



The Heron

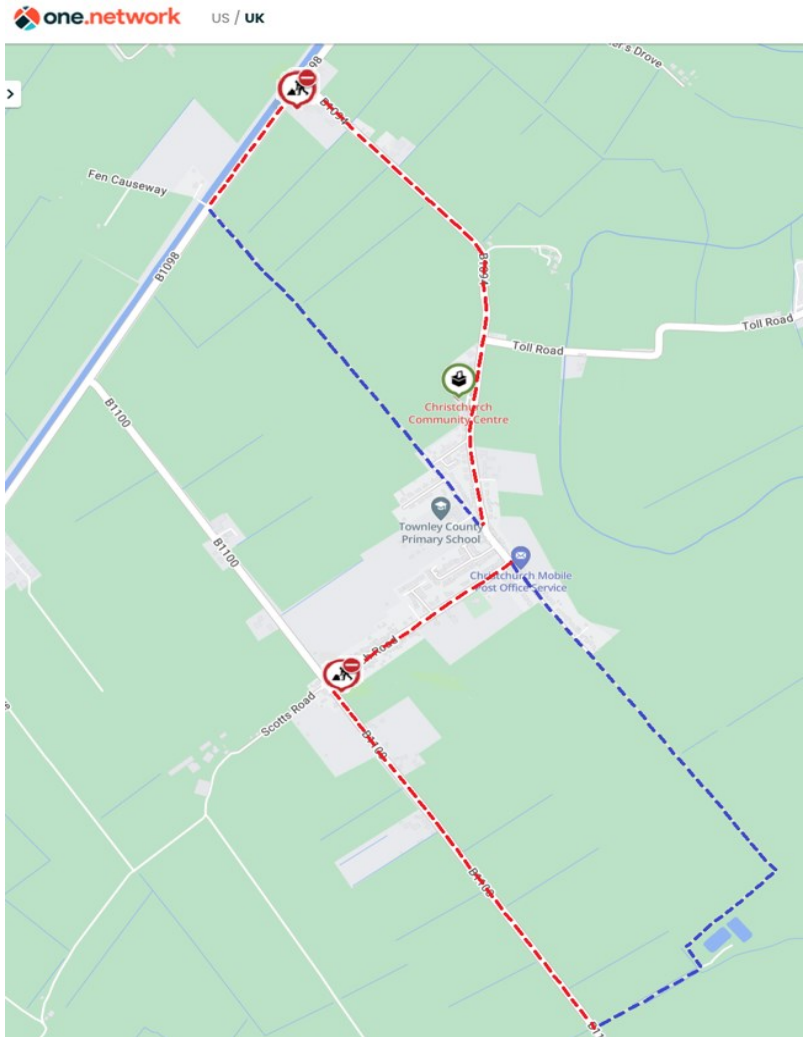
Community Magazine

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End

April 2024

In this issue

Townley School	2
Local Road Closures	2
Important Announcement	3
Diary Dates	4
Editorial	5
Heron News	5
Volunteer Cambs	6
Annual Parish Meeting	6
Local Events	7
PC Snippets	8
Church News	9
Kids Page	10
Dog Mess	11
What Flies Over	12
Recipe	13
Steve Barclay	13
What's On	14
Candles for Ukraine	14
Clubs Pages	15-16
Advertising	15-21
Useful Numbers	22
Community Info	22
Christchurch Road Names	23
"I will always love you"	23
The Urge to Fly	24



Village Road Closures

On Monday 1/4/24, two sets of road works are due to take place affecting the village. The first is the long-planned traffic island at the end of Church Road, and this will involve closing the road from 00:01 until 12:00. - - - - -

The second works are improvements to the junction of Upwell Road and 16ft Bank (locally known as Jackson's Corner), and again will involve closure of this junction. - - - - -

During these works, access to Padgetts Road will be via Green Lane, and to the 16ft via Crown Drive, beyond Wayside Estate, as marked in blue on the map. - - - - -

As both of these temporary routes are along rutted dirt tracks, it is expected that motorists won't actually notice any difference to the usual route!





TOWNLEY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Christchurch, Wisbech, Cambs. PE14 9NA
office@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Website: www.townley.cambs.sch.uk
01354 638229



Facebook—Townley School and Nursery

Remember that our website has lots more information about school.

March 2024

This week I met with the Local Authority and the contractor building the new classroom. We have just received planning permission today and work will start within the next few weeks. Our neighbours will receive letters from the contractor with their contact detail on should they need them. There will be restrictions on delivery times to minimise disruption for our neighbours.



EYFS Class (YN/R) focus stories have been *The Great Sheep Shenanigans* and *Where is the Green Sheep?* We shaved shaving foam sheep in the tuff tray which was great fun! Our questions of the day focused on wool and sheep. We had to decide if a jumper could jump and whether wool was green! Please can you help? Our sensory path needs a revamp! If anyone has any pea gravel or garden slate, we would really appreciate it. Thank you



Emerald Class (Y3/4) In **Forest School**, Mr Diffey got the children to find food for butterflies. They got to plant flower seeds create patterns by putting nails in slices of wood and using wool to finish their design.

Emperor Class (Y5/6) In **RE** we started a new unit: *Why is there suffering?* We learnt about the story of Adam and Eve and discussed who was responsible and why God tested them. We learnt about what free will is and the importance of it.



Hawker Class (Y1/2) held their class assembly for parents and enjoyed singing their learning to everyone! In English the children have created calligrams and animal shape poems. There were cats, dogs, sharks, penguins, pigs, dragons and snakes, some children even used some software to create final versions of these.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ~ IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear readers of the Heron,

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the committee have been forced to take the difficult decision to temporarily suspend our Heron community magazine. Unfortunately, we have not been able to secure anyone to help support with the editing and publishing side of producing the Heron.

At present the Heron is collated and published by a very small team of volunteers who are dedicated and keen to support the continuation of the Heron. However, due to their working schedules, personal circumstances and commitments over the next couple of months, they are unable to continue for a short time. **Now is the time** if anyone does feel they would like to help, especially if you have any publishing experience, to contact the Editor on editor@theheron.info

Our aim is to relaunch the Heron in the Autumn following our Annual General Meeting - which will be held at Christchurch Community Centre on Thursday 26th September at 7pm - where we will review the situation. You will be able to keep in touch by using the enquiries@theheron.info email and we will remind readers about the AGM in the public notice boards outside Christchurch Community Centre. We will also produce a flier, nearer the time, as well as posting information using our website <https://theheron.info>

My aim was to submit our application to become a charity during this Easter holiday however, due to our present circumstances, we have decided to put a temporary hold on this until we can review our position at the AGM - where you are all welcome to attend.

We will be contacting all stakeholders that are connected with the Heron as quickly as possible. We will also be contacting our advertisers to discuss what we can best do to compensate for any advert space that is owing along with any Heron subscribers.

Whilst some reading this article may assume that it is an April Fool, unfortunately we regret to inform you that it is not.

Please let me reiterate we are all passionate about our local community magazine and we do hope you will be able to join us for the AGM in September where we anticipate, we will be in a much better position.

Lorna Kirk (Chair of the Heron Executive Committee)

More Road Closures (Real ones!)



B1093 Fifty Road - between Tipps End and Manea. Closed for 40 days from 2nd April.

A1101 Bates Drove - Littleport

Closed both ways to all traffic between 25th March and 31st May for works.

Diary Dates

Tue 2nd April	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 2nd April	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Sun 7th April	Welle Cinema - "Dream Horse"	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Mon 8th Apr	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Tue 9th Apr	WI - Quiz 7 Games evening	7:30pm	CCC
Wed 10th Apr	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am - 1pm	CCC
Tue 23rd Apr	Annual Parish Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Wed 24th Apr	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am - 1pm	CCC
Sun 28th April	Christchurch Yard Sale	9am onwards	Throughout the village
Sunday 5th May	Welle Cinema - "Oppenheimer"	1.30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Sat 11th May	Plant Sale	10am - 2pm	38 Church Road
Sat 11th May	Card Making Workshop	10am - 2pm	CCC

Regular Weekly Events

Monday	Short Mat Bowls	7pm - 9pm	CCC
Tuesday	Hobby & Craft Club	10am - 1pm	CCC
Sunday	Car Boot Sale	8am - 12pm	Skylark Garden Centre
Wednesday	Chair Based Exercise	10am - 10:50am	CCC - 07880543821
Thursday	Cake, Coffee & Chat	1:30pm - 3:30pm	CCC
Thursday	Car Boot Sale	9am onwards (buyers)	Upwell Field
Friday	Christchurch Umbrella Breakfast	9:30am - 11:30am	CCC
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu	Mobile Post Office	4:10pm - 4:30pm	Lay-by near Fen View

At the time of going to press, all information is as accurate and up to date as we can make it. Changes and updates may be published subsequently. All information contributed by outside agencies, including dates etc., will be assumed to be correct.

NB as a matter of courtesy no content from the Heron should be used without prior permission.

Editorial

Sorry! Couldn't resist the April Fool being about the potholes and constant road closures! Did we get you?!?

Exceptionally unfortunate news on page 3 but we have tried our best to secure help and it simply isn't forthcoming.

There are lots of things coming up in the village. Why not join in the Yard Sale (details on Page 7) coming up on 28th April. Pitch donations are all going to a worthy cause - "Young Lives V Cancer". We also have our annual plant sale on 11th May. This year we pray for a nice, sunny day. It was freezing last year! We are hoping that we can rely on our trusty team of helpers again this year to make it another success. All proceeds from this go towards keeping your village magazine in production.

The first village car show of the year is just around the corner (details on Page 7) on Sunday 2 June at the Community Centre and Playing Field. I don't know how but we always manage to "book" the nice weather for those, always a varied selection of vehicles and a good day out.

Ever fancied making your own cards? There is a card-making workshop being held at the Community Centre on 11 May (details on page 9).

Clive Benjamin

Heron News



**Heron Annual Plant Sale
Saturday 11th May 2024
"Treetops" 38 Church Road
10am-2pm**

**This is our annual Fundraising Plant Sale.
Please come and support us.**

**If you have any spare plants, pots, planters
or good quality gardening equipment that
you would be willing to donate, we would be
happy to receive it.**

Please contact Sandra on 01354 635478.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Enjoy reading the Heron?

If you haven't donated already and are interested in helping to support the production costs, you can now donate electronically at: www.madegreat.co.uk/sponsorship

100% of your donation goes towards printing costs.

You can choose to have your name printed in the next issue of the magazine or keep your donation anonymous.



EDITORIAL TEAM:

Editorial Team Leader - Clive Benjamin - editor@theheron.info

Editorial Team Members: Sue Norman, Elaine Reed-Hughes, Pat Rigby, Wendy Yates, Liz Scott

Treasurer, Advertising Manager - Elaine Reed-Hughes - adverts@theheron.info Tel: 01354 638310

Deliveries Manager - Annie Nason - 01354 638088

Support—Lewis Bennett (IT), the Delivery & Postal Team, Publishers and Printers

General Queries - enquiries@theheron.info



Website: www.theheron.info

New Volunteer Cambs website calls on the local community to make their mark with volunteering

A new website has been launched by **Support Cambridgeshire**, promoting exciting opportunities for residents of Cambridgeshire to explore volunteering near them.

Whether you have 10 minutes to spare or 10 hours, in a few clicks you can be matched with an organisation or group in the community which inspires you to make your mark, expand on the skills you already have, discover new ones, unlock your potential or create lasting friendships with like-minded people.

All you need to do is visit the **Volunteer Cambs** website at volunteercambs.org.uk, create an account and hey presto! At the click of a button, you can find the ideal cause to support right on your doorstep.

"Volunteering is not just about helping others", say the creators of the new volunteer matchmaking service – "it's also about what they'll get in return. This includes a sense of purpose, wonderful experiences, and a whole lot of thanks from the causes they are helping"

Volunteer Cambs works by asking organisations and groups to load up their opportunities and profiles directly so there's always something new for a volunteer to look at every time they visit the site. And the good causes who are promoting their work benefit by having a continuous stream of potential volunteers.

The website has also had backing from the Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Speaking about the launch of Volunteer Cambs, Dr, Nik Johnson said: *"The role of volunteers in supporting our local communities is crucial, and it's always humbling to see the efforts of our residents who give up their time and skills to support the causes that*

are important to them. I'm hugely excited about the impact the Volunteer Cambs portal is set to make in matching volunteers with the organisations that need them - and am proud to see our region leading the charge and shining an even brighter light on the importance of volunteering and making connections like never before."



An enquiry form featured on the website will help groups and volunteers match up, contact each other, and there is even a chat function for those who want to dip their toe in first. Would be volunteers can search for opportunities by location if transport is an issue, for instance, or by topics that match their skill set and interests.

Mark Freeman, CEO at Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, Volunteer Cambs lead partner continued: *"Volunteers benefit from knowing they can make a real positive difference and have a strong impact on their local area. And anyone can volunteer, you could be retired, a skilled professional, a student, a family who want to volunteer together, or even a corporate team. Sharing talents with others connects all of us in a really special way and can boost our mental health and well-being too by helping us to feel valued, knowing that what we do as volunteers is appreciated and respected."*

The Volunteer Cambs team will be out-and-about across Cambridgeshire over the coming year. You can also keep an eye on the site for more information and inspiring stories and photographs of great volunteer/group matches transforming lives and raising awareness of the value, impact and importance they're having in their local area.

To find out how you can match your precious time to local good causes visit volunteercambs.org.uk. It all starts with one act of kindness.

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Christchurch Tuesday 23rd April

The Annual Parish Meeting is your opportunity to come together as a community to discuss all aspects of life in Christchurch, raise issues or make suggestions. It's also an opportunity for village organisations and groups to showcase their work and celebrate their achievements. This is your meeting and the Parish Council is merely coordinating the event. If you would like to add anything to the agenda, please contact the Clerk.

Guest speakers from the emergency services have been invited to talk about what they do and how they do it. The recently-announced closure of Manea Fire Station will result in slower response times for Christchurch, so we hope to have a representative of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to discuss the implications of this decision and the impact for Christchurch. A Cambridgeshire Police Officer will explain the different roles in policing and the impact of the emergence of new types of crime and answer questions about policing in Christchurch. We also hope to have a speaker from one of the local Health Service bodies or charities.

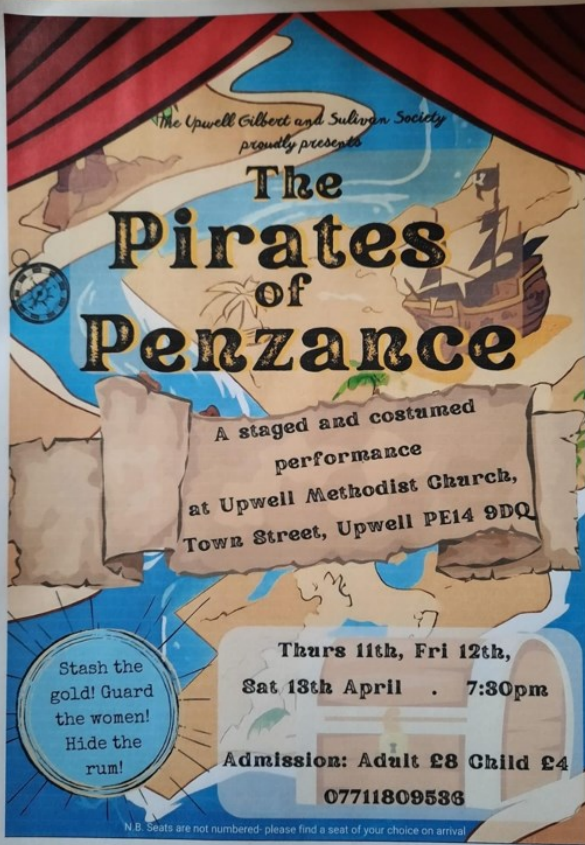
The meeting takes place in the Community Centre on Tuesday 23rd April at 7.00 for 7.30pm. Light refreshments will be provided.

Your opinion matters, so please come and have your say.

Dave Gibbs, Clerk
clerk@christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk

01945 870083

It's funny, silly, musical and it's on the stage at Upwell Methodist Church 11th 12th & 13th April! It will be our pleasure to entertain you



CHRISTCHURCH YARD SALE

**SUNDAY 28TH APRIL 2024
9-12 NOON**

**Stall-holders pay £5
(will collect on the day)
Funds raised for the charity
Young Lives v Cancer
(formerly CLIC Sargent).**

**Contact details: Pat Rigby
07776 142642.**

**Need to confirm your "yard's"
participation by 20th April so that we
can print the maps of all locations.**



Please Follow Facebook page:- Christchurch Community Centre to register attendance



Christchurch Community Centre , Upwell Road , Christchurch near
Wisbech. Cambridgeshire PE14 9LL (On the Recreation
Ground)

PC Snippets

Public time

The editor apologised for an error in reporting regarding the planning application for 4 Fen View, the report stated a wall, when it should have been reported as a fence.

There was discussion around the state of the roads, which has caused damage to vehicles, and also to the timing of the works closing the 16 Foot Bank and the Littleport Road with respect to the likely closure of Welney Wash Road for flooding, though it was pointed out that if the Littleport Road was closed at the same time as Welney was closed, this could cause access difficulties for those living around the area.

Applicants for vacant parish council position were voted on by written ballot – Brian Burfield was voted in and joined the council table. The PCC thanked Nathalie Benton Skerritt for her submission.

Other items included a request to re-site the bin from outside the old shop, the pavement work outside Field Lodge has been scheduled for next week, after over 10 years since the process first put in place to get this work done, Clarion Housing Association investigating the ownership of land around the properties on Upwell Road with regards to clearing any mess, and concerns on visibility on the corner near Dun Cow, especially when coming down Church Road and turning into Green Lane. The white lines need repainting, and this will be requested. A question was asked regarding the storage of electronic records for the Christchurch website, there was assurance that there are a number of copies of this.

Bowls Club donation –the PCC will seek input from the old bowls club members as to the use of these funds. Annual PC meeting planning (23rd April) – see article elsewhere on this.

Cllr Dal Roy report

Clarion Housing Association. At a meeting on 4th March, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was recorded that there are around 120 empty homes within Fenland despite massive demand. Clarion have said they are resolving issues quickly, but FDC dispute this, with just 34 employed people to manage/repair 4000 houses. Clarion have a 2050 upgrade plan, eg. solar panels, insulation, replaced doors, with each property being assessed to see if viable. Response times to emergencies are poor and FDC have requested a direct dial number to the emergency team, as that doesn't yet exist.

The Head of planning left in February, and the new appointee going through checks and once completed, then the land behind Syringa House will be addressed. Policing local areas – we do not see any police in the area, the service is trying to recruit more police officers, but it's unlikely that we will see any extra police in the area and PCSOs are in short supply.

Highways department is looking at insisting on kerb-to-kerb repairs by utility companies and Cllr French is fully on board with this.

Peterborough Care partnerships are looking into the issue of shortage of GP surgeries, and looking at putting a central hub in Fenland, but no timeline or location, but this will refer to the Fenland Study phase 3 with the view to centralised hubs, and access including public transport links will be considered.

Clerks report

The daytime closure of 16 Foot Bank at the Upwell end has begun (completed by the time you read this), and other items mentioned included the Great British Spring clean, empty homes and the council tax penalty, Craft festival taking place in March, and a combined authority electric vehicle and charging point survey taking place. Cambs volunteers website has been launched (see elsewhere in the Heron).

Recreation ground extension, quotes for bridges received. The PC gave the go-ahead to start the project.

Spraying of highways, with a new proposal to spray twice a year on roads with kerbs, PC chose to opt in to spraying. Verges to be cut at end of April (and then July and October).

Planning

Installation of ASHP in front of property at Tipps End, extension and fence to 4 Fen View, and a single dwelling for a family member next to the Hole in the Wall cottage with agricultural tenancy. – PC have no objections to any of these applications (the clerk may assist with the last application listed).

Finances more or less in line with budget.

Barclays Bank ongoing issue – now being handled by the Executive Complaints team at Barclays head office. PCC reluctantly keeping on the account with Barclays as is the best cost option. There have been 2 payments totalling £425 from Barclays as a result of Peter Owen's complaint, which was escalated, both paid into PC account, all to go to the charity, along with a further £132 from the recycling CCC bins contract.

Next meeting – 7:30pm 8th April, all are welcome to attend.

Church News

Card Making Workshop
Saturday 11th May 2024
10am – 2pm

**£15 per person includes all materials
and a buffet lunch.**

There are limited places.
Please contact Helen on 07702 225259
or 638092 to book a place
(payment in is required in advance of
the day please).

**All profits will be added to the Church
Repairs Fund.**



Lunch Break – 2nd and 4th Wednesday
(10th and 24th April)

11am – 1pm Free hot drink BYO lunch

Coffee and Cake – every Thursday 1.30- 3.30pm

Free drink. Donations for a piece of cake

Friday Breakfast – every Friday 9.30-11.30am

Free drink and toast.

Other breakfasts available to purchase.

BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES **FOR APRIL.**

7th April

10.30 Morning Prayer, Christchurch
10.30 Holy Communion, Doddington

14th April

10.30 Holy Communion, Manea
10.30 Morning Prayer, Wimblington
15.00 Holy Communion, Benwick

21st April

10.30 Holy Communion,
Christchurch
10.30 Morning Prayer, Doddington

28th April

10.30 Morning Prayer, Manea
10.30 Holy Communion, Wimblington
16.00 Evening Prayer, Welney

Quiz and Curry

Christchurch Community Centre
Saturday 20th April

Doors open 7pm Quiz starts 7.30pm

Maximum number per team is 6 people

£7.50 per person

There will be a raffle.

**All profits will go to the church
repair fund.**

Dear All

Firstly, thank you to all those people in the village who have supported our recent events.

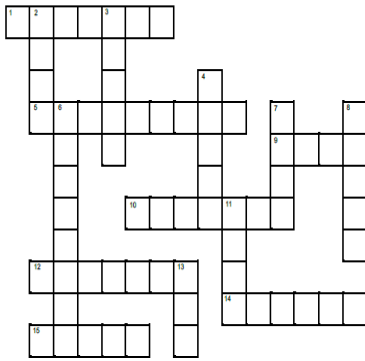
We continue to add to the church repair pot, although the final total seems a long way off just yet. We were very pleased to be able to donate £116 to the Ferry Project in Wisbech and a full bag of items to March Food Bank after our Lent Lunch in March.

A very special thank you to Russell Fowlers of Manea who pumped about 2000 gallons of water out of the church yard for no charge! This helped to reduce the flooding and prevent flooding of the church building itself.

As the ground dries out more, you will see the churchyard returning to its usual well-maintained state, thanks to Keith Bruce, Alvar Smart and others for all they do.

Helen Chappell
(Church Warden at time of going to print)

Spring Crossword



Across

1. Lots of flowers on a tree
5. A brightly coloured flying insect
9. Bees live in this
10. There is said to be a pot of gold at the end of one of these
12. You may give someone special a bunch of these
14. Holiday associated with eggs
15. When a young bird breaks out of its shell










Down

2. A baby sheep
3. The umbrella in the picture has lots of these
4. Get the dustpan and brush out for a Spring one of these
6. Something you put up when it is raining
7. When it warms up the snow does this
8. Birds build these to lay their eggs
11. The sky is this colour
13. After winter you see more of this in the sky during the Spring

Answers to all on page 17


Spring I Spy

How many of each of the items can you spy?

	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>

Spring Word Search

r	v	b	t	f	i	o	p	l	l	t	p	u	l	u
r	o	p	l	a	b	u	d	c	a	t	n	u	a	u
r	h	v	u	o	e	l	n	o	m	u	k	m	u	b
t	u	l	i	p	s	n	o	m	b	u	f	b	k	o
o	r	d	p	r	c	s	s	o	a	l	r	o	n	
e	n	o	x	t	t	l	o	i	m	r	o	e	c	d
y	e	l	l	o	w	c	e	m	w	t	w	l	y	o
e	d	n	u	d	r	e	h	a	t	a	e	l	s	r
h	a	t	c	h	a	r	a	i	n	m	r	a	h	b
r	k	j	w	f	i	t	a	i	c	i	s	m	o	u
t	h	a	w	c	n	g	o	r	e	k	d	f	w	n
e	i	a	e	o	b	g	e	m	n	t	n	n	e	n
e	w	o	a	g	o	s	p	r	i	n	g	a	r	y
n	e	s	t	s	w	e	r	u	e	v	g	c	s	s
h	s	l	i	u	i	h	t	a	o	a	t	e	n	n



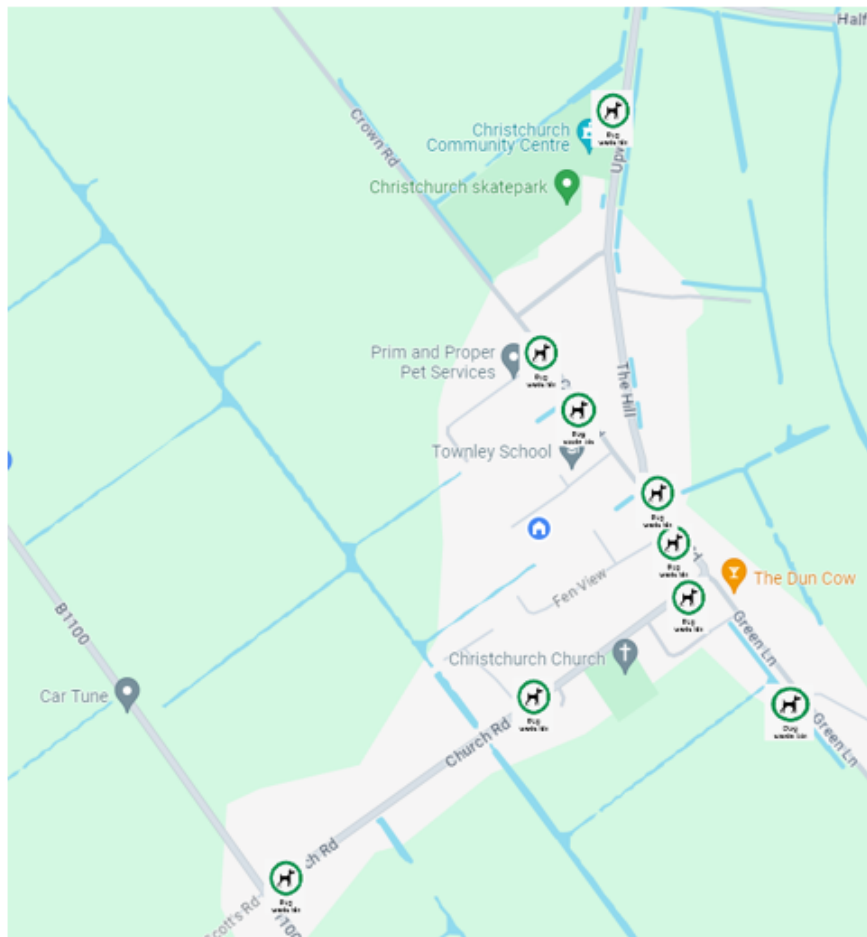
Spring
Showers
Tulips
Hatch
Lamb
Blossom
Yellow
Bud
Rainbow

Clean
Flowers
Thaw
Chick
Bunny
Nests
Warm
Umbrella
Bloom

Colour in these Pictures with some bright pens or pencils.



Dog Poo Bins

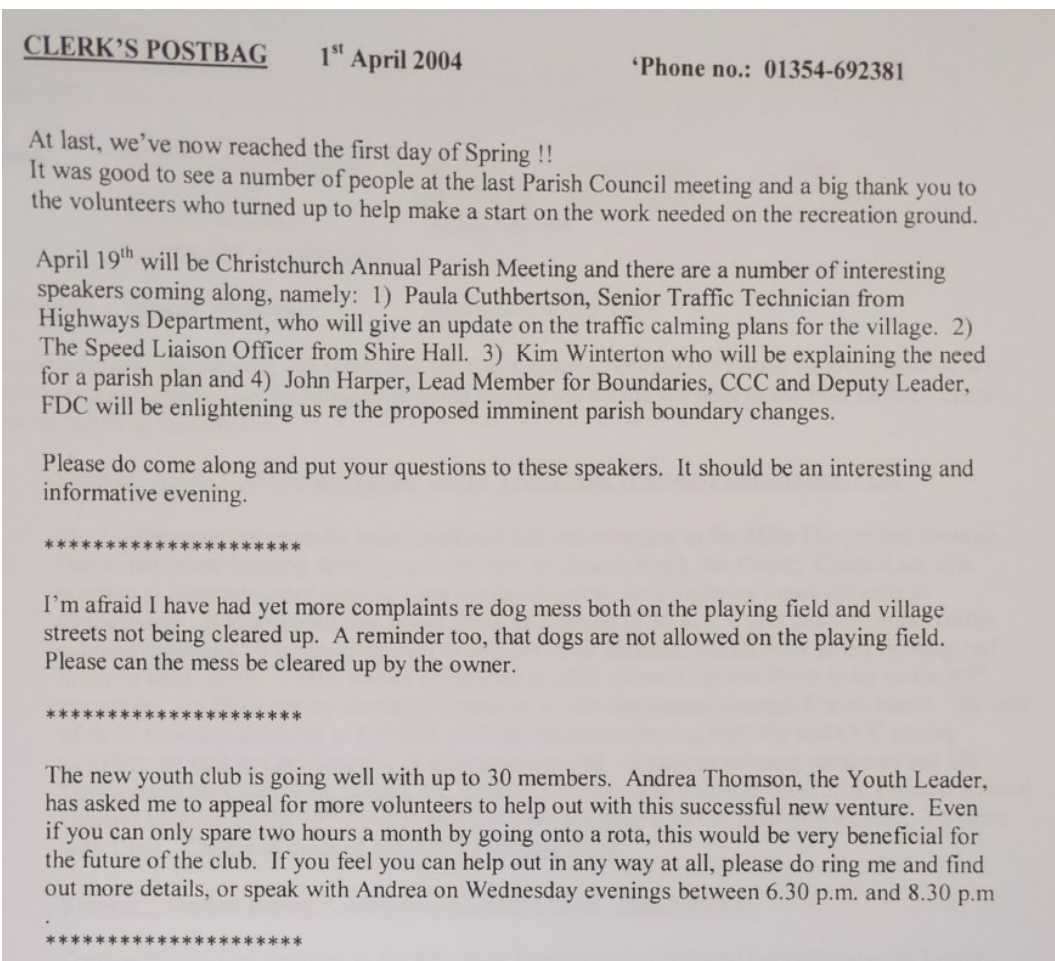


There have been a number of comments recently on Facebook, and raised at the PC meetings regarding the amount of dog poo around the village. Some new signs have gone up encouraging people to use the poo bins, and the PCC again stressed that if anyone spots this happening, it should be reported and FDC will impose penalties. Please pick up after your dog, as the vast majority of dog owners do.

We have a large number of poo bins, or combined bins around the village (and 2 more to come when the Recreation field is completed, if not before).

Here is a map of where all of the bins are located (plus bins off the map at Crown Drove/16 Foot Bank junction, and Padgetts Road/Green Lane junction).

Below is an extract from the "Clerk's Postbag" dated 1 April 2004. It seems the issue of dog mess hasn't really improved much in the last 20 years! - Ed



What Flies Over

P&M Hyper

Primary Role	Leisure
Power Plant	Rotax 912ULS
Trike Height	2.75m
Trike Length	4.15m
Wing Area	13 sqm
Wing Span	
Max VNE Speed	120mph
Trim/Cruise Speed	55-95mph
Max. Take of weight	472.5kg with BRS
Rate of Climb	1000 fpm fully loaded
Fuel Consumption	13 lph
Fuel Capacity	65 litres
Range	Approx 5 hours flight
Ceiling	10,000 without oxygen
Crew	Pilot + passenger

Flylight Adam

Leisure, thermalling
Moster 185 Silent 25hp
13.2 sqm
8.65 m
56mph
60mph
196 kg
400fpm
2.5 lph
23 litres
Over 10 hours flight
10,000 without oxygen
Pilot only



			4	2				1
3	4				5	6		
1	9					2		
6	8				2	4		7
7			5	9			2	
2				6			8	
			3					2
9	2		8		1		5	
						8		

Answers on page 17

Recipe

Herby spring chicken pot pie

Minimise your washing-up with this delicious one-pan chicken pie with spinach and herbs and topped with crispy filo pastry. It's ideal for busy weeknights



Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for brushing over the pastry
bunch spring onions, sliced into 3cm pieces
250g frozen spinach
6 ready-cooked chicken thighs (or see tip, below)
350ml hot chicken stock
½ tbsp wholegrain mustard
200g frozen peas
200ml half-fat crème fraîche
½ small bunch tarragon, leaves finely chopped
small bunch parsley, finely chopped
270g pack filo pastry

Method

STEP 1 - Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large, shallow casserole dish on a medium heat. Add the spring onions and fry for 3 mins, then stir through the frozen spinach and cook for 2 mins or until it's starting to wilt. Remove the skin from the chicken and discard. Shred the chicken off the bone and into the pan and discard the bones. Stir through the stock and mustard. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 5-10 mins.

STEP 2 - Stir in the peas, crème fraîche and herbs, then remove from the heat. Scrunch the filo pastry sheets over the mixture, brush with a little oil and bake for 15-20 mins or until golden brown.

RECIPE TIPS - USE SHREDDED CHICKEN

Use 400g shredded roast chicken if you have leftovers from Sunday lunch.

From the office of Steve Barclay

The Wisbech incinerator is the topic that everyone is talking about – and for good reason. I was as shocked and angry as constituents when the news came through that the Planning Inspector's recommendation had been accepted. It is a flawed proposal, located on an unsuitable site.

This is a scheme that, if built, would bring hundreds of thousands of tonnes of municipal, commercial and industrial waste to Wisbech each year for incineration. The town, district and county councils were all united with me in campaigning against it. It is a scheme that would never have been granted planning permission by the local authority and was created to generate just over the 50 megawatts of power threshold, meaning that it qualified as a nationally significant infrastructure project and was therefore subject to determination by the Planning Inspectorate process outside our area.

This is the wrong scheme in the wrong place, that will have a detrimental effect on our local community. I will continue to fight this proposal and have already held meetings with Fenland District Council to support them in bringing forward a judicial review.

The fight must continue to oppose this scheme given the massive blot on our landscape it will cause. I am committed to doing everything possible to fight it. Only a year ago, the Government introduced legally binding targets to halve the amount of residual waste going to landfill or incineration. Making progress on this target undermines the case for new incinerators.

This scheme is even more disappointing given the progress made more widely in securing investment for the constituency, with the latest example being £20m of funding announced in the budget specifically for local schemes in Wisbech. Yet incinerator overshadows this progress, and I will work with local councillors, businesses and residents to try and stop it being built.

Looking for somewhere to go?

What's on in April 2024

Sunday 14th April – Fun Dog Show at Upwell Playing Field, New Road PE14 9AB booking at 10:30am Judging starts 11am £2 per class

Sunday 14th April 10am to 4pm - Springs Artisan Fayre, Upwell Hall, New Road, Upwell

Saturday 20th April 7.30pm start - Race Night (East Anglian Race Nights) at Upwell Village Hall, New Road PE14 9AB admission £6 including sausage and chips.

Saturday 20th April 2024 7pm – Quiz and Curry night, CCC. £7.50 pp, proceeds to the Church Repair Fund.

Sunday 21st April 10am to 4pm - Farmers Market & Family Funday, Marshland Hall, Smeeth Road, Wisbech

Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th April - East Anglian Game Fair, Euston Estate, Thetford IP24 2QH, Dog & Duck show, Fly Fishing demos, Horse boarding, Gundogs, Scurry & Trials Driving, Pakefield Ferrets, Terrier Racing, various dog shows, clay shooting and lots more. See website ukgamefair.co.uk for ticket info and times.

Sunday 28th April 9am start -Yard Sale in Christchurch. Stall holders £5.00 for donation to Young Lives V Cancer (formerly CLIC Sargent) contact Pat Rigby 07776142642 to register and to be included on map

Saturday 4th May 11am to 4pm – Ely Eel day 2024, Jubilee Gardens, 18 Jubilee Terrace, Ely

Sunday 5th May to Monday 6th May - Ely's Food, Drink & Craft Festival 2024, The Gallery, Ely & Palace Green Ely

Saturday 11th May 2024, 10am-2pm - Heron Annual Plant Sale, "Treetops" 38 Church Road, Christchurch.



Swindon Humanitarian Aid Partnership Candles For Ukraine

If you have collected candles and other items (in clean and good condition) for Ukraine, here's where and when to hand them in.

Each weekend during April (Saturday and Sunday), there will be a labelled box placed at the front of Grasshopper Cottage, 5, Upwell Road. PE14 9LF, for you to put them in. If your item is too large to go into the box, please leave it in a labelled waterproof bag at my front door.

What can be donated? See MARCH HERON p 7.

Alternatively, call me on 01354 638088 and I can arrange a collection. If you would like to give money instead /as well as items, please place your gift in an envelope with your contact details and put it through my door. I will give you a receipt and send your donation to the charity. **THANKING EVERYONE IN ADVANCE. PEACE TO UKRAINE.**

Annie Nason



**EARN £30 Per Day
Dog sitting in your own
home.**

Food supplied by us.

**Our dog SHIRO Japanese
Akita male would stay
with you when we are
away.**

**If you are interested
please contact me:**

Email: kim.d.lucas@btinternet.com

or text: 07450 811860



**TRYZEN
THERAPIES**

Professional Massage Therapy in the comfort of your home.

Reflexology

Prenatal Massage

Swedish Massage

Deep Tissue Massage

Indian Head Massage

****We come to you!****



www.tryzenterapies.co.uk

tryzenhealth@outlook.com/07803327492

Christchurch Hobby and Craft Club

**Every Tuesday
10.00 AM- 1.00 PM**

Christchurch Community Centre

Bring your art, craft or hobby along to the club to work on and share with like-minded friends.

Maybe you will introduce us to something new or find something you would like to try, i.e. artwork, needlework, crochet, card making, Lego, or maybe there is a jigsaw puzzle looking for someone to finish while you are thinking of what to start.

Interested?

Contact Janet Harper on 07941 465319 or Pat Rigby on 07776 142642

Christchurch Book Club



The Christchurch Book club met in March to discuss the latest book Blood Orange by Harriet Tyce.

This book was enjoyed by all, a dark psychological thriller, a barrister who is a wife and mother but whose work, an affair, partying and the unravelling of her marriage, starts receiving sinister messages. When she is asked to take on a murder case, the life of the accused starts to mirror her own. Full of twists and turns and a very unexpected ending.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 2nd April when we will discuss the current book, A Narrow Door, by Joanne Harris. The next book will be The Phone Box at the End of the World by Imai Messina.

New members are always welcome. For further details or if you would like to come along to the next meeting and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.



WI Meeting held at the Community Centre on Tuesday March 12th at 7.p.m.

All members were present except for Belinda, Wendy and Helen although she did arrive slightly later.

Dr. Hirson then gave a fascinating talk on Olive Oil. Dr. Hirson was a doctor at Manea but then bought a property in Tuscany which had a number of olive trees. With help from friends and locals he began to harvest them.

He told us of the benefit of using olive oil for health. We were then invited to taste the oil by dipping a piece of bread into it and trying to ascertain the taste of the oil. His talk was accompanied by a range of slides, showing the various stages of olive oil production.

Next month: Tue April 2nd will be an open meeting about “scamming”. Members to arrive at 6.30.p.m., Non-members at 7.15 p.m. cost £3.



Christchurch Gardening Club

“A Welcome in the Hillside”

As the Gardening Club’s year swings into action, we welcomed friend of the club Gary Wilmott, to come and speak at the first full meeting of the year. Gary was keen to tell us all about his experience of building a market garden from scratch in Wales, and as the move from the West Country to Wales was over twenty years ago, a distinct lack of the internet at the time made research and procurement of materials that much more difficult. It’s interesting to note how much more the internet has become part of all our lives in the last couple of decades or so. Increasing their 4 acres to six acres Gary and his family started breeding sheep, requiring planning permission for the sheep sheds and garden. Fighting against several years of harsh snowy winters the project was brought to a successful conclusion and sold lock stock and barrel in 2018. Gary entertained the members for well over the hour with his many and varied photos and commentary.

Next month on Tuesday 16th April, is one of the clubs open evenings featuring David Reeve talking on Protecting our Royals. David was a fixture at Sandringham for many years in charge of the Royal protection unit and is now a leading light in the production of the Sandringham flower show. A raconteur and excellent speaker, this will be an evening not to miss. Non-members welcome.

Apologies for a mistake in last months column, The Vicarage is in Ruston not as stated Bury.

For more information on the club and events please call 01354638230 or come along on the night. You would be very welcome.

Steve.

CHRISTCHURCH GARDENING CLUB DIARY DATES 2024

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 7:00 pm ~ Speaker talk starts at 7:30 pm.

Tuesday 16th April 2024: David Reeve - Protecting our Royals

Tuesday 21st May 2024: Richard Willitt - Norfolk Owls (Live Owls)

Tuesday 18th June 2024: SUMMER BUFFET

Tuesday 16th July: 2024: Joan & Richard Munns - Gault Woodland Trust

Tuesday 20th August 2024: Mary from Manea - Succulents.

Tuesday 17th September 2024: Philippa Pearson - Garden Design Tips.

Tuesday 15th October 2024: T.B.A



Indoor Short Mat Bowls

New club meeting every Monday 7-9pm at Christchurch Community Centre.

ALL WELCOME! (Spare bowls available to loan.)

For further details call Janet Harper on 07941 465319.



A & B SMITH
DOMESTIC APPLIANCES
SHOWROOM

Unit 1
Honeysome Industrial Estate,
Chatteris,
PE16 6TG

☎ 01354 575079

Open to the public
Open
Monday - Saturday
9am - 5pm
Same day delivery



BOSCH Vax™ **Hotpoint**

CANDY **INDESIT**


BEKO **Hoover** **DeLonghi**

Russell's Family Butchers

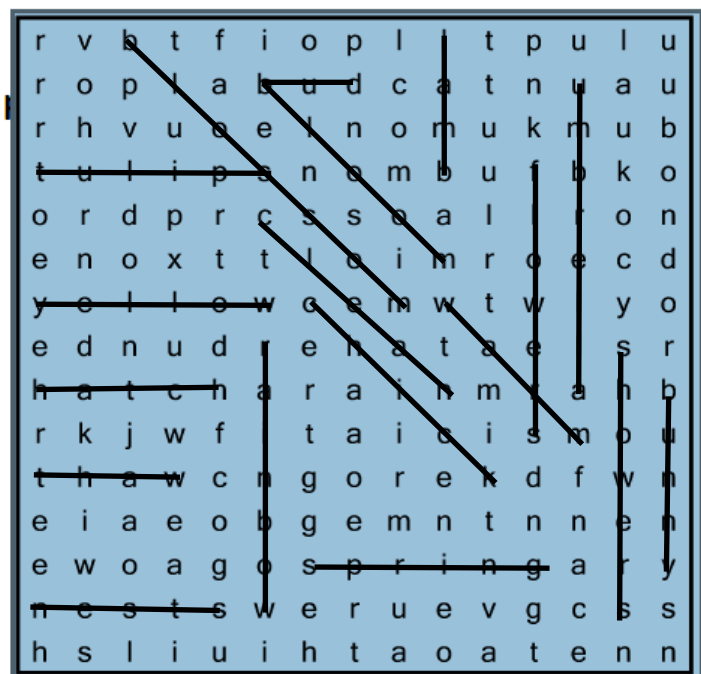
Family butchers for 5 generations.
All of our meat and poultry is fresh free range from our own farm.

Visit us at our shop in Upwell or at our market stall in March (Saturdays) or Wisbech (Thursdays and Saturdays).

97 School Road, Upwell, PE15 9EW
Tel: 01945 773419



Answers from Page 10.



Spring I-Spy Answers

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------|---|------------|----|
| Flowers | 6 | Watering Can | 8 | Butterfly | 14 |
| Rainbow | 9 | Pairs of Gloves | 8 | Bird House | 5 |
| Wheelbarrow | 8 | Umbrella | 3 | Pot Plant | 12 |

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| Across | Down |
| 1 Blossom | 2 Lamb |
| 5 Butterfly | 3 Spots |
| 9 Hive | 4 Clean |
| 10 Rainbow | 7 Melt |
| 12 Flowers | 8 Nests |
| 14 Easter | 11 Blue |
| 15 Hatch | 12 Sun |

Answers from Page 12.

5	6	8	4	2	7	9	3	1
3	4	2	9	1	5	6	7	8
1	9	7	6	8	3	2	4	5
6	8	5	1	3	2	4	9	7
7	3	4	5	9	8	1	2	6
2	1	9	7	6	4	5	8	3
8	5	1	3	4	9	7	6	2
9	2	6	8	7	1	3	5	4
4	7	3	2	5	6	8	1	9

CHRISTCHURCH ELECTRICAL

Simon Freeland Hill Farm, 3 Church Road, Christchurch, PE14 9PQ

Tel: 01354 638802 Mobile: 07727 046439



Domestic electrical work undertaken.
No job too small.
Free quotations / estimates.



www.electricalcompetentperson.co.uk

www.electricalsafetyregister.com



www.allpestscontrolled.co.uk

WOODWORM
BEDBUGS
MOLES
MICE
RATS
ANTS



SQUIRRELS
RABBITS
WASPS
BIRDS
FLEAS
BEES

Call Danny on

Tel: 01945 772 153

Mob: 07795 073 985



A JONES & SON

TELEVISION SALES/REPAIRS/INSTALLATION

FREE LOCAL DELIVERY
FIRST CLASS AERIAL INSTALLATIONS/ADDITIONAL POINTS

26 March Road, Wimblington, March, Cambs PE15 ORN

Tel: 01354 740320

CLOSED ALL DAY TUESDAYS

FOUR SEASONS TREE SERVICES

Qualified & Professional Tree and Client Care

PRUNING ● LOPPING ● FELLING
PLANTING ● REDUCING & RESHAPING
CROWN RAISING ● HEDGE TRIMMING
THINNING ● POLLARDING ● STUMP REMOVALS
OVERGROWN GARDENS PUT BACK INTO SHAPE
FRUIT TREES TREATED ● LOG & WOODCHIP SALES



FREE ESTIMATES & ADVICE WITH NO OBLIGATION

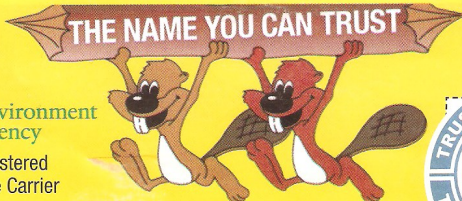
For quality jobs at a competitive price call:

Home: 01353 721665 - Mob: 07771 707921

All work carried out to BS 3998 Standard

A genuine family managed business est. for over 30 years - Fully Insured

THE NAME YOU CAN TRUST



This company offers a 7 day cooling off period



645 Services Ltd

For your complete Oil Services

Registered Office: 12/13 The Crescent, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 1EH - Director: B E Easey
Company Registration Number: 07872493
VAT Number: 126 5422 30

For a competitive oil quote, for delivery in the village and surrounding area, (Outwell, Upwell, Tipps End, Welney) please call 645 Services' on 01353 668173 or 07540 334670.

(office hours only please)
or Email: stuart@645services.co.uk

We will always try and be the best price around - with local deliveries scheduled for most weeks throughout the month.



**Your Local, Professional Spray & Traditional
Painting Company**

Air/airless Spray Painting
Traditional Brush / Roller Paint & Decorating
Upvc Window & Door Painting
Exterior Timber Treating



Simply Contact Us On:
07703 459675 or hickscoatings@yahoo.com



March Stationery & Print

**Booklet Printing
Business Cards
Digital Photos
Leaflets
Newsletters
Banners**

01354 656614

sales@marchsp.co.uk
5 Fenland Walk, March, PE15 8TW

A.R. CLINGO

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

**Family Independent
Business**

**Private Chapel of Rest
Personal Attention**

24 Hour Service

Full estimates given at all times

Golden Charter
Funeral Plans



Pinfold House
St. Peter's Road
Upwell, Wisbech
Phone 01945 772502

Outwell Timber

For all your Timber and Building Supplies

**ISLE ROAD, OUTWELL
PE14 8TD
Tel: 01945 77 21 16**

**FENCING, PANELS, TRELLIS
TIMBER, PLYWOOD, DECKING**

SAND, BALLAST, GRAVEL

SCREWS, NAILS, BOLTS

PAINT, SILICONE, HAND TOOLS

**LOCKS, ELECTRICALS, PLUMBING,
GUTTERING
UNDERGROUND PIPE & FITTINGS**

CEMENT, MULTIFINISH, PLASTERBOARD



Rehabilitation



Short & Long-term



Companionship



Dementia



Physical Disabilities



Discharge from Hospital

Wisbech, March, Downham Market

Pure Heart Homecare Limited

"I can only say that I was treated with care, patience and above all respect from each of your employees. They were polite at all times and very helpful - a credit to your company. I would recommend them to anyone."



Excellence



Partnership



Respect



Dignity



Integrity

In need of support for yourself or a loved one? Please get in touch with our dedicated team today...

careathome
BECAUSE HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS



01945 773861



130 Wisbech Road, Outwell, PE14 8PF www.purehearthomecare.co.uk

Upwell Computer Repairs

Sales – Repairs - Maintenance - Upgrades

Sales & Support

Laptop Screen Replacement

Broadband Setup

Windows Reinstallation

Virus Removal

Hardware Upgrades

Tuition

Software Upgrades

Web Design

On-Site Services

Email Setup

Custom Built PC's

System Installations

Internet Security

Data Recovery Services

Network Installations



Contact Lewis today for a free consultation

Phone: 01945 772717 - 07849 778525

Email: support@upwellcomputerrepairs.co.uk

Web: www.upwellcomputerrepairs.co.uk

dermalogica®



Beauty Treatments by Jane

NVQ – op.i – Babtac.

Rose Cottage, Christchurch,
Cambs.

Telephone: 01354 638378



JESSICA®

JESSICA®
Manicures &
Pedicures



concept beauty

Microdermabrasion
Facials
& Gel Nails
& Pedicures



ST. TROPEZ
The Ultimate Tan

Non-surgical Face lifting Treatments



Qualified Seamstress

All dressmaking and sewing
jobs undertaken. Alterations
to clothing and curtains.

**Please contact: Sandra Kay
on 01354 638478**

SARAH JANE'S NURSERY

Mobile: 07905 368729

The Bungalow, Fifty Road, Manea, Cambridgeshire.
PE15 0HN

Sarah Cross

sarahjanesnursery@outlook.com

Also on Facebook

GRANARY STUDIO

Your local picture framer

01354 638614

www.granarystudio.uk

The Granary
Hall Farm, Upwell Road
Christchurch
PE14 9LJ

WELLE CINEMA Three Holes Village Hall Sunday 7th April DREAM HORSE (PG)

The true story of Dream Alliance, an unlikely racehorse bred by small-town bartender Jan Vokes. With very little money and no experience, Jan convinces her neighbours to chip in their earnings to help raise Dream and compete with the racing elites. Their investment pays off as Dream rises through the ranks and becomes a beacon of hope for their struggling community.

Sunday 5th May OPPENHEIMER (15)

Starts 2pm doors open 1.30pm
£3.50 per person NO NEED TO BOOK

BAR & REFRESHMENTS
www.threeholesvillagehall00.org.uk



LW Vehicle Services Ltd *Car and Commercial Repairs*

- Class 4 and 7 MOT Testing
- Full Diagnostic Service
- HGV Maintenance
- Batteries - Tyres - Exhausts
- Welding and Fabrication
- Timing Belts
- HGV PMI Inspections
- Aircon Service and Repair
- Courtesy Car Available
- All Service and Repairs Undertaken
- Car and Van Sales

Call 01354 610172
Email lwvs@outlook.com
Web lwvehicleservices.com

March Road, Welney, PE14 9SE



Wisbech • FUNERAL SERVICE •

Independent Family Funeral Directors



Funeral Directors James and Laura are proud to be serving the community

Personal, caring & affordable

Advice without obligation

24 hours a day



FUNERALS FROM £2,495

Inclusive of all fees

Chapel of Rest

Traditional, Modern & Eco-friendly funerals
Pre-paid & pre-arranged funeral plans

17 Old Market, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 1NB

01945 405950 (24hr)

www.wisbechfuneralservice.co.uk

Community Information

Mobile Post Office:

Visits Monday to Thursday in the lay-by on Upwell Road Monday and Thursday - 16.30 to 17:00
Tuesday and Wednesday - 16.10 to 17:00
Fridays - no service.

ANYONE WISHING THEIR ITEMS TO BE POSTED, ON THE DAY, WILL NEED TO GET THEIR POST TO THE VAN BY 4.40PM - WHICH IS WHEN IT IS COLLECTED.

Use it or lose it!

Mobile Library:

OUR MOBILE LIBRARY COMES ONCE A MONTH, ON THE FIRST TUESDAY, AT 12.15-1.00PM.

The van parks in the lay-by on Upwell Road, opposite to the entrance of Fen View. **USE IT OR LOSE IT?**

The Mobile Library visits March, Christchurch and Manea:

March Elliot Lodge 9:30 - 10:10
March Shaftesbury Lodge 10:20 - 10:50
March Upwell Park 10:55 - 11:15
March Fleming Court 11:30 - 11:45
Christchurch Layby 12:15 - 1pm
Manea Festival Close 2pm - 3pm
Manea High Street 3:10 - 4:30pm

As well as a large range of library books, you can get your NHS hearing batteries, replacement walking stick ferrules and you can dispose of old household batteries.

You can use the Select and Collect service online, or by calling 0345 045 5225.

https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select_and_Collect

Please support your local Library Service, right in the heart of your community.



Please remember that no dogs are allowed on the playing field. Thank you. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Age UK Cambridgeshire	0300 666 9860
Alzheimer's Society (Fenland)	01945 580480
Churchwarden - Mrs Helen Chappell	01354 638092
Citizens' Advice Bureau, Wisbech	03442 451292
Community Centre Bookings (Bryan)	07918 664402
Community Fire Safety Officer	07717 858166
District Councillor - Dal Roy	07885 381007
District Councillor - Matthew Summers	07725 629947
Electricity Faults - UK Power Networks	105
FACT Dial-A-Ride	01354 661234
Fenland District Council	01354 654321
Floodline	0845 988 1188
Library - March	0354 045 5225
MIND (Mental Health Crisis Line)	116 123
National Debtline	0808 808 4000
NHS	111
Norfolk Dial-a-Ride	01553 770310
Parish Clerk - David Gibbs	07932 191050
Parish Councillor - Jill Bliss	01354 638343
Parish Councillor - Ryan Feeney	07785 907509
Parish Councillor - Julia Hayes	07591 537001
Parish Councillor - James Hughes	01354 638310
Parish Councillor - Shaun Potter	07825 016990
Parish Councillor - Andrew Sparrow	01354 638020
Police - Emergency	999
Police - Non Emergency	101
Samaritans	116 123
Telephone Preference Service	0345 070 0707
Townley School	01354 638229
Trading Standards	03454 040506
Train Information	03457 484950
Upwell Health Centre (and out of hours)	01945 773671
Upwell Health Centre - Pharmacy	01945 774934
Veterinary Centre - The Crossings	01366 382219
Water Emergencies	03457 145145
Club Contacts	
Art Club - Jan Clifford	01354 638217
Book Club - Pat Rigby	07776 142642
Gardening Club - Marion Hawthorn	01354 638230
Short Mat Bowls Club - Janet Harper	01354 638681
WI - Margaret Hayes	01354 653240
Jazz Club - Cat Johnson	musiciancat@hotmail.co.uk
Christchurch Stargazers - Mark Andrews	07425 165415

Letters to the Editorial Team

The Editorial team welcome letters from its readers. Please email letters to: editor@heron.info or post them to *The Editor of The Heron, 1 Brimstone Close, Christchurch PE14 9EE*. **PLEASE NOTE:** Letters will only be considered for publication if they are accompanied by name and contact details. The Heron will not share any contact details unless given permission.

We look forward to hearing from you!

How did our roads get their names?

Ha Penny Toll Road

According to Well's 'History of the Drainage of the Fens', there are several private tolls in the Middle level, all of which were placed in lieu of ancient ferries; one of which is the old Croft River, in the parish of Upwell, called the Half-penny Toll, which formerly ran from Littleport Chair to Wisbech.' No doubt it was called Half penny Toll because the payment to pass along the road was a half penny, but the earliest information I can find about the Toll is from the present post mistress who, now about seventy years old, used to live at Toll House when she was a child. She recalls that a Traction Engine used to cost three shillings, a horse and cart sixpence and a bicycle three pence. Nor can I find any indication as to the exact age of the Toll House, which still stands today, except that Well's volumes were published in 1830, so that the Toll House must have been built before this date.

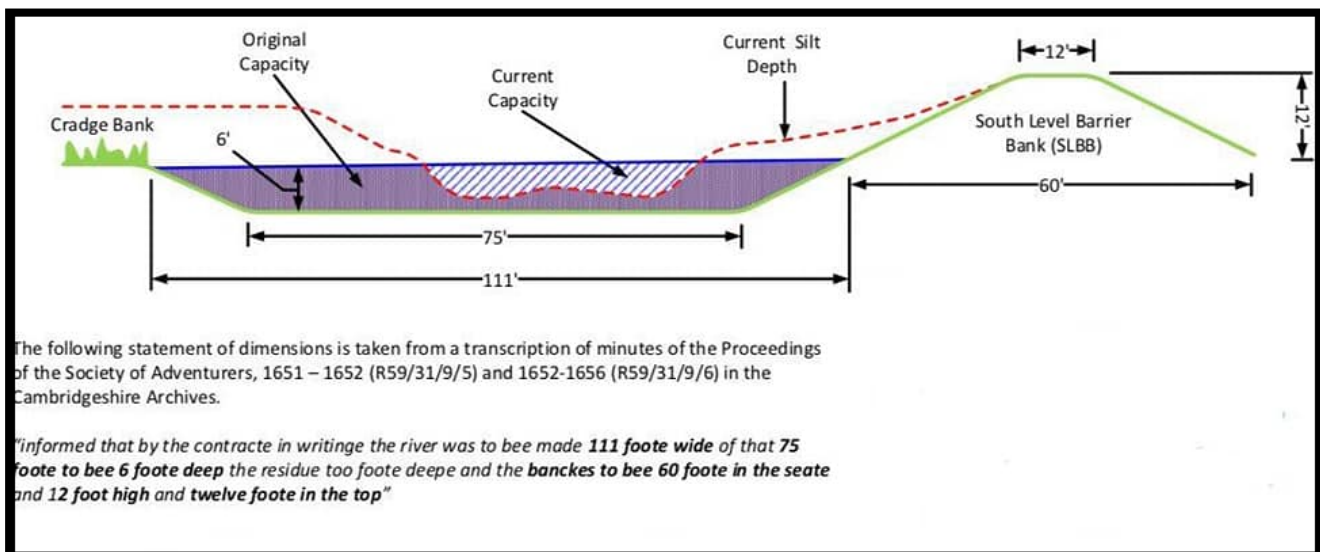
Droves

The Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire Fens abound with roads called Droves. The word 'drove' is used in preference to 'road' because it more accurately describes its original use. In years gone by, at the onset of winter livestock would have been driven by a drover to higher or drier ground that was less subject to flooding. With the return of spring and the drier weather the animals would be driven back down the drove to the lush grazing. But with modern drainage and the lessening chance of flooding they have become a relic of the past.

If it became necessary to move livestock these days most farmers would employ a livestock haulier.

16 Foot, 40 Foot, 100 Foot

Most waterways in the Fens have more than one name, and this is no exception. It is shown on Thomas Badeslade's 1723 map as "Thurlos Drain" (or "Thurles Drain"). The Middle Level Act of 1810 refers to just "Sixteen Feet River"; and Samuel Wells in 1830 refers to both "Thurlow's Drain, or Sixteen Feet River". On OS maps it was "Sixteen Foot River" in 1824 but since 1901 (at least) it has been "Sixteen Foot Drain". I've seen two or three different theories on the naming, one is the width of the Drain at the normal water level, another is the length of river dug each day (though that doesn't stack up too well with the total dug vs time to create the whole length).



The story of "I will always love you", 50 years on - from Dolly Parton to Whitney and Elvis

Are you having a productive day? Perhaps consider Dolly Parton and think again. One afternoon in 1973, a flash of inspiration saw her sit down and write two classics back-to-back.



First came 'Jolene' - a career-defining smash, synonymous with Parton alone. The next? 'I Will Always Love You'. Not a bad nine-to-five.

That tender second track, released 50 years ago in March, remains one of her lesser-known credits, despite soundtracking love and heartbreak for half a century. It was Whitney Houston's cover version, recorded for the soundtrack of The Bodyguard in 1992, that elevated the song to classic status.

The Urge to Fly

When I was young, my parents moved to Biggin Hill. I was always fascinated by the airshows and used to lay on the roof of our bungalow watching them but never really gave much thought to flying. A number of years later, my (then) wife saw something on TV about Hang Gliding and thought it would be a good idea to try it out. After day 1, it soon became pretty apparent that she had changed her mind about this, but by this time I was hooked. I booked myself onto the training course and set myself up for weekends of waiting around for the weather to become just right to get a very few short glides down the hill (firstly with 3 people running with you holding ropes so you didn't go anywhere you weren't supposed to - like hospital!!) I then purchased a Skyhook Cutlass hang glider, which was heavy, inefficient



and slow, but was all I could afford at the time. This plus all the equipment needed came in a 20kg, 20 foot long bag, plus other equipment which had to be carried up a 600 foot hill, rigging it at the top, all for a 3 minute flight (if lucky) down to the bottom to then de-rig and start all over again!

Not surprisingly, in 2 years, I gained a significant number of flights, but total flight time was still under 3 hours – not without a few incidents and a sobering story about someone I knew, who was an excellent pilot (flew in the British team), had an incident where he landed face first and was killed. That and the fact that I have a fear of falling (not of heights) meant that I was finding it increasingly difficult to walk to the edge to take off (once I was away, I had no problems at all). On a trip to Wales, I managed to take off, and the conditions were perfect, which allowed me to fly for a number of minutes, and more importantly, land back at the top – that was the ideal flight as it meant you could then fly off again quickly. However, as I was under my wing partially derigging, another pilot collided with the top of my wing as he landed (fortunately only minor) but for some reason, that was the last straw and I couldn't fly a hang glider again.

However, the flying bug was still with me – one thing I had tried once was a tow launch which meant I could take off from level ground. This was still in the early days, so somewhat experimental and not readily available, but the idea of taking off from the ground stuck, so the next stage was going to be powered flight. I had always liked the idea of autogyros - do you remember Little Nellie from James Bond? Having seriously looked at something like that, I got quite excited about seeing one on a trailer near where I lived (Leeds at the time), only to find out that someone had been killed flying it the following day, and all autogyros were grounded for a time (I believe a fault of how they were flown, rather than the machines themselves).

The next logical step was a microlight – these had originally literally been hang glider wings with a small trike and engine, but by the time I started, the wings were purpose built for powered flight, to give more strength and speed, and this

was a much more civilised way of flying. Easy to rack up hours instead of minutes, and generally less waiting around for perfect conditions. I bought a Mainair Flash 1 microlight, again quite old standard of the time, but it did the job. I passed my PPL(M) and after that, the sky was the limit – literally. I was flying 75 hours a year (well over the 50 hour per year average for pilots) and going all over the place – I wasn't comfortable flying over water, so always in this country, but with a jerry can strapped in the passenger seat, could fly considerable distances, landing in fields (never with crop, and always well away from any livestock or horses) to refuel. On one occasion I landed in a field next to the service station on the M1, and just nipped through the hedge to the services to refill the jerry can!

By this time, I was self-employed so decided I could afford a new machine and duly purchased the trike as a kit. Part of the reason for this new machine was also that I had decided to try my hand at instructing and passed my AFI qualification just before moving to Bedford, so was engaged as a part time AFI at Sandy Airfield using my own aircraft. I did this for a couple of years, but it actually took the edge off flying, so I sold my aircraft and bought a share in a syndicate owned aircraft (very modern – electric start!!). In those days, there were requirements to fly 5 hours every 13 months in order to keep your license valid, and I was struggling to do this, and in fact, one year I went out on the very last day of the 13 months and flew the whole 5 hours and 5 minutes in one go just to keep my license valid, but realised that my heart really wasn't in it any more so sold my share after 20 years of microlight flying.



That wasn't quite the end of my flying, though as my (then, and different) wife liked the sound of going gliding (sailplanes) so we both went along to Gransden where we both had a trial flight. She did enjoy it, but only as a one off, but I persisted – the idea of flight without an engine still really had its appeal and the winch launch was like being catapulted off the ground. I had a fair bit of instruction, but one lesson involved recovery from a spin (which of course means it has to be put in a spin in the first place) – this is not something you are taught on microlights as they can't spin, and was the first (and last) time I've really been terrified in flight and realised that I could continue flying as a student, but there was no way I was going to be able to qualify as a pilot.

In the meantime, other wind driven sports gave me some interest, I've tried land yachting, kite bugging, dinghy sailing and toyed with paramotoring (never quite got airborne). When I get a chance, I have a power kite that I really need to fly again, and blo karting is calling to me to try but possibly, apart from an occasional pleasure flight, I think my feet are now firmly on the ground. It's been a lot of fun though, and I still recognise the sound of a microlight, and look up wistfully.

Clive Benjamin

Any views expressed in The Heron do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heron Editorial Team.
The team aim to provide a balanced view of village opinions where such views are expressed.
We reserve the right to edit any submissions where we feel this is appropriate.

