

COLLIER STREET NEWS

June 2021



THIS ISSUE

Photos from around the village

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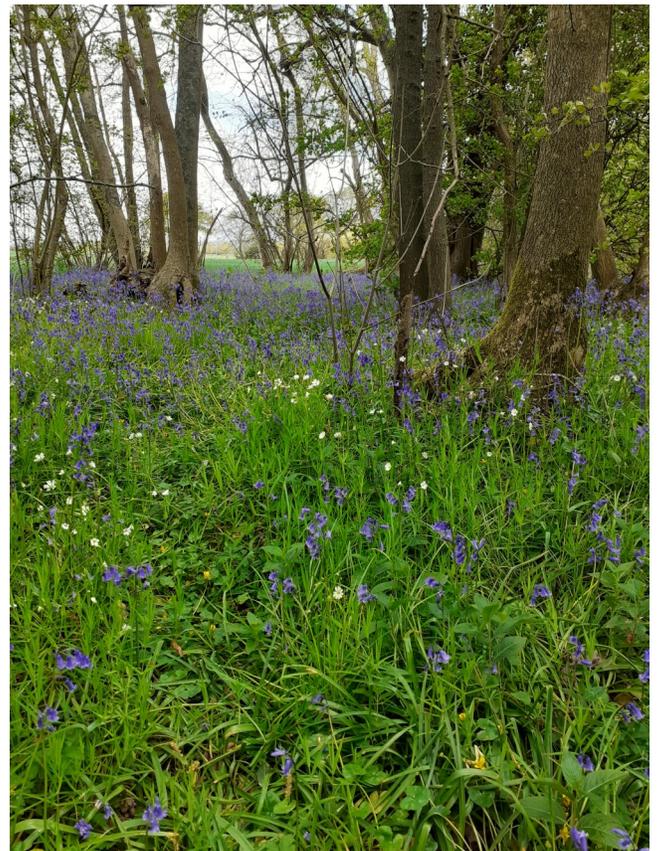
Notes of Parish Council AGM

A Little Light Humour



BLUEBELLS, BLOSSOM AND LIVESTOCK

Photos taken around the village



COLLIER STREET

PAPER DELIVERY

There is a paper delivery service to the village at around 6am every morning. It is supplied by Jackie's News Limited based in Tenterden, they can be contacted on 01580 763183. Cost of delivery is £3.51 a week.

Rubbish, food waste and small electrical items

Monday 7th and 21st June 2021

Recycling, food waste and textiles

Monday 14th and 28th June 2021

www.maidstone.gov.uk

CUTE PET OF THE MONTH - ADORABLE ROO



PCSO NICOLA MORRIS

If you are worried about crime and antisocial behaviour in your area, I am the local Police Community Support Officer for **Collier Street, Laddingford and Yalding.**

If you would like to talk to me, please ring - **Mobile: 07870163411 / Non-emergency: 101**

There is a very successful Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Collier Street involving over 100 residents.

However there are many more households within the Parish who are currently not involved in the scheme. If you would like to be part of the NHW scheme and receive notifications of any suspicious activity or crime then please send your email address to Barbara Grandi at:

barbaragrandi@aol.com



We are gradually coming out of lockdown and restrictions are easing, but help is still available should you require it.

IF YOU NEED HELP, PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING
DAVID GOFF: 01892 730512
BARBARA GRANDI: 01892 730376
MARGARET ASHWORTH: 01892 730323
AND THEY WILL PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP

PLEASE DO ASK FOR HELP!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We would love to hear from you with information, ideas or anything you may feel relevant to the magazine and our village. Maybe a photo taken in the village, or something you would like to share, or write us a letter. Or please send us a picture of your pet for 'cute pet of the month'.

Without your contributions there would not be a magazine, so please send to
editorparishmag@mail.com

FLY TIPPING AND POTHOLES

Did you know that anyone can report pot holes or fly tipping in the village.

Please go to the Maidstone Borough Council website and click on the "Report It" tab.



**COLLIER STREET PARISH
COUNCIL HAVE A NEW
WEBSITE:**

<https://collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk>

WHEELCHAIR AVAILABLE

FOR BORROWING ON SHORT-TERM BASIS

FOLDS FLAT

NOT SELF-PROPELLING

PHONE SUE 01892 730393

(picture not actual chair)



LOCAL BABYSITTERS

- Lucy Anderson 730244 - Weekdays and weekends
- Rosie Ridd 730816 - During term time Friday and Saturday evenings only
- Edward Simmonds 730306 - Any time in Holidays, own transport
- Victoria Simmonds 730306 - Anytime , own transport
- Nancy Murdoch 730433 - Anytime
- Jonny Bentley - 730252
- Georgie Barham - 730247



A portal to a new world

As we follow the roadmap out of lockdown, what might be different when we return to what we will in future describe as “normal”? Many crave a new normal that looks pretty similar to the old one – but is that the right thing to aim for?

The pandemic has led to significant pain and suffering, including in our own local community. All of us know someone who has died as a result of Covid-19. While this is a universal experience, the pandemic has also widened inequalities in our world, with its effect disproportionately felt by those who can least afford it. Those of us who are more fortunate sometimes act first to protect our own well-being rather than helping others. While some aspects of the response to the global pandemic have been inspiring, it seems our world wasn't well prepared, despite the risks being known.

The same could be said for our efforts to tackle the climate crisis or, in Christian terms, to safeguard God's creation. We add large volumes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which raise the temperature on our planet. As these gases hang around for a long time, and the impacts of even small increases in temperature are significant, it's like adding more water to bath ready to overflow.

If not tackled, the climate crisis has the potential to be much worse than the pandemic. So it's not enough to reduce emissions, we have to stop them. This will mean we have to change how we live. As with the pandemic, the climate crisis reinforces existing inequalities, with some of the poorer parts of the world already seeing the effects.

It certainly feels like we have broken God's covenant to look after his world with care (Jeremiah 2:7). Jesus's words and values in the new testament turn upside down the values of the world – he says **“anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life”** (John 12:25). This passage speaks of death being needed for rebirth. Perhaps to hold too closely to one's current life is to lose what truly matters; perhaps we have to make sacrifices, and to put to death some of our old ways of living, to give others more chance of life.

These thoughts are troubling. However, as we face these uncertainties and trials, Jesus provides a shining example. While he is troubled by the challenge he has to face, and considers praying for God to save him from death, he acts out of love (John 12:27-28). Through his sacrifice, we are made whole. In the same way, we need to make sacrifices to fix our broken world, to glorify God's name and to enable others to live and thrive.

So while the pandemic has brought a lot of misery and suffering, perhaps out of that death new life can come. While we weren't well prepared, the pandemic has helped us realise that we can make significant changes in how we live. This should perhaps give us confidence that we can change the world's values, and re-build and renew our covenant with God in respect of our planet, and its inequalities and injustices.

Arundhati Roy, the Indian writer, looked at the early stages of the pandemic through the lens of the injustices she saw in India. Perhaps as she suggests, the pandemic is a portal. We can walk through it with our old ways of thinking, or we can walk through it lightly, ready to imagine another world.

We can hide from our troubles, and seek a return to the past; or we can be ready to help to address the injustices and sustainability of our world. The pandemic gives us a chance for re-birth. Perhaps the last thing we need is a return to normality.

Justin Elks
Licensed Lay Minister



School Report

Many of us cheered as the New Year rang through, bringing with it the symbol of hope for a fresh start in the form of 2021 and leaving behind memories that we did not wish to repeat from 2020. Sadly, this symbol did not last for long. The January academic return for all children in the UK began abruptly with a sudden change from the traditional classroom setting back into the 2020 style of learning through a computer, as the country fell into another lockdown in order to slow the rate of infection of covid-19.

For the next 8 weeks school communities, including St Margaret's Collier Street Primary School, remained apart. The sacrifice proved worthwhile as we saw a rapid decrease in infection rates and hospitalisation numbers, providing our NHS workers with the support they critically needed at that stage.

On Monday 8th March 2021 children were able to, for the first time that year, return to school and be back in the classroom amongst their peers and face to face with their teachers. This date just so happened to coincide with British Science Week and a time of year when we start looking at what could be planted out in the



garden. The combination of this gave inspiration to an idea to bring a new symbol of hope for the future of 2021 in the form of bright and happy sunflowers. Every child at St. Margaret's Collier Street Primary School was given a sunflower seed to plant in their first week back in school. The children then watched with scientific fascination as these seeds germinated into seedlings, pushing their way out of the soil and up to the ceiling of their classroom.

OBramley class used this symbol of hope to inspire them to produce some beautiful sunflower creations (image to the left) that show all the things that they are thankful for and make them happy.

Frustratingly the weather was not as warm as it had been the previous year and late frost meant that planting the seedlings out before the Easter holiday break was not going to be an option. The children were therefore all set the homework task of looking after and caring for their seedling. After some tense moments, trying to keep many seedlings alive, the start of May saw the weather improve and we were able to plant them out in the school grounds.

The children will continue to observe the growth of their sunflowers for a scientific interest, and use them as a symbol to keep their hopes high for a healthy future as they too grow and mature in themselves and their understanding of the world around them.

While the sunflowers are still growing the Discovery Class have also been using them to inspire some of their own creative writing.



Sunflowers

by Joshua Johnson

The dry, parched, barren land stretched endlessly before the withering plant. No saturation for miles. It seemed all was lost: no one had watered them for months, their civilisation was slowly crumbling away to nothing, so a hero would have to rise. That person would be brave strong and fearless but, sadly, Sammy Sunflower had died, due to the drought so the flower patch found Fin.

So, desperate to save his world from death, Fin pulled and pushed until at last he pulled his roots free of the cracked earth and set off, petals drooping dejectedly, as there was no wind, after a long hard trek he finally reached ... the Pipe of Destiny. His cracked lips opened in awe as he gazed upon the thing that would save his civilisation. But, horror on horror, the sunflowers' worst enemy had clogged the Pipe.... Dr Dandelion! Fin drew his root lasso and flung it over the dandelion's stalk, the Dr thrashed around, but Fin stood fast and slowly but surely his roots were losing their grip upon the Pipe. Finally, the Dr was hefted from the Pipe, letting loose a torrent of water saving sunflower kind. However, the Dr shall return!

Afterword: This may shock you, but during all that the people of Collier Street school took no notice of it so when someone tells you they know everything you, the reader, can say "no you don't." as you know they don't know about the sunflowers.

Sunflowers Hope for the Future

By Reggie Elliott-Dunn (11 years old)

The previous year has been quite a challenge for everyone. When you look back, we have come so far, and people are particularly looking forward to a brighter future.

Our recent science project at school was to grow sunflowers from seeds. The sunflower seeds were kindly donated by our wonderful school secretary, Mrs Louise Bentley. When I think about the process of growing a sunflower it has made me think about the ups and downs of the last year. The essentials for growing sunflower seeds are soil, water, pots, natural light, and bamboo sticks. The process of planting a seed is relatively straight forward. When ITV announced the existence of Covid 19, many people thought it would not affect us and would just be like the winter flu bug.

When lockdown was announced in March 2020 people became more worried than ever before. School stopped when the lockdown was announced. We needed to adapt and stay strong. We began to get home schooled, and it was very unusual at first, but it gradually got easier and easier. When I think about the patience, I needed to develop new ways of learning. I can relate this to the patience I have needed waiting for my plant to grow!

Resilience has been needed in many ways: including getting up at the same time as normal when we are not actually going to school and trying to face the challenges of the continuous new learning that comes from the home schooling, but without the usual environment of the pupils, teachers, and classroom resources to assist with this. Mental health has been a struggle for many people in many ways and they have had to keep strong. The summer helped peoples' resilience. It is the same case with the sunflower, the plant needs to be resilient enough to be planted outside, just as the warmer weather helps the plant to develop in a stronger way, the summer months helped people to stay strong last year.

The government and our leaders including the Prime minister (Boris Johnson) have had to be our guide just like the bamboo sticks are a guide for our sunflower plants to grow in the right direction! As we wait for our sunflowers to fully develop and bloom, we look forward to appreciating their true beauty and our countries people are waiting for the release from the lockdown restrictions and look forward with hope to the future.

YALDING POST OFFICE - MOST LOVED POST OFFICE IN KENT 2016 /17/18/19/20/21

OUR PRODUCTS, LOCALLY SOURCED

JUNE 2021

POST OFFICE LTD (POL) HORIZON SCANDAL...Between 2000 and 2014 POL prosecuted 736 postmasters. POL have admitted that it is to contact 540 of those to offer help to appeal against their convictions of theft or false accounting that occurred during the Horizon scandal. This is in addition to the 45 already cleared of any wrongdoing. We hope that those 540 people will be totally exonerated and paid fair compensation. It is also hoped that the Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) now considers taking legal action against those who perpetuated the scandal and who have still had no sanction against them.

Many postmasters were forced at the time to admit to "false accounting" and then pay POL the Horizon induced shortage in order to avoid a prison sentence. An explanation of "false accounting"...Each Post Office has to balance the accounts every month. If you don't balance the account the Horizon system will not let the branch trade until it does so. Some of the sums "missing" were so vast that it was impossible for many branches to resolve the problem...POL then advised those branches to falsely make good the shortage while investigations were made. Investigations were often made by an enforcement team arriving and informing the poor victim that Horizon is never wrong and why did that person steal the money. At court the poor victim had to admit "false accounting". Despite POL telling them to do exactly that previously. And repay POL all the "missing" money. This bankrupted many people and their families.

POSSIBLE CLOSURE THREAT FOR YALDING RETURNS...Nick Read, the new POL CEO, has said that he is hoping to lead a new and open relationship with the Postmasters...he has a funny way of putting this new beginning into practice. Under his leadership he has proposed that there will be a new way of calculating our mails remuneration from October. Like the bad old days of the past most branches will be paid less for exactly the same work. It is so sad to report that if the projection for the future mails remuneration for us at Yalding proves correct this office will have to close. With the loss of income from the Royal Mail sorting office going to Snodland and this sharp proposed cut in wages it will not be economically viable to operate the Post Office after Christmas this year.

Please also remember that since Brexit all parcels to EU destinations now require a customs label. All customs labels have to be filled in with block capitals and be clear and legible and must include the senders' name and address. If not the package will not leave the country and will be returned to the sender.

For those customers with Post Office Card Accounts. (POCA) We await news from POL and Gov't about how they will cater for those who cannot transfer benefits to a standard bank account. POCA is due to cease operating in November.

The Coronavirus emergency. Please wear a mask in the shop. Only one customer in the shop at any one time (more than one allowed if residing together) Please also keep a safe distance apart whilst waiting to enter.

New stamps sets this month are the **Dennis and Gnasher and Wild Coasts** collections. Other Philately products in stock or can be ordered on request.

Foreign Currencies. We still have a stock of Euros and US Dollars...Hopefully people will have resumed foreign travel from May 17th. POL have informed us that credit on Travel Money Cards can be encashed at all branches in UK currency.

Your Post Office offers free cash withdrawals with most debit cards, pay bills, top up gas and electricity cards and keys, pay in cheques and cash to most banks using your debit card. We do Health Lottery, phone Top-Ups, Fishing licences and Moneygram. And, of course...we sell stamps and send parcels and letters all over the world.

Croissants and other pastries have been suspended while the baker moves home and gets his new kitchen up to speed. Coxheath bakery items will continue as normal. (new product Sourdough bread...pre-order only) cold drinks, unique greetings cards by local artists, Yalding honey, Joan's jams, Bit Spicy curry mixes, hand-made fabric items, stationery, Yalding mugs, fresh eggs from local chickens, Loddington Farm fruit juices, Oakapple Farm fresh produce.....All in stock now.

The Post Office Gift Card is an ideal gift for that person hard to buy for....These can be used at pretty much every major retailer in the UK and online. See us for details.

Our opening hours are 9.00am to 1.00pm. 2.00pm to 5.30pm. Closed on Sundays.

Early closing on Wednesdays and Saturdays (12.30pm Saturdays).

Many thanks for your wonderful support for Kent's Most Loved Post Office.... Telephone...01622 814327

Look us up on our Facebook page and website. www.yaldingpostoffice.weebly.co.uk

A LITTLE LIGHT HUMOUR

When you try to wear
your old jeans



I would like to thank my Arms,
for always being by side. My legs,
for always supporting me, and my
fingers...Because I can always
count on them.



🐝 I AM A HUNGRY BEE 🐝

I am a hungry bee and I love dandelions. If I find dandelions for breakfast I go back to my hive and tell all my friends. I do the waggle dance in front of all my friends. This is our satnav directions to the dandelions and my friends will all head off to get their lunch and dinner until the food on the dandelions is in our tummy and we're back in our hive for the night.

Sometimes people spray dandelions and flowering weeds with weed killer. We don't know this until that night when we have a bad tummy. In the morning me and all my friends will be dead.

Please if you have to use weed killers on flowering plants please cut the flower off first and throw it away.

Otherwise no honey for your tummy!

Your friend, the Honey Bee.



THE DANDELION

When you see me, remember that I'm the ONLY one who wants and can grow in that particular spot, because:

- 🐝 The soil is too compact / hard / stomped and I want to loosen it for you with my roots.
- 🐝 Or there is too little calcium in the soil - don't worry, I will replenish that for you with the dying of my leaves.
- 🐝 Or the soil is too acidic. But I will also improve that for you if you give me the chance.
- 🐝 Or a mixture of the above reasons, of course.

I'm here because your soil needs my help so best you let me grow without disturbing me. When everything is fixed, I will disappear again, I promise!

- 🐝 Are you trying to remove me prematurely with my root? However meticulous you are, I will return 2x as strong! Just until your soil is improved.
- 🐝 You can even tell by my growth at which stage my help is at. If my leaves are flat on the ground, I'm far from ready, but if they all reach up then I'm already a long way on my way.
- 🐝 I am 1 of the first bloomers in spring so I will announce spring / summer for you.
- 🐝 My flowers are the first food for insects after hibernation and unlike most other plants, I have pollen AND nectar, not merely one OR the other! And I am generous with them!

- 🐝 During the day when it's hot, I open my flowers but, in the evening when it cools off, I close them again quickly. In fact, if it's not hot enough during the day, I won't open them at all.
- 🐝 My flowers are even delicious for you people by the way, did you know? I used to be called "honey (or gold) of the poor" because my flowers are so sweet e.g. in jam, sauce or salad! The internet is full of recipes - check them out.
- 🐝 But wait until the end of May or later before you start picking and even then, don't pick everything yet! The biodiversity and bees will be very grateful!
- 🐝 And lastly: do you see me standing but instead of yellow petals I have a dandelion clock of fluff? Then make a wish..... and blow hard..... I'll try to make your wish come true!

Your friend, the Dandelion

HONEY-BEE SWARM COLLECTION

This is a Honey-bee swarm. They have no intention of anything but finding a new home. Don't panic. The queen will be in the centre of this cluster and they will have scout bees searching for the most suitable new home. They choose by a type of voting system. If a scout finds a desirable new home, it will come back to the swarm and do the waggle dance to give directions. If it's a hit, more and more bees will waggle directions to the location, till eventually there are enough bees in agreement to make the move...

Meanwhile time is running out as they will be using up their stores.

If you see a swarm and it needs a new home, please get in touch. Most beekeepers will collect for free or maybe a cup of tea!

They will coax them into a hive and once dusk falls and the bees settle in for the night the bees can be taken to a new safe home.

Please contact 07976 277189 to arrange collection by a local beekeeper.





Report from Chair of Governors

It's been just over a year since schools first closed. At the time we had no idea that we'd have to keep closing or limiting schooling for the next year, or just how much things would have to change. As Paul, our headteacher, noted in his most recent update to parents: "The school has never been closed like it has since March 2020. The school retains all the log books from 1876 and it was business as usual through two World Wars."

We've missed having our children at school. We've missed having a lively school at the centre of our village. We've missed being able to do so many normal but vital things like the Pet Show, along with so many things that make a child's primary years special and memorable, like sports day and the end of year play.

However, through all of this we governors are more proud of our school than ever. The last year has served to highlight what a wonderful staff the school has and how so many of them have gone the extra mile to help our children learn in extraordinary circumstances; how many have tried to make everything as normal as possible; how many of them have shown considerable commitment to our children despite difficult and sometimes upsetting personal circumstances.

And our school has gone from strength to strength. Attendance has been exemplary and this year St. Margaret's new Year R was over-subscribed with families picking us as their first choice school. In our most recent parent survey, 100% said their child "enjoys being at St. Margaret's", was "supported to develop as an individual and a well-rounded person" and was "encouraged by staff to achieve their best".

As I write this all the children have been back at school properly for a couple of months. After-school clubs are about to restart and there are plans for sports day and the summer play. It's sunny outside and the future looks bright for our outstanding village school.

Gareth Waterman,
Chair of Governors.

Addendum from School

Incredibly sad to report 18 family bereavements as a result of the Covid. One teacher has long covid. The school has received funding for catch-up. Breakfast and after school activities have restarted. The school is to take part in the Captain Tom initiative. There will be no Pet Show this year. Yr. 6 sports and trips away are scheduled. There will be a year-end Church Service. The school is to be congratulated on achieving outstanding results. Disappointingly the 106 monies have not been received owing to a change in the way that the funding for developments are allocated. The school now has funding for a school patrol person. Applicants would be most welcome. We now have a new flag raiser for four events in the calendar in Cllr Goff.



Woodpeckers- 'so many tree roots!'

We had a great turn out of 16 helpers for the Woodpeckers on May 1st when we were pleased to welcome three new recruits; thanks to Cynthia, Jane and Nick for coming along and lending a hand. Fortunately the sun shone and we warmed up quickly as we laboured away at our different tasks. David Goff whizzed round on the mower while Rob and a few others pruned back the tree canopy to give room for the tractor mower to run underneath. Cynthia and Margaret were sorting out the areas where general stones and debris were making the beds and paths look untidy at the front of the church. Cynthia's daughter Jane helped to weed among the bulbs and spring flowers that border the path up to the church doorway. Jacki busied herself round a tree where the ivy was taking over the tree and the wall and Ray was strimming.



We have removed numerous rotten tree stumps over the years but they also leave large areas of tree roots that emerge through the soil and catch the mower blades. One wide patch of tree root needed clearing near the south wall of the church and this task was taken on by Dave.

He can be seen in the picture wielding a pick axe as he cuts through a large tree root and clears the site with the help of our newest recruit, Nick.

We complied with Covid 19 requirements and took our own tools and drinks. The coffee and ginger cakes were supplied by Margaret and Liz and were enjoyed by all while keeping a safe distance in the open air.

If you enjoy a couple of hours of fresh air and some very basic gardening please come along. We meet on the first Saturday of each month between 10am and 12 mid-day. You don't need to come every Saturday, every little helps.



Jacqui Bakes

Bakewell Tart

An old family favourite of ours, I don't usually make my own pastry but with the added ground almonds & sugar it's definitely worth it. The ladies at work gave it their approval, it was just what was needed on a very wet and muddy day in forest school.

Ingredients

For the pastry

425g plain flour
1/2 tsp salt
250g butter
100g sugar
50g ground almonds
1 medium egg, beaten
2 medium egg yolks

For the filling

175g caster sugar
4 medium eggs, lightly beaten
1 tsp almond extract
400g ground almonds
Raspberry jam

For the topping

350g icing sugar
15 glacés cherries
Flake almonds

Method

Place flour, salt, sugar, butter & almonds into a food processor, pulse to form breadcrumbs. Add egg & egg yolks, pulse until a smooth dough is formed, wrap in cling film & chill for 30 mins.

Preheat oven 180, grease & flour a loose bottomed tart tin.

Unwrap chilled pastry, roll out working quickly so as not to handle too much.

Line bottom of tin with pastry, prick with a fork & blind bake for 15 mins.

Remove from oven, remove baking beans & paper, return to oven for 5 mins to dry out a little more. Reduce oven temp to 160.

Once pastry is cool, cover the base with jam.

Mix remaining cake ingredients, spread over jam & bake for 25 mins.

Remove from oven & cool.

Once cooled, mix the icing sugar with water gradually to form a thick consistency.

Pour over tart, allow to set & decorate with glacé cherries & ground almonds



Collier Street Ramblings *'an amazing survival'*



As you can see in the picture we have a tree with a hollow trunk in our rear garden, every year it amazes us as it survives the winds and the soggy ground to remain standing for another season. It's a silver birch tree and we know it must be at least 30 years old. Once a really healthy specimen it started to rot away from the base upwards, then the top half of the tree broke off after a particularly windy day a few years ago. We had planned to remove the remains but were astonished to see it growing new branches and leaves. It went on to have a new full canopy and has continued to grow ever since.

So how does a hollow tree like this continue to flourish? If the only wood that is affected is the heartwood a hollow tree has a good chance of surviving. This is because the tree only needs the bark and the first few layers beneath the bark to live. These outer layers will often be protected by their own barriers from the rot that creates hollows and holes inside the trees. As long as your tree looks healthy, it is unlikely that the hole in the tree will harm it. So the silver birch continues to survive even though our puppy has tried her best to eat as much of the crumbling tree as possible! However, when you find holes and hollows, you need to make sure that you do not damage the outer layers of the tree in the areas of the holes. This can cause damage to the natural barrier and allow the rot to get into the essential outer layers of the trunk, killing the tree.

Although it may look alarming the tree is not dangerous, but we do keep an eye on it to make sure the rest of the tree is structurally sound and we no longer use it to be the support for a garden hammock.... Just in case. If you had a tree in a similar state and you were worried you could get a professional arborist to check it over just in case.

Sometimes I have seen hollowed trees that have been filled with all sorts of materials including cement but studies have shown that filling in a hollow tree often does not improve its stability. In fact it causes problems for several reasons. The material that you fill the hole with will not react to the weather in the same way as the tree wood, the material will expand and contract at a different rate, which will either cause more damage to the tree or can create gaps where water (which leads to more rot) and disease can get trapped. Also, if you tried to remove the tree at a later date it could cause problems, imagine using a chainsaw that then hits concrete! Apparently the recommended method for patching a tree hole is to use a thin metal flap or screening covered with plaster over the tree hole. This will prevent animals and water from entering the hole and create a surface that the bark and outer living layers can eventually grow back over. Before patching a tree remove any water from the hole and any soft rotted wood. I think we will leave ours as it is, insects and birds seem to enjoy packing away at it and the pup has passed her tree eating stage! They provide food and habitat for more than 300 insect species, woodpeckers and other hole-nesting birds often nest in the trunk, while the seeds are eaten by siskins, greenfinches and redpolls.

It is monoecious, meaning both male and female flowers (catkins) are found on the same tree from April to May. Male catkins are long and yellow-brown in colour, and hang in groups of two to four at the tips of shoots, like lambs' tails. Female catkins are smaller, short, bright green and erect. After successful pollination (by wind), female catkins thicken and change colour to a dark crimson. Masses of tiny seeds are borne in autumn and dispersed by the wind

A silver birch, with its striking silver-white bark, has long been known as a symbol of purity and fertility. In early Celtic mythology, the birch symbolised renewal and purification. Bundles of birch twigs were used to drive out the spirits of the old year, and gardeners still use the birch besom, or broom, to 'purify' their gardens. In Scottish Highland folklore, a barren cow herded with a birch stick would become fertile, and a pregnant cow would bear a healthy calf. Birch wood is tough and heavy, making it suitable for furniture production, handles and toys, the bark was used for tanning leather.

Hopefully our silver birch will remain for a few more years as it is a pretty tree and it provides great dappled shade in the summer.



R.I.P. WHITE HART PUB

As an established landmark in our community, the White Hart pub has died aged 168. Born as a free house in 1853 it served the local farming community for many years for which the locals will always hold many fond memories.

During its life the pub had many long-term owners who became friends and part of the community. As a free house the pub enjoyed much success under those owners who we have found through research include:

- George Hemsley 1861-1872
 - William Hemsley 1872- 1885
 - James Bowles 1885- 1887
 - Silas Hills 1887- 1891
 - George G William 1891- 1906
 - John George Russell 1906- 1925
 - Samuel Watts 1925- 1926
 - Ethilind Pauline Watts 1926- 1926
 - Thomas Stephen & Edith Brown 1926- 1941
 - Edward John Everett 1941-1957
 - John Andrew William Stephen 1957- 1961
 - Mrs Shrimpton 1961- 1967
 - John Draper 1967-1976
 - Eileen Taylor 1976-1977
 - Jim & Laurie Lock, Angela & Colin Springate 1977-80
 - Angela & Colin Springate 1980-98
 - Shaun & Moira Mayatt 1998-2003
- Sue & Russell Roberts 2003-2006

After a period of success as a free house the White Hart was purchased by Shepherd Neame. During this period the pub fell into ill health due to the lack of investment and apprehensive tenancy agreements that crippled tenants. The community would like to thank the people below who tried to make a success of the pub under Shepherd Neame. People that are still friends of the community.

Carl & Sarah

Rob & Nicola McCann scouse

Keith McCann & Rosy

??? & Mel

Graham & Sue Dove (Interim Management)

Gary & Sarah Barrett Oct 2010 to 14 Nov 2011

Anne & Robert (Hailey & Damen Baby Annie) Abbey, Wee Robert 15/11/2011 to 9/12/12

Graham & Sue Dove (interim Manager) 10/12/12 to 9/6/13

Natasha & Lisa 11/6/13 to 11/5/14

Fraser Williamson & Ellie 23/5/14 to 8/11/15

Frazer, the last tenant of the White Hart was forced into bankruptcy by the Shepherd Neame tenancy contract. Being tied to a brewery that sold him their own beer at an inflated price while competitors can buy it cheaper privately and a high rental cost to the property was not sustainable. The final straw came when the oil boiler broke down. Shepherd Neame told Frazer as a tenant he was responsible to replace the boiler, stating “you own the boiler we own the pipes”. He explained his financial position to Shepherd Neame in hope of some help from the brewery but they were not willing to help in any way. Frazer took some time away to consider his options. He could see an upturn in business now that his hard work had paid off but the tenancy agreement was crippling him. He took the decision to hand the keys back and fold the business. At this point Shepherd Neame started to offer a reduced rent and to replace the boiler but Frazer was mentally finished by this point and handed the keys back. Frazer and Ellie lived in the village until last year and still remain in contact with everyone. Post covid they will be at social events in the village again.

After Frazer gave the keys back, Shepherd Neame put a manager in place but the opening hours were sporadic and inconsistent. Also, the kitchen was shut so people who wanted a meal after work or for family gatherings were disappointed and forced to go elsewhere. Shepherd Neame soon closed the White Hart and put it up for sale in 2016 and after a short time it was purchased by L&G Holdings. Some building works were carried out and enquiring members of the community were told it would be opening again in the near future. However, it soon became apparent this was not going to happen.

On 18 August 2017 the White Hart was listed as Asset of Community Value nominated by Parish Council. The community worked together to try and procure the White Hart following the system setup by Government. This was all looking hopeful until 18th February 2021 when Maidstone Borough Council committed the White Hart to death by permitting its demolition to allow houses to be built on the site. L&G Holdings have now laid the White Hart to rest and the community have lost their last focal point for good.

In time the community hope to have a focal point for us to gather at again. Work on this has already started and news of this will be coming later in the year.

Good bye White Hart and thankyou for the memories, CHEERS.



NOTES

Annual General Meeting/Annual Parish Meeting

of the **COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL** Monday 17th May 2021.

Apologies: PCSO Nicola Morris; County Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Read; Barbara Grandi; Cllr Steve Sandys

In attendance	Cllr Deborah Papas	Revd. Paul Kish
Cllr David Goff [Chair]	Cllr Dave Sealey	Gareth Waterman Chair of School Governors [from 7.30pm]
Cllr Andrew Papas [Vice Chair]	Borough Councillor Claudine Russell	3 members of the public
Cllr Steve Barham	Sean Randell – Lorry/Speed Watch	Parish Clerk – Alan Crocker
Cllr Jack Highwood	Sarah Perks – Lorry/Speedwatch	

ELECTION OF OFFICERS					
POSITION	NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SECONDER	ELECTED	
Lead Cllr	Cllr David Goff	Cllr Andrew Papas	Cllr Dave Sealey	Unanimously	
Chairman					
Vice Chair	Cllr Andrew Papas	Cllr Dave Sealey	Cllr Steve Barham	Unanimously	
Chair	Cllr Dave Sealey	Cllr Andrew Papas	Cllr Steve Barham	Unanimously	
F&DCC					
F@DC	All Cllrs				
Committee	Serve on this Committee				
KALC Parish Representatives (2)	1.Steve Sandys	X	X	X	
	2.Dave Sealey	X	X	X	
	Reserve	X	X	X	
	Cllr Jack Highwood				
Community Safety Rep	Cllr Deborah Papas	X	X	X	
Recreation Field Rep	Cllr David Goff	X	X	X	
Village Hall Committee Rep	Cllr Andrew Papas	X	X	X	
	Cllr Deborah Papas				
Highways	Cllr Andrew Papas	X	X	X	
	Cllr Deborah Papas				
Police & Police Forum Rep	Cllr Andrew Papas	X	X	X	
Flood Committee Rep	Cllr David Goff	X	X	X	
What's App Group	Cllr Deborah Papas	X	X	X	
Finance	Cllr Steve Barham	X	X	X	
Litter Pick	Cllr Andrew Papas				

END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

STEP 1		The accounting statement [Section 2] had been prepared and signed by RFO
STEP 2		AT FULL COUNCIL MEETING
STEP	2.1	The Annual Internal Audit Report is received and noted
		Members had already received the internal audit report and accepted the findings. They were informed of the recommendation R1 Review of Expenditure and R2 Fixed Asset Register. These have
	2.2	The Annual Governance Statement [Section 1] is approved
		The Clerk/Finance Officer confirmed with the meeting that the authority had complied fully with the factors 1-8 by reading them out and obtaining assurances that members confirmed compliance with
	2.3	The Accounting Statements [Section 2] are approved
		The members agreed unanimously with the Accounting Statement
STEP	3	The Chairman and Clerk of the meeting sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Chairman signs the accounting statements
		The Chairman and Clerk of the meeting signed the Annual Governance Statement, and the Chairman signed the accounting statements
STEP	4	The RFO sets the commencement date for the exercise of public rights
		The meeting agreed to the display the Notice of Public Rights to commence on Monday 14 th June 2021 until Friday 23 rd July 2021.
STEP	5	The authority sends to the external auditor. The Annual Internal Audit Report The Annual Governance Statement The Accounting Statement An analysis of any significant variances year on year variance A bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 Details of arrangements for the exercises of public rights: and Any other information that the auditor has specifically requested.

APPROVAL OF FINANCE REPORTS FOR APRIL 2021

Bank Reconciliation Report

The member formally accepted the bank reconciliation.

Upcoming Payments and Retrospective Payments

The meeting formally approved the upcoming and retrospective payments for April listed with the agenda.

Receipts for the Month

The meeting approved the receipts for the month of May 2021

Budget Reports to April 2021

The meeting formally approved the budgets to date. The CIL monies have been allocated to Earmarked Reserves. Cllr Dave Sealey raised issue with the way they are recorded within the software. The Clerk will take the matter up with the Software Company concerned.

ORGANISATION REPORTS

Borough Councillor

The chairman extended a warm welcome to Cllr Claudine Russell, the newly elected Borough Councillor. Once the division of parishes have been agreed, now that Cllr David Burton has been elected to lead the Council. Claudine looks forward to working with and on our behalf and can be contacted at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk We will make arrangements to meet with her and update her on the current issues in the parish

Chairman's Report

Cllr David Goff

Cllr Goff welcomed all to the meeting. It has been an interesting year in lockdown. We have continued to hold meetings using the Zoom platform. Attendance has been good by both Councillors and members of the public. Delighted to have Jack Highwood on board and because of the interviews were able to recruit residents to assist with various other ongoing projects. Our thanks to Steve McLoughlin for his assistance to the parish over many years at Borough level. The Chairman wishes to record his thanks to Cllr Eric Hotson, who stood as an Independent candidate but was beaten at the election by the Conservative candidate Lottie Parfitt-Read. He has worked with us as our County Councillor and helped the PC in many ways and we wish him well for the future. We look forward to working with their replacements, with ultimate objective of working for on behalf of the parish residents. As consultees we have dealt with more than the usual number of planning applications and some interesting ones at that. We have also been actively engaged with the Enforcement Team at Maidstone Borough Council.

We thank Sean Randell and his team for their excellent work. The Lorry Watch initiative is now running again following the restrictions of Covid, with the ever-increasing numbers of vehicles contravening the legislation, we thank Sarah for her excellent efforts in liaising with KCC and them with the police. We have constant dialogue with KCC Highways and liaise with them on the Highways Improvement Plan. There is work to do going forward.

We have formed three new groups as a result of the CIL monies received from local developments:

Highways

Recreation

Village Hall

Thanks to all those who have contributed. More work is needed before we are able to prepare the CIL Plan which we will consult and share with residents.

We have with the aid of the 'Strategically Important Play' area grants from MBC been able to replace and provide additional equipment. It is good to see the area is well used. We are delighted to have Marden Minors as regular users of the recreation field although Covid has restricted usage they hopefully will resume in the near future.

Property protection measures have not been completed in the parish and any recent issues have been dealt with by the company who installed them.

There is a new group been formed in Kent to try and works with the KCC on outstanding flood related issues. I have agreed to Chair this initiative. The group brings together CSFAG, Ightam, Turnbridge Wells, Headcorn, East Peckham, and Hildenborough FAG.

We have had six flood alerts in the past 24 month or so, leading to issues in the parish. We had water in two properties not related to river issues. Riparian ownership is a major issue which is being addressed by the revamped CSFAG (Collier Street Flood Action Group) led by Clive Richardson. Ground and surface water issues continue to become more of a problem going forward. Climate change and weather problems mean more extreme weather. The PC gave evidence to the Leigh Barrier Enquiry.

The PC continues to work with the EA to find solutions and improve the flood warning services on The Beult and Lesser Teise. Also, worth noting with MBC, KCC and KCC Highways road closures are also a continued topic of conversation. I am still on the Medway Flood Partnership Strategy Group which is still very active. I am also a trustee of the National Flood Forum and Vice Chair of the IDB. All these posts, support the PC, and the work that needs to be addressed at a national level to find a workable solution.

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The PC met with Matthew Scott the PCC for Kent, KCC Highways on several occasions, attended training, and a couple traffic seminars.

It has been an interesting and challenging year in many ways, and it never ceases to amaze me that although we have no actual village centre, so much goes on in the village that needs the attention of the PC. We are trying to make a difference but at times we are held up by the system. As we hopefully emerge from lockdown we are able to make more of a difference in and around the parish.

Our thanks to PCSO Nicola Morris for the sterling work she does in the parish in her endeavours to keep us safe and well informed.

Finally, I would like to pay a heartfelt thank you to our Clerk Alan, who works tirelessly behind the scenes keeping us all on the straight and narrow. Dealing with finance, auditors, KCC, MBC and numerous other organisation's on our behalf. Thank you, Alan.

Kent County Councillor

Maidstone Rural South

Cllr. Lottie Parfitt-Reid

Lottie was unable to attend our meeting this evening. We have therefore arranged a Zoom meeting with her in order to catch up with the current issues in the parish.

FOCSS

No reply or report received

Helpings Hands

Margaret Ashworth

Reports not a lot of action during the past year due to Covid. She continues to support people as and when needed. Hopefully post the current restrictions the monthly meeting and events can start again in July.

Magazine

The Editors

COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 17TH MAY 2021 – REPORT FROM THE COLLIER STREET NEWS

Jacki Fogg and Emma Howard continue to edit the magazine and Tracey Bentley remains as Treasurer. A small team of distributors ensure that every property in the village receives a copy, we greatly appreciate their help.

Ten editions per annum are currently produced and delivered to 333 properties in the village and immediate outskirts, this will increase over the next few months as the new properties at Willow Grove become occupied.

The team have been concerned recently because income from advertisements is not enough to cover the cost of printing. Meetings have been held with David Goff, Chairman of the Parish Council and it was agreed to undertake a survey of residents to get their thoughts on the future of the magazine. An advertisement was subsequently put into the magazine from which a number of residents made voluntary contributions towards printing costs. We are very grateful to everyone who made a contribution, it is good to know that the magazine is considered a useful source of information.

Unfortunately, even with the voluntary contributions there would still have been a shortfall in funds. However, a new resident to the village, Darryl Chappell, came forward as a sponsor in March 2021. He will now take on the printing of the magazine at a greatly reduced rate. This will ensure that the future of the magazine is secure. We are very grateful to Darryl and his company, Managed Technology.

Jacki, Emma and Tracey

Neighbourhood Watch

Barbara Grandi

There are over a hundred residents on the list of people emailed with NHW bulletins. Fortunately, we have very low crime rates in the Parish. Most recently we have been sharing information and advice about attempted dog thefts, sadly two litters of puppies were stolen from two different properties in a Yalding parish.

The NHW list was especially useful when we needed to share information about help available during the Covid 19 lockdowns and more recently with providing information about Vaccination centres. I know from responses I received that it was much appreciated at the time.

In combination with the WhatsApp Residents' Group and the PC website we manage to keep residents well informed.

Police

PCSO Nicola Morris

No report

Speedwatch/

Lorrywatch

Sean Randell

Sean reported the following statistics to the meeting.

Town/Parish Council Report for Collier Street Speedwatch Group.

Reporting between 29/03/21 and 12/05/21

Current Volunteers = 14

Summary for this Period

Number of Sessions this period = 53

Total Vehicles exceeding limit = 980

DVLA Valid vehicles = 874

Accuracy = 89%

Maximum Speed recorded in 30 limit = 68 mph(+126%)

Police Actions this Period

170 letters have been sent out. After the 4th letter – the police will visit.

Overall

My group started Recording* on = 17/06/20

Number of Sessions since start date = 157

Vehicles recorded exceeding limit since start date = 3343

Maximum Speed recorded in 30 limit = 68 mph(+126%)

Sean has lobbied for police action on enforcement. The PC has met with Mathew Scott and although he is not responsible for operational policing, we were promised contact details from the Police. After chasing we eventually received a call from the Rural Task Force. They have initially promised 4 visits per month on enforcement.

The Chairman thanked Sean and his team for their excellent work and hoped that the police will follow through with their promised enforcement action.

Sarah Perks

Co-ordinates Speedwatch. The chair thanked her for her efforts. Sarah is somewhat disillusioned with the lack of enforcement and the follow up from KCC Freight reporting mechanism. We are hoping to encompass this initiative with Speedwatch in liaison with the Rural Task Force.

St Margaret's Church

Revd. Paul Kish

We have remained open throughout the pandemic, apart from the enforced closures (from April 2020 – June 2020 and November 2020) adhering to the lockdown restrictions and keeping our congregation safe. They have been very supportive, and numbers have been strong.

When regulations have permitted, we have been able to have the choir sing in church which is very much appreciated and enjoyed.

At Christmas and at Easter we were also able to hold brief services in the churchyard where everyone was able to sing, suitably distanced, and to maintain our Christian witness in the community.

The Woodpeckers churchyard working party has been down to one or two individuals to keep grass cut during the times when we have not been able to meet, but we are now back meeting on the first Saturdays of the month at 10am to keep the churchyards in good order and recently been pleased to welcome two new members. We hope before too long to be able to add a new piece of land to the churchyard so that we shall be able to continue to offer burial space to the village.

The Benefice food bank has also been grateful to receive both practical and financial donations and has been a strong support to those who have called upon its services in our villages, though with demand now decreasing it is likely that we shall bring it to a close in the Summer.

Thanks to a generous donation from a villager, we have also been able to install an automatic winding system in the clock tower which should enable the clock to tell us all the right time without needing a weekly winding and adjustment.

We look forward to further lifting of restrictions so as to be able to offer a full range of services, worship, music, and pastoral visiting, and play a full part in village life once again.

Fr. Paul Kish, vicar.

Woodpeckers

DG & Stephane McKay

Covered by the Revd. Paul Kish

Yalding Almshouses

All 6 houses are happily occupied at the moment, the last change of resident occurred in 2019.

There has been a recent change of roles within the Trustees as Donald Troup, our long serving Treasurer, decided to retire and our Clerk Sue Gerrish asked to switch roles and become the Treasurer. We were lucky to find a new Clerk before Donald retired which meant both the new Clerk and new Treasurer could 'shadow' their predecessors for a few months and this has led to a very smooth transition. Our new Clerk is DeAnn Parsons who lives in Yalding.

Michael Stewart, another long standing Trustee, has decided to retire but will stay in the role until a replacement is found. We currently have vacancy advertisements for a new Trustee and for a Handyman willing to do small odd jobs as needed.

The Almshouses were built in 1847 so maintenance is the prime topic of communication for Trustees during the year and at the meetings. We have recently had a fire inspection and have followed through some minor recommendations. During the past winter there were some issues with problematic hot water supplies and erratic heating linked to boiler problems. It was dealt with promptly at the time but we have arranged a full review so that a more efficient and reliable system can be installed this year.

We have a reliable and friendly gardener who has maintained the gardens all through the lockdowns and we are pleased with the general appearance of the homes and gardens.

Barbara Grandi

Chairman: Yalding Almshouses

Yalding Education Foundation

Cllr David Goff

This foundation supports three local schools. Collier Street, Laddingford, and Yalding in two ways. A Spoken English Competition which was cancelled in 2020 (a donation was made to each school towards educational materials). The competition will take place physically in 2021. Grants are advertised every Autumn for pupils who have attended the three schools who request monies to help with their studies. Awards were made for 2020-2021. 25 awards a totaling £6,300.

05.19.07 Date of Next Full Meeting

Next Full Council Meeting 14th June 2021 commencing at 7.30pm Venue TBC

Notes prepared by **Alan Crocker** Clerk to Collier Street Parish Council

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

CHURCH

Reverend Paul Kish 01622 814182

Church Warden

Rachel West 01622 872278

Sec to P.C.C.

Vicky George 01892 730239

R.C Priest

Father Victor McLean 01580 211267

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Jenny Scott jscott@callflow.uk 01892 459041

PARISH MAGAZINE

Editor

Jacki Fogg 01892 730869

Emma Howard 01892 730245

Tracey Bentley (Advertising) 01892 730252

Email: editorparishmag@mail.com

VILLAGE HALL

Chairman

TBC

HELPING HANDS

Margaret Ashworth 01892 730323

(Age concern representative)

SCHOOL

Headteacher Paul Ryan 01892 730264

Chairman of Governors

Gareth Waterman TBC

Friends of Collier Street School

Chair Person: Harriet Breslin

email info@focss.org.uk

WOMANS INSTITUTE

Yalding President: Doreen Stanford 01622 813384

Doctors Yalding Surgery

Dr Scott 01622 814380

Marden Medical Centre

Drs Streeter, Potter, Morgan, Estall, DeCourcy

Hallinan & Wilford 01622 831257

POLICE

PCSO Nicola Morris 07870163411

Non Emergency 101

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Barbara Grandi 01892 730376

Paddock Wood Citizens Advice Bureau

08701 264856

COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council

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Deborah Papas 01892 730830

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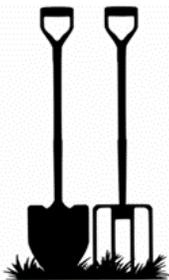
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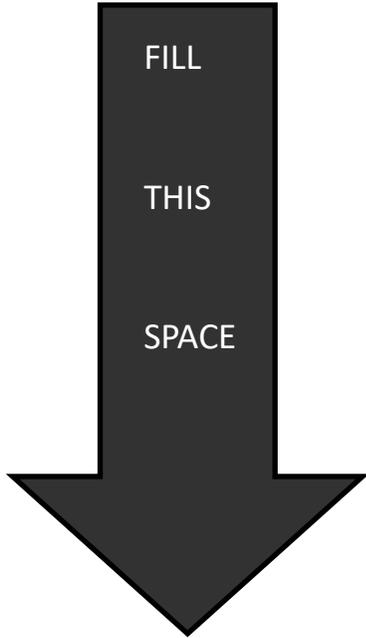
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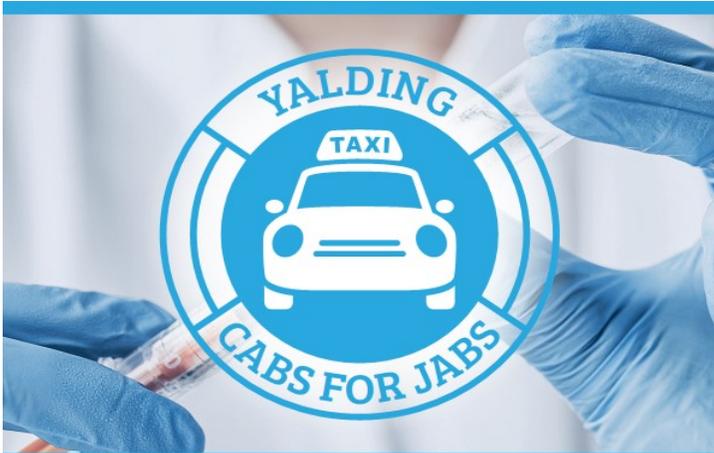
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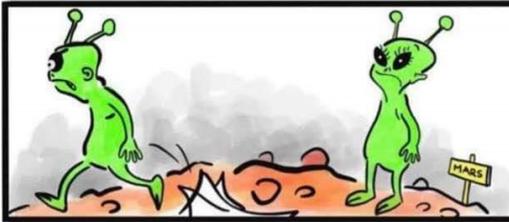
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