

Ravenshead Parish Council

Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all residents, from Ravenshead Parish Council.

Leisure Centre refurbishment

After nearly six years of planning and fundraising, we are delighted that the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre has finally begun. Readers of the Newsletter will recall this project being reported on many times over previous years and no doubt you were wondering if it would ever happen. Managing and running a Leisure Centre by a Parish Council is quite unique. Residents will be aware that this project is funded by a grant from the Football Foundation, a government backed loan and from substantial savings which have been accrued by the Parish Council over many years. Credit should be given to former and current Parish Councillors who have had the foresight to save money over the years towards this project. An increase in the parish precept to pay for this will not be required. There will only be a small increase this year, to cover inflation and the increase in utility bills.

The initial work involves partial demolition and stripping out of the changing rooms, toilets and the small sports hall. Asbestos has been found in the roof space above the reception area so the removal of that has also started. Whilst the project takes place over the next 24 weeks, the large sports hall will remain open for the majority of the time. There may need to be small closures when the electricity supply is upgraded, but users will continue to be kept informed. Temporary toilets are located outside of the front door and users have been informed of the number required for the combination lock.

We do hope that users of the Leisure Centre appreciate that there will be disruption, particularly in the car park where the builder's compound is located. However, we all look forward to the completion of the works, hopefully in June. Our paid staff - the clerks, the booking office staff and the handyman, have all worked incredibly hard and have given much assistance to regular users to minimise the disruption to their bookings. My previous and current Parish Councillors have all been so supportive of this project, no small undertaking for a Parish Council. Councillor Stuart Bestwick has taken the lead on this project and he deserves much credit for getting this village facility to where it is now.

Christmas lights switch on event

The Christmas lights switch on last November proved to be another huge success. In excess of 400 residents attended and Santa and the Round Table were kept very busy, handing out presents to over 175 children. The grotto, which was installed by the Scouts, was beautifully decorated inside, once again by Stephen Reddish. Thank you to all those who attended, and in particular to my fellow Parish Councillors and staff for organising the event, alongside the

Village Hall Management Committee. There was a great children's disco inside and the music outside was particularly enjoyed by the young children, especially when the artificial snow machines were operating. Thank you to the Vicar for the blessing and to Santa for switching the lights on. The bar and the mulled wine were very popular as were the hot drinks, including the addition of Hot Chocolate this year, served by the WI. I hope the additional food outlets were appreciated this year. The raffle income helped to offset some of the costs due to the fantastic prizes of hampers which were filled with donations from local businesses. We thank you all.

Martin Smith

Chairman, Ravenshead Parish Council