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December 2007

Issue 70



Distribution of Over 3,800

FULL OF LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

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www.popleymatters.org.uk

Closing date to submit articles & adverts (13-12-07)

Message From the Editor:- I say it every year, how quickly the year has gone. I am sure the years are shorter. Christmas is a time for joy. I am sure it is for most people, a time for families, but just remember, there are those that will be lonely who may have lost their partner or family member. Just keep an eye out for your neighbours especially if they are alone.

The Magic of Christmas will be spectacular and you can read all about it on pages 14 and 15. It is really sad that it could be the last with our Community Wardens who have spent months alongside residents getting it all organized.

Sherborne St John Parish Council will be writing a regular article as all the houses in Marnel Park and Merton Rise are in the parish of Sherborne St John and the ward of Popley West. We welcome their input into Popley Matters magazine. Their report can be found on page 8.

We have had to increase the magazine by four pages as there seems to be so much to report and we are getting more and more articles. I was thinking back about events in Popley over the last year and it has certainly been a busy one. The new school was finished and the pupils moved in with their smart new uniforms. A ten million pound sewer was finished. Marnel Park is well on the way, as is the housing on the old John Hunt site. Merton Rise has started- with 6000 people in Basingstoke on the housing waiting list there are many of our families that will at last have a place of their own. I still hear the odd remark about the houses being for people from outside Basingstoke. I can't say who would buy the open market that are for sale but the social housing is for people on our housing waiting list, and that's around 600 or more homes that will become available. Popley Festival moved to Popley Fields and worked out quite well. Marnel Football Club has grown so fast that it is hard to keep up with it.

Perhaps you could write in your memories for 2007 and we could publish them over the next couple of issues?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that help with Popley Matters advertisers, writers of articles and letters and our wonderful volunteers who deliver your Popley Matters through rain, wind and snow, both old and young with a special mention for Joseph Doran who has never complained, though I spelt his name wrong for many issues. We could always do with more volunteers, especially in the new houses. For articles, letters, advertisements or to volunteer you can email me at jane@poppleymatters.org.uk, write to PO Box 6727 Basingstoke, RG24 9GG, phone Jane on 819924 or Iris on 411113. Then there is also the website www.poppleymatters.org.uk

Hits on www.poppleymatters.org.uk website for month of November: 1202

To pass back ideas, comments, suggestions, articles or to offer help please write to:- Popley Matters Group, PO.Box 6727, Basingstoke RG24 9GG, email editor@poppleymatters.org.uk. The views in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Editorial Team, the members of the committee, or Popley Forum/Matters.

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More Volunteers Welcome

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Thank you for your continued support

Simone's Column

Hi again, for this month seeing as it is December and nearly Christmas I thought I would write about what my school is doing, like a Christmas production etc. I wasn't quite sure what the school was planning to do, so I asked my Headteacher Ms Rose. I was actually very disappointed after speaking with her as she told me that, because the school hasn't been up and running for very long our traditional Christmas production has been cancelled, and also we won't be doing much else as Ms Rose quoted, "I don't do Christmas". I think it is quite unfair as Christmas is a very exciting and big festivity for some, and even in the old school, John Hunt, we always made an effort at Christmas. I do understand that some people don't particularly enjoy Christmas or they don't celebrate it, but still the school has never failed to please at this time of year and everyone always gets into the spirit and fun even, the teachers have a great time. All of my friends found it very disappointing too, and in sure most of the other pupils will feel quite let down, as I do.

Anyway on to a positive note I thought I would like to mention my old primary school Merton. My younger sister attends Merton Junior School, and I wanted to mention this school because I know they are going to be doing some brilliant things for Christmas. My sister is a Shepherd in the Nativity play, and I have looked at the script myself and it sounds fantastic as the children wrote it themselves using the basic Nativity story but modernised it. I am sure there will be plenty of laughs and I recommend that you go and watch it, as the pupils at Merton always try their best and their Christmas plays always prove to be great successes. The dates for the performances are the 11th and 12th of December at 6.00pm. Also they will be holding a Christmas Bazaar and everyone is welcome, so feel free to go along on the 7th of December at 2.00pm.

I have recently done a bit of research, as someone left a comment on the website, "What is there to do that is less than £7?". Well I have found a variety of entertaining things for everyone to do. Firstly there is the Vue Cinema in Festival Place, where the price for a child ticket costs around £4.95, an adult ticket £5.95, and if you are a student a ticket will cost you £5.15 and a senior citizen ticket is the same. (All the prices are on the websites). The next thing I found was the Aquadrome at the Basingstoke Leisure Park. For adults the price is around £4.50, for juniors it is £2.80, for senior citizens £1.90, for unemployed £2.15, and the disabled go free, (for lane swimming only the prices are cheaper). The third thing I looked at was the Bowlplex, which is also at the Leisure Park, for adults it is £4.90 and for juniors £4.10. The bowling alley offer a saver session which is Monday - Friday 10am until 7pm and an adult is £3.80 and a junior £2.80. I hope this research is useful for somebody but I do think we need some more things around here that are cheaper for families and young people. Well that's it from me until next time but I hope everyone has a great Christmas break and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Editor Note: you can get an all day pass on the Shuttle bus from Railway station to the Leisure Park £1.40 Adult £0.70 Children

Christmas and New Year rubbish and recycling collections

Over the Christmas and New Year period, refuse and recycling collections are as follows:

If your bin (grey or green) would have been emptied on:	...put it out instead on:
Monday 24 December	Same day - Monday 24 December
Tuesday 25 December	Thursday 27 December
Wednesday 26 December	Friday 28 December
Thursday 27 December	Saturday 29 December
Friday 28 December	Monday 31 December
Monday 31 December	Wednesday 2 January
Tuesday 1 January	Thursday 3 January
Wednesday 2 January	Friday 4 January
Thursday 3 January	Saturday 5 January
Friday 4 January	Monday 7 January
Monday 7 January	Tuesday 8 January
Tuesday 8 January	Wednesday 9 January
Wednesday 9 January	Thursday 10 January
Thursday 10 January	Friday 11 January
Friday 11 January	Saturday 12 January

For more information about the refuse and recycling collections see the website at www.basingstoke.gov.uk or call the contact centre on 01256 844844.



The Pre-school seemed very quiet at the start of term as our older children had left to go to mainstream school. We have busied ourselves with many activities, including a fund-raising cake stall, the proceeds of which were used to purchase new Bob the Builder toys for the children.

We have many new children who have joined us this term, most of which are two year olds so they keep us on our toes! We plan to have an Open Day soon so that existing and prospective parents can come and see for themselves what we do. Plans for this term include Christmas crafts, and of course the Christmas play.

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Dear All

The Bermuda Community Association would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

Listed below are some of the activities that take place during the week and weekend:

Mantel Explorers Pre School which runs Monday - Friday
Tuesday Afternoon - Mother & Toddler Group 1.30pm
Tuesday Evening is Bingo Night (Eyes down at) 8pm
Thursday Evening Paper Craft
Friday Evening is Youth Club - 6-7.30pm
Sunday afternoon is a Church Group

I would also like to thank all those who helped organise and attended the Family Prize Bingo, which was held on the 16th November at Popley Fields - this was a venture put together by the three community associations Popley Fields, Melrose and Bermuda. There was a good response with lots people, and I am sure it was enjoyed by all, hopefully it will be something that can be done again in the new year -I believe nearly £180 was raised which is to be shared between the three associations, so a big thanks once again to all who attended - your support is important to us.

Look forward to seeing you all in the New Year

Marion

Chairperson (Bermuda Community Association)

Table Top Sale

Magnolia Court and the residents send our sincerest best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all the residents of Popley.

We would also like to inform residents of Popley that we are going to have a Table Top Sale on Wednesday 23rd January 2008 2-4pm Refreshments will be available, everyone is welcome including members of Melrose Hall Coffee Morning Group and Popley Fields Community Centre, and all other groups and clubs in Popley.

Julie Pior

Retirement & Care Services
Dowland Housing Association
Magnolia Court
Tel: 01256 462140
e-mail: julie.pior@dowland.org.uk



Its been a busy month here at the hall. We hope you all enjoyed the event held to raise money for Children in Need. A big thank you to all who attended and I'm pleased to say we raised a total of £220! Also a big thank you to all who attended the Family Bingo event at held in conjunction with Popley Fields and Bermuda Close Community Centre. We hope you enjoyed yourselves and look forward to seeing you at the next event.

Molly Moocow's Moosic is coming to Melrose Hall. Molly Moocow's moosical sessions provide a fun environment, combining

action songs and rhymes.

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MONDAY:

9.30-12pm Friendly Café

7.30-10.00pm Peregrine Healing and Holistics

TUESDAY:

4.00-7.30 Petite School of Dance

WEDNESDAY:

10.00-11.30 - Popley Little People, Mother and Toddler group

10.00-11.00 NHS Quit Smoking Clinic

12-2pm Oasis Lunch Club

7.15 - Slimming World

THURSDAY:

9.30-12PM Friendly Café

6.30-8.30 Weight Watchers

FRIDAY:

10-3 Together

6.00-7.45 Youth Club - age 5 to 10 years

8.00- 9.15 Youth Club - age 11 plus.

SATURDAY:

9.00-12.30 Petite School of Dance

SUNDAY:

Melrose Christian Fellowship - Contact Pastor Phillip Keeble on 462351 for times of services.

Melrose Community Hall is available to hire for Birthdays, Wedding Receptions, Conferences and all your private hire needs. We take bookings for both occasional and regular events. **Please Ring Vicki Jackson on 01256 420676 for more information or e-mail us at Melrosehall@tiscali.co.uk**

The Melrose Community Association committee would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

You are warmly invited to Worship with us

Sunday morning 10.30 to 12.00 noon

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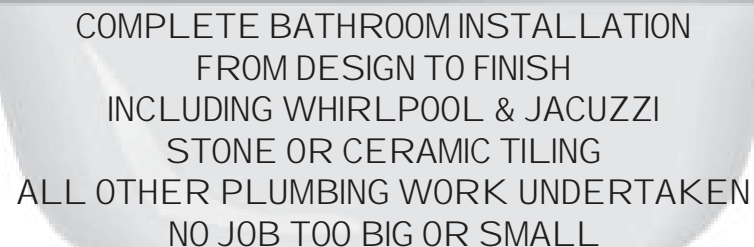
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Councillors Page by Cllr Andrew McCormick

Community Wardens: my sincerest thanks to the Gazette for their coverage of our 20 Community Wardens in Basingstoke, whose jobs are under threat from the Council.

The wardens do a fantastic job in Popley and are extremely popular. We have managed to gather over 1,000 signatures to our petition to Save the Wardens. Readers who wish to sign can do so on-line at www.petitiononline.com/wardens.

Since their introduction in Popley in 2004, Community Wardens have worked extremely well with the local beat officers and latterly ACSO's and PCSO's. Everyone who works with the Wardens has nothing but the highest praise for them. Their wide range of skills and ability to co-ordinate the work of many agencies at local level has reaped huge dividends for Popley.

Before the Wardens were introduced, Popley was the 2nd highest crime beat in Basingstoke (after the Town Centre) and had 125 out of the 400 arson incidents reported in Basingstoke in 2002/3. In their first year of operation (2004), the Wardens helped cut crime by 28%. In 2004/5, thanks largely to preventative work in the community spearheaded by the Wardens, we had just 1 burglary in the whole of Popley.

The above statistics and others were used to help Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council attain a Beacon Award in 2007 for tackling anti-social behaviour. The Wardens have won numerous other national awards, and were cited as one of the top 10 examples nationally of good practice in fire safety and arson reduction initiative. Their good work has attracted the attention of numerous Government departments including the Home Office, the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government Office of the South East.

It is therefore palpably absurd that their jobs should now be under threat and seriously challenges the credibility that Basingstoke had worked hard to obtain for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and community development.

Flooding: we have had a very large number of people approach us with accounts of flooding, many of whom had their houses flooded. We are in the process of presenting a report to the council on flood damage and recommendations for drainage improvements. As if this was not enough, we recently had a sewer main burst in Dryden/Chaucer Close. This was by no means the first we've had in Popley but the response of Thames Water was uniquely disappointing in that they apparently refused to clear up the mess, and when it was cleaned up, they only did half the job. Leaving traces of raw sewage in public places where children can play is completely unacceptable. They are responsible for taking sewage away and take moeny from your water bills to do it. Not since the London cholera epidemic of 1854 has it been acceptable to have raw sewage in the streets.

Flats: the Tories insist on building 448 flats and micro-flats at Gresley Road in a totally inappropriate site and keeping you in the dark about it. It's not their money, it's yours, and we think it's very wrong of them to keep you in the dark about it. In the past 5 years we have had approaching 2,000 flats built in Basingstoke, with more on the way. It's obvious the market is saturated, with prices in Crown Heights down by as much as 25%, when house prices continue to rise. We only ever built 1,000 flats in the entire New Town build in the 60's and 70's. Most of them are gone, most of the rest are going, but it's taken over 30 years to get rid of them. We are storing up massive problems for the future. Gresley Road will make Longfellow Parade and Faroe and Maldive look like luxury developments in comparison. It has to be stopped in its tracks.

Neighbourcare: the Tories are cutting funding to this excellent voluntary organisation which does so much in the community, and it could fold as a result. We are deeply disappointed by this. Just another example of a council administration which refuses to listen.

Buses: don't be lulled into a false sense of security, their funding has only been saved until May 2008. We will need to continue our fight to make sure we keep what bus services we have and get a decent set of new services for the new build, not least a proper cross-Popley service and one which connects Popley with the railway station. But because we have 2,000 new houses being built we are much better placed than the other estates in Basingstoke. Buckskin has lost its evening service and has little prospect of getting it back - we see this as a warning of what might happen in Popley if we are not careful.

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Dear Friends

I read the following recently: REASONS WHY SANTA CLAUS HAS TO BE A WOMAN ... Men can't pack a bag; Men would rather be dead than caught wearing red velvet; men don't answer their mail; Men aren't interested in stockings unless someone is wearing them; Men don't think about buying gifts till Christmas Eve when it's too late; Men refuse to stop and ask for directions when they get lost; Finally being responsible for Christmas would require a commitment!

I also read the following .."The hinge of history is to be found on the door of a Bethlehem stable" (both quotes from J.John & Mark Stibbe, A Barrel of Fun)

The season of goodwill, peace to all is upon us. Though looking at the world around us you wouldn't think so! Apart from the hotspots of Iraq and Afghanistan there are so many other areas of conflict in the world, there are droughts, famines and diseases, extremes of climate and political unrest. All these demand our quiet consideration and prayer. Some of the world's problems may seem to dwarf our own personal difficulties but they are no less important – anxiety over health, relationships and/or jobs and money can all combine to block out the light. This is especially true at Christmas when all we really want perhaps is some peace and quiet and some time to enjoy our families and friends.

In December the church moves into the season of Advent which is a time of preparation. Similar to the season of Lent, it's an opportunity for taking stock, a chance to examine our lives and see where we've gone wrong and make a commitment to change those attitudes of our hearts and minds that cause hurt to those around us and to God and to do so before its too late. It's a tough call, but, once we do we can feel renewed, refreshed and ready to start again.

I hope this year you'll take that opportunity and that you'll also take the opportunity to join us at one of our Christmas services. We're having Candlelit Carols on Sunday 9th at 6pm; Christingle Services on the 16th at 4pm and 5.30 pm; a Nativity performed by the 'grown-ups' on the 23rd at 4pm and Midnight Communion at 11.30 on Christmas Eve.

Amid all your Christmas preparations and as you're putting up the Christmas lights I hope that you will take time to consider the baby in a manger who came as *'the light of the world'* and will one day return in majesty and power to draw us all before God. May the light and peace of Christ be with you and yours this Christmas season and in the year ahead.

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The Group was saddened to learn of the resignation of Jerry English as Group Scout Leader in November. Despite his relatively short time in the role, Jerry had completed most of his training modules and gained a clear insight to the role. We shall miss his kind and supportive leadership. Jerry hopes to return to Scouting when his work commitments allow him more time in this country! Safe travelling Jerry! The District Commissioner for Basingstoke East Scouts, Andy Cullen is seeking a replacement and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in the position (telephone Basingstoke 422725). The role of Group Scout Leader is primarily one of management; co-ordinating the sections, helping to find new leaders and encouraging them to complete requisite training, promoting Scouting in the locality and overseeing the work of the Group Executive.

The sections all continue to provide fun and active activities for young people. Three coach loads of Beavers Scouts from the District including the Air Scout colony, paid a customary visit to see Father Christmas at Paultons' Park and came home laden with presents and exhausted after a simply 'splendiferous' day. They are now well and truly in Christmas mode, making cards and gifts and about to have 'snowball' fight!

The Cub pack celebrated Hallowe'en as well as having a 'sleepover' in HQ in November. Part of the day's programme included a visit from a Conservation expert to hear about conservation issues in the area. They explored part of Basing Woods and found interesting evidence of wild-life and flora preparing for the winter ahead. The pack will present a version of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' to parents in December as part of the Entertainer badge. Several members achieved the Circus Skills and Scientist badge in October. More adult help is desperately required as the section currently only has two active leaders. Please talk with Elaine if you feel you can help.

The Scout section had communications as its theme for the start of the Autumn session and all of the Troop will be presented with the Communicators badge shortly. Several members qualified for Basic Aviation Skills badge whilst others received awards for Emergency Aid, Skating and Music. Some members attended Survival Weekend at Ferny Crofts. Colin has indicated he would like to 'step-down' as Leader of the troop after four years in the role. He has no intention of leaving the troop however.

Centenary Year is now drawing to its close but exciting plans are already appearing on the horizon to carry Scouting into 2008 and beyond. A three-District Activity Day for all sections is planned for June and a meeting about Suisse Adventure in 2009 will take place shortly which is of special interest to those over the aged of 14.

Monthly assistance with Boot Sales at Popley Fields continue for the present though the Group is finding it increasingly difficult to find enough people to give the time needed to oversee arrangements and are conscious that it's the faithful two who largely carry the strain. If you can help at all please contact Colin on Basingstoke 410559. Boot Sales start at 12.30 p.m.



Boy and girls 6-8 years

Meetings: Tuesday 5.30-6.45p.m.

Eve Alexander 346510



Boys and girls aged 8-10½

Tuesday 6.30-8.15p.m.

Elaine Devenport 323453



Boys and girls aged 10½-15

Monday 7-9p.m.

Colin Karslake 410559

A Friendly Family

We lost a loved one earlier this year and had no idea of the impact and sadness it could have on our family. Our wider relatives live many miles away, we are only a small family. We find the thought of Christmas, which is fast approaching daunting and feel that there must be others feeling the same way. We don't wish to put our sadness on another family but to befriend another in a similar situation, make friends with and share happier times and be understanding of each others situation.

We have a special needs child as well, so another child in a similar situation would be very welcome.

Please could they contact me on my mobile which is 0790011 8923. And ask for Sue.

I.T.M.A.

Many of you will remember Tommy Handley and the show I.T.M.A

I thought I would use this to remind you to stay safe this winter. Put this on the wall and I am sure it will help you all.

If you are at home all day in the Winter keep warm. Get your heating checked, put on an extra jumper or an extra blanket on the bed. Make sure you have at least one hot meal a day and plenty of hot drinks. Try thermal socks and although it sounds silly if it is bitterly cold put a hat on, yes even indoors.

Take care if someone comes to the door. On these dark nights do not open it unless you know who is there. If they are from one of the utility companies get them to put their ID through the letter box. Also remember never to sign anything without getting it checked out by family or a neighbour. If you are not sure **don't** sign it!

Make sure the house is safe. Loose carpets can break bones; if you fall you could lay there for sometime before help comes. Keep your paths clear; get a friendly neighbour to help if necessary. Most will be happy to help but I do appreciate not all will. Keep windows and doors locked but plan the way of getting out or help in case of a fire. Switch gas and electric fires off before going to bed and unplug sockets you don't need. The "night" lights for halls etc are useful; they come on when it gets dark.

Arrange for a friend or family member to have a spare key and keep that number near the phone in case of emergency. Make sure you replace or get rid of worn rugs, also replace those tatty slippers. Having worked at the hospital for many years I know just how many elderly and infirm people end up in hospital because of bad footwear. Make sure you keep your main walkways clear.

This may sound like granny teaching you to suck eggs but it doesn't hurt to give gentle advice and reminders to people.

So use **I.T.M.A** and stay safe this Winter by *The Old Codger*



Celebrate Safely this Christmas and New Year.

Tips with candles:

- Always put candles in suitable holders on a firm surface and away from furniture, curtains and decorations.
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- **Never** leave burning candles unattended.
- Before going to bed or leaving the house ensure all candles are properly extinguished.

Electrical tips:

- Before hanging festive lights ensure they are working correctly.
- **Never** use indoor lights outside even if they are safe from the weather.
- If the insulation is worn or the wiring damaged, get new lights.
- **Never** overload electrical sockets.
- Check that plugs have the correct fuses fitted.

Drink Drive Safety:

- You can't calculate your alcohol limit.
- It takes less than you might think to become a drink driver.
- Nearly one in six of all deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit.

At Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, we hope that you do not have to invite us round during your festivities and hope you have a safe, enjoyable, fire & incident free celebration.

Useful contact points and further information:

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service homepage: www.hantsfire.gov.uk
 Community Fire Safety Department: 02380 626809
 Email: community.firesafety@hantsfire.gov.uk

Sentinel

Faroe Close and Maldive Road Consultation

On Tuesday 13th November, residents in Faroe Close, Maldive Road and surrounding areas of the development, were invited to a pre planning consultation event at The Barbican Public House, Popley.

Over 50 residents attended to view the ideas that have been developed following the feedback received last year. They were able to meet the project team and put their views forward.

A big thank you to all residents who took time to attend and make their thoughts known, which provides Sentinel with valuable input into the project. The majority of residents supported the regeneration project and most were positive about the changes made to the previous designs.

The next step is to have further discussions with Basingstoke and Deane Councillors and officers with a view to applying for planning permission. A newsletter will be sent to all residents in the next few weeks to update those unable to attend and to let everyone know about progress.

Many Thanks and Regards,
Stacey

Regeneration Liaison Officer
Sentinel Housing Association
0800 195 5515

Sherborne St John Parish Council

Looking at the notes for the November issue of The Villager, it is clear that despite sub-prime mortgages, natural disasters and other global set-backs, there are still many good reasons for living in the village of Sherborne St John. The Seniors Club is going from strength to strength, and the Parish Council was delighted to be able to support their Christmas lunch. The new Village Hall is proving to be a great success - providing the location for a large number of local activities, as well as weddings, fashion shows and other functions. With its finances in order, the Parish Council was pleased to be able to pay off a further £10,000 from the mortgage account in November. The Football Club continues to be one of the most successful clubs in the area, and the pitches remain second to none – thanks to the hard work of Terry and his team through the summer.

It is also important to mention other unsung heroes, in particular John Edwards, Judith Dalmady and Ian Todd who continue to run the Chute Pavilion so efficiently. The Chute has been a huge success since it opened - and very economical to run. It looks just as good as ever, but after 10years (and a bit like St Pancras Station!), it now requires a little 'tlc' to restore it to full glory. The Parish Council will be looking to see how it can support improvements in 2008.

Meanwhile Phase 1 improvements to the Cemetery were completed in time for Remembrance Sunday – with trimming and remedial works to the yew trees, repainting of the memorial inscriptions and re-laying of the gravel, as well as tree maintenance around the perimeter. Next year we hope to complete renovation by installing a new gateway and fencing. Our thanks to Basingstoke and Deane BC for providing grant aid – and further thanks to Peter Marrison and the PCC (Parochial Church Council) for organising very successful working parties to keep the cemetery vegetation under control.

There are a few outstanding local problems however. Firstly, the remarkably unobtrusive, central location for the Bottle Bank in the Village Hall car park, is not to everyone's liking. The Parish Council is taking a scientific approach to see how much noise it is generating - and decide what can be done to maintain the facility without the unwelcome noise. Generating the information is clearly difficult, but we hope to have this to hand before The Villager goes to press – to allow a considered decision. In the event, it may be necessary to change the bottle bank type, or remove it from the Village Hall altogether.

The retrospective planning application, to use Jennings Yard in Monk Sherborne Rd. as a builder's yard, continues to upset local residents. The Parish Council certainly objects to the storage of steel container units in this rural location.

Discussion of A340 Traffic Calming measures seem to drag on - and are certainly developing too slowly for villagers living on the main road. However thanks to Hampshire CC, SID has arrived! albeit temporarily. SID is the Speed Indicator Display that tells motorists they are speeding; we look forward to understanding how effective it is in slowing traffic. Meanwhile Hampshire CC is also looking to improve the traffic island opposite the Methodist Chapel next year.

Finally, this is the first time the Parish Council notes will be published in 'Popley Matters'. We extend a further big welcome to all the new residents to the Parish in Marnell Park and Merton Rise. We hope you enjoy your new home and please do support local activities and institutions!

Don't forget – you are always welcome at Parish Council meetings. The next meeting is on Monday 17th December at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Our website is www.ssj.hampshire.org.uk

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THE FATHER OF CHRISTMAS

It's hard these days to get a Christmas card with a picture of the real reason for Christmas unless you know where to look! I have even heard people say "What do you want to bring God or Jesus into it for"!! Pictures of Father Christmas, reindeers, dwarfs, robins in trees, even puddings- anything please but not Jesus! So here's a reminder that "Jesus is the reason for the season"

1. When our ancestors, Adam and Eve turned their back on God, they "injected" into the human race a "virus" called sin which broke the relationship with God. Every baby born has that "virus". It's in us and it's deadly. It's the reason why we grow old and die and it's the reason why there is so much mess in the world as well as in our lives
2. God, who had a great relationship going with Adam and Eve before their rebellion, was desperately unhappy and tried so many ways to call people back to Him but there was a problem...
3. We cannot have a reconciliation with our creator without a "price" being paid for our sin. Adam and Eve tried to cover it with leaves but it was God who had to spill the first blood to provide them with coats of animal skins.
4. For centuries after the first sin, the only way back into a limited relationship with God was through repeated sacrifices of animals and the pouring out of their blood (The "blood covering").
5. This was never going to be the permanent answer to the problem and from the beginning of time God Himself knew that He would, eventually, have to become the human sacrifice and so Jesus was born to die for us. It's too much to take in but how awesome that our creator should become the sacrifice so that we could be invited to come back into a relationship with God.

Father Christmas is fine but we need to know the Father of Christmas and we can only become His children by receiving His Son Jesus and until we do, we remain "fatherless". Make part of the last verse of "O Little Town Of Bethlehem" your prayer:

"O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray, cast out our sin and enter in be born in us today..." If you invite Jesus in – He will come!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR

MELROSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

MELROSE HALL, ABBEY ROAD, POPLEY 4

Christmas services

Outdoor Carol service: Friday 21st December Melrose Hall 7pm – 8pm

Christmas Morning service 10-11am.

New Years Eve Praise Party 10.30pm – 12.30am

join the children of Popley as they sing
**Christmas
Carols**
for the whole community



**Marnel & Merton Junior Schools
Chineham Park & St Bede's Primary** in



St Bede's Church

Friday 14th December at 7pm

**Tickets £2.50 available from Schools, St Gabriel's & St Bede's
Interval refreshments provided**



**How do Funky Monkeys Celebrate the
Festive Season?**

Funky Monkeys are busy making decorations and cards as part of our arts and crafts table.

We're singing some fun Christmas carols during our song time.

We're playing with lots of different toys to see if there are any we'd like to ask Father Christmas for (as long as we carry on being really good Funky Monkeys!).

And we get to eat some mince pies (or fruit and biscuits) while Mom and Dad get some tea or coffee, and it only costs £1.50 for the session including the snack and drink!

So, if you fancy joining in the fun and festivities at Funky Monkeys, or just fancy a chat, a drink and time to play come along on to Funky Monkeys. Every Friday at St Gabriel's Church Hall, Tewkesbury Close, Popley, Basingstoke from 10:30am to 12 noon.



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Hello,
 I hope you are all doing well and are have enjoyed the last month. Over the last few weeks the Popley Safer Neighbourhoods Team have been involved in Operation Sparkler aimed at anti-social behaviour during Halloween and Fireworks Night so you may have seen us all out on our bikes on a very regular basis. We feel the operation was a great success and our aims and objectives were completed. Thank you very much to all the shops/residents that helped and supported us through this operation.

As Christmas is only a few weeks away unfortunately I have to remind you all of the burglaries over this period. When you are purchasing gifts remember never to leave them in your car as this is an instant attraction to thieve's. Also please remember that when you are leaving your house unattended it is advised to leave a light on and make it look like someone is at home. Thankfully thefts from under the Christmas tree are not too common but I imagine especially at this time of year it would cause a great amount of distress.

Thankfully SmartWater is available for purchase and could well be the best Christmas present you buy. For those of you who are unaware SmartWater is a unique property marking liquid which once applied can not be removed. If your property is stolen and later recovered the Police can use the Smartwaters unique DNA type structure to trace where it belongs to. Please bear this in mind and you can view more at www.smartwater.com

Please also bear in mind that those of you with teenagers/young adults keep an eye on what parties they are going to. An awful lot of alcohol gets consumed this time of year and we should all act responsibly on this subject.

Finally I would like to say that Basingstoke is a nice place to live and I for one would like to keep it like that. I hope that you enjoy the Christmas build up and stay safe. As ever the Popley Safer Neighbourhood team are always free to talk so feel free to call or invite us for a cup of tea.

Kind Regards,
Phil Rapley 13284
 Police Community Support Officer
 Popley East / Basingstoke
0845 045 45 45 ext: 126





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DON'T HAVE A RUBBISH CHRISTMAS

2007 has been a good year for recycling in Basingstoke, with our recycling rate climbing every month. Please keep up the good work and recycle all you can over the festive period. Here are a few suggestions to help you remember just how much you can recycle.

When you've unwrapped all your presents on Christmas Day, don't forget to save all the gift bags and boxes so they can be used again next year. Gift wrap cannot be recycled so please put it in your rubbish bin. Gift wrap is often made of poor quality paper and can be layered with foil and plastic or covered in sticky tape and ribbons, all of which makes it unsuitable for recycling. Any cardboard boxes left over from presents can be recycled through your kerbside recycling collection but please remember to break up any large boxes first.

At the end of the day, you may find yourself surrounded by empty drinks bottles! Some 14 million glass bottles will be opened in Hampshire over Christmas so remember to recycle yours at your local bottle bank. Any plastic bottles from squash and fizzy drinks can also be recycled through your kerbside recycling collection but please take the tops off first.

When the festivities are over and it's time to take the decorations down, don't forget to recycle your Christmas cards by putting them in your recycling bin. Alternatively, the Woodland Trust offers collection boxes for greetings cards which can be found at all WH Smith, Tesco, TK Maxx and Marks and Spencer's stores.

Almost a quarter of a million real Christmas trees will be decorated in Hampshire this year. When you take yours down, be sure to recycle it at your nearest drop-off point anytime between January 3 and January 17. Once collected all of the trees are shredded and composted locally to make the high quality soil conditioner, Pro-Grow.

Make the most of your kerbside recycling collection over Christmas. It's an easy way to recycle all your TV listings, magazines and envelopes from Christmas cards as well as cardboard boxes, plastic bottles and food and drinks cans. Should you receive any unwanted gifts, donate them to a charity shop and give somebody else the chance to use them rather than throwing them away.

For more information on recycling over Christmas, visit www.basingstoke.gov.uk/recycling or call the council on 01256 844844

Christmas trees can be taken to any one of the following drop-off points between Thursday January 3 and January 17 2008.

Basingstoke Town Centre, Memorial Park (Crossborough Hill car park)

Basingstoke Homebase, Winchester Road

Brighton Hill, Gershwin Road, Sports Pavilion

Eastrop, Eastrop Park, Boat House Car Park

Hatch Warren, Community Centre, Long Cross Lane

Oakridge, Upper Sherborne Road playing fields

Popley, Carpenters Down Open Space

South Ham, Russell Howard car park

Winklebury, Winklebury Way playing fields

Once collected the Christmas trees will be shredded and composted locally to be made into the high quality soil conditioner, Pro-Grow.



U11's 1ST WIN.

Well it's been a long time coming for Adam's team, and boy did they do it in style. 58 seconds in and Jamie Steer popped up and slotted home the Firstly, with a lovely ball from Joe Mulcachy. Inside 10 minutes it was 3-1 with goals from Joe and Finley (The Hair) Nurse, then Joe and Jamie finished Thatcham off with another 3 goals, the final score 6-2. Well done boys. But the man of the moment for me had to be Simba, who had an absolute stormer of a game in goal. Well done Simba.

I know the boys are settling down now, and that Adam still has a few problems with a couple of boys playing up! But! I think with the squad he has, who have lots of character and passion, one more season under their belt and I think they will be league contenders.

Tornados

Still unbeaten, the Tornados are growing in confidence and are really gelling; some of the stuff they produce on the pitch is astounding for their age. We had a 2nd round cup match in Andover and won 1-0. The team then produced a 6-2 win over Loddon with Fyn scoring a hat-trick, Jacob smashing 2 home and 1 Mr. Cameron Grist scoring the goal of the game with an 8 pass romp, with Cam sliding in on the back post to finish the sequence off. Awesome!

Whirlwinds

The Whirlwinds had their first win with a 7-0 thrashing over Thatcham, Gorden Mahoney walking away with the match ball, scoring 6 and Jamie Bartlett finishing the opposition off. For me the Man of the Match had to be Christopher Blissett, I must say that is the best I have ever seen him play. Well done, But! After playing so well, the week after they get beat 4-0 by Loddon, which baffles me, because they can play very good football.

Peter Houseman Youth League

If you would like to see how every competitive age group is doing in the league or would like to check fixtures, then type PHYLY into your search engine and click on PHYLY 2007/2008.

Thanks for your support.

Lee Austen

Tel: 07810444995 Email: mfcpopley@hotmail.co.uk



Come and help us run a bath!
Open Day Monday 26 November 2007 from
11am-7pm

St John Ambulance Hampshire is launching its unique bathing service in northern Hampshire and is looking for new clients and new volunteers.

The popular service, which runs in Southampton, the New Forest and Havant, relies on a team of dedicated volunteers who bath people unable to get in or out of a bath on their own.

The service is a lifeline for its clients - mostly elderly and frail people – but receives no Social Services help. It survives by voluntary donations and fundraising.

Last year, the 45 volunteers ran 2,000 baths in Hampshire and used nearly 200 litres of bubble bath!

Jill Abrahams, who co-ordinates the service, said: 'We've been looking forward to opening up in Basingstoke because there are people here who need our help.

'The luxury of a long soak in a nice hot tub is something most of us take for granted but some people physically can't get in or out of a bath. We're here to help them and they really appreciate what we do.'

She added: 'If anyone was able to help us equip the suite we would be very grateful – we need a fridge, washing machine, tumble dryer, dishwasher, microwave, towels – and of course bubble bath!'

The volunteers are members of St John Ambulance's Social Care team and many also help run monthly outings for the clients.

Jill, who works as a nurse on a stroke unit, said: 'Many of our clients live alone so their regular bath and outings provide a really sociable day out – and that is just as important.'

The bathing service is due to start next year and will take place on Wednesdays at the St John Ambulance Basingstoke headquarters at Knights Park Road, Devonshire Industrial Estate.

For more information please contact Jill Abrahams, at St John Ambulance, on 023 8043 5945



Social Care volunteer Angela helping to bath a client.

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Developments in Basing Wood

Popley Conservation Group

I hope that many of you managed to get along to the Forestry Commission consultation day, held recently at Popley Fields Community Centre. Changes are taking place in Basing Wood and it appears that more recreational activities are to be encouraged in the future. This should be of benefit to people who live in Popley.

However Basing Wood is extremely rich in a diverse range of wildlife, more so than almost any other woodland around Basingstoke.

Whilst the use of Basing Wood for recreation is to be encouraged, many of us are concerned that any development should be carried out sensitively so as not damage the wildlife.

The Forestry Commission have left a display in Popley Fields Community Centre so if you would still like to have your say about developments in Basing Wood do visit the centre and fill out a form.

It has been a slow start to the winter conservation season for the Popley Conservation Group. It all started, or rather didn't start, when we realised that the Natural England licenses we have been working with, were no longer valid for the



A tough nut to crack. Members of the Cabinet Office team getting to grips with coppicing a particularly unyielding hazel.
Photo: Alan Wilkinson

work we were doing and that new conservation licences would need to be sought before we could go ahead with our winter tasks. There was an anxious time while we waited to see whether Natural England would issue a licence. Eventually it arrived but by then we had lost several days work.

So it was fortunate that the Cabinet Office team (volunteers from the local business

community) offered to visit us with a work party. I would like to extend sincere thanks to them for their valuable contribution to conservation in Popley. It really was a great boost just when it was needed and helped us to catch up some of the lost time.

If you think you could help us with conservation around Popley please contact our secretary Lee Roth on 01256 330738 or lee.roth@networkrail.co.uk



David and Vikky, your Popley Community Wardens, would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

Together with our partners, Hampshire Constabulary, Sentinel Housing Association and the three Popley Community Associations, we are now planning this years Magic of Christmas event.

We would like to invite you all to join our Magic of Christmas procession on Monday 10th December. The theme of this procession is 'The Toys Come Alive', so we would like to see everybody taking part, dressing up as their favourite character - but please remember to wrap up warm!

A brass band will be leading the procession, which will leave from Popley Fields Community Centre at around 5.30pm.

To allow others to catch up and join in we will stop for a few minutes beside the shops in Madeira Close and also at Bermuda Park/Community Centre.

The brass band will lead you back to Popley Fields Community Centre to enjoy a special evening full of Christmas magic and fun!

We hope you can all attend.

Please see the proposed procession route on the next page. There maybe alterations to the route on the day due to unforeseen circumstances or adverse weather conditions. And remember - if you have anything you'd like to talk to us about, either stop to talk when you see us, email community.wardens@basingstoke.gov.uk or call 01256 845508.



There was a recent report of Salesmen alleging to be from Virgin Media trying to gain access to addresses in Abbey Road.-the males pitch was that there was a fault with the system etc. The occupant refused entry to the males who had the Virgin Media insignia on their tops and they then left.

The day before this incident two males had attended the address and asked if the occupant was with BT- The occupant informed them he was with Virgin Media. They stated "That's all we need to know". They then left.

If you get cold callers at your house please make sure they have identity badges and you are sure that they are genuine. BT workers should be able to identify themselves and usually have a BT emblazoned vehicle! Also don't give up information to strangers on the phone or cold calling as they could use the information against you.

If you have any concerns then please contact me on 08450454545 or send me a private message on the Popley Matters website www.popleymatters.org.uk

Between 3 pm on the 17th November to 8am on the 18th two push bikes were taken from Falkland Road, a BMX Rhino worth £250 postmarked on the frame and handle bars and a black adult mountain bike from Woolworths £90.00.

The push bikes were in the rear garden when person(s) have entered into the garden and took the bikes without permission.

Please be aware there are undesirables operating in the area so make sure your property cannot be seen or taken.

We wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas

Merton Junior School Christmas Bazaar

Merton Junior School will be holding their Christmas Bazaar on Friday 7th December. Doors open at 2.30p.m. and finish around 4.00p.m. Father Christmas will be visiting and there will be a wide range of stalls and games to enjoy. This year's raffle has a top prize of £100 with many other excellent prizes. Tickets are available from the school office or at the Bazaar. Other popular stalls are the Tombola with over 100 items to be won, the Teddy Stall, White Elephant and Toys. Light refreshments are also available. All are welcome to attend.

The Magic of Christmas

snow machine

Pop by Aston Rogers

magician
 'toys that come alive' procession!
 mocktails

Festival of trees with
 raffle by John Hurst

Karaoke by
 the Youth Club

candy floss

mince pies, mulled wine

prizes for fancy dress

"Ho, Ho, Ho!
 Come and join me for a
 cup of tea and a mince pie at
 Popley Fields Community Centre"

five piece band



10 December 2007
 between 5.30pm and 7.30pm
 at Popley Fields Community Centre



Merton Rise, Everest Community College and the former John Hunt of Everest Community School site – Project Update

Yuletide Greetings! It feels a long time since my last update so this is likely to be relatively lengthy (no change there I hear some say!) – my apologies.

Everest Community School

Following the relocation to the new site in September, I was pleased to attend the formal opening event held on November 1st and received kind mention in both the Leader's and Headteacher's speeches for my role and that of my team in making this project happen. For those of you that took the opportunity to visit the school on the Open Evening held earlier in the term (some 2000 + people queuing down Popley Way) ["if you build it, they will come" – you need to be a "Field of Dreams"/Kevin Costner fan to understand this reference!], I am sure you will agree that the new campus is very impressive and will provide a fantastic learning and community/leisure facility for residents of both Popley and Merton Rise for generations to come.

Former John Hunt of Everest School site

Shortly after the transfer to the new site, the County Council completed an unconditional sale of its remaining ownership at the former school site. The Borough Council also sold a smaller area of land located on the southern side of Carpenter's Down/Popley Way junction. The sale(s) were to Taylor Wimpey who have recently submitted a reserved matters application for the combined ownership for approximately 245 units (remaining dwelling provision under the 2004 outline permission) and this will be considered by the Planning Authority early in the New Year.

The developer of the Phase 1 land has made good progress with all of the first release now sold. As their scheme progresses, I hope you will agree that their gateway scheme is very impressive and that it will make an important contribution to the regeneration of the Popley Way frontage.

Merton Rise

There has been steady progress over the past 6 or so months on the wider Merton Rise project.

(a) *Phase 1*: Alongside the completion of the school, the Phase 1 developers, Miller Homes and Wimpey Homes have made good progress with occupations of the first units anticipated early in the New Year. The park that forms part of Phase 1 is also nearing completion with only parts of the artwork to be completed in March when the weather is less wet and warmer. The Park is to be made available for use in the Spring by new residents of Merton Rise and also existing residents of Popley. An informal consultation on the naming of the Park will take place in the New Year.

(b) *Phase 2*: Following selection of two developers for this important phase of the site, which includes up to 300 dwellings and the Neighbourhood Centre, we have been working closely with each team to develop their schemes of development and hope that reserved matters applications for the various sub-parcels will be submitted towards the end of January. Some of you will have read that the PCT have confirmed they no longer need a surgery facility within the Neighbourhood Centre and advise that existing and new facilities at Park Prewett will meet the needs. Although this is disappointing, without a requirement or funding, the County Council cannot procure a facility independently. We are working with the developer to identify other potential uses for the "former medical building" and these might include premises for a veterinary practice and also accommodation for a number of community office type uses. The supermarket forms the heart of the Neighbourhood Centre and we are in discussion with the Planning Authority and end users as to the nature and size of this proposed use and how this relates to the planning permission we currently have for the site.

(c) *Phases 3-5*: Marketing for part of the land to the west of Sherborne Road, Phase 3 (for a further 225 dwellings) has recently commenced although the outcome of this marketing exercise will not be known until the Spring. Marketing of the remaining phases of development on the site will take place next Summer.

(d) *Procurement Update*: Following successful applications to GOSE, the diversion works to Chineham Lane and formal closure of Sherborne Road have now been completed. With the school open and the Phase 1 developments well advanced, we have opened parts of the newly constructed Spine Road for use as public highway. There continue to be "teething" problems regarding parking of contractors' and parents vehicles on the Spine Road, and navigation around the network with confusion over some of the local road names. Additional land has been made available to the developers to remove their vehicles from the road/footways and it is likely that parking restrictions will be introduced along parts of the Spine Road to ensure that safe and unimpeded movements can occur. Longer term, as the Phase 2 development comes on stream the remainder of the Spine Road between Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane will be opened, again with similar parking restrictions.

Road names of existing roads and the new roads within Merton Rise are under discussion with the Borough Council to ensure that a "family" of names can be identified to relate to Merton Rise and the related Walter de Merton background, and importantly to avoid Sat Nav confusion! Some of these will be agreed with the Borough Council and others as required may need a period of consultation to change names of existing roads. We will keep you posted of these arrangements.

The construction of last part of the Spine Road (between Sherborne Road and the A340) is due to be commenced next month as part of a wider improvement scheme being undertaken by the Highway Authority to the A339/A340 Ringway roundabout. The selected contractor Carillion will establish their site compound within the Merton Rise site on the A340 frontage in December and works are due to start 8th January 2008 and last for a 12 month period. If you require further information about this scheme please contact the County Council's Contact Centre on: 0845 6035633.

(e) *Consultation/Information Strategy*: In addition to the two existing websites for the Merton Rise project (www.mertonrise.co.uk and info@mertonrise.co.uk), we are currently preparing our third community magazine (due out in the New Year) to provide a more visual update on the project, to support the Phase 2 planning applications and to undertake a number of low key consultations e.g. naming of the Phase 1 park.

Thank You

After nearly 9 years of involvement with the North Popley/Merton Rise project, and 4 years as the project manager, the time has come for my role to change and for me to "pass on the baton" to others to complete the project. My key role was always to ensure the new school had opened and all of the infrastructure had been secured (and/or started construction) and with opening of the school and commencement of the last part of the Spine Road my job has largely been done! I feel immensely privileged to have been given the chance to work on such a fantastic project. It has been a very complex, sometimes a frustrating, but always a rewarding time. Thank you for all of your support over the years. This may therefore be my last contribution to Popley Matters but I will ensure that my successor(s) continue to update you on a regular basis.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.....

Regards

Louise

(Louise Hague – Merton Rise Project Manager)