

Meopham Mercury

The Meopham Parish Council Newsletter No 5

Summer 2012

We would appreciate feedback on our newsletter. If you wish to receive The Mercury via e-mail please do let us know (contact details on page 4).

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations – June 2012

Thank you to all the residents who came along to join in the various Jubilee events. The weather did not dampen spirits and a good time was had by all. The events culminated in the lighting of the beacon by the Scouts at Hope Hill at 10.10 pm on Monday 4th June 2012. The Parish Council would like to express their congratulations to the members of the Jubilee Committee who worked tirelessly to provide a superb programme of events for all the family.

As part of the celebrations, the Parish Council planted six native trees (one for each decade of the Queen's reign). The Meopham Historical Society sponsored the English Oak planted on Hook Green in memory of Mr Jim Carley. We are delighted that the five other trees planted at Judson's Recreation Ground have all been sponsored by Meopham families as a living memorial for loved ones.

Reduction in Train Service at Meopham Station

In May 2012, it was announced that South Eastern were planning to reduce the off-peak train service at Meopham from three to two trains per hour with effect from 10 December. This would have resulted in a poorer, slower and more irregular service which would not have been in compliance with the existing franchise service specification.

The Parish Council launched a petition to oppose this change and gained over 700 signatures. This is the first time we made use of an online petition and was a successful experiment which could be repeated in the future. South Eastern also received a very large number of letters sent directly to them.

It was announced on 19th June 2012 by South Eastern that, given the objections from local residents, rail users and stakeholders, this proposed change would not be put forward to the Department of Transport for their consideration. Thank you to all the residents who supported us.

Gravesham Rural Neighbourhood Forum

A well-attended meeting took place on Wednesday 18 July at 7pm at St John the Baptist Church Meopham. The subject of the meeting was what the new National Planning Policy Guidelines mean for rural affordable housing in Gravesham. All parishioners were invited to attend.

Affordable Housing

In June 2012, Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) and Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) conducted a housing needs survey in Vigo followed by a survey in Istead Rise. Due to the high cost of housing in these areas, GBC is considering whether there might be a need for additional affordable housing so that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally will not be forced to move away. Depending on the outcome of the survey, GBC may try to find a suitable site within these areas for such housing. If a site is

found, a consultation event would be held so that residents can put their views forward. There is a rolling programme of surveys and it is anticipated that Meopham will be surveyed in the future.

Moat Housing were due to hold a public consultation event on 25th July 2012 in relation to their proposed development at Evenden Road. Meopham Parish Council is opposed to any inappropriate built development in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Meopham Parish Council has not yet received a planning application from Moat Housing it would be inappropriate to comment owing to pre-determination, until a planning application is received by Gravesham Borough Council.

Road Safety and Parking at Meopham Schools

GBC Parking Enforcement has launched a new campaign in conjunction with Kent Highways and Kent Police. Meopham Community Academy had been raised as an area of concern and patrols targeted the area and gave a zero tolerance to parking that affected the school. Most notable was drivers failing to stop at the zebra crossing in Longfield Hill to allow children to cross the road. Parking has also been an issue at Culverstone Primary School with congestion on the A227 and in Willow Walk. The Parish Council would encourage all parents and carers to park considerately for the safety of pedestrians and drivers alike.

Olympics and the Campsite at Culverstone Recreation Ground

London will be hosting multiple events at the Olympic Park and 13 other venues throughout the Games period from 27 July to 9 September. Brands Hatch will be hosting the Paralympic Cycling from 5 to 8 September. The website www.getaheadofthegames.com has detailed information about road closures, delivery of goods and all events listings which you may find useful.

Meopham Cricket Club will be hosting the "Screen on the Green" on Friday 3 August. There will be a hog roast in the evening and a barbeque and refreshments all day.

The Camping and Caravanning Club, in partnership with GBC, were offering a temporary campsite during July and August at Culverstone Recreation Ground. Unfortunately, this offer has now been withdrawn.

Kent Police

The Parish Council would like to extend a warm welcome to PC Dave Smith who replaced PC Helen Lamb earlier this year. PC Smith is ably assisted by PCSO Jo Hartley. PCSO Dave Brooker moved to another area to continue his excellent work and the Parish Council would like to thank him on behalf of the residents of Meopham and wish him well for the future.

Community Wardens

Please contact Mrs Jackie Fuller on 07813713036 for more details on the following:

- Talk Time group - Meopham Library every Tuesday (10am-12noon)
- Lego club for children from 18 months to 10 years (must be accompanied by an adult) - Meopham Library every Friday (term time only 3.30 pm-4.45pm)
- Volunteers are needed for the sewing and ironing of environmental bags - Meopham Library Thursdays (10am-12 noon).

Criminal Damage and Vandalism at Judson's Recreation Ground

Unfortunately, there has been a spate of vandalism at Judson's over the last couple of months. There was an attempted break-in at the pavilion on the evening of Sunday 13 May. The door and lock were damaged but entry was not gained.

Very disappointingly, on 12 June one of the Jubilee memorial trees was destroyed. This was very upsetting for the family who had sponsored the tree. The scout hut was also broken into on the same evening. There was serious damage to the surface of the play area on about 14 June. A sharp implement was used to cut away a section of the surface. This has been repaired at a cost of over £500.

On or around 20 June, a Meopham Secondary School tie was placed around a piece of equipment in the play area and set alight. On this occasion, the damage was superficial.

The bird's nest swing which was destroyed following an arson attack in November 2011 has been replaced. The safety surface which was also damaged has been repaired. The cost of the new swing and replacement of the surface was in excess of £1,400.

Kent Police are working with the Parish Council and the local schools to raise awareness of this situation and the effect it has on the community. As the school holidays are upon us, we would urge parents to discuss with their children the consequence of such damage and the cost to every family in Meopham.

If you witness any anti-social behaviour or criminal damage, e.g. graffiti, then do not hesitate to dial 999 whilst the crime is in progress.

If you have any information about any of these incidents then please contact Kent Police or Crimestoppers (details on page 4). Meopham's dedicated officer, PC Dave Smith can be contacted using the number 101.

Elections

The Annual General Meeting of Meopham Parish Council was held on 15th May 2012 and the following were elected:
Cllr Douglas Powell – Chairman

Cllr Barbara Wade – Vice-Chairman
Cllr Mark Everson – Treasurer

Cllr Harry Rayner was the only person who stood validly nominated as a candidate for the bye-election to fill the vacancy in the ward of Culverstone and Harvel. He took office on 14th May 2012.

Village Greens and Trees

A full assessment survey has been carried out by an Arboricultural Consultant on all trees on village greens and other Parish Council-owned land. We are now preparing a schedule of work required, with a view to necessary maintenance commencing later this year.

A beech tree on Pitfield Green was felled in June due to disease, which made the tree unsafe. A horse chestnut on Meopham Green, which had suffered storm damage, was reduced by approximately 30%.

Missing and damaged posts on Meopham Green have been replaced and posts on Culverstone and Harvel greens are due to be replaced in the near future.

Meopham Parish Council Annual Accounts

The annual accounts were signed off on 26 June 2012 and the Annual Return has been submitted to the Audit Commission. Copies are available on our website and from the Parish Office.

Social Networking

You can now follow the Parish Council on twitter #Meopham PC and on our Facebook page "Meopham Parish Council". Please do let us have your feedback on these sites.

The Parish Council would like to express its gratitude to a resident who kindly donated funds to purchase a new flag which is being flown at the Windmill on appropriate occasions.

How to Contact Meopham Parish Council:

If you have any concerns or issues you wish to raise, the Parish Office at the Windmill, Wrotham Road, Meopham Green DA13 0QA is usually open from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, Monday to Friday. You may telephone us on 01474 813779 (answering machine available outside the above hours).

E-mail: mpcclerk@btconnect.com.

Your Parish Council Members are:

Hook Green & Nurstead Ward:

Alison Aitken
Mark Everson (Treasurer)
Ken Kemsley
Jo McTavish

Camer & Meopham Green Ward:

Sheila Buchanan
Peter Hasler
Douglas Powell (Chairman)
Barbara Wade (Vice Chairman)

Culverstone & Harvel Ward:

Max Bramer
Ceri Courtney
Hugh Marshall
Harry Rayner

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are due to take place as follows (in the Windmill unless stated otherwise):

7 August 2012

Full Council (Planning) (if required)

21 August 2012

Full Council (Planning) (if required)

4 September 2012

Planning & Projects Committee

16 September 2012

Environment & Amenities Committee

Other useful contacts

Neighbourhood Team:

PC Dave Smith 07980 770598
PCSO Jo Hartley 07772 226070
[or 01474 366011]

E-mail:

gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk

Community Wardens:

Jacquie Fuller 07813 713036
Mandy Cason 07977 981931

Kent Police Crime Reporting 101 or
01622 690690

Crimestoppers (anonymous) 0800 555111
Victim Support 08453 899527
Antisocial behaviour 01474 337400
Community Safety Unit 01474 337528

Racial Equality Commission 01474 369329
Women's Aid 01322 384792
Samaritans 01634 730981
Consumer Direct 08454 040506
Trading Standards Hotline 08453 450210
Citizens' Advice Bureau 01474 361239
Kent County Council 0845 247247
Kent Highway Services 08458 247800
Gravesham Borough Council 01474 564422
Flytipping 0845 345 0210
Graffiti Hotline 01474 337328
Floodline 08459 881188

Noticeboards in the Parish

Please would residents not remove or cover meeting dates, agendas or other MPC information posters on our noticeboards. This information is published for the benefit of all residents. These details can also be found on our website and are available from the Parish Office. Thank you.

Please contact the Parish Office should you wish to place a poster on the noticeboards in the parish.

If you wish to make a contribution to this publication, then please contact the Parish Office.