

MATFEN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

No. 8 - February-March 2021



After a very cold start to the year and some spectacular snow scenes around the parish, Spring is definitely in the air at the moment, as February draws to a close. The recent sunshine has brought out some interesting plants in our garden, such as this lovely Japanese pink pussy willow - signs of the warm weather to come.

As we absorb the latest rules and the government's 'roadmap' for getting back to normal, this edition of the newsletter is all about looking forward; to warm weather and lighter evenings, to seeing family and friends again and to the gradual return of social activities and events in the village.

As ever, we are very grateful to Rev Rachel for arranging to email the letter out. Who knows? the next one may come to you on paper, if you'd like it that way! If you'd like to comment on anything you read here, or contribute an item to the next newsletter, which will be in May, please get in touch at any time: jeanconteh@waitrose.com ...Thank you! ...

Rev Rachel has asked if we can publicise this warning from the police about email and text scams related to Covid, which are currently circulating. It's beyond belief that some criminals try to profit from other people's worries in this way but, sadly, they do. Let's hope that no-one in the community has been taken in by them. Remember that it's fine to ignore or delete messages that you're not sure of, and NEVER respond to requests for money. You can always check the gov.uk website to get the correct information about Covid vaccinations and the latest rules and restrictions.

NERSOU | Protecting communities from organised crime
NORTH EAST REGIONAL SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT

Protecting **businesses** and communities in the North East from common cyber attacks

Created: 05/01/2021
Source: https://cfa.nhs.uk/resource/14062020/covid-awareness/covid-19/COVID-19_SMS_and_Text_Message_Scams.pdf

GOV.UK

**COVID-19:
SMS / Text message SCAMS**

THREAT

The NCSC, alongside security researchers around the world, has warned users of SMS, email, and online scams using COVID-19 information as a lure. The NCSC warning lists the 'Top 4 SMS Scams' as following similar patterns: fake government (GOV.UK) links, lockdown fines, health supplements to protect against the virus, and financial support from the recipient's bank.

Scammers have launched numerous campaigns in the weeks since early December, looking to steal personal information, conduct identity theft, scam victims, and for potential financial gain. In the case of the scam leveraging the UK government, SMS were sent from UK_Gov, rather than GOV.UK.

ADVICE

1. Challenge - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests that don't feel right. Check GOV.UK to ensure it's genuine.
2. Be wary of text messages that try to get you to send money, or important personal information such as bank details or passwords.
3. Take a moment to stop and think before parting with information to keep you safe or your money.
4. Use official government websites and refer to 'Contact Us' sections of websites to access information and services.

Be cyber aware <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home>

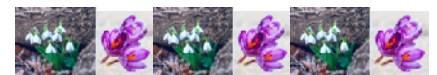
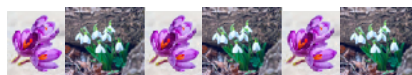
If you have been a victim of fraud or cyber crime, report it to Action Fraud

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
actionfraud.police.uk

Matfen village hall

A lot has been going on behind the scenes in the hall to do essential repairs and to plan for the future. One need we have now is for a cleaner who is relatively local and could do flexible hours to fit round activities. If you know anyone who may be interested or are interested yourself, get in touch on: matfenvillage@gmail.com

The village hall committee had their AGM by zoom on February 9th, and five trustees opted to continue for 2021. These are Rachael Dempsey as Chair, Richard Szweda as co-Chair, Philip Chaffer as Treasurer, Jean Conteh as Secretary and Struan Wilson as ex-officio trustee.



We're planning to open up the hall as soon as we can for a wide range of activities, and to develop more events for children and young people. We're hoping soon to have wifi set up, ready for a new AV system which will really open out the potential for hirers, and mean we can run film shows and music events. It'll also be a great venue for those who may want to run a private family event such as a children's party, a birthday celebration or wedding reception. Our regular hirers, Clifton, Clare and Andrew are all keen to get going again as soon as they can with Zumba, Yoga and Karate, and of course the WI will be back in force. But with the news that hairdressers won't open until April at the earliest, we won't be seeing Susan in the hall for a little while. She's been in touch to say hello and that she's trying to get her head round fitting three months' worth of customers into one visit - after all, you can't stop hair growing! We're always looking for new ideas and activities for the hall, and outside in the village as the weather gets warmer. How about a village midsummer picnic on the green on June 21st, Boris's date for the final end of lockdown? If you'd like to talk about ideas, or find out more about hiring the hall, get in touch via matfenvillage@gmail.com And here's a question about the hall, that some of our senior community members may be able to answer. Our local history expert, Keith Atkinson, a frequent visitor the village as a boy in the 1950s, remembers that it was known as the reading room. I thought it was the school hall until 1972 - can anyone remember it as the village reading room?



An update from GOLocalFood - getting started in Matfen

Watch out for one of the signs that will really confirm that Spring is on the way — at Vicarage Corner on the road to Stamfordham. GOLocal have already proved their skills over 8 years on their site at Ovington, where they grew some seriously big veg last year; can you guess the size of the biggest cabbage and the longest cucumber (answers at the bottom of the page*)? They are well into their new project of cultivating 2.5 acres of land at Vicarage Corner, starting with onions and garlic, and then moving on to all kinds of brassicas. They do a lot of other things besides growing veg, such as linking up with other local producers to set up a marketplace for members, running workshops, pop-up shops and so on, and are keen to bring all this to Matfen. You can become a member, or add your name to a reserve list, if you prefer, or even become a volunteer and join a weekly work share. The website is www.golocalfood.org.uk or email admin@golocalfood.org.uk to find out more.

And here's some exciting news from Vallum Farm... Body & Soul Boutique Fitness and Cafe Aroma will be opening soon, offering over 50 classes, 7 days a week from boot camps and body pump, to yoga, Pilates, spinning and so much more. Contact Debbie Philipson and Jo Stichbury info@bodyandsoulfitnessstudio.co.uk to find out more.



History Corner

Dr. Frances McIntosh, Curator of the **English Heritage Roman Site** at Corbridge has been in touch, seeking information about the men who did the hard work of digging during the excavations of the Roman town of Coria, between 1906-1914. She has sent this wonderful photo of some of the labourers, and would love to find out more about them. Can you help put names to the faces, by any chance? All the photographs are available to view and comment on at the web page below, and you can email Dr McIntosh at frances.mcintosh@english-heritage.org.uk <https://crowdsourced.micropasts.org/project/corbridge-excavators>

Our regular contributor, **Keith Atkinson**, has been delving again into the **Ordnance Survey Object Name Books**, which date from the 1860s, and found some interesting facts about the origins of local place names. Keith writes:

As a child I often walked along Delight Lane. Now I know the origin of the name. The Name Book states, *“The first owner of this house was a Captain in the Merchant Service who had a ship called Delight. It was very successful and to commemorate, he gave this house the same name.”*

On the road from Matfen village to Matfen Piers you pass Foulhoggers Plantation, and the Name Book tells us, *“The name has originated from the place having been marshy previous to its being planted and liable to foul the “hoggors” or stockings of persons crossing it.*

*GOLocal answer: The cabbage weighed 2.4kg and the cucumber was 20 inches long (51 cm)

