

CHALKBOARD

THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE NEWSLETTER

Bon Appétit!

Our first ever cookery course took place in February/March and we were very pleased with the progress our participants made in just five weeks. We aimed the sessions at men over 50 and living alone who might not otherwise have the skills or perhaps the motivation to prepare good wholesome food for themselves.

After an introductory discussion on health and safety in the kitchen, our first class was focussed on budget-friendly light meals and covered eggs 5 ways – scrambled, poached, fried, boiled and omelettes. We also included a simple tomato-based pasta dish which was accompanied by garlic bread. Thankfully everyone was back for more the next week and we developed our pasta dish to create a tasty bolognese. We also found time to prepare a hearty chilli with rice as well as potato wedges and a range of salad dressings.

On the menu for week 3 was a simple soup starter (red lentil and bacon) followed by a delicious full roast dinner – roast chicken, potatoes, vegetables and the all-important gravy. The plan was to demonstrate just how far a chicken could go so we also needed to show our participants how to safely store, freeze and defrost leftovers. The recipes in week 4 would make good use of that surplus chicken with several alternative dishes covered: a simple curry, risotto, a chicken crumble as well as a few 'extravagant' sandwich ideas.

It was great to see both the continued attendance of participants on the course and their improved confidence in preparing healthy, home-cooked food. We hope our cookery course will prove popular with others over the coming months too.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in taking part in the next course, please get in touch as soon as possible since places are strictly limited.



Lenten Evenings

In the weeks before Easter (which this year falls on Sunday 21st April) the Helpers of the Holy Souls are once again running their Lenten Retreat. Meetings take place each Thursday from 7-9pm and provide opportunities to work with Scripture, reflections, images and poetry. All are welcome!

Winter Warmers

Each Friday from January to early March we ran a Winter Warmer Lunch in association with Knowsley Older People's Voice. A free hot meal and dessert was served in the Snack Shack followed by a quiz or bingo. Often the group would then move into the hall for some more physical games such as curling (a non-icy variety) or bocchia (an Italian game similar to bowls). It is great to see activities like this taking place and groups coming together to socialise and try new things. Thanks to David from KOPV for his help with this project – hopefully it is something we can repeat next year.

A Learning Space

Thanks to our friends in The First Step who kindly donated three of their old office machines, we were recently able to begin setting up a small computer suite in one of our downstairs rooms. With a new internet connection installed it means that these computers are now all set up and ready to go. We plan to make this room available to anyone who might need some computer access and also hope to be able to offer some help with any IT issues people may have.

Plans don't stop there however, there's also plenty of room for art activities, crafting and other projects. So stay tuned and we'll keep you posted of new developments.



Let us entertain you!

As you know the third Friday of each month is our Lunchtime Social – a delicious, freshly-cooked two course meal followed by entertainment. Most recently diners have enjoyed live music from the Huyton Ukulele Troup and Nuala Duxbury. Over the coming months we have some great acts to look forward to: March sees the return of Stevie Squeeze playing all our favourites on accordion, in April we have our superb dance teachers Beverley and Martin returning to the Schoolhouse to lead us in a tea dance. Finally, we're very excited that the Sing Me Choir are booked in for a performance in May. So, there's an awful lot to look forward to!



The Lunchtime Social is a great afternoon but remember, if you wish to attend one of our events, you must first become a member (this is free of charge) only then you will then be able to book your place at a meal. (We suggest a donation of £4/person to help cover our costs). We hope to see you soon.

Coming through loud and clear

We're excited to have had a new P.A. system installed in the hall. Four quality loud speakers have been fixed to the ceiling ensuring that wherever you are in the room you will be able to hear superb, clear sound. Those who use a hearing aid can also benefit from the permanent loop system that was installed at the same time which cuts out any background noise and broadcasts only the desired source. So, whether it's for music or a presenter with a microphone, our new system is a great facility for those using the hall.