



Season's Greetings to everyone in Abthorpe

December 2011

AB

MINI FARM

South Northants Planning Committee considered the application from Mini Farm for permanent planning permission at its meeting on 3rd November. You may recall that the family has permission to remain on the site until 2013. As well as seeking to make that permanent, approval was sought to keep three travelling caravans on the site and to remove the condition that it could only be occupied by Mr Fletcher and his family.

Abthorpe Parish Council objected, reflecting the views of the majority of villagers, on the basis that this was a residential development outside the village confines. The timing of this application, when there was still over two years of the temporary permission to run, was questioned. A large number of other objections

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were also put to the District Council, including from both Slapton and Bradden Parish Meetings.

At the meeting on 3rd the District Council planning officer recommended that the application be refused. He described the application in detail and explained the reasons for refusal, one of which being that the site is not considered suitable as a permanent Travellers' site due to the lack of facilities and local services. Both Steve Crowcrofts, chairman of Bradden Parish Meeting, and Keith Fenwick spoke to stress the main points of their objections.

After some discussion, where the members of the Planning Committee asked about the current occupation of the site, the Committee voted unanimously to reject the application. This decision has been arrived at purely on planning grounds: not only the District Council's policy on residential development in the countryside but also the guidelines and policies on the provision of sites for Travellers and Gypsies.

The District Council now has the problem of providing a number of permanent pitches for Travellers and Gypsies and current indications are that they will not have anything in place until 2014, so it is possible that an application to extend the temporary permission for Mini Farm will be made in the next 18 months.

SUPERFAST BROADBAND

At present, broadband speeds are limited by the distance from our village to the telephone exchange. We actually do quite well in Abthorpe compared with some other villages such as Wappenham. But whether you have your own broadband service or use ABbA, there are limitations. The best speed we can get is about 2.5Mbit/second - none of us can get Superfast Broadband which is defined as 24Mbit/second or more. This is being introduced throughout the country on a commercial basis but there is no prospect of that happening in rural areas for many years to come.

However, government money is being made available to ensure that rural areas can benefit from faster speeds. At the request of the Parish Council, ABbA has been asked to investigate how some of this money can be directed our way. To introduce superfast broadband requires two things. The first is a fibre optic link to the village from either Silverstone or Towcester. Secondly the data must be distributed around the village - the final connection to homes can either be over the existing telephone wires or via ABbA's wireless network. A meeting has already been held with Northamptonshire County Council and another one is planned in the new year. A formal Expression of Interest needs to be submitted by

the end of January to tap in to the money available.

To have any chance of success we have to demonstrate as a community that we want superfast broadband. Initially, this is via an online petition organised by NCC at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/96W7GJ7>. If you have a computer and use the Internet, please go there and register your interest - not just once per family but once for every computer, iPod, etc. You can also find out more about the part NCC is playing from their web site: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/envIRON/bigidea/pages/superfastnorthamptonshire.aspx

If we all take action now we could see a real improvement in our Internet access in the next year or so.

ABbA NEWS

The Annual General Meeting of Abthorpe Broadband Association, was going to take place on Tuesday 10th January. However, due to the timing of our discussions with NCC over superfast broadband, we plan to delay the meeting until 31st January so that we can keep you abreast of the latest developments. Watch out for confirmation of the new date.

Even if you are not currently an ABbA member, you will be welcome to attend the meeting.

PARKING IN THE VILLAGE

Among the many delights of Abthorpe is the character of the buildings established well before cars were even conceived. One of the consequences we have now to take account of is finding space for this most essential transport.

There have been recent incidences of vehicles not being able to enter the centre of the village via School Lane or Main Street, raising the obvious concern for the access of emergency vehicles.

This therefore acts as a timely reminder to people living in those roads - and their visitors - to park as thoughtfully as possible so that ambulances or fire engines can access all parts of the village.

DIAMOND JUBILEE MUGS

Ten years ago we celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee by giving mugs to all the children in the village and selling them to everyone else. The Parish Council plans to do the same for next year's celebrations. Three designs are available - two are very similar to the Golden Jubilee ones but this time there is a new design based on a national public competition.

At one time there was a Mothers and Toddlers group in the village, but that folded about 15 years ago when there were no under-fives living here. Some money was left

over, and that was passed to the Parish Council for safe keeping. As no other use for this has been found it will be used to pay for the mugs for the ever growing band of under-16s here now. Mugs will also be available for purchase at an attractive price.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

Janet Dancer is our local Poppy Appeal collector, a job she has undertaken for a long while now. Her work for this year's appeal was as successful as ever, raising £380.55 from the village. This was added to the Wappenham and District Branch collections, which cover a number of villages in the area, giving a grand total of £3,265.93.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

The monthly quizzes continue to be very popular. On 25th October Great South Run sent their winnings of £130 to PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) Association. Seven teams competed vigorously and good humouredly on 22nd November, four being within half a point going into the final round. West Enders pressed on and won £103 which was donated to the charity Crisis. The Christmas quiz on Tuesday 20th December will be a grand finale to a year's fund-raising for a variety of charities.

The bar will be open on Christmas Day from 12.00 to 2.00, and one of Bunny's famous pig roasts with live music is being arranged for New Year's Eve.

The Christmas menu is available at www.slaptonmanor.plus.com/Christmas.html, with the special offer of a free bottle of wine for groups of four. In fact Christmas lasts until 15th January at the New Inn!

CAROL SINGING

With Christmas in mind, and after the abortive attempts of the last two years because of the weather, carol singers will again be out on Tuesday 20th December. As many people as possible are needed, so bring your voice (whether in tune or not) and a torch to The Old School at 6.30 for a lighthearted singing jaunt round the village. In previous years villagers have donated generous sums to Crisis (for the charity or to get the singers to go away has yet to be fathomed). This year's charity will be decided by those who take part, but a warm welcome awaits at the pub to finish off the evening, and the opportunity to stay on for the quiz and supper (just £3!).

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST NEWS

Remembrance Sunday

For the past three Remembrance Sundays, the lives of former village people who fought for their country have been highlighted. Inscribed on the war memorial are the names of villagers who died serving in both World Wars. Also recorded on a plaque beneath the memorial are the names of those who served in World War One, survived and returned to the village. That list incorporates ten members of the Snelson family including that of Joseph Phillip Snelson. His grandson David Snelson kindly attended the service to explain to the packed congregation how his grandfather had served his country.

Phillip Snelson was only a teenager when he joined the British Expeditionary Force as a member of 306 Field Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was serving on the Somme battlefields near the French town of St Quentin when the enemy released clouds of toxic gas that affected Phillip. But he survived the war and returned to work in the then Abthorpe shoe factory situated close to the New Inn (see *Abtalk* July 2011). David brought along the inscribed silver cigarette case, lighter and match holder that were presented to his grandfather by his fellow workers. The inscription reads: "Presented to Gnr P. Snelson on active service 306 Siege Battery R.G.A. -



David Snelson

B.E.F. France for his 21st Birthday Feb 21 1919 - from his fellow workers" The names of those who contributed to the gift are also stated. "Mrs Burt, M A Snelson, S Barrett, P Snelson, E Flowers, W Barrett, J R Snelson, Mrs E Sewell, W Flowers, G Morris, W Warman, Harvey Rush, T Snelson, L Snelson, D Snelson, W Snelson, H Rush, H Hunt, W Timms, W Foster, A Salmons, R Reeve, Ivy Snelson." Many of those family names survive in the village to this day.

Two years later on 23rd February 1923 Phillip married another villager, Ruby Dodds. They lived in a cottage in Main Street that they named 'St Quentin.' Sadly Phillip died from the effects of mustard gas in 1930 when his new son, David's father, was only three years old.

After the service it was learned that one member of the congregation was a serving member of the army due to fly to Afghanistan on active service that very evening. Our

best wishes go to him and his colleagues.

Gift Boxes

This year Abthorpe has become involved with Operation Christmas Child, a project to send gift-filled shoe boxes to disadvantaged children in many parts of the world.

The final total was 33 boxes. Barbara Malcomson was delighted with the response and proudly presented the gifts to Rev'd Paul McLeod and Rev'd Graham Buckle during a service at the end of October. The gifts were sent on their way to delight children of many races and cultures across the world.

Church Tote

The winners of the two most recent tote draws were Rona Cambray in October and Lorraine Salmons in November, each of whom won £230.

Family Carol Service

Christmas Eve at 4.00pm
followed by mince pies and mulled wine - a lovely
way to start Christmas with the family

Christmas Morning Service

Holy Eucharist at 9.15am



Barbara Malcolmson offering gift boxes to Rev'd Paul McLeod and Rev'd Graham Buckle

flowers growing in pots and much more besides. The refreshment area did a roaring trade. After the event when the donations had all been counted Liz and Barry revealed the remarkable total of £4,520 and they are keen to thank everyone who helped to raise such a magnificent amount.

ABTHORPE VILLAGE FUND

This year the Village Fund has again invited over 20 residents for a Christmas

lunch at the New Inn on Thursday 15th December. Hopefully pictures will be available for the next issue.

WHETHER THE WEATHER BE COLD,
Or whether the weather be hot,
We'll weather the weather
Whatever the weather
Whether we like it or not.....

Barry Haycock, as a local farmer, has kept meticulous rainfall records over many years. The average annual rainfall in this part of Northamptonshire is between 26 and 28 inches. This year to October only 13.73 inches had been recorded. The water table has dropped and many local springs have dried up. So now let us hope that there are significant falls of rain.

MARIE CURIE DAY

Marie Curie Nurses assist the care of cancer patients and complement the care given by the District Nursing Service within the NHS. Such nurses work mainly during the night caring for terminally ill patients' needs. Each October since 1983 Liz and Barry Haycock have organised a 'coffee day' in their home to raise much needed funds to assist the work of these nurses. Prior to this year's event they had raised an amazing £74,287.

As ever this year their home was packed with home made puddings, cakes and preserves, candles of all shapes, sizes and colours, cards, bric-a-brac and fresh vegetables. There were apples, wallflower plants,

DO YOU ENJOY READING?

A number of people have expressed an interest in forming a book group in the village. The idea would be to share books enjoyed and recommended by members in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, meeting in each other's homes once a month. Hopefully it would start in January.

If you like to take part please contact Alison Symmers on 857416; symmers@abthorpe.net.

PANTOMIME TIME

Weston and Lois Weedon Drama Club is presenting the pantomime *Robinson Crusoe* on Friday and Saturday 3rd and 4th February at 7.30pm at Lois Weedon Village Hall. with a matinee performance on the Saturday at 2.30pm.

David Riecken on 860234 has ticket information and would also like to hear from anyone who fancies taking part as there may still be some unallocated roles.

ALTERNATIVE OIL SUPPLIES

Having mentioned the Yelvertoft Oil Buying Consortium (YOBCO) in the last issue, we have just learned that Northamptonshire ACRE is setting up a local buying syndicate for domestic heating oil and rolling it out across the county. Initially they are looking for local community coordinators who are willing to collate members' monthly oil requirements.

If you would like to know more visit www.snvb.org.uk/News/562.html; 01604 765888; oil@northantsacre.org.uk

OLYMPIC TORCH

The Olympic Torch will be taken on a 70-day route around the country next year before the Games start. Details of the towns it will pass through have been announced, although the exact route is not described.

It is not coming through Abthorpe but will be close on 2nd July when it travels from Coventry to Rugby, Dunchurch, Northampton and then goes on a roundabout route to Leicester.

Then on 9th July it will be taken from Cambridge to Oxford via Milton Keynes, Bletchley, Buckingham and Winslow.

FILM ABTHORPE

The Plank went down well as a lighthearted commencement to the December evening, reminding the older audience members of the range of comedy talent in Britain in the 1970s. It was followed by the ever-congenial Steve McQueen in *Bullitt*.

The January offering on Thursday 26th will be a different experience. Recommended by one of our regular audience, *Laagan* is an Indian film in a similar genre to *Slumdog Millionaire* – "but better".

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT NEWS

Bill Newton Dunn is a Liberal Democrat MEP, one of those elected to represent the East Midlands. He is providing regular email reports on his activities in the European Parliament. If you would like to receive these let him know at bill.newtondunn@europarl.europa.eu, or write to 10 Church Lane, Navenby, Lincoln LN5 0EG.

SEED EXCHANGE

On Saturday 25th February take spare seeds from your garden along to Wappenham Village Hall from 2.00 to 4.00pm to exchange for others you'd like to try. Even if you haven't any seeds to take you can help yourself in exchange for a small donation. It's a good excuse for indulging in coffee and homemade cake as well.

Ashley Warren of the Bell Plantation has been invited to bring some chickens along together with information about how to look after them for anyone who wants to know what it takes to have your own eggs.

COULD YOU BE A FOSTER CARER?

Northamptonshire County Council has launched an appeal for foster carers for children over the age of ten. There is an urgent need for at least 20 foster carers to give local children aged between 10 and 18 supportive homes and the stability

they need to help them through a period of disruption in their lives.

Councillor Andrew Grant, cabinet member for children, learning and skills, said "These children are at a crucial stage in their lives and just like younger children they need care and support to help them negotiate through a challenging period. Fostering older children and teenagers has quite specific benefits for people who prefer not to have the physical dependencies of a baby or toddler and who'd enjoy interaction with a young person."

Foster carers receive an allowance to cover caring for a child and are paid. They receive support from the county council's fostering team as well as full training.

You can find out more about fostering by simply turning up at one of the following information events; no advance booking required. Wednesdays: 11th January, 8th February, 14th March at The Lakes, Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7YD, 7.00 to 9.00pm. Or call the fostering team on 0300 126 1009; www.fosterme.co.uk

OLD SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

The quiz and fish supper evening on 26th November raised around £400, another useful boost to the funds. Thanks go to Roger Tolson for his entertaining questions and control of the unruly.

PEOPLE

Many of you will remember Simon Pont and his family who used to live in Wappenham Road and emigrated to London, Ontario. Here's his latest news:

"After four years in Canada (learning to shovel snow, understanding hockey, drinking beer, etc. eh?) we passed the citizenship test. At 1.30pm on Wednesday 23rd November 2011 we took the oath and officially became Canadian Citizens.

... and they said it wouldn't last."

Simon, Laura, David & Rachel Pont

Eleanor Gough is currently working in South Africa preparing penguins and other birds that have been affected by pollution for release back into the wild. Penguins are an endangered species, and Eleanor and other volunteers from across the world are helping at a centre operated by the South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds - or SANCCOB for short. It is a place where sea birds go to be cleaned if there is an oil spill in the Cape of Good Hope area. Eleanor, who hopes to study veterinary medicine at university, is gaining hands-on experience working with animals and birds. The following is a short extract from her blog:

"Work has been going really well. I love SANCCOB so much! I managed to get some pictures of a few SANCCOB duties, like setting up pens and tube-feeding birds. Getting bitten has also become the norm. Some penguins don't need to be force fed, they can just take the fish from your hands - they're known as 'free-feeders'. It's better for penguins to be able to free-feed as it means we don't have to handle them as much. Unfortunately in Pen 2 there are an awful lot of free-feeders, so feeding time now



PEOPLE CONTINUED

bears uncanny resemblance to the January sales. And there are always some penguins who think they're free-feeders, but they're really not. They take the fish from you, and then don't know what to do with it. A few seconds later they've thrown it on the floor and are back at your feet asking for another one - so occasionally you have to help them."

Gemma Briggs and Carl McKellar have recently arrived at 8 Wappenham Road with 21-month old Sonny, a lively chap who is looking forward to making friends in the village.

Although originally from the northern climes of Cumbria and Yorkshire Gemma and Carl have just moved from Towcester, deciding that Abthorpe life holds attractions for the family. Motorsport occupies a prominent place in their lives, with Gemma working as a freelance journalist and editor of *MSA*, the magazine of the Motor Sports Association, and Carl in PR and communications in the touring car world. Away from work Carl has a keen interest in old films, especially those by Wilder and Hitchcock, while Gemma is looking forward to having a little more spare time to indulge her enjoyment of art, and print making in particular.

They are looking for a babysitter to allow them some social time, so if anyone is interested please email gemma.briggs@btinternet.com.

Congratulations to Eugenie and Craig Skinner of Wappenham Road on the birth of Thomas George. Thomas arrived on 1st November, weighing 9lbs 7oz.

And more baby news: Rachel Charles and Mike Matthews have become grandparents and Ruth a great grandmother for the first time. Jonathan Nicholas, weighing 8 lbs, was born in Zurich on 29th November to their son Owen and his wife Antje. Antje is from a village in former East Germany, north of Berlin. She went to school in the nearby town of Templin, the same school as Angela Merkel had attended. Owen and Antje met as postgraduate students at Leicester University, and since their marriage they have lived and worked in Zürich, Heidelberg and India. They are now back in Zürich, their favourite place.

**NEW POLICE NON-EMERGENCY
TELEPHONE NUMBER**

The new non-emergency number to contact Northamptonshire Police is 101 (textphone 18001 101). The cost from landlines and mobiles is

15p per call regardless of time of day or duration. 999 should still be used in an emergency. The current number - 03000 111 222 - will remain available for the time being.

DIARY

Tuesday 20 December

Carol singing round the village, 6.30, The Old School
Christmas charity quiz, New Inn 8.00, £3 including supper

Christmas Eve

Family Carol Service, St John the Baptist, 4.00

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist, St John the Baptist, 9.15
New Inn open from 12.00 to 2.00

New Year's Eve

Pig roast and live music, New Inn

Thursday 26 January

Film Abthorpe, *Laagan*, 7.30pm, The Old School

Tuesday 31 January - to be confirmed

Abthorpe Broadband Association AGM, New Inn, 7.30

Friday and Saturday, 3 and 4 February

Robinson Crusoe, Lois Weedon Village Hall, 7.30, matinee Saturday
2.30; 860234

Saturday 25 February

Seed exchange, Wappenham Village Hall, 2.00-4.00