

CPC Chair Report 2017 – 2018

Thank you for attending the AGM of Cliffsend Parish Council.

The last year for Cliffsend Parish Council has been quite busy. During the year Councillors Barnbrook, Small and Tait resigned, however Councillors Hellyer and Francis-Cable have joined the Council. This has meant we need to organise additional training for new councillors.

During the year the “Chapman Meadow” has been looked after by the Meadow Committee with Councillor Searle as Chair. Councillor Searle has worked hard with the various contractors to ensure the necessary maintenance is carried out and the space kept as expected by the village residents. During the year the protective fencing for the memorial trees was changed to reduce the likelihood of mowers or strimmer damaging to the roots or trunks. In addition new identification labels for each tree have been added.

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. However despite the Parish Council negotiating in good faith the Landowner kept trying to alter the area of land leased to the Parish Council or alter the lease so that the terms which the Parish Council would enjoy were actually worse. Because of this the Parish Council has decided to call a halt to renegotiation.

The funding for maintenance of the meadow for the first 10 years finished on 25th October 2017. After a lot of chasing TDC has recently made the final payment into the Parish Councils bank account. The Parish Council has been making financial provision for taking over the maintenance of the “Meadow” this year.

Christmas Lights – Last year the Parish Council decided to refurbish the Village Christmas Tree lights which had fallen into disrepair. The new lights were lit at the beginning of December along with two trees on the front of the village hall and switched off on 12th night. From the comments received the new Christmas lights were appreciated by all.

Earlsmead Crescent – Grass Cutting. Cutting of the grass in common areas of Earlsmead Crescent became an issue during last summer and led to various discussions with TDC. The September meeting was attended by Trevor Kennett (Head of TDC Operational Services). A lively discussion followed, during which it was pointed out by a resident that the original builder had gone bankrupt, at which point the land fell under the responsibility of the then Thanet Borough Council. Mr Kennett immediately indicated that TDC were still responsible, grass cutting and tree maintenance in Earlsmead Crescent were resumed.

Following the closure of the Village shop residents asked for Parish Council help in establishing a weekly Drop-In session so that residents of Cliffsend could have a chat and enjoy the coffee/tea and cakes on offer. The Drop-In session has now become well established with weekly attendances of over 25 people. The Parish Council gave the organisers a grant to assist with start-up and funding costs during the first year. Between September 2017 and March 2018 the Drop-In session raised nearly £500 for various charities.

Defibrillator – Recent events elsewhere have raised the issue that Cliffsend does not have access to a Defibrillator which can assist in the event of someone suffering a cardiac arrest. The Parish Council has decided that one should be available in the village (many other Parishes have

defibrillators available). After discussions with various parties it was agreed that one should be located on the front wall of the Village Hall. The Village Hall committee kindly agreed to the location.

The defibrillator will be installed in a secure cabinet, and be fitted with a combination lock under the control of “Emergency Services”. Should anyone need access to the defibrillator in an appropriate situation which involves the “Emergency Services” they will grant access to the cabinet. The unit is on order and is expected to be installed in the near future once some preparatory electrical work has been completed.

Grit Bins – As most of you will now be aware, the Parish Council has obtained a number of “Grit Bins”, some we bought and some were obtained through the good offices of our “Community Warden” Tony Gander. The “Grit Bins” have been installed in the locations agreed with KCC, the grit for filling them will be provided by KCC.

Unfortunately they were not available during the period of the “Beast from the East” this year, but at least in future winters the Grit will be available should we suffer similar Snow and Ice events.

As noted in last year’s AGM report, the post of “Grounds Maintenance Officer” has been established. The post has been filled by “Chris Barton” following a recruitment exercise. Chris was recently involved in the establishment of the Grit bins, his day to day activities when required are co-ordinated by Cllr Hellyer.

After the “Beast from the East” we had as might be expected a rash of pot holes in the village streets. Many have been reported by our Community Warden and Parish Councillors, Residents are reminded that should they see a “Pot Hole” could they please report it via the KCC fault reporting web site as soon as possible.

Speeding – The issue of traffic speed along Foads Lane and Foads Hill is a particular issue as neither road has much in the way of pavements and both are quite narrow. Following numerous discussions with KCC Highways, finally with the help of our KCC Councillors they have now agreed to install for a period monitors which will record vehicle numbers and speed. The costs of the initial survey have been paid by KCC Councillor Constantine out of her community funds. Once the monitoring has finished the Parish Council will be discussing with KCC Highways what steps can be taken. The cost of any changes will have to be borne by the Parish Council, although KCC Councillor Messenger has provided some funding.

Hugin Green – Recently people (largely from Eastern Europe) have been observed camping on the old Hover Port. In addition many small cylinders which originally contained Helium gas have been observed in the area. Our Community Warden is monitoring situation closely and working with our PCSO to ensure the appropriate services are aware. People are advised should they see these people in the Hover Port area they should not approach them, but report them via the Police 101 number.

Buses – People will be aware that the number 42 bus route was recently under threat as part of KCC budget cuts. The threat of a service cut has for now gone away. It is understood that when the contract to run the route comes up for renewal, Stagecoach will not be tendering to continue the service. The Parish Council will be keeping an eye on developments.

Planning

During the year the Thanet Local Plan has been a subject of much discussion. The revised plan

which had been put forward by the Planning Committee was rejected by the full Thanet Council. Following which the TDC Local Plan was called in by the Government Minister responsible. It is 3 of 4 09 June 2018 understood the “Local Plan” is now the subject of a review between TDC and Govt Planning Inspectors, further complicated by a change of Leadership at TDC. We await the next iteration with interest.

Asparagus Field – As many will be aware the developer of the Asparagus Field was granted planning permission during 2017. We understand that development was due to commence this year, but a start date is not known. When work commences the Parish Council will be monitoring to ensure that site traffic sticks to the agreed construction plan.

New Housing Developments - Cottington Road North/South and Canterbury Road West. The Parish Council objected strongly to all these developments when their outline planning applications were processed by TDC. Many residents also submitted their comments to TDC regarding these plans. However TDC decided to allow the outline plans to go ahead, but the developer was instructed that the distance between houses on the development sites and adjacent existing houses was too close and must be increased, also that they should look again at their plans for surface water containment areas given the potential for Mosquitoes to use them for breeding.

Young’s Nursery – One of the proposals last year involved the use of land which did not form part of the site. Following intervention the plans were revised and resubmitted to resolve this issue. The Sportsman – The former public house has been bought by a local developer. We are awaiting for him to submit the plans for this site. Once they have been received the Parish Council will be calling a meeting to consider their response.

Major Developments

Manston Airport/Stonehill Park. The Development Consent Order plans submitted by RSP to reactivate Manston as an airport are currently being revised following comment from Government Planning Inspectors. In the meantime Stonehill Park have recently submitted revised plans to TDC which has increased the number of houses they are proposing up to 3500 (which is expected to further increase in future). The Parish Council will be considering their response to these latest plans from Stonehill Park in due course.

Richborough Link – This is the new high voltage overhead power line from Canterbury to the former Richborough Power Station to increase the capacity of the circuit to cope with new power inputs from Belgium and potentially a bigger Wind Farm off Ramsgate. The first of the new Pylons to support the new link in Canterbury near BroadOak was recently completed.

Project Nemo – This is the project to connect the old Richborough Power station with a site in Belgium by cable to handle large amounts of electrical energy in either direction. Last year saw the first half of the undersea cable installed from Pegwell Bay towards Belgium. At the same time the shore element was installed between Pegwell Bay and the Richborough site.

There have already been a number of large vehicle movements along the Sandwich Road to transport large transformers to Richborough Power station from Ramsgate port. In the next few weeks there will be another large transformer and a number of smaller transformers being transported along the Sandwich Road. Full details will be on the Village Web site, but the three are early (5-7am) starting tomorrow morning (25th), Monday 28th May, then the 1st June and final large one on 16th June.

The Nemo link is due to go live in 2019 once all the testing etc. has been completed.

Vattenfall – They have two plans currently in hand. One involves replacing the offshore power cables transmitting the electricity from the existing Wind Farm to the junction adjacent to the Jet Garage, this project is still in the planning stage and may now not happen until 2019.

Their second project involves a DCO submission to the Government to extend the existing wind farm by a further 34 turbines around the existing Wind Farm area. These new turbines will be bigger than the existing 100 turbines and capable of generating greater power than the existing site. The extension will involve a further electricity delivery cable from the extended Wind Farm into Pegwell bay and then into their Power facility which will be located in the Richborough Business Park.

The Parish Council is making sure that Vattenfall keep us fully advised of their plans.

Parkway – Latest reports indicate that the project is still stalled due to a lack of funding commitment from Network Rail and the local Rail Service Operator (South Eastern). It is understood this situation will not change until the existing franchise has been retendered and awarded.

Last year we reported the Parish Council is in the process of creating a Village Emergency Plan to deal with major incidents in the village. The response to the survey was disappointing in that only 20 households out of over 800 bothered to return the forms.

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.

We would be remiss in ignoring the support provided by our Community Warden Tony Gander and PCSO John Litchfield, thank to both of you for your efforts during the last year.

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 KCC Councillors Messenger and Constantine for their work on behalf of the village at KCC, the reports on KCC activities at parish meetings are often quite illuminating.

Parish Council meetings have been attended by residents throughout the year, thank you. I would remind everyone 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, we like to hear comments from residents.

The Parish Council as with other bodies and companies is not immune from the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which become law tomorrow. Just to make life interesting the Government has decided quite late in the day to make a significant change to the GDPR which directly affects Parish and Town Councils, we are proceeding slowly with implementing the required procedures whilst we wait for Parliament to approve the new changes.

I would like to say thank you to all my fellow Councillors for their support during the last year. Without them life would be difficult.

As many of you will be aware in February this year our Clerk Ashley Stacey resigned after being Clerk to the Parish Council for 7 years. Whilst we search for another permanent Clerk we are lucky to have secured the services of Roy Wade as interim Clerk, thank you Roy.

Thank you all for attending this evening.