



Available free by email or online for the Parish of Hougham Without and beyond

<https://www.westhoughamvillagehall.co.uk/> or request email copy

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## ROAD RAGE!

Dangerous! That's how local people have described the roads in and around West Hougham which have deep potholes, overhanging trees and debris strewn across them.

People feel so strongly about the dangers and the costs for damage to their vehicles that more than 50 attended a meeting in Hougham Village Hall. The meeting was organised by three parish councillors acting in a personal capacity who have committed themselves to tackling this issue, including forming an Action Group and launching a petition.

Those present at the meeting on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January signed the petition and volunteers stepped up to join the Action Group. All attending signed the petition which will be circulated door to door. Many told the meeting about costly damage to their vehicles, concerns about emergency vehicle access and isolation caused by not wanting to use the roads or visitors staying away.

Regional and local media have been covering stories about the state of Kent's roads particularly as Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January was 'National Pothole Day', which highlighted some of the appalling road conditions presently being experienced. West Hougham received the media spotlight as so many of the access roads are becoming impassable. Local tv were at the Hall on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January to cover the story.

The three meeting organisers, Peter Robinson, Steve Oxenham and Steve Green, asked to receive reports of harm to people and vehicles and copies of claims filed with Kent County Council (KCC). One attendee at the meeting said that his claim was removed after 28 days without action having been taken. Others reported damage to tyres, wheel alignment and other car parts. Most alarmingly, there have been past occasions when emergency vehicles have not been able to access the village in snow because



**A gathering of more than 50 people at the Village Hall has led to a petition and the setting up of an Action Group in an attempt to force Kent County Council (KCC) to mend the roads in and around West Hougham and surrounding areas.**

of collapsed banks, potholes and other issues.

Motorcyclists and cyclists are at most risk from the potholes, but people in wheelchairs also encounter dangers. Most people have suffered tyre damage from potholes and one attendee said she went to have a tyre refitted which was then burst on the journey home. In addition to wear and tear to vehicles caused by bad roads, car repair costs are at an all-time high and local people are fed up with the lack of action to mend the roads.

There is widespread concern that council are earmarking some roads as non-essential, particularly in rural areas such as Hougham. There are also fears that the road system in Kent is in 'managed decline'.

If you have any particular concerns you would like to be discussed by the Action Group, please contact Peter Robinson [Peter40robinson@btinternet.com](mailto:Peter40robinson@btinternet.com), Steve Oxenham [steve.oxo@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steve.oxo@hotmail.co.uk) or Steve Green [steve-9494@hotmail.com](mailto:steve-9494@hotmail.com). Many people have already contacted the local MP, Natalie Elphicke, councillor for the ward David Beaney and the Highways Agency. If you've not done so yet, details of how to do this are provided on page 4.

# “Around the Parish”

## News from Hougham Without Parish Council

A happy New Year to all parishioners from the Hougham Without Parish Council, here's hoping that 2024 brings you all good health and prosperity!

Unfortunately, the start of the year has been accompanied by yet more storms and inclement weather, namely storm Henk, followed by a rather cold spell with amber alerts for cold in the southeast. Needless to state this will further impact the perilous state of the roads in and out of the village. To this effect the Parish Council have taken steps to collectively write to the elected leader of KCC Cllr Mr Roger Gough on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024, about the poor state of road maintenance by KCC on all the roads in and out of the village, and the constant misery, inconvenience and danger this is causing to parishioners. We all sincerely hope it will prompt KCC to take some swift remedial action to deal with flooding on Satmar Lane, potholes on Crooks Court Lane/Gravel Hill, trees and branches along Lowslip Road and rubble and uneven surfaces on Eight Acres rd.

You may have seen the recent advert for a Village Green caretaker to work on behalf of the Parish Council to replace Mr Simon Withy who was not only the previous incumbent of the position, but instrumental in the formation of the village green amenity area and the play equipment you now see. The Parish Council would like to offer a huge thank you to him for all his hard work as village green caretaker in monitoring and checking play equipment, replacing dog poo bags and collecting rubbish, we wish him well for the future. Further to this, the Parish Council have recently started a small sub working party led by Cllr Steve Oxenham and involving non-council member parishioners to discuss ways forward in improving and enhancing the village green amenity space. If you have any ideas please contact Steve Oxenham directly.

The new Parish Council elected in May 2023 are keen for parishioners to be actively involved in promoting services, facilities for parishioners and enhancing the area of outstanding natural beauty that Church Hougham and West Hougham lie within. Parish Council mtgs are held approximately every 8 weeks (see Hougham without Parish Council website) for dates at [Hougham Without Parish Council – Kent, England \(houghamwithoutpc.co.uk\)](https://www.houghamwithoutpc.co.uk).

If any parishioners would like to attend, please feel free to come along, we are a friendly bunch and there is always a section for members of the public to ask questions and make suggestions. The Parish Council are made up of local people who live within either Church or West Hougham, their primary purpose being to work with parishioners to continue to make both villages attractive and pleasant places to live. Participation and interaction with parishioners are key to this goal as evidenced by the public meeting organised by Cllr Peter Robinson in Sept 2023. Please support your local Parish Council as we support parishioners in turn.

Take care, keep warm and try to drive carefully through various pothole alleys, taking a swim in the newly formed Satmar Lane pond and avoiding the Red Bull soapbox rubble pad in Eight Acres!

Best Wishes

Hougham Without Parish Council

## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Thanks to campaigning led by Steve Oxenham, West Hougham's potholes and dangerous road conditions were reported in regional media such as Kent online and national media such as the Daily Mail.

Saturday, Jan 13 2024 KENT ONLINE

### Residents in pothole-ridden West Hougham, near Dover, say it is 'the forgotten village' of Kent

Chantal Weller  
cweller@thekmgroupp.co.uk  
Published: 05:00, 15 January 2023 | Updated: 16:54, 12 January 2024

Fed-up villagers living in a "forgotten" corner of Kent have flooded and are riddled with potholes.

With one crater in West Hougham, County Council (KCC) to take urgent action.

Despite having a population of less than 100, the village has about one for every sixth person.

One resident, Steve Oxenham, has launched a campaign to get the issue fixed.

He says there are four ways into West Hougham, but all are plagued by flooding, terrible potholes or trees blocking the way.

"It's been going on for three years at least - the issue."

"The matters have been reported to highways"

Monday, Jan 15th 2024 8PM -2°C 9PM -1°C 5-Day Forecast

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### The 'forgotten' village with a pothole for every six people: Fed-up locals plea for help after being left trapped by floods and crater-ridden roads

- The streets of West Hougham, in Kent, are plagued with potholes and flooding
- Pressure group tells Kent County Council to 'find the money' to fix the problems
- Are YOUR roads plagued with potholes? Email [matt.strudwick@mailonline.co.uk](mailto:matt.strudwick@mailonline.co.uk)

By MATT STRUDWICK  
PUBLISHED: 14:00, 15 January 2024 | UPDATED: 14:18, 15 January 2024



Above: Metro article 16.01.2024

### **How to report potholes or make a complaint or claim**

The Parish Council has been trying to resolve these issues via discussions with David Beaney, the KCC Councillor for Dover West (including Hougham Without Parish) and making representations to the KCC pothole/flood/fallen trees webpage.

However, it might be worth reminding all residents that it is easy to report fallen trees on roads to KCC by phone:

0300 0418181 Mon-Fri in work hours

0300 0419191 out of hours

These phone numbers are also relevant for flooding. For reporting potholes use the KCC web portal at [Potholes - Kent County Council](#) KCC has overall responsibility for maintaining safe highways in and out the village

KCC Cllr David Beaney can be contacted on email:

[David.Beaney@kent.gov.uk](mailto:David.Beaney@kent.gov.uk) Tel – 07818 024487

Natalie Elphicke can be contacted on email:

[Office.natalie.elphicke.mp@parliament.co.uk](mailto:Office.natalie.elphicke.mp@parliament.co.uk)



# The now infamous... GHOST WALK



**SATURDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 7.30-9PM**

Sinister tales and unexplained mysteries from Hougham, one of Kent's most haunted villages. Ghoulish true stories of tragedy, misfortune and unexplained events guaranteed to send a shiver down your spine.....

**Are you scared.....do you feel brave enough .....**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The walk is over a mile long in duration. It partly covers muddy fields, wooded areas and climbing 2 stiles (waist height) in the dark. Participants need to be physically fit enough to complete this walk unaided. No children under the age of 12 due the nature and content of the walk. Children 12 and over are permitted with a responsible adult. Participants will need to bring their own torch and wear a high visibility vest (provided). They will also need outdoor footwear and suitable outdoor winter clothing. This event is strictly an advance ticket only event (only 25 places available) Please see contact details for ticket purchase on the Hougham Village Hall website <http://www.westhoughamvillagehall.co.uk/> Tickets £8 person.

The walk will start and end at Hougham Village Hall where refreshments are available. The tour is not suitable for anyone of a nervous disposition or suffering from any other associated health condition. Participants must follow the direction and instruction of the walk guide and staff at all times to ensure their health and safety. Participants may encounter unexplained noises, confusing images and unexpected events during the walk. All participants will be asked to sign a liability waiver before departure, and take part entirely at their own risk.



*Event arranged and supported with the help of the Hougham Village Hall Committee*

**FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY THIS YEAR!**

# Nature Trail

by Tony Rawlins

The festive season of Christmas and New Year is now left behind and we are once again into a New Year and wondering what it will mean for us all.



Nature, as ever, continues its circle of life governed as it is by the passage of the Earth in its orbit around the Sun cleverly tilted at 23.5 from the vertical to give the world it's seasons, from the extremes at the poles to the hottest areas, along and near to the Equator. We, in Britain, are at 50 +N in what rates as the Temperate zone and having a climate largely governed by a South Westerly air stream bringing warm wet air from the Atlantic Ocean with the occasional cold spell in Winter usually when a high-pressure area establishes itself over us which can bring frost and snow, often, as has been the case in the last few months being a somewhat relief from Autumnal storms and their accompanying heavy rains bringing flooding to many areas. By and large our climate is kindly towards us and brings many benefits, with no great excesses of one extreme or the other.

Already out in the country side or our gardens the early signs of a kinder warmer season to come, are evidenced in shoots of the Spring flowers tentatively pushing up out of the ground, which shoots if and when a sudden cold spell falls upon them they go on to "hold" in their growth and continue when the cool spell is replaced by warmer weather yet again and the march towards Spring.

Ah! Spring the Season much loved by the English poets, loved above all the other Seasons. The welcoming relief from the dark dreary days of Winter with each succeeding day longer than the one before, the earlier sunrise followed by the later sunset. The path is not always a smooth transition but can be interrupted by wild storms and even cold snowy spells. One is mindful of the old adage ref the month of March (in like a lion and out like a lamb, and sometimes the other way around!) but progress is always made and nature responds to the call very positively, buds swell on the trees the Spring flowers daffodils, snow drops, primroses etc. arrive to delight us all and assure us that all is well and nature can still be depended on.

Right now, the catkins on the Hazel trees are but tiny little yellow tails hanging forlornly but soon they will increase their size and be receptive to their mates the small rather insignificant male flowers awaiting a helpful insect to help the catkins perform their reproductive task.

We are not isolated in preparing for Spring, unseen by us but in Africa many bird species will be preparing themselves for the massively long journey they will soon be undertaking. Flying hundreds and thousands of miles up northwards through Africa from hot steaming jungles, dry savannah lands and the really tough one, the huge mass of the Sahara desert lying as a huge obstacle across the route nearly three thousand miles from East to West and some thousand miles North to South. For the lucky/clever? birds can follow the course of the river Nile which offers numerous watering facilities, the remainder of the migratory birds have to cross the Sahara itself which offers little in the way of wayside facilities.



So we have this pleasure to look forward to - usually April when the migratory birds arrive. In the meantime we will content ourselves with a photograph of birds on our bird feeder, the old faithfuls who do not migrate annually.

***Having gorged on insects during the halcyon summer months, swallows, swifts, sand martins and house martins head back to their wintering grounds in Africa. Swifts leave between July and September, while swallows and martins take off slightly later, around September and October.***

## *From the vicarage*

I recall a parent's evening, years ago, in the days when I was teaching Religious Education in school. A parent introduced herself and sat down. Her daughter was a good student - her book was immaculate, work was always completed, and she had done well in her exam – I was really pleased with her, I said. Mum stared at me, listening in silence. Finally, she spoke. "It's a funny thing to be good at, isn't it? R.E., I mean..."

It was then that I realised that Mum wasn't pleased at all. In fact, she was panicking; she probably had dreams of her daughter becoming a doctor, or a lawyer, or a nursery nurse or something – but surely, not a nun! Anything but that! But why should R.E. be a funny thing to be good at? After all, it's to do with what matters to people, how they find meaning and purpose in their lives and understanding why they do the things they do. It's about understanding, for instance, that there's more to Lent – which this year begins on St Valentine's Day - than just spending forty days doing without chocolate. It's about understanding that there's more to Easter than bunnies – cute and fluffy though bunnies might be - and making up for all the chocolate that you didn't eat during Lent.

I doubt that many, if any, of my former students have ended up as nuns. But over the years I was privileged to meet young people who often surprised others – and themselves – by discovering talents that they didn't know they had. So, if a child you know achieves the unexpected, celebrate it. There's no such thing as 'a funny thing to be good at'!

*Brian*



| CHURCH SERVICES, February 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                   |                                                                                                             |                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Date                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Alkham                                            | Capel                                                                                                       | Hougham                                            |
| <b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b><br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday before<br>Lent                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Evening Prayer</b><br><b>5.00 pm</b>           | <b>Sung Eucharist</b><br><b>9.30 am</b>                                                                     | <b>Eucharist (said)</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>         |
| <b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup></b><br><i>Fun, fellowship and<br/>food –<br/>all children<br/>accompanied by a<br/>responsible adult<br/>please – thank you!)</i>                                                                                        |                                                   | <br><b>3.00 – 5.00 pm</b> |                                                    |
| <b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b><br>Sunday next before<br>Lent                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Sung Eucharist</b><br><b>9.30 am</b>           | <b>Worshipping<br/>Together</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>                                                          | <b>Worshipping<br/>Together</b><br><b>11.00 am</b> |
| <b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b><br><b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                   | <b>Eucharist to mark<br/>the beginning of<br/>Lent 7.00 p.m.</b>                                            |                                                    |
| <b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b><br>Lent 1                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Worshipping<br/>Together</b><br><b>9.30 am</b> | <b>Eucharist (said)</b><br><b>9.30 am</b>                                                                   | <b>Sung Eucharist</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>           |
| <b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b><br>Lent 2                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Eucharist (said)</b><br><b>9.30 am</b>         | <b>Evensong</b><br><b>6.00 pm</b>                                                                           | <b>Sung Eucharist</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>           |
| There is usually a Eucharist at St Radigund's, Capel at 11.00 on Thursday mornings.                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                   |                                                                                                             |                                                    |
| <b>Visit us online at: <a href="http://www.church-alkham-capel-hougham.org.uk">www.church-alkham-capel-hougham.org.uk</a></b><br><b>and on Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/BeneficeofACH">https://www.facebook.com/BeneficeofACH</a></b> |                                                   |                                                                                                             |                                                    |

#### 100 Club Prize Draw

The 100 Club winner in December was Helen Scopes who kindly donated her winnings back to the Hall.



# What's On at Hougham Village Hall FEB/MAR 24



To book any of the events message Dianne on 07710 195331 or Chris on 07533 689018 or book online at <https://www.westhoughamvillagehall.co.uk/>

|                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February/<br>Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March (to<br>avoid Good Friday) 5pm | Pop Up Pub. Bring own drink and nibbles Streetz to Streetz van selling fish and chips from 5pm                                                                                            |
| Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March                                                                   | Quiz Night. £5 per head. Maximum number of people per table 6. Contact <a href="mailto:alisonrbarker@gmail.com">alisonrbarker@gmail.com</a> to book a place. Bring own drink and nibbles. |
| Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> March                                                                  | Ghost Walk. For details see page 6                                                                                                                                                        |
| Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> March                                                                    | Easter Egg Hunt 10.00am<br>Easter Bonnet Competition 10.00am.<br>Both events are taking place on the Village Green                                                                        |
| Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> April                                                                   | Coffee Morning at the Village Hall organised by the Church. Please contact Rachel Hogben at <a href="mailto:rph-rmh@hotmail.com">rph-rmh@hotmail.com</a> for details.                     |

## QUIZ NIGHT

### AT HOUGHAM VILLAGE HALL

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 7.30pm

£5 per head

Maximum of 6 people per table

To book in advance, please message Alison 07976 623805,  
Dianne 07710 195331 or Chris on 07533 689018

**IF YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO DO MORE YOGA.....**how about joining a beginners' yoga class on Wednesday evenings 6.30-7.45pm at the Village Hall, please contact:

Carole Haines

[carolehaines94@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carolehaines94@yahoo.co.uk).

