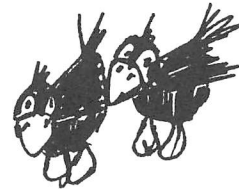


APRIL/MAY 2007

ISSUE 123



WOT!



About Ratby

PUBLISHED BY RATBY SCOUT GROUP

RATBY IN THE SNOW

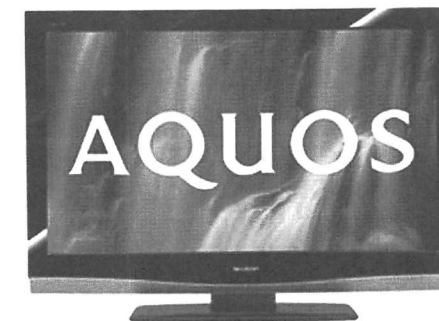


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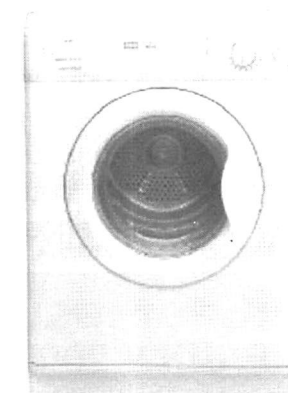


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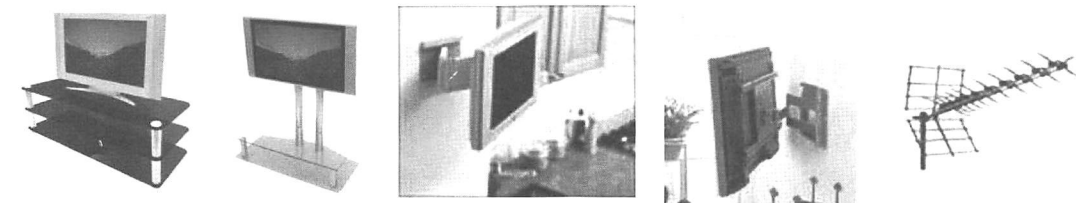


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RATBY COMMUNITY ORCHARD.

The group held a successful and well-attended Annual General Meeting, with a skittles match and supper.

Thanks to 'The Bull's Head' for the Skittle Alley.

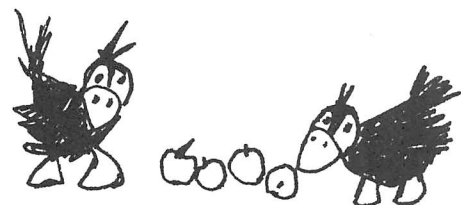
Pruning and Maintenance work was undertaken by volunteers in February and March.

Our next event will be a Skittles match against The Allotment Society!

We have received a small grant from the County Council for tools and equipment.

Date for your diary;

Pond dipping and bat detecting at the Orchard...August 8th. More details in June Issue of Wot.



GIRL'S FOOTBALL

A girl's football team started up on March 3rd, meeting every Saturday, 10.30-12 at Ratby Sports Club.

If you are a girl aged between 7 and 12 years, come and join us.

Call Yvonne on 239 3723.

We hope you'll send us an update of progress!
We don't get enough Sport's Reports in the magazine. Editor.

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SAYING 'NO' TO A MOBILE PHONE MAST

In recent weeks the Parish Church in Ratby has received an approach for the placing of a mobile phone transmitter on the church tower. We have at present said no to that approach and as Vicar I would like to explain why.

The Parish Church building dominates the skyline of Ratby. It should be a symbol of Christian hope, a sign of the care and concern that Christians of all denominations are called to have for the people of the village. It should not be a commercial sign of profit or greed.

There are other immediate concerns that I know are held by some people in the church and the village: some would have concerns about whether such a phone transmitter would look ugly; some would have concerns about having a transmitter of microwaves in the centre of a village where there is a primary school and a preschool. These concerns are also important, although in fact I understand that transmitters can replace flagpoles and look virtually identical; I also understand that existing Government guidelines ensure that transmitters are not sited where their main beam falls upon the grounds of a school without that school's consent.

In recent years, with the support of worshippers, the local community and others, the Parish Church has managed to stay afloat financially whilst spending over a quarter of a million pounds in making the building watertight, warm and welcoming. The last stage of this, which is to install disabled toilets, should be completed in the next 12 months. It has also begun a churchyard extension project to enable the churchyard to benefit the whole community more. However, it looks like those 'good years' may be coming to an end. For the first time in years the church accounts for 2006

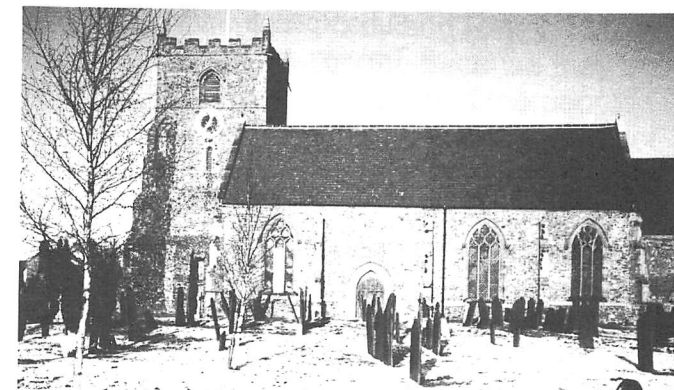
showed a deficit. This year the deficit is likely to grow to between £5-10,000 which would exhaust our reserves. If this trend continues we will be faced with making some tough choices just in order to survive.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised above, or if you would like to know how you could support us please do contact me (0116 239 3009 or rworsfold@btconnect.com).

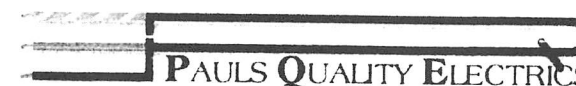
Richard Worsfold, Team Rector.

CHURCHYARD EXTENSION PROJECT LAUNCHED

We are very grateful to all the villagers who have already responded to the project leaflet delivered to homes in January, as we seek to plan the future of the churchyard for benefit of the community. Copies of the leaflet are available from the Parish Church.



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RATBY PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Some of the activities of your Parish Council are not immediately obvious to most people; for example soil testing on the Taverner Drive allotments. Other activities are clearly visible: new MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) and junior play equipment at Ferndale Park.

Your Parish Council intends to continue working systematically on both the invisible and visible for the benefit of us all. Up-coming is the provision of toddler play equipment on Ferndale Park; and extra funding is also being sought for further developments for the youth of the community and discussions are advancing rapidly on establishing an indoor youth facility. Consequently, the precept for 2007/08 which was agreed at the December 2006 Parish Council takes these items into account. The budget below will allow the Parish Council to continue to provide improved facilities in the village.

Category	Budgeted amount
Rates	£531
Salaries (two employees)	£21,850
Utilities-gas/electric/telephone	£1710
Room hire – meetings etc.	£330
Subscriptions – advisory bodies etc.	£600
Training, travel expenses etc.	£350
Chairman's allowance – ceremonies/refreshments	£150
Christmas expenses	£150
Donations	£650
Publicity	£450
Insurance	£4000
Loan	£5956
Skip hire	£450
Dog waste service	£2500
Repairs & development	£200
Admin/audit office	£3050
General maintenance	£2270
Rent for Burroughs Road – play area field	£300
Play equipment maintenance	£1500
New play equipment	£15000
Ground maintenance	£18000
Seats, boards, signs, litter bins	£1000
'Ravishing Ratby' – flower boxes, baskets etc.	£850
Village cemetery	£3000
Bus shelter repairs	£500
Community orchard	£100
Neighbourhood Watch	£100
Pride alarms	£50
Youth Projects	£5000
Allotments	£500
Competitions	£150
Contingency emergency repairs etc.	£3000
2007 Election	£3000

The Council's estimated budget for the year commencing 1 April 2007 amounts to £117,182. However, by using reserves the Council has managed to reduce the requested precept.

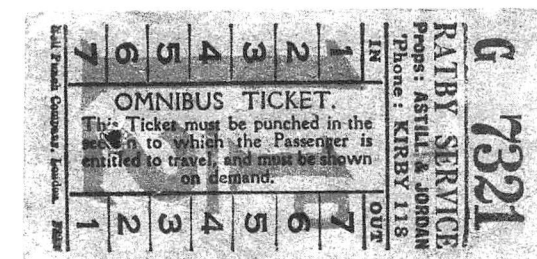
HOW FAR WOULD YOU GET ON A BUS TICKET LIKE THIS TODAY?

CRICKET

We didn't go to Leicester much as kids, perhaps twice a year for clothes etc., but the chief way to get there was by Astill's bus. I remember it because I lived in the Sunshine Houses, and it used to come actually down the service road and pick up at the door. I remember the wartime built (Utility) bus, which Astill's ran. Known as the 'Ute,' as well as other names, it was a Bedford, and it had wooden slatted seats internally. It wasn't very comfortable, but it did sterling service in the 50s, taking Ratby's Cricket team to 'away' matches. Mr Stinson Astill, 'Stin', the founder of Astill's and Jordan, nearly always drove the bus on those occasions. He was getting on in years then, and I think looked on the Saturday afternoon trips as a pleasurable occasion. Known affectionately, at least to the Cricket team as 'Father' he took us to such exotic destinations as Broughton Astley, Dunton Bassett and Kirby Mallory. He sometimes needed a bit of help with navigation, but as one of the team was a lorry driver we always arrived at our destination, albeit sometimes a bit late.

On the way back we always stopped at a pub, win or lose we celebrated it, and it wasn't long before 'Show me the way to go home,' 'Hang on the bell Nellie' (the Curfew song) and 'Bluebells are bluebells' were being discordantly sung on the return journey. Back in time for 2nd House at The Majestic.

I'm pretty sure that the 'Ute' was bought by Albert Pickering, who had a shop in Station Road, and converted into a mobile shop, selling most things, but mainly greengrocery, visiting Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons, at least at our end of the village.



...and PICKET!

Also, another memory is when Eddie went through the Picket Line at the top of Gallimores Hill. I think it must have been in the late fifties, and the chief bus operator of the time, Midland Red, were on strike for something or other, and mounted a picket line somewhere near where the Glenfield Hospital is now. They tried to stop the private bus companies (and there were a few in those days) entering Leicester.

I was on the bus one Saturday (early evening) in the winter. As we approached the Picket Line Eddie doused all the internal lights on the bus, switched headlights onto full beam, and drove straight through the Picket line. He actually was applauded by his passengers.

The other thing that was particularly 'Astillian' was the 'two bus situation' from St Margaret's. Two Astill buses loaded up at the same time with homeward bound factory workers, destination Glenfield, Kirby and Ratby. I didn't matter which bus you got on because they both stopped in Glenfield Square, and the people bound for Ratby got off the bus there, and got onto the other bus which had disgorged its Glenfield passengers. As I remember it, at least sometimes, there was only one conductor to take fares from both buses. He generally rode on the Ratby bus as far as Glenfield Square, then boarded the Glenfield bus and took their fares, travelling back to Leicester on that bus, leaving the Ratby bus to continue on its way, with my wife (girlfriend then) actually ringing the bell to stop the bus and allow passengers to disembark. This was 1958/59.

Since then we've done many trips with Astill's, and they were all good to do, right up until they finished. The last 'foreman' bus driver (Mick) still lives in Ratby.

Like many other things now gone from Ratby, the village is a poorer place for the passing of Astill and Jordan's.

Thanks to 'Ratby Lad' for these memories...we hope they'll jog a few more!



Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

Having just read the latest Issue (122) of WOT I would like to congratulate Mr. Mathews for his initiative in trying to clean up the area in which he lives. I also live on Stamford Street and I must agree with Mr. Mathews at times the mess is awful. I think it is worse down the Jitty as I call it (the cut through to the Plough). As a child we always new it as Dog POO alley, there are bins provided but some people can't be bothered to clean up. I think it is a shame that the Council can't do more to try and keep the village tidy, maybe enforce fines for people flaunting the law rather than rely on people like Mr. Mathews.

I would also like to comment on Mr. Blanchard's letter also in the same issue and echo the fact that Mr. Hunnybun, Avril Sutton and Elaine Moore deserve a Very Big thank you from everyone in the village for their contribution towards the development of Ferndale Park. This may be controversial because Avril is my Mother in-law, but credit where credit is due.

I also think that it is time that certain people on the Parish Council concentrated more on the Village rather than back biting and feathering their own nests, maybe then we could have a cleaner village and Mr. Matthews might be a happier person.

Regards,

Garry Cooper.



Dear Editor

I also read with interest Mr Blanchard's letter (last issue) regarding myself and Ferndale Park, and I feel it is time to set the record straight.

It is fair to say that I did take over responsibility for the Park in my role as Works Officer, as agreed by the Parish Council, but only after it became obvious that former Parish Councillors totally mismanaged the whole project, and indeed, allowed perfectly good play equipment to be taken away! (Do you remember the fort slide?) Nice paths though!

In the past year, far from being obstructive, the Parish Council, working together as a team, has given you a park to be proud of, and they are not finished yet.

A new £40,000 toddler area will be in place by May, and all costs will be met from existing budgets.

Apart from when the paths went in, I cannot recall the park being closed. Furthermore, the Parish Council is now working closely with our local junior football team so that they can now train and play on our local park!

Notwithstanding, I feel from the tone of Mr Blanchard's letter that he expects an apology, so here goes:-

'I sincerely apologise for working hard with other Parish Councillors to bring you the kind of park you always wanted and deserved. I sincerely apologise for re-designing the layout and bringing in the Multi-use Games Arena and junior play equipment so that it was more accessible to less able-bodied children, and saving residents £5000 on their Council Tax. I am equally sorry that I was able to access £21,000 from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to pay for this new phase so that you didn't have to pay extra.

But what I am really sorry about is the fact that Mr Blanchard, a former Parish Councillor, who did a lot of good things in his short time, decided to walk away just as the hard work was starting, and that he should feel the need to put his name to such blatant inaccuracies and drivel when he is well aware of the facts.'

Ratby Parish Council and I will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf so that you and your families may reap the benefits.

Yours sincerely
Cllr. Chris Boothby, Borough Councillor
(Ratby, Bagworth and Thornton)

MORE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Following on from my last letter in which I commented on the ongoing problems of dog mess on our street. I would like to express how amazed I have been by the amount of people who have spoken to me about the similar problems they are experiencing in their part of the village. This problem is obviously a great concern to many people in the village and I personally feel it is about time something was done about it. I know some have already asked a percentage of the people whose dogs are responsible for making the mess to politely stop from doing it. This I'm afraid, has sadly fallen on deaf ears. So I am appealing to any of you who may be reading this article and are in some way responsible for letting your dog mess on the pavements and not bothering to pick it up and to those walking the streets of Ratby, spitting as they go. PLEASE STOP!

Cheers.

Ben Matthews

Dear Ed,

Is there any chance that the Parish Council can stop bickering and work together to get something done about those lights at Markfield Golf Driving Range?

Dear Editor,

A thief has stolen the daffodil flowers from the green between Cardinal Close and Grange Close.

They were planted there for everyone to look at and enjoy, but some light fingered person picked them.

I hope they will feel ashamed and leave them alone next year.

Disappointed Resident
Name and Address supplied.

Perhaps they became a romantic bouquet, or an early mother's day present? If you received a bunch of unwrapped flowers you might want to quiz the giver! Editor.

Dear Editor,

I am a parent of three children, ages, 6, 8 and 11 and moved into Ratby over a year ago. The Ferndale Park at the time was very limited for the children. I started to read the Ratby Wot and discovered the hostility between the Ferndale Park Group and the parish Council, well more the criticism towards the Parish Council.

As a parent I was interested in finding out what was actually happening with my local park. So I took it upon myself to call the Parish Council, whereby the Chairman actually took time to come round to my home, talk to me in great detail about the exciting plans for the park, and all the efforts of a lot of people including the Ferndale Group that has made this park possible. By the time she left I was full of confidence that within the next few months we would have new equipment.

And now for the residents of Ratby you can see that has now been put in place with a toddler play area coming soon.

I do find it a little sad though that in our local magazine there seems to be a lot of name calling, I'm sure there is a lot of information that I am not aware of that has gone into creating the park. It does take a lot of time planning and money. And to everyone that planned the park and put it together whether it be 3 or 25 people at different stages, it is looking good, **thank you to all of the people that helped** on behalf of my children and the children of Ratby.

But please lets stop the constant gripping at the Parish Council, lets start to see a positive relationship between our Parish Council and residents, whether past Councillors or present because it really doesn't look good to call people publicly. I hope a majority of residents like myself want harmony in our village the end result is a great park. Lets ensure that any new projects people can work together and set an example to our children!

Polly Robinson-Gill

RATBY PARENT and TODDLER GROUP

We are open again in the Village Hall, under new management.
Come along on **Wednesdays** in term time, **9.30-11.30**. £2.00 a session.

Families and their under 5s are welcome!

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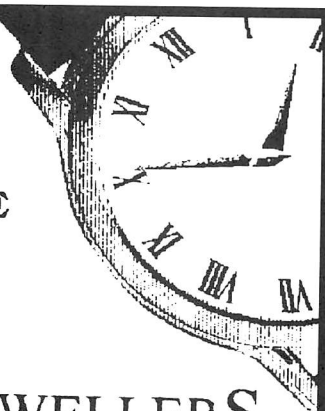
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QUIZ AND MYSTERY

Bradgate Twinning Association held their annual Quiz Evening recently at Newtown Linford Village Hall. 120 contestants ably controlled by a splendidly organised quiz master had a lively evening that had a break midway for an exceptional supper. 15 teams battled it out over eight rounds, one of which was the interval quiz. Competition was fierce but this time there was a clear winner so we did not have to resort to a decider. All the teams contributed to the fun and it was a great evening.

We have organised a Murder Mystery Evening to take place on the 16th June, 7.15 for 7.30pm start, price to be advised. This is always very popular so we suggest that you contact our Social Secretary 0116 287 3119 soon as people are already asking for tickets and we don't want to disappoint you.
Robert Hill.



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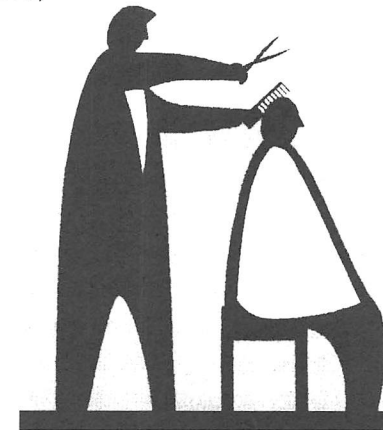
PASS PLUS AND MOTORWAY LESSONS

THE DEMON BARBER

Whilst sorting out some old papers I came across this verse, written thirty years ago while my kids were still at school. It was intended for a local history project the kids were doing at school, but it was never submitted. I thought it might put them off the barber!

It was written through the eyes of a 7/8 year old boy during the late 1940s, and it is how I remember it. The prevailing 'thrill' for children at that time was the story of 'Sweeney Todd, also known as 'The Demon Barber of Fleet Street,' who used to murder his customers and put them into meat pies.

We used to sing a little doggerel in the playground;



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Sweeney Todd the Barber
went to shave his father.
The razor broke
and cut his throat
Sweeney Todd the Barber.

The above might help you to understand the trepidation with which we entered the Ratby Barber shop. The shop in question is now Julie's Hairdressing, One bit of the shop was partitioned off with a curtain from behind which emanated some strange and peculiar smells.

As kids we thought that's where the ghastly deeds were done because every now and again the proprietor would pause and disappear behind the curtain. You held your breath until he reappeared. In truth he was perming, or whatever it is women have done to their hair, and the fluid used in this process smelled pretty foul, at least to a little lad. It was also very dark in there, with only enough light to cut hair over the barber's chair. Facing the wall, and in the darkest part of that wall sat Johnny Toon. He wasn't necessarily a customer, but he just used to sit in the shop talking to Mr Ingram the barber. The point is that Johnny always wore black, and a black cap, but his complexion was very pale, and with him sitting in a dark corner it gave his face an almost disembodied look. The inevitable comment of 'cut his ears off Walter' did nothing for ones piece of mind.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

PABARI'S RATBY NEWS

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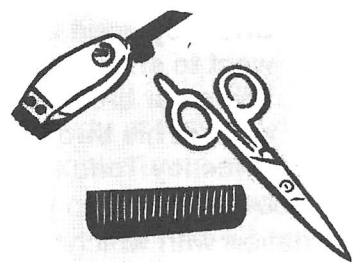
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THE DEMON BARBER, Continued from page 9



Johnny and Walter served in World War 1, and no doubt they would be swapping anecdotes and experiences from that time. One or other would say something funny, and be convulsed with paroxysms of laughter. The head with no body looked even worse laughing. Mr Ingram was always smoking, and usually he would light a cigarette on beginning a hair cut, and not remove it from his mouth until he'd finished, so, as the verse says, 'The ash from his fag, it dropped down your back....'

As I got older and knew the two characters better, obviously my feelings changed. They were two of the 'stalwarts' of Ratby in those days....but the verse was written through the eyes of a child.

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The Demon Barber of Main Street

When we came out of school,
'stead of playing the fool,
and running up 'ome for us tea
with us 'earts in us gob
we went down Ingram's shop
for an 'aircut that ar Dads could see.*

We went in the door
us eyes on the floor
Inside our steps would falter.
When from out of the gloom
spoke up old Johnny Toon,
saying 'cut his ears off Walter.*

As we kneeled in that chair
surrounded by 'air
with ar 'eads sunk into our shoulders
The scissors would snip
'The blood it'll drip
If you don't sit still, so 'e told us.

The ash from 'is fag
it dropped down yer back
Yer eyes were screwed up with the smoke
While 'im and old Toonie
were cackling like loonies,
us kids we just didn't see the joke.

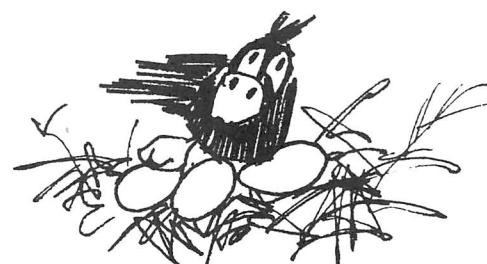
At last it were done,
back out in the sun
through an ordeal that no words could tell
You'd gen 'im yer tanners
and with no thoughts of manners,
ya ran 'ome like a bat out of hell.

*Your dad needed to see that you'd had a haircut and not wasted his money.

*Obviously intended as a jest,
but not seen that way by a little lad.

RATBY LAD

This should bring back a few memories...and we'd love to hear more recollections. Editor



AGE Concern

Leicestershire & Rutland

Age Concern Leicestershire and Rutland Campaign for Fairer Council Tax

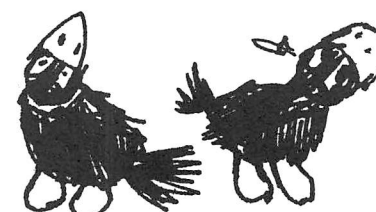
Steep hikes in council tax in recent years, coupled with a new round of council tax bills later this month are leaving many local residents struggling to pay their bills, warns Age Concern Leicestershire and Rutland. That's why the charity is campaigning for the Government to replace council tax with a fairer system, more closely linked to people's ability to pay. For while council tax has almost doubled since 1997, the Basic State Pension has gone up by barely a third – forcing many older people in Leicestershire and Rutland to cut back on essential heating, food and social activities.

Until the system is completely overhauled, the charity is calling on the Government to make it easier for older people to claim Council Tax Benefit. As a first step, Age Concern Leicestershire and Rutland wants a single telephone claim line to be put in place and more progress to be made on the introduction of automatic payments. The charity is also calling for the removal of the £16,000 savings threshold which complicates the system and means that many people miss out because of modest retirement savings.

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Local Man Honoured

At the end of last year the Leicestershire & Rutland Youth Justice Board presented Mr Ken Hunnybun with a 'National Justice Long Service Award for Continued Commitment and Dedication'.

Ken has devoted nearly 45 years to improving youth and youth justice services. Although he worked for many years as practitioner and manager, he is equally known for his voluntary work in establishing and developing membership associations to improve services to, and the experience of, young people. Much of his early work was direct with young people in youth work, including setting up youth clubs in Shropshire. Mostly, his work has been with young people in trouble, in intermediate treatment, mainstream youth justice and most notably perhaps, in the diversion scheme in Leicestershire.

Ken has been committed to developing community based services and, in particular, to good communication and multi- or inter-agency work practices.

In his own words, the main theme driving Ken's career "has been to bring together workers from different agencies working with young people to strengthen the work of all involved to the benefit of children and young people".

Since his retirement he has continued to work for the National Association for Youth Justice as an administrator and conference organiser.

DEADLINE for issue 124

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