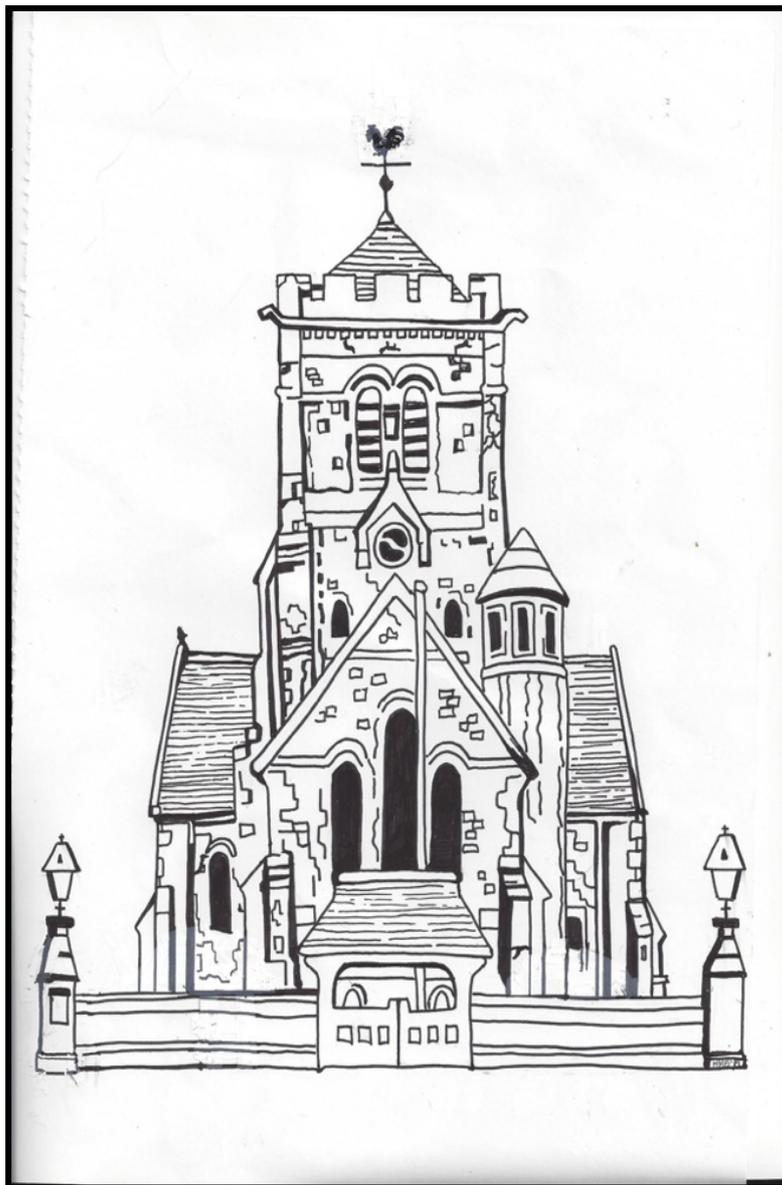


St Giles' and Shipbourne Village
NEWSLETTER



March 2026

OFFICERS OF ST GILES' AND VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

ST GILES

Rector of Shipbourne with Plaxtol: 811081
Rev Dr Peter Hayler Email: RectorSwP@gmail.com
The Rectory, The Street, Plaxtol http://shipbourne.com/st-giles-church/
TN15 0QG

Associate Rector Rev Mark Packer 07970-709006 CurateSwP@gmail.com
Licensed Lay Marius Carboni 07885 753272
Minister
Churchwardens: Mrs H Leach 07762 241720
Mr A Boorman 07795 182966

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Secretary: Mrs C Chambers 382228
Treasurer: Mr C Keeling 07825 139046
Deanery Synod Sir P Britton 365794
Rep:

CHURCH OFFICERS

Parish
Safeguarding: Ms C Jackson 07729814798
Choirmaster: VACANCY
Electoral Roll: Mrs H Leach 07762 241720
Flower Guild: Mrs F Ward 810525
Bell Ringing: Mr G Edwards 07487 729549

SHIPBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Sarah Huseyin 886402 shipbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com
Chair: V Redman
Vice Chair: P Leach
Councillors I Bond, S Oram,
A Dagger, S
Davis,
L Hollobon

VILLAGE WEBSITE www.shipbourne.com

SHIPBOURNE SCHOOL

Head: Mrs Terri Daters Terri.Daters@shipbourne.kent.sch.uk

SHIPBOURNE VILLAGE HALL

Chairman: Peter Leach shipbourne.villagehall@gmail.com
07889 362462
Bookings: Helen Leach 07762 241720

SHIPBOURNE FARMERS' MARKET

Manager: Bob Taylor 833976

SHIPBOURNE WI

President Sue Streeter 810731

SHIPBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

Secretary: Mark Fenton 07487541290

PLAXTOL & SHIPBOURNE TENNIS CLUB

Membership: Cilla Langdon- 810338
Down

POLICE

Emergency: 999 Non-urgent: 01622 690690

ST GILES' AND SHIPBOURNE NEWSLETTER

Lindsay Miles 810439 lindsay_miles@btinternet.com

Rector of Shipbourne with Plaxtol
 Rev Dr Peter Hayler
 The Rectory, The Street, Plaxtol TN15 0QG

PARISH DIARY – MARCH 2026

Except where indicated below, the main morning service at ST GILES, SHIPBOURNE is at 9.30am. Every weekday at 8.30am Morning Prayer will be said at Plaxtol and every weekday evening (except Friday and Saturday) at 4.30pm Evening Prayer will be said at St Giles, Shipbourne.

*St Giles Shipbourne is open for organ practice and private prayer daily except Mondays from 9.00am to 3.00pm
<http://shipbourne.com/st-giles-church/>*

SUNDAY	1st	8.00am	Holy Communion at Plaxtol Church
2nd Sunday of Lent		9.30am	Parish Communion at St Giles, Shipbourne
		11.00am	Family Service with Communion at Plaxtol Church
		Readings:	Genesis 12:1-4a, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17
Thursday	5th	9-11am	Farmers' Market at St Giles, Shipbourne
SUNDAY	8th	8.00am	Holy Communion at St Giles, Shipbourne
3rd Sunday of Lent		9.30am	Matins at St Giles, Shipbourne
		11.00am	Parish Communion at Plaxtol Church
		Readings	Exodus 17:1-7, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42
Monday	9th	7pm	Parish Council Meeting at Village Hall- all invited
Thursday	12th	9-11am	Farmers Market at St Giles, Shipbourne
SUNDAY	15th	8.00am	Holy Communion at Plaxtol Church
4th Sunday of Lent Mothering Sunday		9.30am	Mother's Day Family Service at St Giles, Shipbourne
		11.00am	Mother's Day Family Service at Plaxtol Church
		Readings:	1 Sam 16:1-13, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9
Thursday	19th	9-11am	Farmers' Market at St Giles, Shipbourne
SUNDAY	22nd	8.00am	Holy Communion at St Giles, Shipbourne
5th Sunday of Lent Passiontide begins		9.30am	Parish Communion at St Giles, Shipbourne
		11.00am	Community@11 at Plaxtol Church (Refreshments from 10.30am)
		Readings:	Ezekiel 37:1-14, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45
Thursday	26th	9-11am	Farmers' Market at St Giles, Shipbourne
Saturday	28th	9.30-11am	Community Bread Basket at Plaxtol Church
		10.30am	Great British Spring Clean – meet at Village Hall

SUNDAY <i>Palm Sunday</i>	29th	8.00am	Holy Communion at Plaxtol Church
		9.15am	Procession of Palms from Shipbourne Village Hall to....
		9.30am	Morning Worship at St Giles, Shipbourne
		10.45am 11.00am	Procession of Palms from Yopps Green to... Parish Communion at Plaxtol Church
		6.00pm	Benefice Choral Evensong at Plaxtol Church – To be confirmed
		Readings:	Isaiah 50:4-9a, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 21:1-11
Monday	30th	9.00pm	Compline at St Giles, Shipbourne
Tuesday	31st	9.00pm	Compline at Plaxtol Church

BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH NOTICES

REST IN PEACE

ANN SIMMONS

A LONG TERM AND MUCH LOVED RESIDENT AT LADY VANE, WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF 91.

GEOFF SMITH

WHO LIVED IN PLAXTOL AND WHO HAD SPENT MOST OF HIS WORKING LIFE AS A GARDENER FOR FAIRLAWNE.

BIRTHS

CONGRATULATIONS TO SOPHIE AND ADONIS FUYANA ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR DAUGHTER, **ZANDILE DENISE**, ON THE 29TH JANUARY, AND TO GORDON AND LINDSAY CREIGHTON, THEIR PROUD GRANDPARENTS.

REMEMBER: CLOCKS GO FORWARD

SUNDAY 29TH MARCH 2026



Lento... (Italian: slowly)

March this year is almost all within the season on Lent – see last month’s letter; we shall have begun on Ash Wednesday (18th February). Some of you will know that I play in Maidstone Symphony Orchestra, and that markings on traditional sheet music are in Italian. When a piece is marked *Lento*, it’s going to be a slow one, even slower than *Adagio*. And, of course, there’s a link between the Italian marking for slow music and the season of Lent. When do we ever slow down, though? In heavy traffic? When it’s cold and icy under foot? When we’re completely out of ‘steam’? Life today seems to be lived at break-neck speed, aided and abetted by all our electronic gizmos that normalise our communications to approximately the speed of light! Slowing down can be hard. We need to be purposeful about it... to want to slow down.

Jesus withdrew to the wilderness to slow down, to be close to God in quietness and prayer. Lent invites us to do the same. The church, over the centuries, has developed this slow-down season as a means of preparing for the most important part of the Christian year – Passiontide and Easter. If we don’t slow down, we will likely miss it. Even the Easter bunny is turbo-charged these days! Have you ever considered marking your diary for Good Friday? Strike the day through! Have no expectations of yourself and decide to let others have no expectations of you either. Take time to observe the scene as God, in the person of Jesus, suffers and dies in order to forgive and heal... and why... because that’s what love demanded! God’s perfect love does not ‘insist on its own way’ (1 Corinthians 13:5) - it requires us to accept us as a free and underserved gift... and perhaps we need to slow down to do that too!

Peter Hayler, Rector



Community Bread Basket

9:30 - 11:00 on Saturday 28th March 2026

In Plaxtol Parish Church
Café style Breakfast
All welcome

United Benefice of Shipbourne with Plaxtol
Collections for Chatham Foodbank

Boxes will be placed in both our churches over the fourth weekend of each month for donations of food and toiletries, to coincide with our Community Bread Basket event.



The Kentish Rifleman
Dunk's Green, TN11 9RU
01732 810727

Born in the 1500s, our traditional family run pub is open daily from 11.30am. By the cosy fire or out in the beer garden, we offer home-made food, local beers, a lovely selection of wines and spirits and a friendly atmosphere. Please book your table on 01732 810727 or on our website.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

www.thekentishrifleman.co.uk

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A LILY IN MEMORY OF SOMEONE AT EASTER...

Just fill in the name on one of the slips of paper at the back of the church, and put it with your donation in one of the envelopes marked "Easter Lilies" and give it to one of the Churchwardens. Alternatively you can send your donation to Felicity Ward at Hookwood House, Shipbourne, Kent TN11 9RJ. Cheques should be made payable to Mrs F. L. B. Ward please.

There will be a list in church at Easter in memoriam of all the people who are being remembered.

We shall also use daffodils or tulips for the church at Easter, so if you would like to give some to the church please bring them to St Giles between 9 and 10 am on Saturday 4 April, when we shall be decorating the church. If the weather warms up, we shall use yellow and white tulips on the windowsills, as the daffodils may be going over by then.

If you would like to help with the church flowers at Easter, please contact Felicity Ward (01732 810525).

PLAXTOL SCHOLARS AT ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

The Scholars have been invited to sing Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral on Saturday 18th April at 5pm.

Come and join us in this magnificent building. It is such a privilege for us to sing there.

And looking ahead we have also been asked to step in and sing the services in Rochester Cathedral on Sunday 9th August (10.30am and 3.15pm). Come and say hello.

Marius Carboni

SHIPBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

The contact details for the Parish Council are:

Shipborne Parish Council
Clerk – Mrs Sarah Huseyin
Gable Cottage
Ismays Road
Ightham TN15 9BE
e-mail: shipbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com
Telephone: 01732 886402

Please visit the website for Shipbourne Parish Council Meeting Agenda's, Minutes and News. (<http://www.shipbourne.com/>) If you have any ideas or would like something added, such as a news item, please email the Parish Clerk.

PARISH MEETINGS

The Parish Council meetings *usually* take place on the second Monday of each month (except August) at 7pm and the agenda will be posted a few days beforehand on the noticeboard in the bus shelter opposite The Chaser and on the Parish website. If you have anything that you would like to raise or would like to join the meeting, please email the Parish Clerk shipbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com. Please visit our website www.shipbourne.com for further details.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS –

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/planning-applications-appeals/planning-view-comment-planning-applications>

KENT POLICE

Our new beat officer is Thomas Mead PC 46014468, based at Tonbridge Police Station. For non-urgent matters, please call 101, for emergencies please call 999.

<https://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk/>

For information on community policing, My Community Voice is a messaging service that helps Kent and Medway residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams. The service sends updates about your local

area directly from the police officers themselves. You can sign up using the link or website address above.



For full details of all our walks, see www.tonbridgeandmallinghamblers.org.uk or our Facebook page

KENT BUS SERVICE CHANGES BULLETIN - JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH & APRIL 2026

<https://www.kentbusinfo.co.uk/service-changes>

Bus services in the UK operate in a de-regulated (privatised) environment outside of the control of KCC who do not license or contract operators or their services.

Bus operators can change or cancel or any service by giving 70 days notice to the Department for Transport. Operators will make decisions on what services to run, their routes and their frequencies based on commercial and operational considerations notably that the use of the service will cover the costs of operation.

The bus industry in the UK is facing a very challenging period of increasing fuel and driver costs, reduced levels of use and a shortage of drivers and this is leading to high volumes of service reductions and cancellations.

Although operators can make these changes without the permission of KCC who cannot therefore resist them and cannot commit to securing replacement services, the Council are keen to ensure that bus users and other stakeholders are aware of pending changes.

Detailed information including operator's websites are included on the Kent Bus Information Portal: <https://www.kentbusinfo.co.uk/service-changes>

SHIPBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 9th March
7.00 pm Shipbourne Village Hall

You are invited to attend the public open session of the next parish council meeting above, during which some time will be allocated to the issue of Local Government Reform.

Before attending, please read the information below and look online to acquaint yourself of the issues and please also look at the questionnaire through which you are able to take part in the consultation.

If you do want to attend the meeting, we would be grateful if you could RSVP via email to: shipbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com or call/text/WhatsApp Peter Leach on 07889 362462

There has been considerable debate around the Government’s plan for **Local Government Reorganisation** (LGR), under which Kent County Council (KCC) and Tier 2 authorities—including Kent borough and town councils such as TMBC—would be replaced by unitary councils. Parish Councils will remain unaffected.

Planning for these changes has taken place over the past eighteen months, with comprehensive assessments and business cases developed to determine implementation strategies, the number of required unitary authorities, and the transition process from existing county and borough councils to new unitary authorities.

Existing councils were instructed to submit business cases to central government, including firm proposals concerning the number and configuration of the new authorities. These submissions have recently been completed, initiating a public consultation period during which all stakeholders are encouraged to participate. TMBC indicated preference for option (3A): a three-unitary model dividing North, West, and East Kent. Conversely, KCC expressed support for option (1A), a single unitary authority.

In November 2025, local parish councils were invited to contribute to the assessment process. Following collaborative meetings with neighbouring parish councillors, both a joint response and an individual Shipbourne Parish Council response were submitted to TMBC.

The rationale for transitioning to unitary authorities remains ambiguous. At the parish level, it has been suggested that councils could assume greater responsibility for local services, however as parish councils operate primarily through volunteers this raises questions about feasibility. There is also a question about how this would be financed. While enhanced engagement at higher administrative levels would be beneficial, the likely composition of the new unitary authority—including Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, and Tunbridge Wells, with a combined population of 500,000—raises doubts about how there can be closer involvement, and how the larger authority can meet local needs.

County and borough councils have already incurred substantial costs in preparing and submitting assessments and business cases. Forecasts indicate that transitioning to unitary authorities could cost approximately £100 million per unitary authority. Furthermore, KCC's current significant debt is expected to be distributed across the new unitary authorities, with wealthier areas absorbing larger shares, ultimately impacting our Council Tax rates.

Local government reorganisation will affect all residents, and individuals are encouraged to review the information provided and participate in the consultation process.

Further information and links to access the consultation have been provided to Shipbourne PC by Harry Rayner who is our County Councillor:

- ***LGR consultation – on 5 February, Government ministers launched the statutory consultation on options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Kent and Medway. All five proposals that were submitted to Government by Kent and Medway councils are being consulted on. The consultation is public and open to anyone who wishes to respond. Further information about the consultation and how to take part is available on the Government website here: [Local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway - GOV.UK](#). The five business cases are available to view on the Kent Council Leaders website here: [Local Government Reorganisation Consultation - Kent Council Leaders](#)***

The consultation closes on 26 March 2026. After the consultation, Government officials and ministers will review all responses alongside the evidence in the business cases that were submitted. A decision is expected in the summer of 2026. Please use your networks to promote the consultation

and encourage people to have their say on this important issue for the future of Kent and Medway.

Mrs Sarah Huseyin Parish Clerk, CEO & RFO Shipbourne Parish Council Gable Cottage,
Ismays Road, Ightham, TN15 9BE Tel: 01732 886402



Borough Green Road, Ightham, Kent, TN15 9JA 01732 884726

It's Spring Planting Time!

Visit us for shrubs, roses, fruit trees, soft fruit and perennials

-Seeds, herbs, vegetable plants and seed potatoes

-Gardening tools and planting accessories

-Compost, pots, fertilisers, logs, charcoal and bird feed

-Local grown produce, bread, eggs, cheeses, biscuits and ice cream

- **Rombouts** coffee available in farm shop

- We stock **COOK** frozen meals and desserts

Open every day: 9am-5pm

sales@greenacresgardencentre.co.uk



Shipbourne Village Hall News

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Saturday 28th March 10.30 am – 12.30 pm Great British Spring Clean

Saturday 25th April CASP (Climate Action Shipbourne & Plaxtol)

Saturday 13th June 3.00 pm – 7.00 pm Village Garden Party

Saturday 19th September – 7.00 pm Jukebox Bingo

Saturday 21st November – 7.00 pm Quiz Night

Great British Spring Clean Campaign - Litter Picking - Saturday 28th March 10.30 am

Join us for this year's Great British Spring Clean and help keep our village and surrounding countryside clean and tidy.

Last year, volunteers collected 15 bags of litter, making a real difference to our local environment. We hope to build on that success this year.

The village hall will be our main base, with hi-vis jackets, gloves, litter pickers, rubbish sacks, and suggested routes available.

Volunteers are invited to meet at the hall from 10.30 am. You can join the main group or start from agreed points and work your way towards the hall. Equipment can be arranged in advance where needed.

Please take care on lanes, especially with young children. Off-road routes will be suggested for families.

Full bags can be left at the hall. If you come across large, bulky or heavy items, please take a picture and either a what3words location or make a note of where it is and we will arrange collection. Refreshments will be available from 11.30 am to 1.00 pm in the hall.

For further information, route planning, or equipment, please contact Tim Wright [07833 510936 / tim.dj.wright@gmail.com].

NEW EXERCISE CLASSES FOR 2026

Monday mornings	9.30-10.30am	Hatha Yoga Contact Sam 07872 493320 Sambridgland.79@gmail.com
Thursday evenings	6.45-7.45pm	Pilates (mixed ability)
Saturday mornings	8.15-9.15am	Barre (mixed ability)
	9.30-10.30am	Mat Pilates (mixed ability) Contact Lizzy on WhatsApp 07718 124171

Help us to keep in touch

If you want to be kept informed about this and future events, please email peter4inscope@yahoo.co.uk with your contact details.

We are keen to keep everyone informed directly of all village events, not just those at the hall, and would greatly appreciate receiving your contact details, so please do email as soon as possible.

SHIPBOURNE VILLAGE HALL

Situated on the Green in the heart of Shipbourne, our village hall with its enclosed and safe garden, is the perfect venue for children's parties, family celebrations, pilates, yoga, exhibitions, fundraising events, training courses or seminars. It has a main hall, an adjoining side room ideal for meetings, blackout blinds, wheelchair access, a well-equipped kitchen, baby changing facilities and disabled toilet.

Wi-Fi with excellent download speed is provided by courtesy of Gigaclear.

In addition, 2 N° 8m x 4m marquees, 3 N° 3m x 3m and 2 N° 2.5 x 2.5m gazebos are available for hire.

For hall rates, enquiries and bookings, please call Helen Leach on 07762 241720 or email shipbourne.villagehall@gmail.com

SHIPBOURNE WI

February has been a busy month for the WI. Tuesday 3rd was the day a group of us went off for an overnight stay in Canterbury. On arrival, our first port of call was The Beaney Museum. The museum houses many paintings, artefacts and memorabilia of children's programmes such as Bagpuss, The Clangers and Noggin the Nog; and for those of us who remember Rupert Bear, there was an interesting collection of objects.

The height of the trip was the evening visit to The Marlowe Theatre where we enjoyed a good dinner, and then "Sunny Afternoon - The Life Story of The Kinks". The acting and music gave us an exhilarating, if somewhat deafening experience, which had members of the WI 'almost' rocking in the aisles! The guided walk around Canterbury the following morning was most informative, but unfortunately there wasn't enough time to visit the Cathedral.

The visit was a resounding success, chiefly thanks to Lindsay Creighton and Helen Leach with their immaculate organisation. The first of others, we hope!

Members were delighted to welcome Sir Paul Britton to speak at our main meeting. Sir Paul, who worked for the Civil Service for many years and finally in the Cabinet Office, regaled us with anecdotes about the politicians of that era, their foibles and their fractured relationships, usually within their own parties! It was a fascinating talk, and had members absorbed in the narrative.

Our regular events have included Book Club, a walk and an enjoyable lunch at The Chaser. The next meeting is on Wednesday 11th March at 2pm, when the speaker will be Eddie Prescott on the subject of "Bomber Harris - Villain or Victim?"

Glynis Coates



NATIONAL TRUST - IGHTHAM MOTE NEWS

The Second-Hand Bookshop has been moved from Laundry Cottage to the Coach House at Ightham Mote. This new location will enable us to extend our offer of good quality books to our visitors.

Many local residents have generously donated books in the past, and we really appreciate your support. With our larger shop in mind, we are making a fresh appeal for donations of 'pre-loved' Children's Books together with Adult Fiction. Every donation we receive goes towards funding projects at Ightham Mote.

Donations can be taken to the Visitor Reception area and there is a buggy service available from the car park if needed.

We hope you can visit us in the Coach House Bookshop soon.

Best wishes

Bookshop Team - Ightham Mote

Plaxtol Players|
Spring Quiz
On Saturday 25th April, at
Plaxtol Village Hall
7pm for 7-30 start.
Tickets £15 (including cold
buffet supper) Cash Bar,
Raffle

Contact Sandy for tickets or
to book a table.
sandy.oram@sky.com
01732 811494



THE WEATHER IN JANUARY

The average day temperature was 10.2⁰c, the average night temperature was 2.8⁰c, the highest day was Sunday 18th with 15.5⁰c, the lowest day was Friday 9th with 5.0⁰c, the highest night was Monday 19th with 8.0⁰c, the lowest night was Monday 5th with -8.5⁰c, the total rainfall was 194.5mm, with an average over the last 35 years of 91mm, the highest year was this year with 194.5mm the lowest year was January 1992 with 12.0mm, there was only 4 days this month that we didn't have rain.

Lionel Stielow



Climate Action Shipbourne and Plaxtol, CASP
www.casphub.org

Climate Action Spring Fair April 25th, Shipbourne Village Hall.

'I wish there always is water for plants'

'I wish to see more flowers'

In January, we shared our children's wishes for the planet. What would you like to see your village tackle to make our lives, our villages, our woods and our greenspaces more climate resilient? **Come and tell us.**

Come along to our climate action spring fair and see what other villages, Climate Action, Nature and Biodiversity groups are doing. **We are all in this together** and together we can share best practice and hone new ideas.

Our fair will include children's activities, stalls, tea and delicious cake.

We can do it! Reduce fuel bills now. Through our Home Energy Project, we have assessed six typical village houses for how to make those houses warmer and cheaper to heat. **Come and see the results!** Learn about everything from small tweaks to major investments. Have a chat with an expert and talk to neighbours who have had their homes assessed or who have installed retrofit measures. Visit a home to inspect a heat pump. Find out about the **new grants available** under the government's Warm Homes initiative. Take away your free climate action and warm homes toolkit.

More details soon but please save the date and **join us to help people and nature** in the villages of Shipbourne and Plaxtol at the Heart of Kent!

Climate Action Shipbourne and Plaxtol, CASP
Never too small to make a difference.



Supported by the Great British Energy Community Fund and Kent County Council



Wasp Treatment

Taking the sting out of summer

andy.wasp

Wasp & Wasp nest treatment

Mobile: **07833558773**

Email: andy.wasp@yahoo.co.uk

Fast, Efficient and Reliable

Tonbridge & surrounding area

TN9. TN10. TN11

02/25)

A photograph of a painter in white overalls and a white cap, standing on a wooden ladder and painting a white wall with a roller. The painter is positioned on the left side of the business card.

Grumpy Painters
Painter & Decorators
PM Gladman & Son

March House
Five Oak Green Road
Five Oak Green
Tonbridge, Kent
TN12 6TJ
07885 201765 / 01892 834507

grumpypainter@hotmail.co.uk

Fully Insured with Public Liability
Over 30 Years of Experience

02/25)

FROM YOUR LOCAL MP

In 2021, I was sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party for speaking in Parliament about the persecution of Uyghurs in north-western China. For more than a decade, many have faced severe repression, and I have continued to press the UK government to stand firmly against human rights abuses.

Since then, we have also seen serious allegations of spying in Westminster, debated the proposed new Chinese embassy site in London, and raised more serious questions about our national security and values. We are facing a hostile state that is trying to undermine us here in the UK.

That is why, when the Prime Minister travelled to China earlier this year, I hoped that the case of the British Citizen, Jimmy Lai, who remains imprisoned in Hong Kong, the hostile actions of the Chinese state online, and the treatment of the Uyghur people, would be central to those discussions.

Instead, I learned at the end of the visit that I and several other MPs had been removed from China's sanctions list. While that may sound like a positive step, it isn't. It's a distraction from far more important issue: the freedom and rights of those still suffering persecution.

These may seem like distant international matters, but they reflect the kind of country we are and the principles we stand for, the goods and services we trade and the relationships that we rely on in times of global conflict. It is important that we remain clear about the challenges posed by authoritarian governments, and that we do not compromise our values for short-term convenience.

If you would like to read more about my work on these issues, you can find further updates online, or you are always welcome to contact my office.

Tom Tugendhat

MP, Member of Parliament for Tonbridge, Edenbridge and North Downs Villages

E-mail	tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk
Phone	01732 441563
Social Media	@TomTugendhat
Letter	130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1SP

17TH CENTURY COTTAGES OF PLAXTOL & SHIPBOURNE

The few cottages of the 1600's that survive in our villages are good examples of domestic vernacular architecture. These were not the grand or large houses built for the gentry but modest homes built by freeholders – yeomen who managed their own farms – or successful tradespeople.

Vernacular buildings are those made from local materials to hand. Like the larger hall houses of the 16th century the cottages of the early 17th century were usually timber-framed, set on a stone plinth, with panels inset with 'wattle and daub'. Locally this daub would have been clay mixed with straw or small stones – and maybe even cow dung – and pressed on to the wattle, a frame of upright wooden stakes woven with slats of local split hazel or willow, the whole then lime washed or rendered with plaster.

These simple, small rural houses each with their own garden were usually single storey with hipped or half-hipped roofs built from reed. The thickly thatched roofs sometimes incorporated dormer windows to light small attic rooms, accessed via tight stairwells. As clay tiles became more freely available throughout the 17th century they were often used to replace the fire hazardous thatch.

The cottages were compact in size with low ceilings which meant that they were easier to heat. Window openings were low and as the century progressed they were constructed nearly square with two casements of small panes of glass held together with lead. Such a 'chocolate-box cottage' with a thatched roof, a central doorway with roses growing over and a window each side – surrounded by a garden of flowers and vegetables – exemplifies one's romantic idea of the perfect country cottage.

Sometimes the wattle and daub panels were replaced with stone - which would have been Kentish rubble - and some may eventually have been filled with locally made brick. By the second half of the century as timber such as oak became scarcer the cottages – although often with a basic timber frame - were increasingly built from the local stone in its irregular state without any working into blocks. And some cottages such as these, although still small, were built with two storeys, the upper one part of the attic.

Floors of existing cottages built in the 1600's often slope due to the natural warping of the wood and not bad workmanship and the dark exposed ceiling and wall beams – contrary to many views – are not blackened from soot but have naturally darkened with age.

Rose & Crown Cottage – since renamed – at the top of Sheet Hill and Elm Tree Cottages in Yopps Green are good examples of 17th century cottages in Plaxtol. In Shipbourne, Butchers Cottage and Hoad Hill Cottage represent 1600's styles whilst, fronting the Green, charming Collens Cottage - like pretty Tree Cottage in Plaxtol - is also a good example of a Stuart period cottage in the countryside.

Libby Cohen

Newsletter Trial: Where to get your copy

Collection Hubs: Hard copies are available for collection from the following hubs (thank you to all hubs!):

- St Giles' Church
- The Chaser Inn
- Plaxtol Stores
- The Kentish Rifleman

Digital Copy to your Inbox: Residents are encouraged to sign up to receive a digital copy directly to their email inbox - please email lindsay_miles@btinternet.com

Online: The newsletter will continue to be uploaded in a digital format to www.shipbourne.com and a monthly link provided on the Shipbourne Facebook page @shipbournevillage

Limited Access: Please contact Lindsay Miles at lindsay_miles@btinternet.com or 01732 810439 if you are not physically able to collect a hard copy and have no access to a digital copy.

Handyman

No job too small, based in Dunk's Green.
Any jobs that the trades aren't interested in.
Fully insured and very reliable.
If you can't or don't have the time to DIY
**Call Ian on 01732 810 437
or 07773 775 237**



**PLAXTOL PEST
AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT**

**Ciaran Payne
07368 605762**

**INFO@PLAXTOLPEST.CO.UK
WWW.PLAXTOLPEST.CO.UK**



**FOLLOW SHIPBOURNE ON FACEBOOK FOR VILLAGE NEWS,
INFORMATION AND EVENTS**

@shipbournevillage

MARCH AT SHIPBOURNE FARMERS' MARKET



We have recently welcomed two new popular stallholders to the Market. David sells his handmade wooden planters – perfect for Mothers' Day gifts later this month and can be made to size. North Charcuterie is based in East Farleigh and produces cured hams and salamis with British, Spanish and Italian influences.

Cooks call March the 'famine' month for its lack of seasonal choice. But don't despair for Spring is just around the corner and at the end of the month the clocks go forward, with the promise of longer, warmer days as the season changes. So why not make the most of the last of the winter at the Farmers' Market this month, and savour all those wonderful comfort foods before the spring really gets going? After all that's one of the real joys of seasonal local shopping – life moves on, ingredients come and go with the changing year, and we can all enjoy knowing we are eating food at its finest whilst giving vital support to local producers who are working flat out to cope with the challenges the British weather keeps throwing at them.

A wonderful warming fish stew is a superb way of enjoying superb fish and seafood this month. For meat eaters, pork is an excellent choice this month and it's still ideal weather to enjoy a hearty roast on Sunday with all the family. Try a shoulder joint for the best combination of flavour and texture. The cheaper cuts are worth trying in slow cooked stews –pork belly, breast of lamb, shin of beef – all great value and superb eating.

Winter cabbages, cauliflower, spring greens and kale are all picking well now. They need little cooking and are really at their best simply shredded and steamed. Or try quickly stir fried with garlic, ginger and chilli. Cauliflower goes really well with curry spices so try it in vegetable curries, soups and fritters.

Beautiful pink forced rhubarb is really the only local fruit around now but the season is short so make the most of it. Use in crumbles, fools, ice creams and sauces – it goes particularly well with a large pinch of ginger.

To stay up to date with “what’s on” at the Market, request our weekly e-newsletter by visiting www.shipbournefm.co.uk or email lindsay_miles@btinternet.com.

COOKERY CORNER

MOTHERS’ DAY RHUBARB AND ELDERFLOWER CAKE

Making the most of new season forced rhubarb.

Serves 8-10 / Prep: 40 mins / Cook: 55 mins

For the rhubarb:

- 400g trimmed forced rhubarb cut into 4-5cm slices
- 110g caster sugar
- ½ lemon zested and juiced
- 2 tbsp elderflower cordial

For the elderflower cream:

- 300ml double cream
- 2 tbsp elderflower cordial
- 100g full fat natural yoghurt

For the cake:

- 115g unsalted butter
- 95g ground almonds
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 1 lemon zested
- 3 eggs – 2 whole and 1 white only
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp elderflower cordial
- 100g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarb of soda
- 130g full-fat natural yoghurt

1. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Butter the sides of two 20cm round cake tins and line the bases with baking parchment.
2. To roast the rhubarb, line a high-sided baking tray with baking parchment, add the rhubarb, then top with the sugar, lemon juice, zest and cordial. Cover with foil and roast in the oven for 25 mins until soft. Remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Strain the rhubarb from the poaching liquor, reserving the syrup.
3. Whisk butter and cream on medium speed for 2 mins, then, using a rubber spatula, scrape down the butter from the sides of the bowl, then tip in the sugar and lemon zest. Turn up the mixer speed slightly and continue whisking for 5 mins until light

- and fluffy. Turn the mixer speed down slightly, then add the eggs, egg white, vanilla extract and cordial and mix together.
4. Combine the flour, almonds, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Scrape the butter mixture down from the sides of the stand mixer bowl, turn the mixer to low speed – so it's just stirring – then spoon in the flour and almond mixture in four batches, alternating with spoonfuls of the yogurt, and finishing with a batch of the flour and almond mixture. Mix until just combined, with no streaks remaining, then add half the roasted rhubarb and 1 tbsp of its syrup to the batter and fold it in.
 5. Divide the batter evenly between the cake tins and bake in the oven for 25-30 mins until a skewer inserted into each cake comes out clean. Remove the cakes from the oven, leave them to cool completely in the tins on rack then carefully remove from the tins.
 6. For the filling, whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl and fold in three-quarters of the remaining roasted rhubarb, along with the elderflower cordial and yogurt.
 7. Put one of the cakes flat-side down on a cake stand or plate, prick it all over with a skewer, and use a pastry brush to brush the cake with a little elderflower cordial. Spoon on half the cream mixture, top with the other cake, and brush that cake with cordial, too. Spoon over remaining cream mixture, top with the remaining rhubarb and spoon over some of the poaching syrup.

Stallholder Shopping List

Eggs – Edward Nut Farms

Forced Rhubarb – Roughway Farm/Watts Farms

Taken from bbcgoodfood.com

USED STAMPS FOR THE R.N.I.B

Thank you to everyone who has left used postage stamps at the back of the church. So far I have managed to collect 5 kilos which should raise £100 for the R.N.I.B. Please keep collecting them for this very worthwhile charity.

Jenny Porter

Ayre Building Services



- Extensions
- Loft Conversions
- Kitchen Fitting
- Bathroom Fitting
- Tiling
- Carpentry
- Plastering
- Painting & Decorating
- Ground Works
- Brickwork
- Drives & Patios
- Fencing

West Peckham, Tel: 07990 996905

References available

Digger and driver available for hire



www.pegum.net



GAS, LPG, OIL & SOLID FUEL

SALES • SERVICING • PLUMBING

RANGE COOKERS • BOILERS • WOOD STOVES

AGA REFURBISHMENT • UNDERFLOOR HEATING

WATER TANKS • OIL TANKS

01732 463256

office@pegum.net

Unit 12, Gaza Trading Estate, Hildenborough, Kent TN11 8PL

SHIPBOURNE CLASSIFIEDS

Simple Domestic and Personal Advertisements, up to four lines, are free to Newsletter readers. This free category includes items for sale or wanted, baby-sitting, dog walking, domestic needs etc. **To ensure Shipbourne Classifieds is kept up to date, each domestic/personal advertisement will be published in the Newsletter for three months and then removed unless requested otherwise.**

Business Advertisements up to four lines are charged at £1 per monthly issue or £10 for a whole year of 12 issues. Also available are up to half-page display advertisements, charged at £10 per monthly issue, or £100 for a full year of 12 issues.

All revenue raised from Shipbourne Classifieds goes towards St Giles and the printing costs of the Newsletter.

Disclaimer: Please note that the St Giles and Shipbourne Newsletter cannot be held responsible for the quality of the goods or services advertised in the Newsletter.

TD BRICKWORK LOCAL RELIABLE BUILDER

All aspects of Brickwork, Garden, Walls, Steps, Patios, Repointing, Landscaping. Please Contact Terence 07742831875 or Email douseterence@gmail.com. (12/25)

YAMAHA ELECTONE HS-4 ELECTRIC ORGAN SYNTHESISER WITH STOOL

Model introduced 1987 and probably bought that year. Inherited recently. Seems good order but cannot give any assurances. One careful lady owner! We live in Ivy Hatch. No charge but donation to St Giles' Church Restoration Appeal suggested. Please message 07584 517383. (02/25)

FOOT CARE PODIATRIST/CHIROPODIST at my clinic in central Hildenborough. Gentle and effective care for your feet. Alice Neale MRCPod BSC Hons HCPC registered. Contact telephone 01732 832524 or text 07951949015 (02/25)

HAIR BY SHARON - Mobile hairdresser, for prices or to make an appointment please call 01732 773043 (02/25)

SALLY OSBORNE - ELECTRICIAN: NAPIT Part P approved. All domestic electrical work undertaken. To arrange a free quote please contact me on 07710 443079 or email salvioz@blueyonder.co.uk (02/25)

DAVID ROWE Plumbing & Heating, a reliable engineer for all your domestic requirements including: boiler installation, servicing and repairs, full heating systems, radiators, hot water cylinders, power-flushing, gas fires, gas cookers, bathrooms. Please contact David, 07715266311 or email droweph@virginmedia.com (02/25)

LOCAL WASP NEST TREATMENT: Fast, efficient, reliable. Andy Wasp 07833 558773 (02/25)

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Please send any articles and adverts for the April Newsletter by

15th March 2026

Please email articles to lindsay_miles@btinternet.com or
call 01732 810439