

*Crockernwell, Drewsteignton, Sandy Park, Venton, Whiddon Down.*



# Drewsteignton Parish Post



ISSUE NO. 95

January 2014

## NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council were delighted to hear the news that Miss Marjorie Smith (Nanny) from Drewsteignton has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours list for her sterling work over many years in the community. We send our warmest congratulations to her. We welcomed Cllr James McInnes, our representative on Devon County Council, to our December meeting. He listened to our meeting and has taken away our concerns on various County responsibilities especially where highway matters were concerned. As has been mentioned before in the Post, Devon County are consulting on many matters but one in particular is an online consultation survey on bus services in the County. The survey is available on the DCC website but we were concerned that parishioners who had not got a computer would lose out on being able to take part. Thanks to Cllr McInnes this can be done by post and the details are available from Bella Snook our Clerk on 01647 231046.

If you are wondering where the Whiddon Down Parish notice board has gone, it is being refurbished and will shortly be replaced in the west-bound (village side) bus shelter for protection from the weather.

We considered planning applications at Wallon and Hunters Lodge, Drewsteignton and it was very useful to the Council that the applicants attended the meeting. We agreed to support all the applications. Cllr Joy Walker left the meeting during our discussions on Wallon as she had declared an interest in the matter.

We had hoped to finalise our budget for the next year but we have been advised by the National

Association of Local Councils that Government have still not made a firm decision on capping precepts yet. It will be discussed at our next meeting and details will be available next month. The Council were made aware of an anonymous letter criticising us and two Councillors in particular which had been reproduced on social media and left on vehicles around the Parish. There were several inaccuracies in the content and we would invite the author to contact any councillor or the Clerk to discuss their concerns instead of skulking around the Parish in the dark on consecutive Sunday evenings.

We have been approached by The Tavistock Times which incorporates the Okehampton Times asking for details of our activities as they cannot send reporters to every meeting. We agreed to send our agendas, minutes and details of the Parish website to them. If you are arranging anything in the Parish we urge you to include it in the what's on page of the website so it can be seen by the press.

Cllr Stuart Hardie gave a report on an emergency planning meeting he and two other councillors attended. One bit of information which came from the Devon & Somerset Fire Brigade representative from Okehampton was their initial response to a thatch fire would be 8 appliances which can be scaled back if the first on scene thought it appropriate. Another point he made was, please have the name of your house clearly displayed at the end of your drive as it takes time in an emergency situation to locate you.

Our next meeting is **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014 7.30pm at Whiddon Down.**

## Discover Bush Craft This Winter

Would you like your children to learn how to survive and thrive in nature this winter whilst having great fun and making new friends? Then why not sign them up for a day of Bushcraft Essentials with the eclectic team of environmental educators from Wild Woods 'n Willow near Chagford? Let Linda, Charlie and Daniel inspire your children with a range of practical, sensory and playful activities outdoors from fire making and shelter building in the woods to knife work and cooking in the outdoors. Children will also learn how to feel at home in nature and have closer encounters with wildlife.

Wild Woods 'n Willow, who work with a number of local primary schools, cater for all ages from 8 years upwards and run special days for teenagers as well as summer wilderness camps and their popular Bushcraft Birthday Adventures which include games, cooking on an open fire, woodcraft and stories. 'We offer enjoyable outdoor experiences that help young people engage with the natural world and improve their understanding and skills whilst opening up opportunities for things to be different,' says Linda Lemieux who has worked with Ray Mears among others. 'All our activities also seek to foster authentic feelings of community.'

The Wild Woods 'n Willow team will be running their first 2014 Essential Bushcraft course during the February half term.

To find out more and to see the full 2014 programme of activities visit: [www.wildwoodswillow.org.uk](http://www.wildwoodswillow.org.uk).

## Tillys Parish Post

With all the wet weather over the last month, most of our matches have been postponed and I now haven't played a football game for a while. However, this year the Chagford pantomime is on and we are doing 'Around the World in 80 days', which my Mum co-wrote along with Dorothy Muir.

I auditioned in mid September and got told I had the part of Ruby in November.

After we were sent our scripts, the whole pantomime cast had a big read through of the story. I am one of three servant girls that travel around the world with Phileas Fogg (the main character) and Passepartout (his butler).

We had several rehearsals before Christmas and I now think things will get quite full on. It is great fun and there are a few other people from Drewsteignton involved including Livy Rubbra, Freddie Hassell and my sister, Flora. So far it is going really well and I can see it coming together.

As well as acting on stage, a few of the characters travelling around the world had to do a short film which helps fill in the gaps between leaving England and arriving in the first main country. We couldn't have filmed it without Matt and Jonathon Skilton, between them they filmed for us on two separate days and said they will also edit the piece!

We have just filmed it this weekend between rain showers and it was great fun as we got to wear our costumes, which are really snazzy. We were very lucky with the weather and it only rained on us at the very end of filming which was a relief for all.

All in all it was a very mischievous and funny day.

Tickets go on sale on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January from the Box office in 'The Mess' in Chagford with the pantomime being performed in half term week from the 18<sup>th</sup> Feb. **Tilly**

## Climate Change

How can Climate change deniers be so arrogant as to think we are not responsible for Climate Change. Evidence is all around! Hopefully the deniers won't be given air time on Question Time again, now the IPCC have confirmed they are 95% certain we humans have caused the damage.

So, for the children who will inherit a terrible mess, isn't it time we had a change in the National Curriculum and teach them how to live a sustainable and much lower consumer lifestyle?

I was very impressed at Chagford School recently where they held a farmers market, with the local food grown at Chagfoods for sale, they also had Bees and creating Bee friendly gardens.

Permaculture on the agenda soon I hope..

**J Whatley**

## Open Letter To The Parish Of Drewsteignton.

Common to a number of Parishioners I received an 'Open letter' inserted under my vehicle's windscreen in mid December.

To paraphrase the content the Author(s) questioned the expenditure of the Parish Council, questioned its activities and effectiveness, questioned the integrity of a new Councillor and invited the Parishioners as a whole to reject the necessity for a Parish Council by contacting the Local Government Ombudsman.

The letter was, very regrettably, unsigned.

I feel a response is called for. I have been a resident of the Parish for some 25 years and possibly negligently, have never served on the council. However in that time I have probably seen some half a dozen Chair, a lesser number of Clerks and obviously many Councillors.

Without exception their integrity, commitment to the well being of the Parish and the workload undertaken without financial reward is extraordinary. (The Clerk receives a very small income which would hardly equate to the minimum wage!) Their expenses are minimal in relation to the Council's expenditure as a whole. These figures are available, published annually and presented in detail at the Annual Parish Meeting. They are audited by an independent parishioner and then by an officer of the Audit Commission. What do they do? The list would be too extensive for this response but here's three examples:

An ongoing and heavy workload problem has been the proposed closure of traffic to Turnpike Road at Whiddon Down. This was a Parish Council initiative that was brought to a satisfactory conclusion by this Council.

A portion of wall between the Churchyard and the Drewsteignton car park recently collapsed through natural causes. The Council contributed £100 towards its repair.

The Council funds in large part if not in total The Drewsteignton Parish Post which is delivered freely to every household in the Parish. The frontispiece always gives considerable detail of the Council activities in the preceding month---hardly secretive!

Thus I believe that Parish Council is a well worthwhile organisation and gives excellent value for money when the gross contribution for the Parish is divided between the many households who contribute through their Council Tax. Apart from its day to day activities it acts as a buffer between the Dartmoor National Park Authority (which is nothing like as democratic an organisation) and the parishioners.

We should all be grateful to the Chair, the Clerk and all the councillors for their generous donation of that most valuable asset of theirs - time.

**Tony Thomas.**

## Burn's Night.

### The Long Room, Drewe Arms

Yes - it's that time of year again: Burn's Night. What better way to spend a dark damp night in Devon than with a plate o' haggis, neaps and tatties at the Drewe Arms.

Enjoy a delicious 3 course supper plus a tot of whisky for just £17.50

Tickets available from Drewsteignton Post Office  
Please choose your meal options on your ticket stub.

Your options are:

Smoked Salmon or Cheese & Oatcakes  
Meat or Veggie Haggis with neaps & tatties  
Raspberry Pavlova or Cheese & Oatcakes  
Whisky or Irn Bru

All proceeds to On The Edge/The Mess Youth Project  
Please wear something tartan!



## ACORN COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**Cheriton Bishop Lunch Club** – Are now having 2 lunches a month, if you would to come along please phone Jean Martin 01647 24586 for more details.

**Minibus trips to Sainsbury's from Cheriton** – Dates are Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> February. Please phone Sylvia on 01647 24267 or Jackie on 01647 252701. Help is provided in store and a wheelchair service is also available. The fare is now £4 return.

**Teign Valley Memory Café** - This month it will be 9<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February. Please call Margaret on 01647 252622 for more details. Meetings are held at Strawberry Hill, Dunsford on the B3212 – look out for the sign.

**Acorn Coffee Morning at Teign Valley Hall** – The Bowden Room, Teign Valley Community Hall 10.30 - 12. This month it will be Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February. Please do pop in for a coffee and meet up with friends, everyone welcome. Please ring Jackie on 06147 252701 if you need a lift.

**Acorn Services** - Should you need transport to an appointment, a prescription delivered or any other Acorn service, please phone Sylvia Tripp on 01647 24267. Please leave a message on her answering machine if she is not at home and she will call you back. If you have not heard back within 24hours please call Jean Martin on 01647 24586.

### A NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES HELPING MORE PEOPLE

Last year, our services were used by 151 people on 2,421 occasions – up from 1981 in 2012 – a healthy 22% increase. Most of the increase was attributable to the increase in home visits by our new Community Care Manager who at the request of our GP's made 215 home visits.

Next year, from April, we are expecting to increase our patient transport services to cover the transfer of many clinics from the RD&E in Exeter to our local community hospitals. We aim to work with the NHS to cluster and schedule appointments in our area to enable minibus services to operate to and from Moreton and Okehampton hospitals. We will also need more volunteer car drivers. We are also planning to assist those in need when returning home after an operation.

All this extra work will require additional funding at a time when local authority budgets are being substantially reduced. Should our funding be cut, service users can rely on Acorn continuing as we have adequate capital reserves for such an occasion. We will then need to step-up our fund raising activities.

The New Year sees many people retiring – it's a good time to join our growing team of volunteers to join in with our good works in your local community. If you can help or want more details, please call Jackie on 252701. **Please check out our website** [www.acorncommunitysupport.co.uk](http://www.acorncommunitysupport.co.uk)

## Become A Member Of Healthwatch Devon

Healthwatch Devon is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Devon. We ensure that the voices of consumers and those who use services reach the ears of the decision makers and are taken seriously. Our vision is of better health and social care services through public involvement.

Why should I become a member?

By being a member of Healthwatch Devon you will belong to the only independent consumer champion for all health and social care in Devon.

Membership is open to any individual or organisation in Devon who would like to see better health and social care services influenced by public involvement.

Being a member gives you the opportunity to become actively involved in championing the rights of service users and holding providers to account.

As a member you will have the right to vote for Healthwatch Devon board members or to stand for election yourself. You also have the opportunity to become a key volunteer, trained and supported to speak and act in the name of Healthwatch Devon. We are independent, inclusive, and with a strong membership, can be powerful.

Become a member of Healthwatch Devon

How do I become a member?

For more information about membership and to make an application, please contact Healthwatch Devon. Call 0800 520 0640 or email [info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk).

You can also apply online at [www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk/](http://www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk/)

## January Bird Notes

The continual wet and windy weather we have had over the last month was not what was predicted by the Met Office. They suggested a cold winter spell would come in December with little mention of the heavy rain, wind and flooding that we have been experiencing over the past four weeks, which has been officially recognised as the windiest and wettest December for over 30 years.

The very wet conditions we have experienced have also been accompanied by quite mild temperatures for the time of year and by my reckoning we have only had a couple of frosts in November and none at all in December. The mild temperatures do not affect the garden birds as much as freezing conditions and so they are not struggling to find food in the fields, woods and hedgerows. Despite some natural food being present, this is the season when garden birds benefit from feeding and I am putting out food for the birds but only niger seed in one feeder and mixed seed in another. When the weather gets colder, I will also put out peanuts and suet blocks.

I mentioned last month that the niger seed attracts goldfinches, but more recently I have also seen siskins eating it. Both are members of the finch family, and seem surprisingly bold around humans, and I can get closer to them when they are on the feeders than almost any other birds.

Another member of the finch family I am seeing a lot of are bullfinches, and especially the males as they are very obvious. Bullfinches are a quite big and very compact finch which looks bull-necked or neckless. They are normally quite timid and so are often seen flying away if they are disturbed in the garden or along the hedgerows. As with most small birds, the males have the more colourful plumage but in flight, the white rump is highly obvious. If a pair are present in the garden, it is the male who is the most obvious with a black crown and 'face' and a bright pinkish-red breast and under-parts.

I have never seen them on a bird feeder but would be fascinated to hear if anyone has and what they were feeding on, as they normally feed on insects, various seeds and fruit tree buds. It was due to their fondness for these that they were heavily persecuted in the past, especially in fruitgrowing areas.

A real favourite of mine is the long-tailed tit, and I have only ever seen them on my feeders once, about three years ago. They are usually seen in small family parties which move quickly along hedgerows and through woods and gardens. They are a very small and rotund tit with a longish tail, and when seen in flight just looks like a tiny pale ball with a tail.

From time to time, I write about the peregrine falcons on St. Michael's church in Exeter, which are well worth looking for if you happen to be in town. At least one (and normally both) can be seen perching on the tall pinnacles at the base of the spire on the south side of the church, overlooking Bartholemew cemetery and are best viewed from the Victorian catacombs on the opposite side of the valley. The resident female is highly likely to be perching within the trefoil window on the south side, as this is the entrance to their nest box.

I was watching both adults settled on their normal perches on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan whilst my daughter, Flora was at her gym club, and I was talking to one of the residents of Dinham road about the birds. During this conversation, I was told the spire had been dramatically hit by lightning at 10.30 am the previous day when there were some big storms rolling around. I have yet to hear how the birds reacted to the lightning strike, which sounded like an explosion, but it seemed like business as usual just 24 hours later.

There had been very little external damage apart from some stone damage to the tower, as the lightning conductor had done its job, but it badly affected the electric box and knocked out the heating system. I have heard there is some concern for the camera that was installed into the peregrine nest box last year on which we were able to watch the development of the three young peregrines from egg-laying to fledging last season. We are hoping to get this year's developments in the nest live onto the church website for all to see Devon's most famous pair of peregrines.

**Nick**





## FEELING COLD?

### Find that inner glow - VOLUNTEER

Calling volunteer marshals/stewards

Get ready to roll with

West Devon Rovers

Join SSAFA's special forces

Help servicemen and women

For details of these and many more

volunteering opportunities

Contact us

Drop in Tuesdays and Wednesdays

10am-2pm 13 East St. Okehampton

Thursdays 9 am-1pm Tavistock Library

Fridays 1pm-4pm Tavistock Library

Freephone 0330 660 0357

Email [volunteering@westdevoncvcs.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@westdevoncvcs.org.uk)

## Mustard Chicken Casserole

Chicken and mustard is a classic combination – and in this recipe mustard is mixed with honey for a sweet marinade. If you have the time, let the chicken marinate for a few hours.

### Serves 4-6

Takes 25 minutes to prepare plus marinating, and 4-8 hours in the slow cooker.

### INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp wholegrain mustard

1 tbsp English mustard

2 tbsp clear honey

8 chicken thighs, skin on

Salt and freshly ground black [pepper](#)

2 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, roughly chopped

300g parsnips, peeled and roughly chopped

Few sprigs of thyme

600ml hot vegetable or chicken stock for the slow cooker (900ml for the traditional method)

Bunch of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

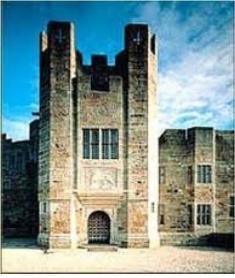
### Method

#### In the slow cooker

1. Mix together the mustards in a bowl and stir through the honey. Season the chicken thighs well with salt and pepper, then smother them with the mustard mixture. Cover and leave to marinate for 30 minutes, if time permits.
2. Preheat the slow cooker, if required. Heat half the oil in a large flameproof casserole over a medium-high heat and add the chicken pieces, a few at a time. Cook for 6–10 minutes until golden – be careful, as the honey may cause them to blacken quickly. Remove and set aside.
3. Heat the remaining oil in the casserole over a medium heat, add the onions, and toss them around in the casserole to coat in any juices. Stir to scrape up the sticky bits from the bottom, then add the parsnips and thyme. Transfer everything to the slow cooker, pour in the stock, and add the chicken pieces. Season, cover with the lid, and cook on auto/low for 6–8 hours or on high for 3–4 hours. Add the parsley, taste, and season, if necessary. Serve with steamed leeks or greens.



## News from the Castle



Incredibly, we are already one year in to our building project. I cannot believe how quickly time has flown. Work is progressing really well with 140 windows removed and being refurbished and sections of the roof partly dismantled and waterproofing work underway. There are piles of granite on the driveway and the castle looks like a giant 3D jigsaw puzzle.

The last year has been amazing with so many new things that we wouldn't have been able to do if we were 'normal'. The biggest hit has to be the viewing platform. This is a 20 metre high section of scaffolding that takes you in to the main work area and you can

see across the roof and watch the work taking place. Amazing. The tower will be open as often as possible this year, weather permitting. It is well worth a visit if you have a head for heights.

We are now getting ready to open up for our new season on 8 March. Watch this space for lots of different events and activities including some great community events including an art and theatre project with Get Changed theatre.

We are still looking for more people to join our brilliant team of volunteers. If you would like to meet us and find out how you could get involved, please come along to our volunteering open day on Saturday 8 February, 11am til 3pm.

Here's to an even more exciting year in 2014.

Best wishes,

**Paula**

**Community Engagement Officer, Castle Drogo**

**01647 434130, paula.clarke@nationaltrust.org.uk**

## National Libraries Day at Okehampton Library

To celebrate National Libraries day at Okehampton Library on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February, we are having a Mad Hatter's Tea Party for children and their parents and carers.

The fun starts at 10:30 with a tea party followed by Alice In Wonderland storytelling with 'Mad Hatter' Rob from Entertainingly Different. Come along in fancy dress for the chance to win a prize.

Coffee will also be served by The Friends of Okehampton Library from 10:30-12:00

Another prize is on offer with our 'Spot the Cheshire Cat' competition, entry forms available in the library from 4-8<sup>th</sup> February.

Don't be late for this very important date!

## Respect Your Recycling Box

The containers cost up to £5 each and recent research has shown that too many are being thrown away or used for other things - meaning unnecessary cost to council tax payers.

The Borough Council has come up with the top five list of misuses:

1. Toy box
2. Pet food storage
3. Growing vegetables or herbs
4. Rubbish bin
5. Filling with concrete to hold up bollards!

Cllr Robert Sampson, Vice-Chair of the council's Community Services Committee, urges residents to treasure their recycling boxes and sacks:

"If everyone took care of their recycling containers and used them to their full potential, we could save about £18,000 per year - that's a direct saving which could help keep council tax down or be used for a better purpose. Add to that the extra financial and environmental savings from recycling more and it becomes quite obvious really."

As well as recycling boxes in a variety of sizes, the council also provides households with kitchen food caddies and garden waste sacks.

## Devon and Cornwall Police

We have received reports of thefts from vehicles parked at beauty spots in the Teignbridge and West Devon areas.

These incidents have increased recently at Yarner Wood, Trenchford Reservoir, Teign Bridge Car Park, Stover Country Park, Venford Reservoir in Teigngrace, at Burrator Reservoir and Fernworthy Reservoir and the car park near Kes Tor in Chagford.

These incidents have been occurring on Saturdays and Sundays, late mornings and afternoons. Entry to vehicles has been by smashing windows, forcing locks and opening doors that have been left inadvertently unlocked. Bags, purses/wallets and contents have been stolen.

Residents are asked to be mindful of leaving items of value in vehicles when leaving them unattended.

Take all items of value with you, making sure you have securely closed and locked all doors and windows.

### Royal British Legion Drewsteignton Branch Women's Section

Calendar Of Events For 2014

15th February 10.30am Coffee Morning at Glebe Cottage, Drewsteignton. Bring & Buy & Raffle

26th April St George's Day Tea 3.30pm Drewsteignton Village Hall. Raffle

28th June Afternoon Tea 3.30pm. Hillside, Drewsteignton. Raffle

2nd August Buffet and Drinks 12-2pm "Undermoor", Broomhill, Chagford. Raffle

8th November Soup and Sandwiches 12-2pm Drewsteignton Village Hall

### The Parish Post

The Post is designed to keep everyone in touch with life in the Parish. We'd love to hear about your forthcoming events, hair-raising experiences, fundraising efforts, funny stories, memories, recipes.

Your thoughts, opinions, comments, views and concerns are important too.

Please tell us. You don't have to be a great writer, just email or phone John Shiell or Pauline Rowe, details below.

If you don't tell us we can't print it

**John and Pauline**

### Drewsteignton

### Parish Post

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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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***The Parish Post reserves the right to edit contributions and wishes to state that views expressed are not necessarily those of the Parish Post.***

Contributions for the next edition by  
1st February - Thank You