

Dittisham Village Voice 8th December 2015

A couple of weeks ago I was driving back into the village when I saw Paul Vincent skillfully reversing his sheep trailer on to the side of Riverside Road, opposite St George's Church. Nothing woolly was inside, just two empty builders dumpy bags.

The following day while walking my dogs, I saw the trailer was covered with notices – one saying 'Stop! Don't walk past!' in big red letters. Reading more of the notices the reason for the trailer became clear. Sarah Stoddart had, like most of us, been very concerned seeing the plight of refugees in the news. Having heard Taunton Dene based action group People to People Solidarity, were collecting warm clothes and other items for the refugees, Sarah rang Paul Vincent and the sheep trailer collection point idea was hatched.

Sarah sent an email around to villagers and posted notices on our village telegraphs poles, asking for donations. The plan was to leave the trailer in situ for two weeks, and just see if any donations would appear. Within three days the trailer was full, within one week it was full to bursting. Paul had trouble closing the doors there were so many donations.

The trailer was taken back to Paul's house where the contents were sorted into piles of different items that had been donated. The team was bowled over, not only by the quantity, but the quality and variation of wonderful items that had been received: almost new, warm coats, tents, sleeping bags, camp beds and blankets to name but a few. Once sorted, and labeled, Paul and Brian Stoddart drove it all to a large collection warehouse in Taunton, for onward transmission to Calais, and beyond.

Thank you Sarah, Paul and Brian, and thanks also to Leslie, Sally, Sarah and Sophia for giving up their time to sort the donations. And of course, a huge thank you to everyone in our beautiful little village who donated so generously.

Tickets are now on sale for the Ferry Boat Inn Christmas Draw, which will take place Christmas Eve. As always there are some super prizes, including cash prizes plus many other fabulous surprises. Get your tickets now!

And finally, next Wednesday 16th December it will be Ladies Night at The Red Lion from 7.30pm. It's a chance for all the girls to get together, to wear something Christmassy, and have a festive good time with mince pies provided.