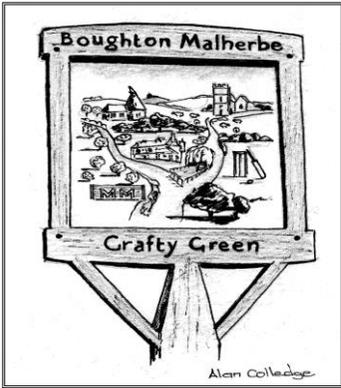


Malherbe Monthly

Number 200
March 2021



Incorporating Liverton Street & Platts Heath

Useful contact names and telephone N^{os}.
BOUGHTON MALHERBE/GRAFTY GREEN

County Councillor	Shellina Prendergast Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk	07970 461160
Borough Councillors	Martin Round martinround@maidstone.gov.uk Karen Chappell-Tay karenchappelltay@maidstone.gov.uk	890276 07918 675619
Church Wardens	Kenneth Alexander Vanessa Goodwin	859549 858372
Parish Council Clerk	Chris Hume email boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com	07972 630555
Village Hall bookings	Carol Hulm email carolhulm@gmail.com Mobile 07990 574214	853583
Village Hall General Enquires	Jon Thompson email bromley@ashleylaw.co.uk Mobile 07932 112730	851351
KM Correspondent	Joan Drury email: jdrury23@btinternet.com	853766
Gardening Club	Sue Burch	850381
Church Choir	Doreen Hulm	850287
Dazzle	Gail Kelly	850671
Yoga	Sue Burch	850381
Parish Council Website	www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk	
Priest in charge	Dr John Huggins email: vicar@lvb.org.uk	850280
Curate	Charlotte Coles	07805 092823
Reader	Joan Drury email: jdrury23@btinternet.com	853766
Benefice Office	Sarah Hills email: churchoffice@lvb.org.uk Answer phone available out of hours	850604
St. Edmunds Centre	Kate Stansfield	07500 895831
Fresh Fish delivery	Tuesday at approx. 3pm by Post Office	01580 754300
Malherbe Monthly Production Team		
Mike Hitchins	Advertising: mfhitchins@btinternet.com	858937
Mike Hitchins	Editor: mfhitchins@btinternet.com	858937
John Collins	Treasurer	850213

The views expressed in "Malherbe Monthly" are not necessarily those of the Production Team; publication of articles/adverts does not constitute endorsement and we reserve the right to edit!
Anything for the **April** edition should be left in Grafty Green Shop, or contact Mike on 01622 858937 (mfhitchins@btinternet.com) by **20th March**

Front Cover: A happy 'Luna' enjoying her walk in the recent snowy weather.

News from St. Nicholas Church

A lovely sunny afternoon and the garden is needing some attention, making me feel guilty for being indoors. The birds have already finished today's ration of food and asking for more. No doubt I will provide it for them. So wonderful to watch their behaviour through the seasons.

Some good news for the nation's health and the exhausted NHS with the amazing organisation and uptake of the vaccination programme. We are so grateful to everyone who has helped make this happen.

No change for access to our church and face-to-face services yet, but with such rapid improvement around the country this will soon change and we will post notices for everyone when we can.

The porch is open as always and welcomes anyone in need of rest, quiet prayer or time for reflection in it's beautiful location looking across the Weald.

Morning Prayer is said daily, on line, at 9.30am. Please contact Rev. Anne Price on 01622 924963 or revanne@lvb.org.uk, if you would like to join in any day. If you have prayer requests do contact Rev. John Huggins, Rev. Anne Price or the churchwardens at any time and prayers will be said in Morning Prayer time, or in private if you wish.

Other Services are available on-line, television and telephone. Please contact the church office for information about these regular events, including Prayer Times and services throughout the benefice, and how to access them, by phone, email etc. The Church of England has links to regular Sunday Services on their website and how to receive them by phone. If you need help do ask anyone with internet access, or the churchwardens, church members etc.

Lent Study 'Growing Hope in Lent' Online Reflective Sessions, will be held at 7.30pm each Tuesday through Lent starting on 23rd February.

The zoom links are below;

23rd February with Anne

2nd March with Lorraine. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88563010381>

9th March with Charlotte as above

16th March with Pamela as above

23rd March with Richard as above

30th March with John as above

The Aspire Federation our Primary School Group, which includes Platts Heath, have sent a note of thanks to everyone to thank them for the continuing support from St.Nicolas and others, in enabling the staff to cater for the children in their care during normal school closure.

Many Plans are afoot for St.Nicolas and it's role for us all in the community. Of course, we are reviewing the hospitality plans e.g., Cream Teas, Coffee Mornings, Lent Lunches, Harvest Suppers and more, as we go forward together, but also other ideas are being mulled over.

We hope to move on and will let you know, and listen too, as we should be able to come together in the months ahead.

Eco-spot great news, we think we might have had the first sighting for many years of a Water vole along the Stour River just beyond Bowley Mill. In the 1960s and 1970s I saw them every day swimming across the millpond, unmistakable with that V-shape of water.

PS Sandy has made a full recovery, not been off a lead yet!!!

Sally Alexander



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Please be aware that we are still cooking Fish & Chips for takeaway on Friday Lunch and Evening.

Please order in advance by calling on **01622 850259** and we wish everyone to stay safe and well and thank you for your support.

Yoga and Health

Practicing yoga has many benefits. It is famous for keeping you flexible which is achieved by working gently and consistently to lengthen muscles that have become tight. When you move your body, it enables fluids to exchange and refresh, for example synovial fluids in your joints that keep the surfaces smooth, more slippery than ice on ice. Another example is the work that your lymph nodes do (over 600 or them in your body). These are in your elbows, armpits, chest, behind your ears, back of your head, pelvis and behind your knees; movement is essential for the lymphatic system to perform efficiently as part of your immune system; lack of movement will cause them to become congested so exercising now is more important.

Not only will exercise improve your overall health but it also mitigates the negative effects of stress; Yoga (which has been around for over 3000 years) recognised the importance of a healthy mind as well as a healthy body and developed different ways of being mindful. The simplest is to take a few minutes to sit and watch yourself breathing and noticing any pleasant feelings; a positive and uplifting mind will also help keep your immunity buoyant.

I am continuing to teach yoga via zoom which has been appreciated by quite a number of folk; if you would like to join me I would be more than happy to have a chat and include you. My contact details are:- grafftyyoga@gmail.com or phone 07803 962339

Sue Burch
British Wheel of Yoga Teacher

Sue's Nature Notes – Butterflies

Cultivating your garden brings many rewards and pleasures and also brings a variety of visitors to your piece of England. Gardens are welcome corridors for all sorts of wildlife and leaving areas to become wilder will enhance the opportunity for many creatures and for you to enjoy.

You may have been lucky enough to have already seen the yellow brimstone butterfly which is one of the first to appear in the spring; these butterflies rely on buckthorn leaves on which to lay their eggs whereas the orange tip, another early butterfly, will lay their eggs on flower heads of garlic mustard and ladies smock; leaving these plants will allow the eggs to hatch and for the caterpillar to pupate.

Whereas, stinging nettles are favoured by red admirals, painted lady, small tortoiseshell, peacock and comma butterflies as well as ladybirds.

Bramble flowers (late July/August) are the favoured feeding stations of white admirals and hedge brown/gatekeepers.

These plants can also be foraged by us humans as they are all edible – see the web pages of www.eatweeds.co.uk.

Sue Burch

Village Hall News

I hope you are all continuing to keep safe and well.

We have no news yet about when the hall will be open again, but with the vaccine rollout continuing apace we are hopeful that things are now looking more positive and as a committee we will endeavour to have the hall open again as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, we have continued with a programme of repairs and renovations whilst the hall has been closed so that these can be undertaken with the minimum of disruption to our hall users. Just recently we have cleared the weeds and dug out the flower border to the side of the hall which over recent years had become rather untidy and hopefully you should see some replanting in the next few weeks to tidy the flower bed up ready for the spring and summer.

We are considering repainting the outside of the hall, probably over a weekend in the spring when we have some warm dry weather and will organise a working party to undertake this work. We are always looking for assistance with this type of activity and if you would like to volunteer your services please let me know either on 07932 112730 or bromley@ashleylaw.co.uk and I will be pleased to put you on the list of willing and able volunteers!

Jon Thompson

**Boughton Malherbe
Parish Council
Contact Details**

Ron Galton, Chairman

- Tel: 01622 850369

ron@boughtonmalherbecp.org

(Finance, Planning, KALC)

Robert Turner

- Tel: 01622 850325

robert@boughtonmalherbecp.org

(Finance, Planning, KALC)

Barry Adams

Nick Eastwood

Grant Kennaird

Chris Hume, Parish Clerk

- Tel: 07972 630555`

boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com

**A short update from
the Parish Council**

The Parish Council continues to operate under Covid 19 restrictions. Meetings will therefore continue to be held by teleconference. Dates for the remainder of the council year are:

8th March 2021

Helen Whately

MP for Faversham and Mid Kent

I work for you. If you have a problem you think I can help you with, please contact me or visit me at one of my surgeries

House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA

www.helenwhately.org.uk

Tel: 020 7219 6472; Email: helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk

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Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council on Monday 25th January 2021, 7.30pm held by teleconference

Present: Cllrs R Galton (Chair); R Turner; B Adams; N.Eastwood
Clerk Mr Chris Hume

Cllr Galton opened meeting at 7.30pm

1. **Anybody filming or recording this meeting to declare it.** - none
2. **Apologies** – none
3. **Declarations:**
 - Any lobbying** – none declared
 - Any interest in items on the Agenda** – none declared
 - Any changes to the register of pecuniary interests** - none declared
4. **Approval of Minutes** – approved the Minutes of 11th December, 14th September, 20th October 2020
5. **Matters Arising** – none
6. **Planning Outcomes since 2nd November** – It was noted that the Kitilano application has been approved and the Council has raised an objection with MBC due to suspected deviation from the approved plan.
7. **Public Session** – Four members of the public in attendance. Representations were received from Grant Kennaird, Mike Hitchins, Chris Wheal and Peter Newing. In view of the volume of issues raised, those making representations were asked to send their comments to the Council in writing.

The Chairman stated for the record that the council is not going ahead regardless and is pursuing every avenue to try to get the best scheme possible and satisfy as best we can all the comments received. Had we given up before now we would not be doing justice to those who want the scheme, and the council has always been prepared to abandon the scheme if it is either not viable or no longer supported by the community.
8. **Local Policing/Community**
 - 8.1 Police/Crime Report - stats previously circulated were noted. Theft at Stream Farm reported by Cllr Turner
 - 8.2 Speedwatch – no update
9. **Highway and Footway Matters**
 - 9.1 Report from Lead Councillors on Ditches, gullies, potholes etc – Cllr Adams reported on issues submitted to KCC and awaiting response.
 - 9.2 59 Bus – report received from John Collins noting the end of the pilot in February and concern that it will not yield accurate results due to the pandemic. This will be raised with KCC
 - 9.3 Litter – Cllr Turner reported on collection by members of the public. Working party to be organised once Covid restrictions end.

- 9.4 Highways Improvement Plan – noted the latest version of the plan circulated Separately
10. **Councillor Reports on any External Meetings attended** – noted meeting with Jennie Watson from KCCC re Traffic calming
11. **Finance**
- 11.1 Noted the Balance at the Bank:
- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Nat West | £70,996.46 |
| Nationwide | £14,150.58 |
| Cambridge and Counties | £22,963.65 |
- 11.2 Noted income since the last meeting : PSS £255.5: Interest £1215.43
- 11.3 Bank Reconciliation – agreed statement circulated with the agenda
- 11.4 Any cheques to sign: none
- 11.5 Authorised the following payments: Defiblator: £47.34
Robert Turner £55 re Litter bin at Church(Colin Campbell) and hedge cutting(Martin Smith)
12. **Budget for 2020/21** – approved the budget below
13. **To set a precept for 2020-21** – agreed to request the current band D charge of £ 24.00 which will generate a precept of £ 5,731.48 from the tax base for 2021/22.
14. **Councillor Vacancy** – received two expressions of interest. It was agreed that the two interested parties will be asked to submit a letter setting out what they can bring to the role. An extraordinary meeting will then take place to select on the basis of these submissions.
15. **Traffic Calming Update** – The Clerk informed the council that the revised scheme has been submitted to the designers at KCC and we await the next stage
16. **Speed Indicator Device** – Noted that the council will be meeting with Toby Butler from KCC on the 26th January.
17. **Litter Bin Outside the Church** – Noted that the problem has subsided and no further action is required at present.
18. **Correspondence** – Precept and tax base from MBC
19. **Further Information**

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm

BUDGET 2021/22

£	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
RECEIPTS			
Precept	5,581	5731.48	
Parish Services Scheme	500	407	
	6,081	6138.48	
VAT Refund	180	200	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	6,261	6338.48	
PAYMENTS			
Staff Costs - Clerks Wages	2,473	2498	ASSUMES 1% INCREASE
Other Costs			
Village Green Maintenance	500	500	

Village Hall Hire	250	250
Christmas Tree	300	300
Christmas functions	350	300
Litter Collection	100	100
Churchyard Maintenance	500	500
Emergency Plan	0	0
Training Courses	500	300
Internal Auditor	50	70
Insurance	400	370
KALC Membership	240	300
Contingency	40	50
Chairman's Expenses	100	50
CPRE Membership	200	36
Stationery, postage	250	200
Total Other Costs	3,780	3326
Repairs Fund contribution		500
TOTAL PAYMENTS	6,253	6324

Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

Minutes of a Planning Committee Meeting held by teleconference at 7.00pm on Monday 8th February 2021

Present: Cllrs R Turner (chair); R Galton; N. Eastwood; B. Adams
Clerk: Mr Chris Hume

1. **Declaration of anybody filming/recording this meeting.** None
2. **Apologies for Absence** – none
3. **Declarations:** (i) Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda - none
(ii) Declarations of Lobbying - none
4. **Approval of Minutes of the Planning Meeting on 2nd November 2020** – approved
5. **Planning Applications:**

(i) **Public Session** – no public present

(ii) **APPLICATION REF: 21/500437/FULL**

PROPOSAL: Erection of two storey front extension to house lift for disabled use.

ADDRESS: 3, Boughton Park, Grafty Green, Kent ME17 2EF

It was resolved that the council will support this application.

6. **MBC response to Complaint re: 20/504038/FULL Kitsilano** – It was resolved that the Clerk will write again to MBC asking them to review the actual build against the application to assess whether a breach has occurred.
7. **Further Information** - none

The Meeting closed at 7.15pm



Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council on Monday 8th February 2021, 7.30pm held by teleconference

Present: Cllrs R Galton (Chair); R Turner; B Adams; N.Eastwood
Clerk Mr Chris Hume

Cllr Galton opened meeting at 7.32pm

1. **Anybody filming or recording this meeting to declare it.** - none
2. **Apologies – none**
3. **Declarations:**
 - Any lobbying – none declared**
 - Any interest in items on the Agenda – none declared**
 - Any changes to the register of pecuniary interests - none declared**
4. **Public Session – no members of the public were present**
5. **Co-option to Councillor Vacancy – it was resolved that Grant Kennaird would be invited to fill the vacancy by co-option. Clerk to notify applicants and MBC.**
6. **February Malherbe Monthly Content on Traffic calming – it was agreed that the council will produce a response to clarify factual inaccuracies and the Clerk will circulate a draft. This includes a commitment to set out how the impact of the scheme will be assessed once it is in place for at least several months.**

Following an update from the Clerk on progress by KCC, it was resolved that the Clerk will circulate further details of a timetable to enable the Council to consider the revised KCC designs and quote to meet the 31st March price deadline
7. **Further Information – Clerk to review suggestions for further information from KCC on SID**

The meeting closed at 8.19pm

Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

Traffic Calming Scheme

Final Scheme Approved – After considerable careful deliberation, and consultation, and three versions, a final scheme prepared by KCC Highways was approved by the Parish Council on the 25th February. The revised scheme has been displayed in the village shop and can be viewed on the parish council website. Following concerns from residents about the noise generated by the granite chicanes, these have been removed from the scheme and replaced by painted chicanes. As a result, the cost of the scheme quoted by KCC will be £19,610.23. This is a significant reduction in cost and responds to the concerns expressed by a number of residents about the cost of the previous scheme. In addition, the council hopes to secure this price by paying in advance before 31st March and thus avoiding higher prices to be introduced by KCC from 1st April. KCC are currently expecting to carry out the works in the summer.

In addition, the Parish Council has committed to carry out an impact assessment on the scheme when it has been in place for a few months. To this end, the council has agreed to commission a further traffic survey on the stretch of road between Courts and the end of the 30mph zone to provide a more extensive baseline against which to compare the impact of the scheme.

Response by Boughton Malherbe Parish Council to The Editorial and Thought's for The Day in The February Malherbe Monthly

These two articles in last month's edition of MM may give some residents the impression that the Parish Council is ignoring resident's comments, as well as advice from KCC Highways. The Council would like to reassure residents that neither is the case. Resident's comments, and the various consultation outcomes, have been used to shape and modify the scheme. Obviously, it is not possible to accommodate all comments, especially where they are contradictory, but nothing has been ignored. The Questions and Answers page on the council's website attempts to respond to as many of the comments received as possible. This also provides an explanation as to why the council has proceeded with this project in the way that it has. We encourage you to read this. No steps have been taken, or decisions made,

without KCC advice. In fact, nothing has been done at any stage without it being recommended by KCC.

Specifically, the editor asserts that the points he makes have not been considered or answered by the council. This is not the case; and a glance at the Questions and Answers will confirm this.

In relation to the two headline questions in the editorial the answers are as follows:

1. KCC have stated several times that **(i)** the scheme will be less effective than physical traffic calming and **(ii)** there is no evidence available of the impact of schemes like the one we are proposing. However, what this actually means is that there will be nothing physical on the road surface to slow traffic, and that there is no evidence that it won't be effective either. KCC do believe there will be some impact, but they cannot quantify it. This is therefore a "judgement call" the councillors are making to respond to an expressed desire of residents to take action on traffic speed through the village. The Council does intend to set out how it will measure the impact of the scheme once we are at the point of formally commissioning KCC to go ahead. This may include another traffic survey and public consultation.
2. To be sure that spending the money on the project is prudent, and in light of concerns expressed by some residents, the independent internal auditor was asked to review this decision and confirmed that he thought it was financially prudent. In addition, steps have been taken to reduce the implementation cost and ongoing maintenance costs since the auditors' report was received.

With regard to the other assertions in the two articles, we refer the reader to the Questions and Answers on the council's website.

In case residents require further re-assurance, the council can confirm that KCC Highways have at no point suggested that the scheme is not worth pursuing. They have simply sought to manage our expectations and inform us that the potential impact is not quantifiable in advance

The council would like to thank everyone who has submitted comments. They have been invaluable.

Parish Council Elections - 6th May 2021

Parish Councillors serve a four-year term. But due to the pandemic elections were postponed by a year. A new Parish Council will be elected on May 6th this year. Volunteers are invited to consider serving their community on this important body.

What Does the Parish Council Do? Parish Councils are the lowest tier of local government and have an extensive range of potential powers. Their aim is to use their powers to benefit their local community. Our Council maintains the village green and supports local amenities such as the Village Hall. The Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications and its comments are generally influential regarding planning decisions. Other main functions include ensuring that KCC Highways addresses issues regarding roads, ditches and gullies. **What do Parish Councillors Do?** Parish Councillors main role is to attend council meetings and take decisions on behalf of the community. They also ensure that the council's budget is spent appropriately. Each Councillor has a portfolio and represents the parish community at meetings with bodies such as Maidstone Council, the Police and KCC.

How much time will it take? As little or as much as you want. There is plenty to do, but the minimum requirement is to prepare for, and attend, Parish Council meetings and these are normally 6 a year plus approximately a dozen committee meeting. Meetings take place in the evenings in the Village Hall .

What do I do if I am interested? Parish Nomination papers and candidates' guidance are available on the Electoral Commission website or from the Clerk. You will need to complete a nomination form and submit it to Maidstone Borough Council who manage the election process. The nomination period runs from Monday 22 March through to Thursday 8 April at 4pm. Elections may not be contested if there are five or less nominees for the five positions on the council. If you are interested in standing, have any questions, or would like more information, contact the Clerk, at boughtonmalherbepc@gmail.com or on 07972630555 to find out exactly what is involved.



Dear residents

We hope you are keeping safe and we wish you all a belated Happy New Year!

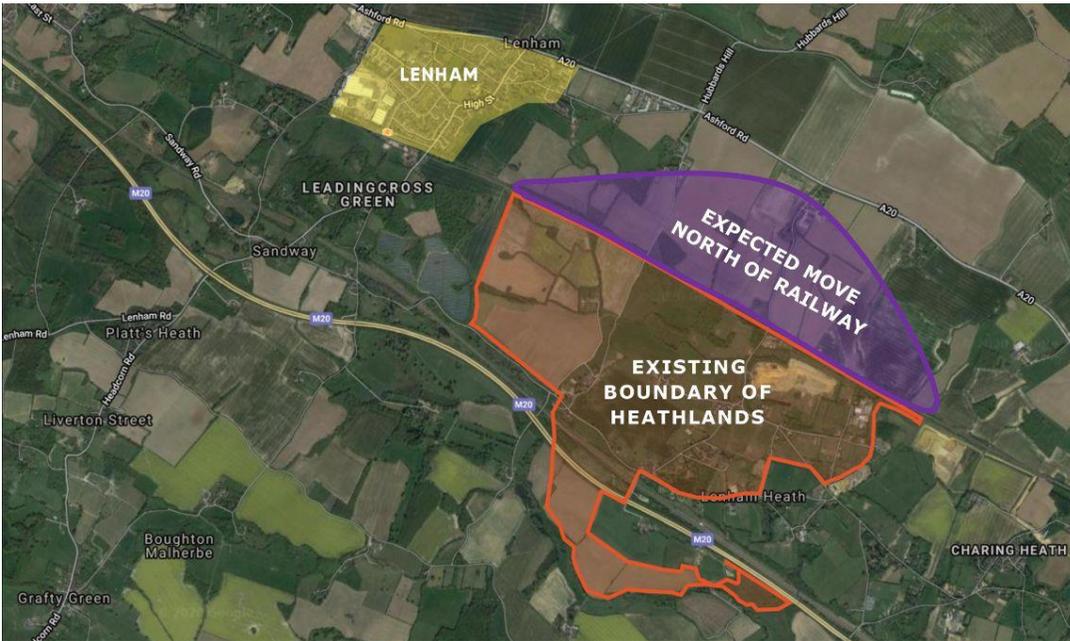
This is our first update of 2021 following a very busy end of year responding to the Council's Local Plan Review public consultation.

We'd like to say a BIG THANK YOU to those of you who took the time to respond to the public consultation. In total, we were copied into over 500 responses from residents in Lenham and the surrounding villages throughout December. This has demonstrated the significant strength of feeling against the proposed new development.

What is next in our fight to preserve our countryside:

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) are working on a third iteration of their "Heathlands" masterplan and a revised red line boundary. They will be formally submitting this to the Local Planning Authority arm of the Council on 31st March 2021. As soon as it is published we will ensure it is circulated to you.

Our latest understanding is that MBC is looking to move the development to the north of the railway - between the railway line and A20 - as shown on the map below. Rumours suggest they may build up to the border of Lenham village/Lenham Heath too. This shift of the target development area seems to be in part down to the lobbying we have been doing to demonstrate that it is not feasible to develop in large parts of the area south of the railway line and in between existing properties. We would therefore expect the masterplan boundary to change on the south part. A move north of the railway line would be just as devastating and we all need to continue to vocally oppose any further development in our countryside. Their new target area is based on the fact that the land ownership to the north is simpler with just two landowners who are already part of the principal landowner group. However, from a countryside and environment point of view, the unacceptable visual impact to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is exacerbated. It is also at odds with the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan which looks to protect open land around the village settlement boundary.



Small landowner update

As you may recall, we threatened legal action on behalf of 18 landowners last November calling on MBC to remove around 70 acres of private land from their masterplan for which they had no permission to include. Through our lawyers, we have been in discussion with MBC's appointed lawyers and have been absolutely clear that this land is not for sale and is not to be included going forward. MBC's lawyers have noted the position of this group of landowners but have stopped short of confirming that they will not attempt to compulsory purchase land they require to build their project.

We have openly communicated with MBC and all elected councillors in recent weeks to express our disappointment in this strategy they are looking to adopt for land acquisition. For the record, MBC do not own a single piece of land in the area they want to build nor are we aware that they have made any tangible progress in doing deals with principal or smaller landowners to bring Heathlands forward.

Sadly, councillors on MBC appear to be silent on the matter. None of them apart from our own local independent councillors, Tom & Janetta Sams, appear to be willing to calling out this unacceptable assault on local people's land, properties and livelihoods. This approach to new housing sites could set a dangerous

precedent across the borough if they think they can get away with compulsory purchasing existing properties and land to make way for new housing schemes. If they can do it to residents in Lenham Heath they can do it to other residents in Maidstone. We ask everyone to call out this action and urge residents to write to MBC councillors and the Chief Executive Alison Broom - alisonbroom@maidstone.gov.uk.

Dates for your diary

6 May 2021 - Referendum on the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (LNP). The LNP is important in order to control where the new housing already agreed for Lenham is going to go and what it will look like. The Parish Council has set out a clear strategy on how our village will absorb a further 1,000 new homes over the next ten years. Importantly, it doesn't make any provision for a new garden community like Heathlands and never will. Having an adopted LNP will ensure local residents are in control of planning in Lenham rather than leaving it to MBC to do as they choose. SOHL strongly recommends residents say YES to the LNP at May's referendum.

June 2021 - Next public consultation on the Maidstone Local Plan Review (LPR). Following December's public consultation (Regulation 18b), MBC are aiming to go back out for a further consultation (Regulation 19) in June. As a reminder, the Local Plan Review sets out where house building will occur across the borough up until 2037. The Regulation 19 consultation will be the final draft of the emerging next Local Plan and this will go to the independent Planning Inspector to examine in public and ultimately approve (or not) for adoption. MBC should be using the recent Regulation 18b consultation responses to review and refine the Plan. We will need residents to write to MBC in a similar fashion as you did for the December consultation. SOHL will provide all the details closer to the time and again will publish all the information on our website

Helen Whately's Parish Update

Light at the end of the tunnel

I know for many people these past few weeks have been some of the hardest of the pandemic. These dark winter days have been made so much harder by lockdown and not being able to see friends and family.

We also heard the sad news about Captain Sir Tom Moore. His service to our country and our NHS, and the inspiration he gave us all, will live on.

While these continue to be tough times, there are good reasons to be hopeful.

I've been chairing a Task Force to help bring down rates of infection in Kent. I've seen the hard work and dedication of people and groups across the county in bringing the virus under control – and we are seeing these efforts pay off with infection rates falling.

Our vaccine rollout has reached over 17 million people, and we are on track to have vaccinated the top four priority groups – which includes people most at risk from Covid along with health and social care workers – by the middle of this month.

Our testing capacity goes from strength to strength. Over 19 million rapid PCR tests have now gone out to care homes so they can regularly test staff and residents. And when a new variant of the virus was detected in parts of Maidstone, we were able to deliver 9,600 home testing kits within 72 hours to help contain the spread.

We're continuing to support people and businesses through these difficult times, including a boost for local services with Kent County Council seeing its budget from central government increase by 5.5% to just over £1.1 billion for the next financial year.

As the lighter days of spring appear, we are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. But we mustn't stop now. We can all do our part by following the guidance and keeping each other safe.

Support during lockdown

Councillors and volunteers are playing a crucial role in our response to Covid.

I've been truly impressed at the scale and speed of the response here in Faversham and Mid Kent, from our County Council to parishes and community groups, charities, and local businesses.

Sometimes it can be hard to know where to look for help, which is why I've put together a list of local contacts on my website.

If you're self-isolating and need help getting food, if you're a business looking for grants, or you want more information on testing and the vaccine rollout in Kent, then take a look on my website:
www.helenwhately.org.uk/news/coronavirus-local-contacts-page

Mass testing comes to Maidstone

Almost 10,000 testing kits were delivered to parts of Maidstone within 72 hours to help contain the spread of a new strain of the virus.

Operation Barton involved Kent Police, Kent Search and Rescue, Kent Fire and Rescue, and Kent County Council, with more than 300 staff on the ground.

Huge thanks to everyone involved, including people in parts of Shepway and Park Wood for their co-operation in the mass testing rollout.

It's vital we come down hard on the new South African variant to contain it and help prevent further outbreaks.

Community testing more important than ever

Along with the vaccine rollout, increased testing capacity is also helping to offer us a way out of lockdown.

We now have 24 symptom-free Covid testing sites across Kent – including the Detling Showground and County Hall in Maidstone, as well as sites in Canterbury and Swale.

These tests are so important for helping to pinpoint where the virus is in our community, as we know around 1 in 3 people with Covid have no symptoms.

It's particularly important you get tested if you need to leave home for work. More information, including how to book a test slot, can be found on KCC's website.

Boost to police numbers in Kent

We're getting an extra 145 police officers in Kent over the next year.

Kent Police is on track to get an extra £19.5 million next financial year, and Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott has said the money will be spent on extra officers for the force. This is good news for people across Kent.

We already have record numbers of police officers in the county. The latest announcement means Kent is on track to have 3,970 officers by March 2022. That's 183 more officers than 2010.

Kent Police has launched its #MoreThanTheBadge campaign to help recruit new officers.

Taste of Kent Awards are back

Voting is open for the Taste of Kent Awards 2021. Now in their 17th year, the Awards showcase the best that the Garden of England has to offer.

If there's a Kent beer or cider you particularly enjoy, a brilliant butcher who deserves recognition, or a local supplier that has gone the extra mile during the pandemic, you can nominate them online here: www.tasteofkentawards.co.uk

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Road Closure – Message from Contractor

This closure is just outside Boughton Malherbe Parish by the railway line as you come into Lenham. However, it will clearly have a significant impact on residents driving to and from Lenham.

“We would like to advise that Walker Construction are arranging to close Headcorn Road between the junctions of Robins Close/Mill Close and Boughton Road, Lenham near Maidstone, (ME17 2HT). The planned closures are due to come into effect from 0500hrs **Monday 29th March** through to a planned completion by **Monday 19th April** 0500hrs. The works are to enable service connections to the new housing development on the land just south of the Headcorn Road Rail bridge in Lenham.

Walker Construction are working collaboratively with a number of service providers to complete the works quickly and efficiently within one single road closure - unfortunately due to the nature of the works required there is no possibility of using any other form of traffic management. It is with every intention that Walker Construction and our collaborative partners complete soonest to then be able to open the road as quickly as possible.

We are aware this will have an impact on the local community and therefore wish to advise you of the upcoming planned closure. We are also in liaison with the local public transport network to manage bus route diversions too. Walker Constriction will be providing advanced signing of the closures in the coming weeks, and also completing a letter drop to the local community.

Link Word Puzzle - Answers at the back (don't look first!)

Find the missing word?	
1	Anne _____, The Chase regular
2	_____ Feet, A no 1 for Mud
3	The _____ of Zorro, Antonio Banderas film
4	Band of _____, Freda Payne's only no 1 song
5	_____ Riley, Countdowns' number cruncher
6	Steven _____, Jaws director
7	_____ Hart, Emmerdale character played by Karen Blick
8	_____ Ryan, Bolton born chaser nicknamed The Vixen
9	David _____, Coronation Street actor known for his role as Roy Cropper
10	_____ Osman, Alexander Armstrong's Pointless host

	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3	Answer
1	Envelope	Cell	Out	Padded
2	Cocktail	Minister	Medicine	
3	Security	Speed	Shy	
4	Painting	Crude	Skin	
5	Hair	Free	Life	
6	Attendant	Ski	Off	
7	Round	Walk	Lay	
8	Racing	Rate	Tyre	
9	Morning	Instant	Table	
10	Care	Home	Bee	
11	Belly	Folk	Break	
12	Market	Bite	Pit	
13	Contact	Naked	Lid	
14	Combat	Guard	Robbery	
15	Short	Clear	Near	
16	Vicious	Stone	Crop	

Grafty Green Gardening Club Programme 2021

Date	Speaker/Event	Topic
5 th January	Kevin Tooher	Pruning
2 nd February	Lucy Adams	Dry Gardening
2nd March	Laura Brady	Vegetables & Herbs – Growing & Cooking
6 th April	Visit to Spalding Bulb fields	
Sat 8 th May	Plant Sale, on the green if fine and in Hall if wet	
15 th May	Visit to Leonards lee Gardens	
1 st June	Visit to The Croft at Thurnham	
12 th June	Grafty Open Gardens	
6 th July	Visit to Godinton Garden	
3 rd August	Visit to Horton Farm	
7 th September	DeJaeger – Bulbs	
10/11/12 Sept	Weekend away in Herefordshire	
5 th October	Ian Gray (Mammal Society)	Hedgehogs
2 nd November	TBC	
7 th December	Visit Winter Event at Kew.	

Grafty Green Gardening Club - Update for March

We are very pleased to announce that Laura Brady will speak to us via Zoom on 2nd March. As scheduled, Laura runs a small market garden in Chartham growing vegetables and her talk will reflect her business. The Gardening Club are also booked to visit her farm later in the year when hopefully our lives have opened out a bit more.

Sue Burch will host the Zoom meeting, so please can you contact her before the talk to register your interest and receive a link.

Exciting plans are afoot for the Gardening Club to assist with keeping the church garden path planting tidy and maybe introduce some wilder plants where appropriate to encourage even more insects and small mammals into the Church garden. The church wardens are keen that the local Primary School become involved with this project building bug hotels etc. So, look out for more news about this as it develops.

In our gardens:- Plants are perking up after the recent snow and they seem none the worse for it. March offers us a last chance to plant bare rooted hedging plants although plants grown in containers can be planted year-round. It is time to prune our

bush and shrub roses and when tidy and complete a mulch of well rotted manure or shredded bark will finish the job. There is still time to divide and plant perennials and cut down growth left after winter. In the vegetable garden seed beds can be prepared and sown.

The Garden Club Committee is doing everything it can to bring news and cheer to our members albeit as a zoom talk until we are able to meet up again. If you would like to join the Gardening club a subscription to our Treasurer Doreen Hulm at Lavender Cottage, Grafty Green of £5.00 will secure you a membership.

Carole Frost - Secretary - Grafty Green Gardening Club.

Grafty Gourmet

This is such a simple, yet fantastic recipe. The almond lattice pastry really adds a twist to the sweet filling of rhubarb and vanilla.

Rhubarb & Vanilla Tart with Almond Pastry

For the pastry

240g of plain flour, plus extra to dust
140g of ground almonds
200g of unsalted butter, softened
100g of caster sugar
2 large free-range egg yolks

For the filling

1.5kg of rhubarb, ends trimmed
200g of caster sugar, plus extra
to sprinkle
Zest and juice of 1 orange
1 teaspoon of vanilla bean paste

1. For the pastry, mix together the flour, almonds, butter and a pinch of salt in a food processor until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and egg yolks, then mix until the pastry comes together into a ball. (If you don't have a food processor, rub together the flour, almonds, sugar and butter with your fingers in a bowl, then stir in the egg yolks with a wooden spoon.) Shape the dough into a flat disc, wrap in cling film and chill for 40 minutes.
2. Put all the filling ingredients and 50ml of water in a large pan. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook over a low heat for 15 minutes or until the rhubarb is tender. Remove from the heat, strain away the excess rhubarb juice and leave to cool.

3. Roll out two thirds of the pastry to a roughly 30cm circle (you may need to dust the work surface with a little flour to prevent the pastry from sticking). Carefully roll the pastry around the dusted rolling pin and unroll into a 23cm pie dish or tart tin. Use a piece of pastry to push the pastry case into the edges of the tin, then trim away any excess. Chill for 20 minutes in the fridge. Heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan.
4. Line the pastry case with a large piece of baking paper or foil and fill with baking beans or rice. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, then remove the beans or rice and paper or foil and cook for a further 5 minutes or until the pastry feels sandy. Remove from the oven and leave to cool slightly.
5. Spoon the rhubarb into the tart case, then roll out the rest of the pastry into a 14cm x 24cm rectangle the thickness of a £1 coin. Slice the pastry into 14 x 1cm wide strips. Lay one strip on top of the pie, a couple of centimetres from the edge of the dish, then trim the ends, pressing them down gently onto the pastry rim to secure. Repeat but at 90 degrees. Continue laying on pastry strips, alternating the direction, leaving a 2cm gap between them to create a lattice of overlapping strips.
6. Sprinkle the tart with caster sugar, then bake for 15-20 minutes until the pastry is golden on top and the filling is warmed through. Leave to cool slightly, then serve with ice cream, cream or custard.

Music Notes for March 2021

So, lockdown continues, with its effect on live music locally. There is still plenty of music to find on the internet in one form or another and some excellent short performances are currently doing the e-mail rounds, but I will continue my quite different theme, that of the significant musical anniversaries in March. There are lots, including several relating to well-known musicians, here are just a few:

*8th March – 100th anniversary of birth of Sir Thomas Beecham, British conductor and impresario.

*14th March – 340th anniversary of birth of Georg Philip Telemann, German composer

*16th March – 10th anniversary of death of Modest Petrovitch Mussorgsky, Russian composer

*23rd March – 200th Anniversary of death of Bernhard Anselm Weber, German composer & music director

*25th March – 140th anniversary of birth of Béla Bartok, Hungarian composer and pianist

My readers will probably know something about all of these, but Telemann, though famous in his time, may be the least well-known to non-organists nowadays, so here is an extract his Wikipedia entry:

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681 – 1767) was a German Baroque composer and multi-instrumentalist. Largely self-taught in music, he became a composer against his family's wishes. After studying in Magdeburg, Zellerfeld, and Hildesheim, he entered the University of Leipzig to read law, but chose a career in music. He held positions in Leipzig, Sorau, Eisenach, and Frankfurt before becoming musical director of Hamburg's five main churches in 1721. His career prospered, but his personal life was troubled: his first wife died less than two years after their marriage, and his second wife had extramarital affairs and accumulated a large gambling debt before leaving him.

As one of the most prolific composers in history he was considered by his contemporaries to be one of the leading German composers of the time and was compared favourably both to his friend J. S. Bach, who made Telemann the godfather and namesake of his son Carl Philip Emanuel, and to G.F.Handel, whom Telemann also knew personally.

He wrote much music for organists, including 48 chorale preludes and 20 small fugues to accompany his chorale harmonisations for 500 hymns. His music incorporates many national styles, and he remained at the forefront of all new musical tendencies. His music stands as an important link between the late Baroque and early Classical styles.

By popular request the alphabet continues:

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Christian Message March 2021

March: in like a lion and out like a lamb?

The beginning of the year certainly feels as if it has all the ferocity of a Lion with storm Christoph, floods and snow, wreaking havoc for so many, already experiencing the pressure of lockdown, the reality of illness or, tragically, losing loved ones.

This time last year, our first period of lockdown was just round the corner. Whether March leaves like a lamb in 2021 remains to be seen, but I pray that it does, as more people receive vaccinations against Covid 19, more lives are saved and normality becomes an ever-nearer reality. It is that great resolve to keep on testing and trying new solutions that brings such hope. The enduring dedication of exhausted NHS teams, teachers, home-educators, food suppliers, and many more, to carry on for the greater good, reminds us that, despite geographic location, loneliness and boredom, we are a community. We need each other, we need to nurture and feel nurtured.

March includes Mothering Sunday, when we reflect on nurturing and love. Some will have wonderful memories of the most important person in their life. Others will feel a sense of loss for a parent passed away, or sadness that they never experienced the benefit of a stable home or knew their parents. Again, we need each other, our Churches and local community, to nurture and feel nurtured.

With God there is always hope. He is bigger than all that happens around us and to us, and he walks alongside us every step of the way, however dark our journey becomes. God is the ultimate symbol of love, caring and parenting. With him we will feel nurtured and learn how we can nurture others.

Rather like the old saying about March, we may enter our relationship with Jesus like a lion, full of anger, hurt and sadness, but the realisation that he never leaves us, however low we fall, helps us to become like a lamb, with time to rest in Him, reflect, and experience joy, so that we are ready to face the world with a renewed energy and love for each other. As we turn from 'lion to lamb' ourselves, may we look on in wonder and **“Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”** (John 1:29).

Pamela Cuerden

Len Valley Benefice March 2021

Everybody is welcome

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31

Important – Please note:

Given the frequently changing national situation, please continue to check notice boards, website and Facebook for the latest information.

Our **Online Worship** will continue so please join us for our weekly service. **Traditional services** can be accessed by searching for 'Len Valley Benefice YouTube' and then looking for the correct date.

Breakfast Church are meeting by Zoom beginning at 9.30am each Sunday. Please email vicar@lvb.org.uk for the link.

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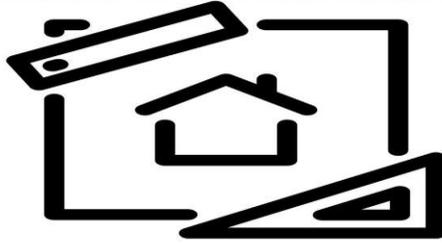
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First Aid Support – when **an ambulance has been called using 999** - Interim emergency support (first aid and AED defibrillator), prior to arrival of paramedics / ambulance, may be available (not 24/7) by calling Chris Wheal on 01622 858100 -this is a voluntary 'good Samaritan' facility for residents. It is hoped a SECAMB (ambulance) community first responder scheme may start in future

NHS Medical Helpline	111
Maidstone & Pembury Hospitals	0845 155 1000
William Harvey Hospital	01233 633331
Headcorn Surgery (out of hours listen to -	01622 890294
Lenham Surgery recorded messages)	01622 858341

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KCC Emergencies	03000 41 41 41
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KCC Community Wardens:

Local warden – Stuart Ellesmere	07969 583923
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Answers to the Quiz and Missing Word Puzzle

	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3	Answer
1	Envelope	Cell	Out	Padded
2	Cocktail	Minister	Medicine	Cabinet
3	Security	Sped	Shy	Camera
4	Painting	Crude	Skin	Oil
5	Hair	Free	Life	Style
6	Attendant	Ski	Off	Lift
7	Round	Walk	Lay	About
8	Racing	Rate	Tyre	Flat
9	Morning	Instant	Table	Coffee
10	Care	Home	Bee	Worker
11	Belly	Folk	Break	Dancing
12	Market	Bite	Pit	Flea
13	Contact	Naked	Lid	Eye
14	Combat	Guard	Robbery	Armed
15	Short	Clear	Near	Sighted
16	Vicious	Stone	Crop	Circle

Find the missing word?	
1	Anne Hegerty ; The Chase regular
2	Tiger Feet ; A no 1 for Mud
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6	Steven Spielberg ; Jaws director
7	Lydia Hart ; Emmertdale character played by Karen Blick
8	Jenny Ryan ; Bolton born chaser nicknamed The Vixen
9	David Neilson ; Coronation Street actor known for his role as Roy Cropper
10	Richard Osman ; Alexander Armstrong's Pointless host

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