

**May / June 2023**

**Edition 193**



## USEFUL NUMBERS

Braintree District Council	01376 552525
Colchester Hospital	01206 744491
Doctors Car Service	07845 596092
Freshwell Health Centre	01371 810328
Hedingham Medical Centre:	
Castle Hedingham	01787 461465
Sible Hedingham	01787 460612
Kaaren Berry, Parish Clerk	07341264219
Little Chestnuts Preschool	079018 80914
Little Hedgehogs Toddlers	01440 785778
Pumphouse Brewery	07780 702293
Rev. Caroline Brown	01787 469161
St Margaret's School	01787 237354
The Green Man Public House	01787 237418
Toppesfield Community Shop	01787 236003
Toppesfield Village Hall Bookings	
Wendy Ames	07933743724

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## Toppesfield Parish Council

Following the recent elections the returning officer at Braintree District Council has confirmed that Alan Collard, Kitty Bourlet, Jeremey Graves, Trisha Roberts, Amanda Smith and Frances Winter have been elected. They will sign their acceptance of office at the first meeting of the new council on the 18th May 2023. This means there is currently one vacancy. If you are interested in joining the Parish Council please inform one of the councillors or the parish clerk.

Parish Clerk — Kaaren Berry

Parish Council Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of every month in the village hall. You are welcome to attend the Open Session which starts at 7.30pm.

## Toppesfield & Gainsford End Parish Newsletter

Published by Toppesfield Parish Council

Editor: [clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com)

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

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Neighbourhood and Development Plan

Twitter & Instagram— Toppesfield & Gainsford End Community

Website—<https://e-voice.org.uk/toppesfield-parish-council/>



## From the Parish Council



Welcome to the latest edition, 193, of the Parish Newsletter.

Looking back at earlier editions it is interesting to see how the style and format have evolved. When Sid Read began the Newsletter in 1982, he prepared it 4 times a year on a mechanical typewriter, using correction fluid for any typing errors, and sent off the finished copy to be printed by a Banda machine (a type of spirit duplicator). It was printed on A4 paper, was in black and white only and had no photos. In due course Sid acquired a word processor (very new-fangled then!) and over time introduced more changes, making the Newsletter more interesting and more attractive.

In 2019, the Newsletter began its 'rebooted' bi-monthly existence in A5 format and with more colour and photos. Technology has certainly transformed both the way the Newsletter is produced but also its appearance.

And although the content has changed (anyone remember when we had a WI Chapel and football club?), we still have a full Newsletter. It shows a village that is active, continually striving to remain sustainable, unlike many similarly sized villages.

So, when you read through the Newsletter, think about all the work and time put into making the likes of the shop, the village hall, the church, the allotments, the pub, the brewery, the pre-School, the cricket club and everything else. These organisations help to make Toppesfield what Essex Community Foundation has called 'an exemplar village'. It does not happen by accident but through the commitment and efforts of individuals. Let's all support these groups as they don't only help to create a stronger and more viable community. Research has shown that in a village with a shop, a pub and a primary school house prices can be up to 10% more than for similar properties in villages that have none of these; and they sell more quickly. It makes sense, for so many reasons, to support village organisations.

There are a few things to which we want to draw your attention. First, there is a First Aid Awareness session in the village hall on 20 May. It is free to attend and spaces are still available. Please contact Kaaren Berry (details opposite) if you would like to attend. On 15 July, we will again have an Amenity Vehicle in the parish to collect household waste; mark it in your diary. This was well used last time.

Finally, the new Parish Council 4-year term begins this month. The newly elected councillors are shown on the opposite page. This still leaves us one councillor short of a full complement. If anyone is interested in joining the council, please contact our Clerk, Kaaren, who will be able to tell you what is involved.

We hope you enjoy the Newsletter!

## **Parish Council Information**

A short summary of Parish Council goings-on at the March and April Meetings:

In March, a concern was brought to the attention of the parish council that cars are parking on the pavement along Stambourne Road and so making it difficult or impossible for pedestrians to use them. The problem normally arising in the evening. It was unsure whether this was a highways or district council issue. Discussions were held and it was agreed in the first instance to do a flyer drop asking people to park considerately.

In April, Residents from Gainsford End attended the meeting to express their concerns regarding the planning application as described in agenda item 23/69. The main concerns were regarding incorrect information provided, flooding issues, the property would overlook the playing field, the land is currently agricultural land and the access to the property would need significant work to allow fire engine access and it will change the view and layout of the centre of the hamlet.

A resident who would like to help plan a coronation celebration has provisionally booked the village hall for the 7th of May, a street party could be held and use the hall if the weather is wet. It was questioned as to how much funds would be available for the celebrations. It was suggested that the Parish Council have a designated Facebook page to post on rather than posts getting missed in the village page. Research has been carried out into the price of commemorative mugs for the children of the parish.

A resident reported that there had been a lot of work on the Park Lane car park, fencing off the back piece which has meant the car park is working as it should be and there are no longer abandoned vehicles in it. Also, quotes had been obtained to resurface the car park and mark out bays. It was suggested that if the back part of the car park were to be sold the monies raised should be used to resurface the front of the car park and mark the parking bays out and if it doesn't cover the cost to carry out this work then it should not be sold, and the land kept for future projects.

Councillor Richard Van Dulken provided the following report in March:

- There had been a fly tipping case along the Great Yeldham Road and as this is on private land the district council are not responsible for clearing it away. Cllr Collard will contact the landowner to make them aware of the fly tip.
- Braintree District council has agreed its budget which gives a 2.5% increase in Council Tax on their proportion. However, Braintree DC will be refunding each council tax payer £25.
- The booking system for the recycling centres will come into force on the 13 March for a trial period.
- Richard attended the gardening club at St Margarets School for a litter pick and enjoyed meeting the pupils and helpers. It was mentioned if it were possible for the school to have painted games on the playground, i.e. hopscotch. Cllr Smith will liaise with the headteacher regarding this.

## **Parish Council Information continued**

It was agreed to put a post on Facebook asking people to park responsibly in the centre of Toppesfield and especially around the Pump, and include an article in the next newsletter regarding this.

Comments have been received asking could the newsletter be emailed to residents rather than printed copies being distributed. It was agreed to survey parishioners asking for feedback on whether people would like it delivered, emailed or collected from a central point or read it on the website only. Feedback on the content will also be asked for.

March Planning application 23/00337/FUL for the demolition of a garage and erection of 1 No. 2 bedroom dwelling. Church Farm Barn Church Lane Toppesfield CO9 4DR. This application was discussed and the parish council submitted an objection response due to the issues of access, size of building, parking issues and the overdevelopment of the site.

It was agreed signs should be placed at entrances to the playing fields regarding dog fouling and dog being kept on a lead.

A RoSPA inspection of play equipment is planned for May 2023.

The proposal to sell the rear part of the car park in Park Lane was discussed and the parish council it was agreed.

The parish council agreed to purchase commemorative mugs for the children (under 16's) of the parish and to arrange a place for a community picnic. It was also agreed that there would be fancy dress competition to be held for best King and Queen for the under 5 years and 6yr – 11 years. Judging will take place at 3.30pm. Event to run from 12.30pm – 4pm.

A request had been received from Toppesfield Cricket Club to place two or three IBCs to capture rainwater from the pavilion roof. These will be housed in by black lap fencing approx. four feet high. The project will be funded by the cricket club. The request was discussed and it was agreed the Cricket Club to place the IBCs as requested.

The Local Government Boundary Commission – A consultation on division boundaries for Essex County Council has begun. There is a 10-week public consultation period inviting proposals for new council divisions and division boundaries for Essex County Council. This consultation period ends on 5 June 2023. Please see the following link for more details, Essex | LGBCE.

Planning Application 23/00502/OUT for outline planning permission for the construction of 1No. dwelling with garage/carport with permission sought for Access, Appearance, Layout & Scale with Landscaping reserved.

## Parish Council Information continued

The application was discussed in detail and taking into account the comments raised by the public attending and those comments already on the Braintree Planning Website, the parish council are not supporting the application. The response to Braintree District Council was:

The Parish Council has concerns regarding the application as follows:

- The flooding issues which already badly affect the road adjacent to location of the proposed building and the nearby properties and road.
- The proposed entrance to the site is in the middle of an 'S' bend which would create additional danger to a road which is already used by heavy lorries and on which the speed limit is 60 mph.
- The design and scale of the proposed building are out of keeping with neighbouring properties.
- There is also a degree of uncertainty about the accuracy of some of the details in the application itself.

As a result, the Parish Council does not support the application as it is presented.

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 18th May 2023 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.



  
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# CRINDERS

## SATURDAY 15TH JULY 2023



## St Margaret's Church

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of May, we will be celebrating the coronation of the King and on the 7<sup>th</sup> May there will be a service in St Margaret's to mark this event and in the village, I know there are many celebrations planned. I will be with my daughter that weekend in London and we hope to be watching live and enjoying and joining in with all the celebrations, so look out for us on the TV !.

This is a momentous occasion one that has not happened since the crowning of our late Queen, a reason for people to come together, celebrate and be filled with joy.

And in my ministry, I am preparing for the joy of the wedding season where I will be officiating at several weddings over the summer, the first one being at St Margaret's Church in June.

However, also in this season we are facing a period of change as Rev Liz Paxton retires, and we have to start to look ahead as to what and who we need in our benefice. Change can bring with it uncertainty and a sense of fear and dread, we all like to hang onto what we know and are comfortable with now.

Change can come along suddenly and when we least expect and not always for the good. By now most of you will be aware of the events of Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, for one family their life and future has changed forever, as we all set out that morning no one could have known what was about to happen. We all I am sure have read negative press about our emergency services, but on that morning, I have never witnessed so much love, care, and professionalism.

I would also like to give a heartfelt thank you to all of those who have reached out to me, to check that I am OK, it has been very comforting to know how much you care for those of us in the village.

'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, great is his faithfulness'.

We are not just here for funerals, but also for christenings and weddings. So, if you are thinking of planning either of those get in touch and we can have a chat.

And the normal pattern of services continues on Sundays with services starting at 11.00am.

In addition, the Church is open every day for private prayer. And as always if you know anyone in need of a visit, or you would like a visit yourself. Please get in touch.

[revcarolinebrown@gmail.com](mailto:revcarolinebrown@gmail.com): 01787 469161

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May - Coffee Morning and Book sale cancelled**



## St Margaret's Church

### Church services for May and June

All services at 11.00am

May 14th Holy Communion

May 21st Morning prayer

May 28th Holy Communion for Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

June 4th Morning prayer

June 11th Holy Communion

June 18th Morning prayer

June 25th Holy Communion

**The Next Village Markets will be held at  
Toppesfield Village Hall on:**

**Saturday 3rd June 10.30am—12.30pm**

**Saturday 1st July 10.30 am—12.30pm**

**Saturday 5th August 10.30am— 12.30pm**

Please pop along to see what is on offer from fresh meat, jams, pastries, and cakes to handmade crafts, cards, jewellery and more.

Or pop in for a tasty bacon roll and a cuppa with friends.



## Toppesfield Village Hall

As we come to the end of the current Village Hall Committee's year in office, I will outline achievements over the past few months. Needless to say Covid has had quite an impact on Village life. Hall bookings dropped, apart from the PreSchool who regularly hire the hall daily. Several activity classes never resumed for various reasons but hopefully in time this will change and normality will be back. We held a Jubilee lunch, which was well attended, some Warm Hub coffee mornings where refreshments were available, completely free of charge, which for some reason were not so popular. The markets are held on the first Saturday in the month and continue to be well attended. Children's parties are held but to a lesser extent as today's children have other venues they wish to go to!

A table tennis club was set up briefly but failed to attract much interest, but the equipment is available if required to start again. However the Bowls Club is still going well on a Tuesday night at 6.30 till 8.30, and has ten regular members. During summer months, weather permitting, Pétanque takes over from Bowls in the field near the pavilion.

Most Villagers know our hall is available for hire and is fully equipped with everything provided, including heating, lighting and even fans for when the weather is too hot, instant hot water etc. So please if you have an occasion to celebrate, consider using this facility which is on your doorstep. The current committee have done an excellent job of keeping the Hall in good order and are always open to suggestions for improvement, so why not have your say or come and have a look with a view to hiring. We look forward to life after Covid.

Jean Bagnall on behalf of the Village Hall Committee.



***Spaces still available.***

*The parish council are hosting a First Aid Awareness session on the 20th May at Toppesfield Village Hall.*

*The session will run from 10am - 12pm where an overview of basic first aid will be given, along with defibrillator and resuscitation guidance.*

*If you would like to attend please can you contact the parish clerk on [clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com) or by calling 07341264219*





# Toppesfield's

# Coronation

# Picnic

Despite the dire weather forecast, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May turned out to be one of those quintessential late spring days. It was not too hot; certainly not too cold. The breeze was gentle and the sun shone on everyone who joined the Toppesfield Coronation Picnic.

Nearly 100 people took the chance on the weather and gathered in the school playing field and they were well rewarded for their faith in the weather.

Food was eaten and drink consumed

The judges chose the winners of the Kings and Queens Fancy Dress Competition and prizes were awarded.

More food was eaten and more drink consumed.

Everyone relaxed and soaked in the bucolic atmosphere: but then the games commenced.

Egg and spoon and three-legged races – what could be more gentle and innocent for such an afternoon? What could better portray the gentleness and easy-going nature of the English?

Well that was what I imagined, until the adults charged their spoons with eggs or strapped their legs together to create 3-legged aggressors.

To say this was competitive does no justice whatsoever to what happened. Wives against husbands; neighbours against neighbours; best friends against best friends. I suddenly realised why the English haven't lost many conflicts in their history. I also realised why in future I will be crossing the road when I see Amanda or Victoria coming towards me.



*Amanda's pre-race war dance*



*Just don't get in their way*



*Is that a thumb on the egg, Ali??*



*Kings & Queens on parade*





## News from the Footpaths

Hi Everyone

I hope you are all well and I expect a lot of you are having your covid booster jab.

I always think Spring has to be the best time of the year with everything breaking out and growing after the Winter. To me the most important thing is the lengthening day light hours when we can get on the garden but have to say we cannot take too many chances with the garden as there are still some sneaky frosts to catch us out.



The hedgerows are bursting with life , colour and song , wonderful! I have noticed this year that the dandelions seem to be particularly colourful. The bees do love them and they are a very rich source of nectar and pollen. I have to say I cannot resist blowing the seed heads to tell the time!

Cowslips or Peggles as they are often known, do make a wonderful splash of colour along the verges and their perfume is wonderful, again a great favourite of the bumble bees.



I had reported the finger post at footpath 23 which is half way between Ollivers Drive and the road junction had fallen over. This was supposed to be replaced during the Winter but unfortunately the highway team responsible for doing this was also responsible for gritting and salting the roads and our finger post did not get replaced. Unfortunately, now it will not be replaced until next Winter. The other thing I had reported was that so many of our waymarker posts have been knocked, or fallen over or have disappeared altogether. Rather better news on this front. If I provide a list and location of the absent and damaged waymarker hopefully a volunteer group called FOFW , who look after The Fritch Way, will come and replace them. Watch this space!

Sadly I have to note that when I am out walking I see so many dog poo bags flung into the hedges and verges. Dog walkers, please do not do this. There are several dog poo bins around the village so please use them.

Take care and keep enjoying our beautiful parish.

Ann Read



# **PUMPHOUSE**

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## **BREWERY**

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## **Busy brewing beer for everyone**

It's been a busy Springtime at the Brewery, with sales to pubs & clubs and some very successful markets adding up to nearly £3000 in just one week at Easter. That's our best ever.

At the time of writing, the day before the Coronation, we are hoping for two more busy Bank Holiday weekends in May.

Aaron produced two large brews of our special Coronation Ale, (that's about 1200 pints), but it hasn't been enough to satisfy demand.

Pubs and private customers alike are asking for more, so there will be another batch of draught Coronation Ale ready week ending 12 May - and bottle conditioned a couple of weeks later.

Poplar Nurseries Food Hall have asked us to produce a special 'own label' bottled beer for launch in the Autumn. We're working with them and we'll keep you updated.

The East Anglian Community Pubs Forum (a group of 24 pubs) has requested that we supply draught real ales for their next event - at the Lamarsh Lion and the King's Head, Pebmarsh, and to join in a charity walk between the two.

We also held our 8th Annual Members' Meeting in the Village Hall.

As we said at the meeting, we're always looking for new pub customers to add to the 15 we supply. So do let us know if there's a pub you think should be serving a Pumphouse pint.

We would love to hear from anyone interested in joining us as a volunteer. Above all, please keep drinking and enjoying our traditional real ales!

We still have a few individually numbered 330ml bottles of our Limited Edition Coronation Imperial Milk Stout. You can reserve yours by calling Paul on 07968 728281, Tina on 07801 271883, Richard on 07786 861009 or emailing: [pumphousecommunitybrewery@gmail.com](mailto:pumphousecommunitybrewery@gmail.com) All Pumphouse bottles are available direct from the Brewery on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 to 4.

**We brew the beer for the Pub of the Year**

## St. Margaret's C of E Primary School



At the end of last term, it was lovely to conclude with our Easter Service in the Church. Our thanks to Rev Caroline for supporting us with this service.

As we move into the Summer Term, we are excited about our upcoming learning. We are looking forward to our topics of 'Where is home?', 'What is so important about water?' and '¿Qué hizo que los mayas fueran increíbles?' across our three classes.

We have also started this term with a new trim trail installed on the field which we are enjoying putting through its paces.



As a school, we have also raised money for a range of charities including Children in Need, NSPCC and Comic Relief.

Finally, we have been working hard to increase the wider opportunities available for our children. Blossom Class had the opportunity to perform alongside other primary schools and a live band in the Braintree Sing Concert and we have increased our club offer to 21 clubs per week. We have also had 16 children start piano lessons in school this term and are very excited to see their progress.

As always, don't forget to follow us on social media and keep an eye on the website for updates!

Website: [st-margaretscofe.essex.sch.uk](http://st-margaretscofe.essex.sch.uk)

Facebook: [St. Margaret's CofE Primary School, Toppesfield](#)

Twitter: @StMargaretsTopp

Instagram: stmargaretstopp



# **Toppesfield and Gainsford End Show 2023**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Toppesfield Village hall at 2.00pm**

Yes it is that time again. Last year the show was particularly special having missed two years because of covid. It was partly overshadowed by the death of our Queen but we dedicated the show to her memory and had a wonderful day.

Thankfully we are on track for another great show this year. It was so encouraging for me to have some new helpers join in last year with fresh eyes and new ideas.

**So this year: -**

Many things will be the same. We will have a raffle, cream tea refreshments and some outside stalls as well as the competitive classes.

**What is new?**

The schedule has been changed a little and I hope for the children's classes having all the classes in the same age group grouped together will make it easier to sort out.

**A new class for the children** up to 16years of age is **The Tallest Sunflower**. You will have to provide a photograph of your sunflower showing height measurement. **So get your sunflower planted as soon as possible.**

**A new cookery class** is a Couple's baking competition. No disputes please!

**Photography classes :-**

Toppesfield

Memories of a Coronation.

Magical nature.

I hope these subjects will give you plenty of scope to explore your photographic ideas.

**So get sowing, sewing and snapping.**

As always new volunteers to help out will be much appreciated.

So put the date in your diary and contact me if would like to be involved in any way.

**I look forward to hear from you!!!!**

Ann Read

m: 07981 422665 email: skomerann@tiscali.co.uk





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# Social Cricketers Wanted

**ALL ABILITIES WELCOME | 18+**

Whether you're a seasoned pro, just want a game or 2 a season or just take part for the drinks afterwards, we need you!



**COME ALONG TO PRACTICE NETS ON THURSDAYS FROM 6PM  
(STARTS END OF APRIL | PLAYING FIELD, CHURCH LANE, TOPPESFIELD)**

**OR CALL OR MESSAGE DAVE ON 07970 771 190**

# TOPPESFIELD ALLOTMENTS with NASLAG

We lost him but he could not stay away!!

Mick Frances as returned to the fold with a smaller plot that he intends to grow on with raised beds in the no dig fashion. Welcome home Mick, we missed your groaning for a few weeks! We are all looking forward to seeing his new pet YETI in action.

The site is looking spick and span, the grass is cut, the gazebo is up and we are ready for the summer season. The fruit trees are in full blossom.



The Easter Raffle was a great success raising fund of £168 Pounds for the pot. The draw was on Easter Sunday, Linda Pritchard does a fantastic Job of organizing this event, as well as the Quirky Community Herb Garden.

## Tommo's Tips

### May Overview

The comfrey on the site is now in full bloom this is a very beneficial plant for the pollinators and the leaves steeped in Rainwater makes the finest fertiliser.

May is always looked forward to as the first month of summer but it marks the end of the spring. It is a month when we can get caught out by mini droughts and heat waves. The biggest threat is to any young plants that have that have recently been transplanted into the open ground and freshly emerging seedlings. Be sure to keep all of them well watered and if the young transplants look as if they are flagging give them some shade protection from the heat of the sun or drying winds. On the other hand May can be a complete disaster month bringing frosts, cold winds with heavy rain or hail, so be prepared to take steps to protect plants if it is necessary.

### Harvest

Sprouting broccoli, cabbage, spinach, rhubarb, spring onions, early sown lettuce, beet-root, radish and peas. Cut asparagus regularly to maintain the supply. Start to remove the side shoots on tomatoes.

Use up all of the last winter leeks. Clear away any old or finished crops and dig over the soil and prepare the site ready for the next crop.

### Sowing and planting

Plant in pots or trays under glass, Dwarf and climbing French beans, runner beans, sweet corn, outdoor cucumbers, courgettes ,pumpkins, squashes, outdoor cucumbers – all which can be planted out next month.

Savoy cabbage, winter cabbage, endive, kale and sprouting broccoli can all be sown in the open ground now, ready to be planted out next month.

Continue making direct successional sowings in the soil of lettuce, radish, spinach, turnips (switch to kohlrabi when the weather becomes hot) beetroot for summer use and also maincrop beetroot to put into store at the end of the summer. While the leeks, Brussels sprouts and French beans sown last month under glass, can now be planted out. Plant out Chard. Constitution Hill Nurseries is a fabulous place with reasonable prices for many Veg plants.

This is also your last opportunity to sow peas and parsnips this year!

### General

Thin out whilst still very small, the seedlings of beetroot, carrots, lettuce, onions, parsnips, turnips and always water along the row to settle the disturbed seedlings back in, once the job is completed.

Put up poles for runner and climbing French beans. Support peas and broad beans before they become too tall. Start to earth up potatoes especially if a frost is forecast.

Marigolds, Poached Egg Plants and Naturisms are a good companion crop for many veg plants being sacrificial for many bugs, and also attract the bees which pollinate our crops. Keep hoeing between crops to control weeds and also create a “dust mulch” to conserve precious soil moisture. Try to water in the cool of the evening if possible using a watering can to direct the water around the root area of the crops.

If you can get it, put some straw underneath the developing strawberry fruits to keep them off the soil and try to avoid watering overhead to reduce any problems with mildew.

### Pest and diseases

Look out for blackfly on broad beans, greenfly on peas, lettuce, cabbage root fly, carrot fly, thrip damage on brassicas especially when the plants are small. Spray the affected plants with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants. Our plot will inevitably generate green waste, from weeds to old crops and spent compost, but please do not be tempted to dispose of it at your local tip or on the bonfire. This “waste” is actually a tremendous resource, as a large percentage of it can be recycled into compost that will enhance the fertility of your allotment garden. Your “black gold” will:

- Improve soil texture

- Improve aeration of the soil

- Increase water-holding capacity of the soil

- Improve soil fertility

- Feed micro-organisms that keep soil healthy

- Reduce landfill pressure

- Save you money



## How to Compost using the "Cool" Method

Compost production works best when there are a couple of heaps on the go at the same time; one that you are adding to and another that you have filled and left to decompose; a process that can take up to a year. The containers could be wooden bins (with a cover) or plastic composters, whatever suits your space. The volume of your container should ideally be 1 cubic metre, any less will still work but may take longer. If there is a vermin problem on the site it is wise to put metal mesh at the bottom of the heap, over the bare earth.

To create good compost, you should mix carbon-based waste (browns) half and half by volume with the nitrogen-based plant (greens) remains. The green material provides nutrients and moisture whilst the browns decompose more slowly and provide the energy source for the microbes that carry out the composting process. The brown material also absorbs excess moisture and facilitates air-flow within the heap.

Browns (carbon) dead leaves, old straw/hay, dry plant stems, sawdust in small amounts, shredded paper in moderation, wood ash, torn cardboard - small pieces.

Greens (nitrogen) grass in moderation, fruit and vegetables (raw), tea leaves and coffee grounds, pea and bean-tops, manure, bedding plants, urine - male only, young weeds, flowers, comfrey / nettles.

Cut or bruised comfrey leaves layered through your heap will encourage bacterial activity and speed up decomposition. Wood material should be chopped up or crushed, shredding will speed up the process but is not necessary. Turning the heap now and again or mixing with a fork or compost aerator will introduce oxygen and help the materials to break down. There is a slight risk of inhaling harmful spores whilst aerating so make sure the heap is damp and if you have health problems wear a mask. You may need to water in dry spells. Most plot holders follow this cool composting regime; hot composting takes much less time to produce compost but is more labour intensive.

Not to be included cooked food or bread, meat or fish, coal and coke ash, cat litter or dog faeces, glossy magazines, plastics, metal and glass.

More details of a low effort hot compost technique suitable for an allotment and information on other forms of composting can be found at:

[www.carryoncomposting.com](http://www.carryoncomposting.com)

## What to do with weeds

All weed tops apart from bindweed, ground elder or those with seeds can be added to the compost heap; send those to your council green waste service. Some councils will offer a green waste collection service to allotment sites. Other roots can be rotted down in a bucket of water for a few weeks and then added to the heap. The liquid can be diluted and used as a plant feed. Roots can also be crushed and then baked in the sun on a metal sheet or inside a black bag to desiccate.

## What to do with diseased material

Plant materials infected with club root or (onion white rot etc) should be disposed of offsite or put on the burning heap, temperatures at the council green waste facilities will get high enough to kill these pathogens, your cool compost heap will not. Powdery mildew and rust are less persistent and if the disease has been caught early, material could be added to the heap, otherwise dispose at Braintree District Council facilities. Fruit suffering from brown rot can be buried at least 30cm deep, burn or dispose of infected wood.

Can I as a resident of Toppesfield take materials to the plot to compost?

The answer is yes! the allotment compostable heap is at the side of the woods. Please place only soft green waste on the site and vegetable trimmings, not hedge trimmings, these can be disposed of in the green bins. Check the allotment site rules to see if it is permitted to bring green garden waste or vegetable and fruit peelings from your kitchen to site. Call me on 07824 665 915 if you are not sure, leave a message if I am unavailable and I will call back.

## Leaf mould

Store collected leaves in wire containers or sealed black plastic bags, add some grass clippings or coffee grounds for nitrogen and ensure they remain damp. Ideally, they should be collected with a mower on a high cut to shred them. Store the leaves for at least twelve months to allow them to break down sufficiently. The main benefits of leaf mould are that it contains twice as many minerals as manure and retains 3 - 5 times its weight in water, making it an excellent choice for improving your soil structure. Leaf mould makes an excellent mulch and is a key ingredient when making homemade potting and seed composts.

## What to do with your compost

Well - rotted compost can be dug into your plot at any time (depending on soil type) other than summer - down the nutrients to be washed out by winter rains.

If you follow a no-dig regime compost can be used a mulch in late winter or early spring, this will help to conserve soil moisture and inhibit weed growth. The compost can also be used as an ingredient in homemade seed and potting compost.

Compost Awareness Week aims to raise the awareness of the public regarding the benefits of using compost to improve or maintain high quality soil, to grow healthy plants, reduce the use of fertilizer and pesticides, improve water quality and protect the environment. It is held each year at the beginning of May.

A 2014 Report from Dr Jill Edmondson at Sheffield University found that 95% of plot holders in their study composted their allotment waste, recycling nutrients and carbon back to their soil effectively. As a result of this practice the survey found that the allotment soil was significantly healthier than surrounding arable fields. Allotment soil had 32% more organic carbon, 36% higher carbon to nitrogen ratios, 25% higher nitrogen, and was significantly less compacted.

So, plot holders - keep composting!

Have a Good Summer  
Paul Thompson Chair



# ART CLASSES WITH A TWIST!



Would you benefit from sometime to relax and enjoy?

Would you like to learn, or improve your drawing, painting, creative skills?

Would you like to learn in an environment where you feel welcomed and encouraged, even if you don't feel confident about your abilities?

If the answer to any of the above is 'Yes', then please read on:

**Everyone** has the ability to create, but it is taking those first few steps that can often be the most difficult.

I can improve your confidence.

**Creativity** is not about sitting down to produce a masterpiece (that comes later!), but it is the willingness to delve into your soul, think a little differently, and open your mind to new opportunities and interesting ideas.

We are all different, everyone will approach my class with different objectives and skill sets, but it is you, and your individual uniqueness that will help you forge your own pathway. Who knows what talents you may discover on your journey?

## **About me:**

I'm professionally trained in both 'Art and Design' and 'Interior Design' and have worked alongside Adults and Children helping their creativity for over 25 years.

I've worked as an 'Artist in Residence' in Primary Schools, and set up and coordinated Brentwood Council's very first 'Art Trail'.

My work has been exhibited in Galleries, Theatres, Shopping Centres, and Churches (to name a few), and I've had work featured in national and local publications—but, I'm still learning too!

If you're ready to find out just how creative you could be or if you just wanted to develop your existing skills with like minded people, then please contact Debbie on: 07944 036784

Prices: 1 Hour session £7

2 Hour session £12

All materials will be provided and are included in the price.

**'Art' is an expression of human creative skills and imagination.**

Henri Matisse: **"Creativity takes Courage"**

Stella Adler: **"Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one"**

## **An update from SWAP and WASC May 2023**

Following SWAP taking its own water samples from near the base boundary to test for contamination (in one water sample tested by SWAP, the levels of toxic forever chemicals were found to be an extraordinary 454 ng/l (nano grams per litre) WASC engaged a geo-environmental consultant to examine all the evidence available in a desktop survey to establish an expert opinion on the possible contamination on Wethersfield Airbase.

This report, more than 50 pages long and written by one of the most highly regarded authorities on contaminated land, is frightening. In summary, the report recommends that no one should go onto the base before a full survey is completed and mitigating actions taken. Please contact me if you would like a full copy of the report.

Meanwhile, as the last Newsletter went to press, the Home Office admitted that there was indeed a plan to house people awaiting the processing and outcome of their Asylum claims on the base. There had been no consultation with Braintree District Council (the local planning authority), with Essex County Council, with Parish Councils or with any local residents. Preparations for this accommodation had been underway since before the announcement, and as events were moving more quickly than a Parish Council can react, The Fields Association took up the fight.

Two public meetings were held, letters written and telephone calls made. Social media channels were very busy and some 20 media outlets featured the story.

The latest situation as I write is that Braintree District Council (BDC) were last week at the High Court to hear the results of its application for an injunction to stop the Home Office plans. They were not successful but the judge gave leave to appeal. It is currently not known if BDC will appeal. The other pertinent fact is that Clause 101 of the Levelling up Bill may become law, so that this will all become academic. Under Clause 101, the Government will not have to consult or apply for planning permission for any development on Crown land.

A member of The Fields Association has instructed his legal team to proceed with different legal actions against the Home Office and this may also have also been decided by the time you read this.

Any form of major development on the Airbase will be unsuitable for many reasons but of course, the question is then what can be done with this very large site. The villages of Wethersfield and Finchingfield (in which parishes most of the airbase lies) are going to develop a joint Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Part of the airbase falls within Toppesfield parish, but it was decided to continue with the already-in-progress NP rather than join with the other villages.

WASC is developing a list of possible uses for the land, and this will help inform the Joint NP.

The latest information regarding Wethersfield Airbase can be found on the SWAP Facebook page and also on the BDC planning portal.



## BAR OPENING HOURS

Monday - Closed  
Tuesday - Thursday 3 - Close  
Friday - Sunday 12 - Close

## KITCHEN OPENING HOURS

Wednesday & Thursday 5-8  
Friday & Saturday 12-9  
Sunday 12-4

## Weekly specials

Sunday Roast featuring sirloin of beef and large selection of fresh vegetables

## What's On

Fun Quiz - Last Sunday of the Month from 6pm  
Proceeds to Air Ambulance

Open Mic - First Sunday of every month from 5pm  
All welcome

For take away and table bookings please call 01787 237418



# TOPPESFIELD



## Community Shop



*Support your community  
to enable them to support you!*

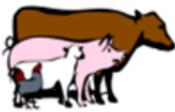
**We stock a wide range of  
frozen and convenience foods  
as well as many household products  
alongside our fresh and 'to order' services  
all at very competitive prices**



**Weekly orders**

Bacon  
Ham  
Sausages  
Chicken  
Lamb  
Beef

**PRIORS HALL FARM**



Fresh Quality Meat

*Prices dependent on cut and weight*

**Fine wines**



**TOPPESFIELD**  
Vineyard

**OZES**  
cdp

also available in  
our freezer cabinet

Specialty  
CAKES  
PIES  
PASTRIES

### **Magazines & Newspapers**

Do you have a favourite periodical? Albeit Daily, Fortnightly, Monthly, we can order it for you.

### ***Eat In or Takeaway***

***Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate, Cold Drinks, Ice Cream  
Soup, Rolls***

### **OPENING TIMES**

Mondays	.....	8.30am - 4.00pm
Tuesdays	.....	8.30am - 4.00pm
Wednesdays	.....	8.30am - 4.00pm
Thursdays	.....	8.30am - 4.00pm
Fridays	.....	8.30am - 4.00pm
Saturdays	.....	10.00am - 12.30pm

**POST  
OFFICE**

**OPEN**  
Wednesdays  
10.00am - 1.00pm



# Danaher Animal Home

Glorious George is searching for a new owner who will not only give him all the love he deserves, but an understanding owner who can guide him through some life experiences.

George came into our care a very nervous and shutdown boy, but he has turned such a corner with the staff and has grown in confidence massively. It was apparent when George came in he was under socialised which meant he lacked confidence around people and dogs, but now George can make human friends and he even has some doggy pals! We are so proud of how far he has come and the staff cannot wait to find him a new home where he can continue learning and gaining some life experiences.

We are looking for breed specific experience to ensure you know what you are getting with George and that he will be in the right hands, it's really crucial that cane corsos are socialised, so we are hoping he finds a new owner who is passionate about helping him develop and learn, and continue the training we have begun.

George is a sensitive boy but full of character, he has the looks and charm and we all love him dearly! There is never a dull moment with George, especially when he decides to flop on the floor and demand belly rubs! In the right home we know he will thrive and be a dream companions for someone.

George did come from a home, so we expect the normal everyday environment to be familiar to him, he has been with us for some time now so the transition from kennels back to a home might mean he needs time to adjust back into a house.

If you are able to offer George his forever home, please fill out an application form online at [www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk](http://www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk)





# Danaher Animal Home

Please say hello to our beautiful old girl Pickle, she is looking for calm retirement home when she can relax, take it easy and know that she is loved and safe. Pickle has arrived at Danaher since her previous owners moved home but was unable to take her with them.

Being blind and possibly completely deaf Pickle is needing a family who will provide her with the calm environment that will allow her to feel safe and secure, she can sometimes be panicked by your presence so she needs to learn the signs of you being there and be given time to come forward to say hello in her own time so she never has to feel panicked again.

Although Pickle is currently a little fazed by other guinea pigs, we feel she will benefit massively if she was given the chance to get to know one while still having her own space, she would like a piggy neighbour although there is a real chance she may never feel comfortable enough to actually move in with that neighbour. Pickle is an un-neutered sow so any prospective cage mate would either need to be another sow or a castrated boar.

If you have the 5 star retirement home that could see Pickle well in her twilight years please submit an interest form for her on our website at [www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk](http://www.danaheranimalhome.org.uk)





LITTLE CHESTNUTS PRE-SCHOOL



TOPPESFIELD

**SPACES  
AVAILABLE**

**WEEKDAYS**

**8.30AM - 3PM**

**CALL 07901 880 914  
TO BOOK A VISIT**