

# **LOWER HALSTOW VILLAGE NEWS FEBRUARY & MARCH 2026**



*Photo kindly supplied by Mandy Parker*

**Compiled, edited and published for the village on behalf of  
St Margaret's Church**

Lower Halstow Village News  
Feb & March 2026

## **SERVICES AT ST MARGARET'S**

1 February 2026 - 8am, Quiet Communion  
8 February 2026 - 10am, Morning Worship  
15 February 2026 - 10am, Communion  
18 February 2026 - 7pm, Communion with Ashing  
22 February 2026 - 10am, Songs of Praise

\*1 March 2026 - 10.30am, The Six Communion at Uplift, Upchurch  
Village Hall  
8 March 2026 - 10am, Morning Worship  
15 March 2026 - 10am, Communion  
22 March 2026 - 10am, Morning Worship  
\*29 March 2026 - 10.30am, The Six Communion at Newington

\*Services at other churches

## **ALTAR FLOWER ROTA**

8 February 2026 - Georgina  
No Flowers during Lent  
29 March 2026 - TEAM

7 December 2025- Eileen  
15 December 2025 - TEAM  
4 January 2026 - Lynne  
18 January 2026 - Helen

## **COMMUNITY CAFE**

**Memorial Hall**

**Second Saturday of the Month**

**11.30am – 2.30pm**



## **REMEMBERING RESIDENTS**

In December and January the village sadly lost 2 long term residents

From Emily's family:

**Emily Bartlett 1946-2025.**

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who attended our mother's funeral at St Margaret's church in December.

Steve and Dave Bartlett



**John Mustoo**

**(John's funeral is on Wednesday 28 January 2026 at St Margaret's Church at 10am and the family would be happy to welcome anyone who would like to attend)**

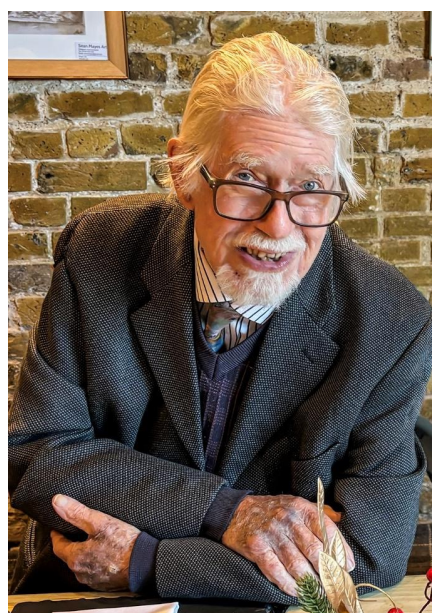
**From Glenda Tress:**

How sad that another of our villagers has passed away. I remember many years ago when John was on the parish council and the meetings would quite often go on until 10.30pm as he was a stickler for discussing everything in minute detail, which I might add, wasn't a bad thing. His interest and knowledge in our village was admirable involving himself not only as a parish councillor for years but his involvement with the memorial hall and the bowls club. How will I remember John; always misplacing things, stubborn, argumentative, but very funny. He was such a character, we will miss you John

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*How proud he was getting his suit out of mothballs to attend the pensioners party*



**From the Short Mat Bowls Club:**

Lower Halstow Short Mat Bowls Club sadly have to report the passing of our founding member, John Mustoo at the age of 95. John founded the Bowls Club nearly 25 years ago and had been an active member playing twice a week right up to his passing and he still managed to play a very decent game of bowls. As a member of the Committee, his knowledge and experience had a great effect on the progress of the club.

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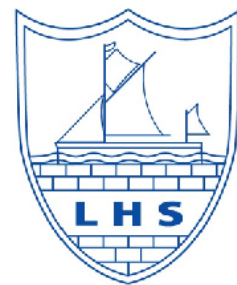
John was also an active member of the community and had a large input in the development of the Memorial Hall including the extension and also as a member of the Hall Committee was a guiding light in its continued success. He attended many social events and was very well known for his wit and keen sense of humour. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

**From the Thursday Group:**

John we will miss you for all your interesting knowledge of the world and life. We had lots of fun when we had a quiz, you contributed very well, even when you mis-understood the question, and we all had a laugh. With our fond thoughts, you are now at peace.”

**LOWER HALSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Term 2 was a wonderfully festive one at Lower Halstow School, and I am delighted to share a summary of the exciting events that took place. From seasonal celebrations to creative classroom activities, the children and staff were busy spreading cheer and making special memories together. We hope you enjoy reading all about the highlights from our school community as we headed towards the festive period.



Back in November it was an honour to attend the Brickfields Remembrance Service again. Our children represented the school with

pride and respect, taking part in laying poppy crosses and observing the two-minute silence to pay tribute to those who served.

The big man in red made a very special stop at Lower Halstow School! His cheerful elves transformed our Lodge into a festive grotto, where every child had the chance to meet Father Christmas, share their Christmas wishes, and receive a gift courtesy of Friends of Lower Halstow School (FOLHS).

We had a festive frenzy in the lead-up to Christmas! One highlight was our Santa Run, raising money for the FOLHS. The excitement kicked off in style with Santa himself starting the run! Thankfully, the rain took a break, letting the children don their FOLHS-provided Santa hats and dash around the Daily Mile track, lap after lap. With Christmas tunes filling the air, there was plenty of singing, laughing and holiday cheer. We're still counting up the funds raised, but one thing's for sure—everyone had a truly merry time!

The FOLHS Christmas Fair was another festive hit! The children had a blast decorating wooden decorations, trying their luck at hook-a-duck, and of course, one of the biggest favourites—winning a cuddly teddy or in some cases a potato! Laughter and cheer filled the air, making it a truly magical afternoon.

The FOLHS Christmas Shopping Evening was a wonderful success. Parents and families enjoyed browsing a fantastic variety of stalls while warming up with refreshments including mulled wine and hot chocolate. The stalls offered something for everyone, with beautiful wood carvings, paintings, knitted baby clothes, decorated chocolate oranges, personalised slate engravings, chocolates, tree decorations and a range of games to take part in. The event was very well attended, and it was lovely to see so many families from the village coming together to support the school. We were also extremely lucky to receive a generous donation of two bird boxes for the school from Jack at Axeworks Arts, for which we are very grateful.

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As we look ahead, we already have lots of exciting events planned for Term 3, and the children and staff are eager to continue building on the wonderful spirit of our school community. We are very much looking forward to all that 2026 will bring and cannot wait to share more special moments with you in the months to come.

Michelle Crowe  
Head of School

## **PASTORAL LETTER**

February 2026, and for some of you this will be the first village mag. letter of the year, so I think it's still timely to wish you a Happy New Year. By now most of us have gone back to our normal routines. The Christmas decorations have gone away; the cards have gone to be recycled, and all the presents have been given out. The year lies before us full of hope and promise, with calendars and diaries waiting to be filled.

This may be the year of a special event for you and your family, or maybe you are anxious about something the future months may bring. We wish each other a 'Happy New Year'. A whole year of happiness? We think about changing our outlook on life; changing unhealthy habits – outcomes of which we hope, will give us more happiness. Really? If you are like me the efforts are short lived, and there is the feeling of hopelessness as we go back to our old ways.

We are different people, so different things make us happy. But being content with what we have, or counting our blessings, helps us know happiness. In reality for most of us, there will be moments of loss, or pain in the year ahead. So, as well as wishing you a happy New Year, I'm going to wish you JOY. JOY is not reliant on circumstances. It actually bubbles up in the most difficult circumstances; it is born out of hope. After losing my husband a few years ago I lost sight of my purpose, my significance. I lost my JOY. My faith, my hope in God, along with family support, from my kids and my church family, is helping me have those moments of Joy once again. Yes! family life can be difficult – yes! life can be challenging – but yet, there can still be JOY. So, my

prayer for you this NEW YEAR comes from Romans Chapter 15 Vs 13.  
'May God be the source of your HOPE; may He fill you with all JOY and  
PEACE as you put your faith in Him'. Amen.  
Hoping that 2026 brings many blessings  
Gill Gay

### **MOBILE LIBRARY**

The mobile library stops outside the Memorial Hall fortnightly from  
1.50pm to 2.30pm. The next dates are Thursdays 5 and 19 February  
and 5 and 19 March 2026.

### **HAPPY HOUR ALL AGE SINGING GROUP**

Would you like to join us. No experience needed.

You don't have to be able to sing.

Mondays 2 and 16 February 2026

Mondays 2 and 16 March 2026

6.30pm – 7.30pm

We spend an hour a week, twice a month  
just singing for the joy of it. We will have a go at some  
contemporary songs and gospel songs.

£3 per family or £2 for an individual to help pay for the hall.

Under 16's please have an

adult drop you off and pick you up

Under 12's will need an adult to stay for the singing.

Memorial Hall

School Lane

Lower Halstow, ME9 7ES

Contact: Liz (07730893747)

Gill:(gilliangay99@yahoo.co.uk)

## **THE TUESDAY SOCIAL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026**

Join us for an update on the charity

Smile Malawi

by founder Elspeth Baecke

Tuesday 24 February 2026

Memorial Hall, School Lane, ME9 7ES

7.30pm – 9pm

£4 entry on the door

Refreshments

Raffle

Contact Liz 842272

### **FLOOD WARDEN**

From Kay Howard-Challis

A Very Happy New Year to All Residents in Lower Halstow from your Flood Warden.

Please make sure that your outside hose pipes is disengaged from your main water supply, because if the hose pipe freezes, the frozen water can travel up your hose pipe, into your outside connection and then into the mains pipe supplying the cold water, it can then travel into your home and could burst your pipes within your home.

Please keep all road drains near your home clear of debris.

Please stay safe in 2026.

We are still looking for other volunteer flood wardens, should you be interested, please let me know, my contact email address is:- [howardchallisk@gmail.com](mailto:howardchallisk@gmail.com), where we can discuss what the position entails.

## **FRIENDS OF THE BRICKFIELDS**

A belated Happy New Year, everyone, I hope you enjoy our Brickfield this year and, hopefully, help the Friends whenever you can.

The Brickie is a haven for wildlife with its many different habitats in such a small area, something most of us may not notice as we plod around in the mud walking our dogs in the pouring rain. A local birder has seen 58 different bird species already this January, from Redpolls to Goldcrests, Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps not to mention a Water Rail in the Upchurch stream. We have Foxes, Hedgehogs, evidence of visiting Badgers, rare Bumble Bees such as the Shrill Carder, rare Moths including the Fiery Clearwing, it may not look much but it's a really special place.

Lots for the Friends to do before the nesting season starts, we'll be having work parties, probably on **8 February and 8 March**, meeting at the Lapwing Drive entrance at 10am as usual. I will be trying to organise a couple of midweek work parties too as there is a lot to do from hedge cutting to path repairs (we have more shingle to repair the muddiest areas), covering the single plank bridge with new netting to make it less slippery and general pruning and path widening as necessary. Beginning to wish I hadn't written this, way too much to do!

I'd like to thank Shaun and Sam at Treecraft for all the wood chips they contribute and spread for us - the latter is truly above and beyond! Also for their response time whenever there's a tree issue on the Brickfield. Lastly, thanks to all the happy helpers who do so much for the site, quietly getting litter picked, debris removed from paths etc., etc. Without you the place wouldn't be as good both for people and wildlife.

Judy

## **THE THREE TUNS**

We continue to be closed on Tuesdays. We at the Three Tuns would like to thank all of our customers for your support throughout 2025 and the festive period.

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## **THE TUESDAY SOCIAL - 28 MARCH 2026**

Join us for a delightful and interesting talk  
And So To Ted - A History of Teddies and Other Bears!  
by professional speaker Melanie Gibson-Barton  
Tuesday 28th April

Memorial Hall, School Lane, ME9 7ES

7.30pm – 9pm

£4 entry on the door      Refreshments      Raffle

Contact Liz 842272

The Tuesday Socials are fundraising events  
for St Margaret's Church, Lower Halstow

## **BUS SERVICES IN LOWER HALSTOW - Services 327/328**

### **The bus timetable changed on 5 January 2026**

(SD = School Day, SH = School Holiday)

This summary was created with lots of help from Julia Dunphy. For details of stops etc look at [chalkwell.co.uk](http://chalkwell.co.uk)

*Monday to Friday, not Bank Holidays*

#### Sittingbourne to Chatham

7.24 (SD), 7.34 (SH), 9.39, 12.24, 15.32 (SD &SH), 16.02 (SD), 18.09

#### Chatham to Sittingbourne

7.31 (SH), 7.40 (SD), 9.38, 13.26 (SH), 13.34 (SD), 15.57 (SH), 16.15 (SD), 18.42

*Saturdays*

#### Sittingbourne to Chatham

7.45, 12.55, 15.35

#### Chatham to Sittingbourne

9.08, 14.37, 17.17

## **LOWER HALSTOW PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council meetings are held in the Memorial Hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

### **Allotments**

There are a few allotments available to rent. If you fancy having a go at growing your own vegetables, fruit and flowers please contact the the Parish Clerk in the first instance at [parishclerk@lowerhalstowparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@lowerhalstowparishcouncil.gov.uk)

The fees, terms and conditions are on the Parish Council website where you will also find a host of other information:

<https://www.lowerhalstowparishcouncil.gov.uk>

## **SWALE VOLUNTEER CENTRE - VOLUNTEER TRANSPORT SCHEME**

The Volunteer Transport Scheme is delivered by volunteers who use their own vehicles and give their time freely to take people to essential medical appointments. For users of the service there is a small annual admin fee and a charge, payable directly to the driver, for each journey to help with petrol and vehicle running costs.

There may be a number of reasons why you may not be able to use public transport such as age, disability, accessibility, times, mobility and costs. Please contact Swale Volunteer Centre to see if you are eligible to join the scheme.

### **Costs and how it works**

It is available to all local residents who have difficulty in using public transport, there is a registration fee of £35 and thereafter an annual fee of £30 per person, payable to Swale CVS to help cover administration costs. Journeys are charged at a rate of 50p per mile (with a minimum charge of £5.00) with an additional £1 admin charge per journey.

When booking a driver please notify us of any mobility aids to ensure we can accommodate these and the approximate length of time your appointment is likely to take. The person taking your booking is also a volunteer giving their time to help you.

Your driver will be happy to wait with you for a reasonable time (up to 2 hours).

All trips must be booked through our office to comply with our insurance cover.

### **Contact**

Telephone: 01795 473828 select option 1

Email: [zoe.deveson@swalecvs.co.uk](mailto:zoe.deveson@swalecvs.co.uk)

This line is open Monday – Friday between 09:30 and 15:30 (if urgent i.e. your driver is late or your appointment is cancelled select option 5)



**Memorial Hall – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm**

**Please join us for a fun evening with legendary quizmaster**

**Michael van der Straaten**

### **Fundraising for Lower Halstow Scout Group**

**Tables of 6, pay £5.00 per person on the night – book with [ria.smithuk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ria.smithuk@hotmail.co.uk)**

**Raffle, heads and tails, bring your own drinks and snacks**

## **A PAST VILLAGE RESIDENT**

From Anne Hill, who lives in West Sussex but likes to keep in contact with news of Lower Halstow. She saw the photo of Kath Tress on the front of the October & November 2025 edition:

“seeing the photo made me think of my maternal grandfather, Albert Durrant, who was Section Leader in the Lower Halstow Home Guard from 14 May 1940 until 22 December 1944. At that time he was living at Mill House in the village with his wife, Queenie, and their daughter Joyce. Together with other villagers who served during the war, both Albert and Joyce's names appear on the framed document in the village church.”



## CONTACTS

(Telephone numbers are 01795 unless otherwise stated)

If you notice any information is out of date, or you would like something else included, please let Gill know on ransleyfamily@gmail.com or call 07771 817152

**Brickfields** - Judy Telford, 07486 530068, friendsofthebrickfields@gmail.com

**Cricket Club** - Mark Stevens, 07950318576

**Dog Warden** - Daytime 417850. Out of hours 383099 option 2

**Flood Warden** - Kay Howard-Challis, 844408, howardchallisk@gmail.com

**Food Bank Donations** - leave any food/toiletries items in grey box at 34 Crouch Hill Court. Place any money in an envelope marked "Food Bank" into letter box

**Judo Club** - Jon 07944 755036

**KCC Potholes** - 03000 418187

**Kent County Councillor** - Richard Palmer, richard.Palmer@kent.gov.uk

**Member of Parliament** - Kevin McKenna, kevin.mckenna.mp@parliament.uk, 07519 087522

**Memorial Hall** - Bookings email lhmhallbookings@outlook.com

**Mobility Items** - to borrow items, call Tony Clark 07977 566097, Dawn 07910339116 or Jackie 07840 258665 (there is no room for further donations)

**Neighbourhood Watch** - Co-ordinator, Richard Asbury, LHNWatch1@gmail.com, 07894 792802, Facebook - Search Lower Halstow Neighbourhood Watch

**Noise nuisance** - Daytime 417850. Out of hours 07881 817601

**Parish Council** - Parish Clerk, Mandy Archer, answer phone 844558 parishclerk@lowerhalstowparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.lowerhalstowparishcouncil.gov.uk Meetings are on first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

**Playgroup** - Heather Salisbury, 07984 613532

**Police** - PC Skye Williams: skye.williams@kent.police.uk General enquiries, 01622 690690, kent.police.uk Neighbourhood Watch 01634 792131

**Samaritans** - 116 123 - free number day or night;

**School** - 842344, <https://www.lower-halstow.kent.sch.uk/>

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**Scouts, Cubs and Beavers** - Ria Smith, Group Scout Leader,  
ria.smithuk@gmail.com

**Short Mat Bowls** - Mick Porter, Secretary, 713120

**St Margaret's Church** - Rev. Amanda Lane, Associate Priest for The Six, 842478 or alternatively call 07778393231 and leave a message, PCC Secretary, Dawn Drury 07910339116, Church Enquiries, Jackie Swift 078402 58665

**Swale Borough Council** - Main office, 424341

**Swale Borough Councillors for Bobbing, Lower Halstow & Iwade** - Lloyd Chapman, lloydchapman@swale.gov.uk, Roger Clark, 430324, rogerclark@swale.gov.uk

**Three Tuns** - 842840, www.thethreetunsrestaurant.co.uk,  
info@thethreetunsrestaurant.co.uk

**Village News** - Distribution, Glenda Tress, 843757 Items for inclusion send to Gill Ransley, ransleyfamily@gmail.com, 07771 817152

**Walkers (Lower Halstow Walkers)** 10am every Monday, including Bank Holidays, from the Brickfields end of Lapwing Drive, a brisk 2 hour walk or a one and a half/2 hour walk at a more moderate pace. Call Margaret on 843927 for more information.

**Wildlife Rescues** -Lenham Hedgehog Rescue 07932 383552, Columbines Wildlife Care 07738 573818/07738 515263, Thorne Hedgehog Rescue 07825 952201, Kent Wildlife Rescue 07824 893399

**Yacht Club** - Dave Quigley, 841242

**The deadline for items for the April and May 2026 Village News is noon on 10 March 2026**

**Please email items for inclusion as early as possible to ransleyfamily@gmail.com**

## **ADVERTISING IN THE VILLAGE NEWS**

If you would like to advertise in the Village News donations are requested. Minimum suggested donations are - Full page £15 per edition, half page £7.50 per edition and quarter page £3.75 per edition. All monies received go towards the cost of printing the newsletters. Everything else is done free of charge by volunteers. The PCC reserves the right to exclude adverts if they appear unsuitable

## **UNIQUELY YOURS FLOWERS AND MORE**

A village based flower arranging business offering flowers and crafts for all occasions, tailored to meet your needs.

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**SJP Approved 18/2/2025**

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