



News from Abthorpe

May 2012

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

The meeting this year takes place on Monday 14th May in the Old School starting at 7.45pm. This is the annual event for everyone in the parish where you can find out what has been happening. As well as the Parish Council, the church, village path warden and local schools will all give reports. We hope that the County and District Councillors will be present to give an update on what is happening in their domains and the local police will also give a report. As well as listening, you can also ask questions.

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The Parish Council held its regular meeting on Monday 16th April. Most of the business was routine but it was reported that the planning application for 9 affordable homes in Brackley Lane has been approved. It appears that this was done without being considered by the District Council's Planning Committee but we have been assured that all our comments have been taken into account. New conditions included with the approval will limit the disruption during construction.

The new Localism Bill makes provision for a Neighbourhood Plan; at present it is not clear whether it will be either useful or necessary for one to be prepared for Abthorpe. Much depends on what the District Council puts in its Local Plan. It appears that the Neighbourhood Plan will adapt the Local Plan to the particular needs of a parish but if we do have to prepare one it could take a couple of years, will be expensive and involve a referendum.

BYWAY REPAIRS BEYOND BUCKNELL WOODS

Further to the article in the October issue, the work has actually taken place beyond Bucknell Woods towards Syresham. Recently, the hedges have been cut back and the

one on the north side laid. There is now a good drainage ditch which will help to keep it drier, so it is an open and pleasant track to walk along.

JULIA JARMAN COMES TO TOWCESTER

As part of Towcester's first literary festival, children's author Julia Jarman will be visiting Towcester Library on Sunday 10th June at 3pm.

TOWCESTER PRODUCE SHOW

Entry is now open to put your vegetables, fruit, home produce (including Towcester cheesecake) in the show which takes place on Bank Holiday Monday, 27th August. Contact the Town Clerk on 350995. It will be held in the Town Hall from 1.00 to 4.30pm.

CHURCH NEWS

The Annual Church Meeting was held on 25th April when Richard Tomalin and David Hughes were elected as churchwardens

The Parochial Church Council now consists of Rev'd Paul McLeod as Chairman, David Hughes Vice Chairman, Barbara Malcomson Secretary, Alison Robbins Treasurer, Richard Tomalin and Angela Darling.

Rev'd Paul McLeod, David Hughes

and Richard Tomalin as churchwardens and Barbara Malcomson who is Deanery representative are all ex-officio members. On top of that six members of the PCC are allowed but at present there are only two so it is a very small PCC. The support and help from members of the congregation is very much appreciated.

The numbers on the Electoral Roll have gone up this year from 25 to 29 which is very encouraging. Thank you to Electoral Roll Officer Steve Andrews for his work in reviewing the roll.

The PCC was one of many organisations throughout the country to hold a Super Soup Lunch to raise funds so that Christian Aid can help people in some of the poorest communities of the world. The home of Barbara and Eric Malcomson was packed with villagers enjoying homemade soups which catered for all tastes, courtesy of Richard and Carolynn Tomalin, Jenny Carter and Eric Malcomson. Not only did the event raise £230 but it also provided a wonderful opportunity for people to chat and generally put the world to rights.

Alison Robbins, Jan Miles and Francesca Wright led a short informal Mothering Sunday service, enjoyed by family members ranging in age

from two to ninety. The service concluded with coffee, soft drinks and home made biscuits specially baked for the occasion.

Future services have been arranged for May 27th (Pentecost) Holy Eucharist service at 9.15am; June 3rd, a short service at 10am to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee; and June 24th Holy Eucharist at 9.15am.

Following the huge success of the concert last year, the John Cleveland Band will be paying a return visit on Saturday 29th September. This event will be a joint fundraising event with the Old School Committee.

Recent tote winners were Rachel Atkinson who won £232.50 in February, Dave and Chris Cunningham the same amount in March. In April Darren Andrews won £237.50, a pretty good scoop for the newest tote member.

VISION YOUTH CAFE

The Café in Towcester has been awarded £10,000 by lottery-funded Awards for All to deliver a project for young people between 13 and 19. They are looking for enthusiastic and committed young people to get involved in arts activities with the aim of reducing rural isolation and anti-social behaviour.

The youngsters will get six free workshops and training sessions from professional youth workers; full volunteer induction at Vision Youth Cafe including access to further free training; nationally recognised accreditations for their voluntary hours; and a chance to make friends, get involved and have fun.

Further information from Steph (Youth Participation Worker) at Vision Youth Café on 07933507590 or email visionyouthcafe@gmail.com

ABbA AND SUPERFAST BROADBAND

In the February issue we reported on the ambitious plans by Abthorpe Broadband Association to bring superfast broadband to villages stretching through the Tove Valley: Wappenham, Weedon Lois, Weston and Slapton as well as Abthorpe. Superfast broadband will mean that we can all enjoy on-line TV and films, iPlayer and Skype without the constant 'buffering' that plagues so many of us when we try at present. The project now has its own website at www.tovevalley.net where you can read all the detail. Eric Malcolmson, chairman of ABbA, has been interviewed twice on Radio Northampton, and you can listen to his pearls of wisdom at www.abthorpe.net/broadband.htm.

This really is a community-driven initiative which has the potential to deliver what many in the communities desire (up to 100Mbps is potentially available). Key to ABbA's plans will be the purchase and installation of a fibre optic cable into the Tove Valley area.

The ABbA Team has met with DEFRA and Northants CC, and is building support in the other villages. So far the responses have been very positive.

There are nearly 1,000 people and over 100 businesses and homeworkers in the Tove Valley, and ABbA now needs your actual support for this venture. The website has links for you to pre-register your interest. Please take a moment to visit the site and tell your friends (in the Tove Valley) about it. The finances are such that to provide superfast broadband, ABbA needs 200 subscribers. The target charges are £120 a year for 30 Mbs, This is much less than mainstream superfast broadband ISP charges. ABbA currently charges £60/year for less than 2Mbps service as they operate as a not-for-profit community company.

A meeting has been arranged for everyone in Abthorpe on Monday 28th May - see back page for details.

PEOPLE

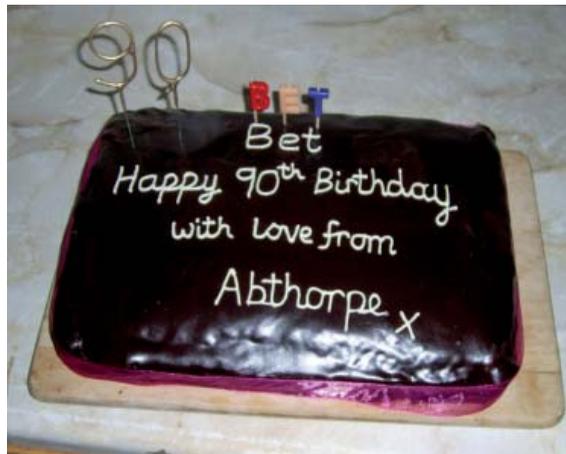


Mrs Barbara Rush, or Bet as she is known throughout the village, celebrated her 90th birthday on 26th April.

Bet was born in Northampton and lived there until 1937. She attended the Notre Dame Convent School that used to stand in Abington Street. During the Second World War she went to Leicester to

train as a toolmaker to help the war effort. Later she came to work in Abthorpe's shoe factory.

On her 21st birthday in 1943 she married Ron, an Abthorpe man. It was Easter Monday, Bet remembers. When the houses in Brackley Lane were completed in 1946 Bet and her husband moved in and she has lived there ever since. In 1948 Chris her son was born, followed by her daughter Heather. She worked in the canteen of the former Towcester Secondary Modern School. Chris became a cub scout in Towcester and shortly



PEOPLE (CONTINUED)

after Bet joined the committee and remained a member for 29 years, 19 of them as Treasurer.

In November 2009 Bet was travelling to Towcester in a taxi when it was involved in an accident at Abthorpe crossroads in which she was seriously injured. Bet spent 14 weeks recovering in hospital. She remarked recently that only the messages and goodwill of people in this village got her through. Bet loves people and is very interested in their lives. It's what keeps her young, she insists. That, and the thought of riding her famous skateboard!

After celebrating her birthday at home on the day with friends and family, she had a second mini-celebration during the interval at a recent quiz night in the Old School. The committee presented her with a birthday cake inscribed 'with love from Abthorpe' that was sliced up and distributed to the many people present; and yet another cake was presented to her in church the following Sunday!

A warm welcome to Emma Scott and Anthony Haslam who moved

into Ivy Cottage on Silver Street just after Christmas with their son, Gabriel, who is 16 months.

Anthony grew up in the area and managed to persuade Emma to move down from Cheshire. Could it be Anthony or Abthorpe that was the draw? They both work in Brackley, Anthony as an engineer, Emma with Tesco. Anthony is training for the Loch Ness marathon in September, so you may well meet him out pounding the lanes.

Also recently arrived in the village are Sylvie and David Coleman who have moved up from Surrey to be near their son's family and help out with their three-and-a-half year old twin grandchildren. They are settling in at 22 Wappenham Road, and looking forward to getting to know Abthorpe.

Their other son, Mark, has also moved with them. He has already found the delights of cycling around the lanes on his training rides. Sylvie and David also enjoy cycling, but probably of the more leisurely sort. We hope they'll be happy living in the village.

PEOPLE (CONTINUED)

Our newest arrival in the village: Baby Taff 2 (while awaiting his formal name), a son for Lucie and Paul Grimes of Stone Barn. He couldn't wait to arrive, beating the midwife to it, and weighing in at a healthy 10lb 3oz in the early hours of 29th April. Many congratulations to the family.

**LOCAL GUIDES**

*Chris Cunningham, Bradden
Brownies leader*

Can you help? We urgently need a new Guide leader!

At the moment one of our local Guide units, Greens Norton Guides, has only one leader which is neither easy or satisfactory. Is there anyone who would like to be involved with Guides?

There are currently 24 local girls aged 10 to 14 in the unit. You would be aiding and encouraging the girls in a wide variety of activities, games, crafts and outdoor activities including camping.

Being a volunteer is a rewarding experience. If you would like to know more, please do contact me on 857848. Thank you.

ABTHORPE BOOK CLUB

The book group is now settling in to a comfortable pattern, meeting on the last Monday of each month.

The range of books selected (very unscientifically) is broad, with *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett following *The 5 People You Meet in Heaven*. The most recent title, *Remarkable Creatures* by Tracy Chevalier, got the lowest rating of all so far. *Death Comes to Pemberley* in which P D James recreates the world of *Pride and Prejudice* and sets a murder at its heart will be reviewed and chewed over on 28th May.

You would be very welcome to join the party; just contact Alison Symmers, symmers@abthorpe.net; 857416.

THE FREE WATER SUPPLY UNDER ABTHORPE

The current hosepipe ban now may seem a problem to some gardeners but villagers had bigger problems when they had to collect their drinking water from central wells and taps around Abthorpe.

Settlements were formed where there was a fresh water supply so a spring must have been visible when the first settlement was set up at Abthorpe. One or two of the oldest houses had their own wells but later spring water was piped to the largest houses around the Green as well as the three farmyards. Before 1972 there was no mains water or sewage in Abthorpe, the only fresh water supplies being from the few wells fed by springs in some gardens or from this free village water supply which originated from Meadwell spring in the field behind the Stocking Frame from where it was piped to several central points. It was accessed by taps or pumps, such as the pump on the Green, a tap west of the Green below the church, one by the orchard in Brackley Lane, and the other next to Fawe Park on Wappenham Road.

The tap by the orchard in Brackley Lane ran very slowly and in 1932 it was taking 15 minutes to fill a bucket, so people would leave their bucket and come back to collect them when full. Mrs Page found that filling hers was even slower, not because of a hole in her bucket but because a greedy neighbour would pour her water into his bucket. When she found out and tipped water over him in anger he made sure she got fined at Towcester magistrates court. However, when she got back from court the widow found that someone had left the same sum of money on her table!

When Towcester Rural District council had houses built in Brackley Lane in 1947 they piped the village spring water to them and also to their other council houses which had been built about 1927 in Wappenham Road. The rest of the village struggled on for another twenty five years. Imagine fetching every drop of water in a bucket from the pump on the Green.

When a chimney fire occurred at Rozel in the 1950s the fire brigade put their hose down the chimney to extinguish a burning beam ruining the highly polished quarry floor with wet soot, much to the dismay of Loreta, the lady who lived there then.

The wells in the village are marked on the 1899 OS map. It's not easy to reproduce here, but can be found on the Abthorpe website for those

interested: www.abthorpe.net. The wells varied in depth and in the early 1900s butter which had been made at Foscode was stored down a very deep one called Barratt's well (possibly at Cedar Cottage in Main Street), to keep it cool in summer.

Although it is no longer taken from the taps the water still runs along the original line of its overflow on the boundary of Tan Yard and Deep Meadows at the entrance to the village in Wappenham Road (where it has recently been flowing with great abandon) before passing under the road, through the fish ponds, now filled in, across the fields to the stream.

A tan yard required plenty of water and the one in Abthorpe had been situated there from at least the 1500s. Both the Abthorpe and Slapton tanyards, now Fell Yard, were run by the same Knight family over many generations. It was a profitable occupation as shown by their numerous wills. In 1554 Edward Knight left money to the poor of Abthorpe, Slapton and Wappenham. Amongst other bequests was the rather unusual one of a calfskin to a friend to make him a jerkin.

Before mains pipes were installed, grey water from sinks ended in the stream near Tinkers Bridge (which carried the railway over the Tove) via the ditch in Tinkers Close where soap suds could be seen even in the 1980s as some houses were still using the old pipes. The cleaning of the ditch was the responsibility of the village whereas keeping a free passage for the village spring water became the responsibility of the County Council when they took over repair of the roads. They altered the culvert under the road by Deep Meadows when the water caused regular flooding. In 2000 when the pipe leaked on the Green it was the County Council that repaired it. This responsibility was laid down in the 1826 inclosure Act: -

'The spring in the 1st Allotment of Thomas Barford (field number 66) called Meadwell Spring and continued as a drain or watercourse under ground until it reaches an old inclosure belonging to Valentine Barford (field number 52) until it discharges itself by means of a spout on the Church green.

Which said watercourse, the said commission doth hereby order and direct shall be forever and hereafter kept in repair by and at the expense of the several persons liable to the repair of the public roads in the parish.'

When cottages were built as an investment a source of water was often

supplied either by sinking a well or installing a soft water tank for water off the roofs. Around 1836 three such cottages were built in the garden of Orchard Cottage in Main Street as a source of income for framework knitter George Wadey and his family. His will stated that the occupiers should all share a well in the garden with no right of way being obstructed.

In later years if the spring supply was low Albert Snelson was paid to pump water into a small reservoir situated near the spring in the field behind the Stocking Frame.

When the new Grafton house was built at Challock in 1839, T & J Morton were paid £3 10s 0d to sink the well, then another £1 10s 0d to deepen it. However, when they sunk a second one there just a year later it cost £18 0s.0d, deepening it in 1841 for £1 5s 0d, which shows that sinking wells was a difficult science.

Once mains water was introduced in 1972 the water authority encouraged people to fill the wells in with garden rubbish. The one at the Reading Room was used by the home guard during the war, and afterwards Bill Kendall remembered them disposing of their unused explosives down it. The public taps were sealed off but this did not stop the passage of the water.

Despite the mains installation Grafton View was without drinking water until after 1976. Mr Heggs walked to fetch his supply in a bucket from Plum Pudding spring where it came out of the verge near the village sign, east of the village. His hobnailed boots could often be heard, night or day, walking through the village.

So whilst people are paying their water bills all the time free water flows beneath the village. Sometimes it is unwelcome. When the water table is high some cellars in Main Street become flooded; it was a regular occurrence in the 1970s in the winter. During the time when Mr & Mrs Woodcock lived at Orchard Cottage a chain of six people bailing out with buckets were once unable to reduce the water level in the cellar below two inches.

M E H

[The recent rains have once again blocked the pipe under the road at the entrance to the village. The resulting flooding has damaged the road surface. This has been reported, but there is a large hole under the water there, so take care. *Ed*]

CARDBOARD RECYCLING

Some background information to the recent changes to the way cardboard is collected has been provided by South Northants Council.

The move follows the introduction of new legislation for cardboard recycling that means that any inks in the cardboard will no longer end up in processed garden waste. Apparently it will raise more income and lower the overall cost of the service.

The new arrangements are temporary until further improvements are made next year when the fleet is renewed. The council is considering introducing food waste collections and a bigger recycling scheme which may mean replacing the current boxes with a bin. More information:

www.southnorthants.gov.uk.

OVERHEAD POWER CABLES GO

Around the village green there were many overhead power cables supplying electricity not only to nearby homes but to street lights, owned and paid for by the Parish Council from its precept. One of the metal poles that supported a street light had become very rusty and had to be removed for safety reasons. As a consequence all electricity supplies

to that section of the village (north of the green) were routed underground, and the redundant overhead cables have been removed.

Following the report of the removal of overhead cables Stanley Clark of Harpole got in touch to explain the he believed that the supporting poles were originally erected by his father Walter Clark, supervised by his grandfather, Ebenezer. This took place in the late 1920s or early 1930s when they both worked for the Northampton Electric Light Company based in Angel Lane.

Stanley reminisced that his father had told him that because of the Russian Revolution there was a shortage of wooden poles in this country. The gap was apparently filled by the Northampton Tram Company that was doing away with its electric trams and replacing them with petrol driven buses. The metal poles and stanchions that previously supported the trams' overhead power lines were put to good use. They were transported to Abthorpe and other villages as supports for the newly installed electricity service. There are still some of these old metal tramway poles in use.

Who said recycling was only a modern phenomenon?

SAFARI SUPPER

The expanded rerun of last year's success is now full with 64 people looking forward to an 'interesting' evening. For each course eight hosts have bravely offered or been coerced into providing a starter, main course or sweet. Even more to be applauded are the reception and coffee hosts who will be invaded at the beginning and end of the evening.

A full report next time if anyone can remember what happened.

GIVE & GAIN DAY

Give & Gain Day is the UK's only national day of employee volunteering. The campaign encourages employers across the UK to get involved and encourage staff to volunteer a couple of hours during their working day to support initiatives in their local communities.

This year it will take place on Friday 18th May. Do you know of any projects that would like volunteer support? Are there any groups who would benefit from employer support such as CV writing, mock interviews, the world of work workshops? Is there a bit of DIY that your group has been putting off, but that the right volunteers could do in a few hours? More information:
nicola@snnvb.org.uk or 358264

NEW GARDENING PROJECT

SNVB has lottery funding for a five-year project called Garden Buddies. Starting this summer Garden Buddies will provide a bespoke volunteer gardening service to local elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable residents. The service will enable such people to remain in their own homes and enjoy the companionship of the volunteer gardeners. The volunteers will also benefit from developing confidence, social skills and improving their employability potential. SNVB will provide the volunteer Buddies and also all of the equipment. Further information: 358264.

DIAMOND JUBILEE

The plans outlined in the last issue of *Abtalk* are now being refined but the programme remains as before. Saturday 2nd June is set-up and mug day. All the under-16 children are invited to the Green from 2pm to receive their mugs. We will organise a group photograph so everyone has a memento of the occasion. Would fathers please come with their children - because they can then help put up the marquees. And that goes for any other able-bodied person. It does not take long to put up the marquees but as they are quite large

a team effort is needed. We will also be setting out tables and chairs.

The main event is on Sunday from noon. Bring your own food and drink, but if you want beer, the pub will be open. You could take a jug or container along there and get a few pints at a time. We will also set up a BBQ so that you can cook your own sausages and burgers (or even steaks if you want to splash out). There will be games for the young children if we can find volunteers to organise them. And a photographic display covering life in the village over the last 60 years.

Look out for the flyer with all the final details which will be distributed in mid-May.

The fun continues on Monday 4th June when Abthorpe has been challenged by Slapton to a cricket match at Slapton Lodge starting at 2.30. The team is not yet complete, so do sign up with Philip Berry if you can hold a bat. If you can't, then your support is needed to cheer on the Men of Abthorpe: 857531; philip.berry@abthorpe.net.

FILM ABTHORPE

Each month a regular filmgoer is now selecting a film they would like to share. *Butch Cassidy* was the first of these in March, followed by April's

offering of *Separate Tables*, a classic from 1958.

In an attempt to put some order into the programme, several dates have been set although not necessarily the films. So put these in the diary: 17th May, 21st June and 26th July.

REGULAR SHOPPING TRIPS FOR VILLAGERS

South Northants Volunteer Bureau is keen to hear from villages and community groups who would like to trial a range of village-to-shop routes.

If you are interested in discussing ways that people in the village and possibly in conjunction with neighbouring villages can hire their minibus for regular shopping trips to say Milton Keynes Shopping Centre or Northampton, Daventry or Banbury then please contact Nick King: nick@snvb.org.uk; 353321.

OLD SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

Jules Dyckhoff

Spring has arrived and with it the start of our fundraising for this year. Our thanks go to Lynn Neasham for hosting our first coffee morning on 18th April, and all those who braved the rain to help raise a total of £194.70. The quiz night on 28th April

was a well-supported fairly raucous evening raising £720.

Other dates for your diary are:

- ♦ Sunday 20th May: Plant Sale with tea and cakes in the Old School from 3 'til 5pm
- ♦ Saturday 23rd June: Fish & Chip Supper on the Village Green
- ♦ Sunday 22nd July: Lunchtime Family BBQ at Holly Blue Farm by kind permission of Sue & Merrick Loggin
- ♦ Saturday 29th September: An evening with the John Cleveland Band in St John the Baptist Church, in association with Abthorpe PCC
- ♦ Saturday 24th November: Race Night in the Old School.

More events will be added as the year progresses, so please keep an eye out for those flyers through your door.

Finally, we will shortly be in a position to submit our plans for the refurbishment of the toilets and, once planning permission has been granted, we will be able to get quotes for the cost of the work. Then we will finally know exactly how much money we need to raise. Our fundraising total so far stands at £6,210.49 and this amount has been given an additional boost by the very kind donation of £4,585.50 from the Old School Tote, for which

we thank Steve Andrews and the old Tote Committee.

NEW COUNTYCONNECT BUSES

New Bluebird Orion Plus mini-buses, designed for this type of service and wheelchair accessible, have arrived. To book the service call 0845 456 4474 or see www.county-connect.co.uk/information/ for more information

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

Life continues happily at the New Inn attracting people from within the village and further afield. It was hard to miss the visit of the Nene Valley Chapter of the Harley Davidson Owners Group when they powered through the village to make their lunch stop at the pub one Sunday recently.

Another tour to the Hook Norton Brewery took place on 18th April when 16 stalwarts started with breakfast in the pub at 9am to set themselves up for a gruelling day of tasting the product of the brewing process once they had learned the intricacies of maintaining consistent quality over the different brews. Not only did they test the output at the brewery but had to research how other landlords kept their Hooky beer. And of course there had to be

DIARY

Monday 14 May

Parish Annual Meeting, Old School, 7.45

Sunday 20 May

Plant Sale with tea and cakes, The Old School, 3.00-5.00

Tuesday 22 May

Quiz, The New Inn, 8.00

Sunday 27 May

Holy Eucharist service, 9.15

Monday 28 May

Abthorpe Book Club, Willowbrook, Wappenham Road, 8.00

ABbA meeting and presentation, The Old School, 7.00

Thursday 31 May

Film Abthorpe, The Old School, 7.30

Saturday 2 June

Children's photograph on the Green, 2.00

Marquee set up, 2.00 onwards

Sunday 3 June

Short Jubilee celebration service, 10.00

Lunch on the Green, 12.00 noon

Monday 4 June

Cricket match, Slapton Lodge, Slapton, 2.30

Tuesday 19 June

Quiz, The New Inn, 8.00

Thursday 21 June

Film Abthorpe, The Old School, 7.30

Saturday 23 June

Fish and chip supper on the Village Green

Sunday 24 June

Holy Eucharist, 9.15

Sunday 22 July

Lunchtime family BBQ at Holly Blue Farm

Thursday 26 July

Film Abthorpe, The Old School, 7.30

Tuesday 31 July

Quiz, The New Inn, 8.00

a debrief in the New Inn once they made it back.

Steve and Sian are settled in well and pleased with the way the restaurant is progressing. Indeed on Mothering Sunday not only were they fully booked throughout the afternoon but reluctantly had to turn people away as there was simply not enough space available.

The charity quiz evenings are always a success. 5+1 supported Cancer Research with their £100 winnings in March, and in April the Barflies were touched by the story of Claire Squires and contributed the total of £94 from the evening to the Samaritans through her Facebook page. The next quiz is on Tuesday 22nd May.



Superfast Broadband for Abthorpe and Slapton

Tove Valley Communities Superfast Broadband project aims to bring superfast broadband to the Tove Valley, making it one of the best connected places in the world by the end of 2012

The Tove Valley project can bring superfast broadband speeds of 100Mbps to homes and businesses at prices well below those in most urban communities

Find out more about the project and what it can do for you

Open Meeting Monday 28 May

The Old School in Abthorpe

Starting at 7.00 pm with a presentation at 7.30 pm.

Ask the experts about all aspects of the project

Speeds

Capacities

Prices

Set up costs

Equipment

How can you help?

Or visit www.tovevalley.net