



## **Ulcombe Annual Meeting of the Parish Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Parish Cllrs: F Kenward (Chairman); M Lingwood; B Stacey; M Lovegrove; I Moir; R Robinson; P Titchener

In Attendance: Irene Bowie (Parish Clerk) . 43 Members of the public

1. Apologies were received from KCC Cllr Prendergast, MBC Cllr Round, PCSO Boyd
2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The minutes of the were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes. There were none
4. Report from the Chairman of Ulcombe Parish Council.

I am delighted to welcome everyone to our annual parish meeting - rather later than usual. In fact, we have not had an annual meeting since April 2019.

During the last 16 months there have been many changes - both on the parish council and in the parish.

I took over as Chairman in May 2019, and Irene Bowie our clerk joined us in October of that year.

Despite a rather difficult year - during the pandemic, parish council business continued if not quite as normal - our meetings moved onto zoom, and it is only since June of this year, that we have moved back to our normal Thursday evening slot in the village hall.

Planning has continued - unabated, and we looked at 28 applications in the year March 20 - 21. As a parish council we are a consultee on all applications in the parish of Ulcombe, -and our comments can be seen on the MBC planning portal. We have been to the MBC planning committee on 4 occasions in the past year, where the planning officers have disagreed with our comments. We have 2 refused applications waiting to be heard at appeal (very delayed due to covid)

We have attended several meetings with Kent Police over the last 16 months. We are given monthly crime figures by our pcso John Boyd, and apart from a rise in anti-social behaviour during the lockdown, the figures have remained fairly low.

I reinstated police surgery meetings at the village hall with our PCSO John Boyd - these offer parishioners a chance to air local problems with the police and parish council. John Boyd - who has been our PCSO for 6 years, was due to leave us in August due to a change in policing, but I am glad to say he is still with us for the moment. A key message from the police is that we should all be encouraged to report any crime - no matter how small - to the police.

During the last 16 months we have worked hard to improve the recreation area - this has included -

The purchase of a bench for John Ware, a longtime resident who died in January 2019.

The installation of a defibrillator on the side of the village hall - we had some training in January 2019, there have been requests for more training, and we will be looking into organising this.

The purchase of some rather impressive steel barriers at the entrance to the village hall . This is to stop larger vehicles coming into our ground.

Local farming contractor Tom Hope replace our old telegraph pole fencing with some very smart knee rail fencing.

Two very large silver birch trees, that were shading the roof of the village hall have been removed.

The turfed area outside the village hall entrance has been replaced with shingle. We have one prototype planter - which will shortly be joined by another. The plan is to place these around the village to enhance our environment.

The recreation ground committee planted 300 daffodil bulbs beside the new fencing.

Sadly our cricket pavilion has been closed - we had a surveyor's report in March which stated that we would have to spend up to £20,000 to keep it going for a few years, and £80000 to replace it with a similar new build. Obviously we cannot afford this - with only Headcorn football club now using the recreation ground. We therefore decided to install a container - with toilets, which can be used by the football club and any other outdoor event.

Further plans include the installation of a new 3 bay noticeboard which will be used by the parish council , the village hall and other village organisations to advertise. Wilding around the edge of the recreation ground.

Our clerk Irene has been working hard to update the organisational side of the parish council

All councillors have new specific council email addresses. We have a new parish council website - far easier to use, and which we can use to advertise local events. All residents can sign up to email alerts which will keep everyone up to date with local events. Please take a look at this! You can also click straight into KCC and MBC report it sites.

Our Highways Improvement Plan has been updated - as a parish council we are continually identifying problem areas which we can then look at improving with Kent Highways. We are aware that the roads are a major source of discontent amongst our parishioners - the increase in traffic, the speed of vehicles, and the size of lorries and tractors which are on our roads every day. The disintegrating road edges and numerous potholes. We will continue to fight for better roads and restrictions wherever possible. We have managed to extend the 30mph speed limit on the Lenham Road.

The other main complaint from residents is litter and fly tipping - this seemed to be particularly bad during the lockdown. MBC had a bad outbreak of covid, which meant the litter pickers were diverted to roadside collections and so we were left with a sea of rubbish on the verges. Also changes in the way the council recycling sites operate, seemed to result in far more incidents of fly tipping - particularly builders waste.

We have been put on the cctv mobile camera round, and you may have seen some warning signs around the parish. There do seem to have been fewer incidents of fly tipping in recent months - but we would ask all residents to report anything on the MBC report it website. Links on our website.

On the 2nd August Ulcombe experienced terrible flash flooding - the whole episode lasted a couple of hours, but left 27 properties in the parish with flooding. The parish council is working with MBC and KCC to set up a flood resilience plan. We also want to find out what measures could be put in place in the future to mitigate any further flooding.

During the course of the past 16 months, I have been constantly reminded of the kindness of people in our community.

Malcolm and Frances Crawford set up the Ulcombe support group during the pandemic - a great way for the

parish to stay in touch - and to help each other.

Sean Charlton - our local farmer - who paid for the new barriers at the entrance to the village recreation ground.

Shellina Prendergast - who paid for the Lenham Road speed reduction scheme. The many parishioners who have been out picking up litter around the roads.

Simon, John, David and Jonty - who were pressganged into chopping down trees, moving turf and shingle. and installing the first planter.

There have been many other acts of kindness across our parish, and I hope they continue.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors and Irene. for all their hard work and support over the past 16 months.

#### 5. Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21

The annual statement of accounts was presented by the Chairman.

Annual gross income for the Parish Council was £ 27,503 which is an increase of £3,935 over the previous year. Expenditure was £ 18,282 which was an increase of 2,688 . This was due to the cost of a new website and barriers at the recreation ground car park. Although some of the website costs were offset by the KCC grant of £900.

The total net bank balance as of 31st March 2019 was £48796 which was an increase of £284

**ULCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021**

Balance per bank statements as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	£ 39,518
Less any unpresented cheques at 31st March 2021	
Total	<u>£ 2,710</u>

Net balances as at 31st March 2021 £ 36,808

The net balances reconcile to the cash book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows

**Cash Book**

Opening balance 1st April 2020 £ 27,588

**Receipts in the year**

Precept	£ 24,030
Interest	£ 2
Parish Services Scheme	£ 2,071
Grants KCC and KALC	<u>£ 1,400</u>
	<u>£ 27,503</u>

**Less Payments in the year**

Admin Costs	£ 10,103
Parish Maintenance	£ 5,809
Parish Services Scheme	£ 2,060
	<u>£ 18,282</u>

**Closing balance per cash book as at 31 March 2021** **£ 36,808**

6. Questions from members of the public.

A resident asked what was happening to the Village Newsletter. The Chairman said that this was not a parish council newsletter, but one produced by the community and that she was hopeful that others would come forward to produce the newsletter .

Reports from Village Organisations.

The following organisations put up display stands with information regarding their organisation and if applicable how to join:

Ulcombe Parish Council  
History Society  
Headcorn Football Club  
Ulcombe Church  
Badminton Club  
Ulcombe Newsletter  
Ulcombe Village Hall  
Friends of All Saints, Ulcombe ( FASU)

Reports received :

**Ulcombe School:**

At the beginning of lockdown the school continued to offer high quality education for every child either remotely via Google classrooms or in person at Kingswood School. All staff were involved and we managed to continue to offer provision for everyone.

Myself and the office manager continued to access the Ulcombe site to allow the undertaking of Health and Safety audits, fire safety checks, water compliance reports, tree safety reports and for contractors to continue to assess the drainage and window issues which are currently in hand for the works to be undertaken later this year.

During lockdown the school took delivery of almost 60 new Chromebooks and other associated hard and software allowing online learning and computing skills to be on par with other schools around us.

Once we were all able to return to school earlier this year I can say with utter pride that the pupils and staff have been working hard this term and managed to have fun whilst closing the gaps in the children's learning following the lockdowns over the last 18 months. Year 6 enjoyed a trip to Otterden and a wonderful leaver's night under the stars before they left for secondary school. I have heard from them all and everyone is enjoying settling in to their new environments. Years R/1 enjoyed a trip to the local church to take part in a national initiative collecting data on the environment. We have had a variety of themed days to boost the learning in History, Science and Geography all of which have been well received by pupils, staff and parents. We have welcomed the new year R pupils into transition sessions and they are all now with us having completed their first few days without a single tear!

To continue to promote the church ethos and associated Christian vision and values of the school I am very pleased to be able to say that three new reflection areas are now complete and being used by the children. There is one garden area with seating outside and a further two quiet areas indoors. The children are using this for reflection and prayer. The Christian Values are now firmly rooted in all we do as well as our motto 'one body many members learning together surrounded by God's inclusive love',, this is following a very successful enrichment day in which every child helped to shape the motto and discuss and embed the values.

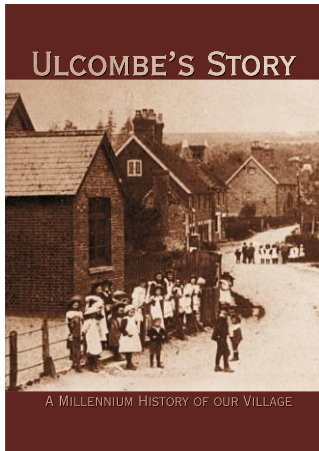
Looking forward I am hopeful of a year of less disruption so the pupils can fully engage with their learning and we can go back to offering a broad and varied learning journey for them full of enrichment and wonder.

Many thanks

Emma Masters

Head of School

# Ulcombe History Society



At the Millennium we decided to write a history of Ulcombe. I gathered together some twelve people and invited them to each write a chapter. All said 'yes', and I wrote the rest. The history came out in 2004 and, thanks to a grant, it was decided to give every household in Ulcombe a free copy.

Once *Ulcombe's Story*, was published in 2004, we decided to form the *Ulcombe History Society* and we have been going ever since.

Until the Covid lockdown, we met about nine times a year in the village hall on a Tuesday evening and had some excellent and very interesting speakers

About three times a year, we organise outings – sometimes to stately homes in England, cathedrals and museums, and occasionally we have ventured overseas - to the War Graves in France, to Versailles, to the Bayeux Tapestry, and to mediaeval Guedelon.

Since the lockdown we have not been able to meet but we plan to resume activities this month, starting with an outing to Parham House in West Sussex to see a beautiful stately home and garden. If you would like to come, there are still a few spaces available on the coach. Please contact the secretary, Bridget Samuelson, on email [messageuhs@icloud.com](mailto:messageuhs@icloud.com) or telephone 01622 890912.

On Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October we are to have a dramatized presentation put together by Simon Odam called the *History of Mining including the Kent Coalfields*.

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> November Brian Biggs will be speaking about *Ship Towage and Salvage on the River Thames and at Sea, 1953-2020*.

Then on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December Mike Brown will talk about *Christmas on the Home Front*.

If you are interested in joining come along on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October or contact the secretary, or, if you prefer, you can just attend a talk without joining the society. Either way you will be warmly welcomed!

Molly Poulter (01622 842988 or email: [mollycpoulter@gmail.com](mailto:mollycpoulter@gmail.com))  
Chairman, Ulcombe History Society

## Report for the Annual Parish Meeting of Ulcombe, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

### Shellina Prendergast – Kent County Councillor for Maidstone Rural East Annual Report May 2021

Dear Resident,

The last year has been an incredibly tough period for all our communities and businesses. As we take our first steps to get the country out of the restrictions, I want to thank all of you for having played your part, showing much resilience, patience and resolve in helping to get the virus under control and supporting each other through the difficult times.

Uniquely in the country, Kent has confronted not one but two – or three – huge challenges: Covid-19, the end of the Brexit transition and the arrival of large numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children last spring and summer. Kent County Council has been there with residents and businesses throughout this – supporting the vulnerable through the “Kent Together” scheme, securing millions of items of PPE, rolling out community testing

and supporting families, businesses, and the many voluntary and community organisations on the road to recovery. Below are some examples of the work in key areas led by Kent County Council during this time:

#### **Kent's Children, Young People and Families**

- HeadStart Kent, a programme that has enhanced the mental health and well-being of young people in the county since 2016, has been awarded extra funding to continue its vital work for an additional year - <https://kccmediahub.net/headstart-kent-awarded-additional-years-funding745>
- Supporting families under financial pressure in the crisis, supporting the voluntary sector in working to tackle financial distress, Free School Meals in the October half term and since, and the £10m Helping Hands scheme to support individuals, families and businesses.
- Kent County Council has protected tax payers from the cost of the arrival of large numbers of young asylum seeking children through a new and increased funding deal agreed with Government last summer. We continue to press the Government to establish a sustainable National Transfer Scheme which will ease the pressure on border authorities like Kent.
- Reconnect – a universal community-based programme of activities currently being developed to help children and young people reconnect with their pre-Covid-19 lives. <https://kccmediahub.net/ambitious-kcc-led-community-programme-will-help-children-and-young-people-reconnect-with-their-pre-covid-19-lives745>
- 91% of Kent schools are rated as good or outstanding. The challenge of a rising school population has been met by building out places for an additional 25,000 students over the last ten years.

#### **Supporting Communities and the Voluntary Sector**

- The Library Service introduced the popular Select and Collect and digital services while maintaining the important Home Library Service – a vital link for many vulnerable residents.
- Over 4000 miles of Public Rights of Way saw increased usage of up to 100% in places and the 9 Country Parks have never been busier.
- Community Wardens, already highly valued before the pandemic, played a vital frontline role supporting and protecting those who were vulnerable and in need of help.
- Support for the cultural and sports sectors facing the considerable challenges as a result of Covid-19.
- Investing in communities and the voluntary sector, most recently through the Crowdfunding Kent initiative where Kent County Council committed £500,000 to co-fund community projects that help recovery from the pandemic.
- Launched the Kent Together initiative working with communities and borough councils to provide 24/7 help and support to those who are vulnerable and isolated due to the pandemic and in need of essential supplies including food and medication.
- Delivered over 1000 carephone devices to vulnerable and isolated residents, enabling them to connect with friends, families and carers during lockdown.

#### **Brexit Transition**

- Along with local and national partners, Kent County Council made huge preparations for the end of the Brexit transition to ensure that roads and services remained open for residents and businesses.
- When the French Government shut the borders just before Christmas, KCC staff, Members and partners worked tirelessly to resolve the crisis. Transition plans were adapted, testing centres were set up and welfare measures were put in place for those stranded by the closure.

#### **Backing Kent's Businesses**

- Helping businesses during the pandemic has been at the core of our work – investing in the Kent and Medway Covid Help Line, assisting more than 14,000 businesses and making millions of pounds available in affordable loans to help businesses survive and prosper as we come out of the current crisis.
- No Use Empty scheme, supported by £12m of support last year, provides interest free loans to small, local builders to bring empty properties back into use. The scheme has delivered almost 6500 homes on

brownfield land, safeguarded hundreds of local jobs, created new homes and improved derelict areas of land.

### **Broadband for Businesses and Homes**

- Kent County Council has worked with the government agency BDUK to deliver better broadband across the county and several communities within Maidstone Rural East have benefitted from this. This has included:
  - Delivered faster broadband connections to over 140,000 homes and businesses across Kent that would otherwise have been left with no or slow broadband.
  - Provided funding to over 2,000 rural homes and businesses (without superfast broadband connections) through the Kent Top-Up Voucher programme.
  - Enabled access to superfast broadband of at least 30Mbps to over 95% of homes and businesses in Kent.

### **Roads and Rail**

- Committed another £10m to this year's pothole blitz after a year in which Kent Highways filled in almost 50,000 potholes and patched the equivalent of 50 full size football pitches.
- Invested £11m in a road resurfacing programme and five-year maintenance plan.
- Kent County Council launched the Vision Zero Strategy for road safety which not only has an ambitious aim for reducing or eliminating road accident deaths by 2050 but represents a new way to engage with communities and address local road safety concerns.
- The Kent Rail Strategy 2021 positions KCC to influence future plans for Kent's rail services.

### **Protecting our Environment**

- Commitment to reach Net Zero for our own services and buildings by 2030 together with projects and funding in place to deliver this target along with a plan for Kent as a whole to achieve this by 2050.
- Launched an innovative Plan Bee for pollinators, ambitious work on biodiversity and plans, already underway, to plant a tree for every resident in Kent.
- Less than 1% of waste collected in Kent goes to landfill; the rest is recycled or turned into energy.

The above is just a flavour of the work at Kent County Council. As we emerge from Covid and lockdown, we are working to build a better future for Kent: standing up against national targets for housebuilding in the county while securing the services and infrastructure we need so that they come with, not after, any development; supporting both young and older people after this toughest of years; and costed plans in place to protect our environment and achieve net zero.

This is a time to feel optimistic. My thanks again to all of you for the part you have played in helping and supporting our communities and for taking the steps and following guidance to reduce the spread of Covid 19. I am very proud to represent residents of Maidstone Rural East – together we make a great community!

All the best

**Shellina Prendergast**

2021