

FROM REV ALLISON TWIGG:

I write this as the New Year has just broken and it is tradition at this time of year to wish each other a very Happy New Year. So, let me begin by doing so. I hope that 2021 will be a good one. Many of us may think that it at least has to be better than 2020 was!

What about happiness? What is it that we are wishing for each other when we say these words? For some it may be simply a greeting. For others, a genuine wish that those we greet really will enjoy a good and trouble-free year. Eleanor Roosevelt famously said, "Happiness is not a goal...it's a by-product of a life well lived." As we enter travel through New Year what might lives well lived might look like?

I think that this year in the Villages of the Uplands Group we have seen beautiful glimpses of lives well lived even in the most challenging of times. Our communities have been drawn together, supporting each other, with willing volunteers helping in times of need. We have both supported and been supported by our local shops, schools, the surgery and the wider NHS.

Many of us had to celebrate Christmas differently, with plans changing suddenly and familiar traditions having to be set aside. I am so very grateful for all those who took part in the Church Advent Windows Trails and the Angel Hunts in so many of the villages. I know they brought delight and Christmas joy to many, even if we did have to dodge the winter rain to see them. Thank you to all who helped the churches spread a little joy in the community and WOW – we have some amazing creativity in our midst. Perhaps these trails could become a new Christmas tradition here a way of lifting the spirits in the dark days of winter.

Yet Christmas is past, strange as it was and for many the question usually turns to what next? For many, the first few months of the year is a challenging time. The days remain dark and the winter weather sets in. Someone worked out that the 21st January, labelled Blue Monday is the all-time low. It is the day the credit card bill arrives. The transient happiness of the festive season can seem to disappear.

May I suggest three things?

Hope and hopefulness can make a big difference. Remaining hopeful can be a challenge – when it is so difficult to plan into the future. However, the news that Covid Vaccinations have begun and that there are those that we know who have received it is a sure sign that there is an end to our current situation. The year will get better... Thinking this way is a hopeful choice.

Contentment is surely another ingredient. Yet we have found small ways of finding contentment. Meeting with those we love over zoom; going for a walk with a friend and exploring the wonderful countryside we are blessed to live in: picnics in the garden or hot chocolate in front of the fire. Simple? Yes. Contentment is noticing and enjoying the moment.

Thankfulness is the third quality that comes to mind. Oprah Winfrey said: "Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never ever have enough."

There is a spiritual discipline in this kind of happiness. In pausing each day to reflect and remember the things that have brought you joy and in knowing that to do this can lift your spirits even in the darkest of times. Learning as you do, as St Paul wrote, the secret of being content in any and every situation and giving thanks. It is a process. It promises a happiness rooted in hope, contentment, thankfulness and, for me, ultimately in God himself.

With every blessing,

Allison

CHURCH SERVICES FEBRUARY-MARCH

At the time of the newsletter being prepared for publication, it was not possible to confirm the pattern of services in the Uplands Group of Churches for February and March. Please check with our Website or contact the Rector or Churchwardens. Notices will also be displayed in church. <http://www.uplandsgroupchurches.org.uk>

We would like to say a big '**Thank You**' to the Foss's for providing the splendid Christmas tree which was then erected by John Matts outside church. Thank you to Sally Marsh for the lovely decorations in church. Well done to everyone who participated in the Advent Windows, they were all really wonderful and innovative! Also thank you to any 'Angel' stone painters.

Please could people be reminded that Christmas Wreathes should now be removed from graves and also that artificial flowers are not permitted in the churchyard. *Meg Benn*

CHURCH CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION: Rev'd Allison Twigg 01604 846099 revallisontwigg@gmail.com

The Uplands Group Office: uplandsgroupoffice@gmail.com; Website: www.uplandsgroupchurches.org.uk

PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH FUND

A big thank you from Ann Fowler to all who supported and donated to the

Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund in the autumn. An amazing £1000 was raised.

A special thanks to Lyn who contributed so much. I could not

Crabtree Pocket Park

In the lane lays a carpet on show, with white drops of snow. The birds flutter to their boxes, an ideal place to avoid the foxes.

Sadly there's no work parties, until you've had your vaccine [my hearties](#).

A new picnic bench to fund with a sum, a new place to plant your

If you're interested in helping or hearing pocket park news direct to your email, please contact Ruth Rolls on ruth.rolls@gmail.com.



Knitting

Is there anyone who would like to knit hats, mittens, scarfs for adults or children for next winters shoe box collection? Or maybe a blanket square?

30 stitches DK wool, size 8 / 4mm needles & garter stitch to make a square. A more interesting square can be made—see the picture. I have the pattern if you would like it. Also we need oddments of wool.

Tricia Freeman 01604 770855



RAVENSTHORPE MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD UPDATE

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA: PLEASE OBEY THE RULES

The Children's Play Area is able to remain open, at least for now, but it is crucial that parents ensure that the rules of use, under the Covid-19 regulations, are closely followed:

- The equipment is used at your own risk.
- Adults are asked to ensure that they and their children maintain a distance of 2 metres from others unless they are from the same household.
- If the play area is busy, please come back when there are less people.
- Adults must bring hand-sanitiser for use by themselves and their children. This is not provided. We would also ask that antiseptic wipes are also brought to be used as appropriate. Please apply hand sanitiser before and after using each piece of equipment and encourage children to avoid touching their faces. Where appropriate please wipe equipment after use.
- Children must only use items of equipment by themselves or with members of their own household.
- All children should be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult, but if children are old enough to go on their own, then it is still the parents' responsibility to ensure they are able and will obey the rules.
- If the Play Area is busy, only 1 parent is allowed to accompany a child or siblings in order to limit the number of people in the Play Area at any one time.
- Don't stay too long on a piece of equipment to let others have a turn.
- If you are wearing disposable PPE or using tissues or wipes, please take them home with you. Do not litter.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Please report any concerns you have whether this is to do with the equipment or to do with the management of the play area during the times it is being used (playingfield@ravensthorpe.me.uk)

ODDS-200 LOTTERY WINNERS

The winner of the Odds-200 lottery Xmas jackpot (£100) was Maureen Stonehouse.

The monthly winners for December were Richard Bott £50 & Ruth Rolls £20. And for January Martin Wilkes (£50) & Di Hayes (£20).

Covid-19 Support for residents in Ravensthorpe, Coton & Teeton

As previously mentioned, if you require assistance of some kind as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, please call Bob Pike on 01604 771277 or email ravensthorpe2020@gmail.com



Ken (on the right) and Richard Hickman: A chilly January morning doesn't quite do it the justice it deserves.

THE ROUNDABOUT: A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

As all of our younger folk will know, the roundabout in the children's play area at the Playing Field is now back in action. . .

For this enormous thanks go to Ken Hickman, who—free of charge—and with the help of his son Richard, has dismantled and restored the old roundabout, Ken has replaced all the moving parts, including bearings, and painted the metal framework. It has been a big job.

The roundabout was originally installed in 1985 and now, coupled with the installation of a new "safety surface", is looking and working as good as new. For the funding of this we say a huge thank-you to Daventry District Council and our own Parish Council. This is the second major overhaul for the roundabout in its 36-year existence: in 2014, Martin Wilkes, Kieren Cooper and Russ Barringer replaced all the wooden platform parts.

Ken has been a member of the Playing Field Committee since "the early 80's" - before the roundabout was originally installed. Like his father Eric before him (and several other generations of Hickmans) Ken was born and grew up in Ravensthorpe.

Ken's father, Eric, as well as being, for many years, a member of the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee, was one of the founding Trustees of the Playing Field, along with Horace Batten, Emily Faulkner, Leslie Fox, Win Payne (Ken's aunt) and Dilys Bailey. This group formed in 1945 to raise money within the village to purchase the 4.5 acre field from the Church and to establish it as a memorial to the two village men who had died serving in the War—Colin Smith and Albert Watson.

The Ravensthorpe Memorial Playing Field was formally opened in July 1949. The Eric Hickman Pavilion at the Playing Field, opened in 2000, is named after him.

Ken's mother, Vera, came to the village as a young girl when her parents came to run the Chequers. That was probably (according to Ken) "in the mid-1930s". For many years, Vera was a member of the Village Hall Committee and the WI.

In 1986, Eric Hickman was awarded an MBE for his services to the community.

Update from Buckby Library & Hub

Buckby Library & Hub is sadly closed again during the current lockdown. However, we can still offer book selection via our SELECT and

COLLECT service. Please complete a form

either online (buckbylibraryhub.org) or by hand (forms are available outside the Library; you can pop it through our letterbox). We will be in touch when your books are ready for collection.

Not a member of the library? We can now register you as a member using the same form. Note that becoming a member is free! Please ensure you give your **DOB** as this information is essential for generating a library card for you. We will include your new card with your books when they are ready for collection.

Please note we will only be open for collections on Saturday mornings.

The Chequers: please support our local pub.

Ravensthorpe needs the Chequers; the Chequers needs our support, and you can do this by ordering a take-away.

It is open for takeaway orders from 6.30-8.00pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays. You need to pre-order during these times.

To order please phone 01604 770379. Contactless payment on collection (cash accepted but card preferred).

The menu (subject to availability) includes:

- *Steak, Ale and Mushroom Pie;*
- *Steak & Ale Hotpot;*
- *Cottage Pie;*
- *Beef or Vegetable Lasagne;*
- *Chicken, Lamb or Vegetable Curry with rice;*
- *Beef Chilli with rice;*
- *Fish (cod or haddock) and chips and peas;*
- *Homemade beefburger;*
- *Homemade Lamb Burger.*

All at £8.50 and served with vegetables or chips as appropriate.

- *Children's portions are also available. .*
- *Beer, lager and cider also available with (but only with) pre-orders.*

The shop is also open 6.30pm to 8.00pm (Wed-Sat), in addition to the usual 11.00am-2.00pm (daily)



Ravensthorpe WI is still meeting courtesy of Zoom. Would any village ladies like to join us? We'd love to have some new members or guests.

We managed a virtual Christmas party with entertainment from Nick Ellison playing the fiddle and members reading poems or stories. Gill Douglas provided a Christmas Quiz and Jean Bennion won the craft competition to make a bell in any medium.

We are now looking ahead to the programme for 2021:

- In January we will be hearing from the WI climate change ambassador in a discussion forum.
- On February 15th we have a talk on 'Stained Glass Windows' by an ex-Denman Tutor, Anna Conti. (Denman has been the centre for WI learning, providing residential and day courses for 70 years. Sadly it is now closed, the pandemic being the last straw).
- For March 18th we will be hearing from Ginny Davis 'To the Fringe and beyond' on her experience of the Edinburgh Fringe.

If you would like to join us as a guest then please let me know and I will send you a 'zoom' invite. The above are available as a free 'try a session'.

We very much hope it won't be long before we can meet in the old fashioned way - in the Village Hall seeing friends, listening to speakers, having tea with social chat and laughter. In the mean time we 'plan for the worst, hope for the best' as they say. The meetings will continue on line for the time being.

Our subscriptions will be due in April and are £44 a year. Why not try one of our meetings? You will be warmly welcomed.

Margaret Lewis – President. You can email: maggielewisuk@gmail.com or phone 770458.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Vandalism in Top Ardles Wood

Information regarding this has been sent to the Woodland Trust and it has been acknowledged by them. Thought to have occurred on New Year's Eve, the woodland map and guide board has been burnt and broken down and there is evidence of a small fire (maybe BBQ) in the glade. If anyone has information regarding the individuals who did this the police may be interested.

Top Ardles Wood is an amenity enjoyed particularly by residents of this village, many of whom contributed to its creation in various ways.

To learn more about the Woodland Trust, to donate, become a member or help to plant trees at new woodland sites please see the website:

[Woodland Trust: UK's Largest Woodland Conservation Charity](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>



FOOD BANK: PLEASE HELP

As no doubt you are aware, the Foodbank needs your support more than ever. You can make cash donations via the website:

RAVENSTHORPE VILLAGE HALL

The Hall had to close after Christmas to meet the current Government COVID-19 Rules.

While it will have to remain closed for the duration of the lockdown, the management team have been busy making improvements.

We hope to open again before too long once rules permit.

For further information: contact@rvhall.online or 01604 771277

The deadline for submissions for the March Newsletter is Tuesday 23rd February.

Contributions should be sent to Alan Worthington at ravensthorpenewsletter@gmail.com.

COMPASS ENERGY - SUPPORTING RAVENSTHORPE CHARITIES

Compass Energy is a new oil supply company started by Tony Watson and led locally by Trevor Reay, who is based in Brixworth (both formerly of Watson Fuels).

Their aim is to provide household fuel "at the most competitive prices" and for every 10,000 litres of household oil purchased by Ravensthorpe householders, Compass Energy will contribute £50 to our village charities. The amount of fuel purchased will be monitored by Compass. - make sure you register your interest under the Ravensthorpe buying account – RAVS. This will be supporting the Ravensthorpe Charities.

To order or get a quote: contact Compass Energy on 01604 345526, or Trevor Reay on 07702867349.

