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This is alongside our Bar menu and will be similar to the A La Carte menu on the weekends.

Pub quiz 23rd February 7pm live music to follow - Quiz £2 per person and cash prize

Opening Hours:

Pub: Monday – Thursday and Sunday 11am to 11pm

Friday and Saturday 11am – Midnight

Kitchen: Monday – Friday 12noon – 3pm and 6pm – 9.30pm

Saturday 12noon – 9.30pm Sunday 12noon – 4.30pm

Contact: 01233 712223 / info@thewheelinnwestwell.uk

Pub Menu and A La Carte available during Kitchen hours.

Sunday: Roast 12noon – 4.30pm

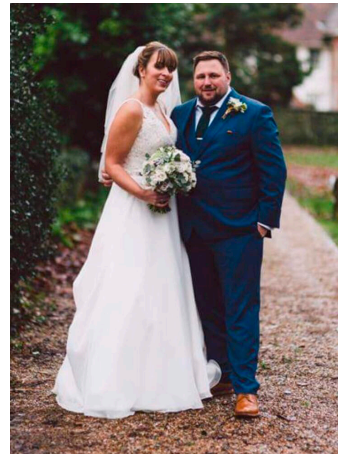


THE WESTWELL EYE

180

February

2018



Frances Edwards and Tom Jones on their wedding day. Livestock checking
Sunset in July - taken by Rosemary Harding



2nd February

4th February

12th, 26th February

13th February

23rd February

10.30am Coffee in The Wheel - all welcome

3.30pm Messy Church - Westwell Parish Hall

1.30pm Painting Group

11am Book Club - The Wheel

7pm Quiz - The Wheel

February 2018

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
4 2nd Sunday before Lent 8am Holy Communion St. Mary Westwell Messy Church	5 7pm Fitness	6 7pm Players	7 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	1 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	2 10am Iona Eucharist 10.30 Coffee Wheel	3
11 1st Sunday before Lent 11am Iona Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	12 1.30pm W1 painting 7pm Fitness	13 Shrove Tuesday Book Club - p13 7pm Players	14 Ash Wednesday 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	15 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	16	17
18 1st Sunday of Lent 11am Family Service St. Mary Westwell	19 7pm Fitness	20 7pm Players	21 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	22 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	23 7pm Quiz The Wheel	24
25 2nd Sunday of Lent 11am Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	26 7pm Fitness 1.30pm W1 painting	27 7pm Players	28 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	Mar 1 R.F.W	2	3

From the Editor's desk...

Another month, another sadness in the village, Don Clifton passed away in his 90th year on 20th January having lived in Westwell for over 60 years. I know you would all like to join me in sending condolences to Ivy, Simon and Trevor.

The Westwell Players start rehearsals for their April production, on 6th February, see page 10.

Thursday 8th February is Charing History night, this month Nick Sandford is talking about Godinton, should be very interesting - see p13.

Also on page 13 you can read about the book club which is back for 2018, having had a New Year's lunch in January.

The quiz at the Wheel on 26th January was very well attended; the next one is 23rd February, at 7pm, and booking is essential to avoid disappointment.

If you have problems with the speed of your broadband do read page 9 and get in touch with Clive Bainbridge.

Read page 10 if you are affected by the overnight lorry parking, you can have your say!

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.

Correspondence to: Carolyn Thorneloe, Gaoler's Retreat, 5, Faversham Road, Lenham, Maidstone Kent ME17 2PN. Tel: 01622 859376, Email: westwelleye@gmail.com

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(Patient enquiries)	504112
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Parish Council

The Parish Council met in the parish hall on Tuesday January 9th. There were no members of the public present so no Open Session took place. Tim Lister was co-opted on to the Council to fill the vacancy which arose when Anne Davidson stepped down for health reasons. Larry Krause, borough councillor, gave a report and said that he had approved a grant of £1000 to the Hall Management Committee for new chairs for the hall. Grants will also be available for events to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI. The Local Plan examination will likely be in June, or possibly earlier, as two inspectors to chair the Examination in Public have been appointed.

The minutes of the November and December meetings were approved and Matters Arising taken: planning permission will be required for the proposed storage container on the playing field for Westwell Players' costumes and props. Given that there would not be space for fete materials it was suggested that a second, smaller container would be needed.

Three planning applications were discussed, including the new boiler room and lavatory for St Mary's Church, this was supported by the Parish Council. Additional comments on the planning application for the Wheel Inn were discussed and will be submitted to the Borough Council. Preliminary drawings for overflow parking on the playing field from the Wheel have been prepared for discussion.

Recommendations of the Staffing Committee were discussed in camera and agreed, including revisions to the Job Description.

The Financial report was approved and the draft Budget for 2018-19 discussed. It was agreed that the Precept be increased by 1.5% to £15,985: this is lower than the current rate of inflation (3%) but would still result in a small rise in reserves and with the change to the parish boundary in 2019 more properties would be precepted in the following financial year.

Possible changes to the Good Citizen Award were discussed and will be reviewed with the Horne family, who donated the Award. Any changes would be announced at the Annual Parish Meeting on March 26th.

The Clerk will go on a training course on the upcoming changes to the Data Protection Laws and their effect on the Parish Council.

A new date for the resurfacing works in Watery Lane will be sought from Tarmac.

The Christmas tree (a yew) was planted on church green in time for the Christmas services; Mary Anne Pitt met the cost, in memory of Kip, and the lights were donated by the Lucy Farrington. All were thanked and Tom Brandreth was thanked for clearing a fallen tree in Westwell Lane.

The meeting closed after Any Other Business. The next meeting is on Monday March 5th at 7pm in the parish hall. All meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

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Lent Courses in G7 Benefice 2018

Please contact the leader if you hope to attend. All courses are open to people from the whole benefice. You will find more details of each course on leaflets in the churches.

Charing: Wednesday 7.30 – 9pm at Applewood House, The Hill, Charing. Leader Kevin Moon. To book: phone Kevin 01233 713894/email kevinmoon@g7benefice.org Course begins on 21st February. See leaflets in churches for more details.

Charing Heath: Tuesday 6.45 – 8pm Charing Heath Church: Leader Rev Richard Webb. To book: phone Richard on 01233 714663 / email richardwebb@g7benefice.org Course begins Tuesday 20th February. We will be looking at “Heaven – Finding Our True Home” (The meaning of the Cross)

Cornerstone: Monday Evenings 7.30 – 9pm Little Chart Church. Leaders – Diccon Spain, Pete Austin, Kevin Moon and Jenny Oliver. To book phone Pete on 01233 820860 / email petejaustin@hotmail.co.uk The course begins on Monday 19th February. We will be looking at the theme of ‘Hope’.

Little Chart: Monday 10.30am – 12noon at Home Meadow, The Forstal, Little Chart. Leader Rev Philip Cox. To book phone 01233 840274 / email philipcox@g7benefice.org Course begins on Monday 19th February. We will be looking at the first Letter of Peter – a pastoral letter to persecuted and frightened Christians. Please bring your Bible.

Other courses in the benefice yet to be confirmed. See leaflets in churches for further details.

1st Charing Scout Group

These are exciting times for our group. We have almost finished plastering inside our new headquarters. There is still a lot to do but it is beginning to look like we hoped it would. We are so grateful to the small band of helpers who come along regularly to make it happen. We are now choosing the kitchen which will be sponsored by the Charing Village Voice.

All our sections have exciting programmes planned for the term. Several cubs have moved up to scouts so we have a couple of spaces available for 8-10 year old boys or girls. Please email me for more details.

gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk

Terry Lister. Group Scout Leader

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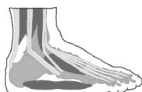
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Mark J Hilliger

Mark Hilliger passed away at his home in London on the 24th December, 2017 aged 45 due to complications from lung cancer. Mark had lived in Westwell with his parents Ivy and David Hilliger since 1984, only leaving 2 Castle Cottage on the death of Ivy in 2013.

When a teenager he was a Westwell Player and had a role as Pearce a shop boy in ‘Half a Sixpence’ in 1991. He loved to joke and jest and enjoyed the limelight. He went onto complete his Business Studies degree at Manchester Metropolitan University. He worked for a time at Eastwell Manor, Stena Lines, Leeds Castle and Seven Seas Worldwide before becoming a carer to his mother Ivy after David died in 2009.

He loved trifle, reading, travelling, classic cars, and the musical scores of John Williams and John Barry. If ever he had appeared on Mastermind his two favourite subjects would have been James Bond and Rolls Royce! He was looking forward to skiing again and spending time with his two nieces, Emily and Sofia Henderson (Tylers, Westwell) whom he adored and they him. A fun and very kind uncle and much loved brother will be sadly missed.

Mark's funeral was on 31st January at 1pm at St. Mary, Westwell and followed by a wake at The Wheel where his family and friends celebrated his life.



WESTWELL WI

Our speaker this month was Christine Drury, who told us about the work of the CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) of which she is chairman of the Ashford Branch. Christine told us of the work done by the organisation, not just in the maintaining of the countryside, but in the fight against unsightly and unnecessary urbanisation of our countryside. Ashford CPRE, being in the heart of the most densely populated part of the country, has a great deal to do in this respect.

They have several areas of focus including the planning system to ensure housing is put in the best location and of the best design; energy, ensuring wind farms and solar farms do not blight our countryside; transport, in particular finding an alternative for Operation Stack. Christine highlighted some of the ‘battles’ that had been fought and won on our behalf against inappropriate development, not only in Council offices but in the High Courts.

The organisation is doing a terrific job ensuring that as we move forward with the times to improve our way of life, we preserve the beauty of our countryside as much as possible.

Our President, Barbara, reminded us of forthcoming events including a Coffee Evening in March, a Horse Race Night in May and a day trip to Le Touquet in June.

The first competition of the New Year was a perfume bottle of which there were several elegant entries.

Next Meeting: Thursday 8th February 2018

Film Show by Ashford Camcorder Club

Hostesses: Mesdames G Bortoli, C Fuller and D Cackett

Vote of thanks: Mary Thiele

Competition: Most items in a standard matchbox



Weald of Kent Protection Society

WKPS are working hard to make sure that any further development of the Weald is sympathetic. We must prevent developers running riot over this precious countryside and save the landscape and historical character of the Weald for future generations.

Our voluntary dedicated team of planning scrutineers examine planning applications received by three local planning authorities, Ashford, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.

WKPS's views are submitted to the relevant authority, either opposing a proposal or suggesting modifications to reduce/mitigate its impact.

YOU NEED US WE NEED YOU!!!!

We would welcome new active members to help on planning events, producing newsletters, keeping villages informed (village representatives) and planning scrutineers; training and guidance will be given by fellow committee members.

JOIN now£15 single/£20 Joint annual membership, or there are Life Membership options.

Membership form is on www.wkps.org.uk or email secretary@wkps.org.uk or call 07919 871543 and we will send a membership form out to you.

You can also pick up a membership form at the entrance to the Wealden Fair

Planning applications

The following applications were supported by the Parish Council and a decision is awaited from ABC:

17/01805/AS 102 Sandyhurst Lane Installation of rooflights and velux style roof terrace/balcony to rear elevation to facilitate loft conversion

17/01836/AS St Mary's Church Single storey extension to north elevation to provide boiler room/WC facilities; new oak door to north elevation

The following applications will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting:

18/00022/AS & 18/00023/AS Park House Farm, Westwell Lane, Westwell

Change of use and conversion of agricultural barn and outbuildings to dwelling with associated annexe and parking provision with demolition and removal of cattle sheds, change of use and conversion of oast to dwelling, erection of associated covered parking and change of use of associated agricultural land to gardens

17/01865/AS & 17/01866/AS (Listed Building Consent) Church Barn, Westwell Court, Westwell. Replacement of 4 conservation rooflight

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Once submitted, a reference number and copy of the report is sent to the person making the report. You can use this new service to report minor crimes, suspicious activity or a no-injury road traffic accident. My reports advise that the service is much quicker (at the moment) than waiting for a 101 phone call to be answered!

Full details see Kent Police website at <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online/>.

If **You** see anything suspicious call 999 (if urgent) or use Country Eye, phone 101 or log in to <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online/>. to report it
For further details of Westwell Community Watch visit our website at :
westwell.community.watch@gmail.com

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

Kent Police

The Kent Police Rural team have circulated their quarterly activity report which shows they have been busy pursuing criminality across the county, particularly those poaching, hare coursing and lumping together with investigating several cases of crop and environmental damage from illegal off-roading, including £20,000 damage to Sandwich Golf Course. In the course of their actions against these offenders they have been successful in recovering three stolen Land Rovers and other stolen goods and a number of other stolen vehicles and number plates. Arrests were also made for possession of catapults, knives and poaching equipment. Fortunately none of these offences occurred in our area but we still get complaints of illegal off-roading of which the police have been made aware.

Vigilance and care of your property is as important in the rural environment as it is in the urban areas. PIR lighting and CCTV cameras are both deterrents and help in catching and prosecuting perpetrators.

2-WATCH-4

As the dark nights continue we are getting a number of reports of “2 near misses” between pedestrians and motor vehicles. With unlit roads and often poor visibility it is important that if you are out that you make yourself “visible”. Wear light coloured outer clothing, ideally wear a high visibility vest, use a torch and walk on the side of the road so you are facing on-coming traffic. Hi-viz jackets are cheap (less than £5) and may save your life.

Keep Vigilant - Tony Bartlett – WCWS Co-ordinator

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Letter to the Parishes

Christmas is over! Or is it? It's never too late to talk about Christmas! Even if the decorations have been stored away for next Christmas, the house is cleaned, the credit card bills paid and phew it's all done for another year! Yes, I know it's now February but there are still the lasting memories.

For many of us it was a time of celebration with Christmas cards from friends both near and far, parties and dare I say it carol services. For others it has been a sad time of loneliness and bereavement. Now the rush and worry is over - do you stop and reflect on what it is all about? During the quiet moments, perhaps after lunch, do you let your mind wander and wonder?

Do you recall those nativity plays by the children (weren't they moving - seeing those little ones dressed up and acting the dramatic story of Jesus' birth). Or the Christmas cards with a nativity scene reminding us of "The reason for the season"

Do you remember the story of Mary being told by the angel she was to be a mother and Joseph again visited by an angel. The journey to Bethlehem and Jesus born (in a stable). The shepherds visited by the angel and then rushing to see the Baby. The final scene is usually the visit by the Magi (wise men) and the presentation of the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

How many times have we seen these events acted out, sung about and preached upon with various explanations of all that happened that wondrous night? (Although the Magi probably didn't come until 2 years later!) So what helped you this Christmas to understand the events more clearly?

Children find repetition very helpful in understanding and love hearing their favourite stories again and again. Is that true for many adults? Every year we hear/see the Christmas story again. Every year we spend time, money and nervous energy, preparing for our celebrations. Choirs rehearse for hours, shops spend weeks getting their displays ready to tempt us to spend. We go to parties and have friends/relations to visit us.

I attended a my grandson's school carol service in The Cathedral in mid December. What a wonderful ambience. !000? parents, friends and pupils preparing and looking forward to their Christmas celebrations..

The Bishop of Dover preached. What a privilege and challenge to say something about Christmas that was relevant to so many and such a wide range of ages. He said the essence of the Christmas story was not the birth in a stable, the shepherds, the angels nor the Magi and the three gifts (important as they all are), but actually it was the message that is woven through the events of that wondrous night from God saying:

"I LOVE YOU"

I pray our loving Heavenly Father will bless you in this new year,

Richard Webb 

Etc

Dates for diaries

May 19th Fun afternoon. Details to follow

June 16th. Safari Supper

August 26th. Fete

December 1st Bazaar

Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at The Wheel, **Friday 2nd February** from 10.30 - 11.45am. All welcome.



Charing & District Local History Society

Godinton House: Speaker: *Nick Sandford*

A brief history and behind the scenes look at the house and gardens. **8th February** at Charing Parish Hall. 7.45pm for prompt start at 8pm



WAGS

12th, 26th February



Book Club Lunch

This was our first meeting for the new year. Seven of us met at the Beefeater just around the corner from Tutt Hill. We talked about our Christmases, books, food and family. Liz updated us on Mike's health which is improving, and we are glad she managed to come to this gathering. Some of the group had colds and some are away.

The food was excellent and we managed to crack a few crackers which had lovely messages inside..and some posh gifts, like a deck of playing cards, or screw driver sets. Amazing what they get into these tubes. The service was very friendly.

Our next meeting will be at the Wheel and the book is '**My Brilliant Friend**' by **Elena Ferrante**. Very Italian...a new challenge. We will see if people actually read it through. It will be good to meet. Always is



Parish News

Westwell Church Services for February
www.g7benefice.org

Friday 2nd:

10am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 4th: 2nd Sunday before Lent

8am Holy Communion

Sunday 11th: Sunday before Lent

11am Iona Eucharist

Wednesday 14th: Ash Wednesday

10.30am Holy Communion - Egerton

7.30pm Holy Communion - Charing

Both services with ashing

Sunday 18th: 1st Sunday of Lent

11am Family Service

Sunday 25th: 2nd Sunday of Lent

11am Eucharist

Tuesdays:

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

Baptisms

James Edward Batt was baptised on Sunday 7th January 2018 at St. Mary, Westwell

*May God make his home
Christian and loving*

Weddings

Thomas Edward Jones and Frances Ann Edwards were married at St. Mary, Westwell on Sunday 31st December 2017

*May God strengthen them in their
married life together*

Funerals

Denzil Wood died on Thursday 30th November 2017 aged 76. His funeral took place at St. Mary, Westwell, followed by burial in Westwell Cemetery, on Tuesday 19th December 2017.

*May God enfold Denzil in his
tender love and care.*

Family Church in February



Messy Church is back in the parish hall on **4th February**, 3.30 to 5pm.

Theme:- Candlemas, Light and shadows.

All welcome to an afternoon of fun, crafts, activities, a story, songs, prayers and tea.



All age service **11th February** St Mary Westwell, 11am. Theme Feasts

This month's charity from all Westwell services is **Ashford Family Nursery**. The nursery provides early years education and parental support for mainly disadvantaged families in the Ashford area. Many children are on the Social Services Register, suffer severe behavioural problems or developmental delays. English is often a second language.

The Government Voucher schemes do not cover the full cost of running the nursery and we, the committee, need to raise £15,000 a year to keep the Nursery in business. For more information pennyknatchbull@gmail.com

4th March Messy Church 3.30 to 5pm. In the parish hall. Theme: Spring

All welcome to an afternoon of fun, crafts, activities, a story, songs, prayers and tea.

Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning. Wendy Bartlett

Flowers. Heather Lister

Brass. Sheila Filmer



Getting better Broadband

For many businesses and residents in Westwell parish broadband is lousy. Some even have to run their business using mobile phones and dongle connections. If you live in Westwell village the fibre cabling BT put in a while ago has improved connection speeds a lot. But for others it is still really poor. The problem was highlighted a while ago in the articles Clive Bainbridge wrote last year.

There is a new opportunity to do something about the problem. You may already have seen Nick Hammond's facebook group chat on "the parish of Westwell" facebook page. The opportunity is this: we can greatly increase the pressure on BT to get better connections by working as a group: in effect pooling and increasing our need. We are already linked into KCC's work. This will create what BT recognise as a "Local Body Partnership" (LBP): a tri-party agreement between the Westwell community, KCC and BT. Nick is an expert on broadband networks and is working on this with KCC to put the LBP together.

What we need to do is identify the businesses and residents in the parish that have lousy broadband. Including businesses gives this a really strong economic argument. It is well known that Kingsland Lane and Pilgrims Way have a broadband problem. If you live or work there **PLEASE** participate. And there are other parts of the parish too that need urgent broadband improvement, so don't hold back.

Because BT provide the connections for all broadband suppliers in our area it doesn't matter who your service provider is for your broadband: it is BT who need to improve the connection, and when they do, your service provider will deliver you faster broadband.

Here's what to do: Just send your name, postcode and address to: clive.bainbridge@gmail.com. Title your message "Broadband". Nick or Clive will reply to your email to follow up. If you are not sure, but think you may have poor broadband do email anyway.

There will also be maps of the parish on a board in the Parish Hall and available at The Wheel: put your initials on the map where you live and send an email.

Tell your neighbours about this: the more residents and businesses we have the stronger the Partnership we can make with BT and KCC to put together the commercial case for the work to install better connections.

A walk in the park

The trees stood tall beside the path
The sun shone through the leaves,
With grass and shrubs along the way
All stirring in the breeze.

And as we strolled on through the park
We listened to all the sounds
The whispering trees and rustling leaves
T'was magic all around.

I sometimes wish, if it were so
And trees talk to each other,
That I could listen to the words
They whisper, or seem to utter.

We love to walk here in the park
Such beauty all around,
Elegant trees, dainty ferns
Colours green and brown.

Spring or Summer, Autumn, Winter
Any time of year,
The smells and colours of the woods
Are always waiting here.

J Jones



Westwell Players

Players has had their first meeting for the new production and it was very memorable in more ways than one. We met in the Cole Room as the Parish Council were meeting in the main hall, with warmth and tea-making facilities - while we nearly froze to death with no hot drink to sustain us! However, it was worth the discomfort - Neil has come up trumps yet again and chosen a grand script for a Murder Mystery to be produced on **Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 26th, 27th and 28th April**, in our Parish Hall! Some form of meal is to be included but that has yet to be discussed. We read through the script '**Murder By Paint Brush**' and Neil withheld the last two pages so that we didn't know who the murderer was and he is not going to let us know until after the casting! It was a very exciting meeting with a big question at the end that took our minds off our cold extremities - even though Valerie was holding her nose to try and bring some feeling back to it! We held a poll to hear who we thought the murderer was and the floor was divided. If you want to know you will have to come along at the end of April. Meanwhile we are all looking forward to starting weekly rehearsals on **Tuesday 6th February at 7pm**. We are hoping for a much warmer meeting this time with a cuppa to warm us at half time! We had a prospective new member and are all hoping that he has not been put off and we will see him again at our next meeting. If you fancy coming along we would be delighted to see you whether you want to act or help out in any other way, we always have a laugh and welcome newcomers.

Here's to lighter evenings and better weather, it may be dreary now but Spring is our next season and I for one cannot wait!!

Mary Anne Pitt 

Next steps for all of us on the lorry parking issue.

Next steps for all of us on the lorry parking issue. The good news is that the overnight lorry parking ban trial does seem to be working. The laybys and verges along the A20 between Drovers roundabout at Ashford and the Charing roundabout contain fewer HGVs at night. There is little doubt that the combined community effort of residents was a help to Ashford borough and Kent county councils to come up with a trial solution with Government. The meeting at the Hare and Hounds in July 2016 not only explained the problems and the stress but provided the councils with the community evidence of need that was essential to make it a council priority.

This is not an easy or smooth process: you may have seen the local paper reports of a few problems, and there are some who think the problem has just been diverted elsewhere. ABC's monitoring suggest this is not the case and lorries are using the lorry parks when there is space available. But we do need more lorry parking space. This is an ongoing process and it is good news that the planning application to double the size of the Ashford truck stop has now been submitted.

To make the change permanent for this section of the A20 we need to collect and record the evidence of what has changed; and to do this while our memories are still fresh, and we still have the notes and record of our experiences.

There will be another meeting at the Hare and Hounds on Tuesday 20th February at 7pm to do just that. Do please come along to talk about your experience; what has changed so far, what more needs to happen, and discuss how we can make the progress so far more assured.

Christine Drury



Hothfield Heathland Volunteers 2017 Review

In this February article I wanted to highlight some of the work that our amazing volunteer team have done at Hothfield Heathlands during 2017. During this time a total of 165 volunteers have contributed 692 days of their time. This figure is equivalent to 3 members of staff working full time across the reserve.

Our Achievements:

The progress we have made at Hothfield is brilliant and we are seeing these results across the whole site.

Our Bracken Bashing antics throughout the summer months have cleared a total of 13 hectares. This should hopefully give the heather, and other heathland room to breathe and thrive on the heath.

Over the years, the Heathland has become overrun with invading scrub. The main culprit being Silver birch which smothers out the specialist heathland plant species we are trying to protect and restore. It was a good year for birch growth but we are working hard to knock it back. We have been making use of some new tools, Tree Poppers, which allow us to pull the trees directly out of the ground, this technique is much slower than cutting, but unlike the cut areas, the 1.8 ha pulled should not regrow.

As the visitor numbers to the reserve increase, the pressure on the paths and tracks also increases. The volunteers have shifted several tonnes of sand in order to raise paths across the reserve, prioritising those that normally become impassable in the winter. The 360m that the team have improved has probably required movement of 20 tonnes of hand dug material!!

Livestock:

This year the Konik Ponies returned and along with Highland Cattle and Hebridean sheep

have continued their great work of halting young scrub development, reducing the nutrient level of the soil and controlling long grass; this is key to our long term restoration of the heathland and bog environments. The most important aspect is ensuring the welfare of the livestock for which we rely on our dedicated team of Livestock checkers. Our livestock checkers will come out in all weathers, all year round, and we couldn't manage the site without them – Thank-you!

Species that benefit:

Our work on Hothfield Heathland prioritises the restoration of acid bog and heathland habitats and to increase the species associated with them. To ensure our work is having the desired effect, our volunteer Ecology Group has surveyed the plants and flowers across the whole site. Of the 56 important heathland plants we were looking for, we found 40 across the reserve, and in good numbers too! Many thanks to all the volunteers that have helped look after Hothfield Heathlands over the years. And a big thank-you to the other unsung heroes that collect rubbish across the site, let me know about potential issues and make the whole reserve a safe and friendly site to visit.

If you would like to get involved, or would like to find out more about the work of the Kent Wildlife Trust, please contact Ian on ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk

Ian Rickards,

Ashford Area Warden, Kent Wildlife Trust

