

ABTALK



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

1. Rights of way

In the last edition of *Abtalk* it was explained that there had been some unexpected work done at the top of Brackley Lane on the Bridleway RA 22 (known as Withymore Lane), from arrow A up to arrow B. This led to a lot of discussion among the land owners on both sides of the lane as well as other interested parties. Eventually a consensus was reached and further work on the upgrade of the Bridleway was stopped at the start of the Footpath RA 46 (running from arrow B to arrow C). The footpath along this section B – C has become very muddy and deeply rutted.



2. Parking

This remains a perennial and very difficult problem especially around the Church and the Green.

There have been times when it would be impossible for a car to get through let alone an emergency vehicle, the latter being a major concern.

We would ask everyone to be considerate when parking and make sure that other vehicles, especially Ambulances and Fire Engines, have clear access. Emergency vehicles must be able to get past and reach anyone in difficulty and needing urgent help.

The Council has erected a sign at the junction of Main Street and Silver Street bringing this to everyone's attention.



3. Planning

There has been no re-application for the agricultural building, further up Withymore Lane (near arrow C) that was discussed in the last edition of *Abtalk*.

There has however been a lot of activity in an old barn in the same field, on land owned by the same people. It is difficult to know what the renovations are for, which include drainage presumably of the surface water. It certainly looks from the outside that the renovations are not in keeping with an agricultural shed and may well be a breach of planning regulations and change in use of the shed. We have asked the local planners to look into this.

4. Litter Picking

Another litter pick is to take place in the village very shortly: please see the box below for details. Do give us your support.

Future meetings:

March 11th 2024: Ordinary Meeting. 7pm Old School

April 29th 2024: Ordinary meeting including AGM, 7pm Old School

May 30th 2024: Annual Village Meeting - all welcome from 7pm at Old School for refreshments with meeting commencing at 7:30pm

*Abthorpe Parish Council invites you to come
Litter Picking
On Sunday March 2nd
10.00 am until 12 noon*



*Help us keep our beautiful village clean and tidy
Meet on the Green - bring gardening gloves but all other
equipment supplied
Please give us your support - it is your village too!*

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

Many of us were intrigued by the flyer that came through our doors in January and our curiosity to hear about some of the stories from times past drew a large number of villagers to the Old School on the 3rd February. Jill opened the talk by explaining that in the research she and Alison had undertaken to find out more about the history of the Old School, they had heard snippets of news – or at least speculation – about other events in the village from the former pupils of the school. Alison then led us on an illustrated virtual walk around 19th century Abthorpe, stopping *en route* at selected sites where there was something interesting to reveal. Whilst Alison made it clear that it was not possible

to verify the accuracy of some of these stories, it nevertheless made for very entertaining listening. What probably will stick in our memories is that there are at least 3 unexplained and sudden deaths that occurred at different times and in different locations within the village. In 1872, Isabel Brackenbury took afternoon tea with her sister-in-law in Leeson House, went up to bed perfectly fit and healthy, but was as stiff as a board in the morning! Was 'something' put in her tea, we ask? Just a few years later, in 1895, a 2 year old boy, Gerald Amos mysteriously died suddenly in the bath, while the maid who was in charge was 'having a cup of tea', whilst just 5 years later, William Coulson who lived in the terrace of cottages opposite the church, had his nightly cuppa before retiring to bed – only to be found floating in the village well the next morning. Are our suspicions grounded or groundless?

We all enjoyed the Georgian ditty penned by a rather superior 'outsider' who rather looked down on, what he regarded as, the lowly and uncouth people of Abthorpe. True, Pryce-Jones, the school master cum vicar of the time, renowned for his fondness for the drink, his debts and his decade behind bars, was not perhaps the most upstanding member of the

Abthorpe Old School

Abthorpe Tales, Myths and Legends



Come and join us for supper.
Alison Symmers and Jill Tolson will
share some stories of Abthorpe's past

Saturday 3rd February

Bar opens 7.00pm for 7.30pm at The Old School

£12.50 including Supper

Tickets from oldschool@abthorpe.net
or Lynn Neasham: 07767082594; 01327857870
Or see events on Facebook

Charity Number 309804

community, but did the whole village have to be castigated with this slur:

"Abthorpe is a village of Peculiar People,
A drunken Pastor
And a wooden Steeple."

The talk was then followed by an excellent casserole supper accompanied by jacket potatoes and the bar provided liquid refreshment. Thank you to Alison and Jill, and to all the organisers for a lovely evening.

Forthcoming Events at the Old School

The Truckers Breakfast and Weekday Lunch will be back – dates will be posted on the Old School website (oldschool@abthorpe.net) shortly. Owing to the popularity of previous talks combined with supper, there are plans already in the pipeline for more such events. Details of subject matter and dates will be confirmed as soon as they become available.

We welcome any offers from villagers who would like to host a Coffee Morning in their own homes in aid of the Old School, so please contact us at the above email address, if this is something you are interested in doing.

We are always open to suggestions for any fresh ideas you would like to see at the Old School or even on the Green, so please be in touch. We have a few ideas and suggestions already, including a Quiz, a Crazy Whist Night, a Pie & Peas Evening, a Film Night and a few more.

We are postponing our AGM (originally planned for March); the revised date is to follow.

Abthorpe Old School and other village events can also be seen on the Old School Facebook page.

Jan Miles

This seems an appropriate spot to wish Jan a full recovery from her very unfortunate and traumatic accident. After many weeks in hospital, she is now finally on the mend and is relieved to be back in her own home. Jan is an absolute stalwart of the village, particularly as regards organising events for the Old School, and we were all shocked by news of her accident just before Christmas. We look forward to seeing her up and about in Abthorpe again very soon – but don't overdo it, Jan!

CHURCH NEWS

Christmas already seems a long time ago, but, of course, it was a very busy time of the year for the Church, with a series of events ranging from sing-alongs in the pub and on the Green, to more traditional events in the church itself. It was heart-warming to see the support from the village for all of these – there was a record 143 people in church on Christmas Eve for the Carol and Christingle service; what a



pleasure it was to see so many people of all ages enjoying and celebrating together, and who didn't have a lump in their throat when the lights went out and the children sang 'Away in a Manger' by candlelight?

Villagers will scarcely have failed to notice that there has been work going on in the church since mid autumn. Having secured grants from a number of sources as well as using a substantial legacy from our former Church Warden, the late David Hughes, we decided to bite the bullet and finally get the builders in. The existing floor in the North aisle was taken up and levelled, new York stone laid down and the badly damaged walls replastered and painted. At the same time, the various holes in the ceiling where the plaster had fallen away were repaired.

The builders did an excellent job although they were hampered by the very wet weather which prolonged the time it took for the plaster to dry out between coats. But, in addition



to all of this, a lovely new servery has been installed with a sink and preparations made for a water supply. In time, this will enable the new social space to serve refreshments to all who use it – and wash up without having to carry water up to the church! We are hugely indebted to the Parish Council for a generous donation enabling us to replace the old chairs and tables with lovely new ones – it really does look smart and we hope anyone who wishes to use this space will consider doing so.

Of course, it has been a number of years since we removed the old Victorian pews from the North Aisle but, having finally agreed to go ahead with the re-ordering of this part of the church, we agreed to see if there was any interest among local people for



acquiring one of them. It turned out there certainly was and all ten pews have found homes in or very close to Abthorpe. One of the pews has found a new home with Julia and Jamie Ford-Cordes. Julia has spent a considerable amount of elbow grease treating, oiling and buffing it and is very pleased with the result. In the process, Julia was delighted to come across a piece of Abthorpe graffiti – a young Johnny Foster obviously did not find that Sunday's sermon very riveting! The photos



show Julia's pew after restoration and naughty Johnny's handwriting practice.

Other Church News:

Tea & Piece will return on March 17th and will take place monthly on April 21st, 19th May, 16th June, 21st July, 18th August, 15th September and 20th October. Do please come along to the church from 3pm until 4.30pm for a cuppa and a piece of home-made cake. A good opportunity to try out the new tables and chairs – and chat to your fellow Abthorpians.



Church opening – once British Summer Times begins on March 31st (Easter Sunday), we will be opening the church daily during normal working hours. Everyone is welcome to come in for a moment of quiet reflection.

Food Bank box – this will move from its winter quarters in the porch to inside the church from March 31st. Food items currently in short supply at Towcester Food Bank are: deodorant, orange juice, jams/spreads, biscuits, coffee, household cleaning products, hot chocolate, shower gel, sponge puddings, tampons, rice and laundry powder. They have plenty of adult toothbrushes!

Our Curate, the Rev. George Frost, is coming to the end of his 3 years curacy and will be moving on to his own parish/group of parishes by the summer. We will all be sorry to see him go and will miss his easy manner and sense of humour. He may well put in an appearance at our Tea & Piece afternoons before he leaves so please come along to wish him well.

Tote winners: Keith & Monica Plant and Roger & Mary Brennan (October - £125 each); Rene Balderson and Tricia Jones (November - £125 each); Ian & Sue Atkins and Mike Matthews (December - £125 each); Claire Zachar and Jenny Carter (January - £122.50 each).

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NEW INN NEWS

Chef's Table is back! The next one will be on Monday 4th March and tables are still available at £50pp. Have a look at what is on offer: Grazing platter - 5 course taster menu - Flight of wines - Port with cheese - Chefs tipple

Mothers Day Special Menu – on March 10th, from 12 noon, our chefs

invite you to celebrate with a rather special menu.

Sundays at the New Inn: Join us for our delicious Sunday roast served from 12 noon till 5.30pm (last orders): British rump of beef, Welsh lamb chump, Roasted Mediterranean tarts, Honey and thyme chicken, Slow roast pork loin.

Fish boxes – fresh fish direct from Billingsgate, every other Thursday, just £35 for 2 x 6/7oz salmon fillets, 2 x large sea bass fillets, 16oz king prawn crevettes, 2 x 7/8oz cod/haddock fillets, 2 x 6/7oz sea bream fillets. These can be personalised to suit your taste and are delivered free of charge to your door.

To book your table or order a fish box, phone 01327 857306.

Goodbye to Lyn

On January 6th, a rather special person celebrated her retirement in style at the New Inn. Lyn Kilner has been the Bar Manageress at the pub forever – well, 11 years to be accurate. The friendly, welcoming atmosphere that greets all who enter is in large part due to Lyn who has always got a cheery word to say to everyone. On the evening in question, the pub was packed to the gunwales as so many people wanted to recognise the role she has played and to say an official goodbye. Food was provided throughout the evening and live music was played featuring acoustic rock guitarist Elio. A few days after the event, Lyn sent this moving open letter. We will all miss you Lyn – please keep coming to the New Inn – but as a guest now!

To all Customers & staff at the New Inn

Hi,

I would like to begin this letter by saying how amazed and deeply honoured I was to see so many of you attend my retirement party on 6th January 2024. There was so much I wanted to say but was completely tongue tied, so I would like to say a few words now and hope all will read this.

Thank you for your generosity, your gifts and your kind words and wishes they mean so very much.

To Rob, thank you for asking me all those years ago if I would like to come and work for you. It really was the best decision that I ever made. You are and always will be the very best landlord/boss anyone could wish to work for.

To all the staff past and present that I have had the pleasure to work with over the years. Thank you so much for all you do and for putting up with this bossy old moo !!! We have shared so many laughs and good times over the years and I shall miss you all.

Lastly I would like to thank you, the New Inn customers, what a very special bunch you are. You are what makes this pub so great. Thank you for the laughs, the jokes, for putting up with my singing and zany sense of humour, but most of all for making the last 11 years some of the happiest of my life.

With love and respect

Lyn

XXX



MORE CELEBRITY NEWS

Although modesty on his part meant that it took a little while for the news to spread, everyone in Abthorpe is thrilled to hear that Eric Malcomson made this year's New Year's Honours List. Yes – Eric has been awarded an MBE for services to the community in Tove Valley.

Eric is founder and chairman of Tove Valley Broadband, which was set up when he realised that rural internet access was woefully far behind that of urban communities. Eric then set about giving the upper Tove Valley area of South Northamptonshire Internet access far superior to anything else available.

His ongoing commitment over the past 20 years has meant that three times he has reinvented the way the Tove Valley Broadband Association has given the local area internet access – first through direct satellite connection, then village-to-village and house to house wireless, and finally to a fibre optic network.

As the entire country battled the Covid-19 pandemic, the community would have been lost without his innovation and support.

Eric continues to actively engage with residents in the village giving advice, guidance and motivation to other volunteers as they lay fibre optic cables before he splices some more connections and allows even more individual properties access to the Tove Valley Broadband fibre optic network.

Eric will be presented with his much-deserved award at Windsor Castle on March 6th so look out for a photo in the next edition of Abtalk. Meanwhile, this photo is a reminder that Abthorpe was ahead of the game in recognising Eric's achievement, awarding him the coveted Freedom of the Village a full year before receiving his MBE!



CONDOLENCES

On behalf of all who knew Mike Matthews, we would like to offer our sincere condolences to Rachel after the shock of his sudden passing.

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

A word about ABILITY

We are your local not for profit community bus company that was started back in 2018 with the aim to help fill the transport void where bus routes were being cut or cancelled altogether. Our service has been described as a social club on wheels as we aware that people who struggle with transport may feel isolated or lonely. Everyone is welcome on the bus and we can help accommodate people's needs with regards to foldable walking aids and home collection/drop off. We are thrilled to be able to support the need for transport in your parish.

Once people join ABILITY and become a member, we can provide:-

Shopper Service: A flexible on demand weekly service into your local town or direct to your local supermarket.

Days Out: Enjoy a day out at a variety of locations to include garden centres, museums or major retail outlets. Seasonal trips to Christmas markets, pantomimes and pub lunches are also included.

Group Travel: Community groups can hire a minibus along with a fully trained driver for their own bespoke day out. Let us know name, destination, number of people and times required, and we can provide you with a quotation.

For further information, please look on our website – <https://abilitycic.org.uk>

Silverstone Secures F1 Grand Prix

It has been announced that Silverstone will remain the home of the British Grand Prix for another 10 years, after the world-class motorsport venue reaching an agreement with Formula 1.

The British Grand Prix has become one of the largest attended events on the F1 calendar and a pivotal event in West Northamptonshire.

Last year's event attracted some of the biggest names in sport, music and culture, as the race drew in a record crowd of 480,000 across the weekend with over 60,000 fans camping in the local area.

West Northants Council App

A new Report feature has been added to the West Northamptonshire Council app, making it even easier to report littering, fly-tipping and a range of other issues.

The app also contains tools to help you keep on top of waste and recycling collections, connect with your local councillors, find facilities and amenities near you, and discover local restaurants and their food hygiene ratings.

Download the app for free from Google Play or the Apple App Store.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: CHURCHYARD MOWING

More people are needed to mow the churchyard once or twice a season. It takes about 1½ hours a session.

If you think you can help please contact David Robbins (dave.robbsins@abthorpe.net)

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday March 2nd, 10 am	The Green	Litter Pick
Monday March 4th, 7 pm	New Inn	Chef's Table
Monday March 11th, 7 pm	Old School	Parish Council Mtg
Sunday March 17th, 10.00 am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday March 17th, 3.00- 4.30 pm	Church	Tea & Piece
Sunday March 31st (Easter), 9.15 am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Monday April 1st, 7 pm	New Inn	Chef's Table
Sunday April 21st, 10.00 am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday April 21st, 3.00-4.30 pm	Church	Tea & Piece
Monday April 29th, 7pm	Old School	Parish Council AGM
Monday May 6th, 7 pm	New Inn	Chef's Table
Sunday May 19th, 10.00 am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday May 19th, 3.00- 4.30 pm	Church	Tea & Piece
Thursday May 30th, 7 pm	Old School	Annual Village Meeting

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