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2021 Christmas Special

Newsletter

Redbourn
Community Group

May this season be filled with warmth and good cheer and may this Christmas bring you many reasons to smile, we wish you a wonderful time, good wishes from all of us at Redbourn Community Group.



Christmas images in this Newsletter – designed by ...

- Paige, James, Louis and Alex from St Luke's School
- 1st Redbourn Rainbows who have created many cards for residents in the village
- Olivia, Jemima and Daisy from ChristChurch Redbourn's Starfish and Illuminate Group

Ninth Redbourn Christmas Market proves Volunteering works

Thousands of locals and visitors experienced the vibrant warmth of Redbourn Christmas Market in the bitter cold of Sunday 28 November.

As we all shopped for gifts, consumed lashings of mince pies, hot food and drink and enjoyed the entertainment from local groups, it's unlikely many of us gave much thought to the months of voluntary work that made the event happen. The Christmas Market committee members are all volunteers who give their time willingly – and sometimes coerce their friends and families to do the same. On market day they are on site from 6am supervising set up of the stalls in the closed High St, liaising with Hertfordshire Sound and Light and problem solving everything from stall layout to errant parked cars.

As the market opened, volunteers from St Mary's and the Scouts provided refreshment in Cumberland Gardens and the High St. Musicians and performers arrived to deliver fine performances, often honed over locked down months of practice. Even Father Christmas himself volunteered some time away from his busy duties at the North Pole!



Redbourn Community Group enlisted volunteer stewards for car parking at the MOT centre and for the activities in the gazebo in the Village Hall car park which raised a grand total of £866! Our regular shopping volunteer Jo swapped the RCG Minibus for a Tuk Tuk for the day to ensure that Father Christmas arrived at the Market safely.

The organising committee will be enjoying the glow of another successful market over the festive period. They would be very pleased to hear from anyone who thinks they might be able to offer their skills or experience to help with one-off or short term tasks behind the scenes. They can be contacted on: redbournchristmasmarket@gmail.com

Thanks to Catharine Pusey, writer and Stephen Boffey, photographer



A Tree for Tony ...

At a private planting, former President of RCG, Tony Swendell's memory was honoured with the planting of an oak tree, situated on the common opposite Monks Close, his family home. This was planted in recognition of all his hard work for Parish and District Councils and for his kindness and dedication to our community.

His wife, Judy, and their family, would like to thank the Parish Council for making this lasting tribute possible. My sincere thanks to Councillor Colin O'Donovan for working with myself and Tony's family these past months to make this happen.

Thanks to Annie Manning, writer and photographer



Christmas Opening Hours RCG Office will be closed on Christmas Eve 24 December and will reopen again on Wednesday 29 December

Views from two of our newest trustees who joined us in April 2021

James Regan



James is especially engaged in helping with RCG's social media channels. When I saw the advert for new RCG Trustees at the start of 2021, I thought it would be the perfect way to mark the New Year and my intentions to get more involved within the local community. With so much of life coming to a crashing halt so soon after I had moved into the area with my partner, I felt this would be a great way to get more involved and reaffirm my commitment. The inspiring ethos of the Redbourn Community Group resonated with me a great deal, with its proud legacy but keen eye for how it could adapt to better serve more people in the village. Prior to the pandemic I had been a Secondary School teacher, and I recognised the important part that RCG could play in helping young families as well as just senior inhabitants of Redbourn.

It was not all selfless altruism, however! As a career-changer, having started a new role in marketing this year, becoming a trustee of the Redbourn Community Group was also a fantastic opportunity to bolster my CV and upskill in areas that had a bigger emphasis now that I was no longer teaching. Giving back and getting back is a pretty good trade deal, and it can make a world of difference when looking for paid work.

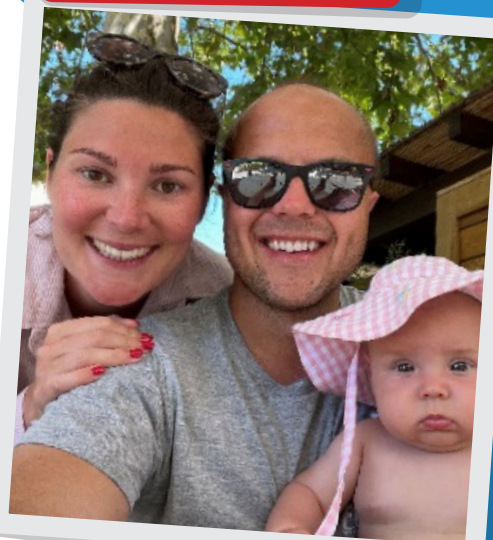
The induction programme was surprising to me in that it allayed a lot of fears. The great unknown can be very off-putting in trying new things! However, being able to talk candidly with existing trustees as part of a mentorship programme, as well as RCG sponsoring my attendance at nationally-recognised training courses for new trustees, was very formative. I learned how I might best apply my existing skills to benefit RCG. At our monthly meetings all input is valid and can help shape the direction of things to come. The future of RCG is what excites me most, and I can't wait to see how, as a group, we are able to bring benefit to even more of the local community in new and tangible ways.

I joined RCG as a Trustee at an interesting time, not only from a personal perspective but also just as we were beginning to see light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel. Of course, we're not out of the woods yet but this unique time is giving me a great insight into the inner-workings of RCG, and a real appreciation for all that our volunteers do.

My decision to volunteer as a Trustee was an easy one; I'd been looking for ways to give my time and develop my experience in the voluntary sector, and the opportunity with RCG ticked both those boxes. I knew that giving time to a good cause was going to be rewarding but what I hadn't appreciated was the broad range of experience that would come with it. The lines between corporate and community are shrinking and skills from both sectors complement each other more than ever. I learn something new every day with RCG, and working with such a diverse team on local issues really provides me with a different perspective to take back to my normal job. Since joining I've largely been supporting technology initiatives and investigating how we can further digitise and modernise our processes and systems.

RCG has a rich and enviable 40 year history and I'm keen to play my role in ensuring that it's here to serve the people of Redbourn for the next 40 years and beyond. Like so many people of my age (forgive me, I'm showing my relative youth!) I've never been on "the bus" so I'm keen to experience that soon! However, also like so many people of my age – and before I joined RCG – I assumed that the bus was RCG and that's simply not the case! The Charity offers a broad range of services and I hope that in future we can increase awareness and continue to develop our support to fully embrace the word 'Community' in our name.

Ben Miller



The Harebell Club and the founding of the Care Group

The formation of the Redbourn Care Group was a family affair for long-time resident Daphne Bigham. Daphne was persuaded by her brother-in-law and fellow Redbournier, Podge Fox, to become its very first Secretary in 1980.

"The original concept was to bring together all the caring groups in the village under one collaborative umbrella," recalls Daphne. So, around 40 years ago, a loose association of organisations such as the Mums and Toddlers Group, the Women's Institute, the Parish Council, the Doctors' surgery and others was formed. The respective representatives of each group would meet periodically to discuss how best the needs of people in the village could be met.

"One of the first initiatives was the formation of street representatives to welcome newcomers to the village and to make sure that anyone in need of shopping and prescriptions was cared for," says Daphne.

Soon after this, thanks to local garage, Stathams, and its association with the Steam Traction Engine Association, a minibus was donated to the group. From its inception the Care Group was intended to help anyone in the village:

"Even today some people feel the Group's services don't apply to them and are only for the older members of the community but they are for everyone who needs them", says Daphne.

The Harebell was adopted as the logo for the group. ***"It's a rare flower and found on Redbourn Common",*** recalls Daphne. Today that same logo is being used for a newly formed "alumni" group of volunteers and supporters who have in the past or currently support the work of RCG.

Daphne's family roots in Redbourn stretch back to the 1890s. Her great grandfather, a farm foreman, lived in a cottage behind Doolittle Mill just off the Redbourn Road. Daphne has lived in Redbourn all her life apart from periods living abroad when her husband was stationed overseas.

Over the years she has been involved in the local Scout Group committee, campaigned for the Redbourn by-pass, organised local fetes and street parties and the Care Group. As well as her voluntary roles and being a mum of two, she has worked in admin and financial roles for local businesses, employed her green fingers at the local nursery, and worked in accounts and as a chambermaid at the Aubrey Hotel! Today she takes life a little easier, keeping in touch with her large family who live all around the world, continuing to explore new locations with the U3A Explorers Group, enjoying live music and throwing some moves on the dance floor to big bands and Motown Music events.



The Redbourn Care Group was an inspiration for other villages, says Pat Schofield, another founder member. When Pat Schofield moved to Redbourn in the late seventies she was attracted by life in a village community... what she perhaps didn't realise then was how much she would become a pillar of that community herself!

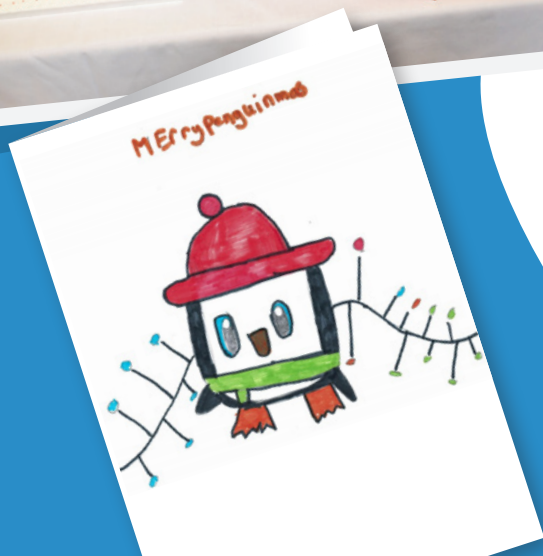
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"To some extent my working life became secondary to my voluntary interests in the village," she laughingly admits. When she stopped work as a music teacher in St Albans to have a family, Pat increasingly became involved in community life. She volunteered for Help the Aged, coordinating collections around the village. She was also closely involved in campaigning and fund raising for Redbourn's Recreation Centre. So it is no surprise that she was approached to become one of the first committee members of the fledgling Redbourn Care Group more than 40 years ago.

It has remained close to her heart and she strongly champions the Group's work in her role as a Redbourn Parish Councillor. Pat recalls the early days of the Group which had initial meetings at the Missionary Trust room in Harding Close and in the various homes of willing volunteers who also took it in turns to "man" the Care Group's phone line from their homes. Pat spent many years serving on the committee, took over the street coordinator scheme from Daphne Bigham and later acted as a minibus escort taking local residents to coffee mornings and shopping sessions. Through her links with Help the Aged, she was also instrumental in winning funding from Help the Aged for a new minibus.

"Although the Care Group was set up as a voluntary organisation it was run properly with an elected committee and constitution, and operated with serious intent, but eventually we realised that becoming a registered charity would enable us to receive sponsorships and donations which were needed to secure the future of the Group's work," comments Pat.

"Redbourn started to earn a reputation as a caring community demonstrating a blueprint which other village communities in the district later followed," she recalls. ***"Although we had links to Help the Aged, the Care Group was always intended to help people of all ages in the village. For example the minibus was used to take young people to swimming sessions at Bricket Wood. So it is fitting that the more recent name change reflects the original and continuing purpose of the Group".***



ACTIVE IN REDBOURN
WARMLY INVITES YOU TO...



CHRISTMAS STROLL ON THE COMMON



SUNDAY 26TH DECEMBER -
NOON

MEET POINT: THE CRICKET
PAVILION

WALKING AROUND THE COMMON (THE
REDBOURN MILE)
ALL WELCOME (NO COST) FOR
SOCIABLE LIGHT EXERCISE

SANTA HATS AND CHRISTMAS JUMPERS
OPTIONAL!
FOLLOWED BY... MINCE PIES AND HOT
PUNCH



ACTIVE IN REDBOURN IS A GROUP OF LOCAL RESIDENTS COMMITTED TO
MAKING HEALTHY EXERCISE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO REDBOURN RESIDENTS
www.activeinredbourn.co.uk

Pat believes the Covid pandemic created a step change in the development of the Community Group both in terms of demand for its services but also in generating many more volunteers who want to help and make a difference in the community. ***"Social media has also made a much wider range of people more aware of the Group and its work,"*** she says. ***"The Community Group has developed and adapted to change really well. It is operating and providing services even more professionally, more younger people are involved and it is gradually making more people aware that it is here to support everyone in the village."***

Pat is a proud mum of 2 grown up 'children', grandmother of 6 and great-grandmother of 1, and laughingly admits that she has a very understanding husband!

Many thanks to Pam Calvert for interviewing Daphne and Pat

RCG Christmas Outing to Ayletts



A lovely afternoon was spent at Ayletts Nurseries in St Albans, looking at all of the sparkly Christmas decorations, being humoured by the amusing dancing Christmas trees, and admiring the beautiful array of poinsettias.

Gifts and Christmas cards were purchased and then the café beckoned! Tea, coffee, sandwiches, mince pies, bakewell tart were welcomed on this wintery afternoon. It was a pleasure having time to chat with everyone and to share stories about family, old Redbourn, and to catch up on other local news.



Christmas Lunch at Redbourn Golf Club

A wonderful Christmas lunch was enjoyed at Redbourn Golf Club being entertained by 'The Ol'Packers' ukulele band. It was a joy to see everyone joining in wearing Santa hats, pulling crackers and relishing a delicious Christmas dinner, cooked beautifully by the Golf Club, and being waited on by their jolly and helpful staff.

Many commented on how lovely it was getting out and having time to catch up with friends and to make new ones. A number of clients and volunteers enjoyed dancing to the band. Roy commented, 'It's the first time I've danced in five years'.

Sally Bartlett expressed thanks for the work of the volunteers over the last 40 years for making such events possible and a delicious fruit cake, baked and decorated by Janet Burdock, was shared with everyone along with a Christmas gift – all donated by our generous supporters across the community.

What a splendid event! Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this such a successful and happy Christmas celebration.

Thanks to Sally Yates, writer and Stephen Boffey, photographer



Thank you to everyone who has supported us in 2021.
We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Redbourn Community Group

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www.redbourncg.org



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