

GRASS

THE NEWSLETTER AT THE ROOTS OF THE GRAND UNION BENEFICE OF BLISWORTH AND STOKE BRUERNE/ SHUTTLANGER, WITH GRAFTON REGIS, ALDERTON AND MILTON MALSOR

Rector's Letter

Within the ever changing society in which we are living at the moment, it has become near impossible to plan too far ahead. Generally, at this time of year, we (the Church) would have prepared Remembrance Day, Advent and Christmas, but this is not the case this year because of the ever-changing restrictions. All the events that we take for granted in our lives will still take place but in a very different way.

I have made many plans in the last few months, only to see them binned within a few days, I am sure we have all experienced this lately. This is not the original letter that I wrote - the first one was deleted. Christ tells us to live in the present moment and not worry about tomorrow, so this is what we need to do.

We need to embrace this present moment as the gift that it is; I think we all know that the way of life we are experiencing at this time will be with us until at least the spring. For the churches to be our Lord's presence in our communities, we will need to look at new ways of being the body of Christ, in a creative way.

We are continuing to meet at 9.30 a m in one church in the Benefice each Sunday while at the same time Zooming the service, and at 9.30 a m on Wednesdays for morning prayer (Zoom).

As Christians, we are called to meet for prayer and fellowship, in which we can support and encourage each other. This isn't easy to do in person at the moment, so I am planning to start a study group over Zoom in the next few months. I hope to write to you all soon about this.

I pray that you all stay safe. Blessings, Richard

Useful Telephone Numbers for the United Benefice of Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne with Grafton Regis, Alderton and Milton Malsor

Rector: Canon Rev'd Richard Stainer, The Rectory, 37 High Street, Blisworth NN7 3B, tel 01604 857619

Churchwardens of Blisworth: Mrs Fiona McKenzie, tel 01604 859541 and Mrs Angela Cheesbrough, tel 01604 858059.

Churchwardens of Stoke Bruerne: Mrs Christine Frost, tel 01604 862561.

Churchwardens of Grafton Regis: Mrs Jean Glanville, tel 01908 543463 and Lord Charles Fitzroy, tel 01908 542908

Churchwarden of Alderton: Mrs Margaret Hall-Townley, tel 01327 811307 and Mrs Linda Dards, tel 01327 811265.

Churchwardens of Milton Malsor: Mrs Jane Trehame, tel 01604 858323 and Mrs Sue Bell, tel 01327 351043

VILLAGE NEWS

STOKE BRUERNE



GRASS Deliveries

It's a step forward (for the time being at least) that we are able to have a hard copy of GRASS. We are indebted to our trusty band of people who deliver around the villages. Hazel Oldfield has carried out this job in Stoke Bruerne for many, many years, but now feels she must pass this job on to somebody else. We would like to say a big thank you to Hazel for all the thousands of copies of GRASS that she has delivered over the years and to all the others who have done this job over the years, and still do it.

Stoke Bruerne Parish Council

There is a vacancy on the Parish Council. This is an opportunity for you to have a real say in matters affecting the village now and in the future, and to serve the community.

This voluntary job primarily entails attending Council meetings which are held on a six weekly cycle. No prior experience is necessary just a keen interest in what happens in the village! If you would like to know more or are willing to put your name forward then please contact the Clerk.

The Parish Council will now fill the vacancy by co-option. Nomination should be submitted in writing to the Clerk at the address below. If nominating another person, please include a signed note confirming their willingness to stand.

Address for correspondence:

Bobs Damerell, Clerk to Stoke Bruerne Parish Council, 4 Brae Hill, Brill, Bucks, HP18 9TF, Email: clerk@stokebruerneparishcouncil.org.uk



Stoke Bruerne C of E Primary School

We are all so very pleased to be back at school. It is wonderful to see all of our children back and eager to learn.

We would like to welcome all of our new starters and, of course, their parents and families, to Stoke Bruerne Primary School; we hope that they will all be very happy with us.

During this first very busy term the children in class 1 will be settling back in and studying explorers. Children in class 2 will be having a very exciting time with a topic about the Stone Age. Children in class 3 will all be learning about World War II.

What a very exciting time, they will all be having.



SHUTLANGER

Shutlanger Parish Council

Shutlanger Parish Council met by videoconference on 10 September. Everyone is as welcome to attend our virtual meetings as when we meet in person; if you do want to join us over Zoom, please let the clerk know.

We have had a very good response rate to the parish plan questionnaire we dropped off to everyone in the village, so thank you to those who filled it in. We are using your replies to update our parish plan from several years ago. However, the Parish Council can only formally adopt the revised plan on the advice of a committee that is separate to the Parish Council. If you'd like to offer to a couple of hours to join the committee considering the revised plan, please let the clerk know.

We are still working through the responses. Two issues highlighted are speeding in the village and the state of road surfaces. As part of our budget setting for 2021-22 we will look at what more we can do, on top of the measures we've already taken, to reduce speeding. As we've written before in GRASS, we can't take over maintaining road surfaces in the village. Northamptonshire County Council (or West Northamptonshire Council from next year) might well be prepared to hand their legal responsibility over to us but not necessarily any money. The Parish Council has neither the money nor the expertise to take on this job. Road maintenance is something you pay the County Council to do for you and all of us can report problems to Streetdoctor or their local county councillor to get them fixed.

Here are some other early thoughts from what you told us.

As we all know, mobile phone coverage is poor to non-existent in some parts of the village. For those of you who have a reasonably modern smartphone, you may be able to set your phone up for wifi calling. 4g.co.uk lists the following operators as offering wifi calling: EE, O2, Three, BT, Sky, Vodafone and Virgin. Once set up and using your home wifi and broadband connection, you should be able to make good quality voice calls at home even where there is a poor mobile signal in the village. Vodafone also may give you a signal booster either for free or at low cost, which you can plug into your router to get a full-strength signal and which should work for older mobiles. For all operators, wifi calls are charged on the same basis as calls over the cellular network under your mobile plan. As the Parish Council aren't experts in mobile coverage, please ask your operator rather than us if you want to know more.

The village's fibre connections have been upgraded recently resulting in better download and upload speeds in most parts of the village. We aren't aware of any plans at present to upgrade the village to 'fibre at the home (FTTH)', giving gigabit download speeds. Please let us know if you have heard anything on this.

Many of you would like the village to have a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, as we used to have for several years. So would we, but we do need people to run it. Several people said in their replies that they'd be prepared to run the scheme, so please anyone who is prepared to help let the clerk know and we can get it going again.

Some replies expressed concern about crime. The website police.uk shows which crimes have been reported in our area by month for anyone who wants to know more.

Many of you from within the village and from further afield have been enjoying the playing field now that it has reopened and been completely re-equipped. We will be doing tree planting in the autumn to further improve our village amenity and will be considering putting in exercise equipment for adults to use.

Finally thank you to those of you who have been making the village look better. As part of residents' tidy up of the grass triangle at the junction of the Showsley Road and Twitch Hill, the Parish Council paid to relocate the grit bin with kind agreement of a property owner. This autumn we will also dig out and return the area contaminated with salt. Thanks also to the other residents who sorted out the grass triangle at the junction of High Street and Showsley Road. And thanks to whoever is clearing the vegetation away from in front of the vehicle activated sign on Main Road coming in from Stoke Bruerne. The Parish Council is also paying for the daffodil bulbs volunteers from the village will be planting this autumn.

Our next meeting is on 12 November, and we will be considering future priorities for the village in 2021 in light of the parish plan review. Please join us then to help decide how we can improve the village.

Shutlanger Parish Council



BLISWORTH

Blisworth Monthly Coffee & Cakes

The monthly coffee and cake sales at our house was one of the early casualties of lockdown and was another social gathering that was missed by many.

Once things started to ease and pubs and restaurants were opening, we decided to hold 'al fresco' mornings on our generously sized drive, which allowed space for social distancing. The first one was greatly appreciated by everyone who came and raised a considerable sum for church funds. We then decided to hold them every two weeks for as long as the weather held. We have been very lucky and only cancelled once due to bad weather.

However, in the end it has been the virus that called a halt to our get-togethers as outdoor gatherings of up to 30 have now been reduced by the 'rule of 6' indoor or out. It is a shame, but we do need to keep everyone safe.

We have all enjoyed the mornings we have been able to meet and chat with real people. Hopefully, some will still be able to meet up on a much smaller scale and at a safe distance. It also looks as if we will be able to continue the church services every 5 weeks.

Many thanks for all the generous donations and contributions of cakes, jams, produce etc. and thanks to Estelle for the loan of the chairs.

We will pray for good health for all and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible around the village. Stay safe! Keep smiling! - It's contagious!

Pat & Mason Masterman

ALDERTON

Church Cleaning Rota

Churchyard Rota

October
30 September to 17 October
18 - 31 October

Katie Steele & Jo Hempenstall
Anthony & Ruth Barry
Mike & Katie Steele

Market for the Knight

We made a total of £282.10 at the market for the knight fund held in the churchyard on Saturday 12 September. I think there is still a little to come in but a terrific result. Thank you all so much, both the buyers and the contributors. What a brilliant bunch!

The 'Ride and Stride' result was a little disappointing as we only had three visitors and two of those were Anna and Emily! The three that did visit said that many of the churches on their list were not open which is a shame. Lots more of you have a go next year and we will make a big effort to make sure you get cake and tea when you get to us. All being well - that is.

The presentation of the now conserved (but not yet relocated) knight went very well. This was helped enormously by the fact that conservator Liz Cheadle happened to be visiting to collect more of her equipment and she spent most of her time talking people through what she had done and what we had discovered. It was so good to be able to share information with everyone and to say a kind of 'thank you' for believing that we

could get this far. It was a great day - even though Linda and I were absolutely exhausted by the end of it! We will be back - and after your funds before much longer! Stay safe in the meantime.

Margaret H-T

The Historically Famous Queen's Oak Unveiled

It is reported that Edward IV first met Elizabeth Woodville at the Queen's Oak tree whilst out hunting in Whittlewood Forest; further secret meetings were arranged before they were married at Grafton in 1464.

The site of the Queen's Oak had become very overgrown so that the oak was not visible at all. On Saturday 19 September, Rob Taylor (landowner of the site and unrelated to any other Taylor in the area), Charlie Reece, Don Allen and myself cleared the overgrown area around the Queen's Oak. After 3 hours, with the use of power tools and secateurs, the area was cleared and the remains of the historical tree became visible once again.

The purpose for the clear-up was to allow Thomas Dennis (the actor who appeared in last month's issue of GRASS) to record the event and tell the story on video for his YouTube series called 'SwipinThruHistory'; this has been available to view since Thursday 24 September.

Brian Patton



Alderton Art Festival Saturday 5 September and Sunday 6 September.

Due to Covid19, we had to postpone the Alderton Art Festival as we know it until 2021. However, we set up an "online art festival" which went live on 1 August and closed on Saturday 5 September. There were over 340 paintings on the site, and 40 paintings and 21 greeting cards were sold. We also launched an Alderton Lottery bonus ball competition which went live on Saturday 5 September. We held a village only barbecue and a teas/cakes event in the churchyard over the weekend. In total we raised £2,100 for the church of St Margaret.



If there is one thing that we can learn from this difficult year is that both the "online art festival" and the Alderton Lottery bonus ball competition can both be repeated for years to come. Online, we reached over 4,000 potential buyers compared to the 600+ visitors we normally expect. The feedback from the local artists has been most favourable and they praised the skill in which the "online art festival" was set up and worked so well. I thank all of the committee for their hard work and all who supported the weekend. I know that I'll embarrass Henny if I mention her by name for her skill in which the "online art festival" was set up, so I won't!

Charlie Reece – Chairman AAF



GRAFTON REGIS

Grafton Regis Village Hall.

The hall is up and running again, thanks to all the support from ACRE; they are very quick in updating us with any changes issued by the Government and making sure that we understand them. We are only letting the hall out to our regular small groups and not taking on any new clients.

Over the last two weeks Thomas Dennis has been busy filming at the church, the old oak at Alderton and anywhere else he feels will enhance the his new video of our villages' history. The video was released on 24 September.

The church has been fortunate in receiving emergency grants from the Heritage Lottery and Garfield Weston; it will allow us to put in some improvements for when we can open our churches again to visitors.

Jean

GENERAL NEWS

Volunteer Drivers Urgently Required

Towcester Area Door to Door (TADD) urgently needs to recruit additional volunteer drivers to help people in YOUR community.

As we emerge from lockdown, the NHS is now offering a wider range of hospital and GP appointments, and dentists, opticians, podiatrists and other healthcare providers are back at work. We have seen a steady rise in the number of journeys requested and we expect this to continue, particularly when the autumn flu vaccine programme begins. This year, more than ever, our elderly and vulnerable members need the support of a friendly, affordable, door-to-door service for their medical appointments.

Drivers need to have access to a car, be available on a regular basis for a minimum of half a day a week and complete a DBS check. Mileage is reimbursed at the HMRC rate, and insurance premiums are not affected. Journeys are agreed in accordance with weekly availability and can fit around the school run, working from home or part time employment.

To learn more about volunteering for TADD, visit www.towcesterareadoor2door.com or email volunteer@towcesterareadoor2door.co.uk.



'What3words'

Jane Trehane has sent the following article in and it is an excerpt from an article from the County WI newsletter, which she felt might be of interest.

It is an app you can download to your smartphone just in case you need to get help and you need to let someone know exactly where you are. What 3words' has assigned 3m squares in the world a unique 3-word address that will never change. In the office it could be pits.brilliant.princess. In another room it could be rocker.coaster.chuck. The words in what3words addresses are easy to say and share and are as accurate as GPS coordinates. People use what3words to find their tents in campsites, navigate to B&Bs, and to direct emergency services to the right location. You can use the app anywhere in the world.

It's no good saying, 'I do not go anywhere', you may have a fall in the garden all alone or on a bike ride and as long as you are able to use the phone, you are not alone. Help is at hand.

I did see on the television where people have been rescued off the hills this summer with the aid of their phone.

Think about it. It may save your life or somebody else's that you come across in our journey of life.

Josie's Home Made Produce

My name is Josie Lepper, and I make home-made produce at my house in Paulerspury. I met many of you at the Alderton Art Festival last year and I hope you enjoyed your purchases.

During lockdown, I have been making jams, for example apricot, blackberry and apple, damson, raspberry, plum and lots of others, all at £2 per jar. There is also crab apple and redcurrant jelly at £1.50 for a small jar. And, of course, I make chutneys, for example beetroot, spicy plum, aubergine and garlic, sweet apple, fig and many others – all will be ready for the Christmas table at a cost of £3 per jar.

I also make up hampers and baskets, to individual requirements, ranging from £6 to £30 for you to give as Christmas gifts.

I am in the process of producing my full list of what is for sale, and this will be available soon; if you would like a copy, please give me a ring on 01327 811288 and I will send you the list. Josie



Yoga Classes

Due to Coronavirus, we now meet on Tuesday Mornings from 10.00 a m to 11.30 a m; currently there are 2 options on-line with access to YouTube recording anytime, or by taking turns to join us in live class at Sunrise Yoga Studio on Wakefield Estate, where we are currently allowed 8 people.

Yoga classes are taught by Iris Parish. You don't have to have Zoom on your device, you can join classes with an invitation link. A new 6 week course starts on 6 October 2020; the fee is only £30, and the course is suitable for all. For additional information, please contact Sue on: 01327 811 596 or email: fitnessgroup@paulerspuryparish.org.uk

For Sale: Partly Constructed Sid & Gillian Cooke Three Storey Georgian Dolls' House Kit

I was given a minimally constructed, unpainted, fine large Georgian style dolls' house to sell for the Alderton Knight fund two years ago and my inability to use Ebay has left it sitting in my dining room ever since.

The house comes with all of the parts needed to complete the project, excluding the glue. The kit is in excellent condition; some of the parts are still in their packets and the instruction book and other paperwork is present. Included in this bargain package is a large quantity of the furniture, including details such as the books for the library, candle sticks and pies for the kitchen etc again, much of which is still in its original wrapping.

The main body of the house has been put together but the project abandoned and none of the rest of the kit has been used. This would make a wonderful project for a Christmas present.

The original cost of the basic kit was £267, including VAT. The furniture was not included in this price and would have cost much more. I will sell for the nearest offer to £150.

All proceeds will go to the Knight fund. Margaret Hall-Townley, tel 01327 811307



Notes from a Local Farmer

I have not spoken to you for a couple of months, and a lot has happened since then. We have just finished the harvest, belatedly, because of the weather. As soon as we finished, the weather turned warm and dry, yet during harvest, it was very variable. The harvest was reasonably good considering the weather, with a very dry spring and late germination. Straw is at a premium as yields were only half normal, most going to Wales for use with livestock.

The sheep have been sorted, with cull sheep taken out to go to market. I have just bought 200 replacements, mostly young sheep to keep for 4 – 5 years. The rams went in on 12 September, but there does not seem to be much activity yet. Lambs have been wormed and foot bathed and fat ones taken out. They seem to enjoy the warm dry weather, and tend to laze around.

All the corn has been dried this year as conditions were not dry enough for harvesting dry corn. Prices are better this year, mainly because of the reduced harvest.

We are now stubble grazing the lambs; this land will then go into winter beans in October. The maize has been harvested on 20 September in dry weather, so no damage with wheeling; this will go into wheat as soon as possible.
So things are progressing very well at the moment.

Robert Davy

News from The Old Mail

For events and happenings in the nearby villages: Cosgrove, Potterspury and Yardley Gobion, see the newsletter, The Old Mail, is available online at various websites: www.cosgrovevillage.co.uk; www.potterspurypc.org.uk; www.yardleygobionpc.wordpress.com

How to Contact the Police

We no longer divide our villages between officers unless they are specifically sponsored by the village. Our team cover all South Northants villages and this ensures villages are covered across all shift patterns. If they have a query for a specific officer, it's best to mark it for their attention via an email and they will pick it up when they are next on duty.

999 – For a crime or incident in progress

101 – For non-urgent incidents

03000 111 222 – Direct dial Northamptonshire police

To Report online: <https://www.northants.police.uk/ro/report/>

Email for Towcester: neighbourhoodteamsouthnorthants-towcester@northants.pnn.police.uk

Your local officers are as follows: PCSO Peter Firth, PCSO Charlotte Morris, PCSO Nicole Degg, PCSO James Herbert, PCSO Kev Thompson (Schools Liaison Officer) For more local NPT information, visit the local policing pages www.northants.police.uk

A Simple Recipe sent in by Denise Ingram

A ladleful of simplicity

A cup of diversity

A tablespoon of justice

A measure of reality

A clove of co-operation

A handful of acceptance

A slice of equality

A teaspoon of respect

Flavour with Peace and strain out world hunger.

CLEANER AVAILABLE

I'm a reliable, trustworthy, and approachable cleaner

I live in Blisworth and have a few new slots for

Blisworth, Gayton, Milton Malsor, Shutlanger,

Stoke Bruerne, Roade, or Tiffield

I can provide references

Please call me, Emma, to see how I can help

07707 875794

or email heavenlyhousekeeping88@outlook.com



YOUR LOCAL HEART SUPPORT GROUP

Affiliated to the British Heart Foundation

Our friendly and informal group is open to anyone living in the Towcester area who has a heart condition, their family members or carers, and for parents of children with a heart condition.

We usually meet every 3rd Thursday
at The Forum (Library), Moat Lane,
Towcester NN12 6AD,
7pm - 8:30pm

(Social evenings, speakers, fundraising, activities/trips)



Our meetings are currently on hold due to COVID-19

but please check out our Facebook page,

and for any enquiries/support please contact Annie:

07554150870 mrschimchim57@gmail.com

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Windows 7 has reached end of life, and it will no longer receive security updates; it is time to change.

I can upgrade it to Windows 10, but still keep the look of Windows 7; all your documents, pictures and programs will transfer as well.

Looking for a laptop? I have a number of refurbished laptops, prices starting from £150.

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Contact Paul Dards on 07540 000844 or 01327 811265 or paul@dards.co.uk

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SNIPPETS:

*Storms make trees take deeper roots
(Dolly Parton).*

*You never know how strong you are
until being strong is the only choice
you have.*

*Ageing is like climbing a mountain.
The higher you get, the more tired
you become but your view becomes
much more extensive.*

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF GRASS is 17 October 2020

If you can get any copy to us earlier than that it would be very much appreciated

Please send any copy to: Linda Dards, Moorend, Spring Lane, Alderton NN12 7LW tel 01327 811265, e-mail: linda@dards.net. Could you please include your name & phone number with entries in case we have any problems. If you would like to add photographs or drawings to your text these are welcome and can be supplied via email or as photos, and returned after scanning. Contributions by email are most welcome, we can accept most formats; please request a response from us on receipt – so you are sure that we have your submission. Word (any version) is preferred.