



St Swithun's Tower Restoration - Latest News

Ro Gadian reports

2016 saw some brilliantly successful and enjoyable fundraising events in Great Chishill, most recently Crafts in the Barn, Pink Champagne, Norfolk Comedy and a Blue Grass Band, all of which contributed to our current total of nearly £53,000, which is incredible in just 2 years.

We have nearly completed the first phase of the restoration project. The main work was to investigate the causes of damp in the tower. Experts analysed samples from all over the tower and confirmed that the tower is indeed damp with moisture in the walls, most likely from weather driven rain. The voids on the face of the tower, composition of the pointing, and large joints in pointing have allowed water penetration into the tower core, and rainwater from a spout on the tower roof doesn't help, as wind can drive rain against the tower. There is also salt damage internally, plaster on the walls is acting as a poultice and drawing out salts from the moisture within the walls. The tower isn't very well ventilated, so the damp can't readily escape.



The proposed repair work is to rake out the pointing on the external walls for the whole height of the tower on all four elevations, then repoint in a hot lime mix, replace missing flints and consolidate any loose stonework behind. Internally all plaster on the ground floor and ringing chamber will be removed, consolidating flints and repointing where necessary, together with improving the ventilation, to help the walls dry out.

A "faculty", which is planning permission from the diocese, is needed before we can start any work. Two have been submitted; one for the repairs and one for new facilities (toilet, kitchenette and to open up the space at the back of the church), but it will take some months before these are approved. Meanwhile a detailed specification for the work has been drawn up by the surveyor and discussed with Historic England. When it has been agreed by all relevant parties, then contractors will be asked to tender, probably in January.

Once we choose a contractor we can submit detailed proposals and costs to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in a second round application. HLF has earmarked funding for our project; as long as we have progressed in line with our original application we should get money towards the full project. We have spent around £25,000 to date, total project costs are estimated to be £352,000 but the maximum HLF grant is £249,100. So we will make up the difference from VAT recovery, by applying for other grants and holding some more fundraising events. So watch out for news of a Ceilidh in the Spring, and keep your fingers crossed that the cost of all the work doesn't escalate too much!



Kids'n Youth

Emily Brown reports

A fantastic afternoon of merriment was enjoyed once again this year at the Great Chishill and Heydon Children's Christmas Party on the 11th December. Over 50 children and their families were entertained by the marvellous Stripey Wipey before receiving a very special visitor... thank you so much Father Christmas for flying in and visiting us at such a busy time of year!



The Youth Club enjoyed a Disco & Pizza night on their final club of the year - our great thanks to DJ Simon for his brilliant music. In exchange for their party treats, the young people made donations of food for the Hitchin based homeless hostel 'North Herts Sanctuary'. Thank you to all our members for the large box full of food Dan was able to deliver to this worthwhile cause. See you all on Tuesday 10 January!

Women's Institute

17 January 7.30pm

Village Hall

Claire Matthews

The Gardens of

Easton Lodge

Visitors welcome! Call Angela 837353

NEW! UNITED REFORM CHURCH FILM NIGHT on Tuesday 10 January

We are holding a film night and showing Salmon Fishing in the Yemen at 7.30pm on Tuesday 10 January in the schoolroom at the URC, and hoping to do this on the second Tuesday of every month at 7.30 pm. Come and enjoy a cosy evening with a glass of wine, popcorn and sweeties. Suggestions for more films welcome! *Call Tess for more info 838941*

Senior Citizens' Festive Tea About 40 Senior Citizens enjoyed a slap-up tea at the Village Hall on 15 December. The annual event, generously funded by the Parish Council, has been organised for many years by Janet Crouch, Eileen Murrell, Liz Parkes and Sue Price (*pictured right*), who announced to general dismay that this would be their swan-song. It was time, Janet announced, for a new and younger team to take over - and before the vote of thanks was concluded, that team had been formed!



Among the guests was long term Chishill resident Denis Rule, making a welcome appearance with his daughter Christine. Denis, who now lives in St Ives, was celebrated for winding the church clock over many years.



More pictures on the village website www.greatchishill.org.uk

CRAFTS IN THE BARN

Lindsey Crawley reports: Crafts in the Barn was again a very successful event - great atmosphere, and lots of people came from the village and afar. We made £676 for the church and the windmill. I want to thank Tom and Ellie Mead for the use of the barn at Lynchetts Farm. Father Christmas, Noah the Donkey and the Hand Bell ringers helped create a lovely Christmas feeling.



From our County Councillor

A Lib Dem motion to the December County Council meeting has resulted in reinstatement of the gritting network as it stood before last year's cuts. A long-term solution requires an adequate revenue stream: reserves can't be the permanent answer for obvious reasons. Similarly, but out of the limelight, our transport subsidies steering group is working forensically to understand the critical role of subsidized bus and community transport. With luck this budget will now be protected, but again, reserves are not a sustainable solution. Budget meetings are in February.

Next drop-in advice surgery: 9 January, 2:30-3:30, Melbourn Hub. Meanwhile, any questions please get in touch: Susan van de Ven susanvanden5@gmail.com, 07905325574.

BIN COLLECTIONS

| | <u>Black</u> | <u>Blue & Green</u> |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------|
| JAN | 7 (Sat) | 13 |
| | 20 | 27 |
| FEB | 3 | 10 |