

The Pie Club of Little Egypt

Report for Annual Parish Meeting Glemsford Tuesday 11 April 2023

The Pie Club of Little Egypt started a year ago with the doors of the Methodist Church Hall opening for the first pie making session on Wednesday 26 January 2022.

Inspired by The Men's Pie Club in the North East and initially borne from Suffolk Libraries Jump Start January initiative there was enough motivation to set up a Pie Club in Glemsford, the aim being to discover the Power of Pie.

Simply put, it is about local guys getting together, having a chat plus baking, making and eating pies. In doing so the aim is to help combat feelings of social isolation, somewhere for guys to meet or just a good excuse to get out and about a bit more.

With initial funding from Suffolk County Cllr Richard Kemp's locality budget, boosted by joint locality awards from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council, this meant that hall hire costs were covered until January this year. Thank you to Cllr Michael Holt and Cllr Stephen Plumb for facilitating this. As a token of appreciation all councillors were invited to come along to one of the pie club sessions and it was a delight to welcome Cllr Kemp and Cllr Holt and introduce them to the Pie Club!

The club took a break in August so to date there have been fifteen pie making sessions. Under the encouraging guidance of local chef Jackie Smith this is what the Pie men now have to say:

"Any gentleman of retirement age this is well worth coming to and I would give it five stars"

"I have learnt, after 75 years, to make pies. I love it"

"Very social and good knowledge of food"

"How to move on from Fray Bentos!"

"I reckon it should be twice a month"

Thank you so much to Jackie – she really does make things happen. It has been encouraging to see the men grow in confidence, learning from Jackie as they go. Some are now making pies at home. They all enjoy themselves, chat and bring together a hearty meal. Everyone goes home well-fed, content and happy and after a year, friendships have certainly been forged.

Thank you to Glemsford Angels for funding the hall hire so that we could continue for another six months until July this year. With the increase in the cost of living we were thankful that we could continue during the winter months. July will be our last session as Jackie and I feel that we have taught as much as we can and have made every savoury pastry possible. This does not need signal the end as the opening is there for someone to continue the Pie Club either as it is or develop a higher profile in the village and maybe expand into the village hall with possibly a soup kitchen as well.

There have been some epic pies along the way not least of all Stargazey pie last week! This was suggested from within the group and thank you to fishmonger John Skelly for preparing the sardines in such a way for this unusual but delicious recipe. Thank you to the JR Humphreys of Clare for quality meat and always giving me a small discount. Also to Lavenham Butchers. The Christmas meal was terrific and thank you to Jamie's Meat Inn in Sudbury for subsidising the meat. Thank you to Mr Guy Weller-Poley at Boxted Hall for the brace of partridge and pheasant for November's Savoury Game Pie.

Thank you to Mrs Daphne Jay and other key holders of the Methodist Church for always opening up for us. Daphne has continued to be an immense help with the bookings, ensuring the hall is open, clean and warm and often helps with setting up tables and chairs. Thank you to Methodist Church Treasurer Peter Chubb for acting as banker on behalf of the Pie Club.

Harriet North

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11.04.23