



# THE BLUE BELL AT COCKING

## Newsletter

July 2021

[www.thebluebellatcocking.co.uk](http://www.thebluebellatcocking.co.uk)



### THE PAUL HENSHAW BOULES TOURNAMENT

Saturday, 7th August  
Starting 6:00 PM  
Cocking playground

### ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Tuesday, 21st September  
7.00 PM  
Cocking Village Hall

## Good Progress

Since re-opening on 17th May 2021

The Blue Bell has been going from strength to strength which is very pleasing and good for the community.

We have been close to 90% occupancy on our Bed and Breakfast rooms, and our food and drink have been flying out of the kitchen and bar. The garden has been busy, helped by the warm weather, and our indoor improvements to the décor and comfort for our guests have been noted and appreciated.

We have a new chef, Dorothy, at the helm in the kitchen, ably supported by Sharon and Alex our apprentice, and a number of new young team members looking after the customers in front of house.

# Our Food & Drink

## Locally sourced produce & made in-house

Dorothy our chef was determined to make our food offering much more local, supporting suppliers in our own area and also, where possible, producing everything in-house. We now serve homemade bread, homemade ice cream and our dishes are freshly prepared when ordered. The only exception is the pies which are delivered to us by the award-winning Midhurst-based Mud Pie company (we decided we could not do it better ourselves in this specific case!)

Some of our local partners are Johnsons Fishmongers of Portsmouth, our vegetables and fruit are from Bryants a local supplier, and we are trialing various local meat suppliers. We also have a local egg supplier and have been serving local asparagus – until the season ended very recently.



We have developed a great partnership with Gusto Wines of Ford near Arundel a small specialist supplier, and are planning to launch a number of promotions to test which wines our customers really enjoy – so give us your opinion when you are next in the pub. Our regular beer on tap, Bell Hop, is from Langham's in Lodsworth and we are currently offering various guest ales from other local breweries. We have been adapting and adjusting our menu since opening in order to meet the expectations of the different customers visiting us, and there have been some changes during the process. We are now working to create a simplified regular offering and are developing the variety available on the daily specials board to continuously refresh the menu and offer the best of the day's supplies. This is all under review and your comments are very welcome.





## Our Team

### Locally sourced people & made in Cocking

We have been recruiting actively to support the increased business and it is taking a bit of time for the teams to settle down and be trained to the level of service we aspire to offer, so please bear with us while we develop a regular routine. We must thank Steve, Sue, and Sharon for all the initial preparatory hard work to get us up and running again whilst at the same time we were also recruiting and training new team members.

On that subject, it is not only our food that's local, but our team is also too. We now employ 5 full-time equivalents and 12 part-timers on a rota basis (which comes to 17 team members overall) with 6 living within the village. This has created local employment opportunities within Cocking village; very much in keeping with the spirit of the community hub project we all supported from the outset. Our other staff are all local to the area, even if beyond the bounds of Cocking Parish itself.

## The Paul Henshaw Boules Tournament

Saturday, 7th August | 6:00 PM | Cocking playground (next to Milestone Garage)

After the sad loss of our much-loved postmaster Paul Henshaw, a Boules Tournament is to be held in his memory. The winning team will be presented with a truly stunning trophy (courtesy of Tony Smith). This will be presented by Evie & Travis - Paul's successors at the Post Office. As many teams as possible of two are invited to attend, but we would be grateful if all teams could confirm their wish to attend by the 31st July. Entry will be free, but there will be a raffle with proceeds being donated to a local charity. The evening is planned to be as sociable as possible and participants are welcome to bring picnics etc. and of course, the Blue Bell opposite will be open for food and drink. For further details, offers of raffle prizes or to confirm your team entry – email Chris at [christianbudd@aol.com](mailto:christianbudd@aol.com)



# Annual Members Meeting

Tuesday, 21st September | 7.00 PM | Cocking Village Hall

With the Covid restrictions now hopefully being eased, we are planning to hold our Annual Members Meeting (AMM)\*

We will have the accounts for the year be presented for agreement by members before being submitted to the Financial Conduct Authority. It will also be a chance for the Steering Committee to update members on the Blue Bell's progress and provide a chance for members to ask questions. Under the rules of the society, the Steering Committee would also be subject to election at that meeting. Members will receive an invitation in advance of the AMM, but please make a note in your diary now.

\*Please note this meeting is for all shareholders of the Blue Bell Community Hub.

## Hidden Garden Event

Held Sunday, 4th July | Cocking Village

Despite some very variable and often downright stormy weather, 680 people visited the 14 locations in Cocking open to the public.

A variety of gardens were included, charming cottage gardens, some offering refreshments of tea and delicious cakes or homemade cordials, the Old Cocking Railway Station with its stunning views of the Downs and the platform which is still visible, to Phillip and Jean Jackson's beautiful sculpture garden which also featured a marquee café area serving more choices of locally made cakes and drinks. At the end of the village, those who visited Crypt Farm were rewarded by a chance to visit the beautiful gardens, the blue pool, where the local stream rises from the chalk below, and enjoy a glass of Pimms on the lawn. Cocking Church had a range of lovely flower arrangements on display all put in by the local team, and Cocking's secret treasure, the Millenium Column, was on the route between the gardens.

The enormous effort put in by the organisers and helpers raised an astonishing sum of just under £6000 pounds for the Blue Bell Community Hub Funds. Heartfelt thanks and congratulations go to all involved. The event did highlight one challenge for the future, which is the current lack of public parking within the village, and this will no doubt be a subject for discussion and review for our local representatives.



# Annual Cocking & Bepton Church Fete

Saturday, 4th September | 2:00 to 4:30pm | Cocking Rectory Garden

The organising committee has already met and is planning to make this the best ever fete having had to cancel last year for the first time in its history spanning over more than 60 years.

The fete will have its usual stalls with a cake competition (prize a professional baking school session), dog show, bottle tombola, human fruit machine, toys, produce stall, teas, etc. The fete will raise much-needed money for both Cocking and Bepton churches which have lost out badly during the pandemic due to forced closures and no collections being taken.

Please support the fete and bring cash as there are no card payment facilities.



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