Saturday 22nd August 2020, 11am - 6pm

Our events are extremely well supported, often drawing thousands of people to Fitzmaurice Park. This is an opportunity to engage directly with people in an exciting and innovative way. A space totalling 3m² will be allocated to interested businesses. The site will operate a one-way system for the flow of pedestrian traffic, and a range of businesses, services, employers, and food and drink stalls are encouraged to attend. There will be no cost for the event which will be funded by Thorpe St Andrew Town Council and Broadland District Council.

To book a pitch or for more information, email office@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk
News from Councillor John Fisher, Town Mayor

I am very pleased to be writing this more upbeat report than my last one way back in March which was advising all residents to stay in and take precautions. I was very pleased however to see many of our “I am self isolating” signs in people’s windows as I walked my dog.

This News edition is very much looking forward to how the Town Council can help to restore confidence and normality within the Town. I know many residents are still nervous about going out and about and many are anxious because their lives have been totally disrupted, regular visits to the shops, parks, church or football matches were suddenly taken from them.

I am very pleased to tell you about the ‘Pop up Business event’ to help our local businesses promote their goods and services. So many of our small local businesses from estate agents to builders from printing to cafés, have not been able to work, so as a community we now need to get behind them and by buying their services and goods we can stimulate and inject money into our economy.

During the lockdown I volunteered to deliver prescriptions for two local pharmacies, a job I found so rewarding as the appreciation from the residents was overwhelming. My daily walks with my dog often featured Thorpe Marshes, Cary’s Meadow, Gargle and Belmore Woods and of course our own recreation grounds and all of which are such excellent facilities on our doorstep. I have been disappointed to witness an increase in littering since more people have been out and about and therefore the Town Council is launching a new litter awareness campaign. I often wonder if people who drop litter think about who or how it will be cleared up and therefore our new signs are asking that very question. I would like to appeal to all residents with front hedges to make an effort to cut the hedges back to their boundary line. With the need to ensure social distancing on the pathways an overgrown hedge can impact greatly when people are approaching each other from different directions. Norfolk County Council Highways does have the authority to cut back hedges and charge the occupier if footpaths are seriously restricted.

My varying walk routes throughout the Town have identified some poor pathways so I have contacted our Area Highways Engineer to draw these to his attention. Footpaths are repaired on a rolling program and if the whole street is approaching the time for full repair then often patch up jobs will be left until the whole path is done, but hopefully many small repairs will be completed now that the highways staff are back to full time operation.

Opening up the tree plantation on Laundry Lane for use by Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) children proved a very popular initiative. Many SEND children are vulnerable to infection but also need space to run and play and parents require five minutes relaxation as a lot of the respite care could not continue during the lockdown. As a result of this at the July council meeting it was agreed to make better use of some spare land at the top of the Hillside Avenue allotments and turn this area into a tranquil area for residents to visit and sit and relax and take in what is one of the most inspiring views across the river valley.

The Town Council still honoured Armed Forces Week and I was proud to raise the VE Day Flag and Armed Forces Flag at the Town Hall flag pole joined by Thorpe British Legion Branch and Father James, suitably socially distanced. I feel that in times such as we are experiencing it is good to retain some tradition and normality. We also raised the Canadian flag on July 3rd, Canada Day and had a chat via zoom with our Canadian twin town of St Andrews.

When we decided in May that the Council should have virtual meetings I was cautious to start with but, moving to the 21st century has been quite straight forward and at the virtual July planning meeting we had many residents in attendance commenting and raising issues. Virtual meetings appear to be more convenient for many people.

Finally I would like to thank everybody who volunteered in anyway during the lockdown. I know many residents helped out neighbours and the elderly and a true community spirit was generated with Thorpe St Andrew residents reaching out hands of friendship to families in Thorpe Hamlet with food parcels. Hopefully we will not experience another lockdown. I know that if we do you will all rise to the challenge once more. I would like to give a special thanks to Fiona Bass our deputy clerk for coordinating much of this work and working tirelessly throughout.
Sharing Goodwill on Canada Day

On July 1st the Town of Thorpe St Andrew joined our twin community of the Town of Saint Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada to share goodwill and best wishes on Canada Day.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have been in regular communication with our sister community to share experiences, responses and solidarity in the face of the global pandemic. The son of the Saint Andrews Deputy Mayor took part in our Parish Church Rainbow Challenge (Hunter Henderson, aged 8) and key worker children at Dussindale Primary School produced a beaver and moose painting for their window display.

On 1st July town councillors, Fr James Stewart and the Royal British Legion raised the Canadian Maple Leaf Flag at the Town Hall and recorded a message. A flag was also raised at the Parish Church. Later that evening our communities were connected by ‘zoom’ as we joined Saint Andrews Town Mayor, Doug Naish, and other councillors and officers to share our experiences and lessons learnt from recent months. On that day Saint Andrews had started their sightseeing boat trips and in Thorpe St Andrew, Bishy Barney Boats also started from River Green. It was a real joy to connect across the miles, both communities caring for each other, indeed we all agreed that the silver lining from this pandemic is the greater appreciation for those who care and the value of strong communities.

Councillor Ian Mackie, Community Goodwill Ambassador

VE Day 75 and Armed Forces Week

No parades or events were allowed for these, but at least in Thorpe we ensured the RBL Standard (flag) was at the 2 minutes silence on our River Green for VE Day 75 in May. It was also at the raising of the Armed Forces flag at the Town Hall and Parish Church flag poles in June. The RBL Thorpe branch still managed to “remember them” in Thorpe even though this could not be a publicised event.

RBL Remembrance Parades & Events

Sadly, RBL HQ have stated that for now all Remembrance parades and physical events must NOT take place. This is because RBL members mostly fall into the vulnerable groups re Covid. RBL HQ hope this ruling may change by October when they will review this instruction.

Thank you

A massive thank you to every one of the 35 people who answered our RBL request for helpers in the last newsletter.

They came forward to help our vulnerable and those shielding by volunteering their time and services in so many ways. These volunteers were matched with local people in need by the RBL branch. Better still most of the volunteers have now built ongoing support arrangements long-term.

RBL Members often talk about the wartime community spirit. It’s been extremely rewarding during this dreadful covid crisis to see our very own, present day Thorpe community spirit. So many people have come together as a team, long lost relatives, neighbours, past strangers who live in the same street, all to help others in need. These acts of great kindness have also been completed without expecting anything in return, making the help given even more appreciated. Thank you.

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News from the Town Clerk

For many of us, March 2020 seems like more than just four months ago. At the start of 2020 I don't think many of us understood the changes which would take place in all our lives. The anticipated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was only just being realised as we put the finishing touches to our March newsletter, normally providing details of the many activities which had been taking place and optimistically hoping St George's Day celebrations might still be possible in some small way.

As the details became clearer, it became apparent that our Finance and Staff Committee on 16th March 2020 would need to once again look at our emergency plan, but for the first time it wasn't due to inclement weather. In addition to this, the Committee considered the Influenza and Coronavirus Policy, which laid out the detail of how the Council would continue to function during the emergency. The Finance and Staff Committee approved the two policies which have underpinned the Town Council's response to Covid-19.

Within six days of the meeting, our newsletter had been completely changed to include the latest government guidance and been delivered. A huge thank you goes to all our volunteers who delivered the newsletter throughout the town. All the volunteers had their temperature checked and were given PPE. Our newsletter was also published online.

Using collaborative software, we set up a virtual office, creating a seamless transition to remote working. The Council continued to be 'open for business', resulting in a steady number of 'business as usual' enquiries. During this time, the Town Council worked in close liaison and had ongoing meetings with Broadland District Council relating to community response, as well as with District Councillors on a daily basis. We have also maintained regular contact with the Police regarding breaches of Covid-19 guidance. Additionally, we promoted our Thorpe St Andrew app to support 'emergency messaging' during the pandemic.

For our residents' health and safety, within hours of Government announcement our play areas were shut and the gym equipment was taped off. All park gates were either removed or tied open to reduce touch-points. Dog owners were requested to keep dogs on leads to ensure social distancing measures were maintained. This has now been changed to ask dog owners to consider doing so, in line with current guidance.

Our Parks and Estates team have continued to provide exceptional service in very difficult circumstances. They have worked tirelessly, undertaking a range of duties to support the community whilst also ensuring the day-to-day work of the team continued. I spend a few days volunteering my time alongside them, although I am not sure whether I could be classed as a help or hindrance, but it did give me the opportunity to engage with residents on our parks whilst the office remained closed, which was very worthwhile.

We also created a volunteer database. Postcards and handmade cards with personal messages were delivered, and telephone calls were made to Dementia Café and Luncheon Club attendees, as well as other residents who reached out to us seeking support. Our community volunteers provided Thorpe St Andrew, Rackhealth, Sprowston, along with Thorpe End and the Plumsteads help with medication deliveries. They also provided shopping, dog walking, telephone calls, and general support. The Town Mayor and Mrs Fisher, along with the Deputy Town Mayor have been particularly active in medication delivery, along with Council staff and other Councillors. Many leaflets were being distributed with medication-promoting the services currently being offered by the Town Council. We also received referrals from supermarkets including Sainsbury's, and local charities, businesses, and pharmacies/GP surgeries. Donations were received to support the volunteers' costs and our community response, totalling £2,000.

An 'excess produce' scheme has also been set up by the Council for both allotment sites. This provides fresh fruit and vegetables to those in need via the District Council food boxes. We have had an overwhelming response to this, and I very grateful to everyone who has given so generously.

I am very fortunate to have such a hard working and dedicated team, who worked daily throughout the lockdown period. Without them, our response would have been impossible to maintain. Our Community Officer, Fiona Bass, was singled out by Broadland District Council for her work during lockdown and given an award on Friday 24th July 2020. I am also indebted to the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor who have made themselves available 24/7 throughout this period, and to the District Councillors and Town Councillors who worked tirelessly with officers throughout. But most of all to the residents who volunteered to support the community during the lockdown.
Archant, formally known as Eastern Counties Newspapers, had outgrown the print hall which was situated within the current head office, Prospect House, in the centre of Norwich so a new site had to be found. Archant Print, on the St Andrews Business Park, was opened in 1995 by The Duke of Kent.

At that time Archant Print was the first privately owned regional newspaper printer in Europe to have the capability to print in colour of every single page. The mighty presses were capable of printing colour newspapers at a speed of 22 completed newspapers per second, 80,000 newspapers per hour. At Archant Print’s peak it consumed annually 28,000 tonnes of newspaper, 500 tonnes of ink, 3 million newspapers were printed every week and over 90 different newspaper titles. Its 35 delivery vans delivered to over a 1000 outlets every night in Norfolk and Suffolk and drove nearly 20,000 miles per week in doing so.

In the late 1990’s newspapers were booming and Archant purchased more newspaper titles in Kent, London and South West areas with all these newspapers being printed at Archant Print in Thorpe. Millions of pounds were spent in expanding Archant Print and by 2009 Archant Print was the largest privately owned newspaper printer in Europe. Archant Print now had the capability of printing four different newspapers at the same time with all four newspaper coming off the press at 22 copies per second or a combined output of 320,000 newspaper printed per hour. The annual consumption of newspaper was the equivalent of covering the surface area of the UK, twice ...! and printing nearly 2 billion single tabloid pages per year.

Archant Print was winning many prestigious national quality awards and in 2013 came second in the national award of newspaper printers of the year. The first time any regional newspaper printer had got into the top 6 let alone coming second, and this was a small regional newspaper printer taking on the large national printers... and nearly winning!

H&S, Environmental, quality management and the reduction of accident awards were soon following. Archant Print was the first newspaper printer in the UK to be awarded three ISO accreditations at the same time, never been done in the industry before.

However, with the digital world gaining momentum newspaper circulation was on the decline and although still to this day, Archant has the best selling regional daily newspaper in the UK, the EDP, the decision was made to close Archant Print in November 2019. All newspapers printed at Archant Print would be moved to other larger facilities to ensure continuity for its loyal readers.

The decommissioning of Archant Print commenced in May 2020 and will be completed by the end of August. Over 1200 tonnes of printing machinery has to be dismantled and removed from site. Some equipment has been sold and some will go to be recycled. Its the end of an era for Archant Print in Thorpe St Andrew but its been one heck of a journey.

From a personal perspective I would like to thank everyone living close to the Print Centre for your patience in putting up with the inevitable noise being made during the decommissioning process. Although it probably doesn’t sound like it we have done everything possible to reduce the amount of noise being made. Both you and I wish we were not having to make this noise at all.
Councillor's Grant makes Accessible Defibrillator a Reality

Thorpe St Andrew Town Council has been able to make one of its defibrillators accessible 24/7 thanks to a Members Grant donation from Councillor John Fisher.

Following a request by Thorpe Recreational Bowls Club to get an accessible defibrillator installed, Councillor Fisher opted to use his entire grant in making this a reality.

Ian Aitken, Chairman of Thorpe Recreation Bowls Club explained “We are very pleased to have the use of the new defibrillator cabinet; as a small Bowls Club we were struggling to provide one for our members. I would like to thank local electrician Chris Wilson for installing the new cabinet at no cost to the community.”

Speaking about the donation, Town Clerk Thomas Foreman said “Following the opening of the Community Café, an exterior defibrillator cabinet with an electricity supply became a real possibility. The generous donation by Councillor Fisher through his ward grant has meant this can be a reality far quicker, meaning the lifesaving equipment is now publicly available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

Making a defibrillator publicly accessible is important on a site which features football pitches, tennis courts, and a bowls club. There are also many dog walkers using the park every day and homes nearby. Nanny's Cakes Café is a hub of the community and locating the cabinet here was a natural choice.

This is the second publicly available defibrillator installed in the town, with the first being installed at River Green park on Yarmouth Road. The defibrillators are designed to be used with no training required, as they talk the user through how to use it and provide pictures for additional guidance.

Thorpe Helping Hands

Thorpe Helping Hands is a grassroots volunteer group set up during the early days of the Covid-19 crisis to support people across Thorpe St Andrew and Thorpe Hamlet.

It quickly built a team of 80 local volunteers who offer support services including ‘Check & Chat’ calls to isolated residents, shopping errands and prescription collections.

A team of younger volunteers has been writing letters to care home residents.

One key weekly activity is the food hub at Pilling Park, which sees volunteers pack and deliver essential food parcels for about 90 households in need.

The group has established a committee and is working with Community Action Norfolk to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme to support the community throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Freephone 01622 370 527
or email us at thorpehelpinghands@gmail.com

Consultation on Energy Saving Streetlights

The Planning and Environment Committee has launched a consultation on replacing the inefficient sodium streetlights in Thorpe St Andrew with efficient LED streetlight heads, which have an estimated lifespan of 25 years.

If approved, the Town Council will seek a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to fund the replacement, with the repayments paid through the reduced energy costs and existing budget commitments to streetlighting.

Prior to the Town Council considering the project, the Committee are keen for the public to also provide their views, so let us know, by emailing office@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk

Go get Trained

During October last year Thorpe Town Council along with a local business Go and Get Trained hosted a Free CPR Awareness days at Roxley Hall. Attended by local residents, town councillors and the Town Mayor.

The hour-long free sessions gave people the awareness of how to perform CPR, how to use a Defibrillator and advise on to deal with someone who is choking. More sessions are planned later in the year if you wish to attend.

Half term holidays in February saw more first aid activity at Roxley Hall. Helen from Go and Get Trained hosted Mini Medics – First Aid Workshop for children aged between 6-10 years old. Well attended and accompanied by mums, dads and grandparents the children enjoyed a 3-hour session learning how to call the emergency services, performing CPR, using a defibrillator, wounds, bleeding, bandaging and putting their parents into the recovery position. For more information please contact Helen – Helen@goandgettrained.co.uk
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Travel from Thorpe River Green in Norwich. All other times, boats are available from Freedom Boats, Bungalow Lane, NR7 0SH. Bishy Barney Boats, Thorpe River Green, Yarmouth Road, Norwich, NR7.