

Welcome to the first edition of the Community News

This monthly newsletter has been created by representatives of the Parish Council and Grafton CofE Primary School so that everyone in our thriving village community is kept informed about events and matters that affect us.

We've started small, but plan to grow and over the next few months we will be including advertising and a local business and group directory. Inside you'll find a diary dates section and we'd like to extend this too, so that it includes dates for more events from organisations across the Parish. We've designed the Diary Dates so that they can be snipped out and put on your fridge or notice board as a reminder. If you'd like to advertise, or include information about your event or organisation then please email news@graftonparish.com, call **810406** or use the new letterbox at the hall.

Are you able to help? We're looking for people to join the friendly News team. If you can spare an hour or two a month to help with distributing the News to your neighbours, helping with editing or co-ordinating advertising – it would be great to hear from you. Please email or call us on the contact details above.

We hope you enjoy the News, look out for the next edition coming through your letterbox in mid December.

An inspiring new term



Children Come First

Education is about so much more than lessons. School should be interesting and fun and we take every chance to promote this by getting our children out and about and inviting visitors in. Here is some of what we've been up to over the last term.

- We're working with the choir master from Salisbury Cathedral School and will be taking part in a concert at Salisbury Cathedral on December 7th. Singing raises the spirits and the children's voices are beautiful. See the article on page 3 for news about our Community Choir and come along to raise your spirits.
- Our School Council is working with our neighbouring schools in a School Council Network. They are looking at ways of developing our outside environment and some of our younger children visited RHS Wisley to look for ideas. We have lots to think about but our starting point is to set up a vegetable garden and start a gardening club – another activity that is good for the soul!
- Last term the children raised funds and built a bird table (with the help of Goff Beese – thank you Goff) for the gardens at Brendoncare care home in Froxfield. This term School Council members went along to present the table and meet some of the residents. Relationships between young and old in our communities are a source of great enjoyment for us all.
- Visitors to school included a local author whose book Pud-Swan is raising money for Naomi House, a talk about Jesus' teachings and a local mum who came in to talk about parenthood. Trips out of school have seen the junior class visiting castles and bringing history to life. Year 6 children joined their friends from Shalbourne Primary on a residential trip to Dorset, a very successful collaborative initiative for all.

There have been all the usual activities and more – sports coaching and sports festivals, our Harvest Festival and to top it all a visit from Ofsted. Our lively school is at the heart of our community and as we enter the exciting Christmas term we have lots more to look forward to.

The New Coronation Hall IT'S ALMOST COMPLETE!

Grafton Parish Council has overseen the construction of this new building but it would not have been possible without the support of everyone in the parish.

Now is the time to enjoy this beautiful building and reap the rewards of all your hard work.

Many of the activities on your wish list at the start of this project such as yoga, film screenings and a toddler group, are now being planned. A full list will be in the Hall as soon as it opens.

The new Hall will be open for business during the first week in December and the facilities are really fantastic. There is a sprung floor, seating for 150 or space for 250 to dance under the natural oak beams which are stunningly lit. The audio and projection systems are ready and the fully equipped commercial kitchen and bar are just waiting to be used!

Parishioner, Tom Dobson, has made and donated a beautiful shield to commemorate the building of the hall. Look out for it when you visit!

During the initial phase we are planning to keep the hire charges as low as possible to encourage lots of use.

Please telephone **810406** or email hall@graftonparish.com for more information. Please include your name and a contact email or telephone number.

We are keeping to our promise!

Our 2008 community Christmas party included the pledge to celebrate Christmas 2009 in a new CORONATION HALL.

Why not come along on Saturday December 19th at 18.00hrs, join in the Christmas celebrations and see this beautiful, warm, dry and well equipped hall.

There is no better time to come and have a nosey around than mince pie, mulled wine and Father Christmas time?

The full programme will be published in next month's issue of the **Community News**

Father Christmas is coming to his grotto in the hall on party day to collect your Christmas letters. You have time to get them ready!

This promises to be the

BIGGEST PARISH PARTY YET!

We are always looking for willing hands.

If you have any time to spare and could help us then please call **810406**.



New Community Group

A conversation with the Ofsted inspector at Grafton School gave Steve Oakey the idea of setting up the Grafton Grafters, a community group dedicated to providing practical support and initiatives across the parish.

Despite only starting in September, the group has already organised a successful Halloween party for children on the communal area at the Severalls and is in discussions with a number of grant giving organisations to secure funds for village projects. They are now turning their focus to improving the library area at school with a lick of paint and new shelving, and creating a vegetable garden for the children.

If you have practical skills such as DIY, gardening, electrics, carpentry etc and would like to give a little back to your community then please get in touch with Steve on **811109** or email **shebby1966@aol.com**.

GRAFTON GRAFTERS are go!

Securing the future of our School

Shortly before the summer holidays, the Governors of Grafton CofE Primary School announced that it was seeking to 'partner' with another local school. Everyone involved with our school is committed to securing a school in Grafton for future generations and ensuring it remains a key part of our village community but we know that some change is necessary so that we become the first choice for parents in the parish. In this part of Wiltshire there tend to be 'larger' schools - one class per year group with 30+ pupils in each class, and 'smaller' with mixed age classes of around 20 pupils. We believe that the best of both worlds lies somewhere in between.

Our small school offers many benefits including small class sizes and high levels of individual attention – for example, every child in Key Stage 1 (Infants) has their reading listened to every day. However, some year groups are very small which makes it difficult to stretch all children. Partnering with another school will mean that year group sizes will increase and the education and personal development of children at the school will benefit.

This initiative is supported by Wiltshire Council and you may have seen that Easton Royal School has recently entered into a partnership with St John's in Marlborough.

We have had initial meetings with a number of neighbouring schools and Wiltshire Council, and we will continue to explore possible options during the next few months. Of course any partnership will be subject to extensive discussions about how it would work in practice including any travel arrangements. The Staff Team, Parents and others have been made aware of our plans and the response has been positive. We will keep everyone informed as our plans develop.

When the lights go out

Have you ever wondered what would happen if there was a major emergency, such a major road incident in the parish, or a nationwide power loss? Well, even if you haven't, you will be comforted to know that Wiltshire Council holds annual Emergency Planning Exercises to provide an opportunity for parish councils to simulate what they would do in such an event.

The most recent simulation given was that the sun had emitted solar flares – these in fact are a real threat and are so intense that they produce magnetic pulses with the force to destroy power grids by melting transformers. We had to deal with the emergency to the satisfaction of the emergency services in Wiltshire.

There will be more detail on how these "role plays" are done and how to join in next time in another issue of the Community News.

In the meantime Southern Electric said that both of the recent outages we actually experienced were due to something being on the line and blowing the transformer. Southern Electric has checked the line in the area that went down and have cleared all vegetation. They said that if people notice branches that are touching cables (or suspicious looking nest building squirrels near transformers!), to contact them on the Emergency Number **08000 72 72 82** and they will deal with it.

Dec' the Hall!

We are looking for metre square designs/posters/pictures to hang around the walls of the hall for the Christmas party.

Call on **810406** for more details.

Drop in to the hall on November 24th for an hour when there will be a chance to collect your own blank sheet and poster ideas. Anyone aged 2-102 is invited to contribute to our Christmas gallery.

How about joining us on Dec 17th to make mince pies etc for the party? The more the merrier!



Don't be a heart attack victim.

You are never too young to be affected.

If you suffer a cardiac arrest, your heart goes into a rapid, chaotic and lethal rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF). If treatment does not occur within 10 minutes, your chance of survival is nil. Given that an ambulance will struggle to make it to our parish in 10 minutes, it is really important that our community is not only equipped with Public Access Defibrillators (PAD's), but that we are also trained to know what to do.

We have just one free training session left on 19th November – it's almost full, but we could squeeze a couple more people in! Contact details are below.

PAD's cost about £2500 and our aim is to equip each of the 5 hamlets in Grafton Parish, making a grand total of £12,500. This is ambitious, but we've done exceptional fundraising before in Grafton Parish and so we are confident we can do it again!

If you:

- Would like to attend the final training session;
 - Are interested in running or helping with a fundraising event;
 - Have ideas on fundraising; or
 - Would like to join the Fundraising Committee;
- then please contact us at mail@graftonparish.com



Carols on the Green

The Friends of Grafton invite you to join our Community Choir. We'd like to form a Grafton Christmas Choir of young and old (toddlers up to grandparents!) who will sing 'Carols on the Green' at the Parish Christmas Party on Saturday December 19th.

If you'd like to join us then come along for one or more of our 'practices' (of about 30 minutes) at the school. Check the diary dates section.

It would be great to see as many people as possible to join in any of the practices (1, 2 or all 3) whether you can sing, play an instrument or not at all. There will be tea and cake/biscuits for those who come along.

Dates for your diary

(notice boards and www.graftonparish.com will have the latest updates)

NOVEMBER 2009

- 19th 19.30 Defibrillator training at *Grafton School*
22nd 11.00 Family Service *St Nicholas*
24th 17.00 Christmas designs. *Coronation Hall*
24th 18.30 Parent/Governor meeting *Grafton School*
26th anytime Bag2School drop off
27th by 9.00 Bag2School drop off
29th 16.00 Community Choir practice 1 *Grafton School*

DECEMBER 2009

- 4th 19.30 Windmill AGM *Coronation Hall*
6th 11.00 Patronal Festival *St Nicholas*
7th 12.00 Ladies Lunch *The Swan* Tkts 870274
7th 16.00 Community Choir practice 2 *Grafton School*
7th 19.00 Christmas Bingo *Coronation Hall*
8th 14.00 Grafton School Christmas play
St Nicholas (dress rehearsal)
9th 18.00 Grafton School Christmas play *St Nicholas*
12th 16.00 Santa & Xmas fair *The Swan*
12th 17.00 Wilton illuminations on! *Duck pond*
13th 16.00 Decorate the *Hall* for Christmas. All welcome
14th 16.00 Community Choir practice 3 *Grafton School*
14th 19.00 Bingo *Coronation Hall*
14th 20.00 Monthly quiz night *The Swan*
16th 19.00 Hort. Soc Members' Xmas party
Coronation Hall
17th 16.00 Mince pie & tombola fun *Coronation Hall*
18th 11.00 School Carol Service for everyone
St Nicholas
19th 18.00 Christmas Party *Coronation Hall*
20th 11.00 Carol Service *St Nicholas*
21st 19.00 Bingo *Coronation Hall*
25th 11.00 Christmas Communion *St Nicholas*
25th 12.00 Mince pies, mulled wine & Santa *The Swan*
31st 20.00 New Year's Eve party *The Swan*

JANUARY 2010

- 4th 19.00 Bingo at *Grafton School*
5th 19.15 Parish Council *Coronation Hall*

To contact us:-

Email: news@graftonparish.com. www.graftonparish.com

Post: into the letterbox by the hall

You are invited to contribute to the next issue by Friday 4th December. Editorial rights reserved.



Children Come First

The Friends of Grafton ... What a great year



A huge thank you for your support over the last school year at our events and activities. Whether you tossed pancakes at "pancake races on The Green", threw eggs at the "Easter Eggstravaganza", brought your dog to the village Dog Show or filled a bag for Bag2School we are very grateful for your contributions.

We had a busy year with our events and presence at other fantastic local events including the Game Fair and the Wilton Windmill Victorian Day and our community learning events continued with the Angels First Aid course - an informative and enjoyable evening. Our last fundraising activity of last year was our Grand Draw – thank you to all the organisations who donated prizes:

3 Mobile, Marlborough College, Crosby & Lawrence, Hill Barn Farm, Wexcombe Foods, Promotional Print Services, Finkley Down Farm Park, Your Wellbeing Centre, Mundys, Polly Tea Rooms, Fine Cheese Company, Dead Sea Spa Magik, H Mackinnon Fitness, Tesco, The Cutting Room, Cross Keys Pub, The White Hart Pub, Windmill Society, Rejuvenesce, Manor Farm, Wyevale Garden Centre, Crofton Beam Engines

Monies raised have been divided between school and pre school and so far have contributed to the purchase of a sheltered area for our infants garden to maximise use of this lovely outside space for learning and a 'quiet' place for our playground.

We've been busy over the last term with children designing Christmas cards, a wonderful Spooky Spiders Treasure Hunt at Halloween, a family portrait offer with Imagine (contact us via school on **810478** if you'd like to know more) and the World's Biggest Coffee Morning for MacMillan Cancer Support. Into the current term and we have a Bag2School collection, our Community Choir and Children In Need activities. It's all go!



We are a thriving village pre school based at Grafton CofE Primary School on The Green, East Grafton. With a maximum of 12 children at any session and a fabulous team to take care of them we offer a wonderful setting for pre schoolers to develop their confidence and independence.

To find out more pop in at any time or call us.

Growing together ...

A caring, stimulating environment

Idyllic location

Great range of facilities

Children aged 2½ to 5 years

High levels of individual attention

Pre school sessions plus lunch club

Where learning through play is fun

Sunflowers Pre school (at Grafton Primary School)
East Grafton, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 3DB
Telephone: **0774 834 9856**

3 easy ways to raise money for your community

Enclosed with the News is the **Bag2School** bag, the regular fundraising event for Friends of Grafton. Why not make some room before Christmas by filling the bag and dropping it off at school either on Thursday Nov 26th or before 9am Friday Nov 27th. If you can't deliver the bags contact **810478** to make alternative arrangements. If you have more than one bagful please use black bin bags. Spread the word to friends and family—the more bags we collect the more money we raise.

For all **ONLINE SHOPPERS**: go to your normal online retailer via **www.thegivingmachine.co.uk**. All major retailers are listed including Tesco, Next, Ebay, ELC, Amazon etc and all give a percentage of the order value each time you buy via the giving machine. Select either Coronation Hall or Grafton CofE Primary School as your beneficiary. Encourage your friends and family to shop this way too and this could be a great way of supporting your community organisations.

BULK BUYING OIL: Wessex Petroleum give ½p for each litre of oil bought back to the village - call **0800 980 6172** and quote **D19** (Coronation Hall and Friends of Grafton School).

As those who fill their tanks regularly know prices will always vary and in the run up to Christmas they generally rise. If we can get a minimum order of 10,000 litres placed by November 23rd then it will cost 37.2p per litre (1p less than current price and this will be held as prices rise, as they are expected to do). Call Julia Bowes on **871543** if you would like to participate in the November oil bulk buy.

Latest Update from Grafton Parish Council

Grafton Parish Council meets on the first Tuesday of every other month. The last meeting took place on Tuesday 3rd November at the usual time of 7.15pm at the new Coronation Hall. Our Wiltshire Council cabinet member, Stuart Wheeler, also attended and updated us on the new Performance Reward Grant Scheme. If any voluntary groups in the Parish are interested in securing funding for a project, then they should consider the Performance Reward Grant Scheme or the Area Board Community Grants. Email **mail@graftonparish.com** for details.

All Parishioners are encouraged to attend the meetings and we would welcome the opportunity to meet you and answer any questions you may have.