

COLLIER STREET NEWS

JUNE/JULY 2024



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COLLIER STREET

PAPER DELIVERY

There is a paper delivery service to the village at around 6am every morning. It is supplied by Jackie's News Limited based in Tenterden, they can be contacted on 01580 763183. Cost of delivery is £3.51 a week.

Waste and Recycling Service

From Monday 25th March, Maidstone Council has made changes to some waste and recycling collections and your bin day may have altered.

Collection weeks may have altered too.

For more information, please visit 'bins and recycling' on the MBC website.

www.maidstone.gov.uk

CUTE PET OF THE MONTH - CHARLIE



Defibrillators

There are defibrillators available at St Margaret's Church, Collier Street and The Woolpack, Benover Road. These are life saving devices so it is important that as many people as possible are able to use them.

Defibrillator training is available for anyone to undertake via the website below:

<https://vimeo.com/557677120/e7524918c5>



Village What's App Information Group



To keep up to date with beneficial information, news, advice, crime / incidents, you are welcome to join the Resident's What's App group.

If you would like to be part of this group, please send an SMS / iMessage to:

CLlr Deborah Papas on 07960 754641 stating "Sign up for CSWA Group" and Deborah will add you to the group.

Terms and Conditions

By signing up to the group, you accept these conditions and also understand that the messages are only for urgent and important details only and not for general chit-chat. You also are in agreement to receiving information considered to be of benefit to the group such as community safety and highways bulletins. The Parish Council will not tolerate any rude or inappropriate messages, photographs or videos and reserve the right to remove such material and also the participant from the group.

COPY DEADLINE 20TH OF THE MONTH

Do you have a hobby or interest and could write an article about it for the magazine? We are always looking to include something different so why not get involved by either producing a one-off article or a regular feature. Thank you to everyone who regularly writes or cooks for us.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We would love to hear from you with information, articles or photographs you wish to feature in the village magazine.

Or please send us a picture of your pet for 'cute pet of the month'.

Without your contributions there would not be a magazine, so please send to

editorparishmag@mail.com

THANK YOU

FLY TIPPING AND POTHoles

Did you know that anyone can report pot holes or fly tipping in the village.

Please go to the Maidstone Borough Council website and click on the "Report It" tab.



Collier Street is a small village and civil parish in the Borough of Maidstone in Kent, England. The village is in a rural location but is close to the larger villages of Yalding, Marden and Horsmonden.

The village includes St Margaret's Church, a primary school, a small business estate and several farms. St. Margaret's church and school are at the centre of the village. The church forms part of a benefice with St. Mary's in Laddingford and St. Peter & St. Paul in Yalding. The three villages are located within three miles of each other but Collier Street, once part of Yalding's civil parish, has had its own parish since 1999. The civic or civil parish of Collier Street is governed by an elected parish council and was formed following a review by Maidstone Borough Council. The village seems not to have existed before the start of the nineteenth century, nor does the road even appear on maps before the late C18th. It is most likely that the village was named for a long narrow clearing ('strait' hence 'street') through a wood used by charcoal burners (hence 'Collier'). Subsequently farms were established along with a handful of country houses before the majority of housing followed in the early Victorian era. The church was built between 1847 and 1849 and the attached school was opened in 1860.

LOCAL BABYSITTERS

- Lucy Anderson 730244 - Weekdays and weekends
- Rosie Ridd 730816 - During term time Friday and Saturday evenings only
- Jonny Bentley - 730252
- Georgie Barham - 730247
- Olivia Brown—07460 243707—weekends



For whom the bell tolls

I'm writing this Parish Letter in May as we approach Bell Sunday; a festival set up to recognise the contribution of bells and bellringers to the life of the church, and raise awareness of the importance of the sound of bells in our communities.

Today, church bells aren't always appreciated by the communities in which they ring out. In November, a church bell that sounded every hour at Beith Parish Church in Ayrshire was stopped after a noise complaint by a local resident. Subsequently, a local petition was set up to reverse the move. The same complaint happened in Witheridge in Devon in March, where the bells ring every quarter-hour throughout the day and night. Further afield, the French parliament is putting in place a new law to address the challenge of rural newcomers moving to the countryside from big cities then bemoaning the way livestock, church bells and rural sounds impinge on pastoral quiet.

It seems to me that these types of tensions are at least partly a consequence of failures of empathy and communication. In the case of the Witheridge bells, it was reported the situation escalated because complaints were met with a dismissive "you'll get used to it". Inevitably it seems the complainant has been the subject of threats of violence. The bells were silenced until all parties could reach a truce. People are reported to be furious that the clock has been silenced. No one seems to come out of the situation with much credit, or with understanding of each other's point of view.

Bells have traditionally had an important role in both church and community life. As well as calling people to worship, they have often been used to witness to key events – to sound curfews or approaching air raids in a time of war, to announce a local event, to celebrate a wedding, or to mark a funeral. The chime of a church bell or clock has been relied on by people throughout their lives – calling them from their work in the fields, helping them to know when it was time to head home as children playing in the streets.

It is an irony that, despite the large number of sophisticated ways in which we can potentially communicate with each other, real dialogue seems to become increasingly difficult, and we become increasingly irritated with each other.

Perhaps here we can take some inspiration from our bellringers to whom, with Bell Sunday in mind, I have been paying attention to more than usual over the last few weeks. They come in early to do a largely unthanked job of witness with skill and dedication. In their number are now many non-churchgoers who, while they ring for pleasure perhaps and don't stay for the services, take something of our church and community with them as they go. While several of our bellringers can be described as more senior, making the physical work of bell ringing more difficult, we sometimes see younger people joining them - in a society where it is increasingly unusual for young and old to mix.

Christians can think of Church bells as the sound of God's word trying to break into our world. I have come to value our bellringers as a model of service, dedication and welcoming. I hope our bells can continue to be seen as an audible connection to our history, and a symbol of a constructive dialogue between church and community.

Justin Elks
Licensed Lay Minister

“Let them be restored as in the days of their youth.” (Job 33:25)

Towards the end of March, just before Holy Week began on Palm Sunday, I had an operation to reconstruct my right shoulder. A lifetime of being a man of action has taken its toll; various bits of my arm have deteriorated, and muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues need to be stitched back together to make my arm work again in a non-hurty way and with a greater range of movement. Wisdom and experience don't help much here when the doctors begin their consolatory explanations with the phrase, “At your age ...”

It doesn't seem that long ago that I couldn't wait to be older so that I would become fitter and stronger and increasingly more capable as I grew into what was to become my ripped vicar's physique, essential for the daily spiritual task of shifting tables and chairs and scuttling up the tower to change the flag. Now the prospect of increasing age turns scuttling into clambering, and ripped into wobbly, and setting up tables and chairs with one pathetic arm in a sling brings a tear to my eye as I realise that this is now the way things are.

We start our lives running up the hill with great enthusiasm to get to the top, but it is only when we become conscious that we might need a bit of help to stagger down the other side that we realise that we've passed the peak, and that it really is downhill from here. With good grace, we concede that Olympic glory will have to be for others now.

My goodness, what an old misery guts! I sound like one of those old gits in the pub comparing notes on their various maladies. Nothing at all like Job with his legendary patience. Job was the epitome of good grace in his suffering. He listened to God instead of grumbling or complaining, as his friends advised, and he learned to see life in a rather more holistic way, as part of something greater and more extensive than his own limited existence.

As we come to the end of a glorious Eastertide, and Spring is now long established with its metaphor of new life and a renewed engagement with our surroundings, we have the opportunity to give thanks for the best that is in us, and for the joy that we experience. There will always be injury, sadness, and limitation, but there will also always be something for which we can give thanks if we allow ourselves to let in the joy.

I expect that after a few months of careful physiotherapy and patient discipline I may yet be able to hold a cribbage hand again and hug people without wincing. It's not over yet, and there is still plenty to come of a different sort and in a different age. If we are not to feel like Basil Fawlty and his “What was that? That was your life mate!” (Communication Problems) then we must make sure we take time to stop and consider what we retain as well as what we might miss, and then our conversations will be characterised by the sharing of joy instead of the comparison of ailments. Our relationships will be all the healthier for it.

I usually start and end with a biblical quotation, but this month we can finish with something from that literary genius Robert Louis Stevenson, from the dedication to his collection of essays entitled “*Virginibus Puerisque*.” A different kind of Holy Scripture, perhaps.

“It is good to have been young in youth, and as years go on, to grow older ... but to travel deliberately through one's ages is to get the heart out of a liberal education ... the best that is in us is better than we can understand; for it is grounded beyond experience, and guides us, blindfold, but safe, from one age on to another.” (RLS, 1881).

fr. Paul

Collier Street Pop-In Get Together 2024

St Margaret's Church

*Margaret, Barbara, Jacki, Christine, Jo and Lorna
invite you to come along and enjoy: home-made cakes and sa-
vouries, friendly company and a raffle.*

2 - 4pm the second Wednesday of the month:

The remaining dates for this year are:

*June 12th
July 10th
August 14th*

*September 11th,
October 9th,
November 13th,
December 11th*

We were pleased to see our regular visitors at our April and May Pop-Ins.

*We received a very nice thank you letter from 'Spadework' expressing their
gratitude for the £100 donation we gave them and this was read with
interest by everyone.*

*Bridget Wood, a staunch supporter of Medical Detection Dogs, also came
along to collect their £100 donation and to thank everyone. Bridget has had
Labradors for many years and some of their puppies have gone on to become
medical detection dogs. Bridget had some lovely chats with our visitors
about the amazing way these dogs can transform the lives of many people.
MDD carry out ground breaking research to improve early diagnosis of
cancer and other diseases and train dogs to support people with life-
threatening health conditions, saving their lives on a daily basis and
helping the NHS by keeping them out of hospital. You can find out lots more
online at www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk*



*We love giving our modest profits to
charity so if you enjoy a mug of hot drink
and some home made baking please
come along to one of the Pop-In sessions
at St Margaret's Church in 2024. There is
a minimal cost of £1 for a 'bottomless'
drink and just £1 per bakery item.*



**COLLIER STREET HISTORY GROUP
PEOPLE AND PLACES EXHIBITION**

6th, 7th, 8th September 2024 at St Margaret's Parish Church

**The Exhibition aims to feature some of the People and Places of
Collier Street including:**

**The Pubs
Mill House
The Pest House
An early suffragist: Elizabeth Wilmshurst French
The Savage family
The lives of the first ten people baptised, the first ten people
buried and the first four couples married in the Parish Church
The football team
The cricket team
The Brownies
Gaffords Bridge

And others**

**We are also delighted to announce that Phillip Day will show
another of his excellent Battle of Britain documentaries from 19.30
on Friday 5th September:**

FIELDS AND THEIR SECRETS: September Days.

**Opening times:
Friday 6th September: 1830 - 2200
Saturday 7th September: 1000 – 1600
Sunday 8th September: 1300 - 1600.**

We look forward to seeing you there.

Kevin Stewart 07904 113827



Local History

Bramley Class have been delving into the history of the local area this term. We are delighted to have been able to work with the Collier Street History Group. They have been extremely helpful with their knowledge and resources; thank you.

We looked in detail at an article from 'St Margaret's Collier Street Parish Magazine' dated May 1975.

SCHOOL NEWS +++++

Since beginning our survey of the village, we have noticed just how little detail still exists about the everyday lives of people who lived here in years gone by. The following is a composite essay about the weekend occupations of the children in the Spring of 1975.

For most of us the weekend begins on Friday evening as we relax and forget the cares of school. No more hard chairs to sit upon, or sums to do. No decisions to make or answers to find, for two glorious days of freedom. Many people simply settle into the most comfortable chair they can find and prepare to enjoy an evening of television, but some prefer to use the longer summer evening for activities like fishing, walking, gardening, tending their pets or playing with their friends. Almost everybody finds parents are willing to relax rules about bed-time as the day that follows is a holiday.

The class is almost equally divided between those who sleep late and those who get up extra early to enjoy the pleasure of Saturday morning. Apart from the boy who usually attends a cinema performance, nobody has anything special to do with the time before lunch. It is spent watching television, reading, playing, bicycle riding, camp building, fishing, hunting, shopping or helping about the house.

During the afternoon, there is again no set pattern of activity. Television is watched if nothing else suggests itself. Time seems to pass pleasantly until the children's programmes around tea-time claim the attention of almost everyone, including those addicted to the open air. After tea, more television with an odd game of cards or monopoly, until fairly late bed-time is reached.

Sunday morning passes very much like that of Saturday. Some children go to Church or Sunday school, while others cycle or walk or play or help about the house. Television is not very popular during the morning. The mid-day meal is still almost invariably the traditional roast. Afterwards the television films claim much attention while a few

/contd...

families use the time to visit or entertain friends and relatives. The evening is given over almost exclusively to televiewing, but with school the following morning, many attractive programmes are broadcast too late to be enjoyed.

Although there seems to be no very exciting or regular activity, everyone looks forward to, and thoroughly enjoys the weekend.

Saturday is by far the most popular day as it can be enjoyed without the feeling that another week is imminent. The later part of Sunday is definitely marked by the business of the following day. Much hair is washed and many baths taken, but the thought of school does not seem to mar the pleasant and relaxed attitude that seems to typify the modern weekend.

We discussed the article and thought about how weekend life has changed. Children wrote about a typical weekend in their life. We discovered the following.

For most, the weekend begins on Friday evening with a more relaxed dinner time and the opportunity for children to enjoy one of their favourite meals; fish and chips, pizza or pasta are firm favourites. Children seem to be able to stay up a little later than normal as there is no school tomorrow.

A Saturday morning is generally a busy one. Children partake in a wide range of clubs and activities from horse riding and football to music lessons. The afternoon is spent by many at home entertaining themselves with electronic devices or watching the television. Saturday night also brings a later bedtime and for a few children a takeaway in front of the television.

Sunday morning has a more leisurely start with some children not getting out of bed until midmorning. Family outings to the shops or to see loved ones are popular amongst children. Many families then enjoy a traditional roast dinner with all the trimmings. The day ends with finishing homework, baths and generally preparing for the school week ahead.

Our typical weekend may have some differences from those of 1975 however we can certainly see the similarities.

Collier Street School

SUMMER FAIR & PET SHOW

SATURDAY, 22ND JUNE
MIDDAY TO 4PM



Fun pet show classes
Games and stalls
Bake Off competition
Gifts and shopping
Food and drink
Raffle and entertainment



YALDING POST OFFICE - MOST LOVED POST OFFICE IN KENT 2016 /17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24

OUR PRODUCTS, LOCALLY SOURCED, LOCALLY SOLD

JUNE 2024

Horizon Scandal. Continues... The Inquiry continues unrelentingly for the next month or so. This month sees the disgraced CEO of Post Office, Paula Vennells give evidence. This is the one person, whose responses to questions will be very closely analysed. Her position, as public enemy number one...a person who has knowingly given false evidence already to Parliament, remains in the balance. Will she be indicted? Oh I do hope so.

Royal Mail's Tracked 24 or 48 Service, (Compensation up to £150.00) that can be purchased at Post Offices, rather than just on-line, has been delayed until 11th June. Meanwhile **Signed for** has reduced compensation from £50 to £20, which makes me think that this will be slowly phased out... The new product, when it is rolled out this month, will be very popular.

King Charles banknotes. These will be slowly introduced into general circulation from 5th June.

Please be aware that the mobile phone network signal is not so good in the Post Office. Many of our customers find their phones cannot download the necessary QR codes in the Post Office. So, if you are using a QR code from your phone to post off a return package it may be good practice to take an earlier screenshot of the QR code so our infra-red readers can interpret it quicker.

Shop & Local Produce. Cranbrook bakery items on sale every day. Orders taken. Sourdough bread available by special order. Cold drinks, unique greetings cards by local artists, Yalding and Laddingford honey, Joan's jams. Bit Spicy curry mixes, stationery, Yalding mugs, fresh eggs, (from genuinely free-range local chickens), Loddington Farm fruit juices & Oakapple Farm fresh produce – all in stock now. **Strawberries in stock daily.** The Emporium is open every day and our stock is regularly restocked and refreshed by our ever-increasing army of local crafts persons.

New stamps sets this month are the **Dogs and Red Arrows** Collections Other Philately products in stock or can be ordered on request

Foreign Currencies. We still have a stock of Euros and US Dollars... POL have informed us that credit on Travel Money Cards can be encashed at all branches in UK currency.

Your Post Office offers free cash withdrawals with most debit cards, pay bills, top up gas and electricity cards and keys, pay in cheques and cash to most banks using your debit card. We do phone Top-Ups and Moneygram. And, of course...we sell stamps and send parcels and letters all over the world. A list of nations that cannot accept mail at this time is on the Royal Mail website. **Mail to Russia, and Ukraine are currently subject to restrictions**

Our opening hours are 9.00am to 1.00pm. 2.00pm to 5.30pm. Closed on Sundays.

Early closing on Wednesdays and Saturdays (12.30pm Saturdays). Telephone...01622 814327

MARDEN WALKS

LONG DISTANCE WALKS

The walk along the Sussex Border Path continues and has just reached Gatwick West. The remaining sections will be walked on Tuesdays throughout May, then with a break until August, so no walks in June. For further details please contact Ian Balmer on 831578 or igbalmer@gmail.com.

SUNDAY WALKS

The Sunday walk will be on June 2nd, led by Steve Filmer who will choose the route. This will start at the Library at 10.am and will be around 6 miles.

SATURDAY WALKS

Weekly Saturday walks are continuing. All start at the Library at 2.pm and are approximately an hour long.

June 1st Turkey Farm via Westfield House No Stiles

June 8th Copper Lane via Stanley road. No stiles .

June 15th Poulter's Hall Arable vines orchards. No Stiles

June 22nd Plain Road and Millenium Avenue .No Stiles.

June 29th Car share to Leeds Castle Walk in grounds

The Saturday walk program is also posted on the events page of the Marden Community Board of Facebook.

THE KENT OWL ACADEMY

The Kent Owl Academy is a family run business, situated within the confines of 'Kent Life' in Maidstone. Providing Experience days, School visits, Visits to Brownies and other organisations, Photography workshops, Corporate events and TV/Film/Media work and much more! Get up close and personal with owls and exotic animals!



Collier Street Ramblings : 'busy nest building'

In my garden I have a pale pink nest box, a funny colour I know but it was bought for me as a leaving present from a colleague when I left my post as Deputy at a primary school to become a Head Teacher at a different school. This was back in 2003 and the nest box has been a great present as I think of my friend as I watch it's busy inhabitants every year. The pink box has been home to blue tits every year since, they really seem to love it. In that time there have been 20 blue tit families born and raised. It is on the side of our garden workshop and has been moved a few times as the building has been upgraded but the birds always return and they don't seem bothered when we sit on the adjacent decking....although it was hard to get a photo of them at the nest box!



At one stage we resorted to hanging a piece of plastic mesh across the front to stop the woodpeckers stealing the baby birds from the nest, but in the end we found that the woodpeckers were attracted by the nuts in the bird feeder so we only put out bird seed in the feeder now.

Every year we are in awe of the work ethic of the parent blue tits as they fly endlessly back and forth to feed the young with beaks full of flying insects or small caterpillars. In addition to feeding themselves they will need to find over 1000 items of food a day.

Then all of a sudden the activity ceases, the birds have gone and we rarely see the fledglings.

They are such vibrant birds with a blue cap, a yellow chest with a vertical black stripe, and a colourful mix of blue, yellow, white and green on their small bodies. They are about 4 and a half inches long, weigh less than half an ounce and are thought to live for 2 to 3 years.

The female builds a grassy nest which she fills with soft moss and she could lay up to 10 eggs! However, their nests often contain one chick (or more) that has a different father.

We also find that Blue Tits like to nest in the hollow of one of our apple trees just like the ones in the picture.

In George Orwell's poem *Summer-Like*, he writes a couple of verses about the Blue Tit:

*A blue-tit darts with a flash of wings, to feed
Where the coconut hangs on the pear tree over the well;
He digs at the meat like a tiny pickaxe tapping
With his needle-sharp beak as he clings to the swinging shell.*

*Then he runs up the trunk, sure-footed and sleek like a mouse,
And perches to sun himself; all his body and brain
Exult in the sudden sunlight, gladly believing
That the cold is over and summer is here again.*



Jacqui Bakes

Apple & Blackberry Crumble Cake

We've had a lovely few days of shine sun, little blip today with the rain but hoping for more of the sunshine for half term. We've so much to do outside, lambing has finally finished, we've had all gorgeous bouncy ram lambs this year not one ewe lamb, this has never happened before! After a morning of weed and clearing the beds, a slice of this cake with a cuppa is just what's needed. Sometimes I bake this as a traybake and serve warm with custard, delicious as an autumn pud.

Crumble ingredients

100g plain flour
50g caster sugar
50g butter

Cake Ingredients

300g butter
300g light brown sugar, plus 25g
300g self raising flour
6 eggs
250g Bramley apple, peeled and chopped
250g blackberries

Buttercream Ingredients

250g butter
500g icing sugar
1tsp vanilla extract

To decorate

Blackberries
Sprinkles



Method

Preheat your oven to 180C, grease and line two 8"/20cm round tins. Peel and core the apples, cube the apples into about 2cm pieces.

To make the crumble, rub together the sugar, flour and butter until the mixture resembles bread crumbs, leave to the side for now.

Put the apples into a bowl, and cover with 25g of light brown sugar. Mix it up so all the apple pieces are covered and leave to the side.

Beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add in the flour and eggs and beat until smooth.

Fold through the apple mixture and blackberries gently and split between two 8" lined tins.

Sprinkle on a layer of the crumble mixture (only about 1/2cm worth per cake) and then bake in the oven for 50-55 minutes or until baked through (can take up to an hour or more)

Leave the cakes to cool in the tins for 5 minutes and then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Beat the butter for a few minutes until really light and fluffy. Add in the icing sugar 1/3 at a time and beat fully.

Add in the vanilla, and beat again until smooth.

Get the first cake and spread/pipe some of the buttercream onto it (I used half of the buttercream).

Mash a few blackberries in a bowl, and add on top of the buttercream.

Add the second cake on top and pipe on the other half of the buttercream.

Add on some blackberries and some sprinkles and you're done!

ENJOY!

Yalding Garden Society Spring Show

Despite the weather a last minute race around gardens to rescue exhibits from the wind and rain produced a splendid array of flowers and vegetables. The huge range of size and colour of perfumed, single and double daffodils was remarkable and, although not so many, the tulips were full of colour. In the vegetable classes there was more rhubarb this year but fewer entries in the other classes, probably due to the recent difficult growing conditions.

Members of the society arrived at the Village Hall during the morning of the 23rd March with arms full of flowering shrubs, spring flowers and plants in pots, including cacti and camellias of a very high standard.

There was a magnificent display in the Flower Arranging section with bright red displays celebrating the Chinese Year of the Dragon and there were more than usual entries in the craft section, including a stained glass window, embroidery and a delightful 'goose' draught excluder. The Cookery section was well supported with some excellent produce of lemon curd and redcurrant jelly. It should be noted that the winners in the Bakewell Tart, Banana/Walnut Cake and Bath Bun classes were just two men. It was good to see there were also more entries than usual in the Photography classes featuring unfurling ferns, exotic pot plants and wild countryside, squirrels and badgers.

In the afternoon, after the judging, visitors and members browsed around the exhibits, purchased plants from the plant stall and enjoyed meeting friends over a cup of tea whilst waiting for the results of the ever popular raffle, which as usual, included the 1st prize of a generous voucher donated by Wood Cottage Nursery.

The cup winners were:

Doris Mary Licence Bowl for most points in all classes - Joan Godden.

Tom Lister Cup Best Daffodil Exhibit - Jo Doctor.

Sheila Lister Cup for Best Collection of Spring Flowers - Christine Walker.

Mary Haffenden Challenge Cup for Best Cactus Exhibit- Joy Virden.

Jan Maxted Memorial Cup for Best Floral Arrangement - Jennie Brownsdon.

Patricia Bent Challenge Bowl Novice Flower Arranger- Jennifer Raikes.

Kathleen Dicker Cup for most points in Preserve/Cookery classes - Eileen Dodd.

It was a most successful show. Thank you to the committee and volunteers for all their hard work organizing it and preparing the hall.



Woodpeckers- 'Lots of weeding'

Once again the Woodpeckers tidying group have been busy at the church with two more active sessions. The mild and wet spring has encouraged the rapid growth of all grass and weeds as I am sure you have experienced in your own gardens.

On April 6th we were treated to some spring sunshine although it felt chilly in the shade. There were about a dozen of us making sure the grass was cut, all edges were strimmed, the flower beds weeded and the graves tidied. We welcomed Steve as a 'new recruit' and he

worked with David H and Derek clearing up the giant piles of leaves at the back of the churchyard.

Everyone welcomed the tea/coffee break with a tempting choice of cakes: lemon drizzle cake and brownies from Stephane's wife Margaret or fruit cake from David G's wife Frances. The popular recipe Frances uses is from Pam who was our much missed cake baker from the early years of the Woodpeckers.

We had a pleasantly sunny day on May 4th when we split into two groups. Three of us, myself, Liz and Jacki, went up to the graveyard in Green Lane to tidy around the graves, we also attempted to improve some of the neglected older plots but it will take a few sessions to improve them all.



Back in the churchyard Stephane was mowing, Ray was strimming, David H was cutting up a fallen branch while Ann, Michelle, Margaret and Peter tidied up.

The cakes provided by Barbara and Jacki went down well at the tea break; rock cakes were a very popular choice, as well as Victoria sponge and Red velvet cake.

We meet the first Saturday of the month in the churchyard at 10am so please come along if you would like to help.



MINUTES
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND ANNUAL MEETINGS OF
COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL
Orchard Room, St Margaret's School
on Monday 13th MAY 2024
commencing at 19.00PM
In attendance

Cllr Andrew Papas [Chairman] [AP]	Cllr Kelly Rigden [KR]
Cllr Steve Barham [SB]	Cllr Charlie Cooper [CC]
Cllr Deborah Papas [DP]	
Parish Clerk Michelle Rumble [MR]	Borough Councilor – Cllr Russell
Mr. Ben Ward	

24.05.01

**RESULTS OF ELECTIONS
2024**

The Election was uncontested, and we have a new Parish Councillor Mr Charlie Cooper. He was welcomed to the Parish Council. There was still one vacancy.
The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting the Declarations Pecuniary Interest form and Acceptance of Office.
These need to be returned to the Clerk at the next meeting, if not already done so.

**24.05.02
ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

The Clerk took this part of the meeting and asked for any nominations for Chairperson. Cllr D Papas nominated Cllr A Papas; this was seconded by Cllr Barham. **RESOLVED** by all members present. Cllr A Papas took the chair and the continued with the meeting.

**24.05.03
ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairman asked for nominations, Cllr D Papas proposed Cllr Highwood (who stated before the meeting that he would be prepared to carry on as Vice-chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Barham. In his absence it was **RESOLVED** by all members present to elect Cllr Highwood as Vice-chairman.

**24.05.04
APOLOGIES**

Cllr Highwood,

**24.05.07
BOROUGH COUNCILLOR
REPORT**

MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell

Dated: MAY 2024

Cllr Russell was in attendance, and gave her report, it was about Bins and collection days which had changed. There had been some initial problems, but they were working with the Bin Contractors to work this out.

Cllr Russell also stated that the Local Plan had been voted through – it was now adopted and was now in the 6-week Judicial Review period. Supplementary planning documents will come next.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid was not in attendance, but a Report had been received prior to the meeting.

Kent County Council:

Budget

Prior to the budget, KCC received news that government were giving some additional support to local authorities which with the exceptionally challenging financial pressures all councils are under is very welcome. Of the 600M announced, 500m is new funding for councils with responsibilities for adult social care and children's social care. The benefit to KCC is around 12.9 M, however this really doesn't address the structural issues we are faced with. Circa £13m, when we were looking at requiring £118m in savings isn't going to cut it and difficult decisions to ensure the councils sustainability will have to be made.

Adult Social Care

ASC is still, and probably will be until the whole sector is reformed, the biggest and most troublesome aspect of our statutory responsibilities. Many transformative initiatives are happening which are starting to show green shoots of delivery, but it is early days, and the problem is ever increasing. There's a big push or drive to increase the uptake of directs payments.

We have launched a new technology service; Enabled Lives with a raft of digital technologies with the aim to keep people living independent healthier and longer lives in their own homes.

I was asked to serve on the ASC committee which started in March. I have a personal interest in this area and am looking forward to contributing to this department.

Children's Services:

The closure of the Marden Children's centre remains first and foremost for our division, and whilst it's a very disappointing decision I have constantly sort assurances that the money will be invested in staff and people to deliver a comprehensive and reliable outreach service for our residents. I have also been reassured no closure will happen until we know what and where and HOW the service will be delivered. Our meeting with the team was positive but now we need to see the actions. My concern is that things are happening at a snail's pace and then suddenly it's all change so I will keep asking for updates.

UASC:

We continue to press for a comprehensive national transfer scheme as this is the only long-term solution to enable us to dispatch all out legal responsibilities. This is after all a national issue and must be treated so. Reception capacity for 9 sites is being established to comply with the court judgment from last July, no such site is currently in our division.

Highways

The state of the road network

The state of our roads is blatantly clear for all to see, and the situation is not good, we are of course at the worst time of year for torrential rain coupled with freeze thaw the damage is unprecedented. This is unquestionably a national problem, driving the back lanes of Norfolk on a regular basis I see the same problems everywhere. This of course provides no comfort to residents. Recent correspondence with Neil Baker our highways cabinet member with whom I'm in constant touch has emphasised that to repair and bring up to standard our entire network would cost £700M and if all assets were included it would be in excess of £1B this puts the government's announcement which allocates us £134m over the next 10-11 year into context, it should be noted this is also back-ended...it will help but is hardly transformational. On a positive note, we are bringing the pothole blitz forward and the funding does give us a degree of confidence to set longer term plans.

Utility Roadworks

This is probably the number one issue I get contacted about - Emergency Road closures. These spring up instantly and seemingly with no thought or consideration for planned or scheduled works that are going on currently. Consequently, we have set up a Project Team to look at the whole issue, which is more complicated than might be supposed. This is not least because a significant percentage of Utility Roadworks are classed as emergencies, on their own definition of the term, which mean that KCC gets no notice of them, and only has to be informed two hours after they start. I will give more detail about this in my annual report which will be sent over in the next couple of weeks. But just to note in conclusion over 30% of road closures are done under Emergency powers.

On a final and personal note, whilst I have many concerns regarding the budget, I felt it my duty to vote it through. Things are very challenging, but nothing compared to the consequences of having to issue a 114 notice. There was however a saving put forward of 1.3million which involved the allocation of approx. £330k to MBC to assist with recycling, which was to cease immediately. On the surface it would be easy to conflate this with money that could be used to save the HWRC, but they are different things. This money is vital for the borough and would in the long term save KCC money in the form of gate fees at the Allington incinerator by diverting recycling to material recovery facilities in advance, therefore less waste to Allington. It also helps us hit recycling targets allowing us to reclaim PRN. An amendment was put forward by the opposition to restore this payment to the 4 boroughs which I explained to the leadership team I felt I must support and therefore voted for this amendment.

Public Rights of Way:

The headlines (the tables are below for information):

- Length of PRow network in Maidstone Rural South (as best as we can get it): 132Km.
- 5Km length of PRow are cleared three times by contractors through the summer months. We're always happy to discuss amendments to our programme with the Parishes if they feel that routes should be added (or removed).
- 177 issues reported through the last 12 months,
- 97 of which are resolved.
- 41 are awaiting inspection.
- 31 are in progress in one way or another.
- 8 alignment/ long term obstruction issues have been reported/ identified. Just one or two of these can generate huge amounts of work for officers, can take many months and involve legal challenges.
- 21% of the network has been inspected by volunteers in the last 12 months.
- 29 Hours of volunteer work.
- One temporary closure to facilitate work.
- Interestingly 155 property searches were responded to. It's a very accurate indicator of the volume of property sales.

Works of note:

Boughton Monchelsea:

KM110 – several trees cleared, revetment work to riverbank hopefully planned for this year.

KM115 – completely obstructed by palisade fence by the landowner after repeated acts of vandalism and an assault on a farm worker, originating from Park Wood. Now open again but access more secure. Several trees cleared and path trimmed.

KM116 – very overgrown path cut back.

Chart Sutton:

KH548 – re-opening of long obstructed footpath.

KH562 – management of path through unauthorised traveller site.

KCC has been operating without an officer in the Maidstone area for the last few months. Recruitment is underway and hopefully we'll have someone in post early in the new financial year.

Collier Street Parish Council

2024 Chairman's Report

Elections

Six nominations for the seven seats were received by the Recording Officer for the uncontested parish election this May, and so all were duly elected.

I am delighted to welcome Charlie Cooper as our newest member and look forward to working with him.

Retirements

After many, many years of service, David Sealey and Steve Sandys both decided to stand down from the Parish Council, earlier in 2024.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank them for 7+ and 20+ years, respectively, of commitment to their local community. Their wisdom, experience and wit will be sorely missed, and on behalf of the Parish Council, I wish them a happy 'retirement'.

Planning

Councillors David Sealey and Jack Highwood have worked regularly, methodically and diligently researching and opining on each and every planning application that impacts our Parish.

It is still important, of course, for local people to 'have their say' on any planning application, as being a planning 'consultee' such as the Parish Council, can only take things so far.

Highways

In the past year, we have been able to get agreement from KCC Highways for to an additional SLOW sign on Green Lane, to the North of the Haviker Street junction. We know that this junction continues to be problematic, and will continue to work with KCC, to see if any further improvements are possible.

We also try to keep on top of road painting, and most of the 30 roundels were refreshed earlier this year.

A number of items on our wish list have been discussed over the past year, and we continue to work with KCC, where the need for our requests is often challenged.

Parish Clerk

I would like to personally thank our Parish Clerk, Mrs. Michelle Rumble for her continued patience and hard work.

PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Parish Council are allowed to fill the vacancy by co-option, due to the fact there had only recently been an election. Mr Ben Ward who was present at the meeting wished to fill the vacancy on the Council. It was proposed by Cllr D Papas, seconded by Cllr S Barham, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that Mr Ben Ward was co-opted onto the Parish Council. The Clerk will forward him all the relevant forms which need to be completed and returned as soon as possible. The Clerk will sort out New Councillor training for both Cllr Cooper and Cllr Ward. The Clerk will also sort out new email addresses.

CIL MONIES

Cllr D Papas had no update at this time.

HIGHWAYS

The Clerk was asked to contact the resident who emailed a few months ago regarding the Haviker Street speed signs. This has now been sorted by KCC and the signs now show the correct speed. The Clerk was asked to contact the resident and update them on this.

There was no update on the HIP at this time.

Streetlighting

The Clerk is trying to seek new quotes for the contract from a different supplier, but this is proving quite difficult as there are so few unmetered streetlighting suppliers.

RECREATION FIELD

The Clerk circulated prior to the meeting the Play Inspection Report. This was noted and any work highlighted the Clerk will seek quotes.

Email from FOCSS asking to use the Recreation Ground for the Annual Pet Show on the 22nd of June 2024. It was **RESOLVED** by all members present to approve the request. The Clerk will inform them.

MARDEN MINORS

The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting the Marden Minors Pitch Agreement for the coming season. It was **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Chairman should sign the agreement. The Clerk will send this onto the Club Secretary asking for the Risk Assessment and Schedule of Games and the Pitch Fee, all of which is part of the agreement.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Parish confirmed that the next full Council meeting will be, in The Orchard Room, St Margaret's School on MONDAY 3rd JUNE 2024,

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.45PM

Prepared by | MICHELLE RUMBLE | Clerk to Collier Street Parish Council

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS			
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	Vicar@YaldingChurches.co.uk	Marden Medical Centre	01622 831257
Church Warden tbc		PADDOCK WOOD COMMUNITY ADVICE	
Sec to PCC Evie Cummins	M.slater@outlook.co.uk		01892 838619 info@pwadvice.org
PARISH MAGAZINE		VILLAGE HALLS Yalding Village Hall	01622 814163
Editors Jacki Fogg	01892 730869	Youth & Community Centre	01622 815498
Emma Howard	editorparishmag@mail.com	COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL	
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VILLAGE HALL		parishclerk@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
Ben Ward Chairman	07976 277189	Chair Andrew Papas	
HELPING HANDS		andrew.papas@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
Margaret Ashworth (Age Concern Representative)	01892 730323	Jack Highwood Vice Chair jack.highwood@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
SCHOOL			
Headteacher Paul Ryan	01892 730264	Dave Sealey Dave.sealey@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
Chairman of Governors Sean Randall	01892 354736/07891 927684	Steve Sandys steve.sandys@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
Friends of Collier Street School		Steve Barham steve.barham@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
Chairman Kelly Rigden	info@focss.org.uk	Deborah Papas Deborah.papas@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
YALDING'S WOMENS' INSTITUTE		Kelly Rigden Kelly.rigden@collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk	
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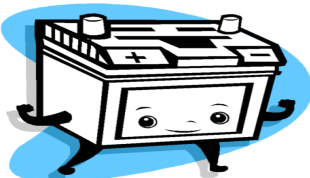
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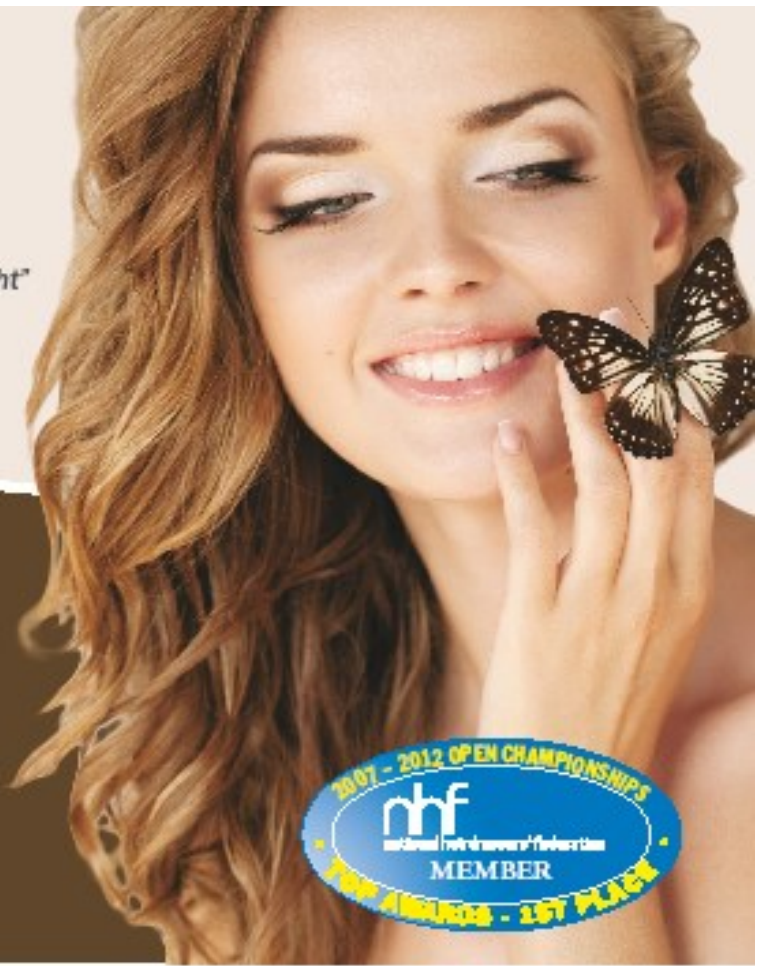
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