

# ULCOMBE

## Annual Parish Report

### 2024/25

[www.ulcombeparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.ulcombeparishcouncil.co.uk)



Produced by Ulcombe Parish Council  
May 2025



# Ulcombe Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Parish Meeting of Ulcombe Parish held at Ulcombe Village Hall on  
Thursday, 22 May 2025 at 7.15pm.

## **Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman.**

I cannot believe that a year has flown by. In July 2024, we welcomed Tom Boland to the Council. We now have 6 parish councillors.

**Planning Applications** - For the period April 2024 to March 2025, we have as a council dealt with approximately 39 applications, mainly relating to household changes or gypsy and traveller sites. The Borough Council Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan is still ongoing.

A Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan Residents' Survey is being circulated to residents seeking your feedback. We have been asked to put this plan together by Maidstone Borough Council to help prioritise infrastructure needs and aspirations of the community alongside future spending decisions, particularly where funds generated from local housing development are concerned. This will be available to complete via an online survey platform (the link is on our website, Facebook and Village WhatsApp group). Alternatively, we can deliver you a paper copy if required. It will only take a few minutes to complete.

**Police** – We have two new officers looking after Ulcombe, PC George Head and PC Chad Maskell. It is important that all crime is reported so that if a pattern appears to be establishing then resources can be specifically allocated. Please always ask for a report number. The police contact details are in the Ulcombe Newsletter. In the 12 months to end March 2025 there were 43 crimes in Ulcombe compared with 603 crimes in Headcorn, Broughton Malherbe and East Sutton (excluding Sutton Valence). This 43 includes 16 anti-social crimes, 14 violent and sexual crimes and 7 theft crimes. Monthly crime figures for Ulcombe can be found online via the Kent Police website at [www.e-watch.co](http://www.e-watch.co).

**Community Warden** – We do not have a dedicated Community Warden, however, this does not mean that someone cannot help you. There is a Team Leader, Sandra Edmonds, and she can be contacted on 07969 584183 or via email at [sandra.edmonds@kent.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.edmonds@kent.gov.uk).

**Recreation Ground** – We are aware that the play equipment refurbishment has not yet been completed. New ideas for the area were being investigated by the Council and then the winter weather was upon us. We hope to finalise this very shortly and utilise the S106 funding available from the Grafty Green development.

All four sides of the cricket pavilion have now received a full makeover and the structure is now stable. Whilst it is currently just used as a storage facility, there is perhaps future scope to explore carrying out an internal reconstruction and allowing it to become a more usable space.

Following a comprehensive tree survey last year, we then engaged a tree surgeon and his team to tackle all the issues identified in order to ensure the safety of all who use the ground.

We have engaged a new Grounds Maintenance contractor, Steve Waring, who will continue to keep our recreation ground maintained. He has already tackled the brambles, the hedges, the overgrown stream area and also around the bus shelter. We will continue to keep all these areas in check throughout the year so that maintenance is proactive rather than reactive.

We have erected a Tommy statue by the village sign at the northern end of the recreation ground. It is well secured and in response to popular demand, we intend to keep it there permanently. I think it is useful, particularly for the younger generation, to be reminded that their freedoms are due to the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces in the two world wars.

We had an excellent VE Day dance on May 10<sup>th</sup> here in the Village Hall. I would like to thank all those involved in making it a great success, It was a great evening and I am pleased to see that it raised over £800 for the Help for Heroes charity. I hope all of us will remember VJ day on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II.

**Football Pitches** – The football club continues to use the recreation ground for their junior matches throughout the year. Unfortunately, the wet weather conditions have limited play through the winter months.

We gave the football container toilets an exterior makeover with wood cladding so that it blends into the surroundings a little more, as well as installing a handrail on the path for safety.

**Defibrillator** – Following a successful defibrillator first aid training event for residents in July, a request was made for a second defib to be installed at the top of Ulcombe Hill. This was quickly acted upon and with the kind permission of the owners of Went's Garage, it was installed at the end of August 2024. We received a grant from our former County Councillor with the remainder of the costs funded by the Parish Council.

**Finance** - It was agreed to generate a precept for 2025/26 of £26,590 which equates to £64.34 per band D property. A 1.5% increase.

The Accounting Statement for the year ending 31 March 2025 has been internally audited and will also be externally audited by Mazars LLP in June 2025. In summary:-

Balance as at 31/3/2024	£52,645
Receipts in year to 31/3/25	£39,592
Payments out in year to 31/.3/25	£56,735
Balance as at 31/3/2025	£35,502

Residents will be able to inspect the accounts from 3<sup>rd</sup> June, for a limited period, on application to the Clerk.

**Communications** – Our website can be found at [www.ulcombeparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.ulcombeparishcouncil.co.uk). This website is fully compliant with the WCAG (website content accessibility guidelines) and is kept up to date with both Council business and other items of village interest. We continue to use our village noticeboards situated outside the village hall and in The Street (near the bus stop) as well as the Ulcombe Parish Council Facebook page.

We are keen to engage with residents as much as possible and value any ideas for new projects or village celebrations, and we will address any complaints (hopefully not too many) that you may have. Please do get in contact with our Clerk in the first instance or come along to a Parish Council meeting which is held on a monthly basis, which is usually on the first Thursday of the month from 7.15pm here at the Village Hall.

**Litter** – We like many other parishes have to deal with the blight of litter. We would like to thank everyone who took part in the Keep Britain Tidy week as well as those who take the trouble to pick up rubbish on their daily walks. A thank you also goes to our local contractor, Ken Parish,

who services the core of the village on a weekly basis.

The Parish Council does have litter collecting equipment available (pickers, gloves and bags). Please do contact the clerk. Heavily blighted roads can also be reported online to Maidstone Borough Council on

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/report-it/top-6/report-a-street-cleansing/report-litter>.

**Number 59 Bus** – NuVenture Buses runs the Number 59 Bus Service, which runs every Wednesday at 9.48am from the bus stop by Chestnut Close. The timetable is both sides of the road. Did you know that the service route has changed since 22 January? It now stops in Headcorn on its way to Maidstone at approximately 10:05am with a return journey to Ulcombe from Headcorn at 1.18pm (bus stop outside Cost Cutter Stores/Ulcombe Road). The funding for this bus remains in place for this financial year but the Parishes it serves will shortly start to look for funding schemes for 2026/2027. However, it will certainly help any application if we can demonstrate that passenger numbers are high and there is a demonstrable need for the service to run. So please do use the service if you can. The figures for April are good, showing an average of 25 passengers per trip.

**Village Hall** – We have agreed two grants, one to relay the tarmac surface of the village hall entrance and the other towards the hall floor restoration and the painting on of new badminton court lines.

**Thank you** to our two Borough Councillors, Martin Round and Ziggy Trzebinski, and our former Kent County Councillor, Shellina Prendergast. All of whom have given their support to our Parish Council throughout the year.

Cllr. Round is now our newly elected Mayor of the Borough of Maidstone for 2025/26, and on behalf of all of us in Ulcombe, our hearty congratulations, Martin, and we know you will be a great success.

I also want to congratulate Cllr Sarah Emberson for such a decisive result in the KCC elections to win Maidstone Rural East. Her contact details will be in the Newsletter and on the website

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Councillors for their input, support and willingness to look after our village, We are all volunteers and we look forward to the challenges in the coming year ahead, particularly with planning.

Finally, I would like to thank Helen for all that she does as our Clerk and RFO (Responsible Financial Officer). She succeeds for posting our draft meeting Minutes on the website within a few days, and for regularly updating our website with planning matters, agendas, minutes, and all local news.

**Peter Titchener**  
**Chairman of Ulcombe Parish Council**

### **A Report by County Councillor, Sarah Emberson**

No report was received on Council activities, however, Sarah, as a very recently elected Councillor made a short introduction.

### **A Report by Borough Councillor, Ziggy Trzebinski**

2024 was significant. It was the LAST Maidstone Borough Election for the existing Borough Council and was an “all-out” election. It was followed shortly after by a General Election. Thus 2025 may be the last

County Election for a distinct County Council. The new Parliamentary leadership has decided to merge the two levels of Council authorities into larger merged districts/boroughs with the County into “unitary” authorities.

Whilst this was not a shock to some it was in terms of a surprise to the many new political members and the leaders that emerged after the Local Elections, both in Maidstone Borough and throughout the County and nationally. The possibility of Unitary status Councils is not new. Many large Cities and indeed places like Medway provide a unified set of services. But this was a whole County of Kent proposal!

Ziggy and Martin initially reported a totally new make-up of Council and leadership at the last Annual Report in 2024, but a year later this report can only state that the new leadership took a long time to build any momentum and indicate their direction. Yet “things” still happened and needed to be addressed. Barely a week goes by in this Ward without something significant demanding our time and attention plus Committees and major agendas need to be worked upon. We also attend special training and briefing sessions pertinent to legal oversight such as Planning, Licensing and Audit, often just to conform to the law and good practice measures. Martin and Ziggy continue to keep up to date on these matters as both serve on Audit, Ziggy sits on Planning whilst Martin Subs and Ziggy serves on regular Licensing Committees, sessions and hearings plus other Committees.

It was also a Coalition where manifesto claims needed to materialise into a reality. Not easy for the Greens: one group of people totally new to any form of democracy, let alone leadership and administration, working with some very insightful shrewd Lib Dems. Few claims did bear fruit. Some are being worked up, some abandoned, some previous directions cancelled and some remain. Obviously, it took a while for the two groups to merge directions and set up some common aims and objectives in the Leadership Cabinet. Whilst service operations continued, the policies were unclear and lacked definition and direction. Issues that affect this ward were adversely affected such as Planning and enforcement. Leadership appeared to be in limbo for far too long. No sooner had the leadership personalities agreed a coalition, they then went out on the Election trail to contest against each other in the 3 of the General Election seats for Maidstone and others beyond. And in the last 3 months the same ambitions for County Divisions puts most of them in competition!

It has actually been a year of many cancelled meetings and just specific briefings on matters like Equality, Diversity or Sustainability, which few attend. Planning Training is continual and poorly attended. This means that Planning Committee, possibly the most sensitive committee, has both the least able and/or the most experienced. In this respect it is currently made up of a number of Cabinet members.

What became clear in the current leadership direction is that the Leeds Langley to M20 Link and other road proposals will be scrapped. The Housing and Local Plan proposals of both the Maidstone Local Plan and the Council's own programme will be re-evaluated and re-prioritised. Schemes such as Lidsing and Lenham Heathlands that are needed to deliver numbers will be given further consultation and further Policy development. So some immediate numbers will need to be found in “windfall” sites and locations to provide a housing delivery that pleases the government's trajectory. This means any Appeals will be subjected to the whole Local Plan delivery test. It also affects the immediate financial prospects of the Council in its own borrowings and outcomes for its own housing provision, plus there will be longer term loss of dividends regarding the Local Plan and its delivery. So this is a major re-adjustment of the priorities of the Local Plan that re-aligns where the numbers come from. This means budget changes.

The role of Enforcement will hence be devalued with staffing reduced. Resources will be focussed to net zero priorities such as clean air in the Town Centre and energy schemes on Council buildings. Meanwhile planning and enforcement problems continue to dictate in this Ward. Furthermore, there are anti-social and reckless behaviours that require greater activity by community protection, Social Services, Environment and Waste & the Police. These relate to Planning or existing Housing.

Thankfully the Bin service has settled down to pre new contract collection standards, but there are still periodic failures of service, and it is always rural areas that suffer.

When it comes to LG Reorganisation and future Unitary decisions the government have now decided some areas can be in the “first tranche” of moving towards new authorities BUT Kent: not immediately!

Temporary interim processes will apply.

Housing, resident's problems, local ASB & the community housing stock itself continues to provide plenty of emails & calls. This admittedly is predominant in Headcorn itself but the Sutton Valence levels of concern have been a surprise upon taking on the bigger Ward. Discussions with Goldings proved to be a problem and over time they have now realised some issues did need attention and they have now set up a new team.

It has also been Martins Deputy Mayor year before his Mayoral year-and NO Civic PA! But Jo stepped in and through the chaos a response and plan took order.

Thank you to all the Parishes, members and clerks of the Ward and all our residents.

### **A Report from Kent Police**

You now currently have two neighbourhood police officers which cover Ulcombe. These are PC Chad Maskell and PC George Head. These officers do not just cover Ulcombe but cover the whole of the south rural of Maidstone which is from Ulcombe to Yalding.

Throughout the last year, we have continued to liaise with councillors, Ziggy and Martin who have been very helpful in feeding us any issues which they may have in the community which have been raised by residents of the ward. The other part of this year, we have been dedicated in tackling ongoing community issues and crime with the likes of Anti-Social behaviour and a wide range of rural crime.

We are aware of the rise of issues with Anti-Social Behaviour, especially with catapults. We plead that these issues continue to be reported via 999, 101, the Kent Police Website or anonymously via Crime Stoppers.

### **KALC Community Award 2025**

This was presented to Mrs Nikki Sharp in recognition of her 35 years of service to the school crossing patrol and the Village Hall. Ulcombe thanks you for your longstanding dedication to so many community events and organisations.

A certificate was presented to Nikki by the Chairman of Ulcombe Parish Council, Peter Titchener, along with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a gift voucher.

### **Reports from Village Organisations and Representatives.**

#### **Ulcombe History Society**

##### **Programme**

There has been a full programme of 8 speakers this year covering diverse topics. Decoding the Mappa Mundi; Richard II and the Peasants' Revolt; the history of aviation in Kent; the Kentish Tithe Wars of 1930s; The Kitchener Camp in Sandwich 1939; Anglo Saxon England; the aftermath of the Plague and the history of the Pantomime Dame.

##### **Outings**

In June, we took a coach with members and friends to Kenwood House. In September, we enjoyed a trip to Petworth House. Thank you to John Moore, and also Derrick Parkes, for all the work and time involved in making these such successful trips.

##### **Links with other History Societies**

Ulcombe now regularly exchanges information with other local History Societies about talks and events which members can attend as guests. We have welcomed several guests this year from other societies

and some of our members have attended their meetings.

## **Membership**

Membership has reduced slightly by 1 to 32, but I am pleased to report that guest attendance has increased substantially from 40 to 56, partly as a result of networking with other societies.

## **British Association of Local History (BALH)**

Can I remind members of the twice yearly circulation by email of the British Association for Local History publications. These make interesting reading, so do look out for them in your inboxes.

## **Acknowledgements**

In my third year as Chair, I have been greatly supported by the Secretary, Bridget Samuelson, so knowledgeable, capable and efficient. Thank you so much. I would also like to thank our Treasurer, Derrick Parkes for his capable financial skills, constructive suggestions and good humour; Bev Martin for arranging our first class speakers and on occasion finding new ones at the last minute. John Moore who has for 20 years spent many hours organising many really successful trips. I would draw your attention to his wish to step back from this soon. We are looking for someone to work beside him, then take over when they feel ready. Thanks also our other committee members, who help to keep this committee running smoothly: Peter Court, who deputises for me when necessary; thanks the speakers, and helps with the refreshments, Janet Trotter who looks after the raffle and last but not means least, Peter Titchener, who has decided to stand down after 23 years. One of the founder members, Peter has been a mine of local information and historical knowledge for which we are indebted to him. We are also grateful to Richard Pilborough, who inspects our accounts. Lastly, thank you to you, the members, for your enthusiasm and interest, without whom there would be no Ulcombe History Society.

## **Leila Ware (Chair)**

### **Ulcombe Church of England Primary School**

I have recently joined here in April at Ulcombe as the Head of School. I have been teaching for 12 years and have been a Deputy Headteacher in a one-form entry primary school since 2019. This is my first Head of School position, and I am very proud and excited to be leading Ulcombe School into the future. I am thoroughly enjoying my time getting to know the staff and children, and have felt very welcomed by the whole school community. I am looking forward to getting to also know the wider community further and lead the staff and children into the next academic year with positivity and enthusiasm.

We currently have 68 pupils on roll in three mixed age classes, and will be welcoming a number of new pupils into year R in September.

This year's achievements include the following:

A 'good' inspection from SIAMS in November 2024, celebrating the 'very small school with a big heart'. The school was praised for its exceptional nurture provision, wellbeing of pupils and staff as well as its distinct Christian ethos. It was commented that 'deep levels of trust between the school and its community enable pupils and adults to feel included and appreciated as 'one body' which we continue to be very proud of in the daily life of school.

Delivering a unique afternoon provision, designed by the Aspire Federation, called Bounce. A small group of children who found it difficult to be attentive for long periods of time were given the opportunity to combine sport and nurture to develop their resilience and overall behaviour for learning every afternoon. This had fantastic benefits for the children and many now are able to access full day curriculum using the skills they learnt during this time.

The children have attended various experiences this year in addition to their national curriculum which we have to follow:-

Various local sporting events  
Three day residential trip  
Trips to places of worship eg. the Gurdwara  
A unique theatre play performance delivered by The Travelling Association  
Weekly swimming in partnership with Sutton Valance school  
Young voices - a gathering of lots of school choirs at the 02.

We also have several events to look forward to:-

Aspire Arts Festival Year 6 transition day at Ulcombe Village Hall  
Ulcombe Sports Day  
Summer Fun Afternoon organised by the parent association FUS.  
Year 6 Leavers celebration

Ulcombe are still awaiting an OFSTED inspection this academic year. We, Kent and the diocese are expecting good judgements in this inspection and look forward to sharing the outcome with you.

**Olenka Parsons**  
**Head of School**

### **The Committee of The Friends of All Saints, Ulcombe.**

The Friends of All Saints, Ulcombe (FASU) was founded in 2013 to help maintain Ulcombe's beautiful medieval church. Through membership and various activities such as art shows, concerts, auction of promises, garden safaris, bingo and other events, they have given money to the church to help with repairs and innovations. They have also paid the annual insurance of over £2,000.

The Friends has been run by a committee of villagers – not all who attend the church but who treasure the beautiful building which overlooks the village and stands proud at the top of the hill.

Last year they ran a very popular bingo evening which raised £330. All the members of the committee attended a bingo evening in Maidstone to learn how to run a bingo evening.

The second fundraising evening was an Auction of Promises which raised £1,194 on the night and several more email bids came in later. People were very generous and donated some lovely items, though sadly there were not as many people present as hoped who attended.

The first committee worked very hard but most have retired because of age, illness or moving from the village. The current committee has also worked hard but is getting aged. FASU is urgently in need of a few new members. If you would like to help in helping to preserve our lovely church, please do get in touch with our Chairman, Molly Poulter at [mollycpoulter@gmail.com](mailto:mollycpoulter@gmail.com) or Treasurer, David Norman at [david\\_norman\\_@outlook.com](mailto:david_norman_@outlook.com).

**Molly Poulter (Chairman)**

### **Headcorn Football Club.**

We would like to offer our thanks to Ulcombe Parish Council for the continued support of our junior teams and the use of the sports field.

Unfortunately, due to the wet winter and ongoing drainage issues we haven't been able to host as many fixtures at Ulcombe as previous years (the pitches were unplayable between the months of November – March).

Our U11 Thunderbolts team, U11 Lancasters team and U7 Meteors team would also like to thank the residents of Ulcombe for the friendly welcome they always receive when using the sports field.

**Matthew Botley**



## **Chairman**

### **Community Breakfast Report.**

We have now been doing the Community Breakfast for over 3 years, 42 breakfasts and counting! They have gone from strength to strength thanks to our loyal customers and also to those who just come along when they can. I don't know what makes it a success, but I am glad and thankful that it is.

We have now raised to date £7,120, so thank you. £3,560 has gone to the day to day running of our beautiful Church and £3,560 has gone into the community pot some of which has gone to the school for board games, some to the start-up of the 'Drop In' and some went to the funding of last year's village event on the field. A big chunk has gone to the village hall for various things. One of the breakfasts was specifically for raising money to go to the Turkish earthquake appeal. We donated £400, £224 from the breakfast and the rest was from donations given on the day.

I would like to give a big THANK YOU to our lovely team of volunteers, without whom the breakfast could not run. So, thank you to (in no particular order) Simon, Sara, Christina, Rhian, Victoria, Wendy, Donna, Carole and last but not least Janet.

If you have any ideas where some of the money can be used please get in touch via

Nicky Bovington on [nicka50@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicka50@hotmail.co.uk) 07870851192.

Sara Jackson on [jackson64@icloud.com](mailto:jackson64@icloud.com) 07778771063.

### **Ulcombe Village Hall Report**

Ulcombe's Village Hall is not only is available to hire for private functions and small business activities but is also the venue for many community events and is 'home' to several local organisations that benefit the village in so many ways.

One-off events held at the Hall recently include quizzes, bingo sessions and a murder mystery evening. And a Christmas Bazaar in the Hall has become a regular feature of the festive season.

The Badminton Club meets weekly at the Hall for most of the year, the History Society meets here monthly as well as Yoga & Pilates classes. On the third Saturday of every month, all are welcome to enjoy a chat with friends at the wonderful Community Breakfast, and the informal coffee-and-cake "Drop In" alternates weekly with the "Baby Sensory" gathering, offering further opportunities for young and old (and all in between) to meet up. And, with the closure of The Harrow, our local mobile Pizzeria is now using the Village Hall's car park as its Ulcombe base.

The Hall is a registered charity, run by a committee of local people, of which I'm proud to be chairman. It's our job to ensure that the Hall is kept clean and tidy, well maintained and safe, and that all the necessary legalities are complied with. And, of course, we also aim to make improvements to the Hall and its surroundings wherever we can.

Most recently...

- aided by grants from the Parish Council, the entrance to the car park has been re-tarmacked to eliminate the potholes that had developed, and the floor of the main hall has been resurfaced, with the badminton court relined;
- with support from the Ulcombe History Society, we have installed a display of old photographs of the village; and
- helped by a donation from the Community Breakfast team, the kitchen has been prepared to receive a commercial dishwasher. (This has required a re-arrangement of the kitchen as well as considerable electrical and plumbing work in addition to the purchase of the dishwasher itself.)

Our ambitions for the future include making Wi-Fi available at the Hall and providing outdoor facilities: perhaps a patio along the eastern side of the Hall overlooking the recreation ground and/or a seating area (perhaps also a performance area) to the south-west of the Hall, where food might be served and musical or other performances enjoyed. However, although committee members have cleared this latter area of the encroaching hedge, and we have been gifted 4 tables and benches to start this project, we will be dependent on obtaining grant funding (perhaps from the National Lottery) to progress it further.

Our finances are more or less stable, with hiring fees and profits from the events we run just about balancing our outgoings – which were around £10,000 last year – but, as you will have gathered, we have limited means to make major improvements, so please continue to support our activities here in the future so we can continue to keep the Hall available for all who wish to use it.

Richard Pilborough,  
Management Committee Chairman

### **Ulcombe Community Drop In – A Time to Play**

This group takes place on the second and fourth Thursday of each month during term time in Ulcombe Village Hall between 9.30 and 11.30.

The group is facilitated by Wendy, Nikki and helpers Christina and Trevor whom are amazing. The rationale of this group is to offer friendship, a safe place for people to come meet and be part of the community. It is open to ALL residents of Ulcombe Parish; young, old and in between. We do have a play area for our younger visitors so that mums can meet each other and know that their children are engaged and safe.

We do have regular attendees but alas very few of our visitors actually come from Ulcombe, we have mums travelling from Rochester, Coxheath, Grafty Green, Headcorn, Sutton Valance and Lenham. We have many grandparents who have found this group friendly and inviting one family travelling from Bromley! It is fabulous that so many decide to travel to join us and we thank them very much; it would be lovely, however, to welcome more visitors from the village itself.

As previously mentioned, this group is for everyone in Ulcombe and we would love to welcome some of our older residents. We have also introduced a 'taxi' service to help those that are unable to get to us. Trevor Sharp has very kindly offered to pick up and drop off after the session and all they need to do is 'text a Trev' (07521 155833) on either the day before or on the morning of the session; unfortunately, this has not been taken up by anyone. So please come along and give it a go as you may be very pleased you did.

The session is donation only and we feel that this is important we will never turn anyone away. We serve refreshments during the morning, in fact our toast is legendary and has been a godsend for busy mums that have missed breakfast.

Our Christmas party was a joint affair with the Baby Sensory 'Drop In' and it was a huge success. Santa despite having a very busy schedule, came and visited the children, which was lots of fun. Each little one accompanied by a parent got to meet him and receive an age-appropriate gift. There were plenty of yummy things to eat including sandwiches, cakes and of course jelly and ice cream.

We are planning a tabletop/car boot sale on Saturday 29th June to raise funds for our group to update our toys. We would like the village to support this either to come and sell their unwanted items or to buy. We were very excited when we were able to purchase our lovely wooden climbing frame with money that had been raised throughout the year. It is a great success with all of our children and has been an asset to our group. We have also purchased a role play 'kitchen' a balance beam, a smaller rocker/climbing frame and musical instruments. We take great pride in our toys and equipment and make sure that things

are just so for our visitors.

We are also planning an end of term tea party and Christmas party.

Nikki and myself feel passionate about this group and believe that it is a great asset to the village, bringing people together, to socialise share news and be part of something. We hope that others will come along and say 'hello' they will be so glad they did.

**Wendy Saunders & Nikki Sharp.**

### **Ulcombe Newsletter**

The Parish Newsletter (Ulcombe Village News as it is titled) has been produced in its present form for three years and it has been enthusiastically received.

Our thanks go to Liz Foster who produces such an interesting as well as informative magazine each month, and to the people in the village who send interesting stories and articles.

Then, thanks should go to the people who produce the newsletter and to those who deliver it.

Some 230 copies of the newsletter are delivered each month. At £3 a year, it is much cheaper than most village newsletters. We are able to price it so low because of the revenue we receive from our advertising. Any profits made by the magazine are distributed to any village organisations in need.

Thank you to the newsletter committee, Treasurer Richard Pilborough, Distribution Organiser Frances Crawford, Peter Titchener and Molly Poulter.

**Molly Poulter**

### **Ulcombe Badminton Group**

We are a friendly club with ages from teens to those in their 70s. We regularly have 12+ in attendance with mixed ability. We would always welcome new members and make sure everyone gets to play.

We meet on Friday nights from 8pm to 11pm from October to May. Contact Rhian Banham on 07400 096269 if you want to come along and get some exercise and make new friends.

### **Churchwarden Report for All Saints Church Ulcombe.**

2024 began quietly. Lent began very early, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Not a lot of fasting took place on Valentines Day.

Len valley Benefice held their annual Lent Lectures during Holy Week. All Saints hosted a lecture on the Wednesday.

Good Friday and Easter Sunday were well attended.

All Saints hosted one wedding in 2024. We were all very much surprised in the New Year that Nicky Austin announced that Ian Bovington had proposed to her at Christmas. It was a wonderful ceremony, and the weather held.

There were two baptisms in the year. Henriette Cornwallis and Serenity Talbot.

There were two burials for people who had previously moved away from Ulcombe.

There were two burials of Ashes. Maddie Byrne in May and the daughters of Robert and Jean Hemmings brought Mum and Dad back to Ulcombe after they had spent 30 years living near Lincoln.

The Remembrance Service was well attended, as always.

The Carol Service was disappointing. My fault. I posted a flyer to Ulcombe Village News, but did not notice that my computer had picked up the old e-mail address and Liz Foster did not receive it.

Christmas Morning was a warm family Communion. It is always a pleasure to greet people who we only see on Christmas Day.

The Church fabric is in good order. There are some jobs that require attention, but the weather since November has not been friendly to pointing and digging drains. Gutters are all clear and removing the constant rain. The legally required inspections of firefighting equipment, electricity and lightning conductors have been made with good results. I heard a comment some years ago regarding fire extinguishers, quoted by a firefighter. If you have a fire out of control 'Get OUT'!

The PCC agreed in October of 2024 that it would like to step back from the complete wilding of the Churchyard, which is a scheme put in place by Canterbury Diocese but offers an 'in or out' option. It was decided to approach MBC Parks, who cut the grass etc in the Churchyard, to ask if it would be possible to resume partial mowing, to the front of the Church. This will resume in late May, early June when the spring bulbs and primroses have completely died back.

The Financial Report is available in the Church. Spare copies are on the table to the left.

One Item that needs publishing is the Card Reader for Donations. Canterbury Diocese offered 50 x 'Free' machines late in 2023. Our Treasurer applied and All saints was chosen to receive one. A single charge was made to connect it to the internet etc, and it was ours to use. The machine had paid for itself in approximately two months and is regularly used by visitors, ramblers and people joining for services.

### **John Goode (Churchwarden)**

### **Ulcombe Independent Productions**

Ulcombe Independent Productions is a small group of Ulcombe residents who organise various types of events for the village of Ulcombe.

Past events in the last 12 months included:-

Summer village walk on Saturday, 24 July with a picnic lunch.

Quiz Night – October 2024

Bygone Ulcombe (in collaboration with Ulcombe History Society) on 15 February and 9 March 2025

VE Day Event (in collaboration with Grafty Green Village Hall Committee) on 10 May 2025

Forthcoming events include:-

Village Ramble and picnic lunch on Saturday, 12 July 2025.

Family Funday on Saturday, 23 August 2025

Quiz Night – October 2025

### **Simon Odam**

### **Baby Sensory Drop In**

This takes place every other Thursday at Ulcombe Village Hall. Founded by two Ulcombe mums (Jess and Kelly) in May 2023, these sessions were created to provide an opportunity for parents and carers to help stimulate their babies' senses in a relaxed environment.

The drop-in currently caters for babies aged 0-18 months and features a varied array of sensory stations designed to foster cognitive and developmental growth. With hope that the age range will grow as our babies do too!

The sessions are also a great opportunity to meet other mums and enjoy hot drinks, sweet treats, and

good company and we've also enjoyed welcoming some grandparents and nannies too. The group has enjoyed regular visitors over the past two years, from both the village and all over Kent.

Booking in advance is not required and those attending are asked simply to bring a £3 donation which goes towards hall hire, the upkeep of the equipment, and refreshments. Details and more information can be found by searching 'sensory drop in' on Instagram and we also have a WhatsApp group in which we can offer each other support and advice. We have a great community.

**Jessica Norman**

### **Games Afternoon**

This takes place on the first Thursday of each month between 2pm and 4pm in our beautiful church. We currently have between 8 and 12 people attending most months. Rhian, Nicky and myself provide light refreshments for the afternoon; we also join in the games.

We play Scrabble, Rumikub and a card game with a rather dubious name. We are open to all residents of Ulcombe Parish and beyond who would like to come along and join in, either bringing something that they want to play or just to sit and chat. All donations go towards the upkeep of the church. We look forward to welcoming more visitors.

**Wendy Saunders, Rhian Banham, Nicky Austin.**