The Brickleton News

August 2026

Issue 266

Wantage Market Place to be redeveloped?

Oxfordshire Council are considering plans to redevelop Wantage Market Place and pedestrianise a large part of it to enhance public spaces and improve safety. Market Place car parking will close and through traffic may have to take alternative routes round the town centre. Full details are at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/roadworks/future-transport-projects/wantage-market-place

Key to general arrangement plans

1. New flexible public space for markets and events
2. Bus Gate on Mill Street (west of Grove Street junction). No vehicles except buses, taxis, delivery vehicles and emergency vehicles.
3. No vehicles permitted within pedestrianised areas except for market traders Mon to Sun and good vehicles loading between midnight and 9am Mon-Sun.
4. New bus stop on Newbury Street for S9 and 43 services
5. Relocated bus stops and upgraded bus shelters.
6. Relocated taxi rank (x4 spaces)
7. Signalised crossings changed to zebra crossings
8. Right turn-only from servicing route.
9. Public seating area created around the King Alfred Statue, using accessible wooden benches.
10. Existing outdoor seating for businesses.
11. Opportunities for new outdoor seating for businesses.
12. New cycle stand locations
13. New ramped access to Arbury and Victoria Arcade
14. Cobbled area to be retained. Cleaning and decluttering proposed
15. New loading facility for business deliveries and collections.

Volunteers needed for village party and Dunmore clearing !

The Village Hall Committee are planning a village party to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the old (east) village hall on Saturday 5th December. Could you help to organise it? This is another way to help support our village hall and community. We'd like support with advertising, planning, setting up, music, teas, food and raffle, as well as on the day.

Also, on 8th September volunteers are welcome to help clear the area round Dunmore Pond. Thank you

Ramblings of a Retired Chair – Who will be the Hall booking coordinator? *By Mike Ananin*

It is just over a year since I stepped down from the village hall committee to enjoy retirement. Twenty-five years have left me with many fond memories—and plenty of loose ends. The hall committee continues to run the hall well, and I have stayed on as bookings coordinator, just to keep in touch. I could carry on forever, as it is the easiest job on the committee, but we need new blood and fresh ideas in the role.

The bookings job has kept up with modern technology, and bookings are almost completely automated using an excellent software package. New bookings made on the website are immediately reported to me for approval, and I can see everything happening at any time. The regular users book their own slots, so they run their own hall use without referring to me.

All the coordinator has to deal with is the occasional ad-hoc user. I approve these - again online, as soon as I see payments are in. Anyone can look at the booking website themselves at any time. **https://hallbookingonline.com/brightwalton/** If you look, you can see that there aren't many occasional bookings; mostly they are for children's parties at weekends, or sometimes family get-togethers and maybe an occasional wedding, christening or wake. Deposits are invoiced together with the charges, so hirers know they must leave the hall tidy if they want a refund.

So, how much time does it take? This varies, but possibly not more than two bookings a month. What are the pluses? Contact with people – hirers, committee members at occasional meetings, some hall maintenance and, above all, satisfaction. You would also have full support from the committee.

I shall miss the contact that the job has provided. If you are not connected to the church, or you don't have children who attend the school or have a dog to walk, then the village hall is an excellent place to keep in contact. Since retirement I have had time to reflect on what has happened in my life since moving here! We would never have moved to Brightwalton if it wasn't for housing development in the village, thanks to some innovative Parish Council thinking thirty years ago. I had no great ambitions to change anything but was persuaded at the time that the village hall needed a new chairman. John Hall-Craggs was in the process of organising a major upgrade of the hall, so this was a timely, worthwhile challenge. Such a small village and now, such a lovely hall. The old building was gradually upgraded to match the brand-new hall section, and we had two halls in one. Now, we have a magnificent, well-organised hall which must be the envy of many other villages.

Come and join in and do something for the village as the new volunteer Village Hall Bookings Coordinator.
Contact: brightwaltonvillagehall@gmail.com
Mike Ananin

Newbury RDA Autumn Gift Fair

Charity Newbury Riding for the Disabled (RDA) delivers therapeutic riding sessions to over 65 local children with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities to help improve their physical wellbeing and their mental health. Our RDA sessions benefit our participants by improving muscle tone and coordination; boosting concentration, communication and confidence and by giving them a huge sense of achievement and pleasure. This year's Autumn Fair is one of our main fundraisers.

Tot ziens - Goodbye! *By Frank and Karin Meere*

After living in Brightwalton for four and a half years we have decided to move back to the Netherlands. Frank retired last year and with most of our social network being there it was the next logical step for us.

We are obviously sad to leave Brightwalton and the friends we have made here. We were made to feel so welcome when we had just moved in, with flowers and cards being delivered to our house. The village fete a few weeks later was then a great opportunity to meet many of you and to get to know you better.

From then on we've enjoyed the peace and quiet around us; the abundance of kites, deer and hares; the quiet country lanes; the dark nights; the pubs. Too many walks through the countryside to remember – we're really impressed with the freedom to roam here and the number of footpaths compared to the Netherlands. We've just really enjoyed escaping to the country and enjoying the English country life.

Many of you have contributed to how much we enjoyed living in Brightwalton and I am sure you will do the same for the family who will be the next custodians of West Glebe. And if you ever pass through Nunspeet, please let us know.

Thank you!
Frank & Karin

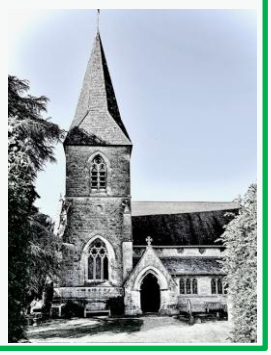
Benefice Update *by the Benefice Team*

What a whirlwind this past month has been across the Benefice.

This last week we have been busy wishing the year 6 leavers well as they prepare to move on to secondary school. Our prayers are with them and our dedicated teachers across our schools.

We have been rejoicing with a number of families, sharing the baptism of five children across our churches.

Not forgetting the joyful occasion on Saturday 27th June, where our Rev Matt was ordained as a priest at a service in Reading Minster.



Next month sees a flurry of weddings throughout our churches with seven couples choosing to marry in the Benefice.

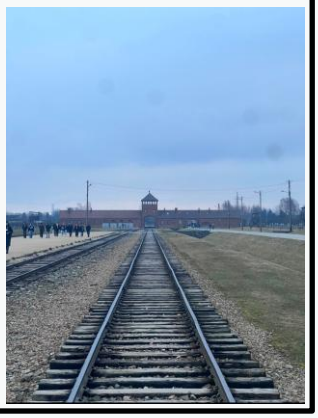
God is doing great things in and around the West Downland Benefice. A reminder that the Sunday service rota can be found on the website. www.westdownland.co.uk

We hope to see you over the Summer
With love and prayers,
The Benefice team

Lessons from Auschwitz (LFA Project) *by Sophie Cooper, Year 12, Downs School Compton*

Earlier this year I was honoured to be selected to join the LFA Project, where two post-16 students from each secondary school in the region are given the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust and consider its relevance today. We explored this challenging part of history in two seminars led by experts in the history of the Holocaust and the role of camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. I also met and heard directly from a Holocaust survivor who shared her personal experiences.

On a very early and cold morning we were flown to Poland for a powerful one-day visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. Seeing the sheer volume of personal belongings - mountains of shoes, glasses and suitcases – drives home the reality of the individuals who were murdered. It took me far beyond textbook facts and dates to see at first hand the consequences of unaddressed racism and prejudice.



Our day concluded on the embankment where cattle wagons would have unloaded thousands upon thousands of Jews and listened to the Rabbi, who travelled with us, deliver a Hebrew mourning prayer, whilst we lit candles as our small way of remembering all of those that died there.

The trip is designed by the LFA Project to ensure that the memory of those murdered lives on, and that faces are put to the numbers and statistics. On our return we presented a talk about our trip in school assembly. The visit was an experience none of us shall ever forget.

(Photo: Sophie Cooper)

COULD YOU HELP BRIGHTWALTON VILLAGE HALL?

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A BOOKINGS COORDINATOR

to help manage ad hoc bookings for the hall.

Most people book through the online bookings system so this volunteer role is mostly involved in answering questions, confirming online bookings, managing the booking and arranging for key access.

There's also potential to take on marketing and promoting the hall to increase use if you would like to.

This shouldn't take more than an hour a week on average and could be shared by a couple - or a couple of friends. The village hall committee are fully on hand for training, questions and support.

We're flexible in how this works so if you're interested in volunteering for the community, we're open to a conversation.

CONTACT BRIGHTWALTONVILLAGEHALL@GMAIL.COM

Brightwalton Parish Council – Summary of July 2026 Meeting

The Parish Council met on Monday 13th July at the Village Hall. Councillors Tim Wyatt (Chair), Annie Agnew (Vice Chair), Christine Delahunty, Damien Goatley and Sue Sayers were present.

District Councillor Clive Hooker attended and updated the Council on recent West Berkshire matters, including that the Local Government Reorganisation decision was due imminently.

Community Updates: Community Coordinator Katherine Moore reported that the Youth Club has paused for the summer; some planned activities were unable to go ahead this term. Sessions will run 5.30–6.30pm from September.

Anna Britnor Guest updated on Village Hall matters, including the search for a new volunteer Bookings Coordinator, repairs to loose slabs, a key audit and assessment of renewable energy options as part of the hall's boiler replacement project. A celebration is planned in December to mark the 50th anniversary of the front hall.

Planning: Several planning application updates were noted, including approvals for Elm Cottage and Northwood, and refusals relating to Brightwalton Stud.

Council Business: A Scheme of Delegation for planning responses between meetings was formally adopted. Work continues on coordinating a meeting with West Berkshire Council regarding Section 106 housing allocations.

Quotes for a new Parish Council website were considered, and an application for WBC Members' Bid funding will be submitted for this, when the scheme reopens.

Village Matters: Following the June tidy of the Old Churchyard, remaining debris will be cleared at a further working group in the autumn. The Council agreed not to pursue wildflower seed planting this year. The War Memorials Trust was noted as a source of advice and potential grant funding for repairs to the War Memorial.

West Berkshire Countryside Society will run a working party at Dunmore Pond on 8th September to clear vegetation and, if materials allow, construct a small boardwalk. Volunteers are encouraged to join.

The Downland Practice has issued a statement about significant funding reductions and potential impacts on service delivery; the Parish Clerk is seeking further updates.

Play Area: Due to budget pressures, upgrades to the safety surfacing will be deferred. The Council agreed to repair the junior swing (£512) and top up the rubber chippings around the large climbing unit (up to £4,000).

Next Meeting: Monday 14 September 2026, 7.30pm at Brightwalton Village Hall. Residents are encouraged to attend. The full minutes for this, and all Parish Council meetings, can be viewed at: https://www.brightwalton.org.uk/brightwaltonparishcouncil

Has anyone seen this parrot ?
Superb mimic.

Editor in Chief – Richard Wilson. Enquiries and contributions to bricnews@gmail.com **October Edition Deadline — Weds 23rd Sept 2026**
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