

CPC Chair Report 2018 – 2019

Thank you for attending the AGM of Cliffsend Parish Council.

The last year for Cliffsend Parish Council has been quite busy, but we have been fortunate to have kept the same team of Councillors. However we did have to function for quite some time without a permanent Clerk.

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. The Parish Council decided after discussions to allow one more memorial tree on a site where a previous tree failed. The new tree will be planted during 2019 when the conditions are right.

When the tender process for cutting the grass in the Chapman Meadow was run last year it was decided that the contract for 2019 would be awarded to Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd, who took over in March this year.

The Parish Council had employed a Solicitor in an attempt 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, we were unable to reach an agreement. Because of this the Parish Council called a halt to renegotiation.

The funding for maintenance of the meadow through a TDC agreement for the first 10 years finished on 25th October 2017. This means the Parish Council now has to fund the costs itself, a certain amount of financial provision has been achieved to provide a reserve to cover these costs.

Benches, the Parish Council has been working to improve the provision of benches in the Village. The first result of this can now be seen outside the Village Hall, where we have the splendid Memorial Bench and the existing bench and a new one at right angles. They certainly improve the aspect outside the village hall. The grounds in that area are due for a makeover. The next phase is to provide additional seating and table area in the young people's play area. This will involve moving one of the existing seats to the other side of the fence. Travellers – Unfortunately Cliffsend has not been immune to the ravages caused by

Travellers, swift action by residents prevented an incursion onto the Marjorie Chapman Meadow last year. They did blight the old road near the airport, but of late the earth banks created there seem to have prevented a return. The Large boxes on the green opposite the village hall are there for the same reason. Once they have been filled with soil they will be planted with flowers and tended by residents.

Christmas Lights – In 2017 the Parish Council refurbished the Village Christmas Tree lights which had fallen into disrepair. The refurbished lights were lit over Christmas 2018, late last year further work was necessary to repair the damage inflicted by wind. In addition this year the Parish Council organised a larger Christmas tree on the forecourt of the Parish Hall. This was switched on with due ceremony and enjoyed by all. Both Christmas trees were lit over the Christmas Period and were then switched off on 12th night. From the comments received the Christmas lights were appreciated

by all.

At various points in the year the Arts and Craft Group have been dressing up our Post Box and Litter Bin outside the hall. The range of characters from the Royal Wedding through Halloween to Christmas was I think appreciated by all. The only sour note was the Post Box Display to mark the 100 anniversary of the First World War which was stolen after being in place only 4 hours, other display items were damaged at the same time. The current Easter Display I think you will agree certainly brightens up the area.

The Thursday morning Coffee Morning started in 2017 so that residents could have a chat and enjoy the coffee/tea and cakes on offer. The Coffee Morning is continuing to be well supported with weekly attendances of 25-40 people. The Coffee Morning organisers have continued their commitment to support other activities in the village such as the Arts and Crafts and Singing Groups, and a number of other activities have been given help to get started. In addition Charity events have been held which have raised Hundreds of Pounds.

Defibrillator – The Parish Council decided last year that one should be available in the village (many other Parishes have defibrillators available). After discussions with various parties it was agreed that it would be located on the front wall of the Village Hall. The Village Hall committee kindly agreed to the location.

The defibrillator was installed in its secure cabinet, after going through various procedures it was adopted and the access lock is now 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.

Grit Bins – As most of you will now be aware, the Parish Council has obtained a number of “Grit Bins”. The “Grit Bins” have been installed in the locations agreed with KCC, the grit for filling them prior to the 2018/19 winter was provided by KCC.

The post of “Grounds Maintenance Officer” has been established. The post has been filled by “Chris Barton” since inception. Chris has been kept busy during the last year trimming growth on verges not cut by KCC, trimming hedges in common area’s and various and many maintenance activities.

After this winter we have 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. During the year KCC installed speed monitoring and vehicle counter devices in both Foads Lane and Foads Hill. Whilst these showed that the predominate traffic flow was Northbound (as expected), the average speed recorded at both sites was less than 30MPH. Our Community Warden (Tony Gander) has also been carrying out Speed Checks when the equipment is available plus the Thanet “Speedwatch” group are looking to bring their machines into the village to try and hammer home the point about not speeding,

Hugin Green – The Community Warden is monitoring the area for antisocial behaviour now the

Viking Café is open for the summer. People are reminded we are in the area where we could have illegal immigrants attempting to land, any sightings should be report to the Police and the Coast Guard if necessary, the Police will alert “Border Force” if necessary.

Buses – Most people will be aware that the number 42 bus route ceased to run on the 7th April despite the Parish Council taking part in the KCC consultation and submitting an extensive impact assessment. The warm words which came out after the consultation have not actually resulted in a service which provides a direct link to Minster. The no9 service along Canterbury Road West is currently turning at Jentex until the work in Canterbury Road West is complete, whilst the service along the Sandwich Road has changed its number to 45 and only goes as far as Sandwich. The direct service to Westward Cross has also been lost.

The Parish Council has continued to lobby with regard to the lack of a Bus Service though the centre of the Village.

Southern Water have been kept busy since the back end of last year due to failures in Strategic Sewers which go along the edge of the Village. The major failure in the pipeline crossing Canterbury Road West has resulted in them having to replace 800 meters of pipe from within Manston Airport down to Hengist Way at a cost of £2.5M.

The three failures in the sewerage pipe running along Sandwich Road from Ramsgate to the Water Treatment works has highlighted its vulnerability, that pipeline is scheduled to be upgraded in 2020, although recent issues may bring that date forward. The pipeline route goes through the Pegwell Bay Wildlife Park which means a lot of regulations have to be overcome before they can start. Southern Water are monitoring the pipe run actively to ensure that further issues will be caught quickly until they can replace the pipeline; the section left to replace is over 3Km long.

Planning

During the year the Thanet Local Plan has continued to be a subject of much discussion. The revised Local plan (2018) which had been put forward by the TDC Planning Committee but was rejected by the full Thanet Council. Following which the TDC Local Plan was called in by the Government Minster responsible. The further revised TDC Local Plan is now under review by Govt. appointed inspectors.

Asparagus Field – As many will be aware the developer of the Asparagus Field was granted planning permission during 2017. Work started on the Ground Works recently, this is being monitored to ensure that the developers keep to the agreed plans and conditions.

New Housing Developments - Cottington Road North/South and Canterbury Road West. The Parish Council and many residents objected strongly to all these developments when their outline planning applications were processed by TDC. However TDC decided to allow the outline plans to go ahead subject to revisions, we await the next submission by the developer.

Young’s Nursery – There have been a number of planning applications for this site. The Parish Council has been closely monitoring the proposals and submitting comments when appropriate,

The Sportsman – The former public house has been bought by a local developer. Recently the developer submitted plans to TDC for the redevelopment of the site. The Plans were considered carefully by the Parish Council recently at a Planning meeting. The residents who attended that meeting voted 100% against the submitted plans. The Parish Council then voted to also object to the

plans, although one Councillor was in favour. We await the next steps regarding this development.

Major Developments

Manston Airport/Stonehill Park. The Development Consent Order plans submitted by RSP to reactivate Manston. The DCO process is currently working its way through the documents submitted by RSP and the many comments/submissions submitted by opponents and supporters. The airport main runway and taxiway areas have a fine layer of lights and chemical toilets as part of the Governments plans in case they need to use it for a holding area for 6500 Lorries in the event that we leave the EU without an agreement!

Whilst the DCO processes for the airport, the revised plans submitted by Stonehill Park last year to TDC for an increased number of houses, now up to 4500 are on hold as they need a change of use for the land in the “local Plan”. The Parish Council will be considering their response to Stonehill Park plans should they become active again.

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 Richborough Link went active in November 2018.

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. The cables and site completed testing early this year.

The Nemo link is now live and supplying electricity via the Richborough Link into the National Grid.

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 later 2019 or 2020.

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 Station – Latest reports indicate that the project now has the funding in place, courtesy of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership who have provided £14M of funding necessary, plus £2.5M from TDC. The Parish Council took part in the Public Consultation last year and was vociferous in its condemnation of the project as being in the wrong place, not wanted or needed by the people of Cliffsend.

The next step will be KCC developing a Planning Application for “Parkway Station” which will be put before KCC Planning Committee in due course, which will be an opportunity for the next Parish Council and residents to submit their opinions.

The Cliffsend level crossing is in the process of being fitted with Red Light Camera's as Network Rail are concerned by the number of people who drive across the crossing whilst the "Red lights" are lit. If you jump the Red Lights which indicate a train is coming it will result in a fine.

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 also 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.

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 in May 2018. The processes which it demands are slowly be adopted by Councillors.

Parish Web Site – This has been looked after for many years by Councillor Pat Searle with the assistance recently of Donna. Over the years there have been many changes to the site because of legislation on the availability of documents. Also the format of the web site has had to change to stay within the latest rules. Further changes will be needed in the future to cope with new rules coming to place later this year.

Councillor Searle has decided this year to step down from the Council after serving as Web Master and a Parish Councillor for many years, Thank you Pat for all your hard work. For the moment Pat has agreed to continue to look after the web site, but she would really like to hand the responsibility over to a younger person. Any volunteers? Please see Pat after this meeting or contact her or the Clerk via the web site.

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.

Two Councillors will stand down at the end of the current Council, Councillor Pat Searle and Councillor Vera Hovenden. We wish to thank them for their many years of service.

As many of you will be aware in February 2018 we lost our Clerk Ashley Stacey. After a period of operating using an Interim Clerk we were able in August 2018 to appoint Anne Griffith as our Clerk. Although Anne is still learning the role as Clerk; her background as a solicitor and law lecturer has meant that quite a few of our processes have been tightened up. Thank you Anne for your hard work.

This is my final Annual report as Chair of Cliffsend Parish Council as I am not standing for re-election to the Council.

Thank you all for attending this evening.