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The Rector writes ....
We live in very strange and difficult times. My farewell Service and ‘Do’ will have to be postponed until later in the year when perhaps the situation is better. As I said last month I do wish you a happy Easter although I cannot greet you on Easter Day. I will to say the main Sunday Service whilst I am still here but in private (something that has not happened in the CofE since 1559 or thereabouts!!). As I have said these are very strange and difficult times.

I am providing you with an Order for Spiritual Communion for those of you who will find it appropriate:

_In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen_

_Lord! I cannot seek thee, on thine altar throne,_
_Yet I may receive thee, weary and alone;_

_When, before thy altar, crowds adoring kneel,_
_These in very essence, thou dost come to heal,_

_Far from priest and altar, Christ, to thee I cry,_
_Come to me in spirit, let me feel thee nigh._

_In my silent worship, let me share the Feast,_
_Be thy love the altar, be thyself the priest. Amen._

_O Lord Jesus Christ, since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I humbly ask that you would come spiritually to my soul. Com, Lord Jesus, come and cleanse me, heal me, strengthen me, and unite me to yourself, now and for ever. Amen_

_Then say ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ and end with saying: ‘May the Lord bless me now and forever more. Amen.’_

These prayers can be said on their own or after watching or listening to Service on the television, radio or the internet.

**Church Choir** This has been cancelled until after the present emergency has passed.

**Pop-in-Parlour** The Pop-in-Parlour has been closed until further notice. More information may be had from Jean Eagle on 01273 890547 or Cherie Winchester on 01273 891576.

**Parochial Church Council** The P.C.C. will meet usually on the Second Tuesday of each month beginning at 2pm in All Saints Church Annex, Plumpton Green. Please consult the Churchwardens as to the dates of further meetings and to the date of the AGM.

**Lychgate** I will bless and rededicate the Lychgate on 29th March, 10.30am at All Saints, Plumpton Green. This will take the form of a private Service as will the blessing of the new Plum Tree of the Village Green. I am sorry that you will not be able to attend but the Parish Council and P.C.C. hope that once the emergency is over there will be a Parish celebration for both events.

**From the Parish Records**

MEMORIAL SERVICE

22nd January Simon Richard Browning FREESTONE
Plumpton Parish Council

www.plumptonpc.co.uk

Notes from the Parish Meeting 10th March 2020.

Councillor Rob Banks reported on:
Local Plan part 2, which has now been approved.
Local fly tipping which continues to increase.
West Sussex/East Sussex ongoing negotiations regarding the tip at Burgess Hill. Hopefully agreement will be reached and people in the Plumpton area will again be able to use the Burgess Hill site.

Parking at the station is being monitored following the decision, by the rail company, to charge for parking at the station. Initially there has not been a problem with parking in local areas, but the situation will continue to be reviewed to see if action is required.

Playing Fields - following significant rainfall since last September, the Parish Council is committed to improving the playing surfaces for all users. Funds have been allocated for major works to improve drainage, weeding and reseeding. This work will start between the end of the football season and the start of the cricket season. This is not a one-off commitment and, through the development of a local plan, additional works will be carried out to generally improve the situation in the coming years.

Works will be undertaken shortly to refurbish the gent’s loos in the pavilion. We anticipate this work will commence shortly.

An on-line booking system will be implemented shortly for all Village Hall and Pavilion bookings. This will enable users to see availability and speed up the process.

Replacement of the fridges in the bar area of the Village Hall has been approved and the new fridges should be in place by the end of March.

Next meeting is at Plumpton Village Hall at 7:30pm on the 14th April 2020.

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The parish Council were delighted to welcome Mike Elms who was co-opted onto the Parish Council at the March meeting. This brings our total number of councillors to a very healthy seven which will ensure that we are quorate during holiday periods and times of illness.

The council discussed our response to the current Corona Virus outbreak and at present we are directing any enquiries to Public Health England whose details can be found on the parish web site. This is regularly updated with any new developments and practical advice as to how to keep safe.

A very successful litter pick was carried out on March 8th and it was pleasing to note that the level of litter collected was down on previous years. The litter gathered was predominately of a commercial nature from fly tipping including the large pile in the gateway at the end of Highbridge Lane which has been there for a while. Thanks to everyone who came along and joined in.

Councillor Banks from LDC has followed up the Chailey school traffic survey with Rupert Clubb of ESCC, but was still awaiting a reply. Cllr.Goodenough said she had also asked ESCC for a copy of the risk assessment they had carried out, she had not received any reply. They will both continue to pursue this. Cllr.Banks has raised the condition of verges and roads due to the rail work, with the contractors BAM Nuttall. The site manager agreed to a meeting on completion to look at repairs and re-instatement which Cllrs.Durham

and David will also attend. Due to bad weather the works did not finish in February as planned and are likely to continue into May.

Councillor Funnell attended a meeting at the LEWES and District association of local councils at which Rupert Clubb gave a report and answered questions. Unsurprisingly the state of our rural roads, potholes and verges were a hot topic of debate. Rupert explained that any reported potholes should at worst be repaired within 28 days. If you wish to report a pothole the facility to do this is on the ESCC highways website. Rupert also explained that local areas will now return to having their own named PSCO which was the case up until a few years ago and they should be introducing themselves to Parishes in the near future.

The Parish council decided to mark the anniversary of VE day on May 8th with the lighting of the beacon. We will liaise with Hamsey Parish Council about this and further information will follow.

TECT

There was a good turnout for the planting of trees on the TECT field on March 15th.

Just over 200 trees were planted - Crab Apple, Hazel, Downy Birch, Hawthorn, Willow and Holly. There are a few rare Sussex Black Poplar saplings from Wakehurst on their way soon too. TECT are trying to improve the field for all the wildlife, birds, bats and pollinators using tree planting to help kick start and support natural wilding processes.

The date of the Annual Parish Party has been set for Saturday July 4th. Marc Munier will be co-ordinating events and will soon be holding a planning meeting
Sarah Osborne, County Councillor

Coronavirus
At time of writing (March 16th) there is only one confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID -19) in East Sussex. Specialists from Public Health England (PHE) are working with East Sussex County Council and NHS colleagues. The case has recently returned home from a cruise and Public Health England is contacting people who had close contact with the latest confirmed case and they will be given health advice about symptoms and emergency contact details to use if they become unwell in the 14 days after contact with the confirmed case. Currently all scheduled meetings at ESCC are due to go ahead as planned but this could of course change soon.

Potholes
I am sure it has not escaped your notice that our roads everywhere are in a very poor state. I am reporting numerous potholes daily and chasing up repairs frequently.

sarahosborne2000@yahoo.co.uk
07986 776105

Rob Banks, Lewes District Councillor

As I write this in mid-March, events are moving so fast on coronavirus - but the latest up to date advice is at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/. If you need to phone instead, and are worried about your symptoms, dial 111. If it is an emergency dial 999. Most importantly do what you can to assist friends, family or neighbours who may be vulnerable or self isolating, and let's support each other as a community to get through this. There are already many across our area who help friends, neighbours and family - to help support this I have set up a Plumpton and East Chiltington Coronavirus support group.

On other matters: In East Chiltington, it is good to see that the devolution (land transfer) of the Hollycroft Field to from the District Council to East Chiltington Parish Council has now taken place. I have also been in touch with Network Rail’s contractor who is working on the embankments near Novington Lane to press the point about keeping lanes clear of mud and make good damage to verges.

When the local Plan Part 2 came up for debate, as Sarah Osborne did before me, I spoke against and voted against it due to the proposed GT01 site (north of the Old Brickworks) on the grounds of it having been previously rejected for development, there is no pavement or street lighting to the site and no key services such as a GP surgeries in the village. The site would still need planning permission.

I have also reported more potholes across our area and have got some filled in for example at the top of Plumpton Lane. Fly tipping has increased and I recently got fly-tipped waste in the ward cleared away by the District Council.

I persuaded Lewes District Council to support the on-going campaign for East Sussex residents to once again be allowed to use Burgess Hill tip. In the meantime, ESCC have confirmed that assistance is on hand at the Ham Lane site in Lewes - eg for disabled residents unable to access the steps to the skips. We are waiting a response from West Sussex.

I am continuing to lobby GTR and Southern Rail over the imposition of rail station parking charges and at time of writing have approximately 300 signatures on my petition to stop the charges. On a positive note, it is good that Southern Water have re-instated the pavement following their repair work to the sewer on Station Road in Plumpton.

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COVID 19
These are challenging times for all of us and many people may need help over the next weeks. If you need help of any sort please use the contact information as below and a local volunteer will be back in touch and do their best to help you:

**PHONE.** Please leave a message if there is no reply and someone will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Linda Watson 07478 524152 (Good Neighbours)
Gina Hawthorne 07595 894425
Rob Banks 07986 755246 (District Councillor)

A new helpline is also to start soon, keep your eyes on noticeboards for information.

**FACEBOOK** - you can also post requests for help here: Search for “Plumpton and East Chiltington Coronavirus Support Group”.

**EMAIL:** Covid19@geniuswithin.co.uk

Our thanks to the team at Genius Within for helping us make sure email contact information is safely and securely stored.
The new FaceBook support group and the Good Neighbours scheme are teaming up to ensure we can deliver help to as many people as possible. We now have an amazing long list of volunteers who can offer all sorts of help.
We can help with shopping, deliveries, prescription collection, dog walking, etc.
Also, if you just need to hear a friendly voice or want a chat please call or email and someone will get in contact.
All requests for help by phone or email will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

**VOLUNTEERS.**
Please use the email address to communicate with us. Covid19@geniuswithin.co.uk

Thank you all!! We have far more offers of help than requests for help currently so don’t think you are not needed if you haven’t been contacted. As requests for help arrive we will be trying to connect with the most suitably placed person to deliver that help.
If you fall ill please let us know and do not undertake any volunteering activities. Also, if you have volunteered and circumstances change let us know and we will remove you from the list.
Coronavirus is very contagious. So please remember to avoid physical contact and keep a two metre distance from other people. Wash your hands regularly with soap and hot water. And pay careful attention to the latest Public Health and Government advice.
We know the community here in Plumpton and East Chiltington is great at rallying around to help in times of need – let’s work together and get through this as a community.
Coronavirus
Wash your hands with soap and water more often for 20 seconds

1. Palm to palm
2. The backs of hands
3. In between the fingers
4. The back of the fingers
5. The thumbs
6. The tips of the fingers

Use a tissue to turn off the tap.
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The Skylark Federation Celebrate World Book Day!

Plumpton Primary School

At Plumpton, WBD capped off an exhilarating 'Book Week' in which children truly delved into the wonderful world of reading. Pupils were: challenged to 'Drop Everything and Read' at any point in the day at the sound of a bell; signing up the listen to stories in other classrooms read by other teachers; enjoying stories read by parents and grandparents (who were invited in to read with children). And, that's not all, pupils at Plumpton are also welcoming children's author, Neil Arksey, to school on Monday 9th March - keeping the reading momentum going.

Barcombe CE Primary School

The children at Barcombe School had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day this year. The children were very creative with their costume choices and drew inspiration from both fiction and non-fiction books. We had a variety of characters ranging from a Guinness World Book of Records adjudicator to a teacher from David Walliams popular The World's Worst Teacher book.
Along with dressing up to celebrate their favourite books, the children at Barcombe have also spent the week enjoying reading through Performing Arts workshops, buddy reading with children of different ages across the school and discovering new books through a book swap.

Hamsey C Primary School:

At Hamsey there was also lots of reading focused activities going on:
- Guess the Book: One of the children’s favourite activities from previous years, we asked pupils to guess the books that our staff team are reading at home. The answers were announced in assembly and we all had lots of fun guessing who was reading which books!
- Comfy Reading: We took part in D-E-A-R (Drop Everything And Read). The office staff secretly came round the school with a bell which heralded the time that everyone – adults and children – dropped what they were doing and read for 5 minutes.
- Reading Buddies: Our older readers supported some of our youngest pupils. Owls joined up with Hedgehogs to undertake peer reading and Badgers teamed up with Foxes.
- Story Time: Children got into their House Teams and enjoyed story time in another class at the end of the school day.
Dressed up as our favourite book characters.
Invited parents and carers to come into school from 2.30pm to read their favourite story book with their children and a small group of their classmates.
**Special Notice** - Owing to the Coronavirus situation, all of our activities have been cancelled for the foreseeable future, following the Government advice concerning meetings, groups and walking together etc..

After the official confirmation that February 2020 had been the wettest on record, the levels of water on the commons have continued to make them very soggy in parts and it will clearly take a while for them to drain. Springtime continues to show, with the season appearing to be advancing forwards little by little.

The annual general meeting was held in March and we welcomed John Smith as our new President. We are delighted that he has agreed to take over from Shirley Whitley who has stood down after many years of being with us. Secondly, a new Treasurer joined us, and we welcomed Adrian Podmore to this important role on the committee. He has taken over from Ian Woolsey who has stood down owing to other interests having moved to Burgess Hill and, unfortunately, due to current poor health. We send him our thanks for his full and comprehensive help he has given us, both in the role of Treasurer and for the many surveys and walks which he has taken on the commons sharing his special knowledge of birds.

For further information, visit our website – [www.chaileycommons.org.uk](http://www.chaileycommons.org.uk) or our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/chaileycommons/](http://www.facebook.com/chaileycommons/)

William Coleman
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**NEWICK COUNTRY MARKET**
Every Friday 10 am to 11 am
Newick Village Hall

PLEASE NOTE during Easter week the market will be open on THURSDAY 9th April (Maundy Thursday) instead of Friday 10th (Good Friday), at the usual time.

Come and join us in the Village Hall to see our wide range of homemade savoury and sweet bakes as the fancy takes you, locally grown produce, bespoke greetings cards, jewellery, knitted items, plants and flower arrangements for that special occasion. Orders can be taken for any of the above, and special diets can also be catered for. If you cannot see what you want feel free to ask one of our producers.

April is the month when we start to have more plants available ready for summer planting, so come along and see our selection.

All the items are produced by members of the market and our cooks have the required standard of Food Hygiene Certificate.

If you haven’t met us before why not drop in for some freshly brewed coffee, meet friends and catch up on village news.

It is advisable to come along early as many items sell out fast.

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East Chiltington
Plumptonfest 2020

Saturday, 12 September, Plumpton Village Hall

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We’re back! Plumptonfest returns...

After a four-year break, we’ve now got a committee together and are hosting another event.

The aim of the event is to showcase local musical talent, giving performers an opportunity to have a go in a friendly environment.

We will stay true to the original intention of bringing together a wide and eclectic selection of ages, styles and levels of performing experience and expertise for an event that is designed above all else to be fun and enjoyable for performers and audience alike.

Previous events have showcased acts ranging from the seasoned veterans who have spent years perfecting (or attempting to perfect) their craft, to those who walk trembling onto the stage for the very first time – only to skip off exhilarated and full of confidence having stolen the show!

Plumpton has a long and distinguished history of musical events and early music festivals took place on the racecourse during the 1960’s - so how would you like to become a part of that history and take part in the celebration of local musical talent that is Plumptonfest?

All are welcome to perform. We provide a full P.A., back-line and microphones (but don’t be put off if you don’t know what any of this means!)

Remember: it’s cheaper than Glastonbury, you won’t get rained on, it’s not muddy and there are clean & hygienic sanitary facilities!

To take part in Plumptonfest, or help organise it (we need quite a few helpers, both in advance and on the day itself), please contact:

Eamonn Murphy
plumptonmusic@gmail.com 01273 890150

Stop press!
With the current coronavirus situation, we're all unclear of where we'll be in a few months time. Hopefully by the time of Plumptonfest, we'll be getting back to normality and what a great way this will be to help bring us back together.
SERVICES

These Services have been advertised although they have been suspended by Order of the Bishop of Chichester and the Archbishops’ Council. However these Services will be celebrated privately so that the Church’s year and observance may be continued.

5th April 2020
All Saints
10.30am
Palm Sunday
Sung Communion

9th April
All Saints
8pm
Maundy Thursday
Eucharist of the Last Supper

10th April
All Saints
8pm
Good Friday
Good Friday Liturgy

12th April
All Saints
10.30am
Easter Day
Sung Communion

19th April
All Saints
10.30am
2nd Sunday of Easter
Sung Communion

26th April
All Saints
10.30am
3rd Sunday of Easter
Sung Communion

3rd May
All Saints
10.30am
4th Sunday of Easter
Sung Communion

Rector: Please contact the Churchwardens for all information.
VILLAGE EVENTS CALENDAR

April 2020
Due to COVID—19 the Village Hall and the Pavillion are closed.

27th June  - Village Strawberry Fair
19th July  - St. Peter & St. James Open Gardens
1st August - Horticultural Society Summer Show 2pm  VH
12th September - Plumptonfest  VH
19th September - Horticultural Society Autumn Show 2pm  VH

BOOKINGS
Village Hall & Pavilion: Jane Donovan 07747 050903 or 01273 891036

COPY DEADLINES
13th April for May
16th May for June
Copy to The Poplars, Station Road
or email: pecncopy@gmail.com or Telephone: 01273 891 427
It’s been a very difficult six months for small businesses, you may have lost some contracts and now you’ve just received a huge energy bill.

Firstly, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133. They can often help to resolve problems with energy suppliers.

Do this quickly if you’re on a business contract and you’ve been told you’re going to be disconnected. If this happens an extra fee can be added to your bill, and there’ll be another charge for being reconnected.

If you think the bill is wrong, contact your energy company. If you are a microbusiness you can only be charged for gas or electricity you’ve used in the last 12 months - they can’t send you a new bill dating back longer than a year.

If the bill is correct, but you can’t afford it, your energy supplier might agree to a payment plan. Work out a realistic budget with affordable repayments. Citizens Advice can help sole traders and individuals, but for other businesses there’s the Business Debtline on 0800 197 6026.

Are your bills being estimated? You might be paying more than you need to. Organise a reminder to send monthly meter readings to your supplier or see if you can get a smart meter installed.

You may find switching energy companies will save you money. Also try energy efficiency measures such as switching off computers and other equipment overnight, use energy efficient light bulbs and make sure your premises are insulated.
Bird Watch

I spent the first week of March with my daughter and the extended family in Maidenhead in Berkshire. The area in which they live is towards the edge of the town, not far from the well-known Maidenhead Thicket, a large open area of grassland and woods owned by the National Trust. At no time, when going outdoors could you fail to see Red Kites soaring over the rooftops. These birds are commonplace there and numbers seem to increase year on year. Centuries ago, Red Kites were widespread across the country. They are large almost Buzzard-sized raptors with a more slender, athletic form and a forked tail. They can catch prey, but they are mainly scavengers, feeding on carrion and road kills.

Through persecution their numbers had fallen to only a handful of pairs in the wooded parts of mid-Wales in the last century. About forty years ago, there was a scheme to re-introduce them to this country from young birds taken from Scandinavia and other places where they were numerous. The Chiltern Hills just west of Maidenhead was one of the release sites. It is an area with belts of trees along sloping scarps so ideal habitat for them. The intention was that, as they bred and numbers increased, the parent birds would chase their young off their territories and so preserve the food supply. Thus, by this ripple effect, as it is known, Red Kites would eventually spread across the land.

However, they are such a feature of the town, that residents put out meat scraps on the lawns for them and a spectacular display takes place which certainly impresses any visitors. From only a few yards at the window, in succession, I saw nine Red Kites, their tails bright chestnut in the sunshine, swooped down collecting the scraps without landing and devouring them while still on the wing. Why disperse to other parts of the country when there is service like that? They are quite regularly seen in Sussex and in recent years breeding have been proven.

I have confidently proclaimed that the Goldfinch study we are doing through ringing has proved a north to south movement in autumn, our local breeding birds going across the Channel while those from northern parts of the country come here for winter. Many such movements have been reported but such is the way with anything so mobile as a bird, they can disprove a theory. Two Goldfinches, one ringed at Plumpton in January 2019 and the other, by my son, in West Sussex in January 2016 were found together in North Wales this January. Another also ringed the same day in January 2016 was recaptured in Sussex this year.

Another wearing a French ring was caught in West Sussex this January having been ringed 571 kilometres away down in France in December 2017. This may well have been a British bred bird that crossed the Channel and was caught during its first winter and because we have had no severe cold weather, not ventured so far south this time. As with most Natural History studies, the more we learn, the more we realise there is to learn.

R.J.L.
It takes a village to raise a child

Honeybees preschool is now well into a very wet Spring term. We have had some very wet and muddy sessions already this year and we are proud of helping to raise a generation of children who are not phased when it’s tipping it down! We have once again extended our provision to cater for the working parent. We are now open from 8am until 5pm. Parents can book the ‘Early and Late Bee’ sessions ad hoc and although this is slow to take off, we are gathering interest for the September 2020 intake which is great news as we lose 26 of our Honeybees to school in July!

Our Curry and Quiz was another success this year and we are very grateful to all of you who supported us. This year we raised £2900 which will be split with Ladybirds baby and toddler group. Our share will go toward replacing toys and resources and enhancing our outside space. Honeybees relies heavily on fundraising to make up the significant deficit in the government funding and allow us to purchase new things for the children. Our next fundraiser is our Bingo night on Saturday the 4th April.

Our outside area is our biggest selling point and the children love to play in a naturalistic environment where staff encourage and facilitate imaginative play. Recently, we haven't had one single family who are looking for childcare look anywhere else once they have seen our outdoor space. Thank you to those parents and Parish Council members and local clubs, pubs and societies, the Panto society, the Half-moon, the fountain, the Plough and the Open Mic for giving their financial support and for those wonderful families who donate their time to us. You may not know but Honeybees are one of the few childcare settings in our area that offers the government funded 30 hours whereby parents can access care to allow them to go to work. Check out this link to see if you may be eligible: https://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-tax-free-childcare

All children are entitled to 15 hours childcare after the term they turn three regardless if parents are working or not or financial situation. We take children from the age of two years. You may be entitled to 15 hours free childcare to help with this. The following link is an easy guide to check if you may be eligible: https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds

All this information is available on our very new website (that we are so proud of! ) Check us out, see what we are about, meet the staff and pop in to see us! https://www.honeybeespreschool.co.uk/

Find us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/honeybeesplumptongreen/

Please do show an interest in what we do. Some of you may not know that we are here. We have been supporting early education for the village’s children since 1972 and many of you have fond memories of Southdowns playgroup. We support the infrastructure of Plumpton Primary and we believe we have a real community feel that has families and their children always at the heart of what we do.

We are a non-profit charity that is committee-run by local parents and staff and we are extremely proud of our attitude toward early education.

When children play, they are happy, when children are happy, they will learn. Simple.

Our prices are very competitive too.

Funded children:
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Unfunded 2-year-olds is £58.20 8am-5pm.
There are many ways in which you can use your funded hours and can even book in ad hoc sessions if your child is registered with us!

Honeybees offers a truly unique childcare experience. If you wish to come and visit us contact: hello@honeybeespreschool.co.uk 01273 890885
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Could the Lewes to Uckfield Line finally Re Open?

The vital Lewes to Uckfield rail line was closed in 1969. Not only did this cut rail services across the Lewes and Wealden districts but it also closed an alternative diversionary route from Brighton to London. Since then there have numerous attempts to re-open the line which is, more or less, still intact.

Now the best chance of re-opening the Lewes to Uckfield railway line in a generation has come about with the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps recently launching the Restoring Your Railway fund.

As a result I am working with the BML2 campaigners (Brighton Main Line 2) on a bid as the Lewes to Uckfield line is eligible to be considered as part of the £48 billion Restoring Your Railways fund and we have submitted an expression of interest with the Government.

A business case will need to be presented to the Department for Transport by early March setting out costs, levels of support locally, and the potential growth that could come from reopened lines. Following this, the successful bids will go through to a further stage with successful bids announced in the summer of 2020. The Government are keen to get things moving quickly on these lines to allowing work to begin as soon as possible.

Since first being elected I have campaigned for the reopening of the Lewes to Uckfield line as another route for passengers from Lewes and the surrounding areas to get to London without having to use the Brighton Mainline. The re-opening of this line will take pressure off the current mainline and make rail more accessible to thousands of people along the route. I am working with the BML2 Project to make sure that we can grasp this opportunity and finally re-open the Lewes to Uckfield line.

For more information on the detailed plans do visit www.bml2.co.uk

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Disease Resistant Elms

I was reassured to learn that we have had five global extinction events over the last 550 million years, four in the last 350 million years and that humans were not responsible for causing them. More than 99% of all species, amounting to over 5 billion species that ever lived on Earth, are estimated to have died out.

However, we are now considered to be in the early stages of a new human-caused mass extinction event known as the Holocene extinction. Bill Hicks presciently described us as a "Virus with shoes". Our species are predicted to cause the extinction of 20% of all living populations within 30 years by the destruction of our biosphere through, amongst other factors, invasive species, habitat degradation, pollution and global warming. We have killed off at least 571 species in just 250 years! Humans are a mega predator.

One of the other major causes of a species extinction lies in an inability to deal with an adaptively evolving disease. Elm trees suffered because of their unfortunate inability to survive infection from a micro-fungus transmitted by the elm bark beetle. Fungal spores are introduced into the tree via wounds made by the boring beetle. The tree responds to the fungus by over producing tyloses (balloon-like outgrowths of certain cells) and effectively strangles itself.

Elm trees were, until the 1970s, a dominant tree in our landscape of woodland and hedgerows. Looking through old photos and paintings of town and countryside the distinctive shape of elms was ubiquitous. Elms spread readily via root suckering as well as seed, ensuring its dominance across the landscape. The timber was valued for its interlocking grain making it valuable for, amongst other things, coffin making.

By transporting timber products from Asia around the world on boats, humans very quickly breached the natural intercontinental biosecurity provided by oceans of salty sea water. This led to the infection of elms, particularly in North America in the 1920s, where the disease developed into a more virulent strain. This was thought to have then been imported into the UK on a consignment of Canadian rock elm. Subsequently, it has been estimated that we have gone on to lose 25 million elms in the UK since the 1970s.

Nearby Brighton, protected by sanitation felling and the sea air, now holds the National Elm Collection and you can see, for the moment, some large specimens in particular along the streets around Preston Park and The Level.

In response to this pandemic, scientists have developed hybrid elm cultivars that have resistance to Dutch elm disease. As part of the Southdown National Park "Trees for the Downs" initiative we have received and planted 15 disease resistant specimens in East Chiltington beside footpaths and on the TECT field. They are clones of Ulmus Fiorente and Ulmus Lucece, bred by crossing Asiatic elms with European species. The hope is that the trees will thrive and spread, possibly replacing the sad loss of another tree leaving a big hole in our landscape, the ash.

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Ladybirds Playgroup

Come and join in the fun on Wednesdays!

Babies, toddlers and pre-school children all welcome at this community run playgroup.
A lovely way to meet local people in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

Plumpton Village Hall
Wednesdays (Term Time) 9.30 to 11.30am
£2.50 per family (first session is free)
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As I sit and write this in mid March with restrictions being put on so many activities and travel limited to essential only in a bid to keep us safe from COVID-19 I am so very grateful to have had my annual winter trip to the mountains of the Süd Tirol. Gsiesrtal is a quiet little valley that stretches up to the Austrian / Italian border in the Zillertal Alps. It is a beautiful place for walking and cross-country skiing.

We set off from Innerförrer Hof, the little farm where we stay, in an ENE direction on the tiny lane. We had views up the valley of snowy peaks and pine tree clad lower slopes. About a mile along the lane we come to the village of Pichl. The road climbs a little steeper to the centre of this small village which is dominated by the parish Church that is dedicated to St. Nicholas. The church was built in 1472 and the neo-Gothic interior dates back to around 1879. It has a tall slim spire with tiled roof that is typical of the area.

At the church we took a hairpin left turn onto the narrow lane and began to ascend. The lane is surrounded by trees, mostly pine. In other years we have walked this route in deep snow and this was the first time during winter visits that we had seen it relatively ice free. Soon after the turn we looked down on a house that has been abandoned and left to decay. It sits in a most beautiful setting on the valley side with magnificent views and we wonder why it is unwanted, and how lovely it would be to have it and make a home there.

As the road climbs among the trees we look over the edge to the steep drop. It was a peaceful afternoon and we enjoy the smell of the vegetation. What was unusual this year was the number of health trees that had fallen or been broken in half all across the region. We found out that a sudden fall of heavy wet snow in November of 1.5 metres had damaged a lot of trees through sheer weight.

Our route descended gradually and passed back into woodland. We came to another clearing with another lovely house and beautiful view. Then the lane wound its way down to meet a mountain stream. Here a Kneipp walk had been created. Sebastian Kneipp was a pioneer of hydrotherapy in the 19th Century. He was a Bavarian priest who used water at various temperatures and pressures to provide therapies. The Kneipp walk we came across used the stones in the stream to create pools and walkways that can be enjoyed bare foot but perhaps not in the middle of winter.

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Our route had climbed to a little over 1400m when we got to a crossing point of little lanes. A crucifix was on the bank above the junction and next to it a picnic table and bench. In past years this has been piled with snow of a metre or more deep but not this time. We took the right turn to continue our ascent on the main lane still in the pine woodland for another half kilometre and then out into a clearing. Ahead of us was the small hamlet of Schindelholz with its tiny mountain chapel and a collection of old Tyrolean farm buildings. We were now at 1478m and in the late afternoon sun we were treated to a fabulous view over the immediate pine clad hill to the Dolomite Mountains to the south. Dolomite peaks have very distinctive rock formations and we spent a little time identifying what we could see. Directly south were the famous peaks of Dürrenstein, Birkenkofel and Dreischuster-Spitze. It is in late afternoon sun that the Dolomite stone colours look so beautiful. A little way beyond the hamlet was a bench that we took advantage of to enjoy the view.

Our route descended gradually and passed back into woodland. We came to another clearing with another lovely house and beautiful view. Then the lane wound its way down to meet a mountain stream. Here a Kneipp walk had been created. Sebastian Kneipp was a pioneer of hydrotherapy in the 19th Century. He was a Bavarian priest who used water at various temperatures and pressures to provide therapies. The Kneipp walk we came across used the stones in the stream to create pools and walkways that can be enjoyed bare foot but perhaps not in the middle of winter.

We took a left turn to pass between traditional farm buildings and dwellings at Wiessen and continued on the track into the woods. The track became a path and this did still have snow and ice on it but mixed with very many pine needles that provided some grip. As we walked we had to climb over the fallen trees and broken branches. The land owners were working to clear these little by little but there were so many that it was clearly a long work in progress. The Talblickweg that we were now on undulates its way through the wood with glimpses of the valley below. As we neared the end of the path we could hear two of the children from the farm where we stay playing with their mum. They are aged 4 and 20 months and have a wonderful pedal along tractor with trailer. We finished our walk pushing them home and marvelling at the lovely tractor.

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  Sunday 3rd May

> Performances
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email: mpselectrics@gmail.com

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**EASTWOOD HEATING & PLUMBING LTD**

Contact: Keith 01273 842093
Mob: 07763 811516

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**MPS Electrics**

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Quiz Nights

In aid of
St. Peter & St James
And
Sarcoma UK
At
The Fountain Inn
8pm

4th May
1st June
6th July
3rd August
7th September
2nd November
7th December

Music Quiz Night

24th April

Plumpton & District Footpath Society

PROGRAMME FOR APRIL 2020

Wednesday 1st April 10.30
start 6¼m distance
Starting Point: Car park a few yards up from Jarvis Brook station Map Ref. 535 298
A walk across fields, heath and woodland between Crowborough & Rotherfield – lunch at Boarswood
Walk Leaders: Bernie Kempton
01825 722649 / 07791247025

Saturday 4th April 10.30
start 4m
Starting Point: Buxted station – parking nearby Map. Ref. 497 233
Circular Buxted walk with optional pub lunch at end
Walk Leader: Sue and Robin Akers
Tel. No: 01273 891701

Sunday 19th April 10.30 start
4 - 5m
Starting Point: Fletcher’s Croft car park in Vicarage Lane, opposite the church in Steyning
Post Code: BN44 3YB

This walk takes you through peaceful farmland and uses mainly field paths & established tracks. Fine views across open countryside to the South Downs and Chanctonbury Ring prominent
Walk Leader: Margaret Land & June Denyer
Mob. No. 07990876391(M)
Mob. No: 07889610183(J)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societies</th>
<th>Clubs</th>
<th>Groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baby &amp; Toddler Group</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>01273 891086</td>
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<td>British Legion</td>
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<td>Brownies</td>
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<td>William Coleman</td>
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<td>Kelvin Speirs</td>
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<td>Flower Club</td>
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<td>Happy Circle</td>
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<td>Peter Hickman</td>
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<td>Wildlife Group</td>
<td>David Philips</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**For changes or new entries:**
- Phone: 01273 891427
- Email: pecncopy@gmail.com
If you are involved in local societies, community groups and events and you would like to write a short article about your activities we would love to hear from you.

Email: PECNCOPY @ gmail.com