
SMISBY VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

November 2020



Remembrance

At this time of year remembrance is very close to all our thoughts. In particular as our 2nd lockdown begins it is important that we remember those, both still with us and long departed, who have been involved in helping and protecting us in the months and years passed.

It was heart-warming to hear Peggy's uplifting words and remembering of those commemorated on our own war memorial as we laid our Parish Council and District Council wreaths on Remembrance Sunday. Despite the requirements for everybody to be distanced and not to socialise (which were closely observed by all who happened to be there at the appropriate time) it felt reassuring to have some of the normal traditions of village life continuing.

We have many tributes in this edition to Jeff Barnes' long standing service in the community and must add our appreciation of the years of service that Jeff gave to the Parish Council both as a councillor and as a parishioner with so many years of knowledge and history of the Village for us to draw on.

We extend our warmest condolences to Pat and the whole family.

News from the Parish Council

At our November meeting we discussed several items – including updates on long-standing issues.

Our war memorial has now been classed as grade 1 listed which will afford it protection in the future. Our grade 2* listed round house lockup will also be having some renovation work in the spring to maintain the brickwork stability and repairs to the door.

Work will be starting shortly for the base for the telephone box installation at the village hall.

We are inviting a representative from highways to come for a site visit to discuss multiple issues including restoration of the footpath opposite the church, recurrent potholes, drain checking on Forties Lane into Main Street and footpath amendments on Chapel Street.

We are waiting for police availability (which has been reduced due to COVID) to organise training for the community speedwatch initiative. We will need volunteers to do the training and then complete regular planned speed watch sessions.

As you will see in the Parochial Charity article, they are looking for expressions of interest for a new trustee. Please consult the Smisby.org.uk Parochial Charity pages for more information. Contact details for current trustees are published here if you are interested in talking to them about the roles and responsibilities of the post.

The minutes of the September meeting are now available on the Smisby Village website and all past meeting minutes are available there too.

Christmas Cheer

With the potential for our current lockdown to finish on the 2nd December we are planning to switch on the Christmas tree lights on the Green on Saturday 5th December.

Appropriate social distancing will of course remain essential but I hope that we can provide a safe environment and continue a fondly held tradition.



St James Church - Remembering Jeff Barnes

In August, we were all saddened to learn of Jeff Barnes passing and our thoughts and prayers are and remain with his widow, Pat, and the family. Jeff was a dedicated member of the congregation at St James' Smisby and served St James for over 40 years holding his faith with a quiet strength and dignity. During that time, he was an almost continuous member of the Parochial Church Council and variously held the posts of Churchwarden, Treasurer, PCC Secretary, Diocesan Representative and Church Charity Trustee. He carried out the duties of these offices with efficiency and diligence in addition to his long career at Courtaulds, duties on the Parish Council, the Parochial Charity, the Village Hall Committee and of course tending his beloved garden at 'Downend'.

As any visitor will attest, the path up to St James is steep and can be daunting yet, despite serious health issues including crumbling hip joints that necessitated using crutches to get about, Jeff continued to make the trip up to the church in all weathers and without complaint, often arriving at the church door in better condition than other more able-bodied people.

Jeff was steady, dependable, and meticulous as well as hugely knowledgeable about church administration and the history of St James. He had an eye for detail and with a calm and persuasive manner, always sought to maximise available resources and ensure that things were done properly. He was a recipient of the Bishop's Badge recognising his work over the years for the church in Smisby and the wider benefice. After stepping down as Churchwarden in 2012, he continued to provide me with support and wise advice as well as much appreciated assistance with the administration of the Church Charity for which he had already done so much to protect the future of St James.

It is hard to sum up just how much Jeff contributed to both Church and village life in Smisby over the years that he lived here, or to adequately account for the positive and lasting impact that he has had, but perhaps it will suffice to say that in my opinion the whole community was enriched by his care and that having left the world in a better place, he will be sadly missed by so many.

Rest in Peace Jeff

Gary Margerrison
Churchwarden & Treasurer

Smisby Parochial Charity Jeff Barnes Obituary

Jeff Barnes was a huge pillar of the community of Smisby and, over his time in the Parish, had served on every committee that helped make Smisby such a great place to live. His passing in August, whilst not wholly unexpected, still filled the village with great sadness and our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Pat and all his family.

Jeff had lived in the Parish for over 40 years and during that time he served, very willingly, long periods of office as a member of the Parochial Church Council, the Parish Council, the Parochial Charity and the Smisby Village Hall Committee. He was meticulous in everything that he undertook and this, coupled with his very incisive and encyclopaedic brain, ensured he was a font of information and could recall chapter and verse of past events and decisions relevant to the running of Smisby. It was foolish not to listen to Jeff, as he freely gave good advice to whoever sought it.

Not just content to be a part of any committee, Jeff was quick to volunteer to take the lead and became Church Warden for St James' and Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. His long term serving on the Parochial Charity, since its inception in 1982, saw him becoming the lead Trustee and he was heavily involved in the financial aspect of the Charity helping to negotiate the sale of the land off Smisby Road for industrial use, which greatly benefitted the parishioners of Smisby and St. James' Church. This and other wise investments have ensured that the Parochial Charity has gone from strength to strength and today, largely through Jeff's accomplishments, now provides sufficient capital to fund future generations. The interest from these investments keeps St James' Church in great order and benefits the local community in the provision of additional funds for projects, events, school books, assistance with University accommodation and of course, the much-loved annual Christmas Hampers for Smisby pensioners.

Jeff's written work was exemplary, his knowledge of the English language was first class and he was a stickler for using the right word, adverbial clause, correct pro-noun or the best past-participle! He was always happy to correct a third person's draft, which invariably read much better after being subjected to Jeff's keen eye.

Jeff loved living in the community at Downend, enjoying his garden where he grew many of his own flowers and vegetables, using them not only for himself, but also donating his flowers for use in the Church troughs during Spring and Summer.

To say that Jeff is irreplaceable is an understatement. He will have a place in the history of Smisby as one of those people who made a true difference to the way of life to so many others who lived in the local Community. Rest in peace Jeff – you've truly earned it!

However, whilst irreplaceable, Jeff was also a pragmatist and would expect the remaining trustees of the Parochial Charity to look now with an open mind of what skills and background someone new can bring. With this in mind, the Charity is now looking to appoint a new Trustee and we welcome applications from everyone in our community. We would be interested to hear from Smisby residents (both long-standing and new) as well as non-residents who have a strong personal connection with the village. This might be as a past resident, through a family connection or indeed anyone who has a particular skillset that they feel might be beneficial to the Charity.

Landscaping and Horticultural machinery for Sale or Hire

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A Tribute to Jeffrey Barnes **from the committee of Smisby Village Hall**

Jeff and Pat were married in 1973 and set up married life at Boundary in the Parish of Smisby.

In 1988 Jeff became a member of the Smisby Village Hall Committee, whilst also working in Coventry as a Manager at Courtaulds, a world leading man-made fibre production company.

In 2000 whilst still on the committee taking on the role of Secretary and then Treasurer he was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer and was given 6 months to live, he carried on with his charity work with the village hall and St James church whilst undergoing aggressive chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Jeff has been a stalwart on the various committees he has been involved with and over the years has battled with a heart attack, hip replacement, and skin cancer.

In 2008 he had served twenty years on the village hall committee and felt that it was time, with all his health problems to retire. Peter Heap, on behalf of the committee, presented him with a Crystal Bowl made at Tutbury, in recognition of the work he had given over the years.

In 2015 Jeff was persuaded to come back on the committee representing St James Church. Jeff could always be relied upon to give his considerable knowledge to a meeting even throughout his various health issues and he will be very greatly missed by all.

Our condolences go to Pat and family.

SMISBY WOMENS INSTITUTE

The Smisby Women's Institute Committee had their first meeting in July to plan for the next few months. We knew that due to government guidelines we could only have 30 members in the village hall, and we felt that would be all right as we were going to Zoom the meeting to the rest the members. But within weeks the goal posts were moved, and we had to think of other ways to communicate with our members.

We always have a summer outing including husbands and partners and this year we arranged an evening at Moira Furnace for a Heritage tour of the site by some very well-informed guides. It was a beautiful August evening, members were asked to bring a picnic and a chair to sit on, it was the first time thirty of us had got together, all socially distancing since February.

Because we needed to have an AGM and our President wished to retire, a BBQ was organised at the Trough Cafe Grangewood in September. The evening was a great success even if we did have to wrap up warm as it was a little bit chilly. It didn't dampen our spirits though, the Beefburgers and Chips were superb and we finished off with a quiz and a poem about Uncle Albert and the Lion, all good fun and we did manage to fit in the AGM.

We have been keeping up with our walks twice a week, a good use of the "eat out to help out" and we have had two craft sessions in the hall.

We have now invested in Zoom and are just getting our heads around this new way of communicating I'm sure we will get better being, as it seems, that there will not be any more WI meetings for quite some time. **Suzanne Jones**



Smisby Village Hall

Unfortunately, just as we had hirers returning to use our hall we have been hit with a new lockdown. This has obviously meant the hall being closed for the month. We had a new Yoga session start, which was proving very popular with our villagers and pleasingly organised by a villager. The canasta club was going from strength to strength with extra dates being added to the diary. We shall, however, keep an optimistic outlook and look forward to a time when we can once again enjoy our hall and community to the full once more. **Ron Walker**

Thoughts from St. James Church –

November 2020

A church has stood on the hill above the village for more than 950 years and many things have happened here over those years, yet this must have been one of the strangest. There hasn't been a wholesale shutting down of all places of worship in England since the reign of King John! And that was because John had behaved particularly badly not because of disease or warfare or rebellion. Many churches stayed open even in the years of the Black Death and the Plague; they continued to function during the English Civil War, but the threat of Covid-19 was just too much. It seemed very odd having no church to open for prayer and worship, no weddings and only gatherings in the church yard for funerals, no bells ringing out across the village. But in time we were able to re-open, though this was hedged about with risk assessments and gaining the permission of the Diocese of Derby before we could safely do so. Our thanks go to Gary Margerrison for his work to achieve this.

Sadly, we had two acts of worship before a worsening Covid-19 situation meant that the Government reimposed their prohibition on public worship. That means there can be no service of Remembrance and no celebration of the start of Advent. We hope we may be able to re-open the church for Christmas but who knows what may happen. Our thanks go to the Rector and his family for their acts of worship from the Rectory dining table, we look forward to more of these over the next weeks.

Finally, can we mark our sadness at the passing of Jean Statt and Jeffrey Barnes, they will be missed by so many.

Canon David K Edwards

Ashby Camera Club

Ashby Camera Club have been unable to meet at Smisby for some time due to COVID restrictions. However the club continues to run its regular competition and lectures online. We look forward to resuming our current winter programme and hope to run a full summer programme in 2021.

Anyone interested in joining should contact the chairman via chairmacacc@gmail.com



BLUEBELL ARBORETUM AND NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb summer flowers/ foliage! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com

Smisby District Cllrs Kerry Haines and Andrew Churchill will be holding a virtual surgery on Zoom for residents on Wednesday 2nd December between 7:00pm and 8:30pm. If you have an issue or concern you would like to discuss with your local councillors, please contact us so that we can book a mutually convenient slot and send you the joining details.

District Cllr Kerry Haines 07967 676404
kerry.haines@southderbyshire.gov.uk

District Cllr Andrew Churchill 07764 268931
andrew.churchill@southderbyshire.gov.uk


South Derbyshire District Councillor Linda Chilton hosts a surgery on the first Saturday of each month at the Melbourne Assembly Rooms, 11.00 am to 12 noon.

Smisby Village Web Pages www.smisby.org.uk

The village website has lots of useful information from many of the groups and associations in the village including St James' Church, WI, Parochial charity, Village Hall and Parish Council.

The Parish Council agenda, minutes and contact details are all published on the site together with the accounts and audit information.

There are links to council sites such as highways reporting, speeding reporting and contact details for planning and accessing the council. In addition, a link to easily access the police neighbourhood alert line.

Parish Councillors Chair Sarah Rushman 07974 803729 Vice Chair Chris Taft Councillor Richard Brooke Councillor Mike Cuming Councillor Hannah Das Parish Clerk Caroline Crowder smisbyparishclerk@gmail.com		Parish Council Meetings at 7.30 (2 nd Tuesday of alternate months) 12 th January 2021 9 th March 2021 18 th May 2021 (alteration due to absence) 13 th July 2021 14 th September 2021 9 th November 2021
Smisby Village Web pages www.smisby.org.uk	Smisby Village News 	Defibrillator code 2131 Village Hall
Parochial Charity Trustee Clare Hynam 01530 481849 Trustee Simon Barnett 01530 412491 Trustee Rob Hounslow 07720 348860 Clerk Sheila Heap 01530 414179		Village Hall Committee Chairman Ron Walker Bookings Clerk Barbara Ball 07526 268698