

Good News Parish Magazine

for High Downs Parish

*Serving the villages of
Eastling, Otterden,
Stalisfield and Throwley*

www.goodnews.rf.gd

FEBRUARY 2025



- 5th Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 9th Quora Concert
Doddington Church 3.00pm
- 12th Arts Society lecture, Egerton
Millennium Hall, Egerton 2.30pm
- 12th Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 13th Local History Society talk
Charing Parish Hall 7.30 for 8pm
- 20th Copy deadline for March 2025 Good
News: goodnewsmagazine@me.com
- 26th Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 27th Arts Society lecture, Faversham
Alexander Centre 11am
- 28th Together in Boots walking group
Doddington Church leave at 11.30am

MARCH

- 5th Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 9th Throwley lanes Clean Up
Throwley Village Green 11.30am

For Candlemas, 2nd February

Dear Lord,
Here we are in February – month of cold days, winter days, but days that promise hope and signs of Spring. Snowdrops and lengthening light; echoes of the hope and light that Jesus brought to Simeon and Anna all those years ago in the Temple. Thank you, Lord, that you always bring light, you always bring hope and peace and joy when we put our trust in Jesus, our Saviour. Jesus, Lord of all our days and seasons. In his name we thank you, as we look to his Light.
Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

TOADS ON THE ROADS



As spring approaches, our local toads make their way out of hibernation and migrate to their breeding ponds often from late February through to April.

Their movement is triggered by a combination of factors, including:

Warmer temperatures: Once the frost has lifted and the nights are milder.

Moisture: Rainy or damp evenings are ideal for toad migration, as the moisture helps them stay hydrated during their journey.

This migration generally happens after sunset, as toads are nocturnal and feel safer moving under cover of darkness. Unfortunately, many toads are injured or killed by passing cars during this migration.

The top of Newnham Lane (Eastling end) is a very busy toad migration route. You can see them crossing the lane, especially on wet evenings, so



please stay vigilant, slow down and stop if it is safe to do so.

Toads play an essential role in our ecosystem, helping to keep insect populations in check. They're also a sign of a healthy environment and their presence is something to celebrate and protect.

Together, we can ensure these wonderful creatures complete their journey safely. Let's share the road and give our toads the helping hand they deserve.

Leigh Dyson

(Toads also cross Kettle Hill Road just below Pinks Farm, so please slow down, especially at night - Editor)

SUNDAY 9TH MARCH

THROWLEY PARISH LANES CLEAN UP

**PLEASE COME ALONG TO
THE VILLAGE GREEN AT 11.30**

**CHOOSE YOUR LANE & COLLECT
GLOVES, RUBBISH BAGS ETC BEFORE
SETTING OFF. RETURN WITH YOUR
SPOILS FOR A DELICIOUS FREE LUNCH
OF HOMEMADE SOUP, HOT SAUSAGES,
BREAD, CHEESES ETC & MEET OTHER
THROWLEY VILLAGERS. PLEASE BRING
THE DRINK OF YOUR CHOICE**

Message for the Month

We live in a hostile and warring world. We see this in the news with the Middle East, the Ukraine, and repeated stabbings in our own country. We may also encounter aggression in our everyday lives, perhaps as we drive.

There was once a king who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures, but there were only two that he really liked, and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for the peaceful towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The second picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, and in which lightening played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the king looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest.... a perfect picture of peace.

Which of the pictures won the prize? The king chose the second picture.

Do you know why? "Because," explained the king, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

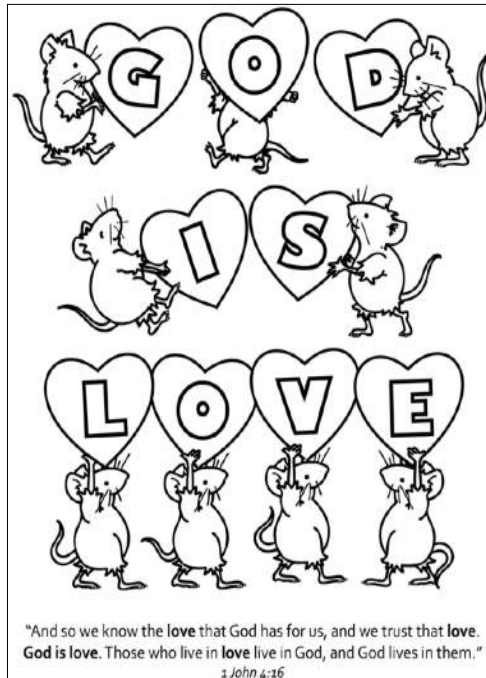
Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

We can know the peace of Jesus. This is more than an absence of hostilities but a deep knowledge that God loves us unconditionally and has accepted us through what Jesus has done for us. This enables us to be at peace with God and with other people. We just need to ask God for this gift of trust in Jesus.

I pray that you will know more of the peace of Christ in our tumultuous world.

As we say in our church services, "The peace of the Lord be always with you."

Rev'd Jim Pye



Very sadly Marie-Louise Lacamp passed away peacefully early morning on 29th December.

She was a church warden of Norton Church for over 20 years and wife of the late organist and choirmaster Philippe Lacamp.

Marie-Louise will be very well remembered for her commitment to Norton village, with Barbary Nursery Schools and her organisation of the very successful biennial Church Flower Festival.

The funeral is on 31st January, 2pm in Norton Church.

Prayer Pointers



On **Sundays** - For those with the responsibility to appoint the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

On **Mondays** - For the leaders and congregations of our local churches.

On **Tuesdays** - For all with less income than they need to feed and clothe themselves and their children.

On **Wednesdays** - For Lifeboat crews as they seek to rescue those in distress along our shores.

On **Thursdays** - For all in need of our Lord's healing touch.

On **Fridays** - For all mourning loved ones in this country and abroad.

On **Saturdays** - For couples planning to marry this year, may our Lord bless their lives together.

Eastling Church Flower rota



2nd & 9th February: Di

16th & 23rd: Gaby

2nd March: Bay / Gaby

If you would like to join the flower arranging rota, please call Bay on 01795 892036.

Otterden and Stalisfield W.I.

KENT, SUSSEX & SURREY AIR AMBULANCE are sending their Speaker Tim Hockney to talk to our Group, explaining the work of this very worthwhile charity. The helicopters respond to an average of 9 emergency calls every day of the year. There are a number of people in the locality who have benefitted from their service, so it would be wonderful if our residents would join us on Wednesday the 5th February at 7.30 p.m. at Stalisfield Village Hall, ME13 0HY to help raise more funds. Guests' admission charge is £5 including refreshments. ALL money from the evening raised will be donated to the Charity.

Our Group did not have a Meeting in January, but a number of us met up at Longbrook Garden Centre in Ashford for lunch. The food was lovely and very reasonable, which was borne out by the popularity of the restaurant. We all had a good chat and time for shopping afterwards.

March's Meeting also has an interesting Speaker - Stephen Beck will be coming along to talk to us about a National Trust property, the South Foreland Lighthouse at Dover. This lighthouse protects shipping from becoming grounded on the Goodwin Sands.

Any queries or applications regarding our WI Group, please contact Helen Brooks on 07477580727 or Ellie Cameron on 07775649337.



CHARING AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 13th February 2025

Charing Parish Hall

Doors open 7.30pm,

talk will start at 8pm prompt



William Morris - Craftsman, Designer and much more

Now renowned for his role in helping to found the Arts & Crafts Movement, in his lifetime he was as well known for other talents – from poetry to publishing, heritage protection to social reform.

We will explore Morris's achievements, the influence of his work then and the continuing impact including rarely seen examples of his works and many of the familiar patterns.

Speaker: Claudia Suckling

Members free - Guests £3

Membership from £10/year.

www.charinghistory.co.uk



Faversham Literary Festival

Friday 21st February to
Saturday 2nd March.

The days are packed with
interviews and
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In fiction Sebastian Faulks, Sarah Perry and Kate Mosse alongside more recent literary stars Eliza Clark and Ferdia Lennon; in poetry, Jackie Kay, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Michael Rosen, Roger McGough and national treasure Pam Ayres. Celebrity faces from the worlds of fashion and stage, including Sandra Rhodes, Wayne Sleep and Dame Harriet Walters.

Full programme and tickets are
available from

www.favershamliteraryfestival.org





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Stalisfield sited at Stalisfield
Village Hall, ME13 0HY

Throwley sited in the old
Telephone Box outside the Old
Post Office, ME13 0PJ

The Arts Society brings people together through a shared curiosity for the arts. We meet at Egerton Millennium Hall on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm (doors open from 2.00pm). Our next lecture will be:

Wednesday 12th February at 2.30 pm:



Canaletto and Samuel Scott in England

This lecture tells of how Canaletto, who came to England in 1746, influenced Scott, a self-taught artist, and of their paintings of boats and bridges on the Thames

Lecturer Nicholas Reed: *author, art historian and archaeologist. Nicholas lectures extensively and is also a member of The Arts Society Egerton*

Visitors are always very welcome at £6 (just turn up and pay on the door), refunded if you join. Membership is £40. For further information please contact Christine Willis, our Membership Secretary via cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377.

See also our website

www.theartsocietyegerton.org.uk

Image provided by lecturer

Old London Bridge, by Samuel Scott, 1758

The Arts Society is the UK's leading arts education charity that brings people together through a shared curiosity in the arts. We enjoy illustrated talks on a fascinating wide range of topics, outings to galleries and historic houses and an elegant annual Society Dinner. Meetings are held at The Alexander Centre in Preston Street, Faversham on the 4th Thursday of the month. Come along for a complimentary coffee at 10.20am for the 11am start. You can try us out for a modest fee and no doubt will want to become a member!

Thursday 27th February 2025:

Our lecturer is Frank Woodgate,
and the subject is

'From pre-history to the present day—the bird in art'

In this lecture we will see birds depicted in Aboriginal rock decorations up to the present day, including paintings by Durer and Picasso.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY

"What do they get up to in there?" On May 8th 2025
10.30-3.15pm. Lyndon Jones, Roy Campbell.

Learn from two senior Masons about the history of the Masons and take a private tour of the Masonic Lodge of Faversham.
£38.00 including a light lunch.

Contact Maureen Bush, Membership Secretary:

tolly@clara.co.uk or visit our website:

www.theartsocietyfaversham.org.uk

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PRESENTS**




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£10 with a reduction for booking all
5 talks.

February 12th - The Clangers

February 19th - Ivor the Engine

February 26th - The Pogles

March 5th - Noggin the Nog

March 12th - Bagpuss

<https://thealex.org.uk>

Services in our Benefice

2nd February Candlemas

Malachi 3. 1 - 5, Psalm 24, 7 - 10, Luke 2. 22 - 40

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

9th February 4th Sunday before Lent

1 Corinthians 15. 1 - 11, Luke 5. 1 - 11

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

16th February 3rd Sunday before Lent

1 Corinthians 15. 12 - 20, Luke 6. 17 - 26

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

23rd February 2nd Sunday before Lent

Revelation 4, Luke 8. 22 - 5

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

2nd March Sunday before Lent

2 Corinthians 3. 12 - 4. 2, Luke 9. 28 - 36 [37 - 43a]

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

5th March Ash Wednesday

Online Daily Worship Continues

As well as the services in our churches, the daily 9am Morning Prayer will continue on the Benefice Facebook Page via

<https://kc-hd.org.uk> .

More information is updated weekly on St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>

Anna Chaplaincy

Please contact our Anna Chaplain, Caroline Ramshaw, if you know of someone who is isolated, alone or unable to attend church.

An Anna Chaplain can offer a listening ear and company. Communion can be brought to you in your own home.



Contact your local Anna Chaplain on:

ramshawcaroline@gmail.com 07799 538 809

High Downs Parish

Rector Revd Paula Jardine-Rose
07516 411269 paula.jardine.rose@kc-hd.org.uk

Parish Administrator Joyce Warren
01795 521831 joyce.warren@kc-hd.org.uk

Associate Priest Reverend James (Jim) Pye
01795 890726 jim.pye@kc-hd.org.uk

Reader Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)

Anna Chaplain Caroline Ramshaw
ramshawcaroline@gmail.com

Reader Pim Baxter (07710 116269)

Church Contacts

Eastling Andrew Baxter, Warden (01795 890598)

Administrator E mail: stmaryeastling@gmail.com

Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King, Warden (01795 890366)

Chrissie Webster, Administrator
(07590 351977)

Throwley David Elvin, Warden (07973 837122)
E mail: david.j.elvin@gmail.com

High Downs Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mark Harlow (07979 864000)
E mail: mark.harlow@kc-hd.org.uk

From the Registers

Wedding

Maryanne Beaney and Ryan McIntosh
30th November at Throwley

Funeral

Jessie Stevens
27th February at Garden of England Crematorium

CONTACT THE GOOD NEWS EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in the March 2025 magazine, send your submission by 20th February to: goodnewsmagazine@me.com.

Past and current issues of the Good News may be viewed on www.goodnews.rf.gd



FRIENDS OF THROWLEY CHURCH

NEWSLETTER • 2025

FOTC NEWSLETTER • 2025

Happy New Year to you all

I hope you had an enjoyable and restful Christmas, however you celebrate the festive season. At our last meeting in the autumn, and in the Newsletter we sent out in 2024, we announced the restoration of the church bells and the belfry. The last time they had been totally overhauled was in 1933 when the 4th Lord Harris renovated the six existing bells and added two more, in line with his late wife's wishes, to complete a ring of eight.

I'm delighted to say that the Friends of Throwley Church has been able to undertake, and now complete, an extensive overhaul and restoration of the bells and the belfry in which they are hung. The work began in the first week of November and was completed in time for the bells to be rung for the Christmas Carol Service on the 22nd of December.

Chair Simon Joy

The Who, What and How of Bell Restoration

Trevor Arnold from Maypole Bells in Rodmersham carried out the work along with Merrick Jardine Rose. It was wonderful that we could find two local craftsmen to do this. It was a tricky and often unpleasant task; the only way to get anything in and out of the belfry is up the Tower staircase, a narrow set of over forty spiral steps, followed by two ladders. They brought down enough bags of rubbish and detritus to fill a six-foot skip and had to carry new floorboards, window frames and bell wheels up and down the stairs to complete the restoration. Amongst the debris two sets of handbells were uncovered, which we will clean and preserve.

As you can see, we now have new ropes, newly re-laminated and oiled wheels, safe walkways, new ladders



New window louvres in the belfry

Simon Joy



Above: the walkway alongside the bell frame, showing the new ladder to the tower roof, the inside of the renovated and cleaned window shutters and the restored bell frame.

Right: the eight bell clappers, which Merrick gently heated to reform the worn and flattened side sections into a perfect sphere again, before he repainted them



A bell wheel being restored in Trevor's workshop



Cleaned woodwork, renovated metalwork and new bolts



New ropes were made in Rodmersham and hung back on the restored bell wheels

with flat treads, rather than rungs, to make access easier, new handholds and rails to help get into and out of the silence chamber, cleaned and replaced floorboards under the bells, refurbished clappers, and new paint and bolts where we need them. Importantly, the tower roof can now be accessed again to make sure it is sound and leak free, and the new window frames and louvres, and renovated shutters, will ensure that the belfry is water tight once again.

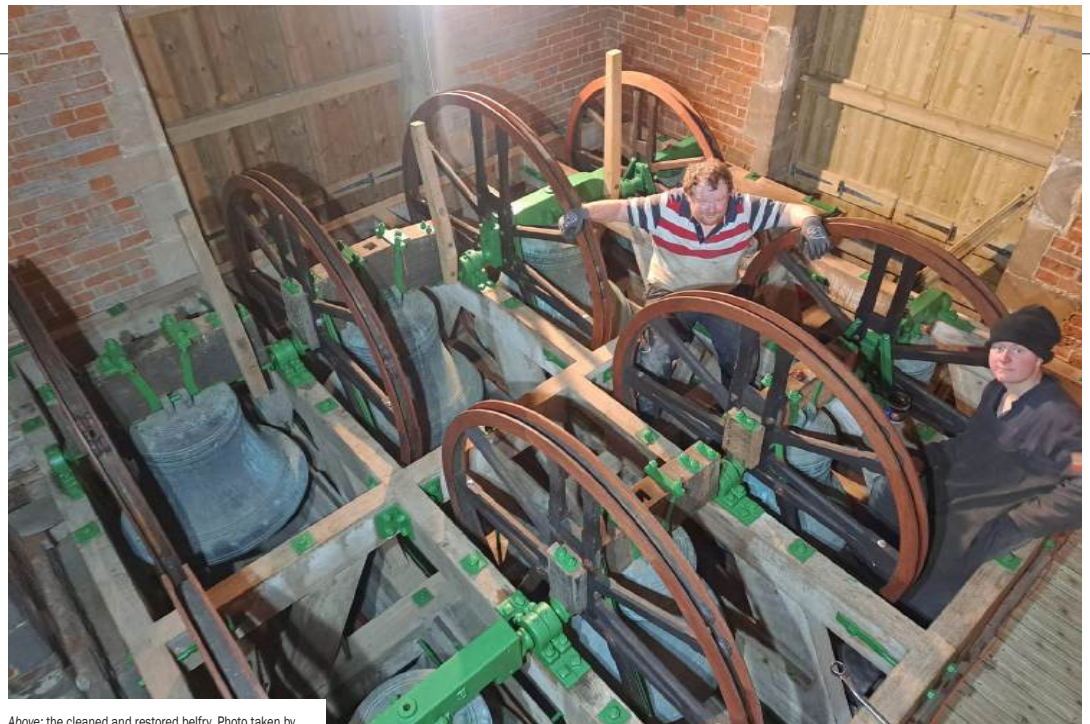
The total cost of the renovation was a little over £15,000. The Friends has funded this amount in full and we could only do that because you have all given so generously and consistently over many years. This is exactly the sort of project that the Friends was set up to support and I'm delighted that your contributions have ensured that belfry will be safe, secure and accessible and the bells will ring out beautifully for another 90 years and beyond.

We are planning to have a formal "Restored Belfry Opening Day" in the spring, once the weather improves, so that those who wish to can see the work for themselves. We'll keep you posted about the date and details.

Moving Forward

It is reassuring to think that contributions from the Friends helped restore the Harris Window in the Vestry in 2021 and have now renovated and restored the bells and belfry in 2024. It is the Trustees' intention that the now almost mythical WC Block will be completed in 2026 and that we can continue to fund projects to ensure greater community use of the church and to protect its structure beyond that date.

Thank you once again for your support and the Trustees wish you all everything you wish yourself for the coming year. *Simon Joy Chair, David Bridgford, Sian Lewis (Art Director) and Sandy MacKenzie*



Above: the cleaned and restored belfry. Photo taken by Trevor Arnold, with Merrick (right) and Phil, who worked on the renovation. Below: the handbells discovered in the silence chamber. The larger set is inscribed "S. P. Masters, from his friends as a token of esteem. Throwley 1924 - 1935." The small bells, just a few inches in height, would have been hung on a frame and struck with a xylophone hammer.



Simon Joy



The new ladder from the silence chamber to the belfry



New flooring by the bell frame replacing 1930s shed doors



Grab rail and handle, the tower's first concession to health & safety!

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News from Citizens Advice Swale

New drop-in session for the new year!

citizens
advice

We're delighted to announce a new drop-in session for 2025, thanks to the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund. Our new project will help us to reach the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, but is open to everyone who needs our support. The additional drop-in session will be on Tuesdays at Murston Family Hub, Tonge Road, ME10 3NT, 11.30am-1.30pm.

As with all our drop-in sessions, you don't need an appointment, you can just turn up. Our services are subject to adviser availability and can get busy, so please be patient with us if you're asked to wait. Remember, our volunteers are giving up their time to help.

We provide advice on a wide range of issues including debt, benefits, housing, employment, consumer, relationships, discrimination, healthcare, education, cost of living and energy.

While you're here we'll assess how we can resolve your query. This may include providing you with advice and information, signposting you to another organisation, or arranging an appointment with another generalist or specialist adviser who can provide you with assistance (such as drafting letters and completing forms) and possibly take action on your behalf (such as contacting third parties).

All our drop-in sessions:

- **Monday**, 10am-12pm, Swale House, Sittingbourne
- **Tuesday**, 10am-12pm, Sheppey Gateway, Sheerness (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)
- **Tuesday**, 11.30am-1.30pm, Murston Family Hub, Tonge Road
- **Wednesday & Friday**, 10am-12pm, 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Alternatively, email us at www.citizensadviceuk.org.uk/email-general-advice (Monday-Wednesday) or call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979.



Night Friends

by Audrey Keen

I hear the pheasants speak
Through the dim grey veil of fog,
I listen as the vixen calls
In answer to the dog.
I catch a glimpse of darkened wings,
I know it is the owl
Who seems to be uncaring
Of the clouds that move and scowl.
He waits upon the lime bough
In the chill and vulpine air,
And calls to his own fellows
In the changing wood somewhere.
While tiny night mice come and try
To shift the scattered leaf,
Though if the owl espies them
Their life will be brief.
And, as the clouds move briskly
And the fog is swept aside,
I see the brightness bring the dawn
That creeps across the ride.
The blackbird hails the morn with song
So do the thrush and wren,
As sunshine put shame on the cloud
Now it is day again.



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News from our County Councillor

In mid December the government published plans to turn all remaining 'two-tier' council areas in England into Unitary Authorities over the coming years, and to install directly elected mayors across the entire country too.

These plans, if they go ahead, will completely change the landscape of local government in Kent and the other remaining areas with county councils over the next few years. And at an extraordinary KCC full council meeting on Thursday 10th January, the administration group voted to sign Kent up to this process, and also to write to government with a request to be on the 'fast-track', and start the process as soon as possible.

Sadly this decision appears to be primarily driven by the poor financial state of both KCC and Medway, and the fact that the government only appear to be willing to offer additional financial support to those areas buying in to their chosen policy direction.

One of the upshots of this request is that being on the fast-track could see the cancellation of this May's KCC elections. A move which many at the meeting on 10th January strongly opposed (sadly my, and other's, attempts to convince the council to express a preference NOT to cancel the elections were voted down).

I strongly believe that the cancellation of elections should not be allowed to happen. The primary argument for cancelling them appears to be that it would enable the mayoral elections to take place as soon as possible, and that council staff would be tied up for the eight week election period if elections were being held.

If those weeks are needed to get a mayoral election set up for May 2026, then the government should have started this process last October, rather than in mid-December. If the amount of work needed is such that the 68 week timeline between now and next May is that tight, it suggests to me that things are being rushed, and are at risk of not being done with the

necessary due diligence for a project of this magnitude.

Should Kent's fast-track application be accepted, we will almost certainly be electing the first ever mayor of Kent next year.

A number of concerns were raised at the meeting about this direction, from all sides of the chamber. The directly elected mayor model concentrates a huge amount of power into the hands of one individual, and the way they are elected often means there's very little that can be done (barring a custodial prison sentence) to remove one once they are elected.

There is also the fact that they will be able to charge a council tax precept, so any potential reduction in council tax which might occur as a result of streamlining the county and district councils into unitary authorities may end up being wiped out by the increase.

This wouldn't be quite so much of an issue if it wasn't for the fact that there have been numerous cases of directly elected mayors spending tens of millions of pounds on vanity projects. Most notably Boris Johnson's attempts to build a 'garden bridge' over the Thames, which saw £43m of taxpayers money spent before the project was finally abandoned. One of the key reasons costs can spiral on vanity projects is that mayors do not receive the same level of oversight and scrutiny as council administrations do.

The second part of this huge project will be Local Government Reorganisation, which will likely take place in 2027 or 2028. I will write an update on this next month.

Rich Lehmann
rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk

Swale Green Party has withdrawn from the coalition at Swale Borough Council to take a stand for nature and for local democracy

A statement from the Green Party Group at Swale Borough Council can be read on the party's website: <https://swale.greenparty.org.uk/2024/12/16/swale-green-party-withdraw-from-the-coalition-at-swale/>

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394 or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

For any scam or cyber attacks or calls please report it on
0330 123 2040

There has been persons stealing road signs in recent times including in the Frith area and Throwley and Selling. I wonder what is said at the scrap recycling business if one turns up with road signs, the mind boggles. If anybody seen tampering with road signs please try and obtain a vehicle no, do not attempt to stop.

We will soon be into the gardening season so please make sure that all your gardening equipment is safely locked away as there certainly will be the unpleasant people around whom will be trying there best to help themselves to it.

We are entering the lambing season so please make sure that your dogs are on leads in the vicinity of sheep, this should be at any time of the year but even more important at this time.

Better still do not walk your dogs where there are sheep or any other livestock and always keep in mind the farmers have a legal right to shoot any animal either attacking or worrying their livestock.

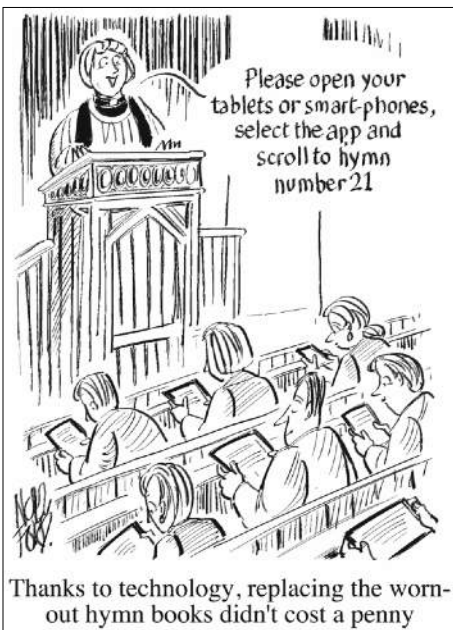
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Alan

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Lost and found

(A simple poem about a dog, but so often this can apply to us as well!)

Lost and found, what a wonderful sound
To a little dog like me,
I slipped my lead, I gave no heed
It felt so good to be free.

It's getting dark, I'm lost in the park
It's cold and starting to rain,
I should have stayed and never strayed
I'll never do this again.

Footsteps I hear, 'please do come near',
On my collar they see my name,
I'm put in a car, we're travelling so far,
Will life be ever the same?

A knock on the door, kisses galore,
Cuddles and pats on the head,
No more will I roam, I'm now safely home
And warmly curled up in my bed.

By Megan Carter



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Our NEW TAKE AWAY MENU

will be running Wednesdays - Fridays
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Don't forget to book up for Valentine's Day - it's a Friday this year so the perfect night for date night with your loved one

Keep up to date by following us on Facebook, Instagram or X (twitter)

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Happy New Year from everyone at Eastling Primary School.

The Friends of Eastling Primary School (FOES) paid for all the junior children to go and see *Wicked* in the West End at the end of term one. This was a wonderful opportunity for the children and they had an amazing experience. During December the infants visited The Reindeer Farm where they met Father Christmas and his reindeer funded by the FOES.

In term two Holly Class had weekly visits to Faversham gym and this term Oak class are having weekly gym sessions. Our Year 3 children have started their weekly swimming lessons at Faversham Pool and we look forward to seeing their progression over the next two terms.

The school had two open days, Wednesday 6th November and Thursday 7th for prospective Reception 2025 children. The sessions were very well attended and the school received excellent feedback. There was a phonics workshop for parents on Wednesday 13th November to share with parents how children are taught their letter sounds in school.

Maple class went to the cinema on Friday 15th November to watch two classic children's stories. Holly class went to the cinema the following week to watch *The Eagle Huntress*. These were free events for school

Willow class had a Coastal Learning Day on Friday 15th November which involved visiting Seasalter Beach in the afternoon following a morning of learning at school with Estuary Partnership. Holly class will also be taking part in Coastal Learning this term.

On Monday 18th November Willow class consolidated their learning on Stone Age by taking part in a Stone Age Day at Kent Life.

The term ended with the infant nativity, pantomime, Christmas shopping and the Christingle Service in St Mary's with Rev Paula. The church looked wonderful with the children's artwork and with standing room only for parents it was a truly wonderful end to the year.

For further information please visit our school website where photographs and newsletters are displayed and updated regularly.
Melanie Dale, Head Teacher



Stalisfield Youth Group!

Stalisfield Youth Group is for 11-17yr olds.

We meet on Wednesdays, usually twice a month, 7 - 8.30pm in the village hall AND it is free to come.

We have music, gaming, craft, table tennis, table football, outside games in the Summer, craft table, tuck shop (everything 10 - 50p), free cake and drink.

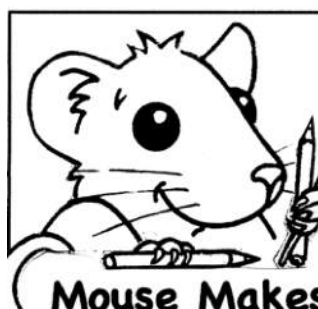


It is a time when young people can relax, hang out and catch up.

Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday 12th and 26th February

Contact Catherine 07929 928 046 or clnorwood@doctors.org.uk or see our Facebook page for more details.




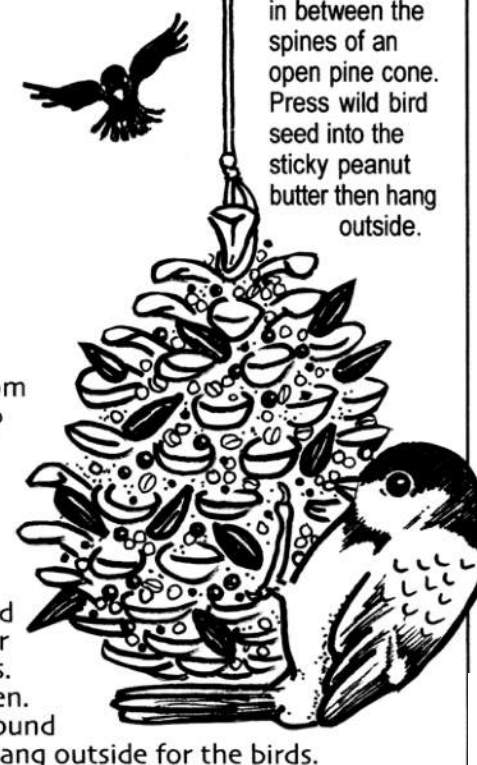

Mouse Makes

Although God provides food for all his creatures, it is fun to leave food out for the birds and then watch to see how many different birds come to feed.

**"O LORD my GOD how great you are!
Lord, you have made many things!
How wisely you made them all!
The earth is filled with your creatures.
All of them depend on you to give them food when they need it.
You give it to them, and they eat it;
you provide food, and they are satisfied.
I will sing to the LORD all my life;
as long as I live I will sing praises to my GOD."**
... from Psalm 104

Spread unsalted crunchy peanut butter over and in between the spines of an open pine cone. Press wild bird seed into the sticky peanut butter then hang outside.

Buy a bag of wild bird seed from a pet shop. Ask an adult to help you to melt a block of lard in a saucepan over a low heat. Take the pan off the heat and stir in several handfuls of the bird seed. Leave to cool a little until the lard mix is mouldable, then using your hands make into apple sized balls. Leave to harden. Wind string around each ball and hang outside for the birds.



Enduring love

This is a true story. Back in the late 1890s a Presbyterian minister called John Chapman was travelling by train through rural Kansas. There was only one other passenger in the carriage, a young man. As the train chugged along, Chapman noticed that the young man was very agitated. Finally Chapman asked if he could help.

Slowly, the young man shared that some years before he had run away from home and done some wild things. Finally, he had written to his parents, telling them that he wanted to come home. But he was afraid they wouldn't want him back.

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The young man had remembered that, at a certain point, the railway track passed very close to his parents' home. In a letter he had told his parents that if they could not forgive him, he would understand. But if they could possibly still want him, then they could tie a yellow ribbon on their old apple tree that grew right beside the railway line.

The train would soon pass his home. "But I'm too afraid to look out for the tree." And with that he began to sob.

John Chapman laid a hand on his shoulder. "I'll look out for you." And so as the young man buried his face in his hands the minister kept watch, peering anxiously out of the dusty train window, seeking an apple tree with hopefully a yellow ribbon around it.

A few minutes passed, and then Chapman declared, "Son, there is a yellow ribbon on an apple tree. In fact, every branch is hanging

with yellow ribbons, scores of them."

Well, of course the young man got off at the next stop. John Chapman continued his journey, deeply moved by this sign of parental forgiveness. He told the story often in his preaching, until it became widely known in Kansas, and finally ended up in the pop song 'Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree'.

The story points to one of the greatest doctrines taught in the Bible: the love of God for his people. It was that love that moved the Father to send his Son into the world.

In Ephesians Paul writes glowingly of *'that great love with which he loved us'*.

John emphasises the same great truth in a magnificent creed of just three words: *'God is love'*. Paul put it this way in Galatians: *'He loved me and gave himself for me'*.

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