Towcester’s annual Midsummer Music Festival rose Phoenix-like from the ashes of the cancelled live event and became Towcester Virtual Midsummer Music Festival.

For seventeen consecutive years the Festival has provided fun and good music in the centre of the Town. When coronavirus struck, the artistes were asked whether they could provide a little something to publish on the Midsummer Music Facebook page. This ‘consolation’ turned out to be a stupendous offering to rival the live event.

An astonishing 32 local musical acts took part, with the overall number of participants running into hundreds. All in all, this amounted to 5 and a half hours of musical entertainment. With such a huge amount of talent on offer we were able to run the festival to the original timetable with 12 sessions of musical compilations running over the 3 days.

Even more astonishingly, our festival reached over 23,000 people on Facebook (as far away as Australia) with the videos being viewed nearly 9,000 times.

As well as conducting the opening ceremony, our Town Mayor, Richard Dallyn, acted as Master of Ceremonies throughout the whole weekend, closing Saturday night with the traditional, but virtual fireworks display.

There are many people to thank for this great success. The event was made possible by our artistes who gave their time and talent for us. We are also indebted to several skilful technicians who supplied photographs and sounds and wove these into the performances to create a seamless set of masterpieces. It is also appropriate to acknowledge the sponsors and pubs who would normally have supported us, and our faithful stewards who, this year, were able to watch the Festival in comfort. Finally, a huge (virtual) hug must be accorded to Lizzi Bucklow-Holt who masterminded the whole event, turning wishful thinking into the reality of a Midsummer Music to remember.

In previous years, profits from the Festival have been given to the Towcester Mayor’s charity. This year, there has been no income from the event, but if you enjoyed Midsummer Music (and it is still available to watch on Facebook), there remains the chance to donate.

All you have to do, is go to the `Towcester Town Mayor’s Charity 2020-21’ on JustGiving.com. Your donation will go to Macmillan Cancer Support Northamptonshire, the Mayor’s chosen good cause.

Thank you.
A WORD FROM THE MAYOR

Hello, I am delighted to take over as the Mayor of Towcester, though my year in office starts, and may continue for some time, in extraordinary circumstances.

We have all sought to maintain social distancing and adhere to lockdown rules, difficult though they are, particularly if you are older and live alone. Perhaps you would like to nominate someone who has shown particular kindness during this time for Citizen of the Year?

As I write this on the glorious first of June when the sun continues to shine, some children have returned to school and some of you have gone back to work. But it will take much longer to return to anything remotely like things used to be before mid-March.

Rightly, in my opinion, the Town Council decided to persevere as much as possible with business as usual. The annual Mayor Making ceremony took place on 18th May, but remotely. Some of you may have seen the somewhat tongue-in-cheek ‘passing of chains’ video the past mayor, incoming deputy mayor, and I recorded.

My chosen Mayor’s charity is Macmillan Cancer Support, Northants. I lost my wife to cancer a few years ago. Many of you may have been affected by cancer: it does not always end life, but it changes it. If you would like to donate, click the green link above to donate via Just Giving (preferred) or cheques payable to Town Mayor’s Charities and posted to Towcester Town Council, Town Hall, 86 Watling Street East, NN12 6BS, will be gratefully received.

To raise money and prompt some positive activity in the lockdown, you may have read that I am looking for photos and articles that sum up what this strange time means for you. The best twelve pictures will be put into a calendar and the best articles into a small publication. There is a separate category for anyone under 18. All the details and entry form can be found in the Community section under “My Lockdown Life” on the Town Council’s website. You will also find forms to enter “The Best Kept Front Garden” and “Citizen of the Year Award”.

So, onwards with optimism. If you have got an event you think you can organise safely with the required social distancing, then I would be delighted to visit as Mayor, and open/and or support it.

Let us show that Towcester is very much alive and well!

Richard
Cllr Richard Dallyn, Towcester Town Mayor
Community Wildflower Meadow Is Now Open

Yes, the meadow is now open. And what a beautiful sight it is. Towcester Town Mayor, Cllr Richard Dallyn, opened the wildflower meadow on Sunday 31st May, maintaining a social distance of course. It was a beautifully sunny morning which showed the meadow in its full glory.

Several people were present (all at least two metres apart) including some who worked on the development of the meadow. It was quite a contrast to the weekend when we started – the rain was almost biblical.

Former Mayor, Cllr Lisa Samiotis was game as she cut the first turf to get the project started. A lot has changed in eight months.

It was a lot of hard work, but the hardest part was waiting for the flowers to emerge and wondering if they would. Luckily, the wait has been worth it - it is a joy.

However, the work does not stop here. It needs to be maintained and the Rotary E-Club welcomes assistance from members of the community to identify potential problems, trim the pathways so people can continue to walk through the meadow and, sadly, to clear any dog excrement they see to keep it safe and pleasant for everyone.

The Rotary E-Club would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the development of the wildflower meadow and that includes the residents of Hazel Crescent that came out to help.

But we are not finished yet. The mound of turf next to the meadow is too heavy and thus too expensive to have it taken away. We could turn that into a number of things: for example, a series of bug hotels, or other wildlife habitats and plant some different meadow plants. Ideas are welcome.

However, we cannot start yet because the surface of it is very uneven and we need it to be smoothed over first with a digger, so we don’t end up creating a neighbourhood full of twisted ankles.

In the meantime, please come and enjoy the wildflower meadow. See how many plants and wildlife you can identify. It really is a place of calm and tranquillity.

If you want to contact the Rotary E-Club about the wildflower meadow or want to find out more about Rotary and what it does please email secretary@rotaryeclub1070.org or visit our website www.rotaryeclub1070.org

Photos by Rotarians Colin Bain & Steve Howe
Life as we know it has changed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the future very much remains unknown. However, the local community in Towcester and surrounding area must be commended for how it has coped with and reacted to such uncertainty.

As Rotarians, we strive to act as #PeopleofAction and subsequently The Rotary Club of Towcester has been keen to play its part despite members not being able to meet in person.

The Club recently donated £1,000 to the charity teams at Milton Keynes University Hospital and Northampton General Hospital, as Towcester residents use both hospitals to access local health and social care services. Such funds are being used to provide essential items and supplies to vulnerable patient groups or those most affected by the strict visiting restrictions.

Additionally, individual Rotarians have volunteered with the SOFEA Community Larder food parcel scheme and donated goods to ‘Corona action for those in need’, a local project headed by Carl McGregor.

Meanwhile, the current pandemic has sparked new behaviour and thinking regarding environmental issues and human impact upon the planet. Rotarians have assisted in promoting litter picking for several years as part of the Towcester Tidy Up project organised by David Reed, but there is still much more to be done.

The Club recently formed an Environment Committee to consider how understanding of issues can be improved and identify where action can be taken locally. We are eager to devise initiatives which will aim to encourage and ultimately help those who want to make a difference and welcome any ideas or suggestions from the general public.

Rotary Life during COVID-19

Please help keep Towcester tidy

The next official Nationwide Clean Up will be in September, probably the weekend of 19th & 20th: this will be confirmed nearer the date.

We will be following the strict advice of the Keep Britain Tidy Group who provide most of the equipment and the Risk Assessments that we follow. This may involve smaller parties, but we wait and see how things develop between now and then.

However, I have undertaken a couple of “local” litter picks near where I live as part of my allowed outdoor exercise sessions. You could do the same!

Simply take a rubbish bag with you and pick up litter whenever you go out on your daily exercise. Remember to wear protective gloves and adhere to distancing guidelines. Stick to open areas and take care, especially if you have children, by watercourses and roads. You can borrow litter pickers from me, including child-sized ones, but please ensure you wash your hands before and after use and sanitise the handle before returning it.

If anyone would like to borrow equipment from me, I will leave it outside my door at an agreed time. When you have finished with it, return it to the same place and let me know.

Please put what you pick up in your own appropriate coloured bin for collection by SNC.

Thank you.

Rotarian David Reed
01327 352414 07970 597044 dreedsfm@sky.com

Rotarian Steph Jones
stephjones@towcester-rotary.org.uk
As I write, we are hopefully about to start coming out of lockdown, and despite the relentless news from the radio there are positive signs of hope. We are so lucky to be isolated in our glorious countryside with all the emerging signs of summer; even in the middle of Towcester you are never far from fresh air and green space. Trees and shrubs are bursting into leaf; flowers are coming out in our gardens, parks, and hedgerows; birds are busy singing away. Nature is continuing its cycle, as is the Foodbank.

Like everyone, we have had to adapt. We are no longer at St John’s Ambulance Hall, and instead of seeing our clients in person, we are operating a contactless service. Our voucher is now a numerical code, and our bags are delivered to anyone who is struggling financially or having problems affording food. We will keep supporting people for as long as they need us.

If you need a voucher, ring the Foodbank on 07724 832043 (Mon – Fri 10 – 12noon), or SNC Money Advice on 01327 322107. If you are self-isolating or ill and need food because you cannot get out to shop, call 0300 126 1000 and select Option 5 (Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm).

The Foodbank is still open thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers, old and new, and the generous support of local supermarkets and residents who continue to put food into our collection boxes. As various activities have been shut down, they have contacted us and we have been given biscuits from Northampton University, chicken eggs from Jacks Hill Café and chocolate eggs from the National Trust and Red Cross. Several postmen and women have started collecting food donations for us on their rounds, and despite churches being closed, parishes have continued amassing donations for us and bringing them in.

One kind gentleman decided that our guests’ need is greater than his and is donating his furlough money to us. We are blessed to be living in such a supportive community. They are only small words, but convey a huge strength of feeling.

Thank You All.

Trustees of Towcester Foodbank

Due to Covid-19, renew169 Wellbeing Café has been unable to open since the middle of March but has continued to support people in the local community. The café has opened as a virtual space on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, via Zoom. On Mondays there has been the opportunity for a coffee and catch up, and on Tuesdays, an online activity.

Telephone Befriending Service - As a response to Covid-19, renew169 have developed a short-term intervention: a Telephone Befriending Service. We want to offer some social interaction whilst the café is closed and for anyone who may need to remain in isolation or are generally feeling in need of additional support. The aim is to offer a social phone call once a week (for up to half an hour), for existing café users and new people whose mental health has been affected by Covid-19. If you would like to receive a phone call or become a ‘befriender’ please email the address below. We have a secure system using Google Forms to keep people’s personal details secure. A lot has been happening behind the scenes and we have a newly-designed website, Facebook page and Just Giving page to link all our awareness and fundraising activities.

Renew and Reconnect Picnics - We had two picnic lunches: Monday 22nd June and Tuesday 23rd June, 1 pm to 2 pm, as an alternative to the online coffee and catch up. Please email address below if interested in future picnics.

The changing face of volunteering - We would like to open the café more regularly, just as soon as possible, but we need more volunteers for this to happen. Could you spare a few hours on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday? There are other opportunities to volunteer in new and innovative ways; are you interested in becoming a telephone befriender or supporting us to raise awareness about the work of the café? If you would like more details as to how you can volunteer your time, please message the email below.

renew4u169 campaign update - Join our “pass-it-on” campaign and knit or crochet flowers that will help raise awareness of the work of renew169 around Towcester. Flowers can be dropped through the door of 169. The cards give details of our Just Giving Page and our new website.

And finally, I have saved the best until last….Please watch our FABULOUS video – ‘You’ve got a Friend’ via this YouTube Link or look on Facebook.

For any other information, to access support or to find out more about how you can volunteer, please contact me on my new email address manager@renew169.org.uk or info@renew169.org.uk or phone on 07761 041203 (Monday to Wednesday)
Walk the spiral path leading up Bury Mount and every so often you will pass information about the history of the town set in stone in the path’s surface. One stone is inscribed ‘43 Romans build Watling Street’. I presume that cost was the reason that the developer left off ‘A.D.’ but how it is currently phrased can add a bit of humour to the guided walks of the town that I sometimes give. Towcester, as we now know it, and its predecessor Lactodorum, would not have existed without Watling Street. For me, the interesting questions relating to the road are why was it built; did they pave it straight away and what events have changed the construction and use of the road? I will attempt to answer these questions in this and the next edition of the Town Crier.

The early history of Watling Street is not documented, and archaeology can only answer a few questions about the road. We therefore must speculate on what is likely to have happened. I think the road originated from supply routes that the Roman Army created as they overran and conquered the Iron Age tribes. Forty years after the Roman invasion of 43 A.D. the conquest was not completed, and they were still trying to take Scotland. Troops, weapons, and provisions would have passed through Lactodorum at that time and probably throughout the following two centuries.

The town is recorded in a list of official routes through Britain (The Antonine Itinerary) that were probably compiled about 200 A.D. Lactodorum appears on three routes: Hadrian’s Wall to Richborough, (Kent), London to Lincoln, and York to London. Of course, Watling Street was not only used by the military but would be used by iron age tribesmen, especially the local Catuvellauni tribe and Roman traders buying and transporting goods. It might not have been until the end of the 1st century A.D. that the line of the road was surveyed by Roman Military engineers and its course ‘set in stone’. This would have been a major engineering project involving the digging and transportation of a vast amount of stone and gravel plus the building of stone and timber bridges. This was something which the army excelled at.

During the Roman period, the road would have been maintained but by 400 A.D. it is likely that sections were decaying. The breakup of Britain in the 5th century A.D. into a series of kingships would have seen it decline as a through route and it is doubtful whether it would have been maintained. As the Angles on the east coast extended their control westwards, Watling Street would again have been of strategic importance.
importance. Before 650 A.D. Middle Anglia was part of Mercia and in the late 8th century King Offa had his court at Tamworth. Tradition states that he founded St. Albans Abbey and had conquered London and Kent, so the road would have been a major transport route for the enlarged kingdom of Mercia.

The earliest form of the name Watling Street is ‘Wæcelinga Stræt – the paved road of the people of Waecia’. Waeclincaester, the town of the Waecia, was the name which the 8th century venerable Bede called St Albans. The section of Watling Street between Canterbury and London during the Saxon period had a different name and was called Caslingc (Key) Street.

The Danish invasion, starting in 865 A.D., bit deeply into much of the eastern half of modern England taking large sections of the Kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex into the Dane’s control. The road was mentioned in the peace treaty circa 880 A.D. between King Alfred of Wessex and the Dane, Guthrum. This stated that the boundary between their lands would run ‘up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, and then up the Ouse to Watling Street’. This point was probably at Old Stratford. The road northwards formed a ‘leaky’ border between the Danes and the Kingdom of Mercia. In 917 A.D. Alfred’s son, Edward the Elder, created a fort (burh) within the ruins of the Roman walls of Lactodorum, manned it with men from Wessex and successfully opposed the Danes at Northampton as part of a campaign to take back the lands the Danes had conquered. It was his illegitimate son, Athelstan (924-39 A.D.), that England was largely re-united under a single ruler and Watling Street again developed as a major route. This is likely to have been the period that Towcester developed into a small market town under Royal control.

By 1200 A.D., Watling Street was one of the four roads that were classified as The King’s Highways, along which travellers enjoyed protection. These, like all other public roads, had to be maintained by the parishes they passed through. The Bodleian Library’s ‘Gough Map’ of the mid-14th century shows the country’s major roads. Towcester is on the route between London and Coventry, which was the 4th largest city in the country with a population of about 5000. This followed the Roman Road from London to Old Stratford but then deviated off to Buckingham and re-joined the Roman Road at Towcester, went as far as Weedon Bec and then through Daventry to Coventry. No road is shown between Towcester and Northampton or from the town to Brackley. The reasons for this deviation between Old Stratford and Towcester are not known but it may have been that the earlier Roman road alignment was not suitable for heavy carts only light carts, mounted travellers, pedestrians and animals being driven to market.

Brian Giggins

(Part 2 to follow)
As a Scout, a Leader, and a human... it’s all about “Being Prepared”

1st Towcester Scout Group Centurions

We started off our September 2019 term on a sad note with one of our long-term Leaders retiring from scouting after some 39 years! This left a huge hole in our group for both Scouts and Leaders; what he did not know about Scouting and all things Scouts was not worth knowing!

However we have been extremely lucky to be joined by ‘fresh blood’ with the parent of a prospective Scout taking up the 4-week Scout challenge, a way for interested helpers to come and see what goes on at Scouts. His ‘outdoorsy’ interests have been very welcome.

We also need to say huge thanks to Steve from our local Grafton Scouting District team who has been assisting us over the past months. He works delivering DoFe to Scouts but he found time to support us and it has been an absolute pleasure to have him on board.

We said goodbye to four of our older Scouts who have fulfilled their Scouting obligations and have now set off on a new and exciting chapter of their lives. We wish them all the very best for their next adventure.

Programme Planning

A lot of time and energy goes into the planning of a Scout programme; there are several variables to consider, the zones which allow work and development towards badges, who do we have available and what needs are there? What is currently going on in the world? What worked well in the past and how can it be adapted and updated?

Embracing the Environment

South Northants Avoid Plastic Pollution (SNAPP) was a project we wanted to get our teeth into.

Our local region SNC is ranked 7th in the country for recycling and our usual dedicated participation for litter picking around Towcester fuelled the excitement to take on the challenge that would take over a year to complete. We got straight back to basics visiting the “Tove Waste Department” to learn more about the generation of waste, where it goes, what we can do to reduce it, costs, and the environment.

We incorporated extra litter picks around the area taking time to look at what waste was being dropped and if this differed during different parts of the year. We also explored carbon footprints on food miles amongst many other things.

Variety is the spice of life

Backwoods cooking, archery, pioneering skills, Pinnacle climbing & learning about the importance of understanding fires, not to mention an evening looking at the world through a disabled person’s challenges. Various tasks were set but it was making a sandwich (crisp or jam) using only one arm that we were thankful for having the ability to do so with both arms and an understanding of the difficulties of such a simple task.

Friday night hike with sleepover at the hut, pizza and movie always goes down a treat. It was nice to see the different variations of onesies and kit a Scout thinks is appropriate in an overnight bag!! As Leaders, we are still shocked to see the jumble of items left after a sleepover – how can you leave your entire kit behind??? It must have been all the excitement of playing football so early outside the hut that morning!

A cultural visit to Oxford was a firm highlight for the whole group, including many historical stops such as The Bodleian Library, a Nicholas Hawksmoor designed building, and a personal tour around Wadham College (very Harry Potter!) to mention a few.

We also had a sandwich of archery, pioneering skills, Backwoods cooking, archery, camping, playing football, playing cricket and an understanding of the difficulties of such a simple task.

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As a Scout, a Leader, and a human... it’s all about “Being Prepared”

The Group will be looking ahead to the new term and the challenges it brings.

The Leadership Team of Centurions is about to change. As a team we were not unlike the Musketeers: “all for one...” in Scouting, and we had planned to step down earlier this year. But we felt it was only right to support our Scouts when they needed Scouting more than ever, and with some leader rearrangement, it looks like we’ll be able to retire and leave our Scouts in safe hands for this September.

But more leader help is always required - if you would like to try the 4-week challenge, please contact our Group Scout Leader (gsl@towcester scouts.org.uk) - you never know, you might enjoy it!

The Leaders: 1st Towcester Scout Centurions

Take the four week challenge

Volunteer for just four weeks and become as amazed at the difference you’ll make.

Week 1
See what we get up to

Week 2
Step to help out

Week 3
Get a little more involved

Week 4
You’ll never find Scouting is for you.

We have a wide range of flexible roles all the support you need people to lead you through the stages. Any help is truly amazing.

#SkillsForLife

Contact Nickala, Towcester Group Scout Leader

email: gsl@towcester scouts.org.uk
Adapting to a new ‘normal’
Who thought we would be so busy during lockdown? Along with lots of other groups and organisations the WI has had to learn to adapt, strive and thrive during these challenging times.
Members have become adept at video conferencing and some have learnt how to share their screens to enable a quiz and a presentation of a holiday in the Netherlands at our monthly meetings. Fun has been had with the wearing of different hats and clog dancing!

Sewing & knitting with love
Those with the requisite skills have continued to contribute to the NHS by making face masks for the non-clinical staff at the Brook Health Centre, Towcester Medical Centre and Ridgway House Care Home. Pairs of hearts have been made for the Connected Heart Project at Northampton General Hospital and knitted baby clothes have been made for the Maternity Ward there.

Keeping in touch
Our regular monthly newsletter has expanded to make sure that all our members, especially those without the internet, are kept up to date with all that we are doing and our committee members make regular phone calls to all our members to check up on their wellbeing.

We hope that any women reading this that might be interested in finding out a bit more about our WI will not wait for things to get back to “normal” but will contact us and discover more about our organisation. Equally, please contact us should you wish to assist us in any of our ongoing projects.

GARDEN CLUB IS BLOOMING LOVELY!
Like most of us in lockdown lucky enough to have a green space, our members have been busily tending their own gardens, growing flowers, fruit, and vegetables in abundance. But we have not abandoned the six WI planters in the town. Working singly, rather than in pairs, we put all the summer bedding in during May and we have tried extremely hard to keep the plants healthy during the warm weather. Unfortunately, the Town Council were unable to assist with the watering as in previous years. Then, Highways England started to carry out the work we had asked for some time ago. The sites of the planters at the North and South approaches to the town were much neglected and desperately needed a tidy up. So, this work is being done and it will very much enhance the entrances to Towcester.

Thank you to our sponsors:
Andrew Gordon & Co Licensed Conveyancers
CED Accountancy Ltd
D W Roberts Opticians
John White Funeral Directors
Michael Graham Estate Agents

Towcester Evening WI welcomes all new residents to Towcester and hope you will enjoy living in our town.

We are an active group of ladies and part of the National Federation of WIs (www.thewi.org.uk). The WI is a non-political, non-religious organisation and campaigns on many national and global issues. As well as our monthly meetings we have a team of ladies who work tirelessly to keep the town’s planters looking good and we run a regular sociable craft group. You would be most welcome at any of our meetings which are usually held on the 1st Thursday monthly at the Sawpits Centre in Richmond Road at 7.30pm. Physical meetings are currently suspended until further notice, but we are meeting online. For more details, check out our WI on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TowcesterEveningWI1971 or ring our Secretary, Petra Giffen on 01327 831388 or President, Sue Hamilton on 01327 350822 or email towcesterwi@gmail.com
Towcester Choral Society goes virtual

Towcester Choral Society, in its 120th season, was all set for a fantastic concert in St Lawrence’s Church on 5th April … but then along came Covid-19! Undaunted, a good proportion of our 70-odd membership now join in with ‘virtual’ rehearsals on Zoom each Tuesday evening from 8.00 – 9.30pm. Embracing the challenges of what is, for most, a new technology, we’ve got over the initial teething problems and now these rehearsals run smoothly and even involve ‘breakout rooms’ for sectional rehearsals.

We are led by our enthusiastic and talented Musical Director Helen Swift, who plays the piano and directs us until the accompanying role is taken over by her husband Jonathan French – after he has put the children to bed! We also have our regular accompanist, the fantastic Rowena Gibbons, who leads a sectional rehearsal for the tenors and basses in a breakout room.

We have continued to sing the repertoire we had been working on for the April concert, plus new items (ancient and modern) which Helen finds for us.

Obviously, it is not the same as getting together for physical rehearsals in the Sawpits Centre – mainly because you can only hear yourself singing! There are, however, some advantages – no traffic or parking problems, and you can have your favourite tipple (or pet) beside you as you sing!

We have also had some ‘themed’ nights – for example everyone wearing red, or wearing a hat, or bringing a mascot. The biggest plus though, is that we all get to see one another, and even have a bit of a chat, so we all feel a little less isolated.

As this piece is being written, we are all submitting video recordings of ourselves singing ‘Smile’ to be put together by some technical wizardry into a montage.

You can lock us down, but you can’t stop us singing!

By the time you read this article we will have stopped singing for our summer break, and as things stand, it is likely we will be returning to virtual rehearsals in September. We are always open to new singers and if you would like to join us you need to be able to access the Zoom video conference platform and be able to print or buy music. We will ask you for a small donation per session, if you are interested and would like more details please email our secretary on secretary@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk

As for the future, well, just like everyone else, we don’t really know what will happen. Keep checking our website www.towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk or the Towcester Choral Society page on Facebook for the latest news. We are all determined that at some point in the future “we’ll meet again”, and we look forward to that day.

At Towcester U3A, we have actively encouraged our members to Stay Safe, Stay at Home and Stay in touch.

Our members are becoming ever more resourceful at finding new ways to keep in touch, mastering technology some of us would never have thought possible. Many of our groups have kept going by e-mail, Zoom and WhatsApp.

We have sent out twice-monthly bulletins encouraged by the fact that our members have submitted reports about their activities, ideas for staying in touch, and also amusing anecdotes and quizzes.

Our cinema group, instead of going to the cinema, have now formed a Netflix group. They watch a film a week, then share comments with each other and the bulletin. Anyone is welcome to join in provided they have Netflix.

Our Alternative Poetry Group is sharing poems through email and also set the rest of us a quiz identifying the first lines of famous poems.

Our chess group are playing virtual games. As they are a small group, they contacted other U3As to play games with them.

2020 is a special year for us. We were founded in 2010 so our birthday celebrations were planned for June. Planning was well underway for an Open Day celebration in June.

However, we have encouraged members to share memories of the first 10 years and we produced a 2010 quiz recalling the year our U3A was born.

The number of members using our Facebook page has increased and many more members are posting.

We marked VE day with a special bulletin as we could not meet. Members submitted articles for the bulletin and Facebook and posted wartime pictures and memories as well as VE Day celebrations in 1945.

We are encouraged by the fact that so many of our members are renewing their membership. We will certainly be in a good position to resume our meetings and activities whenever government and NHS guidance allows this.
In Tokyo on 15th August 1945, Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender of Japan heralding the end of the Second World War.

In Washington at 7 o’clock on the evening of 14th August, American President Harry Truman held a press conference in the White House and confirmed the capitulation of Japan. Throughout the day rumours had spread across America, and in New York crowds had been gathering in Times Square since dawn, prompting the city’s mayor to appeal for calm. At midday 21-year-old dental assistant Greta Zimmer wearing her white nurses uniform pushed her way through the crowds and was grabbed by an American sailor who dipped her backwards and kissed her on the lips. The kiss was captured by photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt and the photograph appeared on the front cover of LIFE magazine. Though it became an icon of its time it has attracted controversy, however, in an interview Greta said: “It wasn’t that much of a kiss. It was more of a jubilant act.”

Meanwhile in London, 15th August was also the date of the state opening of Parliament and thousands of people braved the rain to watch King George and Queen Elizabeth being driven in an open carriage to the Palace of Westminster. The BBC reported the event took on the air of a victory parade and across the nation people celebrated in the streets. When British Prime Minister Clement Attlee addressed the House of Commons, he confirmed Japan’s surrender and expressed gratitude to Britain’s allies in Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma and Russia, and all those countries occupied by Japan. He also paid tribute to the United States saying, ‘without their efforts the war in the East would still have many years to run’.

At 9 o’clock that night the King broadcast to the nation and the Empire and showed foresight when he said: “Our hearts are full to overflowing, as are your own. Yet there is not one of us who has experienced this terrible war who does not realise that we shall feel its inevitable consequences long after we have all forgotten our rejoicings today.”

At the time of writing this article some of the COVID-19 lock-down restrictions have been lifted though many gatherings to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day have been cancelled. This anniversary is a time for reflection and remembrance and Pageantmaster Bruno Peek has asked that we ‘help ensure those brave souls from VJ Day who always feel they are the forgotten Army, are not forgotten by us all during this historic anniversary’.

On 15th August 2020, Bruno asks the following...

Pipers to consider playing Battle’s O’er at Sunrise at 5.47a.m. local time in the country you are in, from home or a safe location of your choice that morning to officially start this special anniversary day. Those Pipers taking part are being asked to visit www.battlesover.org/vjday75

Buglers, Trumpeters and Cornet Players to consider playing the Last Post and Reveille at 11a.m. as part of the 2 minute silence, from home or a safe location of your choice, followed at 8.18p.m by playing Sunset that evening. Those wishing to take part are asked to send their name; name of the band; location when playing Last Post, Reveille and Sunset; name of county; name of country; contact telephone number and email address to brunopeek@mac.com

Town Criers to consider undertaking the unique ‘Cry for Peace Around the World’ especially written for this occasion at 11.05a.m from home or a safe location of your choice. Please confirm your involvement by sending your name; location of ‘Cry’; name of county or region if overseas; name of country; contact telephone and email address to brunopeek@mac.com

Please reply to the appropriate email addresses by 7th August 2020.

*Note: Tokyo is 13 hours ahead of Washington D.C and 9 hours ahead of London.

Philomena Liggins
Church is open, but not as we know it...

As I sit down to write this article it is the first week of June and we have not been able to hold a service in any of my churches since 15th March – and at the moment we do not have a date for when we will be able to re-open! Unfortunately, across the benefice many of our fundraising activities have had to be cancelled, including this year’s St Lawrence Flower Festival.

Yet despite our buildings being closed, and us being unable to gather for events, church is definitely open.

Like many other businesses seeking to maintain some form of operation, we have had to find alternative and creative ways in which to still be a church. YouTube Channels, Livestreaming, Zoom and MailChimp along with social media, website, telephone calls and postal letters have come into their own as we have kept in touch, worshiped together, prayed and cared for one another – not just ‘church people’ but the wider community as well. Some lovely and encouraging stories have been shared of new friends and re-found friendships. People are regularly joining us for Zoom Morning Prayer, and others, who because of health reason are not able normally to join us are now receiving regular communication and are feeling a part of the church community again.

If you would like us to add you any of our mailing lists (electronic or postal) please contact the Tove Benefice office on 01327 350459 or email rector.tovebenefice@gmail.com

And the encouraging new keeps coming! It was only last September that I was licensed to the post of Rector for the Tove Benefice, which has historically been known as a training parish. As this is my first post, after 8 years of training, we were not expected to be ‘considered’ by the diocese for a few years. However, I am incredibly pleased and delighted to share with you that, at the end of this June, Angela Hammett will be joining us as Assistant Curate.

Angela, along with her husband Chris, will be moving to the Rectory in Greens Norton and are looking forward to living and serving the benefice over the next few years. They are moving from Bretton on the edge of Peterborough where they have been a part of Holy Spirit Church.

Angela comes to us having undertaken ordination training at St Mellitus Theological College, where she studied for an MA in Christian Leadership. Her dissertation, which is due this October, is on a passage from Luke’s gospel and we look forward to her sharing with us more about that. Due to the ongoing COVID situation, she will not be able to be ordained at the end of June, but there are plans for this to happen on 26th September at Peterborough Cathedral.

Whilst Angela will live in Greens Norton, she is not the vicar there, as her training will be across the five churches that make up the Tove Benefice.

We know you will join us in welcoming Angela and Chris into the community. Please do stop and say hello to them (of course observing social distancing) when seeing them around the town and villages.

Blessings

Rvd Paula Challen

P.S. I am delighted to inform you that permission has just been granted to open two churches for Individual Private Prayer. St Lawrence Towcester is open Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday 2-4pm and St Bartholomew’s Greens Norton is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10-12 and Sunday 2-4pm

View how the churches have prepared for visitors in these two videos: St Lawrence and St Bartholomew’s

Answers to May’s Crossword Puzzle:

When God gave the membership of Towcester Baptist Church the vision for the Tove Valley Centre thirty years ago, they could never have imagined the circumstances under which it would be built.

There have been many difficulties to overcome over those thirty years, and at times it may have seemed to many that the TVC would never be built. The most recent delay caused by COVID-19 means that the building is now expected to be completed by early 2021.

Following a 6-week shut down of the Tove Valley Centre site, work resumed on Monday 11th May 2020. Reopening the site has been conducted in a way that is fully consistent with Government guidance and follows best practice as provided by the Construction Leadership Council.

What a time for Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship to finally have a permanent base from which to provide our many groups and services! The world will have lived through one of the most challenging times in history and there is no telling what restrictions will be in place, or how much of a disruption to our lives we will still be experiencing. What is certain, is that it will take many years to recover as a Country; as communities, as families, and as individuals.

Community
The Tove Valley Centre will enable us at Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship to better serve our local community as we all try to recover from the impact of Covid-19 on our lives. We will aim to do this through our existing groups such as Wednesday Tots and Youth Club. Melanie, our Youth, Children and Families Team leader and some of her team are doing everything that they can to remain in touch with members of these groups, and to provide fun meetings and activities, largely on Zoom. We are also using Zoom to run our Sunday Services. Once the building is up and running and such activities are permitted, we expect to start providing new groups such as a Luncheon Club and ‘Coffee & Chat’ to help people to build and rebuild relationships and to access support.

Our collaborative work with other churches, charities, and other organisations in and around Towcester will become even more important in the future. This joint working will support people to access the Tove Valley Centre and the services delivered by us as well as the charitable, professional, and health-promoting groups that take the opportunity to hire the premises. The TVC will also be available to Towcester residents to hire for parties, weddings and so on, as well as for music and other events. More information can be found at www.tovevalleycentre.co.uk

Fundraising
We still have some fundraising to do to make the TVC a comfortable and welcoming place for all users. All fundraising events are currently on hold due to COVID-19. Please keep an eye on local press for further information. Meanwhile, we would welcome any donations large or small that can be made here.

If you are a local business owner and would like to support this important project by helping with the fit out of the building or landscaping of the grounds, please contact us via contact@tovevalleycentre.co.uk. We will be pleased to explain what we require and what we can offer you in return for your support.

How can we support you now?
At Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship we regularly pray for our local community. If you would like prayer, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please send us a message via social media:

Facebook Twitter Instagram
You can also send an email to comms@tvbf.co.uk. We regularly post bible verses and events on social media - please follow us to stay informed.

For more information about how your family can access activities provided by our Youth, Children and Families Team Leader, please contact Melanie on youth@tvbf.co.uk
TOWCESTER CAMERA CLUB

SUMMER SPEAKER SERIES

Towcester Camera Club is going from strength to strength, with new initiatives for the coming months, including a stunning, virtual Summer Speaker Series open to the general public. This series showcases the work of four accomplished speakers, giving those with an interest in photography or art a wonderful opportunity to watch – in the comfort of your own home – displays of image and technique covering a range of genres. This dedicated link provides subscribers access at £5 per event or £15 for all four events.

Wednesday 8th July @ 7:30pm
David Keep - "Sports Images with Impact 1 - moving beyond the record shot"
Sports images are very successful on the competition circuit and there's no surprise why - they almost guarantee an image with impact. In this talk, David Keep will share his approach to gaining access, technical challenges on the day and post-processing. Sports covered include athletics, squash, tennis, cross-country horse jumping, white-water canoeing, speed skating, boxing and several more.
https://www.davidkeepphotography.co.uk

Wednesday 22nd July @ 7:30pm
Martine Hamilton-Knight - "30 Years of Shooting Architecture Commercially"
Martine Hamilton Knight DLitt (hon) is an award winning professional architectural photographer based in the city of Nottingham whose career has spanned the last three decades. Her images have been published internationally and feature regularly in architectural books and journals. A major show of her work was held in Ningbo, China in 2009. In 2012, The University of Nottingham awarded her with an honorary doctorate, Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa, in recognition of her photographic work.
www.builtvision.co.uk
In 2013, Martine was asked by Manfrotto, a supplier of tripods and camera supports globally to become one of their international brand ambassadors. This role sees her talking about her work across the photographic industry, and she has been a speaker at the NEC’s Photography Show and in 2018 toured the UK for photographic retailer WEX leading masterclass workshops for both professionals and enthusiasts. Her teaching role also sees her spend part of her time on the MA and BA programme at Nottingham Trent University where she is now a fully qualified academic lecturer. She has run a programme of CPD for the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and twice been a regional assessor for the RIBA Architectural Awards in 2009 and 2018.

Wednesday 5th August @ 7:30pm
Cherry Larcombe - "Creative Flower Photography"
Cherry Larcombe’s work has been exhibited at many national and international exhibitions. A highly accomplished creative photographer and speaker, Cherry will describe how she uses creative ideas to bring out the colour, shapes and beauty of flowers, both outdoor and indoor, as well as delivering hints on how to produce some unique and original floral art.
https://www.cherryannette.com
Wednesday 19th August @ 7:30pm

Ross McKelvey - "A Selection of my Works"


https://www.rossmckelvey.co.uk

"Exhibition Photography has been my passion for several years. Since joining a local camera club in approximately 1999, photography has become a real passion for me, and I regularly compete in National and International Photographic Salons - mostly in Print sections. My most successful genre is probably portraiture, but I enjoy everything from landscape to sport, Nature, Still Life and digital composites." Here Ross will present an eclectic mix of his work with advice, anecdotes and information designed to inspire viewers on to greater things!

COVID-19 developments have necessitated Towcester Camera Club switching temporarily from bi-weekly physical meetings to bi-weekly virtual meetings. We will resume physical meetings only when advice suggests that it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we have continued to meet virtually and successfully, using the Zoom platform. In fact, the Zoom platform has given us a view of what is possible: it has allowed us to develop our learning in ways that are not easy to deliver to a physical audience. The club’s range has broadened, and we are actively sharing ideas and techniques via monthly set themes and image sharing.

- During July and August, we will be extending the normal programme to include additional virtual speaker events, open to the general public via subscription. Subscribe here for our Summer Speaker Series
- From September we will be introducing a third session per month (see programme page) following a rotating programme of “Monthly Challenge”, “Camera Club Surgery” and “Competition Readiness”.

Annual membership is £18 per year with £3 payable for physical meetings in Silverstone. TCC is an inclusive club with a focus on collaboration and learning, not on internal competitions. We participate in just two external competitions each year, although we encourage members who individually enter external competitions to use the club for peer review of potential competition entries. Our membership ranges from beginner to professional. Visit us at http://www.towcestercameraclub.co.uk/ or https://www.facebook.com/groups/717208911681719/

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Entry Form - Best Kept Garden Competition 2020

Entries are invited from green fingered residents of Towcester for the ‘Best Kept Garden Competition 2020’ (click link to enter online). There are so many beautifully maintained private gardens in the town and taking part is very simple. Entries will be judged by the Town Mayor by the end of July and a prize and certificate awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The only criterion is the garden must be in public view, i.e. not a back garden.

If you wish to enter your garden, or that of a neighbour or friend, please complete and return the form below to the Town Council Offices at the Town Hall by Friday 31st July.

Gardener’s Name: ____________________________ Contact details: ______________________________________

Garden Address: ____________________________________________________________

Nominating: Myself Someone else Please circle as appropriate
2019-20 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR!

“I am delighted to announce that my chosen Towcester Town Mayor’s Citizen of the Year 2019-2020, is David Reed.”

Clr Lisa Samiois (Former Mayor of Towcester, 2019-20)

I first met David 8 years ago. You could not meet a kinder person; always smiling and happy to chat. I can chat with David for hours about all sorts of things that are happening within the town. I always like to make sure I am scheduled with David when I am doing the Poppy Appeal: I enjoy his yarns, of years gone by and those more recent! David is always on the end of a ‘phone, whenever you need help and if he can’t help you, he will steer you in the right direction. David deserves this award; he is an enormous part of our community, without whom, many things just would not happen.

Unsurprisingly, David received several nominations for his outstanding contributions to our community. In the past, David has been a scout leader for Towcester Scouts and still frequents some of their events, teaching the children about hedgehogs and pond dipping with them on our wildlife meadows.

David organises many different events in Towcester, including, the twice yearly, Towcester Tidy-Up, The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal sales and helps at the Remembrance Service at St Lawrence Church year on year. He is also a Towcester Rotarian and within this role he arranges the Young Rotarian Competitions, which involves art and literature within our schools and is a member of the Midsummer Music Committee.

When I called David to tell him he had won he was over the moon:

“ I just wanted to thank you very much for this award. It really means so much to me, I couldn’t be more delighted. Like all volunteers we do stuff because we enjoy doing it, so when other people thank you for doing it then it is just icing on the cake. Thanks again, I am one very happy chap.”

I did manage to present David with a socially distanced certificate, but I am hoping to present him with his award at what will be our belated Annual Meeting of the Town later in the year. David you are a very deserving winner thank you for everything you do, it means a lot to us all.

I would also like to congratulate all the other nominees (in no particular order) for their contributions to Towcester; you all make Towcester a much nicer place to live:

- Alan Green – Towcester Country Market
- Margaret Knowlton – Towcester WI
- Danielle Gautrey – Friends of Nicholas Hawksmoor School
- Lesley Driscoll – Brook Health Centre
- Doreen Williams – Towcester PHAB
- Sue Hamilton – Towcester WI
- Annie Simpson – Towcester Heartbeats
- David Taylor – Towcester Rock School
- Mike Perry – Neighbourhood Watch, Towcester Area Door to Door, Street Watch
- Barbara Parfitt – Towcester Food Bank
- Mr and Mrs Barden

Nominations are now open for the 2020-21 Mayor’s Citizen of the Year Award...
Towcester Town Mayor’s Citizens Award 2020/21 Nomination Form

Do you know any unsung heroes whose praises you’d like to sing? The Mayor would like your help in finding people who have given up their own time to make an outstanding contribution to the life of Towcester and who add significantly to the quality of life of those they help. They may deserve recognition for their supreme effort, strength, bravery or achievement.

For example, perhaps they’ve made their mark working with a voluntary organisation or through some other community activity, paid or unpaid. Have they achieved something particularly noteworthy within the town or enhanced the reputation of the town? Maybe they’ve made a significant contribution to the conservation or protection of the natural environment or dedicated to providing a loving and supportive family life to a child or children who do not live with their birth family. All achievements will be considered.

If this sounds like someone you know, then now’s the time to put them forward for a Mayor’s Award.

Get nominating!

Name & address of person submitting the nomination

Name of person being nominated

Junior 17 and under as of 31/12/20
Adult 18 and over as of 31/12/20

Address of Nominee
(We require this information so we can contact the nominee to request their attendance at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council should they be lucky enough to win.)

Nominee’s telephone number
For Junior entries, this should be a parent or carer’s telephone number

Description of why you are nominating the person named above
Please tell us clearly what your nominee has done that makes them stand out against others. Provide as much information as possible. Too little information makes it hard to judge. We are looking for outstanding service to others, paid or unpaid or significant achievements. You should include details of what the person you are nominating does, why you think that they should receive an award, how you know them and the work they do.

Continue overleaf...
Closing date for entries is Sunday 28th February 2021.

Please return completed nomination form to Towcester Town Mayor’s Citizens Award, Towcester Town Council, Town Hall, 86 Watling Street, Towcester NN12 6BS.

Those who are short-listed will be contacted by 26th March 2021 and will be asked if they wish to attend the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 10th May 2021 at which successful nominees will be presented with their award.

Please note: The person you nominate does not have to live in Towcester. It may be that they work here, come to the town to do voluntary work, or have lived here in the past and are nominated for the contribution they made to town life at that time. There will be no posthumous awards.

It is regretted that individual nominations cannot be discussed. The Mayor will review all nominations and will carefully consider who should receive awards. The Mayor, the Council or representatives of the Council will not enter into discussions on the Mayor’s decisions. The Mayor’s decision is final.

Data Protection: The information given on this form will be held in accordance with data protection legislation currently in force including the General Data Protection Regulations. Information contained on the form will be anonymised before being judged by the Mayor. We may read out statements written by the nominator when presenting the Award. Find out more about how we control and process data by reading the Privacy Statements at: https://www.towcester-tc.gov.uk/local-council-privacy-and-cookie.html/

Contact details of Award winner(s) will be shared with The Town Council’s Office. The information you give will be treated as confidential, but parts may be included in the citation and certificate presented to successful nominees.

For further copies of this form please email enquiries@towcester-tc.gov.uk or telephone 01327 350995.

Visit www.towcester-tc.gov.uk for more information or call 01327 350995.
Alderton Art Festival 2020 Goes Online!

We are really pleased to announce that this year our amazing art festival will be held online!

We will be showcasing our amazing artists work, which will be available to purchase online from Saturday 1st August to Saturday 5th September inclusive.

Artwork will be available for collection on Sunday 6th September.

Our online festival pages are currently under construction, so please do not attempt to purchase before 1st August as you will be disappointed!

Visit www.aldertonartfesival.co.uk to learn more.

Well, the internet has been a great help to the ‘Arts’ during these strange times with getting artwork in front of our audiences; but there is nothing quite like seeing artwork in person, whether it be paintings, ceramics, mixed media, textiles, glass, jewellery, printing. I could go on and on...

Over at South Northants Arts we are getting very excited, as now is the time of year when we put out a ‘Call for Artists’ to take part in the South Northants Art Trail taking place 3rd – 11th October 2020 – and yes, we are planning on going ahead with it, so why not come and join us? All you need to do is visit our website www.arts-sn.org.uk - sign up for membership, and then complete the Art Trail application.

The stipulation for taking part in the trail is that you are an artist and a member of the SNA. During the trail you must exhibit within the South Northamptonshire boundary – this is so people visiting don’t have to travel too far between venues, and be available during the Art Trail to talk / demonstrate to those who visit your venue. So, what are you waiting for? Visit the website and find out more.

With so many Art Trails being cancelled or online only this year we would love to be the ones that can actually bring our artwork out for viewing.

Vitreus Art Working Glass Studio and Art Gallery is Moving!

After nearly six years at Wakefield Country Courtyard, Vitreus Art is moving to new, bigger premises at The Bell Plantation, just north of Towcester.

The new location will allow room for more art on display as well as expanded workshop and studio space.

The current gallery shows work by Northants artists including Colin Bywater, Val Goldfinch, Lesley Passey, Niki Thomas, Abby Cork, Clare Tebboth and Jane Warwick, as well as work by 30 other renowned local artists.

The new space will also enable an expanded programme of art and craft workshops to add to the Stained Glass, Glass Fusing and Silver Jewellery workshops already running.

Visit www.vitreus-art.co.uk for details of art on show and workshops running this autumn and winter in the new location.
Towcester Writers’ Group

The first meeting of the Towcester Writers’ Group was held on Wednesday 18th January 2012, inspired by Louise Vargas. We were welcomed into the old library, now The Sawpits Centre, by the helpful, supportive staff.

With the opening of The Forum, we transferred our activities to the splendid new library. With rare exceptions, we have continued to meet in the new library from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month ever since. While meetings are currently suspended until further notice, we extend a warm welcome to everyone, whether you have experience or not.

Our aim is to explore ways of encouraging creativity while making writing an enjoyable and life-enhancing pastime. Above all, we seek to be sociable and, where possible, have fun. There is no set structure for a meeting. A typical evening might include a short creative exercise, discussions of books that have inspired us and readings from our own work for supportive comment and encouragement. Occasionally, we may all be invited to bring along a piece on a theme set in advance. Writers (and would-be-writers) of poetry, prose and plays in all genres are equally welcome.

You can follow us online at: www.facebook.com/TowcesterWriters

THE STORM®

By Martin Johns
May 2020

There’s a storm raging, and yet
trees coming into leaf are so still.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
blackbirds settle to sing their sweet sonatas.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
new galaxies of daisies sparkle in the meadow.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
the heron lifts from the lake to glide away.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
the sky is calm, uncluttered by clouds.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
blue tits balance to feast on dried bulrushes.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
May in the faraway hedgerow form cloudlets.

There’s a storm raging, and yet
a pair of red kites soar to raise our spirits.

WORDS© – by Gini

There is a propensity nowadays
For everyone to say whatever they feel
Whether in e-mail, or Facebook or by SMS
They will author their opinions and appeals

And on Twitter they’ll tweet nearly everything
From the weather to just what they perceive
Without consideration for their reading recipient
Or a care for how it may be conceived

But meet in the high street or playground
Or workplace or local café
And a lot of that digital venting
Will be replaced with cordiality per se

So in our online discussions
In text and written messages beware
And choose your words with compassion
So that they won’t smart, maim or impair

And think what is said before speaking
Consider how the words will be felt
But most of all think from the depth of your heart
How your words are handled and dealt

For a careful word is worth every letter
They can be kind and easy to speak
But their echoes will be truly endless
Uplifting – inspiring – unique!

Based on Mother Theresa’s famous quote:
“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

A time for consideration

As I write to meet the deadline for submitting articles for this issue of the Town Crier, I have been racking my brain to consider a topic that was not Covid-19 related. But unfortunately, I cannot think of one. It has been all consuming for everyone in everything we have done and thought about over the past few months.

It is without doubt that there have been some devastating consequences from the outbreak. More than 38,000 people have lost their lives. People have lost their jobs, their freedom and there has been an impact on everyone’s mental health - whether we recognise it yet or not.

But these are all the concerns and impact measures on adults. As a Primary School, my staff and I have had to consider very carefully the impact on our children.

I am writing this at the beginning of June, as our Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils are invited to join the key workers children in school. Our school has arrows marked on the floor to show safe routes, signs state new rules and both staff and pupils are restricted to certain areas of the school building.

We are taking children from their safe bubble at home and transferring them to slightly bigger, but safe, bubbles in school. For many this has been perhaps a controversial decision by the Government, but if getting our most vulnerable pupils, Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 6 pupil back into school for a period of time means them having the opportunity to socially integrate themselves and get learning and personal development back on track in a calm and controlled manner, then it has to be a good thing.

Our younger children have perhaps attached themselves to their parents and will potentially develop an anxiety from being separated again after such a long period of time. How will we know that this has happened? It will manifest itself differently for each pupil and at varying rates. Some will be anxious inside and we might never know, but there might be a change in their behaviour or their ability to approach things now and/or in the future. Separation from friends and family for this time will have been a challenge for children in the same way it has been for us as adults - but their ability to process and understand their feelings and responses is so much weaker and under-developed than ours. Specialists in their field are relating this to a feeling of bereavement – mourning part of their childhood.

For our older pupils, and probably similar to that of GCSE and A level candidates this year, they have been cheated of their ‘rite of passage’ - their journey has been redirected and there will be a feeling of ‘loss’ or ‘I missed out’ - not to mention annoying! I equate it to a long road diversion - even though you know it is for a good reason, it is not fair and has an impact on your time and overall plan. That is never a good feeling!

I am perhaps asking you as adults, to just give a thought to our children which include our secondary age students, who are all going need to have our understanding and support, as we continue to address our own needs and outcomes from the pandemic.

I have no doubt, from the strength shown in our community since lockdown, that the residents of Towcester will continue their support of each other. It has been nothing but heart-warming to hear of the community response, the volunteers and the true heroes who have been helping others in whatever form has been needed.

We will all come out of this stronger, more experienced, great at problem solving and perhaps giving time to things that did not seem as important before.

I am immensely proud to be part of the Towcester community and wish you all well on our recovery from the pandemic. It will be slow. It will be challenging. But together we are stronger.

Jo Griffin, Head Teacher
How Can the SNC Job Club Support Local Residents?

We offer confidential advice and support on a wide range of topics to help find a way back into work, training, or education.

For anyone currently out of work, looking for a different type of job or even a new career, we can offer:

- 121 guidance from qualified experts
- Help with your CV, Cover Letter, Job Application
- Interview tips & tricks
- Help to identify appropriate jobs
- Hands-on assistance for those dealing with redundancy
- Expert advice on handling your finances
- Training webinars

Free Employment Webinars

South Northamptonshire Council are working with partners CWR Consultancy and The Mallows Company, to run free webinars for all local residents.

These webinars will cover a range of topics to help people cope with current challenges and learn top tips for landing their next job. We are also keen to support personal wellbeing and this will be reflected in these webinars. Given the amount of support available through the SNC Job Club, whatever the needs of our residents, we are on hand to offer support.

Check out [www.southnorthants.gov.uk/jobclub](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/jobclub) for more information on support and the upcoming webinars.

Contact

JobClub@SouthNorthants.gov.uk
01327 322087