

Whatlington News

AUGUST 2023

CONTACT: STEVE TURNER 01424 870041



WHATLINGTON

CONNECTED

Website launched to bring community together

A website has been launched to encourage more residents to get involved in village life.

The site at www.whatlington.com features details of events, information about clubs and activities, a guide to local amenities, useful contact details from alarm installers to window cleaners, residents' recipes and historic photos.

It comes hot on the heels of the village's first

Facebook site and is part of a new drive to build on Whatlington's community offering.

It is the first initiative of a group of residents – the Whatlington Community Connectors – looking to create interesting opportunities for residents to get together in large or small numbers.

Find out more by visiting the site now.

Take a look at www.whatlington.com

**COMMUNITY
DIARY**

**CHARITY
QUIZ NIGHT**
Thursday
31 August
7pm Royal
Oak in aid of
Dementia
Support

**COMMUNITY
COFFEE
MORNING**
Wednesday
6 September
10.30am-
12noon
Village Hall

**MACMILLAN
COFFEE
MORNING**
Wednesday
27 September
10am-12noon
Village Hall

**Whatlington
facebook**

Join the village
conversation
here

[www.facebook.com/groups/
758633079243247](http://www.facebook.com/groups/758633079243247)

More event details are available on the website

See the website for our full menus

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Return of the Village's biggest event is back after four years

FETE!

SATURDAY 26 AUGUST 1.30PM

Whatlington's biggest annual event the village fete is back this month after an absence caused by Covid lockdowns and a clash with the Platinum Jubilee.

The event will once again bring a host of traditional attractions including stalls, pony rides, children's games, barbecue, bar, teas and cakes, and the stress-relieving crockery smash.

Organised by the Village Hall Committee to raise funds for the upkeep of the historic community meeting place, the event is the centrepiece of the village summer.

The committee's Annette Williams says: "It's great to be back! I think the whole community has missed the fete and the chance to relax and have fun in the company of their neighbours.

"Any help you can give on the day is always appreciated as it takes a lot of work to set up for the day and clear up afterwards."

If you can help please call Annette on 07484 638253.

PONY RIDES

BAR & BBQ

KIDS' GAMES

PIMMS

PLATE SMASH

GIFTS & BOOKS

Potholes are not holes

Village motorists may complain about damage caused to their vehicles by potholes but the craters are not yet deep enough to warrant filling.

That's the view of East Sussex County Council, which sent its Highways Steward to peer into the holes in Whatlington Road.

The parish council had contacted County Hall after residents complained but the response was that the holes were not bad enough to warrant repair . . . yet. It pledged to keep an eye on the road surface for when it became sufficiently hazardous to require urgent work.

■ The county council has set aside an extra £5.6m from its reserve for additional work on potholes and drainage throughout East Sussex.

Poop patrol

The village bus shelter is once again being used as a public toilet. In recent weeks villagers have used buckets and brushes to clear up the mess.

Church on theft alert

Sedlescombe Church is the latest to be targeted in a series of thefts of roof lead and other metal.

The roof at Whatlington Church is principally tiled and articles inside are security marked.

However, churchwarden Jeffrey Bridges is asking villagers to report, and indeed photograph, any suspicious activity, including vans or trucks in the lay-by loaded or being loaded with metal or similar.

A call to Jeffrey on 07446 903239 or fellow warden John Crouch on 07788 416903 would also ascertain whether the activity is legitimate.

WHATLINGTON COUPLE INVOLVED IN FATAL ACCIDENT

Sandie Sullivan and her partner Mike Tapsfield watched in horror as a fatal road accident unfolded in front of them.

Mike was driving northwards on the A21 near New England Lane when a head-on collision occurred between the car in front of them and a van coming in the opposite direction.

The car then started heading backwards, smashing into the side of their own motor before ending up in a hedge.

A surgeon and nurse who lived close to the scene of the crash rushed to help the elderly occupants of the car, said Sandie. They told her the injured friends, both from Sedlescombe, were conscious and talking immediately after the collision.

The 90-year-old man was airlifted to hospital in London while the 86-year-old woman was taken by road ambulance suffering what police described as life-changing injuries. Sadly, the man later died at Kings College Hospital.

The van driver suffered minor chest injuries.

The road was closed for several hours after the accident, which happened at lunchtime on 13 July.

As a newly-elected Whatlington parish councillor with her first meeting that evening, Sandie, of Woodmans Oak, didn't have time to dwell on the incident. It was only later that night that the shock hit her.

"I couldn't sleep at all. I kept seeing that car coming towards us and thinking that Mike could have been killed as it hit his side of our vehicle. It was horrible.

"The next day I just kept thinking it could have ended so differently – it was only by chance that we are still here. It makes you think that you never know what could happen."

Despite the tragic ending Sandie was full of



'Lucky escape' from A21 horror crash

praise for the emergency services that attended.

"The police and ambulance were there within 20 minutes. The fire service arrived to cut the roof off the car and the air ambulance landed in a field next to the road.

"These services often get criticised for the time it takes to get to incidents but I thought they were amazing."

The couple's car was initially impounded by the police before being released back to them later in the day, driveable but badly damaged.

The wait goes on for the next stage of the safety proposals for the A21 through the village.

It had been anticipated that National Highways would come back to the parish council this month with ideas based on a meeting with residents earlier this year.

But the authority's Kishore Ramdeen says the "limited nature of our resources makes it challenging to balance the priority of work across all of the A21".

As a result his team is only just making a start on design work so no date for a follow-up meeting has been set.

Pleas to help injured biker ignored

Motorists fail to stop . . . until Anne and Lois arrive

Passing motorists ignored a woman's plea for help as she tended a motorcyclist who had been in collision with her car on the A21.

The driver had been signalling for help for 10 minutes before Whatlington's Anne Smith and Lois Richardson came across the scene and stopped to help.

The friends were returning to their Hoath Lane home after taking their dogs for an early morning walk when they saw the woman cradling the injured biker midway between Blackbrooks and Marley Lane.

Anne said: "There was a queue of traffic and we saw a woman leaning over the motorcyclist, who was on the grass verge.

"I asked her if she wanted help and she said yes – nobody had stopped their vehicle or asked her if she needed anything since the accident occurred.

"She asked me to take over the phone call to the ambulance service as she was very shaky.

"The biker had his helmet on and I had to work hard to stop him from removing it, but eventually he forced it off.

"He was able to provide his name and some details although he was weak, had chest pains and was worsening quite quickly.

"I hung up the 999 call and waited for help to arrive. When nothing happened I called again and the ambulance service said they did not have the original call logged on their system.

"There was heavy traffic and it was about 30 minutes before the ambulance arrived. I kept talking to him and tried to keep him still in case of spinal injury. He became more and more unresponsive.

"When the ambulance arrived so did two police cars and a paramedic at same time.

"They did various tests on the bike rider before taking him to hospital, but the extent of his injuries is not known."

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QUIZ NIGHT

More than £400 was raised at a quiz night at a packed Royal Oak in aid of the Brain Tumour Charity. Quizmaster Anne Smith came up with the questions, Jane Hendley organised the event and Oak landlord Hasan provided the premises and a bottle of bubbly for the winners.



How would you have got on?

1. Who was the tech specialist in the James Bond films?
2. What chocolate bar had the slogan 'Why have cotton when you can have silk'?
3. How many hosts of The Great British Bake-off have there been?
4. Who was the youngest Beatle?
5. What is the total if you add up the numbers around the edge of a dartboard?

Answers on page 10

All change

The village bus service has been rebranded and upgraded. The 304 and 305 buses are both now numbered 1066. An extended morning route to Bexhill College, extra evening services and a two-hourly Sunday service have also been introduced. However some local bus users are concerned that it's no longer as easy to differentiate between the Whatlington Road and A2100 services from Hastings as they now both carry the same number.

Mountain anger at concrete



It's there, it's gone, it's back again – the mystery mound of concrete dumped on the verge at the junction of Riccards Lane and the A21 has puzzled parish councillors.

The hardened pile was first reported to the council in June, when the village's county councillor Kathryn Field agreed to raise the issue at County Hall in a bid to get the eyesore removed.

Success! Parish Clerk Valerie Bennett reported to July's parish council meeting that the mini mountain had been cleared.

Not so fast! Footpath Warden Bev Marks told the meeting he had driven past the site that very day and it was still there.

It seems the overgrown verge vegetation had masked the mound but grass cutting had made it visible again.

Councillor Field said she would make another attempt to get officials to clear the concrete.

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ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH

Patronal festival



Continuing battle against deathwatch beetle

Churchwarden John Crouch reports work to maintain the church and continuing efforts to find a vicar

■ Work on the building and graveyard continues regularly. We will shortly have the eastern boundary fence replaced, and there is ongoing treatment work in respect of the deathwatch beetle, which will involve the inside the church being filled with scaffolding for a while. The first phase of this work has already been undertaken, with the inspection of the void above the Chancel wall. This work was to establish whether there was any water ingress, which may have contributed to the infestation. The inspection found that all was well, although we have taken the precaution of fitting rain water diverters to the roof, to ensure rain is carried clear of this area.

■ The PCC (Parochial Church Council) is delighted to welcome Chris Clarke, who has agreed to join us. We are still looking for a treasurer to relieve Jane, our current post-holder

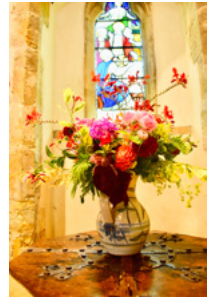
who is also a warden at our sister church, Sedlescombe. If anyone is interested in this role, or any other aspect of support, please speak to either Jeffrey or myself.

The latest round of advertising to find our new vicar is drawing to a close and we look forward with hope that someone will come forward. In the meantime all the services are covered until the end of the year, thanks to the hard work of my co-warden Jeffrey and the support from local retired ministers, in particular, John Hawkins and Stephanie Prosser. The support of these two allows for a good degree of continuity.

■ Running the church takes a lot of time and effort as well as a considerable amount of money. We are custodians of the heritage of the village and a building of this age is expensive, so we encourage everyone in the village to support the activities and events we run. Much of our current spending is covered by some generous past

legacies, for which we are extremely grateful. It may be that you are in a position to make a contribution in this manner, while limited in the support you can give on a regular basis. If this is something you might consider we would encourage you to have an informal conversation with a warden, to ensure that any prospective legacy is left in the most efficient manner.

Churchwardens: Jeffrey Bridges 01424 772535/07446 903239 and John Crouch 07788 416903
 Email: whatlingtonparishchurch@gmail.com Web: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5226



The church held its annual flower festival to celebrate its Patron Saint, Mary Magdalene. A dedicated team spent a morning arranging flowers, which filled the church with both colour and a wonderful aroma. Sadly, poor weather discouraged many from coming along, but those who did enjoyed a wide selection of cakes to accompany the tea, coffee and conversation. The weekend concluded with a festival evening service on the Sunday, with a good number attending to enjoy some rousing hymn singing, followed by more savouries and cakes!

Hymns, Pimms and memories

Churchwarden Jeffrey Bridges unveils plans for some special services in the coming months

■ On the last Sunday of August we will have 'Hymns and Pimms' at 6pm. As the name implies, we will be singing a number of well-known hymns before enjoying a glass of Pimms and some other refreshments. The intention is to hold this service outside, in the churchyard, weather permitting, so please bring folding chairs and perhaps a rug.

■ On Sunday 24 September we will have our Harvest Festival service at 6pm, followed by a Harvest Buffet. During this service we will be collecting donations of basic foodstuffs, to be taken to the Seaview Project in St Leonards where they will be used to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

■ On Sunday 8 October there will be a Songs of

Praise service at 10.30am, in place of the Family Service, led by the wardens with many favourite and well known hymns, with readings and poems in between.

■ On Sunday 22 October we shall have our annual 'Service of Memories'. This is when we remember departed loved ones, with candles lit and names read out. There will be more details nearer to the time.

■ Lastly on Sunday 29 October there will be a United Parish Service, held at Whatlington at 10.30am, where the congregation from Sedlescombe will join with us.

The car park at the village hall will be open for church use for all these services, excepting the Holy Communion ones at 9.15am.

Business as usual

Plans for forthcoming church services will largely follow the established pattern, with some special services as detailed above. There will be Holy Communion on

the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.15am.

On the second Sunday we have the Family Service at 10.30am, followed with refreshments.



Pictured, from left, Ben, Amanda, Sandie, Simon, Roger

New faces on parish council

Whatlington's new parish council met for the first time last month, following a second election that saw six candidates contest four vacant seats.

Three new councillors – Ben Clarkson, Amanda Davis and Sandie Sullivan – were elected alongside Simon White, who was previously a member of the parish authority.

They joined parish chairman Roger Fisher, who was already in place by virtue of being the only person to put their name forward for the first election in May.

Votes cast were:

Elected

- Ben Clarkson 47
- Simon White 40
- Amanda Davis 38
- Sandie Sullivan 36

Not elected

- Martyn Hole 30
- Nicola Evans 26

At its first meeting on 13 July Simon was voted deputy chairman.

Next parish council meeting is 21 September at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

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OAK QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1: Q
- 2: Galaxy
- 3: Five – Mel Giedroyc, Sue Perkins, Sandi Toksvig, Noel Fielding, Matt Lucas
- 4: George
- 5: 210

Fallen tree causes 24-hour blackout

Villagers were left without electricity for up to 24 hours after a falling tree brought down power lines during 50mph winds.

The 40ft tree was blown down on land adjacent to the River Line bridge between Hoath Lane and Mill Lane,



It took with it several high voltage cables that deliver power to 226 homes in the TN33 0 and TN32 5 post codes including Whatlington, Netherfield and Mountfield.

The outage occurred around 6.50pm on Saturday 15 July and while some power was restored in the evening by diverting electricity

around the faulty section of the network, the lights in most of the affected Whatlington homes did not come back on until the following evening.

Homes plan refused

A plan to build five houses on a former nursery site off the A21 has been refused.

The scheme would have seen four and five bedroomed houses on the site of existing glasshouses at Dorrells Farm.

Hillside Nursery had been a thriving wholesale supplier until around 2010 but business had since declined and the outline application was for land occupied by the derelict glasshouses.

But Rother planners turned down the scheme stating it would be 'significantly harmful to the landscape character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.

The refusal notice added: 'The scale and layout of the dwellings, together with the gardens, parking areas and the creation of a new access road would result in a contrived suburban characterisation of the rural landscape.'

It also stated the proposal failed to deliver a range of housing sizes and types, and had not demonstrated that adequate visibility could be achieved for a new access road onto the A21.

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IN YOUR GARDEN

Tom Schollar

Plugs brighten your meadow

The second part of Tom's advice on creating a wildflower meadow
If you didn't mow in May (or even from March to August) did you get an array of different wildflowers?

The truth is that the better your lawn was, the worse your meadow will be, initially at least. The fertiliser, herbicides, weeding and regular mowing that produce a perfect green sward make it hard for wildflowers to compete. There are three main ways to get wildflowers into your meadow:

- plant plug plants
- spread seed
- start with them already there or nearby.

Plug plants can be bought relatively cheaply on-line, or grow your own from seed. The advantage of this method is that the plants are large enough to fight the grass when you plant them. Make a big hole in the

turf because you don't want the plant to be swamped by grass immediately.

Seed can come in two ways, either as a packet of 'wildflower' seeds or as straw from a live meadow. With a packet you scatter the seeds as directed on the packet and wait, ideally after making pockets of bare earth first. Choose seed that suits your soil – acid/alkaline, clay/silt/sandy – because some wildflowers are fussy. Seed from a local source should maximise the chances of success.

Starting with what's already there – if your lawn is not the best, you may have some valuable wildflowers already. We found that we had common spotted orchids in our 'lawn' when we let the grass grow long.

For further information, including seed suppliers:
<http://bit.ly/3QgE5Wf>

CUT TIMING IS ALL-IMPORTANT

Picture A (July) shows an area cut in May on the left and cut in early March on the right. Yellow rattle, orchids, daffodils, scillas, snake's head fritillaries etc have flowered between May and June in the area to the right and are setting seed prior to cutting in August.

B (June) and C (July) shows what flowered after cutting in May. The same flowers are in the March cut area, but are hidden by the grasses.



SEDLSCOMBE AND DISTRICT GARDEN SOCIETY

www.sedlescombegarden.society.org.uk

Cultivate your interest

Our aim: to promote to residents of Sedlescombe, Whatlington and surrounding areas an interest in all aspects of gardening, including maintaining the rich diversity of garden plants to help combat the effects of climate change.

How we do it: shows, speakers, trips, social events, newsletter.

How to join: Contact Secretary Brenda Page on 01424 870455 or email sdgs.secretary@gmail.com

What it costs: £9 per person per year or £12 for joint membership.

COMING EVENTS

Sedlescombe Village Hall Saturday 16 September:
Autumn show – flowers, fruit, vegetables, flowers, made produce and handicrafts.

Wednesday 11 October:
Quiz Night.

Wednesday 18 October:
Coach trip to Sheffield Park to see the fantastic autumn colour. We expect the coach costs to be a little under £20. Entry is free to National Trust members and £14 for non-members.