

Chairman's Report 2016/2017

Thank you for attending the AGM of Cliffsend Parish Council.

The last year for Cliffsend Parish Council has been eventful in that we had the sudden resignation of our previous Chair and two other councillors' part way through the period.

Since I became Chair in October 2016 we have co-opted over a period of time 3 new councillors onto the Parish Council in order to bring the numbers back up to full strength. The addition of new councillors has meant that the various Working Parties had to be reconstituted.

Some of the new Councillors have completed their "New Councillor" training, we are in the process of organising Training for the remainder.

During the year the "Meadow" has been looked after by the working party with Councillor Searle as Chair. Councillor Searle has worked hard to ensure the necessary maintenance is carried out and the space kept as expected by the village residents. The Parish Council has employed a Solicitor to negotiate with the landowner to resolve legal issues with the original 125 year lease document in order to comply with the requirements of Thanet District Council.

Transparency has become a "big" subject in councils during the period because of changes to Government Legislation which require that documents relating to the Parish Councils Business should be freely available to residents on the Web. Virtually all of the more recent documents can now be found on the Parish Council Web pages. The Web master Councillor Searle and her helpers are to be commended for their hard work. The remaining documents from the early years of the Parish Council to be added are not in digital form, so will take time to scan before they can be added to the Web site.

As I'm sure most of you will have noticed the "Cliffsend" web pages themselves have changed significantly since the beginning of the year. The KCC group who host our Web Site decided to roll out a new version whilst we were trying to deal with the Transparency issues. Councillor Searle has had a tough time trying to debug the new web pages with her assistant whilst still dealing with Transparency Issues.

To make matters worse the "Forum" element of the web site came under sustained denial of service attack early in the New Year. As a result it had to be disabled by the service provider. The service provider is considering various options for a new "Forum" service, but security considerations to prevent a further denial of service attack are at the moment preventing any new service being provided.

During the year the Parish Council has been represented at various Thanet District Council bodies in order to ensure "Cliffsend" voice is heard on the issues of the day.

As most of you are aware Thanet Council have been consulting on a new (much delayed) "District Local Plan", the potential implications for Cliffsend are quite significant and your Parish Council has been busy making sure that "Cliffsend" views are taken into account. It remains to be seen just what will come out in the final document.

In parallel with responding to the revised District local plan, your Parish Council has been busy working on our own new "Neighbourhood Plan". Data collected in survey in 2015 has now been processed into a useable form. The Parish Council had engaged a Consultant to produce the report, but unfortunately he had to withdraw suddenly, which has not made life easy. The Neighbourhood

Plan working party under Councillor Small is now busy sorting out a new Consultant to complete the work. The Consultant is funded by grants provided the Government for this purpose.

At the same time we have also been addressing Kent Councils plans for the new “Parkway” station on the mainline railway track where it passes through the middle of the village. The Parish Council enlisted the help of our Kent County Councillor in fighting these proposals. We understand the next stage report is due in the next few months. Apparently the project still has a funding shortfall of approximately £8M.

The future of Manston Airport is an ongoing subject, your Parish Council has been responding to consultations from both Stone Hill Park and RiverOak with comments on their respective development proposals. It was because of those responses RiverOak staged a consultation on the 16th June in this Village hall, the event was well attended by village Residents and we would encourage you all to respond to their consultation with your comments.

Planning Applications. During the period since taking over as chair we have been busy with many planning applications, some small (e.g. adding conservatory), others such as Cliffs End Farm Cottages (Asparagus Field) being much larger.

The Cliffsend Farm Cottages (Asparagus Field) site is currently undergoing an Archaeological Survey (to date the only finds are two ditches and one feature). The Developers have to submit an Archaeological Report to Thanet Council along with a “Construction and Traffic Management plan” which Thanet Council Planning Department must approve before they can start any further work on the site. The Parish Council will be asked for their comments before these are approved.

As most of you are aware 3 new large planning applications were submitted to TDC earlier this year, two along Cottington Road and one along Canterbury Road West. Your Parish Council responded robustly in opposition to these proposals as did many Villagers. Many residents attended the consultation evening organised by the Parish Council and were able to question a representative of the developers. At this time there is no indication when these applications will come before Thanet Council Planning Committee.

The Parish Council been advised by Vattenfall that we can expect disruption in the area of the car park next to Jet Petrol Station and cycleway within the next two years. Vattenfall have identified issues with the cables carrying power from the existing off shore Wind Farm to the interconnection point under the car park. In order to improve long term reliability the off shore cables will have to be replaced.

As residents will be aware during last year Project Nemo (Power cable from Belgium) started preparatory work from their cable landing site to the South of the Petrol Station, through the Country Park and alongside the Sandwich Road to Baypoint Grounds. From there the cables will go under the roundabout into the former Richborough Power Station site which is now a hive of building activity. In the last couple of months the grounds works to carry the cables has resumed with areas of the Country Park fenced off for Safety reasons.

The Parish Council has decided to establish a Grounds Maintenance Officer (Councillor Small). The remit of the Grounds Maintenance Officer will be look around the village for areas of land which are not being maintained, e.g. grass or hedges not being cut; establish ownership and if appropriate arrange for the area to be taken in hand.

We all welcomed the appointment of Tony Gander as the Community Warden for the Cliffsend Area. Since his arrival he has become a familiar site around the village. His first few months have kept him busy dealing with potholes in various roads, poor road signage, abandoned cars (an ongoing battle), organising the monitoring traffic speeds in the village, antisocial behaviour in the country park and fly tipping, to mention some of his activities. A vote of thanks is due to Tony for

his efforts to date, keep up the good work please Tony.

In addition to Tony our PCSO has changed back to John Litchfield, we are aware that he has also been kept busy on various fronts. Thank you John for your efforts

As you all will be aware the Parish Council is in the process of creating a Village Emergency Plan to deal with major incidents in the village. I would urge you all to complete the forms which have been delivered to each house and return them to one of the collection points.

The Emergency Plan and its associated Flood Risk Plan will follow the same format as used throughout Kent, this will enable the documents once completed to be seamlessly meshed into the wider TDC and KCC Emergency Plans. The Emergency Plan will provide a route for the community to deal effectively with incidents when they occur.

Any report should not ignore the efforts on our behalf by our two TDC Councillors John Townend and Brenda Rogers, they continue to support the village at TDC. Similarly we should thank our past KCC Councillor Trevor Shonk for his work on behalf of the village at KCC, his reports on KCC activities at parish meetings were always entertaining.

The Parish Councils financial records for 2016-17 have been audited by our Auditor Lionel Robbins, the first phase of that audit has been passed and the accounts have been signed off. Should anyone wish to view the accounts they should speak to our Clerk Ashley Stacy.

Parish Council meetings have been attended by residents throughout the year, thank you. I would remind people that Parish Council meetings can be attended by any resident, you don't need to book, just turn up on the night. If you can't attend then please use the methods of contact listed on the web site for councillors.

Those of you have attended meetings recently will have noticed we now have microphones which connect to the Village Hall PA system. This I'm sure will make it easier for people to hear what councillors are saying at Parish Meetings.

I would like to say thank you to the other councillors; Councillor Searle, Councillor Lyon, Councillor Hovenden, Councillor Small and Councillor Tait for their support since becoming Chair, not forgetting Councillor Barnbrook who very recently joined the Parish Council.

Finally I have to express my thanks to our Parish Clerk Ashley Stacey, her help and guidance to the Council and myself during these first few months has been much appreciated, thank you Ashley!

Thank you all for attending this evening.