

# THURLASTON CHRONICLE

**WELCOME TO YOUR ANNUAL  
ROUND UP OF VILLAGE NEWS**

**SPRING 2022**

**Community reports**

Parish Council, Village Hall,  
St Edmund's Church and more!

**Village activities**

Art Group, Christmas lights,  
groups getting out and about

**Dates for your diary**

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# PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

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## *Report from the chairman*

Spring 2022 is here, the sun is shining and it's hardly credible that the first lock-down was almost two years ago. One dose of COVID, two lost Christmases and three vaccinations later, and perhaps we are heading towards "normal". This year we were able to hold the Annual Parish Meeting in person for the first time since 2019, in St Edmund's Church on the 28th April, and it was great to see those of you who were able to join us.

Given the situation in Eastern Europe, there is much to be thankful for, but we still face challenges here at home: the economy will take years to recover, inflation is rising and many shops and businesses have closed down. Putin's resurrection of war in Europe is a frightening prospect and a reminder that the peace we have enjoyed since WW2 is an exception to two thousand years of almost constant conflict.

### **CHANGE IS COMING TO THURLASTON**

At parish level, we have the prospect of significant change planned in and around Thurlaston. The implementation of Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan is underway, and we should expect to see the first warehouses and changes to our roads appear within two years, some only a few hundred yards from the village.

Thurlaston Parish Council has consistently pushed back on SW Rugby features of the Local Plan that we considered to be negative, but we have accepted there is little prospect for influencing the outcome further, now that RBC has approved the outline and even some of the detailed plans.

Instead, part of our focus has switched to liaising with developers and RBC, with the aim to minimise inconvenience and upset, and at least provide residents with advanced notice of disruption.

With this in view, we have had meetings with Tritax Symmetry and Homes England in recent weeks, and learned more about their plans; we are building closer ties with neighbouring parish councils with a view to



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working cooperatively. We have been working with Dunchurch for over a year, but in recent months have contacted Bourton and Draycote, Frankton, Birdingbury and Cawston parish councils, with encouraging responses from all.

Brian Coleman, who joined the Parish Council last year, has been instrumental in establishing a dialogue with RBC's Senior Management Team, particularly Mannie Ketley (Executive Director and Head of Paid Service), and RBC's new Chief Officer for Growth and Investment, Nicola Smith.

A common concern we all share is to understand the total impact of increased traffic volumes on our roads and how we can ensure RBC's proposals will genuinely mitigate congestion and pollution (especially air quality and noise). Apart from the warehouse scheme we need to understand the holistic impact of all nearby developments such as housing schemes around Cawston Spinney (promoted by Tritax Symmetry and Homes England) and Warwickshire County Council's Minerals Plan.

The latter development is located adjacent to Dobbies Garden Centre and stretches along the Straight Mile. Unfortunately these developments are gathering momentum with little evidence of timetabled highway improvements in and around the Thurlaston area.



## PARISH COUNCIL RESTRUCTURE

In lieu of the changing landscape, we made several key changes to Thurlaston Parish Council last year. Norman Lines and Helen Creery stepped down and were a great loss, both valued and longstanding council members, but we welcomed in two new and able members in Brian Coleman and Justin Owen, who both joined at the AGM in May 2021. At the same time we restructured the Council's subcommittees in response to areas where we expected the weight of work would fall, and to bring the Council into line with recommended best practice.

Planning-related matters continue to take up more time than any other activity, so we restored the Planning SubCommittee with Keith Boardman as Chairman and lead, and all councillors as members. Keith continues to eat up a lion share of this work, for which we are all grateful, but Justin has been particularly supportive in poring over the most complex planning applications we have encountered, and Stephen and Brian have also made some valuable observations. Justin has also made a significant contribution to maintenance of trees in the Parish, a subject that takes up more council time than you might expect!

We created a new Staffing Sub-Committee in response to advice from WCC on best practice with Stephen Lewington as Chairman and lead. Stephen has done a great job in bringing our policies and procedures up to date and has dealt with this sensitive area with his usual blend of charisma and common sense.

Sylvia Jacques continues to add value as our Parish Clerk, bringing a personal touch to the role and ensuring that tasks are followed through to a satisfactory conclusion, which often requires a degree of tenacity when dealing with local government. Sylvia also maintains many of our links with utilities, suppliers and local tradespeople, and encourages councillors to keep their training up to date.

## BUDGET (PRECEPT)

On the subject of costs, I would like to say a few words about the Precept, because this is how we are funded and you pay for this directly through your Council Tax, so I am sure you would like to understand something of how we budget and where the money is spent.

At the end of 2020-21, our reserves dropped to their lowest ebb for many years, which is why there was a steep increase in our Precept for 2021-22. When



setting the Precept for 2022-23, we took into account the regular annual costs, the potential costs to renew/replace our parish assets and the possibility of ad-hoc costs, such as the one-off advice and support we need for responding to some of the larger planning applications.

Having updated our asset valuations, included some allowance for ad-hoc costs, and mindful that inflation and energy rates are likely to bring cost increases in the coming year, we set the Precept for 2022-23 at £20,000. While this marks a 27% year-on-year reduction, we expect it will enable us to maintain a prudent reserve.

Note that Thurlaston Parish Council takes the management of council funds extremely seriously. There is no intent to increase expenditure unnecessarily. All spending is sanctioned formally at Parish Council and our accounts are in the public domain and published on the Parish Council website.

## CONCLUSION

We all hope the coming year will be an improvement on the last few and that planned events, such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, our Village Fete and the personal events we all have planned go ahead unhampered. We expect there to be ongoing updates on Homes England and Tritax Symmetry, which we will post on the Parish Council website, so at least you will have an idea of what is happening and when.

***Best Wishes, John Bretherton  
Chairman, Thurlaston Parish Council***

You will find information on planning, meeting agendas and minutes, our accounts and other useful information on Thurlaston Parish Council website: [www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk)

# VILLAGE HALL



**Our diminutive and rather quaint village hall is an essential hub of this small community.**

Prior to Covid we used to hold a variety of events to get the community together and raise much needed funds for the hall. We are assuming we can get back to normal in 2022.

The bi-monthly pub night has now restarted and is a long standing tradition which is well attended. It is organised by Irene and Brian Spann and an excellent way to meet villagers socially in an informal setting. Watch out for the Beer Tree sign on Main Street.

The village quiz is a popular yearly event with supper included. We are looking forward to a quiz later in the year. The progressive supper usually begins with a get together in the village hall and is set to return in 2023. The hall is considering a pudding event; currently in the planning stage.

We usually have a big summer tea party each year with home made cakes and a raffle. This year the village hall committee is planning to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee by holding a tea party on the afternoon of Sunday 5th June.

The village fete, led for many years by our Parish Clerk Sylvia Jacques, is a major fundraiser for the village hall and the church, and the village hall is used for tea and cakes on that occasion.

Thurlaston Ladies Club (TLC) meet in the hall and often have speakers or a food extravaganza. The Village Hall is home to the village archives. The archivist is Brian Coleman who should be contacted to view the archives. The hall is frequently used by the police as a community hub.



## HISTORY OF THE HALL

The land was donated by Miss M. Stanley under a deed of gift dated September 1946. The actual building consists of two Nissen huts joined together. It has stood the test of time with a lot of tender loving care. The Village Hall is a registered charity, with a management committee of 6 trustees, presently comprising: Mary Cook,

Chair; Nic Payton, Booking Secretary; Simon Knowles, Treasurer; Shirley Hall, Secretary; Sally Wise; and Judy Douglas.

## HOW IT IS FUNDED

The hall is hired out on a regular basis to various organisations such as Guides, a yoga group and for functions. Unfortunately hiring the hall does not cover our costs and we are very dependent on donations and fund raising events.

We let Thurlaston residents have use of the hall free of charge for personal functions. However, most people generously give a donation to cover electricity and other expenses. Residents can also hire equipment from the hall free of charge. A full list of charges and equipment for hire can be found on our website.

## OUR WEBSITE

Nic Payton built and now maintains the village hall part of the parish website, [www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk) - click on the Village Hall link in the header for more information. It is worth mentioning that the website, a CMS hosted by a company that specialises in village hall websites, was researched and commissioned by our current village squire, Norman Lines, with technical help from Nic Payton. The committee is very grateful for this facility.

If anyone is interested in running an event to support the hall, we would be very grateful. Our main aim is to care for the fabric of the hall to serve this village and its residents and bring people together socially.

**Mary Cook, Village Hall Chair  
On behalf of the Village Hall  
Committee**





# ST EDMUND'S CHURCH



**2021 continued to be a very disruptive year for St Edmund's owing to the pandemic. Nevertheless, we were able to hold 18 Communion Services, 36 weekly half hour reflective prayer meetings as well as a Remembrance service outside by the Cross and our annual St Edmund's Day service.**

In 2021, we finished the refurbishment of Church House thanks to a very generous bequest from the Baugh family, who were strong supporters of St Edmund's over many years and gave us the beautiful stained-glass window admired by so many. Church House has now been let again, improving our finances, and should enable us to keep the church roof in a reasonable state, which is a continuing concern.

We have a faithful band of people who help to run the church; cleaning, providing and arranging the flowers, playing the music, keeping things in good repair and enabling us to run services. We give thanks also to the many villagers who help us along the way. Social events have got underway again.

A more restricted but very enjoyable fete was held raising £650 for the church and an equal amount for the Village Hall. Congratulations and thanks to all involved. The popular village coffee mornings on the third Friday of the month have restarted, and the Myton Hospice coffee morning and sale raised an incredible £715. Many thanks to those who made it happen.

*God bless you all in the year ahead,  
Patricia Townshend, Vicar*

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## VILLAGE FETE 2022



With the pandemic still very much in mind, it was decided to hold a mini fete in 2021 and to everyone's delight this enabled the event to return, with an enjoyable afternoon in Church Lane, where the fete first took place many years ago before expanding to Main Street. On the day the sun came out and residents brought out their tables and put their wares on display. Although the takings were down, there was a lovely atmosphere and the final

overall figure saw the Church and the Village Hall each being given £650. A big thank you goes to our fete team: Mary, Ronnie, Janette, John and Robert. Following the success of this scaled-down event just for residents and their families and friends, this year's fete will follow the same format based around Church Lane and take place on Saturday 2nd July. In honour of The Queen's jubilee, it will of course be a Platinum themed fete!

The aim is to have our usual array of stalls and refreshments, including plants and produce, gifts, china, bottles, bric-a-brac and books, plus tea, cakes and Pimm's! As ever it will be a great way to celebrate summer and any proceeds will raise vital funds for our Church and Village Hall. If you are able to help please contact the fete committee and in the meantime, remember to save the date!

*Sylvia Jacques, Fete Organiser*

# COFFEE CLUB

The monthly coffee mornings organised by St Edmund's in the Village Hall resumed in August after a long gap because of lockdown. We were all very pleased to be able to meet again!

Everyone is very welcome to these events which take place on the third Friday of each month (except for April) from 10am-12 noon in the Village Hall. Future dates are 20<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 17<sup>th</sup> November, 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## Myton Hospice Coffee Morning

The annual Coffee Morning in aid of Myton Hospice took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> December in St Edmund's Church. A very enjoyable event which raises money for this important charity whose fund-raising efforts were severely restricted during lockdown. We made £714 selling gifts and Myton Christmas cards, a very good result! This year's Myton Coffee Morning will take place on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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# DUNCHURCH BOUGHTON ENDOWED TRUST

## Trustee Governor Report, March 2022

The Trustee Governors are responsible for administering the Trust fund left to the junior school by a local benefactor Frances Boughton, after whom the school was named.

**Update:** The school was keen to make better use of the outdoor areas and proposed some significant development ideas. The trustees have agreed to support the school with this project which should give significant benefit. The plans include a nature conservation area, spiritual garden, storytelling zone and outside learning zone. The plans have been drawn up and the project is progressing. The trust remains in a healthy position.

*Greg Irish*





# ART GROUP

## CREATIVE INSPIRATIONS

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**The Art Group, like many activities, had to change with the times through the pandemic. No more meeting in the Church, or visiting Ronnie's garden for inspiration, followed by coffee mornings in the village hall and then returning to finish the chosen monthly learning. But we kept our creative minds alight through Zoom.**

Meeting online, catching up and sharing our creations – some of us even started sewing and knitting - many scrub bags, scrub hats, mask tabs later... It was so good to keep in touch during lockdown, see smiling faces and there are definitely some very talented artists very close to home, along with those just enjoying learning new skills and getting lost in Art!

### OPEN AIR ART

During one of our Zoom meetings we discussed what we could maybe do to brighten up the long Covid days and our fellow Thurlastonians – Mo Steer had been to some open air art exhibitions. She had been inspired and had spread some cheer with Armistice day poppies and other villagers helped to scatter some more poppy creations around the village.

With this inspiration in mind the idea to brighten up Thurlaston became a topic for the group and we decided to ask for permission

to decorate the Bus Shelter for Christmas 2020. That was just the start of our journey.....

The bus shelter was adorned with Christmas themed pictures, a tree and homemade bunting and arty decorations – it was fun to do and brought many a cheer to those visiting and the feedback that came back from neighbours was very heart warming.

***“The art displays brought some brightness and escapism to everyone in the dark days of winter and Covid concerns”***

The art displays brought some brightness and escapism to everyone in the dark days of winter and covid concerns. All looked a bit dull and bare when the Artwork was taken down.

In our January 2021 meeting the idea to cheer up the bus shelter through the seasons was created and the rest is history. Animals for January, Valentine's, Spring, Summer, Halloween and Christmas again!

As you can see from the photos opposite, lots of creativity and contributions have covered the walls, from “Arty” adults and children of the village – recently the guide group have added to the themes.

### THANK YOU

A special thank you has to be made to Eileen Inns (pictured) –

not only has she decorated her house to bring some cheer to all passers-by – she has also helped to build on the living art creations in the bus shelter – busy crafting, knitting and creating colourful ideas and displays.

Delivery drivers and ramblers have used the deck chairs to relax and eat their lunch – children have played in the space and so

many positive comments have been made. It looks very bare when displays are cleared away – so

we were busy painting and drawing for our latest display, which went up recently to celebrate Spring and Easter. As ever, we welcome any contributions from you all.

The art group currently meet monthly on Zoom. We always welcome new and returning members who we wish dearly to see again – if you would like to join and find out more please contact Gill at [martinandgilld@gmail.com](mailto:martinandgilld@gmail.com)

***Yours Creatively,  
Art Group Leaders  
Gill, Mary and Claire.***

**Did you know?**  
The Guides meet at Thurlaston Village Hall on Wednesday evenings from 6.45pm offering activities for girls aged 10-14. Find out more and register at: [girlguiding.org.uk/joinus](http://girlguiding.org.uk/joinus)

# THURLASTON RAMBLERS

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**Thurlaston has a very active rambling group which has been running for at least 30 years.**

We have enjoyed many varied and interesting walks, usually over the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire countryside.

It has been a great way of meeting and chatting to other villagers. We usually end up in a pub for a convivial lunch. Non-walkers are always welcome to join us for lunch.

If anyone is interested in reading about historical walks with photographs, a book of past walks is kept with the village archives. Brian Coleman is the archivist; he will be pleased to allow access to interested parties.



Dates of forthcoming walks are posted on the Thurlaston internet at the beginning of each year by Mary Cook who is the organiser.

Each month someone will volunteer to lead a walk and will post details on the net so that villagers can join the walk and have lunch at a local pub.

This year we have included a few Saturdays so that people who work in the week can have an opportunity to join in. Our 2022 dates saw rambles in March and April, with future dates as follows:

- **May: Wednesday 18th - leader Dave**
- **June: Thursday 9th - leader David**
- **July: Wednesday 13th - leader Sheena**
- **August: Saturday 13th - leader Ev**
- **September: Wednesday 14th- leader David**
- **October : Saturday 15th - leader Mary**
- **November: Wednesday 9th**
- **December: Saturday 10th**



***If anyone would like to volunteer to lead a walk please contact Mary Cook, [blanaidcook@aol.com](mailto:blanaidcook@aol.com)***





# BOOK CLUB

and warn, interacting with their own and other tree species as well as fungi and flora. A fascinating read.

Want a whodunnit with interesting characters, but no mobile phones or forensics, and played out in the dark world of Victorian London? Try **the Monk series by Anne Perry**.

**Snow Country by Sebastian Faulks** is the second in a trilogy. The first, *Human Traces*, was set at the end of the nineteenth century and followed developments in the understanding and treatment of psychiatric illness through the lives of two young psychiatrists. It ended with them

opening a state of the art sanatorium in Austria. In *Snow Country*, the

sanatorium is now being run by one of the founder's daughters and follows the lives and relationships of patients and staff at a time when Europe is being reshaped by war. I found the characters totally believable, the historical events well researched and overall - a very rewarding read.

**We Begin at the End by Chris Whitaker** tells the story of a police chief whose childhood friend has returned from prison after serving 30 years for a murder. I thoroughly enjoyed this crime novel which is very well written and contains some unusual characters. It gripped me from the start all the way through to the end.

*Kay Thorpe  
Thurlaston Book Club*

The past two years created some challenges to keeping the book clubs going, as libraries closed and getting together became difficult, with outdoor meetings (sometimes chilly) and Zoom taking over our discussions.

Both clubs persevered and welcomed the return of meeting indoors, though it was a longer wait for library services to return.

In the meantime, we turned to themes - favourite poems, a classic we had always meant to read, a loved book of our childhood, and many more, raiding our own bookshelves, e-books, and, of course, the bus shelter.

All in all, we read a wide variety of books. So if you're a reader, here are a few of our recent discoveries you might like to consider adding to your shelves.

## REVIEWS

**The Windsor Knot by S.J. Bennett:** An ingenious tale of the Queen and her corgis turned detective to solve a grisly murder at Windsor Castle. Delightful!

**Weatherland by Alexandra Harris:** An exploration of the changing weather over the centuries and its effect on British Culture. Well-illustrated, informative

and engaging it investigates how the weather has been perceived and influenced artists and writers from the Anglo Saxons to the present day. Of interest to anybody who enjoys art, literature, history and science.

**Where the Crawdads Sing, by Delia Owens:** Loved it, beautifully written, very evocative of the Deep South.

***"Joining a book club introduces you to authors and topics that otherwise might pass you by..."***

The source for **Self-Made** was Melvyn Bragg's "In our Time". The book won the 2001 Black Women's History Prize and was written about Madam C J Walker by her grand-daughter. It outlines the story of a woman born into slavery in 1867 who was a pioneer of the modern cosmetic industry. A fascinating read and is also on Netflix.

**Our House by Louise Candlish** has understandably won awards. From the moment the heroine found another couple moving into her house until the mind-bending finale. Thrilling and compelling to read.

My outstanding non-fiction book of the year was **The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben** about how trees communicate, nurture

# LADIES CLUB

**During lockdowns there was little chance for the Ladies Club to meet. However, in June we were able to have our yearly outing arranged as always, so well by Kay. We visited Waterperry Gardens near Oxford. It was a lovely sunny day so we could make the most of walking round the lovely gardens and sitting out to enjoy a drink and lunch. On the way home we visited the Rollright stones and had afternoon tea in Chipping Norton.**

A few of us met for a chat in September. The next meeting was the cream tea in November where the proceeds were given to Sara for her Shoe Box Charity. Ladies also brought along gifts which were suitable for the boxes.

Sara's group leader came along and spoke about the charity which gives so much pleasure to children in poverty from the poorest countries. Then in December we had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch at The Bell in Ladbroke. We thank Jackie Harvey for organising it all so well.

We cancelled our January meeting but in February we held our AGM and from now on, hope that the Ladies Club can hold all its monthly meetings.

The AGM decided to give £200 to both the Village Hall and St Edmund's. We also voted for two other charities to receive £200 each and the winners were Pancreatic Cancer and the MS Society. Kay showed us pictures of possible places for us to visit this year and

whilst having our tea and cake we ticked the two places we were most interested in seeing. There was a clear winner and that was Belvoir Castle in Leics.

We are always very pleased to have new members in the Ladies Club and also visitors to come along to any meeting that would interest them. So below is our programme for the coming year.

Our scheduled speakers in March and April were David Fry, a well known postcard collector - including photos from Victorian times onwards from the Rugby area and Dunchurch and Thurlaston - followed by Jane Isaac, a crime novelist, with her talk 'Murder and Mayhem' about the challenges of writing detective fiction in the modern age.

- May 9<sup>th</sup> - Gillian White tells the tale of the 1575 entertainments laid on by Robert Dudley for Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> at Kenilworth Castle. Gillian is an enthusiastic speaker and much liked by those who remember her.
- June 15<sup>th</sup> - Date and details now confirmed for the trip to Belvoir Castle.
- August 8<sup>th</sup> - Probably a summer tea, tba.
- September 12<sup>th</sup> - A visit to the Marton Museum with David Fry plus home made cake and tea/ coffee, £5/pp
- October 10<sup>th</sup> - Dogs For Good. Life changing devotion - how dogs can help with many forms of disability.
- November 14<sup>th</sup> - Charity meeting, tba
- December - Christmas Lunch, tba

Each meeting will be advertised on the Thurlaston net and the notice board. Hope to see you there.

*Judith Douglas, Co-chairman.*

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LOTS OF LIGHTS!



**Although we couldn't sing along and party in the village hall for Christmas 2021, Thurlaston still enjoyed the traditional carols at The Stocks and lights switch-on, along with the many decorations around the village.**



# A REFRESHER ON THE VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATOR



**In 2017 Thurlaston community purchased an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which was installed in the old telephone kiosk on Main Street not far from the bus shelter. It is available 24/7 for use by anyone that requires it, including the wider community.**

Shirley hopes to provide training again this summer on the use of the AED as both villager refresher training and to introduce new residents to the equipment. She also routinely checks the equipment to ensure it is always in working order.

The brief information below provides AED deployment guidance. Further information is available on the Parish website: [www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk) And/or via the British Heart Foundation: [bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life](http://bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life)

## WHAT IS AN AED?

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable, self-powered device that guides the user through the stages of analysing a patient's heart rhythm and administers electrical shocks to the patient's chest if needed. This action is called defibrillation.

If you come across someone who is unconscious, unresponsive, not breathing or not breathing normally, they're in cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrests can happen to anyone, at any time.

The AED is kept in a secure yellow cabinet in the telephone kiosk. To obtain the equipment release code dial 999.

**Four steps to take if someone is having a cardiac arrest:**

- ◆ **Call 999**
- ◆ **Start CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation)**
- ◆ **Ask someone to bring the AED from the Main Street telephone kiosk. In the kiosk dial 999 and wait for the access code to release the AED.**
- ◆ **Turn on the defibrillator and follow its instructions.**

## WHO CAN USE IT?

You don't need to be trained to use a defibrillator – anyone can use it. The AED talks to the user and guides them clearly, step by step. There are instructions on how to attach the defibrillator pads to the patient's chest. It then assesses the heart rhythm and will only instruct you to deliver a shock if it's needed. You cannot deliver a shock accidentally; the defibrillator will only allow you to shock if it is needed.

*Keith Boardman & Shirley Hall*

## NEWCOMBE & SPIER ALMSHOUSE CHARITY

Trustee meetings were held on zoom in the first half of the year with in-person meetings resuming at the end of October 2021. No major works were undertaken but there was the usual succession of routine repairs required for old buildings.

Work to overcome rising damp was required in houses 1, 2 and 4 which did require the tenants to move elsewhere for a short time. Our plans to replace the flat roofs at the rear of the houses with slated roofs

and better insulation were frustrated by a lack of suitable contractors. We are now hoping to get this work done in the second half of 2022.

Currently two of our tenants have given notice of departure so that we are looking for new tenants. We have no one on our waiting list, so if you have a friend or relative in the area who may be interested then please let them know of this availability.

*Walter Harvey, March 2022*



# THURLASTON MEADOWS

The past year here at Thurlaston Meadows Care Home (TMCH) has seen us having different animals visit the residents including the staff's own cats/dogs. The animal man, as he calls himself, comes with all sorts of species from snakes to skinny pigs! We have had horses visit us, also parties including a mad hatter tea party.

We love to use the large screen tablets which are great for the residents to use for entertainment, like different animal sounds and exploring the many apps we have. iPads connect residents to family/friends which is so important for their mental health.

When allowed due to Covid restrictions we have had entertainers perform outside and theatre groups, these are all things for the residents to look forward to!

The residents have been in the garden and going on walks through the village as much as we can when the weather allows. This year I introduced drumming

to the residents, which is something residents really enjoy making different beats and sounds. We enjoy singing and dancing a lot!

We have managed the odd trip out in the company car to a garden centre. We have a couple of residents who own mobility scooters and they can be seen in the beautiful gardens and sometimes in the village. The charity "Not Forgotten" came and performed outside, it was quite cold but the show must go on! We celebrated when the hairdresser was allowed back in the home.

## OUT AND ABOUT

We may not have had resident's families and friends in the home, but we certainly made up for it with the mews bar opening! The residents enjoyed drinks on the terrace, staff also joined in with the fete and it was the first time the residents had gone out together, which they all loved. We have joined in with the

Thurlaston beer tree evening pub night at the Village Hall when possible, and also the coffee mornings. We have two residents who love horses and we managed to take them out on a horse and cart around the village and they had a fantastic time. What a fab afternoon out! They are still talking about it now.

We had a restaurants evening on the terrace for families to join in and it was a brilliant evening enjoyed by all. We now have our own taxi as well so this means more trips out. I'm sure you will see us out and about.

So, life in Covid times has been hard for everyone this past year including the residents who still haven't quite got used to us all wearing masks, but hopefully things are on the turn and I have lots planned for later in 2022 to make sure we can do the best we can with restrictions in place.

*Heather Davis*  
**Activities Team Leader**

### KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALL THINGS THURLASTON!

Parish Council & Village Website: [www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/thurlastonwarks](https://www.facebook.com/groups/thurlastonwarks)

ThurlastonNet: Join this email group by emailing [listmaster@thurlaston.net](mailto:listmaster@thurlaston.net) with the subject: SUBSCRIBE and in the body of the email please give your name and postcode.



# PAWS ON PLASTIC

On the 20th November 2018, Paws on Plastic was founded in NE Scotland by Primary School Teacher, Marion Montgomery. The idea being that dog owners pick up two pieces of litter when they are out walking their dogs twice a day. Just pop the litter in a spare poo bag, take it home, empty it into your dustbin (recycle if possible), saving the bag to use again.

Paws on Plastic has grown beyond all belief with over 16,000 members on Facebook alone in over 50 countries across 6 continents!!!!

This means at least 64,000 pieces of litter will be removed every day from our streets, beaches, parks and countryside.

***“Every single piece of litter removed makes a difference...”***

It has shown that dog owners are keen to play their part in fighting plastic pollution, with new members joining on a daily basis. The group can be found on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter but you don't need to use any of these, you can still do your bit when out walking your four-legged best friend.

In a press release Marion said: “It's amazing how the campaign has grown in such a short time! I would like to say a huge thank you to my family, friends and all our members and followers for all their efforts in cleaning up their communities. Every single piece of litter removed makes a difference. The strength of Paws on Plastic is its simplicity. As dog owners, we're

already out there walking our dogs every day. We see the litter. We have a spare bag in our pocket and it just takes a second to pick up a couple of pieces. No extra time or effort is required.”

Greg and I like most people pick up more than two pieces on our walks and can often be seen scrabbling around at the bottom of a hedge! With around 9 million dogs in the UK alone, imagine the impact if we all did it!

Dogs are naturally attracted to litter, with many picking up plastic bottles, so what better way to keep them and other

animals safe than removing litter from harms way and keeping our beautiful village litter free.

We don't stop when we leave the village; on our holiday in Suffolk last year we picked up several carrier bags of rubbish on the beach. When we looked closely the seaweed was actually growing on plastic litter, just awful!

Of course you don't have to have a dog to stop plastic getting into our countryside, take a small carrier bag folded in a pocket and pick up any you see. It becomes quite addictive and two pieces is never enough!

***Sue Winton***

## PAW PATROL!

Sue's dogs (left to right) Sam, Jess and Ghillie are keen to support the hunt for litter on their walks around Thurlaston and the surrounding countryside! Pictured here with a collection from one morning's litter pick from Biggin Hall Lane.





# GARDEN GLASS

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**I'm told that in Germany glass rocks are the very latest thing in garden design. They come in all the colours of the rainbow and are easy to care for as they don't attract moss or algae.**

As they are translucent they are just the thing for creative garden lighting, and they provide the perfect bed for firepits as they are heat resistant. And a few glass rocks strategically positioned in a bed or border can add winter colour and all year round interest.

When we moved to the village, along with the garden we inherited some glass rocks. In fact we inherited not just some but a huge quantity, at least a ton and possibly far more than that as we are still discovering hidden caches of them in out of the way places.

Glass rocks turned up everywhere. Some pieces had been used to line paths. Many were found buried under grass and bushes. Some were small, about 10cm across, others were much

bigger. Some were a beautiful pure clear sea green, some were deep blue. But most were varied, with milky stripes and colour changes. Some of the larger pieces were impossible to tell apart from normal garden rocks unless they had been chipped and their glass interior was visible. These were definitely not the decorative glass rocks of German garden designers!

I have used some of the glass to make a rockery – or should that be glassery? The plants don't seem to mind but I have found that gardening with glass can be a hazardous business as sharp edges can cut gloves - and fingers!

The rocks are a mystery. They've clearly been in the garden for many years - we did wonder if there might have once been a glass or bottle works nearby. I'm hoping someone in the village can throw some light on them for us.

***Sheena Ashford***



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## POOR'S PLOT CHARITY

To relieve the poor in Thurlaston, 43 acres of land were set aside in 1728 to enable the poor of the village to grow crops to support their families.

These plots of land today are used as allotments, seen by turning right out of Thurlaston towards Dunchurch, the allotments are on the left just past the cottages. Today just over an acre of land is in use as allotments, which may be rented on an annual basis. The remainder of the land is rented to two local farmers and provides an income to the charity.

The charity was registered in September 1970 *to relieve either generally or individually persons resident in the Parish of Thurlaston who are in condition of*

*need, hardship and distress.* Until recent times, money was distributed for help with winter fuel bills such as coal and electricity. The charity also now offers support for education through grants of up to £300 to any young person leaving secondary education to embark on further education or an apprenticeship. Consideration will also be given to requests which are for the general benefit of the community.

The Charity has Trustees who are presently: Roland Robinson (Chair); Dr Sheena Ashford; Paula Irish; Selena Larque; Jenny Cooper; Rev Patricia Townshend (ex-officio). Meetings are normally held twice a year and a grant application form is available via the Thurlaston website under the Community Info tab at: [www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk) To contact the Thurlaston Poor's Plot Charity, email clerk Cat Sabine at: [thurlastonpoorsplot@outlook.com](mailto:thurlastonpoorsplot@outlook.com)



# RUGBY YOUNG CARERS

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**Thurlaston has been supporting Rugby Young Carers for over 10 years now. It started when Steve Murphy visited the group and was moved by the lives and hardships these young people faced and how some of the carers were as young as six.**

Then on the Village Hall Committee, Steve came up with the idea of Thurlaston youngsters donating presents to the young carers rather than receiving one from Father Christmas at the annual Christmas lights switch-on.

That was just the start and since then each Christmas we have continued. It has now become a Thurlaston tradition of which the whole village should be very proud.

A small group of us from the village also decided to do craft workshops with the carers. These are very popular with both the younger and older children as they get very little time to do this type of activity or just be children.

Covid put a stop to both actual presents and the workshops but we have got round it by sending gift vouchers and funding Zoom meetings with a lady called Nicky Barfoot who has got the children getting creative.

All they needed was a pen/pencil and a piece of paper and the children were so pleased to have an activity in lockdown! During lockdown Gill Dakin and I also put together a craft pack for each young carer with 6 activities in each; again the feedback from them was great.

For several years I have been given brand new children's books and historically the children have taken one or two home each from one of their regular meetings. Again Covid put a stop to this so I advertised the books within the village and sold them to raise funds. The idea being once the pandemic is over we can fund an exciting activity for the children, fingers crossed that won't be too long now.

Also during lockdown I took up making greetings cards and rather than just doing it to keep me occupied I showed a few to friends and since then I've been making them non-stop! From each card I donate £1.20 to the RYC's and have raised over £400, that's a lot of cards!

In November 2021 I decided to do a 'pop up' stall in the bus shelter to sell the remaining books, a few jigsaws and some of my cards, again the village turned out and supported this great cause raising £281 in just a couple of hours!

There are many other ways that people in the village have supported them by making donations, asking for donations when selling items and also giving up their time to help at the workshops. Your generosity makes such a difference to these children; they really are touched by the kindness of people they don't even know.

*Thank you, Sue Winton*

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## PROGRESSIVE SUPPER

There is no report this year as we had to postpone due to Covid and The Team has taken the decision that sadly, once again there will be no Progressive in 2022. However, we are planning a return in 2023 and this will be communicated via the Thurlaston.net and a flyer through doors. For those who are new to this event, here is a brief overview:

The Team welcome everyone to the village hall early evening and whilst you chat and catch up with fellow Thurlastonians; envelopes containing the starter host venues are given out. The starter hosts leave and their guests follow 10 minutes later. The evening will then 'progress' to the main course hosts and guests again move on for dessert and coffee.

The Progressive is NOT a cookery competition and it is very acceptable to purchase ready-made starters, mains and desserts, so please don't be put off if cooking isn't your thing. The evening is about catching up with old friends and making new ones, not worrying if your course is ok!

Hosts are needed for each course: starter; main; dessert and coffee. But any newbies to the village are welcome as non-cooks to enjoy the experience and hopefully then join in the following year as a host. If you are on your own you 'pair up' with another single as there are people whose other halves have work commitments or just wouldn't enjoy it, so ask around, we're sure you'll find someone to pair with. The Team are looking forward to organising the next Progressive and sitting round a dining table with old and new friends once again.

# BEAUTIFUL BEES!

## STARTING AN APIARY

*Greg Winton shares his experiences of becoming a beekeeper...*

**In January 2021 on a cold wet day, with no end in sight to Covid and the aviation industry reeling, I took the opportunity to work part time. I wanted to use this opportunity and made a list of things that I would like to try and things that I used to enjoy doing. As a teenager I had kept bees for a few years and so I decided I would keep them again.**

A bee hive is not the most sociable of things and a safe location is essential and after exploring a few options I found a suitable location for an apiary. Then to refreshing my knowledge! I joined the Rugby Bee Keepers Association and chose a hive as styles have changed over the years. I scoured second hand web sites looking for used hives and equipment, of course most were at the other end of the country but once I had a hive it was then the eager wait for the first swarm to become available.

A modern hive consists of an open mesh base board, a larger brood box in which the queen resides and the young are raised. There is a queen excluder which confines the queen to the lower chamber and above this are shallower honey supers in which 8-10 frames are hung.

The bees will store their excess honey, the number of which will depend on how good the season is. This is then capped with a crown board and a water proof roof. Each chamber is filled with an appropriate sized frame fitted with wax foundation sheets embossed with a hexagonal pattern.

This is then drawn out by the bees to make their comb to raise brood in, store pollen or honey in. The beekeeper will wear a smock or bee suit with a built in veil, gloves, a hive tool and the all-important smoker. These are the basics you need to work your hive. A typical honey bee colony will consist

of one queen, some 1-2000 male drones in the summer and 10,000-60,000 female workers, depending on the season.

Bees have stings, although the drones don't, so at some point as a beekeeper you will get stung. On rare occasions this can lead to anaphylactic shock and if so beekeeping is not for you. The initial sting is painful and can be tolerated, however for me the biggest irritation is the itching around the sting site that occurs a day or two afterwards.

The likelihood of being stung depends on the season, how you handle the bees and each hive's temperament. If your Queen has attitude then her offspring will as well and a particularly ill-tempered hive will need to be requeened; the old queen is removed and a new queen introduced.

***"The likelihood of being stung depends on the season, how you handle the bees and each hive's temperament."***

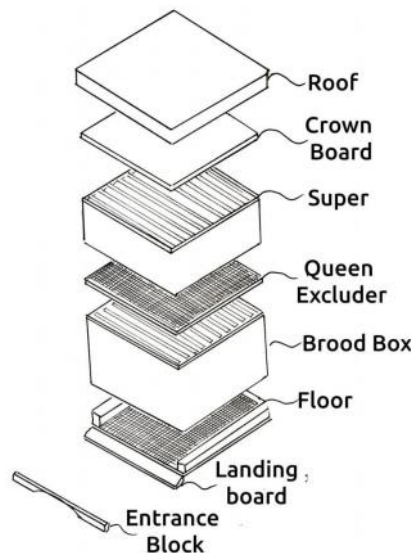
Bees and wasps have a common ancestry but can be defined by their source of protein. Wasps get their protein from prey and bees

from pollen. The UK has 225 species of solitary bee, 24 species of bumble bee and just the one honey bee, *Apis Mellifera*.

As a beekeeper your aim is to ensure the health of your hives and hopefully achieve a honey surplus at the end of the year. To this end the beginning of the year sees you checking on the health and possibly feeding to encourage an early increase in colony size from mid-March.

This hopefully means that you have a good sized workforce as the nectar flow commences but this is tempered with the need to prevent swarming occurring and losing half your work force!

Depending on how the honey flow goes you will have to add honey supers to expand the storage of your colony and







Autumn sees the queen naturally reduce her laying rate and the colony size decreases from its summer peak, so less mouths to feed through the winter. A worker bee lives for about 6 weeks in the summer and as much as 6 months over winter.

***On average it takes 12 worker bees over their lifetime to produce one teaspoon of honey.***

This is a brief summary of what you try to achieve and as in all things there is much more to it. If you would like to know more, introductory sessions are run by the Rugby Bee Keepers Association, [www.rbka.org.uk](http://www.rbka.org.uk) The internet is a good source of information,

even take an early harvest if the year is good. As mid-summer approaches an assessment of hives health and honey stores is made with their need to survive through the coming winter in mind.

here are a few sites to look at. The British Bee Keepers Association, [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk) who also do an excellent book. The Bee Improvement & Bee Breeders Association, [www.bibba.com](http://www.bibba.com) and some excellent videos on YouTube. Finally a great website set up by Dave Cushman, sadly no longer with us, [www.dave-cushman.net](http://www.dave-cushman.net) which is maintained by Roger Patterson who features in many of BIBBA's videos. I am also very happy to talk bees if you have a question.

My first two colonies started as small swarms and only reached a size to get through the winter so no honey collected last autumn but I'm hopeful for 2022 and look forward to extracting the honey. Another article in itself!



## MOVING TO THURLASTON

The evening that we arrived in Thurlaston, we were all curious to know what the people who lived here were like and whether it would be a friendly place to live. Wondering how soon we would make some friends, we were not disappointed when our wonderful neighbours invited us into their home to meet the lovely people who lived at this end of the village.

I will never forget how warmly welcomed we all felt on that evening, and much to our delight, our children made friends with our neighbour's children who happen to be the same age. They have since spent many hours playing football, skating, scooting and trampolining together!

Every time we walk up Biggin Hall Lane, the children say how much it reminds them of a holiday village! They are so proud to invite friends over to see this beautiful neck of the woods, and they confidently take themselves off for little walks out along the footpaths.

I am so pleased because the reason we thought that this was a good place to buy a house was the opportunity to maintain a healthy family lifestyle in a serene and peaceful setting.



The beauty of the area continues to reveal itself week by week; we are thrilled with our view of the reservoir that was barely visible when we arrived in October. We have hundreds of snowdrops on show and the daffodils soon followed. It's always a joy to take a walk around the garden to see what else is making an entrance. Even going out in the evening is a magical experience, I am sure that the stars sparkle more brightly above Thurlaston!

As the months have passed by, we have made some very nice friends who have kindly taken us out on local walks and shared some excellent recommendations for local facilities; the Cheese shop in Bilton has been our favourite find!

I am particularly excited to see what happens in the field of special scientific interest. Indeed, we are all looking forward to many more years of discovery and enjoyment of what this beautiful and friendly place has to offer. I am also intrigued to know what we can bring to the village, and would enjoy getting involved in local events and activities.

***Thank you to everyone who has made us feel so very welcome. Kindest regards, The Elliots.***

# WILD THURLASTON

*Steve Murphy shares his highlights from the natural world on our doorstep...*

**My earliest memory of wildlife was in primary school watching tadpoles in an aquarium change over 2-3 months into little frogs which were then let go on the school fields. I was fascinated.**

Living about 1½ miles from Coventry city centre in the 60s, it was surprising how many ponds were in close proximity and soon reached by pushbike, along with Coventry Canal with its basin just outside the ring road, which then wound its way up to Hawksbury Junction.

These places were where me and my mates as 8 or 9-year-olds would catch frogs, newts and on rarer occasions toads. We would take them home and carefully put them in old zinc oval bath tubs that were common then, only for them to escape overnight never to be seen again. Roll on through my teens where times were spent looking for another kind of wildlife; frogs and toads went off the agenda altogether!

Only when I was in my twenties with a young family and living on the outskirts of Coventry did my interest in nature return; only this time snakes, lizards and birds also caught my attention. Snakes and lizards had to be travelled to, mainly in Dorset, where along disused railway lines adders, grass snakes and slow worms were common and on the odd occasion the Smooth Snake, the rarest snake in Britain. Also in this area was the rare Sand Lizard, found only in specific habitats such as heathland, unfortunately this has

been decimated by development since the seventies. Moving to Thurlaston in the nineties from a city suddenly opened up a whole different spectrum of wildlife. When Ev and I first drove into the village to see if any houses were up for sale, we came across a muntjac crossing Biggin Hall Lane in broad daylight, we'd never seen one before.

After moving into the village, I couldn't believe how many different types of birds visited our garden. All the common ones such as blue tit, great tit, chaffinch, black-bird etc visited our bird feeders but soon goldfinch were turning up and having read that they eat Niger seed, we started getting them every day; these in turn

***For me going out most days for my walk, I will never get bored because something always crops up and that's the beauty of walking around here, you don't know what you will see until you get out there.***

were visited by sparrow hawk. I remember one day pulling up on the drive and a male sparrow hawk had a young starling pinned down on the front lawn pummeling its chest and ripping out its feathers with its beak. I watched from the car only yards away because it was fascinating and even if I had got out the car, the starling probably wouldn't have lived and so its death would have been a waste instead of providing a meal as nature intended.

When I went indoors and was telling Ev about what I had just seen, I looked through the kitchen window and there to my amazement was a female sparrow hawk (much larger than males) in my

neighbour's plum tree with a starling she had just caught.

We almost take it for granted that we'll see greater spotted woodpeckers on the peanuts each day but as a lad I'd never seen a woodpecker, so to see them close up just outside the kitchen window was special. Only a couple of weeks ago Ev sent a photo on WhatsApp to me at work; on the back lawn was a green woodpecker jabbing the ground searching for ants on which they feed.

We don't get so many collared doves as we did when we first moved; they seem to be overtaken by the woodpigeons that gobble up any spare seed on the ground that falls from the feeders.

We don't mind this so much because it means there's nothing hanging around for rats to feast on. On occasions

we do get stock doves as they are fairly common around the village.

Bullfinches are a welcome sight with the males showing their salmon pink chest along with the greyer coloured female; they are often in pairs in the hedgerows around the water.

Starlings - dwindling in numbers globally - turn up each morning squabbling on the bird table. A couple of years ago they congregated in their thousands each evening flying over the village and the water. To watch them twist and turn in formation, known as a murmuration, is something special to witness, before they settle down to roost for the night.





Being in close proximity to Draycote sometimes brings unexpected visitors to our garden, probably helped by the fact we have a small pond. Over the years we have seen reed bunting, moorhen and the odd duck drop in, sometimes for a few days, sometimes a few weeks. This normally occurs in harsh winters when conditions can be really tough down by the reservoir; we've even had heron looking at our pond when we used to have fish. These days we get more newts because we decided to give our fish away, which gives tadpoles a chance as otherwise they would be eaten.

Away from birds, the fields around the village host a fair population of grass snakes which are completely harmless; they feed on amphibians along with small mice and voles. If you manage to catch one they often release a foul smelling liquid which stinks and takes a bit of washing to get rid of, a defence mechanism used to ward off predators. They can also play dead by rolling over with their mouth wide open and their tongue hanging out, this is also a defence tactic to fool predators.

I often used to chat with Mary Binney, who at the time was always in her fantastic garden leading down to the big pond in Patrickfield. She was aware of the grass snakes in her fields but didn't realise there was a small population of slow worms by the sheep wash area next to the public footpath. These reptiles are fairly rare in Warwickshire. Hopefully any proposed development that might happen won't have a detrimental effect on them but it's hard to see how these secretive creatures can avoid any construction machines that churn up the land if permission is granted to build.

Mary's large pond supports two types of newts as well as frogs and various fish; 20 years ago the

village supported large numbers of common toad and often in Spring you would find them squashed in the road down Biggin Hall Lane as they travelled overnight to return to the pond to mate. Sadly toad numbers have crashed dramatically throughout the country in recent times though one of the ponds on the golf course still attracts them locally and soon they will be heard croaking in the water as the spring frenzy of mating takes place.

Walking early morning or towards dusk you can often see foxes and once or twice I've stumbled across a badger but they don't hang about and soon run off once they catch your scent or see you.

Thurlaston and its surrounding area support a wide variety of creatures and once you're down the water a whole new catalogue of wildlife is on your doorstep. Little Egrets, which only 10 years ago attracted birdwatchers with telescopes and binoculars, are now common each summer with numbers reaching 70+ in recent years. Buzzards are now an everyday sight and breed in various locations around here, but kestrels that would often be seen from the motorway bridge hovering above the verges looking for voles are not as common as when we first arrived.

I could go on a lot longer mentioning summer visitors such as swallows, swifts and house martins that journey up from Africa to breed each year, as well as the odd osprey passing over Draycote plus the variety of bats that come out in the evenings catching flying insects, but I think it's only when you actually come to write about the various creatures - and there's quite a few I have missed like stoats and weasels - that you realise what a wealth of wildlife we have around us.

**Steve Murphy**

# CELEBRATING OUR SPECIAL VILLAGE

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## THANK YOU!

We hope you enjoy the 2022 edition of the Thurlaston Chronicle and would like to thank all our contributors, including Justin Owen and Brian Coleman for sharing their photographs, and Parish Council clerk Sylvia Jacques for supporting the Chronicle team. If you have any comments or would like to contribute next year, we'd love to hear from you!

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