



April 2025

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ACTION NEEDED OVER LAMB LANE RACE TRACK

The highway authority have come under fire for failing to take action over the rising toll of high speed road accidents on Lamb Lane.

Eric Cliff - who lives with his wife in a property sited next to the road between Kidd Lane and Haven Farm - is so worried about the danger that he's started looking for a new home.

The couple have seen the speed of vehicles rise remorselessly since they moved in 10 years ago.

Accidents have twice destroyed the fencing at the front of the property. On another occasion the oil tank beside the property was wrecked.

The latest smash - on February 16th - saw a driver plunge from the road at high speed, and hurtle into woodland on the opposite side the road. The driver survived, but the car was barely recognisable afterwards.

South Yorkshire Police said they were treating the crash as "driver error."



BARELY RECOGNISABLE...the latest car to come to grief on the Lamb Lane "race track"...

Eric told FLAG: "Vehicles are travelling faster and faster all the time, and there's more traffic than ever with more and people travelling to and from the new estates at Langold and Carlton.

"The road's like a race track on Sunday mornings. Something needs to be done before someone is killed."

Firbeck Parish Council believes that Rotherham MBC need to take action. But Eric says: "Unfortunately I don't think drivers would take any notice of a 50 mph limit, but speed cameras would help I'm sure."

GOOD NEWS FOR THE SKYLARKS

Letwell's Nicky Blyth has been busy lending a helping hand to the Skylarks currently nesting on farmland on the west side of Gildingwells Road between Gildingwells and Letwell.

For several years the land has been left fallow over winter, then been ploughed before the 1st of May under a Government scheme.

Last year, Nicky says, the whole field managed by Camm's was then re-planted with a one-season Butterfly/Bird/Insect mix, under another "ridiculous" Government scheme.

This year half the field is in Winter Wheat – the other half is fallow.

However, the farmer has now said he agrees that it is not appropriate to plough it at this time of year with Skylarks, Lapwing and other birds feeding and nesting.

Nicky's hoping that the farm manager's decision isn't overturned,

"It's only a small 'win,'" she says, "but nevertheless a benefit to nature."

Nicky adds: "If only we could get more to follow the example."

COMING SOON...BOULES, CHESS AND SKITTLES

The renovation of Firbeck Village Hall garden is continuing with the installation of a secure storage box for the equipment to use on the garden's facilities.

As you can see the boules court, draughts/chess board and skittle alley are all completed.

Details of when the equipment is in the box and how to access it will be displayed on the village hall's website firbeckvillagehall.co.uk so do check it out (and subscribe if you haven't already done so) and villagers can look forward to summer evenings playing a friendly game of boules, chess or skittles.





Family Afternoon Tea

Firbeck Village Hall

Saturday 3rd May 2-4pm

Please come along to support your Village Hall

**Sandwiches,
Home Made Cakes
and Drinks
Including Prosecco
Available**

**Children's
Games and
Activities**

**We welcome donations of homemade cakes and
raffle prizes. Please contact Sharon 07410899181,
Sarah 07792991299 or Anita 07505461368**

FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL AT WORK

Looking at the meeting agendas and minutes of meetings it is tempting to think - "same old, same old". Those of you that come to our meetings, and we sincerely thank those that do for your support and contribution, will know that progress is painfully slow on many issues not for lack of time and effort on our part. Working towards achieving our objectives on the Parish Council can be very frustrating. Much of what we want to do depends on the cooperation of RMBC. All too often we come up against the bureaucracy and lack of resource of local government. Take for instance the state of the verges at the junction of Kidd Lane with New Road. At the very heart of the village we have to put up with the eyesore of churned up grass verges where HGV and farm traffic attempts to negotiate a road junction never designed for such big vehicles. For too many years now we have been trying to get this sorted with RMBC and have an over run strip or "cuff" at this junction to protect the grass verges. We have had many site meetings and many promises have been made to us but not fulfilled. We have offered to get the work done ourselves but it seems RMBC cannot authorise that. We have offered to co fund the work and that seemed to be an attractive and workable proposition but to date nothing has come of it. This is exasperating especially for a community so inclined to roll up its sleeves and get on with projects for the good of the village. The present position is that we have involved a local interest grouping known as the local action partnership/where we live, which is a group of ward councillors, council officers and police who meet to discuss ward matters and how to resolve problems. We have asked them to get on board with our plans to improve the New Road/Kidd Lane road junction, the Ha Ha and to address our concerns for road safety - in particular speeding on the roads in and out of our village and on Lamb Lane. I am hoping that this might result in some progress at last.

Its not all frustrating..

Some things RMBC have proved to be very good at is responding to the drainage problems and obstructions on our roads, footpaths and bridleways. The work in the fields and woodland opposite Firbeck Hall entrance has now been completed which will hopefully resolve flooding issues at the north end of New Road.

Recently, at our request, the Countryside rights of way officer arranged for the overhanging trees and bushes to be cut back on the bridlepaths edging and running through Little Thwaite Wood which were extremely hazardous to walkers and riders alike. he is also arranging for signage on the footpath on the north edge of Firbeck Hall is to be improved to make crystal clear that there is a public right of way there. And last but not least we can expect the blocked culvert on Salt Hill bridlepath to be cleared which should resolve the flooding of the path.

Things which we do have control over are marching on

Yorkshire in Bloom.

Last year you will recall our gardening and general care for the village won us a gold medal in the competition and the award for the best village in our category in Yorkshire. So we have quite a standard to uphold this year. With the recent publicity the village was given by Stuart Minting, rural correspondent for the Yorkshire Post (see the edition for 5th April

2025) we can perhaps expect to have many more eyes on us - so we will want to look our best!

In preparation for this year's entry, the annual free plant exchange will take place on **Saturday 24th May**, outside Honeysuckle Cottage 77 New Rd from 9.30am where people are welcome to bring any spare plants, seeds or garden products, and help themselves to anything available for free.

The RHS Britain in Bloom judging will take place in early July (date to be confirmed), so can all residents support our entry by ensuring gardens are looking their best and support a village tidy up on the weekend June 28th-29th, including help with maintenance of grass verges and litter picking.

Thank you all for the work you put in to keep our village looking so beautiful.

A second defibrillator for the village

Although the emergency services consider our one defibrillator (located on the wall outside The Black Lion) to be adequate given the size of the village, we have been looking at getting a second one to be located more centrally. A defibrillator kept outside must housed in a heated cabinet and that has caused us an issue. From the off, we wanted to put it in the obvious place - the old phonebox. However, the power had been cut off to that and would have costs thousands to reconnect. The church porch was another option but locating it there was not without complications. There are now solar powered units on the market and Cllr Richard Potts is looking at the costs and feasibility of putting one of those in the phonebox.

Getting sleeves rolled up

The little trees which are used to decorate the church path at Christmas have been bought as pot grown trees and some are in their third year of use. Like everything to do with the Christmas tree festival, its success depends on the willing volunteers and at this time of year this means help with re potting the trees. Many thanks to team Aspinall for helping with this task.



80 years of peace?

We see today with the war in Ukraine and in Gaza the harsh and brutal impact of war and the devastation and heartbreak it causes. No wonder that the hard won victory in May and subsequently August 1945 was celebrated with such joy and relief. We have no formal event organised for the village nevertheless, we encourage everyone to acknowledge VE Day (8th May) and VJ Day (15 August) with flags and bunting in your gardens. For locally and nationally organised events looks at the website ve-vjday80.gov.uk.

Caroline Jopling, Chair Firbeck Parish Council

DAVID WRIGHT DELIVERS THE LATEST EDITION OF HIS NATURE REPORT

We're now well into the breeding season. Dogs running in the crops, set-aside and hedgerow buffer strips are a threat to leverets and ground-nesting birds such as chiffchaffs, lapwings, partridges, pheasants, skylarks and yellow wagtails. The latter are Red-Listed and fly here all the way from Africa to breed, so deserve a bit of peace and quiet. Thankfully, most dog owners keep their dogs on or near the paths.

I was pleased to be asked to provide information for Firbeck's neighbourhood plan on bird and animal species I've known to occur in Firbeck. It was an interesting exercise, producing 110 species of birds plus four more species occurring immediately adjacent to the village boundary. And of course, we mustn't forget our female Indian runner duck who bred with a wild mallard and produced chicks, or an escapee eagle owl that once frequented the Hall woods. Animal species totaled 29 although I'm only aware of one bat species: pipistrelle. There may be other species that residents are aware of.

Whilst researching the above information, I went back through my FLAG reports to the first edition in January 2009. I've not missed one since and it's always nice when residents tell me they look forward to the reports and enjoy them.

On 2nd January a Firbeck resident observed a bird which was either a snipe or woodcock in Firbeck. On 7th January I was delighted to see the water rail feeding on our lawn at the edge of the flooded stream. During the winter the airfield produced at least one redwing, a pair of stonechats, hundreds of fieldfares, good numbers of chaffinch, goldfinch and meadow pipit and a small number of skylarks. The two female goshawks remained all winter.

Lapwings returned to breed in Firbeck in late February. A red kite was also seen here then. We have several singing song thrushes in the village this spring.



Yellow Wagtail

I was pleased to see a pair of mistle thrushes here on 4th March. They're a bit bigger than song thrushes and, like song thrushes, are Red-Listed. They have a love of sticky white mistletoe berries and play a vital role in propagating the parasitical plant. They're also called Storm Cocks or Storm Birds as they have a characteristic of singing from the tops of trees before and through a storm. It's thought they're able to detect changes in air pressure.

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GREAT LINE UP AT LETWELL

Acclaimed folk/pop acoustic duo Katriona Gilmore and Jamie Roberts bring their award-winning song writing and fantastic harmonies to Letwell on Friday May 16th.

Nominated three times as the outstanding duo at the BBC Folk Awards at the Royal Albert Hall, Katriona (mandolin, fiddle and vocals) and Jamie (acoustic and steel guitar) met while studying at the Leeds College of Music. They released their debut album in 2008, and have won great reviews with five other albums since then.

Recent years have seen the pair touring Canada and mainland Europe and featuring at some of the UK's biggest festivals. Appearances at Glastonbury led to them touring the country with rock legends Fairport Convention.

Tickets - priced £15 - are available from Martyn on 07909 960 422 or martyndsharpe@aol.com. Payment by bank transfer to Letwell Music account no. 393 81145 sort code 52 30 50. Cheques payable to Letwell Music to 4 Barker Hades road, Letwell S81 8DF.

Doors are at 8 pm. Music starts at 8.30.

Sheffield band Boy On A Dolphin - who have filled the City Hall countless times over the years - are back at Letwell the week before the village fayre playing two consecutive nights Tuesday and Wednesday July 1st and 2nd.

Book early as John Reilly and the boys always sell out quickly.



Gilmore and Roberts on tour with Fairport Convention



Music at Firbeck Village Hall

13th June	GMen Soul Band
23rd August	Jack Harper
26th September	Christine Collister
17th October	The Hunch

**Check out our website www.firbeckvillagehall.co.uk
for more information**

LETWELL RESIDENT AND RETIRED FARMER GEOFF OFFERS HIS VIEW ON COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS

We have had some nice sunny weather of late. Barker Hades Road has been busy with dog walkers, horse riders and bike riders all making the most of the spring sunshine, and nothing to do with keeping an eye on the building works I'm sure. Further into the village the local farm has been working flat out fertiliser spreading, planting spring cereals, potatoes and sugar beet.

On the face of it a busy farm like many, but all is not well in the farming world. Food after air and water is the most important thing in our lives - believe it or not more important than your mobile phone (yes, it is), your car, your house and even your new kitchen.

The importance of food came to the fore in World War Two. Farming before the war was in such a bad state a farm could be had rent free. Many farms had been abandoned because cheap food imported from all over the world fed Britain. In the early part of the war our cheap imported food was being sunk thanks to the submarine attacks, so suddenly British farmers were expected to feed the population.

This could only be done with hard work and government help. Since the war food security has meant British farmers have had subsidies to make sure that Britain had a sound farming industry so in times of need we could feed ourselves as a nation. Subsidies are now a thing of a past and farm produce such as wheat is almost half the price it was in 1982 in real terms while growing costs have more than kept up with inflation. It's an impossible situation - or is it?

You will, like it or not, have a heat pump in coming years, and you will have an electric car and along with everything else it will run on green electricity. This is the answer to the British farmers woes. I have a farming friend who farms good arable land in Lincolnshire, and he's signed up to hundreds of acres of solar panels, and as much as he doesn't like the idea, it makes economic sense.

I'm sure some think farm subsidies are unfair and farming should stand on its own two feet. Well maybe it should, but if you want to eat tasteless soft fruit at Christmas, keep your fancy heat pump pumping and your electric car charged don't moan if the local farmer carpets the landscape in solar panels surrounded by steel panels.

A bit of food for thought - why don't new houses come with solar panels? Why don't the acres of industrial buildings have solar panels on their roofs? Why do we think we can rely on solar when day length in winter amounts to no more than 8 hours, along with fog, and snow that will make them useless.?

Oh, and one last thing. Let's hope there isn't someone thinking of starting a war any time soon because if they do you're going to be very hungry. Now where did I put my phone charger.....

12 HOUR FIRBECK CHARITY EVENT

Entries are being taken now for the annual 12 hour Charity Event, held at Firbeck Village Hall, on Saturday May 17th..

Between the hours of 8am and 8pm set yourself a challenge and see how many miles you can either walk, run or cycle. All proceeds go to the British Heart Foundation.

The entry fee is £12 which includes refreshments throughout the day and use of Firbeck Village hall facilities. A celebration pie and pea supper is also included which you can eat hot in the hall from 6pm or take away to enjoy at home.

It would be great if you can ask family and friends to sponsor your challenge which would help raise even more money for the British Heart Foundation.

Contact Les Crownshaw for details, email les.crownshaw@gmail.com, or by text on 07536984401.

Entries close on 10th May.

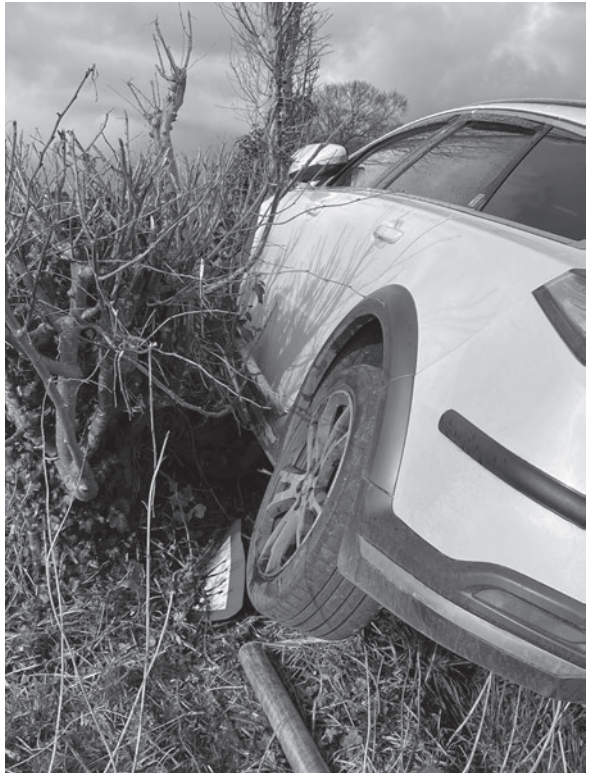
WARNING SIGN BITES THE DUST

Efforts to slow down traffic came unstuck at Letwell - with a car leaving the road and demolishing a newly installed sign aimed at protecting horse riders.

The sign had only been in place a matter of weeks when the accident happened on the road leading out of the village towards Gildingwells.

Horse riders have become increasingly concerned after a spate of dangerous near-misses on the road.

One told FLAG: "The problem is that far too many drivers simply don't slow down for horses. It's getting worse and worse with vehicles travelling faster and faster through the village. I'm not sure the signs are the answer, but they can only help."



NEWS FROM LETWELL PARISH COUNCIL

A view from the Chair

What a lovely change we have had since my last article when we were surrounded by snow. Spring has sprung and it is my favourite time of the year with the garden coming back to life and we can start looking forward to spending more time outside enjoying the sunshine. With this in mind, Letwell PC are holding a **'Village Refresh'** weekend on the **17th and 18th May** between 11am and 2pm where we will be having a spring clean and maintenance in the village. If you are aware that something needs to be done, please email martin@letwell-pc.gov.uk as he will be our coordinator. Better still, we'd like as many volunteers as possible to help over the weekend please. Refreshments will be provided in the village hall and there will be jobs for all ages and abilities. Keeping our village looking lovely is something we can all play a part in.

It's worth remembering that our village is a conservation area and therefore permissions that would not normally be needed may be, so if you are thinking of doing any work in your gardens that involves cutting down trees, or changing the look of your property, it's worth checking that you won't need any permissions before you start work. It's always easier to do this ahead of time than have to retrospectively apply. www.planningaid.co.uk have a great article about conservation areas, and more information can also be found at www.rotherham.gov.uk website.

Finally, April is the financial year end for the PC, and I'm pleased to say that we have finished the year in a much better position and are making some good progress on some of the outstanding issues. Our PC meetings continue to help us to focus on the right things and we would like to see more villagers join us at them. Dates and Agenda items are posted on the village noticeboard, please come along and help us to improve the village.

Until next time, enjoy the light nights and what I hope will be lots of sunshine.

WHY NOT LEND A HAND

With the big day approaching organisers of Letwell street fayre are urging villagers to step forward to help stage the event on Saturday July 5th.

It takes a lot of manpower - and plenty of woman-power come to that - to get the show on the road, and numbers have been diminishing in recent years.

Being involved can be a lot of fun whether it's helping out on splat the rat or picking up the pieces at the famous pot smashing stall.

There's a bonus at the end of the day - supper on the street outside the village hall. Some people insist it's the highlight of the village year!!

If you're interested - fingers crossed for a positive response - then the next meeting is on Monday April 28th. Contact chairman of the fayre committee Adrian Parkinson for more info at parkinson489@btinternet.com

Cinema Nights at FIRBECK VILLAGE HALL



**Come and join us for
one of our
Cinema Nights**

We show recent films
in a variety of genres.

Due to licence restrictions we
are unable to advertise film
titles online but if you
subscribe to our website we
will email you the details.

- 10th May
- 7th June
(Viewer's
Choice)
- 21st June
- 19th July

ADMISSION FREE

**Tea, Coffee & Ice Cream Available
or Bring a Bottle & Glass**