

# DENTON with WOOTTON PARISH

## ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH

Held On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm

## MINUTES

### 1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Allyn Thomas (Chairman), Cllr Graham Bevan (Vice Chairman), Cllr Penelope James, Cllr Bob Akehurst, Cllr Terry Hodges.  
Clerk – Cathy Skinner  
DDC Cllr Beaney (Apologies)

### 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was not held in 2020.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was not held in 2020.

### 5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2020/2021

#### **DRAFT REPORT FROM ALLYN: NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

- As is our role we have reviewed and commented on many planning applications within the Parish and more widely in the District.
- We have monitored public footpaths and intervened to improve access where it has been restricted.
- We have led road safety improvements on the A260 through traffic speed monitoring and enforcement; improved signage; road markings and raised kerbs. In particular we have worked hard to tackle to accident black spot at the junction of Wootton Lane and the A260.
- We have caused improvements to road surfaces across the parish through pot hole repairs and drainage improvements with further work continuing in the coming year.
- Reviewing verge cutting arrangements to seek more appropriate pattern of cutting to meet local and environmental needs.

- Promoted the annual litter pick and supported local villagers who tackle litter and other such issues across the year.
- We have renewed the Parish Website to ensure it is legally compliant and good value for money.
- Provided grants to support local community facilities, for example the two village halls, though we need to advertise this more widely as lockdown restrictions are removed. One project we previously supported to obtain a KCC Counsellors' grant has resulted in a restored Finger Post sign at the junction of Agerster Lane and Lodge Lees Hill.
- We have engaged with a range of interested parties to bring more effective oversight and regulation to the operation of the Lydden Race Circuit. This work continues with our contribution to the setting up of a community oversight group for the track.
- We reviewed the Parish Asset Register to ensure that it was up to date, legally compliant and fit for purpose.
- We supported a fibre broadband scheme for Agerster Lane and Lodge Lees. Denton. Which after more than 2 years is now finally complete. We have similarly supported a much larger scheme for Denton Village, Wootton and other surrounding villages but this is experiencing difficulties particularly through Openreach and partly as a result of the local elections.
- We have undertaken a Housing Needs Assessment survey and will now engage in further research to see if we should support a development of locally affordable housing, for local people, within the Parish.
- We are negotiating with Denton Court about the possibility of renting land for allotments in the village.
- However not all is success. We have struggled to engage without local community police officer/PCSO. In part this reflects the high turnover of such staff and perhaps also the very large geographical; areas they cover.

## 6. REPORTS FROM CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

- **Report from Wootton Parish Hall**

There is not a great deal to report as the Hall has been closed for most of the year, We were fortunate to obtain a Grant from DDC which has helped financially as there were no Hall lettings. Fortunately most of the wedding hirers have rebooked for this coming year.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their reports to DDC planning, regarding the Lydden Hill Race circuit, as the proposed plans could have serious implications regarding the finances of the Hall which is such an asset to our local community.

Everyone has missed the events and clubs based at the Hall and makes us realise the importance of a community hall to our wellbeing. Hopefully, the Hall events & Clubs will be able to restart in the very near future and the first event will be the coffee morning on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

The matter of the car park has still not been resolved with Deacons.

**Keith Jones**

**Chair Wootton Parish Hall**

- **St Mary Magdalene Church & St Martin's Church**

### **Report on the Churches**

Unlike most churches, St Mary Magdalene and St Martin's have remained open for private prayer throughout the Pandemic. Risk assessments were undertaken and Covid precautions put in place.

When we came out of lockdown in the summer, several outdoor picnic services were held in both churchyards. These were popular and joyful occasions. Just before the December lockdown, a beautiful candlelight carol service took place at Denton.

No fund-raising events could be held during the year. So the villages will have to work hard when we get back to normality to try and keep the churches going. The electoral roll stands at 37.

Denton and Wootton, along with Swingfield, have given amazing support to the Salvation Army food bank, which provides food parcels for over 200 families and individuals in the area.

### **Susan Clough - Church Warden**

- **Kent Police**

### **New PCSO**

PCSO Sarah McGuinness attended the meeting and was welcomed by Allyn Thomas to her first meeting of this Parish Council. Our PCSO covers quite a wide area as the map shows, and is aware of the current issues within the Parish..

PCSO McGuinness welcomes contact from parishioners but asked that these queries should be routed through the Parish Clerk (unless urgent and needing immediate Police attendance)



- **KCC Councillor Geoff Lymer**

This year has seen a totally different way of operating at County, District and Parish Council level regarding having virtual meetings. Overall, it has been business as usual and much has been achieved.

However, Whitfield in the Dover West Ward has seen some government moves which have been taken without the full consultation with the local community such as the Inland Border Facility (IBF) which the DfT are keen to tell us it is not a "lorry park," so I suppose Tesco supermarket should be telling us they have a "customer goods loading facility" because they do not have a car park. This is the nonsense of semantics and I for one am not prepared to play their puerile games. I have fought hard to protect the village of Whitfield, Pineham and Guston from having such a site on the White Cliffs Business Park, where the local shoppers experience will become a nightmare as many car drivers and cyclists will have to mix it with diesel fumed belching left hand drive HGVs all jockeying to reach the B&Q roundabout to gain access to the Inland Border Facility the south side of the roundabout. At night this will be a highly lit (for health and safety reasons ) noisy facility.

At certain times I can envisage traffic problems as some HGVs break down, whilst queuing to enter the site, as was evidenced on the Meridian News three weeks ago when I was interviewed giving an update of events.

I was disappointed the MP for the Dover area, who right from the start, proclaimed this is what Dover needs to create jobs, so she stated she would be in full support of the freight facility, lorry park being constructed on the proposed site at Whitfield.

When I became first aware of the project, my first concern went immediately to those whose properties will border that facility and some of the community of Whitfield, Pineham, Guston and the Buckland Estate. Having advised those residents immediately bordering the site to obtain professional valuations of their properties last October and to then obtain a second valuation some three months later, some properties have been de-valued by £100,000, since the initial valuation.

This is not just and any politician should be considering how such government projects will impact on the wider local community who voted them into office before announcing an immediate support for the government project. After all the DfT insistence on not referring the Whitfield project as a lorry park, when I questioned the DfT about the frequent occurrences of freight being unable to cross the seas due to poor weather or industrial disputes, would the freight facility just remain empty, the DfT did concede they had considered using the facility to park up lorries. So it came close to they accepting it could be a lorry park. When I questioned the inordinate spend of tax payers money for a facility with a projected life span of just five years, I was told that it could still remain under HM Customs. So we are not being told the full intentions alternatively the DfT do not have an exit strategy formulated yet.

I am also critical of many of the Dover District Councillors who voted to support the government project regarding the IBF, when as I write, none of us including the DfT have any idea of the final plans for the site, nor the intentions for the site following the supposed closing down in five years time. How on earth can any councillor vote to support a project when no one knows the final plans. I find this incredulous and a point of serious concern.

Then we had the Dover Fast Track rapid bus transport system which the government, through Homes England, is contributing just around £16 million and the balance will be paid by the tax and rate payers. So we have a project which was considered over ten years ago to take the residents from the proposed 5750 homes planned to be built in Whitfield back in 2008 to the shops in Dover town and Dover Priory Railway station to commute to London and elsewhere for work.

The only problem is the project has not kept pace with life. Many Rapid Bus Transport systems established in the Midlands and the North have failed due to lack of passenger commitment, due to various factors, for example the Dartford Fast Track had been popular when it offered free travel to local residents, however, when the bus company started charging fares, combined with long delays at the Dartford Tunnel feeding back into the town, this affected the bus system and the initial popularity has waned.

As we know now at Whitfield the housing development has been delayed due to flooding problems partially created by the concreting over of phase 1&2 of the White Cliffs Business park which may be exacerbated with the development of phase 3.

I spoke to one of the foreman involved in the construction of those houses a while back who predicted a good twenty five years before all the houses will be built on that site. So not the footfall the Dover Fast Track had anticipated. Then we come back to the initial remit " to take passengers to the shops in Dover Town." What shops? they are all closing down.

Then the other problem to take commuters to Dover Priory Railway Station. Well two points have occurred since then. The sea wall being washed away a few years back closed down the railway line from Dover Priory to Folkestone. Network rail rebuilt the line at a cost of £40 million and stated this would be a final reprieve any further incidents such as a major cliff fall and they would close the line permanently. We have had two cliff falls recently, so the future for that line is precarious, then since the pandemic commuting has dropped off dramatically and it is considered this trend will not reverse. Since the pandemic more grocery and other shopping is carried out on line having increased three fold once more a trend predicted to remain. Stage Coach can not run their many rural busses profitably at the moment, so what can the Fast Track achieve that Stage Coach have not been able to do to date? So will the Dover Fast Track be dead in the water before it has been constructed to become another white elephant to go into the Dover Zoo with its other white elephants.

There is proposed an over bridge to take the Dover Fast Track from the Archers Court Road area over the A2 towards the B&Q roundabout. However, the local MP has stated she is determined to have the dualling of the A2 at Whitfield carried out as a priority.

I look at the A2 at Whitfield and find it difficult to envisage how they can dual the area around Whitfield roundabout, due to the number of properties involved. The only solution is to construct a dual carriageway from Coldred via Eythorne, Waldershare to return to the east of Whitfield on the A256.

If that is the projected route which has been discussed, then millions of pounds of rate payers money will have been wasted on constructing an over bridge over the A2 for the Dover Fast Track to avoid traffic density which will be rendered redundant in the future due to a dramatically reduced traffic flow density.

We had further wasting of tax payers money on the Dover cycle lane, which brought Dover to a standstill causing absolute mayhem and now the Dover parklets. The wasteful cost of the cycle lane was over a quarter of a million pounds a disgraceful waste of tax payers money.

So over the past year I feel the local areas have been let down by the government dictating certain projects via the County and District Council to the local communities without consulting, considering, or contemplating how many of their projects often clearly vanity projects will impact adversely on the local community and could that money, now wasted, have been spent more wisely.

**Geoffrey Lymer**  
**Kent County Councillor**  
**Dover West Ward**

- **DDC Councillors**

Cllr Rose joined the meeting towards the end – no report

- **Selsted C E Primary School**

**Academic Year 2020-21**  
**Current number on roll – 94**

Based on parental first choices we also have a full intake of 15 for next September. In a low birthrate year this is testament to the hard work of Mrs Woodgate and her team but is also likely to be, in part, because the last data we reported put us 3rd in Kent!

Selsted is 150 years old this year and we had hoped to do some celebrating – we hope to do this when all restrictions are lifted.

### **Overview**

This year and most of the last academic year have been very affected by the pandemic but I am pleased to say that Selsted, lead by our Headteacher, Angela Woodgate, approached the challenge with a proactive attitude. When the pandemic closed schools in March 2020, Selsted remained open for key worker children and it even stayed open over the Easter holidays, providing school access for those children.

When schools were given options to reopen in the summer term, Mrs Woodgate found a way to open the school in such a way that all years were able to return in some form. Whilst our year 6 pupils missed out on certain rites of passage, the staff made sure that they were able to celebrate in alternative, safe ways.

Our focus for the current academic year was always going to be supporting our children's mental health and wellbeing as well as looking at gaps in their learning. In the first lockdown the school very quickly prepared learning to be done at home, printing out many packs for parents each week. Staff also made wellbeing calls to children and families that they felt needed extra support.

When the children returned in September, Mrs Woodgate published a Selsted Recovery Plan which outlined our approach to getting everyone back on track, emotionally and academically. Mrs Woodgate and staff had anticipated a potential second physical closure of schools so had already been working on a plan that took into account what went well last time and therefore the second lockdown saw all children using Microsoft Office 365 to access their virtual learning. Classes were taught 'live' in the mornings for core subjects then topic work, reading and mindfulness activities happened in the afternoons. During this time teaching staff were freed up to work at supporting individual pupils or small groups who they had identified as needing more input.

Those families that needed laptops had one provided by the school so that children could access the online learning and Mrs Woodgate contacted every family every 2 weeks to check in that children were ok.

The Recovery Plan was revised and continues to be updated as needed. This is attached for you to read along with the information that was sent to parents. Our main priority continues to be the wellbeing of our children, keeping them safe with the procedures in school (which have been well thought out and excellent from the beginning) and now looking forward to how we can support their physical health and academic achievement in a manner that is right for us.

Alongside our focus on the children's wellbeing has been staff wellbeing. Mrs Woodgate and the Senior Leadership team have worked tirelessly to check in with staff, support their mental health and create pockets of joy and care for them to access. Governors have supported Mrs Woodgate's wellbeing as much as they can, making sure that she has the support that she needs and is taking care of herself.

Sports Premium and Pupil Premium

We are required to report on how we spend the monies devolved to us by the government and there are copies of these reports available on the school website.

As an overview, pupil premium (PP) is money attached to any child that falls under the category of free school meals, children in care and service children. Selsted is a small school so we have proportionately fewer PP children than larger schools but we are very careful that the money is spent in improving the opportunities and outcomes for those children. There have been careful staffing decisions made and changes to the learning environment implemented to support the learning as well as a mentor scheme to support their emotional wellbeing. Overall these children are making good progress.

Given the lockdown, it has been harder for us to spend the sports premium money but the powers that be are allowing schools to roll the money over into a second year which gives us the opportunity to consider some exciting projects that would not normally be possible. One of these plans is to see if we can afford an all weather running track so that children can run the daily mile on the field during the winter. This would also potentially be great for sports day.

We continue to use Shepway Sports Trust for provision of PE, training of staff in sports teaching and for competitions. Given that pre-lockdown Selsted had some great sporting success, access to competitions has been unfortunately lacking this year.

Data

Last years SATs were cancelled, as are this year's therefore there is no external data to report on. We undertake our own internal assessments and are working to close any gaps. As previously stated, on the last set of data published we are ranked 3rd in Kent for overall progress and achievement. The 19-20 year 6 cohort were on track to be even better.

Our school vision

We have worked hard over the last couple of years on creating and embedding our school vision;

Here at Selsted, in our unique rural setting, we provide a happy, safe, stimulating environment where children develop their love of learning. Through mutual respect and trust children are given a voice and responsibility. We are brave, resilient and committed to making the impossible possible through God's loving care

We believe that because this vision is at the heart of everything we do that it has enabled us to cope very well in an unbelievably difficult situation.

In the next academic year we anticipate both an OFSTED visit and a SIAMS visit (the diocesan version of an OFSTED)

Our new Library and wellbeing room

For those that know Selsted well you may remember that we have a WW2 air raid shelter.

Over the years this has had various uses as changing rooms when the school had a swimming pool and latterly as a place for the model railway club.

Thanks to some diocesan funds we have been able to insulate and convert the space into a wonderful library and wellbeing room, freeing up the current library to be a resource centre for ICT and group work.

We have also created doors out onto a patio area for outdoor reading and learning.

We hope to be able to have an official opening at some point to which you will be invited.

Memorial Garden

Although it has taken longer than we would have liked, we have finally been able to put the finishing touches to the Memorial garden. The kindly donated WW1 memorial bench is in situ and should you care to use google earth you should see the poppy that forms the centre of the garden.

Conclusion

As stated at the start of this report, the last year has been challenging in ways none of us could have anticipated. We believe that we are emerging from this time as a stronger school community with new and flexible ways of working.

We have been unable to interact with you or invite you to participate in things at school but we appreciate all that you do in the background and hope to see you in the not too distant future.

If there any questions that you have, please don't hesitate to contact me via the school office.

**Jen Ibbetson-Revell**

**Chair of Governors**

- **Neighbourhood Watch**

**Dover District NHW annual report**

2019-2020 has been the most bizarre years for NHW unable to hold committee meetings due to Covid 19 rules, despite this Nhw has adapted to operator although restricted messages have still been sent and received from members and Kent police.

Thanks must go to Andrew Judd our liaison officer who has worked from home as well as his office keeping information being sent out to members by email etc, to support members to keep working for their scheme's as best they can sometimes with the help of their local PCSO. Hopefully, we will all be able to start running meetings when the 'all clear' is sounded

and everyone is vaccinated. I would like to thank all the members and co-ordinators for the service they have put in helping and looking out for their communities despite the pandemic. I and the other chairman have been having county Zoom meeting to help keep the organisation active and ready to restart as soon as its practical.

What of the future hopefully we will start local committee meetings before too long I am sure you would agree with me we need to recruit new and younger members to join us in our quest to help keep crime at bay and support our neighbours. I would like to thank Andrew Judd and all the members for keeping NHW alive during this trying time.

**Bob Akehurst**  
**Chairman Dover District NHW**

- **Wootton Environmental Protection Group**

A Judicial Review is pending against Dover District Council, this has been delayed and more information should be available in 2/3 weeks time. DDC have been contacted on several occasions where LHRC 'quiet' events have not been so. Pressure should be maintained on DDC, individual complaints are more effective that group submissions. Freedom of Interest requests can be made to ascertain numbers of complaints made to DDC.

**7. CLOSE**