



AbTalk

News from Abthorpe

February 2006

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SURVEY

As mentioned in a previous issue, the Parish Council has responded to a request from the District Council to find out whether there is a need for affordable housing in this village. The objective is to provide housing for local people who would like to continue to live in the area but cannot afford to do so. Constructed by Housing Associations, these properties are made available either by shared ownership or straight rental. Between 4 and 6 houses can be provided in any scheme. From the initial responses, the District Council believes that there is a demand in Abthorpe for affordable housing, but needs more information, hence the latest survey which is being distributed with this issue of AbTalk to each household.

The survey form has been drawn up after consultation with the Parish Council, who were keen to keep it simple. A second stage will be for individuals potentially eligible to determine precise need. We did question the need for the section titled 'Ethnicity Monitoring', but were told that this is a legal requirement to enable the District Council to prove that it is not biased. However, you are free to refuse to answer that question if you so wish.

Please take a few minutes to complete the form.

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PEOPLE

Congratulation to Robert McCallum and Kelly Mills who are to marry at Abthorpe Church on 25th March.

And welcome to Helen Swift. Helen has moved to 2 Cadogan Place from London with her daughter, Kaya Lily, who was born early in December.

Sadly we have learned of the death of two former residents of the village. Celia Seal used to live in Stanhill Row before moving to Woodford Halse. Mary Beevor lived on the green before moving to Towcester a few years ago. Our condolences go to their families.

We are delighted that Melanina Giuliana is back home after her recent knee operation and subsequent convalescence in Daventry. Melanina is still recovering and we're sure would love to see any friends

THE PARISH PRECEPT FOR NEXT YEAR

When you receive your Council Tax demand from the District Council, part of it is set by the Parish Council. In Abthorpe, it covers the cost of street lighting, village green mowing, the running of the Parish Council and a few other local services. This year, we have once again not changed the amount of money that we require, despite rising costs particularly for electricity and insurance.

We have, in fact, built up considerable reserves over the last few years in order to purchase the new Burial Ground. That purchase should proceed shortly, although we still need to carry out groundwater

tests before full planning permission can be obtained.

Details of our finances are given at the annual Parish Meeting, which this year takes place on 22nd May.

VILLAGE FUND

There has been much praise for the Christmas events arranged in the village, and, in particular, the lunch for our older residents prepared in the kitchen of The New Inn (thank you Jane) by June Willsher and Jan Miles was a great hit and hopefully will spawn other events which bring together this special group of Abthopians - plans are afoot.

The Fund started with a new

group coming together to organise the village fete. Since then it has been formally established with the opening of a bank account with the Co-operative Bank, well known for its work with community groups, who have been very helpful with free advice. There is a Treasurer (Tim Pope), a Secretary (Jan Miles) who produces the formal agendas and minutes, and the group is held together by its acting chair, June Willsher. The most recent accounts show total income to date of £1,340 with expenditure on the Christmas activities (the lunch, children's party, Christmas lights and liquid refreshments in the church - the mince pies being offered by the Church) of £440, leaving an

estimated balance of £900. A more detailed breakdown will be posted on the village noticeboard and on the website in due course. The residue is intended to be used for the benefit of the village where funding is not available from any other source. Advice is still being sought on any restrictions as to what can be funded, but the committee is busy looking at various projects. The Fund will be built up by organising community events to replace the gap left by the hard-working committee of the Church Fabric Appeal. The principal focus of these events will be social, with fund raising a happy byproduct.

To that end, plans are in place for a quiz night on 4 March. There will be a ploughman's supper

included in the ticket price of £5, and a cash bar. Teams will be a maximum of 8, but you definitely don't need to form a team prior to the evening - come in ones and twos and make a team on the night. Flyers will be circulated shortly and tickets sold door to door in the usual way, or call June Willsher on



Shen Kendal and his sister Elsie Kelcher enjoy the Christmas lunch at the New Inn

850575. On Easter Sunday, 16 April, there will be an Easter egg hunt for

the children, and a treasure hunt for all the family on Sunday 30 April. Plans for this year's fete are being hatched, building on the success of last year to produce a bigger and better event. And to further swell the Fund, Helen and Tim Pope will be taking to the roads of Connemara, running this international Irish marathon on 26 March. This year you will be asked to guess Helen and Tim's combined finishing times, with a prize of £100 to the winner.

ABTHORPE CHURCH FABRIC TOTE

By now everyone will know that the Abthorpe Church Fabric Appeal has been wound up after being incredibly successful over the past two years. Many thanks to Steve Andrews and his team.

The church has decided to continue with the tote, all proceeds being 'ring-fenced' for church fabric only. We will continue as before with the tote being drawn on the last Friday of the month at The New Inn; the January winner was Eric Malcomson, winning £247.50 (and buying the drinks? - Ed.).

Thanks to all members who are continuing and if anyone would like to join, please contact me.

Richard Tomalin (858316)

TIDYING THE VILLAGE

Spring is a good time to tidy the ravages of winter from the focal points of the village, and this year willing volunteers are asked to gather on the Green on Saturday 29 April at 2pm to spend a couple of hours clearing the paths, winter debris, grass edges, etc. Please bring your own tools and bin liners, because if any item, however small, is supplied by the Parish Council the terms of their insurance are in doubt! It's a good social occasion for all the family, and as your reward a BBQ will mysteriously appear on the pristine Green after the hard work.

TADD

Towcester Area Door to Door has a new email address: tadd@btconnect.com

SPEEDING THROUGH THE VILLAGE

Reducing the danger of crossing the road, particularly at the junction with Brackley Lane, has long been an aspiration of the Parish Council, and the difficulties are well known. Some changes have been made to the school bus journeys and stops to make interim improvements for the children and parents. Research has also been started into providing hard standing for school buses to set down on their return journey opposite School Lane where crossing the road is marginally safer than at Main Street for those living on

the 'Green' side of the road.

We already know from the Community Speedwatch project that just standing by the road in high visibility jackets has a calming effect on drivers. The Parish Council is therefore proposing to purchase high visibility jackets which will be available to anyone to wear when crossing the road. Please contact Keith Fenwick (857083) if you would like to use one. You might also find that standing by the road with a clipboard has a noticeable effect on traffic speed!

None of these ideas is perfect, and the greatest hurdle to overcome is alerting local people to the dangers of the road through the village.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

Jane and Robbie have arrived with great energy and plans for their new business, and have welcomed back into the pub many faces who have been missing for quite some time. The renewed sense of vitality has communicated itself to all who venture in. As a family, they already feel settled in the village as if "they've never not been here", with Michael enjoying Sponne School and getting involved in Sunday rugby.

Lunch has restarted from 12.00 to 2.30 every Sunday. On other days of the week lunch is served between 12.00 and 2.30, dinner from 5.00 to 8.00, but these evening times are flexible. And Jane is participating in the Chronicle's February offer where you can dine for £5 by collecting three special vouchers from the newspaper (excluding Valentine's Day).

However, Valentine's Day is just one of the events being arranged. A special menu will be offered from 7.30, for which booking is a good idea. On Mothering Sunday there's a celebration lunch from 12.00 to 2.30. Easter Sunday festivities will top them all as Jane plans to celebrate her 40th birthday with a mediaeval-themed day, complete with pig roast and mead. Start planning your fancy dress! The birthday revelries combine with the Easter egg hunt centred on the pub and organised by the Village Fund.

Looking further ahead, don't be surprised if you're approached to join the revitalised darts team (to be formed ready for the new season); to squeeze into those cricket whites for an inter-village match; or to add your strength (ladies as well as men) to a tug o' war team.

POLICE INFORMATION SERVICE

Northamptonshire Police has introduced a new countywide telephone number for the public to use when making non-emergency calls to replace the five currently being used which will gradually be phased out. The new number

for all non-emergency calls to the Force is: **08453 700700**, charged at the normal local rate.

Over 500 frequently asked questions to the police are answered at www.askthe.police.uk. Do use this in the first instance if you have a general query to release call centre time for more urgent calls. You may also find some more interesting dining-out facts! - such as that over a million calls received annually by Northamptonshire Police.

NEW DIABETES GROUP

South Northants Diabetes UK Group for people with diabetes and their carers has been recently set up for Towcester and the surrounding villages, helped by Towcester Lions Club and supported by health care professionals. Meetings are held every other month at Riverside Centre, Islington Road, Towcester, often addressed by professionals working in the field. The next are 7 February and 4 April, both starting at 7.30. The group is chaired by Roy Tillen who can be contacted on 354887 for more information.

BACK ISSUES OF ABTALK

Remember something you read in a previous issue and want to refer to but no longer have the paper copy? New to the village? Or just to remind yourself of the range of items we've covered in a year - all the back issues of the newsletter are available at

www.abthorpe.net/newsletters.htm on the Abthorpe website (links from the home page are through News).

With this issue the newsletter is celebrating its first birthday and we had hoped to ring the changes on the cover picture but time has got the better of us. If anyone has any shots of the village which lend themselves to an elongated landscape shape we'd be delighted to see them.

EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

An increasing number of employers are supporting their employees to volunteer as a group, with obvious benefits to both sides. South Northants Volunteer Bureau would be delighted to hear from any local organisations that have suitable projects - perhaps environmental or social - which would involve a group working for a specific time on a defined project. A consultancy company organises and manages the logistics of running such a project. Towcester SNVB can give you all the details on 358264.

GIVING BLOOD

Many of us give blood regularly, some cannot face the idea, while others know that it is a good thing to do, but never get round to doing it. However, you never know when you might need some yourself.

It is not just people who undergo operations or have accidents who need blood; there are many

disorders which are treated by regular transfusions. Some of these are quite rare, but when people need to be treated, a constant supply of blood is needed. For instance, a pregnant woman needed several pints in week in the later stages of her pregnancy due to blood incompatibility with her husband. Some leukemia patients need regular blood 'refills' and this can go on for years. Similarly, some forms of anaemia are only treated by regular transfusions. New procedures are being developed which require even more blood – currently 2.1 million donations a year are needed.

Anyone between the ages of 17 and 59 can donate; once you have started you can continue until you are 69. Giving blood only takes less than an hour and you can do it up to three times a year. The process is quite painless; you may feel a little tired for a couple of days, but otherwise there are no after effects. There are sessions in Towcester at the Leisure Centre on 10 February, 10 March, 28 April and regularly after that, from 12:30 to 3:00 and 4:15 to 6:45. You

can just turn up, or book in advance. See www.blood.co.uk or telephone 0845 7 711 711.

LADIES (AND MEN) WHO SEW

Now that so much attention has been lavished on the fabric of the church, the redecoration has shown up the rather sad state of some of the kneelers. The PCC is therefore asking for anyone who has time to spare during these long winter months to stitch a new kneeler. Jan on 857427 or Alison on 857795 will happily explain more about the project.

COOKIES FOR A CURE

Unfortunately, the information did not arrive in time from LEPR, the British Leprosy Relief Association, for me to organise the planned event on 25 January. Hopefully we can try again another time.

Jill Tolson

CHIP AND PIN

And finally... don't forget that from 14 February you will have to have learned your PIN numbers. Signatures will no longer do, except in very limited cases.

It's Your AbTalk - for some issues we have plenty of material, for other ones we struggle to fill the pages. So if you would like to contribute or if there is a topic which you think we should include, please get in touch with the editors. We will always find room for interesting items.

EVENTS*Friday 10 February*

Mums, Dads, Carers and Tots: 10.00 - 12.00, Brick Cottage, Main Street (information on the group from Julie Dyckhoff, 858600).

Tuesday 14 February

Valentine's Day dinner at The New Inn, 7.30pm (857306 for details and to book).

Monday 27 February

Parish Council Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School - parishoners welcome to attend.

Saturday 4 March

Quiz in the Old School, 7.30 for 8.00, tickets £5 including a ploughman's supper, bar.

Sunday 26 March

Mothering Sunday lunch at The New Inn, 12.00 - 2.30 (857306 for details and to book).

Sunday 26 March

Helen and Tim Pope will run the Connemara marathon.

Monday 10 April

Parish Council Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School - parishoners welcome to attend.

Sunday 16 April

Easter and Birthday celebrations at The New Inn, details and times to be announced.

Saturday 29 April

Tidying the Village - meet on the Green at 2pm, all very welcome.

Sunday 30 April

Car treasure hunt for all the family - full details soon.

Monday 15 May

Parish Council Annual General Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School.

Monday 22 May

Annual Parish Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School - please do come and hear reports from all sections of the community.