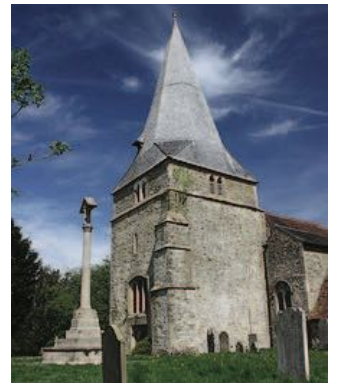


The Sundridge Village News

December 2023 - January 2024



In this issue we hear from The Rectory, learn about A Crafty Afternoon in the Church and, from Fundridge, about events past and yet to come, receive updates from Forest Church, the Sundridge and Brasted CE Primary School, the Parish Council and the Brasted, Ide Hill and Sundridge Gardening Society plus, of course, dates for your diary!

Parish Services - December

Sunday 3rd Advent Sunday

- 09.00 Toys Hill Holy Communion
led by Rev Lynette Leithead
- 10.30 Sundridge Holy Communion
with Advent hymns *led by Rev Lynette Leithead*

Sunday 10th

- 10.30 Ide Hill Family Carol Service
and blessing of new Crib at Ide Hill with Forest Church
led by Rev Lynette Leithead and Jane Rosam

Sunday 17th

- 16.30 Sundridge Traditional Candlelit Carol Service
led by Rev Lynette Leithead

Please note the earlier starting time of 4.30pm

Sunday 24th Christmas Eve

- 10.00 St Martins Holy Communion
Joint Parish Service at St Martin's Brasted led by Rev Adie McCall
- 17.00 Toys Hill Crib Service (*costumes welcome*)
led by Rev Lynette Leithead and Jane Rosam
- 23.00 Sundridge Holy Communion - Midnight Mass
led by Rev Richard Howlett

Monday 25th Christmas Day

- 09.00 Toys Hill Morning Worship
led by Jane Rosam
- 10.30 Ide Hill Morning Worship
led by Rev Lynette Leithead

Sunday 31st

- 10.30 Ide Hill Holy Communion
led by Rev Lynette Leithead

Parish Services - January

Monday 1st New Year's Day

- 12.00 Sundridge Ringing in the New Year
led by Rev Lynette Leithead with Mulled Wine & Mince Pies!

Sunday 7th Baptism of Christ

- 09.00 Toys Hill Holy Communion
led by Rev Adie McCall
- 10.30 Sundridge Holy Communion
led by Rev Adie McCall
- 15.00 Toys Hill Forest Church
Welcome the Wise Men!

Sunday 14th

- 10.30 Ide Hill Morning Worship
led by Jane Rosam

Sunday 21st

- 10.30 Sundridge Morning Worship
led by Rev Angela Baker

Sunday 28th

- 10.30 Ide Hill Holy Communion
led by Rev Lynette Leithead

Churchwardens Althea Chapman
Jane Belle

email: althea.chapman@outlook.com

email: thebellsareringing@outlook.com Telephone 01959 565444

Refreshments are served after the Sunday Services giving time for fellowship and friendship

From The Rectory

“JUST NINE WORDS”

I'm the first to admit that I love all the trappings of Christmas - the decorations, the candles, the food and the presents, as well as carols, midnight communion and being with the family. And here's an admission - I even love the round of very predictable Christmas films! I've lost count of how many times I've watched James Stewart starring in "It's a Wonderful Life" or yet another adaptation of Dicken's "A Christmas Carol"!

Each of us will have our own ideas about what makes Christmas special but, if given just nine words to sum it up, I wonder what we would say about what it really means to us?

The late Cardinal Basil Hume was once stopped by a reporter and asked what Christmas meant to him. In a later article he wrote that he had replied with the first thing that came into his head but, after he had walked about 15 yards or so, the familiar truth that he'd spoken actually "dawned" on him.

He'd known it all his life, but suddenly he saw it and understood it in a new way as the understanding of a profound truth moved from head to heart. It was, he said, "staggering". His reply to the reporter's question was just nine words long. He said,

"The great and awesome God became man for me".

There is an even more staggering truth – that what he said is equally true for you and me. Why not say the words again and let them rest in your heart and mind?

"The great and awesome God became man for me".

When that truth becomes a reality for us, Christmas takes on a new meaning and we enter into its wonder and joy

in a whole new way. May it be true for you this Christmas.

Come and join us as we celebrate the wonder of Christmas this year in the parish. There's a service for everyone and a warm welcome waiting for you.

Wishing you all a very happy, peaceful and wonder filled Christmas and New Year.

Lynette

Rev Lynette Leithead

PS If anyone would like a visit,
please do call me on 07932 605604

Forest Church Fun

Remember, remember the 5th of November – and that is what Forest Church did when we last met. We talked about remembering and why we remember. The Bible reading was about God's covenant with Noah and the promise he made that never again would a flood destroy the earth. Every time we see a rainbow, we remember God's promise to us.

We talked about Remembrance Sunday and then made 'windmill' poppies with varying degrees of success and

stained glass window hangings from fallen leaves stuck onto tracing paper.

We finished the afternoon with sparklers and a warming cup of tea.

The next Forest Church will be Sunday 10th December where we'll be joining the 10.30 service at Ide Hill.

Do join us, fun is guaranteed.



Sheila Turner 1935 - 2023

It is with much sadness that we report that Sheila died 12th November 2023 aged 88, peacefully at home on Remembrance Sunday.

Sheila lived in Sundridge for over 50 years and was involved with and an active member of many local groups and societies. Sheila regularly arranged the flowers for the church services and led the Flower Team for many years.

There will be a Cremation at 10.00am on Wednesday 13th December at Bluebell Crematorium, for family only, followed by a Memorial Service at 2.30 in St. Mary's Church, Sundridge to celebrate her life, to which all are very welcome.

Sheila will be much missed by family and her many friends in the village and beyond.



Flowers to the Crematorium or
please make a donation to Cancer Research UK
via www.justgiving.com/page/inmemoryofsheliaturner

Fundridge Sundridge Cheese and Wine Pairing

At the beginning of the evening we raised glasses to bless the lives of Sheila and Peggy, who were long-term villagers who died this week. Our hearts go out to their families and all who loved and looked after them.

Another fantastic cheese and wine evening, but this time with a twist. Each of the wines was paired with a certain cheese/biscuit/fruit. This is meant to bring out the flavours of the wine.

Six wines were discussed, compared by the brilliant Oli and Ian who always go head-to-head to make you choose whether they are telling the truth about the provenance of the wine or not. This banter makes the evening more fun and brings in a competitive element.

The lovely Melvin obviously has a discerning palate as he selected all the correct answers and won the prize for the evening.

What I found most uplifting (apart from the banter and laughter) was that it was exactly the lovely mix of

people that our Chair, who founded Fundridge, was looking for back in January 2017 when we formed Fundridge Sundridge.

Our ethos is – 'a group of villagers who believe in friendship, a better community and bringing neighbours together.' This event demonstrated that his ambition has become a reality. We welcomed a complete cross-section of people from around the village who would never have come together for a cheese and wine event 5 or 6 years ago and we all had a great time together.

Our next event, in conjunction with the Parish Council "Winter Funderland", will take place on Coronation Gardens on Sunday 3rd December. Come along and enjoy a fun Christmas afternoon from 3pm – 7pm. Meet Father Christmas, enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie, and join in the carol singing and the switching on of the village Christmas lights.



News from Sundridge and Brasted CE Primary School

Greetings from Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School

Well, it is probably fair to say that our most exciting piece of news for this month's edition is that Ofsted have published their report and we are officially a 'Good' school. We are absolutely delighted! You may have seen our banner?!

We were certain that we were 'good' but it is really nice to have Ofsted's agreement! We are so very proud of all of the staff and all of our wonderful children. The Inspector was also impressed by the parental support during the inspection as so many of our lovely parents were keen to make their views known to her. So, November has been a great month so far!

In other news, we have very much focused on the importance and meaning of Remembrance Sunday and raised money for The Royal British Legion by selling poppies in school. In the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday Reverend Lynette led a lovely whole school worship for us with the focus on the importance of remembering and sharing memories of people and events so that they affect us in a positive way. She brought with her poppies, hand knitted by local residents in past years, which the children pinned to a cross as they reflected on the service. We held our own Remembrance Service on Friday 10th, observing the two-minute silence and laying wreaths made in class at the War Memorial at St Mary's Church. And our Head Boy and Head Girl represented the school by laying a wreath at St Mary's Church on Remembrance Sunday.

We have also supported Children in Need by wearing our own clothes, which is always fun, in exchange for a donation to the charity and, as always, we thank our children and parents for their generosity.

Three of our children have attended a writing day hosted by Radnor House with Kimba, a poet and hip hop artist, leading the day to inspire and challenge the children to develop and extend their writing skills. They all thoroughly enjoyed the day, worked hard and produced great pieces of work.

Looking forward to Christmas, we have our Christingle Service planned for Monday 27th November. The children will

make their Christingles in school and then take them to the church for a lovely Christingle Service led by Reverend Lynette. The Christmas theme will continue to our Nativity Play, Baarmy Bethlehem, performed in school for parents. The songs are such fun and the children are thoroughly enjoying the rehearsals and very much looking forward to their performances which will be wonderful! We also have a lovely Carol Concert planned for all of our families, which will be held in St Mary's Church with Reverend Lynette officiating.

We will also support Save the Children UK on Christmas Jumper day in December by wearing our fabulous Christmas Jumpers and making a donation to the charity.

We will end the term with learning celebrations in each class, a pizza party for children who have achieved their reading target and a hot chocolate and mince pies party for our Shining Stars who consistently demonstrate our school values.

Finally, please do spread the word to all friends and families who have young children due to start school next September that we would love to meet them and show them our lovely school. Remember to say that Ofsted have judged us to be 'Good'! Our website:- www.sundridge.kent.sch.uk has lots of useful information and prospective parents should call the school to make an appointment to meet the staff and see the school.

We wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School

Telephone: 01959 562694

email: office@sundridge.kent.sch.uk www.sundridge.kent.sch.uk

We value every member of our community, and support them to shine. "You are the light of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

(Matthew 5 verse 14, New International Version)



A Crafty Afternoon in the Church

Saturday 25th November saw a group of villagers put their creative skills to the test to make Christmas wreaths. Now that some pews at the back of the church have been removed, it made an ideal place to assemble

some beautiful wreaths while listening to Christmas music and partaking of one or two sneaky mince pies and mulled wines. The results were spectacular.



Brasted, Ide Hill and Sundridge Gardening Society

Our 2023 AGM was conducted in record time, with the Committee all happy to stand again and then being duly elected. While our speaker was preparing for her talk, everyone took the opportunity to refill their glasses, have a chat and sample some of the nibbles!

Our speaker was Jacqueline Anthony, Assistant County Organiser for Kent National Garden Scheme, and she gave us a fascinating insight as to how the scheme was formed. In 1859 William Rathbone employed Mary Robinson to nurse his sick wife and retained her after his wife's death, so that people in Liverpool who could not afford to pay for nursing could benefit from being nursed at home.

He worked closely with Florence Nightingale and in 1887 the Queen's Nursing Institute was formed. It was in 1926 at a Queen's Nursing Institute meeting that Elsie Wagg came up with the idea of opening peoples' gardens to the public and the money raised going to medical causes. As they say, 'the rest is history' and the scheme still does this wonderful work today, donating vast sums of money to societies such as Macmillan Nurses, The British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research, to name but a few.

Jacqueline also showed us some beautiful pictures, inspiring us to go and visit some of the gardens in the scheme next year.

This was our last meeting of 2023. We meet again on Wednesday 14th February 2024 for our Afternoon Tea so, if you are tempted to join us, please come along and meet us and have a cup of tea and a cake, we would love to see you.

On another note, we were all very saddened to hear that one of our long-standing members, Sheila Turner, had passed away. Many of us knew Sheila and her late husband, Alan, who both joined the Sundridge and Brasted Horticultural Society in the 1980s. Alan was Treasurer, Chairman and a Vice President over the years until 2006 and in the early years Sheila was actively involved providing teas at events such as the Society shows. She became a Committee Member in the mid-1990s and was Secretary for three years from 2001 to 2004 when she became Programme Secretary, a post she held till 2009 when she retired from the Committee. We are grateful for Sheila's loyalty and service to the Society and for the friendships that were made during her time with us. She will be fondly remembered and missed by all that knew and loved her, and our heartfelt condolences go to all of Sheila's family and friends. A Memorial Service will be held on Wednesday 13th December at 2.30pm at Sundridge Church in celebration of Sheila's life.

Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council update

Kent Highways meeting

On 24th October representatives of the Parish Council met with representatives of Kent County Council Highways. It was a great opportunity to sit down and discuss in person some of the challenges being faced by the parish. Below is an account of what was discussed, which the Parish Council is keen to share to ensure residents are kept up to date. The details of the meeting will also now be taken back to the full Parish Council for consideration and so no actions have yet been agreed or taken. The Parish Council will keep residents informed as discussions progress and actions are agreed.

Sundridge Ward

1. Safe crossing at the crossroads between the A25, Chevening Road and Church Road. As residents will be aware, we have had numerous accidents in this area and residents struggle with feeling safe enough to cross the road here. The question was raised to Highways about possible options. Highways confirmed that it was unlikely that a pedestrian crossing could be added here. The cost would likely be upwards of £75,000. The delay that would be caused to the A25 due to stopping all traffic on both roads frequently to allow pedestrians to cross would also be untenable and severely impact traffic flow in the area, something that is already a major challenge. We discussed any options to introduce a pedestrian crossing further down the A25 but nearer to the crossroads. Highways confirmed that the current location of the pedestrian crossing, on the A25 past the shop, is the first safe location along the A25 due to the requirement for clear line of sight and so introducing one closer was not possible. Their recommendation is that pedestrians continue to use the existing crossing to cross the A25 as this is the only confirmed safe location.

2. Following the parking survey (which received a good response and consistent information so thank you to all residents that responded), we raised the issues highlighted from the survey: parking on the A25 and surrounding roads and blocking of the pavement due to parked cars. Highways confirmed their remit is to ensure safe free flow of the highway and pedestrian safe access to the pavements. We raised several suggestions that could possibly help the village with parking:

a. Allowing residents permission to create their own off-road parking on their front gardens. Highways confirmed any resident wanting to explore this option should apply online at the following link: [Apply for a dropped kerb, extension or access point - Kent County Council](#). There is a fee which must be paid even if the request is denied, so they recommend reading all the criteria that must be met (details on their website) before applying. The criteria are set by the Department of Transport and adopted by Kent Highways. They did confirm that they will never approve access in any situation that would result in a more dangerous outcome for the highway and its users.

b. Moving the white line over to give wider access on the south side of the main road to support parking

that is there today. This was rejected due to the width of the road.

c. Reducing the width or location of the pavement to introduce parking bays on the A25 near The White Horse where the pavement is wider or on Chevening Road where there is also the grass bank. Highways confirmed there are no plans to take anything of this nature forward. The cost is prohibitive.

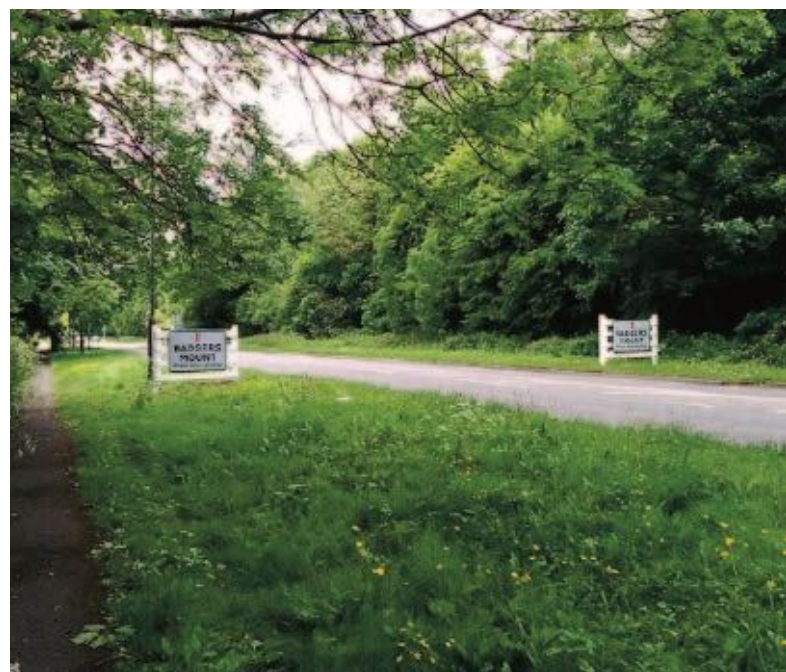
d. Replacing the green on Chapmans Road with parking bays. This land is not owned by Kent Highways and so this is something the Parish Council could explore further with Sevenoaks District Council (who own the land) after further consultation with the residents of Chapmans Road.

e. Introducing a public carpark. Providing parking is not within Kent Highways' remit and so any steps to do this would be in the hands of the parish and at our village's expense.

Highways confirmed the only action that they would consider taking would be to double-yellow line the A25 as this would remove the issues with pedestrians not being able to safely use the pavement which was a clear concern raised by residents in the recent survey. This, though, would exacerbate the current lack of parking in the village. There is also a concern this would facilitate the traffic moving faster along the A25 when speeding is already a concern.

3. We discussed the issues with speeding on both the A25 and other roads in the village. Highways confirmed that the average speed cameras on the A25 were always for a trial period only. However, Nick Chard, our Kent County Councillor, our three Sevenoaks District Councillors and the Parish Council are continuing to campaign for their return. Highways confirmed this was a possibility; however, it would always be on a rolling basis so the equipment (which is very expensive to run) could be used in multiple Kent locations throughout the year. This is an ongoing discussion, and we will keep the village updated on any developments as they happen.

Highways highlighted a possible option to try and reduce speeding by introducing village entry gates (see example in image below) on the A25 to the east as you



enter the village. The theory is that this acts as a speed deterrent as they set drivers' perception that they are entering a residential village and naturally slow down. The cost of these would need to come from the Parish Council; however, this cost would be more achievable than any of the other points discussed.

Speeding on the side roads was also discussed, particularly in relation to the traffic leaving Ide Hill and coming down Church Road to the traffic lights. Highways have agreed to run speed checks to collect data that can then help inform any further action that could be taken on these roads.

They also confirmed that they have found the most effective means of reducing speed in these types of roads is by villages running a local speed campaign. Highways are sending the Parish Council a speed campaign pack which contains posters and stickers residents can place on their property to remind drivers of the speed and encourage drivers to stick to it.

Ide Hill Ward

1. In Ide Hill we discussed whether the 30mph speed limit from the Pre-school through to beyond the Primary School could be reduced to 20mph. Highways agreed to put in place a data survey to see whether there were currently any issues with speeding especially near the school and we await the results. In the meantime, other options to make motorists more speed aware were discussed and are to be considered once we have the data. In the interim, Kent Highways will be providing the Parish Council with a speed awareness pack of posters and stickers to be used by the Parish Council and residents to remind drivers of the current limit and to stick to it. When this is received, we will make residents aware.

2. Highways confirmed that they would agree to kerbing being installed around the Green but would not fund it. The Parish Council does not have the funds to do this but will engage with local residents to see what can be achieved.

Next Steps

The full Parish Council will now review all this information over the coming months to determine the best next steps.

Ide Hill Christmas tree

Once again, the Parish Council will be providing a Christmas Tree for Ide Hill which should have been erected by the time you read this newsletter. The Parish Council has also provided a new socket on the streetlight next to the roundabout so we can now use mains powered lights, saving a significant number of batteries this year and into the future.

Carols on the Green

The annual Ide Hill Christmas Carols on the Green will take place on Friday 8th December, starting at the earlier time of 6pm so more families can attend. The Parish Council will provide mulled wine, hot chocolate, mince pies and sweets for all. So, brave the cold and come to join us in singing a few Christmas favourites.

Stubbs Wood

Aztech Tree Services have completed the first phase of work at Stubbs Wood which was the widening of the

bridleway from the car park in both directions. This has involved the removal of several trees in accordance with the Woodland Management Plan. A grant which funds support of the woodland is based upon this plan. Conformance with this plan is necessary to improve the woodland amenity, encourage more wildlife and increase natural regeneration. The widening of this bridleway will increase the amount of light getting into the wood and, once it dries out, will give better access for riders and walkers. Unfortunately, the work has coincided with a very wet start to the winter so the felled timber will have to remain until ground conditions improve. The rutting caused by the machinery has been reduced somewhat by the contractor but, given the natural drainage issues of parts of the bridleway, we are looking for ways to improve drainage later in the winter. The volunteers will be asked to see if they can assist in this.

The next stage of work, coppicing and thinning of the woods, will take place in the new year, probably February.

The forbearance of the public is greatly appreciated whilst this work is going on through the winter and all users of the woods are reminded to take extra care at this time and especially when works are taking place. Notices of closures and diversions are for the safety of everyone and are not merely an inconvenience but must be heeded.

Memorial benches at Stubbs Wood

As the work progresses in Stubbs Wood, new vistas will be opened up. The Parish Council would be happy to receive any applications for memorial benches to be procured and placed in the woods. The Parish Council has a bench policy and potential donors should contact the Clerk for details and prices. Please note that the location of any benches is subject to approval by the Ide Hill Amenities Committee of the Parish Council.

Ide Hill Phone Box

Local residents Peter Wade and Derry Wiltshire have voluntarily taken on the task of sprucing up the old Telephone Box next to the bus stop on the Green. The Parish Council have supplied the materials and work is currently underway, but the early results look impressive.

Goathurst Common Playground

On Saturday 11th November, the Quiz Night to raise funds for a new playground at Goathurst Common recreation ground was attended by 80+ people and raised over £1,500.

The event also raised awareness among residents who have made offers of assistance plus a couple of donations of items and equipment not being used elsewhere. Residents have offered manual help to reduce costs and the playground fundraising team are looking at possibly refurbishing some of the existing items rather than replacing them.

In the meantime, applications for grants and donations are being actively followed up.

Next Parish Council meetings - Full Council

Monday 11th December 2023 at 19:45

Sundridge Village Hall

Winter Funderland

Fundridge Sundridge in partnership with Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council are pleased to confirm that we will be hosting another Winter Funderland for the village on Sunday 3rd December 3.00pm to 7.00pm on the Coronation Gardens

Come down and enjoy a fun family Christmas afternoon 3pm to 7pm. Activities include:

Meet Father Christmas at our Santa's Grotto and get a free children's present. Visit our lovely pop-up Fundridge Christmas shop to purchase some of your Christmas presents. Enjoy a free glass of mulled wine or hot chocolate and a mince pie.

Purchase food and drink from our Fundridge bar.

The annual Parish Council Christmas Carols will be at 5.00pm, so bring your best singing voices to sing along with the choir.

- Following the carols will be the switching on of the Village Christmas Lights at 6pm



The December - January edition

If you have anything for the "Dates for your Diary" or an article that you'd like included in the next edition, please email by Wednesday 24th January 2024 to:-

editor@sundridgevillagenews.co.uk

Do subscribe to the Sundridge Village News, there is no cost and your details are not shared with anyone.

Send an email with "Subscribe" in the subject line to sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com

Dates for your diary

Sunday 3rd December 15.00-19.00 Winter Funderland
Coronation Gardens - See article

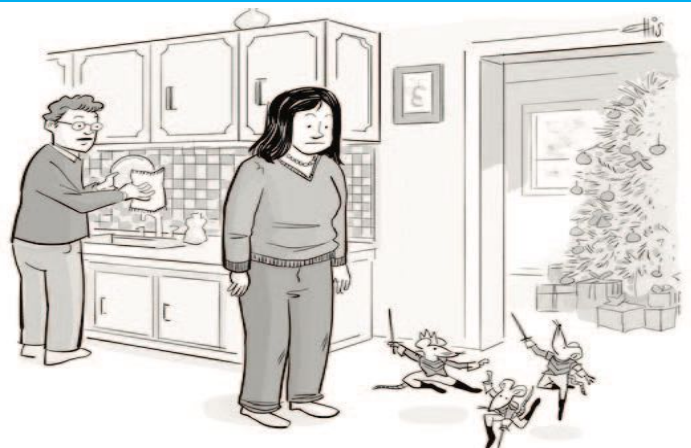
Monday 11th December at 19:45 Parish Council meetings - Full Council Sundridge Village Hall

Until 31st December 2024 Textus 900 celebrations

Until 1 January 2024 Portrait of Dr John Thomas
both at Rochester Cathedral

Wednesday 14th February 2024 Afternoon tea
Brasted, Ide Hill and Sundridge Gardening Society

And finally . . .



The mice always do "The Nutcracker" at this time of year



Come and visit Sundridge & Brasted Church of England Primary School!

**WE ARE PROUD TO BE A
"GOOD"
SCHOOL!**

During our most recent OFSTED inspection (October 2023) the inspectors said:

"The school has high expectations for all pupil's achievement."

"There are lots of opportunities for pupils to deepen and broaden their experiences."

"Pupil's mental health and well-being are a priority."

If you have a child who is due to start Reception in September 2024, we would love to meet you.

**Please give us a ring on 01959 562694
or email office@sundridge.kent.sch.uk**

For more information, please visit www.sundridge.kent.sch.uk

We look forward to meeting you!