

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY FOR 20 YEARS

This year is IwadeVillage.co.uk's 20th Birthday! Did you know we have a village website? Search for Iwade and you should find it immediately after Wikipedia!

My name is Nicola McKenzie and I set up the Iwade Village website back in 2005 as my first business venture as McKenzie Web Solutions. It's still hanging in there now but is due a redesign for its 20th Birthday, which is a work in progress.

Iwade What's On at a glance, the latest news for projects of the moment - think the A249 Grovehurst Road improvement scheme (and resulting road closure in and out of the village), 5G mobile mast, new houses (the imminent 466 dwellings development complete with country park and community hall), Iwade Health Centre appointments and prescriptions and the recent closure of the A2 Tyres Iwade Garage.

There's an Iwade Directory, an Iwade Observer link for all online editions plus the Iwade Parish Council Minutes with an archive going way back. You can even see at a glance what bin to put out this week!

We're planning a 20th birthday relaunch at Iwade Barn later in the year with free tea and cake and we'd love to see you there. Drop us an email at Hello@iwadevillage.co.uk or message our Facebook page [IwadeVillage.co.uk](https://www.facebook.com/IwadeVillage.co.uk) (give us a follow while you're there!) to register your interest or pass on any feedback or comments.

The Iwade website will continue as long as residents find it useful and a recent poll concluded it still has its place alongside Facebook groups. Iwade Village's Instagram will be coming soon as part of the relaunch (who doesn't love a picture!) Thank you for reading and do take a look at [IwadeVillage.co.uk](https://www.IwadeVillage.co.uk) on the web if it's not already one of your go-to websites, you might be pleasantly surprised.

IWADE TOURS - UPCOMING TRIPS



By the time you are reading this, Iwade Tours will have embarked on our first sold out trip of 2025, whereby we travelled up to London for an Elvis Tribute on board a moored boat in King George V Dock. Due to the success and support for this trip, we have been able to book another five trips for 2025 plus a potential short break on the horizon for 2026!

Full details for these outings are available on our Facebook page and are circulated within our monthly newsletter, please email Iwadetours@gmail.com if you would like to be added to our mailing list. Our trips include a visit to the New Forest on Monday 23rd June that includes a two course lunch and guided tour (£85 pp), Tiptree Jam Factory on Wednesday 23rd July (£63 pp), a 'Mamma Mia!' Matinee show with Dress Circle Seats on Thursday 4th September (£70 pp), an 'Oliver!' Matinee show with Stall seats on Wednesday 26th November (£95 pp) and Cruising into Christmas on Tuesday 9th December (£85 pp). Places are secured with a £25 deposit per person at the time of booking, with full balance due a couple of weeks before the trip.

We will always use Executive coaches with allocated seating and washroom, direct travel from Woodpecker Park and our unique Iwade Tours hospitality. As we are a non-profit making group we strive to get the best value days out for you all and hope to offer some interesting and different trips for yourself, friends and family. Our vision is to create a friendly travel group for Iwade and we hope to maintain the support to continue for as long as possible. We hope to see some of you soon travelling with Iwade Tours!



The Iwade Observer

MARCH 2025

THE OLDEST MAN IN IWADE



By John Guest

Some of you may have heard that the oldest man in Iwade died last month. He was 102 years and 104 days old. He had an exceptional life and was deeply loved by his family and friends. If you met him he wouldn't mention the fact that he was a war hero but would wring your hand and declare himself all the better for meeting you!

His passing set me to reflecting on our shared dread of death and reminded me of a wonderful story by Fr. William J. Bausch of a man whose aunt was dying and confessed to him her fear of that final journey. The man lovingly reminded his aunt of how she'd taken him in as a six-year old orphan so long ago. She had sent her servant Caesar to fetch him and he well remembered the dark ten-mile journey on horseback through a scary wood.

The boy had worried that his aunt may not have waited up for him and that the new house would be strange but when they finally arrived there was his aunt to greet

him. She hugged him tight and lifted that tired frightened little boy down from the horse. There was a fire in the hearth and a hot supper on the stove. Then she took him to his new room, tucked him in, listened to his prayers and sat him with him until he fell asleep.

The man reminded his aunt that she did not need to be afraid of the summons or the strange journey or the dark messenger of death. God can be trusted to do as much for you as you did for me so many years ago he said.

And Fr. Bausch writes:

"At the end of the road you'll find love and a welcome waiting. And you'll be safe in God's care. I'm going to watch and pray for you until you're out of sight. And I shall wait for the day when I make the same journey myself and find you waiting at the end of the road to greet me." Ken Guest, the oldest man in Iwade, made that journey and he was not afraid.

He was my father and I loved him and one day he will welcome me home too.

God bless you. John x



WEATHER HALTS VITAL WORK AT SPEEDWAY

By *Paul Heller*

The recent wet and cold weather has seriously disrupted Sittingbourne Speedway’s winter re-building and maintenance program. The track and surrounding grassed areas have been absolutely saturated and could not even be walked on. However, work has begun in the drier areas and is progressing.

A new extension to the riders’ pits area has now been completed, the toilets, turrets and other buildings have all had a lick of paint and all the rotten safety fence wooden boards have been replaced. It has been necessary to replace the air fence with a newer uprated one and this is currently being worked on, it was hoped to have this done by early February leaving time for other projects but the bad weather has put us behind schedule. Each weekend sees a growing band of enthusiastic volunteers plus the regular track staff paddling and sloshing about in the mud trying to get things completed.

There are plans to run a practice meeting at the end of March – weather permitting so it really is a race against time. We are hopeful the next few weeks’ weather will be kind to us and allow us to press on and get things done.

NEWS FROM CITIZENS ADVICE

At Citizens Advice Swale we help people sort out their problems, by giving all kinds of advice – and it’s all totally free. Did you know, we rely on donations and grants in order to change the lives of local people? We’re a totally independent small charity, and we don’t get money from central Government. In 2024 we advised 2,058 clients on 15,951 issues, wrote off £238,796 debts, and helped our clients gain income of £1,644,793. We issued 307 foodbank vouchers and 464 fuel vouchers. In 2023/4 every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Swale was worth £17.89 in public value. The smallest contribution really can make a big difference. We’re grateful to all our current supporters who help us continue to provide a service in Swale. There are several ways you can help;

- Cashback when you shop online: <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/charity/citizensadviceswale>
- One-off or regular cash donations: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/charity/citizensadviceswale>
- Become a Friend of Citizens Advice Swale: <https://citizensadviceswale.uk/support-us/>
- Choose us as your local charity through the Faversham & District Community Lottery: <https://www.favershamdistrictlottery.co.uk/support/citizens-advice-swale>
- Consider leaving us a gift in your Will: <https://citizensadviceswale.uk/support-us/leaving-a-legacy/>

Here’s how to contact us for advice:

- Local drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary) -
- Monday, 10am-12pm, Swale House, Sittingbourne
 - Tuesday, 10am-12pm, Sheppey Gateway, Sheerness (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)
 - Tuesday, 11.30am-1.30pm, Murston Family Hub, Tonge Road
 - Wednesday & Friday, 10am-12pm, 43 Stone Street, Faversham

For telephone advice, call **Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979** (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)
Or for email advice, contact us online at www.citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice (Monday-Wednesday). For debt advice, you can request a call back from our money advice team at www.citizensadviceswale.uk/debt. If you want to stay up to date with our opening times, please visit www.citizensadviceswale.uk or follow us on Facebook.

There lies the skeleton of the Russian ship. Professor Meisen had shown us the file on the shipwreck. It had been en route to the Cape of Good Hope when it had hit rocks in Walvis Bay in August 1925, carrying both cargo and the famous Kasyan Goleizovsky dance group from Moscow.

The ship is nothing but a rusting frame, filled with sand blown in over the passage of time.

‘We found very little in the carcass of the ship. Too much salt eroded most of the hull and anything that was inside was likely washed out to sea,’ says Professor Meisen.

‘I can imagine,’ says my mother, ‘it’s a shame though.’ ‘We have more evidence gleaned from the dig we did in the desert. And we have an account of one of the survivors who was found,’ he says.

‘Who was that?’ I ask.

‘Another passenger who trekked inland with your parents to try and find fresh water, later found by a sailor from a passing ship who saw the recent wreck and landed a small boat to go in search of any survivors: Ivor Gunssen. It is thanks to him that you

are here today, Rita,’ he says. We drive about half a mile to the site of discovery in the desert. There is a Namibian University flag pinned into the soil over the site. There is tape around the boundary of the discovery.

‘We only found some clothing: a shoe, a fur hat; a waist-coat; a watch... and this pendant,’ he says pulling out a bag from the bag he brought along.

‘Take a look at this,’ he says handing the bag to me. A locket is in the bag. I pull it out. There are my parents, side by side, one picture of them dancing, the other of them on their wedding day. My mother shows signs of being pregnant.

‘She was pregnant before they were married?’ I exclaim.

‘It seems so,’ say the Professor Meisen, ‘look at the inscription on the back.’ I turn it over. Maria and Dimitri Nikolaeveina.

‘Our research has shown that that is close to the surname of the Romanov children. This was the pseudonym they used in those times,’ he tells me. **To be continued...**

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PASTORAL LETTER

By *Lis Willmet*

I wonder how many of us find it difficult to listen – not just to each other but also to the sounds around us – and to God.

Sometimes it feels that our busy and chaotic world threatens our ability to listen. There is just so much noise. So much distraction. So many things that demand and compete for our attention. It is very difficult not to be continuously active – both of the body and the mind. And yet when we take time to slow down, to be still, even to stop, interesting and life affirming things happen. We will find that we start to notice new things. We will become more attentive. And we will have the potential to listen.

A few weeks ago I heard Karine Polwart in concert. She is a Scottish folk singer. These words of one of her songs really spoke to me;

“Be Still. Be still. Look up to the sky. Tread lightly as you pass on by. And listen.” I think the words could be considered to be challenging. They are counter-cultural. They could be heard as an order – or an instruction – or a heart-felt plea. They are asking us to take action - to do something – to be different and to make a difference. For me there is a resonance in these words of the psalmist calling us to be still. To seek God and to know him. To love and be loved. To forgive and be forgiven. To live with respect for others and the world around us.

What might we discover if we took time to be still? What would change in us if we began to look around and to notice and to listen?

In the Christian year we are about to start Lent. Maybe as we enter Lent this year and travel towards Easter, we could try and make moments to practise being still. Perhaps we could learn to become more attentive, more curious, more tuned in, and more able to listen. Maybe we can even seek out silence. And in the silence maybe we will be surprised. I hope that we will each meet anew with God. I hope that we might each find a new joy in the natural world. Be blessed as you listen.

DESERT DIRGE - PART ONE

By *Andrea van Schalkwyk*

Digging, digging, frantically digging. Dust and sand clog my eyes. I spit out the sand, salty and gritty in my saliva. Sweat drips down into my eyes, further irritating my eyes filled with grains of sand. Wet sandpaper: I imagine this scraping away at my eyes, blinding me. I can only feel with my fingers the dry bones emerging from the sand. Two skulls, a humerus, a hand, a femur...

I startle awake, drenched in perspiration. Another nightmare. Another futile subconscious delusion my brain has conjured up to rob me of yet another night's sleep. My mouth is dry. Parched like in the dream. I reach for the glass of water next to my bed. I drink deeply. It doesn't wash away the sensation from my dream. Nothing does.

Last week I received information from the Walvis Bay archives about my birth record. My adopted mom offered to help me research my background. I'm adopted by two amazing people. Both are German immigrants. My first language is German but, I'm writing this in English, so that anyone who finds this can easily read it, especially if it's the Press, or maybe it might necessitate the Police. This may sound drastic, ominous even but, I have this uncanny feeling it is necessary.

‘Santjie, breakfast,’ my mom calls, interrupting my chain of thought, and my dutiful entry into my Diary. ‘I’ll be there just now Mom,’ I call out.

This is an important day, as we have a professional team of experts who are going to take us out into the Namibian desert via the coastline to explore the shipwreck my biological parents arrived on, thereafter we are to trek out into the nearby desert to be shown what has been discovered there by some local archaeologists and anthropologists from Walvis Bay University.

We arrive at the university at 11am and meet the team. Mom is a retired lecturer of anthropology hence the preferential access we have to the team we are about to meet, a mixed bag of professionals: anthropologists and archaeologists, as well as some of their top historians. The discovery of the Russian freighter after a mini tsunami stripped away much of the Walvis Bay beaches, is a monumental discovery. I am enthralled by

the amount of evidence they have recovered and investigated.

‘Guten morgen, Vrou Weise,’ welcomes Professor Meisen, warmly extending his hand to my mom and then me.

‘Guten morgen,’ my mother replies, ‘So good of you to invite us here on this further exploration.’

‘Considering what you have told me about your daughter’s origin,’ he says nodding at me, ‘then she is the only living survivor. It is quite remarkable that there were any survivors.’

He turns to shake my hand. He seems credulous as he takes me in, as if he is greeting an old acquaintance.

'I'm sorry he says,' dragging his eyes off me and turning to my mother, 'She is just... just so like the photo we found in the Russian... sorry, Soviet press archives. I believe the likeness is just, well, just too much to doubt the connection.'

‘Do you have the photo to hand?’ my mother asks.

Professor Meisen turns to his colleague. 'Miss Strauss, can you bring in the file please.'

Miss Strauss returns with the file, with photos in hand. She passes one to Professor Meisen, who shows it to my mother. My mother takes the photo, she credulously stares at it. Her mouth drops open.

‘Mein Gott!’, she reverts to her native language, ‘She looks...oh mein Gott!’

She hands the photo to me. I look at myself in the black and white, crinkled fibre- based mirror in my hand.

‘Mom, it is me... no, she has dark hair. Was it dyed?’

My hair is blond,' I stutter.

Here is your father,' says Professor Meisen, handing me a second photo. My mother takes it first. She gasps.

‘His hair colour, blond and his fingers, they are so yours,’ she remarks, handing the photo to me.

I hold both photos, one of my birth mother, clothed in Russian style dance dress, the other my father in what seems to be the masculine version of this dance attire. Professor Meisen hands me another photo. This has both in an elaborate dance hall, in motion, both enraptured in their dance. Elegance and poise captured in a moment, frozen in time.

We drive by Land Rover to Walvis Bay with the team.

TACKLING LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION



I don't like to use village newsletters for political propaganda, and so rarely submit articles to them. However, I have been working on a project that I am really enthusiastic about, and which I hope will benefit a lot of people and communities in our areas.

Did you know being lonely and isolated is more dangerous to your health than 15 cigarettes a day? Loneliness and social isolation are silent killers that can affect many people, and for many years I have been trying to get local authorities to take it seriously. Last year I was finally able to get Swale Borough Council to incorporate the issue in their

Corporate Plan, and hopefully get some developments up and running later this year. However, here in Swale West I thought it was important to start the ball rolling as soon as possible, and having met the Parish Councils across the area, with a presentation from Conservative former Candidate Aisha Cuthbert, who had worked on a similar project in Bromley, there was a lot of enthusiasm and support from the parishes.

Consequently, I have set up a website **www.swalewestcommunityhub.org.uk** that contains local events in our parishes. The only requirement for an event to be included is that there must be contact details so someone interested in attending but who has no one to go with will be met at the event and introduced to other people. Already several local Parishes and groups are starting such events, and several pubs have offered to help people interested in coming to quizzes etc find people they can sit with and get to know.

We are looking to develop this further with chat benches being introduced, and investigating ways by which people who cannot drive can get lifts.

This will not be a quick process but one which hopefully will grow and grow, so that we can help all sections of our communities feel included and valued. If you have any events you would like to advertise, or would like to help out in any way, please contact me on **Cllrmikebaldock@yahoo.co.uk**.

Kind regards, Cllr Mike Baldock.

THANKYOU LINDA

Linda Irving has delivered the Observer to this area for more years than she cares to remember and will be sadly missed. We thank her for her service and, if there was a medal for “long, loyal and meritorious service to the Observer”, she would certainly get one. Linda - a thousand thanks and best wishes for the next chapter of your life.

We are now looking for somebody to take over the delivery of The Iwade Observer to Saxon Walk, Fans Lane, Stangate Drive, Rookery View, Elm Tree Avenue, and Shooters Chase. We are also seeking somebody to deliver to the new Orchard Meadows and Featherbed Farm developments. If you're interested in either of these delivery rounds, or for more information, please drop a line to **The.iwade.observer@gmail.com**. Thank you.

TWO meetings this month of ...
ASSEMBLY on SUNDAY!



Songs, stories, cakes and biscuits, meet new people!
Children, parents, grandparents, family and friends.

All welcome!

Sunday, 9th and 30th March 2025
in Iwade School Hall at 3.00pm
 [Dates for the rest of the school year: 9th March, 30th March,
 no AoS in April, 1st May, 8th June, 1st July]

ASSEMBLY ON SUNDAY is supported by
All Saints Church and the Poorne Alliance Multi Academy Trust.
Further details from: John Guest 07710 353461

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received and accepted from Cllr. Gomez.

None.

Proposed by Cllr. Holowczycki and seconded by Cllr. Hartley, the minutes of the monthly Parish Council Meeting held on 11 December 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

Visitors: Nothing to report.

County and Borough Councillors: None attended.

Police Constable: No report received.

1. Village Centre Litter Collections – Omnicroft: Omnicroft Management Company have not reinstated the litter collection service in the village centre, and have not responded to the parish council. Members agreed Omnicroft should be held accountable and will contact them again, and also contact our County and Borough Councillors. **Action:** Clerk/Cllr. Tolhurst

2. Flood Action Group: Members agreed to post emergency plan contacts on the Parish council website, Facebook page and newsletter. **Action: Clerk**

3. Plaxtol Investments: A contact from Plaxtol Investments has been in touch with the Clerk, and they are looking into the background of the land at Mansfield Drive. Keep on the agenda. **Action: Clerk**

4. Installation of Tree Guards – The tree guards have been delivered and council members volunteered to install them.

Action: Cllrs. Holowczycki/Hyde

IWADE PARISH COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 8TH JANUARY

- Cllr. S. Tolhurst (Chair)
- Cllr. S. Fuszard (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr. J. Hartley
- Cllr. P. Holowczycki
- Cllr. P. Hyde
- Cllr. D. Waters
- Cllr. S. Waters
- Samantha Gray, Clerk
- Lynda Ives, RFO
- One resident

6) Planning: applications are viewable on Swale: <http://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications>; KCC: <https://cloud2.atriumsoft.com/KCCePlanningOPS/searchPageLoad.do>

1. Ferry Road Water Leak: Kent County Council (KCC) have inspected the site and advised the water tested positive for chlorine. Southern Water also carried out an investigation and their water test did not show any traces of chlorine. Council members agreed for the following action to be taken – ask the County and Borough Councillors to help take action, contact the Press and ask KCC to carry out an independent review of the water test.

Action: Clerk/Cllr. Tolhurst

2. KALC Community Awards 2025: Members agreed a nomination. **Action: Clerk**

3. Raspberry Solar Farm Community Benefit Fund: The Clerk contacted RWE to put forward The Barn for a solar panels project. The trustees require time to source quotes due to The Barn being a Grade 2 listed building. The Clerk will pass this information onto RWE. Members agreed to also source quotes for 20 tree's in the village, to be planted in various locations. **Action: Clerk/RFO**

1. Storage for Parish Council items: Members agreed to use storage space at The Barn which has kindly been offered by the trustees.

2. To receive update on ‘Tracker’ document - Parish Council work in progress report: The document was circulated to all members and staff. The following updates were noted; a payment has been received from Iwade School towards the cost to implement a temporary 20mph zone, and the Three Network advised they are aiming for the mast to go live in early February. They will be in touch when a date is confirmed.

1. Quotation from Restore Datashred: Proposed by Cllr. S. Waters and seconded by Cllr. S. Fuszard, members agreed the cost of £86.40p including VAT for secure document destruction. **Action: Clerk/RFO**

2. Clerk Training: Introduction to Cilca webinar –
Proposed by Cllr. Tolhurst and seconded by Cllr. S. Fuszard,
members agreed the cost of £60.00p including VAT for the
training course. **Action: Clerk**

3. Parish Council contact with McCabe Ford Willaims (payroll): Cllr. S. Waters agreed to be the Parish Council contact. **Action: RFO**

4. Bank signatories: Cllrs. S. Waters and Fuszard agreed to sign up as signatories for internet banking.

Action: Clerk

5. Councillor Training: ‘The Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils’ - Proposed by Cllr. Tolhurst and seconded by Cllr. D. Waters, members agreed the cost of two training courses, at a cost of £60.00p including VAT each for Cllrs. Gomez and Hartley.

6. Precept/Budget 2025/26: Proposed by Cllr. Fuszard and seconded by Cllr. S Waters, members agreed the 2025/26 Precept of £69,000.00p. This equates to an 11.65% increase, £4.87p extra per year which is 9p per week on a Band D property. The increase is due to rising costs the Parish Council need to cover. **Action: RFO**

7. Grant for roof repairs to All Saints Church: Proposed by Cllr. Tolhurst and seconded by Cllr. D. Waters, members agreed a donation of £1,000.00p towards the cost of roof repairs on All Saints Church. **Action: RFO**

1. VE Day 8th May 2025: Members discussed the upcoming event and put forward the following ideas; crochet aeroplanes on bollards, serve the celebration cake and arrange a choir to sign the hymn 'I vow to thee my country'. The Barn trustees are also planning an event and members will work with them to organise the events. Members agreed to order two of the VE Day flag of celebration, to be added to the next agenda.

Action: Clerk/RFO

2. Future public events: No volunteers have come forward. Members agreed to ask for the message to be printed on the front of the Observer. **Action: Clerk**

1. Village Hall Committee – Little Lions football group will start on Saturday mornings.

2. KALC Area Representative – No meeting has been held, the next meeting is planned for February. Cllr. Holowczycki spoke about a visit that has been organised to Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara and Gravesend Mosque on Thursday 13 February. There will be a guided tour outlining the work the mosque does in the wider community. All councillors and Clerks are welcome.

- **Litter Pick**
- **Static CCTV camera**
- **Finance Committee**

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 09.06 p.m

13) The next Parish Council meeting will be on Wednesday 12th March at 19:30 in Iwade Village Hall.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information in this newsletter, neither the printer, editor or distribution team can accept responsibility for any subsequent alterations, errors or mistakes in any material published herein. The views expressed in any articles are not necessarily the views of anyone involved in the production of this newsletter.

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