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1st May	11am onwards Mayday Fun
3rd May	7.30pm Parish Council AGM
4th May	KCC Elections
5th May	10.30 - 11.45am Coffee Jamieson's
8th, 22nd May	1.30pm Westwell Art Group - p3
9th May	Book Club, p13
10th May	7pm + Players AGM p2 and 10
25th May	Ascension Day

THE WESTWELL FEE

171 May 2017

Coffee and Cakes
From 11am



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Westwell Parish Hall

Mayday May 1st



Cream Teas
from 2

Bacon
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from 12

Last servings 3pm

In aid of the Church development
Come In and see the plans

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
41 4th Sunday of Easter St. Mary Westwell 8am Holy Communion 3.30pm Messy Church	1 Family Fun Day from 11am 7pm Fitness	2	3 11am Over 50s Fistssteps 7.30pm Parish Council AGM	4 Re.F.T. KCC Elections	5 10am Eucharist 10.30 Coffee, at Jamieson's	6
7	8 1.30pm Painting 7pm Fitness	9 11am Book Club p13 Iris Freemanle	10 11am Over 50s Fistssteps Players AGM 7pm drinks 7.30pm meeting	11 R.F.W.G. 9.15am Plates 10.30 Dog training 7.30pm WI	12	13
14 5th Sunday of Easter 11am Iona Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	15 7pm Fitness	16	17 11am Over 50s Fistssteps	18 Re.F.T. 9.15am Plates 10.30 Dog training	19	20
21 6th Sunday of Easter 11am Family Service St Mary Westwell	22 1.30pm Painting 7pm Fitness	23	24 11am Over 50s Fistssteps	25 R.F.W.G 9.15am Plates 10.30 Dog training 12.00 Ascension Day Communion Service Charing	26	27
28 7th Sunday of Easter 11am Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	29 7pm Fitness	30	31 11am Over 50s Fistssteps	Re.F.T.	2	3

From the Editor's desk...

I have been watching the London Marathon off and on today, congratulations to all Westwellians who took part including Scottie Scott-Adie and also family and friends of any villagers. Our daughter- in-law, Mary, did it in a PB of 3 hours 10 minutes! Every runner is a mad fool as far as I am concerned, but well done to all!

Congratulations to Doris Cackett on winning the Citizenship Award, very well done and not before time!

The Parish Council AGM is on **Wednesday** 3rd May. All are welcome.

There will be no pilates or dog training on 4th May as the Parish Hall is being used for the KCC elections.

Do go to the Players' AGM on 10th May as they would love some more members, there must be some reticent, budding thespians amongst you. You could also join the backstage crew.

Carolyn Thorneloe 

The views of any contributor to this publication may not necessarily be those of the editor and team, nor can the Westwell Eye accept any responsibility in connection with any companies or organisations mentioned or any advertiser.

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Update from the New Ashford College – Elwick Road.



Cllr. Gerry Clarkson, Leader of Ashford Borough Council, CEO Tracey Kerly and 28 members were given a tour of the new college on 5th April.

Paul Hannan, Principal and CEO, described the wide-ranging education and training courses on offer from this September. Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, Deputy Principal/CEO, spoke about the importance of working with the flourishing business sectors in and the town and surrounding communities.

Student Governor and President of the Students' Union Ellie Crook said 'students are very excited' and 'delighted to be part of the new College'.

The Tour of the facilities was led by Mat McLoughlin - the College's Project Manager - assisted by the architect, Ken Watson and Chris Burden and Chris Aisbitt of Bam Construction.

Following the Tour, Gerry Clarkson spoke of the Council's pleasure in seeing the first of the Big 8 projects so near completion.

Ellie then presented Mrs Clarkson with flowers after which the Hadlow Group catering team served a buffet luncheon.

Image: guests assembled outside the new Ashford College.

FOOTNOTE. ASHFORD COLLEGE is part of the HADLOW GROUP: Hadlow College, Ashford College, West Kent College, Hadlow Rural Community School, Betteshanger Sustainable Parks, Hadlow Community Pre-school and Produced in Kent.

Further information can be obtained from Pat Crawford – pat.crawford@hadlow.ac.uk – 01622 618628



Pothole Blitz Launch 2017 - From KCC

Kent County Council launched its 2017 pothole blitz on 3 April. We are spending an extra £2.4million to repair local roads in Kent throughout spring and summer.

We used a team of local contractors for last year's pothole blitz and they successfully delivered more than 1,300 individual pothole repairs and 56,510 square meters of larger road repairs. We have made an early start on this year's pothole blitz by using the same contractors to repair potholes in April.

We would really value your local knowledge and support to help us make sure that we target roads that are important to your community. The quickest way to do this is to use our new online fault reporting tool available on our website www.kent.gov.uk/highways. We've made the form simpler and quicker to use, especially from mobile phones and tablets.

You can keep in touch with us and find out what repairs are being carried out by following our new KCC Highways Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KentHighways) and on Twitter (@KentHighways - we'll be tagging all our pothole posts with the hashtag #Kentpotholes).

We will be publishing updates throughout the campaign, including 'before and after' photographs (taken as proof of quality workmanship), films of the crews showing how they repair both individual potholes and larger road repairs as well as live information about the whereabouts of crews so that you can spot our crews in your area.

The pothole blitz work is being carried out in addition to our normal maintenance work, and we are still continuing with our Keep Kent Clean campaign, which has seen our crews out across the county cleaning signs, re-painting white lines and maintaining shrubs. You can find out all about our Keep Kent Clean campaign on Facebook www.facebook.com/KeepKentClean or using searching #keepkentclean on Twitter.

1st Charing Scout Group

We have two exciting things to report this month. Firstly, the foundations for our new headquarters have now been finished. The project now feels very real. We have been splendidly supported by the Charing Parish Council, Ashford Borough Council, Tarmac Community Landfill Fund and the Peter Adams Trust. Our fundraising continues. The next big event will be the Charing Colour Run on October 1st. Look out for more details and check out the facebook page.

Terry Lister

Group Scout Leader

gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk

Egerton Gardens Open in May

3rd May; Kay and Dick Crabb, Stonebridge Green Cottage, Stonebridge Green.

10th May; Sue Johnson, Keepers Cottage, Egerton House Road.

17th May; Corinne Wickham, Pevington Farm, Pluckley.

24th May; Pam Scrivens Tram Hatch, Charing Heath.

31st May; Wendy Simkins, Barlings, Stonehill Road.

£2 for a cup of coffee and a affle ticket!

Community News

Useful telephone Numbers

Age UK	642094
Ashford Volunteer Bureau	633219
Bees (swarming)	
Andy Bithell	740650 / 07933892413
Borough Councillor:	
Larry Krause	01233 643497
CAB	626185
Carers Support Group	664393
Childline Freephone	0800 1111
Cinema	0871 2208000
Citizens' Advice Bureau	626185
Cruse Bereavement Counselling	878225
Doctors (Charing)	01233 714490
(Hayesbank)	624642
Dog Warden	01233 330340
Hospital (William Harvey)	633331
KCC Community Warden for Hothfield and Charing - Dave Beckley	07811 271306
CROP	01622 851200
Library (Ashford)	03000413131
(Charing)	713177
MS Therapy Centre	01227 470876
NHS Direct	0845 4647
NSPCC	0800 800500
Parish Hall Booking	01233 712016
	doriscackett@btinternet.com
Parish Council (clerk, Sue Wood)	623902
Pilgrims' Hospice (Admin)	504100
(Patient enquiries)	504112
PCC Secretary (Heather Lister)	712981
PCSO	angie.burden@kent.pnn.police.uk
Samaritans	610000
Shopmobility	621196
Solicitor (Thorneloe & Co.)	01622 859416
Victim Support	0845 30 30 900
Water Supplies Queries	0333 000 0002
Water Leak Line	0333 000 3330
Wealden Wheels	01233 840000
Wheel Inn (landlord James Meire)	712430
Westwell Community Website:	
http://www.westwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/	

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Ashford Highways Operations Team Kent County Council

Every year throughout the spring and summer KCC Highways & Transportation receive numerous complaints regarding trees, hedges and other vegetation, which overhang the highway from private property. This matter can pose a number of problems for people trying to use the footways, especially if they are trying to pass with buggies, wheelchairs and scooters. It would be greatly appreciated if you could ensure that any trees and hedges that are bordering the Highway are maintained and cut back to your boundary which would greatly benefit all Highway users. This will help us all keep the highway safe and prevent the need for KCC Highways & Transportation writing to you requesting that you cut back your vegetation. So that you are aware of our requirements, please refer to the text below.

If the boundary of your property borders the footway, then please be aware that:

The full width of the footway/pavement must be available for use by pedestrians.

As well, there must be a minimum height clearance over the footway/pavement of 2.1 metres/7 feet for any vegetation.

If the boundary of your property borders the carriageway, then please be aware that:

If you have vegetation that overhangs into the road, there must be a minimum height clearance of 5 metres/16 feet to accommodate buses and HGVs that may use the road.

If your property is rural, then vegetation should be 0.45 metres/11/2 feet behind the edge of the road and all signs need to be kept clear of foliage.

Also, I would ask that you pay special attention to your trees, hedges and vegetation if your property is on or near a junction, and/or inside the bend of the road, to maintain maximum visibility for road users.

Thank you for the time taken to read this article and we wish you a pleasant summer.

Humans of Ashford - Theatre Project

I am very proud to introduce you to Humans of Ashford, a fantastic intergenerational theatre and arts project that I am supporting through the Create Festival.

There are lots of elements and opportunities as part of this project, which you can read more about through the links supplied below, but at this early stage I hope you would be able to engage in and share this opportunity out to all you think may be interested. In the last few days Grace and Emily (project leads) have put a call out for participants of all ages, experiences and abilities for an exciting theatre project taking place this July.

Don't worry - rehearsals will be relaxed, fun and friendly, and will mainly take place during weekends, in a space in Ashford town centre (accessible via wheelchair). No prior experience of performance or theatre necessary, so feel free to bring along friends and family. More importantly, tea, cake and lunch will be provided.

If you are looking to have a laugh, meet new people and try something different, then please check out the links below and get in touch with Emily and Grace via email: humansofashfordproject@outlook.com

Website: <https://humansofashford.wordpress.com/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj3ifXNrIDY>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HOfATheatre>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HofATheatre>

Chris Dixon. Arts & Cultural Industries Manager
Ashford Borough Council

Westwell WI

With the rather intriguing title of 'Tax, Care and Toy Boys', we were wondering what Trevor French was going to talk about at this month's meeting. What we got was an enlightening talk about the importance of making a will to ensure we maximised our inheritance and to guarantee that it went to those we wanted it to. Trevor covered the topics of Inheritance Tax, Care Funding and not necessarily toy boys but the effect that remarriage could have on our assets.

We heard about 'Tenants in Common' and of creating a trust on death to halve the value on paper of property. Trevor also talked about 'Lasting Power of Attorney' which would prevent the Courts taking over the affairs of a loved one, both financial and health.

Whilst a serious topic, Trevor brought a great deal of humour to his talk and anyone hearing our laughter would never have guessed we were hearing about such a weighty subject.

The Competition Cup, awarded to the member who accrues the most points during the year in our monthly competition, was belatedly awarded to Mary-Anne Pitt.

This month's competition winner was a very elegant frog (surely a contradiction in terms?) brought in by June Scarfe. There was a variety of other items including a rhino, candlesticks and, of course, a WI badge.

Forthcoming events for members:

Coffee evening on Wednesday 3rd May at 7 pm at the home of Marilyn Warner

Croquet evening on Thursday 15th June 6.30pm at the home of Liz Jamieson

Next Meeting: Thursday 11th May at 7.30pm.

Resolution Meeting

Followed by a talk on the Mission Aviation Fellowship

Hostesses: Mary Thiele, Pat Warren and Ros Williamson

Vote of thanks: Celeste Muir

Competition - Blue

Marilyn Warner

Novena week of prayer

As we have done in previous years, using images, prayers and Bible references from the Novena booklets (available in all of the churches and online, we will meet together for prayer around the benefice during the period between Ascension Day and Pentecost.

Come and find God in the 'in between' as we pray together in the Benefice.

Date	Theme	Church	Time
Friday 26th	Luke 2:33-35,39-40,51-52	Hothfield	6.30pm (Compline)
Saturday 27th	John 1: 38 - 46	Egerton	9.30am (Morning Prayer)
Sunday 28th	Esther 4: 13 - 16	Church services	Various
Monday 29th	Exodus 14: 10 - 14	'At home'	---
Tuesday 30th	Luke 1: 39 - 45	Charing	9am (Communion)
Wednesday 31st	Genesis 1: 30b - 2: 3	Pluckley	8pm (Compline)
Thursday 1st	John 19: 38 - 42	Charing Heath	12noon (Midday Prayer)
Friday 2nd	Jonah 2: 1 - 7	Westwell	10am (Iona Eucharist)
Saturday 3rd	2 Kings 2: 9 - 15	Little Chart	5pm (Open Prayer)

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Neighbourhood Watch

We have had no reported incidents across most of the parish but Sandyhurst Lane continues to be a target area for opportunistic thieves, actual or intended.

We have had one actual attempted break-in where the occupants were on holiday, but were alerted through their installed alarm being triggered. A broken window but nothing taken! For the second month running there has been suspicious activity along the lane involving unknown persons parking on residents' drives, even in broad daylight, this time two black males wearing hoodies in a black people carrier, registration number unknown. Again I was alerted by our very vigilant postman, Ian, who is to be commended for his community spirit. At least two different women, although both with Eastern European accents have also been seen wandering around premises. On one occasion when challenged she said she was looking for Norton Knatchbull school.

Please report any such incidents to the police through 101 unless the intruders are actually still around, then use 999. Also look out for any strange chalk marks or other odd markings around your premises which might be indicators that your property is a potential target.

As always, be aware.

If you want to get emails about these or other incidents from our on-line Alert Scheme please send your name, post code and email address to me at:
westwell.community.watch@gmail.com

Also indicate whether you would like to get Westwell Events news including updates from the Parish Council

2-WATCH-4

From Kent Police

As the gardening season gets underway our PCSO Angie Burden warns not to leave garden implements laying around when not in use. Ideally lock them away securely when not in use.

She also recommends the use of so called "magic or smart water", a liquid which can invisibly, but indelibly, be used to mark your property and which when examined under special lighting by the police can identify them as coming from your premises.

This enables the police to identify, and hopefully return, stolen goods and, on occasions, actually identify the perpetrator whose hands or clothes may be contaminated as well.

For further details on the use and where to get this marker fluid go to:

<https://www.smartwater.com/> or contact Angie at angie.burden@kent.pnn.police.uk

To report suspicious activity call 101 or use Country Eye – in an emergency call 999
Keep Vigilant - Tony Bartlett – WCWS Co-ordinator

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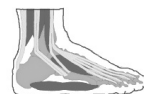


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Letter to the Parishes

I write this shortly after Easter Sunday with the shouts of 'He is risen, Alleluia!' still ringing in my ears. Churches that have for 40 days seemed barren and colourless have once again sprung to life as our wonderful flower arrangers have shared their talents for the enjoyment of all. The sorrow of Good Friday has given way to the joy of Easter and a new journey begins. One of my favourite biblical narratives is the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to the two companions on the road to Emmaus. We learn from Luke's Gospel how Jesus joined them as they walked along, listening to their conversation as they tried to make sense of all that had taken place in Jerusalem in recent days. Lost in despair and dashed hopes they hardly lifted their heads to look at their new companion. As night was beginning to fall, they invited their travelling companion to eat with them and it was there in the act of breaking bread that they recognised Jesus. "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening up the scriptures to us?" And a new journey began as the companions, full of renewed resurrection hope, returned to Jerusalem to tell the Good News.

News headlines over the last few days reveal that we live in a world which seems to be increasingly filled with bad news: As I write, tension is escalating between North Korea and the US, Isis has claimed responsibility for the Palm Sunday bombings of the two Coptic churches in Egypt, scores of children are among the dead as part of a Syrian bus convoy is blown up, not to mention the escalating humanitarian crisis in Yemen, South Sudan, Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. The challenges of living in 1st century Palestine under Roman occupation and opposition from the Jewish authorities, including death threats towards those who had been followers of Jesus, were all still a very real part of the world the companions on the Emmaus road inhabited, but their interpretation of this world and their vocation within it was radically changed by their encounter with the living Jesus. As 'Easter people', our interpretation of the world in which we live and the role we are called to play is filtered through the Good News of the resurrection. We are called to be people of prayer and people who are ready to speak out against all forms of injustice and to offer practical action wherever appropriate.

Such demands would be difficult to fulfil if we were travelling alone, but here in the benefice we have very many opportunities to travel in fellowship with others. Since the weekly worship rota changed at the beginning of the New Year, I have been delighted to see that people have opted to worship in a different church if their own has no service that week. This has not only forged new bonds of friendship but has enriched communities. The weekly Cornerstone congregation, now firmly rooted in Little Chart church, has gone from strength to strength. Towards the end of May we have more opportunities to meet together for prayer and reflection across the 9 day period known as the Novena, this year under the title "Conversations in the In-Between".

As part of our journey together, and in order that we can better discern the will of God for our ongoing life together in the benefice, there will be a meeting on Thursday May 4th at 7.30pm in Little Chart Church to discuss a possible move to a Single Parish structure. All will be welcome to attend.

Please continue to pray for Mim Oliver as she commences the next part of her journey as the Youth and Children's Minister at All Saints Church, Canterbury.

May you all be blessed by the love, joy and peace of the resurrected Christ.

Sheila Cox

Etc

Dates for your diary

June 17th.	Safari Supper
August 28th.	Fete
September 17th	Harvest Festival
October.14th	Harvest Supper.
December 2nd	Bazaar

Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at Underwood, Liz and Mike Jamieson, **Friday 7th April** from 10.30 - 11.45am. Before coffee there will be Iona Eucharist at 10am in St Mary's

Book Club April 2017

Pied Piper, by Nevil Shute

This is one of the author's less well known works. Howard is an elderly gentleman during WWII and finds he is not needed in any effort in England. He decides to go on a fishing trip to France before its occupation. While there the Nazis move in quickly and Howard decides to go home. He is entrusted with two small English children and makes his way toward the sea hoping to cross by boat. As he goes through France, with Germans spreading, he is constantly in danger of being discovered. He ends up 'collecting' other children who are destitute and in similar danger..finally manages to evade execution after being accused of spying because he is asked to accompany the German officer's orphaned niece and promises to send her to the US to be with her other uncle.

The story is full of acts of generosity and kindness...'ordinary people doing extraordinary things', is a pleasant and short read and leaves one feeling optimistic about mankind-ness in an uncertain world!

Our next book is "Hidden Figures" by Margot Lee Shatterly, 9th May. Venue to be arranged. This is the story which was adapted into film and was in cinemas in the past few weeks. Happy reading

St Mary Improvements Committee

Family Fun Day

As the first in our series of planned fundraising events we are having a family fun day on May 1st 11am-3pm in the hall and on the playing field: coffee and cakes will be on sale from 11am; bacon butties from 12noon; cream teas from 2-3pm. Join in a variety of games on the field for a modest charge and, of course, we will be having a raffle. We hope also to have the plans on display.

All welcome to join us for all or part on Bank Holiday Monday!

Dates for WAGS (Westwell Art Group)

May 8th and 22nd

June 5th and 19th

July 3rd

Evening Walk at Hothfield Heathlands

22nd May 6 - 8pm

Meet at the reserves car park, on Cade Road. Walk will look at the wildlife and flowering plants across the reserve. As well as a chance to meet the cattle, ponies and sheep that will be grazing. Approx 1-2 miles, uneven ground and slopes. Walk is free, but donations welcome.

For further information please email ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk

07889 737839

Indian Meal.

Bina Patel is cooking one of her legendary Indian meals for a fund-raiser for Hothfield Church on 28th May. £20 for a three course meal and coffee in Hothfield Village Hall.

Book at the Post office 620841

Westwell Church Services for May

www.g7benefice.org

Friday 5th:

10am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 7th: 4th Sunday of Easter

8am Holy Communion

Sunday 14th: 5th Sunday of Easter

11am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 21st: 6th Sunday of Easter

11am Family Service

Thursday 25th: Ascension Day

12noon Ascension Day Service - Charing

Sunday 28th: 7th Sunday of Easter

11am Eucharist

Tuesdays:

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

Ascension Day Services – May 25 th 2017

There will be services of Holy Communion for Ascension Day at: 12.00 St. Peter and St. Paul, Charing (Benefice)

16.00 Deanery v Diocese Cricket match
Mersham-le- Hatch followed by Deanery
Ascension Day Service.

Family Church in May

May Day Family Fun Day at the Parish Hall
from 11am - 3pm.

Lawn Games, Coffee and cakes, Children's
picnic boxes, Bacon Butties, Cream Teas.

May Messy Sunday May 7th in the Parish
Hall 3.30 to 5pm.

Theme New Life with Fish

All under 10s welcome with an adult. Craft,
Games, Tea; themed around a bible story.

All Age Service Sunday May 21st 11am

Theme Christians around the world.

Do you have contacts with other Christian
Communities across the world? Could you
come and share a picture or a story?

The Annual Church Meeting

This was held on Palm Sunday and the church

activities over the last year were discussed. The lack of ordained ministers in the G7 benefice is making it difficult to continue as we are. The rector suggested that we might consider moving to a more joined up benefice which would function as one parish with each church having its own church council to run its local activities. This is to be considered further in meetings later this year. The Main Meeting is on May 4th at Little Chart church at 7.30pm. The new plans for the church were discussed in outline as we are still awaiting Diocesan feedback before they go to planning. A copy will be available to view at the May Day Coffee morning.

Fund raising will be starting to allow us the money to install a toilet and kitchen facilities in the north west corner of the church.

The meeting ended at 1.30pm

St Mary Improvements Committee

Our project is off to a flying start with a substantial donation from the Haley Family Charitable Trust, of which Cherry and Howard Lumsden are Trustees. They said it was a 'thank you' to Westwell for putting up with them for 50 years! Thank you Cherry and Howard, and this will be echoed by all who benefit from the facilities when they are in.

Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning Sarah Stevenson

Flowers: June Jones

Brass: Suzanne Pier



From Your MP

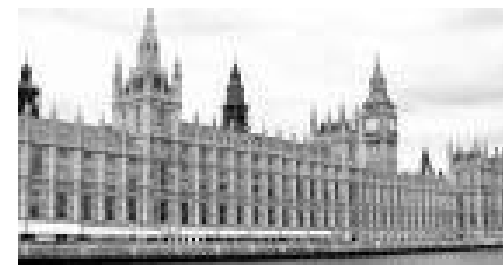
'The recent spring weather has seen the usual appearance of buds and shoots heralding the start of summer, which always cheers me up. But I am even more cheered by the less poetic, but equally reassuring, sight of buildings budding and sprouting in the centre of Ashford.

This is reassuring because over the years even the most-die-hard sentimentalists have observed that a town which does not progress does not stay in a happy state of unchanging bliss, but rather becomes just a little more run-down every year. Over time Ashford was often criticised as a "nearly town", where plans were hatched but never brought to fruition.

No longer is this the case. We can all see that the new College building is practically finished, and the first students will be arriving this September. At the same time the first office building in the Commercial Quarter next to the station is having its foundation laid, and the brewery opposite the college has seen its hoardings go up around the site. Next will be the cinema and restaurant complex.

All of this will provide, education, jobs, and entertainment for local people. The centre of Ashford will be transformed. No doubt there will be critics of each individual scheme, but it will be clear to the whole world that Ashford has come a long way from being a "nearly town." The growth will take longer than the blossom we can currently enjoy, but it will also last for many years, and not just a few weeks. Enjoy the summer!

Damian Green



Congratulations to Doris Cackett who is receiving
the Citizenship Award from George Horne.



Classified ads

Holiday Housesitting incl. pet care
From £50 per day (animal dependent)
Imogen Stevens (19, University of Bristol student)
Free July and August
Driver. Good with all animals, including horses.
Also experience with childcare, DBS checked.
Contact: is16793@my.bristol.ac.uk
07792711511 / 0123371248
References available



Westwell Players

An exciting date this month is Wednesday 10h May when Players are holding their AGM with refreshments at 7.00p.m. with chats and catching up with all the latest news followed by the serious stuff at 7.30, when those little brown envelopes will make their appearance and need to be filled so please bring your yearly £10 which covers endless cups of coffee and biscuits – not to mention the thrill of being in a real live show and all the fun and friendship that goes with being a member of “Westwell Players”. You will also hear who has won the cup presented to the Player who has given the most to the club over the past year. A very hard decision as everyone has worked so hard to get ‘Life Goes On’ on to the stage. However I have my thinking cap on and a decision will have been made by 10th May!! There will be a discussion about the past show with details of what was made – (money that is) and what was given away and then the news about the Pantomime which is being directed and produced by Gordon Forster and Sarah Whiting and is called “Once Upon a Time” It has Cinderella in it as well as Snow White, Red Riding Hood and Alice as well as Prince Marvellous and a couple of characters called Charming so promises to be a lot of fun and very different to any pantomime that has gone before! Watch this space.

DATES for your calendar are Show time: November 23, 24 and 25th with a First Reading on Tuesday 6th June and second reading Tuesday 13th June then a first rehearsal on Tuesday 5th September and some pleasure-filled evenings on every Tuesday after that until Showtime! I very much look forward to seeing all my very good friends at as many of these dates as possible.

Please come along to the AGM if you possibly can, we need a large cast for Once Upon a Time so are hoping for some new talent as well as some people who have been ‘resting’ for a while and are now longing to get back to the grease paint and the adrenalin rush that comes with every live performance!!

Mary Anne Pitt 

Plans

The following were supported by the Parish Council at its April meeting:

17/00301/AS Glebe Cottage, The Street, Westwell Erection of a two-bay garage

17/00319/AS Elvy Cottage, Kingsland Lane, Westwell Erection of a double garage incorporating home office

17/00341/AS Fallowfields, The Street, Westwell Rear infill extension and alteration to existing roof

Older applications:

17/00150/AS Kingsland House, Kingsland Lane. Approved by the B C

17/00148/AS Bridgewood Farm, Watery Lane. A decision is awaited from the B C



May on Hothfield Heathland

A wash of bluebells adds to the magic of May in the reserve’s mature woodland now. Acorns, sycamore and ash keys, beech nuts and fine birch seeds are germinating, sending up tender but determined new growth, future trees unless grazed off. Pink campion was flowering in the Triangle in April, responding to the stronger light in the new clearings. Near the upper bog pink lousewort and deep blue milkwort were already in flower mid-April, rosettes of mottled orchid leaves are visible, and tiny red rosettes of sundew in the bog. The gorse is in full flower, and the tree canopy thickens; I think the oak was out and flowering before the ash this spring. Slow worms and grass snakes have been in evidence for a month, mice and voles skittering about and the birds busy busy.

Celebrating May Day at sunrise on Wye Downs was usually so chilly and damp that after just one experience of shivering for tradition’s sake, I hosted full English breakfast for all dancers, dignitaries and daring audience - staying home to prepare it! Often there were no open sprigs of may blossom for morris hats but by 13th May, 1st May in the old calendar, hedges would be thick with what local writer H E Bates described as ‘the risen cream of all the milkiness of May-time’. This year trees in the woodland understorey on the reserve were almost out by Easter in mid-April, with rogue apple trees flowering nearby.

Hawthorn is a native small tree or shrub, in the rose family; its range covers Europe, northwest Africa and western Asia. The young leaves, out before the flowers with their distinctive red anthers, are tasty to nibble, my father called them chucklecheese or bread-and-cheese. The blossom is never allowed in the house; as a child in the Cotswolds I was told it brought bad luck. The white blossom flowering on bare branches in February/March is another member of the rose family, the blackthorn, beautifully captured by William Morris in his textile design. Hawthorns provide nectar, pollen and leaf food for around 150 insects which are in turn food for many birds; other birds and mammals eat the red haws. The tangled thorny crown provides safe roosting, nesting and hibernation for many birds, small mammals and insects. Tough and fast-growing, it is kept in control on the reserve by the grazing cattle and sheep. One autumn we watched an Oakover truck move slowly along their hawthorn hedge on the A20 just before the Hothfield turn, shaking the haws into the truck for subsequent sowing to add to the thousands of miles of stock-proof hedging across the country. It is still one of the best hedging plants for small gardens, a welcome home for squabbling sparrows, tolerating heavy trimming, and for wildlife is best as part of a mix of other native hedging.

The heathland is open to all, including dogs kept in check. Various trails are signposted all the way round and the trails indicated on the maps at entrances. One toddler explorer regards the circular discs on the posts as lift buttons; she goes up in the lift while her companions have to tramp up the stairs. There are plenty of fallen trees to clamber over. The noticeboards at the entrances give the location of the livestock, the noticeboard down the main slope from the Cade Road car park gives recent wildlife sightings.

For email alerts on the location of the livestock, or to join the volunteers who help maintain the reserve or check the cattle contact the Warden

ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk, 01622 662012.

Margery Thomas