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IAN THOMPSON We would like to thank everyone for their cards, messages and condolences on the sad passing of Ian. It has been a great comfort to us all how much he was thought of.

The Thompson family

GIRLS' BRIGADE UNIFORM NEEDED If anyone has any Girls' Brigade uniform i.e. the jade polo shirt and/or navy sweatshirt they no longer require, please contact me the Captain on **01273 832286** as I wish to pass these onto current girls as this will save parents having to pay full price for new uniform and it is good to 'recycle'.

Margaret Taylor

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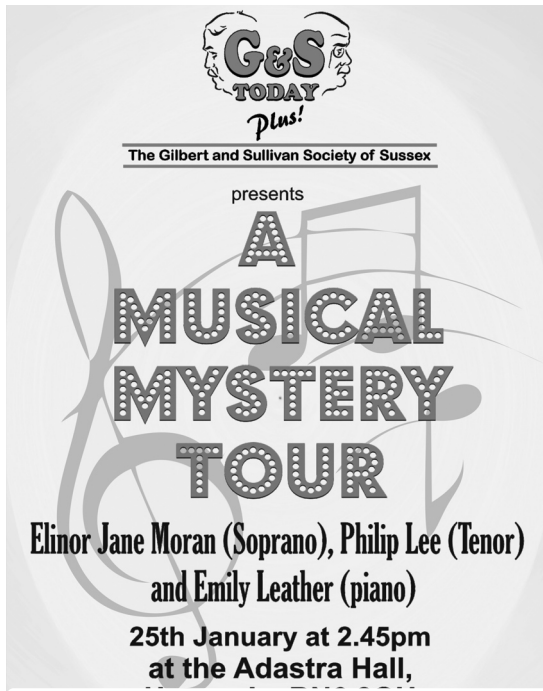
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THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY OF SUSSEX present "A Musical Mystery Tour". Elinor Jane Moran (Soprano), Philip Lee (Tenor) and Emily Leather (piano) on Sunday **25th January**, at 2.45 pm at Adastra Hall, Keymer, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8QH.
Tickets include refreshments. Booking: **gandstodaysussex@gmail.com**. *Pennie Ingram*



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AWARD PRESENTATIONS Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club congratulates the 150 award winners at the end of last term.

The gymnasts are marked on a progressively hard scheme of agilities, then when they have reached each level of proficiency, they are awarded badges and certificates from the British Gymnastics Award scheme. The numbered proficiency badges are followed by Advanced Proficiency in Floor skills, Vaulting and Sports Acrobatic Pairs work. Some of the recipients have worked for over a year for their reward – a usual progress speed is an award every year.

Pictured are Evie Robbins, Jessica Parsons, Sophie Wingrove, Frankie Ingram, Aya Cornwall and Elodie Cutts with their awards.

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*



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Doors open 11.30 am, the Jazz starts at 12 pm, a set lunch is served during the performance and the Jazz finishes at around 2.45 pm.

Advance bookings only via QD Stationery, 52 Keymer Road, Hassocks or call **01273 846978** (Answerphone out of hours). *Chris Lambe*

HASSOCKS FIELD SOCIETY meetings for January are on Monday **12th January**. 'The Balcombe Tunnel Murder (1881)' by James Gardner.

Monday **26th January** 'Bishopstone in History' by Ian Everest.

Meetings are held at a Adastra Hall and commence at 7.45 pm.

Small entrance fee for members and visitors with tea or coffee and biscuits served during the break.

Come and have an enjoyable evening amongst friendly local people - all welcome.

For further information please contact me the secretary **01273 832351**. *Beryl Varley*

MID SUSSEX RAMBLERS As the Ramblers' group for the Mid Sussex area we offer a varied programme of walks throughout the year to suit all ages and abilities. Our walks programme is available on our website: **www.midsussexramblers.co.uk** along with information about the group.

Walks are arranged on Tuesdays and weekends throughout the year and vary in length from 4-12 miles. During the summer there are short walks on Wednesday evenings, trial walks and leisurely nature walks.

New and experienced walkers are both very welcome and if you would like to try one of our walks please get in touch via the Contact Form on our website, or email **msrpublicity@gmail.com** or telephone our Secretary and Publicity Officer, Sue Blandford, on **01403 255654.**

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HASSOCKS WI – Meet on 3rd Monday in the month at Adastra Hall, doors open at 7.30 pm, evening starts at 7.45 pm.

What happened to 2025? November saw a very informative afternoon with Kay Birch from Safe in Sussex and Lauren Acton from freedom leisure. Here is useful information -24 hour National Domestic Abuse helpline **0808 2000 247**, **www.safeinsussex.co.uk**, **www.westsussex.gov.uk** search domestic abuse, **www.rise.org.uk**.

A good number of us enjoyed the drumming and percussion workshop lead by Sean from Drumheads. You don't know what you missed, it was soothing, rhythmic and brash, fabulous. Thank you, Maureen, for taking the lively photos during the evening.

The Craft Club made beautiful Christmas wreaths, mine lasted well. Our Christmas party showcased the talents of some of our members and was very enjoyable. Thank you to everyone who made the evening so festive.

Craft Club will be Monday **5th January**.

At our January meeting (**19th Janaury**) we always stuff breast cancer cushions which have already been sewn. We discuss the resolutions and chat. February meeting is our AGM with a recap of the past year, plans for 2026, committee changes (some may be leaving newbies are always welcome, so think about it). Then we will enjoy listening to Belinda and Dave entertain us with keyboard playing and operatic singing, possibly a musical quiz.

So much to enjoy during the miserable dark winter so don't be alone or lonely, come along, visitors welcome (donation). There will be cake. *Gerry*

HURSTPIERPOINT HISTORICAL & GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY. On Tuesday **13th January** at 7.30 pm The talk is on "The Cuckmere River," It will be a geographical and historical trip along the River Cuckmere, from its source in the Sussex Weald to when it reaches the sea at Cuckmere Haven. The speaker is Dr Geoffrey Mead**.** Please Note! This talk will be held at our new venue, The Players Theatre at 147 High Street, Hurstpierpoint. Small charge for Non Members. All welcome. For further details please email **hurst.hist.geog.soc@gmail.com**.

Jackie Simmons

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SOUTH DOWN GUIDING So who are we? South Down is the name of the Guiding Division that looks after the units in Ditchling, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint and we are part of the wider Sussex Central County.

There has been a Guiding presence in the three villages since 1924 when the 1st Hassocks Guide unit was first registered celebrating one hundred years in Hassocks last year.

Recently we achieved a Guiding first when 3 members of the same family made their promise on the same evening. Our lovely new leader in Ditchling, Sian Fforde made her promise with our Division Commissioner Sue Davis, then Sian enrolled no less than 10 new Brownies- including her own two daughters.



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Sadly, we have recently had to close a couple of units due to a lack of volunteer leaders which means there are less Guide, Brownie and Rainbows places available. Our remaining units are all running on the minimum leaders that is possible, we really want to keep these units open so Guiding can continue in South Down for another century.

So, this is an appeal to you all, (yes men too – there are many non-leader roles to be filled) to consider a role in Guiding. We need leaders, helpers, treasurers' administrators, fundraisers.

Leaders will receive comprehensive training mostly available to complete online at your own pace and you will also have an experienced existing leader to support you and guide you through the training.

In Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint we are very lucky to own our own halls. Both villages have a fantastic, but small, team of volunteers to manage day-to-day maintenance of the halls we are of course very grateful to them for volunteering to do this. We are always looking for new volunteers to help maintain the halls, particularly if you have building maintenance, financial or secretarial skills or just would like to help. We would also like to build up a pool of skilled consultant electricians, builders, gardeners etc that we could refer to as and when needed for advice on maintenance issues. If you can help in any way we would love to hear from you.

Were you a Guide once? Do you remember your leaders and the fun you had?

You could help the next generation of Girls have as much fun as you once did.

If you are interested and would like to find out what we do or help in any way, please contact Sue at **beacondistrictsd@gmail.com.** *Sue Davis*


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AGE CONCERN Dale Avenue, Hassocks, **01273 844461, www.achassocks.co.uk**, Facebook – **Age Concern Hassocks.**

First of all, we would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year!

December was a busy month at the centre, and we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those, who made it a fun and happy time. Thank you to Windmills Junior School and Downlands, who sang beautifully for us, and to Eaton and Webb also came along to entertain us, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

We held four Christmas lunches during the month. Thank you to our staff and volunteers for making these possible and ensuring everyone had a good time. We are also incredibly grateful to Tates Garden Centre Hassocks for donating a lovely Christmas tree, which was the focus of our decorations.

Our Christmas Fair was well attended and a success. We would like to thank our volunteers for their hard work, and those in the community who donated prizes for the raffle: QD Stationery, The Hassocks Hotel, The Sussex Grocer, Louisa Vaughan (Tropic Skincare), and Jean Barton.

Moving on into 2026, January will be a quieter month at the centre, but we will still be offering our members and everyone who comes to the centre a warm welcome, hot drinks, delicious food and cakes.

On the **6th of January**, Community Energy Pathways will be here to provide energy saving advice and on the **8th January** Silvertime Legal will visit us to give information on legal and tax matters.

Please come and have a look around - our dining room has been recently refurbished and looks fantastic – definitely worth a look!

We look forward to seeing you. *All at Age Concern*

MY GRATEFUL THANKS TO HASSOCKS' FAVOURITE BUTCHER ANDY TWINE who has kindly housed collecting cans during the year for CICRA - Crohn's in Childhood Research Association. My thanks also to Andy's colleagues behind the counter - always a cheery smile and hullo to be had.

To Andy's customers a 'BIG' thank you for your kind generosity throughout 2025. It is not always easy to find 'extra change' to put in the can and I want you to know that is is very much appreciated by CICRA who are working so very hard funding research to find a cure for the IBS illnesses which can affect all age groups as well as children. My personal thanks to you ALL - I wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year. *Dorrie*

PLEASE MAY WE CONVEY OUR THANKS TO THE GROUP OF PEOPLE who came to my aid when I kissed the pavement on the corner of Downsview Road and Keymer Road on Sunday the 30th November.

Two people picked me up; one gave tissues and two people walked me home.

Your kindness was much appreciated. I'm recovering well and wish you all a Happy New Year.

Mary

STAR CINEMA Friday **16th January** at the Adastra hall. The film is MR BURTON, based on a remarkable true story of the life of Richard Burton. It stars Lesley Manville, Toby Jones, and Harry Lawtey as Richard Burton. Doors open at 7 for a 7 30 start. Tickets are available on the door. Tea, coffee, wine, and the popular raffle. The Star Team look forward to welcoming you.

Liz Edmunds

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We thank Nicola for the following article:- I am not an eco warrior or eco specialist, in fact I initially agreed with the comments in December's edition for the "Back Page Gossip". The whole new 123 bin collection thing seemed so odd to me too, I had to educate myself as to why the need for the changes? Or as some describe "the unworkable, shambles" at a surface level it could appear that way. After a bit of research my very humble understanding is now as follows.

After agricultural and fossil fuels industries, food waste in landfill is a significant cause of methane gas. Waste food is buried under other household waste and decomposes in anaerobic conditions (without access to oxygen), creating a favourable environment for bacteria that produce methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas. It makes sense to protect the environment we live in, therefore the government passed legislation that by March 2026, all English councils must offer weekly food waste collection, it's not an idea MSDC plucked out of nowhere! According to waste management information available online at Mid Sussex District Council website, food waste accounted for approximately 38% of household waste.

Financially and morally food waste should be kept to a minimum. The odd banana skin, and tea bags for those who do not produce a lot of food waste, can all add up across many households. Just a few banana skins can produce enough energy to charge a mobile phone when sent to an anaerobic digester to be processed into renewable energy and bio-fertiliser.

If all is recycled carefully and correctly for the vast majority of us there will be sufficient services to process our waste in the most environmentally-friendly manner possible. (With the exception of Christmas, being the tricky time it always is with our extra waste. Households with young children in nappies or other medical conditions producing similar which normally go in the black bin could be an issue with the new general waste three weekly cycle).

*Put even small amounts of food waste into the food bin. It can be placed straight into the food bin as is, or it can be lined with newspaper or put in correct bio-friendly bags. It shouldn't smell as being collected weekly, it will smell if one incorrectly puts in the black bin general waste which is on the three weekly collection. Plus, food waste incorrectly placed in black bin will be taking up valuable black bin space, destined to produce methane gas in landfill. (Or if concerned re particularly smelly waste food items during 1 week, freeze in appropriate bio food bag to put in bin night before, that's what they do in Australia for the stinky shrimp shells, after a barbecue!).

*If small groups of flats do not produce a lot of food waste, share a food bin with a neighbour. Take



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it in turns to clean with a little hot water every now and then if felt necessary. Or contact MSDC for a food bin if flats are a couple of bins short following the recent allocation of the new food bins.

*Fold cardboard boxes to create more space in the recycling bin. Don't incorrectly use space in black bin for items that can be recycled. Extra recycle bins can be requested. Tin cans and glass bottles can take from 10 to over 100 years to decompose in landfill but can be infinitely recycled. Not forgetting other recyclable items.

*Where possible take all large items to the tip. Burgess Hill tip has an excellent in and out booking system.

*Soft plastics need to go to supermarket points where possible (difficult for those who don't drive or visit supermarkets to shop), as they are made from complex materials which are difficult to cycle and clog up the household recycling machines.

For food waste two environmentally friendly actions that are relatively simple are, reduce food waste where possible in the first place, and put any food leftovers/waste in the new bin. Climate change and global warming is very real, we can all help towards some damage limitation for us now, and for our future generations. How we correctly deal with food waste is just one way of many, and after all it's not that complicated or massively time consuming to pop food waste in the correct bin, knowing it's collected weekly.

We thank Shelia for the following email:- I totally agree with Steve in his back page column about the bin collection.

Regarding the food caddies, no one asked if we wanted one in the first place, I would have declined, but we were given one anyway and it is a pain in the proverbial, and just one more thing to think about. One week the food bin was left open, and full of rainwater and a few slugs for good measure As for black bins being collected every three weeks, this is disgusting, the thought of them being full of soiled nappies in the hot weather doesn't bear thinking about.

We are disabled pensioners with a small kitchen, and the extra bin and food caddy take up precious space. WE JUST DO NOT WANT THEM THANK YOU.

BEACON DISTRICT TREFOIL GUILD Our November meeting was very well attended. We made novelties for the Christmas tree and some edible fun things.

December saw us at Aroma Cafe. We enjoyed our Christmas dinner and party. We helped a special member celebrate her 90th Birthday!

January will be a planning meeting.

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

Visitors are always welcome! *Pam Strong*

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HASSOCKS VILLAGE MARKET is held on the fourth Saturday of the month (although December is a week earlier) and has a fantastic range of stalls selling hand-made local produce which includes chocolate, pies, olive oil, skincare, soaps and beauty products, teas and coffees, macarons, bread and pastries, cakes, seasonal organic fruit and vegetables, flowers, plants, jam and chutneys, beef jerky, olives, home made Indian foods, falafels, craft items and even dog treats for your favourite pooch. The market has a wonderful community atmosphere where friends meet for a chat and often a coffee and cake in the Age Concern cafe, so do come along each month and support this community event. Please also use the local shops in Hassocks as the traders value your custom and the additional trade the market brings to the village each month.

The market is kindly hosted by Age Concern in their car park, Dale Avenue, Hassocks from 9 am to 12.30 pm and their charity shop is also open until 12 pm to browse. The extremely popular Repair Cafe runs inside Age Concern (except August and December) and the Community Veg Patch welcomes visitors to the garden behind Age Concern. There are monthly posts on Hassocks Uncovered to remind you of the dates and we look forward to welcoming you! *Amanda Felix*

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DITCHLING DOWNS WI A group of us were treated to a fascinating tour of Wren's churches in London in October, learning so much about the architecture, the artwork inside the churches, and the way that life was lived in London in the 17th/18th centuries. Definitely a visit to be repeated. We are now finalising our programme of speakers for next year and looking forward to a wide range of very interesting topics from Jane Austen, to the Maritime Volunteer Service, to learning how to do Lasting Power of Attorney.

We love to welcome visitors and new members to our meetings - if you're interested, please email **gmtennant.ddwi@yahoo.com**. *Alison White*

HEBER OPERA is looking forward to serenading you on Valentine's day with an offering of musical delights on the theme of love from various musical genres. Our principal singers will be performing solos, duets and ensemble numbers for your entertainment at Hurstpierpoint Village Centre on Saturday 14 February, starting at 6pm.

If you are not free on Valentine's Day itself, another performance of the concert is taking place at The Chapel Royal, North Street, Brighton on Friday **13th February** at 7.30 pm.

Tickets for either performance are including a glass of wine and are on sale from **1st January** from **www.ticketsource.co.uk/heberopera** or by calling **07867 975967**. Seats are unreserved.

Jenny Hawkes

REMEMBER FEBRUARY ISSUE
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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF AN MP One thing I have learnt over the last 18 months is that every week looks different for an MP. Sometimes the rough plan that you had for the week goes completely out of the window and you learn to expect the unexpected. I thought it would be interesting to share with you what I got up to during a week at the end of last year, so that you can find out a bit more about what I get up to.

In quite an unusual start to the week, I caught a train up to London and headed straight to Downing Street with other MPs and campaigners to present the 'Save our IB' petition to the Prime Minister. This petition is calling for the government to reverse their cuts to post-16 courses like the International Baccalaureate programme in colleges like Varndean, something a number of Hassocks students have benefitted from over the years.

On Tuesday, I put forward an amendment to the Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill. My proposed change to this law would strengthen the ability of our town and parish councils to bid for assets of community value, rather than them being overlooked in favour of private sales. Later that day, I also took part in a roundtable with charities and other MPs at the Department for Health and Social Care about acute children's mental health services.

On Wednesday, during Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs), I got to ask the Prime Minister a question about delayed hospital discharges caused by a lack of social care support. Shocklingly, University Hospitals Sussex have on average 350 people who are well enough to leave hospital but cannot be sent home. This is equivalent to all the beds in the Princess Royal Hospital. I asked the PM what the government were going to do about this.

After listening to the Chancellor deliver the Budget, I headed back to Mid Sussex and straight into some Christmassy constituency events.

First on the agenda was the Christmas wrapping day at Haywards Heath Town Council as part of their 'Leave No One Behind at Christmas' campaign. I then headed to Burgess Hill Girls, where I presented the first-place prize to Isabelle, the overall winner of my Christmas card competition. I also attended the switching on of their Christmas lights.

On Saturday, I lent a hand at the Winter Food Collection at the Tesco Superstore in Burgess Hill. I got the opportunity to chat with Fareshare, a charity that works with organisations across Surrey and Sussex to redistribute food and reduce food waste. I very much enjoyed taking part in 2024, so it was great to get the opportunity to go back for a second year. I then ended the week with some canvassing in Burgess Hill, chatting to residents on the doorstep, and writing my Monday Mail newsletter.

Every week looks different, but it is always exciting. If you have any questions about my role or how I can assist you, please do get in contact via email at **alison.bennett.mp@parliament.uk**

Happy New Year to you all! *Alison Bennett*

DROP-IN ADVICE SESSIONS Lewes District Citizens Advice is a local, independent charity. Offering free, confidential and impartial advice.

Drop in for a chat at Quaker Meeting House, East Gardens, Ditchling from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm on Tuesday **24th February**, Tuesday **26th May**, Tuesday **25th August** or Tuesday **24th November**. Help with benefits, housing issues, cost of living, debt, energy and much more. Free advice line on **0808 2787892** Tuesday to Thursday 10 am to 3 pm or e-mail info at **lewes districtca.org.uk.**

Nicola Mendelsohn

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SUSSEX PATHFINDERS RAMBLING CLUB
Happy New Year and I wish everyone good health and happiness.
If you would like to increase your fitness levels and enjoy fresh air why not spend a few hours with SPRC and meet like minded people.
We meet every weekend and have seven very different walks arranged for January as follows - Saturday, **3rd January**, Chanctonbury Ring, 5.5 miles.
Sunday, **4th January**, Bolney, 7 miles through woodland and fields.
Saturday, **10th January**, High Salvington, Worthing. This will be a hilly 5 miles.
Sunday, **11th January,** Sompting. 8 miles across downland via the South Downs Way and Monarchs Way.
Saturday, **17th January,** Whiteways Lodge, north of Arundel. 5.5 miles along the South Downs Way.
Sunday, **18th January,** Hangleton, Hove. 8.5 miles exploring the history of the Devil's Dyke.
Saturday, **24th January**, Worthing seafront. This is a 4.5 mile linear walk along the Coastal Path to Rustington. You may wish to catch a bus back to the start point or double the walking distance.
There is no need to book, just turn up and introduce yourself to the group leader. Full details of all our walks through to the end of June can be seen on our website – **www.sussexpathfinders.org.uk**. *Diann*

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THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – HASSOCKS POPPY APPEAL Hello Everyone – I would just like to thank the following shops and businesses that have supported the RBL Poppy Appeal for 2025.
Keymer: Aroma Café and The Greyhound.
Hassocks: Adastra Kitchen, Bakeout
Bowley, Sussex Grocer, The Corner Café, Downlands Community School Office, Garden Bar and Café, Hassocks Barbers, Hassocks Fish & Chips, Hassocks Hardware, Hassocks Infant School, Morrisons
Proper Café, QD Stationery, Sainsburys, The Hassocks Hotel, The Windmills Junior School.
In addition, the No 16 Army Cadet Force, Hurstpierpoint have also collected.
Please accept a very grateful and heartfelt thank you to all of you who have given so generously. I will publish the total amount collected in the February edition of Talk About and Village Voice. Wishing you all a very successful 2026. Margaret Bovill, RBL Ditchling & District Branch, Poppy Appeal Organiser for Keymer and Hassocks.
Margaret E Bovill

KEYMER FOLK DANCE CLUB After the overeating and lack of exercise during the Christmas and New Year festive season, if you need some gentle exercise to shift the odd acquired pound, why not join thirty others and try Folk Dancing at the URC Church Hall on Monday evenings.
We have two meetings on the **5th and 19th January**. On the **19th January** we welcome back Sally and Co to play the music. Meetings start at 7.30 pm and finish at 9.30 pm.
More details can be found at **www.keymerfolkdanceclub.co.uk** or email **keymerfdc@gmail.com.** *Sean Goddard*

NSPCC Thank you everyone who came to our Quiz night on 22nd November. Because of your generosity, we raised an amazing £936.
This is much needed income to support NSPCC Childline so that they can be there for the vulnerable children in our area who contact them for support or advice. *Belinda*

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DAME VERA LYNN CHILDREN'S CHARITY RAISE £15,000 AT EXCLUSIVE EVENT AT LAMBETH PALACE

On Thursday 27 November, Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity hosted an exclusive luncheon at Lambeth Palace. The charity, which supports children under five with cerebral palsy, chromosome abnormalities and rare genetic disorders was joined by special guests Sir Edward Davey MP FRSA, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, and his wife Emily Gasson, who shared their own personal connection with the charity.

This unique event celebrated the extraordinary impact of the charity's loyal supporters, ahead of their 25th anniversary year. Guests enjoyed a drinks reception in the State Drawing Room with Sussex produced wines and soft drinks from sponsors Stopham Vineyard, Wiston Wine Estate and Folkington's Juices, before moving into the breathtaking Guards Room for lunch.



The charity hosted a live auction, compered by parent, Richard Taylor-Johnson, whose son Josh was supported by the charity. Every penny raised at the event will help to provide a range of early intervention support services to children and their families. The charity offers physiotherapy/ conductive education, music therapy, speech and language therapy, rebound therapy, swimming sessions and outreach home-play – all free of charge. With no waiting list to start at the charity, families can refer themselves if they feel they are in need of support.



Glenys Creese, CEO of Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity said: "We are so grateful to have hosted an event at such an eminent location. This event has helped to raise over £15,000 in crucial funds for the children we support, allowing families to see their child reach milestones they once thought were out of reach. We are so grateful to every one of our supporters who joined us on the day, and a special thanks to our sponsors: Homewood Rail, Robert Walters, Folkington's, Wiston Estate and Stopham Vineyard." *Molly Devine*



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RECYCLE YOUR TREE AND HELP A CHILD WITH CEREBRAL PALSY THIS CHRISTMAS



This Christmas, Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity is asking people to recycle their Christmas trees so they can continue to transform young children's lives in 2026.

The charity will be collecting trees directly from supporters' homes on 4, 5 and 6 January. For a suggested donation of £15, you can help children with motor learning impairments to unlock their full potential and recycle your tree at the same time.

You can support a child like Jothi**.**

Following a traumatic birth, Jothi spent the first 93 days of his life in neonatal intensive care. Suffering brain damage, Jothi was eventually diagnosed with cerebral palsy, and his parents were told he would have a poor quality of life.

"We felt totally lost and isolated when we left hospital with a nearly one-year-old with such high support needs. Now we are learning that with the right techniques or equipment, it is possible to make that happen for him in his own way. One of the main reasons he has progressed so well is down to this additional support and therapeutic input." – Kate, Jothi's mum.



If you don't have a real Christmas tree, you can still support DVLCC this Christmas. The charity is looking for volunteers to help collect trees on **4th, 5th and 6th January**.

For more information, and to book, please visit **www.dvlcc.org.uk/christmas**, or call **01444 473274**. The final date for booking is Thursday **2nd January**.

Molly Devine

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DITCHLING PLAYERS - SPRING 2026 PRODUCTION A happy New Year to you all from the Ditchling Players.

We do hope that you managed to pay a visit to Cranford (our November 2025 production) and that you enjoyed the production. There was certainly a lot of hard work both by the cast and back stage crew involved but it was all worth whole.

So now we're putting aside the bonnets and petticoats and looking forward to our Spring production which will be a crime/thriller - unfortunately I can't give you any definite details at the moment but I can tell you that the audition will be taking place on Wednesday **28th January** at Ditchling Village Hall form 7.30 pm to 9 pm.

Further details of the play; roles etc will be put on our website - **www.ditchlingplayers.org.uk** and our Facebook page, once everything has been confirmed. So please keep checking those sites for breaking news!

David Tettersell

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – DITCHLING & DISTRICT BRANCH On behalf of our President, Mrs Virginia Lewis-Jones, Vice President, Mrs Juliet Olsworth-Peter JP, DL, Chair Mrs Catharine Robinson and the Branch Committee, we would like to thank the following who have supported our Poppy Appeal for 2025: Ditchling Hair Studio, Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft, Ditchling Pharmacy, Ditchling Post Office, Dumbrells, Macs Farm, Mid Sussex Golf Club, Notcutts Garden Centre, The Oaks Farm Shop and Café, St George's Park, St Margaret's C of E School, The Bull Ditchling, The Green Welly, The Nutmeg Tree, The White Horse Public House.

In addition, our wonderful collectors Bridget, Brenda, Colin, Eileen and Maz. Please accept a very grateful and heartfelt thank you to all of you who have given so generously. We will publish the total amount collected in the February edition of Talk About and Village Voice. On behalf of the Committee, we wish you all a very happy and successful 2026..

Margaret E Bovill

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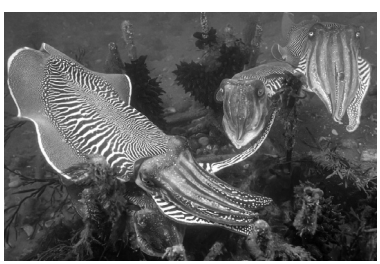
Happy New Year! However you choose to celebrate, I hope your festive season was full of peace, joy, and mega loads of cheese. I always have a new year's resolution and try to make them positive. Apologise less. Dance more. Wear the shoes. Before you stop reading for fear of me going full 'live, laugh, love' don't worry, I'm heading somewhere.

2026 is going to be the year of boundaries. As well-meaning humans, and especially in the UK, we can be a little too agreeable, put up with stuff, get on with it. But as nature illustrates, it doesn't have to be this way.

There are not many better boundary-setting role models than those species who ward off others as standard. Camouflage antithesis, these creatures make themselves obvious to warn incomers that they're not to be messed with. It's called aposematism, a defence mechanism utilised by certain species across the board, invertebrates, plants, mammals, birds, fish and fungi. Told you I had a point. There are a few different types of aposematism.



Aposematic colouration: deliberately bright colours to visually warn of a toxic taste to others (whether this is true or not). Think ladybirds, wasps and Cinnabar moth caterpillars, who are bright yellow to mirror the toxic traits taken on by their favourite food plant – Ragwort. Then there are Cuttlefish, whose colour-changing skills give them the option of disguise or bold vibrant attack.



Olfactory aposematism: repelling predators by producing a smell or foul-smelling substance. This dirty card is played by several species of shield bug, sometimes harshly but accurately known as stink bugs. Many plants are notable for this feature, including the strong-smelling Wild Garlic.

Auditory aposematism: sound as a deterrent. Many species make alarm calls to expose a nearby predator, like a Robin tick-ticking at the sight of a cat. But auditory aposematism is making a sound to directly warn of one's own danger or distaste to others. A famous example is the Rattlesnake, which clatters its tail to give the heads up - "it's not worth it mate". Closer to home, the Garden Tiger moth rubs its wings together to make a rasping noise to the same effect.

Symbolic or tenuous, there's no doubt these creatures have mastered the art of communicating their boundaries. In nature there's no awkwardness, no deeper meaning, no overthink – imagine! So, in nature's honour, this year I'll be saying a lot more 'no'. Hopefully with no need for any olfactory assistance. *Kerry Williams*

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NEWHAVEN-BASED TOMSETTS DISTRIBUTION SHOWS SUPPORT FOR LIFESAVING CHARITY



Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) is more visible on the region's roads thanks to the generosity of transport company Tomsett's Distribution. The Newhaven-based firm has kindly branded one of its trailers in the colours of the lifesaving charity for the next five years to help increase awareness of its work. Although based in Sussex, it will be seen across Kent, Surrey and Sussex and as far north as Scotland. As well as being out on the roads, the working vehicle will also appear at KSS events by arrangement.

The idea came about during a networking event at Plumpton Racecourse organised by the Institute of Directors Surrey and Gatwick Diamond Business. After learning more about the work of KSS, Tomsetts Managing Director Andrew Tucknott offered the use of a trailer in order to increase awareness of KSS. Artwork prepared by KSS was then printed and applied to the vehicle by Kent-based Signs and Imaging.

Andrew Tucknott commented: "This trailer came about through a chance conversation and a simple idea - but the impact it can make for Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex is what really matters. Their life-saving service deserves all the visibility and support we can give them. If our trailer helps raise awareness whilst it's out on the road network, that's exactly what we hoped to achieve."

KSS Corporate Partnerships Manager Rebecca Ussher said: "We're incredibly grateful to Tomsetts for this highly visible way of increasing awareness of our lifesaving service. It costs £57k a day for us to continue flying and saving lives, and to do that we need as many people as possible to know about our work, so opportunities like this are really important.

We'd love to hear from any businesses with ideas on how to raise funds or increase awareness of KSS."

Businesses keen to work with KSS should contact **corporate@aakss.org.uk** or visit **aakss.org.uk**. *Gavin Sherriff*

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HASSOCKS FC We're at the half way stage of the season and hope we can continue 'project survival' in this league. The team work so hard for the badge and the village! It's a great level to be in so please cheer them on to help them over the line. Some ground news: We are going ahead with electricity infrastructure around the pitch to gain an electronic scoreboard and link with more solar panels on top of our main stand roof to help with large energy bills.

We are edging closer to the official planning permission of the south field training pitch after numerous and costly surveys.

We are also drawing plans to see if it's possible structurally and financially for a kitchen extension. The popular Robin's Nest merchandise shed may move across and down a level. While talking about the Robin's Nest, there's plenty of winter items to keep you warm when spending a day at The Hassocks Hotel Beacon ground; scarves, hats, shirts, snoods etc.

With it being winter time we may get the odd cancellation of frozen or waterlogged pitch so message me for a quick answer and I'll be happy to reply **07843 762132**. We've also been trying to improve our social media with Tik Tok and YouTube accounts starting alongside the other usuals. Home fixtures ahead:

Saturday **10th January**: 1st vs Margate at 3 pm.
Saturday **24th January**: 1st vs Sevenoaks 3 pm
Sunday **25th January**: Ladies vs Three Bridges at 1.30 pm. *Pat Harding*

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM BEFRIENDED

We had a fantastic time celebrating Christmas Day at the Hurstpierpoint Village Centre with people who would otherwise have been on their own on Christmas Day. Thank you to all the guests and volunteers who made the day such fun for everyone.

Our regular programme will restart after the Christmas break on **4th January** with an afternoon tea party at St Andrews Church in Burgess Hill.

You are very welcome to come along to our events, no need to book: Monday is Cafe Neuro, Tuesday is Community Choir, Wednesday Balance Class.

On Thursdays **15th, 22nd and 29th January** at 7 pm, we will be running our wonderful Compassionate Conversations bereavement course in Hurstpierpoint. Christmas can be a difficult time with memories of loved ones lost. If you would like support with your bereavement, our 3 week course creates a safe space to share your experience of grief and stories of your loved one with a small group who are also on their grief journeys. Through the guided conversations you will be listened to, connect with others, and find new hope.

If your New Year's Resolution is to give something back to the community, we would love to hear from you, we are also looking for volunteers for everything from one-to-one befriending, to washing up at tea parties.

For more information about Befriended you can see our website **befriended.org**, email **office@befriended.org** or call **0300 772 7703.** *Susan Dyke*

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DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY Happy New Year. We're looking forward to 2026 and all the great films we have lined up for you. Films are already listed on the website. Take a look!

We're starting our 2026 programme with the life, music and story of one of the most influential artists of our time – Bob Dylan. Guest critic Beth Travers gives her personal view.

8th January at 8 pm to 10.20 pm. A Complete Unknown. 2024 (15)**.** "A Complete Unknown is a biopic about the American singer, songwriter and legend starring Timothee Chalamet and directed by James Mangold. The film is a gritty verse in the ballad of Bob Dylan's early life. It takes us on a journey with the then unknown 19-year-old, on his meteoric rise and transformation, from folk singer to electric visionary. Mangold effortlessly captures Dylan's relationships with musical icons such as Woody Guthrie, as well as his complex partnership with Joan Baez (played by Monica Barbaro). The magic of their two voices intertwined beautifully on and off the stage, re-writing the rules of what art can achieve.

Chalamet delivers a magnetic portrayal, capturing both the vulnerability and genius of the man. Breathing new life into an icon of the past, while introducing a younger audience to the brilliance of his music. "

5th February, from 8 pm to 10 pm.

All We Imagine As Light. 2024 (15). Mumbai is more than a city. It's an ever-expanding universe**.** Having captured the teeming collision of lives, Kapadia gently guides us to follow three nurses. Nurse Prabhais a veteran at the busy urban hospital where all three work; her younger colleague Anu (newly arrived from the south of India, is caught up in the first thrill of romance with her Muslim boyfriend and Pavarty a cook in the hospital kitchen, is facing eviction from a home that is due to be demolished to sate the voracious appetite of gentrification.

These are ordinary lives, with small sadnesses, twinging regrets and sparks of joy. In the second half of the film, when the women leave Mumbai to accompany Pavarty back to her coastal village, the skies lift, the air clears and the picture takes on a lyrical, dreamlike quality.

Primarily Malayalam and Hindi with English subtitles. 2h3m Director Payal Kapadia. Cannes Grand Prix.

Thank you for coming to see films with us. We really look forward to sharing our programme of great films.

To keep up to date with our film showings and special events please go to our website, **www.ditchlingfilm.org.uk**. We are on Instagram **@ditchlingfimsoc** and X **@Ditchlingfilm**.

Guest entry available. Half price for under 25s. A year's membership is available. Cards are accepted. Members are eligible for a 20% discount on pre-booked meals and drinks at The Bull Pub on film night!

Films are shown at Ditchling Village Hall, there's plenty of parking in the village hall car. Doors open at 7.30 pm the film starts at 8 pm and you can buy a glass of good wine or enjoy a complementary, park soft drink..

Kate and Bethan for The Ditchling Film Society

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WHAT WAS HURSTPIERPOINT LIKE IN THE 1920s? *We thank a reader for sending in the following article, take from a Pocket Guide to Sussex written in 1928. This was how the village was described back then.*

HURSTPIERPOINT (Domesday Book 1086). The "Wood of the De Pierpoints or Pierrepoints" lies on a n east west ridge between the Cuckfield-Brighton and Handcross-Brighton roads, on a road which, running under the Downs, is the best route in these parts to Lewes: It is a bad best. The piece of road (one and a half miles) from Hurstpierpoint (west) to Hassocks (east) is quite eventful. Apart from the village, north of the road is St. John's College ("Hurst"), one of the Woodard schools, like Lancing and Ardingly Colleges; Danny, an E-shaped, brick-built Elizabethan mansion is south of it, under the bold Wolstonbury Hill. Sir Simon de Pierpoint enclosed the park of "Danehich" in 1358, but the present manor was built by George Goring (1595). Its dignified, restrained architecture is most impressive. It was certainly built to admit light, and hence its multitude of mullioned windows. It contains a fine collection of family portraits. The place has been successively held by Gorings, Courthopes, and Campions, including the present owner, Sir William Campion. Near Danny has been traced the St. John's Common Roman road which may have climbed sidelong to the earthworks of Wolstonbury, to branch at the top into several Downland ways.

South of our stretch of road, in a sand quarry near Hassocks, Mr. L. Couchman has unearthed rich remains of a Roman-British cemetery. North of the road at Ham Farm is a curious moot (or assembly) mound. For the rest, Hurst is a place whence the eye effectively enfilades the bare Downs eastward towards Mount Harry, and westward towards Bramber and the Shoreham gap. At Little Park, north of the road, lived Thos. Marchant, parts of whose interesting Diary (1714-1728) have been published in the Sussex Archaeological Collections. He often excuses himself for not being at church, "as my head ached very much".

WOLSTONBURY HILL. Standing out boldly just north of the junction of the roads to Bolney and Cuckfield from Brighton, Wolstonbury makes the best possible use of its 670 feet of altitude. Directly below in the fine old Elizabethan mansion of Danny, but when on the summit you will probably find yourself arrested by the fine view of Downs across the Adur gap to Chanctonbury. From below, Wolstonbury shows up clearly a line of circular entrenchments, originally the work of a Neolithic people, but later adapted, as in so many cases, by the Romans, very possible during the Saxon terror of the fourth century A.D., and later by the Saxons. Far away in north west Sussex, where distance lessens the contours of the hills, the bold shape of Wolstonbury nearly always affords the eye a fixed point.

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Our thanks to Mrs. Beard from Penarth, Wales, who has sent the following familiar words which are worth repeating via Mrs. Hinman of Bonnywood Road, Hassocks.

THE FACTS OF LIFE

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Anybody, Somebody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did. Somebody got very angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Somebody would do it but Nobody realised that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.



We thank Michael Alford of Stoneywish, Ditchling for this picture of West Street, Ditchling

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DEFIBRILLATOR LOCATIONS

are at the following locations in the parish. In an emergency please dial 999

HURSTPIERPOINT & SAYERS COMMON

Sayers Common Community Shop, London Road, Sayers Common
Village Centre Library Entrance, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint, 40 High Street, Hurstpierpoint
Bowling Club, South Avenue, Hurstpierpoint
Court Bushes Community Hub, Willow Way, Hurstpierpoint
Fairfield Recreation Ground, Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

DITCHLING, STREAT & WESTMESTON

Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling Church, Streat Church and Westmeston Church

HASSOCKS & KEYMER

Railway Station, Outside Ticket Office, **Adastra Hall**, Keymer Road
Adastra Bowling Club, Adastra Park (North Field), **Age Concern**, Dale Avenue
Freedom Leisure Centre, Downlands School, Dale Avenue, **Hassocks Dental Surgery**, 54a Keymer Road
Graystone Referral Centre, 38 Keymer Road, **Thatched Inn**, Grand Avenue
Keymer & Hassocks Sports & Social Club, Adastra Park (South Field)
Hassocks Health Centre, Windmill Avenue, **Oldland Windmill**, Oldlands Lane, Keymer
Weald Lawn Tennis & Squash Club, South Bank, **South Downs Garden Centre**, Brighton Road

Whats On in January

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

DITCHLING UNITARIANS The Old Meeting House, The Twitten, Ditchling. Sunday Services at 11 am 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

THE BEACON PARISH OF DITCHLING, STREAT & WESTMESTON Every blessing for a healthy and peaceful 2026 from the Beacon Parish.
Our first two Sunday services (inc Little Beacons) (**4th and 11th January**) will be Morning Worship with Holy Communion at 10 am in St. Margaret's Ditchling. On Sunday **18th January** our service will be at Westmeston, again at 10 am. On Sunday **25th January** we'll be back at St. Margaret's for 10 am.
Our mid-week service of Holy Communion takes place at St. Margaret's each Wednesday at 10 am.
On the first Wednesday of the New Year, **7th January**, do join us in St. Margaret's at 6 pm for an informal SING! session which gives us the chance to learn new songs and revisit some older favourites.
Everyone is very welcome to all of our events and services. Do check our website **www.beaconparish.co.uk** for the latest information and any updates on the above - Sherrian Guest.

THE PARISH OF CLAYTON WITH KEYMER Our usual pattern of Worship for Sunday services is 8 am 1662 Book of Common Prayer Eucharist st at Keymer. 9.45 am Mass at Keymer 9.45 am Service at St Francis and 11.15 am Holy Communion at Clayton.
For other information see our website **www.claytonwithkeymer.org.uk -** Fr Alex

Dated Events

29th Dec - 4th Jan HURST PLAYERS Players Theatre High Street, Hurstpierpoint. Various Performances. Panto - Pinnochio comes to Life. Tickets www.hurstplayers.org.uk.

1st BEFRIENDED BOARD GAMES Hurstpierpoint 2.30 pm. An afternoon of games, giggles and company call 0300 772 7703 to book.

4th 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.

5th HASSOCKS WI Adastra Hall, Hassocks 2 pm. Craft Club. Visitors welcome.

6th DITCHLING DOWNS WI Ditchling Village Hall, 7 pm. 'The Downton Era' Katharine Collett

6th AGE CONCERN HASSOCKS Dale Avenue, Hassocks 10 am - 1 pm. Community Energy Pathways will be providing energy saving and advice. All welcome.

7th HURST MONTHLY SOCIAL GROUP Guide HQ, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint 2 - 4 pm 'Charcuterie Tasting. Visitors welcome call 07806 670359.

7th UKES OF HASSOCKS Proper Cycling & Coffee 7.30 pm. Monthly community jam session, play and sing along, beginners welcome. All welcome.

7th 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.

8th DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY Ditchling Village Hall 7.30 pm. Film - 'A Complete Unknown'. Tickets available on the door - see article.

8th AGE CONCERN HASSOCKS Dale Avenue, Hassocks 10 am - 1 pm. Silvertime Legal will be giving info on legal and tax matters.

8th POLICE BEAT SURGERY South Downs Garden Centre, Hassocks 11 am - 12 pm. Come along to get crime prevention & advice on neighbourhood issues.

9th MID SUSSEX AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY Cyprus Hall, Burgess Hill 7.30 pm. www.midsussexars.org.uk. 'Nag and Natter Evening'. Refreshments available. All welcome.

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10th CHURCHES TOGETHER URC Hassocks 9.30 am. Messy Church - breakfast, crafts, games and story. All welcome.
10th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road, Hassocks KO 3 pm. (Mens) The Robins take on Margate. Bar and Food available. Free entry to kids 16 and under. Please check socials for any changes.
10th 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 - All welcome.
12th 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.
12th HASSOCKS FIELD SOCIETY Adastra Hall, Hassocks, 7.45 pm. 'The Balcombe Tunnel Murder (1881)' James Gardner. All welcome.
13th MUSKRAT RAMBLERS, Hassocks Hotel, Station Approach East, doors 11.30 am Start 12 pm. Great Food, Great Jazz & Great Company. A set lunch included in the entrance fee. Pop in or call QD Stationery on 01273 846978 to book.
13th HURSTPIERPOINT HISTORICAL & GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY The Players Theatre, Hurstpierpoint 7.30 pm. 'The Cuckmere River' Dr Geoffrey Mead. See article for more info.
13th 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.
14th DITCHLING HISTORY PROJECT White Horse, Ditchling 2 pm. Monthly meet drop in all welcome.
15th WOMENS BREAKFAST The Greyhound, Keymer 10 am. For a social cooked breakfast. All welcome to book email mo.delaine@btinternet.com.
16th STAR CINEMA Adastra Hall, Hassocks, 7 pm. Film - 'Mr Burton'. Tea, coffee, wine and raffle. Tickets available on the door.
17th SUSSEX SEWING CLUB Westmeston Parish Hall 10 am - 4 pm. Like minded makers spend the day doing a hobby they love. To book sussexsewingclub@gmail.com.
18th 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.
19th HASSOCKS WI Adastra Hall, Hassocks 7.30 pm. Breast Cancer Pillow stuffing and new resolution discussions. Visitors welcome.
21st 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 01444 450248.
21st TREFOIL GUILD Guide Hall, Semley Road, Hassocks 7.45 pm. Monthly meeting visitors welcome.
22nd LIBERAL DEMOCRATS SURGERY HASSOCKS Parish Council Offices Committee Room 11 am - 12 pm. Sue Hatton, Kristian Berggreen, Chris Hobbs & WSCC Councillor Erika Woodhouse-Truman. No appointment necessary.
23rd MID SUSSEX AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY Cyprus Hall, Burgess Hill 7.30 pm. www.midsussexars.org.uk. 'Nag and Natter Evening'. Refreshments available. All welcome.

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23rd HURST, HASSOCKS & DITCHLING U3A Adastra Hall, Hassocks 2 pm. 'A Tribute to Rabbie' Marie Fraser. Small entrance fee. Refreshments inc.

24th HASSOCKS VILLAGE MARKET Age Concern Car Park, 9 am - 1 pm. Local produce, bread, honey, cheese, wine, veg etc.

24th REPAIR CAFE Age Concern Centre, Hassocks, 9.30 -11.30 am. Bring items for repair more info call 01273 040110 or www.hkdtransition.org.uk.

24th MENS BREAKFAST The Greyhound, Keymer 10 am. For a social cooked breakfast. All welcome to book email alexbaxter66@yahoo.co.uk

24th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road, Hassocks KO 3 pm. (Mens) The Robins take on Sevenoaks'. Bar and Food available. Free entry to kids 16 and under. Please check socials for any changes.

25th HASSOCKS FOOTBALL CLUB The Hassocks Hotel Beacon Ground, Brighton Road KO 1.30 pm. (Womens) The Robins take on Three Bridges. Bar & Food available. Free entry.

25th GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY Adastra Hall, Hassocks 2.45 pm. 'A Musical Mystery Tour'. See article for more info. To book email gandstodaysussex@gmail.com.

26th HASSOCKS FIELD SOCIETY Adastra Hall, Hassocks, 7.45 pm. 'Bishopstone in History' Ian Everest. All welcome.

26th CAMEO Keymer Church Hall 2 pm - 4 pm. Open to all - come and enjoy an enjoyable afternoon over a cup of tea.

28th SOUTH DOWNS WOODTURNERS Upper Beeding Village Hall, 7pm All welcome to the monthly meet. Please visit southdownswoodturners.com for more info. Visitors welcome.

29th BEREAVEMENT WELL-BEING GROUP Clayton Wood, Natural Burial Ground, Brighton Road, Clayton 10 am - 12 noon. Come and meet others who understand what you are going through. www.bereavementcare.uk.

JACK THE LAD © Ian Allen

Jack the lad
He ain't so bad
He'll probably get a tattoo
If he's feeling sad
Wears Martin Luther boots
Dons a cloth cap and two- tone suits
Always has a cheeky grin
Drinks his larger from a ring pull tin
Drives his motor fast and skids
A local hero to the local kids
Sports a haircut ash blonde dyed
Where is it long, worn with pride
Likes a bit of aggro at a football match
Then it's down the pub lager down at the Hatch
Got no future, lost his job
Social misfit part time Yob
Needs a partner, needs one quick
Needs a partner to crack the whip
Jack the lads now thirty four
Youth is fading, what a bore
Ohh Ah lifes not fair
Jack's a lonely lad with a vacant stare
Ohh Ah R.I.P.
Couldn't face the music now he ceased to be
Couldn't face the music now he ceased to be.

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GILES TURNER
FINANCIAL PLANNING

Starting 2026 with Confidence: Your Finances, Your Future

As we step into 2026, it's the perfect moment to embrace a fresh start. Many people use the start of the year to set intentions and review their financial plans. The turn of the year naturally brings reflection, renewed motivation, and a desire to make positive changes. With the recent UK Budget now fully digested, many of us are beginning to understand what the latest updates mean for our personal finances and long-term plans.

Taking time at the start of the year to review your financial position can make all the difference. The start of the year is a natural point for many people to review their budgeting, emergency savings, pension contributions and use of ISA and tax allowances. It's also a good opportunity to reassess protection policies, review your investments, and update any plans affected by changes in income, family needs, or the recent Budget. These are exactly the kinds of checks and conversations a financial adviser guides you through - helping you understand what's changed, identifying opportunities you may have missed, and ensuring every part of your financial plan is working together. With professional support, these early-year reviews can become clearer and more structured.

As the year begins, I wish you a positive, productive, and financially resilient start. Here's to clarity, good decisions, and a 2026 filled with progress, stability, and steps toward the future you want.

"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.

01273 044951 or 07502 360517
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Please note that the value of your investment, along with any income derived from it, can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

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STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

A lot of you were certainly enraged the eyesore that is our centre piece of the village, is here to stay with us for some considerable time yet. I was quite surprised to hear that even when plans are eventually submitted, they would still object even though they want the place down and gone. So, on that evidence I'll doubt I will ever get to see what will replace everyone's favourite weed farm.

I can remember when they first started the planning and the building of Clayton Mills. Us shopkeepers in the High Street were going to all become tax exiles and that dream of a yacht in the South of France could become reality, but no, with all those new houses and still the High Street continues to decline. Since then with the developments of Hassocks Gate and Friars Oak not to mention Ockley Park footfall on the High Street continues to be less and less, but wait, according to the advertising boards for the new Churchill Retirement Village all is not lost, hundreds of thousands of pounds will be generated by those occupying this new development and once again we're all going to benefit. Well I'm sorry, but this is a lot of old baloney, this government is hell bent on destroying the High Street and small businesses, the reduction of the rates relief and hike in minimum wage will be the nail in the coffin for a lot of us. Already one of the beautiful shops at the top of the High Street - De La Casa - has announced it can no longer keep going with all the overheads and will be closing very shortly. Our small retailers are all endangered species. So it's such a shame, Joanne the owner has stuck with it and tried everything to keep going, but there comes a time when you just have to say enough is enough, otherwise your mental health begins to suffer . Joanne sensibly has made the right decision, because things are only going to get worse - we love you Joanne. I for one have known you for most of your life and I know how this decision has broken your heart, but trust me darling it's the right one, it's a tough old world out there.

You know when your pet does something that makes you laugh, but you know you shouldn't laugh really, my fox has an old chaise lounge which he absolutely loves, it is hard to get him off it. Trouble is it's not very wide and he is not exactly what you'd call underfed, but he loves his Dad, so every time he sees me and I mean every time whether it's 5 minutes or a few hours, he screams and rolls on his back for a tummy rub. He just rolls off onto the floor. I've tried to catch him but he's so close to the floor anyway, there's no point, it's the look on his face that makes me laugh, he doesn't seem to understand how he got there, but I just give him a big kiss and tell him I love him and he understands that.

I'd expect you're fed up with hearing about collection and donation boxes, well here's another one, as usual every year we have the Kit Wilson donation box at the shop for a few weeks. So, if you've got something you'd like to put in it to help some poor unfortunate animal, please feel free to do so, a lot of these rescue centres rely heavily on what they get given at Christmas. I know times are hard but every little helps.

In an effort to try and create more footfall some of our wholesalers are giving us special offers to pass on to the customers and at the moment we can do the boxes of 12 pouches for £4.75 (Whiskers, Felix, Gourmet Pearle and Sheba) this works out about 40p per pouch which is pretty good and cheaper than most supermarkets and superstores, even Zooplus, we could also do the bigger boxes. Let's hope the New Year brings lots of love and kindness not to mention money.

It's very sad but the wonderful man who works for us has found love and naturally wants to be with his new woman who sadly doesn't live locally. Which means we are losing him and have to look for a new member of staff. So, you have to love animals, which entails looking after and cleaning up after them, unloading and putting away pallets of horse feed and bedding and then loading it into customers cars. You don't need gym membership if you work here, this is a job like no other, it is shop work with a difference. If interested, please get in touch.

Happy New Year Steve.

HASSOCKS PET CENTRE, KEYMER ROAD, HASSOCKS 01273 842392