

The Kingsclere Tower



March 2021

Your Village Magazine

T The Kingsclere Tower

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As I write this the news is full of reports of Nasa's Perseverance rover landing on Mars, 7 months after leaving Earth. My initial, Covid-fatigued response was "how come we can land a robot on Mars, when our world has been held to ransom by a virus for almost a year...?" Then I read more, and learned that reaching the red planet is considered to be one of toughest challenges in space travel for many reasons, including a constantly changing distance of between 401 and 56 million Kms, being at its closest to Earth only every 2 years.

The science involved in overcoming those challenges indeed demonstrates perseverance, and we've seen it with the development of Covid vaccines. The vaccination programme is now well underway, and hopefully perseverance in all aspects of our lives will help us get through our own individual challenges.

Neither the Editor nor the Management Committee accept responsibility for the opinions expressed or the goods and services advertised in the Kingsclere Tower magazine.

COPY DEADLINE for April 2021 issue: 12 March 2021

Send copy to the editors at 3 Blue Meadow, Garrett Close, Kingsclere or
 email: kingscleretower@gmail.com

All contributors MUST include name, address, phone number and/or email

Kingsclere Parish Council

Chairman: Cllr John Sawyer (297221)

Email: clerk@kingsclere-pc.org.uk (298634)

Office: 37 George St, Kingsclere RG20 5NH

Public Opening: The office is currently closed please use the contact details above.



NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING –

Will be at 7:30pm on Monday 29th March 2021. This meeting will almost certainly be held virtually. Please see the Agenda on the Parish Council Website for the invitation link should you wish to attend the meeting.

GREEN WHEELY BINS & GLASS RECYCLING –

Wednesday 10th and 24th March.

IMPORTANT BIN COLLECTION UPDATE FROM BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE -

We are currently experiencing high levels of waste collection staff self-isolating due to COVID-19. There are two additional bubble crews in place to aid Covid related absences, but the number of staff-isolating is high, and we want to prepare residents for the possibility that they could face disruptions to services, such as a delay in collections. As always, our priority is to protect the safety of our key worker staff and the residents and we are working hard to ensure our bin crews are tested quickly to enable them to return to work if their results are negative. If we need to suspend non-essential services such as garden waste or bulky waste collections, we will post this information via our website and social media in the first instance.

In the meantime, we thank residents for their understanding and patience during this difficult period and ask them to help keep our crews and themselves safe by wiping down bin handles when putting out their bins and bringing them back in again. For updates on waste and recycling services visit: <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/covid-19-bins-and-recycling>

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SUPPORT FOR VACCINATIONS -

As the biggest vaccination programme in NHS history continues, support is available for residents who have difficulties in getting to their vaccination appointments by car or public transport or with the help of family or friends.

Local community transport charities Dial-a-Ride and Neighbourcare is providing transport support. If you are aware of vulnerable residents in your area who need support to get to their appointments:

Dial-a-Ride: Call 01256 462101 or 01256 574401 between 8.30am – 12:30pm and 1.30pm - 4.15pm. Website: <https://www.cfirst.org.uk/transport/individuals/call-and-go-and-dial-a-ride/dial-a-ride-basingstoke/>

Neighbourcare: Call **01256 423855**.

Website: <https://www.neighbourcare.com/>

ADVICE ON ACCESSING GREEN SPACES SAFELY -

The government has updated the guidance for using green spaces safely to reflect the new national restrictions that came into force in England on 6 January. Members of the public should minimise the time spent outside their home but can leave their home to exercise. This should be limited to once per day, and they should not travel outside their local area. You can exercise in a public outdoor place: by yourself; with the people you live with; with your support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one); in a childcare bubble when providing childcare; or, when on your own, with one person from another household.

FREE ONLINE EXERCISE CLASSES AVAILABLE DURING LOCKDOWN -

Residents can sign up for free online exercise classes from Basingstoke and Deane Community Leisure Trust to support their physical and mental wellbeing during the current lockdown. The classes, which include Zumba, Pilates, Yoga and Body Pump are open to Aquadrome members and non-members. Details of the classes and how to join, are at:

www.morefitness.app/live-classes/

The Parish website www.kingsclere-pc.org.uk



@kingsclerepc



facebook.com/KingsclereParishCouncil

DOG FOULING –

This sadly remains an issue on the paths and pavements in our village. Once again, we remind dog owners to pick up after their animals and equally important, take the bagged waste home or dispose of in the correct bins placed around the village. The Parish Council continue to receive complaints regarding the conduct of some (not all) irresponsible pet owners.

MAY ELECTIONS UPDATE –

The Government has confirmed that elections will take place this year on Thursday 6 May and will see residents in Kingsclere voting on who will represent them on the borough council, county council and as Police and Crime Commissioner.

Elections will be run in accordance with the electoral commission's guidance and work began at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council last year to prepare for running a safe election in May. This includes putting arrangements in place to help keep staff and voters safe at polling stations and counts. Residents are reminded that they have the option to vote by post or proxy, applying to do this is very simple and it is advised to do this early. For more information visit: www.basingstoke.gov.uk/postal-proxy-voting or call **01256 844844**



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR KINGSCLERE MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARDS 2021

There are many people whose service to our community needs recognition, especially in these extraordinary times.

Please contact the Clerk (tel: **298634**) for a nomination form or download one from the Parish Council website (www.kingsclere-pc.org.uk) and return it by Thursday, 1 April 2021, detailing the reasons for your nominations.

How we actually make these awards will be decided in the light of Covid regulations prevailing at the time. We shall keep you informed.

John Sawyer
Chairman



The Fieldgate Centre is run by Kingsclere Community Association, a charity (No 1168366). All residents of Kingsclere over 18 are automatically members of the association, an organisation that relies on volunteers to run it. Be part of it, your support makes a difference.

Over the past year we have continued to refurbish the facilities at the Fieldgate Centre to ensure it can continue to function for years to come as our community centre. Our most recent work has been to the heating system. We have plans now to upgrade the electrical system. None of this capital work would be possible without significant grants from various organisations. We have a matched funding grant from Greenham Trust for the improvement work. We would like to thank the Editors and Committee of the Tower for their generous donation of £1000 which has been matched by Greenham Trust making this in effect a £2000 donation. Several private donations have also been made through this route. Other funders include Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane BC.

We have been able to welcome the NHS Health Visitor team to the community centre where a regular clinic for mothers and children has been set up. Activity is minimal at present so it is good to see the centre used for these clinics.

The community association is always looking at how we can deliver more for the community with the Meet Up @ The Fieldgate and the Playdays over the summer holidays being examples. If you have an idea for a community activity or service that could be run working with the association please get in touch.

As with most community organisations we rely on volunteers. Volunteering can be satisfying in a range of ways and can provide benefits to you that can be transferred to other areas including the world of employment. Working with us can allow you to help other people, gain work experience, improve your skills, make you more employable, make new friends, increase your confidence and allow you to help make Kingsclere an even stronger community. As a community business that needs to generate income to cover its operating costs we have a range of roles; desk based, facility based or activity-based work. If you are looking to use your experience with the KCA as a step towards new or different employment we are keen to provide that opportunity.

fieldgatecentre@outlook.com Telephone - 01635 298497
www.thefieldgatecentre.co.uk

Kingsclere CE Primary School



We hope that everyone continues to keep safe and well during these unsettling times. Our community continues to blow me away with their generosity, support & commitment to our children and staff, thank you everyone!

Our teaching staff have thrown themselves in to a comprehensive Remote Learning Plan where we have a mix of live lessons and recorded lessons and activities via our online learning platform. It has been wonderful to see the imagination from both staff and children in their learning over the past few weeks and I am in awe of their creations.

It has been important to us to maintain a wide variety of learning experiences for the children at home and in school, as well as maintaining high standards of English and Mathematics learning. From baking Sea Biscuits from Christopher Columbus' travels, designing pirate paraphernalia, looking inside the body to study organs & measure heart-rates or being artistic masters in Roman Armour design ... we have done it all!

Whatever happens in the coming months, we can be sure our children remain inspired and enthused to learn!

Keep safe,
Mrs Melrose
Headteacher



Census 2021: Sunday 21st March 2021

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that records the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

The Census Engagement Manager across North Hampshire and West Berkshire is tasked by the Office for National Statistics to engage with all parishes in the area to alert the council to the forthcoming census and ensure that all residents have the support they need to enable them to complete the census.

Census 2021 will be a ‘Digital First’ census with everyone where possible being encouraged to complete the survey online. Between **3-8 March**, a pack containing a letter, a response envelope and information around data protection will arrive through the letterbox. The letter will include a box with the Unique Access Code for each household. The letter will give the householder instructions as to how to access their Census form online but will also give the number of the Census Contact Centre to call if the residents would prefer to access the survey via a household and/or individual paper forms. These will then be posted to the householder direct from the Contact Centre. The initial pack will NOT automatically contain a paper census questionnaire.

Reminder letters will be sent if responses not received by 21 March, then in due course a Field Officer will call to your door to enquire if further help is required.

Jim Soper

We would like to thank everyone that showed their respects on 29th January for our father, Jim Soper. All the cards, messages and words of comfort were very much appreciated.

Janice, Andy and families

Kingsclere Community Library



“Your local FREE library”

Of course we are still closed but we are working hard behind the scenes on our transition to becoming an independent community library. While there will be a lot of changes, the volunteers are committed to continuing to provide a FREE public library service to everyone in Kingsclere and the surrounding villages.

PLEASE, if you still have any books checked out, will you return them through the door slot before 7th March? We will be losing the ability to check them back in to the Hampshire Libraries after that date.

We were delighted to accept a new desktop computer and monitor from Kingsclere resident Derek Butler. We hope to set this up for use by the public for internet access and word processing, with a printer attached. Thank you very much, Derek!

Several people have enquired about making donations by cheque instead of online at www.gofundme.com/f/save-kingsclere-library We are trying to raise £4,655 for our year’s rent with this appeal. Cheques will be gratefully accepted; please make them payable to Kingsclere Community Library Association and pop them through the library letterbox in the door. Even the smallest amount will help us reach our goal. Thank you!

Nicki Lee, Kingsclerelibrary@gmail.com
Tel: 07899 623872

KINGSCLERE VILLAGE CLUB



Helping the Honey Bee

Our **Virtual Village Hall** brings you an illustrated and informative talk by popular speaker on garden matters, Darren Lerigo.

“I have always gardened with bees in mind, but decided it was time to discover the garden plants that really do make a difference.” Find out which plants will give the honeybee the most pollen and nectar, from spring to winter, so you can transform your garden into a honeybee haven.



Via Zoom Saturday, March 27th 2pm £5

This event is open to all – why not invite a friend or family member from outside Kingsclere to join in? Please contact the email address below by March 20th to register your interest.

A great big thank you to all those who donated to our roof appeal, including those who gave in memory of Bill Cooper. With matched funding from the Greenham Common Trust, we have reached our target and work can go ahead as soon as our builder can start. You may also have noticed that some work has been done to improve our garden – again thanks for the donations which made this possible.

A date for the diary: This year we celebrate our Centennial. We are determined to mark the event on **Saturday July 17th** in whatever way we can!

Helen 297390 or email: events@kingsclerevillageclub.co.uk

Kingsclere Duke of Edinburgh Open Centre Bronze Award Applications

The Kingsclere DofE Open Centre is inviting applicants to apply for a place on the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award Scheme starting this April. The Kingsclere Open Centre operates under Hampshire County Council DofE Centre rules. There is currently space in this first intake for **6 young persons** who are currently in School Years 9 or 10. Further Bronze intakes will happen later this year.

In applying for a place on the Bronze Award, a young person will need to commit to spending at least one hour of their time per week within three separate areas of “Skills”, “Volunteering” and “Physical” over a period of 3 months with an additional 3 months spent in one of those areas of their choice. In addition, they will also take part in an overnight expedition towards the end of the scheme.

If you require more information about the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme then please go to <https://www.dofe.org/>.

There is a cost for a place on the scheme of £35 and there may be a small charge by the Kingsclere Open Centre to cover costs for the expedition. Grants may be available to assist with those costs.

If you wish to apply for a place then please **email: kingscleredofe@yahoo.com** with your name, current age, contact details of a responsible adult and a paragraph about yourself and why you wish to do the scheme.

If we have more applicants than places, then you and your responsible adult may be asked to come for a chat and discuss your application.



The Church Pages

How do we live life at the moment? It seems like we are always waiting for the next announcement, checking to see what's happening with the curve, hoping that things will get better. It's been a hard time for so many. Perhaps you feel a bit like you are clinging on, holding on, trying to live as you can until lockdown is eased.

What I've found is that the lockdown has stripped so much away that many of us relied on. It has infiltrated every part of our lives, almost, and it leaves us feeling perhaps empty, isolated, disappointed, and longing for times before. When I watch a television programme from before, perhaps someone eating in a restaurant, walking down a busy street, or enjoying a day at the beach, I'm longing to get back to it; wishing I'd appreciated it more.

Many things have been stripped away. My question then is what is God doing? Looking back at the ups & downs in my life, I can see He has always been working and that He has good plans. I know that He cares deeply for those suffering physically from the virus, those who've lost loved ones, and also those who find each day such a challenge emotionally and mentally.

As some of you will know, I had some time off over Christmas (not ideal when you're a vicar!) and as I ease back into day to day ministry, I'm finding many of the small routine things a challenge. But I hope I'm learning that when I feel overwhelmed, I just have to cling on, hold on, trust that the Lord will lead me through.

And we can trust Him because of Easter when we remember Jesus who came in much weakness, who felt overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death as He contemplated His humiliation and crucifixion, and yet One who persevered to the end, knowing that God had a good plan to bring hope to all who trust in Him.

As we cling on during this lockdown, let's pray for better days but let's also remember that when we feel weak, the Lord is strong. Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness". Let's trust that and hold on.

Blessings,

Ben

P.S. Check out our 'Where is God' in the tough times series the next three Sundays at 10:30 via the website.



Worship in our Churches MARCH

Worship

Please join us as we worship together on Zoom each Sunday at 10.30am. The link to the meeting is available on the homepage of our website www.stmaryskingsclere.co.uk. If you do not have internet access it is possible to join in by phone. Please contact Emma (details below) for joining information.

We are keen to be back worshipping in person when we feel it's safe to do so. Please keep an eye on our website www.clerewoodlands.org.uk or sign up to our newsletter to get the most up to date information.

Private Prayer

St Mary's Kingsclere is still open for Private Prayer on Thursdays between 10am and 4pm for those who would like to visit individually or with members of their household. There are measures in place to keep everyone safe.

Prayer and Friendship

We have a team of volunteers who have offered to be available to speak to those who might need a phone call. Perhaps you are isolating at home alone and just want to speak to someone occasionally? Perhaps you would like someone to pray with? If so please contact Emma (details below) who can put you in touch with someone.



We are here for our community now, as always.
Please do get in touch if there is anything we can help with.

Contact Us

Emma Rivers (administrator): 07422 6887125 or
administrator@stmaryskingsclere.co.uk

Lighting up St Mary's

The sight of St Mary's Church when it is floodlit is truly beautiful. Many people sponsor these lights (£12 per evening) to celebrate an occasion, such as a birthday, wedding, anniversary, christening, or some other special day in their lives.

To book contact Emma, our Church Administrator on **0779 0934972**



January

29th	In loving memory of Jim Soper. His long life of kindness, joyfulness and resilience was an example to us all, a huge asset to the village who will be sorely missed but never forgotten, thanks to all who lined the streets and came for a drink at the church to say goodbye they don't make Jims anymore!
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February

22nd	To celebrate Thinking Day. Remembering all Girl Guides & Girl Scouts the world over. Kingsclere Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers & Leaders.
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March

28th	Remembering Jim Soper on his birthday. With love Janice, Andy and families.
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Kingsclere Methodist Church

We remain hopeful that we shall soon be able to open our Church again and share Worship together. With this in mind our Circuit Leadership Team have formulated a provisional plan for the next three months. Details for March as follows.

7th March - This will be an online Section Service , led by Revd. Rachel Borgars and Tim Gardner.

14th March - No Service

21st March - Holy Communion , led by Revd. Rachel Borgars at 10am.

28th March - No Service

Please accept our apologies if we are unable to go ahead with these plans.

Wendy (Senior Steward)

Hampshire County Council Solar Together Scheme

Hampshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and Cabinet approved the Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in 2020. The Strategy is based upon two targets set by the County Council; to be Carbon neutral and to be resilient to a 2 degrees temperature increase by 2050, for both the County Council and the wider County area.

One key sector where the County Council is taking more action is on energy use within the residential sector. Last summer we announced four community projects that will focus on this area, one of which is Solar Together scheme which launched on 15th February.

The scheme, managed by iChoosr, independent experts in group buying schemes, seeks to increase the amount of renewable energy being generated at household level. Targeted to homeowners and SMEs, the scheme will give residents the opportunity to buy high quality solar panels and battery storage from reputable traders at a highly competitive price.

Approximately 170,000 targeted homeowners across Hampshire will receive a direct mail of the offer from the week commencing 1 March, although anyone can register their interest to join the scheme.

How does the scheme work?

- Registration is free and without obligation. Simply provide details about your roof, such as its size and orientation.
- A supplier ‘auction’ will be held on 23 March, when our approved solar suppliers will bid for the work. The supplier with the lowest price wins and it usually favours local suppliers too. The more people that register, the better the deal should be for each household!
- From 22nd April you will be contacted with a personal recommendation, costs, and specification based on the details provided.
- The decision is then yours as to whether you want to accept your recommendation. There is no obligation to continue.
- If you accept, the winning supplier will contact you to survey your roof and set an installation date. Installations are planned to be completed by the end of October 2021.

Please search Hampshire County Council website for “Solar Buying Scheme” for more information (hants.gov.uk)

Park House Hostel Residents Raise £600 for Racing Welfare

Huge thanks are extended to the hostel residents at Park House Stables who between them have raised £600 for Racing Welfare, the charity that supports the workforce of the racing industry.



The 15-strong team, all aged between 16 and 24, battled the snowy conditions to complete 200 miles in a month. This equated to around a half-marathon per person, with one member of the team completing a gruelling, hilly 10-mile run in under an hour and a quarter. The team completed their challenge at the beginning of February, exceeding their initial fundraising target of £500.

Brian Watson, Regional Welfare Manager for Racing Welfare said: “Thanks to the team at Park House Stables for their dedication in raising these much-needed funds for Racing Welfare. It can’t have been easy to complete so many miles during the coldest weeks of the year, so hats off to them for their sterling effort!”

Racing Welfare offers professional guidance and practical help to all of racing’s people. Support is available for a wide range of life’s challenges, including physical health, mental health, bereavement, careers advice, housing, money advice, illness, addiction, relationships and retirement.

To find out more please visit racingwelfare.co.uk.



Basingstoke & District Disability Forum

BDDF – your local disability charity wants to reach out to you and keep you connected if you do not have access to technology.



As with most charities and businesses, BBDF adapted quickly to the Covid pandemic in March 2020 by swiftly moving our services online and concentrating on fun and interactive activities. They are all free and enjoyed by our members who have the technology to access them. Our Lockdown One Members' survey reinforced that the 'digital divide' exists between 'the younger generation' and those of our members who are either 'older' and / or living with a disability. Fifty percent of respondents admit they lack confidence, and/ or don't have access to internet / technology.

With 75% of our respondents citing the biggest challenges they faced during lockdown 1.0 were around psychological distress, mental health, social isolation and loneliness, it supports our concerns that confidence and access to digital equipment is leading to increased feelings of isolation and mental health issues.

What we can offer:

- If the barrier is around confidence / know-how we can help you use your personal devices;
- Our newsletter can be posted out to you;
- A regular 'care call' to say hello and see how you are doing, with one of our volunteers;
- Disability signposting service, connecting you with what is out there to assist you with your queries;
- Face to face support groups / coffee mornings (again when allowed),
- Our weekly seated yoga class is currently available online.

Our activities are free and fully inclusive. If you want to know more about any of our work please call 01256 423869, it is a voicemail, leave your details (home address, name & telephone number) and we will contact you.

If you can receive emails, and want to know more – please email our friendly team on info@bddf.org.uk

From Amanda, Sarah, Ani & the team of Trustees



Who would have thought a year would pass and we would still be closed? Let's hope that with growing numbers being vaccinated, restrictions will be lifted in the next few months.

Many of you will have noticed that White Crow, due to be our next film, was shown recently on television. We watched it for the second time, and thoroughly enjoyed it, so are now looking forward to seeing it on the big screen in the Village Club! You might also have seen Breathe, an intelligent, funny and thought-provoking film that we screened in 2019 was also broadcast last month.

We will be in touch as soon as we are able to go ahead. In the meantime, we are happy to lend DVDs to members for home viewing.

Please stay safe and stay in touch.

John Sawyer (Chairman) 297221 or jrsawyer@hotmail.co.uk



March in the Garden



The clocks will be going forward later this month giving us relief from the short, dark days of winter. How lovely to see the garden come to life with a riot of colour from the spring bulbs, one of my favourites being the perfectly formed February Silver, not as easily found to purchase as February Gold, but well worth growing, although they may cost a little more.

The weather can still be inclement, and the daffodils don't look as if they will survive, but they manage to bounce back again when a warmer day comes along. There is plenty to be done in the garden now: mulching can be done around shrubs, young trees, and perennials. This helps to stop the soil from drying out later when the weather gets warmer and dryer. If you want to plant container grown shrubs, climbers, perennials etc they can be planted now, not forgetting to apply a slow release fertiliser to give them a good start.

Time to prune roses : the main aim is to stop them from getting out of hand and keeping a good shape. Over-crowding is a problem, no matter how they are pruned, they always grow back, so no need to worry about a mistake, but you do need to cut the very thin stems, those less than the thickness of a pencil are not worth retaining.

Prune Eucalyptus trees hard now: if left unpruned you will lose the pretty round leaves which have a silver glow, and they will become large trees with dull grey oval leaves. Cut back the stems of the Dogwood and Willow: the coloured stems have given a good show through the winter months but now is the time to give them a good prune to encourage new growth.

Also time to divide any hardy perennials that have become choked or too large - perhaps it would be good to give the perennials some support before they become too large and the job becomes more difficult.

The lawns will have been growing, so if possible start cutting, remembering to keep the mower blades high for the first few cuts to avoid damage to grass and machine. Prepare the vegetable plot for seed planting: parsnips and herbs can be sown now, early potatoes can be planted, and onion sets can go into the ground. Feed fruit trees and bushes with blood fish and bone, and as always enjoy your garden - and hope the pigeons keep at bay!

Denise Allen

Kingsclere Village Bunnies Baby and Toddler Group



As we consult our crystal ball for March 2021 from early February, is it possible that lockdown is easing? We hope so! Is there a fresh warm spring or is winter hanging on beyond it's time? Preferably not, so that we can enjoy some outdoor adventures in the sunshine, (within all current guidelines).

What we do know is that March brings Mother's Day (14th), so we want to send our best wishes to all of our bunnies' mummies, nannies, grannies, aunties, carers and all who have kept the smiles on our bunnies' faces over the last year.

A small wishlist for Mother's Day 2021:

- Just a few hours extra sleep pretty please, ok one extra will be great, or even just the chance to sleep all night...ok we'll settle for a big hug when you inevitably wake up at 5:30am because it's morning already!
- Ok getting dressed, let's just say now, if everyone could get dressed without being asked 500 times that would be fab. Even better let's just stay in our PJs all day, far less hassle!
- Lunch magically prepared and cooked and on the table for us all to eat together – beans on toast will be just fine, or even better a lovely roast dinner (we can but hope)
- Toys, toys, toys – please let the house not look like a bomb has exploded by bedtime, just for once, a spoonful of sugar maybe a step too far, but get those tunes flowing kids and tidy, tidy, tidy!

Thank you lovely bunnies, we hope to see you all soon.

Where: The Village Club, George St

When: Every Tuesday, 9am-11am

Cost: First visit free. After that, £1 for bumps and unweaned babies. £2 for first child (including snack donated by Swan St Stores) and 50p for additional children.

Check out our Bunnies Facebook site – as well as our local buying and selling site “Kingsclere Bunnies Preloved”, where local mums often have bargains to pass on. villagebunniestoddlergroup@gmail.com

St. Mary's 200 Club

St. Mary's 200 Club was started many years ago to raise much needed funds to help with the running costs and maintenance of our village church. Nothing has changed today. We still require funds to help with the up-keep of the building (especially for the damp problems in the Kingsmill Room).

Thanks to Maggy and Les Wallace, who have diligently and efficiently managed The Club. They have now decided to step down and Andrew and I have taken up the reigns. We hope we can live up to Maggy and Les' high standards of efficiency.

We shall be contacting all existing members in the hope that they will renew their membership. However, there are a few spare numbers and we invite more people to join us.

Initially, we plan to start in April 2021 and run the draw for 9 months (until December 2021). This year the cost will be £9.00, payable in advance, which gives one entry per month. Thereafter, the cost will be £12.00 for a full year, January to December. You can purchase more than one number to increase your chances of winning. The winning number will be drawn publicly at the end of each month, results published in The Tower and the £50.00 prize will be paid to the lucky winner.

We hope that you will join us and encourage your family and friends to do the same. If you have a special lucky number (1-200) then we may be able to accommodate this, but remember some numbers are already allocated and thereafter will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

We can guarantee that all excess monies will be put to good use.

We would be pleased to welcome you.

Please contact Andrew or Pam Kitch

01635 299743

pamkitch16@gmail.com

andrewkitch16@gmail.com

Nature Notes

Last year's friendly robin has managed to retain his territory and looks in good condition. He has continued to politely announce his arrival for the two suet pellets he will accept, a third is refused at the time, maybe two fill his tiny crop. He has now learned to hover briefly at the fat ball feeder to snatch a snack.



Although goldfinches are not frequent on the niger feeder fourteen were perched in a nearby wild cherry tree – collectively a ‘charm’ of goldfinches.

On two occasions recently we have walked through a reedy, marshy paddock on days of early fog followed by sun. Under these conditions a species of grass – possibly a hair grass – looked magical as the clusters of tiny seed spikelets glittered when the sun caught the water droplets on them – a terrestrial Milky Way.

Our local stream was in full flow, water shining between its banks just short of breaching them. There was a sense of exuberance about it, almost as if to say, “yesterday I was puny, trickling around obstacles, but today I leap over them: I am a river!”

On the same walk we came across a hazel bush, leafless, but totally decorated with catkins, as though arranged by a careful hand. Their vivid lemon-yellow was highlighted by a weak sun emerging from the morning mist, and by a dark background of bramble leaves which were turning from green to purple. Other bushes bore catkins but nothing to rival the display of this one.

Diane Tait and Rod Eldred

Kingsclere & Headley Woodlands WI

The venue we hope to return to when conditions are more favourable:

Kingsclere Village Club, 35 George Street



There are words that capture attention and spark the imagination. It's safe to say that the names 'Nepal' and 'Gurkha' have got that kind of resonance so there's no doubt the speaker booked for Wednesday 10 March this year would have fed our sense of curiosity with his talk "*A Village in the Clouds*". But, as with all others booked for our W.I.'s 2020 / 2021 Programme it lies suspended in time.

Still, we are optimistic that we *will* yet meet up with speaker **Gary Dancer** (another ear-catching name?) and with his guidance we will 'visit' Nepal. He is by profession a Surgical Podiatrist - incidentally also specialising in learning disabilities and mental health issues. How a person in Gary's profession first became involved with a school in Western Nepal is something no doubt to be related during his presentation. What *we do* know is that his interests in Nepal (renowned for its formidable Gurkhas' military skills and that unit's 200-year-old loyalty to Britain) run deep. He is committed to raising money for the school and pleased to report it is thriving and the students doing well.

He will not be visiting the school for some time yet for obvious reasons but he does receive regular updates. He explains that it is sited in a rather remote area "*which has to date helped protect it from the predations of Covid*" and adds that surprisingly, the local 'health post' forms part of the structure. Whether this feature is fortunate or not remains a moot point. In any event they do not have facilities to deal with respiratory problems.

Closing note: Gary Dancer is currently involved in a couple of studies which in the long term might prove beneficial in the fight against Covid.

Nova Saunderson - 01635 299570

KINGSCLERE HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

We had arranged a full speaker programme from October last year through to this March but, as you will be aware, we decided to cancel our meetings due to the virus. We did give consideration to holding a meeting or two via Zoom but our speakers in the main preferred to defer until we can meet at the Village Club and we felt it better to defer our AGM accordingly. We felt this would be acceptable to our membership.

At the time of writing obviously we do not know how long it will be before we can get back to some form of normality. Once things are clearer we will endeavor to arrange our AGM and Richard Croft's next presentation on the history of Kingsclere. We will give consideration to further speaker meetings but may leave our previously arranged meetings until the new winter season. We will also consider opening the village archives on Monday afternoons.

We certainly look forward to when we can get together and enjoy an entertaining programme of speakers.

Michael Leah, Hon Secretary
tel 297403

KINGSCLERE GARDENING ASSOCIATION

Once again nothing to report regarding meeting again. Will it be this year? How are all my colleagues? The committee have met just once since this pandemic began. Hopefully one day there will be an active club working again. Just a bit of information: the first Garden Club started around 1885. There are minutes of meetings and events recorded which now, I believe, are with the Heritage Society. They make interesting reading as you find that some of the village road names come from people who lived here. I believe an Admiral Faulkner was one, along with many others. One mention is of a well attended A.G.M when members had concerns about a meal the committee had at The Crown at a cost of less than 10 shillings a head! I cannot recall the exact amount, but I can assure you the present committee have had no such treats.

On a serious note the village Flower Show was an important affair. The requirements for an exhibit were much more demanding than today's shows, and there were divisions for those who employed gardeners and the lesser mortals with their own plots. After the war the shows were held on a field near the racing stables. One of the exhibitors was Tom Smith who I worked with; also the Hedges brothers, Vic, Charles, and of course several of the Hutchings family. However enough reminiscing: I believe we have always maintained a very high standard which Kingsclere can be proud of. Let us hope that we can start again one day soon.

John Eckton 01256 850017

