

HUNTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

20TH MAY 2024

REPORTS OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Hunton Village Club

By Roger Lee

This report covers the period of the last 12 months during which time the Club has held a number of events (nearly 50 in the last year) including:

- Plant and Produce sale
- Beer festival (240 attendees)
- Walks and lunches
- Meet the village event
- Quiz nights
- Several private hires
- Football and rugby internationals
- Packing tea boxes for the local community
- Monthly Gents evenings
- Ladies nights
- Film nights
- Gardening Club meetings and suppers
- Yoga mornings
- Hunton Book Group
- New Year's Eve party

The Club has been open to members on Wednesday and Sunday evenings when regular dart playing also takes place. This year we decided that we had enough volunteers and demand to open on Friday evenings as well, which we will continue for the time being. We currently have over 130 members which is an increase on last year but we are still striving to increase this number.

Finances are generally in good shape although we have a number of repairs and refurbishments in the pipeline such as a new bar top and external painting. We are currently deregistering for VAT as our turnover is well below the threshold. To continue our policy of making improvements we repaired external woodwork and upgraded our old beer lines and cellar equipment to save money and reduce waste. As a result of the latter, we are hoping to get CAMRA accreditation.

At our AGM in December, the members elected two new committee members, Kevin Larkin and Nic Rudd. Earlier this year we co-opted Simon Webb and Sandra Bullivant volunteered to step down after many valuable years on the committee. We are also keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer for helping at events and running the bar.

Hunton Book Group

By Christine Summersgill

Hunton Book Group has seven members and meets at Hunton Village Club on the second Wednesday of each month. Coxheath Library provide us with seven copies of the books that the members have recommended.

Books that we have enjoyed in the past year include:

The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles

The Lie by Helen Dunmore

The Cleaner of Chartres by Sally Vicars

Huntonwatch

By Sue & Steve Wyles

Huntonwatch was set up eleven years ago with the help and encouragement of the local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators. We had access to information booklets, UV pens, window stickers and a whole host of other items to distribute to Members, regular contact with our PCSO (remember them?) and were able to attend meetings with other local schemes, the co-ordinators and the police.

Since then, the co-ordinators have changed, the local 'governance' structure of Neighbourhood Watch has altered and PCSOs have become a rare sight. We discovered this Spring that Huntonwatch had totally dropped off of the radar in the police and Kent Neighbourhood Watch. It seems nobody knew of our existence.

Just prior to the recent 'meet the village' event at the Club, we managed to re-register with Ourwatch (the Kent NHW scheme) and Maidstone Police. This means we now have access once more to the advice, information leaflets, etc which we hope will mean we can offer an improved service to our Members. We are still to link up with a PCSO however...!

Having re-registered the scheme, we have embarked upon an audit of our Membership so that we can ensure we have an up to date list. So far, 80 households (134 people) have confirmed their details (4 new households signed up at the Club event) but we are still waiting for a significant number to reply. We have taken the decision to give Members until the end of June to respond, at which point anyone we have not heard from will be removed from our Membership list and will no longer receive updates.

As to activity in the village, Hunton thankfully remains a relatively low crime area and our updates have mainly been notifying people of scams, potholes, floods and road closures – not within the usual scope of Neighbourhood Watch but something which, from feedback received, Members find useful.

We hope that there will be an article included in the June Herald which is aimed at increasing membership and we will report back to the Parish Council in due course on the success, or otherwise, of this. Thank you to the Parish Council for its ongoing support.

Hunton Herald

By James Forster

This past year the Herald has continued to be produced and delivered to every home in the village by a rotating team of editors and then distributed by Sue Pinks and her loyal group of supporters. Dudley Farman continues to manage the layout of every issue. Overall, the Herald relies on about 50 volunteers - we couldn't function without them and I thank them all for their support.

We continue to generate a surplus of advertising revenue over costs and have now donated £21,721 to village causes during our 21 years of operation.

Our current bank balance is approximately £6,000 so we are solvent and can look forward to supporting other village causes in the future.

Traffic & Road Safety Working Party

By Jonny Goddard

The Transport group has met three times since the last annual meeting, in June, November and February. The group is made up of three Parish councillors: myself, Mike and Iain, and four Hunton residents. It was set up to focus on ongoing highways issues and to evaluate proposals for road improvements that are presented to the Parish Council and then to KCC Highways for approval. Some works are paid for by KCC and some by the Parish Council, but regardless of how the project is funded, KCC has to approve the proposal.

Incidentally, it is worth clarifying here that part of the role of the Parish Councillors in the Transport group is to lobby KCC Highways to carry out works that are clearly their responsibility, like fixing potholes and reinstating white lines.

The remit of the Transport group is broad with the principal areas of concern being signage, drainage, flooding, road surface conditions and road markings.

To give you a few examples of the group's activity in the past 12 months:

- New chevron signage has been installed on the sharp bend on West Street by Scotts Farmhouse.
- The double height curbing was installed outside Hunton School.
- Speedwatch has started up again thanks to Mike Summersgill who has carried out the appropriate training for seven volunteers and they have met on a number of occasions to monitor vehicle speed in the village.
- New Lorrywatch signs have been collected from KCC for attachment to lamp posts and signs in the village.
- KCC will fund the cost of a sensor at the top of Hunton Hill to record HGV movements. This is to evaluate the need for a "no left turn" sign at the top of the hill.
- A "SLOW" sign has been approved at the bottom of Hunton Hill and a new "SLOW" sign by the "Road Narrows" sign on East Street.
- We are pushing KCC Highways and Drainage to resurface the section of West Street between Grove Lane and Scotts Farmhouse. This section is in a terrible state and the Parish Council has made a complaint to KCC: a) about the state of the road surface and b) about the continued delays in getting anything done to rectify it. The culverts beneath the road have been jetted and are running better so the surface isn't degrading as fast as before. This is ongoing - we're pushing hard for action from KCC.
- There are a number of other drains and culverts in the village that have not yet been cleared. Please keep reporting any blocked drains and culverts that you see. It all helps build momentum to get KCC to take action. This is an ongoing issue that we pursue.
- Mike has asked KCC for more salt bins. They won't fund new ones but will fill and refill existing ones.
- We report verge damage by tractors to the relevant operators to request more care from drivers and consideration of other road users in our village.

Lastly, I would like to thank the four residents who contribute to this transport and roads group: James, Celia, Steve and Fay, and to Sue and Liz who have stepped down. Your input is much appreciated.

Hunton Street Improvements Project **By Iain Simmons**

There will be an article in the June Herald so you can see what is happening.

The reason I got involved with this, is that a huge amount of work and effort was being put in by people, but the default way that local government likes to work, is that it is very reactive. Lots of great things have been done, but all they have ever done is deal with the symptoms rather than the causes. If you want to deal with causes, you have to do a different piece of work.

We know that we need buy-in from the community and it will take a bit of time to develop things and any changes that are made have to come with the agreement of Kent Highways. The work started at the 'meet the village' event. About 30 people came up to me and gave me information. We are seeking more information and will be talking to the businesses within the community as well, to make sure they are involved. I will also be doing some liaison through the school. It will be a slow, gradual build from gathering data to try and work out what, if anything, can be done to make things in the village different, particularly use of the highways – volume, speed, etc.

Some of the feedback I have received already has been very interesting, about use of some of the public rights of way, the footways through the village. Young people, in particular, have asked if they can be altered so they can ride a bike along them. The reason they said that is because even the children themselves, not just the parents, find it too scary to be on the road and most of us in this village have to be on these roads and streets because we don't have any footways. Anybody on foot, on a bike or horse shares the carriageway with motor vehicles.

There is a different dynamic happening throughout the country, that I was engaged in professionally, and have seen in many other parts of the country, and I have yet to see it here, so I think it is a great opportunity make a difference. I don't know what the difference will be, we are working towards that, but the Parish Council has money to make it happen and work effectively with Kent Highways.

King George V Playing Field Committee
By Simon Taylor

For those of you unfamiliar with the King George V Playing Field Committee, we comprise of representatives from all three sports clubs and the Parish Council.

We meet every two months throughout the year and review the condition of the playing fields, the equipment and buildings on it, and decide what, if anything, can be done to improve the amenity. We arrange grass cutting, strimming and tidying up if the field boundaries and we look after the play equipment.

We liaise with the Parish Council in respect of tree surveys and employ contractors to remove dangerous and unsightly branches and boughs.

Every year, in July, just before our AGM, we all walk the field boundary, discuss potential improvements and remedial work and do our best to get this carried out during the next few months.

We regularly become pre-occupied with hedges, rabbits, moles and nettles, as well as reminding the Parish Council chairman that the orchard gate post needs replacing.

We are funded by the Parish Council and try to spend those funds responsibly, sharing them between routine maintenance work and capital expenditure on items that we hope will improve the visual amenity of the field. It has been a quiet year for us this year, but we have installed a fence between the old and new cricket changing rooms, a rocking tractor in the play area and we have just taken delivery of a new bench, also for the play area, so that parents have somewhere to sit while watching the younger children enjoy themselves.

We welcome new members to the committee. This year it has been a pleasure to see Scott Elliott from Hunton Football Club as a regular attendee, with his very positive attitude to improving facilities for the football club. For me personally, I am intending to step down as chairman this year. I have a new grandson and the demands of grandparenthood mean that I am just too thinly spread at the moment. I will however be happy to continue serving on the committee if you will have me.

Hunton Litter Picking Group
By James Forster

We continue to collect about 114 large black sacks of rubbish alongside discarded furniture, old carpets, car tyres and a range of sometimes bulky car or lorry parts each year. This has been collected by Clock House Farm and disposed of with their own commercial rubbish so I am as grateful for their support as I am disappointed by MBC.

Our litter picking group has involved 30 or more from the village including some younger volunteers and we are indebted to them all. We do this at our own risk, taking responsibility for our own safety. Sadly, passing motorists continue to cast litter from their cars and so our roads are only clear of litter for a brief period but I take comfort in knowing how much has been picked up and is therefore there no longer!

We also thank the Parish Council for their financial support given in 2022, allowing us to buy high vis jackets, litter pickers and an initial stock of black sacks. We now need to ask the Parish Council for more money and will make a proposal for consideration shortly.

Hunton Village Hall Committee
By Annette Trought

The Village Hall Committee have undertaken a number of necessary improvements to the fabric of the building. These are important for "future proofing" the building, the intention being to ensure that the Village Hall remains a viable and desirable asset to the community of Hunton. A recent example was the upgrading of the lights within the hall. They are now LED and include uplighters which are designed to illuminate the vaulted roof.

The Hall was built and given to the village in 1926. The centenary will be in two years' time. The Village Hall Committee are looking for ideas for celebrating this.

Thanks were given to volunteers who had donated plants and contributed to improving the outside aspect of the hall

Community Orchard **By Annette Trought**

The Orchard Working Group pruned the trees in the orchard earlier in the year. However, several subsequent meetings had to be cancelled due to wet weather. The group met on Sunday 19th May. The long overdue clear up saw nettles cleared and grass mown. The areas surrounding the picnic tables were cleared and the orchard is now easy to access. The trees are heritage apple, pear and cherry varieties. The creation of the orchard was funded by the Kent Orchards for Everyone and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The funding was for 6 years and ceased in 2019.

Hunton Tree Warden **By Sam Andrews**

I would like to introduce myself as your new tree warden for Hunton village. I would like to pay tribute to Mike Summersgill, the outgoing tree warden, for his 12 years (I think) as Hunton tree warden. I would also like to thank him for his help and advice in getting me settled into my new role.

We had our 18 monthly visual tree assessment in October 2023 of the trees within the parish playing field area. The recommendations included reduction of two trees by the village hall and the car park lights which has been done. There are two poplars on the northern border of the playing field which are dying and are awaiting removal. There is an overhanging branch behind the cricket pavilion on Hunton Engineering land, they have been informed of this but no action has been taken as yet. I plan to remove this branch myself in the near future as it is only a small job. A further inspection of the turkey oak revealed that it does need some more work, and we are planning to schedule this for the autumn.

I am purchasing a new hedge trimmer for use by the PCC and churchyard working party. I will continue my work on the hedge adjacent to the road when the birds have finished nesting, and I will remove the epicormic growth from around the two sycamores near the village hall.

I have recently removed debris from the oak limb by the football pitch which was removed by the football club. There have, to my knowledge, been three new Tree Protection Orders of Oaks around Cock House on Lughorse Lane. The school sapling planting project has been deferred to this year as the 'copse in a box' kit arrived too late for me to use it in 2023.

Hunton Pond & Flood Warden **By Mike Summersgill**

Pond Warden:

The past year has been relatively quiet for residents' enquiries about ponds and for their condition status; with high groundwater levels in the recent wet winter, many of the pre-existing ponds filled up but did not overflow significantly. Natural springs were very active over the past months, but a lot of our ponds in woodland areas are not directly spring-fed and are the result of past human activity (such as those caused by the excavation of soil for brickworks along Redwall Lane).

The village has, however, had three new ponds created on private land, in and around Bishop's and Water Lanes. These are part of a wider project in the Medway catchment, funded in part by a DEFRA scheme and managed locally by Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) – the aim is to create better ecological conditions and also (in other areas) to reinstate 'neglected' ponds. It will take some time for nature to re-colonise these ponds, and work is still ongoing in one of them.

Allied to the MVCP work on new ponds, the Parish Council agreed in 2023 to use CIL levy funds to undertake physical surveys for Newts in some of the ponds in Hunton. MVCP have ecologists with permits to survey and handle Great-crested Newts (GCNs), a protected species, and Natural England have recently designated certain areas of Hunton, where geological conditions and springs persist, as potential zones for improvement of GCN habitat. After surveys of ponds along Redwall Lane and George Street revealed no GCN evidence last April, recent surveys in three ponds down East Street have revealed abundant evidence of GCN egg-laying in two of them, but no newts were trapped. After publicity in the Herald about the first year of GCN surveying, two (possibly three) residents came

forward to confirm they had seen newts in their ponds along West Street and Grove Lane, so the Parish may consider further work on identification next April, in these and the three 'new' ponds.

Flood Warden:

2023/4 was not a year for significant fluvial flooding, although levels on the River Beult were quite often significantly high for short periods (although not as high as at New Year 2022/23) and a few Flood Alerts on the Medway at Yalding caused concern but no residential evacuations. Hunton did however have some significant pluvial flooding events along Grove Lane and West Street, which was exacerbated by debris on a couple of grided culvert entrances (and is not helped by some undersized road culverts); again, these were not as bad as in some previous years, perhaps due to KCC clearing some of the culverts. There remain three locations in Hunton East where carriageway flooding occurs during rainstorms, on East Street, Redwall Lane and George Street, and overflowing gulleys and blocked culverts have been reported by me repeatedly to KCC, without any apparent resolution.

Hunton Ladies Group By Christine Summersgill

Hunton Ladies Group has 23 members and was formed when Hunton WI closed. It meets on the last Wednesday of each month at Hunton Village Club. There is no committee and the ladies take it in turns to organise meetings, communicating by WhatsApp. Occasionally meetings are on a Tuesday if the nature of the meeting would disturb other club members such as the darts team. For example, Sam Andrews and Astrid Cunningham gave a talk and showed pictures about their experiences volunteering for a medical charity in Africa.

Over the past year we have enjoyed different activities such as painting in water colours, card making, a games evening and flower arranging. Local residents have given talks ranging from spinning and weaving to a career in the CID.

Hunton Gardening Club By Lesley Lee

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting there has only been one Gardening Club outing.... a group spent an interesting afternoon visiting Loddington Farm where we learnt about regenerative farming. There are no visits planned for this year so if you have ideas, and are willing to organise something, I will be happy to hear from you.

I try to organise two social evenings during winter months in Hunton Club. In November, after supper, those present heard from Kiri and Martin, who run Wise Owl Cider from premises just off Barn Hill, about their products and then enjoyed a tasting.

At our February evening Sue and David Heaton kindly provided a light hearted quiz as post supper entertainment which resulted in lots of laughter.

In May our annual Plants, Produce and Refreshments event at the Club attracted record attendance, probably due to it being a lovely sunny afternoon. Thanks to those who donated items, helped run the event or came along and supported it. Over a thousand pounds was raised towards Club maintenance projects. Plants not sold at this event were donated to Hunton Village School Fayre where those that sold raised funds for school projects. Some annual plants were left at the school for the children to plant up in their garden.

It takes time, effort and generosity to grow plants and produce or make a cake and all donations to these events are gratefully received. Any plants not sold return to our garden where we do our best to tend for them until another fundraising opportunity occurs to sell them. Last September we tried a plants' stand at the Beer Festival. This raised a useful amount towards the total donations from the event so we will have a similar stand at the Beer Festival on 31st August. Please think about this when you are taking cuttings or dividing plants as your spares will be welcome.

The Tombola at the Beer Festival raises significant funds. I am already collecting donations for this and will be pleased if you can contribute – bottles of beer, wine etc being particularly welcome.

As you know from reading the Hunton Herald, volunteers take turns to mow the grass in St Mary's Churchyard and take part in occasional working parties to help maintain both inside the church and the area round it. These efforts

encourage couples to hold their weddings at the Church and use the excellent facilities across the road here at our Village Hall. Do come to help if you can.

In case anyone here is new to the village and does not know, everyone is welcome to join Hunton Gardening Club which is an informal group of locals who enjoy gardening and related topics. There is no membership fee – I simply keep a membership list and circulate everyone with details of meetings or things which might be of interest. Contact me if you are interested in joining.

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Hunton CEP School **By Iain Simmons**

Hunton Church of England Primary School is Voluntary Aided. This affords the Governors more authority over matters such as the numbers on the school roll. Revenue costs are funded by Kent and the capital costs are funded through the Diocese of Rochester. Though, ultimately, all money comes from the Government.

The school has a Vision: Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life in all its fullness.'

The Values, developed in conjunction with the children, are: Compassion; Joy; Perseverance; Respect.

The children and staff demonstrate these values every day. So, it was pleasing that when the Statutory Inspection (SIAMS) took place in March this year, the Inspector rightly delivered a strong positive judgement. We look forward positively to the next OFSTED inspection; which should take place next year.

The school is full and will be again next year. The children are happy. There is a wonderfully supportive PTA who have raised funds and provided effort to make significant improvements; particularly to the outside areas. The Governing Body is strong but is looking for two more Governors to complete our complement.

Hunton & Linton Pre-School **By Kathy Reid**

I am the Administrator at Hunton Pre-School, here in the Village Hall. We operate from here 5 days a week and currently have 47 children on role and 8 members of staff.

We take children from the age of 2, up until they start Primary School and we have a large catchment area. In July we have 24 children leaving to start Primary School and we are feeding to 4 different Primary Schools, with the majority going to Hunton and Coxheath.

Our Pre-School is an unincorporated charity steered by a committee and as a charity we need to do a lot of fundraising in order to buy new equipment and toys for the children. In April we held our annual Easter Bazaar whereby we raised just over £650 and this money was used to pay for a trip to Kent Life last week for all the children.

Meeting the individual needs of all children in our care lies at the heart of Hunton Pre-School's ethos, and we are therefore committed to providing high quality care and education for children. We ensure that we provide an environment that is safe, secure and welcoming. The children's learning and development is recorded, ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of every child, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically and we are fully committed to work in partnership with parents to help children learn and develop.

We aim to nurture self confidence and self-esteem and encourage independence. We do this by providing a rich play environment that promotes children's rights to explore, question and learn. Each child is given care and attention, is encouraged to participate and learn together. We are also very lucky that one of our staff members holds a level 3 forest school qualification and every Wednesday our children get to enjoy the local surroundings with forest school activities. And once a year our children get to pop next door to have a game of bowls with the Hunton bowls team.

We envisage that the 2024/2025 academic year will be busy due to the new funding for 2 year olds which was introduced in April.

We would like to thank the families and village community for their support in continuing to hold our lovely Pre-School in such high regard.

St Mary's Church

By Iain Simmons

The church is held in great affection by the parishioners and residents of Hunton. This community spirit is evidenced by the strong attendance at festival services and the many who help with fundraising and maintaining the fabric of the church and churchyards. The church has been supported well by the Rector and her Ministry Team; with some innovative services and a shared focus across the benefice. The link with the local Church of England School continues to strengthen. The Rector and Children and Families Worker engage with the school on a weekly basis and the school are holding services in the church termly. Many assist with the organisation and administration of the church on tasks such as: readers and sidespeople; flower arranging; chairing the PCC meetings. Special thanks is given to David Jones; who as treasurer and secretary to the PCC undertakes many tasks to lighten the load of the Churchwarden, as does James Forster with the Fabric and Lesley Lee with the church cleaning and churchyard maintenance.

Happily, three weddings are planned for this summer and the Events Team, led by Wendy Simmons, have a full programme of events lined up. The first event was 'meet the village' on 12 April, attended by 130 people. The next is Berries and Bells on 7th July. The annual village meal is being resurrected for October and will be in collaboration with the Friends of St Mary's.

Over the next year, I will be working with the Rector to develop a new form of Governance for the five churches in the Benefice; so that those who are struggling can be supported.

Friends of St Mary's

By David Heaton

Alongside the subscriptions from members of the Friends, they continue to take the opportunity to raise funds for the charity.

The Friends ran the bar at the successful Hunton Pantomime last October and helped with some of the building and dismantling of the stage. The combined bar proceeds and donation from the ticket sales gave the Friends in excess of £2,500. A few weeks later, the Friends ran the BBQ at the Church Christmas Fayre, though the proceeds are not huge, they were twice the previous year's and keeps the Friends profile to the fore.

I would like to thank all of the Trustees for their continued support, especially Ian Pinks as Treasurer and Kate Banks for the use of her house for the meetings and keeping us supplied with crisps!

The Friends will be inviting a representative of the Fabric Committee and PCC to the next Trustee meeting to discuss what our funds might be useful for in the next tranche of works required to keep our ancient church in good repair.

Our next major fundraising event will be the Harvest Supper here at the hall on 19th October. Make a note of the date in your diary; more details will be released in July.

Hunton Bowls Club

By Colin Slattery

The new season got off to a flying start at the end of April with our usual coffee morning. It is a morning when anyone can come along and have a go at bowling. We managed to sign five new members through this, bringing our membership up to 35. We have nine social members who always do this and more.

This was followed by the opening game on Sunday, the beginning of our bowls season. We always have a full fixture list, with league matches, competitions, tournaments and friendly matches, all to be completed in a very short season, by the end of September. We play in the Weald League, mixed tournaments, during the evening. The ladies play in a ladies league. Being short of members last year, we only had one team in the Friday night league, but luckily, with

new members we have gained this year we now have two teams. Most of the matches we play are within 20 miles of Hunton, apart from one or two exceptions, which are tournaments the members go and play.

During the winter months, the men look after the grounds and we maintain our own green. The surface suffered last year due to the heat, it was quite a warm summer, but we managed to get it back into a decent condition this year. We replaced all the fencing panels down one side of the green during the closed season; these were damaged by the wind so we have replaced them all. We have recently installed three new benches, donated by one of the Club members and we have done various other repairs to the grounds and the green.

We are going to entertain Hunton Pre-School on 22nd May, they are coming along for an active morning, just to get them used to playing a game of bowls! We are going to arrange an evening with the Run Club, where they can come along for a game in the summer. We are always looking for new members. On a Thursday evening, anyone is welcome to come along between 3pm and 7pm. We normally have a practise on a Thursday evening, so the green is always open. We are a very friendly Club, anyone is welcome to come along.

Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club **By Simon Taylor**

I am the chairman of Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club.

We have just started another season and it is probably a bit too early to draw any conclusions yet. Neither team has won a game yet, although this has chiefly been because of our own shortcomings rather than opposition strength.

We have two teams, both playing league cricket in the Kent Cricket League, which has been broadened recently to include everybody from the top teams right down to the truly incompetent.

Last year, our first team finished a credible 6th in division 9, while our twos once again avoided the wooden spoon in division 13 – for the third year in a row.

Numbers so far this year have been good – we have been oversubscribed for both league weekends so far. We have been bolstered by a number of new adult members as well as three youngsters from the Mote Colts, who are getting their first taste of open age cricket at Hunton.

Climate change is becoming a major factor for all cricket clubs – as winters become wetter and milder it becomes more difficult to prepare the ground for the season ahead. Many clubs have been faced with pitches still under water at the end of April. We are very lucky, to the extent that our square drains freely, but it was still impossible to get a mower on the outfield until the end of last month, so we are still playing on a meadow rather than a proper outfield. My thanks go to Steve Jones, our ground manager, who has managed to produce good looking wickets in the face of adversity.

It is also good to see a few younger members preparing to take up posts of responsibility. We have a new lady treasurer, who is keen on collecting match fees to the point of being dubbed ‘the Rottweiler’ and I am being shadowed by our first team vice skipper who apparently has designs on the chairmanship when I am no longer required to serve – good luck to him!

We are still hosting some games for the Mote – this year it looks as though the Mote women’s development team will play a number of matches at Hunton.

Cricket is very much a generational thing and we are looking forward to a new crop of youngsters joining their dads on the pitch (assuming one can persuade them off their xBoxes and out into the fresh air). It has always been an ambition of mine to play with both sons and at least one grandchild, although despite the recent arrival of a grandson, I am likely to be 75 before this happens and I doubt my dodgy hip will last that long.

Hunton Run Club
By Adam Moore

The Run Club started in June 2023. It is a free group, for anyone living in or around Hunton and open to all ages and abilities.

The Club meets twice a week – Tuesday evening and Friday afternoon.

We currently have approximately 20 members and are regularly getting 10+ attending on Tuesday evenings and 4 / 5 on Friday afternoons.

A number of one-off events have been held:

- Half-marathon in November
- Christmas Fun Run
- Easter Special
- Quiz Night

There are a number of upcoming events.

Peace Cottages Charity
By Liz Oliver
(unable to attend the meeting but report provided)

This year we have one new resident and a new trustee. Ian Terry, who was already living in Hunton, came into the cottages in January following the death of a former resident. He joined the other four occupants so, once again the accommodation is fully taken. The new trustee is Iain Simmons who, on becoming the new Church Warden of St Mary's Church, automatically becomes a trustee.

The main work undertaken in the past 12 months is the extension of the car park and the replanting of the front hedge which, when grown, will improve visibility for drivers at the junction of Bishop's Lane and West Street. After discussions with residents and negotiations with contractors, work started in November. New paths and steps to the car park are due to be installed.

Various other more minor problems have been dealt with such as carpet moths in one of the cottages, a broken sink and an extractor fan not working. These problems are reported to the pastoral trustee Graham Dolman and are usually fixed promptly.

More efficient lighting, activated by motion sensors, has been installed outside the cottages with a view to increasing safety for residents.

The very comprehensive handbook given to all residents has been updated this year making it clearer and more effective.

We are very grateful to Sue Nickalls, a comparatively new resident, who enjoys gardening and has considerably improved and brightened the gardens.

Residents in Peace Cottages are important members of our village community and it was good to see some of them at the recent Meet the Village event and Plant sale. The team of trustees all work with dedication and meet monthly on Zoom to continue the maintenance of the property and ensure the well-being of those who live there.

Hunton Walking Group
By Jane Langdon
(unable to attend the meeting but report provided)

The First 1000 Miles.

Hunton Walking Group reached its 250th walk in February this year. Unfortunately, the awful weather scuppered the planned celebratory trip to London, so we had to make do with the proper paths in Mote Park. Nevertheless, there was a very good turn out and several original walkers joined us for a drink afterwards.

I have calculated that if anyone had completed all the walks, they would have clocked up over 1000 miles – quite a proportion of the footpaths, byways and lanes of Kent!

Our twice monthly walks this year have included exploring new vineyards in Bearsted, Boxley and Red Hill and we look forward to sampling their wares in the future. Braving the mud over the winter months and into spring has not dampened our spirits and made the first signs of spring in February, snowdrops in Linton, blackthorn around Langley and increasing birdsong, all the more welcome.

We did get to do our London walk just last week as the weather improved. 14 of us enjoyed a route around The City of London led by Phil Nichols, who proved to be an excellent and knowledgeable Tour Guide leading us past familiar landmarks - St Paul's, Mansion House, Guildhall, The Old Bailey as well as lesser known gems such as the Inns of Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields, many beautiful, peaceful squares and the original Old Curiosity Shop (hopefully a picture in the next Hunton Herald). But it wouldn't have been a Hunton Walking Group without a refreshment stop, this time in one of London's oldest pubs, the Olde Cheshire Cheese.

Following the 'Get to Know the Village' event, a number of people have expressed an interest in joining us and we look forward to welcoming them very soon and also anyone else who would like to explore our wonderful countryside.

Hunton Football Club
By Scott Elliott
(unable to attend the meeting but report provided)

The Football Club has had one of its most successful seasons for many years. Despite a winless pre-season and then starting the season with a draw and a loss, the team went on a great run, not losing another league game until the final match of the season. The team came runners up in the Rochester and District league division 2 meaning promotion next year and winning two cup competitions along the way.

The management team have formed a young bunch of guys who have shown great effort and commitment at every game and performances have been excellent.

Hunton vets team have also had a few friendly games this year in order to keep some of the old faces from yesteryear still involved in club affairs.

Priorities for the summer include improving the playing surface for the players. A very wet winter has left the pitch in very poor condition so the club are currently looking at how to best improve it before the season starts in September and how it can be maintained better during the winter months. Any offers of support are extremely welcome.