

The Ovington Oracle

August 2021

COVID-19

Most legal COVID restrictions have now gone, but as the politicians and scientists have said, COVID has not gone. The emphasis now is on 'personal responsibility'.

As a society personal responsibility and collective responsibility intertwine as demonstrated by the advice on mask wearing offered by the scientists at the COVID briefings.



Chief Medical Officer, Prof Chris Whitty said he would wear a mask:

- "... in any situation that is indoors and crowded, or indoors with close proximity to other people. And that is because masks help protect other people."
- "if required to by any competent authority."
- "And the third reason is if someone else was uncomfortable if I did not wear a mask – as a point of common courtesy."

Chief scientist, Sir Patrick Vallance, endorsed that reasoning and added:

"Masks are most effective at preventing somebody else catching the disease from you, and they have some effect to prevent you catching it."



Every UK adult should have been offered a vaccine, accepting the vaccine not only benefits the individual it also benefits everyone else around them. If you haven't yet received your vaccine please dial 119 to book your place.

Local COVID-19 information: ovingtonclerk.wixsite.com/home

National COVID-19: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Village Information: ovington-village.org.uk

Parish Council: ovingtonclerk.wixsite.com/home

Oracle back copies: ovington.org.uk/oracle

Contents

In memory of Robert "Rob" Stone.....	2
What about electric bikes?.....	3
Village Hall.....	4
Parish Council (PC).....	5
Rainfall.....	7
Church News.....	8
Farewell to Ovington.....	9
Gardener's Delight.....	10
The story of: 'Night Lights'.....	11
And finally	12

In memory of Robert "Rob" Stone

Village

Our condolences and thoughts are with Cath & John on the recent loss of their Son Robert.

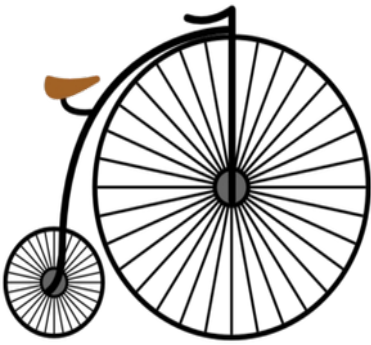
The funeral has already taken place.

Donations are welcome in his memory for the Priscilla Bacon Lodge Hospice and can be sent to Andrew Francis Funeral Services, Middle Street, Watton.



What about electric bikes?

Chris Lewis



I have for some time been considering an electric bike, both as a means of keeping up with my younger friends when out on the occasional recreational ride and as an insurance against the time I may no longer be considered safe in control of a motor vehicle.

Being adverse to spending a shed load of money on a new, ready built item, I investigated the many kits that are available to convert an existing machine. These have the advantage of cheapness and being fun to build but, with a battery, will still set you back the best part of £500. A further snag is that many have features that would require both tax and insurance in the UK.

As often happens, I was offered a cheap second hand one which had failed to sell owing to some technical issues. Undaunted I took on the challenge and, as a last resort, read the manual. Nothing wrong with it!

It is a small wheel city bike, I would have preferred larger wheels for country roads, but it folds up easily to go in a car boot. As it is road legal the maximum speed when power assisted is 15.5 mph, scary enough, it has three levels of assist and six gears. On our mostly flat Norfolk roads I find the lowest level and top gear fine most of the time which helps with the range, I don't go far yet as I fear pedalling a relatively heavy bike a long way home with a flat battery.

Shopping seems a little impractical as, apart from having to brave the A1075, there is little room for large panniers owing to the small wheels and there are few places to safely secure it in town when I get there; although the battery can easily be removed which, in my case is worth more than the rest of the bike.

In conclusion, it is fun to use but perhaps not as practical as a cheap old bike which is easy to maintain and can be left around without the fear of it going missing.

Village Hall

Christine Reilly

The heat took its toll on numbers at the village hall AGM on Thursday. Either that or there was something unmissable on TV! Attendees numbered Committee 8 – Public 2.

After the Chairman's and Treasurer's Reports came inspection of the 2020 accounts. Then the new Committee was elected as follows:

Chairman: Ed Reilly,
Vice-Chair: Jan Cockburn,
Secretary: Marie Ana Cave,
Treasurer: Christine Reilly,
Head of Maintenance: Don Clark,
Parish Council Representative: David Welsted,
Committee: Bob Cave, Sam and Mike Howes, Chris Lewis.

Gill Welsted has stepped down for this year and we would like to thank her for all she has done on the Committee.

The accounts can be viewed on the noticeboard inside the hall. Without the government COVID grant, we would have made a loss of £908.72 for the year. However, the grant has given us a buffer against future loss due to lack of fundraising events, which will certainly be needed for 2021.

We are going to hold our first coffee morning on Monday 2 August (with seats outside, depending on the weather, if you prefer) with a view to gradually opening up the hall. It will depend on the public response whether this will become a weekly, fortnightly or even monthly event. The committee will decide at their next meeting during August what number and type of events could safely be scheduled in the hall during the rest of the year. Hopefully we can look forward to events such as the Ovington Bazaar before the end of this year.

Although it is no longer a legal requirement, Test & Trace have requested that anyone coming to the village hall sign in, either by the visitor's book or the QR code.

Parish Council (PC)

TB

A report from the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held 21 July at the Village Hall. As the weather was so pleasant the meeting took place outside the Hall, near the Committee room.

Correspondence

- Resident request for 40mph around A1075 bends. Councillors confirmed they have had meetings with Norfolk Highways on multiple occasions making a similar suggestion. A review of the A1075 occurred last year and the 50mph section will extend from Watton all the way through to Shipdham, but there was no change to the speed limit at the bends.
- Councillors noted the *Diocese of Norwich* tree survey.
- NCC Rangers will visit soon to perform simple maintenance jobs in the village, one suggested was pot holes in Church Road (Water End Farm corner). Other suggestions for a work list to the Clerk

Planning

Applications

3PL/2021/1029/HOU – Ground and first floor garage extensions to create store room and ancillary annex. Wagtail House Dereham Road

Councillors had no issues with the building which has negligible visual impact. Councillors queried the term “ancillary annex”, which was felt to mean a subordinate part of the existing dwelling, but the plan indicated a completely self contained unit. If this became an informal rental space, for example via AirBnB, it may have an adverse impact on vehicles accessing the A1075.

Notifications

3PL/2021/0241/F: Chanticleer, Annex Dereham Road – change of use of annex building and land to separate dwelling. REFUSED by Breckland Council

Finance and Precept

Councillors agreed payments to be made (full details on website)

Councillors noted that the large ‘Cycle to work scheme’ payment is offset by a reduction in wages for the Clerk over the next 12-months and offers

a financial benefit to both the Clerk and Council as detailed in the precept position document circulated before the meeting.

Highways / village issues

- Surface of Trod
Our new Highways Engineer will be invited to visit to look at this and other village issues
- Memorial Tree in Crown Crescent
The plaque from the dead tree has been moved to the remaining good tree. It was agreed to replace the tree in the autumn, with suggestions invited for a species.
- Road-side logs (Carbrooke Rd)
Cllr Welsted reported he passed the site shortly before the meeting and had observed that only the logs on the south-side had been moved and that they had merely been rolled into the ditch. County Councillor requested to follow up.

Open Forum

Report from County Councillor Bowes:

I haven't had a chance to check that the logs have been removed so I am hoping they have. I haven't got a lot to report other than to flag up the letter from the Rangers, which you will have received and the Parish Partnership Scheme, the details of which you should have also received. Please let me know if any issues arise that I can assist with.

Report from District Councillor Crane:

- The Council's new waste contract in partnership with North Norfolk and Kings Lynn Borough Council with new vehicles which use electric compactors, although it was not possible to have all electric vehicles this time. There is also a new competitive trade waste contract which caters for all sizes of business.
- A Market Town Initiative is underway, starting with Dereham.
- Breckland has started face-to-face Council meetings at Elizabeth House, prior to full unlocking Applewood Hall, Banham and Carnegie Rooms, Thetford were used to provide extra space.
- The inspiring Communities grant funding window opened on 6 April
- The Council has launched a £100k green grants fund to help deliver community projects which help the environment.

Report from TB (as District Councillor):

In an ongoing battle to release sufficient information to allow informed discussion with residents, TB has made an appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about the use of 'commercial confidentiality' to restrict all information on certain subjects. Breckland Council legal officers have acknowledged this is a legitimate matter for consideration and that it would be good to have some guidance from the ICO.

Next meetings:

Wednesday 15 September and 17 November 2021 at 7:30pm at Ovington Village Hall.

Legal documents at: ovingtonclerk.wixsite.com/home

Rainfall

Rod Rumsby



Total for June was 43mm or 1.7" most of which fell on just two days in June.

Total thus far (21st) for July is 37.5mm or 1.5", most of which fell in the first half of the month.

You may have noticed a slight improvement in the weather conditions of late, possibly to the delight of your editor who does suffer from the cold!!!

[Editor: too hot, too hot, send chilled cider urgent!]

Church News

Jean Rockett, Lay Minister



I am pleased to say that we were able to hold our first hymns for a summer evening outside the church. The weather was glorious, as was the singing, which we all thoroughly enjoyed after not being able to sing during lockdown. We did have a few laughs due to one song in particular (Onward Christian Soldiers) being played at a very quick pace which

we struggled to keep in time with. I look forward to seeing you at our next evening service on 8th August. Many thanks to Chris Lewis and Dave Welsted who organised the music and PA system.

The church grounds are looking fantastic, and my thanks go to the wonderful team who have been mowing, trimming, and tidying up the graves. Some of our villagers have taken to looking after a grave or two each. If you have a relative or ancestor who was buried in our churchyard, and would like to put a few flowers on them, that would be quite acceptable. I think that our churchyard is the best kept churchyard in Norfolk. Perhaps we can get the EDP to come along and take a few photos of our efforts.

August services:

1 August – 10:30am	Holy Communion – Revd Jane
8 August – 10:30am	Family Service – Jean Rockett
8 August – 6:00pm	Summer Evening Hymns – Jean Rockett
15 August – 10:30am	<u>St. Nicholas church, Ashill</u> Revd. Jane's last service
22 August – 10:30am	Family Service – Jean Rockett
29 August – 10:00am	<u>St Mary's church, Watton</u> Joint benefice service

As always, my prayers for each one of you continue daily.

With love in Christ

Jean

Tel: 07749 870485

Farewell to Ovington

Rev Jane Atkins

My time here has now come to an end. I retire on 15 August and move to Bradenham – so not too far away that we might be able to bump into one other at the shops or at any church events that I'm invited to.

The future of the Benefice is somewhat uncertain, but the sad fact is that our Benefice of Churches, i.e. Ashill, Carbrooke, Ovington and Saham Toney, do not raise sufficient funds to warrant a direct replacement for me and so your new Priest will have even more churches to look after. I know that looking after four parishes is difficult, especially when so many people remember the days when villages were much smaller and the Vicar could visit his parishioners personally. Being included in a benefice with even more parishes, will be a challenge, at the very least. I hope that you will welcome your new Incumbent very warmly, and not expect too much of him or her as they get to grips with the challenges they face.

In many ways, I am not looking forward to retirement. Before I was ordained, I was a Personnel and Training Manager for some Blue Chip companies, including the Rover Group, BMW and Rentokil - Initial, then I was a self-employed Trainer. After my curacy, I worked as a Prison Chaplain, then I came here, so I have always had a very busy lifestyle. I didn't expect to stay here very long, maybe four or five years, but you captured my heart and I have actually stayed over 16 years. I am so grateful to the families who have taken me into their hearts. I have married the parents, baptised the children and buried the grandparents and great grandparents. I am truly privileged to be a part of the lives of so many people in this Benefice. My mother will remain in Ashill, so I hope to see you in the future; in the pub, at the shops, social events, or just as I drive around and wave to you.

If you would like to join me at my final service at 10:30am on 15 August in Ashill, I would really love to see you.

Revd. Jane Atkins

Gardener's Delight

Barry Lambert

COMPOST HEAPS

With the advent of smaller gardens, the traditional compost heap has given way to “Compost Bins,” and the advert from the 1950’s of turning a heap of rubbish into a heap of use, by various compost makers, has been mostly forgotten.

Anyone who attended “Watton Secondary School”, Brandon Road, Watton in the 1950’s will have known the full time, ex-military, “Gardening Teacher” Mr. Stott, Stony as he was known, who ran the gardens with strict military discipline, and the first job you were shown was how to turn garden waste into compost. Hard plant stalks such as sprouts would be chopped into short pieces with a chopping hook on a block of wood. A much safer way would be to use a long-handled pair of pruners today, not leave them whole, and crush them with a mallet as some trendy “TV” Gardeners tell us to do. All other waste such as grass and soft hedge trimmings would be mixed in, which, after a period of decomposition, would be used in the gardens. Early potatoes, strawberries, raspberries, apples, cabbage, and lettuce would be sold to the pupils at lunch time by the lb. Anyone caught taking produce without paying would have to pay the price of a lb of the fruit taken, a rule strictly enforced.

Editor: Norfolk County Council offer subsidised compost bins, see:

www.norfolkrecycles.com/reduce-my-rubbish/compost/home-compost

The story of: 'Night Lights'

Jeremy Woods

The brave hens had gone to bed on a winter's night, but the house door was still open. HE had not come to close the door and say good night. Suddenly there was a noise outside. Was it a fox, or some other dangerous animal? Nobody moved for a while, listening hard. There was another quiet noise.

Who should look out? Brown Hen bravely took charge and looked out of the low door.

"What can you see?" they asked.

"There are stars on the ground" said Brown Hen.

"Don't be daft" said Cocoa "you only get stars in the sky – up high."

"These are sparkling stars" said Brown Hen "lots of them, all moving, but very close to each other. They are shining different colours."

Taking courage, they all tried to look out of the door. They saw the moving lights on the ground. Tiny bright points changing colour fast and then there was a little cry. "It's a cat!" said Lilly. "It's Diesel from next door!"

Brown Hen looked harder. "She's got a new collar – incredible. That's what the lights are. It seems to be covered with tiny sparkling stones. Would you believe it! On a cat!"

"Perhaps we could have something like that" said Maddy.

At which, Diesel got up from rolling on the ground and moved off in the dark, towards her home. The little lights were still twinkling.

From: "Tales of Brave Hens", to be published by Ovi-Press. Diesel left the Village for several years, but came back. Diesel then left the new house to live elsewhere. I talked to Diesel late one night, recently, when I saw a black cat up the Street and when called, came running up for a tickle!

And finally ...

Rod

Healthy old age:

>> A lady in a nearby village has reached the grand old age of 101, an event which has prompted an interview from the local paper, as follows:



Reporter: Mrs Macdonald can you give us some health tips for reaching the age of 101?

Mrs Macdonald: For better digestion I drink beer, in case of appetite loss I drink white wine. For low blood pressure I drink Red Wine. In the case of high blood pressure I drink Scotch and when I have cold I drink Schnapps.

Reporter: When do you drink water?

Mrs Macdonald: I've never been that sick!!

>> My daughter bought me a tee shirt on which was written "I am not 83 years old, I am sweet 16 with 67 years of experience". Should I be proud of her?

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