

LangfordLife

The Voice of the Village

25 years of Langford Community Centre

A special commemorative issue to celebrate the quarter-century milestone



A look back at the last 25 years
Langford's first settlers
The early years in pictures
Check in with FLTR and parkrun



Celebrate with us

at our Family Fun Day on Sunday 5th May
11 am till 4 pm at the Community Centre



Langford Village Community Centre is celebrating 25 years with a

Family Fun Day

Langford Village Community Centre
Sunday 5th May, 11 am till 4 pm

Everyone welcome!

SAVE
THE
DATE!

- Come and meet the groups who use the hall
- Watch exciting demonstrations
- Try the Langford Village treasure hunt
- Lots of stalls and games to enjoy
- Free face painting
- Plus lots more!



Free cake!
And a coffee, tea
or squash

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www.langfordlife.org.uk

A photograph of a kitchen with white cabinets and a wooden floor. A dog is standing on a small platform near a window. There is a large, dark, messy spill on the floor in the foreground. A washing machine is visible on the right.

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With thanks to aerial photography expert Jeremy Costello for his permission to use this fantastic bird's-eye view of Langford Village on the cover of our special issue. To see more of Jeremy's work, visit www.access-all-aerials.co.uk or for more aerial views of the Bicester area, visit www.bicesterfromabove.co.uk



Chairman's letter

Welcome to this special anniversary edition of *Langford Life*, published to commemorate 25 years since the official opening of Langford Village Community Hall. This issue charts the development of our little corner of Bicester from farmland to what we see today – hopefully you will find lots of interesting information from the last quarter-century (and more) of Langford Village. It's been a fascinating experience researching and pulling together all the stories and events for this magazine. I really hope you'll enjoy reading about them.

Langford Village has always been a good place to live and it remains so. Recent times have seen the addition of FLTR Coffee, a great place to enjoy a cup of excellent coffee and to meet fellow Langfordians, and we have the chance to keep fit with both the 5K Health Route, as well as the parkrun which meets every Saturday morning.

As the LVCA, we are celebrating our 25th anniversary on **Sunday 5th May, from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm** at Langford Village Hall. Everyone who lives in Langford Village is invited, so I do hope you will come and join in the fun. There will be demonstrations by many of our regular user groups – you may even find one you wish to join (see opposite for further details). There will also be lots of stalls for you to enjoy, as well as free cups of tea, coffee, or squash for the children, and a free slice of celebration cake.

The LVCA strapline, 'The Voice of the Village', is as relevant today as when it was conceived 25 years ago. We have a proud history and hope to continue representing Langford Village for many years to come, ensuring the hall remains in good condition for future generations to enjoy.

My grateful thanks go to Mike Oke and Richard Ponsford who have returned to help the LVCA put this special edition together. They have done us proud – well done guys.

If you like what you read in this magazine and would like to join us in representing the village or to help manage the hall, we meet on the third Monday of every month in the village hall at 8.15 pm. You would be most welcome to join us.

With kind regards,

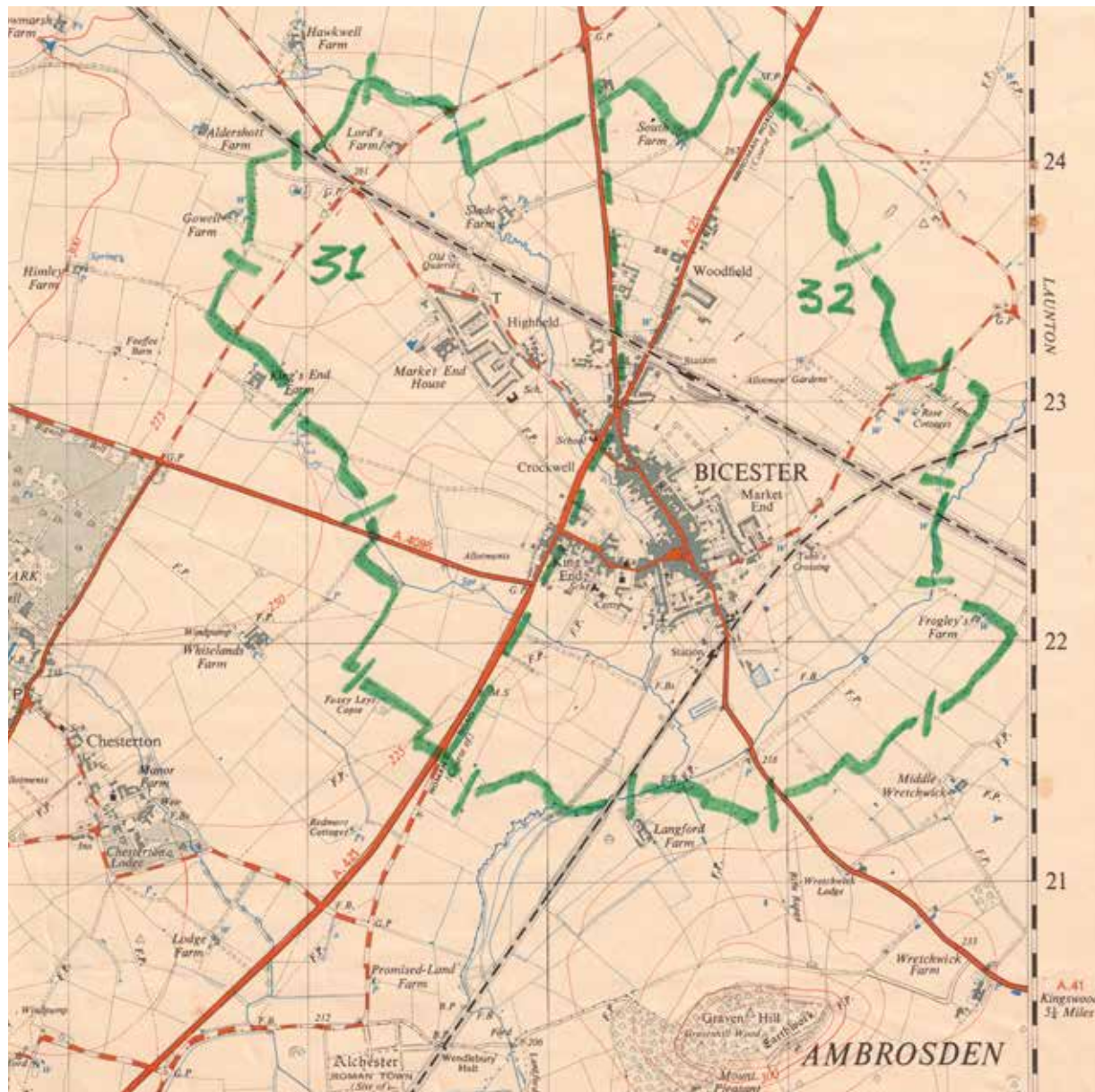
Carole
Chairman LVCA

LVCA COMMITTEE

Chairman Carole Hetherington (chairman@langfordlife.org.uk)
Vice Chairman/website Andrew Smith (lvca@langfordlife.org.uk)
Treasurer Lis Penhearow (treasurer@langfordlife.org.uk)
Secretary Christine Fisher (secretary@langfordlife.org.uk)
Social media/website Chris A'Court (news@langfordlife.org.uk)
Regular users' representative Elaine Whittaker (elaine@yogabeing.co.uk)
Hall bookings Jayne Rossiter-Gill (bookings@langfordlife.org.uk)

'Bicester wuz a little town...'

Right: This map of Bicester dates from the 1960s, before any expansion began. Find the Bicester to Oxford railway line and the London Road to help pinpoint where Langford Village now stands. Langford Village was built on agricultural land owned by Mr William Samuel Penfold and Mr Graham George Pidgeon and was part of the Norman Trust. Unfortunately, the significance of the green markings on this map is unknown.



Below: Facsimile of an article published in Bicester Advertiser on 22nd November, 1985.

BY KIND PERMISSION OF MAGGS JAY

Housing scheme takes a step forward

PLANS for new housing and a new road to the south-east of Bicester have taken another step forward.

Clarke homes developers from Lichfield in Staffordshire, this week confirmed their intention to build to the south-east of the town. They have also reached agreement with the Department of Transport on a new road to be built from London Road to Skimmingdish Lane.

This road, the eastern distributor road, will serve the new housing and also become part of a new ring road for Bicester.

The Bicester Town Plan, due to be formally adopted early next year, allows for

1,350 new homes on land to the south-east of Bicester, together with a new road to be funded privately by the developers who build the houses.

This road will eventually link with the new Bicester southern bypass and an improved Skimmingdish Lane and Lords Lane to form a ring road for Bicester.

Patient

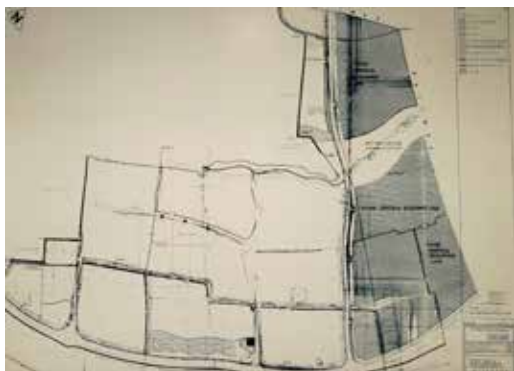
Clarke homes submitted a planning application last November for a new road access to the A41 London Road near Graven Hill, to allow the building of the new road which is necessary to open up the land for

housing development.

Clarke Homes Managing Director Mr Tony Greasley said: "We went through long negotiations with the Department of Transport, but we could not seem to get any sense out of them despite being extremely patient for several months.

"In the end, out of frustration, we decided to appeal against the District Council, for non-determination of the planning applications. We have now withdrawn that appeal because we have reached agreement with the Department of Transport.

"They have agreed in principle to an access on the A41 and everyone is happy."



Left: Outline planning for the site was granted in May 1987 to a consortium of Mr Penfold, Mr Pidgeon, Gallagher Estates, Westbury Homes and Clarke Homes. The first detailed plans were submitted in 1987 by Charles Church for what is now Kingfisher Way; Lawnswood/Ravencroft were among the first homes to be built; An interesting press advert from the time. Note the offer to hold the mortgage rate at 14.5% – thank goodness those days have gone (we hope)!

THE PROBLEM
The first few years on the property ladder are always the hardest, and many first time buyers find it impossible to afford the home that is big enough for their needs.

MORTGAGE RATE HELD AT 14.5% FOR 12 MONTHS

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The Langford pioneers:
The first residents to move to Langford Village encountered a very different place to the Langford we know today. It was very much a building site – muddy and dusty – and to begin with they felt very isolated. There were no shops, no school, no doctors' practice and no community hall. The main Wretchwick Way/Charbridge Lane road was unfinished and so gained the nickname 'the Road to Nowhere'. It ended at Gavray Drive, and the Launton/Charbridge Lane side stopped short of the railway line. From places like Heron Drive (pictured here under construction) and Osprey Close, you could see right across fields to the A41 heading towards Bicester Village, which then didn't exist.

Frontier philanthropist



Among the first people to move to Langford Village was **Ellie Thompson** who liked it so much she's still here. We asked her to share her astounding recollections of those very early days...

There are other residents I know who have lived here longer than my husband Simon and I, and everyone will have their own special memories regardless of how long they've lived in what I believe to be the best community in Bicester. However, I've been asked to write a few words about Langford Village in 'the beginning', so here goes...

We moved into a house in Heron Drive on 2nd March 1992 – it was brand new, the road still unmade. I'd like to say we chose Langford Village because there was a consortium of builders all constructing different style houses and there were some wonderful facilities, but in truth, the country was going through a housing crisis, and Heron Homes were the only builders who would do a part exchange on our leasehold property in Aylesbury!

So here we were, in the middle of a building site. We could look out of our windows and see lambs playing in the fields (now the Linear Park and New Langford), hear the occasional train trundling along the track, and watch foxes playing in the scrubland (now Falcon Mead). A short walk and we were at Jubilee Lake, which had been built not as a beauty spot, but to stop our garden and the rest of the estate from flooding!

Below: Jubilee Lake as it looked in the Spring of 1992.



We could look out of our windows and see lambs playing in the fields and watch foxes in the scrubland

The only completed roads at that time were the original Kestrel Way homes, Osprey Close, Kingfisher Way and Merlin Way. There were a few cycle paths between Peregrine Way and the lake, but otherwise that was it. 'The Road to Nowhere' meant the only way to get to Launton was via the town centre. Dr Street and Partners had set up in a portacabin in what is now the staff car park at the school, and there was just the one solitary post box. There were no shops, no pub, no hall; no bus service or play areas. However, there was – and always has been – a big community spirit.

In the autumn of 1992 a public meeting was held to resolve some of the issues residents were having with the builders, and the Langford Village Community Association was born. The first meetings were held in either someone's home or at the Council Chambers. A logo was designed, the first *Langford Life* published and various campaigns were started for the creation of shops, play areas, a community hall, a bus service, wildlife preservation areas and the establishment of the Linear Park. These were the important issues at the time. The campaigns have continued for the past 25 years, often quietly behind the scenes, and as residents we owe much to those who have served on the committee. As was decided at the beginning, the LVCA is and continues to be 'the Voice of the Village'.

May 1993 saw the community come together for the first time for a fete and fun run on Wretchwick Way. Everyone turned out – the Fox FM helicopter offered rides over the estate, prospective hall-users ran stalls, and we all had an amazing day. In February 1994 the Village Hall opened for the first time. It has been used by so many over the years and LVCA community events have included quizzes,

children's discos, fun runs, fetes, 'ladies nights' and summer balls. It continues to be used regularly by community groups to this day, as well as for private events such as parties and christenings. It's always been a centre point for the community and long may that continue. I'm pretty sure some of the crockery is as old as the hall itself, so maybe it's time to treat ourselves to some more!

Whoever chose to call our estate *Langford Village* did well – it is, in my opinion, a village in its own right. Yes, we are part of Bicester, but to me and my family it has the spirit of a traditional village community – a safe place to bring up a family, where in a crisis neighbours pull together to support each other and of course to celebrate. The Community Association started that ethos back in 1992 and continues today along with the pub (Kieran and Alister do a wonderful job), the school and the Sun Wah takeaway... and now, of course, we even have our own lovely coffee shop.

How lucky we were to stumble across that building site 27 years ago.

Below left: Merlin way from the air, 1993.

Below right: The Fox FM helicopter resting in the field beside Jubilee Lake (now the east side of Ravencroft) before taking some more lucky Langfordians for a sky-ride.

Bottom: A fascinating view of a fledgling Langford Village in 1993 with the 'Road to Nowhere' summer fete in full swing.



ALL PHOTOS IN THIS ARTICLE © ELLIE THOMPSON

The Langford Village Community Association



The LVCA has a history almost as long as Langford Village itself. But how did it come into being, and how did it help shape the community?

The Langford Village Community Association (LVCA) was formed in December 1992, following a public meeting in November that brought together council officials, councillors, headteachers, police and 242 residents of Langford Village to address things such as the lack of a doctor's surgery, pub, school, community centre and shops.

At the time there were no facilities at all on the estate, so the first meeting of the LVCA was held at Longfields School. Subsequent meetings were held either in Council Chambers or in people's homes until the hall was built and handed over in November 1993. The committee

did an amazing job kitting it out in time for its formal opening in January 1994. The first groups began using the hall straight after the February half-term.

Influence

The LVCA quickly began to influence what was happening in Langford Village. A lot of what we take for granted today came about thanks to the diligence of those early committee members:

- Influenced the developers on the kind of facilities that were needed;
- Applied pressure to get the school built;
- Researched the number of children who would be going to the school when it opened;
- Demanded a bus service for the estate;
- Campaigned for a second post box erected near Kingfisher Way;
- Held competitions to name the pub and Nightingale Place;
- Arranged fundraising events to help furnish the hall when it opened;
- Canvassed for play areas, which didn't exist for some considerable time.

Below: We have always thought that the hall was opened by Tony Baldry MP on 8th January 1994, as engraved on the plaque in the hall. But this newspaper article from January 1994 reveals that Mr Baldry was unexpectedly called away on government duty, meaning the honour of opening the hall was handed to Norman Matthews, Chairman of Cherwell District Council. It was too late to change the plaque (below right), and Mr Baldry's name remains on it to this day. At least Mr Matthews saw the funny side!



Langford Village Primary School

It took several years to get the school built, which had been promised since construction of the estate began in 1989. The LVCA worked hard to keep up pressure on the Education Department



to allocate funding to build the promised school. Up until it opened, the children of Langford Village had to go to other schools in Bicester, with many attending Longfields. Langford Village Primary School finally opened in April 1996, with John Moffatt appointed as the first headteacher.

There were no play areas in Langford until 1997, when the one behind Merganser and the larger one nearer the London Road were equipped and handed over – again something the LVCA kept pressuring for. Thankfully, the persistence paid off.

Community events

The LVCA ran a whole range of events and functions over several years to raise funds for the hall and user groups, and also for an extension to the hall. This actually never happened, but the money has been used in recent years to upgrade the hall.

It is unbelievable to us all now that Wretchwick Way was actually the site of a fun run and summer fete in 1994. Fox FM even brought along their helicopter and people could fly over Langford for £15. (Our grateful thanks go to Ellie Thompson, whose photos are reproduced throughout this issue for you to enjoy.)

In addition there were Christmas Parties, Family Barn Dances, Balls, a couple Ladies Nights at which male strippers were booked... although no photos of these events seem to exist.

Pantomimes were also held in the hall, courtesy of The Oxfordshire Theatre Company (OTC), which provided staging and even three rows of banked seating in the hall! With only three or four members in the cast, each energetic production required quick changes along with all the fun and frolics.

Productions included a Japanese folktale of Momotaro, the Peach Boy, along with favourites like The Queen of Hearts and Alice in Wonderland. Sadly, with cuts to their funding, it was no longer viable for the OTC to perform to smaller venues like Langford Village Hall... although if you are reading this and think 'wouldn't it be great to have a community event', please consider joining us on LVCA.

Time gentlemen, please

We nearly didn't get a pub – what a travesty that would have been! The developers tried to persuade early residents to back a change of use for the land at the top of Merlin Way to



become dense housing. Again, the LVCA helped fight this and won the day, although to offset the building costs, part of the land originally allocated for the pub (at the top of Merlin Way) was eventually used for housing. The pub opened in February 1996 under the stewardship of John Kerrison from Launton. The competition to name the pub was won by 7-year-old Ross Potter who lived in Ravenscroft.

The Nightingale remains a fantastic community focal point, and Kieran – who has been landlord for five years now – recently won the Charles Wells award for Best Community Pub, and very well deserved it was too. Kieran and his team host a range of events throughout the year, including live entertainment and karaoke, pool competitions, ladies darts, poker evenings – even an annual dog show! Of course, Kieran also hosts the hugely popular Thursday night quiz, raising funds for a whole host of local charities. An astonishing £30,000 has been raised so far! There is no better demonstration of community spirit than that.

Above (clockwise from top): The fabled 'Road to Nowhere' summer fete on Wretchwick Way, 1993 – just imagine trying to do that now; Kieran and Alister collect their award for Best Community Pub – looking very handsome, gents; The cast of 'The Queen of Hearts'.

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The people vs Unipart

LVCA had its biggest success story in 1996, when Unipart applied to build a parts factory on Gavray Drive, which had been allocated to light industry in the original plans. A sub-committee was formed utilising the skills of various Langford residents (amazingly, 4 out of 5 people on the committee lived in Shearwater Drive!). Meetings were held in the village hall, which were always packed. Dozens of objection letters were submitted and 70 residents packed the Council planning meeting to speak against the proposed plans. The Cherwell District Council unanimously refused the Unipart application in May 1996. 'People Power' won the day! Well done Langfordians.

Sounds familiar

Headlines from the Bicester Advertiser in August 1994 read:

HUGE WAREHOUSE SHOCK

Residents fear massive chocolate storage building will dominate skyline

It certainly does dominate the skyline of Bicester, and in recent times the LVCA has had the same fight against the warehouses on the A41. Initially, we successfully restricted the height of the Bentley Design building to 15.5 metres, only for the outline planning permission to be overturned for the next two buildings, which have now been constructed to 18 metres. Another blot on our skyline.

Homes plan 'threat' to town

Before Langford and Southwold were built, there were protests in Bicester about the rapid expansion of the town, stating that the infrastructure was not in place and that the character of the town would be lost. Again, there were protests about the impact on the town in 1999 when New Langford was built and Bure Park was being planned. Since then there has been further expansion at Kingsmere and Graven Hill, with more housing planned for Wretchwick Green.

The population of Bicester in 1981 was 14,370. By 1988 it had grown to 19,187 a 33.5% increase. Today the population is in excess of 33,000 and it is set to rise to 50,000 over the next few years.

Doctors' Surgery

The first Doctors' surgery on Langford was a temporary building, sited on what has become the staff car park at the school. It remained there until 1994 when the current purpose-built practice was completed. The temporary buildings then moved across to Southwold until their surgery was ready. As we know, Alchester Medical Practice is due to close and move by 2021, thanks to the continued expansion of Bicester.

Railway and Road Links

There were articles in both *Langford Life* and the Bicester Advertiser regarding a form of expressway (although not referred to by that name) and we are still talking about it and waiting to see which route has been agreed as the preferred option and what that will mean for Bicester.

Below is part of an article written by Eric Palmer in the 2005 Christmas Edition of *Langford Life* about the railway.

... We continue our walk across these fields and now approach the exit, which leads into London Road. This is one of the main roads, which leads into the centre of town. As we leave these unnamed fields, we cross over the railway crossing. Unfortunately, this is a very poorly used railway line for the local people in the Bicester area. Its main use is taking rubbish to a local tip. Over the years there has been a lot of talk about redeveloping the railway line, but nothing ever happens.

Eric Palmer

Most people would agree that the railway link to Oxford is a huge improvement for Bicester, thanks to people like Eric.

Outstanding stones

Silent and serene, Langford's two stone circles have intrigued and delighted residents for years. But what do we actually know about them?



The standing stones dotted between 'old' and 'new' Langford were erected to celebrate the rich history of this part of the country. Some of the larger stones will hopefully remain for hundreds of years and so become part of that history.

The large sundial at the London Road entrance to the parkland commemorates the total solar eclipse of August 1999 when this area was under development. The central stone of the sundial (known as the gnomon) weighs 13.5 tonnes and had to be lifted into its massive concrete foundation with a mobile crane.

Unfortunately, our local stone was too soft and so the stones came from a quarry near Bangor in North Wales. Known as 'Glacial Stone', a very hard limestone, it was chosen to look as similar as possible as our local stone. There is also slate from the same area, chosen for being very hard-wearing and easy to build with.

The slate circle in the main meadow produces an unusual acoustic effect when you stand in the centre and speak... try it. One word of caution, the slate circle should not be entered between midnight and dawn at the summer solstice. You have been warned.

First published in Issue 40 of Langford Life in August 2003.

Above: This stunning photo by Bob Rudge shows the sundial in floodwater, the 13.5 tonne 'gnomon' completely unperturbed by its predicament.

Below: The small slate circle after a heavy frost. This photo was the cover image for issue 71 of *Langford Life*.



In with the new

We have been incredibly lucky in the past three years to gain two great additions to Langford: **Bicester parkrun**, to keep us healthy with new friends every Saturday morning, and **FLTR**, a great place to meet fellow Langfordians and have a good chat over a cup of the best coffee in town.

Bicester parkrun

Bicester parkrun started on 16th April 2016 and has gone from strength to strength in popularity, from our lowest number of 79 in 2016 to an astonishing 388 parkrunners on New Year's Day 2019, clearly demonstrating how popular the event is. We even had a hardcore of 259 parkrunners at 9.00 am on Christmas Day!

Bicester parkrun was started by a group of volunteers from the running community who wanted to add another dimension to running in Bicester, one that was perfect for all members of the community – from children to adults, dogs, buggies and non-runners, to experienced runners – and that is what it has become.

Bicester parkrun is part of the global parkrun community and we regularly receive twenty or more 'tourists' from other parkruns around the country (and overseas) to run with us. The concept of parkrun is a friendly, free, timed 5K event which welcomes all members of the community and all abilities. It's 5K, your way: you can walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate – the choice is yours. The reason for its popularity is that it is inclusive to all, whatever your ability,

and is a really friendly non-competitive event. Money was raised by parkrunners in 2018 to provide a portable defibrillator, and we were also able to donate £500 to the Langford Village Hall floor fund too.

The event is run by a core team and around 25 awesome volunteers each week, showing the commitment of so many dedicated people that enable parkrun to take place.

To register go to www.parkrun.org.uk/bicester/ and come and join us on Langford Fields at 9.00 am every Saturday morning! #dontforgetyourbarcode

Katy Andrews
Event Director, Bicester parkrun

Editor's note: The portable defibrillator mentioned in Katy's article is for Bicester parkrun and is not to be confused with the defibrillator outside the entrance to Langford Village Hall. That was kindly donated by the Lions Club of Bicester, for which we are most grateful.



Right: Bicester parkrunners on a sunny Saturday in Langford Village.

The second recent addition to Langford Village is our hugely successful community café, FLTR – the vision of Jeff and Christy Lothamer. As well as wonderful coffee, drinks and food, FLTR has been a hive of activity, and a place for people to catch up, hold meetings and enjoy the company of fellow Langfordians (although those from further afield are also welcome!). Whatever the reason to visit, you are always guaranteed a warm welcome, and the place has a wonderful buzz about it...

FLTR

We reported on the opening of FLTR coffee shop in issue 71 of *Langford Life*, and thought it would be timely to see how things have been for the team led by Jeff and Christie Lothamer.

LL: So, FLTR has been a great success Jeff?

JL: It has... however, I really want to emphasise that our success is not about our hard work, but Langford Community's support of us. We couldn't have done it without this community.

LL: So, we all should be proud?

JL: Absolutely, we should all celebrate together... and we are.

The café is always well supported and busy with a lovely atmosphere as you walk in, along with that great coffee aroma.

FLTR has been nominated by Victoria Prentis MP to the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group as the Banbury Responsible Business Champion 2018, and they have received a Healthy Town Bicester Silver Award.



"It's all about community. Over here they have a heart."

Below: Barista Josh Green serves up coffee with a smile at FLTR.



Many comment on how FLTR has been the thing they didn't know that Langford needed all along, and there are many regulars who find coming to FLTR a bright spot in their day, a place to connect with other neighbours. Many people also pop in to FLTR after a doctor's visit and find a friendly face to cheer them up.

According to Jeff, one lady from the other side of Bicester was heard to say, "We really need a FLTR on Kingsmere... Something over there just doesn't feel like here on Langford." Her partner chimed in, "... it's all about community... over here they have a heart."

Jeff continues: "Our favourite thing is to watch how many friendships have been born inside of FLTR where customers go from sitting beside each other to sitting together, to regular coffee dates together... we've heard many stories of that happening.

"We employ young people who either live on Langford or went to Langford Primary School (currently nine such people). Also, our 'Pay it Forward' scheme allows people to buy a cup of coffee for someone who needs encouragement and can't afford a cup. And, of course, Langford residents have definitely developed a more sophisticated taste for good coffee – something we are quite proud of! More importantly, we've been able to invest some of our profits into two different people's dreams so far – a young lawyer who needed funds for an internship, and a young filmmaker.

"In addition to all the good work at FLTR, our church, Journey Communities, has an active presence in Langford. Besides technically owning FLTR and being the volunteer power behind many of our community events like the Halloween night, we also run a youth club a couple of Friday nights each month at the school. It's a games night where kids are able to have fun, and we also teach a different character trait each night, like honesty or kindness. The games night meets on the 1st and 3rd Friday nights each month at 6.45–8.15."

A caffiene hit some stats about FLTR

- Number 1 of 5 'Coffee and Tea' in Bicester
- Number 2 of 22 'Quick Bites' in Bicester
- Number 9 of 109 'Places to Eat' in Bicester
- Certificate of Excellence 2018 Winner
- 55/55 positive reviews (plus over 100 positive reviews on Facebook)

Source: Trip Advisor

Joint jamboree



The LVCA aren't the only ones with cause for celebration. Langford Village Cubs and Beavers also reach their own 25th anniversary milestone this year. Group Scout Leader **Ellie Thompson** tells us more.

The Scout Group are also very excited to be celebrating their 25th birthday this year, having been regular users of the village hall since it opened. They started on 22nd February 1994 with 18 enthusiastic and fun-loving Beavers. The Cub Pack followed in September 1995 when the first 12 Beavers were eight years old. It was a long time before we were able to open a Scout Troop – mainly because the hall was so busy, right from the very beginning – but in 2013 we were thrilled to hold the first meeting of the 1st Langford Village Scouts. We estimate that over the past 25 years, we have helped around 500 young people from Langford Village enjoy scouting.

We have lots of celebrations planned for our anniversary year. In July, a party of 25 scouts and leaders are going on our first overseas expedition to Holland. Staying for a week at an international campsite, we hope to meet scouts from around the world as well as participate in adventurous activities such as canoeing, high ropes, zip-line and cycling. The Scouts are particularly looking forward to the 'eat as much as you like' pancake cruise in Amsterdam!

Not to be outdone, the Beavers and Cubs are getting prepared to go on a Lego adventure in September when they will be 'sleeping over' in the Lego Reef, enjoying a robotics workshop, an exclusive 4D cinema experience, plus spending plenty of time exploring the park and its rides.

We are an active and busy group and are proud to have served the community for the past 25 years. We would love to hear from any adults who would like to offer support, as well as from parents wishing to place names on our joining list.

You can help celebrate with the Langford Cubs and Beavers at our event on Sunday 5th May at the hall (see page 2 for details). If you wish to know more about 1st Langford Village Scout Group, email langfordvillagescoutgroup@outlook.com



Over the past 25 years, we have helped around 500 young people from Langford enjoy scouting



Top: 1st Langford Village Scouts on an orienteering exercise at Horley Scout Camp, Oxfordshire.

Left: A commemorative badge to mark the 25th anniversary year.

What's on at the hall

During a typical week, Langford Village Hall is used by a wide variety of clubs and groups. We asked our most regular groups to write a short piece about themselves. If there's something that takes your fancy, why not get in touch using the contact details given?

Aikido

Mondays (except 3rd Monday of the month) & Wednesdays 8.00–10.00 pm



Aikido has been running in Langford Hall for 22 years and is a Japanese martial art. The word Aikido means 'The Way of Harmony'. It was popularised by Steven Seagal in films like 'Nico' and 'Under Siege'.

Aikido is based on the code of the Samurai and thus uses weapons as part of the training programme. The sword (Bokken) and staff (Jo) are taught.

Aikido is classed as one of the gentle martial arts, containing elements of Judo and Jiu Jitsu, and uses a variety of pins, throws and restraints against a would-be opponent. It is suitable for all ages, and is not only a good method of self-defence but will also help keep you fit and in shape.

We are happy to run taster sessions for anyone wishing to try Aikido.

Martyn Tyas
01869 321375

Brownies

Thursdays 6.00–7.30 pm

We are 2nd Langford Brownies and meet at Langford Hall every Thursday where we have lots of fun playing games, making crafts and earning badges. We get involved with community projects, like planting flowers to spread a smile round Langford and taking part in St Edburg's Christmas Tree Festival. We have lots of fun and very much look forward to Pack Holidays; our most recent one involved being wizards for the weekend.

Sandra Marshall
sandra.marshall174@sky.com



Line Dancing

Tuesdays 10.00–11.45 am

Line Dance classes are held every Tuesday morning from 10.00-11.45 am. The class is aimed at anyone knowing the basic Line Dance steps and just wanting to dance and have fun. Refreshments are provided at the break. If anyone is interested in learning to Line Dance please feel free to contact:

Lucie
07818 065063
lucie.nicol@mail.com

Peekaboos

Fridays 11.00 am–12.00 noon

Peekaboos Music and Play Club is a fun and welcoming, interactive music, singing, movement and sensory development group for babies and toddlers under three years old. The hugely passionate class leader, and sole business owner, Michelle Goddard from Launton, set up the classes just over a year ago with one class per week. Due to popular demand, this has already expanded to five weekly classes in the Bicester area.

With so much choice of music classes for children in Bicester, Michelle decided to offer age-specific sessions with limited spaces available through a booking system to avoid overcrowding, create a calm atmosphere and allow the opportunity for maximum interaction and learning for the little ones.

Props include colourful scarves and ribbons, sensory rainbow rope, a large multi-coloured parachute, percussion instruments, finger puppets from The Puppet Company, magical floating bubbles you can catch, sensory lights and more.

Michelle now runs classes every week specifically designed for pre-crawling babies. For those ready for the next stage in their development, her Funtime Friday session for actively crawling babies and toddlers aged under-3, is held every Friday (term time only) at Langford Village Hall from 11.00 am – 12.00 noon.

Peekaboos has recently been awarded runner-up in the Best Children's Activity in Oxfordshire in the Little Ankle Biters Awards 2019.

Follow Michelle on Facebook for up-to-date information on class availability, or to book or trial a class @peekaboosmusicandplay.

Michelle
michelle.peekaboos@mail.com

Pilates

Wednesdays 5.45–7.15 pm

Fitness Pilates is a group exercise class based upon the principles of Pilates. Focusing on balance, posture, flexibility and core strength. We use a variety of functional movements, and use mats, balls and bands to enhance the work out.

We are a friendly welcoming group – perfect for beginners or those wishing to return to movement after a break. Free first class for anyone who pre-books in advance.

Sharon Canning
Sharoncanning@sky.com

Rainbows

Thursdays 4.30–5.30 pm



1st Langford Village Rainbows is an energetic, friendly group of girls aged 5–7 who meet every Thursday during school term time at 4.30 for one hour. The unit started in 2008 and we regularly have 20 girls attending each session.

The recent changes in Girl Guiding means that we have a whole new programme of skills and interests to enjoy. The new themes range from 'Know Myself' to 'Have Adventures' to 'Take Action', and our girls have enjoyed everything from making slime to learning tag rugby and gymnastics, to trying new foods and going out around Langford Village on treasure hunts.

Rainbows is a great starting place for girls to see what Girl Guiding has to offer them. We get to see girls forming close friendships outside of their school

groups and embracing new challenges in a safe and welcoming environment. The girls learn through having fun and they try everything, including understanding how to lead, how to work as a team, how to encourage and motivate others and how to present and perform.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help us run the unit so if you could help occasionally on a Thursday or would be willing to help with admin please get in touch with us. I started as an occasional helper and quickly decided to start taking my leadership qualification, and I haven't looked back. It is a great experience and really doesn't need to take over your life. Please get in touch if you would be willing to help out.

Karen Smith
smithmartinclose@hotmail.co.uk
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter/>

Ready2Tumble

Mondays 9.45–11.15 am (term-time)

Ready2Tumble Softplay Stay and Play sessions run every Monday (term-time) 9.45–11.15am at Langford Village Hall. We have a large selection of Softplay shapes, amazing inflatables, including a sensory disco dome, ball pits and playhouse plus ride-ons, animal hoppers and tunnels. We have a separate baby area with lots of sensory toys, mirrors and musical instruments. Our sessions are very friendly and relaxed and we welcome everyone with a smile. There is no need to book in advance, so you can turn up to any session that suits you.

Ready2Tumble started in August 2017 and we have been at Langford Village Hall since the start. In that time we have welcomed a lot of mums, dads, grandparents and carers into our group and plenty of new friendships have been made.

We are a local Bicester family who set up the business to help bring the community together and provide a fun but safe environment for children to play, learn and explore. We also hire out our large selection of equipment and

have set up lots of birthday parties for under 5's in this lovely venue.

www.facebook.com/Ready2Tumble.



Rugby Tots

**Thursday 9.15–11.15 am &
Saturday 8.30–10.30 am**

Make your child's development more fun! Our fun and structured play sessions take children on a journey of sporting imagination, with engaging and energetic coaches supporting them every step of the way whilst teaching how to catch, pass, kick, run with the ball and play as part of a team.

Rob Hill
08453 131908

Slimming World

Wednesdays 9.00 am & 11.00 am

25 years of Langford is falling in line with 50 years of Slimming World! It's our golden anniversary this year, so there's no better time to share and celebrate our local group with you.

50 years of changing lives and saving lives. Slimming World is so very different to anything you may have tried before. Losing weight and feeling fabulous – all whilst eating real food, real meals and never going hungry! We are really proud of the group, and the support network that we have at Langford and the difference it makes for our members.

Recently we celebrated our group's Greatest Loser 2019. The annual title is awarded to the member in the group who has lost the most weight. Our winner was Nick Todd who has lost a

staggering 10st 4lb in 12 months! Nick has done incredibly well and is such an inspiration to every member who walks through our doors! Nick said that it's the group, with all the help and support that really made a difference for him, together with the freedom that the Food Optimising plan offers.

Our group runs every Wednesday morning at Langford Village Community Hall at 9.00 am and 11.00 am. We always love to meet new members who are interested in finding out more. Just come along or contact Hayley for more info.

Hayley Walsh

hayleywalsh01@hotmail.com



Nick Todd: then...

... and now!

Square Dancing

Tuesdays 8.00–10.00 pm

Tuesday evenings at Langford Hall have been the Heyford Hoofers Square Dance Club's home since 2002. We are a friendly club who will teach you all the dance moves necessary to become a fully-fledged square dancer.

Loosely based on English folk

dancing, our motto is 'fun and friendship set to music'. It is suitable for all ages and you don't need to come as a couple. No experience is necessary, but you do need an active mind to execute the moves called out by our regular caller. There's no leaping up and down, no fancy footwork, just handholds and body turns.

Come along and see us on Sunday 5th May when we will be giving a demonstration... and even inviting you to join in. Better still, turn up on a Tuesday evening for an 8.00 pm start.

Julie Davis

01869 389374

Women's Institute

**First Wednesday of every month
2.00–4.00 pm**

Langford Village WI was formed in March 1997 with eight members. Numbers gradually grew and we have well-attended meetings every month, celebrating our 21st Birthday last year. At our meetings we enjoy a range of interesting speakers, craft workshops, country walks, days out and celebration meals. We have fun and have made good friends.

Members also have the opportunity to join other WIs at events arranged by the Oxfordshire Federation sub-committees. There is also an opportunity to attend educational and general interest courses held at the WI's Denman College in Marcham.

The Women's Institute was founded in Anglesey in 1897 and has grown to be the largest women's organisation in

the UK open to all ages. This year the Oxfordshire Federation celebrates its centenary with a series of events. There is something for everyone.

Ladies, why don't you come and join us? Just come along on the first Wednesday of the month at 2.00 pm. You will be made very welcome.

www.womens-institute.org.uk

**and on the Oxfordshire Federation site
http://ofwi.weebly.com**



The Victoria Hill School of Ballet

Fridays between 3.30–9.15 pm

The Victoria Hill School of Ballet is a Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) School of excellence. Started in 2001, it has steadily grown, offering classical ballet classes for ages three to adult, allowing students to develop musicality, coordination, and discipline in a friendly and caring environment.

Ballet training provides the strongest base for all other styles of dance. The discipline and confidence that it teaches are beneficial to well-rounded growth. Students love coming to the classes and often develop good and lasting friendships.

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The School caters to the need of students who want to come once a week as a hobby as well as to those who are aspiring to be professional dancers. Students are regularly entered for RAD examinations which provide them with a real sense of achievement. Annually there is a prize-giving as well as the opportunity to participate in school shows. Senior students, who show dedication and commitment, are invited to extra classes to explore a diverse range of choreography styles and multiple performance opportunities throughout the year. It is the only school in Bicester that offers advanced training and teacher training opportunities to keen students.

Annabelle Clifton from Langford Village, who started ballet with Victoria Hill when she was 9 years old, went on to perform a leading role with English Youth Ballet and subsequently train at Ballet Theatre UK. Other alumni from Langford, Amy Gould and Olivia Scarlett, now train full time at Wilkes Academy.

Contact Victoria Hill for your free trial or to find out more.

Victoria Hill
07748 455093
info@victoriahillschoolofballet.co.uk



Yoga

Fridays 9.30–10.30 am

Yoga classes provide some well-deserved 'me-time'! They are taught in a gentle, mindful style, encouraging you to work with your breath. There's no rushing from pose to pose, just gentle exploration allowing time to release the accumulated tensions we all have. Whether you are feeling stressed from

a busy job or a busy life – or both – a yoga class is your 'oasis of calm', helping you feel good again. Mindful movement with breath awareness helps you to stretch, breathe, unwind and relax... releasing tension from body and mind.

Elaine Whittaker
07917 453224
www.yogabeing.co.uk



For general booking enquiries or to rent the hall for your own event, please call 07946 289092 (9 am–6 pm) or use the booking form on the website: langfordlife.org.uk/contact/hall-booking-enquiry

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Class of 1994

A snapshot of the wider world when the LVCA was formed a quarter of a century ago...



In the news

- Nelson Mandela becomes the first black president of South Africa
- The Channel Tunnel opens
- Charles and Diana separate
- Sunday trading is legalised
- MPs condemn the sale of Rover to BMW
- Camelot win the lottery race – the first numbers are drawn live on BBC 1 in November

Science and technology

- Sony launches the original Playstation in Japan
- VHS cassette tapes are still going strong
- By 1994 there are only 67 mobiles per 1,000 people. Nokia and Motorola lead the market
- Fragments of the comet 'Shoemaker-Levy 9' collide with Jupiter
- Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web and creates the first website
- Netscape launch the 'Netscape Navigator' web browser

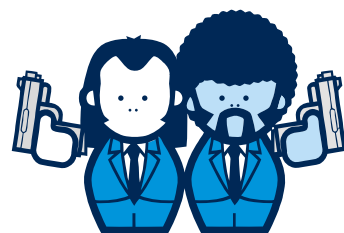
Film and TV

- The Lion King (Dir: Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff)
- Forrest Gump (Dir: Robert Zemeckis)
- Four Weddings and a Funeral (Dir: Mike Newell)
- Pulp Fiction (Dir: Quentin Tarantino)
- Friends is launched
- The first episode of *Time Team* is broadcast on Channel 4

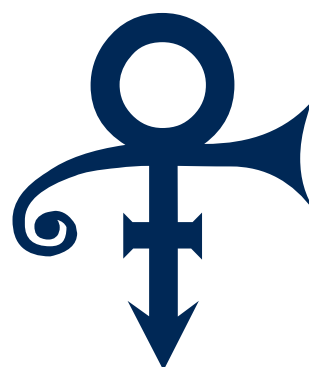
Pop music

- 'Mr Blobby' by Mr Blobby is the first Number 1 single of 1994 having held the top spot over the Christmas period
- Other memorable single releases include 'Things Can Only Get Better' (D:Ream), 'Everything Changes' (Take That), 'The Most Beautiful Girl in the World' (Prince) and 'Love Is All Around' (Wet Wet Wet)
- Oasis release their debut album 'Definitely Maybe'; Blur release 'Parklife'
- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act is introduced by the Government as a response to the burgeoning illegal rave and free party scene
- Kurt Cobain, lead singer of Nirvana, dies
- Future pop sensation Justin Bieber is born

ROVER

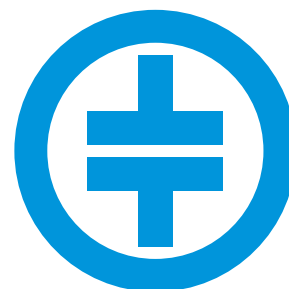


F.R.I.E.N.D.S



NIRVANA

blur



Wordsearch



Hidden in the square are the names of 25 British birds, all of which have a road named after them somewhere in Langford Village. Can you find them all? Have an extra point if your street is on the list!

AVOCET	MERGANSER
BRAMBLING	MERLIN
BUNTING	NIGHTINGALE
CHAFFINCH	NUTHATCH
CORNCRAKE	PARTRIDGE
DUNNOCK	PIPIT
FALCON ✓	RAVEN
GREBE	SANDERLING
HAWK	SHEARWATER
JAY	SISKIN
KESTREL	SWAN
KINGFISHER	WHIMBREL
MALLARD	



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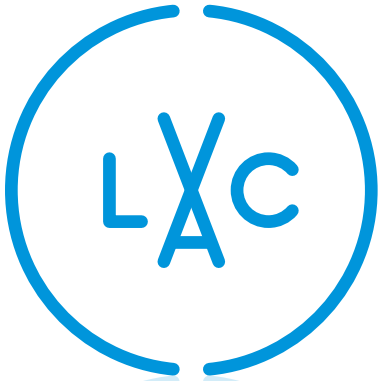
BANBURY

BRACKLEY

BICESTER

BUCKINGHAM

The future for the LVCA



The LVCA will continue as an organisation for as long as the residents of Langford Village are willing to volunteer their time. We don't just manage the hall; we represent the whole village in a variety of local issues – both large and small – that continue to face our community.

Looking ahead, the list of obstacles is potentially endless, but the things we currently know about are:

- **Langford Medical Practice:** Alchester Medical Group to move to a purpose-built 'health hub' elsewhere in Bicester, leading to the closure of our local surgery.
- **Wretchwick Green:** the proposed housing development opposite Langford Village and the delivery of the promised improvements to Langford as part of that project.
- **Bus shelters:** talked about since the Langford was first developed – we are now the only estate in Bicester without any.
- **London Road Crossing:** the LVCA continue to push for a permanent solution.
- **Langford Community Hall:** final upgrading of the facilities at the Community Hall, including new internal lighting, hand dryers and garden improvements.
- **Gavray Drive:** what will the future hold for this cherished haven for local wildlife?

All these issues are ongoing, and the LVCA is committed to doing all it can to influence their outcomes for the benefit of the residents of Langford Village and Bicester town. But if you've identified a problem somewhere within Langford Village, please don't always assume that someone else will sort it out. Maybe it's your turn to offer some time and effort to help your community?

Take a bow

A heartfelt thank you must go to all the previous LVCA chairmen, committee members and Langford Life distributors over the last 25 years. There are so many it would seem unfair to pick out just a few. Many people, all volunteers, have given their time freely to ensure that the hall is there for us all to use, battled to get improvements in and around Langford Village, helped raise money, maintained financial records in a professional manner, and ensured that leaflets and Langford Lives get delivered to every household on the estate. There would be no LVCA nor village hall if it wasn't for such groups of people giving their time so generously over the years. Take a bow, ladies and gentlemen – you all know who you are and we are very grateful. **Thank you.**

Our grateful thanks to the following organisations who have helped us in recent times:

Bicester Lions
Bicester Town Council
Cherwell District Council
Doris Field Trust
FLTR
Howdens
LKT Electrical
Manor Flooring
Nightingale Pub
parkrun
Tesco Bags of Help

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Victoria Online:



@victoriaprentis



@victoria_prentis



/victoriaprentis

www.victoriaprentis.com

Contact Victoria:

Constituency:

01869 233685
Orchard House
Hopcraft Lane
Deddington
OX15 0TD

Westminster:

020 7219 8756
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

victoria.prentis.mp@parliament.uk



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