

Hepworth Herald

Issue 45~ February 2025



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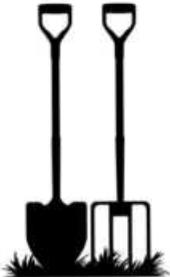
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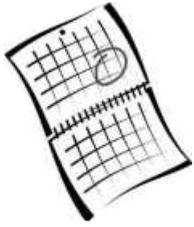
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What's On?

This is what we know about at the moment. Please share any other events you have planned, or that you hear about. Send them to hepworthherald@gmail.com

Hepworth Art Group	Every Mon @1000-1300 » Hepworth Pavilion
Village Voices	Every Mon @1900 » Hepworth Pavilion. p10
Hepworth Coffee Morning	1st & 3rd Thu @1030 » Hep. Pavilion. p4
Village Service	2nd February@0930 » St Peter's
Parish Council Meeting	20th February@1930 » Hep. Pavilion
Suffolk Mobile Library	27th February@1540 - 1605 » See p4
Holy Communion	2nd March@0930 » St Peter's
Parish Council Meeting	20th March@1930 » Hep. Pavilion
Suffolk Mobile Library	27th March@1540 - 1605 » See p4
Hepworth Recreation Hall AGM	22nd April@1900 » Hepworth Pavilion. p16

Events in Hepworth?

Many village events are supported by **Hepworth2Enjoy**. This is an engaged, friendly collective of Hepworth villagers who come together to put on village events and to help others put on village events, providing people-power, experience, and bags of enthusiasm! We now have a small budget to help. Please contact Clare (250 660)



Do you have a new neighbour?

The Parish Council has prepared a Welcome Pack for people new to the village.

It can be found on the Village Website at

<http://hepworthvillage.co.uk>

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES

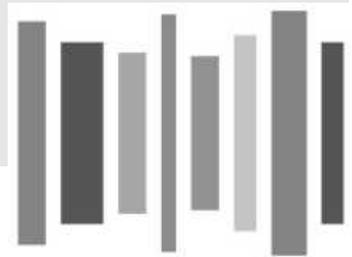
Did you know about the Suffolk Mobile Library Service?
It visits Hepworth every 4 weeks on a Thursday, and stops at:

Half Moon, The Street between 1540 and 1605

The coming village visits will be on

- 27th February
- 27th March

Do stop in, say hello, and
borrow a book or two!



Hepworth coffee morning



On the first and third
Thursday of each month at
1030 -1200.

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and chat, meet new people
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From the Rectory

Dear Friends & Neighbours,

Happy New Year to you all !

We're a month into the New Year already... and I wonder how many New Year resolutions have been kept so far and how many have already been forgotten ?

The New Year for most of us brings with it the hope and expectation of better things to come. Most of us who make New Year's resolutions do so in the hope of becoming; fitter healthier, happier, more fulfilled people. We make resolutions to eat more healthily, to exercise more, to look after ourselves better, perhaps to take up a new hobby or interest, perhaps to read more, to keep in touch better with friends and family. All great aspirations, all in the hope that the year will be better and richer than the one before and that we will be happier people as a result. I don't know about you, but often when I've made a resolution and then failed to keep it... I feel yet again that I've failed and the hope of things being different gradually slips away. Sometimes no matter how much we prepare or plan or think we've got everything sorted, things just slide, and we can be left wondering what we can do to change things.

In the Bible we're given a lovely picture of a situation where things were going badly wrong until Jesus stepped in.

Not long after Jesus had begun His ministry telling people the Good News of God's love, He, His mother and His friends were invited to a wedding. The wedding was in Cana, a town in the province of Galilee. Just like today, weddings in Israel at Jesus' time were big events although these wedding celebrations often went on for days. The whole of the local community as well as all the family would have been invited... it was a very big deal. Everything would have been meticulously prepared and planned, so imagine the horror for the father of the bride the host to be told that the wine had run out! Mary, Jesus' mother, realising what had happened and knowing that it was in His power to help... asked Jesus to 'do something'. Jesus called the hosts butler and took him to where six huge stone jars were standing; they were full (around a hundred litres in each) of ordinary water to be used for ceremonial washing. Jesus told the butler to draw some water and take it the master of the banquet to taste. The water had turned into wine! Not only had the water become wine but it was the very best and the richest of wines. Jesus had turned something very ordinary into something extraordinary ... and in doing so He had not only saved the wedding party, but He'd also saved the reputation of the host.

Jesus had turned something ordinary into something very special... He can do the same for us ... He can transform the ordinariness of our everyday lives into something wonderfully special, rich and extraordinary... and He longs to do that for each one of us.

Perhaps the best resolution we can make or at least explore at the beginning of this New Year is... how we can learn to trust Jesus with our lives... so that He can turn our ordinary into something extraordinary. Jesus was and is all about transforming people and lives... so that we would be to flourish. As He said .. His words reported in St John's gospel (taken from the Amplified version)... "I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance to the full, till it overflows."

I hope and prayer that 2025 will be good year full of blessings for each one of you.

God Bless, Cathy x

St Peter's

St Peter's Church, Hepworth stands at the high point of the village, visible from a distance. It is an ancient building, Grade 2 listed, mostly dating to the 14th and 15th centuries, although there are stones from an earlier, 11th or 12th century building. It survived a fire in 1898, when the thatched roof caught fire and was reroofed with the red tiles we see now. There are registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials held at the church back to 1688, yet there was a marriage and several burials this year too.

The churchyard is a peaceful place to walk or to just sit and listen to the sounds of Hepworth. The earliest snowdrops flower alongside Church Lane while the edge of the graveyard at the rear has masses of snowdrops in the Spring. Quiet visitors may disturb deer feeding underneath the trees, particularly in the colder months.

This building has not survived over the generations without serious maintenance, which has left it looking over us in the village. Today is no different and in the coming months there will be serious fundraising efforts to secure grants to retile the roof, which has begun to leak during the recent very wet weather. The consequent damage to the plaster will need to be repaired too, alongside guttering replacement. The initial indications are that we are looking for £200,000.

On a smaller scale, there is work to be done on a much more manageable level. The mediaeval doors need to be sealed and the ironwork treated. There is ivy growing up the walls of the church which will damage the stonework and window frames if we ignore it.

We are hoping to recruit a band of helpers to work on the churchyard and on these jobs each month, following a very successful morning in May 2024.

If you are interested in joining us from 10am to 12 noon, on the 2nd Saturday of each month please contact me. I suggest we start from Saturday 8th March, when the spring will have started.

Jane Duffield 0776 2549963

(See back page for some photos!)

Speedwatch Along The Street:

For more information about Speedwatch, or to get involved, call Richard on 07979745990



Nov. 2024: 2 sessions 7 vehicles logged

max speed = 41 mph

Dec. 2024: 3 sessions 5 vehicles logged

max speed = 43mph



We are a local, informal, friendly garden club. Green Fingers meetings are held at Hinderclay Village Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm in the evening. Annual membership subscription is £15 and our monthly meeting fees are £3 for members (and £5 for non-members) with refreshments included. You would be most welcome to join us.

19th February - THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ORCHIDS
By Rob Brett, Curator of RHS Hyde Hall

19th March - OUR LOVE OF LAVENDER
From Norfolk Lavender, Heacham
+ much, much more.

For more information, ring Val Hobson: 01359 251977

STANTON W.I.

Our November main meeting was a “shopping” evening when members and friends had the opportunity to buy from various stalls, some of which were members selling craft, or produce such as honey, and also our local ‘Avon Lady’, and a bring & buy stall. It was great fun and all the proceeds went towards subsidising our Christmas lunch which this year will be at the Blue Boar in Walsham Le Willows.



The coffee shop visit was to Dobbies in Bury St Edmunds where members enjoyed browsing their Christmas displays.

A visit to ‘Yum Yum Tree Fudge’ in Woolpit has also been popular. Members were made most welcome and again had time to make purchases.

We are looking forward to an exciting programme next year, beginning with one of our favourite speakers, Amanda Sutherland with a talk entitled ‘Make do and Mend’. Amanda has visited us before and we are always delighted to see her amazing creations and to hear her interesting talks.

Visitors and new members are always warmly welcomed at our meetings which are usually held on the second Wednesday evening each month. If you would like to come to a meeting please contact us first so that we can greet you.

Please contact Jane Duffield 07762549963

Hepworth 2 Enjoy and the Pensioners' Christmas Lunch

During 2024, Hepworth 2 Enjoy were hard at work, raising the funds for the village Pensioners' Christmas Lunch. The Christmas meal is a wonderful way of getting the village together and each of the fund raising events was good fun too.

There was the Pudding Club (so many calories!), the Sausage Supper (my first introduction to Colcannon!) and the French Evening, with such delicious cheeses. There was another Quiz Night, to awaken the little grey cells – which famous, fictional detective used that phrase?

Each event involves preparation and planning, shopping and cooking, donating raffle prizes, furniture moving, decorating and washing up in order to ensure that the event does make a profit, contributing to the cost of the Christmas lunch. In 2024, the charge was £20 per head. We have realised that it is unsustainable for a small group of people (pensioners themselves!) to continue to provide a free Christmas lunch for all the pensioners in the village. This year, we will continue to fund raise, in order to subsidise the cost of the Christmas lunch but there will be a charge. Of course, please let us know if this would cause you difficulty.



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Village Voices

Announcing the relaunch
of the Hepworth Angels!



This is an open invitation to join **Village Voices** our welcoming group of local people from Hepworth and surrounding villages who enjoy singing and/or playing an instrument as an accompaniment.

No auditions required. All abilities welcome.

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**HEPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL - MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HEPWORTH PAVILION THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 24@1930**

PRESENT: Councillor Garry Bloomfield (GB) (Chair), Councillor Nicholas Bennett (NB) (Vice Chair), Councillor Marjorie MacPherson (MM), Councillor Perry Penn (PP), Councillor Louise Robinson (LR), Councillor Hollie Williams (HW)

IN ATTENDANCE: Andy Osman (Parish Clerk) (AO),

24/114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

24/115 APOLOGIES: None.

24/116 PUBLIC FORUM: No public in attendance.

24/117 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO BOTH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS: See Minute 24/121.

24/118 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 24 had been previously circulated and it was resolved that these were an accurate record of the meetings.

24/119 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Minute 24/110: 17 October 24 – Drainage Issue. LR reported discussions with a tenant farmer over clearing drains on part of The Street and who was responsible. County Cllr Spicer subsequently agreed to clarify responsibility with Suffolk County Farms. LR also reported that the footpath sign on Clay Lane had been restored.

24/120 HIGHWAYS MATTERS: None

24/121 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: a. LGA Pay Award. The meeting noted the LGA Pay Award briefing note that had been previously circulated.

b. Finance Report. The meeting noted the finance report (current account balance £6,719.844, savings account balance £7,000.00 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of approx. £4,100 current account and £7,000 savings account). The following payments were authorised: Hepworth Pavillion Hire £48.00; Clerks Salary & Wages £1109.59. LR agreed to provide 2nd bank authorisation.

c. Budget Setting FY 25/26. The meeting discussed the draft budget for FY25/26 that had been previously circulated. It was resolved to adopt this budget unamended and to use a precept for FY25/26 of £6,250 (a 20% reduction) at the January 25 Parish Council meeting where the Precept Form would be completed.

County Cllr Spicer and District Cllr Bull arrived at 7.45pm

County Cllr Spicer provided the following update: • Equation Planning Application - DC/24/1073/FUL. Suffolk Highways had indicated that they would be inputting a holding objection over use of TRICS data.

• A1088 Bridge. The A1088 bridge repairs had been extended until at least the end of February 25 due to issues found with concrete quality in piles recently installed.

• Buses. A bid from local Parish Council's, including Hepworth Parish Council, had been accepted by Suffolk County Council to provide bus services in 2025. It was noted this bid was coincidental with recently announced additional funding to Suffolk for buses by HM Government. There was still an issue with future bus services not stopping on The Street and this would exacerbate the ongoing safety issue of young people having to walk along dimly lit roads without footways.

District Cllr Bull provided the following update: • Local Plan. The West Suffolk

Local Plan examination was ongoing and was due to complete before Xmas.

- Air Quality Report. The West Suffolk Air Quality report recently issued showed that all monitoring stations in this area recorded levels below national requirements.

- Locality Grant. Locality grant funding was still available.

- New Entrance on The Street. Activity related to the newly installed entrance on The Street was noted. The Parish Council agreed to monitor the situation and to report any potential material issues of a planning or building control nature to West Suffolk Council.

24/122 PLANNING MATTERS: The meeting noted the recently issued letters of re-consultation for planning applications DC/24/0437/FUL AND DC/24/1073/FUL along with an unachievable 9-working day turn around for comments. As the letters were issued after the agenda for the November Parish Council meeting had been formally published, the Chair, with the backing of the meeting, decided to hold an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4 December (Standing Order Sect 6 refers) to consider the new information and to resolve whether any further Parish Council comment was required.

24/123 CORRESPONDENCE: None

24/124 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR: None

24/125 DATE OF NEXT MEETING; It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 16 January 25 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Andy Osman, Parish Clerk

27 November 24

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HEPWORTH PAVILION - WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 24@1930

PRESENT: Councillor Garry Bloomfield (GB) (Chair), Councillor Nicholas Bennett (NB) (Vice Chair), Councillor Marjorie MacPherson (MM), Councillor Perry Penn (PP), Councillor Louise Robinson (LR), Councillor Hollie Williams (HW)

IN ATTENDANCE: Andy Osman (Parish Clerk) (AO), One member of the public

24/126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

24/127 APOLOGIES: None.

24/128 PUBLIC FORUM: a. New Entrance (Stables), The Street. The member of public highlighted concerns over the new development at this site near the A143 junction; a post box, some utilities and scalplings to form a hard service had been installed. The safety of the new entrance was also queried. The meeting noted that previous information from West Suffolk Council enforcement indicated that the field was to be used for grazing animals. Considering these recent developments, it was agreed that the Clerk was to arrange a meeting between West Suffolk Council enforcement and the Chair/Vice Chair to discuss potential planning breaches and a timetable for any enforcement action.

b. Clarkes Sign – A143/Clay Lane. The meeting noted a recent email read out by the Clerk indicating that a West Suffolk Council enforcement visit was due to look at this potential planning breach by 6 December.

24/129 PLANNING MATTERS: a. DC/24/1073/FUL. Draft comments produced by the

Chair and Vice Chair on the re-consultation of this planning application were circulated at the meeting. The meeting agreed to submit an amended version of the comments as recorded by the Clerk. [Clerks Note: Comments were uploaded to West Suffolk Council planning portal on 5 December]

b. DC/24/0437/FUL. Draft comments produced by the Chair and Vice Chair on the re-consultation of this planning application were circulated at the meeting. The meeting agreed to submit an amended version of the comments as recorded by the Clerk. [Clerks Note: Comments were uploaded to West Suffolk Council planning portal on 5 December]

24/130 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was noted that the date of the next Parish Council meeting had been set for Thursday 16 January 25 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Andy Osman, Parish Clerk

9 December 24

HEPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL - DRAFT MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HEPWORTH PAVILION - THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2025@1930

PRESENT: Councillor Garry Bloomfield (GB) (Chair), Councillor Nicholas Bennett (NB) (Vice Chair), Councillor Marjorie MacPherson (MM), Councillor Perry Penn (PP), Councillor Louise Robinson (LR), Councillor Hollie Williams (HW)

IN ATTENDANCE: Andy Osman (Parish Clerk) (AO), County Cllr Joanna Spicer (JS),
One member of the public

25/01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

25/02 APOLOGIES: None.

25/03 PUBLIC FORUM: The member of the public commended the attendance of the Chair at the January 2025 West Suffolk Development Control Committee meeting and expressed concern about the approval of the glamping pod planning application plus the ongoing situation at the 'stables' field.

25/04 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO BOTH DISTRICT AND COUNTY
COUNCILLORS: County Cllr Spicer provided the following update:

- A1088 Bridge Repair. Due to open by the end of February 2025.
- Speeding – The Street. LR updated the meeting on recent SpeedWatch data which indicated that there appeared to be no increase in monitored speeds.
- Local Government Review. Suffolk County Council had confirmed intent to be part of local government devolution fast track. This could lead to a directly elected Major for Norfolk and Suffolk and the creation of one or two unitary authorities covering Suffolk. Elections for Mayor could take place next year and, if Suffolk were accepted for fast track devolution, there would be no County Council elections this year.
- Save our Buses. A new bus timetable which would include the bus stop on The Street was likely to start after February ½ term. Save our Buses has now become Support our Buses. Funding for new service until the end of the year but longer term provision depends upon the service being used.
- Weston Lane. PP reported that work on Weston Lane was still ongoing. District Cllr Bull was not in attendance.

25/05 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: Minutes of the meetings held on 21

November 2024 and 4 December 2024 had been previously circulated and it was resolved that these were an accurate record of the meetings.

25/06 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Minute 24/119: 21 November 2024 – Drainage Issue. JS agreed to chase the answer from County Farms to clarify responsibility for clearing the ditches.

County Cllr Spicer left the meeting at 8pm

25/07 HIGHWAYS MATTERS: None

25/08 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: a. Finance Report. The meeting noted the finance report (current account balance £4,426.43, savings account balance £7,000.00 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of approx. £3,100 current account and £7,000 savings account). The following

payments were authorised: Hepworth Pavillion Hire £72.00; Web hosting £40.00; Replacement SID batteries £109.08. NB agreed to provide 2nd bank authorisation.

b. Precept FY 25/26. The meeting agreed a precept of £6,250 for FY25/26.

c. Replacement SID Batteries. The meeting agreed to reimburse the cost of replacement SID batteries (£109.08)

25/09 PLANNING MATTERS: Role of Delegation Panel. The meeting queried the role of the West Suffolk Council Delegation Panel and agreed that the Clerk would share available information on the Council's website.

Signs. The meeting noted the 18 December 2024 response from West Suffolk Council enforcement on the signs at the crossroads A143/Sumner Rd/Clay Lane and agreed that the Clerk would request the timeline of the route forward with sign owners indicated in this response.

'Stables' field. The meeting reviewed a draft email handout prepared by the Chair covering ongoing concerns about activity at this location. It was agreed that the Chair would revise the draft to incorporate comments made at the meeting and recirculate out of meeting for agreement. Once agreed, the Clerk would send this note to the Service Manager (Planning - Development), West Suffolk Council. The meeting agreed to review any response at the next meeting to consider the next steps which could include consideration of more formal complaint action.

25/10 CORRESPONDENCE: a. Save our Buses. Previously covered at item 25/04.

25/11 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN: Bereavement of Ex-Councillor. The meeting noted the recent passing of an ex-parish councillor and agreed to a sum of up to £50 to recognise past service.

Events Noticeboard. The Chair confirmed that this new noticeboard would be erected soon.

Dunhill Lane flooding. PP highlighted that County Farms were investigating the flooding from the ditch along Dunhill Lane.

25/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 20 February 2025 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Andy Osman Parish Clerk

22 January 2025

Planning issues discussed above:

DC/24/1073/FUL - Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate East Sumner Road
DC/24/0437/FUL - Land West Of Birchwood Farm, Church Close

Hepworth Weather (as measured on The Street)

November 2024:	Max. Temp:	17.3°C	24th
	Min. Temp:	-2.4°C	21st
	Total Rainfall:	39.9mm	
	Wettest Day:	15.4mm	18th
December 2024:	Max. Temp:	14.3°C	18th
	Min Temp:	-0.2°C	3rd
	Total Precipitation:	58.8mm	
	Wettest Day:	22.3mm	7th

November 2024: A mild, rather dry month, dominated by high pressure during the first half. 1st-10th - Dull and overcast, 'anticyclonic gloom'. 21st-24th - Remarkable surge of warm air from the south-west brought the max temperature of 2.5°C on the 21st up to 17.3°C by the 24th: 24th - Exceptionally mild day and evening. Temperature remained at or above 16°C during 0600-2200 GMT.

December 2024: A very mild month. Total precipitation was around average with the heaviest falls during the first 10 days, associated with 'Storm Darragh' on the 7th. Pressure then rose and remained predominantly high for the rest of the month with small amounts of precipitation. Christmas period was mild and cloudy with several days of morning fog.

Kindly provided by Richard Hinton. See the latest weather and historical Hepworth weather data at <http://j.mp/HepworthWS>

Death Notice

Margaret Beales, Church Close, Hepworth

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the loss of my wife and best friend Margaret. The world and myself have lost a wonderful person. May she rest in peace.

She did so much for the village that many newcomers probably wont know about. I cannot remember her ever having a bad word to say about anyone, she was thoughtful, kind and always willing to help with anything.

John Beales

AGM

Hepworth Recreation Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 22nd April 2025 at 7pm in the Pavilion

Please do come along - we need your support

We are lucky in Hepworth to have organisations meeting regularly in the Pavilion - the coffee morning, the singing Village Voices, the Art Club, the Parish Council and 2 football clubs (moles allowing!), and the Hall is always available for hire for other private functions.

Our Village Hall cannot legally function without a minimum of 5 volunteers on the management committee to organise the day to day running, and also to make improvements to the fabric of the building. We would love to welcome new volunteers so that we can keep the building open and thriving to support everyone that uses it

We look forward to seeing you all on the night and hearing any suggestions for the future

Thank you!

A remembrance of Margaret Beales for all her dedicated work for the villagers of Hepworth

Having been lucky enough to count Margaret as a friend for so many years, may I take this opportunity to reflect on how much she unselfishly did in the running of the social life of Hepworth to help enrich our village

Margaret was warm and welcoming, caring in being hugely instrumental in entertaining all age groups in the village via the Social Club with jointly running the Youth Club for many years and the enormous task of funding and organising the annual Christmas Pensioners luncheon (now brilliantly resurrected by present volunteers).

The Village Lottery was initially set up to fund the Social Club and Margaret was one of the three dedicated organisers who spent many hours counting the monies and filing all the necessary official paperwork - no easy task

I was privileged to sit alongside Margaret on the Parish Council for quite a while and have very happy personal memories of a day spent together looking over the Ikea site at Nottingham when the Company invited Parish Councillors to see the actual running of one of their plants when Ikea was actively considering coming to Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate - sadly, in the end they withdrew but what an informative visit

When the Parish Council was approached for a nomination for a deserving couple to go to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party to salute their contribution to their local Community, the Council was unanimous in putting forward Margaret and John for this well earned honour, and I know Margaret was so touched by this gesture and thoroughly enjoyed that day

There were so many aspects of village life in which she was actively involved such as helping with organising the Silver Jubilee Celebrations when the whole village joined in children and family games on a field in Beck Street followed by evening food and dancing in the Barn at the Old Rectory (the then Village Hall) and we all had a brilliant day. The current hall was built later and Margaret was booking officer for that for many years, still managing to be active with that even when she became ill

Margaret was such a true friend to everyone in the village and along with all the time and effort she gladly put in to make all these events work, I know of many quiet, unspoken kindness she showed in the background

Whilst recalling all that she contributed to Hepworth and its inhabitants, it goes without saying that this was always done as a close knit and loving team with her husband, John, and may I pass on my sincere condolences, and from us all, to him on losing a life partner and best friend. I hope the knowledge of the love and respect in which Margaret was held by all the residents of Hepworth will now be of some comfort to him

A life lived well and to the full, Margaret, in the support of others
xMarjorie Mac

PASSION FOR PIGEONS - Part 6

Fred Osbourne was a mentor for me in every aspect of pigeon racing when I was younger. A retired painter and decorator for the local council. When I first met him his wife had already passed away and Fred himself was in his seventies. Many hours were spent in Freds garden talking pigeons. One particular Saturday I was there waiting with Fred for his pigeons to return from a race when a swarm of bees descended into his garden. I was ready to vacate the garden pretty quick but Fred said “Stay still they won’t hurt you.” True to his word they swarmed on to an apple tree in Freds garden whilst his pigeons returned flying through them. I can’t remember if Fred won the race but it was an experience I have never forgotten.

Fred kept everything as simple as possible. Being a smoker all of his fag ends were thrown into a bucket of water and before the onset of breeding his lofts were sprayed with this concoction. Beer mats were soaked in creosote and put under the nest pans. Also all the privet clippings were thrown on the loft floor, all of which kept the dreaded red mite at bay.

One Sunday I remember going round and seeing all of his pigeons covered in grease. Fred explained they looked like this because all of the fat from the Sunday roast was left in the tray mixed with garlic powder and chicken mash then given to the birds. Come the following Friday Freds pigeons looked a picture.

Another time he had a red pigeon that had won several prizes was walking round the garden with something stuck in it’s throat. “ What’s the matter with that one “ I asked. “I think it’s got a bit of bacon rind stuck” came the answer.

Later in life when Fred was less mobile the pigeon drinker was placed at his feet on race day because 9 times out of 10 this is the first port of call for pigeons returning from a race and was easier for Fred to catch them to clock in.

With bird flu rearing it’s ugly head again this winter we will have to see if we are allowed to race. With only 1 suspected case in a collar dove way back in the nineties our racing will be curtailed until given the all clear. We are allowed to let them out to exercise and fanciers outside the restriction zones are allowed to race with pigeons daily crossing the restriction zones. If that make sense. It seems pigeons cannot catch it but DEFRA just want to control everything. If people want to see how me and Jimmy get on this year with racing drop me an email FlyingFeathers@hotmail.co.uk and I will send them to the local community page online. Snowy and the Knocking Shop will have to wait for another day.

Until next time, John

Hepworth Pavilion and Recreation Ground

Church Lane, IP22 2PU



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Bookings and Enquiries should be sent to Sarah at pavilionhepworth@gmail.com or 07763 720 591

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Winter On The Farm

Our small flock of forty or so Shetlands live on our tiny farm at the edge of Hepworth. The farm has always had a mixed arable rotation, but with only 80 acres to work with it gradually made more and more sense for us to make a change and enter the whole farm into a five year Countryside Stewardship Scheme.



Now our farm is a patchwork of herbal leys, clover mixes, flower rich margins, grassland buffer strips and winter bird seed mixes. As well as providing important nectar sources for pollinators, seeds for overwintering farmland birds and habitat for a variety of wildlife the new plants are regenerating the land by adding nutrients and improving soil structure. What I hadn't really thought about when we signed up was the potential partnership that would be formed between the new crops and our Shetland flock. There are strict rules surrounding the management of the different plant mixes, and all of them must be left alone for flowers and seeds to develop at various times throughout the year. However, we are finding that it is possible to manage the time slots whilst gradually moving the sheep around the farm. They help to keep on top of growth and benefit from the wide variety of grasses, clovers and herbs.

In the middle of April we top the last of the growth on the winter bird seed plots. The mix has been in the ground for a couple of years and all of the seed has been taken. During the first year, birds such as yellowhammers, reed buntings and partridges feed on spilt seed from quinoa plants, triticale wheat, sunflowers and mustard seed. In the second year they rely on seeds from fodder radish and kale and this is where the Shetlands come in.

Once the seeds have been taken the sheep can go in and tidy up for us. The kale and fodder radish leaves provide a high protein food source for the pregnant ewes and a pick me up for the tired out ram. As the plot has been left alone for a couple of years there is also a build up of grasses and weeds underneath the main crop. It is a lot easier for us to clear the field and start again once the stalks have been stripped and nibbled bare. The Shetlands also add their manure to the land whilst they are there. With their small hooves and lighter weight they are gentler on the land than larger breeds, which is important when we are trying to avoid compacting the soil. As part of our change, we no longer add manufactured fertilisers to the land or use chemical sprays so the sheep can feed on what is gradually becoming organic fodder. So far the partnership is working well, with one small snag, Kale stalks provide nice scratching posts so we have lost some of this year's fleece crop in the field! Something to think about for next year.

Once the flock has stripped the kale the ewes come into paddocks near to the farmhouse to lamb, whilst the boys head off to rough pasture elsewhere on the farm for a few weeks. Next stop will be the herbal leys as the spring growth gets going.

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