

# UPPINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The Voice of Civil Society in Uppingham



## Newsletter August 2019

### Neighbourhood Forum AGM Thursday August 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 7.30pm Garden Terrace - The Falcon Hotel

Welcome to the third UNF newsletter of 2019 which is published just ahead of the next public meeting of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum. Agenda items include:-

- 2019 Executive Committee AGM recommendations
- 'Hospital developments' and 'Dementia in Uppingham and Rutland' – Presentations from those taking a lead in the community
- Uppingham Homes CLT – A presentation on this new community led housing initiative intended to benefit Uppingham and its surrounding parishes
- The latest on a cinema for Rutland and possibly Uppingham
- An update on the work being undertaken to renew the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan
- Community Emergency Plan update with three more defibrillators for Uppingham – Where are they to be located and who funded them?
- The Uppingham Hopper – how is it doing?
- Post Office, bank and cash machine updates

Please note that an exhibition of some of the projects created and led by the Forum and its partners will be on display at the meeting.

**Come early for a good seat!**

**Are you housebound and unable to attend? Why not telephone for an update after the meeting? 01572 823465**

### Uppingham Hopper Driver Training

**Want to support a great community project? Interested in volunteering as a driver? Do you have two or more half days a month available on a regular basis? We are currently planning the next two day training programme for would-be drivers. Please get in touch to learn more.**

**01572 495050   rons@clara.net**

**COME ALONG  
AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT...**

# CHOICE Unlimited

**PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING  
IN AND AROUND RUTLAND**

INFORMATION, SERVICES AND PRODUCTS FOR  
CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES,  
OLDER PEOPLE, AND CARERS.

## Rutland Showground

**Wednesday 23rd October 2019, 12 – 6pm**

**Showground Way, (Off Burley Park Way)  
Oakham LE15 7TW**

To find out more or enquire about exhibiting,  
contact **0116 222 5005**

Email: **choiceunlimitedrutland@yahoo.com**

**@ChoiceRutland   @ChoiceUnlimitedRutland**

NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDED

### Events in 2019

- **Health Plan for Rutland Public Meeting** – Sept 4<sup>th</sup>
- **Choice Unlimited** - October 23<sup>rd</sup> – Rutland Showground - See details above
- **Christmas Craft Fair** - Nov 1<sup>st</sup> - The Falcon Hotel Stalls now fully booked - Free entry
- **Fatstock Show** - Nov 27<sup>th</sup> - Market Place
- **Christmas in Uppingham** – December 5<sup>th</sup>

### E J Toon Charitable Trust

Over 80 years of age and lived in Uppingham for two years or more? You are eligible for £50 this Christmas. Trustees of the above charity have given advance notice that the deadline for registration with the Trust this year is November 1<sup>st</sup> Current recipients of the £50 annual gift need take no action. Registration forms are available from 01572 823465.

### In Memory of Robert Wills

Uppingham community champion Robert Wills, who died earlier this year, supported the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum from its inception by offering free accommodation for its meetings. A tribute to him first published in the Rutland Times and then distributed at his funeral is reproduced overleaf.

# Mr Uppingham



Robert Wills

If Uppingham were a kingdom surely there is one man who would have deserved recognition as royalty. Major employer, property owner, international businessman, leather goods manufacturer, sports club and youth champion, community benefactor, hotelier par excellence, brewer, restaurant patron, company director extraordinaire, honorary Rotarian and loyal friend Robert Hugo Weyl Wills, has died. Known to many as Mr Uppingham, his contribution to the history, development and international recognition of Uppingham has been remarkable. I offer a personal perspective on the man. Robert was born in July 1949. Companies House records show 36 active directorships at the time of his death. A remarkable work ethic and a straight talking approach to business earned him respect from business leaders across a wide range of industries. Like his father before him, his core business for many years was the production of high quality leather goods using predominantly local labour sold through internationally recognised outlets. His younger years travelling around Europe acquiring the raw materials necessary to source the production lines was a period of adventure he occasionally talked about as was the time he heard about his father's death and had

to take over leadership of the family business.

Robert was the second largest employer in Uppingham. His decision to diversify into the hospitality business was a further stroke of good fortune for Uppingham. The acquisition of Don Paddy's and subsequent ownership of the old HSBC bank building gained a foothold in the market place. The wine bar culture with atmosphere to match continued to grow, nurturing a developing outdoor cafe society. Add music and occasional events and one can see why the venue has remained popular with young and old. Among my memories will be how Robert would often talk with pride of how he met and developed a working relationship with James Torbell, once Uppingham's youngest licensee and now a director and leading figure within the family business. He was all for young people!

It was a stroke of genius and hugely popular when Robert acquired the rather run down Falcon Hotel. It was desperately in need of investment and a quality refit. "What does Robert Wills know about hotels? The Falcon is not a viable investment" said one former leader of the County Council. How wrong that critic was! A top to bottom quality physical restoration of the building has resulted in a vibrant community hub and a new heart for the town centre. In partnership with wife Carol, supported by James and the staff team, Robert went on to create an outstanding quality venue catering for everything from major weddings and business conferences to a tourism destination attracting five star on line reviews for its bedrooms and quality of service. Most recently it is the home of the Uppingham Brewery.

Robert's subsequent acquisition of The Vaults pub completed a move to protect and preserve quality in Uppingham's primary physical asset, the Market Place. Perhaps it should now be called

Wills Square in his memory. However, it is the character of the man, not just his business achievements, which earned him his reputation as Rutland's most amiable Patron.

I first met Robert Wills when I was serving as Uppingham Town Mayor. I had written to 30 business folk in the town asking for an hour of their time to talk about how we might work together to move the town forward. Robert was the first to respond, and with typical generosity, invited me to talk over lunch. From that initial conversation, a nationwide recognised business and community governance relationship has evolved. He was the founding Chair of the Uppingham First Community Partnership, a staunch supporter of the Uppingham Business Forum and has provided a first class venue for the quarterly public meetings of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum from its inception. Others, more knowledgeable than I, will talk of his contribution to education, youth service and sport. I can confirm he was the driving force behind preserving a quality high street. Fibre to the premise broadband, free wifi, Rutland's first electric car charging point, the Uppingham Webcam, the Uppingham Golden Ticket, the Uppingham Hopper are just a few of the town centre projects he invested in and helped champion. Little wonder that Robert was the recipient of a Biz Club Annual Award for his work. Uppingham and Rutland have lost a great community champion. The community's condolences to Carol Wills and her children; they have every reason to be proud of their family contribution to the town's heritage.

May Robert rest in peace.....

**Ron Simpson BEM**  
Coordinator  
Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum

Printed and published by Uppingham  
Neighbourhood Forum - 7 Hawthorn  
Drive, Uppingham Tel: 01572 495050