WICKHAMBREAUX ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
TUESDAY 24 APRIL 2018

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman Cllr Treacher summarised the work of the Council for the preceding year as follows:

It gives me great pleasure to present to you this evening an overview of the work undertaken by your Parish Council over the past 12 months – and hint at what might be in store for the year ahead.

In order to prepare these notes, I've trawled through over 100 pages of minutes taken by our Clerk Chenice who has worked tirelessly throughout the year. I would like to thank her for her work and attention to detail.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their work and support.

Those councillors include our two higher tier councillors, Stuart Walker from Canterbury City Council and Michael Northey of Kent County Council. Both are very busy men, yet both attend the majority of our meetings and most importantly, make valuable contributions to our debates and help us find the right person within their organisations to help resolve issues. We will hear from them both shortly.

Thanks are also in order for those running the Parish Council's main sub-committees.

Russ Jordan and his team who are looking after the village hall – not an easy task to follow after John Joice's 15 year hardworking spell. New blood has brought new ideas and new energy and I am pleased to be able to say the Parish Council has been in a position to help the village hall committee financially to make the hall more appealing to hirers and to help reduce running costs. I think the introduction of Wi-Fi to the building marked the start of a new era. I will let Russ say more about the hall in his address.

Our other key sub-committee, led by Cllr Linda Lodge, is the Frank Montgomery Playing Field Committee which as you all know underwent a bit of a transformation the year before. That good work continues as you will hear from Cllr Lodge later. She has been ably assisted by Cllr Caroline Rees and a band of village volunteers.

Our third sub-committee is arguably the most important and yet we hope never to hear from it. That's the Parish Emergency Committee led by Cllr Martin Twyman and assisted by former Parish Council Chairman Tony O'Sullivan. There are some 12-15 villagers co-opted on this committee charged with looking after the welfare of the parish in an emergency – whether that be flooding, blizzards or a civil emergency. They have the parish divided up into zones and hold a list of resources at their disposal (salt, sand bags, vehicles, etc) should we encounter an emergency.
These three groups report to the Parish Council – so what has the Parish Council been up to?

<u>Planning</u>
The Parish Council has been consulted on some 50 planning applications in the last year – ranging from modest home extensions through to the expansion of our village primary school. These take up a lot of time, need much care and require a technical understanding of planning law. We are very grateful and indebted to our lead councillor on planning, Faith Wright, who has devoted hours and hours of her time to this topic and helped keep the Parish Council on track and focused.

The School's second planning application – made after the first was withdrawn by Kent County Council on sustainability grounds – has been delayed a couple of times but it is due to be determined in May. The Parish Council has welcomed the extra "elbow room" it will provide for pupils and staff but remains concerned about the adverse traffic impact.

The Parish Council is frequently asked to try and do something about the negative impact traffic is having on our village. Parking and speeding are both presenting an increased risk to safety. If I am elected to Chair this council for another year, I will try and persuade the authorities to make Wickhambreaux and Stodmarsh 20mph zones. This won't be popular with everyone as there will be cost and signage implications, but in the last 12 months I have noticed an increase in children in the road and more cars pushing at the current 60mph speed limit. A tragic outcome is literally just around the corner.

Roads

The Parish Council plays a useful part in reporting the need for road works, both within the parish and with groups like the A257 action group, helping improve the road network condition in the vicinity. I would like to thank Martin Twyman for leading on all matters to do with local roads and their state of repair – or disrepair!

Trees

I am pleased to report that the trees in the village have had a better 12 months. We lost several the year before and this year we will be doing some replacing – such as on the small green.

UK Power

The heart of the village seems to have been under road works all year as UK Power re-route the old power circuit and sub-station. What started as a three month job from start to finish will probably exceed that time line by a year. The benefit – eventually – for the village will be much reduced risk of future power failures – outages as they call them. The works have left both the small green and Spicers Corner in poor condition, but this is because the works are not yet complete. Once finished the ground will be better reinstated.

We have benefitted from at least one spin off – UK Power has provided the village with an outdoor power source on the small green so we can hold outdoor events more easily and light the Christmas tree. The Christmas tree was put on the green by the Parish Council last season thanks to the generosity of The Rose Public House and Polo Contractors. It is our aim to put up a tree again this Christmas.

Financial Position

You will hear from our Clerk that the Parish Council is financially sound and should remain so for the next couple of years. We have increased the amount in our reserve funds, but we know today that in two years we will no longer receive an annual grant from Canterbury City Council as the City Council looks to make large savings following the withdrawal of government support. We will be asked to do more with less funds.

Community Governance Review

We are coming to the end of a review of parish councils within the Canterbury district area. This review also looked at the need for town councils for Whitstable, Herne Bay and Canterbury.

As far as Wickhambreaux is concerned – and following widespread consultation – there have been no major changes recommended for the parish – such as abolition or merger. We have, however, asked that the boundary be changed to include the Frank Montgomery Playing Field within Wickhambreaux as this is currently in Ickham. This change is unopposed and is likely to be adopted.

There has been plenty of other activity such as a fire hydrant survey, improvements and reporting to Kent County Council of footpaths and signage, repairs to the posts around the greens, changes to our rules to allow the recording of Parish Council meetings and work with Canterbury City Council to try and stamp out fly tipping.

This brings me on to saying a big thank you to Liz Jones who, not only for many years mowed the grass on the green but can still be seen out on dry afternoons picking up litter. I have great pleasure in presenting her with the Kent Association of Local Council's Community Award in recognition of her tireless efforts for the local community.

And more thanks need to be given to Mr and Mrs Birt who until recently were our grass cutters in Stodmarsh.

2018/2019

So what about the year ahead? In the last three years, during which time I have been on the Council, I have been unable to predict the issues which have dominated the year ahead, but I do know we have the following coming up:

- Resolving the problem on the corner of Spicers Place where we hope to put white posts and black chains, with a gap for pedestrians, to stop vehicles churning up the verge;
- Possibly some speed reduction measures in the village;
- A centenary celebration to mark the end of WII in November with a beacon joining hundreds of others across the country

But I've a feeling there will be more than those three items for someone to report on in a years' time.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Clerk summarised the expenditure and income of the preceding year.

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council and I have been asked to summarise the preceding year's accounts.

With regards to received income, on top of the expected entries from Canterbury City Council (Precept £17,039, Concurrent £5837.51) we have also received a VAT Return of £5054.00, which is higher than previous years due to the purchasing of play equipment.

The main items of expenditure have been on clerical services (my pay and expenses on ink, stationery, etc), and our annual donations to Wickhambreaux Parochial Church Council and Stodmarsh Parochial Church Council.

Against the concurrent funding received from Canterbury City Council, the majority has been spent on grass cutting on the Playing Field and Village Greens, and also necessary ground maintenance including replacing the posts around the village green which had rotten.
If anybody would like to see the detailed breakdown of the finances, please come and see me after the meeting.

Turning to the Precept levels for this current financial year ahead, the Parish Council decided to keep the precept levels the same this year following a decrease last year. Looking ahead, the Parish Council have been looking at funding a number of initiatives in the village including refurbishing the old footpath map and noticeboard on the side of Bell House in The Street as it is badly faded, resurfacing the footpath and entranceway to the Playing Field, undertaking a full tree survey of all the trees in the parish and funding the installation of an electricity point on the village green.

As Cllr Treacher has already mentioned, the Parish Council has been looking at ways to solve the current situation on the corner of Spicers Place where vehicles have been mounting the kerb, damaging the kerb stones and churning up the grass which makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk across. The Parish Council is seeking permission from Kent County Council, who own the land, to erect some white timber posts with black chains, the same as the ones

currently on the village green, to try to prevent this occurring.

The Parish Council has also allocated some funding for the village hall including £1,200 to replace the lights with low energy LEDs (which will save running costs in the long term), £900.00 to install a projector which can be linked to the Wi-Fi and £650.00 for two hand dryers to replace the paper towels. It was further agreed that £5,000 be contributed towards the approximate £10,000 cost of replacing the windows and doors, estimated to need replacing in two years' time, with the understanding that the Village Hall Committee would raise the other £5,000.

REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND CITY COUNCILLOR
County Councillor Michael Northey
It was a pleasure to be re-elected for my fourth term as your County Council representative in last May's election. However, the boundaries have changed – the Division no longer contains most of the southern, urban part of Canterbury. Instead I now have parts of Wincheap, all of Thanington and as far as St Augustine's in Chartham. The Division has more or less moved westwards and is more rural. There are now 17 parishes to cover compared with the 10 parishes previously which does make it more difficult to stay in touch with everyone.

Here a special tribute goes to the parish council, its clerk, and all the other people and organisations who work so tirelessly to make this beautiful parish the place it is.

KCC continues to provide a huge range of services, in spite of the difficulties posed by endless cuts in government grants, plus rising demand as the population ages, and inflation costs. 40% of the KCC budget goes for Adult Social Services including care of the elderly. KCC is a great champion of young people and children. The proportion of Kent young people not in education employment or training (NEET) is now at 2.8%, which is below national levels. Though schools are now mostly out of local authority control, KCC is still held responsible for school standards and for providing enough school places. Standards continue to rise in Ofsted terms with 92% of Kent schools now rated as good or outstanding.

The winter and early spring weather caused many more pot-holes all over the country and the county. KCC has now found an extra £11.2 million from various sources, including some government grant. The various teams are working hard to clear the back-log of pot-holes. Many have been repaired and sections of the A2 are better, but both KCC and Highways England still face real challenges in dealing with the great numbers remaining.

All local authorities continue to press the government for more funding which is so vitally needed. Kent has a particular problem as its roads receive such a pounding, especially as a result of its position as the nearest way to and from the mainland of Europe.

The Highways crews worked non-stop and heroically round the clock during the winter snow and we are very pleased to see that overall the county continued to function well.

Finance as ever continues to be a challenge. My Member's Grant, for good local causes, has now been reduced to £20,000. KCC had to raise the council tax by just under 5%.

There were proposals in the recent KCC Budget to reduce subsidies for otherwise uneconomic rural bus routes, of £2 million, but a way was found to bring this down to a £455,000 reduction. None of this affects our own area. Paul Carter and others at KCC continue to negotiate with travel providers to find more efficient and customised ways to provide rural transport, such as call a taxi or minibus schemes.

I recommend the KCC website to see the wealth of activities. This is also valuable for reporting problems, or finding out how to access help, such as social service needs. So many thanks to them and especially yourselves, not only council, but people, church, pub, school and clubs etc, for all you do make the parish an even better place.

City Councillor Stuart Walker
It seems incredible that it was around this time last year I was at The Guildhall discussing the possibility of joining together with Ashford, Thanet and Shepway to form a 'Super Council' which never came to fruition, and also maybe more incredible that this series of Annual Meetings marks the end of my 3rd year and next May my 4th year term will be up and I might be asking you all to lend me your support again!

It has been another year full of hard work and achievements some of which I will be sharing with you this evening. If you would like any more detail on any of them or anything else, please get in touch.

In our ward it has been another year of helping with planning applications, rubbish bin collections, dealing with waste issues including fly tipping and other local issues such as road surfaces and gritting. All of which I have been able to draw on some fantastic support from Robin and the rest of the Parish Council. I thank you for that.

Across the District there's also been a lot to do;

We have passed another balanced budget. It gets harder every year but this year we will be able to continue to deliver the services that you expect even with the cut to funding from central government. This is going to be a challenge for the foreseeable future so any ideas that you may have please let me or Simon Cook know.

At the end of last year, the council asked whether town councils should be created in Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable and whether any changes are needed to the way some parish councils work. This is known as a community governance review, or CGR. From the responses received “it was clear there is a desire for local people and local councillors to have a greater say about decisions affecting their area. Residents “felt this council could do more to welcome members of the public to its meetings and encourage them to take part” – we’re keen to hear people’s views on how we can do this. “This process leaves the door open to the creation of town councils, especially if there is a groundswell of support for them in the future, but recognises that now is not the right time. Some might see local councillors having a greater say about decisions affecting their area as the next step on that journey.”

The council already has the Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable and the Rural Area Member Panel. The latter represents the interests of the district’s villages. Here the public can attend meetings and have their say on issues affecting the area they live in. This helps councillors make informed recommendations to other council committees. “We genuinely want to help local people get more involved in our decision making in a way that works for them and ensures their views are taken into account. As well as improving local democracy and engagement, the arrangements need to pass the test of being ‘effective and convenient’. This means they should be easily understood and shouldn’t unreasonably add to the bureaucracy involved in council decision making.” Officers and Councillors are now going through all the information including all of the comments from our highly engaged residents

<u>Enforcement</u>
All the pieces of our enforcement strategy are now coming together, and it showed some success with the news of four people being fined for littering and another for urination in a public place this week. We are getting recognition for the hard work that’s going on with fly-tipping and this should continue over the next 12 months.

Parish Councils will be offered the opportunity to 'borrow' covert cameras for periods of time and place them where fly tipping occurs to try to catch more people in the act.

Litter

The joint working between the Council and residents on litter-picks is continuing to be a massive success story and one we should all be very proud of. There are some issues with litter picking on village roads that have a national speed limit, but it is hoped that should be addressed this year.

There have been issues with Serco over the past 2-3 months with the service that they have provided, caused by the bad weather of the recent weeks or the issues over Christmas and New Year. But we are working very closely with them to ensure that as a Partnership we can do everything we can to minimise any disruption to residents in the future.

Parking

Across the city the ANPR scheme will start to bed in and give fairer charges for residents. As well as making parking easier and more seamless, it will also provide us with by-the-second data which will be key for understanding traffic movements. We want to put up signage that will tell you exactly what spaces are available in what car parks and guide you there. “We don’t want everyone queueing up at Watling Street when there are loads of spaces at Pound Lane. It would help us manage traffic flows, get data out to sat-navs and help us get it on the council website.” The Station Road West multi-storey preparations are going well and it is hoped that there should be more details soon.

City Centre

There has been a shift in how we deliver cultural services in the district, deciding on putting the Marlowe Theatre into a trust to allow it to continue to carry out its fantastic work and bring first class shows to the City. In having charitable status, the theatre will be able to bid for funding from an increased range of funding streams, and it is also hoped that the change in management will have benefits for the theatre’s work in the community. In addition, the move is expected to save taxpayers in Canterbury £238,000 over the first two years and £111,000 each year after that.

The completion of the purchase of Whitefriars has been a real retail opportunity for the District which should allow residents to reap the benefits of a thriving shopping destination and the reward of the financial return that it will bring. "Retailers at Whitefriars are thriving and there is huge potential for growth especially as it is an attractive destination for shoppers and tourists who want a first-class shopping experience.

It is one of the top 100 shopping centres in the country. As councils come to rely less on the money given to them by central government, we need to find ways to pay for essential services. The income we generate from this deal is another step towards us becoming self-sufficient.”

Whether it’s been work done in the planning and licensing committees; looking after the day to day business through the service committees; or dealing with all our residents’ queries and problems, we have always put you first. The coming year brings its own challenges – and opportunities as well.

A resident asked City Cllr Stuart Walker why the parking charges in the Canterbury were so high. For those working in the city centre or those commuting, it costs approximately £21.00 a day to park whereas for cars using the Kingsmead car park, it costs just over £2.00. Cllr Walker responded that it would not be in Canterbury City Council’s interests to charge too much otherwise car parks will not be filled. No decision has been made on whether to increase parking charges, but Cllr Walker reported he would support a reduction in parking charges to make it more affordable for users. It is hoped that the new ANPR system will help to keep charges down as users will only have to pay for the time they use rather than an estimate of the time they need.

VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS REPORTS

Wickhambreaux Church – read by Cllr Twyman on behalf of Peter Terrill
St Andrews Parochial Church Council is responsible for promoting across the parish the whole mission of the church – pastoral, evangelical and social.

Since July 2016, we have been in a period of interregnum (meaning without a priest) and we have contrived to exercise this responsibility, assisted by our visiting clergy for conducting of services including weddings and funerals.

We are committed in encouraging all members of our local community to worship at our church and to become part of our parish family at St Andrews.

Progress in filling the vacancy – we have gone to advert for a third time for a new priest, hoping to hold interviews in early June 2018. The candidate we interviewed last time pulled out of the process and we therefore did not appoint.

St Andrews is now working more closely with St Marys Church in Stodmarsh, and to an extent with Ickahm, with cross representation on Parochial Church Councils.

We continue to hold three communion services each month – one 08.00 service together with two 9.30 Parish Communion services; offering coffee and biscuits following the 09.30 services.

We have always maintained that support for the church is measured in various ways, not only in the figures for weekly attendance – the effort we devote to holding events in the village and the support they enjoy across the community provides an indication that the church plays a part in many people's lives.

Our linkages with Wickhambreaux Primary School are also very important to us and we contrive to work to maintain and develop these relationships.

The church is open every day in daylight hours and our visitor's book is a remarkable testament to the pleasure experienced by those who visit.

The various activities of the church could not continue without the support we receive from a large number of voluntary helpers – from cleaning, locking/unlocking, maintenance of grounds, flower arranging and for all the community activities which are so vital to our continuing presence in the community. Thank you all and we always welcome new people to come and help, even if it's on an adhoc basis.

We recently held a very enjoyable and sociable hot pot supper by kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Twyman. Our next event will be on Saturday 28 April 2018 at 7.30pm in the village hall, a talk by Dick Bolton entitled "Gardens Great and Small" – for those who have had the pleasure of hearing one of Dick's talks before, you will know how wonderfully entertaining they are. There will be a light buffet supper following the talk and if you haven't already got your tickets, please see me after.

And leading up to Dicks talk we have a working party to clear up the church yard on Saturday morning (28 April) from 10am if you can spare an hour or two to help, you would be very welcome. Many hands make light work and tea and coffee and even a bacon butte awaits anyone that can come along to help!

St Mary's Church, Stodmarsh – read by Tony O'Sullivan on behalf of Bobby O'Sullivan
This has been a year of change for St Mary's, which has seen the retirement of two long-serving Church Wardens – John Hickling and Bob Overton. We would like to place on record our immense gratitude for all their work at St Mary's.

The new Church Wardens are James Holdstock and Bobbie O'Sullivan, and Peter MacBeth has taken on the role of Treasurer. Consistent with changes in the Benefice, we have formed a closer link with St Andrew's, Wickhambreaux, we feel to the benefit of both parishes.

Attendance at services has seen a modest increase this year and two "special" services each attracted more than 60 people, demonstrating the potential for further improved growth. In October, the annual Harvest Festival was led by Trevor, Bishop of Dover, and the Christmas Carol Service was the best-attended for some years.

Although the parish is solvent, we are shortly organising two fundraising events as much for their social as financial value. On Thursday 17 May 2018 there will be a Quiz Night at the Red Lion and on Sunday 01 July there will be a Jazz Picnic on the Downs above the village. You are cordially invited not just to support but to come and enjoy these events.

Like all local churches, we hope for a positive outcome in the search for a new priest. In the meantime, we press on with optimism.

Wickhambreaux School – read by Lisa Crosbie on behalf of Mrs Campling
This year has been a particularly successful year for your village school.

We have undergone a full Church inspection, lead by Canon Burton, and the result led to our third consecutive "Outstanding" grade being awarded.

As part of the Christmas celebrations, we once again performed for the Bishop at the St Nicholas Day Parade and sang in the Cathedral for the local regiment.

As a Church school, we were very delighted and fortunate to have the Venerable Archdeacon Jo Kelly Moore lead our Easter Service this year.

The children and parents were all engaged in her engaging sermon about this special time in the Christian calendar. She explained the symbols on her ceremonial cloak to the children and how they related to New Zealand and was highly amused when one of our very youngest pupils corrected her pronunciation of "eggs". She comments on it in her note to us:

"Thank you for your lovely note. It was a joy to be with you, thank you again for the invitation. I made my kiwi family laugh with the "igg" and "egg" storey!

Wishing you a blessed Easter and a well-deserved break.

Looking forwarded to seeing you again."

The children celebrated through song and readings and we were delighted that members of our local community joined us in worship and we sincerely hope Archdeacon Jo will join us again!

We thank Councillor Wright for her kind comments about the efforts of the school and in particular Mr Collins, our community governor, who managed parking for the event:

"On behalf of the parish council, I would like to thank for you arranging and marshalling the traffic and parking for the school's Easter service and fair yesterday afternoon. It is a difficult job particularly in the pouring rain and it was handled well, achieving the free flow of traffic and orderly parking."

We would also like to thank the many parents who car shared and responded to our requests for considerate parking.

There are many events worthy of mention that have occurred during the year, but some stand out as being special.

War Horse

Our school has a special relationship with Sir Michael Morpurgo, who requested we be involved in the special event organised around the film of his book.

We will all treasure the memories and we felt particularly honoured to be there, as our bond with Sir Michael feels uniquely special and it means so much to hear he feels the same. After the trip to the theatre to see War Horse, the children were given the opportunity to perform with the National Theatre, a re-enactment of the return of the Unknown Solider. During the event the children sang the song "Only Remembered". They also had the opportunity to meet Joey, the puppet horse from the theatre performance, which was of course the highlight of the day.

Our grateful thanks go to our ex-parent Mrs Parker-Banks for organising this for us. She said:

"A huge thank you to all the staff and students at Wickhambreaux who played a part in the event yesterday. It was wonderful to work with you all. The students gave such a moving performance, with such beautiful singing that was so powerful in the space. It truly provided the most wonderful context for the day".

Kent Games

We were invited by the Canterbury SSCO (Schools Sports Partnership Coordinator) to represent Canterbury at the Kent Games this year as part of the Change 4 Life agenda. The children came second to a large school in Ashford and gained silver medals, we are very proud of them.

Also, this year our year 5/6 tag rugby team were awarded the fair play trophy at their recent tournament at Canterbury Rugby Club. We are very proud of the children's achievement. It exemplifies the core values taught within our school and illustrates the pupil's commitment to these.

Science

Empiribox, our science providers, have made us a Beacon School for *"leading the way for our future scientists and for their commitment to and passion for science in their school".* We are delighted, as it opens up doors of opportunities for our children and staff. Mrs Barnes and Mrs Chipperfield have been trained by the company to deliver training for other schools in Kent and beyond, and we are delighted to help others to benefit from the exciting science our children enjoy!

We have been treated to an exciting day of science from Pfizer thanks to Mrs Butler, one of our parents, when the children made snow and examined the properties of magnetic liquids.

This year the Science Week theme was "Exploration and Discovery" and the children had a full week of science, including the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The week kicked off with a bang, literally, in the opening assembly where "Dan the Science Man" discussed serendipity in science and showed us three exciting experiments.

On the Tuesday, continuing the theme of exploration and discovery, we welcomed the Planetarium Dome into the hall. This was a large air-filled dome where space was projected in a 360-degree immersive experience. The children were taken on a journey through space, visiting different planets on the way. Each class got the opportunity to visit the dome and ask questions of the Physicist Jarvis, who took them on the journey.

On Thursday we went to the Observatory Science Centre in East Sussex. Here the children enjoyed a show, a workshop and lots of hands on experiments. The show's theme was about looking after the Earth as a patient would be looked after by their doctor, which included interactive demonstrations and emphasised the importance of keeping our Earth healthy.

There were different workshops depending on the age of the children – a bridge building workshop and a robotic arm workshop. Finally, the children were given free reign of the various exhibitions – there was a large park with science play equipment, a water section and an indoor corridor with many experiments. It was a fantastic day and the children thoroughly enjoyed it.

Finally, the week finished off with the Science fair after school on the playground where the children's projects were displayed for parents and other children to come and observe. There were some fantastic projects and posters displaying some brilliant research and interactive experiments that the children worked really hard on.

Many of our parents attended "learn with your child" sessions and the feedback was extremely positive.

We were joined by the Mayor of Canterbury who talked to us about the importance of Science and wrote to us to say how much she had enjoyed the visit to our excellent school.

We are also continuing our partnership with The Kings School in science.

MFL (Modern Foreign Languages)
In December, some children from Class 4 attended a fun and informative workshop at Augustine House library as part of Christ Church University's Language Day. They were taught some Italian, German and even some Swahili by language students. It was a wonderful morning and our children looked very confident and threw themselves into the activities on offer; then performed a play in French which was praised by their audience.

Teacher Awards
Our staff continue to further their education and skills for the benefit of the pupils and this year Ms Redmond has gained an MA in Education focusing on "Difficulties in Literacy and Learning", and is now accredited by the Dyslexia Association as an Associate Member of the BDA for dyslexia assessment.

Mrs Chipperfield has finished her MA and in recognition of her "outstanding contribution to the work of the Teaching & Learning Academy" at Christ Church University, has been awarded a Fellowship and can now use the letters FTLA after her name if she wishes.

Her work in the field of Maths education has been recognised as of national importance and will enhance the provision of the children, who will reap the benefits in years to come.

These are only some of the events captured from the year and there are many more which you can look at on our school website.

FOWS (Friends of Wickhambreaux School) – read by Lisa Crosbie
The FOWS consist of parents and staff who meet regularly and discuss things such as school events and fundraising. Currently there is a number of very proactive parents in the group who are coming up with new ways to raise money. Previously the money was an added bonus to school funds but unfortunately it is becoming used more and more for essential items such as stationery.

Thank you to the residents who attend our fundraising events to support your local school and if anybody would like to get involved to help, please do get in touch.

Neighbourhood Watch – read by Cllr Lodge
Neighbourhood Watch is a way in which communities can help themselves to stay safe and keep down crime.

Once again, our parish continues to be relatively crime-free, although that has the effect of keeping the Police away!

Last September, those attending the school fete in Ickham were introduced to our new PCSOs (yes plural) – Gavin Dodwell and Nathan Mullins, but they were also spread across many other parishes. Despite invitations to attend parish council meetings and this APM, we have not seen either of them, and this week we learned that Nathan Mullins has left the Police Service. Crime reports from them has sadly been patchy and not very informative.

From April 2018, Kent Police is testing a pilot scheme which allows the public to report non-urgent issues online through their website (www.kent.police.uk). This trial has been introduced following requests to find ways of reducing waiting times by those using the 101 phone number.

Last month I attend the Canterbury and District Neighbourhood Watch Conference and, along with booklets and flyers, collected other useful and free stuff! This included an ultra-violet (UV) pen which can put an invisible mark on your property which can only be seen by using a UV lamp. This is useful when other methods of marking would reduce the value of an object. The mark can fade in time, especially when exposed to sunlight, and can be washed off so needs renewing regularly.

Another initiative (and latest hi-tech method of marking property) is smart water. Trials are currently underway in the Dover district and are due to be extending to the Canterbury area very soon. However, if you cannot wait, then the firm SelectaDNA makes an advanced forensic marking system. It is claimed that the method reduces burglaries by up to 83%. If you would like to find out more, please visit their website www.selectadna.co.uk/nhw to purchase the complete kit which will mark up to 50 items. Use the code NHWKENT to get this at a discounted price of £20.00.

Another useful resource is Owl Card Minders – as shown on the 'Rip Off Britain' programme on the BBC, to protect against non-consensual contactless payments. Contactless cards use radio waves which can be blocked by metal such as silver foil. A reliable solution is the Owl Card Minder made of a special material designed to block RFID signals. Simply slide your contactless card into the sleeve and it can no longer be read by scanners.

Finally, you will have read that the Village Hall Committee are planning IT sessions and I hope that they might consider at least one session about keeping safe online.

Sloyden Charity – read by Christine Le Jeune
This is an ancient charity set up in Harry Sloyden's will of 1568 to help the poor of Wickhambreaux. It is not wealthy in today's terms but if anyone knows of someone the charity might be able to help please approach, in confidence, one of the trustees, Dr Hamilton or myself. There are only two trustees at present as we wait for the appointment of a new Parish Priest. No payments have been made in the last year.

Conservation Society – read by Christine Le Jeune
The Conservation Society has members from the four villages of Ickham, Littlebourne, Stodmarsh and Wickhambreaux.

Sadly, we have to report the death during the year of our Chairman, Alan Holmes. He had always been active in the Campaign to Protect Rural England and we miss his knowledge of wider conservation issues.

Work on the pill box on the river bank, behind the church, has continued and steps now enable easier access to the interior. A narrative board is to be installed to explain its part in the WWII defences.

A talk at our AGM in February was very well attended. Clague Architects gave an illustrated talk about the Pleasures and Constraints of working with buildings in Conservation Areas.

We continue to monitor planning applications and comment when relevant. The most significant of these has still been the County Council's plans for Wickhambreaux School. Originally, the Society objected to plans to increase the size of a school by a third because it was not to meet local need, instead to provide places for children from Littlebourne, Preston and South Canterbury. These children would have had to be brought here by car, exacerbating our traffic problems, making the village more hazardous for cars and pedestrians and resulting in further environmental damage to the verges on the narrow approach roads. We have been assured that the new plans are not to increase the number of pupils, but to improve the facilities for existing children, so we have made no objection but remain concerned about the parking situation and continue to monitor any traffic problems.

We have worked with the Ramblers' Association in keeping open local footpaths, and the path from the bottom of The List to Frognall is now open along its correct line. The last section was very overgrown, and people were taking detours off course. Kent County Council will now put it on its annual maintenance programme, but the best way to keep a path open is for it to be walked, so please use it!

It is the Society's 50th year, so we wish to invite everyone to join us for an afternoon when we shall gather in a local garden and celebrate with a glass of wine and some refreshments. Watch out for details later in the summer.

We should also like to offer to plant a tree in each of the four villages and will be writing to the Parish Councils about this.

Four Villages Post Office and Shop – read by Tony O'Sullivan
I am pleased to report another good year in the life of our community shop and Post Office. One of our key objectives is to support local good causes through grants made from the profits accrued from the rental of the business. Last year, we were able to distribute £6,630 to a total of 15 organisations representing education and young people, environment and amenities, culture and community. As far as Wickhambreaux Parish is concerned, grants were made to Wickhambreaux Village Hall, Stodmarsh Village Fund and the Four Villages Conservation Society.

This year, two officers of the Management Committee – the Chairman and the Treasurer – are standing down. The Committee is anxious to recruit new members to guarantee continuity and plan for the future. Your local representatives on the Committee are Peter Terrill and Laurie Birt.

We maintain excellent relations with our tenants, the Patel family. Regular users of the shop will have noticed some extension in the range of goods and services offered, together with the maintenance of a full Local Post Office service (at a time of cuts in rural post offices) and the provision of one of the only ATMs between Canterbury and Sandwich.

I would like to place on record yet again our thanks to the Patel family for running such a successful enterprise which provides an essential service to the local community. I would also wish to thank my fellow Management Committee members for their unstinting support and hard work in the furtherance of the Association's objectives.

Garden Society
No report presented.

Cricket Club – read by Georgie Hayward
It is with regret that I have to report that we are no more, having dissolved ourselves in March owing to a lack of support. We had also lost our home ground as Goodnestone, where we used to play, have also dissolved. Bishopsbourne Cricket Club was also unfortunately dissolved over the winter.

Bell Ringers – read by Michael Keeler-Walker
I am pleased to be able to present a report to you this evening, especially since the last report was provided back in 2012 due to a clash in the dates for the APM.

There is currently a rumour that the Bell Ringers are just a group of "pub goers", which is not exactly true. It is true that the members normally socialise after practice at the local pub, but it is an active group of members of varying levels of ability, most from Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux but one member also comes from Ickham.

We practice on a Thursdays from 7.30pm to 9pm, to keep to a high standard to be able to call the community to church services and ring for weddings, funerals and other community events. We will be getting involved in the WWI commemorations on Remembrance Sunday this year to commemorate the bell ringers lost in the war as part of the national "Battle's Over – Ringing out for Peace" at 7.05pm.

A mystery tour of four churches will be held later on in the year in North Kent and the annual local bell ringing competition for Canterbury and the surrounding villages is being held in Wickhambreaux this year on Saturday 02 May 2018. Wickhambreaux Bell Ringers will be entering.

Two new members have joined this year, but we are ideally looking for a few more members to make numbers up to 12, which is the ideal number for all the bells. The group is great fun and if anybody is interested in joining, please come along to one of the practices.

THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – read by Russ Jordan
Russ Jordan reported that the Village Hall Committee has been busy in his first year in post and wished to thank John Joice for all his assistance. A farewell party was arranged for John and the Parish Council contributed towards a gift of appreciation.

The Village Hall Committee has been looking into ways to save money and also improvement works to the village hall. The Parish Council has agreed to fund replacing the lights with LEDs, the installation of an overhead projector and the installation of hand dryers to replace the paper towels. Replacing the lights with LEDs should see a saving of approximately £700.00 a year. The Village Hall Committee are also looking into getting a Hive energy management system installed which should provide further savings on utility bills.

The windows have been given an estimated life span of a further two years and the Parish Council has offered to put £5,000 towards the cost of replacement, which is likely to be in the region of £10,000. The Village Hall Committee are currently looking into fundraising options to raise the remaining funds, including the annual jazz evening, a quiz night and another Christmas event following the success of the first one in December last year. An electrician has also advised that the emergency lighting requires rewiring and the Committee are looking at getting this work carried out as soon as possible.

Since last year, the village hall has had broadband installed and the Committee are looking to host some IT help sessions once the overhead projector has been installed. Discussions are ongoing on how best to utilise the new broadband. A new noticeboard has also been installed thanks to a grant from the Four Villages Post Office and Shop fund.

Cllr Treacher wished to thank Russ Jordan for his efforts and wish all the best to the Committee for the year ahead.

THE FRANK MONTGOMERY PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE – read by Cllr Rees

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (Including Flooding) – read by Cllr Twyman
Our group of 14 members met mid-February 2018 for the first time in two years after an uneventful period. The Committee has updated the Emergency Plan in terms of contact details, etc, and the Committee are looking to recruit some younger members to join. Cllr Twyman wished to thank Tony O'Sullivan and the other group members on behalf of the Parish Council.

It has been a quiet year with generally a lack of rain, although we made it through the year without a hosepipe ban! The water levels are very low in the Little Stour and following the dry autumn and cold winter, reservoir levels were very low. Aquifer springs were very low or not running at all until the rains of February, March and beginning of April which has seen some improvement in the water levels, although no threat of flooding. We hope that our river will flow throughout the rest of the rear. The Great Stour has been in a reasonable state but tree blockages have occurred.