Otley Matters

June 2026
No 116

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

SUMMER 2026 IN OTLEY







THE RETURN OF OTLEY BOATS

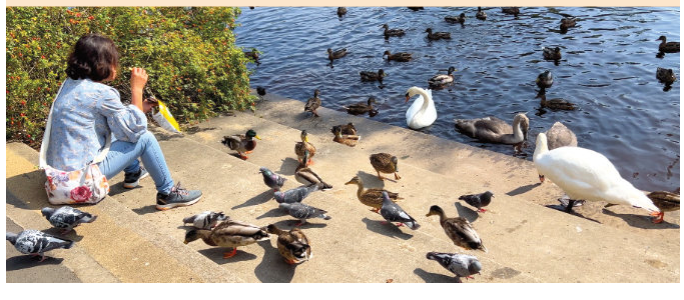
This time it's personal

After last year's glorious weather, when we had to shut up shop while the important bridge works took place, watching everyone enjoy the sunshine without us was, if we are honest, a little painful. That said, we used the time wisely. We have made a few changes and hopefully a few improvements too. We have invested in brand new pedalos that are bigger, more stable and, importantly, faster. We have also had a bit of a rebrand and introduced a more family-friendly pricing structure.

For those who are new to Otley Boats, we are based on the River Wharfe next to Otley Bridge. We hire out rowing boats and pedalos along a one-mile stretch of river. If you have seen our Facebook page, you will know we do not take ourselves too seriously. Feel free to have a look and follow us if you enjoy the content. We have recently joined Instagram if that is more your thing.

Now for the important bit:

Opening days: Saturdays, Sundays & Bank Holidays now through to September.
Opening times: From 10am, with last boats usually out at 4.30pm, later if it is busy.
Price: £15 per boat, per 30 minutes, up to 4 people.
See you on the water!



KIDS SUMMER FUNZONE IS BACK!

Join us in the heart of Otley every Wednesday throughout the August holidays, as Otley Market Place transforms into a hub of FREE family fun from 10am–1pm.

A firm favourite, the Funzone is packed with activities to keep children aged 2–13 entertained. While the full line-up is still being finalised, you can look forward to returning favourites like the much-loved Climbing Wall, Crazy Golf and more.

With Otley's fantastic independent shops and cafés just steps away, it's the perfect chance to stay a while – enjoy a coffee, grab a bite to eat and spend quality time together while soaking up the fun.

LIVE MUSIC LOCAL TALENT

Summer Saturdays

Otley's Market Place will come alive every Saturday for 6 weeks this summer, from Saturday 25 July to Saturday 29 August, with live busker sessions creating a relaxed, feel-good soundtrack for your shopping experience.

Grab a coffee, browse the market stalls and enjoy live music from talented performers from Otley and Leeds Conservatoire as you soak up Otley's vibrant summer atmosphere.

For more information nearer the time, please visit www.otleybid.co.uk and www.visitotley.co.uk

OTLEY FAMILY FUN DAY



The annual Otley Family Cycling Day celebrates its 5th anniversary this year and everyone is invited to join the fun on Sunday 28 June from 10am to 2pm, at Garnetts Field, beside the beautiful River Wharfe. Organised by Otley Town Council, this free event is a fantastic day out for all the family. Children aged 3 to 11 can get on their bikes and have a go on the specially designed cycling skills circuit.

Adults can join in with the chance to try out e-bikes and e-cargo/child carrier bikes on the flat grass area. E-bikes are available for free short-term hire (with a deposit) from the town council office at Otley Core.

There'll be plenty more happening on the day, including an activity tent with festival sticker art, free police bike marking, and stalls from Chevin Cycles, Otley Cycling Club and Otley 2030. Bring a picnic, relax by the river, and enjoy a brilliant day!

www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

June	
20	**Otley Carnival**
21	**Otley Brass Band - Summer Music in the Park**
28	**Otley Farmers' Market**
28	**Otley Craft Fair**
28	**Otley Family Fun Day**
27-5	**Otley Walking Festival**
July	
1	**Otley Cycle Race**
26	**Otley Farmers' Market**
26	**Otley Craft Fair**
August	
23	**Arthington Show**
30	**Otley Farmers' Market**

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

Otley Bids for UK Town of Culture

Otley has officially submitted its bid to become the UK's first Town of Culture in 2028 – building on plans already underway to celebrate two of the most significant events in the town's history.

The bid centres around 'Otley 800', a year-long programme that will mark the 800th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Market Charter in 1227 and the construction of the bridge over the River Wharfe in 1228.

The Town of Culture bid also sets out longer-term ambitions, including finding a permanent home for Otley Museum and regenerating the riverside area to bring it back to the heart of the town's cultural life. If successful, Otley's Town of Culture year would shine a national spotlight on the town's history, creativity and strong community spirit, while helping to boost the local economy and visitor numbers. The shortlist for UK Town of Culture 2028 is expected to be announced later this year.





OTLEY CARNIVAL 2026

Preparations continue for this year's carnival on Saturday 20 June, but without generous donors, the carnival would not take place. If any businesses would like to know about sponsorship, they can email info@otleycarnival.co.uk for further details.

We currently have the following sponsorship opportunities, but alternatively, if you can donate more, we can offer tailor-made packages.

- £300 – includes mention on our website, marketing material, full page advert in our digital programme and social media coverage.
- £200 – includes mention on our website, marketing material, half-page advert in our digital programme and social media coverage.
- £100 – includes a quarter-page advert in our digital programme and social media coverage

The Carnival Committee always welcomes volunteers to join our dedicated team. If you're interested, please email info@otleycarnival.co.uk. Alternatively, if you can't commit to being on the committee, but can spare a few hours on or near the carnival date, we would still appreciate your assistance. Some tasks include setting up the Carnival field, putting up notices, stewarding the parade, litter picking and cleaning up the field after the event. Further details can be obtained from Nigel Gill, Chair, Otley Carnival. Mobile: 07912 550017. Email: njgill@talktalk.net



Free Shuttle Bus to the top of the Chevin on summer Sundays

Otley Town Council is again offering a free, hourly minibus service calling at the car parks on East Chevin Road and Surprise View. This allows you to avoid the steep climb up – you can either walk around the top and catch the bus down again after enjoying the panoramic views or ride up and then walk downhill back to the town centre. Ideal for those with limited mobility and families with small children. Well-behaved dogs can be transported too!

After a successful trial last summer, the minibus will run on Sundays from the end of May. The first bus departs the Bus Station at 10am, with the last trip up at 1pm. Return journeys from Surprise View run on the half hour, with the final return at 1.30pm.

A full list of dates and a timetable can be collected from Otley Core in Orchard Gate or ring 01943 466335.



Otley celebrates its first 'Made in Otley' awards

Otley's thriving community of makers and producers took centre stage on Friday 27 March, as the town's first Made in Otley awards were presented by the Mayor of Otley, Paul Carter.

Sixteen local Otley businesses and craftspeople were recognised at a relaxed and informal gathering at the Secret Garden Café on Westgate, marking the launch of a new initiative from Otley Town Council designed to celebrate products genuinely designed and manufactured within the Otley Parish Wards.

The inaugural recipients represent a diverse mix of traditional craft, food production and manufacturing, highlighting the breadth and depth of creativity and skill within the town.

Those receiving the very first Made in Otley awards were: Bondgate Bakery, Amy Wilson, Wood Goods, Menna Tansy Pearl, Rachel Michael, Phil Howard Clogs, Dry Stone Walling Association, The Art Works, Mosaic Mania, Weegmanns, Geo. Middlemiss & Son, Yorkshire Pecorino, Sinclairs, Shadow Brewing, JB Wilkinson & Sons, and Underground Bakery.

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Otley Walking Festival



Otley Walking Festival is back and it's our twenty fifth! Otley's popular community-led Walking Festival runs from Saturday 27 June to Sunday 5 July.

With a choice of 50 walks and events, there is something for everyone. Short town-based walks, themed walks, woodland walks, strenuous moorland hikes, plus an evening programme of entertaining themed events. The Old Ways, Navvies of the Bramhope Tunnel, Quintessential Otley Chevin, Brief Historical Highlights of Otley, Timble Man, Pannal to Otley, Washburn Wander, Plaques and More: Memorials to Otley's History, A Walk at Swordpoint, Otley Parish Church – Inside and Out, the Welcome Way, and many more! A great opportunity to enjoy all that Otley and the wonderful Wharfedale environment have to offer – with a warm welcome from our walk leaders, too.

Festival programmes are available at Bondgate Bakery, the Core, Otley Courthouse, Otley Library, and many local businesses. Check our website for the latest updates: www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk

Otley Common is Open



After six months of painstaking work by our dedicated volunteers and skilled local tradespeople, we are delighted to announce that Otley Common is now open. If you're looking to host a party, organise an event, book a meeting, or hire a workspace, then get in touch or pop down and visit us.

We have employed four members of staff, launched our new website, and we have lots of opportunities for you to get involved. We're currently recruiting volunteers for our reception and events.

Due to popular demand, we have also relaunched our share offer for people who previously missed out. Investing will mean you can become a member, stand for the Board and have a say in the future of this project – you will also receive interest. We'd like to thank Otley Town Council for their recent investment of £22,000, which will go towards fitting new windows.

Details for investing and volunteering, please see: www.otleycommon.org

The 35th Otley Folk Festival

This year's Otley Folk Festival has a line-up of artists that would grace the stage at any festival.

Friday evening headliners are Jez Lowe and The Bad Pennies – singer/songwriter Jez and his band from the North East. Saturday's artists include guitar virtuoso Martin Simpson, the fantastic threesome Chris Sherburn, Denny Bartley and Emily Sanders, and Sunday will see Otley debutants John Spiers & Jackie Oates, and Bryony Griffiths and Alice Jones. Also included over the weekend are singer/songwriter Katie Spencer, Patsy Matheson and friends, local duo Plumhall, The Old Rope String Band's Tim Dalling, multi-instrumentalist Gordon Tyrrall, The Duncan McFarlane Band, The Hall Brothers, Jon Palmer Acoustic Band, Angelo Palladino, Noah Fenton, Monkey's Fist, and Dave Vermond, plus a host of local talent.

Street entertainment, family events, music workshops and sessions all combine to make for a great weekend.

We always try to offer excellent value – currently the 'Early Bird' full weekend ticket is on sale for £70. All information regarding tickets can be found on our website: www.otleyfolkfestival.com

OTLEY FOLK CLUB

The folk club runs every Wednesday evening at the Black Horse Hotel upstairs room. Some of our recent well-attended evenings with Otley's own Patsy Matheson and friends, and guitar supremo Dariush Kanani, have shown why the folk club is so popular.

In May, our guests included singer-songwriters Tony Wright and Katie Spencer. June sees Angelo Palladino and Fenton/Lennox taking the stage, and later in the year, the great Clive Gregson and the writer of 'Fiddlers Green' John Conolly will be featuring.

Everyone is welcome to come and listen or perform. Artist nights alternate with Singer and Musicians' nights. We start around 7.45pm and we look forward to seeing you at the Black Horse.

For further information, please check our website www.otleyfolkclub.org.uk

Arthington Show



This year the 106th Arthington Show will be held on 23 August on the outskirts of Otley on Pool Road (A659). It is a small, traditional horticultural and agricultural show featuring Sheep, Pigs, Horses and Ponies, Dogs and Terriers. In addition, we have classes in Horticulture, Produce, Handicrafts and Floral Art. The schedule is now available to download at www.arthingtonshow.co.uk and entries can be made online.

This year, we welcome the 3Sixty Mountain Bike Display team, who will be performing in the main ring throughout the day. We are also delighted to have with us again the Steel Concordia band along with many other attractions for all ages, plus Wharfedale Terriers and a fun Dog Show. We have many local stalls and plenty of family entertainment, so do please come along and enjoy a few hours at our small agricultural show. For more details, please visit our website.



Join us on Saturday and Sunday, 13–14 June 2026, for the Weston, Askwith & Denton Open Gardens event. A selection of gardens across the three villages will be open to visitors from 2pm to 6pm each day.

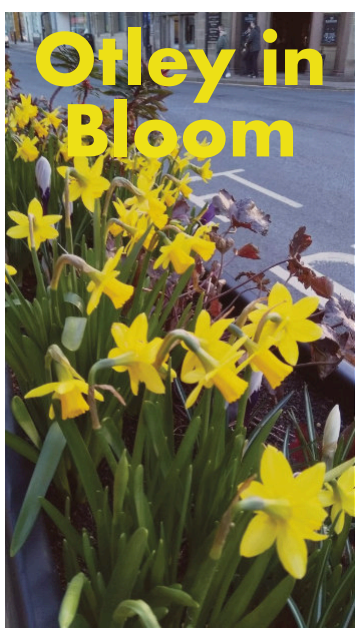
Tickets cost £5, with maps and tickets available from Askwith Village Hall. Tea, coffee and cakes will be available to enjoy during your visit.

Otley Parish Church New Heritage Walk and Church Guided Tour

On the second Saturday of each month Otley Parish Church will be organising two free events to help people engage with the wonderful heritage of Otley and discover more about the history of the oldest building in the town. We hope that people will join the Walk and/or the Tour and feel free to invite a friend to come with them.

Please meet at The Core in Orchard Gate for the Walk at 10.30 a.m. and/or for the Tour at the Church at 12.30 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided between 12pm and 12.30 pm.

For more information, please visit: www.otleyparishchurch.org/walk



The extra bulbs planted in autumn gave a bright spring display of daffodils and crocuses around town. We are now looking forward to a colourful summer and finishing the flower beds in Wharfemeadows Park. At the time of writing, the plants are on order to reinstate the missing flower bed, and by the time you read this, it should all be planted up.

As the weather warms (and the bugs start to explore), we have spruced up some overgrown areas with a chop back and tidy up. This will give room for the other plants to thrive in summer. This includes various planters, Weston Lane beds, and opposite the bus station.

Our work is all undertaken by volunteers – if you would like to help out, or find out more about what we do, contact us via: Otleyinbloom@gmail.com or visit our website www.otleyinbloom.co.uk

Otley in Bloom

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Otley Community Larder: Reducing Food Waste and Supporting the Community

Otley Community Larder continues to welcome everyone on Tuesdays 2.30pm–7.30pm and Saturdays 10.30am–1.30pm. Behind the scenes, around 40 volunteers work across the week, helping to reduce local food waste by collecting surplus food from stores within a 5-mile radius.

Our Welcome Space sessions were a great success this winter, helping us better understand community needs. We are grateful for grants from the Brelms Trust and King Charles' Coronation Food Projects, which will go towards increasing staff capacity to help us develop and grow the project sustainably. Thanks also to FareShare Yorkshire for funding and training, which will help us expand our cooking projects.

As summer approaches, please continue to bring your surplus fruit and vegetables during opening hours – every contribution helps reduce waste locally and supports the whole community. We have received some wonderful produce from local growers and allotments since opening. Thank you for sharing your harvest – it has inspired some of our customers to grow more food themselves.

The Otley Community Larder invites everyone to visit us to help prevent food waste in our town. Find us at The Otley Social Club, Hollin Gate, Otley, LS21 2DP. Contact: larder@otley2030.com



Gallows Hill designated a Local Wildlife Site

Gallows Hill Nature Reserve, with its riverside situation and varied natural beauty, is an increasingly popular place for a walk. But it remains, first and foremost, a nature reserve. Thanks to the work put in over many years and a continued focus on habitat creation and preservation, it has recently been designated by the West Yorkshire Ecology Service as a Local Wildlife Site.

Gordon Haycock, a local ecologist who has been prominent in supporting the Reserve and wrote its management plan, surveyed the main pond at the Reserve over five years and found it supports a good population of great crested newt (Triturus cristatus), as well as palmate newt (Triturus helveticus), Alpine newt (Triturus alpestris), common toad (Bufo bufo) and common frog (Rana temporaria). All of these species breed in the pond, meaning it is an important reserve for some shy but valuable species.

Ensuring a correct balance between leisure use and nature reserve is challenging. All walkers, but especially dog walkers, can help by respecting the role that Gallows Hill has in protecting nature. Keeping dogs on a lead, for example, ensures the safety of pond-dwelling animals in particular. The Friends of Gallows Hill can always do with new volunteers. The Town Council wants the area to continue to be a great place for both nature and residents. Please help us do that.



Join the Friends of Chevin Forest this summer for some free events for the whole family!

- Sunday 14th June: Balsam Bashing on Danefield
- Sunday 12th July: More Balsam Bashing on Danefield
- Sunday 26th July: The Big Butterfly Count near Surprise View

Everyone is welcome and no experience is needed. See our website for more details www.chevinforest.co.uk

Wharfedale Men's Shed

Wharfedale Men's Shed is a charitable friendship group for men looking for social interaction, a new sense of direction or a new skill or hobby. We meet every Monday at Otley Courthouse. Many members join us after a significant life change such as retirement, illness or bereavement.

We've made bird boxes commissioned by Wildlife Friendly Otley and garden planters for The Larder, refurbished park benches, made mud kitchens for schools, and designed and made small adaptations for children and adults with mobility issues. Our talented members make small woodwork items for sale, such as bird boxes, hedgehog hibernation boxes and carved walking sticks to supplement the charity's funds. We have items for sale on the first Monday of the month outside the workshop (weather permitting), and these can be purchased on other Mondays throughout the year.

We are fundraising to build a bigger 'Shed' so that we can significantly expand our membership and do much more for the community. We are grateful for generous support from local businesses, including the Skipton Building Society, Sinclair's and the Barristers North Eastern Circuit charity.

For information, pop in to see us on a Monday, or visit our website: wharfedalemensshed.org.uk. Alternatively, if you are interested in becoming a supporter, please contact Bob Miles at wharfedalemensshed@gmail.com.

Wharfedale Male Voice Choir: The Search Continues

As we move into our summer recess, Wharfedale Male Voice Choir continues to search for an accompanist to join us on Monday afternoons.

With great regret, we have bid farewell to our much-loved accompanist Pat Jones, who worked under our Music Director for several years but finally found it necessary to retire. Pat says that she has especially enjoyed the camaraderie and fun of looking after retired gentlemen who manage to sing in four-part harmony despite many of the choir having no experience of reading music.

We look forward to resuming rehearsals in September in the knowledge that we will have several engagements in the months before Christmas, and are looking forward to the prospect of learning some new and exciting music for our ever-expanding repertoire.

As always, any gentlemen interested in joining this vibrant group should, in the first instance, contact Secretary Peter Roberts on 01943 463456.



Otley Parish Church

Some say we are experiencing a 'Quiet Revival' across the UK. Although a key survey regarding this has to be repeated, a noticeable rise in interest in spirituality is being widely reported, particularly among younger adults, with church attendance and online searches about faith both increasing in the past two years. Questions about who Jesus is and what the Christian faith teaches are being asked afresh.

Otley has encouraging signs of this renewal. Otley Parish Church has seen a clear uptick in attendance over the last year, alongside more people exploring faith through courses, conversations and Sunday gatherings. We are not alone – other churches across the town are also experiencing similar growth.

This isn't about hype or headlines, but a quiet, genuine curiosity. Many are rediscovering the hope, meaning, and person of Jesus Christ, and we are grateful to be part of that story in our community. Visit: www.otleyparishchurch.org



Otley Maker Space

Otley Maker Space continues to invest in equipment requested by its members. This £5,000 3D CAD cutter will produce objects from wood or other suitable material. Otley Maker Space is also well equipped for sewing and needlework, with a clean area for using the sewing machines and cutting out, plus an excellent space for those into electronics and laser-cut woodwork.

Otley Maker Space welcomes new members, so if you are keen on making things, we would be happy to show you around. There is usually someone here on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Email: hello@otleymakerspace.co.uk



Wharfedale Gardeners' Group

© Bob Griffin 07966 187243

We had a busy end to our season when Honorary Lifetime Member Alan Wilson delighted our audience with an illustrated talk on his European wildflower adventures, while April saw Maureen Little highlight the importance of pollinators through her knowledge of beekeeping. Members gathered again in May for the AGM and social evening. Raising funds at the popular Plant Sale at Otley Buttercross was a great success, with members donating plants from their own gardens.

If you love gardening or simply want to learn more about plants and nature, why not join us? Membership offers talks, friendly company and a chance to grow your gardening passion. Guests are also welcome to attend individual talks.

Meetings are held at Beech Hill Church, Otley, on the second Tuesday of each month (September to May) at 7.30pm. To join or reserve a place, contact Christine at wharfedalegardeners@gmail.com or visit www.wharfedalegardeners.co.uk.

Westgate Carers Café



At Westgate Surgery, we know that caring for a loved one is so important, but we also know how tiring it can be. That's why we host our Carers Café every 8 weeks at our Surgery. No clinical talk – just a chance to chat over a cup of tea and a slice of cake. Our doors are open for anyone who would like some advice or just to see some friendly faces.

Our next Carers Café will be held on the 29 July 2026 at 12pm until 1pm. You can find us at: Westgate Surgery, Westgate, Otley LS21 3HD.

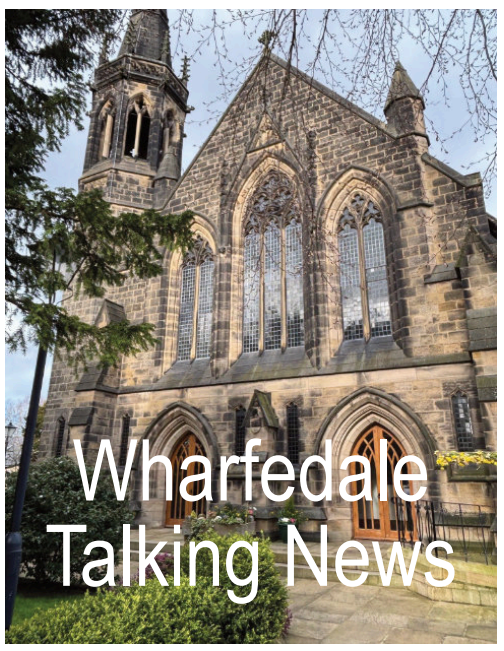
PHGS Eco-mmittee news



Members of Wildlife Friendly Otley presented the Prince Henry's Grammar School Eco-mmittee with an extensive 'wildlife kit' including nest boxes, nest cams, a wildlife camera and pond-dipping equipment. The kit was funded by a grant from the Co-op and will be used to support the school's ecology work. Members of the Eco-mmittee also attended the Leeds Climate Schools Eco-Conference 2026, where they took part in workshops, heard from leading experts and contributed to a presentation to local MP Katie White, who is also the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Climate.

"The Eco-mmittee is an important part of our ecology work in school, and the students have driven many initiatives. It is great to have the support of Wildlife Friendly Otley and these exciting events for the students to attend. We can't wait to see who moves into our nest boxes on the nest cams!" said Geography Teacher Emma Dayes.

Prince Henry's Grammar School
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TRUST
Respect • Flourish • Achieve



Wharfedale Talking News

The Wharfedale Talking News has always included a Thought for the Week, which is written by members of our local clergy.

We had wondered if our clergy men and women would like to read their own contribution when it was their turn on the rota. We thought that members of their congregation would be pleased to hear their messages delivered personally, rather than being read by the Wharfedale Talking News editor. We have, therefore, invited them to do so, and this is beginning to take place.

We hope that any of our listeners who attend a church service will enjoy hearing their priest, pastor or minister reading their own message - and perhaps let them know they have heard it.

We would also be pleased to hear what our listeners feel about this development.

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Otley Swift Watch

'Look! They're back! Look!'

And they're gone
On a steep controlled scream of skid
Round the house-end
And away under the cherries.

From *Swifts* by Ted Hughes.

100 Swift Nest Sites and Counting

It's summer, and the long-distance miracle birds of migration are back with us until early August. Keep your eyes on the skies and listen for their screams.

You may also see the annual return of the not quite so long-distance Otley Swift Watch volunteers patrolling the streets of Otley, monitoring known nest sites and looking for new ones. So far, we have found 100 buildings in our town that have nesting Swifts.

If you have nesting Swifts and think we may not already know about them – or if you want to get involved in being a Swift Watch volunteer, please contact richardmarsh25@yahoo.co.uk

Otley Action for Older People

Otley Action for Older People is offering a free hot meal to anyone aged 60 and over who lives in LS21 and wishes to try our Lunch Clubs.

In July, Otley Action for Older People will be offering a lovely, hot, two-course lunch to any newcomers who would like to try the Lunch Club. On Wednesday 8 July, the Lunch Club will be at Wharfedale Court in Pool in Wharfedale, and on Thursday 9 July at the Chippendale Centre in Otley.

Our Lunch Clubs are long-established groups, a great place to make new acquaintances and enjoy a sociable afternoon. The normal charge for lunch is £7.50. This includes tea or coffee.

Please call the Otley Action office on 01943 463965 to book a place.

WHAT'S ON AT OTLEY COURTHOUSE?

Saturday 20 June: **The Pitmen Poets** (Tickets: £30)
Ex-Lindisfarne singer Billy Mitchell, alongside Bob Fox and Jez Lowe, celebrate the triumphs, tragedy, and humour of the North East's industrial heritage in an evening of music.

Wednesday 24 June: **Summer Flower Arranging Workshop** (Tickets: £36)
A modern floral arranging workshop using fresh summer blooms. Create your own seasonal arrangement to take home.

Friday 10 July: **Black Umfolosi** (Tickets: £21)
Traditional song and dance from southern Africa, featuring rich harmonies, intricate rhythms, and energetic choreography including Gumboot dancing.

Sunday 19 July: **Opera North: Little Listeners – Mini Magic Flute** (Tickets: £6/£8/£25)
A 40-minute musical adventure inspired by Mozart's The Magic Flute, perfect for all ages but especially designed for those aged 4–7 years old.

Thursday 13 August: Movie Matinee: **A Minecraft Movie** (Tickets: £6)
Four misfits are pulled into a strange cubic world and must navigate their way home.

Wednesday 26 August: **Children's Lego Printing Workshop** (Tickets: £12)
A creative printmaking session using Lego to design and layer colourful prints.

Friday 18 September: **Martín Alvarado & Gerardo Villar Y Los Aguirre** (Tickets: £20)
A performance of Argentinian tango and folkloric music, blending traditional sounds with contemporary flair.

To book tickets visit www.otleycourthouse.org.uk, call our box office on 01943 467466 or pop into the Courthouse.



Otley COURTHOUSE

COURTHOUSE FILMS

28 June at 7pm – National Theatre Live: **Les Liaisons Dangereuses**
Doors and bar open at 6.15 – Tickets: £15 / £13
Lesley Manville joins Aidan Turner in a striking new staging of Christopher Hampton's adaptation of the classic novel.



Movie Matinees:
Screenings continue on Thursdays at 2pm (1.30pm for tea/coffee and sweet treat included in price) Tickets: £6

25 June: **Freud's Last Session** (PG)
Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud invites Professor C.S. Lewis to debate the existence of God, Freud's unique relationship with his daughter, and Lewis' unconventional relationship with his best friend's mother.

16 July: **The Life of Chuck** [15]
A life-affirming, genre-bending story about three chapters in the life of an ordinary man named Charles Krantz.

13 Aug: **The Minecraft Movie** [PG]
Four misfits are suddenly pulled through a mysterious portal into a bizarre cubic wonderland that thrives on imagination.

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Otley Film Society's new season starts on 3 September and continues on alternate Thursday evenings at 7.45pm (doors and bar open from 7pm).

The mix of films is, as always, some foreign language, some art house and the occasional mainstream award winners.

Please visit: otleyfilmsociety.org.uk for full programme of dates and films.



New Book from Otley Author

Katja Kaine is an Otley-based author, whose debut Young Adult Fantasy Novel, ***Blood of Gods and Girls*** was snapped up in a major six-figure deal with Penguin Random House and will be released on 2 July 2026. Sunyi Dean is a Leeds-based author, whose debut novel ***The Book Eaters*** was a #2 ***Sunday Times*** Bestseller. Her highly anticipated novel, ***The Girl with a Thousand Faces***, was released in May 2026.

On 3 July, Katja and Sunyi will host an evening at The Bookshop on the Square, discussing their books, writing journeys and process, answering questions from the audience and signing books. Fizz and nibbles will be provided! Entry is free with the purchase of either of their books. For every copy of ***Blood of Gods and Girls*** sold, Katja will donate £5 to Room to Read, an international literacy charity focusing on educating girls and women who would otherwise be unable to access education. Entry without a book costs £3 and all proceeds will go to Room to Read. If you would like to come but cost is a barrier, let us know and we will provide you with a free ticket.



Spaces are limited, so don't miss the opportunity to hear from two fantastic authors in the heart of Otley!



Ilkley u3a

Members of Ilkley & District u3a recently received a moving presentation by Mark Currie about the navvies who built the Bramhope Tunnel, one of the great engineering projects of the Victorian railway age. Many know the Navvies Memorial in Otley Parish Churchyard, which records those who died during construction. Mark explained this unusual commission by the railway company and its significance as an early recognition of those killed at work. Built between 1845 and 1849, the tunnel stretches nearly two miles. Hundreds of navvies worked in dangerous conditions, and at least 24 lost their lives.

Later adopted by Otley Town Council, the memorial underwent a major restoration completed in 2019, supported by local volunteers, residents, businesses and heritage funding. To mark this milestone, Mark produced a 35-minute film, shown at the meeting, exploring both the engineering achievement and the human cost behind it.

More information is on our website: www.ilkleyu3a.org ('Otley' section on the Home page), or on Facebook. You will find much of interest, from karate to mindfulness, candle making to board games.

Let's Light Up Otley for Christmas



Help us save Christmas! A naughty elf has been put behind bars for hiding Otley's Christmas lights, and we need to raise enough money to get him released so he can show us where he's hidden them! If you'd like to help, please contribute at www.gofundme.com/f/lets-light-up-otley-for-christmas. Keep an eye out for the naughty elf in the Market Place in August...

Last year, with your help, Let's Light Up Otley raised £5,000 to add to the council's funding, which contributed to extra lights and decorations, festoon lights in the square, lights around the Jubilee Clock, and uplighters. We aim to raise the same again this year to continue the improvements. Also, if you'd be interested in joining us, send us a message on Facebook – we'd be glad to hear from you.



Looking Back, Looking Forward

New Leadership at the Town Council



Covid was preventing the Council from operating properly, our Executive Officer and Town Clerk had resigned, Council finances were worrying me, and I couldn't easily meet other Councillors to find out their views – less than a year into my role and I was bound to ask, "Why am I doing this? I don't even get paid!" The answer was obvious then and is obvious now: Otley deserves a Town Council that facilitates all that is great about our town, protects our heritage, our community ethos and our pride in place.

In the Bible, the number seven represents perfection and completeness, and so it somehow seems appropriate that I am stepping down from the role of Otley Town Council Chair after seven years helping my fellow Councillors and our wonderful staff make a significant difference in our community. As the elected body for the town, with the resources of the precept (about £100 per household) behind us, we have successfully fought for Otley, worked for Otley and invested in Otley. I am proud of what we have achieved.

It's been a wonderful time being Chair. Sometimes difficult as I mentioned, but mostly great fun with new friendships made both within and beyond the Council, exciting challenges to overcome, people and organisations to support through advice, contacts, practical partnerships and judiciously invested sums of money. The Investing in Otley scheme made a significant difference to the Chippendale Centre refurbishment, the Prince Henry's 3G pitch, to Otley Cricket Club and, just this year, to Grove Hill Bowls Club and to Otley Common. Community grants have supported a myriad of small ventures and projects, and we have been successful in attracting outside money into the town for cycling and walking support, helping local travel become easier, healthier and more sustainable. Just this year, we have obtained West Yorkshire funding to improve the path to and from the Ilkley Road Underpass. I am particularly delighted that a project I had a significant part in (and which my wife, Cllr Sarah Hughes, also had a major part in) – the refurbishment of Otley Play Parks – was achieved so successfully. There is no doubt that the Town Council's financial contribution, but also its willingness to work with residents' groups, had a big impact on the outcome. Of course, I also want to acknowledge Leeds City Council's willingness to prioritise this and thank City Ward Councillor colleagues for their crucial influence and contribution.

Early on in my time as Chair, we achieved a major endorsement of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan. This has informed our approach to planning and protecting our local environment. It was key to our 28-page comment on the, frankly dreadful, plans for the East of Otley development; I am delighted that our response was adjudged to have been significant in pausing that application. We also declared a Biodiversity Emergency and every year we now sit down with colleagues from nature organisations to agree a plan to support our wildlife using local expertise and Council money. We have invested in our Gallows Hill Nature Reserve and were delighted when, just recently, it was designated a Local Wildlife Area. We have invested in our town centre, and here I must pay tribute to Cllr Paul Carter, who has led this support with huge energy, working closely with Otley Bid and organising the banners and new signage totems around town, and, this spring, launching the Made in Otley Awards. And, of course, we have continued to organise town events, including the Remembrance Day Parade and the Christmas Lights switch-on.

Another recent achievement has been the reorganisation of the Council's back of house operations: policies, procedures and financial contingencies. These are not glamorous changes, but it has made for a safer environment for staff, better value for money for residents, and fewer scares for Councillors! Particular thanks go to Cllr Jo Allen and the ex-Executive Officer for this and, of course, to the staff who have put it into effect.

Throughout all of this, I have been part of a wonderful team of 15 Councillors, who all give their time freely, expertly and collaboratively. I have also worked with staff who have a heart for their job and for Otley, whether they have been at the Council 20 years and still love coming to work, or just a few months and bring energy, enthusiasm and new ideas. Thank you to them all. But also, a special thanks to Jason Knowles, who spent fourteen years with the Council – six of those years as the Executive Officer and Town Clerk – and with whom I had a profitable and enjoyable partnership. We wish Jason well in his new job working for the Yorkshire Local Councils' Association as an adviser to Local Councils. We may yet be phoning him up...

While I can't help but look back at a time like this, I also look to the future. We have a capable and ambitious replacement chair in Cllr Penny Robinson, and I will continue as Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, working with Wildlife Friendly Otley and other fantastic organisations and individuals committed to our local environment. We have the Otley 800 celebrations to look forward to, a new Neighbourhood Plan, partnerships to nurture, money to invest and an East of Otley development to monitor and influence. If you think you could be a part of that, let us know and – who knows – perhaps you could end up having the time of your life as I have done.

Cllr Richard Hughes

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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



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 June to August are: Wednesday 10 June and Saturday 11 July and Wednesday 12 August.

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.



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.

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.



TOWN MAYOR'S NEWS

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Over the last three months, my wife Denise and I have had the honour or representing the town at the Menwith Hill Thanksgiving Dinner, formally unveiling the Otley Park Oak Bench in Tittybottle Park, attending the Otley (and Ilkley) Choral Society performance of Mendelssohn's Elijah, launching the inaugural Made in Otley awards – a new initiative from the Town Mayor celebrating sixteen local businesses and craftspeople making fantastic products in Otley. I also submitted our bid to become the UK Town of Culture in 2028.

The Annual Parish & Council Meeting in May brought to an end my time as Mayor, and my wife and I would very much like to offer our sincere thanks to the many volunteer organisations that graciously invited us to their events, the new businesses that invited us to be part of their formal opening events, the many residents that offered their good wishes and helped raise money for charity, and the Councillors and Staff at Otley Town Council who provided us with support and guidance over the last year.

Denise and I would also like to wish the incoming Mayor, Councillor Mick Bradley, and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jo Allen, all the very best of luck over the next 12 months.

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

CONTACTING YOUR COUNCILLORS

ASHFIELD WARD



Tom Featherstone (Lib Dem)
tom.featherstone@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Gareth Dibble (Lib Dem) t: 07951 254927
gareth.dibble@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Sarah Hughes (Lib Dem)
sarah.hughes@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Sylvia Thomson (Lib Dem)
sylvia.thomson@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

PRINCE HENRY WARD



Colin Campbell (Lib Dem) t: 07973 521547
colin.campbell@leeds.gov.uk



Ray Smith (Lib Dem) t: 07946 800946
ray.smith@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

DANEFIELD WARD

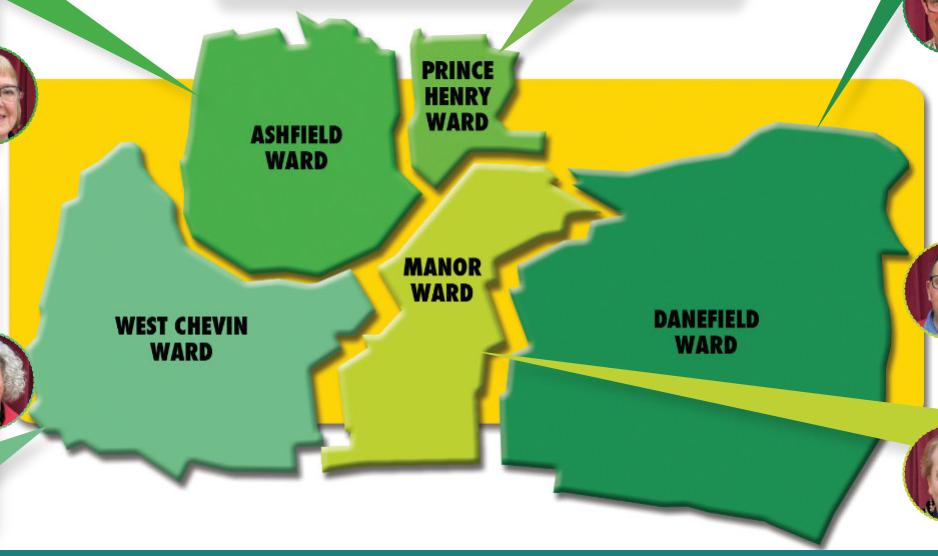


Mick Bradley (Green) t: 01943 467871
mick.bradley@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Sue Stepan (Green)
sue.stepan@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Richard Davies (Lab)
richard.davies@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



WEST CHEVIN WARD



Richard Hughes (Lib Dem) t: 07885 219520
richard.hughes@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Linda Hoare (Lib Dem)
linda.hoare@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Jo Allen (Lib Dem) t: 01943 461899
jo.allen@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

MANOR WARD



Nigel Gill (Lab)
nigel.gill@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Paul Carter (Lib Dem)
paul.carter@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



Penny Robinson (Lib Dem)
penny.robinson@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk



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 contact Katie White MP (Leeds North West), please email katie.white.mp@parliament.uk

OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL LITTER PICK DATES 2026

Date	Ward	Meeting Point
Sat 6 June	Manor	Maypole, Manchester Square
Wed 24 June	West Chevin	Grove Hill car park, Ilkley Road
Sat 4 July	Ashfield	Outside shops, The Parade, Weston Drive
Wed 22 July	Gallows Hill	Gallows Hill car park

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



TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS June 2026 - Sept 2026

Planning **Trade & Tourism**	**1 June**
Policy & Resources **Full Council**	**8 June**
Assets **Human Resources**	**15 June**
Planning **Environment & Sustainability**	**22 June**
Audit **Traffic & Transport**	**6 July**
Policy & Resources **Full Council**	**13 July**
Planning **Community Development**	**20 July**

All Town Council meetings are held at Otley Core Resource Centre, 11 Orchard Gate, Otley. All meetings usually commence at 7pm but times are subject to change. Please check www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk or the windows at 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.

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 is dedicated to providing 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*



ARTICLES FOR NEXT EDITION

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

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Otley Matters is distributed to over 8,000 properties