# Otley Matters

September 2026
No 117

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






# CELEBRATING HERITAGE AND TRADITION

## Heritage Open Day at Otley Courthouse

**Saturday 19 September 10am to 4pm.**

***'Ello, 'Ello, 'Ello, What's All This Then?* A free event, featuring 170 years of Otley Police Force.**

Chat with local Police officers and explore the Police vehicle in the courtyard. Join a guided tour of the Victorian Police station, cells and courts. Discover what life was like as a Police officer in Otley from the mid-19th Century. Learn about the individual officers and their families, including their Police work, accommodation and offices, stables, garages and dog pound, as well as leisure and sporting activities. Thanks to the family of PC Draper for the loan of photographs from when he served at Otley Police Station.

**From 10.30am - 11.30am;** choose a crime and have your 'mugshot' and fingerprints taken exactly where this was done in the 1960's.

**From 11.30am - 1.00pm;** find out what it was like to walk a day and night beat in Otley between the years 1956 to 1968. You will walk round some of the Town Beat, whilst hearing memories and stories from those who walked it. Duration just over one hour, distance just over one mile. Group size 15, booking essential.

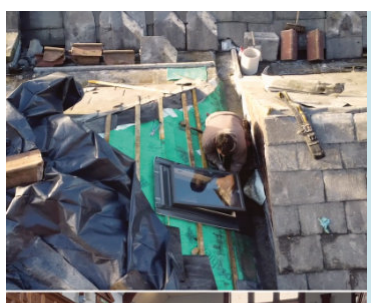
**From 2.00pm;** listen to stirring tales of police exploits told by local storyteller Vickie Orton.

## Otley Museum: Everyday Lives of Everyday People

As part of Heritage Open Day to be held in the Courthouse on 19 September, Otley Museum will host a display about the everyday and home life of local Otley tradespeople.

Step into the rhythm of the past with our exhibition celebrating Otley's skilled workers from butchers and clockmakers to farriers, leather workers and ropemakers, as well as the warmth of the domestic hearth and home, not forgetting a trip to the pub!

Coffee shop and light refreshments are available on-site throughout the day. For more information see our website: www.otleycourthouse.org.uk









# Otley Common

***Come and See What We've Done at Otley Common***

In October 2025, after almost three years of planning and fundraising, the local community bought Otley Methodist Church. As well as saving a beautiful heritage building, it was about creating a vibrant social, cultural and enterprising space.

Since taking the keys, a dedicated team of volunteers, staff and local tradespeople have painstakingly restored the Wesley Hall, its adjoining rooms, reception and corridors.

***Otley Common now boasts:***

- A venue for performance, live music, events and workshops
- Weekly groups, including Pop 'n' Rock Choir, table tennis, jujitsu, yoga, indoor bowls, badminton, Brownies & Guides
- Friday coffee morning
- Affordable office studios to rent by the month — only a few left

There's still more to come, so why not volunteer? Our share offer is also open to help fund restoration of the chapel, youth space and caretaker's cottage. By investing, you'll become a member and have a real say in how Otley Common is run.

This October we plan to mark our first birthday, so we're celebrating with an Open Day and Common Varieties event — full of entertainment, laughter and perhaps a drink or two.

So, come along and see what the town has built. Keep an eye out for news and events at www.otleycommon.org




Everything is coming together for the Otley Folk Festival, which takes place from 18–20 September. New venues this year include Otley Common and the refurbished Bay Horse, long a hub for Morris dancing and sessions.

Whilst all our events are 'family friendly', we are also putting on some specific family events. These will feature – St Joseph's School on Saturday morning – the place for circus skills and tumbling fun, a family Ceilidh at Otley Common on Saturday evening and, on the Saturday afternoon, the Parish Church concert welcomes families with performances from some of the Leeds Conservatoire students as well as a few of our headline stars.

On Friday evening, concerts start at the Parish Church, the Black Horse and the Labour Club and will continue over Saturday. Sunday's main concert venues are Otley Common and the Black Horse Stables.

A programme is available on our website as well as a full list of tickets and prices: www.otleyfolkfestival.com

We're always looking for volunteers, from stewards to committee members. To get involved, please email otleyff@hotmail.com

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**September**

| | |
|---|---|
| **18 – 20** | **Otley Folk Festival** |
| **19** | **Heritage Open Day** |
| **27** | **Otley Farmers' Market** |
| **27** | **Otley Craft Fair** |

**October**

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|---|---|
| **23 – 25** | **Wildlife Arts Festival** |
| **25** | **Otley Farmers' Market** |
| **25** | **Otley Craft Fair** |

**November**

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| **12 – 14** | **Otley Science Festival** |
| **20 – 21** | **Otley Beer Festival** |
| **23** | **Christmas Lights Switch-On** |
| **27 – 29** | **Otley Bookfest** |
| **29** | **Otley Farmers' Market** |
| **29** | **Otley Craft Fair** |

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

OTLEY
-BEER FESTIVAL-
25TH ANNIVERSARY

# Otley Beer Festival unveils a common plan

Otley Beer Festival (OBF) have announced that their 25th Anniversary Festival will move to Otley Common in November this year.

The OBF has held a successful beer festival with our friends at Otley Rugby Club since 2010 (apart from the Covid years), but this year sees a significant move.

As usual, the main purpose of this annual beer festival will be to raise money for local charities, and our popular Sponsor-a-Barrel scheme not only helps raise cash but allows sponsors to be part of this community-spirited event.

Once again, OBF will showcase a wide range of cask beer styles from Yorkshire breweries, together with some Craft Keg beers, real ciders and perry. After a successful introduction last year, local gin, spiced rum and prosecco will also be available. Recognising a growing trend, there will be a selection of non-alcoholic and soft drinks.

Traditional local food will be served from Otley Common's kitchen. The popular live music entertainment will be mainly during the evening sessions.

Dates for your diary are Friday 20 and Saturday 21 November, and it will be open from noon until 11pm on both days.

Nearer the time, pre-sales tickets will be available online using Otley Common's booking system.




Otley Table Tennis Club has launched at Otley Common, offering weekly sessions every Thursday from 6pm – 9pm for all ages and abilities. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced player, everyone is welcome to enjoy table tennis in a friendly and inclusive environment.

Sessions take place at Otley Common. Players can simply drop in, with no membership or advance sign-up required. Prices are affordable for families and individuals, with equipment available to use during sessions. Organiser, Jack Kyp, hopes the club will become a regular social hub, where people can stay active, meet others and enjoy the sport together.

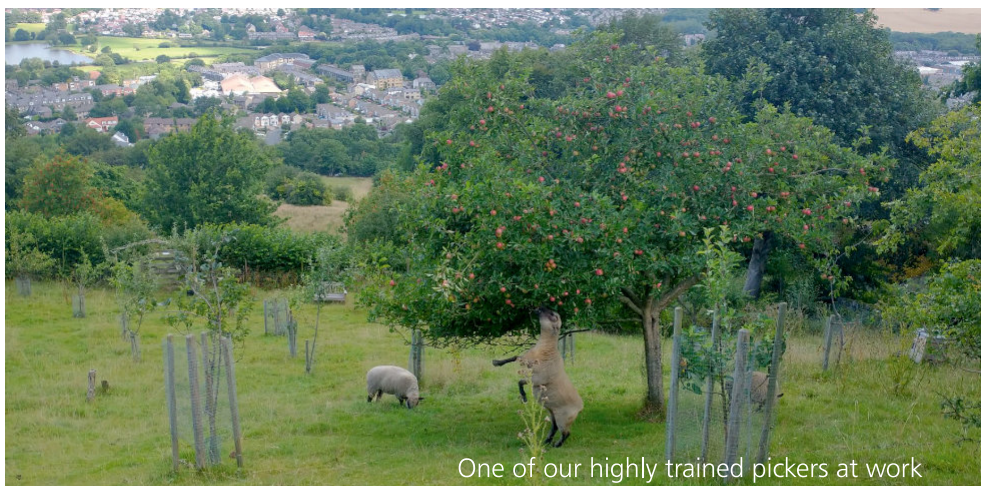
The club would also like to thank Otley Town Council for helping to secure a suitable venue and providing a grant for the purchase of new tables and equipment for participants to use. For more information, or if you have any queries, please email otleytabletennis@gmail.com

# Meeting Point at Beech Hill Church

A new opportunity for meeting folk, chatting and having a cuppa together started in March at Beech Hill Church. Meeting twice a month on Thursday mornings (10.30am – noon, term times), we've already benefited from making new friendships and enjoying each other's company. We have (optional!) games and jigsaws available for those who want to stretch their minds, and we also have a five-minute Bible-based thought for the day at each meeting.

We're restarting after the summer break on Thursday 10 September and will then continue to meet fortnightly throughout the autumn term. More details are available on the Beech Hill Church website: www.beechhillchurch.org.uk/meeting-point or contact hello@beechhillchurch.org.uk

Meeting Point



One of our highly trained pickers at work

# Otley Chevin Orchard Project

There's been a lot going on recently up at the orchard and surrounding Lower Sinclair's Field.

The sheep are now safe behind a newly constructed fence and a hedge has been planted along its entire length to provide a wildlife corridor. Also planted is a mixed woodland copse at the western end of Sinclair's field to create a windbreak for the orchard and to add to the biodiversity of the Chevin (which is already pretty good).

More importantly, the Chevin Orchard is looking very good, so hopefully there will be another excellent harvest this year for you lot too.

Juicing Days: 19 & 20 September 3 & 4 October 17 &18 October

Please remember, to book a slot for juicing, an appointment must be made. Check out Facebook @otleychevinorchardproject nearer the date for details.




The 2026 Festival is celebrating the Artemis space mission with something of an astronomy theme! We start on the afternoon of Thursday 12 November, when Professor Mike Edmunds will be playing Sir Isaac Newton, reflecting on the latter's achievements and the 18th-century world. Included in the ticket price is tea/coffee and a slice of cake!

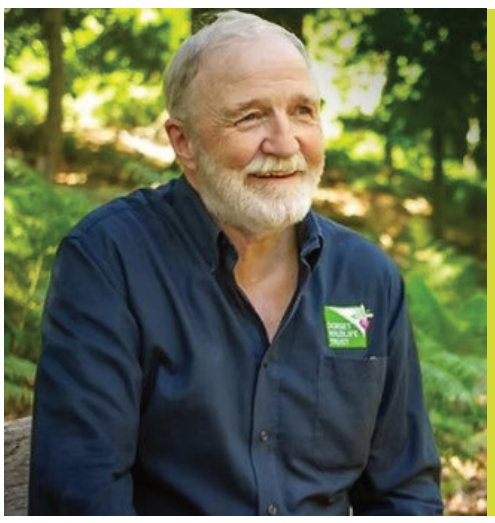
Thursday evening sees our ever-popular Science Café, where three speakers give short talks on wildly differing scientific themes followed by questions from the audience.

On Friday afternoon, the documentary Underland, based on Robert Macfarlane's bestselling book, offers a fascinating glimpse into the hidden world beneath the Earth's surface. On Friday evening, Mike Edmunds returns to explore the Antikythera Mechanism, the ancient Greek device regarded as the world's oldest known analogue computer.

The wonderful free Family Science Fair at Otley Courthouse returns on Saturday 14 November, where local organisations will be providing interactive displays to inspire a new generation of scientists and engineers! Otley Library is offering an out-of-this-world experience with Touch the Moon.

Back in space on Saturday evening, Professor Jim Wild gives a fascinating talk on Solar Superstorms and considers the world's resilience to extreme space weather.

Many thanks to Otley Town Partnership, the Institute of Physics and Leeds City Council for their continued generous support for the Festival.



# Wildlife Friendly Otley Arts Festival

Wildlife Friendly Otley's 5th Wildlife Arts Festival is taking place on 23 – 25 October, held for the first time at Otley Common. There will be a wide programme of wildlife-themed events and activities for all ages, including music, art, photography - with the main day of stalls and free daytime talks on the Saturday. Talks include:

- Friday 23 October, 7.30pm: Dr George McGavin - one of the world's foremost entomologists, leading academic, presenter, and author.
- Saturday 24 October, 7.30pm: musician Sarah Smout, and writer Amy-Jane Beer.
- Saturday 24 October 10am – 4pm will feature an exhibition of stalls and activities, including sticker art for children.
- Sunday 25 October will have a programme of bookable adult workshops, such as natural forms with mixed media.

For more information about events, timings, tickets, and prices, see our website: www.wildlifefriendlyotley.org.uk/festival




# Beyond a Literature Festival

On the weekend of 27 – 29 November 2026 we're hosting the first Otley Bookfest - a series of themed events, discussions and entertainment for literature lovers who want more than readings.

With seven themes - *Fiction, Young Adults, Graphic Fiction and Nonfiction, Mountain Running, Authentic Authoring of African Stories, Work in Translation and Landscapes* - established writers will take part in panel discussions and Q&As.

The festival will run from Friday evening until Sunday evening and will include a full-scale live performance on the Saturday evening with The Bookshop Band. All events will be held at Otley Common, with a continuous café and bar for the weekend.

There will be a fringe festival 'scratch' event on 26 November, where published and unpublished local writers can take a few minutes to air their new work.

Full details available on the Bookfest website – www.bookfestotley.com
Tickets available from: www.otleycommon.org/events

# Heritage Open Days and more at the Washburn Heritage Centre

Tour the 17th-century churchyard incorporating some quirky headstone inscriptions and local stories. Hear about its part-excavation to build the Washburn Heritage Centre with its Tea Room and exhibition.

Join us in a walk around the churchyard of St Michael and St Lawrence Church in Fewston to discover why a Home Office decree closed the churchyard in 1896. Part of the churchyard was excavated in 2009 to build the Washburn Heritage Centre. The fascinating story of the remains and artefacts found in the churchyard (known as the Fewston Assemblage) was examined and analysed as a collaborative project between scientists and volunteers.

Booking information
Sunday 13 September: 12pm – 1pm
Sunday 20 September: 12pm – 1pm

Pre-booking required. Please contact Jenny Wilson on 01943 880794 or email centre@washburnvalley.org

The Washburn Heritage Centre is celebrating the lives of the people of the Fewston Assemblage with a range of events. Full details can be found at www.washburnvalley.org, click on the Events tab.

WASHBURN
Heritage Centre



# New Memory Service launching this October at Otley Action for Older People

Otley Action for Older People (OAOP) is delighted to launch Otley Action Extra, a new daytime memory support service starting this October at The Chippendale Centre. Designed for people living with mild to moderate dementia or memory impairment, as well as those needing additional support due to health conditions, the service offers a safe, friendly and stimulating community environment.

Sessions provide therapeutic and enjoyable activities, including welcome drinks, gentle physical exercise, creative and reminiscence activities, a shared lunch, social time and afternoon tea. Otley Action Extra also offers valuable respite for families and carers, bridging the gap between independent community services and full day care. The service is available to anyone living in the LS21 area. An initial assessment will be carried out to ensure individual needs can be met. Sessions run every Monday from 10am to 3pm at a cost of £50 per session. Transport is available on request.

For more information or to enquire about a place, please contact OAOP on 01943 463965.

Otley Action Extra




A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's Kids Funzone and Music in the Market Place events.

Whether you visited for an hour or came back week after week, your support helped to create a fantastic atmosphere in Otley throughout the Summer.

We're incredibly grateful to all our performers, activity providers, volunteers, partners, organisers and local businesses who helped make the events possible and encouraged families and visitors to spend time in our vibrant historic market town.

As we begin planning next year's programme, we'd love to hear from you. Please visit our Facebook page, leave us a review and tell us which activities, performers or musicians you enjoyed most – visit: www.facebook.com/otleybid/reviews

Your feedback helps us create events that bring people together, attract visitors into the town and make Otley an even better place to live, work, shop and spend time.

Thank you once again for helping make our summer events such a success. We look forward to welcoming you back next year!

# Otley Carnival 2026 Event Report




The 43rd Otley Carnival took place on Saturday 20 June 2026. The event attracted thousands of visitors, and we were blessed with a wonderful atmosphere throughout the day.

This year's parade was led by the Otley Bellman and Sarah's Stars, who have been outstanding ambassadors for the Carnival, followed by a vibrant mix of schools, community groups and organisations.

Without the support of local businesses and organisations, the Carnival simply could not take place. We extend our sincere thanks to:

Leeds City Council Outer Leeds NW Area Committee (sponsoring traffic management costs), Ison Harrison, Sinclair's, Leeds Bradford Airport, Otley Garden Centre, Arundel Travel, Dacre, Son & Hartley, R Kaur Chahal and Stephen Lofthouse.

We also thank Listers for the use of the field, along with Richard Houldsworth, Stuart Thompson, Coopers Transport, Otley Camera Club and Yorkshire Rhodes Removals for their invaluable assistance.

If anyone is interested in joining our hardworking committee, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email: info@otleycarnival.co.uk




## Ilkley & District u3a

Nearing retirement? We offer 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!

We have a host of Otley groups – Bridge, Table Tennis, Circle Dancing, Calligraphy, Tai Chi, Candle Making and more.

Discover what's on offer at Ilkley & District u3a by chatting to our members at 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.



## Otley Squash Club

Otley Squash Club held its annual Junior Handicap Squash Tournament for all the Junior players in the coaching group. Jacob Wright was the clear winner after a challenging 10-match round robin format, losing only once to the runner-up, Amber Stewart. Jacob was awarded the Perkin Trophy, donated in memory of the grandad of the winner of last year's tournament, William Guy, who acted as scorer and umpire for this year's event.

There is a thriving coaching session every Friday evening run by Otley Squash Club's qualified Coach, Paul Hickman, and his volunteer assistants. In a pre-tournament session, players were assessed for handicaps to ensure that all matches were competitive. It was impressive to note the friendly and respectful manner in which the teenagers approached their games and their opponents.

Photo shows the participants and the winner receiving the trophy from the Club Chairman.




## The Whartons Celebrates Music Champion Status

The Whartons Primary School is proud to have been awarded Music Champion School status by Leeds Music Service – Artforms – recognising the school's outstanding commitment to music education.

Jamie Williamson, Music Lead, said: "This achievement reflects the hard work of our staff and the enthusiasm of our pupils. We believe music should be inclusive, ambitious and open to every child."

The award highlights the school's carefully planned curriculum, including whole-class instrumental learning from ocarina to recorder, ukulele and keyboard, alongside a wide range of singing, tuition and performance opportunities. Strong partnerships with Prince Henry's Grammar School, local tutors and organisations further support pupils to continue their musical journeys beyond primary school.

Music continues to be a vibrant and valued part of life at The Whartons and the school is delighted to have won this award.



# Royal Wharfedale Masonic Lodge

Are you interested in finding out more about what Masons do and how we help the local community here in Otley?

Since our lodge was formed in 1866, we have always supported charities, charity being the main ethos of being a Freemason.

In recent years, we have secured grants for Otley charities including:

- £20,000 towards refurbishing and making a community welfare centre user friendly for those with disabilities.
- £15,000 towards adapting a minibus for the elderly and those with disabilities.
- £1,000 for a care home to buy an outdoor shelter.
- £1,000 for a local meal appeal for those less fortunate.
- £500 towards English textbooks for Ukrainian families.

We always consider supporting any local charities who ask for our help. We meet on Friday evenings and we would welcome any enquiries from those interested in finding out who we are and what we do.

Visit: www.royalwharfedalelodge.co.uk or email: secroyalwharfedale1108@gmx.co.uk



# Otley All Saints' Parish Church

The bellringers at Otley All Saints' Parish Church have had a busy year, ringing for special events such as VE Day (and Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday) on 8 May, for Otley Carnival on 20 June, as well as for two weddings.

We hosted visiting ringers in March and May; they came from far and wide to ring our eight beautiful bells with their unusual Yorkshire tail-ends (these are the extra stripy woolly bits on the end of each rope; ours is one of only six towers that have a full set).

We will be hosting another of our popular Open Towers for Heritage Weekend, on 19 September. Visitors can come and see the bells, watch them being rung, and learn about the absorbing pastime of change-ringing.

Our band currently has 14 active members, ringing every Sunday morning with practices on Monday and Thursday evenings. Potential learners always welcome!

Facebook: Otley Bells  www.otleyparishchurch.org (Church Activities)

# A NEW SEASON BECKONS FOR WHARFEDALE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Having enjoyed our summer break, we now look forward to our Autumn term. During the break we had a very successful concert at the Burley Festival, and we look forward to singing at various venues in Otley in the months leading up to Christmas. Our charismatic Musical Director, Paul Hurst, has promised an innovative programme that will include new material as well as some tried and tested old favourites.

Our membership continues to thrive, and we have been delighted to welcome some new members during the last year, but we are always looking to recruit some more. The ability to read music, although helpful, is not necessary as we have many learning aids. Anyone interested in joining this vibrant group of retired gentlemen should in the first instance contact Secretary Peter Roberts on 01943 463456 for more information.

WMVC
WHARFEDALE MALE VOICE CHOIR
41st Year

# OTLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Gives a warm welcome to members new and old to their first meeting of the 2026/27 season at Bridge Church, Manor Rooms at 7.30pm on 10 September 2026.

The membership fee is still only £15 p.a. Guests £3 per visit.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month September – April.

The first speaker on the 10 September will be David Banks on How Yorkshire Began.

For any more details, please contact John Chippindale on 01943 461554, email chipjohndenise2023@outlook.com or just turn up on the evening.




# Otley Methodist Church Our Mission Continues

We're delighted that Otley Common has restored the former Otley Methodist Church as a vibrant community space. Otley Methodist Church continues to worship in Wesley Hall every Sunday at 10.30am. We are a warm, welcoming church, blending the best of tradition with contemporary worship, and everyone is welcome.

Our Harvest Festival is on Sunday 27 September at 10.30am led by Rev. Cameron. This will be family friendly – any non-perishable items would be welcomed for the Foodbank. There will be a Faith Lunch afterwards and then we shall hear from Katherine Hodson who is back on furlough from her work in Yemen. On Sunday 8 November there will be worship geared to all ages for Remembrance Sunday at 10.30am.

We continue to be involved in various festivals and support local activities across the town. So, though the building is now in community hands, the Church continues to be a people at the heart of the community. Why not come along and see what's happening?



# A New Exciting Season!

Having enjoyed one of their best ever seasons last year, Otley Choral Society is now getting excited about the year ahead.

Working with their exceptionally talented musical director, Alex Kyle, and a new assistant director/ accompanist following the retirement of Robin Cook, the choir is about to embark on a programme of exciting repertoire; starting with the joyful and lively Nelson Mass by Haydn, alongside the Duruflé Requiem in November. This is followed by the annual performance of Handel's Messiah in December.

The choir is always happy to welcome anyone who enjoys singing. Rehearsals are every Tuesday between 7pm and 9pm at Prince Henry's Grammar School, starting on Tuesday 1 September. To find out more, please contact secretary.otleycs@gmail.com, or membershipsecretaryocs@gmail.com or you can visit our Facebook page.

# WHAT'S ON AT OTLEY COURTHOUSE?

*Friday 11 September:* **Sixties Explosion!** *(Tickets: £24)*

A feel-good celebration of the biggest No. 1 hits of the 1960s, packed with timeless singalong classics.

*Sunday 27 September:* **National Theatre Live: The Misanthrope** *(Tickets: 13/15)*

Sandra Oh stars in a razor-sharp reimagining of Molière's dark comedy, exploring truth, deception and the cost of speaking out.



*Thursday 22 October:* **Mikron presents: Wensleydale Whey** *(Tickets: £17/45)*

A comic musical adventure of ghosts, monks and the search for a lost Wensleydale recipe.

*Sunday 25 October:* **Luke Wright: Later Life Letter** *(Tickets: £16)*

A warm and witty mix of poetry, stand-up and storytelling, exploring adoption, identity and the lives we might have led.

*Sunday 8 November:* **Mari Wilson** *(Tickets: £27)*

The Neasden Queen of Soul returns with her band for an evening of soulful classics, new songs and career favourites.

*Sunday 15 November:* **Granny's Attic** *(Tickets: £17)*

Granny's Attic bring vibrant arrangements, virtuosic playing and a fresh take on English folk traditions.

*Monday 23 November:* **Festive Wreath-Making Workshop**
*(Tickets: £36)*

Create your own festive door wreath using seasonal foliage, natural decorations and creative touches.

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

Otley COURTHOUSE

# FILMS AT OTLEY COURTHOUSE

**The nights are drawing in and its cinema time.**
**Enjoy the following films and screenings at Otley Courthouse.**



Otley Film Society films screen on the Thursdays listed below at 7.30pm (note the new start time). Doors / bar open from 7pm. Tickets £6.

3 Sept: **The Marching Band** (French)
17 Sept: **The Voice of Hind Rajab** (Arabic)
1 Oct: **Saipan** (English)
15 Oct: **Souleymane's Story** (French, Fulah, Malinka)
29 Oct: **The President's Cake** (Arabic)
19 Nov: **Everybody to Kenmure Street** (English)

Movie Matinees – Thursdays (dates below) at 2pm.
Tea/coffee & biscuits from 1.30pm. Tickets £6.

10 Sept: **Brassed Off** 1996, 15, 1h 48m, UK, drama comedy
24 Sept: **I Swear** 15, 2h, UK, biographical docudrama
8 Oct: **Midwinter Break** 2026, 12A, 1h 30m, UK drama
22 Oct: **Four Letters of Love** 2024, 12A, 2h 5m, UK drama
5 Nov: **The Mastermind** 2025, 15, US, 1h 50m art heist
26 Nov: **Hamnet** 2025, 12A, 2h 5m UK/US biog period drama

Other screenings

6 Sept (7.30pm): **Turner and Constable** (Exhibition on screen)
27 Sept (7.30pm): **The Misanthrope** (National Theatre Live)
7 Nov (time tbc): **It's Nice Up North** film and Q&A with Graham Fellowes
22 Nov (7.30pm): **All That Is Left Of You** Leeds Palestinian Film Festival

Keep an eye on www.otleycourthouse.org.uk for more details.

# CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL RETURNS THIS DECEMBER



The Christmas Tree Festival at Otley Parish Church is now firmly fixed as an annual event in the Otley calendar. This year's festival will take place on 9–12 December.

Last year's event attracted visitors from across the local area, around the UK and even overseas, with more than 1,100 people attending on the busiest day alone. The festival of light also provided local charities and organisations with an opportunity to showcase their work and raise valuable funds, with participating groups collectively raising over £4,000.

Organised by a dedicated team from Otley Parish Church, the festival relies on the support of volunteers, charities and community groups who help with setting up, stewarding and clearing up afterwards.

To find out more about having a tree for your charity, or if you lead a music group that would be interested in performing at the festival, contact allanboddy@gmail.com. Charities who have had a tree previously, or who have let us know they would like a tree, will be contacted in early October.

# Otley Walking Festival 2026



Well, that's it – another Otley Walking Festival has come to an end (sad face). It's been wonderful to welcome people to the festival, showcasing our lovely market town and stunning Wharfedale countryside. People came from far and wide, even from America this year!

With 50 walks and events, there really has been something for everyone. Favourites like the Six Dales Trail, Allotments Walk, Wayzgoose Weave, Five Pubs Walk. New themed walks – Shakespeare in the Woods, Almscliffe Crag, Chevin Up Westwards, The (Otley) Literature Run, Over the Hill and Far Away, Welcome Way and more.

Thanks to the great team of volunteer walk leaders who give their time and expertise for the Festival; financial sponsors (Aura Jewellery, Backcountry UK, Bondgate Bakery, Christopher Little & Co); and local businesses who donated raffle prizes.

Diary Date Otley Walking Festival: 26 June – 4 July 2027. See: www.otleywalkingfestival.co.uk. To get involved (admin, publicity, leading walks, raffle donations) please contact: otleywalkingfestival@mail.com

# OTLEY FOLK CLUB

Every Wednesday at the Black Horse, the Otley Folk Club opens its doors to welcome friends old and new to evenings of music and humour. Singers and musicians nights alternate weekly with guest artists; this year's autumn season features the writer of 'Fiddlers Green', John Connolly, appearing on 9 September, local singer/guitarist Malcolm Connell on 30 September, one of our favourite trios, Hebble, on 14 October, the Jon Palmer Acoustic Band on 28 October, top threesome Serious Sam Barrett, David Broad and Lewis Pugh on 11 November, Blues with C.J. Smith and Johnny Hardcastle on 25 November. On 23 December, The Duncan McFarlane Band will take the stage exactly 25 years after their first appearance at Otley Folk Club.

Future events will include a collaboration between the Folk Club and Otley Folk Festival. On 13 November, there will be an evening with Steve Knightley and The Winter Yards at Otley Common. The Show of Hands top singer/songwriter will play material old and new. Tickets for this event will be announced very soon on the festival website: www.otleyfolkfestival.com

# Otley Zebras Launches Volunteer Recruitment Drive

Otley Zebras RUFC is looking for new volunteers to support its growing mini and junior rugby section with opportunities available for students, parents and members of the local community. No rugby experience is needed for many roles with full training and ongoing support provided.

The club is particularly keen to welcome more women to help grow girls' rugby whether as coaches, volunteers or positive role models. Students are also encouraged to get involved with flexible volunteering opportunities that provide valuable experience, recognised qualifications and skills to enhance their CVs while fitting around their studies.

Anyone interested in joining the Otley Zebras family can contact otleyzebrasrufc@gmail.com

# An Introduction from the New Town Mayor, Cllr Mick Bradley



Originally from Scarborough, a Yorkshire lad, I have lived in Otley with my family for 15 years and won't be leaving as it's a great place to live! Career wise, I managed a Citizens Advice Bureau, worked as a primary teacher and then as a Global Education advisor.

It was an honour to be elected Mayor of Otley by fellow town councillors in May. Events attended since then include opening the Otley Music Festival and enjoying an afternoon of 'Otley Sings' organised by Otley Rotary Club & Otley Parish Church with singing groups from 8-80 years old! In my absence the Deputy Mayor, Jo Allen, attended the Leeds 400th Anniversary Civic Service at Leeds Minster, an enjoyable programme – wonderful music!

Continuing the music theme, I am working with Otley Common to raise money for my charities: Otley 2030 and the Music & Arts Project Leeds. The Common will host some unique DJ events this Autumn – 12 September: 90's Dance Anthems; 7 November: House, Garage, Techno; 19 December: 80's Night Christmas Party – with more to come in Spring. Please accept my Mayoral invitation to get on your dancing shoes and join us in a good cause! Tickets from Otley Common.

I was asked to judge entries to the Otley Carnival, all of which were excellent, attended the 5th Otley Family Cycling Day and then the 43rd year of the Otley Cycle Races, being privileged to meet our local cycling legend, Lizzie Deignan, this year's race organiser.

Thanks to Councillor Paul Carter, outgoing Mayor, for advice on the role. For photos you can follow the Mayor of Otley on Instagram at @mayor_of_otley

# HONORARY CITIZEN




Michèle Smallshaw, a much-loved local teacher and long-time Otley resident, has been awarded Honorary Citizen status in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the town.

Michèle first came to Otley in 1977, aged 21, to attend an interview at Otley All Saints C of E Middle School and was offered a teaching post the same day by Headteacher Mike Bailey, who instigated her move from Lancashire to Yorkshire, along with his panel of advisors. She went on to teach in local schools for more than 40 years, including 25 years at All Saints and 10 years at The Whartons Primary, alongside the late Jim Vincent, another extremely well respected and much loved Headteacher, inspiring generations of children and families.

Now aged 70 and having lived in Otley for almost 50 years, Michèle said she was "honoured and absolutely delighted" to receive the award, presented to her at the Otley Town Council Annual Meeting in May. She thanked those who nominated her and spoke of her deep affection for the town and community she has proudly served for so many years and continues to do so.

Congratulations, Michèle, on this well-deserved recognition.

# APOLOGIES



In the most recent issue of *Otley Matters*, a photograph by local photographer **William Guy** was used without the appropriate credit being included.

We sincerely apologise to William for this oversight and would therefore like to formally acknowledge his work.

We would also like to extend our thanks to William for his continued support of the community and for capturing images that help showcase Otley so beautifully. His photography is greatly appreciated by both the Council and our readers.

# OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL MESSAGE BOARD

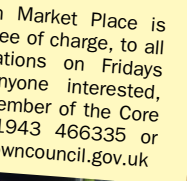
## ROOMS FOR HIRE

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

## Book the Box!

Otley 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, please visit www.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 September to November are: Saturday 12 September, Wednesday 14 October, Saturday 14 November.

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.



## 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.

## 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 RUGBY CLUB

## NAT2N FIXTURES 26/27

15/08/26 - YORK (FRIENDLY) (H)
21/08/26 - DRIFFIELD (FRIENDLY) (A)

05/09/26 - HARROGATE (H)
12/09/26 - WHARFEDALE (A)
19/09/26 - CHESTER (H)
26/09/26 - SEDGLEY PARK (H)
03/10/26 - BILLINGHAM (A)
10/10/26 - PRESTON G'S (H)
17/10/26 - HULL IONIANS (A)
31/10/26 - SHEFFIELD TIGERS (H)
07/11/26 - DARLINGTON MP (A)
14/11/26 - TYNEDALE (H)*
21/11/26 - HUDDERSFIELD (A)
05/12/26 - HEATH (H)*
12/12/26 - FYLDE (A)
19/12/26 - WHARFEDALE (H)*

09/01/27 - CHESTER (A)
16/01/27 - SEDGLEY PARK (A)
23/01/27 - BILLINGHAM (H)*
06/02/27 - PRESTON G'S (A)
13/02/27 - HULL IONIANS (H)*
20/02/27 - SHEFFIELD TIGERS (A)
06/03/26 - DARLINGTON MP (H)
13/03/27 - TYNEDALE (A)
20/03/27 - HUDDERSFIELD (H)
03/04/27 - HEATH (A)
10/04/27 - FYLDE (H)
17/04/27 - HARROGATE (A)

*HOME MATCHES WITH A 2PM KO

Hemingways
Voucher express
Nuffield Health
Persimmon Together, we make your home

# CONTACTING YOUR COUNCILLORS

## ASHFIELD WARD



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



**Gareth Dibble** (Lib Dem) t: 07951 254927
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**Sarah Hughes** (Lib Dem)
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**Sylvia Thomson** (Lib Dem)
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## PRINCE HENRY WARD



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**Ray Smith** (Lib Dem) t: 07946 800946
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## DANEFIELD WARD



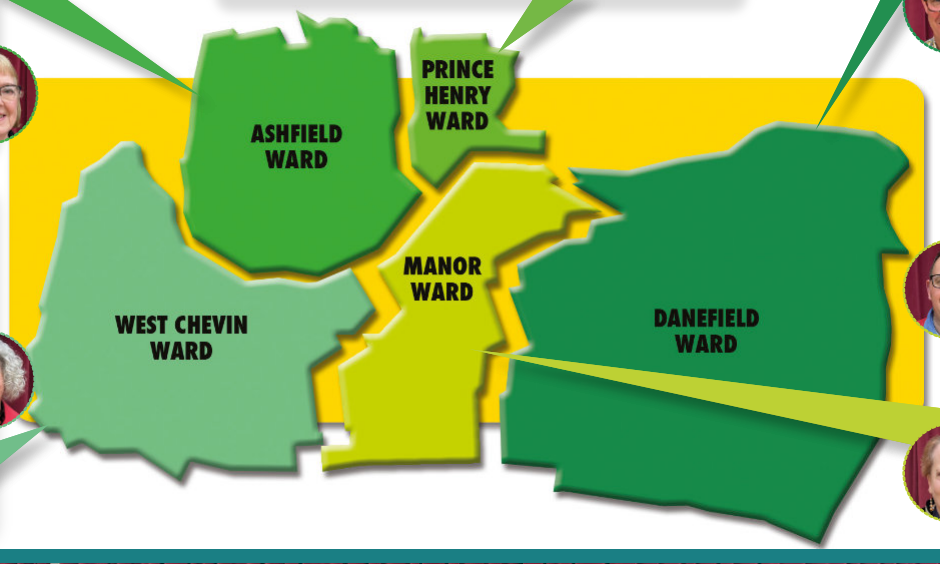
**Mick Bradley** (Green) t: 01943 467871
*mick.bradley@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk*



**Sue Stepan** (Green)
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**Richard Davies** (Lab)
*richard.davies@otleytowncouncil.gov.uk*




## WEST CHEVIN WARD



**Richard Hughes** (Lib Dem) t: 07885 219520
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**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 Gareth Dibble, Cllr Tom Featherstone, Cllr Paul Carter, Cllr Sarah Hughes, Cllr Colin Campbell, Cllr Richard Davies, Cllr Nigel Gill.
Front row left to right: Cllr Ray Smith, Cllr Sylvia Thomson, Cllr Penny Robinson (Chair of Council), Cllr Mick Bradley (Town Mayor), Cllr Jo Allen (Deputy Town Mayor), Cllr Richard Hughes, Cllr Sue Stepan. Apologies given: Cllr Linda Hoare.

**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 North West), please email katie.white.mp@parliament.uk**

## OTLEY TOWN COUNCIL LITTER PICK DATES

| Date | Ward | Meeting Point |
|---|---|---|
| Saturday 5 September | Prince Henry | Wharfemeadows Park Café |
| Wednesday 23 September | Danefield | Summercross, East Busk Lane |
| Saturday 3 October | Manor | Maypole, Manchester Square |
| Wednesday 21 October | West Chevin | Grove Hill Car Park |
| Saturday 7 November | Ashfield | Outside shops, Weston Drive |
| Wednesday 18 November | Prince Henry | Wharfemeadows Park Café |
| Saturday 28 November | Danefield | Summercross, East Busk Lane |

All meeting times are 10.00am with the session lasting until noon.
From December to February there are no scheduled litter picks.

## ARTICLES FOR NEXT EDITION

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

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS
## September 2026 - November 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| **Planning<br>Environment & Sustainability** | **14 September 2026** |
| **Policy & Resources<br>Full Council** | **21 September 2026** |
| **Assets<br>Human Resources** | **28 September 2026** |
| **Neighbourhood Plan<br>Traffic & Transport** | **12 October 2026** |
| **Plans<br>Trade & Tourism** | **19 October 2026** |
| **Planning<br>Community Development** | **9 November 2026** |
| **Policy & Resources<br>Full Council** | **16 November 2026** |
| **Traffic & Transport<br>Audit** | **30 November 2026** |

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.

## 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*




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**Otley Matters is distributed to over 8,000 properties**