

# Malherbe Monthly

Number 256 December 2025

'The tale of two girls and their Christmas sheep' (Maria and Anna Wickens)



This is one of 4 sheep that we've been busy halter training (to walk on a lead) in preparation for the Ashford Christmas Show

Carols Around the Tree - 19<sup>th</sup> December see inside for full details

## Useful contact names and telephone numbers

County Councillor	Sarah Emberson Sarah.Emberson@kent.gov.uk	
Borough Councillors	Martin Round martinround@maidstone.gov.uk Ziggy Trzebinski ziggytrzebinski@maidstone.gov.uk	890276 07852 492770
Member of Parliament for the Weald of Kent	Katie Lam katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk	01580 388344
Church Wardens	Kenneth Alexander Vanessa Goodwin	859549 858372
Parish Council Clerk	email boughtonmalherbepc@gmail.com	
Village Hall General Enquires	Jon Thompson Email: jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk	07932 112730
Gardening Club	Doreen Hulm	850287
Church Choir	Doreen Hulm	850287
Dance Fit	Sharon Harris	890170
Craft Group	Jan Carter	850898
Yoga	Sue Burch	07803 962339
Farmers Market	Tara Musson info.graftygreen@gmail.com	
Parish Council Website	www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk	
Pilates	Cheryl Stubbs email: c.stubbs8@btinternet.com	07852 602369
Art Class	Cathy Hill email: cathyonthehill@hotmail.com	07927 045708
Tai Chi	Rhonda Bailey	07985 001782
Benefice Office	Sarah Hills email: churchoffice@lvb.org.uk Answer phone available out of hours	850604
St. Edmunds Centre	Kate Stansfield Mobile 07500 895831	
Fresh Fish delivery	Tuesday PM fortnightly by the red "phone" box (date to be posted on the box)	07976 435217
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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 **January** edition should be sent to the Editor Carol Hulm via email (carolhulm@gmail.com) by **27**<sup>th</sup> **December** 



## A Christmas Message from Katie Lam, MP for the Weald of Kent



It's hard to believe how quickly this year has flown by, and that Christmas is nearly upon us.

Over the past year, I've been out and about across the Weald, visiting schools and small businesses, hosting events with my clubs, and helping people who've got in touch with me. There's such a special feeling around the Weald at this time

of year, and I love seeing our towns and villages lit up with

One of my favourite parts of Christmas is joining the carol concerts across the Weald – and, if I'm honest, eating far too many mince pies while doing so! Last year's Light Up the Weald tractor parade was a real highlight for me, and this Christmas, I'm hoping to catch up with our local Royal Mail delivery team in Tenterden to see how on earth they manage to get everything out on time. It's a heroic feat!

Christmas trees and festive decorations.

But I also know that winter can be a difficult time for many. Cold homes, poor road conditions, and worries about crime all add pressure when families should be able to relax and celebrate together. That's why this month I've written to every household in the Weald of Kent to share the results of my transport survey, and to ask for your views on crime and policing.

Many people have told me they feel less safe than they used to – whether that's on our roads, in our towns, or at home. Please do take a few minutes to fill in the survey when it arrives, online or by post; your answers will help me raise the right questions in Parliament and work with Kent Police to make our communities safer. As well as all of this, I've been running events through my Farmers, Growers, and Producers Club, Business Club, and I've unveiled my new Young People's Politics Club! You don't have to come from any particular political party - it's simply a chance for young people to learn more about politics, how decisions are made, and how they can get more involved.

To celebrate the launch, I'm running an essay competition, so if you know anyone aged 16 to 22 who might be interested, please do encourage them to sign up and enter! All my clubs are free to join, and I'd love to see you at an event - you can sign up at this link: https://www.katieforkent.com/clubs

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! And as always, if you ever need any help, would like me to visit your business, or just have a question, you can always write to me at Katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk.



Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is asking people across the county for their views on the level of Council Tax they'd be prepared to pay towards their fire and rescue service for 2026/27.

Council Tax is a significant source of funding for KFRS, currently covering around 66p in every £1 of the service's daily budget.

At the moment, a Band D property in Kent pays around **£1.82** a week towards KFRS — roughly the cost of a box of eggs or a loaf of bread — about 4% of the overall Council Tax bill.

Our short survey takes just five minutes to complete - https://eu.surveymonkey.com/r/kfrs ctax2627

We want to hear from all parts of our community which is why we've come to you.

Community magazines and newsletters are the link to the people this message needs to reach, so your support in sharing this will help ensure representation from all communities.

Attached is a graphic for your use, and please do get in touch if you've any questions about sharing this important message.

Our full story is here: <u>KFRS invites views on Council Tax plans | Kent Fire and Rescue Service</u>





# Above beyond

## **Get involved!**





#### Celebrate Christmas with KSS

From festive fundraising to new challenges for 2026, Above and Beyond features a range of great ways to support us.

#### Carol concerts



Our festive season begins in spectacular style with our first carol concert – Carols at Candlelight – at Canterbury Cathedral on Monday 1 December.

It's sure to be a magical evening of carols and heartfelt reflection in one of the UK's most historic and beautiful settings. This marks the start of our 2025 Christmas Carol Concert series, with six events taking place at other stunning venues: Rochester Cathedral, Guildford Cathedral, Arundel Cathedral, Lancing College Chapel and Ardingly College Chapel – each raising vital funds to keep KSS flying when every second counts.

Join our Carol Concerts

## **KSS Christmas shop**



You can also support KSS this Christmas by ordering your 2026 calendar and Christmas cards, which are selling fast, or by exploring our other KSS merchandise for sale in our online shop – the perfect gifts for loved ones.

Every purchase, ticket and act of kindness helps us continue delivering lifesaving care this season and beyond.

Visit our KSS shop

Thank you for making our lifesaving work possible.

https://aakss.org.uk/get-involved/events/our-events/



## **Message Board**

This section is for people to post their messages or any thoughts they would like to share with the community. Send your messages to the editor within the deadline for each month, details can be found on the contact's page 2.

**To the editor!** I have very much enjoyed the sports section of the magazine! Fond memories of ironing to John Arlott and Brian Johnson on radio 4 even the commentary of the streaker, the article brought the games of the Grafty Green Wanderers to life, so thank you. Looking forward to next year's season.

Liz Burgess



Please see the return of the Link Word game on the last page of the magazine

#### From the Editor

A suggestion from a reader is that we could include stories from people about their life in Grafty Green, so I would love to hear from you with your stories, including pictures. See Sue's "Reminiscing" article in the last

<u>....</u>\_\_-!...

**Front cover Photos:** Please send me any photos that you would like to see on the front cover of this magazine.

Thank you.



## Village Hall News – December Newsletter

Dear All,

Firstly, on behalf of the trustees I should like to wish you all a Merry Christmas a Happy New Year and thank you for all your support during 2025. Without your help and hard work the village hall would not be the vibrant and jolly place that it is.

#### Internal redecoration

I am pleased to advise you that ahead of the internal redecoration of the hall when the hall will be closed from Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2025 until Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2026, we have taken the opportunity to have some minor repairs/refurbishments carried out to the doors and part of the ceiling near the front loft.

#### **Events**

At the time of writing this newsletter we are preparing for our annual Christmas Craft Fair weekend which I hope you all enjoyed. Coming up we have the following events for you to note in your diaries:-

## Christmas Quiz Saturday 13th December 7pm for 7.30pm

It's that time of year again for you to get your thinking caps on, it's the usual teams of 8 but if you are sad like me and have no friends never fear we will find you a team. There will be a best Christmas Jumper competition and a raffle. In a slight change from last year there will be no meal provided or a bar so please bring your own food and drink – tickets which are selling fast are £10 a head and can be booked via myself on 07932 112730 or jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk

## Aladdin – Saturday 10th January 3pm to 4.30pm

Oh no it isn't oh yes it is! We will be hosting our annual Christmas Panto in January! This year it is Aladdin and as usual it is sure to be lots of fun. Tickets are £15 for an adult which includes a free child ticket, (under 11), additional child tickets will be charged at £5 per child and once again can be booked via myself on 07932 112730 or <a href="mailto:jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk">jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk</a>.

## Coffee & Croissants Open Morning Saturday 24th January 10 am to 12 noon

To celebrate the reopening of the hall after the electrical rewire and internal redecoration of the hall the trustees would like to invite you all to the hall for a pastry, cup of tea, coffee, hot chocolate or squash for the little ones so you can take a look at the hall, have a natter with friends and let us know if you have any ideas for how the hall can further be used for the community's benefit in the future.

#### **Mobile Post Office Service**

The Post Office have contacted us to advise that they are considering changing the way in which the mobile Post Office service is delivered. They are proposing that sometime in the New Year we are provided with a Post Office van service, (rather than a table in the hall which we facilitate for them for the community's benefit), once a week for a period of 45 minutes and they have asked for permission to park outside the village hall which as trustees we have been happy to provide. Specific details of date and time are not yet available but as soon as we have any more information, we will communicate this to you.

## Farmer's Market - Kings Head Friday 9th January 2026

The last Farmer's Market before Christmas will be held at the village hall on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and will return to the hall after it reopens on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The Kings Head have kindly agreed to host the market at the pub the week before we reopen the hall on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026 so you will not have to wait too long for your weekly visit to the market!

Merry Christmas and Kind Regards

Jon Thompson Village Hall Committee Chairman jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk Tel 07932 112730 www.graftygreenvillagehall.co.uk - facebook – graftygreenvillage



Test your knowledge and have a blast at our Quiz Night!



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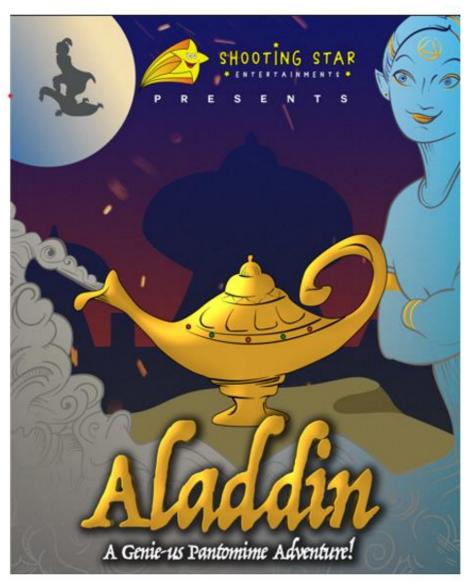
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BRING YOUR OWN FOOD AND

DRINKS

**13TH DECEMBER** 

**GRAFTY GREEN VILLAGE HALL** 



Grafty Green Village Hall Saturday 10th January 3pm to 4.30 pm

Tickets are £15 per adult which includes a free child's ticket - extra child's tickets are £5

To book tickets please contact Jon Thompson on either 07932 112730 or jon@graftygreenalpacas.co.uk

## Grafty Green Village Hall

Bookings 07932 112730

## Regular Weekly Events

Yoga – mixed ability

Mondays and Thursdays 9.30 - 11am

Susan Burch 07803 962339

Wednesdays 7 - 8.30pm

Pilates

Cheryl Stubbs 07852 602369

Tuesdays 9.30 - 10.30 am

Post Office

Tuesdays 12.45 – 2.15pm Thursdays 11.15 – 1.15pm

Coffee morning

Tuesdays 12.00 - 2.00pm

**Short Mat Bowls** 

Tuesdays 2.30 - 5.30pm

Dance Fit

Wednesdays 11 - 12.30pm

Sharon Harris 01622 890170

Joan Marriott 07503 568874

Tai Chi

Thursdays 2.00 - 3.00pm

Rhonda Bailey 07985 001782

Craft Group

Fridays 10 -12.00pm

Janis Carter 01622 850898

Art Class

Alternate Wednesdays 1 - 3.30pm

Cathy Hill 07927054708

Alternate Thursdays 7-9pm

Farmer's Market

Friday 1-3pm

Tara - graftygreen.info@gmail.com

## Regular Monthly Events

**Gardening Club** 

First Tuesday 7.30 - 9pm

Doreen 01622 850287

Fourth Tuesday 12 - 2pm

**Digital Kent** 



## **The Grafty Gourmet**



This simple all-in-one chocolate orange cake is a great alternative to traditional Christmas cake. Covered with an indulgent chocolate ganache, and so easy to make.

#### **CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE**

#### Ingredients

75g of cocoa powder

6 tablespoons of just-boiled water

2 medium <u>oranges</u>, well-scrubbed, (finely grated zest of both oranges and 2 tablespoons of juice only)

225g of unsalted <u>butter</u>, cubed and softened, plus extra for greasing

225g of caster sugar

4 large free-range eggs

225g of self-raising flour

1 teaspoon of baking powder

For the candied orange zest ½ <u>orange</u>, well-scrubbed 25g of <u>caster sugar</u>

For the chocolate icing 300ml of <u>double cream</u> 300g of <u>dark chocolate</u> (about 70% cocoa solids), broken into roughly 1cm pieces 2–3 tablespoons of semi-skimmed milk

- 1. Preheat the oven to 170C Fan. Grease and line two 20cm/8in loose-based sandwich tins with baking paper. Mix 50g of the cocoa powder with the just-boiled water to make a smooth, thick paste. Stir in 2 tablespoons orange juice.
- 2. In a food processor or freestanding mixer, add the butter, sugar, eggs, flour, baking powder, remaining cocoa powder, orange zest (of 2 oranges) and the cocoa paste and pulse or beat until well combined, thick and creamy. Do not over-blend or the cake will be tough rather than light. Spoon the mixture evenly into the prepared tins and smooth the surface. Bake on the same shelf in the centre of the oven for about 25 minutes, or until well risen and just beginning to shrink back from the sides of the tin.



## CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE continued......



- 3. Remove the tins from the oven and leave to cool for 5 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack. Peel off the baking paper and leave to cool completely. To make the candied orange zest, use a vegetable peeler to peel long, wide strips off the half orange, avoiding the white pith. Cut the zest into long thin matchsticks and place in a small saucepan with the sugar and 50ml of water. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 5 minutes, or until the zest is softened and the sugar syrup is well reduced and lightly coating the zest.
- 4. Line a small tray or plate with baking paper and use a fork to lift the orange zest from the syrup and drop onto the paper, keeping the strands separated. Leave to set for at least 1 hour before using to top the cake.
- 5. To make the chocolate icing, gently heat the cream in a medium non-stick saucepan until hot but not quite simmering, stirring occasionally, then pour over the chocolate pieces. Stir once and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Stir the melted chocolate into the cream just enough to combine don't over-stir or the mixture could become oily. Leave to cool for 5 minutes.
- 6. Place one of the sponges on a wire rack over a large plate or tray (to catch any excess icing so it can be reused). Spread a quarter of the chocolate icing thickly over the surface and then place the second sponge on top. Mix a tablespoon of the milk with another quarter of the chocolate icing (about 135g) in a small bowl until smooth. Using a palette knife, spread the whole cake thinly with the thinned chocolate icing, filling in the areas where the two cakes meet. Place in the fridge for about 40 minutes to set. (This layer will help the rest of the icing cover the cake more smoothly and doesn't need to be perfectly neat.)
- 7. Once the first layer of icing has set, stir the remaining 2 tablespoons of milk into the remaining chocolate icing, until smooth and shiny. Spread the icing all over the top of the cake and down the sides as smoothly as possible using a palette knife. Leave for 2–3 hours to set and then carefully transfer to a cake stand or plate and top with the candied orange zest.

The Grafty Gourmet

## **Grafty Green Gardening Club**

Meetings take place in Grafty Green Village Hall, usually on the first Tuesday of the month and begin at 7.30. Members contribute £2 for each meeting where we have a speaker and guests (always welcome) £4.

Outings take place from May to August this year and the cost and final details will be sent out prior to the event.

Membership £5 - contact Doreen Hulm (Treasurer) 01622 850287

## **Programme for 2025**

Date	Speaker/Event	Topic
December	Leeds Castle light show	

# Gardening Tips December Gardening Tasks:

- Many of the jobs for last month can be done this month, if conditions allow and it's not too wet or frosty.
- Last chance to gather leaves, especially off lawns, to add to compost or make leaf mold.
- > Still not too late to plant bulbs. If squirrels are a nuisance, I find that some holly placed over the planted bulbs wii stop them from digging them up.
- Put out water for the birds and fill bird feeders with seeds and nuts. Place a ball to float on ponds to stop the water from freezing over completely.
- Clean and service garden tools and lawnmower (does anyone ever do this?!)
- > Gather festive foliage. Get out into the garden whenever the weather allows!



## The Old Kent Carollers Kings Head on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2.30





The Old Kent Carollers sing local carols again at the Kings Head this Christmas at 2.30pm on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December.

Many local carols around the country are often forgotten, but they are wonderful to sing. For the last decade, the Old Kent Carollers, that include John and Nick Moore from Grafty Green,

have been bringing some of Kent's almost forgotten carols back to life. They're very different to the carols we hear in church or on TV each year, and that difference makes them interesting, joyful and fun to sing.

The Old Kent Carollers are led by Gavin and Julie Atkin, well known across the country for their playing and singing of folk music, and most of the Kentish carols we will sing at the Kings Head will have been collected from local archives by Kathy Wallwork of Pembury and myself a local person. Carols from villages as close as Harrietsham and further afield like Canterbury, Eythorne and Marden. We would love you to join us to keep this tradition alive.

John Moore



## Sue's Blog - reminiscing!

Last month I asked for your recollections – I hope I inspired some of you to let Carol have a few lines about your journey.

This made me think about my journey into becoming a yoga teacher – first of all it was because of a threat of redundancy – I didn't see myself, at a somewhat mature age, trying to persuade some company to take me on; I had been a participant of yoga classes for some years so decided to train to teach. What an experience! So challenging, yet life changing! I now have confidence to try new challenges without worrying about criticism or judgement and that has given me a freedom of expression through my drawings and other creative enterprises. I feel enriched and with a sense of 'what else can I do'!

I am your local yoga teacher, and I have inspired many of my yogis to follow their dreams and aspirations.

Sue

## Yoga with Susan Weekly classes in Grafty Green Village Hall Monday morning 9.30 – 11 Wednesday evening 7 – 8.30 Thursday morning 9.30 – 11.

Yoga brings a sense of peacefulness and connection to yourself and others whilst bringing more flexibility and strength into the body. For more information or to enrol for the new term - please give me a call 07803 962339



#### **BOUGHTON MALHERBE PARISH COUNCIL**

#### www.boughtonmalherbe-pc.gov.uk

#### Minutes of the Full Meeting of the Parish Council held on

#### Monday 3rd November 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

#### Present:

Cllrs N. Eastwood (Chairman), L. Hook, C. Tomlinson

#### In Attendance:

Mrs M. Norris (Clerk)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

#### 25/11/01 Apologies & Declarations of Interest

- a) Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Thompson and Cllr Peter due to other commitments.
- b) No changes were declared to the Register of Interests.
- c) No declarations of pecuniary or other interests were made regarding any agenda items.
- d) No requests for dispensation were received.
- e) No declarations of lobbying were made.

#### 25/11/02 Public Session

The Chairman opened the public session. No members of the public were present, and no matters had been raised for discussion.

#### 25/11/03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council meeting held on 1st September 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.

#### 25/11/04 County & Borough Councillor Reports

No reports were received from the County Councillor or Borough Councillor.

#### 25/11/05 Matters Arising / Updates from Previous Resolutions

- The Clerk confirmed that no volunteers had come forward to participate in the Community Speedwatch initiative.
- As Cllr Thompson was absent, no update was available regarding the quotation for the fingerpost sign.
- The Clerk confirmed that a Poppy Wreath had been purchased by the Parish Council for Remembrance Sunday.
- · The clerk confirmed that balances from Lloyds were in the process of being transferred.

#### 25/11/06 Planning

- a) No new planning applications had been received for comment during this period.
- b) No planning decisions had been received since the previous meeting.

#### 25/11/07 Finance

#### Bank Balances (as at 3 November 2025)

Lloyds Community Account (1062)	£541.97	
Lloyds Instant Online (4862)	£2,280.64	
Lloyds 32 Day Notice (00LS)	£42,403.14	
Nationwide	£14,973.40	
Cambridge & Counties	£25,114.73	

#### Receipts since September 2025 meeting:

Interest (Lloyds 4862): £ 2.58

Interest Lloyds : £1.62

Maidstone Borough Council: £84.00

#### Schedule of Payments for Approval- November

Invoice Date	Amount	Payee		Reference
October 2025	£700.00	Nu Venture	Bus Service	3213
Sep/Oct	£885.12	M Norris	Clerk Salary	
6 October 2025	£24.49	M Norris	Poppy Wreath	12002289767
November	£500.00	St Nicholas Church	Donation in line with budget	

November	£50.00	Air Ambulance	Donation in line with budget	
Total £2159.61				

#### Resolution:

The schedule of payments for November and the bank reconciliation had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Payments were authorised accordingly. The PC was advised that the Chair had been in contact with Nationwide to secure better access to the account and will chase them for a resolution

#### 25/11/08 Parish Council Budget 2026/2

Councillors discussed the draft budget in preparation for setting the precept. In recognition of the inflationary climate, the PC agreed to uplift the budget by 5% and directed that the Clerk will update the budget lines as agreed and reissue the revised draft to members for review.

#### 25/11/09 Correspondence

a) CIIr Hook agreed to inspect the grit bin and confirm whether a winter grit delivery is required.

Action: Cllr Hook

b) The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted the Church regarding Mr Andrew Grigsby's request. The Senior Church Warden has confirmed arrangements for placing crosses on the three graves as requested and the Clerk informed Mr Grigsby accordingly. A letter of thanks had been received

#### 25/11/10 Reports on External Meetings Attended by Councillors

Clir Tomlinson reported on the recent KALC meeting. It was agreed that a provisional date should be set for a planning meeting to discuss any matters arising from Maidstone Borough Council's forthcoming Heathland and Gypsy & Traveller proposal.

#### 25/11/11 Christmas - Carols Around the Tree

Councillors agreed to hold the event on Thursday 19th December.

Arrangements will be finalised once attendance numbers are known, and refreshments will be organised within the budget previously agreed at the September meeting.

#### Part II - Exclusion of the Public and Press

#### 25/11/12 Bus Service

The Clerk reported that, following a recent meeting with neighbouring parishes and other stakeholders, an application for grant funding has been submitted. No further details are available at this time.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm.





## The Friend

## Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> Performance begins 19.30, doors open 19.00

Running time 2 hrs, directors Scott McGehee, David Siegel

The Friend (15, 2025) is a tale of love, friendship, grief and healing – and to cap it all, one of the stars of this unforgettable story is a Great Dane named Apollo. When his owner (played by the wonderful Bill Murray) dies he bequeaths his beloved dog Apollo to his closest friend Iris (Naomi Watts). There's only one hitch. Iris is a writer and teacher who lives a quiet, solitary existence – or she did, until Apollo bounces in to wreck it, throwing her comfortable New York life into disarray. The regal yet intractable 150lb beast immediately creates problems for Iris, from furniture destruction to eviction notices. Yet as Iris finds herself unexpectedly bonding with Apollo, she begins to come to terms with her past, her life and the loss of her friend. What better for the Christmas season than this remarkable film, don't miss this Christmas treat!

And then comes the new year. 2026 begins in grand style with **Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.** Yes, Robert Redford and Paul Newman will be with us again in this well-loved classic on 9<sup>th</sup> January.

Please get in touch for more information or to join our mailing list.

**Admission**: Adults £5, under 16s £2; cash only, card payments not accepted.



lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com



www.lenhamfilmclub.org



@lenhamfilmclub

# **Egerton Film Society**



# EGERTON MILLENNIUM HALL THURSDAY 11th December 2025 Doors 7.00pm - PERFORMANCE 7.30pm

Admission £6.00

Email: egertonfilm@btinternet.com for more information







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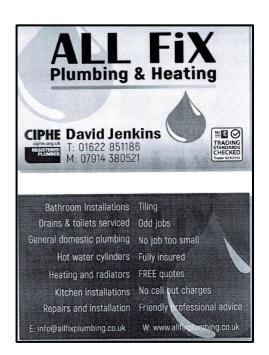
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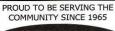
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## **Ken and Eve Sweet** extend a warm welcome to The Kings Head Grafty Green

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- Baby massage, reflexology and colic alleviation (birth-crawling)
- Mama sharing & support circles
- Baby yoga (3 months to pre-school)

#### **Events**

- **93** Parties
- Coffee mornings



Join Gemma's classes in Weald of Kent: Gemma Debnam Qualified Basking Babies Instructor 07305 882 972

gemmadebnam@baskingbabies.co.uk baskingbabies.co.uk/wealdofkent

We thoroughly enjoyed our Basking Bables "Nurture Me course, it was great to learn massage and reflexology techniques to help with common complaints such as teething and colds. Me and my baby were so elaxed after each session. It was lovely to get to meet other mums and bables, and be able to chat over a cup of tea each week



## News from St. Nicholas Church – December 2025

So much to look forward to in the coming weeks, excitement for the community and school events, for the buying of presents for those we love, not to mention the delicious treats to share with friends and family. Sometimes we can forget those who may not share in these familiar things, the vulnerable, homeless or hungry, a time for us to support the charities providing basic comfort to those in need.

A time also to remember that Mary and Joseph had no home when they arrived in Bethlehem when their baby, Jesus, was born. I like this nativity picture as Mary appears to be holding a cup of tea! Perhaps another special gift from one of the Wise Men!



#### **Usual reminders**

The church porch is open at all times. Enjoy a rest with a hot drink on these cold winter days, with the Christmas tree in view. Leave a prayer request if you wish. It will be prayed over in church as soon as possible.

Use the mini food bank if you need. There is a larger food bank in St.Mary's Church in Lenham, open daily from 10.00am-4.00pm.

There is a cold tap at the back of the church building beyond the West Door, if you need to refill the jug/kettle or dog bowl.

The main church building is open for services, meetings, cleaning etc. If you wish to visit at other times, please contact the churchwardens for a key.

**Village Cake and Coffee Time** continue each Tuesday from 12.00-2.00pm and coincides with Post Office from 12.45-2.15pm. All donations are shared between the church and a charity chosen by the regulars. As mentioned last month we have given £100 to the Lord Whisky animal rescue and sanctuary charity.

Am about to try a new 'Christmassy' recipe, mincemeat shortbread. Will await the verdict!

#### Farmer's Market

Kenneth, Jacquie, Janet and I have enjoyed a couple of Friday afternoons with our stall in November. We meet such a variety of people, both stall holders and visitors. Am trying my hand at Irish wholemeal soda bread. Lots of discussions over recipes. We are taking a break in December but hope to be there once a month from January.

#### News

**Christmas Craft Fair** lots of late nights sewing, knitting and cooking for St.Nicolas' stall at the Fair on 29th and 30th November. Will give an update in next month's magazine. Should be a lively weekend.

**Carol Service** at St.Nicolas is on Sunday 14th December at 3.00pm. Enjoy this annual occasion of hearing the bible readings and singing favourite carols in the candlelit atmosphere, followed by mince pies and mulled wine. A good start to the true story of Christmas.

**Crib Service** is at 3.30pm on Christmas Eve. A relaxed time for families to enjoy welcoming the baby Jesus into his place in the nativity scene, with candles and carols and the excitement and joy of Christmas Day nearly upon us.

**Christmas Day** there is a communion service at 10.00am.

**Sunday 28th** there is a benefice service at Ulcombe at 11.00am and will be 'A Celebration of Christmas Carols'. Lots more carols to enjoy

#### **Farewell**

The funeral for Jean Weeks will take place on Tuesday 9th December at 10.30am. Please remember Jean, her family and friends, in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time.





Sally Alexander

## Len Valley Benefice December 2025

## Everybody is welcome

For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear. I will help you. *Isaiah 41:13* 



#### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

**9.30am** Lenham: Holy Communion **11.00am** Harrietsham: Chippendayle

#### Sunday 7th December

9.30am Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church9.30am Harrietsham: Morning Worship11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

#### Saturday 13th December

3.00pm Lenham: Christmas Messy Church

#### Sunday 14th December

**9.30am** Harrietsham: Holy Communion

**9.30am** Lenham: Breakfast Church **11.00am** Ulcombe: Holy Communion **11.00am** Lenham: Holy Communion

3.00pm Boughton Malherbe: Carols by Candlelight

5.30pm Harrietsham: Carols by Candlelight

## Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December

7.00pm Ulcombe: Carols by Candlelight

## Sunday 21st December

8.00am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.30am** Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion

9.30am Lenham: Christmas Breakfast Church

11.00am Ulcombe: Holy Communion 5.30pm Lenham: Carols by Candlelight

#### **Christmas Eve**

3.00pm Harrietsham: Crib Service

3.30pm Boughton Malherbe: Crib Service
11.15pm Lenham: Midnight Holy Communion
11.15pm Harrietsham: Midnight Holy Communion

#### **Christmas Day**

10.00am Boughton Malherbe: Christmas Holy Communion

10.00am Ulcombe: Christmas Holy Communion

## Sunday 28th December

11.00am Ulcombe: Benefice Service 'A Celebration of Christmas Carols'





## Christian Message for December 2025 - Len Valley Benefice

As we come to the close of this year, we naturally reflect on all that has happened for us individually during the last 12 months.

It will almost certainly be a mixture of feelings for most of us as we recall times of disappointments, sundresses, struggles, as well as blessings and celebrations too.

My prayer for all who read this message is that you will end your reflections knowing that you can end 2025 well. I pray that you will have known God with you during all your emotions of this year and He will be with you, moving in your life as you start to plan for a New Year. God will always want to heal whatever situation you meet in 2026 and beyond. God is still blessing, and God is still reconciling.

As you start planning for the next year perhaps it will be helpful to remember how it has been for others too.

Perhaps you know the account of Hannah?

Hannah's husband loved her so much but for years she was taunted by others because she had not had the blessing of children. Hannah prayed to God and cried and cried, inconsolably. She vowed that if she was blessed with a son, she would give him unreservedly to God's service in gratitude for all God had blessed her with. Hannah did conceive and then named her son Samuel. Samuel became a great prophet of the Old Testament.

We all have times when we might feel lonely.

We might feel left out.

We might feel unacceptable, inadequate or frightened.

People do cry themselves to sleep, just like Hannah.

People do wake up feeling sad about what the day might bring, or about the days ahead.

There are people who have lost contact with friends.

There are those whose loved ones have died but maybe they are trying to be cheerful even though they have a big ache of sadness.

Lots of people are hurting and wish that things in their lives were different.

Maybe you have screamed out to God 'have pity on us'

Do you believe that God hears us as we scream out to him?

Well, the Good News is he certainly does!

I began my message of prayer by suggesting that we reflect on ending the year well and planning the New Year knowing God's presence is with us always. My prayers are for you to celebrate seeing this year out and welcoming in the New Year with joy!

Thank you, God, for making Your presence known and always being there for us, as you were for Hannah.

## **Christmas link word puzzle:**



Find the single word that can go after each of the three items to make a common Christmas-related word or phrase. No repeats

SET	1	2	3	Your Answer
1	jingle	sleigh	silver	
2	chestnut	marshmallows	potatoes	
3	holly	ivy	mistletoe	
4	figgy	plum	Christmas	
5	sugar	gingerbread	butter	
6	nut	beef	turkey	
7	fairy	string	icicle	
8	mulled	spiced	hot	
9	mince	apple	berry	
10	carol	choir	hymn	
11	pine	fir	spruce	
12	angel	star	glass	
13	turkey	cranberry	stuffing	
14	advent	picture	chocolate	
15	cracker	party	paper	
16	brandy	warm	pouring	
17	nativity	stable	Bethlehem	
18	midnight	candlelight	village	
19	reindeer	toy	wish	
20	frosty	winter	wonder	







## **Emergency and Help Contact Details**

Police, Fire and Ambulance Emergencies	999
Police, Non-Emergency - (Including PCSO)	101

Ambulance 999 note: an aed 'public access defibrillator' is sited and available 24/7 at the premises (in porch) of A.W. Court in Headcorn road. Ambulance 999 control centre will give 999 callers the lock code, if appropriate, to access the *defibrillator*.

NHS Medical Helpline			111
•			
Maidstone & Pembury	Hospitals		0845 155 1000
William Harvey Hospita	al		01233 633331
Headcorn Surgery	(out of hours listen to		01622 890294
Lenham Surgery	recorded messages)		01622 858341
Electricity (UK Power N	letworks)		
1	Emergencies and Power Cuts		0800 783 8866
	2	Or	01243 508866
Water	Emergencies		0333 000 0002
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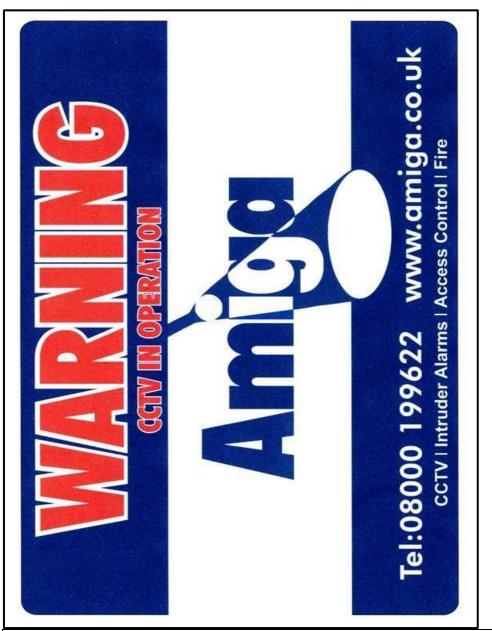
Water	Emergencies	0333 000 0002
Southern Water	Foul and Waste Water drainage/Flooding	0330 303 0368
Calor Gas	Emergencies	08457 444999
KCC	Emergencies	03000 41 41 41
	Highways	03000 41 81 81

#### KCC Community Wardens:

	· Stuart Ellesmere t – Dawn Riach-Brown	07969 583923 07773 397125
Fire	General Enquiries Home Safety Visits	01622 692121 0800 923 7000
R.S.P.C.A Vet	Emergencies 24 Hour Pet Emergency Treatment Service	0300 1234 999 01622 734555

Maidstone Borough Community Protection - 01622 602202 - Bonfires, crime, dogs, domestic abuse, loan sharks, noise, pests and protection orders

Environmental Services - 01622 602162 - Fly tipping, Street cleaning, Litter, Bins, dead animals



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