



News from Abthorpe

March 2007

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Parish Council consist of seven members elected for a period of 4 years. Duties are not onerous, but members are expected to attend the meetings which take place every 6 weeks. While the Council does not have any major powers, it is part of the formal structure of local government and is able to put forward views on a variety of topics affecting local people. It can also take the initiative in providing local services and in ensuring that other local government organisations are aware of things which need attention.

The next elections are due in May, so now is the time to consider if you would like to become a Parish Councillor. Do you have any burning issues? Are you prepared to devote some of your time to the community? How do you want to see the village develop? One thing which does make the Parish Council stand out from the other councils is that there is no party politics. All the members in the past have stood as independents. It is well over 20 years since we have had a contested election so it would be good to break that 'tradition'. In fact, on several occasions there have not been enough candidates nominated and the vacancies have had to be filled by co-option.

If you are interested, you can find out more by talking to one of the existing councillors or coming to our next

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meeting on Monday 16th April at 7.45pm in the Old School. Notices calling the election will be displayed on the notice board on Wappenham Road. Polling day is usually the first Thursday in May, with nomination during April – there is only a short window to do this. It is best to get applications in quickly to allow time for any errors to be rectified.

THE NEW BURIAL GROUND

About eight years ago it was realised that the existing burial space had limited capacity. Although this is owned and operated by the Church, provision of any new facilities becomes the responsibility of the Parish Council. The Church offered a piece of ground on the Silverstone Road at a favourable price and after detailed consultation with villagers this project proceeded. The first stage was to obtain planning permission. The Foot and Mouth outbreak delayed this, but permission was eventually obtained subject to further groundwater tests being carried out. Sale of the ground was also held up because of objections to the closure of the existing burial ground, a process which is still suspended. Despite this, the Parish Council reaffirmed its decision to purchase the new land last year and asked the Church for permission to carry out the groundwater tests. A response to that request has not yet been received. Planning permission is critical to this project, but the existing permission expires in June this year and an application will have to be made to renew it. To complicate matters, the District Council has stated that we will have to reapply for planning permission until the burial ground is actually used. Given the number of burials in the existing ground, it is impossible to say when that the first burial will occur.

What seemed a few years ago as a fairly straightforward project has become more and more complicated. Now, therefore, is the time to reconsider whether to continue with the project or abandon it.

When originally consulted, villagers strongly favoured the retention of burial facilities in the Parish and accepted that the site offered, while some way from the village, was as good as could be found. Since then some of the practical problems have become more apparent. Given the size of the village it may take some years before even a handful of plots are required in the new ground. Many people today prefer cremation, while others have reserved plots in the existing facility. Running a burial ground has its complications. Apart from the legal formalities to be observed to comply with the Burial Act, the burial ground must be operated safely. Headstones, for instance, have to be properly installed and regularly inspected. Operation of the new burial

ground will impose an additional administrative burden on the Councillors and the Clerk. The cost of purchasing the ground, including fees, has increased and is now estimated at £7,500 to purchase the land and obtain planning permission, of which about £1,200 has already been spent, and a further £3,500 to make the ground fit for use. On the positive side the Parish Council now has a much greater reserve towards meeting these costs.

We would like to know your views at the Parish Annual Meeting on Monday 21 May in the Old School. The meeting starts at 7.45pm. Alternatively, feel free to talk to the Clerk or any Councillor, or to contribute your views in writing any time before then.

ABTHORPE VILLAGE FUND

Following on from the Christmas celebrations - and wasn't the Christmas tree twinkling in the churchyard delightful? - the Village Fund Committee has devised a programme of events for 2007 (always subject to change of course, as the best laid plans of mice and men.....)

Race night. with supper	Saturday 31 March
Whist drive	Saturday afternoon, 28 April
Car treasure hunt	date to be confirmed
Children's picnic	last week in July (day will depend on the weather)
Fun day	Saturday 8 September
Beetle drive	October
Christmas lunch	Thursday 13 December
Carols on the Green	Saturday 15 December
Children's Christmas party	either Saturday 15 or Sunday 16 December

There is an event for which your help is needed:

We would like to start a Saturday afternoon whist drive. It used to be a very popular pastime in years gone by, but card playing is not so frequent a leisure activity nowadays. So in the inaugural session planned for 28 April we'd like to bring together those who can play - the experts, playing at their own tables - with those needing a refresher demonstration, and beginners who can learn together. Would you like to take part? Would you be willing to demonstrate, or teach absolute beginners? June Willsher on 850575 would love to hear from you.

Again, June would welcome any comments on any aspects of the proposed programme above.

The Committee held its inaugural AGM back in November but those who missed it may be interested in the accounts summary. Although the aim of the Fund is not to amass large amounts of money, a reasonable residual balance is necessary to fund

events and have a working budget. The total income during 2005/6 was £3,197, with expenditure of £1,767. Some of the expenditure was on free events, such as the children's Christmas party, the tree and lights, the older residents' Christmas lunch



Although it seems a long time ago now, the singing on the village green at Christmas was memorable, as was the the entertainment by the children and adults during refreshments in the church



*Helena and Jeremy
Pope*

and the Easter egg hunt; the rest on funding events which went on to produce a surplus. From the accumulated profit of £1,430 the marquee, bunting and insurance were purchased to leave a total surplus for the year of £895. The full accounts are available for anyone who is interested.

MORE INTERESTING FACTS...

The Northamptonshire Rights of Way Team during 2006 has installed 286 fingerposts, 56 kissing gates, 35 bridle gates (which sound interesting: what are they - can anyone help?), 19 field gates, 78 bridges under 7.5m and 6 over 10m.

REMINISCENCE BOX

The Alzheimer's Society is collecting items for a Reminiscence Box and is looking for donations of any artefacts such as old kitchen utensils, tools, bottles, washboards, local newspapers/magazines - in fact anything that will bring back memories of the past. If you can help, Elizabeth would be delighted to hear from you (sorry, we don't have her surname). Please call her on 07747 034218.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE FORUM

NORDAF has launched a new website at www.nordaf.co.uk giving valuable information on services and support.

Michelle Batchelor is also available

as part of a Victim Support project to give individual support - guaranteed to be in complete confidence - on 01604 603477.

REQUEST TO ALL DOG OWNERS

Mrs Breen at Home Farm has asked if everyone walking their dogs on the footpath next to her property would kindly keep them on a lead. She has had some unfortunate incidents with dogs and her hens, so to avoid any repetition it would be appreciated if dogs are kept well under control in that area.

ARTS NEWS

We regularly receive the programme from Chenderit Visual Arts Centre at Chenderit School, Middleton Cheney, which has a range of events. Of particular interest to anyone with an artistic bent is their adult community evening programme of classes in painting and drawing, ceramics, digital photography, bookbinding, etc.

Although their current term is under way, it's probably a good time to find out what may be of interest for next term: 01295 711567; www.chenderit.northants.sch.uk.

And you can sign up for a free newsletter, *Arts News*, which is an interesting mix of information and what's on in the world of books, music and the visual arts around South Northants. Sue Carverhill is

the contact on 01327 322334;
sue.carverhill@southnorthants.gov.uk.

ABTHORPE BROADBAND ASSOCIATION (THE CHEAPEST IN THE WORLD?)

In pursuit of their aim to bring broadband to the community, ABbA is now offering free internet access at the New Inn for laptops equipped with Wi-Fi. And just in case anyone is not yet aware, broadband is offered in Abthorpe and Slapton at just £5 a month. Details from 857083 or the Abthorpe village website: www.abthorpe.net.

SOUTH NORTHANTS VOLUNTEER BUREAU

SNVB has recently started a forum to increase its communication with the local community. If you have a point of view to make or anything to publicise you will find the forum at www.snvb.org.uk. Apparently the range of topics and the number of visitors to the site is already creating a stir.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

Devil among the Tailors, or Northamptonshire skittles, has made a welcome return to the pub after the old skittles table was sold by a previous landlord some years ago. (It sounds as though there must be a tale to be told there!) Robbie and Jane have bought a replacement from G J Pepper, a specialist craftsman in Wellingborough.

Saturday 10 March saw the end of season party for the darts team. The team has just completed its first season in the Towcester Village League, finishing bottom it must be said but having a good time in its quest for success; and as every good sports team says: things are looking up. The new season has already started, so we wish them well.

The skittles team met with more success in the Village Pubs League, finishing in the middle of the table having battled against more teams than are currently in the darts league. Their last game of the season is on 5 April, but a summer season is planned, and more players are wanted for that. So if you fancy joining in - every week on a Thursday evening - talk to Jane or Robbie.

Among the upcoming events is a major challenge on Sunday 1 April. Lots of support is needed from the village to see off the challenge of Blakesley to a day of pub games: aunt sally, darts, dominoes, skittles, card games and garden Jenga. The word on the street is that around 30 people will be coming over from Blakesley, so it's all hands on deck to keep up the Abthorpe end from 12.00 onwards. Jane will reward you with free food and the end of evening celebration karaoke will be doubtless a fitting climax regardless of who wins.

Mother's Day is fast approaching and Jane has created a special set

menu on Sunday 18 March of three courses for £7.95 if you'd like to treat Mum. From 1 March the lunchtime menu of 2 courses for £5.00 has been on offer to all ages, served Tuesday to Saturday 12.00 to 2pm.

The murder mystery evening on 21 April starts at 7.30 and will last for three to four hours. A full evening's entertainment is provided including a three-course meal. There are only a few tickets left: cost is £9.99 and prebooking and prepayment is required.

Following the skulduggery afoot at the recent quiz night, Robbie is retaliating with a Politically Incorrect quiz on 6 May, the bank holiday weekend.

And the annual Abthorpe -v- Blakesley cricket match is set for

Sunday 3 June (all very above-board and no 'tactics' employed at all!). Cricketers of all ages are required to augment the team; Philip Berry (857531) or Jane (857306) will be delighted to hear from you. Success eluded the Abthorpe side last year, but if we muster all our skills and experience perhaps we can change the balance of fortune.

Looking further ahead, gearing up for the Grand Pix there will be a pig roast and entertainment from Craig on vocals and guitar on Saturday evening (7 July) before the big race. And again, the Classic Cars weekend on 28/29 July will be special, with a set menu and a return visit by the Northampton duo, Six String Vandals (who helped the darts team celebrate their end of season).



*New
Year's
Eve
masked
party*

PEOPLE

We would like to send our condolences to the family and friends of Alice Salmons, who died in January at the great age of 98. Alice had lived in Abthorpe virtually all her life, having moved here from Slapton, her birthplace, at the age of two, and was our oldest resident. She was a highly respected villager with a wonderful sense of humour. Alice and Betty Bodily, a friend and relative by marriage, worked together at Trueform's Abthorpe shoe factory in Silver Street. Betty was a 'skiver', not someone who is work shy but an employee who cut the leather ready for machining, whilst Alice worked in the 'closing' room where the shoe uppers were transformed into the finished article. She loved gardening and until a year ago grew lots of her own vegetables in the plot behind her cottage in Wappenham Road.

[Ed: This peep into long-lost Abthorpe makes it important that we capture as many tales of the past as we can. Would anyone like to take on the project of either putting together a mini-Living Archive, or at least noting snippets from older residents that can be shared with those of us who long to glimpse into the past of the people who have lived in our lovely village? Please let me know.]

Pauline Reid, Curate of Abthorpe and the other four parishes in the Whittlewood Benefice, has come to the end of her training and is moving with her husband, Ian, to Dullingham in Cambridgeshire to continue her ministry in the Raddesley group of commuter villages between Cambridge and Newmarket. Many good wishes go with her as she takes on her own parishes.

There has been a flurry of new residents who have moved in recently, and judging by the number of 'for sale' boards, more to come.

Sam and Daryl Cozens have managed the building project and done quite a bit of the work themselves over the last year, creating their home at 22 Wappenham Road. They have now moved in with son Jack, who is still at school in Wootton, the village they moved from, but will be going to Sponne in a couple of years. His love of football frequently takes him off to Newport Pagnell football club. Daryl is yet another motor racing aficionado in the village, being a director of RML touring cars in Wellingborough.

PEOPLE

Lucy and Carl Brennan have completed their purchase of Forge Cottage on the Green and are just making it ready to move into before baby no.2 is born in April. No.1 son is another Jack. Lucy grew up in Blakesley so is moving back home after time spent in Hampshire with Carl, where he enjoyed sailing. However, the distance to the coast from here is unlikely to deter him from continuing to indulge his passion.

Jamie and Julia Ford-Cordes moved into High Trees in Wappenham Road at the end of November from Newton Longville. Jamie currently works as a finance project manager at Abbey in Milton Keynes. Other dog walkers will probably have met them walking their two dogs, Alfie a chocolate labrador and Toby a black lab.

Bryony and Dan Clarkson come to Stone Barn before Christmas with their children Finn, who is 5½, and Scarlett, 2½ - and halves are very important at that age! Their new baby is due on Friday 16 March, so the numbers of children in the village is increasing at a wonderful rate. And we should welcome Bryony's mother as a 'temporary resident'; she is looking after the children while Bryony is in the John Radcliffe and will become a familiar face, especially at the nursery school, where Scarlett is newly enrolled. Bryony is planning to start up her interior design business as soon as new baby allows, assisted by Dan who also project manages building schemes.

And just a note that there will be no lunches on Easter Sunday as a private party will fill the dining room.

The recent charity race night was an outstanding success, raising £523 for Barnados. Jane plans to follow up with a casino night in the autumn to support the work of the Alzheimers' Society.

WINE TASTING

Talking of village generosity, Joyce and John Riches raised £80 for Age Concern recently as a result of a Fairtrade Wine Tasting evening. In fact the evening spawned the germ of an idea to have a monthly wine tasting 'club' where favourite wines could be shared with like-minded people. If anyone is interested in starting it off and/or taking part please call - Jill Tolson (857320).

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWS

Recent Church tote winners are Janet Dancer in December who won £257.50 and in January Richard Gladdle was in luck. Pauline Reid was the very appropriate February winner, with £255 to take to her new home in Dullingham (see People).

The PCC is planning a new venture for this summer, opening Abthorpe Gardens to the public during the weekend of 16 and 17 June.

LOOKING FOR SERVICES

We don't want to venture into the realms of advertising in Abtalk for several reasons, not least because it puts pressure on the already busy editors to produce an issue at regular intervals. However, if anyone is looking for special services that they have been unsuccessful in finding elsewhere, it seems a good channel of local communication to use the pages of the newsletter to spread the word. Therefore please let us know if you would like to make a request for recommendations for, say, a gardener, handyman, cleaner, etc. (contact nos. on the front page.)

NEW LEARNING CENTRE AT BUCKINGHAM

The Buckingham Centre at Verney Close has just opened in response to a request for more classes in this area. There is an eclectic mix of courses on offer. Apart from the usual subjects offered to adult learners,

you can indulge in eBay Basics, learn creative approaches to stress, play with Word and Clipart, and improve your digital photography techniques. There are one-day Saturday courses, and weekday and evening block sessions. It looks a fascinating programme and they are also open to suggestions if your interest isn't covered. More on 0845 045 40 40; www.adultlearningbcc.ac.uk.

SWIMMING LESSONS IN TOWCESTER

Julie Dyckhoff and Gail Coombs are leading a protest against the changes to children's swimming lessons in Towcester Centre for Leisure. Courses of lessons normally run during school term time but the plan is now to extend them right through the school holidays for an almost continuous period of 46 weeks, without consultation with the community. A petition was presented to the Centre Manager on 5 March arguing that the new programme will disrupt family life. The full course will have to be paid for, so either families will lose money and teaching continuity by not attending some lessons or take part even on Good Friday and Easter Monday regardless of family plans.

Although the Centre insists it is company policy to retain the 46-week programme, the door does not seem to be completely closed. Following the petition, the company has agreed

to open up discussions with Julie and Gail, and has already initiated a review of the programme with teachers and staff. It will be interesting to see how much the company is willing to listen to the strong concerns of their users.

DEMISE OF MORE LEYLANDII

The line of Leylandii trees which borders the footpath leading from Cadogan Place towards Wappenham is to meet its end of 26 March. That side of the footpath, known officially as RA5, is owned by South Northants Council which has ordered their felling. They have outgrown their

welcome, cutting light and views from the bungalows in Cadogan Place and creating a tunnel of the footpath. However, when a branch came down into one of the gardens during the recent high winds that was the last straw. The roots will also be ground out so that they cannot regrow. Residents and walkers alike will be pleased to have that area opened up.

And just a reminder.... You can read back issues of Abtalk on the website under the News section www.abthorpe.net/newsletters.htm



The recent snowy day meant a good few people didn't venture out of the village. Snowmen sprang up all over the place. One was the creation of Martha Gray, although dad Steve probably enjoyed the opportunity to play as well. This is Rusty the Snowman

EVENTS*Sunday 18 March*

Mothering Sunday Service, 9.15, St John the Baptist Church
Special lunch menu at The New Inn

Tuesday 27 March

Parochial Church Council AGM, The Old School, 7.00

Saturday 31 March

Race Night, 7.30 for 8.00 at The Old School, £3 including hot supper
Church spring clean, 10.00 - 12.00. All pairs of hands welcome.

Sunday 1 April

Pub Games challenge, The New Inn, 12.00 onwards

Monday 16 April

Parish Council meeting, 7.45pm, Old School

Friday 20 April

Revd Pauline Reid licensed at Dullingham, evening, 857996 if you would like to
join the coach party

Saturday 21 April

Murder Mystery evening, The New Inn, 7.30, tickets £9.99 including dinner

Saturday 28 April

Whist drive, 2.30 in The New Inn

Monday 14 May

Parish Council meeting, 7.45, Old School

Monday 21 May

Parish Annual Meeting in the Old School at 7.45

Saturday 3 June

Annual cricket match against Blakesley

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 June

Abthorpe open gardens, organised by the PCC in aid of the church

Saturday 7 July

Pre-Grand Prix pig roast, The New Inn

Saturday 28 July

Special menu and entertainment to accompany the Classic Cars event, New Inn

Saturday 8 September

Village Fun Day on the Green

Thursday 13 December

Christmas lunch for older residents