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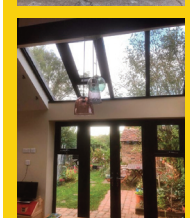
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We thank Jill Hewer of Keymer for this picture of St Francis Sunday School Nativity taken in 1970. Email in if you recognise anyone in the picture.



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Chris and Jill Kitcher would like to wish all of their friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We are not sending cards this year as we are making a contribution to charity

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

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~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

1ST HASSOCKS SCOUT GROUP - CHRISTMAS POST DELIVERY SERVICE The scouts are happy to offer a delivery service for local Christmas cards again this year.

For nearly half the price of a second class stamp, the scouts will deliver your cards in Hassocks over two weekends in December, to raise funds for the 1st Hassocks Scout group.

There will be 5 Collection boxes located at: QD Stationery, Marchants Estate Agents, Age Concern, Hassocks Hardware and Orion News.

Please bring along the correct amount of 50p per card, as the locations cannot provide change.

The boxes will go into the shops from the **1st December** service with the last collection at 4 pm on Friday **13th December** so cards can be delivered in time.

Fiz

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT IN DANNY HOUSE Heber Opera is delighted to be singing in the fabulous setting of Danny House on **14th December**. Starting at 7.15 pm, the concert will offer a mix of traditional Christmas carols and seasonal music, with wine and mince pies in the interval. Tickets can be booked online at **www.ticketsource.co.uk/heberopera** or by calling **07867 975967** between 9 am and 5 pm. *Jenny*

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"LIGHT UP HASSOCKS, IT'S CHRISTMAS"



Friday **5th December,** 4 pm to 8 pm.

Come and enjoy this wonderful community event! The evening will host a children's parade, food court, late-night shopping, funfair, lots of live music, and local community groups. We can also announce that there will be an absolute *sackload* of *Christmas magic*!

To make sure all this festive fun happens safely we will have a road closure in effect 4 pm to 8 pm.

Keymer Road will be closed from Woodsland Road to the entrance of the car park behind The Sussex Grocer. Keymer Road will then be closed from the western side of the mini roundabout by Station Approach East to Clerks Acre for the parade from approximately 4.15 pm to 5.15 pm.

The road closure will affect buses and a diversion will be in place. Access will be maintained for emergency vehicles and medical emergencies, but other traffic will be asked to wait/diverted. After a record-breaking number of requests to be allowed through the closure in 2023, we feel obligated to remind people to please not underestimate how dangerous and difficult it is to escort a car through crowds of people in a dark and noisy environment.

May we suggest that if your arrival home is during the road closure periods that you use the Dale Avenue car parks or the car park on the western side of Hassocks Station.

Please advise any likely visitors or carers well in advance so that they can plan their access and parking in plenty of time.

Festive wishes, The Light Up Hassocks Elves.

P.S. We still need marshals so if you can help please get in touch! *Erika Woodhurst-Trueman*

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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO OUR DARK SKIES? Maybe you aren't aware but, here in Ditchling, we are privileged to be living in a Dark Sky Reserve within the South Downs National Park?

However, more and more households are choosing to leave exterior lighting on all night. Apart from the cost, it is ruining our magical canopy of the Universe. If it's a matter of security, then maybe install security lighting? Better to have it coming on now and then than a constant glare into the night sky. Carefully placed they shouldn't cause an issue to neighbours.

It would be tragic to loose our Dark Skies status so, please, think again when deciding if you REALLY need to keep those lights blazing.

So many times, I have looked up into the night sky and failed to see shooting stars, special moons or rare planet sightings because of the outside all night lighting.

Please be mindful of our night skies.

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THE BEACON PARISH OF DITCHLING, STREAT & WESTMESTON We have a busy month of Christmas events coming up and hope that you'll be able to come and bring family and friends to join us!

Our regular services of Sunday Worship with Holy Communion will be at St. Margaret's Ditchling at 10 am on Sundays **7th December** (with a 'Little Beacons' session for younger visitors), Sunday **14th December**, Sunday **21st December** and Sunday **28th December**.

On Saturday **13th December**, we look forward to welcoming Brighton Singers for a concert in St. Margaret's, Ditchling at 4 pm. Tickets are available online from **brightonsingers.org.uk** or at the door.

Christmas Services: Our Carols by Candlelight services followed by mince pies and mulled wine will take place as follows:

Sunday **14th December**, Streat Church at 4 pm.

Saturday **20th December**, Westmeston Church at 4 pm.

Sunday **21st December**, St. Margaret's, Ditchling at 6 pm.

By popular demand, and to fit everyone in who wants to come, there will be two Crib Services on Christmas Eve, both in St. Margaret's Ditchling, one at 2 pm and one at 4 pm. Everyone is welcome.

On Christmas Day there will be a celebration of Christmas with Holy Communion at 10 am in St. Margaret's, Ditchling.

Any changes or updates to the above will be on our website **www.thebeaconparish.co.uk**

We wish everyone a happy Christmas and every blessing for a healthy and peaceful 2026.

Sherrian Guest

CRAFT FAIR Hurstpierpoint Christmas craft fair in Hurstpierpoint Village Centre on Saturday **6th December**, 10 am to 2 pm. Time to find those unusual handcrafted gifts for Christmas and to enjoy a warm welcome with a drink and homemade cakes and savouries.

If you are a crafter and would like to have a stall at the last minute, get in touch, you might be lucky!

The fair is in support of Heber Opera, a self funded opera group that brings concerts and productions for local communities.

For more information: **jenny@heberopera.co.uk**.

Jenny Hawkes

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HURST SANTA SUNDAY Join us on **7th December** from 12.30 pm to 4.30 pm at Hurst High Street. A magical Christmas Market in the heart of Hurstpierpoint!

Join us for a festive celebration filled with live music, delicious treats, and plenty of Christmas shopping. Bring the family along for fun kids' activities, exciting fairground rides, and a chance to meet Father Christmas himself! Get into the holiday spirit with us and make unforgettable memories.

PINNOCHIO COMES TO LIFE… Hurst Panto rehearsals are in full swing – the Players present this year the classic story of a puppet who wishes to become a real boy.

In this modern re-telling of a boy's innocence, we embrace the ideas of 'Green Theatre', exploring today's challenges of good versus evil, all beautifully wrapped up in a highly engaging story complete with talking whales, donkeys, fairies, heroes and villains, to delight children and grown ups alike. A magical mix of storytelling and musical numbers, sprinkled with the important ingredients for sustainability, accountability, and caring for our environment.



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Tickets are now available on-line and in person from PSP Homes, 106 High Street, Hurstpierpoint, Mondays to Saturdays. Performances **29th December 2025 - 4th January 2026** from 2 pm and 7 pm shows (bar opens 30 minutes beforehand).

Coming up: The Girl on the Train Adapted for the stage, based on the best-selling novel and DreamWorks film directed by: Hannah Porter.

Rachel Watson longs for a different life. Every day, she escapes into the world she watches from her train window, the seemingly perfect couple living the dream she's lost. But when the woman she's been observing suddenly vanishes, Rachel finds herself entangled in a web of mystery, deceit, and shocking revelations.

The Girl on the Train is a gripping psychological thriller that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

Audition Details: Play Read-Through on Thursday **11th December** at 7 pm. Audition 1 on Tuesday **16th December** at 7 pm and audition 2 on Thursday **18th December** at 7 pm.

Performance Dates: **14th–18th April 2026**

Want to Get Involved? We're looking for enthusiastic actors, as well as a Stage Manager and Technical Crew to join the team!

If you have questions or can't make the audition dates, please get in touch with Director Hannah Porter at: **hannah.l.porter@icloud.com.**

Come be part of this thrilling, contemporary production. We can't wait to see you at auditions!

Jo Kearns & Hannah Potter

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HASSOCKS FC We have had a relentless November with games Saturday to Tuesday for 4 weeks in row. The team are working so hard. It's great to be playing at the highest level the club has ever achieved. A real test but one we're enjoying. Thank you to the home fans and travelling support. We're growing all the time and it's great to see our healthy crowds follow away too.

We had our record crowd vs Brighton u21's at 1,004 people. I was very impressed that everyone behaved so well on that occasion, which can potentially be a problem with larger crowds. Also nice to see the local youngster's enthusiasm at our home games. We welcome this for feel good community vibes.

Ground news is we've been working on extra parking spaces for the winter (again), and awaiting possible news on more solar, scoreboard and south field training project news. We need an electricity cable trench put in around the pitch to the far side of the ground for these things, so hopefully there is infrastructure going on to build this club upwards.

The south field training pitch is in the process of both biodiversity and landscape assessments towards the next steps. A long process but one we're determined to complete.

We have a stall booked at Light up Hassocks where people can get a bonus offer for our Saturday **13th December** match vs Merstham. We'll also have the Sussex County league title trophy and Peter Bentley cup, along with Rocky Robin mascot for any photo opportunities.

Title contenders Three Bridges visit for our festive fixture on Saturday **27th December**.

Here are upcoming fixtures. Remember to check social media for cancellations due to weather or text me on **07843 762142**. Home fixtures:

Saturday **13th December**: 1st vs Merstham at 3 pm. Sunday **14th December**: Ladies vs Broadbridge Heath at 2 pm. Saturday **27th December**: 1st vs Three Bridges at 3 pm. *Pat Harding*

DITCHLING CHRISTMAS MARKET IN AID OF ST PETER AND ST JAMES HOSPICE (special 50th year anniversary) taking place on Sunday **7th December** between midday and 5 pm at the Ditchling Village Hall? Everyone welcome, small entry fee kids free. Lots of lovely stalls Soup, refreshments and cakes available! *Marija*

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NEIGHBOURLY CARE IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS Neighbourly Care is a charitable organisation founded in 2008 by councillor Anne Jones MBE. It is run entirely by volunteers, and our aim is to make our community a better and more caring place. We do this by providing practical help to housebound or isolated older people, people who are sick or disabled, people who are lonely, parents with young children, or people in sudden crisis. We work within Burgess Hill, Hassocks, Keymer, Hurstpierpoint and district.

Our services include activities such as befriending (either through visiting or by phone), escorted shopping, shopping for the housebound, local transport, light help around the home, minor household repairs and small gardening jobs. All services are free though donations are appreciated. Over the last year we have carried out 1393 home visits and befriending phone calls and seen 112 different clients. We currently have 34 active volunteers.

We are currently keen to recruit more volunteers. The skills that volunteers require are friendliness, kindness, patience, enjoyment of other people's company, willingness to give some time and, ideally, the ability to drive, though this isn't essential. Some volunteers offer an hour a week; others volunteer several times a week. Some volunteers do driving only e.g. taking clients to hospital and doctors' appointments; other volunteers just shop for clients. Some volunteers wish only to do befriending, either through meeting for a cup of tea or via the phone.

We ask anyone interested in becoming a volunteer to contact us by phoning **07876 066368** or by emailing **neighbourlycare@outlook.com** A committee member will then make contact to discuss the role. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer with Neighbourly Care will be asked to complete a DBS check, complete some paperwork and undertake a brief induction into how we help the community.

Our website is **www.neighbourlycare.co.uk.**

Chris Newton

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BOTHY SINGERS CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

Our annual concert with BF5 is on Thursday **4th December** at 7 pm. We have a new venue this year! We will be at Christ Church, Sayers Common. This is a lovely way to start Christmas, magical candlelight creates a beautiful atmosphere. Joining with BF5, a brass quintet, makes an enjoyable concert of traditional carols and varied music. Tickets available at Eventbrite via website **www.brassfusion.co.uk** in advance or on the door. Children Free. Do come along and join us! If you can't make this one we will be doing it again at Horsted Keynes Church on Friday **12th December**.

Jan Wright

FESTIVE QUIBBLES



Santas bought a motor,
Trading in his sleigh,
Rudolph's now the chauffeur,
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MAMMOTH CHARITY WRAPPING SESSION SUCCESS



L-R: Cameron Wallis from Tates Head Office with the Budding Foundation's Clive Gravett and Russell Hall.

Volunteers wrapped over 11,000 Christmas presents for a Sussex charity in a mammoth day-long operation in Hassocks.

The Budding Foundation and Tates of Sussex held their annual charity grotto wrapping event in the village's Adastra Hall.

From nine in the morning until dusk, 65 willing volunteers wrapped the thousands of gifts, to be distributed across the garden centres charity grottos at South Downs Nurseries Hassocks and Old Barn Nurseries Dial Post. The volunteer team were assisted by staff from both garden centres and Tates' head office.

Tates of Sussex donates all profits from its two festive grottos to The Budding Foundation; the charity then provides grants to help young people in need and help to improve their education and quality of life. Funds are distributed throughout Sussex with emphasis on the Mid Sussex and Horsham areas.

Trevor Butler

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We provide the tools (and the chocolate biscuits). All you need to bring is your enthusiasm. You can work at your own pace and hopefully enjoy the companionship. We are a friendly group with an age range stretching from 30 to over 90 years.

To find out more about us please look at our website. **www.wolstonbury.com.** *Margaret Maillardet*

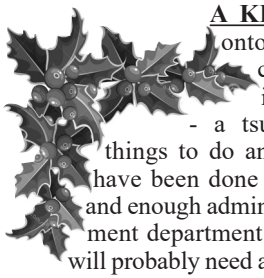
COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS MARKET IN BURGESS HILL On Saturday **6th December,** Burgess Hill Horticultural Society are hosting a Christmas Market in the Cyprus Hall, featuring an array of stalls in support of local good causes and craftspeople. Refreshments available. Open 10 am to 2 pm. Free admission! **www.burgesshillhorticulturalsociety.com 01444 245509**. *Flo Whitaker*



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A KISSING BUNCH Hold onto your hats! Christmas is coming. Love it or loath it, it is bearing down upon us - a tsunami of deadlines and things to do and things which ought to have been done and lists and frustrations and enough admin. to keep an entire government department in a spin. At the end, we will probably need a holiday, if not a bank loan and a month on lentils-and-water in order to recover. Was it always so?

When I ask Michael what he remembers about Christmas preparations in his boyhood, he thinks blankly for a moment and shrugs: "Not much." Men and women had clearly defined roles in those days and since making puddings and pies was women's work such things were no concern of his, but finally he hits on something that did impress him: "Bringing in the holly," he says. A Christmas tree would be bought from the nursery behind The Bull, but holly came free from the farm and his father and uncles cut and brought home great bunches to share amongst their households. Putting up the holly was man's work, so he could help, and there was something magical about the way it transformed the house.

Holly is still synonymous with Christmas, and though we may get little more than a sprig of the real stuff for our figgy puddings, the familiar leaves are everywhere to be seen on card and wrapping paper designs, and everything from table napkins to crackers and Christmas socks...

The name is there in our songs and carols and its folk memory takes us back to a time when everything was home-made and we lived closer to Nature. Bringing green boughs indoors at midwinter certainly has a primitive feel to it, even today. The pungent scents of evergreens remind us of our beginnings in the woods of a pagan past, and we are still annually seized with the need to decorate our homes with *something*, even if we have forgotten exactly what or why.

In ancient times, the Romans decorated their houses with foliage during the festival of Saturnalia and the Druids brought evergreens into their huts, offering refuge to their forest spirits while winter raged outside. Holly and ivy, representing the yang and yin of the greenwood, were the plants of choice in Britain: the holly, sharp, upright, masculine, representing the solar year; the ivy, clinging, and pliant, (no women's lib for ivy!) being lunar and feminine.

Such symbolism adapted itself readily to Christian iconography, and despite an early ban on evergreens, they had become a necessary part of the celebrations both in church and home by the 12th century.

Holly (the Holy tree) with its blood-red berries and thorn-like leaves took pride of place as a protector and defence against lightning and witchcraft. Ivy was also believed to offer protection from evil. Both could be used for divination and Medieval records document the widespread purchase of both for decorating churches at Christmas. Only mistletoe, sacred to the Druids, was generally considered too pagan to be used.

With the coming of the Reformation, evergreens, along with mince pies and carols, were condemned as Popish things, but the Puritans could not keep the greenwood out for long, for the people loved their holly.

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The chronicler John Aubrey recalled how they added fragrant bays and rosemary, juniper, and even box to their decorations during the Restoration, and by the beginning of the 18th century, it seemed everyone was busy 'decking the halls' with renewed fervour. Christmas trees, being foreign things, were as yet unknown in Britain, but here we had the Kissing Bunch for a festive centrepiece. Here mistletoe, beloved of the Druids, came into its own. As a parasitic plant, growing suspended on the branches of trees, mistletoe held a special other-worldly status for our ancestors. Its glutinous, sticky berries, white, as opposed to holly's red, were seen as tokens of fertility, containing milky, heavenly semen to vitalise the Earth. Mistletoe was therefore dedicated to Love so it is really no surprise that a custom arose of kissing beneath its leaves. On farms, long ago, the mistletoe from the kissing bunch would be fed to the first cow to calve in spring, thus ensuring the fertility of the herd. At Stanton's Farm in East Chiltington, the Victorian mistress ordained that for every kiss exchanged beneath the mistletoe, a berry must be removed. When the berries ran out, the kissing stopped!

We are in Dickens country here, with Pickwick and the spontaneous dancing and quaffing and parlour games which then seemed so essential a part of the spirit of Old England. Mr. Pickwick had only a 'huge branch of mistletoe' to frolic under, but the traditional kissing bunch would have contained holly and ivy too, plus candles and apples and shiny ribbons to reflect the light. The whole thing, constructed on its hoop-like frame was a microcosm of the turning wheel of the year and the sun and the fruitfulness and life-sap of the green earth were represented and honoured in it. The brief anarchy, fellowship and fun that took place beneath it, provided as good a way as any to cock a snook at winter's hardships. And one could dig back into history to uncover many further layers of meaning.

These days the kissing bunch features seldom in our homes, but I can't help feeling that this is a pity. Perhaps random kissing is out of fashion, yet the strangeness of reversing inside and outside, bringing the wild home and letting a little inner exuberance out, can still transform our lives.



What do we really need for Christmas? Is it another novelty from Santa's toyshop? A gadget that reduces the fullness of life's experience to an algorithm in the pocket? The latest screen to demonstrate that the Earth is flat? A bigger oven? An

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escape to the Algarve? Or is it something deeper, richer and of infinitely greater potential? The key to our authentic, many-dimensioned world - one which is more meaningful than the sum of all its data - is ours for the taking, if only we know how and where to look for it. This Christmas I wish you the chance to step outside and, leaving the madness behind, let the elements enfold you like a well-loved coat, feel the exhilaration and the strangeness of their presence and then bring a little of that strangeness indoors and share it with friends by your fireside. And may the joyful gifts of the kissing bunch - light and vitality, prosperity and companionship, brighten your year!

Rosemary

HASSOCKS WI Meet 3rd Monday in the month. Doors open 7.30 pm evening starts 7.45 pm.

Andy Thomas was a popular speaker at our October evening . Listening to our members we will try and book him again to talk on a different subject.

I attended the WS Federation annual meeting in Horsham. Katy Bourne PCC for Sussex was the main speaker. We had to vote on various WI stuff too.

November saw our event 'No More Violence to Women & Girls', nationwide WI campaign with Kay Birch from Safe in Sussex as our main speaker.

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I hope it was well attended. I have already booked KB for 2026.

By now we will have enjoyed the November meeting, the hands on drumming and percussion workshop. Did you hear the noise and realise what fun we had (hope so).

Our December meeting will be Christmas party time with, fizz, member inspired games, the popular Xmas hamper raffle and the choir will entertain us too. Thank you Marie. Come along for convivial evening, visitors welcome (donation) don't feel lonely come along for a jolly time.

In November the Craft Club made useful felt boxes. I had to miss it but intend making one at home (Shirley help may be required).

December Craft Club **1st December** is Christmas wreath/table decoration making. Bring along some garden greenery if possible as well as yourselves.

Our January meeting will be Resolutions, stuffing Breast Cancer cushions, chatter, natter and of course cake!

Best Wishes to everyone for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Gerry

WHY NOT START YOUR CHRISTMAS IN A VERY TRADITIONAL WAY? Hassocks United Reformed Church invite you and all your family to the Christmas Eve candlelit Carol Service from 6 pm to 7 pm. (so home in time to hang up the stockings)

All children will be able to hold a safe candle as they join in our service.

Heather McNiven



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EXTRAS

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HASSOCKS GOES GOLD ROUNDUP SEPTEMBER & BEYOND!

What an incredible month of GOLD September was and what a staggering total raised for The Children & Young People's Cancer Association!

This community was such a lifeline to us as a family when Pearl was diagnosed, all through her 11-month treatment and in honouring her after she passed. I am annually amazed at and incredibly grateful for all those who get behind Hassocks Goes Gold with so much enthusiasm, kindness and generosity. What started back in 2019 with simple laminated paper Gold Bows was a way for me to raise awareness of Childhood Cancer and feel that Pearl was not forgotten.





Even in that first year I was astounded by the backing that simple idea got and how many people joined in holding their own events to help raise funds for the #PearlPower fund to research more effective and kinder treatments.

Hassocks Goes Gold has continued to grow every year and annual events of the Sunflower Growing and Themed Poster Competition, The Giant Gold Bow Trail, Parklands Road Art Exhibition, The Gold Shop Window Competition, The Golden Gala and Market Tombolas now seem like firm fixtures on the village calendar!



The 24-hour Facebook Auction was a huge success this year too with incredible prizes of fabulous hampers, jewellery, massages, crafts, dining and travel experiences and so much more offered by other generous businesses and residents too numerous to mention here. Thank you so much for all of these wonderful gifts.



Thank you to all the individuals who ran fundraisers to help boost the total this year, there were fancy dress and toy driveway sales, plants, second hand clothing and cake sales donated by businesses, dress up days at HIS & Hassocks Nursery, a whist drive, window displays, children's craft events, bucket shaking at Hassocks FC, HCR gold runs and even live music events too. Biggest of all was the Wine Tasting at Adastra Hall run by Amanda Felix which deserves a special mention as that alone raised £5K towards the total this year!

Thank you too to all the kind donations from businesses and residents whether buying a Goldfish themed poster, sponsoring a bow or making a direct donation all your money is going straight to funding research to combat Childhood Cancer. And to all those who help raise awareness from the post box toppers to just talking to visitors about why our village turns GOLD in September, it's so valuable to make more people aware of how common Childhood Cancer is and how little funding it receives.

Hassocks Goes Gold is run on a shoe-string and I'm grateful to all the kind friends and family who give their time and energy to making it possible.

This year the #PearlPower fund was proud to fund four new research projects into Ewing Sarcoma, the very type of cancer that took Pearl. Added to the two funds we started funded back in 2023, #PearlPower is really making a difference to the chances of future children diagnosed with cancer and Hassocks Goes Gold is a massive part of that, having now raised over £100K as this year's total was the biggest ever at now over £22,000 – including the recent Halloween extravaganza at 'Spook Haven', at the junction of Adastra & Grand Ave! This is a staggering achievement! Time for a rest now and to start planning how to make next September's Hassocks Goes Gold even brighter and better…

Rachel



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BURGESS HILL CHORAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CONCERT Don't miss Burgess Hill Choral Society's concert when we shall be performing excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* and movements from the works of Rutter and Vivaldi. The event also features the accomplished professional soloist, Ruth Kerr, and the choir will be accompanied by Sussex Classical Players. In addition, there will be our ever popular carols for choir and audience.

Handel's *Messiah* is a beloved masterpiece and is probably the most commonly performed of all choral works, A memorable highlight in this piece, which will be included in this concert, is the exuberant *Hallelujah Chorus.*

All the other music at this event has also been specially selected to help us celebrate Christmas - for example Vivaldi's uplifting *Gloria* and Rutter's contemplative *Esurientes* from his *Magnificat*

The concert takes place on Saturday **13th December** at 7.30 pm at St Andrew's Church, Burgess Hill, RH15 0LG. Tickets are available at: **www.ticketsource.co.uk/burgesshillchoral**, from Burgess Hill Help Point, on the door, by phone **07522 493966**, or visit our website at **www.burgesshillchoral.org**.

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We've got a wonderfully busy month ahead, packed with seasonal cheer and community spirit. On Saturday **6th December** from 10 am to 1 pm, we're hosting our much-loved Christmas Craft Fair! Come along to support the centre, browse beautiful handmade gifts, and maybe even treat yourself. There'll be cakes, hot drinks, and a fantastic raffle with great prizes. Raffle tickets are available now in the charity shop, and the draw will take place at 12.30 pm on the day.

Eaton and Webb will be performing in the centre to get us in the festive mood, whilst the Sundown Ukulele Band return to entertain us. We're also delighted to welcome Windmill Junior School, who'll be popping in to sing some Christmas carols.

We are hoping to launch a Monday minibus service exclusively for Burgess Hill residents. If you're looking for a warm, welcoming place to socialise and enjoy a freshly prepared three-course meal, we'd love to have you join us. Give us a call.

Our refurbishment is now complete, so please pop in and have a look. Don't forget that the rooms within our centre are available to hire, so if you have a big event or if you are looking for a venue to hold regular classes, please give us a call on the above number or come and see us. As our table tennis sessions are so popular, we are hoping to start an additional session on a Wednesday afternoon, so if you are interested let us know.

We can't wait to celebrate the season with you!

All at Age Concern

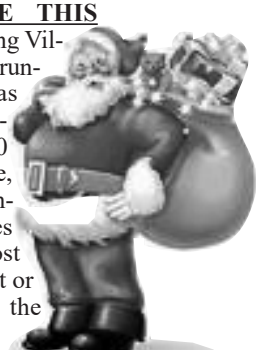
KEYMER FOLK DANCE CLUB The Keymer Folk Dance Club held an excellent 75th anniversary dance on 12 October at the Adastra Hall.

Over 60 people attended including current and past members of the club, and members from other local folk dance clubs. Calling was by Sean Goddard with the music provided by Chris Jewll and members of Touchstone. There was a *Washing Line* history of the club from 1950, and members of the club provided cakes.

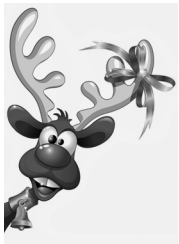
In December we are meeting on **1st and 15th December** at the United Reform Church Hall, starting at 7.30 pm. The 15th will be our Christmas Party, with music provided by Sean Goddard and Michael Curry, with seasonal cakes and biscuits.

For further details of all our events, please check our website at **www.keymerfolkdanceclub.co.uk/** or email **keymerfdc@gmail.com.** *Sean Goddard*

BRING SOME CHRISTMAS SPARKLE TO DITCHLING VILLAGE THIS DECEMBER The Ditchling Village Association (DVA) are running a free Christmas window decoration competition. 1st prize £100 voucher for the White Horse, as well as other prizes sponsored by the DVA. Judges will award prizes for the most festive window, house-front or garden decoration within the parish.



Judging will be on the **19th December**. DVA Judges' decision is final, no cash alternatives. *Neil Iosson*



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RAILWAY 200 CELEBRATIONS AT HASSOCKS STATION On 27th September Hassocks Rail Group (part of Hassocks Community Organisation) held an exhibition at Hassocks Station to join in the Railway 200 nationwide celebrations marking 200 years of the modern railway, the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

The bunting was up and there was a buzz and hum in the ticket office hall. Three poster frames contained pictures of Hassocks Station through the ages starting with the first station built in 1841 which was then replaced by a grand Victorian station in 1881, this lasted for 90 years when it was replaced in 1973 by a modular prefab station that only lasted 40 years, and then replaced by the new station opened in 2013.

A steady stream of people visited the display which included many photos of the 1841 and 1881 stations. There was also a model train set showing the old Hassocks sand pit line, built by a member of the Rail Group, a great attraction for young and old alike. Another display had memories from local people of travelling by train in bygone times and memories of the Victorian station. Lots of people came to recount their memories and show us their photos of the Victorian station and one man came with his train ticket collection including original train tickets over 100 years old! The Rail Group handed out keepsake cards with pictures of the old and new stations painted by a local artist and children were given train stickers and train themed colouring books.

It was a happy day celebrating Hassocks Station, with people reflecting on the past and how Hassocks grew up around the station which is so important to Hassocks today.

Over the years Hassocks Rail Group has built up strong stakeholder engagement links with rail company managers. If you are interested in joining the Rail Group to help ensure Hassocks and surrounding villages continue to have the station facilities and train services they need, please email me the Rail Group Chair, on **cc@hassockscommunity.org.uk.**

Catherine Cassidy

BEFRIENDED As the Christmas season approaches, Befriended is spreading joy, friendship, and festive cheer across Mid Sussex with a series of special community events this December.

Befriended's mission is to bring an end to loneliness and isolation among older people, through offering friendship, community, activities and a sense of belonging all year round. But at Christmas, that mission takes on an even deeper meaning — a time when no one should feel forgotten or alone.

This December, we have a host of heartwarming celebrations planned:

Christmas Tea Parties & Carol Concerts. Join us for two joyful afternoons filled with music, a delicious Christmas tea with festive treats, featuring a Carol Concert performed by the Befriended Choir.

On Sunday **7th December** – St Andrew's Church, Burgess Hill and Sunday **14th December** in partnership with Holy Trinity Church at Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint.

You can expect carols, Christmas sing a along, a fun quiz and a wonderful atmosphere as we come together to celebrate the season and the power of community.

Community Christmas Lunch – Christmas Day. For those who might otherwise be spending Christmas day alone, Befriended is hosting a Community Christmas Lunch on **25th December** a warm, welcoming space to enjoy good company, a fabulous five course lunch, and some good family fun.

Christmas is such a special time for us at Befriended. It's about bringing people together, sharing joy, and reminding everyone that they matter and are loved."

Befriended continues to run one to one befriending, choir, balance, outings, chaplaincy, holidays, pop in cafe's, social events, and community projects throughout the year — all made possible by our wonderful volunteers and supporters.



If you'd like to find out more about Befriended, volunteer, support our work or book for Christmas Day, please visit **www.befriended.org** or email **office@befriended.org.** *Gail Millar*

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GYM NEWS A spectacular firework display was followed by an intense bonfire at the community event held at Danny in November. Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club would like to thank everyone connected to the event – all the stewards, volunteers, firework technicians, Hurst Fire Brigade, The Hassocks Pub etc. Funds were raised for Oldland Mill, Hurst Gym Club and six local schools, including Albourne, Hassocks Infants & St. Lawrence.

The Club also looked forward to its Christmas Fair which was on the evening of Friday the 28th November and the morning of Saturday the 29th November in Hurstpierpoint Village Centre.

The Club will mark the end of its term on the **2nd to 4th December** with the presentation of over a hundred British Gymnastics achievement awards. Some of the recipients have worked for over a year – a usual progress speed - where some had only started in September.

Practice is already underway for the Arts Competition on the **21st March**, with ribbon, beam and ball routines being worked alongside the ever popular Sports Acrobatic Sixes.

There are vacancies for pre-school children on Friday afternoons who have passed their third birthday, for boys and girls from Reception to Year 6 on Tuesdays and for girls from Reception to Year 11 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Anyone interested should contact the Club to find the up-to-date position.

Free starter places are still available for Pre-school children from Sayers Common. More details of the Club can be found at **www.hurstpierpointgym.co.uk** *Andrew Hair*

TREFOIL GUILD Our meeting on 15th October was a visit from Jerry from TWAM - Tools With A Mission. He told us how our old tools can be cleaned up, renewed, electrics pat tested, packaged and sent to Africa. He showed several slides of people these tools have helped, including a young man who has trained as a bricklayer and now has his own apprentice, a young lady who was probably a sex worker who made her daughters school uniform and now has a business making school uniforms for other children in the school, using a sewing machine she purchased from TWAM.

There is a list of items needed. Agricultural tools, building tools, electrical tools, sewing machines, knitting machines and haberdashery.

Our November meeting was all about Crafting and Cookery.

For our Christmas meeting we are going to Aroma Cafe for Turkey and Christmas Pudding also to celebrate a very special birthday for one of our members!

We meet at the Guide Hall, Semley Road on the 3rd Wednesday in the month. 7.45 for 8 pm.

Visitors are always welcome! *Pam Strong*

THE DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY



The hall lights fade, the stories start,
Films and friendship warm the heart.
Together now, in festive cheer—
Merry Christmas and a bright new year!

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas; one that meets your heart's desire in whatever form that may take. We will be serving mulled wine and mince pies at our December film night on **4th December** 7.30 pm at Ditchling Village Hall. The Holdovers, 2023, (15). Directed by Alexander Payne, is a touching drama set in the 1970s at a New England boarding school and shines a light on the lonelier side of the Christmas holidays.

The story follows three unlikely companions who are left behind during the break: the school's most disliked teacher, a rebellious student, and the kind-hearted cook. Paul Giamatti delivers a superb performance as the grumpy and sarcastic Mr Hunham, who gradually reveals unexpected warmth beneath his prickly exterior. Da'Vine Joy Randolph is outstanding as Mary, the school cook grieving the loss of her son—her performance richly deserved the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for its emotional depth. It captures the essence of the season—an instant holiday classic that finds something tender and true in each of its characters' struggles and connections. **www.ditchlingfilm.org.uk**. *Kate and Bethan*

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HURST, HASSOCKS & DITCHLING U3A

Happy Christmas from the u3a! We are part of a national movement open to all those who no longer work full-time, with no age limit. Join us and 'live, laugh and learn' with others of similar interests. The local u3a has almost 500 members from the three villages, and surrounding areas, and is continually growing. The annual membership entitles you to attend interesting monthly talks at Adastra Hall Hassocks, and Court Bushes Community Hub in Hurstpierpoint. But much more than this, you can join one (or more) of our 66 groups. The groups are nearly all free, or require a very small contribution towards venue hire; there is no formal tutor or teacher - each group is led by a u3a member who coordinates meetings and encourages the sharing of skills and knowledge.

You can find out more by visiting 'HHD u3a'. Here you will find a full list of groups, message any group leader, and download a membership form. For those not 'online', you can leave a message on **07355 943650**.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Marie Fraser

DITCHLING UNITARIANS at The Old Meeting House, The Twitten, Ditchling.

Open Minds, Kind Hearts, Free Spirits.

Tucked away behind Lewes Road, just a short walk along The Twitten opposite the Village Hall is a lovely Old Meeting House. Here, since the 1700's, resides a free-thinking faith community. All are welcome.

Sunday Services draw on themes from Christian & other faiths, science, the arts, the natural world and everyday living. They include words & readings, quiet reflection & prayer, music & hymns.

Sunday Services – twice a month at 11 am. On **7th December** is the Sunday Service and **21st December** is the Christmas Service.

The Mindfulness Meditation - monthly, at 7 pm on Tuesday **16th December.** Our small friendly meditation group practices mindfulness once a month for about 40 minutes. All welcome.

For details, please see the posters around Ditchling Village, or visit our website at **www.ditchlingunitarians.org.uk**

Paul Taylor

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A VOLUNTEER HELPER URGENTLY NEEDED at the Clayton Visually Impaired Club. We meet fortnightly on a Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm.

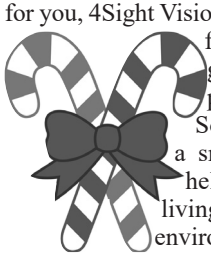
If you are interested, please ring me on **01444 450947**. *Dorothy Lazenby*

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO LAST THROUGHOUT THE YEAR! As we look forward to 2026, why not make a New Year's Resolution that will benefit the wider local community and the environment? 4Sight Vision Support (4SVS) runs a recycling scheme, saving many items from landfill, and helping to raise funds for its work supporting those living with sight loss across West Sussex.

The Festive Season can leave us with additional food packaging that can be recycled to raise money: this includes cracker, biscuit and cake wrappers, Pringles tubes, mini cheese nets, bread or bakery plastic packaging (inc. zipper bags, plastic packs and closure tags). All those stamps from Christmas cards can be accepted, plus stamp collections.

The scheme also extends to jewellery and watches, (all any condition or age), old or foreign coins and notes, mobile phones, games consoles, cameras, video cameras, sat navs, iPods, MP3 players and printer ink cartridges (except laser toner cartridges). 4SVS would even love to have your old car, as it works with Scrap Car Comparison to turn old cars into cash!

If you receive a gift over Christmas that really isn't for you, 4Sight Vision Support would also be grateful for new and unopened Christmas gifts to use as raffle and auction prizes throughout the year.



So please have a think about how a small resolution to recycle can help make a big difference to those living locally with sight loss, and the environment.

For full details of items accepted for recycling visit **4sight.org.uk/recycle**. Recycling and unwanted gifts can be dropped at Head Office in Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, or at the charity's office in the Shoreham Centre, Pond Road, all during normal office hours.

For further details, or if your business/club/society/café would like to become a public recycling point, please call the Fundraising Team on **01243 828555** or email **fundraising@4sight.org.uk**. *Cathy Clark*

MID SUSSEX BRIDLEWAY - Winter is approaching, with its unpredictable weather when bridleways often become wet and muddy, especially around gates. This is when people out for a walk sometimes place whatever comes to hand — bricks, paving slabs, logs — into the muddy gateway so that they can pass through without getting wet feet themselves. As a walker myself I completely understand this. But if you do encounter this situation, perhaps you could give some thought to our four legged friends, who find it difficult to step over these mini "bridges", which often grow as the months pass and the mud gets deeper. Keeping the centre of the gateway clear by placing your stepping stone/branch on the side allows people to keep their feet dry while horses can safely passing through too.

Something else to remember: In wet and windy conditions fences, gates and paths and tracks can all suffer damage. In addition, fallen trees and branches blocking the path might make it difficult or impossible to continue your journey. If you come across anything that needs repair or removal please report it to the relevant County Council as soon as possible. The more reports they receive the more likely it will be fixed or cleared. If you're not sure which County Council you need, access the Mid Sussex Bridleway Group website where you can ask for help from one of our members to find the correct location and we will also report the matter. *Jacqui*

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MND WEST SUSSEX (NORTH) NEW CHAIR

Hassocks resident Michael Stratford has been appointed as the new chair for MND West Sussex, North. Michael has a wealth of knowledge of management in the business world and uses these skills in the competitive world of charitable organisations.

He has spent the past 20 years involved within the charity sector, firstly with 'Bluebird Community Transport' as Chair and subsequently CEO, during that time Michael volunteered for 'Friends of Princess Royal Hospital', '4Sight', plus teamH leader for the 2012 'London Olympic Games' and has fundraised for MND.

Recently Michael had a lead role in Mid Sussex with 'Community Transport Sussex' as Business Development Co-ordinator, involving networking, fund raising and new initiatives (covering the same area as MND West Sussex, North)

Having lost a close friend to MND, plus relationships with three others, he has a full understanding of the requirements for MND members, their careers, family and friends.

Michael is passionate about the charity sector, added to his love of sport, especially football, cricket and stoolball; he is a keen scriptwriter with a love of movies. (Why does Radio 4 not have a 'Desert Island Flics'? he asks.)

His first aim is to recruit volunteer 'Ambassadors' for the support of MND members, plus a Mid Sussex fund raising team (better known as the volunteer 'Funsters') For details contact Michael **07837 916087 michael.stratford@mndassociation.org.**

A MOMENT IN TIME The Autumn mist creeps silently across the fields, leaving the cobwebs on hedges glistening with dew and the grass damp underfoot.

In the wood, the sky can be seen above the canopy of bare branches and in the silence the trees whisper to each other.

Watch the leaves of bronze and gold drift down, blending into the multi-coloured carpet spread out before you.

Listen to the bird song, the rustle of the leaves disturbed by a squirrel searching for the last acorns before winter comes.

A harsh cry from a crow momentarily splinters the air, then fades into the distance.

Close your eyes and breathe in the cool fresh air. Stand still and embrace the peace and calm that surrounds you like the falling leaves.

Enjoy your moment in time. *Shirley Payne*



QD STATIONERY 52 Keymer Road, Hassocks 01273 846978

We are open a little later for *'Light up Hassocks'* on Friday 5th December. We look forward to seeing you!!

EVERYDAY VICTORIES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE Much of my work as your MP involves supporting residents with personal issues and challenges. These smaller victories may not make headlines, but they are an important and vital part of my role.

Some recent examples include assisting a constituent in correcting an inaccurate council tax band and securing a substantial reimbursement from the Department for Work and Pensions for someone who had not been receiving all the benefits payments they were due.

A local GP surgery was suffering from blocked drains, which was forcing the practice to cancel appointments at short notice. This went on for some months but was resolved after I liaised with government officials and Southern Water to make sure that the work was done.

Another case arose from a conversation with NHS staff at the Princess Royal Hospital, who were worried about the hospital's lifts. Three of the four main lifts were out of order, leaving the hospital vulnerable if the last one failed. The lifts were repaired shortly after I contacted the local NHS Trust.

On the trains, a commuter was struggling with their daily journey to East Sussex. The direct train passed through their local station but did not stop there, forcing them to take multiple connections. After I raised this with Govia Thameslink, the company agreed to add the stop to the morning route, saving valuable time and money.

In Parliament, I've campaigned alongside local therapy providers for adopted and looked-after children, calling on the government to reverse funding cuts. A local family contacted me when their child's therapy was about to be paused due to funding running out. After urgent discussions with the relevant bodies, I was delighted that the therapy was reinstated, making a real difference to that child's wellbeing and ability to access education.

Big wins in Parliament are always worth celebrating, but it's often these smaller victories that mean the most. Helping people in Mid Sussex remains one of the most rewarding parts of my job. Do you have an issue you need support with? Email me at **alison.bennett.mp@parliament.uk**

Alison Bennett MP

DAME VERA LYNN CHILDREN'S CHARITY RAISE £60,000 AT CHARITY GOLF DAY Thursday 2nd October saw businesses from across the southeast gather together to raise vital funds for Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity (DVLCC). The Aerogolf event was hosted at Oxfordshire Spa Hotel, where guests enjoyed a round of Championship golf and a three-course meal.



In the evening, attendees helped to contribute to the phenomenal final total through a raffle, live auction and some amazing donations to the charity's Platinum Partners project. Six Platinum Partners donated £5,000 each, helping to contribute to a child like Jothi accessing DVLCC's services for a full year.

Jothi's mum, Kate, attended the event, telling guests about their family's journey. After being born by emergency c-section at 32 weeks, Jothi suffered from oxygen starvation, spending his first 24 hours on a ventilator and the first 93 days of his life in the neonatal intensive care unit. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Jothi's parents were told he would have a poor quality of life. He has been attending DVLCC for over three years and has made amazing progress; even starting to take steps with the support of a walker – something his parents could never have dreamt of.

The generosity from the attendees of Aerogolf will allow many children like Jothi to take their first step in the world and reach milestones that their families once thought were out of reach.

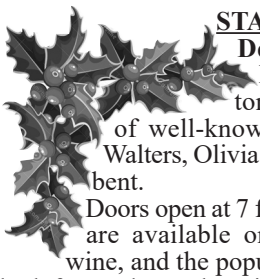
For more information on Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity, please contact me on **01444 473274** or email **molly.devine@dvlcc.org.uk**. *Molly Devine*

DITCHLING DOWNS WI At our October meeting Bill McNaught gave a fascinating talk on the genius of the Brunel family - Father, Son and Grandson, and their incredible contributions to the development of civil engineering and public transport in 19th Century Britain.

We won't be having a speaker in December - instead we will be enjoying each other's company at our Christmas Party!

For details of joining DDWI please contact **gmtennant.ddwi@yahoo.com**

Alison White



STAR CINEMA Friday **12th December** at the Adastra Hall. The film is Paddington in Peru, starring a host of well-known faces, including Julie Walters, Olivia Coleman, and Jim Broadbent.

Doors open at 7 for a 7.30 pm start. Tickets are available on the door. Tea, coffee, wine, and the popular raffle. The Star Team look forward to welcoming you. *Liz Edmunds*

SUSSEX PATHFINDERS RAMBLING CLUB

Throughout the year members of SPRC continue to provide new and interesting walks throughout East and West Sussex.

We are surrounded on three sides with wonderful views, lush pastures and spectacular forests. On the fourth side there is the vast English Channel with pretty harbours, varied types of beaches, imposing cliffs and the magnificent Coastal Walk.

Running through all these sights are streams, rivers and canals passing farms, tiny village houses and some imposing mansions.

However, one particular walk, somewhere between Boxing day and the **31st December**, has become a tradition with SPRC and long may that continue.

Jean, a stalwart member of SPRC, will lead her usual 'Pass the Port' walk of 10 miles on Sunday, **28th December** starting at 10 am. There will be opportunities to shorten the route at various points by catching a bus back to, or near, the start point. There will be a lunch break at the Mile Oak farm. Full details of the walk can be seen on our website **https://sussexpathfinders.org.uk** together with all our walks in December. *Diann*

THE GROWING NETWORK We are a freely-giving community network that supports local people to grow and share food, with no one left out.

This month we will be meeting for a Christmas pot-luck lunch with a big pot of soup to share.

We meet each month to share seeds, seedlings and extra produce along with gardening tips and friendship. We'd love to meet you whether you're a veteran gardener or would-be grower of vegetables and if you'd like to find others to help you get started on your gardening journey. You don't even need to have your own garden, as there are some of us that like to collaborate by growing with others. Come along and see what we're up to and help yourself to the seedlings, seeds and produce on offer.

Saturday **13th December** 11 am to 1 pm at Friends Meeting House, East Gardens, Ditchling BN6 8ST. This is the Quaker Meeting House (not to be confused with the Old Meeting House in the Twitten) Feel free to bring a contribution to lunch or any of nature's bounty from your garden. Or just bring yourself! Warm wishes. *Catherine, Imke & Julie*

THE ROCKING HORSE CHILDREN'S CHARITY supports babies, children and young people along with their families at The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital and The Trevor Mann Baby Unit in Brighton as well as all of the specialist children's wards and baby units in hospitals throughout Sussex.

This year Mid Sussex Radio 103.8 FM is supporting the wonderful work of the charity by collecting toys and games for the children who will be in hospital during December and particularly at Christmas.

From Saturday 1st November brand new unwrapped gifts can be dropped in to the Mid Sussex Radio Studio at 89 Church Walk, Burgess Hill or next door at The Digital Café at 87 Church Walk Burgess Hill.

Please make sure any gifts are brand new – unfortunately we are unable to accept second hand toys or gifts.

Please don't wrap your gifts – this way they can be matched with the right child.

Here is a suggested list of suitable items we can accept:

Board/card games for children of all ages, Colouring or art related gifts suitable for 3–10-year-olds, Art related gifts for teenagers, Books for toddlers, Story books for aged 3+, Books suitable for 10–14-year-olds, Mini remote-control cars or vehicles, Deodorant/bath sets for teenagers, Pyjamas for children under 10, Disney/Peppa Pig/Bluey/Hey Duggee books or toys, Toy cars or farm animal toys, Teddies, Dolls, Stationery sets and notebooks/sketchbooks.

We would love to hear from clubs, companies, schools, churches or other groups who would like to join Mid Sussex Radio in collecting gifts for poorly children from our area.

We would also like to hear from you if you are able to offer to be a drop off point for gifts. Perhaps could be a drop off point for pyjamas for children under 10.

Let's make this Christmas truly special for the children who can't be in their own home at Christmas.

For more information on how you can get involved please email **studio@midsussexradio.co.uk**. Please mark emails FAO Dizzie.

Dizzie Howes





Whats On in December



Clubs, Societies & Groups please let us have your programmes and/or events to **PUBLISH FREE** in this section. Email **ed@villagemagazines.co.uk** or send to **QD Stationery 52 Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8AR.** For more information call **01273 846978.**

Regular Clubs Meets

BBT - Hassocks (Bumps, Babies & Toddlers) - St Francis Church, Priory Road, Hassocks. Thursdays 1 - 2.30 pm. A group for play & chat.

BEFRIENDED CAFE NEURO Salvation Army Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill Mondays 10.30 am - 12 pm. - Support those living with dementia, their carers and loved ones. More info email office@befriended.org.

BEFRIENDED COMMUNITY CHOIR - Tuesdays (term-time) 10 am - 12 pm, Methodist Church, Burgess Hill. All welcome to sing for joy. More info www.befriended.org.

BEFRIENDED FALL-PREVENTION EXERCISE CLASS Gateway Baptist Church, Station Road, Burgess Hill Wednesday 2 pm. More info www.befriended.org.

DITCHLING MORRIS - Practice Thursday at United Reformed Church Hall at 7.30 pm. Pop in if you feel like joining.

GREYHOUND MORRIS Practice every Tuesday at Keymer Church Hall, 7 pm. We welcome new members of all abilities both musical and dancing, see you there.

HASSOCKS TABLE TENNIS CLUB - Mon & Thurs 2 - 4 pm at Adastra Hall. Roll up to play.

HASSOCKS TABLE TENNIS Mon & Thurs 2 - 4 pm Adastra Hall. Roll up to play.

HASSOCKS YOUTH GROUP The Green Room, Adastra Hall, Hassocks. Thursdays 5.30 - 7 pm School Years 4 - 13 (Term time only). All welcome for games, crafts and activities and social time.

HEARTS OF SUSSEX BRIDGE CLUB - Monday online and Tuesdays at Age Concern Hassocks. More info visit www.hsobcbridgeclub.co.uk

HUG IN A MUG MUMS, DADS & CARERS - 8.45 - 10.30 am every Monday, Keymer Church Hall, For parents, carers or grandparents who look after children. Cake, coffee, toys and games.

HUG IN A MUG - A coffee (and cake!) morning for all. Monday 10.30 - 12 pm at Keymer Church Hall and at Clayton Church Hall, every Tuesday at 10.30 am to 12 pm.

IRISH SET DANCING The Emmanuel Centre, Ditchling 7.15 - 9.30 pm. Come and join us for some fun and active dancing (not Riverdance). We are an informal and friendly group. Beginners are very welcome, no need to bring a partner. Your first session is free call 07802 847234 for more info.

KEYMER FOLK DANCE CLUB meet on 1st/3rd/5th Mondays at 7.30 pm at the URC Church Hall, Hassocks. No partner needed just come along. For further details visit www.keymerfolkdanceclub.co.uk or email keymerfdc@gmail.com.

MID SUSSEX SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE GROUP. Meet every Tuesday Evening, 7.30 pm, Main Hall Hurstpierpoint Village Centre. Anyone is welcome, no previous knowledge is necessary just a willingness to have fun. Please visit www.msscd.org.uk for more details. (We do not meet in July or August)

SUSSEX FLY DRESSERS GUILD Clayton Village Hall, Thurs. 7 - 9 pm. Beginners to Advanced sussexflydressersguild.org.uk.

VISUALLY-IMPAIRED CLUB We meet alternate Wednesdays from 10.30 am to 2 pm at Clayton Parish Hall in Underhill Lane. If you are interested, please ring me on **01444 450947**.

WHIST DRIVE - Our friendly club meets at Age Concern, Hassocks every Thursdays at 6.45 pm. More info 01273 843390.

Church Services

BEACON PARISH SERVICES DECEMBER Morning Worship with Holy Communion 10 am St Margarets, Ditchling on **7** (inc Little Beacons), **14th 21st & 28th**.

DITCHLING UNITARIANS The Old Meeting House, The Twitten, Ditchling. **7th** Sunday Service at 11 am Open Minds, Kind Hearts, Free Spirits. **16th** Mindfulness Meditation 7 to 8 pm. www.ditchlingunitarians.org.uk.

HASSOCKS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH Evening service 'Worship & Praise' at 6 pm on 3rd Sunday in the month. All welcome.

QUAKER MEETING FOR WORSHIP 10.30 am Sundays, Ditchling Friends Meeting House. Also 2nd & 4th Sundays at 10.30 am, at The Yews, 55 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath. All are welcome for peaceful worship and coffee. Our magazine "Friendly News" is available at Ditchling PO www.ditchlingquakers.org.uk

Dated Events

1st HASSOCKS WI Adastra Hall, Hassocks 2 pm. Craft Club. Visitors welcome.

2nd DITCHLING DOWNS WI Ditchling Village Hall, 7 pm. Christmas Party

3rd HOLY TRINITY CHURCH Hurstpierpoint 7.30 pm. Mothers' Union Advent Evening with Carols and Reading followed by Mulled Wine and Mince Pies. Tickets 01273 833954.

3rd HURST MONTHLY SOCIAL GROUP Guide HQ, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint 2 - 4 pm 'The 'Magic of Pantomime' Ian Gledhill. Visitors welcome call 07806 670359.

3rd UKES OF HASSOCKS Proper Cycling & Coffee 7.30 pm. Monthly community jam session, play and sing along, beginners welcome. All welcome.

3rd AGE UK MEMORY CAFE Adastra Hall, Hassocks 10.30 am - 12.30 pm. These sessions are for anyone with memory problems, dementia and their family member or carer. More info call 01444 450248.

4th BOTHY SINGERS Christ Church, Sayers Common 7 pm. Candlelight Concert. See article. Tickets www.brassfusion.co.uk.

4th DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY Ditchling Village Hall 7.30 pm. Film - 'The Holdovers'. Tickets available on the door - see article.

4th BEFRIENDED BOARD GAMES Hurstpierpoint 2.30 pm. An afternoon of games, giggles and company call 0300 772 7703 to book.

5th LIGHT UP HASSOCKS Keymer Road, Hassocks 4-8 pm Family Event Procession, Stalls, Choirs, Santas Grotto, Funfair and more.

5th CHURCHES TOGETHER URC Church Keymer Road, Hassocks 6 pm Activities, Refreshments & Fairtrade.

5th JAZZ ETC Old Meeting House, Ditchling 7.15 pm. 'Aneesa Christmas Special'. See article. Tickets Ditchling Post Office.

6th COELIAC GROUP South Downs Garden Centre, Brighton Road, Hassocks 9 am - 11am. 'Brunch and Chat'. All welcome.

6th AGE CONCERN HASSOCKS Dale Avenue, Hassocks 10 am - 1 pm. Christmas Craft Fair.

6th HEBER OPERA Hurstpierpoint Village Centre 10 am - 2 pm. Christmas Craft Fair.

6th BURGESS HILL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Cyprus Hall, Burgess Hill 10 am - 2 pm. 'Community Christmas Market. www.burgesshillhorticulturalsociety.com. All welcome.

7th HURST SANTA SUNDAY High Street, Hurstpierpoint 12.30 - 4.30 pm. Magical Christmas Market - music, treats and Christmas shopping.

7th CHURCHES TOGETHER URC Church Keymer Road, Hassocks 4.30 pm Christingle Service.

7th BEFRIENDED St Andrews Church, Burgess Hill 3 - 5 pm. Afternoon Tea Party with quizzes, celebrations, making friends, information, advice and great entertainment. More info www.befriended.org.

7th ST PETER AND ST JAMES HOSPICE Ditchling Village Hall 12 - 5 pm. Christmas Market.

8th THE GROUP The Railway Pub, Station Road, Burgess Hill. 7.30 pm. A club for the over 55 unattached for more info www.thegroup.org.uk.

9th AGE UK MEMORY CAFE Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint 2 - 4 pm. These sessions are for anyone with memory problems, dementia and their family member or carer. More info call 01444 450248.

Lost Property



'Like' our page on Face book & keep up to date with all the lost property items 'QD Stationery'

10th DITCHLING HISTORY PROJECT White Horse, Ditchling 2 pm. Drop in all welcome.
12th STAR CINEMA Adastra Hall, Hassocks, 7 pm. Film - 'Paddington in Peru'. Tea, coffee, wine and raffle. Tickets available on the door.
12th MID SUSSEX AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY Cyprus Hall, Burgess Hill 7.30 pm. www.midsussexars.org.uk. 'Nag and Natter Evening'. Refreshments available. All welcome.
13th CHURCHES TOGETHER URC Hassocks 9.30 am. Messy Church - breakfast, crafts, games and story. All welcome.
13th THE BEACON PARISH St Margarets Church, Ditchling, 4 pm. Brighton Singers Concert. Tickets brightonsingers.org.uk or on the door.
13th THE GROWING NETWORK Friends Meeting House, Ditchling 10.30 am to 12 pm. Feel free to bring any seeds or plants to share or gardening books/tools you don't need. See article.
13th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road, Hassocks KO 3 pm. (Mens) The Robins take on Merstham. Bar and Food available. Free entry to kids 16 and under. Please check socials for any changes.
13th BURGESS HILL CHORAL SOCIETY St Andrews Church, Burgess Hill 7.30 pm. Christmas Concert. Tickets 07522 493966. See article for info.
13th MENS BREAKFAST The Greyhound, Keymer 10 am. For a social cooked breakfast. All welcome to book email alexbaxter66@yahoo.co.uk
14th HOLY TRINITY CHURCH Hurstpierpoint 3 - 4.30 pm. Family Christmas Crafts for pre-school & primary aged children. Booked www.holytrinity-hurst.org
14th THE BEACON PARISH Streat Church, 4 pm. Carols by Candlelight followed by mince pies and mulled wine.
14th HOLY TRINITY CHURCH Hurstpierpoint 7 pm. Contemporary Carols.
14th CHURCHES TOGETHER Adastra Hall, Hassocks 3 - 4 pm. Carols Together with refreshments.
14th PYECOMBE CHURCH 6 pm. Carol Service.
14th BEFRIENDED Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint 3 - 5 pm. Afternoon Tea Party with quizzes, celebrations, making friends, information, advice and great entertainment. More info www.befriended.org.
14th HEBER OPERA Danny House, New Way Lane, Hurstpierpoint 7.15 pm. Traditional Christmas Concert. See article. Tickets 07867 975967
14th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road KO 2 pm. (Womens) The Robins take on Broadbridge Heath. Bar & Food available. Free entry.
15th HASSOCKS WI Adastra Hall, Hassocks 7.30 pm. Christmas Party Time with fizz and games. Visitors welcome.
17th AGE UK MEMORY CAFE Adastra Hall, Hassocks 10.30 am - 12.30 pm. These sessions are for anyone with memory problems, dementia and their family member or carer. More info call 01444 450248.
17th TREFOIL GUILD Guide Hall, Semley Road, Hassocks 7.45 pm. Monthly meeting visitors welcome. See article.
17th SOUTH DOWNS WOODTURNERS Upper Beeding Village Hall, 7pm Christmas themed evening with mince pies Visitors welcome.
18th WOMENS BREAKFAST The Greyhound, Keymer 10 am. For a social cooked breakfast. All welcome to book email mo.delaine@btinternet.com.
18th POLICE BEAT SURGERY South Downs Garden Centre, Hassocks 11 am - 12 pm. Come along to get crime prevention & advice on neighbourhood issues.
18th LIBERAL DEMOCRATS SURGERY HASSOCKS Parish Council Offices Committee Room 11 am - 12 pm. Sue Hatton, Kristian Berggreen & Chris Hobbs. No appointment necessary.
20th HASSOCKS VILLAGE MARKET Age Concern Car Park, 9 am - 1 pm. Local produce, bread, honey, cheese, wine, veg etc.
20th THE BEACON PARISH Westmeston Church, 4 pm. Carols by Candlelight followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

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20th CHURCHES TOGETHER Hassocks Village Market, Dale Avenue 11 am Carols in the Market Place, mulled wine, mulled apple juice available.
21st THE BEACON PARISH St Margaret's Church, Ditchling 6 pm. Carols by Candlelight followed by mince pies and mulled wine.
21st PARISH OF CLAYTON WITH KEYMER, Meeting Room, Keymer Church Hall. 9.45 - 10.45 am. Storytime Creative - Stories from the Bible and the heart and respond with your own pictures or creative writing. Bring an adult. More info 01273 845964.
21st DITCHLING UNITARIANS The Old Meeting House, The Twitten, Ditchling 11 am Christmas Service.
21st HOLY TRINITY CHURCH Hurstpierpoint 6 pm. Candlelit Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies.
21st ST BARTHOLOMEWS CHURCH Albourne 6 pm. 9 lessons and Carols followed by mulled wine and mince pies.
22nd URC CHURCH Hassocks 3 pm Crib Service.
22nd CHRISTS CHURCH Sayers Common 6 pm. Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies.
22nd CAMEO Keymer Church Hall 2 pm - 4 pm. Open to all - come and enjoy an enjoyable afternoon over a cup of tea.

CHRISTMAS EVE CHURCH SERVICES

CRIB SERVICE Ditchling Church 2 pm
CRIB SERVICE Hurstpierpoint Church 3 pm
CRIB SERVICE St Francis Church, Priory Rd 4 pm
CRIB SERVICE Ditchling Church 4 pm
CRIB SERVICE St Peter, Twineham 4 pm
CRIB SERVICE Hurstpierpoint Church 4.30 pm
FIRST MASS St Edwards RC Church, Keymer 5 pm
9 LESSONS & CAROLS Keymer Church 6 pm
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT URC, Hassocks 6 pm
MIDNIGHT MASS St Bartholomew, Albourne 8 pm
MIDNIGHT MASS Keymer Church 11.30 pm
MIDNIGHT MASS Hurstpierpoint Church 11.30 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH SERVICES

COMMUNION Hurstpierpoint Church 8 am
BCP EUCHARIST Keymer Church 8 am
MASS St Edwards RC Church, Keymer 9.30 am
EUCHARIST Keymer Church 9.45 am
COMMUNION St Francis Church 9.45 am
FAMILY COMMUNION Hurstpierpoint Church 10 am
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE URC, Hassocks 10 am
EUCHARIST, St Peters, Sayers Common 10 am
CHRISTMAS COMMUNION Ditchling Church 10 am
BCP EUCHARIST at Clayton Church 11.15 am

25th BEFRIENDED Hurstpierpoint Village Centre 12 - 3.30 pm. Community Christmas Lunch. More info and to book www.befriended.org.
27th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road, Hassocks KO 3 pm. (Mens) The Robins take on Three Bridges. Bar and Food available. Free entry to kids 16 and under. Please check socials for any changes.
29th Dec - 4th Jan HURST PLAYERS Players Theatre High Street, Hurstpierpoint. Various Performances. Panto - Pinnochio comes to Life. Tickets www.hurstplayers.org.uk.

AN OCEAN OVERSIGHT - December has a real indoors vibe. Short days, finishing work in the dark and inconsistent weather doesn't exactly motivate us to get out, even if we know it's good for us. This poses a challenge for connecting with wildlife, which we know can increase people's desire to protect the natural world. Despite many species hibernating or migrating, there is still so much to see. To throw yourself in at the deep end, I encourage you this winter to explore our beautiful Sussex coast.

That said, in reviewing my parish magazine articles of this year, I realise I've not included any marine species. This is awkward. If our marine team find out they'll be livid. But also, we work hard to connect people with blue spaces, promote the value and wonder of the ocean and fight for its protection, so how have I overlooked it?

The marine environment has long since suffered from a lack of attention in the conservation world and beyond. At the risk of sounding like I'm defending myself, in a way it's understandable. We're terrestrial mammals, desperately under-resourced for the aquatic. We seek warmth, dryness, a firm foundation underfoot, and can align more easily with perils of the warm-blooded – and things with a face.

Many of us value coastal connections; beach trips, swimming, travel to warmer waters. But our oceans are not a luxury. They are a lifeline. A critical feature of our ecosystem, which we and all other life on earth could not survive without. Our disconnect with the ocean environment is contributing to its demise, and we must turn it around.

There is something fascinating about the unknown of the big blue, and once you start to investigate, you realise how truly epic it is. Although much is out of sight from land, the diversity of healthy UK waters has such colour and vibrancy, from royal blue Lobsters to 90s-neon Corkwing Wrasse, and other-wordly nudibranchs.

In winter it's wild. The drama of furious waters, crashing waves and freezing sea-spray. Watching, huddled in layers, a freezing cold nose and the promise of an after winter-walk's too-hot-yet chips. Heading to the water's edge for stone-sprinkled sand and shell treasure discoveries. And there's nothing like a stomp along a windswept beach to galvanise a slumped after-Christmas-dinner bunch.

So, this December, why not skip a shopping trip, dodge the odd social occasion, push that deadline. Instead, head to the sea. And I'll submit many a marine article in 2026. Promise.

Kerry Williams

GILES TURNER
FINANCIAL PLANNING

Plan, Save, Celebrate: Your Year-End Financial Guide

As the year winds down, it's natural to reflect on what you've achieved and where you'd like to improve. Between festive celebrations, family gatherings, and gift-giving, finances often take a back seat — but this is one of the best times to review your situation and prepare for the year ahead.

1. Review Your Finances

Start by looking back at your year. Did you reach your savings goals? How did your investments perform? Were there unexpected expenses? Reviewing your accounts helps you see what worked and where you can improve next year.

2. Maximise Tax Opportunities

Before the tax year closes, in April, take advantage of available allowances. Consider topping up pension contributions, making charitable donations, or reviewing investment gains and losses. A quick chat with your accountant or adviser could help you save more than you think.

3. Set a Holiday Budget

The festive season can easily lead to overspending. Create a realistic budget that covers gifts, food, entertainment, and travel — and stick to it. Protecting your long-term goals is the best gift you can give yourself.

4. Plan Ahead for 2026

Set clear priorities for the year ahead — whether that's reducing debt, growing your investments, or saving for a specific goal. Small, consistent steps make the biggest difference over time.

Final Thoughts

The holidays remind us of what truly matters — family, connection, and the joy of giving. With a little planning, you can enjoy the season without financial stress and head into the new year feeling prepared and confident. Take some time this Christmas to reflect, reset, and plan for a brighter financial future. Your goals are within reach — and the best time to start planning is now.

"The path to the financial future you desire starts with the plans that you make today."



If you would like to find out more, please get in touch.

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STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

As soon as I saw the ticket on our rubbish bins with the quote it's a simple as 123 I thought this is going to be a shambles - no way can the rubbish bins go so long without being emptied. We don't have any food waste with the price it is as we can't afford to throw away. So, one of those little green caddies would be worthless to us and it does seem to be a bit of a lottery as who gets these little caddies. There are 7 flats above the shops along our parade, out of these seven flats only three of them have had these caddies delivered, all of which have remained empty and unused. So a total waste of time and money, alright I get the concept about a cleaner greener Mid Sussex, but as for being simple - as far as I am concerned this is an unworkable scheme, soon the wheels are going to come off – only every three weeks is crazy, I'm sure I will get some feedback about this.

Christmas is once against almost upon us and as usual all of us retail shops are hoping that when you can, and if you want to SUPPORT US, then please do. Having the money to pay those after Christmas bills is a great feeling, but over the years the Internet and others have eroded that feeling, now we just live in hope. Please SHOP LOCALLY where you can.

Now that eyesore opposite. I had a very long chat with the owners, and the bottom line is it's going to continue to be an eyesore for some considerable time at least another year. Apparently, the plans were turned down on delegate powers, now that doesn't mean a lot to me, but I think it didn't even make it to the planning department, which was very disappointing for the owners because they wanted to replace the garage with something a lot more useful to the village. I asked them if they are going to resubmit different plans, but the answer was look Steve, we are a company who have lots of fingers in a lot of different pies and we are dealing with other authorities' who want us to build and develop environmentally friendly buildings, so our time and effort are taken up with them. So, we have no time or interest in trying to come up with new plans for the Hassocks site and if all efforts do fail, then we will just put in another garage on the site, but even that idea is a long time away. So, that's it the eyesore will continue to dominate the centre of Hassocks, my plea to make it into a car park was also turned down, so it seems they are playing the waiting game and have nothing to lose in doing so.

The name Eastwood for the new cafe in town comes from Station Approach East and Woodlands Road. Thank you everyone for the info on that and good to hear how much you're enjoying your visits, it comes highly recommended.

Good old Mother Nature has once again come to our rescue to ensure there are definitely no Stand Pipes this Christmas. However, the deluge of rain had the usual devastating effects on the shops in the centre of town, which has ignited a flurry of work on our drainage system which the people in Hi-Viz call old and inadequate. Most of the gullies are collapsed and blocked, so are all being replaced and repaired to ensure hopefully the rainwater runs away before it can do any damage. I'm not sure but has the Post Office recovered from it yet? You don't want that not operating properly coming up to Christmas, but it is hit and miss at the best of times.

Did you notice this year the distinct lack of any of the shops or other premises selling poppies and normally it was hard to spot anyone not wearing one. This year it was the other way round. Is this because we're supposed to be moving towards a cashless society and people don't carry small change anymore to put in a collection box or is it a distinct lack of respect for those who made the ultimate sacrifice?

Wishing you all Happy Christmas. Love Steve.

HASSOCKS PET CENTRE, KEYMER ROAD, HASSOCKS 01273 842392