

CROCKERNWELL
DREWSTEIGNTON
SANDY PARK
VENTON
WHIDDON DOWN

Drewsteignton Parish Post

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DECEMBER NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

As reported last month the Council has now decided on the amount we request West Devon Borough Council to collect as our part of the Council Tax (the Parish Precept) for 2010/2011. It is worth noting they collect the money and pay the Parish Council two lump sums per year, so we do not receive interest on this money!!

For several years the Council has kept the Precept as low as possible and has even used our reserves to help. This has meant that we now have little money left over for any emergency that may arise or to move forward on projects highlighted in the Parish Plan or by the Parish Council for the benefit of the Parish.

Funding from DEFRA paid for the production of the Parish Plan; the Parish website was set up and is maintained by volunteers; the Parish Post is produced by volunteers; we have obtained sponsorship for, and repairs are being undertaken voluntarily by councillors, to maintain the bus stops; the Playing Fields are managed and maintained by a committee of volunteers who raise monies throughout the year for this purpose; and for several years the Parish Clerk has not claimed their full entitlements. Some of our annual major expenses are £1,700 for the maintenance of the public toilets (this used to be the responsibility of West Devon Borough Council); we are still paying off a loan for the car park which is £2,000 and will be doing so for the next seven years before the debt is cleared; £600 for the maintenance of the car park; despite the sterling work of volunteers the cost of production of the Parish Post is estimated to be £1,000 -- over 86% of parishioners have indicated they use the Parish Post to keep in touch with Parish activities and news

and it is felt that this publication is very important to the Parish.

Devon County Council has indicated the projected cost of closing Turnpike Road at Whiddon Down could be in the region of £4,000-£5,000, and whilst funding for this project may well be obtained it is expected that the Parish will provide some monies to "kick start" this work and we are looking at £750 for this.

The Parish Clerk's commitment is 10 hours per week and the Council has decided it is prudent to precept for the correct amount of remuneration as fixed by the National Association of Local Councils, which is £4,420.

We have resolved to request an increase of the Parish Precept which would equate to a band D property annual increase of £6.27 (just over a gallon of petrol) or £3.48 per elector. In percentage terms this is quite a bit above inflation but we hope that by explaining what we intend to do with **your** money you will understand and approve of this course of action. If any parishioner would like full details of the Council's expenses they can contact the Clerk.

Two other items of note are that the police are continuing to monitor and enforce the speed limits in Whiddon Down and Crockernwell, and the amended plans for the affordable housing in Lamb Park were well received. The Council listened very carefully to all the points raised by parishioners on this subject. The Council resolved to support the application with the hope that some amendments can be made to improve access to the rear gardens. Our next meeting is Monday, 18th January at 7.30pm at Whiddon Down village hall.

Parish Profile...The Young Ones

The Parish Profile has been an occasional feature of the Parish Post for some time now, but for the time being we're going to focus on the youth of the Parish. If any young people fancy trying their hand at doing a Profile, or have any other ideas for articles, please get in touch.



Genoveva Arteaga-Rynn, better known as Viva, will be a familiar face to many in the Parish who have popped into the Drewsteignton Post Office Stores on a Saturday morning, when she serves behind the counter. Viva, 18, is doing an art foundation course at Exeter College.

What is your main interest?
Photography.

Would you like to pursue it as a further career?
Yep, definitely.

What do you like to photograph?

People. They are more interesting than plants, they change quicker.

If you had a ticket to anywhere, where would you go?
Right now? Um ... I would go to India.

What is your favourite colour?

I don't have one, it changes all the time. Right now it's a purple auberginey colour.

You are half-New Zealander, half-Mexican. If the two countries' football teams end up playing each other in the World Cup this year in South Africa, which team would you support?

Well, New Zealand don't stand a chance, so Mexico. But in rugby it would be a different matter ...

If you could be someone for a day who would it be?

There's loads of people I would be. Solve Sundsbo or Rankin, they are huge fashion photographers with hundreds of people working for them and amazing equipment.

If you could take one thing to a desert island with you, what would it be?

It would be a laptop with broadband so I could Facebook and use Wikipedia. Or I would take Ray Mears, not Bear Grylls.

What is your favourite film?

One of my favourite films is Leon, it's amazing.

What is your favourite song?

Currently listening to songs by Florence and the Machine. She's a female artist with a very powerful voice.

What is your favourite book?

Well, right now I am reading Small Island by Andrea Levy. I'm enjoying it a lot.

If you could change something about Drewsteignton what would it be?

To have a Tesco? No, no, I'm joking, I promise. Err, maybe a train station? I quite like it the way it is, actually.

Burn's Night Supper

Long Room, Drewe Arms, Drewsteignton. Saturday 23rd January, 7.30pm for 8pm start

3 Course Supper

Smoked Salmon or Cheese and Oatcakes

Meat or Vegetarian Haggis, Neaps, Tatties and Gravy

Raspberry Pavlova.

Shot of Whisky

Tickets £12 from Drewsteignton Post Office.

Proceeds to Drewsteignton Village Hall and Chagford Swimming Pool.

Please wear something tartan.



Get set for the 2010 veg growing season

A new year, and a new vegetable growing season is upon us!

If you're a novice grower or a total beginner mulling over the idea of growing your own, my advice is: Go for it! It's rewarding and it really isn't difficult.

Over the next few months I'll be giving seasonal hints and tips to help make your veg plot a success.

First off, it's useful to have a rough schedule in mind for the coming months:

January: Get plot ready

February: Buy seeds

March: Sow some seeds

April: Sow (almost) all the other seeds

The two most common things I hear from disappointed veg growers are:

1. Everything grew, but it was all just a bit piddly.
2. It was all going well, then it suddenly went ballistic with weeds.

Both of these problems can be addressed right now before you've grown anything (or at least when the Siberian weather comes to an end). It's all about getting your plot ready, and it's one of the most important jobs of the year.

Piddly plants are largely a result of lack of nutrients in the soil. We live in the country, surrounded by heaps of manure, so get some and dig it into your soil. It's black gold and will make for healthier, pest resistant plants and a bumper crop.

Weeds are an inevitability. The best way of dealing with them is to make them easy to get to, and easy to get out. This is where raised beds come in. They take a little time to build but they make tending your veg plot easier and more enjoyable. Make the beds 4ft wide so they're easy to reach across, and avoid stepping on them so the soil stays loose and easy to weed.

There's a video on our website www.seedtoplate.co.uk that shows you precisely how to do it.

Hiltons in Moretonhampstead sell 8in x 1in preservative treated planks that are perfect for the job.

They'll even deliver them if you ask nicely.

Next month: The best seeds for those beautiful new raised beds.

Peter Clements runs a business from home in Drewsteignton, all about helping people to grow their own veg. Seeds, veg growing kits and advice are available on our website www.seedtoplate.co.uk

Need more volunteers? Baffled by CRB checks or the New Vetting and Barring Scheme?

The Devon Association of Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) is offering time and expertise on a range of volunteering issues to small (income under £40k) community and voluntary groups in your Parish. You may want to find out more about the Criminal Records Bureau checks or the Independent Standards Authority Vetting and Barring Scheme or help with recruiting more volunteers – if so, we can help! You will also be able to access regular updates on volunteering issues and have the opportunity to link in to local networks if you want to.

Interested? We would love to hear from you. Contact Jenny Fish, County Co-ordinator by email jennyf@torridgecvs.org.uk or telephone 01237 471136 and a local worker from West Devon CVS will arrange to come and see you.

Training Dates for Your Diary

Emergency First Aid

Thurs 25 Feb 2010, venue to be confirmed, full day.

A chance to get your certificate!

£40.00 pp (members) £50.00 pp (non members)

CIEH Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering

Early 2010, Bideford, full day.

A chance to get your certificate!

£40.00 pp (members) £50.00 pp (non members)



Sam Peirce resides in Exeter and has been a regular columnist in a number of regional newspapers. Never shy of expressing an opinion, she writes about all manner of things but is happiest when ranting about the things that impinge on her otherwise harmonious existence. Every month, she will share her thoughts with us in The Parish Post.

A cake with many candles...

Our entire family has good reason to celebrate next weekend as my grandmother is going to celebrate her 100th birthday. My aunt is holding a bit of a party for her at her care home, making sure her entire flock will be there, although I don't think my gran is particularly bothered about the whole affair, to be honest. I suppose after that many birthdays, it starts to get a bit samey. I know how I feel after 42 so I should imagine 100 tuneless renditions of 'Happy Birthday', 100 cakes bedecked with a growing number of candles and 100 sets of birthday cards has started to get a little predictable. She is very lucky in that she still retains her mental faculties, but her eyes and her ears have nearly worn out so making out what is what and who is who on the day will completely tire her out, I'm sure. In some ways, these celebrations are more for the offspring than for the person actually celebrating the birthday. We, with our vision and hearing, get to sit and cluck about how fantastic it is that she has reached this milestone. How she has lived through two world wars, the Titanic sinking, more life-enhancing inven-

tions than anyone can care to mention and seen five monarchs reign and 19 prime ministers running the country. She has also had the pain of outliving two husbands and a son. It seems unbelievable to have lived through so much and not be completely overwhelmed by it all. I recently read a quote: *In youth the days are short and the years are long; in old age the years are short and the days long.* It really made me think about how she fills those long days when she's on her own. She can't listen to her beloved music any more and she can't read, do cross-words or watch television. She struggles with her motor skills so even a walk in the fresh air can't be done without assistance. I asked her recently and she said she was quite happy – sitting there on her own, with her thoughts and memories. It's reassuring to know that her long days are not empty and a reminder that you can't judge somebody's standard of living by comparing it to your own. One hundred years of thoughts and memories will keep her busy for some time to come.

© Sam Peirce 2010

Record breaker

The stunning sum of more than £800 was raised for the Playing Fields at the Curry Night held in the Long Room at the Drewe Arms at the end of November.

Bill Savage's competition to win a bottle of whisky by throwing your coin nearest to the bottle contributed over £65.

FORCE at the Farm

Coffee Morning
at

Bowbeer Farm, Drewsteignton on
Saturday 16th January 2010 at 10.30am
in aid of FORCE.

Cake stall and Draw.

Please come along to help support this
worthy cause.

Shop local

When the snow came this January, cutting many of us off from the outside world for a few days, just as it did last year as well, the Drewsteignton Post Office Stores was a lifeline. We often take the shop for granted, but it's not just a place to get your bread and milk and other essentials, it's a community service, a meeting point and an information hub, where you can be assured of a cheery welcome.

You can get just about everything you need in the Drewsteignton PO Stores, and it's open seven days a week (half days on weekends). Marg, who runs the store with husband Ian, says, "The family motto has always been, 'If you don't see it on the shelf, ask, and we'll try to get it for you'."

The shop has been in the same family for nearly 40 years. Ian's parents, Monty and Winnie, first took it on in 1971. When Monty retired, Ian's sister Penny and her husband Ron ran it for 12 years. Ian, who previously made and fitted artificial limbs in Exeter, and Marg, who ran the coffee shop at Sainsburys in Pinhoe for 12 years, took over the shop five years ago. During all those years, a number of village residents have worked in the shop, the current ones being Judy who has worked there for 13 years and Jill, along with a steady stream of "Saturday girls" (the current one is featured in this month's Parish Profile).

Ian's working day starts around 5am, sorting and marking up the newspapers, then sorting out the post for delivery, and fetching the milk from Dunn's Dairy. During the freeze, he had to pick up the bread and the newspapers from Whiddon Down, as the normal deliveries couldn't get through to Drewsteignton. It's hard work, but as Marg says, "It's a way of life -- a very rewarding way to live."

The shop supports a network of local businesses by sourcing locally as much of its produce as it can. Bread comes from Okehampton, and there's a cold counter of fresh local cheeses and meats, including sausages and cooked ham cut fresh on the premises, and Tom's pies and cakes.

As well as supplying everyday grocery needs, the shop offers a number of services, including dry cleaning, pick up and deliveries on Tuesdays and Thursdays; veg boxes from Riverford Farm on Thursdays; a drop-off and collection point for doctor's prescriptions; newspaper and magazine deliveries to your door. And of course they deliver the Parish Post for free.

While the shop is a lifeline for many in the village, the harsh reality is that it couldn't survive as a business without the income that comes from the Post Office side.

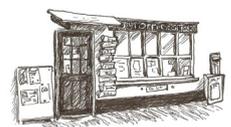
The Drewsteignton PO, which is also a local sorting office, survived the closures in 2008 but it still needs to continue to hold its own to meet future challenges.

It's worth remembering that it's not just stamps that are available over the PO counter. Every bill that is paid in the Post Office helps, including your council tax payments and telephone and utility (water and electricity) bills.

The PO counter in the shop also offers banking services, including a cash point for most bank cards; euros on demand (no need to order), and other foreign currencies.

The bottom line is that if the Post Office in Drewsteignton goes, the shop would go too. That would be a huge blow to the village which doesn't bear thinking about. Use it or lose it.

Ian and Marg at Drewsteignton Post Office Stores would like to thank everyone for their support. They've been overwhelmed by the generosity and good wishes of their customers over Christmas and New Year.



Whiddon Down Village Hall -- Produce Market

A regular Produce Market will be held on the 4th Saturday morning of each month. The first Market will be on 27th February at 10am.

There will be stalls providing fresh vegetables, dairy and meat products, cakes and local crafts.

Please support this new venture. We are hoping it will be a new community service.

If you would like more details, please contact Patrick Sullivan (01647 234111 -- evenings) or Michael Hall (01647 231634).

Feeding Garden Birds

As I write this, Drewsteignton is under a blanket of snow with no immediate rise in temperatures forecast, and the prediction of more snow to come. It is in conditions such as these that feeding our garden birds can really make a difference, not only because natural food is difficult to find by day but the plummeting temperatures at night can have disastrous effects if birds are below weight when they go to roost.

The two common types of bird feed available are peanuts and mixed bird seed, both of which provide for different species, but when the conditions are as harsh as they are at present, I put out more food and of a wider variety.

It is essential to provide food of a high nutritional value for birds, so apples cut in half (or just apple-cores), dried fruit such as raisins or sultanas and porridge oats are all great for putting out. The RSPB does not encourage bread alone but suggests breadcrumbs are of value.

If I do put bread/crusts out, I ensure it is in small pieces and under cover on the bird table as the crows will generally spot large pieces and take them away. When putting out kitchen scraps it is useful to remember to put them out early in the day rather than in the evening as birds are not the only animals to visit our gardens when the weather gets bad. Rats may find food left on the ground at night.

The current cold spell has brought new birds to my garden, with up to 12 blackbirds on occasion, fieldfares, starlings, goldfinches and a cock pheasant. This is adding to my "regulars" -- blue, great and coal tits, great spotted woodpeckers, nuthatches, pied wagtails, chaffinches, greenfinches, house sparrows and dunnocks.

Providing food for birds helps them through periods of severe weather, but it is also important to provide clean water for drinking and bathing. With the current low temperatures, it is worth checking during the day that it hasn't frozen over.

Nick Dixon



News from the Castle

Christmas is over and the Christmas decorations have come down -- quite a big task for us with over 10 trees in the house, a grotto, garlands and other decorations! Looking back we have had a great Christmas period, with more visitors than the previous year. This was largely as a result of being open between Christmas and New Year, which was very popular. We all enjoyed welcoming a 6ft polar bear into our new visitor centre, as part of the Ice Bear project. And let's not forget our first evening openings and the very successful lantern project, where over 40 local children paraded down the drive with many lanterns (all made by the children) during the only dry period of the evening. So, all in all, a great month; busy, as always (there's never a quiet period for us, despite what many think! also a very cold one!

Thankfully our boiler is keeping up with demand, during this cold weather, so the castle remains warm and we are about to put a new wood burner into the gardener's workshop, to replace an electric heater. This is used by the gardeners to keep warm, during their occasional tea breaks, but also to dry wet clothes, so it is often on. By replacing the electric heater with the wood burner we can further reduce our carbon emissions and our reliance on fossil fuels. We hope to be fossil fuel free by 2016, generating all of our resources using fuel from the Drogo estate.

Drogo Quiz Night

On the 21st January we will be holding our first Drogo quiz night. A bar and food will be available from 6.30pm, with Bangers and Mash (vegetarian option available) for £5. The quiz starts at 8pm, for teams of up to six people. There will be a charge of £2 per person, with 50% of the takings going into the prize fund – so, the more people that take part, the bigger the prize. Call Paula for

more information on 434114 or email paula.clarke@nationaltrust.org.uk

Don't forget that the castle grounds, shop and café are open every weekend throughout the winter.
Saturdays & Sundays 9 January – 7 February 2010

Searching for Spring Trail

Follow the trail around the gardens and grounds to look for signs that winter is coming to an end and that spring is on its way! The gardens, shop and café will be open. Winter admission charges apply + £1.50 per trail (including prize).

Finally, I will only be writing for one more Parish newsletter as I have a new job, starting at the end of February. So, I will be leaving Devon and heading north, to Herefordshire.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year

David Bailey

Property Manager

Castle Drogo

Telephone: 01647 434130

Email: david.bailey@nationaltrust.org.uk

Drewsteignton Gardeners' Club

Chairman—Phillip Evans —01647 281285
Hon. Sec: Bunny Johnstone 01647 432068
and Carol Mason 01647 281185

We had an excellent Christmas dinner Monday 14th December at Fingle Bridge Inn.

Many thanks to Barry and his staff who treated us so well and also for Daphne Greener and David Cox for entertaining us!

Our January meeting is on Monday 11th when Kenneth and June Ashburner will speak to us on "The Magic Garden".

On the 18th of January we'll have our representatives at Cheriton Bishop Horticultural Society's annual Quiz night and we will be joining them again on 15th February at 8pm in their village hall. The title of the talk is "Plant Supports and How to Make Them". If this sounds interesting to you, please join us. All are welcome.

Community garden

Does anyone out there think that a Community Garden to grow our own food would be a good idea in Drewsteignton? Now the government is backing a "Grow Your Own" policy, I am going ahead with the help of H.O.G.C.O. who help communities set up community gardens. If you're interested, please contact Julia Whatley (julia_whatley@hotmail.co.uk).

Julia notes: The government plans to launch a "grow your own" revolution by encouraging people to set up temporary allotments or community gardens on land awaiting development or other permanent use. It aims to develop a "meanwhile" lease to formalise such arrangements between landowners and voluntary groups and is considering establishing a "land bank" to broker better links and ensure plots are not left idle. Ministers believe the move could foster community spirit and skills as well as improve physical and mental health.

Snow collection

Collecting the refuse and recycling has been difficult during the snow. Skeleton crews have been out and about, mainly focusing on the main salted/gritted routes, and on the denser areas of population, such as the town estates. "It is unlikely that the more rural areas will be serviced," says Jane Savage, Waste Reduction and Recycling Officer at West Devon Borough Council.

Police Notice

On 16th December 2009, a group of young males and females called at properties in Whiddon Down purporting to be collecting for the Children's Hospice South West. When money was declined another cash request was made for a project to help runaways get home for Christmas. We have contacted Children's Hospice South West who state that they do not have any callers out of office hours and they always carry charity literature with them. These callers certainly do not ask for any cash donations. Please be aware of this and remember do not let anyone into your home you do not know. If you have any concerns, then please contact us on 08452 777 444 quoting Police Log No. 159 of 17th December 2009.

Music on the Edge -- Live in the Long Room

Music on the Edge are a contemporary classical duo from Throwleigh -- Susie Hodder-Williams on the flute and bass flute, and Chris Caldwell on soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet.

From 8.30pm on Mondays 18 January and 22 February in the Long Room at the Drewe Arms.

Great bar, roaring fire, one set. £5 on the door, under 21s free.

www.musicontheedge.com



Drewsteignton Parish Post

If you have trouble reading this publication please let me know and I will arrange for a large format version to be sent to you

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Contributions for the next edition by
1st February — thank you