

ABTALK



ABTALK OCTOBER 2023

Welcome to our October edition, which follows the same format as the last one and contains a good summary of what has happened and is about to happen in the village. We welcome contributions from anyone in the village – just get in touch with Alison, contact details on back page. The cover photograph shows Church Lane about 1910.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Temporary closure of Bridleways RA 22 and RA 38 with footpath RA 46: Some of you will no doubt have seen the temporary closure notice for the above rights of way at the top of Brackley Lane where Withymore Lane leads off to the right.

This was brought about by commencement of work to improve the surface of Withymore Lane, and was instigated by one individual Josh who owns land further up the lane. A hardcore-type base layer was put down for about 100m but without the permission of the other land owners.

This led to the works to improve the lane being stopped while negotiations between the interested parties were held, the outcome of which is not clear as we go to press.

Planning

The above closures of the rights of way are linked to a planning application for an agricultural building in a field towards the end of Withymore Lane.

The applicant Josh of Crown Events, is keen to upgrade the lane to allow vehicles to access his holding.

He has told locals that he is looking to provide camping for city youngsters in the countryside.

We still do not know why he needs a large agricultural building as there is little evidence of him farming. He has however allowed a local farmer to graze his sheep on the land.

The original application was to decide if he needed planning permission or if the building could be erected under the agricultural permitted development rules. We understand from our Councillor at West Northants Council that he does indeed need this permission, but he has not yet re-applied.

We are keen to find out what long term plans Josh has for his land, and will be keeping a close eye on developments of the Lane as well as his land.

Next Parish Council Meeting is on 30th October at 7pm in the Old School.

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

After the festivities in May to celebrate the Coronation of the new King and Queen, it was decided to have a quiet summer so that the organisers could catch their collective breath before girding their loins for more events over the autumn and winter. That time is now upon us, so details of what fund-raising events are in the pipeline are detailed below. Although it may have been quiet on the fundraising front, there has been action on the maintenance of our lovely Old School. The roof has been inspected and repairs carried out where necessary and the mower shed, which had begun to let in water, is also being fixed.

Weekday Lunches: By the time this edition of Abtalk goes to print, the weekday lunch of 13th October will have come and gone, but if it proves to be a success, more will follow. The lunch is for everyone who, for whatever reason, is at home during the week – do you work from home, are you retired, are you a stay-at-home Mum or Dad for example? The menu for the first occasion is soup and a roll, but it is intended to change the menu depending on demand.

Call My Wine Bluff: On Saturday 2nd December, from 6.30pm for a start time of 7.00pm, we are holding a wine tasting quiz. This is back by popular demand, the participants from a previous such event having had great fun. It is a light-hearted evening which is suitable for everyone – no one takes it too seriously! Tickets cost £20 which buys you a lasagne supper followed by a cheese board and a varied selection of wines to taste. A bar will be available for the purchase of other drinks – or more wine!

Coffee Morning: Just a week later, on Saturday 9th December, and in conjunction with St. John the Baptist Church, we are holding a Christmas coffee morning. This proved to be a very popular event last year with the Old School buzzing with chatter and a wonderful selection of both sweet and savoury morsels on offer.

To make this event a successful fund-raising venture, we do need volunteers to make cakes/savouries and, just as important, could we appeal for raffle prizes please? These can be delivered to Jan Miles, Lynn Neasham, Alison Robbins or Jill Greenhalgh either at home, or Lynn and Jill are in the Old School on Tuesday evenings playing bridge. We will add extra days when donations can be handed over with dates, times and locations on the village facebook. Please donate!

Village Talk: We are planning on having a talk in the New Year. Date and time to be confirmed, but the theme of the evening will be Tales and Myths about Abthorpe – with a Gruesome Story or Two. There will be a bar and supper will be provided. Is your appetite whetted? Then keep an eye on the Old School webpage or village facebook for a confirmation of the date and ticket details.

And remember there are these regular activities held weekly in the Old School:

Tuesdays Yoga 9.30 to 10.30 am

Tuesdays Bridge 7.00 to 10.00pm

Wednesdays Yoga 6.15 to 7.15 pm

To hire the Old School or any other enquiries please email oldschool@abthorpe.net

CHURCH NEWS

Building Work: Those of you who live around the Green or walk through the centre of the village regularly will soon notice workmen arriving as work finally commences inside the church. This work has been a long time in the planning – over 5 years – and we are hoping it will all be done by Christmas. The delay in getting the project underway has been partly due to efforts to raise grants and loans and partly, of course, to the impact of the pandemic. Due largely to the diligence of former Church Warden Richard Tomalin over £25,000 has been pledged or given by a variety of trusts and other bodies for which we are greatly indebted. In addition, we will be using money raised by the Tote to help fund parts of the project so our thanks, as ever, to all who contribute to this.

The main purpose of this work is to improve the North aisle and make it a more sociable space. The sloping wooden floor will be replaced by York stone and the wall will be replastered. In addition, a simple servery with a sink will be installed together with additional electricity and a drainage supply. With a much appreciated and generous donation from the Parish Council, we hope to also purchase some smart new chairs and tables to make this space in the church both more user-friendly and more welcoming for all.

With costs of building work rising all the time, we have had to scale back on some of our earlier plans so we will continue to fundraise to hopefully enable us to make further improvements in the next few years. Your support in these efforts will be much appreciated.

As with all building work, there will inevitably be an element of disruption as supplies are brought in and old material is taken out. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, but hope that you feel the end result is worth it!

Food Box: Due to the work being carried out in church, it will not be possible to use the North door to enter the church after Monday October 30th. The South door will be used but will not be open during the day now that colder days are approaching. The food box will be moved to the South porch and, as Christmas approaches, an extra box will be provided for more festive produce.

Harvest Supper and Talk: Harvest Supper, which took place on 23rd September, took on rather a different form this year, but proved to be a great success. The evening opened with a complimentary glass of wine, before a very attentive audience was treated to a most interesting illustrated talk by Anne Baldwin (more details below). Following the talk, instead of the customary hot meal, a Ploughman's Supper was on offer with crusty bread accompanied by cheese, pork pie and quiches and dishes of home-made chutneys and pickles. This was followed by a variety of hearty autumn tray bakes and coffee. The evening was as friendly and convivial as we have come to expect and we are most grateful for the support of everyone who came – not just from within Abthorpe, but from Slapton, Silverstone and beyond.

Anne's Talk: Anne is the mother of Abthorpe resident Carol Cummins although Anne herself hails from Ormskirk. A little over 10 years ago,



Anne with a group of students and their families enjoying an afternoon of sports activities at the college.

when just 70, Anne was sadly widowed but after a year or two had passed she decided she must not let the rest of her life be dictated by her loss. Instead, she responded to a poster that had caught her eye asking for volunteers to train to help at Mission stations. Since there was no age limit for applicants Anne decided to give it a go. Necessary training completed, and now in her mid-70s, Anne found herself on a plane to Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka! As she walked through customs and out of the airport, the heat and humidity of the country hit her, there at first seemed to be no-one to meet her, she had little idea of where she had to go or how to get there, and she did wonder what on earth she had let herself in for. However, a friendly



A decorated elephant as part of a Buddhist parade through the streets of Kandy, accompanied by dancers and bands.



face soon appeared and Anne was driven to her new home – the Lanka College of Theology, set in the middle of a jungle clearing, where she was to teach English and generally help out. Anne told us of the work she did, the people she

A traditional greeting for the Archbishop of Canterbury on his visit to the Theological College of Lanka in August 2019. He visited as an act of support following the bombings in churches and hotels on Easter Day 2019.



Sigiriya (Lion rock) rises 200m above the surrounding countryside. According to tradition a palace and fortress were built on the top of the rock in the 5th century. The ruins still remain and can be visited following a stiff climb!

met, life in the aftermath of the troubles and disasters that have beset the country and various interesting encounters. It was an inspiring talk given by an inspirational and very courageous lady.

Tea & Piece: The last Tea & Piece afternoon of 2023 took place on Sunday 15th October. On this occasion the cuppa and cake were complimentary for all those villagers who have helped with church duties during the year – the mowers, the church openers, and others. We value your support and are very grateful for your help. Look out for the restart of this montly event next Spring.

Remembrance Sunday: As has become the tradition in recent years, a short service of Remembrance will be held around the War Memorial on the Green, starting at 10.50 am on Sunday November 12th. It is always heart-warming to see such a good crowd of villagers gathering together for this occasion. All donations collected at the event will be sent to the British Legion.

Christmas is Coming.....Look out for details either on the village facebook, or the notice boards, or through your door giving dates and times of our favourite events. Preparations are already underway for the Christmas Tree Lighting on Sunday December 10th and the Carol Service and Christingle on Christmas Eve.

Church Tote: Recent winners, all receiving £125 were Darren & Tina Emerton and Tricia Holmes in July, Rachel Hulbert and Tricia Holmes in August and Lucy Jones and Claire Zachar in September.

NEW INN NEWS

Thursday night is Billingsgate Fish Night – Once a month we will be hosting a Fish Night at the New Inn providing a 4 course set menu with a bottle of wine per couple. Guests are asked to arrive at 6.30pm for the 7pm meal. The next Fish Night will be on Thursday October 19th while the November date is yet to be confirmed.

Monday is Chef's Table Night – On the first Monday of each month Chef delivers a gastronomic delight with a bespoke set menu for his guests.

To book either of these meal events, please call 01327 857306.

A new menu was launched in September, and very appetising it looks too. The special Christmas Menu will be available from December 1st.

BUSES FROM ABTHORPE

Abthorpe once again has a bus service. The Ability community bus company now runs weekly on Monday mornings to Towcester, returning about 12.30 so giving about 2½ hours there. The bus will take you and pick you up anywhere in Towcester, including Bell Plantation.

This is an 'on demand' service so people need to register first. They can then choose from the differing levels of membership which range from £0 to £45 per year. If someone has a current valid concessionary bus pass they can travel free of charge once they are registered. Non-bus pass holders will be charged a mileage fare.

To register, go to their Website - abilitycic.org.uk/ or telephone 01327 604123. There is a £10 fee for registering. There are three levels of service:

Gold - £45 per year single or £55 joint gives you home pick-up and drop off, boarding assistance and shopping carried to your door. Walkers are stowed in the back of the bus.

Silver - £30 single or £42 joint picks you up at a recognised bus stop and provides boarding assistance. Walkers are carried on the bus.

Bronze is a free service which picks up and sets down only at a recognised bus stop.

Seats have to be booked each time you want to use the service.

Currently at least three people in Abthorpe use the service so it needs a few more to make it viable in the long term. Experience is that the Gold service is best as it takes you to your door and shopping is carried to the doorstep. Day trips are also organised, with one proposed to Oxford in November.

CRAFT FAIR

There is a craft fair in Wappenham Village Hall on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd October from 10am to 4pm. On display will be locally produced jewellery, art, sewn creations, woodwork and other creative goodies. Entry is free.

PEOPLE NEWS

Wedding bells: The wedding took place in August of Gemma Jones, whose parents Phil and Karen live in Abthorpe, to Max Winters in St John the Baptist Church. With the sun shining the photos show Gemma arriving at the church with her proud Dad and her bridesmaids, whilst after the service the bride and groom departed in style.

Rene celebrates her centenary: Long term Abthorpe resident, Rene Balderson, achieved the remarkable age of 100 years on September 25th. Modest as ever, Rene did not want a big fuss made, but enjoyed visits from her family and close neighbours over the course of several days. And of course the



icing on the cake was a personally signed photograph from the King and Queen. She asked that her grateful thanks for the cards be passed on to everyone who sent them.

James Coombs: It was a sad day in August when family, friends and neighbours said goodbye to James who died in July at the age of 20. His mother Gail gave a moving eulogy at the packed service in Abthorpe Church.

Gail began by saying how the family have been truly humbled by the love, messages, cards and gifts they have received and that these have been a great source of comfort.

She and Matthew say thank you to you all. "We have shed tears but laughed at the same time of the memories shared".

Gail then reflected how James always wanted to get things done, and he demonstrated this exceptionally at the beginning - having arrived at Northampton General Hospital at the crack of dawn, 5:57am to be exact, James was born just 8 minutes later!

From an early age, James showed an independent streak. He would go to pre-school in the village one day as Buzz Lightyear, another as a character from Thunderbirds and another as Spiderman to name just a few of his outfits. His mum was just grateful he had his clothes on as he and his brother took great pleasure in removing their clothes at any opportunity!

James always enjoyed spending time with all his friends, family and family friends. He made lots of friends from his school years at Silverstone and Sponne and some might say he was a social butterfly. He was immensely proud of his brother and sister, George and Beth in whatever they did. The biggest smile though he had was for the two family dogs Milo and Hugo who brought him great joy. He loved walking the dogs in the rain across the fields around Abthorpe which he said made him feel alive. James was a Northamptonshire lad who loved where he lived but enjoyed going to new places and experiencing new things. He loved the holidays and weekends



away with the lads – surfing and socialising.

James loved his sport. He was an Aston Villa supporter and he himself played football for Silverstone, Halse and Towcester. However, it has to be said his coaches had their hearts in their mouths with James's slide tackles. It's fair to say he was very competitive! James tap danced and had a great time being Shrek and a revolting child! He was a black belt in kick boxing and loved swimming and running. He loved the banter of being in a team and the friendships he developed from this.

James received his A Level results during Covid and he did well. However, he was disappointed with the B for Maths as he felt he could do better so re-sat the exam and achieved an A. He was accepted to go to Durham University last year to read Biological Studies which made his parents extremely proud.

James had an inquiring mind and always wanted to learn new things particularly in science. He enjoyed reading editions of the *New Scientist*. He did not make decisions without researching the subject in some detail although the amount of clothes he ordered that he didn't like the fit of and were sent back did not reflect this!

He was very determined in anything he did and would always want to finish what he started. Gail remembers once following him as he cycled back to Abthorpe from cricket practice at Silverstone. Halfway there he keeled over and lay on the bank at the side of the road, still on his bike because he was so tired, but he got up and carried on until he got home. To this day the family still refer to the spot as James's corner.

Despite being diagnosed with AML (leukaemia) in June last year, James never once complained, displaying great resilience, determination and courage in facing the battle ahead. There were some difficult times, but his personality shone through to all he met.

James's family will always remember his wonderful smile, infectious laugh and quick wit. For them the three words that best sum him up? Caring, humorous and inquisitive. One of a kind. His passing of course leaves a massive hole but they will be forever thankful for "touching our lives over the last 20 years. We have been blessed. You've changed our lives for the better and filled us with the most amazing memories we'll never forget. We wish there had been more but will cherish what we had together".

For anyone wishing to make a donation in his memory, the charity Gail and Matthew have chosen is Young Lives Vs Cancer.

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 19th October	7.00pm	New Inn	Fish Night
Sunday 29th October	7.30pm	New Inn	Quiz Night
Monday 30th October	7.30pm	Old School	Parish Council meeting
Monday 6th November	7.00pm	New Inn	Chef's Table
Sunday 12th November	10.50am	The Green	Remembrance service
Sunday 19th November	10.00am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Saturday 2nd December	6.30pm	Old School	Call My Wine Bluff
Monday 4th December	7.00pm	New Inn	Chef's Table
Saturday 9th December	10.30-12.30	Old School	Coffee Morning
Sunday 10th December	4.30pm	The Green	Tree Lighting
Monday 11th December	7.30pm	Old School	Parish Council meeting
Sunday 17th December	10.00am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday 24th December	4pm	Church	Christingle and Carols
Monday 25th December	9.15am	Church	Christmas Service
Sunday 30th December	10am	Church	Service

Look out for Carols and Beer at the New Inn just before Christmas. Rev Paul may have some more of his 'characteristic' jokes.

Next issue of Abtalk - we had planned to have an issue in September and one in December but events overtook us. But there should be an issue early in the New Year. Contributions welcome.

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