

# MATFEN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## No. 17 – September - October 2022



Welcome to Newsletter Number 17, the first in the new, Carolean age. The death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8th and the end of the Elizabethan age was marked in the village by the ringing of the Church bells and a special service on Sunday 18th, the day before the state funeral. The Jubilee Garden at the east of the village green has taken on a new significance, as Liz Bishop points out in her update on its progress below. And, by the way, many thanks to the Parish Council for the sturdy new swings in the playground in Ingoe!



There's been a lot to get into this edition of the newsletter, a sign of the growing number of activities in the village hall and elsewhere in the community. **Matfen village hall** is very busy these days with different fitness classes, but don't forget that it's also available for private hire - if you're thinking of having a children's party, a christening reception or any other family event, you can find out more and make a booking via the website, at [www.northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/matfen-village-hall](http://www.northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/matfen-village-hall) or by email: [matfenvillage@gmail.com](mailto:matfenvillage@gmail.com) or phone: **07817 375237**.

**Andrew and Harry Waters** are still leading their popular weekly **Karate** sessions on Fridays from 6pm-7pm. They always welcome new members, and can be contacted on [matfensrka@gmail.com](mailto:matfensrka@gmail.com)

After her successful taster sessions, **Jo Stichbury** is in the hall on Mondays. She's running **Legs Bums and Tums**, with a fun aerobic warm up, from 9.30am, to get you ready for the week ahead. Then there's **Body Flow**, a combination of Pilates, Yoga and tai chi to music at 10.15am. Later in the day, she's doing **Body Flow** again at 6.00pm and **Cardio Blast** at 6.45pm, a fun aerobic-based workout. You can buy a monthly pass for £35 or pay as you go for £7 a session, or back to back classes £10. [jostichburyfitness@gmail.com](mailto:jostichburyfitness@gmail.com) tel: **07855247063**.

As well as Jo's sessions, there are four new fitness classes that you can sign up for:

- **Pilates** with **Jill Newton** on Wednesdays from 10.00-11.00am: [jillie.g@live.co.uk](mailto:jillie.g@live.co.uk)
- **Forrest Yoga** with **Ruth Forster** on Wednesdays from 6-7pm: [ruth@namayay.co.uk](mailto:ruth@namayay.co.uk), **07833 088600**
- **65+ Exercise Class** with **Freya Renison-Benn** on Thursdays from 9.30-10.15 am: [freya@functionalfit.org](mailto:freya@functionalfit.org) **07340569270** <https://www.functionalfit.org> – Freya also runs a **Bootcamp** at Matfen Cricket Ground every Saturday from 9.00-9.45am
- **Vinyasa Yoga** with **Christine Heslop** on Fridays from 9.30-10.30am: [christineheslop585@gmail.com](mailto:christineheslop585@gmail.com), **07533 533841**, [Myoga-newcastle.co.uk](http://Myoga-newcastle.co.uk)



### **Ruth and Christine introduce themselves and their particular take on Yoga:**

**Ruth Forster** is excited to share Forrest Yoga at Matfen Village Hall. Built on the four principles of Breath, Strength, Integrity and Spirit, Forrest Yoga encourages you to engage your mind as well as your body. It is a rather intense practice (but don't let that put you off!) with an emphasis on the core that builds physical and emotional/mental strength through a series of poses and mindful breathing. Forrest Yoga takes into account modern living with all of its stresses and strains. Suitable for all levels, Forrest Yoga encourages you to work according to your own physical needs, inviting you always to find ease in the poses, and there are always options. All you need is an open mind, an open heart and come along for a lot of breath, a little sweat and a lot of fun! Our little yoga family is growing and we'd love to see anyone who would like to join us.

#### **and Christine:**



I'm delighted to be teaching my yoga class in Matfen. I'm a senior level yoga instructor, having trained in India to advanced level. I'm also a posture and alignment specialist. I started practising yoga over 20 years ago to help with my running injuries and gravitated towards the physical practices of Ashtanga and Hot Yoga. At the beginning I saw yoga simply as another form of exercise, but the more I practised, the more I started to realise there was so much more than just body-centred yoga practice (Asana). I began to study and practise the other aspects of yoga (the eight limbs, Ayurveda, Yoga philosophy) and this was a transformation for me, mentally and

spiritually. Nothing makes me happier than seeing those I teach enjoy their practice. Yoga benefits all ages, from the young and fit, to elders with arthritis and everyone in between. I really hope you can join me on the mat soon. I charge £7 per class or £35 for 6 weeks (unlimited time pass).

If the thought of all that exercise leaves you feeling a bit exhausted, here's a restful update on the **Queen's Jubilee Garden** refurbishment from **Liz Bishop**:

The end of Queen Elizabeth II's reign brings extra significance to our Jubilee Garden. Work continues there with ground cover in place by the end of this month. Thanks are due to the volunteers who have both laboured and contributed items, plants and seeds. A young crab apple tree is to be planted, with the promise of blossom and fruits as it grows. A second hedgerow at the water's end, to be added in November, will create a wild-life corridor towards the wood-pile. As ever in gardens, the weather will influence progress over the months ahead. In our uncertain world, Spring will certainly come, and a new bench in the sunniest corner will offer a chance to sit and enjoy a peaceful place. If you're interested in helping the garden develop, get in touch with the Parish Council on [matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com).





**Great Whittington and Matfen WI** are hosting an event in the village hall on **Tuesday, October 4th at 7.30 pm**, a fun play called 'Gone to the Wall' to mark Hadrian's 1900th birthday – everyone welcome! Entry and refreshments in the interval are free, but donations will be gratefully received. Come along and find out the 'true' story of the building of the Roman Wall.



As well as monthly meetings, the WI organises regular lunches, walks and outings. We're a small, friendly group that always welcomes visitors and new members – email [contehjean@gmail.com](mailto:contehjean@gmail.com) if you're interested in joining.

**News from the Parish Council – making a Local Resilience Hub:**

As part of the next steps in finalising the Community Resilience Plan, the PC met with representatives of Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) to help develop our plans and see how they could be of assistance. The centre point of the plan is that Matfen Village Hall becomes a **Local Resilience Hub**, supported by NCC and Northern Powergrid so that it has a power supply, even in a power emergency in the locality. Northern Powergrid would supply a generator and the necessary fuel so that the hall can stay functional and be available as a warm place for those residents who are affected. Northern Powergrid will assess the village hall and decide on what alterations are needed to support the project. The PC have also applied for funding to assist with the costs of upgrading facilities to accommodate more people and improve facilities accordingly. Another aspect of the project is that volunteers will be needed if an emergency occurs and residents need to be supported and accommodated at the village hall. At the meeting, it was made clear that there are certain necessary roles, from all perspectives, to help everything run smoothly. Clear communication is important so that everyone is aware of the situation. This is where we need local residents to provide assistance and, we hope, volunteer to be trained by NCT for the various roles necessary – sometimes as simple as making a cup of tea! If you are able to help in this way then please send your details to: [matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com) Many thanks!

**And some highlights from the latest Community Action Network (CAN) News – first, EV Charging points**

Northumberland County Council is committed to making our county carbon neutral by 2030, and is encouraging everyone to do what they can to reduce carbon emissions. Transport is high on the agenda as part of NCC's Climate Change Action Plan and they have installed curb-side charging stations at seven locations across the county to make electric vehicles more accessible for our residents. The chargers are mostly suited to overnight charging for residents who do not have access to off-street parking (and therefore cannot have private chargers installed), but they can also be used for visitors to top up where needed. Seven points across the county have been chosen for the pilot, and the nearest to Matfen is in Corbridge Main Street. If the pilot is successful, these charge points will be rolled out in other areas in the county.



**Branching Out Fund**

The Tree Council is offering funding to schools, community groups and Tree Warden Networks to plant trees, hedges and orchards. Grants are for between £200 and £2,000 for projects with strong community involvement, ideally involving children and/or young people. The deadline is **04 December 2022**. If your community group is interested, the details can be found on the Tree Council's website: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/>

**The Climate Action Fund**

This is for those with more ambitious plans, but is maybe something for communities and individuals to think about:

The National Lottery Community Fund is offering funding between £300,000-£500,000 to community and voluntary organisations, charities, public sector, working partnerships for 12-15 projects that:

- Show how creating a deeper connection with nature will lead to changing people's behaviours and greater care for the environment.
- Show how by bringing nature back into the places we live and work, we can help communities to reduce or adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Show longer-term, larger change that goes beyond the communities they're directly working with.

More details at: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/climate-action-fund-programme>



**History Corner:**

Jacob Atkinson (1863-1950) was born at Chollerton. He married Isabella Douglas (1870-1920), born at Clarewood, and they had a daughter and two sons, the youngest of which was Keith's father, John Douglas Atkinson (1900-1979), born at Great Whittington. The family moved to Matfen, probably in 1906, and took the post office and shop, then in Rose Cottage next door to the *Black Bull*. Isabella was the postmistress for 12 years prior to her death in 1920. Jacob then became postmaster and general dealer until he retired in 1935. The shop was called the 'Anything and Everything' shop and in later years also sold petrol.



The photograph on the left shows Jacob in the late 1940s, standing at the gate to a field which he rented and which became the site of East Close, Matfen. At that time he was living in Model House, next to West Farm, Matfen.

The photograph on the right, taken by W. P. Collier in about 1913 and in the collection in the Heritage Centre in

Bellingham, shows the same field with its gate in front of the house in South Side.

**And, to close ...** many thanks to all the contributors to Newsletter 17, especially Keith Atkinson, whose History Corners have always been interesting and entertaining. This is his last appearance in Matfen Community Newsletters, but I'm happy to say there is a writer waiting to take up the baton. Huge thanks, as ever, to Rev Rachel for distributing the newsletter by email. Any comments, suggestions and contributions for future newsletters are very welcome, and If you know of anyone who would like a paper copy, please let me know – [contehjean@gmail.com](mailto:contehjean@gmail.com). The next newsletter will come out in mid-November.