



Issue 234

March 2021

Brickleton News

Why not take a peek at our wonderful **Website**—full of useful information. <https://www.brightwalton.org.uk/>



Schools are Back !



Balloons along our lanes announced the return to school again after so many weeks.



Think yourselves lucky! In 1916 the school was closed for six months because of epidemics. Records show several weeks of closure during early years due to Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Measles, Mumps, Tonsillitis, Influenza and Chicken Pox. In 1934 there was a Polio scare. Covid-19 is doing its best to disrupt our lives, but I am sure the health authorities are working their hardest to make this one the last.

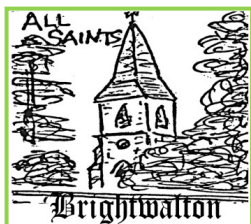
📧Helen Fretwell 📧 Silversmith and Jewellery Designer

Beautiful handcrafted jewellery made to order to suit all budgets. See my Facebook page or call 07551775500



Please join us in the churchyard at

2.30 pm on Good Friday (2nd April) for a short reflective service with poetry and music.' This is part of a wider series of services to celebrate Easter beginning with a 'Remembering Gethsemane' in Chaddleworth Churchyard at 8.00 pm on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday there is The Passion Reading and Prayers in Welford Churchyard at 9.30 am, followed by a Church Open Air Storytime at Great Shefford at 10.30 am. On Easter day at **6.30 am** there will be an open air holy communion at Leckhampstead followed by a Zoom Church at 10.00 am



West Berkshire Council Active Travel Scheme Consultation was open on 22nd February 2021

Have your say on our 'Active Travel' schemes in West Berkshire. West Berkshire Council is committed to encouraging active travel by introducing more walking and cycling opportunities throughout the district.

The council is taking action to help the public safely make walking or cycling trips part of their daily travel choices. Below is the link to take part and find out more on the schemes already identified:

<https://westberksatschemes.commonplace.is/>

News from Brightwalton Primary School



The past 12 months have been a challenging time for everyone. It is now nearly a year from when schools were first closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, but Brightwalton Primary School has remained open throughout – making sure the children who most needed us were well supported. With stringent Covid-related safety procedures in place, we were able to open to more children in June 2020 and even managed to offer some regular schooling to all children during that Summer term. The beginning of 2021 was not quite the start we imagined, as with less than 24 hours' notice we were closed once again to the majority of pupils. As before, we remained open to teach and support the children of critical workers and those who needed us most. Our teaching staff are now delivering several live online sessions daily as well as offering teaching to those in school, including Catch-Up sessions to children identified as having the largest gaps in learning due to the pandemic. Our support staff are continuing to work hard in all their usual roles, such as running the office, keeping the school safe and clean, and facilitating the work of the teachers. This involves supervising class work while teachers present online, instructing small groups for particular learning and supporting specific children with work they find challenging. It is lovely to have children in school and to hear their voices and laughter echoing along the corridors and outside during playtimes.

Throughout this time, we have continued to evolve and now have 106 children on roll. We have an exciting new school member in the form of a school dog – Bertie, a cocker spaniel puppy belonging to Mrs Lyford. He will, in time, work with small groups of children, listening to them read and being a calming influence for children who are suffering with anxiety. Following the very successful refurbishment of the Children's Kitchen last summer, we have replaced windows, lights and cupboards in some classrooms and updated our tired staff room.

As the daffodils, kindly planted by the Friends of Brightwalton in the school grounds, begin to come in to flower, they give us hope of a brighter future. We hold onto this hope as we wait for the imminent announcement from the Prime Minister, which could allow us to have all the children back in school from 8 March, giving them 4 weeks in school before the Easter holidays. Although we acknowledge the impact this pandemic has had on children's learning and wellbeing, we are determined to negate this in everything we do, with all the resources available to us.

Ministry of Defence Local Police Patrols

The Ministry of Defence Police now operates a small armed policing team every day and night at RAF Welford. You might see us patrolling across the Lambourn Valley and the Vale of the White Horse. If you've seen anything suspicious please speak to our officers when you see them, or email us at matthew.callinicos100@mod.gov.uk or ian.colin100@mod.gov.uk.

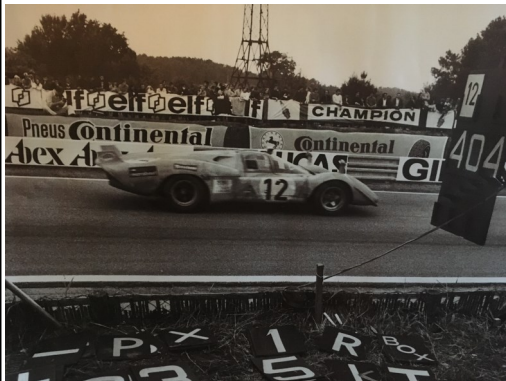


Your information, no matter how small, could make a big difference to keeping our communities safe or preventing crime. Your information is always in the strictest confidence and will only be shared with our policing partners at Thames Valley Police. In an emergency please always dial 999. It is an emergency when a crime is being committed, someone is at risk of being injured, or there is a risk of serious damage to property.

ALISTAIR WALKER—by Beverley Sunderland

I have been asked to say a few words about Alistair Walker, our dear friend and neighbour, who lost his short battle with cancer on 25 January 2021. He died peacefully at home that evening, surrounded by his wife Marion and those who loved him, including his beloved dogs. We moved in opposite the Walkers in 2005 and we know that many in the village have known them for so much longer, given that they turned Brightwalton into a much more interesting place when they arrived at Wardsgarth in August 1983.

The hardest part of writing about someone like Alistair Walker is where to start and where to finish, there is just so much to say. The short but entirely accurate summary of Alistair's life appeared in the Telegraph and read simply 'up for a challenge, sometimes illegal, loved and loving.' How thrilled he would have been to see this set out in the Telegraph opposite the page containing a photograph of a man up a ladder posting an enormous picture of a naked lady's bottom. It was almost as if he had planned it. Before moving to Brightwalton, Alistair had had an amazing career as a professional racing driver in the 1960s and 1970s, racing in Formula 2 around the world with great success, competing against and often beating the well-known drivers of the day. It is not something he would boast about as he was not that kind of person, but on the rare occasion a glimpse of this magnificent driving career would come to the forefront. Some years ago, at the rather grandly named Dale Yachting Club, a rather loud member was (he believed) enthralled the entire room with his manly tales and moved on to talk about the excitement of watching the racing at Le Mans. Pointing at Alistair he asked 'have you ever been to Le Mans?' Alistair looked up, paused and said in a very dead pan voice 'not since I came fifth in 1970'. In fact his place in the race was such an accomplishment that, as best-placed British independent driver, Alistair was the first recipient of the massive John Woolfe Trophy. However, despite his excellent driving and navigation around Le Mans, when Alistair and Marion moved to Wardsgarth in 1983 there was of course no sat nav. So, when Alistair brought his mother out to show her the new house and they then took her on for a pub lunch one Sunday, that was the easy part. The harder part was finding their way back to Wardsgarth, which took them several hours of trying almost every country lane in West Berkshire. The irony was not lost on Alistair. Even once he had retired from racing Alistair could be found in the company of some of the world's most



well known racing drivers who would frequent Wardsgarth, you would find them in the garages, spanners in hands, under cars checking the suspension. In those days he would have a full stable of a D Type, GT40 and splendid Ferraris on show at John Hall Craggs' Railway after a blast round the village in them. Always ending the day with pretty good parties – to the extent that a builder who was replacing the floor in their conservatory rang up his boss to ask for directions back to 'that amazing pub' that he had been working at.

There was also Alistair's much coveted herb garden, which he sublet to a well known rock band to ensure they had a fresh supply of all of their favourite herbs... Such was the positive impact that Alistair had on everyone who knew him, when the author and great, great granddaughter of Charles Dickens, Monica Dickens, lived in our cottage, she immortalised him in one of her last books 'One of the Family' when she introduced the characters 'Sir Alistair and Lady Walker!' When my youngest sister Sally was moving to Australia, Alistair promised her a spin in her favourite car of all time, his beloved AC Cobra. As Marion and I push started the beauty down the hill, my sister strapped into the front seat next to Alistair, Marion and I looked at each other and simultaneously said 'did we tell Sally he used to be a racing driver?' Apparently not, but as they overtook the first four cars they encountered, she soon worked it out! After retiring from racing Alistair learned to fly and gained his license on a 600 hp Harvard Trainer from World War 2. However, his love of historical machines did not stop there. In 2004 he spotted an advert for a rather sad looking World War Two rescue launch called 441. It had seen better days and was in need of a complete restoration. With the help and talent of Phil Claddurn they restored it to its former glory. Alistair was talked out of reinstating the rear guns but almost everything else was original. A video of her launch for sea trials is truly heartwarming: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TATeItlCQO4>.

As news of 441's reincarnation filtered out, letters and messages started to pour in from around the world from those who had served on her, explaining how the knocks and bullet holes had been acquired. These rescue launches would be deployed to pick up downed pilots in the channel and were actually the property of the RAF. It was therefore a great honour when the RAF presented 441 with an ensign to represent the RAF at the Queen's Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant on 3 June 2012. The organisation for the event was carefully coordinated, including having to sleep on your boat the night before the pageant. The weather was terrible and so Alistair made a dash to the local supermarket to acquire two sleeping bags for him and Marion, to ensure they would at least stay warm. Too late they realised that they were in fact children's sleeping bags, adorned with My Little Pony and coming up to their waists...

Despite or perhaps because of his colourful past, Alistair had a strong belief in ensuring that wrongs were righted, that those who would do well with just a little help were given that opportunity, and he ensured that his home was filled with generosity, love and kindness. Nothing was ever too much, whether it was making a toast rack from bits of 441 or coming out in the rain to tow me home when the car broke down. He was a familiar sight driving Marion around to sell poppies for the Royal British Legion every November or dispensing advice on all things mechanical. He was a truly remarkable man. Kind and generous, funny and practical, with a deep rooted sense of loyalty and kindness. We were immensely proud to call him our friend and to be so lucky to have had him as a neighbour. He will be truly missed by all of us.

Sir Philip, 2 Limetree and Me Mike Hatcher

From the time my wife and I moved into No. 2 the Wroughton family also became part of our lives. Firstly Mr Pilkington introduced me to Sir Philip's Mother and I worked for her until she died. Sir Philip paid my wages and eventually when Kirsten was coming back from Australia engaged me to start work on the walled garden to get Kirsten involved. As she said to me recently 'it didn't really work with me'. The friend in the world of chickens who got me this house died a few years back. Arriving at Peasemore Church for the funeral I met Sir Philip being dropped off. In the course of habit I greeted him as 'Mr Wroughton' to which he responded 'I wouldn't know you if you called me Sir Philip'. When Mr Pilkington died I continued looking after Limetree Farm, often the house and garden, for 5 years. Mr Wroughton headed the three Executors of the Will. In the end when the house and land was sold I was told 'if you put in a reasonable offer it would not be shown to anyone else'. On the weekend after completion of our purchase Mr Philip came to our house and said to Sylvia that he hoped we would be very happy here – 40 years have shown we have been.

Two final thoughts. Before he died Mr Pilkington said he hoped Limetree would be bought by someone who had children and dogs as it was so suitable. Stephen and Ursula unknowingly made his wishes come true. Sir Philip's burial at Fawley continued the precedent set by his Father, as related to me by his wife, who had said the view from his grave was the best on the estate; that's why his wife always wanted me to cut the beech hedge by the grave. Go up there sometime and look North.

Farming News from Evelyn Bracey

Well it does seem as though spring may be on the horizon. Things have been quite quiet during the winter months—just that one cold week when pipes kept freezing up.

We have now put fertilizer on the grass and also the crops which have started to show a little growth. The spring beans have been drilled at the top of Brightwalton hill and any time now they will drill Dunmore with spring barley, so things are beginning to get busy. Calving has been going on at quite a rate which is great; they are so cute but can be very naughty especially when you have to put their ear tag in. This is a job that has to be done as soon after they are born as possible. They have two tags—a silver one and a yellow one. These show the herd number which belongs to us at Home Farm and the other the number of the calf. This is all to do with traceability in the future as once we have tagged the calf we have to register it with the British Cattle Movement Service, after which we receive a passport for that particular calf which stays with it for the rest of its life. When that particular calf is sold we have to sign the passport which is then passed to the new owner. If that particular calf dies or is slaughtered we have to notify BCMS and send the passport back to them. This is one of the things which is checked by the Red Tractor scheme. If they find any mistakes we could have a heavy fine imposed on us, so these records have to be kept up to date.

You may also have noticed that around many of the fields there are rough looking margins. These are what we call Buffer Zones which are there for a purpose. We are asked to leave these to encourage wild flowers, butterflies and birds plus any other wildlife. We are paid to manage them hence you may have noticed that some of them have been cultivated and some are topped off, but they do encourage many wild species. We also plant various plots of wild flowers having pollen and nectar. Once the spring comes these will be alive with bees, butterflies and birds, but will talk more about those next time.

A Missed Celebration (thanks to Covid)

Brightwalton made a huge leap into the modern world twenty-five years ago. A housing estate was to be built in the centre of the village with nine new houses. What did villagers at the time think of having a potential influx of twenty-five people? What sort of people would they be? How many additional vehicles will Ash Close have to suffer? So many doubts!

Being one of the newbies, I cannot remember anyone being particularly bothered – rather they were glad to get the houses finished after months of noise and building. We were welcomed by many, particularly the school population as we brought children to support a decline in numbers with the threat of closure. Our little 'Acre' was diverse and included various professions, mainly in technology, but with other businesses. My wife and I were the only teachers.

The connection with Saxons was never really explained although there was an archaeological dig in 1994 which identified a possible Saxon trench across this site. Bewley Homes attacked the site with great energy removing a large amount of concrete and persuading various council factions that sewage and ancient tree problems would be addressed. The houses were built quite hurriedly - as we discovered after moving in. Numerous snagging problems appeared. Although building regulations were all adhered to, they were to a minimum as we discovered in our first winter. Why weren't the walls insulated? Who forgot to provide a fireproof slab in front of the open fireplaces? We were woken at dawn one morning by our neighbour to ask if we knew why there was smoke coming from their hearth. The arrival of fire engines revealed smouldering timbers where there should have been concrete. It was the same in all our houses, and we may never have discovered it had it not been that our neighbour, a motor racing fan, had been up until the early hours watching the Grand Prix in Australia and keeping his open fire stoked up. There was a lot of evidence of hasty construction, including creaking floorboards which we may never be able to resolve without major reconstruction.

In such a small village, induction is a slow process. The Brightwalton Grapevine was, and still is, almost imperceptible unless you have children, or possibly dogs. With no regular form of social activity, we Saxons formed our own group calling it a 'wine tasting course'. This kept us in the know, and we enjoyed the wine. Some of us were invited to The Lawn that first Christmas for drinks, and to meet other villagers. We appreciated that and felt part of the village already thanks to Olivia's Brickleton News. She produced the News with such great energy finding out bits of information everywhere. New-comers, babies born, Council news were all duly reported.

So here we still are. Well, three of the original households are. We obviously love the village and are content to live on long after our chicks have flown the nest. Three hundred and sixty six souls spread around five locations that call themselves Brightwalton do make a brave effort to be sociable and not complain too much. Our village boasts the only floodlit recreation ground – **yes**, all day and all night reaching as far as our local pond at Dunmore. We in the heartland of the village suffer the crowing of a rooster, which loves to wake us up at dawn. We learn to avoid the frenetic pick-up times around the school, and are confident that the muck-spreading season around the fields will eventually pass. Occasionally we breathe in bonfire smoke in the hope that the culprit will put it out properly before nightfall. All that pales into insignificance to the latest addition to our woes – one microscopically small organism by the name of Covid-19. However, living in our small village is still wonderful and a delight to enjoy.

Roll on the next twenty-five years. Maybe someone will read this and compare!



LITTER

The **Parish Council** has a number of adult and child litter picking kits available to lend out. If you are keen to do some litter picking alone or with the family, please get in touch on

brightwaltonpc@btinternet.com



BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL AT THE MAY MEETING
Meeting Held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 8.00pm via Video Conference

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

Minutes: The January meeting minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record. There were no declarations of interest.

Planning:

West Glebe – the owners joined the PC meeting to explain their plans for an additional dwelling to the southern side of West Glebe. PC awaiting notification from WBC to comment.

It was stated for the record the status of the following application(s):

21/00038/HOUSE Northwood, RG20 7BP – proposed single storey rear extension. WBC granted the application.

ASPIRE Update: It was reported that the first phase of work starts on the 12th April and the new organ arrives in the next couple of weeks.

PCC Update: An outdoor service will be held on Good Friday, details to be published in the Brickleton News.

Village Hall Committee: The committee AGM had been held and committee re-elected. They were pleased to report that the nursery is thriving. The other regular users are expected to return in September. It was reported that the hall broke even this financial year. The fete committee will be meeting this month to agree if a fete in some form should go ahead, alternative fund-raising ideas are also being explored.

Matters Arising:

Footpaths: It was reported that Malt House Farm have put in place a new permissive footpath, giving an alternative route around their land. Details to be published in the Brickleton News, signage in place. Parishioner had asked the question as to why footpaths across farmland could not be laid to grass to improve the surface over the winter. Councillors agreed it was up to farmers to manage the paths across their land.

Memorial Bench: Approval has been granted for a new memorial bench in front of the church in memory of John Hall-Craggs. Private donations have been received and the VHC has also agreed to donate towards the bench. The bench has been chosen by the family and the PC agreed purchase, installation to be arranged by J Snow.

Tree Planting on Brightwalton Hill in memory of Sir Philip Wroughton: It was agreed this would be considered further at the May meeting, tree planting would need to go ahead in autumn.

Old Churchyard Wall: It had been found that the Old Churchyard wall was in need of repair / replacement, Clerk has fenced off and keep out notices were in place as wall was now unstable. One quote received, further quotes to follow. Clerk to investigate if a like for like replacement would be required from WBC conservation team.

Litter: Clerk reported that 9 bags of litter had been collected from the roadside in Brightwalton Holt. WBC had collected the bags and dealt with the human waste that was found in the layby. Councillors reported that litter throughout the village is getting worse. It was agreed that the PC litter picking equipment could be lent out to households that are keen to do some collections. Clerk to publish notice in Brickleton News and write up the necessary guidance to go out with the equipment.

Annual Parish Meeting & Annual General Meeting: The current covid regulations only allow PC meetings to continue online until the 7th May. It was agreed to wait for further guidance from BALC before making arrangements.

Finance:

Balance of the Current Account as of 03/03 is £5,344.30, savings account £7,865.12

The following transactions had been made since the January meeting:

VAT refund for 2020 £634.83

Donations x 10 totalling £450 for JHC Memorial Bench

CHQ 200093 WBC Refund of additional Members Bid money £65.00

The following cheques were signed:

Chq 200094 S Youldon 22nd September to 28th February expenses £42.27 (inc £3.21 VAT)

Chq 200095 Imprint Colour Brickleton News March printing £65.00

Chq 200096 Memorial Benches UK £744.90 (inc £124.15)

New standing order instruction signed for Clerk wages and HMRC PAYE quarterly payments signed for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Councillors resolved to set up internet banking for payments, with 2 signatures authorising as per the current mandate. Clerk to update Financial Regulations and forward paperwork for set up.

It was agreed to appoint David Weller as the internal auditor. Clerk to arrange and produce accounts for sign off at the May meeting.

Any Other Business:

Additional Correspondence: Clerk reported that RAF Welford MOD police team had been in contact advising of patrols across the local area with details of who can be contacted if parishioners have any non-urgent matters to report. The team will be working with Thames Valley police. Details published on the village website and notice boards. Clerk reported that BALC had been promoting free online training, details to be forwarded. WBC District Parish Conference to be held 11th March, Clerk to attend and circulate presentations.

Meeting closed at 9.23pm.

The 2021 Meetings will be held: 10th May, 12th July, 13th September and 8th November