



Higher Denham Community Association Newsletter

December 2013

Dear All,

Welcome to the December issue of the Higher Denham resident Newsletter. At the time of writing there are less than 3 weeks until Christmas and it seems almost everyone I speak to hasn't done any shopping, ordered the turkey, written their cards or done any other preparations yet - which makes me feel better as neither have I, so I had better get started!

In this issue you will find an update from recent Committee meetings and "Committee Under the Spotlight" introducing resident Jane Blyth who has recently joined the CA and runs the Hall and bookings. Nature Notes also returns this month with an interesting article on Nuthatches and Shrews.

Regular readers of the Newsletter will know that I have been writing it for some time - in fact since April 2009 - and I have decided now is the time to hand the reins over to someone new. I have really enjoyed writing the Newsletter over the past 4 years and hope you have found it a useful and valuable way of keeping up to date on what the CA are doing on your behalf. On Page 3 you will find an advert looking for a new Editor and we would love to hear from anyone willing to take on the role from January 2014, or this may sadly be the last Newsletter you receive. Please do get in touch if this is something that you would be interested in doing.

Finally, whether you are planning to spend Christmas with family and friends, at home or in sunnier places, all that remains for me to do is to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jacqui McGowan - Editor

Hall Schedule

- **Monday**
2.15pm - 3.30pm Keep Fit
5.15pm - 6.30pm Circuit Fitness
7.00pm - 10.30pm Line Dancing
- **Tuesday**
6.20pm - 7.20pm Zumba
- **Wednesday**
10.00am - 11.00am, Yoga
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
- **Friday**
11.30am - 12.30pm Zumba Gold
(please note this class does not run on the last Friday of the month as the Senior Luncheon is held)

The Hall can be hired for functions and bookings are made via **Jane Blyth** on **01895 833378** or email **jane_e_blyth@yahoo.co.uk**

Update from the Committee - Keeping you Informed

- The Notice board outside the Hall is looking rather worn and shabby and the committee is very aware that it doesn't give a good impression to those passing by. We have contacted the Parish Council to ask if they are able to replace it with a new one and hope to hear from them soon. If they are unable to help the existing Board will be removed.
- A resident has brought to our attention the state of the Bridleway sign on the corner of Lower Road and Moorhouse Lane. The pole is rotten in places and cannot be repaired. We have contacted Bucks CC who have agreed to replace it as soon as possible.
- Concerns have been raised about the level of darkness during the evenings around the Hall and garden area. After discussion the committee has agreed to use the recent donation from GlaxoSmithKline to install an uplighter in the Community garden to softly illuminate the trees, shrubs and bus shelter from dusk to dawn. This will hugely improve the overall appearance of the area whilst making it feel safer for users of the Hall and Social Club in the dark, winter evenings. Any monies left over from the donation will be used to purchase plants for the gardens.
- The new raised flower beds at the front of the Hall are due to be started imminently - in fact by the time you read this the work might already be underway! When they are finished the beds will be handed over to the Gardening Club to design the planting scheme and we can all look forward to an abundance of colour as they become established.
- At a recent meeting a resident couple attended the Open Session to suggest installing a full size goal post on the field for the younger residents to enjoy. The committee agreed this was a good idea and we were delighted to receive a very generous donation to cover the cost, with a request that any surplus be used to provide seating in the bus shelter. We will be adding these new facilities to the field and shelter in the New Year.

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Editor Required

for the Higher Denham CA Resident Newsletter

Do you enjoy writing and are a “would be” author or journalist?

The Higher Denham Community Association is looking for someone to take over writing the resident Newsletter from January 2014. If you would be interested in continuing this important role within the community and would like to hear more details about what it entails, please contact:
Jacqui McGowan on 07876 391349

The Future of the Hall - Challenges Ahead

The future of the Hall and how it can be sustained in the years to come continues to be a main point of concern and discussion at the CA committee monthly meetings. We are in agreement that in its current condition and due to its likely remaining lifespan plans for a replacement Hall must be put in place sooner rather than later. Funding of such a project will be a big challenge and is not achievable through the revenue the Hall currently generates and its associated running costs. We will be sharing our thoughts with you in the near future and will be looking for your input and ideas on how we can achieve a new community facility for Higher Denham.

Committee under the Spotlight - Jane Blyth



I have recently joined the HDCA committee and wish to introduce myself.

I have lived and worked around the Ruislip, Northwood and Harefield area for the past 40 years. First as a nurse then once my children grew older, I achieved my ambition to become a midwife.

I feel very privileged to have had a career I have really enjoyed, especially in the community, attending many homebirths and being part of such a special time in a family's life. I semi retired 4 years ago and now do part time in the hospital, with the plan to finish completely next year.

We have raised a family of 3 girls, who have in turn produced 7 grandchildren who not only give us great joy but luckily we are closely involved with their lives.

Graham and I will have lived here 10 years in January and love it very much. When you turn into Old Rectory Lane, it really is like coming home. I feel I can leave all my worries behind and just enjoy. Our children and grandchildren all love it here and always visit, enjoying the park, field and social events.

I always planned to offer my help once I fully retired as I am very aware how hard the committee work and like many, we enjoy the facilities and events they organize.

My role is to continue booking the hall lettings, following on from Sue Kelly who has now retired. I only hope I can do as good a job.

If anyone wishes to book the hall for a party or other activity please get in touch Special rates for residents! Details on website www.hdca.org.uk or ring 01895 833378.

Finally I wish everyone a Happy Christmas, a time of year I really enjoy and cannot wait to get my “reindeer out again!”

Regards,

Jane Blyth

Gardening Waste - Discount for early birds!

A new chargeable garden waste service will be available to everyone and will start the fortnight commencing 31st March 2014. Collections will take place on the same day as recycling.

The following will be collected from your green bin:

- Leaves and grass cuttings
- Dead plants
- Trimmings and prunings
- Small branches
- Weeds, shrubs and flowers



Please note that for this new service food waste cannot be mixed with garden waste as currently happens.

You will only receive the new garden waste service if you pay for it. A discount will be available if you sign up before **31st January 2014** which will mean you pay the reduced price of £35 for the first year, rather than the normal £45.

If you do not wish to subscribe to the new garden waste collection service South Bucks District Council will collect your unwanted bin before the new service starts.

You can sign up for the new service by completing an on line form at: www.southbucks.gov.uk or telephone **01895 837333**.

Higher Denham Senior Luncheon Club

The Senior Luncheon Club reached a major milestone in October - it has been running successfully for 20 years!

The Club was originally started by the Church and a group of ladies from Higher Denham, none of whom still live here, although 2 ladies who joined at the beginning still attend the lunch every month (the food must be good!). The lunches have always been a social event for the senior citizens and is a facility they value highly as it allows them to make and meet friends and to enjoy a healthy lunch in informal and relaxed surroundings.

The Club has never advertised and relies on word of mouth. Numbers are restricted due to the space in the Hall and the desire to maintain the “family” atmosphere. Higher Denham residents are given priority on the waiting list.

The lunches are held in the Hall on the last Friday of the month at 12noon and the freshly prepared hot lunch costs £2.00 per person.

If you would like to hear more about this social activity, with a view to becoming part of it, please contact Mary Rints on **833256**.



Neighbourhood Nature Notes

Unless somebody volunteers to take on the editorial role for the news letter, this might be the last Nature Notes I write, so it's a good job the story this year has a mostly happy ending.

No sooner had the previous Nature Notes gone to print lamenting the absence of bats, than they reappeared in the garden whirling round at dusk catching flying insects. More interestingly resident Di Gordon told me that about 70 pipistrelles, mainly females and babies, had been roosting in the loft of 3 Side Road but had moved on of their own accord, which was useful for the resident, as bats are a protected species and one cannot legally disturb them. Then HDCA past Chairman, Len Smith noticed what he thought to be mouse droppings on his garden table. He was investigating the closed parasol over the table when a bat fell into the table! On opening the parasol, a second bat flew out, and both sped off. I suspect the cold wet spring meant not many insects about, and that accounted for their earlier absence.

Likewise, the garden birds had had a hard time, with little success from early nesting. The wonderful warm autumn, however, has helped the second broods to feed up ready for winter. A fledgling Nuthatch, brought to the bird-table by its parent, is now a daily visitor, preferring sunflower seed to the peanuts his name suggests he would go for. The Nuthatch is a delightful, small woodpecker shaped bird, salmon pink below and morning suit grey above with a bold black eye stripe and a tendency to walk head first down tree trunks, not head first up like woodpeckers and tree creepers.



The Nuthatch

The Goldfinches that fed on the Niger seed have gone. Like many of our "resident" birds (the ones you see all year in the UK) they have presumably moved south, to be replaced by others arriving from colder climes.

I recently received a copy of the latest water vole survey. These charming rodents were the model for Ratty in the book *Wind in the Willows*, so I'm please to say that we still have them in the rivers that border and run through the garden here, but sadly they seem to have disappeared from up stream. Water voles like river banks that are not too heavily overgrown by trees and more important, that have vegetation in the water along the bank, so if you have a house in Lower Road backing onto the Misbourne, try to leave the wild iris, a favourite food, and other marginal plants along the bank and do not "tidy" the river too much and perhaps they will return.

Lastly, we returned from a sailing trip 2 weeks ago, to find a dead shrew on the front doormat; a "present" from a neighbour's cat I assume. About 5 to 6 cm long with a 3 cm tail, brown-black fur, pale underneath and a long pointed snout, this is one of the smallest and most common of the UK's mammals, but we do not often see live ones because they live in the undergrowth. Active by day and more so at night, they eat their own weight in insects, spiders and worms every day, because such a small body loses heat quickly.



The Shrew

They are solitary and very territorial and will fight any other shrew invading their 400 sq. m. (a small back garden) home patch. They get together only to breed, which they do 4 or 5 times a year producing 6 or more young each time. If the nest is disturbed, the young follow mum in single file each holding the tail of the one ahead with its prehensile snout. With that rate of breeding, the only reason we are not overrun by them is that they are eaten by owls, foxes and other predators. Shrews apparently exude a liquid, from glands in the skin, that cats dislike, which is probably why we got the "present". Still it's a nice sign that they are about.

Clearing the dead plants from an herbaceous border we found, a foot above ground level, what I think was a dormouse nest, but that, and why cats give humans "presents", are stories for next time, providing there's a Newsletter to put them in!

Ron James
Wind in the Willows

Social Club Corner

Christmas Eve is always busy at the Club as families get together to start enjoying the festive break. The Club will be open 4pm–10pm.

New Years Eve The Club opens at 8pm thorough to 1am with a range of CD music being played throughout the evening, and the countdown to midnight in London being shown on the big screens. No tickets required or entrance fee.

All welcome at both events

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Classified Column



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Monthly Draw Winners

October 2013 Winner (Ticket No.)
1st Prize £15 S Kelly, Lower Rd (54)
2nd Prize £10 D Gordon Lower Rd (77)

November 2013 Winner (Ticket No.)
1st Prize £15 Mr Simpson, Middle Rd (082)
2nd Prize £10 Mrs Chapman, Side Rd (107)

December 2013 Winner (Ticket No.)
1st Prize £15 E Davies, Middle Rd (75)
2nd Prize £10 Mrs Ambrose, Upper Rd (209)

HDCA Committee Contact Details: www.hdca.org.uk

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