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District and Parish Council Elections : David Clayson's Retirement

David Clayson has expressed the wish to stand down from the Parish Council at the District and Parish Council Elections on 5th May 2011, after over 40 years service to the community. (More of that at a later date.) In the meantime if you are interested in volunteering to stand as a Parish Councillor for Brafield on the Green, please contact the Chair, Gill Morgan, for further information.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

You will all recall the flurry of activity in 2009 when many of us worked so hard together to make our views known about the so called 'Emergent Joint Core Strategy' which proposed a massive amount of housing and a dual carriageway close to our village.

Much has changed since then with the formation of a new national Coalition Government which has embarked on a radical series of planning reforms. The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee, the Council body who produced the Strategy, however, has now reissued it in a new draft form, again to set out the planning framework for the western area of Northamptonshire (which includes Brafield) up to the year 2026. The Councils involved have continued with it so as not to risk leaving a vacuum in the Planning system that might be exploited by unscrupulous development. We have not seen the new Strategy in full yet but are quite certain (as many of you will probably have heard from local media coverage) that the document has been substantially rewritten and the proposals for major housing and road development close to our village have been removed. This is promising news for all of us. The only 'overspill' proposal relating to Northampton is now to the West, and there is only a 'small residual figure' for housing development in the villages in South Northamptonshire. The consultation period for the new Strategy is 17 February - 31 March and we again recommend that as many people as possible get involved in looking at and commenting on the Strategy, both by way of approval and/or criticism. The new Government's proposals put a lot of emphasis on giving local people and communities the chance to have much more say and influence on the future of where they live. So, if we support that change, then we must seize the opportunity to comment. The Village Action Group will probably be active again in the near future in supporting people to get involved, so those who were in email contact then will probably be contacted soon and asked to speak to neighbours and friends.

Representatives from your Parish Council are continuing to work with other local parishes as part of the Nene Ridge Parishes group, and will be meeting shortly to formulate a joint response to the latest proposals.

Village Spring Clean

As part of the Northamptonshire 'Stop the Drop' campaign, Brafield is holding another Village Spring Clean to help clear accumulated rubbish from in and around the parish and would welcome help from local residents. We will be meeting on the **Village Green on Saturday 2nd April at 10 a.m.** If you would like to give a hand to make the village a more pleasant place to be, please come along! Rubbish sacks and gloves will be provided. Please contact Dawn Allingham 899083 or Gill Ager on 891488 for further details.

Precept

The Precept (the money allocated to the Parish Council from your Council Tax) was set at £12,500 for the year 2010 -11. We will have an anticipated spend of £13919 for the forthcoming year 2011-12, but in the light of the current state of the economy, the Parish Council has proposed that it maintains its precept at the current level and takes any overspend from its reserves. It is worth pointing out that your Parish Councillors are all volunteers and, although entitled to certain expenses, no Parish Councillor has put in any such claim. Your P.C. will continue to scrutinize all expenditure and investigate alternative, more cost effective contracts wherever possible.

Play Area Litter Bin

South Northants Council has agreed to provide the Parish with another post mounted litter bin which will be sited outside the Alley Gardens Play Area on Church Lane. This will be emptied regularly as are all the other SNC bins around the village. Kindly help to keep the Play Area clear of rubbish by using the bin, **but not for nappies or dog poo bags PLEASE.**

Searching for lost friends and relations

More and more people around the world are using the internet to try to contact lost friends and relations. The village website is starting to receive requests for information about people, often triggered by the old photographs which can now be viewed online. It has been agreed that these enquiries / requests will be placed on the village site as they are received. If the people concerned or their relatives are interested, they can then make contact directly if they wish. One such request is available on the website now!

Northampton Museums : Events and Exhibitions

The Parish Council has received details of events and exhibitions taking place at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Guildhall Rd, and at the Abington Park Museum from January – April 2011. These events and exhibitions are aimed at a range of ages and **most** of them are **free** of charge. These include a wide variety of changing exhibitions (paintings, shoes, crafts etc.), costume and shoe store tours (there is a charge for these), Museum morning talks for the over 60's, Lunchtime talks, Creators clubs (collograph printing, ceramics, performance poetry etc), February half-term workshops, Easter workshops, Guided walk (uncover Victorian Northampton with a blue badge tourist guide), Easter egg hunt (Abington Park Museum), Toddlers' afternoons (under 5's), Identification and recording days (from archaeological finds you bring in) etc.

For further details and/or a brochure please contact Northampton Museum and Art Gallery on 01604 838111 or email museums@northampton.gov.uk
The Northampton Museum and Art Gallery on Guildhall Rd is open from Tuesday to Saturday 10a.m. – 5p.m. Sundays 2p.m. – 5p.m. and admission is free.
The Museum in Abington Park is open from April – October Thursday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays 1p.m. – 5p.m. admission free.

Royal British Legion : Great Poppy Party Weekend

In celebration of the Royal British Legion's 90th birthday, it is encouraging individuals and groups to hold 'Poppy Parties' over the weekend of 10th – 12th June 2011. It is estimated that almost one in six people in the U.K. has a direct service connection - that is: has either served in the past, or is serving now, or is a family member of someone in the Service past or present. The Legion believes that we should all take pleasure in celebrating the 90th anniversary of this remarkable organisation and its outstanding achievements over the last 90 years, with a carnival atmosphere and a great sense of fun, comradeship and togetherness. It doesn't matter whether it's a barbecue, fancy dress event, karaoke night, masked ball, barn dance, games evening, a dress down day at school, sporting event etc. etc. Poppy Party packs are available now. At the same time parties can raise valuable funds to further the work of the Legion for the future.

If YOU are interested in organising a Poppy Party event, further details are available from
Bruno Peek OBE MVO OPR National Co-ordinator
Tel: 01722 714937 Fax: 01722 714720 Email: info@thegreatpoppypartyweekend.org.uk
Web: www.thegreatpoppypartyweekend.org.uk

Queen's Diamond Jubilee / Royal Wedding

As you will be aware, the Queen will celebrate 60 years on the throne in 2012 and a number of events, competitions and initiatives are being planned nationally to celebrate this occasion. It is also hoped that communities throughout the U.K. will come together and celebrate this historic occasion in their own way, and Brafield on the Green Parish Council will be discussing possibilities for this locally.

The Parish Council itself has no plans to organise any local events to celebrate the marriage of Prince William to Kate Middleton though it has had several enquiries from groups of local residents who are themselves getting together to organise street parties to mark this Royal Wedding.

Safer Winter Driving in Northamptonshire

Whilst we all hope that there will be no repeat of the severe cold and snow experienced at the end of 2010, Northampton County Council in partnership with MGWSP (the service provider) has issued an advice and guidance leaflet to Parish Councils. (Further copies available tel: 0845 6011113). A total length of approx. 1129 miles of road receives precautionary salting – just under half of the total network in the county – at a cost on average of £32,000 per salting.

Advice for winter driving: Check local and national radio for travel information & weather forecasts. Allow extra time for your journey if necessary. Check tyre pressures are at recommended levels and that tread depth is correct (including spare!). Check lights are clean and in good working order. Check wiper system is working effectively. Check washer bottles are full and contain a suitable additive to prevent freezing. Check battery is in good condition – topped up and fully charged. Check that your antifreeze is at the correct level. Ensure all windows and mirrors are clear of snow, ice and condensation. Ensure you have outside clothing with you. Do not travel too fast or too close to vehicles in front. Drive smoothly and avoid harsh braking and sudden changes in direction. Keep in as high a gear as possible. Always use dipped headlights when visibility is poor – rain/snow/fog. It is better to travel a little further on a treated main road than to use untreated minor roads.

Next Parish Council Meeting:
Monday 21st March at 7.30 p.m. in the Sargeant Memorial Hall Brafield

Members of the public are most welcome to attend any meeting
At the start of the Parish Council meeting, time is set aside for public enquiries