

Benenden Magazine January 2022



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Editorial



I had a Groundhog Day moment when I looked back at my editorial for January 2021 when I hoped that the year would herald much to be optimistic about. And in many ways there was. But, as I write, Omicron is having a rapidly growing impact on everyone's plans for Christmas, as many take understandable precautions. We've been here before.

Plans can change in the blink of an eye and I know that, for many of you, Christmas suddenly took a different turn. It's ok for me as I'm retired, but my heart goes out to hospitality venues and local traders, who have had almost two years of the most awful stress. If we want to keep them going, we must do what we can, when we can, to support them.

I fervently hope that 2022 will bring better news and progress in the battle to control Covid. It's also a year with a lot to look forward to in the parish, including our wonderful fete, jazz and blues in Iden Green, and an extended weekend of celebrations in the parish to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

A very important date is the referendum on 3 February, when we all get to vote on the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan. It's been years in the making, has been passed by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and the last critical step is that the parish now votes to accept it or not. Please, please, before you vote, don't listen to rumour. Check the facts and make sure you know what you are voting for or against, as this is very important for the future of the parish.

You can see the full plan including site maps, policies, protections and frequently asked questions (with answers) at www.benendenneighbourhoodplan.org.

In the meantime, keep safe everyone.

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

January

Saturday 8	Skittles, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 15	Bingo, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 17	Parish Council Meeting, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm	
Tuesday 18	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.21
Tuesday 18	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Unfashionable Clothes, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.21
Saturday 22	Darts, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 25	Merry and Bright, AGM, Memorial Hall, 2pm	
Thursday 27	The Comicals of Narna, Benenden Players Panto First Night, Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm	p.9
Saturday 29	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	

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

Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6.30pm

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11.15am

Parish Council



Having been approved at the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council cabinet meeting on 2 December, our Neighbourhood Development Plan will now move to a parish referendum on 3 February. However, from that public meeting it is apparent that the following point needs to be clarified. The Independent Examiner asked that the NDP site plans for the hospital sites are extended to include the Local Wildlife Sites adjacent to them. This will give them extra protection under our site-specific policies for the sites. So, there will be:

- NO increase in the number of houses proposed for the hospital sites
- NO increase in developable area proposed for the hospital sites
- Extra protection for the Local Wildlife Sites and the proposed Local Green Space (the former cricket pitch).

Another proposed Local Green Space in our NDP is the Beacon Field next to the primary school, where our wildflower meadow project is being led by Cllr Driver. Progress was made on the volunteer day held on 2 December in conjunction with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Eight volunteers strimmed large patches of the field and these were raked to expose bare soil. All exposed patches were then sown with yellow rattle and planted with plugs of teasel, mallow and knapweed (40 in all).

One of our other ongoing projects is the restoration and repair of the village wells. Progress has been made with the ideas for fund raising, and further details on this will be in the next month's magazine.

And finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair
nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org
For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on Facebook

Parish Council Meeting
Monday 17 January 2022,
Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm



Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)
Curate: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 rev.ylva@gmail.com (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday)
Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 julia.collard@btinternet.com
Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 sue@undaunted.co.uk
www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com
Please inform the Rector, Curate or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Sunday 2 January	8am Communion	10am Family Communion	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 9 January	8am BCP Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 16 January	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	
Sunday 23 January	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 30 January	8am Benefice Communion	10am Benefice Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	
Morning Prayer	8am Mondays and Fridays		

Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)
Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays and Wednesdays
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
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From the Parish Registers

Baptism 5 December Noah Oliver
Funerals 16 December Wendy Clifford Interment
22 December Lesley Attwood Funeral Tunbridge Wells Crematorium

Rector's Letter



What is important for 2022?

"I dearly hope and pray that many of these things that we have missed will go ahead as usual this year." That is what I wrote last month, thinking about the forthcoming Christmas celebrations.

"I trust though that through all the uncertainties you still managed to find a way of enjoying Christmas. We are at the beginning of a new year; putting the old one behind us. It can be a new start, not more of the same." That is what I wrote as part of my letter for January 2021, never thinking for one minute that I would be having the same sort of thoughts 12 months later.

Like many people, I would like us to be able to get back to being able to plan things and to knowing with a degree of certainty that they would go ahead. Things like: planning time with family; or planning holidays; or making plans relating to work. It would be good not to have the uncertainty, and in the back of one's mind the thought, 'will I need to rewrite the plans again?' I look forward to the day of not having to think about LFTs or PCRs; or wondering if I'll need a Covid passport for travel or anything else that I'd like to do.

Now I'm working on 'Plan B', hoping we'll not have to redraft things for 'Plan C'. Perhaps it's a timely reminder for all of us not to take things for granted; not to take this precious life for granted. I am absolutely certain that those families who have lost loved ones to Covid, or are trying to help loved ones through Long Covid, would echo the sentiment: Do not take life for granted.

Life is precious; life is also fragile. Life is to be lived. We might not be able to do it in exactly the way we want, or had expected, but we can still appreciate it. Let the uncertainties caused by Covid remind you at the start of this New Year of the thing that is important in life: our relationships with one another. As we begin another year, make the effort to continue to contact your family; to renew a relationship that has perhaps lapsed. Make an effort to relate to members of your family, or to a friend. Moreover, make an effort to relate to God this year, because through all the uncertainties of this life, He is the one constant. He is still there, still loving, still caring about you. We are at the beginning of a new year, putting the old one behind us. It can be a new start, for us all, with our important relationships.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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Talking Point



Hearing other people's points of view

I've spoken at and chaired many conferences and I've heard many eloquent explanations of why a person or company succeeded brilliantly or failed catastrophically. I've discovered that the people and companies who know how to listen do very much better than those that don't. So, I started a quest to find out why not listening to other people's ideas, i.e. resistance, is so common. Surely evolution would favour those who listen to the best ideas and use them rather than ploughing their own furrow, regardless of success?

Stories and experiences along the way gave insights, but not the answer. Why native Americans pass a peace pipe: only the one holding it can speak, the rest listen. How my Japanese colleague would earn the most respect and be listened to by being silent longer than anyone else in a meeting. How asking good questions changes people's minds better than providing good answers. How in every great meeting the quality of the listening by the leader is striking.

I finally got to some sort of answer of why we resist other people's ideas when I read Daniel Kahnemann's 'Thinking Fast and Slow'. Resistance comes from the way we process information. Our brains have learned patterns and mental models we recognise instantly. The ancient, faster parts of our brains want to jump to conclusions rapidly in order to keep us safe. The slower, more evolved, logical parts of our brains find it hard to compete. We accept more readily what matches our existing mental models, we reject what doesn't match our mental models. Resistance. To change our minds, we have to consciously challenge ourselves.

A technique I was taught is listening for understanding versus listening for judgement. Decide to listen, not argue (yet). Resist the voice in your head formulating answers part way through the speaker's sentences. Ask questions which build your understanding of the situation or point of view. Summarise what you've heard. Then tell them why they're wrong! Seriously, consider overtly what you've learned and compare it to your mental model of the situation.

Why is this important? Techniques to divide people are rife and are used to effect today. Social media and 24-hour news give voice to and amplify the arguments - and create wider, deeper divides than might once have been the case.

Hamilton vs Verstappen fans can only see one person crashing into the other. Leavers vs Remainers might only see one side of a border. Red vs Blue politics are deaf to both being right on a subject. Diversity: 'like us' vs 'not like us', creates false stories.

Next time you get into one of these situations, take time to suspend judgement and listen for understanding. See what you learn. Only then start speaking. "Two ears, one mouth," is an old saying. It behoves us all to use two ears if we want to move some of the stubborn debates and inequalities around us.

Peter Massey

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Benenden Village Trust

Benenden is blessed with a rich diversity of trees around the village, ranging from the magnificent specimens in Benenden School's parkland to the Japanese cherry collection at The Grange. Benenden Village Trust (BVT), the charity that owns the recreation grounds in both Benenden and Iden Green, has just finished surveying and tagging all of the trees on these sites, to ensure they undergo a systematic programme of management.

The mature trees are mainly a mix of English natives - such as oak, field maple, hawthorn and silver birch - but there are also some American red oaks, including a lovely specimen that dominates the Iden Green Pavilion car park.

The Trust would like to thank Josh Ovenden-Heath of Advanced Tree Solutions, who carried out the survey at no cost. With an eye on future generations, as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022 and the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, the parish council is purchasing two service trees, which the Trust has agreed can be planted in the vicinity of the single willow on Iden Green recreation field.

As part of the initiative, the parish council has also ordered a bundle of free saplings (hawthorn, field maple, hazel and hornbeam) for the BVT, and it is hoped that these can be used in part to replace the unhealthy hawthorns along the road frontage at Iden Green.

This follows a substantial programme of sapling planting last year around the two recreation grounds, with the trust and parish council working together and using a grant for tree planting from Kent County Council.

In Benenden, that initiative included a line of flowering cherries on the north side of the playground - a tribute to Benenden's Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram, the British ornithologist, plant collector and gardener, who was a world authority on Japanese flowering cherries and lived at The Grange. He died on 19 May 1981.

Martin Dickson, Benenden Village Trust
www.benendenvillagetrust.org



Benenden Panto

After months of rehearsal, painting, sticking, sewing and prop making we are on the home stretch and looking forward to performing 'The Comicals of Narna' at the end of the month in the village hall (27-30 January). This is a truly wonderful community event with almost 50 adults and children from 9-70 plus involved on and off stage. They have all worked so hard over the last few months, dedicating a great deal of their time in creating this production.

We are pleased to say that tickets are selling fast, and you can buy these online at www.benendenplayers.co.uk. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can buy them from me in person in the village shop café between 10-12noon on Sunday 2 and 9 January (Card payments preferred if possible please), or call me.

We are very mindful of Covid, of course, and we will follow guidelines to keep everyone as safe as possible. If we need to postpone the show due to government requirements then we will contact you with the option of a full refund, unless you wish to full/part donation to help cover costs we are incurring in the run up to the event.

Ruth Clark 07767 261883
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Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

Happy New Year! The PTFA wishes everybody at school and all within the community a wonderful start to 2022. May it be filled with health and happiness. Thank you for everything you have done to support us in the past months. We are so grateful for every helping hand, any participation in our initiatives and events and your help to spread the news about what we are doing to help enrich the lives of children.

Our outdoor Christmas market was simply magical, and not only because of each of the fun class stalls where one could guess the name to win a massive teddy bear to take home, enjoy freshly popped popcorn, listen to Santa or make your own reindeer food with eco-friendly items. Having the vintage 1912 carousel definitely added the sparkle in the children's eyes that we were wishing for. We cannot thank everyone involved enough, from help with set up, to donations, giving time and generating ideas, through to clearing up efforts, vouchers for our raffle, managing the barbecue or helping share the market date with friends and family.

For January we would love any support you can give for our classroom wish lists, which we have set up via Amazon. If you go onto our PTFA website under Events, you can access each class list, discover what the teachers have chosen and pick an item you feel would add value and happy smiles. Your purchase then gets delivered directly to the teacher.

Here is to a brilliant New Year. May we have the opportunity for many wonderful moments that bring us closer together as a community, allow us to fundraise for our PTFA charity and delight the children and families.

For more details on any initiatives, please scan QR code or visit our website
www.tinyurl.com/2bpyw54h



Astrid Miller, Benenden CEP, PTFA Chair

Primary School

What a busy and eventful term it has been. In November, the children remembered all the people who fought in the First and Second World Wars and in more recent wars and conflicts. We were delighted that as a mark of respect, our Year 6 attended the memorial service in the village and Mrs Dignan was very pleased with their impeccable behaviour and thoughtful questioning. The rest of the school gathered outside in the playground and we were pleased that Miss Maynard was able to play the 'Last Post' before we began our two-minute silence.

Unfortunately, at the end of November we saw a rise in the number of children who tested positive for Covid-19, which meant that we had to return to operating in 'bubbles'. Thankfully, within a week we saw an immediate reduction in the number of positive cases and we were able to return to normal routines just in time for our Christmas market. It was a wonderful event due to the amazing parental support that our school enjoys. Particular thanks must go to our incredible PTFA, who had been working tirelessly behind the scenes for weeks to ensure the event was a success.

Congratulations to all of the children who took part in our Nativity 'A Bundle of Joy' - it was simply magical. An incredible amount of work goes into putting on a performance and this work was evident in the quality.

Amidst all the excitement of Christmas, our school council arranged a 'Crazy Hair Day' to raise money for our two charities. The event raised £152, which was added to the retiring collection from the nativity and meant the children raised £250 altogether, split equally between Starfish Malawi and the WWF.

I am very proud to say that, despite all the challenges the pandemic continues to present, the staff, governors, children and parents have continued to show enormous determination, creativity and resilience and I would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

Lindsay Roberts, Executive Headteacher
240565 office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
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Benenden Pre-School

As 2022 dawns, we traditionally set ourselves some New Year's resolutions and try to achieve our chosen goals. At Pre-School we have recently designed a new curriculum to support children's development and learning, with eight goals for children to work towards by the time they leave us for primary school.

Each of our goals contains four progressive milestones and they cover all areas of learning. Our first, and probably most important goal, is that children settle in and become confident learners. This necessitates supporting them in separating from their parents and building positive and trusting relationships with staff and other children. Activities helping children work towards this goal encourage them to communicate and negotiate with their peers and, later, to reflect on their learning and show pleasure and pride in what they have done.

Another goal reflects the time we spend in the Pre-School garden, and it is to create and complete an obstacle course. Children use a variety of resources in our outdoor space to achieve this, combining tree stumps, tyres and planks of wood to challenge their climbing, jumping and balancing skills. This goal also encourages children to work collaboratively and match their physical skills to the task in hand.

A third goal is to follow a recipe to bake a bread roll. The first milestone sees children mixing soil and water during their play in the mud kitchen and mixing flour, salt, oil and water to make 'playdough', using spoons and whisks. They practise pouring dry ingredients and use their dustpans and brushes to help sweep up.

Children made gingerbread hearts for Christmas, helping measure ingredients, watching for the scales to balance, cracking eggs and stirring in the golden syrup. Pre-School smelled wonderful!

Happy New Year, and I hope we all celebrate our successes as we work towards achieving our goals this year.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor

supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

Benenden School

I always enjoy the last few days of term; there is a wonderful festive atmosphere, with girls singing carols, lots of noise and of course delicious food as we all look forward to the Christmas holidays.

As we say goodbye to another term, it is an opportune moment for reflection, and I must say that this one has been an absolute pleasure, particularly compared to this time last year. Seeing the students all back here together with the vast majority of events taking place as normal has been delightful (and we want to maintain this going forward). The girls themselves have fully embraced the term and have led from the front, whether by setting up new societies, launching charity initiatives, running their own magazines or compiling amusing Christmas videos.

With two school carol services (one at St George's and the second at St Dunstan's), two Seniors' Advent services, a Christmas lunch, Mark Reading, inter-house lacrosse and the ever-raucous Twelve Days of Christmas in the quad (which was so loud you may have been able to hear it in the village!), the autumn term has certainly ended on a real high.

There does of course remain a degree of uncertainty ahead as the new variant causes disruption, but we are all now used to living in this way, and I have been impressed by everyone's resilience and adaptability; together, as with the past two years, we will overcome whatever comes our way.

We are very much looking forward to what promises to be a great 2022, which will begin in style with an important Benenden Society reception with our guest of honour, HRH The Princess Royal, in January, when we will be launching our ambitious bursaries campaign.

I wish you and your families an enjoyable Christmas and a happy New Year.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

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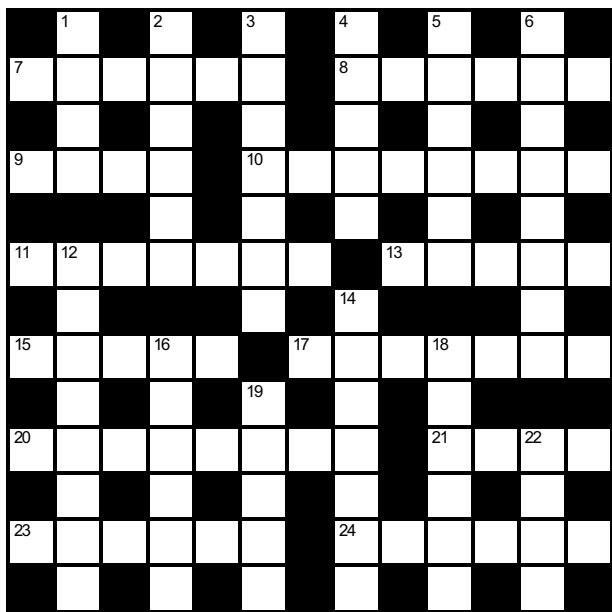
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By ASCII

(Moderate)



Across

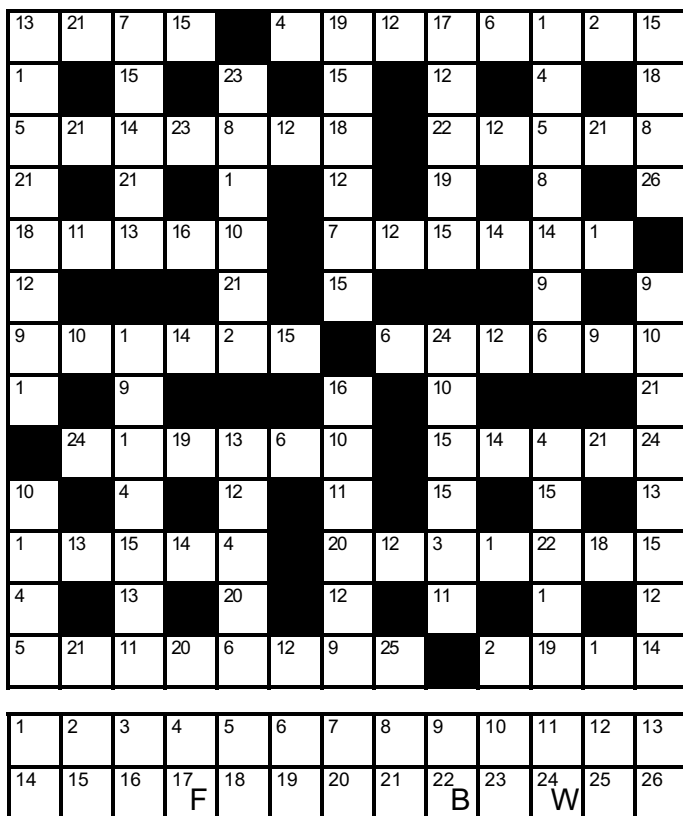
- 7 Rebel over current (6)
- 8 Refreshed, having eaten on Irish airline? (6)
- 9 Disgraced idol takes to public swimming pool (4)
- 10 Huge effort from Hermes to deliver the goods (8)
- 11 Hospital procedure finished positively for all to see (4,3)
- 13 Old saying from the era of advertising? (5)
- 15 A pair of simple mountain shelters, yes? Sounds like only one, though (5)
- 17 The business of being against the large hadron collider (7)
- 20 A message from the Arctic about, say, double-glazing? (4,4)
- 21 Sounds like the cat's done some work (4)
- 23 Love must be earned, eventually (6)
- 24 Undo red tie and lay down (6)

Down

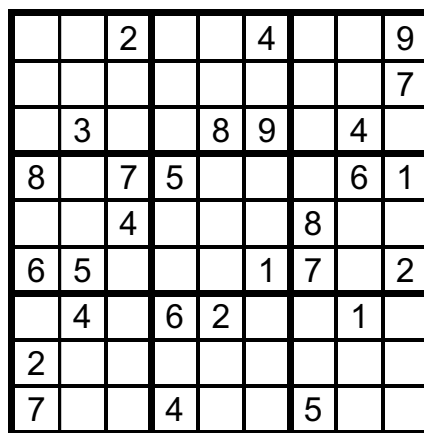
- 1 Still I wander the snows of Tibet (4)
- 2 Swaddle in Chanel? (6)
- 3 Place a low stool roughly on to mat (7)
- 4 Woodland god, relaxed for twelve months? (5)
- 5 Overdose after psychedelic experience? Stand firm (6)
- 6 Saint Aragorn, unknown to all? (8)
- 12 Abject poor fund in disarray (8)
- 14 Work aplenty in auction houses? (3,4)
- 16 Benson's partner protects against loss? (6)
- 18 Bad temper caused by ill-fitting shirt, one hears (6)
- 19 Guitar chord sounding like distressed sheep?! (5)
- 22 Finished American edition (4)

SUDOKU

CODEWORD No26 (Tricky)

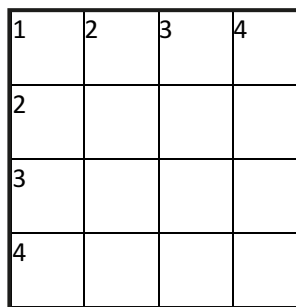


Each number represents a letter. Break the code and complete the grid. Three letters have been given to help you. **Heavy** lines denote a new word.



Each column, row and block **must** contain numbers **1 to 9** in any order. Each number can be used only **once** in each column, row or block.

FOURWORD



In the grid, place all of these letters to make the same four words across and down. Four clues are given to help you.

AAAAACHHHHORRSYY

- 1 Cleans up tea, at first?
- 2 Hilarious ditch
- 3 Hail Sir Chris or the Old Man?
- 4 Sounds like mantas are on the up



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Planning Matters

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

- 21/03444/FULL Field Farm House, Coldharbour Road. Erection of proposed single storey outbuilding. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/02327/FULL Hopehouse Hens, Hopehouse Lane. Excavation works to pond (Retrospective). The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/03552/FULL 1 Claremont Place, Chapel Lane. Single storey rear extension and Side porch addition with storage. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/03599/FULL The Barn House, Cranbrook Road. Alterations to fenestration of house and replace existing garage/log store. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/03588/FULL Stable Cottage, The Green. Demolish existing rear lean-to and replace with similar size rear extension for ancillary use (utility and shower room), internal alterations including addition of bedroom/office on ground floor, addition of small balcony to serve master bedroom, replacement and upgrade of some windows and porch. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/03581/FULL Plum Tree Cottage, Halden Lane. Proposed garden outbuilding. The Parish Council objects to this application.
- 21/03664/FULL Broomhill, Dingleden. Proposed single storey infill extension to north elevation. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 21/03687/FULL 2 Century Cottage, Rolvenden Road. Single storey side extension, infill porch and permeable hard standing for one additional vehicle. The Parish Council supports this application.

<i>Benenden's</i> <small>SHOP POST OFFICE CAFÉ</small>	
CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES	
Christmas Eve:	Shop and Post Office open 7.30am-3pm Café open 8.30am-2.30pm
Christmas Day:	Shop closed
Boxing Day:	Shop closed
Monday 27:	Shop closed
Tuesday 28:	Shop closed
Wednesday 29:	Shop and Post Office open 7.30am-5pm Café open 8.30am-4.30pm
Thursday 30:	Shop and Post Office open 7.30am-5pm Café open 8.30am-4.30pm
New Year's Eve:	Shop and Post Office open 7.30am-3pm Café open 8.30am-2.30pm
New Year's Day:	Shop closed
Sunday 2:	Shop and Post Office open 9am-1pm Café open 9am-1pm
Monday 3:	Shop closed
Tuesday 4:	Return to usual shop opening hours

Village Hall

We're looking forward to a very positive year at the hall, with lots of exciting activities taking place. First and foremost, this month is the Benenden pantomime, 'The Comicals of Narna', which is running in the final week of the month. Get your tickets soon because they're selling out fast.

We also have our usual host of exercise classes and workshops, including pilates and yoga from Lizzie, Beck, Ruth and Charlie, and fitness with Jane and Charlotte. Ami is running her full complement of dance classes, including tap, ballet, acro, musical theatre and others, and Ros is continuing Scottish dancing on Fridays. The Arts Society and the Village Lunch have monthly bookings in the diary for workshops and gatherings and, as always, we're always open for all kinds of parties and functions.

Please see our website for contact details.
 Holly Clayson, Manager 07419 989830
enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org
www.benendenvillagehall.org

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REFERENDUM 3 FEBRUARY

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- Provide **affordable** housing, including Almshouses
- Use **brownfield** sites where possible
- **Protect** our green spaces, beautiful views and dark skies
- **Improve** protection for local wildlife sites

NO PLAN MEANS NO CONTROL

See the maps, policies and the full plan at:
www.benendenneighbourhoodplan.org

Promoted by J Newman on behalf of the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan
Supporters Group, both of Reeds, The Street, Benenden. CRANBROOK TN17 4DB

Topical health

This time last year we were all talking about Covid vaccinations and whether it was safe to have one. Now, as we start a third year in the shadow of Covid, the big question is not really about vaccinations past, but boosters present and perhaps even those yet to come.

Of course, it is natural to be apprehensive about more jabs and also questioning as to where and when this might all end, but the facts speak for themselves. Vaccinations both reduce the risk of catching Covid and, perhaps more importantly, as the most recent scientific data suggests, are more important as a weapon in the battle with Covid-related severe disease than with becoming infected per se. Over 80% of those hospitalised with Covid are unvaccinated, but the unvaccinated make up less than 20% of the population. You do the maths.

Boosters are important in raising levels of immunity, which start to wane some months after the initial vaccine doses. They also reduce the risk of severe disease and hospitalisation, which is why there has been a push to increase the rate at which this is done in the face of the Omicron variant. At the time of writing, this new variant means that boosters are being offered to the over 40s from as little as three months after they received their second vaccination dose.

The question about boosters yet to come remains an open one, although it is likely that coronavirus boosters are here to stay in the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine. This may mean more of the same vaccine or, what is perhaps more likely, that the annual, or more frequent, booster will be tailored to the then dominant variant. Once again, I urge anyone who is still undecided to get vaccinated: it might just save your life.

Peter Ellis

Benenden Hospital

After the bustle of Christmas I find January can be a bit of a miserable month so it is lovely to share a positive story. At Benenden Hospital, apprenticeships are offered to our employees with a variety of development programmes. This includes supporting individuals to complete the Level 5 Nurse Apprenticeship Programme.

After seven years of working at our hospital, Mollie Yates applied for the Nursing Associate Programme: "I saw it as a chance to progress my career whilst being able to stay at Benenden Hospital. By getting this opportunity to do the course, it has allowed me to start my journey to one day becoming a Registered Nurse."

Nysa Chaseley-Turner was drawn to apply to the programme as it offered her the chance to work towards a professional registration: "I found the written work on top of shifts at the hospital and attending placements a challenge. It was particularly difficult to adapt to a mixture of online, in person and independent learning. I had so much support from the team in the eye unit, for which I was really grateful."

Sasha Carlton began her career working on reception, and after completing her Nursing Associate Programme she now plans to become a fully registered nurse: "I'm excited to see what other opportunities Benenden Hospital has to offer in terms of further courses and training and to explore all areas of nursing."

It is such a pleasure to nurture and develop talent. National Apprenticeship Week takes place between 7-11 February, so let's celebrate our hospital's exciting training opportunities together.

I would like to wish you a happy new year, and I hope that 2022 brings good health and happiness to everyone.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse

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Iden Green and Benenden WI

A very happy New Year to everyone. We have a great deal to look forward to as it is our 100th birthday this year and we shall be celebrating in style. Apart from a pleasurable visit to Pashley, we are also hoping to arrange further exciting centenary events.

Recently, some members were able to visit the Cherry Tree again for a special meal. Everyone enjoyed convivial company and delicious food. Others joined an enlightening and well presented WI Wanderers Zoom talk by Tim Potter on the Bloomsbury Set.

Our first meeting of the New Year will be in the Memorial Hall, on 18 January at 2pm, when we are looking forward to admiring your variety of out-dated clothes, especially Shirley's hot pants!

Also, on 15 February, our invited speaker will be Anna Astin, who will be talking about the history of women and flying.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk



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Village lunch

The village lunch will take place on Tuesday 18 January in the village hall at 12.30pm. £5 each and all welcome. Please could you let me know if you would like to come by Thursday 13 January, so we can plan and shop, as well as cook.

Genevieve Greenwood 240526

FOURWORD
1 CHAR, 2 HAH, 3 AHAY, 4 RAYS

7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
2	6	8	9	1	5	3	7	4
3	4	5	6	2	7	9	1	8
6	5	3	8	4	1	7	9	2
9	1	4	2	7	6	8	5	3
8	2	7	5	9	3	4	6	1
1	3	6	7	8	9	2	4	5
4	8	9	1	5	2	6	3	7
5	7	2	3	6	4	1	8	9

SUDUKO

1	A	2	G	3	Z	4	D	5	J	6	T	7	V	8	U	9	C	10	H	11	Y	12	I	13	M
14	N	15	E	16	P	17	F	18	L	19	R	20	S	21	O	22	B	23	Q	24	W	25	K	26	X

CODEWORD No26

Across: 7 Revolt, 8 Aerate, 9 Lido, 10 Olympian, 11 Open day, 13 Adage, 15 Bothy, 17 Concern, 20 Cold call, 21 Opus, 23 Endear, 24 Tiered

Down: 1 Yeti, 2 Cocoon, 3 Ottoman, 4 Satyr, 5 Tripod, 6 Stranger, 12 Profound, 14 Job lots, 16 Hedges, 18 Choler, 19 Barre, 22 Used

CROSSWORD No26

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Hot Topic



Community Shop share withdrawal

When the community shop launched in 2015, about 350 people bought shares in the venture. Without that capital, supplemented by various grants, the shop and café would never have got off the ground. The intention was always to return money to shareholders when finances permitted and in early 2020 plans were made to start the process. However, Covid struck and

the greater concern was to ensure the shop's survival.

In the financial year to March 2021, Benenden's made a

loss, principally because of the closure of the café, but in the last six months there has been a dramatic turnaround. The management committee has concluded that about half the share capital of £86,000 can be returned to shareholders in the next few months, while still leaving a good margin of safety.

The principles for share withdrawals were agreed by shareholders at the Extraordinary General Meeting in February 2020, and they included that the local shareholder base should be kept as broad as possible, maintaining at least one share per person. It is therefore intended to offer withdrawal only to people with more than one £10 share (which accounts for the overwhelming majority of shareholders).

The first call on the available cash of about £43,000 will be to pay out in full to the estates of shareholders who have died; and to people who have left the village and want to withdraw their share capital. The rest of the available cash will then be divided among participating shareholders pro rata to the number of shares they hold.

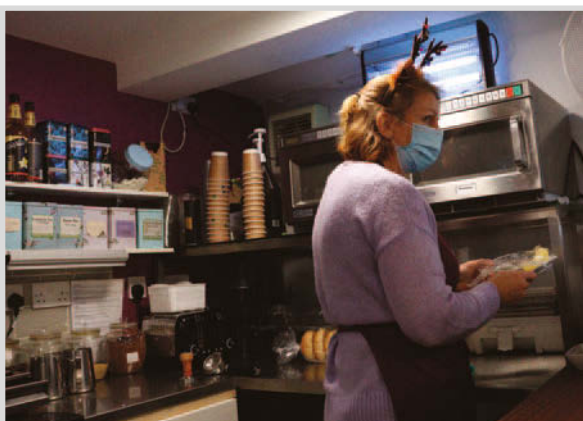
As a rough guide, if all eligible shareholders opted to take part in the share withdrawal, each one would expect to receive between a third and a half of their invested cash. The balance of their investment would remain in shares until such time as another share withdrawal programme was undertaken.

Applications for share withdrawal must be received at the shop by 31 January 2022. Application forms will be available in the shop and on the shop website from the beginning of January. You need to complete a form only if you wish to withdraw share capital - if no form is received at the shop by the due date, you will be deemed to have chosen not to take part in this withdrawal programme.

If you would like to donate your shares to the community shop, you can do so at any time. The application form contains an option to make such a donation.

When the applications have been processed and allocations made, payment will be sent by cheque to home addresses.

Many thanks again to everyone who enabled the idea of a community shop and café in the village to become reality.
Martin Pexton





Electric dream finally realised - after a few shocks

Graham Hayday shares his, not quite so smooth as he would have liked, experience of installing an electric vehicle charger at home

Nine years, 100,000 miles, one child, one dog, and two catalytic converter thefts since we first got her, it's time to say goodbye to our trusty



hybrid, as pesky criminals like stealing catalytic converters from them. So that left an EV as the only viable option for someone wanting to reduce their tailpipe emissions.

In advance of its arrival, I needed to install a home EV charger. Sounds simple, right? Before

Toyota Prius. After some serious lockdown research, I decided her replacement had to be an electric vehicle (EV). I didn't want another

I go further, there are a couple of things you should know. One: our house - a former stable - is old and attached to another. Two: I'm possibly the world's least practical person. If you live in a detached or a newer house, or have more knowledge of electricity than I do, then your road to greener motoring won't be strewn with the metaphorical potholes I shall now describe.

If you want an EV, you'll probably want to charge it quickly at home, which means an EV charger. I went with OHME. Nice small unit, not the most expensive on the market, and they have a decent app. Their 'onboarding' process was outstanding. Their website is a joy, and even an ignoramus like me was able to answer their questions about the power supply in my house.

But then things got a little complicated. OHME

outsources the installation to a third party. Based on the initial online questionnaire, I was told that the

electricity supply to my house was 'looped' and I had to get it 'unlooped' before they could do the work, and then ensure that the main fuse was rated 100A. And only my DNO could do the unlooping and check the fuse.

My DNO? A quick Google search later, I discovered that DNO stands for distribution network operator and mine is UK Power Networks. I called them and spent half a lifetime navigating a complex automated menu, before being put through to the right department. At which point I got one final automated message saying they were too busy to take my call and I should try later. The line went dead. I went back to their website and eventually found an email.

They replied with a form I had to fill in. To a layperson it was almost impenetrable. To be fair to UK Power Networks, it is really aimed at the



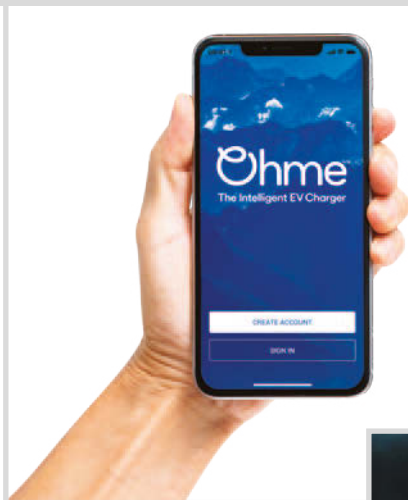
installer, but coming round to inspect my property wasn't part of the service I was offered by the electricians OHME appointed. I didn't want to spend any more money. And I was in a hurry. The car was due to arrive within a fortnight. So, I did my best to answer such questions as 'Premises Existing Agreed Maximum Import capacity?' Nope, no idea.

My best efforts turned out to be good enough. I was told by email everything was fine - I could go ahead with the installation. I replied: "Are you sure? I don't know much, but I do know that my supply is definitely looped." To which UK Power Networks replied: "You're quite right, we should never have sent you that previous email. We'll send engineers round to do the work." I was now in the surreal position of feeling like I knew more about electricity than the people who operate the power lines and cables connecting my house to the national grid.

Before they would unloop the supply and check the fuse, UK Power Networks told me I had to upgrade my tails and I had to get an electrician to do it. Tails? Back to Google. Your 'tails' are wires that link your meter to your cut-out service. I called a local electrician, who did that a few days later.

Then it was UK Power Networks' turn. Two people turned up and, after some investigation, decided the supply didn't actually need to be unlooped after all! Nor did my fuse have to be upgraded to 100A; 80A would suffice. Then it was over to the installer. When told the fuse was only 80A, he was stumped and had to call the office. He was told to go and get some clamps from the electrical wholesaler.

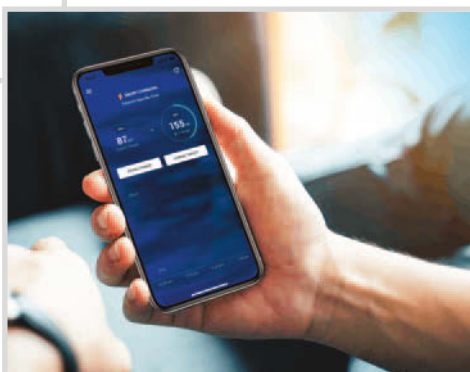
Clamps? By this point in the process, I was



so bewildered I didn't even ask exactly what they were, nor why he didn't have them. An hour later he returned with said clamps, which turned out not to be medieval implements of torture after all. But please don't ask me what they do. Remember: I can barely wire a plug. What I do know is that they wouldn't have been necessary had UK Power Networks upgraded the fuse to 100A. When that was

sorted, he was finally able to install the charger itself. Job done.

This whole process should be way, way simpler than it was for me.



It won't be this bad for most of you - the nature of my property and its electricity supply is a bit unusual - but it is ridiculous that it was as complicated as this, given the government supposedly wants us to ditch fossil fuels.

Most of the hassle would have been avoided if a qualified electrician had surveyed my wiring after I'd put the order in. In retrospect I could have arranged that, but I had no idea what was to come and how much knowledge I was expected to have.

All's well that ends well. The charger looks rather splendid next to the old water pump on the outside of our house. That pump no longer works but would once have been used to quench the thirst of the original equine residents of our property. We now need a very different type of horsepower to get us around. Here's hoping the car proves easier to drive than the charger was to install.



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Clubs, Sports and Recreation



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The lunch is open to all ages, single men and women and couples.

All are welcome and it only costs £5 a person for a main meal and dessert. The cooking of dishes such as creamed chicken and tarragon, turkey pie,



lamb tagine, trifle, crumble and Pavlova (to name just a few to whet your appetite) is shared amongst a brilliant band of volunteers, several of whom will host the lunch on the day. If you can't drive and need a lift to get to the lunch, then that can be organised.

The lunch is usually on the third Tuesday of the month but in February and May 2022 it will be on the second

Tuesday. The first village lunch of the year will take place on Tuesday 18 January at 12.30pm. If you would like to join us then please call Genevieve Greenwood on 240526 by Thursday 13 January so that we can make sure we have enough food.

Sheila Hume 854627



The village lunch: you are invited

The monthly village lunch in the village hall is a welcoming social event for anyone in the village to meet others and enjoy delicious food. If you haven't been or are new to the village then please come along and enjoy it for yourself.

Its original brief, back in the days of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2016, was to fill a halfway house between Meals on Wheels and the Benenden café and provide an opportunity for people to get together. The idea then, as now, was that the lunch should also have a social and informative purpose and be a good way for those who may not know many people, those who may spend much of their time alone, or those who are new to the village, to meet others and make friends in a relaxed environment. It's very informal and up to you whether you go once



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**The Cranbrook and District
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PROBUS is a local, national, and international association of retired people who come together in non-political, non-sectarian, non-profit, autonomous clubs which provide regular opportunities for members to meet others in similar circumstances, with similar levels of interest, make new friends, and maintain and expand their interests.

We have recommenced our regular monthly lunchtime meetings at The Bull, Benenden.

Currently there are vacancies for new members. If you are retired and would welcome friendly, relaxed company at a lunch, with interesting speakers, then please contact the Hon. Secretary on 01580 211814 for more information.



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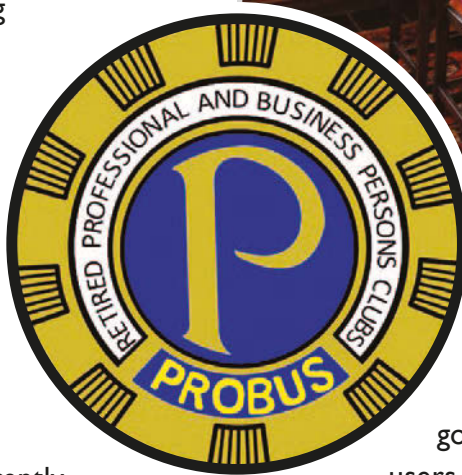
The Probus Club started in the UK almost 50 years ago in Welwyn Garden City ago by two men coming up to retirement but who realised that they didn't know many people in the town where they lived. Since then the movement has spread around the world. Every month there is an informal and friendly gathering of the Cranbrook and District branch at the Bull in Benenden, where retired gentlemen meet to socialise and have a nice lunch, which is followed by a guest speaker. This has been going on for a long time, although the lockdown caused a year's gap.

In the UK and Ireland, it is seen as a strength of the movement that there is no central organising body, so each club sets its own rules, the watchword being informality. Today there are an estimated 1,700 Probus Clubs in the UK, and in some towns demand is so great there are several: Cheltenham has ten!

Our club meets on the second Monday of each month, and in December we hold a Christmas lunch, where our wives and partners can join us, too. About 40 members currently enjoy this monthly experience. Membership is open to all professionals and businessmen living in Cranbrook and the local district, who have fully or partially retired from their normal business or profession. That might sound to be a bit daunting, but we are just a group of regular guys out to relax and enjoy each other's company.

"Probus promotes good fellowship and interesting speakers without involving any fund raising or other commitments," says Robin Dalton Holmes, a regular attendee. Dick Hill enjoys the gatherings, saying: "It's a pleasant opportunity to chat with fellow retirees over a drink and a decent meal."

There are currently vacancies for new members, as time and life has caused the retirement of some through what might be called 'fair wear and tear'. If you are interested, then you can come along as a



guest to explore the possibility of joining. The subscription is very reasonable, and the lunch is good value for money, as regular users of the Bull may know.

We are always looking for interesting speakers, so if you have retired in the district, have enjoyed an interesting career, and perhaps have a few lively tales to tell, then we would love to hear from you. You will get a free lunch and a small fee, too.

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Clubs, Sports and Recreation



Bequest restores Benenden's handbells

Ruth Tolhurst was born in Grange Cottage on the Green in 1926. She married Bob just after the war and in due course moved back to Benenden, buying her childhood home, in which she and Bob lived for the rest of their lives and raised their children. She served the church in many ways, including locking and unlocking every evening and morning for many years.

Both loved the sound of St George's fine ring of bells, Ruth especially; she never failed to express her appreciation to us when we passed on the way to and from the church, right up to her own passing in 2020.

It was with much gratitude that we learned that Ruth left a bequest specifically to Benenden bells. We thought long and hard about how it could be used in a way she would have liked. For many years the church had a collection of old handbells in very bad condition and unusable, and we decided to use the money to restore them.

There were 26 in our collection, five of them being cracked and useless. After much head scratching and advice from Sue Glossop, a Benenden ringer, also Director of Music at Vinehall School, we reckoned that there

was one ring of 12 bells but the tuning of this possible 12 was far out and rather poor. There was, however, also a quite good ring of seven bells, an octave in D minus the top bell, much lighter and entirely suitable for change ringing (which mirrors tower bell ringing in having two strokes, upward and downward).

We took the bells up to Whitechapel Handbells for further evaluation and recommendations.

They agreed about the lighter ring of seven and could supply a new treble bell to match; this could be done within the amount of the bequest plus a bit more from the PCC Bells Fund - to which the PCC kindly agreed. The seven bells preserved



are a 19th century ring by Whitechapel, probably about 150 years old. Whitechapel did a superb job of restoring them, with the new treble bell a perfect match with the historic seven, with new leather handles and clappers, as good as new.

We have been using the handbells to learn the difficult art of double-handed change-ringing. We also made a portable stand for them so they can be used for 'tapping' simple tunes - a bit limited on just one octave, but we did bring it out at the primary school Christmas market for the first time as part of our recruitment drive for more ringers, and rang several carols as well as some change-ringing.

The handbells reside in a padded case with an inscription 'Restored 2021, by the gift of Ruth Tolhurst, 1926-2020, who loved the bells'; they will forever be known as the Tolhurst Handbells. We hope she would have approved.

Rod and Karen Lebon



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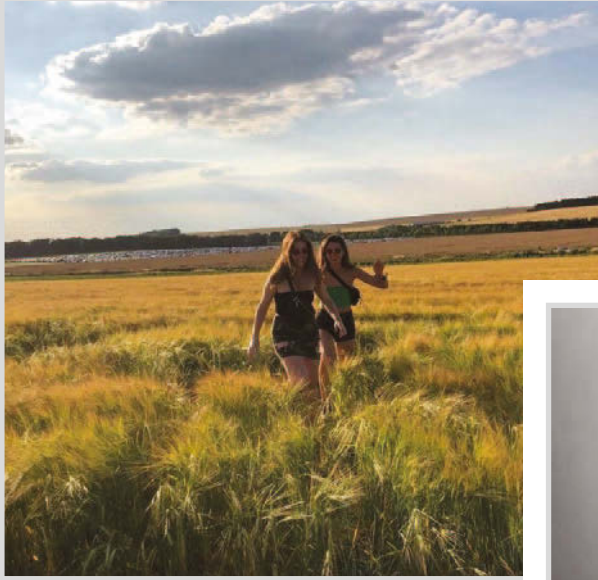
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Hannah Ellis: taking the long legal road

Following my spotlight on Daisy Barron-Bligh last month, I had the privilege of interviewing another young person in the parish who is rising to the challenge of navigating the Covid years to pursue her education come what may. Hannah Ellis (22), good friends with Daisy, has lived here since she was seven. Her parents are Benenden Hospital director Jane Ellis, and care specialist Peter Ellis (who writes this magazine's topical health column). Knowing that if she took a year out before heading for university she would probably never go into further education, Hannah chose to move straight from Cranbrook School to Oxford Brookes University to study Criminology and Politics. "Since I was little, I always said that I wanted to be a lawyer and some work experience with a local law firm while I was at school finally decided me. My strategy was to study a topic at university that would be a good basis and springboard into an eventual law conversion course."

Like so many I've spoken to, Hannah's experience of her first term wasn't great. "When it came to choosing my accommodation, I made the mistake of choosing luxury over practicality. I was quite a way away from campus. My advice to those going to uni is to be as near as possible." In her second year, sharing a house with friends just a walk away, life was much happier.



Hannah worked her way through her time in Oxford, signing up for agencies who needed staff for retail cover and events such as Silverstone race days. "It was a good option as I could pick and choose jobs and hours to fit around my course." For the last four years, she has also worked as a PA 'buddy' to a young autistic man, visiting museums, the cinema, taking walks and going for lunch. "This is particularly rewarding and fulfilling for both of us," she says.

Graduating with a 2:1, Hannah then went straight to the University of Law in Leeds to take a one-year Graduate Diploma in Law, followed immediately by a one-year Legal Practice Course, coupled with a Master of Law. She'll be finished in July 2022 and plans to apply for a paralegal post initially. "Training contracts with law firms are quite scarce, very competitive and could take several years for me to be successful. Starting as a paralegal is a good first step and means I can start earning and be independent immediately."

It's not all study for Hannah, she readily admits, and Leeds ticks all the boxes when it comes to a vibrant social scene. And, if you need any advice about music festivals, then she is the one to speak to, particularly if your music taste is house, dubstep and drum and bass (as a frequent folk festival visitor, these were alien genres to me). Her adventurous spirit has taken her to Outlook in Croatia three times alone!

I look forward to following Hannah's career as she navigates the world of law, knowing that there will be a dance in her step, and drum and bass in her earphones!

Ruth Clark



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Drinking with friends beats behind closed doors

I learned a new abbreviation the other day: BCD. Somebody told me that a lot of things had been going on BCD in the last 21 months, and I went blank until he explained: Behind Closed Doors. In the days before lockdown (BL), we were all allowed to go out and mix and mingle to our heart's content, but then every pastime that once drew us together became BCD, including village wine tastings.

Obviously I did a lot of wine tasting on my own (OMO, BCD) but it wasn't quite the same as having a bunch of like-minded souls in the same room to share the experience, as I was reminded when we all met up again to sample the wines of the Rhone, in the company of wine merchant (bromptonwine.co.uk), educator and all-round top bloke Richard Household.

Richard had been such a hit when talking us through the wines of the Loire in our final outing before the first lockdown (seems a long time ago), that the Benenden Wine Committee (as we rather grandly like to call ourselves) decided he'd be the ideal choice to get us up and running again. As usual, we were right.

The format was tried and trusted: a red and a white to whet the whistle on arrival, which included the excellent (white) Sablet from Domaine le Souverain, which will soon be available in the community shop for £12.75 (good value); followed by eight wines to taste, spanning the length and breadth of the Rhone Valley.

The wines of Famille Perrin were a particular focus of the evening, including

the opening Cotes du Rhone Reserve Blanc (£11.95), which was deservedly popular, not least with me. The edited highlights from that point (i.e. the other wines I bought) were the full and spicy Les Sommets de Rasteau (£18.45) from Domaine Martin and the

2016 Chateauneuf du Pape from Mas de Boislauzon (rich, smoky and black-fruited, £36, but then it was just before Christmas and I'd been drinking).

The wines were first-rate, as you'd expect, but one thing our tastings have become known for is the quality of the food, which quite possibly reached a new high.

The table groaned with

regional delicacies, from French game pie to pork rillettes with cornichons (that's junior gherkins to you), to the point where I felt like a king from the court of Versailles, feasting and supping to the point of contentment.

All of which was rounded off by the annual reappearance of Tracy Claridge's favourite seasonal tippie, the sweet and spirited Pineau des Charentes from Chateau d'Orignac, a staple of the community shop (a bargain £22.85) and perfect with a slice of Christmas cake.

The food and drink were exceptional, the venue (the café at Benenden School) kindly donated for the evening and warmly received, but the real highlight was the convivial company that we'd missed for so long. It just goes to show, drinking BCD and OYO is okay, but drinking with friends is best.

The next village tasting is likely to be in March, quite probably featuring the wines of Italy. Full details will appear in this space in due course.

Peter Thomas



In Your Garden

Enjoy synchronicity with the seasons

Once upon a time I had an allotment. It didn't last very long, I am ashamed to say, just two seasons, but fast-forward a few years and I'm still growing food to eat, albeit on a smaller scale. It passes on a connection with the land and seasons that is binding, and even my two daughters are hooked.

When we had the allotment, they were at primary school and I remember them racing back to the house with a bowl of freshly picked sweetcorn to boil, and they have never forgotten how delicious it was. Since then, I have grown spinach, chard, kale and purple sprouting broccoli, not to mention salad leaves, tomatoes, cucumbers and radishes.

Herbs are so easy to grow and all find homes in pots on the terrace. My elder daughter even kept some on her windowsill at university to use in her cooking. I now grow three types of basil: Napoletana, lemon and any red variety. The Napoletana is a particular success, with its huge crinkly leaves, and is delicious whizzed into pesto, drizzled over a melon and courgette salad.

I tend to buy the woodier herbs, although I really should propagate my own as they are so easy to do. Other favourites are lemon verbena and camomile - both perfect snipped and used as tisanes in the summer.

I have also grown new potatoes, garlic (hard neck, with taller flower spikes called spathes that you can eat), aubergines (very successfully in a client's greenhouse), beetroot, pumpkins and courgettes. I have had failures - no-show with potatoes one year, blighted tomatoes the next -



but the successes far outweigh the disappointments and as I get more experienced at growing food, I find myself thinking about how to extend the season - making chutneys and jams, freezing a glut - and how to cook more creatively with vegetables, for example using courgettes or beetroot in my cakes.

Once you start growing and eating seasonally, then having a bowl of fresh strawberries in winter seems utterly nonsensical, which brings me on to growing fruit - very much still a plan in my head.

My great aunt used to have a wonderful walled garden and trained peaches, pears and plums against the walls. My father always had an apple tree or two, a Victoria plum, some bush fruit - usually gooseberries - and always raspberries. I still love a fresh apple from the tree and only today I purchased some Fuji apples from a farmers' market in Etchingham.

Growing food to eat is definitely the missing link that I have now found. As you are bound by the seasons, this extends into growing ornamentally. I now find myself drawn to planning for winter interest. I have to have scent (sarcococca, daphne), coloured stems (salix, cornus), interesting bark and glossy green foliage. In spring, I grow bulbs and woodland flowering plants, and on it goes.

With this new perspective on the seasons comes a healthy adjustment to life, and although I am not a great one for new year's resolutions, I think my newfound perspective will just roll on.

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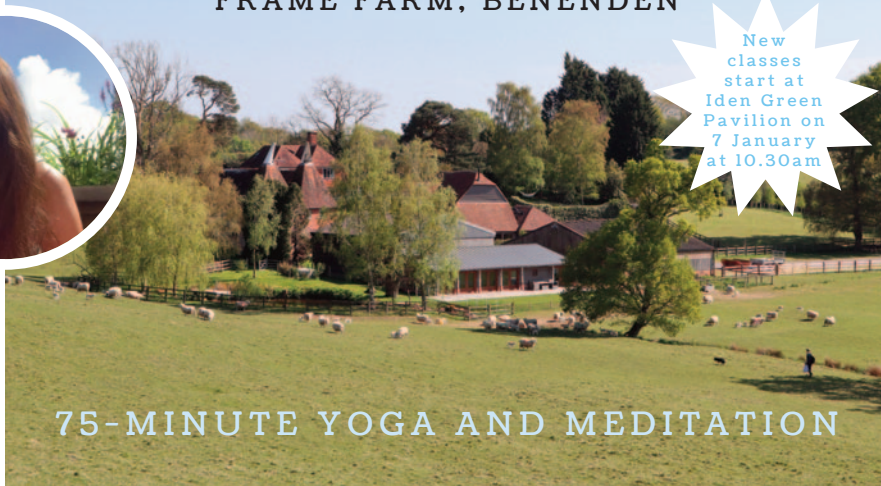


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Above: Christmas spirit in the village: The Pre-School Christmas Fair; the Primary School Christmas Market; the Community Shop volunteers' evening carol singing

Front cover: Planting for a brighter future: Beacon Field wildflower meadow volunteer day. Photograph: Peter Driver