

Rolvenden

Update 2020



Welcome to the Annual Rolvenden Parish Council Newsletter

This is usually delivered to each household prior to the Annual Parish Meeting, but this year's meeting, due to be held on April 30th has been postponed until further notice due to the restrictions imposed during the Covid 19 outbreak.

The restrictions also mean it is not possible to deliver a copy to all households for the time being.

The Parish Clerk is monitoring the latest government guidelines regarding future meetings and we will update residents when we can.



Here in Rolvenden, as throughout the country, we have had our usual way of life turned upside down by the Covid 19 pandemic but as Chairman of the Parish Council I am incredibly proud of the way in which our village has risen to this challenge, proving (if proof were ever needed) that this is a very special place to live.

Council members have worked long and hard to set up “Rolvenden Response” to ensure that all elderly, self-isolating and vulnerable members of our community have access to the help they need.

Residents’ responses for the call for community volunteers has been so phenomenal that all areas of the village are covered, far exceeding our expectations.

Cllr Graham Tiltman and the Rocket team, together with My Village Store, have really stepped up and are working tirelessly to provide a daily delivery service for essential groceries to vulnerable residents.

Our ABC ward member Cllr Kate Walder has provided unfaltering and much needed advice, support and practical help throughout and I am so grateful for her help.

The Parish Council will continue to update residents via its website, social media and the Rolvenden Update but if you have any questions arising from this newsletter please contact the Clerk, Peter Setterfield, by email. rolvendenclerk@gmail.com

Please stay safe and I look forward to seeing everyone when we are “released”

Cllr Denise Curtain

Planning

The major achievement for the Parish Council regarding planning during the last year has been the unequivocal support for the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Development Plan, approved by a huge majority at the referendum last autumn. Our thanks are due to the steering committee which oversaw the drafting of this important document, in particular Lynn Curtis-Woodcock, Denise Curtain and Kerrin Malone.

Every planning application that is considered in the parish must now be judged against the policies agreed and approved in that document.

The Plan carries equal weight with the Ashford Local Plan so if borough planners choose to override our policies, they must show strong justification for doing so.

The Council continue to work with the applicant in respect of land west of Kingsgate Cottage, Rolvenden Layne, where the principle that four houses should be built is agreed but the design and open space format may not be quite right yet.

At Cherry Wood Cottage, Alder Lane, we objected to the construction of a substantial agricultural barn on a

small holding which did not seem to justify such a large structure. The applicant had apparently already cleared the site, including undermining an ancient row of coppice Hornbeam, which had featured in the Rolvenden NDP, and whose future we are keen to secure.

More recently, the residents of Rolvenden Hill and Puddingcake Lane have made their concerns well known to us in respect of an application land south of Swiss Cottage for an educational smallholding with holiday accommodation and caretakers house. The Council have objected to the over intensified nature of this application which lies within the AONB.

Approximately two or three applications are considered at each meeting. Residents are welcome to attend and speak about any application, an option which is welcomed by the Parish Council to ensure that they are aware of any local sensitivities before a decision is made. Comments can also be made online www.ashford.gov.uk

Community Speedwatch

Since the first session last November, our local community speedwatch team have worked tirelessly to improve road safety in the village.

The team currently numbers 10 volunteers who so far have reported

124 speeding drivers to the police, some of them being repeat offenders who may now face prosecution.

The group would welcome new volunteers. You do not need to commit to a specific time or day – availability can be input online on a week to week basis and even offering just one hour a week can help.



To find out more or to become a qualified operator go to www.communityspeedwatch.org Click on “Register” then “Join an existing group” selecting “Kent”, then “Ashford”, then “Rolvenden” from the drop down menus.

Once registered you will be able to complete the short online training session (30mins). Your successful completion of that will be advised to the Area Co-ordinator who will then arrange for roadside training

Bequest from Miss Pat Thoburn / Allotments

The village has been generously gifted two parcels of land, from a bequest made by the late Miss Pat Thoburn.



The allotments and the fields between the church and Great Maytham are to be entrusted to the Parish Council to ensure their continued benefit and enjoyment to parishioners.



The Parish Council is committed to fulfilling the wishes of Miss Thoburn and making the most of this valuable resource for our village.

The Parish Council's solicitors are working with the Executors to arrange legal transfer of the ownership and we will keep you updated as things progress.

Rolvenden Rocket

Rocket Reaches New Heights!!!!

The Rolvenden Rocket Minibus Pilot Scheme approaches the last part of its 2nd year as a "not for profit" wellbeing transport initiative for residents of the Parish and beyond. We are pleased to report that the project continues to meet the required financial targets and contractual requirements as laid down by ABC and Enterprise Lease Hire .

The outstanding success rate to date has been made possible by the support and determination of the volunteer management team and drivers, and those of you who have supported the scheme to date.

Our Rocket is a respected community minibus scheme, used by residents, social groups and schools, providing a valuable solution to recent cuts in local bus services and allowing elderly, lonely and isolated residents the opportunity to get out more to socialise. Rolvenden is very fortunate to have the use of The Rocket Minibus and we are the envy of other

parishes. Please help us seal its future by spreading the word and supporting the Rocket trips whenever possible.

Many social outings are available including children's Wave Rave, group trips, PC organised day trips and mystery tours and charity run lunches which have resulted in the minibus having covered 16000 miles to date. The future of The Rolvenden Rocket looks good but lies firmly in the hands of parishioners. Without your support there will be no Rocket minibus. There will be important decisions to be made as to its viability at the end of the pilot period.



During the present Coronavirus pandemic all Rocket Trips have been suspended for the foreseeable future. However, your community minibus and its team are proving to be a great asset, working with My Village Stores to deliver necessary provisions to residents who are self-isolating, the over 70s or vulnerable. We are proud to continue to offer this service for the benefit of residents in need. The Rocket team give their time freely as volunteers, all we ask in return is that residents appreciate its value to our village and support the project when things return to normal

We look forward to seeing you on The Rocket very soon.

Special thanks to Cllr Denise Curtain and our ABC councillor Kate Walder for their advice, support and encouragement.

Cllr Graham Tiltman.

Rolvenden Rocket Scheme Manager

Missing Funds

In September 2019 the former clerk pleaded guilty to fraud by abuse of position and was sentenced to three years in prison. During the sentencing hearing he admitted to forging signatures, fraudulently manipulating the bank signature mandate and presenting councillors with forged bank statements.

A subsequent Proceeds of Crime process established that he had no assets that could be seized to repay the stolen funds. Instead he was ordered to repay a nominal £1 or serve an extra day in prison.

The Parish Council's previous bankers were contacted immediately the fraud came to light but have failed to respond to our complaint that they failed to spot or notify us of unusual activity on our accounts. As a result, a complaint was lodged against the bank with the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Further contact with the bank was rebutted as they would not look at

our complaint pending the decision of the Financial Ombudsman Service. Following an appeal, a decision has been upheld that the Parish Council is not eligible to use the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The Parish Council have appointed solicitors to advise whether a case should be taken forward against the bank.

A claim was also made on the Parish Council's insurance in respect of the loss, but insurers would not consider it until a conviction was secured.

The claim process has been made more difficult by the loss of all council documents in the execution of the fraud, but submissions have recently been made to the loss adjuster to support our claim and these are currently under review.

We are also awaiting a copy of the transcript of the sentencing hearing to add further weight to our claim.

Royal British Legion. Annual report to APM 2020

The Rolvenden Branch continues in its traditional manner. Our headline events over the past year have been

Summer Reception held at Great Maytham in June and AGM and dinner in the autumn.

We co-ordinate the Remembrance Day Service which is probably the best attended service of the year at St

Mary's

Due to current restrictions the branch is unofficially suspended until further notice. We hope to resume events in the autumn of 2020 and particularly be there to organise the Remembrance Day service in November.



Meanwhile, if any person is aware of ex service personnel or their families who are in need , then we welcome applications for welfare support. These are likely to be met from National not branch funds and I urge those who qualify to apply.

Edward Barham

Rolvenden RBL Chairman

Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch (March 2020 update)

Rolvenden NHW continues to provide key information to members of the scheme to keep the village updated, proactive and alert.

Jenny sends regular updates to scheme members, Pam also gives vital local information and Siân represents Rolvenden NHW at regular Ashford and District NHW committee meetings where different Neighbourhood watches meet to share information and get updates on recently developments.

Recently Chief Inspector Nick Sparkes attends these meetings. The PCSO, Kate Richardson provides regular updates and there is a forum in Tenterden where co-ordinators and members can ask questions to representatives from the police.

A very useful extract appeared in Rolvenden Village news (March edition) on page 16 on training to protect children from gangs and criminal behaviour.

Joining Rolvenden

If any new resident would like to join, details can be passed onto Siân or Jenny: sian_reeves@hotmail.com and jenny@vening.net

If you would like to be a member/co-ordinator, you can also contact Andrew Judd:

andrew.judd@kent.police.uk
(Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer South East Kent Police)

There is a data protection form that needs to be filled in.



Supplies

There are supplies of wheelie bin stickers, rfid-blocking wallets or card protection wallets (as some cards contain embedded radio frequency identification chips which thieves use to steal information. These wallets insulate you from electronic pickpocketing, helping to keep you safe from high-tech thieves). There are also purse bells available to buy and free NHW stickers.

Crimes

Rural crime of farm machinery and scams continue. Some issues with anti-social behaviour and soft drugs. At this time with the Covid 19 virus, scams are on the increase with increased online activity so residents should be wary of telephone calls from strangers, emails from unknown sources and never give out personal or bank details. Do not open the door to anyone if you are not expecting a visit and check ID.

Due to Covid 19, the next neighbourhood Watch Ashford and District Committee Meeting on 4 May and AGM planned for 20 June may need to be cancelled or postponed.

Contacting the police

If a non-emergency crime is happening either call 101 or use the website to report the crime:

<https://www.kent.police.uk/> Click on the 'Report' tab.

In emergencies, dial 999. With only 12 rural task force officers covering the whole of Kent, it is important to log crimes and work together in the community to prevent and report crime but the team is making significant inroads on crime reduction despite only being 12.

With thanks from Siân, Jenny and Pam - Rolvenden NHW Team

The Rolvenden History Group

The group endeavours to reflect the interests and curiosity of its members.

The committee welcomes feedback and insights about local history as well as topics that interest members. Communication is key.

We arrange lectures, organise outings, and stage exhibitions.

This year we are focusing on the four hundredth anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower and investigating what Rolvenden would have been like in the period 1511-1625.

Our first exhibition was on the subject of Hops, last year we investigated the landscape and gardens of the parish.

New members are always welcome. For a full lecture list and information about activities planned contact Sue Hatt on 01580 241661.

Our website is: <https://therolvendenhistorygroup.wordpress.com/home/>

The Basil Russell Trust

The Trust was established in 1990 by the late Basil Russell, lifelong gardener at Hole Park and international table tennis referee, to benefit the youth of Rolvenden and surrounding parishes.

The investment portfolio was valued

at £288,361 as at 31 Dec 19, with estimated annual income of £9488
The capital value has fallen very significantly recently in the Covid crash.

Distributions totalling £5971 have been made during the current financial year which include:

- Rolvenden's contribution to the Community Youth Worker at Homewood School,
- Stool Ball and summer fete
- summer study course fees for a student
- Kent ACF, Cranbrook detachment
- Ongoing support for a medical student
- Rolvenden Pre-school

The Trustees have offered a sizable grant towards the provision of new play equipment for the Streyte playing area and await progress on that project.

Trustees are keen to receive applications from any individual, or group of young people, or by adults on their behalf who seek assistance with their studies, tuition fees, travel costs or to fund personal development opportunities.

Edward Barham

March 2020

Rolvenden War Memorial Trust Annual report 2020

The trust has had a relatively quiet year. The Trust has continued to manage its assets within the village and maintain and improve them wherever possible. The main improvements were the replacement fencing along the northern boundary of the Streyte field (cricket pitch) to ensure safety and to put in place a gated access to the 1/3 acre adjoining the tennis and football club. Pedestrian access has been restricted through the new gates due to antisocial dog soiling and health risks to sportsmen using the playing fields. Unfortunately the very wet autumn and winter have limited completion of the proposed works which will be resumed later this year. The Trusts financial position remains uncertain and whilst its books were improving the current investment uncertainty will need careful management.

The committee would like to remember and thank Brian Hindley for his many years of outstanding service. He will be fondly remembered for his insight and wisdom, his dogged scrutiny of affairs and his unique monologues.

Village Hall

Rolvenden Village Hall has had a few additions during the last 12 months.

After a generous anonymous bequest for replacing the rotting windows we have replaced not only the two bay windows but also the west end doors and windows. The installation company also installed free of charge one further window which was very much appreciated.

The bookings continued to increase and we had started to look at how best to hire out the Gallery. We also considered grants to replace our boilers and, with successes such as our Bingo nights, we were getting there.... when Coronavirus struck, resulting in the closing down of the hall for the foreseeable future.



We have taken advice from the Government, our insurance company and industry bodies to turn off heating, hot water and all but emergency and security electrical items, which will reduce our utility bills. The security lighting, cameras and other protection systems will continue to operate as normal.

By taking these actions we should be able to operate for more than our required 6 months reserve, as required by the Charity Commission. The Treasurer and I are monitoring our financial situation and will continue to do so.

With this husbandry of our finances we will be in a position to emerge from this outbreak in good shape, but will need to do some fundraising in order to rebuild our reserves.

Fred May

Chair Rolvenden Village Hall
Committee

Email: Info@rolvendenvillagehall.co.uk

Telephone: 01580241211
Mobile: 07874214916

S106 funding from Halden Field Development

The Parish Council is due to receive funds from the S106 funding resulting from the development at Halden Field.



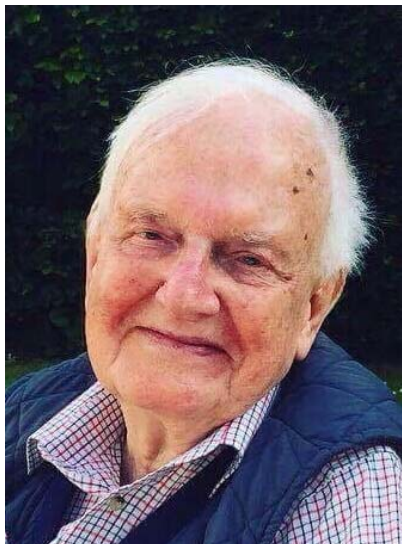
Funds are available for specific project areas which include allotments, play areas, green spaces and sports facilities.

We hope to have the new Streyte play area ready for the summer although much depends on when the current lockdown ends. The Layne play area will follow later in the year. Funding for allotments will provide a water supply, improvement to soil quality and pathways. The recent gift of land bequested to the village will benefit from the green space funds.

We understand that the funds have been requested from the developer by ABC and will be available to us as soon as they are paid over.

Mr Brian Hindley

It was with great sadness earlier this year that we learned of the passing of Mr Brian Hindley.



Brian was the long-standing president of Rolvenden Cricket Club, a Trustee of Rolvenden War Memorial Trust and served as a Rolvenden parish councillor for many years, finally retiring at the age of 90 in May 2019.

His integrity, intellect, straight talking and keen eye for detail proved an invaluable asset to the Parish Council and made him a faithful champion for the village whose presence is now sorely missed.

The Parish Council

Parish Councillors are all volunteers and receive no payment for their services.

The current councillors are:

The Streyte

Cllr. Mr Antony Johnstone

48 Sparkeswood Avenue
Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent
TN17 4LZ

Telephone: 01580 241806

Email: johnstonecelia@gmail.com

Cllr. Mr Edward Barham

Hole Park, Rolvenden, Kent
TN17 4JB

Telephone: 01580 241344

Email: edwardbarham@holepark.com

Cllr. Mrs Lynn Walker

30 High Street, Rolvenden,
Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LN

Telephone: 01580 241369

Email: linda19walker@btconnect.com

Cllr. Mrs Irene Newman

10 Gybbons Road, Rolvenden,
Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LL
Telephone 01580 241813
Email: dnewman@btinternet.com

Cllr. Mr Steve Bryant

11 Sparkeswood Avenue, Rolvenden,
Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 4LU
Email: stevebryant123@outlook.com

Cllr. Mr Graham Tiltman

4 Moneypenny, Rolvenden,
Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NF
Telephone: 01580 241006
Email: grahamtiltman@gmail.com

The Layne

Chairperson

Cllr. Mrs Denise Curtain

33 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne,
Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NS
Telephone: 01580 241095
Email: duckscrossing33@gmail.com

Cllr. Ms Tessa Turner

26 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne,
Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NP
Telephone: 01580 241837
Email: tessalivesley@yahoo.com

Cllr. Mrs Fiona May

3 Thornden Court, Thornden Lane
Rolvenden Layne, Cranbrook, Kent
TN17 4PS
Email: Fiona@fmay.uk

Clerk and other contacts

Clerk to the Council

Mr Peter Setterfield PSLCC

Wealden House, Grand Parade,
Littlestone, Kent, TN28 8NQ
Email: rolvendenclerk@gmail.com

**Ashford Borough Councillor for
Rolvenden. Kate Walder**

Potts Farm, Chennel Park Road
Tenterden, Kent TN30 6XA.
Telephone: 07839 110611
Email: kate.walder@ashford.gov.uk

Kent County Council Cabinet

Member. Mr Michael Hill OBE

Members' Suite, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone, Kent
ME14 1XQ
Tel: 03000 416240
Email: michael.hill@kent.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings are held on
the third Tuesday of the month
except in December.

The meetings are held in the Church
during summer months and in the
Moneypenny Lounge in winter and
start at 7.30pm unless otherwise
notified.