting talk given by Graham Harrison about the use of poisons as medicines by the Victorians. Thank goodness we now have rules and regulations with regard to the prescribing of these.

At our November meeting we exchanged our families' favourite recipes with some anecdotes and tastings. Copies of the recipes can be accessed on our new website. If you need help with using the site, please let us know and we will find someone to help you find your way around. We will be having a demonstration of the website at a meeting but have technical difficulties at the moment doing this in the Village Hall.

Margaret Smith

NEXT WI MEETING 'Christmas Celebrations': Storyteller Chloe Lees plus drinks and festive fare, Tuesday 8 December 7:30 pm in Village Hall.

Allsorts Preschool

Autumn activities

The Allsorts children launched themselves into the autumn term with a variety of seasonal themed activities including leaf print pictures, autumn walks, pumpkin carving and hedgehog and birdfeeder making. Baking continues to be a big hit and the children have enjoyed making homemade bread rolls and flapjacks. French lessons and yoga-inspired Tatty Bumpkin have resumed and continue to be very popular with the children.

In November, the children celebrated Bonfire Night by building a fairy light 'bonfire' with sticks that they collected over the week, and they created some wonderful firework pictures. Forest School began again, now on a Wednesday afternoon, with outdoor activities making the most of the village surroundings. The children also began to practise for the December nativity play.

AGM

The AGM of the parents' group committee, which runs the Preschool, was held in September and saw a number of changes to the committee. Lorna G stood down as chair, as did Andrea F as assistant chair, Alex W as treasurer, and Clare B as a committee member. They did a fantastic job in their roles and the Allsorts staff and committee would like to say a huge thank you for all their hard work. Helen W has kindly taken over as chair, Lisa S has become treasurer and Hannah B secretary. Kristen D now leads fundraising with Sally J concentrating on our project to raise funds for the garden (see page 5). Steph R continues to manage the website and Ali Q joined as a new member.

Fundraising

Fundraising events so far this academic year have included the teddy bear drop, which saw the village's much-loved soft toys parachute or zip wire down from the church tower. Our Halloween Party at the Red Lion was a huge success with the children arriving in fantastic costumes, playing spooky games and enjoying delicious Halloween themed food such as mummy's fingers and eye ball pasta. Thank you to Mark and Hannah for hosting the event at the pub again this year and allowing Allsorts to raise funds by organising Halloween games. We raised over £100 through the games and Mark and Hannah very kindly donated £150 to Preschool from the pub's takings.

Allsorts still has spaces available for a number of sessions this year. Please contact us at allsortsadmin@btinternet.com if you are interested in knowing more.

Environment Group

Climate Change

The United Nations Conference (COP 21) of the 190 or so nations who are party to the Convention on Climate Change will meet in Paris from 30 November to 11 December. This bald statement hides the fact that this meeting will determine whether humankind will survive on planet earth.

This conference is expected to result in agreements which it is hoped will determine whether or not the future rise in global temperature will be restrained to the target 2 degrees C. Failure to reach agreement will mean that before the end of the century the world will enter a new pattern of climate, adversely impacting on the lives of billions. Coupled with sea level rise, this altered climate will cause the lives of our grandchildren and their children to be deprived of the things we take for granted today.

Ash Die-back

Certain of the ash trees in the Earth Trust's Paradise Wood are suffering from ash die-back. You can find out more about this problem from the Earth Trust website www.earthtrust.org.uk. Ash trees in our Parish are likely to become infected. Please inform me or any member of the group if you see any ash trees suffering from die-back.

Millennium Wood

In the last *Villager*, I reported that the wood was in good shape and that the worrisome brambles in the central glade had been cut back. Since then, a working party from Vertex Pharmaceuticals, based at Milton Park, led by James Davys, spent a day at the wood attacking more of the brambles, tidying things up and making the surroundings look even more attractive. Thank you James and your gang for your great efforts.

Didcot B Power Station Visit

Members of the group enjoyed an afternoon visit to the Power Station on 15 October. They were given an exhaustive tour, explanations of the different stages in power generation and the station's links to the National Grid. The two engineers who acted as guides answered a large number of questions which enlarged aspects.

St James Churchyard

Members of the group, led by Trevor Wintle, took part in the annual autumn tidy-up on 17 September.

John Rodda

Neighbourhood Watch

The village has been part of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme for over twenty years. During the last five years, due to co-ordinators leaving the area or being quite reasonably unable to continue, a large part of Brightwell- cum- Sotwell is not covered. We need six or eight people to give us effective coverage. The police, because of budget cuts, do not have a regular presence in villages other than in cars. They are often only reactive and rely on feedback from communities.

This contribution to the life of the village requires very little work. There are only four meetings a year, taking perhaps half an hour or forty five minutes. They are held in the Village Hall, at 8pm in the evening, on the first Wednesday in December, March, June, and September. There is no question of there being any element whatever of vigilantism. It is simply an attempt to keep households, in the small area of each co-ordinator's territory, informed of any relevant problems stemming from crime or serious antisocial activity.

If you are online, the police information service, through the Neighbourhood Watch Area's overall representative, issue reports on the Wallingford district, where and when there have been problems that could affect people or property in the village and our neighbouring parishes. In the past, co-ordinators have left notes through the doors of houses on their patch. Now it is more likely a question of a simple email to those neighbours on the village website.

Brightwell has been very fortunate in having relatively little crime for a long time. This has, to some extent, led to a feeling that a Neighbourhood Watch set-up is not as important for us as for some other communities. We should not rely on this to be always the case. Parts of the village have no coverage at present, areas from Greenmere and through the West End of the village.

If you live in any part of the Parish, are unaware of being in touch with a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, and would like to make a small contribution to the security of your community, please get in touch with me or leave a message on 01491 839394.

John Acton

Red phone box gallery - new exhibition

On Monday 11 January 2016, an exciting new exhibition will be opened at Brightwell's very own Red Phone Box Gallery featuring the work of Robert Gibbings. Immediately before the Grand Opening an illustrated talk by Martin Andrews, author of his definitive biography, will be given in the Red Lion at 7:30pm. Free and all welcome. Not to be missed.

Robert Gibbings was a well known wood engraver, artist, sculptor and author who lived and is buried in Long Wittenham. Born in 1889 he studied at the Slade and the Central School of Arts and Crafts in 1911 where he met many influential artists including Paul Nash. He bought the Golden Cockerel Press in 1924 and went on to design and produce, with Eric Gill, some of the finest illustrated books ever published which are today highly collectable.

He became a lecturer at the University of Reading in 1936 where he built a punt sized boat which he travelled down the Thames and collected material for 'Sweet Thames Run Softly'. In 1955, after moving to Long Wittenham, he wrote a companion volume 'Till I End My Song' which contains many local scenes and became his last book.

This will be an excellent opportunity to find out about a colourful local influential artist and author without having to leave the village! And what's more it is free – you only need to buy your own drinks!

Jason Debney

The Bach Centre

A few issues ago, our *Villager* article was about our search for a new gardener. We duly appointed Allan O'Connor to the post. Bach Centre gardener is always a difficult position to fill, because the garden here makes particular demands on its custodian. The challenge is to manage it, but not too much! - and of course always give priority to the remedy plants. Allan has made an excellent beginning, and has already conducted quite a few guided tours for visitors and students.

We also lost our office administrator, who decided to take up an option to study Arabic and work in Oxford. We have taken on Grace Blizard, a local lady from Wallingford. She has also contributed in an unexpected direction by creating a new range of hand-painted, very special dropper bottles, ideal for taking Bach remedies. They're on sale in the shop.

Stefan



Wallingford Museum

As usual, Wallingford Museum will close for its winter break (Dec - Feb) to carry out refurbishment and prepare exciting new exhibitions for next year. These will feature William the Conqueror's impact on Wallingford - including his crossing of the Thames here with his army 950 years ago after the Battle of Hastings. There will also be an unusual and fascinating special exhibition revealing history through the work of cartoonists over the centuries. The museum will re-open on 1 March 2016.

Please remember that the museum bookshop, with its constantly changing stock of good second-hand books (all modestly priced) will remain open during December, January and February, on Fridays and Saturdays from 10:30am to 1pm. However, for one Saturday only there will be 'The Best Book Sale' on 5 December from 10:30am to 3pm

Stu Derby, Publicity Officer

Earth Trust

Natural Christmas Sun 6 Dec, 11am-3pm

Drop in to the Earth Trust Centre and make your own unique Christmas decorations and gifts using natural and recycled materials, plus visit Father Christmas! Price by activity.

Introduction to Hedgelaying Sat 5 & Sun 6 Dec, 9:30am-4pm

A very practical, hands on two days laying a Midland style hedge with expert Clive Leeke. Learn about this traditional skill on the job here on the Earth Trust's nature reserve in Little Wittenham. All specialist tools and equipment provided. £75; booking essential: 01865 407792 or admin@earthtrust.org.uk.

Heritage Skills Taster Session: Hedgelaying Sun 13 Dec, 10am-4pm

Discover the basics of hedgelaying in an informal taster session, working alongside the regular Earth Trust Sunday volunteers. Free but please book: 01865 409413 or go to volunteering@earthtrust.org.uk.

In Brief – Round and about

Wallingford Gardening Club

Wine, Mince Pies and Quiz plus AGM, Thursday 10 December, 7:30 pm, Ridgeway Community Centre, Wallingford. Visitors very welcome, £2

14 January meeting – ‘*Trees – a camera’s perspective*’ Richard Roslyn, Head Gardner, Blewbury Manor.

Wallingford U3A

2 December - *Christmas Party: Wine, Music and Song with Pandemonium.*

6 January - *Not Joanna Lumley: Moscow to Vladivostok on the Trans-Siberian Express.* Meetings are held at 2pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Crowmarsh Village Hall. Visitors are always made welcome. For more information visit www.u3asites.org.uk/wallingford, or phone Jill on 01491 835994.

Panto Time

It’s Panto time in Wallingford again – this year it’s *Rapunzel*, so a chance to let your hair down and enjoy Sinodun Players’ version of this traditional tale. Performances take place at the Corn Exchange, Wallingford, Tuesdays-Saturdays 15-30 January with a Saturday matinee. Tickets: Adults £10 (Tues-Thurs) £12 (Fri & Sat), Children £6. On sale from 20 November at Box Office 01491 825000 or www.cornexchawnge.org.uk.

Snow Dragon

The Christmas Show at Cornerstone Didcot is Tall Stories’ magical tale, *The Snow Dragon*, from Saturday 19 to Thursday 24 December. Performances at 11am, 2pm and 4pm most days. To book contact Box Office 01235 515144.

Science Exchange

Science Exchange Wallingford’s speaker on Tues 12 January, will be Peter Adamson on ‘Measuring Happiness’, 7:30pm at Wallingford School library (<http://www.cafescientifique.org/>).

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Post Office

Your Post Office is open in the Stewart Room of the Village Hall at the following times: Monday to Friday 09:00 to 13:00. Saturday 09:00 to 12:00.

The Last Collection Time at the Post Office by Royal Mail is 11:05 am. For the full range of facilities available at Brightwell Post Office see website at www.postoffice.co.uk.

Last Recommended Christmas Posting Dates:

Air Mail

Middle East, Africa – 4 Dec

Asia, Far East, Cyprus, Japan, Eastern Europe – 7 Dec

Caribbean, Central and South America - 8 Dec.

Australia, New Zealand – 10 Dec

HM Forces – 11 Dec

Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Poland – 14 Dec

Canada, Finland, Sweden and USA -15 Dec

Austria, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain – 16 Dec

France – 17 Dec

Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Switzerland – 18 Dec

Inland

Second Class – 19 Dec

First Class – 21 Dec

Parcelforce Worldwide Express 48 – 22 Dec

Royal Mail Special Delivery and Parcelforce Worldwide 24 – 23 Dec

Christmas Stamps

These are available in Books of 12 Second Class and Books of 12 First Class or in sheets of 25 stamps. European Stamps up to 20g are in sheets of 25 stamps.

A Happy Christmas and peaceful new year to all our customers.

Mike Powell

VILLAGE DIARY

December

4	Brightwell School Christmas Fair	School	6-8pm
4	Village Shop Christmas Evening	VS	6-8pm
5	Art Club Exhibition	VH	10-1pm
8	WI 'Christmas Celebrations'	VH	7:30pm
11	Community Association Christmas Concert	VH	7:30pm
15	Quilting Group	VH	9:30am
17	Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary Carol Service	Is Farm	7:30pm
20	Carol Service	St Agatha	6pm
24	Save the Children Carols around the Christmas Tree		5:15pm
24	Midnight Service	St Agatha	11:30pm
25	Christmas Day Service	St Agatha	9:30am
30	New Year's Eve Eve Party	Red Lion	8:30pm

January

3	Wassail, starting opposite Red Lion		3:30pm
11	Illustrated talk on new Red Phone Box Exhibition	Red Lion	7:30pm
23	Burns' Night	Red Lion	7pm

Advance notice

16 March	Village Quiz VH
26 June	Summer Concert, St Agatha's

Refuse collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins 3 & 17 December, **Monday 4, Friday 15 & 28** January
Green (& brown) bins 10 & 24 December, **Saturday 9 & 21** January

Village website

For more information about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell visit the village website:
www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk