

Snitterfield Parish Council

Annual Parish Assembly 2021

Report from Village Organisations

Rag-Tag Toddler Group

It has been a tough year for the young families in our community and many of them have been feeling isolated and finding it hard at home with their small children to keep entertained. We have had quite a few new babies born in the village during the Covid-19 pandemic and it has been especially hard for those who are first time parents during the past year without the chance to meet other parents or even have family to help them.

The value of having our own community led baby & toddler group has therefore become extremely apparent and it was very sad to have to close the group in March 2020 for the first lock-down.

During this period the toys were all cleaned and moved into our lovely new store cupboard in the village hall. The new store is so much better than the shed we had been using off the back room of the hall which was damp and attracted mice in the winter.

We re-opened the group in September under Covid-19 guidelines for a restricted number of parents and as the demand was high we also put on a second session on Thursday mornings.

Unfortunately we had to close again in December but have just reopened our 2 morning sessions again from April 12th with our own Covid-19 guidelines to keep us all safe.

Our numbers remain restricted but the parents & grandparents who come along are so pleased to be able to take their children to a safe airy space to play & learn to socialise with others.

However, as we have had no income for the majority of the year we may face financial problems this time next year as our funds have been completely depleted on recently paying our annual subscription to the Early Years Alliance which also includes insurance for the group. The cost this year was £178.46 and I am hoping that over the course of the next 12 months we will be able to replenish our funds but if not we may approach the Parish Council for some short term financial assistance towards our insurance/membership.

The group is run by the parents and carers of the children who come along and the majority of us live in Snitterfield or come from nearby. We have a good range of toys and equipment & usually have a craft activity, music and story time each week although this has been curtailed for the time being due the Covid-19 restrictions

Information about the group is available through the village magazines & noticeboards; [Warwickshire County Council website](#); Family Information Service; Netmums website & the Toddle About magazine. We also have our [own Facebook page](#) through which parents currently book a place for each session.

Snitterfield Rural Cinema

The rural cinema has unfortunately not been able to run over the past year due to the Covid-19 restrictions and has been missed by many members of our community and surrounding villages.

We did manage to put on one film in the autumn under strict Covid-19 guidelines from Live & Local (who coordinate the scheme) but we have not yet had news about when we will be up

and running again yet. Due to restricted numbers in the hall it may be a case of waiting until the Autumn to see its return.

In the meantime Live & local had been working hard to try and keep our communities across Warwickshire connected with run various home cinema schemes which I have advertised through the parish magazines and email group. They have been very well received by those that have taken part.

We look forward to returning to the village hall as soon as we can to bring the cinema back into our local community.

The Telephone Box Rejuvenation Group

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was decided that any book exchanges could not take place from the phone box. However, once the windows had been re-sealed to make them watertight, shelves will soon be installed in the phone box ready for the community to use for books and seed exchanges.

Snitterfield Village Hall

This last year has been challenging, to say the least. It has been very frustrating not being able to provide our vital service to the community.

Financially we have been able to survive with grateful thanks to the District Council grants in support of our running costs. Our year end, March, financials will be available soon. We expect to have a surplus from grants and pledges to carry forward to the next stage of refurbishment.

It is now three years since the village hall committee started on the urgent project to refurbish the village hall. At the time, parts of it were not fit for purpose, the toilets needed renovating, there was no toilet for disabled, the storeroom was a leaking wooden hut and the meeting room at the rear of the hall, also wooden, was deteriorating rapidly.

Thanks to generous grants and local support at fund raising events, we have been able to reach a halfway point with the project.

- The existing toilets were renovated in 2018
- New storerooms were completed in 2019
- The new annex which houses the toilet for disabled people is just finished. It is positioned with a doorway from the main hall and a fire exit with ramp to the left of the building and path to the front car park.
- When the new backstage/meeting room at the rear of the hall is built, one day, there will be an entrance from this room to the annex
- The toilet is fully equipped with all the facilities needed for disabled people
- There is also a baby nappy changing table as this toilet is for all meeting room users, so that they do not need to disturb events in the main hall.
- The main hall has been redecorated, having improved the insulation of the angle between the walls and the ceiling. The floor has been restored and looks brilliant.

The outside of the front of the building has also been redecorated. We are making progress. We are now aiming to do some upgrades in the kitchen, to meet current standards. We are also considering having the front tarmacked before the rear meeting room is built. We will know more when we have quotations. This is still only halfway!

We now face the task of raising funds to replace the wooden meeting room at the rear, which has now deteriorated so badly that it is not fit for purpose.

We want to build a new, larger backstage / meeting room, as changing facilities for performers. We will be able to encourage wider use of the stage. It will be ideal for smaller social gatherings, particularly for the elderly who do not need or want to use the large main hall.

The room will have its own entrance for wheelchair users, direct access to the toilet and a servery, so that the room can be used independently of the main hall.

The cost estimate, at this stage, is £160,980 fully equipped! It will be ideal for off site management meetings and training sessions, often requested by local businesses.

At the current rate of being awarded grants and local fund raising, it could be some years before completion.

We ask the Parish Council to consider mechanisms whereby the committee can have a lease. This will enable us to make a grant application to BIFFA, which could be an important opportunity.

We also ask the Council to consider a long-term loan.

Meanwhile we continue to seek grants and are hopeful of developing a fund-raising programme to re-start in the Autumn.

The committee thanks the Parish Council for their continuing support and looks forward to the Council being able to make grants, again, towards the project.

Fete Committee

As many of you know, the fete generates a profit, and the Committee asks for requests for funding from village groups in late Autumn. We are pleased to relay that, following the June 2019 fete, we were able to award £3,300 towards a number of local groups who applied for funds.

The funds were allotted as follows: £1,000 was awarded to the St James the Great bell restoration appeal and the remaining funds were distributed to: Snitterfield Nursery, who purchased a storytelling chair for their sensory garden, Snitterfield Primary School, who bought equipment for their Forest School area, SACC, who will use the contribution for water pipes to the allotments, the Village Hall who bought paint for the refurbishment, SNIPE for six month printing costs, and Snitterfield Wild Flower Verges group who bought seeds and fencing.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the 2020 'Circus' themed fete could not take place and given the current social distancing restrictions and uncertainty regarding the measures required for large-scale events, the committee decided not to hold a village fete this coming June.

However, the committee wanted to offer Snitterfield residents the opportunity to get together before June 2022 and therefore decided to organise a smaller-scale village event, the Village Show.

The committee felt a smaller-scale event would be more appropriate this year as we ease ourselves out of lockdown and given the hardship many have suffered over the past year. Consequently, the Village Show will not focus on fundraising; there will be no entry fee, there will be fewer 'paying' stalls and the event will therefore not offer village groups the opportunity to apply for funds. It is scheduled to take place on Sunday 12th September and aims to be a celebration of village life, our community and what it has to offer. We are excited to be pairing up with the Gardening Club for their Annual Produce Show and plans are afoot for a Dog Show, afternoon teas, and smaller scale children's entertainment.

All being well the fete will return in its more traditional format with additional entertainment for 2022.

Anne Carless

Snipe

Snipe is a village newsletter that is published and distributed three times a year, free of charge to all households in the parish. It has been a valued method of communication in the village for almost 20 years. Snitterfield organisations and clubs use it to advertise events and services and it is a useful conduit for local news: this was particularly the case during the early months of the pandemic. We also include regular articles about village history and memories in order to keep this knowledge alive. Feedback from the villagers remains very positive.

Archive copies of Snipe are also available on the [village website](#).

One addition this year, written during the lockdowns, has been a series of ten Snipe Walks and associated maps, hopefully encouraging villagers to get out and about in the countryside around our village. These are available on the [village website](#).

Snipe is written, edited and delivered at no charge by a small team of volunteers within the village.

Funding for printing costs has been provided annually by The Parish Council together with a few private donations, with further funding for the necessary software from Snitterfield Village Community Projects. Without this funding the newsletter would not be viable. The Snipe Committee would like to express its gratitude to the Parish Council for its ongoing support.

Snitterfield Garden Club

Our Village Garden Club has been mothballed, effectively, since March 2020, the last date on which we held our regular monthly Club Nights. Since then all Speakers and outside visits have had to be cancelled owing to restrictions in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Our first step back onto a path of relative normality is being organised in the form of our Annual Produce Show and will take place on Sunday, 12th September 2021 and form part of the proposed Village Show.

This Produce Show will be open to all and the schedule of classes is on the [Snitterfield Garden Club website](#).

It is hoped that many folks who have found solace and inspiration from their gardens during these strange and difficult times, will venture to enter something into the show and consider joining our club.

Our year starts each September with the Show & AGM and we have, hopefully not too optimistically, already booked all our speakers and visits for the new 2021/2 season, the full programme for which is on our [website](#). We really do hope that Village Hall meetings will be permitted for our usual size of audience of 60plus, by this date in the Autumn.

However, we do have a fall-back plan should indoor meetings need to be cancelled once more as, since last Autumn, we have joined forces with an online gardening community – Tender Shoots Garden Club network (TSGC) – and been offering several talks per month from speakers via Zoom. Some talks have also been recorded for subsequent viewing on YouTube.

These talks, and all update emails, have continued to be circulated to those who were members as at March 2020, even though their membership expired in Sept '20 as, technically, we have no members at present. However, we are looking forward to welcoming former members, and new, to the September Show, when all will have the opportunity to join once more and to enjoy our happy, gardens and gardening-related interest group.

Gillie Waldron, Snitterfield Garden Club.

