

Brackenfield Village Association
Notes of informal open meeting on Thursday 7 September 2017
at 7pm at Brackenfield Church Hall

Present: Linda Walker, Rosalyn Rogers, Nigel Rogers, Keith Purvis, Sarah Poulton, Stefan Priest, Cath Pilsbury, Martin Philips, Revd Ralph Lawrence, Lynn Keeton, Graham Keeton, Mike Edwards, Christine Edwards, Anne Edgar, Gillian Burnett, David Burnett, Iain Armour

Apologies: Colin Wilkinson, Lindsay Eyre,

Purpose of the meeting: This was an informal meeting to review how the picnic went and to seek opinions about what direction the village association should take and possible future events.

Picnic on the Green - comments:

- The picnic was enjoyed by those who attended and it was recognised as a “first class, well run event”.
- People liked that it was a local event for the village rather than a larger “fund-raising” event: *“I feel the Picnic will grow generically anyway, hopefully becoming an annual event which the whole village can look forward to and enjoy”.*
- We were very fortunate to have such good weather.
- It was good for families and nice to see so many large groups of family and friends together, including birthday celebrations.
- The activities for children were appreciated and some had met new friends and enjoyed the bear hunt in the woodland, which was cleared for the event.
- People enjoyed sharing food.
- Welly-wanging was popular.
- The Plough enjoyed being included in the community and made a donation of £50

What could be improved:

- Louder sound system (and/or guide people to sit closer to where the music and PA systems are placed).
- Some people would have liked lager and wine to be available from the bar.
- Some people would have liked more stalls and activities.

What next:

- It was agreed that a similar event should be held next year preferably on Sunday 15th July, possibly with extended time of 11am to 5pm, subject to approval by the Parish Council.
- Stall holders could apply to attend on the understanding that this is a small-scale event which is not being advertised beyond the village.
- Additional activities suggested include traditional school games such as sack and egg and spoon racing and a village “bake-off”. Further ideas and offers of help to organise activities will be welcomed by the committee.

Action: Mike will raise at the next Parish Council meeting.

What is the purpose of the Village Association?

- There was some discussion and it was mentioned that the long-standing Well Dressing Festival has now come to a natural close after many years of success and significant fund-raising towards maintenance of the Church and Church Hall.
- The discussion helped to clarify that the Village Association has been created primarily to bring the community together for enjoyment and development of community spirit rather than large-scale fund-raising.
- With grants and modest fund-raising at the picnic, costs had been covered and sufficient raised to pay for Life Support/Defibrillator Training for 20 people. This has been booked for 28 April 2018 from 0930 to 1230.
- The Committee would like to maintain focus on community enjoyment and small-scale projects. They welcome suggestions and involvement from all villagers and want to keep events local and manageable at present, with potential for growth in the future.
- Co-operation between the various groups within the village is desirable and there may be opportunities for joining together for “extraordinary events” such as the Diamond Jubilee.
- There was some discussion about possible community events that could take place in the Church Hall and payment of a hire charge for such events would be entirely appropriate, to help cover the maintenance and running costs of the building.

Ideas for future activities:

- Arts trail round the village (any kind of art, sculpture, scarecrow, plants, etc.) with a map for guidance
- Open Gardens (This could be something for the longer term and it was acknowledged that it requires a great deal of effort and there may be concerns about security.)
- Christmas Tree with solar lights outside the Church Hall; Lighting up Ceremony with refreshments and carols
- Children's Christmas Party; Father Christmas (be aware of Disclosure and Barring requirements)
- Film Night (Holloway Film Club loan equipment; There are also open-air screening providers)
- Christmas Dinner
- Pie and Pea supper and talks
- Whist Drive
- Quiz Night with supper
- Ferret racing
- Antiques Valuation
- Auction
- Workshops e.g. Christmas wreath-making
- Ticketed event in Dobbs Croft e.g. Jazz concert
- Video wrap of Church or Hall e.g. to commemorate the end of WW1
- Recognition of centenaries such as Votes for Women; 100 years since death of Gustav Klimt

Next steps:

The committee will look into the Christmas Tree/Carols and Summer Picnic, as these seemed to have widespread support and also discuss the idea of an Arts Trail.

Anyone wishing to help or make further suggestions, please contact someone on the committee or via the website: www.brackenfield.org

