

Sandal gears up for third Scarecrow Festival



OUR THIRD scarecrow festival is almost upon us and we're all hoping this year's weather will be as kind as it has been in the past. Good weather certainly brings out the crowds to enjoy the many varied and inventive scarecrows on display along the trails and at Sandal Cricket Club and West Yorkshire Sports and Social Club.



Put the dates in your diary – Saturday and Sunday, September 23/24. Join us for the official opening at St Helen's church at 11am on the Saturday and for the main attractions in the church rooms and at the cricket club. At lunchtime on Sunday the focus will switch to the sports and social club where there will be another set of attractions.

As always we are very grateful to all the scarecrow makers who ensure the weekend is so much fun and to the volunteers without whom we could not stage the festival. It is our biggest family event of the year.



For 2017 there will be a few new things to keep you entertained. A treasure hunt along one of the trails should help to keep you busy and you can track what the festival mascot, Tommy the Tyke, has been up to over the past few months.

There will be games for youngsters and adults to enjoy and there'll be an art competition and craft activities for children. Sandal Library will also be encouraging you all to be artistic with some bun decorating. And don't forget the Bake Off competition on Sunday. Bring your scarecrow-themed cakes to the sports club to be judged and then sold off in aid of Memory Lane, Sandal Library's dementia-friendly community garden.

Brave teddy bears to skydive for charity at Scarecrow Festival

FIRST a horse-riding scarecrow, now one that's going to make a parachute jump. The Rotary Club of Wakefield is taking the plunge and running its third charity Teddy Bears' Parachute Jump, this time in conjunction with the Scarecrow Festival. Skydiving bears can be sponsored in aid of their owners' chosen charities while entry fees benefit the Forget Me Not Children's Hospice. Over the past two years the bears have raised £3,200, including the sponsorship raised by the SCA's fearless entrants.

Rotary club secretary Peter Clarke said: "We're once again grateful to the fire service for their help with this event. This year, because we're at the scarecrow festival, we thought it would be a bit of fun to have a Rotarian scarecrow take part in the jump, too."

Festival co-ordinator Jean Chaplin said: "We are delighted that we're linking up with Rotary in this way because it's something else for the children to enjoy. Our mascot, Tommy the Tyke, is raising money for Wakefield Riding for the Disabled, which is how he came to be riding a horse. A skydiving scarecrow will be something to behold - sounds great fun."



The parachute jump will be held at West Yorkshire Sports and Social Club on the Sunday afternoon, September 24. Children, families, companies and community groups are encouraged to enter teddy bears or other soft toys. For sponsorship forms call Peter Clarke on 01924 252437. Just in case the fire engine gets called out on an emergency, contingency plans have been made to hold the jump elsewhere the following week.

Chairman's review of key planning issues

ONE of the aims of the SCA, set out in its constitution, is to watch and, when necessary, comment on planning applications. This year has seen a few major issues for us to address.

The future of the West Yorkshire Sports Club seems to have finally been resolved following a Wakefield Council Planning Committee meeting in June when approval was given for housing on the site. The club has had an insecure future since it became viewed as an "infill" site over 20 years ago following housing being built around it and the lapse of its lease in 2003.

You may well be aware that I, as chairman of the club for almost a decade, strove to find a replacement site in Sandal. Unfortunately this is not the outcome. I am in regular contact with the current club chairman who informs me that detailed, complex and protracted contract negotiations are on-going with the council and the developers, Persimmon. He is unwilling to sign any contract until the club is assured that the new site will provide like-for-like facilities.

The proposed M&S Foodhall close to Asda was rejected by Wakefield's Planning Committee in July following their officers' recommendation that this was inappropriate development in the green belt. This issue was discussed at our AGM in 2016 and, whilst the majority of those at that meeting were generally supportive of the application, we recognised others would have the contrary view so we submitted representations outlining members' concerns. In summary, these related to traffic issues, the potential effect of other retail units on existing local businesses and assurances if this development was approved no further encroachment into the green belt would be allowed. We wait to see if the developer appeals the council's decision.

We now hear that the council is willing to lease land between Pugnays and Asda for the potential development of 100 holiday lodges. I would welcome your views on this proposal so the SCA can make representations on members' behalf at the appropriate time. Call me on 252282.

We have also seen the reopening of the former Sandal Castle visitor centre as a café which will allow the Friends of Sandal Castle to operate from its home again. This is welcome news and we wish the family well with this venture.

Les Goddard

SCA presents bench to library's new community garden

THE SCA has supported Sandal Library's new dementia-friendly community garden with a handsome bench, being tried out here by three committee members – chairman Les Goddard, SCA founder Councillor Monica Graham and Dr Keith Souter. The garden, which has been attacked three times by vandals, was declared officially open by Monica, who said: "This has come about as a result of people power – people who have put their hearts and souls into this through all the difficulties. They have created a haven of peace and beauty for all visitors."



Other forthcoming SCA events

Friday, October 13: Cheese and wine evening at West Yorkshire Sports and Social Club. SCA member David Lane, CBE, will talk about herkry and family history and how you might create your own coat of arms, just as he did.

November: Christmas tree lights switch-on followed by a family social at Sandal Castle Primary School. More details later.

Friday, December 16: Mince pie and wine at our annual Christmas concert at West Yorkshire Sports and Social Club when we will once again welcome Horbury Victoria Youth Brass Band under its leader, Tom Greatorex.

'Aspects of Sandal' calendars go on sale this month

THE SCA has produced its first calendar which will go on sale at the Scarecrow Festival. It is a major project for 2018 and proceeds will go to fund amenity projects such as the hanging baskets and Christmas tree.

Entitled *Aspects of Sandal*, the calendar's twelve full-colour photographs range from permanent historic features such as Sandal Castle to the passing glories of some of our springtime blossom trees.

Priced just £5 each the calendars can be kept as a permanent reminder of Sandal or they will make excellent Christmas gifts.

