

HARVEST LUNCH

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, HOTHFIELD

FOLLOWING THE SERVICE ON

SEPTEMBER 6th 2026 AT 12 MIDDAY

ALL WELCOME

SUGGESTED DONATION OF

£6 PER PERSON

Ploughman's Lunch and dessert with glass of wine or soft
drink followed by coffee or tea

Donations go towards upkeep of the Church.

Contact: Pamela 01233 623568

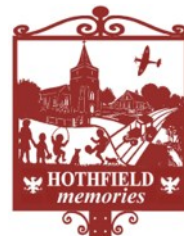
Dates for your Diary

Hothfield Parish Council next meeting 7pm 10th Sep Hothfield Village Hall

Kent Police Hothfield Common Drop-In 12noon 4th Aug (see page 3)

Harvest Lunch St Margarets Church 12noon 6th Sep

The Early History of Hothfield



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In June local author and enthusiastic historian Dr Kaye Sowden kindly gave a detailed and fascinating talk on the early history of this area of Kent, which was well attended. Hothfield, and neighbouring villages such as Westwell and Little Chart, are located in the Weald of Kent, which is the flatter area of land south of the North Downs. This vast area was mostly forest and unattractive for people to live in as there was little open land to graze animals or to grow food. The heathland at Hothfield would have been an open space with some resources such as water, bracken for bedding and animal food, and trees for fires. Belgic tribes moved into Britain during the first and second centuries; the Cantiaci settled in Canterbury. A number of burial urns and beakers were found by soldiers near Hothfield heathlands during WWII, and these were identified as being Belgic. This suggested that a tribe passed through this way but might not have settled here for long, at the same time that the Romans were also in Britain.

Kaye explained that it took the Romans with their vast numbers of people, tools and experience to start to clear openings in this forest where people could settle, using the felled trees for fuel and enclosures, and growing plants and keeping animals. From then on there were expanding numbers of small settlements that continued to open up the forest. The native people here at the time worked with the Romans and benefited from their activities.

Kaye's talk was based on historic maps and a wide variety of records. Did you know that there is evidence of a large Roman house at Little Chart and a Roman bathhouse just down the road at Rooting Street? ... and evidence of a Roman settlement and a Roman burial at Westwell? Plenty of flint tools, arrow heads and other ancient artefacts have been found around Hothfield and at Little Chart, as well as evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlements. Plenty of sites of post-medieval mills have also been recorded. Kaye has identified possible routes of earlier roads which do not exist today and potentially some Roman roads.

Most early settlements were near rivers as water is vital for life, but the current Hothfield village does not lie on the banks of a river, so where did the first villagers establish their homes? A lot of Kaye's interest surrounds Ripper's Cross, next to the Stour, where she feels there may have been earlier settlements and activity, and a Green Lane still runs nearby which may have been an earlier route for the Bethersden Road and a link with Little Chart. An early map also shows a lake east of the village close to the current lake which is above the waterfall. The current lake was man-made and sits high above the road level, but before that there seems to have been a lake on the route of Pigs Brook in the eventual grounds of Hothfield Manor – did early villagers settle near there?

I'm very grateful to Kaye for her captivating illustrated talk which she gave for free, but collected donations for her local history group; and thank you to everyone who came along on a hot evening.

... and visitors to the Belltower

Also in late June the belltower at St.Margaret's Church was open again, along with an afternoon cream tea in the church. Some visitors climbed the tight winding stairs to visit the inside of the tower and to see the bells, and the inside of the steeple. Everyone who made the ascent seemed to enjoy themselves and learned a little more about our historic church. Thank you to Martin, our Belltower Captain, for allowing us into this part of the church which is rarely seen.

Hothfield Parish Council

For full minutes of meetings of Hothfield Parish Council, please either see the noticeboard outside the village shop, or visit www.hothfield.org.uk
PLEASE NOTE: The email address for the Parish Council is parish.clerk@hothfield.org.uk

Village Hall Closure

The Village Hall will be closed from 3rd Aug & reopen on the 24th Aug.

Litter Volunteer Patrol

HPC wish to express our thanks to the four residents and two council members who volunteered their time to pick up a huge 10bags of rubbish throughout the Village on Sat 11th July. Special mention to our wonderful Clerk Marie for organising everything and Penny on the Teas & Coffees. This event was arranged by HPC following residents complaining about the litter in the village. Unfortunately as usual only the regular contributors to village welfare turned up. It seems residents are quick to point out problems with our village but rarely willing to help.

Charing Scouts Group

Summer holidays should be a time for rest and relaxation..... Term finished with beavers having a Pirate day, starting early morning and finishing late evening. I hope the beavers were tired, because I'm sure the leaders were .

Cubs had a very successful camp. Numbers were reduced this year because we had to change the date. We still have a brilliant time celebrating 110 years of cub scouts. Cubs have been set a list of 110 activities to try to complete this year.

Scouts and explorers are getting ready for their camps, so perhaps not such a restful summer.

We have launched our website, charingscoutgroup.org.uk which we hope will keep everyone up to date with what we are up to. It's at an early stage at present but we hope it will prove really useful. Well done Andy for all your hard work

Terry Group Scout Leader 07748818660

Hothfield Village Hall

Bookings via
www.hothfieldvillagehall.co.uk

Regular weekly events

Mondays @ 16:30

Target Shooting School

www.targetshootingschool.co.uk/ashford

Tuesdays @ 19:00

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492 862974

Wednesdays @ 17.30

Koba Dog Training

Contact: justine@kobadogtraining.co.uk

Thursdays @ 10.30am

Dance Visions Zumba

Contact: bookwhen.com/dancevisions

Fridays @ 18.30

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492 862974

Hothfield Common Drop-In - Come and talk about your priority

issues! : Tue 04 Aug 12:00

Dear Hothfield,

I will be holding a surgery at Hothfield Heathland Nature Reserve. Meet us in the Car Park at between 12:00 - 13:00 on 04/08/26.

This is your opportunity to raise any concerns you may have and to find out what I am doing to tackle the issues that matter to you.

Everyone is welcome and please share this message on to anyone that you would feel would benefit from attendance.

When and Where?

Tue 04 Aug 2026 12:00 - 13:00

**Hothfield Heathlands Nature Reserve,
Ashford TN26 1HD**



**Kent
Police**

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th Sep

Every year in the UK, around 1,400 to 1,500 young people under the age of 35 die by suicide, with around three-quarters of these tragic deaths being boys or young men. Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 20 to 34 in England and Wales.

This World Suicide Prevention Day, we're sharing one important message: If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts and show them you care.

Every 90 minutes, someone in the UK or Ireland dies by suicide and 1 in 4 of us has had suicidal thoughts.

Let's prevent suicide today. Because tomorrow's too late.

Suicidal thoughts can be interrupted

The Samaritans surveyed people with lived experience of suicide and the majority told us that their suicidal thoughts have been interrupted.

- 60% said their suicidal thoughts had been interrupted by someone close to them, like a friend or family member.
- 14% said their suicidal thoughts had been interrupted by a stranger or someone they didn't know.

Anyone can interrupt someone's suicidal thoughts

Small interruptions you make and actions you take could help someone who is suicidal. You don't have to be an expert to save someone's life.



Ashford Borough Council: Crisis and Resilience Fund - Summer Heating Oil Scheme Criteria

Purpose of the Scheme

The Crisis & Resilience fund "Summer Heating Oil Scheme" has been created to try and offer oil households some resilience with regard to managing their fuel bills. Typically oil prices are lower during the warmer months and consumption is usually much lower too. Hopefully, by assisting you to purchase heating oil now, it will put you in a better position to start saving for that winter fuel top up that you will inevitably need. The fund is limited and further help/support with heating oil can not be guaranteed.

To be eligible for support, applicants must:

- Be aged 16 or over
- Be a resident of Ashford permanently living within Ashford Borough Council
- Be a Council Tax/Utilities payer for that property
- Be in receipt of means tested benefits or have a total household income of £33,000 or less per year for a two person household and £47,000 for a three or more person household (including children)
- Use heating oil as the main source of heating and/or hot water.
- Have less than £3,000 in savings (unless on a means tested benefit)

Applicants will be required to provide:

- Proof of financial circumstances, such as: Bank statements from the last 3 months, Payslips from the last 3 months, Evidence of benefits received.
- Proof of heating oil use, such as: A recent invoice or delivery receipt, Bank statement showing payment to a heating oil supplier, Tenancy agreement confirming oil based heating.

Award

Where eligibility and evidence requirements are met, eligible residents will receive an award of £450, designed to contribute towards the rising cost of heating oil rather than cover the full cost of supply.

Foot patrol at Hothfield Nature Reserve



Police Officers from Ashford Beat have conducted foot patrol around the area of Hothfield Nature Reserve following a recent report of suspicious activity, and taken time to speak to regular dog walkers.

If visiting Hothfield Nature Reserve and you witness any suspicious activity, please report this at the earliest opportunity via 101/999 in order to give Officers the best chance to attend and assess. Always, when walking dogs or visiting isolated areas for walks in general, stick to the designated foot paths. Your safety is our priority when visiting areas of beauty like this.

Alternatively you can report any concerns to the Reserve Warden.

We are hosting a drop-in engagement in the coming weeks at this location (4th August), which we would urge anyone interested to attend!

Celebration Cakes for all occasions
including Weddings

Special bakes include personalised
cupcakes, Brownies, Blondies,
chunky cookies and personalised
biscuits

You can find me on: Instagram –
@flossysfussybakes

Facebook – Flossy's Fussy Bakes
Whatsapp/text – 07769 228842



HOTHFIELD POST OFFICE

New Opening Hours

0700—1900 7days

August usually means a glorious spread of purple heather or ling *Calluna vulgaris*, but the heatwave may cause it to fade early, though the tiny papery flowers will persist on the plants all winter. The heather is one of the important sources of food and cover for ground- and low-nesting birds such as yellowhammers and tree pipits, whose final broods are maturing this month.



Sunny areas of the reserve are spangled with bright yellow tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, resembling a small buttercup, and heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile* with tiny white flowers. Several of the specialised plants listed in the Hothfield Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) citation because they are scarce in Kent are visible from the causeway across the main upper bog: yellow bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, marsh St John's wort *Hypericum elodes*, also yellow, cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and the insectivorous round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* with rosettes of tiny reddish leaves and slender erect stems of tiny white flowers. Pink bog pimpernel *Lysimachia tenella* creeps across the significant variety of sphagnum mosses. Some ling colonises the drier hummocks but pink cross leaved heath *Erica tetralix* prefers these damper conditions. Wet/ functioning peat bogs are one of the best carbon stores that exist - better than woodland. Purple/mauve devil's bit scabious *Succisa pratensis* is only now coming into flower and will provide pollen and nectar until the frosts.

A colony of dwarf furze *Ulex minor* near the fenced-off bird sanctuary flowers in summer, while gorse *Ulex europaeus*, will bloom from the autumn on. Both are important sources of nectar and pollen for insects and the thorny bushes offer excellent cover for small creatures and perches for birds. The thorns are modified leaves so can photosynthesise.

Birds in late summer are generally quiet, fledglings keeping to deep cover away from the raptors overhead. Hobbies will migrate south but buzzards and kestrels remain all year. Demoiselles, dragon flies, butterflies and day-flying moths are active; the willow emerald damselfly emerges this month and may fly until November. Many of the open ponds have already dried up, so less opportunities for species like dragonflies to lay eggs. Volunteers run night time non-destructive moth counts through the summer, logging the results with KWT and nationally. Insects are also being monitored this summer in several locations. Be tick aware for dogs and humans throughout the summer.

Slow worms, grass snakes and common lizards including this year's young will bask in the sun until temperatures drop and trigger hibernation.

Rain when it comes will bring fungi, even in August, with every habitat on the reserve supporting a rich array right through to spring. Take away photos and memories, but please leave all the fungi for others to enjoy and for the organisms exclusively dependent on them for food and habitat.

The highly valued volunteers have a regular programme of work through the year and trained volunteers check the livestock every day. New recruits are always very welcome. Contact www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities Margery Thomas, KWT Volunteer

Bear in mind that you can now encounter our animals at any point on your visit. Please remember that dogs must be on leads until end of August across all open spaces. Dogs may be off lead, but under control within the woodland sections of the reserve only. Please follow all signage, remove litter and dog mess and place all dog bags in the bins. Hothfield Heathlands is one of the best spots for wildlife in the county; with your help we can keep it that way. **Ian Rickards, KWT Area Manager**

Ragwort in the Village

Unfortunately, there is still be a lot of hysteria attached to ragwort, mostly from misunderstood guidelines developed in the 60's/70's. It is listed as an injurious weed from the 1959 weed act. This legislation means that DEFRA could insist that a neighbour controls their ragwort to prevent it spreading onto their neighbours land. It is NOT illegal to have ragwort on your land, but if your neighbour is concerned that it will spread into their hay crop, then they could report to DEFRA who could insist you remove it. This would mean clearing ragwort growing with 50 m of hay fields.

It is widely misreported that there is a strict, blanket legal obligation for landowners to destroy ragwort. In the UK, the government guidelines outline targeted management and codes of practice, and do not mandate eradication unless a formal enforcement order is issued to prevent severe agricultural spread. I am not aware of any hay fields in the Hothfield area, but potentially horse owners might want to keep their pasture clean. The only real risk from ragwort is when it is cut in hay and fed to animals. Actively growing ragwort offers no risk, as it is very unpalatable and animals will refuse to eat (which is how it has evolved). We have zero concerns about ragwort growing on our nature reserves, as the animals avoid it and it is a fantastic nectar source and food plant for lots of invertebrates.

The harm to humans and children is miniscule. You would need to consume significant amounts to cause harm, and there are considerably more poisonous plants in peoples gardens, parks and nature reserves. **Ian Rickards, KWT Area Manager**



Katie Lam MP's Weald of Kent Awards 2026

One of the great privileges of representing the Weald is seeing, up close, just how many remarkable people and places there are in this corner of Kent – people working hard, often against a difficult backdrop, to do the things they love and to take care of their neighbours.

That's what the Weald of Kent Awards are all about. This year you sent in so many wonderful nominations that it was incredibly difficult to whittle them down to

a shortlist, but we finally managed to pick just four in each category. Here, ready for your vote, are your finalists:



Farmer, Grower or Producer of the Year

Aragon Farm, Sissinghurst – some of the very finest cherries and cherry juice in Kent.

Wayfarer Wines, Woodchurch – one of the amazing vineyards that put the Weald on the map.

Kingcott Dairy, Staplehurst – the Reynolds family's grass-fed herd produces gorgeous raw milk and cheese.

Lovejoy Farm, Wittersham – top-quality local meat sold through their own shop and across the Weald.

Independent Shop of the Year

Frank's Bakery, Headcorn – Lovingly revitalised by its new owners.

Loddington Farm Shop, Linton – a hub of local food and wine alongside a lovely café.

TN17 Food & Wine, Sissinghurst – exceptionally well-stocked shop and post office.

Webb's of Tenterden – cookware, gifts, children's shop and an incredible ironmongers.

Local Business of the Year

Cranbrook Vets – an independent vets known for offering wonderfully personal care.

Olive Tree Vets, Charing – they go above and beyond with home visits for less mobile owners.

Rockits Sensory, Tenterden – a safe and happy space for children and young adults.

The Hawkhurst Bread Shed, Marden – a thriving local business with a very loyal following.

Local Hero of the Year

Matthew Knoesen, Biddenden – Just 13 years old, Matthew is already a French Open wheelchair tennis champion.

Mildred's Trust – a food bank and anti food waste project for local families facing hardship.

Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – tireless volunteers, particularly in recent water outages.

Wealden Community First Responders – volunteers helping save lives across the Weald.

Pub, Café or Restaurant of the Year

The Queens Head, Sutton Valence – one of the finest beer gardens and views in Kent.

Willows End Tearooms, near Marden – homemade food in a warm and friendly setting.

The Bell & Jorrocks, Frittenden – much-loved pub at the heart of village life for the past 20 years.

The Flying Horse, Smarden – A family-run pub which has raised extraordinary sums for good causes.

Every one of them helps makes the Weald what it is. Voting is open now and closes at the end of August – so learn more about our finalists and have your say here: <https://www.katieforkent.com/weald-of-kent-awards>

Katie

Educational Grants

Uniform



Scouts Subs



Dance



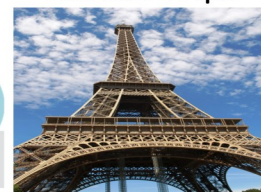
Sporting Activities



Travel



School trips



University



If you live in Hothfield and think that Hothfield Educational Foundation could help with your children's education, or know of someone else who could benefit, please do contact us via HothfieldEducation@gmail.com

Saint Margaret's Church

For weddings, baptisms, etc. contact the Parish Office calehillpcc@gmail.com 07395 910317

Rector: Rev. Sandra Marsh The Vicarage Pett Lane Charing Kent TN27 0DL Phone: 01233 713996 email: revsandramarsh@btinternet.com

Services in Aug

Sunday 2nd 11.00am The Eucharist

For services in our other churches, see www.calehill-westwell.uk



Calehill
Dementia Friends



Memory Café
Meet ♥ Share ♥ Support

♥ YOU ARE WARMLY WELCOME ♥

A friendly space for people living with dementia or memory loss, together with their family and carers.

Join us for a cup of tea or coffee, a relaxed chat and gentle, dementia-friendly and reminiscence activities in a warm and welcoming environment.

WHEN: Tuesday 9th June (and every second Tuesday of the month)

TIME: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

WHERE: 1st Charing Scout Headquarters
Pett Lane, Charing, TN27 0DW

COST: FREE to attend

PARKING: Free parking available on-site

This café is run in partnership with



Hythe, Lyminge & Ashford

No booking or formal diagnosis is needed —
just drop in!

QUESTIONS? | Contact us at calehilldf@gmail.com



Find us on Facebook
Calehill Dementia Friends
Follow our page for updates on local events and support.

GARDENING IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH!

JOIN THE GARDENING GROUP AT CHARING SURGERY TO GET FRESH AIR, EXERCISE, MEET OTHER PEOPLE, HAVE FUN & ENJOY BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

OPEN TO ALL PATIENTS AGE 16+ GREEN FINGERS NOT ESSENTIAL!

COME AND JOIN US! TUESDAYS 9AM-12PM POP ALONG & SAY HELLO!

SHIFT HAPPENS

DRIVING TUITION

Paul 07703 685143

www.shifthappensdrivingtuition.co.uk

Art Group

There is a small group that meets twice a month on Monday afternoons in Westwell Village Hall.

We enjoy painting, drawing etc, together with a cup of tea and a chat.

If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact Penny Sutcliffe on 01233 634191 for more details.

HOTHFIELD NEWS

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