

Season's Greetings to
everyone in Abthorpe

AB
A

News from Abthorpe

November 2016

There has been a long gap between newsletters (time to sack the editors?) so necessarily this issue will refer back to summer activities as well as look forward. Nonetheless, interesting things have been happening and snippets of news gathered, which all add to our experience of life in Abthorpe.

Editors:

*Jill Tolson
857320; jill.tolson@abthorpe.net*

*Keith Fenwick
857083; keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net*

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS*Keith Fenwick*

We have several meetings to report. The War Memorial has been cleaned; after taking expert advice we just gave it a wash with water and removed some of the moss growing on it. The defibrillator has been installed in the telephone kiosk and is regularly checked. So far it has not been needed but it is there just in case. The road surface between Wappenham and Towcester has been repaired with a better job than had been expected given the standard of previous repairs. It is likely that other sections of the road will deteriorate so we will keep an eye on it. The roads to Silverstone and Blakesley remains very unsatisfactory but work was not planned on that.

When one of the street lamps in Brackley Lane failed early in the year, it could not be repaired as the type of bulb used was withdrawn on environmental grounds last year. We knew this day would come, so had to purchase a new LED light. This is white rather than yellow. Its coverage is also different, with a narrower beam which restricts the glare into adjacent properties but reduces the light on the road. Since the white and yellow lights do not go well together we are now examining the replacement of all

lights in the village, either all at once or in groups. The existing yellow lights will all fail in due course, but in a random manner. We have been fortunate in obtaining a grant under the Construction Infrastructure Levy which will cover a substantial part of the total cost. We also have received a contribution of £3,000 to parish funds from the solar farm development at Handley Farm. When we have final quotes for the replacement of the lamps, we will decide how to proceed.

During the summer, some of the footpaths in Bucknell Wood were closed on safety grounds. Initially this was for 3 weeks but a six-month order then came into force. Some work has been done to renovate the paths so hopefully they will be available for use again in the New Year. Although the closure notice includes pedestrians, all the paths have others leading on to them which are still open.

The planning application for Mini Farm which was refused last December did not go to appeal, but not long after the period for appeal was over a new application was made, this time for fewer pitches. Only static caravans were requested, but an amenity block was included. The Parish Council objected, mainly for the same reasons as before, i.e.

that this is a development outside the village confines, that the applicants have not demonstrated that they are Travelling People as currently defined and that the sanitary arrangements were unsatisfactory. The District Council have, once again, turned down the application. Several reasons are detailed in the decision letter which can be found on the South Northants web site. Go to the planning section and search for applications for Abthorpe parish. There have been no other significant planning applications recently.

You will all, no doubt, have been affected by the work on the roundabout at Towcester. The name Abthorpe now regularly hits the road traffic bulletins because of the congestion on the A43. Bulletins are issued weekly; you can see the latest one on the village web site.

Finally, the Parish Council has moved into the age of Internet banking. All payments from the Council have to be authorised by two members; the

Clerk is not a signatory. Banks have recognised this need and now provide a system whereby online payments can be generated by the Clerk and then authorised by any two Councillors. As with all bank-related matters it took some time to get the account set up, but we now seem to have overcome all those obstacles.

Parish Council meetings, which start at 7.45 in the Old School and to which everyone is invited are:

Monday 19th December 2016

Monday 30th January 2017

Monday 13th March 2017

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

The Christmas menu is now available with two options: a pre-booked party menu for eight or more people which includes canapes, prosecco, three courses, mince pies, coffee



Carl and his team at the New Inn.

and chocolates, all for £30 a head. And an individually priced menu which includes festive fare. Both options will be offered throughout December for lunch or dinner.

On Christmas Eve Carl is planning a celebratory special 7-course menu. Look out for further details.

The restaurant will be closed on the 25th and 26th but the bar will be open as usual from 12.00 - 2.00 on Christmas Day.

On Wednesday 21st December at 6pm come and join in carol singing at the pub, sustained with beer and mince pies; an excellent start to the festive week.

New Year's eve will see the pub open for its usual celebrations.

Among the recent quiz winners have been M&Ms, No Eye Deer, Not



Rob Smith

Abba who chose the local Home Start charity to receive the £106 from the evening, and No Hoppers who certainly weren't useless sending £125 to Cynthia Spencer House.

A modest fee of £3 is extracted from each person for supper and the fun of the light-hearted quiz. The



The M&Ms pleased with their win

winning team chooses the charity, generally local, to which the money collected during the evening is to be donated. More than £8,200 has been raised since Rob took over the pub in 2008 and inspired these regular quiz evenings. It is a great achievement for a small village.

The next quiz is on 27th November, so do come along. You don't need to have a ready-made team as there are always ones to join. And one not to be missed is the Christmas version, this year on Sunday 18th December.

SISTERS REUNITED

The ease of international communication can be a wonderful thing and the opposite at times! But a touching story demonstrates its beneficial side.

From Brazil came an email, sent by Antonino José Casa. He explained that he is the stepson of Mrs Anna Barbato who was searching for her sister Melanina, who they knew lived in our area. Four photographs were attached to the e-mail that showed Anna and her daughter Angela plus Antonino and his son. Anna was described as being in good health for an 83-year old and still very lucid. Anna also wanted contact to be made with Melanina's brother Vittorio

Melanina (below) and her sister Anna.



Barbato who lives in Johannesburg in South Africa.

Melanina Giuliani has lived in the village since the 1940s. She admits that she still struggles with the English language. She was born in Avellino a small town in the shadow of Vesuvius. Her husband Alberto had been a prisoner of war in Slapton and when hostilities ended in 1945 he decided to stay in England. Melanina joined him here and they lived happily together until he died in 1997. He is buried in the churchyard extension and the Italian inscription on his headstone is complete with a picture of a Ferrari, made in Modena where Alberto came from.

When shown the photographs Melanina's reaction was to identify the photograph of Anna as herself. There is an uncanny likeness between the two sisters. On being assured it was her sister Anna, Melanina said: "It can't be - she's in Brazil!"

So Antonino was able to reunite the two sisters, and the family is now in telephone contact after all these years.

SAFE CYCLE STORAGE

South Northamptonshire Council has installed four lockable bike shelters at the Tove Short Stay Car Park off Northampton Road. Bikes are housed in their own little cabins

which are free, but cyclists will need to use their own padlock.

LOCAL FILM CLUB

Now that we no longer have film evenings in the village film buffs may be interested in the Weston and Lois Weedon film club. They open their evenings to friends from neighbouring villages for their season which runs through from autumn to spring. Club membership costs £5 per year which helps to cover the annual MPLC licence. Entry to each club event is £2 for members, and each member is welcome to bring a guest at a cost of £3. For information and a programme of forthcoming films: www.wlwfilmclub.co.uk

COUNCIL TAX COLLECTIONS

It's gratifying to know that local council tax payers are not having to bear the burden of many unpaid bills. South Northants is among the top 5% of councils in the country for successful council tax collection, achieving a rate of 99.1 per cent.

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

The management committee has continued its sterling job of fundraising to keep this historic building in shape. The main hall is now the focus of attention, the other internal areas having been updated

in the last 3 or 4 years. Although the process of applying for grants will begin shortly, fundraising contributes substantially to the budget.

The popular Christmas coffee morning has morphed into a Christmas Fayre and moved to the Old School, on 10th December this year from 2.00 to 5.00. The original idea has grown like Topsy and is set to be a wonderful village event. From a Christmas tree and festive lights to an extensive free craft area for children, it should be a glittery afternoon. You can give the bear a name, take part in a grand raffle, browse the cakes, pickles and chutneys, hand-made wreaths, decorations, needlecraft and cards on sale, and indulge in a little mulled wine and mince pies to round off the afternoon.

The ever-popular Truckers breakfast returns on 26th November from 8.30 to 11.00 with more to follow on 21st January and 25th March next year. And looking further ahead to next year, the annual plant sale will be on 28th May. It will also be worth going along to the AGM on Thursday 2nd March at 8.00 to hear how plans are progressing for the hall.

During the summer there was a car treasure hunt won by the Tomalin family (*below*).





Mick Hulbert, the High Sheriff, Steve Andrews and Bob Carter with his grandson Alexander at the fundraising tea party on 2nd August.

Among the guests taking afternoon tea at the home of John and Joyce Riches was the High Sheriff of Northamptonshire who conveniently lives in Abthorpe. Caroline Brocklehurst wore her impressive regalia to greet villagers. The honorary office of High Sheriff is an ancient one, established at least 1,000 years ago and held for a year by each incumbent. The duties include attendances at royal visits and giving support to High Court Judges, the police and emergency services. For the past 15 years Caroline has

run a stud in the parish breeding thoroughbred racehorses. Perhaps her comprehensive knowledge of horses would have come in handy in the past as sheriffs were able to summon a 'posse comitatus' and raise a 'hue and cry' after criminals in the county.

There is now a noticeboard on the door to the school yard where all future events are publicised including a list of dates when the school is booked. So when you are passing a quick check will keep you up to date.

EDUCATION CONSULTATION

Northamptonshire County Council's School Admissions Team is leading a formal consultation of admissions arrangements for 2018, affecting all mainstream schools in Northamptonshire. The consultation allows for schools to make proposed changes to their admissions arrangements and/or their Published Admissions Numbers (PANs). A full summary of the changes proposed by mainstream primary and secondary schools (including Academies, Free Schools, UTCs, All-through schools and all local authority maintained schools) can be found at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk under consultations register, second item. Or telephone Stephen Earl or Liz McLaverty on 0300 126 1000. The consultation closes on 13th January next year with results expected by 28th February.

TOVE VALLEY BROADBAND

The industrial revolution between 1760 and around 1840 introduced new manufacturing processes that were reliant on power largely provided by steam and water. These were concentrated in towns meaning that villages such as Abthorpe found that its cottage industries reliant on man and horse power were unable to compete.

The technological revolution that is taking place now could reverse that trend and allow the countryside once again to compete on equal terms with large population centres by allowing workers to operate from their homes using high speed broadband. Sadly in many parts of the country the provision of these connections is not high on the agenda of the major internet service providers.

Tove Valley Broadband, successor to Abthorpe Broadband Association, has already delivered fibre optic/WiFi system that gives unlimited usage to its 500 plus members for £10 a month with speeds normally well in excess of 30Mbs. However, there's no stopping the directors' ambitions and they have decided to install fibre to the premises if requested. At the moment the extra cost can be substantial, but cost sharing between properties is a good way forward. Some physical obstacles such as roads do inflate the cost, and of course availability of volunteers is also a consideration.

Do we need such high broadband speeds? The honest answer is no. But maybe the attitude is similar to that of a mountaineer who when asked why he climbed to the top of a high peak replied "Because it's there!"

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE

On 13th November John Riches led a community act of remembrance for those who died or were affected by the two world wars and other conflicts. The exploits of two Abthorpe villagers were particularly remembered this year: 'Shen' Kendall and Stephen Holley.

Charles Edmund Kendall, born and bred in Abthorpe, was best known as Shen, a nickname he acquired while at school when he repeatedly sang the shanty Shenandoah. He left school at the age of 14 and after farm labouring he was appointed as a junior porter for the London Midland and Scottish Railway company based at Helmdon station.

Shen was called up in 1940 after the Battle of Britain, and recruited into the Royal Regiment of Signals. After training he found himself on a troop ship sailing down the River Clyde and out into mid-Atlantic in a bid to avoid German submarine patrols based in occupied France. Shen had little idea of where he was going. Some days later under cover of darkness,



the convoy slipped through the Straits of Gibraltar and on the 8th November 1942 it anchored in the Bay of Algiers. There, amazingly, he bumped into his Abthorpe friend Harry Hinton who was serving with the 5th Northamptonshire Regiment. They remained life long friends and often shared a pint of Hooky in the pub.

After his ship was dive-bombed by enemy aircraft he joined the American-led 1st Army that was pushing east whilst General Montgomery's 8th Army was pushing west from its base in Egypt in an attempt to encircle the Axis armies. After hospital treatment for dysentery Shen was attached as a signaller to a Royal Artillery anti-aircraft battery that landed on the Italian mainland to defend the port of Naples. Vesuvius promptly

erupted! Although the Italians capitulated Shen always maintained that the Germans remained a potent fighting force right up to the date of their surrender, 7th May 1945.

When reflecting on his wartime experiences, Shen insisted that he was no hero and was perhaps lucky because as a signaller he was

often unaware of how close he was to the type of action experienced by infantrymen. His grateful country awarded him four medals that he wore with pride at British Legion parades. He was demobilised in February 1946 and returned to work for the LMS as a signaller at both Blakesley and Towcester boxes.

William Stephen Holley CBE had a real Boys' Own hero type of life. At the age of 19 he left his native Isle of Man and served as a Lance Bombardier in the Manx Territorial unit of the Royal Artillery. In 1941 while his unit was stationed in Crete the Germans launched the first parachute invasion in history. His regiment took terrible losses but Steve was fortunate and was evacuated from the battle to North Africa where he fought against Rommel's Afrika Korps. He was commissioned in Cairo in late 1941. When he returned to Britain he



became a gunnery instructor in Wales but as he longed to see more action he volunteered to fight the Japanese in Borneo. Whilst crossing the Pacific on a troopship he was recruited into Special Forces and following training in Australia he was scheduled to be dropped by parachute behind enemy lines in central Borneo. When the allies dropped two atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima plans rapidly changed and he was landed by Catalina flying boat on an up-country river ten days before the Japanese surrendered.

Steve became a member of the North Borneo Military Government helping to get that colony back on its feet after the ravages of war. His book about those times called *A White Headhunter in Borneo** describes many amusing and harrowing experiences. He helped the colony to achieve nationhood and actually signed the Malaysia Independence Agreement on behalf of North Borneo alongside British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and Foreign Secretary Duncan Sandys.

**still available to buy - a book well worth reading, as are Steve's other publications: Entente Cordiale, an amusing tale of Anglo/French relations in the style of Tom Sharpe, and Godverse and Oddverse, a book of poems, some of which were written to entertain his grandson.*

POPPY APPEAL

Once again Abthorpe has been very generous in its support of the Poppy Day appeal. £559.67 was collected in the village with a further £63.46 being contributed from the pub.

PARKING IN TOWCESTER

The additional 110 spaces in the new long stay car park in Northampton Road have been opened after the Local Highways Authority reassessed its conditions imposed on the car park which had originally been restricted because of the flooding risk. Apparently further highway improvement work is planned for the Brackley Road/Watling Street junction.

SMJ EXHIBITION AT TOWCESTER MUSEUM

The Stratford upon Avon and Midland Junction Railway (or SMJ) was a small independent company that operated a line through our local area. One of the principal stations was Towcester. The station site is now occupied by

Tesco.

An exhibition about the SMJ is currently to be seen in Towcester Museum and provides a nostalgic look back at an age when steam was king and rural branch lines were the lifeblood of many isolated communities. A detailed, lifelike model of Towcester Station as it could have been in the era of British Railways is fascinating, whilst a series of historic photographs provides an insight into the characters and machines of yesteryear.

One old poster records that the passenger train service between Blisworth and Banbury was to close on Monday 2nd July 1951 and that Helmdon and Wappenham village



stations would close for passengers. Perhaps if the line had lasted just a few more years it could have become a heritage railway or a major commuter route? The SMJ Society that has helped stage the exhibition states that the line has gone but is not forgotten. "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."

Who knows, the society may be right and perhaps the disused routes of the old railway lines that radiate from Towcester could once again be used for transporting people? But the exhibition is well worth a visit.

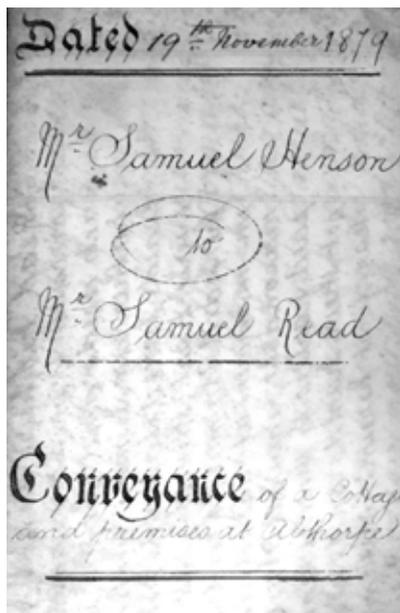
ELIZABETH COTTAGE

Back in August Birthe and Philip Hollingbery from Helsingor in Denmark were wandering round the village searching for Elizabeth Cottage. Sean, one of our postmen, helped by pointing it out in School Lane close to the junction with Wappenham Road.

Although Philip was born in Moreton-in-Marsh he has lived in Denmark for many years with his Danish wife Birthe. He was in Abthorpe researching his family's history and believes that Elizabeth Cottage was named after Mrs Elizabeth Taylor who was living there with her 16-year old domestic servant Abigail Welch when the 1881 census was taken. Ten years later she was still living in Abthorpe. She had married James Taylor, an artificial flower maker in Southwark, London, and bore him eight children, but when she was widowed she moved to Abthorpe, it is thought because her mother had come from the Whittlewood area.

Her youngest sibling, Samuel Read, was Philip's maternal great-great-grandfather, who by 1900 had acquired the freehold of Elizabeth Cottage. In his will of 1906 he urged his executors to keep it in the family as long as possible. He died two years later

Leah Abbott the current owner of Elizabeth Cottage became involved in the story and was able to let Philip have a copy of the conveyance, beautifully handwritten on velum, showing that Samuel Read actually bought the cottage in 1879.



PEOPLE

The marriage of Dr Kate Greenhalgh and Dr James Cockcroft

Kate Greenhalgh planned to walk from her family home in Wappenham Road through the streets of Abthorpe where she grew up to the Church for her marriage to James Cockcroft. When the big day arrived it rained and rained and rained. And then yet more rain. Time for Plan B.

Having left their wet umbrellas in the porch members of the congregation packed the church. Kate and James were married by the Reverend Lulu Pelly who used a traditional order of service from the Anglican liturgy. 'Jerusalem' and 'Love divine all loves excelling' were the chosen hymns.



Jill Greenhalgh, Kate's mother, read a lesson from the Book of Corinthians whilst Paul Cockcroft, James' father, delivered a poem written by Roy Croft. Both readings were devoted to the theme of love.

Once James and Kate had been declared man and wife and signed the registers they emerged from the porch – to rain. With much laughter they scrambled through a phalanx of hoisted umbrellas and showers of rose petals to a waiting 1966 Sunbeam sports car decorated with white ribbons which took them to their wedding reception.

Although the heavy rain might at first be seen as a great misfortune, in retrospect it must surely have made their special day even more memorable.

PEOPLE (CONTINUED)*The marriage of Alun Stevens and Rachel Lumbis*

Abthorpe villagers Rachel Lumbis and Alun Stevens will never have problems remembering their wedding anniversary as they were married on Remembrance Day.

In bright autumn sunshine the bride and her entourage walked from her home. She was met beneath the beautifully decorated arch at the church gate by the Rev'd Paul McLeod who led her to the chancel steps to join bridegroom Alun. The bride and groom made their declarations and with a loud "We will!" the members of the congregation affirmed their support for the young couple. Mrs Chris Lumbis, the bride's mother, read a poem entitled "On your wedding day" with feeling and vigour.

Rachel and Alan left the church in bright sunshine to be greeted by their many friends and relatives. It really was a delightful village occasion.



MILK DELIVERIES

Milk&More, who deliver in Abthorpe, have changed their depot serving this area to Banbury from Milton Keynes. See www.milkandmore.co.uk for details of their online milk and grocery shopping with free delivery and no minimum order; tel: 0345 606 3606.

OPEN-TOP TREASURE HUNT

If you were around the Green on Sunday afternoon at the end of August you would have witnessed an odd collection of people and cars gathered to take part in a treasure hunt specifically for open-topped cars – affectionately known as The Topless Treasure Hunt. An added twist this year was that drivers and passengers dressed in the period and nationality of their car. And what a sight it was.

The treasure hunt winners were in their 2008 Mazda, aptly named Geisha Girl, which was sporting a Japanese flag and bandana'd driver. Best costume winners were from the Buckingham car club (*below*). Two winners' sashes were awarded as their efforts were too good to separate. One couple was in Holly the Buzzing Hornet, a 1933 Wolseley Hornet, the other in the Mean Green



Beast, a 1976 MGB GT V8.

Having hunted all the clues, the motley assortment refreshed themselves with dinner and the odd pint at the New Inn, ready for the awarding of medals and of course the wooden spoon.

SILVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT

The company which took over a 999-year lease for the areas of land around the edge of Silverstone Circuit has submitted a new outline planning application to South Northamptonshire Council to replace the existing permission issued in 2012 which expires next year.

The new proposal from MEPC includes 1,699,000 sq ft of general industrial, office and storage and distribution space, along with 441,000 sq ft of hotels, education facilities, student accommodation and space for automotive promotions. The proposal could create between 3,400 and 4,500 jobs.

CHURCH NEWS

Autumn has pretty much passed now and we are looking forward to Christmas. Our harvest weekend went off very well. Forty people turned out on Saturday 8th October for Harvest Supper. We chose a variety of lasagne dishes for our main course followed by Alison's ever popular crumbles. Sticky toffee pudding was added as an alternative. It was lovely to have some young families join us and we really appreciated all the help the children gave us when we were clearing up!

The church looked lovely for our harvest service on the Sunday. The harvest produce donated was taken as usual to the Hope Centre in Northampton.



Peugeot man

Richard Tomalin

Services for December

Sunday 11th December: Holy Eucharist 11am

Sunday 18th December: Holy Eucharist 9.15am

Saturday 24th December: Carol Service at 4pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Sunday 25th December: Christmas Day Holy Eucharist 9.15am

All are very welcome to any of our services.

The Rev Paul is also organising a beer and carols event in the New Inn on Wednesday December 21st at 6.00pm.

Tea and Piece

Our monthly summer afternoon teas in church have been a great success and we added extra ones in October and November by popular demand. Thank you to everyone who donated cakes and helped. The space created by taking out the pews on the north side of the church has really worked for this and we are now planning how we can make the changes more permanent.

Tote

Our church building in Abthorpe, being central to the village, adds much to the village's appeal. It surprises people to hear that we get no money from any sources to maintain this building; it is solely the responsibility of the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Council to keep this Grade II listed building in good shape. For this reason we run a monthly tote which raises money purely to look after the building. The idea is simple. Each member has a unique pair of numbers and pays just £5 per month to enter the draw. We draw the winner in the pub at the end of each month. Each member has a nearly one in a hundred chance of winning over £200.

More importantly, the same amount helps to provide a regular stream of much needed funds to preserve the church building. Even people who don't attend church regularly benefit from the church building. It adds to the general appeal of the village and provides a focal point for events such as concerts and social functions as well as church services. We are delighted that a majority of households in the village are tote members.

We try to make contact with each new family moving into the village to give them a welcome, and the tote is one of the things we introduce about village life. If we haven't seen you yet, why not get in touch and

play your part in preserving our heritage by joining the tote. For more information, please contact Richard Tomalin on 01327 858316; richard.tomalin@abthorpe.net.

Our recent winners are Katie and Alex Hammon who won in August, Mary Hulbert in September and Rob and Barbara Smith in October. Congratulations to all.

Preparations for Christmas

On Friday 16th December at 10am we will be cleaning the church. Come and enjoy getting the church clean for Christmas, along with a bit of chat and some mince pies.

Then we will be decorating for Christmas after the service on December 18th, at about 10.30am. Please come and lend a hand with that – no need to come to the service, although we would love to see you!

Thank you to everyone who has helped and supported us over the past year. The PCC really do appreciate it and wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a successful 2017.

For any further information, please contact Barbara Malcomson on 01327 857066 or malcomson@abthorpe.net.

THE CHURCH BELL

The church's architect has identified that the church bell has become slightly loose on the mechanism. There is no danger of it coming apart, but in the circumstances the advice is not to use the bell, and the rope has been tied up out of reach until the Diocesan bells advisor has had an opportunity to investigate.

Talking about the bell, strange things were happening recently when it was striking ten at 1pm and 12 at 3pm. The gremlin was located: the recent power cuts has affected the electrically wound mechanism which keeps the bell in synchronisation with the clock. All was put right in time for the 11am tolling for the remembrance service.

TALKING NEWS GOES DIGITAL

For over thirty years the RNIB has recorded *Talking News* on tapes but they have now switched to delivering the service on usb sticks with all the benefits digital brings. Help is available to manage the change. If you would like more information contact Stephen Pascoe on 01604 719193.

ABTHORPE ROUNDABOUT (AKA ISLAND)

Back in September Highways England, the government owned agency responsible for managing major roads and motorways, together with BAM Nuttall the contractors carrying out the Abthorpe roundabout project, held a public engagement event that gave the public an opportunity to speak directly to the project team. Project Managers Adam Bunce from BAM Nuttall and Mark Humpage of Highways England greeted a substantial number of visitors at their temporary office close to the Bell Plantation.

Mark explained that vehicles on all the roads entering the roundabout except for our Abthorpe Road, would be controlled by traffic lights. In the light of experience, once the new road layout is in use the lights will be re-tweaked to optimise traffic flows which has already happened at the A5 roundabout. Another area of concern was the increased traffic using the road once the proposed Towcester relief road had been completed adding A5 through traffic to the A43. Assurances were given that future growth had been taken into account when the plans were drawn up.

Once the construction has been completed a substantial number of trees will be planted, although these will take time to mature.

Mark concluded that the inconveniences caused by the reconstruction of the Abthorpe roundabout is "short term pain for long term gain!"



TOWCESTER FOODBANK

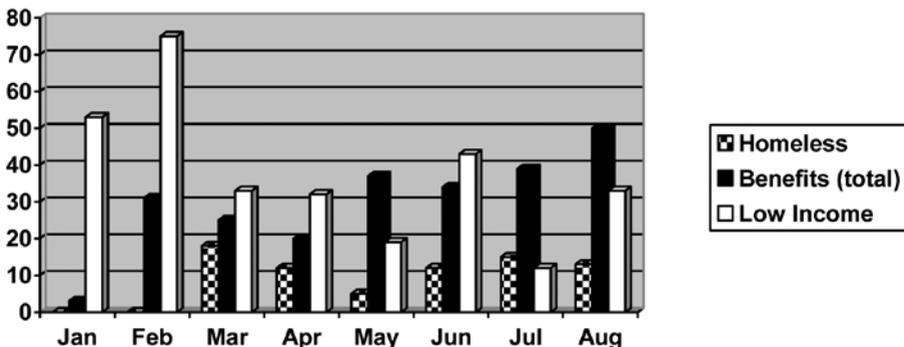
Clients of the Foodbank are referred by registered agencies who give vouchers for three days of emergency food. Whilst visiting the food bank, people are offered a listening ear and help to get them back on their feet. After all, anyone can find themselves at crisis point for a number of different reasons. Over the summer we have received the following notes from Barbara Parfitt of the Towcester Food Bank which shows some interesting statistics.

"The foodbank relies totally on the generosity of local people, organisations and churches for the food which is given out to those in need in our community. We know that there are many in your village who are already generous givers. Thank you so much.

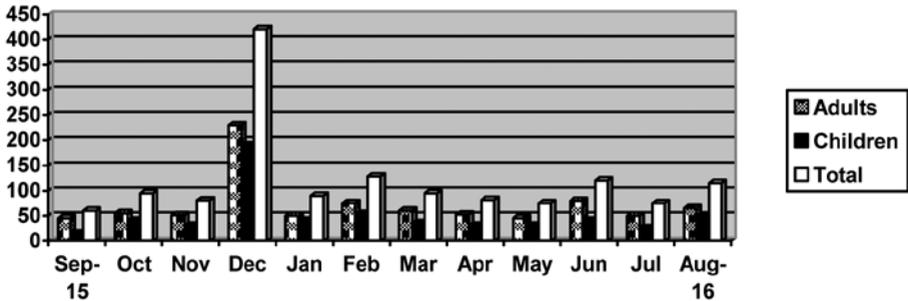
"August, in contrast to previous years, was busy. We fed 110 people (63 adults, 47 children), off 41 vouchers. Over the summer (June - August) last year we fed an average of 13 people a week. The year before, 16 people a week. This year, we fed an average of 23 people a week. That is a huge increase at a time of year when we don't expect to see one.

"A total of 36 people off 11 vouchers were being affected by Benefit Delays, while a further 14 people (6 vouchers) had them for Benefit changes. We had 14 vouchers for Low Income (30 people). No-one presented a voucher from a school for holiday meals, although 7 adults and 6 children were referred as Homeless. The graph below shows the numbers of people affected by Benefits, Low Income and Homeless. It is showing a steady rise on the Benefits front.

"A new benefits cap for the working-aged of £385 a week for families and



Why people came to us



Numbers of people fed since September 2015 by month

£258 for singles is being implemented from November, down from £500 and £350 respectively. This will not apply, as far as I can see, to the disabled, or those on Working Tax Credits. But it will undoubtedly affect at least some of our clients."

Now the Christmas is just around the corner festive food donations would be much appreciated. There is a suitable box at the back of Abthorpe church.

BEFRIENDERS WANTED

Northamptonshire Association for the Blind is looking for home visitors/befrienders who can make a huge difference to a visually impaired person's life with a fortnightly visit. NAB support their volunteers, offer specialist training, and reimbursement of all mileage and telephone calls. Find out more from Rachel Cave, their volunteer

coordinator: rachel@nab.org.uk; 07889 411274.

OLD TOWCESTER LIBRARY

The previous library site, an old school building dating from 1869, has been purchased by the town council for use as a community centre. It will be known as The Sawpits Centre as it's close to Sawpits Green, the only area of common land left in Towcester.

BROADBAND POSTSCRIPT

To add to the report on page 9, membership continues to rise and there are now over 500 people connected to the service. Coverage has also extended a bit further, to include Woodend, Blakesley and Adstone. But that really is far enough.

The AGM will take place in January; details will be emailed to all members when available.

THE UNINVITED VISITOR

John and Joyce Riches had a surprising visitor one hot afternoon while taking tea in their dining room by the open door to the garden. Along came a handsome fox, an unusual occurrence so close to humans. However, he had no qualms and later when the dining room was empty Mr Fox was spotted walking around the room carrying out an inspection before trotting back outside. Such are the unexpected pleasures of living in the countryside.



ABTALK ONLINE

It's worth remembering that viewing *Abtalk* on the village website at www.abthorpe.net under News shows all the pictures in glorious colour. And if you feature, share your moment of fame with family and friends.

ABTHORPE ALERT

There are very few times when it's necessary to send out an Alert, but being aware of suspicious activity in the area can keep us all safer. No-one should be alarmed, but sensible precautions can help; there have been a few daytime break-ins in the area recently.

To sign up to receive alerts where you can also share information about anything untoward, go to www.abthorpe.net.

DIARY

Saturday 26 November

Truckers' Breakfast, the Old School, 8.30 to 11.00

Sunday 27 November

Charity Quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Saturday 10 December

Christmas Bazaar, the Old School, 2.00 to 5.00

Sunday 11 December

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 11.00

Friday 16 December

Church clean, 10.00

Sunday 18 December

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 9.15

Decorating the church for Christmas, 10.30

Christmas Charity Quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Monday 19 December

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.45

Wednesday 21 December

Carols, beer and mince pies, the New Inn, 6pm

Saturday 24 December

Carol Service, St John the Baptist, 4.00 followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Sunday 25 December

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist, St John the Baptist, 9.15

Saturday 21 January

Truckers' Breakfast, the Old School, 8.30 to 11.00

Monday 30 January

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.45

Thursday 2 March

Old School AGM, 8.00

Monday 13 March

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.45