

West Wickham Village Hall

Report to Parish Council

18th May 2016

Bookings

The hall continues to be used regularly by groups and clubs from within and outside the village, and income from hire charges has been similar to previous years.

Daisy Chains preschool (<http://www.daisychainspreschool.co.uk>) are the most frequent user of the hall and their finances have improved since the last report, thanks in part to concessions in hire charges made by the Village Hall Committee.

The KenYuKan club continue with their twice-weekly sessions and the Karate club are now well established with a weekly meeting. As with previous years, there have been many ad hoc sports hire bookings and functions held during the year. The Carpet Bowls, History and Gardening clubs within the Village continue solidly and are all represented on the committee.

A post office has also been opened at the hall, run by Clare Butfield.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety (H&S) continues to be a priority for the Committee and regular checks have been performed, in addition to asking all regular users to report any concerns, so that they can be investigated and assessed promptly. We also make use of the fact that the preschool is Ofsted regulated and is required to carry out a daily H&S check.

A service was recently performed on the hall partition screen and the regular fire extinguisher service was undertaken.

Committee

The Committee met three times during the calendar year and the meetings were all well attended and productive.

Paul Donert has indicated that he is happy to continue as Treasurer for the immediate future, which is much appreciated.

Marcus Cornish decided to step down from the Committee after several years as Vice-Chairman and has been replaced by Di License as the second Parish Council member. The Committee would like to thank Marcus for all his help over the years. Simon Keen has kindly agreed to take over as Vice Chairman.

Nick Salter has indicated that he wishes to step down as Chairman at the AGM in October and the Committee is actively seeking a replacement.

Maintenance

A structural survey of the hall was performed and a report provided to the Committee. This has been circulated at the AGM. In summary, the report indicates that the hall is in very good condition, but points to a number of areas to keep an eye on, and gives an indication of when major repairs would be required. The biggest item identified is the need within the next 10-20 years to re-tile the roof. Some other recommendations, for example, fitting cowls over the air vents supplying the heating system, have already been implemented.

The survey was performed free of charge by Fred Connell (a friend of Paul Donert) and the Committee would like to express their gratitude for this fine work.

Nadine Warner, our caretaker, has once again done a great job keeping the hall clean and tidy.

Finances

The hall has made a small profit this year, despite the cost of the floor resurfacing work. This somewhat offsets the loss made last year.

Following the survey of the hall, an estimate now needs to be made as to how much needs to be put aside every year to cover on-going wear and tear and maintenance of the hall. The sum is likely to be higher than the profit currently being made through hire of the hall. The Chairman proposes that this subject is raised at a future Parish Council meeting to discuss how adequate future provision can be made.

Fundraising

The SoDs of West Wickham held a 'WickhamFest' fundraising event at the hall in June 2015 raising £473, split equally between the Village Hall and the Church. Many thanks to Kevin Newey for organising the event, which was great fun despite terrible 'summer' weather! Another WickhamFest is being planned for next month.

Website

The Parish Council has now formally taken over the running of the website and will pay the hosting fees in future. The Village Hall pages and features remain unchanged.

Miscellaneous

The AGM will be held in October at the Village Hall. Please come along this year to show your support and share your ideas.

Nick Salter - Chairman of the Village Hall Committee

DAISY CHAINS PRESCHOOL (PARISH COUNCIL REPORT MAY 2016)

April 2015 – 2016

This year at Daisy Chains has been a very successful one. Our numbers have increased from the previous year considerably and have brought us back onto a better footing from a financial point of view. It is still necessary for us to hold our fund raising events to continue to run the preschool and we continue to be supported by the community in our efforts.

We have started a popular lunch club two times a week on a Tuesday and Thursday that extends the opening hours of the preschool on those two days. This proved to be a good decision and increased our numbers immediately. We have taken on a fourth member of staff to cover lunch club hours and sick leave/emergency cover.

This year we have covered the topics of Shapes, At the Shops, Transport and Journeys, All About Me, On the Farm, Numbers and Counting, People Who Help Us and Under the Ground. Last summer we took a trip to Shepreth Wildlife Park and had a talk from one of the park keepers and a hands on experience with some of the animals.

We have continued to use our garden area as a valuable learning resource and managed to enter some vegetables in the annual show, for which we were awarded a second prize.

During this year we managed to secure a further £1000 grant from the Wadlow Wind Farm Community Fund to be used to develop the wildlife conservation area (by the allotments) to further educate the preschool children. Thanks to Diana Licence and colleagues for their help with this long term project. We have already been over to start building "animal houses" and will be using this area to a greater extent when a fence has been put in place to make sure that the children are in a safe environment.

Our thanks also goes out to the Village Hall Committee who continue to support us financially when our numbers are low (normally Autumn Term of year year) and to members of the community who support us by attending the events that we put on and for donating Sainsbury/Tesco vouchers to us that have enabled us to

obtain several extra bits of equipment through their schemes.

Sue Harrow.

West Wickham & District Gardening Club

Report for the Annual Parish Meeting, 23rd May 2016, on the twelve months up to 30th April 2016.

During the twelve months up to the end of April 2016, the Club had a most successful year, with the one disappointment more than offset by strong performances on most fronts, and with members rising very well to the one unexpected challenge. The Club's year followed a well established pattern, but has also seen some constructive innovation.

The Club's two major events, the Annual Plant Sale and the Annual Show, are held in the Village Hall, the Plant Sale in May and the Annual Show in August. The Plant Sale plays a central role in the life of the Club because, as well as producing a fine range of inexpensive plants which can be bought by members and friends, it is the main source of the income with which the Club pays for its speakers and the hire of this hall. It is thus highly gratifying that the 2015 Sale once again produced a record income – an income almost double that of two years previously. The Annual Show plays an equally central role in the life of the Club, in this case allowing members to display, and to win small prizes for, their own horticultural and domestic achievements. Though the 2015 Show was not a record breaker, with the number of exhibits and exhibitors down compared to the previous year, it was nevertheless a very successful event, enhanced by a thoroughly competent new domestic judge, and making a valuable contribution to the Club's finances through the raffle promoted by Shirley Shadford and the sale of the produce through the auctioneering skills of Peter Grieve. The Club is grateful to its sub-committee which organises the Show, and is particularly indebted to Andrew and Janet Morris for their major contributions to both the Plant Sale and the Show

Between these two events the Club planned its usual summer outings. Two were Monday evening outings to local gardens of interest – the first to *Dip in the Hill* in June, and the second to *Cobb's Hall* in July. The joy of these visits is that they are to real gardens on a summer's evening; the downside is that they are weather dependant, and uncertainty can reign (as in our June visit) until the very last moment. The third outing is normally the Annual Trip, an all day event by coach further afield, and this was the subject of the Club's one disappointment of the year, as the event had to be cancelled due to lack of support. However, this has also had the positive effect of provoking the Club to make its major innovation of the year. As the problem of finding a date and a venue which suits almost half the Club's members has been challenging the event for a number of years, we agreed at the 2015 A.G.M. to find out whether the garden club of Balsham would be interested in collaborating with us in organising a joint Annual Trip. Happily, the response from Balsham has been most enthusiastic (they have been experiencing difficulties similar to our own), and our first joint trip will take place next month.

Arguably the most important of the Club's activities is none of the afore going, but rather is the monthly Monday evening talks which take place right here in this Hall, from early autumn to late spring. These were once again arranged by the Club's excellent Programme Secretary, Rosemary Yallop, who year after year compiles a really diverse programme which caters for both the novice and the expert. During this last year these talks ranged from the relatively practical (such as identifying apple types and coping with apple disease; caring for succulents; and the secrets of effective feeding and composting) to the more abstract (such as a talk about Charles Darwin as a gardener and plantsman, and – probably the most popular talk of the year – a wonderfully enthusiastic and well informed talk about South African *fynbos*). In the midst of these professional presentations, by arrangement at our Christmas meeting four of our own members revealed their expertise in short presentations. The unexpected challenge to which I referred in my opening words occurred when our March speaker allowed his Satnav to take him to Huntingdon; fortunately our in-house experts rose to the occasion and we had a most useful question and answer session instead. Happily, all these meetings were well attended, and the presentations (of both our visitors and our resident experts) were well received.

The Club's most practical activity continues to be the very popular group purchase of seeds (through which members are able to buy seeds at considerably discounted prices). This time consuming operation is managed by our Trading Officer, who this year is Marian Corbett; we are most grateful to her, as dealing with seed suppliers is not always easy and the role of Trading Officer is sometimes thank less.

Another practical activity, and the subject of the Club's second innovation of the past year, concerns the strip of garden in front of this Village Hall. At the 2015 A.G.M., the Club agreed to the request from the Village Hall Management Committee that the Club should take over the management of that strip of garden, and a small working group was formed, under the leadership of Sue Kiddy. Thanks largely to Sue, the replanting has now been done, and the other neglected borders are being contemplated.

The membership of the Club remains broadly stable – two less than last year, but exactly the same as the year before that. We lose some long serving members through relocation or more sadly through death, and during this last year we lost one greatly valued and highly expert member, Sylvia Norton, whose death we hope to mark by planting an appropriate tree. However, new members continue to be recruited and we endeavour to make newcomers feel welcome, and in this way the Club continues to serve as a useful venue for new residents to meet their fellow villagers and to integrate into local life.

The finances of the Club remain healthy, with members' subscriptions, the Christmas Raffle and the Plant Sale all contributing to fund the Speaker programme and the hire of the Village Hall for Club events. The Club's finances continue to be managed by Andrew Morris in his role of Club Treasurer; once again the Club is much indebted to him for this valuable and time consuming work. The Club's 2015 Annual General Meeting elected the afore mentioned new Trading Officer, but otherwise re-elected the serving officers to continue for another year.

Arthur Mawby (Chairman)