



Ulcombe Annual Parish Report 2011/12

www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk

*Produced by
Ulcombe Parish Council June 2012
(Reports from the Annual Parish Meeting held April 2012)*

Ulcombe Parish Council: Chairman's Report

In the past 12 months the Parish Council held meetings on 26 occasions. These were the 12 monthly meetings held here at 7.15pm on the second Tuesday of every month, plus 14 additional extraordinary meetings convened when we had to submit responses to planning applications, consultation documents or evaluate tenders. It has been a busy year with long agendas to wade through, but in the main we have managed to close the meeting at 10.30pm to be fair to those councillors who are in full time work. In the previous year there were a total of only 20 meetings.

Attendance by councillors has been very good and we have also been able to have representatives attend external consultation meetings, seminars, training sessions, and when necessary, the Borough Council Planning Committee.

The main issues that we have been working on that have generated the extra work emanated from the Coalition's Department for Communities and Local Government. These are the Draft Proposals for the National Planning Policy Framework, the Localism Bill and the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. We have also been responding to the Borough Council's Core Strategy Document. Thankfully the Ulcombe Parish Plan of 2006 is approved as the basis of the new initiative for Neighbourhood Plans. This is because the Ulcombe community has not called for a reappraisal of the relevant sections of the Parish Plan.

Another major matter of concern has been the reduction in the Concurrent Functions income to parishes from the Borough Council and its effect on the parish precept, described in the April edition of Ulcombe Village News. At this

point I would like to thank in particular Peter Titchener for the work he has done in reading and drafting responses in relation to these important issues. Similarly a thank you to Bridget for attending all manner of inter-parish meetings where the associated networking by parish clerks can be very useful.

Crime

I was hoping that our Community Police Officer or Community Police Support Officer could come this evening but I trust that they are on duty somewhere and could not swap a shift. I think it fair to say that the level of crime in Ulcombe continues to be low (touch wood) although there has been a small number of break-ins during the past few weeks. It is important that all crimes and attempted crimes are reported to the police as the cover we receive reflects the level of crime reported. Assuming it is not an emergency, the number to call for the local neighbourhood policing team to report anything suspicious is 01622 604390 and to report an actual crime 01622 690690.

Highways

Potholes created in the past winter were fewer than last year's and were repaired more quickly. The road surface in The Street was top-dressed and the gullies blocked by the excess chippings were eventually cleared after repeated requests. The 'gateways' at each 30mph sign were installed and we are grateful to County Councillor Jenny Whittle for the funding from her devolved community budget. Sadly the installations are not as robust in their construction as we had been led to expect. There will be a report from the Speedwatch team later this evening. Also, disappointingly, the

voluntary street litter clearing initiative had to stop because of difficulties with insurance required to meet the health and safety requirements. On the face of it this seemed a good example of a community initiative in line with the ideals of the Big Society banner.

Planning

Maidstone Borough Council consulted us on 25 planning applications in the year. Of these the Borough over-ruled the parish council's recommendation on 4 applications, mainly concerning travellers, whilst decisions are awaited on 8 others.

Election on 3 May

The election will only be for one of the 2 Borough Council posts representing Headcorn Ward. 3 departures from Ulcombe Parish Council will be filled by 3 new councillors and with 7 nominations for the 7 seats, the election will be uncontested.

Joyce Braggs is standing down after a large number of years' service with an impeccable attendance record at our meetings. She has brought wisdom and a great sense of fairness to our discussions and must have been an excellent teacher. Jim Noble has been a real asset since he joined 4 years ago with his objective, common sense views and generous practical abilities. This is also my swansong on the Parish Council after an innings of, I believe 12 years in the chair. I have enjoyed the experience and am not giving up because of a premonition of a serious attack of death, but changes in my personal circumstances tell me that it is time to step aside. I am sure the new parish council will be a strong team and I wish them well.

GEOFF BEALE, CHAIRMAN ULCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council useful information

Members

Peter Titchener (Chairman):

telephone 01622 842655

Trevor Sharp (Vice Chairman)

Hazel Bingham

Albert Evans

Paul McCreery

John Watton

John Wilkins

Bridget Samuelson (Parish Clerk):

telephone 890912, email:

bridget.sam@thurstonhelis.co.uk

Meetings

Our scheduled meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month, starting at 7.15pm. The public and press are welcome to attend but the meeting will be closed for the duration of any confidential items. Additional (extraordinary) meetings to discuss planning, finance or other urgent matters are held where a deadline needs to be met.

Notice of all meetings along with agendas, minutes, financial information (and more!) is published on the notice-board and also on the parish website:

www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk

(please access all information via "Site Pages")

The parish council is consulted on all planning applications for Ulcombe which have been submitted to Maidstone Borough Council. Please check with the clerk when an application is due to be discussed if you wish to be in attendance. A site visit will usually be carried out beforehand to help the parish council to assess the plans. If you submit comments relating to a planning application to MBC and want the parish council to take them into account too, please forward a copy to the parish clerk.

Ulcombe Parish Council Finance Report 2011/12

<i>Summary of receipts</i>	£
opening reserves brought forward from the previous year	14,766.00
precept	9,199.00
reserve account interest	3.00
concurrent functions grant	4,380.00
VAT recovered for 2011/12	1,323
Total income	29,671.00
<i>Summary of payments</i>	
office and staff costs	4,019.00
insurance	1,700.00
audit	255.00
hire of hall for meetings	610.00
association membership	413.00
consultancy fees (Joint Parishes Group)	255.00
training courses	525.00
Annual Report	115.00
Information Commissioner notification	35.00
travel expenses	33.00
recreation ground/car park	4,250.00
pavilion	1,179.00
grants to organisations	1,414.00
broadband grants	2,456.00
VAT paid in 2011/12	1,245.00
Provision for rounding of figures	1.00
Total payments	18,505.00
Closing balance	11,166.00

Included in each expenditure heading:

Office and staff: clerk wages, office supplies,

Audit: internal, external

Association memberships: Kent Association of Local Councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Society of Local Council Clerks, Kent County Playing Fields Association

Upkeep recreation ground/carpark: litter/bin clearance, strimming, mowing, hedge-cutting, notices, driveway repairs, car park/play area electricity, play equipment inspection, trees inspections, play area/carpark lights, wasp nest removal, first aid/sharps boxes, carpark markings,

Pavilion: alarm service, electrical works, fire extinguishers inspection, electrics inspection, electricity, water rates, CCTV equipment

Grants: village hall (oil tank), Remembrance Day wreath, Ulcombe PCC (water heater) Ulcombe Primary School (Jubilee mugs), Royal Wedding Street Party

Broadband: connection grants to households

For more detailed information please see document entitled "Minutes of meeting held 10 April 2011-12 income & expenditure assessment" which can be viewed on the parish council website (click on *Site Pages* then *Minutes*) or contact the clerk for a copy.

Kent County Council Report

Highways

Highway repairs were now being carried out by Enterprise instead of Ringway and they would undertake improvements to village gateways where these had been installed to a lesser specification than had been planned for. The salting service during the winter weather was considered to have been an improvement on the previous year. Parishes could request additional bins from their County Councillor if these were needed. Parishes were encouraged to respond to the forthcoming Freight Transport

Strategy consultation especially as this covered the inappropriate use of rural routes by HGVs.

Council tax

It was noted that this had been frozen for 2012/13 for the second consecutive year. The difficulty for parishes to raise funds for their services was acknowledged as, with the loss of so many grants, they now, largely, only had their precepts to draw on. KCC had to save £97 million in 2011-12 and further savings of £95 million in the current financial year. Whilst it

was difficult to avoid an impact being made on front line services, great efforts were being made to prevent this happening. Sadly, some 1,500 redundancies were required over 4 years.

Education

Cllr J Whittle had been working with Ulcombe CE Primary School to bring the new building project to fruition. As part of its efforts to improve youth unemployment, KCC had established a fund to help create 1,000 apprenticeships for young people in Kent.

JENNY WHITTLE, COUNCILLOR FOR MAIDSTONE RURAL EAST

Ulcombe Village Newsletter

The accounts for the Newsletter are as follows:

Expenses	£
Postage	22.32
Paper	272.81
Lease of photocopier, inc insurance through ING Lease (UK) Ltd	378.78
Toner and maintenance by Kent Photocopier Group @0.852p per A4 page	478.86
Editor's expenses	50.00
Total	1,202.77
Income	
Subscriptions including postal	793.50
Advertising	699.20
Total	1,492.70
Profit 2011	£289.93
Bank balance at 1/1/12	362.48
Cash carried forward from 2012	10.20
Cash to carry forward from 2012	50.37

The Newsletter is now making a small profit as it is using the school photocopier on very generous terms. It is hoped to give surplus funds to village groups if possible and the small policy committee will decide how to distribute the money.

There have been no complaints from the readership regarding content of the Newsletter but accounts of interesting activities (by individuals or groups), photographs, etc are always welcome from residents.

The team of volunteers who deliver the Newsletter each month in all weathers are thanked as is Mr Hampton, the Headteacher of Ulcombe Primary School, for his support in allowing the committee to use the school's facilities to produce the Newsletter. Finally special thanks go to Leon Holmes as Editor.

PHILIP EASTON, TREASURER
ULCOMBE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

Maidstone Borough Council Headcorn Ward Members' Reports

The significant achievements of Maidstone Borough Council over the last year had recently been highlighted and included the improvements to the museum and its excellent new extension, the extensive renovations to the high street, the improvements to Mote Park, Maidstone's position as 8th best town in the country (according to the survey by the Halifax) and its part to be played in the forthcoming Olympic Torch Relay.

However, it was noted that in the rural areas there were a number of concerns, including the ongoing need to provide suitable accommodation for gypsies and travellers. 15 new pitches were to be established but this still left an immediate unmet need for 57 pitches.

Landowners had been approached for additional appropriate sites but it was going to be a difficult task to provide sufficient numbers. There was a preference on the part of gypsies and

travellers to settle in the Weald but the council was seeking to establish pitches more evenly throughout the borough.

Maidstone Borough Council had been concentrating on trying to save money and had set up a system of back office sharing with other councils as one measure. The need to make substantial cut backs would continue for the foreseeable future.

Litter clearance was an issue in some areas. It was noted that the aim was to keep main roads clear with more minor roads being litter picked less frequently. It was hoped that the problem could largely be contained by deploying resources in this way.

Citizens Advice Bureau operated a valuable outreach service at Headcorn every third Friday in the month at Headcorn library. No appointments were necessary and residents from the surrounding area were encouraged to use the service.

JENNY GIBSON

One of the major concerns of the rural areas was the need to meet the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers. The new Traveller Policy specified that sites had to be in defined development areas. Maidstone Borough Council had been awarded a grant of £1.3 million for the provision of 15 official sites (pitches). A scheme is to be introduced whereby sites would be sold or rented out and the income used to cover the provision of further lawful sites.

It was hoped that this would see an end to unlawful sites being established with retrospective planning consents then being granted on appeal because of the unmet need by the borough council. Temporary permissions were currently being given for unlawful sites and these would be replaced with accommodation on official sites as they became available.

RICHARD THICK

Ulcombe Dramatic Amateurs Society (UDAS)

After the highly successful productions of Terry Pratchett's *The Weird Sisters* in 2010 and the *Murder Mystery, Murder Backstage* in 2011, the drama society, UDAS, took a well earned rest and a year off. We will be starting up activities

soon with an aim towards a new production in early 2013. All details are still to be finalised, but sufficient to say another hilarious and convivial show is anticipated. Our wonderful Chairman Rosemary Caswell has decided to step down and will be replaced by the equally

wonderful Mimi Humphreys. We are still actively recruiting for new members, so anyone who wants to release their inner performer should contact Mimi on: mimi.humphrey@yahoo.com.

PIPPA EVANS
DIRECTOR UDAS

Ulcombe Church of England Primary School:

What has Happened in the Last Twelve Months at Ulcombe

The majority of this report has been written by children from Year 6. We hope you enjoy finding out about things we have done.

"We have looked back over the last twelve months and thought about what has happened here in school. The first topic we learnt about was the Royal Wedding. At the same time as the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton we were writing reports, so we made a newspaper all about it.

"Soon after that we were thinking about everything our mothers do for us. For the Mothering Sunday assembly each class showed why mums are so special – we changed the words of Delilah and sang to them! At the Easter Service all of the children took part in telling the Easter story through song, poetry and mime (because we were doing silent plays at the time). Next the school football went to the Lenham tournament and we came 4th, which was great for our small school. In the league we were runners-up, which was amazing. For the third year we were joined by children from Platts Heath and John Mayne Primary Schools for our Residential Adventure. We went to Osmington Bay in May last year and had a great time making new

friends and facing new challenges.

"On Sports Day we had lots of fun and races. There was also the Summer Fayre with the stocks! We went to see The Jungle Book at Tunbridge Wells soon afterwards. Some of us got to meet the cast afterwards, and they gave us some great pointers for our summer production. This was called Zoom, which is a modern version of the Tortoise and the Hare. It was great to perform and the audiences obviously loved it as much as us. To celebrate the end of the year, and those moving to secondary school, we had our End of Year Disco and Leavers' Barbeque, followed the next day by our Leavers' Service at All Saints Church.

"We learnt about the sea and transport in the autumn with some of us finding out about the Titanic. The oldest children went to the Chatham dockyard, learning about different types of boats, making rope and visiting a special exhibition all about the famous White Star liner, which sank 100 years ago. The younger children went to Hastings to the Aquarium, Fisherman's Museum and Lifeboat station. As part of our work on the sea we even had a pirate day.

"We had Funky Footwear Friday with all the money going to

Kent Air Ambulance. We have done this every year because the Air Ambulance does so much to help save lives. We then had our Harvest Festival, when we gave a lot of food to help those in need in the Maidstone area.

"In November we had our amazing fireworks display – it was a great evening and FUS raised lots of money. Our annual Remembrance Assembly was next. We had some adults from the village with us as well for this special assembly. Then we had Children in Need, when we each dressed up as a famous person and we played bingo, as we were 'showing our spots' to raise money. In Road Safety Week we learnt about how to stay safe. The oldest children had another trip. This time we went to London and went on lots of types of transport and we went to Ashfield House. This is where London Underground staff are trained, and we all got the chance to drive a train ... simulator. All of us went on a trip to The Bluebell Railway, where we met Father Christmas and travelled on steam trains.

"We had Ofsted inspectors coming to visit us and they agreed with us that our school does lots of good things. They also said that our school is getting better

and that the grown-ups know what needs to be done next. A book fair came to our school and we bought lots of books, which meant that the school got lots of books for free. Soon after we had the Christmas Fayre and children made cakes, decorations and gifts to sell. There were many other activities and the FUS raised lots of money again. This was followed a week later by our Christmas Service, when we all worked hard to tell the story of the first Christmas.

"In the Spring our football team played several matches and did quite well. Our team from last year were nominated as Team of the Year at the Maidstone Youth Sport Achievement Awards. It was great to go along and be part of the awards ceremony, even though we did not win this time.

"FUS organised a St Valentine's Disco for us in February – we enjoyed dancing and the sweets! We also had some visitors in school. We were taught about Irish dancing and, on a different day, Caribbean music. These were great fun and we had never done them before. Year 6 went along to a theatre workshop all about drugs, to help us know how to keep out of danger. Owlets had a film premiere of their animation project. It was really good and really funny. To help them learn about dinosaurs they went on a visit to Maidstone Museum, looking at dinosaur bones and fossils.

"The twelve months ended with our most recent activities. We flew kites for Sport Relief, which has now raised more than £50million altogether. (This is from people all over Britain, not just us!) Many of Tawny Owls were again on a Residential Trip, this time to Little Canada on the Isle of Wight. We went with the same to schools and had a great time again. It was good meeting friends we knew from the last trip, and making more new friends. We had different activities – Dragon Boating was one of our favourites. We got back just a few days before Easter, just in time for our Easter Service at All Saints.

"Thank you to everyone who has come along to our events and helped raise money for the school. We have a great time this year and we hope that everyone who comes to Ulcombe has as good a time as us."

As an additional note from me, the Library project is still moving forward, edging closer and closer to fruition. The issues surrounding the sale of the land are almost all resolved, so that this can be placed on the market. Once KCC have sold the land we will be able to progress with the extension.

I would, as ever, like to express my thanks and that of the whole staff team to everyone from within the school, church and wider communities who have supported us in so many different ways. From helping listen to children

read to lending a hand at one of the Fayres or from offers of help in the snow to coming along to the Friends' Dinners, we remain extremely grateful.

The actions of each individual, however significant or however small they may seem to you, help to make our great school what it is today and what it will be tomorrow. Particular thanks must go to the staff and governors for their unstinting efforts to help the children be the best that they can be, and to FUS, who have raised many thousands of pounds during the five years I have been at Ulcombe. The outdoor classroom, due to be erected in the coming days, is another great example of their phenomenal support and hard work. I must, of course, also thank the children from Year 6 who wrote most of my report for me!

We look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming events, including our next Friends' Dinner on Friday 1st June, when we will be celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Sports Day and Summer Fayre on Saturday 23rd June and our Summer Ball on Saturday 14th July. If you have any questions, or have any offers of help or support that you would like to make, please do not hesitate to come and talk to one of us. Best wishes,

VINCENT HAMPTON
HEADTEACHER, ULCOMBE PRIMARY
SCHOOL

Ulcombe Friendship Club

As always, it has been a very full and enjoyable year. Our membership continues to grow, and it is especially good to have a contingent from our neighbouring village of Kingswood.

It is invidious to single out individuals for thanks, but I would like especially to thank Meg Cannings for all she does, month by month, in bringing and taking away all the crockery and table cloths and washing (and ironing) ready for the next meeting. Melanie Ford has always been a huge support, and Pat Davis has been invaluable as the Club's treasurer, keeping us all on the straight and narrow!

Our thanks go to all the other members of the committee who have committed time and effort to keep the Club running successfully. The Club is run by a small committee – most with specific responsibilities: chairman, secretary, treasurer, deputy treasurer, tea rota, publicity, contact with the sick and bereaved, representatives from Kingswood and two others.

The feedback is that everyone finds that the Club lives up to its name – that it is a very friendly club.

During the year, we lost Gladys Mouncer after a long illness which she bore with great dignity and cheerfulness. Our sympathy went to her husband, Syd. More recently, we have lost Cliff Playford after a long struggle with Parkinson's Disease. He was unable to get to the village hall, but always welcomed us at his home for Garden Parties when Dorothy was still with us. Our sympathy goes to his three daughters.

We have had a full year with speakers from The Peggy Wood Foundation, and by Colonel Martin on his early life, Gordon Johnson on an unusual view of Kent, Stewart Gardner on Old London, Alan Stockwell on Puppets, Piers and Pantomimes, Ann Chance on Saddle Sore in Montana and Molly on a hundred years of family weddings.

We have had a Christmas Party, a New Year Lunch at the Ridge Golf Club, a Garden Party at The Old Dairy and two outings. The first was

to Merrimans and the Bluebell Railway where, I think, we tried to fit in too much. We then had an extremely successful and interesting visit to the Royal British Legion Factory at Richmond. This year, we had three coffee mornings – partly to raise some extra funds, but also to have enjoyable get-togethers. The first was at my home, The Old Dairy, the next at the home of Pat Davis and the third at Meg Cannings'.

One new venture is our Cream Tea and Sale in Ulcombe Village Hall on Saturday 19th May. We hope you will all support it in one way or another. The funds we raise will help us to keep the cost of outings as low as possible. We will be having a cake stall, raffle, bring and buy and hopefully outside stalls. Cream teas will be on sale and you are all urged to buy your tickets in advance.

Thank you all for continuing to support the Club. We look forward to a happy year.

MOLLY POULTER, CHAIRMAN, ULCOMBE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Ulcombe Ballroom Dancing Club

This has been running for a number of years now and has some fifteen couples attending regularly. The members have greatly appreciated the recent new facilities provided in the village

hall and foyer.

The class is geared to all abilities and new recruits are welcome to join at any time – the steps are explained during each session so it is easy to pick up the dances. Ideally, members need to come in

couples as it is not always possible to pair up individual dancers.

Each year there is a trip to Jersey where a ballroom is taken over by the club – it is quite an event!

ROD DAVIES, ORGANISER, ULCOMBE BALLROOM DANCING CLUB

Ulcombe History Society

Though we are a small society, I think we have had a very successful and enjoyable year. John, our Treasurer, assures me that we are financially viable, and our membership is growing. The Society has been organised by a hard working committee comprising John Moore, Geoff Beale, David Easton, John Ware and Peter Titchener. Joyce Braggs, who organised the raffles over several years, had to resign half way through the year. We are very grateful for all her help.

The year saw four evenings when we had visiting speakers – all were excellent though their subjects were very different. We started the year with Albert Evans, who lives in the village. His talk on the Zulu Wars was fascinating. Then Steward Gardner gave us a very interesting talk on Old London, showing pictures of all sorts of odd corners of the city which some of us had never seen before.

Sheila Boyd's talk on the American heiresses made us realise how much the aristocratic society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century owed to the influx of American money. The talk would have been enhanced if she had had

some slides of the heiresses to show us. In his talk on the History of Folklore, Ernie Warner concentrated on the Christmas customs we take for granted, explaining their origins, and their significance to our ancestors.

We had three outings, all hugely enjoyable. The first was to Bletchley Park where we had an excellent guide – a former Major General – who took us round all the different buildings and showed us the complicated Enigma machine which had been rebuilt. Coffee was provided on arrival, and lunch in the middle of the tour.

An evening visit to Godinton Park proved equally enjoyable. We were taken round the house which has only been open to the public in the last few years. It was in private hands and was handed over to a trust when the owner died. The gardens were beautiful, especially the walled and colonnaded garden.

Our weekend visit in September was voted a great success. We went first to Warwick Castle – now run by Madame Tussauds. One of the largest castles in England, there were many separate parts of the castle to enjoy including the great hall, the ramparts, and separate displays of

Edwardian life and mediaeval life. There were falconry demonstrations, archery, and a whole host of separate attractions.

After an overnight stay in Kenilworth, we visited Kenilworth Castle – a ruin, but some felt it more atmospheric than Warwick Castle. We then moved on to an exquisite mediaeval moated house called Baddesley Clinton. The interior was furnished and interesting, but what we all found fascinating were the priest holes. The owners of the house were Roman Catholics and successfully sheltered a number of priests in the sewage drains!

This coming Saturday we are going by coach to Chichester Cathedral and Fishbourne Roman Palace. There is still some space on the coach if anyone wishes to come at a cost of £30, departing from Lodge Gardens at 8am. We are currently planning a 3 day trip to Versailles, Chartres Cathedral and Fontainebleau from Saturday 14th September to Sunday 16th September. The cost, including the 2 nights in a hotel, will be between £199 and £213. Anyone interested should contact me, Molly Poulter, or John Moore.

MOLLY POULTER,
CHAIRMAN, ULCOMBE HISTORY SOCIETY

Ulcombe Cricket Club

Due to wet weather and lack of members we played about 9 games, 4 of which we played at home. I would like to

thank the whole team for making games happen, even when some weeks we only had 8 men. But when we had a full squad we won

the game. I would like to thank David Drane, Neil Parkin and Darren Edwards for the teas. I hope we have a better season this year.

TREVOR SHARP
CAPTAIN, ULCOMBE CRICKET CLUB

All Saints Church, Ulcombe

Church building

This past year we have focused our attention on making certain aspects of the church more user friendly. We began with the Tower Room. The west door has been made draught free and the room painted in pastel shades. The skylight was cleaned bringing more light in the room and allowing a view of the stained glass window. New furniture and furnishing have been added making this a very pleasant space for meetings, choir practice etc.

In the main body of the church the old pews have been moved to the side and several new carpets have been purchased. Chairs and coffee tables make this area a good place for socialising after the church service.

In the Vestry, the unused vestments have been removed from the cupboards and stored in airtight bags. The cupboards have been shelved and this has allowed us to de-clutter the room. We have been fortunate in obtaining a £100 donation from the Parish Council towards a wall-mounted water heater. This has now been installed which will make providing refreshments very much easier.

We were delighted to receive a donation for the replacement of the flagpole. This installation was very timely with the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee and Olympics this year. We will be very proud to fly the flag for Ulcombe.

A major challenge this year has been the quinquennial review. We have received reports for the electrical installations, lightning conductor and trees. The final report from Andrew Claque, the architect is due shortly. Unfortunately we are very aware that their view will impose a very heavy financial burden on this ancient church. We will be applying for funds from such bodies as English Heritage as and when appropriate but we know that this will be a difficult year and a challenge for us all. We pray that we will get there in the end.

Sadly, we have been the target of lead thieves who have stolen a quantity of lead from the roof above the Lady Chapel. This will further add to our financial difficulties. We currently await quotes for repairs.

We have now placed a wall safe in the wall opposite the car park and have put up posters for the attention of those using the car park. We are hopeful that this will raise some revenue. William Tassell has very kindly put up lighting in the car park. This will be of particular value for evening church activities.

Opening the church on a daily basis has proved problematic of late. We have lost some of our volunteers for a variety of reasons and finding their replacements is proving very difficult. It is our intention to see the church opened again and we will renew our efforts to find more people after the Easter period. Using the

church for other activities is also a good way to ensure the church remains open.

Activities

A harvest supper was held in October. This was well attended and enjoyed by all present. We are very grateful to those who organised the event, did the catering, manned the bar and contributed to the raffle.

Our prime concern this year has been to find a wider use for the church. We have met with individuals from within the community to generate ideas. This has resulted in some very good ideas, a few of which have already been implemented. These have included:

NHS health checks for the 50-74 year olds. This was made possible with the aid of Age Concern UK. We had the services of a qualified nurse and a life style adviser. We offered this service for four consecutive Wednesdays and had a very good response to this. All who attended were very positive about the experience.

We have started a second hand book service and it is beginning to attract some interest. We are hopeful that this will grow.

The Sutton Valence Choral Society will be performing Haydn's Creation on 22nd April. Tickets have already sold out.

A flower festival is planned for 27th, 28th, 29th April. Several groups and individuals have



Ulcombe Pre-School

The pre-school has continued to operate for four mornings a week in the Ulcombe village hall, and is open from 9.15am to 1.00pm Monday to Thursday, which accounts for the KCC funding for three and four year olds of 15 hours per week.

We began term one in September 2011 with eight children, only one of whom attended the full fifteen hours of operation. Our child numbers have currently increased to nine, with children attending a variety of hours. We will lose three children at the end of this academic year due to movement to primary education, however we may commence September 2012 with approximately ten children, due to siblings starting. These regular fluctuations in child numbers and attending hours continues to mean that our 'income' is rather unpredictable, never allowing much room for development of the pre-school.

The management committee has remained stable this year. Myself, as the Chair, and our Treasurer, no

longer have a child attending the pre-school, and so we are looking for a new Chair and Treasurer. We currently have seven committeemembers, including the aforementioned officer positions, which satisfies our requirement of a quorum of five members. We continue to welcome more committee members, whether or not directly linked to the pre-school. All of the work in support of the pre-school by the committee members and parent helpers is carried out voluntarily, and I thank everyone for their hard work. The pre-school will be holding its AGM in May.

Corinne Giles continues to lead as the pre-school Supervisor, and Sonia Crosbie has successfully passed her NVQ level 3, which also qualifies her as a Supervisor. We have two full time members of staff, and one in a 'cover' position to accommodate illness and training. This continues to provide us with consistency and flexibility to suit the pre-school's requirements.

The pre-school is still currently

trying to organise a permanent advertising banner, as we feel strongly that this would significantly increase the profile and awareness of our organisation. This sign is almost in place, and we are awaiting confirmation from the village primary school for acceptance of the design.

The pre-school has continued to fundraise throughout another year, including a Christmas Open Morning, an Easter coffee morning, and a forthcoming cream tea tombola in association with Ulcombe Friendship Club. Fundraising is a critical means of keeping the pre-school in operation. Huge thanks go to Ulcombe Parish Council, who have given the pre-school £200 to help with its operation. Thanks also go to Councillor Jenny Whittle, who has allocated us £500 from her 2012-2013 budget.

We feel that the pre-school is an important part of village community and an essential link between home and school for our children as they grow. We thank everybody who continues to support Ulcombe Pre-School.

MELISSA DALLAMORE
CHAIRMAN ULCOMBE PRE-SCHOOL

◀already declared an interest in putting in a display. We are hopeful that the attendance will be good. Jean Davis and her team have been working extremely hard to make this a success.

Other events planned for this year include:

BBQ & Beacon lighting on 4th

June, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The Tower Beacon has been kindly donated by Ulcombe Parish Council.

A series of concerts, beginning in September, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the installation of the church organ.

A Harvest celebration weekend

in September to include a farmer's market, a harvest supper and a harvest festival service, all to be held in the church.

We are very grateful for the support we receive from the community in all of our endeavours.

JOHN GOODE & RITA STRUTT
CHURCH WARDENS, ULCOMBE PCC

Ulcombe Village Hall

Although we have undertaken less renovations than in the previous year, we have still been busy dealing with thermostat and boiler problems. We have also decorated and re-carpeted the lobby and repaired and maintained the roof and replaced the stolen flashing.

The hall continues to be used on a regular basis by the preschool, badminton club, history society, friendship club, two dance clubs, keep fit, parish council meetings and the stitching club. The hall was hired by the Borough Council for elections and was also hired for several children's parties, a christening party and a wedding reception. We also raised money from the hire of tables and chairs.

The committee continues to organise events for fundraising and last year we held a garage sale, two quiz nights and the annual Macmillan coffee morning. In the coming year we are planning a street party for Queen's Diamond Jubilee, a bingo night to be run in conjunction with the PTA and our usual quiz nights.

Plea for help!

All committee members are thanked for their hard work throughout the year but a plea goes out for new members as a number of long standing members have recently retired. We also need volunteers to come along and help out at fund raising events – all are welcome to join us!

MARIA REVELL, CHAIRMAN
ULCOMBE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

Ulcombe Speedwatch

The team has not been in action during the last year and is now looking for a new leader as the present co-ordinator, Mrs Crosbie, is moving away from the village. Anyone interested would need to enthuse a new group of volunteers about the usefulness of the work – it can mean getting cold and bored for an hour or two and sometimes feels like a rather lonely and isolated task!

Whilst some residents have shown their approval by hooting or waving, others have been amongst those speeding and volunteers have sometimes even received verbal abuse or hand gestures. It is important that volunteers feel their contribution is well supported by other village residents, and backed up by other action. Perhaps the Parish Council might make links with campaigns against

speeding through villages in Kent, or launch a petition to the Highways Authority for more action to 'calm' traffic.

The new signs for the village are considered to be a step forward but perhaps do not make much difference to those who regularly speed down the road but at least no one has any excuse not to know the speed limit now. As Speed-watch has only been active once or twice a month when the weather has been suitable, it is quite difficult to judge its effectiveness.

The Parish Council past support has been noted and the members are urged to raise awareness of Speedwatch for the future. All existing information is available to be handed over to a new co-ordinator to take this forward.

REPORT FROM NOTES PROVIDED BY
CHRISTINE CROSBIE, CO-ORDINATOR

Community Policing Report

Between 25/04/2011 and 23/04/2012 there have been 51 reported crimes in Ulcombe. They are broken down as follows:

- Theft – miscellaneous, including theft by "finding": 12
- Vehicle interference – motor vehicle: 3
- Attempted burglary dwelling with intent to steal: 1
- Section 39 – Assault by beating (battery): 2
- Criminal damage to property valued under £5,000: 10
- Attempted theft of conveyance other than motor vehicle/pedal cycle: 2
- Theft of motor vehicle: 2
- Burglary other than dwelling with intent to steal: 5
- Theft from motor vehicle: 4
- Fraud by false representation – Fraud Act 2006: 3
- Arson: 3
- Assault a person thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm – Section 47: 2
- Possess a loaded shotgun in a public place: 1
- Possess a controlled drug of Class B – Cannabis/cannabis resin: 1
- Total = 51

This is a like for like for the period 25/04/2010 – 23/04/2011 also 51 reported crimes. There has been no increase in crimes reported or in fact a decrease.

PCSO ALAN BEECH
HEADCORN WARD PCSO