

Archers villain Rob Titchener to open Monks Eleigh fete

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[Staff Reporter](#)



Helen Titchener, played by Louiza Patikas, and Rob Titchener, played by Timothy Watson, from the BBC Radio 4 soap, The Archers.

Organisers of an annual church fete in a peaceful Suffolk village could be facing a security challenge –because it is being opened by the man playing the most hated character on radio.



Monks Eleigh in Suffolk.

Actor Tim Watson is menacing bully Rob Titchener in the rural soap *The Archers* which is drawing more than five million listeners with its gripping storyline of domestic violence, revenge and attempted murder.

Next month he has agreed to open the fete in picturesque Monks Eleigh and judge the Best Children's Crown competition, Best-decorated Cake for the Queen's 90th birthday – and a dog fancy dress contest – with protection if needed.

Organisers of the traditional fete in the village – with a population of just 420 – hope to raise several thousands of pounds for the historic 15th Century St Peter's Church.

Fete committee member Nicola Gooch said: "Tim Watson is not actually Rob – he's a rather fabulous actor. Rob is a fictional character and I am sure *Archers* listeners will be able to tell the difference. But just in case we will have some burly men standing by!

"The *Archers* has raised an important social issue through the story of Rob and Helen – we are thrilled that Tim is coming to our annual fete and hope that it will help raise awareness of the issue of domestic violence and coercive control."

Another villager said: "Everyone is very excited but feelings among *Archers* fans here are running quite high.

"A lot of people will want to know what happens to Helen but I am sure he won't give away any plot secrets.

"We always have our own safety officers at the fete to keep an eye on things – if anyone did start heckling or booing or worse I am sure it will be dealt with quite quickly."

Like the fictional Ambridge, Monks Eleigh has a village green with a pump lined by thatched cottages, a church, a pub – The Swan not The Bull – a community shop run by volunteers, a post office and is surrounded by prosperous farms.

And the fete will have bowling for the pig contest, a coconut shy, face-painting, archery, a display of falconry and stalls selling cakes, plants and bric-a-brac. BBC presenter Martha Kearney, who has a home in Suffolk, will also be at the fete on June 4.

Actor Tim has had *Archers* fans on tenterhooks for months over his cruel treatment of his pregnant wife and stepson Henry – which culminated with a desperate Helen lashing out with a knife – and finding herself facing a charge of attempted murder.

The writers of the programme say that the storyline will continue and the story may take years to evolve.

Meanwhile the woman's charity Refuge which helps victims of domestic violence has had a £125,000 surge in donations – boosted by from sales of T-shirts and bags carrying the slogan "Free The Blossom Hill One" – a reference to Helen's arrest.