

PUTTENHAM BARN BUNKHOUSE

Newsletter – Spring 2023



Social activities to brighten the long winter...

A cold evening in January was uplifted by a well-attended quiz night at the Good Intent pub in Puttenham, organised by volunteer Tish. The competition was fierce and as Tish reported: 'Only 7 points separated the bottom and top teams – what a brainy bunch!'

The winning team, Puttenham Pipers, chose their prizes from this splendid hamper. Not only was the evening very convivial but it also served to encourage interest in the barn and promote volunteering opportunities.



Photo by Tish Piwowarek



The Silvana Duo -
Katie Sazanova (flute)
and Hannah
Woollacott (guitar)

Photo by
Dave Williams

In February, volunteer Chris Meeks invited all barn supporters to the Silvano Duo concert in Godalming, hosted by Conservatoire Concerts. Local supporter and artist Pat Williams produced three delightful drawings during the evening, one of which is included here. Pat says: 'They are just quick sketches, each done more or less whilst playing just one piece of music. It was a very enjoyable evening, the sound of their music inspired me to try to capture their delight in performing. They were truly together whilst playing and gave everyone great pleasure to both listen to their choice of music and watch their skill in playing together.'



Regular winter checks were carried out to ensure all was well. On a chilly February day the lovely catkin display in our hedging was a promise of springtime.



Out with the old, in with the new:

We are very grateful to the Gatliff Trust who have given us another generous grant towards improvements at the barn. Some of this grant has been used for our lovely replacement signage. The new 'Barn Bunkhouse' fingerposts, hand made by The Acorn Workshop in West Sussex, are now ready for installation at the earliest opportunity ... *Please see attached 'Stop Press' page!*

Positive vibes for the 2023 season

Our Operations Committee, Trustees and active volunteers have all been busy in so many ways to ensure the barn was set up and ready for opening to our first visitors during April. A good number of bookings have already been received for this new season, our 18th year of welcoming visitors from all over the world to our unique accommodation - all with a story to tell!

Threat to Hogs Back bus route...

We are alarmed at a proposal from Surrey County Council to dramatically reduce the frequency of the Stagecoach 65 bus service along the Hogs Back. If implemented, this would mean only a two-hourly service in each direction (instead of hourly as at present) which makes no sense environmentally or socially; the impact on communities along the route between Guildford and Alton would be immeasurable, at the same time as adversely affecting our own Project. We have, therefore, made strong representations to the County Council, arguing for a completely different approach: one that recognises the strategic importance of re-connecting the two separate bus services between Guildford and the historic city of Winchester (currently a change of bus is needed at Alton), and providing an additional bus stop for Puttenham.

Can you help? Although the official consultation closing date has passed you might still be able to influence County Councillors – especially those Conservative members who are promoting this change – and if you live beyond Surrey please consider writing to the County Council Chairman about the importance of green tourism. To receive the full letter POND submitted, please contact chrismeeks@chrisjm.plus.com

Further projects in hand

In addition to the Gatliff Trust grant featured overleaf, we are indebted to The Chapman Trust for their funding to help support the barn generally but with a focus on protecting heritage and supporting local wildlife as well as to educate the younger generation about a greener way of living. We hope to look at new projects that will engage with disadvantaged children in particular.



We are also working through our Green Tourism Award accreditation. This is a nationally recognised award, with bronze, silver and gold levels to indicate how well an organisation is working towards not only supporting high environmental standards, but also healthier living and the local economy. Many green

actions have already been taken due to the assessment process, such as introducing new eco-friendly SMOL cleaning products (see photo) and bringing the green composting bin back to life after a long period out of service.

...Please see attached 'Stop Press' page for an exciting update!



We send our best wishes to stalwart volunteer **Dave Williamson**, who has been unable to offer his innumerable practical skills at the barn for some months due to health issues. Dave can still help with his wealth of knowledge if problems arise, and if not able to attend in person is willing to be consulted by phone.



Our vision for the future... Barn project Trustees have asked Martin Barnes and Chris Meeks if they will bring together a draft document presenting a vision for the future of our environmental charity. To help them in this, Martin and Chris invite your ideas or suggestions: Email martinb@puttenhambarn.uk or phone 01483 424767.

Our Charity – seeking further Trustees...

Our charity managing Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse – Project Oasis North Downs (POND) – is looking to the future and seeks to appoint additional Trustees with vision and imagination to further strengthen and guide the organisation. Could this be a role for you?

Within the Trustee group as a whole we need folk with a spectrum of knowledge and skills related to managing this amazing Project. In short, we need people with an enquiring mind, a strong environmental conscience and well attuned to outdoor activities who in a positive way can contribute towards our Barn becoming even more a beacon of environmental excellence.

Whilst day-to-day activities of the Barn are handled by our Operations Committee, Trustees operate more strategically and seek in harmony with all our other volunteers to navigate a way forward for the charity. The rewards of being a Trustee include a sense of satisfaction in helping outdoor folk explore the countryside, yet also the companionship of working alongside other like-minded people. There are a minimum of four Trustee meetings a year (sometimes held on-line) and reasonable travel expenses are payable. If you might be interested in becoming involved and would like to explore the possibility without any commitment at this stage, please contact Chris for a chat with one or two of our existing Trustees, or simply to gain further info: Email chrismeeks@chrisjm.plus.com or phone 01483 422774.

Special requests: Is there anyone reading this who has sewing skills and could take up curtains? Also sought is a handy person, possibly with woodcraft skills, who could help fix some bits at the barn.

Shout out for a future barn visitor! George B has booked to stay with us in June. He writes: '...I am planning a sponsored walk from Winchester Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral following the Pilgrims Way. I am trying to raise money for 3 cancer charities... I'm hoping to walk about 25 to 30 miles per day... People can pick which charity they want to support.'

If anyone would like to encourage George on his way for any of these three worthy causes the links are:

www.justgiving.com/team/Walkingthepilgrimway2023 for breast cancer; www.justgiving.com/team/Walkingthepilgrimway2023-1 for testicular cancer; www.justgiving.com/team/Walkingthepilgrimway2023-2 for prostate cancer.

TWO OF MANY COMPLIMENTARY ON-LINE COMMENTS

Amazing walkers and cyclists eco hostel Barn

Amazing eco barn for cyclists and walkers. Has the same ethos of the Pilgrims' hostels in Spain with the added bonus of the eco credentials. Fully equipped kitchen, OS wall to wall map of the area, lots of books and a cute window shop with enough for a basic meal. Handily located on cycle route 22 and the North Downs Way route.

Date of stay: August 2022

Lilia B, TripAdvisor

Guest from Norwich

19th September, 2022 **4.8 of 5**

A beautiful setting, and nice and simple accommodation which was perfect for us for a one night stay. Eddie and Mary (wardens) were particularly understanding... Thank you to them. Beautiful locality which I wish we had more time to explore. Perfect biking area to be in.

Freetobook

Would Recommend: Yes

Tips for other travellers: Great for biking and hiking generally.

~~ Newsletter contributions welcomed by Hilary – hjperry88@gmail.com ~~

This newsletter is published by Project Oasis North Downs, the registered charity that manages Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse

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