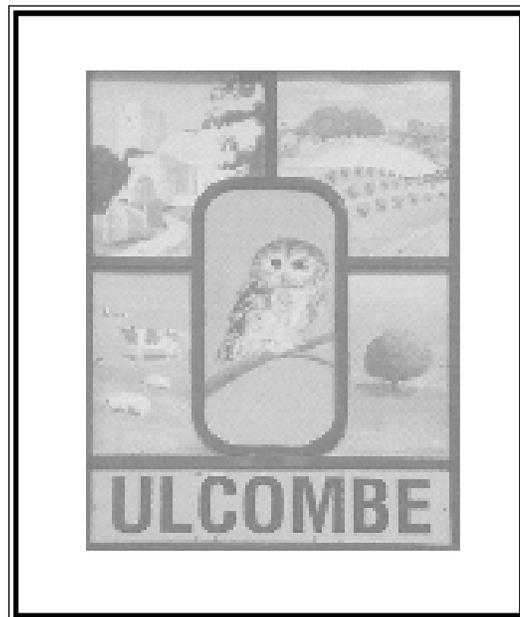


www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Ulcombe Annual Parish Report 2012/13



*Produced by
Ulcombe Parish Council June 2013
(Reports from the Annual Parish Meeting held April 2013)*

Ulcombe Parish Council: Chairman's Report

In May 2012 we welcomed three new parish councillors – Albert Evans, Paul McCreery and John Wilkins. We are now a full house of seven in total.

In the past year, April 2012 – March 2013, there have been 12 regular parish council meetings and 5 extra parish council meetings – a total of 17 meetings, 9 fewer than last year. The following issues came up during the year:

- a) The Saturday 59 Bus service is subsidised but given the cuts in KCC it remains vulnerable. It is a question of “use it or lose it”.
- b) Ulcombe has agreed Lorry Watch signs for Chegworth road to monitor inappropriate use of rural roads by vehicles over 7.5 tonnes, particularly HGVs.
- c) Your Parish Council paid for Jubilee mugs for the children at Ulcombe school and paid for the beacon on the church tower.
- d) Grants have been made to the Village Hall, the pre-school, the Diamond Jubilee party at the church, and the M20 noise group which is campaigning to re-surface the M20 between Junctions 8 and 9.
- e) Speedwatch recruitment for volunteers has been advertised again.
- f) New anti dog-fouling signs have been agreed for the recreation ground.
- g) We have cleaned the War Memorial in the Churchyard so that the names and inscriptions are now visible. We will be adding two further names this year and cleaning the base of the memorial again. Your Parish Council laid a wreath on behalf of everyone in the parish at the Remembrance Sunday service.

Parish Councillors have attended many external meetings. They include, amongst others, the Parish Police Forum, the 59 Bus Service Group, the Joint Parishes Group (JPG), the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), KHS Parish Seminar,

Global Airport for Kent Conference, Gypsy & Traveller Awareness Session, Maidstone Parish Conference, KALC Clerk's Conference, KALC Planning Conference.

In addition, we have responded to numerous consultation documents including the Kent Freight Action Plan, Localising Support for Council Tax, Speed limits for HGVs over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageway roads, Core Strategy Junction 8, and Integrated Transport Strategy etc) and this is probably the most time-consuming job for the Parish Council.

The major issues are as follows:

Crime

There were only 18 reported crimes in the year April 2012 – March 2013. This is a considerable reduction compared with the total of 48 crimes in 2011/2012, and the 45 crimes in the year 2010/2011. The detection rate is however only 10% compared with the Kent average of 37%. It is important that people always get a crime report reference number when reporting a crime so that they are all properly logged. The police want all non-emergency calls to be made by dialling 101, and not 999 unless it is a genuine emergency.

We were told last summer that we would be having police surgeries in Ulcombe Village Hall on a regular basis throughout the year so parishioners could meet the police and discuss issues of concern. The first surgery is yet to be held and we have written to them to find out what is being planned for the future.

The police budget has been cut by 20% and thus there are greater constraints than previously. It has been announced that the PCSO funding will no longer be ring-fenced from March 2013. At this stage I am not sure what this might mean for

Ulcombe, but it could mean Alan (our PCSO) will be back on a bicycle!!

Planning

As I am sure most of you know, Ulcombe Parish Council is a consultee on planning issues, and Maidstone Borough Council consulted us on 32 planning applications. Of these, Ulcombe agreed 13 and refused 19. The 32 included 15 gypsy and traveller applications, of which 10 were in Headcorn near our boundary on Lenham Road. We refused all the gypsy and traveller applications but Maidstone only refused 1 and agreed 7 with 7 still pending. Of the 17 non-Gypsy and traveller applications, MBC agreed with Ulcombe on 9 of them, 7 are still pending and 1 was withdrawn.

Many gypsy and traveller applications are approved on appeal because Maidstone's G&T policy and locations for new pitches has still not been finalised. Maidstone needs to find sites in the Borough for 157 pitches between 2011-2026. Because Ulcombe and Headcorn already have a large proportion of the existing pitches, and the Water Lane site is one of two official sites in the Borough, Richard Thick has worked hard on our behalf to get a verbal commitment that the extra pitches will not be sited in Headcorn Ward and hopefully spread more equitably around the Borough. We are now trying to get this commitment in writing.

Maidstone Local Plan

Maidstone Council's Local Plan, which will not be ready before 2015, is proposing that 15 – 16000 new homes should be built in Maidstone Borough. The large villages to the East and South of Maidstone will have to take hundreds of new houses. Headcorn, for example, may have to accommodate as many as 300 extra homes (the current size of Ulcombe) and their population could grow

by about 20%. The Rural Service Centres of Headcorn, Lenham, Harrietsham, Marden and Staplehurst, are judged to have the public transport, shops, doctors etc to serve the increased population. Ulcombe will feel the impact of increased traffic from these enlarged villages and it's a reasonable assumption that there will be no highway improvements to take the extra traffic. Ulcombe on the other hand, is not being asked to take any planned housing development for obvious reasons.

This leads me to my next topic. The government is sweetening its massive housing targets by allowing parishes to prepare their own neighbourhood development plans; parishes cannot reduce their allocated targets but they can have input into design, etc. Tomorrow night [24/4/13], Ulcombe will debate the issue of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ulcombe. This could have major implications for our Parish, including housing development on greenfield sites around the village. As this subject will affect all of you in one way or another, I hope you might think it in your interests to attend (7.30pm at the school hall).

Finance

The biggest single financial issue has been the cut in our Concurrent Functions grant by Maidstone Borough Council as you will have seen from the March Ulcombe Newsletter. In order to maintain parish facilities and services like the upkeep of the recreation ground, the pavilion and insurance premiums, we have had to increase the precept to cover the shortfall. We did well with our petition on this subject and KALC is now studying the possibility of arguing for a differential council tax for rural areas.

Our reserves are not large, and we are going to have to conserve as much as we can given the probable further threats to our future income. It is very easy to spend

other people's money (ie: yours), and we have a duty not to embark on schemes which will result in wasting your money and then increasing the precept to compensate.

Highways

Your parish council has been fighting to try and reduce the volume and speed of traffic in and around Ulcombe. We now have our village gates, funded through our KCC Councillor's (Jenny Whittle's) budget, to emphasise the speed limit when entering the village. In the near future we will be considering whether to install speed screens in the village which light up when the speed limit is exceeded. This would replace the blue police warning signs on the 30mph signs that have to be paid for anyway.

We have also submitted a report to Kent Highways, the police, and our KCC councillor in which, amongst others, we are asking for a reduction of the speed limit in Ulcombe to 25mph and better paths to the church and village Hall etc. Kent Highways has had its budget cut this year by 80% and will not prioritise Ulcombe as its crash data does not justify actioning the recommendations in the report, and the police have advised that they do not have the resources to enforce current speed limits. We are continuing to fight this issue.

Better drainage, signage, filling potholes and re-surfacing of our roads are other priorities for us. As you have seen we are in the process of resurfacing The Street and Ulcombe Hill, reinstating the 30mph tarmac and raising the manhole covers. We hope that Knowle Hill and Windmill Hill will be next.

Finally, I would like to thank Bridget for her great attention to detail. The workload for parish councils has tripled in the last 12 years but she is managing to keep our ship on a safe course through very stormy seas.
PETER TITCHENER, CHAIRMAN
ULCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council useful information

Members

Peter Titchener (Chairman)
Paul McCreery (Vice Chairman)
Hazel Bingham
Albert Evans
Trevor Sharp
John Watton
John Wilkins
Clerk: Bridget Samuelson 01622 890912
email: bridget.sam@thurstonhelis.co.uk

Meetings

Our scheduled meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month, starting at 7.15pm. The public and press are welcome to attend but the meeting will be closed for the duration of any confidential items. Additional (extraordinary) meetings to discuss planning, finance or other urgent matters are held where a deadline needs to be met. Notice of all meetings along with agendas, minutes, financial information (and more!) is published on the noticeboard and also on the parish website: www.ulcombepc.kentparishes.gov.uk
All information is accessed via "Site Pages".

Village Newsletter

Thanks are due to all those who have helped in the production and distribution of the Newsletter during 2012 and also to the Primary School for the use of the School's photocopier. With a continuing subscription price of £3 and income from advertisements the Newsletter has ended the year with a useful profit of £809 most of which will be distributed to village causes. If anyone would like to take on the role of treasurer, please do let me know!
PHILIP EASTON, TREASURER
ULCOMBE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

Ulcombe Parish Council Finance Report 2012/13

Summary of receipts	£ (figures rounded)
opening reserves brought forward from the previous year	11,166
precept	12,199
reserve account interest	3.00
concurrent functions grant	4,490
VAT recovered for 2012/13	1,160
Total income	29,018
Summary of payments	
office and staff costs	5,138
insurance	760
audit	275
hire of hall for meetings	455
association membership	419
consultancy fees (Joint Parishes Group)	20
training courses	140
Annual Report	150
Information Commissioner notification	35
travel expenses	10
advertising of notices	50
recreation ground/car park	3,006
pavilion	1,236
grants to organisations	1,440
Jubilee beacon	309
war memorial cleaning	475
VAT paid in 2012/13	1,093
Provision for rounding of figures	1
Total payments	15,012
Closing balance	14,006

Included in the above expenditure headings:

Office and staff: clerk wages, office supplies

Audit: internal, external

Association memberships: Kent Association of Local Councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Society of Local Council Clerks, Kent County Playing Fields Association

Recreation ground/carpark: bin emptying, strimming, mowing, hedge cutting, notices, barrier repairs, play equipment inspection/repairs, TPO consultation, registration of land

Pavilion: alarm service, electrical works, fire extinguishers inspection, electrics inspection, electricity, cesspit repairs, materials survey

Grants: village hall (oil tank), Remembrance Day wreath, Jubilee Village event, M20 Noise Survey, Ulcombe Pre-school, Christmas Lighting Up event

For more detailed information please see "Minutes of meeting held 9 April 2013: 2012-13 income & expenditure assessment" which can be viewed on the parish council website (click on *Site Pages/Minutes*) or contact the clerk for a copy.

Maidstone Borough Council Headcorn Ward Members' Reports

Richard Thick reported that it had generally been a very quiet year. The Borough Council had been actively pursuing locating an initial site of 15 pitches to provide accommodation for gypsies and travellers. The council's aim was to spread provision around the borough.

The Core Strategy was ongoing with targets for numbers of households and sites for development still to be confirmed. There were issues regarding infrastructure which were still to be resolved.

Richard would like to start a local volunteer initiative to tackle litter problems around the ward lanes as the borough council could not resource full clearance on its own. He would be investigating the possibilities further with MBC and would liaise with the parishes in his ward.

Richard was currently Deputy Mayor Elect and from May 2013 would be Deputy Mayor of Maidstone. In 2014 he would become Mayor.

Jenny Gibson reported that with no spare money for funding and grants from MBC, parishes were needing to fund more items themselves. The proposed replacement scheme for concurrent functions continued to be an issue between the borough and parishes. Much of the Core Strategy had had to be revised as the information previously used was now out of date. Developers might have to pay a levy to provide for infrastructure. There were still many concerns regarding unlawful gypsy and traveller sites. However, MBC needed to make provision for sites and spent a lot of time dealing with the applications and sites which come forward in the planning process. The council was conscious of it being a difficult issue to resolve and of the need to consider the problems from all sides.

All Saints' Church, Ulcombe

Church building

We are delighted to report that following a request for volunteers in the Ulcombe News; we now have sufficient volunteers to keep the church open every day of the week. We are very grateful to all of those who have responded so positively.

This year we received the Quinquennial Review (QQR), which, as anticipated, identified a number of problems, the most serious of which was the state of the lead roofs on the north & south aisles. The lead has come to the end of its useful life. Several splits have occurred which are allowing rain to leak through causing damage to the interior of the building. We have been in discussion with the Architect, English Heritage and the Diocese and are delighted that an agreement has been reached to replace the lead with alternative material that is less expensive and also unappealing to lead thieves.

We applied and were successful in obtaining a grant from English Heritage towards both the cost of the investigative work on the roofs and the consequent replacement. This still leaves approximately £40,000 to find and we are now in the process of applying to other funding bodies to make up this deficit. The investigative work is underway and is due to be completed by December 2013. The actual replacement work is scheduled to begin the following year – funds permitting.

Following the theft of lead from the roof above The Lady Chapel in March 2012 we have had this successfully replaced with zinc. The resultant damage to the interior plaster is due for repair this spring. This has been covered by insurance.

The QQR also highlighted concerns

regarding the electrical supply, which included the identification of asbestos boarding in the electrical cupboard. This has now been dealt with. We were fortunate in receiving an anonymous donation for this work.

Other issues raised included the stone wall on the turret, the internal décor that is crumbling in places, the lightning conductor, the need for an access audit and the cleaning of the windows. The access audit will be undertaken this year. The remainder of the work will need to be put on hold until the roofing work is complete.

We now have a portable screen in the church, thanks to Simon Odam who carried out this work for us. This will enable us to include new activities which we hope will be of value to the community as well as enabling us to raise additional funds

Activities

This has been a busy and fulfilling year for the Church. We have engaged in a number of activities that have proved very popular with the local community.

A flower festival was held in April. Several groups and individuals put in displays on the theme 'A new beginning'. Attendance was excellent, despite the inclement weather. Jean Davis and her team worked extremely hard to make this a success.

We held a BBQ & Beacon lighting event on 4th June, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The Tower Beacon had been kindly donated by Ulcombe Parish Council. We were fortunate in having a beautiful clear evening and even a full moon, which made the occasion very special.

A series of concerts, were held in the

autumn to celebrate the 50th

Anniversary of the installation of the church organ. These were a wonderful celebration of music with the organ as the star attraction. Our resident organist Michael Alexander started the series by giving us a demonstration of its capabilities together with a witty pocket history. The second evening featured the brilliant Invicta Ensemble with a range of baroque music and we finished with an evening of local talent including Ulcombe's own soprano Katherine Samuelson and harpist Emma Jane Isaacs - a lovely end to the series.

Our Harvest celebration weekend in September, included a local produce and craft fair, a harvest supper, held in the church for the first time and a harvest festival service. The Fair was very well attended and we plan to repeat this in the spring. The candle lit harvest supper was excellent. Many people enjoyed the lovely atmosphere as well as the fantastic food. Thanks are due especially to Mair Chantler as well as her able assistants. The harvest offerings for the harvest service were donated to the Salvation Army in Maidstone for distribution to those in need.

We have been very grateful for the support we have received from the community in all of these endeavours.

In the coming year we aim to build on our success in these activities and are currently planning: a spring local produce & craft fair, a summer BBQ & Jazz band event, a series of concerts, Film & supper evenings, children's film and refreshment events during the school holiday, an autumn fair, a candle lit harvest supper.

JOHN GOODE & RITA STRUTT
CHURCH WARDENS, ALL SAINTS CHURCH

Ulcombe Church of England Primary School

A Year of Sport and Activity

Going back twelve months one of the first events to report on was a sporting triumph. Our cricket team won the Chance 2 Shine Cricket Tournament at Leeds & Broomfield Cricket Club. The sunshine certainly shone down on the team, who thoroughly enjoyed playing against teams from other local schools.

Sport featured heavily in 2012, largely thanks to the Olympics. The children were set two challenges for the school holiday in June, to design a torch which represented our school then to make an Olympic Torch using the same design, or based around the Olympics or the Olympic and Paralympic Values.

The children took part on World Sport Day in June to raise money for the School and the British Heart Foundation. The children had a fantastic time learning to play Ultimate Dodgeball. All of the teams tried really hard to do their best, taking on a new challenge and raising funds.

To help us keep fit and healthy, and to do a small bit for the environment, our school is taking part in the Kent walk to school challenge. The green travel campaign is run by the charity KM Walk To School Team, who provide incentives encouraging families to walk to school. The charity also teaches children road safety skills.

Our annual pancake races took place on Shrove Tuesday. The children raced across the playground and back in their houses, trying to keep their pancake off the floor. Older children had made the pancakes and even had to try and keep the pancakes in the air, flipping them as they went on their way. As our topic at the time was food, the older children tried their hand at making the pancakes.

We even went away to take part in physi-

cal challenges. This year's Residential Adventure went to PGL Osmington Bay, Dorset, near Weymouth. We went with two other schools again, for the fifth year in a row. We invited Platts Heath Primary School and John Mayne CE Primary School to join us and we are really pleased that they came too. We set off at 10.15am on Friday 22nd March and got back at 6.20pm on Monday 25th March. All of the children had a great time, having a go at activities such as abseiling, climbing, zip-wire and developing team skills. With such a cold snap late in March we were all looking forward to being at home in the warm!

Celebrating 60 Years of Service

Going back to another major event of 2012, it was wonderful to welcome so many of you on Friday 1st June to our Diamond Jubilee Ulcombe School Friends' Dinner. Our oldest children were waiting at tables, making sure everyone who came for lunch had everything they needed. After lunch the children led a very special assembly, celebrating the Queen's reign. We started with a rousing rendition of Jerusalem. The children shared their pictures of the Queen, told us what they would do if they were the monarch for the day, read their work describing how the Queen and others might have felt at the time of the coronation, showed us their designs for new stamps, and more. We ended the afternoon with, of course, the National Anthem. Our thanks go to FUS and the Parish Council, who donated a commemorative coin and a mug respectively for each child to take home and keep.

In the autumn our Friend's' Dinner used several themes. Before the meal Barn Owls and Tawny Owls sang 'Grace' in French for us, then after lunch all of the

children showed what they had been learning about recently. Owlets displayed the rockets they had made, Tawny Owls had created some poems using personification and used multimedia presentations to show them, whilst. Barn Owls rounded off the afternoon with a most appropriate autumn song - Firework by Katie Perry.

In Spring the theme for our dinner was Mothers and all the wonderful things they do for us. Owlets told us why they love their Mummies so much. Barn Owls used the love of their mothers as a focus for some amazing poetry. Tawny Owls shared with us everything that their Mums do for them at home, but as if crimes had been committed. All of Key Stage 2 taught us about the tradition of giving flowers and painted pink carnations for their own mothers. It was certainly a varied and entertaining afternoon. As well as all of this we also had the FUS Mothering Sunday Prize Draw. Very many congratulations to our six winners. Our thanks go to everyone who donated prizes and bought tickets. This raised £75 for FUS funds.

Friends of Ulcombe School – Our PTFA

FUS have certainly been busy throughout the year. It was wonderful to be joined by so many children, families and friends for our Sports Day and Summer Fayre on Saturday 23rd June. Well done to all of the children who took part, particularly Sapphire who won the Sports Day Trophy! The Summer Fayre was an amazing success. There were pony rides, as well as lots of activities stalls and a barbecue. The Grand Summer Draw took place, with great prizes on offer.

The Summer Ball was a night out for the grown-ups in mid-July. A champagne recep-

tion was followed by a starter accompanied by the wonderful singing of Katherine Samuelson, a former pupil. Items available in the auction included being Head Teacher for the Day. This proved to be the most popular of lots, raising £200! The night finished with the chance for everyone to strut their stuff on the dance floor - and some really did show off their best moves! The evening was extremely enjoyable, whilst raising well in excess of £1,000!

Our FUS End of Year Disco for the children took place in late July. Following on from the disco children in Years 5 and 6 were invited to a barbecue. This was a really good time for the older children to stay and relax together as, for Year 6 at least, their time at Ulcombe CE Primary School drew to a close.

The FUS Village Fireworks' Night took place on Friday 9th November. The firework displays have been incredible in recent years, and this year was absolutely no exception. It was wonderful to see so many friends and family enjoying the evening, helping to raise well over £400 for FUS.

The FUS Christmas Fayre took place on Friday 14th December from 6.30pm. Father Christmas rested his weary bones in his grotto and lots of children went to see him and get a special gift. Our fantastic Christmas Fayre raised almost £900.

The FUS St Valentine's Disco with DJ Richie was on Thursday 14th February after school. Thank you to all of the grown ups who helped make this happen, including all the parents who helped set up and sell refreshments and, for playing great music all afternoon.

All of the children took part in a great Easter Egg Hunt on the penultimate day of term. FUS again worked hard to make sure this was bigger and better than ever. Each class had to spread out and search the school field and playground to find eggs.

Each one had jigsaw pieces, which the class had to put together. Their prize for working as part of a team to find the hidden eggs and solve the puzzle will be an egg all of their own to bring home and enjoy. FUS and the Easter Bunny organised another competition for the children, in which they could help him to find the lost eggs by choosing the right square on the map.

Charity is Not Just at Home

Fund-raising during the year has not just been for FUS, though. Friday 16th November was BBC's Children In Need Day. We helped to raise money and had a great time all at once. There was the Ultimate Tiddlywinks Championship, a chance to wear something spotty and we could bring our teddy bear with us for the day. By taking part with such enthusiasm and generosity we were able to raise over £125!

The School Council asked for us to have a Cake Sale for Comic Relief, so we agreed that this would take place after school on Monday 25th February. Our holiday homework was an opportunity to raise money for this great cause, rounding off our Term of work focused on Food, Glorious Food. We know many parents enjoyed taking the opportunity to teach their child some great skills at home. It was fantastic to see the School Council, Tawny Owls and staff selling some wonderful creations on the first day back after the school holiday. On Red Nose Day itself School Council asked for a bad hair day and the chance to dress in red. With the dinosaur theme to this year's red noses children could also bring along a dinosaur for the day. The children (and their parents!) responded brilliantly as ever. The children had a great time, but also understood that we were taking part to help those for whom life is much more challenging.

We are delighted to announce that Bad Hair Day, Dress In Red, Bring a Dino, a

Staffroom competition, Owlets' Exhibition last term and the Cake Sale at the start of this, together with proceeds from today's Film Club, brought the total raised to a massive £259.01.

Learning Elsewhere

Away from the school we have been learning too. We have already mentioned our PGL trip, but other places have received visits from Ulcombe-ites. Children from all three classes had a great time seeing cogs and wheels in action in all sorts of ways at Legoland. We went on rides to see all sorts of science and technology at work, whilst taking part in science workshops too.

Tawny Owls were given a fabulous opportunity to see the studios of Radio Kent and BBC South East as part of our Lights, Camera, Action, topic. They learnt an enormous amount and even created a mock news item to send to the BBC as a thank you.

Returning to Ulcombe

After thirty years, Mr Mike Fenton has made a special return visit to Ulcombe CE Primary School. On Monday 11th March Mr Fenton, the school's former Deputy Head Teacher, came to teach the children how to play the Autoharp. Now he is a world famous autoharp player and is amazing. His wife came along and played in the concert with him.

At the end of January, as part of 'Food, Glorious Food' the children enjoyed a visit from Billingsgate Market's Seafood School. They tasted different foods including prawns and got the chance to make different foods too.

Celebrating with Friends

We have continued to hold our services at All Saints during the year. All of the children helped to lead our worship, with ►

◀ plenty of friend and family there to support the children. The children helped us to understand how the idea of harvest is different for different people. Thank you to everyone who donated gifts as part of our Harvest Celebration. These were left with the church to be distributed to those in need of a little support in the Maidstone area.

The Supersonic Lamb was the Ulcombe Christmas Production. Children from Owlets class took the lead, ably supported by actors, actresses and a choir from Barn Owls and Tawny Owls classes. As we expected, this was extremely entertaining, as the Christmas story was given a special twist for this Olympic year.

Our Christmas Service at the church gave all of the children the opportunity to re-tell the Christian story of Jesus, as well as some more light-hearted contributions. Unfortunately road works meant that our Easter Service was moved to the school from the church at the end of Term 4. It was great that a good number were still willing and able to join us despite the change in plan as the children explained the events of that first Easter.

We are pleased to have been able to share time and equipment with friends this year. UDAS war-time adventures were par-

tially lit using the school's stage lights in the Village Hall, whilst Mrs Wills has joined the Pre-School Committee.

A Better Building

We are extremely pleased that the roof above two of our classrooms was replaced. Barn Owls used The Owls' Nest as their classroom while Tawny Owls re-located to the Hall. The work was completed with internal re-decoration during the Easter holiday. Our thanks go to everyone at Byfords Roofing who have helped us to get this work completed to such a high standard.

Security of the school site came back under the spotlight in the autumn, when oil was stolen from the school's tank. The damage done to the school was considerable with a large section of the playground made unusable by spilt fuel. Thankfully, we received support from KCC in rectifying this and have been working to make the site and the oil tank more secure.

Library Update

The Library extension and associated improvements are still waiting upon others. The Diocese and UK Power Networks should be arranging for the sub-station to be moved to the eastern end of the school

site. The sale of land cannot be completed until this is in hand. KCC are unwilling to forward fund our project despite its certainty, so we continue to chase other people to move this forward.

And Finally...

We continue to help children make excellent progress. Whilst there is some truth that statistics can be used to back up any opinion, material produced by both KCC and Ofsted show that children are making good or even outstanding progress during their time at Ulcombe. We are proud of everything that we enable children to achieve academically, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

Despite the constant tightening of the public purse, the enforced changes to our profession and the unpopular changes to our national curriculum, we look forward to supporting the children during the coming year. Our vision does not change, regardless of what goes on elsewhere, that in our school we are inspiring children, enabling achievement and preparing for life in a happy, caring Christian village school.

VINCENT HAMPTON
HEADTEACHER,
ULCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ulcombe Ballroom Dancing Club

We have about eleven couples attending the Wednesday evening class for two hours, our standard continues to improve, but we will never be professional and the ethos of the class is 1. A lesson 2. A social occasion 3. Exercise. We have had very little problems with the village hall other than the theft of the oil on, I think three occasions, when it is impossible to continue with the class as it gets very cold and wearing overcoats and mufflers is not very conducive to dancing

although it makes quite an amusing spectacle. All in all we are quite happy.

Thursday night is practice night and is for one hour and a much more informal evening, we are quite happy to try to accommodate any other users of the hall as when Tory wanted to have the hall at eight o'clock for her Zumba. We had no problem with moving to an earlier spot. Also Thursday is traditionally election day so we can be cancelled. I personally do the practice night and

look upon it as giving the hall income when all the elements work out. If anyone would like to come to either of the dance nights they would be very welcome.

Of the eleven couples who attend, three are from the village, two from Headcorn the others are from other villages. So in conclusion we are predominantly a local rural activity. Although all are welcome!

ROD DAVIS, ORGANISER
ULCOMBE BALLROOM DANCING CLUB

Ulcombe Dramatic Amateurs Society (UDAS)

UDAS or affectionately known as Ulcombe's Dramatically Amateur Society presented an evening of entertainment and good food (the emphasis being the good food not good acting). This year we presented a trio of comedy plays, consisting of episodes from Dad's Army, Fawlty Towers and our ever popular 'Allo 'Allo.

The group is headed by our Director, Pippa Evans, (she of the professional acting experience) went into rehearsals late

last year and then into the New Year with what seemed to be every night of the week (some would say that still wasn't enough!). But we hope the performances were enjoyed by all who came to watch.

Each performance was rounded off by good food, the main course being cooked by Chris and Sandra Barlow, to whom we are very grateful.

We are grateful to Ulcombe's school and village hall for the use of their facilities and made donations to both after the play.

Just to end this report saying that at the moment we have not thought of our next performance and we are planning a get together very soon, if you are interested in joining the group, either acting or behind the scenes, then get in touch. My number is 843592.

On a sad note was the recent death of Judy Porter who joined us this year to make friends – she will be missed by us all.

MIMI HUMPHREYS
CO-ORDINATOR, UDAS

Ulcombe Pre-School

Ulcombe Pre-School report for the 2013 AGM of Ulcombe Parish Council

The pre-school has continued to operate for four mornings a week in the Ulcombe village hall, and is open from 9.15am-1.00pm Monday to Thursday, which accounts for the KCC funding for three and four year olds of 15 hours per week. We have now also been accepted onto the KCC 'Free for Two' scheme, which allows funding for two year olds (conditions apply).

We began term one in September 2012 with 8 children, 3 of whom attended the full 15 hours of operation. Our child numbers have currently increased to 11, with children attending a variety of hours. We will lose 6 children at the end of this academic year due to movement to primary education, and so will commence September 2013 with approximately 5 children. These regular fluctuations in child numbers and attending hours, continues to mean that our 'income' is rather unpredictable, never allowing much room for development of the pre-school.

The management committee has remained stable, and indeed increased, this

year. I have remained in the position of Chair. I have not had a child at the pre-school for over a year, and mentioned in last year's report that we are looking for a new Chair; no-one has offered yet to take up this position. Our Treasurer is resigning at the end of this academic year (July 2013), and so we are hopefully in the process of recruiting a new Treasurer. Huge thanks go to Michelle for all of her hard work she has done as Treasurer. We currently have eight committee members, including the aforementioned officer positions, which satisfies our requirement of a quorum of five members. We continue to welcome more committee members, whether or not directly linked to the pre-school. All of the work in support of the pre-school by the committee members and parent helpers is carried out voluntarily, and I thank everyone for their hard work. The pre-school will be holding its AGM in June.

Corinne Giles continues to lead as the pre-school Supervisor. Sonia Crosbie left the pre-school in February 2013 to experience a larger setting, and I thank Sonia for all of her hard work at Ulcombe Pre-School, and wish her all the best for the future. We employed a replacement for Sonia, who left after one month of service, due to personal reasons.

We are currently advertising for a replacement, with current temporary cover sustaining our working ratio requirements. The pre-school continues to have an additional member of staff in a 'cover' position to accommodate illness and training. This continues to provide us with consistency and flexibility to suit the pre-school's requirements.

The pre-school has secured its permanent advertising banner, located at the primary school, and I thank Mr. Hampton for giving us this space.

The pre-school has continued to fundraise throughout another year, including a Christmas Open Morning, an Easter coffee morning, and a summer sports day. Thanks again go to Councillor Jenny Whittle, who has allocated us £500 from her 2012-2013 budget. We will be receiving this soon, and are designating the money towards 'Free for Two' specific equipment.

We feel that the pre-school is an important part of the village community and an essential link between home and school for our children as they grow. We thank everybody who continues to support Ulcombe Pre-School.

MELISSA DALLAMORE, ULCOMBE
PRE-SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

Ulcombe Village Hall

Current committee members:
Frances Crawford - Chair, Paul McCreery – Treasurer, Debbie Bell – Secretary, Maria Revell, Mimi Humphrey, Jane Williams, Christina Cox, Jack Webb, Pippa Evans.

The village hall has had a year of mixed fortunes; on the plus side we have more regular clubs meeting there than ever before and these include Pre-School (4 mornings a week), Badminton, Stitching Club, Ballroom Dancing (2 evenings a week), Friendship Club, History Society, Drama Group and exercise clubs for Zumba, Boxercise and Urban Rebound. Contact details for all these clubs and activities are available from the Bookings Secretary Nikki Sharp on 842848 or from myself on 843862.

The income from these activities is obviously a great help in paying the bills, but sadly is not sufficient to pay for maintenance and updating of the hall, which was built in 1978 and therefore now needs some updating. In the past few years, we have installed new double glazed windows and doors, a new heating system and new toilets. However, much still needs to be done and this summer we hope to replace the kitchen with a 'new' second-hand one that we have already purchased for £500.00. We are currently looking for an experienced kitchen fitter to do this in the school summer holidays.

However, a greater priority is to insulate the roof and walls; currently there is no insulation in the walls at all and only a very small amount in the roof. In the eight months since the beginning of September 2012, we have spent £2072.18 on oil and even though we have obviously had an exceptionally cold winter this is not an

amount that we can afford to carry on paying. Jan Summers did obtain quotes for insulation back in 2009 when all the hall renovations were being costed and at that time it appeared that this would cost somewhere between £2500 and £3000. We will try and obtain a grant towards this and we are anxious to complete these works before next winter, but before even starting we need an asbestos check and then we have to have the loft hatch enlarged as insulation companies have quoted this as a condition of the work being undertaken.

Our most recent expense has, unfortunately, been yet another oil theft. We have now had two definite thefts and two attempted thefts in the last two to three years. We installed a new bunded and much smaller tank in September on the advice of a local oil company, in the hope that this would make it more difficult and less worthwhile for the thieves. Not so! On 23rd March the palisade fencing was torn from its fixings and the oil pipe was cut, leading to a loss of about £200.00 worth of oil. Unfortunately although the CCTV was working, the security lights were not and so there was insufficient evidence for the police to pursue this. We have now increased our security substantially at a cost of £520.00 and keep our fingers crossed for the future.

All this leads me to the minus side! We aim to hold three to four social events every year to raise funds for the village hall; usually these consist of two quiz nights and one or two other events depending on ideas and committee members availability. In 2012 we hosted the Queen's Jubilee Street Party (in the hall due to poor weather); this was a free

event with financial assistance from the Parish Council and it was very well attended and a huge success.

Our next fund raising event was to have been a Bingo Night on 29th September, to be run in conjunction with the school – this was cancelled due to very poor ticket sales. Our Autumn Quiz Night was held on 17th November with a profit of £680.00 and was attended by 67 people. Again the next fund raising event, the Safari Supper due to be held on 26 January 2013 was cancelled due to lack of numbers. Our most recent event, the Spring Quiz Night held on 16th March was again poorly attended with only 45 tickets being sold; despite this we decided to go ahead and raised just over £450.00 for village hall funds and as always a good time was had by all who attended.

We are very grateful to all the people who do regularly support our efforts but would love to see more villagers attending and, by their attendance, helping us to keep the hall open for the community. A lot of people seem to be under the impression that the hall is owned and run by the Parish Council, but this is not the case. The hall does stand on Parish Council land, but is actually owned by the villagers with the committee members acting as Trustees. The Parish Council does give us an annual donation towards our funds, which in 2012 was £850.00, for which we are very grateful but, aside from this and income from rentals, any other income has to come from fund raising, although we were very grateful this year to receive £700.00 from UDAS following their hugely successful production in February.

To this end we will plough on with fund raising – our next event is the postponed Safari Supper which is due to be held on 18th May. Following on from that

we will be having a wine tasting in September and a Quiz Night in November. Next year we would love to hold a Barn Dance but this does depend very much on anticipated ticket sales as the bands and caller are very expensive to hire. We are very happy to organise virtually anything as we now have quite a few years of experience between us, so if you or your neighbours have any ideas please let us know!

Of course, if quiz nights, etc are really not your cup of tea, but you would like to make a donation to the funds, this would be very gratefully received.

Life has changed quite a bit since I moved to Ulcombe 30 years ago, with the closure of two shops and the more recent closure of our pub, which has seen some very lively evenings in the past! Apart from the school, our village hall is the only venue where friends and neighbours can come together as a community to socialise and it is very important to maintain this facility in the best way we can – so remember if you don't use it you may lose it!

FRANCES CRAWFORD, CHAIRMAN
ULCOMBE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

Ulcombe Friendship Club

2012 was a very full and busy year.

Membership increased throughout the year, and there were a number of innovations.

Our talks, as always, were varied and interesting. We heard about Life as a Parish Councillor, about the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, about life in a Victorian workhouse – not very pleasant, and about life in show business. One month we were introduced to the history of the tools in our garden sheds, and another month to old photographs of Maidstone.

Our outings were particularly successful. The first was the river trip up the Medway from Maidstone to Barming. We were provided with an excellent packed lunch and drinks – and all sat back and enjoyed the views and the leisurely cruise along the river. Blessed with a sunny day, it was much enjoyed by everyone. Then, later in the year we visited Heaven Farm where we were given an excellent lunch. After looking round the farm, we were taken to a restored windmill. It was quite a long walk and not everyone was able to do it – but those who reached the windmill found it fascinating. And the views were wonderful. Our New Year Lunch was held at the Ridge Golf Club, and

at our Christmas party, we were entertained by Pauline Fisher on the trumpet.

As you know, we are a self supporting club, and there were one or two anxieties about the Tea rota as people did not always arrive in time to get it ready. We are very grateful to those who come early and get the tables and chairs out – something not all of us are able to help with these days.

One very successful innovation was our Cream Teas and Sale in the Village hall in May. Not only did it bring in useful funds for the Club, it also enabled us to give pleasure to a number of villagers who sat and enjoyed an afternoon relaxing over tea and looking at the stalls. We also had coffee mornings thanks to Pat Lyne and Melanie Ford, and a Garden Party at The Old Dairy when the weather held up nicely.

We have an interesting programme prepared for this year – though there will be one or two changes which we will tell you about later. The Club could not run without the dedicated help of the Committee – Meg who oversees the tea rota, Melanie the Secretary, Pat the Treasurer – and all the rest of the committee to whom many thanks.

MOLLY POULTER, CHAIRMAN
ULCOMBE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Community Policing

Ulcombe crime figures 01/04/2012 –
01/04/2013

For the above period there have been 18 reported / recorded crimes. They are broken down as follows: Theft – miscellaneous – including theft by finding x 9 Burglary other than dwelling with intent to steal x 1, Criminal damage to property valued under £5,000 x 2, Theft from motor vehicle x 1, Burglary other than dwelling – theft x 1, Assault a person thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm – Section

47 x 2, Arson x 1, Vehicle interference – motor vehicle x 1

There is a 10% detection rate. 4 of the reported/recorded crimes are from 1 venue and this venue is being treated with Mediation to assist the family and a further 2 crimes are from another venue that is a long on going dispute.

For the same period 2011-2012 there were 48 reported/recorded crimes and 5 were detected. There is a difference of 4 crimes due to the investigations that were carried out and the re-classification of the reported/recorded crimes.

There has been a reduction in the reported/recorded crime by 30.

I understand the Parish had been disappointed that crime levels had remained around the same for the previous 2 years, but this year has seen a big reduction. This can be contributed to a more high visible patrolling of the area, this is something that I had informed the Parish that I would be doing. The aim is to continue this approach and assist the Parish when possible.

PCSO ALAN BEECH
HEADCORN WARD PCSO

Ulcombe History Society

We have had a very successful and happy year with membership growing, a number of interesting talks, and two very enjoyable outings. The Society is organised by a committee comprising Geoff Beale, David Easton, John Moore, John Ware and Peter Titchener who have been a pleasure to work with.

Our first talk, by Imogen Corriogan, was specially prepared for us, as a number of us wanted to hear about our Anglo-Saxon heritage. It proved very worthwhile. Canon Peter Brett not only talked about the Mediaeval Priest and his parish, but also took the trouble to visit Ulcombe church and included direct references to Ulcombe in his talk. This we much appreciated. It was good to have two local people talking – Pippa and Albert Evans, who talked about Aphra Behn who had such an influential role in seventeenth century theatre and yet was not nearly as well known as she should have been. At our Christmas meeting, at which we served mulled wine and mince pies, we had a talk by Alan Stockwell about the development of pantomime over the centuries. As a pantomime player himself, he gave us a detailed and interesting talk about the significance of pantomime over the years.

We have had two very good outings, and I want here to give thanks to John Moore on whom all the complexities of the financial arrangements have fallen. Our first outing was to Chichester Cathedral and Fishbourne. We had a tour of the cathedral

with excellent guides, and afterwards were served lunch in the separate Alexandra Room. We then had a chance to wander round Chichester before proceeding to Fishbourne where those of us who had not been there before, were amazed by the Roman remains – wonderful pavements with intricate designs.

Then, in September, we ventured on a two night visit and set out for Versailles – travelling under the tunnel. It was a very successful trip, but there were quite a few hitch-ups during the course of the weekend. When we arrived at our hotel we discovered it didn't do dinner, and our guide, who had been brought in at the last moment, hadn't organised anywhere for us to eat! We were, by then, very hungry. However, he rose to the occasion and managed to find a restaurant where we all ate together. The next morning we set off for Versailles – an amazing palace on which Louis XIV spent huge amounts of money and where he insisted all his courtiers resided so he could keep an eye on them! We then went on to Chartres and had a tour of the cathedral. Again, an amazing building, but for some of us it seemed very dark. Several people were dismayed to see the way some of the restoration work had been done – we don't think it would have been allowed in England! After the tour, we scattered to different restaurants for dinner. We didn't know beforehand, but Chartres was celebrating a Feast Day and was crowded with people. After dinner, there was a wonderful son et lumiere against the walls of the cathedral. Unfortunately, some of us didn't get to it in time because the serving of dinner took so long. We got back to the coach, tired but

happy, only to be directed by traffic police down a side road where the coach found it impossible to get round a corner because of cars parked on the corner. I will not go into the ramifications of the event and the interaction with the local gendarmes – only to say it ended by all the men getting out of the coach and man handling a car onto the pavement! A further problem arose the second morning over breakfast as the hotel was unwilling to serve breakfast as early as we wanted. However, by dint of argument, we got it in time to leave early for Fontainebleu. I think most of us preferred Fontainebleu to Versailles. It was somehow more homely although it had beautiful rooms, furniture and tapestries. It was, altogether, an interesting trip!

You should all have received copies of this year's programme. I hope you are happy with it. Do please let your friends know about our meetings and trips. If we can fill our coaches, we can keep the costs down. As you know, we have a raffle at each meeting, which, similarly, helps with costs. If any of you feel you could bring a raffle prize occasionally, that would be very welcome. On your behalf I would like to express our thanks to our Treasurer, John Moore, our Treasurer who is keeping the society in the black, to Geoff Beale, our Vice Chairman, who seems to do much of the hand-delivery of our information and programmes, to David Easton, our secretary, who is a mine of information, to John Ware who produces all our posters and looks after membership; and to Peter Titchener, who produces interesting background information for our trips.

MOLLY POULTER,
CHAIRMAN, ULCOMBE HISTORY SOCIETY

Ulcombe Cricket Club

The 2012 season was unusually wet and out of 12 fixtures arranged, the club was in the end

only able to play 1 home match and 3 away, which was rather disheartening. There are 4 home games planned for the 2013 season so far. New members of any ability are very welcome to join the

club (men and women) with a minimum age of 13 years. All the fixtures are friendlies.

TREVOR SHARP,
CAPTAIN, ULCOMBE CRICKET CLUB