

**For residents of
Oxhey Village**

Cover photo by
Ant Cottee



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members

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today!**



Winter newsletter 2024

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at the
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www.oveg.org

Editorial

By **Ben Atkins**, Chair

Welcome to the latest edition of the OVEG newsletter – our second with the new look and feel, designed by our wonderful volunteer Ant. We’ve received some excellent feedback about the refreshed design, and I hope you agree that it’s an improvement.

As an OVEG member, you should also have been receiving our new e-bulletin, written by our Deputy Chair and Publicity Officer, Rob – this is a more frequent update on what’s happening in our community. If you haven’t received this, it may be because your membership has recently lapsed or that we don’t hold an up-to-date email address for you. Either way, you can now check online and rejoin – see the back page for details or contact our Membership secretary Michelle (membership@oveg.org). Our membership fees offer excellent value for money and being a member means you’re also investing in your local community.

As Autumn has really set in over the past few weeks and winter rapidly approaches, the committee has been busy organising our Remembrance Sunday event (see page 4) and starting to plan for 2025. We are hoping to clean and restore our village noticeboards and maintain the war memorial on Oxhey Green, as well as representing the community’s views on any future planning proposals.

We’ve also started to plan our events calendar for next year. The OVEG Quiz will be back as our first event of the year, followed by our Village Social and AGM in April. As well as our summer events, we’re hopeful that we will be able to bring back the ever-popular Big Breakfast next autumn.

However, the rest of the year is still to come, and I wish you and your families health and happiness for the remainder of 2024.

Together, we are stronger

By **Rob Kirby**, Publicity Officer and Deputy Chair

Ever since OVEG was founded, our purpose has been to serve the interests of our members. That’s why, in recent months, we’ve spent a great deal of time working on how we can best communicate with our members.

We’ve made a lot of progress, not just through the redesigned magazine, but also through the launch of our new email newsletter, exclusively for OVEG members. These email updates ensure members are the first to hear about local news and the work we do on their behalf. If you don’t currently receive these emails, it may be because we don’t have your email address, so please let us know.

Not sure when your membership runs out? The good news is that we’ve recently switched to an online membership renewal system. This will let you know when your membership is due for renewal and,

better still, you can pay easily online in just a few clicks. If you still prefer to renew with cash, our membership secretary **Michelle Potts** remains on-hand, and you can contact her on **01923 223512**. To check the status of your membership, please get in touch and we’ll be happy to help.

Given that you’re taking the time to read this, you probably share my belief that Oxhey Village is a great place to live and work. One way you can help is to encourage others to become OVEG members. As a member, they’ll be first to find out what’s going on in their area and directly contribute to the work of the committee. As I often say; together, we are stronger.



To become an OVEG member, they can email membership@oveg.org or simply scan the QR code to be taken straight to our registration page.

We’re looking forward to welcoming them.



Remembrance Sunday

By **Ben Atkins**, Chair

Sunday 10th November saw the Oxhey community come together once more to remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

Our Remembrance Sunday events included the laying of wreaths at the Oxhey Green memorial, followed by our community walk and service of Remembrance at Watford Heath.

Father Sam Friar led the proceedings again this year and remarked on how humbling it is to see such a large number of people coming together to honour those who have lost their lives. It is a true testament to the Oxhey community spirit that so many people and groups turned out to show their respects.

Our Police Community Support Officer, Dom, once again ensured that the march and events were well supervised, and our volunteer marshals helped manage the crowds and the traffic.

Jill Ibbott laid a wreath as a surviving family member of some of those named on the memorial on Oxhey Green, and our deputy Lord Lieutenant Patrick Moriarty joined to lead the community march to Watford Heath.

Our local Scouts, Beavers and Guides and their leaders were present as always to represent the younger members of our community. We were particularly grateful to Barry and Gill Hulin who also laid a wreath during the service at Watford Heath.

Our thanks go to John Ratcliffe for reading "The Fallen" and to Andy Probert and Jack Maxwell for playing the Last Post during the Watford Heath service.

Ken from the Oxhey Bowls Club served refreshments afterwards

and their neighbours provided electricity for the PA system. I'm sure that I will have missed some of the contributors and can only apologise – I hope you all know that this is such an important event in the annual calendar and we're grateful to you all for the part you play.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the diligent coordination of Andrew Filer who ensures that the proceedings run without a hitch.

I was reminded this year that Remembrance isn't just for those who didn't make it home but is also a mark of respect for those who did. I feel very proud to live in an area which recognises the sacrifices made by members of our armed forces.

Lest we forget.





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Bushey's social history is shown through displays on life in the village both in time of peace and war, some of the many locally made products and historic maps.

There is an on-going programme of changing exhibitions throughout the year.

Open Thursdays to Sundays 11am - 4pm
ADMISSION FREE

Rudolph Road, Bushey WD23 3HW
Tel 020 8420 4057
www.busheymuseum.org

Turn down the lights and protect our wildlife

By **Shirena COUNTER**, OVEG Environment Officer

With the clocks going back and the nights drawing in much earlier, many of us instinctively reach for the light switch.

However, for outdoor lights we should think twice, as these have a disastrous effect on our wildlife. Artificial light at night, particularly at dusk or dawn, causes all sorts of problems for wildlife by unnaturally altering their hunting, feeding, mating and other behaviours.

Our LED lights are far brighter than the old orange (sodium) lights, and they tend to emit more blue light which has the greatest negative effects. Our insect populations (on which we all depend for our food security) are plummeting with 40% of species facing extinction, partly due to this excess of light.

But what about security?

This is usually the main reason people turn their outdoor lights on at night. However, whilst bright lights may make us feel safer, they create dark shadows, actually making it easier for potential attackers or intruders to hide. Surprisingly, there is no scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crime (www.darksky.org/light-pollution/lighting-crime-and-safety).

If you are concerned about security, a motion-sensor light is a much more effective deterrent than one you leave on all evening/night. Set the sensitivity to a level that only activates the light when someone or something enters the area. If you shorten the time they switch on to 30-40 seconds this is sufficient to blind any intruders and still alerts you, whereas having lights on for longer means they can see what they are doing.

Further movements then will trigger the light again making it more obvious there is an intruder and harder for them to see (and stay unseen).

Lights that shine brightly in all directions particularly outwards or upwards are the most harmful to wildlife but there are things we can do to help.

Outdoor lights

Ideally switch all outdoor lights off altogether but if this really isn't possible, try the following:

- For security lights and porch lights, opt for motion-sensor lights as above
- Angle all lights, including security lights and porch lights, so they point directly downwards or towards specific areas, like the door or driveway, rather than letting them shine indiscriminately. Check and adjust light angles regularly
- Even better, fit outdoor lights with a light shield to direct the light downwards and stop it being dispersed upwards and outwards into the night sky. Look for fixtures that are labelled "dark-sky friendly" or designed to minimize light leakage. Consider "cut-off" designs that prevent light from escaping horizontally
- If you already have an outdoor light and can't fit a light shield, replace the bulb with one that has a much lower brightness to reduce light spill while still providing adequate light. Choose lights with a lower lumen rating (around 300-400 lumens for porch lights). You can buy these online or in any hardware store. Remember these are not the same as lower watt bulbs (which just use less energy)
- Many outdoor lights are blue-toned which are harsh and scatter more light. Replace these with a warm colour as this is less intrusive to neighbours and has less impact on wildlife. Choose a colour temperature of 2700K or lower (warm white or amber)
- Use just enough light to illuminate pathways and entryways, and avoid excessive floodlighting. One well-placed light that is not too bright is often enough
- If using Christmas lights outside, avoid decorating trees or hedges and put them around (or just inside) windows or your porch instead

And finally.....

- Spread the word – many people are completely unaware of the damage they are doing by leaving outdoor lights on, so persuade friends and family to switch off too!

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14.30 to 16.30 Thursday Meet

Join us every Thursday in the Church Hall for tea, coffee, cake,
books to swap, jigsaws board games or simply chat.

10.30 Friday

Said Eucharist.

We are an inclusive church community which is committed to offering a warm and friendly welcome to all. We love having children in church and value their presence.

If you would like to be kept up to date on future events and news from St Matthews, please sign up for our weekly newsletter by emailing newsletter@stmatthewsoxhey.org.uk or visit our website: www.stmatthewsoxhey.org.uk



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A year in the life of Oxhey Bowls Club

By **Ken Horn**, Chairman Oxhey Bowls Club



Oxhey Bowls Club has always been known as the best kept secret in Oxhey, having been tucked away behind the houses on Watford Heath for over 100 years since its founding in 1910, when it was part of the Grange estate. On discovering the Bowls Club, visitors often comment on how peaceful and serene they find the location.

We are a friendly, outdoor bowls club, with currently a mixed membership of 70 bowlers and 30 social members and are very active in the local bowling circles. Our outdoor season lasts from May to September. We play Watford & District, County matches, and our own internal trophy competitions one of which was presented to the club in 1927 by Ted Ray. He was the professional at the former Pavilion Golf Club which is now part of the Oxhey Hall estate.

We play against other local clubs and have roll-ups three times a week where all members are welcome to hone and improve their skills. We always try to involve as many members as possible in games and work hard to make sure all newcomers are especially welcome. In the winter, social events are held throughout the week on a regular basis in the club house.

Local organisations such as OVEG, Climate Cafe, the Farm residents, Bromet PTA, a ladies keep-fit group and others use the club hall on a regular basis for meetings and local community events such as Remembrance Sunday. One of our biggest events in the past year, which we were pleased to be part of,

was the Jazz on The Green festival held in the middle of May. We were blessed with fine weather and during the afternoon we hosted three bands on our green. Throughout the day we welcomed visitors to the club, providing tea and homemade cakes, and the bar was also open. The club and members always try to involve themselves in the local community, and if there are any local groups that need a small venue, please feel free to contact us; details below.

If you would like more information, check out our website:

www.oxheybowlsclub.co.uk

Ken: **0208 428 6917**

Pauline: **07807 920007**

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Planning news

By **Shirena Counter**, OVEG Environment Officer

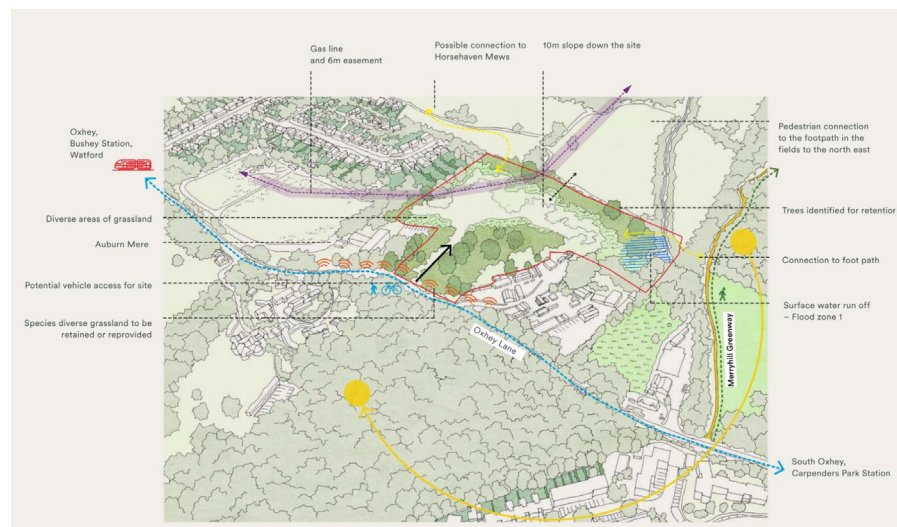
gs8 development in Oxhey Lane

You may be aware that land on Oxhey Lane (next to the Christmas tree farm) is being proposed for housing development. gs8, the contractor/developer held two community workshops in July and September.

They informed us that the intention of these workshops is to get local residents' feedback on how to shape the development and we understand they are planning a public exhibition

on the plans before the end of the year. They state that their buildings are climate positive with respect to carbon capture, zero waste, water and energy and with a focus on providing affordable homes for first time buyers and young families.

We understand that residents may be concerned about the development and will be keeping a close eye on the proposals as they develop. For more information, please contact **info@gs8.london** or **07896 004355**.



Plans for Chalk Hill

Following an enquiry about the former Massey site on Chalk Hill, OVEG asked local councillors to investigate and have been informed about two separate sites on Chalk Hill that are being sold for potential development. The first is 8-12 Chalk Hill (the Massey site) which has outline planning permission for 224 houses, plus retail and community space with parking for 69 cars. The blocks range from 5-9 storeys high.

The second site is 14-16 and 18 Chalk Hill plus 12 Ye Corner, where there are currently 3 houses. It is being marketed as having potential

for similar levels of development, but no planning applications have been submitted to date. It has some Tree Preservation Orders in place and 14 Chalk Hill is a listed building. The two sites are next door to each other.

For more information, see **www.brasierfreeth.com** and **www.knightfrank.com**

Currently we are looking for a new Planning Officer to join the committee, so if you would be interested in supporting OVEG to proactively monitor any applications in Oxhey, please contact our chair, **Ben Atkins** at **ben.atkins@oveg.org**





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Heritage Open Day at St Matthew's

By **Margaret Tabor**, Worshipper at St Matthews

**"I've walked past this church
hundreds of times but never
been inside before"**

"I got married in this church"

These were just two of the comments from the 50 people who came to visit during our first Heritage Open Day on Friday 5th September.

Having made the decision to take part, we thought about what we could display. We researched the history of the church, which included the original charter granting the land in 1007 (we have a facsimile on the wall in the church), and information on David Carnegie and Thomas Blackwell who (amongst others) gave money towards the building of the church in 1840. A regular attender at the book swap provided us with information about the architect, W. H. Syme, who was responsible for several buildings in Watford. We also put together a display of photographs. Some of these were very old and we had difficulty dating them, and some were of more recent

events in the church. One of our most noteworthy features is a window by the famous stained-glass artist, Karl Parsons, who lived in Kingsfield Road and we reproduced an article from the church magazine of 1916 which explained its symbolism.

Among the many church memorials is one of an Oxhey resident, Flight Sub-Lieutenant R A Warneford, who was awarded the VC and who brought down the first Zeppelin. Unfortunately, he was sadly killed in an air accident shortly afterwards. Warneford Place is named after him. Most of this research was produced as a free booklet which we handed out to visitors.

Most importantly(!) we appealed to the congregation for homemade cakes so we could provide refreshments. Cups of tea and cakes were much appreciated by the people who came and stayed to chat.

It was a very successful and enjoyable day, and we plan to open again next year, probably on both Friday and Saturday.

Environment news

By **Shirena Counter**, OVEG Environment Officer

OVEG climate café update

By the time you read this, the second series of our climate cafés will have come to an end. We have continued to work on the two projects started during the first series and in the last session we will be discussing how we want future cafés to run. See below for updates.

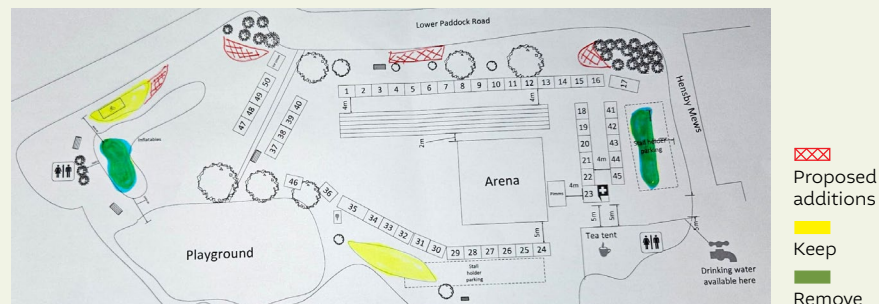
Oxhey Green uncut

To support our pollinators, it was proposed that some areas of Oxhey Green are left uncut to encourage the growth of wildflowers. You may be wondering why we've asked the council to do this, given that Attenborough's fields are next door to the Green.

However, unfortunately the fields have poor pollinator value, because the grazing of the cows prevents many of the wildflower species we need from flowering. Even if the fields did have lots of wildflowers,

we still need to increase the coverage as much as possible because so much habitat has been lost in the last 70 years.

The UK's gardens provide more space for nature than all the National Nature Reserves put together, but unfortunately an increasing number of domestic gardens also provide little food or habitat for pollinators as so many are now covered in paving, decking or plastic grass. The more we can support them both in our green spaces and our gardens (no matter how small an area), the better.



Oxhey Swapsey

Oxhey Swapsey started as an idea to help residents recycle unwanted but usable household items by donating to others in the local community rather than throwing them away and ending up as landfill. On the first Saturday morning of each month residents were encouraged to put items outside their houses for others to take away.

A key challenge proved to be how people could find out what things were being given away each month, and from where, particularly for anyone not on social media. At our last meeting we explored some possible solutions but all of them involved too much time and capacity, so weren't practical. As there is already a Facebook group (For sale and free in Oxhey Village and nearby), we agreed that we shouldn't duplicate this group.

We are now focusing on how we can make it easier for everyone in the community to recycle things that can't go in the council recycling bins, for example letting others know when planning a dump run to see if they have anything they also need taken, and providing information about the recycling opportunities available in the area for more unusual things such as light bulbs or biros.

We have started to compile a useful list of things and where they can be recycled within our environment page on www.oveg.com

"Guerrilla gardening" on Oxhey Green

Eagle eyed residents will have noticed on a few Saturdays, some small gardening groups on Oxhey Green tackling the overgrown planted areas with the aim of encouraging biodiversity. These came out of one of the climate café sessions and are organised by Jane Hopkins (of Refillabell fame) with volunteers. These will restart in the spring so if you would like to help, please email me or contact Jane directly.



Contacting the OVEG Committee

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Rohan Dronsfield
Committee Member

Shirena Counter
Environment Officer

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All change at the Villiers Arms

By **Ben Atkins**, Chair

**You are probably aware
that Jason, Gary, Veronique
and Val Gutteridge have
now left the building
(the Villiers Arms)!**

I went to school with Jason and was delighted when I heard that he was taking on one of our excellent local pubs – Jason is a family man first and foremost and an experienced hospitality professional, so it was no surprise that he made such an excellent landlord.

Not everyone is aware that Jason held down a full-time job whilst running the Villiers, as well as being a father of 3 wonderful young children. Jason, his wife Veronique (V), dad, Gary, and mum, Val, have all pitched in over the 7 years they have held the license and I for one will miss seeing all their faces behind the bar.

Jason's leaving weekend was a testament to the man and to the family – hundreds of people showed up to give their thanks. Jason's speech resonated with many when he thanked his wonderful staff (all of whom are staying on with the new owners) and remarked that the pub is made, not only by those who own it, but by those who chose to make it their local. Even with the Covid closures, he said that his memories of the Villiers will always be positive, and he knows he's made friends for life.

Of course, they leave the pub in great hands, and we are thrilled that local lady Paula Murphy has taken on the mantle as the newest person in charge – we hope to get an interview in coming newsletters!

Best of luck to Paula and our thanks and very best wishes to the Gutteridges as they hang up their bar towels for the next adventure!

OVEG membership

Please join us today if you haven't already. Membership includes our quarterly newsletter to keep you up to date on all things Oxhey and OVEG related.

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Upcoming events

Oxhey Village Quiz

Spring 2025

AGM and Village Social

Spring 2025

Contributing to the OVEG newsletter

The deadline for news, items, stories, announcements and adverts for the next issue is the last week of February 2025, content subject to available space.

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