

ABTALK

News from Abthorpe

March 2023

Parish Council News

Mike Greenhalgh, Chairman

Platinum Jubilee Tree

The Parish Council completed the Platinum Jubilee year with the planting of an oak tree to commemorate the event. The tree, a very small Common Oak, was planted in November in Peter Newcombe's field below Main Street and Stone Cottage. We thank Peter both for his permission to plant the tree there and for his help with planting and erecting the tree guard to keep the sheep away.



A small plaque has been attached to part of the guard to mark this milestone

Planning issue

As many of you will know there are plans to build an agricultural building under the 'Permitted development' rules on very old pasture land at the top of Brackley Lane/Withymore Lane, also known as Footpath RA46.

So far this is not a planning application as that is unnecessary under the current legislation, but the local Council, West Northants, have decided that the project does need prior approval.

We, as the local Parish Council, have written to West Northants Council on a number of occasions pointing out the flaws in the development:

1. The field where the agricultural building is proposed to be built is a Local Wildlife Site and neighbours a Site of Special Scientific Interest (due to its rare and unusual plants including orchids).
2. The 'Barn' is very large for the land it is to serve, namely just over 60 acres of pretty poor quality pasture land.
3. There is poor access to the site via Green Lane and in particular Withymore Lane which is deeply rutted and very muddy, especially at this time of year. Getting machinery and building supplies to the proposed site will be very challenging.
4. What will be the barn's ultimate use? The owners of the land do not, as far as we know, have any experience of farming.

We continue to be vigilant over this and other planning issues and will keep you up to date as far as possible with developments.

Kerbs for the Village Green and Gates for the Village

At the same time as the number of cars parking beside our village green has grown over the years, the Green itself has been shrinking, as each car takes just a little nibble at the grass as it is parked. The edge of the Green has moved about 500mm (that's about 18 inches in old money) and the step down from the grass to the road has increased to about 200mm (8 inches) in places. Attempts to deter parking on the grass itself were quite successful by putting posts along the Green side, but these did not stop the 'erosion'. In the end it became apparent the only viable solution was to put kerbing

along the main section of the Green (for now) to form a physical border between the road and the Green. That work was done during the lead up to Christmas. All we are awaiting now is for the Highways Department to check a few things out, and we'll then tidy up the area and get the grass re-laid/reseeded in time for summer. If funds allow us to do so in the future, we'd like to lay kerbs along the two other sections of the Green where it meets the 'main road'. The erosion issue is nearly as bad there as it was in the central section.

At the same time as laying the kerbs, as part of our efforts to calm traffic through Abthorpe, we have installed 'gates' at both ends of the village, along with new village name



signs. The old ones, which West Northants Council will remove in due course, are very faded, and did nothing in terms of warning drivers that they are approaching our village. The gates are designed to do just that, warning drivers that the village is just ahead and that they should drive with care. So far, comments from villagers have been very favourable. We hope you agree.

Parking

The thorny issue of parking is never very far away.

There have been some comments about residents parking in very tight spots which would make it impossible for an emergency vehicle such as an Ambulance, Fire Engine or Police vehicle to get to some of the houses in the village. This of course could have potential serious consequences.

It is obviously important to 'Park Prettily' and to not obstruct the thoroughfare. There are many villagers who park their cars partially on the pavement. As long as the pavement is still usable, then this is reasonable, but there must be a way through on the path for pedestrians to walk, including those with young children, buggies, wheelchairs and dogs. These people should not have to use the road.

All in all, we need to be respectful and think of others when we are parking.

PLEASE PARK PRETTILY!

Community Speed Watch 2023

Following concerns expressed by residents regarding the speed of vehicles travelling through the village, the Parish Council has once again registered Abthorpe's in the Community Speed Watch scheme. This is a national initiative in which proactive members of local communities join, with the support and supervision of their local police, to record details of speeding vehicles using approved detection devices. Registered keepers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit are contacted - initially with a letter explaining the potential risks and consequences of their dangerous behaviour. Repeat offenders receive a visit from the local police, irrespective of where they live. Beyond these friendly gestures, focused enforcement and criminal prosecution follow, based on the collated evidence.

This year, we will have the surveillance kit from **Saturday 27th May to Saturday 24th June.**

We need a recommended minimum of two, ideally three, volunteers per Speed Watch session, so the more volunteers we get, the more effective this initiative will be. Minimal training is involved and each Speed Watch session lasts, on average, only 60-90 minutes.

If you are interested in participating in this important initiative and helping to reduce speeding through our village, please get in touch. Without your support, we are unable to make a difference. Contact Tina Emerton, Community Speed Watch Coordinator at abthorpeparishclerk@gmail.com

Meetings

The Parish Council continues to meet on a 6-8 weekly basis in the Old School starting at 7.00 pm. Anyone is very welcome to attend and there is always a slot on the agenda for residents to speak and bring up a new issue.

Since Christmas we have sadly lost a Councillor as Max Kellner resigned his position on the Council due to heavy work commitments. We thank Max for his work on the Council over the last few years.

We are fortunate to have found a new volunteer to join us - Sarah Jones - who will be co-opted formally at our next meeting in April.

This year's Annual Meeting will take place in the Old School on Tuesday 30th May at 7.00 pm and all residents are welcome to attend.

Councillor Profiles

In the last issue of Abtalk we introduced you to some of our Parish Councillors - Mike Greenhalgh (Chair), Rachel Stevens (Vice Chair), Emily Humphrey and Chris Zachar. In this edition we introduce Phil Berry and Fi Noble.

Councillor Philip Berry

Merrilyn and I moved to Abthorpe in 1996 with, for a brief period, our children James and Vicki, and felt at home from the day we arrived. Almost



immediately I seemed to be co-opted into various village activities and functions like mowing the Green, the village Millennium commemorations and celebrations, and helping to raise £25,000 to fund repairs to our parish church.

I am retired from a career in marketing, having worked in nearly every field from ice cream to the National Curriculum.

My days of scuba diving and cricket are now behind me, but I enjoy golf, singing in the Greens Norton Choir and walking our infamous Labrador, Hamish. I'm even still up for the odd pint in the New Inn, where I occasionally act as quiz master for the monthly charity quiz night. I have been a member of the Parish Council for about 12 months.

Councillor Fi Noble

I moved to Abthorpe in 2006 from Edinburgh. I have been married to Stephen for nearly 30 years and we have two children, Katie and George. I have been involved in village life since we arrived, being an active member of the Old School committee, and I joined the Parish Council over four years ago.

I work part-time for an employee benefits company in a sales support role.



We currently have two dogs living with us at home, Ace and Dash, three chickens and two ponies. I love seeing friends and playing in my garden. Life is always busy!

Abthorpe Parish Council invites you to come



Litter Picking

on Sunday April 2nd

**Help us keep our beautiful village clean
and tidy**

We will meet on the Green at 11.00 am

Equipment will be supplied

Please give us your support

Old School News, Part 1

Since the last edition of Abtalk there have been several social/fundraising events and there are quite a few more in the pipeline.

In December the Old School organised a Christmas Coffee Morning in conjunction with the Church. We are grateful for the many contributions of both savoury treats and cakes, which were well received by a good turnout of villagers. The Old School hummed with conversation as people talked excitedly about how well they were doing with their Christmas shopping lists, how many cards had been written, and how they wished Christmas

came around more often than once a year. Or maybe not! But there was a lovely festive atmosphere and some excellent raffle prizes proved to be the icing on the cake for the lucky winners.

In January, as Christmas began to be but a distant memory and the weather turned decidedly chilly, a Truckers Breakfast was laid on. Although all who came tucked into their sausages and bacon with relish, numbers were a little down – perhaps too many of us had rather over-indulged during the festive season?

Lack of numbers was certainly not the issue with the next event. There was not a spare seat in the house for the talk in February given by well-known metal detectorists, Andy and Lance. Well, that was who we were expecting, but at the last moment they were not available so Paul and Alan from South Northants Metal Detecting gallantly stepped into the breach. An excellent and entertaining presentation followed with the evening concluding with a simple but delicious Ploughman's Supper.

Another very well-supported event was the Race Night on Saturday 25th March. The 72 people there had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Horses were bought, bets were placed and money lost. Chilli and jacket potatoes proved very popular at half-time.

We're older than you think (aka Abthorpe's Re-Written History) - the Detectorists Talk

In a packed Old School on the evening of Saturday 18th February two metal detectorists, Paul Marrant and Alan Standish, accompanied by fellow detectorist Genine Marrant, took us on a journey into Abthorpe's past. If you were unable to attend the talk or felt that it might not be your thing, or if you attended but would like a reminder of what you saw and heard, a brief summary of the main argument follows. First of all, though, Paul has asked for the following to be included:

“We at South Northants Metal Detecting would like to thank all those who attended for their attention and participation. The interest shown was overwhelming and so very much appreciated. It is nice to be in the company of so many people who appreciate their local history as we do.

Several people were interested in some of the online sources of information, so I would like to share this with all the readers of this newsletter. If you would like to see the finds that we have recorded, then the following web address will take you directly there without any search parameters being entered.

<https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/countyID/7371/districtID/7306/parishID/7528/show/100/sort/created>

If you would like to have a general look at the wealth of information held on the Portable Antiquity Scheme website, then please use the following web address and enter the “Spatial Details” for the area that interests you.

<https://finds.org.uk/database/search/advanced>

Another great source of information is the following website, the address below is for Abthorpe. For other areas please use the search functions

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol4/pp1-5>

There are two other sources of information that you may find interesting, these are Lidar information and georeferenced maps. The georeferenced maps have a lot of options including old Ordnance Survey maps and others.

<https://www.lidarfinder.com/> (Please ensure you allow location tracking for it to work properly)

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/> I strongly suggest that you go to the top right-hand corner and click "Go to former side by side viewer"

For any budding detectorists out there, I advise you obtain NCMD membership to protect yourself and the owners of the land you are detecting on. Also, I strongly advise you use a model search agreement which is available in the members area when you join. The site also contains plenty of advice and the all-important Metal Detecting Code of Conduct that you should adhere to.

<https://www.ncmd.co.uk/membership/>

<https://www.ncmd.co.uk/code-of-conduct/>

Finally, if anybody has information or contacts for any landowners who would be interested in our group detecting then please forward details onto Paul Marrant at settingout@hotmail.com with the word 'Detecting' in the subject line. Similarly, if you would like to try detecting prior to investing in a detector or you would like any advice or information then please email Paul.

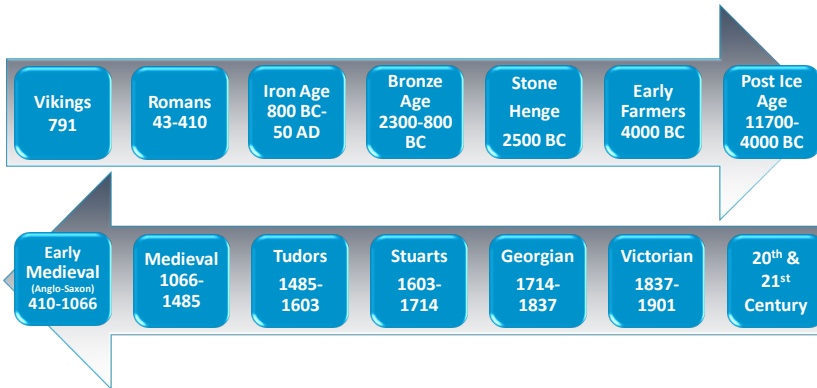
Once again thank you all for your interest and attendance and we look forward to seeing you again.

Genuine, Paul and Alan of SNMD"

[If anyone is having difficulty with the online links above, remember that you can download a pdf version of Abtalk from the village website and use the links in that directly. Ed]

So, back to the actual talk, what did we learn? A clue was in the title: **Abthorpe's Re-written History**

Paul very helpfully showed us a timeline detailing how the past can be divided up into different periods:



Paul pointed out that Abthorpe’s recorded history states “No remains of prehistoric or Roman date have been noted in the parish but there are earthworks of two medieval settlements, Foscoate and Charlock, as well as within the village of Abthorpe”.

So, Abthorpe’s recorded history officially goes back to the Medieval period as shown on the timeline when we were a simple farming community, right? Wrong! The finds discovered by metal detectorists and others dispute this statement. Their careful searching in the fields surrounding Abthorpe has unearthed these significant artefacts:



A Medieval copper alloy French jetton (a token rather than a coin) dating from about 1350-1400AD. The image on the left depicts a crowned king standing holding a raised sword in his right hand; with his lowered left hand resting on the shield of France.

The significance of this French token is that it indicates that trade was occurring in the area, suggesting that Abthorpe was much more than a closed or isolated farming community. We can surmise that goods and services were rather more expensive in the main town of Towcester where

the guilds were in control so local people in and around Abthorpe did a bit of trading on the side (the precursor to a Sunday car boot sale?).

This find of a disc brooch takes us back several hundred years earlier to the Early Medieval period (AD 700-900) when the Anglo-Saxon culture existed.

The front of the object is decorated with a backward-looking animal with four legs, each terminating in three long claws, an upward curled tail and a mane. The head has a ring-and-pellet eye and an open mouth. Those Anglo-Saxons either had vivid imaginations or strange varieties of horses?



imagination or strange varieties of horses?



The next find confirms that Abthorpe's history certainly goes back to at least the Early Medieval period for it is a cast copper-alloy late Early-Medieval sword pommel dating from the period c. AD 900-1100. It is fascinating to ponder who last held this very sword, what he was doing with it, was it ever wielded in anger

But this find is even more amazing because it dates from Roman times. It is a copper-alloy Nummus (coin of low value) of the Constantine II era, dating to the period AD 321-323. We know that the Romans had been in Britain for nearly 300 years at this time so this coin would have been minted in



London. Perhaps someone from the successful and wealthy town of Lactodorum (present day Towcester) was riding or walking through Abthorpe one day and

And how about this? Forget about those Romans – the first photo shows part of an axe head and the second a spear head. Both are made from a cast



are made from a cast copper alloy. The axe is believed to date from the middle of the Middle Bronze Age (around 1300 BC) to the Earliest Iron Age (700-600 BC) while the spearhead is Late Bronze Age (1100-800 BC). So, to put it another way, these finds are older than the Roman coin by over 1000 years.

So it would seem – and this was the crux of the presentation – that Abthorpe’s recorded history has now been pushed back from its previously accepted Medieval era to beyond the Earliest Medieval period of the Anglo-Saxons, back beyond the time of the Vikings, back beyond when the Romans were here, even back through most, if not all, of the Iron Age, to the Bronze Age. What sort of lives did those early people live where we live now, what did they think about, how did they dress, what did they eat? We may never know all the answers but we can wonder.

Old School News, Part 2 - Events in the Pipeline

Details will follow in due course, but dates to put in your diary are:



Saturday 1st April, 10.30-12.30: Sarah Jones is hosting a Coffee Morning at Stable Cottage. Her cake-making is legendary so not to be missed.



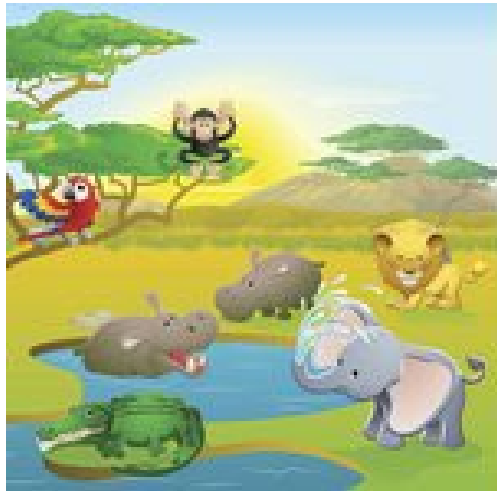
Saturday 20th May am: Old School Plant Sale under the management of Bill Lamb, Abthorpe's answer to Monty Don. Refreshments will be available.

And, of course there is the Coronation - see later in this issue.

Safari Supper

Another Safari Supper evening is being organised for Saturday 24th June. Our last one was back in 2019!

For those unfamiliar with the concept of a safari supper, the evening starts with a drinks reception for all diners during which you are told where to go for your first course. The mystery of your main course venue is revealed at the end of the starter, and likewise for dessert. Diners are split into tables of 8 and at each course you will be at a different house



with a different set of dining companions. Those participating can choose to do a course of their own choice.

Everyone gathers again at the end of the evening at one venue for coffee (and maybe a little left-over wine). It is a great social evening with an opportunity to get to know neighbours in the village you may not have come across before. The organisers hope to visit door to door with an invitation, but if you want to make sure of your participation, please email safari-supper@abthorpe.net and watch out for more information on leaflets and on the village Facebook page.

No Mow May

A national campaign was launched by the charity Plantlife last year and is being repeated this year. West Northants Council fully supports the campaign and is encouraging Parish Councils and individuals throughout the area to participate. Furthermore, according to Eugene Tom of the Sustainability Team at the Council, they have already spoken to their contractors who will be implementing this across a number of parks in West Northants.

The idea is simple: for the month of May, do not cut your grass but leave it to grow.

Why? Over-maintenance of lawns and other grassy areas means that the wildflowers and other plants in the grass don't have a chance to grow, flower or set seed. Changing the way we mow, mowing less regularly or allowing some areas to get long and leaving others short, enables this to happen and increases biodiversity.



If we change the way lawns and grassy areas are cut, we will see more wild flowers; this is good for our senses and for pollinators.

To put it simply: **plants need pollinators and pollinators need plants.**

To persuade all of us gardeners to give it a go, Plantlife released the following information:

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- On a single day in summer, one acre of wildflower meadow can contain 3 million flowers and produce 1 kg of nectar sugar for pollinators.
 - But since the 1930s, we have lost nearly 7.5 million acres of flower-rich meadows and pastures. Just 1% of our countryside now provides this floral feast for pollinators.
 - Against this loss, habitats such as lawns have become increasingly important. With 15 million gardens in Britain, our lawns have the potential to become major sources of nectar.

In response to these findings, we are being encouraged to leave our lawnmower in the shed and let the lawn grow long, just for the month of May. In this way, smaller plants like clover, daisies, dandelions, selfheal, and clover will get a chance to flower and give pollinators a head-start.



Of course, come 1st June, you don't have to crop all your lawn short again! An increasing number of people are allowing some grassy areas of their gardens to grow long but perhaps mowing a path through which can be most attractive (as well as cutting down on maintenance!),

But what will the neighbours say? Embracing a wilder lawn is exciting, but can be challenging for some people. By separating long-grass areas with short-grass borders and paths, you can create a sort of ‘*managed messiness*’ that shows the flowers are intentional and not down to neglect!

In addition, you can put up a sign to show you’re taking part in Plantlife’s No Mow May – available for free from nomowmay@plantlife.org.uk.

As a matter of record, the PCC of our church of St John the Baptist had already decided to implement No Mow May this year in the churchyard as part of our environmental policy. The Parish Council is currently considering whether to adopt the same approach with land which comes under its jurisdiction.

Our Farmers are helping too

Barry and Liz Haycock have told us of a government initiative in which they are participating. It is part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme whereby farmers are given grants for good environmental practice.



In this case, a grant is given to arable farmers who set aside small plots of land on which to grow a mix of wild flowers. It makes sense that farmers want their crops to be pollinated so they need to encourage the growth of flowering plants to increase food supplies for the pollinators, particularly bumble bees, solitary bees, butterflies, moths and hover flies.

The seed mix is carefully selected to include a variety of flower species which will provide a steady supply of pollen and nectar-rich flowers. Strict guidelines tell farmers when and how often cutting can be done to ensure sustained flowering throughout the spring and summer. In the winter the whole plot of flowering plants will be cut or grazed, and the dead material removed, in preparation for regrowth the following spring.

Barry has already planted out his designated strips of land and is looking forward to seeing the results in the coming months.

Time to get walking again!

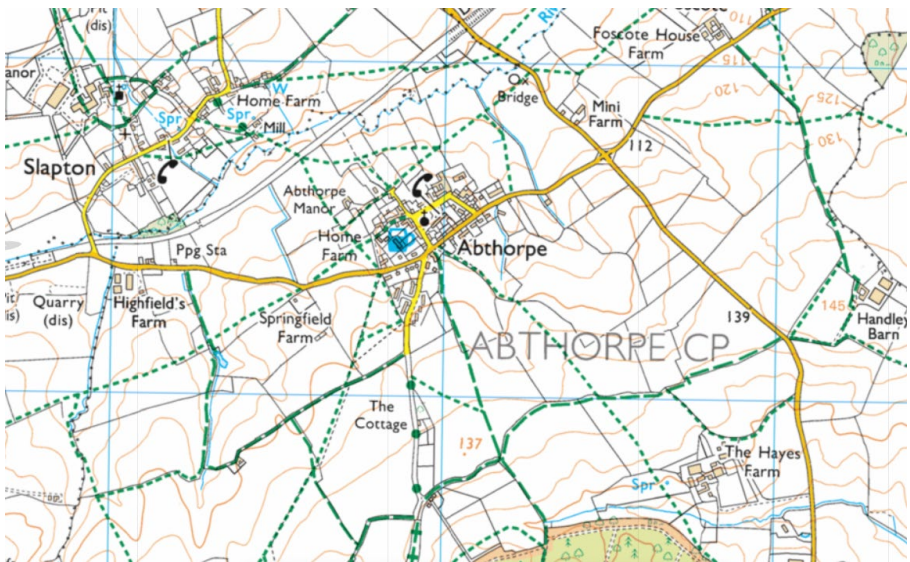
With Spring on its way, we start to think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks?

‘Walking in Northamptonshire’ has loads of walks to download and print, free; it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is there in one place: <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/northants>.

John Harris, who maintains the website, said “There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. ‘Walking in Northamptonshire’ (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you”. So, home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

Sticking to the Footpaths

We are fortunate in Abthorpe to have many footpaths radiating out from the village in all directions. It is possible to do a whole variety of circular walks, either west towards Wappenham, south towards Bucknell Woods, east towards Foscoate, or north towards Bradden or Slapton. It is important to remember however that while we, the public, have every right to walk along the designated footpaths or bridleways, we do not have the right to arbitrarily cross fields that are under private ownership. The following map shows the footpaths that lead out from Abthorpe – in black and white they are not that easy to pick out but Abtalk can be viewed in colour online via the village website (www.abthorpevillage.co.uk).



Alternatively, you could follow this link [FixMyStreet - Abthorpe](#) which takes you directly to the OS map. Another idea is to use this link [Cadcorp SIS WebMap 9 \(southnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) and choose 'Map Features', then 'Transport and Streets', then 'Public Rights of Way'. Both links produce

maps which you can enlarge in order to get a clear understanding of where the rights of way are located.

At this time of year, in particular, it is also worth reminding dog walkers to keep their dogs under strict control as the lambing season is now well underway. Two of our local farmers have already lost sheep as a result of dog attacks.

Church News

The special Christmas events all now seem a long time ago but just for the record:

Christmas Coffee Morning – a successful joint venture with the Old School (see earlier reference).

Beer and Carols at the New Inn – after a hiatus of a few years due to Covid, it was heart-warming to have such a well-supported event this year. We sang our hearts out, groaned at the awful Christmas cracker jokes, downed a few drinks, and fortified ourselves with welcome nibbles from the kitchen. Grateful thanks to the Reverend Paul for leading and to Rob and the team for hosting.

Christmas Tree Lighting – as darkness fell and our Christmas tree in the churchyard was lit up, Phil Berry led us into some jolly songs and carols before we tramped into the church for mulled wine, muffins and more of a sing-song. As we finished with ‘Santa Claus is Coming to Town’ who should put in a perfectly timed appearance but SC/FC himself.

Christingle and Carols – Is this the best part of Christmas? The church was packed with families for our traditional Christmas Eve service. It is always a lump-in-the-throat moment as the children form a huge circle round the aisles, the lights are turned off and Away in a Manger is sung by candlelight. We were able to send £200 to the Children’s Society from the offertory

proceeds, a salutary reminder that not all children in the UK are as blessed and privileged as ours.

Looking forward now:

Our **regular Sunday service** is on the third Sunday of the month at 10.00 am so over the next few months it will take place on Sunday 19th March, Sunday 16th April, Sunday 21st May, Sunday 18th June and Sunday 16th July. These services are always a Holy Eucharist service, but are open to everyone whether you wish to take communion or not.

In addition to the regular services there will be an **Easter Day** service on Sunday 9th April, this service beginning at the earlier time of 9.15 am.

We have a number of **weddings** booked to take place in church, the first being between Tim Ti and Gemma West on Saturday 15th April at 1.00 pm.

We are planning to restart our monthly **Tea & Piece** afternoons now that the worst of the cold weather has, hopefully, passed. Although these will normally take place on a Sunday afternoon between 3 pm and 4.30 pm, the first actually took place on a Saturday (18th March) as the following day was Mothering Sunday. The others are planned to be on the same day as the regular church services - so Sunday 16th April, and so on.

We will be giving the church a **Spring Clean** on Wednesday 29th March from 10.00 am and would welcome any help. Coffee and hot cross buns will be provided to keep energy levels up.

Recent **Church Tote** winners have been Jane Jones and Helen Taylor, who each won £132.50 in November as did Jenny Carter and Rachel Hulbert in December. In January's draw Rene Balderson and Mike Matthews each received £127.50 while the February winners were Tina and Steve Clews and Margaret Bunting who each won £128.75. The March winners were Tricia Jones and Rachel Hulbert, who each won £126.25.

With the lengthening days and improving weather, we will resume **opening the church** daily once British Summer Time begins on 26th March. Anyone is free to walk into the church – no appointment necessary! – for a period of calm or quiet reflection. If the church should happen to be locked, please

contact one of the following PCC members who will arrange to open it for you:

- Jill Greenhalgh 858102 (home) or 07717 887787 (mobile)
- Barbara Malcomson 857066 (home) or 07544 680606 (mobile)
- Alison Robbins 857795 (home) or 07814 474047 (mobile)

And don't forget the **Food Box** just inside the church. Towcester Food Bank have sent out this appeal:

Give Help - Donate food

Our foodbank relies on your goodwill and support.

Over 90% of the food distributed by foodbanks in The Trussell Trust network is donated by the public - that's why your food donations are absolutely vital to our ability to give everyone referred to us a balanced and nutritious supply of food. We always welcome donations and a list of our greatest needs is given here:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Tinned fruit | Fruit juice (UHT not fresh) |
| Custard | Toothbrushes |
| Jam | |

We've got plenty of Pasta, Beans and Soup!

Also, next to the Food Box, is a box for collecting used stamps. These go to a charity called Against Breast Cancer, which funds research into detection, treatment and improved survival rates after breast cancer diagnosis. The stamps need to have at least a 1 cm margin left once they have been torn from your envelopes.

News from the New Inn

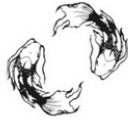


It is only March but the New Inn has already held several special celebratory events: Burns Night, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and Mother’s Day. These special dates all inspired the team to use their imagination and culinary skills to come up with meals and music to suit the occasion. But if you missed out, don’t worry because there are still plenty of opportunities to sample the delicious food and special atmosphere that we have now come to expect from our favourite local.

In particular you might like to book a place (Tel. 01327 857306) at one of the following:

- The Chef’s Table on the 1st Monday of the month (**except May this year**).
- Fish Night - once a month on a Thursday evening - next one is Thursday 30th March.

And don’t forget that you can order a Fish Box every other Thursday containing fresh fish from Billingsgate Market. Call the pub for more details, or visit their website: www.newinnabthorpe.uk or their Facebook page: www.facebook.com The New Inn – Abthorpe.



New Inn Fish Night
30th MARCH 2023
6.30pm Arrival 7pm First Course



Ceviche of Salmon, Smashed Avacado, Sweet Pickled
Cucumber Gateaux, Dressed Micro Sald

Homemade Mixed Crab and Cream Cheese Ravioli, Served
With Split Dill Cream Sauce

Palate Cleanser, Mango Sorbet

Pan Fried Sea Bream Fillet, Buttered Cannellini Beans,
Sundried Tomatoes, Charred Sweetcorn, Topped With a
Lemon Butter Sauce

Homemade Milk Chocolate Torte Served With Vanilla
Chantilly Cream, Chocolate Scrolls & Fresh Fruits

£40pp Including Bottle of Wine per Couple booking,
Choice of White - Pino Grigio, New Zealand Sauvignon
Blanc, White Rioja

£10 Deposit Per Person To secure Booking (non refundable)



The **Pub Quiz**, held on the last Sunday evening of the month, continues to be extremely popular, drawing in both locals as well as teams from neighbouring villages. The first winners of 2023 were The West Enders who won £230 from 50 generous people who played at the pub. They donated it to Sarcoma UK, which Abthorpe resident Jamie Ford-Cordes has a

personal interest in and is now a trustee for. Jamie's wife Julie sent this information:

"Sarcoma is a rare Cancer that affects approximately 5,000 people a year. Because it is so rare most people are misdiagnosed and the survival rates are really low so the team at Sarcoma UK do amazing work to raise awareness with GPs to get faster diagnosis and fund hospital clinical trials etc to make sure that more people have a positive outcome."

In February the winners of the Quiz were 6 Counties and this team generously donated their winnings of £172 to the Turkish Earthquake Appeal.

For those who are interested in flexing their arm muscles, Rob reports that the pub **darts team** is doing well currently being near the top of the league, whilst for **Rugby** fans the TV takes centre stage whenever the Saints have a home match.

The Coronation

In the words of James Saunders Watson Esq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire:

"The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort is a huge milestone in our history. The weekend of events will bring people together to celebrate our Monarchy and the mixture of tradition and modernity, culture and community that makes our country great."

"As with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations last year, we know that our fantastic community will come together once again to celebrate another historic occasion."



“Everyone is invited to join in, on any day, whether that is by hosting a special street party, watching the Coronation ceremony or the spectacular concert on TV, or stepping forward during The Big Help Out to help causes that matter to them.”

Plans are gathering apace for Abthorpe’s celebration of the King’s Coronation. No events are planned for the day of the Coronation itself (Saturday 6th May) as it is anticipated that excellent television coverage will encourage most residents to watch events unfold in the comfort of their own homes. However, Sunday 7th May is quite a different matter! The outline for the day is as follows:

Sunday 7th May on The Green

From Midday: Bar opens
2.00 - 4.00 pm: The Big LunchBBQ/Pig Roast
5.00 - 7.00 pm: Ceilidh
7.00 pm onwards: Music & Singalong with Terry
9.30 pm - Lighting the Beacon

We would welcome offers of help from any villagers to assist with

- Setting up marquees
- Making salads
- Making puddings

Please email if you are able to help: coronation@abthorpe.net

The following day, Bank Holiday Monday, has been designated [The Big Help Out](#) when everyone is invited to take part in volunteering projects in their local community. Volunteers will be needed for a big push to roll out fibre for Abthorpe Broadband. In addition there will be plenty of clearing up to do after Sunday’s celebrations so please do come along and do your bit. The bar will still be up and running all day.



News Flash - While their programme is not yet finalised for 7th May, there is a strong possibility that the Red Arrows will fly over the village at some time, and where better to see them than from the Village Green?

Tove Valley Broadband

Keith Fenwick

The project to extend fibre round the rest of Abthorpe has made some progress. Most significantly, a directional drilling machine has made the crossings of School Lane and Main Street. The machine bores under the ground without disturbing the surface and lays a pipe through which our fibres have been drawn. Two meetings have also been held for those who will be getting the service. Unfortunately, the weather has not been kind to us so it was only recently that we managed to start laying cables. This is compressing our timescales as we need to complete installation by July to meet the terms of the grant. As explained during the meetings, this is your project and there are ways in which everyone can help. We will be pushing on over the next few weeks but want to make big strides on volunteering day on the Coronation weekend, so please help if you can.

After the disruption caused by Covid, we are again holding a proper Annual General Meeting this year: at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 31st May in the Old

School. Full details will be sent out to all members in advance but please make a note of the date now. There will be reports on our recent activities and financial position. You will also have an opportunity to ask technical questions.

From the archives (Abtalk November 2016, p.9):

The article, having recorded that Tove Valley Broadband was now regularly reaching speeds of 30mbs/sec, posed the question: do we need such high broadband speeds? The answer was no! How things change in a few short years. We regularly now reach speeds of over 300mbs/sec!

Art Exhibition

The Tate Modern it may not be, yet the Old School is to play venue to our very own Art Exhibition in June. It turns out that Abthorpe has more than its fair share of established and budding artists, as the following article reveals.

An interest in creating Art has brought together a group of local individuals, each of whom possesses very different artistic skills and pursues individual artistic interests, providing an exciting approach to creating artwork in a wide variety of media including oils, watercolour, acrylics, graphite, pastels and pencil.

To showcase these talents, they are holding an inaugural exhibition as a group.

The exhibition will be held in The Old School Abthorpe on 10th and 11th June from 10am to 4pm. Refreshments will be available. You are invited to come and view some of the work on display, and to meet the artists in person. Please put the exhibition dates in your diary and we look forward to seeing you.

Below is an introduction to the individuals exhibiting:

Tina Clews

Tina Clews has harboured a lifelong passion for art but took a short break from it – 40 years to be precise – whilst she developed her skills in Management in her native Yorkshire Bank. As self-effacing as she is talented, Tina has rediscovered her art as an outlet for her creativity in her adopted home of Abthorpe. Typically, Tina will have a go at anything but secretly prefers pencil sketching. She also has tremendous skill in the softer medium of pastels where colour is abundant. Subject is very varied from portraits to still life with a variety of challenging compositions in between.

Contact details: tsclews@gmail.com

Paula Le Baigue

Paula began her artistic practice fifteen years ago when she joined an oil painting class in Buckingham. In 2013 she was accepted onto a Fine Art course at the University of Northampton and after five years of studying she graduated with a BA and MA in Fine Art. She has been involved in collaborative exhibitions in The Old Truman Brewery in London, and many more in Buckingham and Northamptonshire through Northants Open Studios. Paula enjoys painting portraits and the challenge of capturing the character of the person through their eyes. Her abstract work portrays her passion for experimentation and finding beauty in decay, with a preference for oil and rust paint on stretched canvas, linen and cradled panels.

Contact details: paulalebaigue@googlemail.com

Website - Paula-LeBaigue.co.uk

<https://www.instagram.com/paulalebaigue08>

<https://www.facebook.com/paulalebaigueartist>

Helen Oates

Helen has been a practising designer for 40 years after completing a degree in product design. Her final commercial projects were designing museum interiors for notably the National Air and Space Museum in Washington and the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Looking for an avenue for her creative energy, she has been challenging herself with professional artistic direction, the application of acrylic paint. She is particularly drawn to a more abstract approach using dominant bright colours and texture.

Helen has always had a keen interest in the arts, formerly professionally in three-dimensional design and manufacture, finding that the aesthetic approach and understanding of artistic principles is a transferable skill. The artistic process of material selection and methodology of producing a painting is both thought-provoking and extremely interesting to her, especially when trying to understand what makes an interesting subject, composition and final artwork that at the end of the day you want to look at and enjoy.

Contact details: nick.helen.alice@btinternet.com

Marna Perrigo

Marna's interest in the visual arts began early when she discovered at school that she could draw. She became fascinated by the history of art. For more than 20 years she has been painting in watercolour. By incorporating pen and ink in some of her work she has found it can lend added vitality and detail which help to increase the impact of light and shade on the subject matter. She is drawn over and again to the play of light as it falls on her favourite subjects of water, boats, buildings and plants.

Contact details: marna@perrigo.co.uk



Left to right: Paula, Tina (rear), Marna and Helen

Rosemary Packman (Visiting Artist)

Rosemary is a self-taught, amateur artist with no formal training. Having said that she has for many years joined in local art groups. Her influences are Van Gogh, Cezanne and the drawings of the old masters.

Her preferred media are graphite, ink and a new discovery (to her) oil pastel.

Contact details: rspackman17@outlook.com

Sabari Sen (Visiting Artist)

Also invited to take part in this exhibition is another visiting Northamptonshire-based Artist, who will be exhibiting a beautiful selection of her Ceramics.

Contact details: Sabari Sen SS Art and Ceramics

Website: Sabarisen.com

ssartandceramics@gmail.com

Guy Beresford Linnell

Shortly after the last edition of *Abtalk* was published, we heard that Guy, a long term Abthorpe resident, had sadly passed away. Some villagers may not know that it was Guy, yet another Abthorpe artist, who designed the Millennium Sign which stands on the Green, a photo of which forms this issue's front cover.

It depicts of course, not just our iconic church steeple complete with its golden cockerel, but also a cobbler and a bobbin - reminders that Abthorpe once played a significant part in Northampton's famous shoe industry, as well as being home to many of the area's lacemakers.

The sign also shows the Rose of Northamptonshire and the shield of St George.

Eulogy to Guy Beresford Linnell

Guy was born in Leicester on the 30th April 1944 and grew up in nearby Groby. As a teenager he was packed off to boarding school in North Wales, which he didn't like very much. It soon became apparent that Guy was a talented artist and he went on to study for a Diploma in Fine Art at Cardiff University before gaining a degree at Leeds University.

Guy's first job was as an Art teacher at a comprehensive school in West Bromwich which was where he met fellow teacher Olwyn. Both Guy and Olwyn found teaching at the school very challenging at times but it set them up with skills that they took forward into their later teaching careers.

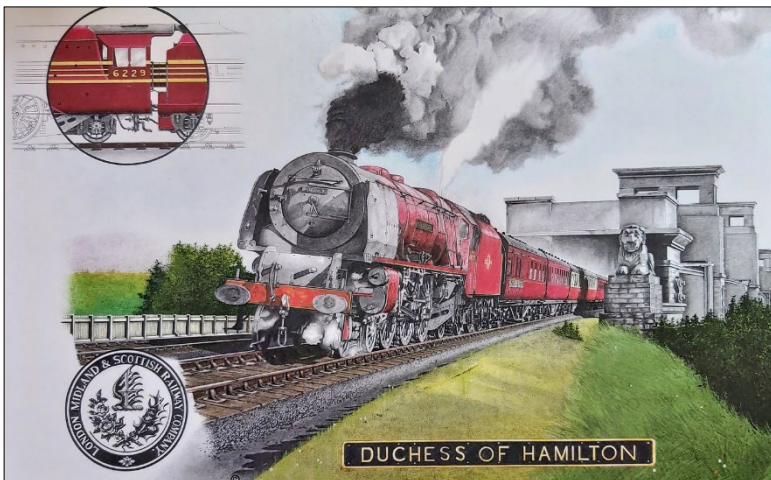
A wedding in Birmingham on the 21st July 1970 was followed by a honeymoon at Lake Orta in northern Italy, which they loved, and were to return to for many happy family holidays in the years to come.

After their marriage, Guy and Olwyn moved away from Birmingham to Greens Norton where Guy taught at Falcon Manor private school in the

village, but before long he and Olwyn moved again settling in Abthorpe in 1972 which is where they have lived ever since.

Shortly after moving to Abthorpe Guy took up a position at Thomas Becket RC Upper School in Northampton teaching Art, Design and Graphics, and he remained there until his retirement. He enjoyed teaching at Thomas Becket (mostly), appreciating the good camaraderie among his fellow teaching staff. His son Richard has memories of Guy designing and making stage sets for school productions and painting large murals in his spare time.

After retiring from teaching, Guy spent many years undertaking art commissions which took in a range of subjects, anything from family portraits to cars, engineering projects or magazine articles but his favourite was always steam locomotives, often to help a steam preservation society. He absolutely loved trains in all their types and forms but especially steam locos.



One of Guy's wonderful artworks, including a trademark insert (top left) showing precise details.

After teaching, Guy joined the Police Force as a special constable based at Towcester Police station which he found very fulfilling and continued until he reached the Police working age limit.

As many of you will know Guy also loved all things Alfa Romeo, some would say to the point of it being a bit of an obsession. He was the Owners' Club registrar for many years, contributing regularly to the club magazine, and helping with the organisation of shows and events including a road trip to the factory in Italy for their centenary in 2010.

Guy was a practising Christian being a member of the congregation at Helmdon Baptist church where he was baptised. In more recent times he attended the church here in Abthorpe.

Guy was a countryman at heart with a respect for nature and wildlife. He loved Abthorpe and was very proud to be asked to design and paint the village millennium sign – a fitting legacy.

Guy took his Alzheimer's diagnosis on the chin, accepting it and showing bravery. Although the last months were a difficult journey for Olwyn, Richard and Hannah they drew strength from each other and from their shared memories of Guy.

Odds and Ends

Northamptonshire Police

Emergency Services Cadets wanted

Aged between 13 and 18 and interested in becoming an Emergency Services Cadet? Now's your chance to work with the county's police, fire and ambulance services. More details at <http://ow.ly/CUs650NknIO> or register your interest by April 7, here: <http://ow.ly/yv2V50Nkm2s>

Mature Drivers Roadshow - 2nd May 2023

This from Henry Cameron, Prevention and Community Protection Department, Northants Police:

Are you a mature driver (aged 60+)? Live in Northamptonshire? Rely on being able to drive? This FREE roadshow is for you!

Driving is an important part of our everyday life and Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance is keen to help to keep mature drivers driving safer for longer.

Our driving ability changes over time for different reasons, especially as we get older. It's important that we recognise whether and how our driving is changing so we can stay safe and protect both ourselves and those around us.

This Mature Drivers Roadshow is aimed at drivers of 60+, and will cover all different aspects of driving. There will be a short talk and then plenty of time to meet informally with our many stand holders. Free advice will be available on car adaptations, eyesight, how your prescription medications may affect you, and much more.

Our aim is to keep mature drivers driving safer, for longer

Book your Free tickets via Eventbrite: <https://mature-drivers-2023.eventbrite.co.uk>

The event is being held at Police Headquarters, Wootton Hall, Northampton NN4 0JQ (<https://what3words.com/bill.necks.boxer>) with two sessions, 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.

Working Group Volunteers

This request comes from Colin Moore, Chair, Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch:

I am looking to set up a working group of members to examine how Neighbourhood Watch across Northamptonshire can improve our engagement and communication with our existing members, also with any potential new members.

I also feel that Neighbourhood Watch needs to modernise and the working group will be examining all aspects of our offering, to find ways that meet the modern-day methods of engagement and communication.

The plan is for the working group to examine all aspects of what and how, we within Northamptonshire present Neighbourhood Watch.

It should not be time-consuming, just one or two hours a week to work within the group, discuss thoughts and ideas with other group members. The plan is for the working group to have 12 months to examine what we have and to find new solutions. The working group will have a free hand with no direction or executive leadership. I am looking for new ideas and suggestions as to how we can move forward and ensure our Neighbourhood Watch provision is fit for the future and meets the needs of our members.

If you have any spare time and would like to help shape our county Neighbourhood watch, then please send me an email directly to colin.moorennw@hotmail.com

I am particularly interested in members with skills in project management, affecting change, social media, website design, communication, events, but more importantly any members with ideas and suggestions who want to get involved and see Neighbourhood Watch succeed.

The closing date for members to join the working group will be 31st March 2023. Thank you.

Engagement with the Rural Community

And PCSO Matt Taylor from Northants Police has this to say:

South Northamptonshire has an extensive rural community, with many farms and rural businesses in the area.

Northamptonshire Police has a dedicated Rural Crime Team based in Northampton who has a jurisdiction covering the entire county. They work closely with neighbouring forces to address a number of rural interests. All the Police Officers on the team have rural interests outside of the workplace.

In addition to this I (PCSO Matt Taylor) have recently been appointed Rural Point of Contact for the Neighbourhood Team. I grew up in the rural community having gone to school in Bugbrooke and was then a student at Moulton College. Outside of work I have an interest in livestock, horses and birds, and I have previously been involved in Falconry.

I have participated in two of the Rural Crime Teams recent engagement events at Towcester and Althorp House, and have been out with our Rural Volunteer in the area updating the contact details of farmers and landowners. I see my role as liaising between the many farms and businesses in the area, the wider Neighbourhood Team, the Rural Crime Team and some of our key rural stakeholders.

You can contact me directly by emailing Matthew.Taylor@northants.police.uk. All incidents / crimes should be reported online www.northants.police.uk or by calling 101 or in an emergency 999.

Rural Crime Prevention advice can be found at <https://www.northants.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rc/rural-crime/>

Women’s Cycling Tour returns

Councillor Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure is thrilled to announce that *“once again West Northants will host a world-class sporting venue this summer when we welcome back the prestigious Women’s Tour.*

“The international cycling race will take place from 7th-11th June, with Northampton hosting a stage start on Thursday 8th June. The route is set to run through West Northants, taking in parts of the Daventry and South Northants areas, with further details due to be announced in the coming months.

“West Northants has played host to the prestigious event four times in recent years with record numbers of spectators visiting the area and lining the route to show their support – which we very much hope to witness again this year as we showcase our fantastic area to a worldwide audience.”



(Photo - Credit: SWpix.com)

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Diary: March - June 2023

Mar	Wed 29 th	Spring Clean 10.00 am - Church
	Thurs 30 th	Fish Night 7.00pm - New Inn
Apr	Saturday 1 st	Coffee Morning 10.30-12.30 – Stable Cottage
	Sunday 2 nd	Litter Picking 11.00 am - Village Green
	Monday 3 rd	Chef's Table 7.00 pm - New Inn
	Sunday 9 th	Easter Day Service 9.15 am - Church
	Sunday 16 th	Holy Eucharist 10.00 am - Church
		Tea & Piece 3.00-4.30 pm - Church
	Monday 17 th	Parish Council meeting 7.00 pm - Old School
	Thurs 27 th	Fish Night 7.00pm - New Inn
	Sunday 30 th	Quiz Night 7.30 pm - New Inn
May	Sunday 7 th	Coronation Celebrations Midday onwards - Village Green
	Monday 8 th	The Big Help Out - Village Green
	Saturday 20 th	Plant Sale - morning - Old School
	Sunday 21 st	Holy Eucharist 10.00 am – Church
		Tea & Piece 3.00-4.30 pm - Church
	Monday 22 nd	Annual Parish Council Meeting 7.00 pm - Old School
	Thurs 25 th	Fish Night 7.00 pm - New Inn
	Sunday 28 th	Quiz Night 7.30 pm - New Inn
	Tues 30 th	Annual Village Meeting 7.00 pm - Old School
	Wed 31 st	Tove Valley Broadband AGM 7.00 pm - Old School
Jun	Monday 5 th	Chef's Table 7.00pm – New Inn
	Saturday 10 th	Art Exhibition 10.00 am-4.00 pm - Old School
	Sunday 11 th	Art Exhibition 10.00 am-4.00 pm - Old School
	Sunday 18 th	Holy Eucharist 10.00 am – Church
		Tea & Piece 3.00-4.30 pm - Church
	Saturday 24 th	Safari Supper – Evening - Various village venues
	Sunday 25 th	Quiz Night 7.30 pm - New Inn
	Thurs 29 th	Fish Night 7.00 pm - New Inn