

Oundle Chronicle

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Refill Revolution aims to change our shopping habits

Sunny Woodend

Refill Revolution's goal is to make sustainable shopping mainstream. Refill Revolution was originally founded in Market Harborough by Beth Lambert, a young mother who was concerned about reducing the waste that her family created.

Camilla Sherwin, a founding member of Oundle Waste Less, went to speak to her about her initiative.

"I really wanted to have a sort of trial, one pop-up shop, but she said she didn't do pop-ups." And so, although the initial intention was just to organise a one-off pop-up, Mrs Sherwin opened the shop once a fortnight during the summer. And then, following popular demand, the shop's open hours were increased to three days a week.

Refill Revolution, located at Oundle Wharf, is a packaging-free shop where customers use their own containers to stock up on loose food items, toiletries and

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For this year's Remembrance commemorations, purple poppies were displayed at the Oundle and Ashton War Memorial to pay tribute to the animals that have died while in war time service

Purple poppies inspire tributes to animals in war

Millicant Riordan

In November, the Oundle War Memorial was made ready for remembrance commemoration events with the addition of a display of purple poppies alongside the familiar red poppies. Although little known, the purple poppy has been adopted to pay tribute to the animals that have served in conflicts around the world.

The purple poppy was first introduced in 2006 by the charity, Animal Aid. Since 2016, animal charities, Murphy's Army and Blue Cross for Pets have joined the purple poppy campaign to raise funds, whilst Animal Aid have turned to raising funds with the sale of purple enamel paws.

The former director of Animal Aid, Andrew Tyler, said: "Animals used in warfare are indeed victims, not heroes. They do not give their lives; their lives are taken from them."

A menagerie of animals including horses, dogs, pigeons, elephants, camels, cats, canaries have contributed to the war efforts of the 20th century. Over eight million horses died in World War One, alone. In memory of their service to conflict zones, Oundle included purple poppies in the knitted decorations of the Oundle and Ashton War Memorial.

Stephen Abbott, press officer for the Oundle British Legion, said: "The Oundle Royal British

Legion are delighted with the positive response to the addition of the purple poppies to the bollard cover display around Oundle's war memorial."

The Knit and Natter group responsible for the display, meet regularly at Fletton House, and were inspired to commemorate the contributions of animals to the two world wars by their own appreciation for animals. Other displays in towns across the country encouraged the group to do something to honour them.

They first began decorating the war memorial for the Remembrance services around four years ago. It took two months for the knitters to create the current memorial display, which will be permanently included in Oundle's

remembrance events.

Over the years, they have knitted elaborate decorations for over twenty events, some just for fun and some to raise awareness for a number of causes. One of the most notable was the Great Oundle Yarn Bomb, when the Market Place was completely decorated with fanciful, bright creations.

2019 Election



Turn to pages 8 and 9 for full coverage of our local candidates and the issues they stand for.

The Chronicle Team



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Opinion: the view from here

Saul Agar Ward

When I originally sat down to write this article, I was going to urge a vote for the Conservatives. I may not like their policies, I thought. I may not like their leaders, I may not like the party, but at least they'll get Brexit done. However, I have now shifted to what I suspect is a minority view.

Let's look at the Tories and see why this one string to their bow is more of a rubber band. Boris Johnson is, if nothing else, untrustworthy. Not only did he notoriously write two completely opposed articles on EU membership for the Telegraph, and publish the pro-leave one on what seems like the flip of a political coin, but he also has had a less than impressive record in government. This is the man who, as Mayor of London, spent £43 million of taxpayers' money on his failed garden bridge project, and his carelessness as foreign secretary set back the case for the detained British citizen, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliff. He now refuses to release a report on Russian interference in UK elections.

Then there's his claim that he will get Brexit done without any further "dither and delay". Depending on what you mean by "Brexit", this is likely not true. What Boris has now is a withdrawal agreement, and while this could be passed in a Tory majority government, it won't settle the issue. We will still have years of negotiation before we settle our future relations with our main trading partners. Leaving the EU will actually create more, not less uncertainty. So a vote for the Conservatives to get Brexit done, will not actually resolve Brexit and the UK's global trading relationships.

Many readers in this constituency will be Conservatives, and feel that this election will finally be the chance for a Tory majority government after years in compromised relationships with the Lib Dems and then the DUP. But the Conservative Party is no longer the party it once was. It is no longer the party of caution and centrism and scepticism and practicality, but the party of Brexit at all costs. We have seen the purge of the 21 MPs trying to stop a no-deal Brexit. These were loyal Tories, including Ken Clarke, the most loyal of all in his 49 years in the Commons, but they were cast out because they refused to be as dogmatic with regards to Brexit as their leader wanted. The Tory party

has changed.

For many moderate Labour voters, however, the prospect of a Corbyn leadership makes them uneasy. But there are other reasons to think twice about backing blue. The Conservative manifesto has its fair share of problems, such as its lack of focus on anything not Brexit, as well as its lack of actual policy and beliefs. Helping to secure a Conservative majority will not just allow Boris' withdrawal agreement to be passed, it will open the door to five more years of Tory policy.

What about Labour then? It is undeniable that in this election, Labour is more radical than they have been for years. But is Brexit any less radical? The question is what type of radical change would be better or worse.

The constant refrain is that Corbyn would "ruin Britain". But would an actual Labour government really be all that bad? Labour's policies promote a compassionate kind of government that we haven't seen in this country for years. Their proposed National Care Service and pledge to build more council housing will do real good. Yes, the charges of antisemitism levelled against party members give pause. I would argue, however, that public outrage has done much to force the party to take action. Let's hope the Equalities and Human Rights Commission investigation will shed light on this pressing issue. Labour is at fault here, absolutely, but this doesn't absolve everyone else of blame. Discrimination and bigotry are not just the failings of Labour, and we should address the problems within all parties. The Conservatives have not done anything to stem the growing xenophobia and Islamophobia in their party, while racism scandals have already surfaced within the short life of the Brexit party.

Corbyn is less popular now than in 2017, and this time he is facing off against the Brexit Party and a charismatic Conservative leader. Labour will likely not win a majority, but if there was a tactical vote to block the Conservatives, there might not only be a better chance for a proper (delayed) Brexit deal, but also a coalition government that will execute the compassionate policies that distinguish Labour's platform.

I am not yet old enough to vote in this election, so my future lies in the hands of an older generation. I have to hope that others will make the right decision for the future of all young people.

What's On in the coming months

January 5, Stahl Theatre:

Oundle Cinema will be screening the extraordinary story of Rudolf Nureyev, a Russian born ballet dancer whose defection to the West at the peak of the Cold War in the 20th century stunned both the USSR and the world. Opening the double bill, will be the recently released docudrama *The White Crow*, in which Ralph Fiennes captures the brilliance of Nureyev. This will be followed, by a never-before-seen HD restoration of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, performed in 1966 by Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn at the Vienna State Opera.

January 15-18, Queen Vic Hall:

Oundle Amateur Theatre Society will be performing *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Pantomime* by Peter Denyer. The group has been performing a pantomime annually since 1985. Tickets for the show are currently on sale at the Oundle Box Office on New Street.

January 17: St Peter's Church

Poet, playwright and activist Benjamin Zephaniah speaks candidly about his life at the forefront of social justice campaigns, as part of the Oundle Festival of Literature.

January 24th: Queen Victoria Hall

VicsGigs presents a rocking music evening with Pandamonium, winners of the 2018 Visual Radio Arts poll, and finalists in the Herne Bay Rocks 2019 competition.

February 6: Queen Victoria Hall

Transition Oundle hosts energy industry experts to talk about "Net-zero carbon by 2050? Energy initiatives to keep UK on target".

February 7: Amps Wine Merchants

A tutored tasting by Philip Amps of mature vintage ports, accompanied by a selection of pies, nuts, cheeses and fruit.

February 24-29, Queen Vic Hall:

This year's Gilbert and Sullivan production is *The Pirates of Penzance*. The Gilbert and Sullivan Players' first performance in 1959 was *The Pirates of Penzance*. This year's production will mark their 60th anniversary.

March 28-April 4: various venues

The Oundle Festival of Music and Drama presents a competitive festival for amateur performers of all ages. The syllabus is available at the Oundle Box Office on New Street.

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Bike racks improve access for cycle parking around town

Meagan Iu

After years of planning, in September 2019 the council was able to install new bicycle racks and shelters in locations around town, including the Market Place, opposite the Greedy Piglet, outside Tesco, the Co-op, the Queen Victoria Hall, Fletton House, the Courthouse and at Barnwell Park.

During 2018, the proposals were shared and supported by the council which identified potential grant funding opportunities. The town council applied to East Northants Communities Facilities fund and successfully obtained £7000. They also put aside funding for bike parking from a Section 106 fund that was allocated from recent



Cycle rack outside The Greedy Piglet on North Street

This idea was first proposed by Transition Oundle in the 2014 plan for transport as part of the neighbourhood plan, and a proposal for a cycle parking was made by the Oundle Business Association late in 2017. The objectives were to provide more parking facilities for local shoppers and town users, as well as facilities for groups of cyclists riding through on weekends from local cycling clubs. It was also hoped that this project would encourage support of local businesses by helping to maintain a vibrant high street.



New racks outside Fletton House

housing developments.

The council was approached by a Corby business, Macmain Amstadt, which has experience in creating architectural street furniture. The designs were developed to include standard Sheffield racks and smaller but stylish loops similarly designed to stand bikes against, which were installed by areas where shoppers visit. Outside the cafés, to accommodate a large number of bikes more efficiently, bar-style racks from which bikes hang from the saddle were installed.

All racks have now been installed across town and in Barnwell Park. There are about eighty spaces in total. Many look like traditional bike stands, with some also providing shelter, and some are the type of stand more often found at cycling events where bikes are hung on the bar by their saddles, and can be secured using a bike lock.

Paul Eveleigh, who organised the installation project, said: "As part of the neighbourhood plan there is an aspiration to create cycle ways so that residents need not wrestle with traffic for road space and younger cyclists can feel more confident at making a journey

"Hopefully, more people will cycle and alleviate some of the traffic stress and pollution that we see at peak times in town."

Work to begin on North Bridge

Meagan Iu

The green light to begin Oundle's North Bridge repairs has finally been given. In late October, the then MP, Tom Pursglove, wrote that planning permission had been granted and that work would begin in mid-November.

The promised start date of September for the repairs, said to take over 100 days to complete, had been pushed back for months.

The North Bridge on Station Road in Oundle was closed to heavy goods vehicles in May, after a 2014 inspection report concluded that seven of its thirteen arches had structural faults.

Because of this, Northamptonshire Highways imposed a three-tonne limit, and installed bollards to enforce width restrictions of 2.1m at each end of the bridge.

Despite availability of £1.3m funds from the central government, the repair work to the Grade II listed bridge was further delayed because of planning issues to do with its listed building status.

The planning authority at East Northamptonshire Council and Historic England had been accused by residents and the local council of

demonstrating a lack of urgency to deal with the issue. There has been concern that various delays will drag on as they did with the repairs to South Bridge, which had the same weight restrictions imposed for years.

Residents have complained about how frustrating the inconvenience of negotiating the bollards is on the width-restricted bridge, in addition to the increase of heavy traffic that has been diverted through the town's conservation area.

The bus routes have also been changed, and buses have to take a longer route into and around town. Businesses have been affected because of reduced access for their vehicles. The increase in heavy goods vehicles through town has posed risks of damage to buildings on the narrow streets.

The planned works to strengthen the arches will be carried out under the bridge, and will not affect road users.

Highways are keeping traffic management to a minimum to reduce disruption. The southern footway will be closed but pedestrian access will continue on the other side of the bridge.



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The future of Fletton Field is still in dispute by council and community

In the face of fierce opposition from the Oundle community and the Oundle Town Council, Northamptonshire County Council is continuing its efforts to sell Fletton Field for development.

The NCC's latest planning application seeks outline planning permission for the development of 33 extra care apartments for older people, along with associated parking, community green space and landscaping. The development would comprise self-contained apartments, both for sale and for rent, with 24-hour staff support on premises.

In 2016 a planning application for 13 dwellings was refused by East Northamptonshire Council planners. However, ENC did indicate that the planning authority would look favourably on a planning application for extra care homes.

The field was designated by the ENC as an Asset of Community Value in 2016, for its role in furthering the social wellbeing of the local community.

The Draft East Northamptonshire Local Plan (DENLP) identifies the most pressing need facing the district is the growth in older person households and the need for retirement housing and extra care accommodation. The NCC believes their plan for Fletton Field fulfils the DENLP policy requirements to meet the needs of an ageing population.

It is not clear that the size of the site would be suitable for an extra care facility, however. In comments made to the application, the Housing Strategy Manager said that a scheme of 33 units might not be enough for a viable facility.

"Extra Care schemes usually provide in excess of 40 units and often between 60 - 80 units. Schemes often provide a number of related services on site for residents in order to be sustainable. However, a larger scheme would require more storeys and may not be sustainable from a planning perspective on a site of this size.

"We support the principle of an extra care scheme close to the centre of Oundle, but from a housing perspective are not certain if this is the right site for such a scheme given the above factors."

The application does not detail how the expected personal care services or the 24-hour staff support would be accommodated. The planning application also proposes that the development could suit specialist support for dementia care, although such care is usually provided in a secure care home environment, not in extra care units.

The Oundle Recreation and Green Spaces Group has been campaigning to retain the field as a green space for use by the wider community. They calculate that if the site was developed, the town would lose forty percent of its accessible green space. They argue that the NCC had not submitted "robust evidence to support the assumption that the site is redundant".

Their argument is supported by the Town Council, which points out that the site is marked in the draft Oundle Neighbourhood Plan as a local green space and is not allocated for residential development in the existing local plan. The OTC urged that no application should be considered prior to 2021 and the adoption of a new local plan and Oundle Neighbourhood Plan. The council also questioned the haste in which the NCC is pushing forward this application. It wrote: "OTC further questions the disposal of the land by NCC at the present time and considers that no such assets should be disposed of prior to the coming into force of the new Northamptonshire unitary authorities."

Fletton Field was sold to the Guardians of the Poor of the Oundle Union in 1899. The NCC acquired the land for free, and it was used by the primary school as a playing field, and by the residents of Oundle for a variety of recreation purposes over many years.

the town. It represents an exciting opportunity for Oundle School, but we are sensitive to its place within the town and our responsibility to move forward with regard to our obligations."

When Northamptonshire County Council reorganised its

Elton quarry plans near the A605 face objections

Gwyneth Angel

A recent planning application for mineral extraction may see a busy new quarry operation off the A605 near Warmington. In May 2019, The Elton Estate submitted plans to develop the area by the roundabout, turning 23.2 hectares into a gravel and sand quarry, with a working lifespan of nine years.

The area is currently pasture land, with a public footpath enjoying unbroken views of the countryside towards Fotheringhay.

The town of Oundle and the Northamptonshire area has a long history of mining. Northamptonshire is built on rock formations dating back to the Jurassic age, and Oundle itself was built on the sedimentary rock oolite, making it a perfect area for mining, and is the reason why the older buildings in Oundle, such as Cobthorne House, are built from locally sourced stone.

Given the high demand for housing nationwide, a gravel pit will increase production of locally sourced material for construction. Northamptonshire is a net importer of both sand and gravel and crushed rock; imports outweighed exports by 23%. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan that was adopted in 2017 identified the Elton site as suitable for extraction. The Elton plan is an extension to an existing operation, and will help to maintain a balance of supply across the county. They anticipate a total extraction of up to 900,000 tonnes of

gravel and sand over seven years.

Mineral extraction will occur in four phases, across different sections of the land. Each phase will include reclamation of the land and restoration to arable grassland.

The plan may be good for local building projects and companies, but local residents are unhappy about the proposed development, calling it an "insane plan".

Residents have warned that it will destroy the "fabric of [their] village forever," and are particularly worried about the impact this will have on traffic along the A605. The application estimates that 25 articulated HVGs will move in and out of the site every day.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England strongly objected to the plan on grounds of its scale and the adverse impact on local residents, wildlife, public rights of way, increased traffic on the A605 and historic and ecological landscape setting.

"The scale of the operation, covering over 20 hectares, has the potential to have far more adverse impact on the historic and ecological landscape setting than the existing site. The scope and timescale of the proposed extension over the planned nine-year period will result in irreparable damage being inflicted on the wildlife that currently enjoy these flood meadows, as well as considerable disruption to the quality of life for local residents."

education provision from three tier to two tier in 2016, Oundle's primary school was relocated to the former middle school site on Cotterstock Road and the original site on Milton Road was left vacant and surplus to educational requirements.

The NCC appeared to take charge of the site, and in 2016 it submitted a planning application for the conversion of the buildings to a development of townhouses, apartments and mews cottages.

The planning authority indicated they would grant permission, and the town council at the time raised no comments or objections. However, the NCC did not progress the application and it was dropped by 2017.

There is no current planning permission for the site.

The sale of the former school site was complicated by questions about its ownership. The primary school was established by the Church of England long before the local authority took on oversight

of education, and existing land registry documents raised ambiguities about whether the diocese or the county had a claim to the land.

Mr Toriati said: "There were a number of interests in this land but they were resolved by the vendor satisfactorily prior to sale."

In the short term the school will need to secure the site from further deterioration, and conduct a full survey and review of the property to determine what can be rebuilt or remodelled.

While the school has no firm long-term plans for the site, it will form part of the strategic development plan for the school.

"We think that this site could potentially unlock a range of options. We aim to bring in a specialist team to help us define those options over the coming months," Mr Toriati said.

The school's property adjacent to Abbott House on Glapthorn Road is in the process of being sold.

Milton Road primary site has been sold to Oundle School

The former primary school site on Milton Road has been purchased by Oundle School, ending speculation about its sale to property developers.

Dom Toriati, the School Bursar said: "It is a strategic site which sits both at the heart of the School and

New undertaking for former pub

Sunny Woodend

Despite some hopes that a long-running pub would find an owner to reopen it, planning permission has been granted to the Kettering firm Averil Phillips to convert the building on 4 St Osyth's Lane to an undertakers. Located next to the Co-op, the building was previously the Angel Public House.

Between 2009 and 2016 there were nine tenants who had tried to run the pub successfully, but struggled to make profit. The pub ceased trading in 2016 and the grade II listed property was put on the market.

In its approval for a change of use, the planners noted that its history as a pub was not inherently significant. It was not used as a public house until the 1960s, and was reported to have been previously used as a smithy, grocery and inn.

Averil Phillips and Family, an independent funeral director, has been based in Kettering for many years. The cellar will be converted to a mortuary, and internal work done on the ground floor to serve the business. The proposed work is sympathetic to the building's

listed status and location in the conservation area. They estimate that three to four funerals will take place at the venue each week.



Before planning permission was granted, the Oundle Town Council raised concerns about the short-term parking that would be required, in addition to the space required for the movements of a hearse and funeral cortege in a location adjacent to a supermarket, but the planning officers judged that the impact would be relatively limited.

Controversial planning permission put on hold

Facing a large audience of concerned residents on November 13, East Northamptonshire Council Planning Management Committee considered two highly contentious applications for large housing developments in Oundle. The applications for sites on Cotterstock Road and St Christopher's Road were both deferred until independent surveys could be undertaken, and further submissions reviewed.

Plans for the construction by Gladman Developments of up to 130 homes on a 16-acre site at Cotterstock Road had been tipped for approval by ENC planners. The council had written: "The principle of developing the site is considered to be acceptable as there is an identified need for housing in Oundle in accordance with the adopted Development Plan."

There has been strong resistance to the plans. The Oundle Town Council has raised objections because the development does not form part of its draft Neighbourhood Plan, which calls for smaller developments at different sites to satisfy the required 172 houses that need to be built by 2031. Members of the

public have submitted 84 comments about the site, drawing attention to traffic issues and the smell from the adjacent Anglian Water sewage works.

In light of residents' concerns, the decision was made to defer a decision until independent traffic, drainage and odour assessments could be made.

Planners had expressed reservations about the plan by Persimmon for 65 houses and an extra care unit of 65 units on St Christopher's Drive, a site which is also not in OTC's draft Neighbourhood Plan. The planners raised concerns about the proposal for an extra care facility, which was offered as an alternative to the required affordable housing without demonstrating that an extra care provision was actually a realistic option for the site.

At the meeting, Persimmon submitted a 60-page amendment arguing they were not required to demonstrate viability. They also said they had contingency plans for affordable housing should they not proceed with the extra care units.

The council agreed to review the new submissions before making a decision.

Future of private schools in debate

Millicent Riordan

Although rumours have long circulated about Labour's ideas about the independent school sector, the alarm was raised at the September party conference, when the Labour Party voted in favour of a proposal that would "integrate all private schools into the state sector". According to the motion, they intend to "redistribute democratically all endowments, investments and properties held by private schools", and dismantle the Ofsted system.

Confusingly, John McDonnell, the shadow chancellor, played down the notion that the state would seize private schools' assets. He said the proposal was potentially illegal and that he would not support legislation.

"Everything will be done on the basis of consultation, and often this isn't about seizing property, it's about having access to services and facilities," he said.

Nevertheless, the proposal has spooked the independent sector. Julie Robinson, Chief Executive of the Independent Schools Council, said: "Labour's plan would breach the European Convention on Human Rights on the right to choose education.

"This does not improve our education system. The

repercussions would be irreversible and far-reaching."

The effects of such a move would impact both the educational system and the local economy of communities where private schools are based.



The Independent Schools Council (ISC) said that independent schools save taxpayers £3.5 billion per year, as well as contributing £11.6 billion to the UK economy and supporting 257,000 jobs.

The economy of Oundle has been entwined with the independent school at its centre for hundreds of years; a relationship that has perhaps grown more vital in the last half century as the economic contributions from traditional market place businesses have declined. Dom Toriati, the bursar at Oundle School, said the school spends £37,000,000 annually on wages, goods and services in East Northamptonshire and the surrounding area.

The impact on the local economy is significant. The school employs more than 750 staff, including catering, domestic and grounds positions, who find secure employment and who spend money in the local economy. Mr Toriati said that on average, £1 million per year is spent just on food, with as much as possible going to local suppliers. Local craftsmen and tradespeople are employed to help maintain the school buildings, which are maintained and improved at a cost of £2.5 million per year.

Oundle's activities do not cease at the end of term when its boarding pupils return home, generating further trade with local businesses. During the holidays, £1.5 million is turned over by Oundle Enterprises, which lets school premises to thousands of visitors attending residential holiday camps. Additionally, it helps to manage use of facilities, such as the sports centre swimming pool, by members of the public.

While the town of Oundle does not depend on the school, any plan to break up the business would have a profound impact on the local economy. It is doubtful that the Labour Party will actually pursue such "draconian" measures, but the proposal does sharpen the debate about the value of the independent sector.

Legal challenges to Neighbourhood Plan

Oundle's Neighbourhood Plan has progressed to John Parmiter, the independent examiner appointed to review whether the plan meets "the basic conditions" and other relevant legal requirements.

An unexpected obstacle to the plan's success emerged at the Examiner's public hearing on October 29 when developers with current planning applications at stake sent lawyers to challenge the plan. Lawyers for Gladman and Persimmon contend that because the plan adopted amendments after the Regulation 14 consultation process without further consultation with the community, "the Plan is unlawful and cannot progress any further".

Oundle Town Council's lawyer argued in response that "any sensible consultee would be alive to the fact" that given the objectives of a consultation, some changes would be made.

The OTC said: "The objections raised must be seen in the light of the vested interests of the developers who are aggrieved that the plan does not allocate their sites for residential development."

The Interim Report into the Examination is due in early December.

Keyless car theft leaves owners mystified

Millicent Riordan

On Friday 19th July, a surprised car owner on Ashton Road discovered that their BMW M3 had been stolen from their driveway. The owner was still in possession of both sets of keys. The victim posted on social media: "It's a pretty noisy car to start and drive off, so god knows how they did it."

Such keyless car thefts are the wave crime to hit car owners. The Association of British Insurers reported a national rise in keyless car thefts to The Times: 16,000 insurance claims were settled within the first three months of 2019. The cost totalled £108m, an increase of 22% from last year.



Faraday pouches are an inexpensive option to keep your car safe

In the last five years, two confirmed keyless car thefts involving relay devices have occurred in East Northants. According to the police, one of the vehicles was recovered.

Keyless car theft is a new technological approach undertaken by thieves. Usually two relay boxes are used to boost the signal of a car fob inside a house, so the theft often involves two perpetrators. One relay box is held near the house whilst the other is planted near the car door. As the vehicle is started with a button, this allows them to

unlock the car using a recognisable signal and drive off while the owner is still in possession of the fob.

A spokesman from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders told The Times: "Technology can only do so much... we call for action to prevent the open sale of devices used by criminals."

Simple and inexpensive Faraday pouches are a sound way to prevent further keyless car theft. They act similarly to Faraday cages, which block signals from car fobs and contactless cards using special materials and sewing techniques. This means that there is no signal for criminals to track. Some car manufacturers have installed features that mean a car key will no longer broadcast after it has not been moved for a set amount of time.

Thatcham Research, a research firm, published findings that Mazda 3s, Volvo V-60s and Toyota RAV-4s are vulnerable to thefts using relays. However, Volvo, Toyota and Mazda have concluded that they will invest in higher security measures, in order to protect their customers. Tracker Security has concluded that BMW X5s, 3 and 5 Series, and Mercedes-Benz C and E classes are the most likely to be stolen.

In an interview with Whatcar? Magazine, David Jamieson, police commissioner for the West Midlands said: "Last year, 7452 cars were stolen in the West Midlands; that's nearly three times as many as in 2015." He has begun a national campaign calling for car-makers to increase the security they provide.

In East Northamptonshire there have been three key-less car thefts since 2017, and Police have made two arrests in connection to this type of car theft. To the relief of the Oundle car owner, two men were arrested by Cambridgeshire police, on 30th July, in connection with the BMW M3 stolen from Ashton Road.



A Mercedes Sprinter van was stolen from a drive on King's Road in October

Police beat

Millicent Riordan

The summer saw a spike in crime incidents reported, with an increase from 24 in July to 32 incidents in August.

A winch was removed from a vehicle on Bellamy Road, Oundle during the week of 18th July. The winch must have been unscrewed, as well as having the connecting cables cut.

On July 19th a car was stolen between midnight and 7:20am from Ashton Road. This is believed to have been a keyless car theft. Another car was stripped of items that evening just after midnight on St Christopher's Drive. Further cases were reported during the night of July 23rd and 24th: items were stolen from a vehicle on Benefield Road, and from a car on Wakerley Close.

A woman was approached by two unknown men at 1pm on the afternoon of August 2 on St Osyth's Lane. They asked to borrow her phone and she replied that she did not own one. They then climbed into the passenger side of her vehicle and stole her handbag. It was recovered and returned to her.

Six businesses located in the Oundle Marina suffered thefts of several items on August 8th. These items were located and returned. However, the offenders have not been located. The rear headlights of a car parked on Benefield Road were also removed on August 8th.

The crime rate decreased dramatically from 32 crimes reported in August to 19 in September. However, there was an increase to 24 reported incidents in October. During September and October incidents of violence and sexual offences accounted for the majority of reported crimes. Of the seven incidents reported in October, one suspect has been charged, four incidents are still under investigation, and in two cases, the police were unable to prosecute the identified suspects.

A car in Lower Benefield was stripped of possessions on September 16th. A car was keyed

on the driver's side on Creed Road by unknown person(s) on September 12th.

Four counts of shoplifting in Oundle occurred in October; three were reported at the Co-op in Oundle and one was reported at Oundle Waitrose. The police have no suspects at this time.

A Sprinter van was stolen from King's Road between 11pm on October 9th and 6am the following morning by unknown means.

There was an attempted burglary at a house on Wakerley Close during the night of October 27th. A building on Barnwell Road was burgled on November 4th at 14:35.

There were three burglaries reported in Oundle during September and October. A burglary on Monson Way was reported in August. However, the suspect was unable to be prosecuted in October.

A silver teardrop trailer was stolen from a private, communal car park on Glapthorn Road during the week of November 4th.

On Oundle Road in Stoke Doyle, an attempted theft of a vehicle on November 10th was reported. The rear window was broken and the boot was damaged, although nothing was taken.

On November 18th, two men attempted to steal a car from an Oundle driveway at 9:30 pm but were chased away when the owner was woken by the sound of a saw, and shouted from his home. They proceeded to drive away in another vehicle.

The police are collaborating with National Pub Watch on the Ask for Angela campaign, which will help people who feel threatened on a date.

As part of Operation Snap, police are asking drivers to submit dash cam footage of traffic offences to their website, as this may be helpful to take action against drivers found to be breaking the law. Police caution that any footage should not be placed on social media as this could affect their efforts to make a legal case.



A silver teardrop trailer was stolen from a private car park in November

Barclays pledges to stay open - for now

Esme Kroese

Barclays Bank is the last bank in town, following the closures of NatWest and the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society. However, Barclays has issued a time-limited promise: the company will keep open Oundle's branch until at least October 2021 as a commitment to rural communities and towns where they are the last remaining bank.

The bank had announced in October that customers would no longer be able to withdraw cash from post offices from January 2020, which caused widespread upset.

Within a few weeks, the company stepped back from that

plan and pledged to maintain full post office services, including cash withdrawals, for three years.

Uppingham lost its Barclays branch earlier this year.

Barclays says that it is reluctant to close local branches due to the consequences and inconvenience to local areas, and Barclays is trialling means by which it can work with communities, including flexible opening hours, and new technologies such as video-banking.

Adam Rowse MD of Branch Based Banking at Barclays said: "We are constantly exploring new ways to evolve the role of the branch.

"By maintaining last in town or remote branches over the next two years, and working with the community, we hope to increase demand and keep these branches viable."

First Responders get behind the wheel

Gwyneth Angel

In September, Oundle Community First Responders were able to upgrade their emergency response vehicle to a new estate car.

Local businesses were approached to raise £3500 a year for three years, and four businesses agreed to donate £500 each for three years. The responders will need to continue raising the

sent to locations from which 999 has been called within a ten-mile radius of Oundle, and they treat the patient as much as possible. Mr Brackley said that a first responder's job involves "keeping the patient alive to the best of our ability until the paramedics arrive".

Becoming a first responder involves a four-day course to reach the first level, along with a refresher



With support from local business, First Responders were able to upgrade their car

remaining £1500 a year to support running the vehicle.

The support from local businesses came from: Barton Petroleum, Pete Barford Productions, Nene and Welland Oddfellows, CI Consultancy, Pest Professionals, and MPB Structures Ltd. The new car has more storage for their equipment and is more robust.

"The day after we got the car we had a call saying a farmer had been crushed by a cow," said Paul Brackley, a first responder. "We would not have been able to get up the roadway if it had not been for the new car."

The first response team are

course every year, and meetings every month. Mr Brackley has been involved for 14 years and is a level 3 first responder, along with four others in the team of eleven.

Andy Skinner had his first experience with first responders when his father had a serious fall. After calling for an ambulance, the first responders arrived in minutes. He wrote on the NextDoor platform: "At a time when the ambulance services nationwide are stretched to breaking point, with long waiting times for less serious emergencies, Oundle residents are very lucky indeed to have this service which certainly isn't commonplace for many people."

North Shoes introduces new clinic

Millie Trotter

Customers of award-winning footwear store North Shoes will have an extra spring in their step with the launch of a special clinic at the Oundle shop in the Market Place.

The NC Foot Health Clinic will be launched on Saturday 7 December by 30-year-old Ryan Clements, a qualified foot health practitioner. Mr Clements, who is manager of the North Shoes store at Bourne, qualified through the Maidenhead-based Smae Institute. He holds a diploma in advanced bio-mechanics from the College of Foot Health Practitioners and is also a member of the Society of Shoe Fitters.

The clinic will help people with all sorts of nail problems, plus corns, verrucas and hard skin and, using the latest 3D scanning technology, can also address foot pain and walking problems by supplying bespoke footwear inserts. It can also speed up referrals to specialists like physiotherapists.

"The launch of the clinic at Oundle means we will be an all-



round one-stop shop for customers, with our staff as qualified shoe fitters and the clinic there to address foot health and walking problems," Mr Clements said.

Mr Clements is also a runner with five marathons under his belt, and with his experienced know-how, offers the clinic service to sports clubs and fitness groups.

All treatments cost £30, a bio-mechanic 3D scan is £65 and bespoke footwear insoles can be prepared, if needed.

Clinics will be held on Thursdays and Fridays between 9am and 5pm and appointments can be booked in the shop or via their Facebook page.



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There's all to play for in Corby and East Northants election

Millie Trotter

This election is arguably the most important one of the last decade. Not only are voters choosing the next government, but they are taking a position on how Brexit will be handled. And from a local point of view, voters are deciding on which candidate can represent the constituency and act for the best interests of its

constituents.

Since 1983, the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency has swung back and forth between the Conservative and Labour parties.

In the 2017 election, the constituency had a high turnout of 73%. Conservative candidate Tom Pursglove won a majority by 2690 votes, a change of 6.5% for the Conservatives. The Labour

party also saw a 6.3% increase in the share of the vote, while UKIP's voter share decreased by 11.2% from the 2015 election. The Green Party won only 1% of the total vote.

This constituency voted in favour of leaving the European Union, with 64.2% of the vote.

This election has only three candidates on the ballot, with no representatives from the Green

or the Brexit Party, raising the question of who those supporters will vote for.

Will voters tick a box for their convictions, or vote strategically? Will voters consider the contentious national picture, or vote for a candidate to represent local issues?

With a choice between equally deserving candidates, it looks like many votes could be up for grabs.



Beth Miller grew up in Corby playing football for both Corby Cougars and Rushden & Diamonds, and values her early work experience in a local cafe, hair salon, warehouse and McDonalds. For the past six years, she has worked on policy development and campaigns in Parliament, with a recent focus on implementing post-crisis financial reforms at the Bank of England, including measures to improve governance of banks and more effective regulation of the financial services industry.

Tom Pursglove has represented Corby and East Northamptonshire since 2015. During his time in Westminster he worked for the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of State for Immigration at the Home Office in 2016, and was appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade. Mr Pursglove was also appointed as vice chairman of the Conservative Party for the Youth in 2018. In 2019 he was appointed Assistant Government Whip.

Originally from Romford, Essex, **Chris Stanbra** moved to Corby in 1981. Mr Stanbra is an accountant who has served as borough councillor and a county councillor in Corby. He was elected in 2009 to Northamptonshire County Council for the Oakley Division. As a member of the council he worked on a number of committees and worked closely on local issues, including climate change and library closures. In line with his party, he is committed to stopping Brexit.

Remembering Lady Brassey, president of Oundle Festival of Music and Drama

Millie Trotter

The long-serving president of the Oundle Festival of Music and Drama, Lady Caroline Brassey died aged 74 in August 2019.

Having joined the Oundle Festival of Music and Drama in 1991, she was the festival's longest serving president. In 2015 she received the 25 years Long Service Award from the Federation of Festivals.

Festival Chairman, Gwen Radcliffe said: "She showed great interest in the Festival. We will never forget her gracious manner and her enthusiasm."

Lady Brassey had an energetic



attitude and a real passion for helping others in the community. Her contributions and effort were appreciated by all those around her.

Known fondly as Midgie, she and her husband, Lord David Brassey, also opened their home in Apethorpe to Fishing for Forces, a charity that provides fishing therapy to war veterans.

As patron, she organised and welcomed a huge number of people to her home, and even placed a large selection of her glass and porcelain for sale to raise money for the charity.

The founder of Fishing for

Forces, Bill Howell said: "Lady Brassey's passing has left a void that will not easily be filled."

Mr Howell said: "She is sadly, but fondly missed and her kindness, friendliness to all she met and her support for Fishing for Forces will be remembered for a very long time."

Lady Brassey was the former Caroline Evill, third daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Godfrey Evill and Nesta Herbert.

In 1978 she married David Henry Brassey, 3rd Baron Brassey of Apethorpe, who died in 2015, and is survived by two daughters.

Beth Miller Labour



I grew up and went to school in Corby, and I would be immensely honoured to represent my home area as a Member of Parliament. I have worked at both the Bank of England and in Parliament, contributing to policy development on better banking regulation.

I understand the diversity within this constituency and the importance of representing all of its citizens and their interests in every town, village and hamlet. If elected, I would have an office in the constituency and hold surgeries across the area so that I could meet people face-to-face and seek to help them with problems that they wish to raise with me. I would commit to addressing all issues that are brought to me, whether communicated by email, letter or telephone.

I believe that it is essential that a local MP works closely with other tiers of government. The Tories drove Northamptonshire County Council to the point of bankruptcy, and the county is now planning for two new unitary authorities to be set up in its place. As the MP, I would maintain regular contact with councillors on the North Northamptonshire Unitary, as well as those on the county, district and borough councils before their abolition. I would also look to work closely with town and parish councils, like Oundle Town Council, especially on issues like house-building and maintaining a vibrant market place.

I believe that this General Election will set our country's direction for a generation, not just for five years. Boris Johnson's Brexit deal is bad for business, for employment and for the unity of the UK. If passed into law, it will create further uncertainty and risk the catastrophe of a No Deal outcome at the end of 2020.

At a time when our society is more divided than it has ever been in my lifetime, I believe that we need to reconsider what sort of place we want Britain to be. I want to work for a future in which everyone shares in the

prosperity we create, where our public services provide support and protection, especially for the most vulnerable. I believe that, ultimately, we all benefit from a more egalitarian society.

I will never forget the opportunities which were given to me by the last Labour government: the investment in my comprehensive school, and the Education Maintenance Allowance which allowed me to fund my studies. It worries me that so much progress in education has been destroyed in the last nine years under Conservative governments. I want to see nursery education properly funded to give every child a good start in life. Student finance must be reformed to lift the burden of debt from those in higher education. We must support innovation and change in our economy by providing for lifetime learning, giving people the means to acquire new and improved skills and knowledge throughout their careers. We must also invest in higher quality apprenticeships, ensuring that these effectively combine education and training to create the most productive workforce for the future.

Tom Pursglove Conservative



Despite the challenging national political climate, in the last four and a half years as a Member of Parliament, I have always worked tirelessly on local issues and am proud to have helped thousands of local people with all manner of problems and concerns in that time.

Throughout, I have been readily accessible, as I believe in getting out there, listening and campaigning hard on the issues that matter. It has been my practise to regularly knock on doors in the town and the surrounding villages throughout the year, not just at election time, and I have held my weekly advice surgeries across the constituency, including in Oundle at No 1 St Osyth's Lane, whose kind welcome and hospitality for me and those coming to see me, I have always greatly appreciated.

Amongst other things, I am particularly proud of the work I did in supporting Fairline employees when the company ran into trouble and it is terrific to see the successor company doing so well today and regularly taking on new staff. I fought with the community to get the emergency funding for the repairs to the North Bridge from the Government and I welcome that the works are now beginning. It was fantastic to open the new science block at Prince William School, which represents a significant investment in state of the art facilities to help broaden educational opportunities for our young people. I campaigned successfully alongside local people to keep the Corby Urgent Care Centre open and for East Northants residents to still be able to access first-class care as quickly as possible.

I have also been pleased to actively support the Refill Revolution shop at Oundle Wharf, and it was great to be at the launch of the Oundle Repair Café. Both are important local grassroots initiatives which prove we can all do our bit to do right by our environment at a local, national and international level.

Moreover, I have always stood up and been counted when it comes to the need to protect the rural character of Oundle. I have been vocal on the issue of unwanted over-development and have opposed the sale of green open spaces at Fletton Field and at Oundle Primary School on Cotterstock Road.

I am committed to working alongside other elected representatives to ensure the concerns are heard. In my view, local people should decide where development is acceptable.

Finally, I am determined to follow through on our clear commitments which tie up with the key priorities raised in the weekly conversations I have to put more police on the beat, invest more in our local NHS services, including boosting the availability of GP appointments, and further increase funding for our local schools to ensure that every young person has the very best start in life. As someone who went to a local comprehensive school, that matters to me enormously.

I am honoured to have been re-selected as the Conservative Party's candidate for the General Election, and I very much hope that Corby & East Northamptonshire residents will again put their trust in me and allow me the opportunity to continue to work hard and campaign on the issues that matter most to local people - listening, campaigning and delivering.

Chris Standbra Liberal Democrat



I want to Stop Brexit. If the country elects a majority Liberal Democrat government on December 12th, its first action will be to revoke Article 50 to Stop Brexit. In all other circumstances, I will support a People's Vote and campaign to Stop Brexit. As a nation we are better off in the EU. We are more prosperous, and safer and stronger because we are working together with our friends. I think it is right to pool some of our sovereignty to achieve this. The EU isn't perfect, but we can make it better by working from within.

We have a housing crisis. In Corby and East Northants there are over one thousand families on the waiting list for a council house. I want to see those council houses built, so that every family on the waiting list gets the chance to have a council house. In addition, whilst respecting the wishes of local people, we need to get housebuilders building, so that there are more homes to buy at a price homebuyers can afford, especially first time buyers.

We have to deal with the climate emergency. As a Northamptonshire county councillor, I proposed the motion that declared a climate emergency across Northamptonshire, and committed the council to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. In September I was one of many Liberal Democrat party members who overwhelmingly approved party policy that will mean minimum interim targets of 75% by 2030 and 93% by 2040.

Other issues that are a priority for me include: creating mental health services parity with physical health; maintaining international aid at the 0.7% of GDP we spend; ending the wait for benefits and treating people fairly; giving young people the opportunity to attend their nearest school and that every school is a good school; reforming our electoral system; ensuring that the new system of local government in Northamptonshire works properly - we can't set it up to fail.

Clear and unequivocal demands for change for a sustainable future

Gwyneth Angel

Scientists are warning that we cannot wait to take action to combat the climate change crisis. More than 11,000 scientists from 153 countries say that urgent change is needed in the way we live our lives, and it is the young generation that is joining them to insist on transformative change.

Sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg has emerged as a motivating leader for young people around the world. After taking solitary strike action outside her school, her convictions have mobilised a series of global school strikes which have taken place on Fridays in over 2000 cities worldwide. It is estimated that nearly 1.5 million young people from around the globe have participated in these events.

In September she spoke at the United Nations Climate Summit, confronting the inaction of the world's politicians with a striking condemnation: "How dare you?" Her emotional speech provoked a chain of reactions worldwide. While many were very positive, others were critical and even

personally abusive about her Asperger's syndrome, OCD and selective mutism. Her response: "That basically means I only speak when I think it's necessary. Now is one of those moments."

Some adults have attacked her for virtue signalling, histrionics and empty rhetoric and they accuse her of terrifying children with exaggerated claims about the threat to the planet's survival. However, Greta doggedly points to the science.

She is not wrong: research indicators show that climate change poses a very real threat of rising sea levels, increasing temperatures and extreme weather events.

Terrifying statistics are emerging. According to the UN Environment Programme annual report issued in November, global emissions must fall by 7.6% every year from now until 2030 to stay within the 1.5C cap on temperature rises necessary to prevent dire and disastrous consequences.

Meat consumption is one threatening contributor to climate change. A study last year by

researchers at Oxford University found that the meat and dairy industry produces sixty percent of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions and cows produce about forty percent of the annual methane budget. These factors, as well as others, such as deforestation and a rapidly increasing population, do not just damage our environment, but threaten the planet.

In November, scientists wrote in *BioScience*: "We declare clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency."

Political leaders and policymakers around the world have a responsibility to act through education, regulation and taxation to help change behaviour. On a local level there are many ways in which individuals can assess their habits and make changes that contribute to the global effort. Consuming less, reducing waste, and responsible recycling is easy, as is cutting down on meat consumption. Changing habits, such as simply switching off lights, walking or using public transport can all make a difference.

Another resident wrote angrily: "Our WHOLE street has been red tagged... THE WHOLE STREET IN OUNDLE... Not acceptable... MAYBE WE SHOULD ALL STOP PAYING OUR COUNCIL TAX."

One resident decided to call East Northamptonshire Council, who sent a council worker to inspect the uncollected bin. He explained the council's precautions. "The real issue with contaminated bins is the extra cost involved in sorting them."

The council replied to residents via Facebook, explaining that because of the extra sorting costs, contaminated bins would end up going to landfill, rather than recycling. "We appreciate it can be frustrating not having your bin emptied, but contamination of recycling can mean tonnes of waste that could be recycled, going into landfill."

The council explained that bins occasionally have to be checked. In May, the council carried out district-wide patrols for contamination and stated that in total 2259 bins were looked at, and 374 were rejected and received a red tag. They also explain that food waste was found to be the worst contaminant, with 47% of bins not emptied due to it. More surprisingly, they also found dirty nappies.

Charlotte Tompkins, Waste Service Manager at ENC, said that the green bin inspections are meant to provide an opportunity for the council to re-educate residents about what should and should not go in the bin.

While dirty nappies should be an obvious item not to put in the recycling bin, there is still confusion about what plastics and packaging you can actually recycle, and how can you avoid being "red-tagged."

The council has published a list of plastic items which can and cannot be recycled. The "No Thanks!" items include: all black food trays, pet food pouches, plastic bags, food packets for crisps, sweets, coffee, biscuits, pill blister packs, plant pots and cling film. Tetra Paks are also not recyclable by the ENC because the foil and plastic layers are too difficult to separate. Removing the thin plastic windows from paper envelopes is a small detail that helps to reduce contamination.

They also emphasise the importance of ensuring that all food has been removed, and items are rinsed before being recycled.

Mrs Tompkins said she uses the "scrunch test" to determine whether a plastic item is recyclable: squeeze it and if its springs back into shape, it is not recyclable; if it remains squashed, it can be recycled.

Supermarkets ramp up efforts to reduce plastic waste

Esme Kroese

Consumers are to object to the over-use of plastic packaging, and leading retailers are taking action.

The reasons for urgent action are compelling. About ten percent of the plastic we use ends up in the ocean. This means that per year there are nearly 700 billion plastic bottles or items in the sea.

In the North Pacific Ocean there is six times more plastic rubbish than plankton, which marine animals accidentally eat, thinking it is food. About 100,000 marine creatures die each year from getting caught in plastic, while over a million seabirds die from eating or getting caught in plastics.

In the middle of the North Pacific Gyre, an area called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is made up entirely of plastic. This plastic island is the size of India, Mexico, and Europe combined.

Not only do we use too much plastic packaging, but often the packaging is made up of a type of plastic that cannot be recycled.

Waitrose is one of the leading supermarkets to change its policies in response to this growing crisis and are committed to removing or redesigning plastic and single-use packaging.

One big problem in food packaging is the use of black trays, which are not recyclable because of the dark carbon pigments. Waitrose has swapped all black plastic lids on its own-brand products and

replaced them with clear recyclable plastics, saving over 17 tonnes of plastic landfill. They have also created a fibre-based tray as an alternative to the black plastic used in microwavable meals - a supermarket first.

They have removed plastic straws and cutlery from all their shops and cafes, and have replaced all single-use fruit and veg bags and carrier bags with a home compostable alternative. By Christmas 2020, their own-label cards, wraps, crackers, tags, flowers and plants will be glitter-free.

Waitrose is currently conducting a trial called Waitrose Unpacked in two shops where they have removed packaging from a range of products and introduced features such as a dedicated refillable zone with dispensers for dried products, frozen 'pick and mix', coffee, wine and beer refills, as well as detergent and washing up liquid refillables.

More than ninety percent of the customers that Waitrose surveyed said they would continue to shop Unpacked, and Waitrose plans to launch Unpacked in two further shops from November.

At Oundle's Waitrose, the shop encourages customers to bring in their own refillable containers to the deli and fish counters to help reduce single-use plastic. Few people have taken up this option so far, but as the notion of using refillable containers becomes more mainstream, shoppers will find

that the practice is part of their shopping routine.

Oundle's other supermarket, The Co-operative has also introduced new policies to reduce plastic waste. They have been carrying non-plastic cotton buds for eleven years, have banned use of micro-beads in own products and eliminated plastic straws. They have removed polystyrene disks from pizza bases, and replaced plastic packaging on some ready meals with a card tray and sleeve or a foil tray and sleeve.

With an increase of recyclable packaging from forty-six percent to seventy-four percent, almost three-quarters of the Co-op's packaging is now recyclable.

Can your waste be recycled?

Gwyneth Angel

There is not only an increasing momentum these days to reduce our use of plastic, but also concern about recycling what we do use. There remains, however, a lot of confusion about what sort of plastics are actually recyclable.

In July residents of Oundle took to Facebook to express their irritation when their green top bins were given a 'red tag' and not emptied. One resident remarked, "It's a joke, and not a very funny one."

Keep on giving after Christmas with the Tree-cycle charity scheme

Alice Blackmore

Wondering what to do with your Christmas trees this year after the festivities are over? One solution is Sue Ryder Thorpe Hall Hospice's charity tree-cycling scheme. This is a way for people to recycle Christmas trees in an environmentally friendly way while raising funds for the charity.



Sue Ryder Thorpe Hall Hospice and Nene Valley Tree Services launch this year's charity Tree-Cycling scheme.

This scheme, which was first launched by Nene Valley Tree Services last year, raised over £400 for the hospice. This year, the service is collecting Christmas trees from the 4th to 11th January.

In return for a £10 donation, the

trees are collected from the curb side and then chipped into mulch for use in the gardens of Sue Ryder Thorpe Hall Hospice and at farms near Oundle.

Participation in the scheme not only supports people in vital need of hospice care, but also reduces landfill and helps local farms.

"Every tree that is collected and every donation that is given will help our Sue Ryder nurses, care teams and support staff be there when it matters," said Lucy Stone from Nene Valley Tree Services.

"We are delighted to be able to raise funds for Sue Ryder again this year, and do something to benefit the community as a whole. This is a green, practical and ethical solution to the common problem of what to do with your tree after Christmas and donations will go towards ensuring people will get the care they need."

Christmas tree collection can be booked at www.sueryder.org/ThorpeTreecycling.

Council introduces electronic waste collection

Meagan Iu

The East Northamptonshire's Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection pilot scheme began in September in Raunds and was planned to run until the end of 2019. According to the council, if this trial was successful, the scheme would be rolled out across the district.

According to Charlotte Tompkins, the ENC Waste Service Manager, very early on the trial was shown to be a success, and WEEE collection will be extended



across the district.

The council judged the amounts collected, how many households participated and their feedback on the scheme's usefulness. It also needed to determine whether it would impact on the time to complete the regular collection rounds, the profile of tonnages collected over time and whether the capacity provided for the storage of the material on the collection vehicle would be sufficient.

Residents will soon be able to leave their electronic waste in bags or boxes alongside their bins for collection.

The council will collect a wide variety of items alongside the normal weekly pick-up: electrical items such as hairdryers, small kitchen appliances such as toasters and kettles, electronics such as DVD players and phones, small electrical DIY tools and electronic toys and chargers.

The collected material will be sent to a UK facility that will break the items down into the component materials with magnetic and electric currents, and will then be sent on for recycling into new products; the plastics will be sorted into the different types by eddy current separator, near infra-red and other technologies.

East Northamptonshire Council said they do not receive any income from the sale of materials of this scheme. "As a council, we are committed to helping residents with their recycling in East Northamptonshire. With a growing number of electrical items in households due to technologies constantly changing, this trial is the next step in ensuring that as many items as possible are sent to recycling facilities," said Steven North, Leader of East Northamptonshire Council.

Donate old phones to Oxfam for recycling

Meagan Iu

Have you replaced your phone, but do not know what to do with your old one?

Most people upgrade their phones every two years and stash the old ones in their drawers. According to a survey conducted by the Royal Society of Chemistry, there are about 40 million pieces of technology hidden in drawers all over the UK.

Mobile phones contain many valuable materials and components, 80% of which can be recycled. Smart phones contain valuable scarce elements from mines, like gold, silver, copper, indium, tantalum, palladium and platinum. The metal, indium, is used to make conductive coating for sensitive touch screens and can also be used to make solar panels, while tantalum can be used in a variety of vital medical devices.

The UN estimates around £7 billion worth of gold is currently lying in landfills worldwide and the total value of recoverable parts could be as high as £34 billion.

In the UK alone we are responsible for around 1.5 million tonnes of electronic waste, and only recycle around 17 per cent of this. The Environmental Audit Committee says that the UK is producing 24.9kg of e-waste per person, higher than the EU average

of 17.7kg.

Without proper recycling, landfills become toxic mines of dangerous substances, which can be hazardous to human health and the environment, as they start contaminating soil, polluting water sources and entering food supply chains. Heavy metals, ozone depleting chemicals and lead glass will decompose in landfills which can cause serious environmental problems in the future.

Charities such as Oxfam offer a recycling scheme where they turn every mobile phone into cash to buy supplies for impoverished communities, such as water tanks, wells, tools, seeds, school books and more. This applies to iPods and tablets as well, which can be refurbished, repackaged and reused, or taken apart into separate components by specialist recyclers to be reused in the industry.

Their recycling partner company, CMR, repair, recycle or recondition the phones that are donated and also wipe them clean of all data including names and numbers that are stored on the phones. Working phones are given a new life, and are sold abroad; some even end up in developing countries and can help communication in areas where landlines do not exist.

You can donate up to five phones to the Oxfam shop in Oundle. Or visit the Fonebank website to find out the value of your unwanted mobile, and how to trade it in for cash and make a donation to Oxfam at the same time.

Dental products waste can now be recycled

Meagan Iu

Oundle Waste Less, an environmental conservation organisation, has joined the Colgate Oral Care Recycling Scheme, a programme organised by TerraCycle. Refill Revolution at Oundle Wharf and Oundle Library are the designated drop-off locations for dental recycling.

The accepted items to be recycled include any brands of toothpaste tubes and caps, plastic toothbrushes and any of their outer packaging, empty floss containers and their outer packaging, electric and battery toothbrush heads only, and any toothpaste cartons. All excess product must be removed from the tubes before recycling.

TerraCycle is an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling typically hard-to-recycle waste. They offer a range of free programmes that are funded by conscientious companies, as well

as recycling solutions available for purchase for almost every form of waste. By volume, TerraCycle recycles over 97% of the waste that they collect.

Once the waste is collected, the oral care products and packaging are separated by polymer type, cleaned, and extruded into plastic pellets to make new recycled products. TerraCycle uses only circular methods (reuse, upcycling or recycling) for repurposing the waste collected through their programmes.

TerraCycle will award points based on the weight of the waste collected, which can be redeemed by Transition Oundle into financial donations to participating organisations such as local schools. Transition Oundle is a non-profit organisation to help local residents take small practical steps towards lower carbon living, by running projects which focus on transport, energy, food, work and lifestyle.

Exploring new ways to live with Refill, Repair and Restore

Restore

A new wellness centre at the Wharf in Oundle has opened opportunities for people to explore holistic pathways to better health and wellbeing. The Restore Wellness Centre has a suite of well-designed rooms, with a full programme of fitness classes, and a roster of therapists offering consultations.

The centre is run by Fi Phillips and Francis Leader who both grew up in Oundle, and later practised law. They met after returning to the local area to raise their young children and found they shared interests in health and wellbeing, as well as ambitions for a wellness centre that would provide an opportunity to do something local and contribute to the community.

"I had always had a dream of setting up a studio space. Frances has focused more on the shop side, and the consultation rooms to bring in therapists," said Ms Phillips, who teaches yoga.

Ms Leader has a particular interest in gut health and makes fermented foods such as

sauerkraut, kombucha and kimchi, which have many reported health benefits, such as boosting immunity and improving digestion.

"Fermented foods balance out the bacteria in your gut and have lots of related benefits toward making you feel well," she said.

The fitness programme includes a wide range of yoga sessions for all abilities and preferred styles, including sessions for children and teens, alongside strength and conditioning classes.

Practice services include one-on-one sessions with qualified practitioners offering reflexology, reiki and nutritional therapy, including Lorisian food intolerance and Genova Diagnostics testing. A medical herbalist is available to consult on metabolic and stress-related disorders as well as hormone-related conditions.

The therapists schedule consultations during the week, and classes run throughout the day with flexible payment plans. The space at Restore is also a centre for workshops and events, with forthcoming sessions to include meditation sessions, kirtan and choir singing.



Fi Phillips and Frances Leader have partnered to open new wellness centre

Refill

continued from page 1

household cleaning liquids. In addition to these refillable goods, carefully sourced sustainable items are available to buy, such as bamboo cutlery and toothbrushes, cotton produce bags, washable nappies, washing up items made from coconut husk.

In most cases their prices are equal to the branded products that can be bought in the supermarkets; in some cases they are cheaper, in some cases they are more expensive. "Our products are carefully sourced and have good credentials. We invite our customers to question their contents, source, prove-

nance and production and we'll do our best to answer."

The supply system also works hand-in-hand with the refill ethos. The products are supplied in a circular packaging system where the containers are reused and go back to suppliers to be refilled. Those that cannot be refilled go back to suppliers to be recycled.

Mrs Sherwin said: "Large bags and sacks, and cardboard boxes are reused until we can't squeeze any more life out of them."

The Oundle Refill Revolution team want to make it clear that they aren't "radical zero-waste lifestyle promoters".

Mrs Sherwin said: "We provide an alternative way of shopping, and do our best to walk the talk,

Repair

Zac Atkinson

Repair Cafes have burst onto the community scene, tackling our throwaway culture, and now there is one right here in Oundle, organised by local environmental group, Transition Oundle, as part of their National Lottery funded Oundle Waste Less project.



Volunteers at the repair cafe work on the electrics of a broken iron

Repair Cafés are community events that match people who need stuff fixed with people who like fixing things. The international repair café movement kicked off in Amsterdam, and has now grown to over a thousand worldwide, with more than 115 in Britain. They are completely non-commercial, and their aim is simply to encourage people to consider getting items repaired before throwing them out so as to reduce waste and extend a product's use.

"Do you have something that needs fixing? Perhaps a CD player, coffee machine, pair of jeans, favourite necklace, bicycle, much loved toy...don't bin it - bring it along and we will do our best to fix it while you watch/help!" said Andrea Wood.

The Cafes are run by local

volunteers who are skilled at repairing household goods. People can bring items such as bikes, clothing, electronic appliances and toys. Repairers will provide common tools like screws without charge, but if an item needs a spare part, it can be ordered and brought to the next café for repair.

At the most recent Café in November, forty-two people booked a slot to have items

repaired, ranging from a food mixer, digital clock and bedside lamp to necklace clasps and new coat buttons.

While there are no guarantees, the repairers will give it their best effort, and are even keen to help teach people how to do a repair themselves.

The Repair Café has a booking system to allocate time slots with a suitable repairer; or one can wait with a cup of tea until a repairer becomes free.

Email the Repair Café organisers at repaircafe@transitionoundle.org.uk with a short description of the item, and what is wrong with it.

Oundle's Repair Cafes take place at Fletton House on Glapthorn Road. The next session is planned to coincide with a national day for Repair Cafes on February 15.

and would prefer that many people think about the impact of their purchases, rather than Refill Revolution providing the solution to the very conscientious few.

"Reducing unnecessary waste is a small piece in the whole environmental jigsaw, but we hope that Refill Revolution provides a place where people can start to figure out some of the puzzle."

The store has also provided an opportunity for customers to share conversations about green initiatives and has allowed other small, like-minded businesses to promote their services. The Refill Revolution team have started to share their business space with Restore, a new wellness centre at Oundle Wharf that opened in November.

Refill Revolution is open in Oundle on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from 9am to 4pm.



Letting wildlife flourish in verges

Esme Kroese

While some people complain that the Highways department does not mow roadside verges enough, there is a growing lobby to let the grass grow and actively manage wild growth by the sides of roads in order to encourage insect populations. Oundle is one community that is initiating a trial for a new approach to the management of roadside verges.

There is no doubt that the world's insect population is in jeopardy, with forty percent of insect species in decline and over a third of the insect population endangered. The speed of the rate of extinction of insects is more than eight times higher than that of any other mammals, birds or reptiles. The total mass of insects has been reduced by two and a half percent a year, and some sources state they could possibly have vanished by the end of the century.

There has been a ninety-eight percent fall in ground insects over the last 30 years due to insecticides containing neonicotinoids and fipronil which damage and sterilise the soil and kill grubs, discouraging further plant growth.

Bees are at the forefront of environmental concerns about

declining insect populations. In the UK, one-third of the bee population has disappeared in the last ten years.

Planting wildflowers on verges provides a habitat for bees and insects to feed off and pollinate the plants, helping the local plant population while increasing the population of the insects themselves. Insects help keep the soil healthy, recycle materials and control pests. Without them, whole ecosystems could be drastically impacted.

The Bee Friendly Trust is one organisation that transforms neglected urban spaces to create a bee-friendly or insect-friendly habitat. They have built flower beds in many train stations along the London North Eastern Railway, including one at the Peterborough station. Found at the site of the old coffee shop, it is a cross-shaped planter with popular pollinator-friendly plants such as rosemary and lavender sourced from Tandee Nursery, in Barnwell.

Oundle Town Council is pursuing a plan to trial wildflower planting at the recreation ground on New Road. Led by Councillor Ian Clark, they will follow the Plant Life's Management Guidelines, for

advice about management of the growth cycles.

In January, Mr Clark plans to mark off around six to ten trial areas of two metres by two metres

Phil Sewter is one resident who is keen to work with the council to promote wild verges, and has applied for free wildflower seeds for public areas from Kew Garden.



A roundabout near Peterborough has patches of unmown areas planted with flowers that encourage insect populations

wide around the fence line of the recreation ground. In February the plots will be dug over and raked to create level seed beds. The plots will lie dormant for around six weeks while they are monitored for growth of perpetual weeds, and the seeds will be planted in March or April. The suggested seed mix has a high density of yellow rattle which Mr Clark believes is important to keep grass under control.

Cllr Clark hopes that through this initiative, the council can encourage more volunteers to help maintain wildflower areas.

Along with the many benefits for wildlife, communities who make similar initiatives to manage wildflower verges and urban spaces say that it improves the area, and helps to also bring people together and encourage greater awareness of our natural environment.

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VicsGigs got the beat

Meagan Iu

A new initiative is aiming to put Oundle on the map for live rock music performances. VicsGigs was created by Anth Hodson-Curran and Bob Cheatham, who both share a love of live music and an ambition to bring some excitement to Oundle's night life.

Mr Cheatham retired a couple years ago and moved to Oundle, and was disappointed that there was no live music to listen to. He has friends and colleagues who organise music gigs in Leicester and Corby, and thought it would be fun to join in and promote live music around town. He first punted the idea of live music on Facebook to see whether there was an audience for it, and that is where he met Anth, who had also recently retired to Oundle, and shared his love of music.

They decided to use the Queen Victoria Hall as their live music venue, and have promoted their programme under the name of VicsGigs.

"It says fun and it says music. We try to give people more of an option in Oundle to do things in town, and the stuff that Bob has done so far and that we've got planned really start to build a range of music, stuff with different taste. We kind of want to bring modern progressive rock into town and build up another venue for bands," said Mr Hodson-Curran.

They feel that Oundle should be a good fit for a new music scene. "Oundle has got a funny little kind of left field music history to build on, with Billy Bragg having lived locally and back in the 70s the then infamous Doctors of Madness played at Oundle School," says Anth.

The drummer Ginger Baker was a familiar sight for a short while

in the 1970s, and Oundle School hosted progressive rock band Van Der Graaf Generator in 1972, and the 'industrial' band, Throbbing Gristle in 1980.

There used to be hundreds of small clubs, halls and pubs that hosted music, and most bands built their success touring across the country and playing at small venues. But with a third of small music venues in the UK closing down in the last decade due to noise objections and increasing costs of overheads, such as business rates, there are fewer platforms from which bands can build a reputation and progress to bigger venues and festivals.

The vision for VicGigs is to break that trend. They are not in it to make money – and there is a good chance they could lose money - they are just trying to establish a new venue for bands. The dream is to get VicsGigs recognised around the country and attract a momentum for music of all different styles, starting with progressive rock, and diversifying in the future, with a following from people in the local area and nationally.

When Mr Cheatham first presented the idea on social media, the response from Oundle residents was very enthusiastic.

"But actually turning that into real people turning up is a challenge. My strategy is to get some regular events happening almost once a month at least, and we're well on the way for that next year."

They have been to a lot of gigs in the past, and have got quite a few connections, which has enabled them to book some well-known progressive rock bands.

Their first gig in September featured a band from Corby, The

Contenders, plus Jake Cunnington, a young local singer-songwriter.

They are still finding their feet for what sort of audience they can build on from the residents of Oundle and beyond. "The first gig was almost like a practice gig to work out what you have to do, because I didn't have a clue to be honest. There were a few from Oundle but there weren't as many as the responses on Facebook," said Mr Cheatham.

For their November gig they

nothing to do in Oundle at night. "We're trying to find stuff for people to do, to make a Friday or a Saturday night out."

The music scene has always built on its grassroots origins, but it needs the small venues to thrive. VicsGigs is hoping to be that much-needed stepping stone.

In the coming year, their programme begins on January 24th with Pandamoanium, winners of the 2018 Visual Radio Arts poll, and finalists in the Herne Bay Rocks



Bob Cheatham and Anth Hodson-Curran are bringing a music scene to Oundle

used the back room at the Ship just to try a different venue for heavier 70s rock covers with Eight Foot Under, a tribute band to classic 70s rock music, playing a selection of songs and bands from AC/DC to ZZ Top, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, and Led Zeppelin.

"We were playing it quite safe, using a tribute band theme, because for whatever reason people want to go see something more familiar than something entirely new. And it just helps us get an idea of what people are prepared to pay for some live music a five-minute walk from where they live," said Mr Cheatham.

Mr Hodson-Curran noted that some people in the Oundle Chatter group have discussed how there is

2019 competition.

Upcoming shows at the Queen Victoria Hall include Lifesigns, a big progressive rock band, on March 13th; Letz Zep, Europe's official number one Led Zeppelin tribute act, will perform on May 29th; a fantastic Prog double header on June 26th featuring The Gift, a symphonic progressive rock band based in London, and the John Hackett Band, created by the brother of Steve Hackett, the lead guitarist of progressive rock band Genesis; the Pure Floyd Show, a Pink Floyd tribute band based in South Wales, will perform on October 17th.

Information about their programme is available on the VicsGigs Facebook page.



Back when "Hellraiser" Ginger Baker came to town

Millie Trotter

The death of drummer Ginger Baker in October 2019 was covered at length by national newspapers, and the news sparked memories of him by people who encountered him when he lived in Polebrook in the 1970s.

Known for his outstanding drumming skills, fiery temper and a fondness for polo, Mr Baker's life as a rock star was not short of corruption, drugs, and scandal. In his autobiography, *Hellraiser*, he breathlessly detailed the numerous scams he claimed to have been the victim of, and the chaos of his professional and personal life. However, he fondly reminisced about his time in Polebrook and Ashton from 1977-78, where he developed his love for polo, horses and the countryside.

He became involved with polo while recording in Nigeria, and despite no previous experience with horses, it soon became an all-consuming, expensive obsession. He was introduced to the area by his friend, Kevin Slavin, and kept his horses on the Ashton Wold estate, where he was encouraged by Miriam Rothschild to set up a polo club. One of the most prestigious matches that he organised was the

Robert Stigwood Challenge Cup, but like many events in his life, chaos and mismanagement caused it to be cancelled.

The most amusing anecdote in *Hellraiser* about his time in Polebrook is his description of accidentally finding himself in the Fitzwilliam Hunt. "One day when I was out riding on my young horse Project I met with what seemed like a hundred people on horseback all congregated outside the Chequered Skipper pub in Ashton Wold. I was invited to join the hunt, even though, dressed as I was in jeans and an anorak, this was by no means the correct attire. It seemed churlish to refuse, so I joined them, stayed well back and my horse jumped everything. I was in the middle of a bunch of people saying it was 'Jolly nice, pip, pip', hurtling along the tarmac roads to the sound of the hunting horn; then galloping over the plough. We caught a fox on the estate, which can't have gone down well with Miriam or her sister – they loved foxes."

Of those who remembered him, some disapprovingly recalled his reputation for outrageousness. "He was not the most pleasant person I have ever met. Rude, arrogant, ignorant and some of the hangers-

on were even worse."

Mr Baker lived large and was not only battling drug addiction at the time, but he overstretched himself buying, selling and keeping horses, and had dodgy dealings with mobsters and stolen polo horses. His Ashton polo club adventure was short-lived. The last

was no way I could pay anyone," he wrote.

For those to whom he did not owe money, Mr Baker, with his "mucky boots", was "a legend". Jon Pywell said: "I remember riding through Oundle on me moped and seeing a strange thin bloke with red hair walking through town



The Robert Stigwood Challenge Cup was never held

straw was when he fell out with Charles Lane, Lady Rothschild's son, about his horses' loss at the Blue Coat Cup. In 1978 he abandoned the project.

"My polo dream had gone to pieces and I left Polebrook owing money left, right and centre. There

wearing purple cord flares and a fur waistcoat. It was Ginger - totally out of place but cool as f***. I did a double take. I'd never seen nowt like him before, especially not in a sleepy Northamptonshire market town! Top man and a fantastic drummer! RIP Ginger!"

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Customer service is key to Colemans' success

Millie Trotter

Colemans stationers and the Oundle Bookshop are two irreplaceable shops in Oundle.

The Coleman family have been running their chain of stationery shops in Northamptonshire for 50 years. John Coleman started as a newsagent in Higham Ferrers in 1969, and the family lived at the back of the shop. He sold that business, and set up selling business machines and typewriters before expanding into office supplies. They now have shops in fourteen towns.

When Colemans first arrived in Oundle in 2002, it took over the premises of King's on New Street, which had been a stationers and printers for over one hundred years. Colemans of Oundle now caters for all office-related needs, back-to-school stationery, as well as fine art and craft supplies. The shop is so packed with such a variety of stock, there is literally something for everyone, along with the friendliest staff, who are always on hand to help.

Down the street in the Market Place, is the Oundle Bookshop. The beautiful Georgian building is an iconic feature in the Market Place. It has been a bookshop since 1923, and was acquired by Colemans in 2010.

There is a huge selection of

books surrounding a comfortable seating area where the idea of "try before buy" is encouraged.

The shop is also a busy hub promoting local authors. Joey Patterson-Gordon, who is the managing director of the business

large shops like Waterstones have hit local bookshops, the Oundle Bookshop remains a well-supported and successful business because of its focus on customer service and careful planning. Ms Patterson-Gordon said: "We've



Joey Patterson-Gordon manages a busy operation across Northamptonshire

and daughter of Mr Coleman said: "We like to support local authors who may not have the resources to publicise themselves elsewhere, so we like to offer publicity for them."

While competition from online services like Amazon and

had to be very focused on what we're good at, and not diversify too much." It is a brand that people have come to know and trust in the county.

She highlighted the main difference between buying books

from a local bookshop, and buying them online. "When you buy something off the internet, you've got to know exactly what you're looking for. But the joy of coming to a bookshop is that you can browse and pick books up you've never heard of."

But the key to success when running a small business, she said, is to be "very visible, absolutely love what you do, and love serving customers."

Mr Coleman, Ms Patterson-Gordon and their team clearly have a passion for good customer service and it is clear to see that there is a loyal clientele for their shops. Ms Patterson-Gordon agreed. "We are very lucky in this town that we have a loyal customer base."

"His customers are his life and blood," said Ms Patterson-Gordon about her father, who can often be seen in the town in his leather apron from his picture framing work.

That is a quality about the Colemans' shops that their customers recognise and appreciate. Many shoppers in Oundle do not go to the bookshop just to buy a book. The welcoming environment means they can just browse and also socialise with other people.

Ms Patterson-Gordon said: "Once the socialisation of retail disappears, a piece of the community and community spirit disappears with it."

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A trip to Kikisams never gets old for generations of children and parents

Alice Blackmore

For children growing up in Oundle over the last 20 and more years, Kikisams has long been a favourite shop filled with the magic of playtime, brimming with toys to cherish. For their parents, it has been a much needed emporium for hard-to-find quality children's clothes.

When Chandrika Swann moved to Oundle in 1994, there were no shops with children's clothes, and she discovered the need for one when her son was born a year later. Before long, she decided to open Kikisams on West Street.

Although Mrs Swann had worked part-time in retail while at school, and had run a jewellery shop for three years during her 20s, working with children's wear was new.

Her colleague, Niki Hodgson, began working with her when they met in the shop and became friends fifteen years ago. Mrs Hodgson used to shop for clothes for her own children in Kikisams. She now buys clothes at Kikisams for her grandchildren.

"The business is based around unique, good quality clothing," Mrs Swann said. The shop opened

in one room with designer baby clothing brands, such as Elle, Levi's and Ralph Lauren. When Timberland launched its baby clothing brand in 1997, it proved so popular that people were "buying it out the box".



Chandrika Swann's shop, Kikisams, introduced good quality children's clothes and toys to Oundle

Running a business over the long-term means Kikisams has evolved over the years. Mrs Swann follows the trends and keeps an

eye on her changing customer base and their shopping preferences. She spends a lot of time going to exhibitions and shows to source the latest styles. Her aim is to be "a little different from the high street shops".

extends from play and party wear for infants to young teens for both boys and girls.

Early success encouraged her to stock traditional wooden toys and Ty beanie babies, which helped her grow her business, and now the three rooms of her shop overflow with a huge selection of toys.

One of the most popular brands is TOPModel, a range of creative materials for anyone interested in fashion and styling. It has proven to be so popular that she has to order new stock at least once a month.

But the pleasure of owning a boutique shop is not only in choosing her stock, but in the relationships she has built over the years with her customers. She said: "I enjoy talking with customers, finding out what they need."

Having a small shop is a virtue, because she can pack it with quality stock. "I have customers that have travelled from Scotland, France, Germany, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Oakham, because it's a unique shop."

Kikisams is a firm favourite for a new generation of parents who have fond memories of being in the same shop as a child, and who now return to treat their own children.

New boys in town offer a First Class cut and shave

Ben Clayden

While there is plenty of choice for women who use hair and beauty services in Oundle, now men have a new destination for traditional men's grooming.

were teenagers. Customer care is their first concern. "We always worry about how we can make our customers feel comfortable," the manager Hilmi Kutlubay said.

Lots of barbers can provide a

trendy cuts such as the popular skin fade cut, they offer wet shaves, beard styling, eyebrow threading and nose and ear waxing.

"It's different to the traditional English way," he explained.

Originally from Turkey, they set up their first shop in Market Harborough. The services of Turkish barbers have a proven demand across the country, and the family have found there is a market to expand their own business. The brothers visited Oundle for a day and thought it was a lovely town. Despite the competition of other barbers, they thought they could offer something different.

Some might question the introduction of a new salon to what seems a crowded market place, but in the United Kingdom, barbershops are the fastest growing retail business. In the United States, the National Association of Barber Boards estimates that the industry will be worth \$26 billion by 2020.

The world of men's grooming is growing, and people are more innovative and creative about ways to improve haircare for men. It has become part of a general movement for men to be more aware of their self-care and wellness, promoted

by famous role models such as David Beckham who features in advertising for grooming products on a global scale.

Men are increasingly taking more pride in looking after themselves. Brazilian blow-dries for men are up by two-hundred percent, waxing up by eight-five percent. According to the app Treatwell, which is an online booking platform for beauty and hair in Europe, twenty-five percent of men have regular manicure appointments.



Manager Hilmi Kutlubay and his brother Jela with George, who already considers himself a regular customer

First Class Turkish Barbers is a new family-run barbers in the Market Place, offering a full service menu.

The shop is staffed by two brothers and their cousin who have all been cutting hair since they

good cut, but they provide more than a haircut. First Class pampers customers with the services of a traditional Turkish barber.

Customers are welcomed with a hot drink, and are treated to massages and hot towels. In addition to



First Class offers a great barber experience, one which comes highly recommended by young and old, and early reviews have been entirely positive. "Cracking bunch of guys, really good cut and shave, would recommend," wrote Alex James on Facebook.

The perils of pampering pets



Oundle dog owners are sensible about their pets. Maria Earl at Leo's in Oundle said she stocked Pawsecco last year, but no one wanted it. Her shop focuses on stocking healthy options, such as super premium, grain-free foods.

Esme Kroese

Many people treat their pets as a member of their family, and this love is demonstrated by how much we spend on them.

Consumer spending on pets and related products rose from £2.5 million in 2005 to £4.9 million in 2018, with much of it spent on specialty food for dogs, such as dog ice cream made by companies such as Waggy Doggy Doodahs.

Another luxury trend is alcohol substitutes for pets. For example, Pawsecco is a safe pet version of rose wine for your pampered pet. Woof & Brew makes 'champaws', a champagne substitute for dogs and cats.

However, in our urge to pamper our pets, could we be endangering their health by mistake through exposure to toxic foods? Research shows that dogs are allergic to many different common foods.

For example, chocolate contains a chemical called theobromine which is similar to caffeine, and can have toxic effects on dogs such as agitation, hyper-excitability, tremors convulsions and heart disturbances.

Grapes, raisins and sultanas also are linked to kidney failure, while onions have a toxicity that causes lethargy, elevated heart and respirator rates, pale gums and even physical collapse.

Garlic consumed in large amounts can also cause these symptoms for some dogs.

Other foods that make dogs ill are macadamia nuts, which within twelve hours of digestion can cause dogs to experience weakness, depression, tremors, vomiting and an increased body temperature, with symptoms lasting up to 48

hours. Mouldy food also makes dogs ill with mouldy bread and nuts containing lots of toxins.

Dairy products can be especially sickening as dog's don't have significant amounts of the enzyme lactase that breaks down lactose in milk, which means that feeding a dog dairy products can cause diarrhoea and other stomach problems.

Yeast dough is also dangerous for canine consumption as it can cause gas to accumulate in your dog's digestive system and lead it to expand and rise which can cause stomach or intestine blockages and is extremely painful for your pet.

Corn on the cob also creates intestine blockages for dogs as it is not easily digested by them and can cause vomiting, loss of appetite, absence of faeces and a sore stomach.

Bones can be dangerous to dogs if uncooked and easily splintered so make sure if you give your dog a bone for a treat that it is sturdy, cooked and unlikely to splinter in your dog's mouth. For this reason, chicken bones should not be given to dogs.

Another very dangerous food for dogs to consume is blue cheese, which as a dairy product is already difficult for dogs to digest. It also contains dangerous substances called roquefortine C which can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and tremors, twitching, seizures and high temperatures if consumed in large doses.

Respected veterinary online sites and services state that if your dog shows any of these signs of exposure to toxic foods, you should seek emergency veterinary advice.

Watch out for the hedgehogs

Esme Kroese

Winter bonfires provide a festive opportunity to gather family and friends round, but they are also a death-trap for our spiky garden friend, the hedgehog.

Hedgehogs are already in

as there could be a hedgehog underneath."

Some large bonfires need a length of time to be built in advance and would be very hard to move. One preventive solution is to place chicken wire around the bottom of



serious decline due to the reduction of their habitats by farming and development; we have lost half the hedgehog population in the last two decades. To avoid contributing to their decline, we can be more aware of the dangers that we create for them.

Bonfire piles create an ideal habitat for hedgehogs, and the risk is that they will crawl into the attractive, dark recesses of the bonfire material.

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society says: "If material is stored on open ground in advance having a bonfire, it's crucial to dismantle it and move it to another spot just before lighting. Ensure it's moved to clear ground – not even on top of a pile of leaves,

the bonfire right after construction to prevent a hedgehog from burrowing in.

What more can we do for hedgehogs to make sure their population does not decline further?

To help hedgehogs prepare for their hibernation season in the winter, set out dog or cat food and water so they can build up their fat reserves to survive the winter. Keep gardens safe by avoiding use of slug pellets, and create a habitat, such as a wild corner or a small shelter for them to nest in.

In the 1950s, there were an estimated 3.5 million hedgehogs in Britain. Population numbers are estimated to have since declined by more than half.



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New Oundle School Sports Centre makes preparations for launch

It will not be long before the cranes are dismantled and the hoardings removed to reveal the new Oundle School Sports Centre. Opening in Spring 2020, the new Sports Centre will offer first-class facilities for health and fitness and swimming. The existing website (www.oundlesportscentre.co.uk) will be revamped on 16 December, giving full details of membership packages, facilities and activities available.

In preparation for the opening, members of the Sports Centre's senior management team have been busy lining up staff to work across a busy programming schedule, including duty managers, receptionists, lifeguards, fitness and class instructors.

For regular users of the Sports Centre, the new senior management will be on hand to keep the operation working seamlessly.

The new Activities Manager is Beth Goodman who lives in Bourne. She has worked in the leisure industry in a variety of roles, beginning with lifeguarding, fitness and then moving into management. A keen sportswoman, Beth was ranked fifth as a competitive swimmer in Lincolnshire. She currently plays football for Ketton Ladies FC, and has played for Leicester

City Women FC and Notts County Women's FC Super league.

Ed Tate will already be familiar to many as he has worked at the Oundle pool for nearly 14 years and now moves to the role of Operations Manager. He lives in Higham Ferrers and has worked in the leisure industry since the age of 16. A club captain and competitive swimmer when younger, he completed the challenge of swimming the Channel in 2013. He has now hung up his trunks to spend time with his family and four-year-old twins.

Alexis Gray lives in Oakham and brings over 15 years' experience to the role of Front of House Manager, ten of which she spent at Uppingham School Sports Centre. Alexis also has knowledge in various areas of the industry including fitness and coaching. She has gained her black belt in kickboxing and has competed on the continuous circuit for many years. She now trains and coaches in the world of Crossfit, competing occasionally.

In advance of the launch of the new Sports Centre's fitness programme which will ultimately have over 30 weekly classes, there will be a schedule of taster classes available to try out at The Acre (Oundle School's current sports centre), starting in January.

Community awards for sporting contributions

Millie Trotter

More than one hundred and fifty sporting stars and physical activity champions from across East Northamptonshire attended the very first district-wide Sports and Physical Activity Awards ceremony on 17 October to celebrate the sporting achievements of people of all ages and abilities.

The sporting awards recognised individuals and clubs that have made significant advances in their areas of sport.

From the eight award categories, there were four award-winners from Oundle.

Prince William School won the award for Secondary Sports School of the Year; Ian Gow, who has organised the weekly runs at Barnwell Country Park won the award for Community Coach of the year; Rachael Lever from Prince William School won Sports Person of the Year with her achievements as a double British U17 and U18 fencing champion, and swimmer William Roberts won the award for Disabled Sports of the Year.

At the Northamptonshire Sports Awards in November, Ian Gow was also presented with the award for Community Activator of the Year.



In September, William Roberts participated in the 5th Down Syndrome International Swimming Organisation European Championships in Sardinia, where he was a member of the Down Syndrome Swimming GB squad. He achieved six new personal bests from his seven races (breaking two of them two weeks later back in Corby), and made it to the final of the men's 200m backstroke, coming sixth.

CLASSES

A taste of things to come

We are delighted to launch a New Year taster programme, enabling you to come along and trial some of the classes on offer at the new Oundle School Sports Centre, opening Spring 2020.

Over 30 weekly classes are planned (full timetable will be published in March) so this is a great opportunity to meet our staff, find out about membership options and shape up for the New Year.

› Circuits and HIIT

13th January
- 12th February

› Aqua and HIIT

25th February
- 18th March

Classes cost £5 and you can pay per session.

All Taster classes will take place in the current Sports Centre on Milton Road in Oundle.



Oundle School
**SPORTS
CENTRE**



Enquire and book your space today:
01832 277150

Our new website launches December 2019, giving details of membership packages, facilities and activities available www.oundlesportscentre.co.uk

Let us introduce you...



Basil, Higgs the Dog Particle, and Milo, Lurchers and Golden Retriever



Belle
12-year-old Springer Spaniel



Sam
13-year-old retired racing Greyhound



Toffee
1-year-old Red Fox Labrador and Golden Retriever



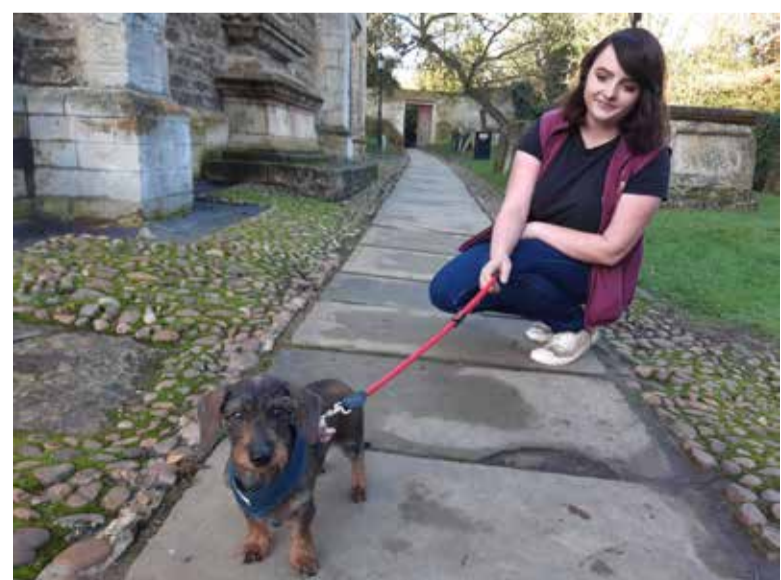
Millie
German Shepherd



Winnie
14-year-old retired service Border Terrier



Pearse
4-month-old Deerhound



Queenie
8-year-old Dachshund