

# Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 81 - September 2025



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## Never mind the showers: the party goes on!



**LAUGHTER IN THE RAIN** (clockwise from top left): caricatures of participants, Burt the DJ spreading the love, the band playing, and the party in full swing (Photos: Jonathan Dart)

A band of helpers stood in Newport Road after organising the set-up of the annual Bell Tower street party around rain showers on the morning of 5 July with one thought on their minds: would the expression "Build it, and they will come" hold true?

There was music, both recorded from DJ Burt and from our live covers band, food had been transported from the Moderation by Andy and Bee, but where were the party-goers?

Gradually the tables filled up and kept on filling until the happy few became a happy many, bringing attendance back to pre-COVID levels despite the odd spot of rain.

While the adults mingled, New Hope's Abi Ord had provided children's activities, including Jenga. Abi also helped with face painting. Professional artist Gunja Bhatt was able to provide a street party first by drawing caricatures of attendees'

faces in addition as an alternative to decorating them.

An opportunity for audience participation in an artistic activity was also offered in the form of a children's colouring competition overseen by Mary Neale, with the sheets provided by the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway. Adults could participate in Bell Tower committee member Richard Chandler's quiz, which tested their musical knowledge.

The association picked up a few new members, and committee members used the event to engage with residents. We are also very grateful for all the donations we received. We hope many more people have a clearer idea of what Bell Tower does.

At the end of the party, chairman Bob Murrant thanked the entire committee for their tireless efforts to put the event on as well as all those who helped with everything from sound technology to litter picking. We'd also like to thank the Moderation and New Hope for their consistent support for the street party.

We'll probably need all our helpers, and hopefully some new ones, next year because of the success of the 2025 party means a repeat in 2026 is highly likely. As well as offers of help we are open to feedback and suggestions on ways to make the event even better.

*Jonathan Dart*



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# Blooming marvellous!



**WORTHY WINNERS:** (clockwise from top) gardens by Brian & Lee, Priya and Josephine.

Thank you to all those that took part in this year's Bell Tower Community Association front garden competition.

We had more entries than previous years. Judging took place on Monday 28 July in the evening. Our judges this year were Claire of Nood and Spill Bar in Caversham, her mum Tina from Norfolk who herself is a prizewinning gardener, our vice-chair Liz, and myself. Each judge had a maximum of 30 points available spread over three categories – colour, variety and tidiness.

Our winners were Lee and Brian of Northfield Road with 105 points, second was Priya of Addison Road with 102 and third was Josephine of Cardiff Road with 100. All very close!

Once again each entrant received packets of seeds for them to use next year. We were also amazed at the number of really colourful gardens we passed as we walked around the area that had they been entered would have made the judging even more difficult.

Our next competition will be judged in the spring of 2026, so it's time to get planting your bulbs. Details on how to enter will be published in our

next newsletter or you can register now by emailing us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk). The closing date is 28 February 2026. You don't have to fill your entire front garden with lots of plants and bulbs as we will be looking for most colourful hanging basket, most colourful trough and most colourful planter.

*Bob Murrant*

## Don't bin it!

Sadly we seem to be living in a throwaway society these days, and yet there are a number of alternative ways to dispose of things we no longer need.

There are plenty of options – sell items or give them away, Freecycle or Freegle, donations to local charity shops. Our area benefits from plastic food wrapping recycling as well as the red recycling bins and black bins for food waste.

Look out for a longer article with more details in our next edition.



## MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

Come and join us for a coffee and a chat

Saturday 13 September  
10.30am - 12.00pm

New Hope Centre, 95 York Road  
ALL WELCOME

## News in brief

- We are looking forward to our next 'Meet the Neighbours' coffee morning on 13 September, and are organising a Macmillan coffee morning on Saturday 11 October, also 10.30-12.00 at New Hope. We are looking for volunteer bakers to provide cakes for the Macmillan coffee morning in October – please email us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk) if you are interested in helping.

- The council is proposing additional charges for on-street parking, including residents' permits, for higher emission vehicles. We have concerns that this will disproportionately affect residents in terraces who often have older cars. Have your say by 12 September at <https://reading.govocal.com>.

- Do you have any feedback on this year's Reading Festival? We are meeting the council and Festival Republic, the organisers, in October, and if you would like us to present your views to the meeting please email us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk).

- We are organising a community weed cleaning session on Saturday 15 November, starting with the pavements and gutters in the worst affected areas. Meet in Randolph Road at 10.30am on the day, and we'll have coffee afterwards. Bring a spade or similar – the council will be providing sacks for collection and will take them away afterwards.