CHURCH AND COMMUNITY NEWS

KEYS

HILDENBOROUGH



November 2026

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From the Church

Greater Love

In February 2008, Lance Corporal Matthew Croucher was on patrol with the Royal Marines Reserve in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. His leg caught a tripwire connected to a grenade.

He realised at once what had happened. The grenade had been triggered, and his fellow Marines were close enough to be killed. There was no time to weigh up the options. There were only seconds.

Croucher shouted a warning. Rather than trying to save himself, he deliberately put himself between the grenade and his comrades, using his body and his rucksack to shield them. He knew what a grenade could do. He believed he was about to die. But his instinct was that if somebody had to take the blast, it would be him.

The grenade exploded. His comrades survived.

And remarkably, so did Croucher. His equipment absorbed much of the blast, and although injured, he lived. He was later awarded the George Cross. It is an astonishing story of bravery. But it also tells us something about the nature of love.

Jesus once said: ***"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."*** **John 15:13**

Most of us will never face the decision Croucher faced that day. But there is something deeply moving about a person willing to place themselves between danger and somebody else. In a sense, love says: "If there is a price to be paid, I am willing to bear it." And that takes us to the heart of the Christian message.

Christians believe the cross was not simply the tragic death of a good man. At the cross, Jesus willingly gave Himself for us.

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8**

Christ did not wait for us to deserve His love. He did not wait for us to become good enough. He loved us first. Croucher's fellow Marines could never say they had earned what he did for them. They simply discovered that another had been willing to put himself in harm's way so that they might live.

There is something of the cross in that picture. As we approach Remembrance Sunday, we remember countless men and women who sacrificed so much for others. Some returned home. Others never did.

We honour them not because we glorify war, but because we recognise the extraordinary cost that others have been willing to bear.

And perhaps remembrance should cause each of us to ask: what kind of person am I becoming?

We may never be asked to lay down our lives. But every day we have opportunities to lay down our pride, our time, our comfort and our self-interest for somebody else.

Because sacrifice does not begin on a battlefield. It begins in the human heart. And at the centre of the Christian faith stands a cross which declares what love looks like.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Tim Saiet

ST JOHN'S CHURCH - Directory

Tel: 01732 833 596 Website: www.stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

Please ring the church office or email any time, if you would like to discuss any pastoral or administrative matter.

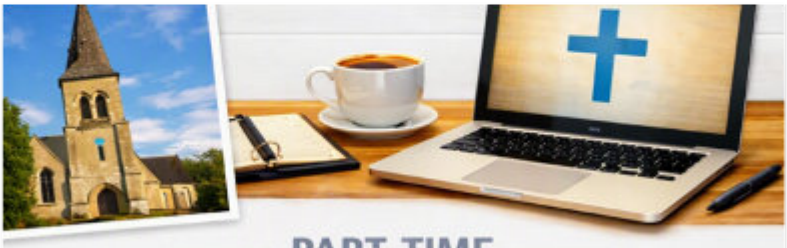
Office Hours - Ad-hoc until a new administrator is appointed.

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Children's and Youth Pastor	Lisa Glasscote	lisa@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Church Administrator	Vacant	01732 833 596 office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Church Volunteers		
Lay Readers	Trevor Long	07513 420 509
Warden	Vacant	01732 833 596 office@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Treasurer	Rich Lake	07579 210 122 treasurer@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Safeguarding	Kate Lake	07579 821 956 safeguarding@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
Church Centre Bookings	Cynthia Fawcus	01732 833 397 cynthia@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
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Sunday services
9:15 - 10:30am - Contemporary service with breakfast served in the Church from 8:45am
Refreshments served between services in the Church Centre. All welcome.
11am - 12:15pm - Traditional service

Tuesday service
11:15am - 12pm Morning Prayer

Contact the office to receive Church News and Notices or follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/stjohnshildenborough



PART-TIME

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

St John's Hildenborough

Join our supportive team and help keep our busy parish running smoothly!

We're Looking For:

- ✓ **Approachable**, dependable, and organised
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Role Includes:

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- Preparing Orders of Service and notices

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ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

HIVE

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The Hive Youth Group

For school year
6–13
£5



Sunday 8th November

Clip'n'Climb , 3:45pm–5:30pm

Booking is required for this event

All youth leaders hold a valid DBS

For more information please contact
Lisa Glasscote
lisa@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk
5–7pm at St John's Church Centre

WHO LET THE DADS OUT?

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

Wide range of kids play equipment

£3 per family; includes hot breakfast sandwich and refreshments

Next 3 Dates.
Nov 7th, Dec 5th, Jan 2nd

Meet other local Dads and have fun

For children aged 0-6

9:30-11am

Church Centre, Foxbush TN11 9HT

Forget-me-not Cafés

Companionship over a cuppa

The D'Vine Singers came to the Café in October. They are a friendly group who meet to sing for fun. They entertained us with a mixture of songs from Adele to the Everly Brothers, a rousing version of What will we do with the drunken sailor and Let's Twist Again.



For our November Café we have Cieron Faux, a Café favourite, coming to sing to us.

We also welcomed Kelly from Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services (ADSS) who support people affected by dementia. Kelly talked about staying safe in the home, keeping warm and being independent. There is a Home Energy Service which provides practical advice and can give support on home safety, energy and financial support and staying scam aware. To get in touch with ADSS you can call 01474 533990 or email HomeEnergy@adss.org.uk or visit their website: www.adss.org.uk.



For our December Café on Wednesday 9th December at 11.00 am we will be holding our Dementia Friendly Carol Service at St. John's Church, Hildenborough followed by refreshments in the Church Centre. We would like to welcome everyone to come to this service to support those living with dementia. Come along to hear the Christmas Story and to sing some well-known carols with us.

If you would like more information on the Forget-me-not Cafés or would like to be put on the mailing list for the monthly programme of all the Cafés please contact Elaine on forgetmenot.sadfc@gmail.com or phone 07946 534 476.

Those who come to the Café live with a dementia diagnosis while others have mild memory loss, others care for a person with dementia. The Café is also open to anyone who would like to get out of the house for a couple of hours and meet other people for some conversation. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at St. John's Church Centre, Hildenborough from 11.00 – 12.30pm. There is plenty of free parking and disabled facilities on site. ***Julie Rhodes***

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

SHOEBOX APPEAL

Samaritan's Purse
OPERATION Christmas Child



WHY A SHOEBOX?

For some children, a shoebox may be the first gift they have ever received. Filled with toys, school supplies and practical gifts, each box offers joy, hope and a reminder that they are loved.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, partners with local churches to share God's love and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

In 2025, UK **shoeboxes** reached children in **Ukraine, Moldova and Jamaica**, among other destinations.

1 CHOOSE A BOX

Take a shoebox and leaflet from church.

2 FILL IT WITH GIFTS

Follow the packing guide (see over) for what to include.

3 BRING IT TO CHURCH

Return your completed shoebox during collection week (see below).

COLLECTION WEEK AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL

9–16 NOVEMBER 2026

Monday–Friday 10am–2pm | Sunday morning

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US
Emma.Haggart@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
HILDENBOROUGH

RECYCLE YOUR OWN SHOEBOX

HOW TO PACK A SHOEBOX

1 FIND A SHOEBOX



Use an average sized shoebox and decide if it's for a boy or girl and the age group (2–4, 5–9 or 10–14).

Recycle your own shoebox or collect one from church.

2 FILL IT WITH GIFTS



Include a mix of toys, school supplies, personal care items and something fun. See ideas on the right.

3 WRAP & LABEL



Wrap your box (lid and box separately if possible) and label it with the correct boy or girl age group using the leaflet from church.

4 DONATION NEEDED – FROM £5

£5 per shoebox, paid directly to Samaritan's Purse online. Covers collection, shipping and processing – not church or school.

5 BRING IT TO CHURCH



Return your completed shoebox during collection week at St John's Church Hall.

GIFT IDEAS

- Toys (e.g. small cars, dolls, soft toys)
- School supplies (e.g. pens, pencils, notebooks, colouring books)
- Personal care items (e.g. hairbrush, flannel, hair accessories)
- Something fun (e.g. a game, puzzle, stickers)

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE

- Soap or toothpaste (not allowed)
- Sweets or chocolate
- Liquids or aerosols
- Sharp items (e.g. scissors, knives)
- War-related items (e.g. toy guns)
- Medicines
- Breakable items (e.g. glass)
- Used or damaged items

TRACK YOUR SHOEBOX

You can give your £5 donation online and, if you wish, follow your shoebox to see where it goes.

SCAN HERE

To pack, donate and track your gift

samaritans-purse.org.uk/occ

COLLECTION WEEK AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL

9–16 NOVEMBER 2026

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QUESTIONS? CONTACT US
Emma.Haggart@stjohnshildenborough.co.uk

HILDENBOROUGH FARMERS' MARKET

There was a lot planned for the Farmers' Market during the month of October. Every year we support the Wear it Pink for Breast Cancer Now charity by raising money for the charity through raffles and donations, all the stallholders and volunteers wear pink.

As usual during the October half term we had free arts and crafts for the children with Arts by Alex.

How did they go? I'll let you know in December as this article is being written before they've taken place!

Please make a note in your diaries for our Christmas activities. As well as the stallholders all ready to take your Christmas orders we have our local schools coming in to sing carols for you and a special visitor.



Tuesday 8th December: we will be welcoming Hildenborough Primary School choir

Tuesday 15th December: we will be welcoming Stocks Green School Choir

Tuesday 22nd December: although a very busy man we will be welcoming Father Christmas and one of his elves who will be giving every child a free gift.

Have you got a glut of apples in your garden? Here's a simple **Apple Crumble Recipe** to use them up or see our fruit and vegetable stall to choose what fruit you would like in your crumble.

Ingredients For the crumble
- 300g/10½oz plain flour
- pinch of salt
- 175g/6oz brown sugar
- 200g/7oz unsalted butter at room temperature, cubed, plus a little for greasing

For the filling
- 450g/1lb apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1cm/½in pieces
- 50g/2oz brown sugar
- 1 tbsp plain flour

Method
1. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/ Gas 4.
2. Place the flour, salt and sugar in a large bowl and mix well. Taking a few cubes of butter at a time rub into the flour mixture. Keep rubbing until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs and all the butter is incorporated.
3. Place the fruit in a large bowl and sprinkle over the sugar, flour. Stir well, being careful not to break up the fruit.
4. Butter a 24cm/9in ovenproof dish. Spoon the fruit mixture into the bottom, then sprinkle the crumble mixture on top.
5. Bake for 40–45 minutes until the crumble is browned and the fruit mixture bubbling.
6. Serve with thick cream or custard.

ENJOY!

Meet the volunteer – Rob Mansfield of Who Let The Dads Out (WLTDO)



Hi, I'm Rob Mansfield and I help run Who Let The Dads Out, which is a monthly play group aimed specifically at dads. I'm also the editor of Keys Magazine.

I've lived in Hildenborough for just over 10 years with my wife Nancy and my two children, Molly and Freddie. I've been attending WLTDO since Molly was little and after COVID there was a changing of the guard, so I stepped in to restart the group. We have a small core team and a few casual helpers that dip in and out.

On the first Saturday of the month, we take over the church centre for the morning, filling the main hall with a bouncy castle, bouncy slide and softplay. We have quieter activities in the café with toys cars, magnetic building blocks and colouring in. Hot drinks and bacon sandwiches are provided to the dads and the kids get to have lots of fun.

We've become really successful, attracting new families each month and could do with getting more men involved in helping us run it. It's 3 to 4 hours per month. It could suit someone whose kids are too old to attend (we cater for kids 0-6). If you can chat and take round teas and coffees, we'd love to hear from you.

My personal highlight for doing it is when one of the dads tells me that their kid's been begging to come as it's so much fun. It means we've got something compelling to offer against screens or the myriad of activities kids can do these days.

The worst bit, without a doubt, is being the party pooper who turfs the kids off the bouncy castles at 11 to start the tidy up process. It's softened by having so many of the kids and dads muck in to help us tidy up. It's a real team effort.

If you think this sounds like fun then please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you – editor@keysmagazine.co.uk.

More about me

I appeared in Hildenborough Amateur Dramatics first performance, playing one of the Ugly Sisters in Cinderella earlier this year. I've heard there is a pantomime planned for February 2027 so keep your eyes peeled for that, it was so much fun!

If I were prime minister for the day, I'd make finance education compulsory for schools. It's such a shame that so many are put off thinking about their finances because of the endless nonsense jargon and overly complicated tax system. Teaching kids about finance could transform their lives later on.

Rob Mansfield

What's on in and around our village?

Arts and culture are flourishing in the local community often with little by way of external funding - please read through the following events and try and get to one if you can!

Hildenborough Conservation Group: Westwood Coppicing

T&MBC has given the HCG permission to continue their coppicing in West Wood for the next five years. This will take place on the first four Saturdays in November (7th,14th, 21st and 28th this year).

Editors note: Wikipedia defines coppicing as: Coppicing is the traditional method in woodland management of cutting down a tree to a stump, which in many species encourages new shoots to grow from the stump or roots, thus ultimately regrowing the tree.

We meet at 10am and finish around 4pm. Instruction on tool usage and coppicing techniques will be given by experienced group members. Children under 16 years must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian.

Sausages are cooked over the fire embers at lunchtime so bring some and rolls if you wish to partake.

You will get mucky and smoky so sturdy footwear and old clothes are a must. If you use an inhaler, please remember to bring it with you.

Contact: **Lynne Flower 01732 355 080**

Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra: Autumn Classics

Sunday 15th November, 3:00 pm at The Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks

Join the Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra for an afternoon of evocative British and Scottish masterpieces, featuring Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad*, Elgar's majestic *Symphony No. 1*, and Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* with international violin soloist Basil Alter.

Tickets are available now directly from the box office (01732 450 175 or https://stagsevenoaks.co.uk).

Angel Café at St John's Church Centre - updated opening times! - Term Time Only

Wednesday - 8.30-4.pm - Social café - no children's activities

Thursday - Soft Play - 8.30am - 4.30pm - softplay until 2pm

Friday - Play Area - 8.30am - 2pm - 10.15am story & rhyme time. 11am - 1pm Chatty Table

Climate change - The People's Emergency Briefing – 1st December, 7pm in the Village Hall - Free

What does the changing climate mean for our future and that of our children and grandchildren? Find out at our local community screening of the People's Emergency Briefing in Hildenborough Village Hall.

The UK's summer of 2026 was reported by the Met Office as the hottest on record for the second year running. As our climate changes, what could this mean for the things we care about most — our food supplies, our health, our local community, and the natural world around us?

Join us for a free screening of The People's Emergency Briefing, presented by Chris Packham.

- When: 1st December 2026

- What time: 7pm doors, 7:30pm film starts

- Where: Hildenborough Village Hall, TN11 9HY

- Cost: Free to attend so bring your friends and neighbours

- Tickets: https://buytickets.at/hildenboroughcommunity/2478063

This gripping 50-minute film brings together leading scientists and experts who presented evidence on the climate and nature crisis to MPs, peers and key decision-makers at Central Hall, Westminster. It explores exactly what this data means for our everyday lives.

But this isn't just about understanding the risks. It's about the future we want to build in our local community: reliable food supplies, affordable energy, cleaner air, quieter roads, and greater energy security.

After the screening, stay for an open discussion. It's an opportunity to hear the facts, share perspectives, and explore how Hildenborough can respond together.

Book your free ticket using this website or by scanning the QR code:

https://buytickets.at/hildenboroughcommunity/2478063

Want to help out? We'd love a hand with refreshments, setting up, or packing away. Please get in touch if you'd like to be involved:

Baz - hildenborough.community@gmail.com

Can you help deliver Keys?

Thank you so much for the fantastic level of response to our request for more distributors. If you would like to help us distribute Keys, please get in touch with Clem (details below). We're actively looking for someone for parts of **Leigh Road** and **Hilden Park Road**. If interested please contact Clem on 01732 833 543 or 07756 585 549 or clemgiles@hotmail.com.

THE OAST THEATRE - "EDUCATING RITA" by Willy Russell

14th – 21st November 2026 Performances: 7.30 p.m. (Sunday Matinee 3.00 p.m.) - Tickets: £14

This brilliant and much-loved play is about education and choice. It follows twenty-six year old Liverpool hairdresser, Rita, and her experience in returning to education. Tutor, and failed poet, Frank, is initially reluctant to take on the enormity of trying to teach this needy but unconventional and unfocused would-be student, preferring instead to continue easing his way through his teaching duties with the blunting help of the booze he keeps stashed behind the books on his shelves. For Rita, though, Frank is the perfect teacher and faced with her determination and her insistence that she wants to 'know everything', he is reluctantly persuaded to commit to overseeing her studies and the series of regular tutorials through which the play unfolds.

It is by turns clever, funny, touching and kind, but never patronising. Come and see for yourself!

Book online at www.oasttheatre.com

Hildenborough Historical Society

George Gorham's booklet – **A record of the Great War as seen from Hildenborough: a month by month account of the impact of the war on the villagers of Hildenborough who gave their lives in the First World War**

was available at our meeting on 16th October when Gary Martin told us about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission including the 5 graves in St John's cemetery.
If you would like a copy for a donation (£5 recommended) to **Help For Heroes** please contact the Society or atkinsontony@btinternet.com and we will arrange this.

Hospice in the Weald - Our Christmas events and activities

Christmas wreathmaking workshops - 28th November, 30th November, 1st December, 2nd December - at the Hospice in Pembury

Join us for a festive wreath-making workshop led by our experienced instructor Sally, and relax in a warm and welcoming atmosphere with festive music and complimentary refreshments.

All materials are provided, so all you need to bring is yourself and some festive creativity. Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned crafter, you'll leave with a stunning handmade wreath to enjoy throughout the Christmas period.



For more information and to book a place please visit the events section of our website, hospiceintheweald.org.uk

Hildenborough Friendly Badminton Club – Thursday Evenings at the Village Hall

We're currently looking for 2 or 3 new members to join our friendly badminton club which meets every Thursday evening between 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm (from beginning of September until the end of May).

We are all about enjoying the game - no leagues, competitions or matches against other clubs. We simply play friendly doubles (both same sex and mixed) in a relaxed atmosphere.

Players of all levels are welcome. However, we would prefer that new members have some prior playing experience or basic badminton ability.

We charge a fee that covers hall hire and shuttlecocks etc. We can offer several options regarding the fee. An annual fee, which of course would be adjusted as we have already started our season or pro-rata fees depending on how often you are able to play.

But the first session is free so come along and see if we're the right fit for you

If you are interested, please contact Ivan Kirkpatrick on 07730 888 429.

November 2026 walks

Join our vibrant and welcoming group, proudly part of the national Ramblers walking charity.

Non-members are welcome to try up to three free 'taster' walks with us. If you're new to our walks, please contact the walk leader to check that the walk will suit you.

See Tonbridge and Malling Ramblers on Facebook or

www.tonbridgeandmallingramblers.org.uk.

8th November - Circular walk from Otford to Shoreham with a steep climb up the side of the Darent Valley and a panoramic view. This landscape was a source of inspiration for the 19C painter Samuel Palmer. Moderate difficulty. - 5 miles

19th November - Leisurely ramble on the National Trust estate of Scotney Castle near Lamberhurst. Fields, woodland and farmland tracks; no stiles. Includes a stop at the Scotney Castle tea-room. - 6 miles

26th November - Brenchley circular walk across farmland and on quiet lanes and footpaths. Pass through the grounds of Sprivers (an NT property) and walk on part of the High Weald Landscape Trail. Moderate difficulty. - 6.2 miles

29th November - Medway Valley: from Teston Country Park to Barming and return past East Farleigh Lock and Bridge, Barming Bridge and Teston Bridge. Moderate difficulty; no stiles. - 6.5 miles

The Night Sky in Hildenborough – November

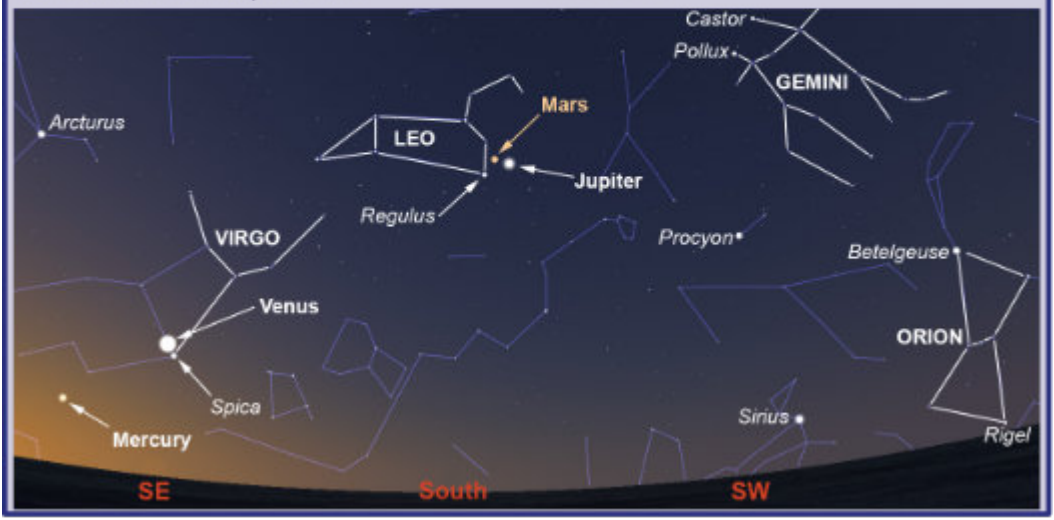
I mentioned previously that if you were awake in the early mornings, during November, you would be able to see two bright planets pass close to each other, something known as a planetary conjunction.

The planets concerned are Mars and Jupiter that have been closing in on each other for some time. Mars is making all the running because it moves the quickest of the two whilst Jupiter is, very slowly, moving away from the red planet. At the beginning of November, the planets are 6° apart which is equivalent to 12 full Moons. You might think that the Moon is huge in the sky but if you look when it is well away from the horizon, and high in the sky, you will realise that it is actually quite small. The pair are joined by a waning crescent Moon on the 2nd and 3rd providing a photo opportunity. Then, by the 16th the two are as close as they can get, being just over 1° apart (2 Moon diameters). After that they move apart again despite the fact that both are moving in the same direction, towards the east (left).

Then on the 27th Mars passes less than 2 degrees to the north east of the bright star Regulus, the brightest star in the constellation of Leo, the lion.

However, before that, a day or two either side of the 21st, look low down in the south east to find both of the inner planets (Mercury and Venus) making an appearance. Venus is very close to the bright star Spica which is the brightest star in Virgo, the virgin. I would suggest looking at 6:30am because the Sun will still be approximately 10° below the horizon which means we are still in nautical twilight.

Incidentally, if your horizon is low towards the west, you will be able to see Orion preparing to set and to the east (left) of it, Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky which is nearly in line with the three stars in Orion's belt. Despite its apparent brightness, Sirius only holds that number one position because it is very close to us and not because it is unusually bright. The nearest star to the Earth (apart from the Sun) is Proxima Centauri which is 4 light years away whilst Sirius is 8 light years distant. Compare that to Rigel, the bottom right-hand star in Orion which is 860 light years away and yet it is still the 7th brightest star in the night sky. Rigel is a type of star known as a blue supergiant which could be more than 300,000 times more luminous than the Sun. By the way, one light year is equal to 9½ trillion kilometres.



The Zodiac is a band that crosses the sky where the Sun, Moon and planets can be found and has links to astrology, something that has no scientific basis at all. The band of the Zodiac crosses the map, running through Virgo, Leo, Cancer and Gemini. Cancer is only shown faintly on the map because the stars that form it are comparatively faint and difficult to identify.

The map is drawn for 6:30am on the 21st November. Constellations are named in block capitals whilst star names are in italics.

Brian Mills FRAS

Hildenborough Cricket Club

Hildenborough Cricket Club finished with four wins from their final six matches. Pete Wood reflects on the club's fortunes in a long hot summer. The club played 21 games this season, winning nine and losing 12 which ranks as a decent season - and are already looking forward to the next one.

Fixtures were extended by a week into October to host Bromley club Vishwa, who proved too good for us on the day. Hildenborough went into the game with top batsman and bowler awards still to be decided. Skipper Greg Smith scored 567 runs this season in 16 games (only out eight times) averaging 70.88 - with a top score of 100 not out against Kent Ramblas.

However, despite missing the final game he finished 202 ahead of his nearest rival to take the prize - only the second player in the club's history to score more than 500 runs in a season. Wicket keeper Greg also finished as top fielder with six catches including one in the outfield and two run outs.

He finished ahead of JP Martens - one stumping, six outfield catches and two run-outs. Paul Herbert also deserves a mention, holding six catches and claiming two run-outs in only eight matches.

The race to be best bowler was a very competitive affair, four players vying to finish top wicket taker.

Matt Richards claimed one in the final game to top the list with 20, ahead of Digby Russell and Barry Webb (who also missed the final game) with 16, one more than Simon Clark.

Richards sent down 86 overs - taking his wickets at 5.34 runs apiece - with best figures of 4-41 against Eagle CC.

Anyone interested in joining the club should contact Pete on 07525 082 652.

Peter Wood

Would you like to be part of Keys?

Writing - The deadline for content is the 15th of the month.

I'm keen to hear from volunteers who'd like to take our volunteer interviews. These are great for giving insight into what volunteering really looks like and how rewarding it can be. I have some interviews out there but I'd love to run one each month.

Please drop me a line if you'd like to feature. ***Rob Mansfield - Editor***

Growing, Learning, and Thriving at The Oaks Nursery



Nestled on Riding Lane next to Hildenborough School, **The Oaks Nursery** focuses on helping children aged 2 and a half to 5 develop a love for learning and a deep connection with the natural world. Through outdoor exploration, creative play, and hands-on discovery, children build independence and confidence in a warm community setting.

The Oaks is also celebrating an exciting new chapter with **Cordelia Hepden** stepping into the role of Nursery Manager. Having previously worked at the nursery as a practitioner, Cordelia brings a hands-on approach and strong relationships with local families to her leadership.

- **Spaces Available:** The Oaks currently welcomes prospective families to visit.
- **Contact:** 01732 834 401 | theoaksnursery@gmail.com
- **Location:** Riding Lane, Hildenborough, TN11 9HY

Autumn at Hildenborough Tennis Club



There's plenty going on at Hildenborough Tennis Club this autumn, with three new coaches and adult and junior coaching sessions continuing straight after half term in November.

Based at the Recreation Ground, HTC has three all-weather courts, two with floodlights, so tennis doesn't have to stop when the clocks go back. And the new pathways recently installed around the Recreation Ground, including the path leading to the tennis courts, will make getting there on winter evenings considerably easier.

The club has a talented and experienced coaching team. **Jamie Frost** runs the Friday junior programme from 4–6pm, with Mini Red for 5–8-year-olds and Orange Ball for 8–11-year-olds. The first junior lesson is **free**, so children can come along and give it a try before signing up for the rest of the term.

For adults, **Dave Clifford** runs Advanced Intermediate coaching on Tuesday evenings and Beginners & Rusties on Wednesdays. The latter is ideal for beginners and those who haven't played for a while and fancy getting back on court.

Jamie, Dave and Luke Bateup are all available for private coaching, whether you're just starting out or want to work on improving your game.

And you don't need to join the club before giving it a try. **Adults can have up to two taster sessions – either through the group coaching programme or as private lessons – before becoming a member.** Membership is reduced for the

remainder of the current membership year, with adult membership now just **£55 until 31 March 2027**, and junior membership reduced too.

There's plenty happening outside the coaching programme. HTC has several weekly club play sessions, both during the day and in the evenings - we have men's, ladies' and mixed league teams, a club ladder and an annual American tournament, so there are lots of opportunities to play, whether you enjoy a bit of competition or something rather more relaxed.

And it's not all tennis. The club has **two Pickleball courts**, with paddles and balls available, so you don't even need your own equipment to give it a go.

Facilities include a clubhouse, eco loo and outdoor seating area alongside the courts, and there's a good social side to the club too. There's an annual Open Day and a family BBQ, with tennis and Pickleball played throughout the day. Members also regularly put together teams for the monthly quiz at the Half Moon, and the club will be back there for its Christmas social in December.

The club is right in the heart of the village, and the courts are available for hire by **local schools, groups and organisations**, so please get in touch if you would like to discuss this.

So, if you live locally and haven't ventured through the tennis club gates for a while – or perhaps didn't realise quite how much goes on here – **now might be a great time to take another look. And by the time Wimbledon rolls around, you'll be glad you did!** More information about booking a coaching session, membership and the club can be found at **hildenboroughtennis.co.uk**.



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T.M.B.C. News

Scheme of Delegation

Just come into force are the new rules for the 'National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions'; probably the worst part is the fact that applications of up to 9 houses and other smaller applications (these are Schedule 1) can only be decided by Planning Officers. This includes Householder applications and the entire scheme greatly reduces the role of elected councillors. Larger applications not in Schedule 1, thus Schedule 2, can be brought in to committee, but it appears to be much harder to secure this. The main emphasis is on officer delegation and if planning officers and local members cannot agree that a larger application should come to committee the default is a planning officer decision.
We, the Council, have already reduced our planning members to 13, as required by this scheme and now operate a single planning committee. (Personally, it does appear not to be the best decision we have ever been forced to undertake).

Audit

Grant Thornton, the Council's auditors have reported on the financial year of 2025-26. For Financial sustainability, Governance and Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness they find no significant weakness in arrangements with some minor improvements noted. Under our previous Director of Finance, a 10-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was instigated: this has served us well. A new MTFS is about to start. We the Council are fortunate to have an exceptional finance team; there are Councils we are told are at least 2 years behind on their accounts. Mind you, Audit costs - the Grant Thornton fee for 2025-26 is £158,740.

Steve Churcher RIP

On a more personal note, residents who are Tonbridge Angels FC supporters may well be aware of the sudden death of former Chairman and Stalwart of the club Steve Churcher. Steve was a personal friend whom I knew at primary school along with his brother Geoff. We met up again after attending school and socialized on many occasions including holidays and conferences. Steve started his last journey from Tonbridge Angels football ground, the hearse being followed by family, friends and supporters to Tonbridge Baptist Church. Steve's funeral was very well attended; the Minister conducted the entire service of words and reflections on Steve's life. Picture shows me and former Cllr and Mayor Owen Baldock holding a tribute banner of Steve at Tonbridge Angels football ground. Thanks to the supporters for taking the picture.



Contact me

Please do not hesitate for one minute, about contacting me on Borough Council matters. If you would prefer a home visit in private, just let me know. Even, if it's about planning.

Council Meetings

Please remember Council meetings are still streamed on You Tube, however public attendance is permitted in the Council Chamber.

Cllr Mark Rhodes

Borough Councillors
c/o TMBC, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, ME19 4LZ

Kath Barton
kath.barton@tmbc.gov.uk

Mark Rhodes 01732 914 166
mark.rhodes@tmbc.gov.uk

TMBC - 01732 844 522

Kent County Councillor
Harry Rayner 03000 421 606
harry.rayner@kent.gov.uk

Contact the Parish Council via
clerk@hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk
or by telephone (07818 329 029)

Hildenborough PC, Riding Lane, Hildenborough, TN11 9HY

Evening WI: For our October meeting we all shared a Harvest Supper. We welcomed a visitor to the meeting. The committee had provided food for the evening, and each item spelled out the word HARVEST. As well as sharing some lovely food, we all took part in a quiz with a food theme. Sheila was the winner! It was a really enjoyable evening and a wonderful opportunity to catch up and chat with everyone.

As usual we went over all the WI business, news and updates and talked about our next fundraiser in November. As always, the ladies all bought items for the community larder which we support each month. Our next meeting is ***Tuesday 10th November 2026*** when our guest speaker will be Sandie Porter, who will be talking to us about "Tropics" Skin care.

The evening WI meets once a month and gives members the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, and have fun. We always welcome new members, so please feel free to just drop in and say hello, even just for one evening to see what we are all about.

Please note our meeting time, we meet in the family room at the Church Centre at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start.

Lorna Stapley-President.



Centre Piece

From Hildenborough Parish Council - **https://www.hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk/**

Contact: Louise Jenner (Clerk) - **07818 329 029 clerk@hildenboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Postal Address: **Pavilion and Recreation Ground, Riding Lane, TN11 9HY**
The Parish Council's green post box is located at the rear of the Pavilion Building

October 2026

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who came along to the Local Plan Regulation 19 information evening and to the drop-in sessions held at the Village Hall throughout October. The turnout was remarkable. Every chair in the building was taken, with people standing at the back and along the sides. A couple of residents told us they were unable to get into the building at the information evening, but they came to a drop-in session instead, and we were glad to see them.



Thank you to all the residents of Hildenborough for your continued support.

Our Hildenborough Local Plan page remains on the Parish Council website. There you can view the historic documents, along with a copy of the response Hildenborough Parish Council submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) on the Regulation 19 plan.

Round the Rec: Stage 2 Complete

Stage 2 of the Recreation Ground footpath is now complete, giving the village a fully tarmacked loop around the Rec. We hope residents are enjoying it. Whenever Councillors have visited the site, it has been great to see so many people out using the new path. Thank you to Arnold Tarmac for completing the second stage so promptly.



Easier Access for All

The height barrier at the Recreation Ground car park has been raised to 2.2 metres, so that personal disability vehicles can now get in. Together with the new tarmacked path, this makes the Recreation Ground enjoyable for all.

What's Next for the Path?

Stage 3, behind the tennis court, is waiting on the next round of Section 106 funding. We hope

to hear from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in 2027 regarding the next funding allocation.





Pedal Power at the Rec

Thank you to Kent County Council and to Councillor Harry Rayner for a Member's Grant towards a new bike storage rack, which has now been installed at the Recreation Ground. We hope it will be useful to residents and to cyclists coming from a little further afield.



Looking Smart on the Village Green



The War Memorial and the Village Green water fountain have both been cleaned, and new planters have been installed on the Village Green. New plants for both sites will be going in over the coming weeks.



Something Missing? For our eagle-eyed readers: the village sign has gone away for a clean and a fresh coat of paint. It will be back soon, looking its best.

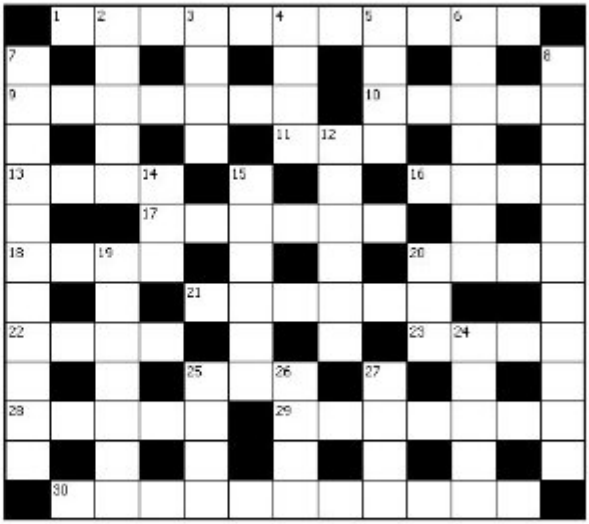
Crossword Clues & Answers

Across

1 and 20 Down 'Lord of all _, Lord of all _, whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy'(11,3)
9 Mosesí question to a fighting Hebrew labourer: 'Why are you _ your fellow Hebrew?" (Exodus 2:13) (7)
10 Acclaimed cellist who contracted multiple sclerosis at the height of her fame, Jacqueline _ (2,3)
11 'At even _ the sun was set, the sick, O Lord, around thee lay'(3)
13 A descendant of Gad (xNumbers 26:16) (4)
16 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but _ for the gift my Father promised' (Acts 1:4) (4)
17 Clambers (Jeremiah 48:44) (6)
18 Peter's response to questioning by the Sanhedrin: 'We must _God rather than men!'(Acts 5:29) (4)
20 Christian paraplegic author, artist and campaigner, _ Eareckson Tada (4)
21 Bird partial to the nests of other birds (6)
22 'Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat _ _ '(Matthew 13:2) (2,2)
23 Infectious tropical disease (4)
25 Tree (3)
28 'No fear of me should _ you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you'(Job 33:7) (5)
29 For example, to Titus, Timothy or Philemon (7)
30 Week beginning with Pentecost Sunday, according to the Church's calendar (11)

Down

2 'O Jerusalem _ how _I have longed to gather your children together' Matthew 23:37) (5)
3 Way out (4)
4 Exhort (Romans 12:1) (4)
5 Done (anag.) (4)
6 Highest of the four voice-parts in a choir (7)
7 Concerning the study of God (11)
8 Uniquely, it has Abbey, Cathedral and Chapel (11)
12 Admonish (Matthew 16:22) (6)
14 Frozen (3)
15 Established form of religious ceremony (6)
19 Inscription often found on gravestones (7)
20 See 1 Across
24 Behaved (Joshua 7:1) (5)
25 Time (anag.) (4)
26 Lists choice of meals (4)
27 'For the wages of sin is death, but the _ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'(Romans 6:23) (4)



Wordsearch - The poppies of Remembrance Sunday

In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders. Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed.

But then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil.

Those endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such horror, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

World
War
France
Flanders
Green

Fields
Bombed
Barren
Bleak
Destroyed

Spring
Destruction
Bright
Red
Poppies

Mud
Chaos
Seeds
Grow
Soil

Cheerful
Growing
Horror
Doctor
poem

R O R B D G N I W O R G
O P F A T C G N C B O N
R U B R I G H T L A T I
R E D R A E S E O I C R
O S R E D N A L F H O P
H E D N Y K C G E P D S
S E I P P O P E R O E W
N O I T C U R T S E D A
E G W H A F M T D M E R
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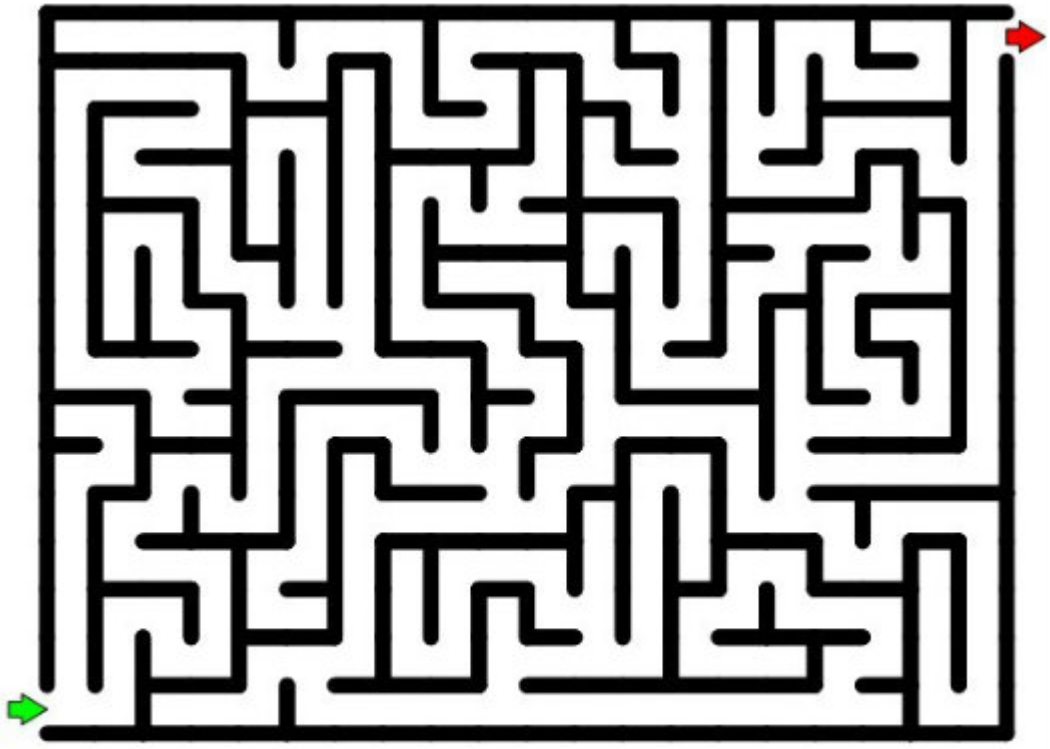
Sudoku - easy and medium puzzles

		4	1					
		9	4				2	
		2	6			3		8
	6		8	4	3		9	
2	8	5				4	3	1
4	9		2	1	5		8	
3		6			9	5		
	2				1	9		
					4	8		

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6						2		4
			3				6	
	1			4				
		9				7	8	
		2	1		5	6		
	8	4				1		
				2			1	
	5				7			
4		8						3

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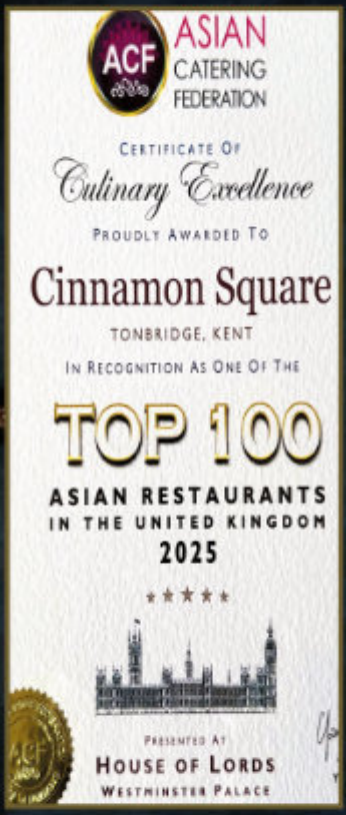
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Local Directory

Church Contacts

Home (Connect) Groups	Church Office **01732 833 596**
Prayer Chain	Cynthia Fawcus **01732 833 397**
Bright Sparks, (Mondays, term-time)	Lisa Glasscote **01732 833 596**
Generation Creation (Sundays)	Lisa Glasscote **01732 833 596**

Community Groups

Evening Women's Institute	Miss Lorna Stapley - **07960 174 789**
Beavers (Ages 6-8) Thurs 5.15-6.30 pm	**hildenboroughbeavers8thtonbridgescouts@hotmail.com**
Cubs (Ages 8-10.5) Monday 6.30-8 pm	**hildenboroughwolfcubs@gmail.com**
Scouts (Ages 10.5-14) Friday 7.30-9 pm	**8thtonbridgescouts@gmail.com**
Guides	Sharon Roberts - **07960 782 178**
Brownies	**hildenbrownies@outlook.com**
Hildenborough Amateur Dramatics	Rich Lake - **07579 210 122**
Hildenborough Conservation Group	Mrs Lynne Flower **01732 355 080**
Hildenborough Farmers' Market	**managerhildenboroughfm@gmail.com**
Hildenborough Gardeners' Society	David Haugh **01732 832 869**
Hildenborough History Society	Tracy **hildenboroughhistorysociety@yahoo.co.uk**
Village Preservation Society	David Vanns **01732 835 289**
Hildenborough Litter Pickers	Emily Simons **07715 113 899**
Hildenborough Parish Council	Louise Jenner **07818 329 029**
Hildenborough CofE Primary School	www.hildenborough.kent.sch.uk - **01732 833 394**
Stocks Green Primary School	www.stocksgreenprimary.co.uk - **01732 832 758**
Stocks Green Pre-School	www.stocksgreenpreschool.co.uk - **01732 834 115**
Oaks Nursery	www.oaksnursery.org.uk - **01732 834 401**
Village Hall Bookings	Hilary Macnamara - **07598 927 953**
West Kent Concert Band	**wkcb@muzodo.com**
Floodline	**0345 988 1188**
Southern Water (spillage reporting)	**0800 952 1001**
Hildenborough Speedwatch	**jonathan.ashton.bidwriting@gmail.com**

KENT POLICE (Non-emergency calls) 101

Hildenborough Sports

Badminton	Kathryn Stewart **07809 299 553**
Indoor (Short Mat) Bowls Club	David Chambers **01732 833 612**
Hildenborough Cricket Club	Barry Webb **01732 838 422**
Hildenborough Friendly Badminton Club	Ivan Kirkpatrick **07730 888 429**
Stoolball Club	Lauren Welch **07999 604 213**
Tennis Club (membership)	**www.hildenboroughtennis.co.uk**
Hildenborough Road Races	**hildenroadrace@gmail.com**
Tonbridge Swimming Club	**chairman@tonbridgeswimmingclub.co.uk**
Tonbridge Bridge Club	Lionel Shields **01732 355 919**

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ADDITIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT DISCLOSURES FOR DIRECTORS IN 2025/26

Additional reporting requirements for directors of close companies came into force for Self-Assessment returns from 2025/26 onwards. A close company is generally a company that is controlled by five or fewer shareholders or by its directors. The new requirements mean directors of close companies must report the following on their tax return:

- The name of the close company.
- The registered number of the close company.
- The amount of income they receive from dividends from that company in that tax year.
- The highest percentage of their shareholding.

The Self-Assessment return already included boxes to indicate whether a taxpayer was a director of a close company, but completing these boxes was optional. The new rules mean directors of close companies are now obligated to complete the boxes.

Only directors who currently need to complete a Self-Assessment return need to report close company information.

If the company is only a close company for part of the tax year, the new boxes must still be completed.

HMRC have recently confirmed the following:

- Where directors are unpaid and/or have zero shareholdings in the close company, they must still complete the new boxes on the tax return. Listing unpaid directorships in the additional information box is not an acceptable option.
- Directors of dormant close companies must also complete the new boxes.
- Directors of registered charities or Community Interest Companies do not need to complete the new boxes where they did not receive, or become entitled to receive, any employment income or dividend income.

A £60 penalty may apply for the incorrect completion of the close company boxes.

If you would like any advice, please contact us on 01732 838877

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