

STEVINGTON MAGAZINE



BOB'S HOUSE 31st July 2007

MARCH 2021
Number 196

VILLAGE DIARY

Because of the uncertainty resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic there are only a few Village Diary entries in this edition. We hope that in June it will be jam packed with events taking place in the village.

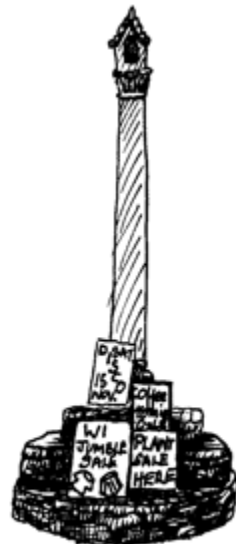
In the meantime, please keep an eye out for posters round the village and check the Stevington Support Facebook group and the websites and Facebook pages of the pubs, village organisations and the churches to keep up to date with what is happening:

Websites

Parish Council	stevington-pc.gov.uk
Village Hall	stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk
St Marys Church	stmarysstevington.org.uk
Baptist Church	stevingtonbaptistchurch.org
Red Lion	redlionstevington.co.uk
Cinema Club	stevingtoncinemaclub.uk
Guitar Concerts	stevingtonguitarconcerts.co.uk

Facebook

Stevington Support
Stevington Social
The Royal George Stevington
The Red Lion Stevington
Friends of St Marys Church Stevington
Stevington Guitar Concerts
Stevington Baptist Church



Photographs as credited. Cover drawing by Mike Robinson

Opinions expressed in the Stevington Magazine are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Editor. Some features may be kept for future issues.

HELLO STEVINGTON!

You will remember that our Christmas Greetings Charity in December was the SMART! Prebend Centre in Bedford. Thanks to the generosity of the village, we had 42 greetings and raised £882 plus some Gift Aid. We have received a formal thank you letter which is included on page 5.

We are very grateful to all our regular advertisers who have signed up to continue to support the Magazine during 2021. The annual costs of the Magazine are a little over £1,000 and without our advertisers we wouldn't be able to cover costs so please have a look through the Magazine and use all of these local businesses when you have a need - it's great to support them as they support us! Remember to tell them where you found their details.

Well lockdown restrictions continue so once again this is another edition without the usual reports on events that have taken place in the village and promotion of forthcoming events. We have been concerned before each of the 'lockdown issues' that we might not have enough material from our contributors - but we need not have worried you have provided us with lots of interesting material including some articles from new contributors which is great. So if you've been thinking of putting pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, then please give it a go!

Prompted by someone in the village who has sent us a drawing which we hope to use for the cover picture for the next edition, we would like to invite any of our readers of any age to send us pictures of Stevington landmarks that we could use on the cover for an occasional break from reusing all of the pictures we have in our archive. The only requirement is that the image is clear in black and white.

Spring is on the way and its looking like the end of the tunnel is in sight so hopefully we can all soon be back to something like normal.

Heather and Keith

NEXT MAGAZINE

The next edition of the Stevington Magazine should be delivered sometime around 5-6 June 2021. The last day for receipt of copy for that Magazine is Sunday 23 May 2021. Articles should reach Heather and Keith Parkinson (Old Paddock, Church Road, Tel. 826677, email stevington.magazine@googlegmail.com) on or before that day.



HONEY

This is to say Thank You for all the lovely comments and messages we have received from all over the village on the loss of our little dog Honey.

Sadly, after being with us for nearly three years, the nasty virus she suffered from caught up with her, and she went within 36 hours.

She was the mainstay of our lives and organised us (and Church Road), being at all the Thursday night NHS clappings - sorry Petres that she used your garden pond as a swimming pool on one occasion - and went almost everywhere with us and made us keep walking.

We miss her very much.

Anna and Bob Hart

OUTDOOR LIGHTS ON AT NIGHT

Please would people with outdoor lights in the village be aware that these can shine into the bedroom windows of their neighbours' houses and become a nuisance when trying to sleep. Such lights should be turned off at bedtime. If they are security lights they should be on a movement sensor. Thank you for your consideration.

A Villager

THE FARLEY WAY CLAPPERS

When the idea came up last year to clap for the NHS at 8 o'clock on a Thursday evening, Farley Way joined in the fun with drums and saucepans and generally enjoyed having a chat with our neighbours and catching up with their news. When the idea was introduced again this year, we just felt that 8 o'clock in the winter was not a good idea, (some of us are in bed by 8 o'clock) so we agreed on 4 o'clock and continued enjoying a clapping catch up, socially distancing of course. However, with the regulations changing continually, we felt that it would be best if we just stayed on our drives and didn't mix with our neighbours at all. We just call out across the road and have a general nod and cheery wave! Last week Arthur, at number 9, made a speech thanking all our heroes and led three cheers and there was much clapping afterwards. We all have a lot to be thankful for don't we?

Marion Hext

Stevington Magazine
Heather & Keith Parkinson
Old Paddock
Church Road
Stevington, Bedford
MK43 7QB

THANK YOU!

Dear Heather,

**Re: Receipt for Donation to SMART CJS from The Stevington Magazine in the amount of £882
(donations with Gift Aid - £295)**

I writing to you to confirm that SMART CJS has received this kind donation from you and supporters of the Stevington Magazine. We thank you for making this generous gesture at what is a challenging time for many charities like SMART CJS, operating with greater demand than ever for its services.

If you don't already receive email updates from us - the best way to ensure we stay connected is to complete this short form www.smartcjs.org.uk/consent-for-contact-connect and we'll make sure we keep you up to date.

During the pandemic, we have been operating from a hotel in Bedford 24 hours a day/7 days per week. We have helped nearly three times as many individuals than usual - far more because of people losing their jobs, accommodation and falling on hard times. This has meant additional staffing, food and other costs to keep the homeless safe and fed during the pandemic. This sum will go a long way in helping us keep going and keep this vital service running.

Our grateful thanks, once again, to you and the readers of the Stevington Magazine. Your support is invaluable and much-needed right now.

Yours sincerely,



Anita McCallum | Chief Executive Officer

Mob: 07760619149 | Email: anita.mccallum@smartcjs.org.uk

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PHILLIP DONNISON

Sad times. Stevington has lost one of its true characters, Phillip Donnison has died. Below are two contributions celebrating Phil's life, the first contribution is from myself [Ray Cox] covering Phil's earlier years and the second contribution [from Chris Gillam] covering Phil's later years.

Farewell Donny

[Ray Cox] I have had the honour of being friends with Phillip Donnison, or Donny to his mates, for over sixty years. Donny was an all-round good guy and an absolute "character-and-a-half". We were best of friends in our pre-teen days and together we got into numerous scrapes. As you may well know, Donny had a very adventurous outlook on life and always pushed the boundaries and limits of whatever he did.

When we were about ten years old, I recall a day when we decided to do an experiment to see if we could catch a bullet from an air rifle! We decided a yellow car sponge and a thin leather driving glove would be perfect to safely catch the bullet! We spun a coin and Donny won the toss. In typical Donny fashion, he chose to do the catching of the bullet - I was more than happy to do the trigger pulling! Donny took up his position and held his sponge and glove covered hand about 3 yards from the end of the rifle and I pulled the trigger. Not surprisingly, the experiment didn't go quite as planned. Donny ended up rolling on the floor clutching his hand in agony and the bullet had left a large round and bleeding hole in the palm of his hand! After the initial pain had subsided, in typical Donny style he said "well - at least I caught it!"

The second event revolved around football. Stevington boys team often played football against other village teams and Donny chose to be our goalie. Donny had a somewhat unusual technique for keeping goal which involved diving at the feet of the opposition, with his arms and legs flailing in all directions, in the vague hope that some part of his body would get in the way of the ball and stop a goal being scored! On one particular day a giant of a centre forward had broken through the pathetic defence of Stevington boys football team and was about to shoot at the goal. So Donny launched himself at the feet of the giant, there was a massive impact and somehow the ball missed the goal. Donny stood up and someone shouted "Donny you've had your front tooth kicked out". His nonchalant reply was "Yeah - probably - but they didn't score!". Donny went on to complete the game with his front tooth missing!

Donny was way ahead of his time and together we invented peer-to-peer communications at the end of the 1960's. This started off

by sending messages to each other at night by flicking our bedroom lights on and off. This worked OK until we burnt out the light switches. We then decided to run a number of very thin copper wires over the field that separated our houses by about 400 yards - true peer-to-peer digital communications. This allowed us to send binary messages to each other in the form of morse code. This worked brilliantly until a lady went for a walk in the field with her dog. Within the space of a couple of minutes the dog became completely entangled in the hundreds of yards of thin copper wire and the dog ended up in the middle of a ball of copper wire about a yard in diameter. It took two grown men to untangle and extract the dog and that was the end of our digital communication system. About 20 years later a guy called Tim Berners-Lee re-invented this digital communication system and called it the internet and he got all the credit - but Donny and I were first!

Phil went on to Bedford school and was the life and soul of the 133 bus journey to and from town each day. Phil had various temporary summer jobs including selling ice-cream from a van which included having his van windscreen smashed by a competitor, working in a petrol station providing free petrol to Stevy lads on motorbikes on Sunday mornings when the boss wasn't looking and working in a fertiliser factory which included dismembering rotting animal carcasses to name but a few. After school, Donny went to Rugby University to study engineering. After some time, Donny decided to devote a significant proportion of his life to helping deaf children, learnt to speak sign language and then taught in a number of schools across the UK.

I hope these few stories have provided a brief snapshot of the true character that Donny was. Donny has touched many lives and I'm sure many other folks have similar characterful memories of their times with Donny.

In summary, all I can say is:

What a character, what a life, what a guy.

So, what more can I say other than: Donny, Rest In Peace.

In memory of my very best friend - Phil Donnison

[Chris Gillam] Phil loved life and lived it to the full, actually he was brimming over with life and he was never stuck for something to do. My early memories of Phil, or Donny as we called him, were that he was always busy doing or planning something and preferably something that involved him buying some new kit or expensive equipment.

When we were teenagers, I can remember Phil's excitement and enthusiasm for anything new. For example, he was really into progressive rock music and when Led Zeppelin first came on the scene, he was straight into it and we used to sit cross legged in his bedroom (or in the lounge if his mum and dad were out) and furiously shake our heads from side to side fuelled by cheap cider no doubt!

Phil always had an adventurous spirit and I remember the go karting days when we used to go flat out downhill on homemade wooden machines that invariably had pram wheels on the back, a plank for a seat and were held together with a few nails. Maybe this was the kickstart that gave Phil his nerve and a taste for adventure and fun. There was also a co-owned motorbike that a few of us shared and drove like nutters along the old railway track (now the Country Walk) in Stevington which was the small village where we all grew up in the 1970's. I can also remember when Phil's dad bought him a motorbike - it was an Ariel Arrow. These were not considered as great bikes back then and Phil's was always in bits on the garage floor. I can still picture him now sitting on the floor surrounded by various bits and pieces of motorbike desperately trying to get things put back together again in time for the customary push start attempt. Those push starts were legendary and more often than not ended in a lot of backfires and disappointment but Donny was never beaten and would always go back to the garage for another look at things before the next push start agony. I think this started his love affair with motorbikes which as many of you will know stayed with him for all of his life.

Phil used to arrange an annual weekend walk for 3 of his mates, these were Kevin, Peter and myself and Phil always went to a lot of trouble to decide on where we would go and over the years we went to a lot of places including Snowdonia and the Peak District along with various moors and dales. We used to camp overnight and it was always hilarious as something would always go wrong and of course we would blame our team leader Captain Donny for everything! The walks were always eventful and despite Phil's intricate planning (he used to hang the relevant section of the Ordinance Survey map round his neck) we would always get lost and then get back to the tent late, soaking wet and exhausted but I can honestly say that Phil would never get flustered and took everything in his stride.

When Phil and Maria moved to Paraza in France all those years ago I knew he would make a success of things but when he started

Mellow Velos bike hire I never thought he would do so well. He worked really hard and demonstrated the usual Donny determination to do things properly and for the right reasons and his business flourished and when it was converted to a franchise and welcomed four pairs of new franchisee partners, he was so very proud and pleased as punch.

Phil's latest hobby in a very long line of hobbies over the years was sailing but others included: yoga, grass skiing, motorcycling, archery, hang gliding, power gliding, canoeing, cycling, walking, model plane making, and even DIY home improvements where he could turn his hand to anything even plumbing and electrical work, he was an amazing guy.

Phil was a very clever and knowledgeable man and as our friendship grew, I was always in awe of this but he never once used his superior intellect to intimidate me or anyone else for that matter but instead he would patiently explain things in such a good way and I guess that's why he was such an outstanding teacher when he worked with profoundly deaf children in Exeter. Anyway, the way I will remember Phil is probably the same way as many other people in that he was a kind and resourceful man with a wicked sense of humour, we used to laugh so much sometimes that we would literally collapse in tears. I consider myself lucky and privileged to have known Phil so well and for so long and to be able to call him my best friend, I will miss him so much, he was a one off for sure.

Rest in peace Phil.

Ray Cox and Chris Gillam

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STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Parish Councillors:

Pete Fisher (Chair)
Andrew Lockwood (Vice Chair)
Janet Day
Aaron Keep
James Lockwood
John Strutt
Jane Thomas

Tricia Lennie (Clerk)

The Parish Council would like to welcome John Strutt onto the Parish Council and look forward to working with him in support of the residents of Stevington.

Role of the Parish Council

We thought it would be useful to remind everyone about the role and responsibilities of the Parish Council. Stevington Parish Council is a civil local authority established by the Parish Councils Act of 1894 and the Local Government Act of 1972; it is the lowest tier of local government.

The Council is made up of seven councillors elected by the electors of Stevington every four years, plus a salaried Clerk who is responsible for organising meetings, maintaining the Council's accounts and other administrative tasks; the Clerk is not a voting member of the Council. If a seat on the Council becomes vacant between normal elections a specified procedure must be followed, this can lead to an election but more usually a new councillor will be co-opted onto the Council until the next election.

The Council meets on a six to eight weekly basis to discuss Council business and hear any concerns from local residents. All meetings are open to the public and times and dates are published by the Clerk on our website and notice boards (currently all meetings are via Zoom). There is a legal duty to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) although due to the pandemic Government granted a waiver for 2020.

Parish Councillors set a budget for the following financial year every November based on planned expenditure with a small contingency for unexpected costs. The funding for all parish councils is allocated by the district council and is taken from the area's council tax; this is called an annual precept. The precept is added to the local council tax and paid to

the parish council in two instalments, for Stevington in 2021/22 this amounts to £15,688.

The Parish Council is consulted by Bedford Borough Council on all planning applications. Councillors discuss the pros and cons of each individual application and express an agreed response to the Borough Planning Authority. Although the Planning Authority will take the views of the Council into account, the final decision on whether to approve the application is made by the Planning Authority.

Stevington Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the playing field, churchyard, playground and some street furniture (e.g. benches, old water pumps, defibrillators, notice boards). Bedford Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of the road surfaces, traffic signs, footpaths etc. however, Councillors do monitor these and report any damage to the Highways Department for repairs and maintenance.

All Parish Council meeting minutes and policies are published on the website or if anyone is unable to access the website copies can be requested from the Clerk.

Our Village, Your Safety, Your Roads

The Parish Council is working with the Borough Council regarding the state of our village roads, their safety and general maintenance and we want to assure you that there is a plan in place and you too can play your part.

Highways have started the process of repairing the road markings but poor weather conditions have created a delay. Their work force is part of a task force that is involved in gritting and dealing with environmental issues around flooding. However, we can report that the process is underway and will include clearing signage, remaking road markings and making road surface repairs.

We are also addressing traffic monitoring. The Parish Council has been granted a 'mobile flashing monitoring sign' for the village and we are currently waiting for this. Our Borough Councillor, Jon Abbott, is sorting this out for us at a cost of approx. £3,000. This device will flash at offending drivers and record speed data. This will provide us with the information needed to decide if more stringent actions are required such as the possible installation of average speed cameras which are very costly. It has been confirmed that Stevington is on the list to have average speed cameras installed. Bedford Council is installing approximately 8-10

systems a year but with 80-90 locations on a waiting list, we have no idea where Stevington features.

Bromham and Pavenham residents actually paid towards the purchase and installation of their cameras. The more money the local village and Parish Council can raise, the higher up the priority list we would be for getting them fitted. We, at the Parish Council are very interested in hearing your views on this and if the need is greater in respect of getting average speed cameras fitted we would need financial support.

We know that all councils are having their budget slashed, year on year, by central government. Each camera costs approximately £40,000, we need at least two to be effective and it has been suggested that Stevington would require three, meaning the total cost is in excess of £120,000, which is money the Council simply does not have. Our local Council does not 'make money' from these devices, any fines are held by central government and shared equally across the country but once installed, the local police force pay for maintenance of these devices.

These devices are not a cheap solution so we are also considering other more cost-effective actions to keep our village safe, including:

Stop speeding: After monitoring our roads over several months, it seems that the speed is increasing and often cars can be seen braking and reducing their speed once already within the village 30mph rather than reducing speed throughout the village. Please remember there are more walkers, residents' pets, wildlife and horses with their riders on our roads today. Braking when you see the sign or the danger is not a solution. We have seen more cars in the ditches this winter.

Run a SPEED WATCH Group: Please contact the Parish Council if you wish to help with this.

Park considerately: We have some very narrow streets in our stunning village. Please think about where you park, how your parked car might affect others and in particular access by emergency services.

We are working to prevent oversized HGVs entering the village: Recently we have seen more and more HGVs stuck at and causing damage to the Cross because of poor signage into the village and because their satnavs direct them through the village. For a Weight Restriction Order to be enforceable, Bedford Borough Council would need to find suitable locations for new lit up signs which would cost £5-6k and

it would be a challenge to find a suitable location at the Cross end of Silver Street because of the crossroads.

Hopefully, you can see that Bedford Borough Council and the Parish Council are in talks to resolve some of these issues but you can play your part. If you see an offending vehicle, take a picture on your phone or just jot down the registration number, date and time and then send these details to me.

With your help and support, we can make the village safer and ideally not feel like big brother is watching, but if we cannot curb (excuse the pun) these traffic issues, then an average speed camera system may be the solution with the necessary cost for the safety of all. Contact the Parish Council through the Clerk with your thoughts, ideas and suggestions.

Village Hall

Regrettably the Village Hall remains closed but will reopen with a full programme of activities as soon as government guidance allows. The Parish Council would like to thank the Village Hall committee for ensuring the hall is looked after whilst it is closed by undertaking maintenance work and regular checks.

Playground

The playground has remained open. Parents and carers are reminded that no cleaning of the equipment is undertaken. Please ensure you follow guidance by ensuring your children keep a safe distance, whenever possible, and use wipes to clean their hands.

Playing field

Both the playing field and playground are being well used in the current lockdown. The field is popular with dog walkers especially those who cannot use the paths further afield whilst it is so wet and muddy. The Parish Council is monitoring the field. Thank you to those dog walkers who always clean up after their dog and use the bin at the exit of the car park.

However, we are concerned about dog mess, especially around the edge of the playground and the swings outside the fenced area where dog faeces have not been cleared up. This is a significant health risk to children and we would remind anyone who exercises their dog on the field to clean up after their dog and ensure it is under their control. If the problem continues the Parish Council will need to consider requesting a dog control order for the whole field, something we want to avoid given

that some people in the village who use the field have limited mobility and would not be able to walk their dog elsewhere.

Community Support during Covid-19

The Parish Council would again like to thank everyone who has supported family, friends and neighbours during this lockdown. It's been positive to hear of our more senior residents going for their first vaccinations with some being given lifts by kindly neighbours. Volunteers are still available if needed. Contact the Clerk by email or Janet Day on 07843 642867.

Windmill

Discussions are ongoing with Bedford Borough Council over the long-term maintenance of the windmill, public access and the role that the 'Friends of' group can play in supporting/promoting the windmill going forward. Unfortunately, owing to the current pressure on the Borough Council caused by the Covid-19 restrictions and recent local environment issues the previously scheduled meeting has had to be pushed back to March, so we hope to be able to provide a further update in the next magazine.

Planning

We have had several planning applications over the last few months and we would like to thank residents for their support.

East West Rail

As many of you are aware there is currently a proposal to develop a rail line between Oxford and Cambridge. This will impact on Bedford with the proposed development of Bedford Station and a new route for the rail link out of Bedford to Cambridge. There will be a non-statutory consultation in the next couple of months for you to share your views. (There will be a full statutory consultation later in the year).

If you want further information the East West Rail Company (established by the Department of Transport) have established an online community hub with further detailed information: <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk>.

Parish Council Newsletter

For regular updates please sign up to the Parish Council automated weekly newsletter on the website: www.stevington-pc.gov.uk

Jane Thomas

Email: clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.stevington-pc.gov.uk

Windmill photo courtesy of John O'Reilly

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BEDFORD BOROUGH NEWS

We have entered 2021 in a similar fashion to how 2020 ended, but there is hope ahead. The vaccination programme is working well, with the three centres in Bedford all being used. By the time you read this, we should hopefully have had a pathway back to some social contact announced by the government; even when this happens we cannot become complacent about Covid-19. As we saw when the last lockdown ended, infection rates in Bedford rose to nearly 1,000/100,000 of the population. They are back down to under 200/100,000 but this is still far higher than in the spring of 2020.

Please remember **Hands, Face, Space**.

Finances

The 2021/22 Bedford Borough Council budget was approved at Full Council meeting on 3 February with cross-party support. The budget maintains the Council's record of saving frontline services and protecting the vulnerable, despite severe government underfunding and the financial challenge caused by the pandemic.

The context in which the budget will be delivered was laid out in stark terms during the meeting, including the £24 million cut in the Council's main government grant since 2015, and the need for £10.9 million of ongoing savings to be delivered in one year.

Savings are targeted at the way the Council operates including the use of new technology and streamlined ways of working, with savings within directorates and increased income generation, all in order to protect vital frontline services.

There is also a range of measures to continue to reduce the Council's environmental impact and help tackle climate change, including a major investment in a Solar Energy Farm that makes new use of the former Elstow landfill site.

Meanwhile, ongoing support for the vulnerable includes full Council Tax Relief for those least able to pay, more investment for adults and children's social care services, and more emergency accommodation for the homeless.

Investment in the Borough also includes further town centre regeneration, expanding schools to create more school places in growing areas and road and pavement resurfacing and improvements.

Environment

Council Reminds Residents to Control Dogs

With lockdown still ongoing and more people out walking during the day, it is timely to remind dog owners that it is against the law for dogs to be dangerously out of control anywhere, including both public and private land.

A dog may be considered dangerously out of control if it injures a person, another animal or causes someone fear or apprehension that they may be injured. If a dog does injure a person then the offence is aggravated.

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure their dog is acting in a safe and appropriate manner. If this is not the case, legal action can be taken against the owner and/or the person who was in charge of the dog at the time. If a dog is dangerously out of control, the owner can receive an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to 6 months.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is in place throughout Bedford Borough. This means dog owners must clean up any fouling by their dog, put an 'out of control' dog on a lead when directed to do so, ensure their dog is on a lead in certain designated areas and not allow their dog to enter areas where dogs are excluded such as children's play areas.

In Stevington there are two Dog Control Orders in place, for the children's play area at the village hall and for the church yard at St. Mary's.

Anyone who is found to be ignoring a PSPO can be fined £75 on the spot and up to £1,000 if the case goes to court. If you witness a dog that has attacked another person or animal, or is dangerously out of control, you can report it to the Police by phoning 101.

Making Bedford Borough Friendlier for Bugs and Bees

As part of the 'Bugs and Bees' project, the Council is planting new hedgerows and wildflower meadows. The Bugs and Bees project launched in the summer and saw the Council receive lots of requests from local residents for areas where a more wildlife-friendly maintenance regime could be put in place.

As a result, the Council is trialling more areas where the grass is not mown but instead left to grow naturally. By not cutting the grass it

creates natural wildflower meadows, allowing local native species to bloom and provide pollen and nectar.

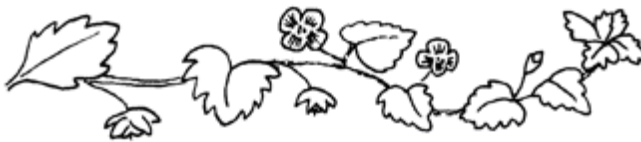
The Council also brought this approach out of the parks and onto the streets last year. On roadside verges, the grass must be cut short to ensure that people can see and that junctions are safe. However, the grass is often left long at the back of the verge away from the road. This is an important way to encourage wildlife such as invertebrates, butterflies and bees into the heart of the urban area.

If you would like further information about this project, or to suggest an area that the team could look at, then please email bugsandbees@bedford.gov.uk.

Councillor Jon Abbott

Telephone 07784 549180

Email jonathan.abbott71@icloud.com



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STEVINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Hardly surprisingly, very little has happened since the last magazine. With the Covid-19 restrictions currently in place, we are unable to run any events in the Hall. With the roll out of vaccinations and more optimistic news on infection numbers and possible easing of restrictions, we hope that we will be able to offer Cinema Club, live streamings and the resumption of activities in the Hall when allowed.

In the last year, there have been several new residents moving into Stevington - welcome from the Social Centre. We hope that when we reopen the Hall that you will enjoy some of the activities and events on offer - it is a great way of getting to know the community. If you have a hobby or sport you would like to share, please feel free to discuss informally with the booking secretary or any other Committee member - see list below. You can do this easily by emailing info@stevingtonvillagehall.org.uk. We know that several families have moved in during the last year so suggestions for children's and young people's activities are warmly welcomed.

In the meantime, the playing field and play area remain open. Many thanks to Jake Wagstaff and his tractor for straightening the gate post, enabling the car park gate to be opened.

It has been lovely to see families enjoying the play area and residents using the field for exercise and individual training. However, it has been disappointing to find an increase in dog mess, particularly adjacent to the play area. There is a dog waste bin in the car park, so please use it.

A complete list of Committee members is below.

Chair:	Steve Cole
Treasurer:	Gary Thomas
Secretary:	Linda Penney
Parish Council Rep:	Janet Day
Elected Member:	Roger Penney
Elected Member:	Barbara Collins
Co-opted Member:	Linda Rudd



Co-opted Member:	Christine Holbrook
Village Hall:	Jean Blayney
Women's Institute	Jackie Gooding
Bowls Club:	Barbara Collins
Football Club:	Shane King
Baptist Chapel:	Jim Russell
Cinema Club:	Stephanie Wingrove
Historical Trust:	Roger Day

Linda Penney
Stevington Social Centre



ICE CREAM SALE



In preparation for Cinema Club reopening before Christmas, we restocked the freezer with our delicious and very popular ice creams. Much of the stock has gone or is about to go out-of-date, so you have an opportunity to order your favourite flavours

at the bargain price of £1.00 per individual tub. Orders will be fulfilled on a first-come, first-served basis for all orders received by **Friday 12 March**. We aim to deliver your order **on the morning of Saturday 13 March**.

<u>Flavour</u>	<u>Number of tubs</u>
Serious chocolate	6
Mint choc chip	15
Vanilla bean	18
Rum and raisin	14
Strawberry	5
Blood orange sorbet	3

To order, please email lpenny12@btinternet.com with your order, including your name and address. When order is confirmed, payment is requested by BACS to

Stevington Social Centre,
Sort Code 20-05-74
Account number 70961604

Linda Penney



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HCPC registered**

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Peaches Close,
Harrold,
Beds.
MK43 7DX
Tel: 01234 720225**

STEVINGTON HISTORICAL TRUST

Registered Charity Number: 1086669
www.stevingtonhistoricaltrust.org.uk

At last work is drawing to a close on the revision of *Stevington: The Village History* which we published in 2001.

The new edition has been largely rewritten and incorporates much new information as well as a large number of hitherto undiscovered photographs. The aim is to print the work as a companion volume to the *Natural History* under the title *Stevington: The Village History Revisited* and to publish in the Autumn.

When the Church Room reopens we will deposit there a print of the new work and an order book so that those who may be tempted to buy it can register their interest.

Naturally, we should be happy to hear in advance from anyone who would like to reserve a copy. (I already have a little list). We expect the run to be quite short, certainly not more than 200 and probably less.

I cannot hazard a price at this stage but it will be a substantial volume of about 400 pages printed in full colour by offset lithography.

We still have left a few copies of *St Mary's: History and Architecture* at £20.00 and the *Stevington Enclosure Award 1807* at the same price.



Boulogne



Quency



Wake



Holland



Stanley



Aiston

Peter Hart
Hon Secretary
01234 823586

peter2hart@btinternet.com



Anne Stileman Bursary Fund

Are you a resident of Stevington, studying art, photography, graphic design or visual arts?

Would a grant help you with equipment, travel or research costs?

**Applications for support are open all year round.
For information about how to apply email the Clerk at
clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk**

THE
RED LION
FREE HOUSE
STEVINGTON



INTRODUCING FRIDAY TAKEAWAYS AND CULINARY TREATS POST LOCKDOWN

LOCKDOWN three may seem never ending but you may have seen a flurry of activity in our kitchens as chef Wayne is busy developing new dishes for our much anticipated reopening with a special emphasis on fresh Cornish fish - please look out for Lobster Thermidor, Mackerel Escabeche and Tuna Sashimi on our restaurant menu one day soon!

In addition to running our popular Sunday roast takeaways, we are also delighted to announce we have added a new takeaway service on Friday evenings.

For collection between 5pm and 7.30pm, we are offering a real celebration of the fish and chip supper, including traditional Doom Bar battered cod, tiger prawns with sweet and sour dip and glorious array of home-made fritters. Please contact Peg for further details.

Thanks again for you continued support, we can't wait to welcome you back soon....



The Red Lion. 1 Park Road, Stevington, Bedford, MK43 7QD

Visit: www.redlionstevington.co.uk

Tel: 01234 823946 Email: hello@redlionstevington.co.uk

The Friends of ST MARY'S CHURCH

Our fundraising ideas this year are presently based around online activities; we look forward to being able to hold traditional FOSM events as soon as we can but for the meantime, we are trying to imaginatively raise funds without face-to-face events.

We are extremely grateful for the kind support we have received including the sale of handmade facemasks and the ongoing Avis Clayton Six Nations sweepstake. If you have any ideas that could help us raise funds, or would like to make a donation, please get in touch. Our present fundraising is focussed in creating better access and improvements to the Church Room.

Open Gardens

We are planning to hold this years open gardens online. We held an extremely successful event last year when 40 Stevington gardens were accessible for an online tour.

Your garden does not need to be manicured, perfect or weedless. Your photos can be anything from your garden that you would like to share, perhaps a project in progress, some new planting, or parts that you particularly like. The event will go live on 1 June but photos can be taken anytime.

It might be interesting to see how gardens have changed since last year? Last year's open gardens are still available for viewing on our web site www.fosmstevington.uk.

To take part you simply visit our website for instructions.

Calendar 2022

We are hoping to create a Stevington Calendar to go on sale at the end of the year. We are looking for photographs of Stevington that reflect a particular month. Photographs could include landscapes, scenes from Stevington walks, gardens, events and anything that you think would make a suitable calendar picture. For details visit our website.

Christmas Cards 2021

We are planning to produce FOSM Christmas cards. If you are a Stevington artist who could support us by donating a piece of Stevington related Christmassy artwork please get in touch by emailing fosmteam@gmail.com.

If you are not a member of FOSM please visit our website for more information about the charity and details of how to join. Donations are always welcome.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Team FOSM

STEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
TODAY'S WOMEN WORKING FOR TOMORROWS WORLD



Once again we are in lockdown mode but we are trying to keep in contact with our members through regular newsletters and Zoom.

In December our virtual Cheese and Wine party proved to be a success with everyone enjoying their cheese and biscuits parcels even if unable to join us online. We were also able to catch up with news and to exchange Christmas greetings.

At our January meeting we discussed and chose the resolution we wanted to forward to National via our Federation. We also had contributions from members of the funniest or loveliest Christmas present they had received this year. These ranged from ornamental ducks on very long legs, deer sausages, a stylish hat to a variety of knitted and crochet items which seemed to have various uses.

In February we took the plunge and set up a Zoom meeting with a speaker. Mark Steinhardt is a storyteller of local and traditional tales. The three stories he recounted were quite eerie and compelling. One of the stories was set in the frozen Yukon which was very apt considering the type of weather we were experiencing that week.

Before Mark joined us, members were swapping tales of their coronavirus vaccinations. It would seem that the majority of us have now had our first jab - is there light at the end of what seems to be a very long tunnel?

We are still unable to plan ahead but in March we will organize a quiz as the speaker for that particular month feels a Zoom meeting is not quite appropriate for his talk.

We will keep our members informed of any activities we are able to arrange and in the meantime we hope everyone stays well, safe and optimistic. Hopefully Spring is just around the corner!

Marilyn Billett



ST MARY'S IN EARLY 2021

Covid-19 and its effects over Christmas and the New Year

Services over the past few months have of necessity been restricted. On 13 December we had a service of Lessons and Carols. Not quite our usual format, but there were 6 readings telling the familiar story of Christ's birth, and a choir of 7 sang a few carols. It was much appreciated by those who attended - sufficient in number to require use of the North Aisle. Christmas Eucharist on the morning was attended by 14. It was agreed at a PCC meeting on 9 January to discontinue services in St Mary's until a review in mid-February, which has now happened. It is hoped that services will resume in early March, but details at the moment are sketchy. We have continued to open St Mary's daily for private prayer thanks to a team of 8 volunteers, now from 10am till 4pm, and it is clear that the facility is appreciated by a steady trickle of visitors.

Quinquennial Inspection

A curious phrase for our 5-yearly Architectural Inspection, to ensure that the structure of the church is sound. Our architect has found some serious problems with the tower stonework which require attention, as well as a few other issues. Several months have been spent assessing the work required, and we are now going out to tender to specialist firms who are qualified and competent to undertake the work, before then starting the process of seeking grants and other funding.

Church Room

We now have planning consent for the disabled access and 'link building', and the architect and lift manufacturers are working on detailed drawings to obtain building regulations permission.

Churchyard Maintenance

The churchyard looks neater and tidier as a result of a small working party coordinated by Hugo who meet on the first Saturday of each month from 10am to noon. Gravestones covered with ivy and brambles etc. are beginning to see the light of day, the French drain is regularly being cleared of weeds, and several wobbly gravestones have been effectively propped up again. Many thanks to the volunteers. Now the weather is improving, do please come along if you would like to help.

From the Register:

*Funeral 20/01/2021 Roy Keech
(Internment of Ashes to be held at a future date)*

Robert Eadie, Churchwarden

STOP PRESS!

I am very pleased to say that services at St Mary's will resume on Sunday 7 March with a 9:30am Eucharist service, followed by a 9:30am Eucharist on 14th, and a 5pm Evening Prayer on 21st. It is important please to let me know if you intend to attend, so that a safe seating plan can be arranged. The rota for Palm Sunday (28th) and Easter Day is still being finalised. RE

BLUE SKY THINKING

It could be a Think-In, a Suggest Fest, an Idea-Up, a Brainstorm. Whatever words you may use to describe creating and sharing ideas, we need your help.

As you know, St Mary's PCC, together with the help of FOSM, is well on the way with its plans to build an access lift to the Church Room. We have missed the Church Room as a valuable and important place for the village. It is the venue for the Community Shop, Wavelength, various clubs and is a place for people to get together and chat - all things we have missed so much over the last year.

Once access is made available for all, we want to make the most of our Church Room. This is where you come in. What would you like to see happening to make the place a lively and important meeting place and village hub? We welcome your ideas. Please get in touch through St Mary's website: <https://stmarysstevington.org.uk> or contact Robert Eadie, Tricia Lennie or Jane O'Connor.

Plans are available on the website.

Look forward
to hearing from
you.

Jane O'Connor





STEVINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Had this been anything like 'normal times' we would have been reporting, among other things, the recent gathering in the chapel hall for Pancake Day. Hopefully, there would have been a photograph of a pancake being expertly tossed and maybe a few pictures of happy faces enjoying bowls of soup and the inevitable pancakes.

Alas, these are not 'normal times' and the company of others has had to give way to lockdown and social distancing. The memories remain and hopefully, traditions going back a long way will be revived in 2022. The pancake tradition stems from the practice of eating up all the fatty delights in the kitchen store on Shrove Tuesday before embarking on the 40-day observance of Lent, which in turn leads up to Easter Day. It was a period of preparation, a time for Christian believers to take stock of their own lives and perhaps review some practices they had allowed to creep in over the year. It was a time for a bit of spring cleaning in a different way.

In 2021, most people are thinking of liberty from lockdown. A subtle air of excitement is creeping in as people think of summer holidays, of 'second doses' and of meeting family members they haven't seen for months – even sharing hugs and kisses. The scent of joy is in the air, made all the more enjoyable because the weather seems to be getting in the mood as well.

By now, New Year resolutions will be well gone, defeat or triumph. Doubtless those in the defeated camp have been telling themselves for weeks 'oh, it didn't really matter.' Now the attention turns to Lent. 'What are you giving up?' is the new topic of conversation overtaking 'Have you had your first jab?' 'Where did you go?' 'Do you know what sort it was?'

For the Christian however, Lent is a period of eager anticipation. If you were planning a super summer holiday, you would perhaps be buying new clothes (the papers are currently full of advice on this), you might be reading up on the places you could visit (again a bewildering choice of maps and guides) and of course, the small matter of choosing dates, buying tickets and arranging insurance. You live in hope that everything will work out.

Easter brings Lent to a far greater climax as we celebrate the fact that God's own Son gave His life to take the punishment for all our sins large, or small, but we need the passport of faith – the belief that God sent His Son to be the supreme sacrifice. Travel passports always have a date when they will expire: faith does not. Lent ends with Easter and that could mean the start of a very different journey.

Peter Evans



WaveLength

Stevington

Since the present Covid-19 restrictions were introduced we have not been able to hold our regular wavelength meetings but 1 to 1 help and WhatsApp support remains available to anyone who has had difficulties with their IT.

During the lockdown, online services, entertainment and video calls have become a way of life for most people but for anyone who does not have the equipment or skills to get online it has been a very challenging and possibly lonely time.

We are delighted that Stevington Wavelength has been acknowledged and awarded a grant to provide a tablet that anyone can use at home. It is completely self-contained and doesn't need any other paraphernalia. The idea is that anyone in the village who doesn't get online can borrow the tablet to use at home, at their own pace, to make videos calls to their friends and family or access services.

Easy to follow instructions and Wavelength volunteers will be on hand to help. It is actually very easy to make a video call so don't for one moment think you couldn't do it. If you don't go online but would like to try let us know. You can ring John Duffield on 01234 822617 or ask a friend to email duffieldjc@aol.com.

Stevington Wavelength is not about experts helping novices, it's really about people in the village helping each other and sharing knowledge. To Join our WhatsApp group contact Bob Collins, Robert Eadie, Roger Day or John Duffield.

Team Wavelength



Sponsored Bike 'n Hike

BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

Avid readers of this column will recall that, despite all the odds, the Trustees of the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust decided to push ahead with a much-modified version of the annual Sponsored Bike 'n Hike on 12 September 2020. No churches would be open, no-one would greet visitors, no refreshments, no toilets, no register of visitors - it all seemed uninviting and unlikely to be a money-spinner.

But we British are known to rise to the occasion, and three couples from Stevington decided to bang on and see what would happen. The first couple home reported that they hadn't seen many people about, but it transpired that they had gone on the wrong Saturday (a week early but that was irrelevant, and their sponsors held to their promises!) This left a retired churchwarden and husband who did the job properly, and Anna and me. I knew that I wouldn't be fit enough, so we put the screws on our family for a 'small donation'. The upshot was an extraordinary overall total of £1,000 plus Gift Aid (of which half came back to St. Mary's). This earned us another Silver Award as the second highest donors!

Even stranger was the result for the whole Trust (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire), which was £110,050 with some Gift Aid still to come in, the second highest total ever achieved by the Trust!

I don't pretend to understand the logic of raising more income by doing less, but please put Saturday 11 September 2021 into your diaries, and we could have fun finding out!

Robert Hart
Stevington Representative
Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust

PARISH COUNCIL EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Do you ever feel there is too much information but still wish you knew what was going on? Why not sign up on the Parish Council website www.stevington-pc.gov.uk to receive a free weekly email newsletter. Agendas, minutes and the latest local notices will be sent straight to your inbox each Wednesday.

STEVINGTON SOCIAL CENTRE 100 CLUB YOUR VILLAGE HALL NEEDS YOU MORE THAN EVER!

For only £5 per month you can help raise valuable funds to keep your fantastic village hall in good order whilst helping yourself to the chance of winning £100!

The 100 Club still has a few numbers available, so try your luck and help maintain your village hall. In spite of numerous Covid-19 safe precautions put in place the village hall continues to be closed under lockdown restrictions.

The 100 Club is currently our ONLY means of revenue so your support is crucial. A dedicated team of volunteers helps keep the building in good order throughout the year and with your help we can secure the future of the building until we re-open with our usual programme of concerts, films, theatre, ballet, opera, carpet bowls, table tennis, yoga, Pilates and private functions.

EVERY MONTH 4 lucky winners receive a cash prize. To join contact Hugo at hugovankempen0@gmail.com or on 01234 824894.

These are the most recent lucky winners:

Dec	£100	Nº 22	Linda Penney
	£50	Nº 77	Anna Hart
	£25	Nº 84	Bob Hart
	£15	Nº 24	Dita Hollins
Jan	£100	Nº 44	John Harlington
	£50	Nº 84	Bob Hart
	£25	Nº 35	Marina Markham
	£15	Nº 24	Dita Hollins
Feb	£100	Nº 2	Roger Penney
	£50	Nº 3	Seb Blore-Rimmer
	£25	Nº 87	Marilyn & Geoff Billett
	£15	Nº 64	Heather & Keith Parkinson



Hugo van Kempen





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STEVINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB



Unfortunately the introduction of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions just before Christmas meant that we had to postpone our traditional annual charity fund raising match on Boxing Day. In addition to this the continual rain around Christmas rendered the pitch waterlogged so the game couldn't have gone ahead anyway. Monies raised were going to be donated British Heart Foundation and this will be retained as our nominated charity for our next fund raising event.

On a positive note, since our last report, whilst our league position and statistics haven't changed the team remains unbeaten and has not conceded any goals and the players have an exemplary disciplinary records during this period.

Whilst the government has announced that outdoor sports can commence at the end of March there is still a lot of uncertainty as to whether our part of the Bedfordshire league will recommence or whether the 2020/21 season will be nulled and voided as is the case with Football League Tiers above us.

At the end of the day the most important challenge currently is joining as a cohesive team, pulling together to fight the spread of the virus - so please continue follow Covid-19 control measures to make sure you, your families, friends and work colleagues stay safe!

Shane King

VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATORS

To access these in an emergency situation, **please dial 999 immediately**. The call handler will provide you with the code for the cabinet lock.

The defibrillators are located in:

- Red telephone box near the cross in Church Road
- Yellow cabinet on front of Village Hall
- Yellow cabinet on front of Baptist Chapel Hall, West End.



CHURCH GROUNDS VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all who donated gardening equipment for the church grounds.

A small team of volunteers meet at 10am every first Saturday of the month to spend a few pleasant hours removing ivy and weeds, clearing bushes, cleaning gravestones and generally keeping the place looking tidy.

If you can spare a few hours to help out, please just turn up on the day, you'd be most welcome!

Hugo van Kempen

STEVINGTON WRITERS



Following the publication of their first anthology, *Let's Imagine*, Stevington Writers have been overwhelmed by the positive feedback from those who have read and enjoyed the variety of work it represents. This has inspired all of us to keep going in 2021 despite any challenges presented by life in the 'new normal'.

We knew how lucky we were to be able to be creative in 2020 and wanted to use our good fortune to raise money for Bedford Foodbank from donations. As always, residents of Stevington and friends further afield have been extremely generous. We ordered 100 copies of the book and there are very few remaining. Each author had 12 copies of the book to do with as they pleased - many gave them as presents to friends and family at Christmas. Spare copies were exchanged for donations to anyone who expressed an interest. As money goes directly through the Bedford Foodbank donations page it is not possible to give a definitive figure, but our 4th AGM on Monday 4 February agreed that a total 'in excess of £300' had been raised. Thank you all for your support.

Tricia Lennie





Bedford Foodbank
71 Murdock Road,
Manton Heights Industrial Estate,
Bedford,
MK41 7PL

T 01234 268569
E info@bedford.foodbank.org.uk
www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

Tuesday 19th January 2021

Dear Mr. Tricia,

I am writing to thank you for your recent financial donation and for the attached Gift-Aid Form which will increase your donation by 25p in a pound sterling.

Any donations we receive we are always very grateful for and never more so than in these current challenging times. Your donation will help us to provide for any unfortunate people in the Bedford Borough area experiencing food poverty, or who move into the area due to domestic violence, or a homeless person who is rehoused, the running cost of the warehouse and the running of our transit van, as just a few examples.

Unfortunately, the need for help from the Foodbank continues to increase year upon year and we expect in the midst of this virus the need will be greater. We usually regularly feed over 500 people a month, giving them enough food for 3-4 days, or around 10 meals. The monthly food leaving our warehouse is generally in the region of 5-8 tonnes, so we are very grateful for all donations, whether money or food that we receive as each one is vital for the ongoing work of the Foodbank, and is greatly appreciated.

However, you may be interested to know that for the month of March 2020 we fed 1055 people of whom 433 were children and 11,308.3 kg of food was given out. This is the first time since 2011 that we have fed over 1,000 in a month! In December 12 tonne of food was given out. 369 vouchers were redeemed, 845 people fed, and of which 320 were children.

It is sad that help like this is needed, but great that individuals, organisations and communities can come together to meet the increasing need in Bedford and the surrounding villages.

Thank you all once again, for your continued generous support on behalf of everyone who uses or volunteers at the foodbank.

Keep well, keep safe.

Yours sincerely,

Maria B. Guest
Volunteer Admin Support
Bedford Foodbank
Office 01234 268569

BEDFORD SAILING CLUB

Water, water everywhere.....

The sailing club has remained active through the winter months with a number of members getting out on the water thanks to a carefully managed precautionary Covid-19 procedures.



However, two floods in quick succession stopped activities for a few days! On Christmas Day the clubhouse kitchen was submerged in 3 feet of water, reaching the kitchen work surface and wrecking the newly redecorated walls and kitchen units - but the waters have receded and we'll have the clubhouse back in useable condition before too long.



Flooding has become such a regular feature in recent years that we are now considering raising the clubhouse some 4' off the ground, creating storage underneath for club boats.

No equipment was lost during the floods, so members are again able to book an allocated time slot to allow for social distancing and can use a selection of club equipment for canoeing and kayaking to explore the river Great Ouse or just relax in our idyllic riverside spot.





Villagers wanting to join the membership of this fantastic local facility or to book a time slot can contact:

Dave on
daveabrear@aol.com

or Hugo on
hugovankempen0@gmail.com.

Mole Rescue

This mole, spotted by Chrissie and Dave Fitch on Christmas Day, was desperately trying to avoid the floodwaters by the sailing club. The mole tried to climb into the ivy on a tree completely surrounded by rising water and was relocated to higher ground in the woods.



The club has offered the mole new accommodation within the club grounds, but he has yet to take up the offer.

Mr Mole was unavailable for comment.

Hugo van Kempen

Flooding photos courtesy of Sailing Club.

Mole photo courtesy of C&D Fitch

WASTE COLLECTIONS

Month	Rubbish	Recycling	Green
March	9, 23	2, 16, 30	2, 16, 30
April	6, 20	13, 27	13, 27
May	4, 18	11, 25	11, 25
June	1, 15, 29	8, 22	8, 22

Stevington Baptist Church



Here to serve, support and encourage our community: seeking to bring fun and joy to church life

In light of the Government guidance around non-essential contact, we regret to announce that public worship at Stevington Baptist Church is suspended until further notice. Please check our Facebook page for further updates. We will put posters up in the village when our services and events are able to resume.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy, in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

www.stevingtonbaptistchurch.org

www.facebook.com/stevingtonbaptistchapel

office@stevingtonbaptistchurch.org

BIRD RECORDING AND MONITORING IN STEVINGTON

January and February are often thought not to be a good time for listening to birds but if you stop and listen, there are a surprising number of birds singing and calling in our gardens at this time of year.

I recently started monitoring and recording the birds I hear and see in my garden and discovered there were many visitors that I was simply not expecting. Unsurprisingly, early in January, robins and blackbirds were the most frequently heard. I soon started to hear the raucous resident flock of jackdaws and in early February, the robin started to give way to the song thrush and dunnock, who became frequent callers. There were other visitors too, such as, blue tits, green finches, goldfinches, pigeons, magpies, pheasants and many more on my list of observations.

I have been using a free app on my iPhone to help identify these birds, especially the less familiar ones. This got me wondering if there are others in the village who would be interested in sharing their observations as part of a Stevington bird recording and monitoring group. This would enable us to build a bigger picture of what we have in Stevington, how it relates to our local habitat and how this changes over time. More importantly, the group would provide valuable input data for our national and county biodiversity monitoring programmes and national bird watch activities.

If you or anyone in your family would be interested in supporting this project please get in touch with me by phone or email.

Number of Bird detected	
07/01/2021 - 16/02/2021	
No	Birds
232	Robin
130	Thrush (song)
118	Black bird
111	Jackdaw
107	Dunnock
42	Tit (blue)
37	Greenfinch
31	Dove (collared)
21	Magpie
19	Goldfinch
19	Pheasant
19	Redwing
16	Goose (Canada)
11	Blackcap
10	Woodpigeon
8	Crow (carriion)
7	Starling
5	Fieldfare
5	Swallow
5	Tit (long-tailed)
4	Nuthatch
4	Rook
4	Siskin
4	Tit (great)
3	Stonechat
2	Thrush (Mistle)
2	Wagtail (grey)
2	Wren
1	Chaffinch

John Strutt
 Email: Johnstrutt34@gmail.com
 Phone: 07921 213180



MOBILE LIBRARY

Hello Stevington Readers!

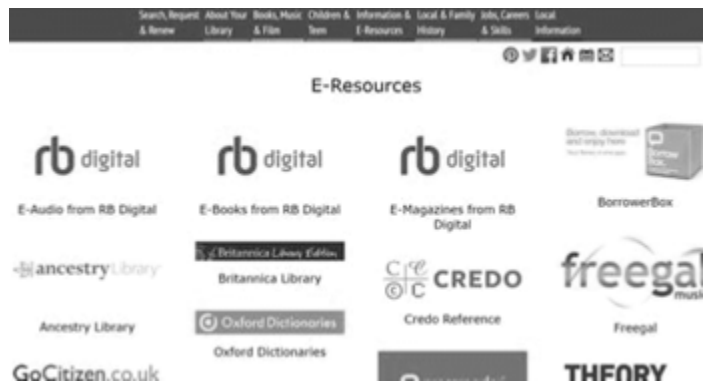
Firstly, we hope you are all safe and keeping well during these difficult times.

Like with many other services, at the time of writing, we're unsure as to when we will be able to resume the Mobile Library visiting you. Those of you who are signed up to our text local service will receive a message when we are due to start visiting again, and we'll also be announcing this through our social media streams (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).

When we restart, the times for stops at Stevington is as follows:
The Cross - 1.35 to 1.55pm

For those of you who are able to drive, Bedford Central and Kempston Libraries are open for our select and collect service. You can request a bundle of books which staff will pick for you, or request specific items to pick up. For further information, please visit www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries.

In the meantime, until we return (or after if you still wish!) we have a fantastic range of digital resources available via the Virtual Library. Using either your Mobile



Library or static branch card, you can register for thousands of free audio books, ebooks, digital magazines and daily newspapers, from our suppliers at RB Digital, Borrowbox and Press Reader. For further information on these, visit www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries and browse the eResources section of the virtual library.

Stay safe, and we look forward to you borrowing from us soon!

The Kempston Mobile Library team.

LIFE IN RUSHDEN

It is now almost 14 years since we moved to Ray's parents' 'bungalow' in Rushden after 29 years in Burridges Close so do you think we made the right move? Rushden was once described to us as a town with a village mentality and we now believe that is a perfect way to describe the place.

Obviously we knew the area well as Ray's parents had lived in the bungalow for over 30 years. However we changed it into a 'bungahouse' - it looks like a bungalow from the front and a house from the back! We needed a doorbell for the property and went to Mays Electrical (run by Jackie Pell's sister) and were talking about the type of bell we needed. When asked if we lived in a house or bungalow, at the same time Ray said bungalow and Marylyn said house - so the response was 'Do you two live together?'

One stipulation on moving to Rushden was to purchase some land off the neighbour. They had lived there before our parents, so we knew them very well. Immediately they said yes so giving Marylyn the large garden she had dreamt about and both of us a lot of hard work. Fourteen years later we realise that a garden never nears completion!

We are lucky to have fields behind us with horses, foxes and deer yet it is only a 5-minute walk to the High Street. Living in Stevington we had to drive everywhere whereas in Rushden we walk everywhere. The doctor is a stroll across Hall Park situated at the top of our road where on a nice sunny summer Sunday we enjoy the music provided by the town council in the walled garden. The dentist is in town and generally we can buy anything we need along the High Street. It has been a shame that the two main department stores closed, but we still have a town that is full of character. Osborne's Toy shop has been on the High Street for 65 years and is a must for young children and collectors - but beware if you enter you will definitely buy something. Net Affair made and installed all our curtains with a range that will satisfy anyone. Family run butchers and grocers provide fresh and local products, tailors that can alter clothes as your size changes over the years and of course a range of hairdressers, barbers (including Turkish) and beauty salons for massage, sun beds and nails. Cafes and bars that will keep you going on those long shopping days, plus of course FREE parking which is a great bonus.

Shoemakers were in abundance in the old days and by the late 19th century there were 61 factories in Rushden alone. Sadly only four

exist today, DB shoes celebrate 100 years this February and moved into 'moulded' shoe production - they have a great factory shop in the town, Sargent's (est. 1899) who sell quality hand made shoes, mainly to the Japanese, at around £3000 a pair, Grenson's (est. 1866) who range from sneakers to bova boots for all ages and pockets and Sanders (est. 1873) again selling quality shoes at affordable prices. An added bonus for us is Venezia Italian Restaurant at the bottom of the road that we frequent regularly and of course now Rushden Lakes which is a great area to shop, eat, walk and relax on a nice summer's day and again just a 20-minute walk away.

Over the last 14 years we have kept in touch with the goings on in the village, through the magazine and contact with 'old' neighbours who we do miss. When we were remodelling the property, Ade and Micky spent many hours working for us. Yes, Micky did travel to Rushden to build our neighbours garage and our greenhouse and sheds, plus we had Alex fit all our floors and carpets and he has been back since to help us and a neighbour.

The Close we live in only has 13 dwellings and despite Covid-19 our house has been the location of many gatherings since we moved and even this year when we had a VE Day street celebration and a Christmas street gathering all in accordance with social distancing! Everyone is so friendly that it is just like living in a village. We have also enjoyed some charity work raising funds for Macmillan, Children with Cancer UK and in particular Marie Curie, opening our garden and holding events. We have given around 50 talks, Ray on Antiques and Marylyn on Flying, to many local organisations to boost the funds and only stopped in 2019 when we had reached £25,000, but still support other local organisations.

So if you are 'up north' shopping at Waitrose or Rushden Lakes then please pop in and see what we have done. Prince Harry, our cat, would also welcome you in. He adopted us 6 years ago and the whole close love him and he attends all parties. Our telephone number is in the magazine as we are still dealing in antiques and enjoying the fairs (it's a holiday from the garden work) so we look forward to seeing some of you whether old or new 'Spike Islanders'.

Marylyn and Ray Wood



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FARMING NEWS

The general public maybe thinking, 'what on earth are farmers doing right now?' The truth is - on the land, not a lot. Especially this winter as it is officially the wettest on record. The heavy clay soil in this area is extremely susceptible to damage from heavy machinery and since that is really the only sort of machinery these days, the answer is simple - when it's wet, stay off it. On Monday I travelled up to Chatteris, after a considerably wet weekend, and there was a farmer ploughing, power-harrowing and drilling late winter wheat all at the same time - we simply cannot do that around here. Even livestock can cause considerable damage especially around feed and water troughs and gateways; damage which can take years to resolve. The predominating clay soil also means you cannot find various wild species that you may see elsewhere, especially on holiday. I had a Facebook battle with Graham not so long ago when he swore he saw Wild Garlic growing within the parish boundary. I doubt that very much but if it's true I'd love to see it as it's a really good wild cooking ingredient.

So, having established that farmers are doing bug...not very much on the land at the moment, what takes up their time? These days it's mainly paperwork. It probably used to be only repairs to the infrastructure, such as hedging, ditching, building and roof maintenance, homemade construction of a new trailer or cultivator, etc. But back to that paperwork - training is now a prerequisite for a modern farmer and it includes more and more environmental briefings, seminars and mandatory exams to allow him/her to carry out highly responsible operations like pesticide and fertiliser application. Continual Professional Development has finally reached the countryside. It's true, shooting and skiing do sometimes appear on the Jan/Feb calendar but as soon as March turns up it's back to work outside and remember we don't get a summer holiday - well not the sort you're thinking of anyway.

Going on from last time, there is still time (a good month from now) to plant new hedges and trees. If anyone is having a go and needs guards and stakes, get in touch with that bloke at Duck End Farm - he managed to purloin a shedload from a golf-course contractor when he was on the parish council.

When field operations do recommence, the first job will be to apply the first dose of nitrogen (N) fertiliser to the winter wheat (no winter oilseed rape in the parish this year). Crops don't really respond to N until soil temperatures reach 6 degC or above and today they are 3.3 degC so they're going the right way (last week, they were -1 degC at 10cm depth).

Potash (K) fertiliser can also be applied - we used to think that potash (K) was naturally occurring nutrient released by the clay soils, and although this is true, our crops do respond from an application in the spring - you can apply it in the autumn but as it leaches rapidly from the soil in a wet winter, that would be a risking a loss to the soil and a hazard to the environment. The current thinking is that for every £10,000 we spend on fertiliser, £4,000 is wasted either by volatilisation into the air, de-nitrification by soil microbes, being washed down the drain or locked up by high soil calcium and alkalinity. This is clearly unacceptable but the latest developments are working to make artificial fertilisers kinder to the environment and more efficient for the crops. Nitrous Oxide and ammonia losses are the biggest contributors to farming's contribution to greenhouse gas production and they mostly arise from old fashioned artificial fertilisers. However, things are happening to turn this around.

The next field operation is something called T0 in winter wheat and will take place from mid-late March - this is a spraying operation and will include a fungicide to prevent yellow rust and Septoria disease, a plant growth regulator to promote stronger tillers and a dose of manganese (this becomes unavailable to the crop's roots when it is growing fast so needs to be supplemented by spraying it on the leaf). In mid-late April, T1 will take place - this is probably now the main and most costly spray. This will contain a very active Septoria fungicide, another growth regulator to stiffen the straw and more manganese. The main dose of N will also be applied about this time. However, this could change - even in a relatively short space of time climate change has altered the weather patterns and we're now seeing long periods of wet followed by drought and the traditional timings of these events have been thrown into confusion. Luckily, modern farmers, if they are not too big, can adapt quickly and change their operations. This is why it is possibly not a good idea to allow farms to get too big? We're all family farms around here so we would say that wouldn't we, but speaking to an accountant the other day, he told me the most profitable farms were those with just enough work to be able to be covered by the owner (up to about 1,000 acres combinable arable).

By the time you receive the next instalment in June, Will Saunders will be flat out lambing or will have finished. Right now he will be feeding his pregnant ewes up hard, ready for them to be able to support what he hopes will be two healthy lambs per ewe. My limited sheep knowledge tells me that three lambs are OK - sometimes but there's a chance that you could always end up with a good 'un and two poor ones that don't 'do'.

The Farmers



THAT WAS THE NEWS THAT WAS
Northampton Mercury - 28/11/1818

HIGHWAY ROBBERY
FIFTY POUNDS REWARD

WHEREAS SAMUEL PARSONS, of HARROLD, Feltmonger, was, on Wednesday the 25th Day of November instant, at about half-past Five in the Evening, ATTACKED nearly opposite Dungey Farm, by THREE MEN, who threw him down, and robbed him of a Bank Note, Value one Pound, and about Three Shillings in Silver.

And whereas Mr. WILLIAM SOAMES, of STEVINGTON, was, a few Minutes later, ATTEMPTED to be STOPPED, and was SHOT AT.

And whereas THOMAS JOHNSON, of CARLTON, Carrier, was, on the same Evening about Half an Hour later, ATTACKED and BEATEN VIOLENTLY on the HEAD, near the Village of BOZEAT, and robbed of a canvas Purse, containing 18s. in Silver, a small black leather pocket Book, containing shop Bills, a light drab great Coat, six new Hats, three new Spades, and other Property.

This is to give Notice,
That a Reward of FIFTY POUNDS will be paid, on Conviction, by Mr. WILLIAM ROGERS, one of the High Constables for the Hundred of WILLEY, in the County of Bedford, to any Person who will give such Information as may lead to the Conviction of the Offenders.

The Robbers had their Faces blackened, and were armed with a Musket and Bludgeons; two of them appeared to be about five Feet ten Inches high, the other was not so tall.

The Bedfordshire Mercury - 02/05/1868 -Steventon: Keeping A Wedding Anniversary.

Thomas Cox, a labourer, of Steventon, was charged with being drunk at Steventon, on the 13th inst.

Defendant: I wish to say, gentlemen, it was my wedding day. I was drunk, I am sorry to say.

Police-constable Mardlin stated that about six in the evening he saw the defendant in a state of drunkenness, and spoke to him several times. He made a great disturbance at the Cock, because the landlady would not allow him to enter; he refused to leave.

Defendant: I never went in the house.

Mardlin: You tried to get in, all you could.

Defendant: It was the anniversary of my wedding. I was married in '40 - the same year as Prince Albert was (laughter). I am very sorry it has happened.

The Chairman said they regretted that Cox was summoned there again.

Defendant: Great trouble has been brought upon me by one thing and another.

The Chairman reminded him that he had been there on two former occasions, and he would now be fined 5s. and costs 6s. He had better take care in the future.

Defendant: Will you allow me time to pay it in?

Mr. Thornton: You find money to drink with.

Defendant: I have seen a deal of trouble. Since I lost my dear wife I have sold every chair I had.

The Chairman: The magistrates will give you a fortnight in the hope of never seeing you here again.

Defendant: I hope not, sir.

The Bedford Times & Bedfordshire Independent - 29/11/1870 - Bletsoe Petty Sessions - Stealing A Shirt

Henry Crofts, a railway labourer, late of Stevington, was brought up on remand charged with stealing a woollen shirt, value 8s., the property of Mr. Thomas Clark, farmer, at Pavenham, on the 15th inst. Martha Coleman said that on the 15th inst she was washing at Mr. Clark's and washed the woollen shirt now produced and hung it out on a line in the close adjoining the house about 1pm; there were other things hung out with it. I went out to look at them about half-past 3 o'clock, and the shirt was gone. I saw a man in the close with a white slop on. He was stooping down tying up something on the ground, but I did not see his face. I went and told Mrs. Clark the shirt was gone and that I saw a man in the close, but did not know him. Police-constable Cheshire said that on the 15th inst he received information respecting the loss of the shirt, and went in pursuit of the prisoner and overtook him on a footpath leading from Pavenham to Stevington; he was carrying a bundle. I asked him what the bundle contained. Prisoner said, "What is that to you." I was not in uniform, and I told the prisoner that I was a police-officer, and that I should see. He then threw the bundle down and told me to take

the lot. I searched the bundle and found the shirt; it was wet. I asked him where he got it from; he said he bought it off a woman, and gave a shilling for it. I told him that I should take him into custody for stealing it; he then became very violent. He was not sober. I took him before J. Tucker, Esq., and he was remanded. Prisoner pleaded guilty, and wished to have the case settled there. Committed for two months hard labour.

Bedfordshire Times and Independent - 22/08/1913 - OAKLEY

On Wednesday at 6.20am, a large number of inhabitants witnessed the departure from the station of Miss Hilda Odell, who was leaving for Liverpool en route for Vancouver on the "Corsican," to meet her future husband. Mr. Frank Smith of Vancouver. Mr. Smith is a son of Mr. Thomas Wareing Smith, of Northampton, and late of Duck End Farm, Stevington, and a brother of Mr. C. B. Smith, the present owner of Duck End Farm. Miss Odell has for some time been an assistant mistress at Stevington, and has been associated with church work in her own parish as Sunday School teacher, chorister and occasionally presiding at the organ. Her genial nature and readiness to lend a helping hand has made her very popular. Miss Odell received many presents.

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Mark Jackson

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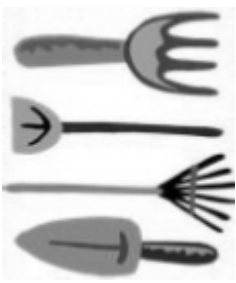
Whether you are a complete beginner or a “lapsed” bowler, people on their own, families, friends – everyone is welcome!

For more information, please ring

Matthew Kirchin on 07512 008747

or check our website

www.bridgmanbowlingclub.co.uk



GARDENING TIPS AND INSPIRATION FROM PARK END THATCH

Well, what a sopping wet winter we have had yet again! Seems that this is what climate change has in store for coming UK winters. Don't plant anything until the ground dries out a bit. Check now to see if you will need to deal with moss in your lawn and plan the scarification job for a dry spell. Once the grass starts growing, begin regular mowing on a dry day, using a high cut. Use new turf to patch worn areas of lawn.

MARCH

Some of us leave all the cutting back until March to help insects overwinter under the cover of spent foliage. This waste material is ideal for adding to your garden compost bin or heap. New shoots of herbaceous perennials will begin to emerge if there is a warm spell this month so take care when cutting low down and protect those leaf buds. Lift and divide plants which flower in the summer such as Geum, geraniums, Persicaria and Phlox.

Last chance to spray your apple and pear branches with winter wash to keep the troublesome woolly aphid at bay. This pest hides in the cracks of old wood and pruning scars and can kill an elderly tree.

Weeds will begin to emerge this month. If you get into the habit of hoeing them when they are just at the seedling stage throughout the summer, the job of controlling them will be much easier.

Coppice Cornus and Salix to stimulate colourful young stems for next winter.

Plant evergreen trees, hedging and shrubs. Put in stakes to support the taller plants in borders.

Early potatoes are delicious if you have some spare ground, chit them by standing in an egg box and when the shoots are 1cm long plant them 30cms deep. Plant onion sets and shallots. Late in the month sow seeds of leeks, carrots, broad beans and peas directly into the ground as soil begins to warm.

Repot houseplants which have become pot-bound or need dividing into clean pots with fresh compost. Feed and begin watering them with fresh rainwater.

Creatures will be emerging from hibernation: toads from their shallow excavations, hedgehogs from their dry nests and mice and shrews will be more active.

APRIL

This is the ideal month for sowing a wide range of vegetables directly into the soil. Prepare an area of fine soil, make a drill with the end of a piece of cane for each type of vegetable and sow carrots, turnips, peas, broad beans and spinach. Protect all new shoots from frost.

If you have a greenhouse, sow French beans, squash and courgette into individual pots and grow on to transplant in the third week of May when frost has passed. Also, leeks and brassicas, unless you have a seedbed ready for them. Ventilate greenhouses and cold frames on warm days.

Finish tidying borders, pull up weeds, divide and transplant herbaceous perennials, water new plantings, feed with Growmore, put in stakes and then mulch with your home-made compost. Penstemon, Caryopteris and Artemesia can all be cut back towards the end of the month.

Summer flowering bulbs and corms such as alliums, eucomis, lilies, cannas, dahlias and gladioli should be planted in pots or borders now. Water all new plantings in dry weather.

Feed roses, soft fruit and container plants with general purpose fertilizer, diluted liquor made from fresh comfrey leaves left to decay in a lidded bucket or mulch with well-rotted manure.

On poor soil feed borders with granular Growmore, irrigate and then mulch with home-made compost.

New rose leaves may display black spot, a cosmetic problem which also causes leaves to fall prematurely. Remove the worst of the leaves, pick up all fallen rose leaves and burn. Sprinkle a sulphur dust around the plant to help fight the problem.

Keep all newly planted trees, hedges and shrubs watered until established.

MAY

Deadhead fading daffodils, sprinkle around the foliage with bonemeal and leave the leaves to die naturally. Next year you should get more flowers.

Start liquid feeding houseplants and all those containers outside.

This month weeds will grow as fast as the precious seeds and new plants you have put into the ground. Hand weeding and careful hoeing on a weekly basis is recommended.

Now that you are regularly cutting your lawn, this is the time to apply the high nitrogen feed and selective lawn weed granules. If you have just a few weeds try the Verdone lawn weed-killer hand spray treatment.

Check you seed packets to see which should be sown where and when. Keep young plants watered in dry weather. Earth up potatoes. Continue successional sowing. Sow lettuces in module trays and plant out straight into empty sunny spaces in your garden. Towards the end of May plant out those vegetable modules and protect from any late frost with fleece as with all new shoots from tender plants which you have in your garden.

Those lilies you planted will be attracting the scarlet lily beetles to their fresh growth, pick off the beetles and squeeze them! Find slugs and snails on the lawn by torchlight and relocate them away from your garden.

Many garden birds feed their young with aphids and caterpillars. Parent birds need us to provide them with fresh water to drink and bathe in. Put out feeders full of sunflower kernels and wild bird seed mix, for the adults to keep up their energy levels up while they search for appropriate live food for their nestlings.

Please let me know if there is a subject you would like me to write about, by email to info@susanyoungdesign.co.uk or contact the editors.

Susan Young

VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATORS

To access these in an emergency situation, **please dial 999 immediately**. The call handler will provide you with the code for the cabinet lock.

The defibrillators are located in:

- Red telephone box near the cross in Church Road
- Yellow cabinet on front of Village Hall
- Yellow cabinet on front of Baptist Chapel Hall, West End.





Update from Lizzie, Village Agent

COVID-19 Help Latest

Your Village Agent is still working during these difficult times.

Lizzie is still able to help with completing forms and discussing if you are entitled to Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit or a Blue Badge.

Did you know.....? Below are some useful items that Lizzie can help you with.

- **FREE** handy Reachers – first come first served
- **FREE** colouring books and word searches
- **Help** with accessing transport to get to your vaccine
- **Help** with form filling can still be done
- Other useful **FREE** items such as carbon monoxide alarms, jar openers and more, while stocks last
- Referrals to services that can **help** you with any problems you have at this current time.

Do you have elderly relatives? If you have a question or would like to talk through about how to support an elderly relative during this challenging time, many services are available regardless of where you live, so if you are worried then please do give Lizzie a call.

All work is conducted within current government guidelines

Please contact Lizzie, your **Village Agent on**

Freephone: 0800 039 1234 or Email: lizzieb@bedsrcc.org.uk

This is an answerphone service, so please leave your name, address and telephone number, we work part time and aim to call you back within 48 hours

HARROLD ODELL COUNTRY PARK NEWS



Before I commenced writing this article, I thought it would be a good idea to read what I'd written in the December issue about the period leading up to Christmas.

Many of the Covid-19 issues I wrote about then have come to pass. The café did indeed have to withdraw its sit-in option again as the new lockdown was announced. Social distancing rules and concerns about the easier transmissibility of the new variants meant that many of our long-term volunteers have stayed at home for health reasons. Many of them are in the at-risk age group or shielding other family members.

Richard and I are classed as key workers. Trees don't stop falling down just because Covid-19 is around. In fact, this hasn't been the only virus we've had to contend with. We have lost eight of our mute swans since Christmas to Avian Flu. The bodies were sent off to DEFRA for testing as this is a notifiable disease and they confirmed the diagnosis.

People keeping chickens and ducks have been obliged to keep them indoors until further notice as it can decimate commercial and domestic flocks. The virus is spread via the bird's bodily fluids therefore it is vital that people do not handle wild birds while they are feeding them. Hand washing is very important if you are handling birds at home as there is a slight chance that it can be transmitted to humans. We have PPE on when collecting bodies and they are double-bagged ready for collection. Please report any dead birds, whatever the species so we can deal with them. Warning notices are posted around the park and on the website www.hocp.co.uk.

It's a good job we have been on duty. This winter has been an absolute pig in terms of the weather. The first floods came at the beginning of October which is unusually early. Then at Christmas, we were hit by an absolute deluge that resulted in many properties in Harrold, Odell and right along the Ouse valley being flooded. The fire brigade had to rescue our neighbours who live near Harrold Bridge. The park's rain gauge registered a full 2" of rainfall in just 3 hours. We often don't get that in a month! The storm drains couldn't cope and the roads turned into running rivers.

Now in February the ground everywhere is completely saturated. It cannot soak up any more water. Every time it rained, the water went straight into the swollen river causing more flooding. Repeated bridge



The recent flooding in the park. You can just make out the top of the pond dipping platform and you wouldn't know that Kingfisher Lake was there as a separate entity. The river meadow has disappeared under an inland sea!

closures resulted in significant detours to get from A-B. The paths around the park have become mud baths and it's going to take a long time for the grass to recover.

The high river levels made it much harder for fish eating birds like herons, egrets and kingfishers to find food. The water turned to the colour of mocha making it very difficult to spot prey. Even our resident otters have had a rough time. One was spotted running down Harrold High Street at Christmas. They have been forced to hunt in ponds and backwaters where the water is clearer and less turbulent.

It can't have been very pleasant for animals like rabbits and badgers having to live underground in saturated burrows. Badgers give birth to their cubs in February and they are going to struggle to keep newborns warm and dry.

We sold out of firewood by Christmas. We assume that this was because people were at home so much more due to the pandemic. New supplies will not be available now until late autumn. There is already a significant waiting list in place for then when this year's tree thinnings have seasoned.



Steve & Mark have been stacking the wood pile in the compound behind them

The volunteers who have been coming to help us have done an amazing job. They have helped us clear flood debris from the footpaths, dug channels in the lake banks to try and drain off the excess surface water, helped with tree works, shifted and stacked logs in the compound, cleaned out the empty log bins ready for next year.

Going forward, they will be mending broken hurdle fencing and furniture and clearing bramble. Before Christmas, we were all ready to start laying hedges. They were cleaned back and all the stakes and binders prepared but we couldn't proceed due to social distancing and lockdown. If we can't start the next section by mid-February, it will be too late and it will have to be done next winter.

The other issue has been that we haven't been able to host Community Payback work parties at weekends since last March. They were all set to re-do some of the stock fencing in the river meadow when the first lockdown hit. Having to travel out from Bedford in a minibus meant that they couldn't distance themselves and therefore had to stop coming.

All events and Health Walks have had to be cancelled which has been a bitter blow for all my regular fortnightly walkers. At the time of writing, there is no telling when anything can be resumed. The vaccination programme has started to really get going which is fantastic news.

Another piece of good news is that I've finished writing the new 5 year (2021-2026) Management Plan for the park with the help of Claire Pick, the Borough Council's Environmental Development & Viability Officer. This will guide us through the management of all the different habitats around the park setting out our vision, policies and achievements as we go along. Armed with this document, Claire will spearhead our application for another Green Flag Award given by the Keep Britain Tidy Group for outstanding green spaces. We have been privileged to have won this for 13 consecutive years and the flag flies proudly next to the disabled parking area in the main car park.

It just remains for me to say a massive thank you to all our amazing volunteers. They have stepped up to the breach throughout a very difficult year for all of us. Please refer to our website for any updates, event dates etc. as and when we can resume normal service. www.hocp.co.uk.

Janet Munro - Park Warden

Photos courtesy of HOCP



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