

PARISH NEWS

JUNE 2020

From the Parsonage

People are responding differently to self-isolation. It is certainly making more evident the reality that we're all dependent on other people and the importance of 'keyworkers' who generally might be taken for granted. Some people are having to work extremely hard and are under extra pressure. Parents trying to work from home and look after their children are stretched. Teachers learning how to prepare and deliver lessons online aren't having an easy time. Perhaps too much focus has been placed on the NHS, which, whilst being politically expedient, runs the risk of not looking at the bigger picture of the impact of the pandemic on society as a whole. Locally, care homes are having a really tough time. As with other keyworkers, the staff of these homes are often poorly paid but very dedicated.

Like many churches throughout the country we are also trying to adapt. We are producing a short Sunday video while we are in lockdown. You can view any of these on YouTube and they can be accessed via the website www.sussexdownlandchurches.org.uk or Facebook - South Downs Churches*. One benefit of these is that they are watched by more than just the regular congregation. But we still long to be able to meet up properly again in these beautiful places of worship – to sing, pray and reflect. Our 'keyworkers' are the churchwardens, those who clean and maintain our churches and those who pray in them. Through their dedicated work they remain available for everyone in our villages as places of peace and comfort. I hope very much that we will be able to re-open them soon.

The early church had to be taught that no individual or small group should ever think of themselves as more important than another. This was partly to avoid divisions which were beginning to open up within the church community. Jesus deliberately took on the role of a servant when he washed his disciples' feet to teach them what was essential to their maintaining their unity after he had left them. Humility is generally not valued today, but this difficult time certainly reminds us of just how indebted we are to those who daily humbly serve us.

Peter Blee

** If you require further information, or you would like to receive emails with links to the services or morning prayers on Zoom, please contact the Benefice Administrator benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk for details.*

If you have any queries or need spiritual or practical help, please contact: Peter Blee on 01323 870512 – he is available whether you are a member of the church or not. (This includes face to face contact - but at a safe distance.) Frank Fox-Wilson is available on 01323 871148. Please respect Frank's need to minimise contact and that he is off duty from Tuesday to Friday.

Postponed to 2021 - 50th Selmeston and Alciston Flower Show

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, the Flower Show Committee has taken the difficult decision to postpone until next year. We know many of you have been working very hard on your gardens, but we take the health of those in our community very seriously and want everyone to be able to participate in the 50th Flower Show without fear of infection. We will be back in 2021 with an extra special event, when everyone can join in. Onward and upward, and in the meantime, we hope you enjoy your garden and start dreaming up what you will enter next year.

Raina Thompson-Brody and the A&S Flower Show Committee

Ladies' Breakfast

The Ladies' Breakfast team had hoped to have a talk on hospital chaplaincy by Dr Dundas Moore on Saturday 20th June at Berwick Village Hall. There would have been hot drinks, homemade cakes, and nice company at the first of our mid-morning meetings. However, with the pandemic still limiting social gatherings, it seemed unlikely we would be able to get together on that day. Regretfully, we have decided to postpone the event until a later date, when you will still be able to hear Dr Moore's talk.

Meanwhile, we are hoping to hold the next event, as originally planned, on Saturday 10th October, in Alfriston. Emily and Julie Kenward will be speaking on "Time to Talk Befriending". So, ladies, please keep that date in your diary. If you need to check up, nearer the date, to know what is happening, please call Ruth Butlin on 01323 485463.

Ruth Butlin

Family Support Work (FSW) – Update

It feels hardly any time since my last update to you, but already a month has gone by as we continue to operate under lockdown. The restrictions on movement and contact have, of course, affected our work over the last few weeks, but our practitioners have been finding new ways of supporting parents and using the food delivery slots as a time to catch up from a distance with their families and offer as much help as they can. With the impact of furloughing or job losses starting to really hit home, the upcoming weeks will be crucial and we are doing our best to keep up with all developments so that we can give our families the most up to date advice.

Our wonderful supportive community has continued to be extremely generous. We have been able to keep our food bank stocked thanks to the generosity of a local building firm, but our immediate priority is to make sure that we can continue to pay the salaries of our practitioners so that they can keep doing their amazing work. Our big events programme would have provided a significant amount of these funds, but with everything cancelled we are now facing a challenge to bring in enough money. But we are optimistic that the hard work of our staff and the dedication of our supporters and funders will keep us afloat until times become easier for everybody.

Thank you to everybody who has contacted us by phone, email, or post with words of encouragement, prayers, and financial support. We are so incredibly grateful to you all for your kindness during these unprecedented times.

April's work in numbers

- ◆ 173 (socially distanced) visits to families supporting 41 grandparents, 357 parents and 410 children
- ◆ 21 supported meetings (virtually via Zoom/Skype etc.) with other agencies
- ◆ 252 food deliveries made

Prayer points

- ◆ Thanks for the success of an application for emergency Covid-19 funding and prayers that other similar applications will be successful in the next couple of weeks
- ◆ Thanks that all our staff remain healthy and able to continue their work
- ◆ Guidance and wisdom for the senior management team, who are meeting remotely every week to discuss and plan for the future

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

June Gardener's Diary

This month is the last chance to sow main crop carrots to be ready for harvesting in September or October. Also peas sown early in the month should still be ready in September.

Sow swedes if you have not already done so, and French beans can go in for a second crop. Continue to sow beetroot, spring onions, turnips, lettuces, and radishes with some at the beginning of the month and some near the end. This is also the last chance to sow runner beans and with a bit of luck will give you a crop as late as October.

Watering is especially important in dry weather. Keep the roots of all plant moist but not soaking wet. Hopefully, this month we will be harvesting some of the early sowings i.e. potatoes, radishes, turnips, carrots, peas and a few more.

Keith Winter

News from King's Academy, Ringmer

As the school continues with 'remote learning', we are still providing a safe school environment for our vulnerable students as well as those whose parent or carer is a critical worker. We are very grateful to the excellent support provided by our staff that are physically on site, and those who are providing work on-line for the vast majority of our students. We would also like to thank our parents and carers who are juggling so many responsibilities at home for the way they are assisting us in still giving an education under exceedingly difficult circumstances.

Safety and the wellbeing of staff and students is, and will always be, our main priority so, during this partial closure, we have taken the opportunity to deep clean the entire school. Students currently attending are being taught in a defined area so that the rest of the school can remain totally unoccupied. We want to be certain that when we are asked to invite students back to the school, we have proper plans in place that can not only protect but provide confidence to parents, students, and staff. The King's Group will only start face to face teaching when we have done everything possible to reduce people's anxieties.

As things have progressed we have refined our online teaching - staff have received training and are now able to offer real time interactive lessons to our Year 10s This has enabled us to ensure that they are engaging with their GCSEs and not missing valuable learning. We are very aware that this is a crucial time in their education, and we will support them in any way we can to

provide them with the best opportunities to learn. To this end we have been publishing a regular newsletter with additional learning ideas and ways that parents and carers can supplement our teaching.

<https://www.kgaringmer.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=970&type=pdf>

King's Academy Ringmer wishes all our local community the very best of health at this difficult time and thank you for the many good wishes we have received.

Stephen W. Green, Environmental Coordinator, King's Academy Ringmer

Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers – 'I Bless the Rains Down in Africa'

It's amazing how a song can transport you someplace else. I can't hear 'Africa' by American soft-rockers Toto without drifting back 35 years to a school disco in Plymouth. Right now I'm sat by a Sussex reedbed listening to two songs simultaneously pouring from deep in the reeds. These songs also take me back to my childhood and Saturday mornings spent birdwatching beside similar reedbeds in South Devon.

These summer singers are two small brown birds; the Reed Warbler and the Sedge Warbler, and their songs make me feel strangely nostalgic for a place I have never been: Ghana, where these warblers will have spent the winter before returning to Sussex each spring. Reed Warblers are rather plain, whereas Sedge Warblers sport a streaky back and stripy head with a heavy 'eyebrow' that fixes them with a permanently intense expression. But these identification features aren't important because you'll rarely see these secretive birds. But, boy, will you hear them! Because when they start singing, they just can't stop.

The Reed Warbler's song is a loud, repetitive stuttering chatter of jumbled phrases that just just doesn't just doesn't seem to just just just doesn't just doesn't seem to go anywhere. It sounds like one of those warehouse-sized 1950's computers churning out data. The Sedge Warbler's song is similar but much more energetic and erratic with added harsh 'churrrs' and whistles giving the overall impression that it urgently needs a straitjacket and heavy medication.

These complex songs have a simple message; 'Hey ladies, my territory is so rich in insects that I don't have to spend much time hunting for my food; I can waste my time just singing'. It's the loudest, longest, craziest song that will seduce a feathered female. Sedge Warblers raise their family in a no-thrills nest low in vegetation, but the Reed Warbler weaves an incredible deep hammock lashed together with spider silk between the stiff stems of the tall reeds. The whole cradle will rock as the reeds bow in the breeze.

In August, after raising their families, their warbler thoughts drift back to Africa where drums echo and wild dogs cry out in the night. The warblers will gorge themselves with aphids and, with a fat belly full of fuel, take off from Sussex and head over Iberia, North Africa, and the wide Sahara to Ghana - a 3000-mile journey. I always imagine a Ghanaian naturalist pausing momentarily each autumn to observe these returning visitors. Do his thoughts drift to the Sussex riverside where they spent the summer? When the rains return to Africa in the Spring, they will summon the insect food that will again power their tiny warbler wings back to England to add to my Sussex summer soundtrack.

Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

Benefice Clergy

Revd Peter Blee

Rector of Berwick and Vicar of Selmeston with Alciston The Parsonage, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6SR

Tel: 01323 870512 Email: peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk

Peter's day off is Saturday.

Revd Frank Fox-Wilson - Assistant Priest

The Vicarage, Wilmington, Polegate, BN26 5SL

Tel: 01323 871148 Email: frank.fox-wilson@berwickchurch.org.uk

Frank's 'on duty' days are Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Churchwardens

Alciston - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623

Berwick – Vacant

Selmeston - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

Benefice Administrator

Stephanie Lewis-Grey Tel: 01323 811136 Email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Parish News Advertising and Distribution

This is coordinated by Jeremy and Valerie Shaw. Tel: 01323 811567.

Parish News

This "digital issue" is also available on the benefice church's website www.sussexdownlandchurches.org.uk and Berwick Parish Council's website www.berwickparishcouncil.org.uk. We are anticipating that future issues will be distributed in this way until things return to normal.

As the "digital issues" do not include advertising, we intend to include the advertisements in the printed issues until they have appeared in a full 12 month's issues.

The production team is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

Contributions (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin Chilvers by the 12th of the month.

Email: empty.sea@outlook.com; Post: 66 Parkfield Avenue, Eastbourne, BN22 9SF.

You should receive confirmation of receipt by the 15th of the month, but if not, please call him on 01323 507655.

Contributions can also be passed on to one of the coordinators:

Jane Anderson at Old Postman's Cottage, Alciston Tel: 01323 870075.

Valerie Shaw at Selmeston House, Selmeston Tel: 01323 811567.

Laurie Tinsley, Wynsford, Berwick Tel: 01323 870895.

Donations

Financial donations to the Parish News are gratefully received. Cheques payable to "Parish News" can be passed to the Treasurer, Valerie Shaw, Selmeston House, Selmeston, Polegate, BN26 6UD. Alternatively, electronic donations can be made to Barclays Bank - Account No. 70650625; Sort code 20-49-76.

We are very grateful for a donation last month from Dr Butlin.