

COMMUNITY NEWS

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

With the festive season almost upon us, it seems that there is so much going on in our community. The new Coronation Hall has opened its doors and everyone is very welcome to enjoy the fantastic new facilities at the Christmas Party on Saturday 19th December at 5.30pm. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make the new hall become a reality.

We hope that you enjoyed the first edition of the Community News. If you have any feedback or suggestions, or you know someone in the parish who didn't receive a copy, then please let us know at news@graftonparish.com and we'll ensure that they are included in the distribution. Each month there will be additional copies of the News in the Swan and the Coronation Hall. We still need distributors in West Grafton and Marten, if you can help once a month then please let us know.

We're planning to launch our directory of useful local businesses and organisations in the January News. So if you have a business (large or small) that offers a service to local people please let us know. Just drop a note with your details (business name, type of business and contact details) to news@graftonparish.com. We want to hear from local clubs and organisations too. See page 4 for more information, including advertising rates.

We hope you enjoy this festive edition of the Community News and look forward to seeing you at an event in the parish over the next few weeks. Very best wishes to you and your families for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Look out for the next edition of the Community News in mid January.

Grafton Life.....

Have you ever wondered about the people who make up our rich and diverse community? Grafton Life... will be a regular feature in the Community News and each edition will include an interview by senior pupils at Grafton School and a local 'character'.

In our first column Cerys, Jack, Liam, Louise, Shannon and Stacey (all aged 10) meet Bill Clemence, publican at the Swan Inn.

How old is the pub and where did the name come from?

The Swan is only about 80 years old. Just over the road is Old Swan Cottage and it is believed that this was the former pub – but a new and bigger pub was needed so the current Swan was built in the 1930s. It's thought that the pubs' name came from the swans at Wilton Water.

How long have you been running The Swan?

We've been running The Swan for about two years, although we've lived in East Grafton for about 8 years. Before this we ran a pub in another part of Wiltshire and we also run a pub near Wimbledon which means I travel up to London a few times a week.

Do you work long hours?

When I'm in Grafton I often do email at home in the morning and usually arrive at The Swan about 10.30am. I tend to leave around 10.30pm leaving the staff to clear up. We have a team of 7 staff – 3 in the kitchen and 4 in the bar. Businesswise – we had a good summer and our monthly pub quiz nights and regular Ladies Lunches are always very busy.

Where do you live?

I live with my wife Sara and our four children, Holly, Wilf, Bertie and Blythe, two dogs and two rabbits in a cottage in East Grafton.

What do you do for Christmas?

It's a very busy time for us with the Wilton Illuminations and Xmas Fair on Saturday 12th. On Christmas Day there will be mulled wine, mince pies and a visit from Santa at The Swan from noon. All being well, lunch in the Clemence household will be about 3.30pm. And then there's New Years Eve at The Swan to look forward to – this year it's a Wild West theme!

**Christmas Party
December 19th**



Snacks, mince pies, mulled wine and soft drinks provided.

A NEW hall and a NEW team for a NEW party format too.

Open to all residents of the Parish. Friends and family who are staying with you are most welcome. It's free but donations accepted!

Rough schedule!

- 5.30** Feast of fun for the under 10yr olds
- 6.00** Festive fair and tombola for everyone
- 6.30** The Community choir leads the singing
- 6.45** Santa arrives on his sleigh
- 7.00** Everyone can visit Santa in his grotto
- 7.30** Disco party time for everyone and licensed bar for over 18's.



Christmas Eve: Santa's journey begins.....

- Hollow Lane Wilton 6.00pm
- Marten 6.15pm
- Wexcombe 6.30-6.45pm
- East Grafton 6.45-7.00pm
- Duck pond Wilton 7.00-7.15pm



Our dream comes true!

The Coronation Hall has been rebuilt and is open for everyone to use.

A letter to the Parish from Peter Lemon, Chair of Grafton Parish Council.

I have considerable pleasure in being able to write to everyone in the Parish to confirm what I am sure you already know. The Coronation Hall rebuilding work is complete and the Hall is now open. We have achieved what looked, at the start, to be the wildest of dreams. This is thanks to the massive amount of support and help from so many people in the Parish throughout this enormous undertaking.

The design of the Hall is a major success and our thanks go to Guy Symons and The Barn Partnership architects. The Hall looks in keeping within its rural setting and the oak beams have transformed the interior into a most attractive venue. Carty Building Contractors have been magnificent and have ensured that all the work has been completed on time.

Obtaining funds from the Big Lottery, Wiltshire and Kennet Councils involved considerable work, and we wouldn't have been successful without the total commitment to the project within the Parish.

We have managed to achieve far more than just a fantastic new Coronation Hall after all this hard work. I believe the most important long term benefit is that more people throughout the Parish have got to know each other and to work together. This will continue to develop as the new Coronation Hall enables us all to extend our local activities.

Our thanks must go to so many who have helped organise and run the fund raising activities, for example, the Grafton Game Fairs, The Music on the Greens, The Children's Treasure Hunt, Sponsored Rides and Outlaw Hunt, The French Evening and Mushroom Foray, the Bridge Days, the Money Box Gifts, and the Quiz Nights at The Swan. These activities were all very successful and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

To achieve what we have during the building phase has been very largely due to the team members who have all gone far beyond the expectations of any reasonable amount of voluntary work within the community. The leaders of the various teams have been quite outstanding. I can assure you that we would not have been so successful without their commitment, smiles and bloody mindedness to ensure that we got what we wanted.

The Big Lottery visited the Hall last month to see the progress and ensure that we were meeting the standards we had set ourselves when we applied for their grant. We asked them to give us an idea of how they thought we had managed in comparison with the other projects they are funding. Their response was that the Coronation Hall was one of the best rebuilding projects any of them had seen. This certainly gives you an idea of how they were thinking.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make the dream become a reality.

Grafton & District Horticultural Society

On Wednesday, 18 November, our Members were treated to a very interesting lecture by Ray Broughton - one of our favourite speakers. Ray has a vast knowledge of horticulture - he is a Senior Examiner for the Royal Horticultural Society, teaches at Wisley, has a Fellowship of the Institute of Horticulture and is Senior Lecturer at Sparsholt College. His lectures are always easy to follow and are full of handy tips. This time we heard good advice about small trees for the garden - what to look out for and most importantly how to plant and look after them.

Before the lecture we held our AGM, a quick affair of less than 15 minutes. Rita McVittie presented the finances which are in healthy condition, and in her Chairman's report Marijke Craig looked back on a successful year. The new format of 4 evening lectures, 3 daytime garden visits and lunch, our June coach outing, July's visit to members' gardens and supper and a most enjoyable Christmas Party, has proved to be a winner. Do come and join!

Marijke Craig 01672 810364

Support your local School

We are very grateful to all the parents and others in the community who help out with school activities and we would love more people from Grafton Parish to get involved. However much time you feel able to give, and in whatever area, there is certain to be a way you can help.

Helping in school – Help out in the classroom with reading, playing games to support maths or, if you have a skill you'd like to share, in an after-school club. The children's reading comes on leaps and bounds when they are listened to, and we always need more adults to help. If you can give an hour a week please call the School Office on 01672 810478 – we will organise an introductory coffee morning for those that are interested.

Friends of Grafton School – 'Friends' support the school with an annual programme of fundraising and community events. They are always looking for more people from the community to help out – whether it's baking a cake or helping to organise an event. For more information about Friends please contact Lucy Pash on 01672 870665

School Governors - The Board of Governors play a vital role in the strategic direction of the school and works with Jill Parr and the staff team to ensure that we deliver the best possible education for our children. As you may have seen from last month's Community News we are currently seeking to partner with a local school. We are on the threshold of the next major development in our school's long history – an interesting and challenging time for us. We are actively recruiting Governors right now and we are especially keen to hear from people who have a child coming up to school age and/or some experience in Finance, Business etc. If you have an hour or two to spare a week and would like to support your local school - please let us know. Call Tamara Reay (Co Chair of Governors) on 01672 811108.

Windmill Society sets sail in the new Hall!

It is with great pleasure that we can report that the Hall had its christening on Friday December 4th when the Windmill Society AGM filled the space with 70+ happy supporters. A film show and computer presentation demonstrated that the AV and lighting systems work, the kitchen was filled with goodies and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere, space and warmth. There are a few "settling in" issues to deal with, the purchase of a corkscrew being one of the more important! When the driveways and surrounding land become established the parking should improve too. On a dark and wet night the additional lighting does help and thankfully the system now turns off at the end of the event too!

Get fit in 2010!

Adult exercise classes Start Monday 11th January

Join us for a FUN mix of cardiovascular and resistance circuit exercises to help combat festive excess and get rid of January blues! Classes are starting on Monday mornings (9.30am – 10.30am) and cost just £5 per class (booked as a 6 week course). Suitable for age 18 years and over with clean bill of health.

Come and try a taster session with Henrietta Mackinnon on Monday 11th January – no charge, just make a donation!

Yoga classes Start Tuesday 12th January

9.30am - 10.45am and 7.30pm - 9.00pm

With Lizzy Hawnt - British Wheel of Yoga Teacher. For details and to book your place contact **01672-841553** or hawnted.house@btinternet.com

Get IT fit in 2010 too!

Keeping our children safe online

Helping your child to be safe in the "online" world is a worry for many. How do we help them to be safe in social networking sites and chat rooms? Look out for details of an e-Safety community learning event in the next edition.

Computers

A number of casual "get to know IT" sessions will run from February. Nothing formal. Just come along with your questions for a social session and to fix those gremlins that frustrate or annoy you! More in the next issue.

Coronation Hall bookings 01672 810406

To avoid disappointment please book early to use the Coronation Hall. Private bookings are not shown in the calendar here for obvious reasons but they are coming in thick and fast so please make sure that you tel **01672 810406** or email hall@graftonparish.com in good time to find out when it is available for hire.

Anyone wishing to use the Hall for a Charity event or to help us to keep our rates low by organising an event in the Parish to help supplement our funds is very welcome to talk to us about how this can be achieved.

More club details in the next issue:

The Art Club, open to all and using a variety of mediums, will recommence during February.
The Friendship Club next meets on Wednesday February 3rd.

Ofsted visits Grafton School

Ofsted inspections occur every three to four years and it was no surprise when just a few days into September we were informed that ours would take place the following Monday! Overall, we were pleased with the inspection and the 'Satisfactory' rating confirmed our ongoing self assessment which shows improvements in a number of areas, especially in maths.

Achieving 'Satisfactory' is good news given that a new, tougher, Ofsted framework was implemented at the start of this academic year and some Wiltshire Schools have dropped by one or more grades. Some of the conclusions from the report are:

- Children make sound progress in relation to their individual start points at school with good progress in speaking and listening, reading and maths. There is a good range of clubs, educational visits and visitors which enrich the children's development.
- All aspects of pupil wellbeing, health and safety are positive. Pupils take on responsibility enthusiastically and older pupils look after the younger ones. They talk positively about school and enjoy collaborative projects, love school trips, the 'family atmosphere' and have good relationships with teachers.
- There needs to be more activities for pupils to develop a clear idea of our culturally diverse society in Britain and across the world.
- We need to focus on writing across the school to improve pupils' rates of progress.
- Some aspects of engagement need to improve to involve fully all parents in school life and their children's learning.

Jill Parr, the staff and governors have developed an action plan to address the areas highlighted by Ofsted. If you would like to read more then the full report is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Dates for your diary

Notice boards and www.graftonparish.com will have the latest updates. All events take place in the Coronation Hall unless otherwise specified.

DECEMBER 2009

- 14th 16.00 Community Choir practice 3 *Grafton School*
14th 19.30 Bingo
14th 20.00 Monthly quiz night *The Swan*
16th 19.00 Hort. Soc Members' Xmas party
17th 14.00 Decorate the Church *St Nicholas*
17th 16.00 Mince pie & tombola fun
Come along and help us to get ready for the Christmas Party—all welcome!
18th 10.00 Coffee Morning for all *Grafton School*
18th 11.00 School Carol Service for all *St Nicholas*
19th 17.30 Christmas Party Do not miss this!
20th 11.00 Carol Service *St Nicholas*
21st 19.30 Bingo
24th 18.00 Santa starts HIS GRAND TOUR!
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

- 3rd 11.00 Holy Communion *St Nicholas*
4th 19.30 Bingo *Grafton School*
5th 19.15 Parish Council "Public meeting"
11th 09.30 Adult exercise class "Taster Session"
11th 20.00 Monthly quiz Night *The Swan*
12th Yoga class (9.30 and 19.30)
17th 11.00 Parish Communion *St Nicholas*
18th 09.30 Adult exercise class
18th 19.30 Bingo
19th Yoga class (9.30 and 19.30)
24th 11.00 Family Service *St Nicholas*
25th 09.30 Adult exercise class
25th 12.00 Ladies Lunch *The Swan*
26th Yoga class (9.30 and 19.30)

Your Church Needs You!

If you would like to get involved in decorating the Church for Christmas, please join us on **Thursday 17th December at 2pm.**

St Nicholas Church is looking for more volunteers to help clean and arrange flowers in the Church on an on-going basis. Just one month of the year and you can plan the hours to suit you. Contact Sally Butt on **01672 810743** for more information

To contact us:-

news@graftonparish.com

Post: into the letterbox by the hall

You are invited to contribute to the next issue by Wednesday 6th January. Editorial rights reserved. Some articles which were promised in the last issue are being held over to our January edition. (no space!)

Useful contacts

Email news@graftonparish.com with details if you would like a listing one of these sections.

Societies/Clubs/Organisations: 1 line free entry

Friendship Club	01672 810349 Libby Gilbert
Cricket Club	pack.andy@googlemail.com
Bingo	hall@graftonparish.com
Windmill Soc	susie.brew@hotmail.co.uk
Link Scheme	01672 870120
PCC Secretary	01672 870266 Millie Lemon
Horticultural Soc	01672 810364 Marijke Craig
Art Club	libby_gilbert80@hotmail.com

We have had enquiries about advertising already so please let us know if you would like to be listed in the next issues.

Business based in the Parish

1 line listing – Free

Business based outside the Parish

1 line listing – £1 per issue. £10 per annum.

Commercial Advertising

Rates per issue for larger listing

1/12 page £5 1/6 page £10 1/4 page £15

1/2 page £20 Full page £40

Discounts for 6 months and 12 months

Cricket

Wilton cricket club will be having a pre-season meeting in the Swan in late March/early April, details later. All will be made very welcome especially anyone interested in playing on the occasional Sunday afternoon, or umpiring, scoring or helping with the teas!!

Community fundraising

Help raise money for the Coronation Hall and the Friends of Grafton when making routine purchases.

Christmas shopping online?

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. This is at no extra cost to you!

Select either Coronation Hall or Grafton C of E 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.

Filling your oil tank?

Thank you to everyone who supported the November oil bulk buy. This is a great scheme as everyone benefits from better prices and we raise money at the same time. We hope to repeat this on a quarterly basis – so the next bulk order will be in February. The bigger the order the bigger discount we can negotiate so do participate if you can.

If you need to order in the meantime, then Wessex Petroleum gives ½p for each litre of oil bought. Call **0800 980 6172** and quote charity reference **D19** (Coronation Hall and Friends of Grafton).

Swine Flu Update

You will have probably seen in the media that the vaccination programme for 'at risk' groups commenced at the beginning of November. The first groups are:

- Adults and children over six months of age who have a long-term health condition
- Pregnant women
- People who live in the same house as someone whose immune system is compromised by disease or treatment
- People aged 65 and over, in the current seasonal flu vaccine 'at risk' groups

We understand that both Bedwyn and Burbage Surgeries have issued invitations to these groups and are on track with the programme for those that wish to take up the vaccination. The Department of Health has recently announced that the programme will be extended to children over 6 months and under 5, as they are also a high risk group. Our local surgeries expect to be issuing invitations to these children shortly.

Wilton Windmill AGM Update

The Annual General Meeting of the Wilton Windmill Society took place on Friday 4th December at the new and stunning Coronation Hall. Attendees enjoyed a film of the various events that had taken place over the year as well as catching up with friends whilst enjoying delicious refreshments served up by the members.

The Chairman's report highlighted many successes of the 2009 season, including news that in May this year, filming for the BBC2 Christmas Special of the Victorian Farm took place at the mill, which had to remain a secret until the transmission date was released. Ruth Goodman and Alex Langlands (who had been our guest at the Victorian Day) took part in the milling process, led by our own Peter Lemon! Flour sales, member numbers and visitor figures were up, as was revenue, so the Society is particularly well placed in the current financial climate. We are always looking for more members and volunteers – www.wiltonwindmill.co.uk.

Surprise! Ofsted visits Sunflowers too

We are very pleased with the overall tone and content of our report which highlights many of the good features at Sunflowers, including:

- Children enjoy their learning and make good progress in communication, language and literacy skills and personal, social and emotional development.
- There are many examples of good practice at Sunflowers including: high expectations regarding children's behaviour and participation, active encouragement of both speaking and listening by staff and good use of resources and indoor and outdoor space.
- The strength of relationships between children, staff, parents, the school and outside agencies are evident.
- Day-to-day leadership and management is sound with good features, demonstrating enthusiasm and determination.

As the report states '**Children's growing confidence is a direct result of good relationships with staff and the way resources are deployed ready for learning. Because day-to-day management is good, children know what is expected of them. They respond with excellent behaviour and positive attitudes.**'

The overall rating was 'Satisfactory' reflecting a number of small, but important observations which were addressed immediately. Lyndsey Turner and her team, with the support of the management committee are implementing an action plan to address the areas highlighted. If you would like to read more then the full report is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

We are pleased that many aspects were reported as 'Good' and we are all working towards achieving "Good" next time.