

A SCHOOL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

During this term I have been welcomed on two visits to Upwell Community Primary School. The main purpose of the visits was to discuss with the headteacher, Mrs. Fiona Rickard, whether it would be possible for adult members of the community to access some of the facilities of the school when the children are not present. This would be in keeping with that section of the Council's new plan, which seeks to respond to a parish-wide call for further learning opportunities for adults, particularly in the crafts and computing areas, as well as looking to secure access to more provision for sport.

The initial response to this idea was encouraging and we agreed that, subject to the approval of the governors, this idea could be investigated further. During their meeting on the 12th October, the Governors also approved this idea, in principle. Such an involvement would need careful planning and preparation, and the activities resulting would require careful supervision, to ensure that nothing would impair the work and condition of the day school. These discussions are ongoing, and we shall be looking to make tentative ventures down this road in the spring.

The Council is committed to supporting any agency, group, society or institution working for the good of the community. Given that the school looks after almost all our primary age children, it seemed then to be an ideal opportunity to feature the school in this newsletter, and on the Council website, in order to demonstrate that support, and reveal to our parishioners just what fine work is being done at the school, and this among splendid new facilities.

On both of my visits, Mrs. Rickard was kind enough to show me around the school, and to describe the nature of the progressive programme of teaching and learning now being undertaken there. The phrase "A school for the 21st Century" is a direct quote from the headteacher, who is determined that, while the exterior of the school remains inevitably Victorian, the inside fabric, like the developing curriculum, will be thoroughly modern and suited to the children's needs for this 21st Century world.

My overwhelming impression was of a happy school, with children working contentedly in an environment where they felt secure. Those to whom I spoke were polite and responsive, as well as confident. The environment in which they now work is largely new, clean and attractive, and there is evidence of good strategic use of technology. Even the new kitchen and food technology area looks clean, well-equipped and enticing!

Looking at the school from School Road, the signs over the doors show that in 1909, there were separate entrances for boys and girls. The school dates in fact from well before that year. Modernisation and rebuilding for the inside accommodation had been long sought after, and particularly during the last 12 years or so. It must therefore have been with great satisfaction that, in August 2005, the long-awaited reconstruction work began. At an initial cost of £686,000, the construction company Kier built a new hall, converted the old

school hall into a classroom and library, extended another classroom, provided two new corridor areas, extended and refurbished the kitchen, resurfaced one of the playground areas and created a much-needed staff car park. Moreover, all this work was done, notwithstanding the winter weather, by April 2006! The quality of this work, along with an appealing choice of decorating materials, is self evident as one walks around the school.

Catering mainly for children from Upwell and Three Holes, the school has 7 classes with some 170 on roll, and is holding its numbers up very well. The pupils contribute to the work and development of the school in an enlightened way, in that each class elects two representatives to serve on the School Council, which meets fortnightly. Here, news is shared, ideas are discussed, and charities chosen for support. The representatives report back to their fellow pupils in each class, and are responsible equally for taking the views of their class back to the Council! Surely good training for life in a democratic society later, maybe even the Parish Council!

Mrs. Rickard is also the headteacher of the primary school in Welney, and during the 5 years she has been in post has sought to cultivate a rounded approach to the learning programme which the pupils are offered. Use of technology is important, but it is balanced with a respect for traditional values and skills. Classes are currently assuming responsibility for dedicated areas of the school gardens, for example, and are made fully aware of the contribution that healthy eating and fitness make to their well-being.

Described as a super cook, the head of kitchen plays her part by ensuring that the children have hot meals that are colourful, well presented and appetising! There is of course a national curriculum to be followed, but this can be presented in a number of ways. Here the approach is cross-curricular, thematic and carefully planned.

Periodically, the school holds events to which members of the public are invited. Parents, of course, have more regular access. I would strongly urge all residents who can manage the times chosen, to take up this opportunity, particularly if they were at one time pupils of the school themselves. They will find the time well worth giving, and understand why it is that this Council is very pleased to feature and support this school, of which we can all feel proud!

Appeal from the British Red Cross

Do you remember when we all used to have friends and neighbours to pop in for a cuppa, bring a loaf of bread back from the shop etc?

Sadly, it happens much less these days while, unfortunately, the elderly population increases. The Red Cross 'Home From Hospital' service is increasingly being called upon to support patients at home during the early days following discharge from hospital.

Could you spare an hour or two during their first three or four weeks at home to visit and check how they are, maybe get shopping etc?

We are looking for reliable adults of all ages to support our work in the Community. All expenses are paid and you don't even need to be able to drive!

If you think you may be able to help then please ring Sandy or Alison at the hospital for more information on 01553 613613 ext. 2721. Thank you.

New Clerk For Upwell Parish

In October a new face joined the team at Upwell Parish Council. Kate Cobley has taken on the role of Clerk following the departure of Ian Vaughn-Arbuckle.

Kate has just moved to the Parish, having spent the past seven years living in Wisbech. Originally from Norton Canes, a small village in Staffordshire, she now lives in Upwell with her husband, two year old daughter and a grumpy dog called Bob.

Educated at University in Birmingham, Kate worked in Marketing before making a move into I.T. She has spent the last eight years working as an I.T. Consultant working with organisations such as The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Parcel Force. She gave up the hectic I.T. lifestyle when her daughter was born and now works part-time at Fenland Council for Voluntary Service in March as well as acting as Parish Clerk.

COWARDLY SLAUGHTER

In the first week of November, an article appeared on the back page of the 'Citizen' recounting the horror tale of two cats shot with airguns, in Outwell. Mercifully, at the time of writing, the two poor cats had survived. Worse was to follow, however, for in the following few days, a swan, a Muscovy duck and three mallards were found in the Creek, all shot, and four of them dead.

Needless to say, this pitiful find was reported to the police. It is difficult to understand how this killing could have gone unnoticed, and we appeal to anyone with information about the perpetrator(s) of this cowardly shooting of harmless and defenceless animals to pass that information either directly to the police, or to any councillor. Someone of the basest mentality is using what must be a powerful airgun, and this in a vicinity where young children have to walk to and from school. We promise to act on any information received, and to request the stiffest possible penalty.

The killing of a swan is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and this mindless vandal would do well to reflect on the fact that a man in Devon was recently given 3 months in jail for a similar act.

DRAWING CLASSES

Having read in the recently published new Parish Plan that the Council is looking to promote and encourage craft classes, and similar opportunities for adults, two of our lady parishioners propose to offer Drawing Classes in the spring of next year.

Based in the Committee Room of Upwell village Hall, the classes will be primarily for beginners, and could progress on to more ambitious projects and skills for those who would like to go on from there.

The programme will be offered by Virginia (Ginnie) Mayo and Dorn Williams, both very well qualified, and very willing to share their skills to people interested enough to sign up for an initial 6 week course, sessions to be held on Mondays, 1.00pm to 3.00pm. The sessions will be offered at £7 each, and subscribers will need to bring their own basic equipment, - particularly an A3 or A4 sketch book, or cartridge paper, along with an HB and a 4H pencil, a sharpener and a rubber!

Ginnie is a former student of Hornsea College of Art, and the Royal College, while Dorn attended Bath Academy and Brighton College. Dorn is also a children's` writer and illustrator.

Scheduled for March, and to include coffee and biscuits refreshment, the sessions can be booked well in advance. The numbers to ring are:

Ginnie on 01945 772905, or Dorn on 01945 773941.

The Council would be happy to hear from others in the parish or near who would be prepared to offer classes in crafts or activities. Those interested could telephone the Parish Clerk on 01945 772260, or the Chairman on 773865.

Lakesend Lads

You always hear of the bad things, such as jobs, vandalism and stealing, anti-social behaviour, rape, the list goes on and on. But all is not lost when you have two fine young men, as we do in our small village of Lakesend. Here is their story and good for them!

Twins Daryl and Jamie Ward went to Townley Primary in Christchurch and attended Neale Wade Community College in March. Daryl works as a wood machinist in Wisbech, while Jamie is a catering assistant at the Wildlife and Wetlands trust in Welney. At the age of eighteen they decided that they wanted to fundraise for charity. Their chosen charity was MAGPAS. It started by them lighting the house up for Christmas, then a bingo in June. They did a 10k run in July and have just had a tombola stall at Three Holes fun day. The total they have raised so far is £1,808.70. The next planned event is to light up their home in Lakesend in December and hold a raffle.

Well done Daryl and Jamie!

I remain yours, a very proud Councillor for Lakesend, Three Holes and Upwell

F K Humm

THREE HOLES LOSES A LONGSTANDING FRIEND

We have been informed that one of the Three Holes Committee's long-serving members, Ron Watson, has passed away after some 7 weeks in hospital. Ron, as a serving member of the Village Hall Committee and the former Treasurer of the Playing Fields Committee will be much missed. Fellow Committee members are saddened by his loss, and disappointed that he may not have been able to share in the joy of their success in winning a substantial sum from 'The People's Millions'.

UNWELCOME VISITS

We are all used to seeing horses being walked and exercised on local roads, and, by and large, people welcome the sight and show courtesy when passing in cars. We have had reports though of cases where riders have steered the horse into people's drives, presumably to avoid oncoming traffic. In one case at least the horse took the opportunity to leave a pile of droppings in the drive. Clearly this is not acceptable, and riders are asked to stay firmly on the public roads or designated exercise areas. It would seem reasonable to request that, as far as is possible, the horses should be 'sound' before being ridden on to the roads.

TV SUCCESS FOR THREE HOLES

Hopefully many of our local residents were tuned in to Anglia Television on Thursday 16th November, when the Three Holes Committee for the Village Hall and Playing Field had their well-deserved moment of fame!

Knowing that their existing playing field equipment had seen better days, and was indeed becoming a possible danger in parts, the Committee applied through Anglia TV for a grant from the "People's Millions Fund." This was in fact their second application, having come very close indeed to winning a substantial sum in 2005. This year, however, brought a really good reward for hard work and dedication. In front of an excited crowd of children, and barely less excited grown-ups, the Committee Treasurer Sally Elmer was presented with a handsome cheque for £39,077!

Having helped another committed committee member, the late John Chapman, to apply and make a good case for this award in 2005, Sally spearheaded the renewed entry and application this year. This entailed having to go down to Cambridge, to the TV studios, to be briefed and advised as to how to proceed, and how to represent the committee in interview, should they be selected. With the full support of a recently reconstituted committee, chaired by Les Watkinson, with Rita Cuss the longstanding and hard-working Secretary, Sally submitted the entry, and eventually stood in the full glare of the arc lights for the award ceremony, held in the car park of Three Holes village hall. Cool as could be, she then spoke calmly and confidently before accepting the handsome cheque.

Typically, Sally and Rita tell me that they would like to dedicate this success to the memory of John Chapman, always a champion of Three Holes village and its people.

The plan now is to provide a brand-new children's play area, similar to that in Upwell, and to provide access for the public, including the handicapped to a seating area near to the new play area.

The Parish Council offers its warmest congratulations to the Three Holes Committee for a job very well done, and on a success richly deserved.

N.M.

Watch Your Waste!

It's that time of year again and gardeners all around the parish are busy clearing leaves, cutting back shrubs, clearing out old bedding plants and generally putting the garden to bed.

Even the smallest patch can generate a whole load of garden rubbish and it is tempting, especially in rural areas, to tip the whole lot over the fence onto the neighbouring field. After all, it's all degradable, isn't it?

But disposing of garden waste, be it grass clippings or fencing, in this way is a poor substitute for properly sorting your garden rubbish. Lopped branches and old fencing causes a hazard to farmers and walkers and can damage farm machinery if it gets caught up in it. Garden rubbish thrown into ditches will block drainage channels and may cause flooding. Rats love *anything*: for them, paper and cardboard is a warm, comfortable home from home, although no wildlife appreciates plastic bottles and old paint cans.

So, what's the best way to deal with all that waste? The new green bins most of us now have alongside our black wheelie bin are designed specifically to take away paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and food and drink cans – but not garden waste.

The Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk provides a free to use 'Green Bag' garden waste collection alongside the regular refuse collection service. They will collect any 'green' garden waste such as grass cuttings, hedge trimmings and leaves as long as they are contained in a Council issued green bag. Simply place your green bags alongside your usual household refuse on your normal collection day.

Green Bags are available for 60p each or £6.00 for a roll of 10 bags. Bags can be purchased from any of the Borough Council Offices, or they can be ordered by telephone (see end of article).

Of course, the best way to deal with 'green' waste is to compost it. Composting is an effective and environmentally friendly way to deal with garden cuttings and certain kitchen waste.

For the best results from your compost bin it should be positioned in a sunny spot on well drained soil. The soil below the bin should be loosened to improve drainage and increase access for worms and bacteria. Place a few inches of kitchen waste on the soil at the bottom of the bin, this will attract worms and bacteria to the bin and increase the rate of compost formation. For the best results, organic waste should be put in the bin in layers of different material between 6 and 12 cm deep.

You can compost almost anything that is organic, i.e., anything that has been grown. This includes: fruit and vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, crushed egg shells, grass cuttings, prunings and leaves, small amounts of shredded paper and soft cardboard, animal hair, vacuum dust (only if you have woolen carpets). The following cannot be put into your composter: cat or dog excrement, meat, cheeses, fish, disposable nappies, shiny card, hard objects.

For best results, ensure your compost bin contains some grass cuttings or vegetarian animal manure. They heat up and speed up the composting process. However, they should be mixed with other organic waste to avoid slime formation.

It is essential that your compost bin is kept warm and moist. Placing the bin in the sun and out of the wind is therefore preferable. Ensure you always put the lid on your compost bin and do not let the compost dry out. To ensure that air is getting to the centre of the bin, turn the material regularly. This will also speed up the decomposition process.

Your compost is ready for use when the material does not resemble anything that you put in the bin. Collect the compost from the small hatch at the bottom of the bin. The compost can then be spread on the garden where it will act as a fertiliser.

Alternatively, garden waste can be taken to a Household Waste Recycling Centre. There is a recycling centre in Kings Lynn. The site opens from 8.00am to 4.00pm seven days a week and takes garden waste, DIY waste, electrical goods, batteries, engine oil and a number of other household items.

The following items should not be put in green bags or any other collection bag/bin: gas bottles, sheds, greenhouses, bags of rubble, fence panels, posts, chemicals such as weed killer and creosote, Polystyrene containers. Call 01553 616200 to find out how you can safely dispose of such items.

Whether you compost, use the green bag scheme or take your waste to a recycling centre, you can be sure that you are acting responsibly and protecting the environment. And with the garden put to bed, you can get on with those shelves that need putting up, fix that dripping tap in the bathroom, oh and that door handle that need fixing...

For more information about any of the topics covered in this article, use the following telephone numbers or go to the Borough Council website at: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk

Garden Waste Collection/Disposal	01553 616200
Household Waste Recycling Centre	0844 800 8004
Council Green Bags	01553 776676
Abandoned Vehicles	01553 616335
Fly Tipping	0500 2532687