

Parish News – February 2017

Editor this month: Geoffrey Fitch

If you have any news you would like included in the monthly newsletter please send your copy to geoffreyfitch@hotmail.co.uk

Also note that if your paper copy of the newsletter has disappeared you can always find it on the parish website www.wwl-pc.org.uk which is updated regularly by John Shepherd.

On January 8th nearly 100 people from throughout the Benefice attended a service in Hawkesbury Upton Church to bid a fond farewell to Alveen after six years as our parish priest. Although the 8th was the 14th day of Christmas the decorations were still in place which was unconventional but entirely suitable for a celebratory service. Following Richard Thomson's "thankyou", Alveen preached her last sermon. It is unlikely that any in the congregation will have listened before to an address which featured so many characters from Winnie the Pooh but it was, after all, Alveen's swan song so a light-hearted farewell was very welcome. After the final blessing a scrum ensued around the south door to partake of the wine and canapés on offer and on leaving all agreed that it had been an excellent, jolly occasion.

The AGM of the Village Hall Fund took place on January 17th and was kindly hosted by the School in the splendid Reading Room. Discussions as to the future of the fund were good-natured and covered a number of possibilities.

Several options were considered which would have involved spending the capital sum (about £120,000) on projects that would benefit all parishioners and pass the scrutiny of the Charity Commissioners. In no particular order they were 1. Investment in solar panels on purchased or donated land to provide income for village events. The current return of about 2% (and unlikely to change) was deemed not very attractive especially on a diminishing asset. It was also felt that interest rates, although currently low, would eventually return to long-term normal rates which would make 2% fixed seem a bad option. 2. Discussions with the Forestry Commission for Arboretum membership for all eligible parishioners in perpetuity have begun but could take some time to negotiate. 3. Donate the fund to Westonbirt Leisure to upgrade the golf club. This was felt to be difficult for several reasons. In order to protect our investment, the land on which the clubhouse would stand would have to be donated to Westonbirt parish and the School would be unwilling to follow this course: the need for a village hall cannot really be justified when it is remembered that the old hall was little used and expensive to maintain: it was felt that the capital sum available, after retaining monies for running costs, would be insufficient to provide a big enough venue for parish events.

Having discussed the possibilities one might have concluded that the AGM had achieved nothing but this turned out not to be the case. Natasha Dangerfield, the School Headmistress suggested that as Tiggers Playschool had decamped to Tetbury the building is now little used and might be available for village activities.

The building has heating, lavatories and tea making facilities and it was thus felt that the offer was too good to miss if any village clubs wanted a meeting place. Following a visit by several residents Natasha is now looking to the Governors to sanction the use and also to decide on the costs of hire. More news should be available soon.

G.F.

A Message from Alveen

Dear All,

I'm so glad to have this chance to say goodbye, especially to all those who were unable to come to my final service at Hawkesbury on 8th January. Even more importantly it is an opportunity to say a heart-felt "Thank You!" — for your friendship and support over the last six years and not least for your exceedingly generous farewell gift. It will be put to very good use indeed in setting up my new place.

I will miss this parish far more than I can say and hope that many of you will visit me in Dorset — it isn't so very far away! My new address from 14 January will be: 8 Abbots Walk, Cerne Abbas, Dorchester, Dorset. DT2 7JN. I expect my email address to stay the same as it is now: alveen01@icloud.com — once I my broadband has been transferred. The telephone number has yet to be arranged.

My very best wishes and all of God's blessings and much love to all of you.

Alveen Thoresen