

Barratt consults on next housing proposal

Barratt Homes have launched a consultation on plans to build 150 houses to the east of Northampton Road, days after a different plan for a similar-sized housing development to the other side of Northampton Road was refused planning permission (see also p 3).

The development would be opposite the Cricket Club, occupying a piece of land in between the David Wilson estate to the north and the allotments to the south. Barratt's plans foresee a development of 150 two- to four-bedroom houses, 29% of which would be designated affordable housing with the rest to be sold at market rates. The plan was for the to all be two-story houses, though following the consultation planners are considering including a limited number of bungalows.

improvements to infrastructure

Unlike the unsuccessful proposal by Carter Jonas, Barratt's plans also include provisions for facilities and improvements outside the housing development itself.

"It's been very clear from all the conversations we've had with the people of Brixworth so far that the key concern is the village infrastructure," says Ian Young, development director with Barratt Homes in Northampton. "Topics that come up time and again is the limited amount of parking near the shops, the capacity of the doctor's surgery, and the primary school. Therefore, we're looking at ways to



Above: Barratt Homes seeks to fill in the space between the David Wilson estate and the allotments to the south of Brixworth

make improvements in these areas, which would benefit the whole community." *(continued overleaf)*

Better, but not good enough

Rarely has there been an issue that's been as emotive as the current double-whammy of housing applications. No sooner was the first voted out by Daventry District Council's planning committee (we now wait for the inevitable appeal) that we get the notice of consultation on the other. Small wonder that this feels like a village under siege.

And why this sudden flurry of activity? Mainly because DDC has lagged behind its targets for new housing construction, and because Brixworth was identified as a "sustainable" location.

How anyone could have arrived at that conclusion still beggars belief. Parking problems at the village shops are so chronic that people are taking to leaving their car halfway down the road. The merger of the doctor's surgery with Guilsborough means that while it's easier to get an appointment, it may well not be in the village. And it's hard to see how the primary school could cope with any real increase in numbers – there is no obvious place for expansion. Parents are vehemently opposed to a second school, fearing that this would split the village community.

However, there is some consolation to be taken from the fact that Barratt, the would-be developers of the second proposal, are at least looking at doing something about the infrastructure problems. A 20% increase in the number of parking bays may not be a lot given how tricky parking already is, but it's good to at least see them taking these issues into account.

The developers confirm that in the days before Localism, few developers would have gone to the same lengths of consultation and considering local concerns. "It would have been a case of, here's the proposal, take it or leave it. But now we make a point of consulting and taking on board some of the suggestions we're getting," says Ian Young, development director with Barratt.

Unluckily for Barratt, for many of the people in Brixworth, this is not just about another housing development – this is a fight about whether Brixworth remains a village or turns into a small town. And five extra parking bays is a paltry pay-off for turning a village into a small town.



*Maude
Flavell-White*

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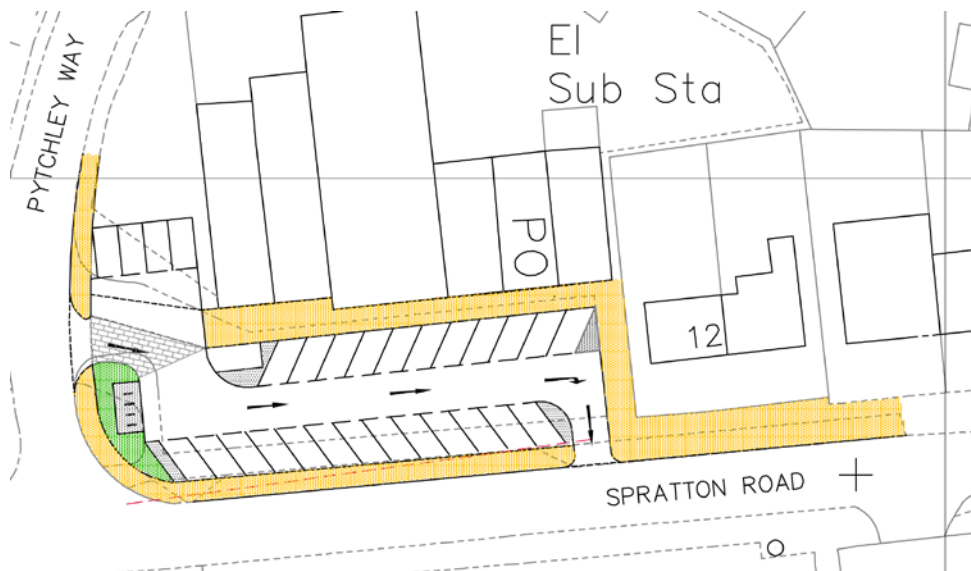
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The *Brixworth Bulletin* is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The deadline for contributions and advertising for the June issue is 25 April 2012.

Library to open on Sundays

Northamptonshire Library Service is committed to introduce Sunday opening hours across all libraries in April/May this year. In exchange, it is proposed to close Brixworth library on Mondays and opening an hour earlier on Tuesdays to Fridays. This would result in new opening hours of 9am - 6pm Tuesday to Friday, 9am - 1pm on Saturdays and 1pm - 4pm on Sundays.

A public consultation on the proposed new times is currently underway until 5pm on 2 March. If you've got any comments or suggestions, please visit the library and contribute to the consultation. -jb



Among the plans presented at the consultation on 20 and 21 January was a proposal to redesign the car park outside the shops at the centre of the village. The plans (pictured, above) would see the parking bays at the side of the road replaced with parking either side of a drive-through car park. This would increase the number of bays by 22% from 23 to 28, in addition to which the planners say they would try to acquire land or a property nearby for overflow parking.

Barratt Homes is still trying to get a better understanding of the issues faced by the doctor's surgery and the school. For now, plans include the usual cash contributions to schools to shore up places, and extra funding for the bus service.

Expecting opposition from the existing allotment holders, who would suddenly find themselves adjoining a housing estate, Barratt is suggesting proper parking, running water, and the creation of another ten allotments to satisfy what's been described as 'pent-up demand'.

finished by 2016?

Young expects that, all being well, an official planning application would be submitted to Daventry District Council at the end of February. The hearing would be likely to take place in May and – if it was to be approved – the detailed planning application would follow by the end of the year, meaning

that construction would start in spring 2013.

"We could see the first houses up four to five months after the start of construction work, and the whole site would be complete within three years," says Young.

Reaction in the village has been mixed to say the least. While nobody doubts that we need money spent on village infrastructure, many question whether what's on offer is enough, and whether the promise would ever become reality.

a hard sell

It is obvious that the scheme has its share of opposition. BRANE says that in its exit poll after the consultation, 96% were opposed. Others I spoke with share the unease about the effect of the expansion, but are quietly resigned that if there really is a need for new houses they may end up being in Brixworth. Some of those on the newer estates, like the David Wilson estate, worry that if they complain they'll be accused of hypocrisy.

village future at stake

For many, however, there is a sense that they are fighting for the future of Brixworth as a village, as any further developments will turn Brixworth into a small town.

Amanda Vizer, who's lived in the village for most her life, says: "Brixworth has grown phenomenally over the past decades. We've taken more than our share of new housing – every time they say that this is the last one, and it never is. I've got an allotment on that site and I'm worried that if that housing estate gets built we'll start to see vandalism. And what about the school? Brixworth has a very large primary school as it is and there's physically no space to extend it. So what are the options? I don't want larger class sizes, and I really don't want to see a second school – that would destroy the community and divide the village. I don't care what these people offer to make us agree to the housing estate, I don't want to see any more new housing in Brixworth – our village is being treated as a sacrifice to allow the small villages to stay small, and I've had enough of it." - cfw

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DDC rejects first set of housing plans

Over 100 Brixworth residents made the journey to Daventry on Wednesday 11 January to hear the Planning Committee's decision on the application by Carter Jonas for outline planning permission for 150 homes to the south west of Brixworth, west of Northampton Road. Unsurprisingly, they were delighted to hear the application refused by 12 votes to nil - though the decision could still be overturned on appeal.

Parish Councillor Ian Barratt said: "The Parish Council voted unanimously to strongly oppose this application. We are proud of [Brixworth's] unique identity which would be destroyed by urban sprawl."

Speaking for the local action group BRANE, Bob Chattaway observed that the development was contrary to Saved Policies limiting development outside the village boundary and the Brixworth Village Design Statement. "A planning inspector dismissed an appeal for a golf course in the very next field in 2003. What would he have thought of this?" He added that the expansion in the 80s and 90s had left Brixworth with barely adequate infrastructure, and that since then another 108 houses had been approved on infill sites. "This application takes exactly the 'build anywhere' approach condemned by the National Trust."

These views were reinforced by Cllr Nick Bunting who detailed just how much the proposal conflicted with Daventry's policies



to protect its villages and the countryside around them.

Cllr Liz Wiig read out a statement by County Cllr Chris Millar objecting to the proposal and praised BRANE for the work they had done collecting 3,126 signatures on a petition against this and other large scale developments around the village. In addition to the petition, DDC has received more than 800 letters and e-mails objecting to the application. She added that Brixworth could not sustain any further development on this scale. Her proposal to refuse the application was seconded by Cllr Pam Booker (Clipston).

Cllr Frank Wiig, in his last session as Chairman of the Committee (he has since resigned on health grounds), pointed out that the mere presence of various facilities should not be enough for the village to be considered 'sustainable' - there had to be enough of them to serve the needs of the community.

After the vote, Mike Robinson of Carter Jonas reportedly confirmed that he had expected the decision given the level of opposition and the Officer's recommendation to refuse.

MP Chris Heaton-Harris, eight Parish Councils including Brixworth, the Kingsthorpe residents association WASPRA and Nigel Ozier of Barber Associates (on behalf of BRANE) had also objected to the application.

Barratt Homes

BRANE also plans to oppose the proposal by Barratt Homes to seek planning permission for 150 homes to the east of Northampton Road (see p 1). It was felt that the consultation held on 20/21 January was lacking in substance and BRANE's exit poll showed 96% of visitors were against the proposal. The objections are very similar to those that apply to the Carter Jonas application in that it would conflict with the Local Plan and have the same negative effect on infrastructure.



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- ♦ Improving communication between service providers, the group and the wider population
- ♦ Promoting the patient perspective and enabling patients to make best use of available healthcare

We hold regular meetings every two months, alternating between both surgeries. A GP and nurse advisor attend the meetings. We welcome any patient from the Saxon Spires catchment area.

Some of our projects for 2012:

An introduction to Nordic Walking

Nordic Walking burns 46% more calories than ordinary walking. It is great for neck, shoulder and back problems, and easy on knees and joints. We've arranged a free one hour taster session on Friday 13 April, for which we'll meet at Brampton Valley Way, Spratton Road car park, at 11am. If you like it, a four-week course will start the following Friday (cost: £25 including all equipment). To book, contact Lizzi England on 236361 or email eengland@northamptonshire.gov.uk

First Aid Courses

Would you know what to do in a medical emergency? We are thinking of running some first aid courses in 2012, but we'll need a minimum number of participants. If you are interested, could you let us know?

Complementary Therapy Day

We are planning to organise a Complementary Therapy Day where you can experience a range of therapies with taster sessions available. The event is planned to take place in summer 2012 – watch our information boards in the surgeries for news.

To find out more about our group or register an interest in First Aid Courses, contact SSPPG secretary Barbara Hogg on 880552 or barbara.hogg@tiscali.co.uk



Snowmen in a hurry

The late outbreak of winter in early February saw snowmen appearing at every corner and front garden. If you were wondering how they got about so quick, it would seem that some had also brought along some pretty nippy transport. The snowman arriving in this snowmobile must've been the envy of his peers...
Photo by Ian Topham

Meet the New ...Village Dentist



After our article covering the local dentist's practice in our last issue, we were surprised to learn that Matthew Nuttall was leaving, in order to take a career break after 25 years. Matthew asked us to convey once again through the *Bulletin* a big "thank you" to all his patients he has got to know over the years.

Dr James Hewitt already took over the practice in mid-January and is now settling in. The practice has been rebranded as the Brixworth Village Dental Practice and can be found at www.bvdental.co.uk.

With the new name also comes a new, extended range of treatments, with anti-ageing treatments such as botox and fillers.

Brampton Heath goes beyond golf

If you thought all you could do at Brampton Heath Golf Centre was to play golf, you may be mistaken. The centre has branched out to cover a broad range of activities, from weddings to beauty treatments. Its restaurant is popular with golfers and families alike – especially on a

Sunday! – and the conference facilities are seeing plenty of use by corporate guests. In addition, the Centre will later this year open a free Tri Golf course, especially designed for children. The course is free to play though booking may be required when it's busy.

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Kelmarsh approval fuels energy debate



The subject of wind turbines always raises a lot of heat. However, there is some doubt about how much energy they produce. This issue has become critical in the fierce debate about the plans of the Kelmarsh Trust to erect a wind farm just north of Haselbech.

Daventry District Council (DDC) had refused the application for these turbines in December 2010. It therefore came as a shock to many local people when the Planning Inspector overturned this decision just before Christmas.

Permission has now been given for six turbines, four 126.5m high and two reaching 121m, to be built just south of the A14. The Kelmarsh Trust maintain they are needed to contribute to the £1.5m it must raise over the next ten years to preserve Kelmarsh's historic buildings.

The project has met with stiff opposition from the local community which has spent a lot of money and effort in campaigning against it. DDC alone has reportedly spent over £100,000 in fighting the application. This decision follows the approval of five wind

turbines at Watford Lodge and the refusal of a proposed wind farm at Harrington.

The wind turbines will be seen from Grade I listed Kelmarsh Hall, its Grade II listed gardens and the important Naseby Battlefield where Oliver Cromwell's troops overcame Charles I's army in 1645. There are concerns that they will make it more difficult for visitors to imagine how this battle, a critical turning point in the development of parliamentary democracy, was played out. It is also argued that the wind turbines will be an inefficient investment as they will be sited in a low windspeed area.

While accepting these concerns, the Planning Inspector Paul Griffiths justified his decision by saying they were outweighed by the benefit of contributing to regional energy targets. Another of his reasons was that the wind turbines would not be permanent, lasting only 25 years, in contrast to the long period the historical assets were expected to endure. In his report, he said, "... the proposal would cause harm to the setting of a range of designated heritage assets. At its worst, that harm would be less than substantial and it would disappear once the period of the planning permission had elapsed".

Our local elected representatives are continuing to press government ministers for this decision to be overturned, although they do not hold out much hope. Councillor Chris Millar, Leader of Daventry District Council, and Chris Heaton-Harris MP have also raised this story in the *Daily Telegraph* (see also p 24 for the full letter).

Chris Millar explains that while DDC has been proactive in supporting green energy, he doesn't understand why wind farms seem to be promoted as the main option.

With regards to the Kelmarsh decision, he says: "Despite the setbacks, we've been through a fair and democratic process. We may need to accept wind farms in a good windspeed area but because of the low efficiency, this decision just doesn't make good sense." - *jf*

Beginners' Guide to the Organ

The Northampton & District Organists' Association will be holding its annual 'Beginners' Guide to the Organ' event at All Saints Church, Brixworth on Saturday 24 March, 3-4.30pm. This event is free and open to anyone of any age. It will include a short talk and demonstration of the organ along with an opportunity to have a go. The event will be led by Jonathan Harris who is an experienced organ teacher and Director of Music of St Mary the Virgin, Finedon. There is no need to book; just turn up. For details see www.northamptonorganists.org.uk or telephone 881 182.

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Police Report

Metal Thefts

The continual high price of scrap metal continues to drive this crime type. Of local interest is the male bailed to court, the case was initially adjourned to Oct 25 but was now further adjourned to March 2012, so maybe later in the year I will be able to provide you with an update.



Metal theft continues to be rampant – please be vigilant

In October a resident of Brixworth called us with a registration number after seeing occupants of a vehicle help themselves to an old central heating boiler. My staff patrolled the area and stopped the van in Pitsford, three were arrested and are currently on bail.

Later the same month a suspicious vehicle was seen parked up on Station Road Brixworth, the occupants climbing over an adjacent fence. On return to the vehicle they claimed all innocence but were of previous interest to us for metal theft.

On another occasion a vehicle was spotted parked up next to a large metal farming implement and the occupant just approaching the controls of his Hiab crane – he was challenged as he was obviously about to lift the item into the back of his vehicle but claimed he was just looking and was going to ask the farmer if he wanted to sell it!

A resident of Spratton watched a van pull

up and the occupant help himself to his neighbours car ramps, fortunately he took the registration number and earlier this month three occupants of the vehicle were arrested and interviewed over that and a similar offence at Loddington. All three are currently on police bail.

On 3 January a broken down vehicle

was taken from the roadside in Holcot and has never been recovered. We suspect it was taken for scrap. So if you see anybody lifting an unattended vehicle from the roadside please make a note of the vehicle registration, type and a description and give us a call.

Please remain vigilant to this type of crime; most of it is opportunistic so if you see anything that

does not seem right, call us on 101 if it is non-urgent or 999 if a crime is in progress.

Staffing update

We seem to have had a lengthy period of change however we are now pretty settled. The team now consists of myself Sgt Mike Grady, PC Mark Osborn, PC Lyndon Harris, PCSO Jo Hillery, PCSO Glyn Lewis and PCSO Allan Whenmouth. We are frequently supported by several Special Constables at weekends and have a number of colleagues based at Watford Gap who join us when we conduct warrants, such as the drugs act warrant we carried out at Kelmash in January which resulted in an adult caution for possession of cannabis.

Drink Drive Campaign

Over the Christmas and New Year period the force ran a drink drive campaign and we conducted random breath tests on motorists.

On 23 December we ran a traffic checkpoint on Northampton Rd Brixworth and spoke to over 100 motorists. Of the thirty we breathalysed, two failed the test and were arrested. Another motorist was dealt with for possession of cannabis.

Recent crime

Despite a relatively busy crime period up to the end of 2011, crime in Brixworth ward is still down 15%, with 96 crimes in the village itself to the year end, 7 in Lamport, and one each in Hanging Houghton and Draughton.

We suffered another car key burglary on 13 January in Brixworth (Ashway area). A VW Golf was taken with the keys which had once again been stolen through an insecure door.

This is another timely reminder to lock doors and windows and keep keys and valuable possession out of sight and reach of doors and windows. We are happy to pop round and offer crime prevention advice, just give a call or speak to us when passing.

As always should you have any concerns please call us, speak to one of my team or visit our website www.northants.police.uk where you can enter your thoughts which may well influence our local priority in future.

Also make sure you attend the next Community Panel meeting on 26 April; a full report on the previous one is on p 26 of this *Bulletin*.
- PS 923 Mike Grady

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Lampport & Hanging Houghton news

There have been a number of personnel changes in the village of Hanging Houghton recently.

Ron Jennings and his wife moved from The Gables, Manor Road in early Jan 2012 to move to Spratton to be nearer family. Kirsty and Keith Mason and 5 year old son Mathew, and Kirsty's parents Keith and Carole Walker have now moved in. Bob and Hilary Cox moved into 8 Manor Gardens in Dec, 2011. Clive and Margaret Westley are due to move into 5 Manor Gardens in April this year. Number 3 Manor Gardens has a sold sign on the estate agents board. Nick and Jan Fossey have left the village and moved to Potterspury to be closer to their parents and their old house is now up for rent.

I wish them all a warm welcome, and to all those leaving – bon voyage.

There are also a few potential moves in the offing as at least two other properties are for sale, namely Eve and David Ward at 8 The Croft who are hoping to downsize, and Annie and David Braviner of The Old School who are hoping to move abroad. I wish them well and will miss them all.

On a sadder note I was recently told of the death of Derek Watchhorn, who moved from Townsend Close, Hanging Houghton with his wife Jean last year. He had been ill for some time and was 87 years old. – *Mike Philpott*

Vicar Watkins retires

The vicar of Brixworth, Anthony Watkins, has retired with effect of 19 February. Watkins has served the village since 1981 on what was initially a five-year posting. Read more about his story and his retirement message on the Church's newsletter (p 14).

As of the *Brixworth Bulletin's* press time, no successor has been named and we are now expecting an interregnum while the Church examines the requirements of the village.

"Such interregnums are rarely shorter than six months and can last a year or more," a spokesman for the Peterborough Diocese told the *Bulletin*.

During this time, the churchwardens will ensure that All Saints' Church is run as normally as possible with services held by locum priests. Please check the noticeboard at the church for announcements.

For any special services such as funerals, weddings and baptisms, please contact the wardens Michael Lewis on 881836 or Sylvia Woodhead on 880158. -*cfw*

Council information



The way Daventry District Council provides its rural information services is changing.

Where previously the information services were accessible through the small office at the library, with opening times dependant on limited staff availability, information can now be accessed whenever the library is open via online self-service points linking to the Council's website at www.daventrydc.gov.uk.

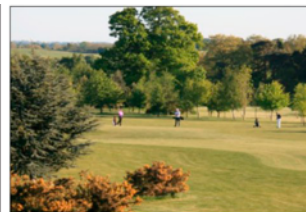
As a result, the Brixworth Information Services Office is now closed, but there is a dedicated phone line direct to the Council for anyone who has queries about how to use the online self-serve system.

Brixworth library supervisor Jill Barber says: "Library staff can also assist in finding relevant information eg planning applications, Homechoice information, ordering new bins,

online payments for example council tax and printing off any documentation. However we cannot help with Benefits advice – customers need to speak to DDC Advisors via the direct telephone line for that."

Councillor Colin Poole, responsible for access and communication at Daventry District Council, says: "The new self-service points will allow the Council to make savings while providing a more accessible service to our customers. The answers to many of the queries that we get via the rural information centres are already available on our website, which is why we are able to make the changes.

"Our rural centres have had very few visits in recent months from people wanting to access DDC's services so we are confident these changes can be made with minimum disruption."



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Bluebird Care supports “unsung heroes” on International Women’s Day

Bluebird Care, a care-at-home provider which operates in the area and employs several carers in Brixworth (pictured, below), will pay tribute to Britain’s band of ‘unsung heroes’ on International Women’s Day on 8 March. The company is backing calls for such informal carers to receive greater support.

According to a report published in 2011 by charity Carers UK and the University of Leeds, the care provided by friends and family members to ill, frail or disabled relatives is now worth £119 billion every year.

Rozina Sayani, Director of Bluebird Care (Northampton & Daventry) says: “There are around 6.4 million people in the UK providing care for ill or disabled loved ones that would otherwise cost the state £18 an hour, which adds up to £18,000 per carer per year.

“These people, many of them women, make a massive contribution to their local

community. In fact, a recent study estimates that 25 per cent of women in their 50s are carers. With an ageing population, caring is becoming a fact of life for every family. Yet

that operates across the UK, works alongside thousands of carers across the UK and Ireland, providing professional support to people in their homes – and sees at first hand the invaluable work provided by relatives and friends.

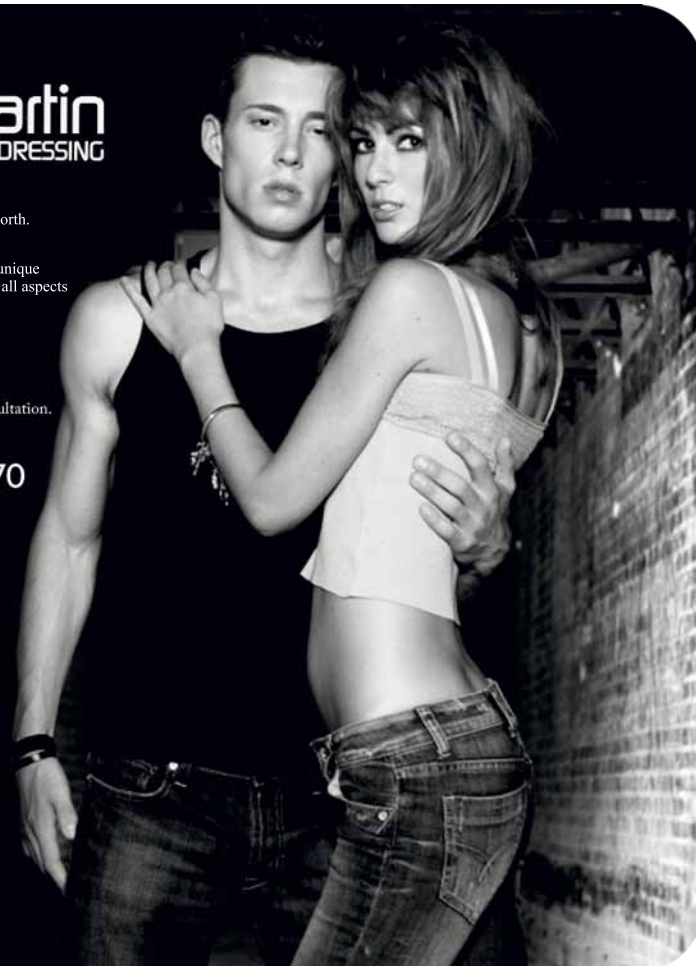
Rozina continues: “We often work with our customers’ families so are very familiar with the commitment and hard work that carers invest in improving people’s lives. Throughout the UK, there are hundreds of thousands of unsung heroes caring for a relative. It’s important to support, recognise and celebrate the incredible work that unpaid carers do. As a company with a dedicated and experienced range of care workers, Bluebird Care can help by providing respite care – the provision of short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members. This can provide a much needed break.’

Bluebird Care opened a Northampton and Daventry branch in October 2011 and now has a team of over 20 trained care workers in the area.



this often creates real pressure with many struggling with little or no help, often putting their health, work and finances at risk.”

Bluebird Care, a care-at-home provider



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Country Eye *Here we go again*

This time in my column I had intended to settle down and tell you about some small and apparently insignificant creature that lives out its life unseen in the world beneath our feet. Having recently read about a man who has dedicated his life to exploring the lives of dung beetles, I thought I had found the ideal subject. From the scarabs of Egyptian legend to the humble dor beetles of our own countryside these creatures have quietly performed a service that is vital in the great scheme of things. They eat dung, they mate on it, and their grubs eat it. Without them and the wider community of animals and plants to which they belong, we ourselves would cease to exist. For as part of one of the planet's recycling systems they help ensure nutrients are returned to the soil, thus enabling life to continue. But that must be the end of my story for the present, though I hope you will allow me to return to the important subject of dung at a later date.

If the right doesn't get you...

The reason being that the postman cometh and I must reluctantly leave the real world to return to the sham world we have created for ourselves. A brown envelope has just landed on my doormat, from which I learn that Daventry District Council has turned down the insidious plans by Carter Jonas to weld 150 houses onto our village, in their words to help 'soften its outline.' (And to think that I had never noticed its current hard outline). This news reached me just a day before the outline plans by Barratt Homes for an equal number of houses adjacent to that site dropped onto my

doormat. 'One fist of iron, the other of steel, if the right one doesn't get you, then the left one will': lines from the traditional work song have been popping into my mind ever since. Although the context is somewhat different, they do seem to fit our village's unwanted predicament.

Get rich quick

Recent local history shows that far from just going away, these unwelcome, unbalancing developments that others from outside seek to impose upon us for their own profit, will keep on appearing in the planning system until they eventually get their way. For example, the Buckton Fields development plans recently passed have been presented in one form or another on numerous occasions since at least the mid 1990s. The trouble is that the rich and the powerful, which are ultimately behind

tackling one of them whilst at one of the many Buckton Fields presentations. The conversation went something like this: 'I'd like to ask you a question?' Sharp suit in dark suit and broad-bladed tie replied 'Certainly sir.' I said 'Could you give me some estimate as to the net profit to the developers if these plans are passed?' Sharp suit's reply? He laughed, turned away, and said 'next.'

A race to the bottom

Rampant development is just one aspect of the almost suicidal race to the bottom that has been taking place in our land for the past several decades. Not just in our land, but across the world. The power of the supermarkets and other large corporations is rapidly becoming absolute. The biggest of them are equal, in financial might, to a hatful of entire nations at the other end of the scale; they are in a position to buy and 'own' those countries if they chose. And believe me, while such countries have resources they can exploit, that is precisely what they will continue to do so long as they remain unfettered.

Over 3,000 of us objected, via BRANE, to the Carter Jonas development. Ours is a large village; some of us may think lurching uncomfortably close to being a small town. Yet such numbers who have taken the trouble to express their opposition indicate that our community spirit is alive and well. I sincerely hope that when the new



Hardly a hard edge to the village...

these get-rich-quick schemes, care not a fig for Brixworth or its people. They employ shadowy agencies and slick professionals, who plan with military precision to soften up and overcome any opposition. I remember

application from Barratt Homes appears we will once again object. Thank you to BRANE for all their hard work. Their web site address is www.spanglefish.com/brane - Brian Webster

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Help the *Bulletin* help Brixworth

In the December issue of the *Brixworth Bulletin*, we asked everybody to write in and tell us of any people, organisations or institutions they thought could do with a helping hand and a little financial support.

Given how councils are having to cut back on many services, and how the economic downturn has affected many of us, we thought we'd be inundated with requests and suggestions. But not so! Whether this means that there aren't many deserving causes (hard to believe), that people are too shy to come forward, or that nobody actually reads the *Bulletin* (now there's a depressing thought!) we don't know.

Nevertheless, we did receive two letters from good causes asking for help. Obviously we'd love to support them both but unfortunately we can't – so somebody has to decide.

This is where we need your help. Have a read through the two applications, have a think and let us know which one would get your vote.

There are several ways by which you can vote:

- 1) Post the voting slip on the next page to the *Brixworth Bulletin*, 13 Station Road, Brixworth NN6 9BP
- 2) Take the voting slip to Brixworth Library, where we've set up a post box just for this purpose (more voting slips are available there)
- 3) Tweet us @BrixBulletin – please remember to include your name and address.

One vote per person. Voting closes 31 March.

Brixworth Centre Pre-School

The Brixworth Centre Pre-School, based in 'The Centre' building next to the Saxon Church in the heart of the village, is a very popular pre-school and managed by local parents through a voluntary management committee.

"That means we continually work very hard to raise funds to allow us to buy essential items such as craft materials, new toys, books, equipment etc," says Katherine Haxby, the pre-school's chair.



hazardous and insecure. We need funds to be able to install a secure gate, cut down overhanging trees, secure the perimeter etc. We would very much like to generally extend and improve the quality of the outside experiences for the children who attend our setting as many experiences can only actually be 'experienced' outside at this age."

Carrying out this work would make a substantial improvement to a facility that is already extremely well appreciated and popular among the young families living in the village. The pre-school currently has over 36 children on the role from the age of 2 years 9 months onwards, and there is space for up to 26 children per morning session. Awarded a coveted 'oustanding' rating by Ofsted, the pre-school has such a good reputation both in and around Brixworth that it already has 21 children on the waiting list for the year 2014.

"Improving the outside play area and making the lower playground safe would make a huge difference to the children attending the pre-school so we really hope the people of Brixworth will support us and help us get the funding we need," says Katherine. - cfw



Usually money is raised through fund-raising activities such as a Christmas Fair, Summer Fair, cake sales, activity afternoons etc but there is a limit to how much this can bring in.

"The project we would love to tackle, if we were to get additional funding from the *Brixworth Bulletin*, is the lower playground," Katherine says. "We would love to make this safe and secure so that the young children are able to play freely and explore and investigate the outside environment".

"At present, our lower playground area (pictured, left and below) is dark and dismal, not to mention somewhat



Connie

Connie is a happy four-year-old girl living in Brixworth with her parents and her younger brother. She suffers from a very rare condition which has delayed her development and most noticeably affected her balance and her ability to learn to walk independently.

“Even before she was diagnosed I knew that something wasn’t right,” says her mum Rebecca. “She wasn’t rolling or sitting, wasn’t making good eye contact, and didn’t gain weight or thrive as you might expect.”

Friends and family told the parents not to worry, that everything was fine – but Rebecca’s worries were confirmed when Connie was diagnosed with a heart murmur caused by an open duct at around six months of age. “It was then that the consultant broke the news that there might be underlying issues,” says Rebecca.

These underlying issues were eventually diagnosed as Ohdo Syndrome, an extremely rare condition with only around 60 confirmed cases worldwide. While the open duct in her heart was successfully repaired when Connie was 13 months old (and she promptly started to grow and put on weight), her other difficulties were only just starting to manifest themselves.

Ohdo Syndrome affects causes learning disabilities coupled with congenital heart disease, and often also affects the shape



and size of the eyes and teeth. Typical for the syndrome is the delayed development – Connie did not sit until she was 18 months old and took her first very tentative steps at the age of two and a half, which is considered early by the standards of her syndrome. “Speech, if it comes, comes at 7-8 years but could be limited to a couple of words or a handful of sentences,” says Connie’s father Mark. “For the moment Connie is really concentrating on walking.”

It was a few months after Connie took her first steps in September 2010 that her parents first took her to the Footsteps Programme in Oxford, which they’d heard about via a friend. A round of treatment at the Footsteps Centre consists of three weeks of intense daily physiotherapy.

Footsteps is an independent physiotherapy centre geared to helping children with neurological disorders, cerebral palsy and similar disabilities. Key to the Footsteps programme is the so-called ‘Spider’ – a metal frame and harness that is attached to a lot of bungees. The Spider not only supports the weight of the child but also enables

physiotherapist to isolate weak muscle areas and specifically target them with exercises.

“The difference the physiotherapy at Footsteps has made, just after that first course, was immense,” says Mark. “Connie’s confidence and ability improved hugely, it really brought her to her feet.”

“Just earlier today she was standing at the TV, turned herself around, walked across the living room, out the door and to the bottom of the stairs. Completely unaided and not encouraged, and she didn’t fall once. Compare that with before we took her to Footsteps – it used to take so much persuasion and work just to get her to take a couple of steps.”

He adds that while she does still crawl a lot, and it doesn’t take much to make her fall over (especially with her two-year old brother charging around), her progress has been nothing short of astounding. Her newfound independence was accompanied by a huge increase in confidence and engagement with the world around her, too.

Greatly encouraged by her progress, Connie’s parents took her on a second round of physiotherapy at Footsteps last year, and hope to fit in a further two three-week courses during 2012. However, cost is an issue – the centre’s therapy is not available on the NHS, and each course costs around £1,200. Funding from the *Brixworth Bulletin* could pay for one of these courses.

“We know that early intervention is key to help kids like Connie, so we’re doing everything we can for her now, regardless of cost,” explains Mark. Everyone is helping out – not just parents and grandparents, the family has also involved work colleagues and local charities such as the Lion’s Club to fund Connie’s treatment. “We couldn’t bear the thought of sitting here in years to come wondering what might’ve been if only we’d done more.”

Rebecca adds: “Despite her diagnosis and challenges with regards to her ability, Connie is simply a joy to us, her parents and all who know her, and a true inspiration. She makes us so incredibly proud with her wonderful personality and her super-cute smile!” - cfw



Vote Now!

Name

Address.....

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Brixworth Centre Pre-School

Connie

Please either:

- ◆ Tweet us @BrixBulletin with your name, address and vote
- ◆ post this form in the Brixworth Bulletin postbox in the Community Centre & Library, or
- ◆ mail it to

Brixworth Bulletin
13 Station Road
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Deadline: 31 March 2012

Wanted: Foster Parents

“Could someone like you help someone like me?” That’s the question as Northamptonshire County Council launches an urgent appeal for foster carers for children over the age of ten.

A new countywide campaign aims to help bring stability into the lives of older children by urging local individuals or families to foster over-tens.

Councillor Andrew Grant, cabinet member for children, learning and skills, says: “Finding foster families for older children is now our top priority as we have an urgent need for at least 20 foster carers to give local children aged between ten and 18 the supportive homes they need to help them through a period of disruption in their life’s journey.

“These children are at a crucial stage in their lives and just like younger children they need care and support to help them negotiate through a challenging period.

“Fostering older children and teenagers has quite specific benefits for people who prefer not to have the physical dependencies of a baby or toddler and who’d enjoy

interaction with a young person.

“By giving these children a home in your family and helping them make important decision in their life you’ll be making a huge difference to their future and in return, you’ll have a hugely rewarding career.”

Finding foster carers for older children is a challenging task for authorities across the country. There are currently 511 children and young people in foster care in Northamptonshire and more than half of them are over ten.

Foster carers receive an allowance to cover caring for a child and are paid. They receive support from the county council’s dedicated fostering team as well as a full training package.

my county council

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Draughton News

Spring is springing – a bit earlier each year so they say – but Draughton never sleeps , really!



The main activity for the village leading up to Christmas was the Christmas Fayre. The village pulled out all the stops to produce cakes, puddings, jams, jellies, chutneys, mustards, sweets, crafts – you name it – and all of the highest standard. The combined efforts raised over £2,000, which for our little community is astounding. Our thanks go to all who made, came, bought and supported.



The proceeds went to the church to pay for the newly installed heating system. We can now justly boast one of the warmest churches around (not that the past winter has been much of a test; not until February anyway!). Still it was fantastic to have a lovely warm building on Christmas Eve for the carol service with nearly the whole village crammed in and the vicar able to write in the service registry: 'Full Church' - Result!!

As I write this the snowdrops are bursting through. January is set to be enlivened with a Burns Night supper in our Clubroom and a Spring Fayre in – well – the Spring!

We run a small yoga class on a Monday night which all helps to limber up for the year ahead. There is usually space for a mat or two. We are at a very basic level and welcome anyone who would care to join us. If you are interested please call Kate Calnan on 686747.

- Kate Calnan

Join the Job Club

If you are looking for work, a change of career, volunteering opportunities, considering further training/education/apprenticeships or even wanting to start your own business, Brixworth Job Club may be able to help.

The club was set up to support jobseekers and those looking for new opportunities. Participants get free use of the library's computing facilities, internet access and local jobs pages. They will also be offered one-to-one friendly advice and support from confidence building to CV writing, interview skills and effective job searching techniques.

The club meets monthly starting 23 March (10am – 1pm). Further meetings are planned on 20 April and 18 May, at the same times. All meetings take place at Brixworth Library. For more information contact Della Butcher on (01327) 871100 or visit www.daventrydc.gov.uk/job-club

Everyone joining the club will also receive a free memory stick and welcome pack. - /jb

Northants Police Authority Grants

If you thought crime doesn't pay you'd only be half right, as Northants Police Authority uses some of the proceeds of crime as grants for projects that might prevent future crime.

Nine such grants are currently available: one of £10,000, three of £5,000 and five of £1,000 each.

Any organisation or group can apply to receive these "for capital projects that aim to tackle or prevent anti-social behaviour". Projects from smaller organisations or groups are particularly welcome.

To apply, download the application form at www.northantspoliceauthority.org.uk. The deadline for submissions is 30 April.

Jackson Grundy helps village groups

The Estate Agent Jackson Grundy launched a scheme in 2010 to raise funds for community groups including those in the Brixworth area.

The scheme sees the company donate 5% of its commission upon completion of a property sale to a local cause. Vendors can choose from a list of nominated good causes.

To date the scheme has raised over £3,000 with cheques issued so far to the Village Hall, Brixworth Centre Pre-School, Brixworth Cricket Club and the Country Park. Brixworth Youth Foundation, All Saints Football Club and the Olive Branch are also organisations that have been nominated and are awaiting payment. - /jf

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ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Brixworth A.D. 680

Vicar: A new appointment awaited
 Churchwardens: Mrs S. Woodhead, 8 Brackenhorough 01604 880158
 Mr M. Lewis, 8 Beech Close 01604 881836

FROM THE FORMER VICAR

Dear People of Brixworth,

By the time you receive this Bulletin, I will have reached my retirement date (29th February) and no longer be Vicar of Brixworth, although my departure from the vicarage will not be until sometime in March.

When I came here in 1981 I envisaged staying for about five years, especially as those early days weren't easy for me and I had much to learn but well before the end of the five years I had little desire to move. I can honestly say that I have felt quite at home in this parish and been able to get on with the task of being parish priest with little interference (or indeed help!) from my superiors. Naturally there have been ups and downs and in the last year or so I have felt less able to get around the village due to a few problems with legs and feet. In any case, the Church of England decided in 1974 that the age limit for full-time ministry should be 70 and I am well into my 70th year.

Perhaps a few biographical details may interest you. I was born in Abergavenny in South Wales and brought up in a village (Llanfoist) just outside the town. My schooldays were passed at the local King Henry VIII Grammar School from which I went to St David's College, Lampeter, to read history rather than theology. (I like to tell people that Lampeter was the only place in the world that would accept me for a degree without 'O' level maths. – I was a dunce in that subject.) From Lampeter I went to St Stephen's House theological college in Oxford for two years, expecting to return to Wales afterwards.

However, I consider myself to have had a lucky escape because I was never very pro-Welsh and I was offered a place on the staff of St John's East Dulwich, a large parish between Lordship Lane and Peckham Rye in South London. I was ordained in Southwark Cathedral by the lordly Bishop Mervyn Stockwood in 1966 and joined the vicar, two curates and a lady-worker to begin my priestly ministry. It was a good training parish with a church school, a hospital, an old people's home and lots of organizations. I remained there nearly five years, the penultimate one of which I was on my own in an interregnum.

After several attempts to stay in London, I somewhat reluctantly accepted a second curacy (usual in those days) at Tewkesbury Abbey in Gloucestershire. Of course, I soon fell in love with the building and its programme of services and events but found it difficult at first to adjust to the more leisurely style of life there after a very busy parish in London. After 4½ years there I was appointed Precentor and Chaplain Choral of Chester Cathedral where I remained for six years before being offered the incumbency of Brixworth with Holcot by Bishop Douglas Feaver in 1981. There seemed to be many reasons at the time for not coming here and a number of friends warned me against it but I took the risk of coming and have not regretted it. Indeed, I have been truly grateful for the opportunities and experiences I have had here and simply wish I had made better use of them.

As some of you know, I have developed a great love for our capital city (a form of madness in the minds of country people) and although I shall miss living in a village, I am hoping that there will be many compensations in living in the London hinterland. I have acquired a rented flat in Bromley (Kent) at a place that is designed for retired clergy (plus wives or husbands) and clergy widows. It has its own chapel and there is a limited amount of social activity for those who desire it but it is not an institution and all live independently within the premises. There are fast trains to Victoria (15-20 minutes away) and easy access to Kent and Sussex which I look forward to exploring this summer.

That's quite enough about me and I'd be rightly rebuked if I leave no Christian message. I will just underline three things that I tried to establish while at All Saints' Brixworth. First and foremost there is the central position of the Holy Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, the Mass if you like that term, the service which the Lord gave us, not simply as an occasional event but as the high point of each week when we are enabled by our communion with Him to share in His life and ministry as we feed on His word and love and try to take Him to others in all our dealings with them.

Secondly there is the importance of silence in personal prayer and in the public services of the Church, so that we ponder the words of scripture and our experience of life and allow God to speak to us rather than chatting away and trying to create a kind of religious frenzy born of frenetic activity and breathlessness and an inability to keep still. Only in silence and stillness can we begin to taste and enjoy God's own peace and love of us.

Thirdly, I have tried to emphasize the importance of the Christian Calendar throughout the year with its on-going rhythm of the seasons, its feasts and festivals that give us variety in our Christian pilgrimage and act as a kind of creed to remind us of the essentials of our faith, from day to day and year to year.

May God bless you all and keep reminding you that the ancient building here in your midst is not just an historical monument but a reminder and vehicle of the Christian faith that has sustained the people of this land through so many centuries and is able to sustain us still if only we allow God in Christ into our lives.

Yours sincerely

Anthony J. Watkins



The Last Supper by Ercole de' Roberti, National Gallery, London

ALL SAINTS' CALENDAR

March, April & May 2012

N. B. Owing to the interregnum that begins in March and will continue until a new vicar or priest in charge is installed, it is impossible to be definite about times of services on Sundays and major feast days. The notice-board at the church gate will be one source of information and hopefully a weekly sheet to take away from inside the church during opening hours.

Nevertheless, the dates of the Sundays and special days during the next three months are listed below.

MARCH		
4	Sunday	Second Sunday of Lent
11	Sunday	Third Sunday of Lent
18	Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mothering Sunday
19	Monday	St Joseph, husband of the B. V. Mary
25	Sunday	Fifth Sunday of Lent
26	Monday	Annunciation of the Lord to the B. V. Mary
APRIL		
1	Sunday	Palm Sunday – the first day of Holy Week
5	Thursday	Maundy Thursday
6	Friday	Good Friday
7	Saturday	Holy Saturday
8	Sunday	Easter Sunday
15	Sunday	Second Sunday of Eastertide
22	Sunday	Third Sunday of Eastertide
23	Monday	St George, Patron Saint of England
25	Wednesday	St Mary the Evangelist
29	Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Eastertide
MAY		
1	Tuesday	St Philip & St James, Apostles
6	Sunday	Fifth Sunday of Eastertide
13	Sunday	Sixth Sunday of Eastertide
14	Monday	St Matthias, Apostle
17	Thursday	Ascension Day
20	Sunday	Seventh Sunday of Eastertide
27	Sunday	Festival of Pentecost (Whitsunday)
JUNE		
2-5		H. M. Queen's Diamond jubilee Celebrations

FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM	Sunday	6 November	Brooke Isabella Mabel Robinson	14 The Knoll
HOLY MATRIMONY	Saturday	5 November	Ian Paul Wood & Kerry Janet Golding	The Cedars, Station Road
HOLY BURIAL / CREMATION	Monday	31 October	Lily Nancy Kilby	Boniface House
	Friday	4 November	Ronald Christopher Seelig	17 Tantree Way
	Friday	4 November	Mary Helen Wykes	51 The Ashway
	Friday	2 December	Gwendoline Mary Crooks	Brompton View Care Home

Brixworth Parish Council Newsletter 14th Edition, Winter 2012



We are on Facebook!
Search for "Brixworth Parish Council" and "like" us to receive our occasional updates directly into your Newsfeed. We would be pleased to receive your comments!



Chairman's report



As I sit to write this message, it is early January; so it should not be out of place for me to wish you a Happy New Year. But then you will not be reading this until, perhaps, March or April - a little late for such greetings! So, although I wish you happiness, let us address at least a couple of issues that need to be considered this year.

You may have read that Northamptonshire County Council is considering saving money by reducing police coverage, particularly the coverage afforded by Police Community Service Officers (PCSOs) and although this does not necessarily mean we will be without coverage, whatever coverage we may get will likely be limited as a consequence – perhaps too limited; leading to an increase in crime and anti-social behavior, just as we are seeing the fruits of the effort that has been ongoing in Brixworth for several years now.

One solution is for the village to fund the cost of a Brixworth PCSO which is about £34 thousand per year, or, if you prefer, about £1.50 per month per household, however, the question needs to be asked – is this and the enhanced security it would bring something that the people of Brixworth want? Or should the Parish Council just sit on their hands and insist they really are saving money?

It may not be an easy question, nor is the question of future development within and around the village.

Although one proposal to build housing south of the village was recently rejected by the Daventry District Council Planning Committee;

A new application is looming that will also move the village towards the town of Northampton which is equally busy moving towards us with the threat of eventually engulfing Brixworth; as it has Kingsthorpe. I, as much as anyone, would like Brixworth to keep a safe distance from the urbanisation of Northampton. But, if we say we will have no housing development in Brixworth, we are pretty much assuming our children will - in fact must - move elsewhere.

Surely, if we agree development south of the village is not on the cards, we should be looking to see where development; for the future growth of our families and our village, might take place? As it is, there are several busloads of kids that journey to Moulton School every day and they read signs saying Brixworth is Full – so where will they go when they leave school? Where will they set up their future homes if Brixworth is too full for them? Moving away should be an option, not a necessity.

Therefore the goal should be managed development that includes developing housing and also demands that the village go out and secure new employment possibilities for our future generations, shouldn't it? I would welcome your views on how we might make Brixworth an inviting place for our children and grandchildren, whilst keeping the village character we all enjoy.

There will be an election in May and if you think you can help resolve questions like these, I would encourage you to stand for election to the Parish Council. Some councillors will stand for re-election, some won't; I am sure that if you stand, you will find it worthwhile and interesting.
Michael Lacey mlacey@brixworthpc.org.uk



For more information or to contact your Parish Councillors go to our website at www.brixworthpc.org.uk

Or contact Parish Clerk Jane Macken on 01604 881243

MEETING**DATE**

Planning	Monday, 12 March
Full Council	Tuesday, 20 March
Recreation & Amenity	Tuesday, 27 March
Planning	Monday 2 April
Highways & Environment	Tuesday 3 April
Finance	Tuesday 17 April
Annual Parish Meeting	Wednesday 18 April
Planning	Monday 23 April
Full Council	Tuesday 24 April
Planning	Monday 14 May
Annual Council Meeting	Tuesday 15 May
Recreation & Amenity	Tuesday 22 May
Full Council	Tuesday 29 May

Agendas will be displayed at least four days before the meeting, please check for any changes to meetings.

Contact details for the Clerk and Councillors are available on www.brixworthpc.org.uk and in the Library.

Full Council Meetings are at 7:15 PM
Committee Meetings are at 7:30 PM

Parish Council Election 3 May 2012

It is expected that Parish Councils will inherit more power to take decisions, make plans and act on behalf of their communities in the coming months, in part because of the provisions of the recently passed Localism Act that intends local people to have more influence on issues that concern them.

If you think you would like to join the Parish Council to contribute to the future wellbeing of our community, here are some of the steps to take.

A prospective candidate must deliver a valid Nomination Paper, or send it by post, to the Returning Officer for the election. This form is obtained from the Returning Officer at Daventry District Council or the Clerk to the Parish Council.

To identify each candidate, the Nomination Paper includes the candidate's surname, forenames, residence and description (if required) plus his or her number and prefix letter from the current register of electors. The Returning Officer and Clerk to the Parish Council have a copy of this register.

The nomination paper must also contain similar particulars of a Proposer and a Secunder for the Candidate, both of whom must also be electors for Brixworth Parish.

The nomination paper must be completed and returned to Daventry District Council by noon on Wednesday, 4 April 2012.

If you have any questions about this process, the Clerk to the Parish Council would be happy to help.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

ARE YOU A BRIXWORTH VILLAGE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION LOOKING FOR FUNDING, IF SO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL FOR MORE DETAILS. THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF GRANT APPLICATIONS IS THE 31 MARCH 2012.

Please contact the Clerk for an application form on 01604 881243 or email clerk@brixworthpc.org.uk

Also available on the website for downloading www.brixworthpc.org.uk

Meet your Parish Councillors

The Parish Council will be holding surgeries in the Library/Community Centre foyer on the following Saturdays from 10.00 am – 12 noon.

3 March
7 April
5 May



For more information or to contact your Parish Councillors go to our website at www.brixworthpc.org.uk

Or contact Parish Clerk Jane Macken on 01604 881243



BRIXWORTH MATTERS

www.bcfchurch.co.uk

2012

What will 2012 have in store for us? If you are interested in sport there is a feast this year – the Olympic Games, European Football Cup, Wimbledon, Cricket and much more. If sport is not your thing, then the hope of a good summer with holidays, family times, country walks, B-B-Q's in the garden on a delightful summers evening.

Our hopes and aspirations at the beginning of a year are still attainable – yet as we are aware our lives are not always as straightforward, and disappointments lurk in the shadows spoiling such hope.

This looking forward got me thinking about some words of Jesus, when he said to His disciples “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven that cannot be destroyed”. What was He saying? I think simply this – it is easy to neglect the fact we are spiritual beings and fail to see things in the light of eternity. To know God now, to know His love, security and acceptance in a changing world is to store up treasure that will never fade or be destroyed.

We at BCF wish you all the very best in 2012 and would love to see you at any of the Services and events throughout the year – a warm welcome is guaranteed.

Every blessing

Phil Walter (Revd)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil", with a horizontal line underneath.

Contact: Phil on 882040

Messy Church Adventure



Brixworth Christian Fellowship would like to thank all who have been enjoying the Messy Church adventures in 2011 and now in 2012.

Remember Sunday 25th March is the new revised date for the next Messy Church adventure. This is a family event to encourage mums, dads, sons and daughters, grandparents, carers (etc) to come and join in this afternoon of family entertainment as we invite you to a free time of family fun, food and friendship. Join in various fun activities where you can meet new people and watch (or) join in the fun as we (try) and act out a story from the Bible, and then tuck into some wonderful food!

**This is a FREE event
for families from the village...
Sunday 25th March 4pm - 6pm
Brixworth Library & Community Centre**

Friends from BCF look forward to entertaining you.
Hope to see you there!

For further information email
bcf.cw@virginmedia.com or see our website
www.bcfchurch.co.uk

Christianity EXPLORED

One life.
What's it all about?

Do you have a question regarding life? What is the point of my life? Is there life after death?

Could there be more to life than what I am experiencing?
Does any of this really matter?
Why, if there is a God is there so much tragedy in the world?

Brixworth Christian Fellowship is running a short course which will help you to explore questions like the ones above and more importantly questions on life that are important to you.

You are cordially invited to Christianity Explored One Life What's it all about?

The course starts on Wednesday 29th February 7-9pm (Coffee/Tea and biscuits)

The Olive Branch Library and Community Centre
Spratton Road Brixworth

This is a FREE event!

For further information email bcf.cw@virginmedia.com or see our website www.bcfchurch.co.uk

Operation Christmas Child



Thank you for all your support as 1562 boxes were collected in Brixworth and the children who received them in Kyrgyzstan would have realised that someone somewhere really cared!

What would you find at BCF?

BCF is a church that began in 1988 formed by a group of people who were living in Brixworth and worshipped at other churches in town. Over the years the church has grown with its vision to be church in the community.

Today you will find around one hundred people together on a Sunday morning at the school – all ages and backgrounds – families and individuals enjoying being together. What would you find if you came along?

Coffee & Toast – friendship – a warm welcome – Junior church for all children including a Creche – hearty singing of both traditional and contemporary hymns and songs – a group of musicians to help us in our worship – prayer – sermon (always relevant never boring!!) and the opportunity to explore the Christian faith together. We hope to see you sometime –

why not look on our website: www.bcfchurch.co.uk

Pensioners Lunch

Did you know that every Wednesday the Olive Branch Coffee Shop closes its doors to the public to serve the Pensioners of Brixworth and surrounding area. From 12 noon a two course meal plus tea or coffee is served at a cost of just £3.80.

It is an opportunity to have a natter with old and new friends and enjoy the playful banter the OB provides.

If you would like to come along please phone 889030 to book your place, or call in to the Olive Branch in person.

See the monthly menu on the website: www.bcfchurch.co.uk

COFFEE SHOP

More than just a Coffee Shop, the Olive Branch is the place to meet, be kept informed of Village life and receive a warm welcome.

Pensioners lunch on a Wednesday at 12 noon
(need to book on 889030 or in person)
If you have never tasted the fine coffee and food – why not try it!
Mon - Thur 10-3.00, Fri 9.30-3.00,
Saturday 9.30-1.00
For more information phone The Olive Branch on 889030

Run by volunteers this non-profit making venture has a welcoming atmosphere.

BCF Weekly events

Sunday:	09:45 – 10:30 11:15 – 12:30	Informal gathering Main Service of Worship (including Junior Church and Creche)
Monday:	20:00 – 21:30	Prayer Meeting in the Olive Branch
Tuesday:	19:30 – 21:00	TNT – for Teenagers*
Wednesday:	20:00 – 21:30	Home study Groups
Thursday:	10:00 – 11:30	Olive Shoots – a Mums & Tots group*
Friday:	17:00 – 18:00 18:15 – 19:15	Dynamites Children's Club – age 5-7 years* Dynamites Children's Club – age 8-11* (*held at the Library & Community Centre)

Well that's a bit about us.

If you would like to know more about anything in this leaflet or to know more about the Christian faith, then phone Phil on 882040 or go online at www.bcfchurch.co.uk

Brix and Mortar

Buy to Let – Is it time to think again?

Buy-to-let may not be the hot property it was during the boom, but lower house prices, rising rents, poor interest returns at banks, unsure pension payouts and improving mortgage deals have caused us all to think again.

If you are willing to accept that the value of a property may slide in the short term, and you can raise 15-25% of the property value yourself (leaving you to borrow the remaining 75-85%) it can be a good long-term investment – especially if you can get the rental income to not just cover the mortgage payments but cover a little extra too. Ideally you're looking for the monthly rent to be 125% of your mortgage payment.

Like any investment, buy-to-let comes with no guarantees, but for those who have more faith in bricks and mortar than stocks and shares here are some top tips:

1. Research the market

If you are new to buy-to-let, what do you know about the market? Do you know the risks, as well as the benefits? If you know someone who has entered the buy-to-let market, ask them about their experiences.

2. Choose a promising area

Promising does not mean most expensive or cheapest. Promising means a place where people would like to live, this can be for a variety of reasons. Buy-to-let properties can be very expensive when they stand vacant, so make sure you buy in an area where there is sufficient demand for rental property, and that you have the kind of property tenants are looking for.

3. Do the math

Before you think about looking around properties, sit down with a pen and paper and write down the cost of houses you are looking at and the rent you are likely to get. Traditionally buy-to-let lenders want rent to cover 125% of the mortgage repayments. Deposits required are around 15-25%.

4. Shop around

Do not just walk into your bank or building

society and ask for a mortgage. If you are looking for advice consider using a specialist buy-to-let mortgage broker. Remember that merely asking them for information does not put you under any obligation to use them.

5. Think about your target tenant

Instead of imagining whether you would like to live in your investment property, put yourself in the shoes of your target tenants. Who are they and what do they want? Then make sure your property covers the key points.

6. Don't be over-ambitious

We can't all be buy-to-let millionaires with huge portfolios but we can secure a better future for ourselves if we are sensible. To

compare the value of different properties use their yield, that is annual rent received as a percentage of the purchase price. You should easily achieve 5%, far more than your money will get in a bank currently.

Rental values will vary for each individual property and a local specialist rental agent will give advice on what you can expect. As a rough guide, if you rent out a property in Brixworth you can ask between £500 and £695 per month for two bedrooms, £650-£795 for three bedrooms and £800-£1,200 for four bedrooms.

Finally, choose an agent to help you. Their advice is free. Remember that you do not have to go for a High Street presence as many independent agents offer an excellent and personal service. – *Stuart Little*



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Your local property consultant

stuart little

Review: Treasure Island

On a cold dark January night Brixworth Drama Group managed to light up the village with a heart-warming rendition of a panto version of Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, directed by Sue l'Anson. The whole audience thoroughly enjoyed the evening which was both entertaining and hilarious. It's amazing that an amateur group could create such a well-produced show.

The production began with the arch-pirate Long John Silver (Mike Culverhouse creating a believably sinister character) complete with crutch, wooden leg and parrot, joined by a motley crew of pirates (Amanda Pilgrim, Libby Bowers, Sue McAspurn and Sophie Cardwell). They were not very happy because their treasure map had been stolen by renegade pirate, Billy Bones. Imagine a bunch of bankers who've had their bonuses stolen by a Big Issue seller.

The first of many musical numbers (enhanced by a great live band) took place in the Benbow Inn: throughout the pantomime were familiar songs that had been twisted into a *Treasure Island* theme with excellent vocals from the director and choreography from Ruth Cardwell. The Inn was run by the larger than life Henrietta Hawkins (James Skeggs demonstrating his skills as an ex professional with a mesmerising stage presence) and her son, Jim, played by BDG newcomer Hannah Saxton.

Early visitors to the Inn included Henrietta's

doctor, Livesey (Caroline Monk), and also Captain Billy Bones (Jon Mackley) who came to an abrupt end when given a death mark by another pirate named Blind Pew (John Wardell). Bones left his chest containing the

by the buxom Joanna Runiewicz. They try their charms with naughty looks and lots of innuendo but eventually decide to try their luck in Southampton Docks.

After a short sea voyage, in which almost all



All aboard: The Brixworth Drama Group's cast for *Treasure Island*

treasure map for the proprietress to find. Henrietta, Jim and two unwilling sailors, Fore and Aft (Heather Pool and Eileen Truby, a great comedy duo) were forced to flee with pirates on their trail.

They sought advice from the foppish Squire Trelawney, Stuart Cooper adds great humour to the performance turning the character into a pompous aristocratic buffoon (think of Boris Johnson with a speech impediment and you get the picture). A single glance at the treasure map reveals an astonishing amount of the backstory concerning the buried treasure. However, when the Squire decides to search for the treasure, taking Jim and Livesey with him, he forbids Henrietta from travelling with them. Cue a disguise and Henrietta was transformed into a less than convincing sailor.

Meanwhile, Squire Trelawney and Jim have chartered a ship captained by Smollett (Den Coles) and First Officer Arrow (Alex Monk) to take them to *Treasure Island*. They were approached by two dockside ladies who try to entice them into a good time. Jean McDonnell plays the rather 'past her sell by date' madam with a zimmer frame adorned with a red flashing light. Her prodigy is played

the crew prove that they know nothing about sailing and are rather slow in realising that half of the crew plan to take over the ship, they arrive at *Treasure Island*. They are surprised by appearance of the bedraggled Ben Gunn who leaps out from behind a rock to greet them (Played by Allan Pope whose voice and mannerisms really captured the character). He was marooned by Silver 20 years earlier and has been alone on the island aside from a six-foot talking pink rabbit to keep him company.

After a close call with the local 'cannibals', played by Yvonne Keller, John Wardell, Bobbie Race, Mollie Robinson, and Jacob, Isaac and Ben Leach. Jim runs the ship aground to prevent the pirates escaping with the treasure, and an armed standoff follows. Having lost the singing duel (with original music by Stuart Cooper), the pirates flee both from the armed crew and the vegetarian 'cannibals' but meet their comeuppance in the clutches of the Amazons. Ben Gunn insists that Roger has the treasure and at the conclusion of the tale, a six-foot pink rabbit did indeed appear, complete with treasure.

Clearly everyone involved with the panto enjoyed doing it and this was borne out in the audiences' reactions. It was probably one of the best productions that the group has put on. The costumes (organised and made by Eunice Ellis) were super and really added to the overall effect. There was a barrage of pantomime jokes, many of which were on two levels so that adults and children could enjoy different types of humour. Children were encouraged to come dressed in the pirate finery and at the end of the pantomime Henrietta became a compère judging the fancy dress competition and encouraging the children to shout in their finest pirate voice: yo ho ho and a bottle of rum! This is a production Brixworth Drama Group should be proud of and I for one can't wait for their next one. - Bobbie Gordon



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Beyond the pub grub

Jennifer Fitzgerald speaks with Les and Anthea Pike, owners of the Coach and Horses pub

The roaring fire at the “Coach and Horses”, the ancient pub with a thatched roof at the northern end of Harborough Road, is always a welcome feature in winter. I was especially glad of it on the frosty January morning I sat down to talk to the landlords, Les and Anthea, for the *Brixworth Bulletin*.

How did the business start?

We bought the pub about 25 years ago. We'd previously been running the Abington Park Hotel in Northampton.

The “Coach and Horses” has always been a pub – it was a coaching inn in the sixteenth century, when it boasted the fastest change of horses between Leicester and Northampton. The stables used to be where we now have the Bed & Breakfast rooms. Originally, there were three cottages joined to the inn, which have been knocked down.

What is your relationship to Brixworth?

We moved to Brixworth about 30 years ago, and moved into one of the first David Wilson homes. We now live in Church Street. Anthea comes from Long Buckby and Les from Northampton itself.

What changes have you seen over the years?

Building the food trade and offering accommodation have been the most significant changes.

We now have what we call a food-oriented pub. When we first took it over, the pub was selling basic “pub grub” – Scampi and Chips, Chicken in a Basket, that sort of thing, with filled rolls and only one special dish. We have gradually extended the range of menu – Les is a chef by trade who has even cooked for royalty in the past. At the beginning, Les did the cooking, Anthea was front of bar and Les' brother was behind the bar. Our food is always cooked fresh and we keep changing the menu.

The biggest impact on our business recently was when we converted the stables into a Bed & Breakfast facility four years ago. Within six months we won four-star recognition from the tourist board VisitBritain, and last year we were in their top ten list for accommodation with food and drink.

The overall drink trade has seen a drop of about 10-12% since the introduction of the smoking ban. Our wet trade has dropped about 5%. People are tending to buy more drink from supermarkets. We sell more wine nowadays, as people like to take wine with their meals. However, the wine has to be good as people have become more discerning. We've seen no particular trends in beer consumption – we always offer three real ales and three lagers. Yes, there has been an increase in non alcoholic drinks as people have become more health conscious.

Who is currently involved in the pub?

John has been our head chef for twelve years. Our assistant chef Andy, who also lives in Brixworth, has been with us for nine years.



In addition, there is Matt the manager, Jenny who helps run the restaurant floor, and Les' granddaughter Danni who plans to run the B&B business in future.

What are your customers like?

They fall into two main categories – families at the weekend and business people. There are also the local regular drinkers who tend to be older.

People are booking into our B&B from all over the world. They are mainly business people visiting the likes of Mercedes HPE, CPL Aromas, SPX and other companies based at Moulton Park and Sywell.

On an average Saturday we'll serve at least sixty meals. Unlike most restaurants we don't have a fixed capacity as we can move our tables around.

We have a fantastic group of loyal customers and 80% of our trade is repeat business. When Les had problems with his shoulder, lots of people volunteered to help us.

What's your typical day?

We get up about 6 o'clock and come to the pub. Anthea does her own cleaning here and we then serve breakfast. We're finished breakfast by 9.30 and then it's time for the paperwork, taking bookings and doing the cellar. At lunchtime, when we open from eleven o'clock to two thirty, we have Matt covering the bar and Jenny waitressing. We're open again at four in the afternoon until eleven in the evening.

We don't have a fixed pattern for our days off. We take holidays as we choose but don't stay away for more than five days.

How do the seasons affect business?

The pub business doesn't seem to vary. Of course, there's a mad rush in the two weeks up to Christmas when we see an increase,



but there hasn't been any drop off in regular business this January. Since we've had a garden, we've been able to increase our summer trade. And in winter, people come because they like our cosy fireplace.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you?

One of the most amusing things recently was on the Royal Wedding last April, when Darrell Titt dressed a car up in Union Jacks and parked it outside (pictured, below). We put on a hog roast and 250 people came. We got onto the front page of the *Chronicle & Echo* – the picture was bigger than that of the wedding. We're planning to do the same thing again for the Queen's Jubilee.

What is the strangest thing that has happened to you?

It's difficult to say because after twenty years, events tend to merge into one another and nothing particular stands out. We've had quite a few famous people visit the pub over the years including the glamour model Abi Titmuss, former Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson and England cricket captain Allan Lamb.

What are your top three challenges?

We just want to maintain our high standards.

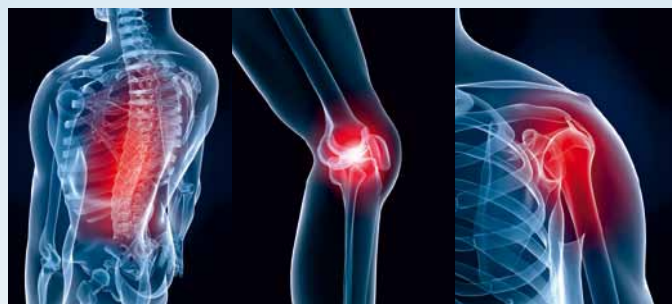
We are also planning for Les' granddaughter Danni to take over the running of the B&B business in due course. No, we don't have any retirement plans. What else would we do?

Outside of work, we are still hoping that Anthea's horse will be able to compete as a reserve in the Olympics. She's had the horse since it was four months old – it's a Grade A show jumper and an advanced eventer that has qualified for Burleigh and Badminton. It was picked for the Olympics trial but we were really disappointed because it had a last-minute injury.



What message do you have for your customers?

We'd like to wish you all a very happy new year and thank you for your loyalty. We're very grateful for your support – we have had 25 years of good going, which is quite a feat in this trade.



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WESTMINSTER REPORT

Happy New Year!

So a busy and eventful 2011 has gone by in the blink of an eye and we find ourselves in an important year for our country.

There can be no doubt that the year ahead will be tough, but we are in a debt crisis and we have to deal with it. Spending money we don't have isn't an option, as we all know from our own households. We should also learn the lessons of non-action from the Greek example.

Personally, I am convinced that Britain is on the right path and I hope we will see real progress during 2012. There is also much to look forward to, from the Olympic Games to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

There are also a couple of local issues I would like to comment on.

Firstly, just before Christmas, the the Planning Inspectorate overturned Daventry District Council's (DDC) decision to refuse planning permission for the Kelmash Hall wind farm (see also p 4).

Like many local people, I am bitterly disappointed by the inspector's decision and together with Councillor Chris Millar I wrote the following letter to *The Telegraph* which was published on 31 December 2011:

"SIR – You call (Leading article, December 21) for Greg Clark, the minister responsible for redrafting the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to "produce another draft that is more precise and better defined". One important area that requires urgent clarity is the positioning of wind farms close to heritage sites.

Despite Government assurances that "heritage protection" is not being watered down, two disturbing appeal decisions in Northamptonshire have been upheld by Government-appointed inspectors. These show that the blind goal of "renewable energy targets" is nullifying the very idea of localism. They also undermine David Cameron's claim that heritage must be safeguarded in the planning process.

At Kelmash, six giant turbines will disfigure the historic Civil War battlefield of Naseby and greatly harm the setting of Kelmash Hall, described by Nikolaus Pevsner as "perfect". Even the inspector admits the house is of the "highest" significance and that the turbines will be "an obvious presence", as well as harming the adjoining field where English Heritage stages its annual Festival of History.

At Watford Lodge, too, turbines will spoil the setting of Ashby St Ledgers manor house, where the Gunpowder Plot was schemed. They

will be visible from the celebrated gardens made by Gertrude Jekyll.

Heritage is a reason why so many people visit Britain every year. Heritage tourism contributes £12 billion to the economy.

With Chris Huhne promising up to 32,000 wind turbines, clarity on where they can be sited is urgent. If the Planning Inspectorate uses renewable energy targets as a reason for agreeing schemes, regardless of impact, is there any point in a local democratic planning process?"

I feel that this sums up my thoughts on this issue. Please be assured that going forward, I will continue to vigorously raise these concerns.

I also know that many residents in Brixworth are concerned about new housing proposals affecting the village and I am keen to work closely with local people, and BRANE - who it is worth mentioning, do a magnificent job - to make sure that your views are heard.

The Government's new concept of Neighbourhood Planning, introduced via the Localism Act, will do much to aid this. For the first time, local people will have a real say over where, and what, development takes place in their area. This is very welcome after years of centrally imposed, top-down targets, which did little to secure local buy-in to development and instead infuriated residents.

With this in mind, I am encouraging the Government to maximise local involvement in the planning process through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is currently out for consultation. Only then will residents believe the planning system truly works in the best interests of the local community, with local development, planned, determined and delivered by local people.

It really is an honour and a privilege to be your MP and I look forward to working closely with you in tackling the challenges of the year ahead. If I can ever be of any assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

With best wishes,

Chris

House of Commons, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

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Meet the Young Apprentice

Harry Maxwell, or Harry M as he was more commonly known, became a regular face on the TV last autumn as one of the contestants in the hit BBC1 TV series, Young Apprentice. The 17 year-old from Brixworth soon proved to be one of the most memorable participants in this series due to his outspoken and competitive nature, which sometimes set him on a collision course with the rest of the participants. But even before he was selected to take part in the show, Harry was a veteran of the boardroom: by the age of 16 he had set up three businesses ranging from travel to cosmetics. We caught up with Harry and his mother over the Christmas holidays.

Q: What inspired you to create the businesses?

A: (Mrs Maxwell) Harry was really inquisitive from a young age. I ran a few small businesses myself and Harry was forever coming up with ideas for driving it forward, promoting it etc

(Harry) I see it as a challenge – it's fun to challenge yourself and to see what you can do. It's also interesting to see how things pan out if you have an idea. Though to be fair money also plays a role.

Q: What did you get out of appearing on the Young Apprentice?

A: I learned a lot about different aspects of business and the techniques people use. I also got a lot of contacts, not only Lord Sugar and other people I met on the show, but also others who've got in touch after seeing me on TV.

Q: How did you get to go on the show?

A: I've always been a massive fan of The Apprentice and even used to watch the American version before it came to the UK. When I heard about the junior version there was no way I could have missed it. I saw the news about the Young Apprentice even before it was advertised on the TV – mine must've been one of the first applications they received!

Q: How hard was it to get in?

A: There was a lot of competition – they had 30,000 applications for the Young Apprentice, from which they pick 12. That means lots of competitions, practice sessions, interviews, as well as psychological assessments to prepare people for the attention they're likely to get as a result of being on the show.

It's a long process, starting with applications between December and February after which come the interviews. Filming took place over eight weeks in the summer.

(Mrs Maxwell) During filming they cannot have any contact with the outside world (no phone, no laptop etc) except for one ten-minute supervised phone call a day. That was hard.

(Harry) You're also not allowed to tell anyone a thing about the show until it airs, they're really paranoid about leaks. At least because we were all under-age we got regular breaks and days off, on the adult series they don't even get that.

(Mrs Maxwell)

The hardest thing is the break between the end of filming in August and the show going on TV at the end of October – the wait was horrible!

Once it started showing it was great – the reaction from friends, family and people in the village was fantastic. Everybody was really positive and so wanted Harry to do well, they used to get very annoyed when he got a bit of stick sometimes. The ladies in the Post Office in Brixworth were loving it and always wanted to hear the latest; I suspect the other people in the village using the post office used to dread me coming in as the queues are long enough as it is!

Stephen Troop was really proud too, he remembers Harry as the little boy who used to carry the Christmas tree home for his mum when he was seven.

Q: How did you get on with the others on the show?

A: While we were on task, everyone was very competitive – after all we were all there to win. But we actually got on very well back at the house, we all had a lot of fun.

Q: How do you deal with the sometimes nasty comments you get on Facebook and Twitter?

A: That goes with the territory, we were warned beforehand to expect some pretty awful comments. You don't go on a show like this and expect to have everyone like you. But I generally found that for every bad thing there was something positive. You just have to try not to get too high or too low on some of the posts, and laugh off the worst ones.

Q: Did you ever fear that appearing on this kind of show could backfire?

A: To be honest I would have regretted passing up that opportunity far much more than any kind of upset or negative outcome from it. Actually it has been a great help with the interviews I've been attending for university and internship – it makes for a fantastic talking point. You want me to give examples of working under pressure, working in a team etc – how many do you want? Plus it's a huge help just getting to the interview stage – I never realised how many applications are rejected without an interview!

Q: Do you think you'll set up more businesses in future?

A: Definitely. At moment I'm focusing on my last few months at school and doing my A-levels, and after that I'll go to university, hopefully either University College London or the London School of Economics. Once I've got some free time I will go look at some ideas have had, and maybe ask Lord Sugar to see what he thinks. -cfw



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Fresh start for Photographic Society

Following on from the letter in the December edition of the *Bulletin*, a group of people with a shared passion for photography met at The George on 18 January.

The main topic was what we would like to do in the coming months and years, and ideas ranged from an exhibition in the library to studio sessions, film work, digital image processing, and visits to a variety of locations. We are working on the plan for the year's activities, so expect to see more information in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Obviously, one of the topics we discussed is the way the village will be changing around

us in the coming months and years.

Whether BRANE is successful or not in stopping the village expanding, we would like to record, for posterity, the way the village develops. So if there is a particular area of the village that anyone would like us to preserve in photography, please contact us.

To set the ball rolling, above is a picture of the field west of Northampton Road, taken on the very day in May 2011 when the news of the Carter Jonas development was announced. Entitled 'One day...', it's about what my dad would say to me about the view across the valley toward Spratton and the

Bramptons. He said: "It's a lovely view, mate, but one day, it will all be concrete!"

We hope to have a website and email set up soon, so that the village can see our work in detail and contact us more easily.

For now we are meeting fortnightly at the George on Thursdays from 8pm – everyone is welcome. Further details of upcoming meetings can be found on posters in The George and the Community Centre.

If you have any questions regarding us and what we are doing, then please contact me for the time being. - Ian Topham (ian@tophams.net)

News from the Community Panel

At the January Community Panel Meeting with the new chairman Cllr Colin Bament, a resident again raised concerns about the use and distribution of drugs. There are conflicting views on the extent of the problem, and we'd welcome anyone who knows more to attend the next meeting in April.

Another issue was dog fouling on the path to the Country Park via the Ashway. Cllr Bament will see if a receptacle can be placed in that area.

There were requests to better publicise the new "101" non-emergency police phone

number, which Gill Newton of the Police Authority will take up at their next meeting.

Last quarter's request to concentrate on parking problems – especially on people illegally parking on double yellows in Pytchley Way and outside Chambers Butchers, has resulted in warning notices and in some cases parking tickets.

As speeding topped the list of residents' concerns this time, it was decided to make this the police priority for the next quarter.

At the end of the meeting, Gill Newton said that budget cuts by 2015 could force

Northamptonshire police to cut the number of PCSOs by one third, or 50 people. In her opinion, such cuts would affect rural areas more than towns as PCSOs integrate well with the community in the countryside. In Brixworth, this has no doubt contributed to the 40% drop in crime we have seen since 2005. Residents should write to Cllr Chris Millar with any concerns about how PCSO cuts might affect crime in Brixworth.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 April at 8pm in the Community Centre's Main Hall. Please come and voice any concerns.
- David Hymas

Carol Service and Nativity



Another year passes, and as Christmas 2011 fades away into a deep corner of my mind, I am left with the fond memories of all those presents that we gave and received, some we had always wanted, and some we weren't expecting. Cards from friends we never see, the Christmas letters, and the family get-togethers. The decorated Christmas trees, and the countless lights glinting in the windows and gardens around the village.

My lasting memory from last year will be, as it has been for many years, the Brixworth Christian Fellowship's Outdoor Nativity. It will stay in my mind not for the carols, or seeing the children dress up as kings, shepherds and angels of varying shapes and sizes. Neither for the bitter cold, or the warming comfort of a hot mince pie and cup of tea. Not even listening to the church bring a modern twist to a traditional theme and make it relevant for today.

No, last year's memory will be seeing so many villagers turning out and taking part in what is rapidly becoming our very own Brixworth Christmas traditional scene. The space in front of the library, right down to the pavement, was crowded with people of all ages braving the cold to watch the Nativity. And as 2012 will bring so many new challenges to our village, let's make a date to meet up again at this year's Nativity.
- Cllr Richard Vizor

Ice skating and fun at charity event

Dozens of blind and partially sighted children and their families from across the county enjoyed a fun time on the ice on 5 January courtesy of the sight loss charity Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB). NAB organised an exclusive session for members of their children and family service to take to the ice at Beckworth Emporium's temporary ice rink.

For some, it was the first time in their lives they went skating. Many of the younger visually impaired children especially enjoyed skating around the rink with a giant penguin, a special skating aid for children.

Hugh Spence, families assistant, said: "All the children and their families really enjoyed having the opportunity to have fun doing something different and by having use of the rink exclusively meant that the children could experience ice skating safely without lots of people pushing past them."

After the children's event, NAB welcomed everyone to a fundraising evening with ice skating followed by a delicious meal and raffle at The Griffins Head in Mears Ashby.

A sincere thank you to all who supported the event or donated prizes, especially Beckworth Emporium and The Griffins Head.

The NAB mobile unit will visit next visit Brixworth on 21 March. It will be outside the library from 11.30am to 12.34pm with advice and specialist equipment to help blind and partially sighted people.

To find out more about services provided by Northamptonshire Association for the Blind call 719193 or visit www.nab.org.uk

Calling local charities

A music festival with a difference is coming to Brixworth. On Saturday 28 July, Lake House in Brixworth Hall Park will host a charity festival showcasing blues, rock, jazz and perhaps some folk music.

It will feature talent from across the region including artists from the Guildford School of Contemporary Music.

While the details of the event will be confirmed and advertised nearer the time, the organisers are very keen that the proceeds benefit local charities as well as the Air Ambulance and Help for Heroes.

Any charities in or near Brixworth should therefore please contact Rosemary Tuckley, Brixworth Hall Park, Brixworth, NN6 9DE or email rosemarytuckley@talktalk.net with some background on the charity, how it helps the community, how much it relies on donations etc. The organisers will also be appealing to local businesses for support.

Pensioners enjoy their Christmas feast

On 14 December, around sixty pensioners gathered at the Library & Community Centre for their Christmas Lunch organised by Brixworth Christian Fellowship at the Olive Branch cafe which it runs.

The three courses were appreciated by all, as they entered into the Christmas spirit. With the crackers pulled, hats on and the home-made Christmas pudding donated by a volunteer before them, in walked some twenty delightful children from the school to sing Christmas songs to the gathered pensioners. Such a polished performance with smiles all round and a round of applause that shook the room!

Carols were sung, there were readings of the Christmas story, a visit from Father Christmas and a few facts about the traditions of Christmas, and a good time was had by all.

A big thank you to the team at the Olive Branch for all the hard work they put in – to Ken Troop for the supply of vegetables for the meal and Santa's little helper PCSO Jo Hillary!

Even when it's not Christmas, the Olive Branch holds a Pensioner's Lunch consisting of two courses plus tea or coffee every Wednesday from 12 noon to 1.30 pm. Lunch is open to all pensioners. For further information if you would like to come along speak to Vernon or Sue on 889030 or pop in at any time.



U3A report

The December meeting got the group off to a bright start for the festive month with a performance by The Homestead Singers whose repertoire included carols and popular songs interspersed with a joke or two. This was followed by mince pies and sherry or the usual cuppa and a seasonal raffle. Polly Feeley gave a very interesting presentation in January with anecdotes of her childhood in the fifties, together with some memorable tunes from the period, which certainly evoked memories amongst the members present. In February we enjoyed a presentation on Rockingham Castle and the Watson family by Mick Boyce, a tour guide at the Castle since 1999.

A group of thirty-five members took a coach for a visit to the Olympic Park (pictured, right) which they were able to see from the viewing area in John Lewis at the Westfield Centre. They were also able to tour Canary Wharf and a Museum and Heritage Centre at the Woolwich Arsenal where the shooting events will take place. A smaller group took advantage of a special offer at Highgate House which included half board and use of the leisure facilities for a very reasonable outlay. The Music Appreciation Group were spoiled before Christmas with a concert by the Nene Consort who demonstrated the versatility of the recorder, closely followed by the quarterly programme hosted by Mike and Marion Fitchett in their studio.



Members of the Brixworth U3A group took the opportunity to see the London Olympic Park under construction

The Christmas lunch at the Three Swans in Market Harborough

was attended by nearly seventy members who enjoyed a seasonal spread, and the January lunch involves a return to the Lamb at Little Harrowden which proved a popular choice with the Rambling group later last year. The Rambling Group, including the strollers is attracting nearly forty participants every month and successful walks were held at the Bramptons in January and Nether Heyford and Flore in February. There are now over twenty members of the Bridge Group, who continue to meet weekly, and both the Table Tennis and Badminton groups are proving very popular.

The Gardening group made Christmas decorations in December and in January enjoyed a visit to Covey Nurseries. The Genealogy group and the Poetry group continue to make good progress, the former now having joined with other groups in the area to improve access to records and enable the exchange of information and general matters of interest. The Theatre Group are going to see Ladies in Lavender at The Royal and Derngate in April. Following the success of the holiday in the Forest of Dean last year the visit to Cornwall this year is booking up quickly with twenty members committed so far.

With a full programme of events lined up for the coming year there promises to be something to suit all tastes and requirements. New members are always welcome and would no doubt find plenty to interest them; indeed it is due to the membership that such a wide range of interests is covered. Details are available on the web at www.u3asites.org.uk/brixworth or from our Membership Secretary Peter Davies on 880401.

- Gerry Dobson

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Choral Concert

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Admission: £9; £5 for under 14s.
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Brixworth & Scaldwell Scouts

The Scout Group started the New Year with a bang. We had a highly successful New Years Eve Family Disco at the Village Hall, which was a sell out success. In fact it was so good we are going to do it again later this year. That has set the tone for the rest of the year I think – all of us raring to go and enjoy ourselves.

The Beavers have organised a whole series of thrilling activities. These include considering our safety, trying different foods for Chinese New Year, map making (I wonder if they will find the treasure?), tracking, scout craft and some backwoods cooking. They will also be undertaking some air activities and getting prepared for Easter.

Cubs are planning a fine old time. From building Chinese Dragons, celebrating Burns night (with Haggis and Irn Bru!) to showing off their collections, their enthusiasm for sport and telling everyone about their hobbies. Plus they will be working on their Reader and Artist badges. If they have time I am sure the leaders will be able to fit in some fun and games too!

Scouts have adopted the Olympics as their theme right through to the summer and all activities are being fed back to a central Scout database so the Brixworth Scouts can monitor their achievements against other groups in the country. Still on going is the popular Entrepreneurial Challenge Badge – please support the Scouts with their businesses should you be offered

the opportunity. On top of all that they are camping in February and some are working on their canoeing in preparation for a three-day canoe cruise down the river Wye in May.

Explorers have scheduled an exciting couple of month's activities for themselves. As well as joining the Scouts on the camping expedition, they have a number of night hikes on the agenda, some off road biking, go-carting, shooting and science. All this as well as making the haggis to celebrate Burns' night, a games night and going swimming – it exhausts me just to write about it!

The Scout Group as a whole has a Family Camp planned for June to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations. Nearly seventy people are off to sunny (we hope) Cannock for a long weekend of activities and festivities.

I am pleased to say that the waiting list to join the scouts has fallen from two years two months to nineteen months. We continue to look for ways to reduce the waiting time further. Therefore when young people do not attend their section evening for four consecutive weeks and their absence has not been discussed with the section leaders, I will contact the parents / guardians to see whether the place is still required. Plus where subs remain outstanding for more than four weeks I will again contact the parents / guardians to discuss the young person's place. The Scouts organisation fully understands that in these difficult economic times payment of subs is not always at the top of the list. Anyone experiencing difficulties with the subs can contact the treasurer or me to discuss ways in which this may be overcome with complete confidentiality.

As always we continue to seek to strengthen our leader team. Many leaders are under pressure at work, which means sometimes they cannot make it to their section evening. Currently we have over one



hundred young people involved in Scouts, many who turn up every week. The more leaders we have the more flexible we can be. Leaders do not have to be able to commit to one evening a week. If you have one evening every two weeks or every month that you could spare, come and visit us, see what it is all about. Talk to one of the leaders or contact me and find out about the fantastic experiences and opportunities with Scouts.

Another way to get involved is via the Executive Committee. We have several active members and many ideas for fund raising and raising awareness of the Scout Group. We always need more members; again it gives us flexibility and a much wider input. If you have a few hours to spare please contact us and find out more.

To find out more about Scouts in general please visit <http://scouts.org.uk>. For more info on the Brixworth and Scaldwell Scout Group, contact Kim Phillips, Group Scout Leader on 07815 070878 or info@armarketing.co.uk
- Kim Phillips

1st Scaldwell Guides

During the autumn term, several Guides designed and made pennants for the Quilts 4 London Challenge. They are hoping to give each competitor of the Olympics and Paralympics a pennant to take home after the Games.

We had a joint meeting with both Brownie Packs on the theme of Halloween (ideal for fancy dress). The girls did various challenges which eventually won them a plate of food. This was consumed much quicker and a good time was had by all.

Over 50 Guides and Brownies from the district enjoyed a weekend at the John Lowther Centre, Kettering in November. The weather was much kinder this year which enabled us to enjoy go-carting, archery and several outdoor challenges.

By request the Guides made mini Christmas cakes again which they marzipaned, iced and decorated over a period of three weeks. We finished the term with ice skating at Beckworth Emporium near Ashby and a visit to the Royal Theatre in Northampton to see Alice in Wonderland. – Jill Gunnnett, Guide
1st Scaldwell Guides



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What's on at Brixworth Library?

Rhymetimes for the Under 5s: Free to all Under 5s and their parents/carers every Friday. During term-time, Session 1 runs 9.45-10.20am, Session 2 10.30-11am and Session 3 (under 18 months only) 11-11.30am. During school holidays there will be one session only from 10-10.45am.

Struggling to help your child with their homework? Need a computer and haven't got one? Then why not come along to the Brixworth Library **Homework Club**! Staff are at hand to help you/your child complete their homework. Computer use, internet access and printing is free! Every Wednesday (term time) 3.30-5pm

Children's Crafts & Activities take place one Saturday morning a month and every school holiday. Please visit or phone Brixworth Library on 882153 to find out when the next one is.

The **Scrapbooking and Crafts Club** meet once a month on a Saturday morning from 10am to midday. There is a charge of £3-4 per person to cover costs and refreshments. Open to all with an interest in crafts, no previous experience needed.

Brixworth Reader's Club meets every first Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm in the Library – open to all who enjoy reading, discussion and tea & biscuits!

The **Brixworth Drama Group** will be holding a free exhibition upstairs in Brixworth Library throughout March. Enjoy a look back at the history of the drama group!

Come and support your local Library by joining **The Friends of Brixworth Library**. We usually meet every second Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Alternatively, support the library by becoming a Friend by annual subscription or becoming a volunteer.

Brixworth Library's current **opening hours** are: Mondays to Fridays 10am-6pm, Saturdays 9am-1pm, closed on Sundays. Please note that the times are scheduled to change to 9am-6pm Tuesdays to Fridays, Saturdays 9am-1pm and Sundays 1pm-4pm, with the library closed on Mondays. A consultation on these changes is underway until Friday 2 March. Contact Jill Barber on 882153 for more details on any of our services.

Planning update

DA/2011/0754 101 Northampton Rd Remove trees in a conservation area	17.10.11 PC No objection 11.11.11 DDC Approved
DA/2011/0770 28 Shelleycotes Rd Two storey side extension	17.10.11 PC No objection 11.11.11 DDC Approved
DA/2011/0838 Mercedes-Benz HPE External Illuminated Sign	7.11.11 PC No Objection 6.12.11 DDC Approved
DA/2011/0868 12, Oathill Close Single storey rear extension	7.11.11 PC No Objection 8.12.11 DDC Approved
DA/2011/0790 Rosemary Cottage, Froghall Construction of detached garage with storage above	7.11.11 PC No Objection 28.11.11 DDC Refused
DA/2011/0792 13 Kennel Terrace Single storey rear extension and single storey front extension	7.11.11 PC No Objection 21.11.11 DDC Refused

Be wise and stay well

Fruit smoothies and mini health checks will be on offer at the launch of Daventry & District Over Fifties Forum (DOF) first 'rural' Wise & Well event, which will take place at Brixworth Library on Monday 26 March from 2-4pm.



This is the first of a series of fun and informative events which will focus on staying healthy and having fun. There are guest speakers from the NHS, local pharmacies and parish nurses, as well as demonstrations of 'Extend' gentle exercise, a gardening demonstration by Moulton College, a general health quiz, interactive games and a Wii Sport taster session. If that wasn't enough, there are free gifts and goodie bags, subsidised refreshments and home-made cakes from the Olive Garden café, as well as a prize draw for a Luxury Easter Hamper.

For the (decidedly!) under-fifties, Surestart will be organising activities such as Story Times in the Children's Library. For those interested in helping the library, there will also be information about "The Friends of Brixworth Library" Group and how you can help.

See you on 26 March.

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What's on?

27 Feb - 3 Mar	Stomp	Derngate
28 Feb - 3 Mar	Mogadishu	Royal
1 Mar	Limehouse Lizzie	The Roadmender
1 Mar	Rich Hall	Corby Cube
4 Mar	Hayley Westenra	Derngate
8 Mar	Sir Andrew Motion	All Saints Church, N'hampton
8 Mar	Word Furnace	Corby Cube
9 Mar	Joe Brown	Derngate
10 Mar	The Owl and the Pussycat	Corby Cube
10 Mar	Stewart Lee	Derngate
14 Mar	I Beach Road	Royal
14 Mar	Circus of Horrors	Derngate
15 Mar	Fascinating Aida	Derngate
15 Mar	History Society: Shopping in the 18th Century	Brixworth Village Hall
15 Mar	Chimaira	The Roadmender
16 Mar	The Dubliners	Derngate
16 Mar	What I heard about the World	Corby Cube
17-18 Mar	Bedlam Breakout 13	The Roadmender
17 Mar	Milos Karadagic	Derngate
17 Mar	An Instinct for Kindness	Royal
18 Mar	The Australian Pink Floyd	Derngate
18 Mar	Sweet William	Royal
18 Mar	Mother's Day Special Trains	Northampton & Lamport Railway
21-25 Mar	Cinderella on Ice	Derngate
22 Mar	Classic Cut	Corby Cube
23 Mar	Job Club	Brixworth Library
24 Mar	Introduction to the Organ	All Saints Church, Brixworth
26 Mar	Photography Course	Kelmarsh Hall
26 Mar	Bowling For Soup	The Roadmender
27 Mar	Bootleg Beatles	Derngate
27 Mar	How to Disappear Completely	Royal
28 Mar	Titus Andronicus	Royal
29 Mar	The Solid Silver 60s	Derngate
30 Mar, 7.30pm	Village Voices Concert	All Saints Church Brixworth
30 Mar	Satish Kumar - 8000 Miles and More	Npt'on Museum & Art Gallery
31 Mar	Pam Ayres	Derngate
31 Mar 23 Sep	The World at your Feet	N'pton Museum & Art Gallery
1 Apr	Limelight Theatre School	Derngate

5-7 Apr	Esme's Eggstraordinary Eggstravaganza	Underground
6-7 Apr	Cirque du Ciel ShangHi	Derngate
7 Apr	Jaguar Skills	The Roadmender
7-9 Apr	Easter Egg Special Trains	Northampton & Lamport Railway
8-9 Apr	Antique & Collector's Fair	Lampport Hall
11-14 Apr	Carmen: Bizet Remixed	Underground
12 Apr	Andy Abraham's History of the Big Bands	Derngate
13 Apr	Chris & Pui	Derngate
14 Apr	Paul Merton: Out of my Head	Derngate
15 Apr	Dancing in the Streets	Derngate
19 Apr	That'll be the Day	Derngate
19 Apr	History Society: Street Furniture	Brixworth Village Hall
20 Apr	Mark Steel	Corby Cube
21-22 Apr	Country Fair	Kelmarsh Hall
21 Apr - 27 May	5 Years of Stone Lithography	N'pton Museum & Art Gallery
21 Apr	Muttnik - First dog in Space	Corby Cube
21 Apr	La Boheme	Derngate
22 Apr	RPO: Beethoven Piano Series Part 2	Derngate
24-28 Apr	Fiddler on the Roof	Lighthouse Theatre, Kettering
26 Apr, 8 pm	Brixworth Community Panel	Community Centre, Spratton Rd
26 Apr	Syd Lawrence Orchestra	Derngate
27 Apr	The Osmonds	Derngate
28 Apr	Jimmy Carr	Derngate
30 Apr - 5 May	National Theatre Connections	Royal
30 Apr - 5 May	Grease	Derngate
6 May	Cooking in the Garden	Kelmarsh Hall
6 May	We'll meet again	Derngate
6-7 May	Hardy Plant Fair	Kelmarsh Hall
7-9 May	Teddy Bear Weekend	Northampton & Lamport Railway
8-12 May	Bette & Joan	Royal
12 May	Stewart Francis	Derngate
15-19 May	An Inspector Calls	Derngate
16 May	Containers for Summer	Kelmarsh Hall
18 May -30 June	The Bacchae	Royal & Derngate / Other
19-20 May	Garden Fair	Lampport Hall
22 May	Simon Amstell	Derngate

24 May	Mackintosh's modernisation of 78 Derngate	Kelmarsh Hall
25 May -30 June	Blood Wedding	Royal
29-30 May	Matthew Bourne's Early Adventures	Derngate
2 Jun	RPO: Nigel Kennedy plays Brahms	Derngate
3 Jun	Cooking in the Garden	Kelmarsh Hall
2-4 Jun	Branch Line Experience	Northampton & Lamport Railway
3-4 Jun	Festival of Country Life	Lampport Hall
7 Jun	Rhod Gilbert: The Man with the Flaming Tattoo	Derngate
12 Jun	Painting in the Garden	Kelmarsh Hall
13 Jun	Beds & Borders	Lampport Hall
14 Jun	Lords and Lamps	Kelmarsh Hall
15 June	Motorhome & Caravan Show	Kelmarsh Hall
15-17 June	Althorp Literary Festival	Althorp House
15-16 June	Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	Derngate
17 June	Father's Day Trains	Northampton & Lamport Railway
17 June	The Sounds of the Supremes	Derngate
22-24 June	Plant Finder's Fair	Cottesbrooke Hall
25-30 June	Save the last Dance for Me	Derngate
26 June	Painting in the Garden	Kelmarsh Hall
26 June	Ladies Day	Lampport Hall
28 June	Getrude Jekyll	Kelmarsh Hall
29 June	Landscape in Watercolour	Lampport Hall
1 July	Cooking in the Garden	Kelmarsh Hall
11 July	Design your Garden	Lampport Hall
12 July	Empress Elizabeth of Austria	Kelmarsh Hall
14 July	Festival of History	Kelmarsh Hall
6-28 July	Hedda Gabler	Royal
14 July	David RAM JAM Rodigan	The Roadmender
15 July	RPO: Last Night of the Derngate Proms	Derngate
20 July	Adam Ant	The Roadmender
21 July	Shakespeare in the Garden: As You Like It	Lampport Hall
28 July	Jazz live in the Garden	Lake House, Brixworth
18 Oct	Julian Clary	Derngate

Sports Page

Under 7s Football

Brixworth Juniors Under 7's Football Team played their inaugural mini-league match on Saturday 19 November against Grange Park Green at Dallington Park. I must admit that I wasn't quite sure what to expect and how they would handle what was a big step up for them. However, I need not have concerned myself as they were terrific and all seemed to enjoy the experience very much.

In the first game against Grange Park, the team were unlucky not to win and enjoyed the bulk of the possession. I was particularly pleased how positively they responded to an early goal conceded. All in all a 1-1 draw represented a great result against a very decent side and especially when you consider that this was the team's first ever match at this level.

Due to the success of the initial matches



played, the team will be continuing with their participation in the league for the rest of the season. In fact, such has been the popularity, we will be entering an additional Under 7's team from February onwards.

New faces are always welcome and

should you have a child currently in year two who would like to get involved in structured mini-soccer we would very much like to hear from you. For further information please contact Kirk Knowles on 01604 881122 or 07753 809374.

- Kirk Knowles

Brixworth Mixed Hockey Club

It's been an interesting few months for Brixworth Mixed Hockey Club. In the last game before Christmas we came up against a very strong Bugbrooke team which had narrowly beaten us earlier in the season to knock us out of the cup. It was therefore all the more gratifying to get a measure of revenge by beating them 3-1. There were several outstanding performances on the day not least from our oldest player who scored a brace of goals to give us what became a comfortable victory and allowed us to head into the Christmas break full of confidence.

On January 2nd Northants Mixed Hockey Association (NMHA) held its annual President's XI versus Chairman's X1 family fun day at Moulton Sports Complex and representatives of Brixworth MHC were in the Chairman's XI. The game turned out to be an unusually one-sided affair, despite the best attempts of the umpires, and the Chairman's XI ran out clear winners. Brixworth MHC members also organised a NMHA junior team to take on a Saints HC junior team. This game was a more closely contested affair and, after the match ended in draw, Saints went on to win on penalty flicks.

January 7 saw the NMHA league restart after the Christmas break. Unfortunately Brixworth MHC were not able to continue where we left off and we suffered three back-to-back defeats despite scoring ten goals.

February 7 sees a return to training at Wellingborough School, where the new Astroturf pitch allows us to play from 7.30-8.30 pm.

We are still looking for new players to join so, if you are interested, please contact Jon or Tracey on 07500 633921, brixworthmhc@gmail.com, brixworthmhc.onsport.com or via our Twitter, Facebook or Google+ pages.

- Jon Davies



Ball by Ball commentary

Northamptonshire Association for the Blind will provide Ball-by-Ball commentary for all four days of the LV County Championship and the CB 40 limited over games at the Wantage Road ground. In addition, this year the commentary will also be available at www.northantscricket.com/commentary

All blind or partially sighted supporters and their helpers are admitted to LV county games and CB40 games at Northampton for £5 a day. Call 514455 for details.

Mathematics Private Tuition

For children ages 6 - 16

If you would like your child to receive some extra tuition, please contact

Mervyn Ward
01604 881767 or
ward525@btinternet.com

