

News from The Parish Council

We were pleased to appoint Sara Archer as our new Parish Clerk, and she started working with us on 7th August. Together with other Thanet Village Clerks, Sara attended what was to be the first of regular meetings with officers from Thanet District Council to discuss, and hopefully respond to, environmental issues including litter and street cleaning. Sara will continue to press our concerns about the need for regular street sweeping but do please let us know of any other such matters you feel should be addressed.

From September, Gavin and Wendy will conduct Speedwatch sessions in the village on the second Saturday of each month, and Chenice and Sarah will carry-out sessions on the first Wednesday monthly. Other ad-hoc sessions will continue involving as many volunteers as possible.

I met with PC Beth Ninnim, the Thanet Villages Beat Officer, to discuss, among other things, traffic problems in our village. We agreed to plan periodic enforcement activity, coordinated with the Speedwatch Team. On these days, there will be a police presence to enforce the law and highway regulations such as vehicle weight limits, wearing of seat belts, and use of devices while driving, as well as supporting our Speedwatch sessions. We hope to arrange the first of these activities within the first few weeks and will, of course, report back with the results.

Beth advised that the main reported area of concern from Acol villagers was car racing, “drifting”, and other such anti-social conduct on Columbus Avenue, which was proving resource intensive to police. She asked that residents be vigilant and report any such activity to Kent Police online, dialling 101 or, if causing danger, 999.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents to the village ‘phone box survey favoured discontinuation of the public ‘phone service and repurposing the box for other village amenities. However, with only twelve responses, the main takeaway is that most villagers don’t really care! The Parish Council will consider how best to utilise the asset and continues to welcome any views from the community.

Chenice arranged a meeting with Anthony Curwen, the Managing Director of Quex Estates, which she and I attended to discuss provision of a safe footpath from the village. In a productive meeting, Anthony clearly appreciated and shared our desire to provide a safe walking route but, due to the vesting process and legal complications of ongoing court cases concerning estates management, it’s unlikely that the Estate would be able to prioritise negotiation and provision of a paved pathway in the foreseeable future. What he could undertake to do was to sow a three-metre-wide grass strip between the Recreation Ground and Quex. It will be sown this autumn and will be ready by the spring. Any increase in their insurance premium will be covered by themselves as a gift to our village. He also proffered good advice on how we, the Parish Council, could engage in ongoing housing and relief road consultations, to lobby for cycling and walking provision from Minster Road through the village which, although longer term, we are, of course acting upon. Anthony would also like to provide a defibrillator at The Recreation Ground.

There was a full agenda for the Parish Council meeting held on 24th August. The minutes will be available soon but among the decisions were agreement on the introduction of an Attendance Register, and Councillor Portfolio Leadership roles, as follows:

Chenice Butterworth	Finance, Children & Families
Sarah Corby	Leisure & Community
Richard Steel	Training, Communications

Gavin Winpenny	Highways
Wendy Winpenny	Planning & Development

Rev. Mark Ham and Loraine Bant (Church Warden) attended the meeting to discuss the future of St. Mildred's Church. A meeting, attended by 28 people, had been held on 8th August in Acol Village Hall. Notes from the meeting are on the Parish Council website. Although the consultation is continuing - and there will be a further meeting at Birchington CEP School on 20th September - the need to close the church seems unavoidable, although the restrictive covenant covering the building is being reviewed to determine whether a change of use may be possible. We agreed to continue canvassing residents' views and provide any further feedback.

Richard Steel (Chair)