

*“Some sort of periodical is an essential life-line in a village such as ours”*

Welcome to West Farleigh's own

# LIFELINE



## WEST FARLEIGH EVENTS DIARY

<b>Fri 13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>7pm for 7.30pm</b>	<b>All Saints</b>	<b>Unsung Heroes film night with Philip Day</b>
<b>Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	<b>2pm to 5pm</b>	<b>Good Intent</b>	<b>WF Crafters Easter Fair</b>
<b>Sun 5<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>11am – 5pm</b>	<b>Smiths Hall</b>	<b>Open Garden Day</b>
<b>Fri 17<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>6pm doors</b>	<b>Elmscroft</b>	<b>Much Ado About Nothing</b>

Written, managed, and distributed freely by West Farleigh residents. Edition 595

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**Deadline for the next issue is 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

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ART

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Sat 28 Feb 10 – 1 Watercolour Techniques

Fri 20 Mar 10 – 1 Painting a Fox

Fri 15 May 10 – 1 Watercolour Techniques

Sat 16 May 10 – 1 Painting Kingfishers

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## GARDENING NOTES BY TINA WOODHAMS

Spring arrives in a flurry of blossom and daffodils! With the longer daylight hours, it is time to sow and transplant flowers and vegetables and prepare borders. At this time of year, the greenhouse is a hive of activity – if you haven't much space to grow indoors, it may pay to wait for a few more weeks before starting sowing. Consider investing in a covered area, however small, as it will give you a head start!



With the snowdrops now finished, lift and divide any larger congested clumps to replant around the garden. Left to multiply, this will lead to reduced flowering in future years. Carefully dig the bulbs out of the ground with all greenery still attached, then tease the clumps apart and replant a few centimetres apart and at the same depth as before. Remove any seed heads from early-flowering daffodils and other spring bulbs, leaving the foliage to die back naturally. Any faded indoor bulbs may be planted into the borders for flowering next year.

Start to prepare your flower borders to sow and plant hardy annuals for colour throughout the year. Begin by digging the ground, removing any weeds and garden debris and then raking over to ensure the ground is level. Adding mulch such as garden compost or well-rotted manure will help to improve water retention and maintain nutrient levels in the soil.



Young bedding plants will now be available, so purchase some and grow on under cover until they are ready to be planted outside. If you have overwintered plants in the greenhouse, check the leaves for signs of mould and remove any damaged foliage to prevent disease. In the vegetable garden, plant onion and shallot sets and sow spinach, remembering to cover with a cloche as the risk of frost is still a possibility! If you have already purchased your early seed potatoes and they have been chitting (left in a light area to sprout), these can be planted towards the end of the month, either in trenches or in pots if space is limited. As the weather warms up, we all start to emerge outdoors again – along with the garden pests! Slugs and snails, aphids and the menacing box moth will all make an appearance, so be vigilant and take all necessary precautions to limit damage.

“March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb”; strong winds are traditionally a feature of our spring climate, take time now to re-check tree ties and supports on climbers and wall shrubs.

**HAPPY GARDENING!**

## THE CRUFTS DOG SHOW by Rebecca Hawkins

In 2026, the Crufts dog show (recognised by the Guinness book of records as the longest running dog show) celebrates its 135th year. Here are a few facts that may interest you.



Charles Cruft, the founder of Crufts was inspired by his previous role as the general manager of a dog biscuit factory, which involved visiting different dog competitions.

The 19th century saw an increasing fascination with dogs in Britain, with more people becoming interested in dog shows and competitions. Cruft's initiative capitalised on this trend, creating a prominent event that has evolved into the world's largest dog show.

In 1886 it was initially a show exclusively for terriers and named 'First Great Terrier Show'. 5 years later it was open to all breeds and was renamed 'Crufts'. It took place in the Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington. That year, 2,437 entries and 36 breeds were in attendance. This same year, Queen Victoria's collie, Darnley II, and two of her Pomeranians won prizes.

The show was hugely popular despite not running every year. Crufts was suspended between 1918-1920 due to the First World War and it was not held between 1940 and 1947 because of the Second World War.

The hugely anticipated 'The Best in Show' award was not originally included as the last round but was introduced later in 1928. That year the award was won by a Greyhound called Primley Sceptre.



Charles Cruft died in 1938, aged 87. His widow Emma continued to run the show until 1939 but then passed it on to the Kennel Club, the governing dog-breed standards.

Growing in popularity, it was moved to the NEC in Birmingham in 1991, spanning a huge 25 acres of space including arena and stalls. Now with so many dogs in attendance, it is calculated that 350kg of dog hair is cleared from the NEC following the

show!

The show is more popular than ever with over 24,000 entered into the competition in 2024, featuring more than 200 breeds. The show is now split into 7 categories judged over 4 days, these groups include - Gundogs, Hounds, Terriers, Pastoral, Toy, Working and utility.

Top breeds from the gun dog category include the golden retriever, leading with (509) entries, followed by the Labrador retriever (485) and the cocker spaniel (418). The cocker spaniel has won the coveted 'best in show' competition a record 7 times (6 of them achieved by the same breeder, Herbert Summers Lloyd)

The oldest dog to win 'Best in show' was a flat coated retriever, Jet, aged 9½ years in 2011 and the youngest was awarded to a Bulldog named Chuckles who was just 1 year and 3 months old in 1952.

You may think with all the prestige surrounding Crufts there would be a grand prize for winning the whole competition. Well, surprisingly, there's not! Of course, there are perks to being a Crufts winner, such as bragging rights, but the Best in Show winner only gets £200.

The large shiny trophy you see the Crufts winners pose with is made from solid silver, so it's no surprise that the winner doesn't actually take this trophy home. But they do receive a replica.



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## PASTORAL LETTER by REBECCA PARNHAM

Well, here we are already in the third month of the year! How did that happen? January seemed to drag forever and then February rushed by in the blink of an eye and then Whoomp! here's March! Or is it just me?



March marks a significant turning point in the UK calendar. It is the month where we finally say goodbye to the short, dark days of winter and welcome the first signs of spring. For many, this transition brings a sense of renewal and optimism. Maybe this is a better time to start making those 'New Years Resolutions' than in the darkness of January?

However, March 2026 is not just about the changing weather. It is a busy month packed with important national days, cultural observances, and global celebrations. St David and St Patrick have their celebration days, Mothering Sunday is on the 15<sup>th</sup>; there's World Book Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> (look out for children going to school in fancy dress!), International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> and Comic Relief (Red Nose Day) on the 20<sup>th</sup> to name just a few of the events.

One that made me chuckle when I found out about it is world PI Day on the 14<sup>th</sup> – a celebration of mathematics chosen because the number PI ( $\pi$ ) starts 3.14.....

March seems to be a month full of things to celebrate. If you scour the internet long enough there's almost something for every day of the month- local, national and international celebrations, both sacred and secular.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> we will be changing the clocks to British Summer time – remember to 'Spring' forward an hour! However, it's also Palm Sunday, so in the church we will be remembering Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem when the crowds gathered and welcomed him with shouts of Hallelujah and waved palm branches. So, should you see scurrying shrubbery hurrying down the streets on the 29<sup>th</sup> your eyes probably aren't deceiving you, don't be alarmed, it's most likely a churchgoer who's forgotten to change their clocks before going to bed and is rushing to join in the celebrations!

So, Happy March everyone, whatever and however you are celebrating.

Becky

## SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS

Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	9.30am	Communion	David Jones
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	9.30am	Morning Worship	Sue Elliot

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## LITTLE ANGELS



A mother and toddler group in West Farleigh Church 1pm every Friday in term time. From babies to pre-schoolers. Mums, Dads, Grandmothers, Grandfathers and carers all welcome. Coffee for adults, lots of toys and fun for the youngster.

## WEST FARLEIGH CRAFTERS



The West Farleigh Crafters have been busy at their meetings and produced postbox toppers for Valentine's day, (see front cover). Did you see this cheeky addition to one of the boxes.

We hope you enjoy them and well done all the crafters. If you would like to join us all are welcome whatever your craft preference or ability, every Monday at the Good Intent 6-8pm. Come along and join in.

### Easter Fair

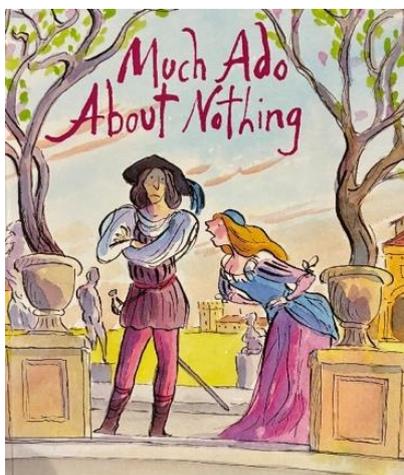
We are now busy creating our Easter box toppers but are also, in collaboration with the West Farleigh Art Group, holding an Easter Fair on Friday 3rd April at the Good Intent.

We will have some of our crafts available to buy, other Easter treats and the Art Group will be displaying their paintings and pottery, some available to purchase. There will also be a raffle with the proceeds going towards fund raising for West Farleigh to

install Tommy silhouettes in support of the RBVE (formally RBLI).

Come along and visit us, we will be there from 2 - 5pm - all welcome.

## 'Much Ado about Nothing' at Elmscroft House, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July



Following the success of Present Laughter (2024) and Twelfth Night (2025), the Changeling Theatre is coming to Elmscroft for a third time to perform this Shakespeare play.

You can buy tickets on-line (see QR code)



or at

[www.tickettailor.com/events/westfarleighvillageevents/2039113](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/westfarleighvillageevents/2039113)

or in person from Alex at Elmscroft House. £25 per adult, £15 per youngster 12-18 yrs.

## NEW RECRUITS NEEDED!

If you have some time on your hands and would like to help a local and worthy cause we are looking for volunteers!

At Dandelion Time we work with children and families who have experienced trauma or abuse to reconnect with one another using nature, craft and the natural world. We have volunteering opportunities across the charity and are especially looking for volunteers to support our fundraising team to go into the community and share our work.

If you enjoy being with people and would like to join our friendly and inclusive volunteer community please



email [alisonbrown@dandeliontime.org.uk](mailto:alisonbrown@dandeliontime.org.uk) or see our website for more information [www.dandeliontime.org.uk](http://www.dandeliontime.org.uk) “

## AND DON'T MISS 'BEFORE THE FEW'...

**BEFORE THE FEW**  
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All Saints Church, West Farleigh  
Friday, March 13th, 7-9pm

Free entry  
A charity event for All Saints Church  
Donations bar

## West Farleigh Parish Council Report

Meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026

Next Meeting: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm

### Policing Report

There is now a Policing Team in place that will attend our meetings going forward, when shifts allow.

There have been recent speed checks in the area, and they urge 999 to be used for emergencies, otherwise utilise 101 or online reporting.

### Agreement of the precept

It was agreed to fix the precept at £29,178; this equates to a zero-percentage increase to the annual charge per Band D property.

### Donations 25/26

Three requests were received for consideration. The Farleigh's WI received £300 (to go towards updating their technology and maintenance requirements), All Saints Church received £100 (to assist with the churchyard maintenance) and the Lifeline received £100 (to assist with their website costs).

### Conservation Area

The area around All Saints Church has been added for assessment in the Conservation Area review, likely to now be in May or June.

### Highways Matters

Smiths Hill SLOW marking has been approved by the PC.

The HIP (Highways Improvement Planning) Officer is progressing matters with MBC in relation to the ongoing Smiths Hill drainage issue including potentially more frequent cleaning.

The full minutes can be reviewed on the West Farleigh Parish Council website.

## Farming in the Farleighs 2026 02 20

Have you noticed how neat the hedgerows are looking at the moment? This is a photo of a hedge near Warnhams Farm on Hunt Street, all trimmed and ready for the new season.



So why do farmers cut their hedgerows in winter and how is it done?

Since May 2024 there have been new hedgerow management rules, the Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024. They are intended to protect hedgerows on

agricultural land. These hedgerows are important ecological building blocks across our landscapes. They provide habitat, act as wildlife corridors, slow soil erosion and water run-off. They also support crop pollinators and sequester carbon as well as enriching the landscape. Proper hedgerow management can also make farmers eligible for subsidies.

Hedgerows covered by the new rules cannot be cut or trimmed between 1 March and 31 August. There are exceptions, for example if the hedgerow is a safety hazard or diseased.



Hedges should not be trimmed during this season because it is the main breeding season for birds. It is illegal to intentionally damage active nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Cutting during this period disrupts nesting, destroys habitats, and reduces winter food sources like berries for wildlife. The main bird breeding season is from 1 March to 31 August, which is why the trimming deadline is the end of February.

Farmers normally use tractor-mounted flail hedge cutters to manage hedgerows. Imagine a very large cylinder lawnmower attached to an adjustable hydraulic arm. A compact to mid range tractor is able to support such attachments. A typical example is a Winton WAM100, which costs around £6,200 including taxes. The WAM100 has a PTO-driven hydraulic pump that operates independently of the tractor's hydraulic system. PTO stands for Power Take-Off. It is a splined drive shaft, usually located at the rear of the tractor. It transfers mechanical power directly from the tractor's engine to operate external implements and machinery, such as the hydraulic pump.

The cutting head and arm reach are controlled by levers, connected to cable controls positioned on the tractor. It can be easily attached to the 3-point linkage of most small or compact tractors. The power range of the tractor should be between 35 and 50 HP. The cutting head is one metre wide and it weighs 300 kg. The vertical reach of the hydraulic arm is 3.5m, and the horizontal reach is 1.95m.

## SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



### FOOTBALL

Our 1<sup>st</sup> XI - due to the weather and fixtures - had no games last month! Meanwhile our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI had two games. First, we lost 4-1 away to Ightham and what a game we had against Wateringbury. Believe it or not the final result was a 6-6 draw, amazing!



### NETBALL

Our girls have done well last month having some positive results which have improved our important league position. We began by losing to Alchemist 39-31 but this was followed by a much-needed victory 38-34 against Vixens. Next we just made a much-needed point when we lost 44-22 versus a tough Phoenix side. [Ed. If you lose but still score half or more of your opponent's score, you earn a point.] Finally, we gained another victory when we beat Headcorn 42-31.



### CRICKET

The season is fast approaching, and we would love to have new players to help bolster our two sides. If you or anyone you know would like to help out please get in touch: call or text 07761 355518 is all you need!

### CLUB NEWS

Our ton-up winners for last month were:

88	Karim Habibi	£30
122	Linda Body	£20
17	Rose Jones	£10

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## The Farleighs WI

At our monthly meeting in February, we were pleased to welcome Gill Garbo from the Big Cat Sanctuary who gave an interesting talk about the big cats they are caring for and the role the sanctuary plays in conservation.

As well as our monthly meetings, we continue to offer a wide variety of activities and social events for local women. We have an active arts and crafts group, where our members can learn new skills or continue to work on their personal projects. We are currently working on Easter crafts.

Our darts group continues to meet at the Good Intent every Monday and our quiz team takes part in

the Tickled Trout charity quiz each month. This month our book group are reading *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue and our Film Club recently enjoyed a showing of *The Greatest Showman*.

We also have an active lunch group, which does the rounds of local hostelrys and eateries, and a walking group, as well as other regular opportunities for socialising with friends.

We are currently planning a Ladies' Pamper Afternoon which will take place on Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup> from 1pm, where there will be the opportunity to try a variety of treatments. Please see our Facebook page for more information.

Our monthly meetings continue to be the second Wednesday of each month, 6.45pm for a 7.00pm start at the WI Hall in East Farleigh and in March our speaker will be Alan Haines talking about the Baby Boomer generation.

We are open to women of all ages and new members are always welcome. Check out our Facebook page, email

The Farleighs WI invite you to a  
**LADIES PAMPER AFTERNOON (16+)**  
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us at [TheFarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk](mailto:TheFarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk), or just pop into our next meeting where we can guarantee tea, cake and a warm welcome.

**Lynn Stout,**  
President, The Farleighs WI



## FLYING AROUND THE FARLEIGHS

### Have The Farleighs lost their cheese?

No, that's not a misprint, and it refers to what some of Kent's oldest folk will recognise as part of the song of the *Yeldring*. It may also ring a bell with those who grew up with their nose in Enid Blyton books as it was she who popularised the almost universally known '*Little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese*' song of the Yellowhammer.



But yes, they have suffered a steep decline in Kent over the last fifty years, along with the rest of the country. This once common farmland bird has been one of the species hardest hit by the introduction of intensive agriculture. As hedgerows were systematically removed to create bigger, machinery-friendly fields they were deprived of nest sites. Next followed the change to autumn-sown cereals that meant there were no stubble fields left



with spilt seeds to sustain them through the winter. Further loss of seeds and insects from chemical sprays followed to hammer them (pun intended), reducing their *little-bit-of-bread* too. But we now know enough to begin reversing the losses.

(Photo: Alex Boughton)

Many small fields in our part of Kent have retained the yellowhammers' basic requirement of low hedges and insect-rich vegetation associated with damp ditches along the Greensand spring line. Sensitive hedgerow

management for nesting is a first step and farmers can be paid to leave a broad field margin to provide the insect and plant life to feed the young of all species.



Photo: Ray Morris

However, even Blyton's *Famous Five* would soon spot that if half of all yellowhammers die each winter due to starvation, the mystery of the disappearing Yeldrings can be solved by providing over-winter food for them in the form of a seed-rich crop left in the ground. And it's working.

On frosty, sunny days, fields sown with winter bird seed sometime have a blizzard of bright yellow birds (plus flocks of those 'little brown jobs') just as over-winter stubble fields would have had in the past. Here, local ornithologists have trapped and colour-ringed yellowhammers to track them

by sight (captured on cameras) around the area.



Photo: Darren Nicholls

Not only have we found the birds move from farm to farm, hoovering up the food to keep them alive, we are recording birds surviving well beyond the three years thought to be the norm. For a bird dubbed *scribble lark* by poet John Clare – after the pattern of scribbled lines on its eggs – it's good that carefully scribed evidence suggests things are beginning to look up for birds in some parts of Kent. Yellowhammers start singing in March – so ears open!

Ray Morris



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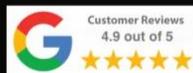


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