

West Wickham Village Hall

Report to Parish Council

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.

The recent introduction of the Village Hub Night has proved popular and these have been well attended, bringing the Village Hall right back into the heart of the community.

Daisy Chains preschool (<http://www.daisychainspreschool.co.uk>) is the most frequent user of the hall. Their finances remain finely balanced and current occupancy rate is at about two thirds. The committee applied a discretionary 25% discount for the autumn term when intake is always slow, to help alleviate the financial pressures on the preschool.

Both KenYuKan and Karate clubs have twice weekly bookings and the Carpet Bowls club also has a regular evening booking ensuring that the hall is in use almost every day. As with previous years, there have been many ad hoc sports hire bookings and functions held during the year. History and Gardening clubs within the Village continue solidly and are represented on the committee.

The post office also continues to operate out of 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 as part of Preschool's compliance with Ofsted regulations. In addition all regular users are asked to report any concerns, so that they can be investigated and assessed promptly. 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. There have been significant changes in the make-up of the committee in the last 12 months, particularly in the executive roles

Nick Salter decided to step down from the Committee in October, after five years as Chairman and has been replaced by Vice Chairman Simon Keen. The Vice Chairman role has now been filled by James Cowell. The Committee would like to thank Nick for steering it over the last few years and maintaining the village hall as a key asset to the community.

Paul Donert has also stepped down as Treasurer and has been replaced by Brian Marshall. The hand-over process is well underway and Paul has agreed to continue to help Brian through this initial period. The Committee would like to thank Paul for his long service and help over the years.

Maintenance

No large maintenance work was carried out in the calendar year. The hall remains in a state of good repair with work being performed as and when required. Sufficient funds are available for anticipated maintenance over the next few years. Nadine Warner, our caretaker, has once again done a great job keeping the hall clean and tidy.

Finance

The hall has made a useful profit this year, thanks to very consistent bookings, fundraising income, and no large maintenance work undertaken. 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.

Fundraising

The SODs of West Wickham and Di Licence held a combined Village Fete and second 'Wickhamfest' fundraising event at the hall in June this year, raising over £1616, of which 50% went to the hall. ARM Ltd provided a generous £500 charitable donation taking the total for the hall to £1308!! Many thanks to Kevin Newey and Di Licence for organising the event and to the SODs, who once again manned the BBQ and bar all afternoon and into the small hours of the night.

Website

The website (<http://westwickham.org>) content continues to grow steadily. The online enquiry and booking feature is being used regularly with users checking the online calendar for availability.

Miscellaneous

After experimenting with different sports hire rates for summer and winter, a single rate was reinstated at £8 per hour.

Simon Keen

Chairman of the Village Hall Committee

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AND VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE MEETING 2017 from DAISY CHAINS PRESCHOOL

Although it is fair to report that Daisy Chains has had another successful year we have unfortunately experienced a downward turn in numbers of children joining the preschool over the school year.

Obviously ,less children means less parents so this year we have struggled with committee members and helpers to run our fund raising events, however we have still carried on with our calendar of events even though we have had a skeleton staff sometimes.

We ended the school year in July 2016 with 11 children leaving us to go to primary school, thus only leaving us with 10 to start the new school year with.

6 Children started throughout the year and we currently (April 2017) have 15 on our books taking up a total of 41 sessions each week. Fees currently stand at £11 per 3 hour session. Since April last year we have covered six themes, one each half term, these being Under the Ground and Into Space (Summer Term), Water and Fairy Tales (Autumn Term) and All Creatures Great & Small and Light & Colour (Spring Term).

We believe that although we have a strict curriculum to adhere to in the Early Years Foundation Stage it is still important to give the children a topic to focus on each half term.

Tuesday and Thursday lunch clubs still prove to be popular extended sessions and we have again continued this all throughout this year.

Our garden continues to flourish and it looks like we are going to have a bumper potato and raspberry crop this year. The sensory garden has really grown up and gives off some lovely scents, some of them are even used in our cooking that we still continue to do on a weekly basis.

On election day we embarked on our annual outing. This was to Audley End Miniature Railway where we all went for a trip through Fairy Woodland on the steam train and then went around Fairy Village with a real life fairy and elf spinning us fairy yarns as we went.

After managing to obtain £1000 in 2015 to establish a conservation area we are now able to safely take the preschool children up there to extend their knowledge of the natural world. They love to don their wellies to go up to the nature reserve and look out for The Gruffalo. Our continued thanks go out to all volunteers who have had any part in the process of preparing the conservation area and maintaining a safe area for us to use.

Staffing

In late Spring 2016 Lucy (our Deputy Preschool Leader) announced that she was pregnant and would be leaving us at Christmas to start her Maternity leave. Since we had already taken on a fourth person in the latter part of 2015 (for Emergency cover) we were able to ask her if she could fill in for Lucy's shifts when she had her baby. Leander Peppercorn was keen to take on this role and has been a great asset to our team as our fourth permanent member of staff instead of being our emergency cover girl.

Next came one of the biggest events of last year, this being Leander and Oliver's wedding in July. Staff and children alike milked the event for what it was worth and talked about all things weddingy for the whole of the summer term..... And then she became Leander Bearton.

Fund Raising

We have continued to hold fund raising events throughout the year including bingo in September, Christmas Fair in November, a quiz night in February and have just held a Jumble Sale. Unfortunately we had to cancel our Easter Eggstravaganza at the last minute due to the fact that only four people were available to run it! And although we tried a different tactic in running a summer term bingo night last year it was a bit of a disaster and we only cleared a small profit. The quiz night was particularly successful and we were caught on the hop when 5 more teams than we had prepared for came to take part but we accommodated them with no more ado.

AOB

Back to the baby issue for a moment, Lucy had a healthy baby boy on 27th January 2017, weighing in at 6lb, 15oz. He has been named Miles Henry, and is a little brother to Luke who attended our preschool for his foundation years.

Lucy is expected to return to Daisy Chains in Septemberwe shall have to wait and see!

OH NO, another baby alert - Leander announced in March that she is due to have her second baby in November and will be going on maternity leave in October !!!! Will it be flavoured pink or blue?. I just cannot keep up with all these babies.

On a personal note, I have taken over the role of Health and Safety Officer on the Village Hall Committee. This has worked out to be a good idea because as the main users of the hall the preschool

carry out Health and Safety checks every day, therefore I can ensure that the Village Hall Committee are notified of any outstanding issues as soon as possible.

The safety finger guards have now arrived and need to be fixed on the doors.

On May 11th Alex Sch. Carried out PAT Testing at the hall and has now tested all electrical applications. All defective appliances (2 kettles) have been disposed of.

As always, we strive to advertise our lovely preschool at every opportunity and we thought that a feather flag was an attractive and noticeable way to meet this objective. We need to get the word out that we exist here in West Wickham (and have a lovely village hall too). Our apologies to those of you who did not like our up-to date advertising methods. We don't want West Wickham to lose another important community resource so we do what we think necessary to keep Daisy Chains and West Wickham on the map.

Next April will be the fortieth anniversary of our establishment so we have plans to celebrate in big style ! Further information will be forthcoming in 2017 – 2018.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee for their continued support over this last year. The discount on hall rental at the start of the year really helps us a lot with our finances.

For, and on behalf of the Daisy Chains Preschool Committee, Susan Harrow

West Wickham & District Gardening Club

Report for the Annual Parish Meeting, 22nd May 2017, for the twelve months to 30th April 2017.

The Club once again had a successful year, which broadly followed well established lines but which included one significant innovation.

The major events in the Club's year continue to be the Annual Plant Sale in May and the Annual Show in August. The first of these two, the Plant Sale, is by far the largest single contributor to the Club's annual income, and is also the most practical contribution the Club makes to the village's gardens, through the good yet inexpensive plants it makes available. It is thus most gratifying that the Plant Sale continues to go from strength to strength; for each of the past three years its takings have set new records, so that in May 2016 it produced almost double the income of three years previously, and it makes a most generous contribution to the Club's finances. The second of these two events, the Annual Show, was once again most successful, with a marked increase in the number of exhibits compared to the previous year (including an increase in children's entries), with an excellent team of judges, and with the supportive context of tea and cake organized by Val and Allen Scott. As always, the success of the Show is very largely due to the efforts of Andrew Morris and the Show Committee.

Between these events, the Club made its conventional two Monday evening summer visits to local gardens of interest. This year the Programme Secretary, Rosemary Yallop, arranged visits to two very different gardens - the first to the spacious but distinctly fading gardens of Spencers of Little Yeldham (a former Courtauld and R.A.Butler house), and the second to the compact but vital garden in Little

Saxham of Gill and Michael Hicks (formerly of this Club). Both visits were well supported and were (just) accommodated by the weather.

The significant innovation of the year concerned the Club's third summer visit, the all day coach trip further afield. As explained in my Report of a year ago, it is difficult for a club of our size to sustain a coach trip on its own, and it had been decided to experiment and conduct a joint trip with the Balsham gardening club. In consequence our trip organiser, Janet Morris, teamed up with the Balsham organiser, Lyn Bobrow, to organise what proved to be an excellent and very well supported trip in mid June, to Peter Beales Roses in the morning and East Rushton Old Vicarage in the afternoon. The sharing of the event was so successful that our A.G.M. agreed that it should be repeated this year, and we hope it will become a regular fixture in our calendar.

Important though all these events are, it is nevertheless during the preceding autumn, winter and spring months that the Club is at its most vital, through its Monday evening meetings. These were once again arranged by the Club's excellent Programme Secretary, Rosemary Yallop, who year after year compiles a really diverse programme of speakers who cater for both the novice and the expert. Thus for example during the past year the novice learned how to grow plants in containers while the serious gardener received expert advice on growing dahlias, and in December everyone found themselves learning how to make Christmas garlands out of readily available plants. Speakers often bring plants for sale to these meetings, and advice is always readily available, at events which are the core of the Club's existence.

Arguably the most practical of the Club's activities is the bulk purchase of seed and other products for members at a considerable discount from a designated supplier. This valuable and time consuming operation is organised by our Club Trading Secretary, Marian Corbett, and the Club is much indebted to her for this work. Another of the Club's practical activities is the dispensing of advice and information to members through the publication of the occasional *Newsletter*, and for this we are much indebted to Janet Morris. And a third practical activity, whose impact is enjoyed by all users of the Village Hall, is the maintenance of the strip of garden at the front of the Hall, in the main by the kindness of Sue Kiddy on behalf of the Gardening Club.

The finances of the Club continue to be carefully managed by our excellent Treasurer, Andrew Morris, with our income coming from members' subscriptions, the Christmas Raffle and the Plant Sale, and our main expenditure being on paying speakers and on hiring the Village Hall for Club events. As with many small clubs, cheque books and paper financial records remain important to the Club's operations.

The membership of the Club remains stable, at 32. We will very soon be planting in the village's wild life area an ornamental crab apple tree in memory of Sylvia Norton, one of the Club's most loyal members and one of the village's most accomplished horticulturists, who died last year.

Arthur Mawby, Chairman

WEST WICKHAM CARPET BOWLS CLUB

The Club has 17 members from West Wickham and outside. As well as our normal Wednesday club evening we continue to play friendly matches against other clubs both home and away. Carpet bowls is fun, friendly and easy to pick up. Everyone is welcome to come along and give it a try.

Janet Morris, Secretary

WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY CLUB

The Club is a small one but is still managing to put on a programme of talks and evening visits. Dig4 this summer will probably be our last test pitting exercise and we will then be looking for grant aid to identify our pottery finds before completing the final report. After that we will be looking for a new archaeology project. In August we will be involved in something completely different as we promote a dramatised production of the Australian diaries of John Ramsden Wollaston. John was perpetual curate in West Wickham for 15 years until 1840 when he and his family emigrated to Western Australia where they led a pioneering life and he did much to establish the Anglican church in the newly established colony. We are very pleased to welcome members of the Stark Raven Theatre Company from Bunbury, WA, who are giving their services freely and we have decided that all proceeds will go to St Mary's Repair Fund as being particularly appropriate.

Janet Morris, Secretary