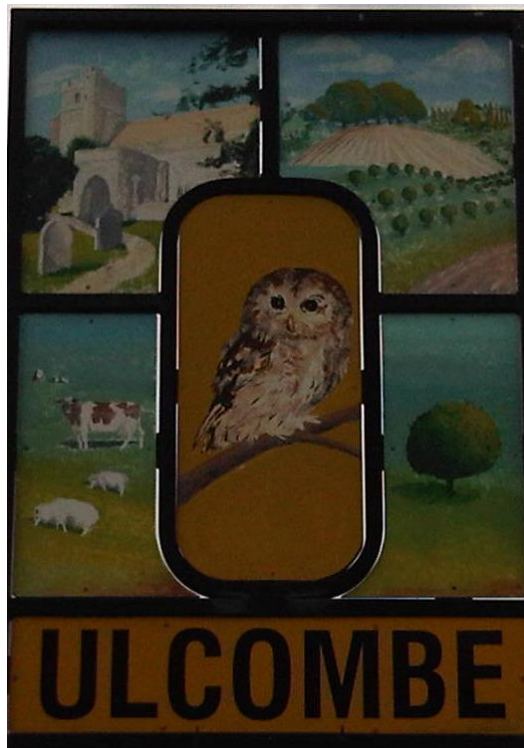


ULCOMBE

Annual Parish Report

2017/18

www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk



Produced by Ulcombe Parish Council
June 2018

(Reports from the Annual Parish Meeting held in April 2018)

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

In the past year, April 2017 – March 2018, there have been 11 regular parish council meetings and 1 extraordinary parish council meeting on 24 August, which were well attended by residents in order to discuss the Cravo Greenhouses application with the applicant. A Residents’ Liaison Committee was set up as a result of this meeting, and it has been meeting periodically since under the chairmanship of Matt Lingwood.

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

- Crime - there were 14 reported crimes in the year April 2017 to March 2018, 4 fewer than last year and fewer than half those occurring in 2013/14. It is important that people always get a crime report reference number when reporting a crime so that they are all properly logged. The PCSO requests that people call 101 to report crime, or 999 for an emergency. Also one can view Ulcombe crime statistics on www.e-watch.co.

There has been a change in the policing model and PCSOs are now less likely to attend parish council meetings

- Planning – Ulcombe Parish Council is a consultee on planning issues and Maidstone Borough Council consulted us on 34 planning applications, including 2 later withdrawn. This was 10 more than last year. Of these, Ulcombe agreed 19 and refused 13. Maidstone disagreed with us on 6 applications. 3 went to the Planning Committee which we lost, and 2 are still pending. There were also 3 Prior Notification applications.

Maidstone’s Local Plan was eventually adopted in October 2017. We have been fighting Maidstone Council’s call for housing development sites in the borough because the infrastructure cannot cope. So far, Ulcombe has escaped planned housing. However, we understand this government could require Maidstone to take an extra 7000 houses by 2031 in the Local Plan Review that will soon take place. It is rumoured that Lenham might get a new village of 5000 houses. Unfortunately, we are even now in the eye of a storm because of all the current housing planned in the local rural service centres of Headcorn, Lenham and Harrietsham. Traffic volumes, congestion, and more potholes, on our local country lanes and the A20 can only get worse. The Council for The Protection of Rural England, on legal advice, recently withdrew its plan to take the Borough Council to court over its decision to put warehouses at Junction 8 of the M20, by Leeds Castle.

Traveller sites and pitches in Headcorn Ward are increasing, and we have lost two major application requests at the Planning Committee stage. A third traveller application in Eastwood Road was rejected by the planners.

We are encouraged by the improved planning Enforcement department at MBC which has been very proactive in assisting us. There is also some hope that government will soon improve the law on unauthorised development and encampments. It has called for suggestions, in the consultation, as to whether existing measures should be strengthened, and how public authorities can use the powers available to them more effectively. Our thanks to our two local MPs for their efforts in promoting this initiative.

- Highway problems – Potholes - KCC says there is a £600m backlog of potholes in Kent and thus the extra £2m recently found for potholes is rather meaningless. It is a struggle given the devastation to our lanes over winter, the lack of money, and increased road traffic - particularly large tractors and more and more HGVs. Residents are asked to report potholes online to KCC direct on its “report a fault” page.

Legally, buses can travel down Chegworth road despite the HGV 7.5 tonne limit, but we are still objecting to Nu Venture bus 66 using this road on its return to Maidstone.

Drainage - Work has been done to alleviate the drainage problem at The Pye Corner Z bend. Ditches have been dug out too. A new underground pipe might be necessary down the first part of William Post Lane from Pye Corner.

Parking- The possibility of parking restrictions on the blind bend by the school is currently being looked into by the parish council, KHS and the school.

HGVs - Our MP, Helen Whately, in November, wrote to Jesse Norman, the Minister for roads, to try to make it mandatory for HGVs to have a commercial GPS rather than a domestic one. No legislation will take place because of the impact on the industry and we were told it is up to local authorities to put up signs instead. We all know that the 7.5 tonne weight limitation signs are often ignored.

Lenham Road – the second survey in July 2017 produced mean speeds of 29.02mph westbound and 28.8 eastbound which was very similar to the speed survey in December 2016. The result doesn't justify a speed reduction. White lining is now in place and we are close to agreeing better bend signage with KHS to highlight sharp bends. Some of the cost will be for the parish council, particularly the chevron signs we plan to put on the bend near “Diamond”. We will also be looking at the feasibility of having solar powered flashing speed warning signs on Lenham Road and The Street, and also a 20mph restriction past the school in school hours.

Chegworth Road/A20 - the lack of funds will make it unlikely that KHS (Kent Highways) can narrow the Chegworth road where it meets the A20. The experimental siting of bollards to discourage HGVs from entering Chegworth Road is being assessed.

Leaks -The water leaks in The Street, by the school, still exist despite weeks of major investigation and digging trenches. The conclusion so far is that it is not piped water. The surface water is of course dangerous when it freezes. This is an ongoing problem.

- Recreation Ground
 - a) Play Area – we are investigating what we can do to upgrade the play area and provide some new equipment for all ages. We hope to hear from Maidstone very soon about Maidstone’s Strategic Play Area Grant which will match funds we can raise.
 - b) Dog fouling - more “no dog” signs on the recreation ground and car park have been erected. We do not want dog mess in the children’s play area or on the football and cricket grounds.
 - c) Two signs will go up soon to warn against the use of motorised vehicles on the Recreation Ground. We have had quad bikes, mopeds and motorbikes on the grass. The large sign at the entrance is not visible enough for people to see.
 - d) Trees - Following a recent tree inspection survey, some surgery has been required to ensure that these remain in a safe condition.
 - e) We have put in a fence and a hedge of hawthorn behind the pavilion, and a new underground electricity cable from the road to the pavilion.
 - f) We are grateful to the resident who donated rubber granules for wet pour, so we can more easily repair holes in the playground safety surface.
- Grants - Our grant to the Village Hall is £1120 and we gave £200 for a new table tennis table for the Table Tennis Club.
- Speedwatch - This has restarted. Please contact Rhian or the clerk for more information if you want to get involved as a volunteer.
- Roadside litter and Fly tipping - Fiona Kenward organised a very well supported litter clearing group on April 9th last year when we collected about 75 large bin bags of litter from the A20 junction with Chegworth Road to Headcorn Road in the village . We have had two other litter pick days since then on 8th October last year, and 25th March this year. I also want to thank those residents who individually walk the roads to pick up litter.
- Village Website - This has been recently redesigned by EIS, our website host. Please contact the parish clerk so we can post future events information for you.
- Facebook -We have also agreed to have a 6 month trial of an Ulcombe Facebook page. It will not be interactive but it will provide news and regular updates on issues and events. Our clerk is responsible for what is posted and I want to emphasise that we all have to be very careful of data protection and defamatory posts which is why we are not making it interactive.

- Defibrillator – the school has recently purchased one for the school and is liaising with the parish council to make it accessible to residents. The Parish council may invest in a second one too. The nearest one otherwise is at the funeral director’s premises in Grafty Green.
- Football- We are delighted that Headcorn youth teams are using our recreation ground for football, and we now have an under 9s girls team too.
- Trees & TPOs – we are listing important trees in the village and putting those with TPOs on a map. The Jubilee Corner oaks date from George III’s Golden Jubilee in 1810 and are suffering from compression of the soil on the island. Putting large logs around the island is one way to limit vehicles compressing the soil. Whether we can aerate the soil is another matter.
- Pop up Café – we had a very successful pop up café last summer. It operated every 4 weeks for a few months, outside the Harrow- an initiative by Action with Communities in Rural Kent. Sadly, Ulcombe is not on the rota to be visited for this year.
- The Parish Council is concerned that The Harrow now appears to be closed and we await further news.
- Finances – The Parish Clerk will take you through the 2017/18 year end finances as circulated. For 2018/19, it was agreed to generate a parish precept increase in income to the parish council of 1.98%. This equates to £52.30 per Band ‘D’ property or an increase of 0.5%, which is one of the lowest in Maidstone.
- I would like to thank the other members of the parish council for their contribution and their hard work on the various projects they take on. We are all volunteers.

Balance per bank statements as at 31st March 2018 £ 24,264

Less any unpresented cheques at 31st March 2018

2030	Cllr Titchener	£	43
2036	South East Water	£	23
	BG Electrical		
2037	Contractors	£	312
2038	Tree Cycle Tree Care	£	816
2039	Mrs H Anderson	£	556
	HM Revenue &		
2040	Customs	£	84
		£	1,834

Net balances as at 31st March 2018

£ 22,430

The net balances reconcile to the cash book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows

Cash Book

Opening balance 1st April 2018 £ 27,277

Receipts in the year

Precept	£	19,875
Interest	£	1
Parish Services Scheme	£	2,295
Recreation Pitch Hire	£	420
VAT Payments	£	1,027
	£	<u>23,618</u>

Less Payments in the year

Staff Salary	£	7,680
Publication Printing/Advertisement	£	471
IT Services	£	35
Hall Hire & Subsistence	£	526
Subscriptions	£	558
Training	£	-
Finance & Insurance	£	978
Recreation Ground	£	8,867
Pavillion	£	999
Play Equipment	£	101
Car Park & Village Hall	£	1,100
Road Projects/Surveys	£	1,497
Legal and Planning Opinion	£	3,986
Extras & Miscellaneous	£	453
VAT Payments	£	1,212

£ 28,465

Closing balance per cash book as at 31st March 2018

£ 22,430

The proceeding statement are only a draft summary of the accounts. Copies of the full Statement of Accounts is available from the Parish Clerk.

Ulcombe Parish Council accounts are audited internally by Lionel Robbins F.M.A.A.T and the Statutory Annual Return is externally audited by PKF Littlejohn.

The exercise period for electors to inspect the accounts will be from Monday 3 June to Friday 13 July 2018. The requisite Public Notice and a copy of the return will be placed on the Parish Website www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk and on the village noticeboard nearer the time.

Kent County Councillor - Shellina Prendergast.

It is a great honour and privilege to represent you at Kent County Council.

Kent is a great county and my Maidstone Rural East Division is one of the very best parts of Kent for its natural beauty, heritage and of course the people. Last year you elected me to Kent County Council with the largest vote, biggest majority and the highest share of vote among the KCC candidates standing in the Maidstone district. Thank you for your support.

As many of you will be aware, in recent years (and for the foreseeable future) Kent County Council has faced an enormous and unprecedented financial challenge. This challenge arises from a combination of rising spending demands, reductions in central government funding and freezes/limits on raising council tax. Combined, this has led the Council to make annual savings of between £80 to £90 million per annum since 2010.

Despite such punitive financial constraints, and the ever-increasing pressures of an ageing and growing population, Kent County Council has continued to meet its statutory duties in maintaining its complex array of front line services such as adult social care, highways improvements/maintenance and the education of our children and young people. And whilst supporting the continued delivery of a balanced budget!

The last few months however have seen some very positive outcomes for the Council and Kent residents – Kent has been chosen by the government as one of the few counties benefitting from a 100% Business Rate Retention Pilot (worth £10million to Kent) and government funding also included a Social Care Grant of £3.65million to help in our ambition for older and vulnerable residents to be safe and supported with choices to live independently and £3.1million for pothole repairs.

During my time at Kent County Council, I have worked with residents and 17 parish councils/meetings to address the pledges I made to you when elected, and these include:

Transport and Highways

- Speeding motorists and inconsiderate parking are a problem for us all and can lead to life threatening injuries. As your Councillor, I have worked with Kent Highways, Cabinet Members and the Police to seek solutions to this type of problem.

- Highways Improvements – I was delighted to play a part in securing just under £1million of developer funding to implement the improvements to the much needed A20 Harrietsham Road Improvement Scheme. A revised design was consulted on earlier this year with some very positive feedback and the scheme has an anticipated commencement date of September 2018. I am currently working with several parishes on further highways improvements in this area – the A20/Faversham Road being an example - and am liaising with Officers to secure the appropriate schemes and the all-important funding sources.
- Potholes, overgrown vegetation, drain and road repairs are the responsibility of Kent County Council – KCC have a war chest of £7.5million to address this problem, and I have urged the Cabinet Member for Highways to ensure that the roads in this Division are prioritised for long overdue repairs, particularly in the rural areas. Please report any potholes or highways issues on <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem> or ring 03000 418181 during office hours or 03000 419191 for emergencies.
- Public Transport – working alongside bus operators and KCC Officers, I have continued to push for high quality reliable bus services to ensure that our children get to school on time and our older residents are not left isolated in rural villages. Train links to London are a vital amenity for our residents and commuters, and I continue my work with our MP and South Eastern trains to improve services.

Planning and Infrastructure

- I have a proven record in fighting against inappropriate development within our rural areas and am not afraid to challenge decision makers. Housing development without supporting infrastructure such as schools, medical facilities, transport links and community facilities remain my priorities and I have worked hard with those parish councils currently in the process of preparing Neighbourhood Plans to ensure that developments are sustainable for both current and future residents.

Communications

- Improving access to broadband and better mobile services for our rural areas is dear to my heart. At a time of great financial pressure, KCC has invested £16m to match fund the Government's funding to extend broadband to rural Kent. 94.6% of Kent households now have access to superfast broadband. KCC is now working on a subsidy scheme to help the remaining households connect. More detail can be found on <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/broadband>
- I have worked with our MP, Helen Whately, in getting the mobile phone companies and broadband providers to look at solutions for the “not spots” in this area and a survey covering all households in Headcorn was launched a few weeks ago. Helen and I await the results of this survey and will take the necessary actions.

Education

- Many of you will have heard me saying that our children and young people are our future and they deserve the very best start in life by attending good local schools. The unprecedented increase in the population of Maidstone Rural East has led to some significant pressures, particularly on primary school provision, and I have worked hard with Cabinet Colleagues, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Maidstone Borough Council and our MP to ensure that every child is able to attend a school within proximity of their local area.

At Kent County Council, I am a Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education – the largest portfolio within Kent County Council - which includes responsibility for commissioning school places, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Placement, Youth and Youth Justice, Children in Care Services, Adolescent Support, the Fostering and Adoption Service and many other services. The welfare of our children and young people is the Council's top priority, and I am proud to be part of a team which last year gained a "good" judgment from Ofsted for our Children's Specialist Services and where 92% of the schools attended by our children are rated by Ofsted to be "good" or "outstanding". A memorable highlight for me was giving the opening speech at this year's Kent Adoption Conference – it was truly humbling to see nearly 200 professionals and adopters in the room with only one clear ambition: to make a family for some of our most vulnerable children here in Kent.

As well as Cabinet meetings, I sit on the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, the Corporate Parenting Panel - like all elected Members, I am very proud to be a corporate parent to Kent's looked after children and care leavers. Appointments to outside bodies include the Red Hill Trust – a registered charity offering support to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. I attend as many of the local parish council meetings in my Division as I can – often two in one evening – as well as the annual parish meetings. My most important role is to help and support residents with individual problems – my case work is varied - and I am easily contactable by telephone or email.

I am also pleased to help many local projects through my KCC Member Grant – and so far this year I have committed/pledged to the following organisations: Maidstone Mela, Headcorn Scouts, Harrietsham Summer Fun Club, Broomfield and Kingswood Traffic Regulation Order for reduction of speed near school, Stockbury signage, Maidstone Pastors, Kent Search and Rescue, Slideway Youth Bereavement Support, Ulcombe Play Area, Detling Cricket Club, Harrietsham Parish Council office lift, Maidstone Dawn Patrol, Kent Autistic Trust, Five Acre Wood School, Harrietsham History Society Memorial Garden, Ulcombe Church, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Kent Foster Care Association. I already have a queue of worthy projects lined up for 2018/19 but do please let me know if you have a local project which I can support.

KENT COMMUNITY WARDEN – Dawn Riach-Brown

During the past year I continue to cover visible presence in many areas within Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling. This includes tasking's from my Supervisor, Community Safety Unit (CSU, Partners & Agencies) and the Residents.

This year I have 6 priorities: Domestic abuse, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse, road safety, serious & organised crime and safeguarding vulnerable people. We are accredited to Kent Police.

I act as the 'eyes and ears' for local residents, tackling low level crime and antisocial behaviour I can also help by offering advice on home security and property marking.

I have dealt with Cold Callers, Scam Calls, Graffiti, Fly tipping, Dog Fouling and other concerns and with this information referred to relevant partners and agencies.

Community Warden continue to attend various training courses and events. We also continue to give talks on Scams/Think Jessica, Beat the Bogus Caller and Stop the Scammers, Road Safety, Anti Bullying and Internet Awareness.

Community Wardens across the County have identified residents that have paid £100k's in scams. They have been working closely with Trading Standards in order to educate residents and help reduce the likelihood of becoming an on-going victim of crime.

In Britain 3.2 million people have hand over cash to mass marketing scams run by organised criminals. It is now estimated that £10 billion is sent in postal scams alone. Evidence shows that out of 1.4 million residents living in Kent, 42% are likely to be a scam victim at some point...up to 600,000 residents – Across Kent Wardens have been visiting 1500 residents on a 'Suckers List' seized by the Police.

My role is to act as trusted friend, providing a visible, reassuring presence in the community. Listening to and encouraging residents to resolve problems and enhance their quality of life. If I can't solve a problem directly my role is to refer people to the appropriate agencies that can help. I promote social inclusion and assist vulnerable people.

As well as working closely with local Parish Councils and Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, I also work with other professional authorities to ensure residents are able to access the support they need. For example:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Kent Fire & Rescue Service | Kent Trading Standards |
| Schools | Environmental Protection |
| Social Services | NHS/Doctor Surgerie |

The aim is to enable residents to take a proactive approach to work together to build safer and strong communities and improve the quality of life for vulnerable residents. I also help to tackle social isolation with the help of voluntary agencies and local charities. During the last year I have been supporting residents with dementia; hoarding; food parcels, self-neglect and welfare visits, some requiring hospital treatment.

We are also the KCC Incident Liaison Officers working closely with Kent Resilience Forum in times of emergency and I was involved in assisting residents during the flooding in Yalding and Boughton Monchelsea; distributing food and water during operation stack (a few years ago) and this year distributing water in areas with burst water mains shortly after the snow.

Our role is to provide advice, support and signposting to agencies and partners where needed. I continue to cover Ulcombe area with visible presence and visit when needed. I have in the past year visited residents regarding ASB which resulted with referring to other partners/agencies, Dog fouling stencilling with MBC Dog Warden (refresh this year) and Fly Tipping when seen.

We are promoting the **Volunteer Support Warden's**. If you would like to advertise this please do so. Please see below.

Are you passionate, enthusiastic and up for a new challenge? Do you like meeting new people, want to learn new skills and provide valuable support to local residents? Kent County Council, working in conjunction with the Kent Association of Local Councils is introducing an exciting new Volunteer Support Warden role in selected areas.. The role will be challenging but rewarding and you'll be making a real difference to local communities. For more information and to find out which areas this role is being launched contact Community Wardens on 03000 413455 or visit www.kent.gov.uk/communitywardens .

Kent Police – PCSO John Boyd

Ulcombe has maintained a fairly low level of crime during the past year.

Crime levels throughout the year have their peaks and troughs but I am pleased to say that we are sustaining the reduced level of crime overall that we have benefited from over the past few years.

This thankfully has been possible through the support of the community and the Parish Council.

We have dealt with a number of issues throughout the year, which have included the following:

- Provide a visible presence in my wards and surrounding areas.
- Follow ups on the victims of burglaries/breaks to give crime prevention advice and information booklets.
- Helping neighbours to try to sort out their disputes, this on most occasions means linking in with the housing associations where applicable.
- Linking in with the Kent County Council Wardens and other agencies to help out with many problems that arise.
- Speed enforcement checks and speed monitoring checks throughout the area.
- Patrols of outlying areas to deter and stop vehicles known for scrap metal thefts. This has been backed up with pre-arranged Policing Operations County wide involving numerous authorities and scrap yard inspections.

We are always trying to keep on top of any nuisance youth issues in the village. As with the previous year this has also not been a major issue this year and any incidents of this type of behaviour have been swiftly dealt with to good effect. We encourage residents to call in any incidents of this type of nuisance behaviour.

As with most areas in life the police have changing priorities and budgets. Taking that into account for most of the last year my wards stretched from Harrietsham across to Headcorn than across to Downswood.

But now I am pleased to say that after the last recruitment drive we have more personnel who have now taken over their wards.

So my wards are now Harrietsham/Lenham and the Headcorn area wards

I have and will continue to provide the visible presence and first class service that the Kent Police is renowned for.

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

HEADCORN FOOTBALL CLUB – Kieran Killeen

There ground is currently being used by our youth teams and we are pleased that this year we have introduced an all girls team 'The Kitty Hawks' and we are promoting this in our local villages. The ground remains well drained and thus provides an excellent playing surface which we are really grateful for.

ULCOMBE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL– Emma Hickling, Executive Head Teacher

There is much to report from the school, following a busy few months. I shall talk about some of the highlights.

Award for our reading reward scheme

Last summer we were invited to an award ceremony as we had been nominated for an award for our home reading scheme. The scheme encourages children to read at home with a system of rewards that are presented in our celebration assembly. On attending the ceremony we were announced as the winner for the Maidstone area and then as the winner for Kent. Our prize was a story reading for the children and a trophy which is proudly displayed in school. We have continued the scheme this year with an under the sea theme.

Residential trip, daytrips, sports day and other summer events

Each year we take the KULB federation children in years 5/6 on a residential trip for three days to an educational centre. Last year we went to Kingswood in Ashford and this year the trip took them to Swattenden. The children enjoyed climbing walls, zip wires, 3G swings, campfires and other outward bound activities. The infants at Ulcombe are taken on an annual farm trip to the Rare Breeds centre which they thoroughly enjoy. Our sports day and summer fair were well attended. This year the PTA are planning to take the whole school on a trip to Go Ape at Leeds Castle.

Funded Events

We have been lucky to have been in receipt of some funding from Maidstone Borough Council which enabled us to commission Project Salus, a children's charity to provide some additional experiences for the children. Last year were able to offer cooking classes, non-contact boxing training, a makeover of a shared garden that the children designed and a celebrating our differences workshop.

Visit from the House of Commons

Perhaps the most exciting event of the past year, has been a visit from the women and equalities select committee from Westminster. The MPs spent the day in Ulcombe, meeting the children and the staff, talking to leaders and governors and finally meeting the parents. The visit was very positive and the information will be used in a future report. The reason for the visit was positive, it was in recognition of the work that is being done to provide good quality education for our unique school.

Supporting another Local School

KULB were approached just before Easter and asked if we could support another school, as KCC had some concerns around the provision. KULB are now in collaboration with this school and will be supporting them until August 2019. This means that I as executive headteacher will be working with the school 1/2 days a week, sharing policy and practice and supporting the headteacher to make positive changes.

ULCOMBE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - Rita Strutt and John Goode, Church Warden

The Church building and closed burial ground and grave yard:-

Church Fabric

The church is now in good order. It is water tight and the lightening conductor has been replaced and the required additional conductor fitted. The interior walls have been plastered and painted. Plans are now in place to install a glazed door.

Closed church yard and graveyard

The closed church yard surrounding the church is the responsibility of MBC Parks department and is always well maintained

The grave yard, which is located to the rear of the church, is the responsibility of Ulcombe PCC. This year we have had the services of a community group supervised by Kent Probation Service. They have done an excellent job and it is hope that this service will continue.

A board outlining the Diocese rules on the use of the graveyard has now been erected to give some clarity to users and visitors.

The Church Community

Worship

In October we welcomed our new Priest in Charge, Dr John Huggins, together with his wife Lorraine at a Licencing service held at St Marys Lenham. We are greatly enjoying their presence with us and look forward to exciting times to come.

We are pleased to continue to welcome new worshippers to our congregation

We are still without a regular organist but the Hymnal works very well.

Church Activities / Community Events

We have held 6 events this year:

- **April** A guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral with a Holy Communion in the crypt
- **June** The Great Get Together at the Harrow Pub in memory of the MP Jo Cox in which we celebrated our unity as a village
- **September** Our Harvest Supper with a difference in which we combined a brilliant meal with the showing of the film Mama Mia
- **November** Curry Night - a feast of Asian food
- **December** A joint FASU/PCC Christmas Market. The first such venture. It was so successful it is already booked for next year.

Charitable giving.

This church, together with the other 3 churches in the Len Valley Benefice, have continued to support the following charities:

Connected church – in which we work with sister churches in Zambia to create, bore holes which give a much needed clean water supply.

Maidstone Christian Aid -who support the homeless and those living in poverty in the local area

The British Legion – giving support to ex servicemen

FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS', ULCOMBE – Molly Poulter

The Friends of All Saints, Ulcombe have had a busy year with **three main fund raising events.**

- 1. A 60s night on 15 July** at the home of John and Fiona Kenward which raised £895.03
- 2. A concert by Lees Court Music** on 23rd September which raised £499.70
- 3. A Christmas Market, on 2 December,** which we shared with the PCC The Friends share raised £425.40 The market was enhanced by Fiona Kenwards Community Choir.

Donations to the Church

1. Building Insurance

The Friends have undertaken to pay the annual cost of insuring the church - £2,000 per annum – which is a significant part of the running costs of the church.

2. Music

As the church is without a regular organist, the Friends purchased a Yamaha Clarinova keyboard at a cost of £500 as the previous one was really past its sell-by date! They also purchased a music computer which parishioners are just about getting used to working..

3. Twelve small tables at a cost of £240.00

4. Road Signs to the church - £154.07

5. A Tea Urn £58.80, and

6. A Sundial £25.00

Future help

The Friends have undertaken to help with the cost of providing a glass door to the church

They have helped with cleaning the church, weeding and tidying the car park and church yard and cleaning some of the glass windows.

Over the year, our Friends have given very generous support to our various fund raising events for which we are very grateful.

On the 29 December 2017, our accounts showed that we had **£13,616.07** in hand.

VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE – John Ware, Committee Member

Current Committee Members: Chairperson – vacant position!!, Treasurer – Debbie Boland, Secretary – Debra Bell, Committee members – Christina Cox, Mimi Humphrey, Mary Ann Lovegrove, Janine Monk and John Ware.

Sadly after a very short period in office Claire Tristram our Chairperson from December until our AGM on 17 April has resigned due to new commitments. Our thanks go to Claire for her contribution to the running of things albeit for a very short time.

While our committee along with assistance from other villagers are endeavouring to reduce a chairperson's workload, the pivotal inspirational role needs to be filled for us to function. Unfortunately the position cannot be filled from existing committee members, we need to hear from interested people.

The Village Hall continues to be used on a regular basis by many clubs and societies providing a wide range of activities. These include badminton, ballroom dancing, table tennis, history society and art classes. All these activities take place from Monday to Friday but at the weekends the hall is frequently booked for children's parties and celebration parties. Notwithstanding Parish Council meetings, polling stations and special villager meetings. Contact details for all these clubs and activities are available from our bookings secretary Nikki Sharp on 07555 735054.

During the past year we have organised two quizzes, unfortunately one had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers, sadly this would have been our very clever quizmaster Jack Webb's lat quiz before moving

from Ulcombe. Our January quiz saw a new face in charge Steve Cutler and along with funds for the village hall a very generous donation was made to the hospice. Sadly, a planned clairvoyant evening had to be cancelled, pity we couldn't see that coming – joke!. We hosted the Kent Breakfast in February and further funds were raised entirely for the hospice.

Regarding works to the hall last year, this saw the installation of the remote controlled (but wired) for the hall lighting system which will be beneficial for societies with guest speakers saving have to keep popping out to the electrical cupboard along with upgrades and repairs to external lighting. Disaster wise we did have another flood from the boiler which was swiftly rectified. Our plans for 2018 include repairs to the fascias and gutters along with improvements to the curtains and developing a site management plan to hopefully spread tasks around more.

Personality wise, we saw the retirement after 10 years of dedicated service to the village hall of Frances Crawford our Chairperson, Paul McCreery our Treasurer, Claire Tristram and Jack Webb. We welcomed Debbie Boland who swiftly took on the mantle of Treasurer and Janine Monk.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB – Molly Poulter

The Friendship Club had been started in 1999 and had been a thriving club until about two years ago when there was a noticeable decline in numbers. The decline was due to illness, death and people leaving the village. In 2010 the Club had 60 members. Since that time, 24 members had died, 6 had moved away and 5 were too ill to come. Very few new members had joined.

Mrs Pat Davis, the treasurer, said that although the finances of the club were very healthy with some £2,226 in hand, the club was no longer paying its way each month. The surplus funds had been accumulated through the efforts of members with coffee morning, a cream teas afternoons in the village hall as well as raffles.

A number of experiments had taken place during the previous year to try and ease the perceived situation. Many of the existing members believed the hall was now too large, too uncomfortable and cold! The Club tried meeting in The Harrow in April, May and June, and then in July moved to private homes.

At its AGM in January, the seventeen Friendship Club members present were asked to make a formal decision about the future of the club: to continue as a small group catering just for existing members; to try to recruit more members and continue in the hall; to organise the Club on a completely different basis; or to close the club.

After much discussion the majority present said they would like to continue the club by meeting in private homes. Worry about exclusion because of lack of space was dismissed. The owners of these homes said that they might be able to squeeze in a few more people plus the occasional speaker and slide presentation. For security purposes, they insisted that the addresses of these homes should not be made public. When it was pointed out that this would invalidate the club as an official club, the future hosts agreed that, in order to make the club available to new members, the venue of the meetings would be obtained from Mrs Pat Davis, whose telephone number would be printed in the village newsletter.

Some time was spent discussing the future of the funds. Suggestions were made that they could be used for members to have lunches and outings, or that some could be given to the village hall, church and school. No decisions were made.

The meeting then proceeded to the elections of the committee. Mrs Molly Poulter, when asked to stand again as Chairman, said that (with her 85th birthday approaching) she did not wish to continue. Mrs Pat Smith, who has lived in the village since childhood, agreed to take on the chairmanship and Mrs Melanie Ford, the secretarial role. Mrs Pat Davis agreed to continue as Treasurer.

HISTORY SOCIETY – Molly Poulter

Although we are a small society, I think it is a happy one – and membership is creeping up as our Membership Secretary will tell you.

It has been a busy year though we were disappointed that our planned trip to Amiens in September did not take place as it became too complicated to organise. Part of our difficulty with these trips is the cost of the coach and the numbers needed to make them financially viable.

But the Society had an excellent trip to Portsmouth (which sadly I missed as I was about to go into hospital) and another good evening exploring Charing which again I missed but I gather was very enjoyable.

We also, sadly, had to cancel our Musical Evening with Michael Alexander as he was ill.

We had eight evenings with speakers and the topics ranged from the Revolting English (about protests!), the Cinque Ports, London City Liveries, Mediaeval Bestiaries, Parallel Histories of Hungary and England, the Early Kingdoms of Kent, the making of the King James Bible and the Venerable Bede.

I hope you are happy with the programme we have prepared for this year.

We started the year with an excellent and very interesting talk by our Treasurer, John Moore, who told us about his visit to India to observe and advise on schooling in various parts of the country.

Three trips have been planned for this year – to Greenwich in June, to Elham in the evening in July, and to Amiens in France. John Moore and Geoff Beale will be telling you more about this year's trips.

We have a very happy committee and I would like to thank them all on your behalf for all they do for the Ulcombe History Society.

Ulcombe Dramatic Amateur's Society – John Ware, Society Member

While there is no production on the chocks at the moment, we have been meeting as a society to select and read through a selection of plays. We selected one but unfortunately due to logistics and members health problems we couldn't sensibly present it in our normal spot of early spring this year.

A group of us went to see 'The Play That Went Wrong' at the Marlowe Theatre last year, and six of us – the majority- went to see UDAS prodigy Michael Purday at the Hazlett Theatre in Hi-de-Hi. We will be back.

WRITING CLUB – Ellen Richter

The Wayside Writers was set up in 2013 to support and encourage local people with an interest in writing, whether their interest is in fiction or non-fiction, poetry or prose.

During the last 12 months we started using the Harrow as a base, although sadly this is no longer possible. However, during our time there we ran three very successful 'open mic' nights (in August, October and December).

Open mic events are opportunities to perform a poem, reading, song or even a few jokes with an audience, and the three we ran enabled people from the village, and friends of villagers, to come along and experience something they may never have tried!

The events were friendly and supportive, and I received very positive feedback on them. This suggests there is local support for evenings of this type and we will potentially organise similar events in the future, if the opportunity arises.

I would like to say a personal thank you to everyone who came along, sang or read something, and supported our efforts!

Other open mic events were also organised directly by the Harrow, which were not affiliated with the Wayside Writers; I wanted to take this opportunity to confirm we only organised three events as there has been some confusion about this.

For this year, we have decided to try a new approach, whereby we have a meeting on alternate months (May, July, September, November, January, March). Every other month instead of a meeting, we will go to a writing-related event somewhere in Kent. This could be a poetry or book reading, an open mic night, a lecture or even a play. It will depend on what I can find in any given month!

This will hopefully be inspirational for our regular members but may also encourage other people to get involved – even if you don't write, if you are interested in listening to performances you are very welcome to join us.

Our first trip was to see the local writer Bill Lewis give a reading from his published works in Rochester; it was a really entertaining and vibrant night out, and although only three of us could attend we all enjoyed it very much.

Our next event will be in June and I hope to share details via the newsletter for anyone who is interested in coming along.

We still need more people to get involved, so if anyone is interested in joining us, or simply coming to see how it works, please call 01622 840199 and speak to Ellen, or drop an e-mail to poetryforevents@gmail.com.

ULCOMBE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER –Rachel Robinson

Over the last year the Ulcombe Village Newsletter (UVN) circulation has remained static at around 300 covering the majority of the village. The annual subs have remained frozen at £3 a year and we continue to generate reasonable income via advertising. The ethos of the UVN remains as a local, apolitical newsletter, with articles provided by the local community for the local community. The income

generated from advertising is for the purpose of covering the costs of the newsletter, rather than for profit, and therefore advertising only forms a small part of the publication. The newsletter only exists in paper form and at present there are no plans to move to an online platform.

Printing is still undertaken, by Leila Ware, at the school during term time and we would like to thank the school for accommodating us and letting us monopolize their printing facilities each month. Outside of term-time Charles Tassell has continued to make his printing facilities available to the newsletter and we would like to thank him for helping us to ensure that the newsletter can be printed, at a low cost, for twelve months of the year.

As you know the newsletter is fully reliant on volunteers who give up their time on a regular basis and as editor I would like to pass on my personal thanks to Leila and John Ware, Mimi Humphry and of course all our distributors who brave the weather and the potholed lanes to get the newsletter out each month.

Finally I would like to thank the community for providing the articles for the newsletter. We receive regular contributions from the Parish Council, the Village Hall, the Len Valley Benefice, Headcorn Health Walks and an excellent music column from Brian Hardy and occasional articles for many other groups within the community. In summer 2017 the newsletter ran a drawing competition for the children of the village and we intend to run another competition this summer. If you have suggestions for this please do let us know. We always try to give prominent positions in the newsletter for upcoming events and Ulcombe News. If you are involved with a group within the community and would like to contribute more regularly to the newsletter please do feel free to get in touch. Equally if you would like to contribute a regular column, whether that be on cooking, gardening, nature, astronomy, serialization of a creative writing piece, etc. please do get in touch, we can certainly accommodate more regular contributors. Without the ongoing support of the village UVN would be a thin publication indeed and we hope that the village continue to find it a useful and enjoyable publication.

BALLROOM DANCING CLUB – Rod Davis

The dance group is doing well now after a dip in the middle of last year when no's dropped to an uneconomic level. But new people joining means we have just started hiring the hall on another date , to try and bring them up to a level to get more from the Wednesday class. We do understand that when we have the hall on other than our Wednesday class it is an ad- hoc arrangement and we are quite prepared to move if the hall gets a better offer. In conclusion we are doing quite well at the moment.

BADMINTON CLUB – Alan Burch

The Ulcombe Badminton 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.

Unfortunately the club has lost some regular players over the past year but has managed to recruit a couple of new players. We currently have 10 members and the average weekly attendance is perhaps 7 or 8. 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. However, there are times when attendance falls to only 5 or 6 due to other commitments so we could do with another couple of energetic players to increase overall numbers. For information, most 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 teach people how to play but if there is any interest in coming along then please give me a call.

THE ART CLASS

Established 7 years ago, The Art Class continues to offer structured and informative courses at Ulcombe Village Hall. We offer a range of courses for all levels of experience, each covering a variety 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. For more information on Workshops please contact: theartclass@outlook.com

Autumn Courses

We have just started our summer course, and dates for our autumn courses are still to be confirmed. However, it is expected that we will begin a new selection of classes in mid-September running through to December.

More information regarding the above Workshops and Autumn Course details can be obtained by calling **The Art Class** on **01622 892013** or email : theartclass@outlook.com

ULCOMBE TABLE TENNIS CLUB – Hazel Bingham

We have been running for about 18 months now. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month and if there is a 5th Tuesday we have an extra night.

Initially we had one second hand indoor table and one outside table. The outside table was too large to keep in the storage cupboard and was cluttering up the entrance hall. We have been very fortunate to have been able to replace the outdoor table with a new indoor one, thanks to a generous contribution from the Parish Council.

So with two good tables and plenty of bats and balls the only thing missing is the members. Initially we were averaging 6 to 10 people each session. This has now dropped to between 2 and 6. I have tried to promote the club in the village newsletter but this has not enticed any new members.

Unfortunately from a personal angle, due to a change in work and child care arrangements, I myself cannot always attend but thanks to Leon Holmes we have managed to run the club every fortnight.

Sadly, if we cannot get some more interest, and I will definitely promote again. I am not sure how long we can continue. Although we have £152.40 in the kitty at the moment, the subs of £4 per person per session are not covering costs of hiring the hall, so we are having to use these funds to make up the shortfall. I hope I will be here again next year to give a more positive update but that depends on the support of the village.

Parish Council Members:

Peter Titchener (Chairman)

Mary Ann Lovegrove

Iain Moir

Jon Thompson

Fiona Kenward

Rachel Robinson

Matt Lingwood

Clerk: Mrs Helen Anderson

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