



Upwell Parish Council

September 2007

Volume 3 Issue 3

The IWA Rally, St. Ives

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Find us at
www.upwellpc.co.uk

If you have a comment or contribution please send it to:
 Kate Cobley
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 Upwell
 Wisbech
 PE14 9BW
 01945 772260
 or
 to any Parish Councillor listed on back page.

It happened and it was, apparently, very, very muddy!! In spite of the temporary closure of both the Nene and the Ouse at a crucial time when boats would have been travelling to the Rally, we have still had almost three hundred more boats which came through the village and moored at Church Bridge Staithe than at this time last year. And many of them have yet to make the return journey!

As we were keen to find out if the extended Staithe, water point, large rubbish bin and flyer full of information had made a difference, my husband Dave has been paying frequent visits to the moored boats and chatting

to their owners. The amenities have been very much appreciated and we have received many positive comments – a good result for the Parish Council and Welle Creek Trust working together. The only complaints we received were concerning the silting on the river bed which is apparently in need of dredging! One for the Middle Level Commissioners, I think!!

It's good to know that we provided a fen welcome for our waterborne visitors and were not caught unprepared and left with egg on our faces. Thanks to everyone who helped with this.

Sylvie Short

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

By Neil Morgan, Council Chairman.

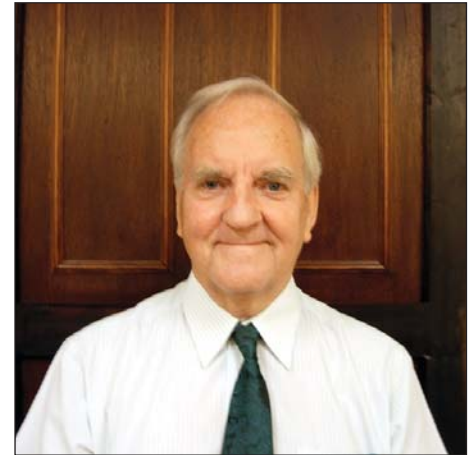
I welcome you to the Council's new style newsletter! In the hope of creating greater interest, and a wider opportunity to bring both council and community news, we are trying out a more ambitious - and more expensive - version. You will quickly realise that the new-format newsletter contains advertisements, and it is revenue from these that is covering the costs of the printing. The Council is grateful to the local business leaders who have offered us their support in this way. If, as we hope, the new version proves to be well received, we will give consideration to a further expansion of the newsletter, with more features and local interest items or stories. Even at this early stage, we would welcome any constructive suggestions for the inclusion of any additional features you might like to see.

The mention of suggestion reminds me that we shall soon be offering the opportunity for all the residents in this parish to communicate their ideas, observations or queries to the Council. We propose to erect a number of suggestion boxes at strategic locations within the parish, one of which at least should be within reasonably easy reach of everyone. While the boxes will be locked, any items posted in them will be collected on a regular basis, and, provided a name and contact details are provided, each item will receive an acknowledgement and a response within a short time.

In another development, consistent with our published parish plan, we propose to erect three new notice boards on the front wall of Upwell Village Hall. One of these will be a 'Job Vacancy' Board - an idea which proved

very popular when residents were asked to comment on it in the Village Appraisal completed last year. Local businesses will be asked to co-operate by forwarding notice of any forthcoming vacancies to the Parish Clerk, who will ensure that they are displayed. A second board will be erected to offer news and advertisements for any local events, clubs, societies or interest groups. Space on this board will be available to anyone who wants to post such detail, and, again, the item to be displayed should be sent to the Clerk. The third board is intended to be a Leisure and Tourism board, where forthcoming events planned to occur anywhere within reasonable travelling distance of the parish may be added to any occurring actually within the Parish. A good example would have been the recent Inland Waterways Rally, held at Peterborough on bank holiday weekend. Although this event was not specifically local, it did add considerably to boat traffic, and consequently to the number of people visiting our villages, and taking advantage of our local shops and other amenities. We shall review the use of all three boards as we work through this year, and revise their use if necessary.

I would add at this point that the boards, the suggestion boxes and the labour costs of erecting them will be paid for from a grant of just under £2000 which we were successful in obtaining from the Fen Leader+ organisation, from a particular project they are conducting to encourage community involvement in local affairs. I hope we can reward that organisation for their support by making good and full use



of these facilities, and by looking after them! My only other contribution for this edition concerns the circulated invitation to participate in the classes which have been arranged. All of them are on offer by local people FOR local people, and I do hope that lots of residents will take the opportunity to join at least one, learn a new skill, and meet other people. This is a still developing area for the Council, and we would be interested in any further suggestion for classes or interest groups which you might like to see set up. This process, too, is part of the parish plan, in that we are recognising the call for just such opportunities which came from good numbers of people completing the questionnaires last year. If you missed the opportunity but could still be interested, please contact the tutors listed, or the Parish Clerk, who has all the details.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND?

The Council recognises that the huge majority of our dog owners keep their pets well under control and give real thought to the avoidance of nuisance to other people. This said, we receive regular reports of noise nuisance through barking, of cases of dog fouling in public areas and of the intrusion of dogs into restricted areas.

To look at these matters in turn:

Many people have their dogs for personal and property protection purposes as well as keeping them as pets. It is understandable therefore that dogs kept for this purpose will bark at the sound of intrusion or unrecognised sounds. Furthermore, barking is of course completely natural for dogs - it's what they do! However, real problems arise when the barking becomes persistent, is sustained over long periods of time, is unheeded or ignored, and above all, when this barking is at night time, when people's sleep is disturbed. Dog experts insist that these problems can be avoided by training, by firm control and by rewards for not barking without reason. Even before or without this, though, the real answer is for dog owners to think about dog noise, to be careful about possible disturbance to others and to stop the barking quickly and firmly. Most dogs are

indoors at night, and this in itself is of great help to neighbours. DEFRA has a leaflet available on their website, called 'Is your dog barking too much?' It is well worth reading.

The Council has already provided bins for owners to use for depositing dog faeces. It is completely unacceptable for dog mess to be left for others to clean up, or tread in, ANYWHERE. Here again the Council has relied on the good sense and the personal responsibility of owners to clear all such deposits, but the reports received confirm that there are dog owners who are completely ignoring this responsibility.

We already have specified areas where dog walking is strictly not permitted. These areas include the whole of Upwell Playing Field and the children's play area which is part of that field, Welle Community Garden, the churchyard, and the cemetery. Once again, common sense would dictate that all such areas where people walk, relax or exercise should be avoided. Yet we have regular reports of dogs being walked on this field. For instance, we have reports recently of a man walking a greyhound type dog, reddish brown, through the playing field and the churchyard. Another cites a large man with an ear-ring, walking

with a little girl, and leading a large rottweiler and a Staffordshire bulldog actually into the children's play area and letting them loose in there. All such cases are unacceptable and must stop.

Hitherto the Council has preferred not to exercise the powers available to it on dog-related matters, relying on the common sense or good nature of our residents to carry the day. We must now, however, review our position on this. Within the range of possible measures is the issuing of dog control notices, and, after due warning, the issue of fixed penalty fines. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act of 2005 gives Borough and Parish Councils this right, and the choice as to whether to exercise these rights, and fines can be up to £1000, as levied by the Magistrates' Courts. We appeal to all dog owners to co-operate, to respect the rights of others, to keep our villages clean and to take proper measures to stop loud or persistent barking. Records will be kept of all such future complaints, and residents are encouraged to send in to the Clerk any photographs or details of irresponsible people ignoring this call. The Council is duty bound to protect the rights of the caring majority.



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VILLAGES IN BLOOM

What a privilege and a pleasure it was to view the gardens entered for this competition. Neil Morgan, the Chairman of the Parish Council, and I set aside a Sunday afternoon and the whole of the following Saturday to ensure that we gave adequate time to look carefully at the truly the beautiful gardens we were shown.

We had a list of criteria against which to judge in order to try and be as fair and objective as possible, but as well as things like attention to colour-mixing, provision for wildlife and areas for relaxation to be enjoyed by family and friends, we also included that all important 'WOW' factor. It is not always possible to quantify exactly how this is achieved, but it was unmistakable when we came across it. We also looked for attention to detail and the health and vibrancy of the plants.

All the gardens were a delight and we were grateful to everyone who entered for supporting the competition. There were, however, clear winners in the three categories and it was overwhelmingly evident that a great deal of love had been poured into the creation of these beautiful gardens for the enjoyment of the owners, their families and friends. During the process Neil and I became very conscious of how much a garden reflects the gardener, and I became aware of the magnetic attraction generated by a truly aesthetically pleasing garden. We were blessed with gloriously sunny weather for both of the judging days and I found it hard to tear myself away from some of these havens!

Winner – Ernita Beasley, Elworthys Cottage – Large garden category
Second – Terrie and Gordon Diffey and Joan Myers, 15, School Road

Winner – Elizabeth Carter, 43, St. Peter's Road – small garden category
Second – David Gray, "Tree Tops," Newbridge Road

Winner – Mrs. G Liles, "Meadowside," Cock Fen Road, Lakesend front garden
Second – Melanie Smith, "Holmleigh," School Road

Sylvie Short



Winner – Elizabeth Carter, 43, St. Peter's Road – small garden category



Winner – Mrs. G Liles, "Meadowside," Cock Fen Road, Lakesend front garden



Winner – Ernita Beasley, Elworthys Cottage – Large garden category

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Sadly, there has been no identifiable decrease in the number of incidents of anti-social or criminal behaviour in a number of areas of our parish. The principal gathering points are the playing field car parks in both Upwell and Three Holes, and the clearly identifiable persons responsible are youths, mainly in the 15 to 19 year old age group. They turn a deaf ear to those who try to reason with them, and have taken on an air that suggests that they are invulnerable, and can get away with any variation of excessive noise, abuse, stone throwing, breaking glass bottles, littering, drinking alcohol, vandalism, graffiti, dangerous driving of cars and mopeds and, more recently, theft. Even more of a concern, clear evidence of drug-taking and substance sniffing has been found.

The Council has no wish to pick on or pursue any members of our community, but has an obvious duty to do what it can to help protect the main law abiding and peace loving majority from the calculated nonsense and deliberate law breaking of the few. Not few enough, unfortunately, as evidenced by the fact that 25 of the youths, not all of whom actually live in the parish, have received personally delivered letters of warning from the police.

In co-operation with the police, the Village Hall Committee, the Playing Field Committee and the Welle Community Garden Committee, the Council has

therefore installed CCTV in and around the village hall and the playing field in Upwell. This installation is now fully up and running, and is being recorded 24 hours a day on a DVR. As was anticipated, the youths could not resist the temptation to interfere with the equipment, and having first moved the smaller cameras to look at the floor or the sky, they then subsequently stole 3 bullet cameras and destroyed 2 others.

Ironically, either not knowing or not caring whether the system was working or not, the youths concerned carried out all these acts in the direct view of the cameras concerned, which WERE indeed, working! Copies of the DVD recordings of these and other subsequent incidents are now being studied and collated by the police, and, we trust, the youths concerned will shortly be receiving something more than a warning letter!

It is worth adding that a daily record of all incidents of criminal or anti-social behaviour is now being maintained by councillors, and forwarded to the police on a regular basis. A few of these incidents are, in our judgement, serious crime, and we would expect the measures to be taken by the police to be in proportion with that seriousness.

We are constantly being asked "Where are the parents?" Obviously a good question, but one for which we do not have an answer – a number of councillors recently watched CCTV recordings on

which there were youths milling around the car parks virtually all night long, and we have reports of similar visits at all hours of the night from Three Holes. So, indeed, where are the parents? DO they not know where their children are? Do they not care? All parents should be aware that, if their son or daughter is mixing with the group of youths who regularly and daily hang around the playing field car park, they are at real risk, and could be jeopardising their chances of a free and happy future into true adulthood.

Once again then, we urge ALL residents who see instances of illegal or anti-social behaviour, to report it themselves directly to the police, who are more than fully aware of the present situation, and who are very familiar indeed with a good number of the names of the youths involved here. Publicity nationally will have told us all that what we are experiencing is common and widespread throughout most of the U.K., but this does not mean that we should accept any of it. The police number, (not 999 unless it is a true emergency) is 0845 4564567.

This Council, along with the membership of all the committees listed above, together with a large number of residents offering their support, is determined that the policy to be followed with all such behaviour such as that described, is to be one of NO TOLERANCE. Help us with this!

A COMPETITION FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Among all the adverse publicity surrounding the activities of groups of youths in this and most other parishes, there is a core of sensible, stable and well-intentioned youngsters trying to do their best to occupy themselves and others in worthwhile and constructive activity. At this time, most, if not all of these, meet as part of the Drop- In Shed group which is assisted and supervised by a number of caring and encouraging parents.

The Parish Council would like to see this group and this work extended, and intends to report regularly on their activities and progress. These young people have already succeeded in earning themselves some financial aid from a number of sources, and have done much to put the old pavilion on the playing field to better use. There are several projects under way, and, for example, on the "Red Arrows Day" in July, they had a stall selling a range of really attractive occasion cards which they had made or assembled themselves from kits.

So as to encourage this kind of enterprise, and in order to try to help swell the ranks of these well motivated young people, the Council is announcing now a competition to determine which of the youths in our parish has done most to make a good contribution to the life of their community. The qualification will obviously be for the age range of candidates to be 12 to 18, and for them to have made some positive contribution to the life and work or play of the people living in this parish.

The competition will run from now until next Easter, so that such a contribution can be planned, and the three most deserving entrants will be rewarded with trophies, as well as prize tokens of their choice for £30, £20 and £10 for winner and runners up respectively.

So, please join us in this encouragement, and let us see if our young people can show the bright and positive side of their presence in this community. We hope that a little encouragement from all of us will do much to improve the general morale of this age group, and of those who watch them.

For more information contact the Parish Clerk on 01945 772260

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UPWELL VILLAGE HALL

We have a new roof! At last we should be free of drips and water runs down our walls. This work, recently completed, has cost £17,500 plus the VAT, and we are pleased to report that every penny of that sum was grant-funded. The Committee has expressed its thanks to the WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd) organisation, to the Borough Council for its contribution, and to the Norfolk Rural Community Council for the balance. At the same time as this work was being done, much of the guttering was replaced or repaired, and the Village Hall Committee has funded this itself.

Internally, users will note two further improvements:

The floor has been given a fully protecting coat, and is currently gleaming! This time the section adjacent to the entrance door was

included, so that the whole floor area is now in good condition,

The old kitchen bar has been removed, and replaced by a larger, neater version, which will allow for better and quicker service to users whenever we have events requiring access to refreshments.

Recent activities have included a "Round Britain Quiz" contributed by Chris Gibson, and Car Treasure Hunt organised by Neil and Margaret Morgan. The quiz seems to have been very popular, and was sold through the usual outlets of shops and post office, and the Committee is very grateful to the owners of all these premises, who are always ready to help. The Treasure Hunt, saved by some late entries, was offered as a fun experience rather than for Committee funds, and did eventually involve 8 cars. The course was somewhat longer, and

some clues more testing than that of 2006, but seems to have been enjoyed as a challenge! The winning team scored a healthy 59 marks out of a possible 70, giving an 84% success rate and 5 of the teams gained well over 60%.

The next event is a Bingo evening on the 27th September, and you are invited to watch out for details of the annual Craft Fair on Sunday 4th November, and an evening of song with Fantasia early in December.

The Hall is now fully covered by the newly installed CCTV, both inside and outside, so the Committee hopes that we shall now be able to offer the facilities for hire without the nuisance of the uninvited and unwelcome intrusions of the recent past. All instances of anti-social or criminal behaviour are now routinely copied and passed to the police at Downham Market.

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PE14 9DQ

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are trying to make the newsletter more attractive and the Parish Council are keen to include items of local interest. If you have any anecdotes, tales of local characters or fascinating photographs, please send them to Kate Coble at upwellpc@googlemail.com There is no guarantee that they will get printed but we will try and include them if we can.

NEW PARISH WEBSITE

Upwell Parish Council now has a new-look website at www.upwellpc.co.uk. Residents of the Parish can now log on to the web site to read Council minutes, check the date and time of meetings, view information about activities in the village hall and on the playing field and much more.

The website is currently still being 'populated' with information but it is envisaged that by the end of the year anyone will be able to find information about local groups and services, contact the Parish and Borough Council and read interesting history and news about Upwell and the surrounding area on

the site.

Anyone wishing to contribute photographs taken around the parish – old or new – or local history should contact the Clerk on 01945 772260. All photographs will be scanned and then returned before being uploaded to the 'Local' pages on the site.

There will be a link through to the Borough and County Council's websites and links to the planning pages so that residents can check on the progress of planning applications. There will also be links to other organisations websites, such as the Well Creek Trust and Upwell Health Centre.

UPWELL PLAYING FIELD EVENTS

October 27th	Pumpkin and Masked Ball
November 9th	Bodyshop Party
November 30th	Christmas Bingo
December 14th	Christmas raffle to be drawn.

Further Details from Chair Pam Salmon, Secretary Ros Shorting

UPWELL 200 CLUB RESULTS

May

15 Judith Skelton
116 Pauline Harrison
1 Diane Burling

June

93 Pam Salmon
33 Hannah Bartlett
72 Hazel Medlock
46 E Manning

July

39 Les Spriggs
174 Maisie Harding
30 Alston Schultz

August

102 Ken Clutterham
159 Rosina Cliff
12 Karen Hall

Heart and Vision

The Red Arrows paid an awe inspiring visit to Upwell in July as part of the Heart & Vision fun day organised by local woman, Kate Blake.

Kate organised the day as a thank you to the village for the support she and her husband, Rob, had received over the years following his diagnosis with a rare environmentally induced illness.

Upwell playing field was crammed with stalls, fairground rides, vintage car and birds of prey displays. There was a martial arts display and a local rock band entertained the huge crowd.

Representatives from the local emergency services and forces benevolent funds were on hand to talk to visitors and there was a charity auction at the village hall later in the evening.

The weather was kind to the Blakes, who originally planned a low-key event, and they were thrilled by the turn out.

About three thousand pounds was raised for air force, police and fire benevolent funds during the course of the day.

