



Swallowfield Parish

Newsletter

December 2022

SWALLOWFIELD SHOW A BIG SUCCESS

After an absence of two years, we were delighted to be able to hold the two-day Swallowfield Show once again and to welcome 6,800 visitors over the sunny August bank holiday weekend.

We are very pleased to be able to donate a total of £8,500 to local charities, with details on the website. Thank you to the fantastic cohort of volunteers, who make the Show a community-run event, and to Farley Estate for once again allowing us to hold the event in Swallowfield Park.

In the main arena, visitors marvelled at the somersaults of the BMX show, and egged on the Paws for Thought dogs and Ray Prior, while the Reading Scottish Pipe Band added wonderful colour and sound. The 'village green' area proved very popular, with many visitors spending hours, enjoying the musicians and the Yateley Morris Men, whilst partaking in the food and drink available from the nearby stalls. We saw children's faces light up on seeing the roundabouts, donkey rides, go-karts, Circus Skills and the spellbinding magic of Mr Muddles.

Classic vehicles are always a draw

and we had a record number of cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, tractors and agricultural equipment.

The atmosphere at both horse and dog shows was very welcoming, with the novelty dog show classes proving particularly popular. There is something for everyone.

The hot summer took its toll on the gardening exhibits in the horticultural marquee, but it was very encouraging to see increased entries in other classes, such as crafts, photography and art. It is for all skill levels, so do consider entering next year!

Please see page 11 for more photos.

We are already planning the 2023 Swallowfield Show. If you are interested in getting involved with this unique community event, please contact chairman@swallowfieldshow.co.uk.

You'll find more photographs and information on our website: www.swallowfieldshow.co.uk.

Graham Stanley
Chairman
Swallowfield Show



News in Brief

HITCHHIKING FOR CHARITY

Welcome to Swallowfield resident and former Parish Council caretaker, Mike Hibbit, who has successfully hitchhiked from Land's End to John O'Groats and raised nearly £1,000 for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

Mike is also an enthusiastic member of the Russell Players and plays badminton most Monday evenings in the Parish Hall.

FLY TIPPERS FACE ACTION

A reminder that fly tipping is a criminal offence for which you can be prosecuted and fined. For more information on fly tipping, or to report a case, please visit: www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/fly-tipping.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Shinfield Voluntary Car Service is seeking volunteers based in the local area who have their own car to drive people who have difficulty coping with transport for medical appointments. To find out more, please contact **Sandy Smith** on 07555 923 615.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A reminder that we have a zero tolerance policy regarding any form of anti-social or criminal behaviour and matters will always be reported to Thames Valley Police and Wokingham Borough Council.



MEET YOUR COUNCIL

I have lived in the area, in Arborfield and then Swallowfield, for over 25 years. I joined the Parish Council because I very much like and value the area and the communities within and wanted to contribute to them. As a lawyer specialising in advising businesses, I hope that my experience will assist the Council in its work.

Cllr Catherine Drew
Property and Finance Working Groups
catherine.drew@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

WELCOME

As the nights draw in, our community remains as enthusiastic and engaged as ever. We have moved from the extraordinary Swallowfield Show, through the peerless Sparks in The Park and on to Halloween, where The Street was alive with all sorts of ghouls and vampires. The Crown, The George and Dragon and The Bull are busy, warm and inviting, please make sure to support our excellent local pubs. The Medical Practice has leapt into action with the latest round of efficient vaccinations ably supported by local volunteers. We have plenty to look forward to in the run up to Christmas as we have the strange prospect of the final stages of the World Cup alongside all the exciting nativity events.

Sparks in the Park was exceptionally good this year, it was held at a new, much improved and spacious location and had excellent catering facilities. The finale was particularly spectacular as the last firework cake decided to set off simultaneously – not sure they will be able to replicate it next year!

Not to be forgotten was the bulb planting across the parish. Many thanks to the many people who took part digging in the 1,600 bulbs we planted. I can't wait to see what the parish looks like in the spring.

Thank you to all those involved in the poignant and brilliantly organised Remembrance Sunday. It was wonderful to see the community come together once again to remember and honour our fallen. Well done to all the scouts, cubs and beavers who took part and supported the event so well.

As you may remember, the Parish Council have been exploring writing a Neighbourhood Plan which would give us some control and shape over the way

development happens in our parish. We're now moving it forward, deciding on the important content by learning from other local parishes that have recently developed theirs. Please come and join the team to help in its development, we very much want you to be involved in the process.

We run a rolling set of projects to keep the buildings and spaces we own in a good state. Next year we will give Parish Hall a good polish to improve its safety, security and accessibility for all. We're also looking at improvements to the entrances of the Riseley Memorial Hall.

The Coffee Corner is spreading extra warmth with longer opening hours on Wednesdays, providing soup, jacket potatoes and the opportunity to play card and board games.

Of course, not everything is good in these difficult times. The cost-of-living crisis impacts our parish too. Local charities like First Days, Wokingham are busier than they have ever been and need support. Likewise, the Citizens Advice Bureau is inundated with requests. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) are providing excellent advice on the support that is available at www.wokingham.gov.uk/cost-of-living. There is also a link to the Wokingham Volunteer Centre if you are able to help others in need. Local charities have banded together with WBC to form the Hardship Alliance to coordinate their response to support people impacted by this crisis – their contact details are likewise accessible through the website.

Cllr Jonathan Wheelwright
Chair
jonathan.wheelwright@swallowfield.pc.gov.uk

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Speedwatch Update

The Swallowfield Community Speedwatch Group has now been up and running for just over six months. Speedwatch monitoring sessions have been mounted, typically four times a week, during morning and evening rush hours (peak offending periods) at several locations in Swallowfield, Riseley and on the link road between our two villages. During this time more than 1,300 offenders have been recorded and details of the offending vehicles passed to Thames Valley Police for follow-up.

Of these offences the majority (over 90%) have been recorded on the Odiham and Basingstoke roads in Riseley. The events captured include serious offences (more than 50% over the limit) and multiple instances of repeat offending by the same motorists. Thames Valley Police (TVP) are responsible for sending warning letters to all offenders, with proportionately stronger responses for serious and repeat

offenders, or for 'threatening' behaviour. Unfortunately, the automated system for issuing letters and initiating follow-up action, announced last year, is still not operational; significant manual intervention by TVP is still required. With the huge number of offences recorded in the Thames Valley so far this year (more than 30,000) police overload is a real issue. The severity of speeding offences, particularly in Riseley, is a major concern locally and your council has now scheduled a meeting with Thames Valley's Police & Crime Commissioner, Mathew Barber, to address this and other local issues.

On a more positive note, with thanks to Tony Griffiths, Traffic Management Officer for TVP, a police 'enforcement' team was enticed to visit Riseley a couple of times in early September. They quickly apprehended multiple offenders and we hope to see them again soon. However, due to the shorter days and

deteriorating weather our Speedwatch activities will be suspended over the winter.

Please bear in mind that Traffic Calming was, and is, the Parish Council's primary objective, that Speedwatch was/is only the first step in that campaign and the only action the Council could take on its own initiative (i.e. without support and funding from Wokingham Borough Council). Under its new leadership there are signs that WBC Highways & Transport are beginning to take speeding more seriously and SIDs (Speed Indicator Devices) have been setup at various locations around the borough on a temporary basis. A meeting with WBC Highways & Transport to discuss not just speeding but alternative methods of traffic calming, especially for Riseley, has been requested.

Cllr Ian Fullerton
Transport Lead
 ian.fullerton@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



RECREATION UPDATE

The Parish Council has invested approximately £40,000 in the refurbishment of the playground at Riseley, which has in part been funded by development money from Dukes Meadow, with the rest coming from Parish Council reserves.

Playgrounds are very expensive things and we have worked hard to ensure value for money. We do hope that you enjoy the new playground and if there are any teething issues, please do contact us.

May we thank those residents who completed the Riseley Playground survey at the start of the project, to allow us to hopefully deliver much of what you wanted, namely mud free play and some new equipment.

Over time, and particularly since the relocation of Farley Hill School, we have received questions from local residents concerned about the future of the King George V Playing Fields in Farley Hill. Especially as to whether the fields might be built on in time. Across the country, there is a total of 506 King George V Playing Fields, established and protected and held in trust in memory of HM King George V. As such, they are protected, to ensure that they will always be there for communities as places for sport, nature and play. This does mean that, unlike in Swallowfield and Riseley, the site and playground are not owned by the Parish Council. Instead, they are the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council, who we continue to engage with on the subject.

In the New Year, we plan to conduct a survey of residents, to listen to your ideas and to understand what you would like from our play and recreation areas. These will feed into our future planning and budgeting as much as possible.

Cllr Laura Edmonds
Recreation Lead
 laura.edmonds@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



Remembrance Sunday

Parish News



BULB PLANTING

A big thank you to the residents and councillors who have very kindly helped us to plant a fantastic 1,600 Daffodil bulbs around Swallowfield, Riseley and Farley Hill this autumn.

We look forward to enjoying the results come spring!

Cllr David Lamont
Vice-Chair and Communications Lead
david.lamont@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



Thank you and well done to everyone involved in this year's Remembrance Sunday wreath laying and service. Chairman Jonathan Wheelwright laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.



WASTE AND RECYCLING UPDATE

This year we have been exploring how we can streamline and improve our waste and recycling arrangements, to provide those using our halls and recreation grounds with the ability to recycle mixed materials (paper and cardboard, drinks cans and plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays) on site, whilst continuing to provide the best value service for residents.

We recently tendered to replace several existing contractors with a single waste provider, who will handle general waste, mixed recyclables, cardboard and dog waste. The new arrangements are effective from 1 December 2022.

In due course, we will be introducing new bins at the recreation grounds in Swallowfield and Riseley, and in the Parish Hall, Riseley Tea Rooms and Riseley Tennis Club, allowing users to separate their general waste and mixed recycling.

Please note that the above arrangements are not for residential or commercial waste disposal. Fly-tipping is an offence and any offenders may face a fine or prosecution.

Cllr David Lamont
Vice-Chair and Communications Lead
david.lamont@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



PAYING OUR RESPECTS

Thank you to everyone who visited the Parish Hall to sign the book of condolence following the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



SWALLOWFIELD PARISH HALL – IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED

We have been working with a firm of architects to design much needed improvements to Swallowfield Parish Hall.

The Council gave the go-ahead to proceed with implementation of the first phase of the design at its October meeting. This will cover completion of the detailed design and specification, the tender process and the implementation itself.

Included in the first phase is improved wheelchair access through the front doors, a link corridor between the main hall and atrium (avoiding the need to pass through the kitchen), a new kitchen, a reception counter from the Parish Office opening into the atrium, fire safety improvements (detection, alarm and escape arrangements), and insulation and solar gain reduction treatments to the atrium roof to make the space more usable.

Subsequent phases (funds permitting) are planned, to include better wheelchair access to the Davies and Rose Rooms, additional wheelchair accessible WC provision for the main hall, Davies and Rose Rooms, sliding sound-deadening screens to replace the curtains for the openings into the side aisle of the main hall, and various other minor improvements.

Cllr John Anderson
Property and Finance Lead
john.anderson@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



Local Bus Service Update

HELP IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE COST OF LIVING

Support is available if you are struggling with the cost of living. Many who are coming forward for help are doing so for the first time – the pressure this crisis is creating is unprecedented. Below is a summary of some of the help you may be able to access:

- Pension credits
- Winter fuel payments
- Warm spaces open this winter
- Discounts on household bills
- Finding a job
- Healthy food vouchers
- Low income NHS help
- What to do if you can't afford food
- Mental health support
- What to do if you're in debt

The latest information can be found at www.wokingham.gov.uk/cost-of-living.

Energy Saving Trust's Energy Saving Tips

1. Turn appliances off at the plug socket (can save £65 per year)
2. Draught proof windows and doors (can save £125 per year)
3. Turn off lights you are not using (can save £25 per year)
4. Use a 30-degree cycle on your washing machine and reduce runs by one per week (can save £34 per year)
5. Avoid using the tumble dryer (can save £70 per year)
6. Keep your shower to four minutes (can save £95 per year) or swap the bath for a shower (can save £20 per year)
7. Avoid overfilling the kettle (can save £13 per year)
8. Fill the dishwasher each time (can save £17 per year)
9. Insulate your hot water cylinder (can save £70 per year)

Need to talk to someone on the phone?

Contact the One Front Door to speak to advisors from Citizens Advice if you are struggling. Call 0808 278 7958, Monday to Friday, between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

Want to help others?

Wokingham Volunteer Centre can help you find a role volunteering anywhere across Wokingham borough. Visit www.wokinghamvolunteercentre.org.uk or call 0118 977 0749.

The 600 route, serving Swallowfield, Riseley, and neighbouring areas, will continue to operate as is until the end of the current contract period in March.

A year-on-year comparison of the Riseley fare zones for a three week period this September shows a 48% annual increase in passenger numbers. Further data is not currently available.

Wokingham Borough Council has now put the route out to tender for a subsequent three-year period.

If the Council receives a bid from an operator that

meets the appropriate criteria and budget, a contract will be awarded.

Cllr David Lamont, Vice-Chair of Swallowfield Parish Council, said: "We are very pleased to hear that the future of our local bus service could soon be secured for a further three years, providing much needed surety to those residents who depend on public transport in our area.

With both this and the climate emergency in mind, it is good to see strong demand for the service and a substantial year on year increase in passenger numbers in part of the Parish. We have

continued to engage with councillors and officers at Wokingham Borough Council regarding the future of our local bus service throughout the year and would like to thank those involved for working collaboratively to find a positive way forward."

Cllr Paul Fishwick, Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways, said: "Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for the partnership and work that we have done together on this bus service. We recognise the importance of local bus services to our residents and the role a good

network plays in offering greener and healthier travel alternatives. This is an important part of reducing congestion, getting our residents more active and helping towards our climate emergency, which is another of our key priorities.

"It is also pleasing to see the increasing patronage in the new service, but we do need to have continued growth and I urge residents to take the bus wherever they can as they are safe, convenient and far more beneficial to the environment than driving."

Local clubs and groups



The Farley Hill PTA SPARKS IN THE PARK BACK WITH A BANG
Sparks in the Park returned to Swallowfield for the first time since 2019 as "Spooky Sparks in the Park" on 29 October.

This is a popular and long-running community event and we were lucky enough to have some of the original team still helping out this year - huge thanks to Derek Scuffell and Paul Cobbold for their continued support, 26 years on!

For 2022, we moved from the grounds of the house in Swallowfield Park to Swallowfield Showground on the Farley Estate, which was well received by everyone. We are thankful that the weather held out, to enable parking onsite. The evening was a huge success, selling 1,926 tickets, and we have had some great feedback and photos shared via the Sparks in the Park and Swallowfield Parish Council Facebook pages.

The Wise Monkeys put on a fabulous live music set

and we were delighted to welcome back Arborfield Hog Roast, Little Reds Pizza and Bluebell Box as our food partners.

Our professional fireworks team put on an incredible show, making full use of the new space to impress - many have said "The best Sparks yet!"

The event is run entirely by Farley Hill PTA, headed up by Abi Schmit and supported closely by George Brown, Charlie Edwards, Kate Leeming, Lucy Sant, Christina Haigh,

Nick Boyle, PTA members, parents and teachers, especially headteacher Jane Bateman. Thanks also to Farley Hill Dad Power for helping with the set up/breakdown and marshalling on the night. Special thanks to Natalie Gaibani from the Farley Estate for her continued support throughout the past three years. Farley Hill PTA is a registered charity and the funds raised will go towards new IT equipment for the pupils of Farley Hill Primary School.

SWALLOWFIELD BADMINTON CLUB AT SWALLOWFIELD PARISH HALL
We have spaces for new members early in 2023, on Mondays from 8:00pm to 10:00pm. We find social badminton is a great way to keep fit through low impact exercise and to make new friends.

We are a friendly group based around the villages of Swallowfield, Riseley, Spencers Wood and Shinfield. Our playing standards are varied and we are a non-league club. We hope to see you soon!

PS *Ask about our first free 'taster' evening!

Please contact Daphne on 07745 180 108 or email daphne_seamark@hotmail.com.

A separate group of friends plays on Thursdays, and would also welcome new members. Please contact Malcolm on 0118 988 2736.

...Continued from front page



SHOW TIME

Photos Mark Gowers Photography



The team at Swallowfield Medical Practice SWALLOWFIELD MEDICAL PRACTICE

If you believe that you are due a Covid vaccination and we have not yet contacted you, please call and let us know. If we can contact patients by mobile phone and have their permission to send SMS messages, this is the usual way for us to contact you. We may also phone, email or write to you.

We have both type of Influenza vaccines available (for those under 65 and over 65). We are running an additional catch-up clinic on 10 December in the surgery for pre-booked appointments only.

Again, if you believe you should have had your vaccination, please let us know.

We are currently in the process of having another treatment room built, to assist us in seeing more patients. In short term we have had to close our main treatment room, so two of our nurses will be working at our Shinfield site on a daily basis. Thank you for your patience.

If you have asked for or been given a buzzer when attending for an appointment and you do not have a car, please let a member of the reception team know so we can find you somewhere to wait for your appointment. Buzzers

are used for those patients who believe, or we believe may have an infectious condition such as Covid. They are also available for patients who are at higher risk of infection.

Dr Whittaker is now on Maternity Leave; we wish her well and look forward to her return next year. We are pleased to confirm that from January 2023 Dr Ghaffar will be increasing the number of days he works with us. He will be working all day Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. From February 2023 Dr Bates will be our GP Trainer. Our first trainee, a female doctor who is currently an ST3, is due to start in February 2023. An ST3 doctor has completed

a minimum of ten years training, working as a doctor, and is now in their specialist training period.

Due to changes within the NHS, we are no longer able to refer patients for ear syringing. Whilst we also cannot recommend services, we have been made aware of a local clinician who is qualified in micro suction techniques. This clinician can carry out home visits to those patients who are unable to travel to the clinic and whilst the service is not on the NHS, we have been assured the charges are very competitive.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Sue, Plot Holder

SWALLOWFIELD PARISH ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Autumn at the allotments has seen us all busy harvesting and tidying ready for winter. Despite the extremes of weather this year, overall, it has been a good year for most crops.

In October a working group built some raised beds which we will be offering to families or anyone with mobility issues. Do contact us if you are interested in taking on one of these. We still have a waiting list of keen gardeners wishing to take on a half or full plot and we hope to accommodate people as soon as a plot becomes available.

There is always lots to do even in December and January. Brassicas should be at their peak and root

vegetables should be in good supply. One of the most important things is to make sure of is that, once harvested, you are storing your crops properly to help them last as long as possible:

- Carrots and parsnips – on a layer of sand in a shallow, wooden box. and cover lightly with another layer of sand.
- Winter cabbages – hang them up in net bags or on wooden lats covered with straw.
- Potatoes – in thick paper sacks, exclude the light and keep dry.
- Pumpkins and squashes – place them on straw or shredded paper.
- Haricot beans – dry them out completely and put them in screw top jars.
- Onions, shallots and garlic – in traditional strings, once fully dried out.

Want to know more? Please visit our website: www.swallowfieldallotment.org or contact the SPAA Secretary, Claire Hamilton via email: secretary@swallowfieldpaa.org.

The SPAA Committee wishes you all a very Happy Christmas!



Patricia Taylor

SWALLOWFIELD ART GROUP

August saw our most successful SAG exhibition at The Swallowfield Show so far. We had a record number of visitors and sold a large number of paintings by group members. Many visitors commented favourably on the amount, variety and high standard of work produced. Some of our members also did exceptionally well in the art section of the horticultural competition.

During the autumn term, in class, we returned to a seasonal favourite of painting leaves, berries and seed heads in watercolour. We spent

several weeks making detailed studies of these natural elements so that we could reproduce them in a composition long after the originals had crumbled into fragments.

On a wet-in-wet background of soft autumnal colours, we created a pleasing array of two or three different coloured leaves in varied colours. The most colourful leaves fell into the categories of round (alder etc.), lobed (e.g. maples) and pinnately lobed (e.g. oaks). Berries included sloes, hawthorn, pyracantha, blackberries and rose hip. We aimed to create the effect of sunlight through leaves as well

as the brilliant lime, orange and red colours of the season. Watercolour, with its ability to flow from one colour to another, is ideal for creating these loose shapes and soft effects, even though the results can be somewhat unpredictable!

If you are interested in joining the group, please call Jenny Boddington on 0118 988 5804 for further details. We meet at Swallowfield Parish Hall on Mondays from 2.00pm to 4.00pm during term times.



Barbara Stanley
CHURCH UPDATE

Christmas is coming! You are all warmly invited to Carols by Candlelight (4.00pm on Sunday 18 December) and many people's favourite, the Crib Service (4.00pm on Christmas Eve). The former is an annual opportunity to sing many traditional carols and hear the familiar readings, followed by seasonal refreshments.

The Crib Service is a delight for parents and children alike, from tinies to teens and beyond. (Yes, older children often love it

too.) We have a wardrobe of nativity clothes to dress every child and recreate the nativity tableau. It's where memories are made!

Some say the Crib Service is the start of their Christmas. For others, it is the mystery of Midnight Mass, (11.30pm). Some prefer the Christmas Day services: Communion at St Mary's, Shinfield, at 8.00am or, children, bring a present to display at the 10.30am service.

The Act of Remembrance was very well supported,

with active participants of all ages from Beavers to George Winter, our 96 year old Arctic Convoy veteran, and including the PCSOs, Chairman of the Parish Council, the British Legion and our Borough Councillor. I have seen various medal wearers there and would love to include more ex-service personnel or cadets in the ceremony. If this is you, or you know of others, please would you contact me or the Parish Clerk, so that we can widen participation.

Our weekly Wednesday morning Coffee Corner

has been extended till 3.00pm, offering lunch and a warm welcome on these cold days. Do join us at the Parish Hall!

It is a great pleasure to welcome our new Team Rector, Rev Nigel Beer, to our Benefice. His first official service was a 'full house' service here to mark All Saints Day on 1 November – otherwise known as All Hallows Day, following Hallowe'en (All Hallows evening). We all wish Nigel well for his ministry among us.

RISELEY, SWALLOWFIELD & FARLEY HILL CHARITABLE TRUST

Earlier this year The Trust hosted a quiz and chilli evening, raising significant funds thanks to community generosity, in support of local Ukrainians displaced by the war.

In conjunction with the Reading Ukrainian Community Centre, which provides practical and social support to many refugees, we have catered for regular light lunches at informal social events and have also provided gift packs for teenagers on arrival in the UK. The Trust has also provided Shinfield Baptist Church with the means to fund social get-togethers for more rural based Ukrainians close to our Parish.

These events are so important in providing safe spaces for refugees to meet and share similar experiences whilst learning how to start life in the UK. We are proud to have been involved with these projects which have made a difference to so many people.

The Coffee Corner Team

COFFEE CORNER PLUS

Coffee Corner, Swallowfield's volunteer-run coffee shop, open on Wednesdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm in the Davies room at the Parish Hall, has just got better.

With the prospect of a chilly winter, we've extended our service to provide hot lunches from 12.30pm until 3.00pm from November to March. Whether you are on your own, dropping in with a friend, convening at the start or end of a group walk or cycle ride, you are guaranteed a warm welcome. Hot drinks and cake are served until 12.30pm, with soup, rolls and filled jacket potatoes on the menu for lunch. There are cards and board games for those that want to linger longer.

Once our running costs are covered, customer donations go to our chosen local charities. I'm delighted to report that we've donated £200 each to ASD Family Help in Wokingham and the Reading Community Learning Centre in recent months. All excess lunch donations are going to Share Shinfield. And whilst

Our next event will be a jumble sale on Saturday 4 March from 2.00pm at Swallowfield Parish Hall. Good quality donations of jumble may be dropped off on the morning of the Sale only between 8.30am and 11 am; we reserve the right to refuse items.

Riseley, Swallowfield and Farley Hill Charitable Trust
Registered Charity Number: 1112070



on the subject of giving, we were delighted that our late September afternoon tea raised almost £900 for Macmillan. A big thank you to everyone who made that possible.

We are looking for more volunteers to help, particularly with lunches. The more we have, the fewer the duties! If you could spare 3-4 hours on a Wednesday, roughly once every six weeks, either for a morning coffee or lunchtime slot, please email clare.pilgrim@btinternet.com.

Do drop in one Wednesday, maybe for our special Christmas treats on 21 December? We'd love to see you.



GIVING THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP THIS CHRISTMAS

The Link Visiting Scheme is an award-winning charity dedicated to reducing loneliness in Wokingham borough. With the support of over 400 wonderful volunteers, we currently help around 500

people feel valued and connected.

For many, Christmas Day is a day for getting together with family and loved ones. Sadly, for some people without family or close friends, it is the loneliest day of the year. For the eleventh year

running, we are planning to bring festive cheer to those who are alone and who would love some extra company. This includes having a friend to talk to, a delicious meal on the day plus a gift of treats. If you are on your own, please get in touch and we can see if we can help.

We rely on donations to support those in our community who need us most. Could you help?

For more information, please visit our website www.linkvisiting.org/christmas or call our office on 0118 9798 019.

Pam Wright, Manager

RISELEY VILLAGE TEA ROOM

In November we are usually busy getting everything in place for our Christmas "do" but this year we are planning to close for the season on Sunday 11 December and to reopen in February.

We're not being party poopers as we plan a big 10th Anniversary bash in June next year! Yes it will be 10 years since we opened, 1 June 2013 to be precise. The intervening years have seen big changes but the one constant has been the lovely staff and volunteers - the vast majority have been there from day one although others have joined more recently after my appeal for volunteers and I'm delighted to say all have seamlessly become part of the team.

I am still planning to hang up my apron next year after completing 10 years. I would love to carry on, as the tearoom is my "baby", but health and family must come first.

We are still looking for someone to take on the position of manager. Please be assured that whoever comes forward will be made most welcome and new ideas and plans for the future will be encouraged.

Call the Tea Room on 0118 9967 375 or message me on Facebook – who knows this could be an exciting new venture for you in 2023.

A very Merry Christmas and a happy healthy New Year from all at Riseley Village Tea Room.

THE CALICO TRUST

The Calico Trust is a local charity which can support people who live in Swallowfield Parish. If you need financial help, please contact the Trust in confidence.

Celia Adams

Call 0118 988 4661/07946 654424 or email celia8844@gmail.com.

Ros Riddell

Call 0118 988 2014 or email ros.riddell@btinternet.com.

Tim Double, Secretary

SWALLOWFIELD PITT BRIDGE LODGE

Our Lodge meeting on Monday 7 November was initially a sombre occasion as it was our first meeting after the death of our founding Master, Dr Roger Jago.

It was Roger's drive and enthusiasm that led to the formation of Swallowfield Pitt Bridge Lodge. The Lodge operates in the way it does because it was Roger's vision that Masonry should return to its roots, meet locally and cut back on what he considered to be unnecessary customs that he felt wasted Lodge time - or caused indigestion at dinner. Roger trained as a doctor, joining the Army Medical Corps. On leaving the Army he became a Consultant Anaesthetist at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. He was a Freemason for over 50 years, reaching high office in every Order he belonged to. He lived respected and died regretted.

After a fitting tribute to Roger, the Lodge business commenced with two of our members being raised to the degree of Master Mason and a new Initiate, another local man, was proposed and seconded. Roger's dream flourishes as the Lodge continues to grow and prosper. The evening concluded with an excellent dinner in convivial company where the usual toasts were observed.

Our next regular meeting will be on 6 February 2023, at which we will be installing a new Worshipful Master. The Lodge normally meets four times a year on the first Mondays in February (Installation), September and November and the second Monday in May, at the Mill House Hotel.

To find out more, please contact Tim Double on 07703 254350 or email timpac5261@live.co.uk.

Maggie Uttley, Secretary

SWALLOWFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

We are delighted that members and friends of the Society are coming back to our meetings, we welcome them all and invite anyone else interested in History to come and join us. We meet on the third Thursday of the month in the Rose Room at Swallowfield Parish Hall.

Our autumn programme began in October, when we welcomed Joy Appleton (Chairwoman of the Boxford History Society). She told us the story of how the amazing find of a Roman mosaic, which lay undisturbed for 1,600

years at Boxford, West Berkshire, was discovered during an archaeological dig in August 2017. It dates from the Roman period. The fourth century mosaic is over six metres long.

Experts say this is, without question, the most exciting mosaic discovery made in Britain in the last fifty years and it must take a premier place amongst those Romano-British works of art that have come down to modern Britons.

In November the presentation was entitled 'The Trouble with Henry VIII'. This attracted a packed audience in the Rose room of the Parish Hall. Richard Hoyle, who is

a visiting Professor at the University of Reading, is an excellent speaker and raconteur, his presentation, so full of interesting information he engaged our imaginations of how living in the court during the Tudor period must have been. We hope he will come back next year and tell us about Elizabeth I.

We look forward to welcoming Natalie Gaibani on 15 December, whose presentation is entitled 'Our Family History and Ownership in the Local Area'. We'll end the evening with mulled wine and mince pies!

To find out more or contact us visit www.slhsoc.org.uk

The View from the Hill

Natalie Gaibani

Farley Estate

natalie@farleyfarms.co.uk

The challenges of farming in Britain are encapsulated in the above pictures, both taken this year. In the summer our grass was catching fire as it grew, and now we are rescuing cows from waterlogged meadows. I don't think there will ever be a "normal" year in terms of weather, as climate change makes its presence felt. Indeed, predictions are that the climate in the south of England will be equivalent to the south of Spain over the next generation, something that needs to be taken into account in terms of what crops we should and can produce.

At the same time, farm subsidies are being phased out and the government has reiterated its commitment to ELMS (the Environmental Land Management Scheme). Whilst Farley is on board with looking at ways to improve our environmental management, the government is also pushing the issue of food security and the need to grow British (which should not be viewed as the same thing!). These agendas are not necessarily in alignment and so if the desire is to foster British arable farming, putting all the funding into environmental schemes may not be the right approach. The uncertainty in this area is making it very hard to plan so at present Farley is taking a middle ground, exploring new environmental options whilst also signing up to Defra's Future Farm Resilience Scheme to identify the best way forwards post-subsidy.

The energy crisis is also affecting farms, with a double hit of contractors' fees rising, inputs (fertiliser and sprays) rising and prices volatile. Wheat prices were at a record high this year but not consistently so meaning we are still unsure of the value of the grain we harvested in 2022. We took the decision to move all our storage off-site when Observer Way was built and this has



made harvest more logistically difficult, but grain sales much easier as the stock is managed by Trinity Grain Store near Membury.

The above are all reasons why Farley has shifted its business model not to be dependent on combinable crops - or indeed any industry where the costs and pricing, not to mention the weather are beyond our control. Our commercial and residential lettings are all occupied, the shoot is fully sold out and the equestrian centre is going strong. We have built new fences for the horse trials in June and as always are looking to explore new ways to increase revenue without detracting from the rural setting of our home.

On this note, you may have seen the planning application for Pound Copse (Observer Way), Arborfield. This small development of industrial units is planned as an extension of Bridge Farm. Despite the difficult economic times, we have weekly enquiries for industrial space from local businesses looking to expand. This site is not intended for housing! We believe it is far more suited to light industrial use to fit in with the site in front of it. The consultation period for the development is about to end (at the time of writing) but I am happy to field comments and pass them onto our promoter partner. We hope this development will not only help to secure our future but cement us as a landlord of local businesses providing employment to our surrounding villages.

In other news, I will be moving on from my role in January. I will still be a family member and so will not be going far and I am sure I will see many of you as I walk my dog or drop in on things over the coming years. No doubt my replacement will introduce themselves in the next newsletter and in the meantime I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

As always, feel free to get in touch.

Stuart Munro
Member for Swallowfield,
Wokingham Borough Council

LOCAL MEMBER UPDATE – WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wokingham Borough Council, like all local government organisations across the UK, is facing huge financial challenges to ensure vital services are protected and its residents receive the help and support they need to keep their families safe.

The long-term impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis has put unprecedented pressure on the Council's vital services.

Increases in demand for statutory services for residents, including those with special education needs and disabilities, have also left the Council struggling financially.

The cost of living crisis is hitting our residents but it is also hurting all local

councils, as well as local businesses. Energy costs are increasing for the Council as it is not protected by any price cap. This, together with rise in inflation, has resulted in the cost of providing services to rise significantly.

As the lowest funded unitary authority in the UK, with one of the lowest numbers of staff per resident in the country, Wokingham Borough Council continues to review financial efficiency to ensure sound financial management during these turbulent times.

The Council has had a strong track record of reducing costs and making efficiencies, totalling almost £29million over the past six years. It is made a real terms overall budget reduction of a staggering 34% since the last period of austerity in 2010/11, despite the ever-increasing cost pressures in statutory care.

As part of the efficiency measures, prior to the pandemic, the Council made major changes that reduced

staffing costs, including management, saving approximately £3.5million a year.

With many staff continuing to split their week between the office and working from home, plans have been put in place to move staff to the bottom two floors of the building located in Wokingham town centre. The move will allow the Council to consider various options on what to do with the top two floors of the building while saving on both heating and lighting, helping to reduce its uncapped energy bill.

As I write this brief update, autumn has arrived to give us mild weather, and a great deal of rain. I hope that you all have an excellent autumn and Christmas break.



ARK CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

ARK is an independent and vibrant full gospel Church. Our members come from varied Christian denominational backgrounds and experience the love and presence of the living God. We welcome people from all backgrounds and nationalities. Sunday Services are every week at 10:30am at Swallowfield Parish Hall. They are an opportunity to meet other Christians and make new friends, to study and understand the Bible more and to meet somebody to talk to or pray with.

CAROL SERVICE

(11 December – 6.30pm)

You are warmly welcomed to our Christmas Carol Service. It's a great evening for family and friends to come together. There'll be plenty of carols and special readings. Join us afterwards for tea and mince pies!

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

(25 December – 10.00am)

Come and join us for a special Christmas Day Service and hear about the reason for the season!

NEW YEAR'S EVE SPECIAL

(31 December – 7.15pm)

All are welcome to a celebration into the New Year, in a joyful atmosphere!

Three course meal, lively interaction, songs, fellowship, games and a message for 2023

Please book using this link <https://bit.ly/3Tzg3EO>

For further information, please call 0118 321 5153 or email info@arkcf.org.uk.

Helen Coulter, Manager

SWALLOWFIELD PRE-SCHOOL

The autumn term has seen the children of Swallowfield Pre-School engaged in so many exciting activities and learning opportunities; building confidence, forming new friendships, using vivid imaginations and developing social interactions and language as they play.

We have been delighted to welcome parents in to session to see exactly what their children get up to each day; they have joined us for the morning welcome, joined in with small world character play, helped with problem solving and puzzle making, got involved in role play scenarios, spent time outside on our patio and taken the opportunity to observe from a distance. Feedback from parents has been amazing!

The children were excited by a visit from a former parent who delivered a session of interactive songs and rhymes and read the story of 'Star in a Jar'. We've created a huge image of the story 'A Squash and A Squeeze', which is on display at Spencers Wood Library; the children painted, sponged and collaged each of the characters after enjoying listening to the story.

We've also explored the great outdoors, donning wellies for a music and movement session on the field and a



nature walk on which we collected leaves and sticks in our buckets, and even some daisies...in November! Our garden has been planted with daffodil bulbs which we hope will give a beautiful display in the spring.

At the Pre-School we focus on every child as an individual, adapting our provision to meet their needs. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, stimulating, challenging, encouraging and nurturing the children in our care, whilst instilling trust and confidence and a positive approach in preparation for school and life in general.

For more information about the Pre-School, to book a visit or to register for a place, please contact us at info@swallowfieldpreschool.org.uk. We have places available from January 2023 and operate a waiting list for places in the future.

Swallowfield Pre-School offers morning sessions, Monday - Friday at Swallowfield Parish Hall from 9.15am - 12.30pm. We are a fully inclusive setting and have been rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

Duncan and Claire Hamilton

THE RUSSELL PLAYERS

The Russell Players' pantomime, 'Goldilocks, Three Bears and the Detectives' returned with great style. Written by local playwright Juliet Devon, the show puts a new spin on this familiar tale with Goldilocks' evil guardian framing Goldilocks (the charming but feisty Leah Maskell) for the burglary at the home of the Three Bears.

The sparkling script, was fast paced and enhanced by smooth scene changes. Framed as a courtroom drama, the events played out in flashback-like all current contemporary drama. Notwithstanding the bumbling but sympathetic judge Fairenough, (Glyn

Marshall) and incompetent lawyer, Barry Star (David Parsonson), the threatened miscarriage of justice is foiled by an unlikely detective duo - DI Solvit (Andy Witting) and a visiting Australian policeman (a hilarious performance by Nigel Adams).

The audience heartily booed the villain, Madam Acid, superbly played by Deni Smale. Her easily manipulated henchmen (the suitably named Sneak and Snitch played by Milly Wright and Sarah Mapleston) strained every sinew to ensure Goldilocks' downfall.

There were endearing performances from Mitch Mitchell as, Woody and from Mike Hibbit and Sheila

Partington as the easy-going Papa and Mumma Bear. Young Amber Johnston was splendid as Teddy Bear delivering a strong "Paddington-esque" style performance.

Special mention of Lynn Wright, whose domination of the courtroom scenes as the Court Usher, kept everyone in order. These wonderful characters, (costumed by Hazel Gilingwater) performed through an impressive series of woodlands, cottages and mansions, all beautifully created by Chris Partridge and his team. Excellent lighting and sound effects by Bryan Partington, Juliet Devon and Mitch Mitchell enhanced Maggie Uttley's highly entertaining production, giving it a professional feel.

LOCAL CONTACTS

Swallowfield Medical Practice

0118 988 3134 (general) or
0118 988 3473 (appointments)

All Saints' Church, Swallowfield and Nutbean Cemetery

0118 988 5923 or email office@loddonreach.org.uk

Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 5111

Wokingham Hospital 0118 949 5000

Emergency Service 999

Medical (Non-emergency) 111

Police (Non-emergency) 101

Thames Water (Emergency) 0800 714 614

24hr Floodline Service 0845 988 1188

SSE Electricity (Emergency) 0800 783 8866

Gas (Emergency) 0800 111 999

Swallowfield Community Responders
0118 988 4384

Reading Buses 0118 959 4000

Readibus 0118 931 0000

Keep Mobile 0345 544 0850

Shinfield Voluntary Car Service 0118 9883400

Wokingham Borough Council 0118 974 6000

Citizens Advice (Wokingham) 0808 278 7958

Farley Hill Primary School 0118 973 2148

Lambs Lane School 0118 988 3820

Spencers Wood Library 0118 988 4771

Riseley Village Tea Room 0118 99 67375

Parish Stores 0118 988 5138

DID YOU KNOW?

Our redesigned newsletter will result in a saving of up to 32,000 sheets of paper annually.

CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors can be contacted through Liz Halson, the Parish Clerk.

0118 988 5929

clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk
swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

Your Parish Councillors are: John Anderson, Mark Binns, Catherine Drew, Laura Edmonds, Ian Fullerton (Planning Chair), David Lamont (Vice-Chair), Margaret McDonald, Simon Taylor and Jonathan Wheelwright (Chair).

Facilities for hire

The Main Hall, Davies Room and Rose Room at Swallowfield Parish Hall are available for weddings, parties, clubs/groups, meetings and other events. Please call 0118 9885 444 or email

finance_officer@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

For information on hiring Victory Hall in Farley Hill, please call 0118 324 6600 or email hire@victoryhalltrust.com.

Disclaimer Articles that have been submitted to Swallowfield Parish Council for inclusion in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Parish Council or individual councillors. Anyone wishing to comment on such articles should please contact those involved directly.

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