



Next Editors: Stephen Banks & Jennifer Dixon: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th February

A message from the new Headteacher of Hunton Primary School

I really appreciate being asked to provide a piece for the Hunton Herald this month so I can introduce myself as the new Headteacher of Hunton CE Primary School. Despite my start not being the one any of us envisaged, I have been made to feel so welcome. It has been lovely getting to know new faces and I have been very impressed with the staff's determination to secure learning for all the children whether it be in school or remotely at home.

What a beautiful, special place Hunton is for the children to grow up in and learn to appreciate their environment! Even in these cold, short January days the wild life brightens up our days. The bluetits' acrobatics on the staff cars and seeing redwings on the playground are something to admire.

Just to tell you a little about myself. I have been in the teaching profession for a considerable number of years and taught in various local schools. My previous position was as Head of School at Loose Primary as well as being Inclusion Lead for the Trust as I have 'Special Educational Needs' experience too. I am married and have 23-year-old twins who are now living back with us after being away at university. I remember being asked by the children at my interview what did I like doing best in my spare time and my answer was spending time with family and friends. Let's hope we can all get back to doing this again and I so want to meet the local community.

My first day was not only focused on keeping our school safe during Covid but also on a clear vision for Hunton and how we can build and grow on the successes, yet provide change where it is necessary for the school to progress. It is important to establish a clear vision for the future.

My four key drivers are relationships, high expectations, high aspirations and wellbeing. No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship and happiness in classrooms. It is important that the conditions and learning environment reflect children's experience at school. It is the 'silent teacher' reflecting expectations and we need to make it a beautiful place to be. By us having high expectations, including manners, uniform and behaviour as well as academic achievements, the children will have high aspirations and believe that they can do it!

Hunton School is a 'family' and it has a unique feel about it that is not easy to put into words. It thrives upon mutual respect and positive relationships. I know that Hunton School was fortunate to have local people volunteering to hear children read and participate in their learning. I look forward to welcoming you back when it is possible and working with the wider community so that our school really begins to flourish once again.

The needs of the children are always paramount in the life and decision making within a school. I strongly believe in providing the children with exciting, creative and meaningful learning experiences, which build their enthusiasm for learning and help them grow and develop positively in a variety of ways.

I am looking forward to working with the whole community and continuing to build on the success of the school. We have a committed staff and wonderful children and I will be listening to the views of the pupils, parents and yourselves as we move forward. I can see we have a hugely committed team and wonderful children which of course is a great place for any new Head to start. This is an exciting time for our school and I look forward to working with you all.

Anita Makey



Your Local Contacts:		Village Hall Booking:	www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com	07907 019996
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 - Paul Vasey	101
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474*	Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk	0207 219 7107
Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288	Hunton Bell Ringers: Jeff Young	746541
Village Club: Gil Robertson	820059	WI President: Ann Sawtell	820731
Maidstone Police	690690 or 101	*not available on Fridays	
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, rlhuntonpc@btinternet.com
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Diary Dates
Check out www.hunton.org.uk/diary for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email diary@hunton.org.uk

Pastoral Letter

You don't need me to tell you that we are in the midst of a global pandemic at the moment. It's everywhere you look, all the news, conversations with friends, it pervades everything. Probably rightly so. It really is important that we do all we can to stay safe and keep others safe. Yet, there are those who deny that the pandemic is real, or it is a plot by the communists/right wing politicians/liberal elite/big tech to infect the world with a virus/microchip/fake news in order to suppress/repress/remove the rights of/control the world's population. Getting accurate information is more challenging than ever in a world of instant online social platforms and 24/7 news channels. Who do we believe? Do we trust our governments? The scientists? The newspapers? The BBC?

One thing we can trust is our own experience. I've had COVID-19 and it is most unpleasant. As an overweight, asthmatic, 65-year-old I was at risk of serious illness, but I am grateful that I am over it and working off the after effects. I am still struggling with shortness of breath and my thinking capacity is diminished. (Insert your own joke here) Seriously, it is not to be recommended, and my father died from it. He had a weak heart and other underlying conditions, but it was the COVID which finally ended his life.

One exchange I had with a chap who described himself as an "Apostolic Pentecostal Christian" had him saying that it was a severe lack of faith to wear a face covering and asked the question WWJD? (What Would Jesus Do?) My response to that was that it was not a particularly helpful question because he was God, and we're not, but that Jesus taught us that the greatest commandments are to love your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself. Wearing a face covering, washing hands, staying home, keeping distance when out are not showing a lack of faith. They are showing a love of neighbour. Isn't that what Jesus would want us to do?

Stay safe and well.

Peter Callway, Rector.

Garden tips for February

For those itching to get the secateurs out it's a good time to cut back any overgrown late flowering evergreen shrubs such as Prunus Laurocerasus and Aucuba japonica, (Leave Chosia tenata until the weather is warmer) and deciduous shrubs such as Buddleja and Ceanothus

Now is the time to tackle late flowering Clematis; the easiest group to prune, just cut down to about a foot (30cm) but be careful of the young shoots if they are already starting to sprout, it is easy to break them. There is still plenty of time to plant bare rooted shrubs, roses and fruit canes. Cut autumn fruiting raspberries down to the ground

If you have lifted Dahlia tubers to store over winter, it is time to get them going in containers under cover or in a greenhouse.

Start sowing round peas and broad beans outside and get shallots into the ground

Get sowing early annuals and some perennial seeds under cover or in a greenhouse: beat the lockdown restrictions and grow your own plants for the summer months.

Sue Heaton

Poppies

Way back in the autumn Royal British Legion Poppies were offered for sale in Hunton Primary School, the Village Playgroup and the Village Club. Due to the November lockdown the Club closed and the School and Playgroup were not able to support the Poppy in their usual way. However, the 3 Hunton venues raised a super £132 which was gratefully received. Thank you for your support.

Parish Council says 'No' to Chicken Farm

Hunton Parish Council members are unanimous in their opposition to the planned chicken farm in Chainhurst.

They agreed at their latest planning meeting that the application for the 'free-range' farm, housing 192,000 hens, would over-exploit the use of the site at Reed Court Farm and was far too ambitious in terms of size and numbers. Gary Thomas pointed out that the proposal would mean the farm was covering "every inch of the 94 hectares".

The council was worried about the look of a two-and-a-half metre high fence which would surround the site, as well as the environmental threat to nearby land which is classed as a site of Special Scientific Interest. David Heaton said: "There are a number of ponds on the site and there is important wildlife including great crested newts and other species which could be damaged." Another worrying aspect of the application by Fridays was felt to be potential pollution to the River Beult caused by chicken excrement going into the river, especially as the river there is prone to flooding. The council was unhappy about the possible diversion of footpaths and also had traffic concerns. They felt that insufficient and inadequate information had accompanied the application which now goes to Maidstone Borough Council's Planning Committee for consideration in March. Marden and Linton parish councils are also opposing the plans.

Peter Pan really, really is trying to Return!!!

Like everything else that has been and is planned, both last year and in the first part of 2021, it is quite obvious that putting on a performance at Easter this year will just not be viable.

BUT - we have booked the village hall for October half term week and our performances will happen on Thursday 28th evening performance, Friday 29th evening performance and Saturday 30th, matinee and evening performances.

Those of you who have purchased tickets will be able to use those tickets for October. We do have a note of who has purchased what - and so if you have lost the original tickets, we should - we hope - be able to issue you with new ones nearer the time. We will keep everyone informed as we go through the year. Fingers crossed that we really can get Peter Pan to return in October.

Sue, Sharon and Neil - the production team

Meds Collection Service Reinstated

Huntonwatch is again providing a meds collection service for Hunton residents registered with Yalding, Coxheath or Marden surgeries. To register for this service please contact Huntonwatch on 07907 019996 or send an e-mail to huntonwatch@gmail.com

Tea Box Challenge

With lockdown in place and loneliness being experienced by some people and with local clubs and charities such as Age UK not holding Christmas get-togethers, a local member of the Village Virus Volunteers (formed in March to aid people during lockdown) came up with an idea to deliver Afternoon Tea Boxes to the local elderly and those who are vulnerable. She and a few friends worked together to decide how best this could be done. A call for help went out seeking volunteer bakers and people who would help deliver the boxes. Over 70 people came forward to help! Initially it was thought that 50 or 60 boxes would be sufficient but once recipients were identified the number rose to 200. Could this task be achieved?

On a Saturday before Christmas the organisers and volunteers met at Hunton Village Club at 8.30 am where tables were set up, flat packed boxes assembled and soon the generous baking volunteers began arriving with delicious savouries and cakes, scones and biscuits etc. With Covid in mind they left their offerings on a table at the door and the filling of boxes was carried out in a safe way.

Soon the filled festive ribboned boxes, with a Christmas Cracker inserted, and with a Christmas Card written by Coxheath Preschool children, began to mount up. In the afternoon the transport volunteers arrived and soon the 200 boxes were sent out to people in Hunton, Coxheath, East and West Farleigh, Linton and even a couple of homes in Loose.

Thanks must be given not only to the volunteers who worked on the day but the bakers, the Church, Coxheath Bakery, Brake Brothers, Wards Estate Agents and local people who donated money for the cause. Importantly we mustn't forget the lovely ladies who made it all possible: Edna, Sandra, Philly and Lottie. Thank you one and all!

The Glass Half Full Approach to Life

For a long time now I have walked with a friend and over the past year we have covered numerous miles together. Recently Jan was in need of a challenge to lift her spirits and I suggested she find a walk we could cover over a period of time. We decided to divide the High Weald Landscape Route from Horsham to Rye into six mile sections. Parts are beautiful and well worth walking but signage does vary greatly as we were about to find out on our third walk.

It was muddy and rather grey but we were making good time until we came to a point where the signage failed us. Somehow we finished up in a field of cows. I for one would not choose to walk through livestock fields but Jan declared that having her walking pole all would be well. Why do we remember last words so accurately! I suggested we kept to the hedge, did not talk and under no circumstances should we run. This sage information held for nought as high pitched squeaks and waving of the walking pole only interested the cows who came nearer to inspect us.

Being an optimist, I assured her all would be well and not to worry. I don't think I shall ever forget her reply that being a pessimist and having an optimist for a friend was (expletive) extremely irritating. I agreed it must be, but reiterated all would be well. I won't give you her response but it amounted to her telling me to keep my mouth firmly closed and to wait and see life for what it really is. As we clambered over a locked gate we were both falling about laughing but I did look quickly around to see what, if anything, was happening in the field!

It is this optimism which has carried me this far in my life and as we enter the second decade of this century I am looking forward to a wider, freer life for us all as the vaccinations are rolled out and lock downs will hopefully be consigned to memory. Mercifully I have thus far been free of the terrible consequences of which so many have fallen victim and therefore my enduring memory will be of sunny days, ox eye daises, buttercups and the seasons as they came and went but, above all, the kindness, friendship and help I and so many have experienced throughout the time which is now, hopefully, close to becoming consigned to history.

So let us raise our metaphorical, or otherwise, glasses to a fresh future with our freedom appreciated and revelled in.

Fay Joyce

A Candlelit Service

By the time this issue of the Hunton Herald appears, Christmas, with all its restrictions, will be a long way behind us. So many of us had to change our plans, preventing us from spending the festive season with family and friends. But Christmas morning in the village had a welcome touch of normality when more than 40 people gathered in St Mary's Church for a candlelit Christmas service. Holly and ivy decorated the window ledges, the crib was in its usual place at the front of the church and the candles flickered. The Rector, Peter Callway, took the service, Marion Greensill played the organ beautifully with a medley of carols so that, even though no singing was allowed, everyone felt the spirit of Christmas. Masks were worn and social distancing was observed but, as the sun streamed through the stained glass windows, Hunton's strong sense of community gave hope for light at the end of the tunnel. The first snow-drops were pushing up through the ground in the churchyard on Christmas Day. By now there should be a white carpet of them and they will be well worth a visit. Sadly all five churches in the benefice are now closed again until at least the end of February following advice from Bishops and consultation between the local ministry team and parochial church councils.

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

The Village Club is currently closed until further notice

Love in the Time of COVID

I was an Island Boy, a diving instructor in Malaysia and she was a City Girl, a teacher in Singapore.

We had three exciting years of adventures, spanning SE Asia, Japan, USA and the UK exploring, hiking and diving and we fell deeply in love. Plans were made and then broken as COVID-19 arrived and the World, as we know it, came to a halt.

We wanted to be together and get married but I was no longer welcome as a tourist in Singapore and returned to England. To be married in England you both need to be resident in the country for a week, 28 days before you can get married. This was impossible to arrange. And I could not get into the USA to be married there.

Our only chance to get together was the Christmas holidays and the only viable marriage venue was Bonnie Scotland.

Early planning, lots of paperwork and certificates were gathered and posted and throughout this whole process fingers remained crossed as COVID restrictions were tightened and border crossings banned. Further restrictions came into force and our relatives were unable to travel. Two masked witnesses were borrowed from our hotel. Then Scotland banned all weddings from 26th December. Fortunately, we were lucky again and happily married on the 21st December.

A ray of sunshine at the end of a long year.

We are now waiting to return to Singapore, delayed again by COVID restrictions. However, we are lucky enough to be staying with my brother and his family in picturesque Hunton. We are surrounded by lovely countryside and have had amazing walks across the ever-changing shades of green fields and trees. We have got stuck in knee deep muddy fields, soaked in pouring rain and been swimming in deep floods. Everywhere we have been we have passed other walkers who have been friendly, cheery and smiling.

It gives me hope and inspiration for the future. Best wishes and good health to all.

Richard and Nancy Dolman

Fruit Farming in Cranbrook

When we were farming, by and large we got on extremely well with the lorry drivers who came in regularly. Not only were they a source of highly dubious but hilarious jokes, but they also brought us a never ending supply of much needed gossip. We heard all sorts of things about what other farms were doing, knowing full well they would hear everything about us too. We were not quite so pleased to see them when they had been held up on the M25, been kept late at another farm who had had a last minute order or had to stop because they had gone over their hours. If they turned up at midnight, it was just bad luck and they still had to be loaded.

We had a diverse work force; Polish, Slovakian, Macedonians with Greek grandparents, South African, and mostly English. Everyone got on well and most of them stayed for many years. One day, a lorry came in and the driver approached our Kentish forklift driver. He came in and said, "I can't understand a word this chap's saying. It's not a language I've heard before. Can anyone help?" A Pole who spoke Hungarian and Russian went out and came back shaking his head. A Macedonian tried with his language plus Greek and Bulgarian, with the same result, a South African tried him with Dutch and finally, in desperation, I went to see if by any chance he spoke any French. By now the driver was getting quite irate – "Wassa matter wi yous lot? I only need somewhere to hae ma piece". Glaswegian!

One night, very late, we had a real problem. A lorry came in and the driver seemed to find it really funny that he was five hours late. We loaded him quickly, wanting to get to bed and when he asked how to get out of the farm's oneway system, we simply told him, follow the roadway round the righthand bend and turn left when you go out of the gate. Simple. About twenty minutes later we were not amused to find him on the doorstep. "I am a bit stuck, can you pull me out with the tractor?" We felt we had better assess what he had done before getting a tractor out so went to see. Instead of staying on the roadway round the righthand bend, he had turned left down a track not built for heavy vehicles. He came to a small bridge over a stream which was quite obviously narrower than his cab but he had ploughed on regardless and now the cab was sitting on the bridge with both wheels in the water on either side of it. He did not really appreciate that a small orchard tractor was not going to pull a fully loaded eighteen-wheeler artic out of that. We made him phone his company to arrange specialist equipment to get him out. It arrived about two in the morning and we left them to it. In the morning, the lorry had gone, but what a mess awaited us! Oddly, we never saw that driver again.

Bridget Robertson

At St Mary's Church in February

Following consultation with the ministry team and with PCC approvals, we have decided to close all five of our church buildings until the end of February.

All our services will be online at <http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice> on Sundays and <http://bit.ly/ThursdayCommunion>

Please do pass on the message to your friends who may not have email and continue to pray for each other.

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