



Next Editors: James and Andrea Forster: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th April

Coronavirus – Covid 19

If you are unwell, self isolating or simply worried about going to the shops we can help. Huntonwatch, supported by the Parish Council, will be emailing all its members with details of the help available during the first two weeks in April and full information will feature in the May Herald. All villagers can call Huntonwatch on 820403 if help is needed. If you are willing to help by running errands, collecting medications, shopping etc. please also register with us on the above number. If you are not yet a Huntonwatch member and wish to join please email us at huntonwatch@gmail.com

Steve and Sue, Huntonwatch

News from Helen Grant

One of the big issues concerning residents of Maidstone and the Weald over the last few years has been the spectre of substantial new housing developments underscored by a lack of commitment to necessary supporting infrastructure. Rural villages are especially sensitive to this and Hunton is no exception.

Housing development in Maidstone Borough is already too high and the forthcoming 40% increase, to 28,000 by 2037, is unthinkable. Hence joining with leaders of all political parties on MBC to ask the Government to reconsider these housing targets for our part of Kent is paramount.

It is vital however that where house building takes place it is supported by the infrastructure required. I am greatly encouraged that KCC and MBC are now engaging regularly at the Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Working Group. Improved co-operation can only lead to better infrastructure planning.

Errant HGVs can be a real blight in Hunton, East Farleigh and Linton. I am so pleased to report that a new scheme has been developed. In simple terms it restricts HGVs from using rural roads unless they are genuinely accessing a rural destination. Rat runs and erroneous sat nav guidance will not be tolerated. If I can be of help to you, please contact me.

School News

The church was packed with schoolchildren, staff and parents for the memorial service for School Secretary Mary Holt-Goldsmith, which took place on February 13th. Butterflies with memories and thanksgivings were hung on a beautiful tree and songs were sung with the usual enthusiasm of the children. Each class shared their memories of what Mrs Goldsmith meant to them, which was a great deal indeed. It was a suitably fitting service.

Head Teacher Mr Murdoch has decided to leave Hunton CEP to explore possibilities of developing other teachers, building on his passion for helping others develop. We are grateful for his service to the school as a class teacher and as head for the past two years. The Governors are working hard to plan and find a suitable replacement and we are grateful that Mr Paul Ryan, a very experienced head, will be filling the Headteacher role in the interim.

School has new Crossing Patrol

As the saying goes, “you wait ages for one then two come along at once”. Normally this refers to buses but in this case it’s the new school crossing patrol now operating at Hunton Primary School. Once school reopens a local husband and wife team will be seen mornings between 8-9am and afternoons between 2.55-3.40pm helping everyone cross the road safely. Keep an eye out for our new ‘Mr and Mrs Lollipop’ and please drive and park safely and considerately - particularly when the 20mph lights are flashing.

Your Local Contacts:		Village Hall Booking:	www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com	820403
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	'Potholes' Hotline (KCC)	03000 418181
Pond and Tree Warden: Mike Summersgill	820429	Community Warden: Adam McKinley	07811 271021
Rector: Revd. Peter Callway	747570*	PCSO - Martin Chivers	101
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474*	Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk	0207 219 7107
Associate Rector: Revd Eileen Doyle	204241**	Hunton Bell Ringers: Jeff Young	746541
Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288	WI President: Ann Sawtell	820731
Village Club: Gil Robertson	820059		
Maidstone Police	690690 or 101	*not available on Fridays; **not available on Mondays or Tuesdays	

Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.hunton.org.uk/contacts

Parish Council Contacts	
Parish Clerk: Sharon Goodwin - 681238, huntonpc@googlegmail.com	Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhhuntonpc@gmail.com
Cllr Jonny Goddard – 820096, jonny@cheveneyfarm.co.uk	Cllr Roger Lee - 820210, rhhuntonpc@btinternet.com
Cllr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com	Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com
Cllr Helen Ward - 820810, hwhuntonpc@wardy.org	Cllr Gary Thomas - 820691, gthuntonpc@gmail.com

Diary Dates	
Wed 1 st April: 9-12 noon Church & Churchyard Working Party	Sat 25 th April: 10am Hunton Bowls Club Coffee Morning
Mon 11 th May 7.30pm - Parish Council Annual Meeting - Village Hall	Mon 18 th May – 7pm - Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting - Village Hall
Sun 6 th Sept.: 12.30-10.30pm Hunton Club Beer Festival	
(All dates subject to change following most recent guidance re: Coronavirus outbreak.)	
Check out www.hunton.org.uk/diary for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email diary@hunton.org.uk	

Dear Friends

My goodness! What a time to be writing this pastoral letter. There are so many things I could focus on. Lent, our season for reflection will be coming to an end as we approach Holy Week and the wonderful celebration of Easter. We are also in the grip of the coronavirus pandemic. Today, as I write this, the Premier Football League have cancelled all games; the US has cancelled flights from Europe; the stock market around the world has plummeted; cities in Europe are in lockdown; local elections have been postponed and many people are having to self-isolate. It is a worrying time for us all. What on earth could I write by way of encouragement? When walking home from church this week I saw a sparrow lying dead on a garden path. It made me think of the verse in which Jesus says that God is aware of everything that happens, even when a sparrow falls to the ground, and that we are worth more than a sparrow. He has even numbered the hairs on our heads! (Matthew 10). We are so valuable that God sent his only son, Jesus, to die for us. We need not fear personal trials or even failures; they cannot shake God's love for us. So whatever life throws at us let's remember this: nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).

We are called many times in scripture to love one another, including our neighbours. Jesus says that everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35, our verse for 2020).

During these difficult and uncertain times let us make every effort to do just that! With love, prayer and blessings.

Sue Elliott – Pastoral Assistant, Coxheath Benefice.

Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club Winter report

"Cricket, in winter?" I hear you say. Well, it's true to say that not a lot happens on and around the pitch during January and February. As all local dog walkers will know, venturing onto the field at this time of year is usually a terminally soggy experience and the amount of rain we've had recently has, until now, put pay to any ground maintenance.

However, when the first days of March come upon us we start to look anxiously at the sky in the knowledge that we suddenly have limited time left before the season starts and a lot of work to do – mow the square, re-seed the ends, fertilise, condition the soil (we are not allowed to suppress worms any more due to H&S regulations) and roll, roll, roll – assuming we can get the roller started after it's been left for 5 months in the shed.

There's also the resurgent moles. The endless hoping and praying that Landscape Services will start cutting the outfield a few weeks before the season's start rather than 1 day before, on a drizzly Friday, leading to clumps of unsightly wet grass littering the playing surface.

In addition, it's not strictly true to say that all cricket stops during the winter. We have the joy of playing two indoor tournaments, one in November and the other in January. It's fast paced, sometimes hysterical and frequently lethal with a hard plastic ball pinging off the walls of the YMCA sports hall. We got to the final this year against Linton Park but decided to save our really rubbish performance for the important game.

March heralds the start of our indoor net sessions at Maidstone Grammar School on a Friday evening. These can also be entertaining and for the batsmen a little unsettling as they get to face a mixture of bowling techniques that vary from the vaguely competent to the frankly bizarre. Nets are a good way of loosening the muscles before the start of the season but we've long ago realised that they do little for technique, as all batsmen will tell you, regardless of the amount of pre-season practice, the very first ball you face on grass early in May will either rear up and practically decapitate you or fail to bounce at all and roll under your bat, hitting the bottom of middle stump and gently dislodging the bails.

All that remains is the usual publicity statement. HWCC is an inclusive, friendly, highly social cricket club that welcomes all new members from the parish or elsewhere. We run 2 sides in the Kent Regional Cricket League on Saturdays through the summer and play friendlies as well. If you have an interest in playing at any standard we'd love to hear from you. If you know how to score, umpire, prepare a wicket or make a cricket tea you will be practically worshipped. Under almost any circumstances please contact Simon Taylor on 07795 340008 or Steve Jones on 07860 833693.

Simon Taylor, Chairman, HWCC

Huntonwatch Update

We are pleased to note that since the autumn, when we had unprecedented numbers of thefts of gardening equipment crimes have reduced somewhat – but sadly we have not been spared totally and our sympathies go out to those who have suffered. We cannot stress enough that it is important to keep an eye out for anything suspicious and to report it via 101 with full information. It is clear that criminals do initial checks on an area to identify possible targets and local people are the only ones who can recognise any unusual activity.

Numbers of scams circulating at the moment are on the increase. Be they via e-mail, telephone or cold calling they all have one or two things in common: They apply pressure by indicating there will be legal implications if people do not comply or that building work needs to be undertaken. People are pressured to click on a link, call a specific number and cold callers become threatening. We are looking at ways of faster communication on matters such as road closures.

Pre-Easter Church Working Party Wednesday 1st April 9am – 12 noon

The snowdrops around St Mary's Church have again provided a fabulous show. They are visible thanks to the efforts of the volunteers who cut the grass during the year. A few more volunteers would mean that each person only cuts the grass once during the year. If you are willing to take on the occasional mowing session then contact Sue Heaton 01622 820678 heatonsue4@gmail.com.

If snowdrops are ready to be divided and replanted (and it is not pouring with rain) we will do this, (keeping our distance from one another) on Wednesday 1st April during a church and churchyard working party. Volunteers decide which jobs they wish to tackle, whether inside or outside the church. If you can spare an hour or so of your time to help this working party or other ones this year by volunteering to do some mowing, your help will be gratefully received. Contact Lesley for more information 01622 820210 lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com

Crufts 2020

Our big day arrived and an early start was needed to get to the NEC to allow some settling in time and be ready for the 9am judging. Janet, a very calm traveller with her seat harness on, slept for most of the 3 hour journey. On arrival Janet got out of the car, stretched and did her 'doggie ablutions' in the designated area.

We arrived at our bench, settled ourselves and gave Janet a drink. She looked around, laid down and we had a cuddle as I needed her therapy ability to calm me down. The judging began. We had entered two classes, the Post Graduate and the Good Citizen Dog Scheme for female dogs. The time whizzed by! I changed into smart clothes, gave Janet her last groom and composed myself while watching the class before. I noted the judge's observations and what she was asking other competitors to do. All the dogs looked spectacular, handlers smart but serious, tension was mounting.

Then we were in the ring with number card pinned on, lead in hand and treats in pocket. Janet looked good, I could see the judge liked her but there were 18 German Shepherd dogs in the class. We were 8th in the circle of competitors. All went well, but the judge pulled out the top 5, we were not included so I felt sad, but proud of Janet doing everything she was asked.

Our second chance was for German Shepherd Dogs who have passed Kennel Club obedience tests. Again in the ring, my heart pounding but feeling good, Janet was striding out beautifully looking even better than before. The Judge looked at us all individually, considering her choice. She looked hard at us - can it be? First is pulled out and I could feel my heart saying 'please pick us.' Hooray, she pointed at Janet for second place! I skipped into the ring next to the 1st place, delighted and kissing and cuddling Janet, smiling from ear to ear. I can't believe it. Second out of 12 in our class! What a great experience and a wonderful end to a long but successful day.

Wendy Sharp



Bellringers News

Did you hear the bells ringing at St. Mary's on Saturday the 14th March? Hunton Bellringers were the host of a Striking Contest for the Kent County Association of Change Ringers [KCACR]. Six teams took part comprising Hunton, Linton, East Farleigh, Boughton Monchelsea, Staplehurst and Yalding. There were two competitions. Each team had the choice of ringing a set method or tune or a tune composed by themselves. The rules set are the length of time taken and how many changes the bells make. Each team were judged by experts sitting outside the tower not knowing which team was ringing. The bells had to keep a constant rhythm and not clash. Ringers were required to change places cleanly and stop and start at the correct time. The winning team for composition was Staplehurst and the winning team for ringing a set method was Boughton Monchelsea. Well done to all the teams who took part. A big thank you to Hunton Bowls Club for the use of their toilet facilities and to all the Hunton ringers for their help in providing hot drinks etc. We need more ringers! It's a great hobby with a friendly crowd of people. Why not give it a try, our youngest ringer is 14 and the oldest - well! Practice night at St Mary's is alternate Fridays. Individual tuition for beginners can be arranged. Ring Jeff for more information on 07812 896772

Hunton Village Club & VE Day Celebrations

Following the latest government recommendations, the Club's Committee have reluctantly decided the following, which will not be a surprise to any of you: 1. As private venue bookings Yoga and Pilates classes will continue to be held for the time being. 2. The Club will be closed for all social events for the foreseeable future. On Friday 8th May, (the Bank Holiday), it was hoped that we would be able to celebrate VE Day at the Club. In view of issues relating to Covid-19 it is of course quite possible that such events will be cancelled, but we will keep you informed. The plan was for the Club to be open from midday and for you to bring along your own picnic so we can create a street party atmosphere in the car park / club. We would also like you to bring along any memorabilia that you may have relating to VE Day so that it can be appropriately displayed in the Club.

Elections Postponed

The Hunton Parish Council elections that were due to be held in May this year will now take place in May 2021 following the Government decision to postpone all local elections during the coronavirus outbreak. The current parish councillors will continue in their roles in the meantime.

Hunton Easter Pantomime

Due to the current Coronavirus it has been decided to postpone the Hunton Easter Pantomime to Christmas. The dates will be Wednesday 30th December, Friday 1st January, Saturday 2nd January 2021 matinee and evening performances. All tickets held will be automatically transferable to the new performance dates. As there will be no performance on Thursday 31st December any tickets bought for Thursday 9th April, will be transferred to Wednesday 30th December. Should this prove inconvenient please contact Sue – 01622 820709 suepinks@icloud.com

Litter Picking

As you will have seen from last month's edition I will no longer be co-ordinating the litter picks. It is regrettable but at the moment there is no way forward as the road speeds through the village are too fast for the Council insurance. It is nine years since my first litter pick and I would just like to thank everyone who has volunteered to help me with this demanding task. I would also like to thank those of you who didn't join us but litter picked independently. I think if we pick up litter outside our homes Hunton will be kept reasonably tidy.

Di Martin

Hunton School Classes of 1960s

Having met for the first time since leaving the old Hunton School Maddie Woodhams (nee Parker) and I have decided we would like to try and arrange a reunion of ex pupils of the school. We are looking to contact those who left the school between 1960 and 1964. If you or anyone you know may be interested please email me: johnchaplin@sky.com

WI News & Open Meeting – Hallmarking

Adam Phillips from The Assay Office talked about Hallmarks, a term dating back to 1462 when jewellers brought items to a Hall in London to be tested and marked accordingly. There have been several halls dating from the fifteenth century with the current hall built in 1829 which contains records and valuables fortunately rescued from the Great Fire of London. Adam gave a fascinating talk about the history of Hallmarking, the Guild and testing of precious metals, whilst passing around items connected to this. Unfortunately this was the last WI meeting at the club due to the present health crisis. The open meeting about the Titanic - the Ship that never sank has been postponed.

Tree Warden update on Ash Dieback (Chalara)

It's a few years since I wrote an article on ash dieback, caused by a fungus, which was spreading rapidly across Kent and the UK generally. First identified in the UK in 2012 Kent had not suffered quite as much as other parts of the country. As Ash trees slowly die over the next decade there becomes a greater risk to the public and a lot more work for tree surgeons. Since 1992 ash dieback has been responsible for destroying vast numbers of ash trees in continental Europe and Scandinavia. It has been found at hundreds of sites throughout Britain and Ireland. Initially over half of the findings were associated with trees planted during the previous 5 or 6 years suggesting that the imported plant trade had aided the arrival of this disease. It is likely that resistance to ash dieback will evolve in the UK ash population over time through natural selection.

Landowners, under both civil and criminal law, have responsibility for the health and safety of those on or near their land and for any structures or vehicles adjacent. If a tree or branches affected by ash dieback on private land falls and the diseased tree had been identified but nothing remedied then there could be damages to pay or even prosecution. Local authorities responsible for highways and cycle/by-way routes may already be tagging affected trees as part of their own risk assessments. In Wales, Section 154 Notices under the Highways Act have already been issued but none yet in England. The Tree Council have estimated that the cost of removing trees in private land adjoining highways will be approx. £30 million spread over several years. A further amount will be needed for ash trees in public areas. Some good basic information about ash dieback can be found on www.discoverwildlife.com/plant-facts/trees/facts-about-ash-dieback/. Gardeners and owners/managers of sites with ash trees can prevent the local spread by collecting fallen ash leaves and burning, burying or deep composting them. This disrupts the chalara fungus' annual lifecycle.

Mike Summersgill (Email: huntontreewarden@btinternet.com)

Hunton Bowls Club – Coffee Morning Saturday 25th April at 10.00am

Plant Stall/Tombola/Cake Stall/Bring & Buy. Any donations of plants and cakes would be most welcome! Please come along and support us.

Lambing and Bonding

We are lambing as I write this. The bond between ewe and lamb is fascinating. How natural and yet precarious it can be. Alexis has doted over her first lamb, a girl, but not the second, a boy. He was breech and she needed assistance to deliver him. Did that put her off? He was up, ready to feed so he was healthy, resilient and attracting all the attention a new Mum can't ignore. However, she ignored him and continued attending to her daughter. She returned to check him with an occasional cursory lick as he struggled to get to his feet without any encouragement from her. Initially she did let him feed and we were glad he had her rich colostrum but as the hours progressed she denied him her udder and gave him negative signals. I fed him a bottle of colostrum to be sure he had a good start. He took the bottle as if he was starving and would have swallowed the teat, bottle and all if he had had a chance! Perhaps his suck was too violent for her, or his persistence for more because he was a big lad.

By the next day her behaviour was positively aggressive. She was butting him against the pen when he tried to feed, though he could sneak a feed while she ate or if she thought it was her daughter at the teat. It was too much to bear. He seemed silent and often faced the wall. We could only be sure he fed if we were there making her stand still. We've called him Oliver! We took Oliver away and he is great company for Eddie whose Mum, a flighty first timer was having none of him. There was obviously something in the air that day. I swear Ollie can hear me lifting the bottle out of the Milton tank. He has a good pair of lungs and he pokes his head and legs through every bit of the bars of the hurdle trying to get to the bottle as fast as possible. Eddie and Ollie are in a pen in the nursery where all the mums and lambs are mixing and getting accustomed to finding each other before we release them into the field. I can't help feeling Elini, an older ewe, is keeping her eye on them for us. We turned the shamed Alexis into the nursery yesterday. Yet when we put Ollie to her she ignored him again, this we didn't mind as it allows Eddie and Ollie's friendship to continue.

Sue Heaton