

Hi everyone,

We wanted to provide a brief update to you all on activities from the Otter Valley Association. This email contains the following items:

1. OVA Summer Party – book your place by April 24th.
2. Membership fees are due now.
3. Annual General Meeting – save the date!
4. The summer Newsletter is almost here. Will you be receiving it?
5. We're launching a brand new photographic competition!
6. OVA Initiative update: Water Quality up the river Otter
7. OVA Initiative update: Blue plaque and the notable of the Otter valley
8. OVA Initiative update: Flora & Fauna
9. Bird boxes and bug hotels
10. Facebook, Web, Newsletters & Email updates
11. Volunteers needed

1. Remember to book for the summer party

Cut-off date for booking onto our party is 24th April.



Our summer party is taking place on the 8th May at the Budleigh Salterton cricket club. This is open to ALL members and we hope that you can make it.

[Please click here to register](#)

The party starts at 19:00 with a welcome drink and canapes. There will be a fully manned bar available throughout the evening, where further drinks may be purchased.

There is a large car park and should you wish, there are conveniently timed bus services from both the Sidmouth or Budleigh Salterton directions, with nearby bus stops. You can find these on-line via stagecoach.com.

As you will see from the notes below, we are planning to have some experts on-hand to discuss our major initiatives – including water quality up the river Otter, Blue plaques (now and for the future), walks program and the flora & fauna of the valley. Please do come along and join the team, learn more about these initiatives and hopefully we can entice you to join on – while enjoying the great company, canapes and drinks 😊

Please contact us via info@ova.org.uk if you have a query.

2. Membership Fees are due now

Thank you to all of our members who paid their membership fee on time this year and continue to support the OVA. We wanted to remind members that those who have not paid, or not paid in full, will not be receiving the printed newsletter – which of course is a great shame.

3. Otter Valley Association – Annual General Meeting

NOTICE is hereby given that the 45th Annual General Meeting of the Otter Valley Association will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th June 2024 at the Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Previous AGM held on 12th June 2023
3. Matters Arising

4. The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 24.
5. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
6. Election of Trustees as Officers
7. Election of other Trustees
8. Any Other Business
9. Proposed Date of next AGM - to be confirmed.

Nominations are invited for Trustees to join the Executive Committee in accordance with the Constitution and should be submitted to the Secretary, Otter Valley Association, PO Box 70 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6WN, to be received not less 14 days prior to the AGM.

The draft Minutes of the AGM held on 12th June 2023, together with the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts will be available on the OVA website prior to the meeting or on written request to the Secretary. It is hoped that the formal business will be followed by a short presentation to be given by a guest speaker – further details will be available on the website nearer the date.

4. Summer Newsletter

Please watch out for the next newsletter which should be dropping through your letter-box by early May. Please understand that the newsletter will only be distributed to those who have paid their OVA dues – at the current rate of £10 (individual) or £15 (family). We have a massive issue including a number of articles, many photographs and updates.

- Chairman's Update
- Notice of the Annual General Meeting
- The next 3 months of our Walks Programme
- An update from the Built Environment committee
- Articles on Trees, Pheasants and recent events on the Otter Estuary Nature Reserve
- Launching the OVA Photographic Competition
- A major article on the water quality and other pressures facing the river Otter
- A historical view of Blue Plaques in the Otter Valley, and blue thoughts on Valley notables
- Fairlynch Museum Programs
- Bird Boxes & Bug Hotels
- Song of the river Otter
- Many photographs of the flora, fauna and views across the Otter valley

5. Photographic Competition

We are excited to let you know that we will be launching our first OVA photographic competitions. We are planning two competitions – one for children (15 years old or younger, as of September 30th 2024) and one for adults (16 years or older, as of September 30th 2024). The formal announcement will be in the next OVA newsletter – coming out at the end of this month.

We are very excited about this, and are delighted to let you know that we have three notable experts who have agreed to be the judges:

- Mr. David R White, naturalist. A local photographer who contributes amazing photographs to our OVA publications and facebook group.
- Mr Rick Lockwood, Otter Estuary Ranger, Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. Rick has had a lifelong interest in birds, and nature. He has worked in a variety of ranger-type and community engagement roles in the nature conservation sector.
- Lucilla Phelps FRPS, freelanced for 10 years before joining Sotheby's full time, firstly as Principal Photographer and ending up as Head of Photography. Since retiring she has taught photography to adults in Richmond, lectured to scores of societies in the SE and now SW of England, judged international exhibitions and had images accepted for many international and national exhibitions. She was chair for 10 years of the Professional Panel of the Royal Photographic Society assessing distinction submissions for ARPS and FRPS.

Look out for full details in the newsletter – and we look forward to you all taking part ☺

6. Initiative Update: Water Quality on the River Otter

We have started work looking at the issues facing the river Otter in terms of water quality. Working with other interested parties, such as the River Otter Fisheries Association. You will see a wonderful article in the next newsletter outlining the various issues facing our wonderful river. We will then follow that up with a look at solutions in a future issue. In the meantime, we are looking for anyone who is interested in this topic to volunteer and help the growing group of environmentalists. Please do come along to the summer party – where we will be on-hand to share with you what is happening in this area.

7. Initiative Update: Blue Plaques and historical people of significance

We have also started work on the subject of blue plaques across the valley. You will see two articles in the next newsletter – one outlining the various plaques that already exist, and a second insightful article looking at how to review future candidates for blue plaques. We are delighted to be collaborating with both the Fairlynch Museum and Michael Downes on this project – again please do come along to the summer party where we will have a few people available to talk about this exciting project. We hope we can entice a few of you to help out ☺

8. Initiative Update: Flora & Fauna

A very popular subject to our members has always been the flora and fauna of our valley. You will not be disappointed with the articles, and photo's, that are in the upcoming issue - including a wonderful article from naturalist David R White on the behaviour of Pheasants. Alongside this, Rick Lockwood, the estuary ranger, has provided a great update on the new Otter Estuary Nature Reserve.

9. Bird boxes and Bug hotels

Following on from the work our OVA environment committee has been doing with the local schools, we have produced two new leaflets for anyone to download and print – one on bird boxes and the other on bug hotels. Crammed full of interested facts and ideas on how to build, what types to use for which species and where to place them, we hope these will be received well by our members.

10. Facebook, Web, Newsletters & Email updates

As we evolve our charity, we continue to use different ways of sharing information. We encourage everyone to check out our various forums and engage – whether by liking something, or adding your own article.

- **Printed Newsletters:** We continue to publish a printed newsletter to all OVA paid-up members. This is produced quarterly. Our next newsletter will be published at the end of April. We are always looking for new articles for future issues – please contact us for any ideas you may have.
- **Monthly email updates:** We will be sharing a monthly email update to all OVA members similar to this. If you would like anything included, then please contact the editor at info@ova.org.uk.
- **Website (www.ova.org.uk):** Our website is where all material is published by the OVA – including updated walks, talks, articles, newsletters, flyers and publications. Please note that the printed newsletter is not posted online until the following newsletter is distributed – ensuring that all members are able to read the printed copy first.
- **Facebook:** We are building a community on Facebook. Here members can post their own articles and photographs, as well as comments like and engage with others. This community has now grown to 673 people from Exmouth to Sidmouth and from Exeter to Budleigh Salterton. We also have many people joining the Facebook group from all parts of the world – eager to see the photo's and community updates from one of their favourite places.
- **WhatsApp:** The walks team use Whatsapp to share information with the walkers. If you are interested in joining this, please join one of the walks and talk to the relevant walk leader.

11. Volunteers needed

As with all charities, we survive and thrive on the funding and assistance provided by you – our members. We have a number of vacancies that we are looking to fill with volunteers. If you can spare an hour or two a week, or a month, or a year ... then please do get in touch. Any help is appreciated!

- History – we are looking for someone to help us manage OVAPedia – including researching, writing and uploading new articles.
- Water Quality initiative – we are looking for people to help who are interested in helping evolve the river Otter back to where it needs to be in terms of river quality.
- Talks – we are looking for someone to help us organise our talks schedule. This involves gathering ideas and then working with other committee members and presenters to communicate.
- Events – we are looking for someone to help us manage our upcoming events – such as the members party and talks program.

Please contact info@ova.org.uk if you have time to spare and help us.