

News & Views

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'TAKE THE BAY BUT HAVE MY DISABILITY WITH IT!'

As an urgent response to complaints, the Parish Council has put up a new sign outside the Co-op store at Neath Hill, in an attempt to persuade able-bodied drivers not to use parking bays for the disabled.

The issue has been raised by several able as well as disabled drivers. One lady driver said that she confronted an obviously able driver by saying: 'Well, you've got my parking space, do you want my disability as well?'

The Parish Council would like to do more to prevent use of the bays by drivers who are not disabled. In fact, the bays, like some at local supermarkets, are 'courtesy' only, and have no legal standing.

DO YOU HAVE A BLUE BADGE?

All the Parish can do is to put up the new sign, which it can do under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984. It is hoped the new sign will remind drivers not to use the bays unless they are 'blue badge' holders.

Councillor Tripp, who uses a wheelchair, told *News & Views*: 'I don't think able-bodied people realise that disabled drivers CANNOT park anywhere else. Some people just don't consider others and don't seem to care.'

'I have experienced the same sort of thing at Giffard Park, the Ward I represent. I welcome the Parish initiative and I hope the sign reminds those drivers who act selfishly to consider the less able.'

ML



For some, this is the ONLY place we can park, says Councillor Colin Tripp.

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Home buyers demand energy efficiency

Forget the pond and the jacuzzi; when it comes to attracting new home buyers, energy efficiency improvements are more likely to tick the right boxes.

Changes in the law will soon enable house hunters to compare the energy efficiency and environmental impact of houses for sale before arranging a viewing.

An energy efficiency grading system will be a compulsory part of Home Information Packs which are to be made available to potential buyers from June 2007.

The 'Energy Performance Certificate' will provide an easy-to-read A to G colour-coded rating of both a home's energy efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions. It will also highlight current average costs for heating, hot water and lighting, as well as any straightforward energy saving improvements not yet made.

The independent preparation of a complete

Home Information pack will cost the seller over £700, but deferring this payment until the point of sale is sure to be an option. Logically, the new system will make it easier for buyers to spot the hidden value of a potential purchase, including low running costs and low environmental impact thanks to energy saving features.

The Home Condition Report (survey) element of the pack will be optional when packs launch next June. The Energy Efficiency Certificate is compulsory. Without the Home Condition Report, costs of producing the pack are expected to be around £400.

For more information on saving energy and improving your home's energy efficiency rating, call the MK Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512 012, or log onto www.mkea.org.uk/energyrating.html

Beat bobby to hold weekly 'surgery' at Parish Office

LOCAL beat officer, PC Heather Denton, is to hold a weekly 'surgery' at the Parish Office, on Wednesday mornings, between 10am and 11am, from November 1. Residents are welcome to come and talk to Heather (seen right) about any issues or concerns they may have.

PC Heather Denton told *News & Views*: 'While I do get stopped by people when I'm out on my bicycle, the surgery will be an ideal place for those people who don't see me, and don't therefore get a chance to talk to me.

'So I hope people will come to realise that they can get hold of me at a regular time and place each Wednesday. I am very grateful to the Parish Council for letting me use their office.'



Beat officer Heather Denton, pictured outside the Parish Office at Neath Hill Local Centre.

'Taggers' pay for their 'art'

EARLIER this year, Acting Police Sergeant (APS) Damian Isherwood was asked to set up a small squad – the Pro Active Team – to try and reduce crime and specifically criminal damage, which accounts for 20 per cent of all crime in MK. Great Linford Parish has in the last year been blighted by graffiti 'taggers' suspected of living locally. Tagger is the nickname given to those who carry out graffiti.



APS Isherwood told *News & Views*: 'I thought a good way to reduce crime would be for the Pro Active Team [PAT] to find and arrest high profile targets connected with robbery, burglary, drugs, car crime and criminal damage where Thames Valley Police know the offender, may have enough evidence to charge them but just could not locate the person.'

'In the last three months some 60 plus individuals have been located, arrested and charged or reported by PAT. For graffiti and criminal damage crimes PAT has identified sixteen suspected offenders, either through our usual intelligence, interviews and by talking to kids on the street.'

Out of the 16 persons located, six were cautioned or reported and ten have been charged with criminal damage. 'We have another ten offenders identified but not yet arrested. I felt the only long term solution was to issue the offenders with Acceptable Behaviour Contract [ABC] and ask for large compensation claims' he said.

An ABC is an informal, flexible, written

An ABC is an informal contract between offender and authorities

For this and other similar pieces of 'art' the offender had to pay up £1800.

agreement made between a person who has been involved in anti-social behaviour with the police, their local authority, or Youth Inclusion Support Panel. It is designed to engage an individual in acknowledging his or

her anti-social behaviour and its effect on others, with the aim of stopping that behaviour. The threat of legal action provides an incentive to ensure adherence to the contract. While ABC's are not legally binding, they can be cited in court should it be necessary to

obtain an ASBO or other court action to ensure that the behaviour stops.

As APS Isherwood pointed out: 'The Courts were reluctant to impose an Anti Social Behaviour Order [ASBO] but 13 ABC's were put in place, and one offender who lives in the parish was fined £3,000. Another prolific tagger, a 17-year-old from Newport Pagnell, pleaded guilty to 36 counts of criminal damage and was referred to the Youth Offending Team and ordered to pay £1,800 damages.'

DS

GRAFFITI IS A CRIME - SO REPORT IT!

**Ring the non-emergency police line on 0845 8 505 505,
contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111,
or report incidents via email to: envservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk.**

Re-thatch for crick at Great



*The Street
Where You Live...
by David Stabler*

Paul Reading (left) at work on the old barn roof (below).



PICTURES: David Stabler

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Cricket store at Linford



the cricket store, the adjoining cricket pitch and pavilion at Great Linford are owned and maintained by the Parish Council. Re-roofing was carried out in July by Norman Oldfield of Horton and his colleague Paul Woodfield. The work, agreed by the Parish Council in March this year, was paid for from the annual monies set aside each year out of the annual parish precept in a 'thatching fund'. Norman Oldfield last re-thatched the cricket store in 1985 following a fire which destroyed the building and many of the existing old timbers.

THREE TONS OF STRAW

Norman Oldfield explained to *News & Views* that the wire mesh roof cover is removed and a thin underbed of straw is attached through the existing thatch to give it strength, using wires screwed into the timbers. A deep layer of new specially-grown long

wheat straw is then laid like overlapping tiles over the roof and is pinned to the existing thatching using hazel hoops.

Some three tons of Devon grown straw were used in addition to the Turkish grown reeds. The traditional source of reed was Norfolk, but the quantity available to the flourishing thatching trade has been reduced due to the management strategy of the reed beds and conflicting conservation policies required for nesting birds.

The long stem wheat straw is cut with a traditional windmill reaper and binder whilst green and not when mature and dried out, as it would be too brittle. It is then 'stooked' [stood upright] and left to dry slowly in the field, to give it the strength required for thatching.

So 20 years on, the cricket store thatched roof has been transformed and the building, with its historic links, will continue to be a link to the historic village of Great Linford.

Barn defines if it's a 'true' village

The cricket store is described and illustrated in Paul Woodfield's book "A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes" published by the MK Development Corporation in 1986. It says:

Originally a stable and store for Windmill. It is un-dateable but was probably built around C18. Timber weatherboarding and a pitched roof.

A very rare survival of an ephemeral building as is encountered in almost all medieval village excavations.

It has no regular framing, the posts are miscellaneous and set in the ground and supported with other timbers on the south side so that it took up a rhomboid shape.

The roof was of round poles as cut from the forest, with a variety of props and stays.

The thatch was roped on and patched over many a year. It is the sort of building that is an essential element of the true village and distinguishes it from the commuter village. Very sadly, the building was partly destroyed by fire in 1985 and now has a new roof, removing much of its interest."

For more articles in David Stabler's *Street Where You Live* series, log onto www.great-linford.gov.uk and you'll find them under the *Newsletters* section.

Show's 'growing' success

THE fourth Great Linford Allotment Association Show, held on August 27, was the best supported to date. With a total of 235 entries the show, held in the Memorial Hall, was a massive success and the previous venue would certainly not have been big enough.

Once again, it was the aptly-named John Green who gained the most overall points in the various sections to take the trophy for Highest Number of Points. In Vegetables, he took first place for shallots, white potatoes, red potatoes, red onions, white onions, carrots, runner beans, French beans, parsnips, leeks, and marrow. John also took first place in cherry tomatoes, spring onions and cucumber in the Salad section, plus apples and plums for Soft Fruit. He also made inroads in the Preserves section, with a first place for his piccalillis.

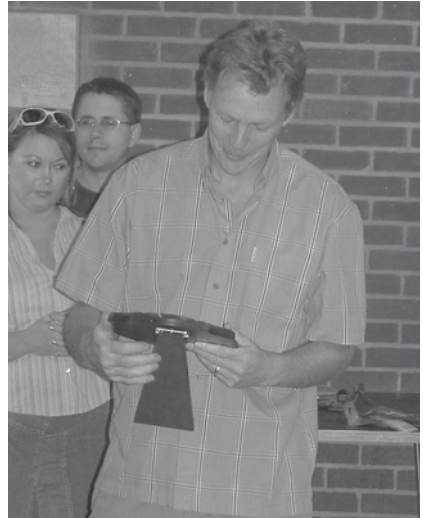
The award for best new plot (since last year's judging) went to Mrs and Mrs Brooks for their Hills Close plot. Best kept allotment prizes went to Richard Potton (Neath Hill), Richard Sharp (Bells Meadow), Mr and Mrs Carey (Gifford Gate) and Sally Ellis (Hills Close). Best kept plot overall award went to Richard Potton, while Mrs Matthews gained most points in the Preserves and Home Baking sections.

NEW IMAGE FOR ALLOTMENTS

The old image of allotment holders being elderly gentleman, has long gone and there is a good mix of male, female, young and old plot holders who are extremely friendly, and willing to offer a helping hand when and where required. It is the spirit of the annual show and of the plot holders that helps make the Parish Council allotment operation such a success, and one that continues to thrive.

The allotment show is completely self-funded by the Allotment Association, with money for this year's show raised from a stall at the Waterside Festival, and by a raffle and teas at the 2005 Show.

The Allotment Association was formed in 2001 by Jenny Sharp the Parish Manager, to promote the then under-used parish allotment sites. The Association meets at the Parish Office at Neath Hill, usually on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. All plot holders are welcome to attend. DS



John Green, winner of the trophy for most overall points gained.



This fine Owl was an entry in the children's animal made from a vegetable category.

Full results of the Produce Show are available from the Parish Council Office, or on our website, at: www.great-linford.gov.uk

A Sharp Tongue

Parish Manager Jenny Sharp bites back

Overgrown hedges should be cut back

WE receive a lot of complaints at the Parish Office about overgrown hedges. Those who complain usually assume that these are the responsibility of Milton Keynes Council. This is often not the case, as many properties in Milton Keynes were built with a fence and then a hedge on the outside. These hedges, regardless of who owns them, should always be kept cut back either to the path edge or the kerb edge (if there is no path).

Should people not keep their hedges in a good state of repair, then Milton Keynes Council have the power to undertake this work and to charge the hedge owners for the cost of the work. If you are in any doubt about whether the hedge adjoining your property is your responsibility, then call in at the Parish Office. We have the definitive Milton Keynes Council Landscape Plans and can clarify this instantly.

Parish applauds fines for parking on verges

Vehicles parked on grass verges is also an issue about which the Parish Office receives a lot of complaints. This activity is very anti-social and makes residents very cross. Another problem is that if a car is parked on a verge, the mowing contractors will go around it, leaving the area even more unsightly. Milton Keynes Council have recently announced that they will be issuing fixed penalty notices, something the Parish Council applauds.

Metcalfe Grove in Blakelands has been identified as an area where a number of residents permanently park on verges, rather than go to the trouble of enlarging their drives to accommodate their needs. *Be warned* you are in danger of being fined.

Rubbish put out early could cost you...

THERE'S one in every street - the person who usually lives in the scruffiest house in the road and insists on putting out their rubbish bags two or three days before the refuse collectors are due. By the correct day, the bags have been ripped apart by dogs, cats, magpies etc and all around the area there are potato peelings, meat bones, egg shells etc, etc. Likewise, usually it is the same people who, when they run out of black bags, use their pink ones and wonder why they are not collected. Any incorrect items in a pink bag will render it 'contaminated' and the bag will be left behind. If you run out of black bags before the next annual delivery, then you will need to purchase some more from the Civic Offices (or use supermarket

bags). We do however have a free supply of pink sacks in the Parish Office. Under the terms of the Environment Act 2005, Milton Keynes Council has the power to fine people who put out their rubbish before the collection day. Please tell us who those people are and we will pass on the details to the Enforcement Team, who will take action.

What issues about Parish life get you hot under the collar? Write to *Sharp Tongue* at the Parish Office, or email us at info.glpc@btconnect. You can also contact us via our website at: www.great-linford.gov.uk

Don't feed the fish - it upsets the pond!

PEARTREE pond at Great Linford is owned by the Parish Council and the day-to-day maintenance is carried out by the Peartree Pond Association, a group of very willing volunteers.

Residents do worry when the water is cloudy. However, it is only to the trained eye that the appearance of the water is an indication of the true condition of the pond. Occasionally dead fish will be seen floating on the water, this is nature and does not, necessarily indicate a problem.

Fish such as carp, are bottom feeders and keep the water permanently cloudy by stirring

up the sediment. This reduces light penetration, so preventing bottom rooted plants establishing. These type of plants are therefore not present to keep the water oxygenated, and the nutrients which could have fed them, go to feed algae instead, making the water even more cloudy.

We have had a number of reports recently about rats around the pond, and we would remind residents that feeding the ducks encourages the rats. Fish and wildfowl do not need quantities of bread because, apart from feeding the rats, this has a major impact on the condition of the pond. JS

Know your Parish Councillors

GLPC Councillors have elected not to receive payment for services they give.

George Byfield (Conniburrow)

604063

Sue Williams (Conniburrow)

690337

Joan Pickhaver (Conniburrow)

678569

Brian Morsley (Downhead Park/Willen Park)

666054

Alan Pugh (Downhead Park/Willen Park)

662441

Charles Allum (Downs Barn)

668115

Alan Wright (Downs Barn)

666926

Colin Tripp (Giffard Park/Blakelands)

618304

Gill Hobson (Giffard Park/Blakelands)

670609

John Figg (Great Linford)

666916

John Perrott (Great Linford)

393770

Rod Markley (Great Linford)

605820

Cecil Macaulay (Great Linford)

231027

David Stabler (Neath Hill)

232025

Alan Williams (Neath Hill)

677402

Cecil Macaulay

(right) is our

newest Parish

Councillor. Cecil

will represent the

Great Linford

Ward, alongside

John Figg, Rod

Markley, and John

Perrott.



Could you be a Councillor?

We still need Councillors to represent the Pennyland and Bolbeck Park areas. If you think you could make a contribution by becoming a Councillor, ring Jenny Sharp, Parish Manager, for an informal chat about what's involved.

Contact Councillors on the above telephone numbers, or through the Parish Council Office, at 10 Tower Crescent, Neath Hill Local Centre, Neath Hill, MK14 6JY. Ring us on (01908) 606613, or email:

gtlinfordparish@btconnect.com.

Contact details are also available on our website: www.great-linford.gov.uk