



BERWICK SELMESTON ALCISTON

VILLAGE NEWS

MAY 2024

◇ VILLAGE NEWS

Advertising is coordinated by Brian Calcott. Tel. 07999 788618.

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

The Production Team is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

Contributions, Photos, etc (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin by the 12th of the month by email: empty.sea@outlook.com

They can also be passed 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 "Berwick, Selmeston and Alciston Village News" can be passed to:

The Treasurer, Brian Calcott at:

2 Railway Cottages, Station Road, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6TA.

Alternatively, electronic donations can be made to:

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◇ CHURCH CONTACTS

Benefice Priests

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

Revd Shirley Pearce Assistant Priest

The Vicarage, Wilmington, Polegate, BN26 5SL

Tel: 01323 318231 Email: revshirleym@gmail.com

Shirley Pearce's 'on duty' days are Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Churchwardens

Alciston - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623

Berwick - Andy Williamson Tel: 01323 870163 / Paul Lewis Tel: 01323 870927

Selmeston - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

Benefice Administrator

Jane Grutchfield Email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

◇ VILLAGE CONTACTS

Parish Council Clerks

Alciston - Sandy Thomas Email: alcistonparishmeeting@gmail.com

Berwick - Alison Stevens Tel: 01323 460007 Email: berwickparishcouncil@aol.com

Selmeston - Bryan Stevens Tel: 07799 862765 Email: selmestonparishmeeting@gmail.com

Village Hall / Field Hire

Berwick Village Hall - Thea Eastmead Tel: 01323 871218 Email: theaeastmead77@gmail.com

Berwick Field - Carole Vine Tel: 07341 660046 berwickfieldhire@btinternet.com

Alciston and Selmeston Village Hall Website: www.southdownsvillagehall.org

Firle and Beddingham Women's Institute OPEN MEETING

7.30 pm Wednesday 8th May
at Firle Village Hall

At our April meeting we had the pleasure of another one of Ian Everest's talks - this time it was 'The Ouse - Past Life and Times' which covered all kinds of different aspects such as the industry, sport, arts, etc, that have had connections over the years to the Ouse Valley. He showed us very old photographs and talked about the people who worked in and around the Ouse, including the fact that famous people like Virginia Wolf, Ralph Reader, Peggy Angus and Eric Ravilious were all closely connected to this area. We had several visitors join us for this talk and ended the evening with refreshments including homemade cake!

Then, on Friday 12th April, WI members and guests enjoyed our annual fundraiser evening of bingo at Firle Village Hall. None of us had played bingo for some time, so it was good to re-acquaint ourselves with 'eyes' down' and 'legs 11' again. There were 17 people in attendance and a well-supported raffle added to our funds. Thank you to everyone who came.

Our May meeting will be our AGM. Please give me a call if you would like further information.

Rosemary Norris
President Tel: 07784 707016

Alciston Parish Meeting

7.00 pm Thursday 9th May
at Alciston church

All residents in the parish are welcome. Please send any items for the parish meeting agenda to

alcistonparishmeeting@gmail.com.

Thank you.

Sandy Thomas

Arlington's Village Market and Coffee Morning

10.00 am - Noon, Tuesday 14th May
at Arlington Village Hall.

All are very welcome; we will be pleased to see you. There will be fresh bread, cakes, quiches, local eggs and other regular stalls. Arlington's Pop-Up Museum will also be taking place at the same time, the focus will be 'Houses and Homes'.

Thank you to the many people, local and from further afield, who support this community event. We hope you will continue to do so. Please bring your friends, and if you have not been before you will be very welcome. The April Market was again very busy, and the hall was full of visitors - including fans of 'The Speedway' which was featured at the Pop-Up Museum.

For further market information please contact Anne Hope:
Tel. 01323 486219 / 07760 424169,
Email anntonyhope@gmail.com.

For further museum information please contact Wendy Holmes: Tel. 07889 689844, Email talkingteapot@yahoo.co.uk.

Pauline Jackson

Selmeston and Alciston Village HUB

11.00-12.30 Monday 20th May
at A&S Village Hall

The Hub welcomes you all to enjoy refreshments, delicious tea and coffee as well as homemade cake in a convivial, warm environment. Pop in anytime, open to everyone - bring your little ones for a run around and meet up with neighbours and friends of all ages.

Please contact any of the committee below if you have any questions or need help with transport to and from the hall.

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Helen 07969 732109, Mairi 07582 938185
or Janie 07785 940915.

Rachel Lewis

Summer Fête and Friendly Dog Show

*From 2.00 pm on Sunday 9th June
at Alciston & Selmeston Village Hall*

We are excited to host our 2024 Summer Fête Fun Dog Show. There will be games for everyone, a BBQ and a bar with a broad selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (including a Pimms station), plus ice creams and a Dog Cafe. Villagers, friends and family all welcome.

New for this year is our inaugural Fun Dog Show. Entries are £1 per class and include:

- ◆ Waggiest Tail
- ◆ Obedience
- ◆ Best Dog and Owner Lookalike
- ◆ Best Trick
- ◆ Best Puppy Dog Eyes
- ◆ Best In Show

Dogs to be supervised at all times. Entry forms can be found on the A&S Village Hall website www.southdownsvillagehall.org, the A&S Village Hall or complete one on the day. For more information contact Helen 07969 732109 or Phil 07538 187552.

Entrance to the fête is free. Please help our fundraising efforts by purchasing your food and drink at the event.

Rachel Lewis

Richard Durrant Midsummer Guitar Concert

*7.30 pm Friday 21st June
at St Mary & St Peter's Church,
Wilmington*

Sit back and relax to the sound of Richard's beautiful, acoustic music; then sit up and take notice of one of the

world's great guitarists. A solo concert of jaw dropping musicianship from the man dubbed 'The Guitar Whisperer'. A thousand and one notes interspersed with tales from the road.

Concert to include:

- ◆ Bach Prelude in E BWV 1006.1
- ◆ Barrios - La Catedral/Un Sueño en la Floresta
- ◆ Turina - Fandanguillo
- ◆ Durrant - The Sleep of a King
- ◆ Sagraeras - El Colibri
- ◆ Yocoh - Sakura
- ◆ Villa-Lobos - Etudes

Tickets cost £20 (£5 for under 18's) at www.richarddurrant.com or contact Tim on 07771 641856.

Tim Berrett

Happy May from the Fabulous Flower Show Committee

Sunday 18th August at A&S Village Hall

After months of waiting, we begin to see the green shoots of the garden emerging, In May, new colours begin to shine as roses start seriously flowering. Vegetable patches begin to show signs of growth and wildlife is busy amongst the new blooms.

What an exciting time of year this is. Remember to plan your entries to the flower show when thinking about the garden this month.

It's time to plant out almost all of the veggies that will be doing well in August. Tomatoes, courgettes, runner beans, carrots and beetroot can all be planted out now. What a great thought - eating that freshly picked bounty from our gardens, and maybe winning a cup!

Remember to earth up potatoes and stop them from growing on the soil surface.

In the flower bed it's time to plant summer bedding, get those dahlias out

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into the garden, and train those sweet peas that are starting to grow fast.

It's a great time to start keeping eye out for photo opportunities - the categories for our photography classes this year leave great scope for creativity - the 4 classes are birds, beach, food and street art - get your cameras out and start snapping.

Even if you don't enter any classes, put Sunday 13th August in your diary. The A&S flower show is a fun packed afternoon socialising with your wonderful neighbours in Alciston and Selmeston.!

Neil Creaton

Showing You Care



Many of you, throughout the benefice and beyond, responded to my appeal for candles over Christmas and the first months of this year. I was asked to help by a man who has known Richard Durrant for years; it was at the concert in Wilmington church that I met him. He assists a group supporting Ukrainians living in Sussex, who regularly send or take cars loaded with goods, donated or bought by money raised locally, to the relief of those suffering in the war that is raging in their country. Over two months I

collected three car-boots-full of every kind of candle you can imagine. These were melted down to make trench candles, using baked bean tins and cardboard, providing light and a bit of heat to Ukraine's soldiers serving in the trenches. These candles, together with the warm clothing that was also donated, have long since made the long journey across Europe.

We do pray for peace, but it is good that we can, sometimes, do something more tangible. I thank you again, every one of you who contributed, and also Peter and Jayne at The Long Man Inn, who agreed to have a collection point there.

God bless you all.

Rev Shirley

A Polite Reminder

If you are a householder who has hedges bordering public paths, please remember to cut them back so that those with wheelchairs or pushchairs can get through. Many thanks.

Alison Stevens

Clerk to Berwick Parish Council

The Romans in Selmeston

Residents of Selmeston are well aware that this is an Anglo-Saxon village if only for the discovery of over a hundred graves of its previous inhabitants that were found in 1897 during the building of Manor Cottages, adjacent to Twydown Field.

Around 18 inches just below the surface, various artefacts were found in the field, that now reside in Lewes Museum. The Anglo Saxons were not the only ones who may have used this field, evidence of the Romans in this area have also been found. Over the years, fragments of Roman pottery have been located both by archaeologists and residents in adjacent fields. Indeed, I was witness to a small

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piece of Roman pottery being found by Sue Harrington from UCL whilst walking across Twydown Field with her, (where the graves were found), prior to her talk at our village hall a few years ago, about these graves. It looked to me like a piece of chipped flowerpot, and I rather foolishly asked, "How do you know that's Roman"? Her icy stare, followed by, "That's my job, I've been studying Anglo Saxon and Roman artefacts since leaving University"! stopped any further (foolish) questions from me.



It has been suggested that just maybe Twydown Field had originally been called TroyTown, after the Roman equestrian sport of the Troy Game (a game described in the 5th book of Aeneid, where Roman youths rode on horseback along a maze of patterns, imitating the storming of Troy, which had a series of maze-like walls around the city). Indeed, The Street itself is a Roman Road, and intersected by another Roman Road by the Church, now called Slubby Lane ('slubby' being Anglo Saxon for muddy).

The Roman Empire spanned more than a million square miles and owed its existence to its military might. The first emperor Augustus (63 BC - AD 14) was the first to suggest that soldiering should become a career choice. During this period forces were split into Legions (only those of Roman citizenship could apply) whilst Auxiliary Units were drawn

from non-Roman citizenship). Those in the Legions who survived the various battles and disease, could look forward to a good pension and land, whilst those in the Auxiliaries could attain citizenship for themselves and their family.

After nearly 400 years of ruling the Barbarians, the Romans left these shores, unable to keep garrisons here whilst the Germanic tribes in Europe threatened their Empire, as well as various internal rebellions in the Army. For more information on how the Romans ruled, can I suggest a visit to The British Museum latest exhibition: 'Legion - Life in the Roman Army', which explores life in a military community as seen by a real Roman soldier, Claudius Terentianus, from his enlistment, to retirement, through surviving documents. There are some amazing exhibits to go with the history, for instance, as shown to the left, a complete set of armour of a soldier and his wooden shield (scutum) found in the dry desert of Syria. The exhibition runs until 23rd June; visit the British Museum website for further information.

Simon Muggleton

May Gardener's Diary

Hopefully, we have planted all our Potatoes by now. Just keep an eye on the weather and if a frost is forecast, try to cover up any leaves that are showing.

Sweetcorn can be sown in pots to plant out as soon as they are strong enough. Also get your Runner Beans, French Beans, Peas, Courgettes, Marrow, Squash, into pots or modules ready for planting out when it's warmer at night. Tomato plants should be growing well by now in the greenhouse.

Vegetables to sow straight into the ground are Beetroot, Carrots, Turnips, Radish, Spinach, Swede and all types of Cabbages. Don't forget to sow short rows,

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so you can add more later, to spread the harvesting.

Pests become active this month so keep a close eye on young plants for aphids on leaves and wash them off with water. Put collars around your Brassica plants to protect them from Cabbage Root Fly.

Watering newly-sown seeds and seedlings is particularly important. To test if you have been watering enough, put your finger in the soil. If it comes out moist, that's perfect.

Lisa Collington

Audio-Visual System Project

The A&S Village Hall Committee is continuing to work on a project to raise funds to install a complete audio-visual system at the hall, with HD projector, screen, sound system and outside PA. This will mean we can provide facilities for film evenings and exciting presentation opportunities alongside offering a more up to date event space for the wide range of groups who use the hall.

We are very grateful for your ongoing support in joining us at our Village Hall events and, as a portion of profits we make will go towards our new AV fund, we especially welcome you to keep coming! You can watch the progress with our fabulous fund-raising barometer next time you visit.

A&S Village Hall Committee

Royal Mail Postal Deliveries Update

Many of you will be aware of issues with Royal Mail letter deliveries over the past few months. I have heard from many concerned residents about delays, which has had a severe impact on people including missed medical appointments and prescriptions.

I am keen to hear from residents if this is improving as I am picking up that in some

parts of the constituency a good service is returning but in others it is still very hit and miss. I have met with local posties regularly and been to the Lewes sorting office to see first-hand the pressures they are under. Before Christmas staff were not being replaced to cover sickness or leave and vans were being taken away from routine walk routes. I met with local managers to raise concerns from residents and to ask them to urgently look at the situation of staffing and resources.

When things did not improve after Christmas, as a group of Sussex MPs we met in Parliament with senior representatives from Royal Mail so we could discuss the continuing local issues with the service.

Since then, Royal Mail have confirmed that they have ended their recruitment freeze and so more posties are now working in each area so residents should start seeing improvements. They have also started hiring more vans so that posties, particularly in rural parts, should again notice the difference.

Since this meeting a few weeks ago there does seem to have been improvements in the service. With most areas in the constituency seeming to have returned to a normal service.

I would encourage anyone who is still experiencing issues with their post to please report it to me at maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk so that I can make sure Royal Mail are aware of the situation and can rectify it.

Maria Caulfield MP

Recipe of the Month: Dark Chocolate Ginger Biscuits

Ingredients

110 g butter

50 g caster sugar

110 g self-raising flour

Chloe Burrell

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2 rounded tsp ground ginger
225 g dark chocolate

Method

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Beat together the butter and sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy. Sieve in the flour and ground ginger, a little at a time, beating until it is all incorporated and you have a stiff dough. Take pieces of dough about the size of a walnut and roll them into balls between your palms, dusting your hands with flour if they become sticky.

Put the dough balls on a baking tray (no need to butter or oil it) spaced well apart and flatten them with a fork. Bake in the moderate oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until the biscuits are light golden brown. Leave them on the baking tray to cool for a minute or two after they are out of the oven and then lift them off with a palette knife and leave them to cool on a wire rack.

Break the chocolate into a bowl and put it over a saucepan of barely simmering water: do not let the bottom of the bowl touch the water. Let the chocolate melt.

Dip half of each biscuit in the melted chocolate and put them to set on a plastic tray or a tray lined with baking parchment. When cold, store in an airtight container.

We would welcome your favourite recipes for future issues.

Valerie Shaw

Family Support Work (FSW)

It hardly seems any time at all since my last update to you. We continue to focus on the core work of FSW - our one-to-one family visits, as well as planning a busy summer schedule.

We were delighted to welcome Michelle Stokes to the team at the start of April-

Michelle is the new assistant family support practitioner for Midhurst, Petworth and Storrington. She will be assisting the practitioners in these areas with group activities, family outings and general support, which will enable us to work with more families and increase our offering in these areas. Our Worthing practitioner, Lydie, retired from FSW at the end of April - we are so grateful for her caring support of so many families over the years, particularly her work with refugee families, and wish her a long and happy retirement.

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Last week we received a message from a young adult whose family we supported for many years. The young person was a teenager when we first started supporting the family and had some very challenging experiences to deal with. The family is no longer on our client base, but she and her practitioner remained in touch. We wanted to share her message with you as it really shows the value of our long-term support:

"I just want to say how grateful I am to you for helping me through life. It's been a long journey and a scary one too, but I

think I've nearly made it. I wouldn't have been able to do it without you. You mean so much to me and Mum, so I just want to say thank you for believing in me."

Our events schedule is now in full swing, although unfortunately the recent bad weather meant the cancellation of the first open gardens of the season in early April. We would love to see you at any of the events, details of which can be found on our website. We do hope that you will particularly support our new Cuckmere Pilgrim walk on 30th May, which promises to be a really special event.

March's work in numbers

- ◆ 242 individual visits and 1202 calls with families supporting 290 adults and 179 children
- ◆ 44 supported meetings with other agencies
- ◆ 44 group sessions held supporting 669 parents and 250 children

- ◆ 89 food deliveries made

Prayer points

- ◆ Give thanks for Michelle, our new assistant family support practitioner, and pray that she will settle into her role quickly
- ◆ Pray for pleasant weather for all our outdoor events over the coming month
- ◆ Give thanks for Lydie and all she gave to FSW, and pray for a long and happy retirement

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

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sold as Progro. Unfortunately, a lot of people put the wrong things into food caddies such as used nappies, plastic bags and dog waste, which then makes it contaminated waste, and it must go to the Energy Recovery Facility at Newhaven for incineration.

One member of the audience told us that if we searched for 'dog waste powers the streetlights in Worcester' on the internet we could learn about inventor Brian Harper who, frustrated by the amount of dog waste appearing on the sidewalks of his neighbourhood in the Malvern Hills, developed a way to power streetlights using dog poo as a fuel source. His system relies on bio-digesting 10 bags of dog poo to produce methane gas that can power a streetlight for two hours at a time. He installed the former gas lamp outside his home and encourages dog walkers to pick up free paper 'poop scoop' bags which they then pop into the digester and turn the handle 5 times. Clearly an effective way of making sure dog waste is put to good use.

Lastly, three important reminders - don't put any batteries into waste bins (they cause fires), or Tetra packs into the recycling - they have a foil lining so cannot be recycled (hopefully they will be recycled by 2026) put them into general waste. Lastly, most major supermarkets are collecting the 'soft plastics', so do bag those up and take them with you when you return to shop there.

Rosemary Norris

Hawthorn

You could set your calendar by it. Around the first day of May, our ancestors would step outside to find foamy white clouds erupting across the Sussex countryside; the Hawthorn was blooming, Spring was turning to Summer. The sight was so visually stunning and so linked with the arrival of May that Hawthorn became the

only British plant to be named after the month in which it blooms. Well, the name Hawthorn is derived from the Anglo-Saxon hagathorn (haga meaning hedge); I'm referring to that other name for Hawthorn: May.

Unlike the impetuous Blackthorn, which flowers in March before it's even bothered to grow leaves, the Hawthorn is more dignified. It waits until it has clothed itself in undergarments of lobed leaves before it dons a resplendent gown of exquisite white flowers. This stunning costume and perfect timing meant Hawthorn took centre stage at May Day celebrations and it partied with Green Men, Morris Dancers, Maypoles and May Queens. 'Gathering nuts in May' actually refers to 'gathering knots of May' to make May Day garlands and decorations.

Then, in the middle of the eighteenth century, tragedy struck. I don't know about you, but I get thrown into disarray twice a year when the clocks change. My life would have gone into meltdown in 1752 as our whole calendar changed from Julian to Gregorian, and we lost an entire 11 days. In this new timeline, Hawthorn now found itself late for the party, blooming around 12th May.

It wasn't the first time Hawthorn had been cast aside. Superstitions dictated that bringing Hawthorn indoors led to misfortune - even death. This could stem from the fact that Hawthorn blooms release trimethylamine, which gives the flowers that unpleasant smell of cat's wee and attracts pollinating insects. It's also a chemical formed in decaying tissue and reminded people of the smell of Black Death - and nobody wanted to be reminded of that.

I remember at primary school being taught 'Ne're cast a clout 'til May is out'. I translated this gibberish into the fact that you should keep your warm clothes on



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until the end of May. I've only just discovered that 'May is out' refers to Hawthorn blooming. My clouts could have been cast weeks earlier.

But the world has changed since I was a nipper - we're warming up. For a temperature-sensitive plant like Hawthorn, the blooming times are changing again. Hawthorn is responding to climate changes by flowering up to two weeks earlier than it was thirty years ago. It has crept back to bloom around May Day and is now more commonly seen flowering at the end of April. So, this May Day, cast your clouts, get out into the great outdoors, and welcome the return of the real May Queen.

*Michael Blencowe
Sussex Wildlife Trust*

From the Vicarage

There is an old Chinese legend of an emperor who wished to choose his successor, so he summoned all the young people from the kingdom to gather at the royal palace.

He said to them, 'When I die one of you will become the next emperor. As you leave, my servants will give each one of you a magic seed. You must plant it and nurture it. One year from today, you will come here again, bringing with you your plant pots. By looking at them, I will know who is worthy to take my place.

Each one hurried home, excited, including a young man named Ling. He planted his seed, and watered it every day, but nothing grew. All his friends boasted about how their seeds had brought forth large and beautiful plants. Ling was embarrassed; he had nothing to show for all his efforts.

The next year, as promised, all assembled at the royal palace. The courtyard was filled with young people carrying flowering plants, bushes, even some small trees.

Ling did not want to be there, but his mother had insisted, so he took his clay pot, filled with soil but devoid of life.

Ling was called aside and feared that he was to be put to death because of his failure. He was bidden to stand in front of the emperor, who surprisingly put his hand on Ling's shoulder. 'I have chosen this young man: behold your next emperor. A year ago, you were all given a tiny stone; nothing could have grown from that. Only Ling here had the courage and honesty to return with nothing. He has the makings of an emperor.'

*[William Bausch,
The Story Revealed, 2013. Page 113.]*

Have you noticed how so many stories in the media seem to be about the lack of honesty? The Post Office Enquiry springs immediately to mind, revealing a cover-up that is an insult to decent honest folk. Politicians, leaders, business owners, media influencers, and ordinary people on social networks, so many indulging in dishonesty.

Stories of lies, exaggerations, cover-ups, casting blame, all assail our ears every time we tune into the radio or TV, or go online, making us think that the world is a sad and horrible place. It can blind us to the huge amount of good in life, and the many thousands of people who will stand up for the truth. We can get so dispirited that we forget the tremendous gift of God's grace to us, giving us hope in the darkest times. That must be the narrative which we tune into daily, in prayer and reading the Bible.

God hears us; as George Herbert said, 'why give dust a tongue and then not to listen to it speak?' Honestly, prayer changes things, so don't give up. God bless you.

Shirley Pearce



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Sunday 5th May

10.00 Alciston Rogation Sunday
United Benefice Service

Thursday 9th May

19.00 Wilmington Ascension Service

Sunday 12th May

09.30 Alciston Holy Communion (BCP)

09.30 Arlington Holy Communion

11:00 Berwick Holy Communion

11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Pentecost Sunday 19th May

09:30 Arlington Holy Communion

09:30 Selmeston Holy Communion

11:00 Berwick Holy Communion

11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Sunday 26th May

10:00 Arlington United Benefice Service

Prayer

9.30 am each Wednesday at Berwick church.

(On the first Wednesday of the month there is Holy Communion (BCP) instead.)

5.00 pm each Thursday at Wilmington church.

To receive a weekly notification about services (the Sunday Link) please email the Benefice Administrator at benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Pastoral Prayer or Talk

Peter Blee and Shirley Pearce are available to speak to people on the phone and are also able to pray with people on request in church at Morning Prayer and to offer help in any way possible.

Telephone: 01323 870512, 01323 318231 or

Email peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk,

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Please visit the benefice websites to check on services and times:
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