

22nd May 2026

Next week's biggest event in the village is almost upon us, and no, before anyone starts clutching their polling cards, we're not talking about that by-election. We're talking about the far more important matter of tea, cake and competitive tombola tactics at the Fairlight Village Hall Summer Fair on Saturday June 6th, from 12 noon until 3pm. Honestly, can it really be June already? It feels like the Christmas decorations only came down last week. This much-loved annual event raises vital funds to keep our wonderful village hall standing proud, looking respectable and available for the countless groups, clubs, classes and entertainment events that somehow keep village life ticking along. Without it, where would we all go for quizzes, coffee mornings and heated debates about raffle prizes? Entry is completely free, although your willpower may not survive the lure of homemade cakes, hot food, cold food, tea, stalls galore, games for the children and enough tombola tickets to make you believe, just briefly, that today could finally be your day. So please pop along, bring the family, bring your neighbours, and bring plenty of small change. It's a brilliant afternoon, a lovely community tradition, and frankly, far more fun than politics.

Hot on the heels of the Village Hall Summer Fair comes what is arguably the biggest event in the Fairlight social calendar, though loyal followers of Bob and Dec's Christmas Quiz Night may dispute that with strongly worded letters. That's twice I've mentioned Christmas already. At this rate the supermarkets will have the mince pies out before we've finished the strawberries. Before anyone panic-buys tinsel, Fairfest is nearly here, and excitement is building faster than the lunchtime BBQ queue. On Saturday 20th June, the Recreation Ground at Wood Field once again becomes the centre of village life, complete with questionable dance moves, overenthusiastic tug-of-war tactics, and at least one person insisting they were once "absolutely lethal at archery" before missing the target entirely. The Fairfest team promise their biggest event yet, running from 12 noon until 10pm, with plenty to keep everyone entertained, from children bouncing on the bouncy castle to adults bouncing gradually towards the bar. There'll be steam train rides for youngsters and grown adults who still wave enthusiastically at locomotives as though they know the driver personally. The fun dog show will feature the traditional spectacle of local dogs pretending they've never heard a command in their lives, while the art and craft stalls will once again tempt visitors into saying, "Maybe I should try pottery." You shouldn't. You can't do it. None of us can. There's archery, a BBQ and bar, plus live music from 5.30pm to 10pm with The Kytes and The Blue Cats, the perfect excuse to dance like nobody's watching. Sadly, in a village, everybody usually is. Best of all, entry is completely free, which nowadays feels less like generosity and more like an accounting mistake nobody's spotted yet. So gather your family, friends, neighbours, picnic blankets, and probably a light jacket for when the British summer remembers its commitment to disappointment, and head to the Recreation Ground at Wood Field, Commanders Walk, for a day of community spirit, music, laughter, sunshine (optimistically), and almost certainly at least one lost flip-flop. The team are also looking for volunteers to help with setup on Friday afternoon and during the event itself, including behind the bar, the tug of war, raffle tickets, and supervising the bouncy castle, a role requiring the patience of a saint and the reflexes of a Premier League goalkeeper. If you can spare even an hour, contact Jennifer Annetts on 07947 791576.

Next up, a public service announcement from the glamorous world of water management: if Battery Hill suddenly feels like the M25 for tankers, don't panic, Southern Water are busy balancing water levels at the Fairlight reservoir and carrying out inspections. The good news? You can still use your water as normal, so there's no need to start hoarding Perrier or showering in Evian. The only real danger is the temporary traffic lights, which seem to have mastered the ancient art of appearing exactly one second after you've committed to the corner. So perhaps approach the hill with slightly less rally-driver enthusiasm than usual while the works continue over the next few days.

As it's the fifth Sunday of the month, this week's Benefice Service will be at St Laurence Church at 10.30am, with refreshments afterwards. So, if you usually make the noble climb up Battery Hill to St Andrew's Church, save your energy, the doors will be firmly shut this Sunday. Meanwhile, at

10.45am, Pett Methodist Chapel will be holding its usual Sunday service, led this week by Alan Hurrell. A slightly later start for those who regard Sunday mornings as more of a gentle suggestion than a deadline.

This Tuesday the 26th at 7pm in the Village Hall, Fairlight Parish Council proudly presents its Annual Parish Council Meeting, featuring all the crowd-pleasing favourites: policy reviews, committee appointments, working groups, and the annual battle for Chair and Vice Chair. Think “Gladiators”, but with a gavel. OK, seriously, it may not sound like the most exciting way to spend your Tuesday evening (because it’s not) but it’s all terribly important and legally necessary, apparently. So if you’re longing for an evening of procedural thrills and administrative suspense, and to see how democracy works at a very local level, pop along, admission is free, and a warm welcome guaranteed.

Next Tuesday, June 2nd, the Gardening Club will be embarking on what promises to be a glorious expedition to the splendid Pashley Manor Gardens, returning, no doubt, with muddy shoes, overstuffed notebooks and at least three members passionately defended new opinions on whether hydrangeas are drought tolerant. Personally, I remain sceptical. The clue, surely, is in the name. For trip details, contact Fiona Spence on 07905 769709, and if you fancy joining this flourishing village institution, where Latin plant names are spoken with alarming confidence, ring Cas Barlow on 01424 814229. And whilst we’re on the subject of gardens, several villagers have been cautiously peering over fences and asking about the date of this year’s Open Gardens event. Sadly, the answer is: there isn’t one. The event is biennial, which is a slightly posher way of saying you’ll all have to wait until 2027 before legally snooping around your neighbours’ delphiniums again.

Then, on Wednesday June 3rd, the Book Club gathers at The Cove at 6.15pm for its monthly meeting. It’s a friendly group, ideal for book lovers, occasional readers, or anyone who enjoys nodding thoughtfully while holding a glass of wine. This month’s discussion is the multi-award-winning bestseller *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. Interested? Email olivia@thecovefairlight.co.uk.

And finally

This week is my birthday, well, not mine exactly. It’s a whole year since I took over this column from Keith Pollard, proof that either time flies, or village gossip travels faster than even the new broadband being rolled out across Fairlight. I hope everyone enjoys reading it half as much as I enjoy writing it, especially on weeks when there’s very little happening and I’m desperately trying to turn a lost wheelie bin into headline news. A huge thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contact me over the past year, whether with news, corrections, encouragement, or strongly held opinions about parking. It’s all appreciated, and I’m looking forward to the next 12 months. Of course, Keith managed more than 750 editions of Fairlight Village Voice. That’s over 15 years of village happenings, fêtes, missing cats, committee meetings, and reports about potholes “getting worse.” So, at my current rate, I only need to keep going until roughly the year 2040 to catch him. No pressure then.

Until next time, have a great week

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