

The Hamlets' Voice

***Staploe, Duloe, Honeydon, Upper Staploe,
Bushmead and Begwary***

Issue 23 – December 2017

Welcome to the Winter edition of your local parish newsletter

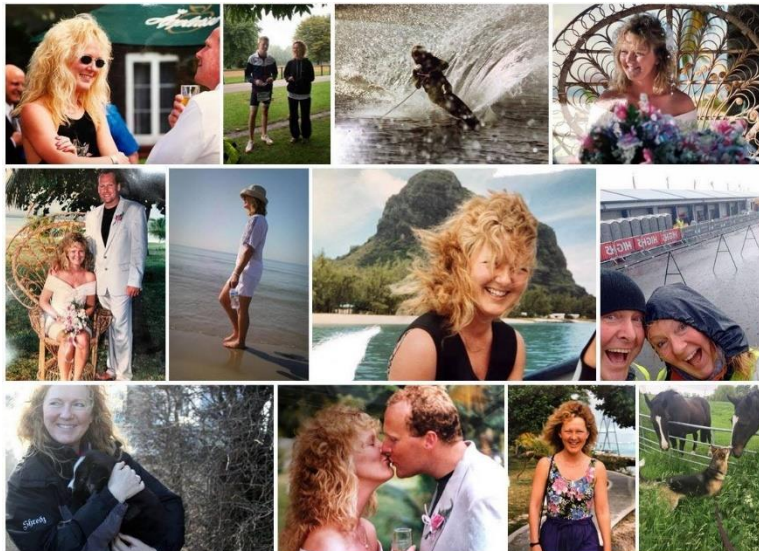
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Julia Stead

With great sadness, we bring the news that Julia Stead of Staploe died on 11th October, just 7 weeks after being diagnosed with advanced cancer.

Our thoughts are with David, Jack and Tom.



New councillor

Emilio Meola of 49, Woodhouse Lane, has been co-opted as a member of Staploe Parish Council.

Emilio has been an enthusiastic contributor to our Public Open Forums and has been attending most of our Parish Council meetings for several years.

The Parish Council are delighted to have him on board.



A great turnout at the Harvest Supper

There was another great turnout at the Harvest Supper hosted by the Village Hall Committee on 30th September, with a number of new residents of the parish coming along.

Thanks to all those who cooked up a delicious dinner, and thank you to Sam, Ian, Nigel, Clare, Howard and Ann for their hard work in organising this popular event.

Broadband update

A new broadband cabinet is due to be installed outside number 8 Staploe soon but it is not likely to go live until the first half of 2018. The cabinet will be fibre enabled but the aluminium cables from the new cabinet to houses west of number 8 up to the end of the 01480 exchange will not be replaced.

Residents from The Lodge and beyond are on the Colmworth exchange and will not benefit from the new cabinet as it is not possible to rearrange exchange areas. The government have made a third tranche of funding available to upgrade those currently without superfast broadband and this work is out to tender. Which properties will benefit from this funding will be determined by the contractor. An announcement on the chosen supplier will hopefully be made early in the new year.

Support our village hall

The Village Hall Committee are urgently seeking new committee members.



The Committee held their AGM on Tuesday 31st October and gratefully received some offers of assistance. However, individuals are still required to join the committee to help manage the current workload.

The village hall is a vital community asset - please help save our village hall!

If you would like to find out more about what is involved in serving on the committee, please contact the Parish Clerk, Lucy Crawford.



Staploe and Duloe Home Guard 1942-1943

(Dad's Army)

Photographed outside Falling Water House

Standing a few yards behind the photographer and watching proceedings with great interest was a schoolboy, the young Arthur Rose. Arthur, still resident in Staploe, was envious of the soldiers because he too wanted to be a soldier but was too young. However he did not want to fight Germans as he had met German prisoners of war working on the land in Staploe and he had befriended them.

If you can identify anyone in the photo, please email us at hamletsvoice@gmail.com

Duloe playing field

Grass cutting

Duloe and Staploe Football Club will be leaving in May 2018, having been offered an attractive deal by Great Paxton. As they have been cutting the playing field grass, we will now need to arrange an alternative. The Clerk has sought competitive quotes and the Parish Council discussed whether to advertise for alternative sports clubs at our meeting on 21st November 2018.

The Parish Council Finance Committee met to propose a draft budget on 17th October and recommended that the estimated grass cutting and spraying cost of £1100 be covered by reducing the amount of money saved for rebuilding or refurbishing the village hall from £1500 to £750 this year. This would avoid a large increase in the precept. Clearly, if we are able to find an alternative sports club to either maintain the field or pay a hire



charge, we may be able to save money. However, we felt it was prudent to budget for grass cutting in case we don't find a replacement in good time - grass cutting contractors get booked up fast!

If you have any views about us advertising for new sports clubs or would like to recommend a club to us, please do contact the Parish Clerk, Lucy Crawford. Members of the public are always welcome to attend our Parish Council meetings to share views – we have an Open Forum at the start of the meeting.

(The minutes of the budgeting meeting are available on the parish website. Search for Staploe Parish Council and then navigate to Agendas and Minutes.)

Playing field trees

Prior to the Parish Council meeting in September, Councillors inspected the trees around the boundary of the playing field. Cllr. Squire explained that often sycamores are planted next to oaks and other feature trees in order to encourage the oaks to grow straight and tall. Once the oaks are established and have reached 6 feet or more, the sycamores are removed to allow the oaks to fill the space. The oaks and other feature trees in the boundary are currently

being crowded by the larger sycamores; Councillors agreed that these sycamores and other trees that needed thinning would be removed.

Buckets and cakes, please!

In the coming months, Huntingdonshire Community Payback Team will be doing some work to clean Duloe Village Hall, trim hedges and cut verges at the hall and playing field, as well as at Duloe Common.

If anyone is able to lend buckets, sponges, scrubbing brushes, or paint brushes please let Lucy Crawford know. Similarly, if anyone is able to make a cake to keep the team going during one of their visits, I am sure it will be most appreciated (and Duloe Village Hall may even become popular enough for a return visit from the team!).

School transport

Bedford Borough Council changed its school transport policy with effect from September 2017. A summary is provided here, based on the policy document and subsequent conversations with Bedford Borough by e-mail and in person. However, we advise all parents to check with the school transport department before confirming school places, to see whether free transport will be available.

- **Children of 16+** (i.e. after year 11) will have to pay for transport to Mark Rutherford at a cost of approximately £297 per term. The Parish Council objected to this decision in the consultation period but the Borough have implemented it anyway because it saves them so much money.
- **Children under 16** are now entitled to receive free transport to their *nearest* school (which, for us, would be in Eaton Socon / St. Neots) or their nearest school within Bedford Borough which has places available, NOT to their catchment school. In our parish, the nearest secondary school in the Borough is Mark Rutherford. This means that children are no longer entitled to free transport to Sandy Upper School, which is the catchment school for Staploe and Duloe. Children in year 10 or 11 who are currently attending Sandy will continue to receive free transport until they finish year 11.

New applicants for secondary school places under 16 can apply for a place at:

- Longsands in St. Neots, but they are unlikely to get in because it is not our catchment school. If they do get in and they are more than 3 miles from the school they will be offered free transport. Most children from Staploe and Honeydon would qualify for this, as it is over 3 miles. One child in Duloe has been offered free transport. New applicants from Staploe are rarely offered a school place, but it depends on the waiting list. Free transport would be offered to children from Staploe. 2017 GCSE results showed 66% of children achieving Grades 4-9 in English and Maths.
- Ernulf in St Neots. Children would be likely to be offered a place because it is usually under-subscribed and they would get free transport. 2017 GCSE results showed "over 50%" of children achieving grades 4-9 in English and Maths.
- Mark Rutherford, which is on the northern edge of Bedford. This is our closest school in Bedford Borough. It is the catchment school for Honeydon but not for Staploe and Duloe. Therefore, if it was oversubscribed, children from Staploe and Duloe might not get a place. Currently there are places available. 2017 GCSE results showed 62% of children achieving grades 4-9 in English and Maths.
- Sandy Academy. This is the closest school in Bedfordshire and it is the catchment school for Staploe and Duloe, so children would be likely to get a place but it is in *Central* Bedfordshire not Bedford Borough so children are no longer entitled to free transport. Alternatively, you can apply for a Privilege Bus Pass at a cost of £297 per term but there is no guarantee of a place on the bus and places are only confirmed very close to the start of term. In addition, it is likely that the bus will stop altogether in July 2019. 2017 GCSE results showed 63% of children achieving grades 4-9 in English and Maths. For the past few years it has achieved some of the best results in the Borough (83% in 2016) but this year's results are lower than in recent years.
- Sharnbrook Academy. This is 13 miles away and certainly not our closest school. It is a catchment school for Staploe, Duloe and Honeydon so children are likely to be offered a place, but transport has never been provided. Parents can apply for a Privilege Bus Pass to use the bus from Little Staughton or Bolnhurst but the cost is again around £297 and parents would need to transport their children to the bus-stops. 2017 GCSE results showed 78% of children achieving grades 4-9 in English and Maths.
- According to the Borough Council, the closest primary school to most properties in our parish is Bushmead in Eaton Socon (but I have challenged that for Duloe, as I believe Crosshall is closer) and the closest in Bedford Borough is Roxton. Free transport will be provided to these primary schools for those living more than 2 miles away. For Upper Honeydon Farm, Upper Honeydon House and properties in Bushmead, Kymbrook is the closest primary school.

The Parish Clerk was recently contacted by a parent who wanted the Borough to provide a bus service to Sharnbrook direct from Staploe, Duloe and Honeydon. The parent understood that this would not be free but she thought there might be parents prepared to pay for Privilege Passes on the bus if they were available (at a cost of about £300 per term). If provided, it would be likely to depart the villages before 7.30am (as the bus currently leaves Little Staughton at around 7.30am). There are a number of parents driving their children to Sharnbrook at the moment.

If you would be interested in paying for a Privilege Pass rather than driving your children to Sharnbrook then please contact the Parish Clerk, and the Parish Council can discuss it at their next meeting.

Litter pick

Date for your diary: there will be a community litter pick on Sunday 18th March, starting at Duloe Village Hall at 2pm.



PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Clerk

Lucy Crawford

Address: 33 Staploe, St Neots, PE19 5JA

Email: lucy_crawford@hotmail.com

Tel: 01480 471526

Website: www.staploeduloeandhoneydonparishcouncil.bedsparishes.gov.uk

Frankenfowl News

Big day at Bassmead! In September, four new guinea fowl were acquired. I went to see the newcomers at once. There they were, in a run three or four metres long, wired all over with chicken wire to keep the foxes out – three traditional guinea fowl, speckled black, grey and white, and a fourth fowl, white all over! And on the other side of the wire, paced Frankenfowl2 (FF2), anxious to take possession of his new harem, even though it was not the mating season. I kept my distance because they were an anxious, agitated group, ready to dash themselves into the netting at any moment at the sight of me. The idea was to keep them penned up for a fortnight so that they could identify with their new home, and then release them so that they stay nearby, roaming the fields and woods that they have acclimatised to while penned-up.

A few days later, I went to have another look. There they were, still in their pen, quite agitated, with FF2 striding up and down on the other side of the wire. But the all-white one was not in sight. Enquiries revealed that a fox had eased back the top lid of the pen and carried off the white one. Imagine the kerfuffle! Think of it this way: it is Strictly Come Dancing; the family are sprawled across the sofas and armchairs, munching toffee popcorn, eyes fixed on the intriguing Claudia Winkelmann, when the sitting room door quietly opens and in waddles a full-size Komodo dragon, forked tongue flickering over terrified ankles. Seizes Mother, screaming hysterically, and waddles off with her clamped in its poisonous jaws! Quelle horreur!

At the end of the fortnight's acclimatisation, I returned for the release of the three survivors. The door was opened: there was but a moment's hesitation and then they stepped delicately out into the bright September sunshine, onto the lush, dewy green grass laden with grubs, insect eggs and tasty little slugs. As FF2 joined them, there was a low, gentle twittering which meant: "We are here; We are family; We are home; Here is feast!" Almost immediately they were foraging in the shining grass, a contented twittering flock. It was a joyous sunshine moment!

That was Wednesday. The happy band foraged all day.

Thursday morning. At this point I should warn those readers of a nervous disposition that they should look away. There was FF2, agitated - more agitated than usual – pacing about in all directions. But of his new flock (£25 each) nothing; not a blood-stained carcase, not even a feather, nothing.

Nothing!

Frank Squire



Stapole, Duloe, Honeydon & Begwary Village Curry Night

Friday 2nd February 2018 at 6.30pm

Location: Duloe Village Hall

Drinks: Bring your own

Adults £15 – Children 6-10 yrs £6

Children under 5 – Free

**Menu – Onion Bhajis, Samosas, Chicken Korma & Lamb
Bhuna,
Rice & Naan (Veggie option on request)**

Please advise and pay by Wednesday 24th Jan 2018

Ged 07790 958357 or Jane Thomson 07889 305754



❖ *Season's Greetings* ❖
and best wishes to all for 2018



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DULOE VILLAGE HALL The hall can seat around 80 people. Hire: £7 per hour. To book, call: 07768 303373.	Contact hamletsvoice@gmail.com to advertise here	Contact hamletsvoice@gmail.com to advertise here

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