

Parish News

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF FRANT, ERIDGE & BELLS YEW GREEN



Newly decorated St Alban's Church, Frant | Photo by David Bartholomew Photography

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From the Rectory



I was reflecting the other day about my old blacksmithing days, a craft I learned following my schooling over several years. It was a lot of hard work, but also stimulating, creative, historical and I loved the fact that my work could be seen around the place I worked. If you have ever been to Haywards Heath, I made six of the public bins!

One of the things that really drew me into blacksmithing was that fact that it brought together, form and function, art and purpose, imagination and engineering.

That was what I loved – making things that were beautiful but also practical. Everything we made had a need and a purpose – from gates, to balustrades, to fireplaces, everything had a reason to be there, but it also had to look magnificent.

I think of the incredible spiders-web gate we made in Maresfield, or the exact copy of a centuries old gate we had to make in Lindfield – copied exactly. Even copying the broken tops of the pinnacle crosses which were broken off during the Second World War as they looked like German Iron Crosses!

That incredible fusion of beauty and purpose is where my creative heart continues to live. It is something that inspires the way in which we do Church at Frant and Eridge, especially with both our churches embarking on the largest building projects we have done in decades.

At Eridge we now enjoy a warm and bright church! Through our heating and lighting project we are among one of the first churches in Sussex to become a carbon neutral church, which is a massive achievement. I want to particularly thank all those who tirelessly worked to bring everything into an affordable budget and to everyone who supported and gave towards our Eridge Church Project.

At Frant Church we have achieved a stunning decorating project, alongside our new vision system. I want to thank everyone who gave so generously towards our project, with particular mention to the late Helen Carpenter whose legacy helped us accomplish it.

Our churches must be beautiful, but they must also be practical. There is zero point keeping lovely buildings if that is the extent of our legacy. We are committed also to building a community formed in faith, hope and love. We are committed to live out our Christian heritage in the way that we live and serve those around us. Through our wonderful buildings we want to make a real, lasting, and eternal difference to those around us.

We would love you to pop in and see all the work we have done, but more than that, we would love you to join us in not just appreciating the beauty, but also being part of our churches of purpose and practice together. Why not join us for Alpha on Wednesday Evenings over a meal where we can look and chat about the Christian faith? A chance to ask the big questions of life! Scan the QR code to sign up for free, we would love you to join us.

—Rev Brendan Martin



News from the Pews

» Gathering Together

Holy Trinity Eridge is looking forward to beginning the new year with a strong start with a visit from Bishop Martin, the Bishop of Chichester, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the reordering of the church - with our listed pews. Plus we are celebrating our new lighting and heating project, which has enabled our churches to be among the first to go carbon neutral in the diocese. Do come to enjoy this special service.



Little Fishes toddlers' group

Little Fishes, a toddlers' group in Frant run by church volunteers, have a fun and friendly gathering every Tuesday morning from 9.30am-11.30am in The Stables (pictured) next door to Frant Church. A donation of £2 per week is paid to go towards the costs.

The group has been running for many years and continues to go from strength to strength with parents and grandparents alike turning up. We love to welcome new families. The sessions are gently structured to provide a fun routine for the babies and toddlers which includes free play (lots and lots of lovely toys as well as a dressing up rail), story time, the ever-important snack time (fruit and yummy snacks) and then it's singing time! Biscuits and drinks for adults of course too with time to chat and catch up!

One local parent, whose children attended the group over 20 years ago, recalls "Tuesday mornings could not come around quickly enough! With a new baby and later on a new baby and a toddler in tow, this delightful group provided an essential outlet for the little ones to learn about social interaction through music, story time and play. I fondly remember Brian on the piano (and think he is still there to this day). Of equal importance, for new parents, it gave a brilliant opportunity to develop



lifelong friendships through sharing the joys and, let's face it, challenges of parenting! My children, who have now fled the nest, remain friends with their fellow toddlers from all those years ago as indeed do I with their parents."

Women's breakfasts 2026

We had some really lovely women's breakfasts last year with some very inspirational speakers.

This is a free event put on by the church open to absolutely anyone and everyone.

The last breakfast was nearly full to capacity with 38 ladies so here are the dates for next year to pop in your diary.

March 14th
June 20th
Sept 19th



Eridge Churchyard

Thank you to everyone who helped with hedge cutting in Eridge churchyard. There was a huge amount of work carried out in a single morning from a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Without this help, the churchyard would simply not look as good as it does. We are very grateful to all of those who participated.

Frant Music – next concert

Our next concert at Frant Church is Kiki Dee and Carmelo Luggeri on Friday 23 January at 7pm. Kiki doesn't need much introduction - she has been a household

name since her 1976 number 1 smash hit "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" with Elton John. Recently celebrating her 60th year in the music industry, she has released 40 singles, three EPs and 22 albums and remains one of the UK's finest and most revered vocalists, having performed and recorded with many of the most famous names in the business.

The Weald Youth Music Forum

"The Weald Youth Music Forum" has been created to provide a musical platform for young people living here to perform in St. Albans Frant and be heard locally in up to 6 concerts each year.

This year, we were delighted by performing talented local musicians of Lewes Sinfonietta and Frant School choir, and Elly Gingell with fellows, Alex and Gianluca.

Concerts in 2026:

- Saturday 31 January - Anouska Assisi at 18.00 with a local warm up band.
- Sunday 1st March - A' level students from Bennett Memorial School at 16.00.
- June / July – An 'Inter Weald Federation' Primary school singing competition (to be confirmed).

Tickets will be available on the door at performances. Free for children from all Weald Federation schools.

Good News from Peter Payne.

My book on the "History of Frant Village" is about to be published. It covers all the major events over the last 1300 years that the village has been in existence, together with items on major buildings, such as St Alban's Church, the schools and 4 pubs, also the famous people who lived here or visited Frant, the clubs, sports etc.

Further information to follow once it is available.

– Peter Payne.

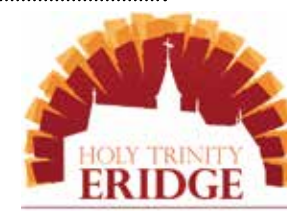
St Alban's, Frant & Holy Trinity, Eridge



www.frantchurch.org

Churchwarden

Juliet Nightingale—01580 200403
Kyle Laidler—07775 855866



www.eridgechurch.org

Churchwardens

Jonathan Lynn—07788 597051
Stephen Barnes—861302

Rector

The Reverend Brendan Martin
01892 752003; rectoryfrant@gmail.com

Services for

January / February 2026

10:30am Frant as One (All Age Service)..... **4th January 2026** Holy Communion 9.15am

10.30am Communion Service..... **11th January** Morning Prayer 9.15am

10:30am Morning Worship **18th January** Celebration Communion 9.15am
with Bishop Martin

10:30am Morning Worship **25th January** Communion Service 9.15am

10:30am Frant as one (All Age Service)..... **1st February** Communion Service 9.15am

10.30am Communion Service..... **8th February** Morning Prayer 9.15am

10.30am Morning Worship **15th February** Communion Service 9.15am

10:00am Ash Wednesday Communion **17th February**

10.30am Morning Worship **22nd February** Communion Service 9.15am

MUSIC IN FRANT

We have the following exciting concerts booked for 2026

All concerts will be in Frant Church starting at 7.30pm.

Doors will open from 6.30pm and there is a licensed bar area.

23rd January 2026: Kiki Dee

20 March 2026: Fenella Humphreys | **26 June 2026:** Jess Gillam

14 November 2026: Caroline Tyler with Harriet McKenzie & Surround Sound

Tickets will be on sale at Brittens Music Shop in Tunbridge Wells and online at Frant Church website.

We look forward to welcoming you! 'Music in Frant' Team

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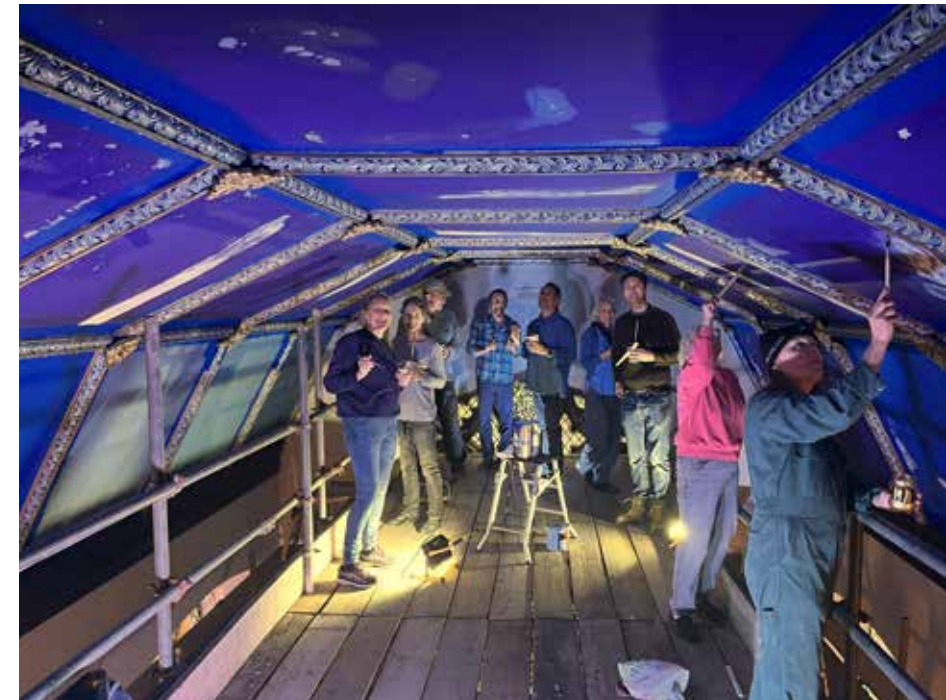
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Equipping Frant Church for 21st Century



Exciting transformational work has started on the interior of our church for the first time in about 40 years all the walls and some of the ceilings have been painted and a pair of large folding TV monitors have been installed at the front (as pictured on the front cover of this magazine). A small team of volunteers working with our Rector, Brendan, has been planning the projects over the past year and, thanks to some generous local residents and Church members, enough funding has been received to award contracts. Additional projects, such as extending the stage into the nave and installing a full oak kitchen to replace the tea station, are being planned and seeking funding; details of which will be shared later in this article.

We had thought that selecting colours would prove to be the most challenging aspect of the redecoration but, in fact, it was choosing the most appropriate type of paint for a 200 year old building with solid masonry walls and no damp course. Traditionally, churches have been painted using limewash – a compound of slaked lime and water – which enables moisture to evaporate from their surfaces. This option, however, was not economically viable as it would have meant removing all the existing paint layers applied from Victorian through

to more recent times. Equally, using modern impermeable paints was not practical as this would have quickly led to peeling surfaces, crumbling plaster and mildew. A paint was required that could address common issues in historic buildings and remain effective for many years with minimal maintenance.

With guidance from our Church Architect and other experts, the team selected Zinsser Grade 1 – a high-performance, mould-resistant, permeable paint suitable for various surfaces. It blocks stains, dries without tension, and helps prevent cracking and peeling. In areas where the substrate is particularly problematic, the plan was to prime with a flexible breathable membrane called Zinsser Peel Stop.

The team opted for colours that were somewhat more distinctive than the traditional white commonly used in church interiors over the previous century – including at Frant – but not as intense as a deep burgundy red, traces of which remain visible on the walls below the dado rail. Zinsser Grade 1 paint can be tinted to any colour and by using the Farrow and Ball colour chart as a reference, several colours were tested on the south and north aisle walls. The team decided on a dual colour scheme with window, arch and door reveals and

the ceiling beds highlighted in a pale off-white ('Wimborne White') in contrast to a darker off-white ('Shaded White') for the walls and ceiling beams. Brilliant white was to be reserved for the metal window frames and cast iron pillars.

Paul Keineder, who is well known by many Frant residents and who decorated the Lych Gate in 2019, will be undertaking the decoration starting mid-September.

Updating the audio-visual system has also had its challenges, not least being the need to incorporate 21st century technology into a historic building in a sympathetic way. A screen, or screens, would need to be located so that they can be clearly visible from all areas within the church. Our solution was to install two 6-foot screens on the south and north walls of the chancel, positioned above the pulpit and the rector's chair. When not in use, these screens can be moved back to rest flat against unadorned sections of wall. Ashdown Audio Visual of Uckfield will install the new system in early October.

So, what next? Well, we have plans to replace and extend the stage into the nave which will entail the removal of the first row of pews. This will provide more floor space for musicians at our concerts and, with the addition of a rail and ramp, enable greater access to the chancel. We would also like to replace and upgrade the kitchen with oak cabinets, granite work tops, dishwasher and fridge, to assist the concerts and other events requiring hospitality. We are also considering removing some of the back pews to create a more flexible space for socialising after church services and for community activities. This would also have the benefit of exposing the only surviving row of box pews from the 1820's Regency Gothic interior. Both these projects, as well as a myriad of smaller projects, many of which are about conserving and maintaining the existing fabric, depend on funding from local people like you. If you wish to support any of these projects, even in a small way, we would love to hear from you.

– David Torr, Ian Holton,
Peter Payne, Rev. Brendan Martin

Christopher Hall (1936 - 2025)

Christopher Sandford Hall was born in 1936 in Tunbridge Wells to Geoffrey Hall, a solicitor and territorial soldier, and Christine March, daughter of a chartered accountant. His father served in the Middle East during World War II, leaving Christopher without seeing him for five years. In 1944, his family moved to Eridge, starting a long connection with the Abergavenny family.

Christopher attended Temple Grove as a boarder in 1944 leaving to join Rugby School in 1949. His father became the first Chairman of the Trustees when Temple Grove transitioned into a Charitable Trust, a role Christopher later took over. After leaving Rugby in 1954, he reluctantly began National Service, initially assigned to the Royal Signals but later transferred to the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards ("the Skins"), thanks to his father's influence. He was commissioned in 1955 and stayed with the Skins, where he developed friendships and was encouraged to keep a horse ... an arrangement that suited him very well!

In 1956, Christopher started at Trinity College, Cambridge, studying Economics and later Law, despite his initial reluctance to become a solicitor. He became involved in hunting and beagling, serving as a whip for the Trinity Foot Beagles and later the Draghounds. He also began stewarding at the Royal International Horse Show in 1957, progressing to significant roles in the event over the years. His involvement in equestrian sports extended to Point-to-Point racing, where he achieved his first win in 1961.

After graduating from Cambridge

with an honorary degree due to an injury, Christopher pursued a legal career, joining Clifford Turner in London in 1959. He qualified as a solicitor in 1963 and began stewarding at the Horse of the Year Show, which provided financial support during his early career. In 1964, he joined his father's firm in Tunbridge Wells as a partner, where he handled various legal matters and found his legal niche. He also became involved in local shows and was appointed a steward at Plumpton in 1965 (introduced by the Late Lord Abergavenny), later serving at Goodwood, Sandown, Fontwell, Folkestone and Ascot.

In 1967, Christopher married Susanna Bott, whom he had known for a decade. They moved to Great Danegate in 1968 and raised three sons while continuing their involvement with horses. Christopher became Hunt Chairman of the Eridge Hounds in 1977, overseeing its merger with the Southdown Hunt in 1981. He retired from this role in 1985 to become Chairman at Ardingly, where he contributed significantly to the growth of the Society and its agricultural and educational initiatives.

Christopher's legal practice expanded to include clients from across England, with a focus on country sports and equestrian matters. He was elected President of the Tunbridge Wells and District Law Society in 1987. In 1977, he purchased a farm surrounding his home, which became a source of joy for his family. His mother moved into a nearby cottage, enabling support from the family.

In 1980, Christopher was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Broderers, a position he held with pride. He participated in the Lord Mayor's Show in Elizabethan costume, accompanied by his family. In 1986, he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for East Sussex, following in his father's footsteps.

Throughout his life, Christopher expressed gratitude for his family, friends, and colleagues, particularly his wife Susanna, who supported him in his various endeavours. The opening words of his book, Horse Welfare, Use not Abuse, read "It is hard to think of a more satisfying pastime than riding my horse across beautiful countryside", and when he retired in 1996 he was able to indulge in exactly that. He was appointed to a role that combined the law and racing, as Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee of the Jockey Club. His passion for racing passed on to his sons and as a family point to pointing was a big part of their family life.

His devotion to horse welfare was further cemented in 2005 when he steadfastly threw himself into what is now World Horse Welfare. This charity was established to protect horses in the UK, recovering, rehabilitating and rehoming the abused; given the pleasure horses had given him, there really could be no more fitting way for him to give back. It gave him huge pleasure to work with the World Horse Welfare team, before finally retreating to a proper retirement with Susanna.

Christopher was very invested in the Eridge community and for years was the councillor for the Eridge Ward on Frant Parish Council. He presented his points at meetings in a forthright and often humorous manner much to the appreciation of his fellow councillors.

In the latter years, Christopher sadly developed Alzheimers. His family say he got to grips with it and remained determinedly positive - "I've got this silly thing he used to say, and I just can't remember things". However, he didn't let his head drop and didn't let it get him down but increasingly kept his life on the farm.

Christopher will be sorely missed by his family, friends and residents across the community who had the privilege to know him.

Parish Council Update

Esquire (Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club developers) have lodged their planning application but it is not expected to come before Wealden planners until February. It should prove an interesting discussion! We are drafting our objections as I write this. They are comprehensive.

In Frant recently there was a serious accident involving a pedestrian trying to cross the A267 by Frant shop. We are pushing hard to get the pedestrian crossing built and are making progress. Some of the complexities involve legal process. For example because of our current constitution we cannot legally engage with contractors to build the crossing because of the high costs involved. In order to rectify this we have to create a Limited liability Company called Frant Pedestrian Crossing Ltd and this is now in progress.

Six months every year we meet with East Sussex Highways to discuss our local issues. This is a useful and helpful exercise and does have good results. The new 40 MPH speed limit on the Bayham Road coming into Bells Yew Green is a recent good example. At our recent meeting amongst other things the A26 Eridge-Crowborough Road was discussed and it is due to be resurfaced next year (not that long now). In addition, the subject of potholes came up, and I reproduce some guidelines below which details their prioritising processes which I hope will prove helpful.

Defects deeper than 100mm and at least 300mm wide-repaired within 2 hours.

Defects deeper than 60mm and at least 300 mm wide-repaired within 5 days

Defects deeper than 40mm and at least 300 mm wide-repaired within 28 days.

Rosie, our Clerk, is very keen to make the Parish Council available to you all and accordingly will now be working in the office by the stables in Frant every Thursday morning. Please feel free to pop in and talk to her about any issues you have concerning the Parish Council.

On that note I would like to thank her and my fellow Parish Councillors for their unwavering support and their unstinting efforts this year. I would also like to thank our District Councillors and our long term, always supportive, County Councillor for their advice, guidance and

support all offered in a constructive and positive manner.

My season's greetings to you all.

Cllr Stuart Crookshank

The Bells of St Alban's, Frant, East Sussex

St Alban's Church, Frant has some fine old bells in its ring of six dating from 1633 to 1777. The bells in St Alban's tower weigh from 2cwt for the treble which is the lightest to just over 8cwt for the heaviest which is the tenor. They are positioned in the belfry in such a way to avoid upsetting the stonework when they are swinging. Much the same as soldiers breaking step when marching over a bridge.

At the time the oldest bell was cast in 1633 bananas first went on sale in Holborn, London. Galileo was tried and condemned to life imprisonment by the Inquisition in Rome for his heretic belief that the earth was not the unmoving centre of the universe but rather that it and other planets moved around the sun.

In England Charles I reigned, and also in 1633 Samuel Pepys was born. In the same year John Wilnar, at his foundry in Borden near Sittingbourne, cast two of the six bells which now hang in St Alban's church tower, and they are still rung 392 years later.

One of the other four bells was made in 1715 by Matthew Bagley III at his father's foundry at Upper Moorfields in London. (The following year father and son were among 17 men who died in a dreadful accident whilst casting a cannon.) The other three bells were cast in 1776 and 1777 by Thomas Pack and

William Chapman who were at that time master founders at the world-famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The foundry ceased operations in 2017 by which time it was one of only two bell foundries remaining in Britain. The other foundry is John Taylor and Co, Loughborough which started casting bells in 1859. They have cast over 25,000 bells for use in 100 countries. And, incidentally, restored the 13 bells in Christ Church Cathedral, New Zealand following the earthquake in 2011.

Bells have been associated with religious services from ancient times. Mention monasteries and most people think of a cold, dark and damp stone building with monks being called to prayer by a bell tolling in the early hours of the morning. Before the days of the newspaper, telephone and radio, the bells in village churches announced services, death of a villager, arrival of the mail and sounded the curfew.

In Henry VIII's time, the dissolution of the monasteries caused the removal of many church bells as well as the monastery bells. These were often broken up and sold for scrap. At the end of these troubled times, during the restoration period, a new way of hanging bells was devised.

The bell was mounted on a wheel with the rope passing around it. This allowed much more control of the bell's movement that facilitated the development of change ringing.

Change ringing began in England in the early part of the seventeenth century. The first Society of Bellringers was formed in 1637. Their records show that bellringing music which we still use today was invented around 1650 by Robert Roan (Society Master in 1652) created Grandsire Doubles and Bob Minor. Since then many tens of thousands of 'Methods' as they are called, have been created. Books were published describing the art of change ringing. Printer Richard Duckworth's "Tintinnalogia - or the Art of Ringing" written by Fabian Stedman (1640-1730) was the first publication on the subject in 1668; Stedman later wrote "Campanologia" (1677, improved edition 1702).

The technique is thought to have spread from the London area across the whole of England. The ringing of church bells had become a popular hobby by the



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late 1600s. Competitions were held to see which band could perform the most pleasant sounding ringing.

There are thought to be only 60 Bells in the UK surviving from before 1300 AD. The oldest dated bell currently known is in Lissett, East Yorkshire, dated 1254. One at Caversfield, Oxfordshire, can be dated by its donor's name to 1207-19. Before the 1700's, English churches used to have only 3 or 4 bells. During the last three hundred years the number of churches with four or more change ringing bells has increased to around 6100. The age of the bells hanging in a church tower may be anything from 400 years old to brand new. Often there are a mixture of ages as bells were added when finances became available.

Of those 6100 Churches with change ringing bells 93% are in England and hence the name of English rather than British change ringing. Wales has 215 churches with change ringing bells and less than 20 in Scotland. There are change ringing bells in other countries, mainly as a result of colonisation by the British. By 2015 the USA had 54 sets and the number is slowing increasing. Australia and New Zealand have 62 sets between them.

In Frant, East Sussex our small band rings the bells in St Albans Church most Sundays. We endeavour to keep a steady rhythm and maintain good striking. You may have noticed on Remembrance Sunday that the bells sounded slightly different than usual. The reason they sounded soft was that we half-muffle the bells. This creates a reverential or quieter tone.

Each time we ring on a Sunday or at a wedding it is vital that the bells ring well and tunefully. This is so important at weddings when the bells are usually ringing while photos are taken at the Lychgate outside the church. If videos are made then the sound of the bells in the background is preserved for posterity which hopefully will be wonderful and a pleasant memory.

Mary & Michael Freestone

RSPB Weald Reserves Newsletter Autumn 2025

At Broadwater Warren it's been an exciting winter so far. Our heathland management started at the end of October and several sections across the eastern heath have already been cleared

of silver birch. The cut vegetation has either been burnt or used to create dead hedges by our volunteer parties. As a result, these areas look much more open and has allowed us to connect several areas of the heathland.

There have also been several contractor works at Broadwater this autumn/winter. One of these saw the improvement of an eroded section of track above Decoy Pond and the second part of this access improvement project will take place in March. This second part will see the improvement of the Straight Boardwalk, which goes through a section of wet-woodland habitat.

Contractors have also removed several spruce trees from the wettest parts of the woodland. These are trees that we had planned to retain, but we were ordered to remove them due to the European Spruce Bark Beetle being discovered on the site. Even though their removal wasn't planned they are non-native trees within an ancient woodland, whose removal will allow more light to reach the woodland floor as well as a greater proportion of native tree species established there.

The ponies have done an amazing job at grazing the grasses this autumn and are due to leave us this November. Our new herd of 9 rare-breed goats, consisting of 4 Bagots and 5 Golden Guernseys, have settled in well and are getting use to their new surroundings. They have all been fitted with no fence collars which will allow us to create virtual fence line and more them around the site easily. On site we now have 2 herds of goats which will help us graze



a greater proportion of the heathland, ultimately creating and maintain more open areas of heath.

Most of the management work that has taken place this autumn/winter wouldn't have been possible without the help of our amazing volunteers. If you would like to be a part of this work, we are also looking for new volunteers to join our Tuesday group at Broadwater. If you enjoy being outdoors, meeting new people and hands on conservation work, then this role could be the perfect opportunity for you. Join our fantastic group of work party volunteers. If interested, please email: broadwater.warren@rspb.org.uk

Ed Dixon

The diocese of Chichester 950.

Chichester diocese celebrated its 950th anniversary last year, but this isn't the whole story.

The diocese is much older, and the bishop was originally based at Selsey. This may seem an odd place, but it made sense when bishoprics were being organised. Selsey was the first Sussex bishopric because there was a flourishing monastery there, founded by the king of the South Saxons, Æthelwealh, in the 680s with Wilfred, a Northumbrian bishop who had been exiled. Wilfrid did a lot of missionary work in Sussex but the king and queen had already been baptised in Mercia, with the king Wulfhere as Æthelwealh's godfather. In around 660 the South Saxon king had made an alliance with Wulfhere of Mercia who was very powerful, and would protect Sussex in time of trouble. We are lucky that Bede, a monk and historian in Northumberland, has a chapter in his history of the English church of 731 about the conversion of Sussex.

Conversion was not straightforward, as it needed the consent of the king, and the king might have an overlord who needed to agree. Sussex was rather late in being converted, after St. Augustine's arrival in 597. Since a whole kingdom was converted the bishopric was naturally the same as the kingdom, so most of the original English dioceses reflect the political position at the time of their conversion. It could never simply be a religious organisation at that date. There was no bishop for Sussex until the 700s. Before that it seems to have

been under Winchester. Selsey was the obvious choice but it cannot have been very convenient. In 1075 the bishop's seat was moved to Chichester. This was part of a general Norman tidying up of what they saw as unsatisfactory Anglo-Saxon arrangements.

Chichester itself is not very convenient for parts of Sussex. The geography of Sussex made travel difficult and it was hard for JPs and the government, as well as the church, to enforce rules, especially in the Weald. This led to the development of Lewes as a second county town, and more recently to the two counties of East and West Sussex. There is now an assistant bishop of Lewes, and another for Horsham.

The Church of England as a whole also celebrated the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed last year, so 2025 was a year of double celebration for Chichester and Sussex. The Nicene Creed is a statement of what Christians believe and is said regularly in churches. It was thrashed out at the Council of Nicaea (in Turkey) in 325. All the bishops of the Christian world were invited by the Emperor Constantine, who had made Christianity the official religion of the empire in 313. It is not impossible that there were some bishops from England there. One of the problems was the Arian heresy. A priest called Arius did not believe that Jesus was the son of God, and his heresy was spreading. The Council confirmed that Jesus was indeed one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This doctrine of the Trinity is not easy to understand, but it is vital. As it happens, Chichester Cathedral is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, so when Eridge church was founded in 1856 it was given the same dedication.

Mary Alexander

Frant Parish Friendship Group

Our speaker for the October meeting was Janie Ramsey and her subject 'The Lifestyle of Duke and Duchess of Windsor'. Janie has been to us before when she told us about the Duchess's fabulous jewels. Janie worked for Christies Auction House who dealt with the disposal of much of the contents of the Duchess's house when she died. The lifestyle that she and the Duke lived in exile in France was quite breathtakingly lavish.

Especially as this was a time when

most of Europe was struggling to return to normal, after the Second World War. Their houses on the Riviera and in Paris were luxuriously furnished and excessively staffed. They entertained extensively and moved in elegant circles. Even their pug dogs lived in style with solid silver feeding bowls!

In November we had our AGM and fish and chip lunch. Our Chairman Trudi Godfrey reported on our many activities during a very successful year. On a sadder note we had lost valuable members of our group and these were remembered. We then enjoyed our fish and chips and finished with a Christmas Quiz.

We rounded off the year with our Christmas Tea Party in December and as this year had been the anniversary of VE and VJ day we decided to invite 'Winston Churchill' (Tony Harris).



Many of our members had such interesting stories to tell of this memorable time.

The exercise classes are starting on 15th January at 2.30 pm in the Stables. These will then be on the first and third Thursdays of the month until May. They have proved very popular with members who have definitely noticed an improvement in wellbeing. New members always welcome we do a taster option for £3.00 so do come along and try us out.

Our first afternoon meeting of the New Year will be on Thursday January 22nd at 2.30 p.m. in the Stables when our speaker will be Gillian Lloyd and her subject 'The Seasons of the Greater Yellowstone Eco System'. Then in February the 26th our speaker will be Natalie Cohen on Scotney Castle.

We wish everyone a happy and peaceful New Year.

Enquiries Valerie Palmer
valeriepalmer1500@gmail.com



Parish Past

It has been a great year for acorns, which turned my mind to oak apples, which are galls formed in oak trees by a burrowing wasp. Why? Because, surprisingly, these humble rural objects are not only one of the foundations of Western civilisation, but a source of profit for our medieval village ancestors.

Early inks were made from lampblack or charcoal mixed with gum which could smudge and faded with time; then it was discovered in the 12th century that crushed oak galls mixed with ferrous (iron) earths and alcohol made a much more enduring ink which actually darkened with age unlike the traditional carbon recipe. From then on oak gall was the preferred foundation for ink in all documents transmitting learning, law and governance until printing took over in the 16th century.

From the time Bayham with its scriptorium was established, around 1330 children in our villages would have been encouraged to climb the tallest trees in search of these galls so that their families could earn good money by taking bags of them to the abbey.

Pat Wright

News from Nus Ghani, MP

Happy New Year! I hope that you had the chance to relax and reflect over the festive period, and that you are ready to embrace 2026.

The sunny days of my summer surgery tour are now a distant memory. Thank you to everyone who came to catch up with me in Wadhurst, Frant, Groombridge, Hartfield, Crowborough, Hailsham, Cowbeech, Bodle Street Green, Rushlake Green, Punnetts Town, Broad Oak, Cross in Hand, Mayfield, Town Row, Five Ashes, Hadlow Down, Maynards Green, Heathfield and Horam.

You will have seen that all local focus has been on Crowborough's Training Camp over the past few months. I have made my objections to the use of the site to house asylum seekers clear to the Home Office and Wealden District Council, and I continue to do everything I can in my power to hold them both to account, and to protect local residents.

Nevertheless, despite the major challenges that the end of last year has presented, we must not forget about the good news and successes that 2025 brought for our communities in Sussex Weald. Please allow me to reflect on just some of them below.

We've had a huge win for Heathfield this year, where the construction of a new Youth Hub was completed thanks to nearly £5m Government support. In Wadhurst, we've secured improvements to mobile coverage at the train station, following my campaign with O2 and Vodafone. In Hadlow Down, we've delivered disabled parking spaces for St Mark's school, while in Horam, a new BMX Pump Track was completed. A new Gateway was opened on the Ashdown Forest to boost accessibility; a new multi-purpose Community Hub is underway at the railway station in Crowborough; and two Post Office branches have returned to our High Streets this year, in Mayfield and in Frant.

I must also pay tribute to our small businesses and charities. It was wonderful to join Waldron's English Soap Company in celebrating their 25th anniversary; join the Crowborough Business Expo; and catch up with members of Hailsham Chamber of Commerce. I continue working with Crowborough's King's Award for Volunteer Services recipients Family2Family, Heathfield's Wealden Works, Rotherfield St Martin, Hailsham's Medi Tech Trust and many others, to ensure local residents are supported.

2025 has also given us the opportunity to honour and remember those who fought for our freedoms in WWII. I joined residents in Hailsham, Heathfield, Mayfield, Rotherfield and Withyham in celebrating VE Day 80 and attended a ceremony commemorating Flying Officer Percy Burton, who lost his life fighting over Hailsham during the Battle of Britain.

I will always champion our local producers, and it was great to catch up with many at the annual Heathfield Agricultural Show and at my Farmers' Forum in Five Ashes in May, which brought together over 30 farmers and many local authorities and stakeholders.

There are many other ongoing campaigns which I will continue progressing next year including work with: Southern Water to prevent flooding and sewage overflows; Sussex Police on tackling rural crime and enhancing road safety; and of course, my ongoing campaign to save the much-valued Crowborough Birthing Centre.

Please be assured that I will continue to work hard in 2026 and campaign for more resources for Sussex Weald. My surgeries take place weekly, so if you need my assistance, please email me at nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk or visit my website www.nusghani.org.uk for more information.

The Arts Society Ashdown Forest

Les Trois Grandes Dames of Impressionism
Marie Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot

Lecturer Sarah Burles

Thursday 8th January 2026 at 2pm

The Impressionists were an innovative and radical group of artists who took Paris by storm in the 1870s. This lecture will discuss the lives of each of these three artists and their work, revealing their skill and originality as well as their willingness to take risks, despite the additional obstacles they faced as women.

Dame Laura Knight

Lecturer Rosalind Whyte

Thursday 12th February 2026 at 2pm

In 1936 Dame Laura Knight became the first woman to be elected as a full member of the Royal Academy in London, 168 years after its establishment. In her extraordinary career she painted landscapes, seascapes and portraits, as well as scenes from the circus, the ballet and the theatre.

Lectures are held at Crowborough Community Centre, Pine Grove, Crowborough, TN6 1FE

Members free. Visitors £8. For further information see tasaf.org.uk

Thanks to our supporters from Hospice in the Weald

As this year draws to a close, we at Hospice in the Weald would like to thank our incredible supporters and volunteers.

Whether you took part in one of our many fundraising events – such as Moonlight Walk, or Hospice Run – shopped in or donated to one of our 30 charity shops, bought a butterfly at Meadow of Memories, sponsored a friend, played our lottery, made a gift in your will or donated directly to us, thank you.

Or perhaps you are one of the 1,000 volunteers who lend your time, energy and skills – we couldn't do it without you, and we thank you.

Your generosity has made a difference to the lives of adults and children in our community who are facing life-limiting and terminal illnesses.

Thanks to you, we have been there for 2,267 people and their loved ones this past year. Our specialist teams supported 388 people in our wards, provided support and advice to 1,809 people in their own homes and in care homes, and helped hundreds more to live well with our range of activities, counselling and therapies.

Every pound donated helps change lives. All our services are provided free of charge. However, with just 13% of funding coming from the government, we depend on our community for the rest. We need to raise £25,000 every single day to pay for things like nurse's salaries, food for our patients, and therapeutic support.

2026 is a big year for us. We are undertaking a major refurbishment programme at our Hospice in Pembury to better support patients for years to come – plus, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of Hospice Run in Tunbridge Wells.

We are honoured to be part of the west Kent and East Sussex communities. Thank you to all who supported us in 2025.

With my best wishes for the New Year
Katie Greywood, Director of Income Generation – on behalf of everyone at Hospice in the Weald, and those we care for

Frant School News

We hosted our first Parish Lunch of this year on 22nd October for local parishioners to join the children for a roast dinner and a tour of the school. Our House Captains were brilliant at touring the school and getting to know our local parishioners. We had a lovely letter from one of our visitors to thank us for the event, which we have shared with the children.

Our next Parish lunch will be Wednesday, 28th January. Please do contact the school if you would like to attend.

Our PTFA hosted Bonfire Night this term, with great success. We had over 1000 people in attendance and raised a brilliant amount for the school. Thank you to all those who helped and attended this community event.

Forest school has been a big hit for Year 1 and Year 4 with lots of muddy, fun activities from Mrs Fox!

We had lots of sporting events last term, including Cross-country and football. Thank you Mr Papper for coordinating and supporting all these events.

Nativity was in full swing in Lower School, who enjoyed singing and rehearsing ready for their performance at the end of term in St Albans Church which is always well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Key Stage 2 Carol concert was held in St Albans on Sunday 14th December at 6pm. A beautiful event with a full church all enjoying Christmas Carols.

We have hosted three Open events this academic year, welcoming new and prospective parents to the school, ready for our September 2026 intake.

Our PTFA Christmas events included a Secret Present Room and a Christmas film night.

Our Year 5 and 6 children were given the opportunity to take part in One Voice again this year at Glyndebourne, performing alongside other schools, opera singers and live music. We are very grateful to have been part of this again.

The term ended with a Federation event. All 4 schools attended Tunbridge Wells Assembly Halls to see the Pantomime. Both staff and children were very excited by this!

Alison Morgan

We were deeply saddened to learn of the

recent passing of Mrs. Alison Morgan, who worked at Frant School between January 2005 and September 2022.

Alison was an integral part of our school community, always ready to lend a hand and support any event, regardless of the time or effort required. Her dedication to providing the best opportunities for the children at Frant school was unwavering—she would always put them first, regardless of what she was doing.

Schools thrive on a sense of community, and Alison truly embodied that spirit. On a personal level, Alison offered me invaluable support, advice, and guidance, helping me lead the school in the best way possible. I am profoundly grateful to her for that.

On behalf of the entire school community, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Alison's family—David and Toby. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Joanna Challis

Bells Yew Green Village Hall Events



A thoroughly successful Music and Chilli Night took place on 7 November raising £1,557 towards hall upkeep funds.

As always, this was a group effort where local volunteers, steered by Frances Rae and Sue Wallis, pulled out the stops to help in so many ways. A huge thank you to all of the willing chilli chefs, potato bakers, decorators, florists, duct tape wielders, table planners, glass lenders, candle lighters, ticket vendors, money jugglers and the list goes on – it was a brilliant and successful effort!

The band, Café Society, played a selection of best loved songs from Ella Fitzgerald, Amy Winehouse and Dusty Springfield to name but a few and enthusiastic dancing kept the hall buzzing through the night. Thank you to our hardworking Chair, Rob Wallis, Treasurer, John Petrie and Secretary, Sue Petrie (pictured above) and all of the hall supporters

Parish News update

We are very pleased to welcome Sarah Bartholomew to the Parish News team

as our new page/graphic designer. Sarah has worked in the creative sector in and around the Tunbridge Wells area for over 30 years and has worked on publications such as Kent Profile magazine, Burswood News and Fox Project News.

Some of you may know her as the lady who used to sit at the front desk at Italia Conti every Saturday during term time for nearly fifteen years. Having taken a break from design for a couple of years, Sarah is now looking forward to getting back to it, starting with Frant Parish News.

When not sat at her desk, Sarah can be found walking over the East Sussex countryside with her rescue dog, 'Molly the Rommie'.

Parish Pets of 2025

'Molly the Rommie' is a 30kg, shaggy sheepdog who was rescued from Romainia five years ago and adopted by David and Sarah (our new designer) and although still very shy around strangers, she now lives her best life exploring the local countryside, chasing squirrels and barking at Amazon delivery men.



If you would like your pet to appear in the next edition, please email a photograph with a few fun paragraphs to carmel.kinley@gmail.com.

The "Parish News" is published by the Church and distributed free by volunteers. The publisher acknowledges the support of the Parish Council. Any views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily shared by the Publisher. The "Parish News" reserves the right to edit submissions as it sees fit. Publisher: Brendan Martin. Editor: Carmel Kinley. Design: sarah@sarahbartholomew.co.uk. Advertising: Susan Piccioni.



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Parish Diary: January/February 2026

» Thursday 8 January & Thursday 12 February

Arts Society Ashdown Forest Lecture
See page (see page 12)

Thursday 15 January

Frant Parish Friendship Group exercise classes
The Stables (see page 11)

Thursday 22 January

Frant Parish Friendship Group Meeting
The Stables (see page 11)

Friday 23 January

Kiki Dee in Concert
St Alban's Church Frant, 7pm
(see enclosed flyer)

Saturday 31 January

Weald Youth Music Forum Concert
St Alban's Church, Frant (see page 13)

Regular Meetings

Little Fishes: Baby & Toddler Group

Every Tuesday 9.30—11.30am in The Stables, Frant. A warm welcome to all.

Encounter (School Years 6–13)

Contact Rev Brendan Martin for more information: 752261

Coffee Morning at The Stables, Frant

Every Wednesday, 10:30am—12noon.
Come for a hot drink, a cake and a chat.

Festival Church Kids During 5pm outside service.

Parish News can be downloaded from: www.frantchurch.org or www.eridgechurch.org
Advertising enquiries: office@frantanderidgechurches.org.uk
Contributions for our next issue should be sent to the Editor: carmel.kinley@gmail.com or 01892 750217
Next deadline: 1st February 2026.

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Frant Church Youth and Kids

Rev Brendan Martin; 752261

Frant Bowls Club

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Frant Cricket Club

Will Patrick: 07884 187871

Frant Garden Club

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Frant Memorial Hall

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Eridge Cricket Club

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Eridge Arts Club

Mary Helson: mary.helson@gmail.com

Bells Yew Green

Bells Yew Green Chapel

Peter Arrowsmith: 01892 610309

BYG Cricket Club

Andy Brooks: 07876 011782

Bells Yew Green Village Hall

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Bob Standley: 783579
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County Councillor

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johanna.howell@frant-pc.gov.uk

Bob Standley: 783579

Parish Council meetings

Full PC meetings are usually held at 7.30pm every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Please check the Council's website at www.frant-pc.gov.uk

MP for Wealden

Nus Ghani MP:
nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk

Police Contact Details:

To report a crime or incident dial 101
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