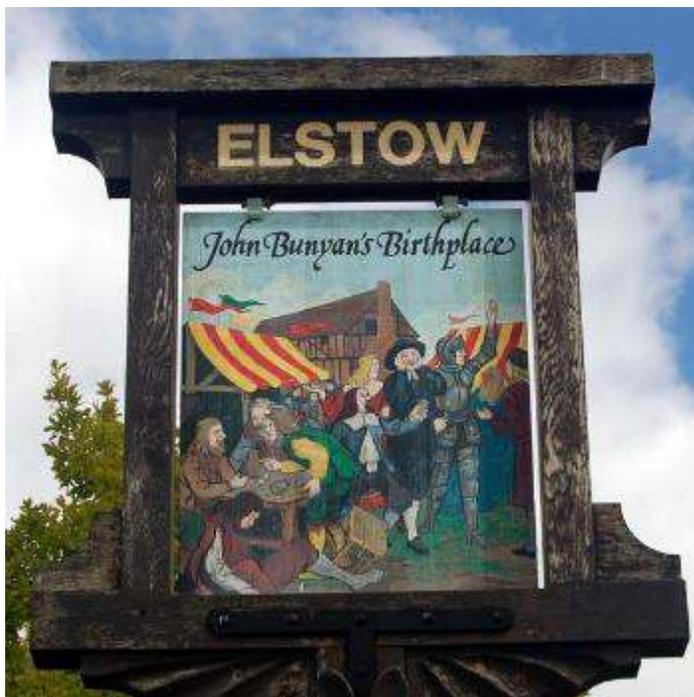


# ELSTOW VILLAGE NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2013

## Elstow Parish Council

Another busy period for your Council; a number of significant local planning applications have been discussed as well as two important planning strategy documents which include sites within the parish.

### Planning and Development news

Your Council has become very active and involved in a number of local planning matters recently: the Council stresses that all residents as well as members of the public can also contribute to and be involved in any of these matters independently.

- **Minerals and Waste Core Strategy**

**Elstow South** - this site was named within the local authority document as a preferred site for waste treatment and land-fill. Following government Inspector hearings where the Parish Council made very strong objections to the inclusion of this site, the Inspector has recommended that Elstow South be removed from the document as a future site. Currently the **Minerals and Waste Core Strategy** document is out for further consultation including this amendment that Elstow South not be included. It is very important that again, local representation is made to ensure that the Elstow site is not included; the public can view the document and register their comments.

The documents can be viewed at:

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment\\_and\\_planning/planning\\_town\\_and\\_country/what\\_is\\_planning\\_policy/documents\\_of\\_the\\_bdf/minerals\\_\\_waste.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/what_is_planning_policy/documents_of_the_bdf/minerals__waste.aspx)

The closing date for comments to be received is 5pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013; if you wish to make a representation then you can either send by e-mail to [mwplans@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mwplans@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk); or in writing using the representations form to the following address: The Minerals and

Waste Shared Planning Service, Central Bedfordshire Council,  
Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

There is also a

- **separate planning application for the same Elstow South site** which has been submitted by the company FCC. This is a separate matter to the strategy document mentioned above and again it is important that residents make representations on this. The application number is 12/01306/FULWME and it is for the construction of an integrated waste management facility and non-hazardous waste landfill at Elstow South. The Parish Council has already submitted an objection to this application.

Another strategy document being reviewed by a government Inspector is the

- **Allocations and Designations Plan** which includes a proposed **large business park site at Medbury Farm**. The Parish Council made representations at the hearings against the inclusion of this site but the Inspector feels that the Medbury site should still be included. The Parish Council is currently working very hard to try and ensure that this site does not get agreed. This document is out for its final consultation and therefore local resident comments on this are vital; the public can view the document and register their comments.

The documents can be viewed at:

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment\\_and\\_planning/planning\\_town\\_and\\_country/what\\_is\\_planning\\_policy/documents\\_of\\_the\\_bdf/allocations\\_and\\_designations/examination.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/what_is_planning_policy/documents_of_the_bdf/allocations_and_designations/examination.aspx)

The closing date for comments to be received is 5pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013; if you wish to make a representation then you can either send by e-mail to [planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk) or in writing using the

representations form to the following address: Planning Policy Team, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

The Parish Council also lodged objections to:

- the proposed development on the car park of the **former public house, The Swan**. This application was refused by the local authority. A new application has been submitted to only convert the former public house into a dwelling
- **old Lower School** application for twenty one dwellings; this application has subsequently been withdrawn. It is expected a new application will be submitted shortly for the old Lower School site.

### **Funding information and contributions**

The Parish Council has been informed by the Borough Council that as part of the developer's contribution from the recent Romsey Way development there are funds available totaling about £40,000 for play equipment and pitches provision within the parish. Design work on this will follow in due course.

In January the Parish Council voted to maintain the precept for 2013/14 at £15,000; the same as 2012-13.

This remains a low figure considering the size and population of the parish - something the Parish Council is very proud of.

You may however, have noticed that your Council Tax bill showed an increase in the precept. This is merely a calculation item because this year has seen a change in the way the council tax base is calculated; a central government change that affects all parishes.

This has resulted in a lower council tax base than previous years, but the local authority has provided financial grant assistance to

the Parish Council so the amount each household pays as a contribution through their council tax does not change.

Recent contributions awarded by the Parish Council have included:

- Contribution of £320 towards the May Festival
- £1,000 contribution towards the maintenance of the churchyard
- Donation made for Remembrance Day
- Cutting of the grass along the Wilstead Road rural footpath - this will continue throughout this year
- Contribution towards new tables purchased for the Elstow Table Tennis Club
- The purchase and installation of a bench to mark the Queen's Jubilee, due to be installed between the High Street and Wadsworth Court shortly

### **Local matters**

Following the recent **unauthorised encampments in Elstow** by the play area off Romsey Way, the Parish Council has made a contribution to works to create a deterrent which are expected to commence shortly.

The Parish Council is continually striving to ensure Elstow remains a rural and historic village, reporting highway issues, maintenance needs within the village, and working regularly with the Police with regards to speeding and reducing crime. The Council has been pursuing with highways possible ways to encourage drivers to exercise more caution and care outside the Lower School which has resulted in some new enforceable parking restrictions there.

The Council continues to fund the production of this newsletter which is circulated to every household within the village three times a year.

The Parish Council will next meet on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Playing Field Hall. As always, the public is welcome to attend and contribute.

If anyone would like to bring any matters to the attention of the Parish Council, please feel free to contact Lizzie, Parish Clerk, on 841835

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## **INFORMATION FROM THE POLICE**

Please remember that it is important for members of the public to report to the police any suspicious people/activity in their streets.

Please use the new non-emergency number 101 or (01234) 841212 and do it AT THE TIME OF SEEING THE PERSON/EVENT, not later.

The number for the local Safer Neighbourhood Team for Elstow is (01234) 842433 and our local PCSO's are Adam Hales and Emily Scott.

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**Burglaries in Elstow**

A resident from the village wishing to raise awareness of burglaries within Elstow has received some advice from the Police which they would like to share.

Their house was unfortunately burgled; the burglars broke-in through a back door and targeted cash and Indian gold jewellery. The bigger loss was the peace of mind and fear that has now been embedded. Although Elstow is generally a safe neighbourhood, they worry that burglars might start to target our affluent area in the current cash-deprived environment.

The Police advise that burglars in the area tend to park their cars on the A421 Bypass and leave their car in the lay-by. They burgle the property and return to their cars to get a quick escape. On many occasions, finger prints or evidence are not found so convictions and arrests aren't always possible, this leaves the public at risk of being the next victim of crime.

Therefore, with this in mind, remember it is important to report anything that you have seen that is suspicious and ensure your homes are secured.

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## **Bedford Borough Councillor Tim Hill's Report**

### **Village-wide Issues**

- a) Change of Ward Name to Elstow and Stewartby - The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has approved my proposal at its second approval stage. The third and final approval stage took place at a special Full Council meeting at Borough Hall on 27 Mar 13, where Councillors overwhelmingly approved it. I would like to place on public record my thanks to Elstow Parish Council for not objecting to this.

- b) Development on waste ground by Interchange roundabout - Good progress is being made on maintenance by developers of the pill-box at left of new entrance road in return for totem sign being on highways land on other side.

### **Local Issues**

Since my last Newsletter Report, I have amongst other local issues progressed the following raised by residents:

- a) Travellers on Elstow Brook - At my request, an amended plan has been produced using bunding i.e. earth mounds that are not very high, but are shaped in a way that will damage any vehicle or caravan that tries to enter the site. The bunding is due to be installed sometime in late April/early May.
- b) The Swan development - I am not objecting to the latest application to just convert The Swan on the condition that the remainder of the site is secured from further development.
- c) Poor state of road on High Street/Wilstead Road - I am pleased to see that following pressure from myself and the Parish Council, this stretch of road has at long last been resurfaced.
- d) Overnight parking by HGVs near the Abbey Fields estate - This is happening on a bypass lay-by and residents are complaining of being kept awake at night by the resulting noise from cooling units. The Highways Agency has rejected the initial closure request from a Highways Officer. At my request, a personal letter from the Mayor has now been sent to the Director of the Highways Agency requesting re-consideration.
- e) Development of the old Lower School site - The previous planning application for twenty one dwellings was withdrawn. A new one is being submitted. I have concerns about the extra houses on the old playing field and its effect on existing residents.
- f) No parking on verges and footpaths - Following a consultation leaflet delivered by me and a large response in

favour from local residents, Highways are now drafting a scheme for Bunyans Mead and High Street for consideration in 2013/14.

- g) Street naming for Interchange development - Following consultation with the Parish Council and the family, a proposal for "Sam Clark Way" has been put forward to the Borough for consideration by the developers.
- h) Romsey Way Play Area - At the request of local residents, I arranged for excess litter to be removed, especially broken glass on and around the surrounding footpaths.

### **Contact me**

Please don't hesitate to contact me on any local issue by any of the following means:

Tel (day): 0131 448 4270

Tel (eve): 01234 857180

Mobile: 07910100240

Email: [tim.hill@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:tim.hill@bedford.gov.uk)

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## **Ghostly goings-on at Moot Hall, Elstow**

There have been a couple of items in the local press about ghosts having been seen at Elstow's wonderful old Moot Hall. Moot Hall, set on Elstow's beautiful village green, is certainly old enough for it to have picked up an unusual guest or two, so what is the truth in the rumours?

A few years ago a former curator claimed to have seen a young schoolboy in there.. She had arrived early and had locked herself in, so she could have her lunch before Moot Hall's usual open public afternoon. Sitting in reception, she thought she saw a figure out of

the corner of her eye. She turned and looked and there, standing beside the door to the downstairs exhibition room was a boy aged about 9. She looked away in disbelief but immediately turned back to look again - but the figure had gone.

The curator was never able afterwards to decide whether she really had seen this boy and she admits that. At the time she was thinking about her young son, who was taking a test at school that day. Yet she was able to describe the boy in some detail, as being dressed in clothing typical of the 1800s.

Interestingly, Moot Hall was used as a school throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This story would not be very remarkable but for events which have happened at Moot Hall since then.

The door beside where this 'ghost' boy was seen to repeatedly open on windy days or nights, despite it being secured with a heavy drop-latch. As this door is wired into the alarm system, it opening would set off Moot Hall's intruder alarm system.

The present curator, who lives next door to Moot Hall was, on one windy night, awoken by Moot Hall's alarm at 1am, 2am and 3am. Each time he went to shut the alarm off, he found this door ajar, despite him knowing that it had been securely shut when he had previously locked up.

Various investigations were then carried out - a carpenter inspected the door and could find no fault with the latch. The drop latch is much too heavy to be opened by a mouse or bat landing on it.

Staff tried shutting the door and only just engaging the drop-latch into its keep, then vibrating the door - as a draft on a windy day *might* do - to see if they could make the latch jump out of the keep but, whatever they tried only made the latch move downward, engaging even more securely into its keep. They also found that on windy days there is no draft at or near this door.

A few days later, after the alarm had been set off several more times by that door opening, the curator fitted a small bolt to the door and it has never set off the alarm since. Some years later, a paranormal investigation team spent the night at Moot Hall. They came with no prior knowledge of any of these unusual events but as soon as the group's medium went through that doorway, she said 'You have a little boy here!'

Other strange things have happened to the staff at Moot Hall. There was a period when the caretaker kept coming in and finding that the cover on the medieval bed had been turned back. The caretaker refused to accept the curator assurances that he was not playing tricks on him - until he checked the alarm system's computer log and found that nobody had entered between his visits; proving that the bedcover had been turned back when no-one was in the building. The cover on this bed is quite a heavy fabric and there are no draughts near this bed.



There have been many paranormal investigations carried out at Moot Hall since then and investigators have reported seeing and hearing children, as well as 'receiving' information about the building which, following investigations by the curator of old documents, turned out to be correct.

Many investigators have photographed 'orbs' - spheres which look rather like floating bubbles about 4-5 cm wide. Some paranormal investigators say that these orbs are merely an optical effect caused by reflections of flashlights on dust specs. Yet, strangely, it is only paranormal investigators who have captured such images - none of the many other people who have taken photographs in Moot Hall have reported finding orbs appearing in their images.

However, the most astounding occurrences have been the digital sound recordings made during 2012. The voice of a man has been captured, on several different recording devices, by different investigators. Whilst those present during recording heard nothing at the time, in response to their spoken questions a man's voice has been heard responding on the digital sound recordings.

There are now four separate recordings, on which he can be heard saying; 1. 'I can hear you', 2. 'I *am* here', 3. 'It *hurts!* 4. '*Burns!*' The first three recordings are very clear and distinct, the fourth somewhat less so. All four recordings sound like the same person - his voice is a little gruff and he sounds elderly.

Andy Matthews, TV producer of *Ghost Hunt* programmes, in November 2012, whilst being shown around the building, claimed to see one of the upright timbers in the downstairs exhibition room suddenly vibrate from side to side and then a figure in white come toward him.

It was his first visit to Moot Hall and the curator, who was with Mr Matthews at the time was intrigued because - unknown to Andy Matthews - the upright timber he had been facing at that moment was one of only two pieces in the entire building which can actually be moved a little from side to side.

Staff at Moot Hall find these events intriguing but baffling. Is there paranormal activity at Moot Hall, or is there a rational explanation for each one? Such has been the level of interest in these occurrences, that Moot Hall is considering holding an occasional 'Ghost Hunt' type evening which members of the public may attend. If you are interested in this, please contact the curator.

Anyone wishing to pay an ordinary (daytime) visit Moot Hall, to see the inside of this beautiful and historic building, may do so on public open afternoons - Saturdays from 1 to 4pm, from the

beginning of April to the end of September. Groups may book to visit on (almost) any day of the year.

Clive Arnold

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## **Lifepath Bunyan Event May 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>**

This is a schools event which happens every other year on The Green, in the Abbey and Moot Hall. It has happened twice already (2009 and 2011) and will be running again from May 21<sup>st</sup> to May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00am to 2:30pm.

The event is hosting around 300 pupils each day from local schools who are coming on an RE day out to explore the Christian faith through the lifepath of John Bunyan. There is music, drama, a fair, crafts and even a Pilgrim's Progress journey. The event is not open to the public and whilst all facilities will be open as usual we would ask residents to be mindful of the safeguarding issues of having so many children on site and ask everyone to keep a respectful distance.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by additional coaches, people, noise etc but trust you will appreciate what a wonderful opportunity this is to showcase the village and its rich heritage to over 1000 children, teachers and parents. For more information please contact Simon Barker on 01234 714036 or email [SimonB@scriptureunion.org.uk](mailto:SimonB@scriptureunion.org.uk)

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## **THE FRIENDS OF ELSTOW ABBEY**



The Friends of Elstow Abbey was founded in 1994 to secure the structure and fabric of our historic 11<sup>th</sup> Century Abbey, built in 1078 by Countess Judith,

niece of William the Conqueror as a Benedictine Nunnery. In 1539 King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and Elstow Abbey became a church. In 1628 John Bunyan was baptised in our Norman font and later married in the church. With such a rich history, it is vital that Elstow Abbey is maintained in good order for future generations.

In the last 18 years, the Friends have raised £55,000, most of which has been spent on repairing and refurbishing Elstow Abbey and its surroundings, eg repairing the Nave roof, church stonework, central heating and providing protective guards for the stained glass windows. Since 2008 we have refurbished the organ, the churchyard wall and Hillersden Ruins, and purchased a piano and heaters for the Vestry, but there will always be more work to do in a church which is nearly 1,000 years old.

Each year we organise fundraising events including organ recitals, concerts and outings. In April 2012 we held a very successful Songs of Praise with Pam Rhodes, with exactly the same format as the BBC TV Programme, but without the TV cameras! Our Autumn Concert was an Organ Recital by our Director of Music David Ewbank, and we had a Christmas Concert in December, performed by a joint choir of children from Elstow Lower School and Abbey Middle School and Elaine Huckle, a professional soprano. Kate

Parrish, our Social Events Coordinator, is organising a tour of Southill Park, home of our Patron Charles Whitbread, on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013, and Kempston Musical Society will be performing at our Autumn Concert on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

If you would like to join the Friends, please come to our Annual Tea in Joyce Harris' garden opposite the church on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 3.30pm. Alternatively, please contact our Treasurer Patrick Luffman (Tel: 01234 345004) at West Lodge, Carriage Drive, Clapham, Bedford MK41 6EX, or Secretary Sheila Batiuk (Tel: 01234 74112). You are also welcome to call me (Tel: 01234 354914), or email: [lynne.faulkner@yahoo.com](mailto:lynne.faulkner@yahoo.com).

**Lynne Faulkner**  
**Chairman of the Friends**

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## **FRIENDS TRIP TO SOUTHILL PARK**



On behalf of the Friends of Elstow Abbey, Charles Whitbread has kindly offered a tour of his lovely home, followed by tea, on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 2.30 p.m. The cost will be £10.00 per person. Numbers are limited so please get in touch with Kate Parrish to reserve your place on either 01462 813277

or e-mail [kate.parrish@btconnect.com](mailto:kate.parrish@btconnect.com)

Southill has been the home of the Whitbread family for over 200 years. The house was bought in 1795 by Samuel Whitbread I from Viscount Torrington whose unfortunate uncle, Vice-Admiral the Hon John Byng, was shot at Portsmouth in 1757 in an error of judgement whilst in Command of the Fleet.

The earliest known owner of Southill was Sir John Kelynge, "a violent Cavalier", who succeeded Hyde as Lord Chief Justice in 1663. His son sold the property to Admiral Sir George Byng, later Viscount Torrington. Samuel Whitbread I died in 1796, a year after buying Southill, and his son, Samuel Whitbread II, a prominent Whig politician, employed Henry Holland to rebuild the existing house. Holland was the fashionable architect of the day; he reconstructed Carlton House for The Prince of Wales (late George IV) and other examples of his work may be seen at Woburn, Ampthill, the Swan Hotel in Bedford and at Althorp.

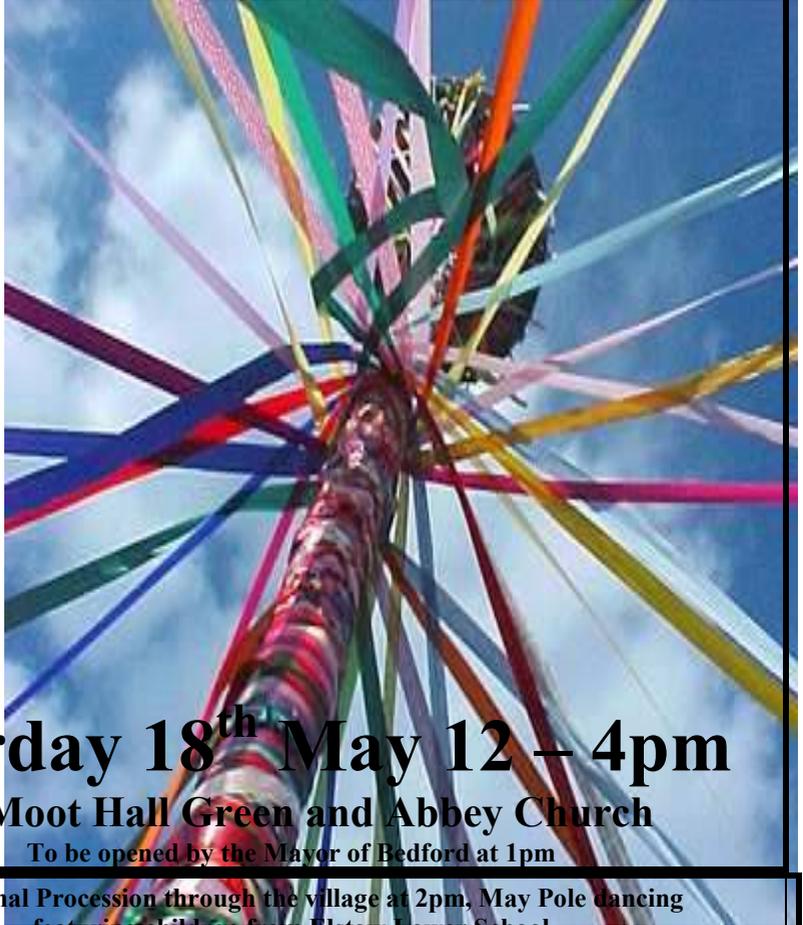
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### **IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER**

If you would like to offer comments, help out in any way, or write/submit an article for a future edition then please contact the Parish Clerk, Lizzie, on 841835

# **Elstow May Festival**



**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 12 – 4pm**  
**on Moot Hall Green and Abbey Church**  
To be opened by the Mayor of Bedford at 1pm

Traditional Procession through the village at 2pm, May Pole dancing featuring children from Elstow Lower School  
Includes: Bedfordshire Bagpipes, Various Stalls, Giant Raffle, Refreshments, Fun fair rides and more...

## **ELSTOW VILLAGE EVENTS**

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2.00pm** Talk on “Memories of Elstow as an evacuee” by Ted Bowen at Elstow Playing Field Hall. Tickets £5 including light refreshments

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2.30pm** Visit to Southill Park, with a personal guided tour by Charles Whitbread, Patron of Elstow Abbey, followed by tea. £10 per person

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 3.30pm** Friends of Elstow Abbey Annual General Meeting at in Joyce Harris's Tea Garden

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May** Moot Hall will be putting on a "Cantamus" concert at Moot Hall in the evening. "Cantamus" is a choral group who perform beautiful, melodic, medieval music. For anyone who didn't come last year, you missed a really wonderful experience, so do come this year! Seats are limited to 60, so get your tickets soon – available in Elstow from Moot Hall, the Post Office, or from Clive at Pilgrim House. Price £6

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June** Women's Institute Brass Band Concert in honour of the Queen's Coronation (at Elstow Abbey). For details please contact Bett Chamberlain 359538

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 3.30pm** Final FEPOW and CoFEPOW Service at Elstow Abbey, followed by refreshments. For details please contact 261477 – all welcome

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July** Shakespeare's 'As you like it' in the Cloisters @ Elstow Abbey. For details please contact Jeremy Crocker on 261477 or John Hinson on 406061

**Elstow Children's Holiday Club, The Knights' Quest (A Modern Medieval Pilgrim's Progress)**

Come and join Sir Chris and Sir Ian as they follow Bunyan's Journey. Elstow Abbey: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 10-1pm (incl: Picnic on the Moot Hall Green) For details please contact Tracey Hinson 406061 or Jeremy Crocker on 261477.

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2013 7.00pm** - Concert by Kempston Musical Society

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 6.30pm** – Christmas Concert performed by Elstow School Choir

**USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS**

**ELSTOW PARISH COUNCIL**

Website: [elstow.bedsparishes.gov.uk](http://elstow.bedsparishes.gov.uk)

Mrs. Sue Anderson  
Mr. Lloyd Allison

Chair

01234 309280  
07789 741933

