

“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

Friday 3 April	2pm – 5pm	Good Intent	WF Crafters & Art Group Fayre and show
Saturday 9 th May	11am – 3pm	Dandelion Time	May Fayre: donkeys and games!
Sunday 10 th May	12 – 3pm	Sports Club	Bloom Annual Plant sale & refreshments
Monday 18 th May	7.30pm	Dandelion Time	West Farleigh Parish Council Meeting
Sunday 5 th July	11am – 5pm	Smiths Hall	Open Garden with teas
Friday 17 th July	6pm doors	Elmscroft	Open Air Theatre – ‘Much Ado About Nothing’
August date tbc		Whole Village	Sunflower competition

Written, managed, and distributed freely by West Farleigh residents. Edition 596

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Deadline for the next issue is 25th April

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Sat 16 May Painting Kingfishers
Fri 10 July Watercolour Techniques
Fri 18 Sept Painting Hares

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GARDENING NOTES BY TINA WOODHAMS

APRIL

At last we are rewarded by warmer temperatures and the gardens are really starting to wake up. Make the most of good gardening weather, dodge the April showers and get busy when there is so much to do and make life easier later on in the season!



Remove faded daffodil flowers before the seed pod swells to ensure a good display next year, leaving the foliage to die down naturally. A general fertiliser can be applied to all spring bulbs once they have finished flowering. Continue deadheading winter flowering bedding such as pansies and wallflowers as these can provide a continuous display until you plant up the summer bedding, remembering to water pots as necessary.

Even as the ground temperature begins to rise, be vigilant of any late spring frosts and keep tender plants under cover at night for a few more weeks.

Start to spray plants such as roses to limit mildew and rust, and remove any dead leaves from plants to prevent rotting. Aphids multiply rapidly during mild spells of weather and can be removed simply by rubbing off by hand. Protect the new young shoots of hosta, dahlia, lupin and delphinium from slugs early to minimise damage.

Remove any weeds from the flower borders and make some room to sow annual seeds next month. Now is a great time to plant summer flowering bulbs – either in the beds or in planters. Place supports around perennial plants before they grow too large which will save you time later on and is easier to do now rather than when they are flopping over!

After the winter, lawns may benefit from aeration and a feed to replace lost nutrients and encourage the grass to flourish. Sow vegetable seeds such as runner and French beans, cucumber, courgette, squash and pumpkins.



If you have planted your first-early seed potatoes, they may already be showing signs of growth above the soil surface and these should be earthed up to avoid any damage caused by a late frost. This will also help to increase the potato crop. Plant your second-early and main crop seed potatoes, either directly into the ground or into suitable containers.

Earlier sown seedlings such as tomatoes and peppers may be transplanted into larger pots before finally being planted out in readiness for cropping.

What's not to love about this month? Spring is in full swing and the extra daylight hours mean that we can finally get cracking – Happy Gardening!

April dog thoughts - avoiding unnecessary tragedies by Rebecca Hawkins.

As the spring season unfolds, with the lighter evenings and School holidays right around the corner, more of us will be exploring the countryside with our dogs. The local fields and farmland will be bursting with newly born and hatched babies. Young animals, such as rabbits, fox cubs, chicks and new born lambs are particularly



vulnerable to various dangers.

This vulnerability underscores the importance for dog owners to exercise heightened vigilance and take additional precautions. Whether you frequently explore rural areas or simply enjoy the occasional scenic stroll through the countryside, now is the ideal moment to reassess your responsibilities and implement proactive measures to prevent distress, injury, or potential tragedy.



Choose walking routes where you can be absolutely certain that no visible animals are present. Places with ponds may have baby ducklings, woodlands may have pheasants or deer, open grasslands will most certainly have newly born lambs. This preventive strategy is far more effective than dealing with the consequences after an incident occurs. Minimising exposure to livestock is the most straightforward way to reduce stress for these animals and safeguard your dog from potential risks.



Always Keep Your Dog on a Lead Near Livestock No Exceptions

Even if your dog is trained to avoid sheep, responsible ownership dictates that they must always be on a lead when navigating through areas with livestock. This practice not only sets a positive example for other dog owners but also shows a deep respect for the rural environment. Those walking in the local fields must obey any visible signs as there may be places and areas where dogs aren't permitted or need to be on a lead no longer than two metres long. The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 also details the responsibilities dog owners have around sheep and other livestock, especially during breeding season. Between March 1st and July 31st this becomes a legal requirement, even if no livestock have been spotted on the land.

Regardless of how obedient your dog may be in other contexts, when confronted with young, wobbly moving lambs, or indeed newly hatched birds, their instinctive behaviour may take control. It's crucial not to wait for an incident to happen before recognising this reality. Taking responsible, preventive action now can help avert potential problems. Dogs possess a remarkable ability to detect sheep and lambs from distances exceeding half a mile. They can sense their presence long before you are aware. Given the opportunity, many dogs may react instinctively, disregarding even the most practiced recall commands. Therefore, it's vital not to take unnecessary risks.

Preventable tragedies are all too common and no one wishes to experience the heart wrenching scenario of watching their dog chase, attack, or harm sheep or lambs. Unfortunately, this distressing reality occurs thousands of times each year. The repercussions can be severe, leading to immense suffering for lambs and sheep and

granting farmers the legal right to protect their animals, sometimes resulting in the loss of a dog's life.

By following these essential steps, you are not only protecting defenceless newborn animals, but also ensuring your dog's safety and upholding responsible countryside walking.

A Message from Katie Lam

We're very fortunate to live in such a safe and beautiful rural area, but in the crime survey I ran last year, hundreds of you shared concerns about issues that chip away at that sense of security – including fly-tipping, speeding and dangerous driving, antisocial behaviour, shoplifting and unauthorised encampments.

One of the most common things I heard was that people rarely see police officers locally, and that reporting crime can sometimes feel pointless if nothing seems to happen afterwards. I completely understand that frustration, but we must continue to speak up when these problems occur. Reporting incidents helps ensure the police know where issues are happening and where their attention is needed.

That's why over the past month I've been bringing local people and businesses together with the police to discuss these concerns directly and make sure officers hear first-hand how people in our area are feeling. I hosted two meetings on crime and policing through my clubs – one focused on rural crime with the police rural taskforce and people from our farming community, and another looking at shoplifting and antisocial behaviour on our high streets, with the Police and Crime Commissioner and local shop owners in attendance.

Alongside this, I've been highlighting to Kent's senior police leadership and local beat officers the areas where people have told me they want to see more visible policing and better follow-up when crimes are reported. Particularly across a large rural area like ours, it's naturally difficult for the police to be everywhere at once. But many of the problems people are worried about are already illegal – the real challenge is enforcement. That's why it's so vital that the police know where problems are happening so they can respond effectively and I'll continue to highlight to police areas in the Weald that need better support.

So please do continue to report incidents, even when it feels frustrating. And as always, if you're experiencing an ongoing issue and need help, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk.



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WEST FARLEIGH IN BLOOM SUNFLOWER COMPETITION

The Tallest Sunflower competition returns in August 2026. Not only does it create some fun, planting sunflowers around our village brings brightness and enjoyment for everyone.

Sunflowers are easy to grow so let's get you started! **Inside this month's issue of Lifeline is a pack of seeds provided by the Bloom team.** All you need to do is fill some small pots with moist compost and place the seeds approximately 2cm deep then cover with a layer of the compost. Place in a warm light spot indoors and wait for the seeds to germinate which usually takes 10-15 days.

When the seedlings are large enough to handle, harden them off outside gradually - for about two to three weeks - then plant them outdoors in a sunny position.

We hope you will be inspired to join in the fun and be rewarded for your efforts!

FRANK UNDERDOWN IS MOVING!

Frank is moving to Hempstead, to live with his daughter Jane. She has a self-contained annexe attached to her house, which is ideal. Frank can have his independence and Jane will be close at hand.

Frank's family moved to West Farleigh from Chatham, when his father left the army. His dad obtained a job, working for the Days, as a groundsman to look after the Cricket Ground and the Churchyard. The Days were able to obtain one of the new council houses, at the top of Charlton Lane, for the family to move into.

Frank met his future wife, Molly. Her family lived in the house by the Mill stream in Mill Lane and her father worked at the Mill. They married in West Farleigh Church and went to live in the gate houses of Barham Court. They lived in one and slept in the other! After their first daughter Marie was born, they moved to Charlton Lane, where they had a second daughter Jane and where Frank has lived for 60 years.

Frank was a keen fisherman and with his mate Mick Merritt, fished in the river but they preferred sea fishing. They had an eighteen-foot dinghy which they used to fish off Dungeness and Rye. They also towed the dinghy to the West Country for more sea fishing. Frank also enjoyed his shooting and would shoot rabbits and pigeons.

He and Molly sang in the choir at West Farleigh and the choir at Wateringbury for 25 years. He played football for West Farleigh but was also a fan of cricket. He did National Service in the Army and signed on for another year as he was enjoying it. He was a Painter and Decorator by trade and he was never out of work. Many of the houses in the village have been painted by Frank at some time! Frank loved his dogs. His last Spaniel was diagnosed with cancer and had to be put down, he had never been without one and does miss them. Labradors to take shooting and Spaniels latterly for company. A well-known painter of Gundogs, Henry Wilkinson, painted two of Frank's dogs, prints of which, hang proudly on Frank's wall, as well as photos of his more recent dogs.

We wish Frank many more happy years, living with his daughter.



PASTORAL LETTER FROM LORNA FAULKNER



April is here and Easter comes on the first weekend. Bunnies and daffodils and chicks and chocolate. What's not to love? A celebration of new life, new hope and the return of the sunshine (we hope!) In the church, we celebrate the ultimate new start – the resurrection of Jesus. A miracle some (understandably) find so hard to believe could ever have truly happened. And it does seem unlikely... impossible...

But then, I look at a tree that has been bare and lifeless all winter, or the layer of muddy leaves that fill my favourite flower bed in the colder months... and I watch something extraordinary happen: The brown twigs slowly develop tiny little leaf shoots that unfold into fresh green growth and the spiky leaves of lupins appear (always more this year than last.) My peony pushes through the mud and stones (always a miracle to me because I always think this will be the year I finally failed it...)

I venture out with my border collie and the ground is drying up and the woods are full of green shoots and the bluebells erupt from the undergrowth. The orchards burst back to life and blossom appears and before I know it, the landscape is transformed.

I look at the magic that happens in spring; the miracles that unfold and shoot and sprout and grow before our very eyes... well, then I am confident in the existence of a creator who could bring life to anything, in the blink of an eye. Romans 1:20 says this: *'God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made.'*

The miracle of new life is all around us in nature. And Christians believe that all we see in nature points to who God is and what God can do. Enjoy the new life that bursts out around us; and, maybe, as you enjoy the wonder of nature, you might allow yourself to wonder about the God who made it; the new life we celebrate in Jesus and what that might mean for you. Love and blessings,

Lorna



The United Benefice of Coxheath, East Farleigh,
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Do you know of anyone who is housebound or lonely and would like a visit? If so, please ask them if you can give their details to us. We have both men and women on the team and we will be pleased to visit.

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You can also contact us online here:

<https://unitedbenefice.church/contact-the-pastoral-support-team/>

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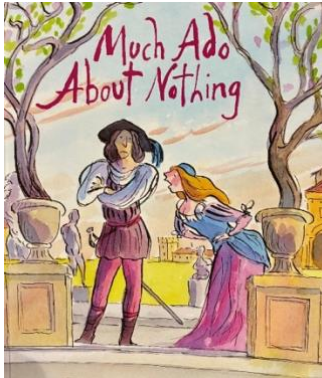
Sunday 5 th April	9.30am	Easter Communion	Lorna Faulkner
Sunday 14 th April	9.30am	Communion	Clinton Davis
Sunday 26 th April	9.30am	Morning Worship	Lorna Faulkner



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

'Much Ado about Nothing' at Elmscroft House, Friday 17th 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 at www.tickettailor.com/events/westfarleighvillageevents/2039113

or in person from Alex at Elmscroft House.

£25 per adult, £15 per youngster 12-18 yrs.

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THE EVERGREENS



A local retired GP gave us an excellent talk and lots of helpful advice about Optimising Health for Later Years at the February tea and in March we learnt about Clock House Farm. I don't think that any of us realised the quantity of fruit which they produce in Kent and is then distributed to the majority of the main supermarkets. We have gratefully accepted the offer of strawberries later in the year. The March lunch was pie and chips.

We have arranged for an outside speaker to tell us all about the Titanic at the next tea on 14th April which should be interesting. A Ploughman's Lunch will be served on the 28th April.

The Evergreens is a friendly group of retired people and new members are made welcome. If you are interested in joining us or would like more information please contact Katie O'Connor at katieeth66@gmail.com or Helen Swan on 07710 442971.

We meet at the Farleigh's W I hall on the second Tuesday at 2.30 for tea and entertainment and the fourth Tuesday each month at 12.30 for lunch and conversation. Lifts can be arranged, however we ask that friends from outside the villages arrange their own transport.



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SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



FOOTBALL With our 1st eleven unfortunately having to drop out of the league, our 2nd eleven must carry the mantle. We had a mixed bag of results it's fair to say firstly losing to Weald Wolves 4-2. This was followed by another loss going down 3-0 to division leaders Nomads. Amazingly, we bounced back this time with a 6-3 win over Weald Wolves and finally another high scoring thriller beating Orpington 3rds 7-4.



NETBALL Our girls finished their winter season's two remaining games starting with an exciting 38-36 win beating Sensations and followed by a 40-28 loss against high flying Foxy Wotsits. To sum up – a very creditable season in what is a tough division and coming fifth in the table. A most enjoyable season was had by all!



CRICKET Nets have now begun, first one being 19th March and for the next few Thursdays held at Cornwallis School. **We need more players!** If you are interested, please get in touch.

CLUB NEWS

Please note it is now the end of the 'ton up' year so I will be knocking on your doors hoping you want to continue to support the sports club with the £10 per ticket. If you are not a member and would like to join £10 buys you a number for the year with monthly draws and a Christmas jackpot!

The latest lucky winners were:

134	Yvonne Martin	£30	154	Lucas Shilling	£30
130	Simon Day	£20	97	Kevin Shilling	£20
108	Harley Harold	£10	112	Allan Godfrey	£10

Yours in sport, Tel (07761 355518)

Taking your phone to the match? Why not send your pictures of our sportsmen in action to editor@thefarleighs.co.uk. We will credit you.

More sports news on www.westfarleighsportsclub.com/



The Farleigh's WI

At our monthly meeting in March, we were pleased to welcome Alan Haines who gave us an amusing talk on the Baby Boomer generation.

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 Salt Path by Raynor Winn and our Film Club recently enjoyed a showing of Downton Abbey, The Movie.

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 19th 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, as we have welcomed a number of new members over the last year, in April we will be having a "getting to know you" session. We are open to women of all ages and new members are always welcome. Check out our Facebook page, email us at 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

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FLYING AROUND THE FARLEIGHS

After the March lifeline, the editors received a query about the field below the cricket green with the footpath crossing down to the bridge. What is it planted with, and why as it doesn't appear to have been cultivated and planted with a food crop. Fair question.

It is an example of the extensive, balanced conservation farming emerging across the country. Much is rightly made of the need for food production, but this can only be done in a healthy, biodiverse environment, not by applying yet more tonnes of artificial fertilisers and pesticides. Arable land hereabouts often requires significant chemical input even for a modest food crop, resulting in CO2 emissions from their manufacture and chemical pollution from run-off into local waterways.



There are plants in this mixture that actually fix nitrogen in the soil, improving its natural fertility. Many are deep rooted, which is why they often look good even in a dry summer. These mine water and nutrients and, because of their deep and extensive root system, allow rain to permeate, increasing drought resistance and reducing run-off. The crop supplies the seed vital to support farmland birds through the winter when natural food is scarce. On a cold morning, [Yellowhammers](#), [Linnets](#), [Reed Buntings](#) and [Greenfinches](#) may be feeding in mixed flocks with sparrows and tits, often many hundred strong.

A local Skylark. Photo: Darren Nicholls

In the summer, the long, tangled vegetation at the base of the hedges make them ideal for birds, mice and voles to nest in. [Skylarks](#) and tiny [Chiffchaffs](#) nest on or close to the ground. [Harvest mice](#) build their nests of dry grass around the fields too. Please tread carefully and keep to the path. A bird frightened from its nest by walkers, or a dog may be spotted by predators that will then plunder its nest.

Some of the plants sown will still produce seed in a second winter. The field won't look so attractive to us then – but it will to the birds!



The benefits for wildlife are obvious. Equally importantly, from the wide range of wildlife-friendly farming being adopted locally, the increase in pollinating insects and those that predate agricultural pests improves the yields in fields where food is grown for human consumption.

The importance of this kind of regenerative agriculture, ie. allowing nature's natural processes to keep the soil healthy, is being thrown into sharp focus by the attacks on Iran, currently leading to a shortage of oil. Industrial agriculture depends on massive amounts of artificial fertilisers derived from oil to keep replenishing soil fertility. So that field is not only helping wildlife but also doing a bit to reduce our reliance of fossil fuels.

Ray Morris

Farming in the Farleighs by Dan Robinson

It's lambing season. Becks has 17 pregnant ewes in the field off Teston Lane, near Tutsham. She has another 18 elsewhere. It's a busy time of year for her, but she's done some advance preparation to make things go more smoothly.



In December she bought specific medications, mineral lick buckets, milk powder etc, because by now everything is out of stock. There are "lick buckets" available in the field. This is a dietary supplement full of minerals, vitamins and sugars (tradename is Lifeline!). The ewes just have it while pregnant and then for a month after having lambled. One bucket between 17 ewes lasts a week and it costs around £30.



Two months ago, her ewes were scanned. The ewes were then separated into different fields to get the correct protein rations depending on how many lambs each is expecting. The pregnant ewes will produce 7 single births, 17 twins and 11 triplets, making a total of 74 lambs and an average of just over two births each. This is good. While waiting for the scanner Becks crutched the ewes, to get their undersides and hindquarters cleaned and trimmed. This makes it easier to spot complications during

the birth, for instance a stuck leg or head.

It would be better if every ewe had two lambs, but things don't work out that tidily. Where there is a set of triplets, Becks likes to wet-foster one lamb to a ewe that had a single birth. How successfully this works depends partly on timing. With luck, there will be a single birth less than 48 hours after a triplet birth. Becks then washes the "surplus triplet" to remove the real mother's scent, then applies the afterbirth fluids of the ewe that has just had the single birth, thus applying her scent to the "surplus" lamb. This should "trick" that ewe into believing she had twins. Each ewe has two teats, one for each lamb. The lambs need to be spread around, two per ewe, so that it evens out the load on each ewe and each teat, and also ensures all the lambs get properly fed.

Most outdoor ewes give birth at daybreak so Becks will check the fields at 4.30am, then go back at 8am to feed the sheep and castrate any male lambs, dock tails and mark her flock. The ewes also get their feet trimmed and get wormed before being moved to a different field with their lambs. There's a quick check at lunchtime. Then at 4pm Becks feeds the ewes and checks the newborn lambs have full bellies of milk. At 8pm another quick check determines if she goes back at 11pm or later. It's a long day.

Ideal weather conditions would be mainly dry with a few light showers to help the grass grow. Too much rain just makes everything muddy, even walking across the field is an effort. We all want all the lambs to survive and thrive.



West Farleigh Needles and Natters

By the time that you read this we hope that we will have seen many of you at our Easter Fayre at the Good Intent on 3rd April and that you enjoyed seeing what we do and also the great work created by the West Farleigh Art group. Thank you so much to all who supported this event, particularly Pauline and Steve at the GI for being our hosts.

Look out for the Easter post-box toppers, we hope you enjoy them.

We meet every Monday at the GI from 6pm – 8.30 (ish) and try all sorts of crafts whilst enjoying a natter. We are of varying degrees of ability and this means there is always someone who can solve a dropped stitch or read a pattern. There is no obligation, no cost, just come along and join in when you are able.

Fundraising

Many villages such as ours have supported this worthwhile cause and display their support through donations for their own Tommy and women in war statues. These cost £325 per pair plus the cost of install.

We have begun a fundraising campaign starting at Needles and Natters to raise enough money to put in some of these for our village. Thus far we have a £40 donation through the sale of one of our Valentine postbox toppers and £210 from the quiz night at the GI.



The Parish Council has pledged some money and we also held a raffle at the Easter Fayre, results of which are not available at the time of writing. We would appreciate any offers of help to install, if you are able to support with this please e-mail editor@thefarleighs.co.uk – thank you in advance.

West Farleigh In Bloom Annual Plant Sale



Yes! This popular event will be hosted at the Sports Club on **Sunday 10th May from 12 – 3pm.**

There will be lots of plants to buy and also the opportunity to enjoy the May weather with cakes, teas and coffees on offer.

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