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Attention Readers!

For the first edition of the Shelburne Free Press in 2026, we're taking you through all of the highs and lows of the first half of last year.

Our 2025 Year in Review will share some of the most significant stories impacting our readers from January to June, continuing with thesecond half of the year in next week's edition of the Shelburne Free Press. Now, without any further ado, here's a look at the year that was!

Jan. 9

? The Dufferin Community Foundation (DCF) has awarded its 2024 fall grants to five recipients. The Arts and Culture Fund was awarded to four local charities ? Dufferin Children and Family Services, Streams Community Hub, Caledon Meals on Wheels and The Brave Canoe. Each charity receives a grant of $2,000 to be used for programs, projects, public performances, forums and events. Dufferin Community Foundation also awarded the National Wildlife Foundation with an Environmental Fund grant, valued at $2,500.

? A call to local police regarding a suspicious person in Amaranth resulted in charges relating to impaired driving, possession of an unauthorized weapon, property obtained by crime and drug trafficking. Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers were dispatched to a male who was standing in the middle of the road holding a dog on Jan. 2 around 8:30 a.m. After a brief conversation with the male who was holding a dog, the officers began an impaired driving investigation, resulting in several charges.

Jan. 16

? A campaign aimed at bringing an MRI to Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) recently completed its largest matching gift challenge yet, raising $3 million. The hospital's foundation announced on Tuesday, Jan. 14, that the matching gift challenge for the Smart Headwaters saw extraordinary generosity thanks to the commitment made by the Morningview Foundation.

? Councillors and staff members from the Town of Shelburne will be attending a meeting with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to delegate about the potential for a truck bypass. During their meeting on Monday (Jan. 9), Denyse Morrissey, chief administrative officer for the Town of Shelburne, gave council a verbal update on the upcoming delegation with the MTO. The meeting is scheduled to be held on Jan. 20. Morrisey told council that staff will ask the MTO to lead the engagement and facilitation to implement the next steps for a potential truck bypass for the Town of Shelburne.

Jan. 23

? A man who devoted his life to community news and keeping people informed recently passed away. Thomas Claridge, 89, who was born and raised in Shelburne, passed on peacefully at Headwaters Health Care Centre in Orangeville on Jan. 18, surrounded by the love of his family. Claridge started his journalism career with the Canadian Press shortly after graduating from university and went on to write for the Globe and Mail for 30 years. While working as a reporter for the Globe, he purchased the Shelburne Free Press and Economist from his father in 1972 and founded the Orangeville Citizen in 1974. Thomas and his wife Pam, who passed in 2024, also owned and operated the Grand Valley Star-Vidette and Caledon Citizen. Their son Alan contributed as reporter, editor and general manager over the years.

? The Township of Mulmur is calling on the support of community members as they join the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition. In a press release issued on Jan. 15, the Township of Mulmur announced its participation in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition, with the hopes of winning $250,000 to use for arena upgrades and the chance to host an NHL game.

Jan. 30

? The Shelburne Food Bank is bringing forward big changes for the organization's future as it continues to make efforts to address food insecurity in the community. The local food bank told the Free Press on Monday (Jan. 27) that they have begun the steps in becoming an officially licensed charity and are in the process of rebranding.

? Ontarians are set to go to the polls on Feb. 27 following a snap election call from Progressive Conservative Premier Doug Ford. Lieutenant-Governor Edith Dumont, the King's representative in Ontario, made things official on Wednesday morning, issuing the traditional writ that kicks off the campaign. Ford made his intentions to call an election more than a year ahead of schedule last week in Brampton, citing a need for a renewed mandate from Ontarians amid looming tariff threats from US President Donald Trump.

Feb. 6

? Dufferin County Council has passed the 2025 budget with a 4.21 per cent increase on the tax levy. During a special meeting on Jan. 30, Dufferin County Council went through a revised version of the 2025 budget and was able to make additional cuts.

Feb. 13

? Headwaters Health Care Centre and Dufferin Paramedic Services have entered a partnership with Toronto Grace Health Centre to help patients awaiting long-term care and minimize health issues for seniors living with chronic diseases in the community. The Remote Care Monitoring (RCM) program provides eligible patients with 24/7 remote care monitoring using a variety of safety devices.

Feb. 20

? The Shelburne Food Bank has officially unveiled its new food rescue van, worth $100,000. Volunteers, sponsors, community members and dignitaries gathered at the Mel Lloyd Centre last Thursday (Feb. 13) for a special event celebrating the launch of a food rescue van for the Shelburne Food Bank.

? Dufferin County Council has pledged to provide $10,000 in financial assistance to Crime Stoppers of Simcoe?Dufferin?Muskoka, following a report on their uncertain future.

? Residents of Dufferin-Caledon had the opportunity to bring their biggest concerns to the candidates running in the local riding ahead of the provincial election. Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) hosted the first of three provincial election debates on Tuesday (Feb. 18) at Theatre Orangeville (87 Broadway). The debate consisted of questions created by DBOT as well as questions from constituents.

Feb. 27

? The provincial election is taking place today (Feb. 27) with seven candidates running in the Dufferin?Caledon riding.

March 6

? Dufferin-Caledon voters have spoken and Conservative politician, Sylvia Jones, has been elected for her sixth consecutive term as MPP of Dufferin-Caledon. Jones was re-elected after securing 52.1 per cent or 26,072 of cast votes in Dufferin-Caledon during the provincial election last Thursday (Feb. 27). Runner-up Michael Dehn of the Liberal Party had 25.2 per cent, Green Party candidate Sandy Brown had 12.3 per cent, and NDP candidate George Nakitsas received 6. 3 per cent of the votes.

? Concerned Melancthon residents are coming together to protest a proposed application by local aggregate company, Strada Aggregate, to quarry below the water table. Melancthon Against Quarries, an independent group opposing the expansion of gravel mining, hosted a community town hall meeting on Sunday (March 2) at the Horning's Mills Community Hall, located at 14 Mill

Street in Melancthon

? Crewson Insurance, located at 110 Adeline St. in Shelburne, has reached a significant milestone as they celebrated 40 years of business on March 1.

March 13

? Three nameless alleyways in the Town of Shelburne have officially received names. During a meeting on Monday (March 10), Shelburne Town Council received a memo from the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee regarding the naming of the three municipal laneways, marking the conclusion of the committee's initiative. The new names are Townsend Lane, Sawyers Feed Mill Lane and Rose Lane.

March 20

? The North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) has released Garry Hunter from his duties as their Community Trusted Peer Reviewer as the Strada Aggregate quarry application moves into the next phase. The local group announced the decision to discontinue Hunter's services in a press release on Monday (March 17), stating their goal of ?achieving clarity on the application has been achieved.?

? Mulmur residents rallied together to show their love of hockey, and now their local arena has been announced as a finalist in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition. Honeywood Arena was announced as one of four finalists in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition on Saturday (March 15), with the hope of winning $250,000 for arena upgrades and the chance to host an NHL pre-season game.

? A former Dufferin County employee is being recognized for her decades of dedicated work. Caroline Mach, former manager of the Dufferin County Forest, was presented with the Forest Stewardship Award from Forests Canada during their conference in February.

March 27

? Riders who use the weekday transit system to travel between Shelburne and Orangeville will continue to have access to the service as the County of Dufferin pushes the end date of their agreement with Grey County. During their meeting on March 13, Dufferin County Council was notified that the Grey Transit Route (GRT) service between Shelburne and Orangeville, known as Route 2, would be extended for an additional three months. The transit service was slated to discontinue on March 31 but has been extended in anticipation of grant funding from the provincial government.

? A snap election has been called for April 28 by Canada's new Prime Minister Mark Carney. Carney, 59, was named Liberal Party of Canada leader on March 9, replacing Justin Trudeau who announced on Jan. 6 that he would resign as party leader and prime minister. Carney took 89 per cent of the vote during the Liberal Leadership Race, with just under 152,000 party members voting. The early election is seen by the major parties as a way of letting Canadians decide who is best equipped to respond to the ongoing trade war with the U.S.

April 3

? The Bruce Trail Conservancy's Dufferin Hi-Land trail has been temporarily closed for the safety of visitors and volunteers as a result of an ice storm over the weekend. Several areas along the Bruce Trail have been heavily impacted by the storm, these include Mono Cliffs, Boyne Valley and Black Bank, which covers all associated side trails between Mono Centre and Lavender. BTC staff and volunteers are in the process of assessing the damage and carefully planning for the removal of hazards.

? Some changes have been made to the electoral map for Dufferin?Caledon and surrounding ridings ahead of the upcoming federal election. The riding of Simcoe-Grey has had its boundaries changed. It no longer includes portions of Mulmur Township and Grey

Highlands. Meanwhile, all Mulmur residents and some residents of Adjala-Tosorontio will find themselves voting in the Dufferin?Caledon Riding. Caledon residents will also see some changes, as the region is split between two different ridings instead of one. his means Caledon residents will either be voting in the new Brampton North?Caledon, in addition to the Dufferin?Caledon riding.

April 10

? They didn't win the big prize, but Mulmur residents will still come out ahead in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition. Honeywood Arena was announced as one of the four finalists in the competition to name Canada's top hockey town on Saturday, March 15. As a finalist, Honeywood Arena will receive $25,000 in upgrades and $10,000 worth of brand-new youth hockey equipment, courtesy of NHLPA However, Goals and Dreams.

? It's been a rough week for Mulmur residents, who were placed under a State of Emergency from April 3 to 7. An ice storm took out electrical infrastructure, causing blackouts and left trees on roadways and residents' driveways, making them impassable. Recognizing the magnitude of the required cleanup efforts following the storm, Mulmur Mayor Janet Horner declared a State of Emergency on April 3. This facilitated mutual aid, wellness checks, shelter activations and focused efforts on clean-up to support the needs of residents, while many of them were left without hydro.

April 17

? Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills has reassured fellow councillors he ?doesn't plan to exercise? the new authority allotted to him with the province's proposed expansion of ?strong mayor? powers. During their meeting on Monday (April 14), Shelburne Town Council addressed the provincial government's announcement, which proposed the expansion of strong mayor powers to the heads of council in 169 additional municipalities, including Shelburne and Orangeville.

? The Town of Shelburne is honouring the rich heritage of the Rotary Club of Shelburne as the service club celebrates 87 years of leadership and fundraising for projects benefitting local residents. During a meeting on Monday (April 14), Shelburne Town Council proclaimed April 22 as ?Shelburne Rotary Day? in the community.

April 24

? Dufferin County cattle farmers will have the opportunity to expand their operations to a new pasture as Dufferin County Council approves an agreement to use 200 acres of public land. Dufferin County Council approved a proposal to enter a 10-year lease agreement with the Grey-Dufferin Community Pasture Committee during their meeting on April 10. The lease agreement is for a roughly 200-acre piece of land off of Amaranth-Grand Valley Townline, which the County has owned for more than 30 years.

? Catholics and religious people around the world are mourning the death of Pope Francis. He passed away at 88 years old on Easter Monday (April 21). A stroke and subsequent heart failure resulted in Pope Francis's death according to a statement from the Vatican.

May 1

? Residents of the region turned out in record numbers on April 28 to cast a vote in Canada's 45th federal election. Incumbent Dufferin?Caledon MP Kyle Seeback was re-elected with 41,836 votes or 58.8 per cent of ballots cast, followed by Liberal candidate Malalai Halimi with 24,151 votes or 33.9 per cent, and NDP candidate Viktor Karklins with 1,815 votes or 2.6 per cent. Voter turnout reached a record of 71.71 per cent or 71,169 of 99,251 registered electors in Dufferin?Caledon ? the highest number reported since the riding was created in 2004.

? Human rights practices at the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) will be reviewed. That's according to an announcement from director of education Peter Sovran, made a week after UGDSB parents released a public letter calling for a

third-party equity audit.

May 8

? Shelburne residents will have more than one option when they cast their ballot in the next municipal election. During their meeting on April 28, Shelburne Town Council authorized the use of telephone and internet ballots when voting in the 2026 municipal election.

May 15

? Shelburne council unanimously passed a motion requesting the provincial government remove them as one of the municipalities granted strong mayor powers. During their meeting on Monday (May 12), Coun. Lindsay Wegener brought forward a motion regarding the recently granted ?strong mayor powers.? Wegener's motion reads that Shelburne council rejects the strong mayor powers granted and requests that the province repeal the legislation or offer an option and ability to opt out of the legislation.

? The baseball diamond in Honeywood will see some much-needed improvements. The Township of Mulmur was declared one of the winners in the Toronto Blue Jay's Field of Dreams competition.

May 22

? Shelburne Town Council is opposing a newly proposed piece of legislation that seeks to change environmental protections and municipal planning procedures within Ontario. During their meeting on May 12, Shelburne Councillor Len Guchardi brought forward a motion to oppose Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025, which was introduced by the provincial government in April.

May 29

? Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are investigating two home invasions that recently occurred at properties on Shady Glen Lane in Mono, where shots were fired. During the incidents, ?one victim suffered some minor injuries from broken glass,? who was treated and released, according to Dufferin OPP Const. Andrew Fines.

? It has been 40 years since a devastating series of tornadoes ripped across central Ontario. The severe weather incident happened on Friday, May 31, 1985, leaving a trail of destruction in the Town of Grand Valley and killing two town residents. Another eight people died in Barrie as the storm moved northwest across the province. According to Environment Canada, a total of 14 tornadoes struck several communities in Ontario, including Arthur, Grand Valley, Orangeville, and Tottenham. Classified as a powerful F4 level twister, the tornado that stormed across Grand Valley began around 4:15 p.m. near Arthur and moved west for over 115 km, leaving a trail of destruction along its path all the way to Mount Albert.

June 5

? Three church congregations in Dufferin County are coming together to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the United Church of Canada. Trinity Primrose United Church, Westminster United Church and High-Country United Church will be hosting four events over the span of a week to commemorate the centennial milestone. The ministers presiding over the celebrations will be Rev. Ann Harbridge, Rev. Janet Jones and student minister Aidan Legault.

June 12

? The Town of Shelburne is moving forward with plans to upgrade Fiddle Park. During a special meeting on Friday (June 6), Shelburne Town Council approved the tendering for the Fiddle Park upgrades. The tender for the project was awarded to Mono-based company TDI Land Restoration/XGD for a total of $2,399,645.82.

? Streams Community Hub brought imagination to the Shelburne community with their first-ever theatrical production. The local youth arts-based charity hosted a three-day run of the musical Seussical JR. on June 6, 7 and 8 at Grace Tipling Hall. The production was co-directed by Streams staff members, Noni Thomas and Robin Menard.

June 19

? It's a big year for the 164 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, as the not-for-profit program celebrates 50 years as a squadron. The Squadron was originally formed in 1975. To celebrate, the cadets held their 50th annual ceremonial review to demonstrate their military skills and run drills, while looking sharp and disciplined. They marched in formation into the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex on Saturday, June 14.

? A new partnership between the County of Dufferin and Dufferin Community Foundation (DCF) is helping ensure that the Museum of Dufferin (MoD) will remain an educational treasure for generations to come. The County and DCF jointly announced in a press release on June 11 that an endowment fund had been established for the local museum. The Museum of Dufferin Endowment Fund will be a ?forever fund?, where donations are invested permanently and the annual income is used to provide grants to the museum each year.

June 26

? Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) reached a major milestone on June 18 with the completion of its $18 million Smart Headwaters Campaign. The campaign, which looks to revolutionize healthcare delivery in the community, has enabled Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) to purchase new equipment and upgrade key areas. The campaign has enabled the purchase of an MRI machine and advanced CT scanner, renovations to its X-ray room, the deployment of 3D Tomosynthesis Mammography technology and upgrades to its Hemodialysis Unit.

? A local youth has returned home after seven weeks of putting one foot in front of the other to complete an ancient pilgrimage hike in Europe. Henry Little, 11, known locally as Henry the Hiker, has completed his biggest hiking challenge to date, a nearly 800-kilometre hike of the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

? The numbers are in and the Shelburne community has set a new local record for the amount of money raised through the annual Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign. The Rotary Club of Shelburne was presented with a cheque for $19,030 from Shelburne Tim Hortons on June 18.