

March 2012

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# Higher Denham Community Association Newsletter

## Hall Class Schedule

- **Monday**  
10am - 11.30am Toddler Group  
2.15pm - 3.30pm Keep Fit  
**NEW!!! 5.15pm - 6.30pm**  
**Circuit Fitness Class**  
7.00pm - 10.30pm Line Dancing
- **Tuesday**  
6.00pm - 7.00pm Zumba
- **Wednesday**  
2.30pm - 4.00pm Adult Singing Club (most Wednesdays)  
7.30pm - 9.00pm Yoga
- **Thursday**  
9.45am - 11.15am Yoga  
2.15pm - 3.30pm Keep Fit  
6.00pm - 7.00pm Zumba
- **Friday**  
11.30am - 12.30pm Zumba Gold (this class does not run on the last Friday of the month)

The Hall can be hired for functions and bookings are made via Sue Kelly on  
**01895 833842**

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Dear Residents,

Welcome to this issue of the Higher Denham Resident Newsletter. You may notice something different this month - the Newsletter is printed in colour and looks so much better than in black and white. More details on this later. This month you will find an update on the recent AGM and details of the new Committee. I am delighted to say this will be my 4th year as a member of the CA and I am looking forward to working with the other Committee members over the coming year.

You will also find an invitation to a meeting on Thursday 26th April to discuss the CCTV proposal for Higher Denham and details of the next Open Gardens in support of the invaluable services of the Air Ambulance Fund. Colts Cricket coaching for the under 11's starts again on 15th April and you can read what's happening in the "Social Club Corner". Neighbourhood Nature Notes returns this month featuring "Sparrows and Sockers". Finally resident Anne Ling has written a personal tribute to a close friend that many of you will know, Chris Barnes, who sadly recently passed away.

However you are spending Easter - I hope you have a great break. Until the next issue.

Best regards,

Jacqui McGowan - Editor

## Community Association AGM— 2012

This year's AGM took place on Thursday 15th March in the Hall with a reasonable number of residents coming along to hear what has been happening over the past year. The Chairman, David Ward, gave an update on what the Committee have been concentrating on, in particular the welcome upturn in hiring the Hall resulting in more revenue being generated, and items of improvement and maintenance undertaken since the last AGM. Some minor proposed changes to the Constitution had been pre-circulated ahead of the meeting and these were agreed by those present.

Treasurer, Dr Ron James, took everyone through the annual accounts and it was good to hear they are looking in a strong position enabling the CA to identify areas of spend for 2012.

As more spaces were available on the Committee than candidates, all those that stood for election were elected as members. The CA Committee for the forthcoming year is:

Dr Ron James - Treasurer, Wind in the Willows

Ms Christine Birtles - Secretary, Middle Road

Mr David Ward, Upper Road

Mrs Jacqui McGowan, Middle Road

Mrs Sue Kelly, Lower Road

Mrs Sonia Harris, Middle Road

Mrs Maureen Dowsett, Side Road

Mr Charlie McClelland, Lower Road

The Committee will elect the Chairman at their first meeting in April.

At the end of the AGM the "Bill Evans" Cup was awarded to Mrs Sandy Grover for administering the Monthly Building Draw for many years. Sandy couldn't attend on the evening, however she received the Cup shortly afterwards with sincere thanks for all her help from the CA, past and present.

The new Committee will be discussing areas to focus on over the coming year at their first meeting in April with the Bus Shelter being high on the list. If you have any ideas or areas you would like to see the Committee concentrating on do let us know, either by email or at the public session at the beginning of the meeting on 19th April at 7.30pm.

## CCTV Update & Next Steps

Those who attended the AGM were given an overview of the CCTV proposal for Higher Denham with questions from residents being answered and discussed. It was agreed to hold a specific meeting inviting all residents to attend and hear more details and decide any next steps on **Thursday 26th April, 8.00pm** in the Hall. The subject of CCTV would seem timely as a number of households in Higher Denham have recently been unfortunate to experience an increased level of burglaries and car thefts which gives cause for concern and requires extra vigilance by everyone.

Despite the recent activity we should remember the majority of crimes of this nature are committed by the opportunist criminal and CCTV may help our Community combat the problem. However, installing such a system requires a lot of consideration, taking into account a wide variety of factors. Please do come along to hear more about the proposal and to either raise any concerns you may have or show your support for the scheme.

## Gardening Gusto

You may have noticed a hive of activity in the community garden over the past couple of weekends. Di Gordon, who oversees the gardens, was delighted to see a number of residents turn up to help on Sunday 24th March, many helping for the first time.



Due to so many hands to help, a huge amount was done on the day - extensive weeding in the flower beds, rubbish removed, removal of self seeded saplings and old and rotten tree stumps, wooden branches were chipped up, areas of ground were leveled, several tonnes of chippings were spread over the gardens to create a woodland scene (and help reduce the need for weeding in the future), conifers were removed which were affecting driver's view of traffic and so much more!

As a result the garden is looking really lovely - do take a look the next time you are driving in or out of Higher Denham or are out walking. Thank you to everyone who gave their time to help - it really has made a difference.



Whilst on the subject of gardening, the CA have become the new owners of a sit on lawn mower, generously donated by one of our residents. This will be invaluable in keeping the grassed areas around the Hall in tip top condition throughout the Summer months. If you would like to give it a "test drive" in the gardens, we would love to hear from you.

## New Fitness Class

A new Fitness Class has started in the Hall on **Monday evenings at 5.15pm–6.30pm**. The class is based on circuit training exercises and is a great way to improve your fitness level. All equipment is provided but do take along a bottle of water with you. Class leader, Jo, will show newcomers what to do.

## Monthly Draw - Back with a Bang!

Annual subscriptions for the Monthly Draw were collected in early March and we are pleased to say the scheme is up and running again. The CA were pleasantly surprised by the number of households who showed their support by buying a ticket, quite a number for the first time - thank you.

For those not familiar with the draw, a percentage of the subscriptions collected (£6.50 a ticket per year) are given as monthly prizes to ticket holders (1st prize £15, 2nd prize £10) with the remainder going towards the upkeep of the Hall and surrounding gardens.

The first tickets were drawn at the AGM and the lucky winners were:

### March 2012 Monthly Draw No. 1

1st prize - £15 K Sugden, Middle Road

2nd prize - £10 Mrs Bryant Upper Road

Future draws will be done at the CA Monthly meeting with results being placed in the Newsletter. If you didn't get the opportunity to buy a ticket in March and would like to do so, please contact any of the CA members (details on page 4).

## Open Gardens - Ready for Take Off!

The next Open Gardens of the year is on **Sunday 22nd April, 2pm-5pm** in support of the Air Ambulance Fund. Our local Air Ambulance is a charity costing £2million a year to run and receives **no** funding whatsoever from the government. All of its costs have to be met by donations and fund raising to ensure it can carry on with its life saving work. We do hope you will go along and support them on the day. Last year Higher Denham raised over £2000 for the Air Ambulance and we hope, with your generous help, to be able to make a significant contribution again this year.



Visitors will have up to 4 gardens to view throughout the afternoon, with the recent good weather helping the gardens look their best for this time of year. Visitors should purchase their tickets beforehand from the Hall (cost £4 per adult, with children under 16 years of age going free). The Hall will be open throughout the afternoon for refreshments between garden visits and there will be plants for sale.

Traffic within Higher Denham will no doubt be busier on the day and we hope residents will be patient with the influx of extra vehicles on our roads.

## Social Club Corner

The Social Club hosted their first "Comedy Night" on Friday 16th March. It was a huge success with all tickets being sold well in advance. The guests on the night were treated to a side splitting, gag-filled evening thanks to the 3 comedienne and compare. The SC are planning another one later in the year— keep your eye out for details to ensure you secure your tickets early.

A group of residents led by Kevin Cosgrove will be climbing Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps, in August to raise money for Cancer Research UK. To boost funds ahead of their climb a Charity event is being held at the Club on **Good Friday, 6th April**, starting at 7.30pm. Live music will be provided by Ricky Percell, performing an eclectic mix of songs from the 60's through to the present day and a raffle will be held. Kevin and his fellow climbers hope that many of you will come along on the evening to show your support for both the Charity and their forthcoming expedition (climbing to a height of 4810m is not for the faint hearted!)

The SC will be celebrating St George's day on **Saturday 21st April**. The bar will be open at 7.30pm, with free bar snacks, Real Ale being served at £1.90 a pint, and Gin £1.00 a shot.



## A helping hand...

Regular readers of the Newsletter will know the CA often ask for help with gardening, etc so you can imagine how delighted I was to receive a call out of the blue from a local company offering to print the Newsletter every month in glorious colour.

Fairweather Insurance Services, based in Chalfont St Peter, have printed this issue and have kindly offered to do so going forward and we are enormously grateful. Fairweather Insurance Services are Commercial and Domestic Brokers - here's an introduction from Director, Jon Senior.

*"Fairweather Insurance Services have been trading locally for 30 years. We are an independent insurance broker, that can help with any aspect of insurance. We like to work closely with the local community and welcome this opportunity to assist the HDCA. For further details of our services please look at our website [www.fairweatherinsurance.co.uk](http://www.fairweatherinsurance.co.uk) or feel free to contact me personally;*

*Jon Senior, Director, 01753 881562  
[jsenior@fairweatherinsurance.co.uk](mailto:jsenior@fairweatherinsurance.co.uk)*

**fairweather**  
insurance services limited

## Parish Council Annual Meeting

Denham Parish Council are holding their Annual meeting in the Higher Denham Community Hall on Monday 23rd April at 7.30pm. All Denham residents are welcome to join the meeting and raise any questions they may have relating to life in and around the area.

## St Mary's Bell Ringers Wanted



St Mary's Church in Denham Village are looking for people to join their Bell Ringing group which meets for practice every Monday evening between 7.30pm and 9.00pm.

Anyone from the age of twelve and upwards with an interest in learning the art of Bell Ringing should contact Barry Wild on 01895 834697 or email [barrywild@btinternet.com](mailto:barrywild@btinternet.com)

Impromptu visitors are welcome to have a go too!



# Colts Cricket for Under 11s

CRICKET COACHING

BY ECB TRAINED (&CRB CHECKED) COACHES

FOR U10 AND U11 BOYS  
(BORN BETWEEN 1-9-2000 AND 31-8-2002)  
TEAM TO COMPETE IN BUCKS COUNTY  
CRICKET JUNIOR LEAGUE

FIRST TRAINING SESSION:  
15 APRIL 2012 10AM-12PM  
AT DENHAM CRICKET CLUB  
(OFF CHEAPSIDE LANE; UB9 5AE)

Contact  
James Nicholas: 07917 137581  
Ray Rulach: 07920 015309  
[James.Nicholas@hyundai-car.co.uk](mailto:James.Nicholas@hyundai-car.co.uk)  
[raymondarulach@gmail.com](mailto:raymondarulach@gmail.com)



## Queen's Jubilee Event - Last call for help

A request was made in the December Newsletter for helpers to come forward to organize an event for the younger residents to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in June. We received a very limited response - if you would like to help mark this historic occasion please do get in touch ASAP. Without enough interest it is unlikely to go ahead.



### Committee Contact Details:

<b>CA Email Address: <a href="mailto:committee_higherdenhamca@hotmail.com">committee_higherdenhamca@hotmail.com</a></b>	
Dr Ron James, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:r.james@company-doc.co.uk">r.james@company-doc.co.uk</a>
Ms Christine Birtles, Secretary	<a href="mailto:cabirtles@aol.com">cabirtles@aol.com</a>
Mr David Ward	07870 629114
Mrs Jacqui McGowan	07876 391349
Mr Charlie McClelland	07785 231155
Mrs Sue Kelly	01895 833842
Mrs Sonia Harris	01895 832809
Mrs Maureen Dowsett	<a href="mailto:maureendowsett@aol.com">maureendowsett@aol.com</a>

## TO CHRIS BARNES - A Loveable, Stubborn, Hardworking Genius of his Woodcraft

It is with great sadness that I announce the death of my friend Chris Barnes who died suddenly in Hillingdon Hospital on 05.03.12 from Deep Vein Thrombosis and undiagnosed Diabetes, aged 66.

As neighbours, you will remember Chris most for beavering away repairing and renovating my home, and, those of you who were lucky enough, beavering away transforming your homes too. This, in turn, meant his visits became more frequent as demand for his craftsmanship spread; sometimes impinging upon another reason for his visits from his home in Devon, to go on Backpack meets throughout the UK of which I have many fond memories.

As you also know, Chris supported me in my Charity work and transformed my garden into a show garden, giving delight to the thousands of Visitors who have passed through over the last ten years.

My thanks and gratitude goes to all of you who have been such a great support to me during this sad time and to those who attended his funeral. Special thanks must go to Di Gordan and Christine Kearley who worked from dawn to late afternoon to provide such an amazing spread for over 60 people. Thank you too for your generous donations to his favourite Charity, The Mountain Bothies Association.

Anne Ling - Lower Road

## Neighbourhood Nature Notes - Sparrow & Stockers

It is more than 15 years since I saw a "common" House Sparrow in my garden. They have virtually disappeared from London and other big cities round the world. In many of these cities sparrows were an introduced species, but even so they thrived in many urban environments. The reason for the decline, which started in the 1990's, is not really known. Suggested reasons have included the Chernobyl disaster, increased use of mobile phones and the phasing out of leaded petrol! One creditable theory is a shortage of insects which sparrows, normally seed eaters, feed their young. Scientific studies have shown a marked decline in sparrow chicks surviving but many other birds feed their young on insects and most have not declined in the same catastrophic manner, so this cannot be the whole story.



Whatever the reason, the good news is that there are signs of a revival. They have returned in numbers to my father-in-law's garden in Basingstoke and other towns outside greater London. They are not the prettiest of birds (Ibjs' [little brown jobs] in birders language) but they are bold, gregarious and they belong here.

During December on a fine cold crisp sunny morning, Julia and I visited Stockers Lake. It's a nature reserve, open free to the public which, if I stretch the point a bit, is just about in our neighbourhood. If you have children or grandchildren who are interested in nature and birds in particular, I recommend a visit. Watching water birds is a good place to start developing this interest. They are easier to see than many birds; they are out in the open, bigger, more colourful and although some dive to feed they tend to stay still for longer than small birds in trees. There are 4 hides at Stockers from where the best views are often obtained and where more expert birders will be happy to explain what's about if you ask. They frequently have bird watching telescopes and most will let keen (and quiet) kids look through them. The optics on these modern scopes are good enough to show every feather of what can be, close up, stunningly beautiful birds. If that does not capture a kids' imagination, and make them want to preserve the natural world, nothing will.

If you want to visit Stockers, the best way is to park the car at Rickmansworth Aquadrome and walk along the lakeside path to the end where there is a sailing club, carry on past the water polo court and cross a small field diagonally and enter the reserve through a kissing gate. The Aquadrome car park is approached from Fellows Road just beyond the new Rickmansworth Tesco's.

The Aquadrome itself has some birds including Swans and Canada Geese (also to be seen on the field alongside Old Rectory Lane in recent months) but Stockers has the more interesting birds. On the morning we were there we observed many different ducks (and the more showy drakes) including 6 Red Crested (and many ordinary) Pochards, Goldeneye, Gadwall, Shovelers, Wigeon and Tufted as well as many more common species including Herons, Shags, Great Crested Grebe, Coot and Moorhen, so plenty to see. The Red Crested Pochard drake is a handsome fellow with fuzzy orange red head and bright red bill. These uncommon ducks breed on Stockers Lake, making up a significant proportion of the 30 or so breeding pairs in the UK. We completed a circuit of the lake walking back on a muddy path between the River Colne and the lake where sometimes shy and secretive Water Rail can be spotted at the river edge. Incidentally, we have seen a Water Rail in our garden on several occasions in January and February; not for the first time, but the first time in a few years. The Snipe were also back on the lawn when the snow came.

Perhaps the most exciting thing we saw on our visit to Stockers (we had seen the Red Crested Pochards before) was a group of noisy House Sparrows in a hedge near the kissing gate. That is only 5 miles from Higher Denham as the sparrow flies, so maybe they will be back in our gardens soon.

Ron James - Wind in the Willows.



Red Crested Pochard



Water Rail