

GASBAG

Great Ashby Sentinel, Bugle & Gazette!

An independent publication
by the Great Ashby Community Centre Management Association,
delivered by volunteers

Your voice in
your community

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Woes on Whitehorse Lane

Most people who use the shops car park in Great Ashby will have experienced difficulties when driving out of the car park. Visibility is so limited that most cars, especially when turning right, will have to be already partially on Whitehorse Lane before even a small portion of the road to the right of them can be seen. Vehicles have to be fully positioned mid way across the road as they continue to drive towards the safety of the left lane, still with little visibility. If cars are parked opposite the entrance then drivers are in the even more dangerous position of having to drive up the wrong side of the road for several feet before reaching the safety of the correct lane. One regular user says "Unless you've actually driven out of the car park to turn right and seen how difficult it can be it's hard to appreciate. It's not uncommon to be glared at as though you have done something wrong when a car coming towards you finds you on 'their' side, when in reality you have absolutely no choice!"



It works both ways

On the other hand, a resident who lives on Whitehorse Lane says he notices some people do not look properly when driving out of the car park. He also says he is often driving to and from his home when he's confronted by people driving too fast coming in the opposite direction to him and is amazed when they manage to stop in time before colliding with him.

Round Diamond School also have major concerns about the safety of children crossing over to school on both Whitehorse Lane and Great Ashby Way. They have just started promoting a 'Walk to School Project' with the County Council and have community police going into assembly in October to remind the children about being safe. Zoë Phillips, Headteacher at Round Diamond Primary School says, "We have huge concerns over the safety of children, as they are dropped at the school cars often stop along yellow zigzag lines. The road has poor visibility anyway and this just heightens the potential for a child to be hurt."

A feasibility study into whether the entry and exit places of the car park could be swapped over was conducted some time ago but it was felt it wouldn't enhance safety and may even make things worse. There is another feasibility study currently underway to look into the the difficulties people have crossing Great Ashby Way to get to and from the school and to see what can be done to make it safer (see 'Council Corner' on page 7).

Weighing in at . . .



Blossoming Babes is a FREE group for soon-to-be parents and parents with babies up to 1 year old. The health visitor attends for baby weighing and offering advice on the last Wednesday of the month. For the 1st Wednesday of the month the Health Visitor will deliver a 30 minute question and answer session on topics requested by parents. This session is run by the Strawberry Fields Children's Centre and takes place in Hall 2 at the Community Centre.

For more information on what Strawberry Fields Children's Centre has on offer and to learn about the benefits of registering your baby or child under 5 at the centre, visit www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk, call 01438 350147 or email strawberryfields@spurgeons.org.



Star Walk for Charlie

When Charlie was born on 5th August 2007, he was a healthy active little boy until 6 months of age when he developed infantile spasms, our first step into his epilepsy. Since then his condition has peaked and troughed, he was very poorly but then picked up again before deteriorating in July 2010 to where we've now 'lost' Charlie as he can no longer respond with reaction or emotion, has poor muscle tone so unable to sit, stand or move any limbs. He is completely gastronomically fed direct into his stomach. His seizures are daily and can vary from slight spasms and seizures up to 5 times a day to when poorly anything up to 60 a day. It has been very distressing to us as he was always smiling and very active and charmed everyone who saw him to now see him unable to do anything.

A muscle biopsy revealed that he has a mitochondrial disorder which explains his condition and its deterioration. It is a very rare genetic condition that is currently being researched. This is an incurable condition and so the effects of it and his quality of life are the main things that are cared for. ie, seizure control, and keeping him comfortable and as healthy as possible. It was then that we were referred to Keech Hospice.

Winter especially is a bad time for him as cold bugs hit hard as he can't clear his chest properly and we end up being housebound as he is too poorly to go out. Not easy for

any of us especially with a very active sister Evie, who is 5 years old!

After the deterioration in July 2010 he has been unable to go upstairs so we have had our home adapted to enable Charlie to have his own bedroom and wet room downstairs. We have a suction machine, feeding pump and oxygen which thankfully he only needs when his chest is bad. He sleeps in a hospital bed with a special sleep system to keep his posture correct. My husband Paul sleeps downstairs with him in case he becomes ill overnight and requires suctioning or if he has a seizure.

Charlie requires 24/7 care and monitoring as his seizures are unpredictable. We have carers who come and help us out which means I'm able to take Evie to school and at other times have a few hours with her knowing that Charlie is being cared for.

He is completely tube fed and on a lot of medications that are needed to keep him well. He suffers from a lot of chest infections which means that twice daily chest physio is needed as well as suctioning. He is no longer able to attend Greenside school as its too much for him, he is home schooled though which is good for him as he is much calmer in his home environment.

He can show when he's uncomfortable or in pain as he gets very agitated in his movements. Again very small indications and a lot of guess work and getting to know him to know the subtle differences in him.

How does it affect us? It very upsetting to

see our child suffering with seizures and being so poorly and knowing that his condition is life limiting but we try to be as normal a family as we can be, not only for our sanity as we don't want to live in this bubble all the time but we try and remain as positive as possible. When Charlie is well we are able to go out and spend family time together with Evie and family and friends. Also going to Keech Hospice is a great help to me and means that we not only receive support but get to meet other families going through similar situations. Charlie goes to Keech for day care and we have been able to attend events like panto's, The Christmas party etc that we wouldn't normally be able to go to, and Evie attends the sibling support group 'Sparklers' which has been great for her.

Family and friends have been fantastic and the support we receive emotionally has been invaluable.

We are not sure what the future holds for Charlie but we are trying to make the most of what time we do have with him and major events like Birthdays and Christmas are even more poignant to us.

Myself and 12 lovely ladies took part in the 10 mile Star Walk on Saturday 6th September to raise vital funds for Keech Hospice care. If you would like to support please log on to www.justgiving.com/Dawn-Farmer3/ to donate.

Dawn Farmer



Charlie with little sister Evie



Charlie with mum Dawn and Stevenage Mayor Sherma Batson and right, some of the ladies who took part in the Star Walk to raise funds for the Keech Hospice outside Circles Cafe Bar.



Ding! Ding!

All Aboard the Round

Diamond Learning Bus!

There was great excitement amongst the Round Diamond School students and staff when they arrived back to school to find their very own red double decker bus in the car park. The bus has been funded by F.O.R.D (Friends of Round Diamond) who raise money to buy resources for their school. The bus will be used to create an exciting learning space for the children with a quiet, nurture area downstairs and a classroom upstairs.

Says Helen Jewitt, Assistant Head, "We are looking forward to converting the bus. This will be an on-going project for the school as we first have to site the bus on the school field and then begin the task of transforming it into learning spaces." Watch this space for more developments.....



A new Great Ashby landmark - the Big Red Bus outside the school

Opportunities to join the team

Round Diamond School are currently recruiting permanent and casual Midday Supervisory Assistants. This role would suit those with an interest in childcare with availability to work an hour and a quarter shift between 12.10 - 1.35pm. This role is subject to safeguarding checks and references.

If you would like to know more or would like an application form please call into the school office.

Well Done Guys! - Charity Fundraising Update

Regular readers will have seen an article in the last issue about men who set out to raise money for charities that are close to their hearts. Paul Murray took part in the 70.3 Iron Man Challenge and raised over £900 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society - Paul's wife Mel has MS. Mark Jolin's wife Linzi has cancer and Mark along with friends Tay Brandon, Jack Wynn, Pete Godden and Liam O'Riordan took part in the St Albans half marathon and jointly raised £4,000 for Cancer Research. Both these sums are a fantastic achievement so very well done to you all!

Have you got a baby? got an under 5 year old? Are you an expectant mum? DON'T MISS OUT - make sure you're registered with us at Strawberry Fields!

Registration will give you access to a wide variety of family activities, advice on many topics including health visitor sessions, healthcare, baby weighing, opportunities to meet others, parenting and family support, links to training and job opportunities and much more. To see the full range of what's going on, visit www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/strawberryfields, call in at our office at the front of Round Diamond School, or call 01438 350147 - we are also on Facebook.



Strawberry Fields - the Great Ashby Children's Centre for families with under 5's

Happy 1st Birthday Hayley!

September 2014 marks the first anniversary of Hayley Ayres taking over as teacher of The Music Train, Great Ashby. Having pioneered classes in Bude, North Cornwall in 2009, Hayley moved back to her county of birth with her husband and two boys in the summer of 2013.

Classes have continued to grow with demand and she now runs 11 weekly sessions on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from GA community Centre with over 145 children and babies attending each week. "This last year has absolutely flown by and it has been an honour and joy working with the children and families of Great Ashby and the surrounding areas" says Hayley. "I often think I have the best seat in the house in full view of all their little faces. Smiling as they have fun and seeing them absorbed as they learn about the world around them through music".

To mark the first year anniversary, Hayley is offering a course of 3 free sessions to anyone who has had a baby since September 2013. For full details on how to qualify for this offer please see the facebook page www.facebook.com/TheMusicTrainGreatAshbyStevenageBranch or contact her on Hayley.ayres@musictrain.co.uk quoting the code AUTUMNBABES. A full timetable of age groups and term dates can be found on the website <http://www.musictrain.co.uk/classes/stevenage-great-ashby> should you wish to climb aboard The Music Train this term.



Here at the Roebuck Veterinary Group we have put together some information to help prepare pet owners to keep their pets happy over the firework season.



All pets are likely to come across fireworks in their lives and most owners will be all too aware of the great stress and upset it causes. Fear is a natural reaction to a loud unfamiliar noise and we should expect our pets to respond in a way that their instinct tells them to. What we don't want is for that natural fear to turn into a phobia – where pets become overwhelmed by fear and are inconsolable and remain very fearful days after the event has happened.

With good preparation and the right techniques we can help our pets deal with fear in the right way and prevent long term phobias from developing.

- Keep windows closed and curtains drawn from dusk.
- Any animals living outside should be brought indoors and kept away from the loud noises. At dusk, lock the cat flap.
- Try to keep children calm before leaving for a firework show. If your pet is already anxious they will pick up on the excitement.
- Put on some music with a constant distracting beat or the television. It doesn't have to be excessively loud.
- Do not leave a frightened animal at home on its' own. Fear can make them harm themselves.
- Try to engage dogs in games and play and ignore loud noises.
- Take your dog for a long walk earlier than normal. Tire them out, hopefully they'll sleep through.
- Make sure that your pets are microchipped, in case of accidental escape. Also ensure all pets have ID on their collars.
- Any pet can be unpredictable whilst they are scared – they may bite and scratch, never try to restrain them while they are scared.
- Try not to fuss your pet while they are scared, they can sense your concern and anxiety and it may make them worse. NEVER punish or shout at them for unwanted behaviour, i.e. crying, soiling in the house – they are just frightened.
- If you are setting off your own fireworks, spare a thought for nearby wildlife, farm animals, horses and other people's pets – Always alert your neighbours.
- If you are having your own bonfire make sure it's a safe distance from any animals and check it before hand to ensure that any hedgehogs have not crawled into hibernate or birds have not nested inside.

There are calming support supplements you can give your pet that are very effective:-

- Pheromone diffusers spray and collars can really benefit your cat or dog by reducing anxiety and promoting calm whilst fire-works are going on. Ideal for new puppies and kittens for their first fire-works experience.
- Sound therapy CD's offer your pet a real long term solution to firework fears.

For advice on what product might be right for you, or if your pet has a really severe phobia and you think they may need prescription medication, please book a consultation with a Vet or telephone the surgery. We will be able to tailor the right type and formulation of product to help your pet to cope with the stress of fireworks.

HELP YOUR PETS STAY HAPPY OVER THIS SEASON

During October we are giving 10% OFF calming support supplements*

*Terms & Conditions Apply

Great Ashby Veterinary Hospital, St Francis House, Whitehorse Lane, Stevenage, Herts SG1 6DU Tel: **01438 745833**
Email: enquiries@roebuckvets.co.uk web: www.roebuckvets.co.uk



Suzanne runs the hands-on art and craft club on the first Saturday of each month during term time at the Community Centre. These are specially designed activities and enormous fun for your creative youngster. For further information and to request a Create Club session for your school contact Suzanne on 01438 281723 or at



suzanneharvey@thecreationstation.co.uk

Defibrillator training - become a life saver!

Readers may remember an item on the Great Ashby Community Council's decision to have a defibrillator machine installed outside the Community Centre. This has now happened and anyone who is interested in learning how to use the equipment is invited along to a meeting on Thursday, 30th October from 7pm - 9.30pm in the Community Centre extension.



The Friday Hype!

The Friday Hype Youth Club resumes for the Autumn term on Friday 12th September and meets weekly in term time between 7pm and 9pm. Thanks to the assistance of the Community Council and GACCMA the Club is stable but it really could use a few more volunteers to help out once or twice a month. All volunteers are given a DBS (formally CRB) check and Child Protection training through Pro-Action. If anyone is interested in volunteering regularly, or offering a one-off activity please contact Neil on 07790 103693.

Geoffrey Matthew
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Inside Circles . . .

. . . a snapshot of some Great Ashby's 'Circles' coffee shop customers

Do you come here often? **Yes, almost every day.**

What's your favourite treat in Circles? **Caramel latte and a teacake.**

Do you live in Great Ashby or are you a visitor? **I live in Great Ashby.**

What's the most exciting thing you did over summer? **I went to see the X Factor auditions with friends at Wembley.**

What personality quirk will you indulge when you are old? **I will still have my nutty sense of humour.**



Do you come here often? **Yes, pretty much every day.**

What is your favourite treat in Circles? **My latte and teacake.**

Do you live in Great Ashby or are you a visitor? **I live here.**

What's the most exciting thing you did over summer? **I went on a spa weekend with the mums from the school and went to see the X Factor with Sam and Clair from Circles.**

What personality quirk will you indulge when you are old? **I hope to still be a little crazy and slightly eccentric.**



Imagine feeling the benefits of a warmer, cosier, more comfortable home that costs less to run and is kind to the environment. To achieve this, all you have to do is thinksulation. Having insulation will boost your home's efficiency saving you hundreds of pounds a year on your gas and electricity bills and, just as importantly, make your home a more pleasant place to live.

The two best ways to reduce the amount of heat and energy a home loses is through installing Cavity wall insulation and Loft insulation. Both types of insulation can have a dramatic effect. A correctly insulated home can reduce fuel bills by as much as £400 per year depending on your house size and once it's in place it lasts a lifetime.

In Stevenage, residents from Great Ashby know that most of your homes in the area are in dire need of insulation especially before the cold winter months kick-in. A big issue about the lack of insulation they have in their homes is that even though they are relatively new buildings, during the summer months many homeowners are still having to keep the heating on because they are freezing cold.

So, how can Primus Energy help?

Did you know that the Government have a Green Deal Scheme for energy-efficient home improvements such as insulation, boilers, underfloor heating and double glazing from the 'savings' you make on energy bills.

That is great news for the residents of Stevenage and Great Ashby in particular as this means that if homeowners in the area give us permission we can supply and fit insulation to all your houses at no up-front cost.

However, the grant that is available is going to be short lived so homeowners should apply as soon as possible so we can help especially as we are only a few short months away from the cold weather.

Primus Energy are experts in insulation and currently work for the Government's Green Deal scheme and Energy Company Eco Scheme installing insulation around the UK. For more information or to simply book your installation call Primus Energy on : **0800 234 3889** or info@primusenergy.co.uk

Council Corner

2014 Christmas Fayre

After the success of last year's Christmas Fayre we're holding another on Saturday 22nd November. If you would like a stall please contact the Clerk using the details below.

Disappointing news

We hope that many of you have enjoyed the picnic benches in the district park. These are secured to the ground for a number of reasons so we were disappointed to hear that one of the benches was ripped off of its mountings in July. This has now been repaired and we hope all three benches will remain in place for many years to come.

Compostable Caddy Liners

We understand that the withdrawal of the compostable caddy liners by NHDC has caused some issues for people. We have a small supply of liners which we will be distributing at the Community Centre on Saturday 20th September from 10am. We have around 250 rolls which are part of NHDC's leftover stock. Rolls will be given out on a first come, first served basis and there will be a limit of one per household.

Grants for Groups

If you work on a project or group that helps the Community you can approach the Council for a grant, just contact the Clerk for more information.

School Crossing Update

A number of people have contacted us about the difficulties they have crossing Great Ashby Way to get to and from the school. A feasibility study is currently being undertaken by HCC's Highways to see what can be done to make it safer. We would ask that if you are driving along Great Ashby Way at the start and end of the school day that you take additional care and take the roundabout by the school a little slower to give people more time to cross safely.

Winter Salt Bags

After the warm weather last year we have a good supply of salt ahead of the coming winter. We will publish the list of roads in November on our notice board outside Budgens. The scheme is run by Hertfordshire County Council and they insure those taking part. Volunteers agree to collect 25kg bags of salt which they will then put on designated areas of road and footpaths in bad weather.

Litter Pick

The next litter pick will take place on Saturday 18th October along the bridle path behind the school and down as far as the Quantock Close play park. We'll be meeting up at the Community Centre to start at 10am. Refreshments will be provided afterwards. The last pick saw quite a few bags of rubbish coming out of the District Park, but far fewer than in March as the new bins were being used.

District Park

The Countryside Management Service (CMS) is currently preparing their draft Management Plan for the District Park which should be out for consultation on October 10th. We'll publicise it once it begins and send links out. Please do take part as the Park is one of the jewels of Great Ashby and it would be wonderful for residents to have a real say in what happens. We are also hoping to hear from a representative of the CMS at our meeting on October 9th at 7:30pm. Please do come along to listen to what they have to say.

Monthly Meetings

We hold our meetings on the second Thursday of each month, except August, at 7:30pm in the Community Centre. We have a period of time for questions from the public. Dates and times of all of our meetings are available on the notice board.



How to Contact the Community Council

Email: clerk@greatashbycouncil.org.uk

Post: Great Ashby Community Council, C/O Great Ashby Community Centre, Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby, Stevenage, Herts. SG1 6NH

Telephone: 07864 026083

Website: <http://www.greatashbycouncil.org.uk>

Twitter: @GtAshbyCouncil

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/greatashbycommunitycouncil>

What's On @ the Community Centre

Children and Young People

Little Orchard Baby & Toddler Group
Mon 10.00am - 12.00 noon
01438 350147

New Start Baby Group
Wed 1.00 - 3.00 pm
01438 350147

Strawberry Stay & Play
Thur 1.30 - 3.00 pm
01438 350147

Brownies
greatashbybrownies@gmail.com
Guides
greatashbyguides@gmail.com
Wednesdays

Dinky Dancers
Fri 1.45pm
Sue 01438 831281

Dolly Mixtures
(2 yrs 9mths-4 yrs)
Mon - Fri 9.00am - 12.00 noon
Mon - Tue 12.45 - 2.45pm
Jan/June/Sue 07759 756 497
(at above times)

Rainbows
Wed 5.00-6.00pm
01438 224095

Angelzdance
Fri 5.00 - 7.00pm
Stephen 07909 702 640

Music Train (3 mths - 4yrs)
Tue, Thur & Fri
Hayley 01462 769017

Create Art Club
1st Sat in month
10.00am - 12 noon
Suzanne 01438 281723

Twins Club
2 - 4pm 1st 2nd & 3rd Mon of month
Carly 07771 640 708

Grapes
kids club, age 7-10
Mon 6.30-8.00pm
Dot 07952 323 692

Ballet, Tap &
Disco/Street
Thurs from 4.30pm
Danielle 07866 395 739

Hula Hoop Class
Selected Saturdays 10.30 - 11.30am
Sally 07866 451 715

Sport, health and fitness

Mid Herts Karate
(from 6 yrs up)
Sun 10.30am - 12 noon
Paul 01438 236894

Legs, Bums
& Tums
Mon 7.30 - 8.30pm
Pauline 07908 969 029

Weight Watchers
Mon 5.30 - 6.30 pm
07899 862 321

Pilates Class
Thur 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Sally 07866 451 715

Zumba 'n Tone
(½ hour Zumba - ½ hour tone)
Tue 7.45 - 8.45pm
Pauline 07908 969 029

Slimming World
Wed 9.30 - 11.00am
Jan 07902 029 680

Badminton
Club
Sun 6.00 - 9.00 pm
Gary 01438 236823

Herbalife
Mon 8.00-10.00 pm
Rob 07535 845 222

Alive & Singing Rock Choir
Tues 7.30 - 10pm
Jamie - 07968 698 651

W I
1st Fri of month 7.30pm
Sylvia 07967 091 857

Other interests

Great Ashby Community
Council (GACC)
2nd Thur in month 8.00 - 9.30 pm
clerk@greatashbycouncil.org.uk

50+ Friendship Club
Tue 2.00 - 4.00 pm
Margaret 01438 317839

Breathe Easy (British Lung
Foundation)
last Mon of month 2.00 - 4.00 pm
Sue 01438 357319

Contact 01438 365392 or info@greatashbycommunitycentre.org.uk for information on hiring the centre for parties, private functions etc



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Great Ashby Community Centre

Monday

Cardio Blast &
Legs, Bums &
Tums 7.30 - 8.00pm



Tuesday

Exercise to music &
Legs, Bums & Tums
7.45pm - 8.45pm



Call 07908 969 029, email paulinesfitness@outlook.com
or visit Facebook page paulinesfitness.