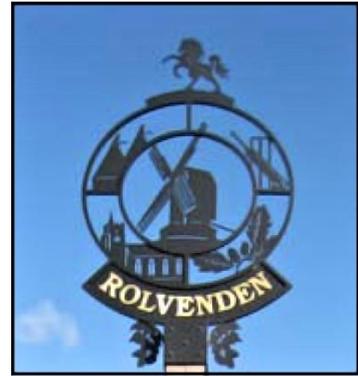


Rolvenden

Update 2021



Welcome to the Annual Rolvenden
Parish Council Newsletter.

Last year our annual newsletter was distributed online due to Covid 19 restrictions. The format was well received and since some Covid regulations remain in force we have repeated the online format again this year.



Photo courtesy of John Ralph



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1 Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Parish Newsletter for 2021.

A hard copy of the document can be arranged by contacting rolvendenclerk@gmail.com or any one of your parish Councillors.

As Covid regulations do not allow in person meetings to resume yet, a virtual Annual Parish meeting was held on Zoom on April 29th, with the agenda shortened to better suit the online platform.

The reports which formed the agenda items for that meeting are available to view using the links below:

- Rolvenden Parish Council [chairmans report 2021.docx](#)
- Ashford Borough Council [ABC Cllr K Walder.docx](#)
- Kent County Council [Mike Hill KCC report 2021.docx](#)

The usual reports from village sports and social groups were not included but we hope to hold an event in the summer when all restrictions are lifted which will allow those groups to report on their activities and encourage new members. The event will also include a welcome party for the many newcomers to our community that have moved in during the lockdown periods and we look forward to meeting them.





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2 Planning

All planning applications must follow the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Development Plan which was approved by a huge majority of parishioners in 2019. Each planning application is now judged against the policies agreed and approved in that document. The Plan carries equal weight with the Ashford Local Plan so if borough planners choose to override our policies, they must show strong justification for doing this. The plan will offer protection to the village for the life of the plan, until 2030, so that no further large scale development is likely to be approved for the parish during that period.

Plans for the small scale developments agreed in the Neighbourhood Plan are now starting to take shape. The Council continues to consult with the applicant in respect of the development of land west of Kingsgate Cottage, Rolvenden Layne, before a formal planning application is submitted. Here the developer's suggested plan is for six dwellings comprising of five two bedroom and one three bedroom house with appropriate parking and landscaping. Formal plans are expected to be submitted within the next few weeks.

The council have also seen draft plans for nine new dwellings, suitable for retired people, on the Redwood site. These plans were for discussion purposes only and appropriate advice has been given.

An application has been received for developing a commercial fishing business at the Wilderness off Hastings Road. This did not meet with council approval as this land has the highest level of protection as part of the AONB, having a grade 2 listing as a Heritage Park & Garden and the presence of a World War 2 test site. Unfortunately, there has already been some unauthorized development on this land over the last few years. We await a decision by borough planners.

Approximately two or three applications are considered at each meeting. Residents are welcome to attend and speak about any application, an option which is welcomed by the Parish Council to ensure that they are aware of any local sensitivities before a decision is made. Comments can also be made online www.ashford.gov.uk



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3 Highways

You can report non-urgent issues online including:

- Street light faults
- Potholes
- Drainage
- Traffic signal faults
- overgrown vegetation (including hedges and grass).

Go to www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel

Do not report a highways emergency online. If an event is likely to cause an accident, please call 03000 418181 Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm or 03000 419191 at all other times.





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4 Community Speedwatch

The Speedwatch group have recently resumed their roadside sessions as the Covid restrictions start to ease. The incidence of speeding drivers seems to have increased during lockdown, possibly due to there being less traffic using the roads and unfortunately drivers have not yet re-adjusted their speeds to take into account the return of traffic to normal volumes.



In a recent one-hour session which took place outside the school we recorded 25 drivers exceeding the 30mph speed limit, with several doing speeds in excess of 45mph and at a time when children were coming out of school.

If a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle their chances of being killed are as follows:

- at 40 mph there is a 90 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 35 mph there is a 50 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 30 mph there is a 20 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 20 mph there is a 2.5 percent chance they will be killed.

The Speedwatch group welcomes new volunteers – attendance is flexible so can fit alongside your other commitments. You can register your interest at www.communityspeedwatch.org or contact the area co-ordinator Denise Curtin duckscrossing33@gmail.com for more information



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5 Bequest from Miss Pat Thorburn / Allotments

Negotiations continue with Miss Thoburn's executors to transfer the gifted land for the benefit of the village, either direct to the parish council or into the care of the War Memorial Trust.

We are advised that the complexities of the transfer are nearing completion and we look forward to fulfilling Miss Thoburn's wishes, namely that the land should be protected for the continued enjoyment of the parish.





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6 Stolen Funds

The council continues in their efforts to recoup the funds stolen through the fraud perpetrated by the former clerk.

You may recall in last year's newsletter we reported that we were awaiting a decision by our insurers on the claim made against our fidelity policy. The claim was ultimately declined by the insurers as they considered that we could not prove we had complied with all clauses of the policy, their main issue being our lack of proof of financial governance. We were unable to provide this proof, which would have included such items as the cash book, initialled cheque stubs, bank statements and bank reconciliations because the former clerk retained or destroyed all council documents.

We applied to Kent Police for a copy of the trial transcript, which detailed the complexity of the fraud and also produced a portfolio of council documents, gleaned from the files of former Cllrs, to demonstrate, as best we could, our compliance with the insurance clauses but these were rejected by the insurers and the original decision upheld.

Our former bank, Lloyds Bank, has failed to accept any negligence on their part. They failed to notify the council of the unusual activity on the three accounts, even when the accounts became overdrawn. More recently, in an attempt to defend their actions, they have supplied a copy of an online banking mandate which they claim authorises the many online transfers that were made to Willard's personal account. Cllrs had not previously seen this mandate and the signatures on it appear to have been forged. As Willard also presented forged bank statements for reconciliation the online transfers went undetected.

A complaint was filed against the bank that received the stolen funds, Nat West, as they too failed to notice any unusual activity on their client's account, which by the nature of the transactions should have triggered their anti money laundering protocols. To date they have failed to respond.

As the Financial Ombudsman had previously ruled that the parish council is not eligible to use their service, our remaining recourse is through the civil court. We are currently seeking advice from a local solicitor on the potential likelihood of success in civil cases against the banks, the insurers and Willard.

Much will depend on the costs such action would incur balanced against our chances of a successful outcome.



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7 Play Areas

Plans have been in place for some time to replace the equipment at both village play areas. Consultations were undertaken with parents and children, who were presented with 3 proposed schemes for each area and these schemes were voted on to determine the most suitable.

Before the chosen scheme could be ordered an application had to be made for the release of the S106 funding earmarked to cover the costs. There were lengthy delays in the legal process required to release the funding from Ashford Borough Council and in the interim both play areas failed their annual safety inspections and had to be closed.



Earlier this year the new equipment was finally installed at the Streyte play area and that is now open again. The Layne area remains closed but installation of the new equipment there is expected during the next few weeks.

In response to many the requests to replace the goal posts that for many years were a feature on the Layne field, fund raising events will be taking place over the summer. Meanwhile a generous donor has provided some temporary goal posts for use on the field. These were erected in mid April and are already proving very popular, not just with children but adults too.





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8 Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch



Rolvenden NHW report May 21

Summary

It has been a very different year with the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown which has considerably reduced reported crime in this area. Despite this, Rolvenden NHW continues to provide key information to members of the scheme to keep the village updated, proactive and alert. Jenny sends regular updates to scheme members, Pam also gives vital local information and Siân represents Rolvenden NHW at regular Ashford and District NHW committee meetings where different Neighbourhood watches meet to share information and get updates on recently developments. The District Chief Inspector for Ashford, Kent Police, Nick Sparkes has also been in attendance along with PCSOs and NHW co-ordinators from across Kent.

The nature of local crimes has mostly involved stealing from sheds and other outer buildings and dog theft has become a major concern. Pam put a very useful article on dog theft in the parish magazine and the PCSO updates from Kate Richards each month are very useful. The major crimes across the country have involved fraud and extortion and many/most of these have been publicised in NHW emails, on Face book and in the parish magazine. These are repeatedly publicised on the radio and TV; hopefully, people do take note of these as more and more are reported. Unfortunately, people do not seem to learn from the experience of others.

Campaigns and Crime:

NHW car campaign

- LOCKED: 44% of cars broken into via an unlocked door
- LIT: 80% of car crime occurs after dark so park in lit areas
- EMPTY: personal belongings removed or hidden from view



Dog theft

This is not specifically a Kent-based crime but a cross-border one involving the rest of the UK and Europe. There has been a significant increase of dog theft from breeders as well as places of residence. Many are puppies with the most popular breeds Springers, Cockers and fashionable French Pug styles.

Many thefts are from people walking their dogs. Often such thefts are highlighted on social media before reporting to the police. Guidance is currently being prepared for dog owners so that dogs are kept safe at home as well as whilst out with owners.

This includes:

- Owners remaining vigilant at all times
- Being routine-free
- Securing the lead by double-wrapping around the hand
- Keeping the dog to the off-side
- Reporting any suspicious behaviour

Catapults misuse (mostly Ashford area)

Anti-social behaviour in Tenterden

Catalytic Converters

It is important to park safely although thieves have become even more brazen, there have been some successful arrests.

Wheelie bin theft

This has increased. If anyone would like NHW stickers, NHW Wheelie bin stickers or purse bells, please get in touch with Siân: sian_reeves@hotmail.com (small charge for these)

Jenny continues to send out relevant information to members via email and we all keep an eye out and ask members to be the eyes and ears.

How to contact Kent police:

Call 101 for non-emergency enquiries and website: <https://www.kent.police.uk/> Click on the 'Report' tab.



The online Chatroom facility for reporting crime produces a more immediate response. Access is via Kent Police Report Online Website where there is the facility to engage in Live Chat (a small blue box at the bottom of the report online page). Live Chat provides the opportunity to talk to an operative and this has proven to be a much quicker and more rewarding experience than 101 for many members. A transcript of the 'conversation' is also made available which can be a useful record. Members are reminded that crime or suspicious activity may also be reported using 101 but 999 for emergencies or when a crime is in operation.

Joining Rolvenden NHW

If any new resident would like to join, details can be passed onto Siân or Jenny:
sian_reeves@hotmail.com and jenny@vening.net

If you would like to be a member/co-ordinator, you can also contact Andrew Judd:
andrew.judd@kent.police.uk (Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer
South East Kent Police)

There is a data protection form that needs to be filled in.

Thank you to the Rolvenden community. Stay vigilant and stay safe.

Jenny, Pam and Siân

NHW Team Rolvenden



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9 The Rolvenden History Group

This past year has seen us unable to hold our monthly meetings and annual exhibition. In order to keep in touch with our members we have circulated a newsletter on a monthly basis on historical eras and their cultural context. We have also notified members of events that were being Zoomed by Kent Archaeological Society and the British Association of Local History.

Currently we are in the process of preparing our Autumn Exhibition which we hope will be able to go ahead the weekend of October 15 to 17.

Based on Wealden, a poem by Nancy Gaffield accompanied by music from The Drift, the exhibition explores the way in which people have shaped and are shaping the landscape. The focus will be upon place and we are going to work from the present to the past. We have already had help from some members who have shared memories of the Barge Inn and Potman's Heath as well as Castle Toll, and considerable work has been done on routeways, and early wool production and the manufacture of cloth. We would greatly appreciate any memories or insights that can be given by the wider community about land use, the number of orchards there were, current production and farming practices as well as past ones, village customs – May Day celebrations or friendly society club days, photographs of your favourite walks, any dialect words for features of the landscape or plants.

We are planning activity packs on various features of the landscape mentioned in Nancy's poem.

We do hope that readers of this newsletter will be able to help in putting this exhibition together by sharing memories.

In the autumn we are hoping to resume our lecture programme.

Sue Hatt

s.hatt72@gmail.com



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10 The Basil Russell Trust

2021 report to APM

The Trust was established in 1990 by the late Basil Russell, lifelong gardener at Hole Park and international table tennis referee, to benefit the youth of Rolvenden and surrounding parishes.

The Investment portfolio was valued at £291,073 as at 31 December 2020 with estimated annual income of £7190. The capital value has remained broadly static from £288,361 in 2019.

Distributions totalling £9970 have been made during the current financial year which include:

- Rolvenden Cricket Club
- Preschool both for contribution equipment and direct fee support
- £5000 funding for the play equipment in the Street play area
- Direct support for individual university students.

Trustees are keen to receive applications from any individual, or group of young people, or by adults on their behalf who seek assistance with their studies, tuition fees, travel costs or to fund personal development opportunities.

Edward Barham

April 2021



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11 The Rolvenden Branch, Royal British Legion

With regret, due to the Pandemic the activities of the branch remain suspended. During the year we have marked the death of former Japanese Prisoner of War Geoff Blain with a moving tribute from the village, parading with his hearse from the War Memorial and arranged a Covid secure Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial.

Time and the pandemic has taken its toll of our members and the future of the branch will be reviewed at the first available opportunity, once we can return to normality.

Edward Barham, Chairman



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12 Rolvenden War Memorial Trust Annual Report 2021

Rolvenden War Memorial Trust Annual Report 2020/21

The Rolvenden War Memorial Trust has had a limited year, like many other businesses and organisations, with the restrictions place upon all by the Covid pandemic. Our quarterly meetings have been severely limited in part due to the social distancing and the lockdown measures in place, but also the restrictions have hampered our activities, giving us a lot less to do than we would have liked. We have managed as best as possible with remote “ Zoom” meetings, a socially distanced garden meeting and a few email rounds.

The focus this year has been on completion of existing improvement projects such as the pond fencing on the Streyte field playing field and management and maintenance of hedging and trees, especially with regard to the tennis club.

The Layne field has seen the replacement of paving surrounding the bench seat and around the post box.

The Trust has continued to manage its investment portfolio which has recovered well from the stock market shock in March 2020.

We have initiated discussion with the parish council, sports clubs and other potentially interested parties to make use of the Halden Field Section 106 monies for the provision of a new sports pavilion for the village. We are hopeful that once social distancing measures have been relaxed we can usefully engage with all interested parties to best meet the needs of the village.

Antony Hinge

Chairman



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13 Village Hall

As you are all aware the Village Hall has been Closed for over a year due to the pandemic.

We did reopen briefly in the summer to a handful of hirers when restrictions were relaxed until we were locked down again.

Even though the hall has been closed the majority of the time the committee has been working hard behind the scenes applying for all possible government grants, looking at fundraising ideas and reducing our outgoing expenses as much as possible to enable the longevity of the hall for when we can reopen.

We are hoping to reopen the hall from May 17th but are awaiting clarification from the Government and our respective governing bodies.

If given the go ahead we will be able to welcome back hirers into the hall but social distancing and other restrictions such as the rule of six will still be in place.

The hall will not be able to host all the village social functions it would normally do until social distancing restrictions are lifted.

The Village Hall can't wait to safely welcome back everyone into this wonderful village facility.

Jack Davidson. Village Hall Chairman



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14 Allotments

Rolvenden Allotment Gardens support a thriving group of like-minded gardeners who want the opportunity to grow fruit and vegetables in a healthy and friendly environment. Our group is comprised of all age groups, we now have families with young children participating in gardening and what they may lack in horticultural skills they definitely make up for with enthusiasm. We also have allotment users with disabilities who are thriving and are very happy to be part of our community. Those with more gardening knowledge are always willing to advise, encourage and help those that want it.

We have set ourselves a target to become far more organised and efficient without becoming dictatorial – as such we now have a small committee, a constitution and have set up a bank account. We also have a Facebook Page and a WhatsApp group.



We have recently had a massive clear up, disposing of rubbish that had accumulated over many years. Somehow this two day challenge managed to become a fun event and very quickly a massive skip was filled and in the evening a mountain of rotting wood was burned.

There is still a lot of work to do but we remain optimistic and are still waiting for finer weather!

Jan Bridger

01580 762932

07445 971791

rolvendenallotment@gmail.com



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15 The Parish Council

Parish Councillors are all volunteers and receive no payment for their services.

The current councillors are:

The Streyte

Cllr. Mr Antony Johnstone.

48 Sparkeswood Avenue, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LZ.

Telephone: 01580 241806

Email: johnstonecelia@gmail.com

Cllr. Mr Edward Barham

Hole Park, Rolvenden, Kent TN17 4JB

Telephone: 01580 241344

Email: edwardbarham@holepark.com

Cllr. Mrs Lynn Walker

30 High Street, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LN

Telephone: 01580 241369

Email: linda19walker@btconnect.com

Cllr. Mrs Irene Newman

10 Gybbons Road, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LL

Telephone 01580 241813

Email: dnewman@btinternet.com

Cllr. Mr Steve Bryant

11 Sparkeswood Avenue, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 4LU

Email: stevebryant123@outlook.com

Cllr. Mr Graham Tiltman

4 Moneypenny, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NF

Telephone: 01580 241006

Email: grahamtiltman@gmail.com



The Layne

Chairperson

Cllr. Mrs Denise Curtain

33 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NS

Telephone: 01580 241095

Email: duckscrossing33@gmail.com

Cllr. Ms Tessa Turner

26 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4NP

Telephone: 01580 241837

Email: tessalivesley@yahoo.com

Cllr. Mrs Fiona May

3 Thornden Court, Thornden Lane Rolvenden Layne, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4PS

Email: Fiona@fmay.uk

Clerk and other contacts

Clerk to the Council

Mr Peter Setterfield PSLCC Wealden House, Grand Parade, Littlestone, Kent, TN28 8NQ

Email: rolvendenclerk@gmail.com

Ashford Borough Councillor for Rolvenden. Kate Walder

Potts Farm, Chennel Park Road Tenterden, Kent TN30 6XA.

Telephone: 07839 110611

Email: kate.walder@ashford.gov.uk

Kent County Council Cabinet Member. Mr Michael Hill OBE

Members' Suite, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ

Tel: 03000 416240

Email: michael.hill@kent.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Arrangements for meetings have been subject to change during the pandemic. Under normal circumstances parish council meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month except December