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POPLEY MATTERS

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December 2020

Distribution of 5,400

Issue 226



FULL OF LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

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Closing date to submit articles and adverts (5pm 15-12-20) editor@poppleymatters.org.uk



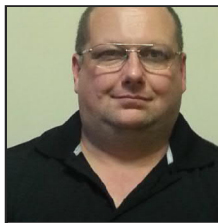
Editor
Jane Frankum

Editor: The Popley Matters team wish you all as good a Christmas as we can. At the time of me writing to you no one knows what Christmas will be like for contact with our families. I think this Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives forever and I for one certainly appreciate the freedom we all had before; lock-down in March came as a terrific shock to all of us. People pulled together and I have heard of some wonderful reports of people volunteering. This included making protective masks and scrubs out of bedding and duvets that were donated by people all across Hampshire mostly going to Basingstoke, Andover and Winchester hospitals. They also made PPE for care homes, surgeries, and carers until they started to get donations of rolls of material. People have also been making up parcels and delivering to families that otherwise would have had to do without and even to NHS staff whose shifts finished close to or after closing time. Panic buying stripped the shelves and by the time they finished work there was little left to buy.

There will be many people on their own this Christmas so please with my usual requests look out for your friends and neighbours; it may be extra tough this year. If you know of a person or family that may need a little help, please let Paul and me know as there is a lot of wonderful people who are there and want to help. Stacy who is half of a duo is asking if you want them to come and sing for and with you, details are on page 1.

The community centres are trying their best to keep clubs and the centres going and have some limited groups meeting using, of course, social distance precautions. Some church services at St Gabriel's will go ahead with Christingle and Christmas services. You will need to book ahead and details are on page 6. I would suggest you contact your church and see what they will be doing. Let's all hope the vaccine works and it is not too far away when we can get back to some normality.

Contact me by on phone 819924, drop me a note through our door at 405 Abbey Road RG24 9EL or email editor@popleymatters.org.uk.



Sub Editor
Paul Frankum

The views in this publication are not necessarily the views of the editorial team, the members of the committee, or the Popley Matters magazine.

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for further information

Greetings from Chineham Library!

Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will be on the other side of Lockdown 2, and Christmas is not that far away ...

As usual, if you want to learn something new over the next few weeks as the nights start to draw in there are a number of courses available online as part of the 'Learning in Libraries' scheme. To find out more and to book a course visit the Hantsweb shop online on <https://www.hants.gov.uk/shop/home.php?cat=369> and click on 'Online learning'. Be aware that you may need to download Zoom for course access.

Hampshire Library offers a Home Library Service to support those who cannot visit a library due to ill-health, disability, or caring duties. If you do not use the Home Library Service but are taking additional shielding precautions, Ready Reads selections and reservations can also be collected on your behalf. Go to www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/ready-reads to find out more, or ring **01962 454747**.

We are still running the Ready Reads scheme if you would like us to pick your books for you – if you would like to register, either ring **01962 454747** or go to www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/ready-reads to fill in the online registration form. We have had some nice feedback from our customers, with some saying that they have been introduced to new authors and books which they are enjoying very much!

Please remember that joining the library is FREE, browsing is FREE, the Ready Reads and Home Library Service are FREE, and our e-offerings through BorrowBox and RBDigital are FREE!

We are currently open on the following days:

Tuesday: 10 am – 4 pm

Wednesday: 10 am – 4 pm

Friday: 10 am – 4 pm

Saturday: 10 am – 4 pm

We wish you a happy festive season, and hope to see you soon!
Chineham Library Team

Calling all Music-Lovers, Especially Those Who May be Feeling Alone or Isolated This Christmas.

We are a local acoustic music duo called Wherewithal and want to spread a little joy during these difficult times. We're offering short personalised music performances outside people's homes during the school holidays, for those people who may be missing out on their usual celebrations or feel they need a boost. We can perform a couple of Christmas songs or, if you have other ideas for a favourite song you'd like to hear, we can discuss learning it especially for you. If you'd like a bit of a longer performance, why not team up with your neighbours for a group gig and arrange for those that need assistance to be able to wrap up and come outside to see us too? Of course, singing along is welcome!

Slots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please message our Facebook page @wherewithalband for more details. Happy holidays to everyone!



Check Your Passport

If you plan to travel to Europe from 1st January 2021, please use this link to check whether your passport will be valid.

https://www.gov.uk/check-a-passport-travel-europe-1-january-2021?utm_source=pptcheckersms&utm_medium=offline&utm_campaign=transition

Remember that your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will be valid up to 31 December 2020 and you might need an international driving permit (IDP) to drive in some countries. More information on travelling to Europe from 1 January 2021 such as healthcare, border control, visas, driving, insurance, pets, roaming and business topics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

If you do need a new passport photo for business travel, please contact me for a covid compliant passport shoot. Appointments are not always necessary. Bookings for non-essential travel will recommence when lockdown is lifted.



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Telephone: 01256 465547 Website: www.everestcommunityacademy.org E-mail: info@everestcommunityacademy.org

Everest Pupils have donated nearly 150kg of donation for Basingstoke Food Bank

Everest Community Academy have been running a house competition to encourage pupils, parents and those in the local community to donate to the Basingstoke Food Bank to help feed those in crisis, across the Basingstoke and Deane area.

The idea was developed by the Everest Pupils Inspirational Committee (EPIC) in aid of supporting the wider community as 'it is important to give to the less fortunate... because we don't want other people in our community to worry about things that everyone should have' (Epic Student Representative. Together, Everest has managed to donate an amazing 147.10kg of food, feeding 350 people in need.

Thank you to all members of the school community for their generous donations, and well done to those in Scott House for donating the most food and winning the competition. With your help, the food bank has fed over 5,800 adults and children since January of this year.

Many thanks.



Our activities continue

Like other organisations, the U3A is restricted again at the moment, and having to rely on Zoom, email and other on-line packages. But we have a wide range of groups using Zoom now, and others are considering it, so many activities continue.

Our members are playing bridge or practising their dance steps at home. They are joining discussions on literature, photos, gardening, arts and crafts, science, philosophy, and history (to name but a few). Learning is carrying on too, from French and Spanish to calligraphy, creative writing and family history. So if anyone is looking for something to cheer them up throughout the winter, have a look on www.basingstokeu3a.org/covid-19 for further details. Membership is still £5 at the moment, with unlimited access to our activities, so do give us a try. There's even a holiday in Croatia planned for 2021 www.basingstokeu3a.org/excursion-and-holiday-details

A Christmas quiz

To help raise some money for our U3A, we've put together a fun quiz with a Christmas theme: stills from Christmas films, photos to identify celebrities dressed as Santa (an easy example is shown here), pictorial clues to festive words and phrases, and a "spot the differences" Christmas scene.

If you'd like try the quiz for a small donation and have the chance to win a gift token prize, further details can be found on our website at

www.basingstokeu3a.org/christmas-quiz

Registered Charity no. 1086263

www.basingstokeu3a.org/



Fun, exercise and socially distanced line dancing!

One of the activities we've managed to keep going during the summer is Line Dancing. Like all the groups which have managed to meet face to face, we hope to start this up again as soon as current restrictions are lifted.

We run a bespoke session to teach beginners the basics, dancing alongside more experienced dancers. And we're gathering a waiting list for when we can manage the classes again.

www.basingstokeu3a.org/music/Line-dancing

Information about all our activities can be found at www.basingstokeu3a.org/ We're looking forward to meeting you!

County Councillor Report: Firstly may we wish you all a Happy Christmas and sincere hope that 2021 is a lot better for us all than this year has been. When the consultation on Chineham Library started, pointed out that we should be in the catchment area and sent evidence of many Popley families who use the library, that Popley was a lot closer than many other areas that had been included, and that Popley was within a few minutes walk. The Save Chineham Library Group were amazing and I worked together with them and they produced the very accurate and professional report to the County. The facts and figures in the report were presented to the cabinet member and chair of the Library Committee. I pointed out that Chineham Library do an article in Popley Matters every month and the residents of Popley feel that it is also our library. The facts were clear and they agreed that Popley was, and should be, in the catchment area. This had such an effect on the figures when they were assessed, and Chineham Library was saved. I would also like to thank Cllr Paul Frankum for sticking with me and helping with the research. It was an uphill battle and the battle was won but if we don't use the Library, albeit at the moment it is online, We could still lose it. **Cllr Jane Frankum 01256 819924 email:- jane.frankum@hants.gov.uk**

Popley West: I am happy to be able to update you all on the progress at Popley Community Park, at last I have been sent a drawing of the play equipment so we have put the information on page 15.

This has been a long, long time coming and had to be done in phases as and when we qualified for funding from developer contributions. Tintern Close Play Area was also upgraded and some play areas in Popley East. Our next campaign is for better disabled access. I confess I didn't realise just how difficult it is for disabled and when you rely on a disabled buggy to get around until I became a user. Simple trips like going to the shops, doctors, dentist, hospital or town means looking at maps to find a route where there are dropped kerbs and can mean a much longer journey. The poor state of some paths is also a concern. The bridge from Abbey Road to Oakridge was impossible for buggies and wheelchairs. Thankfully once we pointed it out, it was repaired very quickly as well as the dropped kerb at the rear of Shangri-La widened and made useable. If you know of any please let us know. We have approached the county about the inaccessible ones along the main Abbey Road and it has been put on the work programme.

Cllr Paul Frankum 01256 819924
cllr.paul.frankum@basingstoke.gov.uk
Cllr Jane Frankum 01256 819924
cllr.jane.frankum@basingstoke.gov.uk

Popley East: 2020 has proven to be a very difficult year but what has come to the fore is the wonderful community spirit that we have both in our ward and right across the town and our thanks go to everyone.

Since the start of the first lockdown, in our role as your ward councillors, we have had to change how we do things as we've been unable to visit residents in their homes or hold our monthly surgeries but, through email and telephone, residents have continued to raise their issues and concerns and we've taken these forward. Please continue to use these contact methods detailed below.

Residents will be aware of the parking improvements that have been carried out in the ward over the last couple of years. Burns Close and Tasmania Close are examples where several new parking spaces have been created and they have been very well received. Proposals for additional parking in Lawrence Close and Dryden Close have now been worked on and residents in these roads will either have recently received correspondence, or will shortly be about to, from the Borough seeking their views on the proposed changes. Please do let the Borough know your thoughts on them.

Finally, can we wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Cllr David Potter 07941507801
cllr.david.potter@basingstoke.gov.uk
Cllr Janet Westbrook 07747335200
cllr.janet.westbrook@basingstoke.gov.uk



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Bermuda Community Hall

Due to COVID-19 the hall is closed and there is no hall hire, however if restrictions are lifted at the start of December, we are hoping that these activities will resume:

Monday from 6:30pm to 8pm we have kick boxing



Wednesday is yoga night with Lou Bedford. Starting at 6:15 and finishes at 7:15, for more details ring 07753109222 or go to www.loubefordyoga.co.uk



Thursday night is street dance and ballet 4:30pm to 6:30pm for details ring Samantha pike on 07811299484



Thank you for your patience,

We wish you a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!



Basingstoke Deane

Rotary



CONTACTS

Helen Ricketts: -
helen@highpathway.co.uk
 or
 Paul Temple:-
tempaul45@gmail.com

**YOUR LOCAL
 ROTARY
 ROUNDUP**

December 2020



'CHRISTMAS CORONA QUIZ'

Below are clues to Christmas anagrams (number of words in brackets) and cryptic clues to Christmas Carols.

1. To wishy washy, rare crummies (6)
2. Manage rain way (4)
3. Troubledly trim me (3)
4. Tinsel two (3)
5. This warm ethics (2)
6. Kneel dottily (2)
7. Jill begs len (2)
8. Sweet gherkin (3)
9. Dug maintain petrochemical (6)
10. In the glints (6,5)
11. Jubilation to the terrestrial globe.
12. Noise injunction 8.00pm to 6.00am.
13. Small equus africanus asinus.
14. Miss Willoughby + Hedera genus.
15. Was the earliest Edmonds or Gallagher?
16. Listen, celestial messenger is vocalising.
17. Summon twice footballer Adebayor.
18. Removed in an animal feeding trough.
19. Summon the entirety of believers.
20. Mr Beckham's only visit to this noble place

Answers will be on our website and Facebook after Christmas.

Rotary Christmas Shoeboxes



A huge 'Thank you' to all the generous local people who donated Shoeboxes for our annual Christmas appeal. It's been challenging to get close to our usual numbers but by the time you read this the boxes will be on their way to give some seasonal cheer to under privileged children overseas. Rotarians from the UK and the destination country oversee the shipment until the children receive the boxes. A Romanian lady, now living in Basingstoke, told us of the joy she experienced as a child on receiving a Rotary Christmas shoebox, her first ever present. Look on YouTube to find video clips by Malcolm Dent about shoeboxes from our Rotary district.



"A Healthier Hampshire in a Heartbeat"

Can you help Basingstoke Deane Rotary provide improved Cardiac Service at Basingstoke Hospital?

Rotary has already raised a substantial amount of money towards purchasing equipment that will treat Atrial fibrillation (a debilitating condition) but we still need your help for the final push to make this happen and achieve our goal to improve the lives of the numerous local people with this type of heart condition. Presently patients travel to Southampton for this essential treatment. With this equipment they can be treated in Basingstoke.

Find out more on our website: www.rcbd.org.uk

Still time to donate, go to:-

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/a-healthier-hampshire-in-a-heartbeat>

Basingstoke Deane Rotary is a group of 35 men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds. All live locally in the borough but some commute to work outside Basingstoke. Most joined Rotary to help others less fortunate, and they find Basingstoke Deane Rotary adds another extremely enjoyable dimension to their lives.

If you would like to find out more about how we enjoy ourselves, just tune in to www.rcbd.org.uk to see what we have coming up, or contact Helen or Paul above to find out more. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Facebook: @RotaryBasingstokeDeane

Twitter: @RBstokeDeane



CHRISTMAS AT ST GABRIEL'S

SUBJECT TO COVID 19 GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

- Sunday 13th December ~ Christingle Services 4 & 5.30pm
- Sunday 20th December ~ Carols by Candlelight at 6pm
- Christmas Eve ~ Midnight Communion 11.30pm
- Christmas Day ~ Family Celebration with Carols 11.00am

PLEASE NOTE:

All services are subject to available places so please book early through St Gabriel's web page www.stgabrielspopley.net

Make your own Christingle and bring to the service. Collect your Christingle making kits from church on Saturday 14th December from 10.00am—12 noon



Probus Hears a Story of Tilting at Windmills

The book about Spaniard, Don Quixote, who futilely attacked the sails of windmills, has some similarities with the experience of Probus Club of Basingstoke member, Dave Kitson.

Some years ago, Dave and wife Jennifer, bought a house in Kent that had an interesting extension – a windmill. Known as Stanford Mill it had been built in 1857 as a corn mill. By the time of their purchase the sails had been removed but was Grade 2 listed.

However, Dave thought it possible to make it usable as an annexe to the house. Some of the floorboards and ladders were rotten or missing due to an inherent problem of severe damp in the mill.

One day, when working at the top of the mill, Dave heard someone coming up one of the aluminium ladders he had installed but there was nobody there. He descended via the same squeaky ladder to the outside and then heard the same noise. It came from a man on an aluminium ladder painting the outside of a house over 70 metres away and yet, in the mill, it sounded almost behind him.

Standing so long and so visible there were many occasions when the mill came under some form of attack. In the First World War a passing Zeppelin dropped a bomb splitting the brickwork on the ground floor. A lightning strike blew out many of the power sockets and an earthquake failed to damage the mill but separated some brickwork on the house.

Selling the house, with a potentially problem windmill, did not present any difficulties. The buyer needed deep pockets if the mill was to be brought back to some usable condition. Windmills may stand proudly on the landscape but, as Dave Kitson will attest, could need bottomless pits of money for their upkeep.

See www.probusbasingstoke.club



*Basingstoke
and Deane*

Have Your Say on Budget Proposals to Keep Council Tax Low and Protect Services Residents Value

Proposals for a Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council budget, that protects services that residents value most while keeping council tax low, have been agreed for consultation.

Approved by Cabinet last night (10 November), a £5, or 10p per week, average increase proposed for the borough council part of the council tax for 2021/22 is likely to make it one of the lowest of the districts in Hampshire, and most of the rest of the country, again.

Despite this, the council still has one of the highest spend per heads of districts in England and the highest of districts in Hampshire. This is despite rising costs and demand for services and a huge reduction in government funding.

Like many others across the country, the council's budget has also been put under further pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with falling income and extra costs to provide support during this unprecedented time.

Maintaining services that residents value, including weekly bin collections, community safety patrols and keeping areas looking their best, are funded as part of proposals to balance the budget next year.

This includes previous commitments for additional funding to increase community safety patrols and a new scheme for councillors to support small-scale projects in their communities, which were delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help fund services, as well as a small increase in council tax, a 3% average increase in fees and charges to help pay for the costs of these services without putting the burden on council tax payers is proposed.

Over the last 11 years £15.1 million in savings have been made while protecting services, with the borough council continuing to look at how it can run more efficiently.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Improvement Cllr Hannah Golding said: "Residents' priorities are at the heart of everything we do and our proposals continue to focus on what matters most to our communities as well ensuring we are well placed to prepare for the borough's future as we work alongside our partners to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our proposed budget plans for the coming year will continue to make us a low council tax borough despite having one of the highest spending per head on services of all districts in the country.

"Although we have a history of strong financial management, we are having to make difficult decisions with reductions in funding and rising costs and demand for our services to ensure we can continue to provide services in the future. With a £1.03 million budget gap in 2021/22, we are awaiting confirmation of government funding to help address this as part of its annual spending review.

"Alongside this we are continuing to look at the opportunities we have to address funding gaps in the future, including how we work to ensure we continue to be as efficient as possible and our services continue to meet the needs of our residents."

"It is really important that our budget continues to reflect the priorities of our communities so we would love to hear from residents, businesses and groups across the borough to help shape our proposals."

Feedback from the consultation, that runs until 3 January 2021 at www.basingstoke.gov.uk/budget2020, will be considered before final decisions about the budget are taken at a meeting of Council on 25 February 2021.

Merton Junior School



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To mark the momentous Remembrance Day, each pupil in school made a poppy to create a field of poppies and wrote a special message to a soldier – either from historic wars and battles, or to those who have fought recently or who are fighting currently. The 2 minute silence held across school was a moving event.



Autumn News

Nov 2020

Is your child due to start school in September 2021?

Merton Infant School is a Good school with excellent facilities. We offer an exciting education for our children and provide meaningful experiences that make learning memorable and enjoyable.

Unfortunately, due to current COVID 19 restrictions we are unable to offer our usual open days and school tours in person. Instead we would like to invite parents and children to view our virtual school tour at the following web link:

<https://youtu.be/lvAuZ3d0xcw>

This video can also be viewed on our school website under Key Information - New Starters September 2021.

Please contact the school if you have any questions.

The deadline for applications is Friday 15th January 2021.

We look forward to hearing from you.

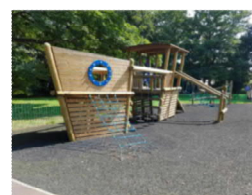
Larissa James
Headteacher



Our children have been busy so far this term, creating museums to share their Stone Age houses; being scientists to explore electricity and making box lamps; reading Shakespeare; writing to NASA; learning about Peru and creating models of Machu Pichu and the Rainbow Mountain and building shelters (to name just a few things!). Our Curriculum has lots of hands-on, practical experiences which allow our child to not only get excited about their learning, but deepen their understanding and build a wide range of skills across a range of subjects.

Merton Junior School are accepting applications for school places for Year 3 in September 2021, please take a look at our school website (www.mertonjuniorschool.co.uk) or you can email our admin team at admin.office@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk for further information.

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Hello Popley

Well it's that time of year again where we shall all be getting ready for Christmas. We at MHA communities have a fun 12 days of Christmas raffle; five numbers is £5 and twelve numbers £10 with lots of lovely prizes to be won. We are still delivering the lovely hot meals from Oasis Café on a weekly basis. What else could MHA possibly squeeze into our members' lives from telephone befriending to Zoom activities, the cake delivery and, of course, the monthly raffle which is drawn on the last Wednesday of the month by myself. This month's raffle prize is a lovely bottle of wine from Berry Brothers and a box of chocolates raffle tickets are £2 a strip and all monies raised go straight back into our own MHA to communities and supporting our members.

I am hoping by the time this is printed and sent out to the Popley community the lock down would have been eased and some kind of normality resumed. If I'm honest, I'm dreading a lockdown Christmas and not being able to spend time with my family and friends, so this year I have decided to bear the bank holidays over the xmas period. I shall be continuing to work and making lots of befriending calls to our members delivering meals on wheels and hopefully bringing some love and laughter and support to our members over this period.

If you know of an elderly relative or neighbour who would love a telephone befriending service or to join in the Zoom activities than please get in touch with me.

We are always looking at extra volunteers to help with the telephone befriending, delivery of hot meals etc. If you have a couple of spare hours a week or a month then please think about becoming a volunteer with MHA Please get in contact with me at Francesca.wildash@mha.org.uk or 07720680403; please leave a message and contact number and I will get back to you.

All that is left for me to say is Popley, be safe and we at MHA Communities wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Francesca Wildash

POPLEY FIELDS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

AGM

THURSDAY 28th JANUARY 2021

7.00PM

Popley Fields Community Centre

For more information about joining the committee

Or to find out what happens at the centre.

Email us at popleyfields1996@hotmail.co.uk



Lions Club of Basingstoke

World Sight Day at Morrisons went very well. Our position was perfect. Everyone had to pass by our very interesting table display after shopping. Many people walked past and then returned either for a closer inspection of the table or to put a donation in our bucket. It gave us an opportunity to chat to people and explain how we raise money and how we spend it. They were really interested. As PRO it was an eye opener. Having produced these reports for nine years, which are published in virtually all the community magazines, 80% of the people had never heard of us. Wow!

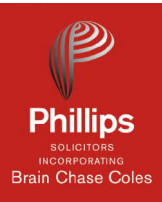
Fundraising: Latest venture is the Basingstoke and Deane Community Lottery on which we have a page which enables supporters to buy lottery tickets. 50% of the purchase price comes to our charity account and another 10% to other good causes. We can only hope that this is more successful than Easyfundraising (which isn't), and Amazon Smile (which is more wry grin).

Welfare: We have received 4 new bids for assistance. One had to be rejected immediately. The other 3 are being scrutinised. In these straitened times we look at both sides of every coin.

Reboot IT: Basingstoke Voluntary Action and our Club are co-operating in this scheme to revamp old computers to be passed on to people who cannot afford new ones. So if you have a redundant computer you'd like to donate for re-cycling please contact BVA on 01256 423816 or email contact@bva.org.uk with your details and they will arrange collection.

Fun: As we can't meet for a proper dinner meeting we had a Zoom Halloween Party complete with Funky Facts, Quizzical Questions and a menu of Eyeball Pasta, Freaky Fingers, Witch's Cauldron and Slime Soup with Dragon Drool – delicious!

Next Month: By popular demand another Zoom Quiz on 14th November. This time we're going mad with 110 easy questions. (Well they are if you know the answers!)



Leave a gift for charity

Whilst many Christmas presents will be forgotten as soon as they have been unwrapped, there is a festive gift that can make a big difference – leaving a legacy to a charity.

Three quarters of Britons regularly give to charity in their lifetimes, but only 6% include a charity when writing a Will.

Without this source of income many charities would have to cut important services and some could not exist.

Lucy Watson, who heads the Wills and Probate team at Phillips Solicitors, said: “Charities rely on both regular donations and legacies in Wills to be able to continue their good work. Leaving money to charity in your Will can make a huge difference and what a wonderful way to ensure that your legacy lives on after you’ve gone.”

“It is especially important to think of charities at the moment when so many of their normal fundraising avenues have been cancelled with the coronavirus pandemic.”

Donations can be as small or as large as you wish, as every gift makes a difference. A gift made to a UK registered charity is also inheritance tax free.

“If your estate is large enough to be chargeable to inheritance tax, gifts to charity will reduce not just the overall amount of tax paid by the rest of your estate but also the rate of tax, resulting in your family getting the most of their inheritance,” explained Lucy.

“If you are looking to leave money to a charity you may well consider Sebastian’s Action Trust, which is Phillips’ charity of the year.”

Sebastian’s Action Trust provides emotional, social and practical care together with outreach and specialist support to families in Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

It also offers respite holidays to families from all over the UK at The Bluebells – the Trust’s unique facility in North Waltham, just outside of Basingstoke.

For help in leaving a charitable legacy, or for any other Wills and Probate issues, please contact Lucy by emailing lucy.watson@phillips-law.co.uk or by calling 01256 854646.

For more information about the wide range of legal services offered by Phillips Solicitors, please visit www.phillips-law.co.uk



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Dear Friends

Whatever you are doing or wherever you are this festive season, whether it's listening to the radio or watching TV this month or even, pandemic restrictions allowing, you might be wandering around the shops in the town by the time this is published. No doubt at some point the lyrics of those all too familiar Christmas songs will worm their way so deeply into your mind until you wake up humming or singing at least one of them over and over again! For example: *"It's Christmas-time; there's no need to be afraid. At Christmastime, we let in light and we banish shade. And in our world of plenty we can spread a smile of joy. Throw your arms around the world at Christmastime."* *"A very Merry Christmas, and a happy new year. Let's hope it's a good one, without any fear!"* or *"So here it is Merry Christmas everybody's having fun look to the future now, It's only just begun!"*

Set alongside the traditional Christmas Carols that we'll also be singing there is clearly an overriding theme in all these songs that speaks of a hope for the future; for ourselves, our families and for the world in which we live.

Where does this hope come from? Is it just rooted in this season of peace on earth, goodwill towards men, something to be put away once January arrives and things get back to 'normal', whatever that is or means! The past year has seen some seismic upheaval through the continuing pandemic. Images of the plight of refugees striving to find a better life, only to lose it through crossing the channel in boats way too small, have brought home the terrible anguish and suffering of other human beings, and for so many there is still the stress and anxiety of daily living highlighted recently in the Children in Need campaign which this year raised an astonishing £38 million pounds!

Sadly, history is littered with the human debris of disease, poverty, conflict, conflict and war, so is it any wonder that we long to hear a message of hope? Hope for the future, for ourselves, for our community and humankind and when we hear it, doesn't it bring a good, good feeling with it?

I believe that as humankind we lack the capacity for permanent change. It seems to me that there is an essential need in the human spirit to fill a gap, to search out something that's gone missing! A gap we try to fill with all sorts of harmful things! I know of only one way to fill that gap! A message is broadcast throughout the year, but especially so now, at this time! It is the message of a Saviour, born in a stable over 2,000 years ago, born for you and for me, born the Son of God! Our God is a God of compassion and care who rolled up his sleeves and got stuck in with us to show us how that hope we all long for can become a reality. If you have young children, why not check out this link on YouTube). A wonderful retelling of God's story.

When you're singing those Christmas songs or Carols, listen to the words! What are they saying to you? May God richly bless you and yours this Christmas time and throughout the coming year and may you know the peace of the Christ-child.

Your friend and vicar
Arthur. St Gabriel's, December 2020
01256 324734
<https://www.stgabrielspopley.net/>

Group Scout Leader	Colin Karslake	07796772500
Assistant Group Scout Leader	Douglas Gowan	07733325498
Beaver Leader	Mandy Pain	07508204098
Cub Leader	Charlotte Bell	07919148376
Scout Leader	Kevin Pocock	07717108560

As the Beavers and Cubs continue to meet weekly on Zoom here is a look at back at our meetings.

On the 27th October, we had a Virtual Halloween Party with everyone turning up in a range of scary and ghoulie Halloween costumes. Activities included a Halloween creature hunt, which involved searching a picture to find all the hidden creatures, helping a skeleton navigate a maze to find their missing head. Other activities included making milk bottle ghost lanterns and Halloween musical statues.

On November the 3rd, we marked Guy Fawkes night, finding out about the Firework Safety Code as well as making some fanatic pictures using paint and a straw.

On November the 10th we had arrange of activities to mark Remembrance Day including painting poppies on pebbles and discovering what sort of things Scouts did during the War to support the war on the Homefront. We ending the meeting with a 2-minute silence.

As we head towards the festive period our online programmes will start to take on a festive and wintery theme to try and bring some festive cheer to young people in these strange times we currently live in. If we can get everything sorted in time and the 2nd Lockdown extended, we hope maybe to hold a couple of "socially distanced" face 2 face Christmas parties so as to accommodate everyone.

Here are the answers to last month's two questions about airfield safety:

1. You are waiting for a helicopter to land. Should you...?
A. Run towards it
B. Stand on the spot where it's going to land to get a good view
C. Keep well away and wait for the rotors to stop and the pilot to signal it's safe before you approach it
Answer is C
2. A jet aeroplane is standing on the tarmac with its engine running. Where is safe to stand?
A. In front of the jet intake
B. To the side of the aircraft and well clear.
C. Behind the jet exhaust.
Answers is B

Finally, I thought I would share with you a couple comments left by one of the Cub Parents on the closed Cubs Facebook Page in response to our post about one of our Zoom Meeting, showing exactly why we are still going with our Zoom meetings, in these difficult time of Covid-19

Can I just say a massive thank you for all you do! We were just saying how Cubs has been a wonderful constant throughout these weird times. I vividly remember the first zoom meeting - the wonderful feeling that my children were interacting with their peers for the first time in ages. You've kept it up without a break and it has been totally amazing

It has been truly wonderful - more beneficial than you know for their mental health - thank you!!

Douglas Gowan
Assistant Group Scout Leader



The Covid-19 pandemic, has made a lot of changes to all of our lives, increased social isolation, perhaps more time on our hands?

Can you spare a couple of hours each month? Would you like to make a difference to your local community?

If so, why not consider joining Popley Fields Community Association? We meet (currently online) once a month to discuss the running of Popley Field Community Centre and other outreach activities like, events, youth club and Popley Festival.

No experience is necessary and everyone is welcome. Even if you don't feel you have anything to offer, by being willing to help you have all the qualifications required.

For more information please contact us via the e-mail below and we'll get one of the current team to contact you.

e-mail us at: office@popleyfields.org.uk

Many thanks and hope to hear from you soon,

The Popley Fields Team



BDDF - Basingstoke and District Disability Forum – the local charity for our disabled community continues to run regular free activities. Please follow us on social media and check the latest news on our website www.bddf.org.uk.

Activities include walking groups (Wednesdays and Thursdays); online winter coffee mornings called *Friday Tea Break Club*; and weekly mobility improving seated yoga (both online and face to face). Note all require pre booking.

Covid allowing, our next **Disability Information Day** will be held at Basingstoke's Malls shopping centre on 26th March 2021. This event is an opportunity to gain information, support and advice on disability related subjects from local organisations, businesses and government departments.

We are keen to start up a new in person support group for those affected by disability who would like to meet new people in a safe environment. If this is something you would be interested in, please email info@bddf.org.uk.

Do you have a disability related question and don't know which way to turn? BDDF have extensive signposting information. We can point you in the direction of the service or local organisation who will be able to help.

Volunteer opportunities - BDDF are looking for Walk Leaders (one hour per week commitment) to lead fully accessible and inclusive gentle walks in your local area.

Keep in touch – As well as following BDDF on social media, or visiting our website, you can sign up to be a BDDF Member (free) and will receive our regular newsletter detailing our latest events and services.

Thank you to everyone who has kindly supported and joined BDDF during a very difficult year for charities.

"Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more."
- Mother Teresa

BDDF wish you and your families a very merry Christmas.



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Our steps to a greener Basingstoke and Deane

Energy efficiency and renewable energy for your home

Now we are spending more time at home, finding ourselves in a new lockdown and with colder weather coming, we are probably more aware of the energy we are consuming in our daily lives. Perhaps now is the time to look into renewable energy schemes as an investment to reduce the costs of your energy bills and gain the security of generating some of your own energy.

The Energy Saving Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/> has a wealth of information about the different types of renewable energy, the benefits you will get from these, funding schemes available and pre-installation guidance.

Before considering a renewable energy system, it is best to look at the overall energy efficiency of your home and insulation is an important factor which can really make a huge difference to how warm your house feels. There is currently government funding for insulation, plus some additional measures.

Through the Green Homes Grant Scheme <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme> homeowners and private/social landlords in England will be able to apply for vouchers to pay for green improvements, of up to £5,000 per household. With government grants covering two-thirds or more of the cost and the homeowner/landlord contributing the remainder. For owner-occupier and park home households on low incomes, the scheme will fully fund energy efficiency measures of up to £10,000 per household.

Available measures are split into primary and secondary groups and households will need to install at least one primary measure to qualify for funding. Primary measures include:

Insulation (solid wall, cavity wall, under-floor, loft, flat roof, room in roof and park home).
Low carbon heat (air source heat pump, ground source heat pump and solar thermal)

Secondary measures include:

Draught proofing
Windows (double/triple glazing where replacing single glazing, secondary glazing in addition to single glazing)
Energy efficient doors (where replacing doors installed prior to 2002)
Heating controls and insulation (appliance thermostats, hot water tank thermostats, hot water tank insulation, smart heating controls, zone controls, delayed start thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves).

Homeowners can check eligibility and apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>.

Census 2021 job opportunities

The Office for National Statistics is inviting applications for exciting new temporary census roles at all levels. If you know anyone looking for a job then please pass this information on. All current jobs, application information and FAQs can be found <https://www.censusjobs.co.uk/>.



Community Park Improvements for the New Year

Work to install new play areas at Popley Community Park was set to get under way at the end of last month as part of major improvement scheme at the open space area.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is upgrading the play equipment and facilities at the popular park with £400,000 funding from developers' contributions.

The equipped play areas will need to be closed from late November for the refurbishment work to take place safely but children and adult users of the community park in Popley Way can look forward to the different play zones for varying ages reopening early in the new year.

Local people were asked for their views on what new play equipment they'd like to see in the park and what features could be improved. As a result, the five priorities created for the space were a junior and toddler play area, seating, perimeter fencing, outdoor gym and a teen play zone and to include facilities for disabled also to enjoy. Exciting new proposals have now been developed for the play areas and teen zone, including a parkour area. There will also be improved landscaping including nature trails, wild flowers and wildlife improvements.

Work has already taken place to install the perimeter fencing and new planting will begin this month, alongside the work on the play areas and teen zone. The outdoor gym equipment and new seating will also be taking place over the winter and it is expected the full project will be completed in March 2021.

"Popley Community Park is a well-used and much-loved neighbourhood facility and I know these improvements will be well received by those people who use it. We asked residents what they wanted and I'm really pleased we are able to deliver a range of new facilities from new play equipment to a parkour area and places to sit, relax and enjoy the beautiful soundings for all the family," explained local Councillor, Jane Frankum. "The winter months will see the contractors carrying out work within a COVID-19 safe environment and therefore it will be necessary to close the play area in the park until the new year, but I hope users will agree the new equipment will be well worth the wait."

For more information visit www.basingstoke.gov.uk/popley-park