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Published jointly by  
St Thomas à Becket Church  
and Framfield Parish Council

# Parish Magazine



**Framfield, Blackboys  
and  
Palehouse Common**

**APRIL / MAY 2026**





## Framfield & Blackboys WI

### KICK STARTING THE GREY MATTER WITH A GREAT QUIZ NIGHT

Creative Quizmasters, Terry and Rich, gave us another entertaining evening of off-beat puzzles and questions backed up by the unflappable Hayley who kept score. Tickets had sold out within days of becoming available and over 70 quizzers took part on the night.



Following the rigorous brain workout of the quiz, players queued up enthusiastically for a fabulous selection of cakes baked by members.

#### MONTHLY MEETINGS

We were entertained in February by **Bingo with Eddie** (Samways). It was a fun evening with Eddie guiding novice players through the rules of the game.

Our speaker for March was **film prop man, Pete Benson**, who regaled us with tales of the unpredictable world of movie sets, famous actors, exotic locations and sometimes nigh impossible demands of directors.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS - 2 PM FRAMFIELD CHURCH HALL

10th April	Speaker - Tony Rawlings - Baroque on a Roll
8th May	Resolution Meeting, Plus Speaker - Margaret Bond - The Diary of a Farmer's Wife

If you would like to find out more about our WI, why not come along to one of our meetings as a visitor. Please contact

**Delia Gillies on 01825 890825 or Jackie Samways on 07950 954827.**

**Follow us on Facebook or Google Framfield & Blackboys WI**

Philomena Whittle

## Father James Writes

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March I ceased to be Priest-in-charge of the Parishes of St. Thomas à Becket Framfield, East Hoathly & Chiddingly and became the first Incumbent of the newly created Weald Way Benefice. No one is however addressed as 'Incumbent', so I am now the Rector of the Benefice.

This is fine, until I'm asked, why Rector? And what's the difference between a Rector and a Vicar? The flippant answer is that I live in a Rectory rather than a Vicarage, so Rector it is! but there's actually a more detailed historical reason, and as is often the case, it all comes down to money!

As the parish system developed in England, a method of paying the clergy evolved. This was done through tithes, the payment of a tenth part of all the produce of lands of the parish.

Often the Lord of the Manor endowed land to the church from which the priest could also derive an income. This was the clergy person's glebe. The Priest who was appointed to the parish and entitled to the tithes was called the Rector. from the Latin *regere* meaning to guide, lead straight, rule or govern.

Now some lands were more productive and extensive than others, so inevitably some parishes were worth more to the clergy than others.

The ones that were rich attracted the attentions of those who were seeking an income, or to increase an already substantial income.

The Lord of the Manor, be it the King or some other noble, might use his power of presentation to reward a dutiful servant or politician. As long as they were in clerical orders (and many who had been educated, were) they might expect to be presented with a well-endowed parish.

Of course, they had no intention of actually living and working there! So instead they took most of the income - and appointed some poor cleric to do the job of actually taking services and ministering to the community in their place, paying him a small amount of the total entitlement. This person was their Vicar, from the

Latin *vicarius* meaning a substitute.

Hence, we get the word vicarious meaning "in the place of". This custom led to great abuses with some powerful clergy, including many bishops, holding a number of benefices and becoming very wealthy.

In 1603 a law was passed prohibiting a priest from holding two or more parishes over thirty miles apart, so requiring the clergy to reside in their parishes. We clergy are still required literally to "sign in" once a year at the Archdeacon's Visitation, to show we are not absent from our parishes.

So, put simply, a Vicar is just a substitute for the real thing, which is a Rector!

The modern-day reality of course is that these titles are largely meaningless and no longer reflect the way that clergy are remunerated. Clergy stipends are paid centrally, and every incumbent, Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-charge whatever the size or significance of the parish - gets paid the same stipend. The differing titles live on as a reminder of our history, and of the way the parish system of England came into being and was resourced.

For your information, in 1848 the Glebe income for Framfield was £590pa. (approx. £91,000 today) Chiddingly £550pa. (approx. £85,000 today) and East Hoathly £261pa. (approx. £40,000 today)

*Who's going to tell the Bishop that I'm entitled to a stipend of £216,000 !!!???*



**Christian Aid Week 2026**, running from **May 10–16, 2026**, focuses on tackling urban poverty in Burundi, where over 70% of the population faces daily hunger and a lack of basic necessities. The campaign aims to support families with sustainable livelihoods and, through partnerships like with Beacon of Hope in Kenya, fight injustice.

### Illustrated Talk in Framfield Church:

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 7.00 pm By Mr Chris Horlock

*The Wise Women of Sussex* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Tickets: £10 to include nibbles and drinks.

Chris Horlock is a regular contributor to *Sussex Life Magazine* and has written ten books on the history of Brighton plus two on Sussex.

He has appeared several times on TV and travels across Sussex researching the history and heritage of the county.

Please contact Delia Gillies for tickets 01825 890825.

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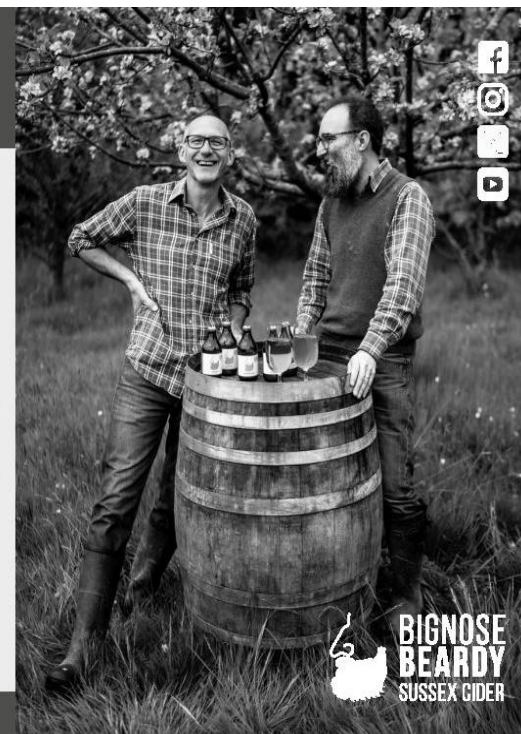
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## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2026**

**At the time of issuing this notice, all meetings are to be held at the Village Hall, Blackboys, at 5.30 pm due to a regular booking in the Memorial Hall.**

**If there are planning applications which require the convening of a Planning Committee meeting these times may vary.**

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**31 March**

**26 May**  
**(Annual Parish Council meeting [6 pm]**  
**and Annual Parish Assembly [6.30 pm] only)**

**28 July**

**29 September**

**24 November**

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**Public welcome. For further details, please telephone the Parish Clerk, Ann Newton, on 01825- 890182/clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk 'Highlands', Blackboys TN22 5LR.**

**Agendas will be published on all noticeboards and the website - framfieldcouncil.org.uk**

THE ADVERTISEMENTS IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE PUBLISHED IN GOOD FAITH. THE PUBLISHERS DO NOT, HOWEVER, ENDORSE ANY PRODUCTS OR SERVICES SPECIFIED

## **Holy Week and Easter in the Weald Way Benefice**

Seven days. Just one week to enter into the mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, Son of Man, Saviour and Redeemer. The church has for centuries set aside these seven days and made them Holy. A Holy Week that explores every human emotion and every Divine nature.

**PALM SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> March:** We begin our Holy Week together at Chiddingly Parish Church. 10.00 am

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March:** We celebrate a quiet spoken Eucharist at 10am. Monday at Framfield and Tuesday at Chiddingly. In these two services the Holy Week story is fleshed out.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY: 2<sup>nd</sup> April.**

We all join together once more, at 7pm at East Hoathly Parish Church for our Maundy Thursday Eucharist.

**GOOD FRIDAY: 3<sup>rd</sup> April.**

On this most solemn day of the Church's year, we reflect on Christ's supreme act of love as he is subject to a show trial, convicted and nailed to a rough wooden cross on the outskirts of Jerusalem. There are 10am services of scripture, reflection and music at St. Thomas à Becket Framfield and Chiddingly Parish Church. At 3pm the Good Friday Liturgy is celebrated at East Hoathly Parish Church; a deeply moving service of Scripture readings (including the John Passion), solemn prayers and the proclamation of the cross.

**HOLY SATURDAY: 4<sup>th</sup> April** Our three churches stand silent and empty as we wait

**EASTER SUNDAY: 5<sup>th</sup> April:** The Resurrection is proclaimed, with parish celebrations of the Eucharist in each of our three churches:

**9.30am at Chiddingly Parish Church with Revd. Janice**

**9.30am at St. Thomas à Becket Framfield with Fr. James**

**11am at East Hoathly Parish Church with Fr. James**

## The View from the Churchyard – Peter Berry

By the time you read this the clocks will have 'sprung' forward which is always quite cheering. However, even as I write this in the early part of March the signs of Spring are everywhere. It seems to have been a long winter and even in today's modern world it is good to feel that the changing seasons and the rhythms of nature are an important part of life.

One of my favourite television programmes is Digging for Britain. The archaeologists are discovering that our peoples 3000 years ago and more celebrated the changing seasons as an important part of their life. Also, the researchers are consistently discovering that these people were much more organised and advanced than had been realised.

By comparison in time the oldest parts of our church here are just over 800 years old. Our earliest recorded Parson was named William; a single name is common in old churches of the time - it being 1185. He predates the existing building by a few decades, so was there a structure even before then. It is likely but we will probably never know. Since then, we have an unbroken history in good times and bad as a parish of which we are all just the latest link in the chain. There is a peace about the building and grounds which many comment upon. We will do our best to maintain and enhance this special place for future generations. If you have any ideas or can help in any way, please let me know. Peter 07815459075

### Looking for a local venue ?

Then look no further!

Framfield Church Hall is well placed in the village next to the Church. It is ideal for regular meetings, social & business events, special occasions, keep fit, exercise groups, birthday parties and other activities.

The hall can be used as an open space or with tables / seating for up to 60 persons. There is a fitted kitchen with catering equipment & crockery etc, a large AV screen, sound system, two loos (one with disabled facilities) and two disabled parking spaces directly outside the hall.

Currently it is used for Art classes, Pilates, Exercise groups, Drama, Singing, Karate Presentations, and children's birthday parties. Our rates are £12.00 per hour. For one off users (parties, wedding receptions etc), the hourly rate is £16.00.

For more details about the hall and its events please get in touch with Graham Seldon on 01825 508758, mobile 07973 685992, or email: [hoss.graham.s@gmail.com](mailto:hoss.graham.s@gmail.com)

## ALLOTMENT TENANTS

**Tenancy renewals have been sent out by email. If you haven't received yours please check your spam box. Rents must be received by 1 May 2026 or a 100% surcharge will be levied. Any plots where the fees have not been paid by 1 June 2026 will be deemed vacant.**

**FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

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### FRAMFIELD VILLAGE MARKET

**2026**

**Memorial Hall, Framfield**

**The market opens from 10 am to 12 noon.**

**28 March**

**25 April**

**30 May**

**27 June**

**25 July**

**August – no market**

**26 September**

**31 October**

**28 November**

**19 December**

**Please contact Ann Newton with any queries**  
**01825 890182 or email [clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)**

**Please call in at one of the markets – all proceeds from our 'café', raffle and cake stall go towards the upkeep of the Memorial Hall – we try to raise £200.00 per market but more footfall would increase that amount.**

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#### *CIRCULATION:*

*This magazine reaches over 1100 households in the parish.  
It is therefore an ideal way to reach a wide customer area.  
Contact the Clerk, Ann Newton for advertising details and rates.  
[clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)*

## NEWS FROM YOUR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

I have received many questions about the soon to be introduced weekly food waste collection. The collection is to comply with the Environment Act 2021 which, among other environmental targets, includes a section that is referred to as Simpler Recycling. This requires all waste collection authorities to provide weekly food waste collections by the end of March 2026. It also requires all authorities to collect the same core set of recycling materials, which Wealden District Council (WDC) already does except for food and drink cartons (tetrapacks) which will be added to their recycling collections soon. The UK Government is committed to fully funding food waste collections under the New Burdens policy, and WDC has received capital funding for the collection vehicles and caddies plus revenue funding for the communications and caddy delivery. The ongoing funding for operating the service has been included as part of the latest Local Government Finance Settlement.

Data from extensive reviews of bins across the UK found that on average refuse bins contained 30% food waste, of which half of that was still edible. By collecting food waste separately evidence suggests that not only is it processed in a more environmentally sensitive way, i.e. by being composted instead of going to incineration, but households can more easily see what food they are wasting and change their shopping and cooking habits to prevent this waste which also has the benefit of saving them money.

To help introduce this weekly food waste collection service WDC has embarked on a comprehensive communications campaign which includes 3 leaflets being sent to all households. The first "Coming Soon" leaflet was sent in January and the second "instruction Leaflet" will be included with the food waste caddy containers when they are delivered to all households. The third is to be sent in March and will be confirming day of the week the food waste collection will take place for their road.

*If anyone would like to meet up to discuss any District-related matters please do not hesitate to contact me. Wealden District Council covers many subjects – Council Tax, Housing, Benefits, Planning, Licencing, Environmental Health to name but a few. I don't always have specific information to hand but can always find someone who would.*

Contact details – Ann Newton,  
'Highlands', Blackboys, TN22 5LR.  
Tel: 07762 746334. Email: [aenewton1965@gmail.com](mailto:aenewton1965@gmail.com)

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## Diary of Church Services

**Note:** The latest church service information will always be on the New Church website: <https://www.thewealdwaychurches.org.uk>. This site, developed by Revd James, covers all three of our churches.

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### APRIL 2026

**Please note the Easter Sunday service will start at 9.30 am**

- 03 Good Friday**  
10.00 am The Way of the Cross – Revd James
- 05 Easter Sunday (Please note earlier service time)**  
**9.30 am** Parish Eucharist (CW) – Revd James
- 12 Second Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Weald Way Eucharist – Revd Janice  
*(This will be Janice's last service with us)*
- 19 Third Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Family Service – Revd James
- 26 Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Morning Praise – Peter Berry

**There is now an Evening Prayer Service at 5.00 pm either at East Hoathly or Chiddingly on the fourth Sunday of each month.**

### MAY 2026

- 03 Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Parish Eucharist at East Hoathly – Revd James
- 10 Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Weald Way Eucharist at East Hoathly –  
Archdeacon Russell

- 17 **Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
10.00 am Family Service – Christine Hayler
- 24 **Pentecost (Whit Sunday)**  
10.00 am Morning Praise - Peter Berry
- 31 **Trinity Sunday**  
10.00 am Weald Way Eucharist at East Hoathly – Revd James

*(Everyone is welcome at any of the church services)*

**Note: The latest church service information is always on the new Church Website:**

<https://thewealdwaychurches.co.uk/framfield-parish-church/>

**COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE PLEASE  
BY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026  
TO**

**ANN NEWTON – 01825 890182**

**Email address:**

[clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)

**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR PARISH COUNCIL –  
FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Mrs Ann Newton (Parish Clerk)**

**Telephone/fax: (01825) 890182.**

**Email: [clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)**

**Postal Address: 'Highlands', Framfield Road, Blackboys,  
East Sussex TN22 5LR.**

**Parish Council website: [www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk](http://www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk)**

**CHURCH NEWS ITEMS MAY ALSO BE  
EMAILED TO THE CHURCH OFFICE:  
[admin@framfieldchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@framfieldchurch.org.uk)**

***We have Space to Thrive!***

A huge thank you to all who joined us and lent their support to our fundraising dinner and auction and to those who so generously donated auction items. We are deeply grateful to illusionist Bertie Pearce who entertained us during the evening, to our brilliant patron and host Natasha Kaplinsky, and to our exceptional auctioneer Pete Denison-Pender of Barcombe. The warmth and generosity shown by everyone made for a truly magical evening, helping us raise important funds.

Over the past months, our community has come together in truly inspiring ways to help us move closer to our goal of transforming Bevern View for the future.

The appeal set out to raise £742,000 to build a new activity space, create a dedicated office building with a staff room, and refurbish our residents' lounge - vital improvements that will enhance daily life for the people we support and the staff who care for them.



We're delighted to share that we have now reached our target - an extraordinary achievement and a testament to the generosity, belief and commitment of our supporters. Thank you all!

We are now in the pre-construction phase and working towards a construction start day of early June. Whilst we move forward with the build, we're continuing to fundraise towards the costs of equipping the new space and refurbishing the lounge area.

Thank you for standing alongside us. With your help, Space to Thrive is not just a campaign - it is now a reality that will benefit our residents and others for years to come.

**Donate: [www.beverntrust.org](http://www.beverntrust.org)**

**Email: [info@beverntrust.org](mailto:info@beverntrust.org)**

**Follow us on social media: [@thebeverntrust](https://www.instagram.com/thebeverntrust)**

The Bevern Trust is a disability charity based in Sussex, and Bevern View is its residential home.

## Parish Survey – Recreation Grounds and Halls

Framfield Parish Council will shortly be launching a community survey about the future of the Recreation Grounds and associated halls at Framfield, Blackboys and Palehouse Common.

The survey will open on **13th April 2026** and will close at **5pm on 26th April 2026**. The online link will be published on the Parish Council website when it opens.

The Council is exploring a range of potential improvements to these important community spaces. Areas being considered include play provision, accessibility improvements, wellbeing facilities, biodiversity measures, and possible upgrades to sports or community use areas.

At this stage, nothing has been agreed. Any proposals taken forward will depend on the level of community support, the availability of external grant funding and overall feasibility. If any of the ideas are progressed, improvements are likely to be delivered in phases over several years.

The survey will be anonymous and should take around 10 minutes to complete.

We recognise that not everyone uses online services. Paper copies will be available on request, and assistance can also be provided for anyone who would like help completing the survey. Get in touch, and we will arrange a paper copy to be sent out nearer the start of the survey date.

**Email:** [clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01825 890182

**Post:** Framfield Parish Council, Highlands, Framfield Road, Blackboys. TN22 5LR

**We encourage as many residents as possible to take part and help shape the future of these valued community facilities.**

## Nature Notes

“Oh, to be in England now that April is here” Robert Browning (1812–1889) informed us. Well, here you are, in an English April. Mr Browning’s life overlapped with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution developing between 1760 and 1840. That is when climate change got started. I suspect he would be surprised at what April feels like now, if he were to come back to life.

I have already seen some wild bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) in bloom near Tunbridge Wells (March 1<sup>st</sup>!), a sight not usual before about May. I have not yet seen wood anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*) out this year as I write on 10<sup>th</sup> March, they normally pre-date bluebells during April, but will these also appear in March? The common bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) will be making the most of these two splendid forest floor plants that are a sign of a woodland being truly ancient. Please do listen out for a cuckoo (*Cuculus canoris*), and if you hear/see one, please let me know, because they have become so rare, that a year can pass without me hearing even one during recent years. However, there is a plant that should be around when the cuckoo appears, and that is the cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*), also known as lady's smock, mayflower or milkmaids. This common crucifer has lovely pink/purple flowers, grows in damp places and is used by the orange tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) butterfly for feeding their caterpillars.

April is also when I used to start surveying the early spider orchid (*Ophrys sphegodes*) at Castle Hill National Nature Reserve at Woodingdean. Our University of Sussex scientific study of this species was from 1975 to 2006 and has shown that the flowering time has advanced from 1975 to 2006, by approximately 2.5 weeks. As for seeing the first swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), I and others are seeing a few swallows during the winter months in recent years, suggesting that some of these normally April birds are not bothering to spend winter in Africa in recent years.

I have seen several yellow brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) butterflies already. They lay their eggs on alder buckthorn trees/shrubs (*Frangula alnus*). This is quite a rare tree but commonly found in mixed species hedgerows. Many other trees will have broken bud between the time I write this and when you will read Nature Notes in April. I always feel that this transformation of the countryside can be a very personal experience accompanied by the chorus of courting birds and the buzz of insects. We really must do our best to minimise the damage done by us humans on the natural world and fit in with it rather than dominate it. Nature can be managed, because we are part of it, but we should use a soft touch minimising its destruction while maximising our appreciation of it as space is a very hostile place and we only have one planet Earth.

Martyn Stenning

All monthly Nature Notes are also available on the Parish Council Website at:  
<https://www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk/naturenotes.html>.

## Framfield CofE School

### Fund Raiser



**Quiz Night**

Heads & Tails...  
**£1 cash on night**

Bar

Raffle

Framfield Memorial Hall  
**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April**  
7.30 for 8pm

£12 per person includes  
cheese/charcuterie Board  
Teams min of 6

Message 07919211414 to book tickets  
Raising money for Framfield CofE School

The poster features a central glowing lightbulb, a wooden board with cheese, grapes, and crackers, and various colorful question marks and confetti scattered around. Text is presented in a festive, celebratory style with bold fonts and decorative banners.

have a look. A lot of children are taking part this year and it would be great if your children and grandchildren can join in.

<https://framfieldandblackboys-hort-soc.com/>

Scroll down the home page to see our next event which gives full details of the fun competition. Good luck.

### Framfield & Blackboys Summer Show 2026

Could you be our Administrator?

We're looking for someone who is good on detail to help with the forward planning. You will organise our participants in the Arena activities, most of which are already confirmed but we need a backroom person who is willing to cross the t's and dot the i's.

Your role is to confirm with these participants that they will turn up on the day, ensure they know what time they need to be there, what time they are performing and any special facilities they require e.g. a power supply or changing area.

You will pass this information back to the show committee which will organise any special requirements. Please contact Caz 07956 453054 or Lin 07776 291446 for more information. This is a voluntary position. The Framfield & Blackboys Summer Show is run entirely by volunteers.



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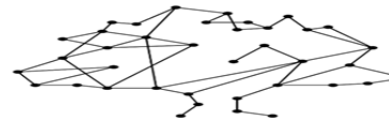
Late March and into April and May can be some of the busiest months for gardeners as the soil warms and growth accelerates. These months are the transition from spring preparation to the peak growing season.

The focus in April is on **sowing and soil preparation** while remaining vigilant against late frosts. I'm sure we have all been caught out by a glimpse of summer only to find cold and frosts return with a vengeance in early April.

### Jobs to do in Late March, April and May:

- **Lawns:** Give your lawn its first proper mow with blades set high (approx. 4cm). Apply a high-nitrogen spring feed to encourage green growth.
- **Sowing & Planting:**
  - **Direct Sow:** Hardy vegetables like carrots, beetroot, parsnips, and peas directly into the ground.
  - **Potatoes:** Plant "second early" and "maincrop" potatoes.
  - **Onions and Shallots:** April is the time to plant out your onion sets and shallots if you are growing them.
  - **Flowers:** Plant summer-flowering bulbs such as dahlias, gladioli, and lilies as the soil warms up more in late April through until May.
- **Pruning:** Prune spring-flowering shrubs like *Forsythia* and *Chaenomeles (ornamental Quince)* immediately after their blooms fade.
- **Greenhouse:** Start sowing tender crops like tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers under cover. Ensure good ventilation on sunny days to prevent overheating.

In your travels around Blackboys, Framfield and Palehouse Common you may have seen a poster advertising the **Horticultural Show Sunflower competition** for any under 16's. For those of you that haven't, here is a link to



### NEW LIFE CHURCH BLACKBOYS

*Living for Jesus / Loving like Jesus*

*Equipping the church to serve the Community & Share the Good News of Jesus*

### Meaningless?

As I write this I am enjoying watching the songbirds on my feeders – siskins, red polls and of course lots of goldfinches to name a few. Behind this is my apple tree, where for the past seven years I have attempted to grow mistletoe by planting hundreds of berries over the years into its branches. With no visible results to date.

This feels very much like being a leader of a church at times. We at New Life Church have been planting spiritual seeds in Blackboys for over 20 years – farm camps, school clubs, youth groups, weekly services - with limited response to date. However, this is what we are still called to do. We are called to be heralds of Jesus' message of love and eternal life, and what you choose to do with it, is between you and Him.

I understand it is very difficult to walk into a church perhaps for the first time (I remember that well) but we are constantly looking at ways to make it more accessible which is why we are currently running the café style Bible Course. It has been great talking with a guy who has been coming each week and how he loves it. Interestingly (or not) he is not from this parish. He wants to seek out who this Jesus is – and is not afraid to broadcast the fact online that he is coming. This has caused some derision amongst his friends – to which he has replied 'if I listen to you, does that mean I can be like you?!' He is already understanding the meaningless nature of life without God.

I always think how much harder life must be without Jesus – everything is meaningless. You, me, creation. The world only offers temporary highs but Christians have one eye on eternity. Emperor Nero tried to cruelly stamp out early Christianity and yet today, to quote another famous emperor 'millions would be willing to die for Jesus today.' And they do. All that remains today of Nero is a crumbling big toe next to the colosseum. Meaningless.

*What do people gain from all their labours at which they toil under the sun?  
Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. Ecclesiastes 1 v  
3 - 4*

**Brendan Hammond** (one of the New Life Church Leaders)  
**Blackboys School, School Lane : 10.45am – 12 noon with coffee & pastries**  
**Email:** [newlifechurchblackboys@gmail.com](mailto:newlifechurchblackboys@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [newlifeblackboys.com](http://newlifeblackboys.com) **Facebook:** [New Life Church Blackboys](https://www.facebook.com/NewLifeChurchBlackboys)

## Parish Council Update

It doesn't seem that long ago that we were packing the Christmas trees away for another year, and here we are heading towards April already.

I would first like to say a very big thank you to Colin Packham, a resident of the parish, local business owner and volunteer with St John Ambulance, who, in collaboration with the Parish Council, organised and delivered two successful defibrillator and resuscitation courses free of charge for residents. The sessions were extremely well attended and very positively received. Given their popularity and clear value to the community, we are now working with Colin to arrange further courses on a range of first aid topics. Please do keep an eye out for further details.

In February we met with ESCC officers and our County Councillor, Chris Dowling, to continue discussions regarding the potential speed reduction scheme in Blackboys. As residents will know, this is not a new topic and there have been various changes and considerations over time. The recent meeting allowed us to focus on the current formal process and the steps required for an informed decision to be made. ESCC will be arranging for a team to undertake site surveys, which will provide the up-to-date data necessary to determine the foundations of any potential design. As the road does not fall within ESCC's highest priority category across the county, progress is dependent on available resources. However, we now have clarity on the process and constructive dialogue in place. We will provide further updates as matters progress.

We are about to launch the Parish Survey, and further details are available in another article in the magazine. We encourage everyone to complete it. With a lot of work and the help of grants, we hope to make some exciting improvements to our leisure facilities.

We held the Sussex Police Street Meeting on 19 February. It was good to see both familiar and new faces in attendance. PCSO Maria Jackson will shortly be moving on to a new role and we thank her for her work in the area. In the interim, PCSO Sue Choppin, a face many residents will already know, will be covering

## A Badger's Brave New World

*By Kerry Williams: Communications Officer - Conservation, Sussex Wildlife Trust*

The Badger is a UK icon. Our largest predator, this monochrome mustelid is a star of the classics: Wind in the Willows, Beatrix Potter, and a certain well-known charity's logo. Often misunderstood, they are also loved by many, and some would argue there's not much better than a Badger, except perhaps, a Badger cub.

Deep in the sett, the Badger burrow, cosy chambers are lined with vegetation collected by the females. Cubs are born around February, but tiny stripey noses don't peek out for 12 weeks, when they emerge in spring. It's a big new world to explore, and stranger than it once was.

Their ancestors would have trundled about acres of ancient woodland; towering veterans and thick, sheltered understorey. Ventures into wildlife-rich farmland would have been commonplace for plentiful omnivorous feasts of insects, fruits, and juicy worms slurped from thick, fertile soil. Without trying, children may have spotted these Badgers for real, on summer evenings humming with biodiversity.

For these new cubs, it's a different story, where invertebrates are often scarce, soil hard, and movement restricted. Seasons have shifted, weather is more erratic, and precious habitats rarer. It's a story where thousands of their kin come to undignified ends on our busy roads, pesticides kill off much of the food, and the future of the family sett is unsure.

But the former isn't a fable, it's a reminder.

It is possible that these cubs, tumbling unexpectedly out of woodland boundaries, might not be met with hot, confusing concrete, but buzzing wildflower road verges: a heads up for the danger ahead. They might cross these risky highways via green wildlife bridges. They could travel with confidence through well-connected gardens and urban green spaces, staying safe along dense hedgerows and taking respite in deliberately dark nocturnal pockets.

They might once again take advantage of a bulging buffet, in our unmown and pesticide-free parks and lawns, in deep field-side buffer strips and in reinvigorated sickly-sweet native Bluebell woodland. We could better appreciate and understand Badger behaviour and needs, engage and connect communities, and inspire a younger generation. Their habitats could be fiercely protected, and their setts saved.

It sounds idyllic, but it doesn't have to be fiction - it's achievable and in reach. We can reset our expectations, recreate those lost habitats, and rewrite the story for our Badgers.

## Blackboys CE School

Pupils at Blackboys Church of England Primary School have enjoyed a busy and rewarding start to 2026, with many opportunities to learn, celebrate and take part in community life.

We have lots of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles in our school. Most recently our school council have been working on charitable acts, raising over £400 for the British Heart Foundation through a lunchtime sponsored walk. Through our Windows, Mirrors and Doors approach to spirituality, we have been encouraging pupils to reflect on world events and to practice being courageous in their advocacy if they see things they don't necessarily agree with. This is helped by our regular Picture News assemblies.

There have been a couple of very memorable 'dress up' days in 2026. In January our children dressed as rock stars and robots to encourage each other to make best use of our 2 maths computer programs: Times Table Rockstars and Numbots.

Reading is always encouraged but becomes a real focus for World Book Day when children dressed as their favourite book characters. In another way to encourage reading, we held a popular Bedtime at Blackboys evening when the children returned to school in their onesies and pyjamas for bedtime stories read by their class teachers, together with a tasty hot chocolate and cookie. Food, drink and reading must go hand in hand as key stage 1 parents joined their children for a reading cafe in our school hall as the final event in a memorable reading celebration.

We're very keen on sport at Blackboys and February and March has seen some real success for our netball teams. Our year 3 and 4 team beat Skippers Hill School in a friendly match while our year 5 and 6 A and B teams both won their respective tournaments at Uckfield Community College. We have nearly 40 netball players at training each week, led by Mrs Sullivan, talented coach Maria Howell and a group of supportive parents.

As Easter nears, we prepare for our service at St Thomas a Becket Church. This, and our display of daffodils outside school tell us that Spring is definitely on its way!

You can keep up to date with all things Blackboys School on our Instagram feed.

Mr G Sullivan  
Headteacher, Blackboys CE School  
School Lane, Blackboys, Uckfield,  
East Sussex, TN22 5LL

X and Instagram: @blackboysschool

our parish until a permanent replacement is appointed. Details of the next Street Meeting will be shared once confirmed.

As some of you may be aware, there was recently a theft of heating oil from Framfield Memorial Hall. I did post about it on the local Facebook group, and it was heartening to receive some very generous offers of support. It is disappointing that someone would steal, particularly from a registered charity that serves the parish.

We have been fortunate to receive a donated table tennis table. It is situated at Blackboys Village Hall and will be available at no extra cost to anyone hiring the hall.

As we approach the end of the financial year, I am pleased to report that the Parish Council remains in a stable financial position. Parish finances continue to be carefully and responsibly managed, reflecting the collective efforts of councillors together with our excellent Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Transparency remains important and full financial information is available via our website for those who wish to review it.

Finally, I have really enjoyed the number of residents who have stopped to speak with me over recent months, whether at the market, out walking, or even in the supermarket. Those conversations are always appreciated, and I am always happy to hear people's views and ideas.

Thank you.

**Keith** Chairman, Framfield Parish Council

### **Blackboys Village Hall, Blackboys Pavilion and Framfield Memorial Hall**

With immediate effect, if anyone is wishing to hire one of our halls, please note that we now have a single point of contact for all of them:

Email [clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)

Or

Phone (Office Hours) 01825 890182

(Please leave a message on answerphone with your contact details)

**Blackboys Village Hall:** Two heated rooms with a seating capacity of 100 and 50 respectively. Very competitive rates for both regular and casual bookings.

**Framfield Memorial Hall:** Large hall with a capacity of 150. Very competitive rates for both regular and casual bookings.

## **FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **Contact us for Parish Issues, Parish Magazine & Village Hall Hire:**

✉ Email: Contact the Parish Clerk – [clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@framfieldcouncil.org.uk)

☎ Phone: 01825 890182 (Answerphone) / Website -  
<https://www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk/>

📮 Post: Framfield Parish Council, Highlands, Framfield Road,  
Blackboys, TN22 5LR

⚠ **Public/visitors - strictly by appointment only**

### 💡 **Street Light Issues:**

***For street lights within the parish, Contact Framfield Parish Council*** and provide details, including location and the number on the lamp post (1 or 2-digit black number on a white background). Street light issues outside the parish should be reported to East Sussex County Council.

🚧 **Footpath, Road & Other County Issues:** East Sussex County Council  
– 0345 608 0190 – [www.eastsussex.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk)

☎ Your East Sussex County Councillor – Chris Dowling -  
[cllr.chris.dowling@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.chris.dowling@eastsussex.gov.uk)

🏠 **Planning & Other District Issues:** Wealden District Council – 01323  
443322 – [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)

☎ Your Wealden District Councillor – Ann Newton -  
[cllr.ann.newton@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ann.newton@wealden.gov.uk)

### **EMERGENCY & SUPPORT HELPLINES:**

🚒 Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) – 999

☎ Non-Emergency Police – 101 / <https://www.sussex.police.uk/>

☎ Non-Emergency NHS (Medical Advice) – 111 <https://111.nhs.uk/>

☎ East Sussex Fire & Rescue (Home Safety Visits) – 0800 177 7069 /  
<https://www.esfrs.org/hsvs>

### **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING:**

👤 Local GP Surgeries - <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp/results/TN225NR>

🧠 Samaritans (24/7 Support) – 116 123 / <https://www.samaritans.org/>

💙 Mind (Mental Health Support) – 0300 123 3393 /  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

📱 Shout (Text Crisis Support) – Text ‘SHOUT’ to 85258 /  
<https://giveusashout.org/>

👤 CALM (Suicide Prevention) – 0800 58 58 58 /  
<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE & SAFEGUARDING:**

🏠 RESPECT (Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men) – 0808 8010327 /  
<https://mensadvice.org.uk/>

👤 NSPCC (Child Protection & Support) – 0808 800 5000 /  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

👤 Refuge (National Domestic Abuse Helpline for women & children) –  
0808 2000 247 / <https://refuge.org.uk/>

### **FINANCIAL & HOUSING ASSISTANCE:**

🏠 Shelter (Housing & Homelessness Support) – 0808 800 4444 /  
<https://england.shelter.org.uk/>

💰 Citizens Advice (Financial, Legal & Benefit Support) – 0800 144 8848 /  
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

🍲 Trussell Trust (Foodbank Support) – to Find your local foodbank –  
01722 580180 / <https://www.trussell.org.uk/>

### **LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**

☎ Local Food Bank - 01825 745489 / <https://www.trussell.org.uk/>

👤 Wealden Volunteering - 01825 760019 /  
<https://wealdenvolunteering.org.uk/>

🚗 CTLA Community Transport Service - 01273 517332 /  
<https://ctla.org.uk/>