

the

Bellingdon & Asheridge

Newsletter

Chairmans Chat

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter

Over the past few months we have carried out extensive building and refurbishment works at the hall. This is finally coming to an end and I am sure Don Baker is looking forward to a well-earned rest. The annex was completed in November and the refurbished toilets will be completed by mid March. This gives us enough time to paint the hallway entrance and varnish new doors prior to the new flooring being laid. I would like to thank you for your patience during these works. I am sure you will agree that when you see the transformation, it was all worth it.

On 28th March Cheryl Gillan will be coming along to officially open the annex. This is your opportunity to come and see the work that has been carried out, as well as to meet fellow residents.

Whilst having a look around, can you spare some time to help run this great facility. We are a small, friendly committee who would greatly appreciate some new members to bring fresh ideas and suggestion. If this person is you and if you want to know more, why not have a chat with one of us at the opening? We'd love to share what we do with you and how you can join us.



Annex : Grand Opening

Following grants from Sport England and Paradigm Foundation and a great deal of hard work by members of the committee, we have some great new facilities at the Bellingdon & Asheridge Village Hall.

The new Annex to the South of the changing rooms, includes new toilets for the playing fields, referee's changing room, storage room and a small meeting hall complete with kitchenette, which can be used by villagers for small meetings or events. (This is being offered at no charge for the remainder of 2015). Additionally the changing rooms and showers have been refurbished. This work has been enabled as a result of a grant (approximately 90%) from Sport England. Within the main hall we have an entire new set of toilets including an accessible (disabled) facility. This is courtesy of 50% funding from Paradigm Foundation.

We are thrilled that **our local MP, Cheryl Gillan, will be opening these new facilities on Saturday March 28th at 10am.** All villagers are invited to come along. We will be serving refreshments and look forward to seeing you then!

Save the Date!		
Belles Quiz	Grand Opening	Litter Pick
6 March 7.30pm	28 March 10am	12 April 9.30am
Tickets Pre-sold Ph 01494 757150	Cheryl Gillan opening the Annex	Meet at Village Hall



Volunteer Opportunities

We regularly ask for help with the upkeep and organisation of the village hall and events. However, we are currently at a critical juncture and desperately need support for our community hall and grounds. Please could you consider stepping forward and joining our team.

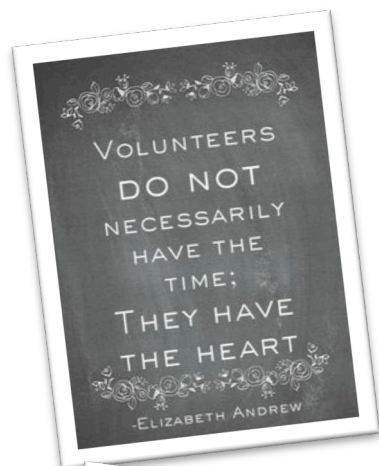
Hall bookings secretary

Chris Hood, our booking secretary, is well underway project managing the building of his new home. As a result, he has had to step down from this role for a while so we are looking for a villager to come forward to act as Booking Secretary for the Hall for the next 12-18 months. Support will be provided during the running in period.

Community Playground Supervisor

The hall playground was created about 3 years ago and is freely available to all villagers and their children. However, it is in need of a supervisor to look after the maintenance requirements. This would include organising (not necessarily doing) grass cutting, tidying of hedges and checking the equipment for damage and repairs.

Anyone interested in taking on these roles and supporting your community, please email contact@bellingdon.com or phone 01494 757150.



Horticultural Society

We all have places in our garden that present a bit of a challenge when it comes to getting anything to grow, but fear not! For every difficult place, there is a plant that will thrive! Try the following and you will see what I mean:-

Dry Shade:-

- Japanese Anemones, Alchemilla Mollis, Epimedium, Pulmonarias and Bergenia

Boggy Soil:-

- Candelabra Primula, Astilbe, Lobelia Cardinalis and Irs Sibirica

Windy Corner:-

- Miscanthus (grass), Sea Holly, Perennial wallflower, Cordylines and Nepeta

Here are the dates for our events this year. Please do come along. They are all at the Village hall.

26th March, 7.30pm. AGM

16th May, 10am-noon. Plant Sale

27th June, afternoon. Plant stall & Basket raffle at the Village Fete





Photos: Rebecca Griffiths

Beautiful Battery Hens

After keeping hens for several years and repeatedly losing them to Mr Fox and family we decided to have a break from hen-keeping until we fox proofed our coop and run. In March 2012 we were ready, and decided to rehome four ex battery hens. March 2012 was cold and snowy and we brought home four hens which looked almost oven ready - their combs were pale, they were all bald and weighed next to nothing. The coop had been moved inside a shed and had a small run attached, so for two weeks we kept them indoors, feeding them layers mash (hen food) mixed with warm water to try and keep them warm. They didn't move around very much and would stand on their own toes, presumably because they were not used to space. And yet these fascinating creatures produced an egg a day. When we first let the hens outside they would look up and freeze. They had not seen the sky or other birds so found life above them to be fascinating. They refused to eat anything that was not their regular food, and rarely moved very far from their coop.... but not for long.

After six weeks they had all grown back their feathers and they were becoming more adventurous. The garden was beginning to blossom and was proving to be a huge

adventure for our quartet. They took to having dust baths in my newly prepared vegetable beds and scratching among the compost heaps for bugs and worms. The trampoline became a place of shelter when it was raining and the patio was the sun trap to sun bathe in. As winter approached, the smallest of the girls found that she could escape the garden. I never knew where she went to but she always returned in the evening. My neighbours told me that she would come into their garden and eat up fallen nuts and seeds under their bird feeder. This same bird decided that the nesting box was not good enough for her and she made a nest in the flower beds and began laying there. We found this out when weeding - a clutch of around a dozen eggs with a very proud hen on top.

This winter, almost two years on, the egg production has slowed down and my girls may be reaching the end of their productive life. They are wonderful to see around the garden and run to greet me as I step out of the kitchen door, so will now enjoy a well-earned retirement. And maybe another four battery hens will be rescued this spring to give us our daily eggs. If you too would like to rescue some battery hens, you can get them from the British Hen Welfare Trust (www.bhwt.org.uk).Helen Griffiths

Annual Litter Pick



The annual clearance of litter in the village will take place on **Sunday 12th April**.

Please meet at 9.30 am at the Village Hall and join us for this surprisingly fun morning with your fellow villagers

We look forward to meeting willing helpers with this tidying up project. The Council has kindly provided pickers to support our work.

Free bacon rolls and tea/coffee will be provided at 12.00 noon for all volunteers.



Curvaceous Cook

Beef and Bean Chilli

I have lost count of the number of chillis that I have made over the years, but this recipe is by far the most delicious and, surprisingly, came from Slimming World! I have added a few bits to it, and it freezes beautifully. It is not too hot, so I always serve with chilli sauce for those who want it.

Ingredients

- 2 onions, 2 carrots, 2 sticks celery and 3 garlic cloves, all finely chopped
- 800g lean minced beef
- 800g tinned tomatoes, chopped
- 4 tbs tomato puree
- 2 tsp chipotle or dried chilli flakes
- 1 tsp each of ground cumin and ground coriander
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 beef stock cube crumbled, or I use a rich beef Knorr stockpot
- Salt and pepper
- 400g can mixed beans in chilli sauce
- 400g can kidney beans in chilli sauce
- 3 roasted red peppers in brine from a jar (you could roast your own and skin them, but these do have a lovely flavour)
- Large handful washed red lentils
- Large handful chopped fresh coriander

If it is too hot for you, just serve with plain yogurt. For 6 people, at least!

Gently fry all the vegetables in very little oil in a big oven proof pot. Add spices.

Meanwhile on a high heat, brown off the meat in batches, adding them to the vegetables. Clean the pan with some water and add to pot. Add the tomatoes and puree, enough water to just cover, lid on, and put in a slow cooker, low oven or bottom Aga oven for pretty much as long as you like, but at least an hour.

30 minutes before you want to eat, stir in all the beans with their sauces, the coriander and peppers, and check seasoning. You only actually need to add them 10 minutes before, but I like my pulses well cooked!

Serve with more fresh coriander and a shake of smoked paprika and plain yogurt.



Bellingdon Belles

The Belle's first meeting of the year took place in the new Hall Annex. And what a great space it is too. Warm, cosy, great lighting and a little kitchenette (for making teas and coffee and serving up snacks and drinks) and private toilets. With lots of parking of course.

We worked on planning our next event – the Village Quiz night on the 6th March. And the one after that which is likely to be a "Race Night" in May. Watch this space to ensure you don't miss it.

We have a new member who we are thrilled will be joining our fun group. If you too would like to join us, please get in touch (01494 757150).



Details of clubs, events and village news, including hall bookings: www.bellingdon.com

Please send your comments, questions and ideas for future articles to the Editor at newsletter@bellingdon.com.