

LOWER HALSTOW VILLAGE NEWS APRIL & MAY 2026



*Photo of the Thursday Group (Bereavement Group)
taken on VE Day in 2025
by Sharon Mepstead*

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

SERVICES AT ST MARGARET'S

5 April 2026	- Easter Day, 6am, Dawn Service and Communion
12 April 2026	- 10am, Morning Worship
19 April 2026	- 10am, Communion
26 April 2026	- 4pm, Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3 May 2026	- 8am, Quiet Communion
10 May 2026	- 10am, Morning Worship
*14 May 2026	- 7pm, Benefice Communion at St Mary Magdalene, Stockbury
17 May 2026	- 10am, Communion
*24 May 2026	- 10.30am, Combined outdoor Communion at St Mary's Newington
31 May 2026	- 10am, Songs of Praise

*Services at other churches

ALTAR FLOWER ROTA

5 April 2026	- TEAM
12 April 2026	- Liz
26 April 2026	- Gillian
10 May 2026	- Yvonne
24 May 2026	- Eileen

MESSAGE FROM JACKIE SWIFT:

Priest in Charge

Rev Amanda Lane, is now our Priest in Charge of the Six. Phone No. 842478, or alternatively call 07778393231 and leave a message.

Lower Halstow would like to send Rev Amanda all good wishes and prayers for her hard work she has already done in our village, and for her future.

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EASTER STORY TREASURE HUNT - 4 APRIL 2026

Easter Saturday

2pm - 4.30pm

Starting point St Margaret's Church.
Clues will be in church and the Brickfields!
£3 per child - Refreshments

Please contact Liz on 842272 to reserve your place.

COMMUNITY CAFE

Memorial Hall

Second Saturday of the Month

11.30am – 2.30pm



Memorial Hall – Friday 24th 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@gmail.com

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

TUESDAY SOCIAL - 28 APRIL 2026

The Singing Sailor

Songs, Shanties, Forebitters, Bilge-Water Ballads
and their History

Join **Seaward** as we set sail in 1853 from Sheerness Docks for foreign parts on a leaky old coffin ship. Sing as you work and watch the Poor Old Horse drop.

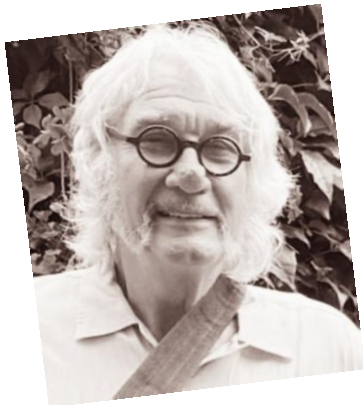
Tuesday, 28 April 2026, 7.30 – 9pm.

The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Lower Halstow. ME9 7ES

Contact: Liz 842272. Tickets: £6.00 on the door.

Demand is expected to be high – ring to reserve your seat.

Refreshments and Raffle.



LOWER HALSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Although Term 4 has brought plenty of rainy days, the first signs of Spring are beginning to appear. With longer days and slightly warmer temperatures, the children at Lower Halstow School have been enjoying the many activities that this time of year brings. One of the highlights of the term was our celebration of World Book Day, when the school was filled with a wonderful array of book characters.



The fantastic characters ranged from Chipmunks to Mario and Luigi, footballers to the BFG, and of course plenty of Harry Potter characters. This year the staff joined in the fun by dressing as different versions of Where's Wally and even held a parade in the school hall. Among the many creative outfits were French Wally, Princess Wally, Builder Wally and Disco Wally. The day began with a whole-school book quiz, where the houses competed to answer book-related questions. After some close competition, Hever House were crowned the winners. Later, the children watched a personalised video from author James Campbell, who has written the series The Funny Life of.... He answered questions that the children had sent in, which was a real highlight. Teachers also swapped classes to read stories to different year groups, helping to make it a wonderful day that celebrated the love of reading shared by the children at Lower Halstow School.



On Friday 23rd January, Lower Halstow School proudly took part in the annual RSPB Big Bird Watch. The whole school headed outdoors, spreading out across the grounds to take up observation points. Armed with pens, clipboards and I pads, the children waited patiently and quietly

to spot and record the birds visiting our school. During the watch, they were delighted to see blue and great tits, blackbirds, gulls, magpies and robins. The children in Acorn Class also made their own pinecone bird feeders to help attract birds into the school grounds. A key rule of the Big Bird Watch is that birds can only be counted if they land—so plenty of patience (and excitement!) was required as everyone waited for their feathered visitors to touch down.

This term we enjoyed our annual Maths Day. The classrooms were filled with children wearing clothes that they had found in their wardrobes with a Maths connection – parallel strips, repeated patterns, numbers, the list goes on and on. It was a wonderfully simple way of getting the children to look for Maths in the world around them. The school's Maths challenges were all based on puzzles. The children from Reception to Year 5 all enjoyed various challenges based on tangram puzzles and our Year 6 children had the additional challenge of trying to master pentominoes. Puzzles were completed, created and used in artwork. It was wonderful hearing the children's reactions to the day and how excited they were when completing their challenges.

The whole school enjoyed an energetic Rocksteady band performance, showcasing the fantastic musical progress made by our pupils this year. The bands treated us to well-known favourites such as Sweet Caroline and Shake it Off, with children confidently performing on guitar, keyboard and drums— with some children bravely stepping up to sing. The performance was led by Jack, who has been teaching and inspiring the Rocksteady groups throughout the year. It was a wonderful celebration of teamwork, confidence and musical talent, and the audience loved every moment. We still have lots of events planned for the last 4 weeks left of the term including Science Week, Parents' Evenings and various Easter activities so we have a busy time ahead

Michelle Crowe

Head of School

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PASTORAL LETTER

The Kingdom Comes Home

Easter is nearly here. And if you're anything like many people in our villages, Easter carries a sense of meaning, even if it's hard to put into words. Perhaps it's the signs of new life around us, blossom in the orchards, lighter evenings, the quiet sense that the world is beginning again. Easter seems to whisper that death is not the end of the story. That somehow, life has the final word. And that gives a sense of resurrection. But resurrection into what, exactly? When Jesus once stood up in the synagogue in his hometown and read from the scroll of Isaiah, he spoke about good news for the poor, freedom for those who felt trapped, and hope for those who were weary or burdened. Then he said something remarkable: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

In other words, the life Jesus spoke about was not only for some distant future, or for heaven one day. It was something beginning even then, a new way of living, shaped by compassion, forgiveness, and the quiet power of love.

This is what Jesus called the Kingdom of God. It is not so much a place as a way of life, a way of being together that reflects God's goodness. It grows wherever people choose kindness over cruelty, mercy over judgement, and hope over despair. It begins in small things: a helping hand, a listening ear, a neighbourly act of care. The story of Easter reminds us that when Jesus lived this way of love, it unsettled the powers of his day. His life of love made flesh, led him to the cross. Yet the message of Easter morning is that love was not defeated. God raised Jesus, and the life he revealed could not be extinguished.

And when the risen Jesus met his disciples and friends again, he did not simply comfort them. He invited them to carry that same spirit of love into the world. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Which means that the Easter story is not only about something that happened long ago. It is also about what can grow quietly among us now, in our homes, our villages, and our daily lives.

Perhaps the question Easter places before us is not only What do I believe? but also Where might love begin again through me? Because the Kingdom of God often comes close to home, growing quietly in the ordinary places where we live.

Wishing you a peaceful and hope-filled Easter.
George Hulme, Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)

THE THURSDAY (BEREAVEMENT GROUP)

The Thursday Group (Bereavement Group) meet every Thursday 10 - 12 (approximately) in the church. We have a happy morning with lovely cakes and savouries. Lots of discussions, of history, topics and any thing that comes up. Not forgetting quizzes which are fun. Please get in touch for a chat to find out a bit more. Jackie 07840 258665.

As you can see by the photo on the front of the Village News, we have fun.

HAPPY HOUR ALL AGE SINGING GROUP

No experience needed. You don't have to be able to sing.

20 April and 18 May 2026, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

We spend an hour, 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)

TUESDAY SOCIAL - 26 MAY 2026

Join us for a fascinating insight into

The Train That Jumped The Gap

by Richard Emmett

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

MOBILE LIBRARY

The mobile library stops outside the Memorial Hall fortnightly from 1.50pm to 2.30pm. The next dates are Thursdays 2, 16 and 30 April and 14 and 28 May 2026.

FRIENDS OF THE BRICKFIELDS

Spring is on its way, in spite of ice on the water this morning! Flowers are starting to appear, White Dead Nettle, Red Dead Nettle, the native Daffodils, Ground Ivy and, of course, the trees; Sallow (Pussy Willow), Hazels and Yew producing clouds of pollen. Bees and Butterflies, have been out and about on the milder days.

In April listen out for the Cuckoo, usually here about the middle of the month, followed by the Nightingales, the latter usually nesting on the Brickie near the houses between Lapwing Drive and Heron Close. Reed bed birds and those exceptionally noisy Marsh Frogs won't be long before they make themselves heard too. Look up to spot the earliest Swallows, Swifts and House Martins, hopefully we'll see more of them this year.

We now have a notice board! About time I hear you cry, it will be erected by the Lapwing Drive entrance and will have a site map, dates for work parties, FotB and Church events on display as well as other things like,

hopefully, a “what to spot this month” for the children and anyone else interested.

I would like to thank all the people who help out on the Brickfield - it's not just about the work parties although they are the most obvious - there's litter pickers, poo pickers (don't get me started on that), people who pull fallen branches off the paths, fill holes the rabbits have dug in paths, prune, etc.. Then there's the fund raising (thanks Michael), tractor repairs (thanks Phil, bet you're glad you volunteered for that one, six hours and counting!!) and maintenance of the rest of the tools we use not to mention the poor souls who orchestrate all this - our very small committee. This village has an amazing number of volunteers but we could always do with more, hint, hint...Judy

THE THREE TUNS

We continue to be closed on Tuesdays.

We at The Three Tuns are looking forward to some warmer weather on the horizon and will be opening the beer garden at the end of March. Hopefully the sun will shine and people will be able to joy a drink in the garden over the Easter weekend. Please be aware that on Bank Holiday Mondays, the Kitchen closes at 6pm and the Pub at 8pm.

Thank you for all your ongoing Support.

Chris, Carol & Team

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 still 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

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>

Parking

Please park responsibly and keep all our pavements free for pedestrians, including wheelchair and mobility scooter users. No one should be forced into the road to get around parked vehicles that are obstructing our pavements. Please also remember that the speed limit in our village is 20mph. Thank you for your cooperation.

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

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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/>

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, Priest in Charge 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 June and July 2026 Village News is noon on 10 May 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.

No job too small. Find me on Facebook or at <https://www.uniquelyyoursflowers.co.uk> or call Liz on 07730 893747



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19 The Street, Lower Halstow

Contact me on 07824 392342 or

Email: edenwood@sjpp.co.uk

Website: www.edenwoodwealth.com

SJP Approved 05/02/2026



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CHARITY PUB QUIZ NIGHT
SATURDAY 23 MAY 2026 AT
THE CROWN UPCHURCH
IN AID OF
SMILE MALAWI



**AN ORPHANAGE IN MALAWI
BUILT IN 2004 AND RUN BY LOCAL
UPCHURCH RESIDENT
ELSPETH BAECKE**

**TABLES OF 6 OR 4
£5 PER PERSON**

**RAFFLE
7.30pm START**



**ADVANCE BOOKINGS ONLY
LIMITED NUMBER OF TABLES**

CONTACT ELSPETH on elspethbaecke@gmail.com
or PAM SHEPHEARD on pashepherd@gmail.com
or either on Whatsapp

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