

**Reports presented at the Boughton Malherbe Annual Parish Meeting on
Monday 18th May 2015 at 7pm
in Grafty Green Village Hall.**

Chairmans Report to the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council For year 2014/2015

Boughton Malherbe is certainly one of the smaller parishes in Maidstone Borough. Small we may be but the Parish Council is always active in ensuring that the Parish voice and views are always heard. This has been achieved by continuous networking and being permanently in touch with our Borough Councillors and KCC representatives.

The role of the Parish Council used to be much easier when I joined some 25 years ago. Today there is a mass of detail which needs to be absorbed. The problem with this is that the Parish Council role depends on those who have the time to devote to the job .I do feel that our Parish Council does seriously have the interest of the Parish at heart .

Parish Clerk

The role of the Parish Clerk is vital in any Parish The person concerned is the legal entity ,the guide, philosopher and friend to the parish councillors .In Boughton Malherbe I am delighted to report that Chris King —after some persuasion and a little mental torture !!—has decided to stay with us as Parish Clerk and we are all delighted. I personally do feel very strongly that to have someone to do the role from within the Parish is so important We are a “strange “community and to have somebody who can understand and support our foibles is greatly to the benefit of the Parish.

I feel that the Parish of Boughton Malherbe will be the stronger and better for Chris’ guidance ---- even if she is a bit strict with us when we try to bend the rules !!!

Chris thankyou for all the hours you have put in over the last year .I think that I can promise you more of the same for the forthcoming year .

Finance

Under the guidance of the Chairman of the Finance Committee—Mike Hitchins I would like to report that the Parish finances are in a more healthy state than for many a year . Thankyou Mike .

Training

In line with good practice Councillors have attended various training courses over the year .Keeping up with the ever increasing changes is a necessary requirement .

Planning

There have been a greater number of planning applications over the year –some more contentious than others .Planning takes a lot of time and I would like to thank the Chairman of the Planning Committee for his input .Thankyou Ron

Liverton Hill

Every Parish Council Meeting and annual meeting the topic of Liverton Hill rears its head .This year the “Users of Liverton Hill “ got together to petition the Joint Transport Board for a weight limit to be instated on the Hill .The area of the the limit would include Liverton Street ,Platts Heath and Sandway .About 300 signatures were collected and the Board supported the petition and it has now gone onto the next stage .Our thanks go to Jenny Whittle and Martin Round for their assistance .

Emergency Plan

This plan is now virtually complete and should be issued in the next few weeks .A big thanks to Ron Galton

Defibrillator

Chris Wheal worked with AW Court to provide and install a Defibrillator for the Parish use .Our thanks to them for their generous support .It is very reassuring to know that we have life saving equipment in the Parish .I only hope that it will not have to be used .

Outside Meetings

Over the past year councillors have attended meetings outside the Parish

I have attended 24,Ron Galton 16 ,Barbara Pearce 8 and Tony King 2 .These meetings cover a wide spectrum of topics from ,KALC ,Joint Parishes Group, Police Forum ,and seminars

It is all about networking and contacts for the benefit of the Parish .

Thanks also to John Collins

My thanks to John Collins for his input into the Transport group to keep our busses running .These do provide an essential service for an aging population .Also thanks to him for acting as our Parish Internal auditor. Chris King comments that she is very grateful for his help and patience

Rosemary and Michael Smith

Thankyou to them for keeping the Green looking good and tidy .This is such an essential part of the village

Joan Drury

Grateful thanks for her column in the Kent Messenger.It keeps us and others informed of Village activities

Mike Hitchins

Thankyou for editing and producing the Malherbe Monthly .This really is an excellent production and filled with useful information . When I look around and see what other parishes, have we are very lucky indeed

Richard Pilborough

Thankyou to Richard and his committee for running the Village Hall .This is indeed a very important asset for the village and it is now particularly well used .

Our Borough Councillors

Martin Round and Richard Thick are our Borough representatives.

Martin has over the last year worked very hard on local issues which effect us all. He is always available and has been very helpful on numerous occasions .

Because of his Mayoral duties we have not seen much of Richard Thick but are looking forward to having him “back on the patch “ from the end of May .

Jenny Whittle is our KCC representative .Jenny works exceptionally hard and is always on hand whenever we need help ,advice and support . Thankyou indeed .

Our Parish Councillors They give up a considerable amount of their personal time both days ,evenings and weekends for the benefit of the parish. I don't think that it is widely understood just how much time is put in for the benefit of the Parish and its Parishoners . Thankyou for your help and support .

Robert Turner 18th May 2015

**Report on Quinn Estates Public Meeting given to Annual Parish Council Meeting,
18th May 2015, by Cllr Ron Galton**

The exhibition held on 1st/2nd May 2015 in the village hall was hosted by the BMPC and Quinn demonstrated their proposals for redevelopment of the Garden Centre site using a display of information panels around the hall.

Members of the PC and Quinn representatives were present to discuss the proposals, listen to comments and answer questions from the public.

Approximately 90 members of the public attended over the two sessions.

Feedback was invited via comment forms before attendees left the exhibition, some were taken away and returned later.

The general consensus was favourable but there were many concerns and these are summarised below together with the responses.

Broadband service is poor in this area, would fibre optic be installed to the development that could also benefit the community. Quinn will install fibre optic broadband to the development and ensure it is available to the village.

The owners of Willington Lodge asked for the houses to be moved further West to reduce overlooking. Quinn agreed to move approx 5.0 metres.

The Paddock area would be better if mainly planted with trees to form additional screening. The paddock area is too small for horses. Quinn saw no problem.

The boundary to Crumps Lane should have extra screening with hedging/trees. Quinn saw no problem.

Crumps Lane is in very bad condition and needs to be rectified before the development is completed. This is a matter for KCC Highways rather than Quinn. KCC Cllr Jenny Whittle and ward Cllr Martin Round will be asked to progress it at the next BMPC meeting as it needs to be done regardless of the development.

Noise and congestion from construction traffic affecting the village and more local residents. Quinn will try to arrange for construction traffic not to approach from Liverton Hill or Eastwood Road.

The site will increase flooding in Headcorn Road. Most of the flooding is caused by surface water run off from the greenhouses which Quinn believe should be resolved by adequate deep soakaways and removal of large concreted areas for gardens during the development.

What about Foul Drainage, there are no public sewers. In the absence of main drainage Quinn will install a self contained sewage plant with no smells and only clean water outflow to serve the site.

How will this affect water pressure which is abysmal in the area. Initial investigation indicates that the overall and peak water demand would be less than for when the Garden Centre was in operation. Hence pressure should not be affected.

There will be a general increase to the already unacceptable traffic movements along Headcorn Road. The overall and peak traffic movements would be less than for the Garden Centre on a busy day.

The internal road should be one way only. Quinn saw no problem subject to Highways input.

What about affordable or social housing for young local families. This type of housing has to first be justified by established demand and based upon Headcorn experience it is insufficient with many of the houses having to be given to people from elsewhere. A social disaster was created with the local families wanting to move away. Also this would mean a high density development to pay for affordable/social housing which would not reflect the character of the surrounding area.

How will this development benefit local employment prospects. The small office development should provide some employment as would the residents with a need for cleaners and gardeners.

Cllr Ron Galton

Grafty Green Village Hall Chairman's report for the year 2014/15

The Hall Management Committee for the year under review has comprised myself, Carol Hulm (Secretary), Robert Turner (Treasurer), Sue Burch, Sarah Cutbill, Stefania Graziola, Margaret Neaves, Barbara Pearce, Sandra Pilborough, Jacky Simmons and Jacqui Thompson - and I would like to thank them all publicly and very sincerely for the time and effort they have expended on committee work again this year.

The regular hirers of the Hall continue to be Headcorn Morris, the Gardening Club, The "Dazzle" drama group for children, Sue Burch's Yoga class, the Bowls Club, the Parish Council and the Church. We have also succeeded in attracting more occasional hirers than in previous years, which has increased our letting income a little.

The main social events organised this year were a treasure hunt around the local countryside, followed by a barbeque (hosted by Sue Burch); our traditional Christmas quiz and, most recently, a Greek meal with Greek dancing and belly-dancing. The Hall Management Committee also assisted again with the running of the annual Harvest Supper in the Hall. These events, plus a 'Phil The Bag' fund-raiser and a generous donation from the organiser of the Christmas Craft Fair, have helped us maintain a financial surplus.

However, the decision (taken last year) to remove the coin-operated electricity meters is having a more detrimental effect on our finances than we expected, because the free availability of heating has led to hirers using more. So we are not only losing meter income but also incurring greater usage charges - and the early signs are that last year's increase in letting fees will not bridge the gap, as it was intended to. At our recent AGM, we decided to wait until a full year's figures were available before considering increasing the Hall hire fee again, but an increase in the rate next year cannot be ruled out. Meanwhile, we will display notices urging hirers to be frugal with our electricity if they wish to avoid an increase.

This year, we continued to use what surplus funds we had to improve the Hall's facilities. We have installed a larder fridge in the kitchen (to supplement that in the Hall) and have also replaced the broken cooker with a larger new one. This has made catering in the Hall very much more practicable. Our secretary, Carol Hulm, has also developed a website for the Hall, which is now live.

For the future, plans are well advanced for the resurrection of the village fete next month, which has involved a great deal of time and effort by Carol and the committee, but offers of support from several villagers means that there should be enough help on the day to make this the success we all hope for.

Richard Pilborough 1/5/15

Cllr Jenny Whittle's Report to APM on 18th May 2015

Lorries!

The Parish Council continues to campaign for weight limit signage for the village and a petition was recently submitted to Maidstone's Joint Transportation Board for consideration. I am supportive of such measures, but these will need to be supported by more Police enforcement and work with local businesses to liaise with their contractors/suppliers to use smaller size vehicles where possible. In addition, I believe the high volume of traffic using Headcorn Road to access Headcorn's Railway Station is compounding the problem. The extension of Thameslink to Maidstone East Railway Station, providing a direct link to the city, should do much to alleviate this situation, but this is still three years away.

School appeals

One of my key responsibilities is to support parents who haven't secured a primary or secondary school of their choice for their child or transport assistance and need my help through the appeals process. This year, 81% of children in Kent received their first choice of secondary school in September 2015 and 96% received an offer from one of their four choices. I have a more successful track record in having appeals upheld for secondary schools than primary schools. Why? Government legislation introduced in 1998 placed a cap on infant size classes so that no more than 30 children can be admitted for classes in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Only appeals panels, which are independent of the local authority and schools, can determine if schools can breach this limit, and only then for exceptional reasons. Platts Heath is a popular primary school with families and in the past I have successfully supported families who have sought transport assistance to send their children there.

Breastfeeding campaign

Last August marked the arrival of my second daughter, Olivia, and, despite the sleep deprivation, she has been a delightful baby! I thought I would use my recent experience to support mums who would like to breastfeed but don't know where to turn to for support. I am spearheading a campaign to signpost expectant and new mums to support available across the network of children's centres in Kent. For more information on the help on offer, or to become a peer volunteer, please log on to www.kentbabymatters.org. If you run a business and want to find out more details about becoming "breastfeeding friendly", please visit www.kent.gov.uk/breastfeedingfriendly. I would like to stress my view that mums know what is best for them and their baby, whether they choose to breast or bottle feed. I just want mums to know where to turn if they need support to breastfeed as it can be a tricky business!

Foster carers and adopters needed

Most families are needed in Kent for teenagers and disabled children, some of whom have very complex needs. Carers are also required for young people who are 16+ to help them make the transition to adulthood. KCC works hard to keep siblings together. More families are needed who have the space and time to look after more than one child.

Fostering is a paid role and age and experience is not a barrier. Foster carers are fully trained and supported throughout their time fostering with KCC and there are plenty of opportunities to meet with other foster carers. Foster carers can be single, in a long-term relationship, with or without

children and do not need to own their own home. You need a spare room and determination and understanding to make life better for vulnerable children in Kent. To find out more about fostering, visit www.kentfostering.co.uk or speak with one of our Initial Enquiries Advisors on 03000 420002. KCC hosts a range of events across the county where you can find out more about fostering.

We also need more adoptive families to come forward. More information can be found on www.kentadoption.co.uk.

Jenny Whittle, County Councillor, Maidstone Rural East

01622 734897 or 07855 767968

Cllr Martin Round. MBC, for BMPC APM 2015

The past year has been a busy one. I am part of a non-formal alliance, but commonly described as the Rural Alliance, where some of us are drawn together on issues that have a rural dynamic and importance that other Ward Members on MBC do not seem to grasp!

The key issue is usually Planning, but that covers a whole raft of matters from homes and the Local Plan, the lack of enforcement and especially to G&T sites, a poor response to Conservation issues like the protection of woodland and important buildings, a lack of realism to rural ways and fundamentally a poor ethos, culture and attitude to rural Planning, where we seem to have too many badly designed oppressive developments being built or in application and a lack of understanding to the real needs and acceptability of good design, & nice and needed housing or business development that would be acceptable. And ward members and Parish Councils are rarely given a genuine input!

Transport and roads, jobs and economic development and the many sub strands all relate to our mission too!

So a grouping of MBC Conservatives frequently liaise and with County members too, plus some other party members give us some respect too!

Recently John Perry, Val Springett and myself met with Alison Broom to make a number of concerned views known to Officers. It was only the start though!

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE 59 BUS SERVICE

I represented Boughton Malherbe Parish Council at one of the two meetings of the East of Maidstone Rural Transport Group held in the last twelve months, the Chairman, Robert Turner attending the other. The group, which along with KCC and the operators, monitors performance and proposed changes to services, is unique in Kent, and is next due to meet on 29th June. I have also raised matters directly with Arriva, such as late running and occasional no shows, at other times of the year.

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. Although that contract is therefore due to last until April 2018, financial pressures at KCC means that support for bus services in the county is under constant review. At present, however, there are not thought to be any imminent changes likely to either the commercial or supported parts of the service.

With the 59 service timetable remaining unchanged since April last year, the only highlight has really been for the anoraks, with buses just a few weeks old appearing for a short time on Saturdays last summer before being replaced by the more usual teenage vehicles! Arriva is of course owned by German Railways, Deutsche Bahn, and this is also starting to appear on vehicles.

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 Rural Transport Group

Community Warden 2015 AGM report for Boughton Malherbe/Grafty Green Parish Council

Dear Parish Council and Parishioners,

I would like to send my apologies for not appearing this evening; unfortunately I have a number of early appointments today that require me to do an earlier shift.

This year has been a very challenging one for me and the KCC Community Warden Service in general – it feels like the service has ‘come back from the brink.’ There have been huge changes that have taken place that will give the team new challenges to deal with. When the Community Wardens entered into public consultation, there was a real concern that there was to be a 50% reduction to the Wardens around Kent. Many colleagues left the service due to the uncertainty of the role and having to say ‘farewell’ was an upsetting process both in a colleague sense, but also in a Warden perspective - as they were excellent Wardens to their respective Parishes.

For me (and a few other Wardens share my opinion) a ‘miracle’ occurred shortly before Christmas – People power emerged. Kent’s Parishes and Public came out in force during the consultation – and voiced their constructive criticism over the new proposals. Amazingly, a U-turn happened within the Council to keep the service as it is. The Community Warden Service will remain extremely committed to its Parishes and its residents – To You – we OWE a tremendous debt of gratitude for keeping the Community Warden Service – more importantly, it’s a job I love, and hope to have for a foreseeable future. There have been changes – the Maidstone Team has now become the Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling Team. There was sadly a 50% reduction in management and a major reduction to administration staff, and holding the role of Deputy Team Leader for the above team is a huge challenge and has increased my workload considerably on top of my current Warden role.

For me – the Partnership working that is occurring between the Community Warden Service, Parishioners - and the many agencies is absolutely paramount, in what are some very challenging times currently in public service reduction – getting the right balance is crucial.

As the year has progressed I have increased my visual presence in Grafty Green and will continue to do so. The frequency of my visits will increase hopefully when more Wardens are employed to cover those areas in the Maidstone and Tonbridge district, which lost their Warden during the consultation period. At present, those including myself have from time-to-time had to be present in these areas for various reasons.

Positively, we have made inroads and have recently began to offer surgeries on a monthly basis (starting this month) at the Village Hall Coffee morning with the local PCSO’s Boyd and De Burca

Ousby. Both PCSO Boyd and I have also been involved in setting up Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Liverton Hill and have been in contact with representatives from Grafty Green in the hope of setting up one here too – offering an important link to Liverton Hill and the Sandway.

I have also reported two abandoned vehicles in the area and nearby fly tipping that has occurred. Once again, may I send my apologies for my non-appearance this evening – I hope you all have an enjoyable AGM and look forward to serving the residents in and around this beautiful area.

Kindest regards,

Stuart

Stuart Ellesmere, Kent Community Warden for Headcorn, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling Team



In my first year of patrolling as a PCSO my main focus has been to provide a high visible presence by carry out regular patrols of Boughton Malherbe and as a new officer I have spent numerous hours making myself familiar with the issues of the area.

I feel that I am a familiar face with the local community and hope that they feel they can come and talk to me any time with any concerns.

Due to the sensitive nature of my role I cannot always discuss individual cases but I have gotten great satisfaction in helping people in the area.

Boughton Malherbe has maintained a low level of crime during the past year. I cannot access any data on yearly crime statistics internally any more, however going by the monthly crimes I report at the parish meetings we are sustaining the reduced level of crime we have benefited from during the past few years. This has been possible through the support of the community, KCC Warden and the Parish Council.

I am also happy to report the return of PCSO Siobhán de Burca-Ousby who has now joined me in patrolling Headcorn, Harrientsham and Lenham wards. I am sure the area will benefit from having 2 PCSOs (2 for the price of 1!).

I have dealt with a number of issues which have included the following:

- ASB from local teenage children.
- Follow up visits to the victims of burglaries to give crime prevention advice and information booklets.
- Visits to various vulnerable people in the village to give advice and recommend them for further help from social services when required.

- I visit Boughton Malherbe regularly and now run Police Surgeries in the Boughton Malherbe on a monthly basis.
- I have arranged for Speed enforcement officers to attend the area.
- The mobile police station still comes to Headcorn village and parks in the Sainsbury's car park for residents to discuss any issues they have.

We are always trying to keep on top of any nuisance behaviour issues in the village and I have been working with Maidstone Community Safety Unit to resolve any brought to my attention. We encourage residents to call in any incidents of this type.

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

Thank you for all your help in keeping Boughton Malherbe safe.

PCSO John Boyd

St. Nicholas Report to the Parish Council AGM 2015

In September last year 2014, Rev: Dick Venn and Rev: Millie Hart decided to have a trial period for a year, where each of them was responsible for two of the Parishes in the Benefice so that they could each focus more fully on two Churches, Dick is responsible for Lenham and Ulcombe and Millie Harrietsham and Boughton, while keeping each other informed about each Church. This seems to be working quite well but we will see in September when they take stock of their findings. Dick is still in overall charge and Millie his associate.

The PCC received a Quinquennial Report in 2014, and on the whole St. Nicholas is in good repair there are a few things that need attention but nothing major, but we still need to be mindful of what works might need doing in the future, therefore good housekeeping is the key and JC our treasurer does an excellent job.

During the winter a Vfast mast was installed in the Tower and the Church now has Wi-Fi for anyone's use, for this we receive a regular yearly payment of £1200.00 which will greatly help with our finances having a regular income from this source.

The Lightning Conductor was checked in the summer and was found to have some defects which have since been put right.

The Clock is maintained yearly and is in good order.

A new wooden Handrail has been installed on the left hand side of the path leading to the south door, we are looking into creating a path between the South door and the West door making the Toilet more accessible from both inside and outside the building.

We have installed a secondary glazing panel in the window of the new toilet, which was made and given by Mandy Hitchins and the Malherbe Monthly News funds paid for the installation, the outer glass of this window was ill-fitting so this is a big improvement.

We are very grateful to both Mandy and the MMNews for their generosity.

Fund Raising Events such as Cream Teas, Harvest Suppers etc. are still an essential to our being able to balance the books and we are grateful to the village for their support and for helping to run these events and for attending them.

Benefice wide new forms of Church are being tried such as Breakfast Service in St. Mary's Lenham and Messy Church which are held mainly for families but others are welcome to join in these types of Service.

Men's Breakfasts are also held once a month at the Dog and Bear Lenham and a Ladies breakfast has also been started, there is a speaker and a full English is on offer at both events but the Ladies can have a Continental Breakfast if they prefer.

Joan Davidson, Churchwarden.

Honywood and Douglas Almshouses Report for APM 2015 by Mike Davidson

2014 to 2015 has been another successful year and there are no vacancies at present. Any future vacancies will be advertised as usual in the Church, Shop and Malherbe Monthly.

REPORT FROM KFRS

Sorry I cannot be at meeting but send a short report instead

Most important KFRS continue to run extensive recruitment campaigns for on-call firefighters throughout Kent including Lenham and Headcorn and enquiries are always welcomed and can be quite flexible.

Despite ongoing budget cuts fire cover remains the absolute priority.

Locally we continue to check the availability of fire hydrants on a voluntary basis at very regular intervals (thanks to Robert Turner for his help). Importantly Not only does this maintain the visibility and availability for firefighters but picks up things like leaks. On this point the fire service is both not responsible nor indeed permitted to repair leaks the latter being the sole domain of the water company.

A new emergency volunteer Taskforce has been established to supplement fire crews and other agencies at Countywide incidents e.g weather related.

Mobilisation is by fire control operators.

Community safety or fire prevention as many will know it remains a top priority with much emphasis on older persons, young families, vulnerable and disabled persons and increasing input regarding dementia and very

much inter agency working. Free home safety visit enquiries are welcomed,

Telephone 0800 923 7000 or contact me.

Chris Wheal KFRS Volunteer

Malherbe Monthly - Report to Parish Meeting 18th May 2015

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 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 has this year donated money to Boughton Malherbe Church to pay for the installation of a commissioned Stain Glass Window in the toilet of the Church.

Special mention and thanks should be made to Silva Close and Jos Wickens without whom the magazine would never be read by anyone. Every month I deliver the magazines to them and they batch them up and deliver them to the 14 distributors who then hand deliver the magazine to the individual households. Though I do not personally know all the distributors 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

Malherbe Monthly.