

PARISH NEWS

OCTOBER 2020

From the Parsonage

Berwick church has been closed for just over a year for building and restoration works. We hope work will be complete and to be able to reopen in the latter part of this month. We warmly invite you to visit if the current regulations permit (please follow Covid 19 guidelines). We're unable to hold a big celebration yet which is disappointing, but Berwick is a beautiful church to visit quietly too.

The various events that we had planned for 2020 have all had to be postponed until next year. New paintings by Julian Bell have been completed and installed behind the altar. These provide a focal point in the church. We have also installed a new audio-visual system so that the use of images, video, music and sound can be used for services and events. This also allows the church to continue to promote the relationship between the creative arts and the church in new ways. As part of the project a student from Brighton University has written soundtracks to accompany three of the oral histories that have been recorded. A new digital organ has also been installed which provides us with a broader repertoire of organ sound suited to different genre of organ music.

The interior of the church feels quite different as a result of the new floor, decoration of some of the rafters and the absence of pews. Now that the beauty of the open space can be appreciated we hope next to apply for permission to replace the pews with stackable and moveable ones which will allow the church to be used in different ways for different forms of worship and events. Samples of these can be seen in the church.

The underfloor heating was finally turned on in September and draws energy for four boreholes, each 150 meters deep. The initial cost of this is considerable, but over the next 25 years it will pay for itself and provide a sustainable source of heating for the future and is the most important factor in the longer-term conservation of the building and paintings, as well as making it more comfortable for worship and events.

We so look forward to recommencing services in the church and welcoming people into the church again.

Peter Blee

Church Services (Morning Prayer)

4th October

10.00 am Harvest Festivals at Arlington and Berwick
Because of restrictions on numbers if you would like to attend a harvest festival service please telephone: 01323 811136 or email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk.
Places will be allocated to those who have responded first.

11th October

10.00 am Alciston Church
10.00 am Wilmington Church

18th October

10.00 am Arlington Church
10.00 am Selmeston Church

25th October

10.00 am Selmeston Church
10.00 am Wilmington Church

1st November

3.00 pm Commemoration Service at Alciston Church

Evening Prayer: 5.00 pm at Alciston every Wednesday.

Retirement Gift for Revd Frank Fox-Wilson

Revd Frank Fox-Wilson is retiring on the 8th of November, Remembrance Sunday. His ministry in our five churches has been greatly appreciated. Whilst we will be sad to say goodbye, we wish him and Jane every happiness as they settle into their new home and next chapter in their lives in Alfriston.

If you would like to contribute towards a gift to express your thanks, please either make a cheque payable to "PCC of Selmeston and Alciston" and send it to Stephanie Lewis-Grey, Flint House, Selmeston, BN26 6UD, or if you would rather make a bank transfer please contact Stephanie on 01323 811136 or email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk and she will give you details of how to make the payment.

BBC TV Licence

The BBC TV licence is proving to be a contentious issue in my post bag right now. It is full of letters and emails from people, young and old, who either feel that the BBC licence fee is no longer working for them, or from those who strongly feel it should stay.

Many complain that they pay for other subscription services, such as Netflix and Sky, and want to be able to pick and choose what they watch, rather than have a mandatory TV licence. Some tell me they no longer watch TV at all and just watch internet channels, like You Tube, and are having to pay for something they do not use, just because they have a TV set.

However, there are also those who are very happy to pay for the licence fee and are concerned over proposals to either scrap or change the fee system which could result in channels being lost or reduced. Having a service that is world renowned for its reporting and programmes is not something to take for granted and in many countries an independent national broadcaster would not be allowed.

The Government is therefore going to be looking at this in the coming weeks and months with a review of the licence fee itself but also reviewing decriminalising non-payment so that people can no longer be prosecuted for non-payment.

As there is such strong feelings on both sides of the argument I am keen to hear your views on this so please do fill in my survey online and let me know your views on the BBC. It will really help me in making sure I represent your views in Parliament.

www.mariacaulfield.co.uk/BBCsurvey

Maria Caulfield, MP

Cuckmere Buses

Most of Cuckmere Buses have returned to operation following a temporary closing of business in late March because of the outbreak of Coronavirus. Some services remain on restricted timetables, but the company aims to have all services back to near-normal over the coming months. Owing to government guidance there is a limit to the number of passengers that can be carried on each trip to maintain social distancing. Face coverings are mandatory (with certain exceptions) on public transport, and the company will provide a mask for any passengers who does not have one when boarding.

Remember, concessionary passes are accepted on all services and there is a cashless ticket facility if required. To check the current status of services please visit www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk or call 01323-870920. We hope you will avail yourself of these bus services which are designed for the local communities and are supported by your Parish Council.

Pottery Day Classes

Pottery Day Classes are starting at Sarah Walton's workshop at Keepers, Bo-Peep Lane, Alciston, BN26 6UH. 9.30 am to Noon on Wednesdays 7th, 14th and 21st October; 4th, 11th, 18th 25th November and 2nd December.

Good social distancing is possible for six students. These classes are suitable for both beginners and those of intermediate standard and give students a sound introduction to the basic techniques.

Total cost is £200 for the eight classes to be paid upfront by 5th October; please contact Sarah Walton on 01323 811517 or smwalton45@gmail.com if you are interested.

Sarah Walton

Berwick Produce Show

Please note that the AGM scheduled for 14th October has been postponed until further notice due to Covid-19.

Sue Woodgate

Co-Chair Berwick Produce Show

Craft Show

The 44th Annual Pre-Christmas Exhibition and Sale by six Sussex artists and craftsmen, all members of the Sussex Guild, will take place from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th November in Alciston and Selmeston Village Hall.

Jonathan Chiswell Jones and Kerry Bosworth show lustreware and porcelain. They are joined by quiltmaker Louise Bell, Sue Lowday (leather bags, wallet and belts), Fleur Grenier who works with modern pewter, Liz Welsh (glass) and Wendy Dolan (stitched textiles).

Work may be taken at time of purchase. All are very welcome.

Jonathan Chiswell-Jones

October Gardener's Diary

This month it's mainly preparation for next year's crops, but first a few tips on getting more from this year's plants. If you grew peas this year just cut off the tops and leave the roots in the ground. As they rot, they release nitrogen, which will be good for next year's crops.

When you cut cabbages, leave the roots in the ground and cut across the top with a knife. This will encourage new leaf growth.

Plant your garlic this month for a bumper crop next year and autumn onions can also now be planted. For the rest of the month get clearing off any weeds and perhaps prepare trenches for beans in the spring, digging in manure at the same time.

Keith Winter

Family Support Work (FSW) – Update

It is hard to believe that we have reached September and a new school year. As the children in our families return to school there is a sense of change, which is causing a great deal of anxiety for some of them. Our practitioners are helping to ease the transition from home to school and giving support on re-establishing routines. We have already started to see an increase in referrals, which we were anticipating back in April at the start of lockdown, and expect that this will continue as new stresses and challenges face families that have just about managed to make it through lockdown.

Our friends at the Mothers' Union have now joined us in our offices in Brighton. It is wonderful to be so close physically as there is so much that we do together in partnership to support families across the county. With office-based staff now back at our head office for half of their working week (whilst still working from home the rest of the time), there is also great joy at being able to see our colleagues face-to-face again after months of phone calls, emails and Zoom meetings.

Finally, there are still some places left for our sponsored abseil at Peacehaven on 19th September. If you have a local youth group then why not see if they would like to join us?

Thank you for all your support during these last few months and please pray for us as we enter what we anticipate will be a difficult few months.

August's work in numbers

- ◆ 286 (socially distanced) visits to families and 209 phone calls supporting 38 grandparents, 340 parents and 362 children.
- ◆ 17 supported meetings (virtually via Zoom/Skype etc.) with other agencies.
- ◆ 127 deliveries of food and other items (such as children's activities) made.

Prayer points

- ◆ For Rosie, one of the mums we support, who tragically delivered a stillborn baby this week.
- ◆ That those staff who have been working throughout lockdown are able to take some time off to rest and recover now that other staff are working again.
- ◆ That we receive positive news about a significant grant application that will make a huge difference to our income.

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

News from King's Academy, Ringmer

We're back! After nearly six months of lockdown our students are back in their classrooms and the school feels a positive and happy place for us all to be. We have missed having the children and are pleased to welcome our largest group of Year 7s for some years.

The past few months have been a challenge for everyone but especially for those charged with the responsibility of getting their children to learn at home. The school was quickly able to provide support and online teaching to our students and was recognised locally as having provided excellent teaching resources as well as communication with parents and students. Initially we focussed on our older students as we were still not sure if exams would go ahead and then subsequently we rolled out "live" teaching to the rest of the school. We also took special care of our vulnerable pupils. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our teaching staff and the cooperation and support of parents and carers. We were quickly able to contact students who weren't engaging with lessons and therefore made sure that we did our very best to maximise learning opportunities.

We are immensely proud of our Year 11s who attained very impressive results in their "exams" this year and we wish them the absolute best for the future. We are still hoping that we can provide them with a proper farewell when things settle down further.

The school looks very different now, not only because of the restrictions which we have had to put in place to deal with the virus, but also because we now have access to a full size, all-weather 3G football pitch on our field. During lock-down the Ringmer Football Club completed the construction of their new clubhouse and pitch which is a great asset to the school and community. We

are now putting together bids to provide proper surface water drainage to the rest of the field to enhance its use so that the community will have a comprehensive sports facility at the heart of the village.

We thank all of those in the school community and beyond who have supported us during this difficult period and hope to welcome many of you back into the school as things improve.

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

Wealden Community Grants Recovery Fund

The fund is now open until 1st November. Please note that the grants programme and deadline is different this year due to the pandemic. Recovery grants are available from Wealden District Council to help local groups and village organisations continue the valuable work they do for the community. Any third sector organisation with Wealden beneficiaries, and groups which have previously supported the community hub can apply for between £500 and £5000, to be spent by the end of March 2021, for projects that benefit the people of the Wealden District.

What the grant can be used for:

1. To enable voluntary and community organisations to continue the valued services and support they provide to our communities – this could include core costs which have been affected by the pandemic and/or loss of income
2. To continue to provide support, where needed, to those most vulnerable and/or affected by the Covid-19 emergency
3. To promote physical and mental wellbeing
4. To ensure resilience of community and voluntary groups in the future
5. The provision of services using alternative delivery models to pre Covid-19 to accommodate physical distancing measures and guidelines for operating these as changes occur through the pandemic lifecycle – this may include equipment, software etc

If you need any advice or require an application form, please email communitygrants@wealden.gov.uk or call (01323) 443520. The deadline for applications is 1st November 2020. We are aiming to give decisions and start the procedure for releasing funding during December.

Michelle Namurach

Partnerships and Funding Support Officer, Wealden District Council

Eastbourne Networx Update

Life is gradually coming back to a new normal but at the same time there is the possibility of a 'second wave', or a resurgence of the first, depending on which article you read.

The reopening of schools is significant. Most children are more than ready to get back to learning and routines. Many parents are very keen to see their children back in a learning environment, but some with children with specific needs are very worried. During lockdown we have provided 11 new desktop PCs for families who did not have the technology at home to engage in online learning or to manage homework. We were also very grateful to another charity for providing two laptops to families in a similar situation.

We can only hope and pray that all will be well as children return to school. In the meantime, we will do all we can to prepare the families better, in the event of a second lockdown. So, lots of IT lessons are beginning to happen, both for children and adults. Many thanks to all the befrienders who were able to stay in touch with families, by visiting them in allotments, on the beach and in parks and gardens. Thank you to the team who helped to set up and deliver PCs too. The project could not have happened so effectively without you.

It is not possible for me to say that you can or can't visit families indoors. You and they are all different and different needs and concerns must be considered. So basically, if a family asks you to visit and if you feel comfortable about it, masked and sanitised for your benefit and theirs, then 'Yes' please feel free to visit but adhere to self-distancing and avoid taking drinks and food from them. Take your own bottle of water. If you don't feel ready to do so, it's no problem and don't feel pressurised.

A family we support is in a difficult situation regarding housing, as the landlord wants to sell the house. It's a family that has had a particularly difficult 10 years, and despite it they are generous, happy and kind. There are three young daughters under the age of 7. They are currently living in a small one bedroom, one living room, flat. If you know of anyone with an empty second home willing to help this family even on a short-term contract, it would be good to hear from you. Please feel free to ask others. There's a home out there somewhere for them, the problem is finding it!

As Victoria Baptist Church remains shut for the moment for outside bookings, it's not possible to hold meetings in what we would consider to be the normal way. Forums, the Annual Review Meeting and Thanksgiving Service have been postponed, but the Trustees have all agreed to continue in their roles and posts.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I appreciate all the reports I receive from befrienders regarding the visits they make to families and any concerns they have or indeed things to celebrate. Please keep them coming!

Best wishes and thanks to you all, for your support, especially through lockdown. Wishing you all the very best for whatever the last third of the year holds for us all.

*Anna Reid
Chair, Eastbourne Network*

Solar Together Group-Buying Scheme

Wealden District Council is working with partner authorities across Sussex to help residents install solar panels and/or battery storage at a reduced cost. Solar Together Sussex is a group-buying scheme, which brings residents together to buy large volumes of solar panel installations to get the best possible price.

The scheme is open to homeowners, landlords and businesses. Participants can register until 5th October at www.solartogether.co.uk, giving details of their roof size and orientation. Registration is free and there is no obligation to proceed. An auction will be held on 6th October, when pre-vetted solar installers will bid for the work. Participants will then receive a personal offer from the winning supplier, setting out the cost of the installation and the likely return on investment. This will help them make an informed decision whether to reject or accept the offer and proceed with the installation.

We want to help residents save money on their electricity bills and reduce their carbon emissions. You may already be aware that there are currently no grants for the purchase and installation of solar photovoltaic panels (PV). This scheme will help those residents who want to install solar PV, do so at a reduced cost. The more people that register, the better the offer is likely to be.

For more information visit Wealden's section of the website at www.solartogether.co.uk/wealden where there is a short video explaining how the scheme operates. There is also a Freephone number 0800 014 8738 and a contact form for additional questions or help with registration.

(Solar Together Sussex is being run by councils across East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove in conjunction with iChoosr, the group-buying specialists.)

*Fiona Berry
Sustainability Co-ordinator, Wealden District Council*

Tawny Owls - Not What They Seem

Once upon a time, we were terrified of Tawny Owls. They were a portent of evil in fairy tales, folklore and just about every scary story, film or poem that needed a creepy cliché. But in today's crowded marketplace of international terrorism, climate change and saturated fats, the owl's powers to scare us are fading. Recently, it appears this spokesman of the supernatural has got itself a new publicist. Its modern image is one of a cuddly pin-up, more Harry Potter than Hammer Horror.

But stand in the woods on a moonlit night and listen for an unseen owl's ethereal call. It's an ancient, unnerving sound that still speaks to something buried deep within us and ignites a primeval fear. The Tawny Owl is the largest and commonest of our island's five owl species, typically nesting in holes in old trees in our remaining woodlands. But what is it about this bird that has given us the willies throughout history? Let's start with those huge, lifeless black eyes that seem to stare into your very soul. An owl's eyes are not spherical but tubular like two telescopes and give amazing vision at low light levels. However, the eye's stretched shape and position on the owl's face presents a narrow field of vision. To compensate, a Tawny Owl has special bones and blood vessels in its neck so it can perform that freaky head twist. This gives the bird the ability to scan all around without having to move their bodies and arouse detection by prey.

And in the world of a nocturnal hunter, silence and stealth are everything. Special serrated feathers slice the air, allowing it to fly as silently as a phantom and aerially ambush its victims. Incredible hearing achieved by asymmetrical ears allows them to accurately pinpoint the rustle of a nervous vole below.

And then there's that disembodied voice arising from the darkness. The male's far-carrying baritone 'hooo-huhuhuhooo' and the female's squawky 'kerr-wik' response are like a mis-matched duet between Johnny Cash and Janet Street-Porter. These calls help establish, maintain and defend a breeding territory and from October the birds are at their most vocal. Of course, Tawny Owls really couldn't give two hoots about scaring us, but throughout history these spectral calls have provided a soundtrack to our deepest fears. In a society which is becoming increasingly detached from nature, it's time to get out into the woods and allow ourselves to be unsettled once again by these mystical birds.

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 donations last month from Mrs Newton and Alciston Parish Meeting.