



# MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018



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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 a varied and interesting year with no lack of challenges!

You will have seen the comprehensive reports from our Standing Committees – where all the decisions are made, subject to approval of Full Council. I should like to thank all the Chairmen of these committees for their continual commitment to the affairs of the Parish.

We continue to pursue the refurbishment of Judsons Pavilion, as you will see from John Ogden's report. We now await the result of our application for funding from the Football Foundation. We should get the decision in July. Keep your fingers crossed! The completion of this long and complicated application fell to our Clerk, Sarah Eggesden and Bob Heming from Meopham Colts. It involved a tremendous amount of work and I would like to thank them publicly for their contribution to the project. I would also like to acknowledge the work done on this project in previous years by members of the council and Meopham Colts.

After Gravesham Borough Council decided to close the toilets on Pitfield Green, we surveyed as many parishioners as we could to ask them if they wanted to keep them open. The overwhelming opinion was "YES"! Your Parish Council has now taken the toilets over after refurbishment and are now responsible for engaging a contractor to open, close and clean them. Including this and business rates insurance etc. we have budgeted £10,000 per year for these conveniences. They will be open from 8.00am – 6.00pm daily (except Christmas Day). This has inevitably led to an increase in our precept. Other inevitable increases, such as staff salaries and pensions, utilities etc. has led to an increase in our precept to £28.86 per annum for band D properties which is an increase of £2.17 per annum. This is still considerably less than the national average precept for Parish Councils for Band D properties which is £64.05 per annum.

Paul Agle, our service contractor, does excellent work across the Parish; litter picking parish owned areas and carrying out lots of other practical jobs. As a country, we seem to be dedicated to litter. I should like to thank residents who regularly litter pick in the parish and those who join some of our members of the Council on our quarterly litter picks. At least the Village is tidy for a day!

After a successful 'Picnic on the Green' last August, another one is planned this year on August 12<sup>th</sup>. We do hope that many of you will come.

Parking continues to be a problem especially on double yellow lines at Camer Parade and at school delivery and pick up times. You have probably been aware of the banners and notices which have been put up around the Village to encourage people to think about parking safely and legally. The local primary schools entered a competition to design posters for this and the overall winner was a pupil at Meopham Community Academy. It comes down to personal responsibility and consideration for others. The Parish Council has no authority to issue penalty notices and the GBC enforcement officers have the whole borough to

cover. We have had a meeting with Kent Highways and with Bryan Sweetland, our KCC councillor, to discuss the speed, volume and weight of traffic through the Village. They have agreed to actively monitor this and look at the provision of a Trixie mirror at the exit of Camer Parade. Bryan has generously agreed to finance this from his member's grant allowance.

You will all have received the Local Plan Review consultation documents from GBC. The Government Inspectors have told GBC they must find a further 1,800 homes in the Borough. Previously the Local Plan had stated 'No proposal for development on Green Belt Land'. However with the new figures from the Planning Inspectorate, some of the new building may be looking at green belt land for small developments. GBC are committed to looking at brownfield sites as a priority. I hope that many of you will have attended the consultation this afternoon or at other sites as advertised. PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR CONSULTATION FORM! Your voice matters.

The Council put forward Sandra Price for a GBC Community Award and we are delighted that she has received this for her work for the British Legion, including organising the annual Remembrance Service on Meopham Green over many years. We also proposed Shirley Taylor for the Kent Association of Local Council's Community Award Scheme for her work in the community, especially with the Meopham Over 60s Club for 40 years.

Finally, but importantly, I should like to thank all councillors for their contributions to the work of the Council, especially the Chairs of Committees. Very special thanks to our Clerk, Sarah Eggesden and her Clerical Assistant, Nicola Jerram for a year of extremely hard work excellently done. Their responsibility is to action decisions taken by Council and advise us regarding legality and everything else. A great deal of their time has been dedicated to grant applications for various issues and processing planning applications. We couldn't do without them!

It has been an honour to Chair your council over the last year with unstinting support from my Vice-Chairman, John Ogden.

Sheila Buchanan

# **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, Planning Applications and approval of most contracts.
- To advise the Council on Standing Orders, Policies, Contracts, Setting of Standing Committee Budgets, Approval of Annual Accounts and major contracts.
- 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 (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Peter Howard, Cllr Jo McTavish, Cllr Douglas Powell 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, several councillors attended a 'Rest Centre' training day 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. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee have been appointed as 'councillor auditors' with the remit of reviewing

internal controls and risk management with the Council's Responsible Financial Officer.

### **Personnel Issues and Staffing Matters**

Improved facilities for use by the Parish Clerk and Clerical Assistant have been purchased during the course of the year. The security of the Parish Office is currently under review.

### **Policies**

The Council's website privacy policy was revised during the year and a policy for compliance with the Europe-wide General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which is due to come into force in late May 2018, is currently under development. To comply with our new legal obligations under the GDPR an external Data Protection Officer will be appointed.

In accordance with the Council's Equality policy the Committee has overseen the purchase of a portable inductive hearing loop for use at our meetings, funded by a grant from the County Council.

### **Contracts**

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

- A new contract for the cleaning of the public toilets on Pitfield Green, which were taken over by the Parish Council on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018.
- 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
- Renewal of the lease for the use of the football pitches at Judson's Recreation Ground with the Colts Football Club
- Administration of the Council's payroll and pension scheme.

### **Training**

Training is important to ensure that both the elected councillors and the Parish Clerk remain up to date with changes in legislation and good professional practice in general. During the year the Council was represented at a number of training events including the 'Rest Centre' training day at The Culverstone Community Centre and training events organised by the Kent Association of Local Councils on finance, planning, the General Data Protection Regulation and other topics.

### **Gravesham Parish Clerks Group**

Meopham Parish Council has played a lead role in the launching of a new group comprising the Clerks of the six rural parishes in Gravesham, which now meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest and areas of possible collaboration.

### **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 on 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, Environmental Improvement, Upkeep of Councils Assets (other than office equipment) and other tasks allocated by the Council.

**Committee Members:** Cllr Sue Gofton (Chairman), Cllr Patricia Luxford (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Dawn Bramer, Cllr M Bramer, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Peter Hasler, and Cllr Barbara Wade

## **Allotments**

The allotments are well supported – please see the report on page 25.

## **Youth**

Since mid February we have delivered youth provision at Meopham Leisure Centre once every two weeks. This is led by The Grand and hosted by two youth workers. It is work in progress but feedback has been that it's a service Meopham needs and we hope to deliver an enhanced Youth facility once the Pavilion at Judson's has been renovated. My thanks to the staff at Meopham Leisure Centre for welcoming all those involved.

## **Village Greens**

We are a year down the line and I am delighted to report that renovation work is more or less completed at Harvel Pond. This has been funded by Kent Highways ,a grant from Tescos and MPC. The Harvel community have actively supported with their input and time to help create a wildlife centre. Thanks particularly to Louise Martin, Chair of Harvel Residents Association and our volunteer pond Warden Ian Carey for their on-going commitment.

In support of the auditing of the greens, tree reductions have been carried out along the boundary of the Scouts site and Judson Recreation ground. This was primarily to ensure the Play Area wet pour can remain safer for use by discouraging moss growth.

## **Meopham Green War Memorial**

A successful grant application to the War Memorials Trust has enabled specialist cleaning of the war memorial.

## **Rights of Way**

As a rural community we need to ensure our footpaths and byways are used and appreciated. Walkers come from afar to appreciate many AONB within the Parish. A more detailed report by the Footpaths Group can be viewed on page 24.

## **Grants**

The Parish Council was pleased to assist local organisations with funding and the following grants were made in the 2017/2018 financial year:

Meopham and District Footpaths Group	£340
Meopham Village Hall	£460
Meopham Windmill Trust	£500
Meopham Historical Society	£273
Culverstone Community Association	£500
Meopham Toddler Group	£300

## **Litter Picks**

Last but not least our quarterly litter picks in the parish are still being held and are gaining momentum with increasing numbers! Meeting at the Windmill, volunteers are given suitable aids to 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. This could be viewed as a thankless task but I know that members of the Parish voluntarily use their time when walking or walking their dogs to litter pick! Our parish is noted for its history and beautiful countryside – so let us continue the good work as I always say- – Every little bit helps.

Remaining dates for Litter Picks in 2018 – 28<sup>th</sup> July and 27<sup>th</sup> 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 Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sue Goffon, Cllr Pat Luxford, Cllr Wade

## **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 Ward where the property is situated 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 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 and will not cause a nuisance to the applicant's neighbours whilst recognising residents' wishes to improve their properties for themselves and their families.

The number of planning applications continues to rise month on month, with more that are complex and controversial. We have also seen more members of the public who wish to speak about applications attending meetings. At Full Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017 it was agreed that a new Committee would be set up to deal solely with Planning applications. On many occasions prior to this new committee being set up discussion about planning applications took so much time at Parish Council meetings that it had not been possible to find time to properly discuss other matters on the agenda. During the last twelve months the Committee has met on a monthly basis, all members of the Council are members of this Planning Committee and planning applications are now given the time and importance they deserve.

## **Highways and Transport**

The Parish Council continues to monitor 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 salt bags in the car parks of St John's Church, Culverstone Community Centre and Harvel Village Hall over the winter period. Traffic on the A227 is an ongoing concern, both in terms of volume, especially HGVs that exceed the speed limit, and poor and illegal parking. These problems are likely to increase in years to come as last year it was announced that the Government had chosen Option C for the Lower Thames Crossing. The Parish Council recently met with Highways England to discuss some of the issues raised by parishioners in relation to the infrastructure, building and ongoing use of the tunnel. We are concerned about the increase in the volume of traffic on the A227 and will shortly be monitoring the volume and type of traffic currently using the road over a seven day period.

A little under a year ago the Council decided to set up a working group to look at parking issues particularly at Camer Parade and outside the schools in Meopham and Culverstone. This was in response to an ever increasing number of complaints from parishioners regarding illegal parking at Camer Parade on Friday and Saturday evenings. and outside the schools especially at school drop off and collection times. The Working Group was successful in attracting a small amount of funding from KCC which enabled us to launch a campaign last autumn. It is called 'Think before you Park'. We started by working with local schools, and the shopkeepers at Camer Parade, we also worked with local residents, GBC, KCC and the Police. The working group produced leaflets, banners and signs and spent a lot of time trying to encourage parents and carers to park more responsibly near to their children's schools. The campaign has had limited success. People are still parking irresponsibly but GBC Enforcement Officers have been a lot more active in Meopham and have issued a substantial number of on the spot fines. A Trixie mirror has been requested to be installed at Camer Parade to assist motorists leaving the Parade especially when delivery lorries are parked on the double yellow lines. The campaign will be relaunched at the beginning of the next school year.

### **Library Services**

We are pleased to report that the new library has been completed and was formally opened on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018; it is situated between the Doctor's surgery and the Day Nursery. It is one of very few new libraries in Kent and is a great asset to the community.

### **The Local Plan**

All local planning authorities must produce, adopt and maintain a Local Plan which talks about the growth and development of new homes in their area, it also looks at what infrastructure and services are required. Gravesham's plan was adopted in September 2014 and as Local Planning Authorities are required to update their plan every five years our plan is now under review. Gravesham Borough Council has launched a consultation exercise and information and a questionnaire has been delivered to every household in the Borough. The questionnaire covers questions on the development of homes and services, the use of the Green Belt and lists a number of options as to how future development needs could potentially be met. The consultation period runs from 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 until 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018. A full list of all drop-in sessions can be found on the Council's website.

## **Parish Plan**

We reported last year that a decision had been taken to go ahead with the development of a Parish Plan which would be called the Meopham Community Action Plan. A Parish or Community Plan is a document that tackles important issues which will influence the future direction of the Parish and includes an action plan which would be monitored by the Parish Council. It is disappointing to report that little progress has been made with the plan. This is mainly due to the illness of the chair and the resignation of key members of the committee including the secretary. Three members of the Parish Council have agreed to start work on the plan in the Autumn. It is hoped that some new members of the community will come forward to help with the work as the development of Parish Plans should be community and not Parish Council led.

## **Kent Rural Coffee and Information Project**

Around 20 other small villages and hamlets in Kent were selected to participate in this project which is being run by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) with funding from the lottery. A 'pop up' café in Harvel has enabled people in this isolated community to meet and enjoy coffee and cake with old and new friends, it also provides advice and signposting to relevant agencies for residents of any age who need help and support on a wide range of issues. The monthly coffee and cake morning has been a great success, attracting people of all ages, and is now held in Harvel Village Hall and run by members of the local community who provide transport for people who need a lift to the hall. The Parish Council have provided a small amount of money for the project, the remainder of funding has come from ACRK.

## **Community Festivities**

The second Picnic on the Green was held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2017 and was a great success. The weather was glorious and the event was very well attended with local people of all ages enjoying a picnic and some entertainment in the sun. We had a jazz band, a magician and other entertainment for the children. Meopham Colts organised a BBQ which was very popular and the Cricket Club ran the bar. The 2018 event will be held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August from 2-5pm and we expect to have one or two new attractions.

# 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 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 has been a very busy year. After we had received great assistance from the Gravesham Borough Council Planning Department, and the Kent FA and Football Foundation to ensure compliance in advance, new planning permission was eventually obtained. This enabled us to go ahead with the next stage of the process. Following advertising, tenders were invited and a number were received. We had established new contacts with the Kent FA and Football Foundation as well as Sport England to facilitate obtaining as much grant funding as possible in addition to the funds already earmarked by the Council and the Meopham Colts. With their extremely valuable support and guidance we have been able to finalise our grant application for a very substantial amount to the Football Foundation and await their decision in July.

This has put a very substantial extra burden on our Clerk and Bob Heming the Secretary of the Colts. They have worked very hard indeed, to ensure that as far as possible, every 'i' and 't' was dotted and crossed as necessary and the complex online documentation was ready for submission on time.

We also finally appointed a Project Management Company to oversee the appointment of the appropriate contractor for the project and then to act as our representative over the construction of the new pavilion and all the ancillary work.

We now await the decision of the Football Foundation Board in late July.

# PARISH REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

2017/2018

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 Luxford
Kent Association of Local Councils – Voting members at AGM and Gravesham Area Committee	Cllrs Buchanan and Ogden
Lower Thames Crossing	Cllrs Luxford 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 2017/2018

May 2017	30	Planning Committee
June 2017	6	Administration and Resources Committee
	13	Planning and Projects Committee
	20	Planning Committee
	27	E&A Committee
July 2017	<b>11</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
	25	Planning Committee
August 2017		<b>RECESS</b>
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
	<b>10</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
	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
	<b>12</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
January 2018	<b>9</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL – (final budget approval only) *</b>
	16	Environment and Amenities Committee
	23	Planning Committee
	30	Planning and Projects Committee
February 2018	13	Administration and Resources Committee
	20	Planning Committee
	<b>27</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
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
	<b>24</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
May 2018	8	Planning Committee
	<b>15</b>	<b>ANNUAL PARISH MEETING *</b>
	<b>22</b>	<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING *</b>



# APPROVED SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2018/19

June 2018	5	Environment & Amenities Committee
	19	Administration and Resources Committee
	26	Planning Committee
July 2018	10	Planning and Projects Committee
	17	Planning Committee
	<b>24</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
August 2018		<b>RECESS</b>
	21	Provisional Planning Committee – only if required
September 2018	4	Environment and Amenities Committee
	11	Planning Committee
	18	Administration and Resources Committee
October 2018	9	Planning & Projects Committee (Budget)
	16	Planning Committee
	<b>30</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
November 2018	13	Environment and Amenities Committee (Budget)
	20	Planning Committee
December 2018	4	Administration & Resources Committee (Budget)
	18	Planning Committee
January 2019	<b>8</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL – (final budget approval) *</b>
	22	Planning Committee
	29	Environment and Amenities Committee
February 2019	19	Planning Committee
	26	Administration and Resources Committee
March 2019	12	Planning and Projects Committee
	19	Planning Committee
April 2019	<b>2</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL *</b>
	16	Planning Committee
	30	Annual Parish Meeting
May 2019	<b>14</b>	<b>ANNUAL PARISH MEETING *</b>
	21	Planning Committee

**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)**

# 2017/2018 BUDGET MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

<b>PLANNING AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE (P&amp;P)</b>	
Bus Shelter Repairs & Renewals	£1000.00
Bus Shelter Cleaning	£1029.00
Parish Plan	£1000.00
Festivities	£1300.00
<b>TOTAL P&amp;P COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£4329.00</b>

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (E&amp;A)</b>	
Cleansing & Litter Collection (Service Contract)	£6500.00
Southdown Shaw maintenance	£220.00
Notice Boards	£500.00
Village Greens	£1000.00
Harvel Pond	£2000.00
Trees (including Community Woodland)	£3000.00
Judson's Play Area - Maintenance	£2500.00
Judson's Play Area – sinking Fund	£2000.00
Grants	£2500.00
Youth Provisions	£3000.00
<b>TOTAL E&amp;A COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£22,220.00</b>

<b>ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&amp;R)</b>	
Staff salaries, tax & NI & overtime	£32500.00
Staff Pension	£5500.00
Cllr and Clerk Expenses	£500.00
Subscriptions	£2056.00
Chairman's Allowance	£200.00
Training	£500.00
General Administration	£5650.00
MPC Accounts Management and Audit	£2610.00
Printing and Copying	£1044.00
Communications and IT	£1800.00
Volunteer Support Community Warden Scheme	£1075.00
Contingencies	£1000.00
<b>TOTAL A&amp;R COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£54495.00</b>

<b>JUDSON'S PAVILION COMMITTEE (JPC)</b>	
Judson's Pavilion & Ground	£500.00
Judson's Pavilion - improvements	£500.00
<b>TOTAL JPC COMMITTEE</b>	<b>£1,000.00</b>

<b>TOTAL ALL COMMITTEES</b>	<b>£83044.00</b>
RECEIPTS	£656.00
GBC GRANT	£700.00
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£81688.00</b>

# VILLAGE HALLS & COMMUNITY CENTRE REPORTS

## CULVERSTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Culverstone Community Centre 2017/2018

By the time this report is being read, Culverstone Community Centre should have a newly refurbished kitchen. Our thanks go to Meopham Parish Council and Kent County Council for the funding they have granted us to enable this project to go ahead.

#### **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, which is ideal for beginners and those who are 50+ is proving popular, and Monday morning Coffee Club, between 10am and 12 noon, welcomes anybody who wants to pop in for a chat, borrow a paperback or two, or play a game of rummikub or table tennis.

Both Meopham and Culverstone Art Groups still meet at the Centre, and Monday afternoon Canasta, organised by Meopham U3A, has been with us for about eighteen months now.

#### **Children's Activities**

'Bounce 'n' Play' for preschool children, every Friday between 10.30am and 2.00pm, is doing well, so much so, another session has recently started on Tuesday afternoons.

The Centre is popular for weekend Children's Parties throughout the year.

#### **CCA Website**

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

## **MEOPHAM VILLAGE HALL**

MEOPHAM VILLAGE HALL: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017/18

The hall was constituted by a Deed of February 19<sup>th</sup> 1917, and operates as an unincorporated charity (302802) registered with the Charity Commissioner, its objectives being the provision and maintenance of the premises for use of residents of Meopham and surrounding area without discrimination, and to improve the conditions of life for the said inhabitants. Trustees meetings are held bi-monthly at the Hall.

I took over the chairmanship of the Trustees from Mr. Blount, who – after many years of service - stood down after the January meeting. Contract hirings remain at a similar number (23): weekend bookings are a little lower, although there has been a small increase in the number of one-off children's parties from the last operating year. Autumn once again proved a quiet period, assumed due to holidays and Summer breaks (contract hirers).

Annual checks were undertaken on the fire detection/precautions system, electrical items, and a quinquennial check on the overall wiring, all of which proved satisfactory. The Health & Safety report was similarly approving, following cutting back of trees adjacent to the fire escape. Changing to sensor switching for some areas, and LED lighting, both to reduce electrical bills, was investigated: control of lights to the w.c.'s has now been implemented but changing to LED lighting deferred for later staged implementation, due to the current ongoing fundraising to replace the roof covering. Maintenance of the car park lighting is current. The macerator in the disabled w.c. was replaced, due to worn bearings. Some problems are still being experienced with the hearing loop system. The caretaker's garage was cleared of Hall items, to allow its intended use. My personal thanks to the caretaker's husband for assistance in clearing the drains (twice), arising from work on the adjacent bungalow.

Servicing/checks on heating and hot water provisions are awaited. Programmes have now been prepared, and agreed by the Trustees, for future maintenance and repairs; a reserves policy (to accord with the Charity Commission recommendations), was also drafted and agreed. All Trustees have now signed declarations relevant to their position, and (where relevant) authority for their respective organisations. Hirers have been notified of the need where relevant, for them/their organisation to have a suitable child protection policy; we still await confirmation from many. A draft for an amended Constitution has been prepared, and agreed by Trustees, for submission to the Charities Commission, to better reflect current circumstances and update the composition of the Management Committee. Following the death of Arthur Fitz-Simon, enquiries will be made for possible inclusion of representatives from the school and other community groups, as the church no longer wish to be represented.

The table tennis Club building was replaced, concluding in late Spring, with minimal disruption to parking: they now have responsibility for insurance of their building direct. Marking to parking bays was renewed – with a slight increase in width for those on the North boundary- although some bays now need remedial work. 'Exclusion' notices have been posted around the car park, confirming use at driver's risk. Liaison with the Country Club representative was confirmed, hoping to avoid possible coincidence of large events.

A wayleave was granted to Mr. Healy for an electricity supply to his building on land adjoining the South East boundary: an initial offer was made by him to the Trustees for use of part of his land as occasional overflow parking, which offer the Trustees appreciated, but thought better to decline. Confirmation was received from solicitors that registration with the Land Registry had been completed, consequent to their not being able to find relevant deeds. An indicator for the roof fund was provided and fitted by 'Mariposa' to the front corner of the building, which is periodically updated, and banners made by the principal of the art class showing the many activities provided at the Hall hung adjacent to the stage arch.

New soap dispensers have been fitted to ladies/gents/disabled w.c.'s, to reduce wastage. Sound reduction measures have been provided to the communicating door between halls, and the kitchen shutters, providing a worthwhile improvement in both halls: the communicating door has also been fitted with provisions to prevent access should both be in use at the same time. Following a recurrence of vandalism to the w.c. doors, and consequent repairs, consideration was given to CCTV provision in the lobby, but is unlikely to proceed on cost grounds. After protracted investigations, a '24 hour access' defibrillator was fitted outside the main entrance, donated by the parish Council; the ambulance service has been notified of its location, and a demonstration held for principal users of the Hall. A gate has been provided to the rear access of the caretaker's bungalow, to improve privacy.

Contributions to the roof fund were initially reasonably steady from individuals and user groups – many of whom have held special events - all much appreciated, but have tailed off markedly in the last few months. Early grant applications produced no offers, but the fund was boosted by a donation of £1357 following the charity rugby match between Vigo/The George. Grants have now been made by the 'Garfield Weston' and 'Bernard Sunley' foundations, and an application to KCC for matching funding will be made in the next month, as it appears this may not be available in their next financial period. The fund now stands at £37,000 (target £38,000, for matching funding), including proceeds from two recent well attended one-off events, for which many thanks to all involved.

Sincere thanks also to all who have contributed to operating the Hall and raising funds in the last year: let's hope we can achieve our aims, continuing to maintain and improve this vital and well used facility.

## **HARVEL VILLAGE HALL**

Chair's Annual Summary 2017/18

### **Personnel**

Following the retirement from the committee last April of Peter Webb we were pleased to welcome Ruth Blake to the committee. Ruth was appointed as secretary and Dennis Reavell and I continued in our roles as treasurer and chair respectively.

### **Events in 2017**

Our two big events of last year were the fete and the barn dance.

#### **The Harvel Fete**

We had a lovely day for the fete and raised over £2,700 to continue to maintain and improve the hall. 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. I would also like to add my personal thanks to the members of the committee and their families who did so much to make the day such a successful one. This year the fete will be on Saturday 7th July and any help would be very much appreciated. You don't have to join the committee to be involved – just be willing to give up some of your time, and you will almost certainly enjoy it.

#### **Barn Dance**

The Harvel House Farm Barn Dance made a comeback last year and was another great success: music, dancing and supper under the stars. We couldn't do this without the support and hard work of all the Jones family along with Lin and Ian Carey – thank you all. We are looking to run this event again this year, subject to suitable dates being available and with the agreement of the Jones'. Again, if you would like to be involved in organising or running this event please let one of the committee know.

#### **Christmas Party**

This was once again an enjoyable evening open to all in the village and surrounding area. This is an event that doesn't raise funds for the hall but is a well attended social gathering. Thank you to everyone who dressed the hall and to Deke and Keith for their quizzes, Sue Webb for judging the Christmas Jumper competition and Rachel for leading the singing.

#### **Coffee mornings**

These have been taking place once a month for the last year funded by the Rural Kent Coffee Information Project. They are open to all, not just for senior citizens, and have been a great success. Sally has been involved from the start and now that the original project has come to an end, has gained funding to enable her to continue every month for some time to come. This is very much in keeping with the will of the hall's benefactor, F. H. Cripps Day, in being a community event, free to all, and open to all. A big thank you to Sally for her work on this project. Please look out for the dates on the village notice boards and come along if you are free, and if you can help transporting any of our older residents do let Sally or Ruth know.

#### **Village Hall Maintenance**

Externally the garden is now showing the benefit of all the work undertaken last year and the car park has had the benefit of fresh shingle. Internally the main hall has

been decorated, new wall lights, curtain poles and blinds fitted, and we have new curtains courtesy of the rebuild of Meopham School. A big thank you to Karen, Jo, and Jane who took on this project and completed it just a few weeks ago. This coming year we will be updating the rest of the external lights, reviewing the toilets and considering the repair of the concrete entrance path. If there are any other projects that anyone who uses the hall would like to bring to our attention, please do so.

### **Harvel Residents' Association**

We have continued to work with the Harvel Residents' Association.

### **Retirees**

This year we are very sorry to be losing Dennis Reavell who has been our treasurer and a member of the committee for some years. He has been instrumental in getting much of the hall maintenance projects underway and completed over the years.

### **New Appointments**

Due to Dennis's retirement there is a vacancy on the committee. The committee is an important part of the village as it manages the hall and ensures that in line with the will of the hall's benefactor, F. H. Cripps Day, we continue to benefit from having this lovely hall available for all to use.

### **Bob Hinde**

Many of you will have known Bob who lived in Harvel longer than most and has contributed in many ways to the community. It has been proposed that a memorial bench be placed on the village green in his memory. The Harvel Hash House Harriers have already made a substantial donation and we would be happy to receive further donations.

Carol Rodgers  
Chair

## FOOTPATHS WARDEN'S REPORT

The Parish Council takes a keen interest in the public rights of way in Meopham parish which extend over some thirty five miles. They offer an ideal opportunity to enjoy our local countryside.

Parish Path Wardens, Gillian Willsher and Ken Dare, provide a close liaison with Meopham and District Footpaths Group (M&DFG) and represent the Parish Council on the Gravesham Public Rights of Way Committee. They are always ready and willing to engage in any issues relating to our public rights of way.

The M&DFG provide an extensive programme of walks throughout the year which offer a wide variety of walks in terms of location and length. May 2018, for example, presented a programme of twelve walks which included weekdays, Sundays and evenings. (The Group website is [www.meopham-walkers.co.uk](http://www.meopham-walkers.co.uk)) New members are always welcome.

In addition to providing walks and social activity for its members the Group keeps the paths under review and has an active vegetation clearing team. The Parish Council is pleased to offer its support by an annual grant towards the clearance work. If necessary the team works with the KCC, in particular Mr John Pelham, on dealing with problems which arise.

Ken Dare, President



## **MEOPHAM ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report 2017/18**

As always my thanks and gratitude goes to the amazing committee members that keep things running smoothly. These people are volunteers who step up and get all sorts of jobs done so that everyone can enjoy the allotments. It's possible these jobs are taken for granted hence why I take some time to highlight some of the hard work. Robin, a committee member for many years, tirelessly checks all the taps before switching them on in the spring and carries out repairs on any that have been damaged over the winter. Peter also a long-standing member continues to give up much of his time meeting new members and helping to allocate plots and ensuring the whole process runs smoothly. Our Treasurer, David works hard in terms of ensuring our expenses are tracked, rents are collected and that we follow proper legal protocols. An especially big thanks however must go to Theresa our Secretary whose passion, energy and dedication is incredible. She looks after Facebook, writes and distributes communications, organises various meetings including the AGM, meetings with the Police and plot holders after the thefts. The list goes on and on, she works really hard and we should all be most grateful. My time as Chairman is coming to an end, it's been interesting to say the least. Unfortunately, my career doesn't give me enough hours in the day to continue this so I hope at the AGM a new Chairman will be elected who does have the time the role deserves.

Open Day: The open day has to be one of my favourite and memorable days from last year. I truly enjoyed it and the collaboration and contribution of committee members and plot holders was just awesome. We also managed to raise £400 for Alzheimer's which is a charity very close to my heart. We enjoyed the company of many visitors including our local MP, Adam Holloway.

Social Media: Our Facebook page goes from strength to strength and continues to attract new members. We currently have 83 members in total. It's a great forum to share ideas and tips.

Pascal Benn, Chairman

## **MEOPHAM WELFARE COMMITTEE**

(Operators of the Meopham Community Bus)

Registered Charity No. 1051669

VAT Registration No. 680 1614 50

### ANNUAL REPORT – 2017/18

As we enter our 40<sup>th</sup> year of service I am pleased to report the ongoing success of the Meopham Community Bus Service. We are lucky to have a very good team of reliable volunteers and Trustees without whom we could not operate.

In addition to the regular thrice weekly bus service into Gravesend, a number of excursions have been arranged for local parishioners to places such as Hempstead Valley shops, Polhill Garden Centre, Dover and Bluewater. Our minibus has also been hired by local groups, societies and sports clubs for social and educational trips.

The minibus continues to be very reliable mechanically, although there will come a time soon when we will need to replace it, depending on available funding. Along with similar organisations, we are faced with ever increasing fuel bills, insurance premiums and service costs but we are holding our heads above water. Passenger numbers are slightly up compared with the corresponding period last year, despite losing 3 days service due to the snow in early March. This is good news but we are always happy to accept new passengers on board.

Myself and our Secretary Ryan Walker were able to assist Kent County Council last year when compiling a toolkit for promoting Community Transport within Kent, by providing a brief insight into how we operate and what is involved on a day to day basis.

Thanks once again to all our volunteer drivers and Trustees as we look forward to continued provision of a bus service much needed by those not served by the regular bus routes in North Kent.

Philip King, Chairman & Treasurer  
*Meopham Welfare Committee*

## RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

PCSO Jo Hartley

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

My name is Joanne HARTLEY and I am a Gravesham PCSO, currently covering Meopham North, along with Westcourt, Shorne, Cobham and Luddesdown. I will be spending a large amount of my time patrolling these locations including Meopham, in order to deter crime and ASB and will be a visible presence as often as I can, along with my colleague PCSO Louis Arnold.

Meopham is part of the North Kent structure which comes under Gravesham CSU, and I am pleased to say that 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](http://www.police.uk/kent). If you select the area that you are interested in, 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 PCSOs 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](http://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.

## **KENT COMMUNITY WARDEN**

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

Within my role I have...

- Promoted community solidarity and encouraged the community to identify and solve problems:
- Provided a reassuring conspicuous presence:
- Collated evidence and reported to Trading Standards and Kent police and supported residents to report incidents providing relevant contact numbers.

### **Other issues dealt with include:**

- Neighbourhood disputes.
- Abandoned and untaxed vehicles.
- Reported nuisance motorbikes to Kent Police.
- Nuisance/stray or lost dogs.
- Graffiti and fly tipping reported and forwarding evidence to assist with potential prosecution.
- Visit scam victims providing reassurance and assisting with the reporting of incidents onto Trading Standards.
- I have conducted many reassurance visits to individuals providing advice, support and making referrals to agencies who can support them. Referrals made allow community members to find the right service to meet their personal needs covering advice on benefits, adaptations, telecare systems and hospital transport.
- I have promoted and linked some residents to the Meopham Welfare bus and the libraries home delivery service for people unable to get to their library, carers and those with ill health or disabilities.
- Provide support and reassurance along with security advice to victims of crime.
- Referrals made to Kent Fire and Rescue service.
- Actively promote the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- I run the community surgery/talk time held at Meopham Library every Tuesday 1000-1200hrs.
- Attend monthly the rural community pop-up café Harvel.
- Weekly I attend Chinnery Court and speak to residents at their coffee morning and provide advice on agency services, scam and crime prevention reminders.
- During the snow reassurance visit were made to residents across the Parish to check on their wellbeing and cleared drives and footpaths where necessary.
- I have managed to obtain volunteers to run the Lego club at St Johns Centre, this takes place on Fridays after school (term time only) and is very well attended. Whilst parents/carers do park at the centre when they attend this club they are encouraged to park here other days to alleviate parking along the A227.
- Work with the Parish Council on the parking initiative.
- Engage with the young people of Meopham and actively promote the youth club.
- Promote and support local events i.e. Meopham library open day.
- Trosley Country Park open day 4<sup>th</sup> April I supported this event with the funded outdoor games.