

**July 2020**  
**Edition 176**



## USEFUL NUMBERS

Braintree District Council	01376 552525
Castle Hedingham Surgery	01787 461465
Colchester Hospital	01206 744491
Doctor's Car Service	07845 596092
Freshwell Health Centre	01371 810328
Great Yeldham Surgery	01787 237212
Halstead Hospital	01787 273110
Kaaren Berry, Parish Clerk	077889 55038
Little chestnuts Pre School	079018 80914
Little Hedgehogs Toddlers	01440 785778
PumpHouse Brewery	07801 042545
Rev. Liz Paxton	01787 277270
Sally Croft, Pastoral Assistant	07850 361101
Sible Hedingham Surgery	01787 460612
St Margaret's School	01787 237354
The Green Man	01787 237418
Toppesfield Community Shop	01787 236003
Toppesfield Village Hall Booking Secretary - Daphne Jude	01440 788270
Vets – Great Yeldham	01787 238255

**Toppesfield Community Shop**  
Church Lane, Toppesfield  
01787 236003

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables, Milk,  
Newspapers, Confectionery, Pet Food,  
Dairy Products, Meat & Poultry, Kindling  
and Coal, Cards, Stationery and more!

Mon/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday  
8.30 am – 4.00 pm,  
Wednesday 8.30 am – 1.00 pm,  
Saturday 10.00 am– 12.30 pm.

**Toppesfield Post Office**  
Church Lane, Toppesfield

Services include: Special Delivery, Mobile  
Top Up, Insurance Services, Household  
Payments, Travel Money, Moneygrams,  
Savings Accounts plus more!

## Toppesfield Parish Council

*Councillors* - Alan Collard, Andrew Bull, Amanda Smith, Andrea Chinery,  
Boyd Page, Chris Neale and Robert Stafford-Baker.

Parish Clerk - Kaaren Berry

Parish Council Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of every month in the Village Hall. During lockdown the parish council are meeting virtually. You are welcome to attend the Open Session that starts at 7.30pm. Please email the clerk for login details.

A Parish Councillor will also be available to listen to your views and answer your queries at the Village Markets.

## Toppesfield & Gainsford End Parish Newsletter

Published by Toppesfield Parish Council

Editor: [Kaaren.berry@kaaren.co.uk](mailto:Kaaren.berry@kaaren.co.uk)

Please see our online resources to find out what is happening

Facebook: Pages -  
Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community  
Toppesfield Village Hall  
Toppesfield Village Stores  
The Green Man, Toppesfield  
Pumphouse Community Brewery

Twitter & Instagram - Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community :  
Website: [www.essexinfo.net/toppesfield-parish-council/](http://www.essexinfo.net/toppesfield-parish-council/)



## From the Parish Council



Hello and welcome to the July 2020 edition of the Toppesfield & Gainsford Newsletter.

You will notice that this edition bears more similarity to the normal format than did our May version; I do wonder, however, what 'normal' will mean after the bulk of the Covid-19 related restrictions have ended. There will undoubtedly be changes to the ways in which we work, socialize and generally lead our lives. Some of these may even be an improvement on the previous *status quo*.

One of the changes that may come about is an increase in working from home, for either all or part of the time. In our case, in Toppesfield and Gainsford End, we are fortunate in being better positioned than many small communities in having an environment that will enable changes in such work practices to succeed.

We have access to ultra-fast broadband in both communities, enabling those for whom fast and reliable broadband connections are essential to have the capacity to work from home.

We also have a range of core amenities in the village which is unrivalled in similar sized villages in north Essex. These, as we have clearly seen over the past few months, provide an amazing level of support for the whole community. The community shop has excelled itself and you can read, in the article later in this Newsletter, that lessons learned during lockdown have provided the committee with the impetus to look at ways of improving the services and products provided; the community owned Green Man, run by David and Paul, has been serving takeaway meals throughout the lockdown and together with a pool of volunteers have been busy renovating and redecorating the pub ready for when it can fully reopen; and the community owned brewery has been selling an increasing volume of beers at knock-out prices as well as supplying Fathers' Day gift packs.

The common theme in all this, of course, is 'community' and this is one of Toppesfield's key strengths. As we move forward to our 'new normal' we should all remember that our community stayed strong and was there to support everyone.

Let's all make sure we maintain this strength by continuing our support for all of these enterprises.

The Response Group set up in March to meet the challenges of lockdown has started to see a decline in the need for its services and we envisage that, all being well, it will wind down over the coming months. We will however look at ways in which those who may need some continuing support can be assisted.

Finally, as you will recall, Dave Dyson sadly passed away in April and, after consulting with Margaret, it has been decided to install a memorial seat for him on the parish owned land behind the Green Man. If anyone would like to contribute to this please let Kaaren Berry, the Parish clerk know. Her contact details are shown on the opposite page.

## **Toppesfield & Gainsford End Allotments**

The weather has been kind to us at the allotments which are now in full use and with a waiting list, which is getting forever longer.

All allotmenters are experiencing good growth of crops, having beaten the frost which crept up on us in mid May. (We should take heed as many folk law tales say "plant out end of May to avoid the late frosts"). Only light damage affected a few beans and potatoes thankfully.

May also found us needing to remove a very dangerous bough off the mighty willow which had split and was in danger of crashing down on the Little Chestnuts plot. Thanks go out to Rob Sullivan & Boyd Page for giving assistance of removal of this limb, and to Rae Syder for helping me burn the aftermath.

On the subject of our burning heap, can we please point out that it is not a dumping ground for residents to put compostable waste on, (all residents have a green bin supplied for this use) as these materials do not burn. We find that we are then having to remove this waste before we can set the bonfire alight – we as a committee should not have to do this.

Nor is it a free tip for building rubble which has been found by the barrow load.

The allotment water supply has been very gratefully used and thanks go to the PC for the funding. Rae Syder and myself have repaired the IPC water bowsers and thanks go to Nick Hasler for supplying replacements, which should last us many more years.

By the time this article is delivered to the parish, the allotments press gang would have had a tidy up in the Churchyard. It was looking a little disshelved due to excessive growing conditions over the last 3 months.

Please remember if you walk your dog through the allotments you are welcome, after all it is a special place for many residents to visit, but please remember to take your dog mess to the bins that are provided at the allotment entrance, and in the playing fields. We are still seeing lots just left!

For information purposes the public footpath located opposite Berwick Hall House, splits to the right and to the left just before the entrance to the allotment plots, community orchard and herb garden.

### **Tommo's Tips**

Keep eating the strawberries and make sure that straw is put under the developing berries to stop the rot. 1st early potatoes will need to be harvested soon.

Please all keep safe the virus is still around!

Paul Thompson  
Chairman



## Your Wellbeing During Lockdown



Whilst some have enjoyed freedom from the usual pressures of life during COVID19 Lockdown, it has left a lot of us feeling worried, stressed, lonely and uncertain. I have found myself oscillating between these two positions – a rollercoaster of emotion! Then, on top of that, we might feel guilty for having fun or feeling stressed whilst others suffer more than us.

How have you been feeling over the past few months? How have you been coping with the range of emotions? Have you noticed the bodily sensations that come along with these feelings – butterflies in your tummy, racing heart, fuzzy brain? What thoughts and images have been running through your mind – do you find yourself imagining the worst or having difficulty making decisions? Have you been asking yourself “why am I feeling this way?” and maybe judging yourself for it?

It’s important to stress that anxiety (and whatever else you are feeling) is **NORMAL WHEN YOU ARE LIVING IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD**. I will try to explain why....

All living beings like a structured, predictable environment. Think of your dog, she likes to be walked and fed at the same time every day, it makes her feel safe. We emphasise to new parents the importance of getting their baby into a routine. The structure helps parents to cope with their new role, and the predictability makes the baby feel safe and secure that their needs will be met. This is because our “reptilian brain” – the part of the brain responsible for fight, flight and freeze – our most basic survival mechanism – is soothed by routine, structure, rhythm and predictability.

Our reptilian brain works by bypassing the cortex of the brain (or our “thinking brain”) when we are in danger, so we react instantly. For example, if we touch something hot, we will withdraw our hand instantly without thinking. To overly simplify this process: the reptilian brain signals the release of adrenaline and cortisol. These stress hormones direct blood flow away from non-essential functions (for example, our cortex and digestive system hence fuzzy brain and butterfly stomach) and towards the heart, lungs and the muscles in our arms and legs to power them for fight and flight (often leaving you feeling restless, energised, twitchy). This system works brilliantly for short term danger like sabretooth tigers or walking out in front of a bus. But when we are faced with a longer-term threat like COVID19, the overload of stress hormones in the body can leave us feeling hypervigilant and drained.

To help us cope with lockdown, the message from the government and the media is to have a daily routine, get plenty of rest, eat well and exercise. This seems like common sense... but can be difficult to put into practice when you are riding the emotional rollercoaster. However, given the way our brains and bodies work these 4 simple things could make a big difference to how you are feeling:

The daily routine provides structure and predictability that soothes the reptilian brain.

Sleep restores the body and brain allowing us to function at our best. Without enough sleep our bodies produce more stress hormone to keep us alert, but also leaves us more likely to feel stressed, worried and uncertain.

Eating healthy food also allows the body to restore. Sugar messes with our stress hormones leaving us more prone to mood swings.

Regular exercise helps release the tension caused by excess stress hormones, and releases endorphins which improve our mood.

Perhaps spend some time thinking about what works for you – what would a realistic routine look like? What conditions help you to sleep at night? How could you improve your diet? What exercise do you most enjoy and how could you structure this into your day?

Lastly, human beings like clear, consistent messages. They make us feel more confident and therefore safer. Maybe this is why some of us felt the initial anxiety of COVID19 reduce when the "Stay At Home" message was given very clearly by the government. However, I have noticed people have become more unsettled since the "Stay Alert" message was issued. It is ambiguous and therefore makes us feel uncertain, less safe and triggers our reptilian brain. It might help to think about what you do have control over, limit your exposure to anxiety provoking news stories, accept that this is a difficult time and give yourself permission to be ok and not-ok, depending on which part of the rollercoaster you are on.

There is one thing to be certain of during this uncertain time... that you are not the only person feeling the way you do.

If you want to learn more about the brain and bodies response to stress, there are lots of resources online. For example:

The three main parts of your brain, by Dr Russ Harris on YouTube

BBC The Truth About Stress – clip on Facebook

If you feel that your life is being significantly impacted by a deterioration in your mental health, or if you are finding it difficult to get through the day without alcohol or other drugs, please contact your GP.

If you are worried that you might hurt yourself or someone else, please call your GP or the Samaritans on their free phone line: 116 123.

If you are feeling lonely and want to talk please contact the confidential Toppesfield and Gainsford End Support Line on: 07341 264221

Dr Victoria Wallis (Clinical Psychologist)

# TOPPESFIELD Community Shop

Well, it's been a roller-coaster ride for the Community Shop over the last 3 months. Even before lockdown, we lost our Chair and Vice-Chair to self-isolation for two weeks and then we hit Lockdown which reduced our volunteer workforce to a total of 4!

*(the new awning)*

Opening hours, serving customers and other processes were changed and the card machine was rewired to be by the door (thank you to Peter Moore). A process for handling orders and deliveries was put in place and a substantial awning put in front of the door (thank you to David and Paul Wignall). The awning was to keep customers dry as they were served at the shop door, but, as things turned out, it provided welcome shade!



*(well stocked and spotlessly clean)*

New volunteers came forward both to serve in the shop in the mornings and to clean and restock the shelves in the afternoons. A training session was held, the booklet "Notes for Volunteers" was updated and off we went.

The cleaning of the shop each day was, and remains hugely important and we have been using a weak solution of paracetic acid courtesy of our Community-owned Brewery (thank you Aaron). The Community Brewery uses it to sterilise bottles before bottling beer.

*(social distance queuing)*



The biggest challenge, especially for the second half of March and throughout April and May, was keeping the shop well stocked. Trips were made to the wholesaler in Colchester, and many trips to supermarkets helped fill the gaps. The wholesaler was very low on stock and supermarkets limited how much we can buy. But, we were able to order from the catering company Brakes thanks to David and Paul, and that meant we had 4 types of flour when Tesco had none at all!!

As sales increased, the shop needed to have more stock, and the barn belonging to TCP is still in use for storing additional back up stock. So we were holding more of what we usually sell, plus lots of new items as well.

Our long standing local suppliers have been amazing. One week, we collected eggs from Ranger twice in addition to our usual weekly delivery and in the midst of lock-down, we were able to offer Wash Farm asparagus! Priors Hall must have almost run out if other shops' orders increased at the rate ours have. TenSheds bakery used to offer us a monthly delivery but switched to weekly which we hope will continue. Plants that Grow, although "closed", have allowed us to visit and raid their stock almost every week rather than having to wait for deliveries.

Many villagers ordered newspapers and magazines together with meat, ham and sausages. All these orders had to be consolidated to ordering and then broken down again for delivery or collection. A big thank you to Ann Read who is still managing this beautifully.





We have learned a lot during the last three months. In summary

- We need to continue to offer deliveries even when the shop resumes normal service so that our most vulnerable residents can enjoy some independence
- The Community Shop has been vital to many villagers and residents of nearby villages and we need to ensure it continues for another 18 years + (2020 is its 18th year of operation)
- Keeping optimum stock levels is not easy and needs daily assessment of all stock
- The shop is too small for the current requirements of the village
- The shop needs a storeroom. Additional stock is currently kept on high shelving in the shop which means volunteers need to use step ladders which is far from ideal
- Whilst the post Office "Fortress" is useful once per week when we have a Post Office, it is taking up too much space which could be better used,

As we write this, it is impossible to know when we will be able to hold an AGM (but we will do so as soon as it is safe and sensible to do so). But there are ideas on which the input from Shareholders would be welcomed. These are:

1. *The enlargement of the Community Shop:*

The Committee proposes that the shop be enlarged by extending into the grounds of the Village Hall such that the back wall of the Shop would be in line with that of the Village Hall. This would provide space for a storeroom and space for additional products. Your input on this as an outline would be welcomed. If it is to happen, there is a lot of detailed planning needed, and consultation of Shareholders, and indeed the village as a whole will be needed. The Committee recommends this to Shareholders to ensure that the Community Shop is ready to provide a suitable level of service to the village for the foreseeable future.

2. As part of the building works, the Committee recommends the removal of the Post Office "Fortress". As part of the planning, an alternative scenario acceptable to Post Office Ltd. for the weekly outreach Post Office service will be developed.

3. The Committee recommends instituting the paid position of a part-time Shop Manager. The job specification will be developed, but will include ensuring optimal stock, overseeing the ordering and delivery of stock, managing local "shopping for the Shop", overseeing the daily cashing up, float and banking.

We would welcome your response to the above 3 points.

Please contact Ann Read at [skomerann@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:skomerann@tiscali.co.uk) or Wendy Ames at [wendyames121@hotmail.com](mailto:wendyames121@hotmail.com).

If you prefer, you can write a letter to Ann and Wendy and leave it at the shop.

Looking forward, we sincerely hope that everyone appreciates the value of the Community Shop and that the support received during the last 3 months will continue. Many people who had not really used the shop before COVID have remarked that the shop is not expensive and how surprised they have been at the range of items that could be supplied. It is also worth noting that any surplus made by the shop finds its way to projects in the village not into some CEO's or investors' pockets!!

Please spread the word and **SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY SHOP.**





The Green Man  
Church Lane, Toppesfield,  
Halstead, Essex, CO9 4DR  
Tel: 01787 237418



We want to thank you for the continued support shown through these troubled times.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Green Man. Hopefully you've had a chance to come and have a drink in the garden with the bar now open for business (social distancing adhered to).

During this time, we have made some changes; the bar and restaurant have had a much-needed makeover and the toilets have been freshened up.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the following people:  
Wendy & Chris and volunteers who helped refurbish the tables and chairs  
Darren & Tina for keeping the grass cut  
Darren for the French polishing  
Margaret for the lovely flowers  
Trevor & Clare for all their continued work and support.  
The Plunkett Foundation for its grant.

Please accept our apologies if we have missed anyone out; we are aware that many more of you have helped behind the scenes. A big thank you to you all.  
We are pleased to say that we will continue to offer our takeaway service.

We look forward to welcoming you all back to the pub both old friends and new.

Best wishes  
All the staff at the Green Man.

## **The Village Hall Opens up!**

It has been oh so quiet at the hall since lockdown. The restrictions that we hold no 'gatherings' keep our community safe. It was really good therefore, to be able to open up for the start of Pre School at the beginning of June and I'm so pleased to report that it is going well for them. I hear that the children are delighted to be back with the staff and other children and are taking all the necessary restrictions in their stride. A lot of work was done by the preschool to get the hall ready for social distancing within their educational day. There was paperwork for both them and the V.H. committee to get into place ensuring that the systems, cleaning and learning could all safely take place.

At the moment the Pre School are the only group allowed to use the hall.

The hall had been closed for a number of weeks, so the water tanks were cleaned and certified legionnaires disease free. We are ready to open up, when we are advised and when we feel that it is totally safe.

Sadly, at the end of July, the hall will be quiet again as it is the summer holidays. We are awaiting directives as to whether we will be able to open for other hires in September. We were about to have our AGM in April. That has been put on hold. However, all the paperwork, including the checked account book, are completed giving us the balance for the financial year. So, we are ready and waiting. We expect that how the hall will be used will be different for some time. Maybe there will be a more social need and the hall will be more of a hub for village life over the months ahead. Who knows! While we await further developments, we hope everyone keeps safe and if anyone has an idea of how we can further support the community please contact us.

Sheila Braithwaite.



# Refurbishment

On March 15th we received the alarming news that a friend of ours was presenting symptoms of the Covid-19 virus. This meant immediate isolation. Having, only days before, volunteered to join the newly formed Village Support Group, I was devastated to inform both them and the community shop, of which I was Chair, that I would now, not be able to help out or indeed fulfil my duties. *(However, in true Toppesfield style, Trisha Roberts took over my post at the shop, for which I shall be eternally grateful! She has done an amazing job, far better than I could/would have done).* Within days we were further updated that our friend had been admitted to hospital and tested positive for the virus. I now knew that our isolation period was going to be much longer than first anticipated. Feeling more than a little down in the dumps, this was pre-lockdown, I set about thinking what I could do to pass the time and give me back a sense of purpose. Eureka! I thought, I know, I'll 'social distance' refurb the Pub. *(That is to say, maintain a social distance while collecting, returning and installing furniture and furnishings).* It has to be said when I first made the call to the TCP, to put the idea to them, I suddenly thought, "they'll think I've lost my marbles". Thankfully though, it was considered a good idea, so I set about making a plan. Knowing I was going to be on a very tight budget, I had to decide what was most wanted and needed to not only brighten it up but also add some warmth and atmosphere. The first stage was to brighten up all the old, tired tables and chairs, of which there were many, so I put out a 'call to arms' on Facebook asking for help. Although the responses were not so many, those that have helped strip and paint have done a fantastic job and the icing on the cake was when Darren Jolley, a village resident and professional furniture restorer, offered to lacquer all of the tabletops free of charge. Secondly, in the dining room, I wanted to create a more 'homely' feel and believed that this could be achieved with the addition of a fireplace as a focal point, so, after much internet searching, a fire surround and electric 'wood-burning' stove were purchased and installed and have certainly done the trick. With more internet bargain hunting we have managed to purchase 'new' leather sofas and lighting for the main bar as well as fabric for curtaining and re-upholstery in both bars. Alongside all this, Paul and David have painted all the walls and ceilings throughout the pub which in itself is truly a great improvement. I am now looking forward to being able to go in and 'put it all into place' for when we can all return to and support this hub in our village. Hopefully, it won't be too long!! See you all there!

*Just a few examples of what's been happening*



*Designer lighting*



*Public bar chairs refurb*



*Main bar tables and chairs refurb*

*Wendy Ames*

## St Margaret's Church

Our church is open again!...at least part of the time.

For the last three months St Margaret's doors have been locked to everyone (though thanks to Richard and Dusty the clock has continued to tell the right time and we've kept the flag flying on the tower).

Now, from the middle of June, we are able to open the church for private prayer. We would of course like the doors to be open all day every day as they were before the lockdown, but at the moment we're required to supervise visitors and maintain strict compliance with government guidelines. So for the time being the church is open **every Wednesday morning from 10am – 12noon**. When you're in the village to go to the shop or the post office please drop in for a few minutes of quiet, perhaps to pray for those you know who have faced difficulties over the last few months, or to say thanks that we are so fortunate to live here in such a caring community.

**And we've just heard that we can hold Sunday services again**, though still with strict government guidelines. The first service will be Holy Communion on **Sunday July 12th at 11.00am** conducted by Rev Liz. We then hope to hold services every other week until the end of August. Meanwhile Rev Liz conducts a benefice service each week on YouTube. Finally, goodbye to Sally... and Frazer and Harry and Jaz...as she moves to Margaretting to begin her Curacy. Thanks Sally for all you've done for St Margaret's and the village. Our prayers and best wishes go with you.

*With the church closed and being unable to hold our Church Fete this year we are suffering a severe reduction in income. If you can help by contributing to the work of the church it would be much appreciated. The church's bank details are: Toppesfield Parochial Church Council. Sort code 20-97-40 Account no. 20880078.*

*If you pay tax and would like to Gift Aid your donation so that we can claim an extra 20% from the government, please email Brian Moody at [brian.j.moody@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.j.moody@btinternet.com) and he can send you a simple form to complete.*

Thank you

## Toppesfield Broadband is now Ultrafast!

Openreach have finished the bulk of the work to provide Toppesfield with Ultrafast Fibre Broadband giving residents access to the fastest possible Broadband service up to 1000mb/s, which is around 900 times faster than previously available!

Ultrafast Broadband packages are available from BT, Zen, Giganet, Spectrum Internet and others. A full list is available here - <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/ftp-providers>

An order needs to be placed with one of the service providers to access the new fibre service and increased speeds. This will not happen automatically.

Outstanding work to connect Dordell Court and parts of Park Lane should be complete by September.

If you would like any further information on the Openreach project, please contact Chris Neale ([c\\_neale@btinternet.com](mailto:c_neale@btinternet.com))

County Broadband are also continuing to install their own fibre network within the village.

## **Toppesfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan** **and** **Photographic Competition – Toppesfield Views**

Well despite the current difficulties we have managed to make progress on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The deadline for responses to the Housing Needs Survey was the 15th May, and we are delighted to be able to report that a total of 74 responses, (including 15 online), had been received just before the closing date, which represents a response rate of 34%. This is an astonishing return given the lock-down we are enduring and compares with a rate of c.25% for the exercise carried out in 2015. Well done to everyone who took the time and trouble to send in their questionnaires.

Laura Atkinson at the Rural Community Council of Essex is now analysing the data, (which we can re-iterate will be "anonymised" to ensure confidentiality), and she is hoping to issue us with her first draft report at the end of July.

We have also received the first draft of the Landscape Character Assessment carried out for us by Gill Wynne-Williams. This contains a wealth of information and we have returned our comments to her for incorporation in the final draft. Unfortunately the weather wasn't kind to us when photographs were taken for inclusion in the report, and consequently we are looking to replace these with better examples now the summer weather appears to be with us.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, the unique natural beauty of our area is described in the Landscape Character Assessment, which is then used to inform other planning policies. This provides a wonderful opportunity for more of us to get involved by taking photographs of your favourite landscape features that you would wish to see retained for the future enjoyment of us all. Forward them to us via email at [ToppesfieldNP@gmail.com](mailto:ToppesfieldNP@gmail.com), or via our FaceBook page, which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/tgenp>.

We have also have an Instagram page showing the views that some people have already submitted. Here is a link to explain how to create an account:

<https://help.instagram.com/155940534568753>

Once you have an account if you search for "toppesfieldviews", you should then be able to click "follow" and then be able to see the page.

We are holding a competition of the photographs submitted to date on the 'Toppesfield Views' Instagram page. You will see the shortlist of photos on pages 15-17 of this newsletter; most of these were taken during 'lockdown'. Please email [kaaren.berry@kaaren.co.uk](mailto:kaaren.berry@kaaren.co.uk) with your first, second and third choice of photograph by 12th July. The winning three photographs will then be displayed in the refurbished Green Man. You can also submit a caption for your photograph choices e.g. "What did the sheep say to the donkey?"

Since the last newsletter we have engaged with the international consultancy AECOM to start work on drawing up a Design Code to capture the essence of the built environment within the Parish. So "What are design codes?" I can hear you ask!

A Design Code, (in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan), provides detailed design guidance for an area; they prescribe design requirements (or 'rules') that any new development within the specified site or area should follow.

They can include requirements for the built form, (e.g. setting out a range of building types and how buildings should interact with the street), landscape, open space, and movement (e.g. access and ease of pedestrian movement), etc.

Design codes can provide certainty to the community as they give more confidence that any new development coming forward will reflect community wants and needs, as well as respect the existing "look and feel" of the area.

You can find more information on design codes within the [Planning Practice Guidance at gov.uk](#)

Clearly there is a lot of work to do to produce a Design Code, but we have started. As with the Landscape Character Assessment, should you have thoughts about aspects of any buildings in the Parish that you feel are noteworthy, please do send us your photographs so we can forward these to AECOM to inform their works.

Finally, we have just been advised that Coggeshall Parish Council has produced and submitted a Draft Neighbourhood Plan for their parish to Braintree District Council, along with 6 supporting documents. (Braintree District Council is responsible for all the remaining stages of "making" the Neighbourhood Plan). If you would like to see a Neighbourhood Plan in its later stages, why not visit: [www.braintree.gov.uk/CoggNP16](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/CoggNP16)

If you have any queries, thoughts or opinions, do please feel to contact us at: [ToppesfieldNP@gmail.com](mailto:ToppesfieldNP@gmail.com).

In the meantime, please continue to stay safe, and look out for neighbours who may be feeling isolated or have needs that you feel you can help with – obviously with social distancing in mind!



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# Gainsford End News

## Defibrillator and bench

Firstly, a big 'Thank you' to Roger Skedd for painting the public telephone box, which houses the new defibrillator.

Thank you also to Rodger Smith for rubbing down the bench between the telephone box and the notice board and treating it with teak oil, it looks much more inviting to use.



The defibrillators in Gainsford End and Toppesfield are both now operational. Instructions for use are shown on the next page.

## Playing field

The work on the new play equipment, incorporating a double child's swing and infant's swinging basket, has now been completed. They will be operational as soon as the current health and safety guidance around the use of playgrounds allows them to be used.

Within the next month we also hope to have purchased a new wooden bench which will be placed next to the swings.

## Help wanted.

Health & safety considerations require that the play equipment in the parish has to be checked on a regular basis and that any problems noted should be addressed. We would like to have a couple of volunteers in Gainsford End who would be willing to visually check the equipment on a weekly basis for any potential problems/defects. They would report any adverse findings back to the Parish Council. You could even incorporate the check when your dog takes you for a walk!

**And lastly**, something for the walkers in Gainsford End. We would like to publish a circular walk between Toppesfield and Gainsford End playing fields suitable for both adults and children.

Have you a particular favourite route to and from these locations. Please let me know.

Boyd Page

## **Defibrillators are now operational in the old phone boxes in Toppesfield and Gainsford End.**

If you come across someone who is unconscious, unresponsive, not breathing or not breathing normally, they're in cardiac arrest. The most important thing is to call 999 and start CPR to keep the blood flowing to the brain and around the body. After a cardiac arrest, every minute without CPR and defibrillation reduces someone's chance of survival by 10 per cent.

If you're on your own, don't interrupt the CPR to go and get a defibrillator. If it's possible, send someone else to find one. When you call 999, the operator can tell you if there's a public access defibrillator nearby.

### **To use a defibrillator, follow these simple steps:**

This is how to use them:

- Step 1: Turn the defibrillator on by pressing the green button and follow its instructions.
- Step 2: Peel off the sticky pads and attach them to the patient's skin, one on each side of the chest, as shown in the picture on the defibrillator.
- Step 3: Once the pads have been attached, stop CPR and don't touch the patient. The defibrillator will then analyse the patient's heart rhythm.
- Step 4: The defibrillator will assess whether a shock is needed and if so, it will tell you to press the shock button. An automatic defibrillator will shock the patient without prompt. Do not touch the patient while they are being shocked.
- Step 5: The defibrillator will tell you when the shock has been delivered and whether you need to continue CPR.
- Step 6: Continue with chest compressions and rescue breaths until the patient shows signs of life or the defibrillator tells you to stop so it can analyse the heartbeat again.





## TCP Update

In the words of the late Dame Vera Lynn, I am sure we are all looking forward to the day when 'we'll meet again' in the Green Man! I know that David and Paul have been putting things in place ready, so hopefully it won't be too long and we are all excited to see the new look interior.

We will, however, not be meeting our shareholders face to face this year as the TCP Annual Members meeting will be done differently this year, with a virtual meeting taking place instead of the one usually held in the Village Hall.

There are also a few changes to the Management Committee this year. My term of office has come to an end and as I am moving to Sudbury I am stepping down as Chair but will remain on the Committee until I move. Gill Page is also stepping down from the Committee at the end of her term of office and Peter Moore is resigning due to the demands on his time from his business and the success of Toppesfield Vineyard. Both Gill's and Peter's contribution to TCP has been significant and I am so grateful for everything they have done and the support they have given not only to the pub but to me as Chair. Thank you!

Regarding new members and positions, I am delighted to welcome Simon Cornwall who was recently co-opted to join the Committee and I am really grateful that Andrew Howells has offered to take over as Chair for a period of six months whilst new Committee members can be recruited and a new Chair decided on.

Being on the Committee, and in particular as Chair, has been hard work but I am proud that during all the time I have been involved the pub has always remained open and that really was the only reason I joined the Committee!

Perhaps you would like to put yourself forward as Committee member – please get in touch on email if you are interested:  
[toppesfieldcommunitypublimited@gmail.com](mailto:toppesfieldcommunitypublimited@gmail.com)

Wishing The Green Man, David, Paul, and all its customers the very best for the future.

Mary-Ann



## Midsummer means more of what you like most from the brewery.

The longest day of the year was also Father's Day and the brewery was geared up for the event; promoting a range of takeaway and gift options, including Toppesfield wine and Pumphouse beer gift packs.

It turned out to be the best week for sales since lockdown, a truly remarkable result, given all the Covid-19 restrictions in place.

Thanks to all our customers, old and new, and well done to Aaron and the team!

It was a good week all round. We enjoyed widespread social media coverage, appeared on the front page of the Halstead Gazette, and even made it into Waitrose Weekend! Articles are on the next page.

Graham has been working on a campaign to have our beers assessed and potentially marketed by national online retailers. The first of these, Best of British Beer, has responded very positively:

***'We love your story - and the beer is great.'***

But our most important customers will always be our local customers, here in the community. Do please tell us the beers you like best (and the ones you don't like so much!) by calling in at the brewery, by visiting our Facebook page or emailing: [pumphousecommunitybrewery@gmail.com](mailto:pumphousecommunitybrewery@gmail.com)

**We will ensure you get more of the beers you like most.**

With pubs due to reopen from 4 July, we'll look forward to seeing you soon for a pint of Pumphouse in the Green Man!

**Top quality takeaway Pumphouse draft beer is just £6 for four pints and only £23 for a 17 pint Demi-pin (long lasting beer in a bag-in-a-box).**

**Just arrived! An engraved Pumphouse glass tankard makes a lovely gift for £15.**

YOUR PARTNERS THROUGH IT ALL



Royal response aids rural areas

Charity funds projects set up to provide support for local communities during the lockdown, writes Lucy Allen

A community brewery and a prescription collection service are among initiatives that have been helped during the coronavirus crisis by a Royal charity. More than 120,000 have been given by The Prince's Countryside Fund to 62 community-led projects dealing with the impact of Covid-19 across the UK. One of those to benefit is the Pumphouse Community Brewery in Essex, which has used the grant to keep running while its main outlet, The Green Man pub in Toppsfield, is shut. The microbrewery helps people such as Mick Simms, who got involved after moving to the village. Having taken early retirement from Carlsberg-Tetley, he then cared for his wife before she passed away. Mick says: 'Word got around that I had worked with beer for

**SPECIAL DELIVERY** Sarah de Lucy with bags of smiles in Cornwall; grant has allowed Mick Simms to keep on working 30 years and they asked if I wanted to help, so I started going a few times a week. Before I moved here, I was having panic attacks and didn't go out much. But moving, having shares in the pub and volunteering at the brewery has been amazing. Everybody looks after everybody here. Another charity to benefit is the Niton Community Project on the Isle of Wight, which is helping to protect the most vulnerable residents on the island. It provides a helpline for shielded residents to request whatever they might need, such as prescriptions, food, repairs, gardening, dog walking and emotional support.

And in Mousehole, Cornwall, the Solomon Browne Memorial Hall charity has been delivering bags of smiles around the village, containing drawings and gifts from primary school pupils, plus books, puzzles and more, to help combat isolation. The Prince's Countryside Fund is supported by Waitrose & Partners through an annual contribution of 150,000 and a donation, recently doubled from 100,000 a year to 200,000 a year, from sales of Waitrose Duchy Organic products. Its director Claire Saunders said: 'These small rural organisations are the lifeblood of many far-flung communities. They have adapted to provide unprecedented support to rural people, quickly and efficiently, with the help of a dedicated army of local volunteers. We are so grateful to all our sponsors, who by supporting The Prince's Countryside Fund, have enabled the provision of these rural response emergency grants during this crisis.'

KIDS STUFF Partners children and grandchildren decorated the goodie bags



Afternoon tea is the odds-on favourite

When supermarket assistant Kirsty Goodale had a win on the televised virtual Grand National in April, she didn't go out and spend her prize. Instead she used the money to provide an afternoon tea for 40 elderly people. Kirsty, who works at Waitrose & Partners in Locks Heath, Hampshire, teamed up with the local branch of Age Concern, next to the store. She says: 'It seemed wrong to keep the money because it was a charity event to raise money for the NHS. We thought it would be lovely for the whole team to be involved with everyone putting something in. So the counters team created 40 afternoon teas, which we put in white paper bags that the children and grandchildren of Partners had decorated with rainbows and flowers. Inside was a scone, jam and clotted cream, plus a handmade napkin and, of course, a teabag in a wrapper. It shows what an amazing team we have, and proves that, although some of our customers can't see us, they are in our thoughts.'

Volunteers provide a friendly face at hospitals



PEOPLE SKILLS Furloughed Partners are offering their expertise in Aberdeen

A team of 13 staff furloughed from John Lewis & Partners in Aberdeen have been working at the city's Royal Infirmary and Maternity Hospital. They are helping patients navigate the hospitals and reassure family members who are not allowed to enter the building with them. Partner Alison Bandoen says: 'John Lewis sent an email asking if anyone wanted to help the security team at ARI. Most of us are already doing what we can to

help family and friends, but I wanted to do a little more to help the wider community. It's given me a new level of appreciation for what people in hospital are dealing with, as well as the work of all the staff. Patient services manager Louise Ballantyne said: 'We needed a team with good people skills because this job can be emotional. We have a group who have had excellent training, and they're coming together and can support each other.'

FEEL GOOD FRIDAY

To help you make the most of time at home, our weekly dose of digital events continues. This Friday, Partner and Scrumptious Summer editor Sikana Franco demonstrates how to make spicy vegan bean burgers with charred red onions to cook on the barbecue. See the recipe and video at waitrose.com and YouTube. And don't forget to check out this week's Feel Good Friday playlist on Spotify.



19th June - Front page of the Halstead Gazette

## **A Warm Welcome Back to Little Chestnuts Preschool**

Little Chestnuts doors closed on the 23rd March 2020 and no one really knew what was to come next, one thing was for certain, our Pre-school of 46 years was not going to be derailed by COVID-19; the hall doors may have been closed but the drive and determination by all staff kept Little Chestnuts very much alive.

Andrea continued to enhance learning through Facebook with many ideas from: helping letter formation, to painting rainbows, creating Easter bonnets, VE Day celebration packs, scavenger hunts and most recently 30 Days of Wildlife.

We were also very fortunate that Sam from Diddi Dance and Sarah from Phonics with Robot Reg, were very keen to help keep our Little Chestnuts spirits up with interactive Zoom sessions, this also enabled the children to see each other and Andrea (which may have helped keep our little ones on the good list those days!!)

Staff were able to ensure the well-being of all our families through tapestry, in which they also loved being able to see the children's hard work and Andrea made weekly check in calls.

I am pleased to announce that through the hard work and commitment from all staff, Little Chestnuts doors re-opened on the 1st June 2020, with the sounds of laughter and joy being heard from the children the moment they arrived.

This has not been an easy journey and will not be without struggle for some time yet, however we could not have got to this stage without the continued support of many people:

Our staff for all their continuous hard work and commitment.

Our parents for believing and trusting in us and who will be finding sparkles of glitter and playdough around their homes forever more!!

Our Village Hall committee who, as always, have supported us during this difficult time and ensured we had everything we needed to reopen swiftly and in a safe manner.

Ray and Anne Syder for doing an amazing job tidying and keeping on top of our allotment plot.

Finally, a massive thank you to all our Little Chestnuts, who have continued to sparkle and shine through this uncertain time, conforming to a new unknown and not being able to get an answer to why, they really are the rainbows of our future.

As we near to the end of another summer term, we hope that we will be able to get to say a fond farewell to our older Chestnuts and wish them well on their new adventures to primary school and we look forward to seeing new and old faces upon our return in September.

For now, we wish you all well and to take Care and Stay Safe.

Laura Hughes  
Little Chestnuts Committee Secretary.



## COVID 19 in Southern Tamil Nadu

As many of you know, I have been involved with Social Change and Development (SCAD) in southern Tamil Nadu, India, for many years. More recently, together with 3 friends, we have formed a Friends of SCAD group in the UK to provide information about SCAD and longer-term, to raise funds for SCAD.

COVID 19 and the Government lockdown has caused unbelievable suffering in India. Similarly to in other countries, it is the poor and vulnerable that are suffering most. You may have seen the stories about migrant workers trying to get back to their home states – sometimes walking hundreds of miles. This is because they are not eligible for assistance in their host states. As there is little or no testing being done outside hospitals, the virus is being carried far and wide, with the major cities being in crisis.

SCAD works with the poor, disabled and destitute. The charity works with over 650 villages focusing on assisting the day labourers, the people affected by leprosy, orphaned and abandoned elders, adults and families of children with disabilities, and other groups who are at the bottom of Indian society. These are people for whom the inability to work – even for a tiny amount of money – spells starvation. Despite India having a space programme, there is little(if any) provision made for the truly needy.



Since the COVID 19 pandemic started in India, SCAD has identified the most in need within the villages where they normally work. This was 1207 families, and they have been provided with gloves, masks and soap together with basic foodstuffs such as Rice, Wheat flour, Moong dal, Bengal gram, Vegetables, Turmeric powder, Chili powder and Coriander powder. The cost per person is around £25. Another 1000 people have been identified as requiring assistance on an urgent basis.

I have a recent report from SCAD on their COVID 19 work and am happy to email this to anyone who would like to see for themselves what is happening on the ground.

As Friends of SCAD, we have launched an appeal to support SCAD's COVID 19 work. So far, we have raised just under £7000. Funds are channelled through the UK Charity AidCamps International and you can donate at <https://www.aidcamps.org/scadcoronavirusappeal.aspx>. Alternatively, you can leave an envelope marked for my attention at the Community Shop. Cheques should be made out to Aidcamps International please.

I do appreciate that everyone has causes that they support, and that there are many voices calling out for help around the world. Many Toppesfield and Gainsford End residents have supported my fund raising efforts for SCAD in the past, and I hoping that some might be able to help now.

Thank you

Trisha Roberts



## **News from the Red Hot Ukes Ukulele Club - Gainsford End Chapter**

Gainsford End echoes with the sound of "ukes", drums, and singers every Thursday as we "Zoom" together to address our needs to make music in these strange times. We pick half-a-dozen songs with a theme, and sometimes even dress up accordingly! We've done "Seaside Holiday" songs, "Drinking" songs, "Moon" songs, "Protest" songs, "Cockney" songs, and our current subject is "Animal" Songs. We'll leave you to imagine our "dress code"! Whatever the subject, we have lots of FUN!

But for the dreaded virus, some of us would have been up in Huddersfield, Yorkshire for the Solstice Weekend at the "Grand Northern Ukulele Festival", an annual event attracting some 1000 ukulele players and professional players, teachers and ukulele manufacturers from all over the World. As the "live" event was cancelled, the organisers arranged an on-line programme of concerts and workshops to occupy frustrated strummers and pickers, which was great fun! However, what we missed was the noise, excitement, singing, playing, and socialising usually associated with Ukulele Festivals worldwide.

So, it got us thinking about a T&GE Ukulele Festival in the rosy future! We have the facilities to host such an event spread across the Parish. The Village Hall could put on concerts, as could the Church. The Village Pub could welcome small groups and workshops in the bars, coach-house, and gardens. The Brewery too could be involved with beer tents on both the Toppesfield and Gainsford End Recreation grounds, great locations for strum/sing-alongs! What do you think?

Again, be assured that the Ukulele community has lots of fun! The instrument has a variety of shapes and sizes but is relatively easy to play, with only four strings to deal with. The "Soprano" uke is the standard size, followed by the "Concert", then the "Tenor", and the largest is the "Baritone". In addition, there is the "Banjolele" (made famous by George Formby), strung and played like a "soprano" but sounding like a banjo. There is also a baby uke, known as a "Sopranissimo", four strings but not so easy to play. Entry level instruments sell for around £25, and you'd need a tuner for around £5.00. There are loads of on-line lessons and lots of help available if you want to get strumming! And of course, the Red Hot Ukes Ukulele Club will eventually get going again. If you fancy making music and having fun – GO UKULELE!

**Malcolm Braithwaite, Gainsford End – June 2020**

### **Kitty's Childminding Service**

Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Practitioner  
Level 3 Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools

Toppesfield Based (CO9)

7:30 am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday

Saturday craft lessons available

Contact me on:

07541636137 or [katrinaobrien89@gmail.com](mailto:katrinaobrien89@gmail.com)





## Toppesfield Parish Paths

Hi Everyone

I hope you are all still keeping well and safe. I feel a little sad writing this that we have just passed the longest day but let's not dwell on that. Since the last newsletter the footpaths have been getting very good use I think as everyone made the most of being able to be outside. It has been and still is such a joy to be outside and certainly nature has been in all its' glory with the amazing weather.

I still go for a walk most days and am keeping a log of things I see and hear. The butterflies and bees seem to have been particularly spectacular and to date I have seen orange tip, brimstone, small white, holly blue, small tortoise shell, red admiral, wall brown, speckled wood, peacock and gatekeeper butterflies and several beautiful scarlet and green cinnabar moths. The bumble bees, of which there are several sorts and other bees ,have been particularly busy and are loving the white clover in my lawn. There's not a lot of grass in my lawns. I consider them to be conservation areas!

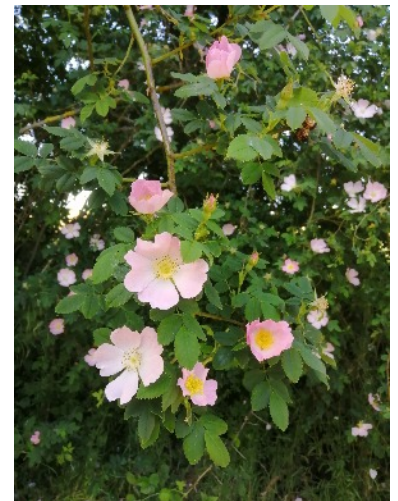
Just this week while walking on Gainsford End paths the bramble bushes in hedgerows are in full flower and absolutely heaving with butterflies and bumble bees. This bodes well for a good blackberry harvest later on also a good crop of crab apples beginning to form. On the flower front there are still different species coming on like the wonderfully fragrant meadow sweet and beautiful spires of the Rosebay willow herb. Also along the verges a rainbow of colours of the agrimony, St John's wort, scabious, hedge bedstraw, bindweed, poppies and of course the cascades of colour of the dog roses. The landscape now has to be dominated by the fields of swaying corn. Just magic.

So many people have commented on the amazing bird song and presence of birds this year. Perhaps it is because we have had time to watch and listen with out the noise of traffic and aeroplanes. When walking up from Gunces towards the village where the path has trees on either side I always hear the Chiffchaff. I think there must be a nest near there and the chiffchaff is always calling. He does sing his name. Interestingly the Chiffchaff is basically a Summer visitor, having spent the Winter around the Mediterranean or in Africa south of the Sahara and is one of the first migrants to arrive here in early Spring but with the milder winters we are having a small minority of Chiffchaffs overwintering in Britain. I am sure if you have been walking out in the village you will be aware of the buzzards calling and soaring over head, a beautiful sight.

It is great that people and their dogs are using and enjoying the paths but could I make a plea. If you have a dog please keep it under control, especially at this bird nesting time and do clear up after your dog. Sadly several people have commented to me that there is quite a lot of dog poo on the footpaths and also bags of poo just been slung in the hedge. I know this is the minority of dog owners but please clear up after your dog.

Keep safe and keep walking!

Ann Read



# WATER AS OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE AGAINST COVID-19

Now more than ever, in the face of the global coronavirus pandemic, we have seen just how vital water is for protecting life. Central to our defence against COVID-19 is the simple act of handwashing with soap and water. It must be stressed that it is essential that regular and thorough handwashing is maintained at all times, under all circumstances.

Of course the pandemic has led to an understandable shift in public behaviour, with the impact of lockdown and people spending most of their time at home, resulting in an increase to water consumption. In some areas water companies have reported an increase in water demand in the region of 20-40% more than before lockdown.

With regards to water use during the pandemic, a study found that:



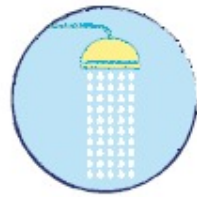
59% cleaning the house more



48% handwashing dishes in the sink more



36% using washing machine more



36% taking more showers



21% taking more baths



19% using the dishwasher more<sup>8</sup>

The research also indicates a potential positive after-effect from the outbreak with people viewing the world in a different way. Since the pandemic:



83% appreciate access to clean running water for handwashing



82% appreciate the natural world more



69% are more concerned about the environment & sustainability



76% are more aware of human impact on the environment



67% are now more willing to take action to reduce their impact on the planet<sup>8</sup>



# DANAHER ANIMAL HOME



The Danaher Animal Home, near Wethersfield is affiliated with the RSPCA but is self-funding. It costs around £600,000 a year to run the Centre. This is greatly funded by our six Charity Shops in Dunmow, Witham, Braintree, Sudbury, Haverhill and Chelmsford.

Unfortunately due to the nationwide lockdown all our shops had to close. We are unable to hold our annual Fun Day which is the biggest fund raiser of the year or to rehome any animals.

We currently have over 100 in our care. All this means we have lost a great deal of money. We have many avid supporters and cannot thank them enough for all the donations they have given. Many purchasing things from our Amazon Wish List. Making any purchases through

Amazon Smile and nominating Danaher as your charity means Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases. Which will help boost our funds enormously.



## **THE FUTURE**

We have now opened our Chelmsford and Dunmow Charity Shops. We have also started to rehome our small animals and are processing applications to rehome our dogs. We hope cats will follow shortly. We are following Government guidelines and strict protocols of the Centre.

We are not currently open to the public but interest in animals can be logged via our website [www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk](http://www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk). We hope our future is not at risk and we can continue to help animals in need.

We would like to thank all our Volunteers, Staff and Supporters again for all they do.

Little Chestnuts Pre-school brings  
*Happy's Circus*  
to Toppesfield



8th May 2021

*Designed and created by*



AVORIO ANELLO



*Early bird tickets  
available from July 2020*

*More information to  
come*