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Plans to reduce speed limit on danger road

Good news for the village's road safety campaigners who have been pressing for action to reduce the speed limit in West Street - particularly the stretch passing the primary school where it was feared children could be injured or even killed in a serious accident due to speeding vehicles.

Maidstone Borough Council has contacted the parish to say that, after a region-wide review of the speed limits in several village areas, it has been decided to reduce the 40mph limit through Hunton to 30mph.

"Subject to funding by the Kent County Council, the necessary changes will be made this summer," said Borough Transport head Steve Goulette. The new limit will extend from the Village Hall, past Bensted Close and Grove Lane, to the bends near the old Prince of Wales (Gudgeon) pub.

Acting Parish Council Chairman Lorraine Redfarn, who is also involved with the school administration, said: "This is really welcome news if the new limit is enforced - although we had been pressing for it to be reduced to 20mph." She said the school was also considering plans to make the entrance safer.

Play equipment sound - but car park needs repair

Repairs have been carried out to the play equipment in King George's field next to the Village Hall, making it safe and secure for children. The parish council is now considering placing a seat and tables nearby for watching parents, as well as fencing to keep dogs off the play area.

Village Hall chairman Alan Bishop said that link fencing was also needed to protect the adjoining playing fields. "At present there is no way to stop anyone from driving in and I would hate to see tyre marks left all across the cricket pitch." He also pressed for further work on the hall car park. "A lot of money was spent - more than £12,000 - on repairs but the work does not seem to have been completed properly; now whenever it rains a huge hole appears and it's getting worse. It seems a shame if all the good work is undermined when all it requires is a form of drainage into the ditch and, perhaps, a couple of lorry-loads of material." The council is taking action.

Anne Bishop is looking for volunteers to take part in a work party to trim back hedges around the hall. There was good support for the internal painting over two weekends.

Liz Oliver, of Elm Corner Farmhouse, who has served on Hunton Parish Council for some 16 years, has decided not to stand for re-election in May, when a vacancy will arise. Anyone interested should contact the chairman or clerk, whose telephone numbers are listed below.

Mother and daughter in Race for Life: Hunton mother Marion Leonard and her 12 year old daughter Catherine are taking part in a five mile Race for Life in Mote Park, Maidstone on Sunday, 15 May and are looking for sponsors for Cancer Research.

**Don't forget the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 11 April at 8pm
in St Mary's church. All parishioners will be most welcome!**

Plea from village schoolchildren: Our Primary School is on a busy road, which we find difficult to cross and we really need someone to help us cross safely at the beginning and end of the day. If you would like to be our Road Crossing Patrol, please contact our Head Teacher, Mrs Sue Wood (820360)

Your Local Contacts:

Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
Village Hall Booking: Jackie Crooks	820226	Under-5s Playgroup:	741951
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Maidstone Police:	608186	Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866**	'Potholes' concern (MBC): Graham Steady	602000
also: Revd David Jones	741474**	Churchwardens: Lynda Twaite	820739
Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	813527	Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
Rectory:	747570	Organist: Philip Moore	749356

**not available on Fridays

Dates for Diaries: 3rd Tuesday in every month - Village Hall Meeting at 7.45pm (820683)

2 April: Mayor's Concert (see page 2)

18 May: Parish Council AGM (814445)

7 May: Applause Event - Senegalese Band - Seckou Keita (820775)

12 June: Hunton Open Gardens (820852)

All items for the May issue to the Editor as soon as possible, and by 14 April, please

Question of Principles or Compromise?

In recent months the question of whether it is always better to stay linked with people you fundamentally disagree with has come to the fore in the world wide Anglican Church. Archbishops from around the globe met last month to work out the right way forward, given the fact that North America has enthroned a practising gay Bishop.

While some countries can accept this move, largely on the grounds of compassion, the majority believe that it goes against the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. The result of the Primates' meeting was that for the next three years the two sides will have a time and a space to ponder their positions and hopefully to reflect on the good things in the other party's argument. (No doubt, whichever side of the fence we sit on, we all have something to learn from the other).

But all this bids a more general question. Which is more important ... to stand up for what you believe in, or to let go of your principles in the name of peace? We face this question daily in relationships; families; local, national and international and faith communities. In the times of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, people again were not being faithful to God, and while the priests and prophets were saying: "Peace, Peace, you have nothing to fear, God loves you," God was angry because of his people's disobedience and because their religious leaders did not speak His truth. (Jeremiah 6:13&14)

So maybe the next question in such dilemmas is: which path would bring real Peace? For surely real Peace is much more than the absence of argument, or the presence of visible unity. As the church is finding, such questions sometimes take a long time to answer. It's about trying to be honest with ourselves - about our motives, and about seeking God's agenda, not our own. It's about trying to follow in the steps of Jesus, who walked the path of faithfulness and compassion most perfectly.

Ruth Bierbaum

Farewell to loyal resident Mrs B.M.'Molly' Shepherd: Hunton resident for 40 years, Mrs Barbara Mary 'Molly' Shepherd, known and respected for her kind and happy nature, has died aged 94. The Revd Roger Castle returned to Hunton to conduct the funeral service (postponed for two days because of snowy conditions), which was followed by burial in the churchyard.

Born in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, Molly worked in the Bank of England in London before meeting and later marrying Edmund Shepherd, an orthopaedic surgeon working at St Barts. When he found a post in the Maidstone area the couple moved to the county town in the mid-1950s, moving to Grove Lane 10 years later.

Molly, a loyal St Mary's church supporter, was always interested in art, being asked to judge a children's competition on one occasion. She also shared Edmund's interest in sailing and keeping their large garden looking immaculate. The couple have two sons, Peter a consultant physician and Patrick.

Mrs F. Jean Fisher - a regular churchgoer sadly missed: Another keen member of St Mary's congregation, Mrs F. Jean Fisher, who had long local links, died earlier this year. A former Sussex tennis player, she came to Willow Grove, Yalding in 1953, moving a couple of years later to Riverside, Hunton before returning to the neighbouring village to live at Downs Farm House.

Her daughter Frances Jones, now living in Norfolk, recalling the family's happy years locally, said: "Mummy had an enormous sense of duty and was particularly good at visiting people when they had retired and were in nursing homes. She loved interior decorating, gardening and arranging flowers. She was a former British Legion Women's Branch chairman in Yalding and later took on *Meals on Wheels*."

Cathedral organist to play in Yalding: Canterbury Cathedral organist and choirmaster Dr David Flood, will be giving a recital on the Peter Conacher & Co (Huddersfield) organ at St Peter and St Paul's Church, Yalding on Saturday 23 April at 7.30pm. The last time he came to the village, in September 2000, he expressed surprise at the quality of the organ and was able to make excellent acoustic use of the church's large nave. Yalding Church Preservation Society is staging its third Open Air Riverside Garden production of Twelfth Night from 23-26 June. For tickets for these events call Eric Raikes on 814272.

Night of Brass Band Music: The Kenward Trust is a registered Christian Charity helping people with drug and alcohol addiction problems. To help boost finances for the Trust's New Building Appeal, the Mayor and Mayoress of Tonbridge & Malling are promoting a *Night of Brass Band Music* with the KM Medway Band, at Tonbridge School on Saturday 2 April at 7.30pm. Tickets (£12.00 plus 50p p&p) are available from the Box Office 01732 361908.

Hall says: 'Bye bye, Lisa - hello Linda!' Lisa Danch, village hall booking clerk and cleaner for several years, has stepped down and been thanked by the committee for her dedication and hard work over the years.

A new cleaner Linda Prentice, who lives locally and is a keen supporter of village life, will ensure the hall is kept ready for hirers. Bookings are now being undertaken by Jackie Crooks (820226), a long-term volunteer worker.

Hall secretary Alison Williams is resigning on moving from Yalding, and the committee is looking to fill this vacancy - "not a lot of work is involved". Anyone interested please contact Alan on 820775 (daytime) or 820683 (evenings).

In an bid to keep costs down, the appeal for volunteers to help redecorate the hall resulted in the main hall, foyer, kitchen and toilets being painted, with thanks to Lorraine Redfarn and Alan Blackledge-Smith. More help is needed, however, to finish the job and the committee is arranging another date later in the year. One task not planned was to clear away and burn the *leylandii* cuttings dumped in the car park. It was the simplest and quickest method of clearing away someone else's mess. The committee has asked villagers to be vigilant and report anyone seen fly-tipping to Maidstone Borough Council. It is our village and we deserve it to be kept neat and tidy.

The Borough Council freighter will be at the Village

Search for Square Milers to keep fit: A brave attempt to try to keep the people of the village fit is being made a Hunton resident. After a party in the Village Hall, Christina Harrison of The Square, West Street was approached by several villagers expressing an interest in getting fit.

"They said that they would love to come out running with me when I do my 'Square Mile' which I try to do most evenings through the summer. So I thought I would get the ball rolling and do something about it. "Helen, who lives near me and is getting married in September, is the catalyst as she would like to be trim for her Big Day. Since her approach, I have had loads of interest, which is great. I don't plan to charge - it would just be a pleasure to get folk fitter and have some fun in the process. The 'Square Miler' is for anyone - don't worry if you are not fit, or are stiff or carrying a few extra pounds - just come along and do some simple stretches and exercises and follow that up with a gentle jog/walk/jog. I would like to start just as soon as the clocks have changed, when the evenings are lighter. All you need is some trainers, casual loose-fitting comfortable gear and 30 minutes - not much to ask out of an evening! We will meet outside my garage (the one with the wooden doors) at 5, The Square for the warm up, and take it from there," says Christina (820545).

Splendid snowdrop success for the Ways

David and Anke Way can be proud of their efforts when they opened their gardens at Southover for a *Black and White Show* of snowdrops and hot chocolate, raising £1,300 for the 'Save the Children Tsunami Disaster Fund'.

On a chilly but bright February day more than 400 visitors came to Grove Lane, with many lingering after unexpectedly meeting up with friends from the village and further afield. The demand for plants on sale far exceeded supply. The hellebores, mostly raised by Jean Murrell, were sold out by midday, while Mike Taylor also did a roaring trade with his snowdrops, raising £190 for the village school.

"Further sales, this time of greetings cards by Mary Johns and Nicky Grainger, collected another £85 for St Mary's church funds," said David, who thanked the many willing helpers who made it such a "splendid fund-raising day" - including Jacquie Leach who donated the chocolate and Waitrose the milk.



Saturday 2 July - A date for your diary!
Summer Evening Concert in Hunton Church - details next month



Just watch the weight come off!

Deliciously Slim, the new group formed in Hunton, had a great response from the article in the 'Herald' and organisers, in thanking readers, are now keen to give an update on how they have been trading for the first month or so.

Since two local ladies got interested in the Gi (glycemic index) diet and formed the group, attendance at their slimming and healthy eating classes is booming. The average weight loss of slimmers in their first weeks has been half a stone on the low Gi diet. Such is the demand that they have started a postal service for people who find it difficult to get to a class, which they back up with personal advice over the telephone. They are also considering expanding to other local areas, so if anyone has a preferred time and venue, they would be interested to know. The classes are currently run from 9.30-10.30am and 7.15-8.15pm on a Monday at Coxheath Village Hall. For further information, please call Jacqui or Ali on 07913 972231

Tom takes Karen's baton to save Minors: Yalding orchestra the *Relative Minors*, formed in 1991 when Karen Di Marco, her children, family and friends played at the family services in the church, looked in danger of folding when she hung up her baton at her final concert in Laddingford church last autumn. The 30 orchestra members were anxious to continue but knew it would take a certain type of person to step into Karen's shoes - someone who was not only skilled musically but who could make a big commitment. Local musician, composer, and arranger Tom Hill has saved the day! Karen introduced him to the orchestra and he is looking forward to the challenge, giving his time and energy to the group's continuation. The orchestra meets fortnightly in St Peter and St Paul's church. Players of any instruments and of any age and ability are always welcome; a part can be arranged for anyone. There is a real need for more strings, so anyone who has played in the past and would like to restart or likes the idea of playing with others, please contact Karen Martin (814444). She says: "The music played is varied; from classics to pop to musicals. Most of all, members have great fun making music together."

Warning: 'Find gipsy camps or we will'

Parishes have been warned that if they do not put forward planned sites for gipsy camps in their area, the Government could make their own selection and force them onto the communities.

The warning came from Maidstone Borough Councillor John Williams, who reported that one way being discussed by members aiming to ease the problems of illegal gipsy roadside camps was to ensure that they had the capacity for transit encampments. "Then if a problem arose families could be moved into these sites temporarily while their case was being resolved. If they were too big there might still be the difficulty of families living together so, ideally, there should be a number of smaller ones. But these should not be too remote and would have to be near to public services and transport."

Mr Williams said that these facilities are not available at the KCC highways depot at the top of Barn Hill which had been suggested at one stage as a possible site. No other locations have yet been mooted.

Eight mile Bluebell Walk: The Heart of Kent Hospice is organising a *Bluebell Walk* covering eight miles across the North Downs and starting from Harrietsham Community Centre on Sunday 1 May. For details call 790105.

Hall car park from 0745 to 0845 on Saturday 30 April

At St Mary's Church in April

Notices

Brass Cleaning: Mrs Murrell & Mrs Newman
Flowers: 3rd & 10th: Mrs Twaite
 17th & 24th: Mrs Down
Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am)
 3 April: Mrs Redfarn & Mrs Weston
 1 May: Mrs Twaite & Mrs Johns
Church Cleaning Rota: Mrs Forster

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

8pm, 11 April, in the church

Sunday Club: The next meeting of the Hunton Sunday Club will be on 17 April at 'Freelands', West Street from 5.15pm for a 5.30pm start until 6.45pm. A reminder that the Hunton Sunday club is a club for all primary school aged children, organised by St Mary's Hunton, and meets on the third Sunday of each month. For further information please contact David Jones 741474.

Services

Sunday 3rd - 2nd Sunday of Easter

11.00am Church Family Service Mrs E Doyle
 Reading: John 20:26-31

Sunday 10th - 3rd Sunday of Easter

9.15am Holy Communion (1662) Revd R Bierbaum
 Readings: Acts 2:14a,36-41 Luke 24:13-35

Sunday 17th - 4th Sunday of Easter

11.00am Morning Prayer Miss C Bostock
 Readings: 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10

OPEN COLLECTION FOR THE KENWARD TRUST

Sunday 24th - 4th Sunday of Easter

9.15am Holy Communion (CW) Revd D Jones
 Readings: Acts 7:55-60 John 14:1-14

Sunday 1 May: Church Family Service 11am

Make Poverty History in 2005

"Every day 30,000 children die to utterly preventable causes such as hunger and disease. These things we could change if ever we decided to." - Bishop Peter Price

This is a good time to join the protest by just sending postcards or letters (not money) to MPs or government ministers...The main events this month in Maidstone will be a joint service at Union Street Methodist church on Sunday 10 April at 6.30pm. and a proposed march on Saturday 16 April, convening at 10.30am at County Hall.

Alpha gatherings prove popular: The last Alpha meeting attracted about 40 guests, some regular church goers, but plenty who were not. For many, those evenings of meeting with people who became friends, were a significant landmark on their spiritual journey.

Everyone is welcome to come to the next *Alpha*. No special credentials are needed, with the food (physical and spiritual), the creche, and the friendship all provided! Just call 747570; visit the Rectory (144 Heath Road, Coxheath) or email: coxheath@benefice.wanadoo.co.uk

Coming soon . . . an extended range of greetings cards - prints of original watercolours by local artists - including new designs for 2005

Quality cards at sensible prices - why pay more?

Cards will be on sale in church, at events during the summer, and by arrangement with Nicky Grainger (813527) and Mary Johns (820384)

Forthcoming events - information available from the Rectory:

3-5 May: Maidstone Bible Convention will be held at the Salvation Army Citadel in Union Street

11 June: *2Gether4God Again*, Children's Festival at The Friars, Aylesford Priory

18 June: Wellspring 2005 at Aylesford Priory

Services at the other churches in our group:

April	3rd	10th	17th	24th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	9.15 MP	11.00 HC	11.00 CFS
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	11.00 Parish Worship	8.00 HC 10.30 MP
Linton	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 11.00 CFS	9.15 HC	9.15 HC
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC 6.00 EA	11.00 CFS	9.15 HC	11.00 MP
10am every Thursday - Holy Communion (1662) at Coxheath HC: Holy Communion MP: Morning Prayer CFS: Church Family Service EA: Evening Alternative				

For Weddings, Thanksgivings, and Baptisms, please contact Revd David Jones (741474)