



GLEMSFORD

Report for Annual Glemsford Parish Council Meeting 2021

Lock-down came and suddenly our carefully prepared programme for 2020 was put into lock-down too. No more getting together to meet to enjoy tea and cake and a chat; no more learning new things from the variety of speakers we had booked. We were all staying at home carefully following the Government's instructions as to what we could and could not do safely.

The next issue was for how long? How many meetings and speakers would we need to cancel? How would our members continue to feel connected to each other while isolated in their own homes? Of course no one could predict this. So the committee had to spring into action to think of ways of maintaining the connection and looking after the health and well-being of our members. Weekly virtual committee meetings over Zoom were held and a series of initiatives put in place.

A telephone tree was established with each member of the committee taking responsibility for keeping in touch with a group of members to ensure they were getting all they needed and were able to have someone to chat to if they so wished. Many of our members live alone and so it was vital to ensure they did not feel cut off from everyone.

Members were sent instructions for a variety of craft projects needed for West Suffolk Hospital: mask bands, teddies, hero bears, blankets. A good number accepted the challenge and produced beautiful examples to be donated to the hospital. Photos of these were then posted on our Facebook page.

One member made a Lock-down scrapbook, parts of which she shared on our Facebook page. This will be a fascinating historical document for the future.

Our monthly competitions continued with everything being submitted and voted on electronically. So we were able to continue to enjoy seeing beautiful flowers from each other's gardens and a wide variety of entries from poems to pictures for the monthly specialist competition.

A few meetings using zoom were offered to members, the first being a coffee and chat session followed by quizzes and games sessions and a poetry virtual tea. Those who participated enjoyed them. We also arranged a few socially distanced walks when we were able to do so.

Over the winter months Themed Thursdays were introduced with members being invited to share something on the chosen theme on our Facebook page. The themes have included meat-free meals, "Desert Island Disc" choices, winter berries, house plants, etc.

At Christmas instead of our usual Christmas party the committee assembled and decorated goody bags for all our members and delivered them to them on their doorsteps. This gave the opportunity for a brief catchup. Members were both surprised and delighted to receive these.

A fortnightly newsletter from the Suffolk West Federation was sent electronically to members. This included news from other groups, recipes, poems, etc, all designed to keep members connected.

The WI Denman college offered a wide variety of on-line tutorials of which several members took advantage. These included cookery, history & travel, virtual tours of London & Constable Country and wide variety of craft workshops.

So even in lock-down the WI has had a lot to offer its members. Of course we have no idea when we will be able to meet again as a whole group but we are endeavouring to ensure all our members continue to feel valued and connected to each other during these unprecedented times.

Merlyn Shepherd
Hon Secretary,
Glensford WI.
February 2021