

East Coker Society Newsletter



JANUARY 2014

Free Issue No 153

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East Coker Society News

Happy New Year!

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Our Winter Fayre on 16 November 2013 attracted an excellent range of stalls, so we hope you found some special Christmas presents. This Annual Fayre is a wonderful social event and an opportunity for you to support the East Coker Society, which publishes this Newsletter. We are most grateful to everyone who contributed and are pleased to report that £845 was raised for our funds.

Spare a thought for all the kind distributors who deliver the Newsletter four times a year even when the weather is inclement. Community news is an important lifeline especially for those with limited mobility and without computers ... so very many thanks to the distributor team and Anne Bingley, who proof-reads each edition.

We strive to increase the take up by email or on the internet to reduce the exorbitant printing costs. If you still receive a hard copy but have access to a computer, then please help us by contacting our Editor, Lesley Lindsay on the email address above.

We wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Sarah Owen

VILLAGE EVENTS DIARY – PLEASE USE IT!

The 2014 Diary is now at the Stores, East Coker, and can be found in the shop – please ask. **Please put forthcoming village events in the Diary to avoid dates clashing.** Thank you.

'DISCOVER EAST COKER' – WALKING PACK

A new 'Discover East Coker' pack which includes photographs, details about places of interest, a detailed map and five fully researched walks supplied in a plastic wallet is available for £2 from the following outlets:

East Coker Village Store	The Forester's Arms
East Coker Tea Rooms	The Helyar Arms
Goose Slade Farm Shop	The Yeovil Court Hotel
Butchers & Post Office, West Coker	Yeovil Tourist Information Centre
St Michael's Church Bookstall	Cartgate Tourist Information Centre

We hope residents and visitors will use this guide to explore our beautiful parish.

WINTER – bonfires

Please consider your neighbours before having a bonfire in the middle of the day. Late afternoon allows washing to be dried, leaves to be raked and gardening to be done without having to retreat indoors from bonfire smoke and falling ash.

Village Clubs and Organisations

EAST COKER VILLAGE QUIZ 2014

Once again the time is fast approaching for thoughts to be turned to the challenge of the Annual Village Quiz. This year it will be held on Saturday 8 March in East Coker Hall, 7.00pm – 7.30pm.

Last year The Early Train team put on a formidable performance to win the prestigious Cockerel Trophy – for the second time!

The number of teams is limited by the capacity of the Hall so please make an early bid for your entry. As usual the evening will include a fish and chip supper, and the proceeds of the event will be donated to the charity chosen by the winning team.

Anyone interested in entering a team should contact Cherry Sowerbutts on 863313.

TIME TO SHARE

A new year begins and we have many interesting and fun events in store. The Club goes from strength to strength and we usually have around 40 members at our Monday afternoon get-togethers. To those friends who make us such amazing cakes, a huge thank you!

Our term starts on Monday 13th January with Belly Dancing! That will wake us all up!

January

Monday 13 – Belly Dancing Monday 27 – All Agog Dorset

February

Monday 3 – Birds of Prey Monday 17 – Musical Bingo

March

Monday 3 – Beatle Drive Monday 17 – Icelandic Talk (Annette) Monday 31 – Call my Bluff

April

Monday 14 – Easter Bazaar

Sandra Snelling 862162 Mobile 07717723448 email sandra.snelling@googlemail.com

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION EAST & WEST COKER

2013 has been a successful year for the Branch and as we begin a New Year let us not forget those personnel of our armed forces who are still serving and sadly still making the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, that total has now reached 447 and as our personnel are withdrawn in 2014 the continued support of the community and the Legion as a whole will still be needed for those still traumatised and injured in Afghanistan and other conflicts.

To give you some idea how your money helps. In 2012 almost 140,000 service personnel/dependants were assisted or advised by the RBL from grants to those in crisis, to the small household repairs carried out by the Poppy Calls handyman and the 8,800 serving and ex-service personnel plus families who were able to relax on seaside Poppy Breaks.

The 2013 Poppy Appeal in East Coker district to date has raised a total of £7110.41 (a record) an increase of £483.70 in our 2012 total. Thank-you to all the collectors, the premises who had static boxes, but most of all, thank-you to those who gave so generously. As we move forward into 2014 and commemorate the start of WW1, let us not forget those men who gave so much, enabling future generations to enjoy a better and safer country to live in. "We will Remember Them"

Dates for your 2014 diaries 25 April – Branch Cheese and Wine Evening
14, 15 June – Henstridge Forces Week-End
22 June – Weymouth and Portland Armed Forces Celebration

WW1 Commemorations will be taking place at various locations including the Imperial War Museum and Westminster Abbey. It is also the 70th Anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. Please visit the Imperial War Museum website for further information www.iwm.org.uk

Thank-you all for your continued support. David Holland – Chairman 862782

EAST COKER READING GROUP

We have two Groups meeting once a month. The evening group (currently 8 members) meets in individual members' homes for about two hours (usually) on the first Tuesday of each month. The daytime group (currently 5 members) meets for about one hour in the Goose Slade Farm Tea Shop on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month (but venue and days do vary to accommodate members' other commitments). As the Library charges reading groups a monthly fee we, in turn, charge a fee of 50p per month to each member. We are a very easy-going group – if you don't like the book, don't feel obliged to read it! The discussions are always interesting - even on the odd occasion when the book hardly gets a mention!

If you are considering joining either group or wish to have more details of the books we read and what we do please do contact Kevin Chapman on 07812726853 or 422594 or email ec.cf@hotmail.co.uk

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EAST COKER SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

The Bowls Club meets every Tuesday evening 7.30pm - 9.30pm and Friday afternoons 2.30pm - 4.30pm in the East Coker Hall.

We are a friendly club and are looking for experienced and new players to join us. Tuition can be given to those wishing it, and bowls can be provided for your initial practice. Why not come and see for yourself. There is no age limit for adults.

We also have a junior section, and are looking for young players, minimum age 9 years up to 18.

For information regarding the junior section, please contact Mervyn Westlake 863227. For other information, call George Dudden 864222.

D Farrant – Club Chairman

THANK YOU

Don and Barbs Nicol would like to thank all those who supported us on Friday 29 November in aid of 'Children in Need', with special thanks to all of you who supplied raffle prizes and lovely cakes.

Once again our village shows its generosity to all requests to dig deep in their pockets, the result which raised £270.00. As you know all these donations go directly to projects within the UK.

Thank you once again.

Don and Barb Nicol

EAST COKER MONTHLY CHARITY COFFEE MORNINGS

The coffee mornings in September, October, and November were well supported and generated £305, £180 and £275 for CLIC, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, and Children in Need respectively. This brings the total for the eleven events held in 2013 to an excellent £2788.

The next coffee mornings will be:

- Help for Heroes – 31 January
- RNLI – 28 February
- Cystic Fibrosis – 28 March

Please come along to the Forester's Arms and give your support to these deserving causes.

Many thanks to Charlotte and all the staff at the Forester's for the support they give to these popular village get-togethers.

ACTION MEDICAL RESEARCH

Many thanks to anyone who supported our Diva Lunch in October at The Tithe Barn, Haselbury Mill. It was a huge success with over 150 ladies enjoying a lovely two-course lunch during which a Fashion Show took place. This was followed by entertainment by 'The Singing Fireman'. Over £4,500 profit was made from this event which will take place this year on Friday 10 October 2014.

Further information from Jane Donnelly 478409.

EAST COKER PLAYERS

Happy New Year to you all

2013 ended with another successful pantomime production and a fun bingo night. We enjoyed hearing the comments about our cute cat - Fluffy. A big thank you to everyone who supported us.

The Bingo night raised approx £300 towards our new lighting system. We will continue to raise funds for our new lights during this year. Look out for posters about an Easter Bingo to be held in April.

Our Spring production at the East Coker Hall will be on Friday 16 and Saturday 17 May 2014. It will be produced by Anne Hartley. Rehearsals start in February on Monday evenings, 7.00pm in the Dampier Room.

If you think you would like to be an East Coker Player, this is a great time to join us as we start a new show. Come and have some fun, with short sketches and singing songs. Minimum age 8 years.

For further details on joining, or about the spring production contact – Anne Hartley 862060 or Hazel Giddings 429163

Found – Child's hooded top, found in East Coker Hall after the Pantomime on Friday 29 November 2013. Contact the East Coker Players.

EAST COKER 400 CLUB

The results of the Autumn Draw:

£100 Mr Peter Cameron; £50 Mr and Mrs Mike Mead; £40 Mrs Pia Boast; £30 Mr Tony Mitchell; £20 Mrs A Davidge; £15 Mr R Tower; £10 Mrs J Swain

The results of the Coker 400 Club Christmas Draw:

£100 John Snook; £50 Mr P Moore; £40 Mrs K Mclver; £30 Mr A Leng; £20 Mrs R Waite; £15 Mrs E Horwood; £10 Mrs J Swain

The 400 Club has been very pleased to send cheques for £200 to both The East Coker Players towards the cost of a new lighting system and East Coker Scout Group for the Scout Hall refurbishment fund.

If anyone would like to join the 400 Club, the annual subs are £20 payable by Bankers Order, then please contact either Gloria Mead 862364 Mary Ashley 862263 Arthur Rees 862828 or Mike Weston 862472

If anyone would like to join the 400 Club, the annual subs are £20 payable quarterly by bankers order. Please contact Gloria Mead 862364, Mary Ashley 862263 Arthur Rees 862828 or Mike Weston 862472



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Optometrists Ben, Simon and Yuki extend a warm welcome to new patients joining our practice. Each is a very dedicated member of the profession and between them they have expertise in a variety of disciplines including emergency eye care, diabetes, therapeutics, dry eye management, contact lens fitting, binocular vision, dyslexia screening and childrens' eye care.

18 Princes Street, Yeovil

01935 478463

We are happy to collect any unwanted glasses for us to use in our eye testing work in Kenya.

EAST COKER GARDENING CLUB – Chairperson: Kath Wilson

The Club was formed in 1999 as the result of a chance conversation in the village shop. It now has around 90 members, most from within the parish, although it also attracts keen gardeners from across a wider area. Membership is active and club meetings are very well attended. New members are always welcome, as are people who may wish to come along occasionally.

The Annual Programme of events is drawn up following members' suggestions. Talks cover a wide variety of topics, from vegetables to flowers, folklore, butterflies and bees. Past guest speakers have included Anne Swithinbank, David Howard (former head gardener of High Grove) and local BBC 'Gardener of the Decade' Katherine Crouch. Local charities have been, and continue to be, supported by funds raised by the Club.

Visits are arranged during the year to places and gardens of interest. The programme for 2014 includes visits to the Malvern Spring Show, Holt Farm and the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. There is an annual three/four day garden club holiday, this year based in Stourport on Severn, during which gardens and places of interest are visited.

Meetings are held in the East Coker Hall, Halves Lane, East Coker on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 7.30pm. *The Propagator*, a free newsletter containing Club news, notes of gardening events, tips, etc is distributed at each meeting. During the growing season there is a produce stall, stocked by members' plants and produce. There is an annual plant growing competition, the judging for which takes place in August.

2014 Programme

9 January

Coppicing

Terry Heard

13 February

Plants that changed the world

Gardens Group

13 March

Compost, the science, myth and magic

Kim Robinson, Compost Champion

10 April

Clivias

Ian Coates

8 May

Yeovil in Bloom

Steve Fox, SSDC

12 June

Plants of South Africa

Michael Keith-Lucas

10 July
14 August
11 September
9 October
13 November
11 December

Gertrude Jekyll
Evening at Owl Cottage
Autumn and Christmas Flowers for the home
Chelsea
Annual General Meeting
Houseplants for Christmas

David Usher
Thanks to Sue Richards
Angie Blackwell
David Hitchcock
Gardens Group

Subscriptions: Annual £10, plus £1 per meeting. Visitors £3 per meeting.

Further information may be obtained from the Hon Treasurer, Stan Shayler 420291 or the Press Secretary, Helen Styles 862447

UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS INTERIORS

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Mob: **07956 601 314**

Email: kittyoakshott@hotmail.co.uk

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

My thanks and appreciation to each and everyone for all their help and support yet again, to make the Christmas lunch such a resounding success and enjoyable occasion. Too many of you to name personally, however without Mary's continued encouragement, support and guidance, I guess we would find it more difficult.

With such an invincible team and the community spirit of all those who participated, we raised an incredible £1,440 to be shared equally between the local Hospice and East Coker Preservation Trust.

Although the lunch is not organised as a fund-raising event, what an accolade that once again the generosity of the village and visitors is realised. East Coker at its inimitable best!

A date for your diary 14 December 2014.

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all, very best wishes, Di Miskin.

EAST COKER POETRY GROUP

Tuesday 21 January – West Coker Poets – Their view of Coker and beyond

The West Coker Poets are making the perilous journey to East Coker to put their slant on local poetry. Always good poetry and on this occasion, some music as well.

Tuesday 25 February – Winter Open Evening

Our open evenings are always popular. Bring some poems to read or just come and listen. There is no particular topic.

Tuesday 25 March – Lyrical Dining "Lyrics in Popular Songs" – to accompany a meal in the Apple Loft

This was a topic we covered a few years ago on a very successful and popular evening. It was felt that there is still a huge wealth of material to be used including anything from Cole Porter to The Beatles. Heather and Julie are arranging the evening and have already chosen quite a programme of song lyrics. There will of course be a little less reading time than usual because of the meal, however if anyone has a song which they feel *must* be included please email Heather as below and we'll do our best to include it in the programme. Please send it when booking your meal, if appropriate.

The price is £15 per head for this event to include a main meal and dessert. The menu details will be available shortly. The numbers for the meal are limited to 25, so please book early.

You can email Heather on heather.murphy159@googlemail.com or telephone 474971.

Please either send a cheque in advance to Heather at 159 Goldcroft, Yeovil BA21 4DB or bring the £15 on the evening. Anyone who wants to come just for the poetry and not the meal please come along as I'm sure we'll find enough chairs, though not necessarily at the table.

Contact details, email info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk or phone David Cloke 862623

Our website www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk

SAVE EAST COKER

The Council published its proposed Main Modifications to the Proposed Local Plan on 28 November. These modifications are intended to address concerns raised by the Planning Inspector in his Preliminary Findings letter following the hearing sessions of the Public Examination into the Local Plan. Following publication a period of public consultation is taking place until 10 January, and it is vitally important that we submit our objections by that date.

The modifications which affect East Coker are an inadequate response to the Inspector's concerns and the modified Plan will still have a severe impact on the area. The Council still wants 800 houses built within the parish, concreting over about 100 acres of Grade 1 agricultural land and impacting the local landscape and many important heritage assets and their settings. The Council's expert consultants themselves admit that there is no way that this impact can be fully mitigated except by not building here. They have proposed a strategy to build half of the previously planned 1600 houses elsewhere – half-solving the problem the Council has created for itself!

Our own consultants are working hard on your behalf to submit a robust set of objections to the modifications so that the inspector will be able to see the inadequacy of SSDC's response to the points in his preliminary findings.

The next steps are that comments from the consultation will be collated and the main issues summarised and submitted for the Inspector's consideration – together with the actual individual responses. It is expected that the Inspector will undertake resumed hearing sessions on the Plan in April/May. In the event that the Inspector agrees to the Proposed Main Modifications there is likely to be a further round of consultation in the summer. The Council hopes to be able to adopt a final version of the Plan by the end of 2014.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for the support we were given at the village meeting to continue the Save East Coker campaign and achieve further changes to the Council's Plan.

Of course this all means a continuing need for funding to pay for consultancy and legal representation at the hearings and East Coker Preservation Trust has commissioned the same QC and Consultant to continue working with us into 2014.

Even though we are planning another year of Fund Raising, a commitment from as many people as possible would help to pay for these professionals and we are aware that some would like the convenience of making regular contributions by placing a standing order to support this work. It is recognised that not everyone's circumstances are the same and it is important that you contribute at a figure you feel comfortable with. The standing order should ideally be for twelve months with a suggested figure of, say, £20 per month commencing as soon as is convenient.

Our Bank Account details are:

Sort Code: 60-24-37 Account No. 13844504 East Coker Preservation Trust"

Please see the programme of future fund-raising events below and continue to give your support to help us sustain the fight.

ECPT contacts

Joe Coles 863146

Martyn Sowerbutts 863313

Richard Vanderpump 864565

Peter Woodford 863633

John Fysh 863963

Sandra Snelling 862162

Fund Raising Events

What an amazing Fund Raising Year we had in 2013. Over £3,000 raised in December alone. Thank you all so much for your support.

Dates for your diary

16 February 9.30am – 1.00pm – Valentines Brunch in the East Coker Hall. Tickets available from Cherry Sowerbutts 863313 or Village Shop. Come and serenade your loved ones over a rasher of bacon and a sausage or two!

14 June – Wandering Supper – details to follow.

Watch this space for many other exciting events in 2014 including Big Band Concert and Ann and John's beautiful wild meadow – open again for us to enjoy in June.

If YOU would like to run an event, please let me know. The fund-raising team are open to all offers and very willing to help and support.

Thank you. Sandra 862162

EAST COKER WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Members of the W.I. wish everyone a Happy New Year, and welcome anyone who would like to join us at any of our meetings. Our first meeting on Thursday, 30 January will hear from Mr Toby Stock on the Yeovil Museum. In February, we find out about paper-making, and in March we have a 'hands on' evening on the art of curling, accompanied by an American Supper. The monthly whist drives continue on the third Thursdays of the month at the East Coker Hall. On Saturday 8 February, we will be holding our Annual Jumble Sale at the East Coker Hall at 2.00pm.

Anyone wishing any further information please contact Secretary Ruby Rollo, tel. 475010.

Diary dates

Thursday 16 January 7.30pm Whist Drive at East Coker Hall

Thursday 30 January 7.30pm Yeovil Museum, East Coker Hall

Saturday 8 February 2.00pm Jumble Sale at East Coker Hall

Thursday 20 Februar7 7.30pm Whist drive at East Coker Hall

Thursday 27 February 7.30pm Paper-making at East Coker Hall

Thursday 20 March at 7.30pm Whist drive at East Coker Hall

Thursday 27 March at 7.30pm Teaching curling and American Supper at East Coker Hall

Thursday 17 April at 7.30pm AGM and a talk on favourite phrases and sayings

‘I FEEL FITTER,
HEALTHIER
& HAPPIER
THAN I’VE
EVER BEEN’

‘It’s brilliant. You start with small steps, eating better and more healthily, getting a little bit fitter and a lot more energetic. I can’t believe something this good for you is so much fun.’

Nina Williams-Kemp, job at 42, 3x fitter, much, much happier



FITTER HEALTHIER HAPPIER



**FREE MEMBERSHIP
PLUS YOUR FIRST CLASS FREE***

MONDAY

Marston Magna Village Hall
Marston Magna, Yeovil, BA22 8BX
09:30 - 11:00 am - Aerobics
Holy Trinity Scout Headquarter
103 Plantagenet Chase, Yeovil, BA20 2PP
5:45 - 7:00 pm - FITSTEPS®

TUESDAY

Abbey Manor Comm Centre,
The Forum, Yeovil, BA21 3TL
09:30 - 10:45 am - FITSTEPS®
Milborne Port Village Hall,
1 Springfield Rd, Milborne Port, DT9 5RE
10:00 - 11:30 am - Aerobics
St Michael's Academy School (prev
Grass Royal) Grass Royal, YBA21 4JW
6:00 - 7:30 pm - Aerobics

WEDNESDAY

East Coker Village Hall, Unit 3, The Old
Sawmills, Halves Lane, Yeovil, BA22 9JJ
09:30 - 11:00 am - FITSTEPS® - **New class**
West Coker Recreation Club
High Street, West Coker, Yeovil, BA22 9AS
6:30 - 7:45 pm - FITSTEPS®

THURSDAY

East Coker Village Hall, Unit 3, The Old
Sawmills, Halves Lane, Yeovil, BA22 9JJ
09:30 - 11:00 am - Aerobics
St Michael's Academy School
(prev Grass Royal) Grass Royal, BA21 4JW
6:00 - 7:30 pm - Aerobics

Call Rachel on 01935 864453
rachel.cozens@rosemaryconleyclasses.com

*Terms and conditions apply
New Members Only. Valid until 31/01/14.

Young People

EAST COKER SCOUT GROUP

Waste Paper Collections The collection point is opposite the school on the last Saturday of each month from 8.30am to 10.30am. If possible, please flat-pack your newspapers and tie into bundles.

Saturday 25 January

Saturday 22 February

Saturday 29 March

Jumble Sales – Spring Saturday 26 April and **Autumn** Saturday 18 October, at East Coker Hall from 2.00pm. **Remember We Will Collect.**

Contact Max Bugler 862186.

EAST COKER PLAYGROUP – find us on www.eastcokerpreschool.co.uk

Happy New Year to everyone and a big thank you to everyone who supported the Playgroup's Annual Craft Fair in November.

The children and staff return from the Christmas holiday, refreshed and ready to enjoy the spring term. One of the Christmas gifts the children gave to their families was a plant pot decorated by themselves, which contained compost, a bulb and instructions on how to grow and look after their bulb. This is a challenge to take on (especially for me) but it is one full of learning opportunities that can be shared. Thankfully the bulb is an indoor variety so will not have to battle the external elements, but with care and luck, the children and their families can enjoy a beautiful flower later this spring. The children may even have photographs of their plant to bring in and share with friends. After all the extreme weather, it is good to look ahead to spring, flowers and sunny days.

The wealth of experience of our fully qualified staff offers quality childcare and education through play, exploring the wider environment and local community with project-based activities. Ofsted have consistently given the group excellent reports and commended us for the interaction and encouragement between staff and children, partnership with parents, teaching, management and the emphasis on fun.

Children can join us from the age of 2½ and Early Years Entitlement is available in the funding period after their third birthday. We are open during term-time with sessions every week-day morning and afternoon sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and optional lunch cover for children who like to bring a packed lunch.

If you are seeking childcare for your 2-year-old, East Chinnock Under Fives playgroup accepts children from their 2nd birthday to starting school. For the past few years the staff at East Coker Playgroup also staff East Chinnock Under Fives playgroup, and both playgroups feed into East Coker Primary School. This began when East Chinnock Under Fives playgroup was threatened with closure due to staff shortages and has worked to the benefit of both groups, each maintaining their own committee and identity. East Chinnock Under Fives playgroup is a smaller group and this can be a great benefit to the younger children. The opening times are term-time with sessions every week-day morning and an afternoon session on Wednesday and Thursday, with optional lunch cover for children who like to bring a packed lunch.

Find us at www.eastchinnockunder5spreschool.co.uk

For more information and to put your child/children on the waiting list for either playgroup, please contact Kay Strode on 07798 812540.

Diary dates for East Coker Pre-school Playgroup

Summer Fair – Saturday 17 May 2014

Winter Fair – Sunday 16 November 2014

EAST COKER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL – PTFA

Diary dates

Family Treasure Hunt/walk – Saturday 29 March

Summer Fair – Friday 13 June

Big Band Event – Sunday 13 July

The Churches

COKER RIDGE BENEFICE SERVICES

A New Year begins after good attendances at all our Christmas services. Despite the severe weather, our services were very well supported and it was good to have a full church on a number of occasions - not least for the School's Carol Service, when there was hardly room to breathe. Though, somehow, happily, everyone managed to.

This Christmas we introduced a new practice at East Coker, a custom that originated in Mexico known as Posada. We acquired a stylish set of carved Mexican figures of Joseph and Mary, who were joined by figures of the infant Jesus and an ox and an ass on Christmas Day. These travelled round homes in the parish as a way of making real the Holy Family's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The figures continued on their journey before returning to church at Epiphany for the visit of the Magi. It served, too, as a reminder that a New Year brings fresh opportunities for us all to make progress on our spiritual journey through life. Now is a good time to chart what terrain that journey might cover over the next 12 months.

One issue on the agenda of St Michael's at the moment is how we might make better provision in the church for children and young families. A committee of our Church Council is currently examining this and we look forward to its recommendations.

This quarter takes us into Lent on Ash Wednesday, 5 March. I remember being surprised while visiting an Anglican Benedictine monastery to hear one of the monks say it was his favourite time of year. For him it meant an opportunity to de-clutter his daily life of non-essential tasks in order to prioritise time for prayer, the study of his faith and an opportunity to grow in spiritual commitment – advice I've subsequently tried to profit from.

May the Year ahead be a source of many blessings.

The Rev'd Charles Hatton

New Coker Ridge Benefice Service Plan

The service details for January to March will be found at the end of this Newsletter.

SPRING FAIR AND PLANT SALE 17 MAY 2014

St Michael's will be holding a Spring Fair and Plant Sale on Saturday 17 May at Hope House (next to Townsend Farm, East Coker).

Stalls will include Plants, Cakes, Produce, Bottle Tombola and Fair Trade Goods. More details will appear in the Church porch, and on village notice-boards; in the meantime, please contact Christine Vince, tel 863429.

Gardeners – would you please grow some plants for the Fair and bring them along. Marmalade makers – would you please make an extra pot (or two) for the Produce stall.

Christine Vince

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, CLOSWORTH

Services in January and February will remain as usual, 2nd Sunday – Family Eucharist 4th Sunday – Evensong.

Easter Sunday is 20 April and we hope to have our usual Good Friday All-ages Service on 18 April, with Cold X Buns at 10.00am. Please check nearer the time for other services in case of changes.

On 25 May we hope to have our long promised SONGS OF PRAISE. It was to have taken place in the Autumn but the new organ took longer to install than expected, so instead of evensong we shall be holding Songs of Praise at 6.30pm. Please let me have your special hymns in good time. The service will be followed by light refreshments.

The Nativity, this last Christmas, had a rather special baby Jesus and Mary, who was his sister, both of whom were recently baptised at Clossworth. I think Mary was the youngest Mary we have ever had. The Church was full the only snag was there were not enough bell ringers to ring. We already have 2 bell ringers at Clossworth and we are looking for more. If you are interested please contact Lesley on 862868.

It has been suggested we start a group for very young children. If you are interested please contact me.

Monica 862834

EAST COKER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, BURTON LANE

Weekly Meetings Sundays Services 11.00am. Other services as announced. **All** are welcome to **all** of our services.

Coffee Stop The Hall is open each Wednesday from 11.00am until 1.00pm for coffee and tea. There are usually some 10-14 present. Everyone is welcome to come along and it is simply meant to be a place where friends can get together for a chat. There is no charge for the refreshments.

We also run **Home Groups** on alternate Tuesday evenings for anyone who may be interested in discussing the Christian faith and there is a youth group meeting midweek for those aged between 18 and 30 years.

Little Wheelers Mother and Toddler Group meeting at the East Coker Hall each Tuesday (during term time) from 10.30am – 12.00pm. £2.50 per family to include coffee/tea and cake for the adults (with squash and biscuits for the children).

Kevin Chapman is available from Tuesday to Friday. He can be contacted on 07812726853 or 422594 or email ec.cf@hotmail.co.uk – Please do feel free to get in touch if you have any queries about the Christian faith or if you would like someone to pray with you or simply to talk to. Alternatively you may wish to look at our website on www.eastcokerchapel.com

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' John's Gospel, Chapter 1 verse 1 (NIV)

BELLS AT ST MICHAEL'S

Interested in a new challenge for 2014? Bellringing may be for you!

The bells at St Michael's Church have been rung for over 250 years, but unless more people are willing to learn this art there is a risk that the tradition of bellringing in the village will cease. We have bellringers of all ages and beliefs.

Regular practices take place, and there is plenty of help available for those who would like to learn. If we have enough bellringers, you may not be required every week.

If you are interested in learning how to bell-ring, please contact Lesley Lindsay 862868

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WEA EAST COKER BRANCH

The Arts and Craft Movement – 6 Sessions from Tuesday 11 February in the Dampier Room, East Coker Hall, 2.30pm – 4.00pm. Tutor Gordon Le Pard. Cost £31.

For more information call Sarah Smith 862466

SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY

The mobile library route for East Coker is Tuesday, every 4 weeks, from 2.30pm – 2.50pm at the Helyar Arms, and 2.55pm – 3.10pm at Mill Close. Further information from Libraries Direct 08453459177 or www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries

21 January

18 February

18 March

HATHERSTONE WOODS (millennium woods) Hedge-laying

Ever wondered how hedge-laying is done? Then join a work party in our local woods to find out.

Next dates are Saturday 11 January and Saturday 8 February.

For more details please phone Chris Blight on 863689 or meet at 9.30am by the main entrance gate.

DOG FOULING

As a dog-owner and walker I am dismayed and appalled by the amount of dog mess around the Parish of East Coker. Over the last year, dog fouling in the Parish has become a serious problem. There is dog mess on the recreation ground, along all the roads, on many of the pavements, in the fields where dogs are walked. It is, in fact, to be found anywhere, and everywhere, you walk.

This has been reported to the dog warden, and notices have been put up at various points within the Parish of East Coker. ***If you own and/or walk a dog, no matter where you walk it, you should pick up after it.*** There are plenty of bins around in which to dispose of dog mess – alternatively, take it home and bin it. If the same amount of human excrement were to be found around the Parish there would be an outcry.

Remember – bag it and bin it (and this does not mean throw it in the hedgerow).

Helen Styles



EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL

SSDC Local Plan

SSDC's Local Plan was not accepted by the Planning Inspector and as a result SSDC made modifications which were put out for consultation from 28 November to 10 January 2014. The Parish Council collaborated with EC Preservation Trust and held an Open Meeting on 27 November to apprise the community of the situation. Parishioners were encouraged to respond to SSDC during the consultation period. Barrie Hartley, Margaret O'Neill and Stuart Todd Associates (funded by the Parish Council) are working to produce the Parish Council's response.

Pavilion

The Parish Council have voted in favour of making more refurbishments to the Pavilion which will result in the storage space at the back of the building being converted into another classroom for the Pre-School. This will ultimately leave the existing meeting room free for community use and the work should be completed by late January.

Village Noticeboard

Councillor Bennett has made more progress with the noticeboard and it is hoped that the completed article will soon be produced and erected in the Paddock.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Launch event was held in the East Coker Hall on Saturday 26 October with 85 people attending. Kath Wilson wishes to thank all those who helped to organise the event and for the contributions from those attending. All the results of the consultation postcard activities will be used in compiling the Neighbourhood Plan.

The parish consultation was developed by delivering 750 questionnaires, one to each dwelling in the Parish. We are grateful to the 159 households who completed the questionnaires, and huge thanks to those who have processed the responses and to Matt Horsley who has been responsible for all the technical work in producing the data. Annette Beardsley and Paul Weston (Planning Consultant) are now turning the data into a report on the findings, which will be re-presented to the Parish later in the spring. This will give the opportunity for everyone to respond to the findings and help us to decide which aspects we will focus on in planning for the future. In the new year, we will contact those people who have shown an interest in being involved in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Fireworks

Some parishioners contacted Parish Councillors following the period around Bonfire Night to comment on the distress caused by fireworks, especially to animals, and the danger to thatched roofs. When using fireworks, it is hoped that people can enjoy the activity whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of other people and animals in the vicinity.

Parish Ranger

We are grateful to our Parish Ranger for the work that he does in keeping our parish in good order. If you spot something that would benefit from his attention, please contact Councillor Bridget Sugg before 6.00pm on 863435; Mo 07097621106; bridget.sugg@hotmail.co.uk

The Triangle was planted in the autumn with two new varieties of daffodil, Loveday and Marie Curie Diamond, specially named to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Marie Curie Cancer Care. They were bred in Cornwall and supplied by Fentongollan Farm, part of the Tregothnan Estate of Lord Falmouth, on the Roseland Peninsula. Ipheion bulbs from Broadleigh Gardens, near Taunton, were put in around the edge of the plot to produce small star-shaped white flowers throughout the spring. Given the right conditions these South American bulbs should bulk up over the years into clumps which flower best when crowded. Three more of the hardy *Geranium macrorrhizum* were added. As well as providing good ground-cover this geranium proved pretty drought-resistant over the summer. A thick layer of organic peat-free compost was put down to reinvigorate the soil from which the tree draws so much goodness. Thanks to Darren for his help.

Councillor Kath Wilson on behalf of East Coker Parish Council

THE EAST COKER BULK OIL PURCHASE SCHEME

2013's fill-up in July/August was about a quarter down on last year's – 47,400 litres in 49 drops. The weather in early 2013 was so bad for so long that many people couldn't wait until July. The price of heating oil was about 55p per litre for 1000 litres in the summer. It is seasonal and rose to almost 60p in September. Today (2 January) it's back to just over 54p. If the weather gets bad it will certainly rise. I shall be co-ordinating a top-up at the end of January unless the weather plays tricks on us and the price rises absurdly. In that case I would recommend postponing it for a month.

The scheme operates as follows:

- I prefer it if everyone who can uses email because it gives flexibility and a record of each communication. If I do not acknowledge an email or phone message, please check that I have received it.
- I write a piece for the January and July East Coker Newsletters and circulate it to all participants on email as a reminder.
- The scheme saves the supplier both mileage and driver's hours and we usually save up to 2p per litre.
- The best method is to fill your tank in the summer, when prices are usually at their lowest, and then top up in Jan/Feb if necessary.
- You let me know how much oil you require. If you want your tank filled, calculate how much you need and order 100 litres extra; the driver will stop when the tank is full. Please note that officialdom decrees a minimum order quantity of 500 litres.
- I also need any special instructions like access requirements. I specify a standard four-wheeled tanker (not a mini) anyway because of the narrow lanes and tight corners in the village. The delivery drivers are resourceful and assume they can find and fill a tank in the customer's absence. You must tell me if this is not the case (eg 'Contact customer to unlock gate' or 'Tank is behind garage to left of house').
- I collate the requirements and get the best price and a delivery date for so many thousand litres in so many drops.
- I give the supplier a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, quantities and any special instructions about access etc.
- I let everyone know the price, which is the same for everyone irrespective of quantity (see * below). Note that prices are quoted before VAT (currently 5%).

- I endeavour to tell everyone the delivery date, but cannot guarantee the supplier sticks to it. Sometimes they offer to ring round.
- The supplier delivers the oil and invoices everyone individually. In some cases the delivery note is also the notice to pay.
- You pay the supplier directly. I have nothing to do with the money.

* If you order as an individual there is often a higher price for smaller orders (say less than 1000 litres). Thus people who order a smaller amount through the scheme save slightly more per litre and those who order more save more overall. This is often a particular benefit to older people.

If you have already taken part and found it worthwhile, encourage your friends and neighbours to join in. There are now little cells in some parts of the village. The more we can order, the better the price. You also avoid the price penalty for ordering less than 1000 litres by being part of the scheme.

To participate or with any questions, contact me, preferably by email (paulewards@waitrose.com) or 864413. Email makes it much easier to circulate information and I do not divulge email addresses. Please let me know your requirements by 7:00pm on Wednesday 29 January.

Paul Edwards

EAST COKER RAINFALL REPORT

The pattern of wet weather in East Coker during the past year has been unusually consistent. The first quarter, January to March, was fairly average with the first month hitting just close to 3½ins (8.9cm), February clocking up 2½ins (6.35cm), and March a total of marginally more than 3ins (7.6cm); this made a quarterly total of 9ins (22.86cm), which is not far off the annual average for the period over the past fifteen or so years. Then the Rainman went to sleep, and the period of April to June produced no more than 4½ins (11.5cm), and the third quarter, July to September achieved total rainfall of 4½ins (11.5cm). At this point the year's total was about 19ins (48.3), just below the rolling average for the period. It didn't look as though the annual average would be achieved this year.

But the Rainman once again woke up from his slumbers. October rainfall was regular throughout the month; after a first half to the month of 1½ins (3.8cm) fierce gusts of rain during the second half of the month made sure that virtually every day was a wet one, and the monthly total closed at no less than 7¼ins (18.4cm); the annual was racing towards the rolling average.

The month of November produced rainfall on twelve days with no more than a 2in (5cm) total and no further rain beyond the 20th of the month. This self-restraint by the Rainman continued into December – no rain until the 13th day of that month, and then all hell broke loose. From the 13th to 24th no fewer than five days or nights produced rain five times at 1in (2.5cm) each time. Violent gusts accompanied the December rain which by Christmas Day had been recorded at 6ins (15.2cm).

The fierce weather continued in various degrees, and the rain fell. By the last day of the month, December had suffered exactly 8ins (20.32cm) up to noon and the whole-year result has been a tidy amount of rain: 35ins (89cm).

Clive Bingley

BRITISH SUMMER TIME begins on Sunday, 30 March – clocks go forward one hour.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in **April 2014**. Copy, please, to Lesley Lindsay, Little Meadow, Coker Marsh, East Coker or e-mail l.lindsay@eastcoker.com, or to The Stores, East Coker, by **Thursday 20 March 2014**.

