

TOTNES TIMES



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Totnes Gazette

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Spike town's gulls menace!



Birds feeding on fish and chips, says businessman

by **RICHARD DAVIES**

A TOTNES businessman is backing a spiky idea he hopes will take wing in the battle against seagulls who plague residents – while providing work for local contractors.

Richard O'Connell is rapidly becoming known as the Seagull Man after fighting the district council election with policies aimed at discouraging the birds widely regarded as pests.

And he is warning that people who feed the gulls are changing their lives, as they won't go out to sea, where they look magnificent, if they can

gorge on fish and chips on Vire Island.

Totnes-born Mr O'Connell, who is passionate about the environment, noticed the problem when he moved back to the town in 2004 and bought a house in Jubilee Road.

'We are quite a high point here in Totnes and seagulls like a high lookout from their lives on cliffs, and they tend to use the high points of the houses as look-out areas and also to nest,' he said.

'So the female nests

and the male sits on the highest point of the house as a lookout, to protect her.'

He said: 'We had problems with the cars getting covered in seagull muck and the washing, when we put the washing out we had to wash it again, because the seagulls circle around.'

'So we started to think is there any way we can stop them landing on the roof or the chimney.'

He looked on the internet and discovered a Bovey Tracey company which manufactured seagull spikes, selling them all over the world but not installing them.

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Help plea over traffic problem

WANTED – a small group of ordinary men and women in the street who will help get traffic-snarled Totnes moving again.

This is the rallying cry which is going out from the town's traffic and transport forum in the wake of Totnes on the Move workshops.

The volunteers will join Devon County Council officers, Totnes county councillor Paula Black and South Hams Council officers with representatives of local

organisations on a 12-strong steering committee to filter ideas from the workshops attended by around 200 people in March.

Controversial ideas such as a by-pass, a town congestion charge and charging for workplace parking have already been raised at the workshops. These will be some of the ideas – including a park and ride and chamber of trade chairman Paul

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Dangerous Dads going totally wild

TOTNES Dangerous Dads are taking a walk on the wild side – and getting nettled – on Saturday.

With the help of expert Robin Mulder from Wildwood Journeys, the dads and youngsters will be learning about hedge-row history, as well as spotting animal tracks, badger runs and birds of prey.

Robin will also be explaining what can and cannot be eaten in Devon's hedges – this includes showing the children how to pick and eat a raw stinging nettle without being stung.

Organiser Ian Blackwell said: 'The wild walk is a regular one now and is always very popular. It is a great event exploring the spring time hedgerows, looking for animal tracks and getting muddy – so wear wellies.'

'With a fire and a rope swing as well, it's going to be great fun. The walk is open to all dads and male carers and their young children in the area.'

'New people are always welcome.'

The event is £3 per dad, with children under five free, and no booking is required. At least one child must be of pre-school age, five or under.

To find out where to meet, email Ian Blackwell at dangerousdads@btinternet.com or call 01803 840990.

Man denies two charges

A MAN has denied assault and resisting arrest.

David Hancox, 28, of Fore Street, Brixham, denied assaulting Nicola Brown and resisting PC Mark Eggar in the execution of his duty. The alleged offences occurred in Brixham on April 25.

Hancox was remanded on bail on condition he does not contact Miss Brown and does not go to an address in Mount Pleasant Road, Brixham.

Torquay magistrates adjourned last week's hearing for a trial at the Newton Abbot court on June 16.

Car park to be repaired

THE car parking area at the top of Kingsbridge Hill, which overlooks Totnes, is to be closed on Friday for essential maintenance and resurfacing.

The area, once a popular beauty spot, is now much used by drivers unable to use the residents' parking zones.

Missing man was unlawfully killed



Contributed
Cllr Alan Gorman, Richard Reynolds and Lyla Patel behind the transformed flowerbed, a tribute to Margot Vickers

Flowerbed tribute to a guerrilla gardener

GUERRILLA gardener Margot Vickers has the kind of memorial she would probably have wanted – a transformed flowerbed.

When Richard Reynolds, her grandson, came to Totnes for her memorial service, he was upset to see the state of a small flowerbed near Seymour Court.

He had helped his grandmother plant up the bed a couple of years ago when she was at the tender age of 93.

But nothing had been done to it since, although Totnes In Bloom volunteers had dug over the bed and tidied it several times, and trimmed the winter-damaged flowering plant cordylone.

But the group had no funds or support for replanting – and their next step was to



Contributed
The flowerbed before it was improved

plead with South Hams Council for help.

However, Diana Cusack, of Totnes In Bloom, said Richard, the founder of Guerrilla Gardening, and Lyla Patel, donated plants and energy, several passers-by, including town councillor Alan Gorman, pitched in to help, and tea was

brought out by local resident Lyn Stocks.

Diana said: 'A major and shameful Totnes eyesore was transformed in a couple of hours. Now visitors crossing the bridge by car, or rounding the corner from the coach and ferry drop off at Steamer Quay Road, will be delighted by what they see.'

AN inquest without a body has been told that a killer may have used his knowledge of potholing in the countryside to make sure his victim is never found.

Forty-seven-year-old Stephen Price hasn't been seen since he was heard arguing with Andrew Lawless, an outdoor sports enthusiast, outside his house three years ago.

Police have searched the isolated Larcombe Quarry at Diptford and a disused copper mine near Ashburton during their inquiries.

The Totnes area was scoured after Lawless made a telephone call suggesting he was travelling towards the town.

Lawless, 43, is serving a life sentence after being found guilty of stabbing Mr Price in a row over parking outside his home in Paignton.

Lawless called the police to complain that Mr Price, a father of three, was pelting his van with golf balls but officers were unable to attend because it was a

by RICHARD DAVIES

busy bank holiday evening.

Murder inquiry spokesman Det Insp Gerry Mudge told the inquest that Lawless informed a friend he had 'cut up' his victim.

Neighbours reported hearing a heavy object being dragged to the van on a piece of tarpaulin taken from a nearby garden.

'Lawless was a potholer, he knew obscure parts of the countryside and he was a mountain bike rider who knew South Devon very, very well,' the policeman said.

South Devon Coroner Ian Arrow, who needed special permission from the Ministry of Justice to hold an inquest without a body, said he was satisfied that Mr Price had been murdered even though the means by which he was killed remained unknown.

He recorded a verdict of unlawful killing.

Talks continue over waste plan

A PRIVATE meeting this week between MVV Environment Devonport Ltd and Sam Gilpin Demolition Ltd will determine the membership of a local liaison committee regarding proposals for an incinerator waste recycling facility in Whitecleaves Quarry, Buckfastleigh.

At an exhibition in the town in February, MVV set out its proposals for an operation which would recycle bottom ash produced by the proposed waste incinerator at North Yard, Devonport and which would be trucked to Buckfastleigh.

About 20 people expressed an interest in being committee members when they completed feedback forms at the exhibition.

They have been invited to the initial meeting at which it is hoped to decide who should represent the community on the committee.

The intention is for the committee to meet regularly to discuss matters arising from MVV and Gilpin's proposals for the quarry. Not only will it meet

throughout the planning stage, but if it is granted permission, will also meet during the construction and entire operational period.

The committee will consist of residents and elected representatives, as well as members from MVV and Sam Gilpin Demolition.

Paul Carey, managing director of MVV, said he hoped it would encourage dialogue between the company and site operators Gilpin Demolition and local representatives.

'This will enable us to provide more detailed information, if required, than is normally possible at a public exhibition or meeting,' he said.

MVV, which is holding another exhibition next month, has received a scoping opinion from Devon County Council on the proposals. The opinion sets out the information the authority considers vital to inform the planning process. This includes an environmental impact assessment.

MVV is currently formulating its response.

Pre-school wedding celebration

CHILDREN at Harbertonford Pre-school celebrated the marriage of Prince William and Catherine Middleton by holding a royal wedding day party.

Children dressed-up and helped to make flags, bunting and flowers for the table.

They acted out a traditional wedding ceremony, listened to a story about a Nigerian wedding and shared a wedding cake baked by a willing parent. The afternoon was rounded off like all good wedding receptions, with a wedding disco.

Pre-school leader Lee Friese-Greene said: 'The children really enjoyed the day.'

'Apparently a number of them went home and asked to try on their parents' wedding outfits!'

The children are now looking forward to the summer term when they will be enjoying plenty of outdoor play, and planting flowers and vegetables.

The pre-school is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Inquiries and visitors always welcome. Call 07772597802 for more details.

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