



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH HELD ON  
MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026. STARTING AT 6.30PM.**

**71.26 To record those present and list of apologies**

**Those Present:** Councillors: K Lamb (Chair), C Chapman (Vice Chair) B Swan, G Clements, C Francis, J Osbourne & 15 members of the public

**72.26 Chair Report –**

For those of you who are unaware our clerk has moved on to pastures new. Currently we are sharing the workload, with Christeen doing a fabulous job in ensuring that the key tasks are completed. Christeen, Brian and I are sharing the admin tasks and temporarily covering the role of RFO. So, apologies if things take a bit longer but normal business will be resumed as soon as we appoint a new Clerk and RFO. I would like to run through some of the things the parish council does as people's perceptions of what the PC is for and what we actually do in reality are often quite far removed. This is not an exhaustive list

**Precept:** One of the key things we do is guarding the public purse. We are responsible for setting the precept each year. This is the money that we ask the District Council to take out of your pockets for Parish expenditure each year. This year it was about £ 88,000. This works out at about £58 per household per year. Just over a pound a week. 15 pence a day, so you get all of what the pc does for very little.

Parish councillors get nothing. We don't get paid at all. We get no allowance. You get all of our time and effort for free.

I'm just going to run through where that astonishing £1.10 goes.

This is not in any particular order of priority or importance:

**Administration and governance :** We organise the precept and we try to make sure the council is run in a sensible fashion. We employ a clerk for that, and the clerk is also our responsible financial officer.

**Burial ground administration:** This is a key legal responsibility for us and is very time consuming. Brian has very kindly agreed to take on this role for the moment. This involves dealing with people trying to buy plots, liaising with funeral directors when people are being interred, and agreeing memorials and headstones. Then there are people looking for graves etc where people were buried a long time ago. The records need to be kept up to date.

**Grounds maintenance:** We maintain, Via a contractor, various grounds, verges and open spaces around the village including the Gore, and the King George the Fifth play park. It can be contentious sometimes striking a balance between what the public want. Some people would like to see unkept wild spaces while others like to see neatly manicured lawns. PFE currently runs the KGV playpark for us. PFE was set up as a charity a long time ago for that purpose, to provide a playpark for

youngsters that was sadly lacking in the village. This has been very successful. The gore has had numerous uses over its life : it's been a cricket pitch, football pitches, a scout hut sheep grazing. At the moment we are working very hard to raise funds to finance new facilities. We have a very successful Elham Valley Football team, and we would like to see their success expanding into creating opportunities for juniors, girls and veterans .

**Allotments:** The PC provide allotments adjacent to the burial ground. I believe there are one or two spares at the moment. The allotments are currently run by the Elham Allotment partnership

**War Memorial:** We're responsible for maintaining the War Memorial. There are currently some on-going maintenance issues which the pc are hoping to resolve in time for this year's remembrance service which the pc also organise in conjunction with the RBL and the church

**Highways:** We deal with KCC's highways representatives. We have a very good relationship with them. We have asked them to please prioritise certain issues and they have been very helpful when funding constraints allow. We had a very productive meeting during the flooding issues with Chris Hespe our KCC councillor and his team and they were very helpful in explaining the way forward and the actions they were taking on our behalf

**Churchyard.** The parish council, according to available records, is responsible for maintaining the closed Churchyard. This is distinct from the burial ground. That means that we are responsible for most things in it, apart from the church, including the wall around it and the gates etc. Owing to a catastrophe that befell the wall its cost about £ 50,000 to put right. In the last couple of years, the precept has had to be hiked up to cover that. It's an awfully large amount of money and we're doing our best to make sure that this doesn't happen again. We are currently looking at a maintenance operation where we have a budget set aside for an ongoing running maintenance for the churchyard walls.

**Twinning:** Councillors put a lot of effort into organising a twinning with Ambleteuse, over several years. We've now handed this to the Elham Twinning Association who hopefully are going to carry this forward.

**Community orchard:** This is a long-term project that was kindly funded by a grant from KCC and is currently making good progress.

**Environment group:** This was set up by the Parish Council several years ago and thanks to the efforts of the very small band of original members they're now going from strength to strength, again, funded by the Parish Council.

**Planning applications:** This takes up a considerable amount of time. This is Christeen's role and she puts a huge amount of effort into this. It's a key part of local democracy. It's local people voicing an opinion and trying to persuade the district that we want a say in what happens here.

**Correspondence:** We don't get a huge amount, but it is time consuming. There are very good, legitimate grounds for asking the parish council what we do and for having an interest in what is happening locally. We try very hard as a Parish Council to be open and visible in what we do. All our meetings are open to the public, information is published in the notice board, on the Parish council website and in the newsletter. All the information is available for all to see.

Every year there is a thing called the "exercise of public rights", and that means for several weeks people can pore through the financial records. By arrangement, you can come and see income and expenses, all the bank statements, receipts etc.

However, this has to be supervised, to ensure the safety of the records and for

GDPR, so there's a cost to that for us all. This is not a new facility.  
Moving forward I'd like to outline some of our key plans for this year.  
Organising contractors for long term regular maintenance of the churchyard wall.  
Ensuring that King George V play park has a viable long-term strategy. The  
playground equipment is getting older and that has got to be replaced at some stage.  
Ensuring that the Gore is retained as a long-term valuable asset for the village by  
refurbishing the facilities and ensuring varied sporting and leisure opportunities.  
Parish woodland. George Palmer left a piece of woodland to the Parish Council as a  
gift to provide an income and a facility for the Parish. We are currently working  
through the legal process and hope to shortly begin organising the large amount of  
work required in managing this new asset.

**73.26 Kent Council Councillors report** - A copy of the report issued is at *appendix 1*

**74.26 District Councillors report**

Councillor Scoffham, please see *appendix 2a*.

A copy of Councillor Godfreys report sent in his absence, please see *appendix 2b*.

A copy of Councillor Butcher's report sent in his absence, please see *appendix 2c*

**75.26 Reports from Elham Village Organisations –**

- **Elham Newsletter** - *please see appendix 3.*
- **The Community Shed** - *please see appendix 4.*
- **Elham Environment Group** - *please see appendix 5.*
- **Elham Farmers Market** – *please see appendix 6.*
- **Elham Valley Cricket Club** – *please see appendix 7.*
- **Elham Historical Society** – *please see appendix 8.*
- **Elham Twinning Association** – *please see appendix 9.*
- **Elham Primary School**– *please see appendix 10.*
- **Elham Valley Football Club** – *please see appendix 11.*
- **Friends of St Marys** - *please see appendix 12.*
- **Play for Elham Charity**– *please see appendix 13.*
- **Elham Gardening Society** – *please see appendix 14.*
- **Elham Neighbourhood Watch** – *please see appendix 15.*
- **Royal British Legion** - *please see appendix 16.*
- **Elham and Acrise Samaritans** – *please see appendix 17.*
- **Elham Allotment Partnership TEAP** – *please see appendix 18.*
- **Elham Sports Club** – *please see appendix 19.*
- **Elham Village Hall** - *please see appendix 20.*
- **Elham Valley Walkers** - *please see appendix 21.*
- **Elham Pétanque Club** - *please see appendix 22.*
- **Elham Methodist Church** - *please see appendix 23.*
- **Elham Friendship Lunch Group** - *please see appendix 24.*

## **76.26 Public Session**

### **□ Bequeathed Woodland**

Chris Burrows enquired about the woodland which has been bequeathed to the Parish Council by George Palmer. The Chair advised that the Council were in the process of instructing solicitors. However, until legal ownership has been formally transferred, the Council is unable to insure the land or take any further substantive action.

### **□ Management Plan and Funding**

Stephen Scoffham asked whether a Management Plan was in place. It was confirmed that this will be developed at the right time. He also suggested exploring a Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC) grant to help offset associated costs. It was noted that essential works will be required to ensure the land is safe, and these are likely to incur significant expense.

### **□ Long-Term Strategy**

Jim Clemence asked about the Parish Council's longer-term strategy. The Chair explained that the bequest from George Palmer includes specific conditions. The woodland, which is approximately 7 acres in size, currently generates a modest income and is expected to become a valuable community asset for the village.

### **□ Clerk Recruitment**

Renee Bull asked for an update regarding the appointment of a new Clerk. It was reiterated that the Council remains in a transitional phase. This had been covered in the Chairman's report.

### **□ Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**

Anne Leva enquired about the RFO role. This was covered in the Chairman's report, but members were again advised that this function is currently being covered by the Vice Chair, with support from another councillor.

## **77.26 Close**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.48pm.

## **Appendix 1 – County Councillor Christopher Hespe - 2025/26 Annual Report Kent County Council**

With many Parish Councils in Elham Valley (there are 16!) holding their annual meetings around this time, it may be opportune to reflect on my first year as a County Councillor. My role is to ensure good quality services are provided at County and local level, whilst representing the 20,000 residents of Elham Valley. I have been welcomed in so many places, and I would like to thank you for that. The County Council is the largest in England, is hugely complex and has a net spend of approximately £1.6 billion. I will write a future newsletter outlining the breadth and reach of KCC, but for the time being you may be interested to hear what the first year of the new administration at County Hall has achieved:

### **Money**

We inherited a dreadful financial position from the previous administration, but in the year, we have reduced debt by £114 million and debt interest paid by £3,362 per day. We managed to set a Council Tax increase lower than 86% of County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils in England. Across the year, we made £115 million savings and re-prioritised future spend of £39.5 million.

A budget for 2026/27 has been set with no extra borrowings, a net increase in reserves, and increased spending for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment, Highways and Transport.

### **Putting Kent First**

For Local Government Reorganisation, we devised an option for local government to save Kent taxpayers £450 million over 10 years.

We produced 'Reforming Kent'; a plan setting out Kent's priorities.

The Council scrapped the 'Climate Emergency Declaration' and subsequent need to spend and achieve Net Zero by 2030. We declared an 'Illegal Migration Emergency' in Kent to highlight cost and safety; and we campaigned for new nuclear provision at Dungeness; International rail services to reopen at Ashford and Ebbsfleet; and began exploration of establishing an Environment Tax for foreign lorries.

### **Saving Services**

We overturned proposals to close 34 Libraries, close Country Parks, lose 35 Community Wardens, discontinue with School Crossing Staff and close four Household Waste Centres, which had all been threatened by the previous administration.

### **Education Services**

We struggled with the increasing cost of special educational needs, and reducing costs of home to school transport proved to be an ongoing problem. But overall, 98% of Early Years settings were deemed 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and 96% of pupils obtained a place at one of their preferred schools.

### **Businesses**

We were keen to support Kent businesses, so we produced Kent's first Commercial Strategy, provided enhanced support for 500 Kent supplier companies, and awarded £55 million more value of contracts to Kent companies. More than 1,100 businesses were assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub.

#### Roads

Like all areas in the UK, our roads suffered during the 'freeze/thaw' of Winter. The surfaces were patched on a temporary basis, but we can usually only provide a good repair in dryer weather. We spent a record amount on pothole repairs (£67 million) and filled in the region of 50,000 potholes, which is a significant increase on previous years. We re-tendered for a new contractor, and Ringway will commence in May 2026. The heavy rainfall posed drainage problems, particularly in Elham and Ottinge, although we did manage to clear more than 85,000 gullies across the County. Significant road improvements were made during the year, including Spitfire Way in Hawkinge, the High Street in Etchinghill and the B2086 (Stone Street) near Petham and Stanford.

#### Other Services

We carried out 7,000 weddings and civil ceremonies, welcomed 2.7 million visitors to libraries and 1.2 million to country parks. Some 99.6% of municipal waste was diverted from landfill and the Council dealt with well over 650,000 tonnes of waste.

#### Member Community Grants

Grants were issued to a number of organisations in Elham Valley, including MCA Dance for Special Needs; Hawkinge Community Events for Summer, Halloween and Christmas events; Elham Valley Cricket Club; Sellindge and District Bowls Club and Shepway Wanderers FC Disability.

#### The Next Year

I am committed to protecting valued services and ensuring your money is spent wisely. We will have tighter contracts and greater value for money, and I will seek to ensure that Elham Valley residents' needs are addressed by KCC.

#### **Chris Hespe**

Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley, and Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency and Reorganisation

## **Appendix 2a – District Councillor Stephen Scoffham**

This report touches on some of the things which have been happening across the district and locally over the last year.

### **Folkestone a Brighter Future**

The work on the £22 million regeneration programme for the Folkestone town centre is proceeding well and is now more than half complete. This is a complex scheme with multiple sites around the town but hopefully it will be completed by the end of the year, and we will all be able to reap the benefits.

### **Folca/Debenhams**

The red brick Victorian part of the old Debenhams buildings (Folca 1) has been put up for sale and attracted some promising bids. Meanwhile, it is envisaged that the white Art Deco building (Folca 2) will become a mixed-use commercial space at ground level with a new medical centre located on the first and second floors. The two surgeries involved have over 20,000 patients and once relocated, will bring much needed footfall and life to the heart of the town.

### **Lower Leas Coastal Park**

The refurbishment of the play area and facilities at the Lower Leas Coastal Park has now started, with a cost of £750,000. The Lower Leas is hugely popular with both locals and visitors alike so upgrading the equipment will be much appreciated. When the Water Lift is restored and back in operation this will be an additional attraction.

### **Swimming pools**

The Sports Trust has been granted £2.4 million to refurbish the public swimming pool at Folkestone Sports Centre. It is planned to complete the work this year, before work to refurbish Hythe Pool begins in 2027. This means there will continue to be public swimming facilities in the district, and both pools will be upgraded.

### **New Affordable Homes**

Another good news story is that the first council tenants have begun to move into the newly built, affordable rent homes on the Risborough Barracks development in Folkestone. A total of 44 homes are due to be completed by the autumn and will be allocated to applicants on the council's housing list. All these new homes will have an EPC rating B, keeping down energy costs and supporting the council's carbon reduction ambitions.

### **Carbon Reduction Strategy**

The district-wide carbon reduction strategy was published earlier this year. This establishes that if we are to meet net zero by 2041 and our obligations under the Paris Agreement, we will need to reduce emissions by around 10% a year. The Council is only responsible for a very small percentage of district wide carbon emissions, so everyone needs to play their part in making this happen. Meanwhile, the Council's ambition to meet net zero by 2030 on its own estate remains unchanged.

### **Freight to Rail**

We are all aware that the congestion caused by operation BROCK occurs at regular intervals. We have no direct powers over motorway transport but since being elected I have been campaigning to shift cross channel freight from road to rail. We have now achieved results, and the way is now open to transport freight direct to a depot in Barking. With over 5000 heavy goods vehicles a day passing through our district, lorries account for about half of local transport carbon emissions.

### **Green Grants scheme**

The second round of the Green Grants scheme was launched last week. Applications are invited during May and June. The closing date is June 26<sup>th</sup>, and details can be found on the Folkestone Works website – just look for Folkestone Hythe Green Grants using a google search. With £250, 000 available, this is a great opportunity for local groups and businesses to initiate and develop environmental and social welfare schemes which contribute to the sustainability of the district.

### **Storm Gorette**

Last year the Environment Agency approved a £2.35 million pound scheme for beach defences between Folkestone and Hythe. The scheme involves moving beach shingle from east to west to build up a buffer against floods and storms. It was put to the test by Storm Gorette in January when freak winds wreaked havoc along the seashore. Fortunately, the defences held firm, proving that the system is effective.

### **Bathing Water Quality**

I have been to numerous meetings to discuss the problems with sewage and bathing water quality. Those of you who watched the Channel 4 docudrama ‘Dirty Business’ will have been as outraged as I was by the way that water companies across the country are discharging raw sewage into rivers and seas and the ineffective action by the regulatory authorities to stop this happening. As a council we have no direct powers regarding regulation, but we are doing our utmost to hold Southern Water to account and to liaise in the most effective way with their officers.

### **Recycling**

District level recycling rates remain steady at around 46%. Given that the figures are based on tonnage, and that packaging is getting lighter, this is an improvement – we have to run to stay still. From now on juice cartons and tetra-packs can be recycled. Meanwhile the discount scheme for black boxes continues to attract steady interest and, as we approach the summer season, five new electronic composter bins will be installed along the beach to help cope with sudden changes in demand.

### **Otterpool Park**

The negotiations regarding Otterpool Park are at a critical stage and involve intense discussions and meetings with Home England, our strategic partner. The headline news is that Home England are resourcing the project intensively and at a high level and that planning permission has been granted for the Wastewater Treatment Plant which is critical to the development. Full updates should be available shortly once the negotiations are no longer confidential.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

We anticipate an announcement by the Secretary of State regarding local government re-organisation during the summer months. This will confirm the boundaries of the new unitary authorities across Kent and mark the end Folkestone and Hythe District Council's role in local government.

**Appendix 2b – District Councillor David Godfrey – sent in his absence.**

As a back bencher of a minority group, I have less influence over Council Policy than my fellow Ward Councillors who are both Cabinet Members (Green Party). We work well together and reach a consensus although there are occasions where I have voted against proposals put at full Council albeit, always outvoted but that is Democracy. I also sit on one of the Councils Scrutiny committees which gives us the opportunity to challenge Council decisions.

As residents will know we are currently undergoing Local Government Re-organisation which will disband existing District and borough Councils and establish larger Unitary groups. We are awaiting the Governments decision on FHDC preference to join with Dover, Thanet, Ashford and Canterbury. Reform led KCC have a very different view on how LGR should be determined so the Governments decision is eagerly awaited,

My main concern with the current administration is the endless delays to the Otterpool Park Garden Town development for which consent and support was won by the previous Conservative Administration when I was a Cabinet Member. Although originally voting against Otterpool the current Green and Labour groups now recognise that Otterpool should bring significant benefits to our District but at this time I fear those benefits may be diminished by constant delays.

I have used my 2025/26 Ward budget supporting projects throughout the Ward including. King George V field, Hawkinge Men's Shed and Summerfest and the Early years project, I am pleased to advise that our members Ward budget allowance for 2026/27 has been increased to £5000 Applications can be made from 18th May on the FHDC website.

I have now represented the district continuously since 2007 and at this time will not be seeking re-election at the end of the current term which ends in May 2027 and wish to thank all residents who have supported me through the years,

**Cllr David Godfrey**

## **Appendix 2c – District Councillor James Butcher – sent in his absence.**

### **The local economy**

Growing the local economy is one of the central themes of the District Council’s new corporate plan, and F&HDC has commissioned an appraisal of the economic opportunities and challenges across the different areas of the district – including the North Downs. As part of the process, we held a meeting at the Hawkinge Community Centre to capture ideas about the issues in our part of the district (e.g. public transport). The report is due to be published shortly.

Last year the District Council launched a programme to support high street and rural businesses with the challenges of the 21st century retail environment, with about 50 businesses across the district participating. And once the Folkestone – a Brighter Future works are completed at the end of the summer, the focus will shift to bringing more life and activity to the town centre, with the recruitment of a town centre manager who will oversee a year-round programme of markets and live events.

### **Tourism**

Tourism is one of the significant economic sectors for our district: millions of people visit each year, spending £269m locally, which supports about 5,000 jobs. We work with local tourism businesses through the District Tourism Board to make sure we focus our limited resources on what matters to them – recently we ran a “shoulder season” campaign to attract people to the district in the quieter months of the year.

A North Downs tourism map has just been published highlighting visitor attractions in this part of the district (including the Elham Valley Way), and the council continues to develop [folkestoneandhythe.co.uk](http://folkestoneandhythe.co.uk) – the district’s tourism website.

We’re waiting to hear the outcome of a bid for UNESCO Geopark status for the unique chalk landscape of the North Downs that extends under the Channel to the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d’Opale in France. Whether the bid is successful or not, there are all sorts of opportunities to encourage visitors who have an interest in landscape and ecology to visit our area, and the district council is starting a project to work with local businesses on more sustainable approaches to tourism.

### **Housing**

Building more council homes is another of the priorities in the F&HDC Corporate Plan: since 2023 Over 100 council homes have been delivered or are in the immediate pipeline, with many more to come over the next couple of years. Meanwhile the District Council is investing £5m into expanding its stock of temporary accommodation, which will see at least 20 properties bought to be used for homeless households in the district. Using council-owned properties as temporary accommodation reduces the reliance on private, nightly-let temporary accommodation and is much more cost-effective in the long term.

### **Public engagement**

The F&HDC Corporate Plan includes a commitment to develop new ways of engaging with people and ensuring that everyone has the chance to be heard, particularly young people. As a result, we’ve established a Youth Forum to consult with representatives from all the secondary schools in the district about their ideas for the future. The Youth Forum meets in the council chamber with F&HDC officers and district councillors. The March meeting focused on the Leas Coastal Park improvements, the Hythe swimming pool, litter & recycling, and the Town of Culture bid. One attendee commented: “I like the feeling of being heard.”

Locally we set up the North Downs Forum to bring together community groups, local councillors, small businesses, and interested individuals, sharing ideas and expertise, and getting a stronger voice for our rural and town communities at the District Council. Previous meetings have focused on the local economy, tourism (leading to the North Downs map highlighted above), local food production and biodiversity, social isolation & local health services, and community energy projects. Anyone is welcome to join, so if you think you might be interested, do get in touch.

### **Funding for community projects and services**

The Rural England Prosperity Fund provides government capital grant funding for both businesses and community projects in rural areas. There are still some funds remaining, although we're processing a lot of expressions of interest – if you're looking for funding for a project (which must be completed by August), you can find details at [www.folkestone.works](http://www.folkestone.works). The first year of the F&HDC Green Grant scheme supported almost 40 organisations with grants ranging from a few hundred pounds to £20,000 to support biodiversity and sustainability projects. The second round of the scheme was launched last week at the Sustainable Futures Forum. This is a network that brings together community groups and businesses to share information and support each other's projects. For example, local firm AW Construction finds ways to avoid sending leftover building materials to landfill, something the Hawkinge Allotments were able to benefit from in resourcing one of their projects.

Each year district councillors have had a ward grant budget of £3k to help fund local community projects, and F&HDC are now increasing that budget to £5k. This year's scheme will open on 18th May, with details on the F&HDC website - do get in touch if you have a project, you think we could help with.

In addition, the District Council continues to fund a wide range of community groups and services like the local community hubs that provide low-cost meals, food and fuel vouchers, digital support, and warm spaces for vulnerable people, and Citizens Advice which helps people with information on debt and benefits, housing, consumer rights, legal matters, immigration and employment queries.

Finally, F&HDC previously introduced a 100% council tax premium on second homes and on homes that have been left empty for over a year. The District Council have decided to use the extra funding to provide a 100% discount for working-age households on the very lowest incomes, to match the government-mandated scheme for those of pensionable age.

### **UK Town of Culture 2028**

F&HDC has now submitted an "expression of interest" to the government to be considered for the UK Town of Culture 2028, which brings with it a £3m investment pot. Back in February we held an engagement event at the Leas Cliff Hall with over 90 individuals and organisations participating and helping to shape the ideas in the bid.

The proposed Town of Culture programme inevitably focuses on Folkestone itself, but many of the cultural organisations in the town are keen to extend their reach across the district. For example, I've previously used some of my ward grant budget to support a series of songwriting workshops in Elham, run by Folkestone Music Town.

We should hear in the next few weeks whether we're through to the next round.

**Cllr James Butcher**

### **Appendix 3- Elham Village Newsletter Newsletter Report by Renee Bull (editor) May 2026**

I took over the role of Editor in August 2019 and in those seven years have made many changes to the Elham Newsletter.

Historically there has been only 10 editions each year, with no editions in January or August, which is when advertising payments are collected. Putting together a February Newsletter is an almost unmanageable task, so I decided to also publish a January edition in 2026. This was received well by advertisers, although I'm not sure the amazing distribution team were too delighted to receive their copies for delivery just before New Years Eve. We are also pleased that Barry Webb has offered his services in upgrading our posters. He has obviously enjoyed using his new skills for a variety of organisations within the village.

Elham Village Hall does not charge for any of the local clubs or groups to put items into the publication: it is the advertisers and small businesses that pay for the printing. The EVHA Trustees believe in the value of producing 800 hard copies each month for our community and are grateful for the contribution from Elham Parish Council this year. The Newsletter is of particular benefit to new residents in Elham. This financial year we have taken £7000 in advertising money and our printer's price remains unchanged at the moment. I continue to use The Sustainable Printworks to print the 800 copies each month, they don't just use sustainably sourced and recycled papers; they actively plant trees, use energy from renewable sources and recycle waste wherever possible. Their price and service have remained unchanged for 3 years. I recently did a presentation at the Elham Friendship Lunch Club about the Newsletter and was able to take old copies of the Newsletter to remind the members of its development. Originally in the 1950s it was a single Newsheet. I read out the names of past editors and volunteers who contributed to the production of the Newsletter, at one time there were 6 volunteers who had various roles in producing the newsletter. Now there is just me, yet I get emails requesting I 'pass details to the artwork teams' or to the Finance department'!

Janet Pain has continued to manage the distribution of the newsletter and keeps a list of willing volunteers who can step in if necessary to deliver each month. The monthly editions are posted on Elham Village Hall website in full colour, and we have learned from our Ambleteuse Twinning group to keep past editions on our website for reference.

As long as folk in the village and our advertisers continue to send in payment and contributions, the production will continue.

**Renee Bull May 26**

## **Appendix 4 – Elham Community Shed Report from The Community Shed to Elham Parish Council May 2026**

This has been an eventful year for the Elham Community Shed. January 2026 began with a first anniversary membership renewal party, which was well supported and enjoyed. The membership remains at 66. The Shed Team has welcomed not only new members but also new session leaders, willing to share their expertise. Membership payments have enabled us to meet our ongoing running costs and purchase some additional tools and consumables. Encouraging more of those 66 members to become actively involved participants is still an aim for the Shed Team. The shocking weather at the start of the year did not help but last month, fifty folks have attended sessions. Elham Community Shed is open on Tuesday for coffee and conversations, Thursday all day and Saturday mornings. Some of the members attend very regularly, some come to work on particular projects, some come to work on their own tasks, others to learn new skills and some just come when they can.

The dry weather has enabled the completion of a pallet ‘Safe Space Booth’ requested via the UKMensShed organisation for the Caldecott Foundation School in Smeeth. This has been constructed using only recycled donated timber. It is intended to deliver the booth this week. The Ward Grant from the District Council, with which we purchased a nail gun, has proved invaluable on the booth build and also on the bird and bat box constructions made jointly with Elham Environment Group.

We remain indebted to the people who donate tools and materials to enhance our work. In April we held a ‘Garden Tool Sharpening’ fund-raising morning which was very well attended and seemed to be appreciated by gardeners. This year it raised over £250. This facilitates the purchase of necessary consumables and new equipment.

The French guests from Ambleteuse were welcomed to The Shed on their visit on 23rd April. They showed considerable interest in the ethos and practical work, and all went home with a fine Shed-made Elham\ Ambleteuse key fob memento created from old donated oak gateposts by Graham Holstock, one of our session leaders.

Other activities – The lathe wood turning sessions have been in demand and successful, well tutored by Graham. Other recent activities include whittling spoons and whistles, stool making, furniture mending, building dead hedges on the Village Hall site and maintaining our tools, shed and wood store.

New activities are being planned, for example essential bike maintenance, learning to knit and outdoor game making. We hope that all EP Councillors keep up to date with Elham Community Shed news through the monthly Newsletter reports.

Underpinning all these activities is the ethos of spending time together and sharing experience and expertise. Chatting is good! We have a regular number of members who just call in for coffee.

**Jim Clements ECS**

## **Appendix 5 – Elham Environment Group**

The last twelve months have been a period of growth and of change for the Elham Environment Group. This time last year we were small in number and resources, with the work we could undertake and our ability to plan for more ambitious projects limited. Now our informal group of regular contributors and meeting attendees has grown to nine, with new members bringing fresh ideas, enthusiasm and, most importantly, time resources to our efforts to promote biodiversity in the village and the wider parish. Some of our time has been spent on the projects initiated in the group's earlier years - notably the herb garden in the King George V playing field, which continues to provide a valuable resource for pollinating insects as well as for the village's kitchens! We also repeated our annual hedge planting day in December, the saplings ordered for us by the council from the Woodland Trust creating another 100m of hedgerow along one of the fencelines of the cricket pitch.

The no-cut strategy introduced by the council last year is again bringing life and colour to the margins of the Gore and the KGV playing field. A review of the scope of the maintenance plan is due, with a view to possibly extending its scope.

In conjunction with the community shed, our project to make roosts and homes for bats and different bird species is now in its second year – having installed boxes around the village, notably in the burial ground, our emphasis has now shifted to encouraging parishioners to put boxes up in their gardens, which we make at the shed and sell at cost. We now have designs for the various garden birds, swifts, tawny owls and barn owls - and plan to continue the project for as long as there is demand for the boxes. A new project suggested by the parish council is the creation of a small wildflower meadow at the east end of the churchyard, where fill from the reconstruction of the perimeter wall has been deposited. We will be sowing seeds, the progress of which we will monitor and report back to the council later in the summer.

Returning to our efforts to support our local bird populations, parishioners may be aware that we have a small population of Swifts which return to the village in May every year, the first sightings of 2026 occurring a couple of weeks ago. We have in recent months made contact with the Canterbury Swift Group, whose knowledge and enthusiasm has been invaluable – and, along with similar groups in other villages in the district, we will through the summer be surveying our visitors and establishing where they nest, with a view to installing boxes in an effort to boost their numbers in future years.

More recently, we have also assisted one of our newer members in carrying out local surveys of small mammals, the data gathered feeding into the database of the Kent Small Mammals conservation group. The surveys will be continued in the Autumn and expanded to include Harvest Mice.

Finally, we have been introduced by councillor Scoffham to the Kent Downs Heritage Ponds project, an initiative to re-establish historic rural ponds which have dried up. We hope to find a pond in the vicinity of the village this year, to make plans for our own local conservation effort, and in so doing, provide valuable new sources of water and habitat.

**Report by Chris Burrows**

Elham Environment Group

May 2026

## **Appendix 6 – Elham Farmers Market**

As the Farmers Market Manager, I consider it a large part of my role to try and get as many stalls as possible, whilst ensuring they fit in with the concept of a Food and Craft Festival. Inevitably there are some cross overs, but overall, I think there is always a good selection of stalls. We have our regular attendees but each market we have at least 4/5 new stall holders, the stalls are spread between Church and the Square

The Christmas Market 2025 was a great success with a record number of stalls, winter sunshine, Santa, elves and a Grotto kindly built for us by Julian and Lyn.

The Summer Market 2025 also went well with thankfully fantastic weather despite the weather forecast – this event often has a few less stalls, which I think is because a lot of markets run on a more regular basis through the spring/summer and therefore have a more established vendor following

We were delighted to be able to send £1775 to the local MND charity from the proceeds of both our raffles and surplus stall fees

We are currently preparing for our Summer 2026 market, at this point we have 37 stalls. As a market we are working closely with the EHO to ensure all our food/drinks stalls have adequate paperwork allowing for the changes in legislation, giving us another level of accountability. This has been extremely time consuming, but I think we are there. We are grateful to the Kent Farmers Market Association (KFMA) for their support with this

We have added two new committee members to our team which has almost halved the average age of the committee!! We are also lucky to now have a marketing expert who will take over our marketing moving forward, - much to my relief – not sure we will be going viral or having a TikTok account, but who knows.

These markets genuinely could not run without our merry band of volunteers and our small but perfectly formed committee. We are also lucky to have generous donations to our raffles, plus support with our printing and advertising. As with all village events there is a lot of planning required, from clearing the church on the Saturday to putting the church back together on the Sunday.

I think the most stressful part of the market is the arrival of the stall holders – there is a peak time at about 8.30am when everyone swoops in and my carefully created plan of where everyone is going gets screwed up. - I have been asked to supply all the committee with my stall plan on the day, which I have avoided so far as they will all then realize my clipboard is empty and I am just winging it.

I love reading in the local newsletter how many people comment Open Gardens, so fingers crossed for good weather and lots of visitors. I don't think I will mention the P word (parking), however please be assured we do our best, but cannot always allow for external influences – like people just parking wherever they want.

**Debbie Francis**  
**Farmers Market Manager**

## **Appendix 7– Elham Cricket Club**

### **ANNUAL REPORT TO ELHAM PARISH MEETING**

The Cricket Club continues to thrive, although we are finding it difficult at times to get 11 players for each match. We have plenty of names on the books but a lot of them are not committed to playing regularly. We have recently put leaflets through doors in various villages in the Elham Valley to see if anyone is interested in playing.

On Saturdays we play in Division 10 Shepherd, which is basically East Kent, of the Kent Cricket League. On Sundays we play in The Kent Village League Division 4 East but have lost our first match yesterday at Boughton under Blean.

Our Juniors are up and running with training on Friday evenings under the capable hands of Kavan Risby. At present we do not have sufficient numbers in any age group to field a team, but that may change as the season progresses.

Kavan has been going into Elham School to offer coaching, and he hopes to continue this.

Hythe Green CC are playing their home matches on our ground, which means there is cricket almost every Saturday at Holloway Field. Spectators are always welcome.

We have also collaborated with the Elham Environmental Group who have planted a hedge on the village side of the ground and may be doing some more next winter.

**Frank Hobbs**  
**Chairman EVCC**

## **Appendix 8– Elham Historical Society**

We have enjoyed an excellent year, apart from our President, Derek Boughton suffering a series of bad falls and ending up in hospital. Happy to report that he continues to recover well but will sadly no longer be residing in our village.

We have continued our Changing Face of Elham series which has gradually taken us around the Parish boundary. The latest instalment, talk 6, took us from Rakesole Farm to Ladwood, Standard Hill, South Lodge, Wick, Acrise Place, Winterage, Shuttlesfield, Mill Down, Bereforstal and ending at Lower Court, Ottinge. Talks 7 and 8 are in the pipeline and will complete our journey.

We have worked with Elham School on the Annual History Prize, the subject this year being The Elham Valley Railway Line. Following a talk to the whole school, the children were asked to write essays, poems, draw pictures or make collages, and one student from each of the four class groups was awarded a prize of books. The best of the 4 winners was also awarded The André Sladden Cup.

All the children in the two older class groups were also given an historical guided tour of the Village.

A recent talk by David Brocklehurst MBE, of The Kent Battle of Britain Hawkinge Museum, entitled The Battle of Britain in The Elham Valley, was very well attended and received. Our next talk is entitled Archaeology in the Elham Valley, delivered by Dr Andrew Richardson who is the Finds Liaison Officer for Kent Archaeology.

You don't have to be a member of our Society to attend the talks, but it is cheaper on the door if you are. At only £10 per head for annual membership, it is also excellent value. Elham is full of wonderful history so come along and find out more about our great Village.

**Chris Francis,  
Chairman.**

## **Appendix 9 – Elham Twinning Association**

The Elham Ambleteuse Twinning Association has been active this year in trying to develop the cross-Channel links between the two villages. This follows the work carried out over the past few years by council officials on both sides to set up this new association.

A working group was set up with a chairman, Anne Leva, vice chairman, Maria Kiernan, and secretary, Janet Wood, and representatives from most of the village organisations, to make sure that all parts of our community could be involved if they wished.

We had meetings to decide how to progress and develop our exchanges with Ambleteuse. The obvious aim was to organise a first visit for members, and it came as a shock to us in Elham when Ambleteuse suggested coming over to see us, giving us just six weeks to prepare.

This visit took place on Thursday 23 April, a beautiful sunny day, making Elham look at its very best.

Our 10 French visitors arrived, an hour early! But the team of members who had volunteered, or had their arm twisted, to help sprang into action. Bacon butties being prepared in the Village Hall kitchen, tea and coffee being brewed in the Peggy Pike Room, our headquarters for the day, no-one would have known that we were in a flap.

The rest of the day carried on as planned. We had decided that this day would be dedicated purely to showcasing Elham and giving our French visitors a taste of very British hospitality. This included a historical tour of Elham, led in French by Anne and in English by Ian Sladden. The English who joined this tour were surprised at what they did not know about their village! The Elham artists had prepared an exhibition of their art for all to enjoy on their return to the Village Hall.

Volunteers were busy preparing the Peggy Pike room for lunch. Fish and chips and mushy peas all round from the excellent Seafarers shop in Cheriton, served in the cartons, with malt vinegar and ketchup and HP sauce handed round. It went down a storm, not a chip left! Going to our only hostelry, the Kings Arms, just wasn't an option on the budget allowed from the Parish Council and for the numbers being catered for. Some 30 people took part.

Groups went in different directions in the afternoon. There was a short visit to the Elham Community Shed, to explain the history of the Shed movement, its aims, and how we do it in Elham. Then two French guests visited the primary school, led by Jenny and Trevor Gasson, Ian led some to a game of pétanque, and others followed Anne to Collards Wood where the owners, Karen and Sylvia, very kindly gave us a tour and talk on managing an ancient woodland. And the bluebells were still out!

Afternoon tea consisted of scones from the Elham Tea House, with an explanation about jam and cream or cream and jam, and excellent cakes made by Barbara Athow.

We exchanged gifts: all our French visitors received a framed cartoon of Elham, beautiful keyring fobs made in our Shed from turned wood, a map of Elham and a bag of jelly babies. We received a decorative glass plaque and a hamper of Ambleteuse goods, which will be raffled at a later date.

This amazing day was made possible by an army of members, about 30, taking on the various roles of guide, cook, hall decorators, balloon pumpers, poster makers, fish and chip collector, and genial hosts, making our French visitors as welcome as we possibly could.

Moving on, we are planning one or two events in Elham to keep our members engaged and recruit more, possibly small visits to Ambleteuse, and a return weekend group visit next year. We are grateful to the Parish Council for the annual funds they ringfence for us to continue this initiative, which they started, and we are developing.

**Anne Leva**  
**Chair**

## **Appendix 10 – Elham Primary School**

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Joseph Magliocco, and I am the headteacher of Elham Church of England Primary School. I began in post in September 2025, so I'm still relatively new, but I can honestly say I have loved the role from the very start.

I've worked in education for around a decade, teaching across London, South London and Kent. I've taught children from the very youngest in Reception right through to Year 6.

There is something truly special about working with young children. Watching them arrive at school unsure of themselves, and then seeing them grow in confidence, independence and curiosity is a real privilege. One of the reasons I love teaching is that moment when a child suddenly understands something new — that spark in their eyes when they realise, "I can do this now." I never tire of that moment.

Challenges of leading a school

- Learning and progression pressure, children only get one chance, we have to succeed for them
- -Budgetary pressures, huge currently. Even more so for a small school like ours.
- Many stakeholders to keep happy, pupils, staff, parents, governors, the wider community, the public image
- Uncertainty over future changes, government policy, funding models changing, new curriculum etc.
- Ofsted

Of course, reading, writing and maths are vital. They are the foundations that allow children to access the world. One of our core school values at Elham is achievement, and I believe very strongly that while schools must be places where children feel safe, happy and cared for, they must also aim for the very highest standards. That is what we are here for. We are engines of social mobility.

We want children to leave us believing they can succeed and go on to be whatever they want to be. That means high expectations — not just academically, but across all areas of school life. Achievement might be in the classroom, on the sports field, through music, creativity or personal growth. All of these matter, and all of them build confidence and self-belief.

As a Church of England school, our values and ethos sit at the heart of everything we do. I was raised as a Christian myself and practised my faith into adulthood, so the role of faith in our school is something I care deeply about. We give children an understanding of the Christian faith, but just as importantly, we ground our school in the morals and values taught by Jesus — love, kindness, forgiveness, compassion and respect.

One parable I am particularly fond of is the Parable of the Lost Sheep. It feels very fitting for our school. No child is left behind. As teachers and staff, we are the shepherds, guiding our flock, ensuring every child is known, valued, kept safe and supported to achieve their best.

Alongside achievement, what I most want children to leave Elham with is a genuine curiosity for learning — a desire to find out more, to explore, to ask questions and to keep growing. Education shouldn't just be about what children know when they leave us, but about how much they want to keep learning. We teach children to be lovers of learning.

My hope is that when children leave our school, they do so with strong achievements, a passion for learning, and a solid foundation of Christian morals and ethics. All of this is rooted in our community, for our community — preparing children to serve others with empathy, kindness and compassion. That is why I am so proud to be the headteacher of Elham Church of England Primary School. Being a small, rural, community-centred school is something very special. Schools thrive when they are supported by the communities around them, and we are incredibly fortunate here in Elham.

**Joseph Magliocco – Head Teacher**

## **Appendix 11 – Elham Valley Football Club**

The 2025/25 season has been nothing short of sensational for Elham Valley Football Club. The club completed the first domestic treble in the history of the Ashford District League which has been going for over 102 years.

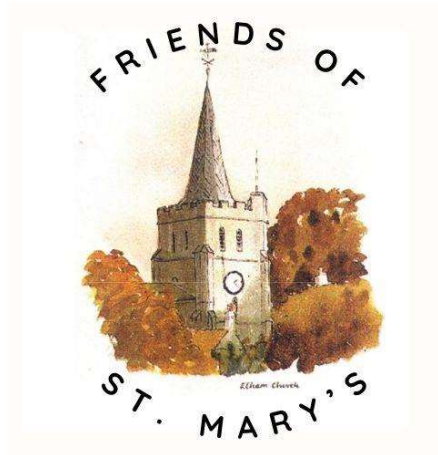
The club won the Ashford Premiership, the league cup and the all divisional cup. This is the clubs 7th trophy in our first four years. The success of the current team is the foundation for the future with the aim to have a youth set up and veterans football all playing from the village.

Sport for young people is lacking. Currently parents are having to take their children to clubs across Folkestone, Whitstable and Hawkinge. The Football club is working hard behind the scenes, hopefully forging links with other village groups in the forthcoming season to achieve the clubs goals.

We are working to improving the grounds facilities. The palmer pavilion will be a fantastic addition to the village and will bring the community closer together and offer a place of sport, a place to create friendships and to bring people together teaching teamwork and communication through sport.

We hope 2026/27 will be another successful year and would like to thank all of our local businesses who help support the club with sponsorship and the fantastic supporters from Elham who come and support the club weekly.

## Appendix 12 – Friends of St Marys – report sent in absence.



### Annual Report 2025/2026

#### Introduction

2025 saw FoSM in buoyant mode both in terms of projects and fundraising.

#### Projects

The restoration of the West Doors was completed leaving them both visually much improved and, most importantly, weathertight. We complemented that work by replacing the very utilitarian railings on the steps leading to those doors with more sensitive wrought iron fittings. Both these projects were fully funded by FoSM to the tune of £6500.

Our next projects will be the restoration of the Southern entrance to the Churchyard together with new lighting at a cost of £5500 [which scheme is ready to go once a faculty has been granted], the purchase of fitted cushions for the main pews in order to improve comfort and warmth and which are now on order at a cost of around £5000, and the repair of the small entrance door in the south wall of the chancel for which we have £350 committed for investigative work.

We now have £17500 reserved as a contribution towards the restoration of the organ should the PCC decide to progress this. £10000 of this is a grant which we secured from the Tory Foundation.

We have also committed to funding half [£1350] of the restoration of the Jesus Chapel walls when the PCC decide to undertake this work.

#### Funding

Funding is of course critical to our ability to invest in the church building. Regular and one-off donations are important especially if enhanced by gift aid and we continue to seek to increase these through further publicity.

We also like to have one major fundraiser a year and in June 2025 "Jazz and Strawberries on the Lawn" raised £3000. Nearly 180 guests were blessed with a delightful summer evening and enjoyed great music in the perfect setting of the Old Vicarage gardens courtesy of Jean– Louie and Virginie Barrois to whom we are most grateful. We also benefitted from very generous sponsorship and practical support from the Kings Arms.

This year we are hoping to have a Candlelit Soiree in St Mary's on Saturday 14 November which will include appropriate organ music and other attractions. Watch out for more details!

### **Public Relations**

Over the last year FOSM has contributed to the Elham Newsletter on a regular basis, which hopefully has improved our profile. The display that was prepared for the "This is your village" event in 2023 has now become a "permanent" feature in the church publicising our work.

### **Round Up**

The FOSM Committee are committed to helping improve St Mary's Church for the congregation and the PCC, as well as various community uses. St Mary's has been an important part of our village for centuries and we are pleased to be able to help ensure that it remains so for many years to come.

I would like to thank all the FoSM Committee, and all our donors for their continued support.

**Trevor Gasson - Chairman**

## **Appendix 13 – Play For Elham**

Play for Elham is a registered charity founded in 2008 to support and maintain two much-loved village spaces: the King George V Playfield (KGV) and The Gore. Our aim is simple: to provide safe, welcoming and inclusive places where people can play, be active and spend time together, with a strong focus on children and young people.

Over the past year, much of our work has focused on keeping the KGV play park safe and well maintained. Following the annual ROSPA safety inspection, essential repairs and upgrades were carried out to play equipment that is now approaching 15 years old. These works, along with insurance and routine maintenance, were funded through careful planning and fundraising, helping to ensure the play park remains a high-quality space for families from Elham and surrounding villages.

At The Gore, we continue to support its role as a key sporting and community space. The site remains home to Elham Valley Football Club, and work is underway to refurbish the Pavilion and adjoining containers. Once complete, these facilities will be able to return to wider community use and hire, helping to support local sport and activities.

We are also proud of our environmental partnerships at KGV. Working with the Environmental Group, the site now includes a thriving herb garden, a wildflower area, and the Jubilee Tree, planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. These features add biodiversity, colour and shared community value to the playfield.

Looking ahead to 2026, Play for Elham's priorities include strengthening fundraising, planning for the future replacement of ageing play equipment, and installing a new piece of play equipment at KGV. Our goal is to give the young people of Elham a play space they can be proud of, while continuing to support sport, recreation and community life at The Gore. Play for Elham is an independent charity and relies on fundraising, grants and community support to continue its work.

With your help, we can ensure these cherished village spaces remain safe, vibrant and welcoming for generations to come.

**Janene Moat**  
**Trustee**

## **Appendix 14 – Elham Gardening Society– report sent in absence.**

As the oldest society in the village, we remain in good health with around 120 members: a full committee, financially sound, and with a full programme of events, meetings and visits. We remain one of the few societies in the county that meet every month for a talk or a visit culminating in the AGM and Christmas Party in December.

All of our activities are available to view at our impressive and revamped website [www.elhamgardeningssociety.org.uk](http://www.elhamgardeningssociety.org.uk)

The Spring Show and Coffee Morning are held in late March or early April, depending on Easter, and is a notable village event. After a challenging & mildish and wet winter and then gales, the competitors produced a worthy high standard of entries of daffodils, and especially tulips as they flowered early this year.

Last July the Summer Show was held and is a big event much enjoyed in the village. The Village Hall is full of entries in some 80+ classes of competition and includes competitors from the village school. It was a great success, and entrants are always praised by the judges for the high standards of entries.

We run an Open Gardens weekend biennially in aid of the National Gardens Scheme charity and this is due at the weekend of The Summer Market in June. There will be 9 gardens for visitors to tour and tea and cakes in the Old Vicarage are always very popular.

Some proceeds go towards the EGS and local charities. It is immensely labour-intensive especially as many of the usual volunteers are the people opening their gardens. More volunteers are still welcome for this year's event.

Our long away visit last year was to see some great gardens in the Midlands based on Northamptonshire. This year it will be a trip to Hampshire in June to see outstanding and/or historic gardens there.

About 40 members enjoyed a convivial evening in November at our Annual Dinner held locally. Also ready for Remembrance Day last November, a few members and their friends revamped the school Remembrance garden aided by funds provided by the Society. This remains a tribute to 'The Fallen' and also to our previous chairman Hugh Buckhurst who was a driving force in its establishment.

In summary, another sound and successful year. None of this is possible without the capability of the committee and the support of our members. There will be committee changes at this December's AGM when several members of the 'Old Brigade' step aside to make room for younger volunteers to help sustain the future of EGS.

**G Newman and D Martin, for the EGS committee**

## **Appendix 15 - Elham Neighbourhood Watch – report sent in absence.**

The ENW co-ordinators are Kevin Lamb and me, Keith Mortimer.

The traditional role of the co-ordinator was to receive reports from the police and other authorities and to pass these on to members as necessary. However, this role has been largely replaced by a twice weekly free online newsletter from E-Watch. This is available to everyone, and not just Neighbourhood Watch members. One can unsubscribe at any time.

The newsletter contains a mine of useful information including-

- Kent Police appeals and news
- Kent & Medway CCG news
- Kent Fire & Rescue news and reports
- Kent County Council news
- Scams
- Product recalls
- Fraud alerts
- Trading Standards news & safety alerts
- County Council traffic news & reports
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council reports

Joining is easy. Search 'E-Watch'. Select 'Folkestone & Hythe' and follow the simple online instructions.

Despite E-Watch it is sensible for non-members to join ENW. We still alert members to local issues reported to us (and which may not reach the 'ears' of the above authorities.)

Joining is simple.

Email me on [keithandroma@outlook.com](mailto:keithandroma@outlook.com) and I will take it from there.

**K Mortimer – Co-ordinator**

## **Appendix 16 – Royal British Legion**

Our small and close-knit Branch continue to meet monthly but during the course of the last year we have changed the venue after the hire charges at St Mary's Church Hall were raised to what we considered to be too expensive for our requirements. We now usually meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 2.00pm in Lyminge Parish Church.

Our Branch has shrunk in size over the last twelve months, reducing from 34 to 28, because of our ageing membership, some of whom have moved out of the area to be closer to family or because they have a tendency to depart this world! We are very conscious of the need to recruit new and younger members, and we are making every effort to become more visible in the local communities.

We have held a number of social events for our members with invited guests, to include our regular occasions of an Afternoon Tea at the Clifton Hotel in Folkestone and a Christmas Lunch at Etchinghill Golf Club. These events brought us closer to our friends from the Folkestone Nepalese Community, some of whom were so warmly welcomed on 15 August last year in Elham to commemorate VJ 80.

Remembrance remains one of our top priorities and last year was no exception, with several important anniversaries from World War 2. Perhaps the pinnacle in Elham was VE 80 when the Elham Village Hall Association, to whom we are so grateful, put on a tremendous day of commemoration and celebration, with the profits coming to the Branch. We are extremely grateful to the Elham villagers who supported the event and gave so generously, but none of it would have been possible without the Elham stalwarts who organised everything – thank you so much.

We make every effort to work with the local primary schools in both Elham and Lyminge, to whom we are officially affiliated. We have welcomed the new Headteacher in Elham who is keen to support remembrance, and we are hoping that this year in Elham, Remembrance Sunday will include a greater number of young people.

We continue to support the Poppy Appeal throughout the year and most markedly with a Coffee Morning in Elham held every October. This will be repeated again this year.

Most recently we were delighted to be part of the initial twinning visit with friends from Ambleteuse and together we held a short act of remembrance at the commonwealth war graves in the cemetery. It was a moving occasion to bring the people of two nations together on local British soil and we hope that we shall be able to visit Ambleteuse soon to show our respects there too.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Elham Parish Council for accepting our proposal last year to add the name of R D Castle, mariner and casualty in East Asia, to the War Memorial. We believe that now the list of names on the memorial is complete.

We are always on the lookout for new members and anyone and everyone is very welcome to join – you do not have to have served in the Armed Forces military but if you support our purpose of remembrance, comradeship and the Poppy Appeal, you will be very warmly welcomed.

**Derek Smith**  
**Branch Chairman RBL Elham Valley Branch**

## **Appendix 17 – Elham and Acrise Samaritans – report sent in absence.**

The Trustees of the Elham and Acrise Samaritan fund continue to meet twice a year.

The Samaritan Committee is made up with a representative from Elham Parish Council, a representative from both the Elham Parish Church and Elham Methodist Church and a representative from Acrise Parish.

The main focus of the meetings is to identify any residents living in the parishes of Elham and Acrise who may be eligible to receive a small financial grant due to illness or disabilities (as per the Trust Fund Constitution).

Over the past year 8 grants were given and these were gratefully received by all recipients with written or verbal thanks given.

Any questions relating to the Trust Fund can be addressed to Sue Prebble - [sue1954prebble@gmail.com](mailto:sue1954prebble@gmail.com).

**Sue Prebble**  
**Trust Fund Clerk**

## **Appendix 18 – TEAP (allotments) – report sent in absence.**

The Elham Allotment Partnership has enjoyed another very successful twelve month. We have a total of 24 allotment plots of which 22 are currently rented out, including three new tenants who have taken over plots this year. We have one large and one small plot available for rent, should anyone wish to rent a plot please contact me via email: [mark.flight@sky.com](mailto:mark.flight@sky.com)

Being very mindful of the location of our site, we maintain it to a high standard, including cutting the grass every week to ensure it looks tidy for anyone visiting the Cemetery and to ensure the safety of people walking around on the grass footpaths.

Using the grass cuttings and other material from the plots we are able to make all our own compost and leaf mold to further improve the soil each year.

Last year we decided to use one of our plots to grow fruit and vegetables to donate to The Rainbow Centre in Folkestone. A variety of different produce was grown, all donated by other plot holders, and taken to the charity each week within one or two days of being harvested The Rainbow Centre is extremely pleased with this new initiative which we intend to continue for this coming year.

On Thursday 23 April 2026 I met with the visiting French party from Ambleteuse at the allotment site. I gave a short presentation on the history of the site. The French party were very enthusiastic, exploring the site, taking pictures and asking questions about produce being grown.

All plot holders are busy preparing their plots and planting up, the Partnership remains a great success enabling many families in Elham to grow their own food as well as now providing fresh food for other families via The Rainbow Centre.

**Mark Flight**

## **Appendix 19 – Elham Sport Club – report sent in absence.**

The Sports Club has a healthy membership, Pickleball continues to be extremely popular, and there are now 4 sessions a week, including an outdoor session on a Friday morning, with all sessions being virtually fully subscribed. The Tennis club sessions held on Monday evening, Tuesday and Thursday mornings are also popular, and all have a good attendance.

The Sports Club continues to make the multi-sport court freely available to local youngsters to play tennis, basketball or five a side football, as the Club wants to encourage as many people as possible to take up some form of sport. However, it is disappointing to report that some vandalism has taken place, with parts of the boards being ripped off and the bonding on top of the boards being pulled off. As a result of this the boarding will be repainted shortly, this will be quite a significant cost to the Club which we had hoped would not need to happen for a couple more years.

Club funds are reasonably sound, however Court 1 is showing signs of wear, given its age, and a full re-surface would cost in the region of £25,000, which currently the Club does not possess. We continue to enjoy an excellent working relationship with the Village Hall Management Team and work closely with them in the management of the courts.

Elham Sports Club contributes in no small way to the attraction of living in the Elham area.

**Maureen Alexander**  
**Vice-Chair**

## **Appendix 20 – Elham Village Hall**

Another year has flown by, and I am pleased to report that Elham Village Hall Association continues to thrive. The hall is very busy with a wide variety of regular hirers, one-off events and plenty of weddings. There are also a variety of sports being played at the hall- tennis, pickleball, badminton and table tennis. In addition, Pétanque is played on our site at the Triangle.

We have lost one of our valuable trustees, Jon Vince, who has recently moved to another village. We will miss him. We also report that our long-term booking secretary and cleaner, Maggie Tappenden, retired at the end of 2025. She has been replaced by Olga and Dee, and they are both doing a sterling job. Every committee member makes a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the hall, and we are confident that we have fulfilled our charitable objectives for the hall which is to ‘provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for said inhabitants.

Our finances are in a very healthy position, and this has meant that we have been able to continue refurbishing the hall. Most recently, we have replaced the front doors to both the main and Peggy Pike entrances. This was assisted by a 20% capital cost grant from ACRE. We have also decorated the Peggy Pike Room toilets and given our Platinum bar a brand-new upgrade. This is of particular importance as the bar is one of our most profitable income streams. As a result- the hall is looking very smart and attractive for our hirers.

The majority of the hall maintenance is carried out by committee members and a large number of volunteers who come along to our regular volunteer days to help with jobs both inside the hall and in our grounds. We have had over 15 people turn up on some of these days so, as you can imagine, a huge amount of man/woman hours means a significant amount of work can be achieved very quickly.

We have also used the services of the Probation Service in the form of their community payback scheme. They have done a marvellous job on a particularly dense and thorny hedge that has cost us hundreds of pounds to manage each year, money that takes a lot of work and time to fundraise!

Our annual ‘Christmas tree switch on’ continues to be a firm favourite in the village calendar. We have been somewhat thwarted by the loss of mains electricity usage from the nearby doctor’s surgery as using battery powered lights have not given us the result we were hoping for. We have our thinking caps on with regard what to do this year so watch this space.

The Community Shed has been up and running for over a year now and is going from strength to strength. The village hall retains responsibility and ownership for the shed itself with the community shed team, as a hirer, having responsibility for the equipment and activities that take place within it.

Our biggest challenge in the near future remains the heat pump which is in need of an upgrade in some form. We are currently exploring various options which could constitute a considerable expense on hall funds, for which we have planned.

In conclusion, Elham Village Hall, with the help of so many unsung volunteers, remains in steady hands and is more than fulfilling its charitable objectives. I would formally like to record my thanks to all those who care enough to contribute to maintaining our hall because the hall and sports facilities help, in no small way, to the attraction of living in the Elham area.

**Jan Stanyon, Chairman. Elham Village Hall. May 2026**

## **Appendix 21 – Elham Valley Walkers - report sent in absence.**

We have arranged 21 walks throughout the year, some within the Elham Valley and others from villages and hamlets further afield. All our walks have been well attended, with participants liking our informal style of walk management and valuing the chance to see new landscapes whilst socialising with fellow walkers.

With the kind sponsorship of the Parish Council, we recently refurbished the map board in Elham's Square by replacing the old footpaths map and installing a new Perspex cover. Our principal ongoing costs are,

- Obtaining annual public liability insurance
- Maintaining our website and domain
- Maintaining the village map boards
- Hosting a small festive celebration at the end of our Christmas walk
- 

Our current funds are deemed sufficient to sustain these costs for the next two to three years. Our small committee has been concerned for some time that the size and average age of our committee is no longer sustainable to offer the full range of activities that we have hitherto undertaken. Two of our members have been forced to retire from leading walks due to health/injury problems and another long serving member is taking an extended holiday in the first part of 2026. Regrettably, we have therefore taken the decision to de-scale our activities in the following way,

- We will no longer hold our annual walking festival
- We have terminated our Walkers are Welcome membership
- We have reduced our bi-monthly walks to once per month
- We will seek to encourage members of the walking group to take an increased role in leading walks. This has already been achieved for the forthcoming year.

However, we remain committed to arranging a regular walking programme and to publish them on our website and in the Elham News.

We will also maintain our group email distribution list, (currently with 88 members) and send regular walk reminders to members as we have in the past.

**Chris Jelly**

## **Appendix 22 – Elham Pétanque Club**

We are now 22 members, having had an increase of 3

Our events in 2025 included

Captain's Day, which is singles club match held on May 29<sup>th</sup>

Doubles competition played on June 27<sup>th</sup>

U3A challenge match played on July 9<sup>th</sup>, which Elham won by eight games to two.

Our friends from Montreuil sur Mer visited us on August 9<sup>th</sup>

This was also our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Their president Jean Claude Delattre, who now in his eighties has played 25 competitions – quite a record!

December 19<sup>th</sup> was our Christmas lunch at The Kings Arms, which was most enjoyable and well attended.

January 4<sup>th</sup>, we had our Christmas melee, but as the weather was so cold we adjourned to the pub!

Due to increased costs our yearly membership has increased from £5 to £10

**Ian Sladden**

## **Appendix 23- The Methodist Church**

The Methodist building on Elham High Street is one site of three, forming part of the Valley Methodist Church. The other two sites are at Lyminge and Rhodes Minnis. Services take place at the Elham Site starting at 9:30am and last approximately one hour. Elham members on occasions join planned services at the each of the other two sites to form a Valley Church Service comprising all three congregations at one site. These start at 10:15am - there is usually a note of what is happening outside the Elham site on the main notice board. On these occasions the Elham site is closed. All information can also be found in the Village Newsletter. In addition to Church Services, we run a Coffee Morning each Monday (except during the school holidays) which starts at 10:30am and finishes at 12:30am. Coffees and teas are served along with homemade cakes and biscuits. It is open to anybody in the village and is a convivial experience. It is free with the opportunity to make a donation. We get together with friends at St Mary's Church, also in the village, for a small number of services during the year. These include a Walk of Witness around the village on Good Friday, stopping at planned locations to sing a hymn, read a passage from the Bible and pray. All are most welcome. It starts in the Methodist Church at 9:30am and finishes in St Mary's where refreshments are served. Some people find that it is one of the most moving and memorable services of the year. We also get together with our friends at St Mary's for Mothering Sunday, Week of Christian Unity, Harvest Festival and the Village Carol Service. We alternate yearly between St Mary's Church and Elham Methodist Church. Anybody is welcome to join us. Bible studies are run every other Wednesday starting at 11:00am and lasting an hour. Currently we are working our way through the book of Romans written by St Paul. These are informal and friendly meetings during which there is a lot of discussion and much to think about. It is open to anyone, church goer or not, within the village. No previous knowledge is needed, just turn up with a desire to learn about the Bible. Currently there is a temporary pause, but hopefully it will resume within the next few months. Every first Thursday of the month we hold a Prayer Meeting starting at 7:30pm and lasting approximately one hour. Anybody can come irrespective of denomination or none. It is a time to humbly seek God and pray about current issues and for people who request it. It is an informal friendly meeting which starts with refreshments. This takes place in the School Room alongside of the Church. On many of the first Saturdays of each month we have a Churches Together Prayer Breakfast. Anybody from a Church in the Valley or beyond is welcome. Indeed, you don't have to be a member of a church to attend, but you do need to want to seek God in prayer. It starts with a cafe style breakfast of pastries, cakes and fresh fruit at 8:30am and proceeds to prayer at 9:00am finishing at 9:30am. It is free with an opportunity to donate at the end. Finally, the School Room next to the Elham Methodist Church building is used for events and meetings. An appropriate charge is made for the use of the room which has an adjoining kitchen and toilet facilities. The church at the Elham Site is a very friendly place. All are very welcome to join us for any of the activities.

## **Mark**

## Appendix 24 – Elham Friendship Lunch Club



The Elham Friendship Lunch Club has been going for more than three years now, a quiet organisation that offers a monthly something to look forward to more than 30 Elham villagers. They may be frail, elderly, lonely, but there's always friendship and laughter on offer on the second Thursday of every month.

The club was started by Sylvia Scott and her sister Val Swain, based loosely on the idea of the Lent lunches organised by the churches. Why have lunches only during Lent, why not carry on the whole year?

So, with a committee of seven and a good range of volunteers, the monthly lunches developed. They are held in the St Mary's Church Hall. Volunteers prepare homemade soups, there is usually a choice of three, and enough for seconds. This is followed by cheese, bread, biscuits, fruit, and a delightful range of cakes, again provided by volunteers. Where would Elham be without them!

Participants pay a small contribution which goes towards the hire of the hall, the Christmas lunch and an annual donation to charity.

We also organise a speaker for each lunch. Recently we've had Roger Newman explaining all about beekeeping, with an (empty) beehive as exhibit; a wood turning demonstration by Graham and Jim from the Elham Community Shed; our new head teacher Joe Magliocco talked about the challenges of running a village primary school; and Renee spoke about how the miracle of the monthly Elham Newsletter happens, with her as editor helped by a dedicated group of volunteers who proof read, distribute and write articles.

Our May talk will be about recycling. Do you know what to put in with the paper, plastic, bottles, and what if it's none of these? An expert will explain.

**Anne Leva**