

ALLHALLOWS PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th APRIL 2013
AT ALLHALLOWS VILLAGE HALL, STOKE ROAD, ALLHALLOWS AT 6:30 pm**

PRESENT:

Cllrs. Mark Skudder, John Lambourne, John Luck, Alan Marsh, Mrs Wendy Myers, Mrs Noleen Skudder; Cllr. Chris Irvine; Rev Stephen Gwilt; Mr Clive Stanley, Webmaster; and 21 parishioners

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Yvonne Forrest and from Mark Reckless MP; Cllr Phil Filmer; and Cllr Tony Watson.

2 MINUTES OF THE 2012 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th April 2012 were agreed and signed as a true record

3 ACCOUNTS

The Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 was received.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Parish Council is now 2 years old, with another 2 years to go, before the end of its term. At this half way juncture, it is worth taking a little time to review the work of the Parish Council so far. I would also like to invite you to let us know how you think we are doing. All the Councillors are volunteers and they are all local residents. Are you happy with the work we are doing?

In the last two years, we have made several changes. We have dramatically reduced the Precept, by more than £8,000. We have increased street cleaning activity, to keep the village tidier.

We introduced monthly Project Days, and consulted with residents about many key projects in the village. We continue to support the Youth Centre and Youth Club, Cross Park Pavilion and the Village Hall. The Parish Council has awarded grants to a number of village groups, such as the Brownies and Rainbows, Little Explorers, History Club, Victim Support, Short mat bowls and the Church.

To improve communication and information, we regularly keep the website up to date and have increased the number of Allhallows Life magazine editions from 6 per year, up to 10 editions per year.

We have maintained the Playing field equipment and secured a very good lease agreement for the field, saving thousands of pounds per year.

Last year the Parish Council celebrated the Jubilee by supplying every household with a copy of the booklet, "A History of Allhallows" (written by local author, Keith Gulvin). The Parish Council also supported the History Club's local history exhibition, held in All Saints Church.

We also held a games day, to celebrate the Jubilee and the Olympics.

After clearing away pockets of rubbish dumped around the village that had been left for years, the monthly Project Days then moved on to focus on Cross Park, the Youth Centre and then Slough Fort. A large number of volunteers have attended our monthly Project Days. Bourne Leisure have also invested over £20,000 in the Slough Fort clear up operation and they intend to continue with a similar level of investment later this year. With the Slough Fort project now on hold during the holiday season at the Caravan Park, we will be looking for alternative projects. I would like to thank D.Rivell for his literary contributions to the magazine, each month. His technical detail, humorous incites and sharp criticisms were very much appreciated and I hope he returns with more observations later in the year. Our next Project Day will be at 8:30am on the second Saturday of June. Watch for updates in the next edition of this magazine.

I mentioned above, that the Precept is now more than £8,000 lower than when the Parish Council came into office. In addition to investing more in Street Cleaning, funding Cross Park Pavilion running costs and providing more grants, I am also very pleased to state that the Parish Council reserves are the healthiest I have ever known them, in 8 years that I have been a Parish Councillor. With this in mind, I would expect that the Parish Council will be considering further reductions in the Precept over the next two years.

Another observation I would like to make is that of the effectiveness of our relatively new Clerk, Margot Sturt. Margot was employed in November 2012. In that short time, she has made an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the Parish Council, introducing tighter controls and a very professional approach to all that we do. I would like to thank Margot for all of her efforts in getting up to speed with council projects and then adding value to the process.

I would also like to thank all of the Parish Councillors, many of whom take part in a wide range of community projects. Many are hard working and dependable people who have made a big difference in the community, with their unpaid volunteering.

There are many volunteers outside of the Parish Council, who make repeated contributions to our society and their work should be recognised and praised, whether its delivering magazines, running a club, organising events, or helping to maintain community land or buildings. Take a little time to say thank you to a volunteer, when you see them. It makes all the difference. And don't forget, you are more than welcome to get involved.

5 MEDWAY COUNCILLORS' REPORT

2012/2013 Parish Council Report

Cllr Phil Filmer, Cllr Chris Irvine and Cllr Tony Watson

Last year when we spoke to you we started by outlining the difficulties which we as a Council face during the continuing global economic downturn. I think it is fair to say that it has been a challenging year not just for us as an authority, but for the country as a whole.

This is why we believe that the actions which we have taken here in Medway to keep Council tax low while protecting and enhancing our frontline services are balanced and fair.

Despite the pressures placed on Medway Council by central government, namely a 3.6% cut to the allocated formula grant, an 18.6% cut to Council tax benefit, and top slicing of the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant and Early Intervention Grant, we managed to deliver a budget which was balanced, and one which we believe delivers for Medway. The 1.99% increase in council tax is equivalent to less than 43p a week for Band D properties.

Despite this nominal increase, council tax in Medway still remains the lowest in Kent and we have managed to protect those services which matter most to our residents – our libraries, our Sure Start centres, our schools, highway repairs and social care for those most in need. Weekly bin collections remain, and, thanks to our recent bid to the DCLG being accepted, we will shortly be introducing weekly recycling for all of our residents which should further drive up our current excellent recycling rate of 41% of household waste.

We have also reaffirmed our commitment to keep free swimming for all of our elderly residents and local children, something which I know is greatly supported. Similarly, we have continued to support efforts to increase opportunities for our young people's career chances through apprenticeships.

We continue to offer a superb array of free festivals for all tastes – the Sweeps festival, our Dickensian weekends, the new River festival to name but a few - which last year attracted a huge amount of visitors to Medway providing a huge boost for our small businesses and the wider local economy. Tourism alone is worth £292 million pounds to the Towns' economy each year, and more than 6,000 people are employed in tourism-related businesses so we can see why it is so important that we maintain our support for our festivals. 2012 also saw a number of big national occasions and I am proud that Medway played its part by making 2012 a year of celebration. Medway held its first ever River festival to commemorate Her Majesty The Queen's diamond jubilee. Medway also hosted Olympic teams from Egypt and the Republic of Congo, and we also saw 75,000 people line the streets when the Olympic Torch made its way through the Towns. It would be remiss of me not to mention also the bicentennial celebrations which were held to mark the life and work of Charles Dickens, our most famous former resident.

With regards to education, I am delighted to report that our bid to create a UTC college was successful at the second attempt. The Medway University Technical College will cater for 14 to 19-year-olds and will specialise in engineering and construction. The new school will offer a range of practically-based courses leading to qualifications, including GCSEs and A levels, and vocational qualifications such as BTECs and NVQs.

Further, I am sure that we were all delighted to see the Hundred of Hoo Academy go from strength to strength following its recent Ofsted inspection where the school was considered to be GOOD, one short of outstanding. This follows the school's best ever GCSE results last year, and is quite a remarkable turnaround. My congratulations to all the staff and pupils for working so hard to ensure that the Hundred of Hoo is increasingly becoming the first choice destination for our young students here on the Peninsula.

It should also be noted that, thanks to pressure from your local councillors, girls from the Hoo Peninsula wishing to go to a Grammar school are now treated more favourably in the nearest Grammar schools' oversubscription criteria, namely Fort Pitt GS. This inequitable issue has been a real bone of contention for many years and we are pleased to see schools such as Fort Pitt listening and acting upon our concerns. With The Williamson Trust taking an increasing interest in our primary education here on the Peninsula we hope that this will lead to further opportunities for our brightest students to achieve and excel.

It is fair to say that KS2 results in Medway remain challenging. Despite our best ever results in KS2 last year, with 72% of children gaining a level 4 in both English and Maths, overall results remain stubbornly on the low side. Steps have been and will continue to be taken to accelerate improvement. We recently appointed a new Director for Children's service, and further funding has been made available to address this issue. We hope that the benefits of this are realised as soon as possible.

Medway's future as a strategic centre in the South East was cemented with the recent announcement of a number of major infrastructure projects. Peel Holdings has brought forward a huge £650million scheme to transform Chatham Waters which will provide up to 3,500 much needed jobs. Development of Chatham Waterfront is also ongoing, while we will soon see the completion of the first housing units on Rochester Riverside. With the further announcement that Rochester Railway Station is set for a major multi-million pound upgrade, I think it is fair to say that regeneration, which should benefit all of our residents, is happening at pace in Medway.

Finally, we want to once again reaffirm our strong opposition to a Thames Estuary airport. Medway Council has made its submission to the Davies Commission and we are currently seeking to have the commission visit the Hoo Peninsula in order that it may see for itself why we need to protect and preserve this special place in the hearts and minds of not just our generation, but for future generations to come.

6 REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

a Churchwardens report All Saint's Church Allhallows 2013

We started the year with two new wardens Shirley and Richard. Kathy and Debbie stood down at the last AGM following many years of serving our church; our thanks go to them for this.

During this year we have had the north aisle roof fully repaired after the theft of lead. Then who ever came back and took the lead from not only the south aisle but also the porch roof, this has also been repaired so we are now lead free.

This now leaves the walls in both aisles to be repainted and hopefully this will be done in the next few weeks, then we can get ready for the quinquennial inspection in July.

Thanks to a grant from the parish council at Allhallows six gas fired cabinet heaters have been purchased to supplement the heaters that are there

already the difference in temperature can really be felt, thanks all who assisted in getting them.

On a personal note we would like to express our thanks to everyone in our congregation, who has helped, guided and supported us through our first year, we probably haven't got it all right, but we are trying. This has been one heck of a learning curve for both of us and Lynn.

Richard Yelton

b Allhallows Youth Club Centre

The Allhallows Youth Centre is run entirely by volunteers on a weekly basis. Without the support of the small core of regular volunteers, the youth centre would not be running.

It has been a reasonably quiet year for the youth club, which celebrated its third anniversary this January. The Youth centre has regular attendees, amounting to an average weekly group of up to 40 young members, aged between 8 and 19.

Not a great deal of extraordinary has occurred at the youth centre this year, however the successful and positive achievements of our past year include:

- Successful and continual running of the club on a Tuesday and a Friday evening. (As many as 60 have attended in a single night).
- 2012 saw the continued use of the centre's fantastic facilities including: Arts and Crafts, Darts, Table Tennis, Table Football, Shuffleboard, a music station, low cost quality tuck, Basket Ball and also our great 'All Weather Football Arena'.
- Leaders of the youth centre have begun working closely with local residents, the shop keepers / Owners, and also the peninsula based PC's and PCSO's to discourage poor behaviour of the young people around the village, and to also build a positive community relationship.
- 2012 also witnessed another successful summer camp which included a workshop run by the organisation: 'Time and Tides' (icon theatre) which worked with the young members to produce music and video.
- The youth club also brought new equipment including a 'Block Rocker' with a fantastic 80's playlist, provided by Mark Skudder! (However most of the members prefer to play their own music!!!)
- 2012 was also a time of ongoing development within the building to convert a junk room into a chill out area (primarily for our catchment of girls).
- Leader: John Lambourne and visiting Engineer: Dan Cooper have been working with the young members to design, build, prototype and run a remote controlled rocket powered car which has recently really begun to take shape.
- This year especially we have seen an increased membership of young people from our neighbouring communities including: Stoke, Grain and Hoo.
- In October we increased the entrance fee to £1.00 in order to enable us to hire a cleaner who works at the club on a weekly basis and helps to maintain the building, ensuring that it is welcoming to all who visit. Her efforts have also reduced the load on the volunteers who can now focus solely on the wellbeing and entertainment of the young members.

- December saw the youth centre transform into a spectacular winter wonderland with sparkly decorations put up by our volunteer leaders. We also hosted our 'last session of the year Christmas party' which was well attended and held at no extra cost to the young members. We hope and believe that it was enjoyed by all who attended.
- 2012 also witnessed a zero tolerance approach to poor attitude and behaviour of the young members particularly in the older age group. We believe that we have successfully stopped issues such as bullying throughout the club, therefore offering a safe and welcoming environment for all who visit the centre. I speak on behalf of all of the youth leaders when I say that we pride ourselves on offering a fun and safe place to come and play, or hang out with friends.
- Unfortunately, due to a lack of available leaders, the Monday Night Football ceased to run this year. However it is the intention of the youth centre to find new, willing volunteers to help run the football on a regular basis and increase the number of available activities for young people to partake in, within the village.
- This year we have also seen a number of our younger session members transition and move up into the older group. This has been a successful phase in their personal development and we hope to help as many of our current younger members to do the same in the coming years. Having said that... we now have ample space in the younger age session (8-11) held on a Tuesday between 6.15 and 7.30 for new members to join.
- This coming year we intend to renew our efforts to attract new young members to the club and maybe also some new (non-regular) helpers.
- We also aim to complete the chill out room and re-invent our table top Scalectrix scheme within the main hall. This October we hope to host a Halloween party and spooky sleep-over...

The young members of the youth centre, and also their parents deserve a huge thanks for their regular and continued support.

We must also thank ward councillor Chris Irvine whose donation of £200.00 contributed towards the centre's 2013 insurance and licences as well as affiliation to Young Kent.

Thanks to everyone locally for their support, especially:

Colin Davis for grass cutting services at the beginning of the year. Jon Myers, Peter Dady and also Adam Dady who took over the role, voluntarily cutting the grass. PCSO Tabs McGowan who continues to support and visit the centre. Terry Prior, Kevin Lawrence, and Adam Crossman for helping with the Monday Night Football. And also Dan Cooper along with the other volunteers associated with the 'rocket car project'.

We must also give special thanks to:

Noleen Skudder for treasuring and advice. Mark Skudder, Judith O'Sullivan, Wendy Myers, John Lambourne, Lynne and Peter Dady and also Margaret Pearson for their regular, weekly volunteering at the centre to ensure its successful week to week running. However, extra special thanks goes to Peter Apostel, without whom the youth centre simply wouldn't function, (at least not as smoothly as it does).

c Allhallows History Club

The history club was started following a chance remark at a Farmers Market, and we decided to have meetings and pool our photographs, books and recollections over tea and cake.

Keith Gulvin attended some of the meetings and gave us interesting talks about Allhallows and particularly Slough Fort, and we decided to display our collections and show a short film in All Saints Church, for the whole of the Jubilee weekend, which was a very wise way to spend a very wet weekend.

We had a lot of visitors and they in their own way contributed to our display with their recollections. This was widely advertised but we are still being told that people didn't know it was on! As a result of that we were invited to Stoke WI and Keith once again gave an interesting talk complete with slides.

Following the Jubilee we had a meeting at Slough Fort with a very interesting talk from Keith, and since then our efforts have been ploughed into the restoration of the fort, so I will leave Keith to give the report on the progress made there.

Glenda Davis

d Cross Park Association

After several delays the Cross Park Complex finally opened its doors for business in October last year.

Already it has three regular bookings:

1. A Tuesday Meet, where anyone of all ages can come for a chat, have a cup of tea and biscuits, share their hobbies and talk about the history of the village and everyday events. Other activities include playing cards and exchanging books and jigsaws.
2. A Prize Bingo is held every Wednesday afternoon with a refreshment interval and a prize raffle.
3. Thai Chi is held on Thursday afternoons.

We held a Christmas Fair and an Easter Fair and the hall has been booked for some private functions.

We would like to see more clubs showing an interest in hiring the indoor hall and the large sports field for rugby, football and cricket etc.

Also, there is a wild life area of trees and plants which when dry, makes a very pleasant walk.

Shirley Melly

e Allhallows Little Explorers

We would like to say that although numbers are low at the moment we do have a regular five families attending weekly. We hope our plans for a

toddlers jubilee party/teddy bear picnic may bring in some more people. We would also like to do some other events in the summer and at present are advertising a group called splatters that are coming to Little Explorers on the 15th May to do personalised gifts for Fathers Day made from the children's handprints. .

f Allhallows Short Mat Bowls

We are still going well with our regular dozen members. We have had another newcomer since the last meeting, a teenager who is becoming a very promising player.

We had to order a new playing mat for which we thank the Parish council for its generosity of £800 towards the cost. The original mat, having been played On every week since April 1989 has done well to last this length of time.

We are always open to new recruit new members, whoc we will teach and provide a set of bowls.

Charles Melly

g Village Hall Committee

We have had a successful year of fund-raising and hall maintenance and we have a full programme planned for the coming year. We have purchased new doors for the main hall, put new tiles on the ceiling and re-floored the store room. The outside of the hall has been tidied up by the Parish Council and Sandy Isles and the fence has been repaired and repainted. Plans are in place for a new floor in the extension. Functions that are organised by the Committee are being well attended and it is refreshing to have younger people involved in the organisation of events. Thanks are due to the entire Committee for the work they do and to the Parish Council for its continued support.

The bingo and the 400 club are run solely for village hall funds and we are dependent on the goodwill and hard work of the people who run both, and I thank them.

Glenda Davis

h The Nearly New 2012

This past year has seen the Nearly New open 30 times, during that time our takings have risen from last year to £724.90 which shows an average weekly profit of £24.16. This we should find encouraging as that is an increase of £3 per week.

During the past year Nearly New has also purchased storage boxes for the church crockery costing £47.00.

We are open term time only from 13.00-15.00 Monday afternoons in All Saints Church, Allhallows.

My thanks must go to all those loyal helpers, donator's, and customers who support The Nearly New during the year.

We are always pleased to receive goods as donations or named, in good clean condition.

Lynn Yelton

i Allhallows Pre-school

At Allhallows Pre-school we aim to support all children and parents by providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment, with staff that are highly qualified, professional, caring and consistent in their approach. We are always striving for outstanding success in all areas of the curriculum that is known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children are our motivation and our aim is for them to develop emotionally, creating a sense of well being which in turn will promote their ability to become independent, receptive and eager to learn.

Allhallows Pre-school provides a rich stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors. We have use of the grassed area to the rear of the building as well as the hard surfaced area to the front. We have a purpose built large sand pit outside for the children to use as well as planting areas and outdoor toys and equipment. Children love being outside and benefit greatly from the experiences that come from the world around them.

The Pre-school works closely with parents and carers, offering regular consultations and reports on their child's progress. We strongly believe that parents are the main educators for their children and recognise the importance of working together to ensure every Child's needs are met. We welcome parent participation and have an open door policy for parents to join us at any time to share interests, occupations, or just their willingness to help. We hold open days where family and friends can come along to see how we operate and join in with the activities on offer.

Since Christmas, where the children were busy with their festive arts and crafts, Nativity and Christmas party; we have been celebrating Chinese New year, Holi, Mothers Day and Easter. All children at the setting are treated as equals regardless of gender, race or cultural beliefs and we welcome parents to share their beliefs/cultural festivities with the setting.

Prior to the Easter break we held a 'Mad Hatters Tea Party' to raise money for the 'Every Child a Talker' project. This project has been set up to raise money for children with speech and language difficulties; something that we are seeing more frequently nationwide. Children were asked to bring a favourite teddy/doll to Pre-School to take to the tea party. This activity encouraged lots of communication between the children as they enjoyed being together in a large group.

If you have a special interest you wish to share with the children please call the setting to arrange for a convenient time to visit.

Village Hall 01634 271652 Monday to Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm

Anita Russell (Proprietor/ Manager)

j The Allhallows Croppers.

The Allhallows Croppers is a group of ladies that meet once a month, on a Saturday, in the Allhallows Village Hall.

A close neighbour, Sheila Waghorn and I both enjoy paper crafting so four years ago we decided to start a 'Crop' in the village. We needed somewhere warm and comfortable, with loads of space, at a reasonable price. A place where we could chat, eat cake, preferably chocolate and make lots of mess while we created our projects.

The name 'Crop or Croppers' comes from the USA, where there are groups of people who create 'Scrapbooks' for their photographs, the pictures would need 'cropping' before they went onto the scrapbook page. Now the term is used for a gathering or meeting that encompasses all sorts of paper-crafting and mixed media work including Altered Art.

'The Allhallows Coppers' was founded in October 2009 with just five members, it has steadily grown and last week the Hall was full as we welcomed a tranche of new members some of them from Allhallows!

Our members travel in from the South East, Croydon, Tenterden, Rainham, Sittingbourne and Strood as well as Hoo.... we are VERY popular!

On Crop days we arrive at the hall by 10am, hauling 'Suitcases on wheels' numerous crafting bags and trolleys! We all bring different projects to make.

There are card makers, scrap bookers, knitters, embroiderers, cross stitcher's and at one time a lady that produced the most amazing Lace.

Nothing is provided but we bring everything we need including some hefty die cutting machines, hence the need for suitcases because the equipment, materials and tools necessary to make a card can be very heavy! At the meeting there is usually a demonstration given on a particular technique or design plus a 'Make and Take' card for anyone that wants to make it.

We do have refreshments available that are included in the Crop fee, but as we are a non profit making group we just cover expenses. Any monies left at the end of the year are spent on a Christmas Party for our membership. We also support Demelza House throughout the year with various fund raising activities.

Eileen Godwin

k Slough Fort Report

Slough Fort is a scheduled ancient monument and an important part of the history of the village, built in the late 1860s.

The project aims to support the restoration of the fort and open it up to visitors. This is a joint community project with Bourne Leisure in which the Parish council have taken a lead. Both Bourne Leisure and English Heritage have provided funding and are committed to further work.

To date there have been six community work days all on Saturdays with an average of around 15 people each time, both locals and from further afield.

This built on the work carried out by Victor Smith on behalf of both Bourne Leisure and English Heritage.

Also research undertaken at the National Archives to further the knowledge of the Fort's history and impact. A guidebook is currently in draft form.

The fort played a part in preventing invasion during WW1 and WW2. It was featured on BBC2 TV a few days ago on the "Ariel Archaeologist"

What have we achieved? The three late 19th Century gun emplacements have been dug out and made visible. A large amount of scrub and rubbish has been cleared from around the site. Access has been gained to the underground magazines. The Main Fort building has been cleared of rubbish and made safe. There is a new access gate via the Bourne Leisure site and fencing to facilitate viewing of the right hand Victorian Gun Battery.

What next? At present we have gone as far as we can until further funding is available later this year to complete the digging out of teh magazines and carry out essential repairs to teh main part of teh fort. Working days will start again in late summer.

Mick Smith

7 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

The Chairman thanked councillors, other guests and parishioners for attending and closed the meeting at 7.45 pm.

SignedChairman

On theday of2014