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News from Abthorpe

May 2013

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

This takes place on Monday 13th May at the Old School starting at 7.45pm. Reports will be given by various bodies in the parish: the Church, Age Concern, Old School and Broadband. Organisations which serve the parish, such as the local schools and the police, give their view on the past year. Hopefully the County and District Councillors will be present. This is an open meeting for everyone in the parish, so come along to find out what has been happening.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Various routine matters were discussed at the meeting on 22nd April, such as renewal of our insurance. We agreed to obtain firm quotes for vehicle-activated signs which display the vehicle's speed. One unit will be purchased, but it will be movable to either end of the village.

Jill Tolson

tel: 857320; jill.tolson@abthorpe.net

Keith Fenwick

tel: 857083; keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net

A new planning application for a house adjacent to 42 Wappenham Road was considered but this only slightly alters the plans which were approved three years ago

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Attempts to revive this scheme in the village have foundered on getting sufficient volunteers to pass on warnings.

There have been two recent break-ins in the village where thieves gained access to houses and in one case stole valuables and a car. As well as warning everyone of such occurrences, it can be helpful if as many people as possible can be contacted quickly in case anybody saw something related to the crime. At present emails can be circulated to people with @abthorpe email addresses so it would be a step forward if a wider email distribution system could be established, similar to Wiz News in Wappenham. All that is needed is for someone to act as organiser with a second person as backup if possible. Joining the scheme would be voluntary. The organiser would keep a list of those in the scheme and send out messages without making individual email addresses visible to anyone else. The scheme could be used just to send out essential advice, such as crimes, interruptions to services, etc., or it

could be expanded to include village activities. If anyone is interested in organising such a scheme, please get in touch with Keith Fenwick: keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net; 857083.

WAPPENHAM OPEN GARDENS

Wappenham is planning a two-day 'Open Gardens - Open Village' event on 13th and 14th July to show off the village with stalls in various gardens. There will be something for all the family. Plans so far include lunches, teas, music and a barbecue, with an exhibition and a miniature garden competition in the church.

DISCOVER YOUR INNER ARTIST

A small tutored art group paints on Thursday mornings in Slapton and is looking for new members. No experience is necessary. Please ring Caroline Coke for more details on 860155.

FILM ABTHORPE

The next film night is booked for Thursday 6th June (May being a month for holidays). After the musical, *Gigi*, a contrast is planned: *A Room with a View*. It's always a good social evening, so come along at 7.30.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Work is well under way now. The current prediction is that the first

will be completed in August. As a result of government changes in the criteria for being on the housing list some people are no longer eligible, but it is still expected that the houses will be filled initially by people with connections to Abthorpe, Slapton, Bradden or Wappenham. Of the 9 houses under construction, 7 are for letting and 2 for shared ownership.

On this subject, the name given to this new development is Snelsons Orchard. The much respected Snelson family has lived in these parts for centuries and on the village war memorial ten members of the family are recorded as having fought in the 1914-1918 conflict.

But why has an apostrophe been left out of the official name for the new road? Surely it should be Snelson's Orchard or Snelsons' Orchard but not Snelsons Orchard?

The Apostrophe Protection Society (www.apostrophe.org.uk) is waging a campaign to save one of the English language's most loved punctuation marks. But Mid Devon District Council has discussed banning these pesky little punctuation marks from its street signs.

At the pub people asked, "Where's it all going to stop? Devon today, South Northamptonshire tomorrow? Are we going to declare war on commas or outlaw full stops? Something ought to be done about it"

Even the government has got

involved! The Department for Communities and Local Government has come out in defence of apostrophes and stated, "Whilst it is a matter for local councils, ministers' view is that England's apostrophes should be cherished."

We'll drink to that and trust that our local council will make sure that the English language's much loved apostrophe is included on the new street sign for Snelson's Orchard.

SURPLUS TOOLS WANTED

Northamptonshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) is appealing on behalf of Community Payback for surplus garden tools that could be used by the group in any of the community gardening projects they undertake.

Anyone who has unwanted tools can donate them by contacting Thomas Meyer: 01604 765888; Thomas.Meyer@northantsacre.org.uk. Information on Community Payback: www.northantsprobation.org.uk/community-payback4.html.

And on a similar subject, Tools for Self Reliance (Northampton) is a local charity whose primary aim is to provide meaningful volunteering opportunities for adults and young people who are unable to work due to a variety of disabilities (mental health, learning or physical difficulties) or other disadvantage. This is achieved through refurbishing

old tools which are then donated to other charities which request specific trade kits for projects in under-privileged areas of the world, or for community projects in Northamptonshire.

Donations of any items (trade tools or gardening tools) are very welcome. Most of the kits contain hand tools, but power tools are starting to be requested as well.

The charity would also welcome enquiries from anyone who might like to volunteer to help, either in their workshop or by becoming a local tool collector. Further information: Val Bridges, 01604 604954.

ABTHORPE BROADBAND

Keith Fenwick

It is now 10 years since Abthorpe Broadband was established to bring 21st century communication to the village. During that time, we have benefitted from fast and cheap broadband but time is moving on. Our system no longer meets current demands so two years ago we started looking at how to improve it and match the superfast speeds which are increasingly becoming available in towns and cities. As with the situation 10 years ago, there is little prospect of commercial (i.e. British Telecom) deployment of superfast broadband here as the investment payback period is too long.

But once again, voluntary effort can succeed where commercial organisations cannot. This time we cannot go it alone in Abthorpe and Slapton so have enlisted the help of people in Wappenham, Lois Weedon and Weston to make the project workable. We worked up a scheme involving bringing fibre to the valley and then using wireless to distribute it. And we explored the possibility of government grants to help with the cost of setting up a new wireless network to match the superfast speeds. The application process was long and hard and divided the project into three phases. In the end we decided we could go ahead with the first phase, involving a fibre connection to the valley and wireless distribution, on our own. Phases 2 and 3, which consist of installing fibre between the villages and then to individual homes, now formed the basis of the grant application and earlier this year we were successful in being awarded a contribution of £117,914 from the Rural Communities Broadband Fund towards the total cost of the project, about £300,000. This was the first such award and the first time the civil servants dealt with a voluntary not-for-profit company.

In the meantime we have made great strides with phase 1 and for those who have been waiting patiently for their new superfast broadband service

the waiting is almost over. There have been delays from funders, fibre providers, etc., and the very cold weather hasn't helped our installation programme either. We have contracted for the supply of the fibre optic cable into our area, and we are now waiting for that to be switched on in the next couple of weeks. We are building the wireless network that we need before we can link people up. Most of the equipment is now installed on Wappenham church tower. Installation volunteers from Wappenham, Weston and Lois Weedon have had training. Much of the equipment for domestic connections has been delivered.

If you are registered we will announce when the system is live and invite you to sign up. If you are not pre-registered, go to :

<http://www.tovevalley.com/prelim-registration.aspx>.

IT'S BLUEBELL TIME

We're fortunate in having Bucknell Wood so close - a pleasant walk across the fields or a drive to the car park on the road to Silverstone - which puts on a beautiful display of bluebells at this time of year. Not so well known is the even more prolific spectacle in Hazelborough Wood which can be reached by going through West End in Silverstone, turning right on to the old A43 which has signs to the wood.

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOB CLUB

The Job Club offers free and confidential advice and support for those wanting to get into work, training or education. It meets in Towcester Town Hall on alternate Tuesdays from 11.30 to 1.30.

More information: 322264; jobclub@southorthants.gov.uk; www.southnorthants.gov.uk/jobclub.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWS

Barbara Malcomson: 857066; malcomson@abthorpe.net

We held our Annual Church Meeting on 9th April and the following people were re-appointed: Richard Tomalin and David Hughes as churchwardens, Barbara Malcomson as secretary, Alison Robbins as treasurer and Steve Andrews as Electoral Roll Keeper. We are again very low on members of our PCC and if anyone would like to know more about being a member please contact me. We do appreciate all the help members of the village give us in so many different ways, so thank you to all. Copies of the Annual Report

are in the back of the church where there is also a folder with minutes from recent PCC meetings.

Services in Abthorpe for May and June:

Sunday May 12 th	Holy Eucharist service 11am
Sunday May 19 th	Pentecost Eucharist 9.15am
Sunday June 9 th	Holy Eucharist service 10am
Sunday June 16 th	Holy Eucharist service 9.15am

Easter

Quite a few people braved the really cold weather to come to church on Easter Sunday and Rev Vic Read took a lovely service. The church looked bright and cheerful after what had seemed a really long cold Lent. Thank you to everyone who had helped with the spring clean the previous weekend and had decorated the church for Easter.

During Holy Week, the Maundy Thursday service was held in Abthorpe church. It is always a moving service remembering the Last Supper and at the end of the service the Sanctuary is stripped of everything, leaving only the bare altar.

Towcester Deanery - Messy Church!

Rev Andrea Watkins will be coming on 26th June to talk at the next Deanery Synod meeting about Messy Church. If anyone wants to know more or would like to come along and find out if it could work in Abthorpe for children and families, please contact me. There is a poster about it on the church notice board. As Deanery Rep for St John the Baptist church I will be going anyway. There is a 'business' bit at the meeting too, but it is not usually very long.

Recent Tote Winners

Bunny Hutchings won £225 in March, and the April winner of £230 was Barry Haycock.

Thank you to everyone who supports the tote. It really does help to have sufficient money to be able to get things, such as the recent churchyard wall collapse, dealt with promptly and efficiently.

Towcester Foodbank

To support the Towcester Foodbank, St John the Baptist church has a box for donations of food. The church is open during the day, so please pop in and leave something for those in need. Just add one item to your shopping every week and make a real difference to a local family under pressure.

The Foodbank gives advice and support alongside helping with groceries. Please only donate non-perishable items. Further information and a guide to those items required: www.towcester.foodbank.org.uk

Pancake Tea

The successful pancake tea raised just over £220 and saw Eric Malcomson cook nearly 100 pancakes. Again, thanks for all who supported the afternoon.

No Same Sex Marriages Here - For The Moment!

"I do not agree with marriage between two people of the same gender!" That was the strong message our Vicar and the Rural Dean of Towcester, the Rev Paul McLeod gave to the Annual Meeting of Parishioners here in Abthorpe. Rev McLeod admitted that "I am at odds with even my own wife," on this issue, "but that happens." His wife, also a priest, is the Rev Sue Faulkner responsible for the nearby Knightley Group of parishes. He does not object to the notion of blessing same sex relationships where they are loving and beneficial to couples. But, he stated, "regardless of the changes that happen in the civil approach to marriage, the church is, at least for the foreseeable future, not changing its approach. Marriage is between a man and a woman."

Later in the meeting there was a request that parishioners should have an opportunity to discuss this matter. The newly elected Parochial Church Council agreed to consider this request at a forthcoming meeting.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN 857306

The restaurant at the pub continues to thrive, and will be open on each of the two Bank Holidays in May. Indeed, on the second one, 26th May, there will be live music and a BBQ of lamb and pork from Rob's farm in Slapton, for which booking is advised. The Wednesday steak night is proving very popular as people realise what a bargain the £10 offer of steak and a sweet is.

St George's Day saw 39 people sit down to a classic roast beef dinner. Steve and Sian organised the evening as a fund-raiser for the Old School, and a tremendous total of £161 was donated by them.

The Mother's Day menu proved particularly popular this year. Father's Day on 16th June will be similarly celebrated with a special menu; again booking is recommended.

With thoughts turning to summer, Steve is intending to add more fresh fish to the menu on Thursdays and Fridays. The takeaway fish and chips on Friday is a useful service for anyone who doesn't fancy cooking at the end of the week.

Summer also welcomes in a steady stream of walkers who find the pub a handy refreshment halt. And the Grand Prix is looming at the end of June, another busy time to plan for.

The monthly quiz is a popular Sunday event. On 24th March No Eye Deer arrived with too many people for one team. It was therefore split into two generating great rivalry between each part. No Eye Deer 2 came out on top and sent £138 to the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance. They were on a roll, and on 28th April the (single) team again prevailed, choosing Helen & Douglas House hospice for children and young adults to receive the £143 proceeds from the evening.

An exceptional amount of money is raised for charity at these events, and thanks go to everyone for their support. Do come and join the fun on Sunday 19th May.

The summer skittles league will be starting shortly. The darts team continues throughout the summer.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

You may remember that back in 2011 a group of villagers surveyed the Abthorpe landscape on behalf of the Rose of the Shires project carried out by the Rockingham Trust. In Abthorpe a hedgerow study was made comparing the current planting and state of the hedges with 19th century maps to see what had changed; interestingly, very little, even down to some of the individual trees on the field boundaries.

The final report *Whittlewood: A Royal Forest* by Tracey Partida has now been published online on the Rockingham Forest Trust site, www.rockingham-forest-trust.org.uk. Select the Online Resource Centre, then Northamptonshire Landscape and Zone 2: Syresham Area Historic Environment Report. The report is also available on the Abthorpe village website: www.abthorpe.net.

An accompanying *Atlas of Northamptonshire* by David Hall, Tracey Partida and Glenn Foard has been published in hardback by Oxbow Books, ISBN 9781842175118, at a special price of £26, www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/an-atlas-of-northamptonshire.html. It is an historical atlas of the greater part of Northamptonshire (the first quarter having been published as *An Atlas of Rockingham Forest*). It presents the results of fieldwork and documentary

research undertaken since the mid-1960s to map the landscape of the whole of Northamptonshire prior to enclosure by Parliamentary Act.

RECYCLING COLLECTION DAY CHANGE

As we're all aware, our bin collection day changed to Thursday at the beginning of April. The reasons are interesting: to allow this service to move to a four day week to reduce the issues around collecting on Bank Holiday Mondays, to save money by making collections more efficient, and to allow more time for crew training and vehicle maintenance. If you have any problems call the SNC environment department (322344), or for Twitterers they say their account (@SNorthantsC) is also a good place to keep an eye on updates.

In the summer the council will be introducing blue bins and food waste collection services. No doubt more information will follow, but a talk on these new bins can be arranged through the Parish Council if there is sufficient interest.

DRIVING OPPORTUNITY

What sounds like a great opportunity is being offered by Northamptonshire Highways and Northants Police to young local drivers aged 17 to 25. They represent only 1 in 8 of all licence

holders, yet are involved in over 20% fatal road traffic collisions.

CarKraft offers a dynamic mix of workshops, allowing participants to experience driving on simulated, adverse road conditions at the superb facilities within the Porsche Experience Centre at Silverstone Circuit. It is a half day event for non-drivers and drivers: the non-drivers are aged 15 to 25 (no driving licence required) and the drivers are aged 17+. Available dates are 12th May, 9th June and 7th September, either morning or afternoon, at a cost of £49.99 per session.

For full information: www.CarKraft.info; or contact David Lee, the Roads Policing Officer for Northamptonshire Police, tel. 101 ext 778415; twitter @Northants_RPU

THE OLD SCHOOL

Jane Leeson the spinster who paid for the construction of a school in Abthorpe during the English Civil War back in 1642 would surely have been amazed and delighted with the most recent refurbishment of her wonderful old creation. Now that the work has been completed, mostly carried out by village craftsman Steve Grey, the Old School Committee invited everyone to drop in and celebrate the refurbishment of the kitchen and meeting room.

All the beams have been re-stained and the walls painted a dazzling white giving it a bright, airy feel. A tough fawn fitted carpet has been laid and delicately patterned orange curtains hung at the windows. The tables in the centre of the room make the place look ready for business.

The kitchen, designed by Robert Miles, was also available for inspection. The old kitchen furniture has been stripped out and the fabric made good. New appliances that include fitted storage cupboards, a refrigerator, cooker, hot water heater and twin catering sinks have been installed giving the kitchen a pristine modern appearance that will surely make the premises very suitable for hosting parties, receptions and meetings.

A large crowd of villagers and visitors sat

around tables in the main hall or enjoyed the warm sunshine out in the courtyard to indulge in the cream teas provided by the committee. Thanks went to everyone who had given so generously to bring the project to fruition.

The building can be hired every morning, afternoon or evening at very reasonable rates. Contact Jan Miles: 857427.

The next event will be afternoon tea with a plant sale on Sunday 19th May from 3.00 to 5.00. There's still time to pot up cuttings when splitting plants in your garden, or to donate young plants grown from seed.

The fish and chip supper on the Green will make a welcome return on Saturday 22nd June from 6pm. And



*Jules
Dyckhoff and
Janet Dancer
serving tea*

after the resounding success of the clay pigeon shoot another is planned for September.

REMEMBER WHEN...

The latest dates for this programme, organised by Banbury Museum, are 29th May and 27th June, 10 - 12 at Towcester Volunteer Centre. The reminiscence group shares stories,

knowledge and memories of times gone by on particular topics, May being 'Make do and mend', and in June, 'the High Street'.

It's for people over 55 and costs £2 including refreshments. There's no need to book, just turn up and you will be very welcome. More information: Suzi on 01295 753784; www.banburymuseum.org

PEOPLE

Lee Kindon, our exceedingly helpful postman, is walking around the village with a new spring in his step as Dawn his wife has recently given birth to twins. The girls Jemma (4lbs 7ozs) and Georgie (5lbs 1oz) were born on 13th March. The proud parents already have another little girl called Jazmine aged two.



Many congratulations to them both. Lee will be rapidly learning what it's like to live in a household with four females.

A very belated welcome to Louisa and Daniel Clark who moved to Yew Tree Cottage. Louisa is a primary school teacher at Pattishall, while Daniel, like several other Abthorpe residents, is in the motor racing world working for Williams. They originally hail from Somerset but motor racing brought them into this area some years ago.

DIARY

Sunday 12 May

St John the Baptist, Holy Eucharist service, 11.00

Monday 13 May

Annual Parish meeting, the Old School, 7.45

Sunday 19 May

Pentecost Eucharist, 9.15

Plant sale and afternoon tea at the Old School, 3.00 - 5.00

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30, £3 including supper

Monday 20 May

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.45

Wednesday 29 May

Reminiscence group, Towcester Volunteer Centre, 10.00 - 12.00

Thursday 6 June

Film Abthorpe, 7.30, the Old School

Sunday 9 June

Holy Eucharist service, 10.00

Sunday 16 June

Holy Eucharist service, 9.15

Father's Day, special menu at The New Inn

Saturday 22 June

Fish and chip supper on the Green, from 6.00

Wednesday 27 June

Reminiscence group, Towcester Volunteer Centre, 10.00 - 12.00

Monday 1 July

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.45

Saturday 13, Sunday 14 July

Wappenham open gardens and various village events