

Summer 2025



Flowers on the Viaduct by Carolyn Clarke from our 2025 Calendar

www.gofolkestone.org.uk

From the Chair

Welcome to the latest edition of the Go Folkestone magazine, the first since I was appointed Chair in May of this year.

Born and educated in Rochester, I spent many happy childhood holidays in Folkestone, running around the Rotunda, marvelling at the magic of the rock shop and watching the county cricket team at the Cheriton ground.

Following a career in the civil service I moved here in 2016 with my wife, Janet and settled on the edge of Radnor Park. In those nine years I have delivered a wide range of walking tours for locals and visitors alike and led or participated in several literary projects. In addition to regular poetry readings, I published a collection of poetry inspired by my affection for Folkestone in 2023.

I joined Go Folkestone in 2018, so was delighted to have been asked by Committee colleagues to take on the role of Chair. The group is approaching its 25th anniversary and already has many impressive achievements, most recently the award-winning electrical waste recycling project and the restoration and relocation of the Victoria Pier foundation stone. The triannual magazine and calendar are always highly popular.

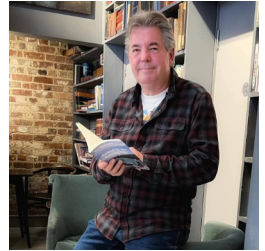
These are exciting times for Go Folkestone. The town faces many challenges to its heritage, economy and environment, but through my leadership I believe we can build on the successes of the past and provide both the membership and the wider community with the best possible service and value for money.

Richard has produced another magazine of serious analysis, human interest stories and artistic pieces that I am sure you will enjoy.

And if you enjoy it, and like what Go Folkestone is doing, why not become a member? Details can be found below.

Have a wonderful summer.

Tony Quarrington



Go Folkestone Membership Subscription/Renewal 2025/26

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Editorial Committee

David Noble
Richard Wallace
Sheila Palmer

Artworker

Alan Reed



Editorial

We hope you like the Summer Go Folkestone magazine. To support our projects and to get news and views please join us for £15pa to get the magazine directly and quickly and to attend convivial monthly meetings at the Burlington Hotel every second Wednesday in the month at 6.45pm. We need volunteers for Saturday electrical recycling outside Boots, tree planting and watering, litter picking, school reading assistance, and even bumble bee counting. And we need more photos of Folkestone AND Sandgate, especially off season, for our fund raising Aspects of Folkestone calendar.

In the last magazine we warned that the De Haan harbour car park redevelopment, ultimately for 410 flats but with significantly more public car parking than originally proposed, was being recommended to the Council for acceptance by its officers. The District Council planning committee had the intellectual honesty to take the advice (see Page 7), because the developer would have appealed a refusal to the national planning inspectorate with every expectation of success. We must take a breather and then press further on sewage disposal and other big worries.

There is no article on the Road of Remembrance this time, simply because the Council is assuring the public that the vital road will be repaired and stabilised by (Summer?) 2026. GF doesn't support the few who say it would make a nice scenic footpath, because the seafront needs maximum vehicular access. And the Leas Lift work continues on schedule to renovate the Lift, also by 2026. The main visible alteration will be the move of the cafe to a tasteful, slightly oast-house style 38 cover building just to the west. See leaslift.co.uk.

If you know of an organisation with an event being planned, in Folkestone or surrounding area, and would like it adding to the events page on our website at <https://www.gofolkestone.org.uk/events> please do let us know through info@gofolkestone.org.uk

Richard Wallace

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors, unless stated to be those of the Go Folkestone committee or organisation.

Town Centre Movement

BY RICHARD WALLACE

Some Go Folkestone members will know that the Green-led District Council, as owner of **Folca/Debenhams** has decided to put the older “Edwardian” style corner block, known as Folca 1, up for sale. We understand there will be few definite conditions, but a presumption against demolition of the prominent frontage, cupola etc, which GF and nearly all locals want retained as the historic gateway to the town peak. Builders say that the interwar rear might sensibly be partly demolished to give a distinct residential entrance, with quite a few flats created in the old upper floors and some brand new ones at the rear. Most of the ground could still make shops. The side stair core, where one went up to Debs Luggage, strengthens the old building which all hope is salvageable.

The District Council has further decided to keep the 1930’s Art Deco “Folca2” piece on Sandgate Road, which it had largely turned into a white shell; partly with the last EU money available! The 1930’s period front is definitely retained. The long time plans to bring a health centre/surgery into Folca, which had focused on the old corner block, are now focused on the easier to convert white shell. This may only replace one surgery or two for Manor Road or Guildhall Street North. But as a high street site we will fight for it to have “super-surgery” facilities. Write to your councillor. I’d say Guildhall Street North surgery might make a good affordable housing site, as might the rear of Folca 1.

In 2023 GF did say that the most surprising absentee from the town centre was **Greggs**. At that time, bizarrely, the bakery company was opening at the petrol station in Cheriton Road, but had nothing in the town centre! In June it was going to convert the former Barclays Bank into a town branch. But it has withdrawn. The Town Council even approved the plans as Greggs weren’t changing much more than the fascia, fortunately for such a nice building. Greggs are firmly believed to be actively looking in town.

Incidentally I was with Barclays for 50 years. Statistics allegedly show the British are more likely to change their marriage partner than their bank (particularly if given 100 quid?). But changing to the nearby Nationwide (others are available) was easy. Be brave!

Meanwhile everyone can see Wilko being converted into an indoor market: **Petticoat Lane, Folkestone**. This worked in Ramsgate, and 60!! CCTV cameras should help against shoplifting. However the effective minimum is eight weeks or ca £500. **The Harp Club** in Grace Hill had an unsuccessful attempt to reopen it as a live music venue. It may follow the former Savoy/Metronome, which has planning permission for flats, down a residential route. Tontine Street has two-three new occupiers including the excellent Fat Raj. It also has a wine bar being created within the building of the former Brewery Tap: superb faience tiling by Mackeson’s circa 1886! The vacated Folkestone Wine Coy in Church Street is possibly going to be occupied by the excellent florist opposite. William Marcus Brown continues to work on Queens House, over Bon Marche (which stays). But one more part storey of five new flats needs to be finished, so three months off.

Book Review

BY SHEILA PALMER

Adventures of a Victorian Foundling

Who remembers Apostle Spoons? Do you know why children are sometimes called Nippers? What were Mudlarks? Any idea what Kentish delicacy was developed by Mr Lambert of Goudhurst?

The answers are among the fascinating asides in *The Spring of Hope* by Colin Patience, who lived and worked in Folkestone from the 1980s until 2024 when he sadly died while his only book was with the printers. The author was inspired to write this story by an elderly gentleman he met in the early days of his career in Education and Social Services

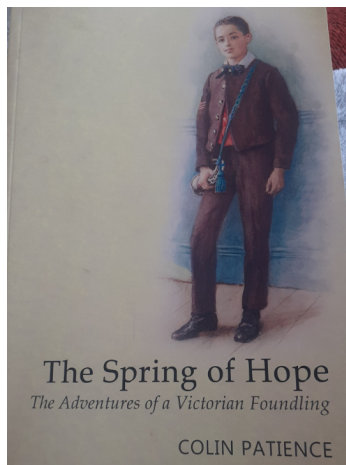
This is the tale of Tom Pelham, a Victorian child raised in the famous Foundling Hospital in London. Here, a mother who was unable to care for her baby could place it in a basket outside, ring the bell, and the child would be taken in. Like many other foundlings, Tom was fostered as an infant. He was fortunate to be cared for by a loving couple in Cranbrook, and then returned to the Hospital to be educated with a view to joining the Army in due course.

His history is partly told in Tom's own words as he begins to write his memoir on board a ship bound for India. He recounts his confusion at being taken from those he knew as his parents and going to the Foundling Hospital of which, of course, he had no memory. However he settled in, made friends, and proved to be an avid reader before he was ten, particularly interested in the works of Charles Dickens (who attended the Hospital Chapel most Sunday mornings). Although he suffered fewer hardships, Tom was fascinated by the many similarities between his own childhood and that of *Oliver Twist*!

In fact, in many ways Tom was fortunate as he thrived at the Hospital and proved to be a talented musician. We share his experiences, visiting places of interest in the Kent countryside, friendships found and lost. Later, with the Army he used the shooting ranges along the beach between Folkestone and Hythe, and spent some time in a local inn, hearing stories of fishing trips, smuggling, and "owling" (smuggling wool OUT of the country).

Colin Patience does a wonderful job of describing Kent in Victorian times as Tom takes us from London to his ship, *The Hope*, at Sheerness. We learn a lot about the hard life of the crew and its soldier passengers on board ship, Tom's adventures at sea, and a frightening act of heroism. Colin skilfully blends real events and historical figures with an endearing fictional biography. There are a number of surprises along the way, and this makes for a very entertaining, informative and enjoyable read.

Gillian Patience, the author's widow, says that he wished any profits from the sale of this book to be divided between The Foundling Museum and Parkinson's UK. He had suffered from this cruel disease for many years.



Our Ukrainian Friends

BY PAM KEELING

In June 2022 my husband Dan and I attended a Meet and Greet for Ukrainians living in the area. This was held at the Folkestone Library(!) To say that we were astonished at the number of people, both hosts and guests, would be an understatement! Thankfully, there was someone who could interpret for me as we wanted, on behalf of the church, to ask what they would really like? The answer was resounding – somewhere to meet where they could share news and help each other.

Initially this was weekly but latterly they have met up once per month as most have settled into a fulfilling life in Folkestone. Ladies from the Inner Wheel kindly serve refreshments provided by Folkestone Rotary Club.

Sometimes our guests sing and recite poetry. Personally, the most poignant was the boy aged 9/10 who recited verse. We all applauded although we had no idea what he was saying. When he finished, he produced the inevitable smart phone, and we could hear men singing. I asked one of the ladies, who told me that his Daddy is on the front line and that he and his colleagues sang a folk song into their phones that morning. The message the boy was sharing was that Daddy is alive!!

We all assumed that this unprovoked and premeditated war against Ukraine would soon be over, and our wonderful guests could return home. It seems three years later that the situation in Ukraine worsens and perhaps our senses are becoming somewhat dulled to what we hear?

And yet, I have just received word from a young lady who is desperately seeking a sponsor/host family in the UK. Her name is Natalia, and in her words, “Because of the war, I live in fear every day. I long for safety, peace, and a new beginning.” Thankfully by the time you read this she should have arrived in Folkestone.

Natalia studied with Roman, a University Lecturer in Religious Studies in Ukraine. He is now a member of the church, and studying English in the hope that one day he may be able to teach here. Roman is desperately trying to find a sponsor for his wife Yulia and their 15-year-old son Mykola. Mykola loves classical music and played in the orchestra in Ukraine. Sponsor/ hosts for Yulia and Mykola would be reimbursed via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. If you feel that you can help and would like more information, **please email Pam via info@gofolkestone.org.uk**

East Cliff Pitch and Putt has Facelift

In the 1980s and later, my work colleagues and I had a favourite afternoon out May-September, at East Cliff pitch and putt. We hired two clubs, a scorecard and a ball each, and went around the 18 holes surrounding the Martello Tower No.3 in 1-2hrs. Very competitive, but also with beautiful views, and a second level putting course. Since then the original ticket kiosk got too close to the cliff edge: my life is measured in geological time! But it is now reopened by the current FHDC, and you pay for bowls, tennis (hard and grass) and everything else at the main East Cliff Sports at Wear Bay Road. Not the Pavilion. Open until 6pm latest start (5pm p&p) and until 30 September.

There's also a brand new information panel on Folkestone geology on the course. This shows how exactly Britain was once joined to Europe. Trust the Greens! It's well done.

Folkestone Sports' Centre

BY RICHARD WALLACE

Sir Roger De Haan has helped The [Folkestone] Sports' Trust, formerly Shepway Sports' Trust, which has been chaired by his protégé Dan Hulme, buy the FSC in Radnor Park Avenue from OPUS. Hulme is a top beach volleyball player who looks like a rock star but is a cool negotiator and businessman. The Trust already includes F51 skatepark building and Three Hills, where their main offices are.

Opus is the administrator of the FSC charity, which had created the sports' centre in the 1970s, but was forced to shut by soaring pool heating costs and other problems, in July 2024. 144 jobs were lost. Although TST will run a tight ship and use many staff that already work at its other sites, some of those 144 jobs will come back. When Three Hills was being planned Sir Roger eschewed expensive wet sports. So the wet sports will continue to be central at Folkestone Sports' Centre, but need improvement to keep competitive with the impressive Dover SC at Whitfield. However Dover is successfully run by a commercial management firm, a good harbinger for Folkestone.

Three Hills does cricket, netball, hockey, basketball, a recently increased Padel offer, and of course football and track and field athletics. FSC did swimming, diving, archery, tennis and table tennis. One wonders what rejigging may occur as Three Hills is very modern. Perhaps the tired gym at FSC will expand and encompass martial arts etc.

The housing developers would perhaps have been stymied by all the planners and politicians, insisting that a sports' centre in the town was mandatory. And also by the fact that the Folkestone Estate of Lord Radnor, had, public-spiritedly, placed covenants on its original gift of land to the town, preventing easy conversion to a commercial use. The Estate and Sir Roger get on well.

However, as a now poor 1973/4 structure (just go and look) FSC will be at least "shell rebuilt", including the old buildings from when it was a golf club. The press release says it will take until Summer 2026, which is actually great news. This would imply little or no planning permission hold up. Ancillary residential development hasn't been ruled out, perhaps redeveloping the sensory garden building, but the prime use has to be a sports' and community centre: a "modern and accessible hub for all" to quote Dan Hulme.

The FSC includes the green space of the under-utilised golf course, and in fact the charity sold off some greenery for Searle Close in the 2010s. Locals must defend the attractive, natural (and fairly damp) strip along the Pent Stream from any development! Sir Roger, when he developed Three Hills as a sports' building, shuffled green spaces and housing around in the 1990s, in a benevolent but profitable way! He owned Westbrook School in Shorncliffe Road. He got planning permission for houses on the school playing fields, creating the new Westbrook estate off Shorncliffe and Marten Road, in return for developing Three Hills for sports and leisure. He may seek to use some S.106 "good works" money pledged for the Seafront for FSC. But we have to say: Three Hills worked.

Reading Volunteers Building Confidence in Reluctant Readers

Will came to me in January. He said he did not enjoy reading and had never read a whole book. Reluctantly, he chose, *The Boy who Haunted Himself* by Terry Deary (2004) and was instantly captivated by the central character who was tall like him and lacked confidence, as he did. Identifying with a book character maybe the first step to thinking critically.

Will was a hesitant reader but during the session became more fluent. He often stumbled over words and failed to respond to punctuation, but we talked about the text using other words and paraphrasing and he listened to me reading alternate pages and started to assimilate the story. The central character visits a hypnotherapist who likens the human body to a car saying that when the car breaks down, the driver (a human being mind) gets into another vehicle. We took a minute to digest that thought then Will said he wondered what happens to all the energy we have when we die. I let him think and then he said there were some bodies he wouldn't want to get into. This made us both laugh and we went on to discuss reincarnation. Believing you can succeed gives students a "growth mindset" and this boy showed he was capable of deep thinking and was prepared to articulate his thoughts in what he considered was a safe space reading one to one with me.



Please volunteer for Reading with Hesitant Readers at Turner School, Cheriton, twice weekly from 9 to 9.30 am.

info@gofolkestone.org.uk

Kentish Towns' Quiz

There was a good response to Tony Quarrington's Folkestone quiz. Here is another, sent in by Jenny Barraclough. They won't be a regular feature!

- 1 Heavy Crossing with which to extract water
- 2 Small missile hits popular car
- 3 A joke in a horse's home
- 4 A deadly number of puffins
- 5 Gypsy language in mother's place, almost
- 6 Canvas hesitatingly covers lair
- 7 Horse's enclosure: hazel, ash, pine, whatever
- 8 Coffin's resting place reaches its conclusion
- 9 A bit less like a pigeon
- 10 Rather like a beautiful bird (only it isn't!)

Answers on page 22

Is This the Way the Resistance Ends – Not With a Bang But a Whimper?

BY TONY QUARRINGTON

After nine years living in Folkestone, this was to be my first Council meeting, namely the Planning and Licensing Committee of Folkestone, Hythe and District Council which was considering the latest iteration of Sir Roger de Haan's plans for plots F and G of his seafront development.

The previous attempt to gain the approval of elected officials had been refused by a single vote on 30 January. There was a widespread feeling that the frankly minor amendments would be sufficient to meet with the Committee's approval this time.

Despite that, I fully expected to be part of a packed public gallery, where a maximum of 37 seats were available, including those allocated to the four speakers, two for and two against the plans, permitted to address the Committee for a paltry three minutes each.

In order, therefore, to guarantee my place in the chamber I arrived an hour before the commencement of proceedings to find a mere handful of the "usual suspects" waiting outside. "Oh well, I am rather early" was how I rationalised the low turnout, "the rest will start turning up shortly".

But "the rest" did not materialise. As we shuffled through the side door adjacent to the car park, there were around a dozen of us, evenly split between supporters and opponents.

And as if in keeping with the mood outside, it was a largely lifeless affair, the only real passion evident in the two speeches against the development, delivered by Councillor Bridget Chapman and campaigner, Georgina Baker. There were a number of regular members of the Committee absent for various reasons, each replaced by a colleague.

It was interesting, perhaps revealing, that few members appeared to LIKE the scale and visual look of the development but felt resigned to pass it because planning rules dictated that it should and refusal would only provoke an appeal that would cost the local taxpayer a fortune and almost certainly end in defeat.

The plans were comfortably passed with seven voting for, two against and two abstaining.

Most Councillors seemed to think that the contentious issue of shared ownership / affordable housing could be addressed separately without it affecting the decision before them. I was not convinced that the proposed diversion of council tax paid by tenants of the De Haan properties into the budget to meet the housing crisis was a particularly honest one that would be forgotten about once the dust settled on this debate.

So it was a pragmatic decision rather than one made with any great enthusiasm (apart from the councillor who happened to be a builder himself!).

For me personally, the most thoughtful analysis of the changes made since January came from Councillor Davison, and the most striking assessment from Councillor Cooper that it was "jam tomorrow" and would condemn the harbour area to a "25 year building site".

Although the attendance in the chamber had been disappointing, I understand that there was a significant take up of the live stream...So that's it, sorted.

Latest on Seafront Crescents: Shoreline selling "healthily" 40ish out of 82; 122 flat **Block C**, a split crescent opposite Marine Crescent is permitted and next to go, but start date not set. Or is it?

With Block B less than half full over a year since the first buyer moved in, and the construction of Blocks A, C, D, and E seemingly some way off, Councillor Cooper's claim might actually be an understatement.

As far as Go Folkestone is concerned, we intend to keep the Harbour Company's "feet to the fire" as the development progresses, continuing to tackle it on the matters that we, and our members, believe are important, for example the quality of water, parking and ancillary services.

We Just keep saying “Grace”

FOLKESTONE LIBRARY UPDATE BY JON O’CONNOR

Four months back, I wrote a piece for the Go Folkestone magazine on Folkestone Library – expressing hope and explaining how the multifaceted campaign to save Grace Hill had survived setbacks and held firm over a period now steadily approaching three years.

When asked to provide an update, the reality is that there is not a great deal to report that won’t already be familiar to most. And yet, there is still hope and it is worth explaining why.

Three years older and wiser, are we any nearer to seeing the Library open again? My answer is and always has been that having prevented disposal and final closure for that long is no small achievement, reflecting a mixture of dogged determination and community patience. So what is new, if anything?

Since February, there have been changes in community leadership and not just at Go Folkestone! The May elections brought Reform sweeping into power at County Hall. Whatever our political views, the removal of some of the more obdurate Councillors, whose stance was consistently about stating the art of the impossible, is a change. We have had more discussion with the recently elected team in three weeks than in three years with their predecessors. There is a clear expression of support for the community proposal for re-opening our library from all our local representatives, again: a real change.

Creative Folkestone has been working in tandem with Tony Vaughan MP to raise the profile of Folkestone Library as part of the Creative Campus long-term project in direct discussion with government ministers. Another step forward: a new development, with no promises and yet... the tantalising promise of a fresh lease of life for Grace Hill within a wider project.

If only – and it’s a big if – the two different political perspectives at local and national level secured a rethink at County Hall, we might yet see our Library open its doors again one day.

As a reminder, the ‘community partnership’ proposal reimagines the Grace Hill library building as an Arts, Learning and Community space, with building and finance management by Creative Folkestone. As a sign of commitment, two local organisations (Sunflower House and New Folkestone Society) submitted an expression of interest in the building under the Asset of Community Value provisions, closely linked to their role within the community proposal. This action created a moratorium on KCC disposal by sale or other means, which will last until mid-September.

Grace Hill Library itself has seen a sudden small spurt of activity, with downpipes being checked and safe working access under construction. Better late than never, maybe.

On St Valentine’s Day, memorably, we finally met for the first time with KCC officers, Creative Folkestone and community leaders. to discuss a ‘roadmap’ of the way ahead. It was not a massacre of any kind, but a chance to be honest about the differing vision and ideas for future of our local library service and the use of our public spaces. In the next few weeks, we are due to reconvene the working group in a very different context from our last session together. In stark contrast to global events, it’s good we are talking.



For the Love of Dogs

BY WENDY ZANCHI-COWIE

I was scared of dogs for many years. My family were more into cats, therefore I was not around dogs very often. Looking back, my fear may have developed when, as a small child, I was bitten by a Bull Terrier and chased down the road by an Alsatian. As an adult, I had to try and overcome this, because dogs would cross my path particularly in the profession I chose, working with families.

Therefore, I put on a brave face, learning to cope as best as I could when around dogs. Most of the time I managed, but I could not help feeling very nervous if they barked at me. Sometimes I had to separate myself from the dog. About ten years ago, my son and his girlfriend got a British Bulldog puppy called 'Bruno'. I had mixed feelings about this, but Bruno was a gorgeous, cuddly puppy who was easy to fall in love with.



One day, I was minding him and he started growling while diving his teeth into my slipper. Naturally I was horrified, as my slipper was still attached to my foot! The baring of teeth and growling continued, so I managed to separate myself from my slipper and jump up on the sofa. Bruno suddenly seemed bigger than he had been before. I found myself at home alone with a mad dog who looked like he would start on me next. I called my son in a panic, telling him his dog was about to eat me! Minutes later, I was somewhat reassured that this was normal behaviour for a puppy who is teething and playing. (Meanwhile, my son was on his way to 'save' me!) Every Thursday I would take care of Bruno when my son and his partner were at work. During our walks through Folkestone and along the Leas, we would meet other dogs with their owners. I realised that I no longer felt fear when they approached and even found myself enjoying the company of all dogs. After all, I was used to playing tug-of-war with a muscular one, with the teeth and jaw power of a small crocodile! I chuckled when people would come towards me and ask to pet Bruno, whilst others would avoid us because they perceived that he looked fearsome. During hot days, I would have to be careful that Bruno wouldn't become out of breath, so we would walk along the Pent Stream in Broadmead Village. He clearly enjoyed jumping in and out of the refreshing water to cool off. When I lost my father, I found myself in a deep depression. Bruno sensed my sadness when we were together, barely leaving my side. His unconditional love truly helped me in my grief. Sadly Bruno is no longer with us, but I will always be grateful for the gentle soul who cured my fear of dogs and gave me so much more... Rest well dear friend.

Mv Horsa

Folkestone's final Sealink ferry – **mv HORSA** – which undertook the last ever sailing from Folkestone to Boulogne on Dec 3, 1991, is no more. It then departed for Greek waters for a variety of owners, until laid up nine years ago as the mv Penelope A. She made her final journey from Rafina (Eleusis), Greece to Aliaga, Turkey for scrapping earlier this year.

Not a Very Safe Place

BY R & H TOLPUTT

I was a little boy in Dover at the start of the war. Dover was a dangerous place from the beginning, whereas Folkestone was thought medium risk. That is until the Germans conquered France and came literally within sight of England in June 1940. I was evacuated in 1939 with my mother and Grandfather from Victoria Park in Dover to Tunbridge Wells. We then went to Lyminge with my aunt, uncle and cousin. A parachute mine took the roof off our house, much of which ended on my aunt's bed. Fortunately, she was in the Morrison shelter under the dining room table at the time. This necessitated another move, this time to Welson Road.

Then, and well after the War, Welson Road was unmade, like Cornwallis Avenue and many others. Every year the householders paid around £50 in total for shingle to be brought up from the beach and spread into the dips and potholes. But during the War the beach was out of bounds for civilians, with barbed wire and a couple of the beach huts actually being dummies camouflaging guns.

Half of the Welson Road houses were empty by 1941. Either the occupants were fighting, working elsewhere, or had locked up and left for safer areas. I happily played in the garden, or in the road as there was no traffic. During air raids, we took cover in a damp and unpleasant Anderson air raid shelter at the bottom of the garden. Sometimes we stayed indoors where the best place during bombing was under the solid core of stairs. But in the shelter, however damp, at least the house couldn't collapse on top of you.

The reason the Germans seemed to target the area was the proximity of the main railway line and the Folkestone Electricity Works, roughly where Jewsons now is. Next door Mr and Mrs Nicholas had a very solid air-raid shelter which actually had an electricity supply – luxury! He was a kind man, an accountant whose offices were in a line of late Victorian buildings, similar to bits of Bouverie Square now, which were demolished when Sainsbury's was built. He audited the Folkestone Estate, going every year to stay with Mrs Nicholas at a Salisbury hotel while perusing the Estate books at Longford Castle near Malmesbury, which is still the main Bouverie family home. No photocopying or emails then, you had to go to the accounts. There is a lovely stained glass window in Holy Trinity Church in memory of Marshall Nicholas given by his widow.

At that time I went to St Nicholas' School in Wiltie Gardens. Most schools had evacuated. I think the Harvey Grammar School was in Tredegar and the Girls Grammar School in Merthyr Tydfil. But there were little children to teach. My friend Paul Rowland and I walked to school along Shorncliffe Road, aged about five, sometimes with an older girl. Adults such as my mother had things to do! There were many bomb sites. Cliffstone Court, for instance, occupies the site of a flattened school called Feltonfleet which had evacuated to Ripley in Surrey. It is still there. I remember a German parachute mine had removed two or three houses in Radnor Park Crescent; you can detect the 1950's "brick but different", houses now. Similarly, a parachute mine in Morehall Ave killed the Mayor, Alderman George Gurr. We were in school at the time and I can recall a huge curtain of brick dust which blew out the window: the school was closed for six weeks.

Once on the way to school, we had to take cover under a hedge during an air raid, which was what children were taught to do. But our teacher, Miss Squier (known as Squib), was still very angry and strict when we were late arriving at St Nicholas. She quickly subsided when realizing why we were late.

Next time I and others will remember the bombing of Christ Church.

Poetry Review

BY SHEILA PALMER

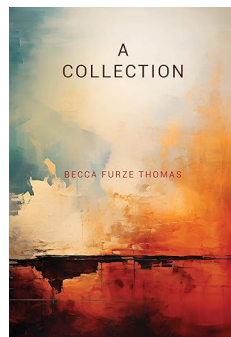
Based along Folkestone's seafront, creative writer Becca Furze Thomas has been writing stories and poems from the age of eight, and her book, **A Collection**, was published in March this year. This small volume contains some of her poetry written between 1999 and 2023. Many are concerned with nature – animals, the weather, the changing sky – which are well observed and expressed with depth of feeling. Some, written after a broken relationship, are wrought with emotion and the situation led to a period of depression which is also painfully described in this book.

Some poems have helpful notes by the author, explaining her inspiration and the circumstances in which she wrote them. All in all, a fascinating and moving work.

A Collection by Becca Furze Thomas

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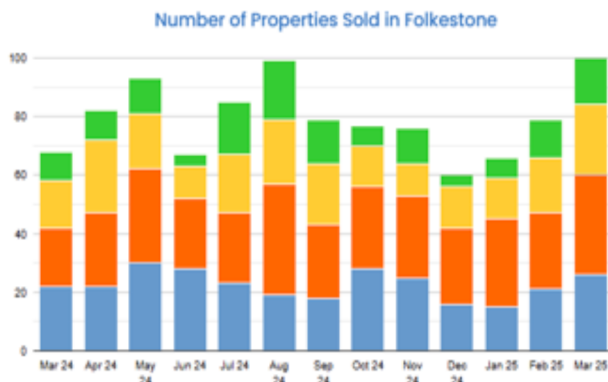
What's the Big Picture with House Prices in Folkestone and Hythe?

KRIS FOSTER OF MOTIS ESTATES

The momentum in sales market activity in 2025 has increased with the number of properties sold significantly higher than March 2024 despite concerns over mortgage rates drifting higher and some softening in consumer confidence over the economic outlook. It has been noted that there are a number of properties on the market in Q2 2025 which have yet to sell, this could be due to a number of global factors and general consumer confidence.

Key takeaways from Zoopla Property Insight – May 2025

- The number of May sales is the highest it's been for 4 yrs and up 6% on last year
- The rise comes as the market rebounds after the Easter lull and the bad initial reaction to stamp duty relief ending
- House price growth is stable with a 1.6% rise compared to a year ago
- More sellers are listing their homes for sale, with a 13% rise on last year
- Northern regions of England are seeing the strongest growth in sale numbers and annual house price rises of 3%
- Southern regions have more homes for sale and lower house price growth of less than 1%
- The housing market is on track for 5% more sales and 2% annual price inflation.



	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	Change
■ Detached	10	16	+60%
■ Semi	16	24	+50%
■ Terraced	20	34	+70%
■ Flat	22	26	+18%

The lettings market in Folkestone is still buoyant with demand very high. Although demand is outweighing supply there is a scarcity of rental properties coming to the market:

Property Rents in Folkestone by Number of Bedrooms as follows:

	No. of properties	Average rent	Median rent
One bedroom	21	£835 pcm	£800 pcm
Two bedrooms	37	£1,193 pcm	£1,200 pcm
Three bedrooms	11	£1,484 pcm	£1,375 pcm
Four bedrooms	5	£2,190 pcm	£1,850 pcm
Five bedrooms	1	£2,500 pcm	£2,500 pcm

There have been few transactions in the town centre with a number of shops remaining on the market for a substantial period including the former **Job Centre**. However we understand that this is under offer. **Petticoat Lane Emporium** has taken over the former Wilko in Folkestone which is available for traders for £220-£240 inc VAT per four weeks for a basic 6x6ft pitch. **The Harbour Arm** continues to attract traders with two new units opening this summer.

The serviced office centre has started to decline. Bouverie House Business Centre in Bouverie Place and the Folkestone Business Hub in West Terrace have both become ideal start up spaces for businesses in the town centre.

Other serviced offices at Basepoint, the Workshop and Motis Business Centre all remain at good levels of occupancy but have space available. Therefore if you are interested in space from one person to 20 persons then please don't hesitate to contact Motis.

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What You Can See From The Leas: Using the Leas Balcony

BY ROGER BELL AND DAN BEEDLE

Go Folkestone has been working for over ten years on setting up a mini tourist attraction at the seaward end of Clifton Crescent. Here an Edwardian viewing balcony has been a favourite place to take the air for years, near the Voices artwork. We think the structure may be 1911 vintage, still architecturally Edwardian, but perhaps you out there can tell us? But the red, green and white lights that can often be seen out to sea are a mystery to most sightseers.

Fortunately we now have the assistance of member Roger Bell, former captain of the Folkestone to Boulogne Channel Ferry. He and others, including sailor Frank Bond, have identified and plotted all the landmarks. Local artist and signwriter Daniel Beedle known as Sign Boy, was chosen to do the final artwork, based upon the plotted directions. Our late Vice Chair Howard Holt did the original technical drawing of the balcony on site in 2023.

The comprehensive view from the balcony, on the best and clearest days includes Dunkirk, Calais, the classic Channel swimming route, Boulogne, Cap Gris Nez Lighthouse, Cap D'Alprech Lighthouse, the Varne Lightship, the Channel sea-lanes, Dungeness Lighthouses, Littlestone Water Tower (behind the tree!), New Romney and the ancient landmark of Fairlight Church. The squat towers of the nuclear power station, and the odd dolphin or shoal of mackerel can also be seen. But from that point at least, neither Dover

nor the Goodwin Sands are in sight, nor much of Hythe. Shame.

This July Folkestone and Hythe District Council, via Councillors Holgate and Baker, have allowed Go Folkestone to make the balcony a tourist attraction by clearly marking how locals and visitors can see the sights. In particular marking the lighthouses which all have their particular signature sequences of red or white lights, visible particularly at night. Some will be rarely



Leas Balcony, Clifton Crescent before repainting.

perceived in only the most perfect conditions e.g. Boulogne Harbour Light, and others are nearly always visible e.g. Cap Gris Nez, Folkestone Harbour Light, Dungeness.

Local schools, particularly Turner School and Folkestone Academy under Michelle Foxwood, have provided paintings of the lighthouses and landmarks. Go Folkestone is very grateful. At first we thought these might be able to be superimposed on the balcony, but that was a step too far technically and aesthetically for the Council. Local amateur painters such as Myfanwy Helen Scott have also helped. We now intend to put all these colourful vignettes into a supporting booklet entitled *What You Can See From The Leas* which will be out for Christmas. This will support the cost and regular maintenance of the drawings and sightlines, which is down to us, at least until it proves a big success. Go Folkestone members can pre-order copies when we have decided prices.

We have one landmark that hasn't been painted by an artist: Fairlight Church near Hastings. This apparently is very visible from the Channel, and like Reculver Towers in North Kent is a perennial non-lighthouse landmark. We are asking any of you amateur artists out there to provide the final piece of our booklet by submitting a painting of Fairlight Church on the cliffs in East Sussex. Tell us on info@gofolkestone.org.uk when you've painted it, or if you have similar work already done, as a calling card. School students welcome.

News from the Planning Front

BY RICHARD WALLACE

With increasing construction costs and slow prices, development in 2025 is tough. Even at **Saga** in Sandgate, Saga PLC has reoccupied several floors of the main office block which has permission for conversion to 62 flats! The partial swing back to working from the office helps. Elsewhere in Sandgate Cllr Prater notes that the unpopular Escarpment development around the **Martello Towers**, which felled many trees, is temporarily(?) halted.

Cash-strapped FHDC has the famous Ship Street site, where the gasometer was until 2001, on Ship St/Foord Road up for offer, having bought it from the National Grid in 2021 for £400k; very cheap per likely dwelling but still perhaps too much. A dense low rise residential development is planned here, but the Council needs a partner despite a Government brownfield grant, due to continued gasometer contamination. It has a scheme for ca 150 units, mainly small houses and flats, but other planning could be pursued (!!). We do think that the massive red brick Victorian boundary and retaining walls are magnificent and the plans do show a little park by the walls. See Shepway Vox.

The two towering lift shafts on The Leas near Cheriton Place remain the hopeful harbingers of the stylish, slightly Art Deco **Leas Pavilion** scheme. It is now on the market for sale with the benefit of planning permission for 92 flats and an Edwardian style meeting room for 100 people: an echo of the now demolished Leas Cliff Theatre. Some original terracotta and other pieces remain safe. The Friends of the Leas Pavilion remain! The architect Guy Hollaway remains involved. We do worry that if the scheme doesn't stack up there is a risk that some more flats will replace the function room.

The excellent charity **Rainbow** is firmly set on converting the Victorian Hamlet Hotel, 5-6 Shakespeare Terrace into a 17 room House of Multiple Occupation, aimed at its clients who often attend its HQ in Sandgate Road. Some moan but if not there, where?

Further afield, **Pentland Homes** have had the details passed on a large, well-spaced 91 dwelling development on two fields at Ashford Road, New Romney. This is inland from town and two-three storey houses. For interest the Pentlands site has had to agree 24% affordable housing provision, and two new wildlife ponds. Newts Ahoy! 80 dwellings are projected at Victoria Road West on the front in Littlestone. So it isn't just Folkestone!

In fact the prime motif seems to be small towns and big villages gradually expanding. At Sellindge Quinns Developments have just had to ensure that two Iron Age barrows are in a park rather than built on! We will have to fight to keep green belts around towns and villages. Otterpool is still on course for submerging Westenhanger, Newingreen and to some extent Lympne, with new houses. A small reservoir is the next move as currently the nearest water is, I am told by Bryan Rylands, at School Road in Paddlesworth!

The Council has forced the owners to clean up **Middelburg** M/S Car Park. But said NCPOA owners are currently staying put. Post Office and Town Council still use bits.

Where Art Meets the Land: Folkestone's 2025 Summer

BY AMBER BAKER

Summer 2025 is set to be a landmark season in Folkestone. The town comes alive with an extraordinary programme of exhibitions, festivals, and artist-led events. With its established creative quarter and a strong community of working artists, Folkestone is set to offer a season rich in historical and cultural texture, where art meets the everyday fabric of the town.

At the heart of the summer is the Folkestone Triennial 2025, the UK's leading outdoor exhibition of contemporary art, running from 19 July to 19 October. In its sixth edition, we will see Folkestone's artwork collection spring back into life, with 18 new artists producing work under the theme '*How Lies the Land?*'. This year's commissions respond to curator Sorcha Carey's theme about contours of Folkestone. Spanning outdoor sculpture, installation, digital media and community collaboration, these works explore Folkestone's layered histories, geographies and futures, transforming everyday spaces into sites of reflection and imagination. Visitors can expect guided tours, artist talks and public programmes that everyone is encouraged to take part in. These will help art lovers gain a deeper understanding of the artworks and the processes the artists have taken to create them.

Running in parallel is **Open Art Folke 25**, from 25 July to 19 October – a festival created by and for local artists and communities, showcasing a plethora of shows, open studios and houses, workshops, performances and more. It's a celebration of local talent and shared creativity, designed to strengthen the links between artists and audiences, neighbours and newcomers. The '**Bloom Weekends**', held on the last weekends of July and August, are the peak time to visit your local creatives. Another key date in the calendar is the **Fête of Folkestone**, taking place on 27 September in Payers Park and the Glassworks. Expect a lively day of art, performance, live music, and a collaboration with Folkestone's much-loved '**Under the Moon**' market, offering locally made art and crafts.

Folkestone Fringe, also in its sixth edition, as the Fringe and Triennial have run together since 2008, returns in September under the title '**Flint and Clay**'. Set against Folkestone's shifting landscape, the Fringe will explore connection, division, and the futures we imagine together. Through three thematic trails, artists and communities will shape a town-wide conversation in streets, studios, and spaces from 1 Sept-19 October.

With so much happening across the town, Folkestone promises one of its busiest summers to date. Whether it's following the trail of Triennial artworks, discovering what's happening behind studio doors, joining in at the Fête, or exploring the Fringe – there's no shortage of ways to get involved. Whatever you choose to do, you are invited and will be warmly welcomed. We hope you'll make time to discover something new in your neighbourhood this summer.

Editorial Note for newcomers: The Triennial, at its core, is a wide-ranging exhibition of public art every three years since 2008, barring pandemics. Every time some of the exhibits are left permanently for the town. Some, like Rana Begum's design for Creative Folkestone on the beach huts, are practical as well as stylish.

Churchwise: Join the Bell-Ringers at St Eanswythe's

BY RICHARD WALLACE

Our ancient parish church of St Mary and St Eanswythe has eight bells and seven Folkestone bell-ringers (there are more elsewhere), including the highly competent David Robinson, the “tower captain”. This doesn’t leave a lot of headroom, and so they would love people to have a practice session, which David Noble and I did in June, quite entertainingly. Phone David Robinson on 079555 99498. The entrance to the belfry is at the rear and then up an original stone, spiral staircase to a room full of eight bells, eight sallies, and mementos to past marathon ringing sessions such as “Easter Monday 1882”: 5040 Grandsire Triple Majors by a team stretching from Henry aged 19 to John aged 75. Nowadays the age range is more typically 45 to 75. Nicky, from Lydd or was it Brenda Blethyn(?), is not the only female bell-ringer in the District. You don’t have to turn up religiously because four people can do a peal, and because being a member of the congregation, or even a Christian, is not required.



I found it difficult enough to be challenging, but enjoyable, on brief acquaintance. Practice is normally once a week on Tuesdays, and most ringers have a go elsewhere too. Brookland and Warehorne have old ground floor belfries. Other churches have more or fewer bells, or, like St Martins in Horn Street, lighter ones. Folkestone’s peak at the Old Tenor which is 25 hundredweight or 1.2 tons, but the beautiful balance and design make it no worse than a light half hour at the gym. No.1 Bell is a mere 6 cwt. And there are weddings to ring for, which must be nice!



David, Richard, Nicky and Steven in bell ringing practice. Photo by David Noble. Above photo by Dave Robinson.

A New “Bus Station” by the End of August?

BY RICHARD WALLACE

Officially the Bus Users’ Group, Go Folkestone and others have been told that the current bus station will be closed on 16 August, by which stage there will be temporary bus stops in a long line along the main road. In Autumn they’ll be resurfacing and re-landscaping Bouverie Square to include a part green, part paved park over half of the Square. We hope it’s an attractive, alcohol (and litter) controlled park, but members worry about both. There is a general aspiration, within and without the Council, that the 1954 bus station building could eventually become a café, which GF support provided it remains a good facility for the bus drivers. But it is only used for training currently.

By Winter, a line of five, permanent bus shelters, probably black, and I have to say, smart, will be there on Middelburg Square. They’ll be double-ended for wind protection, as we asked, and inside each will be $\frac{2}{3}$ a simple slatted seat and $\frac{1}{3}$ standing: the latter, obviously, can shelter a wheelchair. Each will have electronic bus information. But, following our representations, worrying about the elderly wandering up and down, there’ll be a central bus info sign near to Bouverie Square too.

We’ll know by the end of July which service will be served from which bus stop, but we hope and think the “best” location, right in front of Bouverie Square, will be for the busy 16 and the busy Cheriton service. We think the National Express, and conceivably another through service, maybe to beyond Dover, will be at the one new bus shelter on the North side, behind Middelburg House/Saga. Middelburg House should become a block of private flats, using the skeleton of the actual building, but only in the next couple of years.

Foresters Way will be landscaped including trees, and not available to traffic. Middelburg Square North will become two-way, as will Shellons Street. Middelburg Square South, where the rows of bus stops will be one-way only for buses, access to the shopping centre and drivers wishing to go to Bouverie Road West. The old underpass is being filled with hardcore etc and will be where new traffic lights and crossings are placed at the bottom of Cheriton Gardens, near to Cheriton Place. Go Folkestone will write asking that some money is held back specifically in case some of the junctions don’t work.

The archaeology of the redevelopment will be fascinating when the Square is resurfaced. This is mainly because the current Bouverie Square still has a big, back-filled World War II mass air-raid shelter with seats, walls etc. According to Ray this is probably underneath where the zebra crossing is. The Square pre 1939, was a lovely formal garden square laid out by Lord Radnor, with small roads around the edge (in which buses parked !!!). It was similar in plan to our derelict Westbourne Square. I wonder how many flowers will be there now? Still, F&HDC do have a fine display at Kingsnorth Gardens. The “Parks Department” can rise to the occasion if given the chance.

Please contact the helpful info@jacksons-civils.co.uk or Tel 07974 416435 for works information.

Volunteer Appeal for Help for Our Fishing Museum

BY ALAN TAYLOR AND RICHARD WALLACE

In June at St Martin's Church in Horn Street, Cheriton, Alan Taylor gave the Samuel Plimsoll talk, about Folkestone's fishing fleet and the Fishing Museum in East Street and Back Street in the former Ovenden's blacksmiths (still with forge) just behind the harbour front. He made an appeal for more volunteers to help the Fishing Museum, which has hundreds of visitors in the summer, especially at weekends.

Go Folkestone put 1/3rd of the money and a lot of legwork into the Plimsoll Group project, in 2019, for the Samuel Plimsoll Mural, painted by Shane Record. It would be great if members could help for 2-3 hours. Contact Alan at the Museum or info@gofolkestone.org.uk saying whether you want to join the helpers via direct phone and email or a WhatsApp group.

Folkestone's fishing fleet: FE5, FE74 etc. is still going, despite quotas, but the harbour now has six fishing boats and about ten full-time fishermen. You can actually track them and other Channel ships via the equipment in the museum. Around 1900 the harbour had well over a hundred boats, with perennial fishing families such as the Faggs and Tanners. The **harbour fishmonger** still sells an excellent mixture of local and further-flung stock. More than one Folkestone boat bottom-trawls for scallops, a trade that may be under threat from a new 2025 enquiry into bottom trawling. This practice is lucrative, at, Alan said, about £1 per scallop wholesale, but it badly scars the bottom of the sea. More sea bottom areas around the country will probably be prohibited from it.

Nationally there are now more yoga teachers than fishermen and women! Surprisingly the fishing tonnage, which in the UK has declined by 15% since 1972, has declined more on average over France, Spain, Germany and Denmark, but not Norway.



Night Shadows at **kollektiv**

BY KATIE BETON

They break through the hardest surfaces of pavements, tarmac, and concrete walls. You might have ignored them or worse, you pulled them out and threw them away, into a bin or somewhere. You stepped on them. Ran them over with your car, your bike, your pram. Most likely, you didn't even see them.

During the day they're almost invisible. At night, they're suddenly there. Lit by the headlights, or traffic lights. But still, you might have missed them. Ignored them. Nearly killed them. These tiny plants, often considered weeds, that fight for their lives in the world unlike their own. The urban world.

In her first solo exhibition, photographer Chelsey Browne presents a series of enlarged images of plants highlighted by the artificial lights of our cities. She's spent over ten years dedicated to this project, fascinated by the tension between seemingly fragile bodies of weeds and their incredible resilience in unfamiliar environments. The way they survive these unnatural conditions, the way in which they rise from the tiniest gaps of heaviest structures. Photographed as if they were human portraits, these unnamed plants gain personality, become metaphors for what we too experience facing new challenges.

'*Nightshadows*' is at **kollektiv – an arts centre in Folkestone at the bottom of The Old High Street, which celebrates its first year in July**. **kollektiv's** cultural programme centres around celebrating the brilliance already present in our town. In 2024 we saw the fantastic exhibition of Mayotte Magnus, Folkestone resident, whose previous shows include a commission for the NPG in London and the Garrick Club; Mark Simpson's clarinet performance who's premiering his new monumental piece 'Zebra' at this year's BBC Proms; the world premiere of Sophie Haydock's new novel, 'Madame Matisse', and a talk with the New Yorker cartoonist, Navied Mahdavian. Folkestone's well of talent has no end.

Photography has become an important part of the programme, partly because Folkestone has some of the most interesting people working in this field, but also because it can successfully break through certain barriers. **kollektiv** wants everyone to feel welcome and in times where art is becoming less available to some, with modules and courses disappearing even from higher education.

Photography might feel like a familiar tool to people whose exposure to other forms of art has been limited, and thus offer an entry point. This form can build an instant and intimate connection between the viewer and subject - and that is a connection that **kollektiv** strives to build with its audience.

We welcome the Royal Academy fellow and Folkestone resident, **Vanessa Winship** whose solo show opens Triennial for us in July. Following that is another Folkestone resident, Brazilian-born performance artist, **Rubiane Maia** whose work explores life and death cycles, and the relationship between the body and the environment.

Sign up to our Newsletter by visiting our website: www.betoncollective.org. We're open every day for coffee etc 10am-8pm, except Tuesday. See you there!

Folkestone Girls go to Parliament

For the third year running the Folkestone School for Girls has worked with the **Send my Friend to School** campaign which aims to encourage young people to advocate and campaign for global education. In June two Year 10 students, Mollie and Esther, accompanied by their teacher and lead for the programme Mrs Dale, visited Westminster for a day of campaigning and meeting MPs.

The Send my Friend to School scheme each year nominates a campaign focus, based on emerging needs within the UK and abroad. For 2025, the scheme focuses on Investing in Education. Not only does this captivate the hearts of many students at the Folkestone Girls but also aligns with our work as an International School with the British Council.

Over the past ten years, the UK's funding for international education has gone down every year, from around 13% in 2013 to just 3% of the UK's international ODA (Overseas development Assistance) in 2022. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, global cuts to education in donor and country budgets have reversed some of the progress made on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education), with the most vulnerable children being hit the hardest. The number of children out of school globally is at 251 million, and millions more are in school but still not learning basic skills like reading and maths due to poor education quality. The upcoming cuts to UK ODA announced in 2025, stated that education spending from ODA will be cut from 0.5% to 0.3% by 2027, potentially putting a further 2.2 million children out of school in the future. The campaign also focuses on prioritising education for those of marginalised groups, of which girls' education is a particular focus for FSG students. Mollie and Esther have focussed their within school campaigns on this matter as well as the heart of their discussions to MPs.

Once in parliament the students met with Bambos Charalambous, MP for Southgate and Wood Green, who hosted the Send my Friend campaign students for the day. Bambos provided a tour of parliament with the students getting the opportunity to go to the House of Lords, as well as visit the chapel in Westminster that is normally off limits for visitors. The students also got the opportunity to interview and question the Minister for Development, Baroness Chapman, before hosting an MP drop in at Portcullis House where they met and discussed the campaign with six different MPs including Tony Vaughan, MP for Folkestone and Hythe. The students have shown great dedication to the campaign within school and raised awareness through the teaching of lessons, information provided to tutor time and are now starting a club to encourage other students to continue with this work. The students have discussed with others what they feel priorities for education should be and have consistently shown the need for everyone to receive a basic education to facilitate further development and quality of life across a person's lifetime.

If you would like to find out more about the work of, Send my Friend to School please visit: <https://sendmyfriend.org/> We hope in the future to engage local community more in the campaign to ensure that all students can receive a fulfilled and quality education, no matter where they are.



An Update on our Electrical Waste Recycling Scheme

Our electrical waste recycling scheme has been making waves this year, achieving remarkable milestones. With Go Folkestone and the community's support, we have successfully recycled an impressive 4.5 tonnes of electrical waste. Not only does this reduce landfill and environmental harm, but it also breathes new life into items that might otherwise be discarded. Additionally, we've donated over 330 items to local charities, providing support to those who need it most and raising welcome funds for charities like Pilgrims Hospice.

Building on this success, we are now looking to expand the scheme with an innovative "Pink Bin" initiative. This expansion aims to simplify electrical waste disposal while encouraging even greater community involvement. The Pink Bin scheme is envisioned to provide accessible drop-off points for smaller electrical items. To make this vision a reality, we have applied for funding through Greener Grants. We will find out the outcome of the application shortly, and we are hopeful that additional resources will enable us to extend our positive impact.



We are delighted to share that we've recently been listed on Recycle Your Electricals (the famous "Hypnocat"), a platform designed to make it easier for people to locate recycling programs like ours. This listing ensures that more individuals can discover and engage with our initiative, helping us to promote responsible disposal of electrical waste.

However, the heart of our scheme remains the dedicated volunteers who power its operations. We need of more hands to help at our Saturday stalls. Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to a greener planet, meet like-minded individuals, and support local charities. Whether you can lend your time regularly or occasionally, every bit helps.

Together, we can continue to create meaningful change through effective recycling. If you'd like to join us or learn more, speak to any of our volunteers at the regular Saturday stall, opposite Boots in Folkestone or get in touch via Go Folkestone.

Folkestone Garden Centre

Outside town, the Folkestone Garden Centre at Densole got permission last August for a complete facelift including demolitions, extra café and retail. This is apparently due this winter. It's certainly doing better even now than the old MacFarlane's Butterfly Centre!

We do accept advertising at circa £90 per full page, less for repeats, sponsors or part pages. Contact info@gofolkestone.org.uk. or leave message at 01303-254263.

Kent Towns' Quiz Answers

1 Tunbridge Wells; 2 Dartford; 3 Whitstable; 4 Sevenoaks (aaks); 5 Romney Marsh; 6 Tenterden; 7 Paddock Wood; 8 Gravesend; 9 Dover; 10 Swanley.

Bee the Change! Why We Need to Save Our Bumblebees

BY AMANDA LOWMAN

Do you love a big dollop of ketchup on your chips, a swirl of baba ganoush with your pitta, or a sprinkle of blueberries on your breakfast? Then you've got bumblebees to thank! Tomatoes, aubergines and blueberries all rely on buzz pollination – a special technique only bumblebees can do. Unlike honeybees and other insects, they can shake their flight muscles at just the right frequency to release stubborn pollen. That's why they're VIPs – Very Important Pollinators!

But our beloved bumbles are in trouble. Over the past century, UK populations have plummeted. Two species are already extinct, and many more are in steep decline. A staggering 97% of wildflower meadows have vanished since the 1940s, leaving bees hungry and homeless – and putting our food supply at risk.

Thankfully, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) is on the case. Since 2006, they've been working with farmers, landowners, and volunteers to protect bumblebee habitats across more than 4,000 hectares. They also run BeeWalk, a national recording scheme where volunteers count bumblebees along set routes to monitor population trends.

Want to help? It's easier than you think:

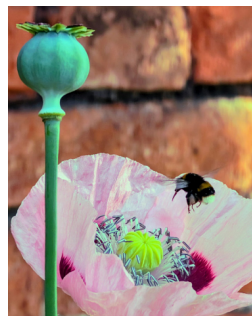
- ☐ Plant bee-friendly flowers in your garden or window box
- ☐ Mow less – let clover and wildflowers bloom
- ☐ Grow herbs and veg – bees love them, and they'll pollinate your crops
- ☐ Make room for nests – long grass, compost heaps and bird boxes are perfect
- ☐ Join the BBCT at **bumblebeeconservation.org** and get their magazine *Buzzword* and access to fascinating members-only talks.

Our local area is especially important for bumblebees – five of the UK's rarest species live in the South East, including the adorable Ruderal bumblebee (or "Rudie" to its friends). Our wildflower-friendly chalky soil and mild weather make places like Dungeness a bb paradise.

I do a BeeWalk in Enbrook Park, Sandgate, and I highly recommend it – it's peaceful, rewarding, and a great excuse for a monthly wander. All it takes is a couple of hours every month to walk a set route, spot and count bumblebees, and send in your sightings. Free training in bumble identification is provided online or in person. To get involved, email: **beewalk@bumblebeeconservation.org**.

And if you spot a bumblebee that isn't flying, it may be resting, so only intervene if it's in danger. If it stays there for more than half an hour, it might need a helping hand – move it to a flower or offer a 50/50 mix of white sugar and water (never honey or brown sugar).

Let's make sure these tiny heroes have a future. They're not just cute garden visitors with an endearing buzz – they're vital pollinators, working hard to keep our plants blooming, our vegetables growing, and our ecosystems healthy.



Picture by Amanda Lowman

Where's Your New Councillor

A PERSONAL VIEW BY RICHARD WALLACE

Go Folkestone is non-political, but it was a lot easier to avoid any flak from activists when Folkestone was sleepily Blue as it was for over a hundred years until the 2020s. The oscillation of Folkestone and Hythe to Labour in the July 2024 general election and then to the opposite(?) wing of Reform UK in the May County Council elections, was weird, and had got even some Go Folkestone members squabbling. But come write for us!



The Greens narrowly triumphed in the District elections in 2023, one seat (11:10) ahead of Labour. Greens are mostly a committed and healthy lot, and seem to be avoiding by-elections and keeping the edge in the District Council, with the help of a couple of Lib Dems from the principality of Sandgate. The driving force of their 2023 victory was an expensive (because it reduced the value of Council-owned land), anti-Prince's Parade vote. If there were another anti-development fuss, they are better placed than some.

By the general election we knew, even Tories, that the Conservatives were toast. But it is worth noting that the vote split suggested that, even at the nadir, FH was still more Right than Left: Labour: 15,020; Conservative: 11,291; Reform 10,685; Green 3,954, LD 2K. I was told that a Labour-backing computer nerd was pumping out iffy reports that Reform were on the edge of winning Folkestone and Hythe last year when they weren't. In view of the later KCC result, be careful what you tell people!!! The Labour MP, human rights barrister Tony Vaughan, impressed me as a smooth and intelligent speaker recently. He is young enough and ambitious enough to keep working hard in the hope of winning here on a continuing Reform/Con split, or getting a more winnable seat in 2029.

Now we have an overwhelmingly Reform County Council: 57 out of 82, anti-immigration, pro local action, and inexperienced. KCC officers have told me that briefings of new councillors on green policy, Net Zero and the like have been officially boycotted by Reform! We'll have to check their position on Go Folkestone's successful electrical recycling! Interestingly though, both John Baker, who supplies my keys via County Hardware, and Mary Lawes, are keener on keeping Grace Hill Library than many KCC professionals, who I know still see it as an aging, badly located drain on KCC.

The Lib Dems, not Lab or Con, are surprisingly No.2 at County, courtesy of the Waitrose "Where's my Irish passport" belt e.g. Tunbridge Wells. Reform's vote was an incredible 14000, when turnout should be much lower than in a general election. As GF wrote on 1st May, Tim Prater, the bumptious but very capable Lib Dem in Cheriton, Sandgate and Seabrook had a chance, and he got a majority of 64! So if you want a different local view from Reform, there's...him. We still have a Labour town council: small budget.

Mary Lawes covers Folkestone East: Creteway Down, Black Bull Road, Dover Road, the harbour area and up to Tontine Street. John Baker (Leyton Orient boy) represents the centre, West End, Guildhall Street and Broadmead.

The Importance of Music in Folkestone

by Maria Kingston, age 13, Folkestone School For Girls

Music is in the beat of our footsteps, in the song of the birds above our heads, the rhythm of our day-to-day lives. It travels across the globe, blasting from car radios, loudspeakers or kept quietly in headphones. As a world, its importance is undeniable. But as a town, how well does the stream of music flow through our streets?

Declared an International Art Town, Folkestone is not shy of creatives and opportunities to explore craft. This also means uplifting aspiring artists of all kinds - including musicians. The Bandstand on the Leas is a thriving venue for tribute acts, up and coming musicians and choirs of talented performers. The Harbour Arm holds many free showings of musicals in the summer on the Harbour Screen and bands or deejays in the event space. Even the most unlikely people can be brought together by sharing the evocative experience that is music, and so the all-access, budget-friendly activities Folkestone offers can spread this feeling. These events help fund the small businesses around the performance area, and shed light on issues that may need fixing.

The vibrant music scene and collaboration of musicians is also actually what landed us a case study at the United Nations Habitat World Urban Forum and coverage in BBC Music Day in 2018, recognising Folkestone as the World's First Music Town!

It is clear that the music surrounding this town (more often than not) sows the seeds of joy when meeting a listener's ears. However, while the tunes emitted from events may usually be music to the public's ears (literally), they *can* receive negative feedback. An example of this is the Music Workshop in the town centre of Folkestone, who were under threat of closure and penalties from the council after receiving a formal noise notice and abatement late May 2025. This was due to complaints from the neighbours of the loud sound particularly during live events.

Excessive loud noise can be damaging to the ears and disrupt the flow of the town and their habits - especially late at night - sometimes even disrupting nearby animals' habitats too. The electrical power used to power the necessary equipment often uses up a lot of energy and watts, as well as an increase in litter and use of environmentally damaging materials (such as a plastic water bottle) whether purposely left behind or dropped in the heat of the moment. With our proximity to the seaside, something Folkestone takes pride in, there is an increased risk of pollution in the sea and danger to the creatures such as seagulls.

Music is tailored to induce emotions from the listener, and sometimes these emotions can spark anti-social or disruptive behaviour throughout the town, possibly endangering people or at the very least causing them to choose a different route. Folkestone's creativity and hospitality to budding artists is crucial to the core that makes up this town and our dependence on music. Music is fundamental to life - something I certainly couldn't live without. The flow of music rushing there with you and the melodic beat it brings to Folkestone's heart is ever present, enhanced by the spread of song and tunes through the establishments and musical people that inhabit them too.

Regranding The Grand

After decades of neglect The Grand is slowly coming back to life and to its former grandeur. The building is owned by the leaseholders (Grand Folkestone Residents Limited) who purchased the freehold in the liquidation sale with company incorporation in February 2021. Since then the challenge to ensure the building is watertight, that its residents are safe and secure, and that all post-Grenfell recommendations are adhered to, has been consuming much time of the voluntary board of seven directors.

Alongside the initiatives to restore the fabric, the cultural life of the building goes from strength to strength with the original pioneering foundations (laid by Beton Collective) having been built on by a Community Interest Company, Grand Arts CIC. Now in its second year of life, The Green Room is fast becoming a performance destination with world class artists appearing through the collective efforts of Bayle Music, Folkestone New Music, Folkestone Early Music, Mermaid Concerts, Folkestone on Song, Folkestone Young Strings and the internationally acclaimed Sacconi String Quartet. All these organisations also shelter under the umbrella of Sounds Folkestone ensuring collaboration and co-operation is to the fore in this extraordinary Music Town.

Every artist who has appeared in one of the state rooms comments on the grandeur, the setting, the link with the opulent cultural past and the sympathetic acoustic which is neither too reverberant nor too dull. With early signs of a vibrant parallel commercial life emerging in Keppel's and the now dry and secure Palm Court being painted this summer, the future of world class music performance may well be accompanied in the not too distant future by the opportunity to eat and drink before or after an event.

Regranding The Grand

Grenville Hancox

Director Grand Arts CIC

Folkestone Live 25 **September 19th, 20th 21st**

Summer will be over, but you can put aside your "back to school" feelings and put these dates in your diary to enjoy the best of professional fringe entertainment at affordable prices.

Based at three Grand Burstin Hotel venues and The Old Cigar and Olive, we are bringing to Folkestone an amazing range of shows ranging from family pantomimes, theatre, comedy, stand-up and dance, to performances for adult audiences only.

To find out more, start following our Folkestone Live social media pages and look out for our website going live in July, where you can learn more about us, the acts and performers, as well as book your tickets.

We are a non-profit Community Interest Company, relying on volunteers, so if you would like to help us in any way from distributing programmes, helping backstage or front of house, please contact us by email.

There's something for everyone!

www.folkestonelive.com

info.folkestonelive@gmail.com

Diary Dates

July

Folkestone Harbour Arm have a full schedule of events for the summer holidays including music, films and games from **Wimbledon**, the **Women's Euros**, the **Lions Tour** plus **Grands Prix**. folkestoneharbourarm.co.uk

The Bandstand also has a full weekend programme until 14th September. folkestonefestival.org

- 27 June – 5 July **Annie** (FHODS) – Tower Theatre
- 1 **Canada Day Service**, Shorncliffe Military Cemetery 11am
- 2 **Tony Hill 'Look Up!' talk**. Folkestone History Society, Holy Trinity Church Hall
- 6 **Sandcastle Competition** – Sunny Sands
- 11 **Quiz, Raffle and Treasure Hunt**, Secrets within the Museum for the Town Mayor of Folkestone's Charities
- 14 – 18 **Charity Adventure Golf Championship** with Folkestone Channel Rotary at Folkestone Harbour Adventure Golf course with the final on July 19th
- 19 **Folkestone Symphony Proms Concert** – Leas Cliff Hall
- 20 **The Most Wuthering Heights Day Ever** – Harbour Arm
- 26 **Hawkinge Music Festival/Folkestone Pride Festival**
- 28 – 5 August **International Circus** – Radnor Park

August

- 3 **Twelfth Night**. The Amphitheatre, Lower Leas Coastal Park
- 8 **Trawler Race**
- 9/10 **Lions' Day(s)** Radnor Park
- 15 **VJ Day Service**, Garden of Remembrance 11am
- 16/17 **Music Festival Weekend**, Leas Bandstand
- 23/24 **Sandgate Sea Festival**
- 25 **Bank Holiday/Old Timer Car Rally**, the Leas

And regularly:

Saturdays Electrical Recycling - Go Folkestone Opposite Boots 10am – 2pm
Last Friday of every month 2pm – **Go Folkestone litter picking**, meet at the top of the Road of Remembrance.

3rd Sunday of the month – **Folkestone Repairs Together** at Holy Trinity Church Hall
12.30 – 14.30

4th Sunday of the month – **Folkestone Repairs Together** at Wood Avenue Library
12.30 – 14.30

Please see the **Go Folkestone website** for updates on **What's On**.

Folkestone Invicta News

by Richard Murrill, Folkestone Invicta FC

Folkestone Invicta go into the 2025-26 Isthmian League Premier Division season with high hopes of a promotion challenge under new manager Jay Saunders.

Saunders, aged 46, came in for the final four fixtures of last season after leaving National League South club Tonbridge Angels to join Invicta, bringing with him his trusted colleagues Lloyd Blackman and Tom Parkinson.



Manager Saunders had been at Tonbridge since May 2022, having joined them from Margate from 2019. He started his managerial career at Maidstone United initially as caretaker Player-Manager in March 2011 at the age of just 32. He led Maidstone to promotion from the Isthmian League Division One South via the play offs in 2012-13 and then to the Premier Division title in 2014-15. He guided Maidstone from the Isthmian League Division One South to the National League with

three promotions in just four seasons and kept them in the National League for two seasons. There were also Kent Senior Cup and Isthmian League Cup trophy wins, two appearances in the Second Round Proper of the F A Cup and two more in the First Round Proper.

As a player, Saunders represented Kent as a youngster and started his senior career at Gillingham for the 1995-96 season and played in the youth and reserve teams before being released during the 1996-97 season. He then joined Gravesend & Northfleet towards the end of the 1996-97 season.

He signed for Margate in August 1998 and scored against Brackley during May 1999 in the match that clinched Margate's promotion to the Southern League Premier Division. Margate finished as Southern League Premier Division champions in 2000-01 to win promotion to the Conference, with Jay winning the Players' Player of the Year award.

In 2002-03 (when Margate ground-shared at Dover) Jay scored in the F A Cup Fourth Round Qualifying win at Gravesend & Northfleet to set up a First Round tie against Leyton Orient which finished in a 1-0 home replay win following a 1-1 draw. Margate then hosted Cardiff in the Second Round which they lost 3-0. Margate won the Kent Senior Cup that season when Jay was the sponsors' man of the match at Welling United and he also won the Players' Player of the Year award again.

Jay was Vice-Captain in 2003-04 Margate when retained the Kent Senior Cup with a 2-1 final win away to Folkestone Invicta.

Jay rejoined Conference club Gravesend & Northfleet in May 2004 and remained there until May 2006. In the summer of 2006 he joined Conference South club Lewes but soon returned to Margate, initially on loan. Jay left Margate to join Maidstone United in May 2008 and became Maidstone captain for 2009-10. In February 2010 he became Player-Coach but was soon back for a third spell at Margate as captain. A whole-hearted midfielder player, in total, Jay made 373 appearances for Margate, scoring 50 goals. He also gained five caps for the England semi-professional side.

He rejoined Maidstone in January 2011 becoming permanent Player-Manager that summer.

Visit the club's website
www.folkestoneinvictafc.co.uk



ASPECTS OF FOLKESTONE CALENDAR



Hi Everyone. One again I'm writing to you in the hope that you will have more splendid photographs that you will allow us to reproduce in our next calendar which is of course **ASPECTS OF FOLKESTONE 2026**, which will be printed next November in time for Christmas. 2026 will be our tenth successive calendar and is just as popular now as when we started in 2017.

Go Folkestone is a Community Action Group set up in 2000 to help promote Folkestone's development and future and as a non-profit organisation the calendar is our primary source of income while at the same time promoting what a beautiful town Folkestone is.

The photographs should be scenic and taken mainly within the Folkestone Town Council Boundary with the exception of adjacent areas such as Sandgate, Elham Valley, Alkham Valley, The White Cliffs, North Downs, and don't have to be taken in the last twelve months as long as the subject is largely unchanged, Winter, Summer, Spring and Autumn – all aspects. Does anyone have shots of the recent The Harbour Arm Fireworks Display?

The successful photographers will be clearly credited and receive three free copies. The proceeds will go towards projects such as the Leas Balcony Lookout, The Pier Foundation Stone and the planting of cherry trees in remembrance of the late Queen Elizabeth II in Cheriton Road Cemetery.

Your files should be high res or large size jpgs, horizontal (landscape) format.

Please send your submissions once they are available as we will go to press as soon as we have the required number of shots which will give us a longer period to merchandise them but that said the final date for submissions will be September 11th.

Submissions to be sent to info@gofolkestone.org.uk or djn@noblepics.co.uk



FOODS THAT IMPROVE MEMORY & CONCENTRATION

If you don't look after your body ~ where else do you expect to live?
... a healthy person has 1000 wishes ~ a sick person has ONE!

For more info contact me—**Nicola Tolson 07855 445920**
or visit my website www.becausegrannywasright.com

