

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WOODNESBOROUGH PARISH HELD
ON TUESDAY 29th APRIL 2008 AT WOODNESBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm**

Councillors	R Ovenden	K Ellen	B Wiseman
	D Ford	D Woodward	B Baker
	D Smith	S Hoskins	G Boorman
	Dist Cllrs Butcher & S Leith		49 Members of the Public
	Sarah Wells Clerk to the Parish Council		

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He then introduced the members of the Parish Council to the meeting. He asked that any comments relating to the LDF be left until the end of the meeting to ensure that the items on the agenda were covered.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Ford, County Cllr L Ridings & Mr Newport.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last annual meeting, held on 24-4-07 were available for all present to read.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Recycling and Waste Management

Following the last Annual Parish Meeting's extensive debate over the lack of re-cycling within the parish and the Dover District as a whole, the Parish Council did write to three local supermarkets, Dover District and Kent County Council from whom we had lengthy replies which were reported in the village magazine. Black box collections have now been extended to Marshborough though we still wait for garden waste collections. It is understand the Dover District Council waste collection contract is out for tender and a new contractor will be appointed by the autumn when hopefully we should see some improvements.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It's my pleasure to present a report on the Parish Council's activities over the past year.

The Council - At the district and parish council elections last May, our parish had two councillors retire – John Armstrong and Andrew Cracknell. Fortunately Gary Boorman and Steve Hoskins came forward to replace them. As there were no other nominations for election, it was not necessary to have an "election" as such.

On John's retirement it was decided to acknowledge his work and dedication to Parish Council duties spanning 40 years with the presentation of a Acer tree. A photo of the occasion was published in the East Kent Mercury. Amazingly John's record is being exceeded by another member of our council who now has 44 years under his belt.

We were delighted to welcome our two new councillors who have shown an active interest in Parish

Council business though as many of you will know Steve has been unwell over the last few months. But we are delighted to see him back with us now.

At the Annual General Meeting in May Richard Ovenden decided to step down as Chairman owing to his heavy involvement in rugby – President for Canterbury RFC – and I was elected in his place.

Police Matters - After a spate of thefts and graffiti in the centre of the village Cllr Brian Wiseman and I met with PC Ian Woodland, from Sandwich in September to discuss these matters and were delighted to learn that Ian's "patch" had now been extended to include our village. We assured Ian that the Parish Council was eager to work closely with the Police and to this aim it was agreed that monthly Police surgeries were to be held in the Village Hall. However, after the first of these, surgeries were suspended. We are now assured that monthly surgeries are back in operation. **I DO URGE YOU** to drop in to have a chat with Ian. As part of the Chief Constable's campaign to promote Neighbourhood policing, the police have established PACT – Police and Communities Together - and the Parish Council at its last meeting "signed up" for it, I'm sure that more will be explained about this later this evening.

I would like to thank the District Council their excellent response in arranging for the removal of graffiti over the past year. Prior to this we had not suffered from graffiti in the village.

Highways - Frustration creeps in sometimes. After waiting for longer than I can remember the Parish Council eventually agreed to fund the installation of an addition light as the top of Fir Tree Hill in late 2006 and eventually last spring it was connected ready for use.

We expressed concern to Kent Highways about motorists cutting the bend in Beacon Lane and requested a centre white line, which still awaited. PC Woodland advises me that he has powers to operate speed checks which I am sure we will call upon in the future – speeding through the village being highlighted in our Parish Plan.

In an effort to illuminate Oak Hill near the bus shelter, Kent Highways installed a solar- panel operated lamp which proved to be reasonably effective, though we wondered how effective it would be once the trees came into leaf. But a problem arose inasmuch that Kent Highways assumed that the bank was their property which it was not and thereby upset the land owner by not consulting her. The lamp has now been removed and we are back to square one. I would hasten to add that neither was the Parish Council consulted over this installation.

It was brought to my attention that the two 30mph signs just over the Sandwich by-pass as you drive into Sandwich had disappeared. It would appear they were stolen – even though one had been concreted into the pavement. They have now been replaced.

A number of requests have been made over the past year for attention to overhanging hedges and trees and potholes. Kent Highways are now moving to new Area offices at Ashford, being even more remote although we shall have a liaison Officer to whom we can pass our complaints.

Our Footpaths Officer, Cllr Ken Ellen has dealt with a number of enquiries over the past year.

The Parish Council did write and oppose the District Council's new parking charges for Sandwich.

Village Hall - Finally the new driveway was laid and is a great improvement from the pot-holed surface we used to suffer from.

During the summer Cllrs Doug Smith and Gary Boorman carried a risk assessment of the these premises which are owned by the Parish Council. Some risks were identified and these have received attention.

Unfortunately a number of window panes facing the car park were broken over a period of time each costing £50 to £60 to replace. Eventually the Parish Council has had to pay for metal grills to be installed.

Post Office Closure - In late October the Parish Council decided to mount a campaign to save our Post Office with a flyer being delivered to every household urging residents to write to the Post Office Consultation Team. I, myself attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of Dover District Council to put the case for retaining our post office. However, as we all know, our efforts were in vain and the post office and shop closed at the end of January. Following this, a joint effort was mounted by both the Church and the Parish Council to invite donations from past customers towards a presentation to David and Natalie for their 20 years of service to the village. I thank you for your donations.

Undoubtedly the closure has had a dramatic effect on the community although we are not alone as many other villages are undergoing the same process in other parts of the country.

The Parish Council has discussed what could be done to ease the stress of this change in the daily life of the village. Several ideas were discussed but not being aware of the level of demand together with funding precluded us from committing ourselves at the present time. The pharmacy and grocers at Eastry do have delivery services available for Woodnesborough residents. We are fortunate to have an hourly bus service between Ash and Sandwich.

I had hoped to get the number 14 bus service re-routed between Eastry and Sandwich via Woodnesborough but on the three occasions soundings with Stagecoach have received a flat refusal.

I would hope that if anybody does have real problems then they would contact a Parish Councillor or members of the Church who have an excellent pastoral care team.

Nevertheless, it has not been all doom and gloom. We are delighted to see that our local pub – now called The Turner Inn – re-open after extensive refurbishment as a pub and restaurant. We wish them every success – I know myself the food is very good – so please support them. They are anxious to become involved in village life.

Youth Club - It was with regret that the Youth Club has closed. The Parish Council had been financially supporting the Club by contributing for a paid Youth Leader. However, the club was suspended in the autumn as the Leader Nicki Christy had decided to give up due to overwhelming family commitments and a lack of help. This has now been followed by the recent closure of The Centa. I do understand that a number of the youngsters are now attending the Phoenix Youth Centre in Sandwich. Our thanks are extended to Nicki and the few helpers who worked hard to keep the Club running.

Parish Plan and new village hall - At the APM last year Cllr Doug Smith and I spoke about the Parish Plan which was being developed. Unfortunately this slipped into the background when the Parish Council discovered that there was a possibility of the village getting a new village hall as indicated in the Dover District Council's Local Development Framework planning document published in the autumn of 2006. The Parish Council set up a working group of 3 Parish Councillors who had a number of meetings with the Officers from the Forward Planning Dept and the Agent for the landowner but we were eventually advised that the original consultation documents were to be withdrawn. However, the new Local Development Framework documents have now been published and circulated for public consultation, which runs for 6 weeks ending on 7th May.

Anybody who has any comments to make on the LDF should respond to Dover District Council Forward Planning by that date.

The indications in the Sites Allocation Document March 2008 is that the District Council is still in favour of a new village hall with front line housing on the site in Sandwich Road. The Parish Council continues to support the proposal for a new village hall on this site.

Turning back to our Parish Plan we are beginning to address some of the items.

Those who travel by bus will know that the Parish Council has had a new bus shelter installed by the Old Post Office stop. This has been funded partly by KCC grant and the Parish Council. It is the intention to add a new village notice board and return the historic sign at the same location.

I would like to express thanks to Ken Butcher for the excellent flowerbed he has created at the top of Fir Tree Hill, which is part of improving the image of the village. Even the black cylindrical litterbins are an improvement old the style we had, though we have still one to change.

Planning - Over the past 12 months the council has commented on 13 applications most of which have been supported. Most have been extensions to exiting premises.

The Parish Council continues to be bombarded by consultation documents, reports and other documents from central government, the District Council, KCC and many other bodies which require a lot of time reading let alone understand and reply to. Parish Councillors have attended meetings with the Police, the District Council and KCC Footpath Officer.

I'm still seeking someone to take on the job of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator for the village. It's not a demanding job but is well worthwhile.

If you want update about the Parish Council please visit our web site – www.woodnesboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk which has been set up by Sarah to bring to bring us into the 21st century.

To conclude I would like to express my sincere thanks to my fellow councillors for their support and their enthusiasm. Our two longest serving members Cllr Brenda Baker and Cllr Richard Ovenden, their knowledge of past decisions and policy are always a great help. Richard is always keeping a watchful eye on our spending! Also our thanks to Bill Newport who continues to keep our village tidy though Bill has suffered from ill health lately.

And not least of all, our thanks to our Clerk Mrs Sarah Wells, who works hard behind the scenes to keep the Parish Council running very smoothly. Thank you for your attention.

5. FINANCE REPORT

RECEIPTS

Carried Forward from 2006/07	7952.78
Precept	10000
VAT Reclaimed	987.81
Interest	441.20
Grants	5494.55
other	0.10
	24876.44

Payments

Employees	4280.17
Administration Costs	1478.20
Village Hall	6481.67
Village Green	1313.77
Grants	1266.00
Planting	198.01
Litter Bins	258.00
VAT	1115.54
	16391.36

Outstanding 2007/08 Payments

Bus Shelter	3419.69
	19811.05

Receipts	24876.44
Payments	-19811.05

5065.39 To carry forward to
2008/09

The Clerk went through the above figures and answered questions from the floor.

6. SPEAKER

Mr S Fury, Kent Deputy Director for the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) gave a very informative presentation on “The Effects of Climate Change on Rural Communities”. His slides included possible sea levels rises for the local area as well as temperature changes and rainfall projections.

7. POLICE REPORT

PC Ian Woodland - I have been the Neighbourhood Policing Officer for the Sandwich Electoral Ward since late summer last year. I am based at Sandwich Police Office, and am able to travel

between my 3 Parishes on foot or by mountain cycle.

I run a monthly Police Surgery from Woodnesborough Village Hall where I would encourage local people to come and have a chat about the policing of the Parish, and to discuss any particular concerns they may have.

In addition, the Parish Council have entered into the PACT scheme, which stands for Partners And Communities Together. The process involves using agencies such as the council to bring forward concerns expressed by people living and working in the Parish that are considered to be part of the policing agenda. Other partners that the police work closely with include the District and County Councils, and their various functions including Highway Services, Parking Services, Housing, Environmental Health, Education, Waste, etc.

The PACT process allows Partners, including the Police, to set out policing priorities that should be tackled by the partners on behalf of the area they represent. Therefore, if you do have issues that you feel should be addressed in your community, and you haven't spoken directly to me about them, you can also make contact with your local councillor and they will bring the issue to our notice.

The Neighbourhood Policing Agenda aims to enable local communities to set their own policing priorities, and to make local officers available and accountable for local policing issues. My contact details are available on the Kent Police website where a postcode facility exists to enable the public to identify and make contact with their own Neighbourhood Policing Officer, be it a constable, or a police community support officer.

I will now give you a précis of the crime situation in the Parish of Woodnesborough: -

In the Sandwich electoral ward (including Woodnesborough and Worth) there were 353 crimes recorded in the 2007/08 fiscal year compared to 376 in 2006/07, a reduction of 23 crimes or -6%.

March 2008 recorded 29 crimes in the Sandwich Ward compared to 37 in March 2007, a reduction of 8 crimes for the month or -21%.

However, specifically for the Parish of Woodnesborough, crime rose in the Parish from 28 crimes in 2006/07 to 37 in 2007/08. Specifically, there were slight rises in burglaries and violent crime, and the rate of criminal damage nearly doubled.

Criminal damage across the Sandwich Ward rose in the last year (exacerbated by the higher levels of graffiti), as did vehicle crime, but violent crime fell by a good margin.

It is too early to say whether the rise in crime over the last year has anything to do with my appointment (sometimes increased visibility has the effect of a higher reporting rate), whether some of the crime was part of a particular spate (sometimes burglaries and criminal damage can occur many times in quick succession in limited areas), or if my illness late last year and obvious absence in the Parishes enabled a small number of people to take advantage.

What I can say is that I am committed to the policing of your Parish, I am now in good health, and am looking forward very much to having a positive impact upon your quality of life.

I have some good news to report. Sandwich Town Council in their capacity as trustees of the

Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, have agreed to finance the purchase of a speed enforcement device that will be kept in my office for use in my area of operation. Therefore, when the device has been delivered, I will be able to act upon complaints of speeding in your area if that remains a concern. I will also be happy to invite complainants to monitor speeds with me in different locations to confirm with them that speed is a genuine problem, or whether it is a perceived problem.

If there are any specific questions on police-related topics I will now be happy to address them.

8. REPORTS

i. County Councillor Leyland Ridings

The Clerk read out the following report provided by Cllr Ridings.

1. KCC have been given a 4 star assessment by the CPE they were rated 15th out of 157
2. Corporation tax is at 3.9%, however the government owe Kent £10m pounds for asylum seekers
3. In the past few month a emphasis has been put on road repairs and 7300 pot holes have been fixed
4. The Neighbourhood forums trailed in the Dover area have been found to be success full and will be rolled out County wide during the following year.

Cllr Ridings has £10k in his personal grant fund and £9300 in the small capital grant fund, so if you need funding for any projects please apply to him.

During the past year Cllr Ridings has been very busy as leader of the Council, he will be stepping down from this position in a few weeks time and hopes to be able to get more involved with constituency matters.

ii. District Councillors

Cllr Butcher - I have been extremely busy this year with my function as Chairman of the District Council. This is an exciting time for the district with lots of planning for the future. Plans to redevelop Dover Town centre are underway and it is hoped that this historic town will become a tourist attraction, this will bring much needed revenue into the district.

As mentioned by the Chairman the Local Development Framework is currently out for its 6 week public consultation, please make your comments to DDC by 7th May, this is an important document that will shape the look and feel of the district for the next 20 year. The planned redevelopment of the Coal Field sites continues, Fowlmead Park is now open 7 days a week and I hope you have all had a chance to visit.

DDC have decided to withdraw from Cesspool emptying, this is mainly because outside companies can offer local resident better prices.

Lastly I will mention pay parking – I know that a lot of concerns have been raised by the increase in charges; however I would like to point out that we are open of the few districts that do not charge for Sundays and after 6.00pm.

Cllr Butcher then took some question from the floor.

Cllr Leith - As Chairman of the Planning Committee I have also had a busy year, recent changes to the planning application procedure have increased the work load of DDC officers. As has already mentioned the LDF consultation period ends on 7th May please ensure you get your comments on the record, all submissions will be looked at by the District Council. This is the first consultation on this 20 year plan, and I know that infrastructure is of concern to a lot of people.

On a personal note I would like to thank the people of Woodnesborough for there support and good wishes over the past year.

Questions were then taken from the floor.

The site allocation section of the LDF was discussed, a number of residents were unhappy that a site on Sandwich Road had been included for residential development and the possible sitting of a new Village Hall. They said that they had not been consulted on this plan and had known nothing about the LDF process. Cllr Leith was very concerned as DDC had paid for extensive advertising of the process including leaflet drops and an entire issue of the DDC newspaper to every household in the district. Coverage had also been included in the East Kent Mercury. Cllr Leith reiterated that there was still time to get representation to DDC before the closing date.

The Chairman of the Council was asked what the Council felt about the proposal for development on this site. He stated that the Council were in favour of the provision of a new village hall as the current one was very well used and had limited parking facilities.

The debate continued for a further 10 minutes with no fresh points being raised, finally the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35pm. He thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for refreshments.