

Spring 2024

Latest news from  
**Elmsbrook**



**ELMSBROOK**

N.W. BICESTER

# Neighbourhood updates

## Community Hub and Local Centre

You'll have noticed a lot of activity at the Community Hub site lately as the contractors are busy putting the finishing touches on the building. It is hoped that it will be completed this Summer. Your Elmsbrook Community Organisation (ECO) have been involved in choosing the colours for the flooring and walls for the new Community Hub. ECO members also had a tour of the site to see how the building is coming along and the space that will be available.

Although the building will be owned by A2Dominion, the Community Hub will be leased to Cherwell District Council and the café will be leased to a new provider. Cherwell District Council has stated that their preferred option would be to lease the hub to the local community through ECO.

ECO are currently carrying out a survey to find out what Elmsbrook residents would like from the new hub and how they think it should be managed. Your opinion is really important, so if you haven't completed this yet, please do so as soon as possible by clicking [here](#).

A2Dominion has recently gone out to tender to find a café provider which will be a perfect fit for Elmsbrook. We are looking for a provider which is sustainably conscious and promotes healthy living with a range of handmade seasonal, locally sourced food and beverages. The aim is for the new café to be a new vibrant destination at the heart of the Elmsbrook community which will deliver themed events, celebrations and pop ups and also evolve in response to local needs. ECO will be involved in the interview process and choosing the new café provider. You can check-out a video of the space [here](#).

If you want to know more or are interested in tendering for the contract, please contact [claire.bartlett@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:claire.bartlett@a2dominion.co.uk).



## Sustainable travelling at Elmsbrook

The Elmsbrook Travel Plan Team welcomes the return of **Laura Fitzgerald** to lead the sustainable travel activities onsite and the ongoing monitoring of travel which forms part of the Eco-town planning commitments.

The Travel Plan and Communities team look forward to focusing on a range of activities across the site this year with a focus on active travel. Look out for dates for Dr Bike cycle checks coming soon.

In the meantime, if you have any sustainable travel questions, would like to hire a Brompton bike or are interested in being part of the Travel Planning operation on site, please contact Laura at the new email address [ElmsbrookTPC@motion.co.uk](mailto:ElmsbrookTPC@motion.co.uk)

# Neighbourhood updates

## Residents Q&A session

On the 6 March, Michael Reece, Chief Property Officer, Dawn Wightman, Director of Homes and Communities and Yvonne Smith Neighbourhood officer at A2Dominion met with residents at The Perch Business Centre to answer queries that residents had in respect of drainage, service charges and defects at Elmsbrook. The meeting was well attended and some very productive conversations were had. Michael, Dawn and Yvonne have taken away a number of queries and ideas and will be reporting back to residents in a months time at a further meeting.

## Parking Issues – Blueberry Drive entrance

We've had a number of complaints about residents parking near the entrance to Braeburn Avenue/ Blueberry Drive leaving very little space for other cars and emergency services to drive into the development safely. We will be putting enforcement signs up to remind people not to park there, but we would appreciate your support in helping to keep the road clear and safe.

Please make sure you and your visitors don't park on the drainage soakaways on Braeburn Avenue and the sidewalks - use your parking bays instead.



## SSE Drop ins

SSE Heat Networks are delighted to introduce **James Furze** as the new Community Liaison Officer. Some of you may already be familiar with James who is committed to being a face-to-face point of contact for queries, concerns, and suggestions you may have regarding your SSE Heat account. He is eager to listen to your feedback and work together to ensure that your voices are heard, and your queries resolved.

Having held his first drop in session at Bicester on 14 March, he looks forward to being able to meet as many of you as possible at future events. The next event will be 5 June, where James will be joining A2Dominion at the Elmsbrook surgery.

If you would like to get in touch, you can email him at [James.Furze@sse.com](mailto:James.Furze@sse.com). He looks forward to working with you all.

## Elmsbrook Surgery Wednesday 5 June 2pm – 6pm

The next Elmsbrook surgery is scheduled for Wednesday 5 June from 2pm – 6pm at Elmsbrook Community House, 1 Bramley Avenue. It's a chance for you to meet face to face with members of A2Dominion and contractors to talk about any concerns or queries you may have.

The following will be available to book a 15-minute time slot:

- Shimmy –with Bill Box
- Surveyor – with Graham Horsley
- SSE – with James Furze
- Setting up your My Account – on Teams so you can join from home.

If you would like to book for any of the above our dedicated email is [elmsbrook.customers@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:elmsbrook.customers@a2dominion.co.uk)

Subsequent surgeries will be held on 2 October 2024 and 5 February 2025.



# Community projects and activities



## Elmsbrook Forest Schools

**Our ever-popular Pop up Forest Schools run by Muddy Feet in February and March were once again fully booked. On 16 February the children had great fun finding woolly worms, making bird feeders, nests and clay birds as well as eating delicious worms in tomato sauce. They spent time looking at leaves unfurling and bumble bees.**

On Saturday 9 March the children crafted some gifts for mothers with willow and sticks as well as playing in the stream and enjoying toasted brioche on the fire.

Don't delay in signing up for our April Pop Up Forest Schools or you might be disappointed.

**Wednesday 3 April** - Egg themed Pop Up (Egg hunts, dye an egg with natural dyes)

**Saturday 13 April** - Butterfly themed Pop Up Forest School (make a grass caterpillar, design butterfly wings)

**Saturday 20 April** - Mini -beast themed Pop Up (bug hunting, bug hotels and making mini beasts)

The sessions are from 9.30–11.30am for children aged 5 years and under and 12.00–2.00pm for children aged 5 years and over. The sessions are subsidised by A2Dominion so the cost to you is only £2 per child.

For more details and to make a booking visit [www.muddyfeetraining.co.uk](http://www.muddyfeetraining.co.uk)

## Adult Forest School Workshop

Our Adult Forest workshops are becoming more popular and at the session on 16 March those who came along had a go at willow weaving a bird feeder. The next Adult Forest School workshop is scheduled for Saturday 11 May. Keep a look out for how to book on the Elmsbrook Facebook site, the Shimmy and notice boards.



# Community projects and activities



## Bumble Creatives Spring Workshops

Lots of creative things have been going on at Elmsbrook Community House over the last few months with our Bumble Creatives workshops sponsored by A2Dominion.

In February half term there was a Childrens Art and Craft Club, on 25 February a Block Printing workshop for adults, a Spring wreath and decorations workshop on 2 March and a Creative Family workshop on 24 March. Elmsbrook resident Jane Randall said; 'I'd never done block printing before and wasn't sure what to expect. It was a wonderfully creative but simple process - loads of blocks to choose from

and a gorgeous range of coloured inks. We printed bags, cards, tea towels - such a lovely session. Highly recommended! If you like to have a go at block printing, there's another workshop planned for May. Simply use the barcode below to book on this or any of our future Creative workshops.



### CREATIVE WORKSHOPS @ THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

A series of Spring into Summer Workshops subsidised by A2 Dominion. Priority will be given to OX27 residents, remaining places will be made available to the wider Bicester Community a week before. Email [bcreatives@outlook.com](mailto:bcreatives@outlook.com) with any questions or for further information






**THURS**  
4 Apr




**Little Artists - Discover Art Award**  
1.30pm - 4.30pm Age 4-8 £2

A workshop designed for our younger residents with Sophie, expert creative and drama practitioner! Your little ones will complete a Discover Arts Award, taking them on an artistic journey exploring the arts around them, investigating different art forms, and sharing their discoveries with others. As well as developing their knowledge and understanding of the arts, Arts Award Discover boosts children's creativity, curiosity, confidence and communication skills.



**WED**  
10 Apr




**Easter Art and Craft Workshop**  
1.30pm - 4.30pm Age 7 - 12 £2

Join us at The Community House for a fun-filled afternoon of creativity and imagination! Our Easter Art and Craft Club is the perfect place for kids to express themselves through various art and craft activities. From painting and drawing to collage. We'll provide everything needed for an afternoon of artistic adventure!



**SUN**  
26 May




**For Creativity and Wellbeing Week 2024**  
**Jaipur Collection - Indian Block Printing**  
1.30pm - 4.30pm Adults and age 14+ £5

For the Jaipur pattern printing workshop we will explore using different tile and repeating printing blocks, working on perfecting a repeat print as well as exploring the use of colour to add more detail to your print. This is a slightly more advanced version of our previous session, but still very achievable with a little practice.



**SAT**  
8 JUN




**Basket and Rock Painting**  
1.30pm - 4.30pm Adults and age 14+ £5

**Basket Painting** - Combining a cotton rope basket with the gorgeous colours from Kilim Tapestries, this simple and effective technique could become an obsession! A lovely addition to your own home or as a gift.

**Rock Painting** - Traditionally rocks are painted and either hidden for others to find or given to someone special as a gift. This simple act of giving keeps you connected with the world and brings joy to others when they might need it most.



Book using the QR codes, search for Bumble Creatives on [eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) or email [bcreatives@outlook.com](mailto:bcreatives@outlook.com)  
All events @ The Community House, 1 Bramley Avenue, OX27 8BA

# Community projects and activities

## Step into Spring

Spending quality time with nature can reduce anxiety, balance your mood and help you feel more positive. Take a moment to notice nature in your daily life. You might be surprised by what you see on your daily walk or in your garden.

Cherwell District Council's 'connect with nature' webpage provides a hub of information with a monthly seasonal theme. Spring is a time of days getting longer with the sunshine bringing growth and greenery. Birdsong reaches a peak and many flowers appear, in turn attracting insects including bees and butterflies. Find out more about things to see and do in Spring [here](#).

From March until July, the early mornings will be full of the noisy sound of songbirds. These feathered alarm clocks sing to attract a mate and also to defend where they live. The still morning air and spring chill makes for the perfect time to attract a mate, before the day's main activity of looking for food kicks off. For a morning activity like no other, wrap up and head out with a cuppa around 30 minutes before dawn to catch the full concert as it warms up. Which bird song is that? <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/how-identify/identify-bird-song>

## Elmsbrook Community Organisation (ECO) News

One of Elmsbrook Community Organisations roles is to deliver community led events and activities. "Five of us loved making Easter wreaths with Nicolette from Bumble Creatives at the Community House recently", said Therese Grear (Chair of ECO). These small group workshops are such fun and a great way to meet your neighbours. It would be fantastic to see more Elmsbrook residents taking part in these activities, which have been subsidised by A2Dominon, to ensure that funding can be secured to continue providing them in the future.

Please let us know what sort of activities you'd enjoy and would take part in by emailing us at [elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com)

Another of ECO's roles is to manage community assets for community benefit. The imminent completion of the Community hub is a prime opportunity for residents to get involved in this and shape it for the benefit of our Community. It can only happen however if there is enough support and willing volunteers who will actively get involved. Our survey (link in the Community Hub article above) is a critical way of finding out what you think, so please take time to fill it in. If there isn't enough support from the Elmsbrook community then an alternative operator will need to be found to manage the hub.

If you'd like to know more about your Elmsbrook Community Organisation or are interested in getting involved, please contact us at [elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com)



## The Big Bicester Swift Survey 2024

Look out for Swifts as they arrive back in Britain from Africa at the beginning of May and help with 'The Big Bicester Swift Survey 2024'.

Quite possibly there will be swifts nesting near where you live especially as there are a number of Swift nesting boxes on Elmsbrook. You may see them when out walking, flying low over roof-tops or making screaming calls as they go.

Find out more about Swifts, Swallows and Martins [here](#) – they are amazing birds! To find out how you can help, go to the Swift conservation tab on the CDC webpage [www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature)

# Community projects and activities



## Elmsbrook Gardening Group (EGG) update Seed swap

On Saturday 2 March about a dozen members of EGG gathered round the table in the Community House to chat about seeds and growing plants from seed over a cuppa and homemade cake and biscuits.

Bicester Harvest at Home (part of the Cherwell Collective), kindly let us have some seed packets to give away. These were mostly annual flower seeds with a few vegetable

seeds. Several of us brought seeds that we had collected ourselves or seed packets from which only a few seeds had been sown. We spent the morning searching through the packets for seeds we thought we might try and exchanging growing tips.



## Tulip planters

It's lovely to start to see the results of EGG's bulb planting last autumn on phase 1 as the tulips are now starting to show their beautiful blooms. The three planters which will be looked after by residents, now have their new 'Elmsbrook In Bloom' plaques mounted on them.

If you'd like to join our 'Elmsbrook in Bloom' WhatsApp group to share gardening tips, advice and adventures, please contact us at [elmsbrookegg@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookegg@gmail.com). In the meantime, keep weeding, digging and planting.

## Dates for your diary

**3 April**

Pop Up Easter Forest School

**4 April**

Little Artists – Discover Art Award

**10 April**

Easter Art and Craft Workshop

**13 April**

Pop up Butterfly themed Forest School

**20 April**

Pop Up Mini-beast themed Forest School

**11 May**

Adult Forest School Workshop

**26 May**

Indian Block Printing Workshop

**30 May**

Pop Up Forest School

**8 June**

Basket and rock painting

**6 July**

Pop Up Forest School

**18 May**

EGG seed swap

**14 September**

EGG Harvest Feast

# Useful contacts

## **A2Dominion Customer Services (queries and repairs)**

0800 432 0077

## **Defects for Phase 4 (under 12 months)**

0333 136 0360

[customerserviceCH@crestnicholson.com](mailto:customerserviceCH@crestnicholson.com)

## **Shimmy support**

0330 332 6280

[support@carnego.net](mailto:support@carnego.net)

## **Travel Plan Coordinator (travel queries and Brompton bike hire)**

[ElmsbrookTPC@motion.co.uk](mailto:ElmsbrookTPC@motion.co.uk)

## **Elmsbrook Community Organisation (ECO)**

[elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com)

## **Elmsbrook general customer queries**

[elmsbrook.customer@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:elmsbrook.customer@a2dominion.co.uk)

# Elmsbrook Groups

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## **Elmsbrook Games Group**

Second Sunday of every month  
7pm–10pm at the Community House.

[elmsbrookgames@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookgames@gmail.com)

## **Knit and Natter**

Tuesdays 7pm–9pm  
at The Community House.

[val.wright@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:val.wright@a2dominion.co.uk)

## **Yoga**

Wednesdays 6.30pm–7.30pm  
at Gagle Brook School.

[info@andreaswrenyoga.co.uk](mailto:info@andreaswrenyoga.co.uk)

## **Pilates**

Tuesdays 6.30pm–7.30pm at Gaglebrook School

[elmsbrookgardeninggroup@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookgardeninggroup@gmail.com)

## **ECO pop up café**

Fridays 8.30am–12.00pm.

[elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookcommunity@gmail.com)

## **Elmsbrook Book Club**

[coryrayjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:coryrayjohnson@gmail.com)

## **Elmsbrook Gardening Group (EGG)**

[elmsbrookegg@gmail.com](mailto:elmsbrookegg@gmail.com)

