

Luddesdown Parish Council

25 Spring Cross, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent DA3 8QG

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Email: clerk@luddesdown-pc.gov.uk

March 2021



Our annual meeting will be on Monday March 15th at 7:30pm by Zoom. You can attend via zoom, by notifying the Clerk at 'clerk@luddesdown-pc.gov.uk' - who will send you the meeting details and joining instructions. Please see the website or notice boards for regular meeting dates.

- **If you need help during this pandemic please contact us using the details above.**
- **Our Spring Clean event will take place at the end of this month** (lockdown measures allowing) please see our notice boards or website for details and ***join in!***
- **We are purchasing enforcement cameras to help control fly tipping** in the area; if you are interested in helping with this initiative you will need to be fit and able (to climb trees) and available to monitor fly tipping hot spots on a regular basis. Please contact Cllr Newnes or our Clerk for details using the contact information above.
- Over the past two years we have with the help of our Borough Councillor been lobbying the Borough to **upgrade the play equipment on the recreation ground**. Some of you have expressed an interest in fund raising to support this. Would anyone interested in helping, or who has an interest in using the equipment please contact Cllr Newnes or the Clerk as we would like you to join a group leading this exercise.
- **Don't forget to complete the census on March 21st.**

What does your Parish Council Do (apart from spend your money)?

The PC exists to represent your opinions to the bodies which affect where and how we live. These are the Borough Council, County Council and other bodies such as Highways England and others. We provide grants to the Church for the maintenance of the churchyard, war memorial and village green. We make small grants to the Village Hall and the Rights of Way Group. We make responses to local planning applications. We have sought to get better treatment of the area by highlighting drain clearance issues. We produced an illustrated report on the poor signage maintenance for the County Highways department. We regularly raise the issues of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour with the Police representatives and with the Borough. We also highlight any potential uncontrolled planning issues within the Parish to the Local Planning Authority. We are active members of the Kent Association of Local Councils who provide us with training and advice.

On Planning: in the last year we responded to the consultation on the core plan by Gravesham Borough Council which contained the proposal to build 3000 new houses on Greenbelt land in Higham, Meopham/Sole Street and Istead Rise, calling on the Borough to find another solution to the housing problem. We submitted a response to the Government consultation on planning reform. We participated in the Highways England supplementary consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing prior to the Development Consent Order (DCO) submission and also made representation to the Borough regarding the Adequacy of Consultation for this project. We are happy to see the DCO has been withdrawn, but it will return... We objected to the proposals by Highways England because of the lack of consideration for the effects of traffic on the villages, its impact on the environment and the prospect of the local main roads being gridlocked.

We deplore the sheer waste of taxpayers' money in promoting a scheme that is budgeted at £8bn (7 times the cost of the QEII bridge) purely to increase traffic between Essex and Kent.

We participated in the consultation on the London Theme Park, and registered for the DCO review. We opposed the theme park primarily on the lack of competence of LRCH (the holding company) to deliver this project, their poor assessment of environmental impact and on the weakness of their transport plan to deliver the expected 15M visitors per annum to the site. We also objected to the way the existing businesses on the site at the Swanscombe peninsula have been treated. We take seriously the need for housing and economic growth but are against developments which put stress on existing infrastructure and services for those living here. We will not allow the impacts of development to this area of outstanding natural beauty to be ignored. You can read the responses we have made in detail on our website under Correspondence, but we encourage your input as it is our role to represent you. If you go to our website, the Planning Tracker shows all current applications, you can also subscribe to the website to be notified of any new applications in the parish.

Our thoughts are with those of you who have suffered badly during the pandemic and lockdowns; we hope the coming year will see some return of your fortunes. We would like to thank all of you who have been involved in making the parish such a desirable place to live in. Last Spring we purchased some litter picking equipment and are particularly appreciative of those of you who have spent time cleaning and litter picking in the parish. I would like to commend Richard Gagg for his selfless efforts in removing so much of the fly tipping here. We are indebted to the Church and PCC for maintaining the graveyard, war memorial and green to a high standard. As a council we owe thanks also to the Village Hall committee and Vineyard Farms Ltd (Court Farm) for hosting our skips during the clean ups which so many of you participated in. We commend the work in this community of the Luddesdown Society who also placed the Christmas tree on the green and long standing member Rita Hayward, who raised the request to get a defibrillator for the village which has now been installed on the Village Hall. Thanks are due to the Village Hall Committee for allowing us to site it there, and for providing the power to keep it warm in winter. The defibrillator and new enforcement cameras were obtained with grants from our County Councillor Bryan Sweetland - our special thanks go to him. We must also mention the support in gaining those grants and the outstanding advocacy provided by our Borough Councillor Tony Rice, who has tirelessly attended almost every single Parish Council meeting (on top of the Borough meetings) and who is frequently found working weekends on your behalf.

Your Parish Clerk, Jo Barker, is available and willing to help or pass your enquiries to us. I would like to thank Jo and my fellow councillors for the work they have done on your behalf over the past year; but space is limited. Please login to our annual meeting to see them, or contact us via email with any issues you feel we can assist you with. Our last year's finance report and next year's budget is available for you to download from the website (www.luddesdown-pc.gov.uk - look for Documents, then Finance).

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Noel Clark
Chair
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