

Mill Bank & Cottonstones Newsletter Autumn 2025



A Summer of Content?

This summer's warmth has worked its magic in the village. There is so much to celebrate; the kindness of neighbours, the returning wildlife, the (mostly) cheerful dogs, our excellent school, a beautiful landscape, through to the summer moon rising above the hill. We have a growing knowledge of the village's fascinating history too – with the prospect of a digitised archive next year, and a new book about the early 20th century to be launched on 14th September. The Community Centre is once more alive with happy events.

We are enjoying a huge improvement in communications, with lively daily exchanges online, trading goods, and looking after each other...not to mention the care for our beloved cats and dogs.

Hundreds of hours of work by volunteers make a real contribution every year to care for the place – in the community garden, weeding the pavements, planting, carrying out repairs and improving security.

Even so, many of the public spaces are in a poor condition, and there's only so much that volunteers can do. The village is suffering from the lack of timely and effective services. The crumbling water supply, anti-social behaviour and crime, cancelled buses, the winter gritting fiasco, blocked gullies, weed covered pavements and tarmac patches to replace stolen Yorkshire stone paving slabs are all recent examples.

Perhaps you remember how it looked when Mill Bank won several Yorkshire in Bloom gold awards, including 'best small village'?

Legislation makes it a duty for our council '...from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas'. The last guidance was published in 1992, and an update is long overdue.

Most people understand that that council finances have been drastically reduced over many years, and there's not much we can do about that. So it's even more important that the council builds effective partnerships with village communities like ours, when so much is at stake. It shouldn't be a struggle to do this, and potentially, everyone wins. Even with the active help and goodwill from Cllr Leah Webster, and Josh Fenton-Glynn, it's hard going to secure changes on the ground. Is it time for a fresh approach?

Whether or not you think the council is actively 'preserving and enhancing' Mill Bank and Cottonstones, the MBG will continue to organise village tidy-ups, support social activities and good communications. Please do join in if you can.



Newsletter: contact -michaelbeazley40@gmail.com / 07756822995 **Website:**

<https://www.millbankvillage.co.uk/> Mill Bank Chat **WhatsApp:** ask Phillippa or Bronwen to join:

See **561/562** WhatsApp group for bus chat. **Email Newsletter:** On the website, enter your email address to receive the newsletter. **Facebook:** search for the Mill Bank Group

At a Glance this Autumn

September

7 th	Rushbearing		St Mary's Church at 13.10, The Alma at 14.30, arrives in Mill Bank around 14.45
14 th	Village History Book Launch	2pm	St Mary's School, with a Heritage Walk starting from St Mary's Church at 1.45pm. Contact Ruth 0775 3748482
26 th	Quiz Night	7.30pm	With Sarah and Evie.

October

5 th	Harvest Festival Service	10am	St Mary's Church Cottonstones
23 rd	Councillor's Surgery	10-11.30	Cottonstones Community Centre with Cllr Leah Webster.
23 rd	Mill Bank Group AGM & Social	7 for 7.30	Cottonstones Community Centre.
24 th	Halloween Quiz		Cottonstones Community Centre - Halloween themed quiz. Ticket event fund raiser – Contact Sarah

November

2 nd	Pet Blessing Service	10am	St Mary's Church Cottonstones. Well behaved humans also welcome.
21 st	Quiz Night	7.30pm	Cottonstones Community Centre
30 th	Mill Bank Christmas Fair	11am-3pm	Lower Mill Bank Road. Crafts and Christmas goods, food and drink, good cheer.

December

6 th -7 th	Wreath Making		Upstairs room at the Community Centre. Contact Linda to book a place 0734 1443989
9 th	Advent Service	10am	St Mary's Church Cottonstones
12 th	Film Night		Details to follow
19 th	Carols and get together	7.30	Cottonstones Community Centre
25 th	Christmas Service	10am	St Luke's Church, Norland

This is **your** newsletter, so please do get in touch with information, photos, or news. Feel free to comment on anything in this newsletter on the WhatsApp Mill Bank Chat page. On the Mill Bank Village website, you can sign up to receive the digital version of the Newsletter automatically by email. See the instructions on the home page – it's quick and simple.

Looking after the Village

It's been a busy time, and here are some of the details about work in progress.

On the buses

Gail wrote to Shelagh O'Neill at CMBC highlighting the disruption caused by the road closures in April and the beginning of May, including personal impact statements.

The MBG will now ask the council for a statement about the number of road closures (see right). Cllr Webster will also ask at Council about regulations which require a utility company to provide alternative means of transport to cover loss of service.

Further bus cancellations and road closures are expected to continue, including a four week closure due to gas repairs on Lumb Lane. Dates are not yet available. **Join the bus woes chat on WhatsApp for more information.**

Grit bin on Nathan Lane – a request has been made to re-site the bin in its original position by the car park on Nathan Lane.

Blocked gullies - Fiona reported the lack of gully cleaning (it was due in May), and the work on LMB and MB roads was finally carried out on 21 Aug. A request has been made to include Nathan Lane.

Weed spraying – Pavements have been sprayed, but there are gaps, and it is not clear if the council will return to re-spray and dig out the roots that are damaging the stone flags and making the pavements un-useable in some places.

Village tidy-up – There will be a further village tidy up soon – details to follow.

Tree stumps on the playing field – Cllr Webster is following up to find out when action is to be taken to remove the stumps.

Yorkshire stone flags - Gail has written to the council to ask when the temporary tarmac that replaced the stolen paving stones will be removed and the stone flags reinstated. Some of the 'temporary' repairs have been with us for years.

Slippery setts between Mill Bank Road and Lower Mill Bank Road.

The new handrail on the lower part of the snicket has helped but needs a further extension to help prevent falls, particularly in wet and frosty weather. A quotation to extend the rail is being obtained.

Asking a Question at Full Council

There is a formal process for asking a question of the council, and members of the group plan to use this to ask in September about the number of authorised road closures. You may have additional questions in mind? Please let us know if you do.

Questions have to be sent to Ian Hughes (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) no later than 7 working days before the Full Council meeting. A question must be no longer than 100 words. Email Ian.Hughes@calderdale.gov.uk.

If you're considering asking a question yourself, consider getting in touch with the Mill Bank Group first, to help coordination, and perhaps to advise on wording and timing.

Planters on Mill Bank Road

The planters by the Close are reaching the end of their serviceable life. Is anyone able to donate their skills and time to make a replacement? The MBG will meet the cost of the materials.

The 2026 Mill Bank Calendar

The 2026 Calendar will be available at the AGM on 23rd October. Please contact Keith on 01422 823687 if you would like to sponsor a month.

The Mill Bank Group will be holding its Annual General Meeting on 23rd October at Cottonstones Community Centre. Refreshments will be available.

Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to Gail and Fiona as our treasured Chair and Secretary, as they step down this year.

The committee will need new members, so if you feel you could contribute some time and ideas to strengthen the group's work in the village, please do consider joining up. We need talents of all sorts; it's fun and friendly, and you could make a real difference.

Follow on Facebook – search for Mill Bank

The History Group



Ruth Beazley's new book on village history will be launched on **Sunday 14 September at 2pm at St Mary's School. The Heritage Walk from St Mary's Church will start with a short introduction and display at 1.45pm**

The Heritage Walk will describe Mill Bank and Cottonstones over one hundred years ago when almost everybody worked in textile production. In 1901 this came to a sudden and unexpected end, sending the area into a sixty-year depression, to the brink of demolition.

The walk will end with tea and cake at the school, where there will also be a display explaining the Kebroyd Mills bankruptcy. This gives first-hand accounts of what it was like living through the days of the depression.

There will also be a display about the famous architects of St Mary's Church and School and other local buildings, many of which are listed. *Caldertales* has sponsored the printing of the book and sales will go to developing the village website. Both events are free, but donations are welcome to support the work of the Mill Bank History Group. The book costs £12, (preferably cash).

Please book early to secure a place on the walk.

Contact Ruth – rhbeazley@gmail.com

07753748482

Cottonstones Community Centre and St Mary's Church Group

Revd Jeanette held a well-attended open day on 3 May to discuss the future of the Church and Community Centre. Following this, a local survey was carried out to gather further views. Forty-two responses were received, and the main message was of support for the Community Centre, with a wide range of suggestions for future use. The responses also contained useful information for the Church leaders. A final version is now available, and will be circulated soon.

Meanwhile the revival of the community centre has continued, with lively quiz nights, and a bingo social evening. See the events guide for what's on this autumn.

Services at St Mary's have now moved to the earlier time of 10am.

The next steps will be to form a committee to take forward recommendations from the survey report, clear the building of items left by previous users, and to promote the hire of the community centre. Also to explore funding opportunities to make much needed improvements.

The MBG will continue to help with communications and to support events and actions being taken forward by the Church and Community Centre.

On Facebook, search for Cottonstones Community Centre to follow progress and contact Ellie for bookings on ellie.fitzgerald@outlook.com

Home Services

Call Freya for help with flat-pack furniture, interior painting, cleaning or minor household repairs, She can also help you find building trades people for larger jobs. Available after work and weekends. Contact her on 07484 814003 or at Freya@ready2movein.co.uk

Contact Dan Annison for help with home repairs or maintenance, and window cleaning by hand with ladders!

Contact Dan on 07794 169139

The Mill Bank Group Committee 2025

Gail Parker (Chair), Fiona Peach (Secretary 07962474914), Linda Wilson (Treasurer, 07341443989), David Bagley, Michael Beazley (077568 22995), Ellie Fitzgerald, Sarah Pittock, Peter Hardy (07531 806279), Keith Kemp (01422 823687), Glynis Lord, Bronwen Pendleton (christopher174@sky.com), Phillipa Walton, Fi Godfrey-Faussett.

Howard Greenwood

10th June 1956 - 30th May 2025



We are very sad to report Howard's death in May. Howard was well known to many in the village, and much loved. A service to celebrate his life opened with a storming number by Jimi Hendrix, followed by warm tributes. His love of nature was powerfully reflected in the closing words, selected

from a poem by the Saddleworth poet Ammon Wrigley: ...“I hark to no sect or creed / But I'll say my prayers to Nature's God / in a field where the lapwings breed”.

Book Group

The Book Group is now in its 16th year, and we continue to meet every month (usually the last Thursday) to read and discuss an eclectic mix of books.

This year we started with “Staying On” by Paul Scott and watched the film as well. February was “Kamchatka” by Marcelo Figueres, about the terrible problems in Argentina in the early 70s. “In Cold Blood” by Truman Capote was March's choice, followed by “The Familiars” by Stacey Halls, about the Lancashire Witches. “Eleanor Oliphant is Fine” was a popular read in June.

As you can see, we read a wide selection of what are hopefully stimulating and worthwhile books.

From September our format is changing slightly. We aim to read a book one month followed by a film the following month, so giving group members more time to read slightly longer books.

In September we will be reading “The End of the Affair” by Graham Greene, followed in October by a film “My Life as a Dog”, a wonderful film about growing up in Sweden in 1959.

We welcome new members. If you have favourite books or films that you would like to share with the group, please do come and join us (and partake of the tempting nibbles also on offer).

To join up contact John on 01422 823589

The Summer on WhatsApp

Judging from the summer's posts, it looks as if the village has decided to renounce the material world, give away its possessions and seek the spiritual bliss that comes from eating lots of courgettes – if only they could find a really tasty recipe.

There have been some unusual possessions on offer, including a pair of Quaker parrots (presumably, these are the ones that don't swear or take strong drink), and a couple of ‘riding chaps’ for £20. Cheap certainly, though the owner didn't actually name the men concerned, or say why she wanted to dispose of them, or state what condition they were in. Probably a bit worn out from all the riding at that price?

And so to rodents and musophobia (look it up yourselves). An alleged giant rat was spotted in a field close to the village. It was minding its own business but triggered a collective shiver of rodent fear and a rapid change of subject. There's a chance it might have been a fox, rabbit or even a super-mouse, but we may never know unless we visit Specsavers more often.

The Quest for authentic window cleaning has continued, but the perfectly timed appearance of a man called Dan has finally delivered the Promise, and he has ladders to prove it. Happily, there are no current plans to hire small boys to sweep the chimneys.

Remembering our Thank-Yous

Special thanks to **Bronwen, Fran and Tan** for helping us to sleep safely in our beds; to **Derek** for the weeding and sweeping; to all the **volunteers on the Community and Church Group** for keeping alive our hopes of a future there; to **Fiona** for grappling womanfully with organisation, knowing what's occurring, and dealing with our bureaucracies; to **Ruth and the History Group Members** for the Heritage Walks and her book on the history of Mill Bank; to **Dave** for looking after the website; to **Bruce and Keith** for our calendar; to **Leah** for taking up our causes at the Council; to **Stuart, Jamie and Penny** for helping out at the water leak; **Bruce** for beautifying the Community Garden; **Gareth Evans** for sponsoring the Christmas Lights; and to **John and Sue** for their unfailing litter picking; to the **Fiddle Wood walkers** who cleared up after the end of term parties; to **Sharon** for keeping up with Yorkshire Water.

Mind and Body

Keep Fit with Julia at the community Centre, St Mary's Church continues on Wednesday 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.

Bien Être – Wellbeing Coaching for Fatigue & Recovery

Claire at Bien Être is a qualified well-being coach supporting people living with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME), fibromyalgia, Long Covid, and the challenges of menopause. She offers personalised coaching to help you improve energy, manage symptoms, and create a life that feels more balanced and fulfilling. Sessions take place from her therapy room in Sowerby Bridge or online.

Text 07971 595 648 to arrange a free coaching consultation and take your first step towards feeling more like yourself again.

Language for Fun Courses in a Day

Nine weeks of the Beginners 1 course, condensed into a single day! This course will run through all the vocabulary and grammar points that you need for a good foundation to learning French or Spanish. All printed material will be provided with access to our online learning area to enable you to practice and review what you have learned. Lunch will be provided.

Although this one-day course is intense, it is an effective "springboard" to your language learning journey. This is particularly useful if you are unable to commit to a regular weekly class, but anyone is welcome. You may also find it useful as a "crammer" before going on holiday or to a French or Spanish speaking country for work. For more information about this or the weekly classes, please contact Ellie on 07868 279513 or email to ellie.fitzgerald1@outlook.com

Help with Defibrillator Costs

Are we all aware that the defibrillator is to the right of the school's entrance door in the car park? And do we know how to use it?

So far, the Mill Bank Group has been paying for the substantial maintenance costs. Thanks to Fran, it has been discovered that a grant may be available from the ever-helpful Community Foundation Calderdale.

Yorkshire Water

With further recent leaks and road closures, our campaign for a thorough overhaul of the infrastructure has so far failed to see a result from Yorkshire Water. During the repair of the latest leak on Nathan Lane, lead pipes joined with asbestos cement were found – and simply patched rather than replaced.

Josh Fenton-Glynn MP asked in the House of Commons how he could use Parliament to hold YW to account. The response he received was that the Government had introduced the Water (Special Measures) Act, set up a Commission on the future of water governance, and that further legislation would be laid in due course. None of these measures will be a quick fix, and the MBG will renew the campaign with letters to YW and to Josh Fenton-Glynn.

The latest leak flooded one house, and sandbags were carried up from the bottom of LMB Road to try and stop the water from flooding houses at the bottom of Nathan Lane. New supplies will be purchased and a new sandbag store set up in Nathan Lane car park.

YOU SEE THOSE VEHICLES TAKING AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OVER THERE? WE NEED TO START SOME ROAD WORKS OVER THERE TOO.



As road works continue to pop up everywhere, India nailed some of our frustrations with this picture.

This monster arrived by navigation error, but was persuaded to turn and go back. Rumours of a new car dealer start-up in Cottonstones were unfounded...



From Councillor Leah Webster

I was very pleased to hold my first surgery at the Cottonstones Community Centre on 5th July, where we discussed road closures and council services in the village. I will continue to follow up the questions raised, and to keep in touch with the Mill Bank Group. The next surgery at Cottonstones will be on 4th Oct at 10-11.30am.

Neighbourhood Watch



and keep this page. Village security has been more of a worry this year. Well done to Fran and Tan, our new Neighbour Watch leaders, who have met with the Police NW team and are continuing to develop the scheme, including how to incorporate Cottonstones. You'll see some new signs at entry points to the village in prominent positions, and a free window sticker is enclosed with this newsletter. The key police advice is to phone in anything you see as soon as possible, either on 999 or 101. The Police say:

"West Yorkshire Police offers different ways to report crime. You can contact us in a non-emergency via Live Chat. Or you can report non-emergency crimes online or track the progress of a previously reported crime. In an Emergency always dial 999. For Non-Emergencies dial 101. For further information, please visit <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/report-it>"

There's more detail in the posters below, including some tips to help prevent car crime. We are all encouraged to join the National NW scheme by accessing the following website, selecting the 'find your local NW' tab, selecting Mill Bank Village and becoming a member <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/>. And don't forget WhatsApp's *Crime alerts: Soyland, Mill Bank and District* for more information.

When and how to contact West Yorkshire Police

Contacting the police has been made easier over the years by having two easy numbers to remember: 999 for Emergencies and 101 for non-emergencies.

Ring 999 when there is an emergency and there is a risk to life or property. An example is when you see a person being assaulted or a burglary in progress.

Ring 101 when you need to report something to the police, but it is not an emergency. An example is when someone has caused damage to your property but no one has been seen.

There are also a number of other ways to contact the police, these include:

Contact us – Website www.yorkshirepolice.uk/contact-us. This website allows you to select a variety of different reports such:

Live Chat – Anyone can use our '101 Live Chat' system from their computer, tablet or mobile via the West Yorkshire Police website; www.westyorkshire.police.uk/101LiveChat. This is a live chat facility where you can speak to someone in our Customer Contact Centre and they will answer your question or advise you what to do.

Report on Line – You can use the online reporting tool to report non-emergency minor crime, nuisance or anti-social behaviour; www.westyorkshire.police.uk/report-it

Crime Tracker – This website allows you to enter the crime number of your previously reported crime to check updates or contact the officer; www.westyorkshire.police.uk/crimetracker. This site is also available as an app for smart phone and tablet.

The contact us page also includes other useful links to assist in contact or updating the police along with phone numbers for other agencies such as Action Fraud and Crimestoppers.

When NOT to contact the police

Sometimes people abuse the ways in which you can contact the police. This means people often ring the police when there is no need and/or it is not a police matter. Some real example of telephone calls that West Yorkshire Police have received include:-

"I'm stuck in a swing!"

"There is a fly in my bedroom!"

"My pizza has been delivered and it doesn't look like the picture on the leaflet!"

Remember the Police are there to help and keep communities safe



CAR CRIME



LEAVE IT LOCKED, LIT & EMPTY

Whilst we can't always prevent it, there are simple steps we can all take to reduce our chances of becoming a victim of car crime.

PROTECT YOUR CAR, LEAVE IT:

1. LOCKED
LOCK YOUR CAR WHEN YOU LEAVE IT

2. LIT
PARK IN A WELL-LIT AREA

3. EMPTY
HIDE ANY ITEMS ON SHOW

SHARE THESE 3 STEPS WITH 3 FRIENDS

Following the top three steps will help keep your car safe, but there are further steps you could take:

- Store car ownership information at home
- Secure number plates with anti-theft screws, available from car accessory stores
- Keep your car keys out of sight in your home
- Use a Sold Secure (soldsecure.com) approved anti-theft device. Search for suppliers on securedbydesign.com
- When parking in a car park, look for a 'Park Mark' (parkmark.co.uk) indicating that the car park meets recognised security levels
- Fit locking, anti-tamper wheel nuts to secure alloy wheels
- Secure items outside of your vehicle. Anything left on roof-racks, tailgate racks, holiday top boxes, or in tool chests are easily stolen when the vehicle is parked

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

Catalytic converters are targeted because of the precious metals that they are made with, namely rhodium, platinum, and palladium. Thieves simply cut the catalytic converter from the exhaust pipes of parked cars and sell them on to scrap metal dealers. Taller vehicles are more vulnerable as the catalytic converters are easier to access.

To reduce the risk of having your catalytic converter being stolen you could:

1. Use anti-theft products such as Catloc - a Sold Secure approved product
2. Park to restrict access underneath your car
3. Weld the catalytic converter to your car
4. Fit a tilt alarm
5. Register your converter and mark it with a forensic marker, which will make it harder for thieves to dispose of it

KEYLESS CAR THEFT

To avoid keyless car theft remember DISTANCE, SIGNAL, STEERING WHEEL.

- **KEEP KEYS A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE CAR:** Keep keys far away from doors and windows. This will minimise the chances of a thief being able to find and amplify the key's signal
- **BLOCK OR TURN OFF THE SIGNAL:** Consider purchasing a Faraday pouch to keep your car key in. These pouches contain signal-blocking materials that stop your key transmitting its code. Check your manual to find out if your key can be switched off
- **STEERING WHEEL LOCK:** Consider using a steering wheel lock, a driveway parking post, or even a wheel clamp

For more information and further tips visit ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar.

OURWATCH.ORG.UK/PROTECTYOURCAR

Nature Corner

With very little rain for months now in 2025, it seems hard to believe that in 2024 - according to the Met Office - we had the wettest Spring since 1986. 2025's clear skies, long sunny days and four heatwaves *so far* have meant that our bees, butterflies, birds and bats are thriving.

Compare that to last year, where bumblebees and butterflies had the worst decline in numbers since records began due to the cool, wet Spring which hindered foraging and reproduction. Happily, the buddleias in the Mill Bank Garden have been covered with Peacock butterflies; the grassland by the Mill Bank Close is full of grasshoppers, and the Ladybirds have been hoovering up aphids everywhere.

We must spare a thought, though, for our woody decomposers. The conditions last Spring were perfect for fungi, and in particular the fungi which feeds on trees.

Twenty years ago Darren Wetherall donated the large beech tree trunks to the park for children to play on (they were removed from a garden on Mill Bank Road) and they are now showing signs of rot.

In February 2024 at least six different fungi were helping the natural process along - edible Amber Jelly, Turkey Tail (see picture), which is valued for its medicinal properties, King Alfred's Cakes, which resemble lumps of coal and can be used as firelighters, Common Inkcap, with the ink used for important documents, and one which *Nature Corner* struggled to identify, but could be Hairy Curtain Crust or Witches' Butter.



Recovery from Long Covid – new Research in Calderdale

Most of us probably want to forget the Covid pandemic, and the woes it brought to so many. The illness itself of course, with the loss of loved ones for some, fear of infection, and the restrictive impact on daily life – the lock-down rules, disruption to school life and health care.

There were some unexpected silver linings in the village however. Daily exercise and the lack of traffic meant new conversations in the lanes; we sang carols in the street and enjoyed Nicola Mills' medley of opera favourites. One of the interesting experiences was the "failure" of the volunteer scheme. Dozens of volunteers stepped up straightaway to offer help delivering prescriptions and shopping. There was some much-appreciated use of the scheme, but in the end, it was the care and kindness of family and neighbours, and reserves of resilience that mattered most.

Sadly – and for perhaps over 1000 people in Calderdale - Long Covid has continued to blight their lives, with significant limitations to daily living. The condition affects people in many different ways, with a bewildering number of physical and mental symptoms, often including extreme tiredness. There's more about this at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/long-term-effects-of-covid-19-long-covid/>.

New research into recovery from the condition in Calderdale has just been published, and this suggests that significant recovery from Long Covid is possible for many but requires structured support, informed healthcare professionals, and accessible specialist services. Read more at: <https://www.jhresearch.org/longcovidresearch>

So, if symptoms return or are lingering months after Covid 19 infection, it's useful to consult your GP, who can also refer you to Calderdale's well-regarded specialist team.

There's also a friendly peer support group. Members often say that family, friends and employers can't understand why you're still feeling ill, so long after Covid infection. Members of this group all 'get it' and it can really help. Email lcsgroupcalderdale@gmail.com if you would like to join in.