

## **Christmas Party 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

### **Report to Sue Parker for Newsletter and for Committee for info**

#### **From Jaqui Mercer, Organiser**

##### **Thanks to helpers**

Firstly I have to thank those who helped on the day and also beforehand in the preparations.

A huge thankyou to Isabel who cooked and donated the lovely Christmas cake again this year.

Thank you to Peter for providing his excellent quiz and tie breaker. Who knew we would need one again this year!!

And of course a big thankyou to our MC Gill Cooban who managed to ensure that proceedings went as smoothly as possible.

Magda Ersoz for helping me telephone all those members of our u3a who do not have email and making sure that they got an invite and placement before the main email invitations were sent out to everyone else.

Also her much needed help to redistribute the food onto other trays etc when it was delivered unsuitable for our requirements. Also her assistance with anything else that was required on the day.

My heartfelt thanks also goes to Carol Palmer for making and donating of the table decorations which I know she put a lot of work into and also her great help on the day with all that was required.

The RUGS who were of exceptional help on the day when the food was delivered and of course their constant serving of teas and coffees and clearing up in the kitchen.

I'm sorry I don't know all their names but Sue Mearns will be able to supply that information.

##### **Report on Event**

Now to my basic report of proceedings for the event.

In June 2024 I paid a £100 deposit to Tilgate Bakery to secure their supply and attendance on the date. At the time I assumed the order that I was placing was going to be the same as last year but with hindsight I believe this may not have been the food that they actually supplied.

Having secured the booking I was told that someone would be in touch nearer the day to finalise the details and for full payment to be made.

By the 30<sup>th</sup> November when I had not had any further contact, I again visited the bakery and was told that Jane was not in but would contact me on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. This she did and I made the final booking for food for 120 people. During that phone call I was quoted approximately £1800 and with a bit of haggling managed to get it reduced to |£1303. Needless to say I was horrified at the price but as it was less than 2 weeks before the event I was not in a

position to find anyone else who could take over the catering. Or in fact the time to investigate even to buying from retail outfits and plating up myself.

Having seen how much was not eaten on the day I now believe that the package I was sold was probably not the one we had last year and in fact with the amount left over believe that I could have ordered for only 80 people and it would have been sufficient.

The leftover food was offered to those on site and so as not to totally waste it the rest was taken by myself and Magda to Open House in Crawley for them to distribute to their people. I know from a talk I heard on Sunday that they now have at least 60 overnight stayers so they will have enjoyed the food we couldn't manage.

With regard to the musicians that played. These were recommended to me by other members of our u3a and I thought it would be a nice surprise to have different entertainment this year. Unfortunately it did not turn out to be the case as the type of music they played was not suitable for our event. Having explained our event to the manager of the musicians, I expected them to play Christmas songs or perhaps carols that people could enjoy or even sing along with. The musicians that attended said this could have been the case if their manager had explained to them what type of event they were attending.

I have been informed by one group leader who attended, that apparently this unfestive music put a damper on the whole proceedings. I can only apologise for this and say I wish it wasn't so.

In closing I would like to say that since the event I have been informed that it would probably be possible to retain the Copthorne Silver Band to perform for us next year if required at a realistic price. But of course that would be down to the next committee or member who arranges it.

It has also been suggested to me that the whole thing could be moved to The Charis Centre next year as it is a bigger venue.

People bringing their own mugs helped with the reduction in washing up required, Although intended to remind them earlier in the week of the party, I didn't get around to this and some people forgot, so an email would be very good idea.

Donation money for the table decorations amounted to £13.00 which will be given to the League of Friends as requested by Carol who made and donated them all.

### **To note for 2025**

I will be out of the country from mid November 2025 until approx. 7<sup>th</sup> December so unfortunately will not be available next year to organise the party so the Committee will need to offer someone else this exciting opportunity.

**No doubt I will be back in time to become a useful RUG on the day!!**