

COMMUNITY NEWS

New and Refreshed Community News

You'll see that the Community News has a fresh new look this month - we hope that you like it!

Thanks to everyone who completed one of the surveys - over 90% of respondents said that the Community News was useful or very useful at keeping you informed about local matters. The events information, local services ads and other useful contacts are especially helpful.

Most residents prefer to receive the News by local delivery (as now), although some would be happy to receive it by email, or attached to a What's App - however given that not all residents use digital communications we have decided to keep local delivery for now, but will also send it out attached to a What's App on each of the village groups. Thank you to all the local distributors - the News would not get out without you!

Overwhelmingly you said that you wanted to read about "local" matters - and many of you have interesting ideas for more content and editorial. In the next few months we will be looking to introduce some of these new sections - please see below for more details.

- Articles on local matters for example - farming, local history, gardening, the environment. Are you a knowledgeable in one of these areas? Would you be willing to write short articles 3 or 4 times a year? We'd love to hear from you - please email news@graftonparish.com if you can help
- Grafton Parish Discs.....a Community News version of Desert Island Discs featuring local people from across the Parish
- Hatches, matches and dispatches (and house moves) - We're happy to include these with the permission of the resident/their family. Please email news@graftonparish.com or drop a note into the Hall letterbox
- Local news for each hamlet, and planning permission notices (where dates allow)

Thank you once again to everyone who gave their views - we hope that you enjoy reading the News!

Thank You to Ridgeway Press

The Community News Team would like to thank Simon Hobden and his team at Ridgeway Press for their fabulous service in printing the Community News for us for the last 13 years. Simon Hobden can be contacted via emailing info@ridgewaypress.co.uk or by calling 01256 300420 - ridgewaypress.co.uk

See www.graftonparish.com, call 01672 216115 or email hall@graftonparish.com for Coronation Hall booking information and details of gazebo hire.



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GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL AGM REPORTS 2022

GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021 - 2022

New councillors and their roles

In May 2021 new councillors joined the team. Mr Richard Pash from Martin, Mr Edward Nelson from Wexcombe and Mr Rupert Bentley from Wilton. The Parish Council team continues to work hard and thanks are due to the entire team for all their efforts over the year.

Setting up Neighbourhood Planning Group

Grafton parish council decided to pursue Neighbourhood Planning (NP). Grafton Parish Neighbourhood Plan will give us opportunity to be in charge of the future development planning in our parish. The subcommittee is set up with Mr Pash as a chair, Mr Nelson as a Vice-Chair and with standing members, Mr Hatherell, Mr Hosier and Ms Vonsova (Clerk). Mrs Pellegram agreed to act as a consultant in the process of creating NP. The Vision meeting on 25 April took place headed by Mrs Andrea Pellegram. Over 40 local residents attended the meeting which was followed by further requests from members of the parish to join the NP Committee.

Web-site enhancements

The Parish Council also decided to refresh the website and Mr Pash undertook this task. We hope by giving it a facelift it will attract a wider public and younger audience.

Setting up a community calendar

One of the responsibilities of Mr Nelson is keeping us updated with upcoming events in this and surrounding parishes by setting a community calendar.

2022 June -Plans fo a Community Event

Preparation for the Queens Platinum Jubilee Event on 5 June are firmly in place thanks to Mrs Witcher and Mr Burke, the main organisers. With an exciting program ranging from a Parish Quiz to test your knowledge of this parish, a picnic lunch on the Green to fancy dress photos with the Queen, there will be a lot to do! The Jubilee Beacon will be lit on 2 June at 9:45 on Wexcombe Down. We are proud of this small parish taking the part in this Nation and Commonwealth event and I would like to thank you to Mr Hosier for his contribution to this event.

Traffic Safety

Mr Andrew Paine, and Mrs Sarah Webb who kindly took over the SpeedWatch group in middle of 2019 are no longer able to carry on beyond July 2022. I would like to personally thank them for all the efforts in the challenging times. Maintaining a SpeedWatch group in the middle of the pandemic, topped up with our busy lives, was not easy.

Data from SID East Grafton shows clearly the level of speeding through East Grafton. 85% passing traffic is travelling over 37 mph, 20% over 35mph. The highest speed was recorded at 65mph. Speeding is an ongoing problem and we doing everything what we can to lessen this. The Parish Council has requested police involvement in the SpeedWatch. Police carried out their own speed watch from the village green but the police car was clearly visible so they recorded very low speeds.

For speed watch to succeed we will need more volunteers to step up, get trained and use the equipment we share with Easton Royal. If you think that you can contribute please volunteer. The training is done online in the comfort of your home.

The state of the roads is beyond our control. This issue is common throughout Wiltshire as Mr Wheeler's report indicates. Public should log any complaints regarding potholes on www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting. We believe that group pressure is essential to create a response from the Wiltshire County Council to repair the roads.

Defibrillators

All defibrillators in this parish have been registered on the The National Defibrillator Network which connects to the NHS ambulance service.

Playing Fields

The ash trees which are deemed to be a high risk to the public are in process of being removed. The skate ramp has been repaired. With a regular grass cutting and sporting facilities the Playing Field is ready to be used for wider public.

Christmas – Father Christmas and Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight, organised by Mrs Witcher, was a great success. The event was well attended and we got lots of positive responses. The traditional Father Christmas round is provided all the traditional excitement on Christmas Eve – thank you Father Christmas and your trusty elf for entertaining the children.

Regards David Lemon - Chairman Grafton Parish Council - chairman@graftonparish.com

Due to limitations of space, a selection of edited annual reports from community groups can be found in the AGM Reports section in the centre of this month's Community News. Unedited versions of all the reports can be found at www.graftonparish.com from 12th June.

A SELECTION OF EDITED ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS PRESENTED AT THE GRAFTON PARISH AGM ON 9 MAY 2022

St Nicholas' Church

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of the parish, community at St Nicholas. The PCC makes suggestions on how our services can involve as many people as possible.

There are 49 on the Church Electoral role which was created anew in 2019. There has been 1 baptism and 2 funerals during this year.

Due to the extreme circumstances surrounding the Covid lockdown rules the church remained closed for the majority of the year. There have been about 4 services held during 2021 and no large celebrations for Easter, Harvest Festival etc. An outdoor Remembrance Service was held where over 100 people attended a short and meaningful act of respect for those who gave their lives in the 2 world wars.

Pieces of wood had been falling from the church ceiling and sadly the church had to close much longer than the PCC would have hoped, in addition to the lockdown rules. A satisfactory method for the repair was determined and work took place at the end of the year, following fundraising. The first large service attracted an attendance of approximately 200 on Christmas Day 2021. Winter Warmers met rarely in 2021 due to the restrictions relating to the pandemic but reopened in time for a Christmas lunch.

St Nicholas' Church continued to receive donations towards the ceiling repairs, all accompanied by the requisite Gift Aid documentation. Grants totalling £2,800 have been received on completion of the work. There remains a shortfall in the income when standard costs such as electricity, insurance and ground maintenance are considered.

The PCC contribution towards the Diocesan Share largely provides stipends and housing for the clergy and this is based on a percentage of the total cost and is calculated by Salisbury Diocese – the PCC reduced this payment by half in 2021, due to the funding shortfall associated with the effects of the pandemic and reduction in regular giving. Additionally, a sum is also contributed to the deanery based on the average headcount of the congregation.

The Trustees are keen to encourage residents to support the church. There was a commitment to hold a number of fund raising events during 2020/21 all of which had to be mothballed until the rules permitted public events. It is hoped that someone will come forward to take on the Church Warden's role in the near future and that volunteers will step up to assist with the regeneration of St. Nicholas'. Sadly 2 PCC Members resigned during 2021 after many years of dedicated service to St Nicholas' Church.

The PCC endeavours to ensure that both St Nicholas and the services provided are as welcoming and embracing as possible. Particular attention is made to the welcoming atmosphere at each service and the timing and content of services is organised to be the most attractive and timely for parishioners.

Grafton Parish Youth Group

During the two years of pandemic and lockdown, the regular members of the Youth Group have either outgrown it or found different interests to pursue. In addition, the helpers from pre-Covid times reluctant to participate to the same level as their families are no longer involved.

On 27 July an invitation was made to young people in the Parish to help determine a way forward for the Youth Group. Sadly the turnout was disappointing, and we didn't make significant progress.

Despite the initial slow start, a number of activities still took place in the latter part of 2021:

24 September - Making Paracord Bracelets

25 October – Go Karting at Thruxton

19 November – Devizes Ghost Walk and Fish and Chips.

Additionally, on 19 December several young people helped to prepare sausage rolls and mulled wine for the Parish Carols on the Green.

During 2022 the energy has been a bit lacking; hopefully with the start of a new school year in September there will be renewed interest and enthusiasm.

Coronation Hall

In the past year the Hall has been able to return to normal operations. As we came out of the pandemic, a couple of classes were lost but they have been replaced with new hirers and new classes. The Hall has a virtually full weekday programme and income from hire is also back to its pre-pandemic level.

In terms of expenditure during the past year, all the light fittings in the main hall area as well as the ancillary areas have been converted to take LED lamps. All 21 emergency lights have been replaced with LED lamps and a regular maintenance check and routine is in place. The air source heat pump was replaced, not without some teething problems which appear now to be corrected. In spite of these significant outlays, the Hall reserves are still healthy and are at the same level as they were in April 2019.

No major expenditure is planned for the coming year. Repainting is expected to be the next big item of cost, but it is considered to be in good enough condition for at least another year. Overall, the Hall is equally well placed to deal with any unexpected costs.

In anticipation of a rise in energy costs that will hit the Hall later this year when the current contract expires, a decision was made to modestly increase the fees from September. The viability of using solar energy continues to be discussed.

The Hall committee is keen to play its role in supporting community events. Despite cancelling the last Community Market and Brunch, the Christmas market is very much on the agenda but focussing more on a community get together. Thoughts such as a regular Village Cafe (where we could have games, cards, book swaps) on a Friday or a Community Brunch on Saturday morning are being explored. The committee would like to engage with the Parish Council and consider ideas to promote community cohesion for 2023, e.g. Burns Night, St George's Day and Halloween etc.

The Hall is providing input to the Grafton Parish website, so that the hall is well represented and any revisions meet the needs of the Hall booking processes.

Maria has stepped down as the hall cleaner and has been replaced by James, although Maria continues in her role as caretaker. As a committee, we would like to thank them both for continuing to keep the Hall as smart as it does. Thanks also to Fran Barclay for continuing to plant and care for the hall's tubs and baskets.

Grafton & District Horticultural Society

We held our first meeting after the end of the Covid restrictions on 21 July 2021 with an evening visit to Peacock Cottage in Manton followed by drinks and canapés in the Coronation Hall. It was great to meet up again since our Christmas party in December 2019.

This garden visit was followed by 2 more afternoon garden visits, 2 evening lectures and our Christmas party. All were a great success in part thanks to the beautiful weather for the garden visits.

We had some problems with our Hall bookings but after many emails and discussions with the Hall Committee I am pleased to say that all our meetings will be held in the Hall which have done for at least 25 years.

We have moved with the times and are now a "card only Payment" club. This was first tried out at our meeting in March when our members renew their membership and all went well. It will save our treasurer hours queueing to deposit cash at the post office!!

I am very pleased to report that so far 7 new members have joined us this year and hope that they will enjoy the 5 garden visits (with pub lunch beforehand!) and the 4 lectures and our Christmas party planned for 2022.

Marijke Craig - Chair

Grafton Goslings

This welcoming and friendly group meets every Thursday at 10am during term-time at the Coronation Hall. The importance of baby & toddler groups has been underlined by the pandemic – which meant that many parents, babies and children found themselves terribly isolated. We are delighted that Goslings has bounced back brilliantly.

Bedwyn & Grafton Link Scheme

Bedwyns Link is a very important service for our local community and relies entirely on local support and 44 volunteers. In 2021 it provided transport for people without cars or who cannot drive, mobility and friendship activities for people over 70 and a temporary food bank. It is one of 42 link schemes in Wiltshire where, together in 2021, volunteers contributed over £1,011,000 and 81000 hours to patient transport and neighbourhood support.

In 2021, Bedwyns' Link scheme:

- Was less busy than in normal non-pandemic years, providing between 10-15 trips per month (this is now increasing to the usual 50 trips per month).
- Had 200+ clients from the Bedwyns, St Katharines, the Graftons and Marten, Wexcombe and Wilton. Also people from Vernham Dean and Shalbourne who are registered with the GP practice in Great Bedwyn.
- Involved 44 volunteers (including 8 telephone coordinators) who helped clients with 252 different trips which covered 5,837 miles (average 23 miles per trip). This was 4% of the total Link miles for Wiltshire - a higher than average mileage as we are a very rural area.
- Bedwyns Link volunteers contributed the equivalent of £18,400 and 1470 hrs to the Wiltshire economy by providing patient transport and other support.

In addition, Bedwyn's Link provided a temporary food bank for families in need (November 2020 – June 2021). Also when covid allowed, we restarted Friendship and Mobility providing 2 sessions/week for about 30-35 people between 70-90. Participants found this great fun and very beneficial.

Income and expenditure summary for Bedwyn's Link 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021:

Total income - £2,769.26

Total Expenditure - £2,911.48

Balance - £142.22

Despite the small loss, the charity still ended 2021 in a healthy financial position, despite not asking for support from Parish Councils as we had enough money in our reserves. However, we are most grateful to Little Bedwyn PC who still generously gave us £200.

During 2021, our new Treasurer restarted a monthly drop-in so volunteers can bring donations, collect expenses and meet others involved in Link. This is usually held in the Three Tuns in Great Bedwyn and is advertised in the Bedwyn Parish News. We are still looking for a Secretary and an Assistant Treasurer – please contact us if you are interested in either of these roles.



Sunflowers at Grafton

The COVID pandemic overlaid layers of complexity during the year. Like other Parish organisations we had relentless planning, decision-making and operational change to keep up with guidance and constant supervision and monitoring to ensure adherence to protective measures.

Sunflowers at Grafton has remained open throughout the pandemic providing continuous support to key workers, our families and our community. This reflects the diligence of our team in keeping everyone safe through the protective measures we put in place.

The team demonstrated great resilience, patience and commitment and worked tirelessly to maintain service levels. Our nursery rooms operated at full capacity, but out-of-school activities were severely restricted throughout the year due to limitations imposed by government guidance.

Our grateful thanks to those across the Parish who contributed to a major fundraising project which led to the transformation of part of our grounds into a natural play space. The impact of replacing a traditional wooden climbing frame with a fallen oak tree on the nature of play for all age groups has been remarkable and underlines our commitment to natural outdoor play.

We are always conscious of our impact in the community and members of our team give their time to support other community activities and events. Community activities may have been severely curtailed due to the pandemic but the Sunflowers' team have continued to support our local baby and toddler group, organised the annual parish litter pick and supported the production and delivery of our community newsletter. And of course community access to our gardens and playground: making our minibus available to community groups; and supporting other community activities and events are all part of Sunflowers' continued commitment to Grafton Parish.

Pewsey Community Area Partnership

PCAP has continued to support small, local community groups with provision of insurance and also banking facilities, which in turn enables these small groups to apply for grant funding for their projects. Greener Great Bedwyn group has now joined PCAP under this scheme, in addition to Bedwyn Footpaths Group and Shalbourne Link. If you know of any voluntary groups who may benefit from this type of assistance, then just email Susie Brew at pcap@hotmail.co.uk.

PCAP has continued to represent the parishes at Pewsey Area Board, Community Area Transport Group and Wiltshire Council Cabinet meetings throughout the year. The partnership continued to hold quarterly meetings through lockdown either via on-line or in person.

PCAP has worked with Wiltshire Council to secure funding of £1.2m from The DfT Rural Mobility Fund for enhancements to the Pewsey Vale Bus Service. The first part of the bus service improvements are targeted for the end of this year.

Youth Activities – Fun days in Pewsey were held in August and were well attended. The Grafton Youth Group have also run activities in the final quarter of 2021.

Pewsey Vale Health & Wellbeing Group - PCAP continues to run the Health & Wellbeing Group and to administer the grant process with Wiltshire Council. All the grant funds were allocated in the 2021 – 2022 year.

Dawn Wilson has joined the Kennet & Avon Medical Partnership (KAMP) Patient Participation Group and Dee Nix is now chair of the group. The working relationship is much improved and there has been much improved communication.

The fortnightly Movement to Music Together exercise class (run by Sylvie Clayden and Henrietta Mackinnon) are still running. The Memory Café reopened in April 2021, had a brief closure as Omicron arrived in December and January and then restarted. We would like to thank all the local groups and individuals who continue to support the café with music, interesting talks and activities.

Pewsey Vale Rail User Group - Dawn Wilson and Colin Gale chair and run the Pewsey Vale Rail User Group – working closely with Bedwyn Rail User Group, Great Western Railway, TransWilts and the Great West Way. They have also been supporting the Devizes Gateway Station project together with the Bedwyn group.

Support for the installation of lifts at Pewsey Station was achieved across many of the parishes in the area. This was just one project that GWR were looking to do from an Access for All fund – we only had 4 days to get our letters of support in!

Finally, our sincerest thanks go to all the Parish Councils who have kindly donated towards the running costs of PCAP which enables this work to continue. For the full annual report, please go to www.pewseycap.org.uk/pcap-pvtp-annual-report-2021-2022/

Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership

Project delivery included Itineraries and Walkers are Welcome. Through these projects we delivered a new long-distance walking and cycling route – the Pewsey Vale Circular Way (72 miles cycling/riding or 77 miles walking). This was an enormous project involving local residents Gerard Dinnage (Burbage) and Ron Forbes (Ham) who created the walking route and Trevor Neal (West Grafton) who created the cycling / riding route, as well as many volunteers who tested it out for us.

In August 2021, we achieved Walkers are Welcome accreditation for the whole of the Pewsey Community Area recognising the diversity and quality of walking. Other projects included the revamping of our walking leaflets to include the accreditation as well as installing a screen in the Crop Circle Exhibition & Information Centre in Honeystreet to show some of our walking and publicity videos. We have to thank the Pewsey Area Board, the Coop Community Fund and Tesco Bags of Help for making the projects possible.

In addition to these projects, the Tourism Partnership has been running the 'business as usual' activities such as maintaining the website and its content, publishing articles, producing monthly business newsletters, producing monthly public newsletters, getting new members on board, social media and advertising and delivering leaflets.

Our commitment to Walkers are Welcome means that we have to demonstrate that the rights of way in our area are being maintained. Bedwyn Footpaths Group (led by Judy Haynes) is the template that other groups should follow – they do an excellent job of maintenance and improvement, liaising with local landowners as well as organising regular walks. We have so far set up a new Footpaths Group in Pewsey.

Susie Brew is on the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners, representing tourism, and is also a Trustee of the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust. The Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership will be organising 2 walks for the North Wessex Downs' Walking Festival in June. For the full annual report, please go to www.pewseycap.org.uk/pcap-pvtp-annual-report-2021-2022/

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Our Vicar writes

Refugees and Poverty

These two topics are at the forefront of my mind at present. We are facing something quite unprecedented with the complex global crises that we hear so much about.

Last night I was at a meeting with people who are hosting Ukrainian Refugees. As the refugees arrive the need for both the hosts and the refugees to be supported and avoid isolation is uppermost. If you are hosts, can I urge you to get in touch?

"It is a common condition of being poor...you are always afraid that the good things in your life are temporary, that someone can take them away, because you have no power beyond your own brute strength to stop them." — Rick Bragg, journalist.

Let us hope that we see again the remarkable generosity of our communities that we saw during the pandemic. As people struggle to make ends meet, we are already facing something that goes beyond a tightening of belts and will probably go beyond the experiences of most of us. With both of these issues, it is not a matter of responding immediately but rather that we are prepared and by being prepared we are ready to help.

"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything." Albert Einstein. I look forward to watching evil being destroyed in our communities,

Every Blessing, Michael 01672 870779 mtmch@hotmail.com

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Dates for your diary

June

06	13:00	Parish Council planning meeting	Manor Farm Wilton
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July

03	11:00	Holy Communion	St Nicholas' Church
11	19:15	Parish Council public meeting	Coronation Hall
30	12:00	200 Year Anniversary Open Day	Wilton Windmill

Local Clubs

Windmill Society	secretary@wiltonwindmill.co.uk
Horticultural Society	01672 810364 Marijke Craig
Crofton Beam Engines	crofton@katrust.org.uk
Grafton Goslings Baby & Toddler Group	graftongoslings@yahoo.co.uk
Dance classes	07746 479345 Charlotte Stevens
Yoga	07747 780898 Tim Brew
Zumba	07710 115324 Joanna Bury

Community News Closing Dates

Please note that our closing date is always the last Friday in each month. Issues are then distributed by volunteers either over the following weekend or within the next few days (thank you all). If you wish to publish an event, advert or comment then do please be aware of the calendar period covered by each issue.

Coronation Hall regular dates

Monday (weekly in term-time)	Dance	16:45
Tuesday (weekly in term-time)	Zumba	09:30
Tuesday (weekly in term-time)	Dance	16:15
Tuesday	TimmyB Yoga	19:00
Wednesday	TimmyB Yoga	09:30
Wednesday (weekly in term-time)	Dance	15:30
Thursday (weekly in term-time)	Grafton Goslings	10:00
Thursday	TimmyB Chair Yoga	15:00
Thursday (weekly in term-time)	Dance	16:45

Monday (1st & 3rd in month)	Alzheimer's Cafe	13:15
Tuesday (1st in month during winter)	Winter Warmers	12:30

To book the Hall: email hall@graftonparish.com or Call 01672 216115 or 07479 281809



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Deadline for the next issue Friday 24 June 2022

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Village WhatsApp groups

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East Grafton - Tamara **07711 824864** Wexcombe - George **07786 332950**
West Grafton - Annie **07802 923344** Wilton - Tara **07833 320951**
Marten - Richard **07795 636767**

New to WhatsApp? We can help - just get in touch.



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