

# Weald News

Week beginning 24th July 2017

## *Allotment Open Day*

On a rather blustery and grey Sunday morning the Allotment Association were pleased to welcome so many villagers to their annual allotment open day. Jim Hawkins, standing in for the Chairman of the Association presented the Evelyn Paige cup (presented by the Parish Council in her memory) to Angela Horton whose allotment had been judged the 'best'. There are so many ways that people manage their plots and it was interesting to see some where fruit and vegetables were grown in serried rows and others where vegetables and flowers were vying for space. Some allotmenters had been up early to mow inbetween the plots to help everything look at its best. There was a magnificent raffle of bottles and a tombola with, of course, a gardening theme. I understand that there are still some plots and half plots available but many have been taken up. I'm hoping to have a small space myself once 'the book' is finished! If you'd like to find out more, see Les Smithers who is usually to be found up at the allotments most weekends.



## *Villagers come out in force*

On Monday night the Memorial Hall was packed with villagers who had come to share their thoughts about the future in the village after the shop closes this weekend and to see what might be done to replace the service that Barbara has given us over the years. Hilary Allen had arranged for Dr Paul Goozee from the Hildenborough practise, and village resident, to tell the meeting what arrangements had been put in place regarding the collection and delivery of prescriptions, Richard French from Ide Hill where they have successfully opened a community shop and Peter Lake Kent

*Editor: Sue Gidman, wealdnews@hotmail.com*

County Councillor.

Hilary was delighted with the turn out and gave the meeting a few numbers to consider 84, 51, 30. These represent the number of hours Barbara works a week, her days off since the shop opened (and 29 of those were Christmas Day) and the number of years the shop has been opened. I think everyone was thankful although a little shocked.

Before the meeting was open to the public for their comments and suggestions, Hilary invited comments from the guests:

### **Peter Lake, Kent District Councillor**

Peter reported that he and members of the Parish Council had been busy engaging in a dialogue with **Arrive bus** company about re-instating the 201 bus route through the village. When a company wants £127,000 a year for the detour through Weald I can understand why talks fell through (I hope I have got my figures right!) He suggested that there may be money in one of the Government's 'pots' for community initiatives.

### **Karen Long, Weald Parish Councillor**

Karen spoke about the status of the old Methodist Chapel and the plans for its refurbishment. Things are stalled at the moment as the Parish Council wait to hear about their submission for a change of use. The first one was granted but omitted Saturday and Sunday so plans had to be resubmitted. It is a possible venue for a shop/cafe but it may well be September before basic renovations can start.

### **Dr Paul Goozee, Hildenborough Surgery**

Dr Paul allayed fears about the prescription delivery service to the village and said that temporary arrangements are now in place where Rebecca Johnson would be delivering prescriptions to the Thursday coffee morning throughout August (10.00 -12.00) already arranged in the Memorial Hall. Rebecca will collect prescription requests on a Thursday, ready for delivery the following week. People may well have to plan more in advance for their repeat prescriptions. Doctors at the surgery are looking at a longer solution but one of the over-riding factors in any decision made is the security of the medicines and confidentiality of the patient.

### **Richard French, Ide Hill Community Shop**

Richard gave an overview as to how Ide Hill dealt with the closing of their one shop in the village. Their main aim at the outset was to have some continuity and the week the village shop closed they opened a stall in the Village Hall for an hour each day selling newspapers. Three weeks later they opened a shop in a sea container and start up from there with a wide range of support from volunteers. This

ran for two years. In the interim plans were afoot for constructing a purpose built shop which is now running with a post office counter and two part time managers with a rota of volunteers; they are open 7 days a week. He now has 130 hours of staff time to fill.

In describing the community coming together and the viability of their shop he used the term 'we'. I was interested to hear who the 'we' might be. It is wonderful that so many people are willing to volunteer BUT it needs a small group of people to be passionately committed to getting a shop up and running for it to be successful. Richard said that the 'we' needed to include someone to oversee the finances, someone with some retail experience, someone to organise and run the rota and a good handy man!!

After a year of operation in Ide Hill the group set up a Community Interest Co. and issued £25 share to individuals which allowed them to vote at the AGM. Richard finished with the words: **'You have to be a bit courageous and go for it!'** Suggestions from villagers came in thick and fast with Linda Walker writing every suggestion on a flip chart so that the feeling of the meeting could be passed on to the Parish Council who were meeting on Wednesday. Suggestions included the potential use of social media including Facebook.

In my notes I have written that Ian Walker commented that he/we need to be **'doing what it takes'** to continue to have a shop in the village. A visit to Barbara was more than a need to buy a pint of milk or a paper, it was a chance to meet village neighbours and to talk to each other.

### Pop in to our pop up shop

Ian and Linda Walker certainly went away from the Monday meeting energised to the extent of volunteering to run a 'pop up shop' community shop in the Memorial Hall every morning during August. They will be selling bread, milk eggs and papers as a minimum and offer shoppers the chance to sit and have a cup of tea or coffee with a biscuit or a piece of cake. Barbara has been selling my cards of the village for a couple of years now and, once Ian and Linda are up and running I hope they will sell the cards too. The intention is that the shop will to open seven days a week: **Monday-Saturday 08.00 - 12.00 and Sunday 09.00-11.00**. Please visit and give your support. I'm sure if you have suggestions or would like to volunteer they would be more than happy to accommodate you.

### The pot of money is growing!

The quiz night fund raised towards having the new history of the village printed raised £1043!! Thanks Weald. We have added it to the total collected so far and things are, at last, beginning to look like we will be able to go ahead!

Recently, Elizabeth Miller and I have been looking through the census reports between 1841 and 1911 which have been fascinating, particularly looking at peoples' occupations. In 1841 there were three shoemakers in the village along with four carpenters, a miller, a publican, a potter, two blacksmiths a painter, a bricklayer, a wheelwright, five farmers and a mariner. By 1911 there was a much wider variety of occupation including a cricket ball maker, chauf-

feur, dressmaker and needlewoman, post office clerk, quarryman, traction engine driver, printer compositor and many, many more farmers and farm workers. By this time, too, we had five pubs in the village so the publicans are all listed.

Another document that is proving an interesting but sad read is the record of who is in the graveyard on either side of the church. Ashley Jones researched the information in 2001 before the extension could be built. The first to be recorded are Adam and Abel Paris in 1822. Abel was 5 years old and his brother Abel who was only 18 months old died 19 days later. Added to this family grief was the death just a year later of twins Joseph and Caroline Paris at four days old and 23 days old respectively. Their mother, Elizabeth followed them a year later. It made me realise just how lucky my friend was when her twins were born at 1lb 10oz and 2lb 1 oz and they have not only survived but are bright boys now aged nine!

The other interesting 'snippet' that came to light recently is that Multon Lambard who gave the almshouses for the *'out pensioners of the town of Sevenoaks'* intended them as a temporary measure only. I suppose in the overall scheme of things, almost 200 years old is but a blink of an eye! Phew! the book is getting bigger and I know we will have to call halt at some time but not while we still have energy to research some more. Please think if you have anything to add, a memory, photo, document etc.

We still have slightly more money to raise so if you haven't ordered your copy yet, please contact me, Susan Gidman at wealdnews@hotmail.com or call 01732 454222.

### Party Time 17th September

There will be a party for Barbara and Carol on Sunday 17th September from 12.30pm - 3.30pm in the Memorial Hall, everyone is welcome! As of Monday, there will be a list available at the new Community Shop where you can leave your name and number if you are able to HELP, MAKE or BAKE for the party.

## Weald Community Shop

Following the closure of The Old Bakery a group has formed to open a Community Shop in the Memorial Hall while a future venue is discussed. The shop will open every day from Monday 31st of July until Friday 1st September.

### Opening times:

**Monday-Saturday 08.00-12.00**

**Sunday 09.00 - 11.00**

Any changes to these times will be posted on the Memorial Hall notice board

If you have not yet volunteered to help and would like to give a couple of hours of your time once a week contact:

**Linda Walker, Volunteer Coordinator 01732 779264**

**in the Memorial Hall**