

Residents' Association Off to a Flying Start



It is probably no more than 3 or 4 months since the notion of forming a residents' association to raise the quality and profile of Lemsford was first suggested. It evolved probably from two main influences. The first was a long-running frustration by many villagers that Lemsford had, over many years, gradually become the Council's "forgotten village". The second influence was a suggestion by Mouchel TSC, the contractor for the proposed traffic improvements, that our community might benefit greatly if it formed an active residents' association, especially with regard to traffic calming issues.

How ever the association came about, one thing is for sure. Response from "Lemsfordians" (and indeed from local councillors and others) has been immediate and very encouraging. At two public meetings held by Mouchel, residents were asked to register if they would be interested in participating in a Lemsford association should one be formed. Since then, two main meetings and a number of task group meetings have taken place and over 25 people are already actively involved. In addition, everyone in the village was invited to a further meeting at St John's Church where updates on the various activities were given and views were aired.

Following an initial "brainstorming" session at Rich and Kat's in February, a number of clear priorities started to emerge. The obvious one was the impending traffic improvements being planned by the County Council, which offered advantages but also posed some key issues for the village and the residents within it. The dilapidated state of the riverbank was also seen as an area where positive action could bring clear results. Finally, the general run-down state of the village, and a noticeable dip in its beauty also emerged as a clear concern.

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VILLAGERS WOKEN BY EXPLOSION AND FIRE



Firemen tackling the smouldering car in the Mill car park at around 7am in the morning

On Monday 25th February, villagers were shaken at approximately 7am by an explosion in the Mill car park. Within minutes, acrid smoke and flames had engulfed the area and were threatening to spread to the trees and shrubs along the riverbank.

The fire services were quickly on the scene and brought the fire under control. As the smoke cleared, the evidence became clear – Lemsford had become a victim of reckless joyriders/criminals who had torched the car and fled.

This is a clear example of the village becoming well known for all the wrong reasons and the type of event which the newly-formed LRA and Neighbourhood Watch are keen to prevent in future.



Jubilee Plans

What are your ideas?

The Queen would like her Golden Jubilee to be a celebration involving whole communities. The summer of 2002 (May to July) will be primarily given over to celebrations in every city, region, county, town and village in England.

Lemsford is the sort of village where we could really push the boat out if we want to. It has a history of organising some really pukka street parties and has a community spirit to die for.

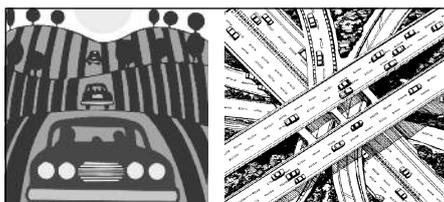
Indeed, quite a few people are starting to ask what we are doing as a community to celebrate this landmark in England's history. And who can blame them... if we are to do something, it needs to happen quickly – the official jubilee week is only a few months away.

But what to do... that is the question! Both Liz at the Long and Short Arm and Lou at the Sun Inn have shown an

interest in supporting and being actively involved in anything we decide to organise. And the newsletter editor knows a good 5-piece band and also a jazz ensemble that would possibly be prepared to provide live entertainment for any occasion!

There could also be a grant available from the council or the Jubilee Trust – although we would need to get a proposal in quickly to stand any chance of support.

This is where you come in. We would like to hear your views on what we should do to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and also know if you would be prepared to get involved. Please complete the coupon inside this newsletter and return it to Malcolm (4 Mill Close) or Terry (12 Mill Close) before the 7th of April.



Lemsford Residents Seen Trafficking!

Update from the Traffic Task Group

The Traffic Task Group has met twice so far. Of the three task groups, this is the one with arguably the more urgent remit given the impending road improvements planned by HCC under the "Safer Routes to School" initiative. With this in mind, there has also been a joint meeting with representatives of Mouchel TSC and the Herts County Council.

The Group's objective is to reduce the amount and speed of traffic through Lemsford and make the village safer for all.

An urgent meeting with HCC and Mouchel took place in early March (at the group's request). The meeting's purpose was to highlight safety and other issues presented by the proposed installation of traffic lights at the Lemsford Bridge.

The task group made a strong case to the HCC that it would be desirable to commission a fuller study of the traffic issues in the village before proceeding with installation of traffic signals. This would provide a better opportunity to see if traffic signals were the best, most cost-effective solution when the entire village's traffic issues are taken into account. Mouchel and HCC agreed to further meetings to investigate this issue more thoroughly.

STOP PRESS

Mouchel TSC have recently written to all Lemsford residents to say:

"...a late, strong objection has been received to the installation of the traffic signals. It has been decided that work on this part of the scheme will be suspended pending further investigation. We apologise for this temporary delay and look forward to discussing with residents the way forward to provide a safer village environment for all".

The Traffic Task Group comprises...

Jim Law; Heather Johnstone; David Jowett; Fred Longcroft; Carole Payne; Margaret Short; Debbie Warner

Anyone interested in joining or contributing to this group should initially contact Jim Law on 01707 325949.



Introducing... The Environment Task Group

The Environment Task Group was set up specifically to address the general poor appearance and untidy state of the village. This has been of concern for some while – there has been a gradual deterioration in the "attractiveness" of the village over a sustained period. The task group has met twice since it was formed to draw together proposals for reversing this trend and to help transform Lemsford into an attractive and cared for village.

"Environment" is a broad area for any group to cover with potentially many diverse strands. As we are only a small band of pilgrims, the group decided to contain ambition and instead concentrate efforts where they could be most effective. We were keen to ensure a focused approach that identified the main areas of concern and then attached clear priorities to them. This was subsequently turned into a "Charter" outlining each priority area and mapping the actions required. The main priority areas are:

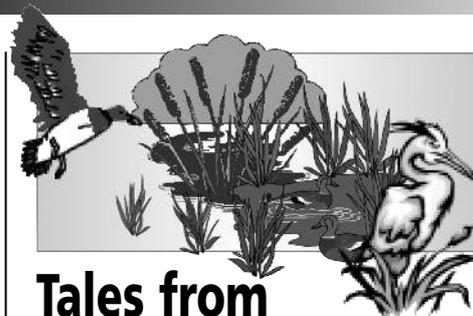
- 1 - The poor and inconsistent design of lighting throughout the village which is out of kilter with a village environment and could threaten safety.
- 2 - The poor maintenance and accessibility of pathways and walkways.
- 3 - Parking on paths and "lay-bys"
- 4 - Overgrown and unkempt foliage
- 5 - Badly blocked drains (including A1M storm drains) all of which require urgent attention.
- 6 - The lack of appropriate signs and road names.
- 7 - Litter and the lack of sufficient litter bins.

The task group have taken a series of photographs of many of the above issues and failings within the village's environment. If you would like to see these, contact Ginny on 328348.

The Environment Task Group comprises...

Terry Payne; Ginny Butler; Ann Coe; Malcolm Oatey; Linda Read; Rex Tate; Jackie Tutton; John Withers

Anyone interested in joining or contributing to this group should initially contact Terry Payne on 01707 329697.



Tales from The Riverbank Task Group

'Twas a dark and stormy night when a band of local volunteers began to address the beleaguered state of 'our' river. Its current unsightly, overgrown and heavily littered state depresses all - the vandalised safety netting a sad reminder of a poignant moment in its history with noisy and often abusive language from young, unlicensed fishermen a more recent unpleasant phenomenon.

To let things continue this way is not an option. The opportunity to recreate a picturesque riverbank is the challenge... but how best do we proceed? "Fill it in! Dig it up! Turn it into a canal" were some of the more adventurous suggestions. Of course, sanity prevailed in the end as another bottle of claret vanished and a clear initial four-point action plan was initiated. The key elements of the plan are:

- 1 - Create a pictorial history of the riverbank – former glory to current state plus an artist's impression of a resurrected bank – which could be used to enlist support.
- 2 - Clarify those bodies responsible for the river and its environs.
- 3 - Research grant funding (e.g. Heritage Foundation) and investigate commercial sponsorship.
- 4 - Investigate media opportunities (i.e. see if BBC would support a Charlie Dimmock style makeover for the river), using the village's history as a prime lever.

Clearly, reconstruction of the riverbank will not be without expense. One option to keep costs down is for Lemsford residents themselves to turn their hands to some modest clearance, but we first intend to explore fully the potential of a more ambitious programme. Like most groups in their formative stages, we need professional advice on legal, technical and environmental issues as they effect the group and its objectives. Any contribution or guidance would be most welcome.

The Riverbank Task Group comprises...

Philip Gould; Michael & Pauline Ayling; Ginny Butler; Jenny Duncan; Bruce Sheriff, Richard Sparks; Barry Trevis; Katarina Vikman

Anyone interested in joining or contributing to this group should initially contact Philip Gould on 01707 335326.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS GET UNDERWAY



As you may well have noticed, work on the road improvements started recently. The first phase of the project, to improve and widen the pathway by the river and narrow the entrance to Mill Close, is now well underway. For a full update on the traffic improvement situation, see the feature article opposite covering the work of the Traffic Task Group.



A few words from...

The Editorial Team

Newsletters come in all shapes, sizes and styles. Some are serious, some factual, others chatty and humourous. As this is the first edition of our Newsletter, we are very keen to receive any input or comments on its content, style, length and frequency. This is **your** newsletter, so don't be afraid to say what you would like it to do for you. Of course, we can't run to anything on the scale of *Hello* magazine because our newsletter is being produced on a tiny budget, but we'll aim to do our best and hopefully produce 4-6 issues this year.

We will also need articles and contributions from you if we are to grow the newsletter into a useful and interactive communication for villagers. Do you have any information you would like to share? Maybe some little-known historical fact or early notice of a forthcoming function. If so, just ring one of our reporters. Their telephone numbers are listed on page 4. (**Copy deadline for the next issue is 10th of May.**)

Of course, we'll continue to give updates from the Residents' Association and the Task Groups, but keep your contributions coming too!

Some suggestions for future articles or columns...

- **News from around the Village, School & Church**
- **Features from Lemsford Springs, the Herons, etc**
- **Special Events, Celebrations & Announcements**
- **Gardening Tips, Favourite Recipes, Poems**
- **Important Information & Contact Numbers**
- **Historical Features**
- **Neighbourhood Watch**
- **Meet the Villagers**



COMPETITION – Name your Newsletter!

"Lemsford News" is a working title. Do you have a better name to suggest for your newsletter? If so, fill in the coupon on the enclosed insert and return it to Malcolm, Terry or Ginny. You could win a bottle of wine if your name is chosen. Names will be put forward at our next Residents' Association meeting on the 18th of April. Good luck!

GAS EMERGENCIES call...

0800 111 999

Lemsford Neighbourhood Watch



As you can see, the Lemsford newsletter is up and running. And as the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for the village, may I congratulate the Editorial Team on their hard work in bringing it to fruition.

May I also thank you for being such good watchers and neighbours. The crime rate in Lemsford is very low... let's keep up our alertness and community spirit so we can all keep it that way.

Lemsford Neighbourhood Watch will run a column in each issue of the newsletter, so if you have any suggestions or ideas to help keep this lovely village crime free then please let me know (Tel. 329697).

Keep watching! Of course, if you witness a crime being committed or anything suspicious, phone the police on 999 and tell them "Terry sent ya!"

Terry Payne
Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator





WHAT'S ON IN LEMS福德

28 March - Jazz Night, Long & Short Arm

29 March - 'Stainer's Crucifixion' Good Friday 7pm at St John's Church

2 April - Charity Quiz Night for the WGC Thaliens at the Long & Short Arm

5 April - Tony, Vocalist/Guitarist at the Long & Short Arm

6 April - Charity Casino Night, 8pm at The Sun Inn

11 April - Jazz Night at Long & Short Arm

25 April - Jazz Night at Long & Short Arm

6 May - Lemsford Fete

6-31 May - A Historical Exhibition of Lemsford Village in Brocket Chapel, St John's Church

7 July - Strawberry Tea at the Mill for parishioners, villagers and their families starting at 3pm

Residents' Association

continued from page 1...

So, three separate task groups were formed to work up proposals which might address these key issues. These proposals, once properly researched and scoped, would then be put to everyone in Lemsford as a positive way forward. The three task groups are:

- **Traffic Task Group**
- **Environment Task Group**
- **Riverbank Task Group**

In this and subsequent issues of the newsletter, we will feature up-dates and reports on the work of each of the task groups*. These groups are not exclusive. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact the relevant group, numbers of which follow at the bottom of each report (see page 2).

*Copies of "Charters" compiled by each of the Task Groups can be provided on request.

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HERONS RETURN



The familiar cackle of Grey Herons can again be heard in the village as the birds go through their breeding antics for another year. The Heronry has been building up in the larch plantation just behind the Brocket Park wall since 1987.

Following the illegal shooting in 1986 of a small colony of breeding herons that had nested at Brocket Lake for many years, the surviving birds relocated their nesting site much closer to the Village and have prospered ever since. With the cooperation of Brocket Park Golf Course, the growth of the heronry has been monitored for the past 15 years. From an initial three nests, the number of pairs has steadily increased. There are now 30 nests, all of which appear to be occupied this spring.

Grey Herons have increased nationally in the past decade, mainly due to the milder winters. The environment of the upper Lea Valley certainly seems to suit the Lemsford Herons at the moment. Hertfordshire has four

other heronries at Tring Reservoirs, Rickmansworth, St. Albans and Amwell, although the Lemsford colony is the only one not situated on an island and is much nearer to human habitation than the others.

Barring particularly wet or cold weather over the next few months (which can dramatically effect breeding success), we can expect around 75 of the young of these magnificent birds to fledge their nests and disperse up and down the Lea throughout May and June.

The Heronry can be viewed from the road at the river bridge and in Mill Close. Please do not attempt to go underneath the Heronry as this could easily cause much disturbance and lead to desertion of the nests. Enjoy the herons from a distance. They are large birds and can easily be seen sitting in their nests and swooping over the larches from The Sun Inn car park.

Barry Trevis, Warden
Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve

Lemsford Village

Lemsford Village,
Quiet retreat,
From new town bustle,
And ancient city seat

Poem by Peter Butler, 1996

LEMS福德 NEWS

This column is for announcements and special events. So if you have any news, special celebrations or events, anniversaries, weddings, births, awards or achievements that you would like to share with us, please contact Malcolm on 330987 or Ginny on 328348.

Birth - A great grandson for Nora Butler and a grandson for Peter and Ginny Butler. Archie Peter was born 26 January to Alec and Lil Butler, weighed 8lbs 1oz.

Meet Your Neighbour



This issue features Richard and Katarina from Bridge House who moved to Lemsford last April.

This may be a small village, but I bet, like me, there are some people you only recognise by sight.

With this in mind, we thought it might be nice to profile a family or individual from the village in each edition – especially people who have recently moved to Lemsford.

If you would like to be featured in future editions of the newsletter, please contact Malcolm on 330987 or Ginny on 328348.