

Oakington & Westwick

February / March 2025

Journal

**Don't Lose the Lottery
Ringing the Changes
Evergreen Themes
Westwick Mystery
Chair Unseated!**



What's On

Weekly

- Mon **Monday Cafe**, 9.30–noon. Church Hall, £1 Liz Davis – 01223 232745
- Mon **Youth Club**, on a Bus, 7–9pm. Recreation Ground, School Year 7 and above. Free. 07853 795256
- Mon **Oakington Singers**, 7.30–9pm. Church Hall. Elaine Bailey – elainebailey1@live.co.uk
- Tue **Senior Pilates**, 11.30–12.30pm. Pavilion. Classes through out the week. Contact: Claire Young – 07766 554413
- Tue **Cubs**, 6–7.15pm. Term time. Pavilion. Richard Young – richard.young@crafthillscouts.org.uk
- Tue **Table Tennis**, 7.30–9pm. Pavilion. Gillian L'Angellier – 01223 234758
- Wed **Mixed Ability Pilates**, 10–11am. Pavilion. Classes throughout the week. Contact: Claire Young – 07766 554413
- Wed **Yoga**, 7–8.15pm. Pavilion. Denise Sibley-Moore – 01954 202235
- Thu **Mature Movers**, 10–10.45am. Pavilion. Katie Harknett – 07541 721059 / info@elementalfitness.co.uk
- Thu **Little Steps** playgroup, 10–11.30am. Term time. Church Hall. littlestepsoakington@gmail.com
- Thu **Ten Sing**, 7–9pm. Term time. Histon Baptist Church. Terry King – cambridgetensing@gmail.com
- Thu **Short Mat Bowls**, 7.30–9.30pm. Pavilion. Dawn Stokes – 01223 236427
- Thu **Quiz Night**, 8pm. White Horse Pub. 01223 232417
- Fri **Beavers**, 6–7pm. Term time. Oakington Primary School. beavers@oakingtonscouts.org.uk
- Fri **Scouts**, 6–7:30pm. Term time. Pavilion. Cara Hanman – cara.hanman@oakingtonscouts.org.uk

- Sat 1 Feb **Village Walk & Talk**, 10.30am. Meet by Church on High Street. Alice – OWNeighbours@gmail.com
- Fri 7 Feb **Minibus to Bar Hill**, 10am. To book ring Teri Seaber – 07711 531004
- Fri 7 Feb **Mobile Library**, 1.50–2.20pm. Coles Lane.
- Sat 8 Feb **Repair Cafe**, 11am–2pm. Pavilion. oakingtonrepaircafe@gmail.com
- Mon 10 Feb **O&W Parish Council**, 7.30pm. Pavilion. All invited. clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk
- Tue 11 Feb **Tuesday Talk & Tea**, 2.45pm. Church Hall. Games Afternoon. Marian Cleaver – 01223 232897
- Wed 12 Feb **Book Club**, 7.30pm. White Horse. “My Brilliant Friend” by Elena Ferrante. Natalie – nataliewant@hotmail.com
- Thu 13 Feb **O&W WI**, 7.30pm. Church Hall. Speaker – David Duker, author. Elaine Bailey – elainebailey1@live.co.uk
- Thu 13 Feb **Chess Club**, 7pm. Interested in joining? contact Ranko Pinter – ranpin@gmail.com or 07766 052025
- Sat 15 Feb **Therapeutic Stories**, 10–noon. Pavilion. koka.me.uk/cats Ildiko Dulo – cats@koka.me.uk
- Thu 20 Feb **Philosopher's Café**, 7pm. Interested in joining? contact Ranko Pinter – ranpin@gmail.com or 07766 052025
- Tue 25 Feb **Community Association AGM**, 7.30pm. Pavilion. All welcome. oakington.westwick.ca@gmail.com
- Wed 26 Feb **Sustainable O&W**, 7.30pm. Church Hall. sustainableow@gmail.com

- Sat 1 Mar **Village Walk & Talk**, 10.30am. Meet by Church on High Street. Alice – OWNeighbours@gmail.com
- Fri 7 Mar **Minibus to Bar Hill**, 10am. To book ring Teri Seaber – 07711 531004
- Fri 7 Mar **Mobile Library**, 1.50–2.20pm. Coles Lane.
- Sat 8 Mar **Therapeutic Stories**, 10–noon. Pavilion. koka.me.uk/cats Ildiko Dulo – cats@koka.me.uk
- Sat 8 Mar **Community Tree Planting**, 1–4pm. Oakington Primary School – psa@oakington.cambs.sch.uk
- Mon 10 Mar **O&W Parish Council**, 7.30pm. Pavilion. All invited. clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk
- Tue 11 Mar **Tuesday Talk & Tea**, 2.45pm. Church Hall. Flower arranging – Judy Wynn. Marian Cleaver – 01223 232897
- Thu 13 Mar **O&W WI**, 7.30pm. Church Hall. Elaine Bailey – elainebailey1@live.co.uk
- Thu 13 Mar **Chess Club**, 7pm. Interested in joining? contact Ranko Pinter – ranpin@gmail.com or 07766 052025
- Wed 19 Mar **Book Club**, 7.30pm. White Horse. “The Other Side of the Dale” by Gervase Phinn. nataliewant@hotmail.com
- Thu 20 Mar **Philosopher's Café**, 7pm. Interested in joining? contact Ranko Pinter – ranpin@gmail.com or 07766 052025
- Fri 21 Mar **PSA Quiz Night**, 6.45–9.30pm. Oakington Primary School – psa@oakington.cambs.sch.uk
- Wed 26 Mar **Sustainable O&W**, 7.30pm. Church Hall. sustainableow@gmail.com

BIN DAYS	Fri 14 Feb, Fri 28 Feb, Fri 14 Mar, Fri 28 Mar.	Black bins
	Fri 07 Feb, Fri 07 Mar, Fri 21 Mar.	Blue & Green bins
	Fri 21 Feb.	Blue bins only



There is a **DEFIBRILLATOR** at the pavilion (hanging outside the patio doors). If you come across someone who has had a cardiac arrest, call 999 and start CPR, while sending someone to fetch the defibrillator – open box, take out defibrillator, shut box (alarm goes off), open defibrillator and it talks to tell you what to do.

Electronic Journal

If you would like a PDF version of the Journal to read on your pad or share with family and friends, email oakwestjournal@gmail.com to be added to our mailing list.

Welcome & Community Association

The Journal's page headers may have turned blue for 2025, but hopefully this edition will help to dispel your February blues! Sit down with a cuppa and get up to date on what's going on locally and in the wider district. And we have mysteries too, from Oakington and Westwick past – including dino droppings and a surprisingly important cow!

But it's worth braving the weather to go out, because there are several events coming up. The Repair Café on 8th February is a chance to meet up with friends and neighbours, and the Community Association meeting on

25th February provides an opportunity to find out about the villages' many clubs and groups. Or join in planting trees at the school on 8th March, efforts that will make a difference for generations to come.

If you've thought of trying something new this year, have a look at the community calendar opposite and see what appeals!

Jenny Prince & Graham Tregonning,
Editors



The Journal is published on behalf of the Oakington & Westwick Community Association, to inform residents about events, activities and issues in the parish. It's delivered free to all residents and is funded by advertising, the Parish Council and the Community Association.

Journal Team:

Graham Tregonning & Jenny Prince (*editors*), Adrienne Chaplin (*distribution*), Jenny Broadway, Ranko Pinter (*chair*), Ella Whellams (*ads layout*), Ela Yates (*business manager*).

Send contributions to
oakwestjournal@gmail.com

or phone: 01223 233510 (Jenny)
or 01223 233208 (Graham)

DEADLINE FOR MARCH/APRIL
ISSUE:

Tuesday 18 March

To advertise in the Journal,
please email
oakwestjournal@gmail.com

Advert costs	Single	1 year*
Business card	£21	£84
¼ page (portrait)	£33	£132
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* Six for the price of four

Adverts for the next issue must
be received by **11 March**.

*Inclusion of an advertisement does
not imply endorsement by the
Oakington & Westwick Journal of
the product or service advertised.*

Community Association News

As we welcome in another year the Community Association Committee wish you all the best for 2025.

The Community Association's aim is to support opportunities to maintain a vibrant and connected community in Oakington and Westwick. This includes managing and supporting the sub-committees responsible for organising of events such as the Village Day and Bonfire Night, supporting the Village Journal and providing an umbrella group for community activities and clubs.



You are invited to attend the
Oakington & Westwick Community Association
Annual General Meeting to share updates
On **Tuesday 25 February**, 7:30pm at the Pavilion
Open to members and all residents



This meeting is open to all so please join us for this opportunity to:

- Find out more about the role of the O&WCA and what we've been up to
- See how you can get involved in future events
- Meet friends and neighbours
- Share information and ideas
- Find out more about the lively clubs and committees in our community.

Committee team updates

Irène Butlin has had to step away as Chair of the Committee, leaving the team without the great organisational skills and thoughtful approach that she has brought to the group over many years. Many thanks to Irène. Bernie Yates will step up as Interim Chair.

Andy Dillnutt has stepped forward as Treasurer to share his finance skills, taking the reins from Bernie.

Village Day

Following the great success of Village Day 2024, the Village Day Team will be coming together to plan for this year's event under the stewardship of Brian Esson. Interested in joining the team? Email oakington.westwick.ca@gmail.com or come to the AGM to find out more.

CA Committee: Bernie Yates (*Interim Chair*), Elodie Cameron (*Secretary*),
Brian Esson, Arthur Sillett, Ela Yates and Andy Dillnutt (*Treasurer*)



Village Tool Share. sustainableow.co.uk/tool-share

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Parish Councillors

Chair: David Reeves

chair@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk

Vice-Chair: Stephen Moore

John Bailey Julie Grove
Tony Starling Ranko Pinter
Jake Camilleri
Two Vacancies

Parish Website

www.oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk

Correspondence to the Council should be addressed to the Clerk:

Mrs Laura Lawrence – Email:

clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk

Post: 4 Meadow Farm Close
Oakington CB24 3AS

Phone: 07903 295860

District Councillors

O & W, Longstanton, Northstowe
Natalie Warren-Green – 07990 553997
cllr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk
Tom Bygott – 07765 475 513
cllr.bygott@scambs.gov.uk

County Councillor

O & W, Longstanton, Northstowe, Over
Firouz Thompson – 07974 680875
firouz.thompson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
On Facebook:
longstantonoakingtonnorthstowe

Member of Parliament

St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire
Ian Sollom *ian.sollom.mp@parliament.uk*
www.iansollom.org Facebook: *IanFSollom*

VILLAGE INFORMATION

Community Association

oakington.westwick.ca@gmail.com

Oakington & Westwick Neighbours (OWN) – 07902 111786

OWNeighbours@gmail.com

Oakington Primary School

01223 232328

office@oakington.cambs.sch.uk

Pavilion Booking Administrator

Tony Leadley – 07936 024587
oakingtonpavilion@gmail.com

Village Stores & Post Office

Thiru Kunaratnam – 01223 232327

Hardship Fund

Contact Jo on 07714 760582, Bee on 07718 068941, Celine on 07541 997299, or *oak.west.hardship.fund@outlook.com*

From our Parish Council Chair

An interesting exchange

One of the parish councillors was on the recreation ground a while ago, deciding on a good place for the Rowan tree, kindly donated by the District Council. A dog was tearing about on the grass. The owner of said dog was courteously asked why the dog was running about on the Rec when there were clear signs saying 'no dogs'. The answer was clear, loud and unequivocal: 'If you don't want dogs on the Rec you shouldn't have made this path round it'.

Ever had to clean dog poo from your children's clothes or wipe it off a young footballer's face?

There is of course another option – the very clearly marked dog walking route, some of it provided by the PC. Alongside the fenced football pitch, across the orchard, through the wood and out onto the busway.

New signs will shortly be installed on the Rec, so may I ask the tiny minority of owners who don't use the dog walking paths to please read the signs. Just two words only.

Water, water everywhere?

At the January PC meeting, a District Councillor's report contained the information that plans for 6,500 homes on the Waterbeach barracks site had recently been approved. This will bring the total to 11,000 homes altogether, a settlement a little larger than Northstowe.

This seems to be at odds with the 9,000 homes and 300,000 square metres of commercial land in this area that are 'unable to proceed' because of concerns about the water supply in the region. All of this may seem remote from us, but the parish relies on the same water supply as all the new developments around us.

Emergency Plan

Parishes have Emergency Plans written to deal with major unforeseen situations. The obvious likelihood in this area is of course flooding. The Oakington and Westwick Plan needs to be reviewed and brought up to date. The PC doesn't have to do it; a small working party is needed. It could simply disband after the Plan is complete. Please contact the Clerk, Mrs Lawrence, if you could give a few hours to this worthwhile request. No previous emergency experience necessary!

Stocks Green

The row of conifers opposite the Baptist Chapel are to be felled and replaced with a fence and a variety of native hedging. This will give much more space and light to the roadway on that side of the green, hopefully preventing damage to the green by vehicles driving over it. The Plane tree is safe! Other improvements will be to the grassed area to try to solve the mud bath of the winter months. The green once drained into and along High Street; sadly no more.

Solar Farm

Plans are afoot for a Solar Farm on land in Longstanton. We have asked the developers to present their plans at a PC planning meeting. All meetings are open to the public. Look out for more details on Oaky Folk.

Solar PV for the Pavilion

The PC is bidding for funding from South Cambs District Council for 37 solar panels and three storage batteries for the Sports Pavilion. This will enable us to benefit the environment and keep energy costs down in the Pavilion. In the previous round of bids, we only just missed out. You can make the difference by sending your views on the project to *clerk@oakingtonandwestwick-pc.gov.uk*.



David Reeves

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From our District Councillors

Thank you to those of you who have contacted me to help with your communication with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) this winter when you've needed support. Please keep in touch, and, in addition, a useful SCDC contact number for all the District Council services is 01954 713000. This is open 8am – 5:30pm, Monday – Friday (until 6:30pm on Wednesdays). For specifics about how to contact a service, go to www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/contact-us.

Picking up on some of your key concerns you have been contacting me about:

Cost of Living Support: Around 25% of benefits go unclaimed as people don't understand who can claim and how. The SCDC website page www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support is a good place to find out more about benefits available, accessing affordable food, managing fuel and utility bills and how to generally get support and advice.

Transport and Community Safety: In particular, residents have asked me about e-scooter trials which are being rolled out across South Cambridgeshire, in a staged approach, by the Combined Authority. Trials are estimated to start in Oakington in March/April 2025. One of the aspects of concern has been safety. Safety is a key criterion for the trial, and any concerns can be registered with the community safety team at SCDC. Email: communitysafety@scambs.gov.uk.

Waste & Recycling: For information or help you might need about bin collections and recycling, please contact me, or email the waste team direct: refuse@scdc.gov.uk. I will be keeping you updated about this topic throughout 2025 as, in the coming months, new policies about recycling and waste will be introduced by the government including collection of food waste from 2026 which I'll keep you briefed about.

Flooding: This is an important ongoing topic that comes to me from residents of Oakington & Westwick. A handy flow-chart on the County Council website shows who manages the different aspects of water flow and management: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Investigating-and-Regulating-Flooding-Who-Manages-What.pdf. The District Council's Awarded Watercourse team, who I work closely with, support parish groups, councillors and representatives by taking a view on drainage matters generally and providing advice on the cause and resolution process. This includes enhancement and support for nature and ecology projects where the service can assist with resources.

WorkWell: This free programme supports people who have a health challenge that is preventing them from working, or who are at risk of being out of work due to a health challenge. It has launched in South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire and Royston, with SCDC involved as partners, and is delivered by CPSL Mind. To find out more, visit www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/workwell.



Cllr Natalie Warren-Green

Bus Franchising: More than 1,600 responses were received in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA's) statutory bus franchising consultation, which ran between 14th August and 25th November 2024. Now that the consultation has closed the CPCA will compile and publish a report setting out its response to the feedback. The Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will then make a decision on how to reform buses, currently planned for early February, although subject to change.

The consultation compared two ways to reform buses: a franchising solution and an Enhanced Partnership approach. Under a franchised network, the CPCA would contract bus operators to run services on its behalf but have control over the routes, frequency, fares and overall standards of the region's buses. An alternative Enhanced Partnership solution, while producing benefits over the current bus service, provides less control over the routes, frequency and overall delivery of the services.

Buses in Cambridgeshire are operated by private companies, the largest of which is Stagecoach. Many services are run commercially and are subject to being withdrawn or reduced in scope if they are not profitable, although some routes are publicly subsidised. According to the BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-67568458, the CPCA stepped in to save 23 bus routes in October 2022 after Stagecoach said it could no longer run them. It reviewed 19 subsidised bus routes, including one that cost £124.83 per passenger; the 7A, Duxford and Sawston to Whittlesford. It carried 771 passengers in 2022/23.

The profitability of bus services is being squeezed by low bus fares and the rising cost of living, including the difficulty of finding drivers willing to work for low wages. Even if the franchising policy proceeds, there will still need to be some economic solution found between raising bus fares or increasing public subsidies. In the long term, some form of automated public transport will need to be developed as bus services continue to decline.

Non-compliance checks on South Cambs taxis: Recent stop checks on taxi drivers and their vehicles have revealed alarming levels of non-compliance with licensing conditions. Out of 17 drivers inspected, only two emerged without issues.

Conducted by licensing officers from SCDC and police officers from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, these stop checks scrutinised essential compliance measures, including the display of driver badges, door signage, and the presence of a first aid kit and fire extinguisher.

Violations identified included parking illegally on double yellow and even double red lines, failing to wear a seatbelt, and excessive window tinting.

This operation has raised serious concerns about the commitment of some taxi drivers to uphold the safety and legal standards required of licensed operators.



Cllr Tom Bygott

Contact details for all Councillors are on page 5.



Pippa Westoby

LETTER CARVER

I'm a Lettering artist based in Cambridge. My work consists of hand carved memorials, house plaques, garden ornaments, and painted lettering for births, anniversaries and weddings. All my work is bespoke. You can see more of my work on my website : www.pippawestoby.co.uk or on my Facebook page : Letter Carving in Stone - Pippa Westoby.

Contact email : pippa_westoby@yahoo.co.uk



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From our County Councillor

As February begins, the daylight hours are gradually increasing, bringing hope for warmer days ahead. However, if you're walking, cycling, or wheeling, please stay visible during darker mornings and evenings to ensure everyone's safety.

Winter Gritting

Cambridgeshire County Council operates 37 gritting vehicles, covering 44% of the county's road network. Roads are prioritised into primary and secondary routes, with primary routes serving as essential connections for work, healthcare, and major services. Secondary routes are gritted during prolonged cold spells or when snow is forecast, depending on resources.

Gritting decisions rely on weather data from twelve stations across the county, and updates are regularly shared on the Council's Facebook and Twitter pages. You can also check which roads are gritted using the Council's online maps at Transport and Streets, maps.cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Driven to Frustration: The Fight for Better Buses

Stagecoach's November timetable changes have failed to address reliability concerns, leaving many residents stranded. This is the second attempt at timetable changes, yet reliability hasn't improved. There is also frustration over the lack of coordination between Stagecoach services and train times to London King's Cross. While the Combined Authority plans to survey Longstanton Park and Ride users following our campaign last summer, we are calling for immediate, tangible solutions.

Bus Survey

A big thank you to the 500+ residents from Oakington, Westwick and Girton who responded to the bus survey. Thanks also to Bernard Yates, the resident who helped raise the number of responses through the Oaky Folk Facebook group. The Parish Councils will now share the findings with

the bus provider.

On the positive side, the £2 capped bus fare continues until March 2025, and the £1 Tiger Pass remains available for under-25s until May. These temporary measures provide some relief, but long-term solutions are urgently needed to meet the community's needs.

B1050 Cycle/Footpath Project

Plans to improve cycling and walking connections to Bar Hill, Swavesey, and beyond from Longstanton and Northstowe are progressing in two phases:

- Phase One: From the A1307 to the new B1050 roundabout. Funded by Section 106 contributions, construction is set to begin in early 2025.
- Phase Two: From the roundabout to the Home Farm Road junction in Longstanton. Delays due to land acquisition and planning permissions have pushed the start date to late 2025.

These improvements aim to enhance safe, sustainable travel for residents across the region.

Looking for a New Volunteer Role in 2025?

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council is looking for new councillors to join the team. This is your chance to make a real difference in the community. Councillors represent local voices, shape vital decisions, and help secure a bright future for our village. Do contact them!

Cambridgeshire County Council and Mayoral Elections

A reminder that elections for Cambridgeshire County Council and the Mayor will take place on Thursday, 1 May 2025. Please take the time to vote and help shape the future of our county.

Firouz Thompson



Contact details for all Councillors are on page 5.

From our MP

As we headed into the coldest part of the winter season, it was shocking news that there were more than 6,500 waits of 12 hours or longer at A&E departments across Cambridgeshire in December. When I recently visited both Addenbrooke's and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, I saw doctors and nurses doing an excellent job keeping up with unprecedented demand, but with more investment clearly needed. That's why I welcomed the announcement from the Government in January confirming funding for a new cancer hospital on the Addenbrooke's site, and also for the rebuild of Hinchingsbrooke – so urgently needed as the existing hospital has been blighted by RAAC. Healthcare, both primary and secondary, is always one of the most frequent themes in my inbox, and fighting for better funding provision of health services remains one of my priorities for the constituency.

On a different note, I have had a lot of correspondence from constituents about the Climate and Nature Bill being brought forward by my Liberal Democrat colleague, Roz

Savage. Thank you to everyone that has shared their views on this with me. The Bill would allow the UK to become a world leader in tackling the climate and nature crisis by addressing its root causes and, as I write, its second reading is due to take place on the 24th of January. I thoroughly look forward to being in the Commons Chamber to show my support for this legislation and it is one I hope the Government will also support.

As ever, I have been holding both in-person and online surgeries to speak directly to constituents about their issues, both personal and campaign-related. I have held these in St Neots, Cambourne, Histon and Northstowe so far, and hope to venture to many more places in the coming months. If you feel you have a problem I could help with, or a matter you would like to discuss with me, please don't hesitate to contact me at ian.sollom.mp@parliament.uk to request a surgery appointment.

Ian Sollom



Full contact details on page 5.

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Oakington & Westwick Neighbours



Happy New Year from Oakington and Westwick Neighbours! OWN continues to provide support with practical help as well as bringing together people for community events. By the time this appears in print, the annual Wassail will have taken place on 25 January and, before Christmas, we enjoyed community carol singing outside the White Horse. Warm mince pies and mulled wine fuelled the enthusiastic singing despite the damp weather. Special thanks to members of Cottenham Brass Band who provided a suitably festive accompaniment. £147 was raised for the DEC Middle East appeal.

Following our AGM in November, we are delighted to welcome two new members to the OWN steering group. Both Matt Saunders and Cate Lambert are relatively new arrivals in the village, and we look forward to working with them. Recent research has shown that social networks are essential to our quality of life, and even how long we live. Life expectancy has increased by 30 years over the past century, but to use a familiar quote, “It is not the years in our

life that matter, it is the life in our years”. If you are new to the village, or newly retired, or have some time you could offer we would love to hear from you. New volunteers are always needed; whether it is visiting someone once a week for a cup of tea and chat, helping with shopping or being on the steering group that meets monthly to plan and co-ordinate OWN’s activities, you can make a valuable contribution in the life of the village.



Don’t forget the Hardship Fund continues to support local people who, for various different reasons, need financial help and advice. For more information contact Jo on 07714 760582, Bee on 07718 068941, or Celine on 07541 997299, or email oak.west.hardship.fund@outlook.com. All enquiries are treated in confidence. The Hardship Fund was launched during the Covid pandemic but in fact has received more calls since due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. Thank you to local individuals and organisations that have donated to it – you have made a huge difference.

Jo Bryant

To contact OWN: 07902 111786, owneighbours@gmail.com

Environment Action Group

Our **Flood Mitigation Group**, led by Andrew Dennis, has examined the proposal for the Wilson’s Road Solar Farm from the point of view of its possible effect on water run-off and flows through the village. We believe that the development, if it goes ahead, wouldn’t generate any significant extra volume of water flowing towards Oakington. It is true that the rain would be falling on a smaller area of ground, due to some of the surface being covered by the solar panels, but as long as there is good grass cover that is well grazed and managed (the developers propose for sheep to graze around the panels) this should make little difference as the water will still infiltrate into the soil. If there are hard-surface access roads, then some small-scale attenuation such as land drains and detention may be needed to locally control run-off.



ensure that everyone is happy with the content before this is finalised.

The **Nature Recovery Project** (joint project with SOW) will be continuing this year, and seeking to build on the recording of wildlife in the village that was done last year. Please contact SOW on sustainableow@gmail.com if you are interested in being involved in this work. We also hope to work together with Histon and Impington Green Spaces (HIGS) to improve biodiversity in the area.

Finally, the photograph shows EAG Chair John Terry helping with the EAG Christmas tree sale in December which raised £455 for the EAG account. Peter Rayner and Bernie Yates of the Allotment society provided valuable help with the harvesting again. There are enough trees remaining for Christmas 2025.

Stephanie Smith

Back before Christmas, the EAG volunteers worked hard **sweeping up leaves** and other debris around the village to improve the safety and appearance of our pavements. We are very grateful to the volunteers who took part in organising and carrying out this important work, which made a tremendous difference to footways around the village.

We have been working to design six new **Information Boards** around the village to add to those that were installed in 2023 at the recreation ground, the community orchards, and at the White Horse. The new boards are planned to be placed at Stocks Green, by the village sign, near the pond, on the area of grass between Mead View and the shop, at Cambridge Road bus stop by the crossroads, and in Westwick. Like the existing boards, these will focus on the history and ecology of the village, and will be linked by QR codes to information on the History Society’s website.

Over the next few weeks we hope to contact owners and residents of any properties mentioned on the boards to



Clubs and Groups

Tuesday Talk & Tea

- **11 Feb** Games afternoon
- **11 Mar** Judy Wynn will be giving a flower arranging demonstration

Marian Cleaver



The Tuesday Talk and Tea Club meets in the Church Hall at 2.45–4.45pm on the second Tuesday of the month, for a talk or activity followed by a delicious home-made tea. We welcome all comers, especially if the subject that month is of special interest to you.

More info: 01223 232897 / mariancleaver@gmail.com.

Oakington and Westwick WI

What fun we had at our retro Christmas party, from hats and games to party food including egg- and jam-sandwiches, teacakes, iced gems and jelly (and lots more!) We played "Guess who I am", pass the parcel... and even Santa came to give out the secret Santa presents!! An enjoyable evening and great end to 2024!



Our first meeting of the New Year was with Steve Iddon. Steve led us through gentle seated exercises and breathing techniques, that were suitable for all.

Our next WI meeting is on Thursday **13th February** at 7.30pm. Our speaker is David Duker, author, who has held a life-long passion for the generation of people who overcame the huge challenge of the Second World War, and is particularly interested in the Battle of Britain.

Elaine Bailey



We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30pm at the Church Hall. We are a friendly group and if you want to try us out the first meeting is free. Contact Elaine Bailey elainebailey1@live.co.uk for more information.

Oakington & Westwick Tennis Club

Another successful Quiz Night for the Tennis Club!

The ever popular Tennis Club Quiz Night at the end of November was a huge success – many thanks to master quizmaster John Barnett! We raised a fabulous sum of over £1,200 which was split between the Club and the brilliant Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust.



Looking ahead to this year's Quiz Night, keep the date of 22nd November free!

We have our AGM coming up soon. The date will be confirmed to members so get in touch if you'd like to come along and find out more about the Club.

Gill Attmore

Oakington & Westwick **TENNIS CLUB** Club members can use hard courts at the Recreation Ground. Our subscription year runs 1 April – 31 March. Current membership: £65 family, £45 adults, £20 for juniors (subject to approval at the AGM). To join or for more info, contact oakingtontc@gmail.com.

Oakington & Westwick Short Mat Bowls Club



If you would like to give bowls a try, come and join us as our guest. We play throughout the year at the Pavilion, on Thursday evenings 7.30–9.30pm. We have spare bowls and you just need some soft, flat-soled shoes. If you would like more information, please contact Dawn Stokes on 01223 236427.

Oakington & Westwick Table Tennis Group



Table tennis is good for your mental health as well as your physical health – heart rate, reaction times, coordination, muscles and joints. Join us for fun and laughter – we are a small, friendly club, of mixed ability. We play every Tuesday at 7.30pm at the Pavilion, and welcome new players. Bats provided. For more information contact Gillian L'Angellier on 01223 234758.

Sustainable Oakington & Westwick

Young people – who will be most affected by the ecological crises affecting our planet – can also be the most passionate advocates for change. We were certainly all inspired by Oakington’s “Eco Kids” who helped to lead the November SOW session on how to have a sustainable Christmas. Having thought about what was really important to them about Christmas, they showed that we can have a celebration with less impact on the environment. Thanks too to Ildiko who helped us make Christmas crafts and decorations from odds and ends of wool.



SOW’s plans for 2025 include the Repair Cafe on **8 February** and tree planting at the school in March (see page 15 for both), plus developing the Nature Recovery Project. Anyone is welcome to come to the monthly meetings which are talks, discussions or workshops – the next are on **26 February** and **26 March**. Email us to join the mailing list and be kept up to date with events organised by SOW and other local sustainable groups, or check the website, sustainableow.co.uk, for “resources and advice” from past talks, eg on heat pumps and wildlife gardening.

Jenny Prince



For everyone who’s concerned about nature and the environment. All are welcome to SOW meetings, at 7.30pm in the Church Hall on the last Wednesday in the month.

sustainableow@gmail.com / sustainableow.co.uk

Oakington Vikings



FA Charter Standard

Our Teams and Contacts

- First Team James & Ronnie 07834 465188
- Under 16s Marcus & Josh 07866 635241
- Under 14s Winston 07968 716290
- Welfare officer Frank 07841 995713

www.facebook.com/OakingtonVikingsFC

1st Oakington Scout Group

The Scouts have started the new term by refreshing their first aid knowledge. They were very privileged to have the chance to practice CPR on a ‘Resusci Annie’ mannequin thanks to one of our wonderful parents, Mandy, who is a paramedic. As well as chest compressions and rescue breaths, they also covered burns, breaks, bleeds and bandaging.

1st Oakington Scouts was very pleased to have four of our oldest scouts presented with their Chief Scout’s Gold Award just before Christmas. Those scouts have now started their journey with the Explorer Young Leader programme and have begun their DofE challenge. We have a small number of places available for 11–14 year olds to join us – get in touch with cara.hanman@oakingtonscouts.org.uk if you have a young person looking to join the adventure of scouting. We are also open to welcoming new leaders. Get in touch for more information.

Cara Hanman



Scouts (11–14) meet 6–7:30 pm on Fridays at the Pavilion. For more details contact Cara: cara.hanman@oakingtonscouts.org.uk

1st Oakington Beavers

Oakington Beavers had a great time on their sleepover just before Christmas. They made their own glow in the dark slime, had an indoor campfire (due to the storm outside!) and competed to see who could eat a doughnut hanging from a piece of string the quickest!



This term we’ve already learnt about different disability aids and had a wonderful visit from Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue who showed us their special kit for finding lost people. We’ve got a lot more fun

lined up, including an international night, science experiments, problem solving missions, and a trip to Clip ‘n Climb!

We’re currently at capacity, but if your child is interested in joining Beavers in the future, please get in touch.

Kathryn Bigg



Beavers (aged 6–8) meet 6–7pm on term time Fridays at Oakington Primary school.

If your child is interested in joining Beavers, please contact Kathryn.Bigg@oakingtonscouts.org.uk.

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Gecko

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jamestomkins@gmail.com



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Oakington Primary School Parent Staff Association



We have a couple of events over the next two months open to the local community.

Tree Planting: Saturday 8 March, 1–4pm

We look forward to joining up with SOW and the wider community for this tree planting event.

We have a selection of Rowan, Silver Birch and Cherry trees which we have been growing on from the Woodland Trust. We invite those who would like to get involved to sponsor a tree for £5 as well as those keen to help with planting. There is no need to sign up to help but we would like commitments and payment for sponsorship in advance: <https://forms.gle/4TW1ffQpPNULc1waA>

We will be providing refreshments for those who help on the day.

Quiz Night 2025: Friday 21 March, 7–9.30pm

We look forward to hosting our annual quiz night with quiz master Dave Barrett.

If you would like to come along please get your team of up to 6 members together and book your spot for £5 per person using: <https://forms.gle/WeXq7rwfWBcRQMxa7>. Teams need to sign up by midnight on Wednesday 19th March.

If you have any questions or would like to contact us please email us on psa@oakington.cambs.sch.uk.

Angela Barber, PSA Vice Chair

Oakington Primary School PSA
Oakington Primary School
Friday 21st March
6:45-9:30pm

QUIZ NIGHT

Sign up by Wednesday 19th March using the link below which includes our payment link. Quiz entry is £5 per person with up to 6 members permitted per team.

<https://forms.gle/Agz5GaWykVGkvQucA>

Our pay bar will open at 6:45 with Quiz starting at 7pm

Table snacks will be provided but also feel free to bring your own along.

Any Questions email us:
psa@oakington.cambs.sch.uk

Parentkind Member Association

Sustainable Oakington & Westwick Repair Cafe



Saturday 8 February at the Pavilion, 11am – 2pm

Come along to the annual Repair Cafe, and enjoy the community buzz together with delicious cakes and lunchtime vegetarian snacks! Everyone welcome, whether or not you also have something to repair.

Repairs are free (although donations gratefully accepted). You can bring along knives or garden tools which need sharpening, clothes which need mending, bikes, laptops, tablets or mobile phones which are giving trouble (although we don't repair screens), household items, gadgets or small appliances which need mending or aren't working properly – and have them repaired for free, saving them from being thrown away and you from having to buy new.



Our volunteer repairers will do their level best to fix your item, and chat to you while they do it – it's a chance to pick up tips from experts as well.

Repairs can be booked in advance to guarantee they will be seen – the booking link is on sustainableow.co.uk/repair-cafe. But if the booked slots are full or you don't get round to booking, you can try bringing your item on the day, first come first served, and if there's time we'll fit it in.

An e-waste recycling bin will also be on site so if you have any small electrical items which are beyond repair please bring them on the day. Most small items with a plug, battery or cable will be accepted, eg toys, appliances, phones, power tools etc; *not* smoke alarms, light bulbs or vapes.

Any queries: oakingtonrepaircafe@gmail.com.
In partnership with Cambridge Carbon Footprint.

Jenny Prince, Repair Cafe team

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Not Just for Christmas

Whether you took yours out on the dot of Twelfth Night (or even earlier), or it's still shedding needles in the corner of the living room, many of us will have had a Christmas tree this year – from the EAG or otherwise! With our oaks and ash leafless, it is worth considering those perhaps less celebrated trees – the conifers – which bring us much needed winter greenery.

Conifers – or 'gymnosperms' – differ from the more familiar 'flowering plants' or 'angiosperms' in having seeds which are not enclosed within an ovary. Many conifers have a 'cone', though one of the UK's most iconic trees – the Yew – doesn't go in for these in the classic sense. In the UK, we have three native conifers: Yew, Scots Pine and Juniper.

Yew is known to many as the tree of churchyards. Their place in folklore is ancient, as too are some of the trees themselves. The Fortingall Yew in Perthshire is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 years old, with a recorded girth of 17 metres!

Scots Pine is also familiar to us as inhabitants of East Anglia, particularly as you head east into the Breckland, where you will see rows of gnarled and wind beaten trees. These are not truly native to this area though, but thrive in the dry sandy soils of this unique place. In its truly native form, Scots Pine is what makes up the rare and threatened 'Caledonian Forest' of the Grampians and western Highlands. They are home to some of our rarest wildlife too; wildcats, pine martens, the endemic (ish) Scottish Crossbill and Capercaillie – the world's largest grouse.

Juniper is typically associated with chalk and limestone, and the native pine forest of Scotland, and is more of a shrub than a tree. The berries have been used for millennia in food – there is little better than venison stew with juniper berries.

But back to those Christmas trees. Norway Spruce and Nordman Fir are among the favourite species, none of which are native to the UK. Indeed, most of the conifers you are likely to encounter in the wider countryside, especially when seen in dense plantations like in Thetford Forest, are non-native forestry species, more at home in Scandinavia and Russia than in Britain. Whilst it is clearly essential to have access to timber for building, especially fast-growing species, there has to be a balance struck – that good old mantra of the right tree in the right place. Too often, we have placed our timber plantations in the wrong place – threatening our rare and under-pressure breeding waders, like Curlews, or taking over rare and carbon storing blanket bog as in the Flow Country of Caithness, North Scotland, which occurred in the 1980s.

So, when December comes around again, give a nod to the oft-forgotten conifers and perhaps think about where you get your tree from.



Of course, there isn't much thinking to do – an EAG Nordman Fir (shown growing above), courtesy of the Butlins, is surely the way to go.

James Heywood

Please support your Pavilion!

The 3G Pitch is well supported but we have a few slots available. Should your team wish to book for the season please contact oakingtonpavilion@gmail.com for availability and prices. Please note that due to the new surface, strict footwear requirements have been introduced, which are non-negotiable; this is to ensure the surface is not damaged.



Meeting Room and Pavilion Hire

Do you know someone who has a business that might want to hire our function room either on an occasional or regular basis? We have a perfect meeting room that is free during the week and some weekends.

We are trying our best to use the building as efficiently as possible, as we need to generate more income.

To hire the building for events or parties please contact Tony Leadley on oakingtonpavilion@gmail.com.

Elaine Bailey

Lottery

After many years as our Vice Chair and Lottery co-ordinator, Mark Darling has stepped down from our committee, and we wish him well and want to say a huge thank you to him for 16 years plus of support to our village and community.

We now need a new volunteer to run the Lottery – could that be you?

The Lottery is an important fundraiser for the Pavilion, and we really do need it to continue.

The role involves organising the delivery of the forms, collating the details of each ticket holder, liaising with the Pavilion Treasurer and drawing the lottery once a month from March to December, in a public place to determine fairness and scrutiny.

Mark, I am sure, will support and guide the person who takes over in the initial stages.

Please contact elainebailey1@live.co.uk.

Elaine Bailey

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Book Club

China Room by Sunjeev Sahota

This was December's book, longlisted for the Booker Prize 2021, so we were expecting it to be a good read and, overall, it was; however I felt it could have offered more.



The story followed different generations of the same family as they struggled with love, heartbreak, betrayal and acceptance. It is a great story, but I thought it ended too soon – I wanted to know more, although that is possibly a sign of a good read. The club agreed on a 7 out of 10 overall as our review score.

The book for the next meeting on **Wednesday 12 February** at 7.30pm is **My Brilliant Friend** by Elena Ferrante. For March, it's **The Other Side of the Dale** by Gervase Phinn on **Wednesday 19 March** at 7.30pm. If these books, or others, interest you, please join us at the White Horse pub in Oakington.

Natalie Meredith

Video Game Review

Frostpunk 2 (Adults only)

The first Frostpunk was one of my favourite games

because of the narrative and strategy required to complete the difficult levels – every choice had consequences. Frostpunk 2 is a compelling sequel, that builds on the strengths of its predecessor, while introducing new elements that enhance the overall experience. Set in a frozen, post-apocalyptic world, the game challenges players to manage a city and ensure the survival of its inhabitants against harsh weather conditions and dwindling resources.

One of the standout features of Frostpunk 2 is its deep and engaging narrative. The story is rich with moral dilemmas and tough decisions that force players to weigh the needs of the many against the few. The game's atmosphere is incredibly immersive, with stunning visuals and a hauntingly beautiful soundtrack, that perfectly complements the bleak setting.

Gameplay mechanics have been refined and expanded, offering more strategic depth and complexity. The introduction of new technologies and resources adds layers of decision-making, making each playthrough unique. The balance between maintaining hope and enforcing order is more delicate than ever, and the consequences of your choices feel more impactful.

The difficulty curve can be steep, and some players might find the pressure overwhelming. But the game's replayability makes it a must-play for fans of strategy and survival games and overall it delivers a gripping experience that will keep players engaged for hours.

Ming Tregonning

Have you enjoyed a game, film, TV series or podcast that you could recommend to others? Send us a review!

Gardening Notes

February: Time to sow chillies, peppers and tomatoes which need a long growing season. A sunny windowsill or heated propagator is perfect.

Start chitting seed potatoes in a light, frost-free place.

Autumn raspberries can be cut back to the ground now. They will fruit on the current season's growth.

To increase your Snowdrops it is time to dig up clumps 'in the green', split them up and re-plant them. They will establish much better than dry bulbs in autumn.

March: Cut back Buddleias and Winter Jasmine to encourage new growth which will flower later.

Pot up Dahlia tubers and keep moist in an unheated greenhouse or cold frame until they begin to shoot.

Plant onion sets and direct sow hardy vegetables like beetroot, carrots and parsnips. Cucumbers and aubergines can be started in the greenhouse or on a warm windowsill.

Make attractive plant supports from Cornus (dogwood) and willow prunings to support tall-growing perennials.

Keep hoeing annual weeds in beds and borders that start to grow as soon as the temperature rises. Most of all enjoy the new spring flowers. Happy gardening!

Ann and Peter Rayner



Oakington and Westwick Allotment Society

We are delighted to say that we now have many new plot-holders taking part in 'Grow your own' at the allotments. There are still a few plots of 10m x 9m available at £10 a year. Really good value for fresh fruit and vegetables and some gentle exercise, so if you are interested or need more information please contact me.

Ann Rayner.
ann.rayner42@icloud.com



Chess Corner

Solution to chess puzzle 6-24

1st White Bf5

1st Black 2nd White

if g:Bf5 R:Bh5 #

if Kh7 R:Bh5 #*

':=' takes a piece '+'= check '#'= checkmate

*Pawn on g6 is a tied-pawn and cannot take Rook as that would put King in check.



Chess Puzzle 1-25

White to move and checkmate in two moves.

Please send your solution to me at ranpin@gmail.com

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New Babies in Days Meadow

At the tail end of 2024 we had a mini baby boom in Days Meadow, with Amelia, Rosalind and Oliver being born in the space of a few weeks. Deciding on a name can be difficult, particularly now that using family names are no longer in fashion. Nicola, who moved into Days Meadow in 2017 before buying their current house in 2019, exchanged lists with her partner before finally agreeing on Oliver. Julie and her partner, who moved in during 2020, tried out the Kinder app, but were not overly impressed and again drew up separate lists, before deciding on Rosalind. While Catherine, who also moved in during 2020, agreed on Charlotte with her partner, until Amelia was born!



Days Meadow has always been a particularly family-friendly road and now boasts 36 children, 21 cats, 5 dogs, and a tortoise along with a shoal of tropical fish! Being able to walk your children to the village school is seen by the new mums as one of the real bonuses of living in Oakington.

Graham Tregonning

Swavesey Camera Club

Annual Photographic Exhibition – Saturday 22 March
from 10am to 4pm at Swavesey Memorial Hall.

Swavesey Camera Club are back in March 2025 for their Annual Photographic Exhibition. This event is one of our major opportunities to demonstrate our photographic skills to the public.



Visit us and vote for your favourite image. In addition to the beautiful prints on display, there will be a continuous display of projected images and AV presentations. Some of the images will be available as greetings cards with all the proceeds from the card sales going to a nominated charity. Tea, coffee, excellent cakes and other refreshments will be available all day.

Visit our website swaveseycameraclub.co.uk where you can find further details of the exhibition. On the website you will also be able to see an online version of the exhibition. (Our exhibition is kindly sponsored by Ash Croft Veterinary Surgery and Tait Financial Services Ltd).

Maggie O'Moore, Committee Member

Why I love...Bell Ringing

The sound of bells has pealed out across fields, villages, towns, and cities for centuries. Over these centuries, English change ringing has captivated the attention of scores of people... but why?



For some, it is simply a pleasurable pastime and provides an opportunity to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and learn a new skill. Others enjoy the physical aspect that bell ringing provides. Still others love to puzzle over the mathematical tunes that bell ringers call 'methods.' And still others (this includes my family) enjoy the varied and intricate places that bell ringing takes you. After all, what other hobby spirals you around stone staircases, or takes you up terrifyingly rickety ladders to the top of a church tower to breathtaking views of rooftops, fields, and wide skies?

While all these reasons are true for me, I love bell ringing because it is the loudest voice of the church. Each Sunday, the bells of Oakington tower peal out across the village proclaiming the praises of the Almighty God. Each Sunday, the bells cheerfully chime the announcement of the beginning of a service. Each Sunday, the bells ring out to invite you personally to church.

Ellie Nicholas

Comberton Ramblers (50th Anniversary)

Join our friendly group for wonderful walks.

Comberton Ramblers walk alternative Sundays between 5–7 miles. The concept of the club hasn't changed since 1974; it is to encourage people to take a walk in their local countryside, enjoy a social chat, and learn a little about the local flora/fauna, all in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

You are welcome to join us on any two of our walks to see if you like it. Then, once you have enjoyed the views, fun, and exhilaration, it is just a case of becoming a member. Annual membership membership fee is £10pp.

(Sorry no dogs are allowed except assistance dogs.)

For further information contact me: 01954 210049,

or 07930 951703 or stella.hardwicke2274@hotmail.com

Stella – Secretary of the Comberton Ramblers

combertonramblers.org.uk

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Bones Without Barriers

Oakington Archaeology 2010 – 2014

Those of you who are new to the village may not be aware that Oakington has a rich cultural heritage ranging from the Iron Age to the present.

During the 1920s Charles Bloom had a plant nursery on land where the recreation ground now stands in Queensway. Blooms are perhaps best remembered for Charles's son Alan, famous horticulturalist and founder of Blooms of Bressingham where you will find the remains of Oakington signal box. In 1926 Alan and workers at the nursery uncovered three 'Anglo-Saxon' warrior graves. These were recorded but despite extensive searches no more remains were discovered at the site. Blooms moved to Wicken before going on to Bressingham; the land was sold to Chesterton Rural District Council and ultimately in 1953 became the recreation ground. In 1993 the Parish Council installed a play area at the recreation ground. During construction a further 17 Saxon burials were discovered.

In 2006 the long-awaited Sports Pavilion was finally agreed. Before the work began, a full archaeological dig was carried out by Oxford Archaeology East, led by Richard Mortimer; 26 remains were uncovered.

The Parish Council were asked to upgrade the 1993 play area in 2008. This posed a major problem: the site was now recorded as significant and the archaeology would cost up to £80k then (double that now) – how could the PC achieve this? Fortunately, Nick Harrison had set up the Oakington and Westwick History Society. The society were encouraged by Richard Mortimer (Oxford Archaeology East) to run a series of 'test pits' round the village, little realising what was to come. We were joined by a volunteer PhD graduate who was between jobs, one Duncan Sayer. Duncan (now Professor Sayer) went on to join the Archaeology Faculty at the University of Central Lancaster (UCLan). In 2009, following extensive talks, it was agreed that the final year Archaeology students of UCLan would carry out our dig as part of their final year dissertation project. None of us could ever have imagined what was to come.

It must be stressed here why the dig was so successful. Prior to our dig, archaeology had always been carried out behind screens, particularly where exhumation of human remains was involved. Duncan had long felt that this was not a moral approach and after discussions with the community applied for a special government licence to carry out an 'open' dig, involving the village getting hands on experience. All – including, and importantly, the children – were able to help



Excavating around the old play area in 2012



"Cow lady" – the high status woman buried alongside a cow. The grave was uncovered on Village Day in June 2012, so the unfolding discovery was witnessed by crowds of residents and visitors. Photo retrieved from Sayer (2022)

and observe everything that went on. 'Bones without barriers' was born.

Over the five years from 2010-2014, each summer around fifty students and staff from UCLan arrived, set up camp and worked on the site for a month. What was revealed became national news. Perhaps our most exciting discovery was the first cow burial to be discovered in Europe.

The village was united, students were made welcome, and a baking group formed to provide home-baked cakes daily. The School involvement was an essential part of the dig, to encourage children to become interested in their culture and heritage. Villagers washed finds and were encouraged to dig, being generally involved at all levels

All finds were catalogued and preserved. They remain the property of the village, and are now stored at Cambridge University Department of Archaeology. Samples of DNA were extracted from teeth, and we were lucky that Oakington's Steve Gamble, at that time, was working at the Sanger Institute and became instrumental in analysing in this important information.

Where are we now? The recreation ground shows no visible scars, and the finds are still stored. Various ideas were bandied about for their preservation and exhibition. Dreams of our own heritage centre still float aloft!

Duncan is still working on Oakington's early Anglo-Saxon cemetery, promising a book at some time. He went on to Ribchester Roman fort, having a main interest in early cemeteries and burial practices. He is currently collaborating with DNA labs in Harvard and Max Planck to put together one of the largest ancient DNA projects in Europe. Those of you who watch 'Digging for Britain' will know he is a constant contributor to the series.

*Julie Grove
(Parish Council Liaison, Oakington Dig 2009-2015)*

To find out more about what the archaeologists discovered, look at the information board in the seating area at the Rec in front of the pavilion.

Coprolite in Oakington and Westwick

What are the earthworks in the field at Westwick, on the north side of the road next to Beck Brook? According to historian A P M Wright, writing in 1989, this was the site of medieval Belbouches Manor, one of two manors in Westwick. An alternative theory is that the lumpy ground is the result of nineteenth century coprolite diggings. Perhaps we'll never know, or maybe archaeology could settle the argument. But in the meantime local historian Bernard O'Connor, who has written widely on coprolite mining, has kindly looked into the evidence for us.

Coprolite is fossilised excreta, from the Greek Kopros meaning excrement and lithos meaning stone. The word was coined by Rev John Buckland, an eccentric professor who took his students to Lyme Regis in 1828 to see the fossils of an ichthyosaur exposed by a recent cliff collapse. He had his attention drawn to the find by Mary Anning, a Dorset fossil seller. The creature's intestine contents were examined and as they contained bones of baby ichthyosaurs, the professor deduced it was a carnivore – not that it could have been a pregnant female. Slices of fossil excrement were polished and made into earrings and inlaid into the top of an occasional table.

Similar fossils were found on Felixstowe beach in 1844 following a cliff collapse. Rev John Henslow, another religious academic, had them analysed and found them to have a high phosphate content. As phosphatic material, like animal bones, was being burnt and crushed to be used as a useful manure, he recommended Ipswich's manure manufacturers experiment with them. They did and a huge open cast mining operation began. Ground to powder in coprolite mills, sulphuric acid was added which produced superphosphate of lime – the world's first artificial chemical fertiliser. Coprolite mining started in Suffolk and by 1846 similar deposits were found in the Cambridgeshire fens. Geologists determined the coprolite bed stretched about 100



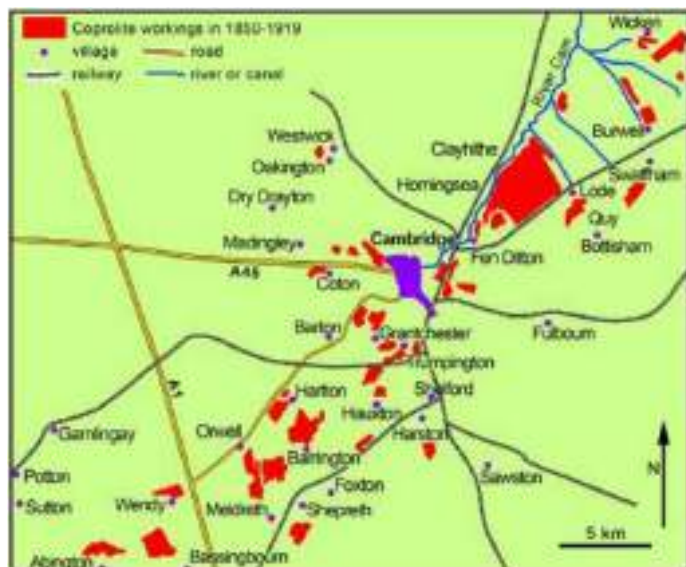
miles in length, from Norfolk, south-east through Cambridgeshire into Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire, up to seven miles wide and in places six feet thick. As the fossil bed contained bones, teeth and claws of at least seven dinosaurs and a range of marine and land organisms, not just coprolite, geologists termed the deposit a phosphatic nodule bed. The diggers, coprolite merchants and manure manufacturers kept the term coprolite.

Although there were a number of references to coprolites in geological papers in Oakington no documentary evidence of any diggings has come to light. This could have been that although the fossil deposit was located in the parish, it may have been too thin or found at depths too uneconomical to be extracted commercially. It could also be that they were worked by local farmers but not documented.

“Phosphatic nodules similar to those at Knapwell are found near where the junction line of Kimmeridge clay and the Lower Greensand crosses the Huntingdon Road and west of Oakington, showing that a layer of coprolites exists wholly or in part between the two formations.” (*Jurassic Rocks of the Neighbourhood of Cambridgeshire* by Thomas Roberts)

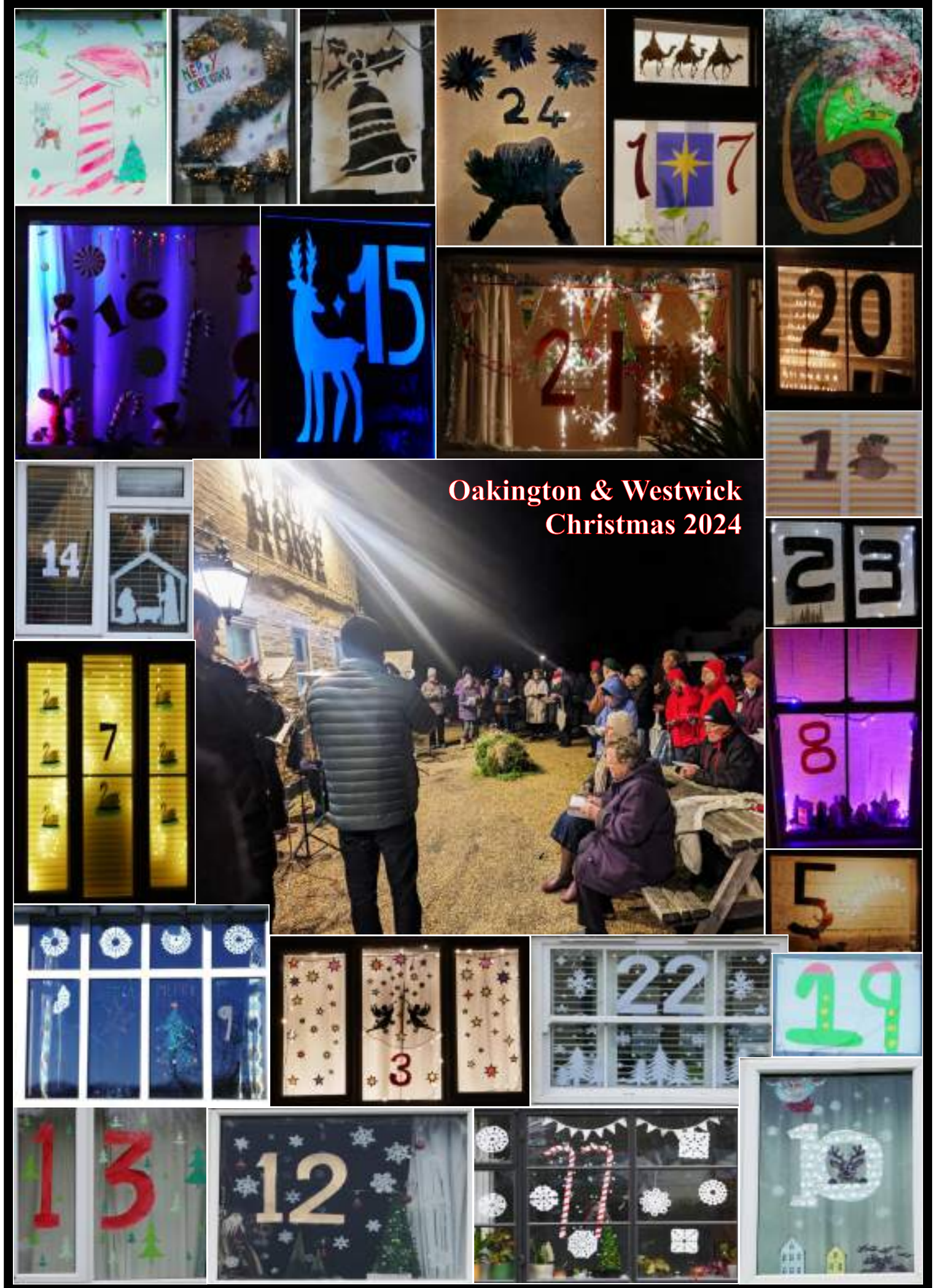
There were reports of workings in Westwick to the north-east which may have involved local men but no details have come to light. Another report mentioned nodules being found at Caxton End below the greensand and boulder clay. (*The Geology of the Neighbourhood of Cambridge, HMSO, 1881, p11* by W. H. Penning and A. J. Jukes-Brown)

The census returns for both settlements showed nobody actually described as involved in the industry, which suggests that if the diggings took place they most likely were not at the time the enumerators came round. ‘*Coprolite in the News*’ by Bernard O'Connor and ‘*The Cambridgeshire Coprolite Mining Rush*’ by Richard Grove are worth reading. Ely Museum and the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge are worth visiting. Accounts of the geological, archaeological, economic, social and environmental impact of the diggings in all the parishes on the coprolite belt can be found by searching for fossil digging/industry or coprolite digging/industry on lulu.com.



Coprolite workings around Cambridge (after map from Sedgwick Museum) – but no other detailed documentary evidence has turned up for the area marked in Westwick

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(With thanks to Stephanie Smith for additional research)



**Oakington & Westwick
Christmas 2024**