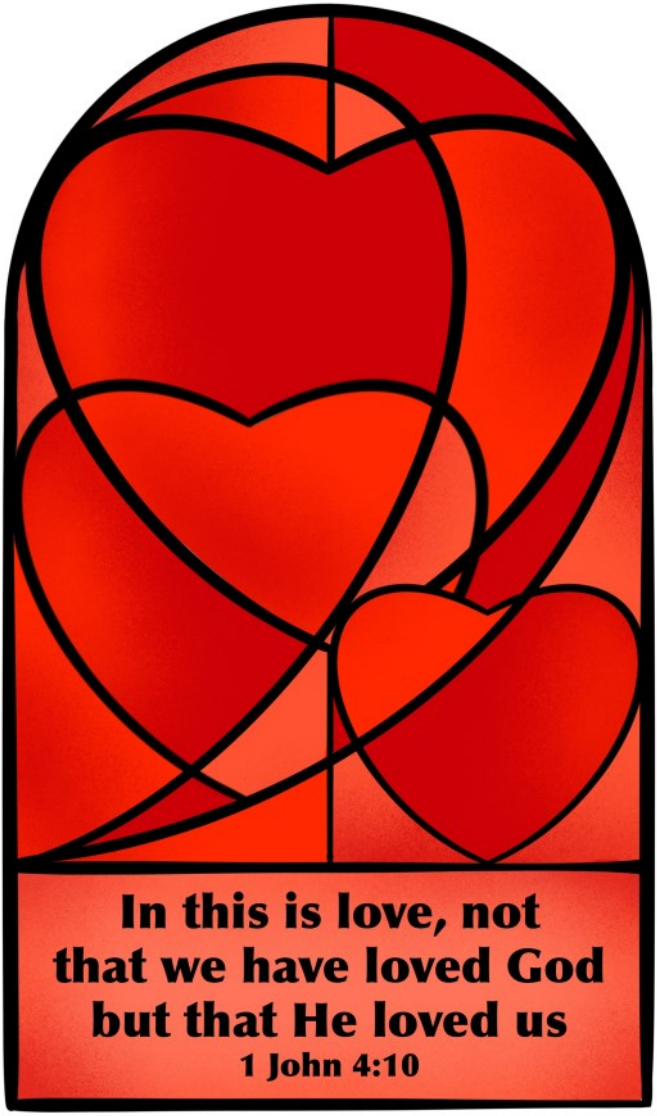
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Church and Community News

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From the Church

St. Valentine, also known as Saint Valentine of Rome, was a Christian martyr who lived in the 3rd century. While there are many legends and stories surrounding his life, it is believed that he was a priest who performed secret marriages for Christian couples during a time when Christianity was forbidden in the Roman Empire. As a result of his actions, he was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually martyred for his faith.

St. Valentine's life and his devotion to love and marriage have made him an important figure in Christian history. His actions remind us of the importance of love, commitment, and sacrifice in our own lives as followers of Christ.

One aspect of St. Valentine's life that stands out is his willingness to perform marriages for Christian couples, even though it was illegal at the time. This act of defiance against the Roman authorities was motivated by his belief in the sanctity of marriage and his desire to support and encourage Christian couples in their commitment to one another. This serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of marriage and the value that Christians place on this sacred institution.

In our modern society, the concept of marriage has often been devalued and undermined. Divorce rates are high, and the idea of lifelong commitment is often seen as outdated or unnecessary. St. Valentine's example challenges us to reconsider our views on marriage and to recognise the importance and value with God's help, of a strong and lasting union between two individuals.

Furthermore, St. Valentine's actions also remind us of the power of love and the importance of expressing that love to others. Love is a central theme in the teachings of Jesus, who emphasised the commandment to love one another as He has loved us. St. Valentine's willingness to risk his own life for the sake of love, serves as a powerful example of selflessness and devotion.

As Christians, we are called to love one another unconditionally and to show that love through our actions. This means being willing to make sacrifices for the well-being and happiness of others, just as St. Valentine did. Whether it is in our relationships with our spouses, our families, or our friends, we are called to demonstrate love in tangible and meaningful ways.

St. Valentine's life and actions serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of love, marriage, and sacrifice in the Christian faith. His example challenges us to reevaluate our views on marriage, to demonstrate love in our relationships, and to stand firm in our faith. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, let us remember the true meaning behind the holiday and strive to live out the teachings of love and devotion that St. Valentine exemplified.

Tim

ST JOHN'S CHURCH - Directory

Tel: 01732 833 596 Website: www.stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

Please ring the church office or email any time, if you would like to discuss any pastoral or administrative matter

Role	Name	Contact Details
Vicar	Rev Tim Saiet	07973 136 968 tim@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Children and Youths Pastor	Lisa Glasscote	lisa@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Lay Readers	Trevor Long Susan Trowbridge	07513 420 509 01732 833 848
Warden	John Bonarius	07801 478 346
PCC Secretary	Vacant	stjohnspcc@outlook.com
Foodbank and Community Co-ordinator	Adele Hopkins-Ballard	07942 148 175 adele@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Safeguarding	Kate Lake	07579 821 956 safeguarding@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Treasurer	Richard Lake	07579 210 122 treasurer@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Archivist	Howard Dolling	01732 833 364
Church Centre Bookings	Cynthia Fawcus	01732 833 397 cafawcus@hotmail.com
Church Operations Manager	Nancy Mansfield	01732 833 596 office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Keys Editor	Rob Mansfield	07515 819 860 keysmag@hotmail.com
Keys Deputy Editor	Claire Rawlinson	01732 834 896
Keys Distribution	Clem Giles	01732 833 543
Keys Advertising	Liz Ridley	keysmagazineadvertising@gmail.com

Our Services

Sundays

9:15am Contemporary service with breakfast served in Church from 8:45am

Refreshments served between services in the Church Centre. All welcome.

11am Traditional service

Tuesdays

11:15am Morning Prayer

Contact the office to receive the monthly Church News and Notices or follow our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/stjohnshildenborough/) for the most up to date information.

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

This year we celebrate 180 years of St John's Church. We are putting together an exciting range of events and special services for the whole community. Save the date: Saturday 25th May, 2pm, Service of Thanksgiving & Celebration
We look forward to seeing you!

Who Let the Dad's Out: Saturday 3rd February, 9:30am - 11am
All children aged 0-6 and their Dads are welcome to join us for a morning of fun and games. Just £3 a family, there is a bouncy castle, soft-play and plenty of bacon rolls for everyone! The group meets on the first Saturday of every month.

Ash Wednesday: 14th February, 7pm
Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study and preparation for Easter. Our service starts at 7pm in Church and will include the custom of being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. You are welcome to attend the service and not take part in the ashing if you prefer.



Regular Services and Activities (*term-time only)

Sundays – 09:15 Contemporary Service and 11:00 Traditional Service
Mondays – *Bright Sparks, 13:30 – 15:30
Tuesdays – 11:15 Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)
Wednesdays – Churchyard Team Meets, 09:00 – 11:00 & Warm Hub (free soup) 12:00 – 14:00
Thursdays – *Angel Café, 09:00 – 14:00 and Foodbank Open, 09:30 – 12:30
Fridays – *Angel Café, 09:00 – 14:00 and *Café Theo, 16:00 – 17:30

NEXT MONTH

The Narrow Road: Thursday 14th March
Riding Lights Theatre Company will be performing their acclaimed passion play by Paul Birch. A moving combination of powerful theatre, meditation and corporate worship.
Tickets £11 from the Church Office.





Easter Lunch: Sunday 31st March
Following our Easter Service at 11am all are welcome to join us for an Easter Sunday Lunch in the Church Centre. Advance bookings only via the Church Office.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

09:30 - 14:00 Tuesday and Friday
01732 833 596
office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

From the Registers

Burials
Donald Alexander Rogers 6th December
Joan Dorothy Taylor 8th December

Keys Magazine needs your input!

Submissions to Rob Mansfield (Editor) through keysmag@hotmail.com
The deadline for an entry is the 15th of the previous month
For all ADVERTISING contact Liz - keysmagazineadvertising@gmail.com

Help Wanted Board!

If you have a role or a need that you would like to include, please get in touch - keysmag@hotmail.com. Priority will be given to local volunteer roles but if there is space I will consider local paid jobs too. There is no charge for appearing on this page.

Can you spare 1 hour a month to help out? Contact the Church Office
01732 833 596 - office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

Hildenborough Farmers' Market
Volunteers wanted
variety of roles
If interested, please contact:
Janet - 01732 838 903
janetrichardson863@btinternet.co.uk

St John's Churchyard
Volunteers wanted
Join the team occasionally or regularly on a Wednesday, 9-11am.
If interested, please contact:
office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

West Kent Concert Band
Wind & Brass players wanted!
www.westkentconcertband.org.uk

Hildenborough Village Preservation Association
Committee Members Wanted
The Association is looking for new members on a voluntary basis for occasional input at quarterly committee meetings. A Treasurer would be particularly welcome.
If interested, please contact David on admin@wealdensc.co.uk

Tonbridge Line Commuters (TLC)
Committee members wanted
Non rail experts welcome
If interested, please contact:
secretary@tonbridgecommuters.org.uk

Need Help?
Contact Keysmag@hotmail.com with details

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

HIVE
HIldenborough VillagE

For school year 6-13
£1 a session

The Hive Youth Group



February 2024

February 11th – The Great Hive Bake Off.

February 25th – Basketball and Sports.



Fortnightly, 5– 7pm
. Church Centre
St John's Church.

All youth leaders hold a valid DBS

For more information please contact
Lisa Glasscote
lisa@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

CAFÉ THEO





After School Youth Café

For school years 6-13.
Open every Friday in term time
4-5:30pm
St John's Church Centre, Hildenborough.
For more info email...
lisa@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

- **Place to meet your friends**
- **Free Refreshments**
- **Board Games**
- **Consoles**
- **Crafts**

Churchyard Team update

Have you visited our churchyard recently? I personally think it has developed into a peaceful and tranquil place to sit, think, feel refreshed or for people to contemplate and visit their loved ones. As many of you know, this wasn't the case a few years ago and I decided to make it my mission to make it feel a loved and nurtured place to be.

How did it start? - Well through conversations with people and advertising in our church weekly notice sheets, I was delighted that 3 volunteers had decided to join me both from inside the church family and outside the church in the community. I walked the grounds with them sharing my vison of how the churchyard might look. It started with trimming bushes, trees and sweeping the car park; later followed by tending the front of the church.



As the year continued, it was great that more people wanted to get involved. Some mow and some trim hedge rows and we are now on reviving and restoring benches around the churchyard. We have a few volunteers who like to weed and maintain the flower beds that help attract wildlife such as bees, butterflies of all different colours, we also have attracted crickets, bats, woodpeckers and many types of birds.

Maybe you can spot a few more the next time you visit?

(We recently had a visit from a vole sunning himself thank to Tim Rice for the Photo)

We have volunteers who turn up when they can, weekly, fortnightly or monthly, giving as little as 1 hour of their time on areas they feel passionate about. We have a small budget that is given by the Parish Council to help us with our work each year, which although sadly does not cover the cost of everything we would like to do, any financial help from both grants and donations is always appreciated and is put to very good use.

The team have had the pleasure of meeting some of the relatives of the loved ones who are buried, we meet people walking dogs, seeking rest, just passing through to visit the local shops, school or to catch a bus.

Just recently I met a couple from Australia who used to be church members many years ago, they showed their children and grandchildren the graves of their relatives and popped into the church building to re visit their childhood. They felt called by God to renew their vows to one another on the chancel steps. It is times like these moments of meeting people that God has a way of moving people most unexpectedly.

If you have not been to visit recently, please do pop down, take 5, enjoy the grounds and say hello to the team, it will be great to see you. ***Much love and blessings Adele***

Forget-me-not Cafés

Companionship over a cuppa

January started off with a flurry of snow and then became rather cold, but this did not seem to stop our guests coming to our first Café of the year. It was a cold morning but very sunny and the room that we met in was bright and looked quite beautiful with our tablecloths and daffodils on the tables.

We had an enjoyable morning with Annalene Beechey singing to us with songs from the musicals. Annalene has just finished a tour of the country in a King and I. Her beautiful voice and songs cheered us up even more.



We would like to say a very big "thank you" to the Cinnamon Care Home Group in Sevenoaks who very kindly donated a luxurious food hamper to our Forget-me-not Café for a free raffle. This was drawn during our January Café and our winners pictured here were Ernie and Elizabeth.



The Forget-me-not Café is held at St. John's Church Centre, Hildenborough on the second Wednesday of every month between 11.00 am and 12.30 pm.

Would you like to get out of the house for a couple of hours and meet other people for some conversation? If you are feeling lonely and would like someone to chat to please come along, we would love to meet you. Whilst some of those who attend the Café live with a dementia diagnosis, others have mild memory loss, others care for a person with dementia, others would like company and a chat.

If you would like more information on the Forget-me-not Cafés, please contact Elaine on forgetmenot.sadfc@gmail.com or 07946 534 476. ***Julie Rhodes***

Church Flower Team — Easter decorations

The church will be decorated for Easter with lilies. If anyone would like to make a donation to the cost of the flowers in memory of a loved one, please contact Rosemary Barton on 01732 832 207 or Carol Walters on 01732 832 008.





High Hopes Jumble sale
17th Feb 2-4pm at Christ Church URC, Tonbridge

As with previous High Hopes Jumble Sales, the success of the event is dependent upon helpers who collect the jumble, sell during the event or clear up afterwards.

If you have helped before then you know how much fun the event is and what a worthy cause we are raising money for.

If you can help please contact admin@childrensworkshop.org.uk or Susan Harrowing 07940 856 496



HILDENBOROUGH FARMERS' MARKET

The month of January was busy even though the weather was changeable from being very wet to rather cold! The Café was also busy with our customers coming together for their weekly catch up with each other.

The Market Team recently put their heads together for the children's activities for this year. So, if you have your diaries handy here are some of the dates up to the Easter Holidays:



Shrove Tuesday, 13th February, is Pancake Day, and we will be having a competition to see who can toss the pancake the furthest, who can toss it the highest and any other sort of competition we can think of at the time!! Come along and have a go! You can also sample our homemade pancakes with some lemon and sugar in the café. Also have a go at the recipe on the right to make your own pancakes when you get home.



Calling all budding gardeners: **Tuesday, 2nd April**, our children's activity will be planting sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds to see who can grow the biggest sunflower head over the summer and who can grow the largest pumpkin for our October market.



You may have noticed that some of our market scarecrows are looking a little sad; we have had them a very long time. We would like you to put your craft heads on and help us to make some new ones. Please make a fun-looking scarecrow and bring it along to the market on **Tuesday 9th April** for our Scarecrow Competition. Watch this space and look out for leaflets at the market on how to make them, sizes etc.

We hope that you will come along and join us at our weekly market for some shopping, a chat, coffee and cake in our café. Our opening times are 9.00 – 11.00 am with plenty of free parking at St. John's Church Centre. You can also speak to the local Hildenborough Parish Council who often visit the market and run a surgery, so if you have any worries or concerns pop along to speak to them.

We can be found on Facebook and our details can be found on the KFMA website, although some of the information is being updated.

For information on the market please contact: **Janet Richardson**, Manager Tel: **01732 838903** Email: **janetrichardson863@btinternet.com**

Farmers' Market Recipe for February

Pancakes

What do you like your pancakes filled with? Jam, chocolate, bananas, fruit – put in whatever is your favourite.

For the Pancake Mixture
110g/4oz Plain Flour, sifted
Pinch of salt
2 Eggs
200ml/7fl oz Milk mixed with 75ml/3fl oz Water
50g/2oz Butter

To Serve
Caster Sugar
Lemon Juice
Lemon Wedges

Method

Sift the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl with a sieve.

Break the eggs into the flour. Then begin whisking the eggs – any sort of whisk or even a fork will do.

Next gradually add small quantities of the milk and water mixture, still whisking.

When all the liquid has been added, whisk until the batter is smooth, with the consistency of thin cream.

Melt the butter in a pan. Spoon two tablespoons of the butter into the batter and whisk it in, then pour the rest into a bowl and use it to lubricate the pan.

Now get the pan really hot, then turn the heat down to medium. Do a test pancake to see if you're using the correct amount of batter. Two tablespoons are about right for an 18cm/7in pan.

As soon as the batter hits the hot pan, tip it around from side to side to get the base evenly coated with batter. It should take only half a minute or so to cook; you can lift the edge with a palette knife to see if it's tinged gold as it should be.

Flip the pancake over with a pan slice or palette knife (or are you brave enough to toss it!) – the other side will need a few seconds only – then simply slide it out of the pan onto a plate.

Stack the pancakes as you make them between sheets of greaseproof paper to keep them warm while you make the rest.

To serve, sprinkle each pancake with freshly squeezed lemon juice and caster sugar, fold in half, then in half again to form triangles, or else simply roll them up. Serve sprinkled with a little more sugar and lemon juice and extra sections of lemon.

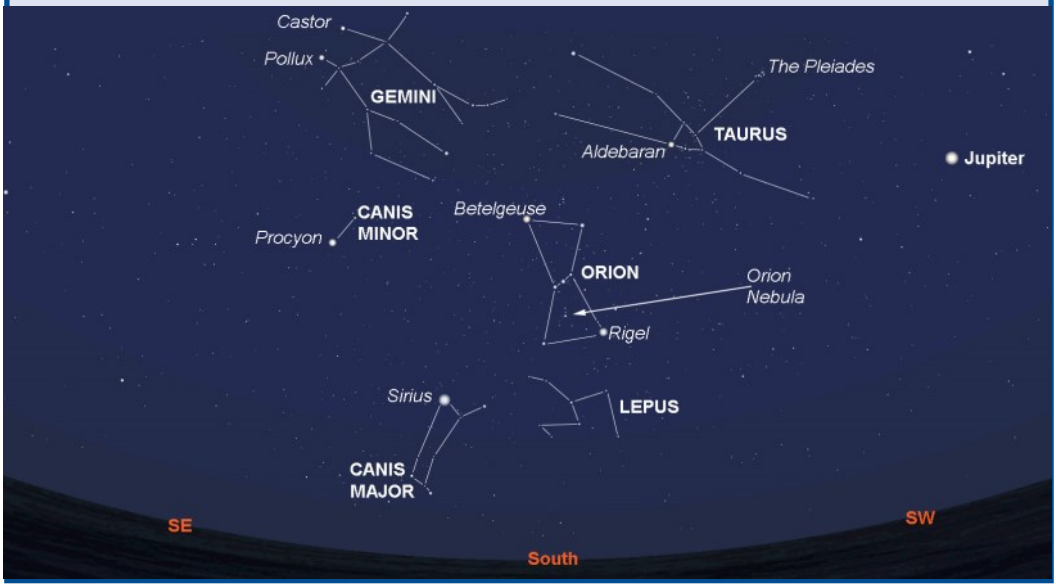
The Night Sky in Hildenborough – February 2024

For planetary observers the sky is in a state of flux at the moment with some planets preparing to move from the morning to the evening sky and others going in the opposite direction. If you've followed Venus over the last few months, you will have seen it dipping closer to the horizon on successive mornings. In early February, you might just catch a glimpse of it very low down in the southeast. But if the "Morning Star" is tricky to find, then Mars and Mercury, that appear to lie in the area of sky between Venus and the Sun, are, to all intents and purposes, no longer observable.

Of these morning planets, Mercury and Venus are approaching solar conjunction (when they *appear* to be at their closest to the Sun) which happens when the transition from morning to evening object (and vice-versa) occurs. Mars, by comparison, was at conjunction in November and has only recently appeared in the morning sky soon to be followed by Saturn that will itself be at conjunction at the end of February.

Jupiter remains the only bright planet visible in the evening skies being unmistakable thanks to its brilliance. It lies due south at 5:30pm on February 1st with an altitude of over 50° but by the last day of this month it is in the south west at 6pm, and now only 45° high.

The evening sky is currently dominated by the bright constellation of Orion (the hunter) along with the other star groups that surround him. To the east of him there are two dogs, Canis Major (the large dog) that contains Sirius – the brightest star in the night sky, and Canis Minor – the little dog. To the north east is Gemini with the twins Castor and Pollux. To the northwest is Taurus that contains the star cluster, the



Pleiades, better known as the Seven Sisters. Finally, below the hunter sits the small but obvious shape of Lepus, the hare.

Orion itself sits at the centre of this group and is one of only a small number of constellations that is universally recognised. The bright star Rigel sits in the bottom west (right) corner and is a blue supergiant that is not one single star but the brightest component of what is, at least, a four-star system. On the hunter's left shoulder is Betelgeuse, the 10th brightest star in the night sky, and one that is known to be a red supergiant. It is so large and bloated that if it were to replace the Sun its surface would lie between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. One of Orion's best-known objects is a cloud of gas and dust that is a birthplace of stars – the Orion Nebula, that sits below the three stars in the hunter's belt. In fact, there are a number of nebulae there that are collectively known as Orion's Sword. The map is drawn for early February at 9pm so you can identify some of the above objects.

Brian Mills FRAS

Hildenborough Evening WI

Evening WI: Our January meeting started with welcoming our members and one visitor. We went through some general WI business and updates of forthcoming events and activities.

We then had our New Year party. It was a great opportunity to spend time catching up with each other and sharing stories about Christmas as well as playing some games. We had all chosen a favourite song to play which we listened to while we were chatting.

After our games we all shared some lovely party food and a welcome cup of tea. We finished the evening with everyone choosing a surprise gift from the bran tub. It was a great start to the New year.

Our next meeting is Tuesday 13th February when we will be having a talk from Jane Scothmer-'Fear and Desire, The History of the Garden Grotto'.

The evening WI meets once a month and gives members the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, and have fun. We always welcome new members, so please feel free to just drop in and say hello, even just for one evening to see what we are all about.

Please note our meeting time, we meet in the family room at the Church Centre at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start.

Lorna Stapley-President.

From our MP - Tom Tugendhat

We're already a month into 2024 and it has certainly been full steam ahead in Tonbridge and Malling, as well as in the Home Office. I hope everybody is back into the swing of things after a much needed and well-deserved Christmas break.

Last month we saw many parts of our community suffer from sudden flooding as a result of some unpredicted stormy weather. We know that certain parts of our community are more at risk than others due to rivers such as the Medway, and the Eden. I saw it myself around my home.

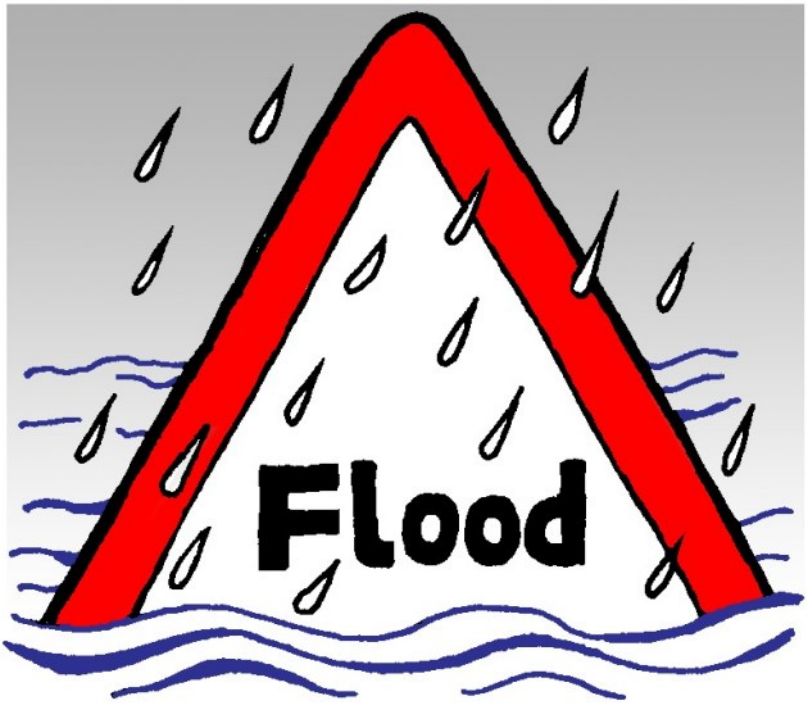
While it can be very difficult to react in the moment to the news of possible flooding, one way we can all put ourselves in the best position possible is to register for flood alerts and warnings. You can do this by following the website address at the bottom of this article. This is a free service which sends a message either via text, email, or call to your device updating you on any possible chance of flooding in your local area.

I often speak to residents about how this impacts their lives. I do appreciate how hard it can be to live with the threat of flooding every year. That is why I am always very happy to share your thoughts with the Government or other departments if there are things that can be done to make the situation easier for you.

My inbox is always busy but that doesn't mean you can't get in touch. You can e-mail me at tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk. You can call my office on 01732 441 563. Lastly, you can also write to me at 130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1SP.

To sign up to flood alerts follow this website address: www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings.

Tom Tugendhat



Hildenborough History Society

It is now over two years since the Society published its book "Hildenborough – Our Village." We were extremely pleased to have sold out both the original print run and the reprint but sadly there were several people who were disappointed to be unable to buy a copy. We have looked at ways of making more copies available but to no avail until now.

We are pleased to announce that we will be able to provide a PDF version online to anyone who may wish to purchase a copy in this way. Our publisher, Canterley Publishing has uploaded the book to their website, where you will be able to purchase a copy which you can download to your own computer and read on line or print yourselves. All you have to do is enter www.canterley.co.uk/hildenborough and follow the on-screen instructions scrolling down to and selecting "Hildenborough – Our Village" at a cost of £5.

WE ARE ALSO PLEASED TO LET YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR NEXT PROJECT. Sometime later this year we will be publishing a new book about the village entitled "Hildenborough - Past and Present". This one will contain photos of places and buildings in the village as they were in the past and what they look like now with a suitable short commentary. Our aim is to include photos where the modern view is either much the same (showing continuity) or markedly different (showing contrast), which we think will produce a very interesting book.

It is expected that the book will contain upwards of 100 old photos and an equivalent number of new ones taken in 2024 and is expected to sell for £9.99. We are currently at the stage of selecting suitable photographs and if you have any that you think might be of interest would you please let Howard and Joy Dolling have a copy. Their address is 1 Derby Close, Hildenborough, TN11 9JU. We would prefer hard copies if possible as these provide a better image for copying into the book. However, if you have high resolution digital versions you can send these by email to johodoll@gmail.com.

We understand that you may be wary of letting such valuable mementoes out of your keeping, but we will take great care of anything which you entrust to us and will ensure that everything will be returned to you in due course. Any such material used will be attributed and acknowledged to the donor.

Howard Dolling

T.M.B.C. News

The Angel Centre.

There must be a Facebook page about everything these days, something gets mentioned and up pops a Facebook page. A save the Angel Centre FB page was created. If you are a regular user of the Angel Centre, you will be aware that the ageng building is past its sell by date, there is a lot of wasted space; the small meeting rooms that used to be where the manager lived are all dis-jointed. Coupled with that, sports floors are worn, and plant/machinery are in need of attention. Members of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Select Committee were tasked with deciding the best way forward for the building. The choices are refurbishment or a new building and not necessarily on the same site. The Angel Centre was originally constructed in 1981 as part of the development of the former Angel Football ground which saw the construction of the existing Sainsbury's store and surface car parks. The Angel Centre replaced community facilities in Lyons Crescent together with a large sports hall and squash courts. The Angel Centre is one of the Council's largest assets in the town centre. The Select Committee voted to leave all options open but to include demolition of the Angel Centre and a new build elsewhere in Tonbridge. Building elsewhere would allow the Angel Centre to remain open until a new building is up and running. The Angel Centre is not very environmentally friendly, and the Council has an ambition to make Leisure buildings carbon neutral by 2027. As well as sport facilities the AC also hosts Community events, and that aspect will need consideration going forward. If you have any thoughts on the AC, please let me know.

L.F.S.A.

Last year, works to expand the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area started. This includes raising a section of embankment near Leigh village at Cattle Arch Bridge and works to upgrade the Leigh pumping station. Work on the south gate of the Leigh control structure starts in spring (2024) and these will be completed later in the summer. In 2025 work to install two gates at the same time, the Centre and North Gates, will commence. All works are planned to be complete in autumn 2025. Work for the Hildenborough Bund is also due to start this spring.
All works at Leigh and Hildenborough are planned to be completed together in autumn 2025.
The 23% water storage capacity increase, has been quite a while coming but completion is just around the corner.

Local Plan.
All the details of the emerging Local Plan are available via the TMBC website.

Council Meetings.
Please remember Council meetings are still streamed on You Tube, however public attendance is permitted in the Council Chamber.

Contact.
Councillors are here to assist with any matters relating to Borough Council business although we have been known to chase after a great many other matters. Please contact your Borough councillors at any time if you require assistance.

Mark Rhodes

At the time I'm writing, the "hot potato" on social media and up for discussion at TMBC is the issue of the Angel Centre in the centre of Tonbridge.

The Angel Centre was built in 1981 and has become very expensive. TMBC has spent nearly £700,000 in maintenance over the past ten years and the TMBC leisure trust predict a £265,000 loss for this year. Many believe that the building is no longer fit for purpose, and it would incur huge costs in refitting the building in order to make it carbon neutral.

Cabinet members have decided that the building should be demolished. Opposition party members of the council have asked the Cabinet to reconsider their decision until a replacement location and purpose has been decided upon. We feel it is impossible to make these decisions without further information.

Before I was elected, the Council commissioned a report from the consultants Mace to review their land and property assets in Tonbridge town centre and to determine how they can best be utilised. The latest stage of the report was due over a month ago but is yet to materialise and councillors are being asked to vote on issues without the report's findings and recommendations.

Personally, I would like to see an integrated leisure centre which also provides for us, the community, with affordable, appropriate meeting rooms for community groups. The library and adult learning services could be relocated there along with many of the council offices currently located at Kings Hill. Funding this, however, is another question....

Kath Barton

Borough Councillors
Kath Barton
c/o TMBC, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, ME19 4LZ
Kath.Barton@tmbc.gov.uk

Mark Rhodes 01732 369 405
39 Cranford Road, Tonbridge
mark.rhodes@tmbc.gov.uk
TMBC - 01732 844 522

Kent County Councillor
Harry Rayner 03000 421 606
harry.rayner@kent.gov.uk

Contact the Parish Council via
clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk
or by telephone (07818 329029)
Hildenborough PC, Riding Lane, Hildenborough, TN11 9HY

WE NEED YOUR OPINION

One of the projects we have been working on to celebrate our 180th year as a church needs your help!

Introducing Info Point

If you have ever visited a Cathedral or place of historical interest you may have paid for a virtual tour or a headset that can guide you round. Info Point is the latest version of this as it can be used in unstaffed heritage sites.

Info Point is a digital visitor information hub that delivers site-specific content. Users connect to Info Point using their phone and are provided with stories and information that deepen and enrich a visit. For more information visit; https://info-point.com/

Rather than have one inside our church I thought it would be a useful tool to help us capture and share the stories of those laid to rest here at St John's. We will be able to share stories, either written or recorded, as well as photographs and videos. Families and friends will be able to submit articles or come and record a short reflection or obituary. Then, anyone visiting the churchyard will be able to access the information on their mobile device.

A Quick Survey

We will be working with the team at Info Point to put together a funding application for the device so there is no cost to the church. To strengthen our application it would be helpful to understand how useful you think this project will be. Please take two minutes to complete the survey; https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NG9FBJZ Hard copies are available from the Church Office or you can use the QR code below. Thank you.

Finally...

As someone who has grown up hearing the stories of Hildenborough residents, and with loved ones buried here at St John's, I am keen to capture our rich local history and bring it to life for future generations. If you would be interested in finding out more or supporting this project do get in touch.

Nancy Mansfield
Church Operations Manager
01732 833 596
office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk



Tales from the Churchyard: The refugee

Some of the stories we find about previous residents in our village are surprisingly modern. Today the struggle of refugees as they flee wars or poverty occupy many a paragraph in the Newspapers. This is the story of one such refugee.

Mrs Joanna Rozita Vertongan has lain undisturbed for over 100 years in our village Churchyard. Back in 1914 her country was invaded by its neighbour in a desire to expand its territory. Her homeland was a small neutral country and her big neighbour wanted to be even bigger. On the 2nd of August 1914 Germany demanded from the Belgians the right to send troops through their country. The Belgians refused. They intended to stay neutral as the big powers of Germany and France squabbled outside their borders. Minor border disputes had been going on for months between France and Germany. The Belgian government felt safe as it had treaties with Britain that its neutrality would be respected. On the morning of 3rd August Germany declared war on France and its troops marched into Belgium. The British sent an ultimatum to the Germans calling for them to leave Belgium. This was ignored and Britain declared war on Germany on the 4th August. World War One had begun. One of a series of small events that had escalated into war. In the middle of this were the Belgians with a small army and few defences. Their army put up a good fight and helped to delay the German advance but for the population they had two options, to stay under German occupation or flee. Many left their homes and took to boats headed away from the fighting. They crossed the Channel to the ports along our South Coast with some ending up in London as refugees.

Among the first wave of refugees to arrive in London was Mrs Joanna Rozita Vertongan and her family. They had lived on the outskirts of Brussels where they owned a General Store and life for them would have been good. They had fled their comfortable life and Brussels and came to London. One of many refugees pouring into the port of London and the other ports along the south coast. Groups of well-meaning individuals quickly formed committees to sort out accommodation, food and support for their needy neighbours. It was estimated by some that there may be the need to house 100,000 refugees. Slowly the Government reacted and brought these varied groups under one umbrella. It soon became obvious that the 100,000 estimate was unrealistic as many of the people coming were in family groups and these, and especially those with children would need special help. While the local government officials tried to register the refugees, locals took action. Out of the muddle and confusion came many stories of communities pulling together and making the refugees welcome. In Hildenborough one such story shows how Joanne and members of her family were helped. Mrs A.F.Buxton of Fairhill took charge assisted by Lady Audrey Petre of Great Hollanden. They found the family accommodation and attended to their needs. Mrs Vertongan died in November 1917 at the age of 66 her death being bought about by apoplexy as the result of shock. Her funeral service was held in Lady Petre's Chapel at Great Hollanden. Over the years refugees from all kinds of conflicts have been made welcome here and it is good to know that this lady's final years were better than she might have feared. One of 250,000 Belgian refugees who arrived in Britain at the end of 1914 and one of the few who did not return home when the war was over to rebuild their damaged country.

In the Church's calendar January is when we remember the slaughter of children in Bethlehem by a tyrannical ruler and plight of a family who took flight. Mary and Joseph fled from Bethlem into Egypt taking the baby Jesus to safety. Jesus had become a refugee leaving behind family and possessions as is the plight of so many refugees today.

In memory of Tim Asquith who did most of the internet research on the graves in the Churchyard.

George Gorham

Centre Piece

The Farmers' Market opened its doors again on Tuesday 9th January following the Christmas break. It was business as usual, with the Church Hall packed with stalls selling crafts and produce and the cheerful team of volunteers keeping everyone supplied with hot refreshments. I had a quick chat with Cllr. Michael Connor, who was attending the Market for the first time as our latest new parish councillor. It was a great opportunity for Michael to introduce himself to local residents and get a feel for any concerns people may have about living in Hildenborough, to feed back to his colleagues on the parish council. A representative from the Parish Council is always available to speak to at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of every month.

Highways

The Kent Highways Planning and Advice Team went to visit the BP garage on the B245 recently, as promised, but concluded that a STOP sign for motorists exiting the garage would not be appropriate. They have said they will refresh the lining on the pavement surface when required and make sure the hedge to the left of the exit is cut back so that it does not obstruct the view for those driving out of the garage. Kent Highways have also confirmed that the designs and costings for the installation of bollards in front of The Flying Dutchman have now been completed and they will be raising the job with their contractors as soon as possible. At the time of writing, the Parish Council has been notified that "wigwag" traffic warning signs are being installed close to Hildenborough Primary School in Riding Lane later in January.

After my visit to the Farmers' Market, I went to inspect the fallen tree on the footpath opposite the Half Moon Pub that has been awaiting removal for several weeks. It is indeed a very large, old tree for the council to remove but I have asked Hildenborough's Highways Steward if he can try and expedite things. He told me that the Public Rights of Way team at KCC is very small, and they have been exceptionally busy attending to pathways that have been washed away by flooding in several locations in Kent, therefore posing a real danger to the public. I hope we will all see the removal of the offending tree very soon.

Flooding

The drains in Hildenborough were put firmly to the test during Storm Henk,

which brought gales and heavy rain to the area over the course of several days soon after Christmas. However, the village's drainage infrastructure seemed to cope comparatively well and there were no reports of flooding in Elm Grove and its neighbouring roads this time. The residents are pleased and relieved that the work carried out last year to clear the drain and culverts in Elm Grove appears to have resolved matters in what was one of the village's worst affected areas.

Police

Early in the New Year I had the pleasure of meeting our local PC, Ollie Evans and his colleague, the Officer for Hadlow and East Peckham, PC Caruana who Ollie teams up with regularly to patrol their local areas. Ollie said that he is trying to get along to the Farmers' Market when his shifts permit, so some readers may already have met him there. He was happy to report that things had been quiet in Hildenborough over the Christmas period but he is keen to hear of any concerns around policing matters that he may be able to assist with. Recently, inconsiderate parking has been endangering the lives of pedestrians who have to step out onto the busy highway to get round the vehicles. Ollie said that offenders will be prosecuted if the problem persists and said it would be helpful if people can supply photographic evidence if they come across the problem. Photos can be sent to me at the e-mail address below and I will be happy to forward them to Ollie.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting is taking place on Thursday 14th March in the Village Hall, Riding Lane. Refreshments will be served by members of the Parish Council from 7pm and residents will have the opportunity to find out more about local organisations who will be manning stalls at the event. The keynote speaker this year will be Ian Nunn, Area Operations Manager at the Environment Agency who will be updating residents on the Leigh Embankment and Hildenborough Expansion Scheme to alleviate flooding in the area, and taking questions from the audience. A "Drop-In" event will take place in the Village Hall on the same evening from 6.30pm to enable residents to speak to representatives of the Environment Agency before the commencement of Parish Council business at 7.30pm.

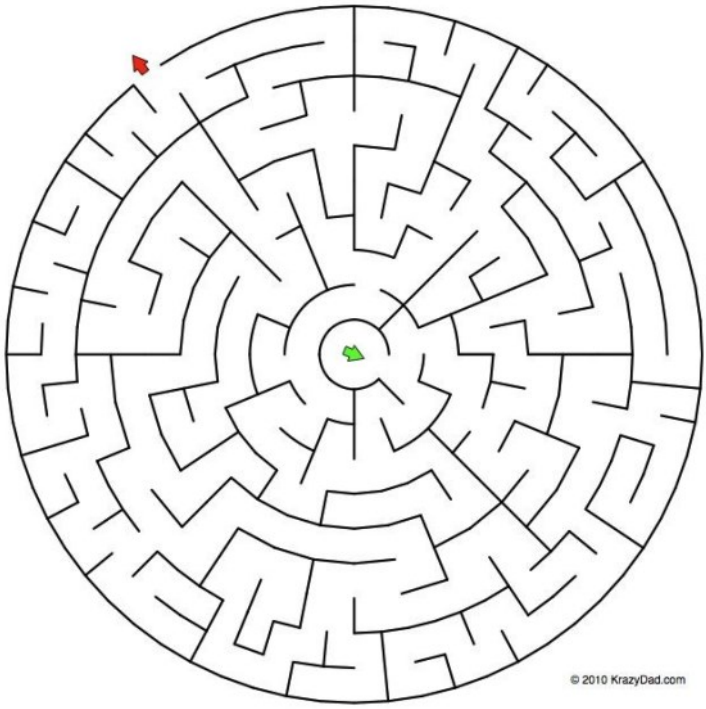
If you have any issues you wish to report to the council please e-mail me at clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk or call me on 07818 329 029. ***Julia Church***

h	g	n	l	c	h	a	n	g	e	n	n
s	j	c	a	t	t	e	n	t	i	o	n
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p	e	a	u	r	u	c	u	b	e	h	l
s	f	b	r	o	t	h	e	r	s	u	l
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change
burning
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Moses
father
leave
Egypt
bush

attention
mountain
Paraoh
sheep
run
Hebrew
body
Sinai

brother
killed
Midian
Aaron
princess
married
people
never



Sudoku is played on a grid of 9 x 9 spaces. Within the rows and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square. Does it sound complicated? As you can see from the image below of an actual Sudoku grid, each Sudoku grid comes with a few spaces already filled in; the more spaces filled in, the easier the game – the more difficult Sudoku puzzles have very few spaces that are already filled in.
Source: Sudoku.com

Easy

		3		8			2	
8	7		2	9	3			
	4	2	6			5		
5	1			3			7	4
2	3						9	5
7	8			4			3	6
		7			9	4	1	
			4	5	1		6	7
	9			6		3		

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Medium

		5			7	3		
	1					2		
7				1	5			6
	5	9			6			
			3			4	2	
6			5	4				7
		1					8	
		8	2			6		

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Guided group walks – February 2024

Our friendly group is one of 13 Ramblers groups in Kent and part of the national Ramblers walking organisation.
We explore the beautiful countryside of Tonbridge and Malling and surrounding areas.
You don't have to be a Ramblers member to try up to three 'taster' walks with us. If you're new to our walks, please contact the walk leader to check that their walk will suit you.

View from the Greensand Ridge – see 4 February walk

For details of these and other upcoming walks and walk leaders, see our Facebook page or visit www.tonbridgeandmallingramblers.org.uk.

Sunday 4 February	Circular walk from Ide Hill to Bayley's Hill along the Greensand Ridge. Moderate difficulty.	4.8 miles
Thursday 8 February	An interesting walk over the hills from the Westerham to Chartwell with good views of the North Downs on the return. Moderate difficulty.	5.5 miles
Thursday 15 February	Circular walk from Stansted on footpaths and quiet country lanes, passing through the hamlets of Fairseat and Hodsell Street. Three ascents and ten stiles; walking poles recommended. Moderate difficulty.	6.5 miles
Sunday 18 February	Circular walk from Wadhurst to Bewl Water. Moderate difficulty.	6 miles
Wednesday 21 February	Circular walk from Mereworth church. Moderate difficulty.	5.5 miles
Thursday 29 February	Circular walk from Harrietsham along field paths and tracks with some slopes. Includes part of the North Downs Way with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. Quite a few stiles, mostly in good order. Moderate difficulty.	5.9 miles

Walks usually start mid-morning. There's a short half-way break (bring refreshments) and
we usually finish near a pub. Most walks are dog-friendly (see website).

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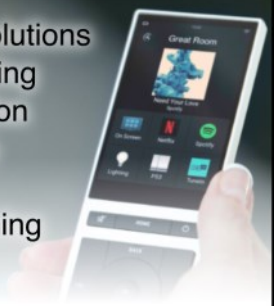
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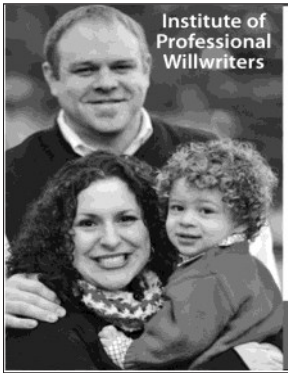
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Church Contacts

Home (Connect) Groups	Church Office **01732 833 596**
Prayer Chain	Cynthia Fawcus **01732 833 397**
Bright Sparks, (Mondays, term-time)	Lisa Glasscote **01732 833 596**
Kids Church (Sundays)	Lisa Glasscote **01732 833 596**

Community Groups

Evening Women's Institute	Miss Lorna Stapley - **01732 832 871**
Beavers (Ages 6-8) Thurs 5.15-6.30 pm	**hildenboroughbeavers8thtonbridgescouts@hotmail.com**
Cubs (Ages 8-10.5) Monday 6.30-8 pm	**hildenboroughwolfcubs@gmail.com**
Scouts (Ages 10.5-14) Friday 7.30-9 pm	**8thtonbridgescouts@gmail.com**
Guides	Sharon Roberts - **07960 782 178**
Brownies	**hildenbrownies@outlook.com**
Hildenborough Conservation Group	Mrs Lynne Flower **01732 355 080**
Hildenborough Farmers' Market	Janet Richardson **01732 838 903**
Hildenborough Gardeners' Society	David Haugh **01732 832 869**
Hildenborough History Society	Judith McQuillan **01732 834 610**
Village Preservation Society	David Vanns **01732 835 289**
Hildenborough Litter Pickers	Emily Simons **07715 113 899**
Hildenborough Parish Council	Julia Church **07818 329 029**
Hildenborough CofE Primary School	www.hildenborough.kent.sch.uk - **01732 833 394**
Stocks Green Primary School	www.stocksgreenprimary.co.uk - **01732 832 758**
Stocks Green Pre-School	www.stocksgreenpreschool.co.uk - **01732 834 115**
Village Hall Bookings	Hilary - **07734 544 412**
Floodline	**0345 988 1188**
KENT POLICE (Non-emergency calls)	**101**

Hildenborough Sports

Badminton	Kathryn Stewart **07809 299 553**
Indoor (Short Mat) Bowls Club	David Chambers **01732 833 612**
Hildenborough Cricket Club	Barry Webb **01732 838 422**
Hildenborough Friendly Badminton Club	Ivan Kirkpatrick **07730 888 429**
Stoolball Club	Bill Richardson **01732 838 903**
Tennis Club (membership)	www.hildenboroughtennis.co.uk
Hildenborough Road Races	Amy Pay - **hildenroadrace@gmail.com**
Tonbridge Swimming Club	chairman@tonbridgeswimmingclub.co.uk
Hildenborough Bridge Club	Lionel Shields **01732 355 919**

Hilden Park Chartered Accountants



YEAR END TAX PLANNING

Now could be a good time to start planning your tax affairs before the end of the tax year on 5th April.

An obvious tax planning point would be to maximise your ISA allowances for the 2023/24 tax year (currently £20,000 each). You might also want to consider increasing your pension savings before 5 April 2024, as the unused annual pension allowance from 2020/21 lapses after three years.

Many of us will have spent time with family at Christmas and that prompts us to think about making or updating our Will. When considering the wording of your Will, you should note that the inheritance tax (IHT) nil rate band continues to be frozen at £325,000, subject to any announcements in the Spring Budget. There is currently an additional nil rate band of up to £175,000 for passing on the family home to direct descendants on death.

Many were expecting an announcement from the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement about cuts to, or the possible abolition of, inheritance tax (IHT). Maybe he is saving that for his Spring Budget, but in the meantime, it may be worth utilising the £3,000 gifts annual exemption for 2023/24 and, if available, the unused amount from 2022/23. Note that £3,000 is the overall exemption for the tax year, not the amount for each done. More generous amounts can be given away by taking advantage of the exemption for regular gifts out of income.

If you would like any advice, please contact us on 01732 838877

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