

Stapleford

Ne Nuntium Necare!

MESSENGER

August 2021

Volume 80 No 8

Price 60p

Opening time

The Granary welcomes the village
page 39



Photo: Louise Guron

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Who's who at St Andrew's

www.standrewstapleford.org

Parish priest

Rev Dr Simon Taylor 840256

Curate

Rev Clare Coates 07818 618795

Churchwardens

Jackie Nettleton 721366

Alastair MacGregor

07855 269844

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Rob Needle 844227

Parish Administrator

Gillian Sanders 07752 373176

Youthworker

Zoe Clayton 894656

Children's Ministry

Sue Brown 01954 264246

Director of Music

John Bryden 07803 706847

PCC secretary

Nicky West 07927 531719

Treasurer

Chris Bow 841982

Vergar

Clare Kerr 842984

Sacristan

Peter Green 500404

Captain of bellringers

Tony Smith 843379

Church flowers

Jackie Nettleton 721366

Liz Hodgkins 01638 570060

Stapleford-Nachingwea Link

Trish Maude 242263

Mothers' Union

Hilary Street 840548

Johnson Memorial Hall

Gillian Sanders 07752 373176

Friends of St Andrew's

Tony Hore 843796

SERVICES at St ANDREW'S

Sunday services vary from week to week and our pattern is changing as we come out of lockdown. See the St Andrew's Noticeboard for this month, and the church website at standrewstapleford.org for full details. The services include:

9am BCP or CW Communion

10.30am Communion, Services of the Word, Messy Church and Forest Church

2pm Sunday Praise

4.30pm Connect

SERVICES AT OTHER CHURCHES

Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston (Roman Catholic)

Sundays 8.45am and 11.15am

Shelford Free Church (Baptist)

Sundays 10.30am

All house, prayer and Bible study groups are cancelled until further notice

Christenings and Weddings

Christenings take place during Sunday worship.

For both Christenings and Weddings, contact the parish priest.

Stapleford MESSENGER

Editor

Contact staplefordmessenger@gmail.com

Advertising

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From the Rev Dr Simon Taylor

YOU may have heard of Nicholas Winton. If you haven't, then check out the clips of his story on YouTube. Esther Rantzen did a *That's Life* episode on him in the 1980s which is well worth watching. He arranged the evacuation of more than 600 children from Germany to the UK in the 1930s. Many of them later recounted how they alone of their families were saved from the gas chambers. In the programme there is a great moment when Rantzen asks all those in the audience who owe their lives to Winton to stand up. I suppose around 50 or 100 do so – see picture below and cue crying all round. Asked about his work later, Winton said that his only regret was that he had not been able to get more children out, but it was just too difficult. One of the difficulties



was with the British government, who were not fully supportive. At times Winton, a rather mild-mannered stockbroker, had taken to forging Home Office documents just to get things moving. Winton was later knighted for his work. Sir Nicholas Winton, humanitarian, life-saver, law-breaker.



This has been on my mind recently as Home Secretary Priti Patel published a new Nationality and Borders Bill, which she hopes will become law this year. The whole Bill has the smell of the hostile environment about it, so I expect that there will be widely differing views as to whether or not it is a good thing. But here – today's bit of free legal advice – is a warning about your potential legal liabilities under the Bill.

Picture the scene. Next year, having enjoyed your UK holiday this summer so much, you decide to take another UK holiday, this time on the south coast. Lots of nice seaside walks, great things to see, rolling countryside and more. Highly recommended. One day you take a walk on the beach. To your horror you see a small dinghy packed with people 50 yards offshore. It is struggling in the waves and lives are at risk. Because you are a normal person you give no thought to the origins of those trying to come ashore, but if you had done so it would have been obvious that they were asylum-seekers. You help rescue them. No lives are lost and they enter the UK.

But hold on. Have you committed a crime? Have you not assisted someone in an illegal entry to the UK? The answer is no, perhaps for more

than one reason, but the headline reason, were it still 2021, would be that you have helped them out of the goodness of your heart and not for any profit. Quite rightly the current law says that is not a crime. It would only be a crime if you were running a smuggling operation and taking payment.

But this imaginary holiday is in 2022. Will you have committed a crime? Answer: yes, if the government has its way, because the Bill makes it a criminal offence to 'knowingly facilitate the arrival or attempted arrival in, or the entry or attempted entry into, the United Kingdom of an individual [if you] know or have reasonable cause to believe that the individual is an asylum-seeker.' It doesn't matter that you did it out of the goodness of your heart and made no profit. It will be a criminal act. And your holiday adventures aside, it also criminalizes those whom international law compels to act. As members of the Stapleford Yacht Club (!) know (if there isn't one, we should start one) it is a duty under international law, to which the UK is a signatory, to attempt the rescue of persons in danger at sea.

This particular departure from international norms is a further step away from our Christian heritage. The Old Testament 'love your neighbour' imperative bites here, of course, with the reminder that when Jesus later applied it he was talking about doing what we could for anyone in need, not drawing a geographical, national or ethnic boundary – you will remember the parable of the Good Samaritan. Beyond that broad imperative God has always expected his people to welcome strangers. It is one of the strongest forces for good in ancient morality and should still be so today. As it happens, it has also been rather good for us as a nation, whether it is for the tough work of harvesting our crops or the hard but glamorous work of playing for our football team. Eight members of England's first team are descendants of recent immigrants. Leaving that titbit aside, the whole story of salvation is one of hospitality, grace and welcome, ending in an open welcome home to heaven for all who are willing to receive the love of Christ for themselves.

I wonder what Sir Nicholas would think of the new law. He might be surprised. At least in his day the difficulty was just a bureaucratic lack of urgency. Now we have something much more sinister, the criminalisation of those good human instincts to help people in need.

There are, I think, two things we can do. The first is to pray for wisdom for our government, that it should not seek to pass the legislation in this unamended form. The second is to write to Anthony Browne MP (at anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk). Perhaps he will do the right thing, so that, next summer, you can too.

Every blessing to you all, Simon

St Andrew's Noticeboard

SUNDAY services will also be on our St Andrew's Stapleford YouTube channel.

- | | | |
|--------|------------------------------|---|
| 1 AUG | 9 am
10.30 am | BCP COMMUNION
OUTDOOR SUNG CW COMMUNION WITH
FOREST CHURCH
Ephesians 4.1-16; Mark 12.18-27
<i>He is the God of the living</i> |
| | 6 pm | BCP CHORAL EVENSONG |
| 8 AUG | 9 am
10.30 am | BCP COMMUNION
SUNG SERVICE OF THE WORD
Ephesians 4.25-32; Mark 12.28-34
<i>Love your neighbour as yourself</i> |
| 15 AUG | 9 am
10.30 am
10.30 am | SUNG CW COMMUNION
SUNG SERVICE OF THE WORD
Ephesians 5.1-14; Mark 12.35-4
<i>The widow's mite</i>
MESSY FOREST CHURCH |
| 22 AUG | 9 am
10.30 am | BCP COMMUNION
SUNG SERVICE OF THE WORD
Ephesians 5.15-20; Mark 13.1-37
<i>Watch!</i> |
| 29 AUG | 9 am
10.30 am | BCP COMMUNION
SUNG SERVICE OF THE WORD
Ephesians 6.10-24; Mark 14.1-11
<i>A beautiful thing</i> |

The church is open every day as a place to come and pray or enjoy a moment of quiet reflection.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funeral:

8 July: Olive Czech

Newsflash: church is not dangerous



ACTUALLY it is good for you, but that is another story.

After our June drama of another fall of plaster from the ceiling we shut the main part of the church while safety netting was put in place. Letting someone be hit by plaster falling from 30 feet did not seem all that welcoming.

You may have seen our services outside in June. It was lovely, and we will do it again, but it was an awful lot of work getting everything ready for services and clearing up afterwards. So I am very glad to report that the safety netting is now in place and we have been able go back inside.

Do pop in and take a look. The contractors have done an excellent job, and the netting is not intrusive at all.

The next step, not one we have to take immediately, is to decide on the method of repair, either full traditional lathe and plaster or an adjusted modern version using a mesh inlay.

Then it will be time for some major fund raising. Unless you happen to have a spare £100k you would like to give us to make the ceiling safe for the next couple of hundred years ... **Simon Taylor**



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A photograph of a modern kitchen with white cabinets, a dark countertop, and a stainless steel sink. A white box with text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

**EXTENSIONS
CONVERSIONS
RENOVATIONS
ALTERATIONS**

Gratitude

THE word gratitude sits on a page with power and authority. It has warmth and cheer reaching out with pleasure and hope. Yet it is used too little. We have come to know and value the word through Pandemic and Lockdown.

At first we felt adrift and lost as structure and focus suddenly stopped. Adjusting proved difficult. Creativity beckoned, working outdoors with lap trays in sunshine. The garden inspired. Looking carefully with time and space to really see was a revelation; greatly appreciated. Observing textures, shapes and colour was enlightening. Pastels were effective in capturing scenes. Viewing clearly through sight but more importantly the heart rewards. Walking locally helped awaken senses. There is always something new even if we think it familiar. As time went on we courageously ventured to the Botanic Gardens. Acres, fresh air and loveliness. We were thankful for virtual Wellness Wanders too. How thoughtful considerate and able people were.



It has been great to see exhibits in the museums, to discuss, question, answer and be artistic. We applaud Zoom and all helping to bring the outside in. We have enjoyed seeing details in paintings, relaxing to mindfulness and music. Being shown virtually into a shed for art activities has become special. Untrodden paths were exciting; even the boxes showing faces without masks, frozen or muted. Interaction was good, laughter a tonic. We looked at achievements recently. Stephen said, 'Did I really do that?' We have been richly rewarded. From the different museums we have 'travelled' and explored. Embracing challenge was worthwhile. Without my stamina and perseverance I wonder where we would be...

From pottery, poetry, church services, education and exercise we have relished opportunities. 'Normality' however calls. Consistency, continuity and stability will gradually change; complicated by Alzheimer's. Websites cannot be human beings. We need to meet, greet, touch - to reassure and communicate. We feel cautious but have to shout 'Yippee' at the thought of concerts and theatre starting again. Wonderful. Patience and sensitivity is needed.

In difficult times we are indebted to many who have cared; recognition truly deserved. Shopping, messages, smiles, kind acts and deeds, enhance life. In months of trials we have learned what is valuable.

Often it is the simplest things for which we feel blessed and grateful.

Stephen and Judith Lee

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I THINK we all know by now that singing is one of the best things for us! St Andrew's Choir is a happy and friendly bunch of people of all ages. We meet each Thursday evening at 7pm for just over an hour.

We work hard, knowing that on Sunday we are needed and appreciated.

Our range of music stretches from 8th century plainsong to music composed last year. We have learnt new skills this last year, adapting to whatever is required of us, week in, week out, inside, outside (sometimes), singing spaced out, soloing, one voice range only,

All four parts unaccompanied or with the organ roaring behind us!

I promise you, as the Director, there is never a dull moment, even the occasional laugh. We look after each other and are valued, every week. Come and give us a go: as they say (and I think it is one of today's best phrases) " You're welcome! " **John Bryden**, music@standrewstapleford.org, 07803 706847.

The start of a good READ



ANITHA the District Executive Director of READ International has arrived in Nachingwea to manage the start of the library refurbishment at Nambambo secondary school on 12 July.

In the photos below Anitha is introducing herself to the District Executive Director of Nachingwea. **Trish Maude**



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Letters to the Editor

Please include a contact postal address with all correspondence.

FROM Dr John W. Lambie, Stapleford

RE: South Cambridge Water Park proposal for Dernford

THE latest scheme for the gravel pit and surrounding land as detailed in the July issue of the *Messenger* must have been composed under the influence of a powerful psychotropic agent because 'pipe-dream' scarcely suffices to describe it.

My comments are a result of visits to the site at least once per week since it opened to the public and include last year's moderately fine summer and this year's wet spring.



1. The lake's level is unstable and quite unsuitable for recreational use. It is not

fed by any stream and even in the last year its level has varied by several feet. The level of the ground water table, the rainfall and the evaporation in warm dry weather all exert an influence. When the water was low last summer, a rather extensive, unattractive muddy bed was revealed around the edge.

2. During the wet spring around the lake a very large area indeed was boggy underfoot. So-called 'sensitive landscaping' would entail extensive and expensive works with heavy importation of good-quality soils. Having put up with the gravel quarry the local environment would again suffer sustained disruption again by works necessary to adapt the area for the proposed uses. The proposed changes would permanently bring more traffic to the already overworked local roads, especially if caravans are involved.

3. Installation of expensive facilities would certainly then require active and professional supervision and cleaning which would cost a lot of money. Charging for entry would totally alter the character of the area removing access altogether for many individuals. An increase in local taxes to finance the facility would be resented extremely.

At present, access to the site is free of charge and control is minimal. I have personally observed the following minor delinquency: (a) failure to clear up dog excrement, (b) swimming in the lake despite notices forbidding

this and a complete absence of safety equipment, (c) littering including drink cans, nitrous oxide containers and remains of barbecues and picnics.



Many of these problems arise because the fence around the lake is not in good repair but to improve

it would cost little. It is my contention that volunteer wardens could be found in the local community at no cost to improve supervision of the existing facility. Also more litter bins and more notices about expected behaviour would cost little. I have never yet seen a police car visit the facility even when substantial numbers were present in summer and occasional appearance of a police officer would undoubtedly help improve behaviour without specific additional cost.

4. Although the proposed scheme pays lip-service to wildlife the proposals look thoroughly destructive. At present there is an especially rich bird population with many rare visitors. With far more human visitors this situation can only deteriorate. Despite dogs being allowed to roam off leads, ground nesting birds such as skylarks are still to be found, so far. It is far from clear how the proposed changes will not in reality damage wildlife. The



claims made in this regard look like empty virtue-signalling.

5. The proposal makes great play of the pressure by current users of the facilities at the site. Is this really true? A well sign-posted food truck set up in the car park at Dernford during this spring but gave up after a few weeks for lack of

business. It is also suggested that the Covid pandemic will result in permanently increased use of the site but the opposite is just as likely to be true. When alternative facilities such as shops and pubs return to normal it is just as likely that footfall at Dernford will decrease.

My view is that the best policy for Dernford reservoir is LEAVE WELL ALONE. Minor and inexpensive improvements would be welcome but grand schemes are NOT WANTED.

FROM: Frank Baker, Mingle Lane

RE: South East Cambridgeshire Badger Group

I AND, I suspect, a number of other residents of Mingle Lane do not share the enthusiasm of the South East Cambridgeshire Badger Group.

For the last three to four years, badgers from a sett in a garden in Hawthorne Road have been devastating my lawn, regularly digging large holes. I understand that neighbours have also experienced the same problem.

I have researched ways of deterring these animals from damaging my garden. The most frequent suggestion is the use of human urine – it does not work. Lion dung is also alleged to frighten them off and it is possible to buy this online at around £20 a kilo. Maybe I should visit Linton Zoo and see if they could give a fresh sample.

Meanwhile, enthusiasts are welcome to come to my garden and repair the damage caused by their beloved badgers. Personally I regard them as pests!



FROM; Wendy Reynolds, Gog Magog Hills

RE: Cycling

A RECENT notice about a bicycle trip planned to go at the speed of the slowest rider reminded me of an incident at work some years ago which caused much amusement. It happened at the Babraham Institute (names changed of course).

One morning, one of the secretaries on arrival at the Hall collapsed on a chair saying “I shall have to rest for a minute before I start. I biked to work with Mrs Brown. She’s much older than me but she pedalled so fast it was all I could do to keep up with her!”

At the same time in one of the lab blocks Mrs Brown had also subsided on to a chair. “I biked to work with Mary Jones - never again! She went like the wind. I did manage to keep up with her but I had to pedal as hard as I could!”



Yesteryear

SYLVIA Morris looks at events in August over the years. Note that punctuation and capital letters are exactly as printed at the time.

1853

WANTON MISCHIEF. On Saturday night last some evil-minded fellow stabbed and maimed a sheep, belonging to R. Collier, Esq., of this place. We are pleased to state that a police officer from Trumpington is on the alert, and we hope ere long the guilty party will be brought to justice and receive the reward he so richly deserves.

1888

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN. Alfred Dawson, farmer, of Stapleford, was summoned for employing two children, under the age of 13, named Frank Smith and Alexander Farnham. Herbert Gosling, farmer of Stapleford, was summoned for a similar offence, in respect of three boys named Richard Elborn, Robert Wilson and Harry Matlock.

1902

EDWARD VII'S CORONATION. The Coronation festivities passed off on Saturday very satisfactorily and the villagers appreciated the efforts of the Coronation Festivities Committee thoroughly. The programme comprised (1) at 2.30 pm a solemn and impressive service in the parish church conducted by the vicar; (2) at 3.30 pm the village children sat down to a substantial tea; (3) at 4.45 pm the parishioners were entertained to a well provided dinner; (4) sports were afterwards held till dark. The entertainment took place at Bury Farm, kindly lent for the occasion. Altogether a happy and long to be remembered day was spent.



1907

SETTING SNARES. At the Cambridge Division Petty Sessions on Saturday, Frederick Phabe, 19, and Gamaliel Turner, 19, labourers of Stapleford, were summoned for using snares for the purpose of taking hares, without a

licence to kill game, on land in the occupation of Mr Stephan Hagger, at Stapleford on July 22nd. Defendants pleaded not guilty.

1940

PAPER COLLECTION

PROCEEDS. The Shelford and Stapleford Boy Scouts and the Stapleford Girl Guides out of the monies received for the collection

of paper, have made donations of 10 guineas to the Red Cross, five guineas each to the Women's and Men's Branches of the British Legion, and three guineas to Toc H. They propose to make other donations and to invest the remainder of the money in National Savings Certificates.

1959

CUP FOR STAPLEFORD. Stapleford defeated Quy in the CCA Cup Final on Parker's Piece on August Bank Holiday afternoon. This was Stapleford's first season in premier-division cricket. The team was captained by Albie Ellis.



Deadline for the **SEPTEMBER** Messenger

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Adrian Michael Halliwell 1939-2021

ADRIAN was born in St Helens and was a proud Lancastrian. When he was young his family moved to Gerrards Cross where his father worked for Mars as a lawyer.

He was educated at The Old Hall in Wellington, Malvern College in Worcestershire and then Christ's College Cambridge, where he followed in his father's footsteps and read law.

He began practicing law in Reading before moving back to Cambridge to join Wild, Hewitson and Shaw where he worked for many years before joining the Crown Prosecution Service.

Husband to Gillian, father to Grant and Thomas, father-in-law to Sarah and grandfather to Oliver, Harry, Freddie and Jemima, Adrian was proud of all the generations of his family.

A passionate golfer who was a member of Worlington, Hunstanton and St Andrews.

He loved meeting people and made many friends through golf, travelling and in our local community.

Adrian was a regular attendee at St Andrew's Church for many years and served on the Friends of St Andrew's Committee.

Whilst ill with cancer he continued to live life with a positive spirit and outlook and was full of praise and respect for our local surgery, the team at Addenbrooke's and the Arthur Rank Hospice Nurses.

He died peacefully at home with family with him as he would have wished. **Gillian Halliwell.**



Looking for a local venue?

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2G3S



IN July we held a very interesting Zoom talk about the River Cam, hosted nature walks round the Dernford Reservoir and Stapleford Parish Pit, and enjoyed two cycle rides around the area. We also pledged to reduce

our use of plastic in the Plastic Free July campaign, and you may have seen our craftivism efforts around the local villages to promote the message, see pictures.



The leader of the Dernford walk, John O’Boyle writes: “We were treated to the distinctive call of a cuckoo and the



uplifting song of larks as they ascended from the grassland around the lake. Terns were busy squabbling on the island where they seem to be nesting, and showing off with their acrobatic flight and vertical dives into the water. A great crested grebe was seen diving down into the water and then passing small fish to her two chicks with their distinctive striped heads.

“Dazzling blue damselflies hovered above the water and a pair of large emperor dragonflies zigzagged near the bank. There were several meadow brown butterflies fluttering about and small chafer bugs sunning themselves on the vegetation. June is the month for grasses to flower and we contrasted the distinctive shapes of several species. There were abundant meadow plants of many colours ranging from white to purple. It will be interesting to see how the meadow develops over the year - will a sensitive grass cut and collect regime maintain the diversity of the ground flora or will the land be left to scrub over? We are fortunate to have on our doorstep such a special area of natural abundance.” What a shame some of this wildlife would be affected by the proposed Waterpark plans.





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There is just time for you to go along to Food For Our Future's event in Sawston. There will be a chef-led cooking event as part of their campaign to encourage people to take up the 'Climate Diet'. It will be outside Boswells' Bakery in Sawston on Friday 30 July, from 11-4. Come along and learn to cook some dishes without using meat or dairy.

Our next meeting is a planning meeting on 12 August at 8pm, on Zoom. The next nature walk will be around Little Shelford, on 21 August. Please email the address below if you wish to attend either. In September it is the Climate Coalition's Big Green Week from 18 to 26, so watch this space for the events we will be running.

If you are interested in green matters and the environment, send an email to greengroupssss@gmail.com to sign up for our newsletter, or to get a Zoom link to join in our meetings. Also see our Facebook page. **Helen Hale**



Great Shelford Library



AT the time of writing, our library opening hours are as follows: Tuesdays 10am to 2pm; Fridays 2pm to 6pm; Saturdays 10am to 1pm.

However, all being well we hope to be able to **increase these hours in August**. For the latest updates please visit cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library, call the contact centre 0345 045 5225 or pop into the library and ask for details.

Children can still sign up at the library for the free Summer Reading Challenge. Have fun reading during the holidays and collect stickers and rewards! Visit Cambridgeshire Libraries Facebook for Families page @CamslibFamilies or our website to find out more. This year children can collect their stickers at any time the library is open.

We hope that adults will enjoy reading this summer, too. Travel may still be tricky, but books can always take you to new places! Borrow books from the library or download free e-books or e-audiobooks from our online catalogue. We also offer a wide range of e-magazines and e-newspapers. Did you know that you can read your daily newspaper free of charge on your device if you're a member of the library? **Rosemary Humby**

Quiz time

THE quiz at the Three Horseshoes has been back in action for a few weeks now and is every Monday at 8pm. The winning team now receives £30 in drinks vouchers (along with the opportunity to set the next week's quiz, if it so wishes), with the runners-up receiving a box of chocolates.

The entry fee is £2 per team member. Half of the money goes to a local charity with the other going into a bonus question pot, which each week's winner gets a crack at nabbing at the end of the quiz. Failure to answer correctly results in a rollover to the following week.

Below is a round from the quiz on 5 July, compiled by Simon Hardwick. Have a go. Answers on page 31.

Those Pesky Numbers

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
2. How many sons of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine (pictured below left) became Kings of England? For another point, who were they?
3. Roman numerals: the system uses how many distinct letters?
4. Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Of how many letters is it composed?
5. The average pair of human lungs has a total area which equates to what exactly? Is it: a) a squash court b) a tennis court c) a football pitch d) a cricket pitch e) a polo field (pictured below right)?
6. The longest river in Europe is 3631 km long. Name the river.
7. A standard volleyball team has how many members (on the field at any particular time)?
8. Monopoly. What is the sum total of the values of the green properties?
9. How many black and white squares are there on a standard chessboard?
10. How many feet are there in a fathom?



The helping hand with no name

AS I waited for my case at Barcelona's Prat airport I felt something was not quite right. Yes, at fourteen years of age, my Spanish was very basic but I could not understand any part of the conversations of my fellow passengers, who appeared to be speaking an off version of French.

I had been selected by my school, Austin Friars, to spend the three month summer holiday with a Spanish family who wanted their son, Carlos, to have some basic tuition in English before attending my school. They had stipulated a boy who was studying Spanish - I fitted the bill in that regard - but at that moment I thought they would take some convincing I was studying Spanish. The case finally arrived, and after passing through customs, I walked on to the concourse, expecting at least one of the family to be there to meet me. No one showed up so after waiting hours, I approached a taxi.

The driver asked in heavily-accented Tarzan English "where family?" I explained I was travelling on my own.

After establishing I had the fare, we set off for the railway station to get a train to Tarrassa where the family lived according to the letter of introduction I had.

"Why you come Spain with no family?" he asked. "To learn Spanish" I replied. He gave me a quizzical look "To learn Spanish? 'Ere? In Catalonia?" "Yes" I replied. "You crazy. No one speak Spanish 'ere. Everyone speak Catalan."

My heart sank. The peseta dropped. So that was the off French I had heard in the baggage hall. My next thought was "what would my father say?" Thank God he was in South America.

When I approached a taxi in the rank outside Tarrassa Station I had an identical conversation with a taxi driver about where was my family/why I was coming to Tarrassa? But now in Spanish not Tarzan English, which made me feel a bit better, even if I was informed once again I was crazy because everyone spoke Catalan.

When we pulled up at the house he could have just dropped me off with my case. Instead we walked up the drive to see in the late evening gloom that all the windows were shuttered and some leaflets were half stuffed into the mail box.



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“No one is living here,” he remarked. Suddenly life was not looking too bright for me. School had broken up - my parents were living in South America - and I did not have the phone number of my Uncle Jack, on whose farm in Norfolk I spent my school holidays.

The taxi driver and I walked to the neighbouring property and he knocked on the door. A very frail lady of advanced years opened the door. There was no way she would have kept it open a nanosecond longer if I had spoken to her in my increasingly mangled Spanish. She informed us the family always spent the summer in their summer home in a hill village but would be back in October! Then the taxi driver posed the question that would have a profound impact on my entire professional life: “Do you have their summer house address for forwarding on mail?” “Yes” she replied .

Fifteen minutes later we pulled up in the village of Matadepera. I can still remember the address - Camino Can Prat 1. An elderly gentleman came to the door and before the taxi driver could say a word he knew who I was. He disappeared into the hall and made a very animated ‘phone call. The taxi driver explained he was telling his son he had got the wrong date! The elderly man took my case into the hall. I was completely exhausted. I attempted to muster up my best Spanish to thank the taxi driver profusely. But the words would not come out because I was so emotionally grateful for him being so bothered to help me.

He seemed to understand. “Entiendo muchacho. Ten suerte.” - I understand young man. Be lucky.” Then he walked down the drive to his car and disappeared into the night.

Not only did I not manage to thank him, I did not even pay the fare!

Yet without his basic humanity I would have had to approach the Police for help, who would have passed me on to social services and then on to the British Embassy in Madrid and then a convoluted routing of flights to South America.

I would have missed out on the opportunity of a lifetime - to acquire a level of fluency which enabled me to work in and visit 22 of the 24 countries where Spanish is the language of the state. I would not have spent three long summer holidays with a wonderful Spanish family, with Carlos and I attending each other’s weddings . Nearly 60 years later and the most recent e-mail was last week. We just do not discuss Gibraltar.

This is my story, of how a stranger had the humanity to care when he could have walked away. These stories do not make the news but they make the world a better place for those involved.

Maybe his God was with him that day. Maybe his name was also Salvador. **Adrian Barnard**

First they came for our verbs...

DID you notice? In the past few years we've developed a galloping loss of faith in the power of the English verb. An example. 'To focus on something' once meant to concentrate your attention, narrowing the range of your gaze to give a vital object your maximum attention. But no more. To focus on a subject is no longer enough. Now we must focus *in* on it. Similarly, we don't distil our thoughts anymore, we distil them *down*. I even heard someone on Radio 4 the other day (where else, I hear you cry?) opine that someone had tried to avert *away* a controversy. Try averting something *towards* you, I thought, as I stood in my workshop, tools in hand, focusing in on splitting a hair.

It's tempting to suggest this loss of faith in the power of our verbs – this need to bolster the verb with tautological extras – reflects a more profound loss of faith in our institutions. There is, after all, no more well-established facet of our language than a 'doing word'.

I realise you might not find this line of argument persuasive just now. Boris Johnson's ratings are currently on the up, galvanised by the vaccine roll-out's apparent demonstration of governmental efficiency. Surely, faith in our institutions is at an all-time high?

Give it time. The sheer number (not amount) of unnecessary deaths that have occurred in the UK during the pandemic will one day – quite properly – become the real story. For now, we don't really want to think about it, glad for the hope the vaccine gives us. At the same time, and for the same reasons, we might also dismiss the dreadful death toll in Brazil, and in parts of Africa, and in other parts of the world. These are purely national failures, aren't they?

You think? One day - perhaps quite soon - we'll be forced to acknowledge they are part of an horrific failure to respond collectively, to see beyond protecting our own people - itself both a misunderstanding of who we are, and what we are up against. But I digress.

Our verbs may have grown weak in our own estimation but that, naturally, is far from the whole story of language. Other changes are actually quite creative.

Neo-nouns sprout up all the time, most obviously in relation to technology – a 'zoom meeting' was almost unheard of a year ago. Even though other video conferencing products are available, the term seems to have embedded itself into our language as deeply as a biro down the back of the settee or a Hoover under the stairs. All this in just a few short months. Other social experiences likewise stimulate the search for new terms with

which to describe them – witness ‘lockdown’ and ‘shielding’ and ‘duvet day’.

Admittedly, what comes out of the New Word Generator is sometimes pure gobbledegook, and sometimes swiftly superseded. Yesterday I heard someone describe something as having ‘increased additionality’. This presumably is what just a short time ago earned the then new-minted title of ‘added value’. A few weeks is a long time in wordsmithery.

My immediate reaction to this kind of change is usually to scream at the radio or TV first and relish the invention later. At first, what tumbles from our lips seems just the latest in a long decline in the precise use of language – the kind of slippage that sees no problem with talking about ‘an amount of people’, or to talk of less things, when we mean fewer. Once calm however, I know the truth is more complicated. A language that is not evolving, twisting and inventing is stagnating, or declining, and whether we personally find the changes charming to the ear is less important than the fact that changes are taking place.

The trouble is, some changes in the words we use and how we use them are simply a mask for malevolence. In these cases, what we are witnessing is not a word morphing, or weakening, or even being gleefully subverted (‘queer’ comes to mind as an excellent example) - but being divorced from its meaning altogether.

This is the sort of thing that George Orwell wrote about. In ‘1984’, you’ll recall the ministry responsible for propaganda is fatuously called the Ministry of Truth, and the section of government dealing with the perpetual war, is the Ministry of Peace. In Orwell’s dystopia the status of facts – historically verifiable truth - is no longer secure. Winston Smith’s own job within the Ministry of Truth is to track back through miles of micro-fiche – through myriad (not myriads of) newspapers and learned journals and official documents - and amend the historical record. Thoroughness is vital. Winston must expunge the very grounds of truth - that is, the soil which helped to germinate any truth that has become inconvenient to the ruling powers.

This might remind you of the Chinese government’s determination to rewrite the origin story of the coronavirus, but that is far from the only example, for the negation of truth has recently reached a new level of ‘blatancy’. Faced with pictorial and other documentary evidence undermining Donald Trump’s claim that his Presidential Inauguration had been attended by more people than any in history, his spokeswoman claimed this was not a lie, merely an alternative fact. This is rather like the infamous bus-side ad announcing that Brexit would save millions of pounds for the NHS. What is just as shocking as the untruth, is the lack of



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accountability for it. As the departing French ambassador to London remarked in relation to the British Prime Minister's bus-plastered 'alternative fact', it would seem that 'Lying is no longer a sin'.

This is not the morphing of language or even a loss of faith in it, it is language with the meaning hollowed out. The kind of stuff French philosophers have been announcing (and in no small way, pioneering) for the past half century. We are now, officially, post-truth.

And if all that does not terrify you, listen to the story of a 26-year-old pregnant woman from Afghanistan who - in what unknowable desperation - shooed her three existing children out of her tent in a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos. And then she set herself on fire. As she lay in a hospital bed where she is being treated for severe, life-changing burns, the prosecutor announced that she had formally been charged with arson.

If losing faith in the power of a verb is a minor thing, to employ words in this way is the thick end of an utterly wicked wedge. And I mean wicked in the old sense, meaning really REALLY not good at all.

In this context, you may be relieved to hear that one final story recently gave me hope. Lady Gaga's dog walker was attacked, and the singer's dogs stolen. That part of the story gave me no hope at all, I hasten to add, but the next bit did. Pressed for a comment, Lady G's father Joe Germanotta came up with the following statement:

"Shooting people in order to steal dogs is wrong."

In other times, I might smirk at this statement of the bleedin' obvious. But no more. In times of such subversion of meaning, Mr Germanotta's simple statement of truth is unbelievably - by which I mean, extremely - welcome. **Fraser Grace**

Big data in a pandemic world:

How our data defies travel restrictions to go global

6pm to 7.30pm, Wednesday 11 August, virtual event on zoom



GLOBAL gathering and sharing of data is crucial to track, understand and tackle the evolving threat of coronavirus. In the UK alone, vital new knowledge has grown out of data provided by many tens of thousands of people. With such vast pools of information, we'll explore how co-operation, sharing and trust across communities and borders is key to making sense of it all.

This is a free event but booking is required - to register go to www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/online/covid-connections/ and search by date.

Fun, food and friendship on the Rec

HOW lucky we were for the clouds to clear and the sun to shine, making a wonderful day for villagers to relax and forget the past 18 months of lockdown. After so much uncertainty over whether what the Village Weekend Committee had planned would be able to go ahead, the day was perfect. It was nice to sit on the Rec with my family and close friends and enjoy their company, whilst seeing so many others doing the same.



Everyone enjoyed the music, children played safely, and parents chilled out whilst enjoying the fantastic food provided by Chris from The Three Horseshoes and drinks



from his pop-up bar. His staff were kept very busy serving burgers, kebabs and beer, and I was informed afterwards that they had pretty much sold out of everything by the end of the evening.

We had so many comments from people on the day and afterwards to say how good the band was and how much they are looking forward to next year, when hopefully we can have a marquee again and get back to running an event that lasts a whole weekend.

ON behalf of myself and others who helped to put on the event, we would like to thank all of those who attended and we look forward to seeing you again next year. Onwards and upwards from here...!

Michael Gatward



Granta medical practices

AT Granta, we are always looking at new ways to connect with our patients and help assist them with their health care journey.



One of the options we are currently considering is a mobile telephone app called Airmid; a patient-facing app designed for patients and GP surgeries alike. From viewing upcoming appointments to video consultations, viewing your medical records and ordering your medication, you can manage all your health care needs in one place. There is also the option of incorporating and tracking your own personal health goals with Apple Health and Google Fit.

Airmid is a simple, secure app which you can log into using your NHS app login or your SystmOnline account. An NHS app login can also be created directly via Airmid.

Over the next few weeks we are planning to trial this mobile app with a number of pre-selected patients to test its suitability. If you have the NHS app, why not download Airmid and take a look? We would welcome any feedback you may have. Airmid can be obtained via the App store. **Sandra East, Head of Patient Services:** sandra.east@nhs.net

Mothers' Union



WE had to cancel our events in July (the Get Together and the Pudding Party with Milton Branch) as the restrictions were not lifted enough for us to go ahead.

However, we have invited Milton MU to join us on Monday 9 August (Mary Sumner Day) for our coffee morning from 10.30am to 12 noon, in the Johnson Hall.

This is open to all members and it would be a lovely occasion to see each other after so long without any meetings. There will be cake and coffee to enjoy, and a raffle. **Hilary Street**

Quiz answers

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 1. 116 years | 6. Volga |
| 2. Two; Richard I and John | 7. Six |
| 3. Seven | 8. £920 |
| 4. 33 | 9. 64 |
| 5. A tennis court | 10. Six |

Stapleford strollers: short walk 22

The Hamlet Church: a circular walk at Duddenhoe End

To get to start of walk

THIS shorter walk starts and ends at The Hamlet Church, Duddenhoe End, CB11 4UN. To get there, take the A505 past the IWM at Duxford and then the first turn left, signed Chrishall. In Chrishall village, follow the left fork past The Red Cow pub and, when the B1039 is reached after a few minutes, go left. Then take the first right, for Duddenhoe End. Before reaching the village, take the first left, signed The Hamlet Church. Park in the grassy church car park.

Distance of Walk

Just over 2½ miles. It's an easy walk with nice views, but is not completely flat. There are, also, a couple of stretches of roadside walking. The roads are not busy, but care needs to be taken.

OS Map

Explorer map 194. For free map extracts use footpathmaps.com or maps.the-hug.net This month's route map is taken from the latter.

Extra Information

Duddenhoe End is a very pleasant small village in North East Essex. There is no pub or shop but, if doing this walk at a weekend, you may well come across the ex-taxi cab, now used as a local mobile ice cream van. The Hamlet Church is thatched and is a nineteenth century barn conversion.

Route of walk

From the church car park head right, along the minor road. At the first junction, turn right, walking for a short distance on the road, going left along a footpath after the first house. Careful: it is not signed and is easy to miss.

Walk along the narrow path (can be a little overgrown), go through a metal gate into a field, then swing right and left, following the right-hand side of the field. Go through a gate on the right before the field-end and head left, passing through a gate next to some outbuildings. This brings the route on to an entrance road to a house on the left. Follow it round until a road is reached. Turn left and walk downhill along the road. TAKE CARE.

A footpath sign points right soon after the slope becomes gentler, and a grass track heads out to the left of a wood. Follow this along the left-hand side of the wood and then swing sharp right at the far end.

The path now goes up a slope. Keep on, with the wood to the immediate right. Swing right and then left and pass through a gap in a hedge

at a point where the wood ends. Carry on ahead and follow the path between wire fences dividing two pastures, until coming to a rough track. Turn right and follow the track until a road is reached. Cross over and take the side road opposite, heading towards Duddenhoe End.

Look out for a footpath sign to the right. Note, the path is a narrow one at first, with tall hedges on either side. Beyond the hedges, the route opens out and, shortly, a large cropped field is reached. The path crosses this and, at the far end, meets the road from the church used at the start of the walk. Turn left and return to the church car park. **David Barnes**

The Stapleford Strollers do not accept responsibility for any accident or mishap that may happen to any person who follows this route.



We're waiting for your story!

HAVE you a story to tell or an event to publicise? Or perhaps you have an opinion to share on an issue that is important to you. If so, drop us a line on staplefordmessenger@gmail.com - after all, it's your magazine and we would love to hear from you.

Vicarage Lane

IN the absence of one body responsible for the upkeep of Vicarage Lane, a group of us spent an afternoon last month cutting back and clearing the overgrown hedge along the lane, filling three green bins.



We have had to leave a few piles of cuttings which would not fit in the available bins and it is hoped that these will rot down over time unless anyone takes the initiative to put them in their green bin!

Thanks go to Sam Webster, Yvonne Smith and Rebecca Trigg for their help. The Parish Council is investigating a long-term solution for the upkeep of the path.

The Parish Council would like to remind residents to ensure that bushes etc do not overhang the footpath outside their property, which might restrict access to the elderly, disabled and mothers and children. **Gillian Pett**

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Puzzle corner

Anagrams

Unscramble the following anagrams in each group.

All end with different letters.

The answers, which can be found on page 43, are all common words.

5-letter words

BLAKE	GINAL	SOUPI	ORAIID	GORIC
PETES	CHITE	LETOX	ROUTE	CATHY
OWNED	RAYED	GROWN	OCEAN	AROPE
AILUP	DEPIT	EXDIN	BROTH	ZAPTO
	HEFTI	ACHER	LAMPS	

8-letter words

SEASKIRT	FLIPSANE	WHOSPINT	LOCHABER
EXPANDPI	BLOWAGUN	BULLYASS	MELTRAGE
SONICERA	INNSURGE	AMINISON	RIPECLUB
MENDSROY	TYRELINE	COMBATAC	CHINWADS
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Stapleford Tennis Club



BY now most of you will have seen the new MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) on the Stapleford Rec. Isn't it wonderful?

Stapleford Tennis Club would like to thank the efforts and drive of Cllr Paul McPhater for his work on this facility. We'd also like to acknowledge the tenacious work and detail of our committee member, Miranda Fyfe, who really kept the ball rolling (in bounds) throughout the past year. Our hope is this facility will be enjoyed by many for years to come.

It is a delight to see players back on the court, with glowing reports about the new surface. You don't have to be a club member to use the courts for tennis—the Pay2Play option is available for anyone to book at £2.50 per hour—but the advantages of membership are outlined on our website - clubspark.lta.org.uk/StaplefordTennisClub/Membership/Join - and include earlier access to booking, club sessions with a professional coach, and eligibility for our club's Wimbledon ticket allocation. Membership is valid for 12 months from date of purchase. Adults £25, Juniors £10.

For those of you who have arranged private coaching, please know that your coach must be registered with STC (which is an LTA Safeguarding requirement and a Stapleford Parish Council condition of use for our club). If you have any questions at all, please contact the committee via our website. We're here to serve. **Erica Dawe**

Cricket news



STAPLEFORD Phoenix, the village's T20 midweek club, enjoyed another success, at Waterbeach in the Business House League.

Ralph Minter was the stand-out star in a score of 167-2 that also saw Jeff Wilson, Niall Barber and Aidan Swain

plunder runs.

Ralph (pictured) turned the game decisively our way in our final over by adding an astonishing 28 further runs to his total to end up 58 not out having come in at number four.

And he then weighed in with two wickets to ensure the hosts were defeated by 37 runs. **Jon West**





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Granary opens its doors to the village

'SO, what will the Village Day be like?' the BBC Radio Cambridgeshire presenter asked me live on air, two days before we opened up the courtyards and garden of Stapleford Granary to everyone. I trotted out our strapline about the day being 'created by the community, for the community' and went on to describe our plans for live music and theatre, craft stalls, delicious pop-up food, children's activities.... 'It's a chance to come back together in a safe outdoor environment and enjoy all the things we have missed so much' I concluded.



But what indeed would it be like?

I wasn't entirely sure. We'd not done this before at the Granary and - as the radio presenter constantly reminded me - there was pretty much nothing going on anywhere else. After the past 18 months, would people feel ready to get back together again?



I was thinking the same thoughts at 10am on Sunday as heavy rain hammered down relentlessly on the 300 metre square stretch tent covering the courtyard. Doing my best to sound upbeat as I gave the volunteers their briefing, I was beginning to wonder if the Village Day was going to be a damp error of judgement. Then, at 10.45am I had a text message: 'Kate - there are queues outside'. And we hadn't even opened the gates yet.

And so it started: visitors poured into the Granary and we were very quickly at capacity, clicking people in and out to manage the flow around the grounds. I couldn't help smiling - in my 11 months as CEO, I had not seen the Granary so full of people nor heard the unmistakable buzz of hundreds of animated, happy voices. The old 1930s orchard became a favourite spot for coffees and picnics. Colourful bunting hung from anything that didn't move and twisted and flapped its way around twelve gazebos in the 'craft village'. A hundred and eighty festoon lights dripped from the huge courtyard tent giving everything a warm, magical glow when the clouds were dark. And there was just enough sunshine to make everyone believe it had been 'a sunny day with the occasional shower' rather than the predicted grey forecast.



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But... 'what was it like'? What is 'a day created by the community, for the community'? It was all the things I didn't plan and didn't expect. It was the way that local artists created little theatrical worlds with their stalls, beautifully displaying pottery, hand-made paper, books, antiques, photographs, carved wooden birds, spoons, bowls... It was the artwork from Stapleford Primary School which looked so vibrant set against the yellow brick and black barn walls. It was the rich variety of music and theatre, chosen entirely by the performers who decided what they felt would be right for the day, and the pop-up food vans and stalls who brought their own menus. It was the children spontaneously dancing, drumming, wearing masks they had made... the laughing, the clapping, the exploring... And it was the warmth, kindness and friendliness in which everyone embraced the fundamental quirkiness and uniqueness of the day – because communities are quirky and unique.



The feedback was overwhelmingly positive ... 'more events like this please... can you do it every year'? Yes we can and yes we will. But I think that the Village Day 2021 will always be a special one. There was a feeling of euphoria in the sheer 'normality' of being together, talking, eating, drinking, dancing, creating. The spirit of the day came directly from the community – those who shared their skills with us and those who came along to enjoy them. And the Granary, with its lovely historical heritage, provided a framework and a backdrop for this. THANK YOU to everyone who made the day such a wonderful one - visitors, volunteers, participants and supporters. You can find more pictures in our

blog section of our website and whilst you're visiting the website, please do sign up to the e-news to keep in touch with us. (PS We'll be releasing details of autumn concerts soon and making a special announcement about our next Village Event in the next few months...) **Kate Romano**

Find out more: staplefordgranary.org.uk Follow us @SGArtsCulture (Twitter) and @StaplefordGranary (Instagram) Contact us: ace@staplefordgranary.org.uk or kate@staplefordgranary.org.uk 849004 (Photos: courtesy Louise Guron)



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Playground refurbishment

THE refurbishment of the playground is waiting for final approval from the Parish Council. The group has been successful in obtaining grants from:

- FCC Community Foundation Grant
- South Cambs Community Chest Recovery Grant
- S106 funds allocated by the Parish Council for the project
- Village Hall Estate Fund
- Scotsdales Garden Centre (two picnic tables)
- Messenger Fund



We are extremely grateful to all these donors and the project should start in September/October.

We have also been collecting money by a Just Giving page so we can add a wooden play structure, and this will continue until the end of the summer. Donations are still welcome!

You can donate online via our JustGiving page, which can be found on: [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/staplefordplayground2021](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/staplefordplayground2021).

Thank you! Playground group: **Gillian Pett, Rosie Brown, Rebecca Trigg and Beckie Whitehouse**

Puzzle Corner answers

Anagrams

BLEAK, ALIGN, PIOUS, RADIO, CORGI
 STEEP, ETHIC, EXTOL, OUTER, YACHT
 ENDOW, READY, WRONG, CANOE, OPERA
 PILAU, TEPID, INDEX, THROB, TOPAZ
 THIEF, REACH, PSALM

ASTERISK, LIFESPAN, TOWNSHIP, BACHELOR
 APPENDIX, BUNGALOW, SYLLABUS, TELEGRAM
 SCENARIO, ENSURING, INSOMNIA, REPUBLIC
 SYNDROME, ENTIRELY, CATACOMB, SANDWICH
 ALPHABET, FORETOLD, BROCCOLI, PERSONAL
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Parish Councillor Diary: Belinda Irons

BELINDA Irons is this month's diarist in our series highlighting the aims and activities of our Parish Council. Belinda is the Council's Clerk and is interviewed by Cllr Jenny Flynn to give an insight into the work which goes on behind the scenes.

Most parish councils employ a clerk to ensure that the Council conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support. Such support is far from just administrative. A good parish clerk is the 'engine' of an effective parish council and may operate as a project manager, personnel director, communications officer and manage a council's financial affairs. Legally, councils can agree to delegate decisions to clerks because they are professional officers whose independence allows them to act on behalf of the council.

JF: How and when did you get into clerking?

BI: I stated clerking in 2002. I used to work for the District Council and had 10 years' experience of local government by the time I started clerking in 2002. At this point, email was just starting to be used and no one had a website!

JF: How would you describe your job to others?

BI: A clerk has a raft of main duties, primarily setting the agenda with the Chair, taking and producing minutes of meetings, and managing parish council finances, including setting the budget, keeping accounting records, and producing all necessary documents for the internal and external auditors. Clerks also liaise with contractors, write and manage tenders, and receive and send correspondence as the Proper Officer of the Council.

However, in reality, no day is ever the same, particularly because I work for other parish councils as well as Stapleford. Over the past few weeks, across my parishes, I have dealt with a call by the electorate for a poll, breaches of leases by clubs and allotment holders, four audits, five Freedom of Information applications, a Data Subject Access Request, as well as carrying out the usual work of accounts, agendas, minutes and correspondence.

There have also been issues around parking near schools; phone calls about double yellow lines, flooding, blocked drains and verge mowing; councillor resignations; licences to occupy/occupier's liability; maintenance of notice boards and defibrillators; Covid security at parish council meetings; and council responsibilities as an employer.

JF: What would you say are the key skills required for clerking?



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BI: The ability to work flexibly and to prioritise tasks is key! Every new challenge brings benefit to all, irrespective of which parish council I am working for, because the skills obtained are fully transferable. Amazingly, once I have completed something with one council, it often appears as an issue at another council so I am prepared and able to deal with it.

JF: You are supported in your role by Kerry Byrne. What does she do?

BI: Kerry is Stapleford Parish Council's Assistant Clerk. Between us we have 30-plus years in Local Government service. Kerry has her own portfolio of work, but she also helps me (and I help her) when the need arises. As she is also a clerk at other parishes, she understands the demands of the role and can step in to provide support and assistance. She also offers a different perspective on problems and talking through things is a real benefit; a different viewpoint can be invaluable in reaching the correct solution. In addition to this, Kerry manages Stapleford's Cemetery and keeps all the records of interments and plot bookings, manages the hire of the pavilion, and assists me with the accounts.

JF: What are some of the most difficult aspects of your role?

BI: Being a Clerk can be very rewarding, especially when a difficult situation is resolved, but it can also be contentious, especially around planning. There are always people who want to obtain planning permission and others who object. Parish councils have to create a balance and respond within planning legislation. Some of my councils have appointed a planning consultant to wend a way through the mire of this legislation. The proposed changes in the Planning White Paper due in the autumn will change the planning system and everyone is urged to make themselves aware of the implications. Another challenge is the amount of good work that a parish council could do versus the number of volunteer councillors that it may have. Parish councils always need parishioners to support them in their varied tasks, which range from developing new facilities for the community to campaigning, litter picking, maintaining parish council land and other assets, organising community events and activities, and improving local biodiversity. Please do come forward as a volunteer and speak with a councillor or me about any area you might want to help with.

JF: Although you know a huge amount about the village, you don't live in Stapleford. Does that make any difference?

BI: Whilst some people may think it is advantageous to appoint a clerk who is resident in the village, from an employee's perspective working outside of one's home village or town is preferable as I have had people knock on my door on a Sunday afternoon in my home village (which I clerk), to discuss planning applications or potholes! Also, not all of the decisions I

have to make are popular with everyone, so I can sometimes encounter some bullying and intimidation. Having some physical distance between home and work is beneficial from that perspective, too.

JF: Did the pandemic bring any particular challenges to the way you work? Do you think some of the changes might become permanent?

BI: The pandemic brought Zoom which, as it turned out, enabled me to attend training sessions and District and County meetings without leaving home. This was also good as it meant that there was no need to travel and so reduced climate change emissions, and some people could also look after children who were schooling online whilst still being able to work. Zoom has the potential to encourage a younger demographic if we can keep it as a legal means of meeting, and it prevents councillors and officials from being harassed in meetings, which unfortunately does occasionally happen.

From the Chair of the Parish Council

CSET Busway

CLEARLY the GCP's decision to press ahead with a Transport & Works Act Order is disappointing with a public planning enquiry pencilled in for next June.

Residents in south west Cambridge suffered equally with a decision to build a busroad through the environmentally special Coton Fields and impacting the landscape setting of the American Cemetery. Our feeling is there is much to be gained now by uniting groups across Cambridge to campaign against this landscape vandalism.

Our MP Anthony Browne is to raise questions over the future of the Greater Cambridge Partnership with the Government, accusing its executive board members of a "baffling display of doublethink" and ignoring views from local residents; he claims there is a "democratic deficit" in the GCP and that he would be discussing its role with the Treasury and Department of Transport.

He goes on to say: "Such a damaging scheme should be a last resort not a first resort and the GCP should look at other less damaging transport improvements first..... There are alternatives such as the light rail system proposed by Railfuture and Cambridge Connect that should be fully explored and the reopening of the railway from Haverhill to Cambridge should be considered."

It has been encouraging that the media have profiled our campaign with interviews of parish councillors on BBC Radio Cambridge and in the

Cambridge News and Cambridge Independent, the latter printing our statement:

“From an unaccountable body this decision came as no surprise. The busway has no business case, is poor value, no integrated strategy for linking up Cambridge, is massively carbon intensive to build and run with diesel buses on tarmac roads, and undermines the commercial viability of the Haverhill and citi7 buses.

“The choice of route fails to account for environmentally damaging the valued landscape of the Magog Hills and Down and the open Granta river valley and opens up the greenbelt for the potential of speculative development.

“Studies and reports show that quick wins such as walking, cycling and bus priority measures, and rail initiatives already identified and discounted by the GCP, would remove congestion from our roads.

“In the longer term, support for the reopening of the Haverhill line (already grant applied to the ‘Restore Your Railway’ fund) as train, tram-train or light rail, would be transformational in giving Cambridge the world-class integrated transport system it deserves.”

MUGA

The MUGA is now fully open and access details are on staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk.

This is a high quality facility offering the opportunity to play tennis and other games, including this netball team’s first action in 16 months.



Report of meeting held 9 June

We welcomed Cllr Brian Milnes, our new County Councillor, to our meeting and look forward to working with him and his colleague Cllr Maria King.

Planning

Councillor Barbara Kettel presented an overview of the Dernford Lake proposals by Russell Smith Farms, as featured in last month’s *Messenger*.

This is for a caravan and camping and leisure centre. A public presentation is being arranged for 7pm on Wednesday, 1 September on Zoom with details to follow. This will be an opportunity for those interested to appreciate these proposals and to reach an informed view. **Cllr Howard Kettel FRICS**

Parish Pit switch backed

A CONSULTATION of Stapleford residents in Spring found overwhelming support amongst respondents to Stapleford Parish Council’s proposals to transfer ownership of Stapleford Parish Pit to the Magog Trust. The Parish Council is very grateful to all who took the time to respond.

The proposals

In March 2020, Stapleford Parish Council resolved to transfer ownership of the Parish Pit off Haverhill Road to the Magog Trust for £1. To bring about this transfer, the Parish Council had to apply to the Charity Commission to request a change to the present purposes of the charity. The Parish Council was required to consult with the beneficiaries of the charity (i.e. Stapleford residents) before the Commission would accept any such request.

To fulfil this requirement, a consultation ran from 28 April to 31 May 2021. Residents were asked to consider the following points and invited to raise comments or questions as they considered appropriate:



Question 1: Do you agree to Stapleford Parish Council’s proposal to lift the restriction on land transfer of the Pit?

Answer: yes/no.

Question 2: Do you agree to Stapleford Parish Council’s proposal to transfer the Pit to a charitable organisation (the

Magog Trust) with aims as close as possible to the existing aim of benefitting the residents of Stapleford? Answer: yes/no.

The process

To optimise participation, the following communication channels were used: two local Facebook pages, Parish Council notice boards, the Parish Council’s website, an article in the *Messenger*, members of Magog Trust resident in Stapleford.

Responses were invited in a variety of formats, but all were received via a poll posted on Facebook or personal emails to the Parish Council Clerk.

The outcomes

Responses suggested that:

175 people supported the proposal and five people objected, i.e. 97% of respondents to Question 1 supported the proposal.

144 people supported the proposal and three people objected, i.e. 98% of respondents to Question 2 supported the proposal.

Positive support for the proposals equated to approximately one in 10 households within Stapleford parish.

Respondents were encouraged to provide additional comments if they wished. Most did not but of those who did and supported the proposals, the following are typical:

“This is a sensible solution and being done in the best interests of the environmental conservation.”

“This is very important for the continuing success of all previous works done to preserve the Pit and to continue in such a way as to preserve it for future generations.”

“The Trust has a good track record of conservation whilst improving public access and the amenity value of the land it manages...I am sure they will manage the Pit creatively and well to wide public benefit.”

“Most of the volunteers are aged 70+, so this proposal is the only way I can see of secure maintenance of the Pit for the long term.”

“The pit is an important area of chalk grassland and I believe the transfer will benefit its management to conserve the flora and fauna of the site.”

Comments from people objecting to the proposals are replicated in condensed format below:

“Whilst the Magog Trust has done some really good work...it has been unnecessarily inflexible when it comes to right of way issues also don't like the Disneyfication of our countryside so popular with developers where natural countryside is converted into bizarre 'country parks' to give the residents the illusion of living a rural life whilst encroaching more and more on the green belt...”

“...no sane person transfers potentially very valuable freehold land...I was appalled at the vandalistic abhorrence carried out by the Magog Trust, and couldn't trust them after that. I like the peace and quiet of the pit and am not certain how the Trust would use or abuse it.”

Next steps

The Magog Trust is to draft a letter on behalf of Stapleford Parish Council to the Charity Commission requesting that it lifts the restriction on land transfer; transfers the site to the Magog Trust; and changes the purposes of The Public Stone, Chalk, Gravel and Clay Pit charity (of which the Parish Pit is the only asset) to include open public access and maintenance of good environmental standards. **Jenny Flynn**

Stapleford Parish Council

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