

DON'T MISS :
Wine Bluffers Evening (7 March),
Fabulous Fete (4 May), **Open Gardens** (8 June)
 and our visit to **Woolley Park** (28 June).

**AN EXCELLENT CHANCE
 to join in and make a difference**

**Annual General Meeting—Brightwalton Village Hall
 7.30 pm Monday 10 February 2025.**

Come and find out how the hall works, and join in the elections.

Everybody welcome.

CHAIR VACANCY

Could you help the village hall and the Brightwalton community? Mike Ananin is standing down as Chair of the village hall management committee in February and we're looking for a new Chair.

The hall runs very smoothly with a great team and we've worked recently to streamline the role of Chair to be easy to take on. The committee meets about 4 times a year and the committee is elected annually. It doesn't matter how long you've been in the village. Newcomers or old-timers bring different perspectives and equal value.

If you'd be interested in a no-obligation conversation about what the role involves, please get in touch with me or Gill Judge.

GP Retirement

Dr Cave has decided it is time to hang up his stethoscope after 35 years at the Practice and will be leaving us at the end of March. He joined as a Partner in 1990, latterly leading us as Senior Partner and stepped down from the Partnership in 2022, relinquishing his management responsibilities to focus on caring for his patients. We were grateful and fortunate that he continued to provide wisdom and share his experience with the remaining Partners to ease that transition.

We would like to recognise and thank Dr Cave for his stewardship of the Practice for 35 years. He has helped to train dozens of aspiring General Practitioners, including three of our current GPs. He saw the Chieveley Surgery built and then extended, was instrumental in setting up the Pharmacy, and led us in our Covid response to care for you our patients and each other throughout the Covid pandemic. He was at the forefront of setting up the Covid hot hub at the racecourse.

The legacy that Dr Cave has left us with stands us in good stead for the future. Despite the reduced funding, increased need and ever shifting political sands, our practice values and culture remain unchanged. We feel fortunate that in contrast to the challenges seen with recruitment across the country, we have managed to attract younger GPs, who want to join us and provide the personalised medical care that we aspire to provide.

Dr Cave's patients will be notified in early February of their new GP. We know you will join us in wishing him a long and happy retirement.

The Partners

**BRIGHTWALTON FETE IS ONLY THREE MONTHS AWAY.
 CAN YOU HELP US? CONTACT DAVE JUDGE.**

Sunday Service Schedule

	9am	10.30am	4pm
1st Sunday	St Mary the Virgin Fawley	St Mary Great Shefford	St James Leckhampstead
2nd Sunday	St Swithun Wickham	All Saints Brightwalton	
3rd Sunday	St James Leckhampstead	Café Church - St Mary Great Shefford	
4th Sunday	St Andrew Chaddleworth	St Gregory Welford	
5th Sunday	St Stephen Shefford Woodlands	St James Leckhampstead	

Some really serious craft work happened before Christmas.



Rev Mike

Rev Mike

If someone had told me a year ago that I would be writing an article about a new vicar, I would have thought they were crazy. Yet, after what I have witnessed and experienced over the past 12 months, I feel compelled to share this extraordinary story and publicly express my heartfelt thanks to Mike for everything he has done and continues to do.

What makes Mike so remarkable is his boundless enthusiasm, energy, and love for music and the community. He has touched countless lives within the benefice and is even gaining a reputation for drawing people from outside our area.

My journey with Mike began at his inauguration. Brightwalton Church was transformed that evening—illuminated with lights, drum kits, and electric guitars alongside a local choir. From that moment, it was clear that Mike was not going to be a conventional vicar for Brightwalton.

One of Mike's most welcoming initiatives is his Tuesday supper evenings, where anyone is invited to join. My family attended one week, enjoying a lovely evening filled with conversation, old and new friends, and a chance to get to know Mike better. With a background in IT and a talent for cooking, he's the kind of person who greets everyone at church events with a warm smile, a good cup of coffee, and an open heart—regardless of their faith or beliefs. Many of the events I've attended this year have felt less like formal religious gatherings and more like community celebrations.

In the lead-up to Christmas, Mike's dedication and creativity were truly extraordinary. From dressing as a giant orange for the Christingle service at Brightwalton School and Church to organizing the traditional benefice 9 lessons and carols Christmas Service featuring a volunteer choir of over 20 people—the largest in a decade—Mike's efforts brought people together. That service alone drew 140 attendees. Beyond that, there were carols with a rock band in Fawley, carols at the Ibez on a Monday evening, and carols on the avenue at Great Shefford. Amid all this, he even managed to transport 57 drum kits to North Wales for the School Year 6 Residential. All this in addition to his "normal" weekly schedule of services. A testament to his tireless commitment to our community.

Mike's impact goes far beyond these events. Under his leadership, service attendance in the benefice has more than doubled. He has embraced the challenge of overseeing 10 churches, turning it into an opportunity to offer a wide variety of events—from traditional services to contemporary gatherings like Café Church in Great Shefford. While this means we've had to travel more within the benefice, it has also fostered a stronger sense of community. For the first time in 18 years, I attended a Christmas Day service outside my local churches of Brightwalton, Chaddleworth, Leckhampstead, and Fawley. The Welford service was excellent, with over 230 people attending; the churchwarden noted it was the fullest he'd seen the church in 40 years.

What has been truly inspiring is Mike's vision of building community beyond the church walls. He actively encourages people to support local pubs like the Ibez and the Five Bells in Wickham by hosting events there. It's a refreshing approach: taking the church to the people rather than expecting people to always come to the church.

Mike, a huge thank you for all you have done this year. If this article inspires even a few more people to join in with the community, then the world will indeed be a richer place.

Shaun Orpen



A COURSE FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

We will be running a January 2025 West Downland Benefice Pilgrim Course. The Course will run on Tuesday Evenings for 6 weeks starting on 21st January 2025 in the Rectory.

Pilgrim is a place where people can explore the Christian faith together and see how it can be lived out each day. Pilgrim is different to other Christian programmes and approaches the great issues of faith not through persuasion, but participation in a pattern of contemplation and discussion with a group of fellow travellers. It is designed for those exploring the idea of faith as well as those who wish to explore theirs

The format will be

- A simple hot meal
 - A short, conversation-starter video
 - Bible reading and reflection
- Discussion, prayer and sending out

Please email sarah.office@westdownland.co.uk if you would like to sign up or follow the link on the website - <https://westdownland.co.uk/whats-on>

I hope to see you there.

With my love and prayers

Rev Mike



As a reminder, the Agendas for all Parish Council meetings are put up the week beforehand on the notice board at the Village Hall, as well as being posted on the Brightwalton Village Website. The Minutes are printed on the back of every Brickleton News, with dates for future meetings included.

For clarity, the meetings scheduled for 2025 are as follows, at 7.30pm: Monday 10th March, Monday 12th May, Monday 14th July, Monday 8th September and Monday 10th November in the Village Hall. There is a 10 minute open session at the beginning of each meeting where Parishioners are welcome to raise any matters with the PC.



Previous visit to Woolley House



Kirsten the owner and guide

Visit to Woolley House A Village Tour

Four years ago in the Covid era we organised a visit to Woolley House. We shall do another visit on Saturday 28 June. It was very popular last time and places were filled very quickly, so we are giving you the chance to reserve your places early. The visit will start from Brightwalton Village Hall at 2 pm and travel in convoy to the parking field. We will have time to roam around the house. Kirsten Loyd, the present owner will host us, and provide tea for everyone afterwards. You can get a good idea what is there if you visit <https://www.woolleyestate.co.uk/>. The price will be £16 per person and will include tea. Get in touch to get full details on how to book (email on page 4). All proceeds will go to charity. Mike Ananin.

Do you care about our village and providing a great experience for our village hall users? We're looking for a new Bookings Coordinator for the village hall. This is a volunteer role and part of the management committee where you could make a real difference to the use of the hall.

The Bookings Coordinator role is quite straightforward with a dedicated online booking system but there's scope for someone keen to take on advertising and promoting the hall for more private or regular events. It can fit around other life or work commitments and involves:

- Approving bookings for new events through the online bookings system and liaising with hirers to arrange access. All can be done remotely unless you'd like to meet in person. Regular users manage their own bookings.
- Answering queries about hall hire. The committee can support with decisions where needed.
- Issuing invoices through the system (it's semi-automated so just a few clicks). The Treasurer will confirm payments.
- Working with the wider committee to ensure smooth management of the hall. You'd be part of a very supportive team.

If you'd like an informal chat with no obligation, please get in touch via email or contact Anna Britnor Guest or Gill Judge.

Patient Participation Group – The Downland Practice

The last PPG meeting was held on 20th November 2024 Hopefully you have all now had your covid and flu vaccinations. If not the pharmacy are continuing to give flu vaccinations while stocks last so do go along and book.

The surgery has finished vaccinating all patients on their list eligible for the RSV vaccine and from now invitations will be sent out monthly as patients turn 75.

Hopefully you have all noticed how well the pharmacy is now running, they are continuing with staff training and recruitment of further dispenser and counter assistants but personally I have never been more than 2nd waiting and my prescription has always been ready.

The practice is now doing limited blood taking but the wait time at the West Berkshire Hospital has improved and, if phoning the hospital for an appointment, do always ask to be put on the waiting list as that often results in an earlier appointment.

Did you know that there are some minor conditions that pharmacists can deal with as well as doing blood pressure checks so don't be surprised if you are referred to the pharmacist on occasion. This in turn frees up the medical staff for issues only they can deal with.

You may have noticed some slight delays in routine appointments with the GP, the practice is aware of this and putting in place options and solutions that should help. Please be aware that even if more residents come into the area the practice does not expand to cover these extra patients, they have to be accommodated within the current practice and this is alongside various funding cuts higher up within the NHS.

Talking of funding cuts, I'm sure many of you were not impressed with Labour's budget announcements but spare a thought for the practice – GP practices will now have to find extra money to pay the increase in National Insurance the government has implemented, and no the govt will not be exempting GPs and nor will they be helping financially. That money will have to be found within existing budgets, but the practice is determined to not impinge on patient care. Some smaller practices are at risk of closure due to this financial burden so we are fortunate not to be in that situation.

If there is any subject or question you would like me to ask on your behalf at the next meeting please just drop me an e-mail at jill.ppg@btinternet.com



Brightwalton village hall—looking resplendent for a wedding reception.

BLUFFERS WINE QUIZ EVENING

(Knowledge of wine not essential!)

In aid of

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BRIGHTWALTON
ASPIRE PROJECT**

FRIDAY 7 MARCH 2025

BRIGHTWALTON VILLAGE HALL, RG20 7DH

Champagne Reception **7:30 pm**

Wine Competition **8:00 pm**

Supper (please bring picnic) **9:00 pm**

Raffle and Heads & Tails (please bring cash)

Wine & Soft Drinks Included

Tables of 8

Tickets £25.00 each

Contact Nick Arkell nick@arkell-family.co.uk

BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL AT THE MARCH MEETING

General Meeting Held Monday 13th January 7.30pm in Brightwalton Village Hall

See the Brightwalton website for a full copy of the minutes, plus other news and events – www.brightwalton.org.uk

10 Minute Open session: One member of public spoke regarding the fence at the school and commented that they were unimpressed with the look of the fence. Raised a question that the school is a listed building therefore, did it have planning permission. Councillors requested for the clerk to speak with the enforcement officer at WBC. Clerk informed all in attendance that this is a subject that Cllr. Wyatt has previously spoken about and released a statement on Facebook regarding this and has sent an email to all councillors on the subject. The fence was put in place for safe guarding reasons. The plans for the fencing and reasons why had been communicated with parents for months with letters home and the plans agreed with the school Board of Governors.

Declaration of Interests: None. **Apologies:** As above

Minutes: The minutes of the November meeting were agreed. Clerk to pass printed copy to Cllr Agnew for signing.

West Berkshire Council- Councillor Hooker Update: Members bid application submitted by Brightwalton PC for the telephone box refurbishment has been signed off by Cllr. Hooker, awaiting approval from WBC.

Community Coordinator Update: Wreath making event was a great success with 20 people attending including adults and children. This will be looked into reorganising for next Christmas. It was the first youth club after the Christmas break today (13th January). A trip to either ice skating or trampolining to be organised before half term. Open gardens event to be held in June.

Church Warden Update: We were very grateful for the Christmas tree which the Parish Council put up in the churchyard. Together with the lights round the lychgate, it was a wonderful sight for everyone to see and greatly enhanced the village for Christmas.

The church was well-used over Christmas. Katherine ran a Christmas wreath making morning at the beginning of December; there was a Christingle service in the middle of the month at which the rector took the service dressed as a giant Christingle orange; there was a school carol service at the end of term and finally a parish carol service with mulled wine and mince pies, attended by over 140 people.

Cllr. Agnew thanked the MOP on the PC behalf for the stand for the tree and J.Wilson for the electricity for the lights.

Village Hall Committee update: M.Ananin is retiring as chair of the village hall committee and bookings clerk, the VHC are looking for a replacement, this is a voluntary role. The next meeting of the VHC is on the 20th January and the AGM on the 10th February. The meeting of Brightwalton Fete is on the 14th January.

ABG commented that the parish council meetings were not advertised enough, clerk confirmed that all agendas are posted on the parish council noticeboard at the village hall, on the website and a copy of the minutes with future dates are printed in Brickleton News. No further action required.

Matters Arising

Pump Track: Ongoing. KM to obtain more information.

Cherry Tree Maintenance: A quote of £30.00 per hour twice per year for maintenance of the cherry trees, rather than an annual fee was approved. If more than twice per year maintenance is required, the PC will need to approve.

Parish Plan: Ongoing. Cllr Agnew is going to look into a questionnaire that can be published in Brickleton News. It was noted that the website needs to be updated. Clerk to action.

Tree Survey: Clerk presented to the council WBC proposal for tree surveys, however, this was deemed to be too expensive, therefore, clerk to obtain quotes from tree surgeons. Clerk confirmed that the person carrying out the tree survey has to have at least a Level 3 Technical Certificate or Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture as advised by WBC. It was approved to add into next years budget an allocation of £750.00 for the survey and any works required.

80th Anniversary of VE day event: This is to coincide with the Village fete. Ideas of a fish and chip van and pop up pub suggested. Also a suggestion of the Open Garden event to have a VE Day theme. To be discussed at the village fete planning meeting on the 14th January.

Letter for village hall insurance: Cllr. Agnew signed on behalf of Cllr. Wyatt, passed on to Village Hall Committee.

Planning No new applications or updates.

Outstanding invoices: No invoices outstanding.

Monthly Finance Report: Clerk presented to the council, Cllr Agnew signed forms for November and December. Clerk to file.

Payments and receipts made since the November meeting, current account balance on 13th January £3,640.98, Savings Account balance on 13th January £10,154.15, Community Account balance on 13th January £10,379.91

CIL Balance on 13th January £2,895.60 (included in the savings account balance).

Interest rate on the savings account is being reduced by 0.05% on 11th March 2025, new rate will be 1.35%.

Precept: Clerk presented to the council the budget to date and the forecast for financial year 2025/2026, the precept was approved to be set at £13,200. Clerk to send form to WBC. Band D contributions rising from £55.30 to £75.44 for the year. Agreed this was required to keep the parish councils finances secure.

Clerk Reports & Any Other Business

Members bid application: Clerk has submitted the application form, if we are successful we will receive £525 towards the telephone box refurbishment, leaving £225 left to pay.

Park inspections for January: Cllr. Agnew, February: Cllr. Delahunty, March: Cllr. Cooper.

Items for next agenda: Neighbourhood plan/parish plan. Clerk to make contact with WBC to get a representative to speak with the PC regarding Neighbourhood plans.

Ideas for Brickleton News: Cllr. Agnew to submit an article to make villagers aware of the location of the Parish Council noticeboard.

Meeting closed at 21:05

The 2025 meetings will be held on:

10th March, 12th May, 14th July, 8th September and 10th November at 7.30pm

bricnews@gmail.com Next Edition Deadline— Wednesday 12 March 2025 Enquiries : Mike A 07867614480

Find Brickleton News and other Village affairs on the Village website www.brightwalton.org.uk

Brightwalton Parish Council pays for the Brickleton News printing but is not responsible for the editing or content It is delivered to your door every two months