

Meeting set to ponder low-carbon

VILLAGERS in Brassington are invited to a meeting to hear more about an ambitious plan to set up a low-carbon heating system in the village.

Consulting engineers, Shar-energy of Shrewsbury, together with their partners, Carbon Alternatives, have been invited by Brassington Community Heating to give a presentation at the village hall on Thursday, April 28 from 6.30pm.

Villagers will hear more about the results of a study into the feasibility of providing a district heating system for the village, which is made up of 225 households, a primary school, church, village hall and two pubs.

Much of the village is in a conservation area and there are several listed buildings and, with no main gas in the village, householders are currently having to buy oil and LPG to heat their homes.

Brassington Community Heating, a volunteer-run Community Interest Company, says pressure for a low-cost and low-emission heating alternative has been emphasised both by the recent increases in the cost of all hydrocarbon fuels and as a result of last autumn's IPCC CoP26 meeting.

Plant swap for Ukraine

MEMBERS of Ashbourne Methodist Church are organising a Plant and Seed Swap on Easter Saturday, April 16, from 10am until noon, to raise money for Ukraine.

People are invited to bring along half a pack of seeds, or a pot of seedlings, or a rooted cutting, and exchange it for something that someone else has brought.

Anyone without something to swap can instead choose to make a donation which will go towards the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

The Church Street Church will also be giving out "Take-out Church" bags, which contain Easter activities for pre-school and primary children.

Burrows to open Monday

THE Burrows Gardens in Brailsford will be open to the public for a day on Easter Monday, as part of the National Garden Scheme.

The fund-raising initiative encourages garden owners to open their gates and show off their lawns and borders to help raise money for a variety of charities.

Visitors to the garden, in Burrows Lane, will be able to peruse the immaculate lawns, exotic rare plants and trees, and old favourites.

They will be open from 11am until 4pm and admission is £5, with children admitted free. Refreshments are available.

To find out more visit ngs.org.uk

Blind turner makes candle stand for church anniversary



LEADERS at St John's Church have finally caught up with a celebration of the Buxton Road church's 150th anniversary by commissioning a special candle stand from a local wood turner.

The church had been poised to celebrate the milestone in 2020, but the pandemic put paid to plans. And a service is due to take place on Sunday, to bless the church's new keepsake.

The Paschal candle stand has been exquisitely crafted by Hulland Ward-based Chris Fisher, who has forged a reputation for his beautiful wood work despite being blind.

Mr Fisher is the first blind turner to be accepted on to Register of Professional Turners, and other commissions he has carried out for churches include a wooden collection plate for his local place of worship, Christ Church in Hulland.

Rev Pip Short said: "Chris has made an absolutely beautiful candle stand for us. It is 4ft tall in turned wood and is stained in colours to reflect the local pastoral countryside along with abstract patterns representing the county lanes and also stained glass windows."

Rev Short will lead a service to bless the stand on Easter Sunday, April 17 from 9.15am, when traditionally the Paschal Candle is lit.



Chris Fisher with his stand

Rival mayor praises Town Team's Levelling Up bid

By Gareth Butterfield

gareth.butterfield@ashbournenewstelegraph.co.uk

THE Mayor of Matlock was among the councillors heaping praise on Ashbourne Town Team's "shovel-ready" bid for more than £12 million government funding, as he graciously accepted the fact that his neighbouring town put together a better package.

A handful of volunteers spent 18 months on an ambitious blueprint for a suite of improvements in Ashbourne, and put them forward as a joint or rival bid to a similar set of regeneration schemes in Matlock.

Both schemes were studied by consultants hired by Derbyshire Dales District Council and the consultants recommended councillors shift their focus to the more well-established set of proposals in Ashbourne. And all it needed was the rubber stamp.

That rubber stamp was firmly applied on Wednesday, after members of the district council's Community and Environment Committee voted unanimously to take the next steps towards trying to win the slice of the government's £4.8 billion Levelling-up Fund 2.

And Councillor Steve Wain, civic chairman of the Derbyshire Dales, ward member for

Matlock All Saints, and Matlock's Mayor, was among those who praised Ashbourne Town Team's detailed regeneration plans, which include a major overhaul of the streetscape, a selection of improvement to public spaces in the town centre, a transformation of Ashbourne Methodist Church, and linking up forgotten areas of the town.

Councillor Wain said: "As a regular visitor to Ashbourne, it has become apparent to me that it is in need of some refurbishment, there's no doubt about that, and I don't mean that in a negative way. "I think, from seeing Matlock, it's doing well at the moment in my opinion, and I'm not just saying that because I'm the mayor, but it is doing well at the moment. There's a good footfall, and we have hopefully got the cinema that will be coming along."

He then spoke about the complex structure bids have to adhere to if they are to be

in with a chance of standing out among a host of other schemes in country, all vying for the same Government handout. He said: "There's a lot of criteria in this, and Ashbourne is a lot better-placed to fulfil that, and I just hope that you get it moved along and, if you have got some money left, we'll have some paving."

It was Ashbourne's councillor Sue Bull that seconded the proposal to approve the recommendation that Ashbourne is put forward.

She explained to members that while Matlock had an impressive scheme to put forward in its cinema project, which had already been mooted for stage one of the funding scheme, Ashbourne Town Team had been working "really very hard" to ensure all its projects were "shovel ready", which would make them more appealing to the government and better suit the bid criteria.

She said: "I certainly know now from what I've seen in documents from the town

team that they have really been working very, very hard to get all these implementations through.

"And I hope that Ashbourne do go forward and we get in, and we do get the levelling up bid fund.

"But, I can assure you, that the town team are adamant that this will go ahead irrespective.

"It's already there, and it will happen, but it would be nice to think the government is going to pay for something instead of the local people half the time."

Earlier in the meeting, the council's leader Garry Purdy told councillors Ashbourne's traders had been wrongly blaming Ashbourne's high parking fees for a downturn in footfall.

Instead, he suggested, it was because they had ignored recommendations in an economic assessment that had been published in 2014.

Referring to a meeting he and county councillors attended shortly before the pandemic, he said there had been one happy outcome in those early days.

He said: "We did manage to achieve a very good result, and that was thanks to Anne Wright, who responded very positively to that meeting and

set the town team up."

After dismissing any suggestions that the council's leading Conservative group had been showing bias towards Ashbourne, he said: "I'm pleased to see Ashbourne has come on leaps and bounds from where we were at a few weeks ago, and I welcome the fact they're being put forward."

Although the pandemic presented challenges to the town team's early work, its handful of volunteers managed to attract enough funding to set up a new brand for Ashbourne, along with a detailed website which offers visitors and residents everything from a directory of businesses, to a round-up of forthcoming events.

Councillors also discussed in detail a further recommendation that a host of infrastructure projects in Matlock should be worked on to make sure they were more ready for appropriate future funding bids, including flood resilience schemes. These are being led by a group similar in structure, but longer-established, called Matlock Vision.

Ashbourne Town Team will work with councillors and consultants on their bid, which needs to be submitted in June, and we will find out in autumn whether or not the bid has been successful.

“I can assure you, that the town team are adamant that this will go ahead irrespective.”

Cllr Sue Bull