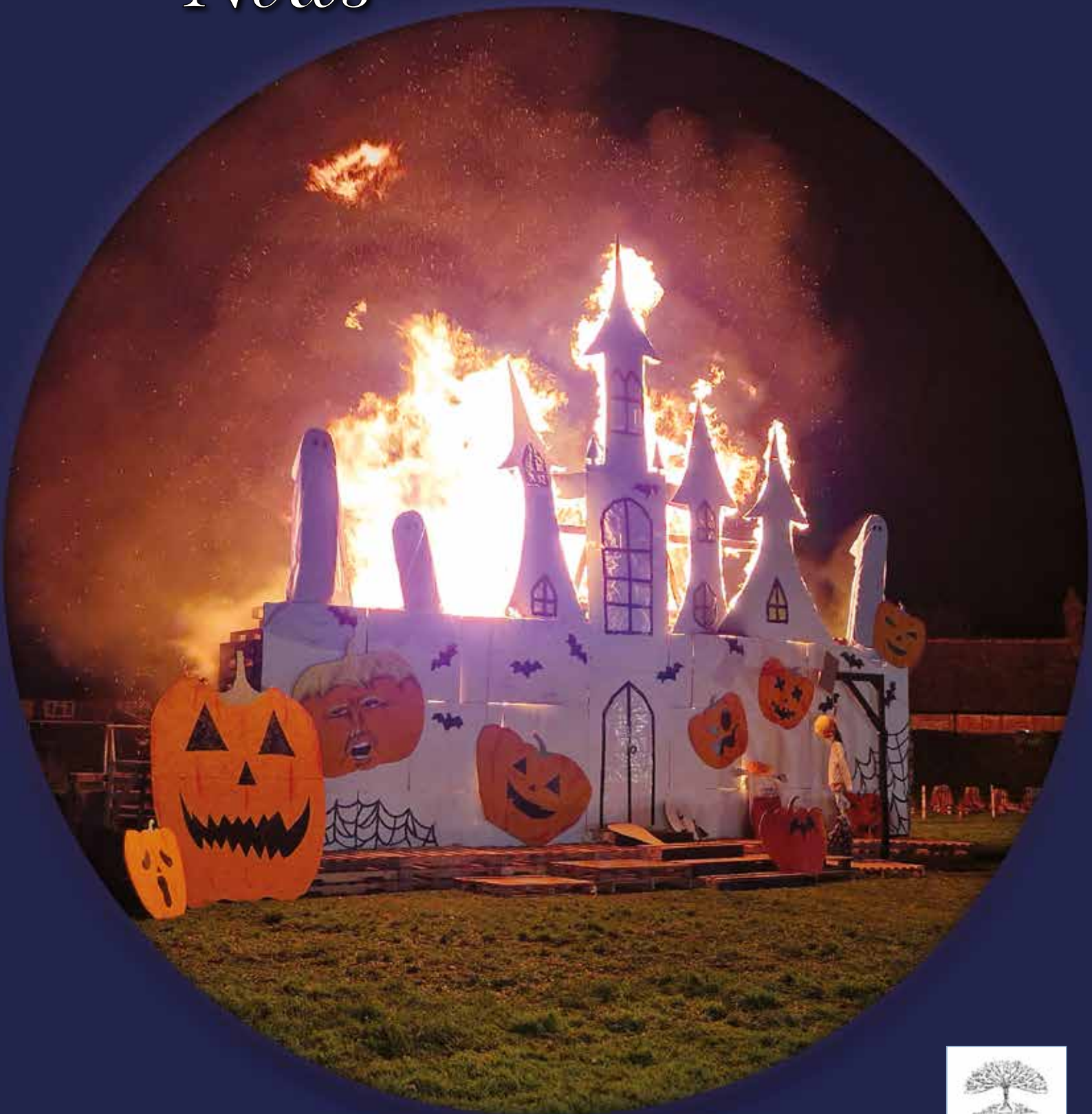


THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



Autumn 2024

Issue 91

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Welcome!

to our Autumn Edition.

We are always grateful to you for sending in your articles and photographs. Your amazing efforts highlight how fortunate we are to be living in Speen and North Dean and how we support our community.

Both villages have been extremely busy since our last edition was published despite the inclement weather, and I hope you enjoy reading all the contributions.

If you belong to a Book Club or just an avid reader, we would love to hear about your recommended book choice either fiction or nonfiction with a brief description of the book to share with everyone.

There are lots of forthcoming events in the period leading up to Christmas and beyond which are highlighted in the What's on section.

Don't forget to put these dates in your diary!

Best Wishes
Jill Roberts

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Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is due by 21st March 2025 with a planned publication date of early December. Please send photos separately from text, together with captions and a consent form (downloaded from the SNDN website www.speenbucks.org.uk) if any photos are of children. Please send to editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk.

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Welcome Packs

The Good Neighbours scheme was set up many years ago and is now run by Pat Richardson in Speen. The service is to provide new Speen residents with a Welcome Pack of village information, so if you know of anyone new to the area please call Pat Richardson on 01494 488627.

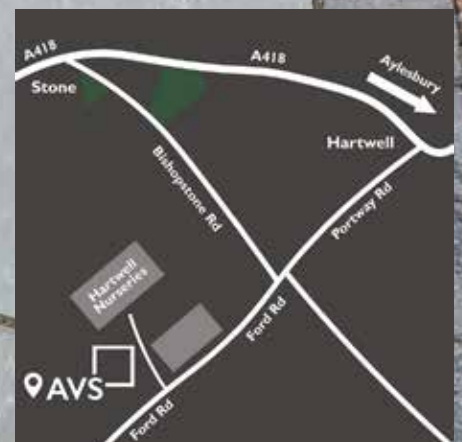
Village News

If you are not already signed up to The Village Messenger do email Village@SpeenBucks.org to be put on the mailing list, with the word 'include' in the subject line - they will keep you up to date via email on a monthly basis with all the latest village news and important dates.

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WHAT'S ON

in Speen & North Dean

REGULAR EVENTS

Sundays	Regular Service of Worship	Speen Chapel 10.30am	Speen Church 488 753 pastor@speenchurch.uk
Tuesdays Term Time Only 3rd Thursday of each month	Speen & North Dean Tiddlers & Toddlers Memory Cafe (19/12; 16/1; 20/2; 20/3)	Speen Chapel Hall 9.30-11.30am Speen Chapel Hall 10.00 - 12.00	speen-northdeantoddlers@gmail.com trudi@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
1st & 3rd Sundays Tuesdays Sundays (1st Sunday All Ages)	BCP Holy Communion Said Communion (Common Worship) Parish Communion with Hymns	St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 8.00am St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 9.30am St John's Parish Church, Lacey Green 10.00am	stjohnschurchlaceygreen.com stjohnschurchlaceygreen@gmail.com

DECEMBER

Thursday 5th Friday 20th	Speen WI Christmas Quiz Christmas Carols	Speen Village Hall 7:30pm North Dean Village Hall 6:30pm	Jenny Pearce 562 333 Nick Howard 07887 690 275
Tuesday 24th	Christmas Eve Carol Service Carols by Candlelight followed by Mince Pies and Spiced hot fruit punch	Speen Chapel 6pm	
Wednesday 25th	Christmas Day Service	Speen Chapel 10:30am	

2025

Thursday 9th January	WI Celebration Supper	Speen Village Hall 7:30pm	Jenny Pearce 562 333
Sunday 23rd March	Speen Spring Clean	2pm-4pm	
May (Date tbc)	Speen & North Dean Bi-Annual Golf Match		Richard Pooley 07785 996 511
Saturday 14th June	Speen Ball 2025	Tickets on sale tba	
Saturday 30th August - Sunday 14th September	Speen Festival	Speen Playing Fields	

ASHRIDGE HOME CARE AWARDS



The Ashridge HQ Team

Congratulations to our own Speen resident Trudi Scrivener whose family owned company Ashridge Home Care recently triumphed at the Buckinghamshire Business Awards winning - "The Excellence in Customer Experience Award" and "The Community Champions Award".



Trudi and Care Co-ordinator Chloe happy to be awarded Customer Service Excellence, a highly coveted award!

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SPEEN SCHOOL & LITTLE APPLES PRESCHOOL

Lisa Davies



The children at Speen School have had a fabulous start to the school year, it has been wonderful to see how they have adapted to new classes and are ready for learning!

One of our great passions at Speen School is music and we were very fortunate to welcome an African Drumming workshop into school. The children learnt to play djembe drums and played a song of Ugandan origin.



worked as a team displaying lots of creativity!



In our Forest Schools sessions, Bramley Class have been looking at the artwork of Andy Goldsworthy and recreating some of his work. They used a number of natural objects and



Pippins Class have been learning the Forest Schools rules and have developed their ability to work collaboratively by making shelters for animals in the winter.

Road safety is something that we always have in our minds and we were very fortunate to welcome PCSO Cabbage and PC Neal who came to talk to us about crossing roads safely and using bikes and scooters safely around the village. It was lots of fun sitting in the police car and listening to the sirens!



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Autumn Term News from Speen School PTA

Since the return of school, the PTA have been busy organising various events. At the end of half term, the Children had a 'Break the Rules' day, which is always very popular with the children and involved lots of fun and colourful hairstyles. The PTA ran the BBQ for the recent Bonfire night in the village, which was very successful and a great event to be part of.

This year the PTA have been continuing with the playground area updates. We have just recently replaced the 'Story Telling' area in the playground. This included all new benches and a new Storyteller chair, as the previous ones had started to rot. We also resurfaced this area, so that it can be used during the winter months. We hope to be able to continue with these works and replace some of the sheds in the playground. We would also like to support the school with some new library shelving.

We are currently planning for Christmas. The Christmas Fair is back, for its 3rd year in a row (24th November 2-4.30pm in the School hall). This has been a lovely event in the past couple of years.

Please pop along for a mulled wine and some festive cheer. We are also running our very popular wreath making event at the beginning of December.

Please remember if you are shopping for Christmas, you can support the PTA via Easyfundraising. It's completely free to join and has so far raised a large amount of money towards the school PTA. All you need to do is create an account and select

Speen school as the cause you are supporting. All information is available on the website. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

Next year we have some of our usual big events in the calendar including Safari Supper and the return of the Speen Ball (please see Save the Date below). We look forward to seeing lots of you there.



Save the Date...It's Back

Speen Ball 2025

14th June 2025

Tickets on sale in 2025



SPEENPLAYING FIELDS

by Matthew Davies, Chair

Greetings, this update will likely find you well in the midst of the Winter silly season and, with that in mind, think of this message from Speen Playing Fields as the Bumper Festive edition, jam-packed with treats for all. In 2024 we've had birthdays, fun-runs and pop-up socials all accompanying the familiar mix of Fete, Funday and Bonfire night, each made all-the-more pleasant thanks to the bi-annual work parties.

Taking the most recent first, this year's Bonfire Night and firework display adopted the spooky,

haunted house theme which was thought apt due to the proximity of the event to Halloween. The typically impressive design was conjured up by the SPFA trustee committee, led by designer-in-chief, Pete Symonds who once again managed to weave his particular spell of creative genius.



Long time attendees will be aware how the event evolved and grew in both size and complexity; gone are the days of a few local children lighting their sparklers from a smouldering log, so too gone have the vast, wonky

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skyscrapers of pallets, defective bed-frames and general household clearances. Instead, the designs have favoured making the visually spectacular using vastly reduced volumes of materials that were destined for the incinerator anyway. As a result of this complexity, a large proportion of the foundations and core building is achieved on the preceding Friday, with final build and field preparations carried out on the Saturday of the event. The Friday build starts early, this year with a barbeque bacon breakfast at the pavilion – an aromatic tactic employed to lure the workers to the site, more willing workers are always sought!

As the event has evolved, the planning, design, build and execution of the event has become the domain of the familiar crew of people who have developed the almost instinctive appreciation of what needs to be done and when, but this is far from a closed shop – if you have a creative leaning or perhaps a physically strong enough to manhandle a pallet or two, then please get in touch with me or one of my fellow trustees. And, while we carried out several expert consultations and adapted our processes in recent years in respect of the ecological impact of the event, we are constantly seeking new ideas that will allow the continuation of this hugely popular event in a way that is environmentally responsible and in a way that ensures it provides the vital fundraising for the community's fields. We regularly attract around five hundred people to the fields once per year, the enduring popularity and renown of the Speen Bonfire is a source of much pride in what is achieved and provides much needed funds for the fields.

The Funday, birthdays, pop-up socials and school running events take place on the main field, which takes a fair amount of maintenance. As you can well imagine and as I have no-doubt mentioned many, many times, the running and upkeep of the fields (main field, under 5s play area and Ridgley's field (including bike park)) is quite the surprisingly expensive business. Insurance, grass cutting, tree pruning, pavilion window maintenance and bike park running repairs all come at a cost, which is met through any modest surpluses generated by events like the Bonfire and largely through the periodic prize draw. So I would like to offer my sincere thanks to those who provide support through their efforts or financial contributions (or both!).

Stepping back to those distant Summer days and evenings. June's Funday proved to be a typically chaotic affair with the similarly typical competitive spirit, water fights, egg throwing and kiddie kurling. The Green Team ran out winners in the

main contest under the steely captaincy of Bethany Kiddo Downing, with Johnny Hynes deservedly triumphant in the Kiddie Kurling. Johnny sliding away into the sunset with the shiny silver trophy and Bethany sloping off into the night shielding her coveted silverware. Well done all contestants! It never fails to impress me; the wide spectrum of competitive spirit and fairness we see on the field of play, there are some for whom no depth is too low to which to stoop in their desire to win and then there's.... actually there's no spectrum. Thanks to Greg C Cook, outgoing referee and bouncer. On a personal level, it took several years for me to grow into the role of Funday coordinator, King-Kurler, occasional barman and drivell-spouting Master of Ceremonies. During the 2024 event it became apparent that I have all but lost whatever tenuous rapport I may have once had with "the Youth" of Speen – in practical terms, as my hair has greyed and I have increasingly struggled to remember the names of even my own offspring, I feel the 2025 Funday will need to be a year of transition to a younger and upgraded team of coordinators, but that recruitment will be a job for the Spring!

The semi-annual work parties are a necessary part of the playing fields seasonal job-lists. Not exactly glamorous and not exactly first and foremost as a pastime among anyone's precious downtime. We do try to liven things up with the offer of post-work food and refreshments. Busy weekends for all inevitably make attendance a challenge, regardless of the least-bad timing approach we adopt. I and the committee are nonetheless very grateful for those who have been able to devote any amount of time to the endless lists of jobs, whether at the scheduled work parties or by doing bits and bobs as and when the opportunity and motivation presents.

Returning to the topic of fundraising. The significant efforts each year have resulted in the association holding a modest surplus on account. Aside from ongoing maintenance and upkeep and after putting aside a contingency fund for things like mower repair, bike ramps or global pandemics we are seeking to make some investments in the facilities. The pavilion really needs some TLC and we feel the Under 5s area, which enjoys some very high use and traffic, would benefit from improvements. Should you have any ideas or suggestions for either of these or any other notions, then please do make them known.

Thanks to the village again for the continued support and thanks to my fellow trustees for their efforts, patience & support of my continued acting, interim temporary chairpersonship!



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SPEENFESTIVAL 2025

It's on! Speen Festival 2025

Saturday 30 August to Sunday 14 September 2025

by Liz Patroe, Festival Coordinator

It's been just over a year since the marquee came down on the highly successful 2023 Speen Festival. I am therefore delighted to let you all know that the Festival will be going ahead in 2025, thanks to a dedicated group of people getting on board and volunteering their time, knowledge and expertise.

Not long after we moved here in 2021, we experienced our first festival. It was unlike any other event we had ever been to! A whole host of activities, talks and social events a mere stone's throw away from our front door and a fantastic way to get to know our new village and the people who live here.

Taking over the running of the festival from Cat Cook is no mean feat (to say the least!) but we are looking forward to putting our own spin on it. Whilst we have our own ideas we would love to hear

from you, the people the festival is designed for, as to what you'd like to see. Or, even better, hear from those who want to organise their own event! Please don't be shy. The Festival depends upon the input and support of villagers young, old and anywhere in between! Email volunteer@speenfestival.org with your suggestions for events or to organise an event.

We are also looking for help with the technical and logistical aspects – sound and lighting; website design and maintenance; publicity; booking office etc. These are ideal opportunities for anyone looking to build up some work experience for their CV, for their further education application or for their Duke of Edinburgh award. Again, email volunteer@speenfestival.org to put yourself forward for any of these opportunities and more.

Look forward to hearing from you.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Speen has two elected representatives on Lacey Green Parish Council. North Dean is part of the Hughenden Valley ward of Hughenden Parish Council. The ward has four seats, though only one is occupied at present.

Elections for parish councillors will be held on 1 May 2025 and nominations close on 2 April. For details including how to become a candidate, search "Bucks parish council elections".

If you are standing for election, we would be pleased to publish your election address in this magazine, up to a maximum of 200 words. Please submit it before the copy deadline in March for our next edition.



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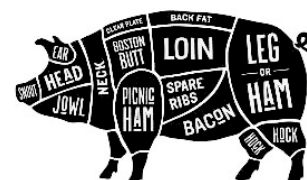
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Speen v North Dean Bi-Annual Golf Match

held on 24th October, 2024

by Richard Pooley

This highly popular golf match between two fiercely competitive villages, was hosted by Speen at Temple GC and extremely well organised by Speen captain Jo Allan.

42 players took part, one of the largest ever fields, and the result produced one of the closest ever contests. The results are as below:-

First with 42 points Christine Davies (Sp)

Second on count back, 38 points, Greg Cook (Sp)

Third on count back, 38 points, James Kent (ND)

Fourth with 38 points, Nick Dibden (ND)

Nearest the pin was won by David Davies (Sp)



Longest Drive was won by Martin Hearn (ND)

The best net gross score for the Gerry Cranley Trophy was won by James Kent (ND) with 76, just shading Tom Pooley (ND) with 77.

The overall result was Speen 31.3 average stableford points to North Dean's 31.1, the narrowest of victories for the Ivor and Janet Beeks figurine Trophy of 0.2 average points.

The Spring event will be run by North Dean in May 2025.

Mysterious happenings on Piggotts Hill

by Jeremy Hamilton

From sheds, barns and various agricultural buildings, ghostly sounds floated around Piggotts in North Dean this Halloween as 60 teenagers gathered for a weekend playing chamber music; one of several Music Camp weekends for teenage musicians that happen at Piggotts across the year.

Locally, what goes on at Piggotts - Music Camp – is often seen as something of mystery, largely because most of the amateur classical musicians who take part don't live locally but make their way there from all over the UK. Between April and October, around 20 different musical weekends happen each year as well as two 9-day camps over the summer.

"Rather than being about giving concerts, at Music Camp the emphasis is on rehearsing and playing together just for the enjoyment of collective music-making", comments Jeremy Hamilton who with wife Alice lives on Piggotts Hill and looks after Piggotts and Music Camp. "We do final run-throughs, but we don't actively look for an audience, so it's usually just a few



family members and the volunteer cooks who are there to listen."

Music Camp, which moved with the Wheeler Robinson family to Piggotts Hill in the 1960s is approaching the centenary of its foundation in 1927. Over

the years many hundreds of amateur musicians from all walks of life have enjoyed getting together to explore often unusual and challenging repertoire. One of the highlights of 2024, for instance, was Wagner's opera *Das Rheingold* marking the third time that the Ring Cycle has been done at Music Camp. The three remaining Ring operas will follow over the next few years.

Unlike some amateur musical organisations which struggle to recruit younger members, Music Camp is a thriving inter-generational musical community



The first music camp in 1927 at Poynders End, near Hitchin

with participants typically ranging from 18 to 88. "Part of the reason for that" explains Jeremy, "is the hard work that community members put in as volunteer organisers and helpers for events for families and teenagers that feed into the core programme. We all feel passionate

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about encouraging the next generation, especially in an era where schools have less funding, have to make tough financial decisions, and as a result youngsters often end up with fewer opportunities for music and arts activities than used to be the case."

"Being at Music Camp is a learning experience for young musicians in many ways", says Hamilton. "Apart from the obvious: being able to put up your own tent and camp for a weekend (often when it's untemptingly cold and wet), there's nothing like being part of a musical ensemble when it comes to honing musical skills. Ensemble playing is about teamwork, listening and responding to the musicians around you." Socially too, young musicians "find their tribe" at Pigotts sharing not only an enjoyment of music, but also the responsibility for keeping things running whilst they are there.

Part of the ethos of Music Camp is that everyone takes care of each other and Pigotts as part of volunteer teams doing everything from cooking, laying tables and washing up through to cleaning and putting things straight before everyone leaves. There are no paid musicians or staff – and everyone contributes to a simple sharing of costs.



*A Halloween rendition of A Wailing on the Wind
by composer Ian Stephens*

Weekends for youngsters – which by collective agreement are largely phone-free zones - don't just involve back-to-back rehearsal either. The recent chamber music weekend included a board games marathon, a long country walk, a do-it-yourself ceilidh and a Halloween evening including musical tall tales by pumpkin light.

The past couple of years, following the death of Nick Wheeler Robinson in 2022,

has been a time of uncertainty regarding the future, but plans are now well advanced for Pigotts to become a Trust enabling Music Camp to continue into its second century and beyond. Diary plans are in place for the musical programme in 2025 which will begin again in April and in due course the team hopes to bring back the popular winter 5.48 musical evenings, where, once a month on Sunday evenings a small local audience has been able to enjoy about an hour's music followed by a chat over a glass of wine and a retiring collection for charity.

**To find out more about Music Camp at Pigotts
contact Jeremy and Alice Hamilton
07834 224589 hamiltons@pigotts.org.uk**

ERIC GILL (1882 - 1940)

Sculptor, typographer, engraver and writer
in the early 20th century – and owner of Pigotts

by Jill Rogerson

Eric Gill moved to Pigotts, near Speen and North Dean, with his family in 1928. Over the years, a community grew up centred on his studio, printing-press and lettering workshop - the buildings at Pigotts, some of which still exist; originally including his house and chapel, workshops, a farm and small school.

Gill produced many large-scale sculptures while living at Pigotts, the most well-known being the figures of Prospero and Ariel on the front face of the BBC headquarters in Great Portland Street, London (1932); the fourteen stations of

the cross at Westminster Cathedral (1914, the reason for his exemption from military service in World War I); and the East Wind sculpture on the front façade of St James's Underground station. His mammoth frieze *The Creation of Man* was the British Government's gift in 1938 to the new League of Nations in Geneva.

Gill invented the '**Gill Sans**' and '**Perpetua**' typefaces in the course of his work as a typographer. Gill Sans has been one of the most widely used British typefaces and was used in the classic design system of Penguin Books, by

the London and North Eastern Railway and later by British Railways, with many additional styles created both during and after Gill's lifetime.

In the 1930s Gill designed a crucifix which was nailed to a small beech tree in Pigotts Wood. Deeply religious, he is said to have walked daily to the Crucifix Tree where he read his rosary. A replica nailed to the same tree, made by Thalia Polak, has been in place since 1977 when the original was removed.

Eric Gill died in 1940 and is buried in Speen Churchyard.



If anyone is interested in reading more about Gill and his family life, some aspects of which were controversial and resulting in his legacy being tinged with notoriety, the following biography may be of interest: *Eric Gill* by Fiona MacCarthy, 1989; published by Faber and Faber, ISBN: 9780571358755.

Much of Gill's work and memorabilia is held and is on display at the Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft

This article is set in Gill Sans with the exception of the word Perpetua which is in that typeface.



LACEY GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL

Roger Craft and Philip Suter – Councillors

Speed watch in Speen

The speed monitoring unit that moves around three locations in Speen – MVAS (Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign) had to have further armour plating this year. Despite the three Parish Council units being protected, someone managed to break into the unit near the school at Lacey Green in the early part of the summer to remove the battery. The units now have a re-enforced locking mechanism.

We are very grateful to Shelley Jennings for continuing to arrange for our unit to move around Speen and Ben Lange for downloading data from the unit.

Street signs blocked by hedges from residential gardens in Speen

The rather wet summer period has meant that hedges have grown more than usual. Some have not been cut back sufficiently by property owners and this has resulted in street signs being covered and a street sign or speed limit / no through road sign or a waste bin cannot be seen or found.

The street signs are normally situated on the boundary of a property (not on a homeowner's property) and many hedges are now growing out

over the boundary which can cause the signs to be obscured and the width of the road itself to decrease. As you will know, we are experiencing more and more delivery vehicles in the area so if your property has one of these signs outside that could get overgrown by your hedge, please can you make sure that the sign is prominent and not covered by foliage.

Grants made to organisations in Speen

Lacey Green Parish Council continues to make a number of grants every year to organisations in Speen, in 2023/24 the Village Hall, Speen Chapel, Speen Festival and the Playing Fields (contribution to a replacement lawn mower) all received funds.

LGPC Meetings

Parish Council meetings are normally held eleven times a year on the first Monday of the month at either Speen Village Hall (normally in the spring/summer months) and at Lacey Green & Loosley Row Village Hall the remainder of the year. Details of meetings can be found at the Parish Council website

SPEEN BAPTIST CHAPEL

Burial Ground and Cremation Plots

Paul Rogerson

The burial grounds of Speen Baptist Chapel have, for many years, provided a Christian resting place for villagers, of all denominations.

The site, situated in the beautiful surroundings of the Chilterns Hills, provides a peaceful and tranquil setting for traditional burials and for the internment of ashes of members of the village to be laid to rest near to remaining family and friends. The area is tended by the family members and volunteers who contribute to make the site a fitting place of remembrance.

It has now been 50 years since ashes were first placed into the site. Over this time the site has provided the resting place for those who lived and given so much to the village during their time here. At the time of writing, some 55 memorial stones are placed to the left of a grassy path leading to a bench which looks back on the plots, the Chapel and other burial graves within the churchyard.

While it is difficult to choose any of those present to mention in this article, as all have given part of their lives towards making Speen the place that it is today, a few are named here:

Jean Ridgley - Jean took over the running of Speen Post Office (on the corner opposite Speen Stores) from her father George in 1949 until it closed in 1980. The (Old) Post Office also sold sewing materials, wool, sweets and toys.



Francis Caldwell - last member of the Caldwell family who moved to The White House of Speen (previously called Red Gables), in 1921. Pupils of Speen School would make a regular visit to the White House to see the original Canadian totem pole in the garden.

Muriel 'Topsy' Groves - who moved to 'Talgarth', in the centre of the village, to be near to her son and wife, granddaughter and husband, and two great granddaughters, all resident in Speen. An active member of Speen Church, keen gardener and knitter, Topsy lived to age 101, the pupils at Speen School having walked along to sing Happy Birthday to her on her 100th birthday.

Robert 'Bob' and Sheila Johnson - living in Abbotswood, Sheila helped many to achieve good grades in their piano exams over many years and Bob will be remembered for writing a history of Speen: 'The Leaves of Time', later to

be adapted for production at the first Speen Festival.
Gone but not forgotten.

Should you like to help with the maintenance of the site, the team would like to hear from you. Please let James know by emailing him on jphentwisle@gmail.com.

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A Christmas Invitation

by Pastor Tim - Speen Church



It's been a year where the next big news story quickly overshadowed the last, so much that late in the year the internet has filled with memes reminding us of major events which seem already forgotten. Through quick and frequent change, I've felt an increasing need for a place of stability and rest, and I am sure I am not alone. Everyone seems to be looking for these things in different places and many ways.

As I navigated 2024, the kind of rest and stability I was searching for wasn't found in entertainment, though we thoroughly enjoyed our share of good concerts and such. It wasn't found in sporting events, though they were many and exciting. It wasn't not found in politics, though I did celebrate and appreciate the democratic right to vote. It wasn't found in the many social gatherings, though there was opportunity to enjoy them.

However, last week whilst I was out and about Christmas tunes started sounding out in public places, I found the familiar words for me now rang with new hope and invitation.

The words of so many Christmas carols, stuck in our memories, remind us of what's celebrated at Christmas by looking back to Jesus' birth. As we're told in the one I heard, "Hark the herald angels sing,

Glory to the newborn King! Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled". Jesus came to provide the solution to the much-needed peace on earth.

The hymn also points ahead. As we trust Him for what He's already done we can look forward to the next part of the big story, the day Jesus will return. "Born that man no more may die, Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth". His first appearance giving hope for a world that He will make right again. Where there will be stability and rest.

So at this Christmastime, in a time of uncertainty, when you might look back to a time when your faith offered stability but no longer does or are searching for that place in the future where you can deposit your hope we invite you to join in our Christmas celebrations and (re)consider who Jesus is and hear His invitation to you.

**CHRISTMAS EVE
CAROL SERVICE, 6pm**

**CHRISTMAS DAY
MORNING CELEBRATION 10.30am**

All the best to you this holiday season!

Home is where the heart is



THE BENEFITS OF HOME CARE

For many, the ideal future involves staying in the comfort of home, surrounded by cherished memories and familiar possessions. However, as families become more dispersed and health challenges arise, the thought of moving to a residential care facility can feel like the only option. Fortunately, there's a better solution: home care.

Living at home with personalised professional support is proven to not only promote independence but also enhance emotional well-being. Many people are surprised to learn that this level of care is more accessible than they might think. Whether it's just an hour of assistance each day or round-the-clock live-in care, tailored support can make a significant difference.

Home carers play a vital role in helping individuals maintain their lifestyles, enjoy social interactions, pursue hobbies, and stay connected with beloved pets. With the right support, staying home can lead to a fulfilling and enriching life.

Ashridge Home Care specialises in enabling individuals to remain in their homes by offering a variety of services, including 24-hour live-in care or hourly visits, medication management, personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping, shopping, welfare checks, and companionship. Choose home care and embrace the comfort and joy of living where your heart truly is.

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Email care@ashridgehomecare.co.uk
or visit the website for further information
www.ashridgehomecare.co.uk



Members enjoyed a busy program of talks and activities during late summer and autumn, many of which seemed to involve eating cake!

On a warm summer evening in August a treasure hunt around the village was followed by a buffet supper and a challenging competition to identify members from childhood photos. Due to the weather our summer garden party was relocated from The White House in Speen to the village hall but Gill Biffa very kindly brought flowers from her garden to decorate the tables. Most members attended and enjoyed afternoon tea. Over the August Bank Holiday weekend a few members visited an open garden at Springfield Farm Butlers Cross where Mary Berry was serving the teas.



In September a representative from a vendor used by the Council gave an engaging and informative presentation on recycling in Buckinghamshire. It was interesting to see what happens to recycled items and surprising to learn how far some materials travel after they leave our bins or recycling centres.

On a sunny afternoon some members enjoyed an outing on the Chinnor Steam Railway which was followed by a cream tea and a fascinating talk on 'Poisons in medicine' a century ago. A few members also attended a fashion show hosted by Holmer Green WI. The event was very well attended and all the Speen members either bought something or won a raffle prize.

As most members have been touched by cancer in some way Speen WI participated in 'The World's Biggest Coffee Morning' to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support. Members provided cakes and the event was very well supported by the village.



Over £500 was raised for this amazing cause.

In October Speen's own Graham Peart explained how One Can is more than a food bank, by interacting personally with their clients they have identified a variety of other ways to support them. This includes grants, a clothes bank, school clothing, breakfast clubs in schools and cookery lessons. Members donated a generous amount of the

most needed items for Graham to take back to the warehouse. Members also attended a Group Meeting at Great Hampden WI with Lady Howe who spoke about her life as Lord Lieutenant for Buckinghamshire. She was an excellent speaker and it was interesting to learn more about the role. The talk was followed by-you've guessed it, cake!

Vicki Scoble from Pot-Tastic invited us to be creative at our November meeting. She provided a variety of ceramics to decorate as well as paint, stencils and other tools and some samples for inspiration. She then took the finished items away to fire in her kiln. It was a really fun evening as members tackled a

variety of projects including copying favourite pieces brought from home.

Our programme planners have completed the programme for next year and it includes talks on a variety of topics including The Royal Flight and The Future of Piers. Potential activities for 2025 include a visit to a wild rose garden and we have also been asked to participate in the 2025 Speen Festival.

Visitors are very welcome, meetings are held in Speen Village Hall at 7.30 on the first Thursday of the month. Why not come along, have a glass of wine, hear an interesting talk and meet the members, you don't have to join until

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you have given us a try. As well as monthly meetings we join in with local group and national activities. For details of future meetings and plans please refer to the Village Diary or the WI page on the village website. If you would like further information please contact speenwi@gmail.com.

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Forthcoming Meetings

Thursday 5th December - 2-4 pm

Christmas social, a quiz

followed by hot fruit punch and mince pies

Thursday 9th January - 6.30 for 7 pm

Candlelit Birthday Celebration Dinner,
a four course dinner with fizz

Thursday 7th February - 2pm - 4pm

Air Ambulance

Thursday 6th March - 7.30 pm

All About Colour

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

A Message from David Carroll

Buckinghamshire Councillor for North Dean

Can I firstly thank the residents who give their time supporting our community in so many ways.

We have seen enormous amounts of rainfall again in our area causing great difficulties and concerns for our residents so I have certainly been lobbying the Bucks council to look at the drainage and road situation concerning flooding in the future.

The new government have announced sweeping changes to the planning system and a 42% increase in housing numbers for Bucks which could potentially affect our area and the protection of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

We have always tried to protect our wonderful countryside and this will continue .

Hopefully the new numbers from the Government can be accommodated on brown field sites in Bucks and safeguard our environment for future generations.

Over several months we directed Bucks Council officers to have discussions with the National Trust at Hughenden Manor about resurfacing the road.

I'm delighted to report this has now happened, I do realise the Park is so important to our community.

Regards David.



ST. JOHNS CHURCH

Festive Afternoon Tea

with seasonal live music

Saturday 14th December 2024 • 2.30pm to 4.30pm

St. John's Church, Lacey Green • Tickets £5.00 (Child £2.50)



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Speen Helping Hospices

Raising Funds in Chilterns Villages Spring 2024

Supporting Helen & Douglas House for Children - South Bucks Hospice
Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity - Rennie Grove and Peace Hospice Care

There is nothing like doing your bit for the hospices funds and having a good time with friends.

The annual Spring Lunch at the Horse Trust was as popular as ever and tickets sold out very quickly.

Comedy Night in September arranged by Elliot Wengler was a terrific success and Lacey Green Village Hall a great venue.

The Bridge Afternoon Tea in North Dean Village Hall attracted a more sedate audience who tucked into the home-made sandwiches, scones and cakes at half time!

The Christmas Market was held in the festive Chapel Hall. People started their Christmas shopping early and the handmade crafts and gifts, fragrances and beauty products, artisan chocolates, stunning jewellery, unusual Christmas decorations and Christmas cards were in demand.

Thank you to all who have supported us during the year. Please continue to do so, we do need you.

Final Events in 2024

Carol singing in the Streets of Speen:

Dates will be posted on Sales and Wants in December. If you would like to join the carollers you will be made very welcome.

Contact me grainnesuter@googlemail.com or 07778803260.

Christmas Hamper tickets will be on sale at the Christmas Market and on-line
www.shh-shop.org

Would you like to get involved in SHH?

SHH would really welcome your engagement, that could be ideas for future fundraising events or helping us expand our coverage in the neighbouring Chiltern Villages, a good contact that might help us at an event, donating a prize for a raffle or if you would like to get involved with SHH contact me grainnesuter@googlemail.com or 07778803260.

Have you thought about taking part in a half marathon, marathon or even a fun run in 2025? If so, would you fundraise for SHH? Our local hospices need your help to ensure they can continue to support families in a time of great need. If you are up for the challenge please contact grainnesuter@googlemail.com or 07778803260.



HH Comedy Night September 2024

**For further information about all our events
check out our website www.shh-shop.org**

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WILDLIFEWATCH

Peter Symonds

Insect numbers were very low in the early part of the summer. Finally in August the numbers improved. Large Silver washed fritillary butterflies and Southern Hawker dragonflies were seen in our garden and adjacent woodland. Even more impressive was a large Convolvulus Hawk Moth which turned up in our garden in late September. It must have hidden itself in laundry on our washing line and was first noted at the bottom of the washing basket. (See photo). This migratory species has a wingspan of some 10 centimetres. The insect, which was the first I had seen for some 20 years, was safely relocated outside and flew away. The record was reported and the county moth recorder confirmed that it was the first record he had for Bucks from recent waves of migration from the continent.

I was also pleased to find about six Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillars feeding on Rose Bay Willowherb and Purple Loosestrife around the pond in our garden. A further excellent insect record for this period must go to James Entwistle who photographed a Glow-worm emitting

a bright yellow-green light whilst on a late-night dog walk nears Guys Spring Wood. It is the females that can produce a strong bioluminescent light to attract males. The females have no wings and resemble a larva whilst the males have wings and look more like a narrow beetle. At the end of August James also recorded a slowworm in his garden in Abbotswood.

By August the breeding season is largely over for most birds. Pigeons and doves often continue later than many other birds, but I was surprised to find a Wood Pigeon incubating two eggs in our front garden in mid-August whilst pruning our trees. These hatched successfully on 19th August. For many birds return migration back to warmer climates is well underway by this stage.

Local sightings have included a Wryneck, a Marsh Harrier over Chequers and a Honey Buzzard reported by Dick Seekins. Jeremy Symondson also recorded a Spotted Flycatcher in College Plantation in late September and a possible Firecrest on Chapel Hill. A pair of Yellow Wagtails were noted at the pond in our own garden on 20th September alongside our three resident Moorhens.

September turned out to be a very wet month with Richard Biffa recording 8.7 inches of rainfall during the month, which is significantly higher than usual, resulting in some significant flooding in the area. In Speen this forced the cancellation of clearance work on the Studridge Lane pond.

October saw the arrival of our first winter migrants. Redwings and fieldfare arrived in numbers whilst three Hawfinches were recorded at a regular sight at Great Hampden church on 31st of the month. Here they feed on Yew berries in the churchyard or on Hornbeam in the fields beyond, but

they are not always easy to find. Alastair Blundell recorded a Raven on his garage in October whilst others have been seen in Monkton Wood and at Great Hampden.



**Please report
interesting sightings -
Peter Symonds
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DARVILLS HILL FARM

Charlotte Downing

Freedom fighting Soays and the neglected art of farming native breed sheep @darvills_hill_farm

When we first started keeping sheep six years ago, we were looking for a low maintenance breed of sheep for a little light grazing of our unloved pasture. At the time our understanding was that wool had a limited value, with shearing costing more than the value of the fleece, and that a self-shedding sheep breed (they do exist) would be a more economical choice.

Enter the mighty Soay, a native rare breed descended from feral sheep found in the Outer Hebrides. As an island sheep they prefer to roam free on rough grazing, with a salty, sea breeze blowing through their fleece, so not entirely suited to our enclosed, relatively lush pasture, at the furthest point from the sea possible on our small island.

Our Soay ewes were content enough until I decided to introduce a system of grazing livestock that involves creating a series of small paddocks with electric fencing. It's a grazing tool based on natural livestock movements which allows for long rest periods for the pasture. This has been shown to build the soil's carbon and water storage capacity, as well as biodiversity but has proved less beneficial for our wonderfully wild, free-spirited Soay who, on a daily basis, channel their inner Steve McQueen and jump the electric fence, 'Great Escape' style.

Fortunately, there are over 60 other native British breeds of sheep to choose from and



we have decided to bring in a Downland breed better suited to our small Chiltern hill farm. Excitingly during my search for a native British sheep with a more laid-back outlook on life, I also unearthed a quiet revolution that is happening in the world of regional wool production.

A small but growing army of British agro-ecological farmers, woollen mills and knitwear

designers are quietly re-writing the narrative about this natural fibre. They are championing regeneratively grown, locally provenanced wool as an important and valuable sustainable resource that doesn't cost the earth. Insulating, water resistant, biodegradable, and not a micro-plastic in sight. From compost, yarn and cloth to the knitwear created by my Pasture for Life mentor Katie Allen (@loopyewes), that graced the runway of London Fashion Week in 2023. Small scale locally produced native breed wool is making a comeback, although I'm not sure it ever really went away.

Our upgraded, yet old school, system of farming these heritage sheep and their slower growing offspring (think more flavoursome hogget and mutton as an alternative to lamb) is going to be an essential tool in the regeneration of our farm ecosystem. As for the annual wool harvest, next February will see me heading to Wool School in the Mendip Hills to figure out what we can do with all that fabulous (planet friendly), fleecy fibre.

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Chiltern Pubs and Bodgers



Historically bodgers working in the Chilterns, turning chairs legs and spindles on primitive pole lathes, had a close association with village pubs. In some cases, local pub landlords doubled

up as chairmakers or timber dealers and there were clear family connections between the two trades. This link has been identified in a recent Chilterns Landscape Partnerships "Chalk, Cherries and Chairs" project and their Chair Bodgers Pub Tour guide can easily be found on a Google search.

Many of our local pubs featured this association, as indicated below.

The Old King George Chapel Hill, Speen

One of these local connections was highlighted in a recent planning application on The Old King George, the former public house close to Speen school, which had workshops to the rear. The Heritage Statement, with the application, explains the likely background of such workshops.

Whilst, in general, wood turning originally took place in A-framed shelters in the local woods the introduction of automation in the 1920's saw a move to bodgers using shacks and workshops at their homes in the village for woodturning. The report suggests that this was the most likely use of these old workshops. The Old King George was run by the Chilton family from around 1840 and John Chilton was also shown in census records as a sawyer. His son, Free Chilton, is shown on the 1861 census as a timber dealer and he applied to open a beer house on the site in 1868.

In addition to the old workshops at the back of The Old King George, the chair-back workshop at William Plumridge's cottage (which is now known as Spinning Wheel Cottage) in Studridge Lane, is probably the best local example of a cottage-based workshop. The left-hand end of the building is a recreation of the former wood turning workshop.

The Hampden Arms Great Hampden

For local bodgers the buying of timber was a great annual social event. This took place once a year at the Hampden Arms. In common with many publicans Free Turner, the first landlord of the Hampden Arms in 1870 also had a wood related occupation as a sawyer, woodman, wood bailiff, a timber merchant or a chair maker. After Free Turner's death in 1914 the Earl of Buckinghamshire, of Hampden House took over the pub.

The Pink and Lilly Parslow's Hillock

The pub was first licenced in 1830. In 1871 the property was taken over by William Turner, a hurdle maker who may have been the brother of Free Turner, landlord of the Hampden Arms. The pub was a regular "drinking hole" of the bodgers who lived in Hillock Cottages, down Lily Bottom Lane.

Other pubs where this association with wood turning has been found include The Boot at Bledlow Ridge, the De Spencer Arms on Downley Common, The Plough at Cadsden, The Squirrel and The Hit and Miss at Penn Street, The Beech Tree at Hazlemere and The Plough at Winchmore Hill.

SPEENFETE



Save The Date • July 12 2025

Clare Morris, Helen Davies - Co-Chairs, Fete Committee



Dig out your windbreaks and deckchairs, shake the sand out of your sarnies and prepare for landlocked Speen to turn into 'Speen on Sea' for just one afternoon

Can you help?

The Fete team is a small, friendly group who meet monthly from February onwards. We would love to welcome new people to our cross-generation committee. All types of skills are needed.

We are also keen to recruit volunteers to help on the day, for example setting up in the morning, running a side show, helping on the bar or selling grand draw tickets, even for an hour or two.



Finally, if you are a small business and would like to advertise in our Program or donate a prize for the Grand Draw, please do let us know.

Please contact fete@speenbucks.co.uk

**Last year, with your help,
the fete raised £5,500**

**Each of our village charities received
£400 and our charity of the year
'Wheelpower' received £1,500**



Speen Village,
THANK YOU for your amazing
fundraising & celebration of the
Paralympics at your village fete
this summer. It was lovely to see
your efforts in raising awareness
for disability sport & we loved
being involved.
Good luck with all your future
events. Love & the WheelPower Team ☺

SEAG meets our new MP Mr Greg Smith



On Friday 23rd August 2024 some members of SEAG met with Mr Greg Smith MP in our village hall. We made him very welcome telling him

about Speen Environmental Action Group and what we have been doing. He seemed interested to hear our story as he said he was keen to know more about all parts of his constituency and people he represents.

Our main aim for the meeting was to ask him to support the Climate and Nature Bill in the Private Member's Bill ballot on 3rd, 4th September. While we had a polite discussion about the issues, he was sceptical about whether any such bill would make much progress through parliament. We made all the right arguments as we know that over a thousand scientists support this bill and many existing MPs in parliament. However, we know he did not support the bill which is a great shame. However, please see below how the bill is currently faring in Parliament.

The Climate and Nature Bill - Zero Hours

How is the Bill faring in Parliament

Liberal Democrat MP, Dr Roz Savage (South Cotswolds), announced she would take the CAN Bill forward as her Ballot Bill choice. A passionate environmental campaigner and world record-breaking solo ocean rower, this newly elected MP was the CAN Bill champion.

Because the CAN Bill was introduced via the PMB Ballot, the Commons Speaker confirmed that the Bill will have its crucial second reading on 24 January 2025. For the first time ever, the CAN Bill will be debated and voted on in Parliament.

What happens next? At the CAN Bill's second reading, MPs will gather to debate the Bill and vote on whether to support it—or not. The CAN Bill needs at least 102 supporting votes to progress. That's 100 votes in favour, plus two

MPs as 'tellers' (who verify the vote). If it fails to get that many, it falls—and is no longer 'live'.

The vote falls on a Friday when many MP's may be going back to constituencies. We do not feel there is any value in asking our own MP again but if you have friends or family who have other MP's then it would be worth asking them to write asking their MP to please stay and support the bill.

<https://action.zerohour.uk>

Great News

The National Trust supports the CAN Bill

On Saturday 2nd November 2024 at the National Trust's AGM Europe's largest conservation charity voted to endorse the Climate and Nature Bill. The National Trust now joins the growing coalition of organisations, scientists, faith leaders, MPs and Peers backing the CAN Bill.

Why is the CAN Bill so good?

It will create a joined-up legally binding plan to address both the climate crisis and biodiversity loss as these issues are deeply intertwined.

It will also enable the UK to take responsibility for our overseas footprint including the emissions created by the goods we import and the ecological story behind them which can be very damaging.

It will also ensure no communities are left behind involving the public in Climate and Nature Citizen Assemblies.

There are many advantages which you can read about on the website but fundamentally it recognises the urgency that is now necessary to bring these issues under control.

**SAVE
THE DATE**

2pm- 4pm

**Speen
Spring Clean**

**SEAG will be organising another
village wide litter pick.**

**Come along, do some litter picking,
meet other villagers**

Tea and Cakes provided.

**SUNDAY
23
MARCH 2025**

RIDGLEY'S FIELD

Wild Flower Restoration



The Playing Field committee and SEAG have been working together since 2019 at wild flower meadow restoration in Ridgley's Field. The yellow rattle planted back then is thriving, suppressing the grasses and encouraging the growth of wild flowers.

Our aim now is to increase the flower species diversity. This will be a long term project but we are intending to give nature a helping hand by introducing wild flower plug plants, this coming spring. We have chosen to introduce four new native species to Ridgley's Field and are cultivating seed at home. Early signs of growth are good as you can see in the photo at the top of the facing page.

It took around 6,000 years to create the species-



Bird's Foot Trefoil



Lady's Bedstraw



Great Burnet



Cowslip

rich grassland for which the UK is globally famous. Yet in less than a century we have lost 97%. It's now rare, covering less than 1% of UK land. But we have a little piece in Speen. Come and appreciate our native wildflowers, bugs and butterflies.



BOOKREVIEW

The Lost Words

Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris



A stunningly illustrated book of nature poems. The author's inspiration came from finding out that common nature words, like



dandelion and acorn, are no longer included in the UK's most popular children's dictionary. In 2018, a copy of the book was gifted to every school in Scotland - more than 2,600 institutions - after an online crowdfunder was started by a bus driver, who found the book 'magical'.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/feb/10/the-lost-words-campaign-delivers-nature-spellbook-to-scottish-schools>

RECIPE

Chilli Bean Soup

Recipe from Mandy How

Ingredients

With the addition of peanut butter in the ingredients this soup is especially tasty.

- Vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 400g canned mixed beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 3 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 400ml vegetable stock.



Method

1. Heat oil in a pan.
2. Add onions, garlic and spices. Mix well and cook until onions have softened.
3. Add pepper, beans, tomato purée and peanut butter. Mix well for a few minutes.
4. Add stock. Bring to boil, then let it simmer for 10 minutes whilst you take out about 4 ladlefuls of the soup and blend. Return blended mixture back to the soup and taste for seasoning.

Credit:@doctorbowl (Instagram)

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