

Santon Downham News

The Parish Council Newsletter for Santon Downham Villagers

October 2013 Number 19

Autumn has arrived, or is it winter? Living where we do in Santon Downham in the middle of Thetford Forest, we are well placed to appreciate the seasons. Last year was unusual in that the weather through the summer and into autumn was damp and mild and autumn colours didn't seem to develop very well. What a contrast this year is, with a wonderful array of autumn tints everywhere you look.

We have a couple of events as we get towards the end of the year. I hope to see you at our annual Christmas Bazaar and at our New Year's Eve Party. *Derek Toomer, Editor*



Autumn colours at St Helen's

Forthcoming Events

Christmas Bazaar – Sunday 1 December, 10am – 4pm

Do come along to our annual craft and gift fair. We will have a hall full of stalls with a wide variety of gifts. An opportunity to buy some unique presents and stocking fillers – gifts, jewellery, cards, crafts and more.



Internet image

New Year's Eve Party – 31 December, 7.30pm – 1am, £12.

Tickets are going fast, so contact Sylvia, 01842 815213, for yours before they run out. Don't forget, this year's theme is characters from your favourite TV programme.



Internet image

Coffee Mornings – November to December, 50p

We have already had two busy coffee morning. Four more before the end of the year. Do come along. The next one is on Wednesday 6 November, 10.30am to 12 noon. See 'Dates for your Diary' on page four for future dates. **Don't forget to bring your own mug.**



Internet image

Village News

Car Boot Sales

With October seeing the last of the car boot sales for this year, we can look back with satisfaction. They have all been well attended, with a regular clientele. The village hall café has been very busy, and the purchase of bacon butties has surprised us all, with monthly sales often well exceeding one hundred. Car boot sales will resume in March 2014.

Harvest Supper

September 10th saw the church nave full of villagers for the annual Harvest Supper. The sale of tickets and money raised from the auction of donated produce gave a grand total of £446 – an excellent achievement. Two thirds of this sum was donated to St Nicholas Hospice and the

charity Tools with a Mission. The latter charity collects tools of all sorts to send to countries in need – removing the opportunity for corruption. The remaining third was put towards the church maintenance fund.

Church Teas

August 18th saw the last of the Church Teas for this year. The ten Sunday teas raised £1,093. This money will go towards church repairs. Although the sum is an excellent amount to be raised, it results from the hard work of a good handful of volunteers, led by Andrew and Margaret Kedar. They would appreciate any new volunteers to help run this worthwhile activity in the new year, so do get in touch with them if you can help.

Village News

Tree Treatment completed

In the last newsletter I outlined the situation regarding trees on Parish Council land. Having had a couple of incidents involving more than one of our trees, the Parish Council had no option but to seek professional help. The survey was carried out and the health of all trees on our land was assessed. Like many villagers, we were concerned that we may lose some of our mature trees. With the work now complete I am pleased to report that all of the trees treated survived mainly intact.

Bees stopped play

The first tree to be worked on was one of the large Scots Pines at the western end of the green. Several large limbs at near the top of the tree had to be removed. It was not a good start for the workers, as one of the large limbs was hollow and had an active bees nest in it. They ceased work and because the bee colony could not be removed and saved, the bees had to be killed for safety.



The tree treatment begins.



The active bees nest posed a problem. They had to be killed for safety reasons.

Oaks made safe

The mature oak trees near to the church have shed bits of dead branch for years every time there was rough weather. The dead ends to many limbs were

very clear for all to see. Skilful climbing and careful chain-sawing soon removed the required branches.



The diseased branches of the large oak near the church were plain to see.



A skilful tree surgeon in the crown of the tree starts his work.

Specimen tree survives

Our main worry was the very large Norway Maple on the grass triangle in Mark Lane. Several large limbs had fallen fairly recently and we were aware that considerable reduction would be required. The workers made use of a large 'cherry picker' to gain access to the upper crown. When the work was finished, it was pleasing to see that even though a large amount of timber had been removed the overall appearance of the tree had not been changed much.



An extra large 'cherry-picker' was required for the Norway Maple in Mark Lane.

Because trees are living and continually changing, they will have to be monitored regularly and treated as necessary.

Litter – taking positive action

We are all ready to moan when we see litter discarded in public places, but rarely do anything about it. Alison Rhodes, who lives near to St Helen's picnic site decided to do something about it.

"I moved to Santon Downham with my husband in 1997 and we thoroughly enjoy living in this beautiful area. Whilst walking our Jack Russell, Mabel, I have had a great deal of contact with the staff at the Forestry Commission and have huge respect for the work they do.



Public picnic site problem

The area of St Helen's picnic site in Santon Downham is used by visitors throughout the year but it is during the summer months that the level of litter greatly increases.

Taking action

Through liaising with the Forestry, I have been collecting rubbish each day as a volunteer over the past few months to help with the maintenance of this lovely area. It is my hope that by controlling the litter problem, it will encourage visitors to be more respectful and leave the area as they would like to find it. With some visitors this is the case

whilst others feel that rubbish should be collected by other people.

Most of the rubbish left is from picnics, barbecues, ice cream wrappers and plenty of wet wipes! More unusual debris includes carpets, beach towels and even shoes.



Alison and Mabel
– ready for action.

Setting an example

Let us hope that by demonstrating that we care for our environment that visitors will do the same."

Alison Rhodes

A very different kind of litter – dog's poo

Dog's mess

I have recently been approached by several people complaining about the presence of dog's mess on the village green, one such complainant having trodden in some.



There are many dog owners in the village and the majority of them behave responsibly. We would like to encourage **all** dog owners to tidy up after their pets – it isn't very difficult. Just turn a small polythene bag inside out, pick up the droppings, turn it back the right way, tie a knot and **put it in your own rubbish bin**.

Dog poo isn't just messy and smelly, it can be dangerous. Many dogs carry a roundworm that can be present in its droppings. Contact with contaminated material can give rise to a disease called Toxocariasis, the symptoms of which are eye disorders, vague ache, dizziness, nausea, asthma and in rare cases, seizures or fits.

Dog fouling and the law

It is illegal to allow your dog to foul in a public



Clearing up after your dog isn't difficult. Bag it, take away and bin it.

place such as the village green. If you fail to clean up after your dog, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued. If the case goes to court, the dog owner can face a maximum fine of £1,000.

The Parish Council will be putting up warning signs about dog fouling.

Dog waste bins

As such bins need someone to empty them frequently, the Parish Council would only be willing to supply some if a regular volunteer came forward. The current Parish Councillors are already very busy with other village and hall activities.

Mick Mackender, Chairman of the Parish Council

Dates for Your Diary

(In the Village Hall, unless stated otherwise)

2013

Wednesday 6th November	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 20th November	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Sunday 1st December	Christmas Bazaar	10am to 4pm	
Wednesday 4th December	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 18th December	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Tuesday 31st December	New Year's Eve Party	7.30pm to 1am	£12

2014

Wednesday 15th January	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 29th January	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 12th February	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Sunday 2nd March	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Wednesday 12th March	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 26th March	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Sunday 6th April	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Wednesday 9th April	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p

Parish Council Meetings

(In the Village Hall)

2013

Monday 23rd December	Parish Council Meeting	7pm
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Village News

Essential Electricity cuts

It can't have gone unnoticed that we had a major electricity shutdown on Thursday 17 October. At one time, there used to be rather frequent power cuts, almost all due to trees or branches falling on the power lines.

Last year, quite a lot of tree trimming took place but they were unable to complete the work, as a number of trees overhung the power lines and it was too dangerous to work on them.

On the 17th, power was turned off and tree trimming took place. For over nine and a half hours, the village was without power – somewhat longer than we had been warned about, but the work was essential.

Fit Villages Initiative

Suffolk Sport has the expertise and funds to set up new physical activity and sports sessions on YOUR doorstep, using local facilities.

If you'd like to see something new locally and you feel there is a captive audience for a specific activity, please get in touch to see how we can help. Contact visit: www.suffolksport.com/fitvillages or contact Henry: 01394 444289 / henry.tapp@suffolksport.com.

Village Websites

Don't forget to look at our two websites relating to the village, maintained by Tim Kaye.

www.santondownhamcentre.co.uk;
www.santondownham.org

Photographs by Derek Toomer

This Newsletter is compiled and produced by Derek Toomer (Ed) and Sylvia East

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