



MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017



Meopham Parish Council, The Windmill, Meopham Green,
Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0QA
Tel: 01474 813779

E-mail: clerk@meopham.org
clericalassistant@meopham.org

Website: www.meopham.org

Twitter: @MeophamPC

Facebook: Meopham Parish Council

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MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCILLORS

The following are currently elected parish councillors to represent the respective wards.

Nurstead and Hook Green Ward.

Cllr Goffon, Cllr Knott, Cllr McTavish, Cllr Ogden DL

Camer & Meopham Green Ward.

Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Hasler, Cllr Powell, Cllr Wade

Culverstone & Harvel Ward.

Cllr D Bramer, Cllr M Bramer, Cllr Howard, Cllr Luxford

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL CLLR SHEILA BUCHANAN

This has been my second year as Chairman of Meopham Parish Council and it has been an interesting and challenging one.

We were saddened by the death of Tony Leyshon, a ward councillor for Culverstone and Harvel, last May. He had strong views and was not afraid to express them, but always had the interests of parishioners at heart. The ward requested an election the result of which was to welcome Pat Luxford to the Council.

The rebuilding of Judson's Pavilion is progressing, albeit more slowly than we would have wished. We are awaiting final planning permission from GBC after considerable consultation with Kent FA to ensure adequate use by the Meopham Colts. It is also necessary to have a satisfactory venue for the Youth Club and other potential users. Many thanks should go to John Ogden who has chaired the Judsons Committee and has been pro-active in moving this project on.

The re-birth of Harvel Pond has been occupying our thoughts and actions. The pond and Harvel Green belong to Meopham Parish Council so it is our responsibility to ensure the maintenance. KCC paid for the removal of years of silt and will make good the Green when the silt is removed. More work needs to be done and we have worked with Kent Wildlife Trust to ascertain what is necessary in relation to tree overgrowth, planting, fence and viewing platform. Our Clerk is actively looking for grants to cover this work. Councillors Max & Dawn Bramer, Roz Knott and Sue Goffton have had a positive input into this project together with Louise Martin (Harvel Residents Association) and other Harvel residents.

Planning applications take up a lot of our time. GBC will no longer supply us with paper copies of plans and we shall have to get used to looking at plans electronically via their website. We now list planning applications on agendas posted on all the notice boards with a link to their website. It is important to remember that although MPC is consulted, the decisions are made by GBC planners and councillors. Any letters of objection or support should be directed to them but we would welcome a copy.

GBC have said they wish to close the public toilets at Meopham Green as a cost cutting exercise owing to an apparent lack of use. Your Council is firmly opposed to this as although those who live locally may not use them, there are many walking groups which do and visitors to cricket matches and other events, apart from passing traffic, value this amenity. GBC are exploring other possible toilet provision before the final decision is made. Should MPC decide to 'adopt' these toilets, it would be at a cost of around £10,000 which would mean an increase in the precept for next year of £3.40 per household per annum (6p per week) for a Band D property. Let us know what you think.

Parking issues continue to be a constant concern, especially around schools and Camer Parade. We have repeatedly urged GBC to provide more enforcement officers to issue tickets to those who ignore double yellow lines and have no concern for resident's property or the danger of exiting Camer Parade where illegal

parking is evident, but there are insufficient officers to patrol these areas on a regular basis. We have set up a working party which is aiming to educate and inform as MPC has no power to do anything else. You will see evidence of this in the autumn.

After a well-attended public meeting at St John's Centre earlier this year and a meeting with residents last November, a Parish Action Team has been set up to look at how residents see the future of Meopham by updating the 2008 Parish Plan. This is not a parish council group but is made up of interested residents with the support of the Parish Council. If you care about this, do contact Susan McNally – email susan.mcnally@lineone.net or tel 01474 815971 / 07795958149.

The precept for this year has increased to take into account our statutory responsibility to provide pensions for our staff and a general increase in regular payments.

I should like to thank councillors for their support and hard work, especially the Chairmen of our committees – Sue Gofton, Max Bramer, Jo McTavish and John Ogden – and Sarah Eggesden, our Clerk, together with the Clerical Assistant, Nicola Jerram. The parish office is the 'engine room' of the Council. The staff put into action decisions made at meetings, endeavour to obtain grants for everything they can and keeps us on our toes and on the straight and narrow. I think you may be surprised at how much they achieve on your behalf!

I have been excellently supported by the Vice-Chairman, John Ogden DL and I have been honoured to be the Chairman in the village I love.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&R) CLLR MAX BRAMER

Responsibilities of the A&R Committee

The Administration & Resources Committee is responsible for the Council's internal procedures. It has delegated powers:

- To take action on behalf of the council on Risk Management, Emergency Plan, Publicity and Media Relations, Parish Website, Accounting and Audit Arrangements, Training, and Planning Applications
- To advise the Council on Standing Orders, Policies, Contracts, Setting of Standing Committee Budgets and Approval of Annual Accounts
- To monitor on behalf of the Council and make any recommendations considered necessary on Administration Costs, Internal Procedures and Standing Committee Expenditure.

Committee Members: Cllr Max Bramer (Chairman), Cllr John Ogden DL (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Jo McTavish 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 has formed an Emergency Plan for the Parish to be used if necessary 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. To keep up to date with developments, the Parish Clerk attended a workshop on emergency planning during the year. A 'Rest Centre' training course has been arranged for all Councillors in October at the Culverstone Community Centre.

Accounts and Financial Matters

The Committee oversees the budgets and ongoing expenditure of all the Council's committees. This includes advising the Council on the use of its Reserves. 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

Following Government legislation to introduce occupational pension schemes for all qualifying employees the Council enrolled the Parish Clerk and the Parish Clerical Assistant in the Local Government Pension Scheme as operated by Kent County

Council. The Parish Clerk, Mrs. Sarah Eggesden, has successfully completed the programme of studies and work necessary to gain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) qualification. This is the first time that any of our Parish Clerks has obtained this important professional qualification.

Policies

As part of the continuing professionalization of the Council's activities the following policies were drawn up and subsequently adopted by the Council:

- Training Policy
- Equality Policy
- Co-option Policy for a Councillor to Fill a Vacancy
- Media Policy
- Noticeboard Policy
- Travel and Subsistence Expenses and Mileage Allowances for Parish Councillors
- Public Participation Protocol
- Protocol for Recording and Reporting of Council and Committee Meetings
- Policy for Retention and Recording of Documents

Contracts

A number of contracts were scrutinised and either approved directly by the Committee or forwarded to the Full Council for ratification. These included:

- The Council's contract for IT services, including maintaining the website
- The Council's book-keeping contract
- The service contract for cleansing of the Council's bus shelters
- Renewal of the Council's insurance
- An agreement with Meopham Village Hall to install a defibrillator and cabinet on an outside wall
- An agreement with the Meopham Windmill Trust concerning the installing of improved heating in the Parish Office at the Windmill and the Windmill Chamber
- Renewal of the lease for the use of the Judson's Pavilion and football pitches with the Colts Football Club
- Renewal of the long-term lease for the Cricket Pavilion and land on Meopham Green with Meopham Cricket Club
- A Wayleave over Meopham Green for a local resident

The Council's statutory obligations concerning one of the leases and rights of access over Meopham Green were also reviewed.

The Parish Website (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).

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 Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Peter Hasler, Cllr Peter Howard, and Cllr Barbara Wade

Judson's Recreation Ground

Judson's remains a key focal point for recreation within Meopham. We are fortunate to have excellent play facilities that are inspected and monitored weekly by GBC and regularly litter picked by our service contractor. The perimeter has been considerably cut back, which is part of our on-going maintenance programme. The actual play area has had monies spent to ensure it remains safe for use and MPC have on-going reserve funds for as and when any equipment needs repairing or replacing.

Allotments

There is a new Chairman of the allotments committee and it is hoped that each and every plot will be taken soon to encourage further community engagement with home grown vegetables. We are fortunate to have this facility and hope the local community continue to support the objective of having an Allotment site within the parish

Youth

This is a difficult area for the Council to support. It's about logistics and more importantly getting the right service and structure in place for young adults. Judson's Pavilion is not available at this present time and MPC have been unable to secure a suitable local venue that could offer similar facilities. GBC now have a bus, which can offer a service but it is in great demand, and we are still negotiating sourcing the bus. We are aware that whatever long term we can offer must be consulted with the young adults, otherwise it will be a waste of time and funds.

Village Greens

We annually audit each and every Village Green to ensure they are kept in good condition regarding trees, posts, gates etc. The residents of Harvel asked MPC if we could address the poor state of the pond by Harvel Village Green. Ownership was

not clear and neighbours to the pond had regularly tried to manage the foliage. After various meetings with residents, Kent Wildlife Trust, the Conservation Officer from GBC and latterly KCC we are pleased to advise that the pond is having considerable work done long term to encourage the return of wildlife. MPC have also applied for a grant to help fund this exercise. It is an excellent opportunity to work together and make a difference to the parish as well as the positives of renewed wildlife. I would particularly like to thank Louise Martin, chair of Harvel Residents Association and Mary Blackwell from Kent Wildlife Trust for their efforts to date. Our contract continues with our service contractor who continues to offer an excellent service in the parish.

Meopham Green War Memorial

The writing on the war memorial has become illegible in places. The stone work is showing signs of the build-up of carbon deposits and biological growths such as algae and lichen. The masonry generally needs cleaning by a specialist company and we are seeking a grant from the War Memorial Trust to cover up to 70% of the cost of this work. We are through the first stage of the grant application and are now in the process of preparing the second stage of the application.

Rights of Way

We are fortunate to live in a parish, which has many areas of AONB, with Meopham Green being a focal point for walkers to enjoy, for example, our footpaths both locally and from afar. As ever 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. They regularly attend Parish meetings and update the Council accordingly. A more detailed report by the Footpaths Group can be viewed on page 23.

Grants

The Parish Council was pleased to assist local organisations with funding and the following grants were made in the 2016/2017 financial year:

Meopham and District Footpaths Group	£340
Harvel Village Hall Committee	£500
St John's Parochial Church Council	£500
Meopham Windmill Trust	£1198
Meopham Village Hall	£100
Meopham Over 60's	£150

Litter Picks

Last but not least we now have quarterly litter picks in the parish. Meeting at the Windmill, volunteers are given suitable aides to carry out litter pick for approximately an hour. This is proving very successful as unfortunately having the A227 running through the heart of both Meopham and Culverstone litter is regularly discarded from traffic moving through. I must also comment that I often see parishioners walking their dogs or generally walking through the parish with a carrier bag – litter picking. We are most fortunate to live in such a desirable area so please note these comments – every little bit helps. Dates for Litter Picks in 2017 – Saturday 29th July and Saturday 28th October

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 Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sue Gofton, Cllr Pat Luxford

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 by a GBC Planning Officer under delegated powers or by the GBC Regulatory Board. 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.

The number of planning applications has risen significantly over the last twelve months, some are complex and a few are controversial. We have also seen more members of the public who wish to speak about their application attending meetings. On many occasions discussion about planning applications has taken so much time at Parish Council meetings that it has not been possible to find time to properly discuss other matters. At Full Council on the 25th April it was agreed that a new Standing Committee would be set up to deal exclusively with Planning Applications, it will meet on a monthly basis and will mean that applications are given the time and importance they deserve.

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 making deliveries or cars are parked on the double yellow line by people who are visiting the various food outlets. Parking outside all our local schools is also concerning, with an increasing number of parishioners complaining about inconsiderate parking by parents and carers when taking and collecting children from school. We have therefore decided to set up a Working Group specifically to deal with Parking Issues. The Working Group has been successful in attracting a small amount of funding from KCC which will enable us to launch a campaign in the autumn; we are planning to work with local schools, shopkeepers, residents, GBC and KCC Councillors and the Police on this matter.

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 is likely to increase now Option C for the Lower Thames Crossing has been chosen by the Government. We will look at re-joining the Kent Speed Safety project which uses community volunteers to help reduce excessive speeds on local roads.

As mentioned above the Government recently announced that they have chosen Option C as their preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing this is a huge multi billion pound project which will not be completed until at least 2025. The Parish Council will continue to send representatives to the Lower Thames Crossing Action Group which campaigned against Option C.

Urban Clearways and Bus Stops

In the last eighteen months we have 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. This project is now completed and the problem of lorries parking in laybys has been virtually eliminated.

Library Services

We are pleased to report that the new library is currently being built, it is situated between the Doctor's surgery and the Day Nursery and is scheduled to open in July 2017. It will be a great asset to the Parish.

Parish Plan

A decision was taken to go ahead with the development of a Parish Plan which will be called the Meopham Community Action Plan. A very successful public meeting was held in January attended by over 150 people. A Committee has been set up with 18 members and they are meeting on a monthly basis. The Group are planning a survey which will be distributed to every household in the Parish. A Parish or Community Plan is a document that tackles important issues that will influence our neighbourhood in the future and includes an action plan.

Kent Rural Coffee and Information Project

Together with around 20 other small villages and hamlets in Kent we have been selected to participate in this project which is being run by Action with Communities in Rural Kent. A pop up café in Harvel will enable people in this isolated community

to meet and enjoy coffee and cake with old and new friends, it will also provide advice and signposting to relevant agencies for residents of any age who need help and support on a wide range of issues.

Community Festivities

The Picnic on the Green held in 2016 to celebrate the Queens 90th birthday was a success despite poor weather so we have decided to hold another picnic this summer. It will be held on the Cricket Green on Sunday 13th August, we hope to have some music, and entertainment for the children, food outlets and the bar will be run by the Cricket Club.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JUDSON'S PAVILION COMMITTEE (JPC) Cllr J Ogden DL

Responsibilities of the Judson's Pavilion Committee

The Judson's Pavilion Committee looks after the on-going maintenance of the Pavilion and any associated work in the surrounding area and the development and funding in connection with the planned redevelopment of the Pavilion and any associated work in the surrounding area.

Committee Members: Cllr John Ogden DL (Chairman), Cllr Peter Howard (Vice Chairman), Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sue Gofton, Cllr Peter Hasler, Cllr Barbara Wade, Keith Waters (Meopham Colts), Bob Heming (Meopham Colts)

This Committee was reconstituted at the beginning of the Council year. It has two senior representatives from the Meopham Colts as seconded members and it has held a number of successful and constructive meetings.

We now have the active support of the Kent representative of Sport England who will oversee and assist with any grant applications we make once we know the extent of the funding requirement. We are delighted that the Colts have raised some £40,000 to add to the reserved funds from the Parish Council for this project.

The Kent FA and the Football Foundation have also met with us and have now approved all the modifications we have made following their recommendations to the plans for the new pavilion, in order to provide for its multi-group use in the future and in providing excellent facilities for both the Meopham Colts, but also other youth groups in the Parish. We have also consulted with and incorporated all the recommendations of the GBC Planning representatives.

The final modified plans are about to be submitted to Gravesham Borough Council Planning Department and as soon as approval has been agreed we will go out to tender. Substantial revisions which have been made to the original plans which will enable us to provide considerably more facilities in the Pavilion to support the Colts own funding needs in the future and those of other groups. We are extremely grateful to Bob Heming of the Colts whose company has been instrumental in producing the repeated revisions to our plans.

This year is the 20th anniversary of Meopham Colts and it would be very appropriate if we could be in a position to provide a fully refurbished facility to them and the Youth of the Parish.

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

2016/2017

Action with Communities in Rural Kent (Kent Rural Community Council)	Cllr Wade
Age UK	Cllr Knott
Clay Cottages Trust	Cllrs Hasler and Knott
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Cllrs Gofton and Wade
Culverstone Community Association	Cllrs D Bramer and Howard
Flagmaster	Keith Savage
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee	Mr K Dare and Mrs G Willsher and Cllr Luxford
Gravesham Joint Transportation Board	Cllr Luxford
Gravesham Rural Forum	Cllrs M Bramer
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
Lower Thames Crossing	Cllrs Gofton and McTavish
Meopham Sports & Leisure Association	Cllrs Powell and Wade
Meopham Village Hall Management Committee	Cllr Knott
Meopham Welfare Committee	Mr P King and Cllr Ogden DL
Meopham Windmill Trust	Mr I Kerr
NHS Darent Valley Hospital Briefings	Cllrs Hasler 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 2016/2017

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

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

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2017/2018

May 2017	30	Planning Committee
June 2017	6	A&R Committee
	13	Planning and Projects Committee
	20	Planning Committee
	27	E&A Committee
July 2017	11	FULL COUNCIL *
	25	Planning Committee
August 2017		RECESS
September 2017	5	Environment and Amenities Committee
	12	Planning Committee
	19	Planning and Projects Committee
	26	Administration and Resources Committee
October 2017	3	Planning Committee
	10	FULL COUNCIL *
	31	Environment and Amenities Committee (Budget)
November 2017	7	Planning Committee
	14	Planning and Projects Committee (Budget)
	28	Administration and Resources Committee (Budget)
December 2017	5	Planning Committee
	12	FULL COUNCIL *
January 2018	9	FULL COUNCIL – (final budget approval only) *
	16	Environment and Amenities Committee
	23	Planning Committee
	30	Planning and Projects Committee
February 2018	13	Administration and Resources Committee
	20	Planning Committee
	27	FULL COUNCIL *
March 2018	13	Environment and Amenities Committee
	20	Planning Committee
	27	Planning and Projects Committee
April 2018	10	Administration and Resources Committee
	17	Planning Committee
	24	FULL COUNCIL *
May 2018	8	Planning Committee
	15	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING *
	22	ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING *

(Dates to be approved at the Annual Council Meeting on 23.5.17)

All meetings will start at 7:30PM. All committee meetings will take place at the Windmill Chamber. *Full Council meeting venues to be confirmed. All public meetings may be recorded.

(Standing Committee meetings may be subject to change in accordance with council policy)

2016/2017 BUDGET MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE (P&P)	
Bus Shelter Repairs & Renewals	£1200.00
Bus Shelter Cleaning	£800.00
Parish Plan	£1000.00
Planning Fees/Investigations	£200.00
Festivities	£500.00
TOTAL P&P COMMITTEE	£3,700.00

ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (E&A)	
Cleansing & Litter Collection (Service Contract)	£6000.00
Southdown Shaw maintenance	£200.00
Notice Boards	£800.00
Village Greens and Harvel Pond	£3000.00
Benches maintenance (Memorial)	£500.00
Trees (including Community Woodland)	£4500.00
Environmental Improvements	£500.00
Judson's Play Area - Maintenance	£2500.00
Judson's Play Area – sinking Fund	£2000.00
Grants	£2300.00
Youth Provisions	£3000.00
TOTAL E&A COMMITTEE	£25,300.00

ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&R)	
Clerks' salaries, tax & NI	£30000.00
Cllr and Clerk Expenses	£400.00
Professional Fees	£700.00
Subscriptions	£2050.00
Chairman's Allowance	£200.00
Training	£700.00
General Administration	£5250.00
MPC Accounts Management and Audit	£1700.00
Printing and Copying	£1044.00
Communications and IT	£1696.00
Contingencies	£1000.00
TOTAL A&R COMMITTEE	£44,740.00

JUDSON'S PAVILION COMMITTEE (JPC)	
Judson's Pavilion & Ground	£500.00
Judson's Pavilion - improvements	£1500.00
TOTAL JPC COMMITTEE	£2,000.00

TOTAL ALL COMMITTEES	£75,740.00
RECEIPTS	£550.00
GBC GRANT	£1150.00
PRECEPT	£74,040.00

VILLAGE HALLS & COMMUNITY CENTRE REPORTS

CULVERSTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Culverstone Community Association (CCA) held its AGM on 9th April 2017 and was pleased to welcome Cllr. Sheila Buchanan, Chairman of Meopham Parish Council, who attended and gave a report.

At the AGM, CCA Chairman, John Reeves, gave his last Chairman's report and announced that he would be standing down and leaving the committee after several years of service. Lynne Hugkulstone, another longstanding and supportive member of the committee, also stood down.

General Activities

Badminton, Short Mat Bowls, Table Tennis and Dog Training continue to be the backbone of regular activities at the Centre. However, Wednesday morning Zumba, ideal for beginners and those who are 50+, and Monday morning Coffee Club are proving popular.

Both Meopham and Culverstone Art Groups still meet at the Centre, and new this year is Monday afternoon Canasta organised by Meopham U3A.

Children's Activities

Unfortunately the weekly After School Lego session was discontinued due to lack of support and leadership. However, 'Bounce 'n' Play' for preschool children, every Friday between 10.30am and 2.00pm, is doing well, and the Centre is popular for weekend Children's Parties throughout the year.

Maintenance Projects and Improvements

The committee is working towards refurbishing the kitchen, which hasn't been updated since the Centre was built. A new cooker has already been installed as the original one was in dire need of replacement.

CCA Website

www.cca.btck.co.uk

MEOPHAM VILLAGE HALL

Registered Charity (302802), and constituted by a deed dated 19th. February 1917

Update on report for year, to April 2017

The Charity is administered by a Management Committee of the Trustees, comprising:

Chairman	R Lingham
Vice Chairman	T Leyshon
Treasurer	R Macfarlane
Booking Secretary	M Keenan
Minutes Secretary	R Knott
Contracts Secretary	S Buchanan
Trustee	A Fitz-Simon

Four additional co-opted Trustees, invited from organisations having leased premises within the curtilage and principal user groups, also attend the committee meetings, which are held bi-monthly unless circumstances require an intermediate session.

The object of the Charity is the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the "spiritual moral intellectual or social wants" of Meopham and the surrounding area.

Running costs for the premises remain generally steady, comparable with recent years. The range and number of contracted users remains steady (around 23), with 'one-off' (particularly weekend) hires increasing during the last year. The treasurer has recently negotiated a new 'period' agreement with service providers, on good terms.

The new accommodation for the Table-Tennis club referred to in our last annual report, is now nearing completion, and will hopefully open formally in May.

A programmed check of the hall electrical provisions was completed, confirmed satisfactory, and measures to improve energy efficiency are currently being considered. Annual checks on the fire alarms/system and portable appliances, were made and certified, and a Health and Safety assessment confirmed. The induction loop system has required some attention, which should render it more reliable. After prolonged discussion with users, it was agreed the piano would be retained, subject to hirers satisfying themselves on its suitability.

A freely accessible portable defibrillator – for provision of which we are indebted to the Parish Council – has been installed adjacent to the main entrance: representatives from main user groups should now have attended an instruction session.

Regrettably, some internal fittings have been subject to vandalism, requiring diversion of funds for repairs. Investigation is current on works to improve sound separation between the halls and kitchen spaces, which it is projected to undertake in the next month.

Banners publicising the fund for the necessary re-covering of the roof (incorporating thermal insulation) were sited 'strategically' within the village, and fund raising for the works is steady and ongoing, having just reached around 50% of our target

(assuming matching funding from KCC). Grant applications thus far have not met with any success, but continue. Sincere thanks to all (individuals and user groups) who have contributed financially or otherwise so far, particularly to Vigo Rugby Club and The George, from whose recent charity match we are apparently to benefit by some £1500! We can however, not be complacent, as the required financial outlay is significant, but will provide major long-term benefits.

Thanks from the Trustees also to everybody using, or helping with and supporting the facilities: we need, and appreciate, your continued help.

HARVEL VILLAGE HALL

The Harvel Fete - This was a great success despite the weather, raising £1,200 for the hall funds. We would all like to say a massive thank you to those who volunteered to set up the green, run stalls, or lend a hand breaking down and putting things away at the end of the day. This year the fete will be on Saturday 1st July.

Barn Dance – Unfortunately the Harvel Barn Dance did not take place in 2016 due to various reasons but Doctor's Orders are booked ready to lead us again on Saturday 15th July. Tickets may be pre-booked by speaking to a member of the committee.

Village Hall Maintenance - During the year we have had the interior decorated apart from the main hall, the ceiling lighting in the hall has been replaced with energy efficient fittings which are also dimmable, the cooker has been changed, the chairs have been replaced, partly funded by a grant from Meopham Parish Council for which we are grateful, the exterior lighting has been improved, the dangerous paving to the front of the hall has been replaced and the area to the rear of the carpark has been cleared and planted with a new tree, hedging and bulbs. A big thank you to those who donated the bulbs and hedging.

Harvel Residents' Association - We have continued to work with the Harvel Residents' Association who have been actively working to maintain and improve the village and surroundings.

Christmas Party - The Christmas Party was a great success the hall was beautifully decorated and the new lighting and chairs added to the ambiance. A big thank you to everyone who helped with this event and made newcomers to the village feel welcome.

Other hall use – The hall continues to be used by a number of local groups during the week and for events at weekends. There is still availability for regular or occasional bookings during the week.

Committee changes - This year Peter Webb and Kelly Cullen-Edwards stepped down from the committee and Ruth Blake joined the committee.

FOOTPATHS WARDEN'S REPORT

We are fortunate to have approaching forty miles of public rights of way in Meopham Parish. They link with paths beyond the parish thereby providing walkers, equestrians and others with excellent opportunities to enjoy the countryside.

Meopham and District Footpaths Group publishes a full programme of walks throughout the year and offers a ready welcome to new members.

(www.meopham-walkers.co.uk)

The Group plays an essential part in ensuring the wellbeing of the paths and their 'path clearing' team is active throughout the year. In particular an annual monitoring project takes place designed to identify and deal with any problems which arise. The Parish Council supports and encourages this work and provides a grant in aid towards expenses.

Assistance from the K.C.C. Public Rights of Way Officer, Mr John Pelham, is readily available if required.

Concern regarding any changes to the nature or direction of paths in the Parish was amply illustrated by the response to an application last year to divert two significant footpaths which pass through the proposed extension of Meopham Vineyard. There were an overwhelming number of objections to this application, which is currently on hold until KCC and GBC hear further from the applicant.

There is a welcomed shared approach, not least by the farmers in the Parish, to make sure our paths are kept open and available to all who seek to benefit from the appealing environment of our Parish.

Parish Path Wardens:-
Gillian Willsher and Ken Dare.

MEOPHAM ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2016/17

Meopham Allotments (situated off the A227 near to Meopham Station) is a beautiful seven acre site backing onto fields and is within an area of outstanding natural beauty. The site contains 164 plots and is managed by an elected committee, made up of seven plot holder members. The land is leased from Meopham Parish Council currently based on a 7 year agreement as of 1st April 2012.

Each plot holder pays an annual rent of £30 to the committee. The funds are used to pay for various items including the rent to Meopham Parish Council, water and site maintenance. The accounts are in good shape with a surplus building up gradually which will be used to cover the cost of replacement water pipes when needed in the future.

Over the last year the committee members have changed a little. The current committee is as follows:

Chairman – Pascal Benn
Treasurer – David Aspinall
Secretary – Theresa Seeley
Communications – Sandra Ross
Others – Peter Hughes, Robin Lee, Sam Hill

As a committee we have been trying to focus on a number of items. Of course the general day to day activities are crucial to keeping things ticking over, such as providing water, toilet facilities to name but a few. As well as this we are trying to harness and enhance the community spirit that we have. We recently surveyed our plot holders with the purpose of gaining some feedback about the current facilities but also to give the committee direction in terms of new initiatives. We had 63 responses which has given us a good sample of feedback. Some of that feedback showed a real desire for increasing the community aspect. As part of that initiative we plan an open day on the 2nd July. It will be a great opportunity for plot holders to take some time out and get to know each other better. But also a great opportunity for the public to come and take a look at the site and maybe for some to consider taking a plot on. We do have a small number of vacant plots currently.

We have also been working on our identity and have launched a new website and email address. The idea being that people should easily be able to find us and communicate with us. We have a Facebook page for members which has been a huge success. Lots of ideas are shared as well as communications from the committee alerting people to news.

Over the next year we plan to do some research on a number of points, there will need to be some consultation with Meopham Parish Council. The items all stem from the survey and include improvements to the toilet facilities (permission for a compostable loo), the possibility of having sheds and also whether we could start an apiary. If we can find a mutually agreeable way to move on these items then the committee will make plans to implement the initiatives.

Meopham Allotment Committee on behalf of its plot holders, would like to thank Meopham Parish Council for the continued use of their land and in addition the various consultations that we have had during council meetings. The collaboration is valued greatly.

MEOPHAM WELFARE COMMITTEE

(Operators of the Meopham Community Bus)

Registered Charity No. 1051669 VAT Registration No. 680 1614 50

ANNUAL REPORT - 2017

On 5th May this year the Meopham Community Bus service has been in existence for 39 years. This is a great achievement to all those volunteers past and present and we look forward to the next 39 years!

Sadly we lost our previous treasurer, Dave Arnold, on 3rd February this year. He and Colin Durham worked together for many years to keep the community bus programme on track, for which we are all very grateful. I was elected Chairman at the last AGM and therefore hold the combined pleasure of both treasurer and chairman.

The past year has not been all plain sailing. We have encountered several issues with the authorities over motor insurance, community bus permits and fuel duty rebates but we are still in business! Unfortunately, we lost our Bus Service Operators Grant with the Department for Transport as the cost of necessary accountant's fees exceeded the amount of the grant. A sad reflection of the bureaucracy we have to deal with.

The minibus has thankfully been very reliable mechanically and we continue to operate our service into Gravesend on three days per week. A number of excursions have also been arranged for the parishioners to Sevenoaks, Maidstone and Bluewater. Passenger numbers are steady but despite several attempts by our volunteers to increase numbers, we do not seem to have attracted much new business.

Our minibus will feature in this year's May Day Parade through the village and has also been hired by other groups and societies for social and educational days out. My thanks, as always, goes to the volunteer drivers and trustees of the Meopham Welfare Committee, without whom the community bus service would not be possible.

Philip King, Chairman & Treasurer
Meopham Welfare Committee

20th April 2017

RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

PCSO Jo Hartley

Contact via 101 or gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk

As explained last year in my update, we have had to continue to work as an overall team as part of the Gravesham CSU due to recent times and operational needs. We therefore currently have no designated PCSO to cover this ward however I do have a vast amount of rural knowledge and can always default back to the rural location and utilise my skills to deal with crime and ASB accordingly. I am currently a Gravesham officer and will therefore be tasked to other areas due to operational needs. However I must stress that all ASB and crime must be logged with the police, via 101 or 999 so that we are aware of the issues and can deal with in the most effective way.

Meopham North resides within the rural wards of Meopham. Current crime statistics suggest that criminal activity is very low at this present time which is reassuring, however if you like to look at specific crime statistics you can visit www.police.uk/kent. If you select the area that you would like, this will provide the crime figures that relate to the freedom of information act and this site is updated by an external organisation.

Crime often leaves victims feeling uncomfortable in their own homes – something that nobody should have to feel. Local police officers and PCSO's will continue to work hard to identify offenders and gather intelligence but would also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to take measures to help protect your property by taking the following simple but effective measures –

- 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 have not got one already, consider installing an alarm or security lights as they act as a deterrent.
- Keep valuable 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 also help us to trace stolen goods. You can also register your valuables on immobilise.com which is a national property database.
- Record all serial numbers of your property, for example IMEI number on your mobile phone – on most mobile phones you can obtain this by simply typing *#06#serial numbers on televisions, laptops and other electrical equipment.

To finalise, we will continue to endeavour to attend community events such as fetes and please keep an eye on the Kent Police Website and our social Media such as Twitter, for any upcoming crime prevention events in the area. This email and any other accompanying document(s) contain information from Kent Police and/or Essex Police, which is confidential or privileged. The information is intended to be for the exclusive use of the individual(s) or bodies to whom it is addressed. The content, including any subsequent replies, could be disclosable if relating to a criminal investigation or civil proceedings. If you are not the intended recipient, be aware that any disclosure, copying, distribution or other use of the contents of this information is prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please notify us immediately by contacting the sender or telephoning Kent Police on 01622 690690 or Essex Police on 01245 491491, as appropriate.

KENT COMMUNITY WARDENS

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

Within my role I have ...

- Provided a reassuring conspicuous presence;
- Promote community solidarity and encouraged communities and neighbourhoods to identify and solve problems;
- Tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Act as "eyes and ears" for other agencies;
- Collate and report to Trading Standards and Kent Police.

Other issues dealt with include:

- Neighbour disputes.
- Reporting of road obstruction of fallen trees.
- Abandoned/irresponsible parking of vehicles.
- Reported recklessly riding of motorbikes to Kent Police.
- Nuisance/stray or lost dogs.
- Graffiti and fly tipping.

As a community warden I regularly visit scam victims within the area, referred via trading standards and other partnership agencies.

When required I have provided support and reassurance, assisted with incident reports to aid with investigations.

I have made many reassurance visits to individuals by request or self-generated resulting in giving advice and making referrals to many agencies to support them with benefit advice, adaptations, telecare systems and hospital transport. Also provided support and reassurance along with security advice to victims of crime.

I have taken part in Meopham Parish Councils litter picks across the village also promoted and taken part in the Keep Kent clean campaign on 4th/5th March which was well attended and successful at Trosley Country Park.

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

In partnership with the Community we organised a Neighbourhood Watch event to promote the start-up of new watches within the area. Barclays Bank provided a representative to attend and delivered a presentation on personal and banking security. I will be arranging another N H Watch event in the summer to be confirmed and advertised shortly. I also attend the Dementia Forum meetings quarterly.

I would like to promote the following; Dementia awareness week an event will be held at The Safeharbour Hub in Coldharbour Road, Northfleet on 17th May more information to follow shortly.

I support the memory café which is held every 3rd Tuesday of the month at St Johns Centre, I attend as and when duties allow, providing support and advice on any welfare or community issues.

There are a number of successful watches across Meopham however more are required, for more information on setting up a watch in your Road please contact Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Erin Scott on 01634 792131 or myself Mandy Cason on 07977981931.