



# MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016



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# MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCILLORS

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015 elections took place to elect the Gravesham Member of Parliament, Borough Councillors and Parish Councillors. All three wards in the parish were contested and the following parish Councillors were elected to represent the respective wards.

## **Nurstead and Hook Green Ward.**

Cllr Goffon, Cllr Knott, Cllr McTavish, Cllr Ogden

## **Camer & Meopham Green Ward.**

Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Hasler, Cllr Powell, Cllr Wade

## **Culverstone & Harvel Ward.**

Cllr Bramer, Dawn, Cllr Bramer, Max, Cllr Howard, Cllr Leyshon

# **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL CLLR SHEILA BUCHANAN**

This first year after last year's election has been a busy and interesting time, especially for those of us in new roles – a steep learning curve! Our new councillors Sue Goffon and John Ogden (Hook Green & Nurstead Ward) and Dawn Bramer and Peter Howard (Culverstone & Harvel Ward) have settled in well and are making very valuable contributions to the work of the Council.

We were very pleased to appoint an experienced Clerk, Sarah Eggesden, at the beginning of June and, as our Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, she has proved to be a real asset in terms of her professionalism and knowledge and is keeping us on our toes! The post of Clerk is vital to the proper, effective running of the Council and we are very fortunate to have her. She has had to deal with a lot of 'back' work owing to the lack of a professional Clerk for a year and in November 2015 it was agreed to appoint a Clerical Assistant. We have been pleased to welcome Nicola Jerram in this role. This reverts the staffing level back to 2, as it had been for a number of years.

Largely owing to the resultant increase in staff salaries, provision of pensions, the excellent work done by Paul Agley our Service Contractor plus many other unavoidable increases in costs, the precept this year has been increased. Last year's precept was reduced owing to only employing 1 part time member of staff. This resulted in a decrease in precept for Band D properties to £17.73 (2015/16) from £22.05 in previous year (2014/15). For band D properties in the current year (2016/17) the precept is £24.38 which is an increase of just over 37% from last year. However the rise compared between 2014/15 and 2016/17 is only £2.33 for Band D properties.

The refurbishment of the current 'eyesore', Judson's Pavilion, is still very much on our agenda. This is the only building which is owned by the Parish Council and we owe it to our young people and other users of the recreation ground to provide suitable premises and amenities. We have engaged the services of The Grand to provide youth club activities on Friday evenings for which the parish council has set aside funding for the youth club for this year; the Meopham Colts are a very successful club which engages many young people – around 200 boys and girls but currently have no clubhouse to further the excellent progress they have made with the help of many dedicated volunteers; the Helen Allison School has expressed an interest in using the ground for activities but, again, without amenities this cannot happen. The previous planning permission has expired and the Council is submitting a further application which, though slightly smaller than the previous one, would provide for all these needs. We are now engaged in fundraising for this important project and anyone who can offer help and assistance with this would be very welcome. Cllr Barbara Wade has already raised a considerable sum from activities she has organised in the village. Can you do the same? We want to see this project achieved as soon as possible.

This year includes the celebration of our Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and a tea party was held on her birthday at Meopham Village Hall for all those 90 and over this year. The second celebration is the Picnic on the Green on June 12<sup>th</sup>. I do hope you and your

families will be able to attend this event – and the sun will shine! Do watch the noticeboards and Parish Council website/facebook page for further information.

We were pleased to see several parishioners turn out for our 'Clean for the Queen' litter-picking. I am sure you will appreciate all efforts to clear our village of unsightly litter deposited by irresponsible people. The more you can do in your area, the better for all of us. Coupled with this is a plea to dog owners to be responsible for clearing up after their pets. There are still some anti-social people who allow their dogs to foul in public places such as pavements and Judsons.

Parking at Camer Parade continues to be a routine problem, with a number of people continuing to park on the double yellow lines along the main road. This creates a very dangerous situation especially when people park at the northern end of the Parade close to the exit, because they obliterate the view of traffic driving towards Gravesend and could well be the site of a potentially fatal accident simply because people do not obey the parking restrictions. We would ask all residents to comply with the rules. A second drive round the block often means that a space becomes available as shoppers leave after completing their purchases. It is also a daily problem at School closing times when parents use that parking space rather than the car park behind the Parade to await their childrens' departure from School.

There is potentially good news regarding Meopham Library. With the welcome refurbishment of Meopham School, KCC have applied for planning permission on another site at the complex.

After a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 with Meopham Parish Councillors, interested parishioners and representatives from other rural GBC parishes, presentations were given and a debate took place as to whether Meopham should adopt a Neighbourhood Plan or a Parish Plan. The majority decision was that we should go for the latter and we are fortunate to have Jim Boot with us tonight to give us a short presentation on this. This would **not** be a purely Council project – it is a community one and we look forward to those interested in the preservation and development of Meopham volunteering to take part.

The Lower Thames Crossing has occupied many minds over the last few months. The Highways England's preferred route is Option C. Consultations were well publicised and we hope that many of you attended the consultations and meetings and completed the questionnaires to give your views.

We are very fortunate to have the support of our Gravesham Rural County Councillor, Bryan Sweetland, and Borough Councillors Lesley Boycott, Julia Bugoyne, John Cubitt and Derek Shelbrooke who attend our meetings whenever they can.

I would like to thank fellow councillors for their hard work and support during the last year, especially my Vice-Chairman John Ogden, and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of our Standing Committees.

Finally, it has been an honour to Chair your Council over the last year and I look forward to working with my fellow councillors in the future on your behalf.

# **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&R) CLLR Doug Powell**

## **Responsibilities of the A&R Committee**

The Administration & Resources Committee is responsible for administration of the Council and has delegated responsibility to produce Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, an Emergency Plan, Policies & Internal Procedures, oversee Accounts & Audit (including budget allocations), Training, office equipment, systems and software (including the website), Publications and other administrative tasks allocated by the Council.

**Committee Members:** Cllr Doug Powell (Chairman), Cllr Peter Hasler (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Dawn Bramer, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Peter Howard, Cllr Roz Knott, Cllr Jo McTavish, Cllr John Ogden, and Cllr Barbara Wade.

## **Risk and Asset Management**

The Committee continues to review risk management and the Council's Risk and Asset Registers regularly.

## **Emergency Plan**

The Parish Council, have recently updated the Emergency Plan which will be used in conjunction with the emergency services, utility companies, health and local authorities, who all have well-rehearsed plans to deal with a major emergency affecting our community.

## **Accounts and Financial Matters**

The Committee oversees the budgets and on-going expenditure of all three Standing Committees. It is also responsible for ensuring that the Annual Audit is completed through an internal audit process, in order to satisfy the External Auditor that the public finances are accountable to public scrutiny.

## **Personnel Issues and Staffing Matters**

Mrs Jan Grigg resigned as Clerical Officer and Mrs Sarah Eggesden was appointed as Clerk to the Council in May 2015

In September 2015 the Council agreed to take on additional clerical support and Mrs Nicola Jerram was appointed as Clerical Assistant in November 2015

### **The Parish Website ([www.meopham.org](http://www.meopham.org))**

As well as providing information about Meopham parish & local material, the website is regularly updated to show relevant news and events, including parish council meetings. The website is continually reviewed and is still being developed and populated.

### **Social Networking**

Parishioners can follow us on Twitter @MeophamPC and facebook "Meopham Parish Council" and there are links to both these sites on our website.

### **Information given to the public**

Monthly reports on the work of the Parish Council are placed in the Meopham Review and noticeboards within the parish, together with reports in other press and media from time to time.

The Parish Council's newsletter, "Meopham Mercury", was published again this year and copies were placed at key locations in the parish including the doctor's surgery, the library, the village halls, Harvel Farm Shop, the Spar stores at Culverstone and Camer Parade and the chemist at Neville Parade. All publications produced by the Parish Council can be viewed on the Parish website ([www.meopham.org](http://www.meopham.org)).

# **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (E&A) CLLR SUE GOFTON**

## **Responsibilities of the E&A Committee**

The Environment & Amenities Committee has delegated responsibility to deal with issues associated with Recreation Facilities, Rights of Way, Village Greens, Allotments, Youth Organisations, Churches, Welfare & Retirement Groups, Community Woodland, Environmental Improvement, Upkeep of Councils Assets (other than office equipment) and other tasks allocated by the Council.

**Committee Members:** Cllr Sue Gofton (Chairman), Cllr Rosalie Knott (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Dawn Bramer, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Peter Hasler, Cllr Peter Howard, Cllr Anthony Leyshon, Cllr Doug Powell and Cllr Barbara Wade

## **Judson's Recreation Ground**

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of Judson's Recreation Ground and pavilion, which was gifted to the Parish in 1950. During the course of the year we have continued to work closely with Meopham Colts regarding the proposed extension/ refurbishment of the Pavilion. There have been and still are funding issues. Meanwhile we have carried out a general building survey including an asbestos and electricity inspection. The latter was deemed a safety hazard and we had no choice but to close the Pavilion for the foreseeable future to comply with health and safety.

Meanwhile modified plans have been submitted to GBC and we will be welcoming tenders from local builders to support our ultimate aim. This is to offer a suitable recreational amenity in support of youth in the village and for other general use.

We welcome comments from the parish in support of this on-going issue. Now we have 5 new councillors on board, there are fresh ideas but we are conscious that Judson pavilion is an on-going concern and most certainly want to try and address this as soon as possible.

Judson's recreation ground and play area has enjoyed a very low level of vandalism again this year. Our on-going thanks to our Community Warden who strives to be in all places at all times. We are monitoring the use of 'legal highs', which has become a national issue. As we speak the Government are looking to introduce new legislation in support of this problem.

The Parish Council and the Borough Council inspect the play area regularly. Independent Inspectors undertake a yearly inspection and any risks raised by any of these inspections are considered and appropriate action undertaken by the Parish

Council. We anticipate having to undertake general maintenance of the soft play surface in the near future and have reserved funds for this.

### **Village Halls and Culverstone Community Centre**

A report from each of the village halls and the community centre can be viewed on pages 20-21.

### **Rights of Way**

We are grateful for the active support of the Meopham and District Footpaths Group. The dedicated footpaths wardens, Mr Ken Dare and Mrs Gillian Willsher and their team, provide a highly valued service and the Footpaths Group are to be congratulated for the excellent clearance undertaken of the 38 miles of rights of way in Meopham. A more detailed report by the Footpaths Group can be viewed on page 22.

### **Village Greens and Trees**

Managing the various village greens around the Parish continues to be a major activity to ensure that trees and boundaries are properly maintained and benches are kept in a good condition. The Parish Council carried out an audit of all of the greens, trees, Judson's Recreation Ground and Southdown Shaw Allotment site. We await confirmation from GBC regarding some trees that have TPOs and have a tree surgeon in place to carry out all necessary work. We have addressed some emergency work on trees in Harvel as a result of bad weather.

The Parish Council appointed a new service maintenance contractor last year to undertake routine and ad-hoc tasks within the parish. This includes maintenance, cleansing and litter collection at Judson's Recreation Ground and play area, bus shelters, village greens and the noticeboards. He has worked diligently in response to the needs of the Parish, particularly with replacing the posts around all greens and responding quickly to our request whenever the need has arisen.

We continue to work with the Borough Council who undertakes the grass cutting on the village greens throughout the parish. We are grateful to Meopham Cricket Club for the high standard of maintenance of Meopham Green.

### **Parish Noticeboards**

A new noticeboard has been installed on Meopham Green with a further board to be replaced in Culverstone. There are now eight noticeboards in the parish and these are well used by the Parish Council and many organisations advertising community events. Commercial advertising is not permitted. All notices, other than Borough and Parish Council notices displayed require a unique number, which can be obtained from the Parish Office and are required to be A5 size only.

### **Allotments and Southdown Shaw**

Southdown Shaw allotments, which are run by the Meopham and District Allotments Association, are still proving popular. The Parish Council would like to congratulate the Association for another very successful year.

## **Grants**

The Parish Council was pleased to assist local organisations with funding and the following grants were made in the 2015/2016 financial year in the total sum of £1315:

Meopham Mothers and Toddlers Group	£200
Meopham and District Footpaths Group - Footpaths maintenance	£340
Meopham Over 60s	£275
Meopham Village Hall	£500

## **Litter Picks**

My final report is with regard to litter picks in the parish. Several have been carried out and my thanks to all those who gave up their time, sometimes in unpleasant weather, to ensure the Parish remains as litter free as possible. Particular thanks to residents of Culverstone including a particular person who independently carries out a litter pick as and when he feels it is necessary.

# **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING & PROJECTS COMMITTEE (P&P) Cllr Jo McTavish**

## **Responsibilities of the P&P Committee**

The Planning & Projects Committee has delegated responsibility to deal with issues associated with Planning, Housing, Highways, Parish Projects, Police & Crime reduction, Libraries, Medical services, Bus Shelters, Parish/Neighbourhood Planning, Amenity/Street Lighting, Community Festivities and other matters agreed by the Council.

**Committee Members:** Cllr Jo McTavish (Chairman), Cllr Dawn Bramer (Vice Chairman), Cllr Rosalie Knott, Cllr Peter Hasler, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Doug Powell, Cllr Barbara Wade, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sue Gofton, Cllr Peter Howard

## **Planning Applications**

The Parish Council continues to scrutinise planning applications received from Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) who are the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Each application is considered individually by a Councillor usually for the relevant ward and a recommendation made by them to a Parish Council meeting. The meeting considers whether to raise an objection to the application to the LPA. The final decision to permit or reject an application is taken either by the GBC Regulatory Board or by a Planning Officer under delegated powers.

We are always vigilant to ensure that planning applications comply with green belt conditions whilst recognising residents' wishes to improve their properties for the benefit of their families. However we are currently concerned at the number of applications for retrospective permission and this matter will be taken up with GBC.

## **Highways and Transport**

The Parish Council constantly monitors road safety in the parish and in particular the A227. We liaise closely with Kent Highway Services (KHS) on issues that require attention such as potholes, uneven pavements and damaged road signs. As in previous years KHS provided one-tonne salt bags in the car parks of St John's Church, Culverstone Community Centre and Harvel Village Hall over the winter period.

Issues regarding illegal parking at Camer Parade particularly at school drop off and collection times and on Friday and Saturday evenings continue. MPC has been working with GBC on this matter, signage has been improved and Enforcement Officers are visiting the Parade more frequently. It can be extremely dangerous to exit the Parade when lorries who are making deliveries are parked on the double yellow lines and this issue still needs to be addressed.

Traffic on the A227 is an ongoing concern, both in terms of volume, especially HGV's, and vehicles who exceed the speed limit; this problem could increase if Option C for the Lower Thames Crossing is chosen by the Government.

Proposals for a multibillion pound road link across the River Thames between Essex and Kent were announced in January. The proposal by Highways England is for Option C a tunnel under the Thames and new roads which would go through Chalk, Higham and Shorne before meeting the A2. Public views were sought on the proposals and the consultation period lasted eight weeks. The Parish Council decided to take a neutral stance on the proposals as it felt it was not directly affected. However we heavily promoted the consultation and urged parishioners to respond. We also attended numerous meetings regarding the Lower Thames Crossing and will continue to support colleagues who are in areas of Gravesham which will be affected by the proposal.

### **Bus Shelters**

A number of bus shelters in the Parish required repair or replacement and during the last twelve months we have been working with Kent Highways Services on this issue. We were successful in securing a grant of £7295.50 from KCC which has paid for a new bus shelter at The George and two replacement bus shelters at the station, plus work is in progress at other bus shelters to clear away undergrowth and repair damage.

### **Urban Clearways and Bus Stops**

We have also been working with KCC on a project to improve bus stops and to create clearways to stop parking in laybys which are primarily used as bus stops. There had been a growing number of incidents where lorries were parking in these laybys and no action was possible as they were not designated clearways. KHS received funding to carry out this work along the whole length of the A227 and this project is currently in progress.

### **Library Services**

Many Parishioners were concerned to learn that a library would not be included within Meopham School which is currently being rebuilt. However MPC has been in regular communication with our KCC Cllr Bryan Sweetland on this matter and we understand that a site between the Medical Centre and the Kindergarten has been identified and that Planning Permission for the development is currently being sought.

### **Parish Guide**

The Parish Guide has been updated and distributed to every home in the Parish, further copies are available from the Parish office.

### **Community Festivities**

The Parish Council has decided to hold two events to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. The first event on the 21<sup>st</sup> April was a tea party held on the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. We invited parishioners who were already ninety and those who were due to celebrate their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this year to a tea party in the village hall. The guests were able to bring a friend or family member to join in the celebrations and Mayor and Mayoress of Gravesham also attended the party. Meopham Evening WI

prepared a delicious traditional afternoon tea using vintage china, the tea was served by members of the WI and members of the Parish Council. Meopham Afternoon Flower Arrangers made some beautiful table arrangements and Meopham Historical Society set up an exhibition of events in Meopham over the last ninety years.

The second event will be a Picnic on the Green on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June. This will be free and some entertainment for the children will be provided. More details about the afternoon will be available shortly.

# PARISH REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES 2015/2016

Action with Communities in Rural Kent (Kent Rural Community Council)	Cllrs D Bramer and Wade
Age Concern	Cllr R Knott
Clay Cottages Trust	Cllrs Hasler and Knott
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Cllrs Goffton and Wade
Culverstone Community Association	Cllrs D Bramer, Howard and Leyshon
Flagmaster	Mr H Antwiss
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee	Mr K Dare, Mrs G Willsher and Cllrs Leyshon and Powell
Gravesham Joint Transportation Board	Cllr Leyshon
Harvel Village Hall Management Committee	Cllrs M Bramer and Knott
Kent Association of Local Councils – Voting members at AGM and Gravesham Area Committee	Cllrs Hasler and Powell (Cllr Buchanan reserve)
Meopham Sports and Leisure Association	Cllrs Powell and Wade (Cllr Goffton reserve)
Meopham Village Hall Management Committee	Cllrs Buchanan and Knott
Meopham Welfare Committee	Mr P King
Meopham Windmill Trust	Mr I Kerr
NHS Darent Valley Hospital Briefings	Cllrs Hasler, Leyshon and McTavish

§ In some cases, the individuals listed are members of the Managing Body of the Organisations concerned. In others, they hold a watching brief on behalf of the Parish Council. Not all the Parish Representatives are members of Meopham Parish Council

# SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2015/2016 (121st YEAR)

<b>MAY 2015</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>PARISH ELECTIONS</b>
May 2015	19	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (St Johns Centre) <b>6.00 PM</b> ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING <b>7.30 PM</b>
June 2015	2 16 30	Planning and Projects Committee Environment and Amenities Committee Administration and Resources Committee
July 2015	21	FULL COUNCIL MEETING (Nurstead Court) <b>7.30PM</b>
August 2015		<b>RECESS</b>
September 2015	1 22	Planning and Projects Committee Environment and Amenities Committee
October 2015	6 20	Administration and Resources Committee FULL COUNCIL MEETING (Harvel Village Hall) <b>7.30 PM</b>
November 2015	3 17	Planning and Projects Committee (Budget) Environment and Amenities Committee (Budget)
December 2015	1 15	Administration and Resources Committee (Budget) FULL COUNCIL MEETING (Cricket Pavilion) <b>7.30 PM</b>
January 2016	19	Planning and Projects Committee
February 2016	9	Environment and Amenities Committee
March 2016	8	Administration and Resources Committee
April 2016	5	FULL COUNCIL MEETING (Meopham Village Hall) <b>7.30 PM</b>
May 2016	10 17	ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING (Meopham Village Hall) <b>7.30PM</b> ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (St Johns Centre) <b>6.00 PM</b>

*All meetings are held in the Windmill commencing at 8.00 pm unless stated otherwise.*

# SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2016/2017 (122nd YEAR)

May 2016	<b>10</b> <b>17</b>	<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING (Meopham Village Hall) 7.30PM</b> <b>ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (St Johns Centre) 7.30 PM</b>
June 2016	7 21	Environment and Amenities Committee <b>7.30pm</b> Planning and Projects Committee <b>7.30pm</b>
July 2016	5 <b>19</b>	Administration and Resources Committee <b>7.30pm</b> <b>FULL COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM</b>
August 2016		<b>RECESS</b>
September 2016	6 20	Environment and Amenities Committee <b>7.30pm</b> Planning and Projects Committee <b>7.30pm</b>
October 2016	4 11 <b>18</b>	Administration and Resources Committee <b>7.30pm</b> Budget meeting (Chairman, Vice Chairman & Standing Committee Chairman only) time TBC <b>FULL COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM</b>
November 2016	1 15 29	Environment and Amenities Committee (Budget) <b>7.30pm</b> Planning and Projects Committee (Budget) <b>7.30pm</b> Administration and Resources Committee (Budget) <b>7.30pm</b>
December 2016	<b>13</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM</b>
January 2017	<b>10</b> 17 31	<b>FULL COUNCIL – (final budget approval only) 7.30pm</b> Environment and Amenities Committee <b>7.30pm</b> Planning and Projects Committee <b>7.30pm</b>
February 2017	14 <b>28</b>	Administration and Resources Committee <b>7.30pm</b> <b>FULL COUNCIL 7.30pm</b>
March 2017	14 28	Environment and Amenities Committee <b>7.30pm</b> Planning and Projects Committee <b>7.30pm</b>
April 2017	11 <b>25</b>	Administration and Resources Committee <b>7.30pm</b> <b>FULL COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM</b>
May 2017	<b>16</b> <b>23</b>	<b>ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 7.30 PM</b> <b>ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM</b>

**All committee meetings will take place at the Windmill Chamber  
Full Council meeting venues to be confirmed.**

# 2015/2016 BUDGET MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

<b>PLANNING AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE (P&amp;P)</b>	
Highways & Streetlighting	£500.00
Bus Shelter Repairs & Renewals	£1500.00
Bus Shelter Cleaning	£500.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£1000.00
Planning Fees/Investigations	£200.00
<b>TOTAL P&amp;P COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£3700.00</b>

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (E&amp;A)</b>	
Cleansing & Litter Collection (Service Contract)	£5000.00
Southdown Shaw maintenance	£250.00
Notice Boards	£1250.00
Village Greens and Harvel Pond	£3000.00
Benches maintenance ( Memorial)	£500.00
Trees (including Community Woodland)	£5000.00
Village sign and flagpole	-
Environmental Improvements	£500.00
Judson's Play Area - Maintenance	£1000.00
Judson's Play Area – sinking Fund	£2000.00
Judson's Pavilion and Ground	£1000.00
Judson's Pavilion - improvements	£2500.00
Grants	£2300.00
<b>TOTAL E&amp;A COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£24,300.00</b>

<b>ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&amp;R)</b>	
Clerks' salaries, tax & NI	£11000.00
Cllr and Clerk Expenses	£400.00
Professional Fees (other)	£1000.00
Subscriptions	£2000.00
Chairman's Allowance	£200.00
Training	£1500.00
General Administration	£6120.00
MPC Accounts Management and Audit	£1650.00
Printing and Copying	£1500.00
Communications and IT	£1500.00
Contingencies	£1000.00
<b>TOTAL A&amp;R COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£27870.00</b>

<b>TOTAL ALL COMMITTEES</b>	<b>£55870.00</b>
RECEIPTS	£550.00
GBC GRANT	£2416.00
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£52904.00</b>

# VILLAGE HALLS & COMMUNITY CENTRE REPORTS

## Culverstone Community Centre 2015/2016

### General Activities

As usual, Badminton, Short Mat Bowls, Table Tennis and Dog Training continue to be the backbone of our regular activities. However, Wednesday morning Zumba, one of our newer activities, is still flourishing, and our Monday morning Coffee Club is proving popular. Members chat, play games, borrow paperbacks, play table tennis, and have the occasional outing.

Meopham Art Group is happily still with us on Thursday afternoons during the autumn and winter.

The more recently formed Culverstone Art Group meets on alternate Wednesday afternoons and is ideal for those who wish to learn to paint with watercolours. There is a regular tutor who caters for beginners and improvers, and new members are most welcome.

### Children's Activities

There is an Afterschool Lego session every Monday during term time. And also 'Bounce n Play' every Friday between 10.30am and 2.00pm. The Centre is popular for weekend Children's Parties throughout the year.

### Fundraising

We raise funds by running a 200 Club Lottery. We usually have an Annual Quiz but didn't manage to run one in 2015.

### Maintenance Projects and Improvements

In May 2015 we had our main roof refurbished. Hopefully this will prevent any leakage problems for at least the next ten years.

We have recently had a defibrillator installed in the main hall. This is obviously available to hall users if necessary, but also to local residents providing the premises are in use.

### Our Website

[www.cca.btck.co.uk](http://www.cca.btck.co.uk)

## MEOPHAM VILLAGE HALL

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

Meopham Village Hall is registered with the Charity Commissioners No. 302902 and constituted by a Deed dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 1917.

The Charity is administered by a Management Committee comprising:

Chairman	Brian Blount
Vice Chairman	Trixie Leyshon
Booking Secretary	Margaret Keenan
Treasurer	Rob Macfarlane
Minutes Secretary	Rosalie Knott
Contracts Secretary	Sheila Buchanan
Trustee	Arthur Fitz-Simon
Buildings Consultant	Roy Lingham

The object of the Charity is the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the residents of Meopham and the surrounding area without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions and in particular for use for meetings, lectures, classes and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupations, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

The hall is currently used by 23 contracted local clubs, many hiring for multiple sessions. We only have one available space left for contract hire and a waiting list has now accrued for other sessions.

In light of the extra finance that will occur in the forthcoming year i.e. the Caretaker's wages will rise in accordance with the 'Living Wage' authorised by the government plus the usual rise in utility bills, we will be adjusting the non-contract hourly booking rates for Friday and Saturday evenings (6 – midnight) to £16.50 per hour from January 2016, in order to cover these costs.

The annual checks on fire alarms, fire extinguishers, portable appliances has been carried out and the Health & Safety Regulations have been reviewed.

The flooring in the back room has been replaced and thresholds to the kitchen, in keeping with Health and Safety concerns.

Grants for a new roof is on-going.

Rob Macfarlane has been appointed as our new Treasurer replacing Roy Lingham who becomes the village hall Building Consultant. A new auditor has also been appointed.

All the unlabelled cupboards within the hall have now been identified and one containing the historical records of the village hall. Meopham Historical Society has been informed and are including interesting information for inclusion in their records of Meopham.

We have applied for a defibrillator for the village hall via The British Heart Foundation and are awaiting the outcome of this application.

Appropriate notices regarding Public Liability and the proximity of First Aid equipment is duly displayed on the notice board in the hall.

I wish to thank everyone who helps in any way and also those who use the village hall – remember **if you don't use it you lose it!**

# HARVEL VILLAGE HALL

## COMMITTEE 2015 SUMMARY

**The 2015 Harvel Fete** - This was a great success, the weather was very kind to us and takings were a record £2750.64. Many thanks to the volunteers of the village who set up, run stalls, and lend a hand breaking down and putting things away - they are the true heroes of the day.

**Barn Dance** - The Harvel Barn Dance was slightly different this year as the barn was unavailable due to harvesting demands. The Jones family kindly let the village use the area in front of the barn and this proved to be an excellent idea as many said that it was the best barn dance yet. Special thanks to the Jones', the Careys and everyone else who lent a hand.

**Village Hall Maintenance** - The exterior window frames and doors have all been repainted and electric hand dryers have been installed in all three toilets.

**D-SLAM Telecom Cabinet** - BT Openreach have installed a new fibre-optic D-SLAM cabinet in the hall car park. This has reduced 'street furniture' in the lane, helping to maintain the look of the village, resulted in a one-off payment of £750 to hall funds and all those on the exchange may now order and use superfast fibre broadband.

**Harvel Residents' Association** - Since October the Harvel Residents' Association have been building a closer relationship with the Hall Committee, keeping us up to date with their excellent work in liaising with the council regarding the upkeep of our village and are to be commended on their efforts.

**Christmas Party** - The Christmas Party was again a great success, Sally Smith did a superb job of decorating and setting up the hall, Rachel Taylor entertained us with some traditional carols and there was also a table quiz. Big thanks to everyone who helped this event go with a bang.

**Special Mention – Operation Steptoe** - Ian Carey embarked on a rubbish clearance/charity raiser during the summer and autumn months; visiting houses in the village and surrounding areas collecting waste & scrap metal, collating and sorting it, and then selling it on to scrap metal dealers. This resulted not only in many people getting their gardens cleared of unwanted metal, but also raising a staggering £645.15 for the Village Hall funds. This was a fantastic effort with a great result.

**Committee changes** – Ian Carey and Deke Frickey retired at the AGM, the committee thanked them for their efforts during their years of involvement.

# FOOTPATHS WARDENS REPORT

The Footpaths Wardens are appointed by the E&A Committee to play an effective part in ensuring the wellbeing and enjoyment of the public rights of way in the Parish.

They maintain a regular and essential link with Meopham & District Footpaths Group (M&DFG) and join the Monitoring Team in the annual inspection of every path in the Parish and in dealing with any problems which arise. The Group appreciates the grant in aid and support from the Parish Council towards its path clearing activity. The cooperation of the KCC PROW Officer is also welcomed.

The M&DFG offers an extensive programme of walks in Meopham and well beyond, throughout the year. There are opportunities of long distance walks through to 'Short Walks' of approximately four miles, at a more leisurely pace.

The Group's web-site ([www.meopham-walkers.co.uk](http://www.meopham-walkers.co.uk)) is full of interest, ranging from its historical background, contacts and current events – plus the latest inviting walks programme.

The readily available local extensive network of public rights of way provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the delightful countryside in our Parish.

Parish Paths Wardens:-  
Gillian Willsher and Ken Dare

# MEOPHAM WELFARE COMMITTEE

(Operators of the Meopham Community Bus)

Registered Charity No. 1051669

VAT Registration No. 680 1614 50

## ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

Apologies for the brevity of this report which has been written at short notice!

Following the sad passing of Colin Durham in November 2015, I volunteered to take on the operations role for the Meopham Community Bus. Having already been appointed as Treasurer last year I have been undertaking both roles and it is likely that I will be elected the new Chairman at our impending Annual General Meeting.

We have continued to operate a bus service into Gravesend town centre three times a week for the benefit of the parishioners of Meopham and Cobham. A number of successful shopping trips to places such as Dover and Sevenoaks have also been arranged.

We were pleased to be able to provide transport at the recent celebration of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at Meopham Village Hall and the minibus has also been used by other local societies.

Whilst we have incurred a higher than usual expenditure on the minibus, following a major service and replacement of the mechanical sliding step, we are hopefully in a good position to continue with our service which, as always, relies heavily on the goodwill and effort of our volunteer drivers.

Philip J King, Treasurer

# RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

*PCSO Jo Hartley*

Contact via 101 or [gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk)

Due to recent restructure of the Community Safety Unit in Gravesend due to staff losses, we are no longer able to dedicate a PCSO to patrol a single ward and we are being utilised across the District, although I am named as your ward officer, I am a Gravesham Officer and will be tasked to other areas, however I do default to rural wards if needed in relation to crime needs. I must highlight that any criminal activity must be logged with 101 or 999 according to what crime in the first instance.

Meopham North resides within the rural wards of Meopham. Our crime statistics have shown that crime within this beat area remains low at this present time. Our internal systems for statistics are only for Policing purposes, so therefore no specific figures can be issued. If you would like to check local crime figures, you can visit, [www.police.uk./kent](http://www.police.uk./kent) . If you scroll down to Meopham North this will provide crime figures that relate to freedom of information act and this site is updated by external organisation.

Crime often leaves victims feeling uncomfortable in their own homes – something that no one should ever have to feel. Local policing officers will continue to work hard to identify offenders but I would also encourage you to take measures to help protect your property:

- If you are out of your home ensure all windows and doors are shut and locked, even if you are just in the garden.
- If you haven't got one already, consider installing an alarm or security lights as they act as a deterrent.
- Keep valuables items and keys out of sight and away from windows and doors.
- Security mark your valuables. This makes them less desirable to thieves and can help us trace items back to you if they are recovered. Alternatively, register your valuables on [immobilise.com](http://immobilise.com). This is a national property database.
- Record the serial numbers of your property, as well as your mobile phone's International Mobile Equipment Identifier (IMEI) number, the unique reference number given to all phones. On most handsets you can get this by typing \*#06#

We will continue to endeavour to attend annual fetes and please keep an eye on the Kent Police Website and social media for any up and coming crime prevention events.

# KENT COMMUNITY WARDENS

*Mandy Cason, 07977 981931 (Meopham, Culverstone and Vigo)*

Kent County Council (KCC) Community Wardens provide a reassuring visible presence in 128 communities across Kent. They deal with low level crime and anti-social behaviour whilst working with partner agencies to make Kent a safer place to live. The wardens are committed to building community confidence and delivering high quality services. The wardens work flexible hours between 7.30 am and 10 pm daily, enabling them to address local problems as and when they occur within the parish.

The wardens' objectives are to:

- Provide a reassuring conspicuous presence;
- Promote community solidarity and encourage communities and neighbourhoods to identify and solve problems;
- Tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Act as "eyes and ears" for other agencies;
- Be a trusted friend for the community;
- Improve access to local authority services;
- Provide information and advice about Kent County Council, local district councils and other public services;
- Promote social inclusion.

They raise community awareness of problems such as SCAM mail, Bogus/Rogue callers that prey on vulnerable people in their homes. We address environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, vandalism and dog fouling.

Other issues dealt with by the wardens include:

- Promoting and supporting Neighbourhood Watch;
- Presentations on personal safety including Internet and road safety.
- Neighbour disputes.
- Nuisance/stray or lost dogs/livestock.
- Providing Welfare advice and Agency referrals;
- Fallen livestock;
- Trading Standards and Police Intelligence Reports.
- Providing funding avenues to support local amenities.
- Talk time Surgeries

Culverstone Lego club has continued to provide a positive contribution, towards reducing the congestion on the Wrotham road during school collection times; this project has been made possible due to the support and funding by GBC.

Community Surgeries are still well attended located in Meopham library every Tuesday 1000-1200hrs.

The new memory café every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month held at St Johns Centre has proven to be a great success I attend when area commitments allow. I also attend the Dementia Forum quarterly. Dementia awareness week which is to be held at Gravesend library is on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May between 1-5 pm.

Charlton football training I hope will return to Vigo shortly funding permitted; this project will be available to all local children.

I have taken part/supported Meopham Parish Council on their litter picks across the village this year. I also attended the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations at Meopham Village Hall. This was without a doubt a great success and enjoyed by all who attended and a credit to all who made this possible.

I will be attending the Trosley Country Park Open day on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May, to promote the Community Warden Service and to discuss any community issues with local residents. KCC Community Support Warden Jacqueline Fuller will also be in attendance to promote awareness on SCAM and related issues. This event is free and all members of the community are welcome.

Meopham Parish would benefit from more Neighbourhood Watch schemes. We currently have several located within the village, however more watches could only be a benefit to the area. I have been successful in obtaining and launching two new watches in the Culverstone area. Anyone interested in finding out more about setting up a watch in your road, please contact the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator John Haddaway on 01634 792131 or myself on 07977981931