

Mill Bank & Cottonstones Newsletter

Spring 2024



The Mill Bank Group was set up in 2002. Its purposes are to look after the public spaces and to protect and improve the quality of life in Mill Bank and the surrounding area. This includes social activities and community events.

The group operates in a spirit of openness and co-operation and respects individual differences.

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter. This year, the Mill Bank Group will bring you quarterly news once again in a printed newsletter, delivered to all households. You also can use WhatsApp, Email, and the Mill Bank Village Website to keep in touch and find out what's happening. See the details below.

A new team was elected at the group's AGM last year and is busy planning fun for the year, plus a tidy-up of the village to make us beautiful again. Who's who on the new committee is at the bottom of the page, with information on how to get in touch and how to find out more.

There will be news of events in the year ahead, dates for your calendar, progress with campaigns, snippets of village history and more. This is your newsletter, so please get in touch and send news, a photo, a date to remember, or a few lines about someone you miss. Contact Michael 077 568 22995 or email michaelbeazley40@gmail.com

We hope everyone will enjoy some of the planned events and social activities this year and encourage you to come along or join one of the groups that will be tidying up in the coming months.

Keeping in Touch

Website: <https://www.millbankvillage.co.uk/>. A beautiful village website packed with local information and pictures of the village and its history.

WhatsApp: Search for the Mill Bank Group and ask the Admin to let you in if you haven't already. The daily posts cover all sorts of useful and often entertaining chat – from buying and selling, through lost dogs, rare birds, to emergency information when things go wrong. If you're not online yet, but fancy a go at it, see the piece at the bottom of page 4.

NEW! 561/562 WhatsApp group for dedicated bus chat.

Email Newsletter: Sign up and have this newsletter by email along with any in-between supplements. On the website, find the block on the footer where you can enter your email address. That will register you to receive the newsletter.

Facebook: the page is under review and not currently useable.

Mill Bank Group Committee 2024: Gail Parker (Chair), Fiona Peach (Secretary-messages to 07962474914), Linda Wilson (Treasurer, 07341443989), John Anderson (01422 823589), David Bagley, Michael Beazley (077568 22995), Ellie Fitzgerald, Tony Gledhill (07770598317), Mike Godfrey, Peter Hardy (07531 806279), Keith Kemp (01422 823687), Glynis Lord, Bronwen Pendleton (christopher174@sky.com), Phillipa Walton.

Events 2024

- March:** -Toad Patrol (throughout)
-Village tidy up 16th -17th
- May:** -19th Mill Bank Heritage Walk;
tea, cake & plant swap
- June:** -Village Tidy up (more cake)
- Aug:** -Summer Gathering/ BBQ
- Sept** -8th Rushbearing
-15th-Cottonstones History Walk
- Nov:** - Bonfire Night
- Christmas Fair
- Dec:** - Christmas Carols
- Wreath Making

Dates and details for some events will be confirmed later.

Fixing Up the Village

As usual, there is a long list of clearing up and repair jobs that have been identified around the village. The MB Group has listed these following a walkabout and is organising work groups to tidy up over the year.

A committee member will be taking the lead for small areas that need sweeping, weeding, planting and minor repairs. The areas are:

- *Ivy Houses - Village Stone - Birks Lane*
- *Around the School*
- *School to Mill Bank Close*
- *Lower Mill Bank Road*

Volunteers - please meet at the School noticeboard 10.30am on 16th and/or 17th March. Bring gloves.

The Mill Bank Group is run by volunteers. The costs of looking after the village come from the proceeds of calendar sales and other merchandise, from donations and occasional grants for special projects.

If you'd like to donate to support the care of village, please contact the Treasurer, Linda Wilson: 07341443989

Cottonstones Toad Patrol

Every year, from early March to the end of April, toads cross the three lanes in Cottonstones from their homes in the undergrowth to reach the Cottonstones mill pond, their ancestral breeding ground. Every year, many of the toads are killed by vehicles, but *you* can help save them! Volunteers spend an hour or so every evening when dusk falls picking up the toads (they don't bite – they don't have teeth!) and taking them across the lanes in buckets. When the weather is warm and damp, more and more toads will make this perilous journey.

You'll need a torch, bucket and something high-vis to wear. The Cottonstones Patrol was registered in 2017 with Froglife, a national conservation charity and since then we have carried thousands of toads across the lanes to safety. We feed the full results each season into a national database to see how the UK toad population is faring.

Training can be given. If you are interested and want to find out more about toad patrolling and the extraordinary life of these gentle creatures, please contact Charlotte on Charlotte@charlottew.co.uk or 07801 968404 (please text rather than phone).

Find a toad and don't want to patrol? Then gently pick it up and move it off the road, preferably into a field on the same side as the mill pond.

Campaigns

Our **electricity supply** had quite a battering in the winter gales, and some areas west of Cottonstones continued to have power cuts. But in Mill Bank, power cuts seemed to be fewer and only brief. Progress of sorts following improved "vegetation management"?

The **water campaign** continues. Yorkshire Water responded positively to our petition by making a proposal in December 23 for an upgrade to the mains supply at Mill Bank. But YW's current line (phone call in February) is that the Capital Funding Team may take months to decide *if and when* to allocate funds. "Ask again in a few months" was their best advice. The MB Group is considering how to respond to this disappointing news.

Village History Group

Mill Bank has a unique and dramatic history. Have you a question for our local historians? Ben asks; 'Are there any mills still standing, and which was the oldest?'



Of the seven mills that once provided employment for Mill Bankers, none are now operating. The last mill to remain in the textile trade was Lower Soyland Mill. Ryburn Knitwear used the premises to make up woollen garments into the 1970s. The mill has now been converted into flats. All the others are in ruins.

Send your queries to rhbeazley@gmail.com and to learn more, come on

our Heritage Walks. Read more on www.millbankvillage.co.uk or buy the book 'Mill Bank. The story of a West Yorkshire Village'.

Heritage Walks: Last year's Heritage walk will be repeated on Sunday 19th May and a new walk based on Cottonstones will be on Sunday 15th September. Each walk will be followed by tea and irresistible cakes. All welcome.

Please book your place with Ruth as numbers are limited for safety reasons. On the village WhatsApp, or 07753748482, or rhbeazley@gmail.com

Village Books & Merchandise

- Mill Bank and area special map from Fiona 077568 22995
Price-£3.99, or 20% discount via Bitcoin LN.
- Mill Bank: The Story of a West Yorkshire Village, by Hazel Whitely and Ruth Beazley. £10. Tel Ruth 077 537 48482
- Mill Bank Tote Bags. £8.00 Tel Ruth 077 537 48482
- Mill Bank and area tea towels £8.00. Tel Ruth 077 537 48482
- Heritage Walk Booklet £2 – these will be free to people attending, but if you can't be there and would like a booklet contact Ruth 077 537 48482

Mind and Body

Keep Fit at Cottonstones Church, Wed evenings 7.00pm. No need to book - just turn up with a mat for floor work. Great music too. Phone 823589 for more information. £5 per session.

French for Fun lessons with Ellie are going strong. Places are available at the United Reformed Church in Halifax on a Monday and in Mill Bank on Tuesdays. Beginners classes will begin in June on Wednesdays. Watch this space for **Spanish for Fun** Beginner classes from September. Please contact Ellie for more details at ellie@languageforfun.uk or 07868 279513.

Talking Points: Please let us know if you have a view about: Re-entering the Yorkshire in Bloom competition? Planting or other work to the bank in front of Mill Bank Close? (When the contractor stopped cutting the grass, planting yellow rattle was suggested)

The Reservoir Walk

This is a quite a long but flat walk, taking in 4 Reservoirs en route - 8½ miles. Stout shoes/ boots/ drinks and OS South Pennine map. Can be quite exposed.

Start at the car park just below the “White House Inn” (recommended for hearty eaters) on the Ripponden to Littlebrough Road (A58). Walk back past the pub to the gate for the Pennine way on the left. Follow the reservoir wall on the right to the end -¼ mile- but then bear NNE at the end to follow a track across the moor (there is a signpost, but if you are not sure simply follow the main PW path for a mile and then turn right on a wide track).

On the original path, after another ¾ of a mile you will pass near to a Pylon on your right and will see the second Reservoir ahead (White Holme). Skirt round to the right of the Reservoir on a wide path which after a mile or so becomes narrower. The obvious path now continues northwards following a drain, but after another 1¼ miles turns left. There are no real alternative paths so simply follow this good path westwards until after another 1¼ miles it meets the main Pennine Way. Follow this path left in a SSW direction for another 3¼ miles, passing Warland Basin and Light Hazzles reservoirs, and Blackstone Edge Reservoir now on your left until you come back to the A58 again.

If you are flagging, call in at the White House for some good food/ale.

A shorter version of this walk (and more child friendly) is simply to walk 1½ miles N on the Pennine Way, turn right on the wide track previously mentioned and after another ½ mile at the southern tip of White Holme look for the track across the moor on the right going towards the pylon. IMPORTANT: Before the pylon look for a narrow track between rocks going in a SSW direction. If you miss this track, you will come out on the other side of Blackstone Edge Reservoir.

Happy Walking.

Plant Swap – Save your Spares!

There will be a plant swap following the Heritage Walk on 19 May at Gledhill Farm, Nathan Lane, from 3pm. Tea and cake also available for a donation.

Book Group

The group of about 8-12 has met monthly on the last Thursday of the month for the last 14 or so years. We read all sorts; timeless classics, newer books, even plays. Last month we read “Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress” and this month it’s Claire Keegan’s book called “Small Things Like These”.

We meet in each other’s houses and about once a year we have a social evening and usually watch a film related to one of the books. It’s great fun, we try not to make the reading too daunting, and we welcome new members. If you love reading as we do and would like to share your enthusiasm, come and join us.

Ring John Anderson on 823589 for more details.

St Mary’s Church Services

Services are held on the first Sunday of the month at 11.30.

The Social Centre can be booked for events. This consists of a downstairs room adjacent to the worship area which has a kitchen, and a large upstairs room with a wooden floor suitable for a wide range of functions. Phone 01422 822936 for booking.

School Term Dates

The school closes for the Easter break on 22nd March, and re-opens on 8th April. Half term is 24th May-4th June, and the summer term ends on 19th July.

Going Online for Beginners

If you would like to go online but are not sure about it, we might run a few informal sessions on what you need, how to do it, and how to stay safe. Contact Michael on 0775 6822 995