



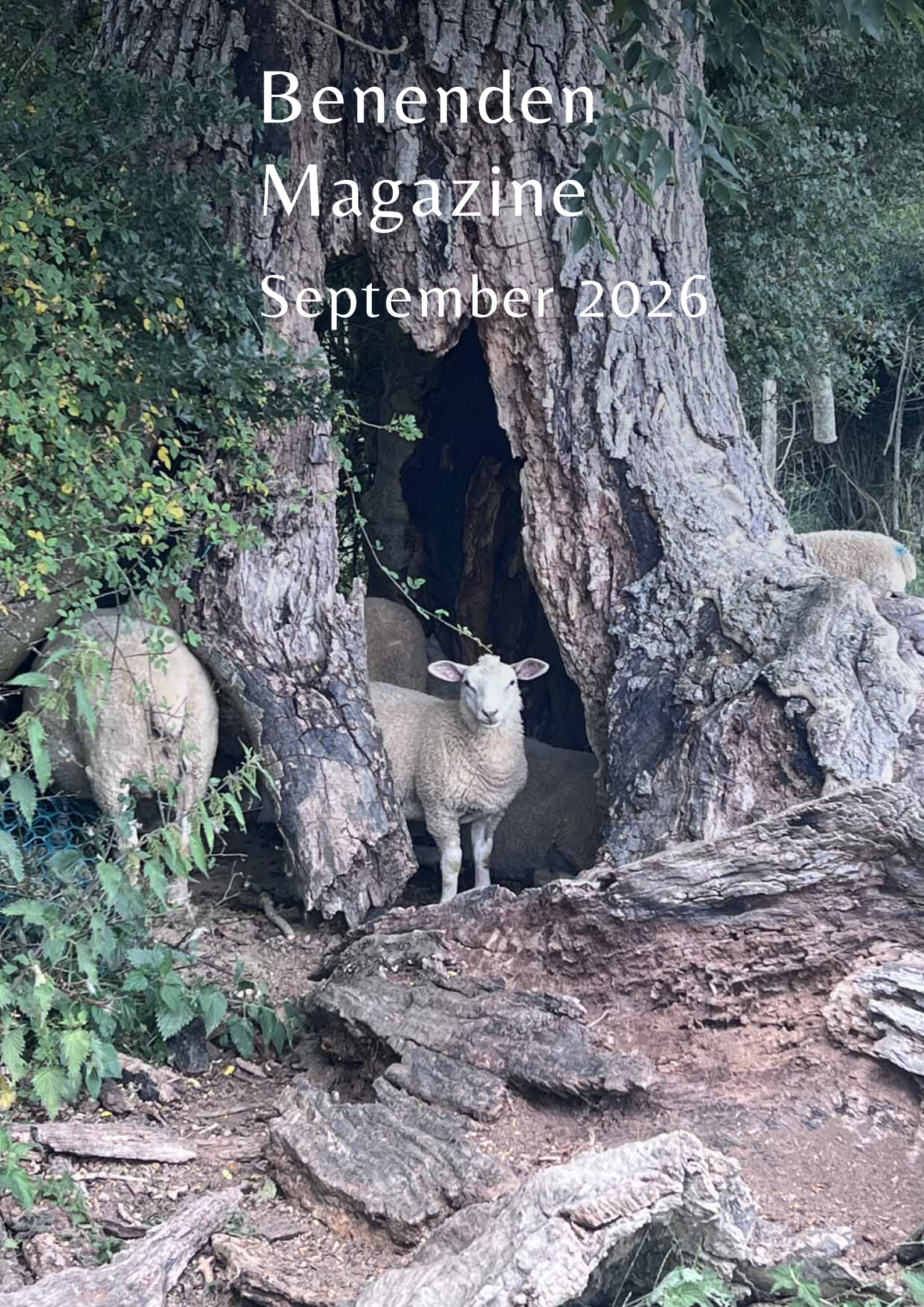
..... BREAKFAST.....		Menu		SWEET TREATS.....	
BACON OR SAUSAGE BAP	4.75	LIGHT BITES		BENENDEN SLICE	14.00
BACON AND SAUSAGE BAP	5.50	CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD	10.45	BAKEWELL/TREACLE TART	3.45
FULL ENGLISH	10.45	HAM & CHEESE PLOUGHMANS	10.50	TRAY BAKE	3.60
TOAST AND BUTTER	1.75	HAM & CHEESE WITH SALAD	7.50	CHEESE/FRUIT SCONES	3.65
SCRAMBLED EGGS OR BEANS ON TOAST	5.00	LAGARINE WITH SALAD	10.00	(ADD CREAM AND JAM 5.00)	
MUTTY GRANOLA (GEEKY YOG & FRUIT)	6.35	JACKET POTATO	7.50	TEACAKE	2.75
TOASTIE	5.45	(4 FILLS 9.75 - 11.95)		MUFFIN	3.00
TOASTIE (FILLINGS: CHEESE, BEEF, TURKISH, CHICKEN, VE, TUNA, PASTA, CORNED BEEF, SPIN, TUNA, HAM)		TOASTIES	5.95		
ALL BUTTER CRISPS	2.95	BAP (BROWN OR WHITE) SLICED IN 6'S	6.95		
PAW AN CHOCOLATE	2.95	(VARIOUS FILLINGS: CHICKEN, HAM, SALAD, CHICKEN OR BEEF PASTA, CORNED BEEF, CHICKEN, TUNA, PASTA, CORNED BEEF)			
ALMOND CRISPS	3.25	MILKSHAKES/SMOOTHIES	4.50		
TRAY AND REALISM	2.95	COCA COLA/DIET/ZERO	1.95		
		BENENDEN'S APPLE JUICE	2.35		



Above: A community of many parts: Ironman Barry; viewing the partial solar eclipse; Benenden's Community Shop new menu; Little Walkhurst open garden; Pilates for a Purpose charity event for Macmillan Cancer Support; the primary school community represented in their school cross; Ray Cheeseman awarded the Memorial Trophy at the Benenden Bowls Club

Front cover: Creativity in finding shade this summer: Sheltering on Hilly Fields. Photograph: Steve Simmonds

Benenden Magazine September 2026



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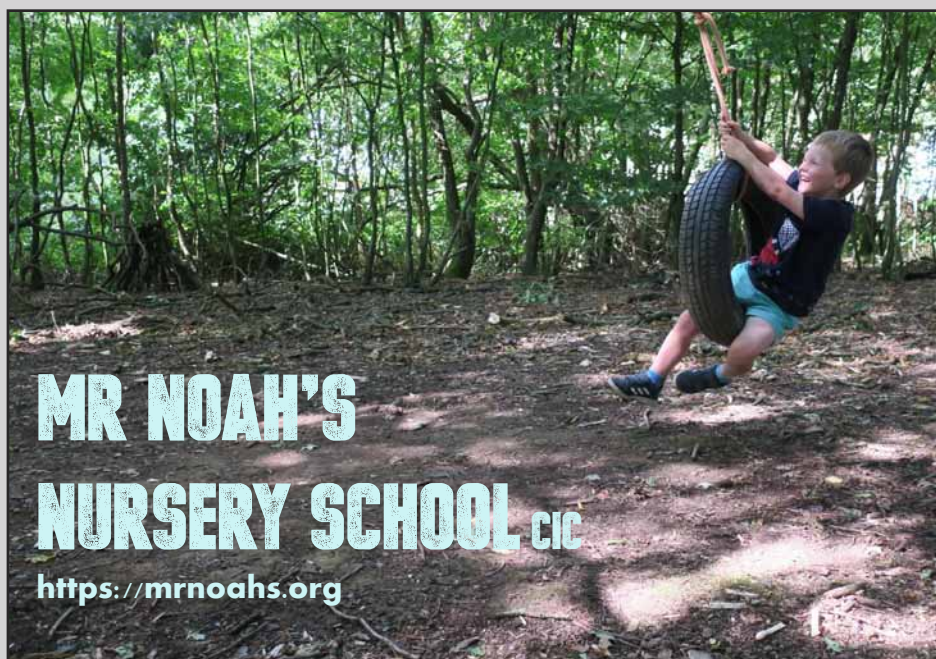


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Editorial



If anyone ever needed evidence of our community spirit then all they had to do was visit the village in August, browse #benenden on social media, listen to Radio 4 or watch local and national TV news. Firstly, and somewhat reminiscent of the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, many were drawn inexorably to the village green and the Bull to experience the eclipse together. I seem to recall that the last one 27 years was truly ethereal - the sky properly darkened and the birds stopped singing. This time, while the light muted just a little and the birds were too parched to sing, the atmosphere was still very special as eclipse glasses, colanders and homemade pinhole cameras were shared around.

Then the ongoing battle for water supply by many suffering across the village over many weeks culminated in a coordinated plea for help by many who have been suffering outages on and off since May. Where individual requests for clarification had little effect, it took a united 'yell' to prompt a reaction and a commitment to discuss in depth and will hopefully lead to a long-term plan (I'm ever the optimist - time will tell). It seems annual water issues are the 'new normal' and it will be interesting to see what future strategies are planned by the Borough Council, South East Water and ultimately the Government to cope with lack of resources, growing demand and creaking infrastructure (see pages 3 and 7).

Happily there's a lot to entertain us over the next couple of months, having fun while also raising money for good causes: a BVT film night in the village hall, primary school barn dance, Buster Keaton silent movie with live piano, and a fabulous ball to raise money for the new pre-school. Not to mention the Jazz and Blues in Iden Green on 29 August just after this issue hits the streets. Add the wealth of events at Hemsted Park on offer and we are truly spoilt for choice.

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

The Benenden Magazine is published monthly as a joint venture by Benenden Parish Council and St George's Parochial Church Council. It is distributed free to all residents of the parish. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers. Responsibility for accuracy of information rests with contributors and advertisers. Neither the publishers nor the editors shall be held responsible for or endorse any opinions, products or services printed in the magazine or directory.

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Village Calendar

September

Saturday 5	Autumn Barbecue, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 7	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Visit to The Copper House Garden, 2pm	p.19
Monday 7	Open Public Meeting with South East Water, Benenden School Centenary Hall, 6.30pm	p.7
Tuesday 8	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 8	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 8	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.9
Saturday 12	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 12	Friends of Kent Churches, Ride + Stride for churches, 10am	p.12
Saturday 12	Social Evening, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 15	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Alison Deane, The Glasshouse, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.19
Wednesday 16	Jesus: the Evidence, Expanded, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7.30pm	p.13
Saturday 19	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 21	Parish Council Meeting, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm	
Tuesday 22	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 22	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 22	Merry and Bright, Games Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2.30pm	p.20
Wednesday 23	Jesus: the Evidence, Expanded, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7.30pm	p.13
Thursday 24	Public Meeting with South East Water, Memorial Hall, 7pm	p.3
Saturday 26	Social Evening, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 27	The Angry Whelk Fresh Fish Stall, Benenden Village Hall, 12-2pm	
Sunday 27	Apple Day, Standen Street Fruit Farm, Iden Green, 1.30pm	p.13
Wednesday 30	Jesus: the Evidence, Expanded, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7.30pm	p.13

Iden Green Toddler Group

Tuesdays during term time in Iden Green Congregational Church, 9-11.30am

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

Cakes & Chaos: Toddler Group

Wednesdays and Fridays during term time at the Mission Church, Sandhurst, 9-11am

Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6pm

Parish Council



Let's not beat about the bush, this summer has been challenging on many fronts, and the burning issue has been the amount of water being pushed through our taps (or not) in Benenden.

Although this has been an intermittent problem for around the last five years, it has really escalated during the endless heat and drought this year with high demand for water, treatment works unable to keep pace with demand and storage tank levels dropping drastically, together with our clay soil cracking and moving causing multiple burst mains.

Many residents have been without water for days on end, and understandably frustrations are high. The parish council has been liaising with South East Water to pursue a resolution to the water supply problems we face. Members of the council met recently with representatives from South East Water, along with three concerned residents, and this meeting was extremely informative.

We have now organised a public meeting to be held at 7pm on Thursday 24 September in the Memorial Hall. South East Water has confirmed that their new CEO, John Halsall, and Douglas Whitfield, water supply director, will be present along with other senior officials, and this will be an opportunity for them to respond directly to concerns raised by Benenden residents about the water supply. Please do come along to this meeting, which we anticipate will be positive and informative for all attendees.

To clarify, this is in addition to a public meeting arranged by the Water for Benenden Action Group on at 6.30pm on Monday 7 September at Benenden School, which the South East Water CEO has also now agreed to attend.

In the meantime, keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for updates, and please do contact us by email or phone, or come along to our monthly meetings if you have issues or concerns you would like the parish council to assist with.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair

nicola.thomas@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk

07593 226462 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk

For more information see our website benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk or find us on Facebook

Parish Council Meeting

Monday 21 September,

Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm

Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)

Associate Priest: Revd Dr Rosemary Kobus van Wengen 764857 rosemaryvanwengen@gmail.com

Churchwarden: Deborah Jenkins 240454 deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com

Churchwarden: Cathy Presgrave 07500 119189 cathy.presgrave@gmail.com

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

Please inform the Rector, Associate Priest or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

8am and 5pm services will be in the chancel of St George's Church, accessed through the Bishop's Door to the east end of the church

10am services will take place in the hall of Benenden Primary School

Sunday 6 September	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion	5pm Evening Prayer
Sunday 13 September	8am BCP Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 20 September	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	
Saturday 26 September			4pm Connect Four at Mission Church, Sandhurst
Sunday 27 September	8am Communion	11am Harvest Service followed by Harvest Lunch	
Morning Prayer	8am Mondays and Fridays at The Rectory, Benenden, but not 11, 14, 18 and 21 September		

Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)

Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but not 15, 16 and 22 September

Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Tobin Bird 240027 www.idengreen.org.uk

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The 10am Morning Worship is broadcast on our YouTube channel: search 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

The Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Wedding 29 August Barbara Baraldi Cassaro and Henry Petch, at St Nicholas, Sandhurst

Church Letter



Support my fundraising challenge as I walk Pilgrims' Way

Work continues on the Restore, Renew, Rejoice project in St George's. By the end of November, the underfloor heating system will be installed and will be working in time for the Advent and Christmas services - that's Phase 1. The toilet extension will hopefully be complete by the end of spring 2027; that's Phase 2a. These two phases are funded, thanks to legacies, grants, and generous local donations. The next phase of the project is then to clad the shell of the kitchen and to kit it out. For this, we need to continue fundraising.

To help get us over the line and hopefully be able to complete the kitchen, I will be taking on the Pilgrims' Way in September as a sponsored walk. The Pilgrims' Way runs from Winchester Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral, via Guildford Cathedral and a little detour to Rochester Cathedral. I was ordained in Rochester Cathedral 16 years ago, so both Canterbury and Rochester cathedrals hold special places in my and Helen's hearts. The walk, assuming I don't get lost along the way, is 147 miles. I start on Thursday 10 September and arrive at Canterbury Cathedral for choral evensong on Tuesday 22 September. This route has been walked by thousands of pilgrims over many, many centuries.

If you would like to sponsor me for this walk and raise funds for the kitchen, that would be wonderful. The various ways you can do this are listed on page 9.

I hope you will feel able to make a donation so we can complete Phase 2b of the project. Phases 1, 2a and 2b, all together, will give us a comfortable church with accessible toilets and good facilities for serving food and drink, making the church building much more usable as a community space. Please drop me an email. It will be very encouraging.

Revd David Commander, Rector





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Talking Point



Water for Benenden Action Group

As many of you know and have experienced, since 2020 the water supply to Benenden has become increasingly unreliable. This year alone some properties have experienced over eight water outages ranging from 48 hours to currently nine days and (at the time of writing) still counting. Often households and businesses are given little or no notice prior to the water supply being turned off resulting in no opportunity to plan for a period of no water - and this during one of the hottest summers on record.

One of the main criticisms we have regarding South East Water is its poor and inconsistent communications. This has caused much frustration, so the 'Water For Benenden Action Group' has been created to help the community to connect, to know that we are not alone when faced with the challenges of no water and poor communications, and to give us an opportunity to feel that we are being proactive in helping to find a solution to this problem.

There is a 'Women of Benenden' (WOB) WhatsApp group, which I would urge you to join if you are not on it. This has proven to be an invaluable source of current information. When water pressure starts to reduce, word is sent out, giving us a chance to prepare. Likewise, the multiple offers of showers, water and support have been extraordinary and remind me once again how incredibly fortunate we are to live in such a strong community.

Thanks go to over 80 people who turned up on Monday 17 August on the village green to create the statement 'HELP US' shaped from hundreds of plastic water bottles collected within a 24-hour period. This sparked much media interest and, whilst momentum for the initiative is strong, we have arranged for an open public meeting on Monday 7 September at 6.30pm in the Centenary Hall at Benenden School. John Halsall, CEO of South East Water, along with specialist colleagues, will be attending and have undertaken to respond to the points below:

- Show a short explanation video as to how the water network feeding Benenden's supply works and how and why the outages occur.
- Provide a dedicated point of contact at South East Water capable of providing correct information day by day.
- Prepare a short-term schedule of works for Benenden with actions required and dates.
- Provide a realistic plan for medium-term works up to and including 2030 to avoid future outages.

Please spread the word and make a note of this date in your diary. It is so important that as a community we stand strong together. After the representatives from South East Water have addressed us there will be an opportunity for questions from the floor.

Thank you for your support.

Amanda Garratt AmandaLGarratt@outlook.com 07766 000064

Water For Benenden Instagram @BenendenVillage

WOB administrator: Nicky Brooks 07808 645702



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Village lunch

All Benenden and Iden Green parishioners are invited to join us for lunch in the village hall at 12.30pm on Tuesday 8 September. If you would like to come and haven't written your name down already, then please ring me by Thursday 3 September. We are a bigger group now which is wonderful but means the cooks need longer to prepare. It costs just £5.

Sheila Hume 854627



My sponsored walk to raise funds for St George's Church new kitchen

I am walking the **Pilgrims' Way** from Winchester Cathedral (depart 10 September) to Canterbury Cathedral (arrive 22 September). It will be 147 miles. Thank you for ANY sponsorship you can give me.



How to sponsor Revd David

If you would like to sponsor David's walk (above) to raise funds for the new church kitchen you can do so in several ways:

- Simply scan the QR code below
- Make a BACs payment to PCC of Benenden Planned Giving Account (Business Account). Sort: 60-06-18. Account: 5903 4742. Reference the payment: RRR Walk
- Make out a cheque payable to PCC of Benenden Planned Giving Account (reference RRR Walk on the back) and either hand it to me or send it to me at The Rectory, The Green, Benenden, Kent TN17 4DL
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Ride and Stride

How many Kent churches can you visit in eight hours, by bike, on foot, or even motorised scooter on Saturday 12 September? If you'd like to find out and join the sponsored Ride and Stride event in support of Kent churches - half of the money raised for the church of your choice and half for other churches chosen by the Friends of Kent Churches. Plan your own route from start to finish anytime between 10am and 6pm. A list of hundreds of churches is provided, where you can sign in, visit and get refreshments.

Anyone who wishes to take part or would like to sponsor someone supporting St George's Church, please contact David (daharmsworth@gmail.com).

More detail at:
www.kentrideandstride.co.uk
 Facebook Kentridestride
 X @KentRideStride
 Instagram @kentridestride

'Allo 'Allo 2 auditions

After the success, three years ago, of 'Allo 'Allo 1, Benenden Players are delighted to invite everyone who might fancy taking part in 'Allo 'Allo 2 The Camembert Caper to our very informal auditions in the Memorial Hall on Sunday 11 October from 2-5pm. There will be five shows in the village hall with evening performances on 25, 26 and 27 February and a matinee on 28 February next year.

We are a very friendly group who don't take ourselves at all seriously and play for fun. The Camembert Caper will be performed in much the same way as the original show, as an immersive experience where the audience become part of René's café, with scenes on the hall floor and up on the stage. Rehearsals will take place in the Memorial Hall and the village hall, mainly on a Thursday evening but nearer the time on Sunday afternoons as well with a break for Christmas.

The parts are:

French René, Edith, Yvette, Mimi,
 Michelle of the Resistance, Monsieur Alphonse,
 Monsieur LeClerc and Mme Fanny
German Colonel Von Strohm, Lt Gruber,
 Capt Geering, Herr Flick, Helga,
 General Von Klinkerhofen
British Officer Crabtree, two British airmen

There are also minor ensemble parts. Come and join us. It's lots of fun!

Bev Beveridge

Jesus: the Evidence, Expanded.

Following the successful talk last March, we are taking an in depth look at the evidence for Jesus, covering all the points in the previous talk in four one hour sessions at 7.30pm on:

**16 September, 23 September,
30 September and 14 October**

Iden Green Congregational Church
Iden Green Road, Iden Green
TN17 4HA

Details from Tobin Bird 07771 710134

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Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association
Charity Number 1152055

Pilgrimage walk

Come and join us for a gentle pilgrimage through the beautiful countryside around Bodiam on Saturday 26 September. We'll follow quiet lanes, footpaths and byways, pausing along the way for short reflections and taking time to appreciate the beauty of creation, enjoy good conversation, and simply walk together.

The route is 3.5-4 miles, using mainly off-road paths, and we'll finish back at Bodiam Castle for a well-earned cup of tea and our traditional slice of cake. The route includes several stiles and may not be suitable for dogs. Please meet at 9.45am for a 10am start. National Trust members can park for free in the castle car park. For non-members, parking costs £5 per vehicle or free parking may be available in the nearby lay-by or on the road opposite the castle.

Everyone is welcome, whether you're a regular pilgrim or joining us for the first time. We look forward to walking with you. Please contact one of us if you have any questions.
Revd David Commander 07710 416978
revdavidcommander@gmail.com
Lyn Hayes 07792 332904 lindapin@aol.com

Standen Orchard Apple Day

Our yearly Standen Orchard Apple Day celebration will take place on Sunday 27 September starting at 1.30pm. We look forward to seeing you there for genuine family fun, PYO, music, archery, apple juice and pressing, cider and local food. Bring a picnic if you wish. Parking is on site at Standen Street, TN17 4LB. What3Words:

intend.poodle.proposals. Local produce stallholders are very welcome. Please contact me. The Standen Orchard AGM will be held at a later date.

Susie Armstrong 07748 180801
susie.armstrong@gmail.com

Benenden Bonfire

Save the date for this year's Benenden Bonfire, which will be held on Saturday 7 November. Gates open 5.30pm. Bonfire at 6.30pm and spectacular fireworks display at 7pm.

Tickets will only be available to purchase online and will go on sale via our website on 1 October.

Gary Bell, Chair, Benenden Bonfire Society
www.benendenfireworks.co.uk

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Wednesday coffee mornings

We would love to see more people at the coffee morning in the Memorial Hall every Wednesday between 10-11.30am, to catch up and make new friends. We look forward to seeing you soon for a hot drink and a biscuit.

David Collard 241944

Benenden Primary School

It's the start of a new year and the children have settled in beautifully. Our school cross has more hands added as all our new starters, children and teachers alike, have been welcomed into our school community.

It's a busy term with the Kent Test and our Year 5 camping trip to Lower Grange Farm - very exciting. We have new roles and responsibilities in the school, with our new head boy and girl and deputy head boy and girl already working hard. In addition to this, we have house captains, play leaders, and of course our 'buddies', where each Year 6 child has an Early Years child to look after and mentor over the year. It is wonderful to watch the children take these roles so seriously and it's great to watch potential leaders begin to flourish.

We also welcome a new teacher, Mrs Hanson, to the team. She has brought a wealth of experience and energy to the Year 2 classroom.

As ever, we are grateful for the team of volunteers who help out in a variety of ways at school. We are always keen to have more. Please contact the office if you are considering sharing your skills and time. It is wonderful to have the support of the wider Benenden community and for this we are really grateful. Thank you.

Alison Brook, Headteacher 240565
office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk



Friends of Benenden Primary School

Get ready to dust off your boots: we're hosting a Barn Dance Bash on Saturday 26 September, from 7pm to 11pm, at the Great Barn, Halden Place, Rolvenden. It promises to be a wonderful evening of live music, dancing and community spirit, and everyone is welcome, whether you're part of the school community or simply fancy a fun night out.

Guests can look forward to live music from Hatted Hens, complete with a caller to guide everyone through the dances, so no experience is necessary. The ticket price of £25 includes a delicious hog roast, with a veggie or vegan alternative available, plus a welcome drink to start the evening off in style. There will also be a raffle with some brilliant prizes, plenty of games, and a bar serving drinks throughout the night. This is an adult-only event.

All proceeds from the evening go directly towards supporting Benenden Primary School, so as well as a great night out, attendees will be contributing to a cause close to home. Tickets are expected to sell fast, so early booking is recommended. To secure yours, visit tickets.co.uk/events/benenden-barn-dance-bash. Alex Mochrie and Stacy Howe
friends@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk/PTFA/

Benenden Village Trust

Benenden Village Trust (BVT), which owns the village hall and other recreational facilities in the parish, held its annual general meeting recently. Members attending in the Iden Green Pavilion were told that the past year had been one of consolidation in the charity's activities, with a much-improved financial position, clearer strategic goals and greater use of the village hall.

However, BVT still faces some major challenges, most notably financial, since a great deal of the year's improvement in cash flow stems from generous support from Benenden Parish Council, the Bonfire Society and others. BVT remains hostage to unexpected large costs resulting from the elderly nature of its two main buildings, Benenden Village Hall and St George's Hall, which had incurred very large repair and replacement costs in recent years, with no sign of this diminishing.

Trustees thanked members of the Benenden and Iden Green community who had volunteered to help BVT in various ways during the year. They also thanked the charity's staff members whose hard work ensured the quality of the trust's operations: Caroline Levett, BVT manager; John Betts, Benenden Village Hall manager; and Jen Gurr, village hall cleaner. In response to members' questions, trustees said the BVT planned to hold another of its successful film nights in the village hall during the autumn.

Under the trust's constitution, a third of trustees must stand down at each AGM and, if nominated, can stand for re-election. As the current longest serving trustees, Simon Brown, Chris Parkinson and Paul Tolhurst stood down. Simon resigned as a trustee. Chris Parkinson and Paul Tolhurst offered themselves for re-election and were unanimously elected by members.

Martin Dickson, Chair, Benenden Village Trust

BVT Film Night

Benenden Village Trust will be hosting another film night on Friday 9 October in the village hall. We are showing 'Hot Fuzz'; a British-made comedy starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, and Jim Broadbent alongside many other familiar faces. A very professional Metropolitan Police officer is transferred to a sleepy English village, or maybe a small town. Think Cranbrook rather than Benenden. This highly trained and experienced officer is baffled by the bumbling country ways of his rural counterparts. He is also deeply concerned that most country folk seem intent on killing things, animals and the odd human. But do not worry, the parish council and other village worthies want everything to be done 'for the greater good' to ensure mayhem and illegality is kept under control.

Sticking to our tried-and-trusted formula, doors open at 6.30pm and a WOW meal will be served from 7pm. The film will start at 7.45pm and we expect to finish by 10pm. Profits from the evening will be used to support ongoing maintenance of the hall. There will be a raffle and an interval to allow you to refresh your drinks and have a pudding. Benenden Players will once again be supporting us through the loan of sound equipment and manning bars and the kitchen.

Tickets (£25pp including supper) are available online. See advert opposite for details. BVT ask everyone to buy their tickets early so we are not panicking about food orders and seating plans.

Paul Tolhurst

★ FUNDRAISING ★ FILM NIGHT

★ BENENDEN VILLAGE HALL ★

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HOT FUZZ



FRIDAY
9 OCTOBER 2026



7pm

Doors open at 6:30pm



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Pilates fundraising

In July I held my annual Pilates for a Purpose charity event to raise awareness and crucial funds for Macmillan Cancer Support. Everyone enjoyed a pilates mat class and we were delighted to raise £335. Thank you to Benenden Village Hall and everyone who attended and/or donated.

Macmillan has spent more than 100 years helping people living with cancer. From the moment someone is diagnosed, the charity is there with all the information, support and guidance they need, to help everyone with the disease live life as fully as they can.

Kat Briggs, PilatesWise

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Our summer meetings are filled with the pleasure of exercise and the great outdoors. We followed Simon Drake on film walking the pilgrimage way to Santiago de Compostela; and this month four members will take part in the Magnificent Games in Hawkhurst - organised by our sister WI - an afternoon of fun and games for all ages and ability. For our August meeting in Iden Green Pavilion, members enjoyed lively armchair exercise called Wobble with paracise practitioner, Kim Wheeler.

An afternoon visit on 7 September to Eleanor Cochrane's lovely garden The Copper House will be a great treat. And then on 15 September, in the Memorial Hall, Alison Deane, retail manager and part of the leadership team of The Glasshouse in Cranbrook will tell us about the social enterprise which offers second chances through horticultural training to women prisoners in the UK.

Visitors are very welcome at our meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm.

Vanessa Albertini, Secretary
pandvalbertini@gmail.com



The Friends of St George's Church

Quiz of the Year

Fundraiser event
Friday 27 November 2026
Benenden Village Hall, 7pm for a 7.30pm start

Tables of 8 **bring your own drinks, glasses and nibbles. If bringing pudding, bring crockery too.**
£20 per head for a chilli con carne **supper.**
There will be a **raffle.**
Invite your friends or we can put you in touch with others.

To take part please contact:
Deborah Jenkins deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com

Friends of St George's legendary quiz

The annual quiz night in aid of the Friends of St George's takes place in the village hall on Friday 27 November.

To be sure of a place in the lineup (tickets always sell out quickly every year) please book your table for your team of eight very soon, as numbers are limited. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

The format will be similar to previous years with seven rounds of questions and supper served at half time - teams supply their own drink. For those of you who aren't already in a team of eight, we can put you in touch with others to form one. The price for the quiz and supper is just £20 per head and on the night we will collect from the team captains the dues for the whole team (which needs to be in cash). Unfortunately, absences on the night will need to be paid for. There will also be a raffle. To take part, or if you have any questions, please contact Deborah Jenkins (deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com).

We look forward to welcoming everyone to another fun evening.

Mark Hollander



**Benenden Cricket Club
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07810 658981

Merry and Bright

Our July meeting was another success. We visited Tenterden Museum, which was very interesting and brought back many memories for a lot of us. There was a mock-up of how kitchens looked in the 50s and 60s, with all the wallpaper and furniture, right down to a fake cat curled up on a chair. After our visit we walked to Marino's for fish and chips. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon and all the staff at both venues were very helpful.

We are over halfway through the year already. Time goes so fast. On Tuesday 25 August we visited the beautiful garden at The Copper House.

The next meeting on Tuesday 22 September at 2.30pm in the Memorial Hall, will be a games afternoon.

Laraine Penny, Chair 241763

Benenden School

Having brought the academic year to a close with our biggest ever speech day celebration, it was a joy to see so many happy families marking the end of their daughters' time with us. For us it also provided an opportunity to show our beautiful site at its summer best, with more than a thousand guests enjoying the grounds that we take such pride in.

Although we are always sad to see them go, we are confident that our leavers are heading off embodying the Complete Education and ready to succeed. Above all, to our girls Benenden is a home from home and our departing head girl spoke beautifully, as so many have done before her, about the lasting friendships she cherishes so dearly. It reminded us that beyond all of the academic achievements, Benenden's greatest strength is the feeling of community it fosters.

Our leavers become Benenden Seniors, tied to the school and the group of friends they made here for the rest of their lives. Many seniors return to speak at the school, sharing their experiences with younger students, and attend the numerous social events we arrange to help them maintain that connection throughout their lives. Recently many of the Class of 1976 joined us to celebrate their 50th anniversary reunion.

While we enjoy the summer holidays, it's important to remember that Benenden never sleeps. We have summer schools running on the site itself, pre-season sports camps, and some of our sports teams are currently touring, playing other school teams in the USA and Barbados.

We look forward to the new academic year and a new intake of girls keen to begin their Benenden journey.

Rachel Bailey, Headmistress

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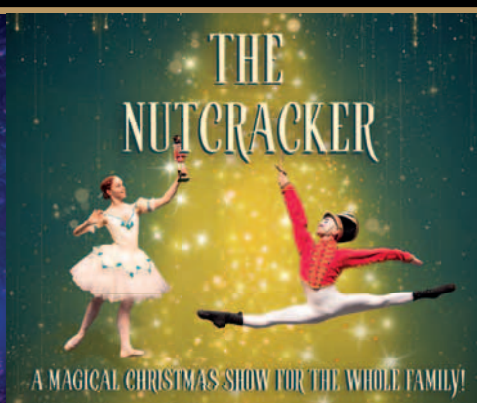
GIANT – screening
29 November



A Christmas Carol
4 December



Step Into Christmas
12 December



The Nutcracker
19 December



Cinderella – The Ballet
13 February

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Talking Shop

First and foremost a huge thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who have come to join us recently and help Benenden's over a bumpy period when we lost several members of staff rather suddenly. You have come back and given your help generously and we so much appreciate all you do. The staff who remain, Lorraine and Liane, as well as those who have returned, Penny, Les and Laura, have also pulled out all the stops, worked incredibly hard, and we have achieved some remarkable leaps forward. To all our customers, please keep coming and supporting your community shop; we can't do it without your kind patronage.

The new menu for the café (see back cover) features some old favourites and some newer additions which seem popular. This is, of course, in addition to our regular hot (and iced) drinks and you won't have failed to notice our new smart, lightweight, outside furniture. Our range of helium-filled celebration balloons are proving very popular - there's even a dinosaur! And, dare I say it, it's time to think of back-to-school supplies so check out our range, including handy lightweight PE bags.

We are very impressed with The Artisan Bread Company in Headcorn. They make a great range which includes white or wholemeal sourdough, farmhouse loaves, multigrain, sandwich and some beautifully soft white and brown baps. All their products come wrapped and labelled which is much more hygienic. Do come and try it. We'd be happy to hear your feedback.

We are very happy to welcome Rachel and Helen to our café. They will be training until they are able to assume more responsibility, along with volunteers, for certain days. We know you'll give them a warm Benenden welcome.

Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk
www.benendens.co.uk

Benenden Hospital

This is a time to think about a cause that is very close to my heart. It's World Alzheimer's Month, with World Alzheimer's Day on 21 September, raising awareness of a condition that affects millions of people and families across the UK.

Earlier this year, I completed the Jurassic Coast Ultra 100km Challenge to raise funds for Alzheimer's Research UK. It was physically demanding and incredibly rewarding, but it also gave me time to reflect on the impact dementia has on individuals and those who care for them. Dementia affects far more than memory - it touches every aspect of daily life for those living with the condition and the people who support them.

Here we believe every patient deserves to be treated with compassion, dignity and respect and supporting people with dementia is not only about providing clinical care, it is about helping people maintain their independence, wellbeing and sense of self for as long as possible.

To support this we have introduced dementia-friendly adaptations, including clear visual prompts and digital day-to-night clocks designed to reduce confusion and anxiety in unfamiliar surroundings. Small changes can make a significant difference to comfort and experience. We have also supported Alzheimer's Research UK this year, through fundraising (and yes, cake was involved!) and ran an interactive information stall in our atrium.

Dementia is not an inevitable part of growing older; if you have concerns about your memory, or that of a loved one, speaking to a healthcare professional is an important first step. Early advice and support can make a real difference. Our private GP service can help guide people towards the most appropriate support for their individual needs. The Alzheimer's Society provides a wealth of helpful information and resources that can also help guide and support.

Claire Harley, Hospital Director

Celebrate Claire Grant

My mother Claire Grant, aka Dr Grant, passed away peacefully on 2 August at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, aged 89. Claire had been a resident of Iden Green and Benenden since 1980 and deeply cherished the village. There will be a funeral at the Kent and Sussex Crematorium at 2.30pm on 17 September, everyone welcome. Afterwards there will be a celebration of her life. Please email clairegrantcol@gmail.com if you would like to attend this. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Kent Air Ambulance would be greatly appreciated: www.aakss.org.uk/donate
Tom Grant

Planning Matters

For full details of the Parish Council's comment please see minutes of meetings.

- 26/01698/FULL 5 Fuggles Court. Extensions to existing conservatory including new flat roof, changes to windows & rooflight; front porch.
- 26/01545/FULL Hinxden Farm Cottage & Hinxden Farmhouse, Hinksden Road. Removal of condition 2 of 95/10426/FUL (agricultural occupancy condition) from Hinxden Farm Cottage and transfer to Hinxden Farmhouse.
- 26/01687/FULL Mount Hall Farm Barn, Mount Le Hoe. Temporary planning permission for the stationing of mobile home for residential occupation.
- APPEAL NO: 25/03054/OUT. Benton Hoppers, Dingledden. Outline (all matters reserved) - Demolition of existing B2 buildings and the erection of a dwelling (self build).

More planning matters at:
benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Air Ambulance marathon mission

Hello, I'm Kaysie and I've lived in Benenden for over seven years and I'm extremely proud and incredibly honoured to be running the London Marathon 2027 in aid of the Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance (KSS). In 2024, my then five-year-old little boy, Alby, suffered a near fatal tonic-clonic seizure. The KSS arrived after the amazing paramedics had done all they could for him, and they swiftly induced Alby into a coma and flew him to King's College Hospital in London. Alby has since been diagnosed with a rare brain disorder resulting in epilepsy. Without the KSS, my son would not be here and I'm running this marathon to raise as much money as I can to give back to an incredible, necessary organisation that relies on a lot of public donations to continue to save lives.

I'm genuinely loving the training so far and have signed up to my first 10k in October at beautiful Hole Park in Rolvenden. This is all completely new to me, so if anybody has any running tips or advice get in touch as I'd love to hear it. I'll be keeping you all updated on my running journey as time goes on, all towards that famous finish line along the Mall. If you'd like to donate to my fundraising page the link is 2027tcsllondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/kaysie-ovenden. Or scan the QR code below. To see exactly where your donations go please visit www.aakss.org.uk. Should you see me running around the village, please don't hesitate to give me a wave.

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Open Garden success

Just over 400 people braved the potholes and road closures over three Sunday afternoons in August to visit our six-acre Little Walkhurst open garden for the Hospice in the Weald. They ambled amongst flower beds, heard jungle birds and animals in our Orchid House, looked at ancient artifacts dug from our ponds and enjoyed refreshments in the tiki bar. This year's new project was based around Alice in Wonderland, where you could enjoy a game of flamingo and hedgehog croquet!

Thank you to the lovely people of Benenden and further afield for helping to raise an amazing £2,246.35. Over the last six years we have raised £10,001.35. We hope to see you next year.

Sara Rowan and Peter Stennett

Ironman Barry

Iden Green resident Barry Bassett completed his first half Ironman middle-distance triathlon in July, despite only starting training at the start of the year and never having swum the front crawl or even run in the last 40 years!

He says: "I was determined to finish the race, having suffered from dietary issues, which caused cramps to appear during the ride, which meant that I could scarcely walk at the start of the run - and I still had a half-marathon distance to complete. But I did finish, although it took much more time (nine hours and one minute), effort and pain than I had imagined."

Barry raised over £1,900 for the British Heart Foundation and plans to return to complete the Half Ironman next year in a competitive time and to complete the full Ironman the following year.

If anyone wants to support his endeavours, visit:

www.justgiving.com/page/barry-bassett-ironman

The Ladies' Book Club

We are still welcoming new members to the book club, where we meet for a meal and a chat at local pubs. If you want to recommend a Christian book that you've read lately or join us for some relaxed conversation please email me:

Victoria Bray vickybray007@hotmail.com

Non-perishable food leftovers

Leftover biscuits? Diet started and want the last of your treats out of the house? Any non-perishable foods would be appreciated for the Nourish foodbank. Please drop at St George's Church or the Garden House, Standen Street. Collections possible. Please contact Gemma at gemmalouhunter@gmail.com or call 241064.

Gemma Coupland and Liz Bewley

Volunteer Transport Group

If you have a medical appointment that you are unable to get to because you do not have access to a vehicle and public transport is not a viable option, contact me and I will see if one of our volunteer drivers can assist you.

The group has responded to more than 120 requests for assistance since being re-formed, but to keep up with demand we would always welcome new volunteers to sign up and help out. There is no minimum time commitment, so if you are interested, do please get in touch with me.

Mick Moore 240755
m.moore131156@gmail.com



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Hospice in the Weald music

In late July, 45 enthusiasts gathered to hear Daniel Grimwood give a most unusual performance in Sandhurst. He presented a lecture/recital on the 'Method of Methods', which he is preparing for his master's degree. It was full of well-known 18th-century composers including our special favourite, Adolph von Henselt.

We had perfect weather for a garden party after the music. My grateful thanks go to all the people who assisted: Irene Vidler and Dawn Bailey were in charge of tickets and programmes and then helped with the teas; Hamish and Cynthia Brown made sandwiches and organised the teas.

The final result was an amazing £760 for Hospice in the Weald, and a good fee for our pianist, Daniel. We have now raised over £22,000 for Hospice in the Weald since my husband left us, so I now have my eyes on £25,000.

Wednesday 9 September will be the last event for 2026, when Florian Verweij will come from Holland and be joined by the world's greatest Liszt performer, Leslie Howard. Tickets, minimum donation of £24, only in advance, are now available. Please call me. Gillian Davis 850384

'Silent' Movie Night

On Friday 18 September why not step back in time for a wonderful evening of nostalgia, laughter and classic cinema. Experience Buster Keaton's much-loved silent comedy The General, brought vividly to life with a live musical score performed by the talented Mike Hatchard.

Whether you're a lifelong fan of silent films or discovering them for the first time, this promises to be an entertaining evening for all ages. It takes place in St Nicholas Church, Sandhurst, TN18 5NS - please arrive by 7 for a 7.30pm start. Tickets are £15 per person (available on the door) and under 12s are free. Or scan the QR code to buy tickets online. Refreshments are available throughout the evening.

Lyn Hayes lindapin@aol.com



Benenden Pre-School Fund Raising



New chapter beckons for hub of the community

As Benenden Pre-School launches an appeal to raise funds for its proposed new home, Ruth Pringle looks back at its history

When I moved to Benenden in July 1973 with an 18-month-old son, I immediately contacted the playgroup in the St George's building to register him. The playgroup was founded in 1967 by Victoria Wells with the support of St George's Church. She told me that as her youngest child was now due to start school, she was looking for someone else to take over the playgroup and asked if I would be interested?

I had moved from Yalding, where I was involved in transferring a privately-owned playgroup into a community one with charitable status. The group, affiliated to the Pre-School Playgroups Association, not only provided activities for the young

children but involved the mothers and provided support to the young families. I suggested to Victoria that she consider the same route and offered to be part of a steering committee to effect this change.

In 1974 the Benenden Pre-School Playgroup was registered with the Charity Commissioners, and I became chair of the initial committee with Arianwen Neve, secretary, and Ann Lock, treasurer. We appointed Pat Sims to be the supervisor, who would be assisted by a rota of volunteer mothers. The fitting out of the rooms was achieved by a team of volunteer parents at minimal cost and amazingly some of the equipment is still in use today.

What I am so proud of is not only the OFSTED 'outstanding' status the pre-school has achieved in recent years but its enduring legacy in providing a centre where young families can build friendships and a sense of community. In order for this wonderful community hub to flourish into the future it now needs financial support to enable it to purchase a permanent home in the centre of the village.

Over the past 52 years so many local families have been part of the pre-school journey with their children and grandchildren. I do hope that

you will generously donate to the fundraising appeal for a new home which will secure the pre-school's future for the next generation of young families in the village.

Watch this space for further news as plans progress and

the many fundraising activities which I hope you will support. All donations would be gratefully received. Please donate to:

www.justgiving.com/charity/BenendenPreSchool



top: Benenden Pre-School class of 1974;

left: Parade for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, 1977;

above right: Village Gala Day featuring 'The Enormous Turnip', 1979

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All proceeds from this special evening will help Benenden Preschool relocate to its new home, ensuring it can continue serving local families and remain at the heart of Benenden Village for generations to come.

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Restore, Renew, Rejoice Fund Raising



Lay a foundation for the future: sponsor a tile in the church

We are making amazing progress on Phase I of our project to sensitively update St George's Church. Most of the dirty and technical work has been completed, but we still need to finish laying the final floor surface and we still need additional funds to complete the work.

Following our fantastic campaign launch at the village fete, the moment to restore and renew the floor at St George's Church has arrived. As part of our vision to make the building a warm, step-free, and inclusive hub for our entire community, we are inviting local residents, families and groups to fund one of 800 individual stone floor tiles. We want to raise at least £40,000 and are well on the way with about £8,000 already collected.

Whether you want to dedicate a tile to mark a family milestone, as a gift for a grandchild, or in memory of a loved one who cherished our church or village, your contribution will form a permanent part of Benenden's living history.

We are asking for a minimum donation of £50 per tile, every single tile funded helps us restore and renew our church, establishing a flexible, accessible space designed to bring people together, tackle isolation and support village life for generations to come. If you are a UK taxpayer, choosing Gift Aid adds an extra 25% to your donation at zero extra cost to you.

How to claim your tile(s): Please complete our online form to reserve and pay for your tile; you can even leave your personal dedication in just a couple of minutes. Please go to www.stgeorgeschurchbenenden.co.uk/fund-a-tile/

Now comes the rejoice part; please save the date: Saturday 14 and the afternoon of Sunday 15 November. After all the hard work and heart-warming generosity supporting the underfloor heating project, the church will be open for refreshments, social time, and for you to come and see the 'new' church floor for yourself. The first services back in church will be on Advent Sunday, 29 November.

Peter Brook, Restore, Renew, Rejoice
Community Liaison

www.stgeorgeschurchbenenden.co.uk/fund-a-tile/

Water in the future: Can supply match increasing demand?

A deep foreboding about the ‘new normalities’ of water problems is increased by water bottle deliveries becoming normal and by public water tanks being installed at the village hall and in Iden Green recreation ground. Here Peter Massey looks deep into the well of South East Water’s management and planning.

I have been reading the various South East Water planning and drought-related documents and I’m impressed by their apparent thoroughness. But, as someone who has investigated hundreds of businesses in my career, I’m frustrated by the focus on meeting regulatory requirements and of acting with the expectation that there will be a drought. There appears to be a lack of ambition to avoid drought conditions.

What should the ambition of a water company be? It should be, “the best drought is no drought”, otherwise our taps don’t run. That should be the ambition: 100% of taps run all the time. The question is: How much water will we need in the future and is there capacity to supply it.

I’ve dug into the South East Water resources management plan (WRMP) and what assumptions it is based on. Is there enough ambition to capture and supply enough water?

One of the key assumptions of the plan is future weather conditions. These are provided by the Met Office/Government in ‘UKCPI8’ with given time windows, 2020 to 2040 being one of them. I wanted to check if the WRMP should have avoided the water shortage problems we’re having regularly in Benenden in 2026, because it feels like 100% of the time someone’s taps are not running. And it feels like that isn’t going to stop anytime soon.

Why is Benenden running short of water?

South East Water may say its long-term WRMP is robust because it is based on the best available climate projections, including the government’s UKCPI8, but that raises a more practical question: Does a plan based on long-term climate averages adequately protect a village when several difficult conditions happen at once?

The events of 2026 suggest why this matters.

The UKCPI8 does not forecast individual years. It describes how the climate is expected to change statistically over decades: warmer temperatures, generally drier summers and wetter winters. Those averages are useful for long-term planning, but they can conceal the particular combinations of weather that put a water network under greatest pressure.

In South East Water’s Kent area, the winter rainfall refilled supplies, then rainfall from March to May was just 36% of normal. At the same time, heatwaves, not surprisingly, drove demand beyond forecast levels. On 24 June, demand reached 687 million litres a day - nearly 100 million litres above the June average. South East Water says every available treatment works was operating at maximum capacity and that storage tanks were being emptied faster than they could be treated and refilled.

This exposes three underlying risks.

Underlying risks

First, averages are not enough: A long-term projection of average temperatures and rainfall cannot capture the operational consequences of a particular sequence: a dry spring, followed by extreme heat causing very high demand.

Second, compound events matter: The problem is not simply less rain. Heat increases demand and losses at precisely the time when rainfall, river flows and groundwater may be declining. The 2026 experience shows how rainfall, temperature, pipe and infrastructure conditions, customer demand and treatment capacity can interact to create a much bigger problem than any one statistic suggests.



Third, having water in the environment is not the same as being able to deliver it to a tap: In June, South East Water said raw-water levels were still in a good position after the wetter winter, but that treatment and pumping capacity was the immediate constraint in Kent.

Benenden experienced the consequence. During the May 2026 supply crisis, South East Water listed Benenden among the areas suffering intermittent supply or low pressure, as drinking-water storage tanks reached critical levels.

The issues

So the issue for Benenden is not simply whether the forecasters ‘got the weather right’. The harder question is whether the WRMP has been properly stress-tested against the real-world combination of drought, heat, exceptional demand and infrastructure constraints.

That is the test of robustness that matters to residents: not whether the long-term averages look reasonable, but whether there is enough resilience when the difficult conditions arrive together. If the stress testing hasn’t been good enough then the plan will fail long term

and our taps won’t just run dry now. It will be the new normal. I suspect South East Water (in collaboration with our governments) has been planning for too little capacity to meet the peaks and not getting sufficient main network funding from developers as new building adds to the demand. Having spoken to the South East Water Supply Director, he does have the ambition to get 100% of the taps running all the time. And although water companies are legally obliged to connect any houses built, they are objecting to developments in Tonbridge and Canterbury in test cases against the legislation.

Yes, we can do our bit. Switch off the tap when you’re cleaning your teeth. Take showers not baths. Recycle water into the garden. But South East Water can do proportionately so much more: by planning to capture more of the increased winter rainfall; building sufficient processing, tank and pipe capacities; fixing the massive leaks from the water network; refusing to connect new developments unless they fund the wider infrastructure - thus being much more effective at planning for the supply to meet the future demand as we globally warm.

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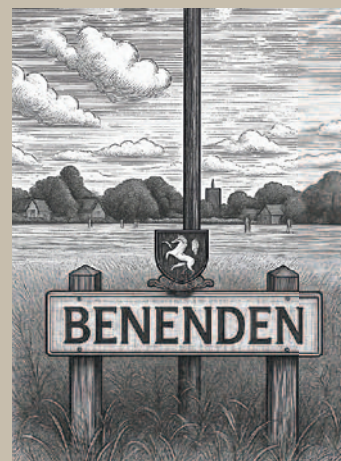
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Show Review



Absolutely Pantastic! Final year children shine at school

Benenden Primary School's end-of-year production, featuring year six pupils, was an adaptation of JM Barrie's fairytale Peter Pan. The script, songs and music were created by a team dedicated to writing for schools. As in previous years, the school's students excelled.

The scenes, often preceded by songs assisting the story line, present the Darling family, Lost Boys, natives and, naturally, pirates utilising every corner of the school hall as well as performing in the round. The stage was equipped with a furlled mast representing the Jolly Roger.

To see the whole class demonstrating their characters comfortably on stage and enjoying every moment was a joy and it would be fair to praise, in particular, Juno as Peter, Murray as Hook, Grace as Wendy and Jen as Tink (Tinkerbell). As pirates, Issy and Felix established a repartee with the audience on the subject of their drinking skills, whilst Lockie both amused and confused the audience and Hook's crew with his remarkable Italian accent.

Of course, Peter Pan ends victorious against Hook, but only after escaping vigorous threats from his crew and, finally, winning a sword fight with Hook, leaving him to the ticking croc. The Lost Boys consist of a broad group of personalities who are Peter's loyal followers,



full of alternative views and suggestions. "Why not have black pudding with strawberry ice cream?" says Tootles.

The scene introducing the natives is performed by a flamboyant bunch of angry characters with wonderful names such as Soaring Hawk, Eagle Brave and Laughing Cow, all passionately led by Alacoque as Limping Bear.

The production ended with two very sympathetic performances by Bea as Mrs Darling pining for her missing children, well played by George, Noah and Grace, and Ella as Tootles expressing her appreciation for Peter and his long-extended life. The group singing and solo performances were memorable.

Full credit must go to the staff of the primary school for preparing years three, four and five to assist with songs, making puppets, costumes and props, and for lighting, sound and imaginative scenery. Thanks go to parents for costumes and makeup. Not least, credit must go to Mr Emmett on this his swansong production as director, for his expertise and his infectious enthusiasm.

Personally, it was joy to be involved with a cast who were endlessly adding ideas and growing their characters. I wish them every success in future drama activities.

Tony Ceeney

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Do Benenden homes need air conditioning?

As heatwaves become more frequent, more people are asking whether air conditioning is becoming a sensible investment. Our previous article looked at simple ways of keeping homes cool without air conditioning. Here, Tim Dwyer examines the different cooling options available and whether air conditioning has a place in Benenden homes.

Which homes are most likely to overheat?

Most UK homes were built to keep heat in rather than out. Fortunately, many older Benenden homes, with solid walls, relatively small windows and generous roof spaces, remain comfortable even during hot weather. Modern extensions with large south- or west-facing glazing, loft conversions and rooms directly beneath the roof are more prone to overheating.

Before considering air conditioning, ask whether your home is genuinely overheating. Feeling warm on the occasional hot afternoon is normal. If bedrooms regularly remain above about 26°C well into the evening, affecting sleep, or living spaces stay uncomfortable for several days despite the measures described previously, active cooling may be worth considering. The table below compares the main options. If a portable air conditioner only needs water (or ice) and has no exhaust hose, it is almost certainly an evaporative cooler, not a refrigeration air conditioner. In the humid conditions typical of a Kent summer, evaporative

coolers are usually much less effective than in hot, dry climates. Be wary of online ads for such 'portable air conditioners' that don't clearly explain how they work.

What are you actually buying?

Most domestic air conditioners are reversible air-to-air heat pumps. They cool and dehumidify in summer and provide efficient warm-air heating in winter - typically at about one-third the running cost of a direct electric heater. Ideal for individual rooms, they heat and cool the air directly rather than circulating hot water through radiators or underfloor heating. They recirculate indoor air, so good background ventilation remains important.

There are two main options. Portable units are relatively inexpensive and require little installation, but are noisier and less efficient because the exhaust hose draws replacement warm air into the room through gaps around windows and doors. Professionally installed split systems are quieter, more efficient and can also provide heating. Once the desired temperature is reached, they automatically reduce their output and may use only a few hundred watts. Modern systems are increasingly efficient and use refrigerants with much lower climate impact.

Choosing the right solution

Air conditioning is not the answer for every home, nor a substitute for good building design. Preventing heat entering the building remains the best solution, while fans are often enough to keep people comfortable. However, where

overheating is frequent or affects health and sleep, a modern split system can provide efficient cooling and heating. The aim is not to cool every home, but to choose the simplest solution that provides comfort with the least energy.

Coming next: The hidden energy in the air

Cooling method					
	Open windows – natural ventilation	Ceiling fans and 'desk' or pedestal fans	Water or evaporative cooler	Portable air conditioners	Fixed split air conditioners
Key features	Cools when cooler outside – a 'passive' solution. Provides ventilation – other options here do not.	Makes people feel cooler by accelerating sweat evaporation and skin heat loss but does not cool the air.	Cools air temperature but adds humidity. Only good for hot, lower humidity weather. In US known as 'Swamp cooler'	Cooling and dehumidification for one room. Needs tube to outdoors	Fast, controllable cooling and dehumidification. Multi-room splits available. Needs pro install including small refrigerant pipes.
Noise	As noisy as your neighbourhood	Low to Medium	Low	Higher (refrigeration compressor indoors)	Low (refrigeration compressor outdoors)
Approx costs	Free	Upfront: £15 - £90+ Per hour: 0.5p - 2p	Upfront: £50 - £150+ Per hour: 1p - 3p	Upfront: £200 - £600+ Per hour: 24p - 37p	Upfront: £1500 - £3000+ Per hour: 12p - 25p

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A shepherd's lament: distressing dog attacks

What frustrates me is that I train dogs not to chase sheep. I see hundreds of dogs every year, I've been featured in the national press, and people travel from all over the country to see me (even the Hebrides), and yet occasionally

As a sheep farmer in Iden Green, normally I think that I am surrounded by friendly neighbours, who love to visit Ethel the pig and to see my ewes and lambs grazing the fields. Normally I am impressed with local dog owners' sense of responsibility around my sheep, keeping their dogs on the lead in the fields and the farmyard. Unfortunately, around early July, someone let their dog attack one of my lambs in a field next to Strawberry Gill. The dog was probably off the lead in the woodland, and seeing my sheep, chased them. Dogs can get through fences very easily and will find sheep before the owner is aware. I then put warning signs up about sheep being present, but these were torn down.

Then, on a couple of other occasions, I have found some of my sheep have jumped fences, which again suggests that a dog might have been chasing them. No apparent harm was done to the sheep, but I have had to repair the fence,

and spend time putting sheep back, which is just another job on a very busy day. And I could easily have missed the bite on the lamb mentioned above had it not walked past me showing its injured side, as the lamb was in a group of about 160 sheep. Had I missed it, it could have developed blood poisoning and died. I administered antibiotics and thankfully it has recovered. Again, this all takes time and money, let alone the stress caused to the sheep.



some people living locally refuse to seek any help from me. I have even had to call the police out on one persistent local offender, despite my offers of help. My aim as a Christian (and village pastor) is to help people. I take no delight in remonstrating with people, but obviously I need to protect my livestock. Thankfully the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025 has helped in the action that can be taken by the police, with unlimited fines and new powers of seizure and evidence-gathering.

So, if you can't control your dog amongst sheep or call it off wildlife, please come and see me, as I would love to help. If not, just keep your dog on the lead whenever you are walking in the countryside, in woodland or the recreation field, even if sheep aren't visible. And, if your dog chases sheep, please inform the farmer.

Tobin Bird

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In Your Garden

Hot topic: How to garden in drought and heatwave

I did not have to look far for inspiration this month on what pressing subject to write about. We are all experiencing very challenging growing conditions in our gardens (and on our land) - and have been for some time now - so now seemed a good time to go through how I approach plant care for both myself and my clients.

Plant care, establishment and maintenance was an entire unit at college - and for good reason. I can put a plant in for a client and within one season it can fail if not properly cared for. We were always shown how to plan ahead, too, particularly for years such as this. Then there is the ongoing maintenance, year after year - but it isn't rocket science, it should be timely, and most of all what you put in you most definitely get out in terms of a healthy collection of plants, trees and shrubs for years to come.

So here is my trusted process that I have used for the last 15 years. Of course, I have had failures but I tend to know it was either a sickly plant to begin with or there is a problem with the soil, such as a sinister virus or compaction/bad drainage that I have been unaware of.

Assume we are planting either in the autumn or spring and as conditions prevail, if putting plants into a newly created border then I will have prepped the ground beforehand. I don't dig over as such anymore but I do dig a hefty load of organic matter into the top layer. Ideally this is done as much in advance as possible to allow all that goodness to work into the soil, breaking up clay particles to allow for root growth, adding beneficial micro-organisms to enable better nutrient take-up and increasing the water-holding capacity of the soil.

If planting straight after purchase then dig as



deep a hole as is possible and add organic matter to the planting pit. I water the plants really well before planting, that is I leave to soak in a tub somewhere, and I usually pour a can of water into the planting pit, too. Plant at the correct level, firm gently all around, water-in generously

(enough to create a good puddle) and then add a thick layer of mulch, minimum two inches.

All plants are watered regularly in their first year - this is then tapered off in subsequent years, depending on whether a perennial, shrub or tree. I never water perennials after the first year. I mulch religiously over winter, top up in spring and often throughout the year. In subsequent years, moisture loss is the biggest issue for most plants - many of our shrubs will be suffering now but try not to be too alarmed as it is likely to just be all the top growth. Come the rains, all will be fine.

If a shrub doesn't come back then it is likely due to unprecedented competition from neighbouring plants - the big ones, such as trees or hedges, which steal all the moisture first. I try not to be too tidy in the borders, either - leaving a layer of leaf litter or plant debris to act as a surface mulch is a great idea and when it rains once again this will all get broken down into the ground and go a long way to keeping the soil in good health for the following year's growth. Good luck.

Annabel Lear GARDENS

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