

# DITTON Gazette



Winter 2023

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL**



## **DITTON REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 2023**



## **DITTON GAZETTE**

Published by  
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# **Chairman's Message**

A warm welcome to our winter edition of the gazette.

As we approach the end of 2023, it is time for reflection and also planning for the future. We have seen the best of the village as part of the Remembrance Sunday Parade. It was a pleasure to see the church full but also the large number joining us at the War Memorial as we gave thanks to all those that served our country, locally and afar.

The Council has been working hard to look at improving facilities. Further details of a record of what the council has done so far this year can be found further on in the gazette.

The Council also saw milestones for two of it's Council Members. Mike Porter celebrated 30 years serving on the council this year in May – he has covered many roles including being Chairman of the Parish Council for 12 years. We also saw Tony Mulcuck reach his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in October - a Councillor now in his 52<sup>nd</sup> year of service to the Council who has and continues to contribute so much to the community.

Council staff has also seen some changes. We said goodbye to Gemma in the summer after 5 years working as the open spaces administrator. We are delighted that Beth has joined the office team and has settled in so well.

We also said goodbye to Brad who worked as part of Open Spaces team and we were delighted to appoint Lewis in July to join the team.

The Council is looking forward to a year of celebration in 2024. Next year will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of our community centre and we will be sharing more details of the celebration of this occasion in our next issue.

For now, on behalf of the council, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy new year.

Cllr Nigel Newman, Chairman, Ditton Parish Council

# Ditton Court Quarry Local Nature Reserve

## QUARRY IN THE WINTER



**BLACKTHORN WITH SLOES**



**GUELDER ROSE**

The leaves of trees and shrubs are changing colour to their autumnal hues in November. The leaves of Guelder Rose gradually turn red, matching the berries, while the foliage of Field Maple and Silver Birch transform to a beautiful gold colour. Dogwood is a big problem in the Quarry because it forms dense areas of scrub that shade out wildflowers. However, it does provide additional leaf colour at this time of year. Blackthorn bushes now have their purple fruits, called sloes, and some of their branches have yellow and white lichens growing on them. In a few places you may see the colourful pink and orange fruits of the Spindle bush. Small birds become easier to spot as the leaves fall off the trees and shrubs – look out for flocks of Blue, Great and Long-tailed Tits as they search for food to build up their reserves before winter.

Monthly information and pictures about the changes in the Quarry can be found on our notice board up at the Quarry entrance. So when you are walking in the Quarry, take a look and see if you can spot these beautiful changes.



**SPINDLE FRUITS**



**DOGWOOD**



**ROSEHIPS**

With special thanks to Mr Easterbrook for information and photos

# DITTON REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 12.11.2023



This year the main service was held in St Peter's Church. The service was very well attended with most being able to sit and a few standing at the rear. There was a great atmosphere in the church and it was very poignant when the names of the fallen, listed on the Ditton War Memorial, were read out and remembered. Both the Church and Parish Council would welcome any feedback on the changes to this year's service so do let us know your thoughts if you attended.





A big thank you to everyone that took part and attended this year's service and parade. Special thanks to the volunteer Road Marshals, and all those that helped on the day we couldn't do it without you.



# **Parish Council Update from the Chairman**

## **Council Vacancies**

Whilst the council has grown throughout the year, we currently have two vacancies. Serving on a Parish Council allows you to contribute to your local community for the benefit of all. We are a collective mixture of ages and expertise and we would welcome anyone that would wish to contribute. Council meetings are open to all to attend, so if you wished to find out how the council operates, please come and visit one of our meetings.

## **What does the Parish Council do?**

The Council meet on the first Monday of each month for the Full Parish Council meeting. This would be the meeting that would cover finance, reports for the community police, County and Borough Councillors, correspondence from partner authorities and residents and planning matters.

All Council Members also meet again mid-month for the Planning, Highways and Transportation Committee. Primarily this will be for comments linked to planning applications made to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council - the principal planning authority.

The Council is responsible for the running of the Community Centre. The Community Centre Committee meet monthly to discuss the hiring of the centre, the maintenance and running of the centre, our Kilnbarn bar and the events that go on each month.

The Council is also responsible for the open spaces such as the New Road recreation ground, the Kilnbarn recreation ground and the Quarry Local Nature Reserve. It also assists on matters such as the Public Right of Way footpaths and the Stream. This committee also meets monthly.

We also have a Finance and Administration Committee and a Personnel Committee that meet quarterly or when required.

## **Community Centre Committee**

The Committee has over the past 12 months continued the maintenance of the Kilnbarn Bar. Regular users will have noticed the new carpets and chairs. The Council also made decisions about pricing including switching suppliers to reduce the potential price hikes that we were facing throughout 2023.

The Community Centre has also seen developments including replacement of the front stage curtains and window curtains in the Oaken Hall. The sound system will be upgraded shortly. The Council has also agreed to upgrade the toilets for the Oaken Hall and Acorn Room. These works will take place during 2024.

The Council is continuing a programme of replacing old light fittings with LED which are far more energy efficient. So far the exterior lights on the building, the Oaken Hall and corridors and some of the office have been replaced. We are soon to have vital works undertaken to line the exterior drains. The drains are old and frequently get blocked so a specialist company has been engaged for the work.

## **Planning Committee**

Whilst fairly quiet this year, all planning applications that are made in Ditton, whether for tree removal or cut backs, garage conversions to large scale construction of new houses are considered by the council.

Comments made by the public are considered and the Parish Council will report to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council it's opinions linked to any developments. Plans will be considered either by Planning Officers for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council or actually by the local Area 3 Committee made up of TMBC members for the local area only.

## **Open Spaces Committee**

The Committee monitor all the Open Spaces and in relation to the upkeep of the green areas around the village. The The council has worked hard to monitor the trees of the village and you would have seen cut backs of trees throughout the year to make sure neighbouring properties are not effected by the trees growth of the past decade. The Council Open Spaces Staff also carry out maintenance for both the Infant and Junior Schools and in the churchyard.

The Committee also manage our popular allotments which on the whole are very well tended and we continue to have a long waiting list. The Committee also implemented the replacement of the floodlights at our multi use courts and upgraded the lighting to LED which will see a saving in electricity costs.

We have been successful in an application for some funding from the Planning Obligations Scheme which means in 2024 we will see the Multi Use Games Area surface be replaced with a new porous asphalt playing surface and the replacement of the wooden play trail at the top of the Kilnbarn recreation ground.

The replacement to the MUGA surface is scheduled to commence on 15th January 2024 and this means the facility will be closed for up to 3 weeks. All current users will be contacted and we apologise for any inconvenience during this time.





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Join us for an evening, to find out more email the contact details below.  
Army Reserve Centre, London Rd, Aylesford ME20 6DB

**CONTACT US**  
[oc.2374@rafac.mod.uk](mailto:oc.2374@rafac.mod.uk)



**07519  
850070**

MUST be aged between 12 (in school year 8) and 17

Parade nights Tuesdays and Thursdays 19:00-21:30



## Ditton Infant School

The last two terms have been as busy as usual. We welcomed our Year R children and their families into our newly furnished early years area in September and have taken part in a few charity fundraising events.

We renewed our Eco-school status and for the first time took part in the 'Just One Tree' fundraising day. For every £1 we raised a new tree was planted and the children learnt about the importance of biodiversity. Parents joined us in school for harvest celebrations and donations of food were distributed by the church on October and then in November we also took part in the annual Poppy Appeal. As well as collecting donations, this year each child made a poppy to decorate a class wreath which was then displayed in the church.

We are currently looking to recruit a school governor so if you know of anyone who may be interested in this role then please ask them to call the school on 01732 844107.

I finish by saying that an infant school really is one of the nicest places to work at this time of year. The school is full of the sound of children singing and the classrooms are awash with glitter. We also look forward to the arrival of our naughty elves who like to play tricks in school!

With very best wishes for a happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

Mrs C Lewer  
Headteacher

# News from St Peter's Church



**Ross Terranova - Rector of Ditton**

## **Advent - A Timely Reminder of the Ultimate Deadline**

Time flies! It is surprising how differently we can view time and still find it our enemy. For some of us there is never enough of it to fit in all that we have to do, never mind all that we want to do.

As for December.... carols, parties, shopping, cooking, presents. How are we going to get it all done in time?

Life can seem to consist of deadlines to meet and no sooner has one been met than the next one comes along.

The season of Advent (which begins on December 3rd) is a reminder of the ultimate deadline, that the Jesus who came to this earth as a baby in Bethlehem will one day return to bring the completed rescue to those who are trusting in him. For some of us, though, time can seem to drag so slowly, just the same dreary job or just the same four walls to stare at all day. However we view time, we seem to spend so much of it waiting for things to happen. For the young, Christmas always seems an eternity away, but it always comes.

There is a lot of waiting in the Bible. Christmas must have been a painfully long time coming for those eagerly expecting Gods Messiah but when the right time finally came God sent his own Son. God's timing is always perfect. He acted in His love, Jesus came, it was worth the wait.

Amidst all the suffering and injustice of life it is possible for us to wait with hope and not just despair as we look to the future. Christmas is about God's perfect timing and his perfect gift. Let's discover that afresh this Christmas.

Wishing you a very joyful and peaceful Christmas.

**Ross**

*We warmly welcome you and your family and friends to our Christmas Services for 2023*

**Carols by Candlelight December 17<sup>th</sup> 6.00pm**

**Carols on the Green Christmas Eve 4.30pm**

**Christmas Holy Communion Christmas Eve 11pm**

**Christmas Praise Christmas Day 10.00am**



# News from St Peter's



## Link to Hope Shoebox Appeal



This year St Peter's Church once again took part in a shoebox appeal for Link to Hope, a small Christian charity which offers help to people of all backgrounds regardless of race, colour or creed with no qualifying criteria other than that they are poor and marginalised. Boxes are sent to either a whole family or an elderly person living in extreme poverty in Eastern Europe.

The Junior school held a non-uniform day in October to raise money to help with the appeal and Ditton Church Pre-School donated some wonderful items to go in the boxes. We shopped for and packed 23 boxes with donations from the schools and the community. Other people chose to pack a whole box themselves and thanks to your generosity we were able to send a total of 50 boxes this year, together with some beautiful knitted items from Crafty Coffee.

When the shoeboxes are delivered, the charity's project leaders are able to identify emergencies such as Maria, aged 74, found sleeping on a freezing cold and dirty floor. Link to Hope were able to provide her with a bed, blankets and pillows. If you have never sent a box before please consider doing so next year, it is such a lovely thing to do. For more information you can visit [www.linktohope.co.uk](http://www.linktohope.co.uk)

Judith Boarer



## Carols on the Green!

Come and start your Christmas by joining together on the green outside St Peter's on Christmas Eve at 4-30pm for 'Carols on the Green'. This has become one of the highlights of Christmas for many and its wonderful to see so many of you come to sing well known Carols reminding each of us what Christmas is really about.



We would love to see you there again, bring your friends and family along, wrap up warm and remember to bring a torch with you. See you on Christmas Eve !



## Ditton Bowls Club

Kilnbarn Recreation Ground  
Kiln Barn Road  
Ditton  
ME20 6QR

Ditton Bowls Club is a friendly club who welcomes new members. Outdoor lawn bowls takes place between April and September. Short mat is played indoors over the remaining months. If you are interested in joining or would like more information please contact the club secretary Karen Boorman, email [dittonbowls@gmail.com](mailto:dittonbowls@gmail.com)

All at Ditton Bowls Club would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## **A VERY LOCAL FOOD BANK**

This food bank has been running for several years now and is located at the Dorcas Centre, Larkfield and covers an area that consists of Aylesford, Ditton, Larkfield and Leybourne and makes donations to people who are finding life very difficult through the hard times so many of us are going through at the moment.

It is called the Larkfield Community Church Foundation. The centre is not manned all the time so if you require help or would like to support the food-bank by a donation of either money or food please contact them by either: email: [foodbank@larkfieldcommuniychurch.co.uk](mailto:foodbank@larkfieldcommuniychurch.co.uk) or by Text to 0753697188. Their charity number is 11220956

## **ATTENTION ALL SPORTS CLUBS**

Do you need somewhere to train?

There are currently vacancies in the floodlit multi-sports facility at  
Kilnbarn Recreation Ground ME20 6AH

# DITTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION



In September members of the Ditton Pétanque Club went to Rang-du-Fliers for the annual pétanque match where they were warmly welcomed by the French team. Although the Ditton team did not win the cup, they played some challenging and exciting games. Everyone agreed that it was a really enjoyable day.

Our Quiz Night at the end of September was once again an interesting and informative evening. It was lovely to see so many teams taking part.

We were extremely pleased to welcome some members of the French Twinning Committee to Ditton in October. Some of the group had never visited Ditton before. Luckily, it was a beautiful sunny day so we were able to take a walk around some of the village. They were pleased to visit Ditton Bowls Club, explore the Ditton Quarry Nature Reserve and admire the allotments. Our walk took us through new and older parts of Ditton before arriving at St Peter's Church. We all enjoyed hearing about the history of the church and seeing the communion silver. Being allowed to pull the bell ropes was an additional excitement.



After lunch at the King and Queen in East Malling we were welcomed at the Ditton Heritage Centre. It was a pleasure to see the photos, maps and artifacts representing the history of our village.



We were also pleased to introduce a member of staff from the Ditton Junior School to the Chairman of the French Twinning Committee. We hope that a link between the junior school and the Jacques Prévert school in Rang-du-Fliers will once again be established.

The Twinning Association recently held the annual Christmas Fayre where we were pleased to see many Ditton families attend and appreciate the many stalls and visit Father Christmas. We are also planning another Barn Dance at the Community Centre on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024. This should be another energetic but fun evening and we hope to see you there. More information will be available after the New Year.

If anyone is interested in learning more about our twinning, please contact Monica and Colin on 01732 844292 or email: [stanleycol@aol.com](mailto:stanleycol@aol.com).

## DITTON ALLOTMENTS

We are lucky to have a great allotment site in Ditton situated next to the Ditton Quarry Local Nature Reserve. The allotments are very popular and we have some great tenants growing wonderful produce. We also have a long waiting list and anyone wishing to be added to the list should contact Beth at the parish office via email - [osa@dittonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:osa@dittonparishcouncil.gov.uk). The allotments are owned and managed by the Parish Council. There is also a Ditton Allotment Tenants Association [DATs] that tenants can join.

This year 5 allotment holders from our allotments entered the Coolings in Bloom - Tonbridge and Malling. Best Allotment Competition which is run by Coolings Nurseries, for Maidstone, Bromley, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling Councils.

They attended the award ceremony back in September and the results were Geoff Barber 3rd, Geoff McCormack 2nd and Mark Webb 1st.



Thank you to Normal Webb [Secretary of DATs] for supplying the information and photo.

Find us on 

**at [www.facebook.com/dittonparishcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/dittonparishcouncil)**

**For the latest updates regarding Ditton Parish Council and upcoming events in the Kilnbarn Bar and Community Centre like us on Facebook!**

# DITTON HERITAGE CENTRE

We have had a fairly good year with six Open Days that saw many parishioners and other people from outside the parish and from further afield looking to find out about where their forebears used to live and about the history told by the Special Days.



**DITTON FETE  
1908  
'til  
1970's**



The Ditton Fete was a large event that started in 1908 and composed of quite a few decorated lorries loaned from local firms and Albert E Reed papermill plus very many marching squads from the local schools and other organisations.



*These photos are the hundred and have at the Herit-*

*just three from hundreds we age Centre*

*showing the history of our lovely village. If you wish to have a visit with your family please contact Maralyn on 01732 844194.*

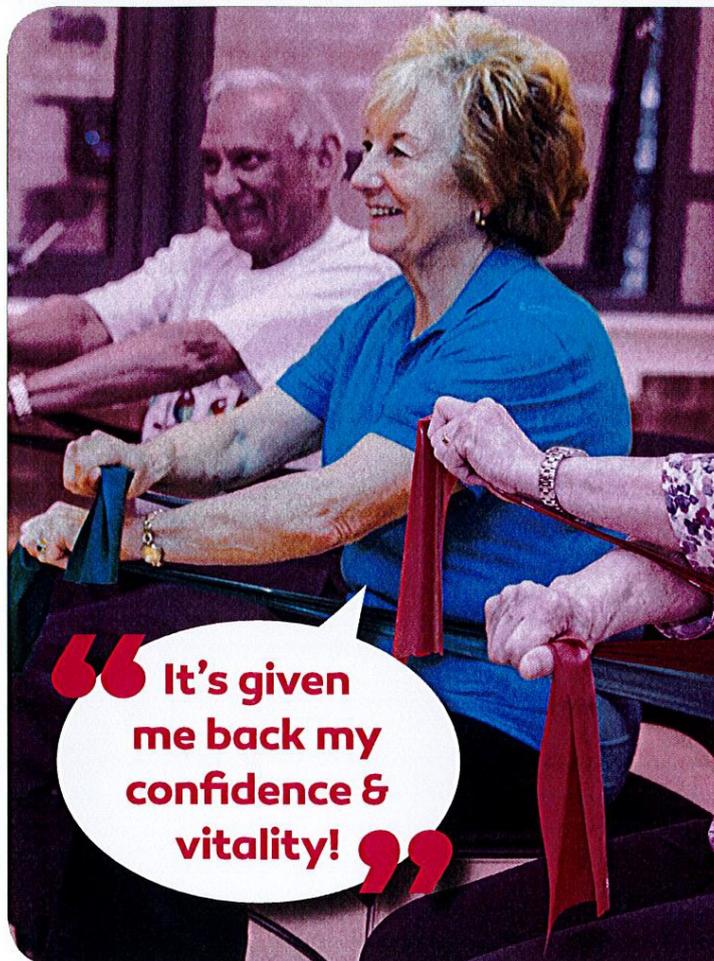
**Fancy becoming a Friend of Ditton Heritage Centre for just £10 a year, then contact Maralyn at the number above.**

We are looking to expand our storage space by installing a container to the rear of the centre. We are looking for funding and if you would like to donate to our fund, no matter how small, please send any donation made out to Ditton Heritage Centre and send it to

C/O 8a Bradbourne Lane, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent ME20 6PA.

## DITTON PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE OPENING TIMES

Christmas Day	CLOSED
Boxing Day	CLOSED
Wednesday 27th December	9.00 - 12.00 Midday
Thursday 28th December	9.00 - 12.00 Midday
Friday 29th December	CLOSED
Monday 1st January	CLOSED
Tuesday 2nd January	OPEN as normal 8.30—4.00



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# DamARA Ditton & Malling Active Retirement Association:

Some of our days out included the following. A visit to Windsor that included a trip on the Thames, and watching the band marching and playing, great entertainment. Another one was to take a ride on the Bluebell Train for a 1 1/2 hour ride



with a ploughman's lunch, another day was spent at Herne Bay with a leisurely stroll along the pier, refreshing clean fresh air, followed by a great meal at the Dog & Duck at Plucks Gutter.



We now look forward to another great year of fun, and leisure interspersed with more days out and a five day holiday thrown in, as well as splendid entertainment from a variety of speakers and singers at our monthly meetings. We have several sections that run activities such as Ten Pin Bowling and New Age Kurling plus a small walking group.



**Why not visit DamARA on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Ditton Community Centre at 1.00pm and see if you would like to join our ranks. We have variety of speakers at our monthly meetings and several special times when we will provide a lunch and some entertainment plus a lively Christmas Party with dancing.**

**Or just give a ring to our Chairman Derek Usherwood on 01622 297150 who will give you all the details.**



Merry Christmas from  
**DITTON BOOK  
EXCHANGE**

Wish list:  
Please contact  
us about  
volunteering in  
2024

**Winter/Spring** \*

Jan 15th  
Feb 5th & 19th  
Mar 4th & 18th  
Apr 15th  
May 20th

**Summer** \*

Jun 3rd & 17th  
Jul 1st & 15th  
Aug 5th & 19th

**Autumn**

Sep 2nd & 16th  
Oct 7th & 21st  
Nov 4th & 18th

**Winter**

Dec 2nd & 6th

2-4pm  
Ditton  
Community  
Centre

 THE KILNBARN

# Christmas Opening Hours



<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>12pm-11:30pm</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>12pm-2pm</b>
<b>Boxing Day</b>	<b>12pm-8pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 27th</b>	<b>3:30pm-8:30pm</b>
<b>Thursday 28th</b>	<b>3:30pm-8:30pm</b>
<b>Friday 29th</b>	<b>2pm-11pm</b>
<b>Saturday 30th</b>	<b>12pm-11pm</b>
<b>New Years Eve</b>	<b>12pm-12:30am</b>
<b>New Years Day</b>	<b>12pm-8pm</b>

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AN EVENING WITH  
**BOBBY DAVRO & DANNY POSTHILL**

SAT, 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024, 19:30 (DOORS OPEN 18:30)

DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE  
KILN BARN ROAD DITTON

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BGT Finalist  
That bloke who does voices!

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Mr Saturday Night!  
Bobby Davro's Sketch Pad

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