February 2021

THE LEE NEWSLETTER

For The Lee, Lee Common, Hunts Green, Kings Ash and Swan Bottom

From the Editor

By Liz Macann

By the time we go to press, it is expected that a good number of those who want it will have received the Covid vaccination designed to protect us all, and allow a steady route out of the restrictions. I hesitate to say "get back to normal", as that may still be a long way off and in any case what does that now mean?

Of all the funnies and philosophical WhatsApps that we have been inundated with over the last year (did they happen before Covid or were they part of the phenomenon?) this simple one was the one I think I liked the most…

"I thought 2020 would be the year I got everything I wanted. Now I know 2020 was the year I learned to appreciate everything I have."

This could be a good message for Valentine's Day, which is celebrated this month in many countries of the world. The original festival would get short shrift these days though, as a part of it involved women being paired off with men... by lottery!

In this month's edition, there are reflections on the times we are in and memories from times gone by – last month's Kissing Gate item, in particular, generated some fun stories of past and present.

Next month, the Newsletter will be edited by Phil Harrison, who will be pleased to receive your letters, articles and pictures, by the 12th February, at theleenewsletter@gmail.com

Your letters

Remembering Geoffrey

To the Editor

We first met Geoffrey and Sally Palmer in Guernsey in the late 1980s. At the time we were organising a promotional event for Channel Island Audi dealerships; 'Vorsprung durch Technik' was still being well-aired on TV. Bringing the man and his voice to the islands seemed highly logical and certainly relevant.

The years rolled by. The next time we met Geoffrey Palmer was in The Shop at The Lee. I wonder what he would have made with 'Lidl on price'.

George Barnaby
Lee Common

Pudding stones

To the Editor

The Lee's website recently received a request for more information about the pudding stones on the Green. It transpires that this was research for an article subsequently published in the Bucks Free Press, but nonetheless it got me thinking.

Pudding stones are apparently so named because they resemble the plums in an old-fashioned plum

pudding (no doubt of the kind favoured by Little Jack Horner). The pudding stone at the western end of the Green (see above) is mounted on a circular brick plinth and an inscription on the underside of the stone states that it was "Dug up near Lee Gate and erected by Arthur Lasenby Liberty, 1907".

I can find general scientific information about them on the internet which we can add to the website, but it would be nice to have some more local background. Does anyone have any more detailed history? Do you have any stories about the (mis)use to which the stones have been put over the years? Any good or amusing photographs?

If you have any information, please email it to us at admin@thelee.org.uk Thanks for your help.
Ruth Fowler
Swan Bottom

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Gaps, gates and stiles

To the Editor

On reading the article in the January newsletter about kissing gates, I was prompted to write the following.

As a keen and regular walker, it is always a lovely surprise to come across an easily accessible stile and even better, a gate.

As a walk leader for the Ramblers Easy Walking group, I am required to recce the 'maximum four-mile routes', especially inclines and the number and type of stiles. With an average age of 70+, there are often people who have reduced mobility or health problems, as well as those with short legs, who find many of the stiles a challenge, even a danger, particularly in wet weather when they are slippery.

Walking is a tonic and locally, a joy. There are numerous local walking groups, including the one in The Lee. Walking is now being prescribed by GPs through the Social Prescribing teams attached to GP practices. These teams are in contact with the coordinator for Bucks' Simply Walk programme, using the walks for patients who might benefit from exercise and social interaction. However, for many, the stiles in our area could be a challenge greater than the effort of meeting a new group of people.

After a friend recently slipped badly on a stile and suffered severe bruising to her chest and rib cage, I investigated whether there is a recommended blue print for the design of stiles and found that there is indeed.

BS5709: gaps, gates and stiles

It was updated in 2018 and provides an interesting read. Some of the topics covered include reference to

the need for less abled bodied and disabled people to be able to access the countryside as well as those walkers of advancing years with decreased mobility associated with arthritis of the hip and knee joints etc. Sounds familiar!

These needs must be balanced by remembering that the main objective is for structures to be adequately stock proof, while providing good access for all legitimate users. It suggests that this can be achieved without discarding local forms in favour of a standardised design.

And much more, ending with numerous diagrams of structures for every situation, including measurements and possible materials. And no barbed wire within a metre of a stile!

From this, my injured friend and I concluded that almost none of the stiles locally, based on this British Standard, could be classified as 'Fit for Purpose'. I think the photograph above illustrates this!

So, how can the situation be improved? Clearly many landowners spend time and money erecting badly designed stiles without realising the challenges presented to users – young, old and canine. I am unaware of whether there is any responsibility to oversee the design and maintenance of stiles or gates by the council and, of course, money is always a factor. Any help/views on this topic would be welcomed and, in the meantime, thank you to all those who have sponsored gates in our area.
Lynda Cooke
Ballinger Common

Gates gone by

To the Editor

In the mid-1990s I persuaded the Parish Council that we should ask the Chiltern Society, of which I was a member, to instal some kissing gates in

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the parish, having already built one myself near our house in Cherry Tree Lane. The first official one we put in was down at the bottom of the Park. The councillors, I think, doubted our skills and came down to watch us do the work. When built, we tested it on a local resident who was heavily pregnant at the time and happened to be passing. She only just got through, and the standard size has since been increased and the design simplified, as getting through with a large rucksack proved more of a problem for D of E walkers.

The Chiltern Society volunteers were ill-equipped in the early days and digging holes in flinty ground is difficult. The depth of the holes depended on the length of one's arm, so some of the first gates I worked on became a little wobbly and have had to be replaced. We now use giant sugar tongs and that makes work easier. Since then, many more gates have been installed in the parish. A couple of years ago I heard from the county council, who supply the gates (timber and metal) that The Lee had more kissing gates than any other parish in the county. I don't know if it is still true.

Barnaby Usborne
Lee Common

[To find out more about how to sponsor a gate, please go to: chilternsociety.org.uk/donate-a-gate. Ed]

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Mystery gates

To the Editor

The identity of 'John and Jan Bradley' was raised last month. Interrogation of local Chiltern footpath volunteers has failed to find a definitive answer; however, it does appear that:

i. John and Jan Bradley wish to remain anonymous (indeed that may not even be their real names).
ii. They have very much enjoyed walking the Chilterns and wanted to donate several new gates.
iii. They wanted to make a difference on a particular walk or area, rather than have them scattered across the Chilterns.
iv. The Chiltern Link was chosen as the focus for their new gates as there were a number of stiles that could be usefully replaced. As a result, the Chiltern Link is now stile-free from Wendover all the way to Chesham.

That's it… other than to say that we are, I'm sure, all very grateful for their donations.

Colin Sully
Swan Bottom

My Scout life

By Tom Brockett

Editor's note: This is the final part of Tom's account of his time in the Scouts and the impact it had on him.

Still Scouting

I have not left Scouting but have flown the Lee Common nest. I am now concentrating on my role as Assistant District Commissioner for Scouts – where I oversee and support the leaders of 10 Scout sections within the Chesham and Great Missenden area. Part of my remit is ensuring the sections are healthy, the leaders have enough support, are sufficiently trained up and just generally making sure there is cohesion; every now and then organising district Scout events. For example, recently I was involved in organising a Scout county virtual camp, in conjunction with my line manager at county level, the Assistant County Commissioner for Scouts.

Another role I am concentrating on is District Media Manager which is promoting Scouting within our district aiming to recruit volunteers to our ranks.

Appreciating help

My thanks go to Enzo D'Alessandro, the new Scout Leader, helping on the tech side of things during lockdown. It was an opportunity to work my charm and attract Enzo to the wonders of Scouting and being a Scout leader.

I would also like to express my thanks to Laura Sole, who has helped me a huge amount in my latter years as Scout Leader. My dad has been my assistant every Scout night for 12 years and my mum supplied many words of wisdom at home. Both have been my rock.

My Scout tenure ended with a virtual camp over the Bank Holiday weekend in August, when a list of activities was given to the Scouts to take part in at home under parental supervision. Scouts camped in either their gardens or bedrooms. We all communicated either by Zoom or WhatsApp. At one point I was running the camp from the pub – now things really are looking up in this virtual world. We introduced as much camp life as possible, including our best camper competition.

Last Summer was my top highlight when I was given the opportunity to represent the UK at the 24th World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, a magical experience; a huge thanks to the local community for getting me there. As I write this article, I have been accepted again to represent the

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UK at the 16th World Scout Moot Jamboree in Ireland 2022.

As Ant and Dec say "I'm a celebrity get me out of here!"

Tom's postscript

I have just received a letter from my County Commissioner to recognise my 12 years' service to Scouting. It reads: "I have great pleasure in advising you that the Chief Scout has awarded you the Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service in recognition of your services to Scouting in Buckinghamshire."

I am pleased to receive it; awards like that do spur you on to do more. But we are not in Scouting for the awards; we are in it to give children the vital increase in self-confidence and belief in themselves they need with all important life skills.

To apostrophe or not to apostrophe?

By Ruth Fowler

A recent discussion within the editorial team has raised an interesting question about the lane from Hunts Green to Kings Ash. I think we can all agree that its official name has never been Strawberry Lane but is it Kings Lane or King's Lane?

There are no street signs to help us, so I had a look around the internet:

- Google Maps and the OS both have the apostrophe
- Chiltern planning application history and other sites do not
- Royal Mail doesn't include a street name as part of the address for any of the houses at the Hunts Green end, but shows Kings Lane (without) for Strawberry Hill Farm
- The Buckinghamshire Rights of Way map has King's Lane (with)

In summary, maps seem to include the apostrophe but sites and documents that reference the lane do not. My hunch is that the apostrophe is correct but has been lost over time, not least because it causes problems in computer software. (I have a vested interest here, having relatively recently conceded that my home is Blacksmith Cottage and not Blacksmith's Cottage, as a way of circumventing too many failed automated checks.) As the Newsletter is not a map, I feel we should stick with no apostrophe, but am sure that others may have a different view.

As to whether the lane runs between Hunts Green and Kings Ash or Hunt's Green and King's Ash, well that's another discussion entirely.

Pet of the month

'Rambo'

By Liz Macaan

Your editor must confess to a secret pash. He is a Shetland Ram (a very hardy breed of sheep) and lives with the Macraes at Rabbs Corner. He came to our village from Wootton Bassett and has been with the Macraes for about two years.

My family have visited him regularly for some time and he has become known to us as Rambo.

Research for this story however reveals that he is actually called Jerry, which is a sad disappointment to us but given that his field companion is Springer there is a certain logic.

To be strictly accurate he is not a 'pet'. It seems he brings great enthusiasm to his job of fathering lambs and is dad to those in adjacent fields, Pace and Maker, Tom, Barbara and Margot and others (plus his field-mate Springer).

He is very sociable, belying those fiercesome horns, and likes nothing more than a scratch behind the ears, although he does haves a unique musky boy-sheep aroma, which will take about 10 thorough hand washes to remove!

So 'Jerry' I may now know him to be, but to our family across the generations, he will always be Rambo.

What's my line?

Every now and then we feature the occupation of one of our residents whose work may be unusual, interesting or both. This month we highlight the Browns whose creative Halloween tableaux and Christmas light shows entertain us as we pass their Oxford Street home.

Jason Brown writes...

I started in the funeral industry as a young man, in the early nineties, and progressed to become a partner in the business in West London. After I sold up in 2017, I opened J Brown Funeral Services in Amersham with my wife Ana, who now works with me full time (although from mid-February she will be in our new Wendover office).

As a funeral director I meet people when they are going through some of

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the hardest times in their lives, and to be able to help them is one of the best parts of my job. If they are lucky this will be the first time that they have had to arrange a funeral and I am here to walk them through every detail so that they can grieve and know that the funeral arrangements will be taken care of. There really is no such thing as a typical day, I can go into the office thinking that I have a quiet day and within a few minutes I am having to go and visit a family to make arrangements or try and find musicians or vocalists for a service.

The hardest part, perhaps unsurprisingly, is when we have to help families with funerals for children – thankfully these are few and far between.

Star Wars themed funeral

I have been a part of many funerals but perhaps my best memory is when we arranged a service for a life-long Star Wars fan. We had five storm troopers attend the funeral, who formed an honour guard leading the hearse and the coffin up to the chapel. As a Star Wars fan myself, I really appreciated and enjoyed being part of this day.

We have also had a service at the beautiful Venus temple at Stowe. In this case the family did not want to come to the office and so I had to arrange the funeral with them in a pub in Old Amersham. On the day of the service, we had to travel to the temple early so that we could ensure the funeral vehicles were out of sight, as the family didn't want to see any signs of this being a funeral. The mourners all arrived at the service in a fleet of golf buggies, which brought the family around the lake to the temple, as it was not possible to bring their cars closer.

Over the past almost 30 years I have noticed a huge difference in how people approach funerals. The 'traditional' funeral is becoming less popular with families wanting to have their final goodbyes more tailored to their loved ones; people are all different and there is no reason that their funerals shouldn't be different too.

Challenging times

The last year has been challenging and we are grateful that the number of mourners allowed to attend funerals has stayed at 30. It was so difficult telling families that a maximum of five could attend in the first lockdown.

We have continued to work throughout of course, although we have installed sneeze screens in our offices and have (reluctantly) embraced technology and recently arranged services with families over Zoom.

The hardest thing for many families is that they have been unable to hold a wake to celebrate their loved ones after the funeral service. This is such a big part of the funeral ritual for many and missing it has been tough. We are sure that when they are able to do so, friends and families will hold memorial services for their loved ones, celebrate their lives and hug each other again.

Here…

By Diana Taylor

February is here.
It is ours who have watched for hours,
News of a desperate world
And now may reminisce
On our last kiss
When lips were free,
And friends came round for tea.

Valentine is here.
He is ours without 'hearts and flowers'
Yet showing we are not forgotten.
Nurture survives
And, in our village, thrives,
With none alone
Thanks to kindness shown.

'Lockdown' is here
It is ours who have discovered
"No man is an island" though Covid glowers
For Lee Folk yet remain
Very much the same
Living on our hilltop
Where care will never stop.

Friendship is here
It is ours to witness as it grows
In sunshine and in showers
To find on walks,
In shop, in talks
In this extraordinary place,
Even with covered face.

Faith and trust are here
They are ours to spread and to cherish
Two of our 'superpowers'
As masked smiles show
What every soul may know
That village life is dear
For LOVE IS HERE.

The week that the rains came down, and down… This was the view in the Park by 14th January when flooding joined the pandemic to launch 2021 into a challenging start.

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Lee Common School News

By Claire Gresswell, Headteacher

Lockdown learning…

Well, this is not the start to the Spring Term that any of us had planned! Life in school is once again looking very different. The staff and I spent a busy couple of days at the start of January, first planning to open safely and then, of course, planning to 'close'. Things did get a little stressful!

Don't get me wrong. What we in the teaching profession have had to handle is nothing compared to those working in the NHS; I honestly cannot fathom how doctors, nurses and carers are still going and my heart goes out to them and their families. But it's fair to say it has been a tough time… for everyone!

Dedication and support

Luckily, as I've said before, I am surrounded by a dedicated team of professionals, a very supportive Governing Board and a wonderfully understanding and caring school and village community. Our parents have been amazing. They have borne the U-turns and changes of plan with patience and stoicism. They didn't moan when we lost our internet connection on the first day of 'going live' with teaching via Microsoft Teams; they didn't grumble when the timetable changed yet again, due to staffing needs; and no-one even mentioned the week without heating which their children endured in the classroom! Instead, parents have embraced the technology, opened up their homes to our screens and once again become their child's cover teacher. I applaud them all.

Cheerful and bright

The children too, have responded wonderfully to the latest lockdown. Most are joining their teachers and their peers with a live lesson each day; many are watching the recorded lessons and the supplementary videos posted by their teachers and all are engaging in practical and active learning tasks. They remain cheerful on the calls and brighten our days with their comments and innocent insights into life at home. We love to meet their pets and favourite teddies. We enjoy watching them have a go on their whiteboards, with or without help from a grown-up. It makes us smile that they still ask permission to go to the toilet and we are happy to forgive the chair spinning, dancing and hand stands that occasionally interrupt the flow of the lessons.

Some 'normality'

We are still open to our Nursery children and those of critical worker families. We have adapted our curriculum and lessons to facilitate the teaching of a mixed age 'bubble' and the children are thriving in each others' care and that of their teachers. They still join their peers from their

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own class in the daily live lessons and are still enjoying Forest School on our wonderful new green field. We are doing our best to keep their days light and full of fun.

How long this way of teaching and learning will last, we don't yet know. But we will keep honing our skills, keep adapting our provision and above all, keep on caring for our children and each other.

Bridge too far?

By Rita Sully et al

Competitive bidding is often more fun and in a recent hand, played online by our foursome, both teams were bidding. It was easy to get carried away and both were vulnerable.

♠ A Q
♥ 8 5 4 3
♦ J 10 8 5 3
♣ K Q

♠ 8 7	♠ 10 3 2
♥ A K 10 7 6	♥ J 9 2
♦ A K Q 9	♦ 7 6 4
♣ 7 3	♣ A J 9 2

♠ K J 9 6 5 4
♥ Q
♦ 2
♣ 10 8 6 5 4

Dealer: East
Vulnerability: All

The bidding started:

E	S	W	N
p	2♠	3♥	3♠
?	?		

Which contract won and did it make? See page 21.

Looking after our 'selves'

A message from Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

Covid-19 is a difficult situation for us all, but with the vaccine roll-out out now underway, we can look forward to much better times ahead.

In the meantime, if you're feeling low or anxious and want some extra help, do use our excellent local support services.

It's never been more important that we make sure we take care of ourselves. 'Live Life Well' gives tips on stress and anxiety, healthy eating, and physical activity.

You can find out more via the 'Health and Wellbeing Bucks' website healthandwellbeingbucks.org

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Services for February

At the time of going to press, restrictions are sadly preventing worshipping collectively in Church.

St John the Baptist, The Lee
Appointment of minister

By Gavin Oldham, Lay Chair, Wendover Deanery

Just before Christmas we were delighted to announce the appointment of a new minister for our four parishes, Revd Chris Haywood. If you are one of the 400 people who have watched the HillTops/The Lee online carol service on YouTube, you will have seen Chris reading from St John's Gospel and looking forward to his arrival with us this Spring. The date set for his licensing service is 29th April.

Chris was ordained in the Diocese of Leicester in 2018 following 29 years working in the health service. For the past three years he has been assistant curate in the Benefice of Hugglescote with Donnington-le-Heath, Ellistown and Snibston, but he and his wife Georgie know Buckinghamshire well.

Our parishes have now been without active ministry for three years, and it will be very good to welcome Chris to our communities. His appointment follows a focused programme in which all four parishes and Bishop Alan of Buckingham have been fully involved.

The announcement of his appointment can be found at: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6002/news/31553/new-vicar-appointed

Contacts: *Parish Administrator:* Joanne Evans (07811 094416). *Churchwardens*: Trevor Pearce (01494 837601) and Mike Sherratt (07597 158269). *Verger:* Bill Pearce (01494 785191). *Treasurer:* David Stephenson (01494 867617).

Lee Common Methodist

In view of the high infection rates, it has been decided to close all churches in the Amersham Circuit of Methodist Churches which includes Lee Common. The situation will be reviewed in the middle of February.

In the meantime, we offer the following prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ we pray for those for whom the journey of life in these challenging times is hard, beset by pain, sickness and sorrow or overwhelmed by poverty, deprivation and injustice. In the trials they face and the burdens they struggle with may your love break through and the message of the gospel bring strength and comfort, help, healing and inspiration.

"We also pray for those unsure of the way ahead faced by difficult choices and vital decisions, troubled by situations in which they can see no way forward or doubting their ability to cope with the demands the future will bring. In the uncertainties of this changing world, may your love break through and the message of the gospel bring a new sense of direction, and inner peace and the assurance which you alone can give so that whatever they may face they will know that nothing will ever separate them from your love.

"May your light shine upon them: a beacon of hope and a lamp to their path. Amen."

St Mary's Ballinger

Our garden is open for private prayer and quiet reflection, but we are unable to open the Church itself until the PCC gives us permission even though we are quite ready. This is because of the Church of England Regulations and we are having to wait for the next PCC meeting which is not until 29th June. We will notify everyone as soon as we get the go ahead so please keep an eye open for our notices. In the meantime, Anne and I will be around to answer any questions and we hope that you will visit our garden if you are in need of a quiet moment.

Contacts: *Associate Church Wardens*: Maggi Cameron 01494 864790 and Anne Ellis 01494 837247.

The Lee Parish Council news

By Hayley Farrelly, Clerk

Lee Common playground

Firstly, a reminder that the children's playground in Oxford Street remains open, on the basis and understanding that:

- The parish council will not be cleaning or sanitising the playground equipment.
- The playground is not a supervised play area.
- Allowing children to use playground equipment is, in this respect, done at your risk.
- Visitors must follow and adhere to all current government advice.

A leaflet containing further information is available at www.thelee.org.uk/playground2020.

May we also remind users that even though it is unsupervised, visitors to the playground are expected to comply with all current Covid restrictions, including no picnicking,

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no meeting in groups, no exercising with more than one person from outside of your household, maintaining social distancing etc.

We realise this is hard with many children at home, but it is most important that we avoid spreading the virus through relaxed behaviour, which has been witnessed recently in the playground area.

The playground is 'unsanitised', so please come back later if it is busy when you arrive and take extra care with washing and sanitising your children (you know what I mean!)

Finally, thank you for the feedback on the new fort; it is much appreciated.

May 2021: local elections

At the time of writing, it is still the Government's intention to go ahead with local elections on Thursday 6th May. We already know that there will be a need for at least one new parish councillor.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a parish councillor and would like to find out more about what is involved before then, please contact me at clerk@thelee.org.uk

You might also want to sit in on a parish council meeting to get an indication of the work and commitment required. The parish council meets next on the evening of Tuesday 9th March.

The Lee website and Forum

The parish council successfully migrated The Lee website and Forum onto a new, more cost-effective platform in January. From a user's perspective, nothing should have changed, except you may have had to log back in. The Parish Council thanks Cllr Ruth Fowler for leading this successful migration.

Scammers everywhere

There have been a number of further instances of attempted 'scamming' since the New Year, with emails and telephone calls trying to convince us that they represent BT, Microsoft, our bank, the Covid helpline, or a wealthy Nigerian exile.

Do take extra care whenever you receive a communication from someone you don't know. There is excellent guidance available from the Citizens Advice, either online at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or from their consumer helpline 0808 223 1133.

The local Community Board

The Lee belongs to the Chesham and Villages Community Board (CVCB) made up of the 15 local County Councillors. It is chaired by County Cllr Tricia Birchley and its role is to provide a local focus for community projects and engagement. It has some delegated funding to support projects that contribute to key priorities (see also page 16).

It will soon be time to set out its plans for the next financial year, which starts in April, and community groups are invited to bid for funding for projects which support key priorities. Applications with match-funding will be prioritised. Funding is not available for any political purposes or for the benefit of a single individual.

The 2020/21 priorities for the CVCB are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport, Highways and Environment
- Community Safety and Resilience
- Economic Development and Regeneration

If you would like to discuss a possible project in 2021/22 that might benefit The Lee residents, please contact me at clerk@thelee.org.uk

Shop talk...

By Symeon Economou

There was a time when the shop was a centre of gossip and idle chatter. These days Covid rules have quashed all that, but one still has plenty of snatched conversations. (Retailer / customer confidentiality forbids me to be specific about some of them!) Brief though some of these interchanges are, you tend to have the same exchange a dozen times in a shift but, had they been recorded, one would have a new 'Brief History of the World'.

HS2: "they would never do that to this lovely countryside, would they?"

Brexit: "we'll stay in, of course"

Trump: "well, he'll never get to be POTUS"

Theresa: "she'll make a good job of it, wait and see"

Brexit: "do you know what's going on, I don't"

Boris: "they'll never make him leader, surely"

HS2: "Boris is bound to scrap it, thank goodness"

Coronavirus: "it won't get here"

Lockdown: "it'll be over by May"

HS2: "they are bound to scrap it now"

Lockdown: "they won't lock us down again"

The Vaccine: "have you been called yet?".

It makes you long for those halcyon days when all we had to talk about was the weather.

Speaking of lockdown, here we are again, only this time it seems a little scarier. Because some of the more vulnerable volunteers have had to step back, we have shortened the hours again, closing at 2:00 pm on Mondays – Thursdays. The vulnerable ones have not disappeared though – many of them are performing the opening routines before we open in the mornings and the closing routines after we have closed. We hope customers will forgive us that it would not be sensible to serve customers during these times.

Chilling out at the Shop

On a positive note, on the coldest wettest day of the year so far, we

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completed the upgrade of the shop and its facilities. Out went the old chillers and freezer cabinets and in came the two shiny new ones. All the volunteers will breathe a sigh of relief at the relative quiet that the new ones bring, together with attractive brighter lights and better energy efficiency.

The swap over created total chaos as the doors, together with their frames, had to be dismantled to squeeze the units through. We all held our breath in the knowledge that the newly stripped-down doors still only afforded 10 mm leeway in height. But all was well… Despite the turmoil created during trading hours, a limited business for essentials was conducted in the hall and by the end of the day the shop was fully re-stocked and ready to go, looking brighter and more welcoming than ever.

The Editor adds:

An article about our Shop recently appeared in Vale Life written by Lamia Walker (known to some locals as the provider of reliable dog sitters). That article highlighted the important central role it and other village shops perform for their communities.

Above is the photo which accompanied that article.

Chiltern Ridges news

By Cllr Patricia Birchley, Bucks Council

Many people will know that the new Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire is Lady Elizabeth Howe, who lives in the Chilterns. For a number of years, she was Chairman of the Heart of Bucks Community Foundation and will be a real asset to our county.

The Thames Valley Police (TVP) report in December stated that the local policing has been restructured, resulting in a 13% year-on-year increase in arrests. An increased number of locally based detectives, many with specialised capabilities, has also meant detections were up 24% in the last 12 months, whilst 'stop and search' incidents were up by 58%. The police have created a new Rural Crime Taskforce and continue to tackle the scourge of drugs, as well as improving the fight against domestic abuse, to protect families from harm.

TVP had the largest footprint of HS2 activity in the country, presenting a significant policing challenge. They have mobilised resources on numerous occasions for spontaneous protests which were often violent in nature.

Your local councillors continue to hold HS2 to account, and the latest petition which reached over 100,000 signatures will now force a new debate in Parliament. We are also working energetically to ensure that the A413 will not be overwhelmed by their vehicles from 2021 onwards, and Sir Mark Worthington, the HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner, has upheld our request for further information.

The council has supported the NHS vaccination roll-out programme, which has been very patchy in Bucks to date. Locally, we are most likely to be called to Chesham or Stoke Mandeville for our jabs and it's hoped that at least 120,000 residents in the county will have been vaccinated by mid-February.

At their meeting in December, Chesham Community Board reviewed the work of voluntary organisations through the Covid pandemic. During the second lockdown people needing support generally knew where to go. It was also agreed at the meeting to monitor traffic speed more closely in the parish in order to make our roads as safe as possible.

You can contact me by email at patricia.birchley@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

HS2 update

By Colin Sully, The Lee Parish Council

Forward programme

The three local HS2 contractors appear to have made a slow start to the year, with delays at a number of sites. However, their programmes for the first three months do seem to now indicate a significant increase in activity in and around The Lee, including:

- a 'bat house', near Potter Row, being accessed using the internal haul road
- further archaeological surveys using the internal haul road and, to a limited extent, other access points on Potter Row and Kings Lane (using 'light vehicles')
- archaeological digs at the Kings Lane compound, with no excavated material leaving site
- preparation work near Jones Hill Wood to receive tree planting,

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using the lower part of Bowood Lane for access
- a new security gatehouse and compound at the foot of the Great Missenden haul road
- landscaping along the haul road
- vegetation clearance along the route of the internal haul road from South Heath towards Bowood Lane and then Rocky Lane
- a new compound at Grove Farm, off the Wendover bypass
- preparatory work at the Chesham Road (Annie Bailey's) shaft site.

Beyond February, we should also expect short closures (at different times) of Leather Lane, Bowood Lane and Rocky Lane, as the internal haul road breaks through at each crossing point.

Parish Cllrs now meet every fortnight (online) with the contractors' local community engagement managers. If you have questions or information you would like us to put to them, then please let us know at clerk@thelee.org.uk

Major ongoing concerns

Our current main local concerns about HS2 continue to be traffic-related and we are trying to enforce agreed standards now at the start of the main construction programme.

Our concerns are:

i. individual lorry drivers taking inappropriate vehicles down inappropriate roads
ii. the overall extent of the use of hill-top lanes by HS2 traffic (see January Newsletter)
iii. the expected overall level of traffic on the A413 once construction starts to ramp-up.

The first issue is simply down to poor contract management and it is important that as much information is fed back to HS2 as regularly as possible on this. We are grateful to residents who have documented and photographed inappropriate vehicles on Leather Lane, Potter Row, Rocky Lane and Kings Lane. We are told that, where miscreants can be identified, they are disciplined. We have also asked for 'No HS2 traffic' signs at the foot of each of these lanes.

The second issue goes back to the report in the January Newsletter, which considered the value of assurances given by Parliament with respect to hill-top lanes. We have not given up on this and will escalate the issue again, although having already lodged a formal complaint with HS2 Enquiries, our MP and the HS2 Commissioner, there aren't many places left to go.

Thankfully, we should see some reduction in the use of Potter Row and Kings Lane once the internal haul road

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RIP Old Oak

is built (we will also find out more about when that is now expected).

Overall traffic concerns

The third major concern at the moment is the discovery that the volume of HS2 traffic predicted to be using the A413 over the next 3-4 years is likely to be far greater than that envisaged at the time of the Bill. The reason for this increase appears to be changes made by HS2 Ltd to the construction routes being used to service the different sites between Amersham and Wendover.

Local parishes presented our concerns to HS2 Ltd in early January, as have Bucks Council and the HS2 Commissioner. The matter will also be referred to the Deputy CEO at HS2 Ltd. Until the new information requested about traffic flows is reported, the impacts assessed, and further mitigation considered, we are asking Bucks Council not to approve any more applications for work from HS2 Ltd – more on this next month.

Local HS2 update: online

We are conscious that simply reading about HS2 in the Newsletter and even seeing the local impacts do not necessarily give residents a clear picture of what is happening and why. HS2 Ltd and the contractors, as well as the Parish Council, are unable at present to hold face-to-face briefing sessions, although 'webinars' by HS2 are occasionally held.

The Parish Council is now planning to hold its own online webinar (probably using Zoom) on Monday 1st March at 7:30 pm, at which local Cllrs will update residents and try to answer questions about HS2's current plans. If you wish to register for this free session, please visit: www.thelee.org.uk/registration/

Through the registration process, you will also be able to raise questions, which we will try to answer on the day.

We should emphasise that this briefing will focus on local HS2 issues, as they impact residents of The Lee parish.

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Forum Freda

Another glass?

Freda has been monitoring recent discussions on the forum, and a couple of things have caught her attention and made her very happy.

Not only are many items finding new homes, but The Lee has reverted to bartering on a number of occasions, with the rehomed items being paid for in wine / champagne. Having realised whilst watching the Millenium video (the first time around) that nothing of any significance happens in this village without wine, it seems that the forum has truly found its niche.

The other thing that has brought home the worth of the forum almost more than anything, are the discussions with our lovely postman, Anthony, offering us help, advice, pleas and insights into how delivery services really work.

Off the rails

We never get far from the topic of HS2 these days, and it seems that a number of HS2-related email notifications have been forwarded far and wide. Provided they don't include personal details this, of course, is no problem whatsoever, but some of the recipients from outside the area have subsequently contacted us under the impression that Freda runs an HS2 information mailing list, rather than a forum in which HS2 currently plays only a minor part.

From the postbag

Finally, a few items from the postbag about missing email notifications.

Dear Forum Freda, I recently registered with the forum, was told I'd receive confirmation within 48 hours – and a week later I've heard nothing.

Dear User, We've encountered this problem before with some new users with Hotmail email addresses. Hotmail has a very annoying habit of rejecting emails without either moving them to junk or notifying the sender – they just vanish into the ether.

The solution is to log in to your Hotmail account, add the forum's email address forum2020@thelee.org.uk to your list of Hotmail contacts and you should never miss another forum email again.

Dear Forum Freda, I recently posted to the forum for the first time, but haven't received an email confirmation. I can see my post on the forum so think it must have been successfully added.

Dear User, The email notifications are intended to alert forum members to new posts, so an email isn't sent to the originator of the post as they already know about it.

Unfortunately there isn't an option to allow you to receive a mail of your own post, but if you can see it in the forum a minute or so after you hit ***Submit*** then everything is fine.

Dear Forum Freda, I think I'm missing some emails from you, can you check to see what I've been sent?

Dear User, We send out thousands of emails each day, and can only maintain a limited record for a short period. However we are confident that all members are sent emails in accordance with their subscription preference, and check regularly for any persistent rejections and failures. In any case, you can always view any particular posting online, as all are kept indefinitely on the forum.

Don't forget that answers to various questions can be found on the Common

Problems page of the website at https://www.thelee.org.uk/common-problems/. If you need some specific advice, please email admin@thelee.org.uk giving details of the problem. Not yet a member of the forum? Then complete the application form at https://www.thelee.org.uk/new-user

Bridge too far?

In our game the competitive bidding led N/S to 3♠ and then E/W took the contract with 4♥. Neither makes as, following an opening lead of A♠, E/W goes one down and N/S bid of 3♠ only makes eight tricks.

Watch the birdies…

By Johanna Jane Free

In my garden there is a big old greengage tree and every morning it resembles a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's film 'The Birds', when 20 or 30 goldfinches fly in to feast on the sunflower hearts in the bird feeders – tweeting and squabbling to get their share. The chaffinches gather in the damson tree nearby, waiting for their turn or to fly down on the ground to peck on the fallen seeds. A little wren darts about while other birds, such as blackbirds, starlings, robins, blue and great tits, visit as well. Sometimes two greenfinches come; this is so incredible, as I haven't seen any in my garden for nearly 10 years due to a disease that decimated the population.

I love to see this ever-changing story and it never ceases to amaze me. Now in this third lockdown I shall use this time to watch the next chapter unfold… So, as I look out of the window, it does.

Different birds react to each other in many ways and sometimes I see things I didn't expect. One afternoon early this year I was watching a kestrel, not in his usual place on top of the telegraph pole, but in the greengage tree where the goldfinches hang out. He was being watched by them, but they didn't seem to be too concerned, as he was intent on something on the ground below.

He sat in the tree for a while, not interested in their twittering at all, then, as if he was getting bored, he flew off. He obviously didn't have them on his menu.

In the last weekend of January, I shall take part in the RSPB 'Big Garden Bird Watch' and wonder what I shall see then?

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Dear Diary

The fastest way to let everyone in the parish know about an event you are arranging is to publish it right here in the Newsletter. Contact the Editor by the 12th of the previous month (see contact details on page 1).

February

Tuesday 9th. **Ballinger Evening WI.** Zoom meeting: 'Behind the Scenes of the TV Shows' with Faith Powell

Thursday 18th. **Ballinger Arts Society.** Virtual visit to The Old East End of London. Pepe Martinez, a native East Ender, will relate how this vibrant area of London unfolded, over centuries, to reveal the dynamic human history of many thousands of immigrant survivors. Their story is sometimes distressing but it is also a celebration as they became able and creative contributors to their host nation.

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Coming soon

Monday 1st March. **HS2 local information event (online)**. 7:30 pm. Organised by The Lee Parish Council; see page 19.

Tuesday 9th March. **The Lee Parish Council Meeting.** 7:30 pm; online; see page 14.

Thursday 29th April. **Licensing service for Revd Haywood.** See page 12.

Thursday 6th May. **County and Parish Elections.** See page 14.

Tuesday 11th May. **The Lee Parish Council Meeting.** 7:30 pm; online; see page 14.

Ballinger Horticultural Society
Please check the website for all up to date details: ballingerhort.co.uk

Directory of local contacts

Ballinger Horticultural Society
Chairperson: Katherine Hersee
07801 948650, kjhersee@gmail.com
Membership Secretary:
jennywooding@btconnect.com

Ballinger War Memorial Hall
Bookings: Jane Ogden, 837379

Ballinger Evening WI
Contact: Frankie Little, 837659
frankie.little@btinternet.com

Lee Common C of E School
School office, 837267
office@leecommon.bucks.sch.uk

Lee Common Methodist Church
Marian Tomkins, 837479

Lee Common Scouts
Group Scout Leader, Chris Nevill. 864881
gsl@1stleecommon.co.uk
Scouts, Enzo D'Alessandro;
scouts@1stleecommon.co.uk
Beavers, Karen Bruton;
beavers@1stleecommon.co.uk
Cubs, James Bruton;
cubs@1stleecommon.co.uk

Shop at The Lee
Symeon Economou, 837195
shop@thelee.org.uk

St John the Baptist Church
See centre pages.

St Mary's Ballinger
Contact: Anne Ellis, 837247
anne.ellis1004@gmail.com

Tennis Court @ Parish Hall
Bookings: Pippa Hart 07785 323232 (ideally WhatsApp)

The Arts Society Ballinger
Chair: Lesley Wickham, 865480
ballinger@theartssociety.org

The Lee Cricket Club
www.theleecc.org.uk
Secretary: Mike Harris
07788 345555

The Lee Flower Show
Chairman: Jonathan Batten, 837450

The Lee Newsletter
theleenewsletter@gmail.com

The Lee Old Church Trust
Secretary: Pam Garner 837501

The Lee Parish Council
Clerk: Hayley Farrelly, 07704 909324
clerk@thelee.org.uk
www.thelee.org.uk/pc
Allotments: Alison Weir, 837529

The Lee Parish Hall Committee
Bookings: Anne Barnett, 837796
Pippa Hart, 837340
Chairman: Tony Lea, 837237

The LeeWay
Contact: 07845 029500

The Newsletter

The Lee Newsletter is published 10 times a year and distributed free to all households in the parish… and a little beyond. The views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Editor.

We welcome letters and articles of interest and relevance to The Lee. Copy should be sent to the Editor of the month (see page 1) by the 12th of the month before publication.

Letters should ideally run to no more than 200 words and articles to no more than 700 words; material may be edited and may appear on the village website www.thelee.org.uk unless consent is specifically withheld. Anonymous contributions are not accepted.

To advertise or place an insert, please contact Paul Apicella on 837377 by the 12th of the previous month.

If you have photographs for publication please contact Jonathan Batten on 837450 or email battenjonathan@hotmail.com.

For queries regarding distribution contact Barnaby Usborne on 837382.

Other members of the Editorial team: Peter Archer, Zoe Berkeley, Ruth Fowler, Phil Harrison, Liz Macann, Jen Ogley, Adam Speller and Colin Sully.

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To book the Parish Hall or Scout Hut

'phone Anne Barnett on 837796

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