

REPORTS FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 27TH APRIL 2021

Chairman welcome report

Due to Covid 19 the Parish Council have conducted the monthly meeting over Zoom, I would like to thank Sally and all the Parish Councillors for their patience during these meetings. The Parish Council has tried to maintain a consistent presence through this pandemic conducting village business.

- The Sheen Farm development of 22 houses has begun, the developers are in the process of demolishing the farm buildings and clearing the land.
- The children's play area has had to have some of the equipment removed due to safety measures which was highlighted in the ROSPA report, the Parish Council will continue to buy and erect new equipment as the year continues, we have received help from members of the community when looking for new replacement equipment, what we have found is it's the safety
- The MVAS (Mobile, Vehicle, Activated Sign) volunteers have continued to move the sign around the village helping to identify speeding vehicles. The data is being collected from the sign is being logged on a regular basis.
- The Recreation Centre and the Village Hall have been closed due to Covid, this will be re-opening along with government guide lines.
- A new web site should be up and running soon allowing more information to be accessed by the community. The Parish Council Agenda and Planning Agenda will be placed onto the New Web Site.
- The Feasibility and Tender for the Village Hall and Rec Centre, has begun with the land registration the next stage will be progressed with a consultant.

The Parish Council continue to have a good working relationship with the District Council and County Council.

I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Biles for their dedication in keeping the village litter free, I would also like to thank Dilshan at the Village shop, he has helped the young and old people in the village delivering shopping and making sure the village shop is well stocked, he also went out his way to find individual items when asked.

Lisa Wiltshire (Chair –Litlington Parish Council)

Report on Steeple Morden Church of England Primary School

Steeple Morden Primary school, like every other school, has faced many tough challenges this year, but we are very pleased to report that Mrs How, the Headteacher, has managed the situation very effectively. The school remained open throughout the lockdown for children of Key workers and only shut for one week for a deep clean, after several pupils and teachers tested positive. Staff remain positive in difficult times and we believe that the school is working hard to ensure that parents and pupils feel safe, and that the process of 'catch-up' is a priority. There is a very calm and purposeful, yet caring atmosphere in the school, with learning and support being at the heart of everyday activities.

Clearly certain aspects of the school day have had to be managed in different ways, following new guidelines, and so children are in year group 'bubbles' and do not mix with children in other bubbles. This is being managed by all staff, by using spaces in different ways, staggering both ends of the school day, and breaks, and by staff working very hard to manage the situation.

Parents have generally been very supportive of the changes and have appreciated the efforts that staff are going to, to keep their children safe, but continue to provide a 'broad and balanced' education in as 'normal' way as possible.

Mental health and filling educational gaps have been key issues for many children: as we have come out of lockdown it is clear that children have had very different experiences during their time at home,

both educationally and emotionally, and teachers are continually assessing children to see where their priorities have to be.

This is all taking its toll on the staff, who are working long hours, and have reported that it is a challenging time for them, but they are a very cohesive staff who support each other and who are being led very effectively by Tracey. Governors too are trying to support as much as we can, by visiting the school where permitted, and contacting staff to show our support. We continue to meet at our normal times via Zoom.

Over the last few years the school has developed the way its Christian Ethos is incorporated into each aspect of school life, and this is playing a key role in supporting the children, and is being used to emphasise the importance of kindness, resilience and bravery at a time when these values are so important in all aspects of society.

Finances continue to be challenging, as they are for many schools, but we are continuing to work alongside the Local Authority and recently this situation is starting to improve.

Bassingbourn Village College

Autumn Term round up

This term has certainly been like no other in Bassingbourn Village College history. But through the adversity, our students and our community continues to flourish and college life goes on.

PHSE lessons this term have ensured attention has been given to support our students and allow them to express any concerns they may have, as well as develop skills to help them cope and adapt to the current way of life. We have also looked beyond 2020 and Covid-19 to consider Black Lives Matter, modern day slavery, and the role we can all play to eradicate bullying to name but a few.

Our School Council and Heads of Houses have been elected and are looking forward to working with the Senior Leadership Team in the coming months to develop ideas to introduce more inter-house activities while following the social measures in place. And our PE team have worked hard to ensure after school clubs were able to restart and over 160 students have already taken part.

For our Year 7s, we have been delighted with how well they have all settled into life at secondary school and adapted to their new routines extremely well. They have had a vast array of exciting and engaging lessons. In English they have all been enthralled by "My Sword Hand is Singing" by Marcus Sedgewick. Other lessons have allowed them to express their creative flair; in Drama they have been creating a script on a new planet, in Music they have composed their own pop song while utilizing the Apple iMacs and professional recording software. In Geography they have been excitedly working on "The Grand Bassingbourn Car Rally" where students planned a route around the local area using the map skills they have been developing.

The Year 8s have had a tremendous start to the academic year and have collectively amassed a very impressive total of merits. In lessons, students have been building on knowledge they gained with us in year 7. In Science, year 8s have been learning photosynthesis and respiration, to climate and the carbon cycle. The Science team have even adapted some practical lessons for inside the classrooms as the Science Labs are currently not possible to access. It has also been a busy term in languages with students looking at the cultural difference between French and Spanish Schools.

For our Year 9s they started their option subjects at the start of the term and have been getting on fantastically well. In 3Design students have been working on the topic of Formal Elements which has been a great opportunity to develop basic skills and drawing in a range of different media. Our Drama students have created two very impressive choreography pieces on the culture of carnival and a whole group ensemble piece based on the current pandemic which was extremely powerful and emotive.

For the Year 10s they have started back with a bang and their Achievement Leader has been delighted with how quickly they have settled back to college life. Year 10 Mentor time has been a real joy with a multitude of enrichment activities, ranging from the weekly inter-house quiz to discussions on topical issues and sessions which aim to develop their skills required by students for their future lives.

And finally our Year 11s have started their last year with us. They have worked so hard over the last four years and we are sure that this year will bear the fruits of this hard work. At the end of November they sat their trial exams which they took with such maturity and drive given the uncertainty surrounding their exams in the summer.

A message from the Principal (Summer Term)

There is no denying the spring term presented a multitude of challenges to our community. Once again I was immensely proud of how our students responded to these and the resilience they continue to demonstrate through a time of constant uncertainty.

Our teaching staff rose exceptionally to online learning and this time we were able to offer all our students 90% of live lessons. Our wonderful student support team ensured our students who need additional support, had TAs available in these lessons. As a result, our student engagement during the latest lockdown was incredibly high.

I remain grateful for the support that our students received from you at home during this time – once again many of you were working full time while supporting more than one child with online learning which is incredibly challenging.

For those students that did come into school during lockdown, our Cover Supervisors and TAs did an amazing job of supporting students with their learning, especially as many students were engaging with different subjects simultaneously. I have no doubt that through collaboration we have all ensured our students remain in the best possible place with their education. Over the course of the next term we will be looking to revisit work that took place in lockdown to re-enforce this learning while providing those students who need it with additional support.

When we returned to school the next challenge was the massive task of testing our whole student body three times in a two week period. This presented huge pressures and we needed a high number of volunteers from the staff and our wider community to support this effort. I cannot thank enough those members of our community that stepped up and volunteered. Without you we would not have been able to run such a successful operation.

I remain saddened that once again another issue of the Heron is unable to reflect the plethora of activities we would normally be involved in during this term. Rest assured as soon as it is safe and permitted we will be offering our students an abundance of exciting extra-curricular activities.

Litlington Preschool

What a year we have all had!

From March 2020 we like the rest of the Country went into Lockdown!

We then returned in September! But during this time we were in touch with our children and their families and we were able to send weekly activity sheets home! And for our Rising Fives we had a socially distanced Graduation! It was lovely for us all to wish them good luck at "Big School"!

When we returned to Preschool in September we were totally Covid compliant with our children learning the new rules very quickly! A big thank you to parents & families adhering to all the guidelines!

In December we had a Christmas Concert with a difference! All done in the garden! Followed by a Christmas Party and a substitute Father Christmas Ho Ho Ho!!!!

Due to the Pandemic we have been unable to do any fundraising! But hopefully if & when we can we will organize some exciting fundraising!

At the moment we have 17 children on Register with 12 children leaving us in July!

If anyone should know of any 2 – 4 year olds please send them our way!

Both Helen & Evi have retired this School Year they were a big part of the Preschool for many years!

We now have five staff! Who are all very happy!!!!

We are a brilliant & happy Preschool and the proof is in the pudding of our children!

We will continue to thrive and be part of the Community for Litlington!

Thank you

Yvonne (Pre-school Leader) & Lorraine (Pre-school Committee Chair)

St Catherines Church

The last 12 months have been very strange for the Parish Church, as they have for everyone and everywhere. The building was closed completely at the start of the first lockdown, with no access permitted and no services. Parishioners were given quiet reflections to use at home. By Easter 2022 though we were holding services over Zoom, with readings and homilies from all around the parishes, a family choir singing and organ music being played. Although no actual communion services were held we were very much in communion. As restrictions eased so did the access to the building and services resumed in the church in July. Numbers were restricted which was manageable with our small regular congregation, but meant there was no opportunity for the Remembrance service or the

well-attended Christmas Eve service in the church. We marked Remembrance outside at the war memorial and a carol service was held online. In January, of our own volition, we took the decision to take all services online to keep the church members safe. However we have not been idle! The water and waste connection to the outside of the church was installed in March 2020. Internal plans were revised, permissions sought and granted, details finalised and eventually on 28th December work started on the installation of the long-awaited toilet and kitchen area. Since then, volunteers from the church have worked daily, assisted by contractors for the heating, electrical work and carpentry. The work is now almost complete and so it is with much gratitude that we thank all those from this village and surrounding areas who gave money for this project. It has been in the planning since 2015 and at times seemed to be out of our reach as the costs kept rising. Thanks to one particular member of the church who took on the bulk of the work and to those who assisted him we have managed to complete this project with the funds we had available. We look forward to the time we can open up the church beyond Sunday services and welcome people back with our new and much improved facilities. Our thanks go to all those who support the parish church in whatever capacity.
Sue Jenkins (Church Warden)

Litlington Congregational Church

Covid Disruption

For part of the past year, due to coronavirus, the Church was obliged to close or did so for covid safety reasons. Services were held in August, September, October and December 2020 and April 2021. For some of the remaining months the congregation benefited from the Zoom services organised by Guilden Morden Congregational Church.

Services are currently being held based strictly upon current government guidelines. It is hoped that they will return to normal on 17 May or 21 June at the latest.

Special Services

Notwithstanding the covid restrictions, it was possible to hold the Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 27 September, the Christmas Carol Service on 13 December and the Easter Sunday service on 4 April.

Ministers

The Church does not have its own minister and relies upon a pool of ministers from other Churches, of various denominations, who kindly give their time to lead our services. In the last eighteen months the number of ministers has reduced and we are seeking to find others who can help. Volunteers or contacts should be passed to The Church Secretary.

Use of Church Hall.

Bassingbourn Brownies are making use of the Church hall while its present venue is unavailable. If you are interested in using the hall for a voluntary donation please see the Church entry in Prospect.

Volunteers

Volunteers are required to assist with maintaining the Church garden and interior decoration. If you are able to help then please contact The Church Secretary.

Projects

Plans have been professionally drawn up to substantially rebuild the toilet area to facilitate wheelchairs and those that are disabled. At around the same time part of the car park would be resurfaced. This is a costly project and will require funding by suitable charities. Due to the current covid restrictions, many grant giving charities are not fully functional and the project has been deferred pending the return to normal operation. In addition, it is hoped that the numbers in the congregation can be increased to help justify the expenditure.

Advent Windows

The Church took part in the village The Advent Windows display in December 2020.

Advertising

The Church wishes to thank Prospect, Litlington Live and The Post Office for allowing it to advertise services and events. These are also shown on the Church Notice Boards.

Membership

The number of people attending our Sunday services remains low. The difficulties of the past year, and the need to sometimes close the Church, have not been conducive with encouraging both young and old to try our friendly services. In 2020 it was planned to redouble our efforts to encourage those in the village to use the Church. Unfortunately, of necessity, this had to be postponed but will soon recommence. The Church is there to serve the village and if it is to continue and thrive it needs your support.

Peter Shoard (Church Secretary)

Litlington Evergreen Club

The decision to temporarily close the club came before the first lockdown was announced as the committee members were not prepared to put the (largely elderly) membership at risk of catching Covid 19 through meeting together. We know that the members have missed the meetings because most live alone and lockdown has been tedious for them. Hopefully we shall be able to have tea in a garden in July and then plan from there.

One committee member made regular calls at the doorstep of a few members who have no relatives in the village - just to check their well-being.

Pam Sharp (Chairman)

Recreation Centre Management

The Recreation Centre has been closed due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and will re-open along with the Government Guide lines.

We have followed the guide lines providing an updated Risk assessment document for reopening.

The Recreation Committee have conducted meetings over Zoom,

The Recreation Centre was given a £10.000 from the government to support the loss of earning due to the closure of the Centre.

We look forward to aerobics, badminton and Dance classes to return.

The football Pitches have reopened to organised team sports.

There are currently two village football teams Saturday and Sunday.

The football pitches are used by local village football teams from the surrounding villages, it is also used by local teams who are unable to use their own village pitches.

Youth teams are using the pitches on Saturdays, a pitch has been marked out for the junior teams, this has been done by the Junior team themselves.

We are looking at buying a storage unit to hold the Rec Centre's football nets and flags. The unit may have to be placed in the Rec Centre in case of vandalism.

We have been very fortunate this year as we have not had to carry out any large repairs, the showers are not in use and have been taped off.

The discussion of the refurbishment of the Recreation Centre has stopped for the moment , Cllr Pledger is in the process of registering the Village hall land and progressing with a feasibility report, to see if its possible use the money from the sale of the Village Hall Land to rebuild an all purpose community Hub.

Lisa Wiltshire (Chair)