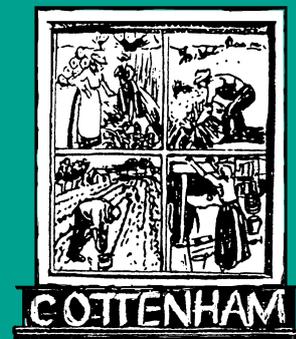


COTTENHAM NEWSLETTER



ISSUE NUMBER 86

APRIL/MAY 2005

SUPPORT OUR PCSO

It was with some amazement that I read the coverage of the incident where our local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) was subjected to criticism for writing a letter to the parents of a 15-year old because he was smoking in public.

Steve Gilbey was attacked in articles in the *Cambridge Evening News* and that attack was joined by the *Daily Mail* and picked up by the Press Association. He was criticised as needing to get his priorities right and the same criticism was levelled at the police more generally.

That was harsh when he was only doing his job. It is an offence for children under 16 to smoke in public and he was perfectly right to take action when he saw that law being broken. Furthermore, having ticked the lad off, he was perfectly right to have sent a letter to his parents. Imagine the outrage that the *Evening News/Daily Mail* would splutter if the police were dealing with minors and not informing their parents.

As for priorities – it is the job of the PCSO to monitor the smaller offences that occur regularly – underage smoking, illegal parking, loutish behaviour etc. These smaller transgressions erode overall respect for the law and respect for other people. I fully support Steve in his efforts to deal with such transgressions wherever he sees them. So do the Parish Council and the Cottenham Residents Association.

Furthermore, Steve's regular presence in the village seems to be having some effect. The crime report in this edition of the *Newsletter* is the shortest ever with only two reported crimes in January of this year. The previous report had only four crimes. This compares very favourably with previous reports where numbers of crimes reported in Cottenham in a month was regularly in the high teens or twenties. It would be naive to attribute all of that fall solely to the efforts of Steve, but I am confident that his presence has been a major contribution.

Keep up the good work Steve. It is appreciated.

The weekend of June 24 to 26 this year promises to be an exciting one for the whole Fen Edge Patch. The Fen Edge Family Festival will be the biggest event in Cottenham in recent years and promises to be very exciting for all.

There will be a wide variety of attractions including: a 30-stall Italian market, live music, a sculptured dog show (!) and the highly successful Open Gardens event will be run again. Full details of all events and developments can be found at <http://www.fenedge.co.uk/festival.html>

Eddie Murphy

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VILLAGE DIARY

April

- 7th Baptist Church, Fair Trade Sale, Baptist Church 10:00am to 12:00 noon
- 8th Village Society, Calvin Coolidge, President of USA (descendant of local boy makes good) – a talk by Mr Muncaster, Primary School, 7:45pm
- 9th Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn 10:00am – 11:30am
- 13th WI, Old and interesting roadshow – Barrie Stevenson, Village College, 7:30pm
- 14th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
- 15th Seniors' Club, 'Exposures of a camera man' by Vernon Place, Village College 2:30pm
- 16th Womens Institute, Clean Up Cottenham, Village Green 10:00am
- 16th Baptist Church, Fair Trade Sale, Baptist Church 10:00am to 12:00 noon
- 17th Womens Institute, Clean Up Cottenham, Village Green 10:00am
- 19th Fen Edge Cinema Club, The Man Who Wasn't There (Coen Brothers, 2001, US), Village College, 7:30pm
- 21st Baptist Church, Fair Trade Sale, Baptist Church 10:00am to 12:00 noon
- 22nd Methodist Church, Sounds interesting with Alan Wyatt and Things, Methodist Church, time to be confirmed
- 28th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
- 28th Parish Council, Annual Parish Meeting, Village College, 8:00pm
- 29th Seniors' Club, 'Why go to school?', a talk by Rosemary Wheeler, Village College 2:30pm
- 29th Gardeners Club, Plat Propagation with demonstration, Village College 7:45pm

May

- 3rd Fen Edge Cinema Club, *Cidade de Deus* (Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, 2002, Brazil, 18), Village College, 7:30pm
- 5th Baptist Church, Fair Trade Sale, Baptist Church 10:00am to 12:00 noon
- 7th Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn 10:00am – 11:30am
- 7th Fen Edge Community Association, Fun Run, Village College Market starts at 9:30am, Run Staret 10:30am
- 11th WI, Resolutions, Village College, 7:30pm
- 12th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
- 13th Seniors' Club, AGM and bring and buy sale, Village College 2:30pm
- 13th Chocolatier Evening with Julie and Nick Percival and the Church Youth Group, Methodist Church 7:30pm
- 15th Salvation Army Young People's Anniversary and Prize-Giving, Salvation Army Hall, 3:00pm
- 19th Baptist Church, Fair Trade Sale, Baptist Church 10:00am to 12:00 noon
- 26th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
- 27th Seniors' Club, Party and entertainment, Village College 2:30pm
- 27th Gardeners Club, Bog and Water Gardens, Village College 7:45pm

Advanced Notice

June 24,25 & 26 Cottenham Family Festival, Village Green,
Lots of events – Make sure you are in the village that weekend!

SMALL ADS

COSTA DEL SOL: new two twin bedroom apartment for rental near Benalmadena Costa. Sleeps five or six. Close to beach, golf and water sports. It has a 50 foot terrace overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and the communal swimming pool. All Mod Cons. Video and rates on request. *Tel 01954 251248.*

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S WIDEST SELECTION OF ROSES: We specialize in roses – over 300 varieties! We also have a wide range of other hardy garden plants of all kinds, all good quality and grown by ourselves and other local specialist growers – perennials, climbers, shrubs, herbs, alpines, ornamental and fruiting trees, soft fruit, hedging, conifers, heathers and bulbs. Our nursery is open by appointment. Telephone Rosalyn and Ray at Goodens of Cambridge, *01954 252325.*

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DOG WALKER/TEENAGER: wanted asap to walk small boxer dog once or twice a week, initially for a three month period. To discuss fees please call Iluska on *01954 203169.*

EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL MUSIC TEACHER/ EXAMINER has a limited number of places available. Specialising in: Piano, Guitar, Drums and Theory of Music, but available for most instruments. All ages, beginner to professional. Examinations if required. Contact John Branton. Mobile: *07786 131782* Email: *johnbranton@ukonline.co.uk* Web: *Johnbranton.co.uk*

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FOR SALE: Two cream 2-seater Habitat sofas, very good condition; 150 cms (w) x 95 (d) x 90 (h). £80 each or both for £150. *Tel 01954 251939.*

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BABYSITTER: Reliable and experienced 17 year-old female living in Cottenham. Excellent references available. Contact Danielle on: *01954 252460.*

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Why not advertise in the Newsletter! Items for sale, announcement of family events... 5p per word, with all proceeds going to charity. Send advertisements and payment to the editor.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Cottenham Newsletter'.

DRAWING

Would you like to begin the week using your creative side? Have you ever drawn upside down? Learn how to by coming to a small, friendly and lively drawing group meeting on Monday evenings 7:00pm – 9:00pm; suitable for beginners or those, more experienced, wanting to get back to the basics.

Based at Cottenham Village College this ten week, but ongoing class is taught by experienced artist Sheila Bryan and takes you through aspects of drawing. Each week looking at a different topic, such as Tone, Line, Negative & Positive, Composition, Quick Scribble Drawings, Drawing Without Looking – a great way to draw!

Have fun exploring various drawing materials and techniques and gain confidence and skills in drawing.

Summer Term Begins Monday 18 April 2005

For More Information Contact

Cottenham Village College 01954 288751 or Sheila on 01223 570371

GRUMBLE?

We are all human, aren't we? Who doesn't grumble at some time or other? But does it do any good? Not much use in grumbling if you don't take any action.

Our youngsters at the WI are intent on improving the litter situation in Cottenham. We – and I suspect most of you – hate to see the rubbish littering our streets. One kind citizen clears the rubbish in the High Street daily and more than one brave person has cleared the bus shelter opposite the Spar shop but what about the rest?

We are starting a campaign to 'Clean up Cottenham' on the weekend of 16 & 17 April. Now comes the challenge. Will YOU join us? We are going to meet on The Green at 10:00am on each of the two days complete with gloves and wheelbarrows or old prams, divide the village up between us and have a go.

YESTERYEAR ROAD RUN



On Sunday 17 April, we have the annual Yesteryear Road Run parade of vintage vehicles. Come and help us raise money for MAGPAS and have fun at the same time! Our vintage vehicle parade will be passing through Cottenham so come out and see the largest selection of cars, tractors, motorcycles, commercials and various other exhibits to parade in the eastern region. You will be amazed by what you see and by the atmosphere of the occasion.

We assemble on Cottenham Village Green, leaving at 9:30am, moving on to Rampton, Willingham, Over, Swavesey, Longstanton, Oakington, Histon and back to Cottenham for 4:00pm.

It really is a fun day for all the family so watch out for our posters for further details.

On Cottenham Green there will be a display of working engines, a fair, food and entertainment throughout the afternoon.

Last year we donated over £8,500 to MAGPAS, making our total fundraising over the years amount to more than £64,000. Please come and support us this year.

For further details contact Tony or Patsy Nightingale 01353 741174.

One reputation the WI treasures is our ability to make delicious cakes. Last year we didn't manage to hold our usual cake stall at the Fun Run. However, this year we will be there on May 7th with some tasty goodies. Remember to come, treat yourself and watch those intrepid runners.

Brenda Ward

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ROLAND BARTINGALE

Roland Bartingale, who died on 5 January 2005 aged 86, served for nearly twenty-four years as a district councillor for Cottenham and Rampton. Prior to that he had a long record of involvement in community service in his native village of Rampton stretching back to the 1950's and also, following naval service in World War II, with the local branch of the Royal British Legion. This involvement continued almost to the end of his life.

I got to know Roland when I became a district councillor for the Cottenham ward in 1988 and served with him until he stood down from the council in 1994. I was immediately impressed with his kindness towards me. He made me welcome, introduced me to local residents and groups and helped me understand the often mysterious processes of local government.

He also had an extensive and detailed knowledge of the local area and of the countryside, and I learnt a great deal from him. Having lived all his life in Rampton, he had the kind of local knowledge which only comes from spending a lifetime in a locality. He knew the history of the houses and farms, where the ditches and drains ran, and the proper way to dig grips – the angled drainage channels in the roadside verges which are so important in the fen edge. He was a countryman through and through – and in the very best sense of the word.

Above all he served long and faithfully. Of course, like anyone who enters local government, he experienced ups and downs. He knew what any councillor very soon learns: that, however good your intentions, you cannot hope to please everyone all of the time. He told me soon after I became his

colleague, 'In this job you've got to listen to people; but you've got to be prepared to be thick-skinned at times too.' If he felt a particular stance was right he was not afraid to risk unpopularity.

But he listened too. If residents had problems, he would go to visit and try to sort the matter out – and he encouraged me to accompany him. He also worked for better local facilities such as the sheltered housing scheme at Franklin Gardens built in the late 1980s. Because he cared for local people they respected him, and every time he stood for election he was returned with a large majority.

As our sympathies go out to his wife and family, it is fitting to record our gratitude for his long and dedicated service to the community here in Cottenham. Together with all that he did for his home village of Rampton, that is his memorial.

Rex Collinson

OXFAM WALK 2005

The Oxfam Sponsored Walk is taking place on 15 May 2005 starting and finishing at Wimpole Hall. Walkers are being offered for the first time a marathon walk (26 miles), a half marathon walk (13 miles) and a mini-marathon walk (4 miles) with routes of 22 and 9 miles also available.

Please join us on an enjoyable day of marathon walking and help make this a bumper fundraising event. This year, we aim to raise £50,000 for Oxfam's Emergencies Fund helping communities affected by natural and manmade disasters. Your sponsorship money could help people suffering from the tsunami in Asia as well as the other continuing crises around the world. Just £50 can provide safe water for 125 families for a week and £115 can buy 5 emergency shelter kits.

For an entry form (available in March), please phone 01223 502798 or email oxfamwalk@btopenworld.com or visit our website www.oxfam.org.uk/walk. Pay in your sponsorship money by 31 July 2005 and you will receive a complimentary two-day pass from Greens Health & Fitness.

If you would like to volunteer to marshal or steward please contact Carrie on 01223 891921 or email carolinetravers@amherst3hl.fsnet.co.uk. Marshals and stewards also receive a free Greens Health & Fitness two-day pass.

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GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

The Garden of Remembrance lies behind All Saints' Church. It is the area designated for the internment of cremated remains. You may have noticed that it has recently been extended.

In the process of improving the appearance of the Garden of Remembrance, some work needs to be done on the older section. Over the years, settling has occurred with the help of mole activity. As a result some stones are raised and others buried beneath the soil.

It is proposed that the memorial stones be lifted, a geotextile membrane be spread over the levelled area before the stones are re-laid with silver grey granite chips around them. The membrane is designed to keep the stones separate from soil and hopefully deter moles at the same time.

The lifting of memorial stones, however temporary, is a sensitive issue that we do not wish to undertake without publicising our intentions. In order to reposition the stones in exactly the same location, a clear polythene template would be marked and named with the stones in situ before any are lifted. The stone tablets would then be cleaned and replaced according to the template positions.

You will appreciate that this is a tedious task and the cost of materials alone will be in excess of £200. Any contributions to the cost of renovation work would be gratefully received. More importantly, queries, comments, objections and approvals would be welcomed as soon as possible so that the work can start later this spring.

Responses to this matter should be addressed to Ken Hewitt, 27 High Street Cottenham (Telephone 251606).

Ken Hewitt.

ARTICLES, DATES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

E-mail, PC floppy disk and paper submissions are all welcome. Please contact the Editor if you have any questions. Dates of events to be advertised in the next issue (No. 87) should span the months of June and July.

CRIME REPORT

Crikey! I thought we had a very short list of crimes in the village in the last edition of the *Newsletter*. That was twice as long as the crimes reported to the police for January 2005, a grand total of two crimes. This is either really good – there has been a dramatic fall in crime in the village; or it is really bad – there has been a dramatic fall in the reporting of crimes in the village. Hopefully, the former is the case.

Remember, it is essential that all crimes are reported. The police want you to report all incidents. So do the Parish Council and all the representatives of the village from councillors to the Cottenham Residents Association.

As always, if you know of a crime that occurred in January and does not appear on this list – let me know. My contact details are on the back of this edition.

Eddie Murphy

Date (Jan)	Description	Location
19	Criminal damage to a dwelling	High Street
20	Criminal damage to a vehicle	High Street

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FUN RUN INVITATION

Several people from all the Cottenham churches, children and adults alike, will this year be asking friends and family to sponsor their efforts to complete the Cottenham Fun Run on the 7th May. The money raised will go towards one of the charities involved in the Make Poverty History campaign, a massive campaign running throughout 2005 by a coalition of charities, trade unions, churches, political organisations and others to try to end the massive imbalance in resources which exists between poor and rich countries, and to campaign for cancellation of Third World debt, more and better aid and fairer trade rules.

If you would like to join us, sponsorship forms will be available from all the churches nearer the time, and also some outlets in the village (look out for the Make Poverty History posters in shop windows). We hope to be running a stall with more information about the campaign on the Fun Run day, and we will have envelopes for you to put your sponsorship money in. Don't worry if you can't run fast – most of us can't either! Help us to make a difference to the lives of poorer people and come and have fun at the same time.

Rosa Hunt

COTTENHAM FUN RUN & MARKET Saturday 7th May 2005



Registration from 9 a.m. at CVC Sports Centre
Registration fees: adults £3.00, children £1.50
Course length approx. 4.5 miles
Run starts at 10.30 a.m., market at 9.30 a.m.
Enquiries: 01954 250099 (for market stalls 01954 288751)

FLOWER FESTIVAL

All Saints' Church, Cottenham, is holding a Flower Festival on the last weekend in May.

A Flower Festival provides the opportunity, not only to deck our beautiful old church with flowers, but also to celebrate with music and events.

The theme of the flower arrangements is 'A Time for Everything', a theme taken from the Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3 in the Bible. The church will be open for visitors throughout the weekend.

Other events planned for the weekend include:

- Friday 27th May, 7.30 pm – a concert in church. The details are still to be worked out, but it will be of the normal high standard offering enjoyment to everyone.
- Throughout the weekend refreshments will be served in the Church Hall. Light lunches are also available around midday.
- Stalls will be selling cakes, books and bric a brac.
- Trips up the church tower will be available for some of the time.
- Services on Sunday take place at the normal time (amongst the flowers). Everyone is welcome.

The Flower Festival is now at an advanced stage of planning (see the posters around the village for the final programme). As with any event of this sort, money has to be invested to make it work – particularly for the purchase of flowers. If you would like to make a donation for one of the arrangements in memory of a person or a cause, please contact the Rector.

The proceeds of the Flower Festival will be split between the church (to maintain the fabric of this ancient building) and charities.

Michael Hore, Rector of Cottenham
Tel: 01954 250454



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SUN 9.00AM - 4.00PM

THURS LATE OPENING 7.30PM

METHODIST NEWS

It might have occurred to some folks in the village that no one has seen the Methodist minister lately. This is not because, since moving to live in Impington, she has deserted Cottenham. No, the village is still part of her life, and will be until August 2006. Every ten years, Methodist ministers are obliged to take a welcome gift of three months, which they can spend either as a time of spiritual renewal, or to do some academic work or research, write a book or maybe prepare their thesis for a PhD. Now it is the turn of the Cottenham minister.

It has been suggested to me, that as the village Methodist minister, I should let you know what I was doing. It would be sad if there were those of you who had heard that I had been to Addenbrookes for a minor cancer operation, and then imagined that some serious fate had befallen me. Actually, I am very well.

During the three-month Sabbatical I will be spending some time on retreat with groups of other ministers, and also having some more solitary time of withdrawal from the busy, but worthwhile task, of helping to care for five churches. I hope to do some work on scripts for possible future publication, and spend some time looking into possibilities concerned with housing and other needs in my forthcoming retirement.

The most exiting period is the month of April when, with David, I will be going to Byblos in the Lebanon, to live and work in a Christian residential school and orphanage. Byblos is about twenty miles from Beirut, a place which suffered greatly from Israeli shelling during the time of unrest. There is now peace there and we look forward to seeing this beautiful country, with its eastern Mediterranean coast and snow-capped mountains.

Whilst I am away, the church will be embarking on a major fund-raising scheme. The village of Cottenham has a reputation for working together and offering support where needed. A lot of work is needed to make the building comply with legislation. The electrical system, the roof, the outer walls, the direct disabled access to church, all need serious attention. The people are warm and kind-hearted in the church, not a 'miserable bunch' at all. Sadly, the interior has come to look 'miserable,' and in urgent need of decoration. Transformation of the inside would be foolish before the other outside work was complete.

So, if you wonder why there is a sudden flurry of activity, or wonder why there is a whole series of concerts, demonstrations and social events happening, you will know 'what is

going on at the Methodist church. It is not a case of, 'While the cat's away the mice will play' but that while the minister is on Sabbatical, the church is moving forward. By doing so we all hope that the buildings will be more accessible, attractive and useful for the whole village community.

Rev. Cynthia Hardiman

POPPY APPEAL

Thank you to everyone for helping to raise a record £4,300.00 for the 2004 – 2005 Poppy Appeal. This has been achieved by the hard work and support of members and friends of the Cottenham and Rampton Branch.

I am pleased to report that our efforts for the 2003 – 2004 Poppy Appeal, received the Cambridgeshire area "Rose Bowl Award" for the largest percentage increase in monies collected for the appeal. Well done Cottenham and Rampton and thank you.

Fundraising continues all year round, and we will be holding a Spring Concert in Cottenham Village College on Saturday May 7th, at 7:30pm.

We are pleased to present Cottenham Brass Band conducted by Colin Watson, with special guests, members of the Cambridgeshire Choral Society conducted by Roger Bond. We also welcome musicians Vicky and Alan Aitchison. Mandy Morton of BBC Radio Cambridgeshire will compere the evening.

Tickets at £5.00, may be purchased in advance on 01954 250080, or on the door.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sheila Rudd.

WHIST!

Ladies! Come and try your hand at Whist in Cottenham. The rules are very simple and can be quickly learned. I did not know how to play it at all and went along just to see what it was like. I am now addicted to it! There is a very friendly atmosphere, it is great fun and there are always practical prizes at the end of the evening too. The Ladies' Club plays every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm in Stevens Close Community Room, Stevens Close Cottenham. It is open to all ages. Just turn up!

Moyra Borg

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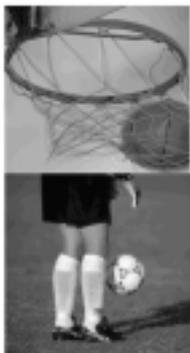
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VILLAGE SOCIETY OUTING

We are planning an outing to Bletchley Park this year on June 11 and it will be open to non-members of the Society. The entrance fee of £10 (£8 concessions) includes entry to the new Bletchley Park Story exhibition and the WWII Centre, all other exhibitions and displays, the shop and a one-and-a-half-hour guided tour. The cost of the coach will be £10.

We will leave at 9:00am from Cottenham Green bus stop and arrive at Bletchley Park at approximately 11:00am. Guided tours leave the Mansion every half hour from 11:00 am until 3:00pm. We will be able to walk around the site freely and will depart for home at 4:00 pm. There is a tearoom/restaurant available for food and drink or you may bring your own picnic. Wheelchairs are available free of charge but must be booked in advance, so please let us know if you require one.

We are offering the Society first choice up to April 23rd, but if you would like to come I will keep a list of names until that date on a first come first served basis. We will require a deposit of £10 at April 23rd and the balance of £10 (£8 concessions) is payable by 4th June.

If you would like to come or have any queries please contact the secretary: Maire Collins, 52 Lambs Lane, Cottenham, tel.: 01954 200873, e-mail mmc24@cam.ac.uk.

CVC SWIMMING POOL

I am pleased to say that the CVC pool will be open this summer. The organising committee would like to thank all those that have supported us this year: especially the Jenny Kay Memorial Fund and Cambridge Cabinet Makers, whose generous donations have secured us another season.

We hope to be awarded a grant that will enable us to make some improvements to the pool and its surroundings this summer. These would include a more efficient water heater, new liner and edging to the pool, lockers and a general spruce up of the changing facilities.

In addition to this we are hoping to offer an extended programme, with a larger choice of sessions, Aqua aerobics classes and swimming lessons. We will be advertising these soon but if you'd like to register interest and be contacted when we know more details please contact me and I will forward information to you.

We are holding our AGM on the 18th April at 7:30pm at the Village College. If you are interested in using, or helping to support the pool please come along. Attending the AGM does not commit you but it will give you a chance to find out more about our plans for the pool, put forward any suggestions you may have and will also help us gauge the level of interest.

If anyone is interested but can't make the AGM please contact me, helen@mcleman.com or 01954 203647 and I'll be happy to keep you informed and take any comments along to the AGM.

Helen McLeman

Kevin Ashworth



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PARISH COUNCIL

The following are matters which were discussed at the January and February Council Meetings:

Change of Councillor – Paul Smith has resigned, and we thank him for all he has contributed over the years, wishing him well for the future. Hilary Johnys has been co-opted on to the Council to replace him, and in welcoming her we thank her for offering her services.

Crowlands Manor, Broad Lane / Tenison Manor – It is expected that by the time you read these notes we will have taken over the public open space, including the Moat Area, and will have employed a charitable organisation who are specialists in the field of national heritage sites. They will work in conjunction with the County Archaeology Office who are keen to accept the site into the Monument Management Project following appropriate maintenance work. Part of the commuted sum which will be received from Persimmon Homes will be used for the cost of this work.

Sports & Social Building / Sports Facilities – A committee has been formed comprising recreational ground users, and parish councillors to consider the various needs. Clearly this is a large project, and one which will cost a significant amount of money. Possible funding is being sought, and again this will take some considerable time to formulate.

High Street Traffic Issues – The increase in vehicular movement is alarming, and therefore the Council will be carrying out surveys, the results of which will be discussed with the South Highways Division of the County Council.

Networking – We have arranged a meeting with other Parish Councils in South Cambs to discuss common issues, and share experiences on other matters thereby hopefully achieving best practice.

Anti-Litter Poster Campaign – There has been a good response from the youngsters at the schools, and the posters have been judged. Hopefully the messages portrayed will be considered with the result that our village will see the positive effects of a cleaner environment.

Under Age Smoking in Public – The Council supports the action recently taken by the Police. What we all should appreciate is that the case highlighted in the media is not an isolated incident.

Graffiti – The bus shelter in Lambs Lane near to Victory Way has been attacked again with graffiti, and has been used as a urinal. Those 'people' responsible had better beware in view of the power being given to the Parish Council through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.

Traveller Liaison – The District Council has set up a new forum for representatives of villages in the northern part of their district in order to continue to work closely with both the travelling and settled communities. The emphasis is to promote greater mutual understanding and respect. The Council has attended two meetings as it wishes to be involved in this initiative, and is currently working on ideas to improve communication between the District Council and both communities.

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LADYBIRDS

Ladybird Pre-School will be 10 years old this year and what a journey it has had to get to where it is today. When the Pre-school opened in the autumn of 1994, it opened on a part-time basis and only eight staff were employed, compared to the 22 we have today.

In the subsequent years, huge changes have taken place as the government introduced an early years' curriculum, regular inspections and funded places for children. To qualify for funded places a high standard of care and education had to be reached and maintained, which Ladybirds has consistently achieved with high standards in inspections. We were among the first pre-schools in the County to gain the Pre-school Learning Alliance Accreditation, recently endorsed by Investors in Children.

Everyone knows that Ladybird Pre-School is open from 9:00am to 3:00pm during term time, and that we offer a play scheme throughout the summer holidays. However, we also work closely with the childminders in the village in order to offer 'wrap-around' care, such as children being dropped at Ladybirds and collected by childminders or holiday cover. We have a list of names of childminders, so do contact us if you need this childcare, or for further information contact Carol Grange – Childminder Development Officer on 01954 252862.

The Ladybird Pre-school is a great asset to Cottenham and is a community project funded and supported by Cottenham Parish Council. We have been granted planning permission to build a new wing, with the aim of extending services to families by providing a wider range of sessions in smaller classes, health advice, improved facilities for children with disabilities, a breakfast club, parenting groups, support groups and so on. Whatever the village feels it needs could take place within this new setting.

This is a very exciting time for the Pre-School as the village has grown and the demand for nursery places grows with it. But we need all the support and donations we can get to make this dream a reality. So, if anyone out there has any ideas on fundraising, donations or wants to be part of the team helping to make this happen, please contact Rosemary Miller – Principal at Ladybird Pre-School on 01954 250891.

And finally...

A huge thank you to all staff, committee members and parents that supported the Ladybird Easter Fete on Sunday 20th March. Also thanks to all the businesses that donated gifts to the raffle. The total raised was over £900!!!! Thank you to everyone who came along for making it such a great afternoon.

WELCOME!

New to Cottenham? We are trialling a new welcoming service for those who have just moved into the village and need a helping hand to get settled in. Perhaps you want to find out what sporting activities your children can get involved in, or maybe your mobility is restricted and you need to find out about mobile libraries or Carecars.

Email your questions on Cottenham life to the *Newsletter* and we will print and attempt to answer them! If you wish to meet a friendly face, then just let us know and we will try to put you in touch with a Cottenham family in a similar situation to yours.

The Cottenham Welcome Group.

EXHIBITION

An exhibition of work by artists of different generations, in various media will be held at 126 High Street from 8th – 10th April and 11th – 16th by appointment (tel: 01954 201901).

The event will start with a concert with family members at 8:00 pm Friday 8th April (reserve seats with Anna on 01954 251999). Entry will be free (musician's contribution at concert) from 10:00am to 6:00pm, 9th and 10th April.

The wonder of being born with a gift and of it sometimes re-appearing in the next generation will be celebrated. Participating artists and musicians include Shirley Felts/Katie Ellis, Frances/Robin Horgan, Alison Mitchell, Clarissa Cochran/Abi Cochran, Bernie/Beth Witchalls, and Sue Kafka-Ellis/Emily Kafka.

Sue Kafka Ellis

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BIRD REPORT

As I write near the end of February, we have had several overnight snow showers in Cottenham. The snow cleared quickly and probably did not have much effect on the opportunities for birds to feed, so I did not use the extra supplies of bird food that I had bought in when I heard the weather forecast. The 'winter thrushes' Fieldfares and Redwings are still with us – I have seen both in the last few days but far fewer than in late autumn/early winter. Large flocks may be seen again as they begin their migration northwards. In 2004, a flock of 380 Fieldfares was seen in Long Drove on March 22nd; the last Fieldfares seen in the county were at Elm and the last Redwings were at Monks Wood, both in mid-April. A notable winter bird is the Waxwing. Hundreds have been seen around the country but there have been relatively few in Cambridgeshire. A flock of at least 30 Waxwings was seen in Long Drove at the end of October 2004. Since then I have looked closely at every 'Starling' flock as Waxwings in flight look rather like Starlings – unfortunately they have all really been Starlings! The Iceland Gull, one of the 'white-winged' gulls, is another species most likely to be seen in Cambridgeshire in the winter. One was seen on the new lagoon in Long Drove on February 24th – 25th.

It's likely that some of our winter bird visitors will still be with us when the first summer migrants arrive, and when you read this it will certainly be the right time to start looking out for the first arrivals. Information collected by members of the Cambridgeshire Bird Club from 1990 – 1999 show that the average earliest arrival dates for summer migrants in the county range from March 12th for the beautiful, small duck Garganey, March 13th for Wheatear, to May 1st for Spotted Flycatcher. These three species have all been seen around Cottenham in the past year or two, but are much less familiar than Swallow (average earliest arrival: March 26th), House Martin (average earliest arrival: March 30th), and Swift (average earliest arrival: April 23rd). The earliest warbler to arrive seems to be the Willow Warbler (average earliest arrival: March 28th). Two species of warbler, Blackcap and Chiffchaff, used to be thought of as summer visitors only but now regularly overwinter; I have seen both in Cottenham this year. By contrast, the Dartford Warbler is Britain's only truly resident warbler. It became extremely rare just over 40 years ago, after the hard winter of 1962/63, then recovered successfully so there are now hundreds of breeding pairs in southern England. It's still a real rarity in Cambridgeshire:

one found in a garden in Cherry Hinton in 2001 was the first recorded since 1870! Another was seen near Peterborough in 2003, and it was a real surprise when one was found just beyond Cottenham's parish boundary on the road to Landbeach on December 31st 2004. The finder had stopped to look at a flock of Lapwings – a great example of being in the right place at the right time!

Anyone who is interested in the birds of Cambridgeshire and beyond might like to join the Cambridgeshire Bird Club. We organise a programme of indoor meetings with speakers on a wide range of bird subjects and publish a bi-monthly bulletin and annual report, all free to members. For further details look at the Club's website www.cambridgeshirebirdclub.org.uk or call Vicki Harley on 01954 250340.

AUTUMN SHOW

The Fen Edge Community Association's 2005 Autumn Show will be held on Saturday 10 September.

The schedule will be similar to last year but there will be a new section for a Spirit-based drink and the photography section will include 'Life in 2005', 'Dusk to Dawn' (photos taken at night), 'Abstract/Shapes and patterns', 'Landscape', 'Water', and a section for Nature/Wildlife/Animals and plants. In the children's section there will be a renewed entry 'a miniature garden'. There will not be a Pet Competition this year.

It's time to get thinking about your entries for 2005. 2004 was our best year yet! Let's see if we can do even better.

There will again be a wonderful Craft fair. Don't forget the auction of entries not reclaimed – this is always fun and you can get some very nice cakes, wines, produce etc. We hope you will support this event both with entries and coming on the day.

Mike Smith

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GUIDES

Were you ever a member of 2nd Cottenham Guides or a Guide elsewhere and now live in Cottenham? Perhaps you are a Guide mum or have a daughter at Brownies thinking about the move up to Guides or perhaps you were never a Guide, but now as a female adult, aged over 18, would like get involved in something within the village on a voluntary basis?

If any of the above applies to you – then here's your chance to make a valuable contribution to the lives of girls and young women. Becoming a Guide leader doesn't require lots of qualifications. In fact, Girlguiding UK will provide all the training you need and 2nd Cottenham Guides needs YOU!! Urgently!

We need two or three enthusiastic leaders to take over the unit from next term (after Easter) or the unit will sadly be forced to close by the end of the summer term. Both the present leaders' circumstances have changed which means they, very reluctantly, can no longer commit to running the unit fully. Both are willing to stay on part-time to assist the new leaders. 2nd Cottenham Guides meets on Thursday evenings between 6:30pm and 8:30pm

What can being a leader offer you in return? Well it will bring out the best in you, you'll gain valuable people skills that can be put to good use in many other areas of your life. You will discover a whole new world of fun, friendship and adventure and ultimately it could be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do with your life!

For more information please contact:

Mrs Bernie Hoskin-Witchalls Tel. 01954 251273 after 6:00pm.

MOBILE WARDEN SCHEME

The Scheme exists to help elderly people lead an independent life in their own homes. Full membership provides the reassurance of a daily telephone call, a weekly visit and help and advice in times of need. Associate membership can provide help when required (e.g. during holiday periods).

Details about the scheme can be obtained from the Warden – Mrs. Madeleine Bird, 34 Telegraph Street, Cottenham, Tel. (01954) 251182.

BEE HELPFUL

I am seeking information on the past activities and characters who kept bees for the purpose of pollinating the vast acreage of fruit that was grown in the area and/or for the harvesting of the products of the hive.

I have been informed that just after the Second World War there were at least 38 beekeepers in the village, but only four of these were members of the local association which at the time had a membership of 447. Many people kept bees and were able to get extra rations of sugar for feeding the bees after taking their honey. By 1970 beekeeping in the county had declined by at least 75 per cent, as had the fruit growing, with fewer than 100 members.

I have been given two names of beekeepers and would be grateful for further information. The first was a gentleman known as 'Uncle David', a character who rode a Levis 2-stroke belt driven motor bike and lived on the Histon Road. He was a past secretary of the Cambridgeshire Beekeepers' Association whose HQ was then in Downing Street, Cambridge. Also, Mr Wiseman who lived on the High Street at the Church end. I have also discovered an old hive with a stamped metal plate bearing the name Mappledoram, another well-known Cottenham name.

In the past straw skeps (old bee hives) were made in Willingham. Did Cottenham have any industry associated with bees? Currently a company at the Maltings, Millfields, imports wax and processes it into polish and other items. Is there any other?

I await your help.

Simon Wilson, 9 Church Close, Cottenham. 01954 251105.

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RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Our thanks to those of you who were able to attend our Meeting on 22nd February and for your continued support.

You will recall our introducing the concept of 'Landbank' in order to provide the land to facilitate Landswap and land for affordable housing. Full details are given below.

LandBank: A minimal-cost, fast-track, solution to the issue of unlawful development by Gypsies and Travellers.

How does it work?

- Local authorities advertise in their local papers for landowners to offer one to three acres of their land for inclusion on a LandBank Register.
- Local authorities then decide, before registration and after dialogue with local communities, on the granting of planning permission for small (to a maximum of 18 pitches), well-managed and controlled, sites.
- Travellers with legitimate reason for moving into an area can then negotiate the purchase of land with outline planning permission with the relevant landowner at pre-set prices.
- Travellers must then put in a detailed planning application prior to moving onto the land but may expect a local authority decision within 14 working days.
- Retrospective planning applications (after travellers have moved onto a site) will not be necessary in areas where LandBank has been adopted. It means an end to unlawful development and encampment!

Why LandBank:

- LandBank offers a solution for the future and for the past.
- In future it will offer the settled community an opportunity to have a say in development in their back yard in much the same way that they would have a say if a housing development was proposed.
- For settled communities blighted by unlawful development, it identifies the land for the concept of LandSwap which is currently the only retrospective solution for restoring community balance. (This is something the Cottenham travellers have already accepted but requests for SCDC to consider same have fallen on deaf ears).
- LandBank will help protect the Human Rights of both the settled and the travelling community.
- LandBank allows for settled communities to influence the development of small sites without the pressure and stress associated with dealing with complex issues when travellers have already moved in.
- LandBank reduces the need for local authorities to exercise expensive and protracted legal options to try and remove illegal traveller encampments.
- LandBank will prevent travellers from using Human Rights legislation to overturn the planning legislation which the settled community is bound by.
- LandBank allows a quick adoption of new Government guidance which seeks to obligate local authorities to provide, or facilitate the provision of, land for Gypsies & Travellers.

The benefits from LandBank may be wider than first imagined.

- Landowners will only be permitted to offer for registration and sale through LandBank a maximum of three acres every five years, and the sale price will be capped at £20,000 per acre.
- It is recommended that in acknowledgement of landowners' support for the scheme Local Authorities should look to allow a one-off sale of two extra acres for normal commercial development. Local Authorities should also ask Government to classify the income from first year sales at £20,000 per acre as 'tax exempt'.
- Landowners should be attracted by the scheme as it assures a favourable return on investment (better still with tax concessions).
- Gypsies & Travellers should find land at a cost of £3000/£4000 per pitch generally affordable and most acceptable.
- The biggest benefit falls, perhaps, to the Local Authorities, as it is anticipated that land registered will be well in excess of the needs of the travelling community.

Land registered is to be 'used':

- a) with first priority to the resettlement, via LandSwap, of those living on unlawful developments.
- b) second priority to meeting the accommodation needs of all other Gypsies & Travellers in a district looking to buy their own plots and to the provision of public and transit sites.

(Expert opinion suggests that the total land needs from a) + b) is 1000 acres nationwide.)

- c) all excess land (which will likely be substantial) can be used for the provision of affordable housing.
- LandBank recognises the rights and needs of Gypsies & Travellers, it allows local authorities to control the size of sites yet affords accommodation for all. It arrests the growth of unlawful development and should henceforth enable all authorities to defend public and private land without fear of breaching Human Rights.

Rick Bristow

CULTURE VULTURES

Missed that fantastic exhibition again or no-one to go with who's really interested?

Why not join the 'Culture Vultures'!

Stuck for someone to go out with to the cinema, that art exhibition, concerts, comedy, gigs, the ballet, the theatre or even London's West End, in fact anything vaguely cultural with a twist!

Interested? Well the 'Culture Vultures' are a group of people who want to participate in culture but never seem to get round to it. We intend to go out in the local area, Cambridge and London to enjoy the cornucopia of arts entertainment available in these great cities. If you are interested please contact us, Sarah and Yaa at yaa.s@virgin.net. First get together is on Sunday 17th April at The Cambridge Arts Picturehouse Bar, Regent Street Cambridge at 7pm. Hope to see you there!

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Northstowe

With the Christmas break well and truly over, we are now able to start hammering out the policies which will start to shape the development at Oakington / Longstanton for the new town of Northstowe.

Two full council meetings, dealing specifically with Northstowe policies, have already taken place this year where the general approach following the public consultation process has been agreed. Some key policies will have a direct effect on Cottenham, not least the proposed arrangements for road access into the town, and the method of handling the surface water run off.

The road access issue was probably the most difficult one of all the policies to nail down. The difficulty centred on whether or not to provide a road access into the town from either Cottenham Road – Westwick, Station Road – Oakington (i.e. using the current Saturday Market entrance), or to have neither of these road access points.

The Cottenham Road – Westwick option was rejected as it would have meant an additional crossing of the infamous Guided Bus route. The County Council were vehemently opposed to this crossing, and coupled with the impact on the surrounding countryside and the vast increase in cost associated with building a bridge to span the Guided Bus, this option was rejected.

Debate then focused on a road access at Station Road, Oakington. It was felt that this would have a severe impact on the traffic rat-running from Northstowe through Oakington to Cambridge, and would also create a large amount of rat running traffic through Westwick, Cottenham and Histon and on into Cambridge. Conversely though, there would also be an impact on the traffic through Oakington if no access was provided on this side of the village, as any traffic coming from Cottenham destined for the new town would ultimately need to go through Oakington to gain access from the A14 side of the village.

Clearly it is a finely balanced issue, and the decision that was opted for was to have no road access into the new town at either Cottenham Road, Westwick or Station Road, Oakington. However, there is still the opportunity that this policy could be challenged (by the developer) when the Area Action Plan is laid before the Inspector at the Public Enquiry. My own view on this one is that if we do not provide an access road and we get it wrong, then although it won't be easy, we can always put an access road in later on. However, if we put the road in, and we get it wrong, we certainly can't take it away again! I feel on balance it is better not to have the road access here at this time.

The surface water drainage issue was somewhat easier to decide upon. My own view is that we ought not to restrict ourselves to any one of the four surface water drainage options detailed in the public consultation, but to allow ourselves to select any number (or indeed all) of the options put forward. We all know how devastating it can be to have

homes flooded, and my own view is that this is one area in which we can afford to adopt an 'overkill' attitude. It is with this in mind that I have already had meetings with the Environment Agency to discuss the feasibility of hybrid type drainage schemes, and I'm pleased to report that the EA are of the same mind, and have tentatively suggested a combination of balancing ponds between Oakington and the A14 (to hold up surface water coming through Oakington and then onto Cottenham and Rampton) together with an additional 'Cut' skirting Oakington to the north, thus intercepting water coming along the ditches adjacent to the Oakington / Longstanton Road. These measures, coupled with the on-site balancing ponds proposed by the developers will (we are told) reduce the run off from the site to less than it is now, with it being undeveloped. Current run-off levels are understood to be around 5 litres per second per hectare, and the developers are quoting a run off rate of 3 litres per second per developed hectare.

I must say though, I was greatly encouraged by the Environment Agency's confidence in the drainage system being proposed by the developers, and I am hopeful that we will, in the end, be able to mitigate against any additional surface water run-off. However, as with all things, time will tell. The initial indications though are encouraging.

Simon Edwards

Traveller Issues

At the time of writing, another public meeting by the CRA has just been held. While we share the concerns expressed by many residents at this meeting and understand the sense of frustration at the apparent lack of action by SCDC, steps have been and are being taken to address these concerns.

Previously we, your local members, in response to the request from residents and the CRA to reduce the number of unauthorised travellers on the site, were involved in preparations to take forward direct action on unauthorised plots at Victoria View, Smithy Fen with the support of full Council. However, the plots identified were subject to a planning appeal received after the decision to pursue direct action, and consistent with a High Court ruling in November 2004, SCDC cannot take direct enforcement action until the outcome of the respective planning enquiry is known. Unfortunately the volume of planning appeals with the Planning Inspectorate means a significant delay to this enquiry, however a tentative date for August 2005 has been suggested. Many people are critical of the amount of costs that SCDC have incurred on traveller issues, however these costs (approximately £200k for 04/05) are mainly attributable to the planning appeals and it is because of the flaws in planning law that the Council has had to spend this sum.

We need a change to current planning laws if we are going to be able to resolve unauthorised traveller sites development not only in Cottenham but throughout the UK. Currently, SCDC makes more provision for travellers than many other District Councils. We are lobbying for a national approach to

continued on next page

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traveller issues and planning policy in order to keep sites to a reasonable size, being able to identify suitable sites for authorised development so that consideration can be given to the impact on the local environment, local facilities and services. A revision to the DoE Circular 1/94 'Gypsy Sites and Planning' has just been released by the ODPM titled 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites' and a response is currently being prepared. This revised document has many shortcomings, it places too much reliance on existing enforcement powers which have proved inadequate, it makes no recommendation on the size of traveller sites, it does not help to spread the load across councils (thereby helping to create a 'honey-pot' effect in councils that are already doing more than their fair share and will not help us in Cottenham).

So what have we been doing?

- Lobbying government by calling for a duty for all councils to make provision for traveller needs.
- Responding to ODPM consultations, including the Select Committee report.
- Lobbying local MPs and raising concerns at Local Government Association meetings.
- SCDC are represented on a specific Government task force looking at traveller issues.
- In accordance with the Housing Act 2004, SCDC are working with the travelling communities to identify their current and future needs.
- Enforcement notices have been issued on plots at Victoria View.
- Breach of injunction notices are still in place on a number of plots at Victoria View whereby any traveller who occupies one of these plots is issued a letter informing them that if they remain on the plots they will be subject to committal proceedings.
- Regular counts take place on Smithy Fen – the latest conducted on 10 February found 56 touring caravans and static caravans on authorised plots and 49 touring caravans and 12 static caravans on unauthorised plots.
- Enforcement officers regularly visit the site.
- Travellers liaison forums take place involving travellers, parish councillors and Officers of SCDC to promote greater community cohesion and to ensure that travellers issues are being fairly considered.

At the CRA meeting this week the main course of action that was proposed for SCDC to take is to pursue the idea of Land

Swap/Land bank. What does this mean? The proposal is that SCDC identifies with local land owners plots of land for sale which would be suitable for development into authorised plots for travellers. This land would have planning permission agreed prior to development. The travellers would buy this land from the land bank and be able to settle there. Do you approve this course of action? If SCDC does this on its own, i.e. this is not a directive from Government and not approved, SCDC would be the only authority to undertake this type of approach, then every other illegally-sited traveller in the country could in theory come to South Cambs to buy land and have it swapped for land with planning permission.

Government figures recently released under FOI show that Britain has around 15,000 gypsy and traveller sites. At the last count, 5694 of these were Council camps, 4814 were legal private sites and 4232 were illegal. So potentially we could see an influx of 4000 plus travellers if we were the only authority to adopt land swap. There are 34 wards in our district so that would mean that each ward would have to provide for 117 odd sites!

If you want us to pursue this action to become the first and only authority to develop land swap then let us know – tell us what you want! We represent the whole community not just those that attend public meetings and we are keen to ensure that a fair balance is maintained between all issues raised that concern our immediate community. If you don't agree with this approach then let us know what other course of action you would like us to adopt.

Communications between Cottenham Parish Council, the CRA and SCDC are on-going and regular meetings will be held over the forthcoming months. It is important that we work together to try to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all residents in our community.

Jacky Dixon

The two articles were approved by all three District Councillors for Cottenham, Oakington and Westwick.

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FEN EDGE CINEMA CLUB

The cinema club has got off to a good start this year with all films shown proving popular. We started off in **January** with Peter Sellers and Terry-Thomas in *I'm All Right Jack* and in February watched **Buster Keaton's** classic silent *The General* in a double bill with **Albert Lamorisse's** enchanting *The Red Balloon*, also silent although made in 1956. At the time of writing we hadn't had either of our meetings in **March**. First, there is **Jacques Tati's** whimsical and very French take on the world *Playtime*. This is the first time we have featured a director twice as we saw **Tati's Jour de Fete** in our first season. Secondly we have **Alexander Mackendrick's** 1955 *The Ladykillers*. For those who have seen Tom Hanks' recent version, the comparison should prove interesting. In **April**, we will see the **Coen Brothers' The Man Who Wasn't There**. As we've already seen one of the **Coens' films in Fargo**, they aren't far behind **Tati** in being the second directorial team to be screened twice in our esteemed club!

Then in **May** we have the Brazilian *Cidade de Deus* and in **June** **Mike Nicholls' version of the farce La Cage aux Folles, The Birdcage**. **July's** offering is Jack Nicholson in *Five Easy Pieces*. As usual there will be no meeting in August, but we'll be back again in **September** with Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney in *Two for the Road*.

Please note that some meetings are on Tuesdays – keep in touch with *Cottenham Newsletter's* village diary for dates or with the club's website www.fencinema.org.uk

Steve Howie
smh@howies.fsnet.co.uk

PCSO

For the past two years Cottenham has never been far from the front pages of the *Cambridge Evening News* nor some of the national papers. The main theme has tended to highlight the current Traveller issues whilst at the same time painting the village as an idyllic place to live.

The recent articles in local and national press had the parents of a village youth of 15 years remonstrating with the local PCSO over the issuing of a GAP (Guardian Advisory Programme) letter for underage smoking in a public place.

As the Cottenham Residents Association, we can appreciate the frustration of the parents, and others who have witnessed policing inconsistencies and who see this as just another example of inequality under the law, BUT if we are to challenge the inconsistency effectively we must be able to demonstrate that we support the laws which we seek to have applied to others. Steve Gilbey can't be in two places at once and his decisions will not suit all of us all of the time, but we believe he works in the best interests of the village and we likewise believe he deserves our full support.

A Firth.
For Cottenham Residents Association Committee.

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Reflections... – by Moyra A. Borg

When I lost Jade, I decided that I would not look for another cat, but just wait and see what happened. Cats often tend to just 'arrive' at the right time. Well, a few weeks ago, a friend told me that her elderly uncle was very ill in hospital. He was not expected to come home again, so I was asked if I would like to adopt his cat. I said I would, though I had never seen it. As I was walking towards the bungalow I thought, what if I just don't take to the cat? Fortunately that didn't happen. The door was opened and before me was a very large and exceedingly beautiful creature, with long, creamy, golden fawn coloured fur. He was a really friendly character. I was told that he was called Billy.

I took him back home with me. When I called out his name 'Billy' to him though, he pretended not to recognise it, so I renamed him Abanazar after the 'baddie' in the pantomime Aladdin which we had just performed in Waterbeach. Abanazar seemed to be just right for him as it sounds appropriately grand and mystical. Also, he is mischievous so it suits him for that reason as well. I kept him indoors for four weeks until he had become accustomed to his new home. I kept the cat flap locked. This annoyed him as he sat there looking out through it and trying to prise it open. At night I always keep my bathroom window ajar as it only opens about five inches wide and will not open further. One morning, Abanazar was nowhere to be seen. He cannot get through there I thought, as I looked at the tiny gap in the window. Just then, I noticed some golden fur attached to the brickwork! He must have squeezed himself through the narrow opening! I then heard him scratching at the locked cat flap trying to get in. I held the cat flap open and in he

squeezed. He gave me a haughty look and went over to his dish to look for some tuna fish. The same thing happened again the following night. On both occasions he returned though, before the crack of dawn, scratching at the cat flap unable to open it as it was locked, to keep him in!

One morning, just after half past five, I was rudely awakened by a heavy and painful thud on my face. Abanazar had tried to leap over my head to jump onto the windowsill above my bed head. He had landed on the curtain instead and had then slipped and fallen off. He landed on the left side of my face and he was quite a weight! I think that he had heard the 'birdies' tweeting away irritatingly in the gutter overhead.

I took him to the vet and he was given a protective jab and a microchip in his neck. I fear that he may wander off and get lost; though to date he hasn't done that. The lure of the tuna fish may get the better of him!

Sadly, his previous owner died shortly after I had adopted his cat. I can tell that Abanazar (Billy) has been looked after very well in the past. He loves to be stroked and talked to and I make a fuss of him all the time. I hope he is happy. He seems to be, as he does lots of roly polys on my carpet. He is going to need quite a bit of grooming though as he has long fur. My life has taken a turn for the better and my heart rises now as I come home. That says it all for me.

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SUGARCRAFT CLUB

I am a member of a prize-winning club in Cottenham that I doubt many of you know exists: the Cottenham Sugar Craft Club. We meet the second Monday of every month at the Village College. We are a small group of people who enjoy decorating cakes. Every month we have a demonstration and hopefully pick up some new skills and exchange tips.

Each autumn, our club enters a table in the East Anglian Sugarcraft Exhibition held at the Village College. Despite our small size we have been very successful gaining First Prize for the last couple of years, the most recent entry being Hogwarts Halloween including Cauldrons, pumpkins and mountain trolls. Our success does not mean that we are all experts, in fact quite the reverse, as one of the criteria is that a full range of abilities is demonstrated.

At Christmas we make cakes that the Salvation Army distributes to the elderly of Cottenham.

We always welcome new members and visitors to our meetings. Coming up in May we have Lindy Smith doing a demonstration on modelling, very useful if you'd like to have a go at producing a special birthday cake for someone. We will list future demonstrations in the village diary.

If you would like to know more please contact me by email: helen@mcleman.com or on 01954 203647.

Helen Mcleman

THANK YOU

The amount raised at our concert at the Village College on February 5th was a magnificent £738.39. Our total was boosted by a further £140 from donations collected at the counter at Shauns Newsagents. Every penny will go to the Asian tsunami appeal as highlighted in the previous *Newsletter* by Councillor Jacky Dixon and Julie Groves.

Please remember the band will be on the village Green on Sunday 26th June 3:30pm to 5:00pm for a programme of light music and from 6:00pm to 7:00pm for an hour of popular hymn singing. This is our contribution to the Fen Edge Family Festival.

On October 15th we shall hold our annual feast band concert when the winner of the junior composing competition will be announced and presented with a prize generously given by The Village Society.

Looking further ahead, by popular demand, we shall hold a carol concert again in the Village College on Saturday 17 December.

We look forward to your continued support.

Colin Watson

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LIFE ON SMITHY FEN

With all that has happened in the last two years it is natural for many to imagine Smithy Fen as an awful place, I have even seen it called a 'no go area'. Nothing could be further from the truth, it is a really wonderful place to live or visit. I suspect there are many villagers who have never ventured onto the fen.

Smithy Fen is several thousand acres bounded by the Old West River, the Smithy Fen Engine Drain and the Cottenham Lode. The travellers site is 20 acres, so Smithy Fen is not just a travellers site it is much much more.

So why do I say it's a wonderful place? The main reason is undoubtedly the friendly helpful people of Cottenham. As new farmers, the help and support we have had has been truly wonderful and we have made many very good friends. I know they think we are crazy to take on a farm in the present agricultural climate, and also being organic just reinforces their opinion, but it doesn't stop them giving us a helping hand.

Then there are the local characters who add so much colour to the place, always ready with a story of times past. They are also very useful to an organic farmer as they can often advise on how things were done before chemicals became available.

And then there is the natural environment, the first thing visitors notice when they come to see us is the silence; this

is so precious these days when it is hard to get away from the noise of traffic. Of course there is noise but generally it's the call of a curlew or the squawk of a pheasant. If one is lucky in the evenings, barn owls can be seen hunting along the ditches and only last week I saw three short eared owls hunting together. When out working in the fields it is always a delight to see the brown hare racing ahead of the tractor until he stops and his wonderful camouflage makes him disappear.

There are also so many things to get involved in: the two I really enjoy are the Yesteryear Road Run (17th April this year by the way) and the Ploughing Match. These are a smashing blend of old machinery and interesting characters, a paradise for an old petrol-head like me. The Yesteryear Road Run is pretty hard to miss in the village but I suspect the Ploughing Match is only known to the farming community and a few other enthusiasts. It is usually held on Smithy Fen on the first Saturday in October; do try to find time to come and see some real experts at the craft and at least one rookie, yours truly.

Many may not look at it this way, but even the traveller people lend colour to the place. Last year at hay-making on a field next to the camp we had the pleasure of the traveller children giving us a 'helping' hand. It was great fun, they behaved themselves (mostly) and we all enjoyed ourselves.

We welcome visitors to our farm, so if you would like to see what organic farming is all about please give me a call to arrange a visit. Bring your children and they can see pigs, hens, cows and horses all enjoying life on Smithy Fen.

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BELLRINGERS

Bell ringing continues to prosper in Cottenham with a particularly social band. Somebody once said that every time you meet a bell ringer you end up in the pub. You don't necessarily drink alcohol, but you can be assured of an interesting and wide-ranging conversation! We had our AGM in February, which gave us an opportunity to review the past year's ringing activities.

The band can call upon 16 ringers, which is above average for a six-bell tower, so we are able to ring for most Sunday services, morning and evening. There have been two new recruits in the year – Grahame Hoskins who is learning from scratch and Zo' DeBarro, an experienced ringer who has recently moved to the village. We rang 12 quarter peals in 2004 – that is 45 minutes of uninterrupted method ringing – and a visiting band rang a 13th one. Notable 'firsts' during the year included first quarter rung in the method Grandsire Doubles by Gerald Walker and first as conductor of Plain Bob Doubles by Steve Howie. The local quarters were conducted by Simon Wilson (5), Kit Kilgour (4), Andrew Snelson (2) and Steve Howie (1). There was one successful peal on 30 December which was dedicated to the victims of the tsunami disaster in Asia and to John Buttifant's 65th birthday earlier in the year. The ringing outing in 2004 was to Essex and Suffolk (thanks to John Buttifant for organising it and to Jenny Bridge for hospitality). The tower welcomed four visiting bands during the year. The Ely District

Association of Church Bell Ringers held its annual striking competition in June at Cottenham and the local team was well represented with two teams and performed well. The term 'striking' refers to ringing well and evenly in relation to each other. The local Beaver group visited the tower in November and the band rang for five weddings during the year.

As the bells were rehung only a couple of years ago, we had a generally quiet year in respect to maintenance until a staple bolt sheared on 3 November. This meant that a clapper broke and fell out of the fifth bell. This made for an interesting practice evening – actually, they're all interesting, but not all in this way – as there was a huge clonk from upstairs as the clapper fell out. Reminds me of the time when, some time before the renovation, I was ringing away happily when I suddenly felt my bell to be much lighter. The rope had broken above me. When I started ringing in 1996, I would have been scared stiff if such an eventuality had come to pass. When it did, I just took it in my stride. Amazing what you can get used to.

We have an interesting outing planned for May when we will glide up the Ouse by motor launch stopping to ring at towers we pass. Should be great fun. One of the pleasures of bell ringing is such an outing, visiting other interesting and often beautiful churches that we would never bother to search out otherwise. This is a repetition of two previous visits, both by ringers at All Saints' but before many of us joined the band, so it's certainly something to look forward to.

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

The ringers have also offered to give conducted tours of the tower during All Saints' flower festival.

As well as the tower bells band, there is also a band of hand bell ringers. In 2004, Cottenham's hand bell ringers rang for one of Cottenham WI's monthly meetings, various nursing homes in Cambridge and Oakington, the Christmas service at All Saints' and at hostleries in Cottenham.

We are always keen to recruit new members to both the tower and hand bell bands. The tower bell practice night is Wednesday at 7:30pm, while the hand bell ringers practise on Monday evenings. Anyone interested? If so, if you contact me on 250823 or smh@howies.fsnet.co.uk. I'll forward your details to the respective band captains, Simon Wilson and Gerald Walker.

The AGM concluded with a prayer offered by Michael Hore, president of the Cottenham ringers in his capacity as rector.

Steve Howie, Ringer

ENVIRONMENT AUDIT GROUP

Spring is coming and Cottenham's hedgerows are breaking into blossom, with the annual display led off from February by the white flowers of blackthorn. The countryside beckons and it's an ideal time to visit the CEAG website – www.cvdg.org/ceag – where you'll find lots of interesting information about the nature of our local landscape, birdlife, flora and more.

In the next few months CEAG will be publishing a colourful booklet – a guide to the local countryside – distilling its various activities over its four-year Local Heritage Initiative funded project. The booklet will be distributed free to every household in the village.

'Landscapes Around Cottenham', Richard Heeps' memorable series of photographs commissioned and owned by CEAG, is currently on show at South Cambridgeshire District Council's offices at Cambourne. They can be viewed there during office hours until June. After this the photos will be available for loan to any local organisation able to give them a suitable showing. Enquiries about the photos, purchase of prints or postcards to 01954 250106 or 01954 250421.

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LETTERS to the Editors

Dear Friends

I hesitate to write yet again to correct misleading information in a Residents' Association report (this time in the February/March *Newsletter*) but, since it refers to me by name, I feel I have little alternative.

Together with my then colleague, Tony Nicholas, I certainly passed on to Mr Bristow in 2003 the legal advice which, as local district councillors, we were given about what could be done to address the growing problems and planning contraventions at Smithy Fen. Like most residents, we were as concerned as he was. However, I certainly did not defend that advice as he alledges.

As I pointed out to him on more than one occasion, we were not lawyers and therefore had little alternative but to be guided by the advice given by the Council's legal department which, after all, exists to guide the council and its members about what remedies the law provides in such situations. Not being lawyers (in common with most councillors), we were not in a position either to defend or criticize that advice.

What we did do was to press consistently for the council to take the toughest and most effective action which the law would allow and, when Mr Bristow suggested that injunctions would provide the most effective remedy, we pressed for their use. We also, incidentally, persuaded senior council officers to hold meetings with Mr Bristow so that his ideas and concerns could be discussed face to face.

I have no wish to tout for 'brownie points' from this sorry situation but, by the time Tony Nicholas and I left the council (and we reported regularly on what was being done through the pages of this *Newsletter*), we had secured the serving of enforcement notices on all the affected land, had persuaded the council to set up a working group to deal specifically with this issue, and had convinced the council to engage specialist legal advice which was already formulating a framework to make injunctive action possible.

Even that specialist advice, however, warned us that injunctions were not the panacea which Mr Bristow seemed to believe them to be. The fact that, as I understand it, the situation on the ground at Smithy Fen has not improved significantly despite the use of injunctive action on part of the site, only serves to underline the point.

Yours sincerely

Rex Collinson

PS I noted with interest the table of results from the Residents' Association questionnaire at the end of their report – but why was there no indication of the number of questionnaires returned compared with the number distributed? (Presumably they were delivered to virtually every house in the village.) Without such information – and the figure for the percentage returned – the claim that these results show how the village responded has only dubious validity.

Letters continued on next page

Letters continued from previous page

Dear Editor,

The Chairman of the Residents' Association wrote, in February/March edition of *Cottenham Newsletter*, criticising the actions of SCDC Legal Officer, Mr Chris Taylor.

Mr Bristow bangs on about injunctions and how they should have been employed regarding the situation in Smithy Fen. Well, this was fully explained to him at various meetings held with Chris Taylor and the legal team, as to why injunctive action was 'inappropriate' at that time. I am sure that Mr Bristow gave the legal experts the benefit of his legal knowledge on why he considered it most appropriate to pursue injunctive action. But there again, perhaps SCDC were out of touch with legal reality.

Legal advice on injunctive action was put to the Council's Development and Conservation Control Committee and was debated and finally accepted by all Councillors. It would have been irresponsible for an elected body to have blatantly ignored legal advice. As the traveller issues progressed a window of opportunity arose in which injunctive action could be taken; and so it was.

Incidentally, this did not take place after I stood down from the Council, as Mr Bristow would have it believed. Indeed at SCDC Cabinet meeting of 4 June 2004, I strongly supported direct action on the 22 plots which were covered by the injunction.

Later that year lawyers for the travellers were granted an injunction against SCDC forbidding the Council to take enforcement action. Cottenham Residents Association welcomed the ruling not to evict. However, on 25 January 2005, CRA said that the Council should have gone ahead with taking eviction action on the 22 plots, despite the pending planning appeal. At the last CRA public meeting, eviction was a no-no. So, first they said no, then yes, and finally no again.

My stance on the issue of unlawful encampment at Smithy Fen was, and remained so, until I left the Council, that eviction, through due process of law, should be paramount. Opinions expressed in the Parish Plan questionnaire, from over 60 per cent of Cottenham residents, suggested that the vast majority would like to see them evicted. It appears however, the CRA have a contrary view and see eviction as not the solution to the problem.

A complaint was even made to the Ombudsman, from a member of the CRA, accusing SCDC of maladministration, arising from insufficient action/inappropriate action. The evidence submitted was lengthy: failure to use ASBO's, section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, etc. However, the complaint floundered and was dismissed. The Ombudsman did not

agree that there was any inaction nor indeed, any fault in the Council's decision making process.

A lot of energy has been expended on trying to resolve Cottenham's traveller problem. CRA have worked hard in an endeavour to put forward proposals that could possibly solve the issues. One may or may not agree with what has been said or done. However, acknowledgement must be given to those who have tried. The ball is now in SCDC's court, but all sides must try to work together for the good of Cottenham.

Tony Nicholas

Dear Editor

Regretfully, after 27 years, time has caught up with us, and we have, reluctantly, decided to give up holding our annual Coffee Morning for Leukemia Research.

Over these years we reckon that, as a result of the generosity of Cottenham's residents we have raised around £10,000, and we have appreciated the annual support.

If anybody still wishes to support Leukemia Research, we will forward any donations which come through the door, or are given to us.

Joyce & Henry Fleck
5 Pelham Way

Dear Editor,

The problem of litter in the village is not what it may appear to be: solely a problem of youth. No one is born a litter-dropper or a yobbo – it is simply because they have not been brought up and educated properly.

Part of the problem is that the authorities, whose duty it is to keep our streets clean, appear to spend their time talking to each other or passing bits of paper to and fro, and then sit back thinking they have solved the problem. The truth is that they have made matters worse.

What needs to be done is simple and costs nothing: bring up and teach the children to be good citizens and punish immediately those that defy the law, which will be a very tiny minority if the first part is fulfilled.

A short story: during the 1951 Suez emergency, my regiment was stationed about five miles from the port of Suez in a disused WWII camp. My department lines were about the size of the village recreation ground, which we cleaned every day. One morning I received a note from my CO: "Just inspected your lines. Knee deep in filth". We went out immediately and scoured the lines. We found an empty cigarette

Letters continued on next page



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Letters continued from previous page

packet and matchbox, some cigarette ends and spent matches. "Knee deep in filth" – I wonder what he would have said of the village streets.

Walter Adams

Dear Editor

Siobhan Taylor is quite right in her letter in the last issue on the sad subject of her father's death when she says what a welcoming place Cottenham is towards newcomers. I arrived here 11 years ago with my family and have always found it to be so. It's still the sort of place where if I meet someone in the street it's rare not to exchange greetings even if we don't know each other. Long may it continue so.

Yours sincerely
Steve Howie

Dear Editor

The residents of Cottenham have spoken, or at least those that braved the freezing weather to attend the public meeting on Tuesday 22nd February.

Working with South Cambridgeshire District Council to lobby the Government to change the law to prevent travellers setting up large unlawful sites was the order of the day.

The concensus was for the Cottenham Residents Association to work with, and not against, South Cambridgeshire District Council to resolve the growing problem of an expanding traveller site on Smithy Fen.

As a founder member of the association, I will do as you ask to the best of my ability. However, I have a strong personal belief that SCDC has very little intention of resolving Cottenham's predicament, certainly not at the expense of inconveniencing other communities in the district, and I would like to share my reservations with you.

It is my firm belief that the traveller site will move from 38 legal plots to 104 legal plots over the next few years and that we will then see expansion onto the 18 acres that a family of Irish travellers bought next to the current site. That will hold a further 90 plots. We are moving towards 72 plots at the moment, with 34 more plots currently the subject of planning applications and appeals.

It is also my belief that there is nothing decisive SCDC is prepared to do to prevent Smithy Fen becoming a traveller super site. It is more interested in passing the buck onto Central Government.

Certainly the Government has failed to grasp this particular nettle and there is a strong argument for Cottenham residents, travellers and SCDC jointly lobbying Number 10

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Letters for publication may be sent to the Editors, and should include the name and address of the sender, although this may be omitted from publication if requested. Please keep correspondence short and topical. Please note that the Editors may use their discretion regarding publication, and their decision is final. The views expressed by correspondents and other contributors are their own and are not necessarily shared by the Editors.

Deadline
FOR NEXT ISSUE
25th APRIL

and/or John Prescott. However, the immediate solution to Cottenham's problems, lies firmly in the hands of SCDC!

Firstly, before I outline the reasons for my lack of faith in SCDC, I would be absolutely delighted if I was to be proved wrong. With that caveat, here are my reservations:

- The predicament we find ourselves in here in Cottenham is entirely the fault of SCDC. By continuing to refuse to follow Government guidance (Circular 1/94 back in 1994) and identify land for travellers to buy, the door remains opened for travellers to win planning appeals by claiming their human rights because they have nowhere else to go if ordered to leave.
- SCDC has displayed little interest so far in identifying land for travellers to buy in the district to alleviate the demand for traveller accommodation. Its actions to date, or rather its inaction, all point to SCDC wanting to contain the problem in Cottenham. Why else have they not complied with Government Circular 1/94.
- Having spent many months cutting the Cottenham Residents Association and key Cottenham District Council representatives out of the loop on traveller issues, Daphne Spink and the SCDC Cabinet suddenly wanted to open dialogue with the Residents Association. I believe this was a direct result of an overwhelming majority of people at the meeting voting for her resignation and that of key Cabinet members, the chief executive and other senior paid officials in the run-up to a general election.
- SCDC is more interested in talk than action. At its heart, this issue is very simple – identify small pockets of land for travellers to buy for themselves. This is a low cost option when compared with the hundreds of thousands of pounds of our Council Taxpayers money being spent on legal bills and eviction plans. It is outrageous that two years after the expansion of Smithy Fen began, SCDC now wants to sit down and talk.
- To date, SCDC has dismissed any dialogue on the Cottenham Residents Association proposed solution, Land Swap and its sister solution Land Bank. Both are eminently sensible proposals, devised by Rick Bristow and myself, and they deserve close scrutiny. What they have received so far is a blizzard of public knee-jerk rejections. There has been no approach from SCDC to discuss the proposals with the authors.

While I keep an open mind about the benefits of being sucked into yet more discussion with SCDC, I remain convinced that ultimately a satisfactory solution will come only when the people of Cottenham exert themselves in this matter.

Neither the Government, SCDC, nor the travellers can be relied on to protect our Human Rights. It is something we must do for ourselves!

Terry Brownbill
Founder Member, Cottenham Residents Association

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**Contact Peter Robertson on
01954 200080**

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police	Community Beat Office.....	01223 358966
Doctors	Dr. Julie Gould, 188 High Street	250079
	Dr. M. Grande, 42 Telegraph Street	251180
Community Nurses	Answerphone or between 1.00 – 2.00 pm	251071
Cottenham CareCar	Co-ordinator, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm	251837
Cottenham Day Centre.....	Mrs. M. Gilbey, 45 Victory Way	251802
Cottenham Toy Library	Karen Wigley	252339
Dentist	Mr. Faber, Old Telephone Exchange, 40 Margett Street.....	251696
Chemist	Co-operative Pharmacy Cottenham, 222 High Street.....	250556
Chiropodist	J.R. Kain, 13 Pelham Close	251143
Osteopath	Roger Giddings & Associates. Physic (Oakington Therapy Centre) Oakington Road, Girton. email: reception@physic.co.uk	01223 237459
Veterinary Surgeon	R. Hughes-Parry, 66 High Street	252122
Schools	Cottenham Village College and Community Office	288944
	County Primary, Lambs Lane	250227
Under Ones Group		250609
Pre-School	Ladybirds Pre-School, Recreation Ground	250891
Out of School Club		250025
Scouts	Carol Gerrard (Scout Group Secretary)	01954 202990
Council Offices	Cambridgeshire Direct – County & District Council Enquiries	08450 450500
Parish Council.....	Clerk – Julie Groves, 44 Victory Way. e-mail: julie.groves@ntlworld.com	202928
District Councillors.....	Jacky Dixon, e-mail: cllr.dixon@scams.gov.uk ...Home: 252083, Mobile: 07919 575190 Simon Edwards	Home: 01223 233682, Mobile: 07711 079089
	Tim Wotherspoon, e-mail: tim.wotherspoon@uk.uuemail.com	252108
County Councillor	Peter Stroude, e-mail: peter@stroude.fsbusiness.co.uk	01223 237984
British Red Cross	Cambridge Office	01223 354434
Citizens Advice	CAB, 72/74 Newmarket Road, Cambridge	08701 264010
Social Services	Histon Team	01223 718011
Mobile Warden Service		251182
NSPCC	Cottenham Area Team, Peterborough	01733 558245
RSPCA	Area Number, Peterborough	0870 5555999
Samaritans	Cambridge Centre	01223 364455
Railway Station	Cambridge, Passenger Enquiries	0845 7484950
Driving Instruction	TOPS Driving School	252239
Taxi	1st Stop Private Hire	01954 261026 or 07919 385702
Taxi	Pegasus Taxi	261324
Library	Margett Street.....	273322
Library Doorstep Service	Hilary Firth	01223 718358
Parish Church.....	The Rectory, 6 High Street	250454
Baptist Church.....	Jeff Boyden, 72 Lyles Road	250985
Catholic Church	Fr David Paul, St Laurences Church, 91 Milton Road, Cambridge	01223 704640
Methodist Church	The Rev'd. Cynthia Hardiman	01223 700778
Salvation Army	Majors Ian and Barbara Fawcett, 15 Pelham Close	250524
Royal British Legion	Matthew Baldry, 123 Coolidge Gardens. e-mail:matthew.baldry@tesco.net	202797
Cottenham Brass Band.....	Colin Watson, 39a Victory Way, Cottenham	250813

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DISTRIBUTION: Paul Redman, Tel: 01954 203598

PRINTED BY: TARGET PRINT LTD, Broad Lane, Cottenham, Tel: 251189 Fax: 252080
e-mail: print@targetprint.org



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