



**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING &
ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

AGENDAS

BUDGET 2016/17

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND
REPORTS FROM PARISH BASED
CHARITIES, ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES**



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2015/16

2015 saw Parish elections and we said goodbye from the Council to two long standing Councillors, Vivienne Robinson and Symon Wilson. After a long illness, Vivienne felt she could no longer fulfil her role as Vice Chairman and Symon had other commitments to fulfil but remains as part of our flood group. Vivienne has now recovered and is once again joying village life. We also said goodbye to Angela Seckleman and to Jason Bryant. Four new Councillors were elected; Patricia Robbins, Sophie Cooper, Tricia Oyler and William Bird. In May, with virtually everyone back in their homes following the Christmas 2013 floods, the 70th Anniversary of VE Day seemed a good opportunity to celebrate and we closed Yalding High Street, donned 1940's dress and had a good, old fashioned street party. A good time was had by all and thank you to all those who came out to help set-up and clear-up. There will be another party on 11th June to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. We have continued to liaise with the Environment Agency, Kent County Council and the district authorities with regard to flooding, remedial action and flood defences. All of the modelling and findings will be available by the end of June at which time, the EA plan to hold three by three day events, one here in Yalding, to explain the outcome and proposals including the work to increase the storage at the Leigh FSA. In the Autumn last year, we appointed 32 volunteer flood wardens and five flood co-ordinators and they have been knocking on doors introducing themselves. A vulnerable persons' register is being prepared. We continue to retain the services of a team from Community Payback who work every Sunday in the Parish. Work this year has included the installation of a path through the cemetery, where previously it was very wet and muddy, and enhancement of The Lees by clearing away surplus undergrowth and digging out of the ditches. Work will resume after the nesting season. They are currently upgrading the path below Twyford Bridge. Our thanks to Councillor Ken Gough for all his hard work in leading the team. Highways is always an important item on the agenda and we have been advised that budgets have been severely cut and only extremely dangerous issues will be dealt with. The new reporting system has improved, although rural broadband slows down the process. We are looking to see what, if anything, can be done about the congestion on Town Bridge; it is not funny when those rat running through our villages seem to feel it is our fault that we have these delays. We continue to wage war on those who fail to collect dog poo and our volunteer litter pickers are a godsend. Well done. As I am sure most of you are aware, Yalding Parish owns a large amount of land, 95.6% of all the common land in Maidstone Borough in fact. This is represented by 31 acres of The Lees including the car park, Fowle Hall Green at Laddingford, The Tatt and Yalding Village Green and the two playing fields of The Kintons and The Jubilee Field. We also own the Parish Lock-Up, which stands on the village green, and this will undergo some further refurbishment this year. We continue to support Yalding Fen and last year we grazed cattle from Brookside Nursery. This was very successful and we are repeating it again this year. It is extremely pleasing to see our sports clubs doing so well especially with the number of youngsters involved and the Scouts go from strength to strength with Beavers, Cubs, now two Sea Scout troops and Explorers Scouts. Last year's Parish Picnic was enjoyed by young and not so young alike and the picking and pressing of apples on site was an experience. No one wanted to go home and we threw the stragglers off well after dark! This year's picnic will be on Sunday 11th September 3pm to 7pm (or so the rumour has it). Also a big thank you to Ken, Symon and "The Team" of lads (and some a bit older) who put up the lights that make Yalding Village look so wonderful over Christmas and to Charles and his team from the Chequers who erected the lights in Laddingford. We have seen some changes in the Parish with two Icons retiring; Joe Morris from The George and Henry Long from The Anchor. We understand that both are enjoying their "freedom". They have been replaced by Tony and Julie at The George and Chris at The Anchor. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan has caused some concern with regard to the high housing numbers but the plan will be lodged for examination on 20th May which will mean that Maidstone has its five year housing-land supply. We have embarked on a Parish Wide Neighbourhood Plan and we are really delighted at the enthusiasm of so many people, including the youngsters, who are taking part. We continue to put pressure on St Modwen/Syngenta to tidy the old factory site; it is an eyesore when entering the Parish. The playing field is also so overgrown that vegetation is growing out of the building. It is good to see once again so many clubs and organisations submitting a report for this publication; we are very fortunate to have so many things to take part in on our doorstep. We are very fortunate to have the support of PCSO Nicola Morris who is very visible in the Parish and at the monthly Farmers' Markets. A big thank you to our Parish Clerk, Angela Gent, who is a major source of support to the Council and to residents and a thank you to all of you who continue to support and maintain the vibrant community that we live in.

Are you on the Parish Database to receive NHw and other information? If not, please email chairman@yaldingparishcouncil.gov.uk.

YALDING PARISH CHARITIES

YALDING ALMSHOUSE CHARITIES

Mrs Margaret Prevett continues as Chairman, and Mr Donald Troup as Hon. Treasurer. Hon. Secretary Mrs Annie Lee Davey. One of our residents has moved in to a Care Home, and a new permanent resident has moved in. As in previous years the Trustees would welcome any information from either the Council regarding anyone needing help from the "In Need" or "In Sickness" funds.

YALDING EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Yalding Educational Foundation supports the education of former pupils as well as current pupils of Yalding, Laddingford and Collier Street Primary Schools. Former pupils going onto Higher Education are supported by being invited to apply for a scholarship. The Foundation assesses the applications against a set of criteria and successful applicants receive a cheque. In 2015-6, there were eighteen successful applicants. The amount received by students varies from year to year according to available funds and numbers of successful applicants. The Foundation also supports a Spoken English Competition at the three primary schools. This involves five pupils from each Year 6 reading a passage from the Bible, a poem of their choice and a newspaper article. They then speak for five minutes on a topic of interest to them. The Foundation provides a prize for the winner at each school. In addition, when possible, good use is made of any reserves, by offering the headteachers of the three schools a contribution to fund an educational visit along certain criteria, for the older pupils. This year the schools are unlikely to have this opportunity.

OTHER CHARITABLE GROUPS BASED WITHIN THE PARISH

FRIENDS OF YALDING SURGERY (FYS)

We continued to try to organise 'different' fund raising events to compete with the wide choice in the local community. We were delighted to accept the offer from Hadlow Amateur Dramatics Society (HADS) to stage/organise their own Murder Mystery evening. This event was an exceptional success, both in fund raising and enjoyment of the large audience. The excellent team effort to sell Christmas/Hamper raffle tickets achieved a very rewarding contribution to funds. We funded £5000 in 2015 to the surgery and £825 for a community defibrillator. Future plans are Spring and Autumn Quiz, HADS new production maybe? Christmas Raffle. FYS are mindful of the full schedule of celebration events to mark the Queen's birthday. We still are looking for younger members to 'put the fun into fundraising!'

GamBLE

Over the last year GamBLE has moved further forward in the plan to support the school in Farato in taking responsibility for running its own day to day management, financial affairs, monitoring teacher performance and planning future policy. There is still a good deal to learn by and from both cultures, but there is no doubt that progress is being made and becoming reliable. Trustees and volunteers, including Linda Gilbert, Bert and Beryl Boxall, Karen and Tony Di Marco, stayed in the village in either November, February or March/April to help with art and literacy; electrical fittings, installation of solar panels and batteries and management training. The Special Needs programme, run by one of our teachers, with support from GamBLE members, has resulted in several pupils across the Primary School making noticeable progress in their classroom work. One very exciting new development is that we are forming plans to write a guided reading scheme based on Gambian life. Interest and approval from the Gambian government and an important literacy organisation in the UK have been most encouraging. Last month, Sir Roger Manwoods' School in Sandwich sent its 10th group of students and teachers to work in the classrooms for a week. They were able to benefit from 24/7 electrical power in the school, thanks to the solar powered panels and batteries that their school fund raising had provided. Fund raising is an ongoing need. We have benefitted from a variety of events: from a sponsored trek of 5-days up and down the Great wall of China to a grand cake sale and lots more. Our annual BBQ is always popular, look out for notices for this year's event on 28th August. This village does a great deal to support our sister school in Farato. Yalding individuals and organisations lend tremendous support to the villagers of a very poor country and the Farato pupils, teachers and citizens genuinely recognise our "untiring efforts" as they put it. We are always seeking new local volunteers to help with administration, education and fund-raising. Our website is www.gam-ble.co.uk and our contact details are 01622 814267 or gamblegambia@gmail.co.uk

KENWARD TRUST

We are a substance misuse service based in Kenward Road Yalding. We were founded almost 50 years ago by Ray and Violet Sinden who offered Christian kindness and sanctuary for those struggling to overcome disadvantage, poverty and homelessness. Today we have three men's projects here in Yalding, a women's only project based in Hawkhurst and another men's project in Uckfield East Sussex. We also have supported housing that offers a transition stage for those who are almost ready to return to independent living. We have invested significantly in social enterprise here in Yalding and provide opportunities for our residents to engage in horticulture, animal husbandry, woodcrafts and catering. We have large conference facilities which can be hired for events and conferences. Later this year we intend to open a new café on site that will be open to the public to enjoy. Kenward Trust has a reputation for excellence in its field and is respected nationally for its work with individuals who have complex mental health and substance misuse support needs. We are always looking for new volunteers to work in a variety of roles and locations and we are extremely keen to work closely with local churches, charities and other agencies within the area. For further information, please contact Robin Snook, Head of Operations at robin.snook@kenwardtrust.org.uk or telephone 01622 814187

YALDING CHURCH PRESERVATION SOCIETY

It has been another busy year for the YCPS Trustees. The sum of £10,000 was made available by them towards repair of the beams in the south aisle, the rainwater spout and beams in the tower roof and now the sanctuary window. The photo competition and subsequent YCPS calendar sold in late 2015 were mainly notable for raising the profile of the Society in and around Yalding. The sponsored teddy parachute jump at the church fete was considered to be the best event of the year, particularly as Trustee Gail Johnson had been able to secure charitable matched funding from her former employers. YCPS will be involved with three future fundraising events in 2016; Performances of the play, 'Outside Edge' in the Parsonage Farmhouse Garden on June 24th, 25th & 26th respectively will see profits donated to the society; Another "Tower Dinner with Hari Covert" will take place on the 2nd of July where 20 lucky draw winners with their partners will be invited to dinner at the church (3 couples will be served on the tower roof). Finally, on September 10th at the Annual Church Fete a second sponsored teddy parachute jump will be a feature of the afternoon and we hope another successful fundraiser to ensure we can continue to support the fabric of the church in the years ahead. We are always happy to hear from anyone who would like to perhaps get involved or support the work we do. Please contact Chair of Trustees **Peter Chapman on 07973 839266** or YCPStrustees@yahoo.co.uk

PARISH ORGANISATIONS – LADDINGFORD

LEARNING

ST MARY'S CEP SCHOOL HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Head teacher at Laddingford Primary School. I joined the school in January and would like to thank all of the staff, governors, parents, children and members of the wider community for making me feel so welcome. There have been three new members of teaching staff join the school since September, they, and the existing staff team are working hard to ensure that Laddingford provides the highest standard of education in a way that inspires and motivates the children in our care. The work that my predecessor undertook in conjunction with the church committee to improve toilet provision for the church and the school as well as putting in a new school corridor was successfully completed and has made a very positive difference to the school. Since I arrived in January we have had two of our older classrooms decorated, this has brightened the learning environment up considerably! I am exceptionally grateful to the Friends of Laddingford School for their continued support and fundraising which paid for the decorating project. We are looking forward to some further building work being done over the summer to replace some of our ageing windows and put a double door in at the end of the Reception classroom to provide easier access to the outdoor space for our younger children. There have been some fantastic results this year; I am really pleased to announce that 89% of children that took the 11+ this year passed, which means that 57% of our total Year 6 cohort passed the 11+ this year, well done to all the children and their families. The children have just received news of their new secondary schools and all are extremely pleased and looking forward to their new challenges and adventures in the summer. Various school activities have taken place this year including a brilliant residential trip to the Isle of Wight for years 5 and 6, and we have lots still to look forward to in this summer term. We will be embarking on an 'Art Week' at the end of May, centred around our school Christian Values of Compassion, Trust, Peace and Endurance. Along with this and our usual summer sporting fixtures, we are looking forward to our street party, and special Church Service to celebrate The Queen's 90th Birthday in June. The staff and governors are working hard to build on the school's 'Good' status, and to make Laddingford an exciting place to learn and grow. Over the coming year we will be continuing to build on the schools strong foundations to further improve outcomes for children, this includes working on developing our curriculum to keep it current, engaging and relevant. We value our close links with the church and wider community and look forward to building upon these in the coming year.

GOVERNORS' REPORT

No report received

FRIENDS OF LADDINGFORD SCHOOL (FLS) REPORT

No report received

LADDINGFORD PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP

We are still actively trying to encourage new people along to the group as since the initial building works started, numbers dropped drastically and we have struggled, despite our best efforts, printing flyers, etc. to get numbers back up. We currently average three families per week which would not even be covering the cost of hall hire. I have recently promoted the group again in the Parish Magazine so hopefully things will start to pick up now that people are aware of the new toilet facilities. Fingers crossed, as it would be such a shame to lose this facility within the community.

OTHER GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

CHEQUERS CHASERS

Unfortunately, during 2015 due to injury and runners moving away from the Parish there was no group regularly running or competing as The Chequers Chasers. A small group meet periodically to run but there are no set group running sessions currently. It is hoped that the group may start up again in the future. Anyone interested in forming a group is welcome to contact Charles or Tracey at The Chequers Laddingford.

CHEQUERS OTTERS

The Chequers Otters are a group of swimmers that live in the Parish that enjoy swimming - mainly in open water. Mostly the swimming is done in the summer in a sociable group at several lakes in Kent as well as organised swims. In 2015 members of the Otters took part in several organised swims around the country including, The Lake District, Suffolk, Devon and The River Thames with distances ranging from 2 miles to 14k. As well as swimming the Otters enjoy the social aspect of chatting, eating and drinking - in the sunshine where possible. Anyone interested in trying open water swimming should contact Tracey at The Chequers, Laddingford.

CHEQUERS RACERS

The Chequers Racers got together round about closing time in November 2010, initially to cycle to Paris as a charity fund raiser. Based around the Chequers Inn, Laddingford, we have since blossomed into an irregular cycling bunch, who, while not afraid of a tough sport if or snow blown mountain, tend to particularly enjoy the social side of cycling. Last year saw us cycle through Provence, taking in the iconic Mont Ventoux, while in August, several of us cycled the Prudential London Ride 100, raising several hundred for charity. Group rides usually take place on a couple of evenings midweek plus weekend mornings. check our website for more info and contact details.

LADDINGFORD CHURCH HALL

We said good-bye to Mrs Oliver, the Laddingford School head, and are pleased to welcome her replacement, Ms Gemma Brain, who is already making a positive contribution. The other big news for last year was the re-opening of the toilet facilities after a long period of waiting for the work to be designed, funded, approved, constructed and, in the end, actually finished. At last both school pupils and users of the Church Hall have clean and modern facilities at hand. Regular Yoga classes take place on Monday evenings. If you would like to participate please contact Caroline Miller on 01622 873380 or laddingford@btinternet.com. Mums and Toddlers meet in the hall on Tuesday afternoons for play and chat. Relative Minors also rehearse in the church hall on Sunday evenings. Now that the toilets have been refurbished, the committee plans to spend some of our savings on the building. Look out for an article in the magazine as soon as we've dotted the i's and crossed the t's. We would remind all residents that the Church Hall at Laddingford can be hired for meetings, children's parties and family reunions. The hall is available most evenings and most weekends (apart from Mondays, when the regular yoga classes take place). Please contact Digby Danvers, our bookings secretary, on 01622 873450 for details.

PILATES

No longer running.

YOGA

Yoga in Laddingford village is enjoyed by many who travel from the surrounding area. Yoga brings in kind and open hearted people, making it a joy to teach. I have been studying restorative yoga; many students bring their own bolster so that they can be quick to recline over it at the end of class! Don't be fooled by the bolster; Hatha yoga is the art of balance. In a physical sense the body needs to be as strong as it is flexible; we definitely recline in yoga but when we do our bodies our tingling with energy! You are welcome to visit my website at www.yoganut.org.

PARISH ORGANISATIONS – YALDING

LEARNING

ST PETER & ST PAUL'S CEP SCHOOL GOVERNORS' AND HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Yalding School continues to thrive and grow – providing outstanding education for its children. Amongst other things, the school was recognised as being in the top 5% nationally for phonics teaching. We have welcomed new staff and said goodbye to others. We are pleased to welcome Jason Avars as our new Deputy Head. Jason, who started in January, is also a qualified SENco teacher and we are very pleased to have him working with us. The school's dedicated staff continue to work hard and their pupils are benefiting from that hard work and enthusiasm ensuring that they reach their potential and are ready to start secondary school. It is a credit to Dorinda Perry and all of her staff that the school continues to go from strength to strength in very challenging circumstances. The school remains a Partnership School with Canterbury Christchurch University helping to share good practice and train the teachers of tomorrow. We are delighted that Emma Thompson is working as our reception teacher as part of this partnership. The current school roll is 159 and once again we are heavily over-subscribed for September 2016. This continues to place the school in a very difficult position, as once again we have to turn away reception age children, who have chosen Yalding as their first preference school. This is affecting families in close proximity to the school and it is something we feel strongly about addressing. It is the intention of the governors to provide better accommodations at the school by fund raising for a new school hall. This hall will have many uses – it will offer more suitable physical education opportunities, provide the required space for school meals and give the school the opportunity to welcome more parents in to assemblies, school plays and meetings. Alongside this, the governors continue to encourage the Local Authority to grant us single form entry (a separate classroom for each year group) which would help us better meet the local demand for places and offer the very best start in life to the children of our village. This will allow us to better meet the challenging OFSTED requirements whilst providing long-term financial security for the school. The New Curriculum is now a year old and teachers are continuing to face, and indeed embrace this challenge as well as 'life without levels'. A great deal of training and support has been brought into the school by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure Yalding school meets the needs of its children. As always there are mixed feelings when we say "goodbye" to our pupils as we wish them well with their secondary education as they go to a broad range of secondary schools this year. As usual there have been a number of enjoyable events and educational visits through the year. Although some time ago now, our older children spent an amazing residential visit at Arethusa and the feedback from everyone who came into contact with them was incredibly positive. They were recognised for their exemplary behaviour, their sense of adventure and the way they all looked out for each other. I think that this, as well as educational ability, is what sets our school above others. Thank you to all the staff for doing a tremendous job and helping create a friendly, purposeful yet fun environment for our pupils to learn, and the PTA whose fund-raising activities are of great benefit to our children. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council, churchwardens, Vicar and governors for the support and time they have given to the school.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) AND FRIENDS

Yalding C of E Primary School's PTA and Friends main role is the fundraising for the school. So far this year we have paid for the whole school to see the Christmas pantomime, refreshments and party food for their Christmas parties, crackers for their school Christmas dinner, Christmas presents for every child, trophies for the children's talent show Yalding's Got Talent and autograph books for the year 6 leavers. To raise the monies to allow us to do this we have had our annual Christmas Fair, shared a stall with the Scouts at the Yuletide Market, had a Denim & Diamonds disco, the refreshment stall at the farmer's market last October, held a pamper night and held some cake sales and school discos. We have our May Fair coming up on 21st May at the school. This year's theme is Alice in Wonderland. We hope that we will see many of you there as this is a lovely family day. We would just like to take this opportunity to thank you all for supporting us. We would never have been able to let our children have what they do without your help and support

SUMMER PLAYScheme

Yalding Parish playscheme ran for the first three weeks of the summer holidays in Yalding primary school and will do so again this year. Nearly one hundred children attended over the three weeks, some for only one session and some for all three weeks. Attendance was higher than the previous year. We had the usual crafts, sports, games, visitors and trips to the park. We thank the parish council for their continued support and for providing an excellent BBQ, The Clerk was always on hand when needed. This year we were Ofsted inspected, we were delighted to receive a good ward. The report can be viewed on line.

TWYFORD PRE-SCHOOL

Twyford preschool has had a busy and successful year. Trips, fundraising events, social activities and a well-attended consultation evening. Ofsted visited and gave us a good recommendation which can be viewed on the Website. We are extending our hours from the next term after assessing parent/carers needs. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue and Peter Gerrish for their care and attention to the upkeep and running of the village hall.

YALDING TODDLER, PARENT AND BABY GROUP

The group still meets every Wednesday in school term time, from 10-12Noon, aimed at 0-5yr olds attending with their parent or carer. It provides social and basic developmental support to children, and an opportunity for local parents/cares to meet in a relaxed and sociable environment. Currently, the group is regularly used by 15-25 parents/carers and 20-30 children. As well as free-play sessions, in the last year we have put on a Christmas Party, held a cake and refreshments stall at the Yalding Farmers Market and organised an Easter Egg Hunt in the village hall. We also have a Summer Picnic planned for May. Sally Ashley recruited and handed over the running of the group in Sept 2015 to, Karen Fillingham (Chairman), Sophie O'Donnell (Treasurer,) and Hayley Richards (Secretary). The group is considering running their weekly sessions throughout the school summer holidays during 2016, availability of the hall allowing, as many parents with pre-school children struggle to find affordable or suitable indoor play environments.

CHURCH AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

BAPTIST CHURCH & YOUTH CENTRE

Highlights of the previous year were: The performance of the Thomas Clarke Quire (period West Wing music) attended by 60/70 people; the Trade Craft sale; the photographic Exhibition by local photographer. The church services up-rated to being every week (previously bi-weekly) including Sunday School. Activities now take place on every day of the week. Coffee mornings and Lunch Club continue to be well attended and appreciated. Plans for the coming year: There is an over-arching plan to increase versatility of the accommodation by adding an 'Activity Room' and an Accessible Toilet. There are no firm plans for this and very limited funds. We continue to encourage use of the building for activity groups. Increased use of the building has increased the demand for folding tables and more will be required. Means of moving these from room to room is also required.

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH YALDING AND ST MARY'S CHURCH LADDINGFORD MINISTRY & WORSHIP - CHURCHWARDENS

Almost a year ago the Diocese appointed Rev. Gary Colville to Yalding Church as a part-time interim minister. Since then Rev. Paul Filmer retired on grounds of ill health and it was good to see him so well supported as he took a final farewell service here in Yalding Church in November. We continue to be grateful to our The Rural Dean, The Archdeacon, Parish Administrator, and all the leaders of the various groups who make up our church family along with Gary and other ministers, who enable us to offer funeral, christenings and weddings as we have always done. Church attendance has altered little since Rev. Paul became ill, with the Festival services continuing to be supported in high numbers. Since Gary joined us it has been beneficial to have a regular minister to support our Sunday worship and to provide continuity. The Junior Church attracts fewer children these days but is here to welcome those who do come along and first time/occasional young visitors. Little Fishes is established and well supported. Both senior and junior choirs are thriving, enriching our regular worship as well as all the special occasions. The Churchwardens along with others in our church family continue to be involved with many village activities and organisations and the new pastoral team initiated by Gary is a fine example supporting those in the community. We continue to show our duty of care to maintain our grade 1 listed church and have progressed several major repair projects including the completion of the south aisle beam replacements. We are indebted to the continued significant financial support from the YCPS organisation. The Wardens' priorities for 2016 are: finding and appointing a new vicar, encourage others to come forward to be more involved in the running of the church. In summary, we continue to strive to fulfil our mission statement "the church in the community and the community in the church" with Diocesan support, the Yalding congregation and helpers in the community.

PARISH GIVING

There has been a small reduction in giving to the Church this year compared with 2014. We are planning to hold a Stewardship campaign. Although it should not start in earnest until the arrival and agreement of the new Vicar we are trying to get a head start by finding someone to lead it. Any volunteers? Legacies can be of significant value to the Church so we are considering ways to gently encourage our parishioners to remember the Church in their wills.

BELLRINGERS

Our band has been depleted. Dominic is working in Germany so we only see him during his holidays. Keith Henson has moved to Shropshire. Ben has found another hobby on a Wednesday and Elke is still suffering from a broken wrist. Nevertheless, the average attendance at practices increased to 6.4. There was only 1 practice with 3 or less ringers and none were cancelled. We rang for 2 weddings, had 2 visiting bands, and there were 3 quarter peals. Jeremy and Meradin kindly hosted our barbeque on 12th July. We rang for the 70th VE day celebrations on 3rd May and for the Yuletide market. Training sessions were held for Cyclones and the Scouts. On 21st March we carried out the annual tower clean and had our annual meal in the Woolpack. Yet again, the meal attracted the highest attendance of the year. 2015 was an improvement on 2014 but I am concerned about the future of our band.

CHOIR

No report received

JUNIOR CHOIR

September once again saw an influx of new members. With a slight change of membership since then, numbers now stand at a committed group of 17 youngsters aged 7 -11 years. The choir continues to meet most Fridays during term time for an hour of singing. We have some excellent young voices and the choir always manages to pull out the stops on the big occasions to produce a beautiful sound and great performances. **Appearances....** Jun '15 - Early Evening Concert. A great occasion. We sang 7 items, 2 of which were joint with the Senior Choir. The youngsters really enjoy singing with the grownups and gain such a lot from singing with an experienced choir and choirmaster. Dec '15 - Yuletide Market, Carol Service, Family Nativity and Christingle Service. Once again Christmas was an extremely busy time for us involving lots of hard work. Most enjoyable and very well received! Mar '15 - Mothering Sunday. This was a lovely, well attended service. Mar '15 – Easter Sunday. Although the majority of the choir were away from the village over Easter, a small group joined with the Senior Choir to sing during Communion. We're not quite sure what the Summer term holds for us but looking ahead to the Autumn there is already an event in the planning stage! Once again I would like to thank the children for their continued commitment and hard work. They show great enthusiasm at rehearsals and their performances go from strength to strength! My thanks also go to the parents for their wonderful support and to Lisa Brooks whose help is, as always, much appreciated.

CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY (THE VANDALS)

No report received

PLANT AND FABRIC

The Plant and Fabric Committee has met bi-monthly during the past 12 months as well as on-site meetings for various projects.

Major Projects

- Chancel Roof lead flashing repairs were completed in May 2015
- St. Mary's Laddingford toilet block completed in August 2015
- South Aisle timber repairs completed Jan 2016
- Tower Support repairs – scaffolding and contractor arranged
- Chancel Window; faculty to repair granted and contractor selected
- Church Clock; the obscuring tree removed in Jan 2016 and two new trees planted in March 2016
- South Transept Stained glass window weather-proofing; expert advice has been sought and investigations are ongoing
- New Cemetery Path; Community payback resources (thanks Ken Gough)

Minor maintenance items

- Sound system repairs

- Cemetery Fencing repair work and painting
- Broken window panes replaced
- Wardens Chest dated as 14th Century and made from local wood
- West Door missing studs replaced (again)
- Overhead Screen; fault diagnosed and repaired
- Routine servicing of heating system, organ tuning, electrical and fire testing

In addition, following Paul Filmer's retirement the vicarage was inspected by the Diocesan Surveyor and his recommendations followed. The carpets have been removed and a decorating contractor appointed. The diocese is funding and arranging the necessary electrical work, repair work and replacement and decoration of the kitchen and utility room. Yet again I would like to acknowledge the excellent contribution and hard work that takes place behind the scenes by all the P&F committee members (Bert Boxall, Peter Crompton, Derek Hudson, Graham Spillman, Andrew Thurston and Wendy Thurston), St. Mary's church hall management committee, and others who contribute to the practical side of our church operations and care, whilst not forgetting those involved in unlocking and locking the church, putting out the bins on collection day, flower arranging etc. We continue to look for younger members to join our happy band!

LITTLE FISHES

We have had an encouraging year with several new children joining us, grannies with their grandchildren, dads with their children and mums bringing quite new born babies sometimes with children already little fishes and sometimes just with baby because they have seen our poster. We do seem to be working as an outreach group which was the Mothers Union intention when we set the group up eight years ago. We have fun with the parachute and sing and play musical instruments then follow the fish to our holy place in the lady chapel for a bible story told using godly play. We have done Old Testament stories, parables and we always link in to church festivals like Advent, Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Some of our families are beginning to come to family service. We have a wonderful team from church who help each meeting setting it up and welcoming and making the feast and helping with activities We shall miss Ruth Bollen very much as she was an enthusiastic member right from the beginning I am also stepping down from the leadership of the group and Nicola Flores will be taking over in April I hope to still attend meetings for a while.

MOTHERS UNION

We have not met on many occasions this year due to circumstances. At one meeting we spoke about people who needed help and prayers and how we could put this into our daily lives. Rev. Gary came and spoke to us one month and this was very interesting. In October we paid our usual visit to Burrswood for the Healing service which is always followed by a delicious lunch in their tea rooms. This is truly a very uplifting experience and one that we all enjoyed and gained something from the time spent there. December should have seen us at the Walnut Tree for our Christmas meal but due to the fire in the restaurant, this had to be postponed, we helped at the Mothering Sunday service, the Passover and Church fete. Some of our members help at the Little Fishes group which is very rewarding. We have organised Cake stalls on various Sundays after the service. We miss Ruth very much as she was such a stalwart and devoted member and thought a lot of the Mothers Union. At present we have 6 regular members and warmly welcome anyone who would like to join us.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We have had quite a busy year for the Committee with some very enjoyable events. God was very good to us all and the sun shone for our Church fete which is always well attended and enjoyed. We also had some new ideas which were very well received and our thanks to those who instigated these. I was told by someone that they really enjoyed coming to the fete as it was such a family event. We served refreshments at the Farmers Market and this was a very good outreach event. We provided refreshments for the Junior Choir Concert and also for the Yalding Church Carol Service: The Church was always full especially when our superb Junior and Senior Choirs were singing. We served refreshments and manned a Craft Stall for the Yuletide Market in December. This was the second year for Wreath Making led by our own first class Flower Arranger, Sue Williams. Our thanks to Sue for giving up not only her time but also making and raffling such lovely arrangements. This is a very popular evening and enjoyed by all. We also held our annual Fireside Carols at the lovely home of Jonathon and Joy Virden and many people feel that this is the start of Christmas for them. So we have had quite a busy and enjoyable year. A very big thank you goes to all members of the Social Committee and the helpers who give freely and willingly of their time.

WOMENS HOUSE GROUP (CARING AND SHARING)

No longer running.

SPORTS CLUBS

CRICKET CLUB

Last year, we had around 40 junior players - between 6 and 16 - training regularly on a Saturday morning, with an U11 and an U13 team in the Mid Kent Youth League. There is a longer session for players of 8 yrs plus, with a shorter, pay-as-you-go session for KS1 players. It was a tough first year for the U11s - with only one 11-year old player, one 10, and the rest 9 or below, they still managed to win a couple of games. The core of the team will play for the next three years, and will be joined by other promising players coming through. Future looks good! The U13s won a good number of tough games in the league, and lost some others they should have won, but ended a respectable mid-table. However, they won through to the final of the MKYL cup, coming runners-up to an outstanding Otford side. A great team performance. - Senior side integrating juniors looking to build towards future of club. Most Saturdays, four or five of the junior players also turn out for the senior side. It is brilliant to see how they have risen to the challenge of senior league cricket. We have lost more than we have won, but as the next crop of youngsters come through the ranks, we will see a strong, home-grown Yalding team in the future. This year, we will field an U11s side and an U15s in the league, with an occasional U13s in friendlies. The plan is that the younger U13s from last year will rotate into the U15s side, but still have some matches to play. Anyone who wants to join at any age is welcome! We are exploring various fundraising opportunities this year. There is a quiz night planned for June 10th in the Village Hall, Roy Farrier organised a farmer's market food stall for us, and there are plans for a tie-up with Lashings. Yalding Young Cricketers were also one of three teams selected for a potential £1000 sponsorship from ASK Italian in Maidstone, but lost on the Facebook vote - despite tremendous support from the whole village and the Parish Council. Thank you for everyone who voted, or tried to. Thank you also to those who made private donations as a result of the appeal. It is difficult to express how grateful we are, other than to say that your generosity means we stand a good chance of funding the kind of improvements to training and equipment we need to compete with bigger clubs. The Parish Council has been incredibly supportive, especially over the ASK votes - thank you to them. And the vote has really raised the profile in the village, particularly of what the Young Cricketers are trying to do. So we just hope to stay engaged, keep promoting local talent, and making the club once again the heart of the community. The continued support of YALSA, through which is

co-ordinated the efforts to secure improved playing facilities in Yalding for future generations. The club is hugely indebted to Roy Farrier for stepping in as groundsman, and doing a superb job with the able help of Peter Blackmore and Richard Field. Thanks to you all.

FISHING CLUB (CALPAC)

CALPAC have agreed that the field can be used again for this year's music festival, which we hope is again successful.

FOOTBALL CLUB - Yalding & Laddingford Football Club

Saturday Kent League Side- As the 2015/2016 season comes to a close it was a difficult year for the senior section at Yalding. At the start of the season the intention was to run 3 senior sides, 2 on Saturday and a further side on Sundays but by Christmas the Saturday reserve side had been forced to fold due to a lack of players and shortly after the Sunday side followed suite. This left us with just the Saturday Kent League side and after a difficult first season in the league this year proved much better. The side finished in a respectable mid table position and have high hopes of promotion next year. Considerable work was done on the pitch during the pre-season. The goals were re-positioned and the pitch was squared up and levelled as best it could be. The pitch was also managed well and several opposing teams were surprised how well the pitch had played. Following the Parish Councils kind donation last year, the new goals for the under 15 side were also installed. Probably the biggest disappointment continues to be the changing rooms. Despite the work carried out last year to try and freshen up the changing rooms and kitchens more modern facilities are needed. The drainage system now appears to be blocked so the 2 changing rooms flood when the showers are used, as does the shower in the match officials changing room. As we have travelled around Kent this year we have played at a number of grounds who have benefited from either Lottery grants or grants from Sports Associations (West Farleigh is a prime example). YALSA meetings and the progression of a new facility seem to have come to a standstill and sadly within the next couple of years the existing facilities will become un-useable and a long term plan really does need to be explored. For the foreseeable future there is some work to do in the close season. The major expense for the club going into next season will be the work needed to the pitches themselves as they will need top soil and re-seeding again, a cost of around £800. Ideally during the winter months' access to a light roller would also be helpful and if anyone within the Parish is able to help this would be appreciated. **The junior section** has gone from strength to strength with the under 12 section gaining promotion. **The under 15s finished** a creditable 5th in the Maidstone league whilst the **under 13s** missed promotion by one place scoring over 100 goals in the season. Under 12s continues to go from strength to strength and we currently have 19 players spread over both our Crowborough League and Weald of Kent League sides. Games in these leagues are played on Saturday's and Sundays. One of those 19 players is Yalding Schoolgirl Georgia Gent who made history back in October and became the first female to sign for one of its teams. Georgia being the fourth player to have graduated to my squad from the Yalding & Laddingford FC Soccer school. It has been a fantastic season. Just three years after our formation we are celebrating having ended the season as Crowborough League C Division Runners Up. Agonisingly we missed out on winning the league title by just one point finishing behind Tunbridge Wells Ridgeway with 42 points having won 14 of their 18 league games. At the same time, we boasted the best attacking and defensive records in the league, scoring 102 goals and conceding just 27. The squad will be presented with their runners up medals and runners Up trophy at the Uckfield Civic Centre during the Crowborough League Presentation awards night in June. Next season we will keep our team in the Weald of Kent League but have decided to part company with the Crowborough League and take up a new challenge in the Express Cabs Maidstone League, we are after all a Maidstone Borough based club.

The soccer school on a Saturday morning has continued to flourish with a number of players graduating to the under 12 Saturday side. Over the past year all of our coaches have attended training courses including first aid, safeguarding children and level 1 coach's certificates. The demand is such that from next season there will be 2 more teams playing within the Invicta league at under 7 and under 11 level. The club have purchased kits for these teams and the elder boys looked great in their orange strips in a recent friendly. None of this could be possible without the time given over by the coaches – Dave, Marc, Larry, Will, Alex and James and by the enthusiastic support of the parents.

RIFLE RANGE

Yalding Rifle Range and the three club sections, (Air Rifle Tuesday Evening's and .22 rim fire on a Thursday and Friday evening's) continue to grow and so far prosper. Much work has been done to try and make the out-side more pleasing to those who pass by and it is hoped that as the summer approaches we will get around to giving the outside of the old building a lick of paint. A lean-to shelter has been put in place for the convenience of the smokers, and a screen put up around the chemical toilet, also a boundary fence & gate. Should the council have any thoughts or complaints about the Range or the club sections that use the range please feel free to contact Dave on 01732-843813 or by email to st.blaze@blueyonder.co.uk. Members of the Parish Council are always welcome to pop along on a Thursday evening for a chat, a coffee & chocolate biscuit to see what we do and view the improvements.

TABLE TENNIS CLUB

The club has shrunk over the last few years but still has a core of between 6 & 10 dedicated members/players. We would welcome new players of any standard. Coaching is available. We are now the proud owners of a robot ball feeding machine. This is a great help for coaching and can also be a very challenging work out as it can deliver up to 100 balls per minute! Continue as we are but, hopefully with a few new members.

YALDING AND LADDINGFORD SPORTS ASSOCIATION (YALSA)

This year the focus has been on the ongoing maintenance of the pavilion. Going forward we would like to look at potential replacement project for the pavilion. We have two open positions on the committee for a treasurer and Secretary but are also looking for volunteers to help with fund raising and grant applications to support a new pavilion project.

COMMERCIAL SPORTING ACTIVITIES

LINE DANCING

Our Line Dancing Class is going well & the hall is always clean & tidy a so are the Toilets.

LUCY ROBINS SCHOOL OF DANCE

Lucy Robins School of Dance (formerly Aerodance) has enjoyed another very successful year in Yalding. Classes are oversubscribed with a waiting list! We also run classes for Twyford pre-school once a week. Classes offered in Yalding are street dance from 4yrs - 16yrs. Our new website for anyone wanting to take a look is www.lrsd.co.uk

PILATES - BODY CONTROL

Over the past twelve months there have been four classes per week (three in the mornings and one in the evenings). Pilates classes run during the term time for a total of 36 weeks. There are also occasional "pop-in" classes during the holidays. Attendance numbers for every class are good and the intermediate group on Tuesday morning is now fully subscribed. It is wonderful to see how many people in the village and from a close proximity are enjoying the practise and hopefully benefitting. I hope to continue to develop and train with some of the leading instructors in this country and world-wide over the coming year. I welcome support from the village; once again I would request for the Baptist Hall to be painted inside, as it really is in a very poor state of repair with peeling paint on every wall. Many people comment unfavourably about the Hall, which is such a shame. As the Village Hall is used every morning for playschool, I have no alternative other than use this facility.

PILATES - WEALD PILATES

A number of newcomers have joined the beginners' class on a Monday. It is always good to see them getting to grips with the concepts behind Pilates and becoming more attuned with their bodies. Identifying and using the correct muscles to do an exercise is more challenging than it sounds, it is satisfying for both the individual and me when it happens. Another highlight is to see movement from the Monday class to the improvers' class on a Wednesday. What a pleasure it is to see class members progress to the next level!

ZUMBA

Yalding Zumba classes are now in their 5th successful year. Many participants have been with me since I started in 2011! Newbies are always welcome. Come and join the fun! Visit www.tanyashepelev.zumba.com for more information.

YOUTH GROUPS

CYCLONES

Over the past year we have continued to meet regularly, although the numbers of young people have made a disappointing and steady decline. The format for the group has continued to be the same, as we have been following the Junior Alpha course material. We are due to complete the final course in May, when we anticipate drawing to a close the work of Cyclones, due to insufficient numbers. It has been our privilege and joy as we have worked together, with young people over the past eight years to see them take steps to explore what their faith means to them, and our hope is that they continue their journey.

MTV

No longer meet.

SCOUT GROUP

Yalding Scout Group continues to remain a thriving and popular organisation for all ages of children from 6 up to 18. We remain very lucky as we have a great deal of very keen and willing leaders (all unpaid volunteers) who are willing to commit their time and energy in making sure the children have a fun and safe scouting experience. However, we are always looking for additional help. This could range from putting away the boats during the Summer to attending one of the section meetings as an occasional helper. The group is also in need of a Quarter Master to look after the equipment. Each section plans and organises activities that allow the children to work for their badges. We are not only giving the children the chance to achieve these levels in their time with us, but also trying hard to incorporate activities just for fun. **The Beavers** had a wonderful sleepover in the village, based on WW2 where the children had ration books and took part in games, activities and campfire songs based on the theme. They have done many badges including some of the new ones which the children really enjoyed, such as collections and communication. They had a great time when the ambulance came in and they got to play with the siren (sorry to the local residents, but they did have fun!). They have been bowling, boating and visited East Peckham for the annual Easter event. In the past year **Yalding Cubs** have enjoyed a weekend where activities included archery, crate stacking, climbing wall, water slide and the usual campfire. Weekly meetings consist of activities leading to activity or challenge badges as well as fun activities such as cooking on an open fire, games evenings and cake decorating. Several cubs also enjoyed a day at Chessington World of Adventure in October which was part of the year of adventure and this year are looking forward to participating in activities to celebrate the 100th birthday of Cub Scouts including a County Centenary Camp in September. **Beult Scout Troop** has welcomed 2 additional leaders, Gina and Hannah Booth who bring considerable skills. Scout numbers are at 17 with a good mix of girls and boys. A number of badges are being worked towards and this has been the basis for the Autumn/Winter term. One of the highlights was an evening spent making films. A TV and Film actress supported the evening and guided the scouts through some acting skills, games and filming techniques. The results filmed on digital cameras were brilliant and worthy of comedy Oscars! The Troop is looking forward to their summer programme on the river. **Teise Scout Troop** have 21 scouts for the Summer term. They enjoyed 2 camps/ trips during the Summer – a canoe camp based at Claygate and a Youth Hostel stay near Newhaven. Activities have included wild swimming at Barcombe Mills, wallpapering, Bin Bag Fashion, campfire songs and sketches, night hikes, first aid and survival training. 9 scouts completed their Chief Scout Gold Award during 2015 – a record! Summer will be spent mainly on the river: canoeing, kayaking and rafting. A week's camp at Lordship Wood, Horsmonden is planned with sailing, mountain biking, team building & climbing. The winter programme will be planned using the new challenge badge scheme introduced this year for Scouts. They plan to run a rafting event for scouts and explorers from the whole of Maidstone West District in 2017. We would like support from the Parish to use the Lees field below the weir. With two scout groups to supply their members, **Poseidon Explorers** is one of the largest groups in Kent, with over 23 young people doing something adventurous most weeks, either linked with both scout troops, other nearby units or on own. We were very proud that one of our explorers, Ruby Haigh, attended the World Scout Jamboree in Japan in August 2015, helped by kind donations and fundraising, supported by the people of Yalding and Laddingford. Short camps at Gilwell Park, Essex remain very popular, the main one being Gilwell 24 in July, although a few brave explorers did manage a very muddy winter camp there very early in January 2016. Summer activities of canoeing and kayaking are now held on Wednesday evenings to make better use of the scout group boats, with the help of other Kent Scout water activity helpers. Summer 2016 will see ten explorers and two leaders visiting our French Scouting colleagues in Bagnols once again, just north of Avignon. As a scout group we ensure that no child is excluded on the basis of cost. To enable us to do this we rely on fund-raising and the generous support of organisations such as the Parish Council.

BOOK AND LITERARY CLUBS

HOLIDAY READING BOOK CLUB

The Holiday Reading Book Club is now in its eighth year. In the past 12 months we have read a variety of novels - international best sellers, current British top sellers and a few weird and wonderful books of the 'marmite' variety! Each member suggests titles in advance for the coming year, we then send our list to Yalding Library where the librarians do their best to order as many as they can from across Kent libraries and hope to gather ten copies of each book. They really do a fantastic job for us, although sometimes a book is out of print, sometimes there may only be a few copies in all of Kent's libraries, and occasionally - and it is rare - they don't have any copies at all! We are most appreciative of the ongoing support we receive from our Yalding librarians, thank you, you do a fabulous job for us! Each month we meet at a different member's home to discuss the book, and being the very social group we are, often move on to discuss other topics of interest over a glass of wine, cup of coffee, and some very tasty refreshments! It is a very successful formula and looks to continue for many years to come!

LITERARY GROUP

We have read a very wide range of books this year, from Homer's Iliad (which led to much discussion about how best to translate an ancient Greek poem into English) to modern fiction, taking in Shakespeare, Bunyan and Goethe along the way. As usual, there were lively discussions and disagreements along the way. One book that we all enjoyed and would thoroughly recommend was "An Officer and a Spy", by Robert Harris. This is a fascinating historical novel about the Dreyfus affair, and (like all Harris's books) a real 'page turner'.

YALDING BOOK GROUP

If you are thinking of joining Yalding Book Group, I am afraid you are too late. It is so popular that nobody ever leaves! Another great year. Ten different books as diverse as Stoner by John Williams and The Miniaturist by Jesse Burton and a delicious Christmas meal. Plans for this year include ten more interesting books and a visit to a stately home in the summer. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful library in the village.

YALDING YAFFLES BOOK GROUP

Our membership of eleven avid and loyal readers, remains unchanged. We continue to meet in our varied homes to hold passionate and occasionally, muted discussions! Our format remains the same, each member taking a turn during the year to host or lead, as well as our ongoing book selection. The library continues to be a source of great help with their efficient and unstinting service, supplying our choice of ten books for the year. In 2016 we look forward to reading, among others, 'The Secret Life of Bees', 'After the Fall', 'Sackcloth & Ashes' and 'The Whaleboat House'. Our unstinting research into grape sustenance enhances a worthwhile monthly meeting.

OTHER GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Most plots continue to be occupied and we have some very enthusiastic plot holders at the moment. A wide variety of vegetables & fruit are cultivated at the plots, with differing levels of success. Generally, the allotments look extremely tidy and well cared for, and there is a sense of pride in the area as a whole. Monthly Working Parties are still a key feature in keeping the communal areas under control. The annual barbecue was again a lovely occasion, with fine weather and a sociable atmosphere. The second annual firework & bonfire party was also deemed a success and may well continue in future years. We aim to have all plots occupied and fully cultivated, and to do all we can to preserve this important green space in Yalding. There are currently allotments available so if you would like one please contact Susannah, the Secretary, on 01622 813309. We are also planning further social events, similar to previous years. Ongoing support regarding potential vandalism. Ongoing support re. the Maidstone Local Plan (i.e. the potential development of the Vicarage Road site).

ART GROUP

We have had quite a few new members join us since September 2015 and we meet weekly on Thursday mornings at the Baptist Church during term time only. We have a very healthy number of artists in the group at the moment. We hold an annual Arts & Crafts Fair in the village hall, Lyngs Close and this year it will be on Sunday, 15th May 11am-4pm. It has been very successful for us in recent years and with the money we raise, it enables us to subsidise an annual trip for the group. Last year we went on WKN Coaches to Brighton for the day. We are hoping they will have a suitable trip for us to do again this year as it is very convenient for us to get on and off at Yalding! We are very excited to be part of the new gallery opening in April at June & Tim's house, Riverside. We will be exhibiting for the month of August at RIVERSIDEpopupGALLERY and look forward to showcasing our years' work. This will give us the opportunity to continue to meet throughout August every Thursday morning at the Gallery which will give visitors a chance to meet us and perhaps join our group in September. We are pretty self-sufficient, but would only ask that the Parish Council spread the news that we are holding our Annual Arts & Crafts Fair and that we will be exhibiting throughout August.

BEE KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Our May Fayre attracted record numbers with the equipment auction, honey sales, tea and cakes and a range of stalls selling bee related items providing an interesting and carried day out for the whole family. The branch ran a series of lectures and demonstrations on subjects as diverse as bees wax candle making, a day in the life of a seasonal (Government) bee inspector and how to manage and prevent your bees from swarming. We visited other Kent Beekeepers branches apiaries and had stalls at the great Comp Summer and Autumn shows. The year was rounded off with a stall selling honey and candles at the Yalding Yuletide Fayre. We are at an early stage of planning our May Fayre but this will be in a new location as the Benover road field we formerly used is no longer available. At the time of writing I am unable to confirm the new location. Our other major exercise is the relocation of our teaching apiary to a new site. The preparation of the new site and the relocation of the hives began early this year. There is much work to be done to create a social and educational hub for the branch. We will continue with our relocation project and carry on with our fundraising with stalls at Great Comp and Yalding Yuletide Fayre and endeavour to provide our members with a varied and interesting social and educational programme.

DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

It's been a quiet year as far as Yalding Drama activities are concerned, which is one way of saying that in the past twelve months we haven't actually managed to put on a production. However, loins are being girded once again and the Summer Play will return in June 2016 with performances of a modern comedy, Outside Edge. While in publicising mode can I put out a plea to all aspiring males in the 20 to 60 age bracket not to hide their light under a bushel if they have any desire to be involved in dramatic productions? For all sorts of perfectly good reasons such men usually have other time-consuming occupations, but this makes it famously difficult for so many amateur dramatic groups to cast suitable plays. So, if you're tempted, or you know a man who might be.....This year's report should not pass without a fond mention and heartfelt acknowledgement to Hugh Williams who died on New Year's Eve 2015. A man of very considerable experience in the field of dramatic productions, Hugh initiated Yalding's outdoor Shakespeare productions which began in 2001 and have continued regularly since, often with Shakespeare but also with other comedies. Hugh also introduced the concept of Drawing Room Dramas, rehearsed play readings in people's houses, which have proved so popular over the years and brightened many a winter's evening. He was a man of immense talent and sensitivity, both personally and creatively, and this village owes him a great deal.

GARDEN SOCIETY

Our members enjoyed a busy calendar with the usual Spring, Summer and Autumn Shows which produced some spectacular displays of plants and produce, despite the unpredictability of the weather. In addition, the cookery, flower-arranging (with a new award to encourage less-experienced flower-arrangers) and photography classes were well-supported including the "battle of the sexes" cookery competition (won by the men!) and the great potato weigh-in. Our judges always comment on the standard of the exhibits and the friendly atmosphere at the Village Hall, and enjoy the light lunch we offer them from the Village Tearooms. During the winter our members enjoyed lively illustrated talks on thrifty gardening, the eccentric gardener and the parks and gardens of Flanders. Our Christmas party, at which we had a fascinating talk on a fund-raising walk on the Great Wall of China, a hotly-contested quiz and a raffle, was a very festive social occasion. We have adjusted to the change of regular meetings to the first Monday of the month. Our newsletter, sent out mainly by email, continues to be very popular with its colourful photographs, reports of the shows and the day-trips, and useful information for our members. We had as usual two full day trips, to RHS Wisley in the spring, and to Oxford in the summer, visiting the beautiful Botanic Gardens and then St Hugh's College. We were escorted round the college garden by their very enthusiastic and knowledgeable head gardener before an impressive tea in the Oxford China Centre, recently opened by Prince William. In addition, we organised an evening visit to the lovely garden of "Timbers" in East Farleigh. Our AGM is always well-attended, with around 80 members (2/3 of our membership) enjoying a chance to socialise after the formalities. The committee had spent a great deal of time and effort over rewriting the show schedules, consulting other societies, judges and experienced gardeners in order to encourage more new competitors. The

Summer Show will take place as usual this year but we are currently considering whether to continue with it in the future, in view of the village's busy summer diaries, and the increased cost of hiring the hall and fees to judges. However, we would regret omitting it from our calendar as it always provides a lovely display and is a very enjoyable social event. This year's calendar contains, with the updated show schedules, an interesting line-up of speakers for our winter talks. There will be two day-trips, starting with a visit to Borde Hill Gardens in April. The highlight of the year, however, will be a Garden Party in the summer to celebrate our 60th anniversary and plans are underway for a variety of entertaining activities on the evening.

RELATIVE MINORS

During 2015 'higher education/work experience' continued to steal away more talented players...Hannah and Charlotte Booth...but they thankfully succeed in swelling our numbers for our fun performances during the year. The orchestra was delighted to perform as an 'act' in the church music concert, along with many other talented music contributions. The orchestra performed at the GamBLE BBQ and both Nativity and Carol services at Yalding and Laddingford. We had hoped to present another concert in the church, but with the village diary full of wonderful celebrations for the Queen's birthday, this is looking less likely. We are eager to recruit new players (strings, woodwind and brass instruments) and whilst we do not audition, members do need to be of grade 2 standard and above.

VICAR'S PICNIC

After last year's festival we learned some valuable lessons; we have appointed a very experienced festival production contractor for 2016 which has been reflected in the ticket price increase (Though, still extremely good value for money). We have also re aligned the festival site and orientation, to allow us better use of the land, kindly donated by CALPAC and Yalding Parish Council. Last year's event saw us break even after helping several great local causes, namely buying a village defibrillator, sponsoring Yalding Kids football team, giving £1300.00 to Demelza House Hospice plus other small spot donations including Macmillan Cancer Support etc. The festival continues to be run by a small group of unpaid volunteers giving up most of their lives to the running of the event which, with your support we hope to continue. We have had to learn everything from the intricacies of port-a-loos (which we are more than doubling this year!) through to dealing with international artist and their agents! 2016 brings us more talent and more entertainment for the whole family. We have, as planned 'upped our game' for 2016 with Indie surf rock legends REEF taking headline slot. As well as having a son of a Rolling Stone in the band and a string of high profile hits, success this year with their new comeback single has propelled them all over our TV's, Radio and major festival appearances across the UK. (We signed them just before the release and success of their new single!) They will be playing Wembley Stadium with Coldplay only a few weeks before coming to our village, let's hope we can all give them just as big a reception! We are also lucky enough to have captured some of the most exciting new breaking through artist from around the country including the award winning SKINNY LISTER, currently on a sell-out tour of the U.S. and the highly rated NOVATONES who will be playing one of the main stages at the Isle of Wight Festival just before coming to us. Of course, we also remain dedicated to our brilliant local talent and festival favourites, giving them the chance to sample the festival vibe. This year, we also have far more covered space, with our second stage completely enclosed under canvass as well as a large Bedouin tent housing the all new 'Secret Disco'. There will be even more free and creative activities for the kids on a far securer site along with mouth-watering food of different varieties as well as the return of the popular boys, mixing up classic cocktails in their VW camper cocktail van! As I'm sure you can imagine, this is a very expensive event to put on, not only financially but sheer hours in time and effort. Without the support of our brilliant village, council and local residents none of this would be possible. Finally, a huge thanks to many people who have supported us thus far. We do hope you will come so we can continue to bring quality entertainment to our village while helping out local causes.

VILLAGE VOICES

Village Voices has existed as a group for 6 years now and, as well as welcoming a steady flow of new members, still retains most of its original singers, including a strong male section. Our main objective is to enjoy singing with each other, explore new music and develop confidence and a sense of well-being. In August, we once more delighted in singing at the GamBLE BBQ and chose a wide range of repertoire: 3 new songs from different parts of Africa, a Gospel song, a couple of jazz style arrangements and a beautiful setting of "Sailing". We are currently preparing repertoire as diverse as Abba, Queen, Renaissance, folk and calypso. We hope to perform later in the year at a concert being planned for late autumn. More singers would be very welcome, so do contact Karen Di Marco 01622 814267 if you would like to "have a go". Try out our relaxed and friendly atmosphere. We meet from 7.30 – 9.00 pm, usually on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month and it costs £10 a term (5 meetings). Yalding School very kindly lends us their hall, or, in school holidays we meet in the Church rooms – see the village magazine and the library for dates. After deductions for venue hire and music, our residual income is donated to GamBLE.

WI

We have had yet another full year of activity. It began with our 72nd Birthday in June with cake and Rod Leemimng ex Special Branch putting a new slant on being a Bodyguard. We also enjoyed our summer tea party in the lovely surroundings of Shellie Ripley's garden. Great Weather and great cake mumm. Two of our members attended The Queens garden party and came back with stories of the day. Whilst our President and Treasurer roasted all day at Lullingstone giving our tea and cake to 1400 WI members, Yalding members ran from shade to shade determined to see all the scarecrows. Our members have attended various workshops including "A Journey Through Gems, Art and Craft" and Home Economic Days, "Four Simple Stiches" and were shown how to make coloured silk scarves in a microwave. Our speakers have given us tips about appraising antiques and were in awe of the medical detection dogs who could recognise one drop of blood in an Olympic swimming pool. Antonia Gallup entertained us with her escapades around India on a motorbike. Most of which were indescribable! Taywell ice cream visited us and with our spoons at the ready we were forced to taste their delicious ice cream. We wish to Thank Mary Jakes for finding such a variety of speakers. With our district we had a visit to Bletchley Park enjoyed our carol service at Allington and journeyed to Brighton for Holiday On Ice. We took photos of members for our "Box" and dressed our scarecrow as a hippy. Our challenge in September was well attended with Glen Brace winning every category but one. Our judge, Pat Tomlin praised our Victoria Sponges which was a consolation. We held a jumble sale in April and a craft fair in October, our lunching ladies are going strong and Jill Smith's walking group is well attended. Our membership has dropped slightly with members moving but it is beginning to rise again since January. We are looking forward to another interesting and varied year.

MARKETS

FARMERS' MARKET

I have managed to attract new stalls to the market including a Deli and a Fresh Fish stall but we will only be able to retain them if they get sufficient customers. The average number of stalls per market declined from 12.4 (2014) to 9.5 (2015) but we have been able to maintain the usual product range. The refreshment stall continues to be a focal point of the market and average net profit for the village organisations running the stall seems to have stabilised around £200 following price increases of the bacon and sausage rolls. When there has been very adverse weather conditions the net profit has been well below the average. I will continue to try and attract new stalls to the market to increase the product range. We have had no luck in retaining a cheese stall because the two who did give it a try were not able to generate sufficient sales to make it worth their while. I will try to find a stall that supplies cheese and deli type products to see if that works. I will continue to explore new ways of marketing /advertising the market to bring in more customers to maintain the viability

of the market but we are almost totally dependent on the village population as few people now travel any distance to Farmers Markets unless they are to very large markets cica 40 stalls such as Tonbridge. The Farmers Market has become a valuable part of our village life providing an important outlet for our local suppliers and a vibrant social event for people in the village. PLEASE encourage villagers to use the market because the stallholders do really provide quality and value for money products.

YULETIDE MARKET

The Yuletide market 2015 was very successful with many visitors as always. We were delighted to secure a brass band who played traditional carols in the upper part of the High Street. Two local actors entertained children in the guise of Jack Sparrow and his moll. And a local band: The foghorns entertained folk in the lower part of the High Street. These along with the Boughton Morris dancers and Punch and Judy show provided entertainment for kids from 1 to 92. Along with this The High Street was busy with stalls and Father Christmas greeted children throughout the evening after opening the market as usual. The committee plan to offer more entertainment for children. We have spoken with the preschool who have agreed to have a stall offering activities for children, as well as Face painting. It has been agreed that hot drinks such as tea and coffee will also be offered in the High Street. The PTA and scouts are planning to do this. We also have plans to increase still further the street entertainment at the market. We have also looked at the problems with congestion experienced with traffic in the High Street when stall holders were setting up; it is intended, with the support of Nu Venture, to extend the road closure from 3pm. The committee is also putting measures in place to control access to the High Street at the end of the market when stall holders require access for loading.

HALLS AND FACILITIES

YALDING VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall has been an important part of the village for 60 years and is a wonderful asset to Yalding, being a venue for a wide variety of events, all of which benefit the community hugely. Last year we changed all the radiators in the main hall and upgraded the lighting in main hall to LED, which are both more cost effective. We are appreciative to our regular hall users who continue to use the hall, but would like to remind everyone that the hall is available at weekends for private hire or fundraising events.

YOUTH CENTRE

See Baptist Church

HELPING HANDS (HH)

The death of Ruth has been a great loss to Helping Hands, as well as losing a good friend. Like so many situations in life, a time of adjustment. But I remain, deeply grateful to Ruth for her love and support. Until I am able to find a sidekick to help run and maintain HH; I will continue to run HH for the benefit of those that require the service. A constant difficulty is that callers will at times, find me unavailable, not only when I am away on holiday! Without the willingness of volunteer drivers, there would of course, be no H.H's and to them I pay a thankful tribute. As always, the aim of moral support and company, during what can be for some, an anxious time, remains the ethos. I am hoping to recruit more drivers to boost the existing pool. The cost of 50p a mile has continued to be maintained from 2012.

YALDING LIBRARY

The library is well used by children and families. The primary school visits regularly for book exchange sessions, as does a local preschool group. A local volunteer runs a popular Storytime on the first Monday of every month. The annual Summer Reading Challenge for children was well supported, 27 children from Yalding School joined the challenge at the library, with many of them completing 6 books to get a medal and certificate. The library supports 6 reading groups in the village by ordering their books. The valuable Home Library Service provides books to those who cannot physically access the library. Please let us know of anyone who would appreciate this service. The parish council have continued to use the building for meetings. The library provides a varied selection of items for loan to adults, teenagers and children. This includes fiction, non-fiction, large print, spoken word cassettes, babies' board books and DVDs. New stock is added on a regular basis. A free public access computer is available in the library, along with a scanner and printer. You can also access our online library services and can perform many routine tasks, such as renewing books and booking a library PC. Our 'Online Reference Library' acts as your very own electronic bookshelf, providing access to encyclopaedias, dictionaries, newspapers and magazines, and other subjects such as business or health from quality commercial databases or tried and tested free-web resources. eBooks and eAudiobooks are also available to borrow with your Kent Library Card. By coming in to the library and using a public computer, you can access ancestry.com and findmypast.co.uk **free of charge**. These websites provide access to a vast amount of information for those interested in family history. We would like to welcome new member of staff, Julie West, to Yalding Library.

PPG

Our brief is to articulate patients' concerns and preferences, particularly in the form of our Action Plan comprising improvements to the surgery's offering. We also act as the channel of communication for the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (the surgery is a contractor to the West Kent CCG). The PPG and the surgery both welcome the NHS's efforts to be patient-led in its provision. In 2015 it became mandatory for GP surgeries to have a PPG, and the NHS rolled out its programme of grass-roots consultation to involve patients in its care provision plans. So far this year we have met with the Practice Manager to define required outcomes, consulted with the Care Quality Commission inspector, proposed enhancements to the surgery's proposed new website, which have been implemented, and collated and analysed the patient survey results. The surgery has excellent patient approval ratings.

The survey results have fed into the current agreed Surgery Action Plan, as follows:

- Patients aware of the "named GP" option
- Patients assigned an agreed named GP
- Patients can book routine appointments on-line
- Patients can book same-day appointments on-line
- On-line appointment booking interface amended to address patient comments
- Notices in waiting room dated, displayed and removed
- Dedicated PPG notice board to improve presentation
- Media board messages correct & up-to-date
- Website up-to-date
- Facility for PPG & others to place notices, questionnaire etc. on the website
- Offer patients secure electronic communication with the practice Patients can order repeat prescriptions on-line
- Patients have on-line access to their own medical record
- Define what patient information the surgery discloses to the HSCIC and other outside bodies

Thanks to YPC for circulating our survey. The surgery has agreed to establish a patient reference group to enable us to give the NHS feedback on its care plans. This will usher in a new "top-down" dimension to our activities. Ask your GP or surgery Reception to join the patient reference group to be consulted in the NHS's care plans

VOLUNTEER TRANSPORT

No report received

INFORMATION

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Neighbourhood Watch in Yalding continues to keep hundreds of residents up to date with recent crimes/anti-social behaviour and with local trends and crime prevention advice. The information comes from Kent Police messaging service and sometimes from Trading Standards. The Parish News database, whereby The Parish Council informs us of flooding and other parish council issues, is also used for NHW bulletins. As ever, the email bulletins are of course only received by those with email who express a wish to receive them; so there are many who are therefore left unaware, although I do believe neighbours can and do help with this problem especially for the more vulnerable members of the community. Information via the bulletins and of course the wonderful involvement of PCSO Nicola Morris surely helps to make us a safer and more aware community. To receive Neighbourhood Watch bulletins, please call 07785 974951 or email jscott@cfsbroadband.co.uk. Otherwise, sign up for Parish News. This is free to residents and data protection issues are observed.

PARISH NEWS

We now have 547 people on our database. To receive useful information on flooding issues, road closures, lost and found etc., please email chairman@yaldingparishcouncil.gov.uk to be included.

PARISH MAGAZINE

The magazine is continuing to be well received by the Parish, with many comments coming in about how people love to know what's going on and also the new Yalding & Laddingford Writers page has been a big success. Please do email us if you have anything you would like to feature in the magazine; News, Thanks You's, Events and Achievements. Despite some illness within the magazine team we have continued to get the magazine out on time albeit with some juggling around with deadlines! This is purely down to an amazing team who are a great support to myself and the magazine: Therefore, a big thank you for all your dedication and hard work needs to go to: Jenny Scott, Annie Lee-Davey, Graham Spillman and Martin William and his fantastic team of distributors.

PARTNERSHIPS

MEDWAY VALLEY COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

A successful Year- we ran many Pop-up Hubs where we discuss travel plans and information to help people consider new journey options. A novelty this year has been our new "Smoothie" bike. Growth came with an increase of more than 7% in numbers of people travelling on our lines and with the extension of the Medway Valley Line to include Tonbridge station. We have extended our work with schools to participate in Safety in Action events in Maidstone and West Kent; where every primary school is invited to send their "move-on" students. Yalding station is the star of the Show at these events as our safety scenario is based at a rural, unmanned station called Yalding! ACoRP Awards - Our work was recognised at the annual ACoRP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships) awards. Sarah Deakin won second prize for Champions Action Day and our Chairman, Mike FitzGerald won third prize in the Outstanding Volunteer Contribution category. Mike has led the Partnership through a decade of success building strong foundations for the future, and fully deserved the national recognition for his extraordinary contribution to Community Rail in Kent. Mike retired from the Partnership this April and his successor is Sue Murray, a long-time supporter of the Partnership, and previously vice-Chair. Station Improvements - Network Rail have been busy repairing and repainting overbridges, including those at Halling, Snodland and Maidstone West. Work to redevelop Snodland station is now well underway and Strood station will soon be replaced by a new building. Additional seating and shelters have been installed at stations, including Maidstone Barracks and Halling. Service Update - Unfortunately, the Medway Valley has temporarily lost its three carriage trains as a consequence of the track collapse between Dover and Folkestone, and will be serviced by two carriage units until repairs are completed, hopefully before the end of 2016. Events and Pop-Up Hubs - Several lucky families joined us for a "Geo-cache" treasure hunting adventure through Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Cuxton in July. The Pop-up Hub also popped up at the Medway Big Ride in Gillingham, Fremlin Walk Shopping Centre in Maidstone, Tonbridge station and the Community Fun Day in Strood. "Coco and the Butterfields" performed live for 2 hours on our Music Train last September. Many guests promised to return to try the Rail Trail Walks and other leisure opportunities in and around the towns and villages along the line. A number of events are planned over the next 12 months, including a Halloween Fun Day on October 28th in Yalding. Further details are available on the website. Funding has been challenging for 2016-17 in view of local government cut-backs and this makes the support of Parish Councils all the more valuable and important. We are very grateful to Yalding Parish Council for your continuing support and for the strong commitment of your representative, Andy Sanders.

MEDWAY VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP (MVCP)

2015/16 has seen another busy year for the partnership in the parish. We have continued to work hand in hand with the parish council and local site owners on a wide range of projects.

Yalding Fen:

- A new run of apple juice was made from the 2015 harvest, which was very large. Bottles are available from MVCP at £2.75 each and supplies have been made to the Yalding tea rooms. We have investigated with Waitrose and some local cider makers the possibility of using more of the fruit in 2016 as so much is currently wasted.
- Ongoing habitat management to maintain the traditional orchard, boardwalks and gates, mow the footpaths and generally keep the site in good repair and accessible to all. 2015 was another good year for barn owl breeding success at the fen with four owlets fledging. The original boxes are now in a sorry state of repair but he owls cling no to them and have not yet moved into their new accommodation – although they have found it as shown by the pellets founds there.
- Replaced various fence posts owing to trees falling across the fence line, and restored approximately 200 m² of meadow as a result.
- In order to provide access to their maintained ditch in the fen the Internal Drainage board have cut a substantial ride through the scrub trail. While this looks severe at first, the additional light should aid floristic diversity in the longer term, especially for bankside vegetation which will create habitat for the threatened water vole. We will seek to monitor to signs of that species which, while observed in the area around Nettlestead, hasn't been seen on site for a number of year. A large volume of wood (mostly willow) has been created and stacked following this project, which will be suitable for firewood once seasoned and habitat piles for amphibians on site.
- Helped host the annual parish picnic attended by 100+ people with juice making, wildlife walks and a bat walk
- Continued on-going ecological surveys for barn owls, bats and amphibians (the roost for brown long eared bats is now formally monitored by the Kent Bat Group). A movement detection camera for the bats was installed but no good images were taken. Water shrew (a Kent priority species) was also confirmed and observed on site in 2015.

- Hosted a series of educational visits for degree level students at the nearby Hadlow College. Will Hughes from the Animal Management team would like to use the site for long-term monitoring projects and we will work with them to achieve those aims.
- Planned Halloween event in 2016 with Sustrans, details to follow.
- We are contacting local schools, again, who have used the site in the past to try and reinvigorate education session there in spring/summer 2016.
- Continued with grazing management through the help of Round Oak Hebridean (sheep) and the parish council's cattle. It is estimated that 5 to 6 Sussex cattle will again be the optimum number required to graze the fen

SOMM

MVCP's "Save our Magnificent Meadows" project is now into its third year. We have an established team of meadow champions and a wide range of family and education events and activities. Full details can be found on our website www.medwayvalley.org Should you wish our dedicated officer to make a site visit and advise on good land management practices she would be happy to do so. Please contact Mary Tate directly on 03000 414833 mary.tate@kent.gov.uk. A further survey of Yalding Lees in 2015 again displayed its growing floristic diversity and it looked truly beautiful at times again in spring and late summer. The parish has now extended the area when arisings are collected and this should only increase floristic diversity still further.

Yalding Tatt

A session of Himalayan balsam is scheduled for Yalding Tatt for June 2016. This will further reduce the vigour and spread of this invasive plant which is hugely reduced in extent at that site now. In the longer term controlled releases of a plant specific fungus are now starting in other river catchments to ultimately control this problem species in a more natural way. Please ask Andrea Griffiths andrea.griffiths@kent.gov.uk if you wish to find out more.

Fowle Hall Green

MVCP held a task day at this small and burgeoning meadow site following a now regular grass cut by the parish. The long term aim is to manage the site for wildlife and provide a useful location for local children to learn about nature in the parish.

Giant Hogweed and invasive species (Andrea Griffiths 03000 414795)

The normal extremely comprehensive giant hogweed control programme was in full swing as usual throughout the parish and beyond. We are seeing notable declines in numbers of plants although some problems persist and it is vital for all parties to continue to work in a co-ordinated fashion. Some key facts and figures (across the whole Medway catchment):

- Over 100 landowners were contacted directly about including their land in the MVCP scheme in 2015 and again in 2016 so far. Consent is requested and granted in case Giant Hogweed and any other target flora are observed and needs treating.
- Environment Agency support and permission to spray was granted for multiple years. Natural England support and permission to treat plants on the River Beult SSSI also granted.
- 200km (approx.) of riparian habitat was covered by MVCP's contractor to chemically treat Giant Hogweed in 2015.
- Approximately 9000 Giant Hogweed plants were treated and recorded throughout the Medway Catchment and River Cray in 2015
- Several treatments of Floating Pennywort were carried out at the source location and on the Medway near Yalding in both 2015.
- Water Fern control on the River Beult was undertaken by MVCP in 2015 using a bio-control method. The results were very encouraging with the blanket coverage of Water Fern being reduced down to a few plants within only a few months. Secondary treatments are likely to be planned in 2016. Natural England permission was granted for this work die to the River Beult SSSI.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL SERVICES

BUSINESS FORUM

This year the membership of the NRBF increased once again. This voluntary business organisation seeks to support local businesses and the community within The village of Yalding and nearby villages. The NRBF once again produced and delivered to this area a printed directory and hosted the online directory and also held free monthly Breakfast Meetings within Yalding at various local venues. The member companies have generated many enquiries from their membership this year and are reporting another successful year with increased business yet again. The Christmas party and Banquet was free to members and their partners and seventy-eight members attended at the Mulberry Tree Restaurant for what an amazing evening with live entertainment and a wonderful four course dining experience. We also hosted the company table event where members could book tables for their staff Christmas parties together with fellow members. This evening was a resounding success and was very much enjoyed by all with dancing into the early hours. This year we are offering free membership of the Network of Rural Business Forums to any company wishing to join and to our existing members. To join complete, the to join Form on the NRBF website.

CHEQUERS INN

The Chequers is a traditional 15th century village inn situated in the centre of Laddingford, run by Charles & Tracey Leaver for the past 22 years. The Chequers provides good quality, value for money menu in a relaxed, friendly environment as well as holding social activities, being the focal point of contact for the village and supporting the community. The Chequers works closely with Laddingford Primary School supporting and fundraising for them. Several fundraising events were held through 2015 with over £5,000 being raised for charity. Annual events such as the Laddingford Flower Show and the Real Ale festival which have been held annually for 19 years continue to be well supported. Sseveral organisations meet or are run from The Chequers including a cycle group (The Chequers Racers) a swimming group (The Chequers Otters) and a running group (The Chequers Chasers). Local beekeepers also meet there monthly as well as friendship group (The Epicureans). The Chequers was delighted to win several awards in 2015, Enterprise Community Pub Southern Region, Summer Flower Display and Christmas Interior Decoration. The Chequers is also recognised by real ale group CAMRA & Cask Marque. The Chequers is open seven days a week all year round (all day Saturday & Sunday).

EDEN

Eden Hair and Beauty continued to have another good year. Congratulations to Elsie and Danielle for completing their advanced Colour and Cutting Colouring Courses this year and Elaine for completing another Vidal Sassoon Cutting and Colouring Course. Our Yalding hairdressers and barbers Darren who lives in Yalding and has 25 years' experience and together with our other fully qualified experienced hairdressers Courtney and Lane will be happy to help with all aspects of hairdressing and barbering.

MOBY DICKS – FISH AND CHIPS

No longer operating.

ORCHARD VIEW GARAGE AND CLASSICS

We had a good solid year with all staff staying the same. We had two work experience boys during the year, both of which were very good and keen. We continue to keep abreast of the latest cars and technologies that are developing rapidly. Future plans include moving our 3 workshops about to achieve a dedicated diagnostic centre and tyre sales area. I am extremely grateful and never take for granted the support that I receive from Yalding parish residents, so I hope that I will continue to be of good service to everyone

POST OFFICE

We are settled back in our re-built home and are hard at work keeping the Post Office and locally sourced retail business moving forward. As last year, Royal Mail is changing their prices again customers will lose on some and gain on others. The emphasis on increasing parcels trade has been very successful and the parcel prices are up a little. Stamp prices for UK and International letters increased by a penny and five pence respectively. The possibility of Post Office Ltd (POL) closing our little branch and incorporating the Post Office into a local larger retail outlet has moved on a little bit. The Branch Transformation programme is part of a Government initiative to remove the Post Office subsidy on a permanent basis. The intention is to fund a radical change to how Post Offices are operated...the emphasis will now be on far larger retail businesses that can open for longer hours. These are called Post Office Locals. The loss of more Government transactions means less work for Post Offices so it makes sense to have shops that are less reliant on Government and Mails work. Subsequently POL has approached local retail outlets to ask whether anyone would like to incorporate our Post Office into their business. The answer has been that, at present, no business feels able to do so at this time. This is good news in the short term only. We can continue operating as we are until such time as either Tim retires and the new Postmaster's contract will make it impossible to operate or POL terminates the current contract and removes the Government subsidy as and when it decides. Should POL remove or significantly cut the subsidy I will close the Post Office immediately. It would be impossible to operate as a going concern from that moment. There is a possibility that POL will classify us as a Community Post Office on a rolling temporary basis, subject to another retailer possibly applying to take it over at a later date. This would protect us from a degree of uncertainty for a few years only. However, my opinion is that, for the guaranteed long term future of the Post Office in Yalding is that it must go to another retailer at some point. We will have more news on this subject in the coming months and will keep everyone up to date with developments. Meanwhile we will continue to be as helpful as we can and offer an individual service to all our customers. We have a Facebook page as Yalding Post Office (open group) and have a website. www.YaldingPostOffice.weebly.com

TEA POT ISLAND

The teapot exhibition doesn't stop growing; we have added 400 unique teapots to the collection which is now greater than 8000. Our ongoing support for the Kent Air Ambulance charity gleans funds from the sale of second hand books which have been kindly donated by our regular customers, and the joy of young and old as they throw their coins into the wishing well teapot and make their wish, has increased to a total of £1,025. Our "Fish Night Friday" and "BBQ Saturday" evenings were well received. As Summer approaches with warmer weather we will resume this popular activity. The latest addition for customers visiting Teapot Island is a new play area for energetic children. They will be welcome to enjoy this new attraction providing a responsible adult is with them at all times.

THE ANCHOR INN

We had a strong summer. Winter was quieter but we are now seeing more & more new faces through the door as we move forward. Weekends are getting busier as we start to move into spring/summer. Sundays roasts are popular and we are seeing regulars now coming in for our roasts. We held a very enjoyable Caribbean night with a live Caribbean singer, it was a fun night and everyone had a good dance and gave us positive feedback. Turning our snug into Santa's grotto and then an Easter workshop was great for the kids and we received a lot of positive feedback about this. Charity Casino night soon- 14th May. £10 per ticket which includes chips for use on our casino tables, welcome drink and nibbles. Live music, events for family's and beer festival all planned for the summer. We change our menu seasonally and are excited about our next new menu launch which has a lot of new and interesting dishes but still keeping the core pub classics. This was launched on 20th April. We are due to close in September for a full refurbishment with plans still in progress. Any feedback from the parish and residents in the area would be greatly appreciated so that we can look at our strengths and weaknesses. We can then address and change where possible. We would love to increase our local trade and support the village where we can. Any help we can give to you whether it be help in a charity event or use of our building for coffee morning etc. Please let me know and I'd be happy to help. We would also be interested in being involved with any village events such as farmer's markets, church fairs and apple picking.

THE GEORGE

Our first year at The George pub will soon be here and it has been ten months of learning. We have never had to experience the challenges that we have had since coming to Yalding but some have been rewarding as we have met some wonderful people who have taken us in as if they have known us for years. But on the other hand Yalding has over 2000 residents with all the bantering that went on when Joe was going to turn The George into flats we thought that we would have many more people happy to see us open as a pub again, that has not been the case and find many very pedigrees. We are trying to get The George back into the community we have had many trials and gotten over many of them and we as a family orientated business hope that the people of Yalding can see that this is what we want to do and bring the family's together, youngsters a place to go that is safe and near home. We are having a children's playground placed in the garden which we hope will attract more families and with a 9.00pm curfew for children the adults can have some alone time to enjoy a drink and music, we have a great new menu now and our pizzas are going good. Will be starting our barbeque Sundays as soon as the weather gets warmer, these are all things that we hope will bring more of the village down to The George. We will be opening the garden for Yuletide and bringing more use to the large outside area that we have. We hope to be doing more events as we have a great kitchen to cater for any occasion and have already been doing some successful themed days.

YALDING GARDENS

This much loved and historic Kent garden has been fully restored and reopens as a wedding and events venue this spring. The Gardens, formally known as Yalding Organic Gardens, a 12.5-acre site on the edge of Yalding, Kent, have been fully restored and were officially reopened by Amanda Cottrell, OBE, Patron of Visit Kent, on Wednesday 27 April 2016, over five years after they were closed. The Gardens will be available for weddings, events and also open to the public on certain days. Visitors will once again be able to enjoy the beautiful gardens, divided into 16 distinct areas. The Gardens were originally created as a display garden for the Henry Doubleday Research Association, (now called Garden Organic). The site was gifted, along with a sum of money from local organic farmers Donald and Pixie Cooper. The gardens opened to the public in 1995 and were once described as "among the most inspirational garden acres anywhere, for everyone" before finally closing in 2011. Despite the efforts of volunteers, the gardens had fallen into disrepair and large areas were significantly overgrown. The new owners, Rod and Nicki Clark, bought the site in 2013 and have made a significant investment to restore and replant the gardens, following the original planting guidelines and with one of the original gardeners on hand to give advice to the team. The contemporary barn has also been restored and two bespoke interlinked Tipi's erected, to provide a unique and flexible space for entertaining and dining. It is now a fantastic new venue for civil ceremonies and events, which will help create a number of new jobs and provide a sustainable business model to ensure The Garden's long term survival. The production areas of The Gardens will also help provide fresh produce for the catering team, as well as a stunning and ever changing backdrop for wedding photographs. The Gardens are divided into 16 areas which demonstrate planting styles through different ages including a medieval garden, Tudor garden, 19th century cottage garden, Victorian Garden and an Edwardian garden originally inspired by the style of Gertrude Jekyll. There is also an area of orchards and a large fruit garden planted with a number of varieties including apples, pears, cherries, nectarines, tayberries, blackberries, raspberries and kiwi, demonstrating Kent's long heritage as the garden of England. "The garden's certification as organic expired a number of years ago before we bought the site and so the phrase has now been dropped from the name. We do however plan

to manage the gardens as sustainably as possible, using a minimal amount of pesticide on the advice of experts, where plants and trees are really struggling with pests and disease. "There are a few changes which previous visitors to the site will see, for example the apothecary garden will now be called the herb garden and the production garden will be increased in size slightly, so both areas can provide more produce for guests to enjoy. The Garden for Today was an area that was never fully established, so this has been renamed as the Contemplation garden and will be planted with a suitable range of plants. The organic Food For All garden will still provide food but will be known as the BBQ garden and will be a space for demonstration cooking and outside dining. There is a considerable amount of wildlife and birds in the gardens which we will support and encourage." The Gardens will also play a role to help educate and encourage the next generation of gardeners and horticulturists, as there will shortly be training courses run in conjunction with local schools and colleges. Young people will be able to get hands on experience in this historic and unique garden.

YALDING TAXIS

Yalding Taxis are based in the village and are now fully established as the local taxi service. We specialise in local journeys for Yalding, East Peckham, Paddock Wood, Maidstone, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding areas as well as providing Airport Transfers and other medium/long distance journeys. We offer a 24/7 service, 365 days a year, and have both male and female drivers available. We also offer a courier service as required. We are looking forward to another good year building our business and thank all our valued customers for their continued support. Many Thanks Mike, Dee, Alun and Steph

YALDING TEA ROOMS

The Village Tearooms – The tearooms have again had a wonderful year, we all truly enjoy being in there with customers and friends, old and new! Watching the children in our parish grow-up and move on from primary to secondary school, and we love how they still pop in or wave as they wander by. We have again continued to support as many charities as we can, and have raised and helped others to raise over £2500 this year for Cancer Research, The Heart of Kent Hospice, The Hospice in the Weald, Oxfam and local charities to our villages. Our plans for the upcoming year include some menu changes, and bringing in children's picnic boxes to eat in or takeaway. We will continue to raise as much money as we can for charity, with this year our main focus being Cancer Research – if any local companies have raffle prizes they would like to donate, please email rachel@dizrat.com. It is vital that all of us villagers support local and small trade as it's what keeps our village special. So a big thank you to every one of you for supporting us, and especially huge thanks to; Sophie, Amanda, Sue, Jenna, Matthew and Jack, and not forgetting Doc Jeary! #TeamTearooms.

ZARDA

We have now celebrated our third birthday and look forward to many more, thank you to everyone who has supported us. Remember, we can also cater for your outside party at home or elsewhere.

PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan will be submitted for consideration in the next few weeks. This is the culmination of many years work including evidence gathering and several rounds of public consultation. At the point of submission this will give the Council a 5-year housing land supply which provides a position to robustly defend spurious planning applications. The final acceptance of this important document by the government will occur in early 2017. Planning continues to provide new challenges, for example solar energy plants. Although this has not affected Yalding directly, however the planning committee have seen four applications in the past three months. Three were rejected and one agreed and agricultural land is vulnerable to this type of energy generation application. Maidstone Borough Council opened an Enterprise Hub in 2015 to provide office space and supporting business facilities for start-up organisations. All the office space is occupied however there are a few hot desks with fast broadband speed still available at Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone. The Council are keen to assist fledgling businesses as they seek to flourish in the competitive environment. Homelessness and associated housing problems continue to apply further pressure to budgets which are already heavily squeezed. In line with other authorities across Kent we have agreed to house a number of refugees from Syria. Although the Council have opened Aylesbury House and Magnolia House which take those in need of housing, further properties are under consideration as the Borough Council seek to fulfil their statutory housing duty. Since the floods from Christmas 2014 receded feasibility work by the Environment Agency, funded by Maidstone Borough Council and others, has been undertaken to ascertain where flood storage protection could be sited. The options for protection are costly and would not provide a guarantee against future incidents. Although the Borough Council are not the lead authority for any scheme it will continue to press for a solution which will help residents. With further squeezes on the Council's funding for the forthcoming year it is even more important that the Council edges closer to becoming an organisation that is able to sustain current service levels via lower costs. The Council's ability to be a wholly commercially focussed entity is some years away, however it is important that it seeks further opportunities to generate its own income.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

This report from Kent County Council highlights some of the projects Paulina Stockell has supported with her Combined Members Grants and illustrates the range of projects, problems and events the County Councillor has been involved with over the last twelve months. In addition to her local work Paulina is Chair of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and very involved in all aspects of KCC's work including the need to balance the books as demand for its services grow, prices rise and Government grants reduce.

Key issues for the County Council in 2015/16:

- Rising demand for social care (adults and children) – this now accounts for over half our spending
- Continuing large reductions in our grant from central government – £58m less for 2016/17
- Increase in landfill waste from households (Landfill waste tax has risen to £84.40 a tonne)

"Our focus will be on improving lives by ensuring that every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses". Paul Carter, KCC Leader. One of the ways KCC does this is through individual County Members and their involvement in their divisions.

Examples support provided in Maidstone Rural West:

2015-16 has seen a variety of issues being tackled on behalf of the residents of Maidstone. Rural West as well as providing support to a number of worthy projects including:

- Supporting various projects for children, young people and their families through support to the Yalding and Laddingford FC and all the local Primary schools.
- Supporting a number of projects which benefit of the communities of Maidstone Rural West including providing funding for Linton Cricket Club and Hunton Cricket club as well as supporting the cost of producing Parish magazines.

- Supporting a number of improvements to local community facilities including Teston Village Hall, Nettlestead Village Hall and Marden Memorial Hall.
- Supporting various improvements to the local environment and support to Medway Countryside Partnership project.
- Addressing a number of highways issues in the area raised by local residents and the Parish Councils

Issues and Projects already being addressed for 2016 – 17

- Supporting local residents and Parish Councils with improved road safety and road maintenance day to day including a commitment to 20mph Zones outside all schools in Maidstone Rural West.
- Supporting projects to enhance the environment preserve the character of the area including the Marden in bloom project.
- Continued support for partnership working for the benefit of the communities of Maidstone Rural West.
- Continued support to local community projects Maidstone Rural West.
- Continued support to residents of Maidstone Rural West to access services locally through increased provision for all including minority groups and those with a disability or illness.
- Continued to support Young People having access to quality services locally.

Each Member can recommend grants from their allowance of £25,000 for 2015-16 to be spent on local community initiatives or highways projects; this is decreasing to £20,000 for 2016/17. Your council tax payment to Kent County Council funds over 300 services many of which we hope you will never need to use such as the Coroner's Court and emergency response.

Here are some of the services provided by your County Council:

- Home to school transport for 7,500 children to mainstream schools and 3,800 children with Special Educational Needs
- Care for nearly 1,500 Looked after Children in fostering and residential care
- A network of children's centres, preventative work with more than 11,000 children a month avoiding the need for more expensive care
- Care for nearly 4,000 older people in their own homes
- Care for over 1,000 adults with Learning Disabilities through supported living arrangements
- Care for 5,500 elderly and vulnerable adults in residential homes
- Direct payments for nearly 4,000 elderly and vulnerable adults to make their own care arrangements
- 16.9m free journeys on public transport for elderly people on their bus passes
- Maintaining and managing network over 5,000 miles of road 4,000 miles of pavement
- Disposing of and recycling 711,000 tonnes of domestic waste
- 99 libraries attracting 6.5m visitors a year
- 1.4m public enquiries through the contact centre

We are also investing in extending access to superfast broadband to the rural areas of Kent and in extra school places where our population is growing.

KENT POLICE (PCSO)

Over the last twelve months I have continued to work within the Marden & Yalding Ward. Some examples of work carried out:

- Surgeries/drop ins – Yalding Farmers Market/Yalding Train Station
- Weekly catch ups with Golding homes and joint home visits carried out – Yalding/Laddingford
- Linking in with Laddingford/Yalding Schools
- Joint Family Management Officer visits to support local families
- Regular contact with Southeastern railway
- Regular contact with British Transport Police
- Joint operations held with Kent Police, Southeastern railway and British Transport Police to combat crime, antisocial behaviour and drugs within Yalding
- Horse Watch/Security Event held for local residents
- Nuisance diaries issued to residents to keep log of events
- Op Innovate – Rural initiatives - CPT (Community Policing Team) and Special Constables deployed to Yalding – road checks completed, Police dogs carrying out patrols within area.
- Reports of nuisance motorbikes/quad bikes – persons identified and spoken to
- The Community Safety Unit (CSU) have been used to combat local issues – taskings have been put in place and CCTV deployed within the area to prevent and deter Crime and Antisocial behaviour
- The Kent Police website shows a breakdown of crime and locations – just need to put in your postcode on the home page. Follow up visits are conducted to local victims of crime
- All antisocial behaviour victims are followed up by myself, whether a call or a visit is requested

Anyone wishing to contact me about any issues or crime prevention advice can call the non-emergency Police number 101 and ask for local officer PCSO Nicola Morris 56202. Please continue to report any suspicious persons/vehicles/nuisance through 101. Thank you for your continued support in making Yalding safe.

GOLDING HOMES

Parking issues have been looked into by Golding Homes and I can confirm Golding Homes are not pursuing parking improvements to Lyngs Close. We also discussed disabled spaces and future permissions for hard standings within gardens, including drop kerbs. Both of which Golding Homes would not unreasonably decline however would ultimately be down to Highways for approval via their formal application process. We do have some garages available for rent in Lyngs Close if residents are interested. There have been no incidents of anti-social behaviour to report and no flooding.

CONTACT DETAILS

PARISH COUNCIL

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KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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PARISH BUDGET 2016/17

Buildings	Post Office Rent	6,500				
	Public Toilets	6,500				
General Administration	Bank Charges	115				
Support Grants	Yalding Village Hall	500				
	Parish Magazine	500				
	MV Railway	250				
	Grant Pot	1,000				
	Hire of Halls	700				
	Insurance	1,250				
	Legal & Accountancy	500				
	Office Equipment	500				
	Printing/Stationery/Postage	500				
	Repairs & Maintenance	500				
	Salary & Clerk's Expenses	15,923				
	Signs & Noticeboards	2,500				
	Subscriptions	1,039				
	Telephone	1,500				
	Training	500				
	Website Costs	250				
	Yalding Church Clock	225				
	Garage Rent	500				
Open Spaces	Churchyards	500				
	Play Equipment	1,500				
	Miscellaneous	2,000				
	Verges	1,330				
	Village Green	540				
	Fowle Hall Green	220				
	Jubilee Field	460				
	Kintons	2,848				
	Lees	2,000				
	The Tatt	420				
	Lees Fencing	500				
The Fen		500				
Playscheme	Cost	3,300				
Street Lighting	Electricity	2,200				
	Repairs	1,500				
Cleaning & Litter	Litter Collection	610				
	Litter Bins	500				
Miscellaneous Expenses	Christmas Lights	7,700		Income	Precept	57,648
	Floodlighting	500			LCTS	3,964
	War Memorial	500			PSS	10,463
	Other	500			Rent Car Park	3,330
Parish Activities	Parish Events	5,000			Rent PO	4,000
River Wall		20,000			Wayleaves	49
Flood Contingency		2,000			Interest	25
Traffic Town Bridge		2,500			DEFRA	321
Neighbourhood Plan		7,500				79,800
Lock-Up		2,500			B/Fwd 2016	47,944
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		111,380				127,744

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on

Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in Yalding Village Hall

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 May 2015
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's report for 2015/16
5. To accept reports from Yalding Parish Charities
6. To accept reports from Yalding Parish Organisations
7. To accept reports from the Principle Authorities
8. To accept report from Kent Police
9. Finance Review 2015/16
10. Presentation of Budget 2016/17
11. Flooding in The Parish – Update
12. Neighbourhood Plan – Overview
13. Speedwatch
14. Any Other Business

Followed by

The Annual Parish Council Meeting

Agenda

1. Election of The Chairman
 2. Election of The Vice Chairman
 3. Apologies for Absence
 4. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 19 May 2015 were approved and signed at the Parish Council meeting held on 7 July 2015
 5. Motion to approve The Parish Council's Risk Assessment
 6. Motion to Approve Fixed Assets Register
 7. Motion to Approve The Statement of Internal Control
 8. Motion to Approve Amended Standing Orders
 10. Motion to Re-adopt Councils Policies and Procedures – note Financial Regulations are to be updated
 11. Note that the Insurance Policy is in place until 2018.
 12. Confirmation of Working Parties and Memberships
- Working Parties:
- Local Council Award scheme
 - Yuletide Market
 - Flooding
- Memberships:
- Medway Valley Railway Partnership
 - Farmers' Market
 - Village Hall Committee
 - Maidstone Area Committee of Kent Association of Local Councils
 - Police Forum
 - Yalding Charities
 - Yalding Education Foundation
 - Yalding and Laddingford Sports Association
 - Catchment Improve Groups (Rivers Beult and Teise)