

Meopham Mercury

The Meopham Parish Council Newsletter No 8

Winter 2013

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

The Chairman, Councillors and Clerk of Meopham Parish Council wish all residents a very Happy New Year.

TRIBUTE TO CLLR HUGH MARSHALL 25th August 1935 – 31st October 2013 By the Chairman, Cllr Doug Powell

I first met Hugh some 28 years ago when we moved to Meopham. Just after we had arrived I heard chopping and banging coming from the bottom of our garden and I strolled down to investigate. I came across a man cutting down the shrubs and creating small stacks of wood beside the footpath. When I asked who gave him permission to work on our ground he merely replied that the footpath needed clearing, he was contracted to do this, and stacking wood would create habitats for the wildlife. He introduced himself as Hugh Marshall, told me that this was one of his favourite places to work as no houses could be seen from this spot and I made one of my first friends in the village.

Hugh was passionate about the wildlife and all aspects of rural living, particularly in the Harvel area. He was part of a team of willing helpers who "brought back to life" the duck pond and reminisced to me many a time about the problems he had in getting the duck house to float evenly. Hugh then led the way in maintaining the pond for the enjoyment of the residents of Harvel and visitors alike. He was also the only person that I am aware of who had background knowledge of and knew the locations of all the village greens. This proved invaluable over the past few years and he was the eyes and ears for Harvel.

He represented the ward of Culverstone and Harvel on the Parish Council between 1985 and 1996 but due to his health decided not to seek re-election. During this period he was particularly active in trying to stop the Post Office and shop closing down and tried very hard to get it reopened. In 2011 he decided to stand again for election to represent Harvel on the Parish Council and until his health deteriorated attended most meetings. Even up to his final days he was chasing me about the state of the roads in Harvel. Hugh will be sadly missed by all of us but is sure to be remembered in the future as almost all of the publications produced relating to Harvel has a picture or mention of him.

Hugh was a character, a good man, a family man, a good Councillor, a good friend and someone who will be remembered for all that he achieved for the Parish.

Parish Council Elections

Due to the resignation of Mr Mark Everson and the sad passing of Mr Hugh Marshall Parish Council elections were held in December 2013. The following were elected:

*Rosalie Knott (Nurstead and Hook Green)
Anthony Leyshon (Culverstone and Harvel)*

Precept 2014/2015

The precept for Meopham Parish Council was agreed at a meeting of Full Council held on 10th December 2013 in the sum of £69,060 (an increase of less than 1%).

Meopham Parish Council Grants

The Parish Council awards grants, at its discretion, to organisations which are non-profit making or charitable within the

parish that demonstrate a need for financial support to benefit the local community.

The following grants were approved by the Council in December 2013:

Meopham Art Group	£300
Meopham & District Footpaths Group	£320
Meopham & District Allotment Association	£500
Meopham Over 60s	£150
1 st Meopham Scouts	£530
KCC Community Wardens	£500

Annual Parish Meeting 2014

The Annual Parish Meeting takes place at 6pm on Tuesday 6th May 2014 in the St John's Centre, Meopham. This is an opportunity for you to meet both your Borough and Parish Councillors and it is hoped the Mayor of Gravesham will open the meeting and speak regarding his role and duties. All residents are warmly invited to attend but only electors in the parish may speak or vote.

Meopham Parish Council - Change to Meeting Times for Ordinary Meetings of Council

Standing Orders are the written rules of a local council. Meopham Parish Council recently adopted the Model Standing Orders produced by the National Association of Local Councils, with amendments. These newly adopted Standing Orders will shortly be placed on our website. One important change for our parishioners is that all future ordinary meetings of Full Council will commence at 10.45 am. The Standing Committees will still commence at 8.00 pm. A list of all our meeting dates can also be found on the website.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy

Gravesham Borough Council launched a consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Plan in December 2013. The Parish Council's response can be viewed on the website.

Why we need our Green Belts – by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

Green Belts are precious. CPRE Protect Kent knows this more than most, as our national organisation was instrumental in the creation of Green Belts for the benefit of the public.

CPRE was formed by the highly-regarded planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie in 1926. The organisation had the express purpose of limiting urban sprawl and ribbon development into the open countryside. One of the founding campaigns was to get 'Green Belts' around our biggest urban areas implemented, thus protecting the wider countryside from development encroaching into it. It only took the national organisation another 29 years of lobbying and campaigning before this was finally fully implemented throughout the country in 1955!

Those Green Belts have managed to stand the test of time, and have proven themselves to be a huge benefit to the public. They have ensured that our major urban settlements have not been allowed to sprawl across open countryside and impact on the character of other areas. Green Belts have also helped to guide development into the right places; ensuring that urban areas are regenerated and targeted for growth.

The real importance of Green Belt land is to discourage development in inappropriate places and to ensure that urban areas do not sprawl into one another. However, with the rising demand for homes within Kent, chunks of the Green Belt are under more pressure than ever before to be developed.

This is currently the case in Gravesham after the recent Examination in public of the Council's draft Local Plan. The Inspector who presided over the Examination recommended that the plan was unlikely to be found sound unless the housing target was increased. This has created a real threat to parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt which fall within

the Gravesham Borough. Whether the Council is able find more appropriate sites which do not fall within the Green Belt or not, the chances are that this undeveloped land is likely to be under increasing pressure in the future. This problem is common throughout Kent with an increase in specially designated and unspoilt countryside facing development now and this is only likely to increase in the coming years.

CPRE Protect Kent believes that our countryside is precious and that we must do all we can in order to protect it. We believe that development in the Green Belt, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in unspoilt countryside should be avoided and we work to ensure that the natural beauty of our county is protected for future generations to enjoy. As a charity, we are funded by the generosity of our members. We are always in need of new members who believe that Kent should be kept beautiful, so if you also feel that your county is special please consider joining us. It costs from as little as £3 a month, and with your support we can continue to protect our most cherished landscapes. You can join at: www.protectkent.org.uk/support-cpre or by calling our branch office and asking for a membership form to be sent to you on 01233 714 540.

Consultation on the proposed New Lower Thames Third Crossing

The consultation by the Department for Transport on the options for a new Lower Thames Crossing received more than 5,700 responses. Respondents raised a number of important points which deserved due attention but the Department were at the same time committed to reaching a decision on location as speedily and effectively as possible. The Department's review of the options showed that Option B (connecting the A2 with the A1089) had the weakest case and decided there was sufficient grounds to discard this option as it received limited support and instead raised serious concerns that it would jeopardise major redevelopments

in the Swanscombe Peninsula, a key part of the growth strategy for the Thames Gateway area. A further announcement regarding the consideration of Options A and C is awaited. In the meantime, the Department remains committed to introducing free-flowing charging at the Dartford-Thurrock crossing by October 2014.

Disruption to the Power Supply Over Christmas and the New Year Period

Did you suffer more than 48 hours without power over the Christmas and New Year period? If you did, you can apply for a statutory payment from UK Power Networks which they have increased to £54. If you were without power on Christmas Day this will be increased to £75. If you were without power for longer than 48 hours you will be entitled to a further payment for each 12 hour period thereafter. Please contact UK Power Networks at Newington House, 237 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 6NP or tel 0800 783 88 66 to discuss your claim.

Safety at Judsons Recreation Ground

Please could we ask that parents remind their children of the dangers of climbing onto the roof of buildings to play or to rescue footballs. Children have been seen on the roof of the pavilion at Judsons Recreation Ground despite signage showing the dangers. Fencing has been erected at the rear of the Pavilion in order to try to stop access to the roof and our PCSO will also be stepping up patrols in order to engage with the youngsters and reinforce the message to keep themselves safe.

Judsons Pavilion

A planning application to refurbish and redevelop the Pavilion was approved in 2012. Grants and funding streams are currently being sought. If any association, club or society believe they could assist with grants and funding please do contact us.

How to Contact Meopham Parish Council:

You can contact us in the following ways:

- Call into the Windmill - we are open 9am-12 noon Monday to Friday.
- Telephone - 01474 813779;
- E-mail at mpccclerk@btconnect.com.
- Twitter - @meophamPC
- Facebook - "Meopham Parish Council"

Your Parish Council Members are:

Hook Green & Nurstead Ward:

Alison Aitken
Ken Kemsley
Rosalie Knott
Jo McTavish

Camer & Meopham Green Ward:

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

Culverstone & Harvel Ward:

Max Bramer
James Ferrin
Anthony Leyshon
Harry Rayner (Treasurer)

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are due to take place as follows at 8pm (in the Windmill unless stated otherwise):

2014

4 Feb	Environment & Amenities Cttee
25 Feb	Administration & Resources Cttee
18 March	FULL COUNCIL MEETING 10.45 am in the Cricket Pavilion
22 April	Planning & Projects Cttee
6 May	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 6.00 pm in the St John's Centre
10 June	Administration & Resources Cttee

Agendas are published in advance on our website, social media and the noticeboards in the parish.

Other useful contacts

Neighbourhood Team:

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 0300 3335540
Kent Highway Services 0300 333 5539
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 Parish or Borough Council information posters on our noticeboards as this is published for the benefit of all residents. Thank you.

Please contact the Parish Office should you wish to place a poster on the noticeboards in the parish in order to gain a unique number to place on the notice. All notices must be A5 size only and notices without a unique number will be removed. The Parish Council only permit posters advertising community events. Advertising of commercial businesses is not permitted.