



VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

OUR NATURAL NEIGHBOURS

Although there are a few signs of spring out there like snowdrops and crocuses poking their heads up they have now been buried under a thick blanket of snow. All our natural neighbours will be struggling to find food in this weather just when they thought spring was arriving. In order to do this they have to be very resourceful. One of our natural neighbours that seem to survive and thrive whatever the circumstance is one we have been seeing quite a lot of recently.

It is as bold as brass and steals from right under our noses without a care

True rats are members of the genus *Rattus* the most important of which to humans is the black rat *Rattus rattus* which is sleeker and less numerous than the brown rat *Rattus norvegicus*. Brown rats are a problem in many a farm and town. They are one of the most serious pests on the planet spoiling grain and carrying disease yet they remain one of the most successful. Their success lies in their opportunistic way of life and their amazing ability to reproduce. One pair can have 200 babies in a year!! They are expert jumpers and climbers and do not mind living in dank dark places. They arrived here as stowaways from Asia and have since spread across the land. The UK population is around 15 million and rising. It is estimated that rats are responsible for depleting 1/5th of the global food supply every year .Rats communicate and mark their territory by urinating almost everywhere they go. The estimated cost of spoiled food is £11 billion a year. They do help to transmit many diseases that affect humans, although it was thought that they were responsible for the spread of the black plague recent studies have shown this to be untrue.

However rats are also responsible for many good things in our environment. People generally think that rats are unclean which is untrue they spend a large amount of their time grooming and cleaning themselves. Rats are beneficial to our native predators being tasty food for foxes, stoats and barn owls. They are also great seed dispensers due to the way they forage for food. Their burrows help to aerate the soil improving its overall condition. They also do a vital job of keeping down the mountainous piles of waste and rubbish we humans create.

So all in all it seems rats do as much good as they do harm and although we don't want to encourage them we should be thankful to have them as one of our natural neighbours in Pyecombe...

Kerry

Reader's Ramblings

What a splendid carol service we had, with the Mid Sussex Brass Band leading our rousing singing of familiar carols. You will be pleased to know that they have already agreed to come back to us on Sunday 9th December this year! Another musical milestone was the retirement of our organist John Walker after over fifty years man and boy playing for us. There will be a farewell to him at the evening service in either April or May, dependent on his availability.

On a sadder note, most of you will remember Terry Desborough who lived in the village with his wife Wendy for so many years. After a long illness he was laid to rest in the churchyard after a packed service led by Caroline and me in early February.

We continue to hold our regular services in the evening of the second Sunday every month, and frequently we have a special theme for them. In February we had a presentation by Karen Lewis and Jill Munday on the school in Nepal which we help support. The school at Malagiri was established eleven years ago in a poor and mountainous country, and provides education where there was none before. But it was damaged in the earthquake a few years ago. Brighton University tutors and friends help raise running costs, and we were shown slides and video clips of Karen and Jill's time out there when they went with the Head Teacher to buy supplies at the nearest city. These brought alive the joy shown by the children at having visitors who cared about them. It really is a worthwhile project.

Of course we do not forget the needy here at home, and a collection of clothing and personal hygiene supplies was made before Christmas and given to the Brighton branch of the Salvation Army.

Now the days are lengthening, and the sun is gaining strength, thoughts turn to springtime. The snowdrops have gladdened us with their appearance, and there is the promise of new life in the buds on trees and shrubs. So it is with church life. As yet there is no news of a replacement priest of our own, and it may well be the end of this year before someone is appointed. During this time of vacancy we have held our regular Holy Communion service every fourth Sunday, when generally the Reverend Debbie Beer from Hurstpierpoint has led our worship. Everyone has come to look forward to her visit and we are grateful to her. And the short service for prayer and reflection every Wednesday at 6pm continues.

Please remember your church is there for you whenever you might need it. You will always be welcome at one of our services, and details are on the monthly news sheet available in church. The rectory phone is still connected and comes through to me if you have a special need.

Patrick

A peaceful oasis in a hectic world

Our village Church is open every day between 10am and 4pm in the winter (10am to 6pm in the summer).

We are pleased to offer a warm welcome to many, many visitors who are walking the South Downs Way - people seem to be grateful for a drink and a loo, and they also appreciate the peace and quiet offered by the building.

Pew Platter

The snowdrops out in the churchyard are a sign that spring is on its way! It seems only a short time ago that we had our Carol Service, with, as always, the Mid-Sussex Brass Band and also for the last few years our own village choir. What a lovely traditional way to start our Christmas! Thank you to all who helped with the refreshments afterwards.

In this New Year we have already had a wedding and despite the weather it was a beautiful occasion.

There has also been a funeral when many villagers and friends from far and near joined Wendy and family at the Service for Terry Desborough. Both Terry and Wendy have been very involved in the village and church life of Pyecombe and for many years Terry was the Fabric Officer for the church.

No matter what the problem was Terry could fix it! He will be greatly missed by us all.

Through the winter months we continue to get visitors to our church, maybe as a place of shelter and a hot drink, or maybe just to enjoy the peace within its walls – but both our visitor books say, “Thank you for keeping the church open”!

Keep a look out for the many events at the church throughout the year and please come and support us.

The Church Team

Social Committee News

Argh, such an awful January and February but on the bright side spring is just around the corner and hopefully we'll see some bright sunny days! We would like to get some new photos of views across Pyecombe and the Downs, especially now spring is coming, on our website. There are some great photographers in Pyecombe who can capture the essence of what this area is all about. While walking their dogs or just walking the Downs?

Christmas Fayre was reasonably successful; we brought in £991 for the Church, much needed for the upkeep of the church and churchyard. It has been noted that the amount we take is reducing year on year.

Not that long ago the amount taken was approximately £1800. No doubt the reduction has a lot to do with people being busier, competing with lots of other Christmas Fayres and possibly tired of the same old thing. Going forward we are hoping to make changes.

We are looking at offering tables to people who have products or services to sell. This could be new stylish jewellery, vintage, craft, preserves, garden services, etc. By having new people with new products/services, it will make the day more interesting and an opportunity to buy those last-minute gifts for others and oneself!! There will be a small charge for each table but each vendor will keep their takings. Pyecombe will continue to have their own traditional tables too, such as cakes, nearly new and Nikki's wonderful quiches and meringues, along with lunches and teas and coffees. If you know of anyone who could be interested then please let us know.



Quiz Night at Pangdean 7th February had fewer people than last year, which saw a phenomenal turnout. Andy Munday was our newly acquired Quiz Master, for the second year running- - he did a great job and I'm proud to say that it was one of the Pyecombe Tables than won the first prize – it was spread ?? Out as Patcham came a close second and Pyecombe Golf Club third.

Prizes for the raffle were donated by BP Garage, they couldn't have been more helpful, Rushfields, who are always excellent at supporting the community and Southdowns Garden Centre and of course our own Pyecombers, who were very generous. A big thanks to Nikki at Pangdean for letting us use such a lovely space, it was warm and very comfortable and a special thanks to Joyce who does an amazing job ensuring everyone buys at least one raffle ticket.

Events going forward:

We have the Easter Egg hunt in the Church yard Sunday 1st at 11.30, all welcome, bring your children and grandchildren along for a fun hunt. It would be great if you could let us know beforehand if you will be coming but if not just turn up on the day! Email

Plant Sale Saturday 19th May

This will be held in the Churchyard between 2 and 4 in the afternoon. We shall have some lovely pot plants, annuals and some other shrubs for sale along with tea, coffee and delicious cakes. Please come along if you can, again the proceeds will go to support the Church which is the centre of our beautiful village.

FootPrint Walking Group 14th June

FootPrint, a walking group organise a walk along the Southdowns Way each year and stop at Pyecombe Church for a much-needed break and refreshments. The Social Committee and village volunteers organise tea/coffee and freshly made cakes to suit most dietary requirements. It's quite an intense couple of hours but a lot of fun.

Pyecombe Village Weekend and Flower Festival will be held 30th June and 1st July 2018 (earlier than usual). The theme this year is **'The Great Outdoors'**. As most of you know this is an annual event that draws people in from around Sussex and beyond. The flower displays use the theme which this year is The Great Outdoors to express their view, thoughts or ideas of what this means to them. The displays often include objects, toys, poetry. What makes it so interesting is the variety. The displays are open to all, just let us know if you are providing a display and what space you want preferably prior to the event and bring it along the day before. Displays can be put together at the church; can be a lot of fun doing them all together. A leaflet will be delivered closer to the date with more details.

This year we are introducing a **Scarecrow Competition!** This competition is open to all. Initially display in your garden, which will be fun seeing all the individual creations as we walk around and/or bring them to the churchyard the day before (Friday). During the weekend the best scarecrow will be chosen! There will be a £1 scarecrow entrance fee. Again, more information to follow nearer the time.

Don't forget our **Fancy Dress Dog Show**, this will be held again this year, it's a lot of fun and both dogs and owners behave very well!

Your chance to be involved: we welcome any ideas or suggestion of what you would like to see happening in the village. Let us know as we would like to help in your own personal events as well and develop other social activities that are of interest to you. Your chance to get involved.

Check out and register on both the Pyecombe website and Facebook page to find out more detail of events coming up.

www.pyecombevillage.co.uk

Pyecombe Village Facebook page

If you require further information regarding the Social Committee activities, please contact Karen Lewis on 07818568999

Parish Council Jottings

It is great to be in a position to confirm that the good news is that the missing dog bins have finally been reinstated by Mid Sussex District Council. Thank you to all those people who contacted me regarding this item and apologies that despite numerous phone calls, photographs and emails to MSDC it has taken so long to rectify.

Proposed changes to the General Data Protection Regulations due to become law at the end of May will mean we will no longer be able to retain personal information, such as email addresses without your permission.

This will result in you shortly receiving an email asking for permission to retain your email address in order to circulate information appertaining to matters such as road closures, events, changes to bin collection dates. When you receive the email please do respond otherwise we are legally required to delete you from our mailing list.

I was recently happy to be able to assist Mary and Mieke with 'insider' information on people at West Sussex County Council who may be in a position to help with the setting up of the Love Your Village volunteer group. This is a scheme that has worked very well in other local areas where parishioners, realising that local government funding cuts are impacting on local service provision, have taken matters into their own hands and are undertaking some of the tasks which should be provided by both District and County Councils. The Parish Council are very supportive of the scheme and hope that it receives great support from all the residents.

By now you will all have received your Council Tax bill we hope you will be relieved to see that the parish precept has not increased. Worthy of a mention is that at our last Parish Council meeting it was confirmed by our MSDC councillor that Pyecombe is one of the few parishes not to raise its precept. Indeed most neighbouring parishes have seen small increases with the largest increase in the area of 45% coming from a neighbouring council.

The Council have recently obtained quotes to carry out remedial works on the area located near the BP/M&S site. It is hoped that these will be done in conjunction with the Area Manager and will then go some way to alleviating the issue of HGV vehicles parking on the grass verges.

Recent planning applications in the parish:

SDNP/18/00784/FUL Hobbs Cottage, Haresdean Lane, Pyecombe. New low level pool with underground pool house plus accommodation and associated earth removal. Application in progress.

SDNP/18/00785/LIS Hobbs Cottage, Haresdean Lane, Pyecombe. New low level pool with underground pool house plus accommodation and associated earth removal. Application in progress.

SDNP/17/05538/HOUS Coombe View, School Lane, Pyecombe. Internal loft conversion including the insertion of six velux windows and an obscured glazed window to the side elevation of an existing split level /2 storey house. Application approved.

It is always nice to see residents at the Parish Council meetings, but if this is not possible and you would like to keep up to date with Parish Matters all Agendas and Minutes can be found on the Website.

Dawn Langston – Clerk and RFO

Parish Council Meeting ~ Dates for 2018

Date TBC May 2018 – Annual Meeting

3rd July 2018

4th September 2018

13th November 2018

Parish Clerk & RFO

Dawn Langston – parishcouncil@pyecombe.org.uk

Telephone contact – 07909 332605

LOVE YOUR VILLAGE!

We love living in Pyecombe and value its lovely community and the wonderful walks all around us. Whilst walking through our village we have noticed of late that Pyecombe is looking tired and unkempt, and we would like to change that!

We are very keen to have a clean and well kept Pyecombe that people are proud to live in and with this in mind we have launched a "Love your village" group to get the clean up going. We are meeting with a representative from West Sussex County Council who will point us in the right direction regarding Health and Safety, Public Liability, and steer us towards any grants or help available.

Our aim is to

- Keep litter under control
- Clear and cut back branches on overgrown footpaths and pavements
- Generally improve the look of our village

Our starting point will be the planter at the bottom of Church Hill, with the cleanup of overgrown pavements along the London Road leading to Pyecombe Street. We will be meeting on a regular monthly basis and of course we are looking for helpers!

We will just have had our first meet up on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th March and hope that this will have been well supported. However, we will be meeting again next month, so hope to see you then. We don't expect you to do both days or both hours. Any help, even just an hour or so either day would be fantastic.

If you would like to get involved contact either: Mieke Thomas 07956 368282 or Mary O'Rourke 07976884165

**If you feel like we do, then we look forward to seeing you (hopefully) on our second "Love Your Village" clean up week-end!
Date to be advised**

We thank Marie Bartholomew for the third instalment of a series of articles on her time at Pyecombe School, being the last Head Teacher at the Village School before it finally closed in 1965, when the building became a residential property that has since been known as Old School Cottage.

Memories of Pyecombe School – Part 3

Towards the end of my first year at Pyecombe, Mr Tandy, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) of schools in East Sussex, called in to introduce himself. He spent some time talking to the children and looking at their work. He was very interested in our environmental studies and said he would like to come back and spend more time with us. Some weeks later he telephoned to say he had a whole day free that Friday and asked if he could come to see us. We had found him a very friendly approachable person so the children were delighted to see him again. He joined in all the lessons and chatted to the children as he looked at their work. At morning playtime he went out with the infant teacher as she supervised the children at play and he joined me there after the children had finished their school dinner which he also enjoyed.

He joined in some of the children's games and asked them what they enjoyed doing after school being particularly interested that several of them were in a local cubs pack.

The day ended with a sing song, Mr Tandy played the piano and the children chose their favourite songs. He said he had enjoyed his day and asked the children if he could come again and they were delighted. The next week I opened the post to find a report on the General Inspection at Pyecombe School. This was the equivalent of today's Ofsted Inspection and I had been unaware that Mr Tandy's visit was an official inspection. I was thrilled to read a really good report, praising the children for their behaviour and the interest they showed in their lessons. He felt they were reaching a good standard in all lessons and particularly praised the way they were gaining knowledge about their environment in a practical way.

We were to see more of Mr Tandy when he brought groups of teachers who were attending a course run by him at Brighton Training College. He would ask me if we could be working on our outdoor studies on that particular morning and each child in my class was assigned to a Teacher with some of the older children having two adults. The children would carry out their assigned tasks explaining to the adult what we were trying to discover and how we had come to decide the particular method we were using. This visit was followed by several more, some led by Mr Tandy and some by lecturers at Brighton Training College. The children became very confident in talking to adults and explaining their work. Several of the teachers wrote to the children to thank them for their visit and said they were trying to find things to study in their environment.

One day in the summer term 1964 the infant teacher was unable to come in that day so I had to teach both classes. We managed quite well in the morning as my class were good at getting on with work I had set them while I was with the infants.

As it was a fine day I took them all down to the Wyshe in the afternoon. I had to lock up the building and left a note on the door to say we were in the Wyshe, a field at the bottom of the lane on the left and added "willies are in the coal shed". My class enjoyed showing the infants the part of the hedgerow we were studying, teaching them the names of the trees and the flowers growing nearby. Then one of the boys said "there is a man coming through the gate but it is not Mr Tandy". When he reached us he introduced himself as Mr Welek, a semi retired HMI from South of London who had met Mr Tandy at a conference and heard about Pyecombe School so thought he would drive down and see it for himself. The children showed him what we had been discovering about the hedgerow and chatted happily to him as we walked back to school. He stayed to talk to me over a cup of tea and suggested that I should take slides to record our work both in the field and classroom. He said he would come again and also take slides to supplement mine. He added that he would bring his own willies next time as he had found the ones I left in the coal shed one size too small!

In March the following year my classroom door opened and Mr Braithwaite, Chief Education Officer to Sussex walked in. I greeted him warmly and thanked him for finding time to visit our small school. His reply was "I thought I should come myself to tell you we are closing this school in July because it is too small".

Luckily the children did not hear what he said but they went home and told their mothers that a man had come into school and must have said something awful to Miss Bartholomew because she looked terribly upset.

I then had to contact the governors and then write to the parents. Everyone was upset and many people wrote letters appealing against the proposal. Mr Tandy also wrote to the authorities but it soon became obvious that the decision had already been made and the children would be transferred to Albourne School.

This meant we only had the summer to complete the slide sequence so Mr Welek invited me to his home in Streatham for a weekend and his wife fed us and provided me with a bed Friday and Saturday nights so that we could concentrate on putting slides he had taken to make a suitable sequence. We no longer had time to do any more so he suggested we should make a taped commentary to go with the slides we had.

I brought the slides back and showed them to the children and they chose the ones they wanted to talk about. They made some notes about their chosen slides and practised at home what they wanted to say so when Mr Welek came down and brought his high quality tape recorder and microphone we were able to produce a commentary with few retakes. This sequence was shown to parents and friends a few days before we closed.

We had some money we had saved to go towards other equipment so we used it for a party on the day we closed. The leader of the local Cubs pack was a relative of the Forfar's bakery so they offered to provide the food. This was generous of them as it obviously would have cost far more than the money we gave them.

The highlight was a beautiful cake decorated with a Maypole with ribbons held by the exact number of boys and girls so each child could take one home with them.

Marie Bartholomew.

Favourite Recipes

Many thanks to Wendy Desborough for sharing her favourite recipe below:

SUPURB OXTAIL STEW

Cooking time approximately 4.5 hours

Serves 4-6 people

Ingredients

4 tbsp vegetable oil, 3 tbsp flour, 1 tsp salt and pepper, 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper, 1 tsp English mustard pwd (optional), 1 whole oxtail (approx 1kg) cut into 2" chunks, 1 glass red wine or small glass sherry, 2 large onions roughly chopped, 2 cloves garlic roughly chopped, 1tsp tomato puree, 2 large carrots roughly chopped, 2 leeks thickly sliced, 2 celery sticks roughly chopped, 2 bay leaves, 2.5 pints beef stock, 2 tbsp flat leaf parsley, stalks and leaves roughly chopped parsley + finally for garnish –1 tbs plain flour, 1 tbsp soft butter, salt and pepper and parsley leaves.

Method

Preheat oven to 160c/325f/gas 3

Heat oil in large ovenproof casserole dish. Add salt, pepper and mustard pwd to flour and mix thoroughly. Toss oxtail chunks in flour and brown in hot oil then keep to one side.

Add wine or sherry to dish and scrape bottom of pan to remove flour and meat juices and stir until reduced to a thick glaze.

Add onion and garlic, stir well and cook for 3 mins to soften the onion but not brown it

Add all other main ingredients, stir well , bring to gentle boil and cover with lid and cook in oven for 3 hrs

Remove dish from oven, remove meat and place in separate bowl, cover casserole with clean cloth and leave both dishes to cool. Place both dishes in refrigerator and leave overnight

Next day remove layer of hard fat formed over vegetable and stock mixture. Add meat and place in hot oven 400f/200c/gas 6 for 1 hour

Meanwhile mix butter with flour and place in a freezer

After 1 hour break butter/flour mix into pieces and stir into stew until flour has dissolved

Return casserole to oven for 15 mins

Leave to stand for 10 mins. Adjust seasoning sprinkle on parsley leaves and serve

Serve with mashed potatoes with added horseradish or mashed celeriac

Local Carpenter/Handyman Required

We are looking for someone with the above skills to make and put up shelves in the store cupboard in the church.

Our preference would be to find someone local but if not we will look further afield.

If you have these skills please contact Karen Lewis on
07818568999

The next newsletter is due out in June. We would love to receive articles from you to share with your community. These can be news, items of interest, local history, jokes, recipes anything that would have been passed around the campfire to keep the sense of community strong in days gone by.

To be included in the June issue please send articles in anytime from now until May 15th. You can email them to parishcouncil@pyecombe.org.uk or post a written piece in the letter box at no. 14 The Wyshe marked newsletter.

Many thanks. Dawn Langston (ed)

This newsletter is sponsored by the parish council and is part of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (publication schemes). Pyecombe Village newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Ed. *Dawn Langston*