HEXTABLE PARISH COUNCIL
HPC
2008

MARCH 2025
NEWSLETTER

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info@hextable-pc.gov.uk | 01322 668530

Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to our latest Parish Newsletter. It has been another busy year for the Parish Council, and as we enter spring, and look forward to the warmer weather and longer days, our staff and members will continue working hard in the community for all our residents.

The Parish Council is fortunate to have Barrie, Lewis, and Ian, who you will see out and about maintaining our open spaces, cutting the grass, and carrying out all sorts of maintenance to keep Hextable looking nice. Over the years, our grounds staff have made some huge improvements to Hextable Gardens, and in these last few years, we are proud of the Memorial Garden at the bottom of Rowhill Road. This space has proved to be a popular area for residents to relax and reflect, and in 2025, where we mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, it brings even greater significance to our newest open space.

Whilst the Parish Council works to maintain your open spaces and provide some of the facilities for community use in the village, we are proud of the wide variety of groups and voluntary organisations that give their time to offer something for everyone. The most important of our objectives for the council is to do everything we can to encourage a vibrant community.

I cannot overlook the hugely important the work of our uniformed groups in the village, and our two football clubs that we are lucky to have in Hextable. These organisations provide important support and an interest for our younger residents and run some exciting activities and events. I am really pleased that these groups have seen some healthy growth over the past few years, with increasing membership.

There are many other groups, clubs and societies that meet in Hextable, providing something for all ages. For example, the Hextable Volunteer Gardening Group meet throughout the year and by assisting our grounds staff, they contribute to the maintenance of our open spaces, whilst enjoying the company of others who share the same interest. If you wish to get involved, there are more details on page 24, including a programme of the planned sessions.

You will no doubt have heard a lot in the news about the proposed devolution, and local government reform. In the biggest reorganisation in the way local government is managed since 1974. See page 20 to see what this is likely to mean for Hextable.

Finally, back in September last year, Hextable Heritage Society was proud to open the doors of the Heritage Centre and welcome former students who attended what was known as 'Swanley Horticultural College' who graduated 60 years earlier in 1964. I was pleased to join other member of the Hextable Heritage Society to welcome 12 visitors back to the former Botany Laboratory. As can be seen on page 28, the afternoon visit was an enjoyable event for all!

Harry Chapmans's Sponsored Remembrance Walk
Departs 10am on 10th May 2025

Harry Chapmans, one of our most active 90 year olds in Hextable I has served with the Royal British Legion for many years.

To mark VE-Day 80, in his own way, he is arranging a sponsored walk from Crockenhill through Swanley to Hextable, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2 in Europe (VE Day 8th May 1945) and in Southeast Asia (VJ Day 15th August 1945).

It is anticipated that the walk will commence at 10.00am from the Parish Council Offices in Crockenhill, proceed to the War Memorial there, where a wreath will be laid, before walking to Swanley Memorial where another wreath will be laid. The final leg of the journey,will see a wreath laid at a Hextable Memorial Gardens in Hextable which it is hoped will be by 12 noon.

During the day a wreath will also be laid on one of the Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard of St Paul's in Swanley Village

All money collected will go to The Royal British Legion 2025 Poppy Appeal.

Cllr Darren Kitchener
Chair, Hextable Parish Council





Memorial Garden

In Loving Memory

The memorial garden is a beautiful open space for everyone to enjoy as well as being a place for solace. The trees and greenery are in and around the area to inspire reflection and remembrance.



The garden can have a calming and therapeutic effect on a person's emotions and the memorial garden was created to provide a space of tranquillity for a few moments of reflecting on memories.

To aid the memories, HPC has a specially designed memorial plaque holder for anyone in Hextable to add a plaque to. The parish clerk will arrange for the plaque purchase, and the groundsmen will attach this to the plaque holder. The clerk to be contacted by email: info@hextable-pc.gov.uk

Plaque requirements:

- The individual to be commemorated must have resided in Hextable at the time of their death.
- The plaque information will need to fit on a plaque size 12.5cm wide by 5cm high.
- Plaque would state the person's name and the date of birth and date of death.

The cost will be £50.00.

Hextable Osteopath

Continuing a twenty-five-year tradition of patient-centred osteopathic care

07579 003365

£10 off your first appointment with this advert.
Until end-June 2025

Specialist treatment

Back pain and sciatica
Neck & shoulder pain
Elbow, hip & knee pain
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..a highly skilled and empathetic practitioner – Viv Pipe

I felt I was in reassuringly safe hands immediately – Alison

I would have no hesitation in recommending him – Michelle N



First appointment £62
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Call with any questions and without obligation.

Jason Cook BSc(Hons) Ost
St Peter's Church, College Road, Hextable BR8 7RH
07579 003365 hextableosteopath.co.uk

From Your Kent County Councillor Perry Cole

Hello everyone and welcome to my Spring Newsletter update.

I hope that whatever you are doing today proves successful and that, especially if whatever it is you are doing is weather dependent, the sun shines on you!

On the topic of weather, haven't we endured a particularly wet and stormy winter? The seasons certainly appear to be changing and with it, the potential for wetter weather in the years ahead, possibly manifesting itself in short but intense rainfall. These extreme episodes can easily overwhelm existing infrastructure and lead to localised flooding. Even if this is limited to carriageways only being flooded, it can impact on residents quality of life due to road closures or delays caused by vehicles cautiously making their way through flooded sections of road with commensurate traffic building up.

I am delighted therefore that since improvements to the drainage systems both here in Hextable and over in Swanley since the floods of 2021, that there have been no repeat instances to those two occurrences. Despite at times exceptionally heavy rain over the winter period, there has been no recurrence of flooding on Goldsel Road thanks to the new soakaways installed after I had lobbied for these and other improvements to be implemented.

For those that pass that way, you may have noticed new gates that have been installed at each end of



the Avenue of Limes. Residents, especially those with mobility issues or managing a wheelchair or larger buggies had commented that in order to get to Swanley Park, their only option was to walk along Main Road and then continue along Swanley Lane and through Swanley or take the brave decision to risk walking along New Barn Road. Suitable gates were sourced through KCC and installed late last year. They will provide opportunity for those members of our community to access once again a route that for too long has been denied to them. Granted, gates themself do not provide the complete answer, as the condition of the pathway is very much dictated by the weather but the gates are a start to ensuring year-round access to all.



The extended trial of the 477 route has so far proven successful, but more passenger journeys are still required to assure its continuance. With many problems faced by the bus industry not least passenger numbers still not back to pre-Covid levels, commercial operators have restricted some routes and cancelled others entirely. To have successfully persuaded Arriva to reconsider their original decision and in part to reinstate the 477 service is great news. Please consider taking the bus even if only occasionally to help keep those passenger numbers up and help to maintain the service for those who genuinely and regularly rely on it.



On a personal note, back in October I undertook a sponsored walk that saw me successfully walk around the Isle of Wight - 79 miles in total - in a little over 25hrs spread over 5 days (well - I had tested positive for Covid the day before I left to undertake the walk).

I am delighted to announce that I raised around £2700 in total for the following two charities: Guide dogs for the Blind and the Kent Air Ambulance. Thank you to those who supported me either through pledges or simply by offering messages of good will. Later this year I hope to walk the length of Hadrians Wall and will be considering the charities to benefit from that particular challenge.

Finally, let me close by wishing you all good health, good friendship and a good Spring/Summer.

Best wishes,

Perry

Hextable Heritage Society 2025 Programme

Hextable Heritage Society was formed in 2000 by a small group of enthusiasts who were keen to discover more about their village. We now have about thirty members and our area of interest has spread to cover not only Hextable, but the parishes near to us.

The aims and objectives of the Society are the protection, preservation, and furtherance of knowledge of the local history and heritage of Hextable and its surroundings. We participate in local and national events such as English Heritage's annual 'Open Days', have an annual programme of talks and members evenings, and maintain an archive of artefacts, documents and photographs from the village's past which can be viewed on open days, or by prior arrangement with a committee member, at the Heritage Centre, Crawfords, off Dawson Drive.

If you have an interest in local history, we would love to welcome some new members to join our friendly society. For a minimal membership fee, this includes seven talks that are given to our members covering a wide range of topics.

Visitors can attend for a small fee of £3.00, giving you the opportunity to come along and 'give it a go' and meet with us – where you will be made very welcome. For more details, take a look at our website www.hextable-heritage.co.uk









Thurs 12th March	AGM and Archives
Thurs 10th April	Tudors in Dartford - Chris Bull
Thurs 8th May	Investigating 4 Kent murders - Mr Whitnall (former police officer)
Thurs 12th June	Tugboats on the Thames - Ian Craig
Thurs 10th July	The vindication of Xmas in north Kent during the Civil War
Thurs 11th September	Chislehurst Caves - Rod Legear
Thurs 9th October	The 1930s plan to build Lullingstone Airport
Thurs 13th November	Pub Crawls in SE London and North Kent area
Thurs 11th December	Members' Christmas Social

CLUB-K HEALTH AND FITNESS CELEBRATES A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE

Club-K Health and Fitness, located right in the heart of our community, is celebrating a major milestone–its tenth anniversary!

Over the past decade, Club-K has become a cornerstone for health and wellness, providing top-tier fitness services and creating a welcoming environment for everyone looking to improve their physical well-being.

36 New Road
Hextable
BR8 7LS

07531885661
www.club-k.club

How New Equipment from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding is Helping Club-K Health & Fitness Serve the Hextable Community

At Club-K Health & Fitness, we're always striving to provide the best service and support for our community. Thanks to the **Sevenoaks District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Funding**, we've been able to invest in new equipment that's already making a huge difference for our clients—both in terms of their fitness and overall well-being.

With funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Grant, alongside **additional investment from Club-K Health & Fitness**, we were able to purchase this new equipment, ensuring we can continue offering top-tier services to our community. The equipment we've purchased includes **a rowing machine, ski erg machine, air bike**, and the **power grid combined smith and cable machine.** These additions have already proven to be game changers for the clients we work with, especially those with unique needs.

For example, one of our **Parkinson's patients** has benefitted from the air bike, which provides an excellent cardiovascular workout while being low-impact and accessible. The ski **erg machine** has become a favourite with one of our clients recovering from brain tumour surgery. We've been able to support him in improving his strength and coordination, helping him reconnect his brain to his body. Strength-building clients are also loving the **cable machines**, which allow them to focus on their goals in a more targeted way.

What's more, the **rowing machine** is now able to accommodate heavier clients, which allows us to offer more options to those who need it most.

This investment has not only expanded the range of services we can offer but also improved the rehabilitation and fitness options for our existing clients. With the new equipment in place, we're able to continue supporting those recovering from surgery, managing chronic conditions, or simply looking to improve their overall fitness.

We are incredibly grateful for the support from **Sevenoaks District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Funding**, which, alongside Club-K's contribution, has allowed us to offer even more to our local community. If you're interested in seeing how we can help you with your fitness goals or rehabilitation needs, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for supporting local businesses and helping us provide better services for the Hextable community.

www.clubk.club.

36 New Road, Hextable, Kent, BR8 7 LS





VE Day

On Thursday 8th May, the nation pays tribute to the service and sacrifice of the entire Second World War generation, from British, Commonwealth and Allied Forces to evacuees and those who served on the home front.

At 3pm on 8 May 1945, Winston Churchill took to the airwaves to announce to the people of Britain that Nazi Germany had surrendered to the Allied forces, deeming the occasion " Victory in Europe Day ", later to be known as VE Day.

Eleven residents from Hextable lost their lives in service of the country, and who are listed on the memorial plaque in Five Wents Hall and we are proud to remember them every Remembrance Sunday

Just like many parts of the country, Hextable also suffered from the effects of the war. A bomb destroyed Hextable House in College Road, and then shortly before the end of the war, on 14th March 1945, a V2 rocket launched from France, landed on buildings in Hextable, killing ten civilians. The rocket landed on the site that is now occupied by the parade of shops in Main Road Hextable that were built in the 50's.

The long-anticipated news of the end of the war or 'Victory in Europe, resulted in spontaneous celebrations breaking out across the nation. A national holiday was declared and people from all walks of life came together to mark the moment.

The 80th anniversary of VE Day is a time for a nation to come together to learn about the stories of those that served and the VE Day generation, from the servicemembers who fought, to children who were evacuated, and women on the home front.

Please watch the noticeboard, our website and our Facebook page for information as we plans are developed.



<u>The Parish Council will specifically marking VE-Day 80 in the following way:</u>

Bunting on the Green – The Parish Council will be working jointly with Hextable Primary School, who will be helping us decorate the railings around the village green with bunting on Friday 2nd May

Seniors Film Afternoon – Come and join us for the latest film afternoon for our seniors on Tuesday 6th May. This time, we will be showing The Battle of Britain and as usual there will be free tea and cake. Doors open at 13:30 and the film starts at 14:00hrs.

Flying the Flag – The Parish Council will be pleased to be flying the 80th Anniversary Flag on the Heritage Building to mark VE Day 80

Please watch the noticeboard and our Facebook page for further details as the arrangements develop.

A Big Thank You

Many of you will be aware of issues gardens are having now with box blight and box caterpillar moth.

The parterre and other areas within the Hextable Heritage Garden have had to have the box plants removed and the areas need to be replanted. HPC are very pleased to be able to let you know that Perry Cole of KCC has worked with HPC and KCC to provide a grant for the replanting of the parterre. HPC wish to thank both Perry Cole and KCC for their assistance and the funds.

Instead of box, HPC will plant standard roses, lavender and nepeta which are beneficial to the insect population.

In addition, there are other areas within the gardens where plants have suffered through age, and it is proposing to plant additional lavender and nepeta to enhance the overall gardens and ensure a cohesive look for the residents along with providing additional resources for the insects.

Hextable Parish Council is working on a biodiversity plan for 2025 with the Kent Wildlife Trust and these new plants will assist with this.

We would like to thank the volunteer gardening group who carried out the planting on Friday 21st March. See HPC Facebook for updates https://www.facebook.com/groups/522083146685103/





HEXTABLE TODDLERS GROUP

Hextable Toddlers Group have been running for over 20 years.

We meet every Wednesday morning (term time) 9.30am till 11.30am, at the Hextable Methodist Church on Main Road. We provide for babies to preschool children.

It's £2.50 per family. We stop for snack which we provide for the children and tea, coffee and biscuits for the adults.

We have lots of lovely toys and craft out every week.

If you would like to come along or more information please email me on **Jennie31noah@virginmedia.com**



Sevenoaks District
Seniors Action Forum

Email: comms@sdsaf.org.uk



Working together in the interests of people aged 50plus

If you are over 50, and live in the Sevenoaks District, why not join us now so that we can raise your concerns and issues. Together we can speak with a respected and credible voice on Seniors Issues

Membership is Free

We will send you Newsletters with useful information about : Health & Social Care, Bus services, Transport to hospitals, Housing and the local plan, Crime, as well as local events

Sevenoaks District
Seniors Action Forum

The Forum has been campaigning since 2010 on issues of concern to you

During this time our membership has grown and we now have over 1170 seniors who receive our Newsletters.

We have built up a good rapport with local M.P.s, KCC and Sevenoaks District Council. We use our influence to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account in all areas of public service.

Forum Contact Details

For more information or membership forms email, if you are willing to volunteer to help, please contact Eileen Murray Giles at chair@dsaf.org.uk
Or contact us c/o 22 Lambarde Road TN23 3HT
(phone/text 07784 677626
Or visit our website or Facebook

by becoming a valued member, you will swell our ranks and make our collective voice- even stronger

Imago Support for Charities & Community groups

Imago are delighted to be providing support to frontline not-for-profit organisations including registered charities, CICs and community groups in Sevenoaks and the surrounding areas.

Imago are delighted to be providing support to frontline not-for-profit organisations including registered charities, CICs and community groups in Sevenoaks and the surrounding areas.

This is being achieved through funding from Kent Community Foundation. Organisations can access bi-monthly networking meetings, a newsletter, one to one sessions focussing on your organisations individual needs and training opportunities.

If you are involved with a not-for-profit as a trustee, director, volunteer, staff member or other role and would like to know more about how we can help or to join one of our networking meetings, please contact Lysette D'Urso at charitysupport@imago.community

Imago provides support and opportunities to people, families, and communities across Kent, East Sussex, Medway and South London.

Our services focus on improving health and wellbeing, tackling loneliness, building social and educational opportunities, and helping people access the right support. To find out more go to https://www.imago.community/

Infrastructure Support Fund funded by Kent County Council

1964 2024 IMAGO 60 YEARS creating change together

ANAGRAM

Can you spot the famous sporting events below?

1. A Costly Ora
2. Round The Craftee
3. Milo is Scrappy
4. Dragon Tail Ann
5. YT Bruising Saxon
6. Six Para Night Bird
7. y Tolerate Henry Gala
8. Women, Man, Child, Bishop sip
9. Gappy Ma Miracles
10. B Smartest Irish

Anagram answers on page 25www

Show your love

Remembering someone special with a gift in their memory

Helping to raise funds for a cause close to a loved one's heart can be a very positive way to celebrate their life

Giving In Memory to We Are Beams

- **Donating in memory instead of flowers**
- **Funeral collections**
- **A regular in memory gift**
- **Leave a lasting legacy in your will**



However you decide to support us, we will be happy to help
fundraising@wearebeams.org.uk

www.wearebeams.org.uk

Your donation will go towards supporting disabled children, young people and their families

Beams
Supporting disabled children & families
RCN 1054129

Beams
Supporting disabled children & families
RCN 1054129

We Are Beams Facility Hire





We Are Beams support families every step of the way through the unique challenges of raising a disabled child. The disabled children and young people who access our services are aged between 4-19 years. They will usually have one or multiple learning difficulties, complex health needs such as Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy or another life limiting illness, physical or sensory impairment, challenging behaviour as a result of their disability, Autism or severe ADHD.

All areas at We Are Beams are fully accessible and are available to hire to the local community, schools and SEN groups. Facilities include

- Newly Refurbished Garden- With specialist fully accessible outdoor play equipment, a swing, trampoline and sports equipment plus water play and a growing area for plants and vegetables.
- Cinema Room featuring a 98-inch screen, a tailor-made media wall, surround sound, and ambient lighting.
- Soft play room with ball pit
- New Sensory Cabin- fully equipped with colour and light columns, interactive wall carpet and projector
- Large Playroom with TV/DVD player and games console
- Kitchen and Dining area





For more information and to book please contact
We Are Beams, Allsworth Court, 38-40 St David's Road,
Hextable, Kent BR8 7RJ
01322 668501 ext. 5 - www.wearebeams.org.uk -fundraising@wearebeams.org.uk

Devolution for Kent

In the next two years, we will see one of the most significant changes in the way Local Government is organised since the last major change in 1972. The government is pushing ahead with plans to simplify the way local government is set up, and to streamline the way local services are delivered.

The Government believes that decisions that affect local areas are best made by the people who know, and represent, their communities better. Therefore, the core objective is to transfer more powers to local communities, such as housing, planning, transport, and support for business.

Under the proposals, all three tier council areas in England and Wales will be replaced with a new structure, where the existing county and smaller district councils will be abolished, and new combined Unitary Authorities will be formed – single bodies responsible for the functions of the County and District councils.

In Kent, this will mean the abolition of Kent County Council, Medway Council and the 12 District and Borough Councils. It is highly likely that these will be replaced by three new Unitary Councils in Kent.

The exact shape of the new set up is still being worked out, by members from all the effected councils but as we go to press, it is likely that Hextable will sit within a newly created West Kent Council. If plans are approved, this new unitary authority will made up by amalgamating the current Sevenoaks District, Tonbridge and Malling Borough, Tunbridge Wells Borough, and Maidstone Borough councils.

Kent County Council will continue to hold its elections this May, but councillors will likely hold their seats for just a two-year term of office until the functions of the councils are all combined.

Overseeing the three new Unitary Authorities, will be a Mayoral Strategic Authority, with an elected Mayor for Kent.

However, the existing towns and parishes will remain unaffected, and Hextable Parish Council will continue as the first tier of local government. It is anticipated that the role of the Parish Council will become more important, as we will be local to our residents. There is more information available by visiting:

www.local.gov.uk/our-support/devolution-hub/devolution-and-local-government-reorganisation-faqs-and-glossary

Seniors Events

Information Morning

Our Information Morning on Friday 21st February brought together 15 organisations offering activities, support and advice to those of us who are older. It was good to have Barclays Bank there for the first time and a group offering Energy advice, as well as HEXARA, Citizens Advice, HiKent hearing and a number of our regulars like The Sevenoaks District Council teams, SDSAF, Emerson Grange and others.

It was a damp dull morning, which I think put a few folk off coming, but we had a fairly regular footfall during the morning and everyone enjoyed the free refreshments. There were lots of "freebies" being given away and you could go home with pens, tissues, trolley tokens, personal alarms, recipes, and lots and lots of very good advice.

Film Afternoons:

Our film afternoon on 21st January featured "Carousel" - the story and its familiar tunes were enjoyed, especially "You'll Never Walk Alone" - much loved now by football fans! Our usual projectionist Richard Abel was unfortunately in hospital, but his son Neil and Richard's wife came and operated the equipment for us. Richard is home and getting better and hopefully will be with us to run our next film afternoons for us.....

Tuesday 1st April we are showing "Mrs Henderson" - a film set in London in 1937 about a woman who buys the Windmill Theatre and rejuvenates it!

Tuesday 6th May we will be showing a war film as part of the VE80 celebrations.

Do come along and join us. Doors open from 1.30pm - Films start promptly at 2pm. Entrance is free. Tea and cakes are provided free.
We usually have a small Raffle which assists with refreshment costs.



Introducing Eleanor Live-Well

Eleanor Live-Well
LIVE-IN CARE & COMPANIONSHIP AT HOME

We are delighted to have recently moved into our office in Kings Hill, where we are enjoying the opportunity to explore the local community and all it has to offer.

Eleanor Live-Well operates under the umbrella of the Eleanor Healthcare Group, which has been providing a wide array of care services throughout the UK for over 45 years. Live-Well was specifically created to focus on providing live-in care.

Our team consists of consultants with a collective 70 years of experience in the live-in care industry, supported by a dedicated group of highly professional, DBS-checked carers, enabling us to deliver a truly professional service.

We cater to clients who need care that varies from short-term post-operative support to long-term assistance. Furthermore, if you are caring for a loved and require temporary relief for a few days or more, we can accommodate that need. Our carers assist with shopping, housekeeping, and personal care, as well as offering companionship and emotional support. They are equipped to handle more complex conditions, including dementia and Parkinson's, all within the comfort and familiarity of the client's home.

We are also proud to be an affiliate member of SOLLA (Society of Later Life Advisors) who can offer additional guidance on funding care.

While our base is in Kent, we provide services nationwide. If you know someone who may benefit from our assistance outside the local area, we are ready to help. Please do contact us on 01732 441 877 or email live-well@eleanorcare.co.uk to find out more about live-in care.

Eleanor caring since 1979

26 KINGS HILL AVENUE, KINGS HILL, WEST MALLING, KENT ME19 4AE

Double Celebration at Hextable Boys' Brigade

It's great to see young people being recognised for the positive things that they do within the community and to do it in style.

Recently Noah Akister Carter was invited to attend the London District award ceremony at the new City Hall which is the home of the London mayor in Docklands where his hard work working with the younger members of the Brigade's at Hextable Methodist Church was read out in citation alongside over eighty other young people from across London at a ceremony attended by parents, leaders and other dignitaries which also including the presentation of a certificate and a medallion which was awarded in recognition of his inspiring example on behalf of the Jack Petchy Foundation.

Noah was also presented locally in February with his Boys' Brigade President Badge which is the second highest award within the organisation.

Noah gives generously of his time and energy working across all generations and is part of the team that also serves both breakfast monthly as well as a full meal at one of the Brigade's over 60's community lunch in December 2024.

Congratulations.

Ian Packham
Hextable Boys' Brigade





Anagram Answers

1. Royal Ascot
2. The Tour De France
3. Paris Olympics
4. Grand National
5. Rugby Six Nations
6. British Grand Prix
7. Henley Royal Regatta
8. Wimbeldon Championships
9. Paralympic Games
10. British Masters

Hextable Gardening Volunteers

During 2024, Hextable Parish Council thought it would be a great idea to start a volunteer gardening group to bring likeminded people together to enjoy the open spaces Hextable has while assisting the groundsmen enhancing the areas.

The idea is to work for an hour and then have tea and cake. Hextable Parish Council is very fortunate to have an excellent baker on the Council who provides delicious cakes.

To date there have been some amazing things completed. To give you an idea of the work completed, over the last few months the group has completed the following:

July 2024: Rose bed weeded, edges tidied in the Heritage Gardens

October 2024: Lavender pruned, and bulbs planted in the Heritage Gardens

November 2024: Fruit trees planted on the village green as the start of the Community Orchard.

December 2024: Bird boxes made in the Heritage Centre for use throughout the village open spaces. These have been put in place in readiness for springs inhabitants.

January 2025: Bat boxes made in the Heritage Centre for use throughout the open spaces. You will see these in the open spaces high up in the trees.

February 2025: hedgehog homes were made.

The dates for the diary for the future events are:

21 March	25 April
30 May	27 June
25 July	22 August
26 September	24 October
21 November	12 December

Do come along at 1pm and meet some likeminded people and enjoy the time adding to the open spaces and some delicious cake.

Fun fact: Do you know a group of bats is called a cauldron?













Scouts Mechanics Badge Day

On Sunday 16th of March, a party of Hextable Scouts, and others from the Swanley District, were welcomed by Austin Black and the team from Go Coach, to experience a fantastic day of learning about vehicle mechanics at at Swanley Bus Garage.

The day was led by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) within the workshops of Go Coach. Mr Blackburn and his staff, proudly supported by some of the soldiers, made sure that 30 young people had the opportunity to learn about servicing and repairs by having unique supervised access to the vehicles. They were able to get up close to several busses, as well as some huge army vehicles that were kindly brought up from the barracks in Ashford. The scouts even got to sample army rations!

The Chairman of Hextable Parish Council met the scouts and the team at the end of the day, where the scouts had an opportunity to report back on their day. They explained what they had been doing, and the things they learned. When asked, the scouts voted unanimously that a splendid day was had by all!

What's more, 30 young people gained another well-earned badge and certificate, and just maybe the day inspired some of the scouts into thinking about their future.

With the help of the adult volunteers, supported by the generous offer from Go Coach - a great local business that serves our community, this unique experience was made possible.

The scouting leadership team express a massive thank to Austin Blackburn of Go Coach, and all the other volunteers that made this day a success



This bus had a number of brake checks that day!



Learning how to safely change a car wheel.



Members of Hextable, Swanley, New Barn and West Kingsdown Scouts who received their Mechanics Badge

Swanley Horticultural College - The Class of '64

Visit by former Students of the Swanley Horticultural College

Hextable Heritage Society had the privilege of meeting 12 of the ex-students that graduated from the Swanley Horticultural College in 1964 - 60 years ago.

The 12 were also accompanied by relatives and partners, and all 19 were welcomed by Darren Kitchener, the chair of the society. The afternoon started with a fish and chip lunch for all in the Heritage Centre.

The Heritage Centre is the last building left on the main site of the original college. The building was the Botany Lab from the 1920's through to the college's closure in the late 1960's.

The ex-students had travelled from all over England and Scotland to visit their old college. There were many society members in attendance as well as the HHS committee: Darren Kitchener, John Meakins, Terry Kitchener and Lorraine Gaskin.

Amongst the 12 there were 2 couples that had met at the college and married later:

Jeremy Carruthers and Gill (nee Cass) Carruthers, John Langman and Linda (nee Kemp) Langman, Ray Hulme, Helen (nee Dewar) Pierce, Kath (nee Hawkes) Arnot, Eleanor Felton, Dan Donovan, David Newman, Dave Smith and John Redbond.

The group were given information on the development of the original site over the last 60 years. Once the lunch was over, they were introduced to the Hextable Parish Council groundsmen - Lewis and Barrie - who then took them on a guided tour of the Heritage Gardens. They were also able to go with Alf Saunders and his son Roy to see the remains of the original greenhouses and the old boiler house on their land.

Photographs were taken in the grounds while the weather was still fair! Then everyone - including the HHS committee and the members were refreshed with some amazing afternoon tea and cakes. Councillor Sue Meeker and her husband John prepared and served up the fabulous spread.

That gave everyone an opportunity to chat about the college, student life and the staff. They also had an opportunity to see some of the archived documents that the HHS have accumulated over the past 20+ years.

I spoke to each of the ex-students about their journey to the college and a snapshot of the next 60 years since they graduated.

Jeremy Carruthers came from Bedfordshire - he was a full boarding student - on a tuition fees paid grant. To pay for his living expenses he held down 2 part-time jobs.

Once graduated he worked in food production in the Winchester area - eventually becoming a manager of a poly-tunnel vegetable and strawberry production company with 150 strong work force.

Kath Arnot was a local girl from Sidcup, Kent - although she still had to live in for her 2-year course. She didn't like the strict matron in charge of the girls accommodation but was able to go home regularly. After graduation she worked at Ruxley Garden Centre for 4 years. She then moved to the Croydon area and stopped working in horticulture.

Linda Langman came from Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent. She met John Langman (who hailed from Hythe, Kent) at the college. After graduation she worked for Kent County Council for 1 year and then moved on to Writtle College in Essex to do the RHS exams. Once Linda and John got married, they set up a Garden Centre in Wye, near Ashford, Kent. They have now retired but their children and extended family run it - over the years it has transformed into more than just plant production, like many garden centres.

Eleanor Felton came from Hornchurch, Essex - she was lucky enough that her family could afford the fees and living costs - so she did not need to have extra jobs and was always able to go home regularly. After graduation, she ran a landscaping business. She then married a farmer near Bristol - over the next decades they developed the site into a Farm, Shop, Hotel and Restaurant. That prosperity meant that she could dedicate almost 20 years to developing a charity. This charity was based in Romania, supporting sick children that needed surgery in the UK.

Ray Hulme was from Ashford, Kent - he was only 17 years old, one of the youngest students. He had a fully funded grant from KCC. When he

returned home to Ashford he worked with his family in a nursery. Over the next 40+ years he helped develop it into a Garden Centre in Ham Street, Kent. He then sold it and started up an agency for recruiting Horticultural workers.

Dave Smith Came from Basingstoke, Hampshire. He was 18 years old. After graduation he went to work for a Gloucestershire landscaping company - which he later purchased. They were a soft and hard landscaping company working on many large developments in Gloucestershire as well as Cardiff, York and London.

Working at Festivals, Private schools and many sport grounds. His company also worked on new town projects like Milton Keynes and Telford - where David N and John R became his customers.

Helen Pierce came from Gillingham, Kent - where her father had bought a market garden and needed her to learn horticultural skills quickly. She only did the 1-year course, fully funded by Kent County Council. Although she had to go home every weekend to work in the family business. She felt she missed out on the social side of college, such as getting a boyfriend. After graduation she worked with her dad growing veg - until she married in 1969. Her husband was a City Banker. They moved to Jersey where she worked part-time in a Nursery. In the 1970's her dad sold the Market Garden and moved to Spain. The family later all moved back to Rainham, Kent.

Gill Carruthers arrived at the college from Blackmore, Hampshire at the age of 22 years old - one of the older students. She had left school at 15, and went to work in a Nursery (Sparshatts) - she then had to go to evening classes to get the O'levels, so that she could get a place at college fully funded by Hampshire County Council. Unfortunately, she could not afford to go home until the end of each term. Having met Jeremy at college they married and went to work at a private Girls School - despite them doing the same work, Gill's salary was only half of Jeremy's - long before job wage equality!

John Redbond was originally from Grays, Essex - he was on a fully funded 1 year grant from Essex County Council. While a student, he took on extra work within the college nursery. After graduation, he went to Edinburgh University and attained Postgraduate degree in Landscape Architecture. By then he was 27 years old, Married and had 1 son. From 1974, and for the next 12 years, he worked on the new town developments for the Milton Keynes Corporation. He also worked for the Department of the Environment for 6 years in UK and Cyprus. Later he became freelance and moved his family back to Edinburgh, Scotland.
Dan Donovan lived on a farm in Ashford, Kent before coming to the college on a funded grant. He was a general stockman on various farms in the area. After leaving the college he worked for 18 years at Toynbee Barnham Shrub Propagators in West Sussex. He worked for a few Greenhouse Research companies in Rustington, West Sussex until he retired. He travelled from Littlehampton in West Sussex for the gathering at the Heritage Centre.

David Newman came from Waddon near Croydon on a 1-year Greater London Council funded grant. Once completed, he worked in Battersea Park, SW London. He then went to Edinburgh and worked in the Royal Botanical Gardens for 3 years. Then he returned to study a 1-year Postgraduate degree in Landscape Architecture at Manchester University. In 1973 he too went to work at the Milton Keynes Corporation - and was there for 14 years. In 1987 he set up his own Landscaping Practice in Milton Keynes, where he still lives - and is still working in his late 70's.

General pointsI gleaned from this lovely group of ex-students was that there was a 60+ student intake each academic year. There were a mixture of l year and 2 year students, as well as boarders and day release students. Wednesday afternoons were set aside for sports activities, which included swimming and hockey.

The day started with breakfast at 7.30am. At 8.00am you went to your timetabled work or study areas. Lectures were held in small groups in the Heritage Centre where September's gathering was held. The dormitories were strictly separate male and female buildings, where all had to be in by 9pm, doors locked – and no opposite sex visitors allowed! If you were one of the lucky men that were assigned and paid to be boiler stokers every night, you had more freedom. This position was a sort after extra way to earn money on a rota system, and could stay out after the 9pm curfew!

The fabulous afternoon was rounded off with the ex-students presenting the Hextable Heritage Society with a generous donation and an established sapling to plant - along with a lovely slate plaque to celebrate their time at the college 60 years ago. The tree: LIQUIDAMBAR WORPLESDON which is from the Maple tree family, and has now been planted in the Heritage gardens for all to enjoy

A fabulous afternoon was enjoyed by all.

By Lorraine Gaskin, HHS Committee Member 11/09/24











"I have used this all in one fruit cake recipe for more than I care to remember." Cllr. Sue Meaker

Everyday Fruit Cake Recipe

Ingredients



- 6 oz castor sugar
- 6 oz soft table margarine
- 3 eggs
- 1 tbsp milk
- 8 oz plain flour
- 10 oz of mixed dried fruit
- 2 oz glacé cherries, washed & chopped
- 2 oz mixed peel
- 1/2 level tsp baking powder*
- 1/4 level tsp mixed spice*

*sieved together

Method

- Grease and line a 7 1/2" cake tin with a double thickness of greased greaseproof paper.
- Put all the ingredients into a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon until well mixed,
- Turn the mixture into the prepared cake tin and smooth the top level.
- Bake in a preheated oven at 300F or 150C or gas mark 2 for 2 hours, reducing the oven temperature accordingly for a Fan Oven.
- When cooked, leave in the cake tin to cool for 2 to 3 minutes then turn out onto a wire cooling rack.
- Put the kettle on for a cup of tea and ENJOY.

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Phone 07999 127485 (office hours only)
01322 668530

Sevenoaks District Council:
Website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk
Email information@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Phone 01732 227000

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www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish_and_recycling/205/report_fly_tipping

Kent County Council:
Website www.kent.gov.uk
Phone 03000 414141

Report a pothole:
www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem

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Non-emergency 101
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Report a gas leak or carbon monoxide emergency:
Phone 0800 111 999

Report a power cut:
Website www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/power-cut
Phone 0800 31 63 105

Report a water leak:
Website www.thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies

Report animal cruelty:
Website www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty
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Web: www.hextable-pc.gov.uk

Allotments

Annual fireworks display

Bus stops

Emptying HPC-owned bins/dog waste bins

Grass cutting (some on behalf of KCC)

Litter picking

Maintaining HPC-owned buildings

Maintaining the Avenue of Limes

Maintaining HPC-owned open spaces

Senior Events scheme

Tree inspections

Tel: 01732 227000
Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Building regulation
Collecting council tax
Development control (i.e. planning)
Dog warden services
Electoral Services
Emptying SDC-owned bins (i.e. the bins in the streets)
Fly tipping
Housing the homeless
Leisure provision
Licensing (e.g. pubs, taxis, etc)
Maintaining SDC-owned open spaces
Managing local CCTV
Occupational health
Parking enforcement
Refuse collection
Street cleaning

Tel: 03000 418181
Web: www.kent.gov.uk

Adoption and fostering
Adult social care
Business waste
Country parks
Disabled services
Flooding and drainage
Highways (e.g. roads/pavements/verges)
Household waste recycling
Libraries
Maintaining KCC-owned open spaces
Public footpath management
Road safety
Roadworks
School and adult education provision
School buses and school meals
Senior bus passes
Special educational needs services
Street lighting and street furniture (e.g. traffic lights)
Trading standards
Waste collection and recycling