



"ALMARTUNE"

Established before 1086 AD

THE AYL MERTON NEWSLETTER

Sponsored by the Parish Council
WINTER 2014 - 15



When you sit down to read this I hope you are feeling fit and well. If, on the other hand, you are one of the many who have suffered since before Christmas with a sore throat, a rasping cough and little or no energy and have found it extremely difficult to shake off, then I trust you are well on the mend as we hopefully head towards Spring.

Hospitals in our region have had a tough winter. There's been much talk about the last flu jab being less effective than in previous years and consequently there has been an unprecedented number of people seeking treatment this winter. This has been compounded by the fact that many of the hospital staff were off sick, leaving some departments with barely a skeleton staff and appointments and clinics having to be cancelled. At Cromer Hospital in January the phlebotomy department carried out no fewer than 2,800 blood tests.

There are encouraging signs that Spring may be on its way, with crocuses and daffodils already making a welcome splash of colour.

The favoured colours of our political parties are also much in evidence as the politicians launch their manifestos and election initiatives in vying for our vote. The countdown to the general election on 7 May is well under way but, by way of a reminder, Parish Council elections will also be held on the same day. Our Parish Clerk has written an article for this edition and mentioned the forthcoming election so now's the time to be thinking if you are interested in standing as a candidate. It's not an onerous duty but by becoming involved you could make a difference.

On a personal note Patsy and I found a house in Holt and moved in two days before Christmas - what joy! We are maintaining our links with Aylmerton and certainly, for the time being at least, I'll continue with *Almartune*, unless of course someone else is desperate to write it, in which case please contact Janet our Parish Clerk (512001).

In the meantime enjoy your read.

John Rampling

NEW BIRD CLUB GETS A FLYING START!

A recent article in the EDP announced that a new birdwatching group was being formed by two local bird enthusiasts - Trevor Williams from Aylmerton and Phil Hall from Gresham - and is to be known as North East Norfolk Bird Club.

Whilst bird watching at Sheringham, they decided there was a need for a birdwatching club that was not just for professional birdwatchers, but more of a social thing, something that would attract youngsters and adults with different levels of experience.

The intention is to focus on monitoring birdlife in the Holt, Sheringham, Happisburgh, Coltishall and Aylsham areas.

Phil worked for 30 years in Nigeria as a full time environmentalist, but returned to Norfolk two years ago where he had spent his teenage years birdwatching at Cley.

Phil, who is Club President, said "The area we are focusing on is under-observed by birdwatchers and other groups. We want to maintain accurate recordings of the status of bird populations. There has been a decline in so many different species and it's good to find out what is impacting on bird numbers". It is known that there are around 350 bird species to be found in the area, with habitats ranging from woodland to the coast.

The inaugural meeting was held at Aylmerton Village Hall on Thursday 29 January when every seat was taken with several people standing. Sheringham naturalist and retired GP, Moss Taylor, gave an amusing and entertaining talk entitled "Forty Years of Birding around Sheringham".



Packed to the rafters - the enthralled audience at the inaugural North East Norfolk Bird Club meeting



Left to right: Trevor Williams (Chair), Andy Clarke (Outdoor Events Organiser) and Walter Sadler (Treasurer)

Trevor Williams said "I was bowled over by the number of people of different ages and experience of birdwatching who turned out on a dark and cold winter's night. The response was way beyond anything we could have expected, so the long term prospects and future of the Club look extremely encouraging".

The Club meets on the last Thursday in each month at Aylmerton Village Hall and every third Wednesday there will be a walk around Felbrigg Park (9 am till 11 am). The February meeting (held on Thursday 26th) was a talk by Nigel Collar about his book (published for Birdlife International) called "Birds & People: Bonds in a Timeless Journey". Again there was a large turn out which shows that many of us have a real interest in the abundance and variety of birdlife in our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

If you are interested in the Club or would like more information visit www.nebc.co.uk or check out Trevor's regularly updated blog on trevorwilliams55@gmail.com

We wish the Club every success.

"FROM THE PEN OF THE CLERK"

Since the last issue of Almartune, the Broadband Working Group have met to analyse the results of the broadband survey. Whilst many of you provided your download and upload times we need more please, to support our campaign. As I am in the midst of changing Broadband provider, please could you write your address, broadband speeds and time of speedcheck on a slip of paper and put it in the post box at the Village Hall.

Karen O'Kane, from Better Broadband for Norfolk, has advised that the next phase of parishes in line for Superfast Broadband will be announced in March. In the meantime we will continue our campaign and keep our fingers crossed that Aylmerton will be on the next list.

The current term of office for our Parish Councillors is almost up as the May elections approach. If you are interested in your community and would like to stand for election then please contact me as the Election Candidate Nomination packs are now available.

The deadline for receipt of nomination forms at NNDC is 4pm on 9 April 2015. If you are unsure about the role of a councillor and how much commitment is involved I am happy to answer any questions. More information about standing as a councillor can be found at:-

<http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/council/697.asp>

Members were delighted to learn that the Village Hall Committee have been awarded grants from NNDC Big Society and Norfolk Playing Fields Association towards the proposed works to level the playing field. Aylmerton Parish Council has released the £800 held in the youth fund toward this project.

We have had discussions with Gresham Parish Council and Beckham Parish Council in respect of a joint project to purchase a Speed Awareness Monitoring sign to be rotated on sites around the parishes. At present the project has been put on hold, due to the costs involved, but we will continue to look into this.

The Parish Council's General Purpose working group is still investigating sources of grant funding for works to the Pill Box and the steps to the War Memorial. We still await professional advice in respect of maintenance to the pond.

On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank all of our community volunteers who have worked hard for the parish throughout 2014 and wish everyone all the best for 2015.

Janet Warner

RAISING MONEY FOR EPILEPSY

In the last edition of Almartune we mentioned that villager, Keith Wisdom, was looking to raise money for the Ellen Mezzetti Memorial Fund in aid of Epilepsy Research UK. John and Lynn Mezzetti (from Fighting Fit Martial Arts, Cromer) lost their daughter Ellen to epilepsy 16 years ago, since when they have worked tirelessly to raise money for this important research.

On Saturday 15 November, Keith took the challenge to "climb" the equivalent height of Mount Everest (29,024ft) on a Versiclimber outside Morrison's Supermarket in Cromer.



**"I saw a yeti just now. I think!!"
Keith, nearing the "summit".**

He trained hard for the 6 hour endurance test, which is said to be the equivalent of one and a third marathons. Encouraged by family, friends and shoppers he achieved his goal and, in doing so, raised the princely sum of £1,008 for Epilepsy Research UK.

Well deserved congratulations are in order.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR OLD MOBILE PHONE?

These days it appears that mobile phones have an ever shorter working life. No sooner have you finally mastered how it works and which apps are absolutely essential for an ordered life, than you find that a new phone has just arrived in a blaze of publicity, one that is faster and far more sophisticated, leading you to believe that you have already fallen behind in the race for the best and most powerful phone in the country.

So if you do upgrade, what do you do with your old phone? If your phone happens to be relatively new then there are web sites where they will make you an offer. Sometimes we try and find a member of the family or a friend who just might find a use for your old one, but if that doesn't succeed many of us just stick it in a drawer, together with several other so-called obsolete phones and forget about it.

If we like to keep things local we can always hand our old mobiles into the re-cycling centre at East Beckham (now called Sheringham Re-cycling centre) knowing that it will be sent off to a re-cycling specialist firm to see if it is capable of being re-used, or broken up in order to salvage the valuable

parts.

If you are feeling generous you could give it away on Freegle (contact www.freegle.org.uk) to someone who actually wants what you are happy to give away. This national organisation has a Norfolk branch currently with around 15,000 members. The website is easy to use and, who knows, you may find yourself picking up something else that you actually need, that is completely free!

We shouldn't forget that many local schools and charities are very pleased to receive your old mobiles and in some cases your old chargers and printer ink cartridges (not toners).

If you know of a local school or charity that would like to receive old/redundant mobiles, just ask them to get in touch (01263 712146) and we'll provide some publicity in our next

NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall has been busy of late. In October there was a very successful Quiz Night which helped to raise funds for the Hall. Later in the month volunteers gathered to carry out a much needed litter pick throughout the village, preceeded as always by bacon butties and coffee in the Hall. Thanks to everyone who supported this.

On the 5th December the Village Hall hosted a Race Night Spectacular with dinner in "The Paddock". Our new kitchen was once again brought into full action providing a choice of menu for over forty diners. A new screen and projector added a much more professional touch to a night at the races. The evening again proved very popular and raised £450 towards much needed funds.

Our Parish Clerk mentioned in her article, that the Village Hall have recently been successful in applying for grants to level the playing field towards the rear of the Hall and we are very happy to pick up on this story. The youngsters have complained, in the nicest way, for some time that the steep slope towards the rear fence makes a game of football something of a lottery, but there has never been enough money to resolve the situation. However, enquires revealed that Norfolk Playing Fields Association were running a funding programme to contribute towards the cost of improving playing fields. A specialist groundworks contractor carried out a survey which revealed that the slope of the pitch was more than 6 feet in places and, whilst it could be satisfactorily levelled, they would need to import quite a lot of soil. This very much vindicated the requests from our youngsters that their "complaint" was entirely genuine and valid.

Armed with this knowledge, successful grant applications were made to Norfolk Playing Fields Association for £1,000 and a tremendous response from NNDC Big Society who awarded us £3,500. The final piece of the jigsaw was a request to our Parish Council, who kindly agreed to release £800 from their Youth Fund reserve.

We have now have sufficient funds to undertake the project and providing the weather is suitable the contractors are scheduled to start in early April. Once the field has been levelled and compacted the area will be seeded, for laying turf would have been prohibitively expensive. The playing field will be taped off and will be out of bounds to all activities until the grass is well established and we would ask for everyone's co-operation during this time. Fortunately, the childrens play area and equipment will be unaffected.

The last phase of the project will be to replace the ageing goal posts and nets as the existing ones have reached the end of

their life, although we will have to raise some monies for this additional work.

It is not only our youngsters who will ultimately benefit when the playing field is level, for when the field is in use at the Fete or Horticultural Show some of the elderly or less able have been reluctant to venture onto the uneven surface.

Plans are afoot to remove the high chainlink fence from the front of the Hall as a number of residents have mentioned that it detracts from the adjacent village sign. It will be replaced with a low picket type fence which will be more in keeping with the surroundings. The final stage of tidying up the frontage will be to move the waste bin to the nearby picnic table and to install an entrance gate (matching the railings around the village sign) to the children's play area.

We are very conscious of the fact that rainwater has been ponding to an unacceptable depth on the flat roofs of the Jubilee Room and kitchen for some time. The felt flat roofs are way beyond their expected life span and we simply cannot leave it until the roofs fail, for we would have to close the Hall. We are also aware that neither of these roofs have any insulation and are either too cold in winter or too hot in the summer, so introducing adequate energy saving insulation is an absolute must.

We have just applied for a substantial grant from National Lottery (Awards for All) for all of this work and we are currently awaiting their decision. If we are successful we will take the opportunity of creating a slight slope to the roof to ensure that there is no chance of standing water on these roofs in the future and to allow for a stray football to roll off!

A Film Club at the Village Hall?

Before the first horse race at the December Race Night we showed a brief excerpt from a James Bond movie just to show the effects of the large screen and a powerful soundtrack. This prompted suggestions that perhaps we should try and set up a film club to show films that benefit from a larger screen and better sound. We would get to choose the films we want.

A number of village halls have embarked on similar schemes for it is much more cost effective to hire films for screening to a club rather than advertise it for the general public.

For a very modest cost we could put on a monthly film, with refreshments to make it a more convivial evening.

If you are interested can you please drop us an email at AylmertonVillageHall@gmail.com and let us know your views and the sort of films you might like to see. It doesn't have to be the latest blockbuster and could just as well be one of the popular classics. If you don't have a computer just pop a note in the Village Hall letterbox (by the main door), but remember to include your name and telephone number.

As we already have the necessary equipment we could get under way with the very minimum of delay.

It's over to you!

MPs SLAM GOVERNMENT'S BROADBAND PLAN

Aylmerton receives regular updates from the Rural Services Network on a wide variety of issues that affect rural communities across the country and in February they published an article on the Rural broadband and digital-only services report which was published by the Environment & Rural Affairs Committee on 3 February.

It makes for interesting reading and is in stark contrast to the updates provided by Norfolk County Council and BT on which our Parish Clerk, Janet Warner, has already reported in

this edition of Almartune.

The Environment & Rural Affairs Committee mentions the government's declared aim of 95% of the country's premises to have superfast broadband speed of 24Mbps by 2017, although BT have already said that the target could slip into 2018. However, the Committee point out that that leaves 5% on slower or non-existent connections. The Committee Chair, Anne McIntosh MP, said "*People living in the hard-to-reach 5% of the country need the same access as the rest to online and digital services. There is a risk in the current approach that improving service for those who already have it will leave even further behind farms, businesses and homes who have little or none*".

The report raises fears that a focus on improving access for most of the country may leave a minority with little or no ability to use government services increasingly available only online.

Miss Macintosh added "*We are concerned that the current broadband rollout targets are based on inaccurate assumptions that universal basic broadband coverage has largely been achieved*".

The Committee strongly recommends that the government's minimum target speed of 2Mbps is too low, must be reviewed and a new minimum speed identified. The minimum speed must reflect modern technological developments and a more suitable target would be 10Mbps.

Rural business leaders welcomed the report and Henry Robinson, President of the Country Land and Business Association said "*We are pleased MPs have listened carefully to the evidence we set out to them. The Committee is right to conclude that a minimum speed of 2 Mbps is now too slow a speed for modern requirements. It is also right to press the government to review this, but it is a shame the report stopped short of calling for a Universal Service Obligation. It is clear that rural areas have fallen behind. If the government was to level the playing field, it must prioritise hardest-to-reach areas, even if this means technologies such as satellite*".

Aylmerton is currently nowhere near achieving the basic broadband coverage and BT have not yet even listed our village for upgrading.

Aylmerton and all of our neighbouring rural communities) need to keep pressing for a much improved service.

The irony is that, even though we receive a poor service, we still pay the same rate as those who are fortunate enough to receive Super Fast Broadband.

NEWS FROM ST JOHN'S

Our round tower medieval church received its quinquennial report in 2013 which revealed that whilst it's not in any danger of falling down it does need a significant amount of work to the fabric to keep it weatherproof and in sound order. Our rector, Rev'd David Head, suggested some months ago that these days the upkeep of a medieval church can often be beyond the scope of an enthusiastic congregation and perhaps the time is right for a Friends Group to be set up to help.

These are independent organisations that seek Friends who could include:

- Supporters of heritage and history
- Those who wish to use the church but don't attend regularly
- Those who believe it's important to maintain a key

community building

- Visitors who would like to keep a link with the building

- Those with family ties to the church

The good news is that a Friends Group has been formed and will be launched at Connie's Stall at the Village Hall 10am Saturday 4 April.

A brochure setting out the aims and objectives of the Friends Group will be hand delivered to every household in the village ahead of the launch and we would love to see you there.

A website has also been produced where more information will be available. We do hope you will support this venture to help preserve by far the oldest building for future generations. At 9.30 am Sunday 22 March there will be a service of glorious Passiontide music and readings. It is a moving sequence of familiar hymns, readings and choir pieces recounting the Easter story.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AYLMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 21st April at 7.30 pm

Guest Speaker:

James Begley - Community First Responder

Subject:- Community Defibrilators

Next Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 12th May at 7.30 pm

Both at the Village Hall - ALL WELCOME

QUIZ NIGHT - VILLAGE HALL

7.30 pm Friday 20th March

Tickets: Lesley: 837937 (Advisable to book)

"FRIENDLY FRIDAY" & EGGS

AT THE VILLAGE HALL

3rd April- 6.30 pm till 9.00 pm

Come and decorate your eggs for the Easter Monday competition

CONNIE'S STALL AT THE VILLAGE HALL

10.00 am till 12 noon Saturday 4th April

PASSIONTIDE SERVICE

9.30am Sunday 22nd March

St John's Church

HOT CROSS BUNS, COFFEE, STALLS AND DECORATED EASTER EGG COMPETITION

10 am till 12 noon Easter Monday 6th April

VILLAGE HALL

In aid of Village Hall Funds

PARISH-WIDE LITTER PICK

Saturday 11th April

Assemble at the Village Hall at 9.30 am for coffee & bacon butties for 10.00 am start
