

# Pre VE Day Tea Party

1 May 2025

2-4pm

Kings Weald Community Centre

**Budget:** £450

**Spent for BHTC:** £187.70

**Breakdown:** £96.15 -decorations  
£91.55 -food

**Event sponsors:** Goodoaks Homecare funded the hall hire -£157.50  
Coop supplied the savoury food, drinks items and jam tarts -approx. £80  
Free entertainment provided by Burgess Hill Girls  
Additional table decorations provided free by Burgess Hill Yarnbombers and organised by Central Sussex Rotary and BH Creative Community

**Total cost:** £425 approx.

## **Aim:**

To provide an event where people in the local community, who are senior citizens or were feeling isolated, could come and meet others. Also specifically, to celebrate 80 years since Victory in Europe, with those who may not be able to attend the outdoor celebrations planned for 8<sup>th</sup> May in St John's Park.

**Number of attendees:** 69 broken down into; 63 booked tickets of 63 available, 7 invited guests, 2 no shows and 1 resident who arrived without a ticket but was accommodated.

## **Publicity:**

The event was advertised:

- In the VE Day Programme, which was delivered to numerous places in the town including businesses, and available on our website
- On all the notice boards across Burgess Hill
- In the Mid Sussex Times
- The Help Point window
- Across the Town Council social media pages
- On the Town Council website
- Event notification via Mailchimp

## **Event breakdown:**

Tickets were booked in advance via the Help Point only, this was either in person or by phone. People were limited to booking two tickets each, to stop there being double bookings, as people often book friends in and then we find they have already booked. During the booking process, they are asked about any dietary requirements, whether they are a Burgess Hill resident and to provide permission to be included in photos.

The tables were decorated in red, white and blue, with decorations provided by Burgess Hill Yarnbombers. Each table had place settings laid out for each attendee (cup, saucer, teaspoon, plate and napkin), milk jugs and sugar bowls. Tired cake stands and small plates were put out with a mix of savoury and sweet foods, including sausage rolls, egg bites, lemon slices and cupcakes. Tables also had a selection of quiz sheets, feedback forms, pens and Union Jack hats.

Attendees arrived and were greeted at the door by the Community Engagement Team. They were then checked in and invited to find a seat. Once everyone had found a seat, they were welcomed with a quick speech from Jen, thanking the sponsors and introducing Burgess Hill Girls' choir.

The Community Engagement Team, took a tea pot to each table, and offered any other hot drinks to attendees, which were made individually, this included coffee, decaf options, and fruit teas. Any guests who declared dietary requirements at the time of booking, were given a selection of suitable items for their needs, on a separate plate to ensure there was no cross contamination.

Burgess Hill Girls brought 30 students, via minibus, who performed a mix of group numbers and solo songs. They also provided song sheets to the tables so they could sing along with some of the songs. Once they'd finished, Deputy Major Tofojju thanked them and the guests were invited to talk with each other and complete the quiz sheets, as well as being offered top ups for drinks and food.

Before leaving, guests were then asked to complete the feedback slips, that had been laid out on the tables. As well as being provided with answers for the quiz sheets.

### **Feedback:**

We received lots of comments verbally during and at the end of the event. Feedback slips were laid out on the tables for written feedback and they had three sections titled:

- What did you like about the event?
- What would you like to see that could improve the event?
- Any other comments:

We collected them at the end of the event, and responses have been listed below.

### **What did you like about the event?**

- Very well presented, attractive table setting. Plentiful food and tea. Event staff helpful. Table quizzes good.
- Appreciated the level of effort to set the event up and constant attention throughout.
- Good social get together, food, refreshments and some entertainment.
- The savoury food. The games and decorations. The choir and the fact you could join in. Plenty of drinks offered by the helpers who were very attentive. Well done.
- The girls singing. The food, especially tea. Trying to remember the questions.
- Excellent -lovely singing by the girls, nice to be able to join in.
- I enjoyed it all! The choir from BHG was excellent. The food was good, lovely, lots of tea.
- Choir but they needed microphones as drowned out by the piano.
- Thank you it was a brilliant event. The girls were lovely. Fantastic food.
- Everything, especially the lovely girls from BHG. Many thanks also for the lovely refreshments.
- Nice food. Helpers very attentive and helpful. Good entertainment.
- The girls singing. Nice food -good company.
- Girls choir. Food but more savoury please.
- Very well organised and publicised.
- The efficiency and friendly staff. Very well organised.
- Everything, girls choir, the food, seeing old friends.
- Very entertaining, nice tea with pleasant company.
- Friendly atmosphere, helpful council staff. Nice food.
- Meeting friends and seeing the girls sing.
- The entertainment was very good.
- The school children singing. Excellent!
- Food was good. Enjoyed the singing and singalong.
- Lovely having the children sing the old songs. Well done.
- The entertainment. Helpful staff.
- Entertainment. Good get together. Very well organised.
- Lovely tea and entertainment.
- Singing.
- Everything was good.
- Everything.
- Everything. Well catered for.
- The school choir.
- Liked your hot chocolate.
- All of it, loved the girl singers.
- Well organised and catered.
- Singing.

### **What would you like to see that could improve the event?**

- Entrance to the event should be quicker as it was a long time for some people to stand.
- Perhaps a bit of background music and a microphone for the choir would have been an advantage.

- Stricker control of seating. Microphone for singing group. Improve access -old people queueing for up to 15 minutes to get in.
- Maybe a microphone when there are singers as it was hard to hear them.
- Could the soloist have a microphone? It was difficult to hear some of their lovely voices.
- Microphone for singers and speakers. A long time to stand before the event -too long for some disabled people.
- Open the doors at, at least, 10 to 2. We are too old to stand for 20 minutes or more. 2 milk jugs on tables would help.
- The decorations. Nothing was too much trouble, we were looked after very well, thank you.
- More savoury choices, maybe sandwiches. Mic or speaker system.
- Some appropriate background music during the quieter moments. Shame that our table didn't get a song sheet.
- Better policy for disabled. More savoury food.
- A microphone for singers.
- Maybe more entertainment.
- Cold drinks be offered in warm weather.
- More savoury food. Couldn't hear the speeches (acoustics).
- Microphone would be useful for announcements and choir.
- Microphone would be helpful.
- Using a microphone would help to hear what is being said.
- Microphone so you can hear. Being allowed in earlier.
- People with mobility problems should go in first and be seated.
- Maybe some historical reflection in the speeches.
- Nothing.
- Not a lot thanks.
- Nothing, all lovely.
- Nothing, it was perfect.
- Background music.
- Maybe a microphone.
- Nothing.

#### **Any other comments:**

- Thank you all for putting on this event. Vegan food was lovely.
- Many thanks to the organising staff from BHTC. Everything was much appreciated.
- Very convivial afternoon and generous of the Town Council.
- It was a lovely afternoon. Plenty of tea, cakes and entertainment.
- A great afternoon. Thank you to all the workers.
- It was so nice to catch up with old friends.
- Vegetarian/vegan food needs labelling please.
- Look forwards to the next one.
- Thank you for a lovely afternoon.
- All in all, it was a very nice afternoon.
- Some soft music as a background.
- Very nice afternoon, thank you.
- Look forwards to more events.
- Lovely afternoon.
- Very good.
- Much appreciated. Thank you!
- Thank you for the invitation.
- A very enjoyable afternoon.
- Well done staff!
- Hope to see you next year.
- All very good and appreciated.

#### **Evaluation:**

Considering we had sponsorship, the tea party still cost a considerable amount, partly this was down to buying additional table decorations, although these will be reused on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, street party event. The cost of food was actually what bulked the costs up, with increases in all the price of items from October's tea party. For example, a box of 6 lemon slices has increased from £1.10 in October 2024 to £1.25 in April 2025. At 15p a box extra, that's an additional spend of £1.20, and whilst that may seem small, when you consider the extra cost of each item and at the quantity required, it is quite a lot. This is something we will need to consider when we put our budget together for 2026.

We originally approached Birchwood Grove choir to perform as attendees have always enjoyed their singing, but due to commitments such as SATs, they were unable to support. Burgess Hill Academy were then approached, and offered to send some students with a music teacher. They then needed to cancel as

the school had several pre-standing commitments and were unable to allocated students and staff to the event. Thankfully Burgess Hill Girls were able to step in and 30 students arrived by minibus to perform.

Generally, we have around 10-15 no shows, and with the very hot weather, I wondered if this number would be larger, but basically everyone showed up! The two who didn't come, we were informed by other guests, were unwell. We also had someone arrive with no ticket, who we were able to accommodate.

We invited some special guests to attend, which was two staff from GoodOaks Homecare, who funded the hall hire, Julie Smyth from Central Sussex Rotary and three volunteers from Burgess Hill Creative Community, who provided handmade table decorations, and Deputy Mayor Tofojjul Hussain, a table was reserved for them. Alison from Coop was unable to stay for the event. Coop, GoodOaks, Burgess Hill Yarnbombers (via BHCC and CSR) and Burgess Hill Girls, were all sent thank you letters via email, as well as thanked during the event.

The overriding feedback to improve the event, is a microphone. Previously we haven't received much feedback saying that people couldn't hear, but I think this maybe down to the fact we had 3 large fans running due to the heat. This is something I will look at for October though.

The only other improvement feedback we received a handful of times, was about waiting to be let in to the hall. Partly why we choose Kings Weald Community Centre is because there is seating outside of the hall, for people to use if they arrive early (some guests arrived at 1.15pm). A lot of people chose not to use this and they were queuing at the door to "get the best seats". Unfortunately, there isn't much we can do to eliminate the issue of people standing too long to come in, as we can't force people to use the seating available, but I will consider making a sign that advises people to use the seating whilst the hall is set up.

We did have an issue with some attendees rearranging the seating plan, which did upset 1 guest who wasn't happy that they were now a table of 10 (instead of 7). They were asked not to add additional chairs to the table as it was set up to allow attendees to properly see the performers but there was little to be done, as they moved them anyway.

Most people seemed happy with the food available and there was very little leftover at the end. The guests with dietary requirements (1x vegan, 2x gluten free) were happy with their food too. The only comment we had verbally and written (*Vegetarian/vegan food needs labelling please*) was from a couple who hadn't declared their dietary needs at the time of booking, nor did they inform us until near the end of the of the event. Had we been aware of their needs, they would be provided with separate plates of suitable food. We also have all of the packaging available at the event, should someone require clarification on ingredients.

Looking at the data collected during the booking process, only one person stated they were not a Burgess Hill resident, which is great!

Overall, it was a lovely event, the hall looked wonderful in red, white and blue and the choir sung beautifully. We will be looking to book the Kings Weald Community Centre again for the October tea party to celebrate Silver Sunday.

Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson  
Events, Communication and Administration Officer  
2/5/2025

Photos of event

