

# WINCHELSEA PARISH MAGAZINE

April 2025



Winchelsea sunrise *Jonathan Murphy*  
[Click here to see the full panoramic view](#)



## **Securing the Future of the Little Shop**

On Sunday 23rd March a town meeting was held in the New Hall to discuss the future of the Little Shop. The plan is to transfer the shop, which is currently privately owned, to one that is owned and managed by the community of Winchelsea. To facilitate this, a small steering group of five residents has been formed, and they have been working over the last few months with the current owner, Mr Stephen Rumsey, to see how this might be achieved.

The purpose of this meeting, which was attended by 150 residents, was to provide an update on what has been achieved so far, and the steps that will be required over the next few months. Mr Stephen Rumsey explained that his personal objective was to secure the future of the shop for the town, and he felt the best way of achieving this was through community ownership. He has generously offered to provide as much support as he can to ensure the success of the venture.

The steering group outlined what has been achieved so far. One thing you may have already noticed, is volunteers being trained by Nathan in the shop. These volunteers will fill the gaps created by Danny's retirement, and from early April will be operating the shop on a Sunday. In the future they will also cover Nathan's holiday's or on occasions when he is unable to work. So far 16 residents have stepped forward to

help, but we need more volunteers. We are asking for a commitment of only one shift per month. Volunteers will work in pairs, during their three-hour shifts and, as well as training, we are in the process of provided step-by-step guides on tasks like using the till and the coffee machine.

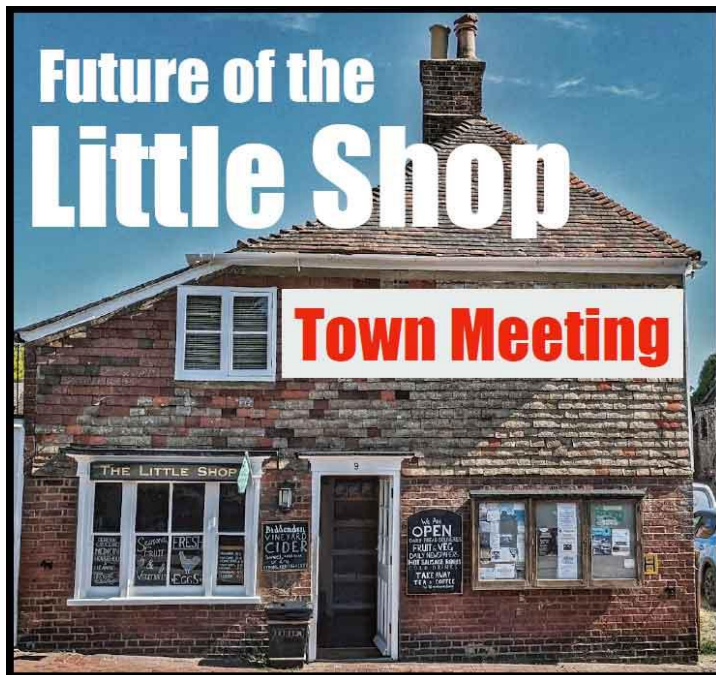
The steering group has also been talking to *Plunkett UK*, a national charity that in the last 25 years has supported over 700 UK community-owned businesses in rural areas with free, expert advice, training and funding. They will help us set up the legal structure, which will be Community Benefit Society. A CBS is regulated by and registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. It is an organisation which gives a broad membership equal stake and equal say in management and operates for the benefit of the community. The steering group has also visited a community shop in Benenden to see how they operate and their experience of working with Plunkett UK.

The steering group has also been working with the *Little Shop Association*, who hold funds left from when the shop was previously a community business, some years ago. They have been very supportive, and it is hoped that these funds may be transferred to the new CBS. The Association has an AGM in April where the committee will recommend to its members that the monies be transferred to the new entity.

Moving forward, the steering group has begun work on preparing a business plan and exploring what grants may be available. Currently the Little Shop makes a small loss each year. One of the purposes of the plan will be to see how the business might break even in the future. The use of volunteers will certainly reduce staff costs, and it may be possible to increase sales and margins, and inevitably we may need some fundraising. The good news is that according to *Plunkett UK*, the survival rate of community shops is 92%.

The purchase of the freehold of the building will also require funding. How much we will need is still being discussed but some donors have already come forward and there is likely to be the opportunity to purchase shares within the CBS.

There is clearly a lot more work to be done, and these things do take time. The steering group stressed that they don't have all the answers yet, but they will keep everyone informed regarding their progress and how you can help.



At the meeting those attending completed a short questionnaire; this is important to determine the level of support for the shop in the community. If you weren't at the meeting and would like to complete a questionnaire, copies are available in the shop. Early results from the survey handed out at the meeting show 92% (105/114 respondents) are very or completely in support of a community shop.

One thing that came out loud and clear at the meeting is that the Little Shop is much loved and valued by our community, but its future can only be assured with the support of residents through volunteering, fund raising and of course as customers. So please use the shop as much as possible, and on a Sunday be patient and encouraging to our volunteers, they may not be quite as fast as Nathan!

The working group has set up an email address, [shopgroup@winchelsea.com](mailto:shopgroup@winchelsea.com), so contact us if you would like more information or to help. You can also talk to any members of the working group; they are Rosemarie Roberts, Glen Marks, Dave Richards, Ian Rowlands and Ali Casey.

# Winchelsea 2025

## A Portrait of the town 25 years after the Millennium

### Winchelsea 2025



A portrait of the town 25 years after the Millennium

### Winchelsea 2025

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#### Background to the book

The book is a collection of photographs and stories from the town of Winchelsea, taken over a 25-year period from the Millennium to 2025. It is a portrait of the town and its people, showing how the town has changed and how the people have lived their lives. The book is a celebration of the town's history and a record of its present.

### North Street



North Street is one of the main streets in Winchelsea, running from the sea to the town center. It is a narrow street with a mix of old and new buildings. The stone archway at the end of the street is a landmark. The street is busy with people and cars, and it is a popular place to walk and shop.



North Street is a vibrant street with a mix of people and businesses. It is a place where people live, work, and play. The street is a reflection of the town's history and its people.

### Friars Road



Friars Road is a quiet street in Winchelsea, named after the friars who once lived there. It is a street with a mix of old and new buildings. The street is a peaceful place to live and walk.



Friars Road is a street with a mix of people and businesses. It is a place where people live, work, and play. The street is a reflection of the town's history and its people.



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### The 100 Bus



The 100 Bus is a project to collect 100 photographs of buses in Winchelsea. It is a project that celebrates the town's history and its people. The bus is a symbol of the town's transport and a reflection of its people.



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Winchelsea Station is a small station in Winchelsea, serving the town and its surrounding areas. It is a station that has been a part of the town's history for many years. The station is a symbol of the town's transport and a reflection of its people.

### Monks Walk & Trojans Plat



Monks Walk and Trojans Plat are streets in Winchelsea, named after the monks who once lived there. They are streets with a mix of old and new buildings. The streets are a peaceful place to live and walk.



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Rookery Lane is a street in Winchelsea, named after the rookery that once lived there. It is a street with a mix of old and new buildings. The street is a peaceful place to live and walk.



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### Court Hall & Museum



Court Hall and Museum are buildings in Winchelsea, named after the court and museum that once lived there. They are buildings with a mix of old and new architecture. The buildings are a reflection of the town's history and its people.



The Little Shop is a shop in Winchelsea, named after the shop that once lived there. It is a shop with a mix of old and new goods. The shop is a reflection of the town's history and its people.

### How would you describe Winchelsea?



How would you describe Winchelsea? Friendly History Community Peaceful Beautiful.

### Acknowledgements



Acknowledgements: Thank you to all the people who have helped me with this book. I am grateful to the people who have shared their stories and photographs with me. I am also grateful to the people who have supported me in my work. Thank you to all the people who have made Winchelsea a special place to live and work.

## Taking orders

The Winchelsea 2025 Book team started work at the end of 2023 and we are at long last ready to take orders.

Come to the Court Hall on Thursday 3rd April between 3pm and 6pm and we will have proof copies to show you. The wonders of digital publishing - which weren't available when the 2000 book was printed - mean that the print run can correspond to the number of orders that come in.

It also means that, if you come along to the launch, you can check your entry for misprints. There are bound to be typos but we aim to eliminate as many as possible.

Also on display will be photo albums compiled by Winchelsea W.I. One, from 1959, contains black and white pictures of all the houses in the town with the names of the people who lived in them. Second Wednesday Society have custody of these and we are very grateful to the committee for letting us put them on display

The 2025 Book will cost £42 in hardback or £35 in paperback. Card payment is preferred.

When you get a look at the proof copies, you'll be impressed by the quality of the colour printing, and Jonathan Murphy's photos of everybody are very special. It's a comprehensive record of the town, our institutions and our busy life at the quarter century.

We will also be on hand to take orders at Church Market on Saturday 5th.

*Gillian Alexander, Chris Chappell, Jerry Moss,  
Jonathan Murphy, David Page and Jennifer Sutherland*

Parishes of Icklesham Pett and Winchelsea

# HOLY WEEK AND EASTER



## **Maundy Thursday Eucharist**

6pm at Winchelsea

## **Good Friday Meditation**

2pm at Icklesham

## **Easter Eucharist**

9.30am at Pett

9.30am at Icklesham

11am at Winchelsea

[winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk](http://winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk)



Winchelsea morning *Jonathan Murphy*

## **Managing St Thomas's during the Vacancy**

The period that a parish or group of parishes is without a priest is known as a vacancy. When Jonathan Meyer retired on 7th February, the vacancy began but the work of the parish and the church has to continue.

At the Parochial Church Council Meeting in January, prior to Jonathan's departure, it was agreed that a working group would take on the responsibility for ensuring that all areas of the parish and the church continue to function. The group comprised: the Churchwardens, Gavin McFadyean, Charlotte Beecroft, Mary Parker and David Page, with David Harris as Chair.

The group meets online every Friday evening for an hour. This is a considerable commitment by the team to ensure that problems are dealt with very quickly and that the church is run efficiently.

There is a standard agenda that covers the following areas: enquiries received by email and phone during the previous week; the organisation of services including clergy, readers and intercessors, the contents of pew sheets, finance, routine maintenance and cleaning, requests for baptisms, weddings, funerals, burials and the interment of ashes; the sound and lighting project, requests to hire the church, the Rectory and the Rectory garden and arranging any special services such as the recent Ash Wednesday Eucharist.



The provision of clergy is clearly the most important aspect of the team's work and we are immensely grateful to David Page for his support of the parish and his recruitment of other clergy ensuring that we continue to be able to worship every Sunday. He also acts as our spiritual advisor.

Charlotte ensures that we have readers and intercessors and that the building is locked and unlocked, as well running a variety of events including the monthly Church Market. Gavin liaises with contractors and monitors repairs including the boiler and floodlights. Mary handles all emails and phone calls to the church during the vacancy. Celia organises all our meetings and ensures Sunday services run seamlessly. David Harris leads the team and handles any financial issues.

After the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 12th April, we will begin consulting widely amongst the congregation, town and wider community as part of the process to draft our Parish Profile, the key document to promote St Thomas's to potential new incumbents. It is important that we have a period of reflection before we begin the recruitment process.

It is easy for lines of communication to falter during vacancies so if you have any questions, do please email Nigel Ashton  
Churchwarden  
[nashton364@gmail.com](mailto:nashton364@gmail.com)





## **Church Annual Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Saturday 12th April at 10.30am in the Church.

The Parish Meeting is held to elect Churchwardens and anyone on the electoral roll in the parish is entitled to attend and vote. This is different from those on the Church Electoral Roll, which usually includes communicant members of the congregation.

The Parish Meeting is immediately followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Everyone who is on the Church Electoral Roll of the parish is entitled to attend. This is an opportunity for members of the congregation to receive an annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council during the twelve months ending 31st December 2024 including financial statements, the maintenance of the church building, its artefacts and the churchyard and any other matters of concern about the parish. Those attending will also learn of broad plans for the current year.

It is at this meeting that members of the Parochial Church Council are elected for the forthcoming year and those present are able to ask any questions. Papers related to the

business of the meeting will be available two weeks prior to the meeting. It is hoped that as many members as possible of St Thomas who are on the electoral roll will attend.

If you are on the Church Electoral Roll and would like to offer yourself as a candidate for election to the Parochial Church Council, there are forms at the back of the church or you can email the PCC Secretary, Mary Parker 07927 107678 [parkermary848@gmail.com](mailto:parkermary848@gmail.com)



### **Repairs completed**

Work has been completed to renew stonework on one of the chancel windows that was in danger of crumbling away. Repairs to the vestry roof are also now done and the scaffolding should come down soon.

### **Churchyard Maintenance Appeal**

We are very grateful to everyone who has responded to this year's churchyard maintenance appeal. It will cost around £4,000 to care for the trees, benches and gates, attend to the War Memorial and employ contractors to mow the grass. IPC contribute £1,800 for which we are very grateful.

If you'd be willing to make a donation towards Winchelsea's 'village green', you could make a BACS payment to 'PCC Winchelsea' 30-90-28 a/c 01964020, ref: 'Churchyard' or [go to the PCC JustGiving page](#). Thank you!

### **Daily Office**

The Daily Office is said at St Thomas's every Wednesday at 4.30pm led by Tom Ashmore. Everyone is welcome to join this service which lasts about twenty minutes. Prayers for our church and the world are included.

### **Bible Study at the New Inn**

The next Bible Study session will take place on Thursday 3rd April at 6.00pm in the New Inn. We will be looking at chapters 3 and 4 of Acts of the Apostles. Everyone is welcome; the session will last for approximately one hour.

### **Easter Lily Fund**

Each year a large lily arrangement is displayed in the Sanctuary in memory of loved ones. If you would like to contribute towards this, in memory of your loved one(s), please contact Charlotte Beecroft. The minimum contribution is £3.

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## **Friends of Winchelsea Church**

There will be a Special General Meeting of the Friends of Winchelsea Church at 3pm on Saturday 5th April in St Thomas's Church,

The Trustees seek approval to amend the constitution. The last amendment took place in 2015. A working group of Trustees of the Friends together with a member of the PCC have been working over the last six months to revise the constitution. The amended constitution seeks to clarify the membership year, to increase the membership fee to £25 pa from the beginning of 2026, and to clarify members' eligibility to vote at the AGM or an SGM.

[Click here to see the proposed new constitution.](#)

I would like to remind members that in order to be eligible to vote at the SGM, members must have paid their annual subscription for 2025, currently £10 per individual or £20 per couple. If you have not already done so it would be much appreciated if you could pay your subscription as soon as possible to: The Friends of Winchelsea Church  
NatWest Bank : 60-18-09 account number 59122684

*Jo Marks, Hon Sec to The Friends*



A pause in the unpacking





*Jonathan Murphy*

## **Wesley's Chapel**

Thank you to everyone who came to the Songs of Praise service on 16th March. It was a truly uplifting time with some absolutely glorious singing. A big thank you to Stephen Page for arranging the programme and Rev Catherine Wagstaff (from Dover) who led us.

**On Wednesday 16th April at 7.30pm** there will be a Reflections for Holy Week service conducted by Rev Jonathan and Dr Julie Todd and this will include the celebration of Holy Communion (or Eucharist). This is always a very poignant time in the days leading up to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

**On Saturday 17th May** there will be a Coffee Morning from 10am till 12 and this will include a rather informal presentation by our history expert, David Lambourne, on the history of the Chapel at around 11 o'clock.

Then we will host one of the highlights of the year with a **Singing Workshop on Sunday 15th June** from 3pm to 7pm. This will be led by Stephen Page with an afternoon of instruction and practise, followed by tea and the service. For those who came to the Songs of Praise service, this is not to be missed, so, if that is you, please note it in your diary now. As always: all are welcome at any of the Chapel events.  
*Mike Lambourne*



# Mayoring Ceremony

Winchelsea Corporation invite you  
to the Mayor Making ceremony  
at 11.am on Easter Monday  
in Winchelsea Church

All are welcome



[winchelsea.com/corporation](http://winchelsea.com/corporation)



## **Thanks to Helena Dollimore**

In March the New Hall Committee Chair, Ali Casey, personally thanked our MP for the receipt of a Platinum Jubilee Grant towards the recently completed works to the Hall. This has included renewing the flat roof to the table store which was leaking.

### **100 Club**

The winning number for the 100 Club for March is 11. Congratulations to the winner! You should already have the money in your account by now.





## Spring Show

26 Garden Society members entered 160 items in 50 categories at the Spring Show on 22nd March and lots of visitors turned up to admire the exhibits.

At the end of the afternoon, Mayoress Debbie Cosstick presented the prizes. Howard Norton won the cup for flowers and the overall winner's salver. Celia King won the challenge bowl for cookery, Jennifer Sutherland won the Armoury challenge bowl for the exhibit awarded 'best in show' by the judges, and shared the cup for floral art with Celia. The people's choice for floral art was Celia's 'salute to spring'.





## **Front Garden of the Month**

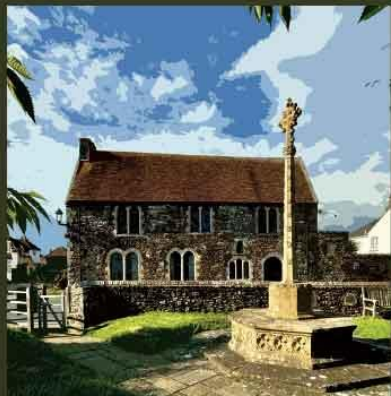
Angela Gilby sets the ball rolling with her front garden in St Giles Close. As the months pass, Garden Society will try and showcase one of Winchelsea's many front gardens and verges that make such a contribution to the look of the town.

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## **Late Tulips**

Garden Society were hoping to hold a tulip show alongside church market this month but it's been a late season and we don't think enough flowers will be in bloom, so this event will not now take place.

# FOAM ■ AGM



**Saturday April 5th 2pm**  
**Lower Court Hall**



**Find out what we achieved in 2024 & our plans for 2025**

**FRIENDS OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS**

## FOAM AGM

This year's annual general meeting of the Friends of the Ancient Monuments will be held at the Lower Court Hall on Saturday 5th April at 2pm

During the meeting Phil Mack will be updating us on major projects completed in 2024 and those planned this year. Our treasurer, Ian Rowlands will be running through the figures, Mark Harris will be updating you on membership, and Chris Chappell will be talking about our fund-raising events and cellar tours.

As usual, there will opportunity to elect the officers of FOAM. The current officers, that's Chairman (Phil Mack), Secretary (Chris Chappell) and treasurer (Ian Rowlands) together with committee members Mark Harris and Glen Marks are all happy to stand for re-election. However, please let Chris Chappell know prior to the AGM if you wish to nominate anyone else to stand.

On behalf of the FOAM Committee.

*Chris Chappell, Mark Harris, Phil Mack, Glen Marks  
and Ian Rowlands*

[winchelsea.com/foam](http://winchelsea.com/foam)

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## Museum opens for the new season

Winchelsea Museum opens again on Tuesday 1st April and will be open from Tuesday to Sunday between 11.30 and 3.30 until the end of October - and on Bank Holiday Mondays in May and August. A team of 30+ volunteers will take it in turns to welcome visitors. [Click here](#) to find out more.



Tawny Mining Bee

## The Bee of the Bang

There's a famous quote of the British sprinter Linford Christie, in which he claimed he didn't just start races at the bang of the starting pistol, but at "the B of the Bang". The first few warm days of March accompanied by the eruption of flowers and birdsong really felt like that snap start to the headlong sprint of Spring. Blackcaps, Blackbirds, Chaffinches and Song Thrushes fill the air with melodious song, and by the New Gate the scissor-snap sound of Chiffchaffs can be heard above that machine-gun blast of tweets from Wrens, and further towards Wickham Manor the occasional Cetti's Warbler.

Incidentally that walk is botanically rewarding too as Pink Campion, Wood Anemone, Creeping Ground Ivy, Alexanders, Lesser Celandine Greater Stichwort and the last of the Violets are all flowering, with Bluebells pushing through, and a nice selection of ferns also doing well. Also at the time of writing, I came across the first Slow-worm of Spring under corrugated iron at Backfields.

This month I wanted to bring our attention to Bees, and in particular, Solitary Bees. Honey Bees get a lot of press, their peculiar folklore and history came to public attention when the Royal Keeper of the Bees at Buckingham Palace announced that he had informed the bees of Queen

Elizabeth II's death, and wrapped their hives in black ribbons - a centuries old tradition known as 'telling the bees'. Bumble Bees too, with their tea-towel friendly fluffy colourful jumpers are known to everyone.

However, it may surprise you to know that of the roughly 274 species of bee found in Britain, around 250 of those are Solitary Bees. By 'solitary' we mean species where the females are all fertile, they build and provision the nest themselves, and lay the eggs. They get no help from 'worker' bees. The male bees make an appearance to mate with the females, then go off and do whatever male bees do when not busy mating - feed or watch. Strictly maybe.

It is perhaps because they don't have busy hives, and by dint of many of them being small, they go largely unnoticed. The Small Scissor Bee for example is so tiny it nests in the vacated holes of Woodworm. Those who grow campanulas in Winchelsea have a good chance of seeing these skinny black miniature bees, some 4-7mm in length, around their bellflowers. Great Dixter too is a good place to see them, having both bellflowers and old timber barns.



Red Mason Bee

Despite their size, however, solitary bees are vitally important pollinators of many different plants in a wide range of environments. If you would like to see them in

detail then the 'bee hotels' you see for sale in garden centres do actually work when sited in a sunny open position. Easier still, just drill lots of different sized holes about 2-3 inches deep in a piece of untreated wood. Usually the first and most enthusiastic of occupants are those known as 'Mason Bees'.

The species I've photographed above, however, is a Red Mason Bee. In the photo you can see that one of the holes is in the process of being sealed shut with a door made of mud. The female bee, having completed the individual brood cells inside, stocked with pollen and nectar and eggs, collects mud in her mandibles, and then shapes and positions it using the tiny 'horns' on her face (hence the name *Osmia bicornis*).

Bee hotels can be dominated by this bee, and in particular by males, as they outnumber female Red Mason Bees two-to-one and aggressively compete to mate. I've even seen them fighting over a newly hatched female before she has fully emerged. After mating, the males insert a plug to prevent the female from mating again.

Those who grow roses may be familiar with the oval sections cut out of the leaves by female Leafcutter bees. These she uses to construct an exquisitely made green tube, sealed at both ends, inside the nest cavity. The doors of their cells differ from Mason Bees by being sealed with leaves instead of mud - their 'front door' appearing bright green when freshly made.

Mining Bees (*Andrena*) are an overlooked group of solitary bees, and yet they are the largest genus of bees in Britain. As their name suggests they tend to excavate their own nests in soil or sandy banks. Walkers passing through Hollow Field right now will see the chaotic mess the cattle are making, churning up the ground and tearing up grass. These eco-engineers provide perfect conditions not only for wildflowers to germinate, but also for whole colonies of Mining Bees to excavate their nests. Garden Lawns too can provide good nesting sites.

Last year, quite unexpectedly, Ivy Bees started a colony in the lawn here at Backfields, creating hundreds of tiny 'volcanoes' - heaps of excavated soil around a central burrow hole. Mining Bees can be very pretty, such as the Tawny Mining Bee photographed here in Winchelsea, busy in our gardens right now.

*Jim Kay*

Winchelsea Town

# SUMMER FETE

Saturday  
9th  
August 2025

**! WANTED !**

**Stall Holders  
Volunteers  
Donations**

St Thomas' PTA are hosting the Winchelsea Town Fete this year. If you can support in anyway please get in touch



**Claire Cooper**  
**Winchelsea@Aura-Energy.uk**  
**07868 368 802**

@ ST THOMAS' SCHOOL, FRIARS ROAD, WINCHELSEA, TN36 4ED

[www.st-thomas-winchelsea.e-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.st-thomas-winchelsea.e-sussex.sch.uk)



## **School Parent Teacher Association**

Preparations underway for the Winchelsea Town Fete. This year the Fete will be held on Saturday 9th August and is being hosted by the St Thomas' School PTA.

If anyone wishes to volunteer to help or provide any support in the lead up to the event or on the day, please contact Claire Cooper [winchelsea@aura-energy.uk](mailto:winchelsea@aura-energy.uk) 07868 368 802.

Any organisations or businesses that would like to have a pitch at the event also please contact Claire.

Other support we will be looking for in the lead up to the event are donations for our tombola and for the raffle.

If you can help in anyway, please get in touch!

Thanks in advance for your support,  
Claire and St Thomas' PTA.

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## **News from the School**

*In his newsletter to parents,  
headteacher Dale Saxby writes:*

We were thrilled to welcome the planetarium to our school recently - a truly incredible experience for our pupils. A huge thank you to our fantastic PTA for funding this event, which brought space and science to life in an unforgettable way. The children were fascinated by the wonders of the universe, and it was wonderful to see their curiosity sparked through such an engaging learning experience.

World Book Day was a fantastic celebration of reading and storytelling! It was wonderful to see the children and staff dressed as their favourite book characters, truly bringing stories to life. The enthusiasm for reading was evident in every classroom and the special activities throughout the day helped to inspire a love of books among our pupils. Thank you to everyone who took part and made the day so special

Our Greyfriars class had an enriching trip to the Nature Reserve, exploring and discovering the local wildlife.

Meanwhile, Castle competed at the Hastings Music Festival, showcasing their talent and dedication. On top of that, we had an incredible turnout for the KS2 Cross Country event, with over 40 of our pupils proudly representing St Thomas' at Sandown School. Their determination and enthusiasm were inspiring and we are so proud of every participant.





## **At the Beach in April**

Winchelsea Beach Community Association will be holding a Craft Fair at the Community Hall on Saturday 12th April from 10.30am to 3pm. All are welcome and entry is free. Refreshments include home-made cakes.

### **Mothers' Prayers**

Tuesday 1st April at 10am at *El Indalo*, Old Harbour Farm Lane.

### **Coffee Morning**

Wednesday 2nd April from 10.30 to 12 in Winchelsea Beach Community Hall. Tea, coffee, Homemade cakes. Warm, friendly atmosphere. All welcome.

### **WBCA AGM**

7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd April

### **Fellowship Lunch**

Friday 25th April at Winchelsea Beach Community Hall, 12.30 for 1pm. Please contact May Parker 07927 107678 to book a place.



## **Winchelsea Beach Community Hall**

Anyone passing through Winchelsea Beach in the last few months can't have failed to notice the building work going on at the Community Hall. The hall was originally built in 1981, and extended twice into its present form in 1982 and 1984; the facilities were definitely showing signs of their age, as the ladies of the committee were often reminding us. Sadly many of the people who contributed their time and effort in originally funding and building the hall are no longer with us, and we owe them a large debt of gratitude.

For those who are interested, the history of the hall and how it came into being is covered in a chapter of Michael Saville's excellent book 'A Changing Shore', which details the history of Winchelsea Beach and its struggle with the elements and the authorities.

For some time the WBCA committee has been aware that we needed to keep up with the times and provide a full access disabled toilet, with proper wheelchair access and ramps. Many discussions took place on the design of the new extension, and those who are familiar with committees will not be surprised to learn that it was the smaller details which took up much of the time. Eventually, and after a false start, we decided on a design.

We did not want to have to close the hall completely while the building work was going on, which might have resulted

in losing some of our regular bookings, and we were able to select a contractor and a design which allowed us to do this.

The new extension incorporates the full-access toilet which also has a baby change facility built in. We have an increasing number of young families using the hall and we hope that this will encourage them to come along.

The other side of the new space will allow us to have a decent cloakroom area. The clean lines of the extension have only served to show up the exterior decoration of the hall, and I have no doubt that it will not be long before we will have some internal pressure to remedy this.

All this of course comes at a cost, and we are fortunate in receiving support from Rother District Council, the Winchelsea Parochial Church Council (PCC), and Icklesham Parish Council. The rather sad closing and sale of St Richard's Church had allowed the PCC to contribute to a large part of the cost, for which we thank them, and we hope that this will be a fitting use of those funds.

The hall should be back into full use in April, and we will still strive to offer excellent value for money to all our hirers

The official opening ceremony will be on the 21st June.

*Geoff Foot*



**WINCHELSEA FILM NIGHT**  
In conjunction with Winchelsea New Hall

**Dear fellow Film Goers,**

please be advised there is  
no screening in April.

Our next Film Night is **24<sup>th</sup> May**  
when we will be screening

**'Waking Ned'**

*(Look out for more details nearer the time.)*

*We hope to see you then.*

Meanwhile have a very

**Happy Easter.**





## **The Fountains and Aqueducts of Rome**

New to the Second Wednesday Society, Wendy Fraser takes a look at the sources and development of the Roman aqueducts and some of the many beautiful and interesting Renaissance fountains and their majestic statues in Rome. Wendy was a tour guide in Italy for several years and a Blue Badge Guide for Bury St Edmunds before moving to Kent.

9th April at 2.30pm in the New Hall

Annual membership £15 - Visitors £5 - Homemade tea £2

BACS preferred  
Winchelsea Second Wednesday Society  
09-01-55 43784800

[2ndWeds@gmail.com](mailto:2ndWeds@gmail.com)



## **Tender Rumination**

Arthur Smith and Phil Nice presented their two-man comedy drama, 'Oof!' on the New Hall stage on 22nd March. They brought their tender rumination on old age and old friendships to life with quickfire gags and some humorous poetry.

Accompanied by only a park bench, they wove an entrancing drama of nostalgic moments and difficult memories. A packed hall responded to the warmth and intimacy of the show.

As is usual with a Winchelsea production, the show could not have gone on without the help of willing and able volunteers. Thanks to Dave, Anne, Mark, Ali, Chris, Cheryl and Hilary. Special thanks must go to Rob for his sterling work on the sound and lights, as well as to Tom and Ant for the loan of their magnificent bench.

To cap an entertaining evening, the whole enterprise succeeded in raising over £700 for the Rye Food Bank. [ryefoodbank.com](http://ryefoodbank.com)

*David Richards*





## **The Four Quartets**

Lorg Gawain Douglas will be giving and mini-lecture and reading to Literary Society at their meeting on Friday 18th April. This will take place in the New Hall at 7pm for 7.30.

He is an accomplished writer, teacher, performing poet and musician. He is the younger son of Francis, the 11th Marquess of Queensbury, and the great nephew of the poet Lord Alfred Douglas, who was also notorious for his relationship with Oscar Wilde. Gawain has written four collections of poetry and a compilation of his poetry, 'Fortuna', was published in 2009.

Gawain has made a special study of the works of T S Eliot, in particular 'The Waste Land' and 'Four Quartets'. In 2006 he recited 'Four Quartets' in Canterbury Cathedral as part of the Canterbury Festival, and gave subsequent performances in Australia and Scotland.

Members free, non-members £5

[literarysoc.winchelsea.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:literarysoc.winchelsea.secretary@gmail.com)



## **The Governments we deserve?**

A speaker with a liberal sprinkling of stardust filled the pews of St. Thomas's church as broadcaster, journalist and author, Gavin Esler, contended that *Britain is Better Than This* a tour d'horizon of recent British political history. He initially focused on our flexible constitution, acclaimed by Pitt the Elder for its innate genius, by Walter Bagehot for its mystique "We must not let daylight upon the magic" and by Macaulay as pure gold in comparison with others' paper currencies.

We heard several descriptions of the constitutional role of *The Crown* - all enhancing mysticism in a veil of verbiage. Following World War II, Lord Tizard's verdict was more nuanced - Britain was a great country but no longer a great power. As the inventor of the octane grading system for fuel, Tizard did know a bit about classifying power. Are we weaponising nostalgia and substituting mythology for history to sustain a notional British exceptionalism?

He scrutinised the unhinged arithmetic of the 2024 General Election where non-voters formed the biggest group in the electorate and the Electoral Reform Society estimated that 8 million potentially eligible over-18s were not registered to

vote at all. Labour's 33% share of the vote secured a 63% seat share and a massive working majority.

The distribution of votes was critical; Reform's 4.2 million votes spread evenly across England and Wales gleaned 5 seats while 3.6 million, predominantly Southern, voters secured 72 seats for the Lib. Dems. usually by overtaking the Conservatives. Drilling down on the statistics reveals the current government as the choice of 17% of possible voters, raising worrying questions of democratic legitimacy against a soundtrack dominated by the barking of the dogs of war. The root cause of the electorate's disengagement is unclear - apathy, restricted choice or a voting system where *wasted votes* pile up?

Our speaker was exercised by the advent of stratagems hindering efforts to hold politicians to account. The *dead cat bounce* imported from Australia, home of a macho political culture of which personal insults formed an integral part, saw interviewees under pressure introduce a startling non-sequitur into the discourse, intending to derail it completely.

*Strategic lying* was illustrated by Boris Johnson's meticulous description of reducing occupational stress by making model buses from discarded cardboard boxes and painting them carefully; although legions of Arts and Crafts enthusiasts, inspired by his example, still eagerly await sight of one of these buses. Liz Truss's conviction that she was unseated from the Premiership by a *Deep State* represented by *The Economist* and *The Financial Times* has foundered on a reef of scepticism.

Possibly anticipating accusations of circling the drain of despair and recollecting his religious setting, Gavin delivered a positive personal credo. The British were a brave inventive people, with Cambridge University alone sitting third in the global Nobel Prize league table, and by resolving some of the issues raised in this talk we could more confidently embrace the future in preference to our storied past.

*Bill Doherty*

# Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by **Marcio da Silva**

**Boyan Ivanov** *clarinet*



**Holst** *St Paul's Suite*      **Finzi** *Clarinet Concerto*  
**Barber** *Adagio for Strings*      **Britten** *Simple Symphony*

**Saturday 17th May at 7.30pm**

## Winchelsea Arts

**St Thomas' Church Winchelsea**  
TN36 4EB



Tickets online at  
[winchelsea-arts.org.uk](http://winchelsea-arts.org.uk)  
and at the door

**£24**

free for under 18s



[winchelsea-arts.org.uk](http://winchelsea-arts.org.uk)

Click here to add your name to the Winchelsea Arts mailing list.  
Information about the next series of concerts will be going out soon.



*Atmospheric temporary lighting last Christmas*

## **Church Lighting and Sound Project**

*Nigel Ashton writes:* A meeting was held on 27th March to discuss our faculty application, which as you may know was rejected in November and March. Members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) were present, including their architect Richard Andrews, also members of the diocese's building team. Winchelsea was represented by myself, Graham Large and John-Marc Swansbury (our sound designer). The meeting was chaired by the archdeacon. I outlined the project and then Graham and John-Marc answered a myriad of technical and aesthetic questions.

The key sticking points were as follows: The DAC didn't feel they had enough information on how the lighting would actually look. The architect said he needed mock ups to know what effect the lighting would have in every area of the church. Graham and I explained that the cost of this would be prohibitive. It was agreed that the architect will meet with Graham in church and Graham will describe exactly what the lighting will achieve in each area.

The committee decided that this was an excellent solution and would give them all the information required. There was considerable concern about the size, positioning, angle and colour of the new speakers. John-Marc agreed to reposition the speakers so as not to interrupt the view of the black marble inserts. There was much discussion about size and

position of speakers and John-Marc agreed to produce mock ups of the new positions on photographs of the pillars. We will include the mock ups of lighting and speakers in the next magazine.

The committee remarked that their reservations about the positions and size, etc, had been fully answered. They were also concerned about the materials and colour of the new sound desk. We agreed it would be made in English oak and would match the colour and finish of the pews.

It was a very detailed and professional meeting and I'm confident that the faculty will be passed at the DAC meeting on 8th May. There are a number of what are essentially planning notices, which will be prepared by the diocese and these will be displayed in church for a month. This means that if we agree a tender, work could begin in June. The DAC congratulated us on a hugely impressive scheme which will 'massively improve the building and will be the envy of the diocese'



**Sue Dormer** died in the last week of March. She was Mayoress from 1995 to 1997. Seen here at last year's D Day anniversary celebrations at the New Hall, Sue lived latterly in East Kent. She will be buried alongside Henry in Winchelsea churchyard. Our condolences go to her daughters, Charlotte and Sara.



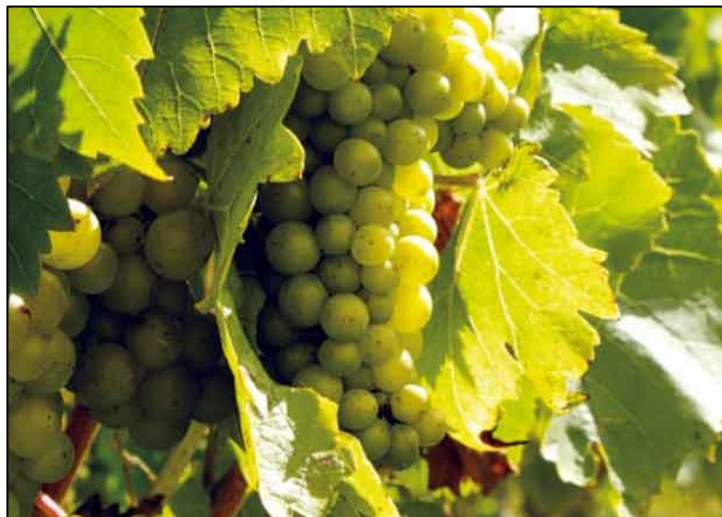
## **V E Day and V J Day Anniversary**

Thursday 8th May marks 80 years since Nazi Germany's formal surrender towards the end of the Second World War. On VE (Victory in Europe) Day in 1945, millions took to the streets to celebrate peace after years of devastating war. However, the Second World War did not formally conclude until Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, on 15th August 1945.

Join us at the New Hall from 7.30 pm for Winchelsea's own 80th Anniversary Celebrations of VE (VJ) Day. As we mentioned in last month's parish magazine the reception will include wine and canapes.

As last year's D Day celebration was illustrated by a thematic display, we will once again have storyboards that can be viewed telling the story through the wartime biographies of 80 people connected to Winchelsea to include the 73 names on the Roll of Honour in the Court Hall. The Piper will then lead the assembled guests across the fields to watch the ceremonial lighting of the Beacon at 9.30 pm.

Our detailed timetable for the evening will follow in the May edition of the Parish Magazine.



## **Winchelsea Wine Society**

Our AGM on 15th February received a report on the successful first year of WWS as a formal society, comprising three tastings and visit to Charles Palmer vineyard. Members adopted the annual accounts and re-elected the existing committee of Andrew (Chair), Chris (Treasurer), Brian (Secretary), John, Sergio and Simon. The two dozen members who attended enjoyed a pre-lunch tasting of four traditional sherries - from very dry to extremely sweet.

Following last year's sell out tasting of wines from Northern Italy, we held an equally popular tasting of wines from Central Italy on 14th March. The evening was entertainingly hosted by Simon and Sergio. A fine Lambrusco was followed by three classic white wines of the region and three tasty reds, all accompanied by fine salami and parmesan.

On Friday 27th June we have arranged an exclusive tour of Oxney, England's leading organic vineyard, which makes award winning sparkling and still wines. There are still a few seats available for the vineyard and winery tour and tasting (with transport by Rye Community Bus) at £25. Please apply as soon as possible to [winchelseawinesociety@gmail.com](mailto:winchelseawinesociety@gmail.com).

At the beginning of August we plan an evening visit to our local vineyard, Charles Palmer. This will include an opportunity to see their new winery and upgraded Cellar



Door tasting area, taste the latest wines and enjoy splendid views on a summer evening.

We return to the New Hall in September for an insightful tasting of Australian wines chosen by Simon who is long experienced in the Australian wine business.

Our final event of the year will be an informal blind tasting to entertain the tastebuds as well as the mind. *Andrew Cripps*



## **Hej Winchelsea: Here We Go Again!**

Save the date : June 21st is ABBA Night - from the team that took you to Bollywood and Holyrood.

Tickets are £20 and proceeds will go towards saving the Little Shop. Full details to follow and tickets on sale to residents from Saturday 3rd May, general release from 24th May.

Glad Midsommar!



## **Rudes return**

The Rude Mechanical Theatre Company is a professional touring theatre troupe that has performed annually in Winchelsea for some years. We are excited to be returning this summer with our new production, Gentle Harry's Farm.

As you may know, The Rude Mechanical Theatre Company have become a staple of the local arts scene over the years, offering a distinctive brand of high energy theatre - a hybrid blend of styles inspired by the commedia dell'arte, clowning, silent movies, slapstick, music hall, pantomime and vaudeville.

We will be performing in Winchelsea on Sunday 20th July on St Thomas' Primary School field.

*Rowan Talbot*

[therudes.co.uk](http://therudes.co.uk)

## What's On Weekly At Winchelsea New Hall

Mondays 09.30-10.15	Pilates with Hannah	Suitable for all. Contact Hannah on 07936 151529 or email <a href="mailto:hannahpilateshastings@gmail.com">hannahpilateshastings@gmail.com</a>
Mondays 15.00-15.50	Zumba Gold	Suitable for all. Contact Daisy at <a href="mailto:fitnessbythesea@outlook.com">fitnessbythesea@outlook.com</a>
Mondays 16.00-17.00	Pilates with Celia	Suitable for all ages and abilities. Contact Celia on <a href="mailto:kingcelia54@gmail.com">kingcelia54@gmail.com</a>
Tuesdays 14.00-15.30	Tune In Winchelsea	Fun singing group run by local tenor Gary Marriot. All ages and abilities welcome. Contact Rosemarie on 07941 458628
Tuesdays 18.00-20.00	Rother Fitness	Contact Rachel at <a href="mailto:rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com">rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com</a>
Wednesdays 18.00-19.00	Rother Fitness	Contact Rachel at <a href="mailto:rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com">rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com</a>
Thursdays 09.30-10.30	Scottish Dancing	A fun, friendly class, suitable for beginners. Contact <a href="mailto:maddycoelho@hotmail.com">maddycoelho@hotmail.com</a>
Thursdays 18.00-19.00	Rother Fitness	Contact Rachel <a href="mailto:rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com">rotherfitnessgroup@outlook.com</a>
Fridays 09.30-10.15	Pilates with Hannah	All welcome. Contact Hannah on 07936 151529 or email <a href="mailto:hannahpilateshastings@gmail.com">hannahpilateshastings@gmail.com</a>

\*\*The hall has Table Tennis, Badminton and Pickleball equipment and can be booked on an ad hoc basis for £2 per person per hour (£1 for under 16's) – contact Rosemarie on 07941 458628 or WhatsApp

Winchelsea Church and Town Calendar  
**April 2025**

- Tuesday 1st Winchelsea Museum re-opens  
Mothers' Prayers - 10am
- Thursday 3rd Winchelsea 2025 Book launch - Court Hall - 3pm to 6pm  
Bible Study at the New Inn - 6pm
- Saturday 5th Church Market at St Thomas's - 10.30 till 12  
FOAM AGM - Court Hall - 2pm  
Friends of Winchelsea Church meeting - St Thomas's - 3pm
- Sunday 6th 8.30am: Holy Communion (BCP) at Pett Level**  
**11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Wednesday 9th Second Wednesday Society - New Hall - 2.30pm
- Saturday 12th Annual Parochial Church Meeting - St Thomas's - 10.30am
- Sunday 13th 9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Icklesham**  
*Palm Sunday* **11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Wednesday 16th Reflections for Holy Week - Wesley's Chapel - 7.30pm
- Thursday 17th 6pm: Maundy Thursday Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Friday 18th 2pm: Good Friday Meditation at Icklesham**  
Literary Society - Court Hall - 7pm for 7.30
- Sunday 20th 9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Pett**  
*Easter* **9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Icklesham**  
**11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Monday 21st Mayoring Ceremony - St Thomas's - 11am
- Friday 25th Fellowship Lunch - WB Community Hall - 12.30 for 1pm
- Saturday 26th Winchelsea Arts Season Launch Event
- Sunday 27th 11am: Benefice Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Sat 3rd May Church Market at St Thomas's - 10.30 till 12
- Sun 4th May 8.30am: Holy Communion (BCP) at Pett Level**  
**11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea**
- Mon 5th May Bank Holiday
- Thurs 8th May VE Day Anniversary Beacon Lighting

### Further ahead

- Sat 17th May Garden Society talk  
Winchelsea Arts Concert
- Sat 31st May St Michael's Hospice Winchelsea Garden Opening

Please send copy for the May Magazine  
to [ryeview@gmail.com](mailto:ryeview@gmail.com)  
as soon as you have it to hand but, in any case,  
before Tuesday 29th April

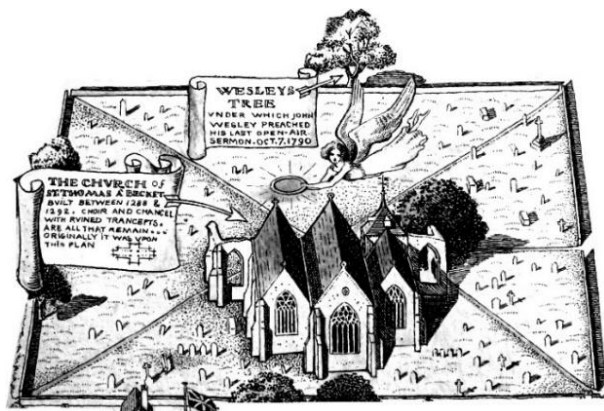


For Winchelsea Beach information go to [winchelseabeachcommunityassociation.co.uk](http://winchelseabeachcommunityassociation.co.uk)

For Winchelsea information go to [winchelsea.com](http://winchelsea.com)

For more information about the Church go to [winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk](http://winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk)

For weekly news from the local area go to [ryenews.org.uk](http://ryenews.org.uk)



## **Parishes of Winchelsea Icklesham and Pett**

The Revd Jonathan Meyer retired in February. During the vacancy, please contact the PCC Secretary, Mary Parker, with any enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals. For all other matters, please contact the Churchwardens.

### **Churchwardens**

Celia King  
Stargazer, Morlais Place TN36 4LG  
01797 227858 [kingcelia54@gmail.com](mailto:kingcelia54@gmail.com)

Nigel Ashton  
Winchelsea Cottage, High Street TN36 4EA  
07786 266260 [nashton364@gmail.com](mailto:nashton364@gmail.com)

### **PCC Secretary**

Mary Parker  
07927 107678 [parkermary848@gmail.com](mailto:parkermary848@gmail.com)

### **St Thomas' Primary School**

Headteacher Dale Saxby  
Friars Road TN36 4ED 01797 226479  
[office@st-thomas-winchelsea.e-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-thomas-winchelsea.e-sussex.sch.uk)

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