

MATFEN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

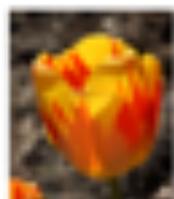
No. 15 - May - June 2022



Aren't we lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the world, especially at this time of year? As Spring moves into Summer, we are surrounded by signs of new life and hope: the fresh leaves and blossom on the trees, the young lambs in the fields, the swallows, swifts, house martins and other birds nesting in all sorts of nooks and crannies. Plants are popping up in the garden that you had forgotten were there - even the weeds look bright and have their own beauty, before they get out of control! Welcome to Newsletter number 15, where there's news of a possible new group starting up to appreciate, enjoy and perhaps protect one part of our living environment - the swifts that return to us every year from their winters in warmer climes.

Matfen village hall has been the scene of lots of activity over the past couple of months, including work on the installation of new wooden window frames. This is almost complete, and will ensure that the heating is more efficient and the hall warmer over the winter months. There have also been some fast-paced events to raise money for the Cricket Club, including a Race Night, which made full use of the A&L system. If pictures on the village

Facebook are anything to go by, it was a really exciting night and generated its own heat. Congratulations to the Cricket Club for the amazing success of their fundraising - over £20,000 for new, state-of-the-art equipment for the teams and upcoming players.



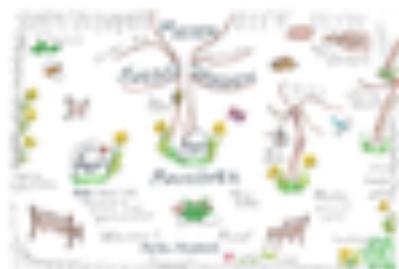
The hall will also be a venue for the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee event** on Saturday June 4th. There'll be plenty going on round the village green from 2pm onwards, and also a display of memorabilia from previous Royal Jubilees and royal occasions inside the hall - more information available via the village Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/matfenvillage/> or email: matfenvillage@gmail.com

And don't forget that the hall is always available to book by groups or private individuals, and you can book via the website:

www.northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/matfen-village-hall, or by email: matfenvillage@gmail.com or phone: 01773 370217.

There'll be events around the district throughout the Jubilee holiday weekend, so you can spread your celebrations over the days: in **Stamfordham**, on Saturday, there's an afternoon tea party followed by a 'Party in the Park' with a barbecue from 1pm onwards. Book your table at the tea party by emailing Mrs Rachel r.scheffer@newcastle.org.uk before May 22nd. On Sunday 5th, **Great Whittington** village hall committee and Parish Council are joining forces to hold their own event. Then, to draw everything to a close, there'll be **traditional Long Evening at 8.30pm in Holy Trinity, Matfen**.

And here's a cheerful depiction of the **Jubilee Garden Refurbishment**, which is under way at the site of the 1877 Jubilee garden at the east side of the village green. The project is co-ordinated by the Parish Council and needs support from volunteers in the village, and there's still time to get involved. If you're interested, get in touch with the PC through the clerk, on matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com.



Matfen Parish Council are holding their next meeting on Tuesday May 24th in the village hall, beginning at 7pm. This will be the Annual Meeting, where anyone resident in the parish can raise matters or propose a resolution. If you wish to do this, you need to get in touch with the Chairman, via the clerk, at least three days before the meeting. You can see the agenda on the PC website:

<https://www.matfenparish.org>. Contact for the clerk, Mandy Senior, is matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com.



Members of the **Matfen and Stamfordham Seikenyu Karate Association club** took part in May in the BKA's first inter club competition for 2 years. There was an impressive turnout of students and several trophies were won by our students, with some excellent skills on display. Samuel Harry Waters, 6th-Dan instructor from the Matfen club was, yet again, men's open sparring champion. We are hugely proud of our students' achievements and dedication to the sport. New students are always very welcome - the club meets every Friday from 6- 7pm in Matfen village hall. Please contact Harry Waters if interested, on 01773 726283.

The garden terrace is open and looks very inviting at **Dulcissima Coffee Shop**, though perhaps the weather is not quite so inviting, on some days. Ian and Tracy are also serving their ever-popular evening meals once a month or so on Fridays. These usually sell out very fast. The next ones are on June 3rd and 10th, so if you want to start off your Jubilee weekend with a delicious meal, drop by the shop to reserve your places or phone 01662 886300. The shop will be open 10 am - 3 pm as usual throughout the Bank Holidays for breakfasts and lunches, and any essentials you may have forgotten.

Great Whittington and Matfen WI have an interesting programme of events coming up, as well as regular lunches and walks. Visitors are always very welcome. The next meeting is in Great Whittington on Tuesday June 7th, and the guest will be Janet Padgett, an expert spinner with the Woolly Wanderers, who know all there is to know about spinning and weaving wool into wonderful things. Then on Wednesday July 6th, there's an outing to Barnard Castle followed by a guided tour of Ruby Castle that's only available to groups. The coach leaves Matfen at 9am, and there are still a few places, so get in touch if you'd like to be on it. caroljordan@gmail.com



Although we're coming to summer, you may be concerned about the increasing costs of fuel. Here's some news that may help you:

Community Action Northumberland (CAN), now have two energy advisers, Leanne and Brian, who are holding weekly online or phone energy surgeries, on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 6 pm. You need to book a time slot, which you can do using any of these contact details: Leanne Shipley: email - leanneshipley@ca-north.org.uk tel - 017734 867000. Brian Watson: email - brianwatson@ca-north.org.uk tel - 017731 08043

And there's also news from CCR of funding for community projects:

Climate Change funding for community groups in Northumberland

Northumberland County Council is offering financial support to organisations including voluntary and community groups, registered charities, constituted groups or clubs, community interest companies (CIC), social enterprises and parish councils to make changes to become more sustainable. Two funding opportunities are available through the Northumberland Climate Change Fund. The first is a small bid of up to £1,000 which could help groups with event equipment, hire costs, energy audits and the planting of community orchards and other greenery. The second is a larger bid of up to £1,000 which could go towards renewable energy and retrofitting.

Bids are being welcomed from **4th May for six weeks until Wednesday 13th June**, which is the deadline for the first round of applications.

To apply, projects must:

- support the Council's **Climate Change Action Plan**,
- be a new initiative,
- demonstrate longevity,
- show a commitment to engaging with the wider community to encourage action on climate change.

The funding can be used as match funding to support larger projects, but not other Northumberland County Council funded projects. Exclusions apply

For more information and to apply, please go to: www.northumberland.gov.uk/practicalnorthumberlandclimatechange fund

Save our swifts - can you help?

Here's information about an amazing bird you'll see often at this time of year, and a request from Sarah Groves, one of our parish councillors:

Swifts have thrived for many millennia. But now their populations are in great peril. In 2021 they were added to the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern, the UK's list of most endangered birds.

They are astonishing birds: everything except nesting is done upon the wing, eating, drinking, (scooping raindrops or making low passes over still, open water), mating, sleeping, preening, and bathing – in rain.

When they arrive at their nest, it will usually be the first time they have touched anything solid in 10 months. In the case of young birds, which begin breeding at four years old, it could be three years or more.

UK swifts winter in Africa, and in an average swift's lifetime of about 5.5 years, it might fly 8 million miles. Some individuals live longer, up to 20 years.

There seem to be a number of reasons for their decline, including changes in insect population, but loss and lack of nesting sites is certainly a factor.

Swifts have evolved to live close to human habitation, nesting in cavities in old buildings, behind roof tiles, eaves, and fascia boards. Renovations and

improved insulation measures can often, unwittingly, mean that nest sites are blocked or lost. Swifts pair for life, and are "site faithful", so if a building has been demolished or changed, they must find somewhere new, quickly. If they can't find an alternative site quickly, a whole breeding season can be lost. Putting up a special swift nest box can help. They need an unobstructed flyway, at least 1m above the ground, to which they zoom in at high speed.

I am hoping to get funding from the NCC Community Fund for swift nesting boxes – I realise too late for this year, but plenty of time to be erected for next year. Please consider hosting a nest box or two, if you have a home that would suit this.

Let me know if you are interested – my email is sarah.a.groves@gmail.com

If you are unable to install nest boxes, the usual wildlife gardening practices will encourage insects in your garden, and will help swifts as well.



History Corner: here's another W.P. Collier photo, taken in the 1920s, from **Keith Atkinson**, which involves his family. It's in The Collier Collection in the Heritage Centre, Bellingham. I've placed it next to a photo from 2022, taken from as close to the same spot as possible. It's amazing how different the scene looks: the big tree went over 20 years ago, and some of the houses have had upper floors added, which changes their look entirely.



Keith writes: The house on the extreme left of the photograph is where my grandfather, Jacob Atkinson, lived after his retirement in 1905 up to his death in 1950. It was known to me as Model House (is that still its name?) and it bears the dedication A. & E. S. 1881: referring to Sir Edward Blackett (1805 - 1885) and his fourth and last wife, Martha. When I was a child, Mr and Mrs James Thomas "Tot" Robson lived in one of the other houses pictured on North Side. "Tot" Robson (1896 - 1977) was a joiner and carpenter and lay preacher at the Wesleyan Chapel in North Road. Mrs Robson was Miss Mabel Thompson prior to her marriage, and was Assistant Mistress at Maffin School from 1913 to 1918.

And, to close thanks to all the contributors to Newsletter number 15, and to Ray Rachel for distributing it by email. As ever, any comments, suggestions and contributions for future newsletters are very welcome. If you know of anyone who would like a paper copy, please let me know - cont@jean@gmail.com. The next newsletter will come out in mid-July.