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News from Abthorpe

July 2006

### **FUN DAY, 9 SEPTEMBER**

The plans for the Fun Day, organised by the Abthorpe Village Fund Committee, are taking shape. The afternoon will start with a lunch time BBQ at 12.00 for 12.30 with a bar in the marquee. Tickets, at £3 for burger, sausage and salad, and £5 for steak and salad, will be available shortly from Jan Miles (857427), as will raffle tickets.

From 2 o'clock an arena on the village green will be the focus for a dog show and various games for children and adults, and on the surrounding areas, stretching from the Old School to the Church, there will be lots of activities for the enjoyment of the very young through to the more mature young. Tea will be served in the Church, while the Old School will host a photo display and the only stalls of the afternoon, the perennial favourites: books and toys. Interspersed with the games activities will be races divided into five categories: pre-school, infant, junior, senior and adult. Skill or fitness are definitely not prerequisites, just a willingness to join in. The emphasis of the whole afternoon will be on 'fun' and not fund-raising. So please make a date in your diary and come along with all your family and friends.

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### **OTHER VILLAGE FUND NEWS**

Rather old news now, but the car treasure hunt on 30 April came to an amicable conclusion after the teams lead by Eric Malcomson and Dave Cunningham tied following the initial marking, and remained so after the tie-breaker question. How else to award the winners' laurel wreath than by the toss of a coin; Dave proudly wearing his trophy demonstrated the outcome. All the families and friends who had taken part appreciated the time and effort Guy Linnell had put in to preparing the event on behalf of the Village Fund.

### **ABTHORPE BROADBAND AGM**

The second AGM was held on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The formalities were quickly dealt with. Chairman Eric Malcomson remarked that each year of ABbA brings with it its own trials and tribulations – whether it be wind, rain or the inevitable leaves growing on trees. This year has been interesting if only for one particular occurrence: the demise of our satellite link. The change-over to land lines inevitably caused a bit of disruption, but we were lucky in that we had already started the transition to a different service provider. The new infrastructure has now settled down and over the summer a final re-organisation to the ABbA system will be made so that we should all – not least the

volunteers who maintain the systems - look forward to better stability and somewhat faster downloads.

Dave Cunningham gave a favourable financial report. Reserves had decreased slightly during the year, but costs had now dropped with the cessation of the satellite link. The subscription remains at £5 per month for unlimited access. A significant new feature has just been provided at the pub, where users can now have free access from laptops and WiFi equipped mobiles.

With no other nominations for Directors, the existing holders were declared re-elected.

After the formal part of the meeting, the wine and cheese, admirably organised by John Riches, came out. Several PCs were set up to demonstrate voice services and other features. A CD of PC utilities was provided, including virus protection, Google Earth and a program to download World Cup fixtures.

### **PARISH ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May was chaired by Barry Haycock, the new chairman of the Parish Council. He reported that the Parish Council had the usual mass of paperwork to review. This continues to come from a wide variety of sources, some is relevant and interesting, some is not.

A second Speedwatch week was organised, this time in better weather. This is now a very popular programme,

so we will not be able to participate again in the foreseeable future. Revised school times have meant that both buses call in the village at the same time; means of staggering this have been organised. We have also asked the County Council for an alternative bus stop opposite School Lane, but they are unwilling to proceed as the ownership of the verge is uncertain - in our view this is simply an excuse to do nothing.

The road to Towcester was finally put right last summer. Serious erosion has occurred this year due to blockage in a drain pipe at Plumpudding field; we are now promised that this will be rectified in July.

Some progress has been made on the new burial ground. We have told the Diocesan authorities that we now wish to proceed with the purchase. The price has increased since it was originally agreed five years ago and we still have to undertake ground water surveys to obtain planning permission.

A survey on the need for affordable housing was carried out but limited real need was established when all criteria were considered. Our best hope now is in conjunction with one or more adjacent villages. The village confines were reviewed by SNC, but no change is proposed.

The helicopter landings at Slapton do not seem to have been so frequent lately, but the matter is still

causing a problem. The District Council, who should be taking action, continue to prevaricate - they have now decided that more measurements need to be made and that expert opinion on the planning law has to be obtained.

Abtalk is now well established as a 2 monthly feature and usually runs to 8 pages. Please keep your contributions coming.

Various reports were given. The headmistress of Silverstone School spoke at length about its achievements and successes. Progress continues to be made in enhancing the facilities at both schools. June Willsher spoke about the Village Fund. This year, a Fun Day will be held in early September - which you already know about!

#### **DOG FOULING**

Sorry to bring up this one again, but someone has recently been leaving (usually purple) plastic bags containing dog mess on verges in the village and on surrounding footpaths. Please do your duty and take the dog mess home. Plastic bags take years to degenerate.

#### **CYCLING FOR CHARITY**

On 28th June, Simon Pont rode from Trafalgar Square to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris by midnight the same day, a total of 250 miles in 15 hours and 50 minutes. Simon and friends Oliver Harrison and Howard

Thomas raised £4,000 for Cancer Research UK. Simon's family has been affected by cancer and the charity is close to his heart.

In 2004, Simon and a group of friends rode from Calais to the Mediterranean in ten days and raised over £9,000 for their favourite cause. One of those friends is currently in remission from cancer. You can read all the details of their exploits at [www.london24paris.com](http://www.london24paris.com)



**THAT OLD CUSTOM OF MORRIS DANCING**  
Brackley Morris Men, joined by dancers from Aynho Apricots, The Royal Oak Eden Morris and Northampton Morris Men, celebrated May Day on the Green.

#### **SOUND SKILLZ(!) FOR 12-18 YEAR OLDS**

Sound Skillz is a project which provides equipment, training and an online support network for young people to learn to DJ and/or make computerised music. If at least four teenagers from the village are interested, all the equipment and help will be brought to you once a suitable venue has been found. More information: Adam Griffith, 07782 535084; [www.soundskillz.org](http://www.soundskillz.org).

#### **POLICE REORGANISATION**

On 1 April Inspector Leonie Tromans (based at Towcester Police Station) took over the South Northants Sector in a reorganisation which makes this section 30% of the geographic area of the county. There are four teams within the sector, Towcester Rural covering Abthorpe and seeing an increase in staffing levels. Towcester Rural is led by Sgt Dave Lowe, with PCs Martyn Dearsley, Will Hawes, Steve Horner, Mick Wallace and Community Support Officers Tara Cooksammy and Charlotte Pearson. Officers' contact email addresses and more information can be found at [www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk). South Northants Sector now comes under Northamptonshire West, one of two areas (the other being Northamptonshire East) which replace the previous four-area structure. The telephone number is 08453 700 700.

For real emergencies - when life is at risk, when you see a crime in progress or there is a traffic incident involving personal injury or danger - dial 999.

### SUCCESS ESCAPES THE NEW INN CRICKET TEAM

The mid-May cricket challenge between the New Inn and the Bartholomew Arms at Blakesley attracted a good deal of Abthorpe support at their away fixture. Amidst suitable encouragement and challenge from the sidelines, Abthorpe piled on 106 runs, not quite enough to prevail but undoubtedly a leisurely 'tea' taken at the pub between innings made up for their disappointment. Let's hope this returns to being an annual fixture.



*Captain Philip Berry in impressive action attempting to emulate his 1998 century*

### BUT HOW DID THE TUG OF WAR TEAM DO?

After reaching the semi-finals at the Silverstone fete, the Abthorpe Tug of War team in action against Slapton on 2 July. Battling valiantly against a



*The successful pull*

biased (sloping) pasture land, they won one pull, but could not overcome Slapton's superior strength or guile (sponsored team shirts?). However, they, like the cricket team, upheld our reputation magnificently and were amply rewarded by Hook Norton's thoughtful contribution of a barrel of beer.

### **NEWS FROM THE NEW INN**

Summer is generally a time when people arrange their own entertainments and garden BBQs, but Jane and Robbie Costall are putting on a few events over the next couple of months.

On 22 July why not get together teams of 4 for a quiz, starting at 8.00pm. Then the bank holiday weekend will be celebrated on 27 August with a pig roast, all day entertainment including games and a bouncy castle, music and a fun quiz. Jane will also be supporting the Fun Day on 9 September by providing the 'Inn on the Green'.

The darts team continues to meet and play during the summer, competing in the Towcester and District League each Monday, alternate ones being at the New Inn. As ever, your support is welcomed.

Jane is again participating in the Chronicle's meal deal offer, so look out for vouchers in the local paper.

### **DO YOU HAVE ANY SPARE TOOLS?**

Towcester Tools is the local branch of a charity which refurbishes unwanted tools which are then sent to Africa for use by local artisans. They would welcome donations of tools or time. More information: Mel at the Volunteer Bureau, 358264.

### **ELECTORAL REVIEW**

The Electoral Review has been completed and left our Ward, Washington, unchanged. It comprises Abthorpe, Moreton Pinkney, Sulgrave, Wappenham, Weston and Weedon, and returns one member to the South Northants Council. The electorate is expected to rise between 2003 and 2008 from 1337 to 1399. Abthorpe's estimated population is now 295.

### **ROADS**

The County Council highways contract with Atkins for 2006/7 is valued at approximately £30 million and is being re-tendered in August 2007. The local South Northants community engineer is Nick Gore, available on 01604 654331.

In the latest plan for roadworks, the forecast is for severe delays of more than 30 minutes at busy times (is this anything more than usual?) as extra lanes are built on the A5/A43 roundabout between August and November. There will be lane closures and 40mph speed restrictions.

And a hefty tome detailing the Northamptonshire local transport plan to 2011 was published recently. Although not recommended for bedtime reading, parts may be of interest: [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/LTP2006-2011](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/LTP2006-2011) or call 01604 654411.

More interesting dining out facts: there are 425,121 km of road in the country calculated to take up 2,200

## PEOPLE

Very best wishes to Clare Chater who will shortly be moving to Old Stratford.

After a fairly short stay in the village, Barbara, Phil and Daniel Wahwerit are moving abroad to pastures new - Kuwait will be their next home. Hopefully they will take with them some fond memories as well as the wooden spoons won at the quiz. Russell and Sarah Ellis-Jones will be returning to Holly Cottage shortly.

Good luck to Jan Harding and his partner who have left School Lane for Chipping Norton and welcome to Rachel Parish.

Also welcome, a little late, to the Noble family who have moved into The Elms from Edinburgh. Stephen has just left the army and his wife Fi have two children, Katie, 9, and George, 7, who go to Blakesley Primary School. After several house moves in the Army, they hope to settle down for a while and already feel very much at home here.

sq km of land, or less than 1% of the total land area of the country.

### ADULT CARE INFORMATION

Northamptonshire County Council has set up what sounds like a very useful service for older people wanting information on helping to live at home in safety, Meals on Wheels, disabled parking badges, home care, financial information relating to care, community services, etc. It offers a 'one-stop shop' at the end of a telephone which is answered by qualified advisors in community services rather than the call centre approach with an automated system which we all find so frustrating. The freephone number is 0845 124 4500, open 8.00 to 6.30 Monday to Friday, and 9.00 to 1.00 on Saturday.

### FREE REGISTRATION FOR TADD

Towcester Area Door to Door, one of the charities supported by the Parish Council, offers transport to medical-related appointments for anyone who cannot access public transport (and there's very little of that in Abthorpe). There is an annual registration fee and a small charge for each journey. The Parish Council has agreed to pay the registration fee for any parishoner

who uses the service. Details from Gail Coombs, 857901.

### **TOWCESTER SCOUTS AND CUBS**

The local Scout troop is looking for helpers over the age of 18 to share their skills with local young people. They are in particular need of a lady prepared to join the Tuesday cub pack. The local Volunteer Bureau on 358264 can put you in touch if you think you might like to help.

### **FREE PROTECTION FOR YOUR HOME**

Safe 'n Sound, in partnership with SNC, SNVB and the Energy Saving Trust, offers free smoke alarms, door chains, low energy light bulbs and advice on protecting your home. More information: 358264.

### **EVENTS**

#### *30 June - 14 July*

Brackley Music Festival: Flamenco, folk, big bands, blues, opera, jazz in a variety of venues. Tel: 01280 702441

#### *Saturday 15th July*

Pig Roast in support of St John the Baptist Church, Old School, 7.00 for 7.30. Tickets from David Hughes, 858060

#### *From Monday 24 July throughout the summer*

Programme of local sports and arts for 5-18 year olds. Colin Hull, South Northants Sports Development Officer, 322337 or 322334

#### *Saturday 22 July*

Quiz at the New Inn; team of four; 8pm start

#### *Thursday 27 July*

Fiori Musicali summer season comes to Castle Ashby with a baroque concert: Vivaldi, Handel, Bach. [www.fiori-musicali.com](http://www.fiori-musicali.com)

#### *Monday 31 July, 11 September and 23 October*

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

#### *Sunday 27 August*

Family bank holiday entertainment all day at the New Inn

#### *Saturday 9 September*

Abthorpe Village Fun Day on the Green. BBQ from 12.00; fun and games from 2.00