Thanington Without South Ward Neighbourhood Watch

www.hilltopca.org
Registered Charity No 1096781

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Hilltop Community Association
Canterbury

Serving the community since 1936

Letter from your Chairman

Apologies for the delay in publishing this newsletter. We've been finding it increasingly difficult to gather articles and contributions, and we'd love to hear your thoughts on whether you still enjoy receiving the newsletter and what you would like to see included. If you have any ideas, stories or suggestions, please get in touch. My email address can be found in the top right-hand corner of this newsletter.

We'd also like to encourage more members of our community to get involved with the Main Committee. Sadly, many of the wonderful people who have supported and organised events at the hall over the years are no longer able to help. We understand that everyone is busy, but without new people coming forward with fresh ideas and enthusiasm, we may struggle to continue running the hall in the future.

The Main Committee meets for just one hour each month, and everyone in the community is welcome. You don't need any experience just a willingness to get involved and help where you can.

We'd love to see some new faces and ensure our hall continues to be a valued part of our community for many years to come.

Going forward with the hall. We are now in the process of getting plans for our front extension for storage. Which we need after the storage has disappeared after the new kitchen and toilets now fitted.
Back in May, we had our Spring Fair with the help of the Gardening Group. This was a great success, see Tracey's report. As always, it was a great event. Thank you to Tracey, her helpers, and the Gardening Club for putting on a great event.

On the 25th July we had our Family BBQ. This was a bit of a battle to put on, as we had 6 weeks of the World Cup football, and school holidays, but we had a great evening with a group called Two's Company, with a lot of dancing going on. We would also like to thank Premier Bars for supplying the bar with a great Selection of drinks.

Looking forward to next year's BBQ. We are looking at 10th July 2027. For the kids in the afternoon, face painting, along with a magician. If you know anyone who would like to play their Guitars and sing, then please contact me.

Looking ahead, we have a 75th Anniversary quiz on the 19th September, as the hall will be 75 years old.

Remember to keep those photos coming in for the HCA 2027 Calendar; the theme is "Keep it Local" Email them to David; his email is d.sackett@btinternet.com. He'll look forward to receiving them.

Yes, it is now August, the last summer month, and what a summer it has been. Records show it was the hottest July ever. Then it's autumn before you know it, so then we start looking ahead, dare I say it, and start thinking about the Christmas Fayre. This is going to be on Saturday 28th November 2026, so put the date in your diaries.

If you are not on our mailing list and you wish to be, then please email me at chairman@hilltop.org. Remember, if you would like a number for HCA 100 Club, it's £2 a month or £24 a year. It's a good way of supporting the upkeep of the hall.

Enjoy the weather while it lasts!!

WRITTEN BY JOHN RICHARDSON







You can keep up to date with what is happening in your Community Association via our website: www.hilltopca.org or our Facebook page - Hilltop Community Association @HCACanterbury. If you would like to join our round-robin e-mail list please send an e-mail with your details to: chairman@hilltopca.org

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Nature Notes by Jeremy Spon



For several years, Jan Armishaw has been writing the 'Nature Notes' column in the Hilltop News, but she has decided that other commitments mean she cannot continue. She asked me if I would take over, and despite some misgivings, I have agreed to have a go. Jan will be a hard act to follow, but I have started making notes of what I have seen in our garden in Iffin Lane, and the surrounding fields, and these will form the basis of my columns. Like Jan, however, I very much welcome any observations from other Hilltop residents - you can email me at jeremy.spon@yahoo.co.uk if you see any interesting or unusual wildlife in and around Hilltop.

The two most notable features of the first half of the year have been how early all the signs of spring have been, and a number of sightings of a red kite and a tawny owl. Until a few years ago, seeing a kite over Kent was incredibly rare - indeed they had become largely restricted to the mountains of Wales and Scotland. But they have recently spread out across the midlands, and are now being seen quite regularly in the south-east. We have had one fly over our garden several times, and last year I even managed to film one flying low over, and occasionally landing in, the field across the road from us. They are spectacular birds, with a very graceful flight. Buzzards have, of course, become commonplace now, but it is always worth taking a closer look in case the big bird drifting overhead is really a kite - the forked tail being the giveaway detail. Tawny owls have never been so rare, but it is unusual to actually see one - they are heard more often than seen. But during the spring, one perched in a conifer in the garden on a number of occasions. I was alerted to its presence by the alarm calls of numerous small birds, and I was able to get close enough to get a clear view. It stared at me intensely for a couple of minutes before flying off - rather exciting!



As for the early spring, many of the typical signs were as early as I can remember. The sloe started coming into bloom in the middle of March, and bluebells were showing colour very soon afterwards. I saw my first swallow at the beginning of April, and the hawthorn was fully in flower by the beginning of May. We even had a peony in flower in the garden at the beginning of March, and roses out at the beginning of May. Since then we have of course had record-breaking spells of hot weather, so the signs of climate change seem to be everywhere. At times in the last week or two, it has been uncomfortably hot, but this has brought out the summer butterflies. Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers are everywhere, there has been a steady stream of Painted Ladies flying north, and now two or three Marbled Whites have taken up residence in the garden. These beautiful butterflies are actually, despite the name, related to the Meadow Brown rather than the whites like the Large and Small Whites whose caterpillars love to eat our cabbages. The first of the new generation of Brimstones has also appeared. This is in effect our longest-lived butterfly, with the adults emerging at the end of June, and surviving all through autumn and winter to breed in late spring. They seem to have a particular taste for members of the pea family, and can often be seen nectaring on runner bean flowers, and the bright pink flowers of the perennial sweet pea.





WRITTEN BY SARAH LOUDON

Watermelon Smooch Mocktail

This is a cool, refreshing and fruity mocktail made with locally grown strawberries. It is perfect for summer parties and a great way of using up any excess of strawberries you might have. You can make the base in advance and just assemble it when you're ready!

Ingredients

- 400 grams watermelon cubes
- 225 grams hulled strawberries
- Juice of 1 lime
- 55 grams sugar
- 80 mls water
- Lemonade or sparkling water.... or Prosecco!



Method

1) Make the simple sugar syrup by adding the water and sugar to a saucepan and letting the sugar dissolve over a low heat. Stir occasionally and do not let it boil. Once the sugar has dissolved, set to one side to cool.

2) Add the melon cubes, strawberries, lime juice and 60 mls of the cooled syrup to a high speed blender (I used my nutribullet) and blitz until smooth.

3) To get rid of any pips, pour the liquid through a sieve and into a jug. This can now happily sit in the fridge for 24 hours.

4) When ready to serve, put ice into a big glass, pour 1/3 of the mixture over the ice and top up with either lemonade, or sparkling water if you prefer a less sweet option or use prosecco if you fancy a cheeky alcoholic version. I think this might also benefit from a shot of gin or vodka but, honestly, the mocktail version is delicious and is hangover free!

Spring Fair & Plant Sale 2026

WRITTEN BY TRACEY SMITH



We held this year's Annual Spring Fair and Plant Sale in early May. In previous years we've always had perfect sunny weather, but unfortunately, we weren't so lucky with the weather this year! You may remember it was an extremely grey and chilly day. But the Gardening Team were undeterred...!

The planning for the Fair and Plant Sale starts in January, with discussions on what we are likely to grow and sell, along with ideas for the stalls, and crafty bits n' pieces. By the time April comes around we have a better idea of what we have managed to produce, and therefore, what's likely to be available. So it's then full steam ahead to advertise the event, find friends, neighbours and family to help us to get the event on the road, and up and running for the big day in May.

My thanks to the Tuesday Club Lads who are always brave enough to raise and take down the Marquee whatever the weather decides to throw at them! I'd also like to say a big thank you to those who helped to layout the tables for the stalls. Many thanks goes to our wonderful HILLTOP BAKERS - You're all so generous with providing us with fab-u-lous cakes, savouries and other delicious things to eat, and I must say the Cake stall always looks so tempting...! Bundles of thanks, goes to the HCA Gardening Group, for sowing seeds, taking cuttings, and nurturing seedlings and plants to provide us with an array of flowers and plants to sell, along with many crafted articles too. I must add my personal thanks to all my friends, neighbours and family who I've sweet talked into helping and volunteering! And last but not least I'd like to THANK all the Hilltop Community, for coming along on an awfully cold day and for supporting us! Between us we managed to raise an extremely generous £795.00 which goes towards our much admired garden at St. Faiths and the upkeep of the Hall.

And in case you're wondering the 'Top Three Raffle Prize Winners' were - First Prize - The Fruit Tray and Prosecco, Colin & Pam Firth, Second Prize - The B&Q Plant Voucher, Toni Baker, Third Prize - The Complete Gardener by Monty Don, Lettie Hart.
Well done to you all!



WRITTEN BY HILARY SPON

WEATHER RECORDS JANUARY – JUNE 2026

Month	Max. temp. °C	Mean (Av.) Max. °C	Min. temp. °C	Mean (Av.) Min. °C	No. of days with rain*	Max. rain in 1 day in mm.	Total rain in month
January	9.2	5.5	-2.3	3.1	21	14.8	89.3
February	14.9	8.79	0.9	5.97	20	10.5	60.2
March	13.8	10.45	2.4	6.19	9	7.2	27.6
April	19.8	14.14	4.7	7.88	3	7.5	15.5
May	30.3	17.96	3.7	11.12	10	5.8	24
June	33.1	22.7	7.3	13.9	12	13.5	50.2

*means any precipitation

To sum up this six month period: (A reminder that my figures just show the comparison between the current year with past years using my amateur equipment in Iffin Lane.) Overall this period was wetter and warmer than January to June last year. Readers might be surprised that the June temperatures listed here are not higher – indoors the temperature on 25 June reached 31, but outside where the sensor and an ordinary thermometer are stationed in the shade, it was only 26.2 degrees. It has, however, felt hot and was very sunny at times, with daily amber or red weather warnings, and occasionally was very humid. There were thundery showers and storms in June with lightening and a power cut on the night of 18-19 and very heavy rain and a thunder storm on the night of 22-23 June: there were some of the loudest claps of thunder and most amazing lightning shows I've ever experienced.

100 CLUB WINNERS

	February	March	April	May	June
£50	Peter Robins	Jeremy & Hilary Spon	Nikki Murphy	Ian Sharp	Jayne Bush
£30	Mike Hopkins	Peter Robins	Trudy Goldsack	Patrick & Racheal Downs Riley	Pam Wood
£20	Trudy Goldsack	Paula Wooding	Kim Curtis	Mary May	Teresa Palmer
£10	Roger Cheeseworth	Terry Gogger	Felicity Elms	Jo Gurden	Peter Campbell
£5	Wendy Neath	Sarah Loudon	June Robins	Toni & Adrian Baker	Toni & Adrian Baker

JOIN THE 100 CLUB!

Why not join the 100 club? Every month 4 numbers are drawn and 4 lucky winners receive a cash prize from £5 to £100.

To join its £24 for the year or £2 a month.

Money raised goes towards on going fundraising for the hall.

If you would like to join please message the Chairman John Richardson at **chairman@hilltopca.org**

CALLING FOR NEW CONTRIBUTORS

This newsletter is for everyone in the Hilltop Community, we love hearing your local stories, life events and even your favourite recipes or recommendations! We are welcoming new inputs for the newsletter this summer, don't be shy and submit your contributions.

Please feel free to email Katherine at x-kr-x@hotmail.com or you can drop of a hand written version to 9 New House Close

Diary of Events

75th birthday Quiz Night
19th of September at 7pm

Christmas Fayre
28th November at 11am

Monthly Events

Crafty Girls
Second Tuesday of the month from 2pm

Coffee Mornings
Last Thursday of the month 10:30am onwards

Evening Church Service
The second Sunday of the month between October and March at 6pm

Hall Hire

The rates to hire the hall are:
£13 per hour for residents.
£17 per hour for non-residents.

If you would like to book the hall for your occasion contact John Richardson on **07889233327 or visit HCAbookings@hilltopca.org**

Scan this code with your mobile camera and visit our website

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL?

We send a lot of our updates and reminders via email to our residents. If you would like to keep up to date then please make sure you send us your email address to

chairman@hilltopca.org

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HCACanterbury

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