

Editorial Contact

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HAZEL AND ZEUS



Hazel is officially a Guide Dogs Puppy Walker and Schools Speaker.

In the past, she had always had a Retriever or Labrador as a pet but recently the house was beginning to feel empty. Another pet would have been lovely but having another dog relatively late in life would be too great a commitment as these breeds can live to be 15 years old. The solution was to become a puppy walker which was a year's commitment.

So three years ago, she and Monty had a two-hour interview with a Guide Dogs supervisor, which cleared them to take the training course (6 weeks before receiving a puppy and a further 6 weeks after). They were assigned Zeus when he was 6 weeks old who was at home indoors with them until he was 12 weeks old when he could start his 6 weeks of puppy classes.

The first seven weeks of puppy training was hard work, like having a baby. Zeus had to get used to crowds in the

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street, on buses, trains and on the underground, in libraries and restaurants. He also has to sit before doors and gates so that the blind person will sense the change in the angle of the harness handle. He also has to slow down at kerbs and slopes as well as only feeding on the signal of a whistle. Hazel has had to take him out in the car away from the house before letting him run freely so that he doesn't get into the habit of pulling on the lead with excitement. He has to wear a lead in the house at all times so that his future blind owner can "access" him easily. At 7 months old he started wearing his working jacket and a heavy white lead when he went outside. The lead has to rest on his shoulder blade to acclimatize him to his future harness.

In mid January, Zeus has to go back to Woodford Green,



London for six months' further training when he will no longer live in a house but share a run with another dog. Then he will have a further 6 months' intensive training, by which time he'll be over two years old.

If for any reason a dog doesn't make the grade, it could be retrained as a dog for the disabled or even returned to its walker. You need both time and energy walking and training a guide dog puppy. Will Hazel do it again? Yes!

There are more people who need guide dogs than there are people to walk them. If you are interested go to www.guidedogs.org.uk or you can sponsor a guide dog for £5 a month.

WI MEETING

19 January 2010

Nicole Shepard will be talking about 'Arbonne Skincare'.

COMMUNITY AWARD NOMINATIONS

There are some members of our community who help others in a quiet and unassuming way, getting little or no recognition. For the New Year, it has been suggested that a community award should be created for those very people.

If you can think of anybody from our villages of Great and Little Chishill who merits some recognition for their good deeds, please nominate this person by placing their name and reasons why in the community letter box on our bus shelter.



SNOW SPECTATOR SPORTS

The snow which lay for the week leading up to Christmas provided some entertainment for those with 4x4s watching those vehicles without. Those grit bins which had been filled in time, were used out of dire necessity as only the road into Heydon was passable.

Those in Little Chishill were cut off.

Many thanks to the farmers who cleared the road from the windmill down to Barley, and also to those who pulled out cars from the piled up snow. **But** no thanks to those who took to the already planted fields in their 4x4s.

If we have further snow,

PLEASE REMEMBER, the grit provided by the council in the bins is NOT FOR SPREADING ON PRIVATE DRIVES

PROGRESS ON POST-16 - EDUCATION TRANSPORT

A meeting between councillors representing students on our First Capital Connect rail line and County Council officers has resulted in clarification of county education transport policy, and acknowledgement of difficulties experienced by local residents trying to get best transport options from home to designated colleges in Cambridge.

We now understand that the County Council has been unable to work with First Capital Connect on a student discount fare because the rail operator would not publish

guaranteed fares in time for county budget setting.

At a subsequent meeting, to which council officers and First Capital Connect were invited to meet with councillors, the two parties agreed to work together on a student discount fare - FCC agreeing to provide advance notice of a guaranteed fare. Watch this space!

Meanwhile, the County Council has agreed to rewrite its post-16 education transport booklet, as well as review the way it communicates with respective colleges.

Please get in touch if you need advice for next term.

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THE CHALK PIT

I understand that plans are in hand for the development of the chalk pit. The pit was used for clunch, for road laying, as the quality of the stone was inferior to Barrington clunch, used extensively for stonework in local churches. After this activity stopped, the pit was used as a rubbish dump, until the village was blessed with dustmen, I believe in the 1950's. Since 1964, when I came to the village, there has been no dumping, and in my early years the pit was used as a free range pig enclosure, the remains of the sty still being evident. Large metal objects dumped there earlier can still to be seen, including, I am told, the chassis of a Model T Ford. At present, the pit is used as a well-engineered sump to take flood water from the village, and disperse it into the subsoil, thus minimizing erosion of the Lower Lynchetts. The footpath has taken various routes and old maps show it to be at the top of the pit.

In the 1970's local children used the pit extensively, when they were free to wander, with

hides, small caves and a wonderful abseiling cliff. Evidence of these activities is also apparent. I am unaware of any accidents. Water used to remain in the pit for most of the winter and, being the coldest part of the village, was used for ice skating. I walk through the pit daily. The vegetation is cut down before it gets out of hand and there are only a few sections that are difficult. These sections could be easily improved with a few volunteers, and the permission of Robin, the new tenant, if that is what people want. However, this may encourage BMX bikes and off road motorcycles, which are not necessarily compatible with wild life. The pit is a delightful wild area, but with few hedgerow birds possibly due to foxes and badgers which inhabit the banks.

Please, don't spend a lot of money, making change for the sake of change.

John Crawley

ROYSTON COMMUNITY TRANSPORT has 3 volunteer drivers in Great Chishill and need more drivers. You know what the buses are like! If you can also be a volunteer community driver, contact Janet Crouch, Ken Allen or Liz Parkes

