

# Parish News

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF FRANT, ERIDGE & BELLS YEW GREEN



*Divot repair evening at The Nevill Golf Club, photo by Brenda Cliff*

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## From the Rectory



I have been reflecting on national statistics from the [biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk) that churchgoing is increasing, and in particular increasing amongst young people.

The conclusion of the poll that was repeated from 2018 and 2024 said this:

“In churches across society something amazing is happening, challenging long-held predictions about the future of Christianity in the twenty-first century. Where once we saw aging congregations and a steady decline in attendance, we see dramatic growth, led by the young.”

For churches and the communities in which we serve this is very exciting, to see people coming to church and getting involved is such a joy. Indeed, I was looking at the numbers in our own services in this parish and we see more people coming, particularly for our special services, with Frant Church Services at Christmas being bigger here than in any recent years and Eridge Church had double the number of people came to our Easter service than in previous years.

I wonder why this is? I don't think it is that the church is doing anything dramatically different to what we had done before (what is change?!), I rather think it is reflection about where our society is, and most importantly what God is doing.

One of the things I think it is important for clergy to do is to be listening. Listening to

God obviously, but also listening to the voices of those about us.

What I am hearing is a sense in our country of losing our moral way. I was listening to a podcast by some famous political people and they were telling how they were hearing this, and told the story of how one chap worried that if our country was forced to defend itself again in war, whether we have the moral ability and stamina to do so.

What I also hear is the lack of clarity and answers when it comes to the biggest questions of life and truth. My wife and I went to the cinema for the first time in years this week and watched the new Mission Impossible Film. It was very good watch apart from the fact that it was apparently second part and we hadn't seen the previous film's first part! In the film there is a malevolent AI which is trying to destroy the world and it does it by using the internet to confuse the human race about truth, morality etc. Thankfully we don't quite live in that world, but we certainly resonate with those problems.

Where is the answer to those questions of truth found? If there is no God, then there is no ultimate purpose and morality – that is the problem. What we are seeing, is that many more people are looking for the answers in the church, and finding the answers in the Bible, and in the life and message of Jesus Christ.

—Rev Brendan



News from the Pews

Our Festival Church returned with a spectacular Bank Holiday Weekend service in May. There was fire lighting, cooking on the open flames (sausages and toffee apples, naturally), and a bonus ride on Brendan’s miniature railway, winding its way proudly around the Rectory Garden. This alternative outdoor worship is a real hit with families and continues to be a joyful expression of community and faith.

A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who work so hard to manage our churchyards. As you can see from the pictures below, Eridge Churchyard has certainly benefited from such work and is now a spectacularly beautiful space bursting with colourful flowers across the neatly mowed grass. Thank you!

We’ve continued to be thoroughly spoiled by our Frant Church concerts. Looking ahead (but only just—this one’s right around the corner!), Saturday 30th August sees a very special visit from one of the UK’s finest classical guitarists, Raymond Burley. Raymond has toured across the world and performed with leading orchestras including the Hallé, the Philharmonia, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. It’s no small thing that Frant Church continues to attract



musicians of such calibre, and this promises to be another extraordinary night.

Continuing with news of music in Frant Church, one of the most exciting developments this summer has been the birth of the Weald Youth Music Forum based here in Frant. This new initiative is all about bringing music closer to home. The aim is to make music more accessible to people in our rural villages, inspire young people and families through live performances, broaden musical horizons, and enrich our church services with more musical involvement. It’s a community-driven effort to nurture a love for music and give it a central place in village life.

The first concert in this new initiative will be held on Sunday 6th July at 4pm in Frant Church and features the Frant School Choir performing alongside the Lewes Sinfonietta. The hugely talented Ellie Gingell, a friend of Frant, will also be joining the programme. We warmly invite everyone to come and support this wonderful step forward in local musical life.

Parish Round-up

Summer has well and truly arrived in Frant Parish, bringing with it long



golden evenings, the soft buzz of bees, and the unmistakable smell of cut grass (and perhaps a little barbecue smoke drifting from back gardens). The hedgerows are full, the fields are glowing, and our Parish pubs have been doing a fine job of keeping villagers happy in their sun-soaked gardens. Nothing quite says “British summer” like a cold drink in the shade of a pub parasol.

The Open Gardens season is also upon us and later in the magazine there are details of the hugely successful Open Gardens and Plant Sale held in Bells Yew Green in May.

On Saturday 21st June, Frant was the place to be for our Open Gardens Day. From charming cottage plots to impressive sprawling grounds, the variety on show was delightful. The family fun dog competition was a highlight and live music filled the air while tea, cake, and food flowed throughout the day. Thank you to all who opened their gardens, baked their hearts out, and helped make it such a warm and memorable village celebration.

Back in May, Frant School rolled out the picnic blankets and union flags for a very special VE Day picnic. The children dressed up, enjoyed a classic wartime-style lunch, and learned about the courage and sacrifice of that generation

Eridge held a community fun day in May which was enjoyed by so many families as detailed later on in this magazine.

In school news, we were thrilled to welcome 15 new reception children and their families to Frant School during a special event at The Stables and our Forest School site. The children got stuck into charcoal art, leaf butterfly making, den building and more, while the parents enjoyed cake and a friendly chat. We’re excited to see these young explorers join the school in September.

As the sun continues to shine on our Parish and the hedgerows hum with life, we look back with joy on a summer already full of community, music and celebration. We can’t wait to see what the rest of the season brings. Whether you’re soaking up some live music, walking the lanes with an ice cream in hand, or catching up with neighbours in a pub garden, we hope your summer continues to be full of all the best bits of village life.

Wishing you a glorious July and August—and perhaps see you at the next concert.

St Alban’s, Frant & Holy Trinity, Eridge

Rector

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



www.frantchurch.org  
Churchwarden

Juliet Nightingale—01580 200403  
Kyle Laidler—07775 855866

Services for

July / August 2025



www.eridgechurch.org  
Churchwardens

Jonathan Lynn—07788 597051  
Stephen Barnes—861302

10.30am	Frant as One (All Age)	6th July	Communion Service	9.15am
10:30am	Communion Service	13th July	Morning Prayer	9:15am
5.00pm	Festival Church			
10:30am	Morning Worship	20st July	Communion Service	9:15am
10:30am	Morning Worship	27th July	Communion Service	9:15am
5.00pm	Festival Church			
10.30am	Frant as One (All Age)	3rd August	Communion Service	9.15am
10.30am	Communion Service	10th August	Morning Prayer	9.15am
10.30am	Morning Worship	17th August	Communion Service	9.15am
10.30am	Morning Worship	24th August	Communion Service	9.15am
10.30am	Communion Service	31st August	Morning Prayer	9.15am





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# Parish Council News

We had our Annual Parish meeting on the 31st May. Slightly different format this year, on a Saturday and during the day. Some excellent presentations from Bob Standley our County Councillor about the proposed Devolution plans which are progressing swiftly with elections due next year and I believe the Village Hall already booked! Still not really clear where the Parish Council fits in with these huge changes and a Mayor possibly based in Lewes but hopefully we should know more soon. Police Sussex Rural Crime Team also made an interesting and useful contribution to the meeting. Their remit is extensive and for example includes maritime wrecks of the Sussex coast! They are very aware of the recent spate of rural crime in our area and our keen to give us as much support, advice and guidance as they possibly can.

Esquire, the developer for the proposed Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club move from Kent to East Sussex (+ 450 houses) are holding an exhibition of their proposals in Frant Village Hall on the 16th July and will be there in person to answer any questions you may have.

Worth a visit to see for yourselves what is proposed, answer any questions you may have and you can then make your thoughts known to Wealden District Council when the formal plans are submitted-possibly late July. The Parish Council's position remains unchanged at this point in time and that is the Natural Landscape (formerly AONB) status of this land in the High Weald must be protected.

The Puffin crossing plans for the A267 in Frant have, dare I say it, hit a bump in the road, because of some software issues in completing the final plans. That has now been overcome and the final plans are now imminent which means we can then progress to actually getting quotes for the construction to begin.

As I said at the Annual Parish Meeting, I am very grateful and we should all be, for the support and commitment of all the Parish Councillors who always put the Parish first and make a great team which eases the decision-making process. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Andrew MacDonald-Brown who, after many years sterling service, is leaving us to move back to Tunbridge Wells. We wish him and his family well. Almost in the same breath



I would also like to welcome Councillor Alex Oram who has recently joined us.

Finally some more good news! As you may recall Bells Yew Green Village Hall recently went through a challenging time but with a supreme effort from members of the local community it has now turned the corner. A recent fund raising event in BYG raised over £1,800 to add to the Hall's coffers! Brilliant!

—Stuart Crookshank

# Bells Yew Green Plant Sale

The morning of Sunday, May 25th dawned clear and sunny (despite worrying forecasts earlier that week for wind and rain) for our fund-raising sale in aid of Bells Yew Green Village Hall at Sunninglye. All three families living at Sunninglye at the oast, the farm and the farmhouse had joined together to plan and stage this event to support the village hall.

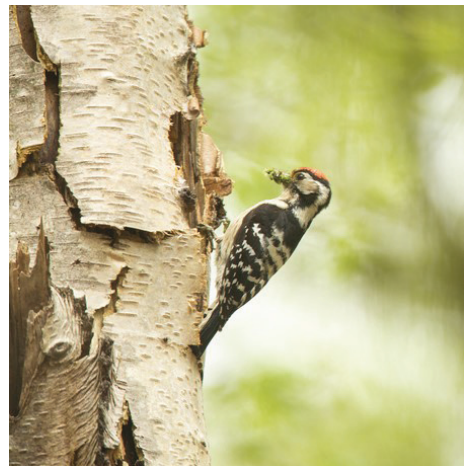
That afternoon visitors flooded into the carpark and made their way firstly to see the exhibition of pottery, paintings and jewellery for sale by local artists and buy from local craftspeople. Next stop was a visit to bottle feed the lambs on the farm and meet Norman the

donkey, Nutmeg the pony together with a pot-bellied pig, chickens and goats. Further down the track visitors were greeted to an abundance of flower, shrub and vegetable plants for sale which had been donated by kind supporters. For the vegetable garden there were bags of manure and sheep's wool for sale too. There was local honey, hand made wooden plant supports and hurdles on sale and the opportunity to admire the skills of our local group of wood carvers. After all that excitement it was time for a sit down with tea and homemade cakes which could be enjoyed on the farmhouse lawn whilst being serenaded by Steve on his guitar. Under the cherry tree there were a series of attractions to amuse the younger children.

What an amazing afternoon it was for all. A huge thank you to those who transported tables and chairs, to the kind people who donated plants and cakes and especially to those who worked tirelessly on the day. A big thank you too to all of you who came and made the afternoon such a success for with all your help we raised an astonishing £1,935.90 for Bells Yew Green Village Hall.

—Sue Petrie





RSPB IMAGES

### RSPB Broadwater Warren

Welcome to our 6-monthly newsletter of what's been happening and what's planned at the Weald Reserves – Broadwater Warren, Fore Wood, Morris's Wood and Rowlands Wood. We had a very busy autumn and winter completing all the habitat management work that must be squeezed into the months when wildlife breeding is paused. It's been a relief to have a warm and fairly dry spring, the bird nesting has started, butterflies are on the wing and the first reptiles have emerged from their winter hideaways. Slowworms, common lizards and at least one adder have been reported. In this newsletter we have concentrated on the work that we have carried out since our last edition in November 2024 and other features include an article on the fascinating history of Fore Wood, including some insights into the activities of a top secret team as we remember VE day some 80 years ago.

### » Forestry Work at Broadwater Warren

In our last newsletter we reported that the felling of spruce as part of the Forestry Commission's plan to create a barrier to stop the spread northwards of the very damaging spruce bark beetle had been completed and, no evidence of the beetle had been found on the reserve. So far so good, and the initial work had largely been done in dry weather. However, things started to go rapidly downhill, as the weather took a turn for the worst and we had a lengthy spell of very wet weather, which meant the contractor's forestry machines turned several stretches of ride into an almost impassable quagmire. In some places the woodland was so wet that even the

huge machines couldn't access the felled timber and a large timber forwarding machine got stuck in the mud. This meant that some of the timber couldn't be extracted and had to be left in-situ. As a result, parts of the reserve looked a real mess and we are sorry if that spoilt your visits. There is always a clause in the forestry contracts that rides will be made good afterwards, but the constant rain also delayed that work. We are pleased to say that all the damaged tracks have now been repaired and the dry weather has really helped to firm them up – no danger now of wet feet after your wellies disappeared into a very muddy puddle. However, it wasn't only the weather that was going to disrupt our plans. After the felled timber had been stacked in the loading bay on the western heath ready for collection, the Forestry Commission made a routine visit to check the logs for any sign of the beetle and to our great dismay they found some. It meant that the spruce logs couldn't leave the site and had to be chipped and taken off to be burnt as biomass for power generation. The inaccessible logs that had been left in the woodland had to be extracted by a tracked excavator, before being chipped. The reserve team also had to fell some remaining spruce trees and burn the wood on site. There are approximately 80 spruce trees remaining within a 300m demarcation zone of where the beetle was found. We have been issued with a Statutory Plant Heath Notice, which orders us to remove these remaining trees within the next 2 years to help stop the spread of the beetle.

We heard that the beetle had also been found in spruce in neighbouring Eridge Park where the Commission has also placed a statutory order for the spruce to be removed.

The upshot of all this is that you'll find some areas of woodland look pretty bleak at the moment, in particular around the zig zag board walk and Midges Bridge (which we wrote about last time), but with the dense spruce canopy gone and light flooding in we should soon see signs of native plants and trees appearing and in time a mix of native trees and plants will develop in these areas.

You may also notice some strange contraptions in the woodland that look like large fireworks ready to be launched on November 5th. These are in fact spruce bark beetle traps that have been installed by the Forestry Commission

to monitor the presence of the beetle. We understand that the Forestry Commission will be checking the traps once a fortnight for the next 3 years!

### » Other habitat work at Broadwater

This autumn and winter also saw our own team of staff and volunteers busy on the heath working to keep the birch under control, which will be a challenging and ongoing task. Along with contractors they also coppiced some areas of birch and sweet chestnut, especially above Decoy Pond, to encourage new growth. It has now become routine to protect this new growth from deer browsing by surrounding the coppiced areas with deer fencing. This year we constructed our longest ever stretch of fencing which surrounds a large coppice plot and stretches for just over half a kilometre.

We are fortunate in having enough resources, both at Broadwater and our other reserves, to make all our own fence posts which saves quite a lot of money.

We have worked hard on the rides this season where we mow the edges on rotation, i.e. one side of a ride one year and the other side a year or two later. The mowing helps to keep grass, bramble and bracken in check and allows low-growing wildflowers to flourish. The ride edge alongside The Cathedral is a good example with flowers such as Tormentil and Heath Milkwort in flower as we write in early May.

### » Livestock

The No-fence collars allowed us to expand goat-grazing to most compartments on the Eastern Heath at Broadwater Warren, which enabled us to refrain from using herbicides for scrub control for a second year-running. The



ALAN LOWETH

goats are proving helpful in removing dense bramble prior to scrub control work, and effective at aftermath grazing of woody regrowth and new saplings following scrub being removed. Our system of using hurdles and moveable shelters was put to the test during several moves between compartments, but has ultimately been a great success!

Following on from this, we have purchased more No-fence collars and have committed to purchasing 10 more goats, which are likely to arrive on-site in July. The new herd will initially be introduced to the Northern Heath, where it will under-go No-fence training for several months. We think our existing herd is having a positive impact on the heath, but that we need more hooves on the ground if we are going to succeed in controlling scrub on a large scale.

The seasonal return of Konik ponies to Broadwater is also something to look forward to in coming months. The current plan is to bring 4 ponies from RSPB Farnham Heath (possibly including Max & Glen who were part of our original herd) to the reserve in late August/early September, and for them to stay on-site until early November.

—Alan Loweth

### Wealden Mowing

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### Frant Parish Friendship Group

We had an extra meeting in April to help members combat the increasing problem of telephone and internet scams. Daniel Godfrey gave us a very informative, if a little scary, talk on how to spot and avoid these annoying and dangerous intrusions. His parting advice to us all was when faced with unknown calls or emails requesting urgent attention pause take time to consider don't rush into any action and if possible talk the matter over with friends or family.

Our last meeting before the summer break on April 24th was to be a talk on Charles Dickens however our speaker was unable to attend so instead we watched a DVD entitled 'You've never had it so good!' This charted life from the end of the second world war namely VE day through the 1950's when life for the average Briton changed beyond recognition. It was a great trip down memory lane.

Our new venture of games afternoons at the George Inn has been very popular and a big thanks to Dom for hosting this.

VE DAY – On VE day we invited members to tea and cake in the Stables and to bring along any memorabilia they had and their memories. Many of our members were children at the end of the war but our oldest member Joy Bruce was 20. She was working in the Foreign Office when the news came through and along with many others left work joined the huge crowds and headed to Buckingham Palace to see the King and Queen It was very inspirational listening to the many stories some of them inevitably sad ones; as along with the joy of cessation of hostilities there was the coming to terms with the loss of loved ones. We are hoping to collate the various stories of this amazing time and along with photographs will include this in the next Parish News.

We will be returning in September with a tea party at the George on the 4th and our first afternoon meeting will be Thursday 25th when our speaker will be Joe Mendell and his subject Houdini. The exercise classes will start again on the 18th September. New members always welcome.

Enquiries. Valerie Palmer [valeriepalmer1500@gmail.com](mailto:valeriepalmer1500@gmail.com)



### Frant CE Primary School Choir

On 6 July at 4pm, the Weald Youth Music Forum at Frant are holding a Concert of Young People featuring the Lewes Sinfonietta – including Ellie Gingell, Francesca Hughes, Will Smithyes and Robbie Hughes. Playing Mozart, Dvorak and Haydn

There will be a retiring collection. All welcome.

Another term seems to have flown by here at Frant School. Please enjoy reading about our news.

- Our Year 6 children took their SATs this term. They were incredibly mature about the process and represented the school brilliantly. We would also like to say a massive thank you to all the class teachers who provided SATs breakfast every morning for the class.
- Year 3 and 4 have had their Forest School time this term with Mrs Fox, having a fantastic time cooking, climbing, diggings and exploring the outdoors.
- We had a PJ day on Friday 16th May to raise money for our school charity, working with a school in Nkuringo, Africa. We have raised £86 to help support the funding for a little boy, Leonari, to attend school.
- Hazel Class (Year 3 and 4) went to Ashdown Forest for a school trip and

had a brilliant time. As well as this, the class also had an Egyptian Day where they all came in dressed in their finest Egyptian attire – we even had some Mummies! The class worked on their hieroglyphics and had an Egyptian feast to end the day.

- We celebrated VE Day in style. All children dressed in red, white and blue. The children all had lessons on what VE Day is and why we celebrate it. We then had a big afternoon tea in the playground, with music and A LOT of food. The children sang the national anthem and shared their learning.
- We have also been lucky enough to be involved with 'VEMail'. We were sent a letter from an 100 year old World War 2 veteran, telling the children about his time at war. Every child in Key Stage 2 has written a reply to our veteran and hopefully we will get a reply to answer some of our questions. The letter was deeply moving and the children were so engaged and inspired by the life of the soldier.

Please do contact the school at any time if you have any questions or would just like to say hello. We are both in school every day and will always find time for a chat.

—Mrs Joanna Challis, Executive Headteacher,  
Mrs Lauren Beach, Head of School



### Parish Past

If you walk around the churchyard it is often possible to see small knobs of iron slag on the path. So what? You say. We know the parish produced quantities of iron in the 16th and 17th centuries. But that was when blast furnaces came into use which involved damming such small streams as we possess to produce the necessary power, thus - quite apart from the noise of industry - necessarily meant all the furnaces were spread around the outskirts of the area.

Which in turn suggests that these small slag pieces belong to a much earlier time when Frant was only a scatter of huts in the forest before the first church was built. It is established that Saxonbury Iron Age camp produced iron in Roman times which was sold to their channel fleet, so the probability is that around Frant too, before it was even a village, a cottage industry existed which produced small quantities of iron by the laborious use of hand powered bellows, and the fragments of slag in the churchyard date from around two thousand years ago. Which is remarkable when you think about it, but of course my speculation could be wrong.

Maybe they imported old slag in the 17th century for part foundations for a church extension- but that does seem unlikely considering the effort necessary to drag such heavy material quite a long way with horses and carts over muddy parish tracks, when cheaper alternatives were by then available

—Pat Wright

### Eridge Village Fun Day

#### » A Celebration of Community

On a surprisingly sunny bank holiday Sunday in May, the heart of our community came alive as the Eridge Village Hall hosted a Village Fun Day; a special event funded by the hall to bring local residents together. The aim was simple: to introduce neighbours, young and old and for residents to enjoy their local hall for a day of laughter, friendship, and fun.

The garden was filled with cheerful chatter and the delicious smell of freshly grilled hot dogs, made with none other than Fullers finest sausages. Free drinks were served with a smile, and the residents enjoyed a refreshing treat courtesy of the Eridge Dairy, whose rich, creamy ice cream was a highlight for many.

The younger villagers had a fantastic time on the bouncy castle, and the games and crafts areas were full of eager faces. Bracelet making and temporary tattoos proved especially popular, with children proudly showing off their creative flair.

It was a heartwarming sight to see people of all ages coming together, taking a moment out of their busy lives to simply enjoy one another's company. Events like these remind us of the true spirit of village life; where community, kindness, and connection are at the centre.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Eridge Village Hall for funding the event and to everyone who helped organise the day, and to all who attended and made it such a wonderful success. Here's to many more joyful gatherings in the future!

### News from Nus Ghani, MP

It is hard to believe that it has been a whole year since the last General Election and ten years since I was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Wealden in 2015. The time has flown by, and I am hugely grateful to the voters of Wealden, and now Sussex Weald for their support and for returning me to Parliament last July.

It has been a very busy time for me since the election and I continue building on my strong record of action and supporting residents, businesses, charities, schools and various organisations across the constituency. To name just a few examples, I recently convened meetings with the Secretary of State for Transport and Minister for Local Transport to advocate for more resources for our roads and railways; held several meetings focussing on rural crime with Sussex Police and our Police & Crime Commissioner; welcomed a new healthcare facility to Hailsham, welcomed the Mayfield Post Office back to the High Street and officially reopened the newly-refurbished Frant Post Office; secured improvements to our water infrastructure including in Halland, Hellingly, Rushlake Green and Wadhurst; and was pleased to open the Crowborough Business Expo 2025.

Additionally, I was proud to become a Patron of Hailsham-based charity Medi Tech Trust whose exceptional work is making a significant contribution not only to local hospitals in East Sussex, but also across the country and overseas. I also continue working on several



campaigns including: working with mobile service providers to improve coverage at Wadhurst train station; supporting Heathfield charity Wealden Works; championing our local medical facilities, our schools and academies; and working with our communities to deliver several projects including a new community centre in Hadlow Down, an expansion to Horam exercise opportunities and a BMX Pump Track, and secure a positive future of the Kings Head pub in East Hoathly.

My motivation has always been to be an advocate for local people, and I am keen to continue to be a strong voice for our communities both in Parliament and at home in Sussex Weald. My surgeries are taking place across the constituency in person, over the phone and online, so if there is anything you need my assistance with, please do get in touch with me via email [nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk).

### Official Opening of Frant shop with Nus Ghani

Nus Ghani was delighted to cut the ribbon and officially re-open the Frant Post Office, following a major refurbishment.

The Frant Post Office has been temporarily closed since February 2024, when the previous postmaster resigned. Having undergone major refurbishment, the Post Office is now under the ownership of experienced postmaster

Paramanathan Nisanathan.

The new Post Office opening hours are Monday to Sunday: 7am – 8pm; while the café is open Monday to Friday: 7am – 3pm.

Nusrat Ghani MP said: “The Post Office provides vital services, which are key for residents of our rural constituency. I have been working with several communities across Sussex Weald to keep our Post Offices from Groombridge to Hailsham open and thriving, and I am pleased that following months of temporary closure, Frant's services have now been restored and expanded under a new ownership. Paramanathan and Nityapiraba have done a fantastic job in modernising the Post Office and enhancing it with a café, and I wish them all the very best for the years ahead.”

Postmaster Paramanathan Nisanathan said: “The community is really pleased to have a Post Office in the heart of the village again and we are sorry that this took much longer than we planned. We are used to serving Kent communities with our other shops and we are enjoying to get to know the people of Frant. The branch is now open daily from early until late, so it's very easy to pop in. People can do their everyday banking here, send and return parcels and to play the lottery. Our café also serves breakfast, sandwiches, cakes, drinks and snacks.”



### Volunteers needed for Bayham Abbey ruins

Bayham Abbey 13th century ruins, just 4 miles east of Frant, is managed as a Free site by English Heritage and we are looking for additional volunteers to open the site at 10am and/or close at 5pm. Whilst there the volunteer checks for litter (very rare) empties bins and secures the site - in all it takes about 30 minutes. There are also vacancies to assist in the second-hand bookshop, open at weekends. For more information, including the benefits of being an English Heritage volunteer, contact Sarah Woodcock (sarah.woodcock@hotmail.co.uk or 07867745955)

English Heritage Searches For Descendants Of Violent Protest Against Cardinal Wolsey 500 years ago, the Bayham Abbey Uprising saw 100 villagers take up arms against Cardinal Wolsey’s plan to close their local monastery. The rebellion is seen as a harbinger of the Dissolution of the Monasteries and Pilgrimage of Grace -

The Bayham Abbey Uprising is a remarkable story of courage which saw over 100 men from the surrounding villages of Kent and Sussex, armed with makeshift weapons, storm the abbey in protest at its closure by Cardinal Wolsey. Viewed by historians as a foretaste of the turbulent years of religious reform to follow, Bayham Abbey’s suppression and the subsequent protest is an indication of the esteem in which monastic houses were held. English Heritage, the charity that now cares for Bayham Abbey, will be holding a commemorative event this summer and is now launching a search for those with family connections to the protestors, to include them in its plans.

More than a decade prior to the Dissolution of Monasteries, Cardinal Wolsey had already started suppressing some of England’s smaller monasteries to fund his new colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. Bayham Abbey, near Tunbridge Wells in Kent, was among those targeted, leading to its closure in 1525. Incensed, local people turned to violence in support of their abbey. On 4 June 1525 “over a hundred men with painted faces and visures”, armed with longbows, crossbows, swords and clubs, assembled at the abbey to reinstate the evicted canons (ordained priests living a communal life). They stormed the abbey gatehouse and temporarily restored the community. The canons were once again removed a week later and 31 men were indicted by the Crown for rioting. It is the descendants of these men that English Heritage is hoping to find.

Michael Carter, English Heritage Historian, said: “The Bayham Abbey Uprising is a fascinating precursor to Henry VIII’s religious reforms - a harbinger not only of the Dissolution of the Monasteries just ten years later but also of the Pilgrimage of Grace, which was a major revolt against the reforms in the North of England in 1536 and 1537.

“In 1525, Bayham was deeply embedded in the religious and social life of its locality. Many of its community — the canons — were local boys and their prayers were highly prized. In addition, the bed in which St Richard of Chichester slept had been preserved at Bayham Abbey as a relic and was believed to perform miracles.

“The abbey was also a significant employer and the men who took part in the uprising were predominantly

local tradesmen, including shoemakers, labourers and farmers. Whilst they will undoubtedly have feared the loss of their spiritual leaders, their loss of income would have been of equal concern. This act of rebellion could have cost them their lives and, as we reach the 500th anniversary of the riot, we are keen to remember and celebrate these brave men.”

Today, Bayham Abbey stands as an impressive ruin, built from golden local sandstone, with much of the 13th to 15th-century church, the refectory range, and picturesque 14th-century gatehouse remaining. It is open to the public daily for free. There are also several objects relating to Bayham Abbey’s dissolution and uprising within English Heritage’s collection, which the charity hopes to bring out for visitors to see during the commemorative event this summer.

Amongst these is the abbey’s stained glass, one of the most important collections of medieval window glass from any monastic site in England. Abandoned after everything of value at the abbey had been removed to be sold (including the lead holding the windows together), these fragments of glass are in a remarkably stable condition and still translucent, showing a vibrant display of patterns and colours. Meanwhile, perhaps the most unusual piece of Bayham’s collection is its pair of ankle shackles, suggesting that Bayham may have had a prison on site for the punishment of badly behaved members of the community.

English Heritage is searching for family connections to the following 31 men. Those who think they may have a connection, should email: [press@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:press@english-heritage.org.uk)

Name	Parish of Residence	Occupation	Name	Parish of Residence	Occupation
Stephen Aleyn	Lamberhurst	Roper	Thomas Milles	Frant	Labourer
Nicholas Bate	Lamberhurst	Brewer	John Mower	Frant	Servingman
Thomas Busse	Lamberhurst	Labourer	John Muge	Brenchley	Fuller
William Busse	Lamberhurst	Servingman	Robert Ovynden	Lamberhurst	Husbandman
John Cowerd	Lamberhurst	Servingman	Stephen Palmer	Lamberhurst	Cordwainer
Nicholas Day	Brenchley	Labourer	Thomas Penkherst	Lamberhurst	Husbandman
William Gale	-	Abbot	Augustine Percyvall	Staplehurst	Husbandman
Thomas Godfowle	Lamberhurst	Labourer	Robert Porter	Frant	Chaplain
Nicholas Godfrey	Brenchley	Shearman	John Ramkyn	Lamberhurst	Servingman
John Grangeman	Frant	Labourer	Robert Reynard	Frant	Husbandman
John Heyward	Lamberhurst	Rippier	Edward Ryseman	-	-
Thomas Hilles	Lamberhurst	Labourer	Thomas Towers	-	Chaplain
William Lamkyn	Lamberhurst	Tailor	John Turke	Lamberhurst	-
John Large	Wadhurst	Labourer	John Whitesyde, senior	Lamberhurst	Husbandman
Alexander Love	Goudhurst	Smith	John Whitesyde, junior	Lamberhurst	-
William Mepam	Frant	Weaver			

### Hospice Run 2025

Are you a serious competition runner? Someone who enjoys a regular weekend exercise? Someone who likes walking in the summer sun? or a family looking to experience a fun Sunday together? The Hospice Run, now in its nineteenth year, has something for everyone.

You can sign up for the following routes

1. Family Fun Run: The theme is “Hospice Heroes” and is suitable for all ages and abilities. Children are encouraged to dress up as their favourite hero as they dodge the water.
2. 5k: for runners starting off on their fitness journey.
3. 10k: for regular runners who like a challenge, taking in popular Tunbridge Wells landmarks.
4. Half marathon: our ultimate challenge! Our half marathon is an undulating route, Suitable for experienced athletes or those wanting to practise their first half marathon distance.

However, the day is about more than just walking or running – there is an amazing event atmosphere, with live music to provide motivation.

Sign up now to avoid missing out on one of the most hotly anticipated closed-road routes in the Southeast.

Visit the events section of our website to find out about the route details, answers to questions you may have, explore payment and fundraising options, and to register for the event.

<https://www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk/events/hospice-run-2025/>

Alternatively call Hospice in the Weald on 01892 820533.

All entry fees and funds raised support Hospice in the Weald’s care for people facing terminal illness and their loved ones in Kent and East Sussex.

### Nevill Golf Club

On a beautiful, clear April evening, members of the Nevill Golf Club set about repairing the divots on the fairways. It was perfect timing that a hot air balloon drifted over and past Ladies’ Captain, Brenda Cliff, took this edition’s cover photo.



### Parish Pets #19: Crow

I know what you are thinking... what’s so special about me and how on earth am I a “pet”. So let me explain.

I have become rather attached to “my human family” and therefore decided I was more of a pet than the average crow out there. All pets have their routines that fit in and around their families and so do I. For example, first thing in the morning, with the background noise of birdsong (such attentions seekers the lot of ‘em), I casually stroll past the sitting room which overlooks the owners’ garden, stop in my tracks and look through the French doors. I then receive my first greeting of the day. “Here he is” she shouts after asking for a cup of coffee from whoever is in the kitchen. Pretending to be alarmed by this announcement, I usually thrash my way through the heather bed (just for a bit of fun to be honest) and flap up in to the laurel hedge as if there is a purpose for this but it’s all just part of the morning routine and interaction. I hear the laughing – complete with coffee – coming from the sitting room.

Over the course of the rest of the day, I like to strut down the garden path and peer into the garden office window at the rather serious face staring at a computer

screen. Once again, a special interaction takes place as the face breaks into a smile and usually something like “oh it’s you again” and “no, you can’t come in” is muttered. Serious face once failed to look up and acknowledge my presence, so I pecked on the window and made him jump – oh how the days fly by.

Come to think of it, maybe I am the owner and the family are my parish pets!

» Like your pet featured in *Parish News*..? If so, send a description and photo to: [carmel.kinley@gmail.com](mailto:carmel.kinley@gmail.com)

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Parish Diary:  
July/August 2025

» **Sunday 6th July**  
Weald Youth Music Forum Concert,  
St Alban's Church, Frant at 4pm (see  
page 10)

» **Saturday 30th August**  
Raymond Burley in concert, St Alban's  
Church, Frant

» **Saturday 12 July**  
Hospice in the Weald Music Festival, The  
Brecknock Arms, Bells Yew Green

» **5-7 September**  
Beer Festival, Brecknock Arms, Bells  
Yew Green

Regular Meetings

**Little Fishes: Baby & Toddler Group**  
Every Tuesday 9.30—11.30am in The  
Stables, Frant. A warm welcome to all.  
**Encounter (School Years 6–13)**  
*Contact Rev Brendan Martin for more  
information: 752261*  
**Coffee Morning at The Stables, Frant**  
Every Wednesday, 10:30am—12noon.  
Come for a hot drink, a cake and a chat.  
**Festival Church Kids** During 5pm  
outside service.

Parish News can be downloaded  
from: [www.frantchurch.org](http://www.frantchurch.org) or  
[www.eridgechurch.org](http://www.eridgechurch.org)  
Advertising enquiries: [office@frantanderidgechurches.org.uk](mailto:office@frantanderidgechurches.org.uk)  
Contributions for our next issue  
should be sent to the Editor: [carmel.kinley@gmail.com](mailto:carmel.kinley@gmail.com) or 01892 750217  
Next deadline: 1st August 2025

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[office@frantanderidgechurches.org.uk](mailto:office@frantanderidgechurches.org.uk)  
*Frant Church Youth and Kids*  
Rev Brendan Martin; 752261  
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Chris Hall, 01892 652483,  
[email: chairman@frantbowls.uk](mailto:chairman@frantbowls.uk)  
*Frant Cricket Club*  
Will Patrick: 07884 187871  
*Frant Garden Club*  
Dianna Tennant: 752029  
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Naomi Berwick; 07599 162222;  
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Trudi Godfrey: 01892 750554  
*Frant Memorial Hall*  
Sharon Warwick: 750185

**Eridge**  
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*Eridge Cricket Club*  
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Bob Standley: 783579

**Parish Council meetings**  
Full PC meetings are usually held at  
7.30pm every 3rd Wednesday of the  
month. Please check the Council's  
website at [www.frant-pc.gov.uk](http://www.frant-pc.gov.uk)

**MP for Wealden**  
Nus Ghani MP:  
[nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk)

**Police Contact Details:**  
To report a crime or incident dial 101  
For other police enquiries contact the  
Wealden unit on 01273 404938 or  
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## MUSIC IN FRANT

*We have the following exciting concerts booked for 2025*


All concerts will be in Frant Church starting at 7.30pm.  
 Doors will open from 6.30pm and there is a licensed bar area.

**30 August 2025:** Ray Burley

**25 October 2025:** London Community Gospel Choir

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

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



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