



Shipston Forum



February 2024

Revamp for Shipston Riverside

There has been good progress on the programme of work near the Bridge Car Park, designed to improve the riverside environment for wildlife and people. Dead and dying trees have been taken out, along with thinning and coppicing done to help new growth. Lower branches have been removed from the large trees around the picnic area to let in more light. Two new octagonal picnic tables, one with a wheelchair accessible space, will be set in hard landscaping extending from the parking area. A new low-growing native hedge will be planted around the edge of the grassed area to define the boundary.



The next step is to plant young wildlife-friendly native trees at the top of the bank to establish a hedge alongside the new fence. In eight or ten years' time, this hedge will be substantial enough to be laid in the traditional manner, and the fence will be removed, having done its job.

The work, due to be completed by the end of February in time for the nesting season, is being undertaken on behalf of the Town Council's Heritage, Amenities and Leisure Projects working group (HALP), with the approval of the Environment Agency, Stratford District Council and Heart of England Forest.

HALP's Verity Richardson said: "We have plans for an area of quiet reflection on the other side of the road, by The Old Mill, to include two new benches, some crab apple trees courtesy of Shipston Rotary Club, and a noticeboard with environmental information. Meanwhile it is work in progress, so please bear with us. Thanks to years of wonderful work by Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) and more recent water quality monitoring by volunteers led by Olivia Hatch, Stratford District Council's Green Party member for Shipston North, our river and its environs are at last getting the attention they deserve."



Fire Service consultation

The future of the Fire Station in Shipston is sparking much heated debate. The County Council has now arranged an additional public information session about the consultation for Shipston. Come along to Townsend Hall 6.30pm on 5th March to have a say on Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's plans. The event is free, but a ticket is required. More details on how to book on page 8. The consultation period ends on 10th March.

New community orchard

An enthusiastic and willing band of 30 volunteers gathered early on a wintry but sunny Saturday morning in January to plant a new orchard at Cornmill Meadows, Shipston's newest local wildlife site. Cllr Hilary Kelly reported: "A mix of trees were planted to increase the biodiversity there. Thanks to Lawns2mow, the holes had already been dug, but compost had to be added to the soil, tree guards and tree ties had to be fitted and then a good helping of mulch added to help with moisture retention. Eventually apples, pears, plums, greengages and damsons will repay all our hard work."



Award for Diane

Diane Wildish, aka Snowy Owl/Blueberry, has received a Chief Commissioner Award at a ceremony in Barton under Needwood, for her can-do approach in running Shipston 1st Rainbows and Brownies, as well as for her work as District Commissioner for the Kineton District.

"It was lovely to receive such recognition from my peers and to feel appreciated in this special way," said Diane. "Girl Guiding empowers girls to find their voice, through fun, friendship, challenge and adventure, inspiring them to discover the best in themselves and to make a positive difference in their community." New volunteers for Shipston Girl Guiding welcome. Please contact Diane on 07875 684799.



Diane (right) being presented with her award from the Girl Guiding Midlands Region Chief Commissioner.

In this issue:

Helping with heat loss – page 4

New system at Medical Centre – page 8

Does bellringing 'ap-peal' to you? – page 9

Pan-disability football – page 9

Mayor’s column



Hello Shipston,

I had the privilege of opening the Shipston Lodge Christmas fair on 16th December and was pleased to see that it was well attended. We thoroughly enjoyed the oompah band. Took a lot to keep the mayoress in her seat but I noticed our town crier succumbed to the beat.

We went to my son’s graduation from Nottingham Trent University on 12th December as he completed his Masters in News Journalism. Proud parents among many others. Now he has to find a career path.

Shipston was very lucky during the recent storms as I believe the waters rose to a dangerous height in the Stour valley, but the work done on flood prevention by the Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) alleviated the potential for flooding.

I attended the Town Carol concert on 17th December at St Edmund’s and had the honour of reciting a reading from the Bible. Luke 2 1-7, a fundamental piece about the birth of Jesus. When the congregation was asked to write down the name of someone they would like to pray for next year, a young man in a wheelchair approached me and said he would be praying for me. I was very moved but unfortunately couldn’t find him afterwards to thank him. Thankyou.

We are in the process of preparing the Civic Service for Shipston which is to take place at St Edmunds church on Sunday 25th February at 3pm. The service will be attended by many of the local Mayors and their partners and all are welcome. I have requested that the hymns are traditional so that we all know them. Trying to do a feature on Shipston Past, Present and Future, get children involved and encourage all of Shipston’s social and charitable groups to take a part. All offerings on the day will go towards the Food Bank in Shipston. Lots to do. Hope to see you there.

A quiet start to the year with lots of new events on the horizon.

Cllr. Gerry Kelly,

Mayor, Shipston Town Council

News from Shipston Town Council’s January meeting

Play areas and planters

Cllr Booth will raise some issues regarding Queens Avenue play area at next General Purposes Working Group, including muddy area to be re-seeded or made into footpath, safety mats under equipment, and dog waste bins. Planters in Rainbow Green need either to be repaired or removed.

Tree work

Work has started on coppicing and pollarding the trees at Riverside and on building a new fence. A hedge will be planted in February.

Cllr H Kelly has given suggestions for the best trees for biodiversity to be planted to replace the oaks that were cut down at Hawthorn Way.

It was noted that lights appear to be on permanently at Greenfields. To be investigated.

Blue light update

Council met with the fire services chief and county council portfolio holder prior to the Council meeting to hear about their Resourcing to Risk model. Council will be encouraging responses to the public consultation which is open until 10th March. *Update: as a result of that meeting there is now a public consultation event being held at the Townsend Hall on 5th March. See page 8 for details.*

First Responders are recruiting two more responders, following a busy year which saw 266 call-outs. The League of Friends is now joining the Lions in match-fundraising for a second vehicle for the First Responders. A defibrillator is now in place at the fire station.

Environmental and Flood Action

Orchard planting at Cornmill Meadow on Saturday 13th January. As an insect expert is unavailable to carry out an insect survey this year, the group will use findings from a survey on a nearby farm.

Flood Action

Council praised the work of Shipston Area Flood Action Group (SAFAG) in helping to protect the town from flooding during recent storms. Flood reports showed that water levels rose to 3m, the highest this winter, on 3rd January. Three metres puts the car park at risk of flooding – 3.5m puts houses at risk of flooding. Flood alerts kicked in at 2.6m. Group to speak to WCC about clearing flood residue from the car park. There is a new link to the bridge webcam, which allows water levels to be viewed. <http://telemetry-data.com/open?profile=ShipstonBridge>

Leaks

Severn Trent has dug up an area adjacent to the fire hydrant in Hay Meadow to identify the source of a leak as a land drain that has not been connected to the mains drainage. High School, identified as owner of the hydrant and drain, to be notified.

Heritage, Amenities and Leisure projects

Council approved expenditure for study tables for Cornmill Meadows and two picnic tables for Riverside, and for a plaque to commemorate Cecil Sandford, to be placed at site of his workshop. Virtual town heritage trail to go ahead, at no cost, but Council to secure the rights.

Surveys

A survey has set out the work required on the Chapel. Next step is to approach SDC conservation officer. Council agreed to have a dilapidation survey carried out at the Hub.

Website information

The council website currently has a list of what the council does. This will be updated to include a list of what the council is not responsible for, eg highways.

Additional Council news

Ellen Badger services and district nurse update

Cllr Dinnie and Town Clerk Helen Morgan made a fact-finding visit to the site of the Ellen Badger Hospital. They met Sarah Statham, the administrator for the district nurses who are currently using the retained block as a base, providing community nursing to residents in their own homes or care homes. She confirmed that no clinical services are being provided at the site and that there is no public access as it is still designated an active building site.

Enquiries regarding district nurses and their administration should be made by phone to 01926 600818. The district nurses have no further information regarding their eventual accommodation on the site.

Rubbish people! Our wonderful litter-pickers

To start the new year, four children came to the monthly litter pick. Thank you to Angus, Finn, Ivy and Gabriel and their parents, but, says Hilary Kelly, adults were a bit thin on the ground. The Council now has some child-size hi-viz tabards and litter pick-up sticks, so children have their own equipment. If you have an hour to spare on the first Saturday of the month, please come along. Equipment is provided and we meet outside the Council Office in West Street at 10am. Refreshments are served afterwards.

Further information from:
hilary.kellyshipstontowncouncil.org

Civic Service

A Civic Service for Shipston will be held at St Edmunds church on Sunday 25th February at 3pm. All are welcome, children too! The service will involve Shipston’s social and charitable groups, and Revd Sarah Edmonds will give a presentation about the town’s past, present and future. All funds raised by the collection to the Shipston Food Bank.



RESOURCING TO RISK

We want to hear from you!

WFRS is consulting on a proposed change to its service delivery model, which aims to keep Warwickshire safe by having fire appliances, firefighters and other resources in the right place, at the right time.

For more details and to share your views, visit ask.warwickshire.gov.uk or call 01926 410410 to request a paper copy or alternative format.

The consultation is open until 10 March 2024.

Consultation now open

wfrsr2r@warwickshire.gov.uk

Warwickshire County Council

WARWICKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Helping with heat loss

Starting this month, Shipston Town Council will be making some thermal imaging cameras available for loan to residents to make assessments of their homes and identify potential areas of heat loss.

The cameras work by detecting infra-red to measure surface temperatures, which can show the thermal effects of deeper structures and any insulation present. The screen displays the temperature range and colour palette, identifying the coldest and hottest point.

There is one USB-C compatible camera available for Android phones and post-2023 iPhones, and an Apple-compatible camera for older iPhones.

The cameras will be available for loan from New Clark House during standard opening hours (9am-1pm) and will include a user guide. Please bring ID that has a proof of address and photograph. A returnable deposit of £25 is required.

For more information about the Shipston thermal camera



project and bookings, or if you would like to get involved, please email shipstonthermalcamera@gmail.com

Lenten lunches

To mark the season of Lent, three churches in town are holding a series of charity Lenten lunches:

6th March St Edmunds

12th March Methodist Church

21st March Catholic Church

The lunches start at 12.30pm, with donations in aid of charity. All welcome.



Jam tomorrow: Food bank plea

Have you got any clean empty jam jars to spare? Wendy Crook has been making lots of delicious jams and chutneys - apple and blackberry, raspberry, marrow and ginger, and even carrot - to donate to the Food Bank each week. She is not getting many empty jars returned. If you have some empty jam jars – 200g size preferred – please drop them off to her at 5 Furze Hill Road. (Just leave on the doorstep.) Donations of fruit or sugar also welcome.



Rotary 100 club

First Prize £55 winner no 86 • Second Prize £33 winner no 4 • Third Prize £22 winner no 92

Please join!

Contact Treasurer Tony Joint tonyjoint73@gmail.com

Special success for Primary School

After eight years of campaigning, Shipston Primary School has finally been successful in persuading the local authority to agree to a specialist resourced provision, and to fully fund the renovation of the music room for its base (music lessons will continue as usual in another room in school). “Although there are a number of specialist resourced provisions in Warwickshire, supporting children with special educational needs who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), there is none in this part of the county,” says Christian Hilton, CEO (NPQEL), Stour Federation. “Hence our being relentless in our campaigning to do the best for all children in our local area. As this is deemed by the DfE and LA as ‘making significant change by agreement’ the school is required to undertake a fair and open local consultation with all those who could be affected by the proposed change and show it has considered all responses received to the consultation.”

You can see and respond to the consultation, which runs to midday Friday 9th February, at <https://www.thestourfederation.com/news/>



Remembering Shipston’s Fallen

4080834 Gunner HORACE BREWER

Part of a series by Shipston’s Royal British Legion to commemorate WW2 Fallen as we arrive at the 80th Anniversary of their death.

Born in Banbury in the spring of 1915, Horace was the son of Samuel and Frances Grace Brewer. Horace had an older brother and sister, Walter and Elsie. The 1921 census shows the family as living in Milcombe near Banbury with Samuel working as a cowman for Mr Colegrave. The 1939 Register sees the family living at 4 Worcester Place, Shipston-on-Stour, with Horace working as a timber hauler for WE Mayo and Sons the timber merchants. Horace has been described as a large and very strong man of pleasing personality.

Horace served with the 311th Battery, 90th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, having joined up at the outbreak of war. Following Operation Torch, the Anglo-American invasion of French North Africa, which had begun on 8th November 1942, the 90th LAA were brought in as reinforcements to the Allied air defences at El-Alamein. Once North Africa had been secured, the Allies turned their attention to mainland Europe and began to make their move into Italy via Sicily.

Horace’s regiment played a key role in Operation Shingle, the Anzio landings designed to break in behind the Germans, who were putting up very strong resistance at places like Cassino, and open the road to Rome. The 311th Battery landed on the second day of the operation, 23rd January 1944, and moved inland to defend field artillery positions. Unfortunately, the US 6th Corps halted after making good progress and failed to push on into the Alban Hills. This was a key mistake, and the initiative was lost when the Germans reacted quickly and soon outnumbered the Allied forces.

Letters

From Nigel Willis

Is it fair to say that, but for SAFAG and their approximately 800 interventions, much of Shipston would have been submerged at the beginning of January?

From: ‘Tom Tell-Truth’

Lost property found in Cornmill Meadows! A member of the public is believed to have lost the items in the picture. They are located about 100 metres down the public footpath from the main access gate to Cornmill Meadows, where there are also waste bins if they really do not want them.

If this is inconvenient, please do feel free to contact Shipston Town Council who will remove them at your expense.



By the end of January the Germans had their forces suitably built up and they launched a counterattack on the 3rd February 1944 that lasted for five days. After the initial counterattack the Germans kept the pressure on and during February alone 90th LAA regiment lost 17 men and had 56 wounded in these attacks. Horace was one of the 17. He was killed on 13th February 1944.

Horace is buried in the Anzio War Cemetery, Italy, and is remembered on the Town Memorial.



New system at Medical Centre



Shipston Medical Centre

This month sees the launch of a new triage system at Shipston Medical Centre. *Business partner Rachel Vial explains the changes:*

From mid-February, every request for a medical appointment will be triaged. There are a number of reasons that we are changing our system.

Patient feedback indicates that there is dissatisfaction with urgent waiting times, and the practice has found that this has led to more and more things being classed by patients as urgent. This has meant that those with clinically urgent need are not always able to access the service in a timely way, as capacity can be full before they access the service. We therefore want to ensure that those with greatest clinical need get a quick response, while those whose need is more routine will be able to get help, ideally within a two-week period. This change will also support continuity of care, as we hope to be able to offer appointments across the team, enabling those who want, to often be able to see the same clinician each time.

Feedback has also indicated that the econsult form can be repetitive and frustrating, and so we are looking to have a simpler form that only has a few questions to help us understand what patients need. This can be completed online, or by the reception team for those who prefer to access the service by telephone. The completed form will be reviewed by a GP within 24 hours and then, depending on need, an appropriate type of appointment will be offered. This might be by phone or by text message. It might be that for some queries no appointment is needed.

Having analysed appointment use, we have identified that some appointments that are booked a long time ahead are no longer needed by the time the appointment time comes. We are therefore reducing the length of time that people can book ahead for, in order to make best use of the resources we have. We hope that this will also reduce the number of patients who miss their appointments.

With this new system, we are aiming to support patients to see the right person, the right way, the first time they access the service for that issue. The triage process will mean that those needing a face-to-face appointment will get one without the need to speak to a GP on the phone first. Patients will also easily be able to tell us if they would prefer a face-to-face appointment.

For more information about the new system, keep an eye on the news section of the website at

<https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/patientnews>

Fire consultation: your views matter



Plans for the future of Shipston's Fire Station will now be heard in the town on 5th March, after Warwickshire County Council arranged an additional public consultation specially for Shipston.

As the Fire Authority, WCC has been running a public consultation and a series of events – initially only at Stratford, Kenilworth, Atherstone, Bedworth and Southam, with none in the south of the county – to give residents, businesses, community groups and public sector partners a say on Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's Resourcing to Risk proposals.

The Shipston event was added after the Town Council made it clear that the town would like a voice on this hot topic. It will be held at Townsend Hall, from 6.30pm-8pm. Places are limited, so anyone wanting to attend must book a ticket. These are allocated on a first come, first served basis. If the event is fully booked, there will be an opportunity to join a waiting list. Book on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-76075908553/>

The public consultation period runs until 10 March 2024. Find out more and respond to Warwickshire Fire and Rescue's Resourcing to Risk on the consultation website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask. It has detail on the proposed model, on-call availability data and response times.

WCC's fire and rescue spokesman Cllr Andy Crump said: "This proposal [Resourcing to Risk] isn't about cutting costs or closing fire stations. It's about making sure that we've got our resource in the right place to make the best difference when an emergency happens.

"We're keen to give people a chance to hear from us in person and to ask any questions they may have. No decisions will be made until the consultation is over, so we hope our residents will take this opportunity and join us at one of our information sessions to find out more."

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Engagement spokesperson Gosia Zielinska says: "Everyone's views matter! Take time to read all the information on the consultation website and complete the online survey. You can also email us on WFRSR2R@warwickshire.gov.uk if you have any questions about the consultation."

Shipston Bellringers

Parish churches have been a focal point of our towns and villages for centuries and today Shipston bellringers are as proud as their forebears once were to uphold the tradition of ringing for the local churches and the community. The bells are there to toll as we mourn, to peal as we celebrate, to mark events of national importance such as remembrance or the passing of the Queen or the coronation of the King, or quite simply to ring out and reflect the rhythms and routines of our communities and churches. It involves ringing before Sunday services and a regular weekly practice on a Saturday morning. The group is always looking for ways to improve and a new initiative this year was to ring in the New Year. They hope to install a training bell soon, which is ideal for beginners to learn the basics.



Fran Hudson started bellringing two years ago: "Since taking bellringing up myself, my respect and admiration for the professionals has jumped enormously. I had no idea that it required such skill to 'feel the balance point' but it's very satisfying once you get it right and I can vouch personally for the basic progress that can be made quite quickly with regular practice!

"There are other advantages to bellringing too. It's a good workout both physically and mentally if you are on a keep fit campaign and it's a very sociable activity. I've enjoyed meeting new people, and chatting over a coffee after the practice or doing our annual New Year's walk. We join in other practices with nearby benefices and there is a really nice family feel to the local bellringing fraternity."

If you have resolved to take up a new hobby and would like to learn how to bellring, you'd be very welcome. Please ring 07972 705539 in the first instance (back-up 07973 163569). The bellringers would be delighted to 'show you the ropes.' Or visit the Shipston Bellringers Facebook page.

Farm Climathon event

What does the farm of the future look like? Find out at a Farm of the Future Climathon at Blackwell Village Hall (CV36 4PE), with a farm walk planned at nearby Tramway Farm on Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd February run by Damian Maye and Aimee Morse from the University of Gloucestershire with the support of Strutt and Parker. It will use the farm as a case study and seek to develop locally-relevant solutions. The event is open to Shipston residents: register at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/farm-of-the-future-climathon-tickets.

SEFC Junior Pan-Disability

Pan-disability football has been a huge success and an ongoing challenge for funds, writes Lee Cooper:

Eighteen months ago, I and three friends spoke about providing activities through football for children with disabilities, special educational needs, learning disabilities, or who are on the long and arduous road of waiting for an official diagnosis. As parents directly linked with having either children or grandchildren with disabilities, we knew that there really are no provisions for youngsters like ours in and around the area. The importance of giving disabled youngsters the opportunity to engage socially, physically and mentally was the driving force behind our vision.

It is proven that exercise and social interactions can have a monumental impact on our youngsters in what is generally a very isolated and lonely growing-up period for them. One more factor was giving their amazing parents/guardians some much-needed respite. Even an hour a week is valuable to relax, recharge and enjoy some quality me-time.

Since we started, we have welcomed with open arms and big smiles 32 youngsters, averaging 18 youngsters per session each week, meaning we are the fastest-growing club in Warwickshire with these provisions. There are now 32 youngsters spending less time on their own isolated from the outside world.

With very poor financial help for parents, especially those who have to give up full-time work to look after their children, we decided to offer every session free of charge. This not only includes where we play and insurance cover through our club, but also free football kit, football boots and shin-pads if required. It also covers weekly winter training at a cost of around £1,000 for the season. So far this has been made possible from the generosity of the public and a bit of begging sometimes. We can't thank them enough!

We have also been able to visit Aston Villa and play against their own disabled teams, which the youngsters were successful in and enjoyed very much. We have now entered the West Bromwich Albion Sandwell Inclusion League for our 12-16 yrs, playing at West Bromwich Albion's Academy once a month. These decisions are all led by the youngsters, proving that giving them ownership, freedom and trust can build their own self-esteem, resilience and empathy. It helps them focus and build great friendships.

SEFC Pan-Disability are always looking for help to keep these much-needed provisions in place for the long term. Thank you to all the coaches who give up their time to help. Without them this would still be just a dream. Lee Cooper, Lead Coach, SEFC Junior Pan-Disability Football. 07398928917

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Shipston High School

The first day of term saw some of our Year 10 maths students spend a day at the University of Oxford Maths Institute to participate in the “It All Adds Up” initiative. The day comprised several workshops, plenaries, and hands-on problem-solving sessions. With only 12 spaces available, students were set challenges to earn their place on the trip. They had a fabulous time and found it inspiring.

We are blessed to have a wide and varied after school club offering and have been able to add some new ones for this term, including Design and Technology, Culture Club and the Warwickshire Book Club Award. It is a great way to make new friends, learn a new skill and get to know members of staff outside of lessons.

We are pleased to announce the re-launch of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and have seen an encouraging number of students register their interest. The option to join at Bronze level will be given to Year 9 and 10 students this year, with Silver being added at a later date. Duke of Edinburgh is a fantastic scheme to help students develop skills, confidence and gives them an edge over others when applying for college, university or a job.

Our sports fixture calendar is as busy as ever and we are straight back into it with students participating in football and hockey matches and training for netball, rugby and basketball has started. It also saw our first girls’ basketball team in a fixture against Stratford Grammar school.

Our Santa Dash/raffle fundraiser for The Shakespeare Hospice raised at an incredible £3,499. Thank you to everyone who donated to this fantastic charity and well done Miss Davies, a truly fantastic achievement!

Finally, we have some fantastic news to share. Shipston High School is delighted to confirm that we have formed a mutually supportive alliance of five local schools; Alcester Academy, Alcester Grammar School, King Edward VI Grammar School in Stratford, Shipston High School and Stratford Girls Grammar School. Each school promotes and achieves academic success, and all value and promote the development of the whole child, enabling young people to grow academically and as independent and confident young adults. By working together for our students, each school will be strengthened in its development of the curriculum and wider opportunities for young people. Each of the partner schools

is currently rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, and all are demonstrably well led, managed and governed. We look forward with excitement to this unique opportunity.



Shipston Primary School

December at Shipston Primary was a wonderful celebration of all the things that Christmas brings. It was lovely to be able to share our productions with parents, carers and family members over a fortnight. Coming together as a community is one of the best things about school life.



On the last day of term, all the children took a book home with them as a present from everyone at school. Incredibly, a recent report found that almost one million children in the UK do not own a book. We know how vital becoming a good reader is to becoming successful in all areas of life, which is why we place such great emphasis on reading.

The Friends of Shipston Primary School (FOSP)’s Christmas Fayre was a fabulously festive family event with many performances from our wonderful pupils as well as local groups, clubs and organisations. The FOSP committee raised a staggering £3,146!

Maafa

Throughout the Autumn term Year 6 were learning about Africa past and present, with a particular focus on Benin. Teaching and learning traced the development of the slave trade and explored Britain’s role, the causes and consequences of the European colonisation of Africa and the worldwide communities that made up the African diaspora in the topic, ‘Maafa’ (great tragedy).

Year 6 learnt about the devastating story of Stephen Lawrence and how he was murdered in a racist attack at a bus stop. They studied Chris Ofili’s piece of art called ‘No Woman No Cry’, named after Bob Marley’s song. This intricate piece was brilliant and tiny dots were Doreen’s skin and he even used elephant dung! This masterpiece is now hanging in the Tate Gallery, London for all to enjoy. *Floella*

Recently, Year 6 have been learning about Baroness Doreen Lawrence and the sad story of her son Steven Lawrence, who was tragically killed in a racial attack - just because of the colour of his skin. Devastatingly, he was only 18. Chris Ofili who was inspired by how Doreen Lawrence stoically turned her grief into action decided to paint a picture of this noble woman. All of Year 6 then sketched and shaded replicas of this marvellous masterpiece. *Iris, Isabelle, Fraser and Ms Young.*





Charles Matthews
Piano Recital
Programme
Two Beethoven sonatas, including the “Waldstein.”
Pieces by Brahms and Chopin and an arrangement of the variations from Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet, which is attributed to Beethoven.

Friday 16 February 2024, 7.30pm
Methodist Church, Shipston-on-Stour

Tickets £8 on the door or available from Clarke Electricals, Shipston

Information: ph 01608 662514
Free entry to Music Society members
New members always welcome

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Design by Julia Phillips

Historic recordings of Shipston Town Band

David Birch with the story of how he found and brought an old recording to life:



In the 1970s, Shipston Town Band was invited along with other members of the West Midlands Brass Bands Association to come to Pebble Mill Studios and record a concert programme for broadcast. The band thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The recording was live without any editing and was broadcast twice, on 15th and 16th November 1975.

The recording on reel-to-reel tape was subsequently sent to the band where it was carefully stored. No-one had the equipment to play it but having found a company who could transfer it to CD I decided to see how well the recording was preserved. The quality was amazing, the playing absolutely top drawer and to cap it all there was an interview by Barry Lankester with Bert Smith the band’s conductor in which he detailed how he had rescued the band after the Second World War by training a large number of local youngsters who were to form the bedrock of the band during an exciting and very successful period in the band’s history, particularly an 18th month period when the band won 21 trophies.

Bert was a determined and accomplished conductor who at the time of this recording had a run of contest successes. His son John and grandson Duncan are still members of the band. Without Bert’s ability, drive and commitment, there would not be a Shipston Band for future generations to enjoy.

I am happy to make the recording available to any former player or supporter of the band. Contact me on birch139@hotmail.co.uk.

An excellent naturalist

Uncovering hidden stories with Shipston Museum

The recently rediscovered red diary, by an unknown diarist, at Shipston Museum has two short entries telling of the marriage of local man Gilbert Wright in 1900, followed 10 days later by his death.

Digging deeper, the Museum has uncovered the story of a fascinating character. Son of local vicar John Wright and his wife Maria, Gilbert was born in Tysoe and baptised on 11th October 1844. A few years later, the family and their two servants moved to Honington vicarage.

Gilbert first took to farming, but in 1875 sold his Willington Farm to focus on his first love, the natural world. He became well-known in the area for his knowledge. In 1896 the Ilmington clerk sent him a mystery object found in a potato which Gilbert soon identified as a ‘splendid specimen’ of a Death’s Head grub. Recognised as a naturalist, Gilbert was a popular local speaker and forward thinker, giving a demonstration in 1896 of Roentgen Rays (the first X-rays) which must have amazed his audience. His own creation of a museum of birds, fish and other curios of country life

was described as a ‘wonderful collection.’

In 1900, aged 56, he met and wed Alice Emma Roe Franklin in Bournemouth. Having found love relatively late in life, we might hope for a happy ending. Just 10 days later, while enjoying a drink in Shipston’s Crown Inn, Gilbert collapsed with a stroke and was taken to the Ellen Badger Hospital where he died, with Alice at his bedside. The funeral had many mourners including well-known local names like Hancock, Jeffs and the hospital matron Miss Bagley. He is buried with his father at Compton Wynnyates.

Gilbert was influential. The local paper reported: ‘He was a well-known sportsman, being an expert with the gun and the rod, and an excellent naturalist and taxidermist, possessing many fine specimens of fish, birds and insects.’

His museum collection was sold at auction by Parsons, attracting a large gathering and good prices. Although scattered, maybe some of those ‘fine specimens’ are still around – we’ll be looking out for them at Shipston Museum!

If you would like to help uncover and share our Shipston area past, contact us on Facebook at the Shipston on Stour Local History Society, email shipstonmuseum@outlook.com or drop a note into the Museum. And remember to put our Easter opening in your diaries.

Shipston-On-Stour Women’s Institute

Barry Derham, Chairman of Millennium Way Walks, urged members of Shipston’s WI to get out their walking boots, blow off the cobwebs, and go out into the fresh air. Millennium Way Walks was founded by a former Round Tabler Chris Taylor, who took to walking one day a week for his health and noticed a lack of long walks in the Midlands. The Millennium Way is 100 miles long from Pershore via Meriden (the middle of England) to Middleton Cheney, taking in pretty Midlands villages along the way. It was created as a major community service initiative in 2000 by the 41 Club – the national association of ex-Round Tablers’ Clubs. It was noted that not everybody wants long-distance walks and so in 2012, 44 circular walks (each ending at a pub) were added. These range in length from 3-10 miles and vary in their challenge. There is an easy access walk for wheelchair users.



All information about the walks is available on the internet – www.millenniumway.org.uk. Would-be walkers can download maps, detailed descriptions of each walk (the number of stiles on each walk is thoughtfully noted), places of interest, and GPS.

Vicky Coleman has been co-opted to the Committee. The next meeting will be on 7th February at 7pm in the Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road, when Helen Cooper will be talking about Being a Creative Butterfly.

Shipston Proms

Sitting listening to Helen and Tim Porter’s successful fundraiser at St Edmund’s Church before Christmas, I found myself wondering what was behind the name of the eclectic evening known as Mrs Porter’s Chamberpot Pourri’ writes Susan Perry.

Helen and Tim explained: The first Mrs Porter’s Chamber Potpourri concert was held in the 2005 Shipston Proms. It was designed to be less formal than typical classical music concerts, with musicians from various genres and ages included in the programme. The name evolved with the addition of a chamber pot filled with potpourri, presented to the event by Phyllida and David Gardner.

Guests at its first appearance at Townsend Hall included Chimera who performed the work of French classical/jazz fusion composer Claude Bolling as well as a piece for two flutes by Franz Doppler. Local musicians included flautist David Oliver, drummer Robin Payne and renowned cellist Beth Porter. The event has been held at the Catholic Church rooms in Darlingscote Road and more recently at St Edmund’s Church.

Over the years Helen’s Chamberpot Pourri has hosted a great variety of musical artists giving audiences an easier way in to appreciate the classics. At last year’s Proms, acclaimed recorder player Heidi Fardell impressed the audience with her rendition of Fantasia on Greensleeves by Vaughan Williams. Heidi has appeared at the Meltdown Festival hosted by Jarvis Cocker and recorded for BBC Radio 3. Soprano Jennifer Smith sang a superb interpretation of Aaron Copeland’s The Little Horses Lullaby.

Helen accompanies the musicians beautifully on piano and Tim produces great melodies from his harmonica. Check out this amazing evening at Proms 2024 if you haven’t seen it before. You won’t be disappointed. Shipston Proms 24 will run from 21st June to 6th July.



Helen Porter, piano, with her daughter Hannah on flute, in Mrs Porter’s Chamberpot Pourri from the 2015 Shipston Proms.

Astronomical Society News



The Stratford upon Avon Astronomical Society meet every 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 8pm at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more. The first Tuesday is a Club Night, in February that will be on 4th February and the speaker on the third Tuesday, 20th February, will be Dr Sarah Horst from Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore, on ‘Toxic Titan.’

Each month one of our members offers pointers to what to look for in the sky during the coming weeks. This month it is the winter triangle.

Orion is one of the most obvious winter constellations, but it forms part of another star pattern (or asterism) called the winter triangle. This is made up of Betelgeuse, Sirius and Procyon and other interesting objects. Betelgeuse is the shoulder of Orion and is bright red. This is the top left of the equilateral triangle. The bottom star of the triangle is Sirius, The Dog Star. Other than the sun it is also the brightest star visible (obviously not including planets). It’s twice the mass of the sun, but 25 times brighter. Sirius has a binary companion, The Pup star, which is a white dwarf, (a star much further into its life cycle) which has a greater mass even though it’s much smaller and less bright than the Sirius. You would need a large telescope to separate them. Just below it is a star cluster M41, just visible to the naked eye, but best viewed through binoculars. Top right of the triangle is Procyon, it is 11.6 light years away and it also has a companion in a binary system.

Another interesting star close by is Rigel, which is foot of Orion. This is a blue giant and monstrous in mass and brightness. It is a mere eight million years old (our sun is four billion years old), but it is estimated to be halfway through its life cycle as it is losing mass at 10 million times as much as our sun. It’s living the rock star’s lifestyle, live fast, die young, and is expected to go supernova, ending up as a neutron star or black hole.



Photo from www.astrobackyard.com

For more details on joining visit www.astro.org.uk or contact the Chairman John Waller john.waller@astro.org.uk or on 07703 192188. Happy observing!

Observation notes written by Adrian Wakeham and Dave Benton.

County Council

I have worked with Izzi Seccombe, the leader of WCC, to get a public meeting in Shipston as part of the consultation on the Fire Service. This will be on 5th March 2024, from 6.30-8pm at the Townsend Hall. Please come and ask all your awkward questions and see how these plans may affect you.

The week I’ve had has been really full-on. We met the Chief Fire Officer and had a robust Town Council on Monday. Tuesday: loads of calls and emails, abattoir research, education, and health reading and, wrapped up well, I went to Stretton-on-Fosse PC. We’re all still waiting to see what happens to the old Pitstop café on the Fosse! Wednesday: Health and Wellbeing Board followed by a long meeting of the Save Long Compton Abattoir Group. I am determined that we don’t lose any more local employers so this one is vital to me. Thursday: housing advice session at my surgery, followed by a nice lunch with Tony Jefferson (former leader of SDC) and just time to feed the dog before a Director’s Board meeting of the Stour MAT – and I was late – oops!

And now it’s Friday: phone calls about Lloyds bank and where people can get money from...and writing my column. I think I can safely say that I am back to normal – and loving it.

The most important issue I addressed this week – to me anyway is domestic violence (DV). Shade Agboola, the Director of Public Health, launched her DV report at the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). There are case studies and loads of info in it – please have a look at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/PH-annual-report

DV is often well hidden. The kids don’t want Mum to call the police on Dad, bruises can be hidden, mental abuse and anguish can be contained, psychological trauma may make kids act out – the ramifications are endless. I well remember, during lockdown, hearing of men who were gleeful that their partner could not leave the house. This is all very real and it’s here. I talk to more people than I ever guessed I would about DV and dealing with the consequences. More than that, I spoke to the Chief Constable (at HWBB) about some of the incidents I know of – and asked her whether we can actually expect the police to be on this locally, when we have one PC for Shipston and 55 villages? She and I are going to work on this – and the PCC Philip Seccombe is involved too. I am passionate about this issue – it’s part of my people first, projects next, approach to life and politics. If you are affected by DV in any form, please get in touch anytime (07748968712) and I’ll be there for you. If you are in immediate danger, please dial 999. Or phone 0800 408 1552 to speak to a support worker. You can contact Crimestoppers anonymously if you have concerns about someone. You (and your kids) don’t have to put up with it.

Thursdays from 10 am at the George – see you there!

Councillor Jo Barker (she/her) Shipston Division
Chairman of Adult Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny
07748968712 | jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk
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District Council

It is reassuring to know that following Storm Henk between 2nd and 5th January, Shipston was not affected as badly as it has been after previous storms or as badly as other towns in the area. This may be because of the hard work of Shipston Area Flood Action Group installing hundreds of small wooden dams along the Stour and its tributaries.



However, if any households have been impacted by flooding, a government grant could be available. This could take the form of Council Tax relief and a payment of £500. To be eligible, water must have entered the house, or the resident was prevented on gaining access to their house for at least 48 hours due to the flooding. For the Government to fund this scheme, evidence is required that at least 50 properties were affected in this way across the whole of the Warwickshire County Council area. It is therefore important that all properties which were affected by flooding are notified to the County Council at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/flooding>

Cllr Olivia Hatch and I have been approached to try and get a school cycle bus going in Shipston so more children can cycle to school. A school cycling bus is an organised group cycle on a set route with timetabled stops that can be joined and left at any point along the way. They provide a safe and easy way for children getting to school. It moves as a unit which is visible to other road users.

It will be along the lines of the Bike Bus which has been running in Leamington for some time. Simon Storey, the cycling proficiency trainer who set the scheme up in Leamington, has offered to help to set one up in Shipston, taking people through the necessary steps to keep things fun and safe.

To get the scheme off the ground support from parents and teachers is needed, so do you know:

- 1. A good staff contact to talk to about this.
- 2. Any parents who would be interested in participating in this.

My contact details are below. Please let me know if you can help.

There has been much debate about the future of the Fire Station in Shipston. It’s good to hear that the County Council have arranged an additional public consultation for Shipston at Townsend Hall 6.30 5th March before a decision is made.

Dave Passingham, District Councillor, Shipston South
07973 846605 | dave.passingham@stratford-dc.gov.uk



Leamington's Bike Bus - could we have one in Shipston?
See above

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Richard Walters
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Vacancy



Vacancy

Useful Contacts

Community Links Transport	01789 264491
Shipston Library:	0300 5558171
- 24/7 renewal line	01926 499273
Highways customer services	01926 412515
Severn Trent Emergency Line:	0800 7834444
Shipston Volunteer Transport Scheme	01608 663122
Shipston Leisure Centre	01608 662354
Shipston Medical Centre	01608 661845
– Out of hours	111
Shipston Link (local transport)	01386 593446
Shipston Recycling Centre	01926 412593
Stratford District Council	01789 267575
Townsend Hall	07514 704057
Warwickshire County Council	01926 410410
UCHW Hospital	024 7696 4000
Warwick Hospital	01926 495321
Local police (non emergency)	101
Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood Team:	01789 444670
shipston.snt@warwickshire.police.uk	
Churches of Shipston:	
Stour Valley Baptist	01608 664876
Our Lady & St Michael	01608 685259
St Edmund’s	01608 661210
Methodist Church	01295 257193

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Something exciting to share?

If you have a story that’s relevant to Shipston residents, please contact the editor, Laura Parker, on 07989 530069 or email: forum@shipstononline.org

To request posts on the council’s Facebook page, contact admin@shipstononline.org

Forum copy deadline:

Second Monday of the month

– but the sooner you can notify the editor of a potential story the better.

The Shipston Forum is produced monthly by the Town Council.
While every effort is made to ensure information is accurate, the Town Council and its contractors do not accept responsibility for material submitted by readers or third parties and does not endorse any organisation or event publicised. Contributions may be edited to fit available space.

Shipston Amateur Dramatic Society
presents

Jack and the Beanstalk

a pantomime by Norman Robbins

Townsend Hall
Sheep Street, Shipston on Stour
7.30 pm
(Saturday Matinee 2.30 pm)

Thursday 8th - Saturday 10th February 2024
Adults £10, Children £5

Tickets available from John Lyne Home Hardware,
on the door or online at
ticketsource.co.uk/shipston-drama-group

Children in fancy dress at the matinee
will receive a treat

"Fee Fi Fo Fum!"