

The Villager

Piddinghoe, East Sussex



February 2020

EDITORIAL

After the shock of the landslide General Election, we now face the partial loss of our Sussexes. We waited 200 years between the creation of the first and second Duke. Will the second become the Duke of Sussex and Vancouver/Toronto/wherever in Canada? Unfortunately, another ugly word has entered our vocabulary: Megxit.

Perhaps this adds spice of sorts to February, often the dreariest of months. It does have Valentine's Day, of course. Still exciting to some. But if you have nothing better to do, and want to see what Americans get up to, look up National Day Calendar on the internet. It features something to 'salute' every day in February. It includes National Groundhog Day, Personal Trainer Awareness Day, Bloody Mary Day, Baked Alaska Day, Tooth Fairy Day. Loads of them! 'Only in America', as the saying goes, and America is awfully close to Canada.

What happened to the road surfacing? We anticipated smooth driving by Christmas. Pity anyone standing in the rain at the bus stop. The road has collapsed right in front of it, where the rain gathers. The 'boy racers', travelling at great speed by then, have such fun whooshing through the standing water and soaking anyone standing there. So why not move the bus shelter, now stranded and unused near Molly's Bench, to the main road? It has possibly the most interesting design in the history of bus shelters. On the C7, it will need to stand with its back to the road to protect the hapless from whooshing. It does have a solid back. The roof, of a most unusual design, going upwards instead of downwards, offering the possibility of maximum exposure to the elements, will still not afford protection at its front. But the sides of the shelter are so narrow, we would not need to cut a spy hole to see if the bus is coming! As it stands, it remains a memorial to a tremendous amount of arguing that took place in the Village as to whether we should have a bus shelter or not!

What about seating? Bill Pierce might want to take some of the Village Hall chairs over there. Not everyone will agree with that.

The shelter does come with a bench of sorts in it, but that could go for firewood when it has dried out. (See 'roof', op cit.) But why not some decent seats? If one is forced to use the bus service, one is suffering enough already. Or we could dispense with the whole idea and hope that the road surfacing is done, and done properly! Have you noticed the surface of the Newhaven Ring Road? What traffic fun there will be when they fix that!

Villagers who have had pellets flying into their back gardens will be interested to hear that a Planning Appeal has been lodged by a local farmer against a decision to curtail the amount of pheasant shooting he has been doing on his land. The Appeal concerns the Iford area. If the Appeal fails, perhaps some notion of stricter controls might drift further south?

There are signs of life in our gardens. Green shoots are coming up. Snowdrops have begun to appear around the Church, and soon it will be Daffodil Time. Hooray! Then we shall all feel better as there are few sights more beautiful or uplifting than the daffs in full bloom on the Church slope.

Editorial team: Sheila Redman, Gill Davies, Bill Pierce, Sue Massey.



THE SNOWDROP.

PIDDINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL 2020

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall, Piddinghoe, on Tuesday 14th January 2020 at 7.30pm (DRAFT)

Present: David Aicken, Debbie Mills, Angela Ridge, Diana Stevenson, Julian Peterson (Clerk), 1 member of the public.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Sarah Osbourne, Cllr Meyer, Cllr Woolger

Minutes: The minutes of the Parish meeting of 19th November 2019 were AGREED by Council and signed by the Chairman.

Disclosure of Interests: None

Public Participation: None

AGENDA

1. a) Council accepted the accounts as up to the date of the meeting as prepared by the RFO. The Chairman signed the accounts.

The balances as at 6/12/2019:

Current Account: £7,226.46

V. Mellor's Bequest: £25,539.81

Reserve Account: £5,013.65

Total£14,779.92

- b) Council agreed not to increase the precept for the year 2019/2020 due to the prudent running of the Parish Council. The amount spent in the first nine months of 2019 was broadly similar to the previous year and no large extra expenditures were envisaged for the coming year. Outgoings amounted to £11,442 the income was £10,892, leaving a difference of -£550. Which still leaves the account with a projected possible total in 1st April 2021 of £3,642. There is a degree of flexibility with unforeseen events. This was agreed.

2. Council agreed to accept the proposed budget and agreed not to put the precept up for the 5th consecutive year.
3. There were no planning applications.
4. It was agreed that there should be a working party of the Councillors, present, to be convened. The purpose is to look into the role and responsibilities of The Village Hall Management Committee and the Parish Council concerning the Village Hall before the next Council meeting. The Working Party will contact Action In Rural Sussex (AIRS) and agree to pay the subscription to obtain their specialised knowledge together with Ssalc. The Working Party wishes to work in collaboration with the VHMC and will seek a meeting before the next Parish Council Meeting. The clerk will attend the meetings.
5. It was agreed at the last meeting that the Chairman would draw up a mowing map that showed ESCC the areas which the PPC wanted mowing, including a stretch from the southern entrance to the village and the field gate and small parking area. ESCC used to mow this area. ESCC accepted the plan submitted by the PPC. Agreeing to the previous price of £200 for the 4 extra mows. The Chairman was thanked for drawing the Map of the areas to be mown.
6. It was agreed that Council would look for a public liability insured self-employed handyman who would maintain the playground. The Chairman has been doing this work (unpaid) for many years. Lewes District Council agreed to continue with the play-ground inspections at no further costs for the year.
7. The Chairman reported that the tree survey had been completed and there were 3 medium risk tasks that would need to be completed. A quote from the tree surgeon that the PPC used previously would be sought to complete the work.

8. Council had no objection to the Parochial Council's application to put a Tourist Information sign to St Johns Church in an appropriate place.
9. The Chairman has a quote to restore the Village noticeboard for £200.00 plus the cost of a special grade varnish. Also, receiving a quote for around £70.00 for the repair or replacement of the fence end post nearest the Village Hall. Council agreed that the work should be completed as soon as possible and agreed to spend up to £300.00. And agreed that the work be done when the weather improved.
10. SLR meeting:
Cllr Ridge attended the meeting on the 29th November and asked about the hedge trimming as previously mentioned and that the road surface south of the Village on the C7 be improved as it has been to the north of the village. The PPC has also written to ESCC complaining about the state of the C7 along the Piddinghoe By-pass and requesting that the pot holes be filled.
11. Council agreed the following meetings:
24th March 2020.
19th May 2020 AGM and Council Meeting.
16th May 2020 Parish/Village Meeting.
25th August 2020.

Julian Peterson, Parish Clerk, Piddinghoe

THE LEWES FUND

Thanks to the generosity of its many donors, the Lewes Fund, which was established in 2012, has now given out nearly £70,000 in grants to over 30 local groups in Lewes and the surrounding villages. This year we have been able to support more local community groups, their members and volunteers, by giving grants to:

- Culture shift
- Ouse Valley Cycle Network
- Greenhavens
- Go Local Repair Café

We would like community groups in your area to be aware that we have grants available. In 2020 we will be considering grants for small sums, normally under £2,000, three times a year (closing dates 10 Jan, 1 May, 11 Sept), with the third, September, round also considering applications for larger sums.

Applications should be made via the Sussex Community Foundation (SCF) web site:

<http://www.sussexgiving.org.uk/apply-for-grants/how-it-works>

If you have any queries regarding the application process, you can call Adrian Barrott at the SCF, who is managing the application process, on 01273 409440.

If you would like to know any more about the Fund, and indeed if you know of anyone who wishes to make a donation to the Lewes Fund, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Richard Pearson
Chair, Lewes Fund
www.lewesfund.org.uk

FILM NIGHT FROM CORNWALL AT THE VILLAGE HALL

From Scottish Highlands to Spanish mountains, Film Night has provided some diverse locations lately and that will continue in our next show, 'Fisherman's Friends', set on the Cornish coast, when it hits our big screen on Friday February 21.

An anticipated large attendance emerged for 'Whisky Galore', the old-time Elstree Studios comedy in late December when 'a wee nip' was promised within the £3 entry fee. Yet at the end there was still liquid left in the bottle (which we stored) shaming those unkind souls who may think our local entertainment all depends on alcoholic consumption! It was actually a funny film, undemanding mentally, and it helped maintain the mood for Christmas celebration. So we thank Isla for recommending.

Bert Cutts, from Seaford, regularly supports Film Night and requested the Spanish Civil War adventure/romance 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' in January. We were happy to comply despite discovering it was a marathon 2 hours 50 minutes long, possibly putting people off. It had a false start, too, as it took us a while to realise that the opening ten minutes of just soundtrack without imagery was deliberate. However, this significantly historical movie, the 25-year-old Ingrid Bergman's first in 'Technicolor', inspired several among the dozen who attended to tell me afterwards how much they enjoyed it.

Our next presentation is more modern, released in 2019 to favourable reviews, with a cast of familiar faces that you will recognize but maybe not know their names. The 'Fisherman's Friends' story is fun for all but it sadly espoused real-life tragedy which I will reveal on the night. Come and see it.

Bill Pierce

E: piercewilliam991@gmail.com

THE ROYAL OAK SURVIVORS



Our village pub closed in 1992 as a result of a fire.

Many of you will remember the Royal Oak Survivors from its inception in 1997. A team of volunteers would open the village hall as a pub for the day, and many good times were had with well supported events throughout the years, usually involving food and always a licensed bar.

Times have changed and now, with many new and enthusiastic villagers in Piddinghoe, we believe it is time to re-invest in our community spirit.

The ROS has recently been reinvented and renamed:
The Royal Oak Revivers.

The existing team is interested to hear from anyone keen to share ideas and become involved planning a diary of events and to commit time and energy to this end.

I will be hosting a meeting during March at 'Byways' to discuss all this.

If you like the sound of it, please email me with your contact details: angelaridge7@gmail.com

Thank you!

Angie Ridge

NEW YEAR'S EVE



Thanks to Marcia and David (W) and Carolyn and Dennis, many villagers enjoyed seeing in 2020 together at the New Year's Eve party in the village hall. With disco equipment kindly loaned by Neil, David discovered his inner DJ (with a little help and heckling from Dennis and emergency tech back up from Dave A), while the rest of us danced as if we were teenagers again. There's nothing like a good bop with your friends and neighbours to rekindle that old spirit of fun and make you forget your troubles.

Food was plentiful and varied with contributions from Marcia and Carolyn, as well as our new neighbour, Rachel.

I'm not sure there are many communities where every single person in the room merits a kiss and/or a hug at midnight... but maybe that was just the combined effects of endorphins and alcohol! Whatever it was, a great evening was had by all.

As we had to get up reasonably early the next day we tore ourselves away at about 1.30am, but apparently the party went on for another hour. No doubt many of us started the new decade with sore feet and possibly sore heads, but more importantly a sense of enthusiasm for what 2020 in Piddinghoe might bring.

Sue Massey

NEWCOMERS TO PIDDINGHOE

On behalf of the village we'd like to extend a very warm welcome to several new neighbours.

Katy Viflic, Flint Cottage

Katy came from Lewes which she loved but hated the parking and found her garden rather unsatisfactory. She remembers walking into the garden at Flint Cottage and falling in love with it immediately when she viewed the property. Katy has two grown-up daughters, both living in Lewes. One is autistic and lives in Supported Accommodation but visits Katy regularly. During the week Katy works full time at the University of Sussex in Student Support. She provides students with financial advice, which has become much more complicated now that Grants have gone. Living with Katy is Mouse, her remaining cat. Very sadly, her other cat, Taffy, disappeared shortly after moving in here. Katy says, 'The welcome here has been lovely. Thank you Piddinghoe.'

Gill Davies

Rachel and Dave, Shepherds Close

After lying empty for a year, Midwynde in Shepherds Close finally welcomes its new owners, Rachel and Dave, who moved in with their black whippet, Aysha, just in time for Christmas. Rachel is a massage therapist and caterer of plant-based food; Dave is an electrician specialising in commercial microwaves. They're both working hard on the house and garden but are also keen to get involved in social events in the village, so if you haven't already met them walking the dog, you're bound to bump into them soon.

Julia Noakes, Brookside

Not strictly a 'Newcomer', Julia Noakes returned to Piddinghoe in October when she moved into Brookside – next door to our bird expert, Julia Clayson.

After living in the Old Forge for 10 years in the early 2000s she moved to India – where she worked as a psychologist for India Standard Chartered Bank – then to the Bahamas and eventually to Lewes but she says Piddnghoe lured her back. She spotted the bubblegum-pink house in Brookside was for sale and there followed a lengthy negotiation process, during which time many of us were pleased to see that the house was repainted grey.

Julia is very happy to be back and gets on very well with her immediate neighbours. She's looking forward to getting more involved in village life and says she'd like to reassure people who may have known her as party animal 'Naughty Noakesy' that she's calmed down a lot now!

Sue Massey

PIDDINGHOE BOOK CLUB

February meeting

Date: Thursday, February 13 at 14.00

Venue: Justins, Village Green

Host: Rita Brown

Book: The Poisonwood Bible

Author: Barbara Kingsolver

Nathan Price, a Southern Baptist preacher, takes his wife and four daughters to a remote mission in the Congo. His aim is to convert all to Christianity, come hell or high water (or mosquitos, ants, parasites, lions, civil war). Things do not go well for the Price family.

More details from Christine: ccbentham@gmail.com or 07944 577774.

SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH PIDDINGHOE

I love marzipan! My second favourite variation is as a topping on an alcohol-infused Christmas Cake and then, to surpass even that, marzipan in and on a Simnel Cake.

When I was a child, growing up in South London, there were few treats, but my Mother was an excellent cook and her Simnel Cake recipe had been handed down by her mother and grandmother before her. Marzipan was at the very centre of the Cake, sandwiched as a filling between two layers of rich fruit, baked in the oven so that the sweet centre became slightly caramelised. When the Cake was cold, a few days before Easter, more marzipan was rolled out to cover the top and the remainder used to make eleven balls, decorating the very edge.



I learned the symbolism of the Cake's construction when I was older: the three layers - fruit, marzipan, fruit - to indicate the three days that Jesus was in the Tomb; the eleven balls to represent the Apostles remaining after Judas Iscariot had committed suicide between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; and the sweetness of the marzipan to show the new life that Easter brings.

The association between Easter and the Simnel Cake is, in fact, relatively modern, since it was these Cakes that Girls in Service, from the 17th Century onwards, were allowed to bake in the

kitchens of grand houses and take to their Mothers on their one-day-a-year holiday - the Sunday we now call Mothering Sunday, formerly known as Lautere Sunday, which falls in Lent.

Lent now looms and with it comes both the longer days from which the word Lent derives but also a period of austerity. The practice of Lent abstinence is not exclusive to Church goers: many others choose to give up something for the forty days, not including the Sundays, which mark the run-up to Easter. Fasting, so much a part of Christianity in Mediaeval England, was strictly observed and needed respite periods to make it manageable; and so, on the seventh day of the week, the fast could - and can - be broken.

Lent and Advent, the Season before Christmas, mirror each other. Both penitential, purple Seasons contain one Sunday when the indicating liturgical colour is rose, a lifting of the austerity that traditionally accompanies them both. Lautere or Mothering Sunday, falling on the fourth Sunday in Lent, is that rose-coloured Festival, now almost imminent.

Saint John's owns a rose coloured Altar Frontal and Pulpit Fall. They may only be used twice a year, but they are beautiful and cheering, breaking up the tedium of both Advent and Lent and representing the joy that accompanies the Festivals that follow these penitential Seasons: Christmas and Easter.

On March 22 we shall mark Mothering Sunday with a forty minute Theme Service, during which we shall think about and give thanks for our own Mothers and for all those who fulfil a caring role; for our Mother Church, the Cathedral at Chichester, and for Mary, the Mother of Jesus. There will be small posies of flowers for any Child present to give to their Mother, and Refreshments after the Service.

Please do join us.

Mary Sitwell

GRASS ROOTS

Concerning January 22

Potentially an unremarkable day, unless it is your, or someone else's, birthday, or an anniversary date maybe. But for me in 2020 it must be the date to settle down to write my article for *The Villager*.

Curiosity spurred me on to look up this date in my books that are written by diarists, authors and essayists, and together with my research on the internet, I discovered the following collection of snippets and interesting items.

'Ice on the roads bears horse and man. Vast halo round the moon.'
(Gilbert White, 1769, Hampshire)

'Brother dined with us. Neck of pork roasted. He put the blind down a little. Sun began to weaken the fire.'
(Richard Hayes, 1778, Kent)

'How do you like this cold weather? I hope you have all been earnestly praying for it as a salutary relief from the dreadfully mild and unhealthy season preceding it, fancying yourself half putrified from the want of it, and that you now all draw into the fire, complain that you never felt such bitterness of cold before, that you are half starved, quite frozen, and wish the mild weather back again with all your hearts.'
(Jane Austen, 1801, Hampshire)

'Mr Dixon by agreement came to dine, to give me an account of his success with Mr Wheatly, for his daughter for my brother; and in short it is, that his daughter cannot fancy my brother because of his imperfection in his speech, which I am sorry for, but there the business must die, and we must look out for another.'
(Samuel Pepys' Diaries, 1662)

'Sunday. A cold raw frost fog, dark and dreary... the chapel bell tolled out sharp and sudden through the white mist to give notice of the service a quarter of an hour beforehand. The hedges were hoary with

rime and frost and the trees were hailing large pieces of ice down into the road. Few people in Chapel....I thought the markers in the Bible and Prayers had suddenly become very short, and after service Wilding the Clerk told me the church mice had eaten them off.'

(Diaries. Rev. Francis Kilvert, 1872, Radnorshire)

'I count Edward Thomas as one of my favourite poets. In fact 'Adlestrop' is one of the only two poems I know by heart. (The other being Shelley's 'Masque of Anarchy', learned in a punky rebellious teenage phase.) When Thomas was asked by Robert Frost why, at the age of thirty five, he was going off to fight in the First World War, he bent down and kissed the earth of England. "Literally, for this" he said. I would do the same if asked.'

(*'Meadowland'* John Lewis-Stempel, 2014, Shropshire)

And to conclude, on this day in....

1575 Queen Elizabeth I grants Thomas Tallis and William Byrd music press monopoly.

1901 Queen Victoria died, aged 81, at Osborne House in the Isle of Wight.

1959 Mike Hawthorne, English racing driver died aged 29 in a road accident.

1971 John Lennon and Yoko Ono record 'Power to the people'.

1992 Rebecca Ridgeway became the first woman to row around Cape Horn in a canoe.

2015 Survival Expert, Ray Mears, who was due to make at least £10,000 as a speaker at the Camping, Caravan and Motorhome Show was sacked after he chose caravans as one of his pet hates on the TV show 'Room 101'.

Angie Ridge

(22 January 2020)

PIDDINGHOE PROPERTIES

Old Vicarage

An official report purported to be a character appraisal of the village of Piddinghoe dated November 2006 states that there are 19 buildings within the conservation area of the village, most being Grade 2 and the Church being Grade 1. The earliest were timber framed replaced by flint in the 19th century and the later properties were constructed in flint from the beginning. The earliest is thought to be Old Vicarage, first mentioned in a document dated 1258. Although much altered, a piece that is thought to be the original building is still visible under the stairs.

The main house as it is today was originally two cottages, the earlier one dating from the early 14th century, with a later addition being built in the early 18th century. Both cottages were used as separate dwellings. There is a fascinating document - a petition to the Bishop of Chichester from the brother of the late incumbent of the benefices of Piddinghoe and Telscombe, which were then held together by 'disposition' - requesting that they become a 'legal union'. He declares that Piddinghoe Vicarage is inadequate for the requirements of a new incumbent and Telscombe rectory would be much more suited to his needs. He adds that the population of Piddinghoe is some 237 souls, the village being bordered to the east by the river Ouse and 'the people living there suffer greatly from the ague'. The document is signed by George Hutchins, declaring he is entitled to take over the living from his late brother. This obviously met with approval and in 1727, the Vicarage ceased to be used by the vicar and was divided into two.

In 1967, the later cottage which had been tenanted and neglected was vacated and was threatened with demolition. (During the early years of the 19th century the building was acquired by the Pelham family, the earls of Chichester, so it seems they had not been very attentive and caring landlords.) Fortunately the owners

of the original cottage took possession and extensive repairs were carried out. A north wing was added and the two cottages were then merged.

The house as it is today has been much altered, not surprisingly given its very long history and the varying requirements of numerous occupants. The original building had a thatched roof, as did some other aged village houses, which was removed when the addition was built.

Fortunately, very detailed reports exist of subsequent alterations and of the interesting 'finds' which emerged whilst they were carried out. Amongst a treasure trove of documents and photographs exists a very faded picture of Mrs Phyllis Combs in her 'prize-winning front garden' in 1906. Behind her is the newly erected 'Parish Room' used for meetings and other community events for the next 50 years.

Today, Old Vicarage stands four-squared and resolute and ready to withstand whatever the next few hundred years might throw at it.

Sheila Redman

PIDDINGHOE BIRDS

The Goldfinch **(*Carduelis carduelis*)**

The Goldfinch is a small colourful bird of the Finch family and is native to Europe, North Africa and Central Asia.

‘The Goldfinches on the railway
paling were worth looking at
A man might imagine then
Himself in Brazil
And these birds the birds of
paradise.’

*(from ‘The Great Hunger’
by Patrick Kavanagh)*



Probably one of Britain’s most colourful resident birds, and smaller than the Chaffinch, Goldfinches quite frequently visit my bird feeders, and are always a pleasure to see. With their spectacular plumage - red face, black and white head, white belly, yellow wing bars, and black and white spotted tail - they are not hard to identify. Females are generally the same but duller in colour.

The Goldfinch is a seed and insect-eating bird. It uses its long beak to extract seeds from teasels and thistles as well as other plants – dandelion, burdock, etc - and of course, it often visits bird tables. It is a sociable bird, usually to be seen with other Goldfinches. Its habitat is varied: parks, gardens, rough ground, orchards, anywhere with bushes and trees.

The female Goldfinch makes a neat, well-constructed nest of moss, wool, hair, and any other available materials, usually built high on the branch of a small tree and precariously, at the end of

a branch. Four to six eggs with pale blue and red markings are laid. Incubation then takes 11-13 days. Upon leaving the nest, the young are fed by both parents for about a week.

In winter, Goldfinches flock together in what are called 'charms', sometimes in large numbers. I have seen a 'charm' of 100 or more in northern France and a memorable sight that was! Some Goldfinches are permanently resident here and others make a short migration to France, Spain, or Belgium. The song of the Goldfinch is a melodious 'liquid tinkling with trills', and its call announcing its presence is a 'whit whit.' Their distinctive song made them very attractive as cage birds.

In the 19th century, thousands and thousands of goldfinches over Europe were trapped and sold as cage birds. It was fashionable then to own a bird in a cage. Reporting in the 'Zoologist' in 1860 a Mr Hussey estimated 'the annual capture of this species near Worthing at about 1,154 dozen (almost 14,000) nearly all cocks!' As a consequence of this, numbers of Goldfinches were much diminished. The arrival of the RSPB stopped the trade and from the 1930s a recovery took place.

In conservation terms, goldfinches are now still doing well, and their numbers have remained stable, partly due to the use of seeds on bird tables such as Nyger, and sunflower kernals. The outlook now looks good for these birds.

'I love to see the little goldfinch pluck
The groundsel's feathered seed, and "twit twit"
And soon in bower of apple blossoms perch'd
Trim his gay suit, and pay us with a song.
I would not hold him pris'ner for the world.

(Hurdis: 'Village Curate')

Julia Clayson

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO 'THE VILLAGER'?

Articles, letters, snippets are all welcome. If you want to contribute an article, please try to make it about 550 words or less. Due to space and time restrictions we can't guarantee inclusion in the magazine, but we'll do our best to accommodate everybody.

If possible please send articles as Word documents, attached to an email addressed to either **piercewilliam991@gmail.com** or **davies.gill@btinternet.com**

The deadline for contributions to the next Villager is 3 April.