

## **DUNTON GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Dunton Green Village Hall on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 at 7.30pm**

**1. Present:**

Mr. Brian Tingley (Chairman), PCSO Sue Harwood, Kent County Cllr. Richard Parry (Member for Sevenoaks West), Ms. Tracy Godden (Clerk to the Parish Council), Mrs. Lesley Edmeads (Trustee, The Sir Thomas Smythe Charity), Dave Perry and 21 members of the Public (including six Parish Councillors).

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Sevenoaks District Councillors Mr. Cameron Brown and Mrs. Kim Bayley (Members for Dunton Green and Riverhead), Miss Christine Barton (Headteacher Dunton Green Primary School), PCSO Jane Wright

**3. Minutes of 2012 Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the April 2012 Annual Parish Meeting were approved. Proposed - Mr. Bayley, Seconded - Mr. Lapham and Agreed.

**4. Matters Arising**

None.

**5. Annual Report of the Parish Council**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged their attendance.

The Chairman read the Parish Council's attached Annual Report for 2012/2013. A copy of the report is attached.

**6. County Councillor, Richard Parry**

Cllr. Parry made a verbal report to the meeting.

KCC's element of the Council Tax had not risen again, It would be very difficult to sustain 0% increases going forward and huge cuts already had to be made. In executing the savings, however, Cllr. Parry was unaware of any frontline services being cut but he asked that if anyone knew differently that they advise him.

Cllr Parry went on to say that he had been working for the benefit of Sevenoaks in general and Sevenoaks West in particular. Focus had been on the following areas:

Grammar School: there had been some correspondence on this matter to which he had tried to respond. The bid was with the minister and there would be a meeting after the elections.

Broadband: some areas of Sevenoaks West were okay but others had a very poor service. There was a project to enhance the speed of broadband in Kent and it was Cllr. Parry's job to make sure that Sevenoaks West falls into the 95% category for



20mb broadband. Cllr. Parry urged residents to vote for better broadband via [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) (favoured status being given to those communities where there had been a great deal of interest indicated).

M25: Whilst efforts had been made to try to persuade the Transport Minister there was no funding available for a quieter surface and there was unlikely to be any for some years realistically.

Iceland: KCC will have recovered £42 of the £50 million (plus 7% on the balance while it is being paid back & it is guaranteed to be paid back).

J5 Slips Campaign: There was a campaign to have eastward facing slips implemented in Chevening. NALC has decided that this is a local matter and therefore KALC will look into this on NALC's behalf. A sub-committee has been set up to look at this (Cllr. Parry to chair) and the aim of the committee is to be dispassionate and objective. The project was unlikely to happen unless private capital up (& there is a sense from businesses that this needs to be done to provide infrastructure to support the County).

**7. District Councillor, Cameron Brown**

Cllr. Brown was unable to attend but had provided a report which the Chairman read. A copy of the report is attached.

**8. District Councillor, Kim Bayley**

Cllr Mrs. Bayley was unable to attend but had provided a report which the Chairman read. A copy of the report is attached.

**9. Kent Police - PCSO Sue Harwood**

PCSO Harwood had attended the meeting on behalf of Kent Police and in the absence of PCSO Wright (who had provided a report, a copy of which is attached).

PCSO Harwood advised that Sevenoaks was one of the safest places to live in the country, with general crime levels in West Kent being nationally very low. Additionally crime figures were coming down, even if only by a small margin. However, there was more opportunistic crime and PCSO Harwood urged residents to get out of the 'it won't happen to me' mind set. There could be a tendency to be blasé because it is relatively so safe in the District. She advised residents not to leave garden equipment out or leave sheds unsecured and urged them to be vigilant. In relation to cars she suggested that windows should not be left open or valuables left on display.

There had been a spate of burglaries where criminals had put mud on letterboxes to determine whether people were on holiday (safe to assume if not cleared off, residents were away). PCSO Harwood encouraged everyone to view their property from a burglar's perspective and to take steps to make their homes & property safer.

Following a point raised by a member of the public about Neighbourhood Watch

and the lack of communication from the local coordinator(s). PCSO Harwood indicated that she had been chasing Jackie Blake at NHW and took contact details for residents who wished to sign up to e-watch (the weekly email newsletter).

**10. Dunton Green Primary School**

Miss Christine Barton, Head Teacher, was unable to attend but had provided an update of the school's activities over the last year which the Chairman read out. A copy of the report is attached.

**11. The Sir Thomas Smythe Charity**

Mrs. Lesley Edmeads advised that the charity had been founded in 1625. It was a provider of financial and pastoral support to those in need.

One elderly resident was provided for in Dunton Green. Mrs. Edmeads advised that if anyone knew of a resident who might wish to apply for a pension that they should contact her in the first instance.

A report had been provided (a copy of which is attached).

**12. Consideration of any resolutions for which notice has been given**

None

**13. Any Other Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm



# Dunton Green Parish Council

## Annual Report 2012/2013

### COUNCIL

The members of the Parish Council are Mr Brian Tingley (Chairman), Mr Ian Bayley (Vice Chairman), Mr Graham Hersey, Mrs Lesley Edmeads, Mr Andy Lapham, Mr Fred Faircloth, Miss Kate Hersey and Mrs Freda England. Mrs Lesley Edmeads remains the Council's appointed representative on the Sir Thomas Smythe charity

Other appointments made in 2012 included:

- Mr Graham Hersey as the councillor responsible for the allotments
- Mr Ian Bayley representing the Parish Council on the Village Hall Management Committee
- Mr Fred Faircloth representing the Parish Council on the Donnington Hall Management Committee
- Mr Fred Faircloth representing the Parish Council on the pre-school committee
- Mr Graham Hersey representing the Parish Council on the Fort Halstead Working Group
- Mr Graham Hersey & Mr Brian Tingley representing the Parish Council on the Kent Association of Local Councils

Last year two members stood down: Mr Robin Martin and Mr Trevor Thake. Mr Thake had been a long standing member of the Parish Council and resigned after more than twenty years' service. The Council has continued to try to co-opt members to fill its vacancies, which are currently three. The Parish Council has made concerted efforts to try to raise the profile of the Council and encourage members of the parish community to come forward and join the Council.

### CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council office in the pavilion continues to be open for queries on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am until 12 noon. The clerk has been instructed only to admit visitors by appointment unless she knows them personally. Enquiries can also be made by post, telephone, email or via the Parish Council's website at [www.dgpc.org.uk](http://www.dgpc.org.uk).

### PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council is consulted on planning applications in the village. In previous years the report listed the developments that, in the Council's view, were the most important current planning issues; the 2013 list is very similar.

- **West Kent Cold Store**

A detailed planning application for redevelopment of site so as to accommodate a mixed-use development comprising 500 one, two, three, four and five bedroom residential units; 2,300sqm of commercial floor space (use class B1) and 460sqm medical facility together with associated access roads, car parking, landscaping and open space was approved in March 2010. This superseded an earlier outline planning application that had been passed at appeal.

In last year's Annual Report it was noted consultations had been conducted by Sevenoaks District Council with regard to the Section 106 Legal Agreement Community Facilities Contribution Fund and its allocation and that a Steering Group had been set up to look at how best this fund could be used. Dunton Green Parish Council's Recreation Ground Project had, at that stage, been approved by Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet to be progressed. The Council progressed its scheme to the sketch plan and costings stage in 2012 which led to a presentation being made to Berkeley Homes by Sevenoaks District Council officers in October 2012 and to Cabinet in December 2012. The project was finally approved for funding by SDC's Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012 (although formal notification of this was not received until March 2013). The Project encompasses provision of a new sports pavilion/community building, new play equipment (to include a Multi-Use Games Area and an upgrade of the current facilities) and new outdoor facilities in the recreation ground. A planning application for the proposed new community building was submitted in mid-December 2012 and the grant of planning permission was received in March 2013.

### POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

PCSO Chantelle Trante left Dunton Green to take up training to become a police constable. PCSO Jane Wright is now assigned to look after the parish on a permanent basis. There is currently no PC assigned to Dunton Green. The Parish Council urges all residents to report crime, however apparently insignificant, to Kent Police.

### PACT

The Partners and Community Together (PACT) Panel which was set up in Dunton Green in March 2008 to look into ways of reducing crime and disorder in Dunton Green continued to meet in 2012, albeit on a less regular basis. However, it has been agreed that the PACT Panel be suspended until such time as there is a need to reinstate it. Crime levels have been reducing in Dunton Green and there has not been sufficient public interest in the PACT Panel to warrant holding further meetings for the time being.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

The youth club for 11-19 year olds run by Play Place Innov8 continues to run each Thursday during term time between 7pm and 9pm in the Pavilion in the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council provided grant monies in 2012 and continues to provide funding support (instalments having commenced again in March 2013) which enables the youth club to continue to run. However, Play Place Innov8 continues to submit applications for funding for on-going activities in 2013 to ensure that this very valuable and worthwhile provision is made available to the young people of Dunton Green.

A 10 week soccer course organised and run by Kick Kent during the summer holidays and autumn 2012 was funded by the Parish Council. This proved to be popular although the Parish Council has taken on board comments about timings for future courses.

### HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS

The Parish Council keeps a watch on local highways and footpaths. Highway maintenance requirements are passed to Kent County Council's Highway Services division or the Public Rights of Way Office. The Parish Council does not cut footpaths with the



exception of the path from the recreation ground to the station, which is cut for the benefit of commuters and the footway between Lennard Road and Station Approach.

Whilst the Section 278 Highway Works related to the new Ryewood Meadows development have effectively been completed, the traffic calming scheme in Station Road is still a cause for concern for some residents.

The Parish Council occasionally receives communications from residents around the village raising concerns about parking restrictions (or, more often, the lack of them) in various areas of the village. The Parish Council is not a highway authority and it has no jurisdiction to implement restrictions. It is, however, a consultee when proposals are put together by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council. The District Council conducted a review in the latter part of 2012. There have been some informal proposals resulting from the review which the Parish Council has considered. However, there seems to be an issue surrounding funding of a large number of the proposals and it remains to be seen whether or not any will be implemented. The District Council will, in due course, consult with affected areas of the village.

#### LIGHTING

The Parish Council continues to be responsible for most of the street lights in Dunton Green that are not on the main road with the principal exception of the Mill Road estate and latterly the new lighting scheme in Station Road.

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES & EVENTS

The Parish Council will continue to work on the Recreation Ground Project in 2012. However, there is still a considerable amount of detail to be considered, agreed and approved before construction can commence. Members of the public have had the opportunity to view the plans for the building and the aspirations for the outside space and comments received by those who have viewed these have been overwhelmingly positive.

2012 was a fantastic year of celebrations with the London Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee being the central events. Dunton Green Parish Council worked hard organising an event to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in style at the recreation ground on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012. From Miss Lucy's School of Dance opening the proceedings to the beacon lighting and firework display climax to the day it was non-stop fun and enjoyment! Teams competed in the It's a Knockout, children enjoyed the bouncy castle and entertainment from the Funky Chicks and then the celebrations continued into the evening with Viv the Spiv and music from 'Off the Cuff! This event really demonstrated just what can be achieved when the community comes together. The Parish Council is very proud to have organised this event and to have been able to call upon so many other organisations in the village who were prepared to get involved - the Scouts, the Dunton Green Social Club, the school PTA and children from Year 5, Dunton Green FC, the Rose & Crown, Faithworks, Dunton Green Youth Club and many, many more local businesses & organisations - too many to mention! Special thanks go to the working group from DGPC & their community volunteers, to Berkeley Homes (sponsor of the fireworks display) & Sevenoaks District Council (Big Community Fund grant) and to everyone who came along for making the day possible!

For the fifth year in a row there was a very successful Family Fun Day held in June at the Recreation Ground. This year the Parish Council's stall once again included a Treasure Map game which proved very popular. Thanks must go to the hard work of Faithworks and everyone else who is involved in the organisation of this much welcomed event each year. The team are already planning for sixth event this summer. Following on from the success of 2011's event, Dunton Green Parish Council held another Summer Afternoon Picnic & Entertainment. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August saw residents bring along their picnics and enjoy a relaxing afternoon catching up with friends and appreciating the sounds of 'Second Wind' Concert Band, a group of over 30 musicians who kept everyone entertained with their vast repertoire.

Once again the Remembrance Day service was conducted by Martyn Berry from St. Marys Riverhead. The Parish Council was delighted that Riverhead & Dunton Green Scouts accepted its invitation to attend the service again. This is an event which is growing in stature in Dunton Green and the Parish Council extends its thanks to all those who take the time to come along.

The Parish Council once again provided a Christmas tree on the green in London Road. For the twelfth year running people from Dunton Green participated in this relaxed event by singing many of the festive favourites. The weather on this occasion meant that the event could take place on the green. Music was once again provided by Bessels Green Baptist Church and refreshments served by Faithworks. Rev Martin Booth led the proceedings. The Parish Council expresses its thanks to all those who enabled the event to take place.

#### VILLAGE ENHANCEMENTS

Following the introduction of hanging baskets in 2011 the Parish Council has continued with its efforts to improve the look of the village. In 2012 two raised flower beds were installed on the northern section of the village green, together with a number of small flowering trees. A new noticeboard has also improved the area in Lusted Road. A flagpole was also erected in part to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. Bulb planting schemes were also introduced into some of the verges and green spaces and the Parish Council will continue to look at ways of enriching the open spaces in Dunton Green.

The Parish Council has also introduced in 2012 quarterly community litter picks. Support for these events has grown slowly but the Parish Council remains optimistic that residents will support the effort to keep Dunton Green clean and tidy.

#### ALLOTMENTS

The Parish Council allotments on Dunton Green Social Club land remain fully let and currently there is nobody on the waiting list.

#### PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES

Summary 2011/2012 Financial Year Annual Return signed off by the Audit Commission:

	£	£
Balances brought forward		103,562.90
ADD		
Annual Precept		56,130.00
Total Other receipts		3,066.40
SUBTRACT		
Staff Costs	19,512.34	
Total other costs	55,778.28	
Balances carried forward		87,468.68



## **Report of District Councillor Cameron Brown**

During the Calendar Year 2012 – 2013 I have attended a large number of formal Council meetings (Full Council, Development Control, Services Select (Vice Chairman), in addition to informal meetings with SDC officers, Parish Council meetings and meetings with residents. I have represented the views of the residents of Riverhead and Dunton Green whenever possible.

The headlines are as follows:

### **1. Budget**

SDC has put up its share of Council tax by 1.98%. As many of you will be aware this is in the context of a substantially reduced government grant and no Council tax increases in the previous two years. While the Council was extremely reluctant to increase its tax levy in the current climate there was, in reality, little choice.

### **2. West Kent Cold Store section 106 agreement**

Funding has now been approved for both Riverhead's and Dunton Green's projects. Riverhead will receive some £59,000 to fund environmental improvements at the heights and for lighting at St Mary's Church. Dunton Green will receive some £1,000,000 to fund the demolition of the existing pavilion, the provision of a community building and new/ replacement outdoor facilities on the Dunton Green recreation site. All monies need to be claimed by December 2017. I would like to congratulate both Parish Councils, and in particular their respective clerks, for their hard work in their successful bids.

### **3. The Library**

Discussions remain ongoing in relation to the library in Riverhead. While publicly stating that the library will not be closed KCC have to make cuts from their budget of some 10%. There is political pressure generally that libraries should have a community feel to them, either being run by residents (cost saving) or having some further community usage. It has been noted that the rent on the Riverhead building is particularly heavy and that there is of course a large library in Sevenoaks. Against that the footfall to the Riverhead library remains relatively high.

Accordingly they are looking at a number of proposals, which include renegotiating the rent on the current building, finding a partner for use of the current building i.e. a coffee shop, finding an alternative venue for the current library and looking to community groups to participate in its running/ usage to defray costs. Anyone interested should let the parish clerk know.

### **4. Parking in Dunton Green and Riverhead**

Following a meeting in March 2013 with Andy Bracey and Richard Wilson from SDC and Parish representatives some progress has been made. SDC outlined that while it was responsible for parking measures and enforcement generally financial support for new measures came from



KCC. KCC's position is that there is very little money with a long waiting list and accordingly any scheme proposed would be much more likely to succeed if it was self-financing. Agreement has been reached with both parishes as to proposed restrictions, particularly relating to Shoreham lane in Riverhead and the Sidings/ Station approach in Dunton Green. These will go out for informal and then formal consultation. Once responses have been received SDC will see what funding if any is available – the fact that Riverhead has air quality issues may assist. Petitions to KCC are also helpful. The likelihood is that the Dunton Green proposals would be implemented first due to the influx of new residents. Resident's views have been represented in the proposals, save where safety of road users requires alternative measures.

#### **5. Council Tax Discounts**

At the Council Meeting in February it was noted that the Local Government Finance Act had given the Council the ability to change Council Tax Discounts. The proposed changes were needed to encourage owners of empty homes to bring them back onto the housing market to address housing shortages. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 there will be:

- No Discount for second homes;
- Unoccupied properties receive 100% discount for three months and then nothing after that;
- Council tax is to be increased to 150% for properties unoccupied for two years.

#### **6. Senior Management Costs**

In line with its savings plan the Council had restructured its senior management team, with voluntary redundancies, resulting in significant savings.

#### **7. New Tenancy Strategy and District Housing Register Policy**

SDC has adopted new policies in relation to the above. The new housing register policy in particular will place greater emphasis on local connection to Sevenoaks District and economic and community contributions, such as employment and volunteering. Housing need and priority will now adopt the Kent wide banding system, removing the old points scoring system. There has been/ will be a significant publicity campaign to advertise the changes.

#### **8. And Finally....**

Residents will be delighted to know that SDC has adopted a new 'Sex Policy' in relation to the licensing of sex shops, sex cinemas and sexual entertainment venues. Residents may be delighted/ disappointed to know that there are no applications in the proverbial pipeline!

**Cameron Brown**  
19<sup>th</sup> March 2013



## **Report of District Councillor Kim Bayley March 2013**

### **Introduction**

In my second year as District Councillor I continued to attend the three committees within District Council that I attended the previous year – Performance and Governance, Environment Select and Electoral Arrangements. I also attended the Full Council meetings during the year as well as a number of informal meetings with Council departments and constituents. I have not been able to attend as many Parish Council meetings as I would have liked due to a large number of timing clashes but I hope I have been available to you via email and phone as needed. I have also acted as a Governor of Dunton Green Primary School within the district.

### **Performance and Governance Committee**

In my role on P&G we look primarily at the finances of SDC.

During the year Council budgets continued to be under pressure due to significant funding cuts by Government at a local level.

SDC reluctantly felt it needed to increase its part of the Council tax by 1.98%. This was done in order to safeguard front line services to the best of SDC's ability whilst SDC continues to look at ways to reduce costs. In particular SDC has recently restructured senior management positions to take out a large amount of cost. However still more savings are needed over the coming years and a specific cost savings group has been set up to look at ideas.

### **Environment Select Committee**

In my role on environment committee we looked at a large number of Local plans as well as parking charges and Bus and Train provision within the Sevenoaks area.

Whilst some parking charges in Sevenoaks have had to be increased SDC have left a number of car park charges at the same level as 2012 to ensure that residents are not unduly affected by rising prices

We heard presentations from bus and train companies which serve Sevenoaks and fed back residents concerns regards timetables and fares.

### **Highways and Parking**

I have been involved in discussions with SDC on new parking schemes for Riverhead and Dunton Green. Given the financial pressures on Kent County Council SDC have considered a number of options and a proposal for the area has been tabled by SDC.

In particular the new proposals should alleviate the dangers in Shoreham Lane and the Station approach area in Dunton Green, both of which have been causing local residents concern. Further smaller changes have been suggested around Mill Lane.



The proposals have been agreed by the Parishes and will now go out for consultation with residents

I have also been talking to KCC about what can be done to alleviate some of the issues in Chipstead Lane although a satisfactory solution has yet to be found.

#### **West Kent Cold Store**

The Cold Store Development is underway and several new residents have already moved in. The developers and SDC have approved the section 106 applications made to them for funding from both Riverhead Parish Council and Dunton Green Parish Council, which should be excellent news for the parishes and residents of the area.

There continue to be some teething problems with the road layout through Station Road but solutions are being proposed to alleviate this issue

Dunton Green will receive approximately £1 million to create new outdoor facilities and a new pavilion on the recreation ground. Riverhead will receive £59,000 to fund improvements at the Heights and for lighting at St Mary's Church.

Both Councils deserve to be congratulated for their hard work in relation to the bids for funding

#### **Library Services**

I have been involved in a number of meetings to discuss the future of library provision in Riverhead / Dunton Green. The Riverhead library has a particularly costly lease and discussions have focused around possible alternative sites, negotiations with the landlord and revenue generating options or partners for the library.

Whilst no announcement has been made that the library will close we continue to look at ways to make it financially more viable

#### **Jubilee and Olympic celebrations**

I would like to congratulate both parishes on the Jubilee and Olympic celebrations where both parishes looked lovely. I particularly enjoyed seeing so many local residents out to see the Olympic torch travel through Riverhead

#### **Big Community Funds**

The parishes have also had a number of successful applications to the Big Community Fund during the year on which they deserve to be congratulated. Most recently Riverhead have received some extra funding for the parkland area

I remain available to discuss any local issues and would like to thank both parishes for all their hard work.

**Kim Bayley**

**22nd March 2013**



Good evening. My name is PCSO Jane Wright , I have been the PCSO for Otford /Shoreham for the last 4 1/2 years . From October last year I took over Riverhead and Dunton green as well. I apologise for not being here tonight. My colleague PCSO Harwood is kindly helping me out.

From my overview of the district I can let you know that Riverhead is a very safe place to live with a low crime rate compared to other areas of Kent. However, there have been incidents of incursions onto residents' property by opportunist thieves. This has tended to be through insecurities to homes, garages and sheds that offenders have taken advantage of. Police are aware of these few incidents and have increased time spent in the area in order to deter & combat the potential for further offences to take place.

At this time Kent Police is undertaking a new performance frame work which is going to be developed forward levels. Currently there is no data available.

Regular patrols are conducted around the whole of the area, at all times of day and night in order to deter any potential offender.

Regular letter drops are conducted by me and my colleagues to remind residents of the need to secure not only their properties but also items of value in and on those properties. These would include items stored in sheds garages and storage oil for heating.

Simple security checks would include padlock and alarm outbuildings, close your garage door so no persons can come down your drive and use the excuse that they were "just looking" .Take your car / house keys upstairs each night and under no circumstances leave anything such as keys /wallets within reach or view of a letter box during the day or night.

Metal thefts are on the increase and residents will probably have noticed the prevalence of small vans going around collecting any scrap metal. Some of these are quite legitimate and have a waste carriers licence. Others are not and can be linked to the unauthorised taking of metal along with other items from domestic and industrial premises. Hopefully now that the scrap metal law has changed this will reduce incidents being called in.

Local police patrols are boosted by the MOD Police at Fort Halstead who we liaise with on a regular basis and who you will see in the area most days. They provide an extra visible deterrent and have a close working agreement with ourselves that involves all information sharing. There is regular contact with the British Transport Police who, in conjunction with Kent Police, conduct inter-force operations on the rail networks that feed into and from the Sevenoaks District to disrupt those persons that use the rail network to travel from place to place to commit crime.

Finally may I please remind everyone that if they see anyone acting suspiciously please dial 101 which is the new non emergency line for the police. This number will get you straight through to the control room at Maidstone where you can report an incident or leave a message for a particular officer or team. What may seem trivial to you could well be important to us. Should you think that there is a crime in progress do not hesitate to use the 999 system.



To find out more about your neighbourhood team or more safety advice visit [www.kent.police.uk](http://www.kent.police.uk). Your neighbourhood email address is [Sevenoaks.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Sevenoaks.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk)

Otford have several NHW schemes in place. To find out more you can visit [www.kent.police.uk/neighbourhoodwatch](http://www.kent.police.uk/neighbourhoodwatch)

Thank you for all your support that you have given me

Jane

Figures for last year  
Overall crime down 3.2%



## Dunton Green Primary School

### Report for the Dunton Green Annual Parish Meeting 2013

I cannot believe that another year has passed since I wrote my report for the Annual Parish ~~Council~~ Meeting. It has certainly been a busy year for both the children and the staff!

We have said goodbye to our Year 6 class of 2012 and, in September, we welcomed 30 young children into our Early Years Class as they began their school days. We have also welcomed children into other classes throughout the school and said goodbye to those who have left Dunton Green to move on to the secondary education or join their families in other parts of the country, and even to other parts of the world!

Our school leavers went to a variety of schools. Some of them took up places at the Grammar Schools: Skinners, Judd, and the Weald of Kent while others went to several different schools including Hugh Christie, Knole Academy and Hill View. Parents and children in this area have a wide range of schools to choose from and all schools offer different opportunities for the children, both academically and in the range of additional activities available.

We have also had some changes to staff. Mr Neville left so that he could concentrate on teaching music. During his time at our school the children were able to take part in national musical events and reached the finals of the Music for Youth Festival. Their success took them to different venues around the country including Brighton, Birmingham and Royal Festival Hall in London. They also joined choirs from around the country to perform at the O2 Arena. Mr Neville also liaised with Kent Music School and established music lessons for the children. Different year groups learned to play different instruments and the sounds of the 'cello, violin, viola and trumpet can still be heard throughout Key Stage 2. Younger children also have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder.

Mrs Grimble also left to take up a new teaching position. She was only with us for a short while but the children made good progress with their learning and were sad to see her go.

Having said 'goodbye' we then welcomed Miss Masson and Mr Butler to our school. We had not had a deputy head since Mrs Pengilly moved to another part of the country and so we took the opportunity to advertise the Year 2 vacancy for a deputy head teacher. We interviewed several excellent candidates and were delighted when our first choice, Miss Masson, accepted the position of deputy head / Year 2 teacher. Mr Butler is also an experienced teacher and we were pleased to be able to appoint a well qualified teacher for our Year 3 class. He, too, has quickly settled in to life of our school. Although the children in these two classes have had a change of teacher in the middle of the year, they are making excellent progress with their new teachers.



We also have a new Site Manager. Mr Arkel had not been with us very long when he had the opportunity to customise cars – something he was very interested in doing. We were very fortunate to be able to appoint Mr Bates. He takes pride in his work and he has many additional skills that can be very useful in a school.

We were pleased with the results of the Key Stage 2 SATS that were held during the Summer Term 2012. It has to be a team effort for children to achieve to the best of their own ability and I know that the staff appreciate the support of the parents in helping the children to value learning. We also recognise that some children find learning very difficult and we believe it is important to celebrate the achievements of all those who have worked hard throughout their primary school days.

	School	Kent	National
English Level 4	95.2%	83.6%	85.6%
Mathematics Level 4	90.5%	82.7%	84.2%

	School	Kent	National
English Level 5	38.1%	36.7%	37.6%
Mathematics Level 5	61.9%	39.4%	39.4%

	School	Kent	National
Mathematics Level 6	14.3%	3.8%	N/A

It seems a long time ago now, but last summer was an exciting time for the children in Key Stage 2. Every two years the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to another part of the country. Last summer they went to the Isle of Wight where they had the chance to experience a range of physical activities including abseiling and climbing. For some of them it was their first opportunity to challenge themselves to attempt some of the very demanding activities offered. The downside was the weather and the traffic problems! The 'Isle of Wight Festival' goers were causing large traffic jams and the return journey took rather longer than expected.

Miss Fitch organises a large number of club activities for the children and we are very fortunate to have a team of staff who are willing to lead some of these activities so that there is no cost for taking part. We also have some clubs run by external providers and for these there is obviously a charge. This includes football and judo. The activities offered range from physical activities such as dance and gymnastics and team games including football, cricket and netball to other, less strenuous activities, including recorders and sewing. We take part in many of the Sevenoaks Schools partnership activities including athletics events, football and netball tournaments and a swimming gala. Last year a group of children took part in a lacrosse tournament for the first time.



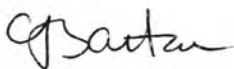
Breakfast Club continues to be managed by Mrs Payne, one of our Teaching Assistants. She does the shopping and the preparation and serving of the food but unlike many schools, there is only a charge for the food.

The Queen's Jubilee was not forgotten either. Members of the PTA, the staff and members of the School Council, organised a special day of celebrations and the School Council invited members of the local community to celebrate with us.

It was a busy and exciting year for anyone interested in sport, and in particular, the Olympics. We joined with other schools to take part in specially organised events in the Sevenoaks area and a group of our pupils also went to the Olympic Games site to see the different venues and 'soak up the atmosphere'. Four lucky children went to the Olympic Stadium, too. We were given permission by the Education Authority to close at lunch time on the last day of the Summer Term so that parents could take the children to Riverhead to see the Olympic flame travel through Sevenoaks.

Our PTA committee members continue to work hard on behalf of everyone in the school. They give up a lot of their own time to organise special events to raise funds and they appreciate the support of local members of the community who come along to the Summer Fete and Christmas Bazaar. The children benefit in so many ways from their efforts. At the moment they have a major project, the renovation of the school wildlife area. The area has already been cleared of weeds and a new pond set up. When it is completed it will make a lovely learning area for children and will be an attractive part of the outdoor area of the school.

Each year is special in its own way but there were so many exciting things happening throughout 2012 that I am sure that it will be a year that all of us will remember for many years.



Christine Barton  
Headteacher



## Sir Thomas Smythe's Charity

Not much to say really as the position of being a Trustee, is of a confidential nature.

However, having passed all of the criteria, I was put under the wing of Steven Valens who is based in London at The Skinners' Company, and they are like an umbrella for different Charities. I take good care of 1 lady in our village. As you can imagine, there are quite a few Trustees around in the 26 Parishes that the Charity covers in West Kent, and some of these look after more than just 1 in their designated Parish.

We meet twice a year, during April (usually in Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells and during October at The Skinners Hall for lunch with the Master, though I couldn't attend last year.

The attached page gives you a brief summary of what the Charity does for people who may need financial and pastoral support. It is not something that one would see advertised but is usually spread by word of mouth. Perhaps if anyone knows of someone in need, in the village, they could get in touch with me please.

Mrs Lesley Edmeads

Parish Councillor for Dunton Green

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013



## TONBRIDGE HISTORY

The website of Tonbridge Historical Society

- Home

## People

- Eliza Acton
- Anna Atkins
- Jane Austen's Tonbridge relations
- Other Austen connections
- The Children family
- Martin Hardie
- Sir Andrew Judd
- Vicesimus Knox II
- Sir Thomas Smythe
- Colonel Stephens
- Tonbridge cricketers
- Tonbridge photographers
- Russell White
- The Woodgates

## Sir Thomas Smythe

Thomas Smythe (1558-1625) was born at Westenhanger Castle near Folkestone. His connection with Tonbridge is through his mother Alice who was the daughter of **Sir Andrew Judd** (Judd), founder of Tonbridge School and owner of a large estate in and around Tonbridge. Smythe was able to acquire the **Great Bounds** Estate in Bidborough and other properties in Kent, London and Essex with the wealth he inherited and accumulated from three favourable marriages. The purchase of Great Bounds began a 200-year succession of Smythes until the closing years of the 18th century. The name is preserved today in Smythe Close, off Bounds Oak Way in Bidborough, and also in Sir Thomas Smythe's Charity. Until quite recently this charity, managed by the Skinners' Company, used income from property investments made by Sir Thomas to provide bread for the poor of several parishes in West Kent including Tonbridge. The charity now helps disabled or elderly people on low incomes in the same parishes with occasional small grants of money. Sir Thomas was also a significant benefactor of Tonbridge School.



Sir Thomas Smythe  
(reproduced by courtesy of the  
Skinners' Company)

The Judd family connection brought Sir Thomas to the Tonbridge area but his grandfather was also hugely influential in another way. He and Sir Thomas's father were important men of the City of London, closely involved in overseas trade. Sir Andrew was a wealthy merchant adventurer who financed many maritime expeditions, while his father ('Customer') Thomas Smythe was a very shrewd businessman and chief customer (responsible for collecting customs or dues) to Elizabeth I. Sir Thomas followed both men into overseas trade and became, in the first part of the 17th century, overseer of virtually all trade passing through the Port of London.

## Early Life



Westenhanger Castle near  
Folkestone, birthplace of Sir  
Thomas Smythe

Thomas was one of 13 children and the second surviving son. He attended Merchant Taylors' School in the City of London and then followed his grandfather into the Skinners' Company and his father into the Haberdashers' Company, becoming a freeman of both by 1580. It was at this time in Elizabeth's reign that attention turned to the colonisation and exploitation of the riches of the New World. Discovery and trade in the far flung corners of the world were becoming patriotic goals, emboldened by the race with Spain and the Netherlands. Thomas was an eager and wealthy participant. It is said that in 1588 he lent £31,000 to Elizabeth to enhance the English fleet which was to go on to defeat the Armada. He became Master of the Haberdashers' Company in 1599 and Sheriff of London in 1600. Unfortunately he fell briefly

out of favour with Elizabeth at that time because of his friendship with the Earl of Essex who attempted a coup in London, but with the enthronement of King James in 1603 Smythe's future became more secure, and he was knighted in that year. His full title was Sir Thomas Smythe of North Ash, of Bidborough and of Sutton at Hone Kent, Haberdasher, Sheriff of London, Knight.

## Merchant Adventurer

By 1600 Smythe had become the Governor of the Muscovy and Levant Companies and between 1604 and 1605 he was ambassador to Russia. Competition with the Netherlands and with Spain as well as other trading nations was intense, and as Governor of many trading companies he was often negotiating with these countries. At about this time there was considerable interest in finding an alternative route to India by locating a North West passage between Greenland and Canada. At various times between 1600 and 1621, Sir Thomas was the Governor of the East Indies Company and on their behalf he commissioned the building of the 20 ton flyboat *Discovery* to find this elusive passage. In the early years of the 17th century it undertook six expeditions funded largely by Sir Thomas. In 1606 the boat was transferred to the Virginia Company and it accompanied the *Susan Constant* and *Godspeed* on an expedition to Virginia funded by Sir Thomas. The expedition was successful and Jamestown was founded in the new colony of Virginia in 1607. The boat was eventually left there, but a replica was built in the USA in 1984 and transported to London on the quadricentennial of Jamestown in 2007. It has now found a permanent home at the birthplace of Sir Thomas at Westenhanger Castle.



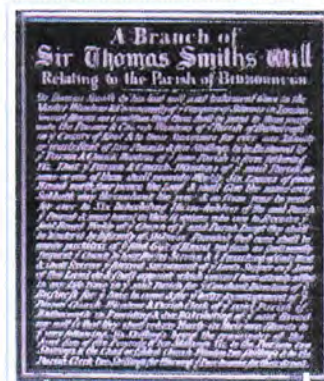
Replica of 'Discovery' at Westenhanger  
Castle



Meanwhile, the enthusiasm for finding a North West passage never wavered and in 1612 Sir Thomas became yet another Governor, this time of the North West Passage Company. As his epitaph in Sutton church reads, he became the prime undertaker of 'that noble design for the discovery of the North West passage'. William Baffin piloted expeditions in 1615 and 1616 on the little boat Discovery and it was on the later expedition that he discovered and named a bay between Ellesmere Island and Greenland after Sir Thomas. It has since become known as Smith Sound. Sir Thomas's experience in exploration and in governing all the major trading companies meant that he was particularly well qualified to be a leading advisor to the government on all matters commercial and naval. It has been said that he held a unique position among the founders of the Empire.

### Family Life

Sir Thomas Smythe's life was one of great adventure and responsibility, in his patronage of the great expeditions of the day. His family life however, was rather turbulent. He was married three times and had four children of his third marriage to Sarah Blount. 1618 was an eventful year for his family: his eldest son, Sir John Smythe of Bidborough married in that year as did his third son who married against the wishes of his parents and cut himself off from the family. Still in that same year his second son Thomas died, and his daughter also died young. To add to these problems, Sir Thomas was not without his critics and some questioned his accounting of Virginia Company funds. It is not clear how much these claims affected him but he was then 60 and began to take stock of his life, wanting to ensure that his wealth was properly deployed. The following year Sir Thomas composed a long letter to the Master and Wardens of the Skinners' Company requesting them to manage his estate as they were doing for his grandfather, Sir Andrew Judde, and outlined his plans for relieving the poor of West Kent, and the scholars and staff of Tonbridge School. His strong religious faith is apparent in the conditions he attached to the distribution of money from his estate. The contents of this 1619 letter were updated by him each year until in 1625 they were formalised in his Will.



Part of Sir Thomas Smythe's Will, displayed in Bidborough Church.

### The Thomas Smythe Charity

In the letter he writes: "... I do also give to the Parish of Tonbridge toward the maintenance of the poor for the year insuing, ten pounds and eight shillings; with the direction that the Minister and Church Wardens of that Parish or Some of them provide weekly twelve fourpenny loaves of good bread, and give it every Sabaoth day at the Church to twelve of the poorest and honestest, in their opinion, dwellers in the Parish, which doe frequent the Church ..." Similar arrangements were made in the Parishes of Speldhurst and Bidborough. Sir Thomas wanted to carry on the work of his grandfather in helping Tonbridge School, by increasing the stipends of the Master and the Usher and providing exhibitions to support pupils at the 'Universitie'. In 1621 he enclosed money for distribution and to provide six pens for the six best scholars 'who shall dispute in the Examinations'.



St. John the Baptist Church, Sutton at Hone, burial place of Sir Thomas Smythe

Rumoured to have fallen victim of the plague which, according to the historian Hasted, 'raged greatly here at that time', Sir Thomas Smythe died at Sutton Place, Sutton at Hone, in 1625. His Will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1625. It was very carefully and responsibly crafted, giving us a glimpse of his generous nature with a hint of humour and sentimentality. He bequeathed to the Skinners' Company all his houses, messuages, land and tenements near Paul's Gate at the west end of Watling Street, as well as his messuage and tenements in Lyme Street. They were to be held for charitable purposes: for the distribution of bread and cloth to the poor of the Parishes of Bidborough, Tonbridge, Speldhurst, Sutton at Hone and Darenth; a yearly sum of Ten Pounds to the Master of the Free Grammar School [Tonbridge School] and five to the Usher, and six exhibitions of £10 each to 'youthes to be chosen who should prove themselves most capable' and whose parents could not maintain them at the university for the study principally of divinity.

Sir Thomas was mindful of his extended family in his Will and donated sums of money to his nephews and nieces of whom there were many. In addition, he provided money for specific purposes such as to buy a ring or a horse and in one case a coach and horses, depending on their needs and his inclination. He freely distributed money for rings among friends and relatives to 'show his love' and so that they might remember him. Apart from the many and varied small sums given to relatives and friends, Sir Thomas bequeathed money to his business colleagues at home and abroad. Some money was to be used to pay off debts incurred by some of his colleagues and some to benefit the plantations, most notably by the building of two churches, one in Virginia and one in the Bermudas, to which £100 each was given.



The tomb of Sir Thomas Smythe at Sutton at Hone