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every Monday at 9am (excluding bank holidays)

SATURDAY 2 DEC CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

5.00 pm Bonners Nativity

5.45 pm Tree Lighting

6.00 pm Santa and refreshments

SUNDAY 3 DEC ADVENT SUNDAY

11.15 am All-Age Worship

SUNDAY 10 DEC 11.15 am Morning Worship

4.00 pm Carol Service

THURSDAY 14 DEC 10.00 am Midweek Communion

SUNDAY 17 DEC 11.15 am Holy Communion

SUNDAY 24 DEC CHRISTMAS EVE

11.15 am All-Age Worship

11.00 pm Midnight Service

MONDAY 25 DEC CHRISTMAS DAY

10.45 am Christmas Service

THURSDAY 28 DEC 10.00 am Midweek Communion

**SUNDAY 31 DEC 10.30 am Joint All-Age
Communion in Nutley**

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PARISH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2023



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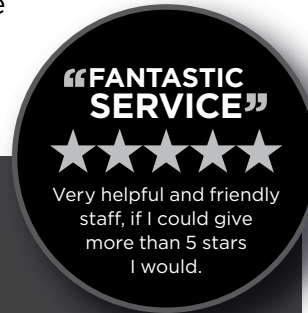
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The Rector writes



What brings you joy in the world? At the moment, it's the sparkly new supermarket, with its neon lights shining through the drizzle, that seems to be an eager talking point. Or perhaps it's the build up to Christmas time spent with family and friends – our minds running forward to Christmas trees, wrapping paper, mulled wine and pigs-in-blankets.

But of course, these things, good as they are, only shine so brightly and provide only a temporary burst of happy adrenaline. The thing that brings joy to one person, may not bring joy to the other. We live in a world that continues to remind us that it is broken. Problems raise their head time and time again, on a global and personal level.

Over the past 2,000 years, there has been a joy-bringing hope that has shone resolutely in the darkness. Something that brings joy in the sense that, while not always guaranteeing happiness, provides a deep sense of hopefulness and optimism in an often difficult world. And this hope is something for every person. In the Bible's Christmas story, an event grounded in history, we meet varied people, men, women, young, old, locals and travellers from afar, who put their hope in God and found joy in his saviour, Jesus. They were individuals who discovered they did not hope in vain.

The promises surrounding Jesus' birth reveal that he is hope in a world that so often feels dark. Hope in a world where it often feels like the same old problems are continuously resurrected.

Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist, who helped prepare people for what God was doing through Jesus. He said:

"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Christ is likened to a rising sun that dispels the darkness and marks a new beginning. Of course, Jesus quite literally rose as he rose from the dead and it's this resurrection that brings with it the hope that Jesus promised, of him one day bringing his people into a new world where the older order of pain, sadness, brokenness and frustration will end. He is the one who guides our feet into the path of peace.

God bless, Revd Ben

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Maresfield Lunch Club



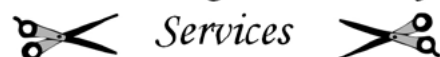
We are very sorry, but the Christmas Lunch
on 7th December is fully booked.

The next Lunch will be on **Thursday 4th January 2024**
at 12.30pm in the Village Hall
and we look forward to seeing you there.

As usual, please ring Pat on 01825 769644 or
email plangridge69@gmail.com to book your place.

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and a happy and healthy New Year**

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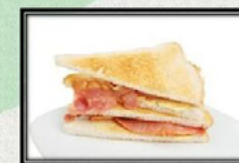
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DADS & TOTS



Join us once a month on a Saturday morning for **Dads and Tots**. This group is
for Dads/Grandads and their children/grandchildren aged 0-4 years of age.

Dads and Tots is an opportunity to spend time with your children, get to know
other dads and enjoy unlimited coffee/tea and some breakfast.

Sessions run from 9-10:30am on a Saturday morning in St Bartholomew's.

Next sessions: 16 December 27 January

We ask for a donation of £2 per adult and 50p per child.

To find out more, please contact our Vicar, Ben (see page 3 for details).

In praise of Preview

Have you been sent a form to complete and wondered whether there was an easier way to get this done? Needed to sign something and email it back? For this and more, let's take a look at the surprising powerful Preview that comes bundled with your Mac.

Billed as a simple utility for displaying images and reading PDFs (those uneditable files often used for forms), Preview is one of the programs that I miss most when forced to work on a Windows machine.

Opening an image using Preview is great right from the start because of the large range of image types that it recognises. Then you will find that Preview's Tools menu has a number of powerful features for adjusting images. So whether you want to rotate the image, change its size, play around with the colour, or auto-enhance, these are instantly done. You can even add text or some fancy graphics. If you are feeling a bit techy, Preview will happily convert to other image types. All very handy but it is in the PDF-mangling side that it comes into its own...

The thing about PDFs is that they are usually intended to be read-only. On a Windows machine, you need extra software for a whole range of PDF-related activities. And the free versions usually stop short of a range of useful features such as encrypting sensitive PDFs, adding or removing pages or redacting information. Here is how Preview handles these in a gracefully generous manner.

In the Tools menu, you will find the 'annotate' section which contains an array of useful features. You can highlight text, strike it through, add notes and any colour of loupe that your heart desires. These are saved in the file and ready for later review or sharing. At the bottom of the 'annotate' section is the 'signature' section. This is where you can scan in a copy of your signature using your camera and then apply it to forms.



When you receive a form by email, the urge to print it, complete by hand and then scan it back into the computer can be almost overwhelming, as well as laborious. Instead, Preview enables you to add text to each section and slap on your signature. This makes light work of the most tedious boxed form – and the feeling of glorious technical wizardry is almost heady.

Among the many remaining features, a couple stand out. The first is redacting information. On the Tools menu you will find 'redact'. Click it and whatever you select in the document will be eliminated, never to return. The second is encryption: pop into the 'File' menu and select 'Edit Permissions'. Here you can set a password required to open the file which conveniently secures it.

Finally, there is adding and removing pages. For this you need to pop over to the 'View' menu and select 'thumbnails'. On the left you will now see the pages of the document. You can drag them into any order you fancy. Similarly, select a page and press delete and... it is gone. Or you can drag images or pages from other PDFs into the thumbnails and they will stay in your document. If only Windows came with such useful software built-in...

Roger Lyon

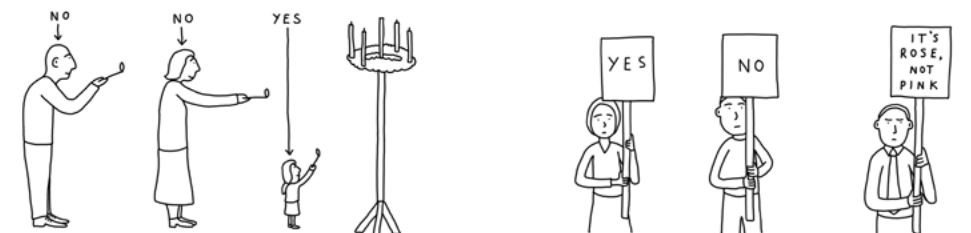
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Dave Walker

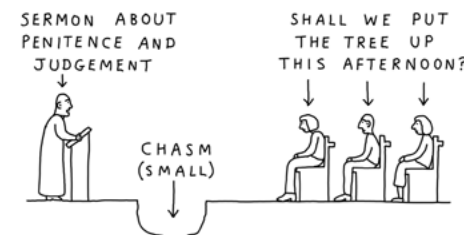
For more of Dave's cartoons, see www.cartoonchurch.com

ADVENT CONTROVERSIES

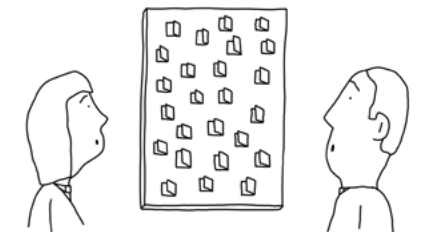


WHO WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES
ON THE ADVENT WREATH?

SHOULD THE WREATH HAVE
ONE PINK CANDLE?













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Maresfield Conservation Group

Christmas is coming – yes, it does seem to be earlier and earlier each year! By the time you read this, hopefully the traditional Christmas tree will be in place and everyone will be gearing up to an enjoyable festive season. If your edition of the Parish Magazine arrives with you before 2nd December, then please come along and join us at the entrance to Maresfield Park.

Looking further ahead, we are pleased to announce an exciting initiative being launched in the New Year: a photographic competition. The twelve successful photographs, one for each month of the year, will be used to create a Maresfield Calendar for 2025. The competition rules can be found on our website. We already have our expert judge in place, so get snapping and, if all goes well, your photo may be selected. The calendar will be published towards the end of 2024, so that's a few Christmas presents sorted for next year already!

A few developments regarding the MCG to note, the first is that from 1st January 2024 annual subscriptions will now only be via direct debit.

The second is that we will soon be having a vacancy on the committee, so if you are interested in joining us and having a greater say in how we try and protect our village way of life, then this could be the opportunity you may have been looking for.

The Winter newsletter is currently at the printers, so look out for that in the coming weeks.

All that remains to say is thank you for ongoing support throughout 2023 and, along with everyone on the MCG committee, I wish you all an enjoyable and peaceful festive season.

Footpaths Group

Despite the awful weather we have been managing to get out. This time of year leaves on the pavements are our biggest headache. We have just spent a morning up at BluAuto and have a number of other pavements in our leaf-blower's sights! This bad weather with its high winds has caused a number of trees to come down. We have identified one in the woods next to the bypass, if you know of any others please do get in touch and we will see what we can do.



Jo Lawrance - Chairman, MCG

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The Arts Society Ashdown Forest

Crowborough Community Centre, Pine Grove, Crowborough TN6 1FE

Thursday 14 December at 2pm

Searching for Shakespeare

Lecturer: Jane Tapley

After more than 400 years, William Shakespeare remains the most admired playwright and indeed the most famous Englishman in the world. In this talk, we explore his life, the influences on him of the Elizabethan age and how his work had an impact on the global stage. We learn what the first open-air theatres were like, the popularity of his plays with contemporary audiences, how his plays survived and who it was who saved them.



Image: Wikimedia Commons

Jane Tapley is currently Special Events Organiser at the Theatre Royal Bath. She lectures regularly to theatre-going societies, the National Trust and other arts societies and is a researcher and consultant for theatre and TV productions..

Members free, £7 for visitors – who are very welcome.
Refreshments available at the end of the lecture.
For further information, contact our Membership Secretary on 01892 861015. www.tasaf.org.uk



Uckfield Folk Club

Upstairs at The Station Pub, Uckfield
Every third Tuesday of the month, at 8pm

Tuesday 19 December

CHRISTMAS PARTY SINGAROUND

All singers and musicians welcome – floor spots available, to be arranged on the night, or just come and listen! Lots of space for social distancing.

Hat collection on guest nights – a contribution of £10 is suggested.

Info: contact Pat on 07788 994266 or plangridge69@gmail.com

NB: There is a parking charge in the Station Car Park, but free parking is available within walking distance

County Council News

Gatwick

Here are some key points from East Sussex County Council's response to the Gatwick expansion proposal.

1. If the application is approved, there will be a need for the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure in advance of the Northern Runway being in full operation.
2. There is insufficient mitigation proposed to encourage a substantial shift towards sustainable travel to and from an expanded airport.
3. Gatwick Airport limited (GAL) needs to mitigate the impacts of the approaching traffic from the surrounding road network, including routes in East Sussex such as the A22 and A264, which feed into the A23/M23 corridor. GAL must also assess the impacts of airport growth on the strategic road network (e.g. M25) and ESCC's highway network beyond the immediate environment of the airport.
4. ESCC requires measures that reduce traffic through sensitive locations near and through Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA) and along the A22.
5. It is necessary to ensure that rail infrastructure and service provision has been properly considered by GAL and Network Rail and can accommodate the increase in demand and capacity that will arise should the Northern Runway go ahead. This must be considered alongside wider demands for rail travel.
6. The proposed new coach route to/from the airport to Uckfield would only have a two-hourly frequency off-peak, though hourly at peak time. ESCC requests a regular hourly service.
7. There is a need for assurances on the accuracy and reliability of the estimated overflight mapping and we will require East Sussex to be included as part of this assessment.
8. Night flights will need to be restricted/capped, and the Northern Runway should not operate between the hours of 23:00 and 06:00.
9. We need to know the impact of noise on Ashdown Forest, a noise-sensitive area.

Roads

Repairs to Church Street in Fletching are programmed for January 2024. Ruston Bridge Road is in the programme and I have queried why the two could not be done together. Equally, more patching on High St Maresfield is planned soon and I can't understand why these are not done consecutively.

Whilst our local campaign for a 30mph limit in Piltdown was not successful, some safety improvements are promised:

- Improvements to the existing speed limit terminal signs
- Installation of new village name plates
- Refresh of '40mph' roundels
- Refresh of warning signs
- Refresh of road markings
- Installation of red surfacing at the gateways.

It is anticipated that the above scheme will be completed by winter 2024.

Council Tax

The process for setting Council Tax for next year and the Financial Plan for the next 5 years has begun. The County Council is carrying out an extensive consultation and if you have any views you wish to record, please visit <https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/governance-and-community-services/budget-and-priorities-for-east-sussex>

Roy Galley

cllr.roy.galley@eastsussex.gov.uk 01825 713018

St. Barts Community Cafe Open every Wednesday 9am-12noon

CHRISTINGLE WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

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St.Bartholomew's is also an agency for Uckfield Foodbank and we can issue vouchers during Cafe hours. Please ask Angie if you need a voucher.

We run *Bitesize* training sessions at the Cafe, plus special events: Ukrainian egg painting, Christingle oranges, children's short films, Christmas crafts etc – and we welcome other ideas.



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Parish Council News

Finance

The Parish Council is setting a budget for the next financial year (2024/25) and this expenditure becomes the basis of the Parish Precept part of your annual Council Tax Bill. The budget setting process commenced at the October meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee and will culminate in the Parish Council approving the Budget and Precept proposals at its meeting on December 19th. All Parish Council and Committee meetings are open to the public and start with an allocated time for members of the public to raise issues and ask questions. Please contact the Parish Clerk for an invitation.

Maresfield Lawn Bowls Club

Sadly, the Maresfield Lawn Bowls Club has closed due to a lack of support, and possession of its pavilion transferred to the Parish Council at the end of October. Consequently, a new use for this building, situated in the southeast corner of the Recreation Ground, needs to be found. My personal view is that it could become a youth club, but that would require local volunteers willing and able to run such a facility. If you agree with this suggestion and/or are willing to assist, or should you have other ideas as to the building's future use, please contact the Parish Clerk.

Wealden Local Plan

The latest news from Wealden District Council about its forthcoming Local Plan is that a draft will be considered by the full Council in early February and, if approved, will be published for formal consultation to take place in the weeks following. However, there are still uncertainties surrounding possible changes to government planning policies, and further delays in Wealden producing its draft Local Plan are not inconceivable.

Parish Office Staffing

We are very pleased to welcome Nutley resident Liz Mitchell to the Parish Office as part time Clerical Assistant where she will be helping our Parish Clerk, Nancy O'Hanlon, with a whole range of administrative tasks. Rosie Barnes completes the team as our part time Planning Clerk. Parish office visiting hours are 10.30 to 12.30 Monday to Friday by prior appointment, please. (E-mail clerk@maresfield-parish.org.uk or phone 714555.)

Website

Please do log on to our Parish Website <http://www.maresfieldparish.org.uk/> to keep abreast of Parish Council activity. We would welcome your feedback as we are aiming to make the Website a really useful resource for Parish (not just Parish Council) information. Let us know what additional information it should contain.

Continued on page 19



Civic Centre Uckfield

Festive Afternoon Tea

Christmas lunch too much? Our Afternoon Tea in the restaurant is a perfect alternative. A glass of prosecco and Christmas songs will get you in the festive spirit!

Sat 16 December - Tickets £18



Christmas Lunch

Mon 4 - Fri 22 Dec

11.45am - 2.30pm

Book your Christmas lunch with your club, friends or family at Luxfords Restaurant. See website for full menu.

2 courses - £23 / 3 courses - £27



Snow White Pantomime



Mirror, mirror, on the wall, don't miss the fairest pantomime of them all! Join us to watch the fairytale unfold in true Uckfield Theatre Guild style.

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Useful links

<https://my.wealden.gov.uk/>

<http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/>

<http://www.maresfieldparish.org.uk/>

<https://www.ashdownforest.org/>

And you can also follow the Parish Council on Twitter and Facebook.

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of our Parish Councillors, our Clerk and her team, to wish all our residents a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Safe New Year.

Martin Craddock

Chairman, Maresfield Parish Council

Parish Council Meetings: December 2023

All meetings commence 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 5 Dec Finance & Admin Meeting (Parish Office)

Thursday 6 Dec NDP Steering Group (Parish Office)

Monday 11 Dec Planning Meeting (Fairwarp Village Hall)

Tuesday 12 Dec Environment Meeting (venue TBA) – if necessary

Tuesday 19 Dec Full Council (Fairwarp Village Hall)

NB: Please note that meeting dates are subject to change. Please check on the Parish website or call the office beforehand if you are interested in attending.



Little Deers Playgroup

The playgroup meets in Maresfield Village Hall from 9.15 to 11am on Thursday mornings (except the first Thursday in the month). They have places for pre-school children.

Just turn up and enjoy meeting other parents while your children make new friends and enjoy playtime together, in a safe environment with lots of lovely toys.



Holly

I'm sure you'll agree that these are crazy times, folks. Back in Ancient Rome they had a festival – Saturnalia – which saw their society turn upside down for a week each December. It seems Saturnalia's traditions of chaos and mayhem are now the daily norm for us Brits but, as we career towards Christmas, we have another thing in common with it. We will soon be paying our respects to the holly tree.



Holly has been celebrated in many traditions over the centuries because, as a native evergreen, its vibrancy in the dead of winter could easily be mistaken for immortality. Holly was the sacred tree of Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture. In pagan tradition, the Holly King ruled over the Oak King from midsummer to midwinter. Holly was easily adopted by Christians, who saw many links between the tree and the life of Christ. Today, holly remains a centrepiece of our Christmas decorations, cards and cakes.

Each holly tree is either male or female. While both produce delicate white flowers in May, it's only the female holly that bears a berry as red as any blood. When these berries are produced in profusion, it's taken to be a sign of an oncoming hard winter -although in reality it's the outcome of a successful spring. Holly's prickles provide protection for nesting birds, their flower buds are food for the Holly Blue butterfly's caterpillar and their ripe berries are essential for thrushes.

If you're after a tree filled with folklore then holly must take a bow. So if you're planning to deck your halls with boughs of the stuff this Christmas, here's a quick user guide. First off, never cut down a holly tree – that's guaranteed bad luck, a superstition which has spared many holly trees

Image: Alan Price



from the woodsman's axe. And make sure you leave holly trees in your hedgerows to prevent witches from running along the top. If you bring holly into your home at Christmas, it'll help protect you from those pesky festive faeries. Only female holly leaves under your pillow will allow you to predict your future in your dreams. Oh, and don't forget to get rid of your holly decorations before Twelfth Night (but don't burn them, that's bad luck too).



Image: Roger Wilmslow

Holly trees will protect you against lightning strikes (I'm not sure if this has been scientifically proven so don't blame me if you still get zapped). And don't eat the berries, they're poisonous, but if you have smallpox you can drink an infusion made from the leaves.

Stick to those rules folks and you'll have a peaceful Christmas. Me? I've had enough of the state of the world today. I'm going to pour some wine, put on my toga and pretend I'm in ancient Rome. Somebody pass me my fiddle.

Michael Blencowe

Learning & Engagement Officer, Sussex Wildlife Trust

www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

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