

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council Community Connections

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Welcome to the Hoo and Chattenden Parish Council Newsletter

Spotlight on Your Parish Council Chairman – Ron Sands

Ron Sands has been a committed member of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council since 2011 and has served as Chairman since 2021. Over the past 13 years, Ron has played an active role in supporting the parish and helping to shape its future through strong, community-focused leadership.



On 7th May, Ron and his partner Dawn had the honour of attending a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, which was attended by both His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. They represented the Parish Council at this prestigious event.

In addition to his parish duties, Ron serves as a Medway Councillor, giving residents of Hoo and Chattenden a voice at both local and borough levels. As Chairman, he leads parish council meetings with a focus on transparency, inclusion, and delivering positive outcomes for the community.

Ron is particularly passionate about protecting the character and environment of the Hoo Peninsula. He was a leading campaigner in the fight to save Deangate Ridge, which has now been successfully protected as a country park—a lasting achievement for the area and future generations.

Ron continues to work hard to represent the interests of all residents and to ensure that the parish remains a vibrant and sustainable place to live.

If you would like to get in touch with Ron, you can email him at: ron.sands@hoopc.org

Neighbourhood Plan Team Celebrated at Annual Parish Meeting

One of the biggest achievements for the Parish in 2024/25 was the formal adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan for Hoo and Chattenden. The NHP was successfully supported by residents in a public referendum held on 7th November 2024, with 92.8% voting in favour. This plan provides an important local framework for future development and land use within the parish.

The Parish Council extends its thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan Team and everyone who contributed to the preparation of the Plan and to all residents who participated in the referendum.

At the Annual Parish Meeting in May, the Parish Council formally recognised the hard work and commitment of the Neighbourhood Plan Team by presenting all members with the KALC Community Award. This prestigious award is supported by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), Medway Council, and Kent County Council, and honours those who have made a significant contribution to their community. Awards were also presented to NHP Team Members Marilyn Campbell and Allison Wells who were unable to attend the meeting.



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MEDWAY COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

Protecting Hoo and Chattenden – Have Your Say on the Medway Local Plan

Medway Council has published its draft Local Plan 2025–2041, which sets out proposals for where housing, employment, infrastructure, and services will be located across the borough for the next 15 years. The Parish Council is extremely concerned about what this means for Hoo and Chattenden.

Under the current draft, Hoo and Chattenden are earmarked for substantial development, with more than 5,300 new homes planned across the parish—around 4,700 in Hoo and 600 in Chattenden. Large development areas have been identified across the parish including land at Main Road, Deangate, Ropers Lane, Ratcliffe Highway, Stoke Road and Vidgeon Avenue, with additional infrastructure such as schools, roads and community facilities promised to support this scale of growth. The proposals are now at the Regulation 19 consultation stage, meaning this is the final opportunity for residents to submit comments before the plan is submitted to the Government’s Planning Inspector for examination.

What’s the Parish Council Doing?

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council is deeply concerned about the impact of these proposals on our community, particularly:

- Loss of green spaces and the rural character of the Peninsula
- Pressure on already stretched infrastructure including roads, health services and schools
- Overdevelopment that threatens to merge Hoo and Chattenden into one large urban settlement
- Lack of clarity on how or when promised infrastructure will actually be delivered

To help represent the views of our residents and challenge the plan, the Parish Council has appointed a planning consultant to submit a formal response. This representation will argue that the scale of development proposed is not sustainable, does not protect the local identity of the parish, and lacks sufficient evidence that the necessary infrastructure can or will be delivered in time.

The consultation ends on 11 August 2025. You can view the plan online at: www.medway.gov.uk/localplan

Parish Events

Autumn and Winter Events for Residents

We’re delighted to invite parish residents to a series of community events this autumn and winter – starting with our ever-popular Harvest Tea.

Harvest Tea – Friday 4 October, 2.30pm, Village Hall

Join us for a relaxed afternoon of entertainment, refreshments, bingo and a free raffle. This is a pre-booked event, exclusively for parish residents.

Tickets are free and available from 1 September – to book your place, please email hoopc@outlook.com or call 07845 741343. Don’t forget to let us know about any dietary requirements when booking.

Looking ahead, we also invite you to save the dates for two more fantastic events:

Christmas on the Green – Friday 29 November

Join us for our annual Christmas celebration on the Green – more details to follow in the next edition!

Dick Whittington Pantomime – Friday 3 January, Village Hall

A great way to start the new year – fun for all the family!

We look forward to welcoming you at these wonderful community gatherings.

Memorial Garden Vicarage Lane

This area has now been formally designated as a Garden of Remembrance/Memorial Garden.

Key developments and plans include:

- The site has been enclosed with ranch-style fencing and gates to define the area and improve security.
- A grant has been secured to fund a memorial stone, which will honour the lost and fallen of Hoo and the wider peninsula.

The future layout of the Memorial Garden, which will include:

- A fenced section for the interment of ashes
- A dedicated area for the scattering of ashes & pets ashes
- A wildflower area to encourage biodiversity
- Seating for quiet reflection
- Accessibility improvements, including a footpath designed to complement the site’s rustic setting
- Memorial stone installation
- Additional fencing, planting and landscaping to enhance the overall atmosphere
- Signage to mark the space and provide guidance

Residents will be encouraged to use the space for peaceful remembrance and reflection.

As part of the site’s enhancement, there will also be an opportunity to apply for memorial seating plaques, allowing personal dedications within this special community space.

PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25 Annual Report

Chairman's Introduction

It is with great pride that we present this Annual Report, highlighting the key activities, developments, and achievements of Hoo and Chattenden Parish Council over the 2024–25 period. As your elected representatives, we have continued to work diligently to maintain and improve the quality of life across our parish through thoughtful planning, community engagement, and dedicated service delivery.

Governance and Parish Meetings

The Parish Council is made up of **17 dedicated councillors** who work actively to promote the best interests of the community across **Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden**. Councillors serve in a voluntary capacity and bring a range of skills and experience to support the effective running of the Council.

Neighbourhood Plan

One of the biggest achievements for the Parish Council in 2024/25 was the formal adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan for Hoo and Chattenden.

The Hoo and Chattenden Neighbourhood Plan was successfully supported by residents in a public referendum held on 7th November 2024, with 92.8% voting in favour. This plan provides an important local framework for future development and land use within the parish.

Planning and Development

The Parish Council remains a **Statutory Consultee** on all planning applications in the parish and continue to provide informed comments to Medway Council.

Recreation Grounds and Environmental Work

Kingshill Recreation Ground

A brand-new play area was installed and officially opened in July 2024, just before the summer holidays. The launch event was well attended, and the facility has quickly become a much-loved community asset.

Further improvements under consideration for Kingshill include:

- Installation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Provision of new goalposts
- Additional security measures to ensure all gates are secure
- Construction of footpaths to improve accessibility, particularly due to areas prone to waterlogging

Coppicing work took place in Millennium Wood to open up glades and encourage biodiversity. This initiative was delivered by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership in collaboration with local volunteers.

Pottery Road Recreation Ground

Tree maintenance was carried out during the year to support safety and environmental health.

The main access gate and fencing, installed in the previous year, continue to secure the site effectively.

Planned improvements include:

- Repair and replacement of footpaths
- Relocation of benches to more suitable positions

Our play equipment is inspected weekly by the Parish Warden, monthly by playground inspectors and annually by a ROSPA-certified independent inspector

Hoo Common

A new noticeboard was installed at the car park perimeter, enhancing communication with visitors.

Future work planned for Hoo Common includes:

- Accessibility improvements
- Enhancement of the lookout points
- Potential tree work and rewilding initiatives to improve biodiversity.

NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE

The Parish Council continues to progress plans for a much-needed new Community Centre to replace the ageing Village Hall on Pottery Road, which has served the community since the 1960s.

Architects have now been formally appointed to lead the design and planning process.

A planning application is currently being prepared, with submission to Medway Council anticipated in July/August 2025.

Subject to approval, construction is expected to begin in early 2026.

As part of the planning process, there will be an opportunity for residents to view the proposed plans and designs at a series of open events. These sessions will provide a chance to learn more about the proposals, ask questions, and share feedback.

Dates and venues for these events will be confirmed and published on the Council's website and Facebook once arrangements are finalised.

This new facility will be designed to better serve the evolving needs of our growing community, offering modern, flexible space for a wide range of activities. The existing hall will remain open and operational throughout the development phase to ensure continuity of services.

Parish Council Publicity

The Parish Council has made a conscious effort during 2024/25 to improve communication and engagement with residents across Hoo and Chattenden.

- New noticeboards are being installed at various locations around the parish.
- The Parish Council website continues to be actively maintained, for official documents, agendas, and minutes.
- The Council's Facebook page is now regularly updated.
- A regular Parish Newsletter has been introduced and is now delivered to every household in Hoo and Chattenden, distributed alongside the Net Magazine. This publication aims to keep residents informed about the Parish Council's work, responsibilities, and community initiatives.

Sign up to our website to receive newsletters and updates directly by email. We encourage all residents to visit our website and subscribe to this service to stay informed.

Grants and Donations

In 2024/25, the Parish Council continued its support for local organisations and initiatives through the allocation of community grants and donations.

This year, the following awards were made:

Hi Kent – £480 to support their continued provision of local clinic services for residents with hearing needs.

Royal British Legion – £50 towards Remembrance Day commemorations.

wHoo Youth Club – £1,350 to assist with the purchase of equipment and to support activities for young people in the parish.

Bird Survey Donation – £100 donated to the Church in recognition of the voluntary work undertaken by an individual who carried out a bird survey on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has a formal Grants and Donations Policy in place, along with an application form available for any organisation within the parish that wishes to apply for a small grant.

Village Hall

On 1st April 2025 the Parish Council took over responsibility for the Village Hall as Sole Trustees.

A new Hall Manager has been appointed to handle bookings and oversee the daily management and operations of the Hall.

The Parish Council will retain responsibility for the Hall until it is replaced by the new Community Centre once construction is complete.

The Parish Council has arranged for the removal of recycling bins to enhance the visual appeal of the site.

The Annual Community Award

The Parish Council is proud to acknowledge the incredible dedication and commitment of individuals and organisations within our community. To celebrate these efforts, we are excited to announce the establishment of the Annual Community Award.

This award aims to honour those who have made a significant difference in our parish, whether through volunteering, supporting local initiatives, or providing essential services that enhance our community's quality of life.

We invite residents to submit nominations for individuals or groups who deserve this recognition. The chosen recipients will be celebrated at our Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish in May 2026.

Chairmans Closing Remarks

We extend our sincere thanks to residents, volunteers, staff, and partners who have contributed to the success of the past year. From safeguarding our green spaces and enhancing public facilities to shaping the parish's long-term development through the Neighbourhood Plan, 2024–25 has been a year of action and progress.

We look forward to another productive year as we continue to build a safe, vibrant, and united community.