

Shotley Pier Group Newsletter

Thank You & Happy New Year

We had a great end to our year at the Red Lion, Chelmondiston, where our Christmas Coffee Morning was very well attended and raised £750.

A huge thank you to our amazing volunteers, the stallholders and artists who help us keep the event enjoyable, and of course a very big thank you to Doug and Mandy, the owners of the Red Lion who have been so steadfast and supportive for several years.

The Red Lion events have just reached the milestone of raising £10,000 for the pier funds and have also given great enjoyment to all those attending and enabled our volunteers to keep in touch with members informally.

8th January Coffee Morning

Traditionally, our January coffee mornings have lower attendance, so please come along if you can, we may have news about the work at the pier too. 10.30am - noon with no need to pre-book, £5 entry includes delicious homemade cakes by our volunteers as well as tea or coffee provided by the Red Lion team, who kindly donate their time and refreshments.

Peta Hillier is a talented artist, so it's time for her to be seen as "Artist of the Month" in January 2020.

Peta Hillier holds several roles in the pier group, she is a Director and Company Secretary of the Society, and you may have seen her in her role as the organiser of our Art Coffee Mornings. Peta first came forward as a volunteer when we had an art week and auction in 2017, this was the first event where we brought together the talented artists of the peninsula and our fund-raising team.

Since then, she has arranged annual fund-raising art exhibitions, one at Harkstead Church, another at Shotley Church, as well as our popular monthly art coffee mornings at the Red Lion in Chelmondiston.



January Artist of the Month

Peta is a local artist , trained at Suffolk University but art is a lifelong passion.

Peta says: "This season specialising in the domestic still life as a response to well-being issues and importance of being in the moment with meditative pieces of cafe and kitchen life." Acrylics are used to exemplify colour and form which is abstract and not photographic. No art is really representing reality but a mood. Still life is an underrated art form that nevertheless is a response to the pressures of events in the busy world.



Coffee Morning Dates for 2020

Weds January 8th
 Weds February 5th
 Weds March 4th
 Weds April 1st
 Weds May 6th
 Thurs June 4th
 Weds July 1st
 Weds August 5th
 Weds September 2nd
 Weds October 7th
 Weds November 4th
 Sat December 5th



Pierside Snacks

Our local publicity has been clear that the cost of buying the catering business and investing in a new food truck was fully funded by an economic development grant.

We purchased the business as a going concern, which included the mobile unit, equipment, stock and excellent training from the former owner. It was not just a payment for a van, it included stock and equipment, and the training and support over several months was invaluable.

This last point is significant because our volunteers lacked any experience in mobile catering, and we were keen to maintain our reputation for providing high quality at a reasonable price. This training enabled us to get the highest score for food hygiene certificate of 5 out of 5, and our team all passed their Level Two Food Hygiene Certificate at first attempt.

As an ethical and co-operative community group, we had no wish to set up in competition with a locally popular business person, so we were delighted when he agreed to sell the going concern to the pier group. We bought the business, and then invested in improving it.

In typical voluntary sector style, we had intended to "make do and mend" but the funder encouraged the Board to invest in a brand new food truck to enhance the local scene, and enable a wider range of food to be sold, especially vegan food which requires a separate griddle to ensure a meat-free area. An added bonus is that the new food truck stands up well to strong winds.

The Board's successful bid for another, much larger grant to renovate the pier decking was enhanced by ownership of the catering operation. Many grant makers want to see a pathway to self-reliance so our clear demonstration that we intend to trade and create an income for the future was a factor in gaining the larger grant.

The old unit is being sold to raise additional funds for the pier as it is now surplus to requirements. Other options were considered by the group such as installing the old

unit near the Ganges development site, but Directors took the view that we want to focus activity at the pier society.

From day one, our steering group, volunteers and local well-wishers all agreed that we want to create a welcoming pier without an entrance fee. Renovating the pier is the main aspect of the project, but creating a regular income is vital too, and is a weighty matter for the Board of Directors who have responsibility of achieving longevity for the pier.

We aim to be open on occasional Sundays over the winter months, from 10am - 2pm subject to weather conditions, and availability of volunteers. This probably excludes January due to chilly winds. We intend to offer regular paid employment when the weather improves. We will be able to take payments by cash and contactless debit card.

Menu items are: Burgers, Bacon Baps, Sausage in a Bun, hot and cold drinks including tea, coffee, hot chocolate, and soup.

We have added a separate Vegan griddle to offer burger, soup, veggie baps and "a sausage type item". We are trialling vegan hot chocolate with oat milk courtesy of Hanks Vegan Deli in Ipswich.

