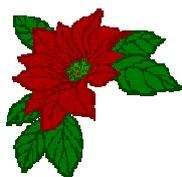




December 2009

Issue No. 58



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Winter Newsletter

Cable TV in NAG

The doom and gloom

As many will know, Virgin Media has given notice of its intention to terminate its current analogue cable service within New Ash Green early next year. Attempts to identify and engage with a decision maker within Virgin were frustrated by the sheer size and nature of the beast. There seemed to be little interest in contemplating an upgrade to provide a digital service. Ultimately, Virgin Media is a commercial organisation which has no duty to provide a service and if the service is not profitable then it makes sense for them to close down, despite the VA's representations.

The ray of sunshine

High speed broadband using

fibre optic cable is the future. If the present cable system is closed down and deteriorates it will be a backward step for the Village. It will be difficult to reinstate a modernised system at some time in the future.

Very recently, we have established contact with a manager within their new build broadband division. Virgin Media would consider upgrading the cable system within the village to provide access to everything that they can offer: TV, phone and broadband. With Virgin currently offering the fastest broadband on the market, this offers a significant advantage over competitors. This would offer HD internet access, multiple user access in each household, high speed downloads and super-responsive online

games etc.

The catch? With current levels of cable take-up, there is no commercial sense in Virgin upgrading the system. However, if the latent interest that I believe exists in New Ash Green in accessing 'an all singing and dancing' high-speed cable system can be demonstrated, the necessary viable business case would exist. We shall be aiming to demonstrate such demand to press the case for an upgrade and much improved cable service for our residents.

The VA will be circulating a letter in the next few days to every NAG resident describing the service that Virgin could make available with a modernised system to ask if it would be of interest to them

Alan Pett - Chairman

Youth Theatre Storms Ahead



Ash Green Youth Theatre was set up in September 2005 with the aim of providing the youth of New Ash Green and the surrounding areas with an opportunity to take part in theatrical activities within the village.

The Youth Theatre runs a two week summer school at the end of August and invites young people, aged 13 to 24, to come along and work with three West End professionals, a Director, a Musical Director and a Choreographer, in the creation of an original piece of musical theatre based upon a predetermined theme which,

in 2009, was William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'.

Each production is written from scratch with the help of the professional practitioners; culminating with all the dances, songs and drama used during the final performance being created by the students.

Next year's summer school will take place between 16th and 28th August 2010 with two performances on the 28th, in New Ash Green Village Hall. If you would like to be part of the Ash Green Youth Theatre course in 2010 or would like

further information, please email us on:

AGYT@hotmail.co.uk or call Jamie Clark on 01474 871417. We would be more than happy to bring in any new members to the course.



Cast of 'The Tempest'



It's all change at Ash Green Scouts

ASH Green Scouts – the village's largest youth organisation for boys and girls aged between 6 and 14 – is under new management and has just announced a packed programme of activities for the next 12 months.

The new team is spear-headed by New Ash Green residents Gary Davies and Gill Lockett who, as Group Scout Leader and Group Chair, have put in place ambitious plans for growth.

The younger members will take part in a series of hikes, badges, sleepovers and pack holidays while the older ones are going camping, survival training, expeditions, canoeing, rafting plus a series of other exciting activities. These include ***I'm a Scout, get me out of here*** based on the popular TV programme with real bush tucker challenges. There is also a host of visits and outings planned.

The new management team includes Alan Pett, Chairman of New Ash Green Village Association Ltd and village residents Pam Godden and Emma Jones, while Pam's daughter, Jen runs the youngest age group, the Beavers.

As part of the re-launch, the

Scouts have a new website www.ashgreenscouts.org.uk designed to tell both parents and young people about the Group, along with details of forthcoming activities.

Ash Green leaders have also recently visited New Ash Green Primary School to run an assembly where they sang a song, played a game and said a prayer while telling the pupils all about Scouts. All children were invited to an Open Night so that they could see for themselves just how much fun they could have at Ash Green Scouts.

Finally, a door-to-door leaflet drop is taking place throughout the village promoting the Group.

Says Group Chair, Gill Lockett: "We have exciting plans for Ash Green Scouts with new leaders in each of the three sections - Beavers (aged 6 – 8), Cubs (8- 10½) and Scouts (10½ -14).

"I would encourage New Ash Green parents with children who fall into these age groups to visit our website and, if they like what they see, to come along and let their children try it free of charge for a couple of evenings to see if it suits them."

Adds Alan Pett, Chairman of

the Village Association: "This is an excellent initiative and I would ask all parents to study the website to see the wide range of activities on offer. I am confident the village will support our new look Group."

Beavers and Cubs meet early on Tuesday evenings while Scouts meet on Fridays. Residents who are interested in finding out more can either e-mail the Scouts from the "Join" page on the website or call **0844 414 5396**.

They now need more adults to help bring Scouting to more young people in the village to give them a sense of adventure and help make them better citizens.

They are holding an adult recruitment week from 6 – 16 January 2010 with a special Open Morning at the Village Hall on Saturday 16 January from 10am – 11.30am. Please make a note to visit them where you'll get to see the young people go through their paces and have a chance to speak to fellow leaders about how you can help.

If you can't wait that long, then check out their website or call them on the number above. We are looking forward to hearing from you!



The recent Scouts Recruitment Campaign has been a huge success—there has been a 50% increase in Ash Green Scouts alone—a record!!!



"Write Here, Right Now"

A new creative writing workshop will be starting in New Ash Green early next year.

Places will be limited, so if you think you might be interested and would like to get your name on the "interested" list, please give me a call on 874976 or e-mail me at:

caroletrowbridge@btinternet.com



The new recruits are seen here being invested by Steve Pursey

Hawk Youth Project

Hello! Allow me to introduce myself. I am Matthew Butt and I am the new Youth and Community worker for the HAWK youth project.

The HAWK Youth Project delivers youth-work in your area. It is funded and supported by 6 main partners; New Ash Green Village Association, Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Ash cum Ridley Parish Council, West Kingsdown Parish Council and Hartley Parish Council.

For the last 6 years the project has been led by Glenn Walsh who has since decided that it was time for him to move on to new things. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all the work he did and handing over a project mov-

ing in all the right directions.

The project works in the 3 areas of New Ash Green, West Kingsdown and Hartley and its focus is on working with 13-19 year olds in each of the communities.

In New Ash Green we run youth sessions 2 evenings a week on a Monday and a Wednesday evening. We work both on the street with young people and also in the Youth and Community Centre. We look to deliver informal-social education on issues relevant to young people, such as drugs awareness, smoking cessation, sexual health and alcohol awareness. Our other aim is to support and empower young people to become adults that can aspire and achieve great

things in life. At HAWK we see young people as a part of the community that needs to be catered for and not a 'problem' that needs to be solved.

If you have any thoughts on youth-work in the area of New Ash Green I would love to hear from you.

Hawk Youth Project, The Parish Office, Ash Sports Centre, Ash Road, Longfield, Kent DA3 8JZ.

hawk youth@live.co.uk



Matthew Butt



New Hawk Logo

Footpaths, Lighting and Holes in the Ground– How you can help!

An often unsung and unnoticed job of the VA is to keep on top of the many routine tasks around the village, including the painting of lamp standards and road crossing barriers, repairs to cracked or uneven paths and to the numerous children's play areas, litter clearance, providing and emptying dog bins etc.

What is harder to manage in a timely and efficient way are the unplanned things, and that is where you can help.

Please report any of the following items, either to your own Residents Society or direct to the VA:

Lighting failures—Street lamps out or damaged or with their inspection hatches missing.

Paths—Trip hazards, uneven surfaces, slippery areas caused by moss or dead

leaves. (Some areas will be the responsibility of the Societies).

Graffiti—With a photograph if at all possible (anywhere, including on your neighbourhood).

Water leaks and other holes in the ground including if the utility company appears to have left the temporary tarmac repair in place for too long.

Contact the VA either by dropping a note in to the VA Office, phoning us on 872691 (24hrs—if the office is unmanned please leave a message on the answerphone) or emailing admin@nagval.com.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated!



Co-Op Cops Award!

Did you know? Alex Sophianou, pictured below, who manages the local Co-Operative store met the 'A' list celebrities at the Pride of Britain Awards that were held in October. He was awarded the Pride of the Co-Operative Award by former England and Manchester United captain, Bryan Robson, ahead of the main show because the company sponsors this annual event.

The Co-Op's Chief Executive, Peter Marks, also handed Alex the award for 'Going the extra mile' with his community work which include Youth Club project plans as well as making the New Ash Green branch 'Store of the Year' last year.



Please assist the VA Office by reporting to us any lighting failures, path hazards, graffiti and water leaks!

The co-operative

Your Police—Your Community



**Kent
Police**



Neighbourhood policing teams have been set up to provide dedicated, accessible and visible policing that respond to the needs of local communities.

The Neighbourhood policing team in New Ash Green has a dedicated Rural Beat Officer who is supported by two Police Community Support officers (PCSOs). PCSOs are professionally trained civilians working for the Police. Our Neighbourhood policing team has recently changed with PC Patching and PCSO's Fry and Maycock moving on to pastures new. We would like to welcome our new team to New Ash Green and they are:

**PC Karen Perkins
07807 340040**

**PCSO Rachel Rowbottom
07969 584203**

**PCSO Steven Vincent
07772 226159**

Our new team are very approachable, if you have anything you would like to discuss with any of them you can either telephone them on the numbers listed above or attend one of the Police surgeries (the dates of which will soon be published locally). The surgery gives you a chance to raise any concerns you have about local policing issues, you will be seen individually on a first come, first served basis. If it is not possible to see everyone during surgery hours, they will take your details and get in touch later.

**FOR ALL EMERGENCY
CALLS DIAL 999.**

**TO REPORT NON-URGENT
INCIDENTS TELEPHONE
01732 771055. FOR
CRIMESTOPPERS (TO
PASS ON INFORMATION
ANONOMOUSLY) CALL
0800 555111.**

**WINTER ADVICE FROM
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD
POLICING TEAM**

Home security advice:

- Always lock your windows and doors, especially when leaving the house.

- If you go out during the hours of darkness it's a good idea to leave a light on, or use timer switches to activate them while you are out. This gives the impression that somebody is at home.

- A burglar alarm is a good deterrent – it's worth getting specialist advice and quotes from several reputable companies.

- Never leave your spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under a doormat or flower pot. These are the places that thieves will look first. Instead, consider leaving a spare key with a friend or neighbour.

- Don't leave Christmas presents on clear view through a window or wrapped presents under the tree.

Don't throw boxes or packaging that contained presents such as electronic

gadgets out with the rubbish as this could alert thieves to the fact that there is new and expensive equipment in the house.

Vehicle safety advice:

- If you are out Christmas shopping make sure that you lock your car doors and close the windows after parking.

- Putting Christmas shopping out of sight in the boot is not necessarily the safest option as thieves know all the hiding places. The easiest thing to do is not leave anything behind when you get out of the car. If it is valuable then leave it at home or take it with you.

- Always remove Sat Navs and wipe off any suction marks from the windscreen as this will advertise the device to thieves.

At home, never leave your car keys on a windowsill or hall table where an opportunist thief might see them.

Winter driving advice:

- If weather conditions are severe, only drive if absolutely necessary. Tell someone where you are going and take a mobile phone with you, along with warm clothing and appropriate footwear.

- Regularly check your lights, tyres and fluid levels. Make sure that your windscreen wipers are in good condition and add some screen wash to your windscreen bottle.

- Before setting off on your journey, make sure the front and back windscreens and side windows are clear of snow and ice.

- Leave extra time for your journey. Keep a safe distance between you and the car in front and reduce your speed.

**Wishing you a safe &
happy Xmas & New Year.**

Useful Contacts:

PC Karen Perkins
07807 340040

PCSO Rachel Rowbottom
07969 584203

PCSO Steven Vincent
07772 226159



NAG Epee Club

A new fencing club has opened up at the Village Hall, New Ash Green, and is being held on Wednesday evenings from 5.30pm to 7.30pm.

This club is open to pupils in years 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

If you are interested and not within the age groups listed above, then please do let me know and depending on the amount of interest, we may

start a club for 13+ year olds.

The cost of the club is £5.00 admission and to fence on the day or a discounted price of £4.50 if you pay for four weeks in advance (£18.00).

The club will be run by TJ Nicholls (International GBR fencer and currently British senior rank of 11th).

The club is open to beginners or intermediate fencers.

The aim of the club will be to bring everyone wishing to fence to a level of the British Youth Championships.

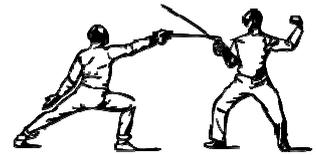
For more information please visit:

www.ashgreenepeeclub.webs.com

Or contact TJ Nicholls:

E-mail: tazjn@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 01474 871484



If you go down to the Woods today...

On Saturday 17th October, as part of the national Apple Day celebrations, the Woodlands Group did our bit in New Ash Green by hosting a small community event in our own amazing orchard.

Using the Woodlands Group's telescopic apple pickers, visitors were able to gather the apples beyond arms' reach, or simply grab a bagful from the tubs we'd already filled – Bramleys from the main orchard and eaters from the school orchard. In addition there were hot drinks and a fantastic array of homemade produce to sample (cakes, flapjacks, fresh apple juice, jams and chutneys, all made with New Ash Green apples) and recipes to take away and try.

With appley games for the children, orchard tours, bird box building, and a display showing the orchard regeneration process over the past five years, we hope that it

was an enjoyable visit for all those who came along.

Thanks to everyone who supported us by making a donation to help us continue our work. The money raised will be used to buy new tools and repair old ones (they get plenty of use!).

If you'd like to join us on any of our forthcoming workdays, we'd love to have you along, and there's never any obligation to make it a regular thing. So why not bring the kids and give it a try, or escape the family for a few hours and come on your own – every pair of hands is very welcome, and we'll reward you with hot drinks and biscuits throughout the day!

Full information about events and workdays can be found via the website or phone numbers shown below, but here are a few dates for your diary to be going on with:

Dec 5th – **SPECIAL RECORD-BREAKING EVENT**

– hedge planting on Northfield as part of the BBC's attempt to plant a million trees in an hour. Groups all over the country will be taking part and we've pledged 200 trees, so we seriously need your help. You could be part of a new Guinness World Record!!

Dec 19th - Christmas social, footpath clearance, and possible charcoal burn;

Jan 9th – our traditional and noisy Wassail in the Orchard;

January 16th – back in the orchard for the start of our winter pruning program.

For information about any of the above, and for Tree Warden walk dates for 2010, please visit our website:

www.nagwoodlands.ik.com

or phone Jerry on 879897 or Carole on 874976.

Come and join the Woodland Group—no skills required! They meet the 3rd Saturday of every month and carry out work in the Orchard and Woodlands of NAG.



More Praise for our Workforce!

The Village Association has a greenlands workforce consisting of 6 employees – a Landscape Manager, Chargehand and 4 Landscape Operatives – to look after all the amenity greenlands in the village.

VA amenity land consists of more than 100 acres divided up into 34 acres of Woodlands, 15 acres of Sportsfield and over 50 acres of grassland.

There is now a Woodland Management Programme in place and we will soon start on the second 5-year plan. The workforce help where possible and the Woodland Group do a lot of the work with contractors being used when necessary.

The Sportsfield is a very large area and is used for rugby, football, petanque and tennis. The workforce marks and prepares the pitches making them ready for weekly matches.

The grassland surrounds 7.5 miles of peripheral paths and also includes the buffer zones between the different neighbourhoods. A large number of trees, hedges and shrubs grow on this land which follow threads of the Kentish countryside running through the village.

As you can imagine, the work required on our Amenity greenlands is very varied and keeps the workforce very busy throughout the year. Climate now has a great ef-

fect on the work and most years we are mowing from March through to November. Some years the weather is very wet resulting in a late mowing but, then the grass is longer and difficult to cut to make it look tidy. Mild and hot weather leads to exceptional tree growth which involves more pruning and leaf fall is heavier and lasts longer. Stormy weather means checking all the trees on our land and in the woods.

During the winter, the workforce does all the tree work which has been agreed in advance following visits by our independent Arboriculturist. They also do heavy pruning of the shrubs and hedges. Recently they have planted bulbs on the main road through the village, which we hope will make a colourful display in the Spring.

Also as much as possible of our machinery maintenance is done in-house, this saves a lot of money.

As the Greenland workforce is the only direct labour force employed by the VA, they also do a lot of other jobs including emptying litter and dog bins, checking play areas and removing glass and rubbish from them and doing repairs following vandalism. Fencing is constantly in need of repairs and maintenance. They also have to remove rubbish including large items dumped around the village and help in removing graffiti.

On occasions they have been called on to help with the removal of sewage from amenity land following drain blockages.

You can see the jobs they do are very varied and they are kept busy all year round but it is looking after the greenlands around the village which comes first and foremost and the job they take great pride in. The workforce have worked extremely hard this year and have been absolutely delighted to receive a lot of praise from residents for work well done. This has proved a great incentive in encouraging them all to keep up the good work. A number of letters have been received at the VA office, from residents pleased to see the improvements.

Health and safety plays a very important part in all the work they do and we have to keep up to date with new laws and more assessments on a daily basis. They also attend training courses which are absolutely essential for them to be able to carry out all the jobs they are required to do.

Personally I think they are all doing an excellent job and I would like to thank them all for their hard work, good humour and cheerfulness at all times. Well done lads and thank you.

Bella Kirk
Greenlands Chairman



The Greenland Workforce has received numerous letters of praise from Resident Societies and individuals this year—well done everyone!



NAGARA—Always on the go....

NAGARA have enjoyed another busy and active year commencing with their annual celebration dinner in January. The monthly meetings have included interesting talks and entertainment, cream teas and fish and chips on 'special occasions'.

There have been monthly walks, keep fit, petanque, bat

and trip, monthly lunches and various theatre trips which have included Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and recently Dirty Dancing. Our excursions have also included Bletchley Park (the war time centre for 'Enigma' codes), a concert at the Royal Albert Hall, Tom Hart Dyke's garden at Lullingstone Castle, a mystery tour, the London

Duck Tour - to name but a few. An excellent holiday was arranged to visit Slovenia. Members are looking forward to the Christmas lunch, and a Christmas show at Brick Lane Musical Hall. New members are always made welcome at our meetings which are on the first Friday of every month at 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

Forget the Big Chill, save money and get freezing!

In the UK we throw an incredible 5.3 million tonnes of good food away every year and over the festive period food waste can be exceptionally high. The main reason for this food waste is because we let the food go off, often untouched or we cook and prepare too much.

Most of us have a freezer – an incredible tool for preserving food and keeping tasty meals to hand. However, we tend to forget that all sorts of food, including bread, meat, ready meals and homemade leftovers, are all easy to freeze and

keep for later. What's more, when we do put food in the freezer, sometimes we forget it's there. How many of us really know what's in our freezer without opening the draw and taking a look?

This month, Sevenoaks District Council's Love Food Hate Waste campaign is encouraging us to make better friends with our freezers and visit them more often!

It's just the right time of year to start the countdown to the holiday season and start saving money. We can enjoy eating up all those

foods buried deep in the freezer now, and then start to fill it with delicious home-made meals and snacks or stock up with Christmas foods which may be on offer.

Simple changes- like checking your freezer or making a shopping list and sticking to it, will help make the most of the food you buy and make a difference in Kent too! For more tips and advice on freezing and frozen foods, especially in the run up to Christmas and recipe ideas, visit

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/kent



Children's Christmas Craft Fair

New Ash Green Social Committee are again hosting a Children's Christmas Craft afternoon at New Ash Green Village Hall from 2pm to 5pm on Saturday 12th December 2009. Instead of rushing around a busy shopping centre why not come along and let your children indulge

in some craft activities with a Christmas theme. There will be a wide variety of creative activities aimed at children of pre-school and primary age. Entrance fee is £3 for the first child and £2.50 for other children in the same family. The entry price includes all craft activities and the cost of

items made, which can be taken home to keep or as gifts for friends and family. Mums, Dads and Grandparents are welcome to come and relax with a cup of tea and a piece of cake while the children get creative. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Nagsocial invite you to come along to the Children's Craft Fair— Saturday 12th December 2009 in the Village Hall

Snow and Ice

If it snows, can we ask able-bodied residents to assist by clearing snow from paths, garage courts, etc.

Salt in the yellow grit bins is provided by KCC and delivered by the Village Association for use on the roads.

Use salt very sparingly on concrete paths and garage courts. Only a little is needed to break up ice or hard-packed snow. Too much will break up the concrete as well, and there won't be any left for others on your neighbourhood. Thank you!



Why Weight to Lose Weight for Free

Following the success of the free Why Weight Plan in the District, SDC, in partnership with NHS West Kent are pleased to announce that we are running another course in New Ash Green.

The Why Weight Plan is a free 12 week programme which encourages people, who have at least two stone to lose, to take control of their lifestyle by balancing a healthy diet with regular exercise. With weekly weigh-ins, advice all your food worries and issues, as well as practical solutions to losing weight, it is a perfect solution to taking control of your lifestyle. Each

Why Weight session also includes a 30 minute, motivational exercise class for all fitness levels. The continuing support and motivation by the Why Weight nutritionist throughout this 12 week programme will help you to manage your weight effectively.

It is free to join and if you would like to find out more or sign up to the programme just speak to your GP, practice nurse or any health professional or contact SDC on 01732 227000.

The Why Weight Plan is organised by SDC and funded by NHS West Kent.


Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL


NHS
West Kent

New Ash Green Village Association Limited

Centre Road
New Ash Green
Longfield
Kent DA3 8HH
Tel: 01474 872691
Fax: 01474 872409
E-mail: admin@nagval.com

VA OFFICE OPENING HOURS

The VA Office is open to residents
9.00am-4.00pm Monday to Thursdays —
Closed to residents on Fridays
The office is closed for all statutory holidays

If you would like to write an article for our next Newsletter, either as a member of a Club or Society or to write an article of local interest, please provide it to VA Office no later than 5th June 2010.

Xmas Tree Recycling

Throughout January the Council will collect your Christmas tree so it can be shredded into environmentally friendly compost.

Put your tree at your property boundary and our Garden Waste Collection crew will collect it during their usual fortnightly garden waste collection round until the end of January. Trees should be placed where you normally put your refuse and recycling sacks, the night before your scheduled collection.

If you want to know the exact day on which your road is scheduled for the fortnightly garden waste collection, call

the Council on 01732 227000.

Trees with an 89mm (3.5" diameter) or smaller trunk will be collected until Friday 30 January. Your tree should not be decorated or be in a pot or stand of any kind.

If your tree's trunk is more than 89mm (3.5" diameter), it would need to be taken to one of KCC's Household Recycling Sites, the nearest one of which is at Pepper Hill.

If you are still unsure about how to dispose of your Christmas tree, call the Council's Contact Centre on 01732 227000 or e-mail

information@sevenoaks.gov.uk



Thinking of Building?

Are you thinking of having building work done? Due to the covenants in the Village you will know that to change the external appearance of your property in any way at all (extension, conservatory, doors, windows etc) you need to obtain approval in writing from the Village Association before starting work.

The Amenity Committee that considers such applications meets throughout the year at around 6 weekly intervals. However on the first Saturday of each month members of the committee are at the VA offices from 10.30am until noon to give anyone informal guidance on their proposed works. It always pays to talk first before finalising your designs! Although these sessions cannot grant approval they can steer you away from solutions that are unlikely to be accepted and towards those that are. So why not come along and talk to us?

DESIGN GUIDANCE WORKSHOPS - 2010

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH - 10.30am - 12.00 midday

Saturday 9 January 2010	Saturday 3 July 2010
Saturday 6 February 2010	Saturday 7 August 2010
Saturday 6 March 2010	Saturday 4 September 2010
Saturday 3 April 2010	Saturday 2 October 2010
Saturday 1 May 2010	Saturday 6 November 2010
Saturday 5 June 2010	Saturday 4 December 2010



Aerial pictures of NAG are available from the VA Office for a small fee