



ABTALK

*News from Abthorpe
February 2020*

PARISH COUNCIL*Mike Greenhalgh***It is Election Year**

Northamptonshire County Council and South Northants Council are being replaced by a single Unitary Authority. This means that all the local services will be provided by a single authority dominated by the needs of the town of Northampton. As far as we know it will not make any difference to the Parish Council. Elections for the new Unitary authority take place in May in preparation for it to take over next year.

At the same time Parish Council elections will also be held. For many years there has never been a contested election for the Parish, which is not really in the spirit of local democracy. In any case, there will be at least one vacancy to be filled.

Have you considered putting yourself up for election? As a councillor representing your community you will help keep Abthorpe a great place in which to live and work. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team. If you are interested contact our Clerk, Tina Emerton by e-mail at abthorpeparishclerk@gmail.com.

To stand for election, you need to complete a nomination form which must be delivered by 4pm on Wednesday 8th April 2020. You can obtain copies from the Clerk or go to www.electoralcommission.org.uk and search for Candidate Guide for Parish Council elections. There is some useful information in this guide as well as a link to the necessary form.

Bus Service

The loss of the community bus service a couple of years ago left our village without any public transport. The Parish Council is conscious that as people get older, they may find themselves unable to drive and therefore in need of public transport. Ability Community Transport is able to meet that need but will only do so if there are enough people to justify a regular service. For instance, a service from Whittlebury now runs on a regular schedule to Towcester. The Parish Council will have to assist with setting up a service and will try to do so if there is a real need. Just let one of the Councillors know.

Village Tidiness

The work done last year to tidy up the paths around the village green and church was much appreciated so

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this year it is intended to extend the areas covered. The cost is funded by some of the money we receive from the solar farm near Towcester.

Speeding in the Village

This is a perennial problem but the use of the speed sign seems to help so a second sign has now been purchased which means there will always be one at each end of the village.



Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Meeting for everyone in Abthorpe takes place on Monday 4th May. This is your opportunity to find out what has been happening with various organisations in the village

and also to ask about anything that concerns you. Come along to the Old School at 7.45pm.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Following a number of crimes committed in Abthorpe in the last few months the Parish Council looked into how the village communicates information about crimes committed or anything suspicious. There are currently three ways the village attempts this: using Neighbourhood Watch/Abthorpe Scheme (9 people registered), Abthorpe Alerts via the village website (36 registered) and lastly Facebook/Abthorpe Noticeboard (302 registered).

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Abthorpe has been going for a number of years but only a few parishioners are signed up to it. Only these people get the Alerts sent out on a local basis from Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch, local Police and other trusted agencies. Neighbourhood Watch's main aims are to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime, improve safety, and encourage neighbourliness across our communities. We feel that getting a larger section of the village community signed up will benefit the inhabitants and keep us all safer. You will see a 'flyer' with this edition of Abtalk, which explains how to sign up to the Abthorpe Neighbourhood Watch scheme and gives a useful crime prevention checklist.

Joining Abthorpe Alerts is easy via the village website at www.abthorpe.net. Simply click on the Abthorpe Alerts email, sign up and then fill in your details. Alerts are more focused on the village than Neighbourhood Watch but take longer to be distributed.

The final way of communicating is through Facebook by applying to join the Abthorpe Noticeboard on Facebook, whereby you will get very current information about suspicious goings on and any local crimes that have been reported. Facebook is also used to inform people what is going on in Abthorpe and other neighbouring villages. A co-ordinator from Abthorpe oversees the page. For those not on Facebook we are aiming to get the Facebook 'crime alerts' sent out on the Abthorpe Alert platform.

The Parish Council will be organising for some bright yellow Neighbourhood Watch posters to be displayed around the village, informing all that this is a Neighbourhood Watch village. There are also some stickers available to householders to place on a window near the front door.

We aim to raise awareness of ways of preventing crime while making sure that we, as well as our neighbours, remain safe. Everyone needs to be on the lookout for anything untoward that could lead to a crime being committed, and pass on the information or any suspicion, thereby helping to keep Abthorpe a lovely safe place to live.

Please get involved and sign up to one, two or even all of these schemes.

DOGGY BUSINESS

More than one resident has suggested that 'doggy poo' bins be provided in the village. Following several discussions, at Parish Council meetings the idea was rejected. The main argument against it is that someone would have to



empty and maintain the bins. As dogs are walked in many areas, several bins would be needed.

And it still needs dog owners to be responsible for picking up the deposits in the first place.

FOOTPATH NEWS

David Robbins, Parish Footpath Warden
dave.robbs@abthorpe.net

Users of rights of way in Bucknell Woods, of whom there are many in Abthorpe, should be aware that the main byway (RA24) running from the chicken farm, directly west through the woods, has been closed by the Council for the next six months. This has been made necessary, on safety grounds, by the recent spell of very wet weather, and heavy usage destroying the surface. Scrambling bikes are a particular problem, and it

is regrettable that this action has been found necessary.

PLANTING FOR POSTERITY

Did you know that the week of 23rd November to 1st December 2019 was National Tree Week? This, the UK's largest annual tree celebration, marked the start of the winter tree planting season.

Sarah Lawson, who lives at Foscombe, does not do things by halves. Why plant one tree when you can plant..... several hundred! Here Sarah explains how and why she got involved:

"I don't know if it's a sign of age or because I have been seriously ill, but I have started to think about what I

will leave behind: children, obviously, house, garden - in 50 years time new owners will have made their own mark - but trees are different!

"In the last 50 or so years we have witnessed the impact of industrialised farming with ancient hedgerows and trees pulled out; the spread of devastating diseases such as Dutch Elm disease and Ash Dieback; and the effects of climate change and global warming. We are lucky to have a lot of woodland around here and at Foscombe two lovely old strip fields with ancient hedges. But there is very little new planting to preserve and enhance our beautiful countryside.

"In 2018 I applied to the Woodland



Sarah Lawson 'planting for posterity' helped by her labrador

Trust for a grant under their 'MOREwoods' scheme and 18 months later a pallet load of trees, guards and posts were delivered. The trees were all whips, i.e. young saplings about 18in tall. They comprised a selection of oak, hornbeam, field maple, wild cherry, crab apple, birch, dogwood and hazel - 700 in total.

"The appallingly wet autumn weather was actually brilliant for tree planting, but it was a daunting undertaking. One of my sons, Ben, came back from Uni for a bit of real work and I had amazing help from several families, including, from Abthorpe, Jill and Mike Greenhalgh, Fi and Stephen Noble, Andrew Dancer,

and David Robbins who donated his own home-grown tree collection. A very muddy week later, all the trees were planted. It was an incredibly satisfying and rewarding experience - especially when viewed from the warmth of our house! Hopefully, the trees will start sprouting out of their guards in the next 12 months and continue to grow and mature over the next 100 years for generations to come."

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2019

It would seem that 1st December is now being recognised as the start of the Christmas season for no sooner had the first windows of the advent



North entrance to a brightly lit Church

*Making Christingles in the Old School
Clockwise from left: Helen Taylor with
daughter Grace, Thomas Zachar, Barbara
Malcomson, Darcy Collett and her friend,
and Claire Zachar*



calendars been opened, than many village houses were arrayed with swathes of twinkling lights. More modern forms of lighting could also be seen in the form of falling snowflakes projected magically on to a backdrop of trees or garage doors. In the centre of the village a bright star hung from the church porch swinging gently in

the evening breeze (or occasionally twirling vigorously in a stiff wind) and a Christmas tree sparkled on the Green. As Christmas drew nearer, a number of village children played their part in making Christingles which produced a wonderful candlelit sight at the Christmas Eve carol concert.

CHURCH NEWS

Barbara Malcomson
857066 or malcomson@abthorpe.net

Remembrance Sunday

On one of the few bright dry days of the autumn, a good collection of villagers ranging in age from babes in arms to octogenarians, gathered at the war memorial to remember those who gave up so much during the two world wars and other conflicts. Looking down on the current Abthorpe residents were two transparent figures, a poignant symbol of men 'who are here but not here'. Three villagers, Alun Stevens with baby son Elliot, Peta Travis and Stephen Noble, each read out a verse of Laurence Binyon's famous poem 'For the Fallen'. Other volunteers then read out the names inscribed on the war memorial, before the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mike Greenhalgh, laid a wreath on behalf of us all. Following the service, everyone made their way – somewhat thoughtfully – into the church to be fortified with coffee and cake.

Christmas

It seemed no sooner had we taken off our poppies than Christmas was upon us!

Once again this year Jill and Mike Greenhalgh hosted a Christmas Coffee Morning. A wonderful selection of cakes were on offer as well as some stunning door wreaths, flower arrangements and table centre pieces and there were some outstanding raffle prizes to be



won. It was a lovely morning much enjoyed by all who attended, as could be gleaned from the healthy buzz of conversation and the delicious aroma of fresh coffee and home-made tray bakes, muffins and mince pies.

The following day we gathered on the Green to count down to switching on the Christmas tree lights. Santa and his sleigh called by and, after getting a bit chilly singing some carols around the tree, we all went into church to warm up and enjoy hot chocolate or mulled wine and something to eat. The children received a gift from Santa and tried to find all the hidden elves.

The church looked suitably festive as we drew nearer to Christmas. This year we embraced the Church of England's #Follow the Star campaign. Besides the porch star, a Winter Tree stood at the back of the church on which people could hang stars with their own Christmas messages, and another star hung over our traditional crib. Our Christingle/Carol service on Christmas Eve saw the church packed with families and was a moving event led by our vicar, Rev Paul McLeod. Wonderful

hand-knitted crib figures made by Carolynn Tomalin were hidden around the church for the children to find and place in a nativity scene and the highlight of the service was, as usual, the moment the lights were turned off and 'Away in a Manger' was sung as the children, holding their Christingles, formed a circle within the church - a moment to treasure.

Families in Church

Lesley Dale, our benefice Reader in Training who lives in Paulerspury, is taking a Mothering Sunday Service in our church at 11am on 22nd March. It will be suitable for every generation. There will be refreshments to follow.

Not happening in our village, but open to Abthorpe children, is a Maundy Thursday Children's Activity afternoon, which will be held in



*Floral displays on offer
at Christmas Coffee
Morning*



Silverstone church rooms on 9th April between 2pm and 4pm. These events are really enjoyable occasions with lots of things to make and do and learn about.

Future events

We are involved with the organisation of the VE75 celebration weekend on 8th to 10th May. It should be an enjoyable and very full weekend.

We are also organising Open Gardens on 28th June. Several villagers have very kindly agreed to open their gardens for viewing - some big, some small, some formal, some modern. Teas will be provided in the Old School with a selection of plants

for sale in the courtyard.

Our Tea and Piece afternoons will be recommencing once the weather gets a bit warmer, the first of these being on Sunday 19th April. These events are an excellent opportunity to have a cup of tea and a piece of homemade cake and chat to other villagers in the church. They are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month between 3pm and 4.30pm. Last year we had several requests from people to take a slice or two of cake home – we are more than happy to comply, but it would be very helpful if you could bring a container along to save your cake getting squashed.

A new face in church

Rev Paul is taking a three-month Sabbatical in the summer so Rev Sue Stanley, a curate at Potterspury church, will be conducting our services. Her first service with us will be on Sunday 10th May at 11am. We are looking forward to welcoming Sue into our church and it would be lovely to see as many people as possible at the services.

Churchyard mowing

With spring just around the corner we will soon hear the sound of mowers in the village. We have a rota of volunteers who mow the churchyard grass and we are always keen to hear from anyone who would be willing to join the rota. Please contact me for further information.

And finally

Our Annual Church meeting will be held on 10th March at 7pm in the Old School to report on last year's events and the financial situation. As a very small PCC we are grateful for all the help we get. The church is in the heart of the village and is for all the villagers, so please do come to this meeting and have your say.

THE TOTE

For those who are relatively new to the village, you may be interested to learn

a little more about the Tote – and, even better, to become a member.

The purpose of the Tote is to raise money to ensure that our lovely old church in its perfect position in the centre of the village is kept in good repair – each Tote member contributes £5 per month and is entered into a monthly draw. Half of the money collected each month is paid out in winnings and the other half is retained by the Church and ring-fenced to pay for maintaining the fabric of the building. Many people assume that there is a magic pot of gold somewhere providing money to pay for any work that needs doing – and, on an old building, that is a constant concern. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Every penny spent on repairs and renovation has to be raised by the local community. The Tote is our way of ensuring that there is a regular income specifically for this purpose.

Recent Tote winners have been Jane George in November, Bet Rush in December, and Clive and Cherilyn Fielding in January, all of whom won approximately £200. If you are interested in joining the Tote, then please contact Richard Tomalin on 858316 or email him at richard.tomalin@abthorpe.net. After all, if the church were to fall into disrepair, what might planners replace it with?

FOOD BANK

We are very grateful to Roland Huggett for volunteering to take our contributions to Towcester Food Bank on a regular basis – a vacancy created by John Riches’ recent departure. In 2019, people from Abthorpe donated 226.7kg of food to Towcester Food Bank via the box in the back of church. Thank you to everyone who has given food to this worthy cause. The church is generally open every day if you



would like to pop something into the box. All non-perishable food is welcome, but currently the Food Bank is well stocked with pasta and baked beans. Remember that toiletries and household items are also needed.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

It will be no surprise to hear that Christmas and New Year did not go unnoticed at the New Inn.

The celebrations got off to a great start with the Beer and Carols evening held on Wednesday 18th December. Rev Paul McLeod led the singing in the packed pub and soon everyone was joining in with gusto – even if at a



Recent Quizmasters l to r: Connor, Olivia, Ben, Maisie and Dan

different pace. Throughout the month the Christmas menu was well received in the restaurant. At New Year, live music and Bunny's pig roast helped everyone there to see in 2020.

The gastronomic evenings which began in November are proving very popular and are set to continue for the foreseeable future. They take place on the second Monday of each month. Chef Stuart Jones is the mastermind behind the five-course menu, each course being served with a wine selected by Stuart to best complement the dish. The evening is limited to 24 people and costs £40 per head.

There will be special Valentine's Day evenings on both Friday 14th and Saturday 15th February. There are also plans to celebrate St Patrick's Day (17th March) and Mothering Sunday (22nd March) so keep an eye out

nearer the time for details.

The Pub Quiz, which takes place on the last Sunday of every month and has been running for 11 years, has so far raised around £16,000 for various charities. For a £3 per person quiz entry fee, hungry quizzers are provided with a sausage and chip supper and so far approximately 1000kg of chips and 25,000 sausages have been cooked! In November the winning team was 'Carry on Doctor' who donated their £174 prize money to Guide Dogs for the Blind to sponsor a puppy. In December the 'Tows on Tour' won the Christmas-themed quiz. In January, it was the turn of the '90s Kids' to run the quiz; the turnout was fantastic and £217 was raised for the Alzheimer's Society at the request of the winning team 'Bring back Roger'.



Villagers enjoying the Truckers' Breakfast

Supporters at Fi Noble's Coffee Morning



OLD SCHOOL NEWS

Most of us have heard the old adage 'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach'. Well, it would seem that this is also the way to a man's (or woman's) wallet! The Truckers' Breakfast in November was again well attended and it was encouraging to welcome some new faces. Nearly £350 profit was made.

Variations on the 'fundraising by food' theme are in the pipeline. A coffee morning on 7th February at the home of Fi and Stephen Noble, with the aim of building up a fund to ensure the Old School can be kept in its excellent renovated condition, raised a total of £160.

Leap Year Lunches are planned for 29th February. These will be served in the Old School from 12 noon and there will be a choice of home-made

Games Afternoons

On the following Wednesday
afternoons:
19th February, 11th March, 1st
April
from 1.30pm in the Old School

Come along to play games
(you can bring your own
favourites or be introduced
to new ones)

Refreshments will be provided
A donation of £2 per person
would be welcome



Examples of innovative games

soup (suitable for vegetarians), jacket potatoes and sausage or bacon butties. If anyone in Abthorpe just happens to have been born on 29th February, they can claim a free lunch (providing there is documentary evidence!)

A new venture which is taking off is the Games Afternoons.

Mark Evans who attends these sessions brings with him a selection of games invented by his father, Silverstone resident Bob Evans. Bob took up this hobby on his retirement and already has two games in production, both available from Amazon. 'Fyzuntu' is a dice game that comes in a burger-shaped dice shaker and, like most good games, is simple in concept but fun to play. 'Additrapp Galactic' is easy enough for children to play (and, incidentally, learn fascinating facts about the Planets) or can be taken to a higher level for those who like a bit more strategy involved. Look out for

Bob's latest invention, still in the pre-production stage, called 'Wordstep' – described by Mark as "Scrabble with a difference".

ABTHORPE BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

Tim takes the reins

Abthorpe resident Tim Newton tells how he got involved.....

"Growing up in Silverstone and working in Motorsport for 35 years I have been fortunate to be involved in some fast moving, interesting and technically challenging roles. Over the last year I have become involved with ABbA/Tove Valley Broadband and I am learning about fibre optics and whether I have any usable skills I can add to the mix.

"We moved to Abthorpe in 2002 and at that time I was spending about 6 months of the year travelling to different race tracks all over the

world where we would set up our kit and communicate with the factory back in UK. Over the years this progressed from simple fax to ISDN and Satellite and finally to ADSL and fibre communication. I would move from a very fast-paced lifestyle at work to a nice quiet one at home, all the time needing to try and even the imbalance between the two. The setting up of ABbA and my ability to then communicate from home made a big difference to my quality of life as I could do more without having to travel to work.

"What I still find remarkable is how ABbA has managed, with a small group of very dedicated and skilful individuals, to set up and maintain what is a world-class network and all this at a price much cheaper than any other potential suppliers. These volunteers have also managed to stay ahead of the trends and demand by moving from a satellite-based system to ADSL and now fibre.

"As I now have more free time, I have started to try and understand how it all works and assist in any way I can. Taking on the role of Chairman will, I hope, free up some of the pressure on others and give a fresh perspective to the organisation. Originally set up as a not-for-profit organisation, we must also avoid being a loss-making enterprise so, as in all things, finding the right balance is important. All the installations and

system maintenance are performed on a voluntary basis so in the same way as the hardware requires tracking and checking, the people that keep the system running need support too.

"Please note that the ABbA/Tove Valley Broadband AGM will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th May in The Old School – all are welcome to attend".

VE DAY – 75TH ANNIVERSARY

As you may – or, indeed, may not – be aware, this year's May Day Bank Holiday has been moved by the Government from the first Monday of May to the Friday of that week, namely Friday 8th May. This is to enable people in villages, towns and cities throughout the UK to hold celebrations to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

Plans are well underway in Abthorpe with activities spanning three days from Friday 8th through to Sunday 10th May. This is a non-profit making event, although if there is money in the coffers after expenses have been met, this will be given to SSAFA (the Armed Forces Charity).

Further details will be announced nearer the date but the details opposite should whet your appetites. All help would be greatly appreciated: this is a community event so the more everyone gets involved the more fun it will be.



Abthorpe 75th Anniversary VE Day celebrations

Plans are gaining pace so make sure you save the date: May 8th – 10th

Dust off your 1940's outfits and join us throughout the weekend

- Enjoy Live Music along with a Tea Dance, and later a Pig Roast
- Get your “whites” out and loosen your arm for village Cricket and Rounders
- Join friends on the Green for a drink, Fish and Chips and the Street Party

More details to follow. Want to help? We would love to hear from you! oldschool@abthorpe.net

All proceeds to SSAFA

**Friday May
8th**

Tea Dance

**Nation's
Toast**

Bar

**Ringling out
for peace**

Pig Roast

**Saturday
May 9th**

Rounders

Cricket

Bar

**Fish and
Chips on
the Green**

**Sunday
May 10th**

**‘Street
Party’ bring
some food
and join
your
friends &
family on
the Green**

CLASSES IN THE OLD SCHOOL:

Art Classes

Following the success of the classes she held in the autumn, Paula Le Baigue is offering another block of 5 classes beginning on Saturday 22nd February and taking place every alternate Saturday until 18th April, the sessions taking place in the Old School.

You need to bring your own materials.

The cost of the classes is £70 and the skills and techniques to be covered are detailed as follows:

22nd February - Using the grid system to transfer your image and underpainting

7th March - Completing the painting

21st March - Painting in acrylics

4th April - Painting in watercolour

18th April - Abstract in acrylics

Paula is also holding some 2-day portrait painting classes (oil on canvas) on three occasions over a Wednesday and Thursday – 26th/27th February, 25th/26th March and 22nd/23rd April – the cost is £90.

If you are interested in attending any of these classes or if you would like further details, please email Paula at paulalebaigue@gmail.com or call her on 07738 561341.

Pilates Classes

The Pilates classes in the Old School are proving very popular and there are now classes to keep you fit and flexible

on four days of the week.

On Mondays there is a Circuits session between 7 and 8pm. On Tuesdays, a Fitness class runs from 9.30 to 10.30am, with Chair Pilates following straight afterwards for the next hour. In the evening there are a further two classes running from 6.30 to 7.30pm and then from 7.30 to 8.30pm.

These evening sessions are repeated on Thursdays at the same times, whilst on Saturday mornings, two further sessions are scheduled from 9.00 – 10.00am and then 10.00 – 11.00am.

If anyone would like to join a class, please email oldschool@abthorpe.net and your details will be forwarded to Sarah Crisp from Blue Lotus Pilates.

NEW YEAR, NEW JOB FOR SOUTH NORTHANTS JOB SEEKERS

Job seekers looking for new work in 2020 are being invited to join South Northamptonshire Council's popular and successful Job Club.

Following a short closure over the festive season, the SNC Job Club has re-opened its doors to continue offering free and confidential advice on a wide range of topics to help equip people with the tools and skills to find work, change career, or even start their own business.

Help is available with CV writing, covering letters and application forms, and there is information on all the

latest local vacancies, apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities as well as debt, money and welfare advice. In addition, the SNC Job Match service also matches potential employees with local businesses. For those thinking of potentially setting up their own business, the SNC Enterprise Club advisor is also available to offer advice and support to get you started.

Job Club takes place in Towcester Library at the Forum every other Tuesday between 11:30am and 1:30pm. The next session will be on Tuesday 25th February. There is no requirement to book in advance.

For more information, visit <https://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/Job-Club>, email jobclub@southnorthants.gov.uk or call 01327 322087.

ONLINE HELP AT HAND AS DIGITAL HUB OPENS ITS DOORS IN TOWCESTER

Residents who want to improve their online skills are being encouraged to visit a new Digital Hub. In partnership with Citizens Advice, the SNC is hosting Digital Advice Hub sessions at the Forum in Towcester.

At these events a trained coach will be available to help residents become more confident with the use of computers and in accessing online council and government services. Not everyone feels comfortable going online to use Council services, such as making payments or ordering bulky waste collections, but with more and

more services moving online it is important that people can get proper access to advice and make sure they can use the internet. It is hoped that these Hubs will play an important role in bridging that gap.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

As has already been highlighted earlier in this edition of Abtalk, we do have a problem with people speeding through our village, so you might be interested in the following article recently published by Northants Police:

In early December it was announced that volunteers have helped improve safety on our local roads.

Community Speed Watch is an initiative which sees fully trained residents use speed detection devices to monitor vehicles travelling through their towns and villages on roads with limits of 20, 30 and 40mph.

Warning letters are sent to the registered keeper of any vehicles caught exceeding the speed limit, which aims to increase awareness of the dangers of speeding and encourage drivers to reduce their speed.

The drivers' details will also be held on record to identify any repeat offenders and anyone caught exceeding the speed limits more than twice can expect a visit from the police as well as targeted enforcement.

Between April and November, a total of 686 Community Speed Watch

sessions were carried out by the groups, which resulted in 4,875 warning letters being sent to drivers caught speeding.

If you are interested in becoming a Community Speed Watch Volunteer, please visit www.northants.police.uk/CSW for more information.

FIRST SIGNS OF SPRING?

In the fields behind the Stocking Frame the first lambs of the season have put in an appearance, watched over by their doting mothers.



CALLING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE HEARD

The Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is looking to welcome more members to its Youth Commission to understand and meet the needs of local young people.

The Youth Commission was launched in May 2019 to ensure the voices of young people in Northamptonshire are heard. Since that time, 20 young people have been working on a project they named the 'Big Conversation', to seek the views of as many young people as possible about two key topics - gang violence and road safety. Results will be presented at an event in March.

The Youth Commission enables young people to get involved in, and express their views, on a range of issues affecting the communities where they live, as well as being a great opportunity to meet new people, gain new skills and help make a difference.

Those interested will get to work on topics such as mental health, anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse. They will gather the views of other young people, plan and get involved in events, and present findings back to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and other partners in Northamptonshire.

Membership will ideally be made up of a diverse group of young people

to broadly reflect the make-up of the county, including those who may have direct experience of the police and justice system.

The role is open to people aged between 14 and 19 years (up to 24 years for people with additional needs) who live in Northamptonshire.

The deadline for applications is Saturday 29th February 2020.

Anyone interested can complete an application form here - <http://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/northamptonshire-youth-commission-application/>

Paper copies are available by contacting commissioner@northantspfcc.pnn.gov.uk.

NORTHAMPTON RURAL MATTERS NEWSLETTER

Northamptonshire Police now publish a newsletter about the work going on to fight rural crime in the county. It covers such issues as fly-tipping, rural burglary, the welfare of wildlife and theft of farm equipment – and, in the latest issue, looks back at the sheep butchery affair, the problem of hare coursing and the case of neglected horses, among other articles.

A copy of the current newsletter is available at https://www.northamptonshireneighbourhoodalert.co.uk/images/site_images/55270_Rural_Matters_Jan_2020.pdf



STORM CIARA - TIMBERRRRRRRR!

Residents around the Green were given a mighty shock on Sunday morning when, with a great crash, one of the churchyard Western Red Cedar trees fell victim to Storm Ciara's rage. Although the main trunk remained standing, a huge side branch came smashing down. Fortunately nobody was hurt as the branch fell mostly across the churchyard itself, but its top branches hung so far over the wall that Tina Emerton's car was completely hidden from view. When Darren tentatively got into the car and edged it out from beneath the

greenery he was amazed to find barely a scratch on it!

Our resident tree surgeon, Bunny Hutchings, living just around the corner, was hastily informed of the tree's demise and was at the scene with admirable speed. Bunny assessed that the rest of the tree, now looking painfully scarred, was not in danger of falling imminently, although it is so damaged that it will have to be felled. Only a day later, Bunny and his team, including a female chain-saw handler, had worked miracles and the offending branch was no more.

Eighty years to grow.....

Half a day to go!

and see over the page for the final result





And, incidentally, looking at these photos showing the Green is a reminder about.....

VILLAGE GREEN MOWING

As usual, Philip Berry will be organising the rota for mowing the village green. As a couple of people have dropped out, a few more volunteers would be welcome. Each person generally only has to do it twice or possibly three times and you get the chance to sit on our relatively new ride-on mower. You will get training in its use. If you would like to help, contact philip.berry@abthorpe.net.

NEXT EDITION OF ABTALK

Abtalk will be published again in June. The Editors would appreciate all articles or information you would like included to be submitted by 31st May and remember we can only include news we know about.

PEOPLE

A number of newcomers have chosen to move to Abthorpe in the past few months and we hope they will all settle in well and feel happy to start joining in the various village activities mentioned in Abtalk. We would love to see you.

Among others, we extend a warm welcome to Tracey and Roger who have moved to The Green, and to Harriet and Jacob who are now resident in Wappenham Road. The same goes for Nick and J'Nel Metherell who have moved into Stanhill Row, along with their three children Gracie, Rocky and Zeb plus two cats. They are looking forward to a bit more space, the country air and a quieter life compared with Wolverton where they previously lived.

We also welcome the Arneill family who moved to Orchard Close in December from Helmdon. Phil is a geoscientist working for an oil company based in Uxbridge, whilst his wife Sophie is a beauty therapist specialising in eyelash extensions and facial treatments and is based in her home salon. They have a daughter Esme who is 7 years old and goes to school in Northampton. They also have a dog called Maggie. Phil says that they are looking forward to becoming involved in village life and have already started to frequent the fantastic pub.



*From l to r:
Sophie, Esme
and Phil
Arneill*

FAREWELL TO BIG JOHN

Just a few days before Christmas, Abthorpe said goodbye to one of the real stalwarts of the village. John Riches, known affectionately as Big John, has moved to St Albans to be close to his son and family.

He and his lovely wife Joyce, who sadly died in 2018, had lived in Abthorpe for over 40 years and John's presence will be sorely missed. John was a good listener, a great talker and was interested in everything that went on around him. He loved nothing better than having a meal or a pint of Hooky at the New Inn and would regale his friends with stories and anecdotes on the many and varied topics that took his interest. Above all, John was a genuinely compassionate man and he was not reticent about sticking up for the underdog or those in need. He was forthright, open-minded and principled with a strong sense of what was right and his contribution to life in Abthorpe was immense.

*John Riches holding
his farewell gift of
Hooky ales*



DIARY (CONTINUED)*Sunday 12 April Easter Sunday*

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15, followed by coffee

Sunday 19 April

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15, followed by coffee

Tea & Piece in the Church, 3.00 – 4.30

Monday 20 April

Parish Council Meeting, The Old School, 7.45

Sunday 26 April

Charity Quiz, The New Inn, 7.30

Monday 4 May

Annual Parish Meeting, The Old School, 7.45

Friday 8 May

VE Day Celebrations, from 3.00 onwards: Tea Dance & Pig Roast

Saturday 9 May

VE Day Celebrations, from 2.00 onwards

Cricket/Rounders, Fish and Chips on the Village Green

Sunday 10 May

VE Day Celebrations

Church service, 11.00 followed by Street Party on the Village Green

Wednesday 13 May

ABbA /Tove Valley Broadband AGM, The Old School, 7.30

Sunday 17 May

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15, followed by coffee

Tea & Piece in the Church, 3.00 – 4.30

Monday 18 May

Parish Council AGM, 7.45, The Old School

DIARY

Wednesday 19 February

Games Afternoon, The Old School, 1.30

Sunday 23 February

Charity Quiz, The New Inn, 7.30

Saturday 29 February

Leap Year Lunch, The Old School, 12.00 – 2.00

Sunday 8 March

Holy Eucharist Service, 11.00

Monday 9 March

Parish Council Meeting, The Old School, 7.45

Tuesday 10 March

Annual Church Meeting, The Old School, 7.00

Wednesday 11 March

Games Afternoon, The Old School, 1.30

Sunday 15 March

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15, followed by coffee

Sunday 22 March

Mothering Sunday Service, 11.00

Sunday 29 March

Charity Quiz, The New Inn, 7.30

Wednesday 1 April

Games Afternoon, The Old School, 1.30

Thursday 9 April Maundy Thursday

Children's Session, Silverstone Church Rooms, 2.00 – 4.00