

SPEENHELPING HOSPICES

Grainne Suter

Halfway through the year and another two very successful fundraising events under our belt.

The Book Quiz was a roaring success and, despite the at times very challenging questions set by our star quizmaster Tom Dent, Speen rose to the occasion and put on a great show. The ladies' team, put together by Di Rainbow, got off to a running start and won hands down. Congratulations to them all. We will put this on the calendar for 2019.

The Spring Lunch was held at the Speen Home of Rest for Horses. The venue was stunning, the weather perfect, the rosé chilled and the lunch, if all the comments are to be believed, was delicious. A big thanks to the many people who supported us, including Leigh Lewis Optometrists, Hildreths, Ladies Who Lunch and Jane at Alchemille.

Next up is the Car Boot Sale on the playing field on the morning of Sunday 9th September. So, book your pitch, gather your junk (or someone else's treasures) and put this date in your diary. Bacon and sausage sarnies will be on sale amongst other goodies to eat.

Wednesday 10th October is the Bridge Afternoon. Bring your table, your cards and your friends and enjoy some

hands of bridge and to keep the brain sharp tea and scones/cream will be served.

Do you remember Dirty Mavis? This band played in Speen some years ago and are now returning due to popular demand on Saturday 27th October at our Chilli Night in Lacey Green Village Hall.

To round off the year we have the Christmas Market on Saturday 17th November. We are so pleased that that the market is now back in Speen and will be held at the Chapel Hall. If you or someone you know would like to take a stall please contact me on 488540.

On your behalf we will be making further donations shortly to the four hospices the village supports: Ian Rennie, South Bucks, Florence Nightingale and Helen House. There is nothing quite like raising lots of money and having fun at the same time.

We always need your support and your money! Please, please come along to the next round of events.

Details of all events will be on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/speenhelpinghospices/ and the Village Diary.

BEECHDEAN DOWN ON THE FARM

Gill Kent

The year 2018 continues to be problematical for farmers. After a hard winter and very wet and late spring, we have now enduring the driest, hottest summer since 1976.

As in 1976 all our animals are on full, expensive, winter rations when they should be grazing fresh grass. One has to admit they all look very fit, (wet grass goes straight through cattle so they do not benefit from its nutrients). The milking cows are free to choose whether they sit in the shade of the barn or go out to graze the dried grass. Needless to say, they choose the barn, which rather nullifies the argument that cows shouldn't be kept in barns!



We have been fortunate to have a lot of silage left over from last winter, but the majority of farmers are not so lucky. Particularly in the west country, milk yields are down and farmers are feeding next winter's silage. Nature has a way

of compensating over the seasons, so we are hoping for a mild autumn with an average rainfall. The price of milk has risen, partly in response to weather induced yield reduction and partly due to the vagaries of the world market. At

last milk production is giving a positive return to farming businesses.

The worries about the spread of TB and the control of badgers continues. We recently visited the Isle of Sheppy, of which 3200 acres is now a privately owned nature reserve. The 800 cattle which graze the marshes have no risk of catching TB as badgers do not like the wet conditions and shun the area. The lapwings, redshank

and hedgehogs are thriving, as raptors and predators, mammalian and feathered, are strictly controlled. If only we were allowed to exercise the same control on our own land.