



Out and About In Thwaites

September 20 - Issue No 440

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Spotlight on Thwaites Village Hall

This Month we dedicate much of our space of Out and About to the behind the scenes work and the future plans of the Thwaites Village Hall, which as we all aware has been closed since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic emergency

Though the doors have been closed, work has been ongoing for the Village Hall to come back both refreshed and ready to serve the community.

We also celebrate the support the Hall enjoys from its many users and fund raisers which makes sure the Hall can pay its way and we can invest in infrastructure of the Hall, which as the years pass by, we need to replace and renew many of the services which keep the Hall running. Please read more on pages 2, 3 and 4.....

Results - Thwaites 100 Club - Winners - July and August

July

- 1st 70. Angie Gibson
- 2nd. 28 Jean Jones
- 3rd 88 Carol Walker
- 4th 94 Margaret Forsman

August

- 1st. 21. Andrew Wearing
- 2nd 111 Nick Gamble
- 3rd 104. Alan Clemens
- 4th 41. Carol Phifer

Speeding - increasing concerns

There has been a noticeable increase in traffic through The Parish in recent weeks, made even more noticeable following the reduction which took place during the height of the Covid-19 restrictions. The police have also received an increase in the number of complaints of speeding traffic through The Green, in particular through the section between Cherry Tree and The Oaks. As response a police officer has been carrying out roadside checks at peak traffic times.



Investing and Sustaining the Future of the Thwaites Village Hall



A programme of investment has been underway at the Village Hall for the past 4 years. Some of this investment is there to see and other work, critical to the safe operations of the Hall is not so obvious. The Management Committee have recognised that successful bidding for money with support from Village Hall Fundraising would become the route to getting some big projects done with costs that could not be met from existing Village Hall funds.



So the focus has moved to actively pursuing Bids and working with partners to secure funding. This investment programme is focused on securing and protecting this community asset for the long term and enhance the range of services it can offer to improve revenue from Hall bookings.

So what has been achieved so far?

1. Renovation of the Tennis Courts - 2016



The Tennis Courts was the start of our programme of works - designed to bring back to life a space which was showing signs of neglect - back to a modern and refreshed Tennis Court.

This work was primarily funded by Tesco through their community fund, with the balance from Thwaites Village Hall funds

2. New Kitchen Project - 2017



The replacement of the kitchen was a big commitment for the Village Hall, and a timely project to bring the kitchen up to date with modern facilities to meet appropriate food hygiene standards. Beyond the new kitchen units, the project required a new kitchen ceiling, improved electrical work and new flooring.

The Village Hall were successful in securing grants from the Copeland Community Fund, Sellafield Ltd, CGP Community Fund plus a contribution from Village Hall Funds.



3. Fire Alarm System - 2018

The system in the Hall was no longer appropriate in meeting new standards and of course safety is the number one priority for the Village Hall.

A new electronic fire alarm system has been installed and signed off by the Cumbria Fire Service, whose help in completing a fire safety review was an important step to improve the overall level of fire safety in this well-used community space. This project was supported by the Ghyll Scaur Community Fund.





4. New Septic Tank -2018

This project was set up to meet environmental new standards and ensure we avoided any increasing risk of a collapse from an aging septic tank, which would have a significant impact on the environment and specifically on Black Beck.

5. New Front Doors - 2018

The entrance doors replaced with support from the Ghyll Scaur Community Trust Fund



6 New Reading Room Roof and Land Drainage Improvements - 2019

Issues of damp and poor drainage have had a significant impact on the condition of the Village Hall. Other works including re-rendering the Supper Room outer wall and to fix the long term drainage issues experienced near the Main Entrance. This project is an example of investing to protect the long term future of the Village Hall. This was funded from existing Village Hall Funds.



7. New Boundary Fence and Delivery of the Registration of the Village Hall Boundary with the Land Registry - 2019

A careful review of existing documentation of the Village Hall land registration identified the need to secure the Village Hall Grounds with the Land Registry - this of course provides a long term legacy for the community by ensuring the Village Hall and its playing fields are correctly identified and registered with the appropriate Authorities.

The Management Committee also completed a replacement of the existing Boundary Fence.



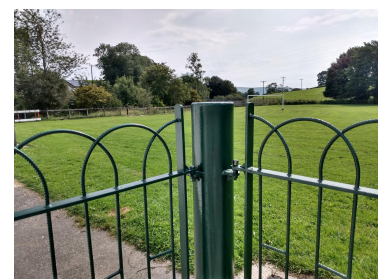
8 Improved Audio and Visual - 2019

This project has delivered improvements for users which need both audio and visual services - this has resulted in a new screen and audio improvements. This is in response to customer feedback.

10 So What Next? 2020 and beyond.....

Paint the Hall

Work continues with the Village Hall remaining closed due to Covid -19. This has presented the opportunity to complete a long outstanding project and complete a re-decoration of both internal and external walls and ceilings. This work is ongoing and we hope you can start to see the difference.



11. New Play Park

Many of you will have seen the plans for the new Play Park published by Millom Without Parish Council who are leading on this project as part of delivering on the local Community Plan.



12. WiFi Connectivity

Work is underway to connect the Hall to the 21st Century with a WiFi Service - this is to broaden the appeal of the Hall to existing and potential new users.

Village Hall - Funding

The Village Hall's continuing programme of investment is to ensure the Hall can continue to stand on its "two feet" and secure a sustainable future.

The Hall gets its money through three routes:

1. Hall revenue from Booking / Hire
2. The fundraising events which are organised by the Village Hall's Social Committee
3. Bidding for grants

Our programme of work over the past four years have costs approximately £80K, of which successful bids and grants has contributed 50% of the total costs.

The contribution of the Village Hall Social Committee and all the community supporters in organising events around the year has made it possible for the Hall to make our investment possible - the Management Committee want to express their thanks for their support - without this commitment the Hall would struggle to meet its ongoing commitments and support the investments over the past 4 years.

Re-Opening The Hall

Re-opening the Hall is clearly an aim of the Management Committee, but much depends on the existing users returning who are also governed by their own regulations. And of course how events unfold in the next few months as to virus spread and Government change to regulations.

There is a significant amount of work to be done to ensure the Hall is Covid-19 Secure and a group has been set up look at the requirements and how this will apply to the Village Hall.

We do hope the Hall is able to welcome back the community at the end of Sept / beginning of October - but of course a lot can change before this date

We do however need to make the sad decision and cancel this years Bonfire Night - with the high degree of uncertainty we must take a cautious approach to keep every one safe.

"Small School - Small Steps"- Jordan Emms - Acting Headteacher - Thwaites School

When the government announced that there was going to be a return to school in England for key worker and vulnerable children alongside those in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, I don't feel we were alone in being surprised by the decision. Logging onto teaching forums, scrolling through Facebook or watching the news, you could sense that there was a huge wave of nationwide uncertainty surrounding the return. With our school playing such a key role in the local community, it was never in doubt that we would roll our sleeves up and adapt our practice as best we could to ensure the safest possible return for our children. I'm very lucky to be in the position I'm in at Thwaites. I'm acting headteacher of a small school with an incredibly big heart. I have a wonderful teaching team around me who invested both their time and energy into ensuring we could reopen safely in June. When I first mentioned the return to the staff, there was, as expected, an element of fear. Local data was amongst the worst in the country, safety guidance from the DfE was being amended daily and people were experiencing COVID in their own personal lives. At a socially distanced staff meeting where I shared my vision for a safe return to school, I was blown away by how receptive the staff were to returning. Team Thwaites pulled together for the benefit of our children. Our kids are the reason we do our job and, with them at the heart of every decision we made, we knew that we could safely welcome some of them back.

We looked at our risk assessments and made sure everything was controlled, we contacted all parents from the aforementioned groups and set about making Thwaites as safe as possible. Classrooms were rearranged, teachers were split into teaching teams to oversee the bubble group and parent information packs were sent to the families of those returning children. In total, we welcomed back 15 children (over 1/3 of our total number) and we're really pleased with the feedback we received from parents and families. Not only were the children safe; they were learning in a familiar environment alongside their normal teaching teams.

The wider opening in September is something we are looking forward to at Thwaites. We've missed seeing our children and although we've made contact regularly during lockdown, online learning and phone calls just aren't the same as face to face interaction – We miss our kids! Our classrooms have been rearranged, hand washing stations put in place, new entrance and exit routes established and the teachers have planned fun and interesting curriculum topics to deliver. We can't wait to get back to doing what we do! I may be biased, but I believe that teaching is the most rewarding job in the world. COVID has robbed children of valuable learning time and although damaging for many in the short term, we can't let this have lasting effects. Our children need us and Team Thwaites will be there to welcome, to support, to encourage and to guide. I believe that all the children deserve the best and that is what I intend to give them at Thwaites School. I know that when September comes and we welcome our children back, there will be questions to answer, changes to routines, new challenges for us all to face but seeing those children smile as they enter on Thursday 3rd September will be the start to the term that we need. I know that Team Thwaites will go above and beyond to ensure each child gets the return to education they deserve. Thwaites is more than just a school, it's a family and we're looking forward to welcoming everybody back in a few weeks.



Building Repairs....for House Martins

Our observations of local House Martin nests suggest they use estuarine mud with sand that is not coarse enough to bind together well or over a prolonged period. There have been, sadly, a number of nest failures over the last several years, especially during very dry and very wet periods. Prefabricated terra cotta nests have been provided for House Martins and Swallows but they have either been taken over by Sparrows prior to House Martin and Swallow arrival or in some way not obvious to us humans have not been considered desirable enough. One pair, probably novices, have been observed building a nest on an outbuilding. Approximately 1000 beakfuls of mud are needed for a nest and the house martin pair were observed carefully placing each tiny ball of mud on the nest; first they fortified the sides and base and then bridged the gap very carefully. They made several attempts to construct a nest and there was much wasted mud on the ground below the nest site. A House Martin nest on a neighbouring garage failed several times during this period and was finally abandoned. The nest was completed, eggs were laid, and chicks were hatched. During a period of heavy rain (in July, surely not?) the nest subsided partially to reveal the grass lining. As the chicks were not mature enough to fledge at this point human repairs were required in the form of carpet adhesive, which held the nest together for a further week. Further rain saturated the nest and it collapsed entirely. The chicks were spotted, still alive in the fallen nest, and a further repair was quickly made with a narrow wooden shelf and small plastic crate for the remains of the nest and the chicks. Sadly, however, the chicks did not survive. This is sad but there may be a happy ending to come. The House Martins (presumably the same pair?) have resumed nest construction with the help of the shelf prefabrication. We wish you a successful brood this time, House Martins!

Well Done - Jack and Ross

If you have travelled through Lady Hall this summer you may have seen a number of sunflowers. Jake Allonby, age 9, organised a sunflower growing competition - plant a sunflower, stay safe - amongst neighbours, family and friends to raise funds for the NHS. The tallest sunflower, reaching 9 feet, was grown by Ryan and Pam Whittaker, who won a hydrangea for their efforts.

This wasn't quite a British record (over 20 feet) but may be a record for Millom Without? The smallest sunflower only reached 34 inches (for which Jan and Bill Taylor received slug pellets and a chocolate bar as compensation). Competitors made donations of over £110 to the NHS. Well done, Jake, for fundraising for this excellent cause!

Ross Watson, also of Lady Hall, organised the 1st Sheepdog trial in the UK since the coronavirus restrictions came into force. The trial was held, following strict DEFRA rules, on 12th July at Whitbeck, with the kind permission of Joe Lowery. Seventy dogs competed on the two courses and all prize winners donated their winnings to the NHS. A total of £400 was raised for the NHS from this trial!

