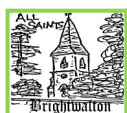


HELP NEEDED

SUNDAY 2 May was a perfect day for a fete. Cool, but sunny and dry - but it didn't happen! For the second year running we have had no fete. As this is the principle source of funding for the village hall, we are having to put many maintenance jobs on hold, but are still paying for things like insurance, fire certification and licensing out of reserves. So, we need money! The hall will be available very soon, and we are hoping people will book the hall again to get us back on our feet.

No fetes means we are short of about £7000. Perhaps you can donate money, or think of ways to mitigate this shortfall. One way is to sign up for our tour of Woolley House in July (see separate advert) which will be a marvellous way to join fellow villagers, and raise funds for the village hall. Kirsten at Woolley Park has kindly offered to give us a tour of her wonderful stately home, just one mile from Brightwalton, and offering tea and cake afterwards. This will be a rare treat and a lovely way to spend a summer Saturday afternoon.

The Fete Committee, led by Jeremy Snow have organised a village barbecue in July, instead of a fete, (see advert) so that we can all meet up on the recreation ground and remind ourselves that life is continuing. This will be a chance for all our newcomers to meet people and find out about the village.



Southend, Brightwalton Remembers HRH The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.

For Loyal Service and Dedication to Her Majesty the Queen,
Our Nation and the Commonwealth and Dependant Territories.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one
come to the Father except through me".

Rest in Peace O Faithful Servant.

D. Webber



WOOLLEY HOUSE TOUR

Don't miss a chance to see our local historic home at Woolley Park. You can have a guided tour of the house followed by tea on the lawn. The tour will start at the village hall at 2.45 pm on Saturday 3 July, driving in convoy to Woolley House. Kirsten Lloyd will be our host and will show us the beautiful rooms in the house. Then, tea and cake, and return.

The price is £15 per person and all proceeds will go to the village hall. Numbers are limited to 30, so first come first served. Please apply by email (bricnews@gmail.com) as soon as possible. Payments will be paid direct to the Brightwalton Village Hall account. Full details will be sent to you after you have paid.

You can get a preview and see some lovely pictures on the website at :

woolleyestate.co.uk.

BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

Downland Volunteer Group

We need more volunteer drivers to drive elderly or non-driving people to their doctor's and hospital appointments. No regular commitment is necessary. It can just be once a week, or even once a month, but drivers are urgently needed. Expenses are paid so it is just time that drivers offer, small or large amounts. It is also nice to meet new people.

Contact michaeljeanpocock@gmail.com or phone 01635248213)

Or speak to me, Mike Ananin. I have several years experience and am happily continuing when operations start again soon.

BRIGHTWALTON VILLAGE BARBECUE SUNDAY 11th JULY

Let's Get Together Again

- At Last!

Bar – Barbecue

Teas – Raffle

Fun

From Midday

JOHN HALL - CRAGGS 1931-2020 A quiet man who got things done

by Shaun Orpen

Thanks to some very kind donations from around the village, we now have a wonderful memorial bench in front of the church, in commemoration of John and his outstanding contribution to Brightwalton over 40 years.

What many in the village will not know, is just how instrumental John was in shaping parts of the village we now all take for granted. He served on the Parish Council for 40 years, taking over from Evelyn Bracey in 1985. During his time John passionately went in search of new projects to support our rural community. He came up with the idea of the 6-a-side football at the fete winning the support of Peter Withey and Dave Judge to take on the mantle. He led the Millennium project which led to Sir Philip Wroughton kindly donating Dunmore Pond to the village. He got funding for and then wrote the 'All Saints Booklet' and there were many more over the years.

He became the master at knowing "who to go to and where to get the money". He was constantly searching for new things to support the local village, which meant he ended up sitting on many local committees giving him an extensive list of places to go to get funds for new projects. It is no wonder that he wrote over 70 letters asking for fundraising for the Village hall extension. The really big projects that he was instrumental in were 'Saving the local school' and the development of housing at Dunmore Meadow and Butts Furlong. In 1990 our local school was in very real threat of closing with student numbers down to around 20. John made it his mission to save the school and indeed some would say that he single-handedly saved the school. The two-building projects were equally important. The first to help bring young families into the village and the second phase to be orientated more towards growing families. Working with the Housing Association and the Rural Housing Association he brought the village together to make this a reality.

John was a great believer in personal contact. As I took on the Chairman role in the Parish Council and then later as we started to develop the Aspire Project, he would often drop by for a cup of tea and a chat. I can even remember being summoned by John to his bedside where he was recovering from illness. This didn't stop John and he was always keen to offer a point of view and some words of helpful encouragement. Over time his networking and skills at raising money have been passed on via Jackie Boxall and others. Even today we are very adept at raising funds for projects - A lasting legacy. Last but certainly not least, one must mention the railway. This not only gave a lot of enjoyment to people in the village on fete day (for over 30 years). Several people have expressed to me that when they mention Brightwalton in some far off corner of our land then the person's eyes light up and mention "Brightwalton, that place with the wonderful miniature railway".

Thank you, John, on behalf of the village, for all your hard work and dedication to Brightwalton over a great many years.



Farming News from Evelyn Bracey

Well I'm not sure that it is spring, but very little we can do about it.

We have now turned most of the cattle out just one or two left in the barn. Always a lovely sight to see the cows and calves out at grass after the winter in. Unfortunately the weather wasn't so kind to them during the first few days those cold nights but we were getting short of silage so really had no choice. Now that the livestock are out there isn't much to do except check them each day to make sure all is well. However the arable side is now busy putting on fertilizer and spraying, due to the frost and the dry weather in April the crops did suffer and growth was slow but now we have had some rain things are looking better. Thank goodness the grass has also started to really come on so hopefully we will have a good silage and hay crop.

I did say in the last newsletter I would talk a little more about our wildflower plots, in fact we have three types of plot, pollen and nectar, wild



bird seed and semi-natural grassland. The pollen and nectar and semi-natural grassland have been established for several years. The pollen and nectar is a flower mixture which will attract butterflies, bees and the like, the semi-natural grassland contains different grasses plus some wild flowers. At this time it is full of cowslips and it is hoped to attract ground nesting birds. These two plots are topped each year and also grazed with sheep but they are never cultivated. The wild bird seed plot is replanted each year with a special mixture of quinoa, marrow stem kale white millet and linseed, hoping to attract different birds. Perhaps for the next newsletter I will put some photographs in as by then they should be in flower.

From John Gardner in Lilley

With 38mm of rain, April was the third dry (or dryish) month in succession. (February had 47mm, March had 27mm.) As a result, gardens and agricultural crops are desperately in need of rain, and the ground is becoming like concrete. 38mm was by no means the driest April since I started keeping records in 2002. Of these 20 years, 9 had rainfall less than 38mm, and April 2007 had no rain at all.

During April 2021, there was measurable rain on only 4 days of the month. The month started in the middle of a dry period of 14 days from 27th March to 9th April. This was followed by 17mm on the 10th and the equivalent of 2mm of snow on the 11th. There was then another dry period of 14 days from 13th to 26th, followed by 2mm on the 27th and 17mm on the 28th.

With such dry weather, the Moving Annual Total has fallen to 789mm. It has not been lower than this since the end of October 2019. The dry weather was accompanied by a lot of bright sunshine and an unusual number of early morning frosts for April. It is said that, for the UK as a whole, it was the coldest April since 1922.

Racing against COVID (Newbury Racecourse Vaccination Centre)

By Beverley Cross

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world, by the end of 2020 there was a ray of hope. The Pfizer vaccine had been approved for use in the UK but it quickly became clear that due to storage requirements, batch sizes (975) and limited time to use it when it arrived, individual surgeries would not be able to offer this vaccine and it was, at that time, the only one available. The most in need were the elderly and the clinically vulnerable – generally slower moving, unable to queue in a socially distanced way in freezing winter temperatures. The ray of hope started to fade in West Berkshire as reality kicked in. And then something amazing happened.

Nine GP practices put their heads and resources together: Lambourn, Hungerford, Kintbury and Woolton Hill, Downland, Strawberry Hill, Eastfield House, Falkland, Thatcham and Burdwood. All much too small to handle 975 vaccines but together they could do anything with co-operation. They combined their resources and found a site at Newbury Racecourse, more used to cheering race goers than masked vaccinators but it suited the needs perfectly – lots of space for parking, security and a large space internally. Doctors and nurses came out of retirement to help, local doctors and consultants came in their spare time. A practice manager was persuaded out of retirement to take on this mammoth task. And then they needed volunteers. Marshalling the cars – many patients had not been out of the house for a year, never mind driving a car and many a car needed jump starting in those early days. Then there was the constant cleaning of chairs, watching over patients to ensure no reactions, guiding and directing and, later on when we had proved our worth, the checking in of patients. The nine surgeries put out an SOS for volunteers and the amazing residents of West Berkshire (and Brightwalton particularly!) stood up to offer their time. From an initial meeting with the Downland Practice manager on 11 January, on 14 January we went live with our first 975 patients... We now have a brigade of over 387 dedicated volunteers who have worked alongside the amazing NHS staff and helped our brilliant surgeries achieve their goal.

It was cold and wet in those early days and the car park marshals in particular were out there in the rain, sleet and snow directing traffic and helping the elderly in treacherous conditions. Airline pilots, retired army officers, publicans, tax inspectors, opera singers, airline crisis management experts...all united in one thing which was to ensure that the old and the vulnerable in our area were vaccinated as quickly as we could. From the outset Newbury Racecourse were amazing, we have happily run racing and vaccination days alongside one another with the only issue ever being trying to persuade the patients to leave rather than watch the next race! Their staff have volunteered for us and nothing has been too much trouble. And then there was the army of bakers – delivering cakes to the centre or leaving them in the box outside our house. Their contribution was as valuable as being there for a four hour shift. None of us really knew how long it would take – clinic days were determined by vaccine delivery and so sometimes it was one day a week, then it was six days in a row. It eventually took three months to administer 33,000 first vaccinations to the most vulnerable groups, giving time for the mass vaccination sites to get up and running ready to welcome the much younger, fitter patients who could easily travel there and did not mind queuing; and the pharmacies to start their vaccination programme with the much easier to store AstraZeneca vaccine. However, we then had to go back and do it all again with the second vaccinations...

We were honoured on 28 April with a visit from the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, Mr James Puxley, to thank the volunteers personally for their time and effort and we were also delighted that three pictures of our volunteers and vaccinators were featured in a recent Government video. As a village we can be truly proud of our contribution to this amazing effort. So many have stepped up – across all age ranges and all backgrounds, united in trying to save lives and get things back to normal. We have all made many friends in the process and shared a lot of laughs. We can all be very proud that collectively we have made a real difference.



Postscript

Bev has been incredibly modest in her account, as she and Jon have played an extraordinary role with the NRVC. They were involved from the outset and initially they were there every day it was open until the army of volunteers were sufficiently trained. They are still VERY involved, especially with the constant liaison with the NHS. They sort out the rotas, roles and even bake cakes and pies for the volunteers. And, they have full time jobs too. A huge thank you to this extraordinary couple for their massive time commitment, great humour and enthusiasm. Incidentally, about 11 Brightwalton residents are regular volunteers. Judith Orpen.

BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES FOR APPROVAL AT THE JULY MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting was held Wednesday 5th May 2021 followed by the Parish Council Annual General Meeting.

The Minutes below are from the Annual Parish Meeting, the full Parish Council AGM minutes are available at www.brightwalton.org.uk

Annual Parish Meeting:

Chairman's Report: S Orpen welcomed everyone to the parish meeting and reported on the year as follows:

"This will not be a year that any of us will forget in a hurry. The year of COVID Lockdown.

The first part of the year was focused on ensuring that we had the right protections and services in place for parishioners, especially the elderly and vulnerable. Thanks to some wonderful volunteers, we put in place a weekly Prescription collection and delivery service. We found online delivery services for meat, fruit and veg at a time when getting a delivery slot from one of the major supermarkets proved challenging.

Continued

We were very pleased to welcome Laura Farris, our local MP at the time when the Newbury Racecourse vaccination centre went live. It was great to hear directly the tone of many conversations in the House of Commons on this important and very current topic.

Thankfully, the village quickly adapted to the new regime imposed by the Government. Church services were moved to “zoom church”, Parish Council Meetings were by “zoom” and the Village Hall effectively mothballed itself until it could emerge from the 1st lockdown.

Thankfully Community spirit was alive and well in the village during the year. We had a very colourful display of houses decorating themselves to commemorate VE Day Celebrations as well as an extended display of Christmas lights across the village.

A first for this year was a Christmas Tree that was put up by the Parish Council in the Church Yard and at the last minute were able to have a well-attended “socially distanced” outside carol service just before Christmas around the Christmas tree. The consensus is that this should become an annual event in the village.

The ASPIRE project continued to take up a significant amount of time, and I am delighted to say that Phase 1 of this project has now been approved and work has just started. Once Phase 1 is complete in a matter of weeks, the Improved physical amenity of the church now presents the village with an additional meeting space that can be used for a wider variety of events to support the school, the village as well as the church.

During the year we have a change of Councillors. Polly Swann stepped down after 14 years service on the Parish Council as Clerk and Councillor. We were delighted to welcome Christine Delahunty to the team as her replacement.

We did manage to do a very limited “village clear up” in the autumn with small discrete groups focused on specific projects. As always, the village looked a lot better and neater as a result.

Financially, against a forecast of £7,343, we ended the year with an actual spend of £7,338 and cash reserves of £12,370.”

Village Hall Report:

A Britnor Guest was pleased to report that users were starting to come back to the hall, including the Children’s dance group which was not only back, was growing too. Financially the hall has had to survive without the income from 2 fetes now and minimal hire income so fundraising would be crucial. The team were currently working hard on fundraising ideas and it was reported that some exciting event plans were in progress with more details to follow in the Brickleton News.

ASPIRE Update: S Orpen reported that phase one work had commenced off site. It was noted that there would be some disruption in the coming weeks as services need to be connected in the road. Plans were in place to keep the school and residents informed on timings. S Orpen was pleased to report that an application for £5,000 match funding had been successful, the matching £5,000 would need to be raised by October. This money was specifically for the Community Support role, and would secure the position for 2 years. The team would welcome input on the role and also requested a Councillor take part in discussions.

Broadband: T Wyatt raised the question on providing Fibre to the Property (FTTP) broadband access to the village as a whole. During the Gigaclear connections several years ago, only properties without the BT fibre to cabinet and those being passed on the way were offered the Gigaclear fibre option in line with the contract with WBC. With the growing number of home workers plus more general reliance on the internet and requirement for greater speeds it was suggested that the PC should work to see if the whole of the village could have a FTTP option for the future. Eliminating the current inconsistencies, this would also then give everyone a choice of provider. General agreement that this should be investigated. Clerk to initiate conversation with Gigaclear and report back. Discussions were had on the alternatives of 5G and Starlink access, but all agreed a FTTP option would be worth pursuing.

Footpaths: Following much discussion in the village about a new Permissive Footpath at Malthouse Farm, the owner joined the meeting to explain the new path. The owner explained with a young family and their own pets, walkers coming through the centre of the garden was far from ideal and by creating the new permissive path he was hopeful that the majority of the users would choose to use this route around the woods rather than through the garden. Since moving in they had found a small number of people completely off the designated footpath, roaming the woods, making camps and stray dogs wondering their garden. An article is planned for the May Brickleton News to explain the reasoning and the new route to a wider audience. Some concerns were raised about signage and discussions on improvements had taken place with WBC and implemented. Additional discussions were ongoing with WBC on the new stile. Concerns were also raised as to whether the original footpath would be lost, owner reassured that there were no intentions to officially re-route the designated right of way. It was generally agreed that the new permissive path created a pleasant walking route.

Discussions continued on the general state of footpaths, with parishioner raising concerns about the conditions on footpaths across fields. M Cooper explained that with modern equipment it is just not feasible to not plough or plant the rights of way that frequently run diagonal across farmland. He went on to explain that in law farmers are required to re-instate paths within 7 days, and most did this far quicker. It was agreed that the past year had seen a substantial increase in use and in complaints, and more tolerance and communication was required from all parties. In regards to maintenance of stiles etc, faults can be reported directly to WBC on the ‘Report a Problem’ page. WBC is also currently running a consultation on rights of way – details can be found on their website and the village website.

Dog Bins: A request to install two dog bins on Ash Close and Long Lane had been received. In line with previous discussions PC agreed that street furniture should be kept to a minimum in a rural village, in addition it was agreed that bins don’t solve the problem of people not picking up and as this was the 5th request – all in different locations – if this was granted where do you stop? Resident had offered to empty bins themselves, but all agreed this was only a short term solution and would become a PC responsibility with the cost at £234 per bin per year this would quickly become a financial burden. A parishioner also made the point that they felt non-dog owners shouldn’t be paying through the PC precept for those that choose to have dogs. Request refused, Clerk to feed-back. There were no further comments or questions, the Parish Council thanked the parishioners for their input.

The May Parish Council AGM Minutes are available on the village website www.brightwalton.org.uk/brightwaltonparishcouncil

The remaining 2021 Meetings will be held: 12th July, 13th September and 8th November