

# **Reports from Parish Clubs & Organisations**



**for the**

**Annual Parish Meeting**

**in**

**Grafty Green Village Hall**

**on**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

## **Chairman's Report to the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council for year 2016/2017 - Robert Turner**

Boughton Malherbe continues to change – little by little – but change it does despite the fierce determination of both Parishioners and the Parish Council to protect our rural idyll.

We have been able to avoid the ravages of vast development seen in other local parishes. The unacceptable and unwarranted developments in Harrietsham, Headcorn and Lenham do unfortunately have a knock on effect in Boughton Malherbe-especially with extra traffic. Hopefully the new Ashford, Lenham rail route to London Bridge and Cannon Street might reduce the dash to and from the trains in Headcorn. This development is due to start within the next twelve months. In addition the Parish Council have organised for signs to be erected at Lenham, Headcorn and Ulcombe saying the Headcorn Road/Lenham Road is unsuitable for Heavy Goods Traffic. These signs are not a cure for heavy goods traffic as they are only a caution. The Parish Council will continue to lobby for a Weight limit on Liverton Hill, Platts Heath and Sandway (the latter two places are in Lenham Parish).

Another point that is important and taken place in Boughton Malherbe Parish over the last few years is that as a Parish Council we have become far more in evidence than before. This has come about by our presence on committees as well as having a very pro active clerk. I do believe that this is due to the quality, determination and conscientious nature of Boughton Malherbe Parish Councillors

I do also seriously worry about the increases of Gypsy and Traveller development. Most of this is illegal especially in Petts Field within the Parish. Enforcement at Maidstone Borough Council is informed of this illegal development but nothing seems to happen. In addition there is new development taking place on a site which is on our Parish Border. The site is in Ulcombe Parish but we do keep the Ulcombe Parish informed of these developments

As part of the Parish Change - at last building is about to start on the old Grafty Garden Centre site. The old greenhouses are all down and a self build scheme is about to begin. I understand that the majority of sites have been sold.

Parish Clerk. In June 2016 Chris King announced her intention to retire from the role at the end of the financial year. We do indeed thank her for her devotion to the job. Chris was instrumental in updating the Parish Council and bringing Boughton Malherbe in line with the Borough, KCC and Government requirements

In April we were able to recruit Chris Hume to take over from Chris King. Over the last month Chris has been thoroughly briefed and handover effected. He has also been getting involved with the vagaries of MBCC. Chris we wish you a long, interesting and happy stay in the role.

Planning issues. There have been even more planning issues over the past year all seemingly becoming more complex. As such I have asked the Chairman of the Planning Committee to report separately.

Finance. Our finances have remained in a healthy state over the past year. I am delighted that John Collins who previously audited our accounts has joined the Parish Council and taken on the role of Chairman of the finance committee. We look forward to benefiting from his experience. So far John has recommended a nil increase in the Parish Precept for the year of 2017/8. In addition a new auditor has been recruited. John thank you for all your work

The Emergency Plan. I have asked Ron Galton to comment on this issue

Training. Members of the Parish Council do attend training courses as these are seen as an essential part of staying up to date. Two people attended a New Councillor course, two people went to the Rural Forum and Chris Hume will attend a New Clerks course

Meetings. Over the past year we have had more meetings than in previous years Parish Meetings, Committee meetings and Planning meetings came to a total of twenty in the past year. In addition members have attended an amount of outside meetings.

Robert Turner	15
Ron Galton	8
Annie Allum	2
John Collins	5

#### Other Roles

Annie Allum has taken on the responsibility for Highways

Tony King has taken on the responsibility of Deputy Clerk as well as vice Chairman Planning

#### Our Thanks

John Collins for attending the Transportation Group meetings to keep the busses running

Rosemary and Michael Smith for looking after the Green in the village

Mike Hitchins for Editing and Producing the very excellent Malherbe Monthly

Joan Drury for her Kent Messenger reports

Richard Pilborough for all his hard and inspired work in running the Village Hall

Mike Davidson and David Chantler for attending the Honywood and Douglas trust meetings

Our Borough Councillors Martin Round and Shellina Prendergast .They both have given us enormous support over the past year.

KCC Councillor. We were all very sorry to see Jenny Whittle retire from her role after ten years. We do indeed thank her for her invaluable support over that time.

On Friday Shellina Prendergast was elected to fill the role that Jenny has vacated. We look forward to her support and help over the coming years.

Our Councillors. A very big thank you to them all as they do give up much of their personal time for the benefit of our small community. I don't think that it is widely enough understood by our parishioners just what and how much is done on their behalf

Looking to the future

1 Greater liaison with Lenham Parish on the development that is to take place on the South West of their Parish

2 HGV Weight limits in the Parish

3 Litter collection

## **Community Warden Service – Stuart Ellesmere**



I am based in Headcorn, which in all honesty keeps me very busy and mainly serve the community here in the area in an official capacity. Although Grafty Green does not have a designated Community Warden, I am more than happy to come to the village if there is an issue that I can help with.

There are approximately 70 Warden's in and around Kent – They all have designated villages from which we link into the Parish Councils and accompanying agencies. Of those 70 Wardens there are also support Wardens who visit the Villages and areas who do not have a designated Warden. The Support Wardens have a marked vehicle for this role.

As a service we are going through changes at the present time with potential commissioning being a part of this from within KCC and also funding opportunities from other agencies. It is highly likely that the Community Warden role will become more care based – e.g. closer working with Social Services and Trading Standards.

We are also currently looking for Volunteer Wardens that can assist their local community and their nearest Warden – there is more information at: [kent.gov.uk/communitywardens](http://kent.gov.uk/communitywardens)

Currently, I work closely with PCSO John Boyd and both of us report back to the Community Safety Unit which is based in Maidstone. The Community Safety Unit consists of Kent Police, Community Wardens, Maidstone Borough Council Anti-social behaviour Officers, Kent Fire & Rescue, Housing providers, Social Services and many others.

It is very difficult to sum up my role as it has many facets. The best way to describe it would be to look at it as a 'walking signpost'. I will often be the point of contact and will refer in the help that is needed from the relevant agency whether that be working with the older generation or the young.

The Warden Service at present have been working with/interviewing around two thousand residents countywide that we believe have been victims to scam mail – we have been doing this in conjunction with Trading Standards and the Royal Mail under the 'Stop the Scammers' banner. There appear to be more victims appearing on a daily basis as Royal Mail have identified further ones.

I have visited the Boughton Malherbe area on several occasions to do door knocks on potential Scam Mail victims this year and have spent occasions being a visual presence in the area – although my timing could be better as I seem to encounter wet weather each time I do this!

As I have said before, I am more than happy to come up to Grafty if there is anyone there that is currently vulnerable and has issues that may need addressing or need help from another agency – if you do know of any person(s) that could do with the support then please get in touch.

Currently I do struggle to make it to the Parish Council meetings as I have extra responsibilities attached to my role. I am also the Deputy Team Leader for the Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling Team which at times also means running a team of 12 Colleagues – I can still mainly do this from Headcorn although there are times that I have to attend CSU Meetings in both Maidstone and Tonbridge.



**Kent Fire &  
Rescue Service**

The visible work is the on-going monitoring of fire hydrants maintaining both visibility and availability. Less visible but equally on -going is the work around home safety visits which are encompassed under 'safe and wellbeing' which extends well beyond the boundaries of

just fire safety. Older persons are up to four times more likely to be involved with a fire, and similarly with a road traffic collision, injuries will be more severe and alarmingly resulting fatality twice as likely and with the older population increasing significantly year on year the message is simply TAKE CARE. Free home safety visits can be requested by calling 0800 923 7000.

**Chris Wheal**

### **Yoga Classes In Grafty Green - Sue Burch**

Yoga classes have been running in the village hall for over 12 years and growing in popularity. Firstly, just Thursday mornings, but since 2006 there are two classes running with the addition of Wednesday evenings. In the last couple of years there has been the occasional Saturday.

The British Wheel of Yoga has also run training sessions for local yoga teachers on two occasions during the past year in the village hall.

## Short Mat Bowls

The club continues to flourish with a regular core of weekly bowlers.

Primarily a social, for pleasure club however some local friendly games have taken place this year with other village clubs. We will always welcome new members, tuition available as well as loaned bowls to get going - short mat bowls the basics are easy to learn and skill comes with practice and at the same time getting enjoyment and gentle exercise.

**Club contact Chris Wheal / Joan Marriott. 01622 858100**  
**Grafty Green Gardening Club**

Meetings are held in Grafty Green Village Hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm unless stated otherwise.

### **Programme 2017 – our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker/Event</b>	<b>Topic</b>
January 10	AGM and Sarah Morgan	Alpines in landscape design
February 7	Tim Ingrams	Hellebores
March 7	Nikki Gammans	Bumblebee Conservation
April 4	Alison Marsden - and Spring Show	Front gardens – making the most of your house
May 2	Steven Edney	Salutation Garden
May 6	Plant Sale 10am on the village green	
June 4 Sunday	Garden Safari in and around Grafty Green – full details and map available with tickets.	
June 9, 10, 11	Weekend away Somerset, The Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton, - Tintin Hull Gardens. Montacute House, Lambrook Manor, Barrington Court, Lytes Cary Manor	
July 4	Boldshaves, Woodchurch, TN26 3RA	
August 1	The Orangery, Mystole, CT4 7DB	
September 5	Tram Hatch, Charing, TN27 0BN Mrs Scrivens	
October 3	Stephen Harmer	History of Sissinghurst Garden Autumn Show
November 7	Fiona Wemyss	Blue Leaf Plants
December 5	Social with a meal at The Rose and Crown, at Egerton	

The organisation is a charity linked to The Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley. We aim to provide a varied programme for our members which this year is 35. On 4<sup>th</sup>

June, to celebrate our anniversary, we have organised a garden safari of 8 local gardens for people to visit and we will be making a donation to The Heart of Kent Hospice from the money we raise. Tickets are available from Susan Burch.

The club is happily joining with the Village Hall Committee to run a stall and competitions at the Village Fete on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

We manage the display for the tubs and planters around the village plus the border along the side of the Village Hall to enhance the environment.

#### Committee

- Treasurer / Membership: Doreen Hulm 850287
- Secretary - Carole Frost 757536
- Rosemary Smith 850526
- Susan Burch 850381
- Bookings Secretary – Irene Ayling 842507  
Mobile 07742107354
- Show Secretary – Lesley Feakes : 850275
- Lynn Grace, Kathy Hales, Veronica Moore, Margaret Hoad.

**Please Note** for outings would you contact Irene Ayling to advise numbers in your party if you are attending

☺ 10% discount on gardening supplies (not special offers) at

*Rumwood Nursery*, Langley ME17 3ND ☎ 01622 861477.

*Millbrook Garden Centre*, Staplehurst Road, TN12 9BT ☎ 01622 832299

# **Annual Parish Meeting Briefing by MBC Ward Members Headcorn Ward**

**Written by Martin Round,  
on behalf of Shellina Prendergast and myself.**

NB: With several Annual Parish Meetings stretched over some weeks, and with some clashes of those, and a number of MBC Committees, Briefings and other commitments at the present time (an election period-purdah-for KCC), then this submission is forwarded to contribute to those Parish Meetings, in our potential absence.

## **Annual Report**

There are 55 elected Members to Maidstone Borough Council. It is fair to say with no exaggeration that both Headcorn Members have contributed fully to the work of the Council and represented the Ward in a prominent manner. We are both "frequent attendees" at most key committees and additional meetings/briefings where others may not be noticed. We are stunned by the amount of low prominence by some members! (see some later comments).

As previous years, and probably future years, Planning and the building of homes is the most high-profile and demanding/consuming matter. And both Headcorn Ward members take that "full-on" with Shellina on the SPST (Strategic Planning) Committee and both of us sit on the Planning Committee, with myself as Political spokesperson (with many additional meetings). I also serve on the Policy and Resources Committee which oversees all policies, funding, personnel and much more, so this again has knock-on implications in other aspects of the Council. We also sit on, or attend, or substitute on some other committees and external bodies.

Planning has now moved on in that the Local Plan has now been presented to Inspection and has NOT come through unscathed. Currently, whilst the Plan has provisionally been passed to go forward, it is subject to several amendments including a well-publicised small reduction in numbers; with a very substantial FIVE YEAR Land Supply of allocated sites and house numbers. There will remain a need to satisfy those numbers beyond what is currently 6.2 years and "windfalls" will continue to be discussed, especially those that are considered disused/redundant or "brownfields". So the Plan will continue to be contentious and where any and all Planning Applications will be subject to much work. However, the general verdict is that the plan sets many "terms and conditions" and in so doing they are legal precedents.

It is the view of the Headcorn Members that whilst Planning law highly favours much development and that our hearts, our heads and our stomachs are often torn when having to make a decision, often ones we are reluctantly forced into, that the MBC Local Plan was flawed at the start of its development-and continues to be-with a



greater need for better policies, OR CLEARER INTERPRETATIONS OF THEM, especially those that would protect rural countryside and also those that might provide appropriate developments in acceptable places with the right design, size, number etc. This thus forces even more difficult and contentious decisions.

That process itself of decision making has been brought into great controversy in the last year with Members receiving both specific legal advice and training and some personal admonishments within MBC together with a level of intimidation and abuse from all sides of the debate.

The importance of Planning is not exclusive to House building. Naturally G&T policy is high on the Ward agenda and the matter of enforcement for many issues continues to be both challenging and costly. It is fair to say that Headcorn Ward and its immediate neighbours has the greatest problem. Ward Members have been raising this matter with other members to get support. It has not been easy. To this effect a workshop was ultimately set up to inform and discuss-after several abortive attempts-and of the 55 members only a minority attended and only those with a political or rural interest. The work on the Enforcement issue continues. This is symptomatic of the MANY rural issues that face some of us, yet many of the other Members fail to respond to and/or don't want to!

And the MANY and wide ranging issues of Planning continue to be hard-work and time consuming.

For example, Junction 8 is an issue that must have some sort of plan, together with any Leeds/Langley Relief Road.

There is a review of the Planning function (the personnel, the tasks, the budget & policies etc.) at present, pertinent to what is needed following the Inspection of the Local Plan and what was exposed over the development of it. This is, itself, a key matter SOME members will be involved in. Surely, we must do it BETTER? From processing and supporting applications, approving, declining, monitoring, communicating, policies, design, dealing with problem or sensitive issues; like the environment or conservation, setting conditions, following through, discharging, S106s and enforcement. All with lots of legal work!

It is especially significant that your TWO Ward Members are very involved at all strands of that work, whilst AGAIN some members of MBC don't even turn up to key briefings. (Some of us can have double and triple diary events because of many interests/concerns much at the same time, plus family and/or jobs, AND Parish Councils to interact with, and we get ill sometimes, whilst some do not have PCs, or jobs or many interests/concerns!).

Litter and fly tipping continues to attract our time and attention. This is combined with the reality that our country roads have become Lorry and van rat runs with overnight parking. There is a bigger picture to this that needs work with many

agencies, KCC and better government legislation. This is being discussed across that wide spectrum. For both of us it is another challenge!

And the final issue I must draw your attention to: DEVOLVED Government. I believe it WILL be noticed by those that are involved in all tiers of government and sadly I believe the public will notice & MAY be affected MORE SO in RURAL areas. There is a keenness of all political parties to streamline and save, together with Brexit implications. MBC must make enormous savings, and KCC must make even bigger ones. So the merging of Council services in some way is inevitable – but how will it be done? With the North? With Thanet, Canterbury, Dover and Shepway/Folkestone merger decisions well underway, thoughts will emerge & decisions will start to loom soon after the KCC election. My belief will be that rural areas may be more isolated culturally and thus disenfranchised by the lack of “condensed” critical mass in services, especially if the Headcorn ward is part of Gravesham, Dartford, Maidstone, Medway. We are the southernmost now as we are in MBC, and to share services and admin with the “bridge to Essex” seems totally unacceptable.....unless the plan really can offer rural areas a satisfactory deal. But this may mean Parishes may need to rethink their future Business Plans and services. But don't ignore this matter! We won't!

And there will be Brexit implications, with devolution very much part of the thinking with regional development issues and ALL public services considered for more changes or cuts OR opportunities.

We must close by thanking our Parishes, especially our Clerks and Chairs for their patience with us at busy times and their active contributions and assistance all the time. Together we still believe and know that we have a great Ward to represent.

**Martin and Shellina**

### **Grafty Green Village Hall Chairman's report for the year 2016/17**

The Hall Management Committee for the year under review has comprised myself, Carol Hulm (Secretary), Robert Turner (Treasurer), Sue Burch, Liz Burgess, Stefi Graziola, Sandra Pilborough, Jacky Simmons, Jacqui Thompson and John & Angela Thompson.

The regular hirers of the Hall continue to be Headcorn Morris, Grafty Green Gardening Club, The “Dazzle” drama group for children, Sue Burch's Yoga class, the Bowls Club, the Parish Council and the Church.

Events organised by the committee this year included:

- "Animal Antics", an animal-themed afternoon of fun and games in the 'fete field' in Church Road (used courtesy of Jamie Clark).
- A lively quiz night, in which the questions were so tricky even the quizmaster didn't get all the answers right!
- Our Mexican Fiesta, featuring live music from a professional Mariachi band and a three-course meal with a Mexican flavour.

Additionally, the Hall committee helped organise the annual Harvest Supper in the Hall and we ran another 'Phil The Bag' fund-raising event, which brought forth another 60 bags of clothes, shoes, soft furnishings, etc, kindly donated by villagers.

And this year, for the first time, the Hall Committee organised the annual Christmas Craft Fair (previously a private venture) and took over production of the Parish Calendar, which this time featured historic views of the village and local area (photos courtesy of John Collins).

All the above has helped us maintain a healthy financial balance, and we continue to use any surplus funds to improve the Hall's facilities. This year we have:

- Installed a water softener, which should help reduce our serious lime scale problem.
- Draught-proofed the inner door to the Hall (which is particularly important if you are lying on your yoga mat at that end).

As for the future:

- if we can get enough support, September will see another open air event: a fete with a medieval theme;
- with the Gardening Club, we are exploring the possibility of using the land at the rear of the Hall as a mini allotment for villagers; and
- following the untimely death of Margaret Neaves last year, we are considering how we might commemorate all who served our community without reward during their lifetimes. Our present thinking is to have a 'Roll of Honour' in the Hall, describing what these folk did for the village in their time here.

So, once again, a busy but enjoyable year and I would like to publicly thank the Hall committee for all their hard work and support in achieving all that we have.

**Richard Pilborough, Hall Committee Chairman, 14/4/17**



Grafty Green has maintained a low level of crime during the past year. I report the crime statistics to the parish council meetings every month. Crime levels throughout the year have their peaks and

troughs but I am pleased to say that we are sustaining the reduced level of crime overall that we have benefited from over the past few years. This thankfully has been possible through the support of the community and the Parish Council.

We have dealt with a number of issues throughout the year, which have included the following:

- Provide a visible presence in my wards and surrounding areas.
- Follow ups on the victims of burglaries/breaks to give crime prevention advice and information booklets.
- Helping neighbours to try to sort out their disputes, this on most occasions means linking in with the housing associations where applicable.
- Linking in with the Kent County Council Wardens and other agencies to help out with many problems that arise.
- Speed enforcement checks and speed monitoring checks throughout the area.
- Patrols of outlying areas to deter and stop vehicles known for scrap metal thefts. This has been backed up with pre-arranged Policing Operations County wide involving numerous authorities and scrap yard inspections.

We are always trying to keep on top of any nuisance youth issues in the village. As with the previous year this has also not been a major issue this year and any incidents of this type of behaviour have been swiftly dealt with to good effect. We encourage residents to call in any incidents of this type of nuisance behaviour.

As with most areas in life the police have changing priorities and budgets. Taking that into account my wards now stretch from Headcorn to Leeds which incorporates eight parishes. I have and will continue to provide the visible presence and first class service that the Kent Police is renowned for.

Anyone wishing to contact me about any issues or crime prevention advice can call the non-emergency Police number 101.

Thank you for your continued support in making Grafty Green safe.

**PCSO John Boyd**  
**Maidstone Neighbourhood Team**

## **A Year In The Life Of The 59 Bus Service**

I represented Boughton Malherbe Parish Council at the two meetings of the East of Maidstone Bus Group held in the last year.

The group consists of Parish Council representatives along the 59 route and the 13 (Maidstone – Hollingbourne via Langley), and together with KCC and the operators of the two routes, Arriva and Nu-Venture, monitors and discusses operational and financial performance and any proposed changes to services, and is apparently unique in Kent. It is next due to meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

The last year has seen no changes to the timetable of the 59 or to the financial arrangements for its operation. Most of the Monday to Friday service continues to be operated commercially by Arriva, with just the odd journey and the whole Saturday service continuing to be financially supported by KCC under a four year contract which commenced in April 2014.

KCC completed its public consultation of its financially supported services as it seeks to reduce that financial support, but there were no changes made to its support of the 59 or 13 services. Following an in depth review of its Maidstone operations, Arriva has now implemented considerable changes to many of its services, but made no changes to the 59 and Arriva confirmed at the last meeting of the Group that it currently has no plans to make any.

However, all services are always under constant review so, as ever, the message remains – **USE IT OR YOU JUST MIGHT LOSE IT!**

**John Collins**  
**Boughton Malherbe Parish Council's representative**  
**on the East of Maidstone Bus Group**

## **Malherbe Monthly Magazine**

### **Report to Boughton Malherbe Annual Parish Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

The magazine continues to be produced to inform its readers of upcoming events and other news that is hopefully of interest. 465 copies are produced each month, averaging 36 pages and is distributed to all households in the Parish of Boughton Malherbe and to Platts Heath, Liverton Street and selected shops in Lenham. It is also posted on the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council website.

The magazine is distributed free of charge, it's cost's being meet by means of paid adverts within the magazine. Without these adverts the magazine would not be able to be produced and I would like to thank all our advertisers, especially the loyal ones who have placed their adverts with us for several years.

Also thanks should be noted to the regular contributors of articles to the magazine that keep the readers informed of events and services available within and near to the Parish.

The magazine does produce a cash surplus and this year we have just commissioned the repair of the damaged lime render on the porch of Boughton Malherbe Church. This is estimated to cost £540.

Special mention and thanks should be made to Silva Close without whom the magazine would never be read by anyone. Even though Silvia had moved from Grafty Green to Headcorn she continues to oversee the batching up and distribution of the magazine to the 14 volunteers, who then hand deliver the magazine to the individual households. Though I do not personally know all these volunteers I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their efforts.

Also I would like to thank John Collins who acts as treasurer for the magazine, paying the bills and banking the advertising money.

**Mike Hitchins Editor**

## **St Nicholas Church Report**

This last year at St. Nicholas has been quiet.

Cream Teas in July and August were very successful again in 2016.

The Church Council remains the same and is re-elected each year at the A.P.C.M.

Lent Lunches in aid of Christian Aid were very well supported again this year

Church Clock has been repaired and is now working well

Rev: Dick Venn retired in September and as yet has not been replaced we have advertised the position and there are two applicants. Interviews will be held this month.

## **Honywood and Douglas Almshouses Report**

Another successful year. There are no vacancies at the moment. All accommodation having been taken during the year. If anyone has any queries please contact either David Chantler or Mike Davidson.

The Almshouses are available to all Lenham and Boughton Malherbe residents who have lived in the Parishes for longer than 2 years. Vacancies are advertised in the Church Porch, the village shop and Malherbe Monthly.



Alan Colledge