

This year is the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Bladen Social Club in February 1957, and the 58th year of unbroken occupancy of the current clubhouse, which was built and paid for by the members in 1959.

As might be expected such an auspicious occasion needs to be recognised and the club will therefore be holding a celebration in the clubhouse and village hall on Saturday the 1st July.

Over those 60 years the membership of the club has waxed and waned as the occupants and demographics of the Parish have changed. Regardless of those changes the Club has according to its title been the provider of social events and entertainment throughout that period all washed down with a convivial beer or something stronger.

This year has been one of revitalisation with a small steady increase in club membership, and regular social events at least once per month. The club has hosted several private parties and a wedding for Parish residents, which have also provided hire income for the village hall. Sadly several members of the club passed away during the last year and the clubhouse was used on several occasions for more sombre events.

The club has also raised money for local and national charities from Coffee mornings, Jumble sales and the waste paper collection with the result that Help for Heroes, Cancer Research, Julia's House, Employ My Ability and Briantspuddle Village Hall have all benefited from donations.

The clubs application, recommended by the Licencing Officer, to change from a club licence to a Premises licence was approved by Purbeck District Council in June last year. The purpose of which was to regularise the existing use of the club premises rather than extend opening hours and turn the premises into a pub as some residents thought was the intent. The use of the club premises throughout the subsequent months has confirmed the club committee's intentions to be a good neighbour and for the club to remain a members only establishment with opening hours very much as in previous years.

A mainstay of club activities has always been the provision of indoor sporting activities, skittles, pool, darts and table games such as dominoes, cards and scrabble. Building on that base a short mat bowls club has been formed affiliated to the club with the objective of providing a weekly social and sporting venue, thereby encouraging active lives and social inclusion for all age groups, especially those who are of mature age or live alone. That objective has been realised with a regular and slowly increasing number of members meeting on Tuesday afternoons during the winter months, and commencing in May on Monday evenings. A subsidiary and intentional benefit of the short mat bowls club is the creation of regular additional hire income for the village hall trust.

Overall the Club has had a very satisfactory year and as a result is able to continue existing plans for repairs and maintenance. Martyr joinery commenced repair work on the porch door earlier this year and with the arrival of warmer and drier weather will complete the repairs so that external and internal painting can proceed during the summer months.

Thank you to all who have supported the club and its charitable and social endeavours.