

DUNTON GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Dunton Green Pavilion on Wednesday 25th March 2015 at 7.00pm

1. Present:

Mr. Ian Bayley (Chairman of Dunton Green Parish Council & of the APM), Kent County Cllr. Richard Parry (Member for Sevenoaks West), Sevenoaks District Councillors Mr. Cameron Brown and Mrs. Kim Bayley (Members for Dunton Green and Riverhead), Sevenoaks District Councillor Mrs Jill Davison (Chairman of SDC), Laura Masson (Headteacher Dunton Green Primary School), PCSO Amy Hardy & colleague, Ms. Tracy Godden (Clerk to the Parish Council) and 23 members of the Public (including five Parish Councillors).

2. Apologies for Absence

Mrs. Lesley Edmeads (The Sir Thomas Smythe Charity)

3. Minutes of 2014 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the April 2014 Annual Parish Meeting were approved. Proposed - Mr. Piper, Seconded - Mrs. England and Agreed.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Annual Report of the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first Annual Parish Meeting (APM) to be held at the new building and promised that a good evening had been planned with the Reverend Martin Booth giving a talk after the formal APM.

The Chairman commented that the Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting but that the Parish Council's Chairman is statutorily obliged to chair this Parish Assembly with the Parish Clerk taking the minutes. This meeting provides an opportunity to reflect on and review the previous year. The Chairman advised attendees that there are regular Parish Council meetings where issues can be raised and that the parish Council is always keen to hear from its electors.

The Parish Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015 was provided to attendees and a copy of the report is attached.

The Chairman highlighted the fact that it had been an exceptionally busy but very successful last 12 months culminating with the opening of the new pavilion. He noted that 2015 will be an election year and Cllr. Bayley took the opportunity to comment on what Dunton Green's parish councillors do and all for the benefit of the village. Whilst they don't always agree they are committed to and passionate about the village and he urged anyone considering becoming a parish councillor to have a chat with him.

Cllr. Bayley also informed that the Parish Council has a wide range of responsibilities such as street lights, footpaths, open spaces (like the Village Green

and the Recreation Ground) and organisation of events for the community (including litter picks, carols at Christmas, Remembrance Sunday service). The Parish Council is always looking at ways to improve the village and is keen to hear ideas.

For the last year the recreation ground has been a major project and whilst it has not always been easy the Council has a much better idea of the process now. The final stage of the project will be the play area which is being upgraded now and which will provide some fantastic facilities for residents to enjoy for many years to come. The official opening is set for Saturday 17th May.

The Chairman thanked the parish councillors and the Clerk for all their hard work over the last year.

6. County Councillor, Richard Parry

Cllr. Parry had provided a report (a copy of which is attached) and he proceeded to summarise the year to the meeting.

Cllr. Parry commented that little had changed in so far as there was still a vast shortfall of funds and some £93 million needed to be saved. The intention was to make further reductions in the back office and to maintain services as far as possible.

Cllr. Parry mentioned that helping people on the ground was a very rewarding part of his role as a County Councillor and that in this respect he had been involved in blue badge allocations and with helping children with appeals & getting them into schools post 11+ (Kent Test).

Cllr. Parry said it was a great privilege to represent the village and he congratulated the Chairman and the Clerk for the results of their hard work over the last twelve months.

7. District Councillors, Cameron Brown & Kim Bayley

Cllrs. Brown and Bayley had provided a detailed joint report; a copy of the report is attached.

Sevenoaks District Council was also under huge financial pressure and was working hard looking at shared services to give the frontline services that people want. The number of planning applications dealt with over the last year at SDC had increased and the councillors had been involved in looking at proposals for parking schemes in the village.

The councillors thanked the Parish Council for being a great team.

8. Kent Police - PCSO Amy Hardy

PCSO Hardy had provided a written report, a copy of which is attached.

She highlighted the fact that crime statistics were available by postcode via

www.police.uk should anyone wish to look at them. PCSO Hardy clarified that her role was to deal very much with quality of life issues, that she was happy to help and that no issue was too small.

9. Dunton Green Primary School

Ms Laura Masson, Head Teacher, had also provided an update of the school's activities over the last year. A copy of the report is attached.

Ms Masson spoke passionately about the school. Since becoming Headteacher there had been a steep learning curve but she would not rest until Dunton Green is deemed to be an outstanding school. There had been some significant changes already with three new staff and three coming in September. Ms Masson explained that there was a really strong relationship between the school and families in Dunton Green and with all the adults in the school knowing about all of the children this made a massive difference.

Having been perhaps stuck in a rut there had been massive change & progress. There were new assessments, a new curriculum but there was uncertainty with Ofsted unsure of what assessments would be required for the next year.

However, the children have been given many more opportunities with homework club having been started and a new Breakfast Club from April. Ms Masson's aim is to give the children in this parish the same opportunities as those children in private education.

Ms Masson had ensured that the school was involved in many more Parish Council events and advised that the school has an open door policy and that they would love to see anyone who wants to come in.

10. The Sir Thomas Smythe Charity

Mrs. Lesley Edmeads was unable to attend the meeting but had provided a written report (attached) which confirms that only one person in Dunton Green is currently receiving a grant and providing details of how to contact Mrs. Edmeads.

11. Consideration of any resolutions for which notice has been given

None

12. Any Other Business

None.

Finally, the Chairman thanked residents for attending the Annual Parish Meeting and invited them to stay on for refreshments & to listen to Reverend Booth's talk 'Funnily Enough' about his life as a comedy scriptwriter prior to his calling.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm

Dunton Green Parish Council Annual Report 2014/2015

COUNCIL

The Council met 12 times between April 2014 and March 2015 inclusive of which 11 meetings were scheduled meetings and 1 was an additional 'extraordinary' meeting. There was an average attendance of 95% of Council members at these meetings. Of the eleven meetings that Kent County and Sevenoaks District Councillors were expected to attend Cllr. Richard Parry (KCC) attended 1 meeting (9%), Cllrs Mrs Kim Bayley and Cameron Brown attending 2 between them (18%) - Cllr Mrs Bayley 2 (18%) and Cllr Brown 0 (0%).

The members of the Parish Council are currently: Mr Ian Bayley (Chairman), Mrs Freda England (Vice Chairman), Mr Brian Tingley Mr Graham Hersey, Mr Andy Lapham, Mrs Lori Monks, Mr Robin Piper and Mrs Angel Gomes-Chodynietcki.

Over the last year one member stood down, Mr Fred Faircloth, and the Parish Council thanks him for his contribution over his three years of service. New members were welcomed (Mrs Lori Monks, Mr Robin Piper and Mrs Angel Gomes-Chodynietcki). However, there are still a number of vacancies on the Parish Council which provide excellent opportunities for residents to make a very real contribution to village life. 2015 is an election year and further information can be obtained from the Clerk or from any of your local Parish Councillors.

Appointments made in 2014 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; superseded by Mrs Freda England following Mr Faircloth's resignation from the Council
- Mr Graham Hersey & Mrs Freda England 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
- Mrs Lesley Edmeads remains the Council's appointed representative on the Sir Thomas Smythe charity

CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council office is located in Dunton Green Pavilion. Enquiries can be made by post, telephone, email or via the Parish Council's website at www.duntongreenpc.org.uk.

PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council is consulted on planning applications in the village and has reviewed 39 applications over the last 12 months (April 2014 and March 2013 inclusive) versus 29 in the previous year.

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In the past year we have welcomed back PCSO Amy Hardy who has taken over the role from PCSO Jane Wright who moved on to a neighbouring area. Thanks must go to Jane for all her hard work in the Parish. Despite having to cover a number of areas the Parish Council has a good working relationship with our community policing teams and very much appreciate their input in the village. As well as being a useful first point of contact for any non-urgent police enquiries our PCSO holds regular police surgeries and crime prevention events for residents to attend. Details of these are listed on the Parish Council website and are also advertised on the Parish Council noticeboards for those not on-line.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & RECREATION GROUND

The past year has seen a tremendous amount of effort by all members of the Parish Council and especially Tracy the Parish Clerk in getting the Dunton Green Pavilion up and running. The new community building and outside play/games area are going to be a great asset to the community. Funding for these projects has come from Section 106 money from the Ryewood Meadows estate development, an application to the SITA Trust for a grant and some funds directly from the Parish Council. The work has not always gone smoothly and even now there are still building issues to resolve but we are pleased to have taken this once in a lifetime opportunity to give residents some fantastic facilities. There is scope for further work to be undertaken on the land adjoining the Recreational Ground which the Parish Council own but that is a future project that will require additional consideration and funding.

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Parish Council has funded a number of activities for young people in the village and is committed to ensuring there are activities for them as well as other members of the community. We have been very pleased with the Kick Kent football training courses that have run throughout the year for 10 to 16 year olds and plan to continue these. We do appreciate, however, that football is not for everyone and are looking at other projects and activities for a broader range of young people. Although we funded the Community Bus run by Playplace over the past year this has had a mixed reaction and we are actively looking for alternatives.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

The Parish Council is keen to promote community activities and events in the village. There are a number of regular events such as the summer picnic, carols at Christmas and Remembrance Day but the Parish Council is planning further activities in the coming year. We are keen to hear from members of the community who have ideas for events or who would like to be involved. Our Remembrance Day event coincided with the publication of a new book researching the WW1 names on our memorial. This has been of great interest and we are considering producing a similar book covering the WW2 names. Please contact us if you have any information you could contribute to this. We do want to run activities for ALL members of the community in our new facilities and

would like to hear what residents would be interested in. Please fill in the questionnaire that has been circulated to every household or contact the Parish Council if you require one.

VILLAGE ENHANCEMENTS

The Parish Council continues to look for ways to improve the village and the environment for residents and visitors. To date our flower beds, hanging baskets, flagpole and bulb planting have been well received. We welcome further suggestions and will continue with a programme of enhancements. We have arranged to have the village war memorials restored this year which are very much in need of work to ensure their long term safety. We do battle against the continued problem of litter and would be grateful to anyone contacting us to join one of our regular litter picks. Likewise, we continue our campaign against the small minority of dog owners who do not pick-up after their dogs whilst walking them in and around the village.

HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS

The Parish Council keeps a watch on local highways and footpaths. Highway maintenance requirements are passed to Kent County Council's Highways 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.

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, Station Road and the Ryewood Meadows estate. We believe that residents wish to have street lighting throughout the hours of darkness and therefore made the decision not to have restricted operating hours of our lighting inventory. We have, however, changed our lighting to a more efficient lower energy solution. We have experienced a spate of vandalism to our lighting columns in one particular area leading us to spend some thousands of pounds to rectify. We are committed to ensuring a well-lit, safe environment where we have control of lighting and the vandal resistant units we installed have successfully stopped the problems we were experiencing.

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 2013/2014 Financial Year Annual Return signed off by the Audit Commission:

	£	£
Balances brought forward		64,924.77
ADD		
Annual Precept		69,026
Total Other receipts		191,197
SUBTRACT		
Staff Costs	27,297	
Total other costs	289,279	
Balances carried forward		8,572

Cllr Ian Bayley, Chairman Dunton Green Parish Council

25th March 2015

Report to Dunton Green:

As the Village's County Councillor I've continued to help those who live in Dunton Green solve a wide variety of problems which have included the provision of Blue Badges, getting young people into the school of their choice, having roads repaired, resolving housing and benefits issues and many other matters which concern all residents.

In particular, for the coming year and despite the County having to save considerable amounts of money, I've arranged that the pavements in Donnington Road are re-laid and repaired, that approximately 20 Street lights in London Road and Rye Lane are replaced and that the bend on Pole Hill, South of Otford Lane, is resurfaced.

Additionally KCC expects to initiate a spring time pot hole "blitz" to get our roads into the best possible state for summer use.

I would also anticipate being able to allocate a proportion of my KCC Member's Fund to help support and develop Village projects.

I've also been working with KCC's internet specialists and also campaigning for a consistent and very high speed Broadband service for all of Dunton Green, making every effort to have all of the village included in the parts of Kent which will benefit from the £30 million plus funding allocated to KCC's and BDUK's faster Broadband project.

At KCC I chair the Council's Scrutiny Committee and am the Governance and Audit Committee's Deputy Chairman. I also sit on the Superannuation Fund, Governor Appointments and Planning Committees and am also qualified to be a member of the County's Schools and Transport Appeals panels.

Probably one of my best memories of the past year is the Village's Carol Singing on the Green just before Christmas; it was a great evening and supported by so many villagers and, young and old, we sang our hearts out. The School's children provided a special touch and reminded all that Christmas is a special time.

The evening was a great success and provided a perfect start to the Christmas season.

As I write this report I am looking forward to getting up early to experience the solar eclipse. I have my special smoked glass ready and am hoping for a clear sky, tomorrow Friday, morning.

Lastly may I emphasise that as the Village's Kent County Councillor I am always ready to help all who live and work in Dunton Green fix problems and in this way contribute to the continuation of Dunton Green being a great Village in which to work and live.

Richard Parry,
19th March 2015.

**Report of the District Councillors, Kim Bayley, Cameron Brown
March 2015**

Introduction

Both your Councillors have attended the Full Council meetings during the year as well as a number of informal meetings with Council departments and constituents on a variety of issues.

It has sometimes been challenging to attend as many Parish Council meetings as we would have liked due to a large number of timing clashes but we hope we have been available to you via email and phone as needed.

Highways and Parking

The Dunton Green new parking schemes have been the focus of discussion with Kent Highways this year with the final consultation now coming to an end. Both of your District Councillors made contributions in relation to the parking scheme, with road safety being high on the agenda. It is however open to question how many if any of the proposals will be implemented, due to a lack of available funds at Kent Highways.

Residents will be pleased to note that the free pre-Christmas parking scheme continues to run within Sevenoaks Town.

Big Community Fund

Riverhead Parish Council deserves to be congratulated for their hard work in relation to their bids for funding from the BCF. Your District Councillors have supported their applications where possible, including a recent application in relation to the provision of Emergency Health Equipment in Riverhead. Sadly this scheme is now coming to an end as the source of funds has run dry but we hope that the funding to date has been welcome.

Planning

Planning applications across the district are running at very high levels. Both your Councillors have reviewed a number of applications in recent months in the District.

Your Councillors had an instrumental role in ensuring that Berkley Homes was not able to renege on its commitments to building the required number of affordable homes within the District at the West Kent Cold Store Site.

Kim Bayley Committees

Kim sits on 3 Committees at SDC. She sits on two financial committees, with a particular focus on ensuring that the District Council can continue to deliver the current levels of services with a vastly reduced budget. She also sits on the Strategy committee which looks at improving communications with constituents as well as key strategic plans of the Council.

In her role on the audit committee she looks primarily at the performance of SDC. In the financial and resources committee she focuses more on setting the budgets and how the money is spent.

During the year Council budgets continued to be under pressure due to significant funding cuts by Government at a local level but the current performance indicators of SDC are positive and departments are performing well and targets are being met. The Council also continues to look at innovative ways to cut costs and schemes to share functions with other Councils.

SDC has once again had to increase its part of the Council tax by 1.95% this year as well as putting in place minimal rises in parking fees to balance the books. 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.

On the strategic committee the SDC website and customer services functions have been the focus of our work this year.

Kim also joined a specific scrutiny group looking at Sevenoaks Leisure facilities and how these can be funded and improved going forwards. In this capacity she attended several meetings at the Sevenoaks leisure centre to discuss future plans at the site.

Kim has also acted as a Governor of Dunton Green Primary School during the year and met with several residents on the Lakeside Place development to try and improve the surrounding area.

Cameron Brown Committees

Cameron is Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and sits on the Development Control Committee, Standards Committee and Audit Committee. He is also a member of the Sevenoaks District Arts Council.

Planning is extremely busy across the District. To put this in some context, the District received in excess of 2,000 applications in 2014. A number of those are referred to Development Control. As a member of Development Control we regularly have two meetings a month, in addition to site visits at various sites across the District. Planning is often extremely contentious and complex but as your local District Councillor I strive to ensure the interests of Rivherhead and Dunton Green are protected.

The Scrutiny Committee at SDC has a general oversight role in relation to all aspects of SDC activities. As such we require each of the Cabinet members from SDC to attend the Committee on a rotational basis to explain the performance of their Office. Furthermore we have the ability to call to the Committee any individual performing public service whose activities affect the residents of Sevenoaks District.

Accordingly we have required the attendance of Kent Highways, Kent Police, Pembury Hospital, the Ambulance Service, the Portfolio Holder for Kent Education, the organisers of patient transport to name but a view. They provide a short presentation and then are rigorously cross-examined by members of the Committee as to their activities and report. The meetings are open to the public and advertised in advance – questions from members of the public can be taken from the Chair so if you have issues you want to raise with various public bodies across Kent please do come to the meetings – you would be very welcome.

Like Kim as a member of the Audit Committee I also scrutinise the Council's Finances. The real challenge for the Council is finding alternative sources of income and reducing its expenditure as the Government grant to SDC continues to reduce. In the last five years our revenue support grant has fallen by almost four million pounds. In real terms this means the funding for every man, woman and child within the District has reduced from £55.95 in 2010 to £20.47 from April 2014. Through partnership working alone SDC now saves £600,000 a year and we rent office space to the Police, County Council and Moat Housing Association generating extra income. The Council is however looking at various investment schemes to ensure that as the size of the grant coming from National Government continues to fall we have alternative income streams to support front line services, including an efficient planning service and weekly bin collections.

Finally

We of course remain available to discuss any local issues and would like to thank both parishes for all their hard work during 2014.

Kim Bayley & Cameron Brown
March 2015

Hello I'm Amy Hardy the PCSO for Dunton Green. I'm sure I will have met some of you as I have been in the area for some time now but after a short break from the village I have recently returned.

Recently I have been working with residents to revive and set up neighbourhood watches in the area, as well as giving individuals advice on home and personal security. As we look towards the spring I am reminding residents to ensure their garden sheds, outbuildings and garages are secure and garden tools are property marked in some way, unfortunately insecure sheds at the end of a garden are an easy target for criminals and with relatively small changes it will make the criminals life harder which inevitably makes them move on to another area. I have recently held a free property marking event at the new Parish council building and I hope to have another busier meeting soon.

The things I have described present just some of the things we can do within a community to help make it a safer place. We do also do many other things but the aim is to help with quality of life issues, if there is anything you like to discuss or arrange please do not hesitate to contact me on 101, you can leave a message for me, report an incident or crime or anything of a non-urgent nature using this number but remember 999 is for emergencies.

For up to date crime statistics please look at www.police.uk and look up crime map.

Kind regards,

Amy.



Dunton Green Primary School

Dunton Green Annual Parish Meeting

Headteacher's report to the parish – March 2015

As I write this report it seems staggering to me that I am reflecting on a whole 12 months of being in the privileged position as Headteacher of our lovely school. Starting as Acting Headteacher in April last year I was made substantive to the post in September. It has been a relentless year of school improvement and change but one which has resulted in a happy, if exhausted, staff and children. The parents of the new Reception intake will shortly be notified of their child's school place and here at Dunton Green we are over-subscribed for the second year running.

Over the past year we have seen the appointment of a new SENCo, and 2 class teachers. The coming academic year will see the appointment of 2 further class teachers and, fingers crossed as I am about to interview, a new Deputy Headteacher. We have seen a new creative curriculum put in place which has enhanced both the children's and staffs enjoyment of teaching and learning. As part of this new curriculum parents are all invited into school on a termly basis and we have seen countless trips, visitors and even an embalming session in year 5 and a heart dissection in year 6. These are learning experiences which our children will never forget! In addition to this we have continued to enhance the children's classroom learning with a wide range of clubs, trips, visitors and experiences.

Our newly appointed Headboy and Headgirl have spoken at village events such as the festival of remembrance and the Christmas Carol Concert, where our choir has also performed. We have sung, entertained the Christmas visitors at Ightham Mote and sung for our local Senior Citizens with Christmas Carols in school with the support of our School Council who provided refreshments. The school has continued its sporting successes with teams competing in rugby, mini-sports, swimming, football and netball as well as the many dance festivals that we take part in. New opportunities for the children over the past year include chess club, cookery club, knitting club and book clubs for both key stages!

There have been visits to Tesco's, Southwark Cathedral, Hastings Aquarium, Bough Beech Wildlife Reserve, amongst others. We have produced a fabulous Harvest Festival, Christmas Concerts at Bessels Green Church, a production of The Tempest, a Pirate Play and a very wonderful nativity. We have dressed up for book day and seen classes dress up as Vikings, Greeks and Medieval Knights as part of their learning. This is just a taster of our activities so all in all a very busy year! You can find out lots more information about us and what happens every week from our fabulous new website.

We have been on an incredible journey over the last year and I genuinely feel that we have improved the learning opportunities for all of our children both inside and outside of the curriculum. That does not mean that we are finished yet. In the immediate future we are looking for community volunteer readers, we are completely renovating our playground, we are starting the journey to becoming a Healthy School and we are completely revising all of our reading resources – all huge jobs. There is much to look forward to at Dunton Green, without thinking about the inevitability of an OFSTED visit in the next few months, and our team will not rest until our school is judged to be outstanding.

So with the summer approaching the pace will not lessen, sports days, fetes, KS2 play SATS and end of year reports loom large on the horizon I am sure the school year will finish as it started – busy, happy, looking to a fabulous future for all of our children.

Laura Masson

Headteacher, Dunton Green Primary School

Sir Thomas Smythe's Charity

The Charity provides financial and pastoral support to individuals in need, usually older or disabled people, living in various West Kent parishes. The Charity founded by Sir Thomas Smythe's will in 1625 – registered charity number 210775 – currently operates two schemes.

- Scheme 1 provides small one-off extra needs grants to individuals in need
- Scheme 2 provides larger block grants to local welfare organisations that work with people in need who are vulnerable and isolated

Currently there is only 1 person receiving the quarterly funding in the village.

Contact details for the Sir Thomas Smythe's Charity representative for Dunton Green are as follows:

Mrs Lesley Edmeads
9 Smugglers, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 4HZ
01580 753575

Lesley Edmeads 25th March 2015