

PARISH PUMP for JANUARY 2018

The December Parish Council Meeting was scheduled for the 13th of December, some three days after the dead line for the January Silsoe News, so this edition is an attempt at a resume of the services provided within our community and our appreciation of the dedicated service provided by mainly unpaid volunteer labour!

I would like to highlight the service provided by the various Parish clubs and groups who supply our community with so many facilities and entertainments throughout the year and particularly over the Christmas festive celebrations. This year we have enjoyed the continuation of the Pancake Races and the Community Fun Day on the Millennium Green! The second lighting of the Christmas tree complimented by the additional treat of High Street Lights which was further enhanced by the Advent Windows! Plus of course the visit of Santa on his Sleigh! This year also saw a Christmas Fun Day in the Community Sports Centre.

Established favourites still thrive throughout the year to serve and entertain such as NAF Club, Chatterbox, Drama, Flittabus, Poetry, Reading, Neighbourhood Watch, Rotary, Bell Ringing, Walking Netball, Cricket, Dance, Young Farmers, Gardeners Club, Allotments, Horticulture Show, Golf League, PTA, Millennium Green, SOS, Horticulture Centre, Village Hall, Silsoe Stride, Choir, Women's Institute, Croquet, Carpet bowls, Hobbies, Songsters, Christian Aid, Playgroups, Community Society, etc! Apologies for any omissions!

Hopefully cricket will eventually take place on the grassed area adjacent to the Community Sports Centre alongside the proposed football pitches. Unfortunately the anticipated football club folded for lack of sufficient numbers in the various age groups. Walking Football started in December at the Silsoe Community Sports Centre every Tuesday 12-30 to 13-30 contact -physical.activity@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk! The Community Sports Centre is a hive of activities with many choices available including gym facilities and complimented by a coffee bar open to all.

There are currently three operational Play Areas in the village for the children with further play facilities planned adjacent to the Community Sports Centre. This of course in addition to the popular plays facilities alongside the Wrest Park Visitor Centre which also has refreshment facilities when open to EH members and the public. The Horticulture Centre is also open for refreshments on Thursdays and some of its produce is available to purchase.

There are many paths through the local fields providing excellent opportunities for those who enjoy walking with or without canine company from the highest point in the parish at the apex of Thrift Wood to the lowest area in Buckle Grove to the south of Wrest Park, which itself provides many safe and pleasant walks when open to the public.

The Parish Church of St James the Great provides much to the community as part of the United Benefice of Silsoe, Pulloxhill and Flitton. Comprehensive details can be accessed elsewhere in the Silsoe News. The Christmas Services provided a variety of opportunities to celebrate Christmas with Carols, Christingle, Blessing the Crib and Midnight Mass, indeed something for all ages!

The Silsoe Neighbourhood Plan is ongoing and a presentation on current progress will be updated on Thursday 18th January 2018 between 6 and 9pm in Silsoe Village Hall. by the Steering Committee.

The Star and Garter plays an important part in many of the village activities providing liquid sustenance food and entertainment as well as a vital venue for several of the local organisations committee meetings.

The Post Office in the Village Hall continues to provide an essential service when it is operational on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12-30 and 2-30 pm. Please continue to use so as not to lose.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has a new Branch Manager for Bedfordshire Susan Wells contactable at susan.wells@cprebeds.org.uk

The Gladman Appeal/Inquiry is still scheduled for the 18th January 2018

There are ongoing problems concerning litter at the roadside, dog faeces on the green and field paths, dumped grass clippings on the village verges and domestic fly-tipping at the bottle bank. Although the “green garden”collections are currently suspended the Ampthill Tidy Tip remains an available option. Please keep Silsoe tidy!

In closing it would be remiss of me not to record appreciation to the Silsoe News itself which gives us such a good platform to firstly advertise all the parish services and events and secondly to report on these activities prior to delivering the “News” around the parish.

The Rural Services Network is calling on the government to ensure that rural communities receive fairer funding for vital public services, coming as the government prepares to announce its local government settlement for 2018-19. Central Government historically underfunds rural areas in comparison to urban areas despite the higher cost of providing services in sparsely populated rural areas. Finally the January meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for the 10th in the Committee Room of the Village Hall from 7-30pm. This meeting is always open to the public.

(PLUS STATEMENT ON THE ANTICIPATED NEW YEAR ROADWORKS)

LIONEL MANN