

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WOODNESBOROUGH PARISH HELD ON TUESDAY 11th MAY 2010 AT WOODNESBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm

Councillors R Ovenden K Ellen B Wiseman S Hoskins
D Woodward (Chairman) B Baker G Boorman D Ford

24 Members of the Public
Dist Cllr Butcher
County Cllr Ridings

Jill Trumper Kent Trading Standards
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.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Smith. Mr & Mrs Butcher. Dist Cllr Simon Leith.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last annual meeting, held on 12th May 2009 were available for all present to read.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. ROGUE TRADERS & E-MAIL SCAMS

Jill Trumper from Kent Trading Standards gave a very informative and thought provoking presentation on the Rogue Traders, Bogus callers, e-mail and phone scams.

Cllr Woodward thanked Jill for her talk. The meeting then broke for refreshments.

5. POLICE REPORT - PC Ian Woodland

Woodnesborough is a part of the Sandwich electoral Ward, and includes the Parishes of Worth and of course Sandwich itself.

Our crime figures are calculated on the fiscal year of April to March, and there was a slight rise in crime between 2008-09 and 2009-10 of about 15 crimes covering the whole of the Sandwich Ward. The Parish of Sandwich suffered a small series of vehicle break-ins centred on the Industrial Estate, which was difficult to recover from, as there had been hardly any vehicle crime during 2008-09. Worth was the only Parish to record a drop in crime.

The Woodnesborough Parish recorded 31 crimes (provisional) in 2009-10 compared to just 21 during the period 2008-09. It should be noted that I have linked 7 of these crimes to a serious incident that had occurred in June 2009, which resulted in the arrest, conviction, and incarceration of the offender for kidnap and possession of an offensive weapon. It has been necessary to take a hard line with some persons associated with the offender in this case, who have sought to undermine the confidence of prosecution witnesses. Measures have been put in place to prevent further offences, and to promote confidence in the local community.

There has been only 1 crime recorded in the Parish since April 2010, the theft of a caravan from Foxborough Hill. I am currently optimistic of a return to the crime levels of 2008-09 if this trend continues.

Your Parish is covered by myself and PCSO Ian NORTON, who is primarily based in Sandwich, but is able to respond according to demand. Ian looked after the Sandwich Ward recently for a period of 6 weeks whilst I was temporarily based at Dover on office-based duties. I am now back working in the area again on full duties.

A major part of Neighbourhood Policing is that the community plays its part in setting our local policing priorities. I try to hold monthly surgeries in this Village Hall, which have not been well attended, but will continue as a conduit to generating conversation and trust within the community. I have been unable to book a surgery this month due to non-availability of the Hall, but will be holding a surgery between 7.30 and 9 pm on Thursday 3rd July 2010. Please come along for a chat if there is anything at all I can help you with. Remember that, even if it is not a typical police matter, I may know someone from a partner agency that will be able to assist.

Alternatively you can contact me at Sandwich Police Station next to the Guildhall, which is normally open to the public between 10 and 12 every weekday. The office is temporarily closed whilst refurbishment takes place to bring our front counter service to the Kent Police corporate standards. Deal Police Station is the nearest alternative during this short break from service.

I will be happy to take any questions. If I am unable to answer them tonight, I will be happy to respond to you formally at a later date.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is again my pleasure to present a report on the Parish Council's activities over the past year. I have to say it's been a quiet year for Parish Council business.

The Council

There has been one change to the Council with the resignation of Brian Wiseman at our last meeting in April due to family reasons. Brian had served for 7 years and was responsible for Police matters and regularly attended the annual Police and Parish Council meetings in Dover and always walked up to see PC Ian Woodland at his Police surgeries here.. Otherwise responsibilities for Councillors remain the same. All Councillors attend meetings on a regular basis and continue to demonstrate an active interest in council business.

I reported last year that Mrs Karin Waite, our litter collector had just given the job up. After advertising we were able to appoint Stephen Hogben-Cloke who lives in the village to do the job. Our thanks go to Stephen for doing a good job in keeping our village tidy.

Highway Matters

The national survey of speed limits on A & B class roads in Kent is nearing completion in East Kent and neither of the two roads A256 & A257 within our vicinity are likely to be changed. However, this survey does not include Foxborough Hill and once completed we will again press the extension of the 30mph limit further down the hill towards Poisons Cross.

At our request an automatic traffic count was taken at the top of Foxborough Hill by Kent Highway Services over 7 days at the end of June. Their report stated that the weekly traffic flow northbound was 6499 vehicles and 6428 southbound. Calculations indicated that 85% of usual traffic speed was 34mph northbound and 33mph southbound. They were not considered excessive. There were, however, a small minority of drivers who drove at unreasonably excessive speeds.

Nevertheless, the problem of speeding within the village has received attention this past year with a mobile speed check in Foxborough Hill in June and then the installation of an interactive sign adjacent to the new Churchyard later in the year. This sign drew driver's attention as to whether they were exceeding the 30mph limit soon after they drove over the brow of the hill. A number of people told me that they thought this was effective in slowing vehicles down. In fact one Parish Councillor told me it frightened the life out of him! Guilty conscience?? But then it disappeared! In fact some people thought it had been stolen. Fortunately "No". The sign is a mobile unit such that it can be used in other locations for the same purpose. And now it has again returned last week! I will add that PC Woodland has assured me that mobile speed checks can and will be carried out when felt necessary.

Despite reporting to the District Council that the road name signs at the top of Fir Tree Hill and Church Street were damaged some months ago they are still awaiting attention.

The problem of the bus stop on Oak Hill was discussed once again following a complaint from a resident who had encountered a near miss by a car one evening after alighting from the bus at the stop. The bus from Canterbury had been stopping just prior the crossroads but has now returned to stopping at Oak Hill following complaints from a neighbouring land owner. The Parish Council is again looking at the possibility of re-locating the bus stop and discussions are in hand with Stagecoach and Kent Highways.

Having just endured the worst winter for some decades I think in our parish we have been fortunate in not suffering from numerous potholes. I attended a Kent Highways seminar at Ashford in the autumn where a new computer system was demonstrated. One of the selling points of this was that not only can parish clerks report road damage, pot holes etc but this can also be done by you, the general public whereby you can then follow the progress of your entry.

Our Footpath Officer Cllr Ken Ellen reported that comments had been made about the horse restrictors located at the beginning of the footpath that leads off The Street through to the orchards at the rear of this hall. This had been an ongoing saga with dissatisfaction with the kissing gate that was installed. Although not elegant the restrictors have now prevented people riding horses up this path. To make them more acceptable I will be painting them dark green in the next week or so.

Planning

Over the past 12 months the Council has commented on 9 applications all of which have been supported. These ranged from house extensions, installation of conservatories and the change of use from agricultural buildings to a trade showroom for building materials. One of the applications included the construction of 4 dwellings at the old Centa in Foxborough Hill. However, this application was subsequently withdrawn. I now understand that a revised application is soon to be submitted for this site.

Local Development Framework & New Village Hall

There is little to report on this subject at present. We understand that the Dover District Council's Core Strategy has now been approved by the Government Inspectorate and we are now awaiting for the revised Sites Allocation document to be published which should have been out in June. However, I am advised that it will be delayed. Hopefully Cllr Butcher can throw a little more light of this in his report.

The Council has considered other sites in the village and at present is keeping an open mind.

Village Hall

First can I say a big thank you to Cllr Gary Boorman and his committee for running and maintaining this hall. I often speak about the cost of maintaining this building. This year that task has continued with the Parish Council having a new retaining wall built at the rear of the stage and kitchen. Its purpose is to keep the bank soil back and to prevent further flooding of those areas. The cost exceeding £5k. Fortunately the Village Hall Committee contributed £1k towards this cost.

As you can see the Village Hall Committee have funded repairs to the ceiling and the Parish Council are still paying for minor stop gap repairs to the roof. Cllrs Doug Smith and Gary Boorman have recently carried out a risk assessment of the hall and made certain recommendations which were discussed at our last meeting.

Police Matters

As you have heard Ian attends our meetings as often as time permits and continues with regular Police Surgeries in this hall. Ian's report again indicates that crime is very low in our village for which we are thankful to both Ian and his colleague Ian Norton.

Social Housing

For anybody who lives or has connections with the village and is interested in one of the Aireys Houses at Foxborough should there be a vacancy, I felt this was an opportunity to draw your attention a change in the system as there is no longer a waiting list as such for these properties. You are now required to register through Dover District Council for the **Choice Based Lettings Scheme**.

To be eligible for The Aireys, you will need to fulfil the **Local Connection Criteria**.

Kent Homechoice is the new Choice based lettings scheme for all Council and housing association homes in Kent. There is now a bidding scheme. For more information you should contact the Housing Needs Section at DDC.

Village Green

The Village Green was established some 8 years ago for the benefit of the youngsters of the village. Back in those days children were using the new Church yard as a recreation ground as they complained that they had nowhere to go – hence the Village Green, where the Parish Council installed a cycle track and football goals after consulting with the then youngsters as to what they would like. The Parish Council is concerned that the Green is being used more and more by dog walkers which is not its purpose.

In March I found it necessary to call out the Dog Warden because of the dog fouling in the centre of the village. Dog fouling is totally unnecessary and illegal carrying a £50 fixed penalty notice. There are numerous footpaths across fields and orchards surrounding the village which are ideal for dog walking. The Warden has advised me that he will be making further visits to our village.

A resident in Beacon Lane complained about the access to the local post box which had become an area of mud and puddles during the winter. Cllr Richard Ovenden arranged for it to be cleared revealing some hard standing beneath the mud. However, because people drive up to the post box I fear the same condition will reappear next winter so a more permanent solution may be necessary.

It gave me great pleasure in the spring of last year to present a donation from the Parish Council to the Mother & Toddler Group which is run by Silvia Porter, Val Smith and Tessa Stevenson in this hall. If you drop in on a Thursday morning during term time you will see it is a hive of young activity. These ladies do a superb job in such limited space.

As I draw to a close can I just say thank you to all the people who run groups in the village many of which use this hall. You do a sterling job for our community. And to Ken & Linda Butcher for maintaining the beautiful flower bed at the top of Fir Tree Hill.

Next I must give our thanks to our Clerk Mrs SarahWells, who works very hard behind the scenes to keep the Parish Council running so smoothly.

Finally I would like to express my sincere thanks to my fellow councillors for their support and their enthusiasm. Some of our debates do become a little lively but that is good for democracy. I began by reporting a resignation, so we now have a vacancy to fill. If anybody interested then please see Sarah or myself.

Thank you for your attention

7. FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk presented the accounts for 2009/10.

	Budget	Actual
RECEIPTS		
Carried Forward	6,325.93	6,325.93
Precept	11,000.00	11,000.00
VAT	694.00	710.02
Interest	300.00	52.90
Grants	0.00	1,000.00
Other		0.10
	18,319.93	19,088.95
PAYMENTS		
	Budget	Actual
Salaries	4810.00	4368.73
Admin Costs - Insurance, office, phone, BB	1535.00	1114.52
Village Hall - Inc Insurance	5800.00	6,208.41
Village Green	1800.00	1,155.11
Councillors Expenses	250.00	0.00
Training	250.00	0.00
Grants	1075.00	600.00
Equip Handyman	50.00	10.49
Litter bins	350.00	0.00
Flower Beds	200.00	281.50
Membership	100.00	72.75
VAT	0.00	937.42
Contingency	799.93	0.00
Other Projects/New VH	1300.00	0.00
	18319.93	14,748.93
Bank Reconciliation Jan to Mar 2010		
Current Account	1,060.00	Receipts
Reserve Account	7,597.48	Payments
Bonus Saver	2,820.67	Petty Cash
Petty Cash in Hand	22.89	
	11,501.04	
Unpresented Cheques	-7,138.13	
	4,362.91	

8. REPORTS**i. District Councillor Cllr Butcher**

Cllr Butcher reported that during the past year a lot of work had been undertaken to allow the amalgamation of services between Shepway, Thanet, Canterbury City and Dover District Councils. It was hope this sharing of resources would reduce costs for rate payers.

One of the services in question was waste collection. At the moment a new contract for the collection of waste in the 4 Council areas was being negotiated. This would allow additional recyclable materials to be collected.

The Local Development Frame work was still being worked on by DDC officers and the new stage of consultation would not be for some months.

Cllr Butcher than answered questions from the floor.

ii. County Councillor Leyland Ridings**Children's Social Services and Education**

In my position as Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, I am delighted that this has been another successful year for Kent's students. In the summer of 2009, 52% of GCSE students achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths, a 2% increase from the year before. It has also been another record year for A-level results in Kent schools with the number of students achieving two A to E passes three percent higher than in 2008.

This year's Kent School Games were officially launched on 1st October 2009 by Dame Kelly Holmes, along with Hugh Robertson M.P. and KCC Leader Paul Carter at Hayesbrook School, Tonbridge, Bower Grove Special School, Maidstone and Allington Primary School, Maidstone. This event has turned into a great success and has resulted in many children participating in competitive sport on a regular basis: there were 900 children and young people at the opening.

The Children, Families and Education directorate is currently being restructured so we are better organised to meet the service demands of the community whilst making necessary efficiency savings. There will be a slim strategic centre, improved frontline service delivery and increased efficiency.

Audit Commission Inspection

In December 2009, the Audit Commission published the league table for the performance of all local authorities in England. There are two inspection reports. One report covers Kent County Council as an organisation. The second report covers Kent, the county, in partnership with the public sector, voluntary organisations and the business community. Kent excels in both reports. Kent County Council is joint top among all county councils in England - it is one of only three county councils that are "performing excellently". So, for the eighth year running, Kent County Council has scored the highest possible overall rating. The county is also singled out for exceptional achievement. In the partnership assessment, Kent gets two exceptional accreditations for improving young people's education and skills, for providing job opportunities to match Kent's growing economy and for the Gateways, which bring a wide range of public, community and voluntary services under one roof.

Transport and travel

This year, we have rolled out the Kent Freedom Pass across the entire county of Kent. We have also agreed to extend the scheme to those students who live in Kent but attend schools in other local authority areas, such as Medway. The Pass, which costs £50 currently, allows students to travel on any public bus at any time, including weekends and school holidays.

The heavy snowfall is likely to have damaged pavements and roads to some degree and I would ask you to report any damage and potholes to Kent County Council. This can be done by telephoning 08458 247 800. The road repair crews are working across the county and fixed over 10,000 potholes on Kent's roads in January 2010 alone. The repairs have been carried out ahead of more permanent work which Kent County Council is preparing to spend an extra £1million on from March onwards.

A new initiative this year was to give each County Councillor £25,000 to spend on Highways work in their division – If you have any suggestions for road improvements please let me know.

Roadworks should also be more streamlined in 2010 as we have introduced the Kent Permit Scheme, which means a company planning to dig up a road must apply for a permit from Kent Highway Services. This will allow Kent Highway Services to better co-ordinate the timing of roadworks, so that gas, water, telecoms, electricity companies and our own crews work on the same part of the road at the same time, reducing the number and duration of roadworks – and minimising their impact on motorists and other road users.

Adult Social Services and Community Safety

Managed by Help the Aged/Age Concern, but funded by our Community Safety Unit, we have provided five 'Handy Vans' to work across the county to provide advice and guidance and fit a range of safety and security products for people over the age of 60. Some of the products currently installed include

smoke alarms, window locks, door chains, door viewers, mortice locks and mortice bolts. The free service is available to anyone aged 60 years or over, who has disposable savings/assets not exceeding £20,000 (not including the value of their home) and lives in an area where Handy Vans operate. To make a referral please phone 0845 026 1055 or email communitysafetyunit@kent.gov.uk.

Health

For those with health concerns we have established, in partnership with the NHS, 'Kent Health Watch', a service to help local residents express their views about health and social care in the county and get through to the right people. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In February 2010, we ran a 'Health Watch' road-show to talk face to face with people to see what issues are important and where. This information will help Kent County Council and the NHS work together to improve the health services.

Communities

KCC is building of the largest new art gallery in the South East called Turner Contemporary. The construction work is currently on budget and on schedule to be completed by the end of 2010, opening the following spring. It is designed by David Chipperfield, an internationally renowned architect.

Council Tax for 2010 - 2011

On 18th February 2010, Paul Carter announced the lowest ever Council Tax increase (since Council Tax began 17 years ago) of 2.1%. The rise of 2.1% means that a Band D property will increase from £1,026.27 to £1,047.78, an extra payment of 41 pence a week. It is expected that this will give Kent the 9th lowest Band D rate of any comparable authority.

Kent County Council will provide an additional £6.5million to support vulnerable adults, £5.3million to strengthen children's social services, mostly to meet the 21.2% increase in referrals in the wake of the tragic Baby Peter case, plus £10m to meet the additional costs in 2010/11 of supporting a £1.5billion capital programme.

Member Community Grant

This year, I have given: £600 to the Eastry Twinning Association to enable them to make an official visit to Longpre-les-Corps-Saints; £549 to Sandwich Technology School to pay for the internal roof to their restaurant extension; £1,000 to Walmer Cricket Club for the refurbishment of the artificial pitch; £200 to Sandwich Town Council for the Sandwich Festival portable toilets; £500 to Preston and Elmstone Village Society to help them rebuild the village hall; £2,000 to Ash Village Hall Management Committee for the Ash Heritage Centre; £500 towards the 2010 visit of the Sandwich – Honfleur Twinning Association; £2,000 for the Sandwich Community Christmas Lights and Carnival; £1,129 to Sandwich Town Cricket Club for the installation of lighting and security system at the Butts Recreation Group; and finally £1,522 to Eastry Village Hall Management Committee for the refurbishment of the kitchen.

9. SEWAGE POLLUTION

Mark Jager, from the Environment Agency

The Chairman explained that unfortunately Mr Jager had been unable to attend the meeting.

Questions were then taken from the floor.

There was concern that work to Gas and Water mains, on Sandwich Rd had not been finished off properly, the site was untidy and large puddles formed. The Chairman said he would investigate.

Action Parish Council

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 9.35pm.