



High Halstow TIMES



Home of the Heron

February 2017

Medway Local Plan Consultation Will Effect Us All

Medway Council are planning to build 30,000 houses throughout Medway between 2012 and 2035. Around 6000 are proposed for the Peninsula. ITS IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY NOW.

Medway Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will guide the development of Medway up to 2035. Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the south east. In 2015 our population had grown to 276,472, and this is projected to increase to 330,200 by 2035. The most important aspect of the Local Plan is making the most effective use of land to ensure we are able to provide the required new homes, jobs, services and roads, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment. The council is now consulting on the second formal stage of the Local Plan preparation. The Development Options consultation document includes a draft vision and strategic objectives for the new Local Plan, options for how growth could take place in Medway, and approaches to developing policies for the new plan. The council is keen to hear from residents, businesses, organisations, community and interest groups to help inform the plan. The consultation period runs from Monday, 16 January to Monday, 6 March 2017. Comments must be received in writing by 5pm on Monday, 6 March 2017.

You can view the Development Options consultation document and supporting information online at www.medway.gov.uk/futuremedway

Copies of the document are available at the reception desk of the council offices at Gun Wharf, public libraries and Community Hubs across Medway.

Speak to a planning officer

The council has organised events and exhibitions so if you would like to speak with a planning officer about the consultation and options, please call in to one of the exhibitions below.

Saturday 4 February 2017, 10am to 12noon at St Margaret's Millennium Centre, Gatekeeper Chase, Rainham, ME8 9BH

Tuesday 7 February 2017, 6.30 to 8.30pm at Guildhall, High Street, Rochester, ME1 1PY

*officers will be available to speak to anyone who cannot access the first floor at the Guildhall

Friday 10 February 2017, 10am to 12noon at Stoke Community Centre, Allhallows Road, Lower Stoke, Rochester, ME3 9SL.

Saturday 11 February 2017, 10am to 12noon at Riverside Country Park, Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, ME7 2XH.

Tuesday 14 February 2017, 6.30 - 8.30pm Sunlight Centre, 105 Richmond Road, Gillingham, ME7 1LX

Wednesday 15 February 2017, 6.30 to 8.30pm at Lordwood Leisure Centre, North Dane Way, Chatham, ME5 8YE

Saturday 18 February 2017, 10am to 12noon at Cliffe Memorial Hall, Church Street, Cliffe, ME3 7PU.

Monday 20 February 2017, 2 to 4pm at Cuxton Social Club, 104 Bush Road, Cuxton, ME2 1EZ

Tuesday 21 February 2017, 5.30 to 7.30pm at Innovation Centre, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME5 9FD.

Thursday 23 February 2017, 6.30 to 8.30pm at Former Library, Bryant Road, Strood, ME2 3EP.

Saturday 25 February 2017, 10am to 12noon at Chattenden Community Centre, Swinton Avenue, Chattenden, ME3 8PH.

Monday 27 February 2017, 6.30 to 8.30pm at Halling Community Centre, High Street, Halling, ME2 1BS

Wednesday 1 March 2017, 6.30 to 8.30pm at St Mary's Island Community Centre, Island Way West, St Mary's Island, Chatham, ME4 3EP.

Have your say

To have your say, please read the development options and respond to the consultation by completing the **online questionnaire**. Alternatively, you can respond by email to futuremedway@medway.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy team, the Planning Service, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR

The consultation runs from Monday 16 January 2017 to 5pm on Monday 6 March 2017.

DOG OWNERS - Please read page 6, it could save you £1000

Resume Of The Parish Council Meeting Held On 11 January 2017

All parish councillors were present at the first meeting of 2017, held on 11th January. It was also attended by 4 members of the public.

Cllr Williams had submitted a motion, that the Parish Council meets in future every month of the year. This means including August and December in the meetings calendar. He explained that sometimes business gets delayed unnecessarily because of the time delay between meetings. The idea was not universally welcomed, but on a vote being taken, it was narrowly passed by 1 vote. Therefore this year there will be meetings on Wednesday 9th August and on Wednesday 13th December.

The meeting was attended by the operators of two of the mobile food vans. They have all the licensing and permissions and are trading legitimately. They acknowledged that some residents have been complaining about their presence and wondered if they could use the car park. They were asked to submit a formal proposal to the Parish Council.

It was agreed to proceed with the provision of two more bus shelters, one to replace the very old shelter on the strip of grass between Eden Road and The Street, and the other to replace the second hand one outside the Recreation Hall. They will be of similar construction and appearance to the shelter installed in Christmas Lane last year.

Cllr Ray Collins had suggested the planting of trees to mark the end of the First World War in 2018. It was agreed to go ahead with the planting of 11 oak trees on the Recreation Ground at the far end along the boundary with the "horse field". The number is to commemorate the 11 villagers who died during the war. The trees will be planted next autumn. We hope to put up a commemorative plaque in the Memorial Hall.

Replacement of the basket for the cantilever basket swing is in hand. It has proved impossible to speak to the original contractor and we have had to go elsewhere.

The public in attendance raised some issues - the fact that some people aren't picking up after their dogs; the behaviour of teenagers hanging about the car park and suspicions about what they're getting up to in the toilets and the speed and lack of consideration of some drivers in the area of the pedestrian crossing. Apparently a driver was seen going fast across the crossing and not stopping for someone waiting to cross.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th February in the Blue Room in the Village Hall not the Memorial Hall at the usual time of 8pm. You are all welcome to attend. If you are coming for a specific item on the agenda, it is important that you introduce yourself to the Chairman and Clerk before the start of the meeting.

Quiz Nights

The last quiz night for the year was held on 30th December. This also saw the end of all the tables taking it in turn to nominate a charity to receive the profit from the night. The list of charities and the amounts donated are as follows:-

Milly Moo (Chattenden)	£214
Cancer Research	£261
MacMillan (2 donations)	£434
MS Society	£231
Wisdom Hospice (Rochester)	£241
Stroke Association	£243
Motor Neurone	£200
Cherished Whispers (Medway Hosp)	£221
Animates (Sevenoaks)	£284
Cystic Fibrosis	£273
Step and Learn (Frindsbury)	£191
Battersea Dogs Home (Brands Hatch)	£221
Kent Air Ambulance	£173

This gives us a total donated to worthy causes of £3,187. We will be starting again at the January quiz night. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported the quiz nights this year and in fact for the past 20 years. We are celebrating our 20th birthday with a cake on 27th January. There will be a quiz night on the last Friday of the month with the exception of August.

Many thanks to Lesley and John who help keep these quiz nights running.

Santa's Visit

Once again Santa came to High Halstow on Christmas Eve and what a night for all involved with a record number of presents delivered and a late late finish. A massive £870 was raised this year with the money again going to Friends of St Margaret's Church.

There was a need to replace the sleigh this year (Santa says no proof that in previous years he had eaten too many mince pies, although this may not be true for his helpers) but we were pleased to receive contributions from a number of people including Simon Green and Mark Skudder (representing Allhallows Santa Visit Group) who helped to make this happen.

Thanks also to the staff of National Grid (Electrical Dept) who gave up their time to build the sleigh as well as Jane Crozer and Ray Collins for the painting and finishing touches. I hope you all agreed their efforts were well worth it. Thanks also to Bradford's who supplied the petrol to help Santa around the village and Stuart Bailey who provided the reindeer power on the night.

Thanks to Santa and his many helpers for making time in their busy schedule.

High Halstow Community Choir

At the end of last year, a group of singers was needed for some community events and Ken and Maggie, both of whom have long been associated with local choirs, got together with a group of enthusiastic villagers who were very keen to sing and help the community. There were no auditions – just a love of music!

Before long there were many of us having a very enjoyable time, making new friends and learning new musical skills that surprised us all! Ken Reynolds inspirationally leads the group and we started with singing carols for the Christmas Tree Festival which was a great success and helped to raise money for the 'Friends of St Margaret's Church'. Everyone was keen to go carol singing as a traditional village Christmas gift to our village. This was very popular, many joined us to sing and the villagers supported us very well. Many people – particularly villagers who had recently moved to live here from big towns, were enchanted to see that these traditions are still alive and well. The carol singing ended brilliantly at Rupert and Sally's house with mulled wine and mince pies which were most gratefully received! Donations from the carol singing raised £120 for Demelza – a charity close to the heart of those we met along the way.

The singers who had originally just got together for the Christmas events, then wanted to continue as a choir after Christmas, so we got together again for our first practice on Monday 16th January and songs from the musicals proved to be very popular! We are very grateful for the support we have received from Stephen our vicar and the Friends of St Margaret's.

The High Halstow Community Choir will meet fortnightly on a Monday evening in St Margaret's Church at 8pm – 9pm. Meetings will be Mon 6th Feb - St Margaret's Church; Mon 20th Feb - St Margaret's Church; Mon 6th Mar - venue TBC; Mon 20th Mar - St Margaret's Church; Mon 3rd Apr - St Margaret's Church.

All are welcome – do come and join us to sing!

Maggie Ryan

Come and Meet Your Parish Councillors

Chris(tine) Watson and Gary Jerreat, two of your Parish Councillors, will be at Kings Kitchen in the Memorial Hall on: Tuesday 14th February 2017 from 10.30 – 12.00pm

and every 2nd Tuesday in the month.

Come and tell us your problems or find out about projects we are undertaking.

If we can't answer your questions there and then we will get back to you.

High Halstow Parish Council.



High Halstow Village Hall

Booking Secretary Wanted – After many successful years of service, Crystal will be standing down as the Booking Secretary in May so we are starting the process of seeking a new secretary now. The role entails dealing with prospective enquiries, showing people around the hall, attendance at the hall committee once a month. Should you require more information in the first instance would you please contact Crystal on 251849, who is by far the best person to answer any of your queries.

Events 2017

To start the event cycle for 2017 we are pleased to announce the following dates

Quiz Nights

Friday	19 th May
Friday	14 th July
Friday	13 th October

There will be further events planned for the year so please watch this space.

Thank You

The Village Hall Committee would like to thank Margaret, John and Lesley for the kind donation from the Memorial Hall Quiz in January. As you may be aware each month a table at the Memorial Hall Quiz select a chosen charity and this month it was the turn of the Memorial Hall Quiz organisers themselves to choose one and they chose the Village Hall. We would like to thank them for their kind generosity and the continued support to the Hall Charity.

High Halstow Youth Club

Youth Club is a club for local children aged 9+. We meet on Tuesdays during term time 7pm to 8.45pm. Children at the club play games, do art & craft activities, listen to music, sing karaoke, play table tennis and enjoy the tuck shop which serves chocolate, sweets, and soft drinks!

In the Summer months the children go outside in the playpark next to the hall; they play football, rounders, and use the play area. We also have annual events including a Hallowe'en event, Christmas disco, and a Summer BBQ.

We are often looking for extra adult help and if you would be interested in finding out more please contact either Cat Archer - 07519941153 carcher1391@gmail.com or Chris Peek at chrispeek@gmail.com

Cat Archer - High Halstow Youth Club Secretary

High Halstow Hikers

Given that the HH Times does not appear in January there are concise reports for two of our recent walks. Following the tradition of previous years our pre-Christmas walk was a local one. From the village hall we walked through the estate to Forge Common and followed the Saxon Shore Way through the RSPB reserve pausing to take in the always impressive views from the lookout point across the marshes. We continued down through Bromhey Farm, up the hill to Eastborough Bungalow and along the farm track above the orchards on the way to Cooling. The conditions for walking were good for the time of year and the weather cool enough for all 18 of us to enjoy warming mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies in the Horseshoe and Castle. We then used up some of these extra calories by walking through Cooling to the castle, turning south to Cooling Court and then following the permissive footpath back to Wybourne's Farm. Overall it was a great way to prepare for less exertion in the coming days.

Our first walk of the year in early January 2017 was led by Mike Davies on what would have been expected have been a cold winter's day but it was actually benign and almost spring-like. Starting at the Quayside in Sandwich, nine walkers headed off along the other end of the Saxon Shore Way towards Royal St George's golf club. The public footpaths criss-cross this prestigious golf course by paths that are well sign-posted with warnings to watch out for golfers and stray golf balls. A short walk took us along the shoreline with Sandwich Bay that was as flat as a mill-pond and then back inland through fields with sheep enjoying the early spring grass. We paid a visit to the Sandwich Bird Observatory that has impressive facilities along with long lists of resident and migratory birds. The observatory is part of a national group tracking and monitoring bird movements with Sandwich being particularly important because of its southerly position close to the Continent. Beyond the observatory the land was flat and all the drainage dykes were full. We came across a group of model aircraft enthusiasts whose impressive model jet plane of about 2 meters in length performed spectacular aerobatics at impressive speeds. An uneventful return to Sandwich town after a 10km walk was followed by a very good Sunday lunch at the George and Dragon pub.

Our February, March and April walks will be on the second Sunday in the month all starting at 10.00am. The first of these, on 12th February, will be around Mereworth and West Peckham starting outside the striking Church of St Lawrence at 112 The Street, Mereworth. This is reached by taking the A228 south from West Malling and turning left into The Street just before the roundabout junction with A26. The exact walking route will be chosen according to underfoot conditions and will be around 6 miles in length.

As ever all are welcome. Any queries to Mitchell on either 01634-254428 or mitch.dowsett@btopenworld.com.

High Halstow Relief in Need Charity

This charity exists to assist those in the Village who are in need, especially widows and widowers. The trustees wish to remind the people of the parish that they will give consideration to any request for a particular need, at any time during the year. If you, or an elderly relative would feel safer at home with a telephone 'Lifeline' the Charity could help with this. All requests are dealt with in complete confidence and there is no need to wait for the October form.

The trustees are:

- Rev. S. Gwilt - The Rectory
- Mr S. Bailey - 27 Cooling Road
- Mrs J. Collins - 6 Marsh Crescent
- Mrs L. Munday - 22 Willowbank Drive
- Mr J. Myatt - Decoy Hill Road
- Mrs C. Peek - 2 Willowbank Drive
- Mrs N. Turner - 12 Marsh Crescent

HH Village Website

Please visit the Parish Council website for everything about our village. You can see the minutes of your Parish Council or look up local groups in the village, past copies of the High Halstow Times, and pictures of recent events. Please note that there is now an RSS feed on the Parish Website where you can get automatic updates when the site is updated. Please visit www.highhalstow.org.uk and follow the instructions on the right hand side.

Speed Limits

Please can I remind people to observe the speed limits through the Village. We should all be mindful that High Halstow

is a nice place to live where children, older residents and walkers should feel safe. Some may not be as aware of the traffic as they might otherwise be. Please be careful.

George Crozer, HH Parish Council



Friends of St Margaret's

Christmas Tree Festival - On December 10th the Village Hall doors opened to the fourth Christmas Tree Festival in High Halstow. £325 was raised and thanks to all who put a tree in, came along etc. Special thanks to the entertainers, Karmann Dancers, Dramarama and the new Community Choir who created such a warm atmosphere for those who came along. This really is proving to be a popular event in the village.



Cuxton Music Group - The Cuxton Music Group performed their second show in aid of St Margaret's in December. A further £309 was raised from their efforts and the Friends Committee would like to thank Maggie, Ken and the rest of the choir for all of their efforts, it really is appreciated.

Santa's Visit - We were pleased to be the chosen charity for Santa's Visit, which raised a further £870 in what is becoming one of the biggest annual events in the village each year. Thank you to all involved.



Scarecrow Festival - Don't throw them old clothes just yet. Following on from last year's successful event, it will be back. We are looking for this to run for two weeks with the scarecrow 'meeting up' at the Rectory Garden Party on July 1st. Please watch this space for further details as we would like this event to be as successful as last year.

Cake Festival - The Committee have put back this event from March and will reconsider it for later in the year so please watch this space.

Grant Applications - The Friends are in the process of applying for a grant for drainage works to be carried out to the Church and will be in a position to let you all know next month how we got on.

Additional Works - The Friends have agreed from 2017/18 to pay for annual pointing and stonework repairs. This will be an ongoing project and is a major step in ensuring the upkeep of this building.

Annual General Meeting Date - Just to keep all informed the date for this meeting is 22nd May, 7:30pm at St Margaret's Church.

A Reminder of How To Join

Although in the past we had accepted requests for people to pay an annual fee in one go, it was not clear enough to all that this was the case, so just to be clear you could pay as follows:

Either by a monthly Standing Order OR a one off Annual Fee

Forms are available on www.thefriendsofstmargarets.org.uk or from any Committee member.

Thank you all for your continued support.

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Six Reasons Why You Should Clean Up After Your Pooch

All dog owners know that they are supposed to clean up their dog's mess when they are out walking, and most dog owners are responsible enough to do just that. However, there still remains a good proportion of dog owners who deliberately avoid cleaning up after their dogs, or will only pick up the poop if someone is watching!

Standing in dog poo is one of the most messy, unpleasant and potentially unhealthy things that can possibly happen to an adult or a child, and nobody should be made to go through this because of other people's laziness! In this article, we will look at six important reasons behind why everyone should pick up after their dogs every time without fail—including when your dog toilets on your own land or garden. Read on to learn more!

Good manners

Firstly, cleaning up after your dog is simply good manners, and nobody else should have to deal with your dog's output because you neglect to! We all know how annoying and horrible it is to stand in dog mess and worse, trail it into the house and have to clean off your shoes afterwards, and by not cleaning up after your dog, you run the risk of causing these inconveniences to other people as well.

Be a good citizen and clean up after your dog! Failing to clean up after your dog not only causes problems for other people that may stand in the muck, but it also gives all dog owners a bad name, and may make other people hostile at the sight of a dog walker in their own area, as everyone gets tarred with the same brush.

You have a legal obligation

In the UK it is the law that all dog owners must pick up after their dogs when in a public place, and failing to do so can result in prosecution. The fines for failing to deal with dog mess can be prohibitive too, with a £100 fine issued to offenders, which can rise to £1,000 and a trip to Magistrate's Court if the fine is not paid within one week of issue.

Infection control

Dog waste is not only foul smelling and horrible in texture, but it also carries and spreads a lot of dangerous diseases as well. Canine faeces are packed with bacteria and carry a whole range of diseases, including parvovirus, salmonella, cryptosporidium and many more, all of which can make other dogs or people very ill, and may even prove fatal.

Worms are also transferred through faeces, and over time, will impregnate the ground as well, placing all other dogs that walk in the same areas at a high unnecessary risk.

Keeping you and your dog clean

If you've ever had to undertake the unpleasant task of cleaning dog muck off either yourself or your dog, you will be all too aware that it is a challenging, messy and highly unpleasant process! Making sure that you clear up after your dog reduces the chances of either of you stepping in it or getting into a mess later, and may also mean that because the areas you walk in stay clean, other dog owners will be more inclined to pick up after their own dogs too.

Reducing coprophagia

Coprophagia is the term for an unpleasant behavioural problem that some dogs exhibit, and means "eating faeces." Some dogs will actually seek to eat their own faeces or that of other dogs, and this is just as undesirable as it sounds!

Clearing up after your dog when they have toileted, whether this be out in public or in your own garden, can reduce the opportunities for your dog to eat poop, as well as also reducing the risk that anyone will walk in it or otherwise have to come into contact with it too!

Protecting the environment

Dog poo is classed by The Environment Agency as an environmental pollutant, which means that the risks posed by dog muck go beyond the simple inconvenience and dangers of people coming into contact with it. While some forms of faeces-based fertilizer such as manure can actually be good for gardens and green spaces when used appropriately, dog poo is not one of these, and it does in fact have a direct and harmful effect upon the land.

The viral and bacterial load in the faeces becomes transmitted to the soil that it sits on, as do parasites such as various types of intestinal worms, which will then lie in wait to infect another dog or person.

This is one of the reasons why you should pay just as much attention to picking up the poop in your own yard or garden as you would when out in public, in order to keep your garden in good condition, and preserve the health of the dogs and people that use it.

High Halstow Gardeners

Our December social evening was held on 6th December when we enjoyed a very pleasant time entertained again by the singer Trevor Styles. Members tucked in to a delicious buffet prepared by the committee.

We do not hold a meeting in January but the club meets next on Tuesday 14th February for our AGM when we will elect our new committee. We do hope you will be able to join us at any of our meetings during 2017.



Birthday Celebrations

High Halstow Women's Institute will be celebrating its 60th Birthday in May 2017.

As part of the celebrations we would like to invite past members for any memories of the Institute. Do you have any photographs of the events such as annual May Fairs? Were you a May Queen or an attendant?

At the very first meeting on 1st May 1957 forty six members joined. We now have 26 members and it would be lovely to boost the membership for this special anniversary.

If you have any memorabilia please contact:
Crystal - 01634 251849
or June - 01634 250105

Need to Hire a Hall

If you are interested in hiring either of the halls in the village for a party, function or meeting please contact:

Memorial Hall - Angela Forward 251756
Village Hall - Crystal Wakefield 251849

**** Please do not call on a Sunday ****

High Halstow Lottery



The winning postcode in December was ME3 8SA

High Halstow Arts & Crafts Village Market

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The Memorial Hall

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**February 12th
March 12th
April 9th**

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Cornish Holiday Cottage Let

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a 16th century award-winning traditional pub, selling locally produced ales and fresh and innovative meals in a great atmosphere. The cottage is ideally placed for discovering the coastline of Cornwall.

- Electric wall heaters with open fire
- Electric oven and hob, microwave, fridge, dishwasher, TV with Freeview, DVD, WiFi, selection of books, games and DVDs
- Fuel, power and starter pack for open fire (October-March) inc. in rent
- Further fuel for fire available to purchase locally
- Bed linen and towels inc. in rent
- Off road parking for 1 car
- Lawned garden with furniture opposite cottage across road
- One well-behaved dog welcome
- Sorry, no smoking
- Shop and pub 1 mile.

The cottage is advertised with Sykes Cottages (<http://www.sykescottages.co.uk/cottage/Cornwall-Fivelanes/Laburnum-Cottage-935455.html>)

Alternatively I live in the village and will be able to offer a discounted rate if you contact me directly on: Andy 01634 936095
Mobile: 07958 604268



Dates for Diary

Every Tuesday:

King's Kitchen
10:00 Memorial Hall
Bell Ringers
19:30 St Margaret's Church

Every Thursday:

Sugar Babes
19:00 Memorial Hall

Every Saturday:

Karmann Dancers
09:00 Memorial Hall
KLUK Martial Arts
09:30 Village Hall

Every Sunday:

Déjà Vu Spiritual Centre
18:30 Village Hall

Every other Monday:

Community Choir
20:00 St Margaret's Church

Every 3rd Wednesday:

Whist Club
14:00 Memorial Hall

Every 4th Wednesday:

Friendly Club
14:00 Memorial Hall

Other Dates:

Wednesday 1st: Women's Institute
19:30 Memorial Hall
Sunday 5th: Family Service
09:30 St. Margaret's Church
Wednesday 8th: Parish Council
20:00 Village Hall (Blue Room)
Sunday 12th: Arts & Craft Fair
10:00 Memorial Hall
Tuesday 14th: Gardening Club
20:00 Memorial Hall
Wednesday 15th: Whist Club
14:00 Memorial Hall
Sunday 19th: Family Service
09:30 St. Margaret's Church
Friday 24th: Quiz Night
20:00 Memorial Hall

Local groups, please let us know the dates of your meetings/events for the coming year so we can include them in the HHT and on the website.

Responsible Parking

It has been noticed that a number of vehicles around the village are either parking on the kerbs, causing obstruction to pedestrians and risking children crossing the road unseen between parked cars; or are parking on corners which is a danger to other road users. Please park with consideration to pedestrians and other road users.

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Hacked Computers

Are you worried about your computer being hacked? Are you worried about being scammed or having your bank details stolen from your computer? Are you worried that those phone calls from Microsoft or their agents etc are real and should you be worried?

Then read on.....

Hi there my name is Jonathan and I run a small Computer company dealing on the residential side of computer support. I thought it may be of help to the readers to chat about many of the issues I deal with on a daily basis as it may be of help and save you from needing to call a company like mine in the first place.

The subject I get more calls about than anything else is how to speed up slow computers but the next most common enquiry is from people who believe their computer has been 'hacked' or 'scammed'.

So I thought it would help to will give a few tips here to help you avoid being hacked or scammed in the first place.

So first off the question you might like to ask is how common is this and am I really at risk? Well the answer to both of those questions is a 'Yes' and 'Very' respectively!!!!

Now first off please don't think I am trying to be alarmist here. In general terms computers and using them is a very safe and secure way of working. And in truth the built in security in the computers and the internet generally is very strong. All official credit card and banking transaction done over the internet are technically incredibly secure. Your computer and the computers at the banks and credit card companies employ very advanced encryption on the account details (a fancy word for scrambling up) so if the information was intercepted from you to them it you would need a super computer to crack the encryption. So if that is so then why worry?

Well the clue is in the word '*official*' I used there. The weak point in all of this technology is 'us or you and me if you like' the human element. We can have the best security in the world in our banks and home computers and it will mean nothing if we simply give away access to it. So how does this happen?

Well all communication on computers is done using those hateful things called 'User Names' and 'Passwords'. These are by design very secure as they use that fancy encryption software too..... But, if we just simply give this information to others voluntarily then all the computer security in the world won't help!

So how do we protect ourselves from this and avoid being hacked. Well in truth probably no one on here will ever be 'hacked' as the press like to call it without prior contact with yourselves. As this involves a person remotely accessing your computer without your knowledge and effectively breaking into it (like in the films). I am afraid in truth none of us generally are important enough for a 'hacker' to want to bother with.

So where is the main risk then I hear you ask. Well you are most likely to be 'scammed' and not 'hacked'.

What's the difference? Well you are scammed when you allow it to happen or actively (even if unwittingly) help it.

So let's ask ourselves what a fraudster would want from you and why they would do it? Well ultimately of course it's your money they are after. They can get at this in two principal ways, your Bank account or your Credit card details.

One of the things most of my customers don't realise is that if they are taken in and give access to a company selling something (advice or goods) that then turns out to be fraudulent it more than likely doesn't just stop there at that transaction.... Once you give your bank or credit card details out they will be used again and again.....!!!!

So how can we protect ourselves? Well first off please understand that the fraudsters are very clever and employ many different frightening and psychological techniques to try and fool you. And everybody is just as susceptible to them. Young and old...

So it may help you to think of the computer like your house. If a stranger came knocking on your door would you simply give them access to your bank account or give them your credit card details? No you wouldn't so why do it if you get a call or email?

So here are some simple rules that may help.

Rule 1. NEVER and I mean NEVER give your user name or password to anyone.... even your email accounts ...EVER!!! If someone rings saying they are from your bank, internet supplier, Microsoft, the Police...anyone, just put the phone down! No organisation will **EVER** call you for this information, no matter how convincing they sound.

Rule 2. Never ever log into your account (the Bank, a website, iTunes, ebay etc) through a link sent to you in an email. No matter how dire the email makes it sound that you have too. Just shut the email program down and log into the website of the requesting company that way if you want to check out if it is authentic.

Rule 3. Remember that even a fraud of a small amount of your money can lead to much bigger amounts a short time later.

Rule 4. No outside company can see if there is something wrong with your computer remotely without you giving express permission FIRST. So if someone calls to say they can see an issue with your computer...they can't...FULL STOP!!!

Rule 5. Most fraudsters work on trying to gain your trust. So the call may not seem to be about anything computer

related to start with. Be on your guard and don't be to 'polite' about this here... just hang up!!!

Rule 6. Never give any company access to your computer over the internet. Once in they can do all kinds of damage or leave things hidden inside that can help them gain information about you later on.

Rule 7. Make your passwords hard to work out. This is hard because we like to use things we can remember like anniversary dates or our birthdays of children's names ect. Avoid this as it makes them very easy to guess by someone else. If it helps... when deciding a password.. pick up a book you have to hand, open to a random page... pick the first 6 character word you see and add the page number it is on to the end of it. Then write this down in a note book and keep that book in a separate room to the computer.

Rule 8. NEVER just throw an old computer out for the rubbish or just take it to the recycle centre. The information stored on it can recovered. Use a company like mine to destroy the data first. This applies if giving the computer to a charity or in all honest another close friend or family member (whilst you may trust them you don't know if they will eventually give it away the computer with your information still on it!)

So what do you do if you think you have or are being scammed?

Rule 1. If at any point in a phone call you are not happy then just hang up!!!! If they ring again just hang up again. If they keep ringing report them to your phone company and inform the police.

Rule 2. If you have given them access to your computer immediately shut it down and Hang up. Call a computer company like mine to get the computer looked at. They could have left software inside that will help them gain the information they want.

Rule 3. If you gave them any financial information like bank details or credit card details call your bank and credit card company IMMEDIATELY after you hang up. They will move very fast at their end to remove funds before your bank or credit card company freeze that account.

Rule 4. *Don't be polite.* Just hang up!!!! They rely on you being nice... don't be. You worked long and hard for your money... don't let them take it from you. If it helps think of them sitting next to you when you are on the phone and them just taking the money from your hand..... Remember you didn't ask for them to come into your home...so don't be afraid to just kick them out!

So I hope this is of some help, and I should say here that don't be frightened of even switching the computer back on ever again.... They are a great tool and are tremendously helpful in day to day living. With just a few careful common sense precautions they are perfectly safe to use.

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Craftastic Comes to High Halstow

Craftastic Events is excited to announce that it is bringing its first event to High Halstow in February. Our event will be held at the High Halstow Village Hall on the last Saturday of every month

Craftastic is a Psychic, Craft, Health & Wellbeing experience for all. We have a large number of traders to suit all people and a tearoom for those who just wish to relax whilst their friends take advantage of what is available. Amongst our traders we have Tarot readers, psychics, healers, massage therapists and crafters.

Come along and you may find out what the future holds for you. Maybe you could enjoy a relaxing therapy – maybe indulge in a massage or a reflexology experience. Our beauticians could help give you that boost we sometimes need to feel good about ourselves.

Alternatively, you could browse the stalls for our handmade goods – maybe that gift for the friend who likes something different. There will be handmade jewellery, scented candles, homemade cakes, handmade glass ornaments and much more. There will be a tearoom where refreshments will be available and you could indulge in a slice of homemade cake with your cuppa.

Come and join us at High Halstow Craftastic at High Halstow Village Hall on Saturday 25th February 2017 from 12:00-4:00. Entry is free, what do you have to lose?



Has your heating packed up ?
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Your Parish Councillors

George Crozer, Chair	01634 250286
e.mail: george@highhalstow.org.uk	
Christine Watson, Vice Chair	01634 256529
Martin Andrews	07984 791029
Linda Atkinson	07825 619353
Ray Collins	01634 250105
Gary Jerreat	01634 253999
Bill Khatkar	07775 668620
Carl Mitchell	01634 250911
Brian Williams	07908 006448
e.mail: bdwilliams9@hotmail.com	

Your councillors may also be contacted
through the Parish Clerk:

Mrs Roxana Brammer 01474 871269
clerk@highhalstow.org.uk



High Halstow Pre-school

Modular Building, Primary School, Harrison Drive,
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01634 255088
Proprietor/Manager Mrs Anita Russell BA (Hons), EYPS

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by 22nd February to:

Carl Mitchell, 8 Marsh Crescent, High Halstow ME3 8TJ
or e.mail to editor@highhalstow.org.uk