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Hunton Parish Plan - Have Your Say

A bid is being made to compile a Hunton Parish Plan, giving a detailed list of every relevant feature of the village from its ancient history to the modern day.

It would include a glossary of all clubs, societies and organisations, as well as an outline of the village population, housing, the school and church – in fact every highlight of the community.

Other Maidstone villages have their own Plan, such as Bredhurst, where a questionnaire was taken among residents to ascertain the most important issues ranging from traffic improvements to police presence and neighbourhood watch to peace, quiet and cleanliness.

Parish Council Chairman, Roger Sawtell, says: "It is crucial for Hunton to have a Parish Plan. If we don't have such a qualified overall opinion on what we would like to see for the future it could put us under threat if any proposals arose affecting the village.

"If, for example, a property developer proposed a major new housing development, we would be in a better position to defend the bid if we had a concise view of the Village's future requirements. We need to be ahead of the game and ready to fend off unwelcome suggestions."

Council Clerk, David Swan, added: "When councillors go to meetings within the Maidstone borough, it would be valuable for them to be able to make suggestions knowing that, overall, the village was behind them in their reasoning. "For instance, if pressing for traffic improvements they could quote their Parish Plan questionnaire saying that, maybe 80 percent, of villagers were in favour of reducing the speed limit."

* Residents with a keen interest in Hunton are urgently being sought to get together to discuss making arrangements for a Plan with a time and date to be set for a meeting. Those interested are asked to contact the Editor as soon as possible.

Happy 1st Birthday to Hunton Club Book Group!

The book group is about to celebrate its first birthday in March. The group was founded by twelve members and all have remained as keen as ever. Eleven are residents of Hunton whilst one member lives in Linton. Our meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of every month at the Village Club where we discuss the monthly book and, being females, many other issues too! The books we read are chosen by us so everyone gets a turn at suggesting their favourite author.



We would like to thank Joan at Yalding Library who makes it all so easy for us. Joan kindly arranges the collection of twelve copies of the books from around Kent each month which we borrow and return. Thank you Joan.

West Street Foot Path

The long-running saga of the provision of a footpath in West Street from Bensted Close to the Village Hall is again being tackled by the Parish Council.

Clerk David Swan has written to Kent County Councillor, Paulina Stockwell, asking if there is any way that the important matter may be expedited other than through Kent Highways.

Mr Swan writes: "This footpath is in the list of local projects supported under the TRAMP process but does not appear to have any priority at county level. The path would effectively link many of the residents with their village sources of play, worship and community which are all in the hall area.

"King George V playing field trustees are working hard to replace the present out-dated play equipment but have made the point that the fund-raising will be more difficult unless some tangible support for the footpath is forthcoming.

"Equally it is felt that there might be some advantage in combining the play equipment and path projects as one initiative. It would be wrong to aim for a centre of play in the village which was not safely accessible on foot or cycle."

Your Local Contacts:			
Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Village Club: Doug Redfarn	820495
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Village Hall Booking: Jackie Crooks	820226
Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829	Maidstone Police:	608186
Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Rector: Revd Peter Walker	747570**	'Potholes' concern (KCC): Kim Hills	0845 824 7800
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866*	Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
also: Revd David Jones	741474*	Organist: Philip Moore	749356

*not available on Fridays **not available on Mondays

Dates for Diaries:

Saturday 24th March, Bulky refuse freighter, Village Hall car park 7.45-8.45am

All items for the April issue to the Editors as soon as possible, and by 15th March, please

Dear Friends,

Lent is upon us again! This season of the church's year consists of forty days in preparation for Easter. It is called a 'penitential season', that is a period of discipline and training for the new life in the Spirit. A time for spiritual introspection. A time to prepare for Easter.

The word 'Lent' comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'Lencten', meaning Spring. Signs of that are all around us. There are Lenten studies in our five parishes over Monday and Tuesday evenings. Why not take 'time-out' and attend one of these and make it part of your Lenten discipline?

As I write this I am reading the autobiography of the Roman Catholic Priest and Cistercian Monk, the late Thomas Merton. It was a very long pilgrimage which he took in his spiritual quest to discover God's will for him. His teenage years and early twenties were taken up with much study but also a hedonistic lifestyle which, as he eventually acknowledged, was disfiguring the person whom God had created. He describes this as 'self-love' which has little room for the God of Love that comes in Jesus Christ. All the time 'self-love' is dominant; God's love is pushed aside. All of us have this 'self-love' which sets its own agenda for life and often does not seek God's will on this or that matter. God is pushed aside so often and then we wonder why it is that often we ask where God is and why doesn't He do something about my problems?!

It is a very human trait which has self-love and self-will dictate our agenda. It is good then at a time like Lent to have a spiritual health-check and seek God more earnestly on His will for ourselves.

Not too many people are called to live the life of a Monk or Nun where there is time for getting in touch with God in a more concerted way and being that powerhouse of prayer for our world.

We can, however, whoever we are and wherever we are, offer our lives to God. As St. Benedict put it - to see our whole lives as an act of prayer - even the most mundane of activities! But also to take time to stop and wait on the Lord.

A reversal of the old saying perhaps will help us as we observe Lent and seek God's leading and direction: 'Don't just do something, stand there'

With my prayers for a meaningful Lent,

PETER.

Out and Out - Aerial Hunters

Most of us country lovers are familiar with the sight of a kestrel hovering when out walking around Hunton. Indeed, in April last year I spotted 3 hovering in a line along the river Beult. Other birds of prey are less conspicuous but exciting to see on a walk. The first sign of one around will often be lots of chattering noise from tits and other small birds in the bushes - look out for an approaching raptor. Sparrowhawks are frequent around Hunton now after the dreadful decline in the 1960s when farm pesticides decimated their numbers. Those with bird-tables may have then rushed in to grab their meal, typically rising in broad sweeping circles of flapping and gliding to gain height before swooping down.

The hobby was a rare bird of southern heathland until the 1980s when its numbers increased dramatically especially in Kent. They are fast, incredibly manoeuvrable little falcons catching large insects in flight. They breed in late June to mid-August in order to catch the less experienced young swallows and martins that form the bulk of the chick's food. It is worth looking for them in the Beult valley from June to September.

David Newman

AGE Age Concern Maidstone exists to promote the welfare of the older residents in the Borough of Maidstone and was originally founded in 1957 as Maidstone Old People's Welfare Committee. In 1972 Age Concern Maidstone was registered as a charity affiliated to Age Concern Kent and Age Concern England. In 1997 Age Concern Maidstone became an Incorporated Charity with the company number 3344224 and the Charity number 1062723.

We provide day care for the older residents in our day centres located throughout the Borough of Maidstone. At the centres we organise a variety of activities from bingo to educational talks; we also provide a hot mid-day meal and perhaps most importantly the companionship of their fellow attendees. During the warmer months we organise trips out for our day care clients. We are able to transport our day care clients to and from our centres in our fleet of minibuses. We also run a domiciliary bathing service and our foot care service is available in a number of surgeries throughout the Borough or in the home if house bound. Information and advice on services for the benefit for older residents of the Borough is available from our office in Mill Street.

Our permanent staff are ably supported by our team of 60 volunteers who drive our minibuses, escorting those clients using the minibuses to and from their homes and supporting our day care work. Without their continued valued support our work would be curtailed to the detriment of our clients.

If you would like to know more about our work, join our team of volunteers, attend a day centre or access our other services; please feel free to contact us on 01622 753 618 or alternatively e-mail us on info@ageconcernmaidstone.org.uk. If you wish to make a financial donation to support our work, our address is Age Concern Maidstone, 14A Mill Street, Maidstone, ME15 6XH.

Paul Coles, Chief Executive Officer

News from Hunton School

We began the New Year by obtaining Healthy School Status. A committee of parents, staff, governors and children formulated an action plan which included developing children's physical wellbeing and an understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

The Rocket Roots gardening club has gone from strength to strength, providing the children with an opportunity to grow and taste a variety of vegetables. We even grew our own pumpkins for Harvest and made pumpkin soup.

Part of the initiative to gain Healthy School Status involved all the children and staff skipping daily. We were helped by John from the Skip2B Fit Company. Many children learnt to skip and over a six week period they set personal goals which many children exceeded. The children learnt about motivation and perseverance as they set goals at the end of the autumn term. This culminated in a visit by Ms Anne Widdecombe MP where the children gave their own PowerPoint presentation about the project. Ms Widdecombe skipped with the children and awarded prizes to the highest achievers and to those who had made the best effort.

After a survey of parents we will be holding a parents' workshop in February to answer questions about packaging and providing a healthy packed lunch.

Our term finished on Friday 9th February with a Valentine Disco for the children of Hunton School.

Three Hunttons Walk 2007

In May 2003, an intrepid bunch of people set off to beat the bounds of England's three Hunttons: one in Yorkshire, one in Hampshire and of course, our own here in Kent. The aim was to complete this sponsored walk within 24 hours. Two kind drivers and a loaned minibus made this fund-raising trip possible and over £2000 was raised for the School. The walk tied up with the ever-popular beating the bounds of Hunton (Kent) where we were joined by dozens of locals.

We are planning to undertake this feat again on 12/13th May 2007. Anyone interested in either walking the three Hunttons or sponsoring can phone Mike Taylor on 820449. The Hunton (Kent) leg will set off

from Hunton Bridge, East Street, at 10 am on Rogation Sunday, 13th May, for which all are invited (with a lunch stop at the White House). Please ring Anne Bishop on 820683 for further details.



Horse Repatriation

I have been asked to try and find sites around Maidstone that can be used for horse repatriation. There is an organisation who assist in returning horses to their owners when they have been taken illegally. In the past they have had problems when trying to do this having received threats from members of the travelling fraternity. The organisation is looking for small paddocks in rural locations where horses can be left to be collected by their owners. If you know of any such sites please let me know and I will add these to the database.

Many thanks

PC Mark Pennicott (contactable at Maidstone police station)

HUNTON CLUB BOOK GROUP JANUARY BOOK REVIEW

MY SISTER'S KEEPER BY JODI PICOULT

Anna is not sick but she might as well be. By the age of thirteen she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions and injections to help her sister, Kate, fight leukaemia. Anna was born for this purpose her parents tell her, which is why they love her even more. But now she can't help but wonder what her life would be like if it weren't tied to her sister's and so she makes a decision, that for most at any age would be too difficult to bear, and sues her parents for the rights to her own body.

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult is the amazing, gut-wrenching, funny, sad and moving story of an American family. Picoult raises the ethical, moral, constitutional, personal and mostly life-or-death decision about a terminally ill loved one for whom extreme measures must be taken to play for more time. Where does the patient's right to stay alive infringe upon the life of someone else, in this case, a sister?

This book brought about a very mixed response from the group. All agreed it was thought provoking and raised ethical issues - just because operations can now be performed - should they? What would we all do in a similar situation? Each chapter was written as though from one of the characters giving us an insight into each person's perspective, dilemmas and emotions, which we all thought was really interesting and liked by us all.

Some of us totally enjoyed the book giving high scores of 9 whilst others thought it too contrived and awarded scores of only 5 or 6. The overall score we awarded was a surprising 6½ out of 10.

Our book for February is Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

At St Mary's Church in March

Notices	Services
<p>Brass Cleaning: Andrea Forster No Flowers for Lent Mothering Sunday</p> <p>Church Family Service Coffee Rota: 4th March: Simmons Family Mothering Sunday: Nicky Grainger</p> <p>Hunton Sunday Club: A club for children of primary school age living, or at school in Hunton, meets on Sunday March 25th from 5.15pm to 6.45pm at Durrants, West Street. Contact David 741474 for details</p>	<p>Sunday 4th March - Lent 2 11.00am Family Service Revd Peter Walker Reading: Luke 13 v 31-end</p> <p>Sunday 11th March - Lent 3 9.15am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) Revd David Jones Readings: I saiah 55 v1-9 and Luke 13 v1-9</p> <p>Sunday 18th March - Mothering Sunday 11.00 am Family Service Mrs E Doyle Readings: At the preachers discretion</p> <p>Sunday 25th March - Lent 5 9.15am Holy Communion Revd Peter Walker Readings: I saiah 43 v16-21 and John 12 v1-8</p>

I believe...

If like me, you were christened when you were a baby, adults would have said things about believing in God on your behalf. As we get older it's right that we take our own stand in our faith.

Do you believe and trust in God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Do you, in your adult life, want to follow Jesus?

Would you like to be confirmed in your faith by His Holy Spirit?

In the Anglican Church, we call the public declaration of our faith as an adult, Confirmation. Its a two way thing: the candidate confirms his/her faith in God, and through the laying on of hands by the Bishop we ask God to confirm the candidate with His Spirit. Would you like this?

If you haven't been christened/baptised already, that's not a problem. It can all happen at the same time. Our next Confirmation service will be in the Ancient Parish Church of East Farleigh on the evening of 15th July 2007. Preparation for confirmation will start in May. Do let us know if you are interested.

Adults, call Revd Peter Walker on 01622 747570

Teenagers, call Revd Ruth Bierbaum on 01622 743866

Lent and Easter 2007	Lent Course
<p style="text-align: center;">Palm Sunday 1st April The Crucifixion by J Stainer 6.00 p.m. East Farleigh church Towards the Cross</p> <p>Join us for a simple time of worship as we gather to stand alongside Jesus, on route to the Cross. 12 noon -12.30 p.m.</p> <p>Monday - Holy Trinity, Coxheath Tuesday - All Saints, West Farleigh Wednesday - St Nicholas', Linton Maundy Thursday April 5th 7.30 p.m. Holy Communion St Nicholas', Linton Good Friday April 6th See newsletter for times and venues Easter Sunday April 8th See newsletters for times at different churches</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Programme</p> <p>Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th February - Slavery: then and now Monday 5th & Tuesday 6th March - Friendship & Prayer: then and now Monday 12th & Tuesday 13th March - Change & Struggle: then and now Monday 19th & Tuesday 20th March - The Bible: then and now Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th March - Redemption & Restitution: then and now</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Venues</p> <p>Monday night - At various homes in and around Hunton Tuesday night - All Saints church, West Farleigh & Coxheath Centre Each evening 7.30pm for a prompt 7.45 pm. start and finishing at 9.00 pm.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Up and Running A Baby and Toddler Club for the whole Benefice meet every Thursday afternoon from 1.30pm until 3.00pm at Holy Trinity Church. Everyone is welcome. Contact David 741474 for further details</p>

February	4th	11th	18th	25th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	9.30 MP	11.00 FS	11.00 FS/HC
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC (bcp) 10.30 MP	11.00 FS	8.00 HC (bcp) 10.30 MP
Linton	9.15 HC	9.15 HC	11.00 FS	9.15 HC 11.00 APCM
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC 11.00 SW (at the White House)	11.00 HC	11.00 FS	11.00 MP
HC: Holy Communion, MP: Morning Prayer, (bcp) Book of Common Prayer, FS: Family Service, SW: Service of Word APCM Annual Parish Council Meeting				

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