

# Fishbourne Community Centre and Coffee Shop open



**The opening of Fishbourne Community Centre is enabling a new raft of community activities to take place. One of these, the Coffee Shop, is a prime example of the kind of small scale initiative to improve the health and well-being of older people which AirS has been encouraging.**

The opening was attended by a crowd of over 500 people of all ages. A parade, display stands and demonstration events by numerous clubs and societies that will use the building, demonstrated just what a vibrant community this is.

During the planning of the project Parish Council Chairman, Julian Snell, had attended a workshop organised by AirS which convinced him that a local coffee shop, as well as local activities would help to improve the health and well-being of isolated and vulnerable members of the community.

As well as the Coffee Shop, which is run by volunteers, the Centre programme already covers a range of health and well-being activities such as JivEasy and Swing Easy, both of which attract a wide age range from within and beyond the Village, art classes, ballet, Bridge

for beginners and computing for the terrified! These complement the existing outside sports activities of four tennis 4 courts, bowls, croquet, cricket, football, netball, a multi-use court and a secure children's play area.

The Centre cost £700,000 and took four years of hard work. Geoff Hands, Chairman of the Fundraising Committee, and



Julian Snell worked closely with Paul Ruscoe, Chairman of the Fishbourne Playing Field Association (FPFA) and a large team of village organisations to raise the funds needed. With advice from AirS, Fishbourne Parish Council took the decision

to raise a hefty loan to kick start the project. The major boost came with a Big Lottery Fund award of £231,000 in March 2009, after an appeal against initial rejection. This was followed by grants from West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council, LEADER and the Sussex Community Foundation, an excellent example of partnership working.



The Centre was re-opened in May by local author Kate Mosse, whose parents had been instrumental in the purchase of the Playing Field forty years ago

and the establishment of FPFA as a registered charity.

There is a harsh reality that all centres have to address; how to get the balance right between income generating activities such as wedding receptions, family parties, away day training and one off big events, and providing support for community activities at reduced rates or at no cost. The organisers are confident that they will more than break even in the first year, no mean achievement in today's financial climate, and will then be able to increase the proportion of social and well-being activities at subsidised or no cost.

Geoff Hand kindly contributed his ten tips for achieving success to AirS Heart of the Village special Action edition, available on our website at [www.ruralsussex.org.uk](http://www.ruralsussex.org.uk) under news & publications.

## A Heart of the Village Campaign success! The Big Lottery – capital fund for community buildings to be launched

**A dedicated capital funding stream is expected to be launched in the autumn as part of the Big Lottery Reaching Communities programme. It is likely to fund medium sized refurbishments, new builds or extensions to community centres, village halls or other community use buildings meeting local community needs and aspirations.**

AirS will publish further information about this fund once details are finalised.





## Aldingbourne Alive: Village hall/community open days publicise the role of village halls

**Action in rural Sussex (AirS) has been encouraging village halls to hold open days or evenings to show their communities the variety of activities which take place at the Hall and that also encourage people to support both the Hall and local organisations.**

Around 2,000 people attended Aldingbourne Alive, where sports clubs to drama groups, churches and community services showed what they had to offer at Aldingbourne Community Sports Association's hall and playing field. Aldingbourne Social Club provided refreshments, children potted up their own tomato plants to take home and Barnham Railway Station was recreated as it was in the 1950s by the Model Railway Club.

The latter has been setting up a local charity that has

moved the old signal box onto the playing field. The event was sponsored by Spirit FM, Awards for All and a wide variety of local businesses.

The AirS Spring Workshops, held at Mannings Heath and Wivelsfield, focused on partnership working with parish councils and on recruiting volunteers and marketing of the Village Hall as well as funding sources and the roles and responsibilities of Trustees.

***"It was a revelation! I had no idea all this experience and support was out there. There were very focused and useful presentations which gave me, as a new recruit to village hall management, much to think about."***

This was the verdict from one of about 60 people who attended.

## Kingston Community Pavilion

**The official opening of Kingston Community Pavilion, funded by the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) and Viridor Credits, was celebrated by the community on 27 May.**

As well as representatives from the BLF and Viridor, both the Chairman and President of the National Association of Local Councils, Michael Chater and Lord Lytton, and the Director of the Sussex Association of Local Councils, Trevor Leggo, together with the Rural Advocate and Chairman of Commission for Rural Communities, Dr Stuart Burgess, were present. Kingston Parish Councillors and members of the Kingston Action Plan Steering Group were delighted to welcome their guests to this community event. The Big Lottery Director for the South of England, our BLF Grant Officer and a Viridor representative were invited to see the project and meet people who had been directly involved in the project over lunch and the whole community joined for a celebration followed by the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

In spite of a rather damp start, the day brightened up and the afternoon and evening events, organised by the Kingston Action Plan Steering Group and Kingston Tennis Club, were a great success. Over 250 people, of all ages, attended from every section of the community, celebrating this unique occasion which lasted well into the evening. Set against the idyllic backdrop of the South Downs, it was a classic English village scene, demonstrating the importance to the rural community of the provision of this wonderful new facility that will allow residents to cater for their own needs in the 21st Century, thanks to the Big Lottery Fund, Viridor Credits and the support the Parish Council received from its County Association.

