



Benenden Magazine

August 2022

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Editorial



For a nation renowned for spending much of our time talking about the weather, we're now having to face up to the fact that, at long last, we've got some proper weather to talk about. Where once we'd happily use our meteorology as a conversation starter, chatting earnestly about drizzle and how our green wheelie bin was blown over in the 'worst storm to hit these shores in a decade', now we're having to address the prospect of something more serious every year.

I've spent most afternoons this week sitting indoors with the blinds down, while feeling rather smug that I moved here 11 years ago from London, where it's currently 40 degrees and you could fry an egg on your brickwork.

Sadly, that's what I've become: a smug Benendenian. I sit here watching the BBC weather forecasters standing in front of a bright red map of the British Isles and I feel delighted that I live in a nice high village where there's always a lovely breeze and a shaded wood to walk in and a village café with outside tables and an awning.

I feel I'm regressing into a mid-life version of the kind of Utopian childhood where the sun shone every summer's day - in a good way - Lester Piggott always won the Derby and there were always lashings of cake and ginger beer. (That reminds me, there's a new cake lady in the café now and she makes an excellent Bakewell tart, which makes me feel even better about life.)

I know I should spend more time thinking about bad stuff, but at the moment, having had Covid and endured the ordeal of seeing which buffoon will be our next Prime Minister, I just want to pick up this magazine, read about all the good people in the village, have a pint in the Bull and wait for the next spell of non-weather.

It's not a bad life, is it?

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

The Benenden Magazine is published monthly as a joint venture by Benenden Parish Council and St George's Parochial Church Council. It is distributed free to all residents of the parish. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers. Responsibility for accuracy of information rests with contributors and advertisers. Neither the publishers nor the editors shall be held responsible for or endorse any opinions, products or services printed in the magazine or directory.

Editors: Ruth Clark, Peter Thomas

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Contributions to: benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com by the 10th of the preceding month.

Advertising orders or queries to: advertising.benendenmag@gmail.com.

Distribution queries to: dd.rhill@btinternet.com.

Postal address: c/o Community Office, Benenden Village Hall, Benenden, TN17 4DY 01580 240371

Printed by The Wealden Advertiser Ltd, Cowdens Close, Hawkhurst, Kent

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)
Curate: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 rev.ylva@gmail.com (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday)
Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 julia.collard@btinternet.com
Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 sue@undaunted.co.uk
www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com
Please inform the Rector, Curate or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Sunday 7 August	8am BCP Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am All-age Communion	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 14 August	8am BCP Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 21 August	8am BCP Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Sung Eucharist	
Sunday 28 August	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	

Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)
Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays
Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Tobin Bird 240027 www.idengreen.org.uk
Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship
The 10am Morning Worship is broadcast on our YouTube channel: search 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

The Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org
Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms 30 July Theo Akrimi and Remy Akrimi
Weddings 9 July Sophie Pugh and Alexander Stoughton
22 July Sarah Bird and Joshua Davies
23 July Amber Beeslee and Benjamin Banfield

Minister's Letter



Take time to slow down and find peace

Dear Friends,

David and Helen have gone off on their well-earned and much-needed sabbatical, and will be back in full action at the start of October. The cat is away ...

No, jokes aside, I'm not replacing David, nor is it my wish to, and neither am I changing anything about the church and what we do there. But I am here for you as your priest and as someone who is immensely interested in the life of this village and this benefice. My ear is always open, should you wish to talk, or have an enquiry or a suggestion to make. I can be reached by email to rev.ylva@gmail.com, or by phone 01233 820100, or mobile 07766 711957. Or come and find me in church on a Sunday morning or in Benenden's, where I tend to serve coffee for a couple of hours at the start of the week.

Summer is a time of leisure and refreshment for many, and I hope that you will have some of that, too. The Bible tells us that God leads us beside still waters and takes us to green pastures (Psalm 23). That is absolutely right, but we ourselves have to accept the invitation. God is not forcing us to slow down and enjoy the tranquillity and rest that he offers us, He is merely holding out the hand and giving us a chance.

When you read this, some of us will have been on our Benefice Summer Pilgrimage to Bodiam at the end of July. There we will have walked beside the River Rother, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of summer. I was very fortunate to be taken along another part of the Rother early one morning in June, accompanying Charles Trollope as he surveyed the birdlife by the river. That morning was, for me, all about what the Psalmist describes; slowing down and immersing myself in the landscape, in the life of animals and plants, and finding rest and refreshment for my soul. Nothing dramatic happened, we saw the odd rarer bird, but mostly ordinary creatures and plants crossed our path, and the mist cleared as the day warmed. It was beautiful and special without needing to be spectacular.

The possibility to slow down and rest is something that we need to cultivate, to practise. So is the ability to enjoy things that are ordinary, common and plain. The human psyche is geared up to crave fireworks of excitement, but we actually thrive on much smaller delights. One of the prayers from the religious Iona Community says: "All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you; all that is lovely, all who are loving point to you as their fulfilment." God is a God of all aspects of life and we can find and connect with Him (or Her?) in our everyday life. We just need to give ourselves time, and peace, to slow down and notice all that He has provided for us.

Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie, Curate

Village Calendar

August

Thurs 4-Fri 5	Summer Drama Workshop, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm	p.9
Saturday 6	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 6	Benenden Bowls Club, Open Day, Recreation Field, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm	p.17
Sunday 7	Little Walkhurst Open Garden, Walkhurst Road, Benenden, 12.30-4.30pm	p.19
Thursday 11	Benenden's Community Shop volunteers' social evening, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm	p.17
Saturday 13	Ladder Toss, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 14	Little Walkhurst Open Garden, Walkhurst Road, Benenden, 12.30-4.30pm	p.19
Tuesday 16	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.17
Tuesday 16	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Hopping in Kent, Iden Green Pavilion, 2pm	p.13
Sat 20-Sun 21	Art in a Topiary Garden, Balmoral Cottage, Benenden, 11-5pm	p.13
Sat 27-Mon 29	Art in a Topiary Garden, Balmoral Cottage, Benenden, 11-5pm	p.13
Saturday 27	Brush Chucker Challenge, St George's Club, 8.15pm	

Iden Green Toddler Group

Tuesdays during term time in Iden Green Congregational Church, 9-11.30am

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

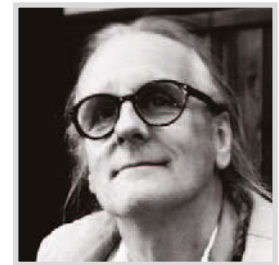
Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6.30pm

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11.15am

Parish Council



So how was ‘No Mow May’ for you, then? I know it’s a while back but even now, in high summer, I remember it with fondness as one of the very few times I even partially won an argument with my wife. I say ‘partially’ because, although she wouldn’t let me laze away the days in a hammock, she was happy with a compromise. Whilst we no longer have a ‘lawn’, we have a mini-meadow of clover, daisies, vetches, etc, criss-crossed with closely-mown paths of ‘lawn’ along which we can walk to water the plants and hang out the washing. I cannot complain. It’s a wonderful adjunct to the wildflower area we maintain at the bottom of the garden.

To some, ‘No Mow May’ was just another bit of what Suella Braverman recently termed “woke rubbish”; to others it was a vital effort to help halt the catastrophic loss of bees and other pollinators.

When we first came to live in Benenden, 34 years ago, I was thrilled to discover, along what was then called Walkhurst Lane (since, for some inexplicable reason, renamed Walkhurst Road), a drift of meadowsweet. On a warm summer’s evening, the scent of those tall, creamy spikes is intoxicating to both insects and humans.

Then someone hacked it down. Don’t know who, but an obsession with ‘sightlines’ does seem to trigger the impulse to turn greenery bordering a road into a desert of dusty, brown stubble. After a while (possibly through lack of funding), this annual act of vandalism became a more sporadic enterprise and occasionally the meadowsweet was allowed to bloom until it produced seeds, and thus it has spread.

The verge spent a couple of years in limbo recently, after drainage works left it with a carapace of sterile subsoil, but this year, the meadowsweet has returned. Beautiful and sweet as ever. I’ve asked those involved in the building of our new almshouses to be mindful of the meadowsweet and the other wildflowers that thrive there, as works begin. I’ve been assured they will.

These things matter. The field adjacent to the primary school seemed destined to decline into a sub-soil polluted, thistle-infested wasteland until last year, when a team of volunteers cleared a number of small patches, seeding and planting wildflowers. It’s a modest start and it requires more work this year but, with the support of our parish council and volunteers from the village and from the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust, I hope it will be the first of many such spaces to be revived.

Russell Cruse, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org

For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on Facebook



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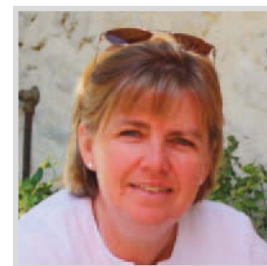
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Talking Point



Footpath woes buried in the brambles

It's that time of year again: the time for overgrown footpaths. My husband Jim and I walk a lot both here and abroad. Jim has just completed the Chemin Stevenson and Chemin Cathare walks in France in 22 days, walking a total of 278 miles, which included climbing 57,678 feet and descending 58,241 feet. Not on that scale, I walked a total of 175 miles in June, largely around the village, and we are off on a walking safari in Tanzania later this year, so we cannot be classed as strollers. For those who do not know, Jim is also the footpath coordinator for the village.

Some paths could be classed as okay, but when they are bad, they are dreadful, with little if any maintenance. My main bugbear is when landowners fence off the footpath then seem to think no further maintenance is required: long grass hides a multitude of issues, with in some cases brambles completely crossing the path, which is not nice when wearing shorts! I could name and shame but will give everyone the opportunity to sort out the issues first.

If only all landowners and anyone with a footpath close to them tried to keep them clear, there would not be a problem. It is far from realistic to think one person could do all footpaths or expect KCC to do them, although for major issues we would have no other option. Both Jim and I regularly take secateurs out with us and clear what we can, but the dog can get impatient if a large amount needs clearing.

In addition, landowners need to check markers and signage, as some are now all but obscured by vegetation and in some cases missing completely, I have on more than one occasion had to point walkers in the correct direction because of bad signage. I have always said if the signage is clear there is no reason why any landowner can complain that walkers are in places they should not be. General maintenance of stiles and gates is another issue.

The recent village fete raised a huge amount and credit must be given to all involved, but that is the point: it was a team effort, like so many other things that happen in the village. Not just one person did everything and footpaths should be looked at in the same way: if everyone did something, big things could happen.

Lynne Hyde

WALK AND CLIP COMPETITION

Inspired by Lynne Hyde I contacted 'Apples to Pears', who make the pocket secateurs that I carry when walking to help keep the paths relatively clear. With unexpected generosity they sent me several complimentary pairs, so they are up for grabs. One pair goes to Lynne, of course, for the inspiration. The next four lucky winners merely have to name the four things, pictured here, I most often have to clip when walking locally and email their answers to benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com. First come, first served.

Peter Massey



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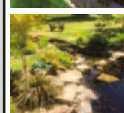
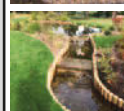
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Benenden Fete

As a village community, it is we who fund and keep our church and its fabric thriving at its heart. It's this community that comes together every year in the most remarkable way to run the Benenden Fete, in aid of St George's Church, to raise those vital funds. Once the necessities have been taken care of for St George's, the remaining funds raised from the day go to local charities. After years of building a reputation for a jolly good day out, the profits are really beginning to, deservedly, reflect the hard work.

The fete committee are so pleased that benefactors of the day now also include Benenden Primary School, our beloved Pre-School and this year Catching Lives homeless charity. It has been particularly satisfying to the committee to know that, for all those parents who juggle their children and work the stalls every year for this village event, that funds from the 'kids' zone' now go directly to children's settings in our community. It is a remarkable village achievement to be able to get to this point.

This year we raised an astonishing £17,000 profit as a result of the coming together of Benenden and friends. Thank you for your part in the fete. Thank you to the donors, the sorters, the stall holders, the artists, the drivers, the drinkers, the eaters, the shoppers, the marketeers, the entertainers, the suppliers, the counters, the tidiers and the general make-it-happeners. Thank you.

Athena Cripps

Benenden Fete Committee

Benenden Players

We are very pleased that we will be running a Summer Drama Workshop in the village for children aged 9-15 over two days on 4 and 5 August. Under the expert guidance of our very own Tony Ceeney, who has taught drama for over 20 years, the students will

Summer Drama Workshop

Benenden Players invite children aged 9-15 to join a drama workshop

**Thursday 4 and Friday 5 August
10-4pm**

Benenden Village Hall

Under the expert guidance of **Tony Ceeney**, who has taught drama for over 20 years. The students will perform to parents and guardians at the end.

The two-day workshop costs £10.

To book or for information call:

Ruth Clark 07767 261883

ruthbclark55@gmail.com

learn performance and improvisation skills, ultimately creating scenes to perform to parents and guardians at the end of the two days. As well as being fun and creative, it will teach valuable acting and confidence-building skills.

The first day and half takes place in the Memorial Hall finishing with a half day and mini show in the village hall.

The two-day workshop (10-4pm) costs £10. To book a place or for more information please email or call me.

Ruth Clark 07767 261883

ruthbclark55@gmail.com

Auditions for 'Allo 'Allo

The Benenden Players have decided to try something a bit different in 2023 and instead of a panto we will perform 'Allo 'Allo on 27 and 28 January in the village hall. Auditions will be held on 4 September in the Memorial Hall from 2pm until 4pm and just to reassure you, we have a relaxed, friendly approach to our productions so if you haven't performed before, don't worry! All are welcome. Due to the subject matter, the parts are suitable for adults only. There are eight male roles and five females needed. Please come and have some fun with us.

Bev Beveridge

The Cranbrook and District Probus Club



PROBUS is a local, national, and international association of retired people who come together in non-political, non-sectarian, non-profit, autonomous clubs which provide regular opportunities for members to meet others in similar circumstances, with similar levels of interest, make new friends, and maintain and expand their interests.

We have recommenced our regular monthly lunchtime meetings at The Bull, Benenden.

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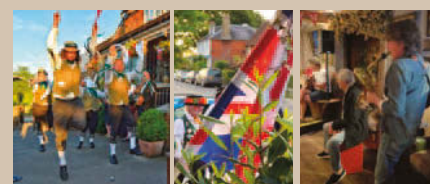


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Grants for students and school-leavers

The Gibbon & Buckland Charity, which started in 1602 with the gift of the school house at the foot of The Green, still gives some support to the primary school, but uses most of its income to give student grants. These are available for any young person under the age of 25 who is resident in, and has been resident in, the parish of Benenden for not less than three years and is either in further education or in other ways getting prepared for working life.

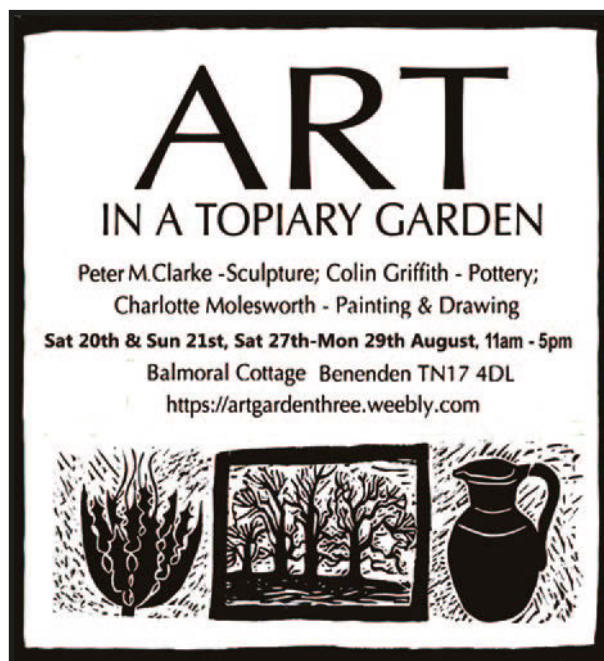
Trustees will also give consideration to applications for grants for gap-year projects of educational worth. If you could benefit, or know someone who could, please ask for an application form at the community shop, or from the clerk to the charity at gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com. The latest date for applications is 30 September.

Iden Green and Benenden WI

We had fun at our social evening on 5 July, which was very entertaining and successful. Thank you to the able team of organisers who introduced some amusing, new and novel activities. Unfortunately our meeting on 19 July had to be cancelled because of the intense heat but we hope that Chris O'Donohue may be able to come sometime in the future.

We are now all looking forward to meeting next in the Iden Green Pavilion on 16 August at 2pm. Having watched Sue Duckworth on-line during the pandemic, it will be good to meet her in person when she comes to talk about 'Hopping in Kent'.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk



Volunteer drivers needed

Some time ago a group was set up of drivers who were willing to take Benenden residents who do not have their own vehicle and for whom other means of transportation are either impractical or unaffordable, to local hospital or doctor appointments. I have volunteered to coordinate this scheme and get it up and running again.

The key ingredient for this is, of course, volunteers willing to give their time occasionally to drive patients to and from appointments in return for a contribution towards fuel. If you would be willing to participate in this vital local initiative, please let me have your contact details, preferably via email. As soon as we have a viable pool of drivers in place, I'll let everyone know in this magazine how to access the scheme.

Mick Moore 240755
m.moore131156@gmail.com



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Benenden Pre-School

It's official! Benenden Pre-School has been awarded an 'outstanding' judgement following our Ofsted inspection in June. The success of the inspection reflects that the Pre-School is truly a community. Our hardworking and dedicated trustees and our innovative and supportive parents play a vital role alongside our staff to ensure Pre-School is the happy, creative and thriving setting it is for the youngest members of our village.

We are thrilled with the judgement and that the inspector highlighted that the children 'show each other inspirational levels of respect, empathy and kindness and offer support and encouragement to their friends'. Staff work hard to ensure these outcomes for children, which are vital life skills.

We are also happy to report that our annual summer fete in the Pre-School garden was enjoyed by many families and was a wonderful social occasion. The breakfast barbecue was a great success, as was the traditional hook-a-duck and other games and we raised a healthy sum towards a new garden shed.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor
supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

Newcomers' lunch

We are planning to reintroduce our newcomers' lunch on 22 October in St George's Church from 12-2pm. This is an opportunity to meet people in the village, to find out what is going on and if there are areas of interest to you, both in church and in the community.

As always it is good to have an idea of numbers for catering purposes. In my absence Sally-Ann Marks has kindly offered to coordinate and would be happy to hear from you via her email address:
sallymarks100@hotmail.com
Helen Commander

Benenden Cricket Club

It is well known that a flag flying at full mast at Buckingham Palace signifies that the Queen is at home, but few in our village realise that Benenden Cricket Club has its own flag, the appearance of which actually has greater significance than that BCC are playing at home.

The story goes that about 15 years ago, the club commissioned a flag to be made, though it was only after some 20 years of lively debate at club meetings that this was agreed - and Andrew Morrison, a stalwart member of the club, became the sole owner of the flagpole rope key.

So if you see a BCC flag on the flagpole by the sign, then this means that not only are Benenden playing at home but you can be sure that Andrew Morrison is also in the team, since he is the only player able to secure the flag to the rope!

Meanwhile, we played our first midweek cricket game this month against the Goudhurst Gentlemen. Whilst Benenden weren't able to field a full team of players, a super-keen Goudhurst provided 15 players to add to Benenden's five. I split the teams into birthday order and the January-Mays played the June to Decembers with ten-a-side! We had a great game with the usual midweek fun rules (age batting order, so the youngsters definitely bat; can't be out first ball; no sixes, to save Benenden residents' cars from damage; retirement at 25, so that all can actively take part, and a new one, too, of reverse age-order bowling, so that the oldest bowled to the youngest of the opposing team. The Januarys were victorious and we all retired to the Bull to celebrate.

Our final home midweek game will be on Thursday 4 August against the TW Royals, with a 6pm start for anyone wanting to support the home side.

We are always on the search for new players of all standards. Please call me if interested.

Our home fixtures for August on The Green:
Saturday 20 August v Mountfield at 1.30pm
Saturday 27 August v Matfield at 1.30pm
Barry Bassett 240901

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Talking Shop

As a wholehearted thank you to the hard working and loyal volunteers we have at Benenden's, we are delighted to invite you all to a volunteers' social evening at the Memorial Hall on 11 August. Please arrive from 7.30pm onwards as before that, from 7pm, we are holding our annual AGM, to which all our members are invited. Refreshments will be provided.

The sun is beating down as I write this and it has been extremely warm in the shop, especially with the ovens going at full blast and the dishwasher providing sauna-like effects. While Mel has been away on her very well-deserved annual break, many people have been instrumental in keeping everything going in our shop and café; managers and volunteers alike. Many thanks to them all. Special thanks go to Lorraine who has taken over as manager while Mel is away and has coped, with good humour and efficiency, despite two staff absences due to Covid.

Many thanks too, to our newest manager, Karen Saunders, who has been undertaking training whilst volunteering in the shop. We extend a warm welcome to her.

Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk
www.benendens.co.uk

Benenden Bowls Club

In an effort to bring bowls to more villagers, Benenden Bowls Club is holding an open day on Saturday 6 August from 10-4pm. All are welcome to come along and have a practice roll-up on our beautifully maintained greens. It does not matter if you have never played before - the emphasis is on having fun with likeminded people. As well as bowls, we will be serving bacon and sausage sandwiches and there is a chance to sample truly excellent cream teas; the main reason some people play bowls! Also, in support of our funds, we will be selling cakes and playing tombola.

Peter Ellis



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Planning Matters

For full details of the Parish Council's comment please see minutes of meetings.

- 22/01852/FULL Finns Barn, Standen Street. Erection of detached oak framed garage.
- 22/01695/FULL Netters Farm, Attwaters Lane, Hawkhurst. Proposed Development of a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Battery Storage and Associated Infrastructure.
- 22/01748/FULL Dulwich Preparatory School, Course Horn Lane, Cranbrook. Refurbish and remodel of existing teaching block, addition of new rear windows, roof lights, external grilles and air conditioning unit, addition of photovoltaic cells to roof, door alterations.

More planning matters at:
benendenparishcouncil.org

Village lunch

The village lunch will take place on Tuesday 16 August in the village hall at 12.30pm. £5 each and all welcome. Please could you let me know if you would like to come by Thursday 11 August, so we can plan and shop, as well as cook.

Kathleen Brewis 240081



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Benenden School

It has been an extraordinary term for all sorts of reasons, not least because we are all loving being in the new Centenary Buildings - the new hall and music school - which we started using in the final days of the term.

The day before the end of term, it was a real joy to see the students competing in Sports Day, the end of a particularly exciting final week for Years 7-10. In addition to prizegiving the previous weekend they thoroughly enjoyed the Arts Festival, which featured some spectacular performances, activities and shows across three days, culminating in a more relaxed fete-style day on the Sunday (although the one student who chose to go on the fairground ride 20 times probably wasn't feeling very relaxed by the end!).

I was pleased that the Head Girl and Captains addressed the whole school together as a community one last time at Thursday's Final Assembly: their poignant specially written poem was beautiful and served as a great way for them to say farewell to the student body.

The culmination of the year involved Year 11-13 and their parents gathering in the new hall for the upper school speech day ceremony - this event was a real treat, featuring surprise performances from English National Opera singers before the Year 13 left through the floral arch, which is always a memorable occasion.

As we enter the summer break, there is much to be excited about for the coming academic year, most notably our new timetable which will enable an increased amount of contact time with teachers and a greater focus on elective options. In addition, we will be offering a date for members of the Benenden community to come and visit the new buildings in the autumn.

Samantha Price, Headmistress



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For more information contact Alison Prall
240417 alisonprall40@gmail.com

Merry and Bright Club

We are looking forward very much to our members' Summer Garden Party on 26 July: a lovely occasion to enjoy ourselves and a delicious afternoon tea. Due to summer holidays, there is nothing planned during August, but we will meet again in September to take a cream tea trip on the Kent & Sussex Steam Railway from Tenterden. If you would like to join our fun social group, then please come along to our 25 October meeting in the Memorial Hall, where you will be very welcome. In the meantime, if you would like more information, please contact us.

Laraine Penny 241763

Joan Hagens 240672

Little Walkhurst open garden

In aid of Hospice in the Weald, we are opening our garden at Little Walkhurst on Walkhurst Road to the public on 7 and 14 August from 12.30-4.30pm. Come and enjoy our cottage-style garden, wildflower meadow, woodland walk and wildlife pond. My art studio will be open and plants will be on sale. No dogs please. Entry is £5 for adults and £2 for under 16s.

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info@benendens.co.uk Tel: 01580 279808

Primary School

It's summer holiday and we are thankful that we have not had to close the school this year and that we have been able to deliver all our normal activities. This term, years 3, 4 and 5 enjoyed a 'real' sleepover at the school in tents. They played games, enjoyed sitting around the campfire singing songs, drinking chocolate milk and eating marshmallows. This could not have been possible without an amazing staff team giving up their time on the evening and then in the morning providing a hearty breakfast. An enormous thank you to the PTFA for funding all the pop-up tents.

In late June we had another treat: our first Live Benenden's Brilliant Showcase. I was blown away by the performers' creativity, courage, confidence, commitment, energy and their sense of enjoyment. It was certainly a fabulous evening and I was a very proud headteacher.

In July the children ran in the Colourdash event in Tunbridge Wells, all the while being pelted with paint bombs! There were many top ten finishes but special mention goes to Olivia Hayworth and Coailainn Crisp for their second and third place finishes in the year 1/2 girls' race.

Just a week later, more than 30 children took part in the Hillview Festival of Arts at Tonbridge Castle. Lower Keystage 2 came third in the Contemporary Dance Section and Upper Keystage 2 performed 'Benenden's Revolting Children' in the Musical Theatre category, and I am delighted to say came first. It is events such as these that the children will always remember and will give them the confidence in all walks of life.

Lindsay Roberts, Executive Headteacher
240565 office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

We are still reminiscing about the glorious day we experienced at the Benenden Village Fete. What a splendid day it was, with such wonderful community spirit. Thank you to the amazing organising fete committee with a special shout out to Athena Cripps and Revd David Commander. A huge thank you also goes to the brilliant volunteers who gave their time and energy to set up and run the children's stalls. And we certainly could not have raised as much as we did, without so many supporters. The funds we raised enabled us to make a contribution to St George's Church with the majority going towards outdoor playing resources at school.

Please remember we have launched a new crowdfunding page on the platform GofundMe, to raise funds towards outdoor play equipment. If you can, please do support our initiative. Thank you. Just use this link to access our funding page: www.gofund.me/80bf4556

We are soon heading into summer holidays and we want to wish everybody a wonderful time. The current Chair and Vice Chair for our PTFA are stepping down at the end of this school year in July. Our goal was always to help make difference and we want to wholeheartedly thank everybody for all their continued support for our children and school. We wish the new committee the very best.

For more details on activities or how to support, please scan QR code or go to our website www.sites.google.com/view/benenden-ce-primary-ptfa



Astrid Miller, Benenden CEP, PTFA Chair

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Topical health

Most people think they don't know anything about first aid, but in reality you probably do, and where you don't, your instinct may often be good when it comes to assessing the situation.

Before engaging in helping another person in need of first aid, there are a few things we need to consider, which are captured in the acronym: DR (doctor) ABC: Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, Circulation. The initial stages of providing first aid rely on good assessment, both of the situation and the potential casualty.

A first aider in need of first aid is no use to anyone, so the first rule of first aid is check for danger and don't become a casualty. If you come across someone in the street or at home who looks like they need help, consider how they ended up like that? Someone who has been electrocuted, for example, may still be conducting electricity, which needs to be turned off before help is offered; while running into the road to help someone who has been knocked down is fraught with danger.

Next, we want to understand if the potential casualty is in fact a potential casualty and not just asleep on the park bench, so we see if we can get a response from them. Speak loudly and ask them if they are okay. If they respond, you can ask them what is happening and whether they need help; if not, and where it is safe to do so, it is advised that one shake them gently by their shoulders to see if they respond, which they might if they were, for example, sleeping or mildly concussed.

If a person fails to respond to calling and shaking, they are likely to be unconscious, while if they are able to make some noise, they may be conscious but in need of first aid.

Peter Ellis

Benenden Hospital

At the hospital I'm proud not only of our clinical staff teams for all their hard work but our non-clinical ones too. Rob Farris is our estates and hospitality manager, who began his career here 34 years ago: "I look after catering, housekeeping, porters, grounds and works and am lucky to work with experienced managers across these teams," he says. Let's learn more about these staff teams.

Emma, our porters and grounds manager has worked here since 1998: "I would describe the role of a porter as the 'movers and handlers'. We're like a family in my team." In October 2021, the theatre porters merged with our general porters creating a team of 13 who respond to our patients' varied needs.

The grounds team trio oversee the lawns and flowerbeds that surround the hospital buildings. They keep the areas tidy to enhance the tranquil setting of the hospital, supporting our caring philosophy.

Our housekeeping team is currently made up of 26 staff members. Marian Chandler, our housekeeping manager, started working part-time in 2001. "Patients remain our top priority as we strive to offer the highest standards of cleaning and hygiene to reduce the risk of hospital acquired infections."

Our 13-strong catering team works hard to feed our staff, patients and visitors every day in our restaurant and in the clinical areas. Donna Avery, our catering manager, has worked here for 30 years, reinforcing the message that it is a place people enjoy working at and want to stay. A huge thank you to them all. Their hard work is essential to giving our patients a positive experience.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse



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Benenden Wine Committee

We diverged from our normal path in July and laid on a beer tasting, but the change of beverage didn't alter the levels of enthusiasm or intake among our guests. This was largely due to the glorious summer weather on the terrace at Benenden School, the quality of the beers, from Old Dairy in Rolvenden, and the expert presentation and pouring from Ginny and Elsie, who arrived hotfoot from the brewery in cars laden with the good stuff.

The interesting point confirmed by the evening was that although we were all beer devotees, our tastes in beer varied enormously. Some new-fangled types favoured the craft lager (in cans), while others (those of us who still remember daily deliveries of milk bottles) gave top marks to the more traditional Blue Top IPA and Copper Top bitter.

The greatest difference of opinion, however, arose when we were treated to the pair of barrel-aged Bavarian-style Doppelbocks (one aged in rum casks, the other in ruby port casks) and the mighty Obadiah Imperial Stout, weighing in at 9.9% abv. Some thought these were wonderful examples of the British brewer's art; others felt they were the work of the devil, but at least we all had the chance to try them.

For our next outing, and quite possibly the most important we have ever undertaken, we'll be inviting you all to the inaugural Tracy Claridge Memorial wine tasting, in honour of the much-missed man who introduced these events to the village in the first place.

Details are yet to be confirmed - so watch this space - but we hope it will happen in October (quite possibly Friday 14) and that we will raise an awful lot of money for some of Tracy's favourite charities. Do please save the date, when we tell you what it is.

Peter Thomas

A walk for Anna

Combined, David and I are 150 years old (73+77) and walking over 100 miles along the South Downs Way to raise money for Mind, the national mental health charity. We plan to do this walk in September to mark the ten years since our daughter, Anna, took her own life. She hugely enjoyed riding this route, so it seems an appropriate thing to do, although I think it will be quite a challenge for us as we fight our aches and pains.

Mental illness can affect anyone. We have supported Mind over the past ten years, seeing at close hand how much they do. We aim to raise £10,000 to help continue their vital work. If you would like to donate you can do this online at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Anna-Sargent10 or I can happily collect cash donations.

Margaret Sargent 850311
margaretsargent48@gmail.com

Hospice in the Weald Musicals

Welcome to our 14th season of Richard Beattie Davis Memorial Musicals. The September Hospice recital will be at 3pm on Tuesday 6 September, when Sasha Karpeyev will be playing with François Pineau-Benois, our first violinist who is coming over from Paris. Sasha tells me that they are exploring the 'Belaieff' composers, which thrills me - possibly inspired by Richard's book 'The Beauty of Belaieff', the definitive study of the Russian music publisher. They will be playing Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Glazunov and more.

Tickets will only be sold in advance. Please contact me for reservations:

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Spotlight

Elizabeth Davies: giving strength to every woman

Living in London during lockdown finally convinced Elizabeth and her husband Adam to move with their three young children to the country and, luckily for them and us, they chose Benenden. During the past year they have become very much part of village life, with the youngest enjoying Benenden pre-school and the two oldest loving Saint Ronan's. Adam, like many these days, splits his working week between home and in London, while Elizabeth runs her fitness coaching business in her home studio and online.



change her trajectory and retrain as a fitness coach. She had had two babies within 22 months and was on a mission to get stronger and overcome the considerable impact the experience had had on her body. "I realised how mainstream fitness programmes didn't properly help mothers, so I set about getting qualified and set up my business originally as The Mummy Coach but, as I now work with women of all ages and stages of their life, I re-named it This Woman Lifts."

"I've converted the garage into a well-equipped gym and work with women individually and in small groups. Every client has different goals, so I design a bespoke full body programme and monitor their progression. My focus is on strength training,

"We loved living in London because everything is on your doorstep, but we found we weren't really taking advantage of it," explains Elizabeth. "Not surprisingly, lockdown helped us focus on the simple things in life that were important to us and the children: space, clean air, a garden and a village community."



Many weekends were spent exploring areas within

commuting distance of London, before the couple drove through Benenden and decided it was pretty perfect. Luckily, they found a house that had just come on the market and within a week it was theirs. "It was meant to be. We felt we had stumbled upon a magical place and once we moved in it just got better and better," laughs Elizabeth.

Originally a lawyer for 12 years, Elizabeth made the huge decision in 2016 to totally

which is vitally important for women from pregnancy through to post-menopause but is often neglected. Strength training can help us to develop strong bones, increasing bone density and reducing the risk of osteoporosis; build and preserve lean muscle mass, which naturally diminishes with age; improve confidence; manage weight; promote better balance and reduce the risk of falls; and manage chronic conditions such as back pain or depression."

Alongside her in-person training, Elizabeth hosts LIFT, a successful online strength and conditioning programme which has a global reach. Each week she releases five workouts, filmed in her studio, for subscribers to do at home. "I'm very proud of this," says Elizabeth. "It's very interactive as I can monitor and encourage them remotely."

Feeling inspired after chatting with Elizabeth, I promptly dug out my weights and renewed my commitment to exercising more and slowing the effect of gravity on various parts of my body!

For more details about This Woman Lifts go to www.thiswomanlifts.com or call 07886 833260. Instagram: @thiswomanlifts
Ruth Clark

Hot Topic

Seeking help for the silent sentinels at our crossroads

Sometimes we don't notice parts of our landscape. Sometimes, elements of landscape, whether natural or man-made, are just there and barely get a glance as we drive, walk or ride past them every day - that is until they're gone or damaged. These statements may well be true of our rather fine (though in need of restoration) Grade II Listed Victorian wells situated at the crossroads in Iden Green and Benenden.

The Queen's Well in Benenden (erected in 1887 for her Golden Jubilee) is 135 years old and the Pump House in Iden Green (erected in 1897 for her Diamond Jubilee) is 125 years old. Both are feeling and showing their age as the timbers are rotting, the stonework is compromised, and both require a roof overhaul. Benenden Parish Council has been working on raising funds for the restoration and repair of the structures and our specialist consultants, Anthony Hicks Ltd, have submitted listed building applications seeking consent to the repair works.

However, parishioners are probably aware that the Queen's Well sustained severe damage on the night of 13 June when a vehicle trailing a length of heavy-duty cable (stolen) took the



whole structure off its stone plinths. It was a completely freak event which could not be foreseen in the imagination, but the structure will now have to be removed from site, restored and returned to its rightful position.

Our funding search continues for the Iden Green Pump House, but we still also need funds for the Queen's Well, as the cost will increase and insurance may not cover all the costs.

Our parish has many listed buildings, ranging from graveyard tombs to manor houses, from telephone boxes to wells. They are all precious heritage assets and belong in the landscape that we cherish so much. The wells are part of Benenden and Iden Green and we see them every day - silent sentinels that stand at their respective crossroads and watch the years go by. While our historic



houses are often hidden from view, the wells are in prominent locations beside the roads that we travel on.

The wells have special architectural and historic interest and sit at the gateways to the villages

in prominent locations, beside historic settlements and ancient routeways. Added to this is the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape of the High Weald which, as you may know, is described as 'one of the best-preserved Medieval landscapes in North West Europe'. The natural beauty of the High Weald comprises five defining components of character: geology, landform and water systems; settlement; routeways; woodland; and field and heath. Other qualities enrich the character components, such as locally distinctive historic buildings, historic parks and gardens, veteran trees, and orchards. Our wells do exactly that, enhancing and enriching the landscape as we know it.

While they are present in the landscape, they no longer serve a purpose or have a function and cannot be repurposed. Partly



because of this fact, the avenues for funding their repair and restoration are closed, and many funding sources preclude a parish council from applying for grants.

There are two ways that you can all help us to restore the wells, and we desperately need your help. Please donate any amount that you can, no matter how big or small to www.wonderful.org/fundraisers/502#charity and/or tell us how you feel about the wells, what they mean to you, do they have a special meaning or are they a special landmark in your life, do you have any historic photos of either of them that you can share? Join in on the BPC's Facebook page and let us know.

It would be rather special, if we obtain the funding, to restore them in the 70th Jubilee of our own monarch.

Peta Grant, Parish Councillor





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Shiruba Tree: crafting rare and beautiful rings

Tucked away in Iden Green, Kris Rogers designs and creates the most beautiful rings from recycled and sustainable materials for men and women in a small workshop at the end of his garden. Shiruba Tree is very much a family business: Kris's partner Becky liaises with customers while toddler Caspar and young Lina (not two weeks old when I visited) pop in and out to check on progress and get cuddles.



Originally trained as a cabinet maker and joiner, Kris taught himself the art of silversmithing, setting up a workbench in his bedroom (carpet burns still bear testimony!). Early on he combined high-quality metals and wood to create contemporary rings and it wasn't long before 'Not on the High Street' asked to feature them on their online website. "I was very lucky," says Kris. "After that everything happened quite quickly and I became a full-time maker in 2013."

Today Shiruba Tree jewellery is only available

directly from Kris and Becky and is bought by customers all over the world. Alongside his range of highly individual signature designs, Kris also undertakes custom commissions and people have come in person from as far afield as Sweden, Holland and Belgium to meet him and discuss their options.

Kris's designs are very much inspired by the character, identity, and properties of the materials he uses. He works with silver, gold, titanium, platinum and, unusually, tantalum, and is one of few jewellers in the UK who work



with this unusual metal. Rarer than gold, but not as expensive, tantalum is a noble metal with incredibly high purity. It is particularly sought after for wedding bands due to its distinctively rich slate blue-grey colour.

In addition to familiar oak, maple, olive and walnut, Kris likes to work with more unusual wood such as Irish bog oak, ironwood,

cocobolo and African blackwood, which is considered to be among the hardest and densest of woods in the world. He is very careful to ensure these come from certified, sustainable sources.

I tried on a few rings and they feel and look absolutely gorgeous (spot this unsubtle hint to my husband!). You can browse the Shiruba Tree collection at www.shirubatree.co.uk or you can contact Kris and Becky to arrange to meet and discuss your own custom commission idea on 07515 910356 or info@shirubatree.co.uk. Instagram: shiruba tree



Ruth Clark

In Your Garden



Brace yourself for the midsummer cutback

We have entered the 'dry zone' in gardening: a term I usually apply to August but in recent years it can start in early July, as it has in this current year. Plants, particularly self-seeders, have covered our ground to perfection during spring and are now strewn with dead leaves and mildewy stems.

I understand that cutting back can leave a lonely gap in the borders for a while. In an ideal situation I would cut any plant back once it needed it but, in reality, I am waiting on whether I have a plant in the wings to be dug in nearby, which will grow over the gap in no time with fresh foliage and an abundance of flowers. I am thinking of dahlias, salvias and half-hardy annuals, which are reliable performers for planting out in June. Technically this affords newcomers enough bedding-in time and an adjustment to the watering regime in order to be abundant enough come July, when we need the ground coverage once more. If I miss the boat in June and hang on with pulmonaris, tiarellas, geraniums, bulb foliage, aquilegias and the like, by the time we reach July we have a bit of a crisis on our hands, as generally it is too late to plant anything out unless we want to spend our days forever hand-watering, and a cutback now (although well overdue) really would render the borders dry, dusty and empty.

If this is the case, then I have no option but to go for a trade-off. I will leave, for example, a geranium phaeum in place - these die back

relatively gracefully compared to some border geraniums and do not suffer from mildew. I tend to leave alchemilla, too, for the same reason, although both plants would be cut back to the ground if I had a replacement ready to go in. Euphorbia flowers, spent salvia and heuchera stems will also stay, as they have relative longevity, too, but I do reach a point when I can bear it no longer and they must also go.

If I am cutting back this late, I will water the ground and mulch heavily. I know we are not supposed to carry this out in the height of summer but I will leave the purists howling: if I mulch now at least the borders look tidier and it will benefit the plants in the long run.

Good gardening is forever a juggling act. Finding the balance is not easy but thinking ahead is key. Always having a plant tucked away ready to be



planted out is a good strategy to have - for example, July is a good time to have sown biennials for planting out in the autumn (for flowering the following spring). Increasing your stock at the opportune moment, such as taking basal cuttings from dahlias in late spring, will afford you more bushier plants to plant out at the end of June/early July. Taking cuttings from penstemons or tender salvias at this time of year will allow you the time to grow these on over winter and plant out the following season.

Alternatively, seek out a really good local plant nursery: one that grows and sells stock in one-litre pots is ideal (but hard to find). As each year goes by, I retreat further from buying anything larger than this for perennials and grasses - they establish much more easily with less watering and form a bushier, healthier plant in the long run.

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Above: The village in action: Cricket on The Green; housekeeping and grounds teams at Benenden Hospital; Denis Field wins the George Best Bowls Shield; camping overnight at the Primary School.
Front cover: A blaze of summer colour. Photograph: Amelia Thomas