Otley Matters

March 2026
No 115

Otley Town Council, Otley Core Resource Centre, Unit 11, Orchard Gate, Otley, LS21 3NX. Tel: 01943 466335 · Email: otleymatters@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



SPRING EVENTS IN OTLEY

Photo: Mark Currie



Otley Coffee Festival 2026

Saturday April 25 10am - 4pm at Otley Parish Church

The review we are aiming for…

The biggest highlight of the day for me was the coffee conversation: sipping so many great coffees and chatting with knowledgeable and passionate Yorkshire roasters has changed my approach to buying and enjoying coffee for the future.

It was great to browse stalls from brilliant local makers – an excellent range of products made it easy to buy a few gifts and support local creatives at the same time. Once we had listened to couple of talks and one of the music sessions, chatted with one of the charities and bumped into some friends, we'd stayed for three hours and needed to refuel, which we enjoyed at the Mistal Kitchen food stall. It was a lovely day.

The festival was fantastic value at only £5.50 for my Early Bird online ticket and my friend's on-the-day £7 ticket and great to know that Otley Coffee Culture is a not-for-profit company run by volunteers and that all surpluses go to charity.

Please come along, enjoy yourselves, support local roasters and creatives, while making money for charity. Follow the QR code for tickets or visit **www.otleycoffeeculture.co.uk**



Otley Show

A Day of Tradition and Fun for All!

Get ready for a fantastic day out at the Otley Show, the oldest one-day agricultural show in the country, taking place **on Saturday, 16 May.** This much-loved event is a highlight of the local calendar, bringing together the best of farming, food, and family fun.

Visitors can look forward to the traditional livestock classes and the ever-popular dog show, where our four-legged friends take centre stage. There will be plenty to see and do, with stalls, local produce, crafts, and entertainment for all ages.

Families are especially welcome – children under 16 enjoy free entry.

Closing date for entries is 17 April. You can download schedules for the main classes from the website at **www.otleyshow.org.uk** For the Dog Show, entries are taken on the day.

Contact Show Secretary Claudia on 07828 763632 or admin@otleyshow.org.uk



Rob Burrow Marathon

Photo: Run For All

The Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon returns to Otley on 10 May, following a hugely successful 2025 event that saw more than 10,000 runners take part. The marathon continues to honour Leeds Rhinos legend Rob Burrow MBE and supports both the Rob Burrow Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Appeal and the MND Association. While many runners take part to support these causes, countless others will be fundraising for charities close to their own hearts.

A number of road closures will be in place to ensure the safety of runners and spectators. Full event and road closure details along with a route map can be found at: **www.runforall.com/events/marathon/leeds-marathon** with volunteering and entertainment opportunities also available. Bus service updates will be provided via **www.wymetro.com**



Otley Camera Club Exhibition

Photo: Danni Burgess

Otley Camera Club is pleased to announce its annual photographic exhibition, taking place at All Saints' Church, from Saturday 30 May to Sunday 31 May.

Following the success of last year's event, the exhibition will once again showcase a wide selection of images produced by club members, ranging from beginners to experienced photographers. Visitors can expect to see a diverse collection of work, including landscapes, nature, street photography, portraits, macro and creative images.

The exhibition offers an opportunity to enjoy photography created both locally and further afield, while also learning more about the club's friendly and supportive approach to developing photographic skills. Club members will be present during the exhibition and happy to chat about their work and answer questions. Refreshments will be available, prints for sale and other exciting activities too.

The exhibition is free to attend and open to everyone.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March

29	**Otley Farmers' Market**
29	**Otley Craft Fair**

April

25	**Otley Coffee Festival**
26	**Otley Farmers' Market**
26	**Otley Craft Fair**

May

1	**May Day Dance**
9	**Otley Green Fair**
10	**Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon**
16	**Otley Show**
17	**Chevin Motor Club - Classics on the Cobbles**
31	**Otley Farmers' Market**
31	**Otley Craft Fair**

**Otley Market days held every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday*



The Club is for young people aged 11 to 14. We meet every Tuesday in term time between 3pm and 4.30pm in Bridge Church Hall and enjoy a youth club style atmosphere with table tennis, table football, board games, crafts and team games. It provides a safe fun space for young people after school and includes free drinks and snacks. The sessions are run by a trained youth worker, from Leeds Faith in Schools, who is assisted in the hall and kitchen with volunteers (DBS checked) from the local churches and community. This project is run by 'Otley Youth and Community Centre', a charity which was set up by the local churches in Otley. It brings young people together to help them build relationships in a safe, fun and accepting environment where the youth leader and volunteers try to build relationships with young people through the activities provided.

We recently received grants from Otley Town Council, National Lottery and Sarah Jackson Community Wish, for which we are very grateful. That will allow us to run the club until at least summer 2028. If you'd like to volunteer at the club, please contact David Evans on 0758 0732743.



Following the raising of over £830,000, the purchase of Otley Methodist Church by Otley Common was completed in October.

A group of eager volunteers and skilled local tradespeople have since been busy renovating the space to transform it into a vibrant social, cultural and entrepreneurial hub. This building is for the community, so if you would like to rent a space, run an event, or have any ideas about how it could be best used to serve the people of Otley, please get in touch via their website: www.otleycommon.org or follow them on social media: @otleycommon.

Raising £830,000 was a great achievement and surpassed the minimum target of £709,000, but was short of the optimum target of £927,000. For more details on how you can invest or donate, visit their website, where you can also find details on how to volunteer to help run and renovate the building.



Otley's famous pubs are one of the things that makes Otley a special town and long may that continue. This though is an especially tough time for pubs and the hardworking publicans who run them, with the cost-of-living crisis, unreasonable tax burdens and pubco profiteering. Dozens around the country are closing, others are reducing hours or being forced to increase prices – meaning it's no longer easy for all members of the community to meet and relax in the warm, welcoming spaces that pubs are famous for.

Which is why Otley Pub Club wants to say a thank you to all the landlords and staff of our wonderful pubs in Otley. They work long hours for little reward, they contribute significantly to the local economy and are still happy to take part in additional events like the Victorian Alehouse competition at Otley Victorian Fayre, which helps to attract more footfall to all the businesses in town (huge thanks to the organisers of the Fayre too!)

We also ask people to get out and support Otley's pubs to keep them going and keep the businesses and jobs alive, as well as our famous pub culture. This is why Otley is a #famouspubtown and the whole town should do all it can to keep it that way! Otley Pub Club will continue to support them all in any way we can.



Otley Walking Festival is back and the programme's looking good. With 40+ walks and events, there really is something for everyone: short town-based walks, meadows and field paths, strenuous moor land hikes and entertaining evening events. Otley Walking Festival showcases our historic market town and the wonderful Wharfedale countryside we are fortunate to have on our doorstep. A warm welcome from walk leaders, meeting friendly folk, enjoying the great outdoors. What's not to like?

The programme will be available from Easter – online and in local venues. Some walks require booking, so please check the programme carefully as turning up on spec won't be possible for all walks.

Thanks to the great team of volunteer walk leaders who give their time and expertise freely for the festival and to local businesses for their sponsorship. It really is a community-led event.

For the latest updates, please see our website: www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk
Or contact us at otleywalkingfestival@mail.com



All change for the Otley Townswomen's Guild! We have been members of the National Association of Townswomen's Guilds for many years, but this is now disbanding. We have decided to strike out on our own and are setting up our own guild. This will follow the ideals of the original association and support women's rights and education and provide friendship and fun within our group. The membership fees will also be cheaper!

We have changed our venue to The Bridge United Reformed Church. The meeting time is 1.30pm - 3.45pm on the first Tuesday of the month. We will have a speaker or a social afternoon and time to chat to old friends or make new ones. We run a series of activities during the month which members can join or just try for a taster session. They include activities, visits to other towns, the cinema, tenpin bowling, country dancing, discussion, gardening, luncheon, knit and natter, readers and walks, long and short.

If you'd like to join our friendly group, come along and give it a try or for more information email marglock42@gmail.com or call Margaret Lockwood on 07748 338706.

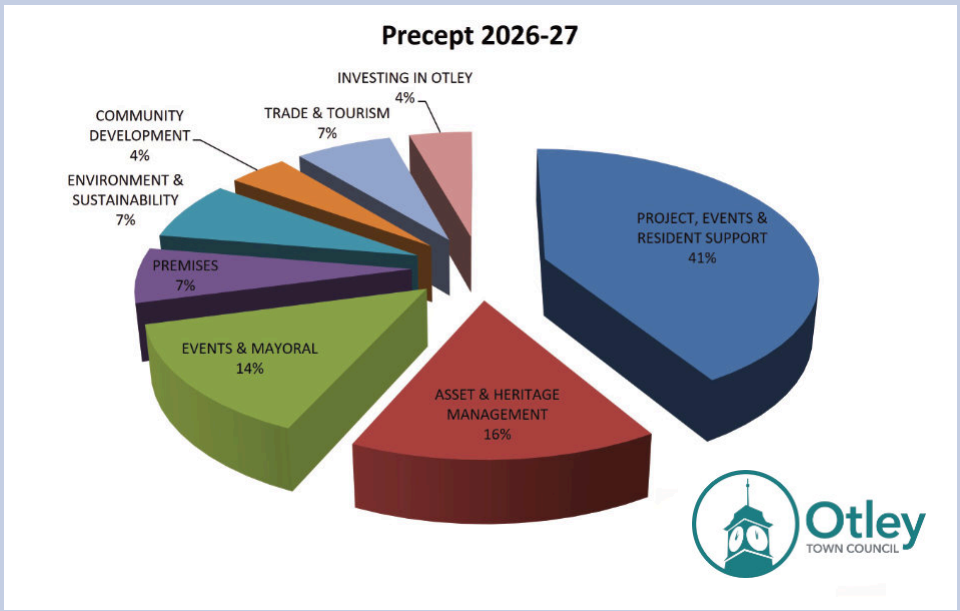
Volunteering at the Otley Wetlands

The Otley Wetlands is a very important nature reserve north of the river. There are meadows and woodlands, lakes and reedbeds for bats, deer, reed warblers, water rails, snipes and barn owls. Bitterns may pass, and starlings might murmurate.

The reserve has been here for over twenty-five years, but not many know it: access is for permit holders only. However, one way of becoming more intimately acquainted with the Wetlands is by volunteering. Nature requires work. The Wetlands are a prime area for orchids and dragon flies. Orchids need healthy flower meadows, dragon flies want open water and wind shadow. Both require managing tree growth, so there's plenty of work to be done. On top of that, it's always hard work keeping the himalayan balsam away, whilst maintaining the reedbeds and woodland for warblers and butterflies. If you want to know the Wetlands, come and volunteer. Please call Peter Riley on 01943 862916 for more information.



NEW OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET PRIORITISES COMMUNITY CELEBRATION AND SUPPORT



At the heart of the Otley Town Council budget agreed in January, is community celebration and support. Every year, the Town Council organises community events such as the Remembrance Day Parade and the Christmas Lights Switch-on, as well as supporting community projects and organisations through the Investing in Otley and Community Grants. This year is significant, however, as it leads up to the Otley 800 celebrations, when the town will use the 800th year anniversaries of Otley's market and medieval bridge to celebrate its amazing heritage and community, whilst helping the community for the future.

"As well as supporting Otley business and residents as we usually do, we have been able to set aside a significant sum for the Otley 800 celebrations, including provision to support a range of Otley organisations to develop great plans for the year. This has been achieved whilst keeping the budget rise below the inflation rate, with the average household paying only £2.68 extra per year", reports Cllr Richard Hughes, the Chair of the Council.

"We have also rebuilt the Council's Investing in Otley Scheme and put money into supporting and delivering projects to make Otley an even better place to live. I am particularly delighted that we will be improving the garden on Crossgate, adding additional benches at Gallows Hill Nature Area and funding the free Chevin Shuttle for a second year."

"We will continue to partner with the local businesses and Otley Bid to promote the town to visitors," said Cllr Paul Carter, who chairs the Trade and Tourism Committee and is currently Town Mayor." Working together is common sense and we know that our efforts have ensured continuing very high visitor satisfaction figures. We continue to provide outstanding public toilets, well looked-after heritage assets and clean streets. More visitors help local businesses and mean residents have a wider choice of shops."

"Supporting local community groups continues to be important" said Cllr Penny Robinson, Chair of the Community Development Committee. "This year our grant scheme has £10,000 to support voluntary groups and, by extension, all Otley residents. Next year, there will be more money available as part of the Otley 800 project and we expect this will ensure an ongoing legacy for the town and even more vibrant groups looking after our people and our heritage."

"Otley Town Council is determined to look after our heritage and environment and to support community life," said Cllr Hughes. "Our heritage asset fund, biodiversity budget and support for active travel all remain important and we are always ready to fight inappropriate development or change that threaten Otley's special character. Particularly important to this is our review of the Neighbourhood Plan for which we are asking for resident help and ideas. (If you do wish to help with this, please email admin@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk or come into the Core and chat to us.)"

"In all this, we are particularly excited this year by the Otley 800 plans, and we urge all residents to consider getting involved in some way."

Cllr Hughes concluded, "We are pleased that for less than the price of a cup of coffee on their annual bill, Otley households can feel confident that the Town Council budget is spent not only in and for Otley, but efficiently and well."

Wildlife Garden Design Competition: Update

Following the launch of our Wildlife Garden Design Competition earlier last year, we're pleased to share that two applicants have now submitted their proposed designs for transforming the space opposite the bus station into a vibrant, wildlife-friendly garden.

These designs will be available for public viewing in the Otley Core, from 13 April to 1 May 2026. During this period, residents will be invited to share their feedback, which will be considered alongside the panel's assessment when selecting the final design. As the project moves forward, you may also notice activity around the site as preparations begin for the next stage.

We'll share further updates, including the chosen design and upcoming steps for the project, once the review process is complete.



A new project from Otley 2030, Wildlife Friendly Otley and the University of Leeds is taking off on the Weston estate this spring. It's called Nature Neighbourhoods.

This is a research project which will also enhance Otley's Nature Recovery Plan. It aims to explore how creating nature corridors can support community climate resilience across three Leeds communities: Otley, Alwoodley, and Horsforth. Each neighbourhood will co-design and deliver a wildlife corridor and Otley's will run from Ashfield Primary School up towards where Wharfemeadow Avenue meets the open countryside. Wildflower planting in private gardens and in public spaces will make a connected corridor of wildlife-friendly habitat for our birds, bees and small mammals to travel along. It will also be an attractive, interesting and safe walking route for school children and families.

Weston Community Nature Garden and Orchard will play a part in the planned new corridor. If you live in the Weston area and would like to get involved, please email comms@otley2030.com



On Friday 5 December, The Whartons Primary School experienced an extraordinary event – a live assembly hosted by Geography website, Odizzi, streamed all the way from Antarctica. The entire school gathered together to watch and interact with the hosts through an online chat feature, creating a unique opportunity for pupils to engage with scientists working in one of the most remote places on Earth.

The session offered fascinating insights into life and research in Antarctica, sparking much excitement among pupils. Questions ranged from wildlife and climate to what it's like living in such extreme conditions.

Headteacher Julia Dickson said, "This was an unforgettable experience for our children. Opportunities like this bring learning to life and inspire pupils to think beyond the classroom. It's not every day you get to speak to someone at the South Pole!"

The event highlighted the school's commitment to enriching education through real-world connections.

Winter work has kept us busy – 2,000 bulbs, donated by Otley Rotary Club, have been planted around Otley in Wellcroft Park, Manor Garth Park and the planters by the Parish Church. The three wildflower beds in Wharfemeadows Park had a weed and tidy before the weather got too wet, along with the butterfly bed in the corner of the car park at Gallows Hill and the corner bed at Charles Street car park. We've also continued the renovation of a bed at the end of Weston Lane – removing the dreaded couch grass to make way, next year, for planting to better support wildlife. 2026 will see us re-instate the fourth wildflower bed in Wharfemeadows Park (following the temporary bridge removal) – lots of plant division and re-planting should hopefully get it back to match the other three beds! If you fancy joining us, for planting, pruning and a bit of friendly chat, please use the 'contact us' page on our website: www.otleyinbloom.co.uk



Great news! The loan for buying Otley's community woodland is now completely paid off, and Menston Area Nature Trust (MANT) now own the woods on behalf of the community.

The woods are being managed by the 'Friends of Weston Woods Steering Group' (FoWWSG), which includes members of local nature groups and the community. The group has submitted a Woodland Management Plan to the Forestry Commission, to help guide the wood's future care, alongside the results of the Community Consultation carried out in 2025. If you'd like to keep up-to-date about events and work days, join the FoWW mailing list at www.tinyurl.com/fowwsubscribe or email info@mant.org.uk

We love to see the whole community enjoying the woodland; however, last summer, some den building got out of control, and several young trees were hacked down. Cutting down trees without permission is criminal damage. Please leave the woodland as you found it! Enjoy the peace of Weston Woods this spring and get involved with our activities. For more information, see: www.mant.org.uk



Helping Hedgehogs Stay Healthy

Hedgehogs may seem to love mealworms, but they're not a healthy food choice. Mealworms are high in phosphorus and low in calcium, which can lead to serious health problems, such as metabolic bone disease, very quickly. The same is true for peanuts and sunflower seeds, often left out for birds. People sometimes say hedgehogs only eat "a few" mealworms in their garden, but hedgehogs can visit many gardens in one night, quickly adding up to far too many. Please also check specialist hedgehog foods carefully – hedgehog food is not regulated, so some brands still contain mealworms, peanuts, or sunflower seeds. Instead, offer meaty wet cat or dog food, and of course a bowl of water.

Don't forget that a hedgehog out in the day is not OK and if you have any concerns about a hedgehog, then please ring the rescue on 07434 626832.

OTLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW







Background

A review of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan was successfully launched at a recent meeting involving representatives of Otley groups, interested individuals and local councillors. The Town Council now wants to hear what you, the people of Otley, have got to say about the town and its future over the next 15 years or so.

We particularly want to know what you think would make Otley a better place to live, work and visit, focusing on the key topic areas of housing, jobs, the town centre, green spaces, travel and transport, community facilities and heritage conservation.

Neighbourhood Plans help shape new development and to protect what's good about the places we live in, as well as guiding community and Town Council action. The current 'adopted' Otley Neighbourhood Plan (2018-2028), has played an important role in holding developers to account on the East of Otley scheme, helping to ensure that they won't get away with a sub-standard housing scheme, as well as influencing the look and feel of many other developments in the town.

It is important to note that the Neighbourhood Plan is essentially a planning policy document which means it only really comes into its own when there are planning applications for new building or other development in the town. As such, it can't solve all of Otley's problems or deliver on all the community's needs and wants, but don't let that stop you telling us all about them!





Tell Us What You Think

Q1: What needs to be done to make Otley a better place in terms of housing, jobs, the town centre, green spaces, travel and transport, community facilities and heritage conservation?

Q2: Is there anything else you want to say that you think is relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan?

You may use a separate sheet to include more information on any of the above questions if necessary.

Either fill in your answers below, tear out the page and return it to the Town Council using one of the drop boxes at any of the following locations:

Otley Core, Orchard Gate Shopping Centre, Crossgate
(Tues – Thurs 10 – 4; Fri 10 – 3).

Otley Library, Nelson St, Otley LS21 1EZ
(Mon – Fri 10 – 5; Sat 10 – 4).

Weston General Stores, Weston Drive
(Mon – Sat early till late except 1 – 2; Sun 8 – 1).

Wrenbeck News, Wrenbeck Drive (Mon – Sun 7 – 9).

Westbourne Convenience Store/Keystore, Bradford Road
(Mon – Sun early – late except 1.30 – 2.30).

Alternatively, follow the address below or scan the QR code to complete the form online.

www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk/otley-neighbourhood-plan-review

If you can do this by 5pm on Wednesday 8 April, that will help keep us on track to have a new Neighbourhood Plan in place by early 2029 (yes, these things take a long time to produce!).

To see the current plan visit:

www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk/otley-neighbourhood-plan-referendum



Next Steps

Once we've collected all your contributions, we'll analyse them and publish responses on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Town Council website, as well as a summary in Otley Matters. They will then be used to help draft an initial Neighbourhood Plan document (what's called a Policy Intentions Document), setting out what the Town Council intends to include in its new draft Neighbourhood Plan.

We hope to consult the community on this in November 2026. If you want to find out more about any of this or if you're interested in getting more actively involved in the Neighbourhood Plan review, please contact us:

Via email:
admin@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Via telephone:
01943 466335

In person:
at Otley Core

Q1 response here:

Q2 response here:



Otley Green Fair

The 2026 Otley Green Fair will be at Otley Courthouse on Saturday 9 May from 10am - 3.30pm. Entrance is free.

There will be stalls from local environmental organisations like Otley 2030 and Wildlife Friendly Otley, ready to give advice and information about making your life greener and helping Otley to become a more environmentally friendly place. Craft stalls will offer hand-made goods using recycled products and there will be activities for families including woodcarving and Sticker Art.

Entertainment will be provided by local musicians in the courtyard. There will also be a raffle with prizes donated by local businesses.

The café will be open serving vegetarian and vegan food and Fair Trade drinks. For more information see the Courthouse website: www.otleycourthouse.org.uk



Apple Juice Varieties

Amazing variety, isn't it? There are of course hundreds of different apples, way more than just Bramleys and Braeburns. In our Orchard there are over 70 varieties, not just cookers and eaters but cider apples too. The cider apples are rich in tannins, so way too bitter to eat!

Looking ahead, hopefully by spring we will have a few additions to our flock of Shropshire sheep. Have a wander up to check them out or visit our Facebook page @otleychevinorchardproject for details of workdays and events or email us on chevinorchard@gmail.com



Wharfedale Gardener's Group

We began the year with Fiona McDonald, a local florist and grower, telling us about her winter preparations for the coming year. In February, a return visit from Ben Preston of Cliff Bank Nurseries inspired us to get busy with plant propagation.

In March 2026, we're delighted to welcome long-standing Wharfedale Gardeners Group member, Alan Wilson, who will be sharing his knowledge, passion, and stunning photographs of wildflowers gathered from his travels around the world. Also in 2026: a talk about encouraging bees, our Annual General Meeting & Social Evening, and our popular Plant Sale in May.

If you would like to join as a member, or as a guest for a single talk, just let us know and we'll reserve you a place. We meet at Beech Hill Church, Otley, on the second Tuesday of the month from September to May, at 7.30pm. Please contact Christine at wharfedalegardeners@gmail.com or visit www.wharfedalegardeners.com

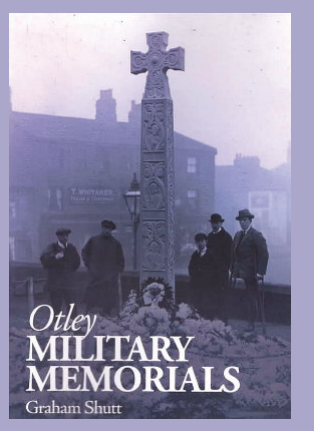
Local exercise classes in Otley are helping the over 60s to stay independent



A new fitness class that helps older people to turn back the clock is being held on Mondays 10am - 11am at Otley Bridge Church. The exercises at Move it or Lose it are designed to keep you active and independent, making everyday tasks easier. Each class helps to improve flexibility, aerobic health, balance and strength. Staying active helps boost our wellbeing and enhances our quality of life. Class member Linda said, “Brilliant class, it is exactly what I need; a nice mixture of exercises, balance, etc., all to fun music and a jolly atmosphere”. Instructor Karen said, “Behind the fun of the class is a serious mission to help people stay independent and keep doing the things they love for longer.”

To try a FREE Move it or Lose it class, contact Karen on 07947123293 or email karen.priestley@moveitorloseit.co.uk

Otley Military Memorials



A new book by Graham Shutt – ex-teacher at Prince Henry’s Grammar School – lists, describes and tells the story of Otley’s Military Memorials. In addition to the 95 graves and memorials in Otley Cemetery, there are 31 other memorials. The Remembrance Garden War Memorial was dedicated in 1956 in tribute to the fallen in the Second World War. In August 1966, the Memorial Cross, sited originally in the Parish Churchyard was moved to the Remembrance Garden. The Cross was dedicated to the fallen in the First World War. There was no Civic First World War Memorial in Otley, making it one of the few towns without one.

The book, priced at £20, is available from ‘The Bookshop on the Square’ in Otley Market Place. All the proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to Otley Museum.



‘Brilliant!’ was the most used word to describe the Science Festival at Otley Courthouse in November 2025. Please see www.otleysciencefestival.co.uk for information and some great pictures. Children visited the ever-popular Science Fair, watched the Science Viking Family show, or came to one of the excellent school shows with presenter Matt Pritchard. Adults enjoyed the regular Science café, the film (David Attenborough’s Ocean), wine tasting at The Science of Wine with Otley’s own David Lawson from Chez Vin on Newmarket and ‘An exhibition by numbers’ incorporating art, music, dance and chocolate. The three speakers covered a wide range of topics on Friday and Saturday, such as climate change with Mike Berners-Lee, the mathematics of knitting with Alison Kiddle and the transmission of deadline bloodborne viruses by Dr Jack Gann from the Thackray Museum.

The next Science Café will be in March 2026. For more information, please see www.otleycourthouse.org.uk

Watch this Space! Please note: In 2026, the November events will be fewer and there will not be a Science Fair because the Festival will be moving to a different month in 2027.

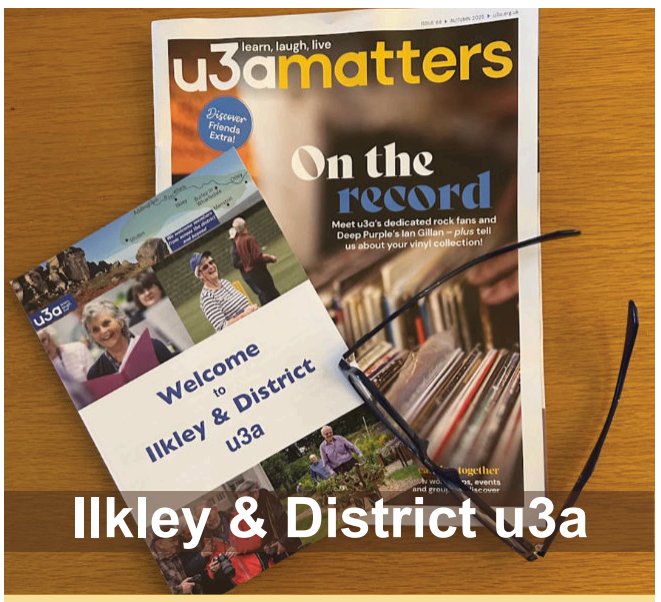


People from across the local area enjoyed a day of workshops at Prince Henry’s Grammar School as part of the Community Education programme, and there are more scheduled for 21 March.

Over the weekend, people enjoyed courses in African Drumming, Art and Art History, Crafting, Deaf Awareness, Portuguese culture and relaxation techniques.

“This is a new initiative for us, adding to the programme for local people, so we were really pleased that so many people came,” said Pippa McPherson, Admin Manager: Community Engagement.

The March weekend has a variety of workshops, from Easter crafts, and lino cut printing, art history and Roman history, Deaf Awareness, techniques to cope with the modern world and a course for fly fishing enthusiasts to create the life span of the Mayfly. Details of how to enrol are on the Prince Henry’s website or available by calling Pippa on 01943 362524.



Retirement isn’t the end of busy, purposeful days – it can be a new exciting chapter. u3a offers friendly local groups and short courses where people share skills, learn together, stay active and have fun. u3a is for people who are no longer in full-time work who want to keep their minds active, stay physically well, and enjoy life in the company of others. It’s about friendship, learning and purpose – with the emphasis on enjoyment!

Karate? Mindfulness? Bridge? Board Games? Living Well in Later Life? Want to learn more about Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Discover what’s on offer at Ilkley & District u3a by chatting to our members at either our Drop-In sessions at The Core or come along to one of our monthly coffee mornings. You will be warmly welcomed, and it is possible to attend a couple of taster sessions before deciding whether to join. Our current membership is £15, magazine subscription included.

More information can be found on our website at www.ilkleyu3a.org (Look for the Otley section on the Home page) or find us on Facebook.

Chippendale Singers

Two Choirs at the Christmas Tree Festival

On Friday, 12 December, The Chippendale Singers and the choir of Westgate Primary School sang to a packed Parish Church to celebrate Otley Town’s Christmas Tree Festival. Conducted by their new choir mistress, Gemma Wilson, the children sang to a very high standard.

A highlight of the carol concert was a new carol, with a Mexican rhythm and percussion accompaniment, composed for both choirs by retired Otley schoolteacher, Martin Campey. It was so well received that there was a repeat performance!

The adult choir were conducted by Jackie Armitage and accompanied by Matthew Lazenby. Proceeds from the concert will be shared equally amongst the Parish Church, Westgate Primary School and The Chippendale Singers. We hope for a repeat performance next year.



The Otley Cycle Club Race Team has once again had a very successful year with several young riders taking part in National and International Championships.

Standing out amongst the successes are two current World Champions. Christoz Tzelis took part in the World Sprint Duathlon Championship, which comprises a 5k run, a 20k bike ride and a 2.5k run. Not only did Christoz win his age group, but he came away with the overall win, which is an incredible achievement.

Another rider to have had a fantastic season, earning the title of World Champion, is Archie Gill (pictured). After early-season gold medals in National and European championships, Archie was part of the Great Britain team at the UCI Junior Track World Championships. As well as a silver medal in the match sprints, Archie won gold in the team sprint, which makes the team reigning World and European Champions. Congratulations Archie!

A Summer Wayzgoose

Wharfedale Wayzgoose Border Morris Side have been dancing in and around Otley for over 30 years. Border Morris is a noisy style of dance involving ragged costumes, disguised faces, bells and sticks. It originates from the Welsh/English border region.

The side are currently preparing for their spring/summer performances. This will include dancing at Surprise View on May Morning, followed later in the month by a Tour of the Yorkshire Dales with various other Morris sides. They will also be dancing at local pubs throughout June and July.

Wayzgoose practise on Tuesday evenings at Otley Common from 8pm – 9.30pm. Anyone interested in being a part of the side as a dancer or musician should contact us through Facebook or Instagram. Traditional folk instruments such as melodeons, fiddles and whistles are particularly well-suited to this dance style.

Details of all events may also be found on Facebook and Instagram. Thank you and hope you’ve had a good festive season, Andy from Wharfedale Wayzgoose.



Otley Choral Society is delighted to announce that tickets are available at the Bookshop on the Square for their next concert on Saturday, 14 March at Otley Parish Church.

After an incredible performance of Messiah in December that ended with a standing ovation from the packed church, the choir has really been enjoying getting to grips with the amazing choruses that Mendelssohn’s Elijah presents, and they cannot wait to sing alongside some fantastic soloists to tell the full story.

Once again, the choir will be conducted by their brilliant musical director, Alex Kyle, who will bring the story alive. The choir is joined by Ilkley Choral Society. Andrew Greenan, who sang the part of Jesus in our performance of Bach’s St Johns Passion is returning to sing the part of Elijah. Tim Harper is also returning to play the organ.



Fellow filmmakers, Mark Currie (Otley-based, Catapult Films) and Ashley Saunders (AP Saunders Film, Silsden) have joined forces to create Wonder – a short 10-minute film, about a young girl fascinated by the extraterrestrial.

Inspired by the many stories of a wise bookshop owner, a curious young girl innocently searches the local landscape, hoping to see proof of alien life for herself.

Filmed during August 2025 in Todmorden, Otley and beyond, Wonder alludes to real life tales of strange UFO and alien sightings. The film trailer can be seen at www.vimeo.com/catapultfilms/wonderfilmtrailer and the short film will be available online at www.catapultfilms.co.uk and for cinema screenings later in 2026.

Featuring Amelia Mungovin and Colin Lyall. Writer, director and editor: Mark Currie. Lighting Camera: Ashley Saunders. Original music: Hugh Fowler.

COURTHOUSE FILMS

Courthouse cinema this spring…as ever, there is a wide range of range on offer at your (very) local big screen. Otley Film Society's season continues Thursdays at 7.45pm. Doors/bar from 7pm: £5 (cash please) on the door:



5 March: **All We Imagine As Light** (India)
19 March: **Mystery film** (To be decided)
9 April: **Satu: Year of the Rabbit** (Laos)
23 April: **Hard Truths** (UK)
7 May: **Vermiglio** (Spain)
21 May: **Mystery film 2** (To be decided)

Movie Matinees continue on Thursdays at 2pm (1.30pm for tea/coffee, etc.) £6

12 March: **All the President's Men** US – political thriller (PG)
26 March: **The Salt Path** UK – docudrama (12A)
16 April: **Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale** UK/US – period drama (PG)
30 April: **Lee** UK/US – drama biog (15)
14 May: **Four Mothers** UK/Ireland – comedy drama (15)
28 May: **White Bird** US – wartime drama (12A)

Other screenings:

Exhibition on Screen – £9 standard, £8 Courthouse Friends
Sunday 29 March. 3pm: **Easter In Art – The Greatest Story Ever Painted**
Thursday 14 May 7.30pm **Caravaggio**

National Theatre Live – £15 Standard, £13 Courthouse Friends
Sunday 8 March, 7pm: **Othello**
Thursday 16 April, 7pm: **All My Sons**
Thursday 28 May, 7pm: **Playboy Of The Western World**

… and finally …

The London Mountain Film Festival comes to Otley (again!)
Saturday 14 March, 7.30pm: Tickets: £10

Following last year's successful link with the LMFF, Otley Film Society is once again teaming up to screen a host of short films about the great outdoors. Expect films of varying lengths about walking, climbing, cycling and all sorts of other outdoor activities. Check nearer the time for the film details.

OTLEY FOLK FESTIVAL OTLEY FOLK CLUB

After the success of last year's Otley Folk Festival, we are continuing to build the festival back to where it should be.

This year's Otley Folk Festival (18 - 20 September) will include performances from Jez Lowe & The Bad Pennies, Martin Simpson, Sherburn, Bartley & Sanders, Martin & Eliza Carthy (tbc), Katie Spencer, PlumHall, Patsy Matheson, Gordon Tyrrall, Dave Vermond, Fenton/Lennox.

Venues will be as last year, the Parish Church, The Black Horse Hotel, The Labour Rooms, and we welcome back the old Methodist Hall, now called Otley Common.

As well as concerts and street entertainment, we are now able to add dances at Otley Common. For further information, please check our website: www.otleyfolkfestival.com

OTLEY FOLK CLUB

The Folk Club is on every Wednesday evening at the Black Horse Hotel from 7.45pm. The 2026 Otley Folk Club Diary is rapidly filling up, guests include…

MARCH:
4 Dariush Kanani
18 Patsy Matheson

APRIL
1 Aprils Aunt
15 Lillian
29 Trash Panda

MAY
13 Tony Wright
27 Katie Spencer

Every alternate Wednesday evening is Singers Night and everyone is welcome. So, we look forward to seeing you at the Black Horse. See our website: www.otleyfolkclub.org



Wharfedale Male Voice Choir

Having enjoyed a successful Christmas season, the choir is looking forward to the rest of 2026. However, our long-serving and much-loved accompanist will be retiring very shortly, so we are urgently seeking a replacement for her.

The job entails liaising with our Musical Director and playing for our weekly Monday afternoon rehearsals with occasional daytime concert performances.

We are a very sociable group that includes traditional Male Voice Choir favourites, Songs from the Shows and even the occasional piece from Grand Opera!

If anybody is interested in becoming involved, they should, in the first instance, contact Secretary Peter Roberts on 01943 463456, who will then arrange an introduction to our Musical Director.

FOLK FOR ALL

Folk for All is a group of friends who met through Otley Folk Club and the Folk Festival. Each of us has had opportunities to participate in and perform folk arts such as music, song and dance in the local area. We are keen to provide opportunities for more people to take part. We run regular beginner-friendly traditional tunes sessions that are well-attended, and we are holding our main event on 21 March 2026, at various venues in Otley.

We are planning workshops run by experienced tutors and performers covering shanties, harmony singing, whistle, guitar, fiddle, and traditional dance such as clogging. We are kindly supported by funding from Otley Town Council and Leeds City Council, and by local venues. We welcome all who are interested to come along, meet us and join our workshops. To find out more, email otleyfolkforall@gmail.com. Look out for further details about our March event, including how to buy tickets, on Instagram (folk.for.all) and Facebook (Folk for All).

OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY FUND

WHAT'S ON AT OTLEY COURTHOUSE?

Friday 13 March, 8pm: **Daoirí Farrell** *(Tickets: £19)*
Dublin singer and bouzouki player, and double BBC Radio 2 Folk Award winner.

Saturday 28 March, 7.30pm: **ShakeItUp: The Improvised Shakespeare Show** *(Tickets: £17)*
A new Shakespeare play created live using audience suggestions.

Saturday 4 April, 8pm: **A Head Full Of Coldplay** *(Tickets: £21)*
Coldplay songs recreated with stadium – style sound, lasers, and LED wristbands.

Sunday 12 April, 8pm: **Josh Jones: I Haven't Won The Lottery So Here's Another Tour Show** *(Tickets: £16)* Stand-up comedy about cats, wrestling, and life in his 30s.



Saturday 9 May, 8pm: **Jon Palmer Acoustic Band** *(Tickets: £11)*
Local folk – rock band return for their 10th annual show at Otley Courthouse.

Saturday 23 May, 7.30pm: **Genesis Songbook** *(Tickets: £23)*
Songs from the Phil Collins era of Genesis.

Saturday 30 May, 7.30pm: **Ian Smith: Foot Spa Half Empty** 16+ *(Tickets: £16)*
New stand-up – Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, covering stress, relationships and modern life.

VICTORIAN FAYRE



The 38th Otley Victorian Fayre, the largest free event in Otley, took place on Sunday 7 December 2025. Our thanks go to Otley Town Council for sponsoring the community stage, which is the heart of our event.

The day started at 6am with Joe closing the roads and a group of young farmers assembling the market stalls. At 9am, volunteers in high-viz jackets helped vendors arriving with a variety of fabulous items for visitors to buy. The catering vans pulled into position as did the fairground rides, not forgetting our famous Steam Train and Punch and Judy, which make perfect memories for all ages. At noon The Grand Opening began with a grand parade, featuring the Yorkshire Volunteer Band, followed by 80 members of the Inspirational Dance Troup and 7 local School Choirs. Towards the end of the day, the Leeds Pipe Band paraded through the town, and our Town Mayor and Bellman presented a variety of awards.

My thanks go to everyone, both paid and volunteers alike, who bring this wonderful event together for the benefit of our beautiful town and local businesses, to every family, friend and visitor who attended.

OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY FUND

TOWN MAYOR'S NEWS



As we move into spring, I would like to reflect on what was a successful Christmas period in Otley. My sincere thanks go to everyone who helped make it so special. The festive lights, decorated shop windows and events such as the Christmas Lights Switch-On, the Victorian Fayre and Otley Choral Society's concert created a wonderful atmosphere.

The months leading up to Christmas were busy for the Mayor and Consort.

October included the re-opening of The Swan, the Prostate Cancer Walk, the Buttercross Poppy Appeal, an accessibility walk around Otley and meetings with the Mayor of Ilkley and Otley and Ilkley BID.

November included representing the Town Council on Remembrance Day, attending the opening of the All Over Each Otter art gallery and Judith Levin Art Exhibition, the Christmas Lights Switch-On alongside Lizzie Deignan, opening the Otley Beer Festival and judging the Wharfedale Nursing Home Christmas Cake Competition.

December included opening the Victorian Fayre, attending Prince Henry's Celebration Evening at Otley Common, attending Otley Choral Society's performance of Handel's Messiah and the presentation of Otley BID's Best Christmas Window Awards.

For more photos, reels, and updates from around our town, you can follow the Mayor of Otley on Instagram at @mayor_of_otley.

HONORARY CITIZENS

Otley Town Mayor Cllr Paul Carter is pleased to issue a call to the townsfolk of Otley to nominate candidates for Honorary Citizenship. The Mayor says: "Honorary Citizenship is the highest acknowledgement that the town can give to those who have performed exceptional, committed service to the community for a period of many years. The list of Honorary Citizens is distinguished, and only those who have provided exemplary service achieve such status."

There is no form to fill in; nominations should be in the form of a supporting letter and sent to the Executive Officer, Otley Town Council, Otley Core Resource Centre, Unit 11 Orchard Gate, Otley, LS21 3NX, not later than midday on Wednesday 11 March.

If you have any queries, please contact the Executive Officer at the above address or by telephone 01943 466335 or email: eo@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



New Council Officer

Hello, my name is Sarah Clarke, and I'm delighted to have recently joined the team as the Town Council's new Receptionist. In my role, I provide support with the general office administration and help ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the council office. I'm also responsible for offering a welcoming front-of-house service and assisting residents with their enquiries – whether they visit in person, call or contact us by email. I'm excited to be part of the community and look forward to supporting you all.

OTLEY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Otley Annual Achievement Award showcases the work of hardworking individuals within the town by recognising both a young person and an adult who have achieved something outstanding – be it academically, musically, sporting or artistic – overcome some form of adversity or helped to make a difference in the local community.

If you know of anyone who has achieved something outstanding or made a significant contribution to our town during 2025, then we would like to hear from you by nominating them now for the 2025 Otley Achievement Award.

This award celebrates achievements made during the year, with the winner recognised with a certificate. To nominate someone, please complete and return a nomination form available from the Otley Core or email a request to eo@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk.

The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, 11 March. Please return all nominations by this date to Jason Knowles or e-mail: eo@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL MESSAGE BOARD

Book the Box!



Otley Town Council takes bookings for the red telephone box in Market Place. Applications to use the space could be for engaging with residents, for promoting local community projects, for information giving or displaying items of interest, and requests are welcomed from schools, local charities, or recognised community groups.

Applications supporting the arts, such as local artists creating a pop-up art gallery, or commercial organisations will also be considered. To find out more and details of how to Book The Box, please visit www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Buttercross Charity Stall Hire

The Buttercross in Market Place is available for hire, free of charge, to all charitable organisations on Fridays and Saturdays. Anyone interested, please contact a member of the Core liaison staff on 01943 466335 or email admin@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



OTLEY FOOD BANK

Otley Core is a donation point for the Otley Food Bank. Please help local people in crisis by donating items of food which have a long shelf life. A shopping list is available at the collection point. We thank you for your support.

Joint Otley Town Council & Community Police Surgeries

Otley Town Councillors and Community Police hold a joint Surgery every month from 11.00am until noon at Otley Core. These take place on either Wednesday or Saturday. The dates and times for March to May are: Saturday 14 March, Wednesday 8 April and Saturday 9 May.



If you have any queries or issues you'd like to discuss in a friendly and relaxed environment, why not call in? No appointment is necessary.

ROOMS FOR HIRE

Otley Core Resource Centre has rooms and exhibition space available for hire. The exhibition space is also available for use by charitable organisations as an indoor venue free of charge.

Should you wish to enquire about any of our facilities or make a booking, please contact a member of the Core liaison staff on 01943 466335 or email admin@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Advertise Your Event at Otley Core

If you are a voluntary, youth, community or charitable organisation in Otley and would like to advertise an upcoming event, please send an A4-sized poster to admin@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk and we will display it in the windows of the Otley Core.

There is also a larger window space available to advertise your activities and events – please contact a member of the Core Liaison team on 01943 466335 for more details and make a booking.

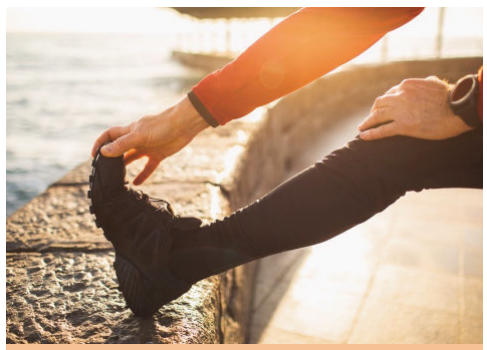


Dementia Support for Carers: Otley Action for Older People

Caring for others can be an isolating and challenging experience; navigating change and making plans for the future can be stressful. We are hoping to reach as many local carers as possible in 2026 and invite anyone needing support to reach out and access our wide range of services.

Local carers are invited to access our new, improved Monday Memory Service. Our Memory Café is from 12pm - 2.30pm every Monday and is open to anyone with memory problems and their carers.

As well as offering a freshly prepared meal, entertainment, games and crafts, we also offer carer support which includes advice on benefits, how to access a social care assessment and support with referrals for equipment, meal deliveries and Befriending support. If you are a local carer and would benefit from our help, then please get in touch with the office on 01943 463965.



Wharfedale Talking News

It's Thursday, and for our editors that means hotfooting it down to their local newsagent to buy the Ilkley Gazette and the Wharfedale Observer. Then they must decide which news items and articles will be included in this week's Wharfedale Talking News. They must work fast, as our technician and readers are ready to record those items from late morning, and by 3pm, the recorded paper is ready to be copied, sent out to our listeners, and uploaded to our website. Local news read by local people – fast!

So, if you know anyone who is blind or partially sighted who would like to hear more about the Wharfedale Talking News, please ask them to get in touch. Details on our website: wharfedaletalkingnews.org.uk



Royal Wharfdale Lodge: Family First

We have a saying in Freemasonry: "Family First, Work Second and Freemasonry Third." Any Mason will tell you that a journey through Freemasonry can only thrive when our wives/partners, our family and loved ones are supportive and involved.

The time you might afford to Freemasonry will be partly taken up by regular social, family and charitable events. These events are the backbone of all Masonic Lodges.

Make New Friends

From the Universities Scheme and New and Young Masons Clubs to special interest Lodges, Freemasonry gives members many opportunities to make a wide circle of friends for life. Finding bonds with people who share common interests and meeting people from all different backgrounds are just some of the ways Freemasonry can help cultivate lasting friendships.

If you are interested in becoming a Freemason, or just want to learn more about us, please check out our website, www.royalwharfedalelodge.co.uk or email secroyalwharfedale1108@gmail.com

CONTACTING YOUR COUNCILLORS

ASHFIELD WARD



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DANEFIELD WARD



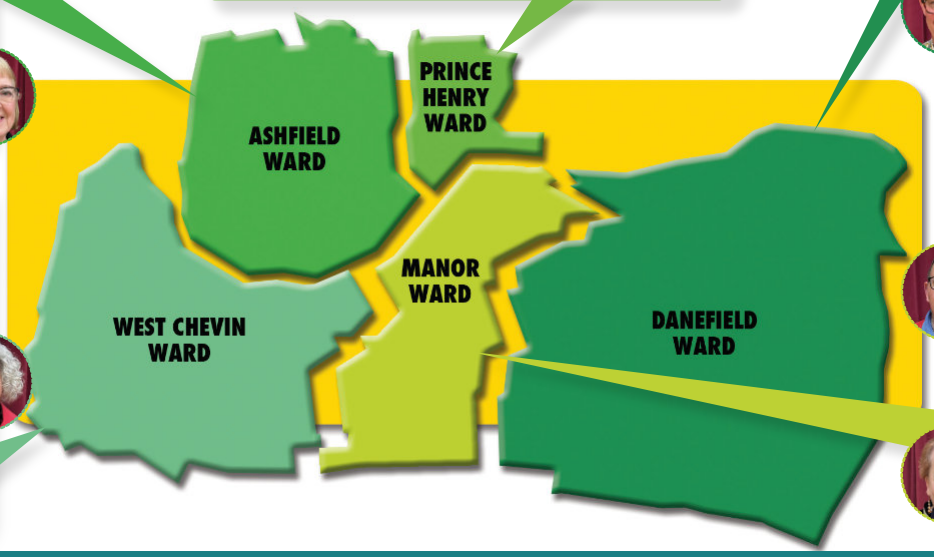
Mick Bradley (Green) t: 01943 467871
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MANOR WARD



Nigel Gill (Lab)
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Paul Carter (Lib Dem)
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Penny Robinson (Lib Dem)
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Back row left to right: Terry Ford (Town Bellman), Cllr Colin Campbell, Cllr Gareth Dibble, Cllr Linda Hoare, Cllr Tom Featherstone, Cllr Richard Davies, Cllr Nigel Gill, Cllr Sarah Hughes.
Front row left to right: Cllr Penny Robinson, Cllr Jo Allen, Cllr Richard Hughes (Chair of Council), Cllr Paul Carter (Town Mayor), Cllr Mick Bradley (Deputy Town Mayor), Cllr Sylvia Thomson, Cllr Sue Stepan. Apologies given: Cllr Ray Smith.

All councillors work in a voluntary capacity

LEEDS CITY COUNCILLORS

Should you wish to speak with Cllr Colin Campbell, Cllr Ryk Downes or Cllr Sandy Lay, please ring 07973 521547 or email colin.campbell@leeds.gov.uk

CONTACTING YOUR MP

Should you wish to speak with Katie White MP (Leeds Northwest), please email katie.white.mp@parliament.uk

OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL LITTER PICK DATES 2026

Date	Ward	Meeting Point
Saturday 7 March	Manor	Maypole, Manchester Square
Wednesday 18 March	West Chevin	Grove Hill car park, Ilkley Road
Saturday 18 April	Ashfield	Outside shops, The Parade, Weston Drive
Wednesday 29 April	Gallows Hill	Gallows Hill car park
Saturday 9 May	Prince Henry	Cafe entrance, Wharfemeadows park
Wednesday 27 May	Danefield	Outside The Summercross, East Busk Lane

All meeting times are 10.00am with the session lasting until noon.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



Otley Town Council's *Otley Matters* community newsletter has been delivered to all households in the LS21 area since 1996. This quarterly publication arrives in March, June, September and December and provides local people with news and information on community groups, events and activities in the area.

Otley Matters is also available to pick up in locations around Otley and to read online at *www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk/community/otley-matters/*

Let us know what you think about your *Otley Matters*, and leave your ideas about features, topics and groups that you would like to read about in future editions. Please email: *otleymatters@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk*



TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS
March 2026 - May 2026

Assets **Human Resources**	**9 March**
Audit	**10 March**
Planning **Trade & Tourism**	**16 March**
Traffic & Transport **Neighbourhood Plan**	**23 March**
Policy & Resources **Full Council**	**30 March**
Planning **Environment & Sustainability**	**27 April**
Annual Parish Meeting	**18 May**

(To be held at the United Reformed Church, Bridge Street)

All Town Council meetings are held at the Otley Core Resource Centre, 11 Orchard Gate, Otley. All meetings usually commence at 7.00pm but times are subject to change. Please check www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk or the windows at the Otley Core Resource Centre for meeting times.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend. By prior arrangement with the Executive Officer, members of the public may arrange to address a Committee or Council meeting before it starts its agenda. Please contact the Executive Officer on 01943 466335 or by email: eo@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk for further details.

ARTICLES FOR NEXT EDITION

To have your organisation, group or event included in ***Otley Matters*** June 2026 edition please contact James Laycock for the editorial date in early April on 01943 466335 or email *otleymatters@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk*

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