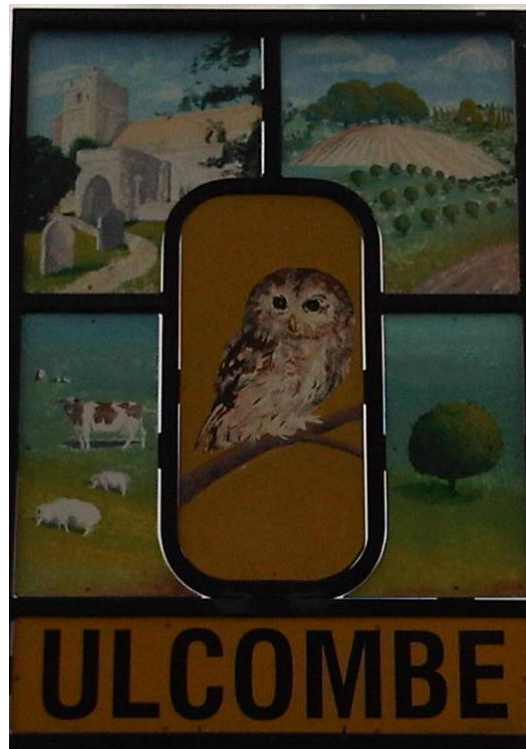


# ULCOMBE

## Annual Parish Report

### 2014/15

[www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk)



Produced by Ulcombe Parish Council  
June 2015  
(Reports from the Annual Parish Meeting held in April 2015)

## **ULCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL – Chairman’s Report – Mr Peter Titchener**

In the past year, April 2014 – March 2015, there have been 12 regular parish council meetings and 5 extra parish council meetings - a total of 17 meetings which is 2 less than last year.

### **The main issues dealt with by your parish council in the last 12 months were:**

- Local Plan - Maidstone Council’s call for development sites, particularly in Headcorn
- Highway problems – potholes, resurfacing and road closures, and kerbs in Chegworth road
- Solar farm proposals either side of Ulcombe road on Grade 2 and Grade 3 land
- Polytunnels ,orchards and reservoirs and screening safeguards
- The monitoring of traffic speed and HGVs.
- The proliferation of traveller sites in Headcorn Ward and in Ulcombe in particular
- Dog fouling - our Community Warden has been very active in putting up posters and getting the children at the school to give leaflets to their parents about dog fouling, and fines.
- Grants have been made to the Village Hall.
- Speedwatch recruitment for volunteers has been advertised again but we need more volunteers. Rhian Banham has taken charge of the new Speedwatch campaign and we are grateful to her for her efforts to date.
- Roadside litter is becoming a big problem. Our thanks to those of you who have organised litter collecting sessions in and around the village.
- We have a Village Diary on the Ulcombe Parish Council website. Please contact Liz to get your events posted. This helps others to avoid clashing dates.
- We are delighted that Headcorn youth teams are using our recreation ground for football. We are still trying to find a cricket team

### **Maintenance around the parish**

- The addition of two names to the War Memorial, and re-cleaning of the existing stonework in time for the anniversary of the start of the Great War.
- The painting of the football posts and the pavilion.
- Broken bollards on the recreation ground have been repaired
- The pavilion cess pit has been repaired, and a land drain installed, to avoid any overflow
- The decorative village sign has been cleaned, touched up, and re-erected.
- The purchase of one or two picnic tables for the recreation ground in the next few weeks
- The replacement of the Parish Council noticeboard next to the bus shelter

### **Parish Council**

First of all I want to thank Liz for settling in so quickly into her new job as our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. I also want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the parish council, to thank Tony Allen for his positive contribution to our deliberations in his short time as a parish councillor. Unfortunately he has had to resign as his job takes him away from Ulcombe for most of the week, and thus we now have one vacancy on the parish council. If anyone is interested, please contact Liz.

### **Maidstone’s Local Plan**

Maidstone Council’s housing target to 2031 has reduced to 16,300 because the Cabinet has taken some sites out of the Local Plan, including the Headcorn sites. KCC and other parish representative bodies want this total to reduce even further because of a lack of infrastructure.

The application for 220 houses between Millbank in Headcorn and Ulcombe Road, although taken out of the Local Plan by the Cabinet in Maidstone, is now before the Inspectorate because MBC hadn’t determined it in time. MBC’s opinion was to approve the application. The two access points to this site are on the Ulcombe road, and if the application is approved by the Inspectorate, we in Ulcombe can expect a larger volume of traffic coming through Ulcombe and the Chegworth road to reach Junction 8.

### **Chegworth Road**

This leads me to the problem of Chegworth road and the increasing amount of heavy traffic causing the banks to be eroded, and traffic jams with HGVs blocking the road. The situation will get worse because of all the development planned in the surrounding villages. Although there is a 7.5 tonne weight restriction in Chegworth road, it doesn’t apply for vehicles starting or finishing in Chegworth road, and there are always drivers who ignore the signs. We have agreed with Kent Highways to have the blue signs on the A20 (warning of the weight restriction ( as for Broomfield

road), and we have agreed to significantly narrow the junction with the A20, remove the traffic island, and have an earth bund by the large layby area to stop lorries and buses parking there. We hope a visually narrower Chegworth road will help deter those drivers who think it is a wide two way road. Jenny Whittle, our County Councillor has very generously agreed to fund some of the works. As this part of the Chegworth road is in Kingswood, we hope Kingswood parish Council will agree. I want to thank Jenny for her great help in funding these projects. It means a lot to a small parish like ours.

### **Crime**

There were 16 reported crimes in the year April 2014 –March 2015 excluding anti-social behaviour. This is nearly a 50% reduction compared with the total of 31 crimes in 2013/14. We are particularly pleased that our PCSO has managed to nip in the bud some incidents of youthful anti-social behaviour.

- It is important that people always get a crime report reference number when reporting a crime so that they are all properly logged.
- The police want all non – emergency calls to be made by dialling 101, and not 999 unless it is a genuine emergency.

### **Planning**

Ulcombe Parish Council is a consultee on planning issues, and Maidstone Borough Council consulted us on 26 planning applications. Of these, Ulcombe agreed 17 and refused 9.

The tree screening for the polytunnels is being planted now and the new reservoir east of Chestnut Close will be started in June. I would ask everyone to spread the word that swimming is forbidden in the reservoirs because still fresh water can be very cold just below the surface, causing cramp and drowning.

We are constantly under threat from unauthorised gypsy and traveller applications in open countryside.

Maidstone needs a 5 year housing land supply, a Local Plan, and more designated official traveller sites which will then allow MBC to oppose unwanted development, which can be upheld on appeal to the Inspectorate if the Local Planning Authority has no Local Plan.

Unfortunately neither of these goals has been achieved yet which leaves parishes open to unwanted housing applications and traveller pitch applications in open countryside.

We would like to thank our Borough Councillors for doing an excellent job in arguing our case with MBC. Together with the Joint Parishes Group and Kent Association of Local Councils, there is now a momentum to try and get a much more sensible joint policy for gypsy and traveller sites in the Borough.

## **PARISH COUNCIL USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **Members:**

Peter Titchener (Chairman)

Shellina Prendergast (Vice Chairman)

John Watton

Carole Brooks

Iain Moir

Mary Ann Lovegrove

Clerk: Liz McLaren (Tel: 07921 809161 or Email: [ulcombepc@outlook.com](mailto:ulcombepc@outlook.com))

**We currently have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. If you would like to have a say on what is happening within Ulcombe; if you want to contribute business or personal skills and expertise; if you want to represent the views of local people, then PLEASE DO contact the Clerk on the details above for further information.**

### **Meetings:**

Our scheduled meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month in Ulcombe Village Hall, 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 the meetings along with agendas, minutes, financial information and more, is published on the noticeboard and also on the parish website, [www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk).

## ULCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT 2014-2015

### Summary of Receipts

Opening reserves brought forward from previous year	16,655.98
Precept 14/15	18,032.00
Council tax base support grant	901.00
Football fees	290.00
Business account interest	3.16
Parish Services Scheme from MBC	2,281.00
Hall hire security deposit refund	100.00
VAT recovered for 2014/15	927.65
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>39,190.79</b>

### Summary of Payments

Office costs and staff costs	7,938.30
Publications, printing and advertising	331.00
Hall hire and subsistence	581.08
Association membership fees	466.32
Training courses	410.00
Finance and Insurance	1,076.14
Recreation Ground	1,986.00
Pavilion and utility bills	2,150.72
Play Equipment	311.00
Car Park and Village Hall	355.00
Extras and miscellaneous	1,576.07
VAT paid out in 2014/2015	939.62
<b>Total expenditure:</b>	<b>18,121.25</b>

**CLOSING BALANCE: 21,069.54**

### **BREAKDOWN OF PAYMENTS (included above)**

OFFICE AND STAFF COSTS - salary, HMRC, office supplies/equipment, telephone  
PUBLICATIONS, PRINTING, ADVERTISING - copies of local plan, Ulcombe Annual report  
HALL HIRE, SUBSISTENCE - Hire of Ulcombe/Headcorn village halls, refreshments  
ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES - KALC, SLCC, KCPFA, CPRE, ACRK  
TRAINING COURSES - inc. Annual Planning and Clerks' conferences  
FINANCE, INSURANCE - internal/external audit, IOC (data protection), annual insurance  
RECREATION GROUND - Grounds maintenance, emptying litter bins, tree and drainage works  
PAVILION - annual alarm/fire extinguisher checks, cesspit emptying, external decoration  
PLAY EQUIPMENT - annual safety check, painting of goal posts  
CAR PARK, VILLAGE HALL - maintenance work on hall path and guttering, replacement bollards  
EXTRAS, MISCELLANEOUS - village sign, war memorial, wreath, grants to other organisations

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL – Ward Member – Cllr Martin Round**

Cllr Round spoke briefly about the recurring problems with the Planning Department at Maidstone Borough Council. Every Parish Council had experienced similar problems with a backlog of cases, errors in trying to use the new Planning Portal, inconsistencies in decisions made, the lack of coherent policies. He outlined the issues concerning Rural Communities with planning applications – many of which were retrospective.

## **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – Ward Member - Cllr Jenny Whittle**

Cllr Jenny Whittle advised that she had been working alongside Ulcombe Parish Council over the year to secure signage to deter lorries using Chegworth Road to access the village. Following an onsite meeting, Kent Highways had agreed take further action as the existing signage was insufficient to deter HGV drivers from using the lane. At a full County Council meeting in February it was agreed to save £90m in order to balance the books. This was part of a £500m savings package over a six year period. Savings had been achieved in areas such as adult social care through greater efficiencies (eg, streamlining the process to access social care packages) and a number of posts had been removed from the Council. She confirmed that local authorities are currently going through a very difficult period and it was unlikely that any further savings could be made without making serious inroads into the frontline services.

She was pleased to see that progress is being made at Ulcombe under the excellent leadership of Emma Hickling, the Executive Headteacher of Ulcombe, Kingswood and Leeds Primary Schools. Jennie Edspire, an award winning blogger and primary school teacher herself, is now a parent governor at Ulcombe Primary School too.

Cllr Whittle appealed for anyone thinking about fostering or adoption to come forward and find out more at one of the information sessions held by KCC. Details could be found on [www.kentfostering.co.uk](http://www.kentfostering.co.uk) or [www.kentadoption.co.uk](http://www.kentadoption.co.uk) Cllr Jenny Whittle can be contacted on [jenny.whittle@kent.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.whittle@kent.gov.uk)

## **KENT POLICE – PCSO John Boyd**

In my first year of patrolling as a PCSO my main focus has been to provide a high visible presence by carrying out regular patrols of Ulcombe and as a new officer I have spent numerous hours making myself familiar with the issues of the area. I feel that I am a familiar face with the local community and hope that they feel they can come and talk to me at any time with any concerns.

Due to the sensitive nature of my role I cannot always discuss individual cases but I get great satisfaction in helping people in the area.

Ulcombe has maintained a low level of crime during the past year. I cannot access any data on yearly crime statistics internally any more, however, going by the monthly crimes I report at the parish meetings, we are sustaining the reduced level of crime we have benefitted from during the past few year. This has been possible through the support of the local community, KCC Warden and the Parish Council.

I am also happy to report the return of PCSO Siobhan de Burca-Ousby who has now joined me in patrolling Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham wards. I am sure the area will benefit from having 2 PSSOs (2 for the price of 1!)

I have dealt with a number of issues which have included the following:

- Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) from local teenage children
- Follow up visits to the victims of burglaries to give crime prevention advice and recommend them for further help from Social Services when required.
- I visit Ulcombe regularly and run Police Surgeries in Headcorn on a monthly basis. The mobile police station still comes to Headcorn village and parks in the Sainsbury's car park for residents to discuss any issues they have.
- I have arranged for Speed Enforcement Officers to attend the area
- I have conducted talks and visits throughout the year to various local residents and groups such as Ulcombe Primary School

We are always trying to keep on top of any nuisance behaviour issues in the village and I have been working with Maidstone Community Safety Unit to resolve any brought to my attention. We encourage residents to call in any incidents of this type.

Anyone wishing to contact me about any issues or crime prevention advice can call the non-emergency Police number, 101. Thank you for all your help in keeping Ulcombe safe.

## **HEADCORN FOOTBALL CLUB – Keith Crisp**

This season has been our second season using the pitch at Ulcombe Recreation Ground. This year we have had both an u15 and u14 team using the facilities and 30 games have been played mostly on Saturday mornings. The facilities we enjoy are some of the best in the league with games only being postponed when the winter elements were at their worst.

Both teams play in the Ashford & District Youth League, the U15's have had a great season and have won their league and are in the cup final. The u14's have not fared so well and could end up 10th in their league. We would like to thank UPC, the groundsman, Peter Titchener and Liz McLaren for their support this season. For next season we would like to continue to use the pitch for both u16's and u13's, at present we are not sure if we will have an u15 team but this is TBC.

## **ULCOMBE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL– Emma Hickling**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, Ulcombe School extended its formal collaboration with Kingswood Primary School and Leeds and Broomfield C of E Primary School for a period of three years.

Emma Hickling continues as Executive Headteacher of the collaboration and devotes around two days a week of her time to Ulcombe. The longer collaboration enabled us to expand the senior leadership team and two Heads of School have been appointed. Following two rounds of advertising and interviews, Donna Atkinson was appointed head of school for Kingswood and Ulcombe and devotes half her time to Ulcombe. The senior leadership team spends about half a day a week on collaboration-wide issues.

The school's governing body has re-constituted as required by new regulations. John Hoadly continues as chair of governors. An experienced school governor, he also chairs the collaboration's steering committee and is chair of governors at Kingswood School. We have welcomed a number of new parent, co-opted and foundation governors, which has strengthened the board of governors. They continue to monitor the school, provide challenge for the leadership team, and help drive improvement.

The collaboration has enabled us to broaden opportunities and bring to bear skills and experience that we would have been unable to achieve alone given the size of our school. In particular, Ulcombe has benefitted from:

- Joint staff training and sharing of good practice;
- Development of subject leader roles;
- Joint governor monitoring of the priorities in the collaboration improvement plan;
- Experienced senior leadership team;
- Opportunities for the children to mix in larger groups;
- Moderation of teacher assessments across the schools;
- Quality assurance;
- Strength in numbers for financial purchases or influence on county council decisions.

Some areas continue to develop within the collaboration and we expect to see greater benefit from:

- Development of leadership skills of other staff – growing leaders of the future;
- Filling schools to capacity (Ulcombe and Leeds);
- Improvement to buildings;
- Sharing of specialist staff, for example the Family Liaison Officer.

We are aiming to achieve a Good OFSTED rating for Ulcombe when it is next inspected, which is due in December 2015. The school has a rising roll and improving standards. Particular areas we are focused on are the attendance of the pupils and the standards achieved at the end of year 6. Both are improving but are currently lower than we would like.

## **ULCOMBE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - John Goode and Rita Strutt, Church Wardens**

### **Church Fabric**

This year we have seen some significant and very welcome improvements to the church. Most importantly, the south aisle roof is now watertight! The work to replace the lead with zinc, install new rainwater outlets and repair some of the stonework has now been completed. In addition a galvanized steel platform has been fitted to give safer access to the roof. We have just received news that we have been successful in obtaining a government grant of £52,500 for repair to the north aisle roof. We hope to start the work this year.

Internally, the biggest improvement has been the upgrade of the Vestry/kitchen. The Friends of All Saints (FASU) kindly donated the funds for this project, and with the help of PCC members their spouses and friends (in particular Chris Whyte, John Ware & Simon Odam) this has been finished to a very high standard, giving us an attractive, clean and functional facility for us to carry out our church duties and cater for social occasions. The outdoor toilet is now in the process of an upgrade thanks to a donation from FASU,

Last spring, the PCC & FASU worked together to give the St Ledger Chapel a much needed spring clean. Extension brushes have now been purchased to remove the 'antique' cobwebs from the high vaulted ceiling in the chancery.

Further work will continue this year to declutter the church. The car park has also undergone a transformation thanks to the work of John Kenwood.

New equipment includes; a projector, kindly supplied by Dick Venn, which has given the opportunity for greater versatility both in terms of church services and new activities which we hope will be of value to the community, the installation of the Vfast mast which means that we now have free access to Wifi and last but not least, we are now flying a large, anti-fray St Georges flag which has been very kindly donated by Danielle & Kevin Earley.

The church continues to remain open on a daily basis thanks to the support of our group of volunteers. We are also grateful to Jean Davis, Angela Maddocks, Valerie Powell-Jackson and Ros Carver who keep the church clean every week, whatever the weather and the circumstances! This is much appreciated by the PCC and our many visitors.

### **Activities**

This has been another busy and fulfilling year for the Church. We have introduced some changes to the service schedule. The monthly rota remains the same, that is, Family worship is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday, Holy Communion on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> and morning Worship on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. All of these services now start at 10.45am and for Family Worship we start with breakfast. Both of these changes have been welcomed and we have seen a steady increase in the size of the congregation as the year has progressed.

We have hosted a number of events again this year. These have included a:

- Vespers service for the Catholic church
- Carol service
- Baroque concert
- Folk concert
- Harvest supper
- Briggs lecture

These activities have enabled us to raise sufficient funds to support the work of the following charities:

- The children's society
- Friends of Kent churches
- Royal British Legion
- The Ebola crisis
- Homeless carers – including regular donations of food for the food bank
- The Tear Fund – this particular charity is supported by the 4 churches in the Benefice and sufficient money has now been raised to sink a bore hole which has supplied fresh water to a village in Zambia for the very first time. Not only has this improved the health of the villagers but it has also meant that the young girls are able to attend school rather than have to complete a 2 hour round trip every day to fetch water for their families. We are particularly pleased to have played some small part in this achievement and there are plans for some members of the Benefice to visit the village next year.

In addition to these activities organised by the PCC, the FASU has also organised a number of very successful activities including an Open day and an Art show, both of which were very well attended and raising valuable funds for the church restoration and enhancement. We have been very grateful for the support received from the community in all of these endeavours. We are now in the process of organising the calendar of events for this year. We will be considering the introduction of an internet café, the provision of refreshments for ramblers and film evenings within the schedule.

It is good to see the progress that has been made this year and we look forward to building on this success in the coming year.

### **Len Valley Churches - Reverend Dr Dick Venn, Priest in Charge**

All Saints Church, Ulcombe (part of the Len Valley Benefice group of Churches – Ulcombe, Boughton Malherbe, Harrietsham and Lenham).

Our vision is “to touch everyone with God’s love”, and we hope that everyone would experience that. So we continue with our usual activities, Sunday services, weddings, funerals and baptisms, but also hope to explain to any and all what it is that – despite the difficulties – keeps us trying to follow Jesus. Here are some of our highlights from the year.

- A powerful digital projector has been installed, allowing us to use film, video etc for a range of activities and services. This is available for community use.
- Messy church continued to be a significant point of contact for many families and we have used both the Church and the Village Hall for this (as well as Lenham Church and Harrietsham School).

- Vfast broadband wireless repeaters have been installed, enabling internet access for each church and increasing available broadband speeds for the villages & giving each church an extra income. We intend to offer the village an internet cafe at the church.
- A new short Breakfast Service designed to appeal to families started in Lenham and has continued with very good attendance. This is for all the villages.
- We are experimenting with new patterns of working, with Rev Dick focussing mainly on Ulcombe and Lenham, and Rev Millie mainly on Boughton Malherbe and Harrietsham.
- The church was full on several occasions – the Mystery and History day (organised by the Friends) and a joint service in August when we celebrated a couple of birthdays and had a hog roast at the Village Hall.
- We have supported in particular the Tearfund Connected Churches project providing clean water via boreholes and hygiene education in Zambia. We also support the Maidstone Christian Care projects and the Maidstone Foodbank. You are welcome to leave food for the Foodbank in the church porch (bins provided).
- Rev Millie Hart was licensed as Associate Priest and moved to the Rectory in Harrietsham.
- Sarah Hills was appointed as Administrator for the four churches.
- Six people from the group were confirmed as Christians at Lenham Church in November.
- Ulcombe Church has had the South roof fixed, thanks to large grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and many others. We have just heard that we have been awarded a further £52,000 to fix the North roof problems. We no longer have water flooding the floors. We have also invested in cobweb brushes (!) and the plasterwork in the chancel and South Chapel has been repaired after the lead theft.
- The church vestry / kitchen has been remodelled and redecorated, thanks to a grants from the Friends of All Saints Church and practical help from some very kind people.
- The outside toilet has also been re-tiled and refurbished, again with help from the Friends of All Saints Church.
- The Friends of All Saints Church have been very active in fund-raising for the maintenance and upkeep of the church.

Many thanks to all who have helped so much in practical and financial ways. My apologies if I have missed anything significant.

## **FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS', ULCOMBE – Molly Poulter**

The Friends of Ulcombe Church has been in existence for the last eighteen months. We can report a growing and very generous supportive membership.

Since our inception we have held three major events, and smaller Social event this March.

- Our first event was an Auction of Promises in the Church, People were very generous with their promises and even more generous with their bids.
- Then we had a highly successful History and Mystery Day which attracted many people from the village and outside. There was a Mystery Play, music, guided tours of the church and tower, an opportunity to do bell ringing, stone masonry and brass rubbing. The catering was excellent and local ale was much enjoyed.
- This was followed by a very successful Art Show in July. It involved a lot of hard work in carrying panels up and down the steep church path, and we are very grateful to all those who helped, as well as to those who manned the Show during the three days it was held.

Last year we purchased eight folding tables for the church which have already been put to good use, while those of you who have visited the church recently will know that, thanks to The Friends, the church now has a splendid kitchen which cost £1,785. The kitchen was much reduced in price thanks to the generosity of Chris Whyte who donated his time as well as providing the materials at cost. The kitchen has already been put to good use and will provide an excellent facility in the future. It shares the space with the Vestry which is also much improved.

The Friends' are now going to finance an upgrade of the toilet facilities at the church at a cost £450.

You will be pleased to know that, as of our last committee meeting in December 2014, we had a balance of £9,297 in hand.

The Friend's Committee has made an offer to the PCC to do several things for the church in the coming months which the PCC have gratefully accepted. They include the purchase of a high level brush so that the unsightly cobwebs in the Sanctuary can be removed, the provision a modern display board for inside the church, and to a baize table cover for the display tables in the church. The Friends have also offered to provide brown tourist signboards saying 'Twelfth Century Church'. These will be placed by the A20 at Chegworth, at the corner by Wents Service Station, on the triangle by the church, and at the approach to Ulcombe from Headcorn. In addition, The Friends have offered to get together a working party to tidy the churchyard and the car park.

A longer term project is to revise and update the Guide to the Church which sold out some years ago.



Sadly, the Parochial Church Council's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a significant contribution to church restoration has been turned down, so there is still an urgent ongoing need for finance. We will be approaching more charitable trusts for help as well as working hard to raise funds through The Friends. We now have 65 Friends and are always looking for more. We are hoping that some of our Friends will decide to make their donations via a monthly or annual standing order. The minimum membership fee is £10. At our next committee meeting we will be planning further events and would welcome any ideas or suggestions the Parish Council may have. We are grateful to all our Friends and to the villagers in general for all their support.

### **VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE – Frances Crawford**

Current Committee Members: Frances Crawford - Chair, Paul McCreery – Treasurer, Debra Bell – Secretary, Mimi Humphrey, Christina Cox, Jack Webb, John Ware, MaryAnn Lovegrove

Despite losing the pre-school last Autumn the village hall is still used on a regular basis by many clubs and societies providing a range of interesting activities. These include Badminton, Ballroom Dancing, Friendship Club, History Society, Art Classes and Dog Training Classes. All of these events take place from Monday to Friday, but at the weekends the hall is frequently booked out for children's parties, celebration parties and yoga workshops. Contact details for all these clubs and activities are available from the Bookings Secretary Nikki Sharp on 842848 or from myself on 843862.

We have managed to get through another winter without an oil theft and our heating costs have been reduced quite a bit this year, partly due to the absence of pre-school but also, of course, due to the fall in oil prices.

Over the past year we have organised four very successful fundraising events; a Barn Dance, which was great fun, although a little under-subscribed; another Clairvoyant evening, which was well supported and our usual Quiz nights in November and April. We are very fortunate to have Jack Webb as our Quizmaster who writes the quiz and manages the whole evening with great expertise and wit. Overall these four events have raised just under £2,000.00 for the village hall funds. Our next fundraising event will be a repeat of the Barn Dance with music and calling from Rattle the Boards, which will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Looking to the future, we hope, at last, to be able to fit a new kitchen in the hall before the end of this year. We have managed to raise, what we hope will be, nearly enough money for this, possibly with the addition of a small grant. The next step will be to organise some quotes and apply for grants before ordering our brand new kitchen. Once the kitchen has been completed we will turn our attention to refurbishment of the hall floor. We are also planning to decorate and carpet the room that has been the chair store for so many years so that it can be used as a meeting room, which was its original purpose.

We are really grateful to the group of people who continue to support us in our fundraising efforts, both in their attendance at events and for their help with cooking, clearing up, etc at these events. We are a very small committee and it would be difficult to continue without the assistance of non-committee members. We have seen some new faces at events this year, which is always nice to see, but as always, if what we are organising doesn't appeal to you and you have some ideas for fundraising, please let us know – we are happy to have a go at virtually anything! Frances Crawford, Chair, Ulcombe Village Hall Committee - 01622 843862 fran.crawford@yahoo.co.uk

### **FRIENDSHIP CLUB – Molly Poulter**

The Ulcombe Friendship Club continues to thrive with quite a few new members, though sadly, as the year progressed, we also lost a few.

We all enjoyed our annual Christmas Party in December when to were entertained by Gary the Magician. Equally enjoyable was our New Year Lunch at The Ridge Golf Club where the food was excellent.

We had coffee mornings at the homes of Pat Davis and Meg Cannings. These help to eke out funds so that we can subsidise trips, pay speakers, and send flowers and cards to those of our members who are ill or in trouble.

The Garden Party at the home of Molly Poulter was blessed with good weather and everyone enjoyed the teas and the chance to sit in the sunshine and enjoy the garden and the views.

In June we had a most enjoyable Outing to Runnymede, Windsor and beyond. The weather was perfect, the river looked beautiful, the food was good, and the guide excellent. Arriving at Windsor we alighted from the boat and had several hours wandering round the town. It was a trip that was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

In September, our second Outing of the year was to Petworth. Again it was enjoyed by everyone- the interesting house and the beautiful gardens.

On a Saturday in June we had a Cream Tea in the village hall organised by Pat Smith, Ann Underdown and Jenny Pearson. It was well attended by both adults and children from the village and enjoyed by all. Again the money raised was a welcome addition to funds.

We had six talks during the year – all of which were interesting. They were on The Multiple Sclerosis Centre, the Curiosities of London, Life Inside, A Victorian Village School, Tales of a man who talked too much, and Big Cats. I would like to express thanks to the committee who have helped run the club during the year. It is invidious to pick out people but special thanks go to Pat Davis our treasurer who looks after our funds, to Joyce Braggs who organises a raffle each month and produces excellent raffle prize we know not from where, to Meg Cannings who brings clean cups and saucers and table cloths each time and takes them all home to wash, and to the many others who take on all sorts of tasks like getting the hall ready.

### **HISTORY SOCIETY – Molly Poulter**

The Society has an increasing membership which is encouraging but I must confess that we have had some ups and downs during the year. We had six talks - two of which were, shall we say, less than exciting, and a third had good content but was read from cover to cover in an uninspiring way.

It is difficult when selecting speakers from a Speakers' List. The talks look interesting but they are not always as good as one hopes. The talk by Martin Heard on the Grand Tour was interesting, and I am told my talk on the East India Company went down well.

Our last talk of the year came into difficulties when we discovered that the hall had been double booked, and as the other group was a Dog Society which was having exams that night, we gracefully retired and ended up at my house. Although it went well, it was far from ideal as the speaker was expecting to give a dramatic presentation and there was little space for him to do it!

Equally, we had a disappointing time with our outings. We were unable to go to the Red House as it was closed in the evenings, and the Greenwich trip was a disaster because I failed to confirm the coach booking and the coach didn't arrive! Then our hoped for World War trip came to nothing because of the very high costs. So it was a disappointing year as far as trips went.

I hope we will do better this year!

As you know the Society is run by a small committee comprising Geoff Beale, John Moore, Molly Poulter, Peter Titchener and John Ware. We always work hard to try and make the programme as interesting as possible and hope you like the look of this year's programme. John (Moore) has been working very hard to organise the very complicated Guedelon trip. .

The Society has purchased some equipment including a projector and a music stand for the speaker's notes. We think we need to purchase a lap top this year, as we have problems finding compatible lap- tops among our members.

This year, because we only had one copy left, we had *Ulcombe's Story, a History of our village* reprinted. If you know anyone new to the village do please tell them it is available@ £18. You might be interested to know that we had it printed by HM prisoners at a much reduce cost!

I think you will agree that, though small, it is a happy society. Members enjoy the chance to drink a glass of wine and some nibbles before and after our meetings.

Please do make any comments or suggestions for the future that you think will enhance the meetings of the Ulcombe History Society. They are always welcome.

### **DRAMA CLUB – Mimi Humphrey**

This year UDAS' Ulcombe's Dramatically Amateur Society' put on their first Pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk' which according to reports went very well.

The group this time was directed by John Moore who also played the 'baddie' in the panto.

It had its usual suspects from the Princess to the Principle Boy, a very over the top Dame 'isn't she always' to a two headed Giant, a green fairy, Simple Simon and Jumping Joan, plus the King and his two sidekicks and not to mention the 'pieman' who could forget the pieman.

I must also mention the many other people behind the scenes that without them the panto would not have happened, a great deal of thanks go to our production team.

For the future that has yet to be decided, we are meeting very soon to discuss this. We would love to continue but we would need more people to join us, clearly you don't need to be a Shakespearean actor or even any good, obviously, just a desire to have a bit of fun, if on stage is not your thing then how about back stage in the production, if you are interested in any of this please get In touch.

### **WRITING CLUB – Ellen Richter**

The Wayside Writers was set up to support and encourage local people with an interest in writing, whether their interest is in fiction or non-fiction, poetry or prose.

We meet on the last Thursday of the month (excluding December which is usually a week earlier) and since January 2015 we have been meeting in the King's Head at Grafty Green.

Membership is free and there is no requirement to attend each monthly meeting, but we do ask that people attend as often as they can – this gives all members an opportunity to seek advice and input on their works in progress. There are seven writers in the group at the moment, and we are happy to welcome new members at any time. Experience of writing is not essential, just a desire to write. We have a website which is in the process of being enhanced; currently there is a public area with some information about the group, and a members only section for sharing work. The website is [waysidewriters.com](http://waysidewriters.com). There is a direct contact form on the website for anyone interested in finding out more.

This year plans are in place to run a writing competition with the school, the details of which will be announced once they are formalised. Over time we also hope to submit short pieces to the newsletter and complete the redevelopment of the website.

Alongside these plans, an article goes into the newsletter a few times a year to remind people about the group and give an update on what we are doing.

Anyone interested in joining us can check the website for the date and start time of the next meeting and come along, alternatively keep an eye on the newsletter for information.

### **ULCOMBE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER – Leon Holmes/Ellen Richter**

The village newsletter continues to be an important resource for village life. During the last year I am pleased to say that John Ware has joined the team as our treasurer following the retirement of Philip Easton, and Mimi Humphrey has taken on the role of Head of Distribution.

As ever, the newsletter can only continue through the generosity of all the volunteers who help to produce and deliver copies to our readers so I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved.

I would also like to give a special thank you to Leila Ware for all the support she has given me and for her hard work each month printing and collating the copies ready for distribution.

Finally it goes without saying that without articles we would not have a newsletter, so I am very grateful to everyone who contributes. Over the next year I am hoping to introduce some more regular columns so if you have any interest in writing one, I would love to hear from you. Thank you  
Leon Homes, Editor

### **BALLROOM DANCING CLUB – Rod Davis**

#### Wednesday Night Dance School

The numbers attending the Ulcombe dance group is 16, eight couples, I think that is slightly down on last year's numbers as we have had two couples move away from the area. The configuration is that 3 couples come from Ulcombe, 2 couples from Headcorn, 1 couple from Egerton, 1 couple from Bearsted, and 1 from Gillingham.

There are no complaints regarding the Village Hall, except it would be good if the wall lights that are out could be dealt with, I would think it is only new bulbs. I would be quite happy to do this with the permission of the village hall committee. The hall is always clean and tidy and well maintained.

#### Thursday Practice night

All is well with this group with 6 attending regularly and other members of the Wednesday school joining in as and when they feel they need practice. The Thursday practice started as a very ad hoc arrangement and has now become a regular fixture. However it is understood that any other events that the hall may be required for on a Thursday evening take precedent and we are quite happy to move or cancel as required, particularly if the hall can be let for more than the 1 hour we have it for.

### **ART CLUB – Jacqueline Duncalf**

#### **Offering Introductory and Intermediate Art Courses for Adults at Ulcombe Village Hall**

Established 3 years ago The Art Class offers structured and informative courses covering a range of mediums including pencil, watercolour, pastel and acrylic. With the guidance of our professional tutor and step by step tuition, we ensure each student's artistic skills are developed to their individual potential.

Throughout the courses, we explore the secrets and techniques for successfully drawing and painting subjects such as portraits,



landscapes, mountains, beach scenes, sunsets, trees, foliage and flowers and much much more! We provide all equipment to minimise initial investment by Students and the course is designed to educate on best materials too! At the end of the course we want people to feel informed and empowered, and able to confidently approach a piece of work on their own in a variety of mediums. We also want them to have had lots of fun!

Throughout the summer we will be offering a selection of half and one day workshops. Places will be offered to existing Students first, but any remaining places will be available for booking by people who would like a little taster.

**Workshop details as follows:**

Life Drawing	10-1pm plus Lunch	Chilham Village Hall
Painting in Abstract (Introduction)	10-1pm	Harbledown Village Hall
Life Drawing	10-1pm plus lunch	Chilham Village Hall
Day Out Sketching and Painting	10-4pm	tba
Introduction to Oil Painting	10-4pm	Harbledown Village Hall
Day out Discovering Art in London	9 til late	London (by coach)

**Autumn Courses**

Our new schedule of Autumn Courses is still to be confirmed. However, it is expected that we will begin a new selection of classes in early September.

More information regarding the above Workshops and Autumn Course details can be obtained by calling **The Art Class** on **01622 892013**

**BADMINTON CLUB – Alan Burch**

I believe that the Ulcombe Badminton Club has been in existence for over 30 years – and amazingly one of the original members is still playing!

The club plays in the Village Hall on most Friday evenings from 8pm-11pm from October to May. We don't play during the summer months because it gets too warm in the hall and members tend to be busy doing more exciting things, like going on holiday.

We currently have 12 members and the average weekly attendance is perhaps 8 or 9. This is just about perfect because there is, of course, only one badminton court in the hall and therefore only 4 people can play at a time. I'm pleased to say that we do have a couple of younger players although many of us are probably classified as 'past our prime'! For information, half of the members live in the village and the others have many years of association with the village.

We don't play in any league, we are a group of people playing what I call 'social' badminton for the exercise, the conversation, a bit of fun and the odd glass of wine or two – which doesn't really help to improve the playing however!

Because of the number of members and the single court, we don't really have the ability to take on beginners and teach people how to play but if there is any interest in coming along next season then please let me know and we'll see how many members we have.

Alan Burch  
Ulcombe Badminton Club  
01622 842984