

Brief resume of the presentation by Juliet Goodman to the Parish Meeting about the WSL Village Show.

History

When asked to give a brief presentation to the Parish Meeting about the Village Show, I looked at some of the older documents to find out a bit about the history of the show. It was originally run by the local WI group but when it became too much for them, and with the possible permanent end of the village show, David Beale stepped in and took over the helm. He formed a village show society with fee paying members. The objects of the show were 'to promote community interest and participation in the traditional village show incorporating produce, flowers, floral art, cookery, handicrafts, photography, children's art and other ancillary activities. Although we no longer have a membership scheme, the objects remain very similar to the original ones.

Current position

A couple of years ago I agreed to be chairman for one show whilst we looked for a new chairman and I am now on preparing for my 3rd show! The show is held once a year in September and is run by a small but dedicated committee. Each year we hold about 4 meetings. The first meeting, our AGM is held in February where we usually also agree the categories for that year's show. In June we hold a planning meeting when the various jobs are allocated to committee members in readiness for the show. These include collecting all the cups from the previous year's winners and having them engraved, gathering raffle prizes, preparing the teas on the day, helping with setting up and clearing up the show and many other tasks. The third meeting takes place 2 days before the show when we prepare the entry cards finally, there is the de-brief meeting where we look at what went well on the day and work out what we can improve for the next show.

Show day

The busiest time is around the show day and on the day itself. The show now has the following categories

Cookery, Preserves, Beverages, Produce, Flowers, Floral Art, Handicrafts, Photography, and Children's Art.

At the moment, we have been getting approximately 750 entries from about 130 people. We have a few loyal supporters who enter the show but we are also lucky to have seen a few new entrants winning classes in the show. We welcome all entrants, new or long-time supporters. All our categories are well-represented and our cookery judges always comment on the high standards for such a local show. They are always impressed by the number of entries, especially after they have tasted over 20 apple cakes in the recipe cake class! The produce section and the photography sections also attract high numbers of entries, with over 110 photos entered at the last show. The interest in the beverages section has also increased, maybe partly to do with the bonus prize from our judge, Charles Ancram of a bottle of champagne for the winner.

The children's sections are always great to see and we are very fortunate that the local school is incredibly supportive, with every child entering something in the show.

Finances

The show is run on a very tight budget and last year for the first time in a few years, we made a small profit. We have a small amount of reserves which would enable us to continue running the show for a few years. However, we have been very fortunate recently to have received sponsorship for the next 5 years from The David Brownlow Charitable Foundation which has given us the financial security without the need to dip into our reserves.

Future

We would very much like to increase both the number of entries and the number of entrants to the show. The show schedule is delivered to every house in the village and it would be wonderful if we could get at least one entrant per household. We would encourage everyone in the village to join in our show, either by entering a class or just visiting the show and tasting our delicious home-made cakes for sale. The show is very much an amateur event, and is a great opportunity to come together as a village and have some fun, with the possibility of a small cash prize for the winners. We publish details of the schedule on our web page on the WSL parish website

<http://www.walthamstlawrence.info/index.php/village-show>

and we also now have an Instagram account @wslvillageshow where you will also find information about this year's show.

The village show is a great opportunity to bring the whole village community together for a fun afternoon and we hope that it will continue to be supported by as many people as possible.

Our next show will be on Sunday 9 September 2018.