

Good News Parish Magazine

for High Downs Parish

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

www.goodnews.rf.gd



**JULY
2025**

- 2nd Warm Welcome Village Social
Stalisfield Village Hall 12 - 2.30pm
- 2nd Otterden & Stalisfield W.I. (AGM)
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 5th Family Fun Day
Teynham Church 11am - 2pm
- 9th Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 16th Mid-week Holy Communion
Wychling Church 11am
- 18 - 19th Art Exhibition in Throwley Church
See advert for opening times
- 20th Choral Evensong
Throwley Church 5.30pm
- 20th Copy deadline for August 2025 Good
News: goodnewsmagazine@me.com
- 23rd Youth Group
Stalisfield Village Hall 7 - 8.30pm
- 25th Together in Boots walking group
Doddington Church leave at **2pm**
- 26th EASTFEST Music event
Churchfields, Eastling 4 - 8pm

AUGUST

- 6th Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 10th Drop off day for donations towards
Stalisfield Fête
Stalisfield Village Hall 9am - 3pm
- 23rd Stalisfield Village Fête 2 - 5pm**
Stalisfield Village Green

For a list of donations needed for the Fête,
please see the centre pages.



ART EXHIBITION

JULY 18 - 19
THROWLEY CHURCH
**STORIES FROM
THE HAND**

In partnership with
The Friends of
Throwley Church

OPEN
Friday 3pm-9pm
Saturday 11am-5pm

ARTISTS

JAYNE SIMMONDS
S J RIVERS
GREGORY DAINES
MOLLY NEWTON
SIMON GUY
MARY SAMPSON

Evening Reception
Friday July 18th 7-9PM
Cyanotype Workshop
Saturday 1-2pm
Free - No need to book

St Michael & All
Angels Church
Throwley, Faversham
ME13 0PF



@FORMNTHOUGHT

**A Special service of
Choral Evensong
Sunday 20th July, 5.30pm
in Throwley Church**
**To be followed by
refreshments.**
All Welcome



EASTFEST.

Featuring the band
"Tomas Tosh"
to be held at Churchfields Eastling
(ME13 0BG)
Saturday 26th July 4pm - 8 pm.

All welcome. Bring a picnic and some cash
for a band whip-round. Julia Bailey.



Message for the Month

A farmer who owned land along the Atlantic seacoast of North America constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms in that area. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the ocean, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops. As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farmhand?" the farmer asked him.

"Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man. Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they

blow away!" The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life? The hired hand in the story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm. We can secure ourselves against the storms of life by putting our trust in God. We don't need to understand we just need to hold His hand to be secure in the midst of the storms. Sleep well!

Rev'd Jim Pye



From the Window

by Audrey Keen

Daisies, daisies on the lawn
I see them when I wake at dawn,
I watch as rabbits play and pass
Each other on the dewy grass.
As rooks call loudly from the trees
They settle on the branch to please
The infant guarded in the nest.
The rough winds prove to be a test
And, though it shakes the leafy bough,
The black rooks sway - hold fast and how
They call, angrily and then quite calm
Lest they should spread fear and alarm.
There are grey squirrels too at play
Upon the birth of this new day,
And presently I know I'll see
The butterfly and bumblebee.

Prayer Pointers

Sundays - Give thanks to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and pray that we may honour God with our thoughts and prayers.

Mondays - Pray for farmers preparing for the long weeks of harvest.

Tuesdays - Give thanks for our health system and people who work to help those in pain or suffering.

Wednesdays - Pray or civilians in countries where the sound of bombs dropping is a daily occurrence.

Thursdays - For world leaders to make decisions grounded in truth for the good of their people.

Fridays - Give thanks for our schools and colleges and pray for those leaving education and starting their working lives.

Saturdays - Give thanks for Food Banks and pray for those who cannot afford to buy sufficient food their families.



Eastling Church Flower Rota



July 6th - Aneta and Leigh-Anne

13th & 20th - Dorothy

27th - Jules M

August 3rd & 10th - Steph

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



Otterden & Stalisfield W.I.

Now that Summer has officially arrived, Otterden & Stalisfield W.I. are getting out and about. The beginning of June saw a group of us visit Little Buds Peony Farm near Maidstone. Although it was quite a journey along narrow lanes up the North Downs there was a surprising number of people visiting the venue as the car park was pretty full. The field was absolutely breathtaking with numerous varieties of peonies in the most gorgeous colours. Plants and picked peonies were for sale to take home. Definitely worth a visit.

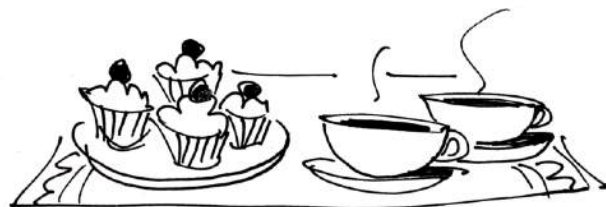


The next trip is organised for July to South Foreland Lighthouse, Dover, with our W.I. Member Sylvia Beck giving us a private guided tour. I'm not sure how many of us will make it up to the top though!

June's Meeting was professional Speaker Jo Livingston explaining to us how we could write our Life Story. This could seem a bit daunting but Jo told us it did not have to be from birth to current day. It can be pictorial, limiting it to certain highlights with short text explanations, or perhaps just covering a certain period of time that was memorable. A scrapbook theme is also a possibility using various tickets and programmes collected over the years, or a particular theme such as a hobby. Jo also gave us a flyer listing life story resources and places to visit, such as museums, as an aid for research.

Katherine Hook is returning to speak to us at July's Meeting. Katherine has previously visited to explain about her Sloe Gin and chocolate production. However, this time it will be to tell us about her other passion - 'Over four decades on Two Wheels'. Another good Speaker so it should be a good evening.

If you would like to join us, we meet the first Wednesday evening at 7.30 p.m. at Stalisfield Village Hall, ME13 OHY. Guests are very welcome at a small donation of £5 to cover refreshments. If you would like to join our Group please contact our President Helen Brooks on 07477580727 or Secretary Ellie Cameron on 07775649337.



Warm Welcome Village Social

Wednesday 2nd July

12:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Stalisfield Village Hall

Join us for social drop-in and stay for coffee, tea and delicious lunch for everyone in the village. There will also be a talk on how to avoid becoming a victim of online fraud by Kent Police during our lunch. Come to the hall and join an activity, use the wi-fi to work or just have a chat with your friends and neighbours. Free to all.



Stalisfield Fete needs your DONATIONS please ...

All fete donations are very welcome ... particularly:

- * Bottles (any substance, especially non-alcoholic & alcoholic drinks)
- * New Chocolate Bars of all varieties – add one to your shop!
- * Pre-loved designer clothes, shoes, accessories
- * Beloved Bric-a-Brac
- * Toys * Books

**Drop off items at Stalisfield Village Hall:
Sunday 10th August 9am – 3pm**

Thanks everyone ... and see you at the fete ...!

Saturday 23rd August, 2pm - 5pm
on Stalisfield Green and in the hall.

EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

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To book, email Annie:

jacksonandadams@btopenworld.com

07754 114670

See our availability here: <https://www.eastlingvillagehall.co.uk/calendar>

Eastling Primary School News

I cannot believe that we are in the final term of this school year. We have had another wonderful year with lots of great achievements.

On Friday 16th May Willow class led a super assembly on their learning around the theme of 'Where Does Our Food Come From?' Holly class visited Brogdale on Wednesday 21st May where they toured the orchard, learnt about bees, did a quiz about fruits, went pond dipping and made clay models of minibeasts.

On Thursday 22nd May the whole school enjoyed Outdoor Learning Day. Acorn class visited a local orchard where they shared a book. They then wrote their own class minibeast fact book. Maple class attended their last farm school where they helped with the sheep shearing. Holly class learnt about how the woods are used and collected natural objects. They then created art in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Willow class explored angles using natural materials and they drew flowers and plant parts before planting sunflowers. Oak class did some drama on the theme of nuclear energy, took part in a maths relay and created sculptures of their memories of Eastling Primary School.



Acorn class travelled to Bedgebury Pinetum on Friday 23rd May in search of the Gruffalo. They were successful in finding him and enjoyed exploring the grounds.

The FOES (Friends of Eastling School) organised a very successful party on the field on Friday 16th May. It was lovely to meet with some prospective families from Eastling and our new Year R families. Year 6 completed their level 1 and level 2 Bikeability at the start of June. On Thursday 12th June all the juniors enjoyed a countryside learning day at Otterden. For further information please visit our school website where photographs and newsletters are displayed and updated regularly.

Melanie Dale, Headteacher



Youth Group in Stalisfield 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.

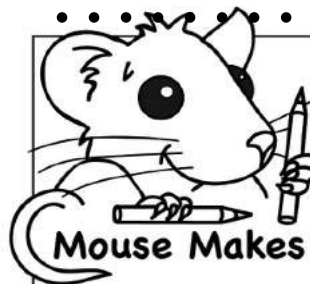


New Members Welcome

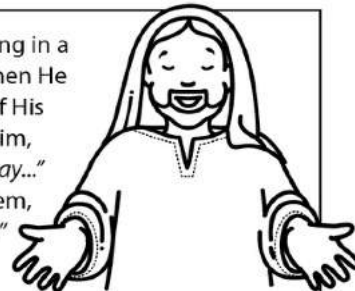
Upcoming Dates:

Wednesdays 9th and 23rd July

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



"Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray...' And He said to them, 'When you pray, say...'"



Our _____
in _____,
hallowed be your
_____, your
_____ come,
your _____ be done,
on _____ as it is in
_____.

Give us today our daily

_____ us our
S _____ as we forgive
those who sin against us.
Lead us not into

but _____
us from _____.

For the kingdom,
the _____ and
the _____ are
yours now and forever.
Amen

D T E O P R G O D
F E E B R E A D I
O M G T O P P G S
R P W R T E O L C
G T L E E N W O I
I A O S C T E R P
V T R P T A R Y L
E I D A I N A M E
N O S S O C D A S
E N P S N E V F W
S K P E V I L A I
S I R S I N S T L
Y N A E A R T H L
G Y H E A V E N
I D E L I V E R E
F O R G I V E V E
A M E N W O R L D
I L F L J E S U S



Fill in the
missing
words of
the Lord's

Prayer
then find
them and
these extra
words in the
word search:
LORD'S PRAYER
DISCIPLES
JESUS
GOD
WORLD
NEEDS
FORGIVENESS
TRESPASSES
PROTECTION
REPENTANCE



The versions of **The Lord's Prayer**
we say today come from the
Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Which version do you
use in your church?



Read
Matthew 6:9-15
and
Luke 11:1-4





Belmont House & Gardens What's On

Open Air Theatre 'Twelfth Night'

Friday 11th July, 7pm

Love, relationships and mistaken identity. Twelfth Night is Shakespeare's bittersweet romantic comedy where no-one is quite who they seem.

Please bring your own picnic blankets or low-backed seats to sit on to enjoy the performance. Picnics are welcome in the gardens. Adults: £25.00, Ages 10-18: £15.00.

Meet the Head Gardener Tour

Tuesday 15th July, 10am

Join our Head Gardener, Alisa, for a walking tour around our beautiful gardens to see some of the many species of plants and trees we have at Belmont. £13.00 per person.

Falconry on the lawn

Thursday 31st July & Thursday 21st August

Kent Falconry Centre will be here flying a variety of birds on the front lawn, you will be in for a real treat. Falconry shows are included within all admission types to Belmont

House & Gardens and will take place at 12.30pm & 2.30pm. Gardens open from 10am. Self-guided tours will be available between 1-3.30pm.

www.belmont-house.org

The Revd Dr Roger Roberts, formerly senior pastor of International Baptist Church, Brussels, considers the beginnings of discipleship...

Is it time you remembered 'eureka!'?

Do you suspect that your Christian commitment is not all it could be? If so, you are not alone. As one American church leader sadly put it: "In America the church is 3,000 miles wide – and one inch deep." But Jesus is still calling us to be His disciples, NOT His well-wishers – from a safe distance! So how does one start as a disciple, exactly? It can be helpful to remember the story of John and Andrew in the first chapter of St John.

Firstly, John and Andrew were simply getting on with daily life when their teacher, John the Baptist, introduced them to Jesus. They hadn't been out looking for Him – but when they met Him, they were deeply affected. Andrew excitedly reported: "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). His statement

is true, but the more you read of the story, the more you'll realize that it was Jesus *who found them*. He is after YOU, too! If you encounter God, it is no accident that your paths have crossed.

The English poet Francis Thompson was a vagrant living under a bridge until a Christian benefactor took him into his home. One of the poems Francis Thompson later wrote was 'The Hound of Heaven', which described God as the one who sought him down through his wayward, "labyrinthine ways." He was, like us, running from God, who all the time was leading him to an encounter with Himself.

Secondly, there is the *eureka!* factor in Andrew and John's story. This expression, from the Greek *eurisko*,



is said to have been exclaimed around the year 200 BC by the Greek mathematician Archimedes when he discovered a way to determine the purity of gold. Andrew used this same expression in vs 41, when he told his brother he had found Jesus Christ. "I've found Him! Eureka!"

You can be sure that Jesus is certainly looking for you, and if your response has ever been: 'I've found Him!

Eureka!' – then you, like Andrew, have become a disciple, a Christian. Maybe you began to follow Jesus a long time ago, but your obedience has been "on hold." You haven't been faithful in worship, in reading the Bible. You haven't even been a part of a local church.

Well, right now is an ideal time to re-discover the joy of *eureka!* again.



Together in Boots

Please Note our New Time!

Join us for a monthly mindful walk through woodland

Leaving Doddington Church at 2pm and returning for tea & cake at 2.45pm

Humans and well-behaved dogs all welcome



On Fridays 23rd May; 27th June; 25th July; 29th August

Enquiries to Lissie on 07790 287878
lissie1710@gmail.com



We are taking a summer break until 10th September when Dr John Stevens will present 'Architecture of Mughal India: Palaces, Mosques, Gardens and Mausoleum' at Egerton Millennium Hall at 2.30pm.

Membership is £45 for 10 lectures. Visitors are always very welcome at £8, refunded if you join. 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

Services in our Benefice

6th July Trinity 3

Galatians 6. 1 - 16, Luke 10. 1 - 11, 16 - 20

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

13th July Trinity 4

Colossians 1. 1 - 14, Luke 10. 25 - 37

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer

Lynsted 10.30am All Together Now

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

16th July Wednesday

Wychling 11am Holy Communion

20th July Trinity 5

Colossians 1. 15 - 28, Luke 10. 38 - end

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Throwley 5.30pm Benefice Evensong
followed by refreshments

27th July Trinity 6

Colossians 2. 6 - 15, Luke 11. 1 - 13

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

3rd August Trinity 7

Colossians 3. 1 - 11, Luke 12. 13 - 21

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Online Daily Worship Continues

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 (07749 403727)

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

Interment of Ashes

Charles TAH Wheler

5th June 2025 at Otterden

CONTACT THE *GOOD NEWS* EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

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

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

New Prayer Group

Starting on Wednesdays

10.30am in

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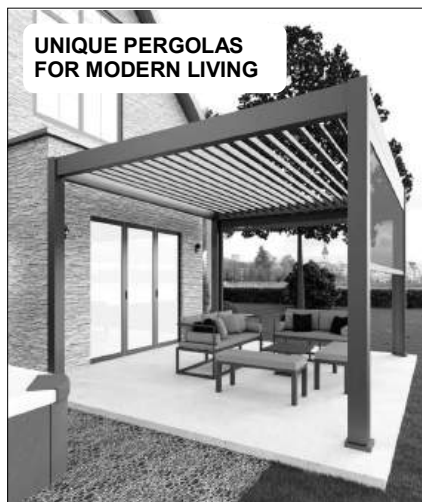
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14th July - Saint's Day of Phocus of Sinope, the brave gardener

Many of us are gardeners, but not many of us are buried in our gardens.

Phocus was a fourth century Christian gardener who ran a little guest house in Sinope, on the Black Sea (now part of modern Turkey). He used the produce from his garden to welcome and feed any visitors who came by, as well as giving anything left over to the poor.

In a time of persecution, the governor of the district sent soldiers to kill him because of his Christianity. But when the soldiers arrived at Phocus's guest house, they did not recognise him. Phocus politely fed them and invited them to stay the night, during which he crept out into his garden to dig his own grave and prepare for death. In the morning, Phocus divulged his true identity, rather to the dismay of the soldiers, who did not want to kill this kindly man. But Phocus assured them that he considered martyrdom the highest honour, and humbly bent his head to their swords. And so, the soldiers killed him and buried him in the grave he had prepared.

The news of Phocus's martyrdom spread far and wide, drawing many pilgrims to his garden. His calm courage and faith in God were widely admired and in time Phocus became the patron of sailors in the Black Sea, and then the whole Eastern Mediterranean.

Phocus's life echoes that of many Christians today, who go calmly about their daily mundane jobs in lands of persecution, and who do not avoid the call to Christian martyrdom, however it may come to them.

STALISFIELD GREEN VILLAGE FETE



& FUN DOG SHOW



Saturday 23rd August

Fete opens 2pm

GAMES

RACES

Fun Dog Show

*** Enter on the day ***



ICE CREAMS



BBQ

MILITARY VEHICLE DISPLAY

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STALLS STALLS STALLS

COMPETITIONS

BRIC-A-BRAC

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CRAFTS

BOOKS

DISPLAYS

.....AND MUCH MORE

The Faversham Pirate Festival - Join the fun on Sunday, 13th July, from 10am till 6pm, on the Front Brents, for a day packed with pirate-themed activities and entertainment.

- Pirate games, stalls, and skiff boat rides on the creek.
- Delicious food and drink to keep you fueled for adventure.
- Live music to keep spirits high!!
- Cannon and weapon displays featuring the Sheppey Pirates and Canterbury Medieval Combat.
- Appearances by Captain Jack Sparrow himself!
- Explore Mermaid Cove and enjoy the enchanting charm of the mermaids.
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01795 890561 option 1.
FGC, Belmont Park, Throwley Road,
ME13 0HB



The Revd Dr Jo White considers

Reflecting Faith: Saying 'Hello'

Previously we considered how, when we are invited by the priest to come and receive Holy Communion, our immediate response can be one of being overwhelmed with the enormity of what we are being offered. We might recognise how unworthy we are, to even be in God's presence, never mind taking Him in our hands and making Him part of ourselves.

Now let's consider some other key moments in our church services. Let's start at the very beginning.... Just saying hello!

How do you say 'hello' to the people you meet? We don't use the same words, gestures and tone to each person, nor on each occasion.

When we meet a very senior person in our workplace; we tend to be deferential and formal. By the time we have worked together for some months, we will still hold them in high regard and with respect, but we are probably more relaxed in their presence.

As for members of our close family, there's a time for huge hugs and explosions of laughter, such as at the

arrivals desk of the airport, but such a greeting is probably not so appropriate when we meet them in a formal restaurant for lunch.

So it is on a Sunday morning, when we meet with the members of our church in the setting of a church service.

By meeting together for worship, we have come deliberately into a consciousness of God's presence. It's not that He hasn't been with us on the way there, but this is a specific and intentional thing.

So, when the person leading the service says 'hello' at the start of the service, they are not just welcoming you as an individual but rather acknowledging that we are meeting together in the presence of God, to worship Him.

This is special. This is amazing. This is huge.

This month: When you next go to a church service take note of the leader's opening words and your expected response to them. What is your acceptance to that wonderful invitation?

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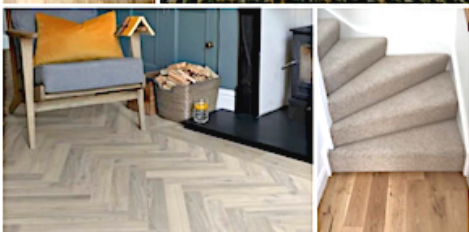
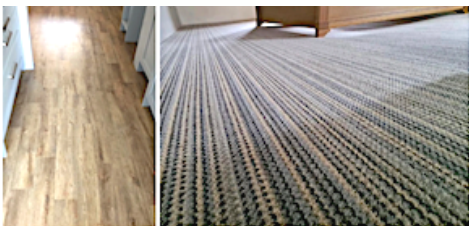


- The vicar announced that an additional font would soon be placed in the church, so that babies could be baptised at both ends.



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SAT 5th July
11AM-2PM

The Field
St Mary's Church
Teynham ME9 9ET

God's Detectives is a group for young people that meets alongside the main Family Service in Teynham Church, on the first Sunday of the month.

Through, craft, games and stories we help introduce you to God's wonderful world, following the readings that are shared in all churches.

God's Detectives is led by Sandie and Cheryl part of our dedicated team of volunteers. If you have any questions E:Mail; youth@kc-hd.org.uk we hope to see you there.

GOD'S
Detectives

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News from Citizens Advice Swale

Our impact in 2024/25

citizens
advice

Our data is in for 2024/25 and we're proud to share the impact we've had on our clients across Swale. We helped 2,047 people. 11% were disabled and 56% had a long-term health condition.

We helped with 2,213 debt issues, 1,192 housing issues and 3,715 benefits and Universal Credit issues. In addition to this we supported people with a further 8,689 problems including energy, relationship, employment and consumer issues. We're seeing an increase every year on the number of issues a client comes to us with, and more complicated cases, due to the continued effect of the cost of living.

Our specialist money advisers wrote off £298,115 debts, and our clients gained income of £1,844,797 with our help.

In 2024/5 every £1 invested into Citizens Advice Swale was worth £14.66 in public value.

Our local services saved the NHS £179,183 by reducing use.

We saved the Department for Work and Pensions £456,660 by keeping people in work.

We saved the local authority £161,267 in preventing homelessness, housing eviction and in council tax repayments.

The public value of improving clients' wellbeing (emotional wellbeing, family relationships and positive functioning) was £5,617,293.

The total value to the people we helped was an astonishing £5,975,751 and the total public value was £7,739,720.

We're proud of our volunteers and staff for continuing to provide this service in our community. How can we help you?

Drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary)

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

Telephone advice

Call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979 (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)

Email advice

Contact us online at www.citizensadviceSwale.uk/email-general-advice (Monday-Wednesday)

Debt advice

Request a call back from our specialist money advice team at www.citizensadviceSwale.uk/debt

To stay up to date with our opening times, please visit www.citizensadviceSwale.uk or follow us on Facebook.



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Our impact in Swale 2024/25

How we made a difference



2,047
people helped

11%

were disabled

56%

had a long-term health condition



2,213
debt issues



1,192
housing issues



3,715
benefits or UC issues



£298,115
debts written off

£1,844,797
income gained

citizens
advice

Swale

Adviceline 0808 278 7979
For email advice and more visit
citizensadviceSwale.uk

Registered charity number: 1103010

News from our County Councillor

There's not a huge amount to report on this month in terms of what's been going on at KCC - at least not in terms of meetings. There has only been one meeting so far, the annual general meeting, which took place as scheduled on 22nd May. At that meeting the new administration voted in their chosen leader. As was to be expected given the change of leadership at the council, the meeting was fairly light on issues which required decisions.

Following the election of specific roles, such as the leader, and leader of the opposition, some debate took place about flags and a couple of other issues which Reform's (now former) chairman had seemingly prioritised on behalf of the elected councillors by putting out posts on social media.

Since then we've been in the slightly odd position of seeing meetings cancelled, and then more, and then more. We've now reached the point where all of the committee meetings which were due to take place in June have either been cancelled or postponed by the new leader and cabinet. Without any meetings taking place, it's very difficult (nigh on impossible) for opposition councillors to scrutinise any decisions which are being taken. It's also incredibly bad for transparency, as the vast majority of the items discussed at committee meetings are published online, and the meetings are web-cast for anyone to watch live, or at any time during the year following the meeting.

What we did get a couple of weeks ago, in place of meetings, was an announcement of a 'DOGE'. (Department Of Government Efficiency). The name 'doge' was chosen in the US by Elon Musk, as he is a fan of an online meme of the same name featuring a photo of a shiba inu dog. The fact that the same name was chosen by Reform UK was surprising, given the abject failure of the project in the US. Over there it set out to reduce the federal budget by \$2trn, and ended up saving only a tiny percentage of that amount (and prompting a number of lawsuits against the US government in the process).

Whilst I completely agree with the goal of looking for inefficiencies and aiming to reduce the amount the council is spending, the way this was conducted felt more like a circus than a serious attempt to identify savings. The chair of Reform UK put out a tweet on the Sunday evening, turned up to a meeting at County Hall the following morning, conducted interviews in the council

chamber, and then left. Three days later he had resigned from his role (although he has since returned).

The results so far appear to be very limited, which is perhaps unsurprising given that KCC has been making cuts for 14 consecutive years. The only items of 'waste' which have been made public so far were either already identified in previous years, or are items of miniscule monetary value when viewed in the context of an annual budget of £1.8bn. (In one case a press release went out for something which was the equivalent of 0.001% of the annual budget.)

Swale Borough Council - Community Involvement

Swale Borough Council is currently seeking your views on its Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This important document outlines how the council plans to engage local residents and partners in shaping future planning policies and decisions, including the preparation of local plan documents and the assessment of planning applications. Your input will help ensure that the voices of the community are heard in these vital processes.

Residents are encouraged to read the Draft SCI and share their feedback through the council's online consultation portal at <https://swale-consult.objective.co.uk/kse>. For those who prefer a paper copy, the draft document can be viewed at council offices and libraries throughout Swale. Comments can also be submitted via email to Lpcomments@swale.gov.uk or by post to the Planning Policy team at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT.

The consultation period is open until 5pm on Wednesday, 2 July.

Cycle-Re-Cycle

In other news, Swale Borough Council (in partnership with KCC) has expanded the popular Cycle-Re-Cycle scheme. Residents can now donate unwanted bicycles at the Faversham Household Waste Recycling Centre. These bikes are then transported to HMP Swaleside on the Isle of Sheppey, where they are refurbished by inmates and sold to the public for just £10. This initiative not only promotes recycling and supports rehabilitation but also helps make cycling more accessible to everyone in our community.

Rich Lehmann
rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394 or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

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

Scams are becoming the pain of our lives; always remember, do not give any of your private details, mainly bank account details, and also if a purchase looks too good to be true then, odds on, it is going to be a scam. If you are caught out please do not feel embarrassed to report it. Quite a while ago I was caught out when buying an item, thank goodness not too costly.

Now that the short nights are with us the criminals will be about trying to relieve us of our gardening equipment. Please ensure all outbuildings are secure.

With the dry spell we have at the moment please be very careful with any BBQs and any firepits that you may desire to have. Everywhere is like a tinderbox.

Have a good month
Take Care
Alan

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Eastling School (School days only, 8am - 4.30pm) sited in the corridor of Main Building. ME13 0BA

Stalisfield sited at Stalisfield Village Hall, ME13 0HY

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