

Clipston Courier

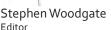
Your Village Newsletter

March 2021

Welcome!

Welcome to this, the 25th edition of the Courier! A special thanks to all of the production team and to all who have contributed over the last six years to make this a very special publication for all Clipston residents. To say that the last 12 months have presented us with unprecedented challenges is an understatement. To reflect on this, there are some stories and anecdotes from the last 12 months describing how people coped. Nonetheless, Spring brings a feeling of optimism which I hope you will all be starting to feel now the days are getting longer and the weather somewhat warmer. Stay safe and well and enjoy the read!







Jim Mcinulty

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What Have I Learned about Myself During Lockdown.

A collection of thoughts from the village by Natasha Wilkinson

Lockdown has made me realise how lucky we are to live in a beautiful safe village surrounded by lovely countryside walks and views – I have learnt to appreciate the simpler things in life like meeting up with family and friends and to be so thankful that we have all stayed safe and well during the pandemic, when so many other families have suffered such huge losses of loved ones.

Lockdown has taught me the importance of resilience, kindness and gratitude. Clipston, has shown an amazing community spirit which has allowed us to navigate this time together. I learnt that I value and am so grateful to be in such an extraordinary place, surrounded by extraordinary, kind and thoughtful people.

What I have learned is the importance of contact with other people. Eye contact and a smile exchange with strangers, a random chat with someone in the park.

I look around the supermarket at the stress and worry in people's eyes and blanketed mouths. I have learned the importance of the small things in nature, the waste in buying unnecessary things. I'm learning that even though most people's hope is running on empty at the moment and our world feels like a scorched barren wasteland, in time, we will flourish again. I've learnt it's important to stay hopeful. Continued on page 8



The editors would like to make it clear that the views expressed in any article contained in these pages do not necessarily represent their own views or those of any advertisers.

All Saints Church

Dear Friends,

So here we are, yes, still in the grip of the pandemic but experiencing all the wonderful effects of spring! The days are getting longer, gardens are coming back to life, the fields are full of lambs, and weather is warmer! How blessed we are to live here.

There is, too, widespread expectation that the continuing distribution of the vaccine will gradually allow us a little more freedom, and that is something to look forward to. Nevertheless, there is no escaping the fact that things remain hugely difficult for many. For some, loss and heartache is painfully acute, with moments of joy overwhelmed by yet another wave of grief. In Holy Week that grief finds its echo on Good Friday, and Christ's death on the cross. Just a few days later, though, we come to Easter Day, with its promise of new life and hope. Together, they remind us that the journey through grief is not an easy one - but it is a journey with a joyful end: a new way of living, and the knowledge that death is not the end, but a new beginning.

Something of this is reflected in crops and garden plants breaking through the dark soil, where they have rested unseen and seemingly lifeless over the winter months – now, though, we can rejoice and give thanks for the life springing forth around us. You never know, we might be back in All Saints' for Easter on 4th April – I hope so - but if not, join us on Zoom, so we can celebrate the gift of new life together. With my love and prayers,



Friendship Club

Hello to everyone in the Friendship Club. As you will have read in the last edition the village hall remains closed. We will be in touch with all of you as soon as things change. In the meantime, take good care and we will meet again soon.

Jill (525 746)

Spire Trouble

You will recall the problem we had with a buddleia shrub growing out of the Church spire the year before last.

We eventually had to employ steeplejacks to put up ladders and then abseil from the spire to remove the growth. Jim Tyson took some great pictures of the work being done and we were very pleased to have got rid of what would have eventually caused



a great deal of damage to the stonework. Whilst they were on the spire, the steeplejacks carried out a full survey of the tower and spire including many photographs and unfortunately the survey showed that there is a lot of work needed to make the spire safe and sound once more.

The major issue is with the metal weather vane at the very top. It has been there since the mid 1800s and is now in a precarious condition. The stonework around its base is missing or loose and the whole thing needs to be removed and replaced. The cost of the original steeplejacks work was covered by the Parochial Church Council and that was a significant part of the church resources. The estimate of the cost of undertaking the work now required on the spire is in the region of £50,000. Clearly this is beyond our resources as the only income we have is from donations and our weekly attendance when we are able to open the church is around 18 people. We will need to raise the sum through grants and this is likely to be time consuming. The cost is so high because the work will require scaffolding and the spire is over 100 feet tall.

The costs of maintaining a large grade 1 listed building dating from the 13th century are massive as you may imagine. We are always having to balance spending to ensure that money is spent in the most effective way. Julie Connell, our treasurer does a magnificent job in balancing the books but in this particular case we can't see a way forward in the near future. Unless that is, someone is able to help us out with a substantial donation or suggestion as to how we may get this vital work done.

It would be a shame to restrict access to the churchyard to avoid danger from the weather vane falling.

If you have any thoughts as to how we might proceed, please contact me on **525120**, **Steve Carpenter**, **Churchwarden**, All Saints Church.

Steve Carpenter

Heather Weston

Heather was first of all our friend, through a shared love for flowers, and it's impossible to say how much we shall all miss her.

When our Flower Club was formed after the successful Church flower festival in 2000, Heather became one of our founder members.

From the very early days she became a committee member, taking on, over the years, the posts of treasurer and secretary. She then became Chairman, serving in that roll for several years. She was a lynchpin of our club, taking on many tasks which 'just needed doing'. It's difficult to explain how much she actually did to make our club successful. Her skills with flowers, which she honed over the years came from her innate ability, talent and practice. She created some spectacular but unfussy arrangements for all the festivals and events we staged over the years. She wasn't fond of 'overstuffed' displays.



We have some wonderful memories of good times shared with Heather and these memories will be shared between us when we can begin to meet again as a club. Heather, as many of you know, was a skilled and knowledgeable gardener. Her garden, stocked with numerous 'useful' plants, was a source of most of the material she used in her floral arrangements. Indeed, she would do almost anything not to buy flowers commercially, preferring to use her own grown foliage and flowers. We often had pots of her rooted cuttings on the sales table which were generously donated and sold for our funds. Lots of those cuttings are now mature plants growing in our gardens and will be a constant reminder of our dear friend, Heather.

I love this poem and it made me think of Heather.

She has a touch with flowers; a way To make the severed blossoms whole. And plan them so that we may Observe a field within the bowl.

Removes some, moves some to the edge. Adds foliage - so that we see Confettied summer in the hedge Or burst of bluebells by a tree.

Grants country thoughts a longer lease And with deft hands creates at will A meadow on her mantle piece, A wild wood on her windowsill.

by Margaret Calloway.

Linda Warren on behalf of Clipston Flower Club.

Royal British Legion

After our stint in the rain in November we collected £429 on the village green and with additional pub collections and donations a

total of £1130 was sent off from the Clipston and District branch – a very creditable amount in the circumstances, with people being very generous – thank you. The County total was £177K with

£13M being raised nationally so far. If you would like to become involved with your local branch, please get in touch.

Rose Anderson

Clipston Parish Council

It's election time at Clipston Parish Council.

Expressions of interest are welcomed from anyone who is over 18 years old. As a councillor representing your community you will help keep it a great place to live and work. You will be supported in your role and will be part of doing something positive for the community. If you are



interested in joining the Parish Council, please contact the Council Clerk Felicity Ryan for more information at clerk@clipstonparishcouncil.org or 07759 076161.

Elections will be held on 6th May 2021 with applications submitted by 8th April 2021. The Parish Council currently meets in the evening on the first Wednesday of the month. If you care about your community and would like to help make a real difference then why not?

Become a Parish Councillor!

P.S. We are seriously not like Handforth Parish Council

Spring is here!

LEGION

As some of you may have spotted there are sheep and young lambs out and about in many of the fields, including those with footpaths. So, please can you keep all dogs on a lead when on the footpaths even if you can't see the sheep (they like hiding round corners).



Friends of Haddon Fields

Haddon Fields has welcomed many visitors-human and caninethese last few months and it has been a very welcome outlet for many during these lockdown months. Lots of wildlife activity has been observed including, Egret, Freshwater oyster shells (presumably originally in the stream until fished out by the Egrets), Kingfisher, Buzzard, Fieldfares, and Red Kite.



The fact that much of Haddon Fields is designated as a flood plain has been illustrated on several occasions this winter, most notably just before Christmas (See page 14). Since then the grassland has been mainly waterlogged or indeed temporary ponds have formed. These features are part of the



beauty of Haddon Fields by highlighting the different seasons. Many people have asked me about the sheep -which will be back by early April. Please note that when the sheep return, they will have very young lambs with them so please be extra vigilant with your dogs. One of the main questions I receive about Haddon Fields is; Can we have Haddon Fields just for ourselves and our dogs (with no sheep)?

Well the short answer is No! Sheep are essential to the maintenance of an ancient pasture ecosystem. As Andy Blake mentions (page 7), if sheep did not graze grassland, the habitat would quickly degrade, leading to a concomitant loss of biodiversity. So, I hope that you can enjoy Haddon Fields this spring and summer, together with the grazing sheep!

Finally, on a positive note, I am pleased to say that there was a very good response from people who became 'Friends' of Haddon Fields. As a result, our funds are growing and we are beginning to see how we can further maintain and develop the areas of importance. If you haven't yet become a 'Friend of Haddon Fields' and would like to find out more, please get in touch.

Stephen Woodgate - Chairman

Coffee & Chat & Canine Partners

We made it just before Christmas and reached our target of £10,000 for Todd. He is in advance training at the Fields Farm Centre. Thank you to all of you who have come to our coffee mornings over the years. It was just fabulous to see everyone each month to meet up for a good old chat! Personally, I would like to say a huge thank you to Anne Woodgate and Jenny Jones who have been the team right from the start in 2012. Without their support



the mornings would not have happened. Also Stephen and Alison and many others seconded to the team for Christmas events and other months. Thank you everyone. I am sure you will be pleased to hear that Anni reached her target too and somewhere there will be a puppy called Inca. She is still busy making cards so please do give me a call and I can give you her contact details. At this time it is for collection only in Market Harborough. Watch out for updates on Todd and Anni's puppy in future editions of the Courier. Take good care everyone

Jill 525746

Clipston Footpaths

As Spring is approaching here's a reminder of where the Clipston footpaths are around the village. We are so lucky to have so many when other villages have only one or two, please note the green coloured areas are open access. There is also a link to Northamptonshire's interactive footpath page and a download of a more detailed list of Clipston's footpaths.

Go to: https://www.clipston.org/assets/files/ Clipston-Footpaths.pdf

If you prefer a leaflet of the footpaths please contact Julia on **clipston.org@gmail.com** with your address and I'll pop one in the door as I have a limited number left from a previous Courier production.

- Spring means more farm animals in the fields so please keep your dog under control and on a lead in fields with lambs.
- Although the majority of dog owners are very good about picking up after their dogs there are some that don't. Please watch your dog and pick up afterwards. Thank-you.

Julia Blake - Volunteer footpath warden 525760

Churchyard Wildlife Area

In the last edition of the Courier I wrote about the possibility of creating a wildlife and wildflower area in the churchyard. Several people have contacted me about this and I am encouraged at the response. this forward. There are many examples throughout the country and it is clear that it will need to be properly planned and consulted upon. I have written to the Dioces of Peterborough seeking their permission to go ahead with the early planning and the Clipston Parochial Church Council have given approval in principal to the proposal going ahead. We are hoping to develop an area with minimal grass cutting to encourage wild flowers and local wildlife. We are also looking at the possibility of incorporating a wetland area to encourage aquatic creatures. Once I have a response from the Diocese I will call a meeting of interested people – possibly on Zoom to start the ball rolling.

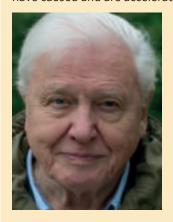
Steve Carpenter - Churchwarden





Community Action: Environment

As Sir David Attenborough has pointed out on many occasions these last few years, global Biodiversity is failing at an alarming rate, with an increasing impact on the interconnected eco-systems of which we are a part, and on which we depend. The cause is almost certainly due to the impact of human activities, which have caused and are accelerating Climate Change and Global Warming, not least



where natural habitats continue to be damaged or destroyed by human food production methods. But how does this loss of global Biodiversity affect us here in Clipston? What can we do about it? Clipston's Neighbourhood Development Plan includes Community Actions (CAs), as agreed by the Parish Council following the Village Hall open day in January 2020, and an Action-Priority vote by our community. Within these CAs, voters gave three activities - 'Biodiversity', 'Green spaces' and 'Trees' - 'top priority' status among the best six options. This is a positive state of affairs, indicating that residents are aware of some of the issues. However, the question remains: what can we do next?

The initial idea is for a group of volunteers to try to develop ideas to see what can be done. Here are some of our fledgling Environment Community Action Group's current thoughts on what might be possible:

Biodiversity surveying:

We need to develop ways of assessing the state of biodiversity in the parish. Two initial ideas, proposed by Clipston's own naturalist, Jules Howard, are 'stream dipping' and Frogwatch. Both ideas are designed to involve the whole family and, if completed regularly, will be able to show if things are



deteriorating, staying stable, or improving. Please watch out for more information to follow on the Clipston FaceBook page. Habitat enhancement: Biodiversity can be encouraged in a number of ways, from the simplest idea of letting part of your garden 'go wild' to building 'bug hotels' and 'wood piles' that are encouraged to decay to provide a perfect habitat for invertebrates.

Development of green spaces: Clearly, this idea links with habitat enhancement and could involve a part of your garden, encouraging more wilding at field edges (which is already happening to a great extent), and setting aside spaces in local settings to allow 'wilding' to take place. Certainly, the latter idea will be promoted in three well known areas: at the top of the Recreation Field (already started); an area close to the Field Centre in Haddon Fields, and part of the Churchyard. Hopefully more 'wilding' areas might be possible if landowners can be co-opted into our ambitions.

Planting Trees: The NDP indicates trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and others that are 'important trees'. Yet there may well be more trees that could benefit from being designated as TPOs. Trees have been planted on Haddon Fields and it may be possible to do the same in other parts of the village and the wider parish. So, as you can see, there are lots that can be done to protect and further enhance our environment here in Clipston. If you are interested in becoming involved and/or volunteering in any capacity, or if you have any ideas on how we can combat the crisis in Biodiversity locally, please make contact with me. Your planet....and Clipston needs you!

Stephen Woodgate on behalf of the Environment Community Action group

Chris Blake and friends return again!

Back in November, the planned concert by the 'Orion Duo and guests' went ahead in spite of Covid. Forced to switch to a virtual concert, the musicians recorded in three separate locations, Ian May's technical wizardry brought it all together as a YouTube premiere event and our biggest audience ever enjoyed the sublime sounds from the comfort of their own homes (couple of photos attached). Many people wrote to express their appreciation and to ask for an encore and so we are starting to make plans to welcome them back to Clipston. 'I just wanted to say thank you and well done for the concert on Saturday evening. Obviously, a lot of hard work had gone into organising it. Whilst we watched it on our own, it was nice to know that so many other people were enjoying it too' 'We want to say a huge thank you for organising the concert on Saturday and especially to the highly talented musicians. It was a real treat and wonderful to feel part of an audience'.



So, subject to prevailing restrictions, we hope to stage two concerts on Saturday 3rd of July. Both will be run with Covid-secure measures in place. The matinee, aimed at children and families, will take place in a marquee at the recreation grounds. To purchase tickets for this event, sold in aid of Stepping Stones pre-school, please contact Jane Hoskins (preschool2@ clipston.northants.sch.uk). The evening concert in Church will have a strictly limited capacity. To purchase tickets for this event, sold in aid of the church fabric fund, please contact Alan Skinner (525237 or alanandanne. skinner@gmail.com). We plan to record the evening concert and links will be available to purchase at a later date. If you missed the November concert and wish to purchase a link to watch it, these are priced at £10 and are available from Faye Tan (faye@oldrectory.uk.net).



Village Hall

At the time of writing, the hall remains closed but we continue to read all the government updates relating to village and community halls with a view to reopening when it is permitted and safe to do so. After such a prolonged closure it is likely to take a few weeks to complete all the safety inspections, remedials and cleaning that will be needed as well as ensuring all the relevant signage and systems are in place before we reopen. At this point, I am optimistic that we will be serving as a polling station for the May elections and hopeful that will be the start of our reopening.

Plans for the refurbishment/ extension of the hall are currently on hold. Once we are back up-and-running and have re-established regular usage, we will re-evaluate the ideas and costs involved and invite discussion again when the time is right.

In the meantime, the mobile eco shop 'Back-to-Basics' is a welcome guest on our car park every Wednesday morning (8.30am-12.30) and continues to build a loyal customer base for its fresh fruit and veg, tasty bakes and store cupboard refills. Adding to that, on a Thursday morning (10.30-11am), Farrell's Fish van brings a wide selection of fresh fish and seafood (he collects directly from Grimsby fish market every morning so it's as fresh and fabulous as possible!). If you haven't yet visited the vans I encourage you to pop along to discover these local gems for yourself – we are very lucky to have them coming to the village but they will only continue to visit with your support.

The village hall is run by a committee of trustees and we are always looking for new volunteers to get involved. Our treasurer Helen will be stepping down at the next meeting so if you are interested in performing that role we would be particularly keen to hear from you. The treasurer's role includes: general bookkeeping (invoicing,

receipts and payments); preparing accounts for committee meetings and the annual return to the Charity Commission; over-sight of utilities, services, licenses and all major expenses. Two key areas of involvement in the next 12 months will be completing the opening of a bank account (held up since the first lockdown!) to enable electronic payments and providing supporting information for grant applications. If you are interested in getting involved, please email faye@oldrectory.uk.net.

We were all shocked and saddened by the recent death of Heather Weston who served as the Parish Council's representative on our committee for many years. We always valued her input and support and she will be greatly missed.

Farming Update

The weather was mostly kind for farming during late summer and early autumn and our local wheat, barley, beans and oil seed rape was harvested in good conditions. Yields were generally lower due to the poor weather last year and many more spring sown, and therefore, lower yielding crops being grown. Prices have been quite volatile as the Brexit negotiations have affected exporters' feelings about how easy that may be in the future.



You may have heard about the change in allowing neonicitinoids (a pesticide thought to be harmful to bees and other beneficial insects) to be used for sugar beet. This is only under very controlled conditions as a seed treatment and will not be allowed for oil seed rape.

The decent weather lasted long enough for most autumn cultivations to be finished too, unlike last year when the wet prevented a lot of winter crops to be sown. We have some lovely sheep living around us – I know all sheep are nice but there are particularly great looking ones as you progress up Brown's hill and through Haddon Fields (although they do move about!)

Sheep (and cattle) are an essential part

of a grassland farmer's business and they are also ensure that we have the grassland landscape we so enjoy. Without them grassland would return to scrub and eventually forest or the land would be cultivated for arable crops where the ground was suitable. It will take a dramatic change in rural society to force farmers into being park keepers or arable only businesses. Most sheep you see are cross breeds designed to improve their mothering ability and meat quality. Many ewes you see are known as mules (not the donkey crossbreed!) The idea is that you mate a hill breed that is genetically developed for survivability and mothering ability e.g. Scottish Blackface in Scotland, Swaledale in Northern England, and the Welsh Mountain in Wales, with a Blue face Leicester which improves the amount of lean meat that the lamb will have. (If you're a sheep been bred to live in the Pennines when you move to the lowland it's like going on holiday to the sun... more food, less stress, better weather - you're bound to do well!) So that's many ewes but here we can see a further cross where a breed that is even meatier e.g. Suffolk or Texel is mated



with a mule. Often these lambs are all sold for meat but in some cases the ewe lambs are kept for breeding and many of those are what you see on Brown's hill.



Andy Blake

Clipston WI

It is now nearly a year since our last face to face meeting in the village hall – we really do miss them but have been finding other ways to stay in touch, through phone calls, chats on the doorstep, newsletters and walks when allowed.

In January we held our first Zoom meeting, (thanks to Julia Blake for the technical bit), which was a great success with nearly three quarters of members taking part. Dawn Macaulay gave a very moving, interactive and eye opening talk on her volunteer work for the Leprosy Mission.

It looks like Zoom is the way forward with our next talk about using "refill" on many everyday items instead of consuming too much plastic. The March Zoom is Rachel Lundy telling us about her experience of cycling across America with strangers, after giving up her job.

We have a most interesting programme lined up with additional social events and walks – COVID willing – and as a result, even with virtual meetings, have recently signed up some new members. We are looking to replace some of the existing committee in October so if you would like to join your W I and have a say in taking the group forward, then please do try us out and have a look at our website – www.clipston.org/wi - you can always attend as a visitor.

A year's membership from April will be £44, this covers speakers, Zoom/hall hire, refreshments and a magazine.

Why not give us a try? You will be most welcome.

Rose Anderson (President)



Suffolk x Mule Ewes

What I've Learned about Myself During Lockdown cont.

I have, rather selfishly, loved not having to be somewhere or do something, giving me more time to enjoy life's simple pleasures, such as, rediscovering an insatiable appetite for reading or simply being at home. I have also surprised myself – at how upset and frustrated I can feel by the actions of some who ignore government guidelines and continue to visit friends and family or refuse to socially distance or wear a mask - I never dreamt I would feel this way.

I think in lockdown I have learned (out of necessity) to slow down, appreciate and notice the small moments that paint part of the bigger picture... like a hot coffee, seeds growing slowly, the seasons changing day by day. On a much shallower level, maybe my biggest learning in lockdown is... it's worth spending a bit extra on tinned tomatoes, who knew?!

I've learnt that I can be more grateful than I imagined. That I have the power to sometimes change how I feel and effect my environment with just little things: lighting a candle, stepping outside and smiling at myself in the mirror.

I've learnt that I like people more than I thought I did.

I've learnt that I need people more than I thought I did.

I've learnt that time is far more precious and fleeting than I thought and that I need more of it. I've learnt that I don't stop to think enough about who I am and what I'm doing.

I've learnt that I value order and discipline and that I feel powerless without it.

For the first time I've been working in my garden this year and have created somewhere that brings me hope, balance and peace. I realise I need to grab life and make the best it.

I have learnt that I'm not in control of everything, even though I want to be.

I've learnt that I need to deeply consider, each day, what it means to: 'Let each morn be better than its eve.'







Family Reflections:

Mum - I learnt that I cope with big/ major changes really well-

I adapt quickly and embrace new challenges head on. (Small, nuisance changes and obstacles bother me much more than the big stuff!)

I learnt that I miss peace and quiet and time on my own more than I miss crowds and socialising. I learnt to accept the things I couldn't change and to focus on making a difference where I could. I learnt that even when everything was closing down, new possibilities were opening up.

Dad - I've learnt that I like working from home and can be productive working from home.

Little Person 1 - I've learnt to help mummy and daddy with some jobs around the house like emptying the dishwasher, sorting the washing and changing light bulbs.

Little Person 2 - I've learnt that I like building Lego!

I learnt that I don't do 'free time' very well if there is too much of it.

The only way I could cope with no work in lockdown was by diarising my whole day via a daily schedule, setting myself goals, learning new things and undertaking projects. But this was all done at a slower pace and sprinkled into the mix was time for me and those around me, my house, my garden and the lovely countryside we have on our doorstep. This taught me to value the importance of a balanced day and a balance between work and home. So much so, that when the chance arose to apply for a very good but full-on job with more money, I had to really identify what made me happy and what my long-term goals were in order to decide whether to apply. The 'old' me would have gone for the job at the drop of a hat – no question. I am competitive and hate the thought of not putting myself forward for things. However, the post-lockdown me realised that all the things that I now know make me happy and which are good for my well-being were not compatible with this job opportunity.

So, I didn't apply and the world didn't end!!

I've learnt it's important to look after your body and mind so you're the best 'you' possible... and when life is tough, in the words of Dory from Finding Nemo: "just keep swimming". (cont. in next issue)

Clipston COVID Quilt

This community project, to tell our story of COVID times, seems to have meant a lot to many people in Clipston. We have received such interesting squares showing such a diversity of approaches and images. The stories behind them are really powerful too and it is humbling to hear what has been important for people, how they have



been affected, what's seen them through and the silver linings that they have found. We will be capturing these background stories as part of this village history project. We have applied for some money from the WindFarm Trust to support the project and pay for the materials. It does feel like a project that has grown from a little acorn of an idea. If you have some thoughts on how we grow it into a bigger 'oak tree' then please do get in touch.

The best part about this for me is the creativity that has flowed from Clipston's brilliant community spirit. I am looking for someone who likes calligraphy. Any volunteers?

By the time you read this many people will have completed their squares but there will be room for a few more if you feel you would like to contribute. We aim to complete the work for Easter but this does depend on the social distancing restrictions of COVID. For more information/instructions contact

Christina cmf50@icloud.com.



Walled-In

If the last four years have taught us anything, it is that the building of walls, both literally and figuratively, is very much 'a la mode'. My wall started out as a purely practical project. The ditch was unsightly and needed to be fixed. Despite these humble beginnings, it has turned into a labour of love.

It was a somewhat daunting task, however, made all the more daunting by the arrival of 22 tonnes of Cotswold Limestone that I was expected to 'turn into a dry-stone wall'? I was not, however, required to do the digging, with that task falling to Father and our friend, Sam. I often used this to my advantage, claiming (entirely unjustifiably) that the ditch was not sufficiently 'prepped' and that I was therefore forced to remain inside.



It was out of my hands! The wall has raised many questions. Very mundane questions, but questions, nonetheless. How wide should the path be? Where should the steps go? How high should it be? Should it run straight or follow the line of the fence?

Many questions, very few answers. An apt summary of the past year. Mercifully, unlike most questions this year, these questions were easily answered; the steps would go near the beginning, the path would be a tad wider than a wheelbarrow, it would follow the line of the fence, and it would be as high as the grass. Sometimes, a session would yield significant progress, and on other occasions, not, and that was okay. Sometimes, I would return the next day and take out all the stones I'd laid the day before, and that was also fine. Sometimes, when trying to sculpt a stone to just the right size, I would crack it in half and that was actually quite annoying, but still alright. No matter the situation, I would listen to Stephen Fry read Harry Potter, while awaiting a visit from Esteban (our neighbour's cat), or else Mother or Father with a well-timed cup of tea and a biscuit.

Overall, it has been a wonderful project. The steps, once my pride and joy, have now come loose. If I am honest, they were never really up to the task in the first place. But I am learning on the job, and it has been very rewarding to start something from scratch, to admit when something isn't good enough and to find a creative way around it. A lot remains to be done ...so I'd best crack on.

Arran Wilkinson

Through the Clipston Keyhole: The Old Dutch Barn

Graphic Designer Jim Mcinulty and his partner of 20 years, Tom, moved to the village in July 2019. Prior to relocating to the newly and beautifully converted Dutch Barn on the outskirts of the village, the couple were living in an old farm house in Walgrave; their home for 14 years. Both keen cyclists, Jim and Tom were already familiar with Clipston and found the prospect of moving to a village so close to Market Harborough and boasting a pub

as charming as The Bull's Head incredibly appealing. The pair had long hankered after an opportunity to build their own home, and their sights had long been set on a rural location within close proximity to a village, so when they discovered the barn it felt at once like the perfect opportunity to fulfill their long-held dreams.

The prospect of a venture as immersive as a barn conversion would naturally be daunting for some, but through Tom's work as an interior designer as well as the couple's experiences with smaller renovations and home improvements, they felt excited and confident in their imaginings and potential achievement. The property itself – nothing more than a rusty farm building set in an arable field upon purchase had been granted prior planning permission, meaning that they could immediately begin contemplating design choices within the framework of the approval. The barrel vaulted roof was one particularly defining characteristic which they loved about the building and which came to play a vital part in informing the interior design and open-plan layout of their new home. As a result of a lengthy wait between placing an offer on the property and building work commencing, the pair had a distinctly clear vision for it once they were permitted to start renovations.

construction, it became apparent that the property was going to require a steel sheet piling to hold soil back when excavating. This was necessary to accommodate a basement -needed to house a small plant room - and came at a substantial and unforeseen cost. Jim and Tom knew that they wanted to try to make their new home as energy efficient as possible, and as such they opted for a ground source heat pump system – hence the plant room - that would help them to keep their house and

water warm at less of a cost to the environment. Alongside this, the external walls and roof are made from a system called SIPS (Structural Insulated Panels) which have a thick layer of insulation sandwiched either side by plywood; apart from the original steels and some new ones in the roof the building is entirely made from timber above ground level. The exterior, consisting of sawn and painted Siberian Larch cladding and a zinc outer roof, makes for a truly stunning aesthetic that complements its natural surroundings

beautifully.

The eighteen-month-long renovation experience was not without its challenges. Most significantly, owing to the remote location and lack of 24 hour on-site presence, the builders' cabins suffered some break-ins during construction. However, the implementation of a security vehicle and regular patrols soon resolved the issue and prevented any further disruptions to progress. Subsequent to this Jim and Tom set up a time lapse camera to track the day to day progress of construction - an initiative, however simple, that has resulted in a memento which can be treasured and re-visited for years to come.

Today, two and a half years since its purchase, Clipston's

restored Dutch barn stands as a much-loved home, and a design inspiration to many seeking a unique, modern and spacious property that at once has its roots firmly grounded in rural traditions yet oozes innovation. Its owners' advice to others seeking a similar challenge and result?

Be brave, you might only get one chance to fulfil your dream.

Rachel Smith









The first stage that needed contending with once a survey had been carried out was, with the help of the vendors, establishing a water and power supply to the property; a prolonged and complex process of seeking approval from neighbouring landowners and negotiating the logistics of sourcing power from Sibbertoft and water from Clipston. Subsequently came the construction of a hard-standing driveway and access track to allow plant vehicles to access the site for building work to take place. Once under

Back to Basics -Your Village Shop on the Move

From sunny Puglia, southern Italy, growing and selling olives, figs, fruits and nuts to a rainy car park in Clipston? That's the move Victoria and Belinda made with their roving village shop – Back to Basics. As well as Clipston on a Wednesday morning it visits Sibbertoft, Arthingworth and five other local villages.



So where did that idea come from? After their return from Italy they worked as managers for a prestigious hospitality company, then first lockdown struck and gave them the opportunity to re-evaluate their goals and think about what they were passionate about – all things food – and what they hated – packaging and corporate gluttony. They weighed up their strengths - Belinda comes from a farming background and has always had her own business ventures with many years in retail and the service sector - a creative and practical person.

Victoria has an accounting background with experience in hospitality, customer service and artisan food production – an organising sort of person. And so the idea of a mobile food van visiting local communities with quality food and low packaging was born; the van was bought last June, custom designed and fitted out by Belinda, and ready to go by September. They try to offer most things you would need for a weekly shop, locally sourced where possible – eggs, cheese, bread from Emmerson and West's, roasted coffee beans, as well as a wide range of quality fruit and vegetables,



mainly British and bought in season where possible. To cut down on waste over 120 loose dried goods are stocked and customers are encouraged to bring their own containers. There are also household liquid items that can all be bought as refills. They are virtually plastic free and encourage customers to make small changes so that together a big difference can be achieved. It's usually Victoria and Sherryl, Belinda's sister, you will meet on the van with Belinda busily cooking away in the commercial kitchen at their base near Desborough, making some delicious preserves and goodies. The feedback has been positive and come rain, shine or snow the shop has turned up and so have customers by a variety of modes of transport including horseback, sledge, tandem, farm buggy and even a tractor!

That all sounds like very hard work to me – how do you relax I asked – Belinda enjoys water sports and Victoria yoga, baking and of course both relish "all things food".

This is not just a lockdown business – it is here to stay. So it seems that everyone benefits – the village hall receives a small donation, we have a convenient shop on the doorstep and great efforts are made to offer something traditional, environmentally friendly and you can even click and collect. www.back2basics.shop
Thank you Victoria and Belinda.

Rose Anderson

Stepping Stones



Stepping Stones Pre-school have been fully open since the start of the academic year in September 2020, and most children are attending as usual.

Children have continued to enjoy our weekly Forest School activities—so far they have taken part in a scavenger hunt, made magic potions, made pine cone bird feeders and looked for animal homes. The children also took part in a litter pick at the Forest School site and on the walk down. Looking after the local environment is an important part of Forest School and continuing this theme we are pleased to start our Eco Schools award, where the children will learn about re-using, recycling and reducing waste.

We are delighted to have been awarded a grant from Daventry District Council to purchase a much-needed new printer, new waterproofs for Forest school and to pay the Eco schools assessment fee. A HUGE thank you to Daventry District Council.

We provide a fun, supportive, learning environment which helps prepare children for school. If you are interested in your child starting at Stepping Stones Pre-school we have spaces available from September 2021, see our website for more information www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk Contact us for more information:

Telephone: o1858 525113 or E-mail: preschool1@clipston.northants.sch.uk

If you have young children at home why not try making colourful butterflies with painted handprints, cut them out and hang them in your window for Spring



CRFT & 100 Club Winners

We continue to be optimistic that our events can go ahead this summer. We'll plan as if they are and review any decisions in light of changing government regulations. The playgrounds have remained open but please follow all the government guidelines when using them, especially with regard to Covid hygiene. The young children's area will be mown again by our own team. CRFT are indebted to Neil Ainsworth, Shaun Beasley, Tim Mayer, David Wilford and James McTaggart. Thank you to them for their commitment to this job. There's space in the team if you'd like to join. Just email me. It's been great that Stepping Stones have been able to continue to run their Forest School each Thursday at the Rec. We are very appreciative of generous donation from the family of one of the pupils to buy 3 new specimen Silver Birch trees of different varieties. The children have planted them.

CRFT will be involved in organising the next, hopefully live, Chris Blake concert although the main beneficiaries will be church fabric fund and Stepping Stones. The date is Saturday 3rd of July. We are planning an afternoon concert for families with young children and much participation, and a more traditional concert in the evening. Please save the date and we will provide more details soon. The Clipston Festival date is September 4th. The Clipston Trail Run is on for 2021 on Sunday 26th September. Entries are open on the Race Harborough web site and we already have 50 runners signed up.

CRFT Winners				
January 2021	December 2020			
Marsha Day	Janet Alderson-Smith			
Beth Wakefield	Grace Burnham			
Cara Bolton	Dan Halls			

Andy Blake - CRFT



Tennis Club

Tennis Coaching at Clipston

Calling all Tennis players or avid tennis fans!! We are delighted to be able to offer some group coaching and individual coaching for both adults and juniors as part of Clipston Tennis Club. This will be run by Laura Mineards who is an LTA Accredited + Level 4 Senior Performance Coach with



over 25years playing experience at county and national level. She has 8years coaching experience working from players as young as 2½ to many adults (we won't reveal her oldest pupil!).

Laura trains county tennis players and players for club teams, she wants to share her love of the sport and help you reach whichever stage your Wimbledon may be! Whether you're a regular player or completely new to the sport we'll have a session to suit your needs. Tennis is a sport for life, learning as a junior you'll have those skills forever or picking it up later as an adult, everybody can enjoy the game to your level, with family, friends or taking it a bit more seriously with some competition, Play Your Way!

Group coaching is a great way of socialising and working technically and tactically on your game. Individual lessons are more bespoke and can focus on the areas of your game which you feel need a bit of extra help, or if you are completely starting from a scratch!

Details (as far as we have) of the sessions

Adult coaching Friday mornings (10:00 – 11:30 for experienced players and 11:30 – 12:30 for absolute beginners) and Junior coaching to take place Saturday afternoons (1:00 – 4:00 in hourly age bands, 5-8; 8-11 & 11+). If you're interested in any coaching or would like some more information please contact Laura on 07766557122 or lauramineards@yahoo.co.uk The cost of these sessions are yet to be finalised.

A "week-to-view" of court availability

For spring (April 19th onwards) the Court availability will be as below.

- 1 If blank then courts are available to everyone
- If you want to "book" a court on a Thursday then you wil need to join the Tennis Club
- 3. There will be some competitive league tennis during the season so courts may be reserved at short notice

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8.00							
9.00				Pre-			
10.00				booked			
11.00				Club Day	Adult Coaching		
12.00				Duy	Coacilling		
1.00							
2.00						Junior Coaching	
3.00						Coacining	
4.00							
5.00	Social						
6.00	Club						
7.00	Night						

Clipston Primary School

It has been a busy term with two Bubbles operating at near full capcity most days during this third Lockdown, supporting our Key Worker families and about 20% of the pupils overall. The whole Staff Team has pulled together to provide excellent Remote Education that is fully aligned with our school curriculum plans to ensure that children all have the same access to lessons whether they be in school or at home. We were delighted and overwhelmed to have eight brand new devices donated to the school by two generous benefactors, one of whom is an ex-pupil who was taught by Mrs Mercer when he was in Reception!

These devices are supporting children who are learning from home.



The snow brought a much needed excuse to play outside and take time away from screens. Children have had lots of opportunities to take part in various organised events designed to promote mental and physical health, including the Sports Partnership's Orientering Challenge over half-term and a Dance Competition which will take place before Easter. Everyone has been also been able to take part in the "Virtual School Games" events with activities including Crossbar Challenge, Keep Up Catches and Boccia. During Mental Health Awareness Week we shared lots of books and stories designed to support children's emotional development and all the children, both in school and at home, were invited to contribute to a whole school display entitled You Be You, celebrating our differences and individuality. As part of the Naseby Group of Churches, we have been

busy creating three Stations of the Cross which have formed part of the Prayer Trail for Lent, and these will be on display near the churches in Naseby and Welford, as well as in Clipston. World Book Day was celebrated very differently this year as most pupils were not in school. Instead, as a surprise, each child received a parcel in the post containing their World Book Day voucher, a hot



chocolate sachet, lollipop, a book mark to decorate and a free book to read. Our new School Motto "Be Kind ~ Be Your Best ~ Be Happy" has been promoted over recent months, including on our website in our Welcome to Clipston video. The school is open for all children aged 4 to 11 years old from 7.30am (Breakfast Club). Further information about the school is available on our website: www.clipstonprimaryschool.org and our Twitter page @ClipstonSchool.

Emma Mercer - Head Teacher.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Keen readers of the Courier will recall the Christmas issue telling you of the Comments received in response to the draft form of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee have, with the help of appointed consultants, considered all Comments and have made appropriate amendments to the draft of the Plan.

That amended Plan has now been formally submitted to the Daventry District Council who have set in motion what is called the Regulation 16 Consultation, whereby the Daventry District Council upload on their website the amended Plan, together with the Schedule of the Comments received by us, how they have been considered and, if appropriate, incorporated in the Plan. As currently shown on the Parish Council website and the village website further comments on the uploaded Plan can be made during the Regulation 16 Consultation Period to Daventry District Council. The Consultation Period started on 9th February 2021 and ends at 5 p.m. on 23rd March 2021. The relevant webpage on the Daventry District Council website is www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/ planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/ submitted-neighbourhood-plans

Following the Consultation Period the Daventry District Council will publish the comments they have received on their website.

The Daventry District Council will then appoint an independent Examiner for his/ her final approval of the Plan. It is most likely the Examiner will make recommendations to the form of the Plan for inclusion. Upon final approval from the Examiner the Plan will be put to Clipston parish residents for the Yes/No referendum.

NDP Advisory Committee



Clipston Flood Defence

Three days before Christmas 2020 and what more could the residents of Kelmarsh Road want? Well, the torrential rain for about 24 hours brought the stream to its full capacity and together with the runoff rainwater from further up in the village, a significant flood between the lowest points of the road by 10pm.

However, the good news was that the 'flood storage reservoir' in Haddon Fields appeared to work as it was designed to! The photo (courtesy of Cat Martin) illustrates the retention of water by the flood defence which helped to control the flow of water and prevent further flood damage.

Stephen Woodgate



Clipston Rubbish!

Now that Spring is here, it is lovely to see the hedges and verges blossoming and growing. What a lovely sight after all the months of winter. However... all this growth tends to cover up the rubbish that lies on the ground. Out of sight, out of mind.



Over the winter, when the rubbish was more visible, a few of us have been picking up the cans, bottles, crisp packets, etc. from the sides of the roads in and around the village. We would love to gather more volunteers and arrange some group litter picking activities when circumstances allow.

If you'd like to take part, let me know by emailing taldersonsmith@gmail com and I can add you to any communication. In the meantime, thanks to anyone who picks up any litter for recycling or binning – you're doing a great job and you're not alone!

Toby Alderson-Smith

Is your dog's flea treatment an environmental danger?

Courier readers may already be aware of press reports based on research published in the journal Science of the Total Environment, which found that flea treatments for dogs are poisoning waterways. The research claims that the highly toxic chemical fipronil was found in 99% of samples taken from 20 rivers in England, and that the average level of an especially toxic breakdown product of the pesticide was 38 times above the safety limit. Fipronil and another nerve agent called imidacloprid, also found in the rivers, have been banned from use on farms for years. Washing pets flushes fipronil into sewers and hence to rivers, while swimming dogs provide another vector for contamination. There are 66 licensed veterinary products containing fipronil and 21 containing imidacloprid in the UK, many of which are sold without prescriptions. Pets are often treated regularly, even if flea treatment is not necessary.

Environmentally conscious dog owners in Clipston are advised to consult their vet for advice.

David Wragg

Dog Poo



There is, or used to be, a lovely ad on TV: **P P P Pick up a Penguin'**.

This plea is a variation on that theme, but not nearly so pleasant as a wrapped chocolate biscuit. P P P PICK UP YOUR DOG POO, P P P PLEASE.

The verges, pavements and fields around our lovely village have become almost an assault course over the past few months, with walkers having to dodge the poo, thanks to those dog owners, part of our community, who do not pick up after their dogs, but would rather leave it for others to tread in. It is little wonder that those who do not pick up the poo give all dog owners a bad name.

Would those using the Playing Field and Haddon Fields to walk their dogs please bear in mind that during lockdown families are using the fields, and that when Covid regulations are eased, Clipston School pupils and Stepping Stones Pre-schoolers will be using the Outdoor Education Centre and I am sure that teachers and parents alike would prefer the children to return smelling clean and not of dog poo. I know it is not a great job, but it is part of the responsibility that goes with the privilege of sharing your life with a dog. They give us so much love, please don't let them be the cause of ill feeling from others.

Sue Marshall

CLIPSTON BUSINESS DIRECTORY

ACCOUNTANTS

Contra Accounting Ltd

Accountancy and Taxation Services www.contra-accounting.co.uk Chris Partridge 01858 414210 / 07912 058 431 07544 107 817 chris@contra-accounting.co.uk

Grange Accounting

Alun Davies Chartered Accountant tel: 01858 437 430 www.grangeaccounting.co.uk

ARCHITECTS/PLANNING

IWA Architects

apm@jwa-architects.co.uk Andy Morris 01858 525 343

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niknacksdogs@hotmail.com Nikita McCauley

The Dog House - Beth Wakefield

Dog walking, in-home boarding, puppy visits, cat & small animal feeding 01858 525 556 / 07710 988 218 bethwakefield41@gmail.com

The Paddocks Doggy Daycare

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EGG DELIVERY

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Clipston garden maintenance Contact Dan Martin Tel. 07920 853 933 hello@greatlittlegardencompany.com

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TUTORING

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Literature/language tutoring from 7 - 13; 10 years experience. 07749 471 739 Rachel.k.smith@hotmail.com

Clipston Groups & Organisations

Bell Ringers

We usually ring the bells before a service at 10.30am on a Sunday (normally at Clipston, but other churches in the benefice too). We warmly welcome new members and anyone who would like to watch.

Lydie Melvin 07866 622063

Bulls Head Skittles Team

We play home and away matches on Fridays from October to March and Wednesdays from April to September. New members welcome.

Robert Burnham 01858 525628

Clipston Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS)

Regular play-reading sessions and performances, new members always welcome for both acting and supporting roles. Meetings are 'as and when' so contact us if you fancy joining!

Val Carpenter 01858 525120

Clipston Homeworkers' Lunch

We are a group of people who all work from home and we meet at the pub on the last Friday of the month for a social lunch. To join the WhatsApp group contact Sam samandamit@yahoo.com

Clipston WI

Enjoy interesting talks and demonstrations. We month. All ages welcome. Children learn meet every second Tuesday in the month in the about Christian values through village hall at 7.30pm. New members welcome.

Rose Anderson 01858 525481

Dog Training

Monday mornings at 9.15am at Clipston Playing Field. Very informal, free, please bring your own treats and poo bags! Rachel Wilford 07788 475129

Flower Club

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Village Hall at 7.30pm for demonstrations, workshops, speakers and more. Linda Warren 01858 525463

Football Club—Sunday

Welland Valley Panthers playing at Clipston Recreation Field Sundays at 10.30am. Minimum age 16 years.

Adam 07870 235 966

Friendship Club

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the village hall at 2.30pm unless otherwise stated. Following the speakers, we enjoy afternoon tea and a raffle to enhance club funds. Guests welcome, fee £2.

Jill Pick 01858 525746

Kelmarsh Windfarm Community Benefit

A charity that allocates funds from the wind farm to charitable projects. Applications for grants can be from village groups or individuals. Please contact Andy Blake or Rob Davidson for more information.

andyblake4@hotmail.com rj1davidson@me.com.

Parents & Tots Group

Friendly group for parents and carers with newborns to 4-year-olds. We meet Tuesdays in term time in the village hall 9.15-11.15am. £2 for one child, £2.50 for more than one child. Includes refreshments.

Chloe Wright 07977 529 859

Shooting Club

We meet on the last Sunday morning of every month (approx. 9.30am-12) on different landowners' sites, and afterwards usually go to The Bulls Head! All abilities welcome (inc. beginners).

Daryl Robinson 07919 252 964

Sunday Club

Kids Sunday school club, held in the Orbell Room at the church during the service on the second Sunday of the storytelling and craft activities.

Faye Tan 01858 525275

Tennis Club

We meet on Tuesday evenings at 5ish at the tennis courts from the end of March to October (weather dependent!). The group is very social and all levels are very welcome.

Martin Clarke 01858 525558

United Benefice Choir

We get together and practise to perform at local church services and special church events. New members welcome. We meet on alternate Thursdays at 6pm. Julie Connell 01858 525336

Whist Drive

A group of us meets on alternate Thursdays from September to May, 2pm at the village hall. Come and join us.

Grace Burnham 01858 525327

Bus Service to Harborough

Clipston to Harborough return on Tuesdays and Fridays only Departs Clipston 10.10 > 10.35 Departs Harborough 12.50 > 13.17

Church & Chapel Services

All Saints Church

Services on Sundays, times vary. Please see www.nasebygroup.org The Sunday Club for children is every second Sunday in the month (see information in Groups section) **Baptist Chapel**

Sundays at 10.45am. All welcome.

Useful Contacts

All Saints Church

Trevor Lake 01858 525422 **Baptist Chapel**

Rob Thompsett 01858 466370 **Bus Service (Centrebus)**

www.centrebus/info

Clipston School (office)

Helen Rhodes 01858 525261 Clipston School Governors (Chair)

Helen Bellamy 01858 525261

Clipston Village Hall & Hire

Grace Burnham 01858 525327

Flood Warden

Ann Essen 07709 411 262 **Footpath Warden**

Julia Blake 01858 525760 Orbell Room at the church

Val Carpenter 01858 525120 Parish Council (Clerk)

Felicity Ryan 01604 740429 Meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month at village hall at 7.30pm. clerk@clipstonparishcouncil.org www.clipstonparishcouncil.org.uk Police non-emergency contact number

Recreation Field Trust & Pavilion Hire

Andy Blake 01858 525760 **Stepping Stones Pre-School**

01858 525113 Tree Warden

Mick Higgins 01858 525302

Charities

Almshouse Charity

Peter Goodchild 01858 525532 **British Legion**

Rupert Ellenborough 01858 525380 **Clipston Consolidated Charities**

Colin Morley 01858 525337 **Clipston School Charity**

Peter Goodchild 01858 525532 **Kelmarsh Wind Farm Community Benefit**

clipston@kwcb.co.uk