

LOWER HALSTOW VILLAGE NEWS

APRIL 2021

Welcome back to the Village News, there have been some changes and it seems right to start with saying thank you.

Firstly to Jackie Swift who has been a wonderful editor for so long, all of her hard work has been so much appreciated. It will not be the same without you Jackie! Then to Glenda Tress who makes sure that her team of willing volunteers deliver a copy to every home in the village. And finally to Stacey Coppack for arranging the printing. We are keeping it simple for the first edition of 2021, so apologies for no photos etc, this time.

There was discussion about whether or not the Village News should go online and it was agreed that to make sure that everyone can access it, a printed copy would continue to be delivered to every home. It will also be uploaded each month on the Parish Council website:

<https://www.hugofox.com/community/lower-halstow-parish-council-17855/village-news/> And finally, a post will be added to the Lower Halstow Village News

Facebook page each month to remind people where the latest edition can be found on the Parish Council website.

This last year has been so strange and at times so hard for so many people. The last twelve months have been particularly hard for families who have lost loved ones and our thoughts are with you all.

There have been many reminders of how kind our fellow villagers can be, with so many offers of support and kindness. Father Christmas' visit to every road in the village with his happy helpers was such a lovely highlight.

St. MARGARET'S CHURCH

There will be a service at St Margarets's on Easter Sunday, the time is still to be finalised.

"Being people who bless"

I wonder what you have given up for this season of Lent? Are you grappling like me as someone with a sweet tooth, with the temptation of anything sweet, like chocolate! And if we do succeed, who knows we may shed a few pounds round the waist and find extra ones in our pockets as a result! Most of us see Lent as being about giving something up, like Jesus spending 40 days fasting in the desert. We are encouraged to consider some kind of sacrifice. Yet Lent is about much more. For Christians it is a time of reflection on who we are before the Lord.

When Jesus was led into the desert he went with the powerful words "*you are my Beloved Son*" ringing in his ears; words spoken over him as he stood in the waters of baptism. They affirmed who he was. Before he had done anything, he heard that he was deeply loved by his Father. They provided the foundation for his life especially from that moment on, in living out the overwhelming, reckless, never-ending love of God*, in seeing lives transformed as he encountered people and in having the strength to resist other destructive forces and voices.

I wonder how many of us have heard such words spoken over us? What are the words that resonate in our ears?

This year I am challenged to think about who I am, who I want to be. This is because of the witness of someone close, namely my father-in-law Dennis, a retired priest (if there is such a thing!), who died recently. His last words spoken over us as a family, which continue to resonate, were those of this blessing: "*the Lord bless us and keep us, make his face to shine on us and be gracious to us, look kindly on us and give us peace*".

Life hadn't always been easy for him. Yet wherever he went he sought to bless people. For the words Jesus heard, were also true for him: "*you are my beloved child*". His life was rooted in his identity as someone blessed by the gracious love of God, who could not help but offer the same to others.

So who do we want to be, what difference do we want to make in life? Will it be as someone who blesses, because of these words "*you are my beloved child*" ringing in our ears? Whoever we are, Jesus invites us to stand where he does, to hear and know these same words for ourselves, so we also can be "the people who bless".

Every Blessing!

Julian

Rev Julian Staniforth

**Listen to 'Reckless Love' by Cory Asbury (easily found on YouTube or Spotify)*

POETRY FESTIVAL

As some of you may already know, looking ahead to the summer, we are hoping to host a poetry festival in the village with the church very kindly offering to host the event. The idea was conceived following the discovery that Samuel Coleridge, whose poems include 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and 'Kubla Khan' visited St Margaret's in 1806 to give thanks for a safe voyage.

Councillor Mike Baldock has suggested that some villagers may like to video themselves reciting a favourite poem or join in a collaborative effort to record the entire 55 lines of 'Kubla Khan'. We have already received a good response on the village Facebook page but wanted to ensure that we had reached all those who may not have access to the internet. Please register your interest in either venture by emailing Carina Jacobs on carinaj65@outlook.com or messaging me on 07899951044 or calling 01795842022.

A steering committee has been formed and plans to meet in April.

CRISP PACKET RECYCLING - PLASTIC FREE LOWER HALSTOW

We are collecting Crisp Packets for recycling - please drop off at 34 Crouch Hill Court. All brands accepted, preferably flat.
All proceeds go to Demelza House.

SWALE FOODBANK DONATIONS

Swale Food Bank is supported by the Trussell Trust which provides food and toiletries in Swale and surrounding areas. This is run in partnership with local churches including St. Margarets of Lower Halstow part of "The Six" .

The aim is to provide 3 days emergency food and support to local people referred to the Food Bank in a crisis.

The collection point in Lower Halstow is 34 Crouch Hill Court. Please place any food/toiletry items in grey box by garage, or if money in an envelope marked "Food Bank" into letter box

DAFFODILS

The Stevens family is happy for daffodils to be picked at Elm Farm again this year. The daffodils are in the field opposite the farm house up the farm track, off Vicarage Lane. Please make sure you close the gate and put donations in the front door letter box of the farm house.

MOBILITY AIDS

Has anyone got a spare corner in their garage or shed? The church keep a selection of items to loan out, sometimes in emergencies. Please contact Jackie on 842749.

LOWER HALSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Monday 8th March the school welcomed back the children and staff following the lockdown and partial closure of all schools. There was great excitement and relief from everyone that we were finally all back together again. There were many highlights during our time learning remotely, such as a Lockdown Learning Bear 'arriving' at each pupil's house to help boost motivation, and Screen Free Fridays where the children were set challenges by each member of staff which involved being active or creative. However, nothing beats being back together learning and having fun!

To make the first day back even more memorable we all dressed up as book characters in celebration of World Book Day which took place during lockdown. We were determined not to miss out. The children and staff were really creative and came as various characters: Dalmatians, Cruella De Ville, Crayons, Mr Fox and the Cat in the Hat to name just a few.

The children were especially excited to be back in school as they knew that our chick eggs had hatched and there were 10 tiny yellow balls of fluff ready to meet them! The teachers had been posting the chicks' progress on our online Class message boards and on Twitter. All the children were given an opportunity to hold or stroke the chicks if they wished. You can see pictures on the internet at www.twitter.com/lowerhalstowsch

Our school dog, Teddy, was equally excited to be back in school (he'd been furloughed!!) and working with the children again. There was a very waggy tail on the gate as he met the children coming in.

Update provided by Miss Crowe, Head of School

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(01795 unless otherwise stated)

Some numbers may be out of date, if you know that any of these numbers are no longer in use please let Gill know on 843871 or ransleyfamily@gmail.com

The Rev. Julian Staniforth - 01634 227329

Dawn Drury Secretary to St. Margaret's PCC - 842688

Jackie Swift Contact for church enquiries - 842749

Memorial Hall (Chairman) Keith Howard Challis - 844408
 lowerhalstowhall@gmail.com
 Memorial Hall new bookings Kay Howard Challis - 844408
 The School - 842344
 The Three Tuns - 842840
 Short Mat Bowls John Mustoo - 843681, or the secretary Neville - 842117
 Cricket Club Mark Stevens - 842090
 Scouts Cubs and Beavers Jenny Brandon - 07837 260771
 1stlowerhalstowscouts@gmail.com
 Playgroup Heather Salisbury - 0798 4613532
 Yacht Club Dave Quigley - 841242
 Judo Club Jon - 07944755036.
 The Parish Clerk Ann Smith - 842908 email clerk.lhpc@gmail.com
 PCSO Lee Fennell – email lee.fennell@kent.pnn.police.uk, Telephone 101
 Swale Borough Council Main office - 424341
 Swale Borough Councillors for Bobbing, Lower Halstow & Iwade
 Corrie Woodford, corriewoodford@swale.gov.uk
 Roger Clark - 430324 rogerclark@swale.gov.uk
 County Councillor Mike Whiting mike.whiting@kent.gov.uk
 MP. Gordon Henderson - 423199 www.gordonhendersonmp.org.uk
 Citizen's Advice Bureau - 0870 1212105
 Police (general enquiries) - 01622 690690
 Neighbourhood Watch - 01634 792131
 Dog Warden (077952 37479 OUT OF HOURS) Daytime 01795 417850
 Noise nuisance 417850 (out-of-hours 07881817601)
 KCC Highways potholes 03000 418187
 NHS 111
 Parish Council Website: <https://www.hugofox.com/community/lower-halstow-parish-council-17855/home>

If you would like your name and number added, or would like to suggest another useful number, please contact Gill Ransley at ransleyfamily@gmail.com . If any number changes, or you are no longer a contact person, please let Gill know.

Advertising rates: £2 per line for those which are for personal gain, but at the same time constitute news or provide a service for villagers. £3 per line for other commercial adverts. The PCC reserves the right to exclude adverts if they appear unsuitable.

Please note that the editor is not responsible for any inaccuracies which may occur in reports and news from contributors. Contributions are printed (usually with only minor adjustments and corrections if necessary) as handed in. The editor has to assume that contributors have checked their facts and that the news is correct. If you have any queries or complaints please contact the relevant organisation direct

The deadline for the May 2021 Village News is noon on 12 April

Please email items for inclusion as early as possible to
ransleyfamily@gmail.com

