

# New facility for the whole Town **SEE INSIDE**



SPRING IS HERE, the leaves are on the trees, the birds are singing. Whitchurch is a great place to be at this time of year.

We have a new Hall and well-equipped library, and numerous events from the exciting Twang music festival to a wide range of activities on the Millennium Meadow.

2007 will see many positive changes in the town as several projects come to fruition. Here at *theWhitchurchWeb* we are proud to be part of the Whitchurch Community.



**EXCITING TIMES** are now upon Whitchurch with the opening of the new Community Centre adjacent to the Silk Mill. This Spring, the building, named after the late Gill Nethercott, has at last become a reality, 13 years after the first ideas were hatched.

With the River Test at its heart this unique building has been designed to celebrate the special character of Whitchurch. Comprising of a new library, a fully-equipped hall and a meeting room, the new Centre is a facility of which the Town can be justly proud.

The Library, with six new internet points will be one of the best equipped local libraries in Hampshire, and will also have extended opening hours. Meanwhile the Hall can be hired for parties, wedding receptions, functions, and community events.

See inside this issue for further information.

## In this issue...

- Community Centre
- Business News
- Smarter Working
- Local News
- Theatre News
- Local Activities

## The Titfield Thunderbolt is coming to Whitchurch.

The Titfield Thunderbolt, a play by Philip Goulding, based on the Ealing comedy, tells the story of a village railway line about to be closed. Villagers come up with competing solutions to their transport problems. Lady Chesterford wants to run the railway herself while entrepreneur Vernon Crump plans to start a bus service. Dirty tricks and devious solutions are practised by both sides in a story of conflict and cooperation.

WADS will be performing The Titfield Thunderbolt at: Testbourne Theatre on Thursday 10th, Friday 11th, and Saturday 12th May at 7.30pm.

Tickets: (£5/£4 concessions)  
Available from:  
Newbury Building Society  
(from 28th April)

and at the Box Office at the Town Hall from 9am to 12am on Saturday 28th April and Saturday 5th May or by calling Claire Isbester on 01256 892514



## Your Views Matter

Do you have any views on the Town? What do you think of the shops, the traffic, the parking? Send all your comments to: [views@thewhitchurchweb.net](mailto:views@thewhitchurchweb.net)

### [www.thewhitchurchweb.net](http://www.thewhitchurchweb.net)

The Whitchurch Web is a name coined to promote interest and community spirit in our great little town through better communication.

#### Contacts:

e-mail: [editor@thewhitchurchweb.net](mailto:editor@thewhitchurchweb.net)  
web: [www.thewhitchurchweb.net](http://www.thewhitchurchweb.net)  
Tel.: 07963 237619  
Fax: 01256 892650

Produced by: [www.jpbdesign.net](http://www.jpbdesign.net) ©2006  
Supporting the Whitchurch Association

## Millennium Meadow Events

This year sees some great events based on the Millennium Meadow, ranging from Maypole Dancing to Artist Days, and from a Cycle Treasure Hunt to Theatre Shows.

Keep an eye out around the Town for posters or call 01256 892837.

**PUB SPOT...** Whitchurch is blessed with a good variety of pubs both in the centre and on the outskirts which cater for a wide range of customers. Each week it is estimated that 56 pubs close due to the pressures placed on licensees from various quarters, which makes it essential that a pub caters for a regular local trade and responds to customer needs.

One such pub that puts the customer first is the Harvest Home in Winchester Road which has undergone a transformation since being taken over by Chris Benton and Jane Acott. Their undinting enthusiasm for providing good, friendly and unpretentious service, and in providing a warm welcome to all who cross their threshold, has made this pub a 'Must Visit'.

At the Harvest Home, there is a good value menu which is receiving plaudits from afar, ranging from tasty traditional meals and snacks through to special dishes and local suppliers are used wherever possible. Special themed evenings are a feature, and the pub regularly provides a venue for live music. On the bar there are real ales, often including a monthly guest beer from one of the growing number of smaller independent breweries or a special seasonal brew. Don't miss this fine pub!

## Youth Club

The Whitchurch Youth Club is going from strength to strength with activities for a full age range. Further success is dependent on people giving their energy and time.

If you can donate a few hours of your time to this successful and worthwhile venture, please contact the club secretary, Denyse Coles on 07962 116639.

## The Harvest Home

Serving Traditional Cask Ales and Home Cooked Food



Full menu with over 50 Dishes including Daily Specials

Children and Families always welcome

Food served All Day every Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Harvest Hear'Say

Our own inn-house monthly newsletter contact us to receive your copy!

### Tuesday Night Curry Club

Home made curry with rice and a pint for five pounds

### Midweek Mexican

Home made Chilli Con Carne with rice and a pint for five pounds

### Thursday Night Steakout

2 x 6oz Rump Steak meals both served with chips, grilled tomato, battered onion rings and fried mushrooms for ten pounds

Winchester Road, Whitchurch, Hampshire, RG28 7HP

tel: **01256 892217**

[info.theharvesthome@virgin.net](mailto:info.theharvesthome@virgin.net) [www.theharvesthome.me.uk](http://www.theharvesthome.me.uk)  
proprietors: Chris Benton and Jane Acott

# New Community Centre – SPECIAL

By Daniel Curtis Daniel is a teenager who was on work experience with Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council's press office and attended the handover of the Centre's keys. He was asked to write a piece as he's interested in a career in journalism. We are pleased to publish it here.

**THE NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE has opened its doors to the public after nearly 18 months of construction, over a stream leading from the picturesque Silk Mill.**

The first thing you notice is the striking red, setting it aside from the surrounding landscape of trees and houses. As you approach along a steel ramp, you get a feeling of real modernity due to the large glass panes and tall structure.

Before I take you inside, it's a good idea to take a look around. The surroundings are to become an ecological area, planted with a natural seed mix from a local source. It will be left to grow and bloom on its own.

During the erection, work had to halt, due to the presence of water voles. To protect these semi-aquatic mammals, two small ponds have been placed next to the stream, to allow them to continue to live in the area.

Many feared reduced parking, but due to a small reshuffle, the existing parking has been retained, plus two extra spaces have been created.



Time to step into the Centre – and into the future too. Something that you are unlikely to find in any other Community Centre is automatic entrance doors. These add to the

features in the building that make it convenient for the disabled and elderly. On your right is a large lift for the disabled, but which is also big enough to transport books up to the library, while on the left are the stairs.

Staying on the ground floor, straight ahead are two doors taking you to the reception area and foyer. One clever feature is the Spinnaker Tower-esque glass panel in the laminate floor positioned above the stream, which is home to ducks, trout, water voles and other creatures. Continuing with the glass theme, two walls are completely made of large glass panels. The foyer also leads to the toilets and a small, carpeted meeting room, suitable for up to 12 people.



Opposite the foyer, is the large hall. With small cupboards on one side, it has a divider in the middle to split the hall in half. There is also a hatch to the kitchen. At the opposite end of the hall is a decking area, with a view of the ponds and stream.

The upper level is the new home of the Whitchurch Library, a much-needed addition to the community. With seats, plenty of books, great views of the town and rural areas, and complete with internet access, it will set the standard for local libraries.

Looking at the new building, from a teenager's perspective, it is clearly capable of hosting many activities. From sporting activities to after-school clubs and a great meeting area; anyone can find exactly what they are looking for.

The Community Centre is something to dream of. Not a single brick or 'block' was used in the construction, showing the contrast with the rest of town. It will be visited many times, repeatedly by a whole host of people, for a whole variety of different reasons.



## A Few Facts:

- The original proposed site was to be at Daniel Road but after consultation the present location was selected.
- The building is on stilts to protect wildlife as much as possible.
- In Spring 2006 construction was delayed to allow the resident water voles to nest.
- Ground-breaking was on 14th March 2006.
- Everyone was delighted that Gill Nethercott who had led the campaigning for this Centre was able to attend. Sadly Gill passed away last year but the Centre is a fitting tribute to her hard work.
- In March 2007, a WW2 bomb was found by workmen and had to be exploded.
- The Centre was funded by £585,000 from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and £325,000 from Hampshire County Council. Total £910,000.
- All Whitchurch residents can actively support the success of the Gill Nethercott Community Centre by joining the Whitchurch Association (see below).

## Join the Whitchurch Association

- The Centre will benefit all in Whitchurch and the surrounding villages. It is hoped many will become members which will allow them to have a say in how it is run as well as being eligible for discounts on bookings.  
Contact Jane Powell e-mail: [jpowell@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jpowell@westberks.gov.uk)  
Fees are Family £5.00pa, Adults £2.50 and Under 18s £2.00

## The New Library

The old Bell Street Library will be open to May 5th before closing to move to the new building where it will re-open with much excitement at 10am on Wednesday May 23rd.

## Bookings...

There is already an exciting range of events planned at the new Centre and Bookings are flowing in ranging from Birthday parties and Club suppers to christenings and youth activities.

To book the hall and to enquire about the reasonable rates potential users should contact:

Jean Watts,  
Tel: 01256 896969  
e-mail: [jean@putitright.plus.com](mailto:jean@putitright.plus.com)

# local business news

## Working for Whitchurch

A NEW GROUP is now active in the Town. *Working for Whitchurch* (W4W) is aimed at doing just what its name implies, working, as part of the *Whitchurch Association*, to improve Whitchurch for all. It's a mix of retailers, residents and community groups.

This is a huge task and so, initially, efforts will be focused on the Town Centre. W4W has grown from the team which, under Stewart Parrington, successfully organised the *Christmas in Whitchurch* activities in 2005 and 2006 and organised EU funded business support for the Town centre's shops.

The group has several events lined up and plans to take a large part in the Town Centre Improvement projects

which will be funded by local councils and SEEDA. Events include Whitchurch Food Fortnight at the end of June, a Beer, Sausage and Potato festival in October and, of course, *Christmas in Whitchurch* 2007.

As you will have seen W4W is starting to make a difference, but real difference will only come from more local people and businesses getting involved. If you can spare a few hours per month, have a passion for Whitchurch and ideally a business background, the team would love to hear from you.

Use the Contact button on [www.thewhitchurchweb.org](http://www.thewhitchurchweb.org), drop a note into the Town Hall (marked W4W) or e-mail: [s.parrington1@btinternet.com](mailto:s.parrington1@btinternet.com)

## SMARTER WORKING

We live in an increasingly congested part of the country. The daily commute typically only manages to offer up stress, unproductive lost time and increasing travel costs whilst at the same time helping to pollute the atmosphere through CO2 emissions. A significant amount of 'out-commuting' (working outside the town) can leave the town devoid of people during the day thus lessening the spend in local businesses and lowering the use of local amenities.

To accelerate and encourage 'smarter', more family friendly, ways of working, *Working for Whitchurch* (W4W) is exploring the possible demand for a local Town Centre based 'Community Work Centre'. This would be a small internet connected 'serviced office' where you can simply 'drop-in' or pre-book a desk together with secretarial support services if you need them.

To register your interest in the proposed Community Work Centre, please e-mail Stewart Parrington at: [s.parrington1@btinternet.com](mailto:s.parrington1@btinternet.com)

## Eating out with a Difference

WHITCHURCH has a fine range of eating out venues that cater for all tastes. One such restaurant is **The Blue Ginger**, in Bell Street, which is as far away from your average Indian restaurant as it's possible to get. The old beams, revealed brick-work and modern lighting give it a sophisticated feeling – not a bit of flock wallpaper in sight!

The menu is also quite different because of the inclusion of many Bengali dishes, the vindaloo and Madras are there but so are many other subtle flavours that the staff will only be too willing to explain.

The *Chef's Platter* is an ideal starter, featuring a range of delicacies, including, ostrich tikka nuggets. For the main course, the menu's *Signature Dishes* section, include Bhaja Mach, a pan fried whole Bengali fish and other Bengali specialties such as Machli cocktail, a seafood cocktail, Shahi lamb, which features unusual fresh herbs and Hariyali, chicken cooked in a green sauce with cream.

The entire menu is available to take away with a 15% discount on orders over £10. If you want a different lunch, but are pushed for time, you can pre-order your meal and have it waiting for you (the menu is on the website, [www.bluegingerwhitchurch.co.uk](http://www.bluegingerwhitchurch.co.uk)).

## Indian & Bangladeshi Food Festival

If you still in any doubt, the **Blue Ginger** is organising an *Indian and Bangladeshi Food Festival* from 13 – 15th May where 30 of its dishes will be available as a buffet so you could try each and every one of them. Any profits from the festival are to be donated to the *Whitchurch Youth Project*.



**Blue Ginger**

TRULY EXCEPTIONAL BENGALI CUISINE

VERY PLEASANT,  
CONTEMPORARY SURROUNDINGS  
FRIENDLY AND ATTENTIVE SERVICE

*Taste the difference!*

Open seven days a week  
For reservations please call  
**01256 895858**  
[www.bluegingerwhitchurch.co.uk](http://www.bluegingerwhitchurch.co.uk)



BELL STREET • WHITCHURCH

## Special Features for Local Businesses

If you would like your business featured here please call or e-mail. We can produce editorial text, advertisements and artwork to back up your activities.

e-mail: [editor@thewhitchurchweb.net](mailto:editor@thewhitchurchweb.net)  
or call **01256 892650**