



Next Editors: James & Andrea Forster: huntonherald@outlook.com
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th February

Snowdrop Sunday 15th February

It's back for 2026! We are pleased to invite the whole village, with families and friends, to enjoy the abundance of beautiful snowdrops in Hunton churchyard on 'Snowdrop Sunday.' This very popular event did not happen last year, as many of the snowdrops were split and replanted. However, we are delighted that new areas are establishing, while the older areas will again provide a joyous reminder that spring is on the way!



The day starts with morning Worship at 9:30 am, where we will give thanks for our beautiful environment. The very popular Afternoon Tea is from 2 till 4 pm. We are hoping to have knowledgeable enthusiasts with us, who will endeavour to answer any questions about varieties, particularly the 'Hunton Herald' and the 'Hunton Giant'.

Donations of homemade cakes would be most welcome.

Contact Fay on 01622 820644 or Wendy on 01622 820875

A Murder at the Club!

Friday 27th February – Doors 6pm – Case Briefing 6:30pm

Something most foul is afoot at the club. A nefarious crime has occurred and only the keenest minds will unmask the culprit! So, dust off your magnifying glass, sharpen your wit and prepare to crack the case. Hunton Village Club is under investigation as Andy Cassidy and Jacquie Grace (both formerly of the Metropolitan Police, National Crime Squad and National Crime Agency) lead our very first Murder Mystery Night.

Doors open at 1800 for pre-case sustenance, before an 1830 briefing from Lead Investigators on the chilling details of the crime. You'll form Major Investigation Units (ideally of around 6), working together as the evening unfolds. Over a three-course supper, you'll examine the evidence, interrogate the facts and follow the trail of cunning clues. But which team will triumph and solve the mystery first? Prepare yourself...the game is afoot!

Entry is £10 per person (£12.50 for non-members), which includes a three-course supper. There will also be a collection for Dandelion Time – a fantastic local charity that supports children who have suffered traumatic experiences.

A word of caution: places are limited, so assemble your Unit and secure your spot before the trail goes cold.

Email Lesley to book: lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com

Your Local Contacts:

School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Maidstone Police	690690 or 101
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Village Hall Booking:	www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk
Pond and Tree Warden: Sam Andrews	hunontreewarden@gmail.com	Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com	01622 820403
Rector: Revd. Lorna Faulkner*	747570	'Potholes' Hotline (KCC)	03000 418181
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474	Hunton Ladies: Chris Summersgill	c.a.summersgill@btinternet.com
Churchwarden: Iain Simmons	820875	Katie Lam MP	katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk
	Ishuntonchurchwarden@btinternet.com	Assistant to MP Katie Lam	020 7219 8175
Community Wardens Team	07811 271021	Village Club: Roger Lee: roger.c.lee@btinternet.com	820210
Hunton Bell Ringers: Susan Clements	07864 041234	Reporting HGVs	huntontrafficreporting@gmail.com
Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk			

Parish Council Contacts

Parish Clerk: Sharon Goodwin - 681238, clerk@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk	Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhuntonpc@gmail.com
Cllr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com	Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@rought.com
Cllr Mike Summersgill - 820429, msummersgill@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cllr Iain Simmons - 820875, isimmons@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Cllr Simon Webb - 07878 018997, simon.webb5@btinternet.com	Cllr Stephen Banks - 07850 545481, sbanks@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Diary Dates

Gardening Club Social Supper, Thursday 12th February; Snowdrop Sunday, 15th February; Murder Mystery Night, Friday 27th February; Quiz Night, Saturday 11th April.

Check out www.huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk/events-list for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email clerk@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pastoral Letter

You may be familiar with the children's story Pollyanna, about a young orphan sent to live in a small American town. Pollyanna has a unique way of dealing with life's challenges, by playing the "Glad Game" – finding something to be glad about in every situation. Even being glad that she was punished by being given bread and milk instead of dinner with the maid – because she likes bread and milk – and she also likes the maid.

She shares this outlook with everyone she meets, gradually softening even the hardest of hearts. However, when an accident leaves her unable to walk, even Pollyanna can't find anything to be glad about. But the people whose lives she has brightened, return the gift, helping her rediscover her spark. It's a lovely reminder about the difference we can make in our communities, if we take the time to notice, care and engage.

This month, I want to encourage us all to look around our village. What is there to be glad about? And how can we share that with others?

There is always something to be glad about if you search for it. For example, I am writing the letter this month because I still haven't managed to get a rota out to the ministry team. And, do you know what? I am glad I was disorganised because I've cheered myself right up.

Hoping for a positive and encouraging February for you all!

Lorna

Gardening Club Social Supper - Thursday 12th February – 6:15pm

Plant yourself at Hunton Club for a relaxed and cheerful evening. You don't need green fingers or a love of begonias to join—just bring your appetite and a willingness to branch out socially. It's the perfect chance to cultivate friendships, catch up with familiar faces and seed some new ones.

Doors will open at 6:15pm, so you can water yourself (at the bar) before sitting down to a delicious three-course supper. The cost is a blooming bargain at £10 per person (or £12.50 for non-members). Spaces are limited and will be snapped up faster than spring seedlings, so dig out your diary and don't leaf it too late! To secure your patch, email Lesley: lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com

Failed New Year's Resolutions

If one of your New Year's resolutions involved getting healthier; you're in good company. It's estimated that 40 – 50% of all resolutions focus on health or fitness. By the time you're reading this however (i.e. early February), it's also estimated more than 80% of people have already waved theirs goodbye and a mere 8% stick with their resolutions long-term. But, before you despair; there's good news! Falling off the resolution wagon doesn't mean failure. It just means it's time to try a different approach. Studies have consistently shown that people who exercise together, exercise more often, stick with it longer and enjoy better results. And, luckily for us, Hunton has plenty of ways to do just that.

If you like running, or keen to start, **Hunton Run Club** meets every Tuesday at 18:30 pm for a friendly 5km loop. If you prefer a slightly slower pace but still enjoy exploring the plethora of footpaths around the village and further afield, then **Hunton Walking Group** meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am, with extra ad hoc weekend walks held throughout the year. If team sports are more your thing, then you'll find a warm welcome at **Hunton Bowls Club, Cricket Club or Football Club**. And, after all that exercise, **Hunton Yoga Group** may be the perfect thing to join, meeting every Saturday at 10:00 am.

So, if your New Year's resolution has already fizzled out, don't worry — you're right on time to start again. But this time with friends! For more information on any of the groups mentioned, feel free to get in touch with Adam: mail@adammoore.net

A Christmas Thank You

Christmas may seem a distant memory now, but we would like you all to know that the Christmas Eve Carol Service welcomed 170 adults and 20 children – amazing! Together, everyone reflected on the meaning of Christmas within the peaceful and beautiful setting of St Mary's. Thank you to Sarah Jones for coordinating the decoration of the church with seasonal arrangements and many candles. Rev'd. David Jones led the thoughtful service. Following the final carol and blessing, Iain Simmons, Church Warden, expressed a huge 'thank you' to the Rev'd. David Jones for leading our worship for 25 years since his licencing. Also, he expressed our gratitude to Marian Greensil, organist, for playing such beautiful music for the past ten years. A presentation was made of a railway book for David and a winter hellebore plant, named 'Christmas Carol', for Marian.

How wonderful that the open collection raised well over £400 for two local hospices. With the highest ever attendance, we even ran out of mulled wine! We will try to improve on this next year. Members of our community read the Bible readings beautifully, while the joyous congregational singing, led by the choir and additional village singers, completed this up-lifting time together. Thank you all!

Wendy Simmons

Vacancy Notice for Peace Cottages

There is a vacancy for a non-smoking, single resident in Peace Cottages, Almshouses in West Street, Hunton. Those interested, over the age of 60, preferably with a connection to Hunton or nearby villages, should contact Rev'd Lorna Faulkner on 01622 747570 or revlornafaulkner@gmail.com for an application form. Further criteria will apply.

A Few Fun February Facts and Gardening Tips

Now is a good time to plant bare-rooted shrubs, hedges and trees, including fruit trees and canes. Give a thought to the bees if you are choosing which trees to plant:

- The willow is a haven for bees as most varieties produce both pollen and nectar. *Salix cinerea* is suited to gardens, and goat willow commonly crops up in hedgerows. They flower early enough for the queen bees emerging from hibernation and the buzz from a busy tree can be heard from some distance.
- Fruit trees are more effectively pollinated by bumble bees rather than honey bees. The red mason bee in particular (often using bug hotels) is a good fruit tree pollinator. Orange-tailed mining bees also appreciate the pollen and in warmer weather enjoy the nectar produced by fruit trees.
- Small leaved limes (*Tilia cordata*) are known to produce a great deal of nectar. A big tree in flower can attract as many as 10,000 bees(!) and flowering in June, it is timed to meet the needs of new colonies of both honey and bumble bees.
- Wild cherry also attracts honey and bumble bees, including solitary bees. It blooms early, in time for bees emerging from their winter dormancy. A wild cherry of a girth of 25cm has been found to produce 170g of nectar a day!
- The Norway maples also generate huge quantities of nectar and produce plenty of pollen. It's also a valuable garden tree thanks to its striking autumnal colours.

If you haven't got room for more trees, look along the hedgerows as you walk the footpaths and you are bound to hear the busy buzzing. Then you just have the challenge of identifying what bees they are!

Sue Heaton

Clockhouse Farm and Tregothnan Estate

Clockhouse Farm has agreed with Tregothnan Estate, to take a 20-year tenancy of the land at Biston Manor Farm, that covers the area north of Lughorse Lane, from Barn Hill to the byway / footpath at the Yalding end of Lughorse Lane.

Over the autumn Clockhouse Farm fenced along the land bordering Lughorse Lane and put in new access gates to the public footpaths. They also improved drainage by clearing the ditches and cutting back hedges and started a programme to improve soil quality — something that has been neglected over the years.

At a recent meeting with local residents, we learnt of plans to use the land towards the Barn Hill side for poly tunnels. The land nearer the Yalding end will be used for arable crops and will be subcontracted out. A wildflower meadow will be planted and two lakes created. The lakes will be clay-lined to aid water storage and used for irrigation purposes. Three attenuation ponds will be built to collect the rainwater run-off from the polytunnels and the hill itself. The Drainage Prior Notification Application is 25/504741 can be viewed online through the MBC Planning Portal.

Tractor routes are still to be finalised, but likely to use the Biston Manor access track to Lughorse Lane, then East Street and Redwall Lane to Driscolls, as well as potentially up to Shingle Barn Lane, along Heath Road and down Linton Hill. A great deal of time has been spent planning, with the help of experts in all areas. They have stated that nothing is set in stone at this point.

Inevitably, residents who are affected have concerns, as well as those who frequent the footpaths around Biston Manor Farm and the Greensand Way. To that effect, we are getting together a Residents' Working Group, so information can be shared and concerns collated. We can then discuss potential problems and work with Clockhouse Farm to achieve the best possible outcome, for all parties. If you would like to be involved with this Working Group, or receive more information on any of the above, please contact Sue Pinks: suepinks@icloud.com

Funding Success Puts St Mary's Repairs on Track

By the time you're reading this, scaffolding should be visible around the church tower. Indeed, work on the tower roof is scheduled to start early February, so that may be underway too. The tower repairs should last no more than a couple of months, allowing the bats to be left in peace as they return to their summer roosting site. In the meantime, great progress has been made in raising third-party funding, ensuring that we and the Friends of St Mary's should be able to complete the project, without losing our ability to support further work. There is always something that needs doing on an early medieval building!

Particular thanks goes to The Rochester Bridge Trust which has offered up to £25,000 and to the Benefact Trust, which has offered up to £5,300. These are significant sums of money and we are deeply grateful to both institutions. As a result, the church and the Friends of St Mary's now "only" need to find about £20,000 to complete the work. Still a lot of money, but much more manageable. Our thanks go out to the Friends of St Mary's also.

With at least one wedding scheduled for the summer, we hope there are no nasty surprises underneath the damaged shingles to threaten our ability to fund the work or that might delay completion beyond mid-April. For now, things look promising.

James Forster

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wednesdays 8 – 11pm; Fridays 6.30 – 10.30pm (2nd and last Fridays only); Sundays 8 – 10.30pm

Let's Get Quizzical! Saturday 11th April

Despite all the above mentioned funding success, around £20,000 still needs to be raised to complete the necessary repairs on the church tower and roof. A Quiz Night at Hunton Village Hall to help raise funds, is being held on Saturday 11th April. Full details will be in the March issue of the Hunton Herald... but, in the meantime, please put the date in your diaries and start gathering a team!

Why Eating Local Has Become One of My Favourite Village Pastimes

When I first swapped London pavements for muddy fields, I found that one of the great pleasures of village life is discovering what's produced just beyond your doorstep. A hand-written sign at the end of a driveway selling eggs. A neighbour who bakes better than anything from a supermarket shelf. Or cider that tastes unmistakably of the apples grown in a nearby orchard. Slowly, and deliciously, I've become a devoted supporter of local producers.

There's something deeply satisfying about knowing exactly where your food comes from. Local producers don't hide behind marketing slogans or glossy packaging. You can meet them face to face. You can ask how the cheese is made, when the apples were picked, or why this year's honey tastes slightly different from last year's. Food stops being anonymous and becomes a story, rooted in place, season and passion.

Eating local is also one of the simplest ways to tread more lightly on the planet. Buying bread, vegetables and meat (or even beer!) produced nearby, means fewer planes, trains and automobiles, less packaging and refrigeration, all leading to much lower carbon emissions. Food miles matter. Local food follows the rhythm of the seasons too, which nature generally approves of far more than strawberries in February.

Then there's the health angle. Many small producers focus on quality, rather than shelf life. That means fewer preservatives and additives and more natural ingredients. Bread goes stale because it's real bread. Sausages taste like meat because they largely are. Eating locally can quietly nudge us back towards simpler, more nourishing food.

Of course, buying local isn't just good for us and the environment; it's also vital for the local economy. When we spend money with independent producers, more of it stays in the area. It supports livelihoods, keeps skills alive, and helps ensure these small businesses can survive in an increasingly challenging world. There are other, less obvious benefits too. Local producers add character to a place. They give us something to be proud of, something to share with friends and family when they visit. They encourage connections – a quick trip can turn into a ten-minute chat, which is no bad thing in an age of self-checkouts and parcels being dumped at your gate.

So, if you haven't already, I'd encourage you to take a small detour, follow that sign, visit the farm shop, or try the local bottle behind the bar. To get you started, here are a few of my favourites:

Bread and other baked goods from The Hunton Baker, a micro-bakery started by Jenny in 2024. **Beer** from Tonbridge Brewery or from Goacher's, one of Kent's oldest micro-breweries. **Cakes** from Candi Cakery, a bespoke celebration cake business run by Cassie on Redwall Lane. **Cheese** from Kingcott Dairy, who make award-winning blue cheeses through responsible farming. **Coffee** from Kin Coffee in Staplehurst, run by Kate and Greg, who have an emphasis on environmentally friendly coffee. **Cider** from Wise Owl Cider or Turners Cider, both family run local cider makers. **Eggs** from Sue and David on Barn Hill. **Honey** from Hellweathers Honey in Chainhurst, run by Guy and Georgie. **Juice** from Owlet, based at Loddington Farm, a regenerative family farm in Linton. **Meat** from Ken Ballard Butchers in Marden, a family run butcher that has been going for more than 100 years. **Vegetables** from Loddington Farm Shop, who sell their own fresh produce but also lots of other Kent produce. **Wine** from Ragstone Ridge in Boughton Monchelsea who started producing wine last year, or from Herbert Hall Winery, an artisan English sparkling winery in Marden, or from Four Daughters Winery, a 4th generation family farm in Linton.

Adam Moore

Benefice Service Rota – February 2026

Church	1 st	8 th	15 th	22 nd
Coxheath 11:00 am	Communion CD	Morning Worship LF	Communion LF	
East Farleigh 9:30 am	Morning Worship BP		Communion DJ	
West Farleigh 9:30 am		Communion LF		Morning Worship DJ
Hunton 9:30 am	Communion DJ		Family service BP	
Linton 9:30 am		Morning Worship SE		Communion CD

LF -Lorna Faulkner, DJ – David Jones, BP- Becky Parnham, CD -Clinton Davis, SE – Sue Elliott

Midweek Services

Coxheath - Every Thursday; Holy Communion, 10:00 am; Linton - Holy Communion last Wednesday of each month, 12.00 followed by lunch

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