



THE STOCKBURY & SOUTH GREEN OBSERVER



Hall Diary

All events at the Memorial Hall unless otherwise stated

Fri	1st	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	2nd		
Sun	3rd	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	4th		
Tues	5th		
Wed	6th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thurs	7th	Gardeners	8.00-10.00pm
Fri	8th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	9th		
Sun	10th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	11th		
Tues	12th		
Wed	13th	Parish Council	2.00-4.00pm
Thurs	14th		
Fri	15th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	16th		
Sun	17th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	18th		
Tues	19th		
Wed	20th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
		Parish Council	7.30-9.30pm
Thurs	21st		
Fri	22nd	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
Sat	23rd	Gardeners Plant Sale	10.00-1.00pm
Sun	24th	Dog Club - Field	10.00-11.00am
Mon	25th		
Tues	26th		
Wed	27th	Pilates	9.30-10.30am
Thurs	28th		
Fri	29th	Zumba	9.30-10.30am
	30th		

Stockbury Bridge

This is not the article that I had been hoping to write ...

Given that National Highways refused to include any form of traffic management for the junction between Church Hill and the A249 in their plans for the Stockbury Roundabout, Kent County Council have been working hard in the background to secure funding for a bridge. It was initially anticipated that a bridge would cost around £8 million but the latest rules from the Department for Transport (DfT) mean that the projected cost has risen to £16 million.

So far KCC have spent in excess of £100,000 putting together a business case with a view to securing funding from the DfT. Access to the funding pot is a competitive process and unfortunately the Stockbury Bridge is close to being in last place. While KCC will continue working in the background, they are understandably reluctant to commit any more significant amounts of money to the scheme.

No-one seems to doubt that the Church Hill junction is dangerous and will be even more so once the roundabout scheme has finished but potential deaths do not figure in the DfT's calculations when assessing priorities for funding.

If the risk of death does not count, what does? The answer is the number of vehicles that would use the bridge. As a small rural community we do not have thousands of commuters wanting to access the A249 or the M2, so the perceived "benefit" is very low. If we want a bridge, the best way to secure funding would seem to be to allow the building of several thousand houses around Stockbury!

This seems to be an interesting paradox given that the Government has previously stated its commitment to protect rural communities. The bridge is needed to protect both citizens and businesses in Stockbury but the only way we can get funding for it through the DfT's usual process is if we allow our rural community to become an urban community!

The safety of the junction will be the subject of audits by National Highways and KCC; if the number of serious accidents is significant, this may provide a case for a bridge. Unfortunately, it looks like we will have to wait for at least 2 people to die in separate accidents at the Church Hill junction before the Government will take our bid seriously.

SPC

The Harrow Survey

Have you completed yours yet? You have until the **11th April** when the survey closes, to let us know your views don't delay, the clock is ticking ... !

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Stockbury School Bus KCC Bus Funding Reduction

KCC are currently planning to reduce spending on local bus services. If their proposals go ahead this would mean that service 332, the Stockbury and Yelsted service to Sittingbourne secondary schools, would be scrapped in September. Families in the village rely on this bus.

The consultation document is available to read and comment on at <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/bus-funding-reductions>.

If possible, please let KCC know your views by completing the questionnaire. **The consultation closes on 20th April.**

Sarah Gull

Stockbury Church Lottery, 2022

The monthly church lottery is underway again for 2022.

Several people have not yet renewed and new participants are always welcome. The cost is £10 for your number which is entered into 10 monthly draws. The draw is held every second Saturday of each month at MB Farm shop.

Three prizes are distributed as required under the Lottery Licence and any profit goes to the upkeep of the village church.

The more participants the higher the prizes!

Winners names are published in The Stockbury Observer and on the shop noticeboard.

If you would like to join in, please contact Emma Charlesworth – email; cookie3003@hotmail.com or tel: 07739 828443. Also you can obtain a form from Tina at MB Farm shop.

March Church Draw Winners

CONGRATULATIONS!

1st £30 - Natalie Seymour (252)

2nd £20 - Emma & Rebekah Charlesworth (153)

3rd £10 - Sandra & Richard Palmer (176)

A Whimsical Evening at The Harrow Stockbury

I would like to organise an evening of entertainment at The Harrow.

If you have a poem, recital, song, joke, story, or whatever, for us to hear, please contact me on 07944-811668.

Brendan

Stockbury Goes Green

As we move ever closer to “net zero”, grants are now available for communities to develop infrastructure that will support the IPCC’s agenda on climate change. Given the number of highly polluting diesel and petrol vehicles in the Parish, it was felt that Stockbury’s contribution to greening the planet should be an initiative that would encourage people to purchase electric vehicles. Cars would obviously be the first “target” but in time this will extend to tractors, combine harvesters and other farm equipment.

A plan has been developed to provide multiple electric vehicle charging points in the centre of Stockbury village. In Phase 1 on the scheme, these would be powered by a wind turbine dedicated to the task. Initially 6 charging points would be provided outside the Village Hall, powered by a turbine located on the village green. At approximately 25 metres (82 feet), it will stand well above any buildings in the village and should receive the full benefit of the wind that frequently blows across the top of the hill.

Clearly a wind turbine on its own would be of very little benefit as it will only provide electricity for the charging points when the wind is blowing. To provide a source of continuous power there will be a battery bank next to it. This will be relatively unobtrusive being only 20ft x 6ft and 8 ft tall; it will fit between the turbine and the village sign.

Phase 2 of the plan will involve filling in the spaces between the trees in the orchard with solar panels and providing charging points, designed primarily for farm vehicles, along Church Lane. Again, there will be an unobtrusive battery bank located by the gate at the junction with The Street.

If all goes well, Phase 1 should be complete by 31st September 2022 and Phase 2 by 30th April 2023. A formal commissioning ceremony followed by fireworks and a free bar, with a special guest who will have cycled all the way from Sweden, is planned for 31st June 2023. She has sent a special message which should be easily accessible to the cryptographers of Stockbury:

1,1	2,10
2,7	4,3
3,6	4,12
4,16	5,14
5,14	

The Stockbury Energy Partnership

Diary Date

**Saturday
June 4th**

Jubilee Weekend on Stockbury Village Green

AUCTION

Come and Join in the Fun!

Bring your Friends!

Enjoy the Bidding!



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 - Sunday

11am

Kitchen open from -

Tuesday 5pm-8.30pm

Wednesday - Saturday

12pm-3pm and 5pm-8:30pm

Sunday

12pm-4pm

EVENTS

Live Music

16th April with
Emily Jayne

Open Mic Night

23rd April
(booking advised)

Take away

available



Wi-Fi
FREE

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 on the last Friday of the month



M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange improvement scheme

Starting on 28 March 2022, we'll be changing the layout of the A249 northbound where the road meets the Stockbury roundabout.

To do this safely, we'll have weeknight lane closures – 8pm to 6am, Monday to Friday – on the A249 in both directions between the roundabout and Chalky Hill for four weeks. There will always be one lane open to traffic in both directions.

We'll then permanently close the dedicated entry slip to the M2 eastbound from the A249 northbound. This closure will allow us to prepare the foundations for the construction of the new flyover. You will still be able to join the M2 from the first exit of the roundabout.

Further details will be provided on our website <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/m2-j5>



We're carrying out improvements to help reduce congestion at and on the **M2 junction 5 Stockbury interchange**, and enhance the flow of traffic, bringing 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



The Harrow

With the unexpected departure of Gareth at the end of February, it was all hands to the pumps during March and seamlessly Sarah and the team pulled together to continue to provide the meals, entertainment and comfortable atmosphere of the pub that we have all been privileged to enjoy in recent months. No mean feat, hats off to them all and much thanks to the volunteers who stepped in and continue to help with the daily running, food preparation, washing up and cleaning of The Harrow in times of need.

Despite the difficult start to the month, there was a full to bursting Fish'n'Chip Night that many indulged in on the premises, while others opted for the takeaway option of the deliciousness on offer!

Games Night was well attended, as was the live music event where the Mike Steve Duo entertained us with music from the bygone eras of the 1950s and 60s, compelling some sprightly villagers to dance the night away like the teenagers they once were.

Unfortunately, disaster then struck; Sarah and the majority of the staff tested positive for Covid-19, as did a number of the volunteer helpers. The Harrow had to close for a period of 10 days with all events cancelled. Thankfully all those that tested positive are now fully recovered and back at their posts.

During those 10 days and behind closed doors, a different kind of work was taking place to freshen up our pub, with the opportunity presenting itself for the carpet to be cleaned, tables re-varnished and chairs spruced up and painted, ready for the regular monthly Coffee & Cake Morning and of course, Mothering Sunday.

Mothering Sunday saw a double sitting of mums with their families all happy, sated and complimentary after a fantastic celebratory lunch, expertly cooked.

Coming up in the diary for April, we have:

- **1st April - Fish'n'Chip Night-** Mushy Peas, anyone? Please pre-book your table and takeaways for this very popular evening of the month.
- **6th April - Tractor Club Lunch** - 12.30pm
- **12th April - Games Night** - The fun and games begin at 8pm, everyone is welcome.
- **16th April - Live Music with Emily Jayne** - 8.30pm Re-live the 80s to the 00s with Emily Jayne as she sings covers of popular songs from those decades.
- **19th April - Quiz Night** - Little grey cells and pens at the ready for 8pm. Please book ahead.
- **23rd April - Open Mic Night** - Are you a budding comedian, musician, songstress, story teller ... ? Come and astound us with your talent. To book your 10 minute slot, please contact Sarah. Kick off is 8pm.
- **28th April - Ladies 'Wot' Lunch** - Come and join like minded ladies for a relaxed lunch at 12.30pm; everyone else is welcome too! Please book in with Sarah.
- **29th April - Coffee & Cake Morning** from 10.30am Indulge in delicious homemade cake, accompanied by a frothy coffee and a catch up with friends, old and new.

STOP PRESS

As we go to print, news of a new Harrow Chef has reached us. We wish Calvin every success in his new venture at The Harrow. A new menu will be available soon.

The Kemsing Singers & Cinque Port Wind Quartet Church Fund Raiser Concert

Saturday the 19th March was the day The Kemsing Singers and Cinque Ports Wind Quartet were performing at Stockbury Village Hall to raise money for our beautiful village church.

Sara and I had been planning it for a while and I was really looking forward to it then Roger and I, along with several others, tested positive for Covid and spent the week feeling unwell; so I missed the concert which I am told was Wonderful! Fantastic! Fabulous!

So what I want to do here is thank all those that stepped in and took over jobs that Roger and I could not do, such as putting out tables and laying them, moving chairs, serving tea and coffee and washing up. I have it on good authority Steve made a wonderful job of that! Maybe a job for him at the pub?

Thank you to all who made wonderful cakes and thank you to all who came along and ate them too! Big thanks to Sara and her talented choir and musicians for such an entertaining few hours.

We made £575.50 for the church, which is amazing and I hope we can do it again one day so I can enjoy it too.

Thank you and God Bless.

Irene Milton

STOCKBURY COMMUNITY BUS

Come ride with us to The Himalayan Gardens for a bluebell spectacular – 27th April, 2022

The Community Bus is going to the Himalayan Gardens in Riverhill, nr. Sevenoaks on Wednesday 27th April. These wonderful gardens have plenty to see and enjoy but at this time the bluebells are considered among the best in Kent. There are quirky 'shed shops' selling gifts and plants and the café serves light lunches, responsibly sourced and produced.

Admission is £8.00 (or £7.00 if 12 or more people go).

Travel cost will be £3.00 for people with Senior Bus Passes and £8.00 for those without.

Please note that parts of the gardens are on different levels and some paths are steep but there is plenty that is readily accessible and flat. For more information visit www.riverhillgardens.co.uk

The bus will leave Stockbury Village Hall at 10.45 and we can make other pickups before that as usual.

Please call 07551 454702 to book your seat.

Sara Kemsley

Why is a Knight and a Dragon on the front page?

Because April 23rd is St George's Day, the Patron Saint of England.

The legend is that St George is alleged to have tamed and slain a dragon that demanded human sacrifices; a story which has captivated British imaginations since the Crusades and the Hundred Years' War.

The 23rd April is the anniversary of his death in 303AD.

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- Full set acrylics with gel - £25
- Acrylic infill with gel - £20
- Waxing - prices from £7 for Eyebrows to £25 for full leg
 - Range of facials
(Inc. Microdermabrasion, Dermaplaning etc)
prices from £25 - £75
 - Full Body Massage - £40
 - Back and Shoulder Massage - £25
 - Wash and Blow dry from £15
 - Eyelash and Eyebrow Tinting from £5
 - Lash Lift and Tint - £30
- MICROBLADING - eyebrow tattooing, enquire for prices

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Stockbury Kent

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 823222

We would love you to join us

Stockbury Book Club

Agent in Berlin

by Alex Gerlis

Agent in Berlin is the first in *The Wolf Pack* series, featuring an unlikely pair of British agents operating out of Berlin, an American sports journalist and an SS officer's wife.

With war coming to Europe, British spymaster Barnaby Allen is recruiting a network of agents in Germany. Despite constant danger and the ever-present threats of discovery and betrayal, Allen's network unearths top-secret plans for a new German fighter plane and a truly devastating intelligence prize, an audacious Japanese plan to attack the United States. But can they prove it? The race is on.

There was an unusual amount of agreement within book club this month about the enjoyability of this book. There was certainly consensus that all of the names did get a bit confusing, so the reference list of characters at the beginning was well used and that a lot of the German place names were glossed over by readers due to difficulties with pronunciation.

A number of the group said that they found it a quick read. Some didn't feel it went anywhere very fast while others felt the lack of pace initially supported the slow build up to the war and intensified the suspenseful nature of the activities. It was felt that the stress the operatives were under was well characterised and the dilemma experienced by some between being a patriot and acting as a spy for whatever reason, was nicely handled. There was disagreement within the group about whether or not there was any love interest.

Comments were made about the nature of the propaganda surrounding the Olympics, how the different identities of the cities really came through and the link between the beginning and end of the book.

One member finished the book just as events in Ukraine began unfolding and found this very poignant, which generated a great deal of discussion and speculation about how possible future events might play out.

All members of the group scored it either a 7 or a 9 resulting in an overall score of 8/10.

Next month we will be discussing *This Must be the Place* by Maggie O'Farrell.

Jackie Smith

Stockbury Gardeners

It really makes my blood boil when I hear that finally our hopes of obtaining allotments on farmland to the east of the village are thwarted. As our Member Gardeners were made aware, the request has finally been answered with a big NO. The reason being KCC have been forced under government policy to allow the positioning of a 144 hectare solar farm to be positioned in Stockbury Valley.

Electro-Bulgare, were grant funded by the EU whilst the UK were still members and were recently given the green light to commence construction; this despite fierce objection by KCC. Under EU directive, article 100-22 /2017 states that any grade 4 (low grade) farmland can be forced (by compulsory purchase) to install solar panels. Stockbury was cited as low grade due to the number of flints in the area and the south facing slopes of Stockbury Valley present the best

angle for the sun to work and produce power. This alone will not occur immediately adjacent to the east side of the village; however, the huge battery storage, power converters and containers will occupy most of the area, making the Stockbury Valley the largest solar farm in the UK. It is understood that Electro-Bulgare will be looking for accommodation locally for the construction workers, Bulgarian speaking hosts will be preferred.

During our next meeting on Thursday 7th April, we will be discussing our options when it comes to our future allotment search. Please do not miss this important meeting.

Our guest speaker this month is (due to illness last month) Steve Harmer presenting a talk on "The History of Sissinghurst" this is at the normal time of 8pm.

An update on the playing field, "perimeter wilding" will be given by the Chairman following a walk round by the members last month. Anybody in the village that would consider volunteering to help please contact The Gardeners.

The Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies held their annual Spring Show on 20th March and several Stockbury members were in the awards.

Our Plant Sale will be held on Saturday 23rd April at the Village Hall, where we will be selling both bedding and vegetable plants, starting at 10.00 until 13:00.

Chris Spree

Enjoy Making Things
Out of Wood?



Why not join Kent Woodcarvers

Wood carving is an enjoyable pastime, especially within a group enabling you to benefit from advice and ideas, as well as socialising and relaxing. It is a great way to be creative and to escape from the stresses of modern life.

The Kent Woodcarvers group was formed from two well established regions of the British Woodcarvers Association (BWA) – namely the Wormshill and Hamlet Wood regions which both existed within Kent. Meetings are held monthly on a Sunday at Wormshill Village Hall from 10am to 4pm and weekly on Thursdays from 9am to 3.30pm at Hamlet Wood Scout Camp.

Membership costs £10 per annum and members pay £5 per visit to cover the cost of hiring the venue and for light refreshments. New members are always welcome and tools, equipment and advice are available. Please drop in at one of our meetings to meet us, you will be very welcome.

For more information and directions please visit our website <https://www.kentwoodcarvers.co.uk/> or give me a ring on 07986-550374.

Glen Martin

Mobile Library Dates

Thursday 7th & 21st April, '22

9.10am - 9.40am



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Kent Fraud Alert

Fraudulent Appeals for Ukraine

There have already been nearly 200 reports received about fake emails purporting to raise money for those affected by the current Ukraine crisis; some of the emails are even claiming to have been sent by Wladimir Klitschko and are using various scams from purchasing t-shirts to donating bitcoin.

Before you donate to a charity, check the charity and their registration number at www.gov.uk/checkcharity. If they have an annual income of over £5,000, they must be registered.

If you believe the charity is fraudulent, report it to the police or Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or online.

If you receive a suspicious email, do not click on any link and forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Fake Santander Texts

Another month, another scam text message in circulation. This time, one that claims to be from Santander suggesting new direct debits have been set up and attempts to trick people into clicking on potential harmful links.

If you receive a suspicious text, forward it to 7726, this reports it to your telephone operator.

Investment Scam Emails Not From ‘Which?’

Criminals are impersonating ‘Which?’ to sell sham investments online. This is attempted through a bogus email which directs potential victims to go to a fraudulent website that misuses the ‘Which?’ logo and copyright to appear legitimate. DO NOT click on any of its links or follow its instructions as neither the emails or website have anything to do with ‘Which?’ Instead please forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Friends Against Scams

The National Trading Standards Scams Team’s awareness initiative Friends Against Scams is fast approaching one million members. Friends Against Scams is designed to inspire action, highlight the scale of the problem, change perceptions of why people fall for scams and make scams a community, regional and national topic.

By attending a Friends Against Scams awareness session or by completing the online learning, anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim. To find out more, please visit www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk.

Cooking with Zeina

Zeina's Easter Rafaello Cake

I rarely bake these days. It involves an incredible patience – more patience than I can muster; I’m more of a fiery alchemist when it comes to food! But it’s Easter soon and it’s time for something sweet. This is one of the few desserts I don’t stress over (Well, unless I eat it ...).

Ingredients

1.5 cups sliced almonds
2 tbsp butter
600ml whipping cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk powder
300 grams white chocolate

1.5 cups coconut flakes
500 grams wafers (no filling)
8 tbsp icing sugar

For the Decor

Little pastel Easter eggs
Sugared flowers
Meringue (crushed)

Method to the Madness

- In a large bowl, mix the cream and the icing sugar with a whisk until you get stiff peaks.
- Stir in the milk powder, half the coconut flakes and half the sliced almonds.
- Melt 200 grams of the white chocolate with the butter on a double boiler (or you can do this in the microwave in 30 sec increments, be sure to stir thoroughly between each 30 secs and continue till its fully melted,. This shouldn’t take too long and helps with less washing up!) Allow it to cool slightly (but still remaining a liquid) and then pour this into the cream mix. Gently mix well till combined but be sure not to over-mix and then cover and put it in the fridge.
- In another large bowl, roughly crush the wafers – by hand is best – and strangely satisfying. Set aside.
- Bring on the cake tin (ideally a spring-form one with a removable base if you’d like to take out the cake). Use butter paper to line it and add a bit of butter, just in case (Because as you know, butter makes everything better!). Also, since there is no baking involved you could also layer the cake into a beautiful glass serving dish and serve it directly.
- To assemble put a layer of crushed wafer at the bottom, then a layer of the cream mixture. Sprinkle lightly with the sliced almonds and coconut flakes and repeat until you’ve used everything up, making sure the final layer is crushed wafer.
- Melt the remaining chocolate and drizzle on top. Put it into the fridge to set.
- Remove the cake from the tin gently. To decorate add the pastel eggs, crushed meringue and sugared flowers and serve.

Invite friends and family over because you shouldn’t have this alone and then enjoy it in the spring sunshine!

Happy Easter!

Love Zeina



Domestic Abuse

If you or someone else is suffering from domestic abuse please visit a Domestic Abuse webpage for advice and more information:

www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primaryservices/housing/tier-2-additional-areas/domestic-abuse

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

www.womensaid.org.uk

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

There are also helplines available if you would rather speak to someone:

- **Choices Domestic Abuse Services**
0800 917 9948
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline**
0808 2000 247
- **Refuge freephone National Domestic Abuse**
0808 2000 247
- **The Men's Advice Line for male domestic abuse survivors**
0808 808 4994
- **National LGBT+ Abuse Helpline**
0800 999 54428
- **Childline**
0800 1111

Housing helplines

There are helplines available if you need help with housing:

- **Shelter -0808 800 4444**
- **Choices -0800 917 9948**
- **Victim Support -0808 168 9111**

AWARD WINNING M B Farms

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OBSERVER DEADLINE

MONDAY 25th April

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Our annual rates for advertising in 12 editions are:

A whole page £400

A half page £200

A quarter page £120

Our advertising year starts in April and new adverts for less than 12 months duration will be charged on a pro-rata basis. Rates for ads smaller than a quarter page will be given on application.

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.

Sudoku - Are you up for the challenge?

						3	8	5
	1		2					
		5		7				
4						1		
	9							
5						7	3	
	2		1					
		4					9	

Patrik Says ...

Until 2024 we will still have yearly elections by a third across Maidstone and as every year, we will be in Purdah by the time the printed versions of this newsletter will be published.

Oh, I just learned that we are no longer supposed to call the pre-election period *Purdah*. Purdah is now being deemed an offensive word because it originates from the Hindustani word *pardā* meaning "curtain" or "veil", which describes the ensuring of women's modesty from the world of men.

Anyway, the *pre-election period between the announcement of an election and the formation of the newly-elected local government* affects anybody in government and requires us, those councillors who are not up for election, to remain politically impartial and not to make any announcements about any new or controversial initiatives that could be seen to be advantageous to any candidates or parties in the forthcoming election ... so here is my April newsletter :

UNESCO Global Geopark

The Kent-wide AONB Unit and their colleagues in France were given the green light to seek Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark status for the Kent Downs AONB together with our neighbouring protected landscape, the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale (PNRCMO). This marks an important development in our UNESCO Sites Across the Channel (USAC) project. <https://kentdowns.org.uk/our-projects/unesco-sites-of-the-channel/>

Contractor Opportunity for Council Work

The Council would like any local businesses, big and small, to bid for their contracts. By registering on the eTendering platform, businesses can take part in upcoming and future tenders. It is completely free to register and there is no obligation to take part in tenders, you can pick the opportunities that best suit you. It's a great way for any business to look for potential work and the portal includes opportunities across the whole of Kent. To register, simply visit www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk and select the 'Supplier Registration' option from the grey box.

Maidstone Welcomes Very Special Dinosaur Guests

Fremlin Walk and The Mall have free family fun throughout the Easter holidays:

2nd – 16th April, Dino Egg Trail

Find 20 large colourful Dino eggs around town, collect a letter on each to help spell out a small sentence; crack the code and hand in the completed form at the Museum for a gift. PLUS be entered into a free prize draw to win 1 of 100 Spike Dinosaur soft toys (sponsored by Maidstone Museums' Foundation). The eggs are designed by fantastic local artists and schools. Trail forms are available from Maidstone Museum and participating businesses.

Saturday 9th April – Meet the Dinosaurs

Animatronic Spinosaurus based on Fremlin Walk and Animatronic T Rex based in The Mall but keep your eyes peeled for him in town. Meet Rangers with Baby Velo Raptors and see the Jurassic Buggy

Enjoy the Dino Craft bar inside The Mall (9th – 16th)

Follow the Dinosaurs on social media to keep up to date with events in Maidstone:

Twitter: @onemaidstone / Instagram: @onemaidstone / Facebook: @OneMaidstoneKent

The Maidstone Borough in Bloom Competition

It's a great myth that in the North Downs we have only farmers and forests and that our 'gardening' is only being done with big heavy machinery. Indeed we have some very keen and creative gardeners in our ward and I like to encourage anyone who enjoys creating beautiful gardens or pots to enter the Maidstone Borough in Bloom Competition, which opens on Thursday 21 April. Judges will start inspecting all gardens, pots or allotments from 4 July giving residents and businesses plenty of time to create their stunning displays.

The Council works with Coolings Garden Centre in Bearsted and Leeds Castle to run the competition and awards ceremony, which will take place towards the end of July. There are lots of categories and entries are welcomed from residents, businesses and community groups.

Anyone entering will be given a £5 voucher to spend at Coolings.

A trophy will be awarded for the winner in each category. All winners in each category will also receive a prize of a £25 Coolings gift voucher as well as two adult annual tickets for Leeds Castle.

To enter, please complete a Coolings Garden Centre entry form through the Maidstone Borough Council website: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/maidstone-borough-in-bloom> And remember, gardening competitions are not just for the townies!

Effects of Fly-Tipping

Throughout the winter I cleaned up some woodland by collecting dead wood, only for the area to be devastated again by the recent storm. Oh, nature has some funny ways to keep us busy! I particularly noticed some foreign sling-weed, which climbs up trees and strangles them dead. This stuff is nasty! It's not like native ivy, which causes no harm, is pretty and provides a habitat for insects and birds. The remarkable thing is that this sling-weed was mainly found in areas of woodland close to the highway. I conclude: it must be the unforeseen effect of fly-tipping. Especially at this time of the year, let's be vigilant and report ALL fly-tipping: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/street-care-and-cleaning/litter,-bins-and-street-sweeping/report-fly-tipping>

Retail Apprenticeships

Tesco informs me that they directly employ 47,967 people and support a further 91,167 jobs through their 2,003 local suppliers. They have offered 577 apprenticeships in the South East and plan to offer more; the apprenticeship programme recruits on a rolling basis. Further details about how people can apply for this can be found on their website: <https://www.tesco-programmes.com/apprenticeships/>

And Finally ...

Last month I reported about the planning application in Binbury. The envisaged committee date never took place. By going to press the 31st of March is mooted but, being such a controversial site, it may well be that this date will be vacated until after the May elections.

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
Dancing Club	Brian Crisp	01634 231886
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
Petanque 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	Ann Rich - email: ann.stockbury@btinternet.com	07718 070807
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