

Offton Village Report for the Year 2011

We were fortunate again this year that nothing untoward occurred in the village and the quiet rural life continues. In fact, the natural habitat around us appears to have attracted buzzards to the area. They can frequently be seen in the skies, sometimes as many as 8, and some seem to be nesting in Middle Wood.

The major issue, I suppose, is the continued dry weather affecting us during the winter months which is not good for gardeners and farmers. Also, reservoirs are not gaining the levels of water in the winter that we need to see us through the summer months, hence a hose pipe ban has been enforced since April 2012.

This comment had to be revised since writing the report and as of the end of April 2012 we have had the wettest April on record. I recorded 115 mm (4mm in 2010, 4 mm in 2011) However, the authorities insist that the fresh water supply levels are still critical.

Another issue affecting the village was the prospect that one of the routes of high voltage electricity lines proposed by National Grid was skirting the village. Consultation events gave people a chance to see the proposals and to give the company feedback on those issues. A number of villagers had their say.

The Parochial Church Council looks after the church and fundraises for the upkeep of it by holding a summer fete. This event is much more than a fundraiser. It gives people, especially newcomers, the chance to meet and get to know others in the community. Other events, such as a quiz evening, supper in the church, a concert featuring 'Voices Together', and the sale of spring bulbs also helped towards church funds. In addition to the normal services special worships, such as the Easter, Songs of Praise, Animal Blessing, Harvest, Remembrance, and Christmas services also bring together young and old. The children enjoyed two workshops where preparations for the Easter and the Christmas Carol services were made.

Under the leadership of Brian Whiting the bell ringing band has a strong following and practice weekly. The band welcomed the New year with a special peal of 2012 changes which took an hour to ring. The bell tower is popular amongst the bell ringing fraternity as it has 8 bells and many visiting bands enjoy the experience.

The village hall had its 1st hiring on the 5th May 2011 when council elections took place and was formally opened on October, the 15th, when a reception was held in the afternoon. The invited guests included the contractors, grant funders, county, district, and parish councillors, as well as the local MP Dan Poulter and, of course, all the villagers. Helen Decker, who is part of the Team GB marathon runners' team, had been invited, too. She grew up in Offton and her parents still live here. She gave a short talk on her sporting achievements and challenges to come, especially with the Olympics ahead. Percy Thorpe, a member of the village hall committee since the 1960s had the honour of cutting the ribbon and declaring the hall officially open. In the evening villagers were treated to a free barn dance.

Meanwhile the site of the old hall has been cleared and the building of 2 houses has started. As they are nearing completion the appearance of them are very pleasing. They fit very well into the village landscape.

The carpet bowlers are very pleased with the new venue and have had a number of recruitment drives to encourage a few more members.

Other events held at the hall have been a craft workshop, keep fit, and quiz evening.

The parish council was also pleased to resume the invitation to all Senior Citizens to a Christmas Party which had a year's lapse due to the old hall's poor state. But the new hall was much admired by the guests who once again had a wonderful home cooked meal and entertainment by the local choir.

The council conducted their usual business throughout the year and were pleased to have contributed £15000 towards the village hall project. They also instigated the parish plan

for which a sub-committee was formed. Every household in the two parishes were given the opportunity to give their views on future needs within the parishes in regards to housing, transport, leisure facilities, etc. A high percentage returned their forms and the computer analysis is still awaited.

Pip Sands, the parish clerk announced that he would retire at the next AGM after 26 years of service. The council was sorry to lose his invaluable experience, but understood his wish for a more leisurely life. They advertised for a new clerk and as of April 2012 secured the employment of Mrs. Jayne Double, who lives in Willisham.

The village recorder has had a few inquiries via the website from people wishing to get info or historical pictures about the village and responded accordingly. One lady wishes to attend the forthcoming events in the summer, so the exposure on the web definitely helps to connect people and benefits all.

This concludes my report. My thanks to the Parish Council for their continued support.

Silke Pinson-Roxburgh Village Recorder for Offton.



Opening Event – October 2011



Houses on site of old village hall