

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WOODNESBOROUGH PARISH HELD
ON TUESDAY 12th APRIL 2011 AT WOODNESBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm**

Councillors	R Ovenden	K Ellen	S Hoskins
	D Woodward (Chairman)	B Baker	D Ford
	D Smith		

49 Members of the Public signed in.

Dist Cllr Butcher

Dist Cllr Simon Leith

Sarah Wells Clerk to the Parish Council

County Cllr Ridings

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 G Boorman. Mrs Moore. Mr & Mrs Thomas. Mrs Baldwin

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last annual meeting, held on 11th May 2011 were available for all present to read.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The problems with the Gas and Water mains works, on Sandwich Rd had been investigated and reported to Kent Highways Services. **Action Discharged**

The Chairman introduced Mr Ellis and his colleagues.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OPPOSITE VILLAGE HALL

Darren Ellis of D.J. Ellis Construction Ltd, Westgate was in attendance with three colleagues. Mr Ellis introduced him self and his colleagues and told those present a bit about his company.

A planning consultant then spoke briefly about the planning constraints on the site, he then handed over to Architect who gave a presentation of the type, design and layout of houses for the proposed site.

The session was then opened to allow questions and comments from the floor. Mr Ellis noted the comments and concerns and agreed to look into the following issues.

- Rain Water run off from the site
- The width and sightlines of the proposed entrance

The meeting was closed at 8.50 for refreshments

The Chairman reopened the meeting at 9.10pm. He introduced PC Ian Woodland.

5. POLICE REPORT

Since 1st April 2010 there were 342 crimes reported in the Sandwich Ward compared to 320 crimes for the same period in 2009-10, an increase of 22 crimes or +6.9%. There were increases in Criminal Damage offences (+37 crimes) and Violent Crime (+15). All other crime categories showed a slight reduction.

I am pleased to report that crime recorded in this Parish between April 2010 and March 2011 remained at very low levels – 19 crimes were reported this year compared with 24 between 2009-2010. The criminal damage rate has halved, as has the rate of burglary to non-dwellings.

Not surprisingly, there were no crime trends, except that theft of metals for the scrap market have been occasional issues. These issues range between lead stolen from the Church, to power lines being dismantled and stripped for copper. This is a national trend, and locally we have been monitoring

activities at scrap metal merchants to ensure that stolen non-precious metals are not being disposed-of within the East Kent area. There are a growing number of persons engaged in “collecting” scrap metals, and it is important that members of the public report persons and vehicles seen in suspicious circumstances looking for scrap.

We have reviewed the manner in which we engage with members of the community in order to ensure that our resources are focussed in the most appropriate areas. As a result I have for the time being ceased to provide a Police Surgery in the Village Hall on the basis that they were not well attended. I am keen to engage with as many residents as possible, but this depends upon the community having the desire to engage with Kent Police. For now, I would encourage any resident with concerns relative to policing matters to use my mobile telephone number which should be published on the Kent Police website by entering your postcode.

You will hopefully have heard the slogan “You Said – We Did”. Neighbourhood Policing relies on the priorities set by members of our communities. So tell us what your policing priorities are so that we can take action where you feel you need action to be taken.

The vast majority of issues raised locally concern the perception of speeding traffic in town and village centres. To that end I have deployed my speed laser in the village, and have found that the worst area for speeding is between Sandwich Road and The Street. In the majority of cases, traffic entering the village from Sandwich failed to slow down at the 30 mph signs. As a result of my findings the Parish Council has requested that the interactive speed sign is deployed to remind motorists to slow down when entering the village.

There have been a number of changes to the way in which I am deployed in this area. Whilst I remain the named Officer for the Sandwich electoral ward (Sandwich, Woodnesborough and Worth), I am also acting as Beat Manager covering Eastry ward and Little Stour and Ashstone ward. My role now includes monitoring developing trends in crime and antisocial behaviour, and supporting the Police Community Support Officers deployed to the 3 wards when they need the support of a constable.

Police Forces have been challenged to make significant budgetary savings over the next 4 years, and Kent Police has started the process of reorganising to make these savings in Kent. The Kent Police Authority has ratified the new policing model, and we are undergoing a period of consultation and planning before the real changes take place.

South Kent (Ashford, Shepway and Dover districts) will merge later this year with East Kent (Canterbury and Thanet districts) to become the East Kent Division. Emergency response will be handled by teams of response officers deploying from a smaller number of bases, but every district will have a larger number of Neighbourhood patrols to handle call demand. Our commitment is to remain visible and available despite the cuts to our budget, and to continue to provide the Kent public with a first class service.

Before I take questions, I would like to remind you of the Open Golf Championships taking place at Royal St. George’s Golf Club between 10th and 17th July 2011. Resident permits will allow Sandwich residents and businesses access to their homes and places of work. The Woodnesborough Road access to Sandwich will be unregulated by Kent Police, and you should expect the village to take more local traffic throughout Open week as a result. Please be assured that I will be on duty throughout this period and will react to local need, and adapt to deal with any issues that the tournament brings. There will be a large policing contingent present throughout to minimise disruption as far as possible, and to maintain community safety.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Before we close the year and even the 4 year term of this Parish Council, it falls to me to give a report on the Council for the past year. As we have had a busy first half this evening, I have reduced my report this year.

The Council

We were delighted to co-opt Councillor Peter Charlesworth to the Parish Council in June following the resignation of Brian Wiseman at the end of the previous year. Peter comes with a wealth of experience having served in the Office of Fair Trading for a number of years in London. He has shown an active interest in attending a number of outside meetings. Otherwise the Council has remained the same with their appropriate responsibilities.

Unfortunately we now know that 2 councillors, Richard Ovenden and Doug Smith are not seeking re-election in May. Richard, who I always referred to, as our "elder statesman" is retiring after 45 years service. We shall miss his detailed knowledge and history of the village. Doug is stepping down for personal reasons but may be co-opted for a period in relation to the new village hall development. We wish them well for the future.

Planning

Over the past 12 months the Council has commented on 14 applications of which 11 have been supported and 3 opposed. These ranged from house construction and alterations, electrical sub-stations and erection of a 60m weather mast at Langdon near Dover. I suspect that the latter was in connection with another application for wind turbines in that area. The housing development at the Old Youth Centre was granted planning permission last year but we are still waiting to see the start of the construction of the 4 dwellings which will tidy that site up.

Highways

Speeding continues to be a concern to residents, be it Foxborough Hill, The Street or Marshborough. The moveable Interactive Speed Sign continues to re-appear opposite the Church in Foxborough Hill every so often. The sign is shared with other villages in the locality... The feedback I have received from villagers is that the sign is effective, though I am told there has been a younger element who try and see how high a speed they can record on the sign! You just can't win. In addition with the aid of funding from Cllr Leyland Ridings the "30mph" sign was painted on the road surface together with the provision of "blind summit" signs.

Following a report from PC Ian Woodland last month we are now requesting Kent Highways to occasionally locate the Interactive Speed Sign in The Street/ Sandwich Road to warn motorists of their speed as they enter the village from Sandwich.

The dangers of the Wood Ash cross roads with five accidents in the autumn was discussed by Councillors at the December meeting. The general consensus of opinion was again the problem of speeding. The signage at the crossroads appeared to be satisfactory. It was interesting to note that the accidents involved vehicles travelling along Beacon Lane from Woodnesborough towards Nonington. Perhaps it's time to press for a 40mph speed limit again.

The Parish Council supported, amongst others in Kent, a motion placed before the Kent Association of Local Councils for representation to be made to the Government for the speed limit of UK rural roads "Class C and unclassified" to be reduced from the present 60 to 50mph. The DfT figures indicate that 60% of all in car deaths occur on single carriageway roads. For 1 mph reduction in average speed the accident frequency drops by 5%.

A request has been made to the Kent Highways Dept for 2 additional salt bins in the parish – one at the top of Vine Lane, Marshborough and the other at the entrance to Foxborough Close. In the present financial climate we may not be successful.

You may tell me otherwise but I believe that we have been lucky in not suffering from too many potholes from last winter.

The re-location of the Oak Hill bus stop saga still has not been resolved. A suggested site is opposite Lasletts Warehouse, though farther back from the entrance to Fir Crest where the buses were stopping. The matter is in the hands of Kent Highways for details of the specification and funding. In fact we have now been waiting for over 4 months. When these details are to hand the Parish Council will consult interested parties in the area.

Our Footpaths Officer, Cllr Ken Ellen reports no major problems have been reported to him during the year.

Young Stephen Hogben-Cloke continues to collect litter around the village for which we express our thanks.

Policing

Having heard Ian's report, I can only say how reassured we feel in the Parish Council when he tells us that we are a low crime area. Long may it continue.

Village Hall

I am pleased to report that the retaining wall built at the rear and the drainage channel in the store room has proved successful. However, problems do not end there as several of the groups using the hall, including Parish Councillors have complained how cold the hall is even with the heating on. Nevertheless the Hall continues to be used by several of the village organisations despite its drawbacks.

I would like to say a big thank you to Cllr Gary Boorman and his committee for running and maintaining the hall.

Finance

It was decided to appoint a small committee to review the Parish Council's finances over the past few years and then make recommendations to the full council on the budget and precept for 2011/12. This gave us the opportunity to reduce the precept by £1000 for this coming year as you will see on your council tax notices from DDC. But we may not be able to repeat that again.

Councillors were delighted to respond to the request from the Chess Club, run by Harry Sharples in this hall, for 4 new time clocks. It is a pleasure to help local organisations with small grants. I congratulate Harry on the success of the Club which meets here on Monday evenings with a good membership of children and adults. Harry tells me that the youngsters enter a number of local competitions with great success. The only sad side is that they have to go to Eastry when they have the larger competitions as this hall is not big enough.

We have received a couple of requests from Guides for donations over the year towards trips to Kenya. Unfortunately Parish Councils are not legally permitted to make grants to individuals although I know that some councillors have made personal donations. A very successful quiz night was run in this hall recently to raise funds for one of the guides.

This may sound like repetition of past years but I do mean it sincerely, to 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.

Our thanks to Ken & Linda Butcher for maintaining the beautiful flower bed at the top of Fir Tree Hill. We must try again to get the District Council to replace the damaged Street name sign.

A big thank you to our Clerk, Mrs Sarah Wells, who works very hard behind the scenes to keep the Parish Council running so smoothly and keeps pace with the endless paperwork that keeps appearing from local and central government. Sometimes I curse having email facilities – Sarah just loves pressing that key to send another email out to the Councillors! How did we survive without email?

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my fellow councillors for their support their enthusiasm and regular attendance at meetings.

Thank you for your attention

David H-Woodward

7. FINANCE REPORT

Copies of the un-adopted year figures were distributed. The Clerk went through these and explained the various items. She informed the meeting that all the Councils accounts would be published on the Council web-site once there had been adopted by the Council and audited.

8. REPORTS

District Councillor Simon Leith – Cllr Leith informed the meeting that after 12 years on the District Council, the last 8 of those representing the people of Woodnesborough he had decided not to seek re-election. He thanked everyone in the parish for there support over the past 8 years and wished them well in the future.

KCC Cllr Leyland Ridings – The budget cuts and reorganisation being made by KCC were outlined. The budget is being cut by 28% over the next 4 years. This would lead to job losses of 1500-2000. The County Council is also to be restructured to make savings. All the primary schools in the area are doing very well and continue to have good results.

Potholes repairs are still a priority in the county. As a KCC members I have two grants funds £25000 towards highway improvements and £10,000 to wards small capital projects.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

Cllr Ovenden congratulated the Chairman on his running of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.