

**HUNTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
18TH MAY 2015**

REPORTS OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

**Hunton Church of England Primary School
By Herschel Santineer**

Thank you for your invitation to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. As Chair of Governors, I thought it would be helpful to share with you the aims of the school and the values we are continuing to embed into everything we do as a school and Governing Body:

- **To provide an excellent education for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds**
- **To create a secure, caring and family atmosphere**
- **To create an ethos based on Christian principles and a respect for other faiths**
- **To maintain strong supportive links between school, home, parish and wider community**

We are expecting an Ofsted inspection at any time and these aims are among the areas that will be considered carefully by the Inspector. In preparation for this, we recently had an external consultant and former Ofsted Inspector visit the school. I am delighted to say that she considers the school to be securely good and working to outstanding. Our data throughout the school continues to be above national averages and, with recent staff and Governor appointments, I believe the school certainly provides the best possible environment for the children. Of course, in education, nothing stays the same for very long and with the possible end of Ofsted, the school will no doubt be faced with new criteria.

Turning to our values, these are: **Thankfulness, Compassion, Endurance, Friendship**

We continue to work on ensuring that these values are intrinsic to the Christian ethos of the school, rather than simply a reflection of secular values generally.

You will have heard at great length about **British Values and the prevention of radicalisation in schools**. Whilst we enjoy a privileged position in Hunton as a rural school, the Department of Education insists we **must** *“promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.”*

Whilst the children are actively encouraged to share their views and opinions regularly in a variety of ways and participate in democratic elections within school, such as for the School Council, we are being encouraged to show British Values in a much wider context (particularly in the community) and I would very much like to ask you for your ideas on how we can involve the children in observing or participating in the activities of the Parish Council. I am not aware of any other schools that work with their local parish council and I believe this would be newsworthy for both the school and local council.

In this connection, I have not forgotten that I promised to invite councillors to visit the school and now that the SATs have finished, I would welcome the opportunity to set a date for that visit after the forthcoming school holiday.

With regard to SATS, the school is now required to have either members of the Governing Body or local community as observers to ensure SATS have been conducted in accordance with the regulations. The school was notified of this only shortly before the tests and so I did not have the opportunity to ask you to participate. I would, however ask that you consider taking up such a role in the future. The training lasts approximately one hour and each test lasts between 25 minutes and 45 minutes. This is another way in which I believe the school can involve the local community.

Finally, turning to the Neighbourhood Plan, I am pleased to confirm that the school and Governing Body are actively participating in providing feedback. The initial consultation of parents' views took place today with the graffiti wall near the entrance to the school. Thank you to Philip Eaton for organising this and the participation of Steve Wyles and Ron Porter. The Neighbourhood Plan is also on the Agenda for the Governing Board meeting tomorrow and we will provide our feedback as soon as possible.

Finally, as a small rural school, finances are always an issue and we face especially difficult times over the coming years and months. One of the ways in which this can be addressed is to increase our pupil numbers by just four or five children. Whilst the school has a waiting list for our Reception class and lower classes, we do have vacancies further up in the school, so I would welcome your recommendations to parents who might be considering a change of school due to factors such as relocation. This will help us to resist the academisation route which is becoming more widely accepted. Hopefully, our school at Hunton is one you feel that you can recommend!

Hunton & Linton Pre-School
By Louise Horlock

Hunton and Linton Pre-School is headed by a leadership team of two managers. Louise Horlock has very recently taken over the role of Pre-School Manager from Lyndsey Cooper and has been in the setting now for nearly two months. Sally Clifton is the Business and Communications Manager at the setting, having taken on this post in September 2013. Our Deputy is Karen Murray, who also works as our Early Years SENCO - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

Our current numbers are very substantial, with 50 children on role. In September, 30 of these will be leaving and taking places in as many as 9 local Primary Schools. The Pre-School has had a steady influx of children wishing to take places in September, when the older children leave for Primary School, and numbers are looking healthy. We are fortunate to get much of our custom through word of mouth, being such a central part of the community in Hunton.

A recent questionnaire, distributed to all parents of children at the setting, brought back fantastic feedback on the work the setting and staff are doing in enhancing their children's learning. Some examples of feedback from parents include:

'My child loves coming to Pre-School and loves telling me all about his day, he really enjoys the outside play area, computer and choosing his story book each week. He has thrived at Hunton and Linton, and we will both be very sad to leave you in July.'

‘My child loves coming into the setting. On his first day back after Easter he was first in the queue, rattling the door, trying to get in. He loves playing with the other children, going into the sandpit and into the field. He is always happy to see staff too.’

We currently have a highly skilled and qualified work force of 8 permanent staff, 4 members of staff that are employed as 1:1 for children with additional needs, along with a small number of bank staff. This year we have a high percentage of children who have a range of additional needs, and have been successful in showing ourselves to be a very inclusive setting, enabling children to access their learning and thrive at Hunton and Linton no matter what their additional needs or abilities. This has further been supported by our recent request from the Sensory Impairment Team and Ofsted to come into our setting so that they can observe the ways in which we do this, as they have heard about what a ‘great job’ we have been doing with the children in the setting.

All of our staff attend a wide range of courses, and are encouraged to enhance their continuous professional development (CPD), enhancing their personal strengths as well as developing areas in which they have a particular interest or feel they would like to develop professionally. This ensures that we are keeping our training up to date, and we are providing the most creative, professional and forward thinking staff for the children at Hunton and Linton Pre-School. Two of our staff team are working towards level 3 NVQ qualifications, due to be completed by the end of the year.

We are lucky to have the support and influence of a Parent Committee at Hunton and Linton Pre-School, this enables us to work closely with our parents and give them an insight into the running of the Pre-School. They are fantastic at getting involved in our fundraising events and coming up with new and creative ideas.

Lyndsey, the previous manager at Hunton and Linton, left a fantastic legacy in the ‘Maidstone Sparks’ collaboration. This is a team of seven Early Years settings in the Maidstone area, local to Hunton, who formed in July 2014 with likeminded settings to provide a network of support, identify training needs and work on making our settings as successful as possible - together. Through our collaborative setting improvement plan, we are able to set goals and make improvements that are shared amongst the settings, and enable us to share information, resources and experiences to further our development as an individual setting. This is going from strength to strength and we hope to develop our collaboration to further enhance the provision we provide at Hunton and Linton Pre-School.

We are thrilled to have managed to get a defibrillator grant from the KCC, with the help of Hollie Apps, our chairperson, which will very much benefit the local community, enabling local people to access this vital piece of potentially lifesaving equipment. The grant from the KCC has very much helped with the funding of this project, however we are now in need of some important funding of £400. This will enable us to securely house the defibrillator on the outside of the building for access by the local community as well as the Pre-School and anyone else who uses the Village Hall. We will therefore be asking the local Parish for any possible funding to enable us to get the defibrillator up and running. If you are at all interested in helping us with the project, please contact the Pre-School via e-mail or telephone and ask to speak to Louise or Sally.

We have been working closely with our Setting Improvement Partner (SIP) to ensure that we are moving the Pre-School forward from our ‘satisfactory’ verdict from Ofsted in 2013. We have been working closely on the areas which were seen as in need of development, following this inspection,

and feel confident that, should we receive a visit from Ofsted in the near future, we will soon move up to a 'Good' grading and beyond. With the employment of a new, forward thinking and enthusiastic manager who has joined our experienced and highly skilled staff team, we have some fantastic ideas to continue to develop, enhance and enable Hunton and Linton Pre-School to thrive into the future and beyond.

St Mary's Church
By Alison Ellman-Brown

St Mary's has had a very successful and productive year with its share of baptisms, weddings and other services. The attendance has been steady, with some well attended 'special' services. It has been good to see school services being supported and seeing parents as well. After all, this is the future congregation, although 'Family Services' are poorly attended by children.

All our supporters, not only the choir and sidesmen, have been very willing to help on a variety of occasions. The Christmas Fair and Antiques & Craft Fair were very successful, as well as our Lent Lunches and Summer Lunches, organised by Ann Sawtell, Louise Ferns and Lesley Lee. Money raised from these has been shared with the Village Club. These have been a really good village community exercise and we hope to continue them.

Without our working parties in the churchyards we would not be such a smart and welcoming country church. I would also like to thank the Friends of St Mary's for all their support. The dance they organised last year was so popular that it was requested to be repeated (advance notice, I think it is happening in November).

Thanks of course are due to the Rector, Peter Callway, and also Reverend David Jones, our Treasurer Chris and all PCC members.

Peace Cottages Charity
By Alison Ellman-Brown (reading the report of Ruth Porter)

There have been five meetings of the trustees of the Peace Cottages, including an extraordinary meeting to approve the accounts.

The residents' weekly contribution was increased by 10% in May 2014 and will increase by the same amount again in May 2015.

No major work has been carried out to the interiors of the cottages this year. An electrical safety inspection was carried out by Lyons electrical and it was found that three cottages needed some electrical work doing. This work has been done. Occasional repairs have been carried out to night storage heaters in the cottages, and a quote has been received for the replacement of guttering and roof flashing at No. 5.

The step up from the road at the side of No. 5 has been raised in an attempt to reduce the flooding of the path after heavy rain.

A handyman/gardener has been appointed. He will be employed on an ad hoc basis when required. (Trustees have checked that he has his own insurance)

Trustees have requested a quinquennial report (which is overdue) from the Diocesan Advisory Committee. Financial provision has been made for work resulting from this, including the possibility of major repairs to the roof.

A site meeting is being planned at the cottages to assess necessary future improvements.

Friends of St Mary's
By Ron Porter

Being involved with this local Charity is a most rewarding experience and the commitment by all the Trustees has generated another successful result towards the preservation of our Church. This report does give me the opportunity of thanking all the Trustees for all their hard work and support over the past year. I would also like to thank those who are Members of The Friends, those who have recently become Members and those who have made generous donations to our funds.

We recently had a Membership drive lead by Ian Pinks, our Membership Trustee. We have attracted more new Members, but at the time of preparing this report, not as many as we had hoped for. The doors are always open for people to join us and Ian will be happy to help you complete the process. If you are a UK tax payer we are able to reclaim tax on top of your annual Membership donation, which helps us even more. Please give it some thought.

Our focus has been, for some months, and will remain so for a while, to help finance the internal redecoration of the interior of the Church. We now know that the cost will be approximately £25,000 and we are on the way to reaching that target, but have a distance to go. There is just under £11,000 in the bank account currently.

Fund raising plans this year are:

- Village Fete - BBQ - on 20th June
- Michael and Katy Webb's wedding - Bar and BBQ - on 11th July
- Train Day at Sue and Lawrence Martin's, which is our main fund raising event on 26th July - tickets are on sale now
- Huntones event - Bar - on 26th September
- Harvest Supper - Bar - on 27th September
- Autumn Supper Dance - Bar and Food - on 14th November
- Christmas Market - BBQ – on 12th December

That is a busy schedule, but necessary to reach our target. The Church is widely admired by so many people, which is reflected by the number of wedding bookings for this year alone. 11 in total, which I understand is a record.

However, I think that we will all agree that the Church does need work internally and to deal with and accommodate the damp. This can only be done professionally and that is why it is relatively expensive. This work must last for many years and that is why we are striving with the PCC to raise the money, so that we can all enjoy our Church for years to come.

Hunton Bowls Club
By Margaret Carpenter

Once again we are at the start of another Bowling Season and are keeping our fingers crossed for good weather.

2014 was another successful Season for the Bowls Club and we started our busy year with our annual bowls tour to Eastbourne. Several fund raising events were held during the year: our Coffee morning; a Quiz Night - which has now become so popular we have had to move from the Bowls Pavilion to the Village Hall; and an Uno Evening - new for us, but we hope to repeat it this year. Our Open Day was not without its initial problems, but we have to thank Christine Harrison and Mike Summersgill for all their help in rearranging decorating schedules for the Village Hall to enable us to use the Hall. This day, when we invite visiting Clubs to come for lunch and a fun day of bowls, is very important to our fund raising for the year, and we are grateful for the support we received.

We had a full list of fixtures which were supported by all members. Our Weald League teams played well and our Ladies Team is to be congratulated for winning the Maidstone & District Ladies Rinks League; three of our ladies also reaching the finals of the M & D Triples competition.

We welcomed 6 new members in 2014 and are hopeful that we will have recruited 4 new members this year. As always, with every small sports club, membership is important to our survival. We are a very friendly club and welcome new members. Thursday evening (weather permitting) is practice evening, usually from 6 pm. We do have spare bowls and all you need to start are a suitable flat pair of shoes. We also have at least one home game at the weekend, so if you are at the Field and think you might be interested, please come in. The Bowls Club now has 3 members from Hunton.

As a Club, we have been very happy to serve on the Playing Field Committee with the other Sports Clubs, helping to ensure the Field is maintained and continues to be a safe environment for all its visitors. We feel very lucky to have our Green situated in such a beautiful setting. Please come and visit us - and you might find you would like to join Hunton Bowls Club.

Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club
By Simon Taylor

Those of you who were here to listen to last year's report from the cricket club will remember that it was dominated by the news that the Parish Council had obtained £50,000 of funding from Sport England to help us replace our decaying pavilion. This year, I am pleased to report that we have contrived to spend quite a lot of that money and I hope that the very tangible results have been noticed by everybody here tonight.

The challenges have been considerable and sometimes unexpected. Planning consent was achieved relatively easily and conditional building regulations approval was received early this year. We made a good start on the foundation in October, clearing the topsoil and digging the perimeter trench; then the rain came and we waited and waited to move on to stage 2, consisting of the brickwork perimeter and the actual foundation slab.

Help came from many different quarters. One of our club members, Craig Dalton, personally dug the foundation trench and poured the concrete in, incompetently assisted by 4 or 5 of us wielding rakes

and spades to keep it stirred. So great was his personal effort that he took himself off to the Far East at Christmas to recuperate and is yet to return. Actually, it might have been because of a knee operation.

Ian Goodyer, one of our first team players, took charge of the foundation brickwork and the concrete slab and, once he could actually find the time to turn up, dealt with this aspect with organisational aplomb and to the complete satisfaction of the building inspector.

A big thank you to Hunton Engineering, who let us store valuable plant and equipment in their yard; and most especially to Hague Construction, who let us have materials and plant at cost, allowing us to bring the foundation in well under budget.

Once we set a date for the delivery of the building itself, things moved on apace and within 2 months we have reached the point where we have a watertight, lined and insulated building, ready for internal fitting. Thanks are due to David Heaton for his input at the delivery stage and for his excellent little tractor and big trailer, which combined to make delivery of the wall panels much easier than expected. Major challenges still remain, not least the provision of power to the new building and the digging of the drainage trenches; but we are slowly chipping away at the problems, dealing with them one by one. I hope that we will be able to invite you all in to have a look on the day of the village fete and I am still reasonably confident that we will be complete by the end of the summer.

I personally have learned a great deal during this process. As well as learning about grant applications, planning applications and building regulations I have learned how to drive and empty a dumper full of concrete; I have learned just how much of a mess a dumper full of concrete makes when driven across a wet outfield; I have learned how heavy a precast concrete block is to lift, and how much it hurts when I drop it on my foot; and I have learned just how miserable it is to carry 15 Heras fencing panels across the field on my back when it is snowing. Above all, however, I have learned how precious the commitment and help of volunteers is to make a project like this succeed, and I would like to thank all those involved, from the club and the parish.

I really ought to mention some cricket at some point, so here goes. Our Saturday 1st team finished a respectable 4th in their division, for the 2nd year in a row, and with a couple more victories would have been pressing for promotion. The Saturday 2s managed not to come bottom of their league and had a couple of memorable victories in their campaign. The Sunday XI were promoted for the 2nd year in a row, although to be fair, due to a reshuffling in the league structure, so did another 9 teams! The high point of the Sunday calendar came early on, with a club record 40 over score of 340 – 7 against Harbledown, the innings consisting of 50s from Jack Hart and Alex Newman and 142 for Dan Taylor. Alex went on to win the club batting award for the year with 585 runs.

During the winter we entered a team in the Maidstone indoor tournament and we were unlucky to be defeated in the final by Linton Park. Both teams appeared in the KM with less than flattering photographs; we all appeared to have grey moustaches, puffy eyes and having been asked to kneel for the photo I looked as though I was 2 feet 7 inches tall, but we mustn't complain as it is all publicity.

In terms of social events and fund raising, we had a full year, raising about £1,500 through sponsorship and events, the highlight being a chest and back waxing of our hairiest club members, Tom Matthewson and Paul Bushell, which raised over £500. I had not realised, until that moment,

just how satisfying it is to pull out a handful of somebody else's hair on a waxed strip, or how uncomfortable it must be to be on the receiving end of an unskilled waxing.

This year we have very young committee (youngest age 18) and we hope that their enthusiasm will rub off on us all. I hope that we will have a successful season and raise additional funds; but our obvious priority is to finish the new pavilion, hopefully, but not necessarily, within our budget.

Over the last few years the cricket club has been made to feel very much a part of the village, thanks to the Playing Field Committee and the Parish Council.

Hunton Football Club
By Dave Elliott

I am the Chairman of Hunton Football Club and am pleased and proud to be part of Hunton village. My father ran the club in 1955. I have brought along some old photos of the teams, going back to 1920.

The Football Club is entering its 117th year of existence. The Maidstone football league is the oldest in the country and Hunton is the oldest club in the Maidstone league, so it can be surmised that Hunton is possibly the oldest football club in the country!

The club remains solvent and has a major sponsor in the form of a bar/restaurant in Maidstone.

The club leans on Danny Peacock (Vice Chairman) a lot, who acts as the intermediary with the parish; thanks to him for all his hard work.

The club was in the semi-finals of the Tunbridge Wells Charity Cup and is mid table in Division 1. A league record of 28 goals was scored against Wateringbury, recorded with a photo in the Kent Messenger.

We hope to help out at the Fete with a penalty shootout.

Hunton Village Club
By Annette Trought (reading the report of Philip Nichols)

Since the report at the last meeting, the Club has continued to provide a growing service to the village community and is now being used by more villagers, not so much as a Club but more as a meeting place. For example, the Pop-Up Shop, where locally grown or produced foodstuffs and other goods are sold from time to time, seems to have found a permanent home at the Club. With the availability of tea, coffee and cakes at the shop, many people gather just for a chat or to read the paper.

The lunches, which were held during the autumn and winter, also proved to be extremely popular, raising much-needed funds for the Club and St Mary's church. Many thanks must be given to Lesley and Roger Lee, plus all of the volunteers who produced a great variety of soups, breads, cheeses, cakes and deserts.

Club membership presently stands at 167, but 40 persons have not renewed their membership. We are often asked why it is necessary for a membership; the answer being that the liquor licence is for a

Club, which requires members and is not a general public liquor licence. In effect, this means that if a person wishes to consume an alcoholic beverage they must be a member or a 'signed in' guest of a member. So for functions such as the Pop-Up Shop there is no necessity for attendees to be members.

The newly formed Hunton WI hold their monthly meetings at the Club on the first Tuesday of the month and, unless the participants wish to buy a glass of wine or something similar from the bar, there is no need for them to be a member of the Club. Membership remains comparatively low with other Club's at just £17 and £11 for senior citizens, with a £5 renewal discount if paid before the end of February.

It has to be said that bar takings during the evenings are at an all-time low, for example a recent Saturday evening produced takings of less than £15. The numbers attending Bingo on a Monday night have also fallen with takings often below £20. It is quite clear that if we were to rely solely on regular evening bar takings the Club would be insolvent. The committee are therefore looking at ways to encourage the use of the Club for the community as a whole. Groups and committees such as the book, gardening, playing field, fete and others are encouraged to hold their meetings at the venue. We are also endeavouring to hold regular functions and have in the past 12 months held events such as music nights with Neil Davis and his friends, quiz nights, 'red nose' race night, pizza night, mixed couples darts and on 10th May a VE Day celebration with some local history and war time memorabilia for people to view. That event was reported in last week's KM with a photo of Sandra Bullivant and Gillie Devas. We are also planning a wine tasting event, fish and chip supper, reggae and cocktails night, games night and possibly a murder mystery night. We have also allowed the Club to be hired out by members for private functions, for example christenings and anniversaries. It is the funds raised at all of these functions, which just about keeps us solvent. Mention must also be made of the darts team which won silver wear this year with the singles runners up trophy and promotion to the next division.

On-going maintenance of the premises has required the replacement of all of the windows in both the Ladies and Gents toilets and attention will need to be given to the flat roofs and the gable tiles. The roofing costs are likely to be in the region of £5,000, which will make a severe hole in the finances. Internally, we are seeking to buy a couple of sofas, with funds kindly given to us by the Hunton Herald and some seat cushions.

The Club continues to function due to the help of the volunteers who give of their time to serve behind the bar, run functions or serve on the committee, which by the way, still requires a secretary, all of which is gratefully received. It would be nice to see more people using the Club both as a centre for the community and especially as a social place for a drink and a natter in the evenings.

Hunton Club Book Groups

By Annette Trought (reading the reports of Tricia Nichols and Chris Summersgill)

Book Group A

The original Hunton Club book group has been in existence now for just over 9 years, meeting at the village Club on the first Thursday of each month. That equates to over 100 books being read and discussed by us. Unsurprisingly, some were liked and some not, most being fully read and finished, but again, some not.

There were 12 members when the group first formed but due to people moving away and other commitments this number has fallen to 8. Curiously the group has found that this number of people actually works better than the original 12. We find that discussion is more centered upon the books and members don't veer off in smaller groups discussing other things. Of course, this we do but only after according the book a score out of 10. We tend to remain at the Club and the evening invariably turns into an opportunity to chat further.

Our thanks must be given to Yalding library that source the books for us from different libraries around Kent. We provide a list of book titles, selected by the members, and the library gathers the books, which one of us collects and returns each month. We understand Yalding library provides this service to several other book groups. We are currently working our way through 641 pages of 'Tuscan Rose' by Belinda Alexandra.

We maintain a small bookcase at the Village Club in which we house a number of different books that are changed from time to time. These books can be borrowed for just 50p each, payable at the bar.

Book Group B

The book group meets on the second Thursday of each month at Hunton Club at 8pm. Although we rarely have all seven members present, we enjoy discussing the books we have read.

In the past year we have read a books ranging from 'Sherlock Homes – A Study in Scarlet' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to 'Life' by Keith Richards. The most enjoyable have been 'Toby's Room' by Pat Barker and 'The Secret History' by Donna Tart. The least enjoyable has been 'Sense and Sensibility' by Joanna Trollope (a boring modern day setting to the original).

Huntonwatch By Sue Wyles

The second year of Huntonwatch has seen numbers grow steadily to 124 households with a dozen new Members (including Hunton Engineering). The more members we have, the better our neighbourhood watch works, therefore we would encourage anyone who has not yet joined to do so.

Huntonwatch relies on a network of co-ordinators and members, covering the whole village - which means that we have eyes and ears in all areas of the community if there is an incident and also that communications back to us are rapid. We are very grateful to our co-ordinators for their continued hard work, without which none of this would be possible. It is pleasing and rewarding to see that this team approach is working effectively.

Whilst on the subject of our co-ordinators, it would be remiss not to mention Les Leonard, who was responsible for the Grove Lane / West Street area of the village, often to be seen cycling around his patch. Not only was he an enthusiastic member of the team, he was also a good friend and is sorely missed. We are still to find a new co-ordinator for this area.

We must also thank Harriet Stevens for her role as co-ordinator for Bensted Close and part of West Street. She is now stepping down and we are grateful to Phil Nichols who has agreed to take over.

Feedback from our new PCSO about the effectiveness of Huntonwatch has been very positive. PCSO Matt Judges has recently replaced Alan Hunter as our contact and we meet with him on a regular basis

as well as communicating via e-mail when the need arises. He is extremely grateful for the information and local knowledge we have been able to share with him.

Huntonwatch has been in evidence at the fete and the pop up shops where we recruited new Members and have been on hand to provide information leaflets and supplies (window stickers, UV marker pens, shed alarms, smart water etc.) free of charge.

During the year we have produced 5 editions of the Huntonwatch newsletter, including a 'Fraud special' in the Autumn, highlighting the more common scams that are in operation. As with most things in life, if something seems too good to be true – it probably is!

Huntonwatch is not just about combatting crime. This year we again set up a network of 4x4 vehicle owners who were willing to help, had the bad weather of the previous year returned. We have been contacted about lost property and missing pets (Houdini the piglet, a fox hound and kittens being recent examples). We have been instrumental in releasing a horse trapped in stock fencing and contacted the relevant agencies when another horse was left abandoned and very sick in East Street. We even had news of a naked male cyclist who was seen around the village! Not surprisingly reports diminished as the cold weather set in.

As to crime, we have not, sadly, remained unscathed. However, crime figures for Hunton remain low in comparison with many surrounding villages. We have seen some burglary and thefts from gardens, have had reports of a number of phone and e-mail scams, fly-tipping and criminal damage, and been made aware of some anti-social behaviour - but by far the highest number of reports concern vehicles (and their drivers) in suspicious circumstances. All this information has been passed to the police and added to their database. This is an important element in the Neighbourhood Watch process and nationally results in a very significant number of arrests and prosecutions - so please continue to report anything that 'doesn't seem right'. We never pass on names and contact details unless we have your agreement to do so.

Hunton Herald
By Helen Ward

We've been kept very busy at the Herald over the last year reporting news from all the clubs, groups and organisations within the village. It's a wonderful reflection of our vibrant community that the problem we are experiencing more often is not, "What can we put in the Herald?" but "What can we leave out?" We are currently considering producing the occasional bumper edition so that we can bring you even more news from your village. We do rely on your contributions, however, so please keep them coming.

There are a number of other ways you can keep up to date with village news: there is of course the Hunton website, the Facebook page and the KM column, all of which are updated regularly by the Herald team. New this year is the Hunton Community Group on Facebook, which currently has around 50 members who are able to communicate directly with each other. So far we have found new homes for unwanted furniture, informed of emergency road closures, had an offer of holiday accommodation and much more. If you haven't come across this yet, please do have a look. We are also in the early stages of setting up Twitter and Instagram accounts as another means of communication.

The Herald remains self-financing from advertising revenue and, in addition, we have been able to make donations this year towards the purchase of gazebos for use at the Christmas Market and other

village events and for improvements to seating in the Village Club. We have also agreed to contribute towards the purchase of stage lighting for the Village Hall.

There have been a number of changes to the Herald team over the course of the year, most notably the sad loss of Les Leonard just before Christmas. Les, having set up our village newsletter and been the editor for a number of years, was a valued member of the team and is very much missed. Dudley Farman has taken over the task of doing the layout from Dawn Dixon, Lisa Halliday has taken on the role of coordinating the deliveries from Christine McSweeney and Sue Pinks is organising the advertising, which was previously undertaken by Barbara Wright. We would like to thank Dawn, Christine and Barbara for all their hard work over the last few years. Thanks must also go to our large team of deliverers who ensure that a copy of the Herald lands on every doormat in the village each month.

We hope you enjoy reading the Herald. We do our best to make it informative, relevant and representative of the village as a whole. If there is something that you would like us to include or you have any suggestions as to how it might be improved, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Speedwatch **By Steve Wyles**

After a break during the winter months, the Speedwatch team has again started holding sessions on West Street opposite the school – one of two locations approved by the Police, the other being by the village hall. So far this Spring we have held 4 early morning sessions on top of the 11 sessions last Summer and Autumn. These have resulted in a number of advisory letters being sent to motorists that have been caught exceeding the speed limit more than once in a twelve-month period and a couple of sterner letters being sent to motorists exceeding the speed limit by more than 50% (ie doing more than 45mph in the 30mph limit). We have had cars passing us at 45-50mph – and that after they have seen us and started to brake! Approximately 10% of motorists are speeding when they pass us (speeding being defined as speed limit + 10% + 2 – ie 35mph in a 30mph limit) and although they do slow down when they see us (mostly, some speed up and ‘wave’ at us) this is still a frightening statistic. If this continues it is only a matter of time before we have a nasty accident – possibly with fatal consequences. I can speak from personal experience having had 2 near misses pulling out of Bishops Lane in the past week alone – both because a vehicle was coming at speed from Yalding direction.

We have had a new member join the team and we now have 7 fully trained volunteers, but with 4 people as a minimum required for each session (5 being the ideal number) we are still limited to the number of times we can go out.

We have started to look at the feedback we have received from the village on our Neighbourhood Plan and it comes as no surprise to us that speeding traffic is high on the list of dislikes. However, an article on the Hunton Facebook site requesting volunteers to come forward has resulted in the grand total of ZERO responses.

We will continue to go out when we have enough of the team available and will look to vary the day and time that we do in the hope that drivers will be educated into driving more slowly through the village. In addition, KCC Highways have said they will install 5 speed monitoring strips over the summer in order to measure the scale of the problem throughout the village.

Speedwatch is an 'educational' initiative and motorists will not be penalised if caught. Each session usually lasts an hour. New Team Members have to attend a short training session before they can participate, but this is not onerous. If any of you feel the same way I do about the dangers of speeding traffic and can spare an hour or so a week (rarely more, often less frequently) PLEASE get in touch with me or one of the Speedwatch team.

King George V Playing Field Committee
By Danny Peacock

The Committee has held its usual six meetings over the last year.

The Committee has continued to ensure that the Field is kept clean and tidy through grass cutting, cutting back trees and hedges and bin emptying, as well as trying to keep the rabbits and moles under control.

Satisfactory reports continue to be received from the MBC Safety Inspector on the play equipment. The new picnic table provided by the Parish Council during the year has enhanced the play area further and is much appreciated.

Although the car park has been in a poor state of repair for many years, in September last year it was resurfaced using 57 tonnes of scalpings, and a French drain was also installed to stop it flooding. The labour was carried out by volunteers, but special thanks must go to David Heaton who organised all the machinery, materials and labour. The car park has undergone some further repairs recently and there are some scalpings left over which can be used in future if necessary. The Parish Council funded the cost of the resurfacing work.

During the year the Committee has paid for the repair of the Football Club changing rooms roof.

The Committee has received regular reports from Simon Taylor and Steve Jones on the new cricket pavilion, which is taking shape on the Field, and will provide a great asset to the Cricket Club and the village.

Looking ahead, the 34 poplar trees bordering the football pitch will be topped within the next month and the Committee will also be giving consideration to the ¼ acre of land behind the football pitch, which is effectively wasteland and needs tidying up. This will be considered when the boundary is walked before the Committee's AGM on 8th July.

Thank you to all the Committee members for their hard work and regular attendance at meetings, and to the Parish Council for its continued support.

Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee
By Annette Trought

There are 3 main areas to update on for the past 12 months: the Village Fete, the Community Orchard and the Neighbourhood Plan:

Village Fete

Hunton Village Fete costs approximately £700 to stage and raises approximately £2,000 each year for the Fete & Village Events Committee fund. Money from this fund has bought pop up gazebos for village use; Christmas lights for the Village Hall; soup tureens and a new tea urn for use at village events.

Community Orchard

The Kent Orchards for Everyone project recognises the losses which will occur if traditional orchards are allowed to disappear. There are an agreed set of priorities: conservation; education; sustainability; heritage and preservation. Hunton Community Orchard Working Group has been successful in receiving funding for the development for a community orchard and last December 24 heritage apple, cherry and pear trees were planted. There will be a few more nut trees to join them plus under planting with soft fruits. Later this year there will be chestnut fencing erected around the orchard perimeter.

A follow up to the “I Remember When” event will be organised to gather further information from longstanding residents of the village around previous orchard locations and varieties of fruit grown. There will also be at least one wildlife survey event too.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Team are currently undertaking the initial consultation and engagement stage of consulting the village on its views for a vision for the future of Hunton. The consultation stage was kicked off with a very successful Consultation Café held in the Village Club on 21st March. The period will end at the end of June. Already there are some common themes emerging from the input received so far. A full report will be shared with the village later in the summer.

Hunton Village Hall Committee

By Mike Summersgill (reading the report of Christina Harrison)

It is with regret that I find myself writing my last report to the Parish Council in my capacity as Chair to the Village Hall. I shall be stepping down on Tuesday and would like to thank you all for your support during my term. It is clearly apparent that whoever takes over from me should be readily available to assist whenever needed and I have been greatly hindered by the pure fact that my working life takes me out of the village 5 days a week for such a large portion of the day.

To reflect on the past year; we have been delighted with the increased bookings of the Hall to the extent that we are now taking bookings a year in advance, the accounts show an improvement. There are 17 weddings in 2015, with 6 booked for 2016.

The Hall has seen a more or less complete redecoration, new fire exit doors, recoated and improved floor, new flooring in the WCs, a burglar alarm, CCTV, new door locks and numbered security keys to name but a few. There is still much to be accomplished, but we are delighted with what has been thus carried out.

Problems during the year were caused by the theft of 10 solar panels, which highlighted the lack of security surrounding the hall, but with the help of the Parish Council we were able to install CCTV and an alarm system. In addition, we also cut the hedges; the hedge at the front of the hall has now been brought down to a metre rather than two metres - this makes the Hall a lot more visible. The hedges at the back were also cut and we have improved the fencing too. All gutters were cleared of leaves and cleaned out, and some repairs carried out. The outside was swept and tidied up.

Other problem areas seem to be with Hirers who use equipment, but do not replace it in the cupboards in the correct order. On several occasions both Mike and Kathy have had to spend time putting things straight. We have had to get the sewage system backwashed and rodded when paper towels were flushed into the system and blocked it up, this caused sewage to flood into the children's play area. Each time this happens we have to get the whole area sprayed, disinfected and in turn require a certificate of decontamination. Notices are now up in the WCs.

We have also found it necessary to carry out maintenance on the sewage system. The pump was not working and has had to be replaced. A maintenance contract is in place.

In closing, I would personally like to thank Mike and Kathy for their tireless contribution to making our Hall the place it is today.

Tree and Pond Warden
By Mike Summersgill

I took over this role in early 2014, from Anne Bishop. Previous information (chiefly on the Tree aspects) is quite detailed and is still held by the previous Warden; there may be some information held by the Hadlow P&T Warden, who has communicated with me recently.

I had already been carrying out a survey of the Ponds and Ditches in the Parish, as part of Biodiversity aspects within the Parish Plan Steering Group role. That hydrological study had been generally completed, and drainage routes were made more evident by the flooding of last Winter.

As a result of previous work knowledge (amphibians) and a training course in Invertebrates (held in Ashford in March), I am now going to survey the wildlife in certain ponds/ditches, possibly in conjunction with Medway Valley Partnership officers. However, it is still necessary to find out who owns Ponds before going onto private land; a request will be put in the Herald for information.

In respect of Trees, I will attend a Kent Tree & Pond Partnership 'Introduction to Tree Wardening and Tree Care' training day in June, and possibly a Hedgerow one in September. These have a nil course fee to us, due to previous voluntary contributions by the Parish Council to the Kent Tree & Pond Partnership. KTPP has a lively Facebook page, which I follow, and there are many useful enviro/ecological groups in Kent.

Hunton Walking Group
By Ann Sawtell

We've climbed hills, wandered in the Weald, sloshed through mud, waded in the Medway, admired churches and castles, witnessed wildlife, delighted in flora and fungi, clambered over innumerable stiles and appreciated the odd pint of ale!

The Hunton Walking Group, now in its fifth year, has been regularly out and about enjoying a variety of walks in the beautiful Kent countryside. Most routes are circular and between four and six miles in length, usually finishing at a pub for a well-earned spot of lunch. Meeting fortnightly on Monday mornings, outings over the last few months have included:

An autumnal walk in the woods around Colliers Green, Cranbrook and Goudhurst, encountering deer, buzzards, hornets and fungi.

A circular walk from the Tickled Trout, wading in an overflowing Medway and sloshing through mud.

A bracing Xmas trip from Hunton to Yalding via Gennings, Barnhill and Buston Manor, with walk leader, Mike Summersgill, being nicknamed "The Grand Old Duke of York". Raised a glass to Les Leonard at the Walnut Tree.

An interesting walk from the Poacher and Pheasant at Tudeley, visiting two churches en route, one with connections to Thomas Becket and the other with stunning stained glass windows by the artist, Marc Chagall.

A beautiful walk in winter sunshine around Leeds and Broomfield, taking in the grounds of Leeds Castle.

A very Kentish walk from the George at Egerton, with Wealden hall houses, lots of sheep and the sound of a skylark.

If this has whet your appetite and you would like to join us, you will be made to feel most welcome. Contact Ann at ann.sawtell@btinternet.com.

Hunton WI

By Ann Sawtell (reading the report of Jane Langdon)

The idea of re-forming a WI in Hunton (the original was disbanded in 1968) was instigated by Ann Sawtell in September/October 2015. She had little difficulty in encouraging a number of Hunton ladies to form a committee, which first met in September, was ratified at the first meeting in October and has remained in place until today. The committee comprises:

President: Ann Sawtell
Secretary: Jane Langdon
Treasurer: Fay Joyce
Bookings: Ruth Porter
Membership: Chris Summersgill
Raffles: Di Martin

Hunton WI is part of the Medway Valley District of WIs.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at Hunton Village Club with a donation of £12 to the club to cover heating and lighting etc. Advice was received from District Secretary, Dee Stevenson; District Treasurer, Sylvia Papworth and WI Advisor, Maggie Vidgen at the first meeting in October. A raffle (with donated prizes) is held at each meeting to help with running costs, complimentary tea/coffee and cake/biscuits (provided by members on a rota) is served after Speaker/activity has finished.

Currently there are 26 members, with an average of 19 attending each meeting.

A variety of Speakers and Activities have been enjoyed as follows:

October:	Louise Ferns	Great Ormond Street Hospital
November:	Sue Hollings	Italian cookery demonstration
December:	Committee	Games and quizzes
January:	Fred Lamont	Chocolate Quakers
February:	Jen Stuart-Smith	Blooming Green
March:	Virginie Daniau	History of Perfume
April:	Cyril Bladwin	Going, Going, Gone

Members also attended a variety of District Activities and meetings at other District WIs, including: Christmas Parties at Yalding, Farleighs, Barming; The District Carol Service at West Farleigh; Exercise the easy way at Nettlestead; The West Kent ACM at Tunbridge Wells; The District Activity at Barming (Power of colour and accessorising); the Home Economics Day at Ditton; and Barming's 95th Birthday party.

In a draw at the March meeting, one member, Liz Oliver, won a ticket to attend The Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in June, celebrating the WI's Centenary.

An embroidery square representing Hunton WI has been made for the district tablecloth by Susan Harris.

Hunton Gardening Club **By David Heaton (reading the report of Lesley Lee)**

During 2014, members of Hunton Gardening Club enjoyed a variety of activities including a tutored day of willow weaving, which resulted in the production of large plant support structures.

A small group joined a private tour of Saltwood Castle and grounds when Jane Clark, widow to the MP Alan Clark, presented the history of some of the amazing collection of paintings, furniture, books and cars as well as walking round the different garden areas and providing a home-made cream tea.

Thanks to owner Clive Baxter, there were two interesting visits to Amsbury Farm, where one summer afternoon was spent learning about fruit growing methods whilst walking through the orchards and an autumn morning touring the processing, packing and storage facilities.

Social evening meetings were held in March when Kay & Tony Mason presented a very entertaining gardening video they had produced and an informal gardeners' question time session was held in November.

Gardening Club members continued to help to maintain the Churchyard, contributed produce to the Pop-Up shops and, thanks to Andrea Forster and Fay Joyce, again ran a profitable stand at the village Fete.

Since 2011 when Hunton Gardening Club was started by 18 locals, the membership has grown to almost 70. This informal group welcomes new members.