



THE STOCKBURY & SOUTH GREEN OBSERVER

March 2023

Hall Diary

All events at the Memorial Hall unless otherwise stated

Wed	1st	Private Booking	3.30-5.00pm
Thurs	2nd	Gardeners	8.00-10.00pm
Fri	3rd	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
		Private Booking	10.30-4.00pm
Sat	4th		
Sun	5th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
		Private Booking	All Day
Mon	6th		
Tues	7th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	8th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
		Parish Council	2.00-4.00pm
Thurs	9th		
Fri	10th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	11th		
Sun	12th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	13th		
Tues	14th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	15th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
		Parish Council	7.30-9.30pm
Thurs	16th		
Fri	17th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	18th		
Sun	19th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	20th		
Tues	21st	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	22nd	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thurs	23rd		
Fri	24th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	25th		
Sun	26th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	27th		
Tues	28th	Bowls	2.00-4.00pm
Wed	29th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thurs	30th		
Fri	31st	Zumba	9.30-10.30am

Bus Pass Renewal

2023 Renewals

In March 2023 there are 140,000 passes that reach their natural expiry and KCC write to the pass holder offering them the opportunity to renew their pass through a simple online or free post process.

As the Stockbury Community Bus does not provide KCC with the details of who specifically uses the Community Bus, they have no way of determining whether a particular resident's pass has been used within the past 12 months. This will result in most local residents who currently have an Older Persons Pass receiving the letter inviting them to renew, rather than a new pass being automatically issued.

Letters for those whose pass will not automatically renew will be sent in late January and February with the new passes being sent out during February and early March.

Pass holders do not need to contact KCC **unless** they have moved since they received their existing pass. Details of how to let us know that you have moved can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/buspass.

Community Charge

When the notification drops through your letterbox in the next few weeks, you will notice that Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue are all increasing their elements of the Community Charge.

A very small part of your Community Charge is something known as the Parish Precept. This is set by the Parish Council and currently stands at £47.79 for the "average" Band D property. You will be thrilled to know that this element of the Community Charge will not be increasing for 2023/24.

SPC



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STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

Tuesdays - Maidstone

Thursdays - Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre (Savacentre)

Pickups from 9:30 a.m. close to where you live. Give us a try!

07551 454702



Kent Police New Community Interactive 2 Way Messaging Service

My Community Voice is a new and exciting two-way messaging service that helps Kent and Medway residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams. The service sends updates about your local area directly from the police officers themselves.

My Community Voice is more than just a messaging service; it allows you to reply to the alerts sent by Kent Police, share information and most importantly, it allows you to tell the police about issues that are affecting you.

You will be able to play an active part in police appeals as well as being kept up to date with what is happening in your local area.

Unlike social media, My Community Voice is a secure and personal messaging system that allows you to determine what type of alerts you receive and how.

If you are passionate about your neighbourhood and want to have your voice heard, then sign up to My Community Voice via the QR code below.



My Community Voice allows you to comment by clicking the 'reply' link within a message, this will be sent back to the person that posted the alert. All emails are read and actioned. This service should **not** be used as a crime reporting tool. Please use www.kent.police.uk/report or in an emergency, if a crime is in progress or life is in danger, call 999.

Sign up today to start getting alerts about the matters that mean the most to you such as community safety, anti-social behaviour, including speeding and many others. Kent Police are committed to engaging with communities, understanding what's important to them, increasing trust and confidence and helping to protect people from harm. Police, partners, and the public working together can build resilient and safe communities, and both reduce and prevent crime.

Sign up to My Community Voice now to keep up to date with what is really happening in your area.

www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk

Silly Space

If you boil a funny bone, it becomes a laughingstock.
Now that's humorous!

Finally my winer fat has gone. Now I have spring rolls!

Stockbury Roundabout The Last Roll of the Dice

At a meeting with Helen Whately in December, she agreed to try brokering a meeting between the Parish Council and the latest Roads Minister, Richard Holden, to discuss the flaws in the DfT's methodology for determining value for money and the effects this can have on communities.

Unfortunately, it turns out that even Junior Ministers like Mr Holden do not meet with the likes of Parish Councils as we are too low in the pecking order. Apparently their diaries would be too full if they allowed such lowly beings access to them. A more likely interpretation is that it is much easier to ignore the effects of their decisions on real people if they refuse to listen. Ostriches could learn a lot!

He has magnanimously agreed to meet with Helen Whately, presumably because she is also a Junior Minister and therefore of sufficient status. We have no date for that meeting yet, but rest assured that we will let you know what happened as and when their diaries coincide.

Phil Woods
SPC

KCC Update

Dear All,

Rather late in the day but I'd like to start by wishing you all the very best for 2023.

2022 was undoubtedly a difficult year for many of us and there is little doubt that many more challenges lay ahead – the cost of living crisis continues to bite residents and businesses, inflation remains high and global issues such as the invasion of Ukraine have had a huge impact on us all – including local government.

Whilst KCC received a better than anticipated financial settlement from the government last autumn, the reality is that this simply isn't going to be enough to keep pace with the rising demand and costs that are needed to deliver services – especially when it comes to the most vulnerable amongst us. KCC's draft budget for 2023/24 - https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/143871/draft-budget-report-2023-2034-including-appendices-A-K.pdf will be considered by Members at our Budget County Council meeting on 9th February and will stimulate a lot of debate around some really difficult decisions that will have to be made so KCC can continue to deliver services in the most sustainable and effective way.

As part of these challenges, KCC has had to look ahead and plan for how things can be done differently and still maintain an effective level of support for residents who need it. One of the proposals under consideration is looking at changes in the way buildings are used to deliver some of the community services – ranging from children's centres and youth hubs, public health services for children and families, community services for adults with learning difficulties, the adult education offer and Gateways. The Community Services consultation - <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/community-services-consultation>

THE HARROW PUB

FREE HOUSE - COMMUNITY OWNED

A quiet village pub in the heart of Stockbury. Serving fresh home-cooked food.

Small functions catered for.

Open from -

Monday - Closed

Tuesday 3pm

Wednesday - Sunday

11am

Kitchen open from -

Wednesday - Saturday

12pm - 2.30pm and 5pm - 8:30pm

Sunday

12pm - 4pm

Live Music 11th March

Emily Jayne

Steak Night

25th March



01795 843222



theharrowpubstockbury



The Harrow Pub Stockbury



contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk

EVENTS

Fish'n'chip shop night on the 1st Friday of every month

Games night on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.

Quiz night on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Coffee and cake morning every Friday



M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange improvement scheme

We will be continuing our closures on the A249 north of M2 junction 5, between the Stockbury roundabout and Bobbing. The closures will enable us to complete our central reservation activities, surfacing and white lining works on the A249.

The A249 **southbound** (towards Maidstone) between the Stockbury roundabout and Bobbing will be **fully closed overnight**:

- 8pm Wednesday 8 March to 5am Thursday 9 March
- 8pm Monday 13 March to 5am Wednesday 15 March
- 8pm Monday 27 March to 5am 31 March

The A249 **southbound** (towards Maidstone) between the Stockbury roundabout and Bobbing will be **fully closed**:

- 8pm Friday 17 March to 5am Monday 20 March
- 8pm Friday 24 March to 5am Monday 27 March
- 8pm Friday 31 March to 5am Monday 3 April

The A249 **northbound** (towards Sheppey) between the Stockbury roundabout and Bobbing will be **fully closed**:

- 8pm Friday 3 March to 5am Monday 6 March
- 8pm Friday 10 March to 5am Monday 13 March

For details of all upcoming closures, check our webpage: nationalhighways.co.uk/M2-j5



We're carrying out improvements to help reduce congestion at the junction, and enhance the flow of traffic. This will provide a safer and more integrated network for everyone and bring real benefits to the drivers who use this junction daily.

To find out more, please visit our website: nationalhighways.co.uk/m2-j5 or scan the QR code. You can also call us on **0300 123 5000** or email m2j5@nationalhighways.co.uk



outlining these proposals was launched last week and any help you can provide in encouraging residents to have their say before it closes on 26th March would be really good. I know it's a hefty document to read – as one or two of you have already pointed out to me - but there are ways of navigating to information at relevant district/ward level and there's also a list of drop in sessions where people can find out more and ask any questions.

Finally, here is a link <https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?u=7efcd0bedbc1757eb8a93cce4&id=8f3a65bf21> - to the latest edition of the e-newsletter which goes out on a regular basis to those who have subscribed to receive it directly into their inbox. It contains information about the Community Services consultation amongst other things and, as ever, I would be grateful if you could share widely including on parish websites, magazines and social media.

I'm hoping to provide more regular – and localised – updates as we go through this year but I think you all know me well enough by now to know that I'm always at the end of an email or telephone to help with any issues you may have. And that I **never** find it easy to turn down a challenge when it comes to doing the right thing for the communities within Maidstone Rural East.....

With my very best wishes,

Shellina Prendergast
Cabinet Member for Communications and People
KCC Member for Maidstone Rural East

The Harrow

February was another busy month in the pub - not that we're complaining you understand! It is so lovely to see the pub regularly filled and so vibrant and full of life.

During last month our Valentine's diners were pleasantly surprised to be serenaded by live background music by one half the Three Hats (we kept that one under our own hat!) as they romantically dined and tucked into their delicious meals prepared and professionally presented by Stefan. The waiting and bar staff had their work cut out for them too and admirably rose to the challenge. They did so too during our Italian evening, which was completely booked out with every one enjoying their pasta fix. Oh, and let's not forget the pancakes! If only Shrove Tuesday was a weekly event! At this point I must thank Ann Rich for her patience as our diners tucked into pancakes long after our Quiz Master was supposed to have begun her ritual monthly torture, resulting in the quiz beginning a tad late - but our pancake eaters were very, very grateful for the delayed start!

We will be continuing our international cuisine themed evenings in March but we will be closer to home this time round ... we will be having a **Steak Night on Saturday 25th**. If you wish to join us, don't dilly dally too long in your thought process as tables are going fast, as they are for **Mother's Day** too, on **Sunday 19th**, where every mum will receive something sweet as a gift from us for being so awesome and always being there for us.

The warmer days of spring are now not too far away but be assured that our wood burners will be alight for a bit longer yet and we will remain a cosy warm space to come to and while away a few hours in some friendly company.

Don't drink? ... have a tea, coffee or hot chocolate instead! All served with a friendly, warm smile.

Something important for you to note. There will be **NO Thai Night** in March, sorry for any disappointment caused.

Our full events listing for March is as follows:

- **1st - Tractor Club Lunch** - 12.30pm.
- **3rd- Fish'n'Chip Night** - eat in or takeaway available from 5pm. *Booking is advised if eating in.*
- **11th LiveMusic with Emily Jayne** - 8pm start
- **14th - Games Night** - 8pm start.
- **19th -Mother's Day** - Every mum will receive something sweet, just for her! Please book ahead.
- **21st - Quiz Night** - please book your quiz table beforehand - 8pm start.
- **25th - Steak Night** - please book ahead.
- **30th - Ladies 'wot' Lunch** - Not just for the ladies! - 12.30pm.

Our guest beers this month are:

- **Canterbury Ales Ernest 4.2%** a single hop pale ale
- **Canterbury Ales Kentish Best 3.7%**

See you in the pub!

STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

Fare Increase

For the past couple of years we have been receiving a regular COVID19 Support Grant which was designed to replace revenue lost due to the pandemic. This grant has been reducing every quarter over the last year and will shortly be stopped altogether; unfortunately the number of passengers using the service every month is still below 2019 figures. This, combined with increased costs in fuel, maintenance and insurance leaves us with no other option than to increase fares. From **April 1st** a single journey (to Maidstone or Hempstead Valley) will be £3 and the return fare £6, ad-hoc day trips will be priced separately. This fare increase will only impact those passengers who pay cash as we will simply claim more money from KCC for residents who use a bus pass. Please see the separate Observer article concerning the renewal of bus passes.

Upcoming Trips

- Faversham Market: Friday 24th March - Leaving Stockbury at 09:30 and returning by around 14:00hrs
- Hole Park, Rolvenden - A trip is being planned for mid to late April (either Wednesday 19th or 26th). There will be plenty of time to wander in the gardens when the bluebells are at their best and enjoy a leisurely coffee and cake in the Coach House Tea Room. The cost will be £18 per person or, for those with a bus pass, £12 to cover both the bus fare and entry to the park. We will aim to leave Stockbury at 11am and return around 4.30pm.

Drivers Wanted

Are you aged between 25-70, hold a Full UK Driving Licence (including category D1) and can spare 2 or 3 hours once or twice a month, then we would like to hear from you.

If you would like to go on either of the planned trips or are interested in driving the Community Bus then please contact Geoff on 07551 454702 or email communitybus-stockbury@hotmail.co.uk

Geoff Moody

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To see a full price list, learn more about the Salon and its offers or to book an appointment See the following:

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 07725 403697

Price List:

- Gel Polish nails - £20
 - Builder Gel with Gel Polish - £25
 - Gel Polish toes - £15
 - Gel Extensions with Gel Polish - £30
 - Gel Extension Infills with Gel Polish - £25
 - Waxing - prices from £7 for Eyebrows to £25 for Full Leg
 - Range of Facials (Inc. Microdermabrasion, Dermaplaning etc) prices from £20 - £75
 - Full Body Massage - £40
 - Back and Shoulder Massage - £20
 - Wash and Blow dry from £15
 - Eyelash and Eyebrow Tinting from £5
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- Enquire for Prices

New Salon Treatments

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£40

Polly Kingsford-Field
Stockbury, Kent

Email: pollykf@btinternet.com

Stockbury (Church Lane) Orchard

Well done to the 30 and more volunteers who turned up for the 'Big Dig'. We planted 130 trees using varying techniques - both mechanised and manual.

It was an amazing turnout and it meant we did the job in no time at all - so more time down the pub! It's just a pity the tree guards supplier was unable to deliver on time; more so because those pesky rabbits have wasted no time gnawing some of the juicy bark off the trees! The good news is we've been promised the guards will arrive in time for Saturday 25th. We've ordered more trees to replace the gnawed ones so if any one is free, please pop round to the orchard any time after 10:30 on Saturday 25th of February. Your help is always greatly appreciated. Please bring a hammer this time! (By the way, a couple of spades were left behind last time, I'll bring them along, otherwise owners can pick them up from Rose Cottage).



I managed to chat to some of our digging volunteers and was surprised to discover quite a few weren't aware the orchard belongs to the community. Please use it or we lose it! Perhaps we should put up a notice by the gate explaining the

rights of access. Although, remember to keep your dogs on the lead when Robin and Angela's sheep are doing the important job of grazing control!

Some of you commented about the zig-zag line formation of the new tree planting, others thought it 'quaint'. It was simply that the dead tree trunks were there first. As the grant arranged through Kent Downs Trust requires us to maintain the orchard's "ecological value as an environment rich in flora and fauna", ripping up old tree trunks wasn't an option. The hope is the orchard will attract a lot more wildlife if we can establish the best conditions for creepy crawlies to thrive.

Sadly, we also received some negative comments about the whole endeavour; being a waste of taxpayers money; that we are not farmers and have no idea what we are doing. One said, "*In time of a cost of living crisis caused by Putin and Xi Jinping ... don't think we should be wasting public money like this ... If you wanna play farmer buy some land with your own money and plant trees yourself*". Okay. But they're missing the point. I can only say we have no intention of managing the orchard as a commercial concern. Instead we're aiming to manage it so that the community can enjoy the space and learn from it.

Speaking of which, the orchard year is an involved one; from winter replanting, spring mulching and pruning, to summer cherry picking (help yourself!) and autumn hedge laying and cutting. So, in the hope of attracting and

retaining the community's interest all year long, we are planning to invite experts to come along and share their knowledge about hedge laying, pruning, and grafting. Who knows, we could end up with some orchardists (I had to look that up!). Also, we hope to arrange some wilding courses such as bat and bird spotting, bee keeping (once the colony is restarted), and organise a celebratory blossom and harvest fun fair and festival if there is interest.

Just remember, it's your orchard. Get involved!

James Arscott

My Grateful Thanks

I want to thank everyone in the village who, in the last six months has sent many positive thoughts and much love my way.

I am so happy to say that I have now been given the 'all clear' and will now have regular check-ups for the foreseeable.

Many, many thanks for all your love and good wishes.

Steve Andrews

Stockbury Book Club

The Stranding by Kate Sawyer

Ruth, a young city dweller who loves the buzz of the metropolis but begins a change of heart as a relationship she is in grows claustrophobic, decides to take a break away from her comfort zone and heads for the other side of the world, New Zealand. There she hopes to clear her mind and assess in which direction she would like to take her life.

However the world political landscape is toxic and on her arrival in New Zealand the way of life as she once knew it disappears for ever. The unnamed menace overtakes her life, beginning with a stranded whale on a deserted beach and a chance encounter with a stranger.

The author allows Ruth's story to unfold by presenting alternate chapters depicting her former life running parallel with her present situation. It is well crafted and our group enjoyed the juxtaposition of the past gradually being revealed alongside Ruth's present situation. It had a kind of satisfying symmetry.

The description of total isolation is powerful and the unfolding of the characters after the apocalypse event and their fight for survival we found convincing and fascinating.

The story's subject led us on a wide-ranging discussion. One topic reminded a couple of us of the universal fear after Hiroshima and the real threat of another world war during the Cuban Crisis of 1962. We also speculated on what it might be like to pass on visions of everyday life to people who had never encountered all the trappings of civilisation that we take for granted.

This sounds as though the story is totally depressing. On the contrary the majority of the group agreed that they enjoyed the read. Despite the harrowing situation described, the author left readers with hope that humans would survive through their imagination and inventiveness.

We gave it 7½ out of 10.

Ann Rich

Boughton Monchelsea Morris

With friends—
Wild Women of Kent Morris

**AT THE HARROW
STOCKBURY**

Thursday

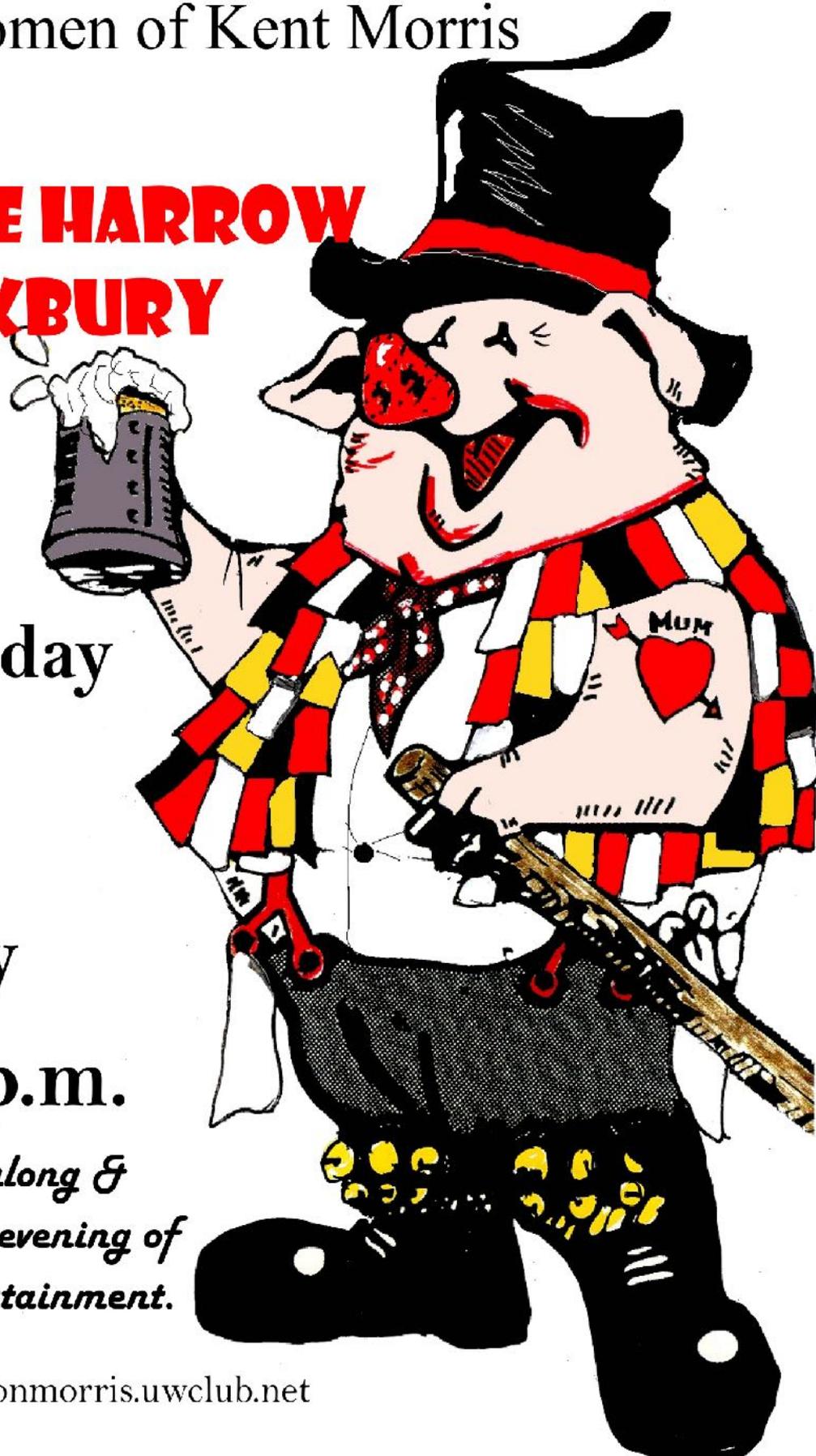
4th

May

8.00 p.m.

*Please come along &
join us for an evening of
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Flood!

On the 31st January, 1953 the sea defences along the east coast of England were breached as a result of the combined force of a freak storm surge and the high spring tide. The Netherlands too was hit very badly. On British soil Canvey Island was most disastrously flooded. The Isle of Sheppey had much flooding too; I was there, in Sheerness. I was woken at 2.30am. by my parents and told to put on something warm because we were possibly going to be flooded. Out of the blue that was really scary. I didn't have much time to think about it because the next thing I knew I was at the top of the stairs being handed various household items. For the next hour I stacked all our small family possessions wherever I could, eventually the only remaining space to store our goods was on the stairs. However, after all that I crept back to bed fully clothed. The moon was out I remember, and I had pulled back the curtains in my room so that I could look out onto our back garden. I kept trying to gauge the height of the water and to decide whether it was rising any further. All kinds of scenarios were going through my teenage head, most of them were not optimistic in outcome, but of course the black water expanse really couldn't give me any clues and it was such an age before dawn when I could process our predicament.

The next day I awoke to discover the water in our house was only 6-8 inches deep and we could still use the gas cooker provided we put our wellies on at the bottom of the stairs. I explored the ground floor and discovered the settee was up on the top of the dining table along with the chairs and our rug. Somehow the piano had been hoisted about 6 inches up on ... well I don't know what all these years later, but I marvelled! For now we were told not to go outside though I have no idea who told us, as we had no working radio.

The water had not risen any further and for the time being my anxiety abated. There were distractions ; how weird and sort of exciting that a rowboat came past our house in the middle of what would have been the road. In fact as far as I can remember for about a week this is how we got our paper and our milk. After that began the slow draining away of the sea.

For the next two months we began a very different life living upstairs all the time. The water slowly receded but we had no electricity and no heating, for light we had an Aladdin oil lamp which gave off an adequate reading light but oh how I hated the dull yellowish glow and the smell of paraffin which got into your nostrils, you couldn't be rid of that even when you went to bed. Warmth now came from a small oil heater, but we still needed extra woollies. For entertainment we read or played cards.

Finally, at last, we could go outside. What a relief. Boots on I walked down our long back-garden path and from a distance wondered what the vast number of small, thin strips of white were, covering the expanse of earth where we grew vegetables. Suddenly I realised and the knowledge made me feel sad and disgusted at the same time. The white strips were dead earthworms, hundreds of them, they couldn't survive in the salt water. I escaped to the front garden determined to rescue my tennis ball from under the hedge. I was about to step onto the front lawn when there was a shout ... 'Don't step off the path!' Too late, I was already committed to the action and teetered towards the ball. I sank in mud right over my boot tops! It must have looked pretty comical, me floundering and unable to get out of the predicament by myself. AND it didn't smell too good either!

The next thing that the adults talked about was school. ... How

was my education to continue? (No internet you see !). Formerly some of us youngsters on the island caught the train to Sittingbourne each morning; boys to Borden Grammar and us girls to Brenchley House Girls Grammar. Just a twenty-minute journey but the Ferry Bridge was not accessible; no doubt repairs and clearance operations were still in progress. So for a couple of weeks this was my school routine. I walked to Sheerness Dockyard in Bluetown on Sunday afternoon, case in hand and with my school friends boarded a boat to Chatham. It was very cold and very smelly. On arrival at Chatham we were hustled onto a coach and driven to Sittingbourne where school friends there housed us 'refugees' for the school week. On Friday the whole process was reversed, and we spent the weekend at home. We all had a great time and not much sleep!

Gradually life began to get back to normal but was marred by the long, long process of drying out the house. Outside salt crystals an inch thick kept forming on the walls no matter how much we brushed them off. Inside, we were issued with noisy dehumidifiers, but the damp just kept rising up the walls. Eventually a year or eighteen months later four feet high foil sheets were pasted to the walls, it was supposed to help but really wasn't that successful.

My experience of the 1953 Flood was of minor concern when I think of the poor people who lost their lives, of the many farm animals who died and of the huge numbers of houses which were destroyed by the sheer force of the sea surge. It was only after the event that experts realised the canal, which ran behind our house only a street away, took the full force of the original sea surge, allowing the water to run uninterrupted, avoiding all the houses. Otherwise my story might have been a very different one.

Ann Rich

Patrik Says ...

By virtue of my chairmanship of the Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee (ERL-PAC for short) the Maidstone Leisure Centre featured prominently on my to do list this month.

It's a nice leisure centre, but costs a fortune in energy and its coming-of-age. Should we knock it down and build a new one, possibly smaller but at modern engineering standards, to a tune of £50 million? In these days when other local authorities are closing their leisure centres because they no longer can afford the running costs, you may wonder whether such a question isn't a tad ambitious for councillors and officers to consider.

To be clear, nobody in Maidstone ever thought of closing the Leisure Centre. It is an important community asset for leisure, sports and even culture and the arts. Indeed we are an ambitious lot and some of us have grand dreams for substantially improving the leisure and sports offers in and around Maidstone.

We did wonder whether a new leisure centre may be a good option to become greener and more cost-effective and considered various options but came to the conclusion that with relatively small improvements we can breathe a bit more life into the old building. The most striking improvement will be to separate the entrance/cafe area from the pool. Open-plan design was en vogue in the 1970s when energy escape was not a design consideration. By better containing the hot and humid air around the pool

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If you would like to place an advert in The Observer, please email stockburyobserver@gmail.com The Editor will confirm receipt and an invoice will be sent along with details of how to pay.

If you are a new customer, please also attach your artwork, preferable in MS Word or as a PDF file.

This is a great opportunity to promote your business as The Observer is delivered to every household within the Parish of Stockbury as well as having an online presence.

**It's never too late to advertise in
The Stockbury Observer!**

Stockbury Parish Council Minutes

The minutes for our Parish Council meetings will be approved at the following meeting and will then be published on www.stockbury.org within 5 days of the meeting at which they are approved.

OBSERVER DEADLINE

MONDAY 27th March

Please email your contributions to

stockburyobserver@gmail.com

March comes ...



CALLING

ALL

GAMERS!



Following its previous success, we are re-establishing a traditional games evening at The Harrow Pub on the second Tuesday of every month.

This is a great opportunity to play old favourites and to learn some new games.

Come along for an evening of traditional fun in the gloomy depths of winter and beyond.

We aim to start about 8 pm and would love to see anyone interested and you are welcome to bring any games with you.



Calling the

“Ladies” of Stockbury:

Come and join like minded ladies for a lovely lunch and a catch up

at

The Harrow Pub on the last Thursday of the month

at about 12.30pm

Please book your place directly with The Harrow on

01795 -843222

We would love you to join us

Mobile Library Dates

Thursday 9th & 23rd March, '23

9.10am - 9.40am

At the Village Hall

area we can save a lot of energy and money and works will take place later this year. There may be some short-term closures required but we are seeking to keep any disruption to the absolute minimum.

By going for this option, we believe that we acted sensibly on behalf of council tax-payers in view of the current financial situation, and we gain some breathing space to consider more ambitious plans for a new leisure centre (or even two?) in the Borough. There is no escaping the fact that the existing building will be nearing its end of life by the mid 2030s.

Brenchley Gardens

Brenchley Gardens is a beautiful park, which is used and enjoyed by many people during the day. Unfortunately the mere mention of the word Brenchley brings the association of anti-social behaviour, not only today but for many generations past. And no, when we were teenagers we were no more angelic than today's youth!!

Over the past year a few decisions were taken, with some still to be implemented, to make Brenchley a safer place for all. Because anti-social behaviour is mainly taking place at night in the Gardens, one of the action points is to close the park at dusk each night and re-open it at 7am everyday

1,000 New Affordable Homes

I previously wrote about our administration's desire to build 1,000 new affordable homes. To keep you updated, I can report that MBC has acquired two new sites on which to build almost 60 new council-owned, affordable homes. This is a vital first step in our programme.

Design and Sustainability Consultation

In November I wrote about Maidstone's forthcoming Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document. This Design Plan will make sure that we will have the tools to ensure that best design quality and high sustainability lie at the heart of all forthcoming development proposals. A big Thank You to everybody who took part at the public consultation. The next iteration of the Development Plan Document will contain a series of draft policy approaches that will have been framed by the feedback received at consultation.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people Development Plan Document Consultation

MBC is asking for views on how best to plan for the future accommodation needs of the borough's Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people (G&T) communities and where new sites could be located across the borough, as part of a statutory consultation.

The Council is in the process of creating a Development Plan Document (DPD) which will provide suitable spatial strategy and site options. The DPD will also provide policies to assess future planning applications for accommodating G&T sites and pitches.

DPDs are an important legal tool to allow us, as the planning authority, to fight against unwanted and unauthorised development, while balancing the needs of all communities and ensuring that infrastructure is provided and the natural and built environment is protected.

We are not yet identifying specific sites or pitches, but are seeking views on the processes around site identification and assessment. The consultation will run between 28 February and 17 April 2023.

<https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/>

Missed Garden Bins (again!)

Regrettably garden bin collections have been a bit of a hit and miss affair in recent months. Garden bin collections are a discretionary, non-statutory service, which MBC provides. This means we don't have to provide it by law and it is not paid for through your taxes, because you pay a fee for the service you have a private contract with the waste authority.

I wrote previously that rather than giving you a refund for missed collections, MBC will extend your contract duration. Following some questions from residents, I did seek further advice from the waste team:

The T&Cs for the garden service do not guarantee a fixed number of collections and state that the service will be suspended at Christmas and in exceptional circumstances. However, this is a fee-based service and the computer-based extension system was introduced during 2021. It allows us the opportunity to provide reparation where a resident has had collections cancelled and/or received very poor service.

An account maybe extended and that decision is based on records:

- The rounds were cancelled – where the contractor has not operated that collection round.
- A missed bin report was filed for the property – where the collection has failed for a reason.

In a vast number of cases these properties are known to us, they have advised of ongoing issues and have been in the formal complaints process. Part of the remedy to that process is to consider and apply an extension, if appropriate to do so. We record all extensions and if an account has already had one, the length of that is taken into account should they request another.

An extension is lost income for the Authority and has to be justified. If the resident's round has never been cancelled and the record for the property does not show disrupted services over and above the T&Cs, then MBC is unable to justify one.

Each resident has their own personal renewal date, the bills are released every month and usually on the first working day, and the majority are sent by email. The MBC waste team will justify an extension by reference to the records of service. If a resident does not agree with that decision they may refer to the formal complaints process.

And Finally...

The UK Government has announced a new energy scheme for businesses, charities and the public sector ahead of the current scheme ending in March 2023. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b7FEXiILaj4oG5pGOW4QqeFvFwIb3o18/view>

Patrik Garten
MBC Councillor for North Downs Ward (Conservative)
Phone: 01622-807907

WANTED!

Can **YOU** spare 30 minutes each month??

We are looking for deliverers for The Stockbury Observer. Please contact the Editor if you can help.

Useful Contact Information

Church Matters St. Mary Magdalene		01795 227329
Community Bus	Booking Line	07551 454702
Cricket Club	Enrique Damian	07522 691831 07967 890010
Crimestoppers	(Confidential)	0800 55511
Dog Club	Mick Bingham	01795 842480
Electricity Problems		0800 7838866
Environment Agency	Incident Hotline	0800 807060
Fly Tipping & Waste Collection	Including bulky items	01622 602162
Gardeners	stockburygardeners@live.com	
Golf Society	Philip Painter	07850 190204
Hall Bookings	Sue Porter	01795 843715
Kent County Councillor	Shellina Prendergast shellina.prendergast@kent.gov.uk	
Maidstone BC Councillor	Patrik Garten - patrikgarten@maidstone.gov.uk	01622 807907
MB Farms Stores & Post Office		01795 842401
Member of Parliament Faversham & Mid Kent Ward	Helen Whately - helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk	
Neighbourhood Watch	Ann Ballard	01622 736331
Parish Council Clerk	Sherrie Babington	01634 867173
Pétanque Club	Tina Jacobs	07743 910185
Photographic Club	Tim Arnold - timarnold@btinternet.com	01795 843049
Police	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	999 101
Police Community Support Officer for Stockbury		101
Public Footpaths & Bridleway	Reporting issues with. - westprow@kent.gov.uk	03000 417171
Roads, Potholes, etc	(manned 24hrs) - www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem	03000 418181
RSPCA		0300 1234999
Short Mat Bowls	Janet Bracey - dd.fastmail.co.uk	
South East Water	Emergency Only Non-Emergency	0333 000 0365 0333 000 3330
Stockbury Observer - Editor	stockburyobserver@gmail.com	
The Harrow Public House	contact@theharrowstockbury.co.uk	01795 843222