



# THE WESTWELL EYE

193

March

2019

## The Wheel

We are extending the local menu, making it a bit more upmarket at a different price!

8th March - Fish on a Friday

15th March - Irish Night,  
St Patrick's Day March 17th

22nd March - Quiz night

29th March European Leaving Party,  
English takeaway menu  
Stella and The Loft Band

Contact: 01233 712223  
info@thewheelinnwestwell.uk



Snowdrops taken by Val Butcher.  
Runners taken by Nada.  
Crocuses on playing field taken by Lucy



1st March  
4th + 18th March  
12th March  
12th + 26th, March  
22nd March  
25th March

10.30am Coffee in The Wheel  
1.30pm Art Group - all welcome  
11am Book Club - The Wheel - p13  
7.30pm Players - p10  
7pm Quiz - The Wheel  
7 for 7.30pm Annual Parish Meeting - p16



## March 2019

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
3 Sunday before Lent 8am Holy Communion 3.30-5pm Messy Church	4 1.30pm Art Group 7pm Fitness 7pm Parish Council in Church	5	6 Church Services p12 11am Fiststeps - Dance as U Go	7 Re.F.T. 9.15am Plates	8	9
10 1st Sunday of Lent 11am Iona Eucharist	11 7pm Fitness	12 Book Club - p13 7.30pm Players	13 11am Fiststeps - Dance as U Go	14 R.F.W 9.15am Plates 7.15pm WI Meeting	15	16
17 2nd Sunday of Lent 11am Family Service	18 1.30pm Art Group 7pm Fitness	19	20 11am Fiststeps - Dance as U Go	21 Re.F.T. 9.15am Plates	22	23
24 3rd Sunday of Lent 11am Eucharist	25 7pm Fitness 7pm Annual Parish Meeting Prish Hall	26 7.30pm Players	27 11am Fiststeps - Dance as U Go	28 R.F.W 9.15am Plates	29	30
31 Mothering Sunday 10.30 am Benefice Communion	April 1	2	3	4	1 10am Iona Eucharist 10.30 Coffee Wheel	2

## From the Editor's desk...

*Spot the deliberate mistake!!*

Apologies for announcing Christmas church services again in February.

It's time for the Annual Parish Meeting this month, read all about it on page 16; also on page 16 you can read about the Parish Council elections and likewise the church electoral roll.

Elsewhere in this issue there is an opportunity for you to do some voluntary work and learn how pharmacies can help you – p3

Sandyhurst Lane residents association is having its AGM on March 6th – p6

Would you like an afternoon weekend job? If so see Godinton House's Advertisement on p5

*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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## Useful Contacts

### 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, Charing and Challock, Dave Beckley	0797798199
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
Police (rural matters only – crime should be reported on 101 or 999)	07980978202
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
Westwell Community Website:	
<a href="http://www.westwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/">http://www.westwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/</a>	

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## Help us help you and think pharmacy first in Ashford

People in east Kent are being encouraged to use a pharmacy or phone NHS 111 if they feel ill. Local pharmacies can offer a wealth of health support and should be the first port of call for common illnesses such as coughs and colds. The NHS 111 phone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A fully trained adviser will answer your call and help you find the right service or give advice about how to look after yourself.

Dr Navin Kumta, chair of NHS Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "At this time of year, many people get colds and flu and visit their GP when in reality a quick trip to the pharmacy is what they need. "Many pharmacies are open for longer hours than GP surgeries, and you don't need an appointment. Pharmacists can give advice and guidance about common problems such as headaches, coughs, colds and tummy bugs. They can also advise people about buying over-the-counter medicine and give advice on prescribed medication. "The best treatment for a cold is to drink fluids, take paracetamol and rest. Antibiotics don't work against viral infections such as colds and will not be prescribed by your doctor."

The message comes as the recent cold weather has added additional strain on the NHS.

Dr Kumta added: "If you urgently need medical care when your GP practice is closed, and the pharmacy can't help, please ring NHS 111 for advice. They can arrange for you to see an out-of-hours GP service if necessary or the most appropriate service for you."

To find your nearest pharmacist, see [www.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk](http://www.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk). The Health Help Now web app is free to use and has been developed by local GPs and health professionals to help people in Kent find out about local health services. It can also be downloaded via the App Store and google play.

## Ashford Volunteer Centre

### Time for tea?

Imagine how it must feel to be stuck in your house, with nobody to talk to and no means of getting out. That's the reality for many people today, and that isolation can have a massive impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing. Ashford Volunteer Centre is helping reduce this loneliness in two ways: by matching people who have a little time to spare with people who would like to receive regular visits, and by providing a transport service to help people get out and about.

If you have some time to spare, would you consider becoming a volunteer driver? Or perhaps you could make someone's week by having a cup of tea, sharing a hobby or playing games with someone in the village? In doing so, you could have a direct and positive impact on someone's life.

If these don't quite fit with your other commitments, there are many other opportunities to volunteer. To find out more call Lindsay on 01233 665535, email [contact@ashfordvc.org.uk](mailto:contact@ashfordvc.org.uk) or visit [www.ashfordvc.org.uk](http://www.ashfordvc.org.uk).

### Wanted: men to make use of a shed!

What would you do with an empty shed and a group of strangers? That's the blank canvas awaiting ex-servicemen and others who wants to take up the challenge of occupying Ashford Volunteer Centre's brand new workshop. Located in the centre of town, it's a great space to develop or share skills, make things individually or as a group, or to just hang out and meet new people. If you'd like to find out more, call Lee on 01233 665535 or email [contact@ashfordvc.org.uk](mailto:contact@ashfordvc.org.uk).

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## Annual Parish Meeting Monday 25th Westwell Parish Hall From 7pm for a glass of wine, 7.30pm meeting starts

Yes it is March again : time for the Westwell Parish Annual meeting.

We will be able to sit comfortably this year on the new chairs, and listen easily thanks to the acoustic panels now installed in the Westwell Parish Hall.

This is the meeting at which we get reports from all the village societies as well as the parish council, and hear from our borough councillor Larry Krause and county councillor Charlie Simkins.

It is also, very importantly, the occasion for George Horne to announce and present the Westwell Citizenship award. The new local plan for the borough was adopted on February 21st by Ashford Borough Council: we can hear what that means and what happens next. Many of you contributed to the village confines mapping exercise so there will be an update on that too.

It will not have escaped your notice that the 25th March is just 4 days before Brexit Day, so by the 25th we may know what is about to happen. If it is no-deal chaos time Jolyon Drury will be on hand to explain what the logistics industry is doing to help keep us all going.

And we may know how any partial closures of the M20 for truck parking might work.

By March 25th we will also be close to local election time. The Election process starts on March 22nd Candidates for our parish council election have between March 22 nd and 4pm on April 3rd to deliver their nomination papers. So maybe our meeting on 25th will be a chance to know who is standing for election – a pity not to use the opportunity. Election day is May 2nd . If you are thinking of standing for the parish council election but haven't decided yet do contact the parish clerk : Sue Wood for more details on 01233 623902. Lots to hear and ask questions about. See you there .

### Church electoral roll

Under church rules the electoral roll must be revised every 6 years, and with the last revision having been in 2013, it must be done this year.

If you wish to be on the electoral roll for St Mary's, please contact Heather Lister or Sue Wood for an application form – this applies even if you are on the current roll – everyone has to reapply. There are also some forms in church.

Please send completed forms to Sue Wood by the 15th March so that the roll can be compiled. Under church rules the new roll must be published at least 2 weeks before the annual church meeting, which this year is on April 14th.

### Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning. Melanie Major  
Flowers. Lent, No flowers  
Brass. Sheila Filmer



## WESTWELL WI

At our meeting this month we had a very enlightening talk from one of our members – Sue Starkings. Although a member for some years, not everyone was aware that Sue is a parish priest (Thursdays are her night off so she always comes in 'civvies'). Sue told us of her 'Path to the Vicarage', which started in Camberwell Green, South-East London, and led through a first career in nursing. After attending college to obtain qualifications, she attended university and attained a degree in Mathematics and Computing, leading to her second career teaching the subject, writing academic books and travelling the world lecturing on mathematics and computing.

It was whilst pursuing this second career that women were first allowed to be ordained, so Sue embarked on the necessary training to take this pathway in her life. She studied part-time in the evenings while still lecturing in the daytime in London – a testament to her determination to succeed. After her ordination, she came to Westwell and the Benefice of G7 for her curacy, and is now a part-time priest in the group of churches which include Challock. Sue is also the Chaplain for the William Harvey Hospital and one day a week at Canterbury Cathedral.

Sue regaled us with tales of weddings she has taken, and those that she didn't – not all brides and grooms are aware of the rules governing church weddings - and those who thought the vicar had control over everything connected with the ceremony, including the weather!

The competition for a snowdrop brought a variety of entries. The winner was an unusual little felt figure carrying a fabric snowdrop, brought in by Liz Hewitt. There was also a photo of snowdrops and a number of flowers and plants.

Anyone wishing to know more about the Westwell WI and what it means to be a WI member should email Catherine at [westwellwi2015@gmail.com](mailto:westwellwi2015@gmail.com)

*Marilyn Warner*

**Next Meeting:-** Thursday 14th March

**Speaker:-** Viki Faulkner – **Living in the 17th Century.**

**Vote of thanks:-** Teresa Wood

**Hostesses:-** Natalie Harman, Helen Cale, Denisse Rhodes

**Competition:-** A candle

### Classified ads

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## Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association

Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association (SLRA) will be holding its AGM at 7.30pm on March 6th at Sandyacres Centre. New and existing members will be very welcome; a glass of wine or soft drink on your arrival. Membership is open to all living in Sandyhurst Lane and adjacent roads.

The meeting is an opportunity to meet neighbours and local councillors, hear about current issues and have your say on local issues in the 'Open Forum'. The annual election of the committee will take place. We are very keen to recruit new committee members, so please call the Secretary on 01233 647721 or email [info@sandyhurst.co.uk](mailto:info@sandyhurst.co.uk). The evening will conclude with talks by Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Communities in Rural Kent and Anna Gould, Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

The SLRA has had another busy year and here are examples of some of our activities:

- Ashford Local Plan 2030. The SLRA contributed to all stages of public consultation, including the public hearings in May 2018. The Inspectors now deem the Plan ready for adoption. Our representations contributed to ensuring that there should be no vehicle access to Eureka Park from Sandyhurst Lane and that the A20 Corridor sites, including Land East of Hothfield Mill (opposite Westwell Lane), should be deleted.

- Housing Planning applications for Lenacre Hall Farm. The SLRA lodged extensive objection comments to the original 'hybrid' application in November 2017, to the later separate full application for 21 dwellings refused by the Council in July 2018 and recently to the latest amended hybrid application in January 2019.

- Planning applications for the former Sandpit, Sandyhurst Lane. After objections by the SLRA, residents and others, an outline application for 18 dwellings was withdrawn in June 2018 but re-submitted in October 2018. The SLRA has again submitted detailed objections and the Council's decision is still awaited.

- Speeding in Sandyhurst Lane. The SLRA commissioned a survey of traffic volume and speed which showed that the majority of traffic exceeds the 30 mph speed limit. We also analysed previous surveys from planning applications and are now exploring what measures we, and our local councils, can take to improve better compliance and ensure the safety of All.

- Overnight lorry parking ban trial. This has proved very successful on the A20 and the SLRA is supporting local councils campaigning to make the trial permanent.

- Successful lobby for ancient woodland. The SLRA supported the Woodland Trust's campaign for better protection for ancient or veteran trees. The Government accepted this point.

- First Aid. The SLRA has acquired a redundant defibrillator from Kent Fire and Rescue and has arranged for its installation on the wall of the Hare & Hounds and will be offering free training on its use.

- M20 noise. The SLRA has continued to lobby for noise abatement. We have received a helpful reply from Damian Green MP, promising to pursue M20 resurfacing.

- Uniting the community Following our successful campaigning on local boundaries, from the May 2019 elections 99% of the SLRA area will be included in the rural Downs West ward, and all will be in the parishes of Westwell and Boughton Aluph & Eastwell and the Ashford Rural West KCC division.

We welcome new members who live in our catchment area and invited you to our AGM. If you have recently moved into our area, this is a great opportunity to meet the community. Full details of the Association can be found on our website (<http://sandyhurst.co.uk>).

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## Westwell Community Watch Scheme

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### Neighbourhood Watch Continuing telephone scams.

Neighbourhood Watch are receiving a lot of enquiries from coordinators and members of the public regarding the continued attempted telephone scams, mainly purporting to be from BT. Most of us will have received these unsolicited calls, all from different numbers. Increasingly the calls are now in the form of a recorded message in a British accent. Do not engage, hang up immediately. Some call barring systems do not work with these calls due to the constantly changing source numbers which can at times show as local numbers. Stay alert

#### Street crime

Theft from shopping and handbags, as well as the less obvious, "cardscanning" is on the rise.

Ashford Neighbourhood Watch sell a range of simple, but effective, crime prevention items to help keep you safe. They keep a small stock which they sell in order to raise funds for NHW locally.

These items are generally available from the Reception of Ashford Police Station or at most police Crime Prevention events

The items they stock are as follows:

Special Card Protectors (One card which will protect all cards in a wallet/purse, limited stock)	£2.50
Card Protectors (single contactless card protectors)	£1.00
New Protective Pouches (For contactless keys or cards)	£4.50
Door Vibration alerts	£5.00
Window Vibration/Shed Alarms	£5.00
Purse Bells (to alert you if someone attempts to take your purse /wallet out of your bag)	£1.50
Purse cables (to secure your purse/wallet to your bags)	£1.50

Don't forget the Police also offer bicycle and valuables security marking

Remember: Crime is rare but working together as we can reduce it even further.

**KEEP SAFE and DON'T FORGET:** If you see anything suspicious call 999 (if urgent) or dial 101, use <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-a-crime/> or contact Country Eye [westwell.community.watch@gmail.com](mailto:westwell.community.watch@gmail.com)

Keep Vigilant - Tony Bartlett - WCWS Co-ordinator

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# Letter to the Parishes

Lent is traditionally a time for giving something up. In our preparations for celebrating Easter Christians have undertaken a ‘fast’ for forty days to focus ourselves on the enormity of those Easter events of 2000 years ago. In fasting we are reminded of Jesus’ sacrifice. A sacrifice which makes us right with God, and forgives our manifold sins.

Now, it may not have escaped your attention that forty days from Ash Wednesday (6th March) does not take you to Easter Sunday (21st April). So what of those extra six days??? Well, those days represent the Sundays in Lent which are traditionally ‘feast days’, when we celebrate God’s love for us, and enjoy the things we have given up.

So, in the past I have tried to give something up for Lent. I have tried giving up beer ... but that wasn’t very effective, because I probably only drink 2-3 pints a month, so I never really noticed. I have tried giving up Coca Cola, but my poor wife had to suffer my grumpiness even more than usual. Of course Sunday was a feast day so I would then ride the sugar rush, and be even grumpier on Monday!

One year, whilst working in the IT department of a major aerospace company, I told my boss I was giving up computers for Lent. I thought I was being so clever!! I also said this was a religious observance, so he couldn’t stop me. He just smiled, gave me a mop and bucket, and told me I would be cleaning the factory floor for the next six weeks ...

So, if like me you struggle in Lent to give something up, how about try something different? Instead of giving something up, take something on! Try spending a bit more time with God. Try reading a bible passage once a day. Try spending some time in prayer ... pray for your friends and loved ones ... or the people of your village ... or those you see or read about in the news. The importance of this is to ‘be’ with God, something my wife has explored in her recent book ‘Forever Wrestling’.

However we live Lent this year, may we remember it is about focusing on God. It is about being reminded of Jesus’ sacrifice. It is about making ourselves right with the Creator of everything. It is not about catching up because we forgot Dry January, or because we want to slip into a dress size lower this summer. Lent is our chance to renew our faith in God and to celebrate the opportunity He has given us to have eternal life through the cross.

There are several Lent Groups running this year around the G7 Benefice, see elsewhere for details. Why not come along as we share God’s word and encourage each other in prayer and fellowship?

*Rev. Jack* 

## Etc

### Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at The Wheel, **Friday March 1st** from 10.30 - 11.45am. All welcome.



**WAGS – Westwell Art Group**  
March 4th, 18th.



### Book Club February 2019

We discussed ‘This is Going to Hurt’ by Adam Kay. Meeting at the Wheel, we used modern technology to include a member through Facetime. June was in Essex and managed to see everyone and join in the discussion as if she was with us in the room!

The book is a record of six years of work for Adam who was progressing through the stages of training to become a Consultant Obstetrician at different hospitals. Using his diary he relates different cases with amazing detail and humour...and quite often using ?!~&\*#@%!!! rude language. Some found that aspect disappointing, though the medic among us found the whole book an accurate description of the life of a junior doctor. The long hours and sometimes terrible situation a doctor finds himself in..the lack of rest or sleep..the impact on personal life. And with all that, this doctor has endless compassion and depth of knowledge and skill. It is a very readable book and fascinating, though a little sensationalist, painfully funny (words of Stephen Fry) and Heartbreaking (word of Jonathan Ross). Deserves to be a bestseller and well worth a read.

Our next meeting is **March 12th** we discuss a free choice of any work by Maya Angelou. A range from memoirs to novels and poetry.

### Charing Gardeners’ Society

We return on Wednesday **March 13th** at 7.30pm in the Church Barn. “The gardens of the Impressionists”, talk by Martin Heard about Monet and other Impressionists as gardeners and painters of gardeners in the context of the craze in France for horticulture as a middle-class leisure activity. Our first show of the year is on Saturday 6th April in the Charing Parish Hall.

All welcome, £3 for non-members includes a cuppa and a chance to chat after the talk. Raffle, seed-swap and plant stall, for which contributions always welcome. Annual membership is a bargain at £3 and includes our 2019 Annual, packed with articles, show schedules and details of members’ events. Check out our Facebook page for news and photos of recent events and for further information about the society see: <http://charinggardeners.org.uk>

### Charing History Society - March 14th Romney Hythe And Dymchurch Railway Speaker Danny Martin

A reminder of the exciting history of this railway and its transition into the tourist attraction it is today. How it is reliant on a 90year old infrastructure, maintained by a dedicated and enthusiastic group.

### Annual Parish Meeting - March 25th 7 for 7.30pm

The APM is a chance to hear what the Parish Council and local groups have been up to over the past year - the evening starts at 7pm with refreshments, and after reports from the Parish Council, clubs and societies the Citizenship Award will be presented.

## Parish News

Westwell Church Services for March  
[www.g7benefice.org](http://www.g7benefice.org)

### Friday 1st

10am Iona Eucharist

### Sunday 3rd: Sunday before Lent

8am Holy Communion

3.30pm Messy Church - Parish Hall

### Wed 6th: Ash Wednesday

10.30am Communion - with ashing  
Charing Heath

7.30pm Communion - with ashing, Hothfield

### Sunday 10th: 1st Sunday Lent

11am Iona Eucharist

### Sunday 17th: 2nd Sunday of Lent

11am Family Service

### Sunday 24th: 3rd Sunday of Lent

11am Eucharist

### Sunday 31st: Mothering Sunday

10.30am Benefice Mothering Sunday  
Communion

### Every Tuesday

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

### Family Church in March

March 3rd Messy Spring-cleans for Lent. No dusters required but lots of sorting out. 3.30pm in the Village Hall. Crafts, Activities, a story, a song, some thinking and of course tea. All on a bible theme. Fun for all under 10s accompanied by an adult. Contact Heather for more details. [hlistner@hotmail.com](mailto:hlistner@hotmail.com)

All Age service, Sunday March 17th at 11 am will be celebrating spring and thinking about Lent. An informal service with chance to join in and discuss ideas if you want. Yummy cake with coffee afterwards

An extra special service on March 31st at 10.30. (Earlier than usual), to celebrate the loving, caring and support what goes with ideas of motherhood, whoever supplies it!

An informal service with flowers, coffee and cakes and a simple communion.

Do come and join us with your family..

### Lent Courses

Tuesdays 7.30-9pm. at 4, Hoads Wood Gardens, Westwell. TN25 4QB. Host and leader Stephen Bates. Book by phoning Stephen on 07810 424840 or Jack on 01233 756674 or email: [stephenbates2008@hotmail.com](mailto:stephenbates2008@hotmail.com). The course will begin on Tuesday March 26th. This course will run for 4 weeks only. We will be following the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland course "The Mystery of God".

### Electoral Roll Revision

Once in every six years the preparation of new church electoral rolls takes place, which means that everyone has to come off the roll and re-apply. The next occasion for the preparation of new rolls is this year, 2019. The revision of the roll must be completed before the APCM. Please ask for an Electoral Roll Application Form if you wish to be included on the roll and have not already received a reminder.

### Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Each parish is required to have an Annual PC Meeting to be held not later than 30th April.

Who can attend? The meeting falls into two parts:-

a) The election of the Churchwardens – anyone entered on the civil register of the parish can attend and vote

b) The annual meeting – only those whose names are entered on the Church Electoral Roll are eligible to vote.

Why should I attend? Because this is your opportunity as a member of the congregation to celebrate, support, raise items of concern and to make a real difference in the life of the church to which we belong. Having spoken to many people over the course of the year, I know there are issues which you feel passionate about. Come and share them and help to build God's Church and your church for the future. Unless stated otherwise, all meetings will take place in the church. **Westwell Sunday April 14th** after the Morning Service (Approx. 12noon)

## Operation Christmas Child 2018.



In November we sent four shoeboxes to the Christmas Child Appeal.

We have received this message from the Samaritan's Purse organisation that distributes the shoeboxes. "Your shoebox gift was sent to Central Asia!

In 2018, together you packed an amazing 511,200 shoebox gifts and equipped thousands of churches and groups in Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East to reach out generously to children in need, with the joy of a shoebox gift and the good news of the Christmas story.

Every shoebox, packed with love and fueled by prayer, has the potential to impact a child's life in a very special way!

We're excited to tell you that your shoebox is helping build goodwill between peoples of different faiths. It was part of a distribution that local church groups made to children of all religious backgrounds in their community. However while political and religious sensitivities continue within Central Asia and for the safety of our ministry partners living in restricted areas, they have asked us not to disclose details about the specific country your shoebox was sent to. "

We will be filling shoeboxes again this year. The boxes will be in church from Harvest to the end of October and then sent off to the organisers for distribution. There will be a list of suitable items with the boxes if you want some ideas. It doesn't take much from each person to make up a shoebox with many of us working together, perhaps you could help this year?

### 1st Charing Scout Group



We're in!

After three years of fundraising and two years of building we have now been signed off by the building inspector. The opening ceremony was a wonderful evening. The formal opening was done by Cllr Gerry Clarkson who has helped us considerably along the way. We then had a family party with sketches and songs from all our young people.

We are now well into our first term with our new headquarters and the young people are working towards a huge range of badges and having a huge amount of fun

[gsl\\_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk) **Terry Lister**



## Westwell Players

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, this is an old adage that I have been reminded of this week when I failed to say 'thank you' to someone who offered to do me a good turn! I don't think I am alone in that it is so easy to keep thinking about something that you mean to do and eventually you think you have done it when really – it's all in the mind! Players are not putting on a show in the Spring which is a great disappointment to us but we are sadly depleted in numbers due to babies due soon, injuries, workloads, illness etc., etc. However we are enjoying our Play readings every other Tuesday and we have three outings planned, to The Marlowe, Cineworld and The Sinden Theatre this week to see 'Follies', a production by another amateur company; it is so good to support other drama groups and at the same time we can meet in the bar and have a little social chit chat as well. We have our AGM next month (May) and we are all eagerly awaiting news of our storage facility being transported by kind volunteers from Pilgrims Way to our field, a labour of love indeed. I was handed a script last week called 'What's New Pussycat' and am reading it with interest, it is one of many we are considering for our November Production, 21, 22 and 23 are the dates. Please get in touch if you are at all interested in joining the Players, WE NEED SOME NEW BLOOD. Some of the old blood is still as keen as mustard, but without a few more we cannot put on a big show like a Pantomime, so please get in touch, don't put it off, pick up that phone and dial 714241 NOW!!! Get through to your friendly correspondent, Mary Anne who will be delighted to have a chat and tell you all about our future plans.

*Mary Anne Pitt 714241*

### Planning applications

The following was approved by Ashford Borough Council  
18/01003/AS Fallowfield, The Street, Westwell  
18/01741/AS Dunn Street Cottage

The following will be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council:  
19/00139/AS & 19/00140/AS Crouchers Manor, Westwell Lane. Single storey rear extension, loft conversion with rooflights; new garage/garden store  
LBC for same and internal partition walls.

### Contd from page 11

Hothfield Heathland is open to everyone. Please keep dogs in check especially around children and animals, and clean up including in the Triangle compartment. Trails are signposted and marked on entrance maps, along with the location of 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 on Hothfield contact Ian Rickards on 01622 662012 / [ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk).

The next volunteer task days will be held on Sunday 8th March from 10:00am and Tuesday 12th March from 9:00am. All welcome, contact Ian for more information.

*Margery Thomas*



## March on Hothfield Heathlands

Water, the stuff of life and part of the magic of the Heathlands. There wasn't much water around in summer 2018, even the little tributary of the Great Stour became a trickle. Reserve Warden Ian Rickards reports that last summer was the first time he remembers there not being ANY standing water in the main bog - usually these pools are full of rare dragonflies, fighting over breeding territory, last summer they were empty. The result of the dry weather last summer and over December and January is empty pools this February, which is not normal and will have an impact on the wildlife as it emerges in the spring. Longer term impacts are that the big sandy Tolls (hills) are not filling with water, and therefore not able to provide the constant supply of water that would keep the bogs wet through the summer.

The bogs have formed over thousands of years because the valley bottoms on the reserve are clay, causing springs to emerge where the upper sandy layer of soil meets the watertight clay and impeding quick drainage of that water. The bog on the slope below Cade Road where the water trickles very gently downhill is more acid than the lower bogs. The water surface can look oily; this isn't due to run-off from an oil spill, or even from fabled military tanks, it's due to high levels of iron deposits in the sandy soil, which reacts with water to produce the film.

The wetland near to Chapel Road and Lakeside Village is very different, fed by a different water supply (underground reservoirs on the chalk downs) it becomes a habitat for amphibians that can't tolerate the conditions in the more acid bogs. This area, dominated by grasses, sedges and flowers such as ragged robin and water mint is categorised as fen. The pools near Chapel Lane still have sheets of heavy plastic in places to smother out the highly invasive *Crassula helmsii*, New Zealand pigmy weed, which in the New forest has done millions of pounds of damage.

Twelve species of sphagnum moss occur here; identification often requires dissection under a microscope. The plants soak up more than eight times their own weight, thanks to the large water-holding dead cells that lie alongside the tiny living cells containing the chlorophyll for making food from water, sunlight and carbon-dioxide. The large dead cells are what makes the moss a sponge, retaining water long after the surrounding soil has dried out and are also structural, enabling the moss to spring back into shape when trodden on by animals. The underside of the mossy layer only partially decays without oxygen in the water, while the growing moss continues piling up on top of itself each year, absorbing water and lifting the water level. Imperceptibly, the compacted layers of decayed moss increases by perhaps a millimetre a year and acid bog is formed. Peat is one of the most efficient stores of carbon dioxide, around the globe it holds more carbon than all the rainforests combined. The peat at Hothfield is only 1 – 1.5 m deep, while bogs in wetter areas such as Ireland are 10 -15m deep. Peat in a compost bag could have destroyed 100 years of peat formation.

These ponds, bog and fen attract a complex community of interdependent plants, insects, animals and birds; they are legally protected because more than 90% of the bogs in England have been damaged or destroyed and these are the only such bogs in Kent. Water is one of the best elements to provide for wildlife, in any size of garden, and can quickly become a valuable complex habitat. If combined with a bit of bog garden they attract more wildlife than each habitat on its own. **Contd on page 10**