

Thornborough & Thornton Fundraisers

For the Annual Parish Meeting

Once again, this year all most of our efforts have been directed towards fundraising for the Village Hall restoration project.

At the end of last year's report, we were just days away from holding our Promises Auction. This hugely successful event was held in the church on 20 May 2023. We were given over 60 Promises to Auction, mostly from people living within the villages. On the evening itself the church was packed with over 100 enthusiastic bidders. The entry fee of just £5 included a pork roll that was roasted and delivered to the church just before the interval, it was delicious. The low entry cost ensured people had plenty of money left to bid from the wonderful array on offer. Promises ranged from a week's holiday in Dorset to an evening with a grumpy old man. We had two excellent auctioneers for the evening who ensured that every penny was squeezed out of the punters. People not able to make the evening were able to put in prior bids. The evening raised an incredible £9262, a brilliant start to an incredibly busy year of fundraising.

We had barely regained our breath before the next event hit us, the Open Gardens Weekend that took place during the weekend of 10 & 11 June. This was the brainchild of Gwynne Grayson and the weekend dawned bright and sunny, such a relief. Several very kind villagers opened their gardens to the public, there were some truly remarkable gardens to view, large and small, country and formal some with wild areas some with manicured lawns. The school put on a display and the churchyard, and chapel gardens were also part of the tour. Someone had the brilliant idea of hiring the BART bus for the day and Ian and Wesley took the part of driver and conductor, on what proved to be one of the hottest weekends of the year, it was a fantastic and much needed addition. Everyone loved it! A team organised teas and cakes in the village hall, there was a Pimm's table on Thornhill and some of the out of the village gardens also provided refreshments. The beauty of this event was that it brought many people into the village, which looked very beautiful that weekend. When everything was added up, we were able to add another £2855 to the funds.

Not people to rest on their laurels Liz and Gwynne came up with an idea in the dark winter months of holding an Opera Fest in Jim and Gwynne Grayson's delightful gardens. A date was set for September and with everything crossed for fine weather an act called Opera Dudes was booked, along with toilets street food and the voluntary services of Amanda Hodges. Jim built the most incredible stage at the bottom of his garden; gazebos were borrowed, and the Sports Committee loaned us their marquee and also their services putting it up. Once again, our luck held and the day dawned bright and sunny, the relief was palpable! We had such fun setting up the day beforehand and Jim and Gwynne's generosity knew no bounds. It was a beautiful sight that evening watching everyone enjoying their picnics, chatting with old friend and neighbours while the sun began to set. Amanda started off the evening with her virtuoso violin playing, it was sublime and then as darkness fell the Opera Dudes came to the stage, they were funny, moving and awe inspiring. Those of us there will hold the memory of that evening for a very long time. We didn't have any idea what this evening would raise so you can imagine our delight when we learned that it was £2155.

As you can imagine we were all quite tired by this time and had a well deserved two months off. Although we did manage to squeeze in our AGM in October and we were delighted to welcome onto our committee, Daniel and Kate Goodger and Sue and John Kenyon. Ann Payne was voted as Chair, Sue Percival as Treasurer and Rachel Avery as Minutes Secretary. To our delight everybody else decided to remain as well, meaning we have a very strong and successful committee for the future.

It was soon time for our ever-popular annual November quiz. This November Des Coltman and Kay Quainton offered to draw up and present the quiz. They challenged us with some exacting questions but also managed to make it fun and entertaining as well. Not an easy task, so we are indebted to them both for their help. As ever it was also a lovely social occasion, and every table was sold. The food was delightful with the best cheese straws prepared by Cath Sayer, delicious homemade pate as well as a spectacular display of cheeses. We raised over £1427 to help swell our coffers further.

Once again, this year the fundraisers paid for the Christmas Tree and lights, then Carol, Faye and Rachael organised Carol Singing around the tree to recoup the costs. It was a lovely evening on the Friday before Christmas, those who attended were warmed up with delicious, mulled wine and mince pies. Following a collection all costs were covered. It is such a lovely sight as you drive through the village in December and brings a smile to your face every time. We are indebted to Woody and his helpers for erecting the tree and Tracy Sapwell for the electricity.

Next up it was the Annual Christmas Quiz. Thank you to everyone in the village who participated and to those of you that spread the quiz far and wide. This resulted in us selling over **600** quizzes and making a profit of £1176. I received so many lovely comments about how much people enjoy it and how it has become part of Christmas. The lucky winners this year were **from the village, Helen and Derek Davies.**

In the lead up to Christmas Liz Julier was the driving force behind selling beautiful 17th Century Maps of the Village. The initial map was donated by Magdalen College, Oxford. Jan and Liz spent an evening preparing the maps so that they were delightfully presented. Through much hard work and excellent marketing Liz managed to make a profit of £951.

In February we joined forces with the PCC to hold another Quiz Night in the Village, for the first time in a couple of years all the monies raised from this event went towards purchasing mowing equipment to help keep our village churchyard in order. Sue Percival devised one of her brilliant quizzes and a fun and very entertaining night was had by all. Once again lovely food helped with the merriment and the hall was decorated with a valentine's theme. We had fewer people attend on this night but still managed to raise £600.

At our February meeting Ann Payne decided to stand down as Chair, due to personal reasons and we are delighted that Gwynne Grayson has agreed to take over as Chair from this meeting. Sue Percival will continue as Treasurer and Rachel Avery as Minutes Secretary.

At the time of writing, we are just two weeks away from our next big event an evening with the incredible Jazz and Blues pianist, Miles Nottage. Miles is a world class player, and we are so very grateful that he is donating his services to help us raise funds for our village hall. We have joined forces with Padbury Village Hall Committee for this event, as Miles is a Padbury resident. The evening is being held at Botolph Claydon Village Hall as we wanted to sell 100 tickets and our own hall could not have accommodated this. We have sold over 90 tickets and are in the final stages of organising what promises to be a fabulous night.

Cath Sayer, Ann Payne, Laura Bentley and Martin Boileau have just begun rehearsals for a production of David Copperfield which will be staged in Thornborough Church in May 2025. This is a huge project and will involve many, many people. We are very excited that a village as small as Thornborough has the ambition and skills for such a large-scale event. Those who have ever been to a Cath Sayer Production will know that this will be a fabulous and not to be missed event.

In addition to raising funds toward the refurbishment of our much-loved village hall, we have continued to maintain the village defibrillator, purchased Thermos flasks for Thornton parish, paid for the village Christmas tree and lights and next year, together with TSSC, will contribute towards taking the village children on a Pantomime trip. We have recently heard that the Village Hall committee have been awarded a grant of £85,000 and we have made a payment of £9,209, as a third-party contributory, which is part of the terms and conditions of the grant being awarded. With the exciting news that works are to start on the hall in May, we will be handing over £14,000 during the coming weeks to help fund the refurbishment.

The fundraising committee would like to thank the two villages for their ongoing support, and we are looking forward to us all celebrating together in September, when the building works are completed. We expect to be raising funds towards the village hall for a little longer as there will be additional items to purchase, to make sure we have a hall that is fully functional for the future.

Even with all this we are not sitting on our laurels and currently our forthcoming events are:

Saturday 20 July – Abba Fest in Jim and Gwynne Grayson's Garden

Every week for the next year twice weekly rehearsal for David Copperfield

Saturday 21 September - an event to celebrate the refurbishment of our Village Hall. Details to be confirmed.

Friday 18 October – a sale of nearly new clothing with a fashion show

November date TBC – Quiz Evening in the Village Hall

Nov/Dec – Annual Christmas Quiz, currently being compiled by Cath Sayer and John Jeffs (part of the funds from this quiz will be going towards the children's pantomime trip in Jan 25).

Dec - Thornborough Christmas Tree

Jan 25 – Children's trip to pantomime in conjuncture with TSSC

May 8, 9 and 10th May 2025 – David Copperfield

And I am sure there will be other events added to the list.

Ann Payne