Otford Christmas Shopping Festival

Despite the threat of nasty wet weather the day happily turned out cold but dry as the shops opened and people came in large numbers to enjoy all the fun of the day. The Parish Council says a huge thank you to all the shopkeepers and pubs who took part in this special day. We sincerely hope that it was successful day for you all. Lots of people enjoyed the opportunity to browse around and buy from our lovely shops where some of the shopkeepers had also dressed in costume for the day and enjoy the entertainment provided in the High Street with ladies Morris dancing, Father Christmas and his big basket of sweets, Church Bells ringing, members of the Methodist Church giving away mince pies, the Otford Art Group in the Village Hall, Bobbo the clown doing his balloon magic and Rob our fantastic fire juggler who was also a very scary Jack Skellington from ‘A Nightmare before Christmas’. Not just the kids he scared! Well done to everyone.

Tree of Light

The Tree of Light service will take place on Friday 12th December at 7.30pm on the Village Green. Following that there will be seasonal refreshments offered in the new St Bartholomew’s Church Centre. Labels for you to write your message on are available from the Parish Council Office. If you cannot get into the office during opening hours (8.30am - 12.30pm) then please phone up and we will write your card for you. Cheques for your donation need to be made out to Otford Parish Council. The Tree of Light will remain lit up until after the New Year. Donations will once again be going to The Hospice in the Weald.

Guide Christmas Post

The Guide Christmas Post Box will be in Otford Library between Tuesday 25th November and Tuesday 16th December inclusive during opening hours. A second box will also be available in the Parish Council office on Monday to Friday between the same dates. All cards will be delivered over the weekend 20th - 21st December and all the proceeds will be divided between Demelza House Children’s Hospice and Kent Air Ambulance Trust. Stamps will be 20p per card and all the money will go to the chosen charities. Please support us by posting early. The Brownies, their leaders and helpers will continue to organise and run the Christmas Post for the village this year with the Guides who we hope will be able to meet again in the near future.

Otford Car Park

Following a suggestion by a resident at the Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council has been considering a ‘one way’ system in the High Street car park. Designs have been produced by a Parish Councillor and can be viewed in the Parish Council office together with a copy of the current layout. The designs would involve taking a small piece of the Recreation Ground and obtaining planning consent for change of use to car parking. One design would involve the overall loss of two car parking spaces, even with the extra piece of land, the other would involve an overall loss of eight spaces. However with the extra piece of land, assuming planning consent could be obtained, and with the existing plan, four extra spaces could be added. Please let us have your views. The plans can be viewed during normal office hours until January 30th or on www.otford.info/parishcouncil

Otford Young Achiever Award

There is still time if you think there is a youngster out there who deserves recognition please let us have your nominations as soon as possible by letter or email to Otford Parish Council at the address above.

Road Works

The rearranged closure of Pilgrims Way West for works by EDF will commence on Monday 5th January. See signs for diversionary routes. The publicised road works at Bat & Ball will not start until these ones have finished!

Police Surgery

PCSO Sue Harwood who is covering the village until we get a permanent replacement for Dave Birchall early next year will be holding a surgery on Tuesday
16th December between 11am and 12 noon. Please come along if you have any concerns.

Keep Safe / Timers
An empty house is easy to spot on a dark night if there are no lights on, try to leave a light and perhaps the radio on if you are going out. And possibly use timers to turn on lights automatically when it starts getting dark.

(A small quantity of timers, which have been provided by the Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership are now available from the Parish Council office. First come first served but only one per household please)
If you have bought Christmas presents don't leave them on view at home or in a vehicle visible through a window. Keep presents out of sight. If they can be seen they can be stolen!

Never leave car keys in the ignition even for a short period, for example on garage forecourts. Always close windows and engage the steering lock, lock all doors and remember to take all valuables with you. Keep safe.

Otford Evening WI
Otford Evening WI meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month in the Otford Memorial Hall starting at 7.30pm. The first meeting in 2009 will be on 8th January. The annual subscription of £29 will be due. For more information please contact Diana Jeremiah on 01959 522981

Christmas/New Year Travel Details
Sevenoaks Bus Station - 01732 743040

Buses
Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - Saturday service
Dec 28th - No service
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - Saturday service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - No service
Jan 2nd - Normal service

Trains
(To Check at the Station or South Eastern Customer Services on 0845 000 2222) or see www.southeasternrailway.co.uk
Dec 24th - Saturday service (services stop at 22.00)
Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - Saturday service
Dec 28th - Sunday service
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - Saturday service

- Holiday Refuse Collections

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal Collection Day</th>
<th>Rescheduled Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 24th December</td>
<td>Normal Collection</td>
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<td>Thur 25th December</td>
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<td>Fri 2nd January</td>
<td>Sat 3rd January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 5th January</td>
<td>Normal Collection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The fortnightly garden waste collection service will also be affected.
The last 'Blue Week' collection before Christmas will be on Thursday 11th December. The Next collection will be on Thursday 8th January 2009
The last 'Green Week' collection before Christmas will be on Thursday 18th December. The next collection will be on Friday 2nd January 2009
Please ensure that your black and clear sacks are put out by 7am on your rescheduled day of collection. Refuse put out after the crew has been through your road will not be collected and MUST be taken back in until the next collection.

St Bartholomew's Church Christmas Services

Sunday 14th December
7.30pm - Choir Christmas Concert

Sunday 21st December
6.30pm - Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve
10am - Holy Communion
5.30pm - Crib Service
11.30pm - Midnight Christmas Communion (starting with carols at 11.10pm)

Christmas Day
9.00am - Christmas Day Communion
10.30am - Church Family Christmas Worship

Otford Methodist Church Services
Come and celebrate the Birth of Jesus with us at our special services and stay for refreshments.

Sunday 21st December
10.30am - Christmas Nativity Family Service
6.30pm - Carols by Candlelight
Christmas Eve
5.00pm - Christingle Service - an ever popular service for all ages

Christmas Day
10.00am - Christmas Day Service for all the family (note 10am start this year)

Wednesday 31st December - New Year’s Eve
11.30pm - Watchnight Service to see in the New Year

Otford Heritage Centre
The Heritage Centre will be closed at weekends during December so it will only be open on weekday mornings when the Parish Council office is open. Normal weekend opening resumes on 3rd January 2009.

There is now a display celebrating 100 years of Scouting which includes insignia, badges and photographs of the local troop from c 1914 as well as up to date material.

Help is needed with general housekeeping in the Heritage Centre. Volunteers would do some light dusting of the display cabinets, check the larger exhibits and tidy leaflets etc. It would be on a rota basis of once every 4 - 6 weeks. Please contact Carol Griffiths on 01959 523140 or carolgriffiths@waitrose.com

Parish Council Office
The Parish Council office will be closed on Christmas Eve 24th December and reopen again on Monday 29th December till Wednesday 31st and then again after the New Year on Monday 5th January. Full details will be posted on the office window.

Sevenoaks DFAS
The Decorative and Fine Arts Society of Sevenoaks (Evening NADFAS) 2008/2009 lecture season continues on 8th January when Ms Vivien Heffernan will talk about ‘Murderers, Magicians, Madmen & Monarchs: Shakespeare through the Artist’s Eye’ The meetings are held at Walthamstow Hall Senior School, Hollybush Lane, commencing at 8.15pm. Please contact Mrs Maggie Llanwarne on 01732 460709 or Mrs Mary Aldous on 01732 452209 for more information and membership.

Otford Allotments Association
Well the response from the last newsletter from some TLC on unwanted plots was so dramatic that all plots are now occupied leaving a small waiting list of three. Hopefully these potential allotment holders can be satisfied in the New Year. If you want to have a guided tour around the sites please ring Barbara Hine on 01959 525468 or call into the Parish Council office on any weekday morning. Incidentally the local library are giving a talk on allotment gardening and other local gardening matters in January - watch for details.

Otford Community Warden
Paul Robertson our KCC Community Warden holds a weekly surgery to discuss any problems and community issues at School House every Tuesday between 11am and 12 noon.

Knole DFAS
Knole Decorative and Fine Arts Society meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Sevenoaks Community Centre, Bat & Ball. The next lecture will be on 15th January when Ian Pickford will talk on ‘Rococo Silver in England’ The Lectures start promptly at 1.45pm and finish by 3pm. Anyone interested in attending a lecture or joining the Society please contact Alison Davis on 01732 780453.

Hatha Yoga Class
The new term for your friendly Hatha Yoga class starts on 6th January 2009. Classes are weekly 7.30 - 9.00pm in term time and cost £8 per lesson. Beginners and all abilities are welcome. For further details and to reserve a place please contact Brenda Hambrook on 01959 525969 or yoga@otford.net

Otford Methodist Exercise Group
The Serendip exercise group meet every Thursday from 9.30-10.30am in the Otford Methodist Church Halls. The group is for men and women over 50 and lead by a REPs level 3 supervisor. Refreshments and chat afterwards, followed by Table tennis or Chess. The cost is £2 per session. You will be welcome for all or one of the activities. Phone David Knight on 01732 743056 for details.

Otford Afternoon WI
Meetings are held in the Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. The first meeting in 2009 will take place on Tuesday 13th January when there will be a talk by Lt. Col. M. Martin on ‘Memories of the Second World War’. For more details please contact Joyce Shaw on 01959 522736.

Sevenoaks Embroiderers’ Guild
The next meeting will take place in Otford Village Memorial Hall on Saturday 31st January when there will be an all day workshop and mini workshops on ‘Beadwork’ with Liz Thornton. Morning sessions begin at 10am and afternoons at 2pm and more information can be obtained from Pat Curtis on 01959 532391.
**Picture of the Month**
The artist for December / January is David Simpson. David has lived in the village for over 30 years and has never painted on a regular basis. Having retired he now finds more time to participate. He paints mainly in oils, which he finds a flexible medium insomuch that mistakes can easily be rectified, although detail can be a problem. He says he admires David Shepherd as an artist hence his penchant for painting animals, but the only thing they have in common is their first name.

**Citizens Advice Bureau Surgery**
The next CAB Surgery will take place at School House on **Tuesday 6th January** between 10am and 12 noon. No appointment necessary.

**Otford Petanque Club**
Every Thursday at 3pm the Otford Petanque Club plays on the new purpose-built terrain in the High Street Recreation Ground and makes good use of the tea making facilities in the nearby Eric Dilley Pavilion. Why not join them? You would be most welcome and no previous experience is required. For further information contact the club secretary Margaret Chandler on 01959 523620

**Otford Primary Top Draw**
TOP DRAW - The Otford Primary Draw. Your chance to win cash prizes and raise money for your local school.
The winning numbers of the November TOP Draw are: 1st Prize £50 - 186, 2nd Prize £15 - 18, 3rd Prize £10 - 64

**Charlton Athletic**
We have some exciting news concerning a trip to Charlton Athletic on **Saturday 7th March 2009** to see a top football match at a bargain price. Details will appear in the January newsletter.

**Planning**
The following applications will be considered by the Parish Council in December. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Head of Development Services, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000

- **New applications**
  - SE/08/02629 49a High Street
    - Proposed front and rear dormers for loft conversion
  - SE/08/02822 28 Ryecroft Road
    - Erection of first floor side extension with matching facing, brickwork and tiling over
  - SE/08/02885 Newlands Shoreham Road

- **Results received**
  - SE/08/01283 26 Warham Road
    - Extension to existing garage and conservatory to rear of dwelling **Allowed**
  - SE/08/02523 The Old Oast House Shoreham Rd
    - Erection of dwelling in garden **Not valid**
  - SE/08/02132 Bartram Farm
    - Demolition of existing buildings. Erection of 370 m² office space with associated parking **Refused**

- **Planning appeals**
  - SE/08/02255 Oakwood Shoreham Road
    - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 2 x 4 bed dwellings together with associated alterations to accessing arrangements and landscaping works **Appeal against refusal**

- **Tree Work in Conservation Area**
  - SE/08/03214 Moat Cottage Station Road
    - Various works to trees

**Tree Cycle**
After this year's festivities have ended, Sevenoaks District Council will collect your Christmas tree for free throughout January and arrange for it to be composted. Trees should be placed at your property boundary by 7am on days when the Council's fortnightly garden waste collection takes place in your road. Only trees with a trunk of 3.5” in diameter or smaller will be collected. Bigger trees can be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Sundridge.

The Parish Council apologises if dates have gone past when you receive your newsletter as timings for deliveries cannot always be guaranteed due to pressure on our local printer and on the volunteer deliverers. Thank you.

The Chairman, Parish Councillors, Clerk and Assistant Clerk wish you all a very happy, restful and peaceful Christmas and New Year. And we look forward to next year with a completed village pond!!