

FEDORA MAGAZINE SPRING 2024

THE VOICE FOR OXSHOTT

*A look into life in Oxshott
over 100 years ago*

*Breathing new life into Little Heath
Recreation Ground*

*Oxshott Village Trust
- turning vision into reality*

*The history of The Oxshott Heath and
the work being done to protect it*

*Bluebell Wood, off Blundel Lane
by Melanie Kavel*

*How the Oxshott community is supporting
a family living with Autism*

FEDORA – The Voice for Oxshott CIC

(Registered # 13057190, 9 Northcote, Oxshott. KT22 0HL)

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair	Anthony Wolfe	chair@fedora.org.uk
Treasurer	Anthony Wolfe	treasurer@fedora.org.uk
Company Secretary	vacant	companysecretary@fedora.org.uk
Planning & Developments	Mike Wheeler	planning@fedora.org.uk
Roads	Ian Dilks	roads@fedora.org.uk
Oxshott Community Speed Watch	Simon Harker	ocsw@fedora.org.uk
Danes Hill School Liaison	Ian Dilks	schools@fedora.org.uk
Membership	Debbie Chitty	membership@fedora.org.uk
Magazine Editor	Nicole Birrell	magazine@fedora.org.uk
Magazine Advertising	Maureen Dufficy	advertising@fedora.org.uk
Website	Nick Shannon	website@fedora.org.uk
Green Oxshott	Lindy Wheeler	greenoxshott@fedora.org.uk

Website: www.fedora.org.uk

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

By Anthony Wolfe



As ever there is a lot going on, but first it is only right that we should mark David Cooke's contribution to the community and thank him for his many years of understated service to Oxshott. You will find a more detailed accolade for his good work on page 9, but at the outset a big thank you to David.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise our litter pickers of which David was a member. In 2023 they collected over 145 bags of rubbish! They have been busy in March and plan to have 3 more collections: 23rd May, 5th September and 5th December; all Thursdays. Well done to Cristina and her team. If you want to join them, please contact me at chair@fedora.org.uk and I shall ensure you are put in touch with Cristina.

On the theme of volunteers, it is great news that a good number of you stepped forward at the AGM to help. Everyone has been allocated roles so you will see some new faces delivering our magazine around the village. Nick Shannon is taking on the responsibility for the website, Maggie Stoker is undertaking the distribution of emails sent to members and supporters, and Maureen Dufficy will be looking after the advertising for the magazine. Thank you all.

At the same time, that does not mean we have no more roles to fill, if you want to get involved then please contact me at chair@fedora.org.uk.

Surrey County Council (SCC) Division Boundary Review

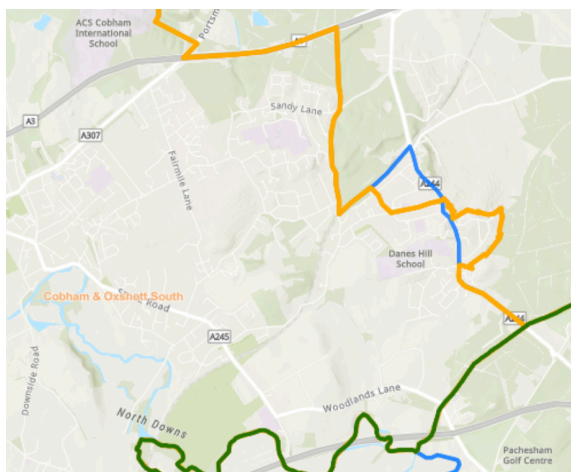
Our members and supporters will have received an email in February about the proposed changes to the boundaries of Surrey's divisions, but for those who are not aware of these proposed changes here is a summary of the situation. Last October, we highlighted a proposal by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to change the boundaries for SCC. In summary, LGBCE proposed to:

- Split Oxshott in two along the A244 combining the northern half with Esher and the southern half with Cobham.
- Drop any reference to Oxshott in the name of the county divisions.

Residents were encouraged by FEDORA to object to these proposals on the basis that responsibility for the A244 needed to rest with one accountable county councillor and that the name of Oxshott should be retained.

LGBCE has now responded with revised proposals. This is unusual and their response references the input from FEDORA.

In summary, LGBCE still propose to split Oxshott in two but no longer using the A244 as a dividing line. In addition, the name of Oxshott will now feature as part of the two new divisions of Esher Claygate & Oxshott North, and Cobham & Oxshott South.



Old proposal in blue, new proposal in gold.

In FEDORA's view, the revised proposals are an improvement, but they include a boundary that crosses the A244 at the top of Steel's Lane, so part of the A244 to the north of the junction sits within Esher Claygate & Oxshott North, and the part to the south sits within Cobham & Oxshott South.

We feel that all of the A244 between the two 30mph limit signs (at each end of the village)

needs to sit within only one division, so that one councillor can be held accountable for actions to ensure the effective management of this crucial stretch of road.

We await the results of this further consultation.

Oxshott Village Trust

In brief, the Oxshott Village Trust was set up after the Second World War and now has responsibility for the Village Hall, the Doctors' Surgery and the land on which those two buildings are built.

As the inadequacies of the current surgery have become manifest, so the Oxshott Village Trust has been working with the doctors on developing a plan for a new Doctors' Surgery fit for the 21st century. At the same time, work has been carried out to turn the trust into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). For the avoidance of any doubt, FEDORA – the Voice for

Oxshott CIC is fully supportive of both building a new Doctors' Surgery and the creation of a CIO.

The whole project is complex, involving a wide range of organisations; three different parts of the NHS, the Crown Estate and Savills as their representative, Elmbridge Borough Council both for a potential strategic CIL application and an application to the planning department, OVT and the doctors themselves. And then there is the financing of the build.

By the time you read this, an initial consultation to consider the proposed constitution of the CIO, as well as a meeting with residents will have taken place. However, that is just the beginning. It is inevitable that there will be more developments and meetings as the project progresses, and I encourage you all to get involved and ensure your voice is heard.

There is a more detailed article on page 30. This is a development that should involve every member of the community and I would ask you all to get engaged to ensure that Oxshott gets the Doctors' Surgery we need, aligned with the appropriate governance for the CIO now and for future generations.

Resurfacing of Esher

Bridleway 49 and Footpath 51

One noteworthy sign of progress in the past six months was the resurfacing of Esher Bridleway 49 and Footpath 51. In recent years both have suffered from the increasingly heavy volumes of rain, resulting in the bridleway's surface being gouged out and the pathway being seriously muddy at both ends.

With the guidance of James Emmett, the Access Officer of Surrey County Council (SCC), Melanie Ravet at Elmbridge BC (EBC) and very real support from Mark Sugden, our local SCC councillor, we were able to apply successfully for funding from both EBC and SCC; together with contributions from FEDORA - the Voice for Oxshott CIC and the



Oxshott Village Trust, we were able to get the project financed. Work was completed at the end of January and our sincere thanks go to James, Melanie and Mark.

Let's hope that the days of waders being needed on Footpath 51 are a thing of the past!

Finally, I am very conscious that the website is not in a good state. However, I am glad to inform you that we have appointed a company to set up a new website that will use well-recognised website software and provide one that is far easier to update. It is planned to go live in April. Fingers crossed!

May you enjoy the coming of Spring and all that it may bring!



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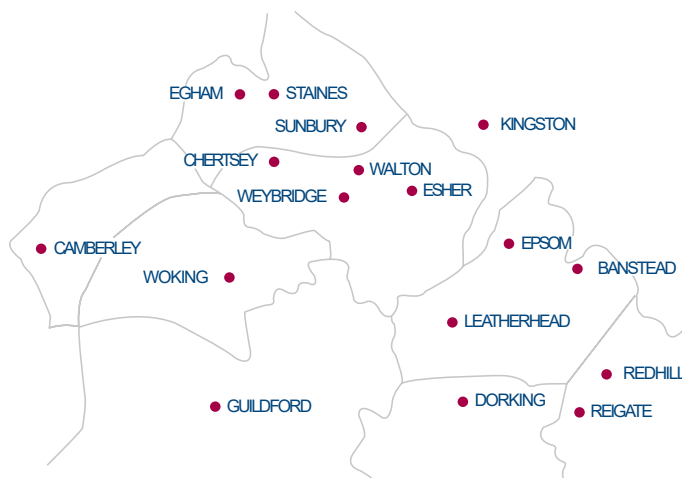
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PLANNING UPDATE

By Mike Wheeler



Local plan

Elmbridge BC is required to have a Local Plan that sets out its housing targets and strategy for the next 15 years. The current Local Plan is out of date and its replacement was agreed by the council last year. It now needs to go to examination by a government appointed Inspector. This process started on 27 February. The first stage is largely procedural, and the real substance will not be addressed until later in April when the Inspector will take evidence on matters such as the housing target, the treatment of Green Belt and specific development sites. FEDORA will attend key hearings but, as it has no specific matters that it wishes to challenge, will not presently be seeking to give evidence. The examination is likely to run the course of 2024 with no decision on the Local Plan expected until perhaps Q2 2025.

Representatives of owners of local Green Belt sites will be at the hearings and it is expected that they will seek to argue that the draft Local Plan is unsound by failing to deliver sufficient new housing. Their clear intention will be to get to a position whereby Green Belt sites have to be released to enable higher housing targets to be met.

Irrespective of the conclusions of the Inspector, a separate threat exists arising from a potential change in government where there would almost certainly be a heavy emphasis on new housing and significant mandated increases in housing targets for areas such as Elmbridge.

All this has profound implications for Oxshott and in particular the farmland to the east of Blundel Lane stretching down to Woodlands Park. This area has been earmarked previously as having the potential for around 4,000 new homes.

Design code

The Design code is the document that will determine the basis on which Elmbridge will approve applications in future. This covers matters such as style, design, and character. The draft Design code is a good document and provides a sensible basis for determining future planning policy. So far as Oxshott is concerned, the basis for determining housing densities for individual areas is sound with the exception of the Bevendean estate where the draft Design code contemplates a significant increase in housing density. This is under review and it is hoped that a more measured approach will prevail.

Important Local Planning Applications:		
Ramli, Beech Close	Block of five flats to replace one single property	Refused at appeal December 2023
Oxshott Village Sports Club	Two paddle courts to replace one tennis court	Refused December 2023
7 Princes Drive	Two detached houses to replace one single property	Refused February 2024
Contentious Planning Applications Currently Under Review:		
1 Holtwood Road	Four pairs of semi-detached houses to replace one single property	
Morane, Blundel Lane	Three terraced houses in a rear garden	
16 Broomfield Ride	Two detached houses to replace one single property – gone to appeal following refusal	

Local planning applications

FEDORA continues to monitor contentious planning applications and provide guidance to residents in respect of planning applications that may affect them. Where FEDORA provides a public comment on a planning application, it will only do so after careful consideration of the overall impact on the community.

Heath Buildings (Planning ref: 2024/0189)

An application was submitted last year to replace Heath Buildings on the High Street with a three-story building with rooms in the roof and with provision for four retail units and nine flats. This application attracted very mixed reactions. Ignoring both public comments from outside Oxshott and multiple comments from the same address, the community seemed split on the application with a balance of roughly 60/40 against the application. The application was considered by the local planning committee in December 2023 who refused permission on two

major grounds:

- Its proposed height, bulk, mass, style, and design would result in an incongruous development that would cause harm to the local area.
- Its height, bulk and mass would result in a harmful loss of privacy to neighbours that would harm their amenity.

A revised application was made in February 2023 that references a change in the external appearance of the building, a slightly narrower footprint, changes to the roof design and some landscaping changes. This is an important application that has the potential to change the face of the High Street. The application is open for comment until 29 March 2024.

For any further information on matters in this article please [contact planning@fedora.org.uk](mailto:contact.planning@fedora.org.uk)

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THANK YOU DAVID

By Anthony Wolfe

The close of 2023 saw David Cooke step back from any further responsibilities at FEDORA, following more than 30 years of service to the community of Oxshott, and it is only right that we should mark such an occasion.



David was brought up near Luton, educated at Sherbourne School and then, like his father, he read Engineering at St John's College, Cambridge from 1961 to 1964. After an initial year working for Vauxhall, he returned to Cambridge to earn his PhD in 1965-68 (as he says focusing on an aspect of gear cutting machine tools – not a very exciting subject!). Later he underlined his academic prowess when he went to Cranfield Business School and graduated with his MBA in 1975. Clearly, he liked his numbers and went on to have a long career in electrical and mechanical engineering, although always with an interest in the developing world of computing.

He arrived in Oxshott in 1984, when he moved from Ashted into his house on the Knott Park Estate and soon got involved in local affairs. He was appointed Treasurer of the Knott Park Estate Residents Association, whose Chair was Bernard Ungerson.

In 1992 he was invited by Graham Clarke, the then Chair of FEDORA, to become the Secretary of FEDORA and only some six years later he became the Chair of FEDORA, a position he held for the next 22 years, standing back in 2019.



A photo that marked when BT connected the village up to Surrey's fibre network

In typical modest David manner, when talking about his time as Chair he highlighted not just what he considered his greatest success but also the two initiatives that he regrets not being able to successfully drive through: sorting out the bridge across the railway line down Blundel Lane towards Stoke D'Abernon, so that it was safe for pedestrians, as well as horse riders; and the proposed Oxshott By-Pass off the A243 towards Chessington and over to the A3.

The two achievements that he will talk about proudly are:

- a circular walk, called Trail 2000, marked out by a series of posts around Oxshott Heath (these posts were manufactured by The Lower Mole Countryside Management Project and paid for by FEDORA), and
- a project made possible by the assistance of Oxshott's then local Surrey CC councillor, Roger Whittaker, which resulted in Oxshott being included in the plans for installing a fibre network across Surrey.

But perhaps he is best known for his successful struggle to protect the covenants in the Knott Park Estate. This was prompted by plans in 2000 to split one plot into three, and by all accounts it was a very stressful time that went on for five demanding years. This was further complicated by the fact there was not unanimity amongst the residents of Knott Park, with some keen to be able to benefit from dividing their own plots. After anonymous hate letters, a High Court case, and legal bills close to six figures, David and his supporters finally won their case - and the refund of most of their legal fees.

But even after 2019 he had not finished, because when he stepped back from the Chair at FEDORA, he continued to help organise the distribution of the FEDORA magazine and to manage its advertising, resulting in it being self-financing right up until he handed over the reins.

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ROADS UPDATE

By Ian Dilks

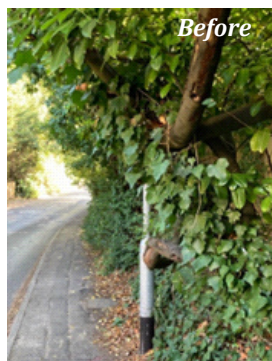


We explained in Autumn 2023 the complexities associated with making progress and gave a comprehensive update. Progress has continued on many but not all projects, albeit slowly. At long last though, the length of our update on roads on Oxshott is reducing in length as some projects approach completion!

20mph speed limit

The new 20 mph speed limit in the centre of Oxshott is now legally in force. Speed signs that were installed inside bushes and were not visible are now fully visible to motorists as our pictures show. At the time of going to print, we were waiting for the installation of four vehicle activated signs to be fitted, although the poles on which they will be placed are installed and wired. This will be done when contractors from the suppliers are available, hopefully in the next few months. Two signs (one facing in each direction) will be placed on the A244 close to Oxshott Lodge and two will be placed in Oakshade Road.

Once everything has been in place for a few months we expect Surrey Highways to remeasure to see what impact this has had on speeds both within the 20mph zone and to the south in the 30mph zone.



Overnight HGV ban

Finally all signage is now in place. This has proved to be a complex process as advance warning must be given some way ahead of the A244 so that HGVs have time to take alternative routes. You may have seen signs when approaching the village from Esher, Leatherhead, Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon. Notifications of the prohibition have been sent to SatNav providers which will

inevitably take time to take full effect, particularly for foreign haulage companies.

As we explained last Autumn this has been put in place using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order so is subject to consultation and review. As advised to members and supporters via a email on 12 March, comments can be submitted using a Surrey Highways survey accessible at

www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/oxshott-village-prohibition-of-heavy-goods-vehicle/consultation

This survey closes on 29 March 2024. We are not currently aware of any major opposition but expressions of support can only be helpful.

The speed measurement referred to above will also allow an assessment to be made of HGV activity.

Footpaths

In the High Street little progress has been made. Outline designs are awaited from Surrey Highways for two options for further discussion with the owners of the Victoria and butcher's shop businesses and properties. It is important that progress is made in the near future to ensure that funding secured for this work continues to be available.

Proposals for a new footpath in front of Oxshott Lodge to provide continuous footpath access from the south of the village to the centre and railway station have made no progress. A number of people responded to our report last Autumn to share FEDORA's disappointment that this isn't a priority for Surrey Highways. We are in a frustrating Catch 22 situation. Surrey Highways don't wish to spend money on design work for a project that isn't funded but we can't seek funding without more detailed plans. Working with Surrey Cllr Sugden and Surrey officials we are exploring

all possible options for public funding to reassess what might be possible.

Given the safety considerations for many children from two schools required to cross the busy A244 multiple times, and increased pedestrian numbers resulting from the continuing development to the south of the village, we may also consider a petition to the Surrey cabinet. However, given the pressure on scarce funding this would be counter-productive unless we could be sure of very substantial support which would take time to organise. We also need to recognise that thankfully we are expressing concerns about the risk of accidents but are competing for funds with sites which have seen accidents and injury.

Railway bridge

This is a site of real progress:

- In December the two drains to the south of the bridge were mechanically cleared of roots and other materials, which showed they hadn't been cleaned out for many years. They should now operate at full design capacity and early signs that this has reduced flooding are positive. There is though a risk that, in common with many other roads in the UK, the installed drain capacity is not adequate to cope with changing weather patterns.
- In late February the pavement across the bridge was repaired and re-levelled so is now much safer to use.
- The forward plan contains proper resurfacing of the carriageway across the bridge which we expect to be done before the end of March.

For various reasons it was necessary to do works on the pavement and carriageway at different times. The pavement works were made possible by Cllr Sugden allocating part of his delegated Highways funds. Cllr Sugden also worked with



FEDORA to push for the carriageway resurfacing to be included in the Surrey Highways central resurfacing programme.

M25 J10/A3 works

There is going to be a spate of overnight closures throughout 2024 to allow for the removal of old bridges and the installation of eight new bridges over the M25. As far as we are aware the works are still on schedule to complete in summer 2025. We have explained previously that the A244 is not an approved diversion route but diverted traffic cannot be prevented from using it. However National Highways have as agreed installed more visible signs that the A244 is not a suitable diversion route. So far the diverted traffic problem has been less than feared and has not caused as much disruption as the seemingly perpetual utility works to replace/repair old infrastructure and connect new developments.

Further information about the M25 works is available at

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/m25-junction-10/#overview>

Other things to be aware of....

1. In recent months we have seen the return of serious flooding on the A244 by the Merrileas/Treetops development site. Thank you to all of those who have reported problems to Surrey Highways who do now at last seem to have accepted there is a problem. We will work them to ensure the cause is established and addressed.
2. The lights at the pedestrian crossing in the High Street were replaced earlier this year. This was part of a routine upgrade to more efficient systems.
3. The High Street parking bays have now been properly marked. This includes the disabled bay outside Munch & Wiggles. Regrettably we have received reports of anti-social behaviour by drivers who are not disabled using this, sometimes for long periods of time. We have raised this with the Surrey parking enforcement team.
4. FEDORA now receives details of upcoming road works and closures by both Surrey Highways and utility companies. Usually this is for the following week. We will report major projects in the monthly FEDORA email where we know sufficiently in advance. Other works likely to be disruptive are available via X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram so do follow us.

5. It hasn't yet been possible to find someone willing to take on the role of school crossing guard at the Steels Lane junction by the church and village centre.

We have received considerable support in the last three years on roads related issues from Surrey Cllr Mark Sugden. His current division covers most of Oxshott, including all of the A244 south of Sandy Lane.

The proposed local government boundary changes of Surrey County Council electoral divisions, due to take effect from May 2025, together with the elections due to be held at that time, mean that we do not know who our Surrey councillor(s) will be from May 2025.

We will be keeping an eye on the implications for Oxshott.

FEDORA needs a photographer!

We are looking to build up a portfolio of photographs of Oxshott for use in future magazine editions and on our website.

They would include photos of local events, interesting buildings, or something magical in our wonderful open spaces.

(see this edition's cover for a great example of that)

So, if you can spare us a little time now and again, and have a passion for photography, please contact us at magazine@fedora.org.uk



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SPRING LAWN CARE

By GreenThumb

Very soon we will be heading into spring, and after the recent cold, windy and wet weather, we'll be welcoming this season with open arms.



Spring not only brings a welcome change in weather and a burst of colour but there's something about the sight of a lush green lawn that brings us a sense of achievement and enjoyment. Beyond being a visual delight, healthy lawns provide a sanctuary for relaxation, recuperation, and socialising. As the season of growth unfolds, here are our Spring Lawn Care tips that not only nurture the health of our lawns but also contribute to our overall well being.

One of the most important lawn care jobs for a good-looking lawn is correct and regular mowing.

- Always sharpen or replace your lawn mower blade regularly, to avoid tearing the grass.
- Mow regularly and keep the cut between 25mm (1") and 50mm (2") in length. Too short can weaken the grass and encourage weeds, moss, and lawn disease.
- Remove grass clippings which contribute to surface thatch, and then moss.

Winter may have left behind some bare patches on your lawn, but spring is the ideal time for recovery. Rake any bare patches and carefully sow high-

quality seed mixed with topsoil. Remember to water well while seedlings sprout.

Spring is also a good time to have Aeration and Scarification done, also known as Machine Work. Lawns have a natural build-up of thatch – a layer of dead grass and moss that can accumulate over the year. Aeration and Scarification are the most effective ways of reducing sub-surface thatch and compaction in lawns, allowing your lawn to breathe again.

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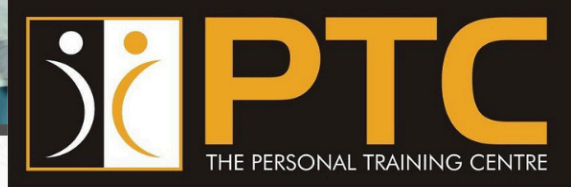


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Certified



Dear Editors

We have been receiving your wonderful, informative magazine for many years. Now we no longer need it, as we have moved after 63 years in Oxshott.

How different the area was in 1958. The Crown Estate not fully developed and sites available for a 99-year lease, at £42 per year. We were pleased to be offered to purchase the freehold several years later.

In the village was the old-style garage, Cullen's, the grocer, the marvellous greengrocer and fishmonger and Nora Strudwick – the invaluable shop which sold "Ladybird" children's clothes among many very necessary items.

Roger was a Chartered Civil Engineer and I, a Qualified Teacher. We had met in 1944, while he was still at Cranleigh. I was a Student Teacher in Twickenham. After working for Sir Roger McAlpine, Roger went to Weybridge for a firm of engineers and worked on many interesting projects such as the Aswan Dam, the Water tunnel near Heathrow and various power stations. In 1965 he formed his own Company designing and building factories and warehouses. In the meantime, I taught at Brooklands School in Cobham – all subjects, plus being in charge of the girls' sports. We held an Annual Sports Day at the Schiff Home. At the same time, we had four children. In those days, Au Pair girls were so invaluable. We joined Oxshott Village Sports Club where I became Ladies tennis captain. I also taught Sunday School in the Church.

We built a swimming pool in our garden in 1966 and Danes Hill Boys were brought to it for swimming lessons. It was also used for Charities when we had a marquee and for various family celebrations.

Our three girls all went to Claremont School and Andrew to Danes Hill and on to Wellington.

There are such outstanding memories of our incredibly happy years in Oxshott – the countless friends, many of whom are sadly gone from our lives – that is the disadvantage of living until 94!

We could not leave Oxshott without thanking Fedora for the great work it does.

Best of luck for the future.

Yours

Lorna & P Cooper and Roger Cooper

THE VERREY FAMILY

By Mike Crute

I have always been interested in the Local history of Oxshott, having lived locally since the late 1950's, and am currently a member of the Esher & district Local History Society. Recently Peter Coates contacted FEDORA to pass on wonderful information on a family that lived here from the end of the 19th century. I have written this account of their lives to give readers a taste of life in Oxshott over 100 years ago.

Oxshott was of little interest for development and housing until the railway was opened in 1885. With much of the land owned by the Crown they saw the potential to sell some off (or lease) plots for development, now there was good and regular access to London. The land was developed as large estates with suitable size plots for the big mansions and associated out buildings and gardens that were planned. The Warren was one of four houses built on the high ground at the junction of Warren Lane and Fair Oak Lane, the area being known as 'Oxshott Warren'. The position of the houses initially gave them wonderful views although this became restricted as the trees grew!



Louis Verrey, came to live at the Warren on the recommendation of his doctor so that the health of his delicate son might benefit from the clean air of hilly Oxshott. The Verrey family first moved from Hanover Square London to Upper Richmond Road then to Oaklawn, in Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, (now The Combat Stress veterans' health charity), in the 1880's. Whilst living there an opportunity arose for them to build their own

house, The Warren, on a plot on the corner of Warren Lane. They built a grand house, separate servants' quarters and stables, with a steep drive that led down to Fair Oak Lane and moved in during 1898 when it became their lifelong family home. Louis made his fortune from the family business, Verrey's Restaurant in Regent Street, London, until he retired, about 1880.



Mr Verrey was a great authority on poultry, especially the Brown and white 'Leghorn' variety on which he published a book. It was a hobby which he enjoyed, breeding on a large scale and being recognised as an expert. He won many awards for poultry and dairy, later acting as a judge all over the county for poultry competitions.

He was very interested in the wellbeing of his local area and became a churchwarden of St. Mary's Stoke d'Abernon, where he worshipped. At this time, it was the local parish prior to the creation of St. Andrews Church, Oxshott in 1913. He was one of the founder members of the Oxshott Horticultural Society and its Secretary then President for some years. He was also an original member of the of Oxshott Heath conservators in 1905 and with whom he became Hon. Treasurer as well as being one of the founders of Oxshott Men's

Club and treasurer of St Andrew's Church Building Fund. It was proposed that a temporary Church be erected on the site so kindly offered by Mr Basil Ellis, thus leaving it open for future consideration whether a permanent Church should be erected on that site or somewhere else. A large committee consisting of the local people was appointed: The Rector and Mr & Mrs L. C. Verrey, with many other notable people. Mr Verrey was the hon treasurer for the Church and Curate Funds.



After his death, Louis's widow Kate Verrey and three daughters continued to live at the Warren

and helped organise amateur theatrical productions, concerts and church functions as well as the Women's Institute. In 1914 Kate became a member of the supervising committee of the Royal Kent School, Oxshott.

During the First World War women contributed to the war effort, along with many other local families — growing foods, knitting, sewing and sending parcels of woollens and food to prisoners-of-war through the Red Cross, using their homes as workrooms.

During the 1939-45 war Mrs Verrey and her three daughters, helped nursing associations. They were always involved in fundraising for local organisations. Scouting came to Oxshott in 1912, five years after Lord Robert Baden-Powell had established the movement nation-wide. At the suggestion of Miss Ida Verrey and supported by George Stoton, the headmaster of the Royal Kent School, they enlisted Mr F.R. Stedman to become the first Leader and they formed the first scout group. Miss Ida Verrey and her two sisters, Dora and Hettie, helped with training.



At first, the green corrugated iron hut at the front of the old school grounds in the high street, was used as the scout hut. The boys met for training and kept their kit in the hut. Later The Warren was used for meetings with training in its grounds and the kit stored in the garages.

Their annual fund-raising fête was held in the Verreys' large garden, which continued until the death of Ida, the last surviving member of the family. The hut was also used by Miss Verrey for carpentry classes for boys as well as the scouts' hut. Her sister Dora used it to teach the girls bookbinding.

A milestone of the local scout movement was the building of a new headquarters at the southern end of Waverley Road in 1968 after many years of fund raising and grant applications. The opening ceremony was performed by Miss Ida Verrey, the longest surviving Verrey sister. The headquarters are appropriately named the Verrey Hut.



After their death, the Warren was vacant for some years, and squatters took over. It was eventually demolished in the early 1980s. Then together with The Gables, the next-door mansion, they were redeveloped in 1987, replaced by several apartment blocks, now called Clarendon Park.

Sources: Oxshott, A Surrey Village, B.S. Gidvani - published by Baron - 1996, newspaper cuttings & pictures, information from Peter Cotes, Verrey Family friends and various Census returns.

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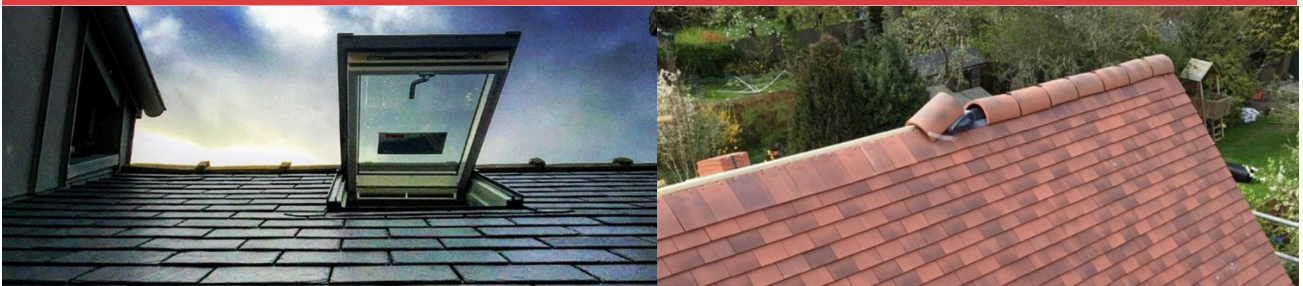
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A Tribute to Graham & Rita Clarke

By Tessa & Douglas Clarke

Graham and Rita Clarke were a force for good in our local community - whether it be a smiling face enjoying their tennis, delivering the FEDORA magazine, or providing guidance and leadership for FEDORA and in particular regarding planning issues. It is a pleasure to provide an opportunity for their two children to remember their lives - Anthony Wolfe



As a young couple with children, Graham and Rita moved to Oxshott in 1971. They made lifelong friends with all their neighbours and members of the Oxshott Tennis Club. Rita was a very keen tennis player and played right up to the pandemic in 2020.

Our parents were always socially active - dinner parties, kids' play dates, organising charity events and Bridge evenings, helping at the tennis club, wedding anniversary parties and birthdays with family and friends from all over Oxshott and beyond.

Graham and Rita were both involved in the creation of FEDORA. Graham became Chairman of FEDORA in 1994 and Rita held the role of Subscriptions and Advertising manager for many years.

We remember Dad coming back into the late evenings after long FEDORA meetings discussing the village issues of the day. It normally involved planning applications and speed bumps! Despite being retired, they both went around the Crown Estate, posting magazines through letterboxes for years, chatting to everyone.

Our parents were very practical people, always trying to help others. They contributed to the installation of the Oxshott Village Clock and the sign with the map of the village. It gave the small, village high street a focus. And you can tell if you are going to be late for the train. FEDORA magazine needs to be delivered to more people? Consider it done.

Dad and Mum took their community responsibilities seriously. It also gave them huge

pleasure to meet new people. Many villagers are from London, other parts of the UK and overseas. The international mix of people in Oxshott was heaven for them. It made them incredibly happy.

Our parents were open, tolerant people. Graham came from Beckenham, the son of a schoolteacher.

Rita came from a medieval town in Germany, the daughter of a civil servant.

They met at university. After a few years in London, Mum and Dad wanted to live their lives in a family-friendly community with woods and an easy commute to London.

"It will make us smile to visit Oxshott now and again, to see how the community is blossoming, while thinking of Graham and Rita, our Mum and Dad popping into The Bear or the newsagent."

So, they chose Oxshott. Over fifty years later many other young families, couples and individuals do the same today: choose Oxshott.



Graham Clarke (16.3.37 – 12.1.24) and Rita Clarke (26.6.39 – 5.10.23)



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DORKING & DISTRICT LOCAL RSPB GROUP

By Jonathan Groves

Weekend Walks & Events Spring 2024



We are part of the RSPB charity. Do come and join us! Our group covers an area of mid-Surrey centred on Dorking and includes Leatherhead, Bookham, Epsom and Ewell. We aim to help anyone interested to enjoy nature and are a friendly and inclusive group of enthusiasts. New members are always welcome but please contact the group if you'd like to attend a walk, so we can manage numbers. We also run midweek walks, but space limits them being listed below, details on the website or by request.

Sunday 21st April

RSPB Pulborough Brooks

Uppertons Barn Visitor Centre, Wiggonholt,
Pulborough RH20 2EL

Bring RSPB membership cards for free parking & entrance. The summer migrants will be arriving, including blackcaps, whitethroats & nightingales. The lakes should be good for a variety of waders and with luck, the white-tailed eagle will fly over!

Saturday 4th May

Dawn Chorus Day at Bookham Common
Meet at Tunnel Car Park Church Road, Great
Bookham KT23 3ES

5am start to hear the birds wake up & start their morning routine claiming spring territories.

Expect a good range of resident and migratory songbirds and maybe even bats & owls. With luck we will hear nightingale again.

Saturday 18th May

RSPB Otmoor

Otmoor Lane, Beckley, Oxfordshire OX3 9TD

Junction 8 off the M40. The car park is free with no facilities. This is an extensive wet meadow reserve with good paths. Spring visitors include sedge, reed and grasshopper warblers. Lesser whitethroats & turtle doves are occasionally seen. Hobbies are frequent visitors.

Saturday 1st June

Woods Mill Nature Reserve

Sussex Wildlife Trust HQ Wood's Mill,
Henfield BN5 9SD

The car park is free but donations are encouraged. There are toilets and a cafe on site. Great variety of woodland and farmland birds. Turtle doves & nightingales are summer visitors.

For more details on these events please visit the website or our Facebook page; alternatively email us at rspsbdorking@gmail.com
Facebook: [RSPB Dorking and District](https://www.facebook.com/RSPBDorkingandDistrict)
Website: <https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/>

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Pioneering Eye Care Since 1996

By Olivia Murray

With the almost doubling in population of Oxshott in the past 20 years and more to come in the next few years, a decent recreation ground for locals to enjoy is essential. We would like a safe space for children to play in and where teenagers can play sport and socialise.

If you would like to get involved with this project or would like more information, please feel free to email us at friendsoflittleheath@hotmail.com.

Renovation of Little Heath
Recreation Ground



<https://forms.office.com/r/W82AGEXJ9B>

OXSHOTT VILLAGE TRUST

- turning vision into reality



How did the Oxshott Village Trust come about?

During World War 2, Canadian Soldiers were stationed in Oxshott. On their departure, they left a sum of money as a “thank you” to the people of Oxshott, who had supported and looked after them while they were living here. In 1944, a public meeting was held in Oxshott with a resolution passed to establish a Trust Fund, seeded by the funds from the Canadian soldiers, to build a Village Centre for the “benefit of the inhabitants of Oxshott”.

Current structure

Under the original Trust Deed, a Management Committee consisting of elected members and representatives of local organisations was appointed to run the centre for the promotion of social, recreational and cultural activities. As the Management Committee has the general control and management of the Trust Fund, its members are regarded as ‘charity trustees’ for the purposes of charities legislation, even though the Trust Fund is vested only in the three Trustees. The Oxshott Village Trust (OVT) now has responsibility for the Village Hall, the Doctors’ Surgery and the land on which those two buildings are built.

The rental funds from the Village Hall and Doctors’ Surgery provide a solid income, enabling the OVT to focus on maintaining the the buildings.

The Halls were built in 1962 and in 1979 a side extension was added to enable the doctors to open the Oxshott Medical Practice which provided NHS services to the then 3,800 Oxshott residents. Further extensions were added in 1985 and 1989. The current patient numbers at the doctors’ surgery are around 8,000. Thus, the need for a new, larger building is the current focus of the OVT.

Vision – a new surgery, fit for purpose

The ambition of building a new surgery for the Oxshott Medical Practice is now looking a distinct

possibility. The road to achieve this vision is complicated and needs careful steering to reach the goal but with every passing month the requirement becomes more pressing. The current surgery is fast becoming ‘*not fit for purpose*’.

The OVT management team have been hard at work carefully putting in place the myriad of actions that need to be completed to turn the vision into reality. It is a complicated journey, with around 8 different organisations that need to be consulted and negotiated with. There will be many speed bumps and hazards along the way – but good progress has been made.

One important factor to take into account when planning is that the current medical facilities are not affected in any way and continue as ‘business as usual’ whilst the planning and building works are undertaken. The current surgery building will remain in situ with the new surgery built adjacent to it. The Oxshott medical practice will remain in the old surgery and will only move into the new one on completion. So, there will be no disruption to medical services.

The land upon which the Village Halls and medical practice reside is owned by the Crown Estate and is currently covered by a long-term lease with 37 years left. Thankfully, the Crown Estate have agreed to extend this lease to 99 years should a new medical centre be built.

Supported by the doctors, the OVT are negotiating with the NHS to gain their agreement for a long-term lease with the Oxshott Medical Practice to ensure ongoing rental revenues. Just to be clear, the NHS will not build the new surgery, only rent one already built.

The new surgery needs to comply with the strict rules and regulations that must be adhered to for all medical buildings – the size of consulting rooms, the flow of the waiting room, the facilities

that are required for patients and not forgetting the requirements for doctors, nurses, administration, and ancillary workers. Initial plans have been drawn up for a two-storey Doctors' Surgery.

All these requirements, agreed in conjunction with the doctors, have been put into the pre-planning application submitted to Elmbridge Borough Council. It is currently planned to engage an architect who will take the OVT through the full planning application, the engagement of a project manager and the choosing of the construction company who will build the new surgery.

And then there is the funding of this new building. Through careful management of the Village centre, the OVT management team have accumulated significant funds that will be put towards the new building. The Trust has also negotiated with the Crown Estate, and they will support and fund 50% of the building costs - that is in addition to providing the land at zero cost.

However, despite OVT's own funding input and the matching contribution from the Crown Estate there is still a shortfall which needs the help of the

community. For that OVT plans to raise funds locally from the residents of Oxshott.

As one of the important initial steps, it has been agreed to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO") that, as is the case with the existing Trust, will be accountable to the Charity Commission and limit the personal liabilities of the Trustees. This organisation will be governed by a constitution that has been the subject of a recent consultation with local residents.

**"Remember, it is your Village
– Your Medical Practice.
Get involved!"**

Once this has been completed, then it will be submitted to the Charity Commission for approval and registration. This is likely to take a number of months. A subsequent AGM will be held for residents following the registration of the CIO with the Charity Commission, where the new trustees will be elected.

Looking ahead, in line with normal practice for Elmbridge Planning Department, residents will all have the opportunity to comment on the proposed surgery when detailed plans are submitted. If you have any questions or want to learn how the project is progressing, please contact the OVT on info@theoxshottvillagecentre.org.uk

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THE OXSHOTT HEATH

By Dave Page

As Oxshott residents, we are fortunate to have wonderful green spaces on our doorstep, but how many of us know anything about the history of The Oxshott Heath and what is being done to look after it? Dave Page, the Countryside Estates Officer, gives us an insight into the work being done to preserve our beloved heath.



History

Due to the location of Oxshott, just beyond the London boroughs and with the proximity of the railway station, Oxshott Heath has always attracted people, both local and from London and the surrounding boroughs, who are seeking a bit of green space to wander through. Oxshott Heath is part of the Esher Commons comprising Arbrook, Esher, Fairmile, Oxshott and West End Commons.

With the large numbers of visitors using the Heath, by the end of the 19th Century the local residents felt that the areas were being overused to the detriment of the heath. So, in 1904 The Oxshott Heath Conservators was formed by means of an Act of Parliament to help maintain, protect and preserve the Heath. Formed of local residents, they were active in managing Oxshott Heath by subscription until 2018 when dwindling resources increasing complexities of managing such a well-used site forced them to dissolve and hand the day-to-day management to Elmbridge Borough Council

(EBC) and their established Countryside Team. Out of the Oxshott Heath Conservators the Friends of Oxshott Heath (FoOH) was formed as a separate organisation with the intention of working with the council to provide support and funds in the active management the council provides.

At a recent meeting held by councillor Corinne Sterry a healthy list of residents signed up to be involved going forward. A subsequent meeting will be arranged, in the not too distant future, for those who expressed an interest and as a group FoOH will then be in a position to decide how to move forward, and what form a newly revived FoOH takes. If you would like to be involved or for more information contact Corinne Sterry at corinne@sterrydesigns.co.uk

What many people won't realise is that these areas have always gone through cycles of being woodlands and heathlands, and that the heathlands are as important to conserve as the large trees. For example, after both World Wars there were fewer trees on Oxshott heath due to the need for wood and space for the war effort. But the original clearances which helped create heathland on nutrient poor areas can be dated back to the Bronze Age when man started to manage the landscape for his benefit and started to create open areas which have benefited the growth of grasses, heathers and gorses. These heathlands have been managed throughout time as wild environments used for grazing, foraging, collecting firewood etc. Commons such as Oxshott Heath were later organised as Manorial Wastes that local poor commoners could use, thus they are still called



commons today and afforded legal protection as Common Land. As the surrounding farmland was developed into residential areas during the early 20th Century, commons like Oxshott Heath received greater protections. This culminated in all the Esher Commons being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1955 thanks to the variety of habitats found here.

Today Oxshott Heath comprises 77.1 hectares all of which is SSSI for its habitats and nationally important invertebrate life.



Ongoing Management

The works on site can be divided into several areas; ongoing and reactive management works such as habitat work, litter picking, path clearance and surfacing, drainage, clearing fallen trees and fly tipping removal to maintain the amenity of the site. These may take place weekly, monthly, annually or infrequently up to 30 years (or longer) rotation in the case of woodland management and path surfacing.

Woodland Management is a cyclical process typically carried out every 20 to 30 years and is designed to improve the age structure and vigour of the woodland to benefit wildlife and amenity.

Forestry work usually has a high visual impact and so can cause concern amongst users of the Heath. The thinning works are focused on improving biodiversity allowing light into the woodland floor to stimulate new tree regeneration and provide habitats for the wealth of wildlife found on the Heath. The aim is to produce a multi-generation continuous cover forest.

In the dry heathland areas of the South Slope and the Sand Pit, a lot of work is required to retain the special characteristics of valuable heath such as open areas of bare ground and a variety of heathland plants -heathers, gorses and areas of managed young scrub. This is done by EBC

Countryside volunteers and Lower Mole Partnership groups, Duke of Edinburgh and school volunteers through to specific habitat works by the council's Countryside team either by hand or using tractor mounted land management tools and excavators, all to re-create the positive effects of grazing and the lost historic management. This is an important aspect of Elmbridge's management as the SSSI is designated for its invertebrate life and those species particularly associated with this habitat.

Marsh and Pond Areas such as Oxshott Bog to the north of Sandy Lane require specialist works to ensure they have a good balance between light and shade to provide optimal habitat for wildlife primarily aquatic insect life. Usually done through vegetation management and visitor management.

Challenges

Oxshott Heath's popularity continues to grow particularly since the covid pandemic as a new generation of residents from within and outside the borough have become aware of its ease of access and the benefits of being outdoors. This in turn brings challenges dealing with people's expectations about how the council can manage visitors, such as large numbers of dog walkers and especially commercial dog walking companies. Add in the increased use of countryside sites by runners and mountain bikers and the existing horse-riding base, then there is potential for conflict which has to be managed. However, Elmbridge Borough Council does not have the powers of its neighbouring London Boroughs to enforce and so they continue to work with the users to promote good behaviour for the benefit of all.

An example of this is the issue of commercial dog walking, which remains a contentious issue among many residents. This activity cannot be licensed or controlled under the Elmbridge byelaws, as it is in the London Boroughs. This means there is nothing to stop dog walkers from just outside Surrey driving a few miles down



the A3 and walking dogs in the common areas around us.

The Team

The Countryside Team at EBC consists of 8 employees covering 625 Hectares of EBC owned land on 25 different sites, most of them designated for wildlife interest. Hamish White - Countryside Officer (since 2005); Dave Page - Countryside Estates Officer (since 1991); 6 Rangers (including a Senior Ranger).

The Countryside Team organise groups of volunteers - 2 weekly groups on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and 1 monthly group on the last Wednesday of the month. The volunteer's interest and enthusiasm is used to complement what the countryside team do. They will do detailed work on the habitats with smaller hand

tools. The larger jobs will require larger machinery and are carried out by the Countryside Team.

Natalie Alison helps the Culture, Leisure and Environment Team with their marketing and communications. As part of this, she helps the Countryside Team with their communications about on-going management works on the various Elmbridge countryside estates. She also helps promote their events, volunteer tasks and recruitment, work parties and guided wildlife walks. Here are the details of the Nature Guided Walks and Nature Friendly Dog Walks coming up soon.

More details can be found on their website:

<https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/green-spaces/countryside-sites/countryside-guided-walks>

Nature Friendly Dog Walks Local commons



Join Countryside Ranger Susy on a friendly group walk with other dog owners and walkers around local countryside sites to learn more about wildlife and habitats on your local commons.

Gain a closer insight into how you and your pets can help biodiversity there.

When and where:

Monday 4 March: Esher Common. Meet in Copsem Lane car park, Copsem Lane, Esher, KT10 9HH.

Wednesday 8 May: Oxshott Heath. Meet in Oxshott Heath car park near the railway bridge (What3words ///liked.paints.alone), Warren Lane, Oxshott.

Monday 13 May: West End Common. Meet in Horseshoe Clump car park, opposite Blackhills, Portsmouth Road, Esher, KT10 8LZ.

All walks are from 10am to 12pm. Free to join.

Spaces limited. Advance booking essential at:
countryside@elmbridge.gov.uk



Elmbridge
Borough Council

[elmbridge.gov.uk/countryside](https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/countryside)



Nature Guided Walks Spring 2024

Join Countryside Ranger Susy on a tour around local countryside sites to learn more about the wide array of fauna, flora and habitats on your local commons.



When and where:



Wednesday 27 March: early Spring wildflower identification tour at West End Common. 10am to 12noon.



Wednesday 24 April: dawn chorus tour on Esher Common. 6.30am to 8.30am. Please bring binoculars.



Wednesday 1 May: late Spring wildflower identification tour at West End Common. 10am to 12noon.



Wednesday 15 May: dawn chorus tour on Esher Common. 6am to 8am. Please bring binoculars.



Friday 14 June: night walk on Esher Common. 9pm to 11pm. Please bring torches.

Free to join. Spaces limited. Advance booking essential at
countryside@elmbridge.gov.uk



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For meeting points and info visit
[elmbridge.gov.uk/countryside](https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/countryside)



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OXSHOTT REPAIR CAFE

By Diana Thornton

Have you visited Oxshott Repair Café yet? Meeting 6 times a year, it is an exciting initiative between the village and Danes Hill School which brings people together to help one another and to share skills.

NEXT EVENTS: SATURDAYS 20 APRIL & 8 JUNE



Interest in mending things and giving them a new lease of life is gaining interest as a very practical way of reducing our impact on the earth's resources. A café opened in Fetcham & Bookham at almost exactly the same time as the Oxshott Repair Café and several are being mooted in neighbouring villages, so this corner of Surrey is demonstrating real impetus and determination to live more sustainably.

The Repair Café initiative in Oxshott grew out of discussions about the *Take the JUMP* worldwide initiative, which were held last Summer by Oxshott Net Zero. The JUMP describes the 6 shifts in behaviour which research has found would maximise the impact which individuals can have to hitting targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These targets ensure we stay within safe levels of global warming. Two of these shifts are to do with re-using and reducing consumption. In particular, it describes our choices around clothing and how long we hold on to products. Students from the eco-committee at Danes Hill have been learning about *Take the JUMP* and will be running stalls at the local Repair Cafés to share their enthusiasm.

Caring for our clothing and other textiles, as well as our general 'stuff', so that they last longer is the bread and butter of the repair cafe initiative. They have a great sewing team, ready with sewing machines or simple needles who can show you how to darn the hole in that jumper, mend a hem or sew on a button. They can help with any kind of fabric repair. And our team of general repairers and electrical repairers can help you to hold on to those household items for longer by fixing your lamp, wobbly chair or clock. During the warmer months simple bike repairs are also on offer.

At all our events, we try to offer a local charity the chance to ask for donations of unwanted items that

can be put to good use elsewhere. Will collected laptops at our first cafe, for use by schoolchildren who don't have access to online learning, and we had an amazing collection of spectacles at our most recent cafe, destined for those in Africa and Asia, courtesy of the local Lions Club.

"We went with a broken sewing machine and came out thankful that, living in Oxshott, we have access to wonderful events like this. Thank you Oxshott Net Zero & Danes Hill School, for organising the initiative reminding us how important community is, and to the friendliest, knowledgeable Repair Café volunteers for making a teenager very happy with a now fixed and working sewing machine" Elise Vickers, Oxshott Resident.



Full details of Oxshott's Repair Café, including the next few dates, can be found here: www.oxshottnetzero.org.uk/repair

The café is always on the lookout for more repairers and welcomers, so if you would like to volunteer, please get in touch at: repair@oxshottnetzero.org.uk

You will find other initiatives which Oxshott Net Zero is involved with on the website, and we always welcome feedback and ideas. We have lots of ideas – how about a plastic-free Oxshott, or more specialised recycling facilities? How about a sustainable gardening initiative or a local energy project? How much we can do depends upon how many volunteers we have. Do you want to get involved? Checkout Oxshott Net Zero's website: www.oxshottnetzero.org.uk

A Conversation With Maxine Shaw, Head of Danes Hill School

Ian Dilks, FEDORA's Danes Hill school liaison, is in regular contact with Maxine Shaw. He recently posed a few questions to her regarding her time there so far and the relationship between the school and the Oxshott community, and wanted to share her responses. In her discussions with Ian, Maxine has also agreed to meet with representatives of local residents to discuss the Bevendean parking and flooding issues referred to below.



It is two years since you were appointed, what are your impressions of the school and of Oxshott?

I have loved my first two years and now feel that I have a really good understanding of what makes Danes Hill such a great school. We do have amazing grounds and facilities, but more importantly we have ambitious expectations for the children, both academically and in terms of co-curriculum and behaviour. We aim high and we have a brilliant staff team to support the children and help them on their journey through school and in preparation for life beyond the gates. However, what makes a school truly special are the individuals who collectively form a school community.

At Danes it feels as though everybody cares and is willing to go the extra mile to support the pupils and each other. Add to that our children who are amazing, keen to learn, inquisitive and tenacious, and a group of truly supportive parents, and you have a winning formula.

It is really important to me that the children recognise that they are part of a community, and I very much hope that the village knows we want to build and maintain strong and supportive relationships with them. We are always keen to be involved in local initiatives such as the Repair Café, which is a great success and I am grateful to Oxshott Net Zero for involving us in the project. We also want to support initiatives such as the 20 mile an hour speed limit and the new Church Hall at St Andrew's.

Nearly a third of our pupils live within walking or cycling distance of the school and they and their families are very much part of Oxshott. As a member of the St Andrew's community, I have found the village very welcoming of me.

What has been your greatest challenge?

Losing one of our pupils last year was a tragic event for a school community to have to deal with. Headship is a difficult job and at times a very lonely one. No one can train you, or prepare you, to deal with the murder of a child and her mother. The best you can do is stumble through the initial hours, days and weeks as you draw deep on your own reserves to support all around you. You find strength and stamina you did not know you had and support from the most unexpected of places. Through the tragedy of losing Lettie came a sense of collegiality as the school came to terms with its collective grief whilst also supporting fully each member of the community with their individual sadness. We have planted 10,000 spring bulbs on the school site, in memory of Lettie, which are just starting to bloom as I write.

What are you most proud of about the school?

I lead a staff training session at the start of each year. Last year we involved every single member of the team, including the grounds staff, the caterers, the estates team and the admin team. Everyone was seated with people they do not normally spend time with as we looked together at our vision for the school and what it meant to us. This felt like the start of something, especially when people commented that they had never spoken to colleagues who they had worked with for ten years or more, as they were 'on the other site' or their paths never crossed. This kind of training is now part of our ethos and from it has come our shared values of Growth, Courage, Passion and Respect.

This year we started by talking about the importance of a best friend at work – we often spend more time with our colleagues than we do with our family! Being happy, included and part of a shared vision really brings a school together.

Relationships between the School and the local community have improved since your appointment but there are continuing concerns about the traffic and parking problems at Bevendean school and flooding in the Waverley Road area next to the school playing field. What is the school doing to respond to residents' concerns?

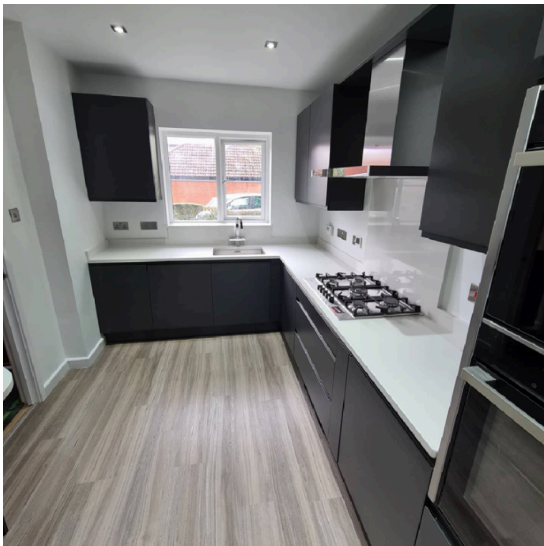
Hopefully, people feel that we are listening. I have attended a FEDORA meeting and we offer regular opportunities for members of the local community to meet with representatives of the school. Traffic is an issue in every school and we are no exception. We have now added an extra member of the team to help with parking at Bevendean. I think the majority of the problems occur in the first and last week of term when there are no after school clubs. We are also working closely with the Crown Estate to look at the reasons for any flooding and ensuring that our drainage ditches are cleared regularly.

What message would you like to give to FEDORA supporters/Oxshott residents?

We are very keen to work in tandem with the community and to continue to develop and strengthen positive relationships. We have great facilities and would love to welcome the community in to use them more. We are sadly restricted by some of the planning conditions placed on the site but if there are ways in which we could allow community groups access out of school hours we would love to do so.

What is the best way for residents to contact the school?

For general queries, please contact Mrs Gail Greenwood at headpa@daneshill.surrey.sch.uk, she is quite brilliant and will quickly ensure that queries are directed to the best person.



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OXSHOTT VILLAGE SPORTS CLUB



There are two lesser known clubs within the OVSC that would love to welcome new members.

Pétanque



Ah, the cool shade of the plane trees in the town square; the clink of glasses from the local bar; the low mutterings of almost discernible French.... but why wait for a brief continental encounter in the summer? Just head to the far end of the car park and you will discover Oxshott's very own pétanque club, where we have replaced berets with club baseball caps and bobble hats, but kept the 'good wine' tradition, guided by our very own member who is a published wine author!

Pétanque is a hidden gem of a sport, which can be played by all ages, and by both men & women on an equal basis. It is playable all year round in all weathers, requiring skill and tactics, but with an element of luck. Its accessibility is a key attraction.

We have 3 afternoon Club sessions every week throughout the year, held every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday at 1:30pm and we have a thriving and competitive membership. We are a very friendly group and many of our members look forward to our post Melee socials with a glass of wine & nibbles as well as playing!

We'll soon get you playing to give you a feel for the sport, and you can meet our members, see how much fun we have and chat to us over a drink and a few snacks. Two of our members, Ann and John, have both recently completed the Pétanque England Club Coaching course, and any of our other experienced members will be very happy to help you.

"COME & TRY" session on Saturday 13th April from 2pm to 5pm, everyone welcome to try their hand.

Contact the OVSC office for more details (01372 843652, office@oxshottsports.com) or see the pétanque pages on the website: www.ovsc.co.uk

Bridge



Oxshott Village Bridge Club is a section of Oxshott Village Sports Club. We have around 50 members and we meet on Thursday mornings in our comfortable clubhouse to play duplicate bridge in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

We play in accordance with EBU rules, although we are not affiliated to the EBU.

We ask members to arrive by 9.20am at the latest so that everything can be set up to start promptly at 9.30am. We normally play 24 boards and the session ends at around 12.30 pm.

We operate a "spare partner" system so members are guaranteed a game if they come on their own, visitors are also welcome with a member.

Coffee and tea are available and we organise a very popular bridge lunch twice a year.

Overall, our aim is to play friendly bridge in comfortable surroundings. We currently have vacancies for new members, if you would like further information please contact our club secretary Fee Preston at feepreston01@gmail.com or see our details on the Bridgewebs website at www.bridgewebs.com/oxshottvillagebridge



Oxshott community supporting a family with Autism

By Denis Deasy

When Denis and Joanmarie, who have lived in Oxshott for 26 years, had two sons who were both diagnosed with autism, they made a conscious decision that they were going to try and not let these diagnoses affect the way they went about their daily lives. In this article Denis, who has published 5 fictional books about autism, gives us an account of how they went about this and how the Oxshott community have supported them in wonderful ways.



I started writing about autism to try and correct the misconceptions out there. Every time I tell people that I have two autistic sons they nearly always say ‘they must be extremely clever’, which is a myth. I just wanted to write about the reality of living with two autistic children, now adults and the effect that it has on family life. Our first son, Denis, is 33 and has ADHD and Asperger’s Syndrome. My youngest son, James, now 28, is severely autistic and completely non-verbal. He also has ADHD, OCD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Anxiety Disorder and Epilepsy. We have many friends who have autistic children and most of them do not go on holidays, to restaurants, pubs or even public transport because inevitably it leads to a stressful experience.

I perfectly understand this approach, every family has a different coping mechanism, but Joanmarie and myself

made the decision very early on to lead as normal a life as possible. We didn’t want to end up resenting Denis and James or each other for restricting our movements.

Going out with Denis and James is always a challenge. James is constantly approaching members of the public, which usually involves just a tap on their shoulder, but it can involve stamping on their feet or licking their hands. The licking encounter unsurprisingly produces a negative reaction even after we clean the saliva with our wipes and explain his autism. However, we have found a solution. Our first port of call, before we head out for the day, is to visit the Post Office on Oxshott High Street, where James likes to buy his

sweets but more importantly the staff happily allow him to lick their hands. James’ OCD licking habit only occurs to the first person he sees in the morning outside of the family.



“Thanks to the Post Office and the Oxshott Club we are able to go shopping and have a social night out that other parents of non-autistic children take for granted but parents of special needs children never do.”

happy to help, no matter what member of staff is on duty. Seeing James is the highlight of our day,” said Nishit Patel at the Post Office.

“We understand James’ parents are concerned whenever James licks a member of the public, so by us doing this in the

Post Office it means that he doesn’t do it to someone else, thereby relieving the stress on them and of course James. We are only too

Another Oxshott organisation that we frequent is the Oxshott Club on Oakshade Road. For many years whenever we were in the Oxshott Club James would take a sip of someone else’s drink and he didn’t care what drink it was. A while ago an elderly gentleman walked in and sat quietly in the corner reading his newspaper. James dashed over to him, took a gulp of his cider, decided he didn’t like it and promptly spat it over his shirt. I was mortified and offered to pay for another drink and dry cleaning but the guy was exceptionally understanding and declined my offer.



Having the opportunity to go out socially and knowing that the clientele at the Oxshott Club are all aware of James' autism and are extremely kind and patient with him has been an absolute blessing. The manager of the Oxshott Club, Sarah Goodheart, said "Denis and James have been coming to the Oxshott Club for many years with their parents. Each and every one of our customers have always treated Denis and James with the greatest respect and it's always a pleasure to see the Deasy family."

Living with autistic children and later adults has thrown all sorts of curveballs at us. An OCD behaviour that James has been doing for as long as I can remember is to throw objects into neighbours' gardens. This could be cutlery, clothes on the washing line, CDs, mobile phones – anything really. One incident that stands out was when my

mother-in-law was visiting from New Jersey. Several of her front teeth are false teeth and one night she put them in a cup of water in the bathroom and in the morning, they were gone. The only explanation was that James deposited the teeth next door so I knocked on our neighbours' door and simply asked 'have you got my mother-in-law's false teeth in your garden?' They were never found.

Denis presents different challenges. We used to go to a pantomime every year. It was a professional production but the audience were all special needs children and adults. Denis hated it. Whenever the audience shouted out 'he's behind you' Denis would look around and swear at them at the top of his voice. During one show there was a quiet moment in the performance and Denis shouted out at the actors 'you're all a bunch of bastards.' As we were only about five rows from the front the actors clearly heard it as a few of them turn around to see who gave them that critique. Even in a special needs audience Denis stood out.

A few years ago, we went to see a singer in a very small venue and we made the mistake of being in the front row, literally only a few feet away from her. Denis clearly didn't want to be there. He was constantly looking at his Kingston A-Z roadmap, which he laid out on the floor and was reading his telephone directory (he always carries this in his back pack – I'm told it's a good read). The singer was giving a lengthy preamble to one of her songs when Denis shouted at her 'Just get on with it!'

Even after incidences like those I have described here, we will never give up on our promise to each

other and the boys to keep engaging with the world.



My latest book, 'He'll Eat The Head Off Ya' (available on Amazon) is about two brothers, one autistic and one non-autistic and how this affected their upbringing. Denis and James are on the book cover, which was drawn by my wife, Joanmarie.

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Postcode: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

(by providing my e-mail address I agree that FEDORA may communicate with me by email)

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of FEDORA – The Voice for Oxshott CIC (the “Company”, registration number 13057190) and agree to be bound by the provisions of the Company’s Articles of Association.

I agree to pay a Membership Fee of £10.00 for the 2024 calendar year which:

- (1) has been set-up to be paid by annual standing order.
(sort-code 20-90-56, account 80164445), or
- (2) has been paid by internet banking (bank details as above), or
- (3) is enclosed herewith and sent to the Membership Secretary, 35 Charlwood Drive,
Oxshott, Surrey. KT22 0HB.
(Delete as appropriate)

If paying online, please also email the information requested on this form to membership@fedora.org.uk so that your details can be recorded.

I understand that a Membership Fee is payable every calendar year, otherwise my Membership will lapse.

I agree to contribute £1.00 to the Company’s assets in the unlikely event that the Company should be wound up while I am a member or within one year after I cease to be a member, for payment of the Company’s debts and liabilities.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

If this application is successful, I hereby authorise you to place my name on the Register of Members of the Company.



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