



October 2015

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COUNTRYSIDE UNDER THREAT

The pressure on the Green Belt has become more intense than ever before with developers, land owners and local authorities wanting to concrete over the countryside to the east and west of our villages.

A final round of consultation opened last week over plans to build some 5,800 homes on the Green Belt in the Rotherham area alone. Sites at Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common have already been identified by RMBC, and could swallow up thousands of new properties unless campaigners manage to force the planners to do a U turn.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England wants the council to concentrate on re-using brownfield land, and has called for the green belt sites at Dinnington - on the Firbeck and Letwell side of the town - to be scrapped arguing that they will only add to suburban sprawl and are too remote from public transport and amenities.

David Smith, speaking on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington and Anston Action Group, has urged local people to join the debate before it's too late. "Our public open spaces are just being swallowed up. We want everyone to tell the council how they feel.

"They say they've changed at the council, but they never respond to us. I don't think they realise how upset people around here are. They don't feel listened to at all."

People are urged to have their say via the website <http://rotherham.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Comments must be made before November 9th.

Letwell Parish Council has already commented on the plans and called for the Green Belt to be protected at all cost.

To the east of our villages plans have been unveiled to build some 300 homes on prime farmland on the edge of Langold. The scheme, proposed by Langold farm company Edward Fisher and Co., targets the area off Doncaster Road between Langold and Oldcotes. An application for outline planning permission will be submitted to Bassetlaw Council. Letwell Parish Council decided to object to the proposals at a meeting in September.



*What's Goosey Gander up to?
Find out inside!*

FIRBECK FUND-RAISING... AT THE DOUBLE

Firbeck father and daughter duo Keith Martin and Cally Keetley completed a 75-mile sponsored cycle ride in August - and are already talking about repeating the venture next year.

The long distance ride was part of Nottingham University's 'Life Cycle 5' series of events to raise money for research into dementia and other degenerative conditions of the brain.

Life Cycle 5 aims to raise £350,000 - which will pave the way for earlier diagnosis and the development of treatment tailored for individual patients.

Keith says the route was "very hilly" - starting from Nottingham University campus and passing through Heanor, Belper, Wirksworth and Carsington Water before heading back to Nottingham. "The day was warm and sunny, although we had to contend with a strong headwind on the homeward stretch. There were more than 400 riders on the 75-mile ride which was well organised with marshalls and the all-important feeding stations.

"Although the course was a challenge, there was a great sense of camaraderie with the other riders and we thoroughly enjoyed our day out!"

Keith and Cally would like to thank all their friends, neighbours and family who generously sponsored them to the extent of £610 which has become part of the £235,840 grand total raised so far.

Anyone who missed out on donating this time needn't be too disappointed as there might be another opportunity to sponsor them next year.

Just a month later Nottingham was again the venue for a valiant Firbeck family's fundraising effort.

On 27th September Wendy Bourne and her five year son Jacob put on their running shoes for the Robin Hood Marathon to raise funds for ACTION ON HEARING LOSS, which assists children and adults who are

struggling to hear or who are totally deaf and may require cochlear implants.

They jointly raised over £800! Little Jacob ran and walked 1 ½ miles which took him 38 mins, and his mum ran the full marathon - 26.2 miles - in a very respectable 4 hours and 30 minutes.

Jacob wants to thank everyone for their support.

"Thank you to all the adults who have sponsored me on my mini marathon to raise monies for ACTION ON HEARING LOSS especially at Woodsetts school, St Martin's Church & St Georges Church and not forgetting my Special large family & precious friends....Love Jacob XXX"



Keith and Cally (they're in lycra!!)



Mum Wendy with Jacob

IT'S ALL HAPPENING HEREABOUTS

Lots of excitement and dramatic sightings David Wright tells all in the latest edition of his popular Nature Report.

Phew! Where to start? Well, how about a Red Deer in Firbeck on 16 July! A young male. The report comes from a blue-chip source. We know they're on the increase, but this is a first report for Firbeck so far as I'm aware. We've had Roe Deer in the area for a long time - a family of four were sighted by a



A Red Deer

Firbeck resident in early September, and I saw one recently.

A Firbeck resident has sent me an interesting garden nature report which includes: a Longhorn Beetle, a Humming Bird Hawk Moth, and several butterfly species, including Comma, Holly Blue, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Tortoiseshell and various Whites. The garden also hosts two Bee Orchids and a Common Spotted Orchid. An interesting fungus in the form of *Boletus Luridus* popped up recently.

Another Firbeck resident keeps a nature diary and was delighted that his property this year hosted four House Martin nests - the first for 12 years. One nest was taken over by House Sparrows, but the other three raised young. This is great news for an endangered species. Good luck too to the House Sparrows - a species which has suffered a torrid time in recent years.

Song Thrushes have had a good year in Firbeck, and a resident reports 10 young from two pairs.

Just about everyone in Firbeck, apart from yours truly, has seen a Red Kite in recent years. One resident was delighted to see four together over Thornbury Hill in mid-August. A gamekeeper informs me they're in fact two pairs.

The gamekeeper has also passed on details given to him by a local farmer who recently observed three Common Buzzards attack another Common Buzzard, kill it and eat it!

A couple of interesting sightings for me were a flock of around 30 Lapwing in Firbeck in late August, and a late Swallow still resident in Gildingwells on 2 October. A Green Woodpecker has also been visiting Firbeck gardens.

Pleasingly, the four Mallard ducklings reported in the July issue have survived to maturity and are now resident on Lamb Lane Dyke. A Moorhen is also present.

David Wright - 01709 813360 davidandgwenneth@gmail.com

TURBINE SCHEME WITHDRAWN

Gildingwells Objectors Working Group have spent many months campaigning against the proposal to site a wind turbine with a tip height of 21.5 metres on Green Belt land at Woodland Farm on Rotherham Baulk.

Here the group tell of the various factors which led to the scheme finally being withdrawn....

“We are pleased to be able to announce that RMBC Planning Department issued a notice confirming the withdrawal of the wind turbine application on 8th September 2015.

We have continuously opposed every aspect of the application for the last 8 months. Some of our communication can be seen on the planning portal.

RMBC planning department state that two main factors contribute to the withdrawal of the application (as published in emails on the planning portal) they are that :-

1/ In accordance with the Ministerial Statement made by Greg Clarke, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18th June the local community must give their backing to any wind turbine application.

2/This point is taken directly from the planning departments email to the agents:-

The planning department had concerns about the “Very special circumstances”required to justify inappropriate development of the wind turbine in the Green Belt. They indicated that the applicants would be required to provide detailed information regarding the capacity (contribution likely to be made to the national grid from the turbine). This was important to enable a possible decision to be made as to whether the contribution of renewable energy was sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

The Planning Department could have reached the same conclusion many months ago,thus saving time and the taxpayers money.

The planning department assured us that our objections would go before the Planning Board and that eventually we would have the right to use our 3 minute right to speak before the Planning Regulatory Board.

We would like to thank Sir Kevin Barron MP for his support and for assisting with communication with the planning department and RMBC - who were surprised to learn that we had been expecting responses to our letters and emails!

Thanks also go to Ken Goodall, who was literally “ The man on the ground” - since he lives next door to what was the proposed development site - and was able to give our group more localised information about the site and its biodiversity.

Thank you to the Friends of Langold Country Park and Margret Mantaj for the wealth of information on The Park and its biodiversity and particularly the local bat population. Margret was delighted to know that the rare Leisler's Bat was recorded at the site in May during the applicants monitoring period.

We would also like to thank each and every one of you from the villages of Gildingwells, Letwell, Firbeck

, Woodsetts and those further afield, who took the time to send in letters of objection and those of you who requested your right to speak at any Planning Regulatory Board meeting

Finally we made it abundantly clear that the opposition to this application was overwhelming and therefore the application did NOT have the backing of this community.”

LATEST NEWS FROM FIRBECK-CUM-LETWELL WI

Although the weather has been hit and miss this summer, our continued Centenary Celebrations were all a hit! Our trip to Burghley House and the Centenary Celebrations at Woodsetts WI were definitely a hit. We held our Wine and Cheese evening in August and had a lovely time – selling cakes and nearly new clothes – and of course eating all the delicious nibbles and drinking the lovely wine. Another hit!!

Three of our members went to the WI Denman College and learnt new crafts. They made beautiful bags using recycled magazines and pictures using scrap fabrics. And the good thing is they will be passing on their knowledge to the rest of us – possibly early next year. Fabulous! Several members went to the WI Centennial Fair at Harrogate and had a great day looking and buying at the many stalls -which catered for everyone's tastes – gardening, craft, clothes and food. So much so, that we want to do it again!

At our meeting in September we were Rummaging in Grandma's Drawers with Julie McLean and finding out the interesting history of the vintage aprons etc. she brought to show us.

Our own Centenary Celebrations are in October – a Nostalgia 50s/60s night – with music, games and food to match the era – and possibly a bit of dressing up!

Our craft day on 28th November at Firbeck Village Hall will be a “Deck the Halls” workshop – 10.00am-4.00pm – making scrap fabric wreaths, Christmas trees, fancy gift boxes and Christmas decorations. Cost £10 plus a small charge for the ring and box materials. This is open to non-members and tea and coffee will be provided, but please bring a packed lunch.

We are holding our Christmas party for members in December at Letwell Village Hall and in January Val Oxley and Julia Colver will be telling us about the Journals of Amelia Staniforth of Firbeck Hall.

Lots to look forward to If you are interested in any of the above events please contact the Secretary.

Are you looking for new friends? Inspiration to learn new skills? Campaign on issues that matter? Have fun? You can have this and more by joining the WI. Our meetings are held on the third Thursday in the month and start at 7.30pm in Firbeck Village Hall and new members and visitors are always very welcome. Anyone wanting further information please contact the Secretary on 01909 540751.

SNOW WATCH

Letwell Parish Council have signed up to join Rotherham's snow warden scheme. Streetpride are providing 5 tonnes of salt which will be stored at South Farm and be available in the event of a winter emergency. A supply of snow shovels and heavy duty gloves have already been delivered. The parish council will call on volunteers if the snow descends and the need arises.

TOM SCORES FOR THE MILLERS

Football-loving youngster Tom Hall was on the receiving end of some gentle ribbing after he was chosen to be a flag bearer for Rotherham United at their fixture versus Cardiff City.



Tom in his Millers shirt

The 13 year old Letwell lad plays for the club's Disability Development team in spite of being a mad keen Sheffield United fan at heart. Tom watches the Blades home and away with dad James and brother Sam - but still manages to pull on a Rotherham shirt when he takes to the field himself.

Mum Karen told FLAG: "The boys in the team know that Tom is a Blades fan through and through, and he got a bit of ribbing about wearing a Millers shirt in front of all the crowd at the New York Stadium. It only mattered because he's such a big Sheffield United supporter."

The Millers host the only disability football team in Rotherham. Karen added: "Tom practises every Saturday morning at Wickersley School, and he loves every single minute of it."

TRAFFIC CALMING - COURTESY OF GOOSEY GANDER

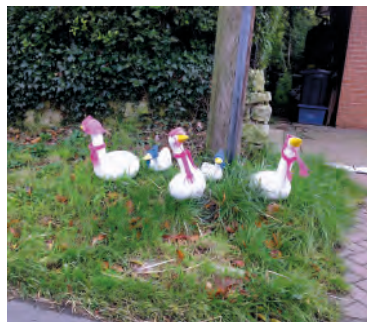
They stand by the roadside in all weathers looking as cute as cute can be.....and complete strangers travel from miles around to dress them in hand-made bonnets, scarves and coats.

The toy geese have put a smile on thousands of faces since they took up residence four years ago on the grass verge outside Stone Chase on the main road running through the middle of Stone.

Householder Wallace Stubbs says the gorgeous ganders have developed something of a cult following among the travelling public in recent times.

Wallace told FLAG: "It's quite something really. It's got to the point where we've got people coming from Rotherham and Sheffield just to bring them coats and hats and scarves. They're complete strangers these people, but they'll pull up, drop off the stuff, and drive away.

"We put the geese there a few years ago to brighten the place up, and it's just taken off. There's a lady in the village who even knits bits and bobs specially for the geese.



"They always look really nice at Christmas with Santa hats and so on. I think they look great, and I'm sure they slow the traffic down which is safer for everyone."

BONFIRE NIGHT

Bonfire Night will soon be here, and Letwell's getting ready for the big day. The event will take place at last year's venue - go out of the village towards Gildingwells and after three or four hundred yards take a right turn down the farm track opposite Moorlands Farm.

Please wear wellies or heavy boots and bring along some traditional grub to share - baked potatoes, parkin, toffee apples or anything that takes your fancy.

The bonfire will be lit around 6.30 pm on Thursday the 5th. Letwell Parish Council will provide an organised fireworks display.

NEWS FROM FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meetings were held on the 29th July and the 16th September 2015.

At the July meeting the Parish Council noted that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) supports plans to designate parts of the village as a conservation area, but little progress has been made due to staff commitments on other projects. The Parish Council has agreed to set up a steering group and is inviting volunteers to be part of the group.

If residents are interested in joining the group they should contact the Clerk to the Council on 01909 239911 or at clerk.firbeckpc@hotmail.co.uk. The group will consider the current draft proposals by RMBC and will look at additional areas or items that might be desirable to include in any future designation.

Members additionally noted that the current Parish Plan is now seven years old. Many of the ideas in the plan have been achieved, although there are outstanding issues such as habitat destruction, rights of way, conservation and speeding. The Parish Council has therefore agreed to draft a revised action plan for the village. This may consider such issues as the publication of a "welcome book" for new residents, accessibility issues, parish council communication, subsidisation of events and volunteers. Prior to the action plan being prepared members hope to approve a parish questionnaire at the November meeting. The questionnaire will then be circulated to all residents seeking their views on how they would like to see the village develop in the future.

Highways issues still sit high on the agenda and it has been agreed that the Parish Council will fund a grit bin at the village hall to assist with path clearance during adverse weather conditions. This should be in place before the winter sets in. Correspondence is also being submitted to RMBC regarding the resurfacing of New Road which falls into an ever deteriorating state.

On a final, positive note funding has been obtained towards litter picking equipment and it is hoped that regular community litter picking events can be scheduled in the future to tackle litter hot spots around the village.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on the 25th November 2015.

THE HISTORY OF ARCHERY IN FIRBECK

Valerie Oxley writes a special report for FLAG about the history of archery in our villages....
"Please can you help us with our research into the history of archery in our villages?"

You may be already aware of the portrait of the young Jonathan Stanyforth of Firbeck Hall, who died in 1779, aged 77. The portrait was painted by Thomas Murray (1663 – 1735), and was offered for sale at Christies in 2009, by Sir Richard FitzHerbert of Tissington Hall, it raised over £23,000. Jonathan Stanyforth is shown in a red coat, in a park landscape, with a bow and arrow and a dog at his feet. The picture appears steeped with symbolism, but what is it telling us?

"The first reference to Archery as a competitive sport with targets, in our area, is from the minutes of the Tickhill Castle Archery Society, whose inaugural meeting was held in Doncaster on 16th July 1833. Interestingly, the following meeting of the Society's committee was held at Park Hill, Firbeck on 27th August 1833. It is difficult to know who was living at Park Hill at this time, as the committee met during a period when Park Hill was rented out by Anthony Butler St Leger.



*Photo by kind permission of
Michael and Carole Burgan*

"We know that in 1823 the Reverend Frederick Sutton Manners and his wife Lady Henrietta Barbara Lumley were living at Park Hill, Firbeck with their young family. We would be very interested to know who lived at Park Hill between 1823 and 1861 when it was owned by the St Leger family but was often rented out.

Thomas Wollaston White and Lady White of Wallingwells Hall are among those listed as attending the inaugural meeting of the Tickhill Castle Archers in 1833. Other people mentioned are Frederick Lumley Savile, his wife and daughters from Tickhill Castle, the Ramsdens from Carlton Hall and the Athorpes from Dinnington Hall.

"To jump to 1885, a report in the Nottingham Post describes a meeting of the Robin Hood Lawn Tennis and Archery Club at Thoresby Park, mentioned as attending are Mrs Jebb, the Misses Jebb and Mr Jebb from Firbeck Hall. The above mentioned are the wife and children of the Reverend Henry Gladwin Jebb, who inherited Firbeck Hall on the death of his aunt, Frances Harriott Miles.

"In 1901, the Firbeck Parish Magazine, reported that 'the Ladies of Park Hill School performed a Pastoral Play and a Japanese Operetta, in the beautiful grounds of Park Hill, Firbeck to help raise money for the

improvement of the Rectory. Despite glorious weather, attendance fell short of the number expected. However, £15 9s 6d was handed to the Rector and was considered a substantial little nest egg with which to open an account at Messrs Beckett & Co.'s Bank, Worksoy.

Tea was served on the archery ground at one shilling per head.'

"The archery ground has long since gone and it is difficult now to imagine where it might have been situated.

The Firbeck Archers

Recently I was told of the Firbeck Archers, the name of a club which met in Costhorpe but was disbanded in 1989.

One of the highlights of the Firbeck Archers' calendar was the commemoration of the Battle of Crecy in 1346 when a small army of English and Welsh Archers helped to defeat a much larger army of French soldiers.

In the shoot there were full size two dimensional targets of Knights on Horseback at 120 yards, Men at Arms at 80 yards and Crossbow men behind shields at 60 yards. The targets were designed by David Millward, who was also a member of the Rotherham Art Society.

"If you are able to supply further information about Archery in and around Firbeck please contact Valerie Oxley valerie@mvoxley.co.uk



Johnathan Stanyforth

NEW YEAR'S EVE

New Year's Eve celebrations promise to be just about the best ever at Letwell with villager Roger Brooks and his good time band The Steroes playing the best of 70s and 80s classic music all the way through to the early hours.

The hall never seems big enough on New Year's Eve so tickets are being limited this year to 45 in total. The cost is £25 a head - which includes a gourmet buffet from top Carlton caterer Ann Wright. Tickets are available - on the basis of first come first served - from Martyn and Andy on 731626 or 540694. A £10 deposit is required to secure bookings.

Only a few tickets remain for the traditional pre-Christmas show featuring ex Lindisfarne frontman Marty Craggs and his Geordie Happy Cats. The gig - scheduled for Saturday November 28th - attracts music lovers from a 100 mile radius, and never fails to deliver. Seeing Marty playing eight different instruments is worth the admission money alone! The programme for 2016 is now being put together - with some exciting big names heading for Letwell if all goes well.

LESSONS FOR ALL

Since moving to Letwell in 2014 Lucy Stephenson has been enjoying the relaxing countryside lifestyle that the village has to offer. However, now she is excited to begin her new endeavor tutoring children, teenagers and adults in Music, Mathematics, Reading and Writing.

Lucy is a qualified Primary School Teacher with 9 years' experience teaching Year 1 – Year 6. Additionally, she has a BA (hons) in Music and has passed 'Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music' (ABRSM) exams in Piano, Flute, Singing and Music Theory.

Lucy tells FLAG “If you, a member of your family or a friend is interested in learning to develop skills playing the Flute, Piano, Singing, Recorder or wants to learn the basics of reading music then don't hesitate to contact me for more information. All ages are welcome and I offer lessons that can be tailored to your needs, whether that may be playing for fun, relaxation or towards exams. ”



Lucy

Lucy also offers private tuition in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Her sessions are centred on developing key skills from the National Curriculum in an engaging, enjoyable and practical way. Revision and preparation towards SATS exams can also be incorporated into lessons.

If you would like more information regarding private tuition contact Lucy Stephenson on 01909 730024 / 07713744647 or lucystephenson1@hotmail.com

KEEP FIT

Keep fit sessions have re-started at Letwell Village Hall after a brief pause caused by the previous instructress moving away from the area. Debbie Hudson, who runs the classes at Carlton village hall, has now taken charge. Sessions run every Friday morning from 9.30 am to 10.15. The cost is £3, and new members are very welcome.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Yo ho ho....Letwell Christmas Party is set for the evening of Saturday December 5th. Lots of festive fun is promised with a special quiz packed full of Christmas flavour. Dinnington Colliery Brass Band will be there as usual to lead the carol singing at the Village Hall.

Tickets will be available next month from Martyn and Andy on 731626 or 540694. Space is limited so please book early.

The cost is a mere £5 - with a pie and pea supper included.

Sounds like the village hall committee don't mind playing Santa...



Presents

STRIKING DILEMMAS

by Ray Castleton

**Fighting for jobs or democracy? Fighting for law or community?
Fighting for your fella or yourself? Three stories – one Miners Strike**

Set against the backdrop of the 1984-85 Miners Strike, these three compelling, moving and touching plays tell contrasting stories of the strike and its human cost: highlighting the real lives of the men on the picket lines, those who returned to work, those who policed the dispute and the women who supported, marched and awakened their own political activism.

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Saturday November 7th Firbeck Village Hall Tickets £10 Phone 07825587323

ART AND FLOWER FESTIVAL



Flower Festival at St Peter's

Letwell's first art and flower festival brought visitors flocking to the village on Saturday and Sunday October 3rd and 4th.

The art group - which meets every Wednesday morning at the village hall - exhibited a range of watercolours and acrylic paintings some of them focusing on Letwell scenes past and present.

St Peter's Church - which had specially decorated by a group of volunteers - remained open all weekend to coincide with the Harvest Festival service.

Art tutor Ann Vinney Swann told FLAG that the joint venture had been a big success. "We had a lot of visitors and the group did really well selling their work. It's always impossible to judge what people are going to buy, but the response was really encouraging."

Ann has donated a painting portraying a Letwell sunset as a raffle prize for the village Christmas party.

Many thanks go to volunteers Margaret Knowles, Maureen Banks, Jacquie Ellis, Anthea France, Nicky Blyth and Jenny Straw, who decorated St Peter's for the occasion.



Jenny and Ann at the Art Show

TAKE IT HOME

FLAG has reported on Firbeck's own dog poo troubles in the past, but the disease spread to Letwell a couple of weeks ago with piles of you-know-what spread all along the lane running from the end of Barker Hades Road towards Langold.

The parish council counted a staggering 24 deposits in the two or three hundred yard stretch between the two sets of boulders. Walkers and those running to keep fit were particularly aghast - but then so were the vast majority of responsible dog owners in the village!

The culprits remain undetected, but the problem hasn't re-occurred since the parish council posted signs telling dog owners to clean up after their dogs. Let's hope the lesson has been learned..