

# Malherbe Monthly

Number 236  
March 2024



**These Hellebores show that spring is on its way.**

## Useful contact names and telephone N<sup>os</sup>.

|   |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| County Councillor                       | Shellina Prendergast<br>Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk  | 07970<br>461160           |
| Borough Councillors                     | Martin Round martinround@maidstone.gov.uk<br>Ziggy Trzebinski<br>ziggytrzebinski@maidstone.gov.uk | 890276<br>078524<br>92770 |
| Church Wardens                          | Kenneth Alexander<br>Vanessa Goodwin  | 859549<br>858372          |
| Parish Council Clerk                    | email boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com  | TBC                       |
| Village Hall bookings                   | Jan Carter email janlcarter@btinternet.com  | 850898                    |
| Village Hall General Enquires           | Jon Thompson email bromley@ashleylaw.co.uk<br>Mobile 07932 112730                                 | 851351                    |
| Gardening Club                          | Doreen Hulm   | 850287                    |
| Church Choir                            | Doreen Hulm   | 850287                    |
| Dance Fit                               | Sharon Harris   | 890170                    |
| Craft Group                             | Jan Carter  | 850898                    |
| Yoga                                    | Sue Burch   | 850381                    |
| Parish Council Website                  | www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk  |                           |
| Priest in charge                        | Dr John Huggins email: vicar@lvb.org.uk   | 850280                    |
| Pilates                                 | Cheryl Stubbs email:<br>c.stubbs8@btinternet.com  | 07852<br>602369           |
| Art Class                               | Cathy Hill email: cathyonthehill@hotmail.com  | 07927<br>045708           |
| Benefice Office                         | Sarah Hills email: churchoffice@lvb.org.uk<br>Answer phone available out of hours                 | 850604                    |
| St. Edmunds Centre                      | Kate Stansfield Mobile 07500 895831   |                           |
| Fresh Fish delivery                     | Tuesday at approx. 3pm by Post Office   | 07976<br>435217           |
| <b>Malherbe Monthly Production Team</b> |   |                           |
| Mike Hitchins                           | Advertising: mfhitchins@btinternet.com  | 858937                    |
| Mike Hitchins                           | Editor: mfhitchins@btinternet.com   | 858937                    |
| John Collins                            | Treasurer   | 850213                    |

The views expressed in "Malherbe Monthly" are not necessarily those of the Production Team; publication of articles/adverts does not constitute endorsement and we reserve the right to edit!

Anything for the **April** edition should be left in Grafty Green Telephone Box, or contact Mike on 01622 858937 (mfhitchins@btinternet.com) by **20<sup>th</sup> March**

## News from St. Nicholas Church – March 2024

Really struggling to write this as our beloved spaniel has chewed my only pair of varifocal glasses, far beyond repair! There are new pairs on order, but 'off the peg' reading glasses recommended by the optician as a stop-gap are not a straightforward answer. It certainly makes one appreciate the gift of sight and the opportunities we take for granted, for clear vision. It may be a temporary and minor 'blip' for me, but for many it is a daily struggle that deserves our understanding and support.

### Reminders

**The church porch** is open at all times, with facilities for making a hot drink and enjoying a biscuit in the peace of its rural landscape. (The coffee sachets have been replenished). A chance to read the bibles perhaps and add our prayers to those of countless others in this place, over the centuries.

Do make use of the mini food bank if you need. There is a larger food bank in St. Mary's church in Lenham, open daily from 10.00-4.00pm.

**The main church building**, is open for services, meetings, cleaning etc., Please contact the church wardens for a key if you wish to visit at other times.

**Church service times** are on the notice boards by the roadside and by the porch, also outside the Village Hall in Grafty Green.

**Celtic Morning Prayer** is said in the side chapel each Monday morning 9.00-9.30am. This is an informal prayer time for all, with short bible readings and time for discussions and prayers to remember those people, events or problems on our minds. If you have any prayer requests, please contact Rev. John Huggins or the church wardens at any time and these will be prayed for at morning prayer time or in private if you wish.

**Village Coffee Morning** takes place each Tuesday from 11.30am - 2.00pm in the Village Hall in Grafty Green. The Post Office is also open there from 12.45-2.15pm. There are usually items for sale, local free-range eggs and honey, greetings cards, Pluckley teas, homemade jams and marmalade and eco household items.

Any donations received at the coffee mornings are shared equally between St. Nicolas church and a charity chosen by the 'regulars'.

### Information

**Pancake Day Party.** Many thanks to all who made it such a busy and successful occasion. Thank you, Roy, for my very tasty and beautifully cooked pancake!

**Lent lunches** are underway in the Village Hall from 12.30-2.00pm on Tuesdays, joining the Coffee Morning. The first one took place on 20th February and will continue until Tuesday 19th March. We enjoyed the soups and Kenneth's homemade bread with friends. All proceeds will go to **Christian Aid** for their caring and vital work worldwide for those in need.

**Monthly Meditations** continue on the first Saturday each month at 2pm in St. Nicolas church. A quiet time guided by Rev. John Huggins in the peaceful atmosphere round the beautiful new refectory table. A time of silence and reflection only. Coffee/tea and a chat afterwards are entirely optional. Can be a break from the endless rush of modern living. The next one is **on March 2nd**.

**Craft Club** is getting inspired again to improve carding and spinning skills. Our new member Suzanne is proving really helpful. Those Alpaca fleeces are just waiting to be used. Very excited that Angela sent us pictures of their new animals, not more Alpacas.

**Wedding** It was good to catch up with Laura and Oliver as they are preparing for their wedding here in April. Like old times seeing her singing in the choir with Sylvia and Doreen at Evensong in February. We hold them in our prayers.

**Lent Courses** are taking place around the benefice. Anyone can join at any time. Please contact Sarah Hills at the church office if you would like to know more.

#### **Finale**

What a delight to see the spring flowers showing their finery despite the gloomy wet days. The snowdrops have been spectacular and the daffodils are not far behind, heralding so much more. Let us rejoice in God's amazing creation.

Easter will be over by the time we receive the next Magazine!

**Wishing everyone a very happy Easter**

**Sally Alexander**



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**FOR THE SELF EMPLOYED AND SMALL BUSINESS**

**Tel: 01622 851542**

**Boughton Malherbe  
Parish Council  
Contact Details**

**Ron Galton, Chairman**

- Tel: 01622 850369  
(Finance, Planning, KALC)  
[ron@boughtonmalherbecp.org](mailto:ron@boughtonmalherbecp.org)

**Robert Turner**

Tel: 01622 850325  
(Finance, Planning, KALC)  
[robert@boughtonmalherbecp.org](mailto:robert@boughtonmalherbecp.org)

**Barry Adams**

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**Tracey Andrews**

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**Nick Eastwood**

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**Vickie Ford, Parish Clerk- Tel:**

07791 135248  
[boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com](mailto:boughtonmalherbecp@gmail.com)

**Heather's** Chiropody & Podiatry

**Registered Surgical Chiropodist / Podiatrist**  
Established for Over 25 Years  
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- Verruca Treatment

**01622 850376** [www.heatherschiropody.co.uk](http://www.heatherschiropody.co.uk)  
[retreat@heatherschiropody.co.uk](mailto:retreat@heatherschiropody.co.uk)

The Brown Barn, Bull Hill, Lenham Heath, Kent, ME17 2JA (Off the A20)

**Helen Whately**

**MP for Faversham and Mid Kent**

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

House of Commons,  
London, SW1A 0AA

[www.helenwhately.org.uk](http://www.helenwhately.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7219 6472; Email: [helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk)

## **Parish Council Election – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**

An election for Councillors of Boughton Malherbe Parish Council is scheduled for Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024. There are five councillor positions of which all are up for election.

It is not known if any of all of the current councillors will be standing again for a further term of 4 years, but should they all stand and there are no new candidates then the current councillors will be elected automatically without any voting required.

This happened 4 years ago and with some resignations during the past 4 years, some of the existing councillors have been coopted onto the council with no public mandate. In fact none of the current councillors have been subjected to a contested election since 2016.

Please find below some dates that will help anyone who is considering running for election to Boughton Malherbe Parish Council.

All the below information can be found on Maidstone Borough Council website. Just google '*Maidstone Borough Elections*'

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March** – Publication of notice of election

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March** – Start of nominations

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 4pm** – Deadline for receipt of nominations

Maidstone Borough Election Office for more advice 01622 602007

## **Village Hall – March Newsletter**

We held our pancake evening celebration at the hall on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February. The hall was packed with a lovely atmosphere. As well as our usual selection of sweet and savoury pancakes which were enjoyed by all, (we sold out of pancake mix!), there were activities for the children and Ron and Barry set out a magnificent model train set which was enjoyed by young and old alike. Thank you for your support which was very much appreciated it was great to see so many people enjoying the hall and your generosity raised approximately £180 which will be used to maintain the hall and for future events that we host.

### **Back by Popular Demand Quiz Night Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 7 for 7.30pm**

As our annual Christmas quiz is so popular the committee are pleased to be hosting a collaborative event with the Platts Heath PTA. All proceeds will be shared equally between the village hall and the school where monies raised by the PTA are used to provide additional resources to the children which would otherwise not be available so as well as being a fun evening any monies raised will be put to good use. The PTA will be setting the questions, tickets are £15 per person and the format will be the usual teams of eight, a pay bar, (although you can bring your own drinks if you prefer), a sausage & chip supper, lots of unwarranted heckling and insubordination usually caused by inebriation and for those of you like me who don't have any friends don't worry we can find you a team on the night! Please contact myself on either 07932 112730 or email [Plattsheathpta@gmail.com](mailto:Plattsheathpta@gmail.com) to purchase your tickets.

### **New Evening Art Class Commencing Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 7 to 9pm Fortnightly**

Cathy our brilliant art class teacher is by popular demand starting an additional art class fortnightly on **Thursday evenings commencing on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April from 7pm and 9pm**. Please contact Cathy on 07927 054708 or Email: [cathyonthehill@hotmail.com](mailto:cathyonthehill@hotmail.com) for more details and to book your place. Cathy is offering a discounted price of £40 for the first 3 sessions, (normally £48).

### **Spring Craft Fair Weekend Saturday & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> May 10 am to 3pm**

We will also be hosting our spring craft fair weekend at the hall on Saturday & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> of May where you can browse a varied selection of stalls offering a wide range of interesting crafted items, have a chat with friends and enjoy a cup of tea and some cake on Saturday or enjoy a bacon sandwich on the Sunday. There will be a wide range of stall holders including beauty products, bags and lots of gift ideas. Any donations of cake will be very welcome and we look forward to seeing you at the event.

### **Village Hall Annual General Meeting Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm**

Finally, I have enclosed within this newsletter a notice for the village hall's AGM. The hall is a community resource run for your benefit and it would be lovely to see you if you would like to share your thoughts on the running of the hall, (good or bad!) and to discuss any ideas you may have for the future use of the hall which would benefit the local community.

**Jon Thompson**  
**Village Hall Committee Chairman**

# Grafty Green Village Hall

Bookings 01622 850898

## Regular Weekly Events

**Yoga – mixed ability**  
Susan Burch 01622 850381

**Mondays and Thursdays 9.30 – 11am**  
**Wednesdays 7 – 8.30pm**

**Pilates**  
Cheryl Stubbs 07852 602639

**Mondays 2.00-3pm**  
**Tuesdays 9.30 – 10.30 am**

**Post Office**

**Tuesdays 12.45 – 2.15pm**

**Coffee morning**

**Tuesdays 11.30 – 2.00pm**

**Short Mat Bowls**  
Joan Marriott 01622 858100

**Tuesdays 2.30 – 5.30pm**

**Dance Fit**  
Sharon Harris 01622 890170

**Wednesdays 11am – 12.30pm**

**Tai Chi**  
Rhonda Bailey 07985 001782

**Thursdays 2.00 – 3.00pm**

**Craft Group**  
Janis Carter 01622 850898

**Fridays 10am -12.00pm**

**Art Class**  
Cathy Hill 07927054708

**Alternate Wednesdays 1 – 3.30pm**

## Regular Monthly Events

**Gardening Club**  
Doreen 01622 850287  
Sue 01622 850381

**First Tuesday 7.30 - 9pm**

## Grafty Green Village Hall

### Notice Of Annual General Meeting

The 2024 AGM will take place at the Village Hall  
on Tuesday 16th April at 7.30pm

*You are all invited!*

#### **AGENDA:**

- Receive the minutes of the last AGM  
and deal with matters arising;
- Receive the Chairman's report on the  
work of the committee last year;
- Receive the annual accounts and the  
Treasurer's report;
- Open discussion of the committee's work;
- Elect a committee for the coming year;
- Consider ideas for the future;
- Review Hall hire fee;
- Any other business

*Please come along,  
cast your vote and have your say.*

The Village Hall committee is a registered charity, (no. 288091), run for the benefit of local residents. We host a variety of events throughout the year such as the Christmas Quiz, Pancake Evening and the Craft Fair. The hall is also used by a wide variety of clubs and societies and we make the hall available for hire to local residents for social events such as children's birthday parties.

Kind regards,

*Jon Thompson*

Hall Committee Chairman

Tel: 07932 112730

Email: [jon@grafftygreenalpacas.co.uk](mailto:jon@grafftygreenalpacas.co.uk)

Grafty Green in collaboration with  
Platts Heath School PTA  
Invite you to our annual

# QUIZ Night

*Saturday 20th April*

**GRAFTY GREEN VILLAGE HALL**  
**DOORS OPEN 7:00PM FOR 7:30 START**



Purchase Tickets from  
[Plattsheathpta@gmail.com](mailto:Plattsheathpta@gmail.com)  
or Jon on 07932112730

*Tickets £15.00*  
*Includes Chip Supper*  
*Teams of up to 8*

Pay Bar Available or bring your own drinks!  
Raffle £1.00 a Ticket on the Night

# **Evening Art Classes at Grafty Green**



**Alternative Thursdays, in the Village Hall, 7 – 9pm.**

**A course of 6 classes (£16 per class)**

**Starting on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**SPECIAL STARTER OFFER**

**Get the first 3 Classes for £40**

**Learn basic drawing skills using exciting and bold techniques.  
All abilities and complete beginners welcome.**

**Contact Cathy Hill: 07927 054705 [cathyonthehill@hotmail.com](mailto:cathyonthehill@hotmail.com)**



# Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

[www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk](http://www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk)

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs B Adams; T Andrews; N Eastwood; R Turner

**In attendance:** Cllr Z Trzebinski (Maidstone Borough Council); Clerk Mrs Vickie Ford

In the absence of the Parish Council Chairman, the Clerk opened the meeting at 7.30 pm

### **M01/01/24 Chairman**

**RESOLVED:** in the absence of Cllr Galton, Cllr Turner to chair the meeting.

**Anybody filming or recording this meeting kindly requested to declare it:** Cllr Adams declared that he would be recording the meeting.

### **M02/01/24 Apologies**

Apologies from Cllr R Galton were received and accepted.

### **M03/01/24 Declarations:**

**Any lobbying:** none declared

**Any interest in items on the agenda:** none declared

**Any changes to the register of pecuniary interests:** none declared

### **M04/01/24 Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** the Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as being an accurate record of the proceedings.

### **M05/01/24 Public Session:** two members of public present:

The members of the public raised objections to the proposed rise in precept (from £7,113 in 2023/24 to £10,000 in 2024/25), pointing out that that it represented an increase of 40%. The draft minutes from the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, which would have alerted other members of the public to the proposed increase, had not been published.

Cllr Turner stated that the proposed rise was high in percentage terms but it represented a very small amount in monetary terms.

A member of the public asked for clarity on reserves, stating the view that emergency reserves and general reserves were just reserves.

Cllr Turner stated that the Parish Council was continually drawing on its reserves to cover regular revenue payments.

A member of the public expressed the view that the Parish Council should not be holding reserves unless it had a good reason for doing so; that the Quinn money had been intended to be used to benefit the community and could be used to give precept-free years.

Cllr Adams asked the members of the public why they had not attended the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January. A member of the public said there had been no indication in the meeting papers that the precept might be raised by 40%. Cllr Turner answered that at that stage it had not been discussed. He added that some very good points had been made and further discussion would take place under agenda item 14.

### **M06/01/24 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Report**

Clr Trzebinski reported that MBC members had begun to look ahead to the forthcoming elections but it was still "business as usual". MBC was pushing forward on acquiring 1,000 houses for Maidstone residents and their adult children. The houses would be available for rent or purchase and, as houses were bought, more would be acquired by MBC. Clr Andrews expressed concern about what had happened in Lenham, where London borough councils had bought up new housing stock for their residents. Clr Trzebinski explained that MBC would own 1,000 houses so they would not be available for sale on the open market. He stated that there were approximately 350 families on the MBC housing list, some in temporary accommodation, so the strategy should result in savings for the Borough.

Clr Trzebinski reported that two beat Police Officers were now covering the Headcorn, Marden and Staplehurst area. He had given Parish Council meeting dates to the Officers and they would be attending at some point. The Officers had already had some success with shop-theft prosecutions in the area. The electoral boundary changes in May would see the Headcorn Ward extended to become Headcorn and Sutton Valence Ward. There would still be two councillors covering the new Ward as MBC was cutting the number of Borough councillors. The new Ward would form part of the new Weald of Kent parliamentary constituency.

Two significant developments had been proposed for Ulcombe, both sites at the end of Eastwood Road. Some parishioners had expressed concern about the possible increase in traffic. Clr Trzebinski explained how the Local Plan would give a reasonable amount of protection against anything outside it. Clr Andrews expressed concern that there was already too much traffic on the main roads.

### **M07/01/23 Planning Outcomes since 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Noted that:

23/504792/FULL Erection of a single storey side extension to existing triple garage, with store in roof space at Grey Cottage, Coldbridge Lane, Egerton, TN27 9BP had been decided.

The Clerk apologised for the absence of further information, which she undertook to provide at the earliest available opportunity.

### **M08/01/24 Local Policing/Community**

Police/Crime Report: It was noted that 1 crime had been reported since 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### **M09/01/24 Community Wardens**

The Clerk had circulated correspondence with Headcorn Parish Council regarding their possible hiring of a warden. The correspondence indicated that they would be open to the warden taking on any cases in other parishes on an ad hoc basis in return for a simple payback of time spent and possibly fuel, depending on associated mileage. The Parish Council indicated that it may be interested.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to request further information from Headcorn Parish Council.

### **M10/01/24 Water Leaks**

RESOLVED: the Clerk to report a water leak on Liverton Hill.

### **M11/01/24 59 Bus**

A member of the public congratulated the Clerk on securing a grant from the National Lottery Awards For All scheme to cover the cost of the 59 bus service throughout the coming fiscal year.

### **M12/01/24 Litter**

RESOLVED: the Clerk to obtain quotations for the installation of the rubbish bin supplied by MBC for the Lengthsman's use.

### **M13/01/24 Councillor Reports on any External Meetings**

Clr Turner reported that he and the Clerk had attended a meeting with Helen Whately MP, which had mostly concerned the Leeds bypass. The next meeting would be held in Lenham at the beginning of February.

## **FINANCE**

**M14/01/24 Balances at the Bank:** Balances as at 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were noted:

Lloyds current

£8,242.94

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Lloyds business saver  | £7,162.94  |
| Lloyds 32-day notice*  | £40,686.46 |
| NatWest current        | Nil        |
| NatWest business saver | Nil        |
| Nationwide             | £14,465.77 |
| Cambridge and Counties | £24,165.11 |

\*Balance at 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024

The Clerk apologised for the omission of the date of the bank reconciliation on the agenda.

**M15/01/24 Receipts since last meeting:** Lloyds Bank interest £193.88; HMRC VAT refund £559.09; MBC Parish Services Scheme £131; National Lottery Community Fund (59 bus) £7,800

**M16/01/24 Bank Reconciliation**

The statement prepared by the Clerk was accepted and signed. The Clerk apologised for the omission of the date, which should have read "16<sup>th</sup> January 2024".

**M17/01/24 Statement of receipts and payments against budget**

The statement to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 prepared by the Clerk was accepted.

**M18/01/24 Cheques to sign:** Clerk's expenses £65 (removal and disposal of Christmas tree)

**M20/01/23 Authorisation of any payments since the last meeting:** Clerk's expenses £57.50; Amesis Ltd £60.67; Mr R Tew (Christmas tree) £275; Mr J Thompson (Christmas Carol event) £489.84; Amesis Ltd £60.67; V J Ford £1,117.48; ted Learning Ltd £40.79

**BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024/25**

**M21/01/24 Budget 2024/25**

Members had before them a revised draft budget, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance and Staffing Committee. Cllr Eastwood observed that many items in the revised draft budget also included a contingency. Cllr Turner explained that his thinking was that regular revenue payments should be covered by the precept. He expressed his view that an increase in precept should be regarded in terms of actual sums of money rather than in percentage terms; that the regular revenue payments amounted to almost £13,000, which far exceeded the 2023/24 precept of £7,113. He stated that increasing the precept to £10,000 would lead to a rise of £10.95 per annum (91 p per month) per Band D equivalent household. Cllr Eastwood expressed his view that the recommendation of the Finance and Staffing Committee (£10,000) represented a radical increase in precept, which would normally be preceded by public consultation. He asserted that funding for the Christmas event and the lengthsman had been approved on the basis of using Quinn donation money; and that funding for the repairs to the Village Green fence could be taken from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) held as a ringfenced reserve by the Council. The Clerk was asked to check on the latter.

Cllr Adams proposed increasing the precept to £8,000.

Cllr Eastwood proposed an increase of 3% on the previous year (£7,326).

RESOLVED: subject to the precept being amended to £7,326, to adopt the 2024/25 budget as presented.

**M22/01/24 Precept 2024/25**

RESOLVED: to set the 2024/25 precept at £7,326.

**M23/01/24 Parish Council Domain Name/Email Addresses:**

The Clerk reported on the "Parish Helper" webinar she had attended.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to pursue adoption of a .gov.uk domain name in line with the Parish Helper scheme on offer from the (Government) Cabinet Office

**M24/01/24 D-Day 80:**

RESOLVED: to invite the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Church to consider commemoration in the Parish; and, if they were to decide to hold an event, to ask the Parish Council for funding.

**M25/01/24 CPRE Grant:**

The Parish Council had paid a subscription of £36 in the year so far but they had been asked by the CPRE to

consider making an additional grant due to a shortfall in the organisation's funding.

RESOLVED: to raise the 2024/25 subscription to £100.

**M26/01/24 Clerk's Salary**

RESOLVED: to increase in Clerk's salary 2024/25 by £1 per hour, in line with NJC pay scales and in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance and Staffing Committee

CLlr Turner closed the meeting at 9.06 pm

[Date of the next meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024]



**COMPUTER PROBLEMS?**

Need help with your iPad or tablet?  
Struggling with Windows?  
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Can't find your photographs?

**WE CAN HELP!**

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between 10am and 12 noon at  
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THE MILLENNIUM HALL

**GET IN TOUCH**

 [instructor@egerton-kent.co.uk](mailto:instructor@egerton-kent.co.uk)  
[www.egerton-kent.co.uk](http://www.egerton-kent.co.uk)

**Dear Editor,**

I write this letter as a form of double appeal. We need on the council both a new set of councillors and a proper democratic election because the current council is not serving the interests of the village well. Those interests take second place to the suppression of democracy to accommodate ego. I certainly don't want to be on the council again after the elections in May if that entails enduring the abuse that I have taken over the past four years. It would therefore be vastly preferable to have a contested election which may even allow us to have some good candidates and some competition which would help expose the truth behind some of the events this I will recount below. I do this because the public should know what is occurring in their council – both because of the poor decision making and the characters which have caused others to resign and stifled constructive debate.

Over my time on the parish council, especially at points where I have raised legitimate concerns, I have faced concocted allegations of misconduct, attempts to intimidate me into resigning on false pretences and attempts to bully me into silence all repeated over dozens of lengthy emails. I will keep this short for readability's sake but please be assured anyone who desires fuller information I can provide copious evidence.

Most recently, I was trying to inquire why a resolution of council had not been implemented properly only to find that the clerk and chairman, Ron Galton, had, in conjunction, felt it best to do something different. Polite written enquires as to why this irregularity had not even been reported afterwards to the council were met with evasiveness from the clerk followed by threats of misconduct allegations for me bullying from Ron. Undeterred, I repeated my attempts to find out what had occurred, and why, at a meeting. I got no answers, but the meeting proceeded normally as can be seen from the minutes – only afterwards did Barry Adams make another attempt at bullying me into resigning with a page long email of fallacies including an allegation of violence at the meeting.

Leading to another round of abuse was the traffic calming scheme. You may recollect that the council was to publish the results of surveys to show the efficacy. The excuses for not doing this over more than a year were as variable as they were all bogus. The final one was that the council could not reach a decision on results to publish because I had given two members of the public the two proposed texts. The fact that local council legislation is geared towards forcing councils to debate matters in front of an informed public was not enough to deter my colleagues from this rather pathetic excuse. It was however an ideal opportunity to blame me and at the same time cover up that the tens of thousands spent on the traffic scheme had yielded no identifiable gain.

The matter of the potential village green purchase probably had some of the same dishonest motives behind it. The failure to make any progress – for which I blame no-one – was best covered up by making up an allegation that I had invented a lie about Ron. Initially, the supposed evidence was that I had campaigned for more openness on the proceedings (a misdemeanour in Ron and Barry's eyes it seems). Ron later developed this into he had proof

that I was responsible. This so-called proof turns out to be that the other councillors had said it wasn't them and someone had told him it was a councillor. Clearly no proof at all, but useful in misleading the other councillors into ostracizing me and keeping their obedience.

Financial matters have been another area of incompetence. After a number of parishioners had, with great diligence, dissuaded the council from reducing its waste on the traffic scheme from £80k to £30k, suddenly the money that had been saved was deemed to be already committed to the village green purchase – I never thought I'd be explaining "you can only spend it once" to a council. There never was any explanation as to how this occurred, nor to why the traffic scheme had been justified on the basis that there was nothing else to spend the money on. After many months of pressure that it was irresponsible to holding reserves on a pie-in-the-sky plan we were neither planning for, nor even actively pursuing, that was dropped. Nonetheless at the budget meeting, the finance committee still recommended a plan to raise tax to take funds far beyond what we have any plan for spending. Under further pressure from dedicated parishioners, with a little help from me, councillors succumb to the argument that 40% rises in taxation should at the very least be accompanied by some justification. A bizarre period ensued where various councillors suggested figures for next year's tax that they'd quite clearly plucked from thin air. The edifice was far removed from responsible governance, but I resisted the temptation to suggest "double top".

Waste is also a feature of our planning meetings. There is an insistence that we must incur the expense of meeting for every planning application. This happens despite most of the time no councillor having a single relevant thing to say. Neither is there any evidence that our usual submissions to Maidstone Council have any impact – rightly when they have no reasoning behind them. Statistically by my reckoning a planning applicant would want us to object as our "rejected" seem to stand better chances of acceptance by Maidstone than others. At the last meeting two councillors hadn't even seen the application before the meeting – not an infrequent occurrence. All-in-all an excuse for much chatter and nothing achieved.

There is a common theme in these shenanigans. Ron seems to expect councillors to be blindly obedient to his wishes and the current batch has been mostly compliant. Critique is not expected nor is it tolerated without the source treated as a threat, patronized and dismissed. That is no way to reach the best decisions or outcomes.

I hope this has not put people of standing because if enough decent people stand for election, we could have a majority to dispel this undemocratic and repugnant behaviour and form a council that really did work for the public benefit. It would also then be a pleasurable place to do that. The workload is a modest one; we have a meeting every couple of months with sometimes a planning meeting in between. The council is responsible for very little and so meetings could be short if we can avoid the current prattling. If anyone would like further information, about either past or future, I'd be happy to be contacted.

**Nicholas Eastwood**

[nicholas.eastwood.bmpc@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.eastwood.bmpc@gmail.com) 01622 850300

## Parish Clerk – Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

A vacancy has arisen for the post of Clerk to Boughton Malherbe Parish Council resulting from the resignation of the previous Clerk.

Boughton Malherbe is a small parish incorporating the village of Grafty Green, the hamlet of Boughton Malherbe and the surrounding countryside, sitting on the greensand ridge between Lenham and Headcorn in the district of Maidstone.

This is a part time role requiring 7 hours per week. The role is home-based with flexibility as to when the hours are worked and attracts a salary between £12.63 and £13.73 per hour (national SCP 7-12) depending on experience/qualifications.

Council meetings take place bi-monthly in the evening, and occasionally there is a requirement for committees to meet between Council meetings.

Duties for this interesting role include:

- attending evening Parish Council Meetings, usually held on Monday. Additionally, there is a requirement to hold the Annual Parish Meeting each year as well the occasional day-time meeting/site meetings
- preparing the agendas and taking minutes
- giving procedural advice to councillors
- carrying out the Council's administrative tasks
- managing all aspects of the Council's finances including budgeting, monitoring expenditure, VAT and the production of all relevant accounting statements as well as the audit process.
- dealing with general enquiries and correspondence
- updating and co-ordinating the Parish Council website

The successful applicant will have good communication, administrative and literacy skills as well as a basic IT skill set covering the various packages required to carry out the functions of the Clerk. The Clerk needs to be organised, have the ability to be flexible and able to show initiative. Where required training will be provided.

The ideal candidate will have previous experience in a local government/clerk role and some experience of managing budgets.

### How to apply:

Please email a covering letter and CV to ***boughtonmalherbepc@gmail.com***. If you would like to know more about the role and have an informal chat before applying, please call our Chairman Cllr Ron Galton 01622 850369.



# Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk

## Minutes of a Planning Committee Meeting held in the village hall at 7:00 pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Present:** Cllrs B Adams; T Andrews (Chair); N Eastwood; R Galton; R Turner  
**In attendance:** Mrs V Ford (Clerk)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm

1. **Anybody filming or recording this meeting:** Cllr Adams declared that he would be recording the meeting.
2. **Apologies for absence:** none
3. **Declarations:**
  - (i) **Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda:** none
  - (ii) **Declarations of lobbying:** none
4. **Approval of Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023:** approved and signed as a true and accurate record
5. **Planning Application:**
  - (i) **Public Session:** none (1 member of the public present)
  - (ii) 24/500211/FULL  
PROPOSAL: Erection of a three-bay, one and a half-storey garage with associated fencing and driveway works.  
ADDRESS: Woodsden Villa, Lenham Road, Headcorn, TN27 9LJ  
The Chairman had provided printed copies of the plans. It was observed that the proposed garage would be set back from the road.  
Cllr Turner asked if the roof tiles would be in keeping with the main house; the Chairman confirmed that they would.  
RESOLVED: that the Parish Council returns a neutral response with NO OBJECTION.
6. **Natural Burial Ground proposals at Redhill Stables, Lenham Road**

Cllr Martin Round (Maidstone Borough Council - MBC) had sent apologies as he was unable to attend due to circumstances beyond his control.

It was noted that the proposal was not within the Boughton Malherbe Parish but was within the Headcorn Ward and that Headcorn Parish Council, among other consultees, had supported it. However, Kent County Council Highways Department had opposed due to the dangerous bend near to the proposed access and so MBC had refused the application. The proposal would have provided an extra burial ground and pet cemetery for Headcorn and the surrounding area.

RESOLVED: to ask Cllr Round if he would attend another meeting to speak on the application; the Clerk to include in the agenda item any action Cllr Round would be asking the Parish Council to take.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:16 pm.



# Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

[www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk](http://www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk)

## Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.17 pm in the Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs B Adams; T Andrews; N Eastwood; R Galton (Chairman); R Turner  
Clerk Mrs Vickie Ford

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.17 pm

**Anybody filming or recording this meeting kindly requested to declare it:** Cllr Adams declared that he would be recording the meeting.

**EM01/02/24 Apologies:** none

**EM02/02/24 Declarations:**

**Any lobbying:** none declared

**Any interest in items on the agenda:** none declared

**Any changes to the register of pecuniary interests:** none declared

**EM03/02/24 Public Session:** 1 member of public present: no public session

**EM04/02/24 Recruitment Panel for Appointment of a New Clerk**

**RESOLVED:** to form a recruitment panel consisting of all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** To delegate to the Recruitment Panel authority to advertise the imminent vacancy; shortlist and interview candidates; and recommend appointment to Full Council.

The Chairman read out the advertisement for the vacancy, which had been prepared by the Clerk. It was agreed that the Clerk's email address should be used for responses but that all correspondence should be diverted to the Chairman's email address from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February, when the current Clerk would be leaving the post.

**RESOLVED:** the current Clerk to contact the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) to advertise for a locum clerk.

It was noted that the above may have a financial implication.

**RESOLVED:** the current Clerk to publish the advertisement on the Parish Council website; in the Malherbe Monthly; the Kent Messenger; Indeed; and the KALC website.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:37 pm

## **Helen Whately – MP**

### **Education is the closest thing we have to a silver bullet.**

It might be a cliché in politics, but it's one which still holds true. Investing in people is the single best thing we can do to improve the world around us.

It spawns the doctors, engineers, and business people of tomorrow. It lights a spark in people who go on to change our lives for the better. And it gives people lots of the tools they need to navigate life.

That's why of all the things we've achieved in government since I became an MP, our record on education is the thing I'm most proud of.

At the last Budget school spending increased to its highest real terms ever – across both primary and secondary education. This is great news for schools and pupils, but it's only half of the equation. What matters most isn't what you're putting in, it's what you're getting out.

The fairest way to measure this is generally through international comparison. Grade inflation makes it tricky to compare UK figures year-on-year, but how we match up globally can't be fudged.

Since 2010 England has flown up every international league table – for science, for math's, for reading. Children in England are now the most literate in Europe, and the fourth most literate in the world.

That hasn't happened by accident. It's thanks to a huge programme of reform – giving schools greater freedom but also holding them more accountable for their actions. And the numbers speak for themselves.

The proportion of children in good or outstanding schools has risen from 66% in 2010, to nearly 90% today. Only 58% of six-year-olds were able to read words fluently in 2012. By 2019, the figure had risen to 82%.

I've made it one of my five priorities to help students get the most from their education locally.

Whether that's helping our local schools win investment - like The Lenham School to get more classroom space through the School Rebuilding Programme, or Queen Elizabeth Grammar, Sheldwich and Graveney Primaries to get improvements through the Condition Improvement Fund.

Whether that's supporting better standards locally – like the brilliant Snowfields Academy in Bearsted which caters for students on the autistic spectrum and was recently rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

Or whether it's bringing opportunities to students thinking about the next step – like my Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair.

As a government we're working hard to put technical and vocational education on an equal footing with traditional academic routes. While university can be a good option it's far from the only one, and apprenticeships are a fast-track to develop skills while working and earning.

The Fair is taking place this year on Friday 8th March at Maidstone Leisure Centre, and we've got over 1,600 students coming to meet companies from Amazon to Shepherd Neame. Please do mention it to anyone you think might be interested.

There's information about all of this on my website, and please do get in touch with me if I can do anything to support local students and schools.



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## How To Make Cut Tulips Last A Long Time

Tulips are spring's most coveted flower. Unlike other flowers, cut tulips continue to grow! They come in the most beautiful colours and varieties. They look gorgeous on their own or as part of a Spring arrangement. Plant the same colour for a stunning uniform arrangement, or mix colours for a brilliant explosion of natural hues.

Tulips are beautiful flowers that brighten up any space! With just a few simple tips on how to take care of cut tulips, you can enjoy these blooms for weeks on end. Here are a few tips when caring for cut tulips...

### TOP TIPS FOR CUT TULIPS

1. Buy tulips that are not fully opened.
2. Remove any excess leaves. Cut 1/4 inch off the stems at a 45-degree angle.
3. Choose a taller vase at first to help the tulip stand up, as you cut the bottom throughout the week you can switch the vase to something smaller and eventually a bud vase.
4. Wash your vase well to remove all bacteria, use cold water for the tulips and a small amount of flower food.
5. Only use a small amount of fresh water in the vase at a time so the tulips to discourage them from continuing to grow. Check the water often as you'll need to replenish it because they do drink a lot.
6. As with all cut flowers, keep away from direct sunlight.
7. If your tulips are wilted in the morning, no big deal! Cut their stems, put them in a taller vase, add a little cold water and they'll stand straight up again.

### WHY DO CUT TULIPS DROOP?

Unlike many flowers, this member of the Liliaceae family will continue to grow up to two inches after cutting when kept in a vase, but with a pliable stem and heavy blooms, though, tulips are prone to bend and droop as a result of gravity and phototropism, a response that causes the flower to orient towards light.

If your tulip arrangement feels a bit “stiff” don’t worry, they’ll start to relax in just a few hours!

## **A VASE FOR YOUR CUT TULIPS**

Of course, you can always buy a stunning, traditional tulipiere- some pottery pieces are a great way to display individual blooms. No arranging required at all!

However, in the interest of simplicity and time-saving reality, buy a flexible vase (or two) that will showcase your tulips beautifully! The key is to use a wide enough opening, with a deep enough shape to support the weight of the stems.

Join me for a PYO Tulip session, book your slot at [www.parkhousepetals.co.uk](http://www.parkhousepetals.co.uk)

**Charlotte @Parkhouse Petals**

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**Maidstone Borough Councillor for Headcorn Ward**  
**Cllr. Zygmunt A.S. Trzebinski**

I am pleased to be writing an article for the Malherbe Monthly. Since I was elected so much has happened and my involvement in the affairs of the ward has increased rapidly, but I thought it would be good to sum up the progress made by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), as well as what I have been doing personally, along with my co-councillor, Martin Round. I have written two articles so hopefully you will get another one next month.

I am glad to say, all but a small minority of MBC Councillors, really do make efforts to work with each other across party lines to make the Maidstone Borough the best it can be. Two years ago, when I was elected, Maidstone Conservatives became the majority party at MBC and since then, working with opposition and independent councillors, some really positive initiatives have been undertaken:

- **1000 Local Houses** Housing is a priority. We have hundreds of families on the waiting list and more in temporary accommodation. This costs us all money. MBC has instigated a programme to buy 1000 housing units for local people. This will give local families a place they can call their own, as well as save money on temporary housing.
- **Environmental responsibility but with cost pragmatism** All decisions taken by the council have an underlying principle that they must be good for the current and future environment. At the same time, it is not practical to ban cars from the centre of Maidstone for a 5-mile radius. It might be nice, but we cannot expect everyone to go to work on a bicycle. All sides of the equation are considered when decisions are made so that a well thought out compromise is found.
- **Dealing with Anti-social behaviour/ASB & crime** We have been working with the Police and getting them to target ASB in key places like the town centre and several village high streets as well as react and follow up on rural crime whilst enforcing a zero tolerance on fly-tipping with heavy fines. We have also tightened up on planning infringements.
- **Restoring pride and activity in the town** Maidstone Town Centre not only employs many, but is also a Tourism and shopping center, a hub of schools and social activity and has cultural and sporting interests. MBC is developing a town Centre strategy to make it a place that is safe and desirable to visit with plenty of attractions. At the same time, both myself and Martin Round have emphasized that this should not be at the expense of our rural communities which also need investment in social facilities.
- **Local Government Reform** Some of the ward and constituency boundaries have changed and as a result, MBC will reduce the number of elected members. Future elections will be held once every 4 years - saving thousands of pounds each year to be better spent on other areas.

- **Robust and relevant budget management** It is essential to keep our finances in order. Other Councils are struggling financially and unable to provide adequate services effectively. Maidstone is in good financial order, providing key services well, whilst it also invests in the future.
- **A Leeds Langley relief road** With the recent closure of the road due to South East Waters piping works, the whole of South & East Maidstone and the Headcorn and Sutton Valence areas have been severely affected. Calls for a relief road have been made for years, but now is the time to actually put real plans into motion. KCC and MBC need to work together to take this forward, and local residents must be informed throughout the process.
- **Rubbish Collection.** All residents are interested in this service. MBC empties thousands of bins each week and, by and large, a high-quality service is maintained. When there are issues within our control, we act quickly to resolve them. Sometimes, as with the shortage of qualified drivers over the last couple of years, it has been difficult to keep everyone happy. We increased wages to retain drivers, at the same time, keeping the MBC budget under control. We have a new contractor starting later this year, and are looking forward to an even better service.

One of the areas that I would like to expand upon is the Local Government Reform as a number of amendments have been made to boundaries. From May 2024, the Headcorn Ward will become the Headcorn and Sutton Valence Ward. This means that Sutton Valence will be joining Headcorn, Ulcombe, East Sutton and Boughton Malherbe to become a very large ward, but still only represented by two councillors. Additionally, the new ward will form a part of a new constituency called The Weald of Kent for which a new MP will be required at the next general election.

Moreover, from May there will be one election every 4 years for Maidstone Borough Councillors so it is very important that as many of you vote as possible as the two councillors who are elected will represent you for four years. Previously, each candidate for wards with more than one councillor would be elected at different times, allowing changes in the makeup of the council to be made year on year. The new system means savings on election costs, but also a better chance for positive changes to be made for the borough due to a consistent approach over 4 years. It also means the council officers have a better idea of how-to future plan.

Lastly I would remind everyone that **photo ID** is required when **you vote** next time. Next month, I will let you know what Martin and I actually get involved in on a day-to-day basis in the Ward.

## **Grafty Gourmet**

This is such a simple, basic recipe that can be served with either a salad, or your choice of potatoes and vegetables.

### **Italian Stuffed Chicken Breasts**

#### **Ingredients**

- 2 tablespoons of chopped olives or sundried tomatoes - whatever you prefer
- 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- ½ teaspoon of dried basil
- ½ teaspoon of dried oregano
- 200g tub of full-fat soft cheese (Philadelphia or similar)
- 4 plump boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 ripe tomatoes, sliced
- olive oil, for drizzling

1. Heat oven to 180C/fan. Beat the olives or sundried tomatoes, garlic and almost all the herbs into the cheese, then season with a pinch of salt and black pepper. Cut a slit along the side of each chicken breast, then use your knife to open it out into a pocket.
2. Stuff each breast with a quarter of the cheese mix, then press to close. Lift onto a greased baking tray. Then overlap tomato slices over the top of each piece of chicken. Season with a little more salt and black pepper, then scatter with the remaining herbs. Drizzle with olive oil.
3. Roast for 20 mins until the chicken is golden around the edges and the tomatoes look a little shrivelled. Serve with a green salad or potatoes and vegetables of your choice.

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## The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

**Friday March 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Performance begins 19.30, doors open 19.00**

*Running time 1hr 48 mins*

We apologise for having to cancel February's performance and the inconvenience this may have caused. We are delighted to be back up and running on March 8<sup>th</sup> with **The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry** (12A, 2023), based on the novel by Rachel Joyce. Academy Award winner Jim Broadbent plays Harold and Penelope Wilton his wife Maureen. Both give magnificent performances. An ageing couple, Harold sets out one day to post a letter to his dying friend Queenie... but he changes his mind. Realising that a letter is not enough, instead of posting it he decides to walk the 450 miles to see her in person. The journey is significant for both Harold and Maureen – Harold reflects on the twists and turns of life whilst Maureen, who has no idea what has happened, agonises over the way she has treated him. Do come along and share this wonderful film. The director is Hettie Macdonald.

As well as showing a great film on March 8<sup>th</sup>, we'll also be revealing the fabulous line up of films that we'll be showing as part of our Spring and Summer 2024 programme. There'll be more about future films in the April issue. Please get in touch for more information or to join our mailing list.

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

**Admission:** members £4, non-members £5, under 16 £2, under 5 free.



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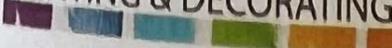
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## Grafty Green Gardening Club Program of Events 2024

| Date                 | Speaker/Event  | Topic   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| January 9            | Joe Archer   | From Kew to Kent  |
| February 6           | Sally Channon  | Thanet Earth  |
| <b>March 5</b>       | <b>Steve Kirk</b>  | <b>Wild life reintroductions in Kent</b>                |
| April 2              | Spring show plus<br>Maureen, Christine<br>and Sue                            | Encouraging wildlife visitors to<br>your garden         |
| Saturday April 27    | Plant fair   |   |
| May 7                | Vicky Golding – Outing to Marden Meadow                                      |   |
| June 4               | Social in Bridget Samuelson’s Garden, Crumps Lane                            |   |
| July 2               | Outing to Hawkhurst – Hands of Hope garden                                   |   |
| July 30              | Outing – Old Rectory Otterden  |   |
| September 3          | Autumn Show and<br>Steven Harmer   | Arts and Crafts movement<br>and their gardens           |
| September 13 -<br>15 | Weekend away to north Devon  |   |
| October 1            | Kevin Tooher   | Choice trees for small spaces                           |
| November 5           | Davina   | The story of the Dower House<br>garden at Chilston Park |
| December 3           | Practical session – table decoration with guidance from<br>Sandra Pilborough |   |

March 5th Members and Non-members can enjoy a talk from Steve Kirk entitled 'Wildlife Reintroductions in Kent'. This promises to be a very interesting talk and we look forward to seeing as many members, friends and non-members as can make it. Tea, coffee and biscuits are always available to accompany a catch up with gardening friends.

Arrangements for our weekend away to North Devon are well underway and we have opened a list for anyone to join us who would like to come. Please call Carole on (01622) 757536 if you want to be added to the list or are unable to get to our meetings or speak to any committee member who will do this for you.

**In our gardens:** - many plants are emerging and it is time to mulch beds and borders. It is also time to prune bush and shrub roses and to reseed bare patches on the lawn. Overgrown clumps of perennials can be lifted and divided and summer-flowering bulbs planted. In the kitchen garden vegetables can be sown and early potatoes planted.

**Guided walk from Grafty Green**

On

**Saturday morning 23<sup>rd</sup> March.**

Meet on the village green at 9.30 for a 9.45 start.

The distance will be less than four miles and we should be back in the village by mid-day.

More information call Sue Burch on 01622 850381 or 07803 962339

**Yoga Classes in Grafty Green Village Hall with Sue Burch**

Monday mornings 9.30 to 11

Wednesday evenings 7 – 8.30

Thursday mornings 9.30 – 11

Yoga is suitable for all ages; revitalising and maintaining or regaining flexibility for ease of movement; establishing strength and stamina, releasing tension.

To join a class or for more details please call Sue Burch (*British Wheel of Yoga teacher*) on 07803 962339.

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## Christian Message March 2024

March is the month in nature of renewed hope as Spring really takes shape before our eyes.

The weather affects the new growth, and if adverse sometimes spoiling the first show of daffodils or blossom, but in general the warmth filtering through and increased light makes us all feel good.

This year with Easter so early (Sunday 31st March) we are already well into Lent having begun that back on February 14<sup>th</sup> – bit tricky - chocs and romance versus give up choc for Lent??!

The year often seems to fly past. There are occasions when many of us are glad that it has gone quickly, especially if it's been a hard year for some personal reason. And of course, conversely, some want to savour the days and exclaim 'what happened, we are already a quarter of the way through the year – where has it gone too?'

Living for the moment, appreciating the now is something that small children are often better at than adults. They ponder, they experience, they wonder, they explore.....and when we are with them we are drawn to do the same.

In the Christian faith believers are often referred to as 'children' of God, and we give God in heaven the name of 'Father' as Jesus encouraged us to do. As God's children we get that same permission that we give our young friends to be curious, to be open, inquisitive. This means that we can be child-like (not childish, that is different), even when we have no children around us to lead the way.

We can stop and watch the ant edge along the garden wall; we can notice the ladybird catching the first rays of sun; we can smile inwardly as we hear the birdsong and see them flitting about busily building nests.....we can smile at the eggs cooking in the pan that look like a pair of eyes looking back at us, the rasher of bacon forming a smile – there are always ways to be child-like and to love the world we live in and not miss out on the wonder of God's creation and presence among us.

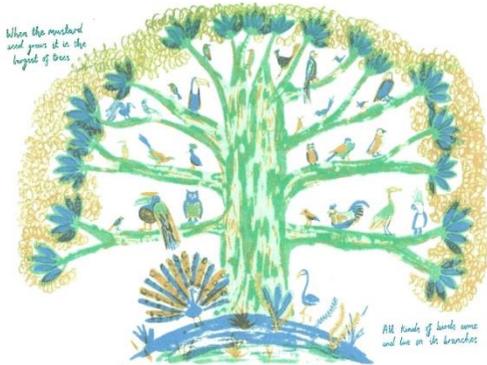
This sort of simple discovery, awareness and meditation lifts my heart, renews my hope, amuses my spirit, keeps me going....what supports you and keeps you going?

The resurrected Jesus shows us that life in all its fullness comes again, and again, and again .... Have a blessed Easter when the month comes to a close.

**Rev. Canon Lorraine Apps - Huggins**

# Holy Week 2024

*Series of Holy Week evening talks  
followed by Night Prayer*



Monday 25<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March

**The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds**

Jonathan Arnold

Monday 7.30pm at St Nicholas, Boughton Malherbe

**What seeds do we sow for growth**

Ben Doggett

Tuesday 7.30pm at St Mary's, Lenham

**The birds that sit in the branches**

John Huggins

Wednesday 7.30pm at All Saints, Ulcombe



# Len Valley Benefice March 2024

## Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

**9.30am** Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.30am** Lenham: Breakfast Church

**11.00am** Harrietsham: Family friendly Morning Worship

**11.00am** Lenham: Holy Communion

## Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March

**9.30am** Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

**11.00am** Harrietsham: Chippendayle

## Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March – *Mothering Sunday*

**9.30am** Harrietsham: Holy Communion

**9.30am** Lenham: Breakfast Church

**11.00am** Lenham: Morning Worship

**11.00am** Ulcombe: Holy Communion

**3.30pm** Boughton Malherbe: Choral Evensong

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March

**8.00am** Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.30am** Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion

**9.30am** Harrietsham: Holy Communion

**9.30am** Lenham: Breakfast Church

**11.00am** Ulcombe: Holy Communion

## Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March – *Palm Sunday*

**10.30am** Benefice Holy Communion at St Mary's, Lenham 'The King who came in peace'

## Monday 25<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March

### *Series of Holy Week evening talks*

*followed by Night Prayer*

**Monday 7.30pm** at St Nicholas, Boughton Malherbe

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds – Jonathan Arnold

**Tuesday 7.30pm** at St Mary's, Lenham

What sees do we sow for growth  
Ben Doggett

**Wednesday 7.30pm** at All Saints, Ulcombe

The birds that sit in the branches  
John Huggins

## Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March – *Maundy Thursday*

**7.30pm** Harrietsham: **Maundy Thursday Holy Communion** with washing of feet.

## Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March – *Good Friday*

**2.00pm** Services in all four churches 'An hour at The Cross'

## Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March

**3.00pm** Lenham: **Messy Church – Messy Easter**

## Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March – *Easter Sunday*

**6.00am** Boughton Malherbe: **Daybreak Easter Celebration** around the fire, followed by breakfast

**9.30am** Boughton Malherbe: Easter Holy Communion

**9.30am** Harrietsham: Easter Holy Communion

**11.00am** Lenham: Easter Holy Communion

**11.00am** Ulcombe: Easter Holy Communion

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