



Malherbe Monthly

Number 247
February 2025

**We are very excited to announce that a Farmer's Market is coming to Grafty Green Village Hall!
From Friday 28th February there will be a weekly
Farmer's Market from 1pm-3pm**



See inside for more information

Useful contact names and telephone numbers

County Councillor	Shellina Prendergast Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk	07970 461160
Borough Councillors	Martin Round martinround@maidstone.gov.uk Ziggy Trzebinski ziggytrzebinski@maidstone.gov.uk	890276 07852 492770
Church Wardens	Kenneth Alexander Vanessa Goodwin	859549 858372
Parish Council Clerk	email boughtonmalherbepc@gmail.com	TBC
Village Hall bookings	Jan Carter email janlcarter@btinternet.com	850898
Village Hall General Enquires	Jon Thompson Email: jon@graftygrenalpacas.co.uk	07932 112730
Gardening Club	Doreen Hulm	850287
Church Choir	Doreen Hulm	850287
Dance Fit	Sharon Harris	890170
Craft Group	Jan Carter	850898
Yoga	Sue Burch	07803 962339
Parish Council Website	www.boughtonmalherbe.co.uk	
Priest in charge	Dr John Huggins email: vicar@lvb.org.uk	850280
Pilates	Cheryl Stubbs email: c.stubbs8@btinternet.com	07852 602369
Art Class	Cathy Hill email: cathyonthehill@hotmail.com	07927 045708
Tai Chi	Rhonda Bailey	07985 001782
Benefice Office	Sarah Hills email: churchoffice@lvb.org.uk Answer phone available out of hours	850604
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The views expressed in "Malherbe Monthly" are not necessarily those of the Production Team; publication of articles/adverts does not constitute endorsement and we reserve the right to edit! Anything for the **March** edition should be sent to the Editor Carol Hulm via email (carolhulm@gmail.com) by **22nd February**



Message Board

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

Update on Renaming: I've received more feedback about keeping the name as it is than changing it, and no suggestions. **So, the name will remain the same**, but I wondered if I should add a small note on the front on the magazine to explain what's included. Something like. ***"This magazine is for the villages within the parish of Boughton Malherbe, it contains information about local events, film clubs, recipe of the month as well as Church and Parish information"*** Please let me know if you think this is something that would encourage more people to read the magazine or send other suggestions to Carolhulm@gmail.com

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

About this page: Use it or lose it: If you like this message board, please send me articles by the copy date on the inside cover, otherwise I will stop including it in future issues.



BOUGHTON MALHERBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 6th January 2025, at 19.30 at Grafty Green Village Hall

Meeting Ref: 007/2024

Present : Cllr Eastwood (Chairman) Cllr Hook, Cllr Tomlinson, Cllr Thompson
Marie Norris (Clerk)

01.25.01 Welcome and apologies for absence

- a) The chairman welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Cllr Peter due to work commitments. This was accepted by the members.
Ward Cllr Trzebinski also sent apologies due to a prior work commitment.
- b) Councillors had no changes to the Register of Interests to declare.
- c) No declarations of Pecuniary Interest were made.
- d) There were no requests for dispensations.
- e) There were no declarations of lobbying.

01.25.02 Public Session/Open Forum

There were two members of the public in attendance. The subject of Speedwatch was raised and it was asked whether the PC will be implementing a Speedwatch programme within the village. The chairman advised that there were no current plans but suggested that the resident contact David Jenkins details who facilitated this previously. The chairman will provide his contact details

A drainage problem was highlighted to the PC. Water was currently collecting on the road and pavement by the public house footpath and the road towards Woodcock Lane. A resident had reported the problem to KCC Highways on two separate occasions and requested that the PC follow up on this matter. The Chairman asked if photographic evidence could be supplied and the PC would then submit this to KCC Highways along with a report .

Action: Clerk

01.25.03 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

Councillors were asked if they had any comments regarding the accuracy of the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish meeting that took place on the 4th November 2024. No comments were made.

Resolved: The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th November 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

01.25.04 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting

Councillors were asked if they had any comments regarding the accuracy of the Minutes of the Planning Committee that took place on the 9th December 2024. No comments were made.

Resolved: The minutes of the Planning Council Meeting held on the 9th December 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

01.25.05 Reports from Borough / County Councillors

No report was submitted.

01.25.06 Clerks report and update of resolutions from last meeting

01.25.06 Planning Applications

Reference: 24/505101/LBC

Little Southernden, Southernden Road, Headcorn Kent TN27 9LL

Proposal: Listed Building Consent internal and external alterations including Installation of boiler and flue, staircase, freestanding solid stove, loft hatch and ladder. Steel lintels installed over south elevations windows, small window and vent removed and in-filled with masonry on east elevation, beam over chimney raised. Installation of 4x security cameras and 5x outside lights. Replacement of windows and roof tiles like for like. Enlargement of patio, erection a rear lean-to on outbuilding including insertion of solar panels and roof re-felted. (Works completed). – Awaiting decision

Planning Applications Decided

Reference 24/504047/Full

Yew Tree Farm, Eastwood ME17 2DQ

Construction of a single storey side extension. Insertion of rooflights over the rear roof slope (part retrospective)

Status Decided

Decision Application Permitted

Reference 24/504524

Wrens Nest Headcorn Road Grafty Green Kent ME17 2AP

Proposal Erection of a single storey rear infill extension, removal of window and section of wall below the window.

Status Decided

Decision Application Refused

01.25.08 Financial matters

a) Receipts of Income

Received since 4th November 2024

£12.09 Lloyds Instant Access Account

b) To Authorise Payments listed on the schedule

i) M Norris Clerk Salary Nov/Dec £843.87

ii)	Village Hall Hire, 4 th Quarter	£100.00
	Total	£943.87

Resolved All payments were approved by Councillors in attendance.

c) Bank Reconciliation

Lloyds Treasures Account	£1,448.75
Lloyds Inst Online	£7,240.79
Lloyds 32 Day Notice	£41,696.99
Nationwide	£14,973.40
Cambridge & Counties	£24,165.11

d) To discuss and approve the FY25/26 Budget and Precept

A copy of the 24/25 budget and the actuals to date and projected figures to year end had been submitted to the PC prior to the meeting. The PC approved the budget for 25/26 and the precept was set at £7546.00 The clerk will forward the precept to Maidstone Borough Council.

Action: Clerk

- 01.25.09. Matters of Correspondence Raised** *(for information purposes only no decisions can be made under this item)*
Matters of correspondence have been sent to the PC members via the clerk at the time of receipt. An email that had been received by the clerk concerning Redhill Stables, Lenham Road and options to improve biodiversity on the land. The PC agreed that Headcorn Parish Council would be best placed to deal with this matter.
- 01.25.10 KALC**
Cllr Tomlinson reported that she had attended the last meeting of the KALC where the main topic of conversation had been the Gypsy and Traveller Plan Preferred Approaches Consultation Document. The minutes of the meeting will be issued by KALC and sent to the PC via the clerk.
- 01.25.11 Neighbourhood Plan**
The PC discussed how to begin producing a neighbourhood plan. Cllr Thompson agreed to look for a template online. The clerk will also investigate options for funding and report back at a future meeting.
- 01.25.12 Neighbourhood Watch**
No volunteers have yet made themselves known to the PC. The PC questioned whether there was an appetite for a neighbourhood watch scheme in the village. Cllr Hook will raise this at a future village hall coffee morning meeting. It was agreed that this item be removed for the agenda until we had feedback from residents at the coffee morning.
- 01.25.13 Defibrillator Training**
The PC are currently awaiting an update from Cllr Peter as to whether the Fire & Rescue Service could provide training. As Cllr Peter was not in attendance at the meeting, an update was not available at this time.

01.24.14

Hugo Fox Domain Name

The PC discussed whether we wish to change the domain name to a .gov.uk address. It was agreed that the clerk would investigate this further. The chairman also requested that the clerk investigate whether the previous email BoughtonMalherbe.org.uk could be discontinued

01.24.15

Matters for Information

- The council briefly discussed whether the PC could move their meetings to a second Tuesday of the month. No decision was made and the clerk would look into this further.
- Signage for the Green. The clerk will make enquiries with KCC regarding installing /purchasing a finger sign for the village Green

01.24.16

The date of the next Ordinary Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 3rd March at 7.30pm at Grafty Green Village Hall. There being no other business the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 20.27 hours

THE HONYWOOD & DOUGLAS CHARITY LENHAM

(Registered Charity No. 211272)

The Trustees hereby give notice that the following
Almshouse accommodation is available:

A ONE BEDROOM BUNGALOW SITUATED IN LENHAM

Applicants must be 60 years of age or more, able to look after themselves independently and have lived in the Parishes of Lenham or Boughton Malherbe for at least two years.

Application forms are available by
e-mailing or telephoning Katherine:

clerk.hdc@gmail.com

07889 562931.

Completed forms should be returned no later than
28th February 2025.

59 Bus News

Commencing on **Wednesday 22nd January**, a change of route and timings of the Wednesday only service to and from Maidstone will be introduced by the operator, Nu-Venture. This is designed to improve the reliability of the service which has been badly affected by the seemingly never-ending road closures in the area, especially when Chartway Street is closed because there are very limited alternatives suitable for buses.

The service will now start from Kingswood and then serve Ulcombe and Grafty Green before continuing to Maidstone via Headcorn and the A274 (and Otham). It will no longer serve Chart Sutton and Boughton Monchelsea. The advantage for Grafty Green is a reduction in journey time of around ten minutes.

The bus will leave **Grafty Green** village at **09.56**, stopping in **Headcorn, Forge Lane junction**, (opposite Costcutter) at **10.05**, **Sutton Road (Morrisons)** **10.26**, due to arrive in **Maidstone Town Centre** at **10.39**.

It returns from **Maidstone, King Street stop L2** (outside of Greggs) at **12.45**, fifteen minutes earlier than previously, and runs via the A274 to **Sutton Road (opposite Morrisons)** **12.57**, **Headcorn (Forge Lane junction)** **13.18**, and **Grafty Green** at **13.27**, before proceeding on to Ulcombe and Kingswood.

The English National Concessionary Travel pass, available to anyone who has reached state pension age, can be used on the bus, and for those without a pass the return fare is £4-90.

As ever the message is very much **'USE IT OR LOSE IT'**, so you are encouraged to make good use of this service to help ensure it continues.

John Collins
(On behalf of Boughton Malherbe Parish Council)

Village Hall News – February Newsletter

Dear All,

It's a little way off yet but the trustee's will be holding the village hall's annual general meeting at the hall on Monday 7th April at 7.30 pm. The village hall is a charity run for the benefit of you the local community, everyone is welcome to attend and if you would like to know more about the running of the charity or have any ideas or suggestions for activities that you would like to host at the hall that would benefit our lovely village community please come along, we would be very pleased to see you.

Planning for the electrical re-wire of the village hall is progressing, it's a bit like a swan all calm and serene on top but paddling like mad below the waterline! The rewire will provide us with both more functionality, comfort for hall users, greater energy efficiency and keep the hall in good condition for the future. The hall will have to be closed for a short while during the works, but it is hoped to give both hirers and hall users as much notice as possible and to keep the inconvenience to a minimum. Once the works are complete, we plan to redecorate the interior of the hall hopefully during the Christmas and New Year break when the hall is not in use but we will keep this under review depending on the internal condition of the hall after the rewire. We will keep you updated as the commissioning of the works progress.

We have just had a committee meeting when we discussed the events we will host at the hall during 2025 and in addition to the regular activities and the pancake evening detailed below we propose to host the following:-

- A bingo night in late Spring.
- A quiz night in collaboration with Platts Heath School sometime in July.
- Christmas craft fair weekend at the end of November.
- The Christmas Quiz in early December
- A Christmas Panto.

Sadly, we have decided not to host a scarecrow festival this year as support for the event appeared to be waning, but I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank those of you who kindly made your lovely scarecrows last year which brightened up the village and encouraged a smile.

Coming up shortly we have the following events at the hall:

Farmer's Market at the village hall every Friday from the 28th February between 1 and 3 pm

Arrangements for the farmer's market are well advanced with stalls selling pet treats and accessories, knitted crafts, plants and flowers, a meat stall, homemade curries, Kent and Sussex cheeses, a fruit, vegetable, eggs and juices stall, homemade cakes and it hoped that the church will be selling bread and their legendary scones, (cheese, fruit and plain as served at the cream teas!), the organisers will also be serving teas and coffee so you will be able to come along and buy local produce and enjoy a relaxing cuppa and a natter with friends and neighbours.

This will be for an initial three-month trial and I would urge you to support this new venture if you would like the opportunity to purchase locally sourced produce in the village on a weekly basis to continue beyond the initial trial period.

Pancake Evening – Tuesday 4th March 5 to 7 pm

Once again, we will be hosting our annual pancake evening. There is a slight change to the originally advertised time of 4 to 6 pm. We will be offering a selection of sweet and savoury pancakes together with the usual refreshments so please come along and enjoy a delicious pancake or two and spend some time over a cup of tea with friends. As well as the pancakes there will be activities to keep the children entertained.

Kind Regards

GRAFTY GREEN VILLAGE HALL

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2025 AGM will take place at the Village Hall
on Monday 7th 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 the local community. 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 both social and business events.

Kind regards,

Jon Thompson

Hall Committee Chairman

Tel: 07932 112730

Email: jon@grafftygreenalpacas.co.uk

We are very excited to announce that a Farmer's Market is coming to Grafty Green Village Hall!

From Friday 28th February there will be a weekly Farmer's Market from 1pm-3pm

Pet treats and accessories

Bread & Scones

Knitted crafts

Pre loved books

Plants and flowers

Hogget, mutton, goat and beef

Homemade curries

Kent and Sussex cheeses

Fruit, vegetables, eggs and juices

Homemade cakes

They will also be serving tea and coffee.

For further information please email Tara at info.graftygreen@gmail.com>



GRAFTY GREEN VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL PANCAKE EVENING



TUESDAY 4th MARCH 4PM TO 6PM

COME AND MEET YOUR FRIENDS & ENJOY

SWEET & SAVOURY PANCAKES £2.50 EACH

Lots of children's activities

Grafty Green Village Hall

Bookings 01622 850898

Regular Weekly Events

Yoga – mixed ability

Susan Burch 01622 850381

Mondays 9.30 – 11am

Thursdays 9.30 – 11am

Wednesdays 7 – 8.30pm

Pilates

Cheryl Stubbs 07852 602369

Tuesdays 9.30 – 10.30 am

Post Office

Tuesdays 12.45 – 2.15pm

Thursdays 11.15 – 1.15pm

Coffee morning

Tuesdays 12.00 – 2.00pm

Short Mat Bowls

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

Alternate Thursdays 7-9pm

Farmer's Market

(With effect from 28th February)

Friday 1- 3pm

Regular Monthly Events

Gardening Club

Doreen 01622 850287

First Tuesday 7.30 - 9pm

Digital Kent

Fourth Tuesday 11.30-1.30

The Grafty Gourmet

Bacon-wrapped sausages cooked in a sherry-laced, onion-rich sauce make this French onion sausage casserole a quick and easy dinner to warm you up on these cold nights.

FRENCH ONION & SAUSAGE CASSEROLE

6 rashers of streaky bacon
375g pack of pork chipolatas
Vegetable oil for frying
25g of butter
500g of onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 tablespoon of plain flour
100ml of medium dry or dry sherry, plus an extra splash
1 beef stock pot
3-4 bushy fresh thyme sprigs, plus extra leaves to garnish
8 large thin slices of fresh baguette or similar crusty bread
4 teaspoons of wholegrain mustard
125g of strong cheddar cheese, grated
Splash sherry vinegar

1. Cut the bacon rashers in half, stretch each piece by running the back of a kitchen knife blade along it, then wrap one around each chipolata. Heat the oil in a medium hob-safe casserole dish, add the pigs in blankets and brown over a medium-high heat for 4-5 minutes. Set aside.

2. Add a splash more oil if needed, along with the butter, then add the onions and a plenty of salt and black pepper. Fry gently for 5-6 minutes until starting to soften. Stir in the garlic, then cover and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the onions have softened and turned deep brown.

Stir the flour into the onions, then cook for 1-2 minutes. Add the sherry, stock pot and 500ml hot water from a just-boiled kettle. Stir to combine, then add the browned pigs in blankets and the thyme.

3. Simmer on a low-medium heat for 20 minutes until it thickens. Meanwhile, heat the grill to high. Toast the baguette slices on each side. Spread with the mustard, then scatter with the grated cheese. Cook under the hot grill until the cheese has melted and is bubbling and golden. Stir a splash more sherry and the sherry vinegar into the casserole, season to taste, then serve with the cheese toasts, and extra thyme leaves, if you like.

The Grafty Gourmet

Grafty Green Gardening Club

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

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

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

Programme for 2025

Date	Speaker/Event	Topic
14 th January	AGM & Philip Oosterbrink (head gardener at Walmer Castle)	The Jungle Garden
4 th February	Robin Smith & David Walker RSPB	Birds of the Medway estuary
4 th March	Jaqueline Aviolet	A the nursery – demonstrations + plant sales
1 st April	Spring Show & Steve Edney	The Kitchen Garden + plant sales
26 th April	10 – 12 am Plant Sale Village Hall	
6 th May	6pm outing to Frittenden, Brickwall Cottages, TN17 2DH	
9 th – 11 th May	Weekend away to Suffolk, The Mill Hotel Sudbury, Middleton House, Melford Hall, Flatford Mill and Markshall Arboretum	
3 rd June	6pm outing to Woodchurch, Boldshaves TN26 3RA	
1 st July	TBA	
5 th August	Outing to East Malling Communigrow educational wellbeing garden charity.	
2 nd September	Autumn Show & Rachel Castle (Swallowfields Nursery)	Shine a light on bulbs!
7 th October	Kevin Tooher	The Edwardian gardens of Sussex
4 th November	Ed Flint (head gardener at Tidewell Manor Robertsbridge)	Roses and friends
December	Leeds Castle light show	

Gardening Tips

This is the time of year for planning. Now that there is mainly evergreen shrubs and trees and bare branches to look at, think about where you have gaps at different times of the year and look at where you could plant new perennials, annuals or sow seeds. Perhaps keeping a notebook with a plan might help; it certainly does in the veg plot!

- All the canes of Autumn fruiting raspberries should be cut back to the ground now, summer fruiting ones are pruned later in spring.
- Cover the shoots of rhubarb with a bucket or large pot to force fresh growth.
- Sow broad beans indoors or in a shed or greenhouse to get ahead in the veg plot, try using damp toilet roll middles to save on pots.
- Plan your crop rotation in the veg plot (brassicas, root crops, legumes- peas, beans etc)
- Check the dates of your seed packets, including flowers, and discard old ones.
- Cut down ornamental grasses but be careful of emerging shoots.
- Chit potatoes.

Finally, join Grafty Garden Club! £5 for a year's subscription and £2 entry to monthly meetings; talks in the winter months and outings in the warmer weather, what a bargain!

Sue's Nature Notes

February can bring some mild weather encouraging a few hours in the garden preparing for the spring. Take a walk around and check for areas where there could be hibernating hedgehogs so you can avoid disturbing them **especially if you are going to use a strimmer!**

Amphibians also hibernate but they will be in log piles, under stones or even tucked into a sheltered spot in the soil; it's usually around valentine's day that frog spawn or a string of spawn produced by toads, can be found in your pond. The blackbirds and newts love frog spawn! If you transfer some to a protected basin (not in direct sunlight) with a few stones/rocks at the bottom you will help them to mature into froglets.

Both these creatures love to eat slugs which are probably the least loved of our garden visitors; you can bait them by placing some damp cardboard under your flowerpots and then transfer them to the compost heap where they help to breakdown the dead material into useful humus.

Witch Hazels

Planting for winter interest, January and February, its spidery flowers range from pale to golden lemon to oranges and reds and some have the bonus of a glorious citrus scent which is mostly noticeable on a mild day.

Planning to brighten up a dark corner the yellow varieties would look stunning in front of an evergreen shrub under-planting with snowdrops; red flowering varieties planted to take advantage of the low winter sun can light up the flowers.

Witch Hazel (Hamamelis) like an open position but will tolerate growing in partial shade; a little careful pruning after flowering is recommended.

Sue

Yoga classes in Grafty Green Village Hall

Monday *and* Thursday mornings 9.30 till 11

Wednesday evenings 7 till 8.30

No classes the week beginning 21st October

New term starts October 28th until last practice on 12th December.

To book call Sue Burch (British Wheel of Yoga teacher) on 07803 962339

*Expand your boundaries yet be able to relax and feel
harmonious, integrated and complete.*



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Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way

You've Got Mail

Friday, February 14th

Performance begins 19.30, doors open 19.00

Running time 1hr 59 mins

Friday 14th February is a night for romance and greeting us will of course be St Valentine. What better way to salute him than by watching the romantic **You've Got Mail** (PG, 1998), starring Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks, which was our audience's choice for this season. Tom Hanks plays Joe Fox, the go-ahead owner of a chain of bookstores, who is dismissive of the nearby quaint little bookshop owned by his bitter rival Kathleen Kelly, played by Meg Ryan. They are at odds with each other in real life to say the least. Things are very different when they meet online, however, as they have no idea of the other's identity and there's no such animosity between them. On the contrary, they fall in love. But what will happen when their true identities are revealed? The film is directed by Nora Ephron and is an unforgettable comedy; do come along and share the story with us.

Our film for March is **The Miracle Club** (12, 2023) a comedy drama with a difference, in which three women, later joined by a fourth, win the chance to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Friday, 14th March is the date for your chance to see an all-star cast in this riveting film.

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

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



lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com



www.lenhamfilmclub.org



@lenhamfilmclub

Platts Heath Film Club

The film club meets on the third Friday of the month between October and May, A small group who agree films to be shown. The suggested donation to the upkeep of the St. Edmunds Community Centre is £4, Doors open at 7.45 p.m. for an 8 p.m. start.

Our next screening is on the **14th February** is "The **Beautiful Game**" starring Bill Nighy. This is a comedy that focuses on participants taking part in an international football competition. The film is more about the individuals than the game.



St Edmunds is located at the lower entrance of School Lane, Platts Heath. Car parking in Green Lane. To receive regular information and to reserve places please email: 1468ceb@gmail.com

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News from St. Nicolas Church – February 2025

Here's hoping the New Year of 2025 has proved to be a good and fresh start.

As a community we are aware that a number of families here and further afield are grieving or suffering ill health at this time and the hopes of many will be concentrating on supporting and caring for those they love. May this New Year give strength and courage to all in whatever situation we find ourselves in, now and through the year.

And let's not get too stressed about world politics!

Reminders

The church porch always remains open. Enjoy a hot drink and the beautiful surroundings in peace, despite the winter weather. Use the prayer request cards if you wish to and they will be incorporated into the Monday morning prayer time. Dip into the bible on the windowsill, use the mini food bank box if you need, though there is a larger food bank at the back of St. Mary's church in Lenham too. It is open daily from 10am-4pm.

The main church building at St. Nicolas 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 porch, on the roadside and outside the Village Hall in Grafty Green.

Celtic Morning Prayer is usually said in the church each Monday morning 9.00am-9.30am. An informal time of prayer and short bible readings, with opportunity for discussion and time to remember the needs of others, friends, neighbours, world issues and ourselves. A thoughtful time to start the week.

Village Cake and Coffee takes place in the village hall in Grafty Green each Tuesday 12noon-2pm and coincides with Post Office 12.45-2.15pm. Donations for the refreshments are shared equally between St. Nicolas and a charity chosen by the 'regulars'. Join in to have your say!

Lent lunches. An early reminder, as Lent does not begin until March this year, but we will be holding these bread and soup lunches on Tuesdays, as we did last year.

They will begin the week after Shrove Tuesday (pancake day), continuing for the next 3 weeks ie. four lunches in all. They will join with the Cake and Coffee time. So that could be everyone's midday meal sorted! The Lent Lunch donations will be given to help fund the work of Christian Aid, a charity providing valuable resources, worldwide, to those in need in these violent and troubled times.

Very Early dates for the diary!

Cream teas are definitely taking place at St. Nicolas this year, on four Sundays:

July 20th and 27th.

August 3rd and 10th. All from 2.30pm-5pm

Harvest Supper in Grafty Green Village Hall on Saturday October 11th, followed by Harvest Festival at St. Nicolas on Sunday 12th October.

Thank you

We need to give a big thank-you to those who have given so much of their time and energy to keep St. Nicolas looking fresh, clean and cared-for over the year, especially mentioning Angela, Siobhain, Liz, and Janet. Many others have also helped in various ways too, catering, washing-up, everlasting tidying-up and setting-up, welcoming visitors, repairs, flowers, bible reading in services, music, the list goes on. Many thanks to all of you and to all who visit, marry, are baptised and celebrate lives in this treasured building and appreciate what it stands for, in our midst.

We look forward to it all starting again in 2025!

Sally Alexander

Church Choirs

In common with our sister Churches, our church is liable to lose its choir unless we can find a few more voices.

We attend three services a month, all very different. The first is Evensong on the 2nd Sunday at 3.30 in the winter and 6.30 otherwise. The next one is Eucharist, which is at 9.30 in the morning on the third Sunday of the month. The last one is on the fourth Sunday of the month and is a meeting of all four Churches and choirs for a service at one of our Churches.



There is always tea, coffee and cake afterwards and a chance to have a chat. We're a friendly lot!

If you, or someone you know would be interested, why not give me a call on 01622 850287. Maybe you could only manage one or two of the services. The Christmas Carol service would be a lovely one to start!

Doreen Hulm

Len Valley Benefice

February 2025

Everybody is welcome



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

Sunday 2nd February

9.30am Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

9.30am Harrietsham: Family friendly Morning Worship

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Wednesday 5th February

9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

11.00am Harrietsham: Chippendayle

Sunday 9th February

9.30am Harrietsham: Holy Communion

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

11.00am Ulcombe: Holy Communion

3.30pm Boughton Malherbe: Choral Evensong

Sunday 16th February

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

11.00am Lenham: Morning Worship

Sunday 23rd February

11.00am Benefice Holy Communion at St Mary's, Lenham

'Re-Sourced in Christ -

Stillness'

Christian Message February 2025

Dear all,

February the season of lambs, spring flowers, valentines, and Lincoln's birthday my diary tells me. February 12th is still a state holiday if you happen to live in one of three states in the US.

It seems strange to us in Britain to imagine getting a day off for a prime minister's birthday, however famous. We do have various 'Bank Holidays' over the year and I am not sure of their origin, I just know how much I appreciate them when they pop up!

The word 'holidays' actually stems from their original source, they were the 'holy days' of the year when you were not expected to work but rather take time out and refocus on what really matters.

Many of our annual days off are still related to remembering and celebrating certain Christian feasts, events, traditions and rituals – Easter, Christmas for instance. Naturally we are glad to have these days interspersed in our year. Without them where would the natural breaks be? They give us time to be thankful, to slow down and to be with friends and family; to draw aside from ordinary life and possibly think about matters of a different nature – spiritual, ethereal, liminal.

As Christians, and I will say as humans, believers or not, we are also encouraged to do this with one seventh of our week – shabbat, sabbath, Sunday, a day of rest. A day when 'thou shalt do no work, wherever you live'. See Exodus 20:10.

Sunday rest has been stolen from us in the past 40 or 50 years – tho' we did not see that coming. We just wanted to break away from legalism and religious enforcement. And that wasn't wrong. But I do wonder how this lack of rest has contributed to burn out, anxiety, disease, agitation, rage, conflict, depression and exhaustion – it is so prevalent among us.

Fascinating stuff – I can see over and over how faith and the practices attached to it of simplification, prayer, mindfulness, rest, generosity, hospitality, magnanimity and humility – living justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God are actually good for us. (Micah 6:7)

God is not a tyrant – quite the opposite; He is desirous of healthy community, wellbeing for those He created and loves, and time – time for all of us and each of us to spend with Him, with each other and even with ourselves. This way we flourish. Simple.

Enjoy February, take a long slow look at the lambs over in the field - they know how to rest and reset by in green pastures by still waters.....

The Lord really is our Good Shepherd.

Rev Canon Lorraine Apps - Huggins

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