



Meon Matters

*News, Views & Comment
from East Meon*

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Editorial

What a great feeling it is to see the first tentative signs of spring – something that seemed almost impossible just a few weeks ago. A bit less La Nina weather next year please.

And we hope this latest issue of Meon Matters will continue to lift your spirits further – notwithstanding our feature on the village sewerage challenge. It surely is the season of Everything Everywhere All At Once.


Sewerage aside, we have uplifting articles aplenty on nature, orchards, tree & hedgerow planting, Easter recipes, and wine recommendations. Plus a preview of the village’s exciting plans for the Coronation weekend. Think long tables, tea & cake, fireworks & cake, live music & cake, children’s races & cake.....you’ve got the idea. And then there’s the boat races, for which the classes and construction rules are just being announced. So, release your over-competitive spirits and get building.

As we start another year, we would like to thank our advertisers for their continuing, essential sponsorship - we hope our new Checktrade-style directory on the Meon Matters website adds further to business enquiries - and our wonderful team of distributors who are vital to doorstep delivery of the magazine. Our coverage is getting better and better – but if you know anyone who’s missing a copy, please do let us know.

And please keep bombarding us with your suggestions and recommendations, including less sewerage.

Andy Hales

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Church Report

People still occasionally ask me if there is any progress in getting a new Rector to replace Jane Ball. It is now some eight months since the start of the vacancy. The four parishes in the Benefice submitted a draft advert to the Deanery at the start of February and we hope the next step will be an early meeting to discuss how we can best get ourselves prioritised for the small number of new posts funded by the diocese. But the priority has to be to find the right person. Meanwhile, I enjoy excellent support from people within the parish and we are blessed to be supported by a wonderful group of clergy, mostly retired, but some giving us time along with their own parish duties.

There is something quite shocking about the church calendar. In the last issue, I was encouraging you to join us in celebrating a birth. Now, just two months later, we are contemplating the death of that same man. Of course, we are having to compress the events of a short life into one calendar year. But there are truths to be drawn from that. One is about the fragility of life. In August last year, we hosted the marriage of a lovely couple in their thirties; on New Year's Eve, the husband died tragically whilst out running. We can none of us take for granted longevity and must close the account each day to make the best of our own lives and those who are dear to us.

And then there are the specifics of the Good Friday account. Where most of us cling onto life, here was a man who invited his own death by his unwillingness to compromise on the values that he believed underpinned all life. He could no doubt have retired happily to a quiet village on the Sea of Galilee, raised a family and repaired old timber-framed houses. But that was not the life to which he was called and the road led with increasing inevitability to his own death. We are not all called to die for the things in which we believe. But we are all encouraged to believe that we have failed ourselves if we cannot maintain an integrity in the values by which we live our lives and that the most important of these is the love of God and of those with whom we travel on this journey of life.

Lent is a time to look at how we are doing on this. Good Friday is a moment to understand what can ultimately be asked of us. And Easter is a day to celebrate our belief that ultimately love must triumph. We hope you will join us in the churches across the benefice as we make this journey.

Jonathan Iremonger



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Please do join us for our Easter Services and Events in the Meon Valley Benefice

Wednesday 5th April

6pm Holy Week Compline Service at All Saints East Meon

Mundy Thursday 6th April

6pm Benefice Eucharist Service at St John's West Meon

Good Friday Walk 7th April

Benefice Walk starting at 9am from Our Lady Warnford*
Do join us for whole or part of the walk.

* A prayer will be said before departing.

West Meon 10.00am - buns and coffee,

East Meon 12.00 - bread and soup,

Langrish 2.15pm - tea and cakes

followed by a short lay led service at St. John's Langrish at 2.30 pm

Easter Sunday 9th April

10.30 am Easter Service (with Eucharist) at All Saints East Meon
Led by Canon Anthony Russell



Above:
Wedding Flowers

Left:
The Garden Club

2022 Church Flower Report

If the last couple of years have been relatively quiet I think I can safely say that we made up for any respite by the number of weddings we have been involved with this year.

All of them were stunning occasions – each had their own very personal touches and I think as flower arrangers we felt very honoured to be involved – we learnt new tricks and were certainly tested at times. Four weddings in a row in August during that intense heat when even the church was warm kept us on our toes.

The hard work and dedication of the flower arranging team is quite extraordinary and we are so lucky to have such skills within the village.

Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas all produced some magnificent displays and as always it is wonderful to have contributions from the Garden Club, East Meon Primary School and the Nursery School.

We have tried to source many of the flowers locally – using The Real Flower Company at Bramdean and whatever was available in village gardens and allotments – all contributions are gratefully received and appreciated as the cost of imported flowers is rising the whole time.

We have three weddings booked in for this year and I am sure the Coronation weekend will require some decorations.

It has been great to welcome some new members to the team and if there is anyone else in the village who would like to be involved do please get in touch.

Philippa Tyrwhitt-Drake
ptdrake@bereleigh.co.uk
07768420105



East Meon Primary School



The Nursery School

School Mothers Day Service

We had the most wonderful Mother's Day Service at All Saints church on Thursday 16 March. The Church team had been liaising with the bishop's office at Portsmouth Cathedral to arrange a very special guest to lead the service.

We had been expecting Bishop Jonathan but unfortunately, he was quite unwell. Luckily his wonderful colleague, Rev'd Canon Kathryn Percival was able to step in at the last minute to take the service and meet some of the children after the service.

The ladies of the church led by Mrs de Lotbiniere made 100 gorgeous spring flower posies, which meant that every child could take a posie home to their parent or carer. We all want to say a huge thank you to these lovely ladies who must have given up a great deal of time to put these together.

Thank you also to the refreshments team who provided tea, coffee and cake for those children invited to the reception after the service. It was very special for everyone to have a chance to meet Rev'd Canon Kathryn properly.

Anna Tebbut





Village Hall Overhaul?

When you go into the village hall, there on the left hand side of the entrance lobby is the foundation stone dated 1974. 2024 will be our Village Hall's 50th anniversary, and a good time to look at the hall and its contribution to East Meon.

In 1974, buildings were rather different than today, meeting the needs and standards that existed well before the internet, electric vehicles and working from home. How will the hall thrive over the next 50 years?

Today the hall is being used more than ever but we cannot escape the fact that some repairs, maintenance and improvements need to happen. We very much want to hear your thoughts about how the village hall can be upgraded and updated to make it somewhere you would want to work, rest and play.

if you would like to tell us what you think, email chair@eastmeonvillagehall.co.uk so your thoughts and opinions can be assembled. Of course, cost will be a factor, but the objective is to make sure there are the ideas and a plan for the hall to be ready for the next half century. There will be an open day in due course to get as many ideas as we can.

East Meon Village Hall Committee

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EVENT INFO

- > Entry by ticket only
- > Cash bar and food stalls
- > Bring chairs, picnic rugs and waterproofs if wet
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- > All cars will access the site from the A272 at Lower Borden
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Warm Space Fundraiser

It seems an unlikely time of year to have a knees-up, but for some miracle - the stars aligned - the entire village was definitely up for one back in January.

Emma and I were offered the gig back in October '22 when the world went into a rapid tailspin regards the cost of living and the heating crisis became very real. So we set our minds to raise funds for the to-be-established warm-space in the village hall, and came up with the most unifying of themes: a highly competitive, highly serious, highly intellectual and high-stakes quiz, reputations could be made or crushed on this night. The village seemed to take the bait and before we knew it we were faced with feeding, watering and entertaining 120 eager villagers.

The planning that goes into these events is surprisingly detailed and time-consuming and multiple emergency meetings were needed in the run up to the night: how much wine do we need (with our particular demographic there's never enough)? How many stiltons feed 120? Pickled onions or not? What if there's a giant snow storm on the night? Every eventuality had to be covered.

There are many people to thank... In the main all of you who bought a ticket and a bottle of wine and raised an arm on the auction... Thank you!



To our band of merry-ploughman-makers – my goodness, if we ever need another factory line of cheese-choppers we know who to come to – thank you!

Thanks also to Amy & Polly, the Quiz Mistresses (the quiz was 100% home-made); and to our wing-men, Richard & Andrew, who by their association with us end up doing a very large portion of the slog. Plus our very own Carol Vorderman (Shelley) number crunching the scores. What a team!

And thanks too to the incredible donations from local businesses who enabled our raffle to be next-level fantastic... winners didn't just get a box of Roses (best before 1987)... AND... the artists who donated their stunning artwork for the auction – Thank you!

Special mention goes to the 'high-spend' table, Quizzy McQuiz Face (you know who you are). And a big well done to the joint winning teams, crowned East Meon's brainiest – The Canine Cavaliers & The Meon Muppets.

The end result was that a great night was had and heaps of funds were raised, now safely in the Village Hall Warm Space account and decisions over how best to use it will be made via the committee. The village will be kept posted (see separate note).

Thank you East Meon.

CdeL & EG

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Foodbank Update

Due to the cost of living crisis the demand on the foodbank increased dramatically and we needed to find ways to keep the foodbank going and recruit additional help.

We are overjoyed that we now have the support of East Meon Primary School PTA, distributing food bags and helping with the day to day management. The foodbank now has its own Facebook account, email address eastmeonfoodbank@gmail.com, bank account and we have added a foodbank donation box outside the village hall.

We have a strong team working together but without the community donations we wouldn't be able to help so many individuals and families in need.

Thank you for your continued support.



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Parish Council Annual Report 2023

The work of the Parish Council is extremely varied. Each of the 9 councillors has three or 4 areas of responsibility whether that be for example footpaths, bins, planning or grass cutting. Over the past few years, the range of matters which require Parish Council input has increased hugely. We now have a councillor tasked to monitor Harvest Football Club's use of our football field and pavilion, we have two councillors who are active members of East Meon Nature and TWiG (the Tree Working Group) reporting back to councillors as necessary and another councillor who is exploring youth involvement in the village.

Often our work is quite frustrating. We need to spend a great deal of time liaising with outside bodies - the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park to name a few. In virtually every case we come up against an unwillingness to commit. We would like these organisations to move faster and to agree to do more. A clear example of this is HCC Countryside Access team's reluctance to close BOATs (Byways Open To All Traffic) to motorised leisure vehicles. By way of compromise they have imposed temporary winter closures on a number of them ... but not all - so that, limited in the number of tracks available, bikers are now destroying those previously deemed to be in reasonable order. In virtually every case we are told that the public body we are lobbying is strapped for cash and short staffed. Compromises are agreed on and so some progress is made but not in your Council's view enough!

Every councillor does their best but we cannot know about everything that is happening in the parish and therefore greatly appreciate the support we get from residents advising us of a broken stile or a planning permission condition which is not being complied with. We don't notice every pothole so please if one has developed near you report it to HCC and they will get it repaired.

Other major matters of concern to villagers are the south of Coombe Road development, traffic calming and the appalling sewage leaks in Workhouse Lane. Having started several months later than planned building work is progressing on the 'Penny Mile' development and in theory it should be completed by July. Details of the approved landscaping plan for the site can be seen on the SDNPA planning website under ref: SDNP/22/02028/DCOND. At the time of writing, it is a condition that 6 of the dwellings on the site must be affordable homes. Rest assured we monitor progress reminding the site manager of the developer's obligations for example relating to site traffic and road cleaning.

In November we had a half day with one of the HCC Highways officers looking at ways of reducing the number of vehicles speeding through the village, especially along the High Street and by the school. Having been awarded a grant of £15,000 to improve the situation we are keen to get on with implementing some of his suggestions and hope before long to have some pinch points, dimpled surfaces on the Clanfield road by The Old Forge and replacement rubber kerbs at the entrance to Workhouse Lane. We have joined a county wide campaign to introduce a 20mph default speed limit in built up areas. We are hoping to be the Hampshire pilot village for this and will keep you posted.

This winter has been dominated by the repeated sewage leaks in Workhouse Lane which have been unpleasant for many of us and absolutely vile for the residents in the immediate area. There has been raw sewage welling up out of manhole covers in the road and in residents' gardens. We are informed that the Victorian sewer that goes along under the road and ultimately to the sewage treatment plant is not fit for purpose. A high proportion of the village's surface water run off enters the sewage system so that when we have heavy - but not unprecedented - rainfall the old pipe cannot cope. Even so the leaks we have here are apparently not serious enough to merit attention. With raw sewage entering the River Meon we have involved the Environment Agency who agree that there is an issue but because by the time the sewage goes into the river it is very diluted it is not concentrated enough for them to be overly concerned. We have made it clear that the situation cannot continue. Southern Water has advised us that improvements will have to be made by 2035 to comply with the Environment Act but this is far too far off. We need an upgrade of the drainage system now. Supported by Rob Mocatta - our District and County Councillor - we continue lobbying on behalf of the village.

On a more positive note, there is a great deal we have been able to achieve. We have installed security lights and cameras at the Sports Pavilion, replaced the clock tower damaged in a storm, and are revamping the female toilets following a burst pipe. By the time of the Annual Parish Assembly the all sports court should have been completely resurfaced (it is booked for this spring). We now have solar lighting along the Frogmore allotments path, a clothes bin has been placed by the pavilion to raise funds for the Air Ambulance Service, a new gate has been put on the Recreation Ground by the play area so that small children will not be able to run onto the road and a second speed indicator device has been installed on the East/West Meon Road to draw drivers attention to the 30mph speed limit. At the request of The Village Hall Committee we funded the purchase of a generator to be used should the village have another major power cut as experienced in the winter of 2022. We have worked with HCC Highways Department to reduce or reposition a number of traffic signs in Oxenbourne in an attempt to limit the use of the lanes as a rat run from the A3 to West Meon. A Jubilee Tree has been planted on the Recreation Ground and the plaque, which has been commissioned, will be installed later in the spring. Later this year we will be planting a tree to mark the Coronation of King Charles III.

Maintenance is of course also important. We have booked a professional survey of all the ash trees on Parish Council land and are hoping that this will be reasonably positive. Residents report that they are pleased with the upkeep of The Green and Chris Smith has maintained the War Memorial area in good order, as well village entrances and other small areas of grass. The RoSPA inspection of the 2 play areas alerted us to the need to replace the wood beam from which the Village Hall play area swings are suspended - this proved to be a very complex operation with a special beam being brought down from Wales. The tall Leylandii at the eastern end of the allotments were radically reduced in height allowing more sunshine on adjacent plots. The river was cleared of willow herb again by the SDNPA Volunteer Rangers and declared by Elaina Whittaker Slark to be in very good condition. The Lengthsman has kept footpaths cleared and village signs clean. We have worked with and supported East Meon Nature and TWiG sourcing funding for the hedge planted on The Green and The Recreation Ground.

2022 saw fewer planning applications than the previous 2 years, with numbers returning to the levels seen before the pandemic. Last year's applications are broken down as follows:

2022	No objection	No objection with comments	Objection	Total	Total last year
Dwellings	11	14	2	27	34
Trees	7	2	0	9	10
Farms	2	0	0	2	4
Other	1	1	1	3	2
Total	21	17	3	41	50

The Planning Committee visited the sites of all applications, no matter how large or small, before submitting a response. Details of the Parish Council's comments on all East Meon planning applications can be accessed via the SDNPA planning website: <https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/>

East Hants District Council's planning enforcement officers and legal team, working on behalf of the SDNPA, successfully applied for an injunction to stop development on land at Westbury Park (not related to Westbury House), which has been sold off in parcels of land. The Parish Council objected to the one planning application for development on a parcel of land.



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The SDNPA will be starting the review of its Local Plan during 2023. The Parish Council will be pushing them to prioritise improvement of East Meon's infrastructure (especially sewerage and drainage) over housing development.

Looking ahead... we will be having the footbridge at Frogmore and the railings there repainted this year and will be making changes in how we charge residents who have allotments so that they will be responsible for the water they use.

This leaves me to express my thanks to my fellow councillors for all their hard work and dedication. They all deserve our support and thanks. I am also grateful to our volunteer tree warden, John Mackinlay, for his commitment and well-informed advice and Rob Mocatta for his work in lobbying on our behalf at District and County level. Finally, our thanks go to Sam our wonderfully dedicated, hardworking and capable Parish Clerk whose patience is breathtaking.

Susan Davenport,
 Chair East
 Meon Parish Council



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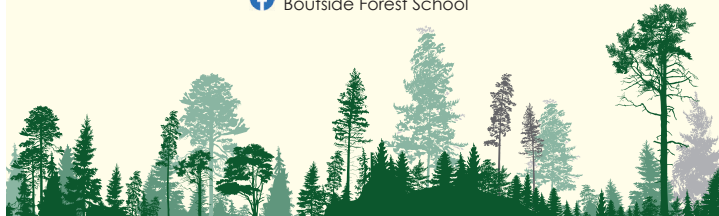
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Invite you to the Annual Parish Assembly
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Monday 24 April 2023
at 7.00pm
in
East Meon Village Hall

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Consideration and approval of the Minutes of the 2022 Assembly
(Available on the Parish Website)
3. The 2023 Chair's report detailing the Council's achievements
during the past year (Previously circulated in Meon Matters)
4. Financial Report of Accounts for 2022/2023 and forecast for
2023/2024
5. Reports from our County and District Councillor – Rob Moccata
6. Parish Forum - this is an open session for residents to ask
questions.
7. Guest Speaker Professor Trudie Lang, Senior Research Fellow,
Green Templeton College, University of Oxford.
Trudie lives in East Meon and will be talking to us about her work
in Oxford.
From Ebola, to Zika to Covid – and why Malaria matters in the
Meons

All Welcome

Cheese and Wine will be served after the meeting.

Parish Council Update

We are off to a flying start in 2023 with our January and March meetings already held.

Youth engagement has been a recurring theme at our Council meetings, and we hope we are making an important step with a hugely expensive refurbishment of the hugely popular All Sports Court. Needless to say, we are filling in every grant application form we can find. We are also keen to install an outdoor concrete table tennis table.

The pavilion continues to be a real pain. Its only redeeming features are the recently refurbished clock, a newly installed CCTV camera and the bright yellow clothes bin. Otherwise, it continues to be a drain on our resources with regular water leaks, and now with recently discovered structural defects. We are considering all options, including a scaled-down sturdier building that could dovetail nicely with various youth engagement initiatives, including the possible provision of youth football.

We've also been on a campaign to upgrade our waste bins, which are rubbish, too small and falling apart. Tempting fate here, but we might be about to make progress with the District Council.

Thank you to the large number of residents who have reported the large number of potholes on our roads (www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes/report-pothole). You would be forgiven for thinking it might be quicker to report instances of unbroken road surfaces. In a similar vein, we are continuing to work on protecting the BOATs from motorised traffic damage. The current proposal, which requires SDNPA funding, is that metal gates are installed to effect winter closures other than for horses, pedestrians and cyclists

Hampshire Highways are advising us on potential farmer-friendly traffic calming measures for the High Street, scheduled for 2023/24. Sadly, our road bridges have been passed fit for HGV traffic. But it has been made "very clear" to the Coombe Road site manager that none of his HGVs should be using Workhouse Lane. And we continue to put East Meon's name forward for one of Hampshire's "20 is Plenty" pilots.

And how about this for a dastardly traffic management initiative - directions to East Meon have recently been airbrushed from the signpost on the A3 at Buriton (with similar signpost changes to follow). Apologies in advance to anyone who cannot now find their way home.

Winter is a good time for planting trees, and our Tree Warden, TWIG and a host of volunteers from the highly active Nature group have been busy doing just this. First up, John Mackinlay has planted the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee tree (with plaque to follow) on the Recreation Ground (see photo below). Next, this whole crew (see second photo below) has been busy planting nature friendly hedgerows on the edges of Workhouse Lane and the Recreation Ground, and fruit trees around the entrance to the Village Hall. All will take a while to become established, which gives you plenty of time to research exotic jam, chutney and cider recipes. And when not planting, the Nature Group have been busy protecting toads and newts. Where do they get their energy from?

No report would be complete without updating you on what we are doing to address the continuing sewerage problems in the village. We are writing to everybody we can in to obtain a hearing for the village's challenges. Given how widespread these problems are, we are going to have to be really persistent.....and we will be.



John Mackinlay planting the Platinum Jubilee Tree



TWIG busy planting



As Spring marches onwards and the army of East Meon gardeners re-start the annual battle against the weeds, black spot and unpredictable weather, the EM Gardening Club would like to remind you of their exciting programme of events to motivate and inspire. The next 6 months include Garden visits (members only - details on how to become a member at eastmeongardenclub.com), Gardens Open with plant sale and the highlight of our gardening year, The Annual Show.

Key dates for your diaries:

23 May Little Court - Garden visit (members only), a "very tranquil , naturalistic and relaxing" garden near Winchester

18 June. Gardens Open - If you would like your garden to be included in this event please contact Nicky Staveley (nstaveley1@gmail.com) by 8 May so we can add you to the map.

TBC Plant sale - an eclectic mix of plants will be available
Whatever you're sowing and growing over the next few weeks please sow a few extra seeds and donate your excess plants for the plant sale

26 July. Wheatley House Garden, Bordon, garden visit (members only) situated on a rural hilltop with panoramic views over Alice Holt Forest and the South Downs.

13 August. Annual Show - a chance to find out what's been going on in the gardens, allotments and kitchens of East Meon. Entry is open to members and non-members and there are categories for everyone: fruit and veg, flowers, flower arranging, baking, jam and chutney making, arts and crafts, photography, a children's category and more.

Entry forms for Annual Show available on line / the village store from mid July with completed entry forms due by Wednesday 9 August.

If you would like to join, or re-join you will be very welcome. Details at eastmeongardenclub.com

If you have any questions and can't find the answer on our website, please email Fiona at secretary@eastmeonclub.com

Introducing... TWiG

The East Meon Nature Group's **Tree Working Group**

TWiG is proud to be **working with the Parish Council and the Community** to explore and identify how the Village of East Meon and its Parish can

- make its contribution to combatting climate change
- help secure the future of our community and natural environment, its amenity, wildlife and fauna, in the face of a rapidly warming climate.

TWiG is seeking to achieve this through community and environmentally sensitive **hedge and tree planting initiatives**. We are busy formulating proposals but these will **need community help** to succeed.

If you would like to volunteer or provide your support

PLEASE CONTACT US ON: eastmeontwig@gmail.com

EM Gardening Club 2023 Photography Competition

The annual photography competition is back, so start planning your entries now. Categories are intentionally broad to enable a wide creative interpretation. Steve Grier, Chairman EM Gardening Club enthused 'with a smart phone in hand there is no limit to capturing moments that delight, inspire or amuse you, so get snapping'

The categories are;

- a. A dog walk
- b. Weather
- c. Gardening
- d. In bloom
- e. A 2023 Village Event
- f. Garden to Plate

Entries will be judged at the Annual Show 13 August 2023.

As Spring marches onwards and the army of East Meon gardeners re-start the annual battle against the weeds, black spot and unpredictable weather, the EM Gardening Club would like to remind you of their exciting programme of events to motivate and inspire. The next 6 months include Garden visits (members only - details on how to become a member at eastmeongarden-club.com), Gardens Open with plant sale and the highlight of our gardening year, The Annual Show.

Key dates for your diaries:

23 May Little Court - Garden visit (members only), a "very tranquil, naturalistic and relaxing" garden near Winchester

18 June. Gardens Open - If you would like your garden to be included in this event please contact Nicky Staveley (nstaveley1@gmail.com) by 8 May so we can add you to the map.

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TBC Plant sale - an eclectic mix of plants will be available

Whatever you're sowing and growing over the next few weeks please sow a few extra seeds and donate your excess plants for the plant sale 26 July. Wheatley House Garden, Bordon, garden visit (members only) situated on a rural hilltop with panoramic views over Alice Holt Forest and the South Downs.

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West Meon W.I. Report - April 2023

Our March meeting was held at West Meon Village Hall on Monday 13th March and was in a slightly different format, inasmuch as it was a meeting for members and their invited guests, who enjoyed a super talk and a lovely special afternoon tea. Our speaker, Frances Carlaw, (who is known as The Pearl Lady and an expert on the subject) has spoken to us on previous occasions, and once again she did not disappoint. The subject of her talk was 'Pearls and the Art Deco' and she gave us a lot of background information on pearls. They come in three categories - natural pearls which are rare, highly prized and exceptionally expensive, cultured pearls made by a process invented in 1897 by Mikimoto and faux (simulated) pearls. She had some fascinating stories to tell about famous pearls bought by Richard Burton for Elizabeth Taylor and the outfits covered in pearls worn by the French dancer Mistinguett, when she performed at the Moulin Rouge.

Our next meeting and AGM is a little later this year due to Easter and will be held at West Meon Village Hall at 2pm on Monday 24th April 2023. Our speaker, Susan Howe, will be talking on 'The Indiscreet Revelations of a Tour Guide' (Subtitled: Dealing with difficult clients and avoiding being eaten by a Tiger). It sounds like a fascinating subject - not to be missed.

We look forward to seeing you all on 24th April. Our new programme of events for 2023/4 will be issued to all members at the AGM.

Sue Kinloch



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Long Term Care Event

The UK has an ageing population. With advances in medical science, people are living longer, but not all of these extra years will be healthy. When considering increasing life expectancy, one must look at both:-

- Healthy old age, and
- Unhealthy old age

Government data suggests that overall life expectancy has increased faster than healthy life expectancy, meaning that the average person can expect to live longer but spend more of this time in struggling health.

From the village, Laura Croft, Elaine Ford and Chris Brooker have come together to advise families on the financial, legal and estate issues that need to be considered prior to and upon the receipt of long-term care.

They want to highlight areas of discussion that are not often thought about until the care need is upon individuals and families. The issue of care for our loved ones encompasses many factors. With careful planning these factors can be considered before the stress of immediate care considerations are required. They are holding a free event to highlight what areas are involved.

All presenters are working professionals happy to give generic advice based on their experience. Any personal advice requested will be dealt with separately on a one on one basis with the appropriate regulatory safe guards in place.

Free Event

East Meon Village Hall – Wednesday April 19th 7PM Meon Valley Care and Estate Planners

Planning For Long Term Care

Laura Croft, Steele Rose - Wills, Power of Attorney and Use of Trusts

Elaine Ford, St James's Place - Estate Planning and Inheritance Tax issues

Chris Brooker, St James's Place - Care Act update, available financial assistance for care and Care Fees funding options

Samantha Booty, Care Home Manager at Blenheim Court. Liss - Considerations when choosing care and what to expect when care is provided

To register your interest please email Laura Croft at lauracroft@steelerose.co.uk or call Laura on 07503 232247

The writing of a Will or Powers of Attorney involves the referral to a service that is separate and distinct from those offered by St. James's Place. Wills and Powers of Attorney are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Agency.



East Meon Hares

As someone who is used to shooting game, putting down sick or old cattle and dogs and humanely dispatching of wounded or ill birds and mammals without too much hesitation, you may have been surprised to see me running from my tractor last week to rescue a young leveret (baby hare) from an attacking red kite. With the mothers giving birth these days anytime between February and November, we are constantly on high alert while cultivating, drilling and rolling to avoid running over these little creatures. For those of you who don't know, the mother gives birth to their young in the middle of open fields in small holes that they scratch in the ground, known as 'forms.' The mother then leaves them and during the course of the days following continually moves to her young to feed and protect them. They usually give birth to two to four leverets up to four times per year, but are predated by most UK predators including kites, buzzards, foxes, stoats and badgers.

The Brown Hare, which was only introduced to these shores by the Romans, is allegedly declining in number in the UK, but in the East Meon area and particularly up at Bereleigh we have seen a huge increase in numbers over the past 30 years and are rightly very proud of our hare population. We have friends who farm on the North side of the A272 and when out walking never see a hare and yet can look over to our fields immediately adjacent to the road and count them in packs majestically running around the fields. Nick Canter, the Bereleigh head keeper, counted 69 all together in one small field only last autumn! So long as we can continue to chase the aerial predators away from these beautiful creatures, we are confident that the Brown Hare will continue to thrive in the environment around East Meon which your farmers have created and manage for their benefit!

Tom TD



Nature Group - The Power of Volunteering

Volunteering is at the heart of many of the good things that happen in East Meon - individuals carving time out of their busy days to improve the lives of people living in the village. It is only through its volunteers that the Nature Group has been able to achieve what it has over the last couple of months.

Our Tree Working Group (TWiG) has planted 140 metres of new native hedgerow along Workhouse Lane and behind the Cricket Pavilion to provide habitat for wildlife, improve our village environment and help combat climate change. In total, TWiG volunteers planted 1000 native hedge plants (hawthorne, blackthorn, viburnum, hazel, dogwood, spindle, dog rose and honeysuckle) together with 10 fruit trees. The work included clearing weeds and in places laying eco weed-suppressing membrane.

It was hard work but great fun but that is not the end of the job. We will need to water the plants in periods of drought and maintain the developing hedges. A big thank you to all our volunteers. We hope that you (and others) will help us with maintenance and our next planting projects - watch this space!

Hot on the heels of hedge-planting, we have restarted our toad patrols. With Valentine's Day and a spell of mild damp weather, the toads and newts started heading off to the pond on Coombe Road to find mates and raise families. Sadly a few were squashed before we got to them but we had escorted some 100 toads and 110 newts across the road before the weather turned cold and activity stopped. The migration will restart when it warms up and volunteers will be there with their buckets to give our little reptilian friends a hand over the road.

With the winter dormancy things have otherwise been quiet. We have taken the opportunity to suppress some of the more rampant weeds on the wildflower patch by the pavilion and the first butterflies and bumblebees have been seen out and about on the warmer days.

Overall, nature continues to struggle with climate change and the associated extremes of wet, cold and dry weather. Alone, the East Meon projects are not going to save the planet but this is the time of year when you too can help. You can volunteer to support the activities above (do get in touch).

You can also help on your own patch, creating ponds (small or large) for birds, insects and reptiles, planting nectar rich flowers that will provide food across the seasons and not over-tidying your garden - the leaves and debris on your flower beds are valuable food and shelter for the beetles and bugs that are such an essential part of nature. Every little bit helps.

Jonathan Iremonger



Easter Weekend – Wine & Food

Lamb is traditional – and with wonderful local lamb available in the village it seems a shame to suggest a chicken dish but sometimes a change is welcome – Red Nose Chicken. The recipe comes from Red Nose Day 1997 and was demonstrated by Delia Smith and Lenny Henry. It is a casserole type dish, easy to make, and will sit in the oven for ages if everyone is late.

I also have a recipe for a fish dish which is called Fish for a Hangover and comes from some long ago and long lost Scandanavian cookbook. Not that anyone in the village suffers from hangovers (although there maybe one or two with the delicious wines suggested below...)... but it is an easy and unusual way to cook fish.

RED NOSE CHICKEN

8 chicken thighs on the bone with skin on
 2 tbsp olive oil
 2 tbsp lemon juice
 2 medium onions, quartered
 Salt & pepper

Sauce

150 ml red wine
 8 tbsps dark soy sauce
 4 tbsps red wine vinegar
 2 heaped tbsps tomato puree
 4 tbsp maple syrup
 2 heaped tbsps ground ginger
 2 heaped tbsps. Mustard powder
 4 large cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
 3 teaspoons tabasco sauce



Preheat oven to 200 c . Mix the olive oil and lemon juice and brush the chicken with this. Tuck the onions in with the chicken and put the rest of the oil lemon liquid in with them. Season with salt and pepper. Put the chicken uncovered on the high shelf and cook for 25 mns. Meanwhile mix the sauce ingredients together.

After the 25 mins take out the pan and pour off the liquid. Then pour the sauce over the chicken and put back in the oven uncovered for another 25 mins, basting at least twice, until the chicken is caramelized and the sauce reduced. It will be blackened and crispy.

Serve with rice, mashed potatoes or any grain which will absorb the sauce.

Red nose chicken wine pairing

Chicken casserole is hearty, warming and of course, delicious. As with all wine pairings, matching flavour for flavour is key, so as not to overpower either wine or food. If you're a white wine drinker, go for something a little fuller and riper. Try "The Search" from South Africa, currently on offer at Waitrose at £7.99 down from £9.99, made up of Grenache Blanc, Marsanne & Roussane, grapes originally from the Rhone valley. With a soft acidity, floral lift and a touch of white pepper, this will pair well with the spicy notes in Anella's dish. If you're a red wine drinker, why not stay with Rhone varietals, and enjoy arguably the best Cote du Rhone on the market by E.Guigal, £11.99 from Majestic. Juicy, spicy and medium bodied, this wine is incredibly comforting (just like this dish).



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RECIPE: FISH FOR A HANGOVER

For 4 people

Preheat oven to 180

4 cod pieces or any white fish (except sole) 250 gr each

Tomato puree

Gherkins/dill pickles – the large kind

White wine

Butter

Fresh dill

Butter bottom of casserole dish and snip some dill into it

Place fish pieces in dish and spread the tomato puree very generously over each piece of fish

Splash in some white wine so fish is barely half covered (don't submerge it or tomato paste will come off)

Slice the gherkins/pickles into one pound piece size thick and lay them over the fish like scales.

Then snip plenty of dill over the fish and season with salt and pepper

Wet and crumple some baking paper and cover the dish loosely, so it semi steams.

Bake for 20 mins

Serve with plain rice or new potatoes and a green vegetable -like frozen peas if you can't face preparing vegetables!

Fish for a hangover wine pairing

The tangy nature of gherkins and pickles in this dish call out for a mouth-watering white wine with a bright acidity. I'd opt for a textured, saline white such as Martin Codax's Albariño from Northern Spain's Rias Baixas (£11.99 from Majestic) which is crisp and savoury. Alternatively, any indigenous Italian white grape variety will offer refreshment and zing, particularly from northern regions. Rather impressively, Lidl's Gavi DOCG from Piemonte at £6.99 offers a citrus, mineral complexity, perfectly complimenting the natural acidity in the tomato sauce.

Anella PM & Tipple Talk

Goat Curry from Meonside Meats

You may or may not have been aware that goats arrived at Lower Farm for the very first time in April 2022. As 3-month-old Kids they grazed all summer on our scrubby hillsides, eating a mixture of grass, blackthorn and brambles. The goats came inside when the weather turned and have been fattened on hay from the farm. And now Meonside Meats have an exciting goat curry for you cooking enthusiasts to have a go at! Could this be the new Easter Dish for the Meon Valley? Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

Jamaican Curry Powder
 4 tbsp curry powder
 1 tbsp all spice
 1 tsp turmeric
 1kg of diced goat
 1 onion
 4 spring onions
 1 red pepper
 4 red chillis (deseed)
 5cm of garlic
 4 garlic cloves
 1 tin coconut milk
 1 tin chopped toms
 1 tube of tomato paste
 1 tbsp thyme



METHOD:

- 1) Marinade the goat meat – salt & pepper, 3 tbsp jamaican curry powder & leave it over night if possible, or at least 2hours
- 2) Sear the meat by heating veg oil on a medium heat in a large casserole pot, add 1 tbsp of curry powder, add the goat meat in batches, and once all the meat is seared put into a different bowl to rest.
- 3) Saute the vegetables in the casserole pot (sliced onion, sliced spring onions, pepper & chillis) – cook for a few minutes and then add the sliced / chopped ginger & crushed garlic – more curry powder depending on how strong you want it. Cook for a few more minutes.
- 4) Add the goat meat to the vegetables and stir it up.
- 5) Add the coconut milk / chopped tomatoes / the tube of tomato paste / the thyme
- 6) Add some water if the juices are not covering all the ingredients
- 7) Pop in the oven on a low heat (140) for 3 hours / until the meat is tender

Serve with a tzazki (homemade – very easy – grated cucumber, 1 clove of crushed garlic, Greek yoghurt stirred up – add salt & pepper) and rice.

East Meon Water and Waste

‘Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink’. So spake the ancient mariner. And the thought was echoed by local residents in January. There was too much water everywhere in East Meon and some of it was definitely not for drinking.

The floods that filled fields towards Drayton in January may have subsided but the anger and irritation of villagers at that end of the village who suffer sewage overflows does not. Clare de Lotbiniere, Mike Critchley and others downstream of the George are weary of the long wait for a solution. And those irritated by the seemingly endless drainage related road closures in Church Street, river watchers concerned for the health of the Meon (a globally important chalk stream) and others watching the new houses being built in Coombe Road must wonder what is going on. Why can't 21st century Britain sort out its drainage? And that's before we ask Surfers against Sewage for an opinion.

The background is that while East Meon has probably doubled in size in the last 60 years, our sewage and drainage is still all carried in a six inch pipe to the treatment works 600 yards west of the village. That pipe isn't big enough. More houses, more people and no new pipe equals a system that can't cope. Investment has been made over the years to improve the river flow. East Meon is a choke point and without that flooding would be even more frequent and unpleasant. Walkers may have spotted that the water treatment plant was the site of significant work last year – but this was only for new filtration tanks, designed to remove the phosphate and nitrates used to fertilise soil. Sadly it has no impact on drainage.

And what were the Church Street works? Minor improvements, but still no change to that six inch pipe that threads its way out of the village and across the fields. Apparently digital monitors have been installed but you don't need gadgets to tell you the bleeding obvious. It floods. And when it floods, sewage is forced out of the pipes, onto the road (and some back gardens) and into the river.

You can help reducing sewer blockages. Every year there are thousands of avoidable blockages in our sewers caused by the flushing of wet wipes, cotton buds and other inappropriate items down the toilet, or by pouring fat, oil and grease down the sink. These items cause blockages within the sewer systems, and these blockages often result in flooding to customers' properties or impact upon pollution to watercourses or coastal waters.

UK suffers from considerable issues with its elderly infrastructure. In the words of the Environmental Agency “East Meon suffers from surface water and ground water overload which when combined with an antiquated sewage network gives unsatisfactory sewer performance for residents”. The theory was that privatising suppliers would free them to raise the cash needed to address this. In the case of Southern Water it has raised billions. But who did it borrow the money from? Southern Water. Pardon? Yes, from a Cayman islands subsidiary, paying an inflation linked interest rate. That could be common sense, or it could be argued to create



Water treatment plant



Sewer drain

potential for deflating Southern Water’s nominal UK profits so its regulator can’t stop it raising prices. Financial engineering is quicker and cheaper than digging holes, and running rings round regulators pays. And somehow over the past ten years the Environmental Agency – the government body that Southern Water is responsible to on quality – has more staff overall and fewer and fewer on the ground. One poor chap covers all of East Hants, plus more besides. And if he finds problems that the rules allow him to fix he has to rely for any work on – Southern Water.

Before you ask, our Parish Council and East Hants District Council have almost no power over the utilities. They can and do harass and hassle, but the system is set up so they have no legislative teeth. EMPC have hustled and complained, but the UK utility industry ship of state sails on generating dividends for shareholders and bonuses for senior staff but very little action on our problems. Planning objections to Coombe Road which included water run off were given short shrift by the government inspector. How much mud has washed down the pipes in the last six months and what that has done to the capacity issues doesn’t bear thinking about.

The data suggests East Meon isn’t being singled out. The (2020) data Southern Water shared suggests Havant – The Budds Farm site and Peel Common - are far worse. And with a fairly small number of properties at risk the priority that will be attached to a proper fix remains a concern.

Southern Water say “We will be investing in the wastewater system to reduce the impact of storm discharges on the environment. This is scheduled for our next Asset Management Period (AMP8), which covers 2025-2030. The Environment Act requires these improvements to be completed by 2035”. Should we grit our teeth till then and put up with it? The groundswell of public dissatisfaction is becoming clearer by the day. The Times a has started a clean-up campaign. MPs are feeling the pressure. Will we ever get more than words on the subject?

Andrew Hughes



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Village Fruit

A bit about orchards, prompted by Stephen Hudson, my son-in-law, who recently wrote about them in Burwash's wildlife magazine. In Burwash, East Sussex, the Wild About Burwash group have planted a community orchard with benefits for school children, scouts and the villagers.

Traditional orchards are cited as a priority habitat for the UK but they have been significantly depleted. The National Trust recently reported that 81% of traditional orchards have been lost. This loss is illustrated in East Meon by checking the 1896 Ordinance Survey map, which shows that six or seven orchards have been lost from the immediate village. The map does not extend to Frogmore where there is at least one extant orchard at Compton Cottage. Mark Camillin of Compton Cottage kindly gave a photo (he thinks?) of Louisa Morris picking apples in the orchard she and her husband planted. Mark says: 'the setting does look very like our orchard here at Compton Cottage.'



What I hadn't realised is that orchard trees age quickly, creating dead wood, and offering many of the benefits that parkland trees take hundreds of years to develop. The cracks in bark, sap runs, rot holes and hollows create desirable conditions for many rare species, such as stag beetle larvae, that rely on standing dead wood.

Especially, orchards with trees of mixed ages offer a greater range of benefits, with younger trees allowing more light to grassland plants below. Older trees host lichens and provide increased shelter and food for animals. In addition to the trees' bounty of flowers for pollinators and fruit for people and animals, undisturbed grassland around the trees can support wildflowers and a range of habitats for small animals and their predators. A variety of grass height lets in different light levels, particularly in areas of scrub and fallen deadwood.

Thus, an orchard offers additional productivity to open pasture, with layers of food production from the fruit above to grazed livestock below and other activities that the orchard could support, such as beehives and honey production.

Another point made by Stephen is that orchards of fruit trees and complex, undisturbed soil, capture carbon. Climate change will bring uncertainty and orchards offer resilience to this uncertainty. As well, wood pasture offers shelter to extremes of weather to livestock and protection from soil erosion. Associated hedgerows and other features provide a further range of habitats and holistically they provide a concentrated complexity of diversity for bird species such as lesser spotted woodpeckers, bullfinches and owls as well as bats, other mammals and insects.

The point being made is in isolation an orchard can only provide so much, but a network of interconnected orchards over the area of our Parish could offer landscape benefits and individual trees in gardens and empty spaces would contribute to this. Espaliers are a great way to grow fruit trees for those of us who haven't got much space.

In Burwash, East Sussex the villagers linked up to send their various apples to be made into cider and bottled. They charge £1 a litre and have 1,000 for sale – you do the sum! Profits will help restore and plant orchards in Burwash.

So, if planting a tree, let's consider a fruit one, especially an apple. After all, apple trees are quintessentially English and have a magic all of their own; there are hundreds of varieties, some intriguingly historical. But none older than the original apple, a charming point made by Peter Brown in his lyrical book *The Apple Orchard, The Story of our Most English Fruit*. He writes that God placed Adam 'in a garden eastward in Eden.' What sort of garden it was, is not mentioned in Genesis, the emphasis was solely on the trees and their ability to provide fruit which is so nutritious that 'to you it shall be for meat.' Eden was not a 'garden' at all. It was an orchard.

East Meon Nature Group's Tree Working Group (TWiG) has planted ten fruit trees adjacent to the Village Hall on Workhouse Lane; 7 apples, 1 pear, 1 cherry and 1 plum. We look forward to some marvellous village fruit.

Acknowledgments and thanks to Stephen Hudson (these words are largely his). And many thanks to Peter Brown, author, and Mark Camillin of Compton Cottage.

Sigi Goolden



There are those that do ... Litter picking in the valley

It is that time of year when the verges are cut back and the leaves are yet to appear and we realise just how surrounded we have all become by litter again. Thankfully it is also that time of year when a number of civic-minded high-vis volunteers venture out to do something about it.

Once a year in the Meon Valley there is a concerted effort to clear the litter along the sides of our roads. You may have seen us out and about, assuming we are on community service, some armed with litter-pickers, others preferring the greater exercise of the manual approach. If you do see us, or indeed any other groups doing their bit, please show your appreciation - it goes a long way. Regrettably the council seem unable to handle this task, not only due to a lack of resources but also as they would be obliged to close the roads to do so (elf and safety anyone?). As such we set out early on a Sunday morning when the roads are quiet to clear as much as we can before returning for a well-earned and eminently more satisfying Sunday lunch in the knowledge of a job well done.

My involvement was inspired by an upstanding octogenarian, who until very recently still joined us on litter expeditions (and only once had to be pulled out of a ditch!). A group of about 20 of us have tended to focus our efforts on the A32 either side of West Meon. We welcome new recruits each year and extend our reach to members of the 'Warnford Wombles', the 'Privett Pickers' and a group of like-minded East Meon neighbours, and now scour the verges in all directions radiating from the village. There are areas that are already handled and plenty, clearly, which are not - so if where you live is in need of attention, why not co-ordinate a group to take it on?

Although it is not dangerous, safety needs to be considered, so I am pleased to report that Winchester City Council have backed 'The Litter Partnership', who work with volunteers, providing a safety vehicle/equipment and take away the waste afterwards. But please note Sundays are their day of rest. The Litter Partnership have a helpful website <https://thelitterpartnership.org/> so do visit it if you feel you can help us keep our beautiful part of the world as it should be.

And... rather than passing it, pick it up. Although the majority of the litter is drinks cans / bottles, you never know what you'll find and it often leads to wild speculation as to how it came to be discarded. This year a cowboy hat, last year some black underwear...

Finally, a message of hope; - I am informed that moves are afoot to track repeat offenders from various fast-food chains, who can be tracked via social media and confronted accordingly.

Jim Ulph



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The Coronation Weekend



In just a few weeks from now the Coronation of King Charles III will be held in Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May. In East Meon plans for the coronation weekend are coming together with a programme of activities.

On Saturday 6th there will be a 'Ring for the King' peel of our church bells before the start of the Coronation Service which will be broadcast in All Saints church. It's wonderful to hear the fabulous music and see all the pageantry of a great British occasion on the big screen and to do this in our own historic church. There will be some special refreshments too.

In the afternoon, we're hoping to plant a Coronation Tree to mark the occasion – that's something we're working on – details to come.

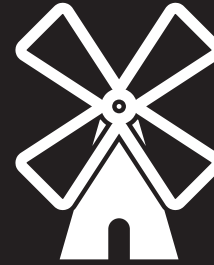
Sunday 7th starts at 12 o'clock with the Great East Meon Coronation Boat Race. There were so many requests to do this again after the race last year that we are doing just that – with a coronation flavour. It's open to all – see the classes listed in the magazine. So start building your entry now.

Then to the Green for the arrival of the East Meon King & Queen, a wonderful Village Tea Party (please bring a plate of something delicious to eat and share), a sports day, the maypole, activity stalls, live music, dancing and a party that will continue into the evening. There'll be food and drink and we will even have fireworks. We're planning on taking a super picture of everyone from a cherry picker, so be sure to be there.

And on Monday 8th it's what the Palace calls The Big Help Out. There's lots of things we can do to help each other and make our village even better. Details are being worked up now, watch out for further details.

The vital ingredient is for everyone to get involved to make this a super successful day and enjoy themselves even more. If you would like to be further involved and could offer some help, please contact chair@eastmenvillagehall.co.uk

The Coronation Team



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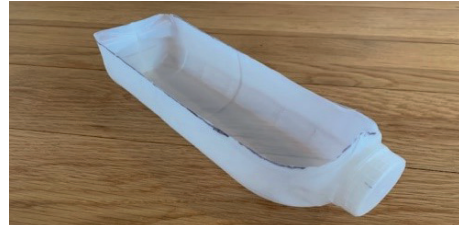
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GREAT EAST MEON CORONATION BOAT RACE 2023

The 2nd annual edition of the Great East Meon Boat Race is open to anyone with a connection to East Meon and will be held on Coronation Sunday 7th May at 12.00pm with registration and scrutineering from 11.30am outside the Izaak Walton pub.



Entries/classes

This year 3 types of craft will be eligible:

Class 1.

All craft must fit within a 'box' 26cm x 10cm and should be made from recycled/upcycled materials. All small parts should be adequately attached. No glitter allowed. Imagination and ingenuity encouraged! Entry fee: £2

Class 2.

Based upon standard 2-pint PET milk container as the hull but must also fit within the above 'box' rule. All other parts up to you but must be adequately attached and no glitter. Boats should be marked or decorated so they can be identified.

Entry fee: £2

Class 3.

The Royal Barge. No size constraint other than it should be able to float down the river. Imagination and ingenuity essential! Recycled/upcycled materials with all small parts firmly attached and no glitter. You can push the boat out here. Big is beautiful! Entry fee: Family £5, Corporate £10

Prizes will be awarded for best boat in class, first boat in each race and 'most deserving in the eyes of the Organisers'

Note: All boats will be inspected and may be refused entry if they do not comply with the class rules.

Good luck and get building!



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