Parish Council
For those interested in all the activities of OPC, the minutes of meetings are available in the library, and all minutes, agendas and newsletters can be obtained via the web (also available in the library). Copies of the Helplines Directory can be printed off for residents if required. They can all be read via http://www.otford.info/parishcouncil. The next meetings will be on 10th December and 14th January 2013 at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall. Contact details of Councillors can be found on the website and at the back of this newsletter. Under the Localism Act 2011 Otford Parish Council has adopted a new Members Code of Conduct. This is also available on the website or at the Council office.

Chairman’s Report
December is upon us and winter is here. The leaves have turned golden and have dropped on lawns, gardens and pavements. Take care, wet leaves are slippery. Whilst on the subject of trees, you cannot have failed to notice that last years pruned willow tree on the pond sprouted new growth with a vengeance this year – maybe it was the excess of rain! The reason for the pruning was to remove some of the strain and weight from the base of the main trunk which is both rotten and cracked and if action had not been taken, the whole tree could have fallen with drastic consequences. A new sapling adjacent to the old tree has been planted and when that is established the old tree will be removed as it becomes necessary.

I would like to thank all the public and councillors who turned up for Bob the Builders day at Hale Lane recreation ground to mark the beginning of the construction of the children’s play area. A special thanks must go to Cllrs Charmian Marsh and Richard Knight for all the work they have done in obtaining the necessary funding and grants along with their general organisation for this project. Although the playground is nearly finished it has not been fully completed and the “furniture” will not be fitted until the playground is open to the public probably sometime in March, which will give time for the land to settle and the grass to bed down.
Hopefully we will soon have the Christmas tree lights working. Thanks to Paul Chandler for supplying the lights and to Mrs Newman for supplying the electricity to run them. Also look out for the duckhouse!

The Remembrance Day service on Sunday was extremely well attended with the church filled to capacity and overflowing into the entrance foyer. On a chilly but sunny morning and despite the police no longer being able to provide support for road closures, our band of volunteers ensured that we were able to hold the procession round the pond, followed by a quiet and traffic-free ceremony for reflection, remembrance and laying of wreaths at the memorial. I would like to congratulate all the children who took part in the service for their exemplary behaviour and thank the road stewards for their invaluable contribution.

The car park continues to be a contentious issue, but as I keep on saying, we will not be able to fully satisfy all of the stakeholder's requirements whatever system we employ. At the moment we have settled on a pay and display system that will be run for the parish by a qualified operator. There will not be vast profits made, but we must cover the operating costs and any excess will be available for the parish. On no account must the Parish office staff be exposed to any complaints or disputes and abusive members of the public will not be tolerated. These conditions can only be guaranteed by a licensed independent operator. What we have not settled on is the parking costs. Following two open surgeries (thanks to those who attended) it has been suggested that a working group representing stakeholder interests be organised to try to resolve the issues of concern with the Council. However, at the end of the day to do nothing is an option we hope to avoid, especially as the school will be expanding next September and as a result more parents will be “dropping off” their children and long-term staff parking will increase. It is expected that the Pay & Display will be held in abeyance until the working group has reported back to the Parish Council. If, however, the demands of the various interested parties prove irreconcilable with the Pay and Display scheme then we will have no option but to cease our attempts to improve parking in the village car park and inevitably, the present chaotic situation will not only persist but deteriorate further. I would like to assure everyone that all councillors work tirelessly in the interests of the village working many hours on your behalf and receiving no pay. The problem of the car park is an extremely complex one to deal with and we are doing our best in difficult circumstances. We will inform you of developments through this newsletter but not the minutiae of discussions. It could be that another open meeting is convened, but the representations from a working group are likely to provide a more effective and efficient way forward in terms of a village wide consensus of opinion.

**Recent Publicity - M26 Slip Roads**

Further to recent reports in the local press Otford Parish Council remains opposed to M26 slip roads at Otford due to their potentially detrimental impact on the Parish.
Tree of Light

The Tree of Light service will take place on Friday 14th December at 7.00pm on the Village Green. Following the service there will be refreshments offered in the St Bartholomew's Church Centre. Labels for you to write your message on are available from the Parish Council Office. If you cannot get into the office during opening hours (8.30am - 12.30pm) then please phone up and we will write your card for you. Cheques for your donation need to be made out to Otford Parish Council. The Tree of Light will remain lit up until after the New Year. Donations will once again be going to The Hospice in the Weald.

Community Warden Surgery

Paul holds his weekly surgery to discuss any problems and community issues at School House on Tuesdays between 11am and 12 noon. Come and see him. Paul can also be contacted on 07813 713366.

St Bartholomew’s Church Christmas Services

Sunday 2nd December
4.00pm - Christingle Service
6.30pm - Candelit Advent Carol Service

Saturday 9th December
7.30pm - Choir Christmas Concert. Tickets £5

Sunday 16th December
6.30pm - Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve
4.00pm - Crib Service
11.30pm - Midnight Christmas Communion (starting with carols at 11.10pm)

Christmas Day
9.00am - Christmas Day Communion
10.30am - Church Family Christmas Worship

Otford Methodist Church Services

Sunday 16th December
10.30am - Christmas Nativity Family Service - with their young folk.
6.30pm - Carol Café by candlelight - an opportunity to enjoy traditional carols, readings and coffee and mince pies.

Sunday 23rd December
10.30am - Teaching Service
5.00pm - Christingle Service - This is a special service for children and the young at heart.

Christmas Day
10.30am - Christmas Day Service for all the Family.

Sunday 30th December
10.30am - Morning Worship (no evening service).

New Years Eve
11.30pm - Watchnight Service to see in the New Year.
**Strictly Christmas Tea Dance**

The Tea Dance is taking place on **Friday 14th December** between 2pm - 4pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall. Just come and have fun - no dance experience needed. This event is **FREE**. Tea & cakes provided. Organised by Paul (KCC Warden) and Parish Council Office with Professional dance instructor Colin. Call 01959 524808 if you’d like to come along.

**Damage to Otford Pond**

A resident recently observed a lorry causing damage to the pond and gave the details to the Parish Office. We contacted the company which owned the lorry, DR & FA Ford Transport Ltd, who disciplined their driver and sent him on a driver awareness course. The company also sent a contribution towards the repair of the pond and a donation which the Council has agreed to put towards the cost of the Community Warden’s Christmas Community Event - 'The Otford Strictly Christmas Tea Dance' on 14th December. DR & FA Ford Transport have requested that we include these details in the newsletter and if anyone observes further damage being caused to the pond do please contact us.

**Police Matters**

We would just like to remind you to be aware of the following so that criminals don’t enjoy their Christmas at your expense.

- Keep your presents out of sight in your car and house. If they can be seen they can be stolen. Keep curtains pulled.
- Always close windows and lock all doors when going out and check car is also locked.
- Park in a well-lit area or an attended car park.
- If going away, consider using timer switches, cancel milk and papers and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on the house. And also make sure your sheds and garages are protected as well.
- Only open your door after identifying the caller.
- Do not keep large amounts of cash at home or carry large amounts of cash around with you.
- If you are offered a quality product at a bargain price ensure the source is genuine.
- In an emergency always dial 999
- To confidentially report information about crime call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111
- Non-urgent crime reporting number is 101
- If deaf or speech impaired text ‘POLICE’ and your message to 60066

**Otford Primary School Bazaar**

On **Saturday 1st December** between 12noon and 3pm Otford Primary School will be holding its Christmas Bazaar, including Santa’s grotto, mulled wine, carol singing, auction, toys, games and books, cookie decorating, raffle, hot dogs, tea and cakes and a visit from a real Fire Engine. Please go along and support the school.
**Poppy Appeal**

The Poppy appeal in Otford raised £1153.32. Thank you to Murray Flinton for organising the collecting trays.

**Guide Christmas Post Box**

The Guide Christmas Post Box will be in Otford Library until Thursday 20th December inclusive during opening hours. A second Box will also be available in the Parish Council Office on Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 12.30pm until the same date. All cards will be delivered by Brownies and Guides over the weekend of 22nd/23rd December and all the proceeds will be divided between Kent Air Ambulance Trust and Children with Cancer UK. Stamps are 25p per card and all money will go to the chosen charities. This will be the 30th year that Otford Guides have been delivering Christmas cards and we would like our Christmas Post Service for the village to continue to be really successful, so please give generously and support us by posting early.

**Otford Village Fete**

The Annual General Meeting took place on Monday 22 October. It was very disappointing that so few people from Otford turned up to hear what the Committee had to say about this year’s fete and their plans for 2013. The fete is held for the benefit of residents and the Committee are all volunteers, giving their time to run the event. They were naturally sorry that there were not more guests at this year’s AGM.

The Chair and Treasurer’s Reports can be found on the website (otford.info/villagefete)

Patty Chatterjee, Chair of the Fete Committee, advised the audience that the Treasurer, Alex Isted, has decided to step down as he has recently taken on responsibilities on other committees and, after six year’s loyal service, feels that it is the right time. Unfortunately, at the present time, no-one has been identified to take over this key role. Unless a volunteer comes forward (preferably with some accounting background, or at least comfortable working with figures), there is a danger the Fete will, sadly, not take place next year. Patty emphasised that the role is an enjoyable one, involving monthly evening meetings, administration and payment of invoices through the year and, of course, strong involvement around the time of the Fete itself.

Please could you give some thought to this?

For more information email patty.chatterjee@virgin.net

**Otford & District Historical Society**

The next meeting of the winter programme will take place on **Wednesday 12th December** in Otford Village Memorial Hall at 8pm when the AGM will be held with refreshments plus a talk on ‘Shakespeare and St Clere’ by John Turnbull. Membership is £6 a year and visitors are welcome at £2 per meeting.
Otford Oast WI
The meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 9.30am in Otford Village Memorial Hall. The next meeting will be on 13th December when they will have their 'Birthday' meeting. There is a crèche and the first visit is free. Do join them. Contact Julie Stevens on 01732 450618 for more details.

Otford Afternoon WI
Meetings are held in the Otford Village Memorial Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. The next meeting will be on 11th December when John Burgess is giving a 'Victorian Magic Lantern Show'. Visitors are very welcome, and further details can be found on the Otford Village web site at www.otford.info with the link to the WI. Contact Kath Larkin on 01959 522355 for more details.

Otford Evening WI
The next meeting is on 13th December when they meet at 7.30pm in the Club Room for their Christmas meeting. Mesdames Gaskin, Masson & Wills will be entertaining them, with suitable refreshments partaken afterwards. They wish those who are unable to be there a very Happy Christmas For more information please contact Sandra Thomas on 0208 402 4634.

Otford Allotment Association
The Otford Allotment Association (OAA) can report that at the present time we have a waiting list of only four Otford residents. With the New Allotment Year starting in October there are still 10 tenants to renew there tenancies.
If you have an interest in obtaining a plot please feel free to call or email Roger Beasley the Parish Agent and have your name added to the list.
Telephone 01732 463072 or email rogerbeasley@tiscali.co.uk.
It's that time of year to get those forks and spades doing their final magic before the winter sleep.

West Kent Primary School Public Consultations 2012/2013
Following KCC Cabinet's agreement of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-17, a number of proposals are, or will be under consultation. The consultation process for Otford Primary School starts on 3.12.12 and finishes on 28.1.13. A meeting will be held at the School on 6.12.12 at 7pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Getting the most from The Library
The Parish Council are grateful to all those who gave input at the library event on Saturday 17th November at the coffee morning in the Otford Village Hall. Any further ideas will be very welcome.

RSPB
On Thursday 6th December at 7.45pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Sevenoaks, invite you to a talk by Robert
Quiz Night

The Otford Gardeners' Society are holding a Fun & Quiz Night on **Tuesday 4th December** in Otford Village Memorial Hall. Doors open at 7.00pm and the quiz will start at 7.30pm. There will be a 'warm up' quiz to get the evening going followed by an eight round general knowledge quiz with a running round. There will be prizes for the winners and also a raffle. Some refreshments will be available but please take along your own drinks and nibbles. The cost is £4 per person with a maximum of six people to a table, payable on the evening. To reserve a table please phone 01959 523760 or 524183 or e-mail gardeners@otford.net.

The Darent Valley Choir

The Darent Valley Choir will be performing 'Vaughan Williams Fantasia on Christmas Carols' and 'In Terra Pax by Gerald Finzi' for their Christmas concert this year. This will take place on the **Saturday 15th December** in The Drive Methodist Church in Sevenoaks. They will also be singing round the tree in Trafalgar Square from 7-8pm on **Tuesday 11th December**. They have done this for over twenty years now, collecting for Demelza House Children’s Hospice, so if you are in London on that day they would love to see you for one or even both of these events.

The Kemsing Singers

The Kemsing Singers invite you to 'A Kemsing Christmas' on **Friday 14th and Saturday 15th December** at St Edith Hall, Kemsing at 7.30pm. It features Edward Bonner in the Christmas Cantata 'The New Born King'. There will also be Christmas songs old and new with a few to sing-along to. It is directed by Sara Kemsley with Peter Young on the piano. Tickets are £8, seniors £6, children £4 and are available from 9, Cleves Road Kemsing or tel. 01959 523752 or via the ticket office at www.kemsingsingers.com.

Sevenoaks Philharmonic Society

The Sevenoaks Philharmonic Society are singing a concert of glorious and uplifting music to get us into the spirit of Christmas. Come to the Stag Theatre on **Sunday 2nd December** at 7.30pm to listen to Bach Christmas Oratorio parts 1-3 and Charpentier 'Messe de Minuit pour Noël'. Tickets are £12.50 (£11 concessions) available from the box office.

What do you think about the up-dated village design statement?

A Village Design Statement (VDS) provides a clear voice as to what sort of village the residents of Otford want to live in: what sort of houses fit comfortably within our village; the look of our own road; neighbours not building extensions that intrude into our privacy and keeping the urbanising effect of Sevenoaks at bay. A VDS is an explicit statement by the community, for the community. Once adopted by the Sevenoaks District Council, it also becomes official ‘supplementary planning guidance’. This means that our District planners, when considering a building or extension application in Otford, have also to take into account what is said in the VDS before coming to a decision. If we want to manage future change in
our parish, we need a positive and strong VDS. But why change the existing document? Firstly, planning law has changed considerably in the past nine months. The goal posts have moved. Secondly, much has happened in Otford for which the old VDS no longer possesses the tools with which to fight. A new VDS is designed to respond to modern problems with renewed vigour. As you will have recently heard, the Government now proposes to 'open up' the planning regulations still further. It may be good for the builders and developers but it is a dangerous time for any community like ours that is desperate to protect its village heritage and its rural environment. That is why, right now, it is so important that we introduce an up-to-date Village Design Statement which draws a clear 'line-in-the-sand' for anyone looking to undertake development in our parish. This needs to be with your involvement and approval. It is a community document. A VDS can't prevent all unwanted development. It can however provide the tools with which unsuitable proposals can be fought. The draft of the up-dated VDS will be on display in the Club Room of the Memorial Hall on **Saturday 15th December** from 10am until 4pm. There will be post-it notes and pens for you to add your thoughts, observations or disagreement with what is proposed. Please try and review it for yourself. Alternatively you can go online, now to [www. Otford.info/vds](http://www.Otford.info/vds) and make your observations there. Our VDS should represent what you feel about future planning in the village.

**New Release - Otford 'Caught on Camera' 2012**

The new release is a 1½ hr DVD recording of 30 village events during this Jubilee year. They are available from The Heritage Centre, bdvideos.co.uk or Barbara Darby on 01959 523339. They cost £10 each, profits to Otford Fete Committee who help various organisations in the village.

**Picture of the Month for December**

This month's painting to be found in the Heritage Centre is by Sue Isted. Sue took up painting after her first child was born 22 years ago. At school she never took art seriously and was considered a 'no hoper' by the art teacher. She started classes at Sevenoaks Adult Education centre and then progressed to Chipstead Art Group under the guidance of Eirlys Hollands who introduced her to the joy of using pastels. Now, Sue is with the Otford Art Group with whom she is very much at home. She mainly loves painting animals and portraits, older faces with character being of particular fascination. Occasionally she dabbles in acrylics and watercolour but always returns to pastels for sculptural quality.

**Otford Methodist Church Wednesday Afternoon Women's Fellowship**

Meetings are at 2.30pm in the Church Hall. Phone Rosemary Cracknell on 01959 522325 for details / transport.

**December**

5th - Christmas meditation / 12th - Christmas lunch

**Hospice of Hope Events**

**Thursday 6 December** - Shopping, Dining and Culinary Christmas Tips - Ladies Lunch at Brands Hatch Place Hotel & Spa. An enjoy mulled wine on arrival whilst shopping for last minute Christmas gifts at our Christmas Market. A festive lunch will be served after which
you will hear from the Executive Chef at Brandshatch Place with those unanswered culinary Christmas questions! Market open from 11am - 4.30pm, lunch served at 1pm, £29.50pp to include Christmas market, glass of mulled wine, three course lunch with a glass of wine, coffee and mince pies plus a cookery demonstration.

For further information on either of the above or to purchase tickets, please contact Wendy on 01959 525110 or wendy@hospicesofhope.co.uk

Fundraising for Rockdale

Rockdale’s Christmas Concert is taking place on **Saturday 15th December** in the Pamoja Hall at Sevenoaks School starting at 6.30pm. Second Wind Concert Band will be playing a great selection of seasonal music as well as some traditional carols for everyone to join in with. There are a number of non-traditional Christmas readings delivered by some special guests including The Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP and the Mayor of Sevenoaks Cllr Richard Parry. Tickets are £15 each which includes Mulled Wine & Mince Pies served after the concert at approx 8pm. Please come along with family and friends and spread the word to neighbours and colleagues. Call 01732 458762 or email fundraising@rockdale.org.uk to book your tickets or visit our web site www.rockdale.org.uk to download a booking form.

Christmas refuse collections 2012

Sevenoaks District Council’s refuse crews will be working most of the break to minimise disruption to local people.

Collections will take place **1 day** later apart from collections on Christmas Day 25th December which will take place just over 1 week later on Wednesday 2nd January. Please out your bags out by 7am on your collection day.

Tree-cycle with the Council

After this year’s festivities have ended, Sevenoaks District Council can collect your real Christmas tree for free throughout January.

The Council can collect trees with a trunk up to 89mm (3.5") in diameter.

Simply put your tree by the boundary of your property, where you’d put your refuse and recycling sacks, the night before the Council’s Garden Waste Collection service takes place in your road. Please be aware that the Council cannot collect trees that are decorated or in pots or stands.

The good news is all the trees collected are turned into environmentally friendly compost.

Call the Council on 01732 227000 or e-mail information@sevenoaks.gov.uk to find out when the Garden Waste Collection service will be collecting from your road.

If your tree’s trunk is more than 89mm, it can be recycled at one of Kent County Council’s Household Waste Recycling sites. Call them on 08458 247 247 for locations and opening times.

Christmas/New Year Travel Details

**Buses**

Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - No service
Dec 28th - Saturday service
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - No service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - No service
Jan 2nd - Normal service

Trains

Dec 24th - Normal service. Early finish
Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - Saturday service
Dec 28th - Saturday service
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - Sunday service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - Sunday Service
Jan 2nd - Normal Service

Ash Tree Die Back
Details of this disease can be found on http://www.forestry.gov.uk. If you believe that any trees in the parish are diseased please contact the Parish Office.

Do you know someone who needs or deserves a brand new garden?
ITV’s hit series ‘Love Your Garden’ staring Britain’s favourite gardener Alan Titchmarsh, is back. Last year Alan helped people across the country whose gardens had suffered as they coped with life’s challenges building them a brand new outdoor space.

Now Alan is looking for more deserving people with gardens that desperately need transforming. They could be an unsung hero or a tireless fundraiser or a family that is coping with difficult circumstances. What ever the story, if you think a garden created by Alan himself could help them or be a fitting way to say ‘thank you’ then please let them have your contact details and a brief description of the person you are nominating by phone on 020 7065 7072 (pre-recorded message service), by post Love Your Garden, PO Box 64382, London, EC2P 2GJ or by E-mail at Teamhort@spungoldtv.com.

Planning
The following applications have been considered by the Parish Council in November. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Head of Development Services, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000
a. New applications

SE/12/02300  4 Sevenoaks Road
Change of use of a ground floor residential room to retail use, non food (amended).

SE/12/02617  48 Well Road
Proposed single storey side extension, two storey rear extension and loft conversion including a large glazed dormer and balcony, front and side dormers.

SE/12/02842  85 Pilgrims Way West
Demolition of existing garage and conservatory. The erection of side and rear extension and new first floor to create bedrooms and bathrooms

SE/12/02844  Chartlands, St Michael's Drive
Demolition of detached garage to facilitate the erection of single storey double detached Garage, conversion of outbuilding to utility room and wc, single storey side extension with lantern light over and roof connecting bungalow to new utility room.

b. Results Received

SE/12/02252  37 Well Road
Demolition of existing triple garage and side extension and replacement with a single storey side extension and two storey side and rear extensions. Refused

SE/12/022676  Jardox, Vestry Estate
Proposed extension to rear service yard Allowed

SE/12/02364  Leyland, Shoreham Road
Demolition of existing porch and erection of replacement front porch  Allowed

c. Tree works

SE/12/02631/WTPO  12 Hopfield Close
To reduce the crowns and height of the three poplar trees by 30% (TPO).

SE/12/02919/WTCA  The Horns, 66 High Street
Fell 1 No Ash Tree (Conservation Area)

SE/12/02784/WTCA  Colets Well, The Green

SE/12/02888/WTCA  23 High Street
Prune 2 No Apple trees by 30% (Conservation Area)

SE/12/02918/WTCA  7 Bubblestone Road
Reduce branches of No 1 Goat Willow (Conservation Area)

d. Appeals

SE/12/01676/FUL  2 Knighton Road
Appeal Ref APP/G2245/A/12/2184264/NWF - Demolition of existing conservatory and replaced with new house, including alterations to 2 Knighton Road, and demolition of garage to form four car parking spaces, to serve both properties.
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<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Oastbrook, Telston Lane</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Councillors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas G. Cracknell</td>
<td>23 Warham Road</td>
<td>522325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mary Evans</td>
<td>14 Tudor Crescent</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mary.a.evans@btinternet.com">mary.a.evans@btinternet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Jackie Howe</td>
<td>33 Pilgrims Way West</td>
<td>525434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Knight</td>
<td>38 Warham Road</td>
<td>524488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. H. Jane Lawrey</td>
<td>23 Tudor Crescent</td>
<td>522360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howard Leicester</td>
<td>Albany, Shoreham Road</td>
<td><a href="mailto:howard_leicester@btconnect.com">howard_leicester@btconnect.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Charmian Marsh</td>
<td>40 Greenhill Road</td>
<td>522609</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Verrall</td>
<td>24 Pilgrims Way East</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jon.verrall5@btinternet.com">jon.verrall5@btinternet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Elizabeth J. Ward</td>
<td>Thymebank, Coombe Road</td>
<td>522384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin J. Whitehead</td>
<td>19 Coombe Road</td>
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The Chairman, Parish Councillors, Clerk and Assistant Clerk wish you all a very happy, restful and peaceful Christmas and New Year.