



Next Editors: Jennifer Stuart-Smith and Angela Baptie: huntonherald@outlook.com
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th February

Gardening Club Social & Supper: Saturday 10th February

Come along to Hunton Club for a relaxed evening when Sue & David Heaton will organise a light hearted quiz after supper. The Club will open at 6.15pm for drinks then the pre-booked supper at £10 each for members of Hunton Village Club and £15 for non-members. Contact Lesley 01622 820210 lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com to book places – please tell her if you have special dietary requirements.

Hunton Gardening Club is an informal group of people who enjoy gardening and related topics. Anyone is welcome to join whether just interested in gardening or a novice or an experienced gardener. There is no membership fee. Volunteers organise visits to local farms and gardens as well as the occasional social event. On Saturday 4th May there will be a Plants & Produce Day at Hunton Club. To join or for more information about Hunton Gardening Club contact Lesley.

West Street road surface update

Hunton PC continue to press KCC Highways to resurface the stretch of West Street from Grove Lane past the Gudgeon. A detailed complaint has been made in December to this effect. The surface was severely damaged by continual running stream water caused by blocked culverts, which were cleared in spring last year. The road is a hazard to motorists and it needs to be repaired urgently.

Johnathan Goddard

Snowdrop Sunday, 11th February 2pm to 4pm

Everyone is invited to enjoy the abundance of beautiful snowdrops in Hunton churchyard on 'Snowdrop Sunday.' This event is always very popular, so do come along, there will be delicious refreshments. Maybe, take some super photographs, or just enjoy meeting up with local friends and neighbours.

Donations of homemade cakes would be most welcome (01622 820875).

Our Christmas Eve Carol Service was extremely well attended; we welcomed over 200 to the congregation with standing room only! Thank you to Marion (our organist) and Revd David Jones for leading such a lovely service, so full of Christmas spirit. Also, thank you to the choir and additional village choristers for leading joyful singing and to Sarah Jones for coordinating the beautiful floral arrangements and atmospheric candle lighting. It was wonderful to have the 'lessons' read by many members of our village and church. So, let's see if our snowdrop event can welcome just as many people to share in another village tradition.



Wendy Simmons

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| Your Local Contacts: | | Maidstone Police | 690690 or 101 |
| School: Secretary/Head Teacher | 820360 | Village Hall Booking: | www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk |
| Under 5's Pre-School: | 820309 | Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com | 07907 019996 |
| Pond and Tree Warden: Sam Andrews | huntontreewarden@gmail.com | 'Potholes' Hotline (KCC) | 03000 418181 |
| Rector: Revd. Lorna Faulkner* | 747570 | Hunton Ladies: Chris Summersgill | c.a.summersgill@btinternet.com |
| Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones | 741474* | PCSO - none | |
| Churchwarden: Iain Simmons | 820875 | Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk | 0207 219 7107 |
| | ishuntonchurchwarden@btinternet.com | Village Club: Roger Lee: roger.c.lee@btinternet.com | 820210 |
| Community Wardens Team | 07811 271021 | Reporting HGVs | huntontrafficroporting@gmail.com |
| Hunton Bell Ringers: Lavinia Thompson | 07885 763071 | | <i>*not available on Fridays</i> |
| Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk | | | |

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| Parish Council Contacts | | Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhuntonpc@gmail.com |
| Parish Clerk: Sharon Goodwin - 681238, huntonpc@goolemail.com | | Cllr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com |
| Cllr Jonny Goddard - 820096, jonny@cheveneyfarm.co.uk | | Cllr Mike Summersgill - 820429, mshuntonpc@btinternet.com |
| Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com | | Cllr Jean Fuller - 07738 935630, jfhuntonpc@outlook.com |
| Cllr Iain Simmons - 820875, ishuntonpc@btinternet.com | | |

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| Diary Dates | |
| Sat 10 Feb – Gardening Club Social & Supper at Hunton Club – Doors open 5.45pm, supper about 6.15pm; | Fri 23 Feb – Walk (11am) and/or Lunch (12.30pm); |
| Tues 27 Feb – 250th walk with the Walking Group; | Tues 23 April – St. George's Day Walk (11am) and/or Lunch (12.30pm); |
| Sat 4 May – Plants, Produce & Refreshments at Hunton Club – 12 noon to 4pm; | Sat 31 August – Beer Festival at Hunton Club |
| Check out www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk/events-list for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email huntonpc@gmail.com | |

Hello everyone,

It's February already! Half-way through February the time known as Lent begins. Lent is a period of 40 days when Christians commemorate the time when Jesus was tested by the Devil in the desert before beginning his ministry. It is a time of preparation for Easter, traditionally a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, which is described as the practice of giving money or food to poor people. Even if you don't identify as Christian or identify as religious you can still take part in the journey, which many people do.

Lent is often a time when folk give up something like, for instance, chocolate or coffee.

Here are some other suggestions that I found online: give up scrolling on your phone; give up gossiping; give up social media; give up unnecessary shopping; give up holding grudges.

Even better would be to give up time to help others. There are many volunteering opportunities or, maybe closer to home you know of a neighbour or friend who is needy in some way, and you can be of help. Perhaps consider giving to a food bank or donate to a charity any money saved by not buying chocolate!

The day before Lent begins is Shrove Tuesday or, as it is more popularly known, Pancake Day.

Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast, and pancakes are the perfect way of using up these ingredients. They were first mentioned in cookery books in 1439 and the first pancake race was in Olney in 1445.

Enjoy your pancakes on 13th February and I hope you mindfully consider ways in which you might be able to reach out to help others not just during Lent but maybe throughout the year.

Here are a couple of quotes on which to ponder.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." Dr Loretta Scott"

Blessings, Sue Elliott – Pastoral Assistant

Hunton SpeedWatch – 2023 Report

As reported in three issues of the Herald last year, we have re-started SpeedWatch in the village in late-June, so have now been operating for just over half a year. The scheme is approved by Kent Police, with trained operators from the community (along with Police attendance sometimes – see below); speeding drivers are never prosecuted or fined as a direct result of our SpeedWatch activity. It is essentially a road safety initiative, to increase awareness of speeding happening on local roads.

The locations we can utilise, being approved by Kent Police after a site visit, are outside the Church (40mph zone) and the Club entrance (30mph zone); we may record anyone going at 46+ mph or 35+ mph, and send registration numbers, vehicle type and colour to the Police website. A Police letter goes to car/van owners that have been notified twice or three times in a year by any SpeedWatch in Kent; a first-time record does not get a letter. Anyone exceeding the Speed Limit by 50% gets a visit by an Officer, whether it's a first record or not; we've had two of those passing the Club at 48mph!

In 2023, we've carried out 44 sessions (mostly one in each direction on the same day), and have recorded 139 'speeders' out of 2000+ vehicles passing; most were 'first offenders', 10 second and just 1 third. We have had a Police Officer turn up twice to check we are doing things correctly, and (on the second visit) to bring along his speed gun for use in tandem; that last visit resulted in him stopping a driver speeding above 40mph outside the Club and issuing them with a formal 'ticket'. Having 'lost' two volunteers from 2015-17 who remained on the 'list' for the first months, we are now down to 6 Watchers and we would like a couple more to join (most Watches use 4 volunteers), so please contact Mike Summersgill on huntontrafficking@gmail.com for info or queries.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council met on Monday 15th January. This meeting is the one where the PC set the Parish Precept for Hunton which forms part of the Community Charge. As the finances of the parish are in a healthy position, it was unanimously decided to leave the precept unchanged for 2024-25.

David Heaton, Chairman

Gardening Tips for Wildlife

Most garden wildlife will still be hibernating so avoid turning over your compost bins until April. There may be small mammals and frogs or toads hibernating in the heap.

Bumble bees will be the earliest out and would appreciate some early flowering plants such as primroses and crocuses. These make good container plants as well as out in the garden.

Clean out nest boxes by mid-February, but it is never too late to put up new nest boxes.

Plant a wildlife hedge. There is still time to buy bare rooted plants if you can find space for a hedge or thicken up an existing hedge.

Decide where you are going to put some log piles in the garden for hibernating insects and mammals so it is already in place for next autumn and winter.

Put your feet up and explore the seed and plant catalogues for some tempting bee and butterfly friendly plants to add to the garden.

Hunton Village Club, update and news

After the numerous successful events held at the Club during November and December, January is a quiet month before gearing up again for February. Reopening on Friday evenings from 6:30 p.m. has proved popular, many thanks being owed to the volunteer hosts, Kerry and Kevin, Heather and Paul, Jade and Nic not forgetting Annette.

At present the plan is to continue to open on Wednesdays at 8 p.m., Fridays 6:30 p.m. and Sundays 8 p.m.

There have already been some planned changes made this year, most noticeably to the bar. The old "T" bar dispensers have been removed and we have had two new beer pumps installed. The beer lines in the cellar / storeroom have been reduced in length and pass through a much smaller chiller which will have the capacity to open two more lines in the future. These changes have opened up some more storage space in the storeroom and shelving under the bar.

It is also planned to replace the bar countertop which is likely to give cause to possible redecoration, but all will depend on cost and available funds.

January also heralds the start of the Club Membership Year. The Club's licence to sell alcohol is a Club Premises Licence, which has regulations to be followed. The Club is required to have Rules and while not much publicity is given to them there is an obligation to follow them. Alcohol can only be purchased by a member, which is why encouragement is given to visitors to become members. Membership is only £25 per year (less than 50p a week) and 2023 members renewing before the end of February receive a £5 discount. The bar prices remain very competitive in comparison with pub prices and combined with the numerous events that are held at the Club membership provides good value.

The next scheduled events are the Gardening Group's social on Saturday 10th February and a Walk and Lunch on 23rd February.

There will of course be lots more happening during the year, details of which will appear on the Club's website, www.huntonvillageclub.com.

Fabulous Fact or Fiction?

Fans of *Pride and Prejudice* read on! The book by Jane Austen that has established itself as one of the most popular ever written, that has been turned into numerous films, TV series and spin-offs, may be part based on Hunton properties and people! A bold claim indeed but how can it be so? It is known that Jane Austen visited Kent in 1796 and also that she based characters and places on those she had experienced first-hand. This was also the year she began *First Impressions*, a draft novel that in 1813 went on to become the published *Pride and Prejudice*.

She was a regular visitor to Kent with many connections here and she is known to have stayed at Goodnestone Park, near Canterbury, with her brother Edward and his wife Elizabeth (whose family owned the estate) in 1796. She also had strong family connections to Horsmonden and to Tonbridge where her father had been at school and where he had taught as a master. She could even trace her Austen family roots back to Yalding.

It appears that the character of Lady Catherine de Bourgh of Rosings may have been based on Lady Rebecca Twisden of Gennings; both were widows with an unmarried daughter, each daughter being a substantial heiress. Lady Twisden's daughter was due to inherit Bradbourn, her uncle's large estate in East Malling, whereas the Bennets lived in Longbourn.

In chapter 29 of the book, Rosings is described in terms that closely match Gennings, namely as a handsome modern building on rising ground (Gennings was extensively modernised in 1778 and other matching descriptions include its steps to the hall, the fine proportions and finished ornaments in the entrance hall, the view from the drawing room, and its two lodges – note, there was a second lodge house further up Hunton Hill, now demolished).

The fictional Rosings was also situated in the village of Hunsford, off Hunsford Lane (Hunton and Hunton Hill), so even the name of the village and its roads could be nods in our direction. Could these and other names used have been similar by design?

The parsonage, where Mr Collins lived, also bears similarities to our rectory as it existed in the late 18th century, before being demolished and rebuilt in about 1867. The parsonage was described as having a large garden, sloping to the road with a gravel walk around the house and a prospect of Rosings through an opening in the trees that bordered the park. Mr Collins speaks of two meadows bordering his home whereas Dr Beilby Porteus (Rector of Hunton 1787 – 1809 and later Bishop of London) similarly writes of his house being separated from Gennings "by two small meadows through which run a little footpath that communicated from our house to the other". Dr Porteus goes on to describe Lady Twisden in such glowing terms that it could indeed be Mr Collins referring to Lady Catherine! Similarities between Mr Collins and Dr Porteus have been commented on by academics unconnected to Hunton (in 1830, 1901 and again more recently).

Jane Austen describes Longbourn as being near Meryton, which in turn was similar to Maidstone at the time with its large barracks and encampment at Coxheath. A contemporaneous historian (Edward Brayley) wrote at the time that "the heath was a very busy spot for it became fashion to visit the camp." Does this sound familiar?!

Finally, Hunsford is described as being a mere 24 miles from London whereas Hunton is about 33 – perhaps this is not a material difference?

We cannot know that Rosings, Hunsford, Meryton, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mr Collins and the Parsonage all sprang from a visit to Gennings, Hunton and Maidstone in 1796 but surely it is a tempting thought that this might be fact not fiction?!

James Forster

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wednesdays & Fridays 8 - 11pm. Sundays 8 - 10.30 pm

Walks & Lunches – Raising Funds for Hunton Club

About twenty people went on the Post-Christmas Walk on 30th December and were lucky to have a relatively dry morning. Just over thirty then enjoyed lunch which included hot soup, salads and tasty donated, home-made cakes served with teas and coffees. Funds raised from these events go towards maintenance projects at the Club.

The next Walk / Lunch will be on Friday 23rd February. As usual, everyone will be welcome to join a free walk lasting about 1.5 hours leaving Hunton Club at 11am. Anyone who does not want to walk will be welcome to wait in the Club or help set up for lunch which will be served from about 12.30pm. You are welcome to just do the walk or just come for lunch or both! Contact Lesley - lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com to reserve places on the walk and / or for lunch at £10 a head for Club members and £15 for non-members.

If booking lunch, please let her know if you have food allergies. She will also be very happy to hear from you if you are willing to help or make a cake.



Volunteers for Churchyard Mowing required

I wanted to say a big thankyou to all our Churchyard Mowing Volunteers. They have undertaken sterling work to keep the churchyard looking smart. We have a truly remarkable church and churchyard in Hunton and aside from our regular services the venue is very popular for weddings too.

Many people are part of the rota to ensure the churchyard is kept trim and tidy throughout the year. The aim is to mow roughly once a fortnight and as and when the churchyard working parties are arranged several times a year.

I have a list of people willing and able but would love more people to be able to help, this keeps down the number of mowing sessions each individual will need to do – definitely the more the merrier!

If you would like to help out, don't forget this is a way to get your steps up and undertake resistance exercise at the same time – what's more to like? We have a mower so no need to feel you need to be equipped.

Please contact Sue Heaton if you are interested and would like any further information. 01622 820678, heatonsue4@gmail.com

Spring term at Hunton Church of England Primary School

Happy New Year from Hunton CEP School. The children have settled back well after the Christmas holidays and are eager to learn.

We are very excited to confirm that 'Tesco Stronger Starts' will be putting our project (to build an outdoor covered area) to the vote in January 2024!

Please, please, please spread the word and tell all family, friends, neighbours in the local area to vote for us, so we can provide the children with more outdoor learning areas.

The project with the highest number of votes across will receive £1,500, the second placed project £1,000, and the third placed project £500. The following stores will vote: Maidstone Grove Green, Tonbridge Rd Exp, Maidstone, Coxheath Exp, London Rd Mdstone Exp, Bearsted Express, Oakwood Park Exp, Week St Maidstone Exp, Maidstone Loose Rd Exp.

Benefice Service Rota – February 2024

| Church | 4 th | 11 th | 18 th | 25 th |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Coxheath 11:00 am | Communion (1+2+3) <i>DJ</i> | Morning Worship (1+3) <i>BP</i> | Communion (1+2+3) <i>LF</i> | All-age worship <i>LF</i> |
| East Farleigh 9:30 am | Morning Worship <i>CD</i> | | Communion <i>LF</i> | |
| West Farleigh 9:30 am | | Communion <i>CD</i> | | Morning Worship <i>SE</i> |
| Hunton 9:30 am | Communion <i>LF</i> | | Family Service <i>DJ</i> | |
| Linton 9:30 am | | Morning Worship <i>LF</i> | | Communion <i>DJ</i> |

Midweek Services

Coxheath - Every Thursday; Holy Communion, 10:00 am.

Linton - Holy Communion last Wednesday of each month, 12.00, followed by soup

DJ – David Jones, BP - Becky Parnham, LF – Lorna Faulkner; CD – Clinton Davis; SE – Sue Elliott; BW – Bertie Woodward

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