

**Minutes of the Littlebourne Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on  
Wednesday 1 APRIL 2015, at Littlebourne War Memorial Hall at 7.30pm**

**Present**

- Parish Councillors; Cllr Viv Spratt, Cllr Geoffrey Barrett, Cllr Betty Jeffries, Cllr Mick Giles, Cllr Geof Welch, Cllr Cate Reid, Cllr Ken Shaw and Cllr Pamela Evans.
- City Councillor Brian Staley.
- PCSO's Lisa Williams and Toby Coburn
- Guest Speaker, Ray Evison, Chairman of KALC Canterbury Area Committee
- Approx. 16 residents and 3 non residents

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Cllr Spratt welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Specific thanks were given to Margaret and Annette for doing the refreshments, all of the councillors for their work and the clerk Gail who works extremely hard for Littlebourne. Our hard working community warden also deserves a thank you, together with Evelyn who keeps Littlebourne as clean as possible. We are so lucky in Littlebourne for the amount of volunteers we have who just can't be thanked personally but thanks go to them all. A special thanks to our KCC Councillor Michael Northey who has been a wonderful support to Littlebourne whilst trying to achieve our aim to make the village safer.

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Cllr Mike Gallagher, County Councillor Michael Northey, Community Warden Gary Moore and residents Reverend Chris Wilkinson, Alan Legge and Pam and Paul Gadenne. Alan Legge had written a note of thanks to the Chairman, which the clerk read out as follows; Whilst I am in touch I would like to express my thanks for all of the hard work you have put on behalf of this community throughout your tenure as Chairman of the Parish Council. Your efforts have been rewarded in so many ways, from grants for village activities to the BMX track for our youngsters. You must have sacrificed so much of your own time and I hope you will now have more time to enjoy your family and friends. You have set a fine example to your successors, both by the results of your work - and by stepping down whilst still at the top of your game!

**2. Report on the past year by Littlebourne Parish Council Chairman,**

**Cllr Vivienne Spratt MBE** - Councillor Spratt read her chairman's report below to the meeting.

As you are informed of the main points of the parish council's work through our quarterly magazine and our website, which carries the monthly minutes together with items of interest, I will only bring a few items to your notice, where I will give you the title and a few words on each. It is a shame that less residents come to the annual parish meeting due to all the information being out there all of the time, as this is a ideal opportunity for residents to air their views publicly and let us know how well we are doing.....or not, whatever the case may be. I will invite you to ask questions or make comments after each item on the Agenda as usual.

**Hedges and Trees**

The constant source of complaints we receive is that residents who live in properties adjacent to paths and Highways don't maintain their hedges and trees, we advertise and ask residents to cut back every year. We also say that we could arrange to have them cut if they are unable to do so, although there would be a cost involved. So if you know of anyone who has let their vegetation encroach onto public paths or highways perhaps you could remind them of their responsibilities before bird nesting season begins.

### **Footpaths and Highways**

There have been many complaints of the state of mud on the road at the top of The Hill and the Public Footpath in Pinewoods it has been brought to the attention of Howlett's on several occasions and also KCC. Meetings have been held with all parties and although some work has been done, it is not sufficient, so this is an ongoing problem that is not yet resolved. Highways and Safety in the village are a prime concern and Cllr. Mike Gallagher works extremely hard at it, for this he deserves our thanks.

### **Speedwatch and accident Reports**

All highways items will be dealt with later, however I must thank Cllr. Cate Reid who works so hard to set up the working parties for speedwatch and recording all the data, including that of the accidents in the village, KCC have used Littlebourne as an example of how things can be done! Thanks also go to the team of volunteers who sit for hours recording the speeding and bad driving!

### **Allotments**

The Littlebourne Horticultural Society run the allotments on behalf of the Council and have done a fantastic job in doing so, the council have made new agreements and bramble sites have been cleared to make a further 8 allotments. We thank Alan Jones, Colin Higginbotham and the committee for all their hard work.

### **Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve**

The nature reserve has developed considerably over the last couple of years, this year the interpretation boards have been installed and many improvements made, thanks to Cllr. Pam Evans and the team of volunteers who give so much of their free time on the site. There will be an open afternoon from 2-4pm on Monday May 4th.

### **Turners Orchard**

Turners Orchard is actually managed by Hall Trust and not the Parish Council, but I would like to comment on this as it has also developed with Wassailing, BBQ's and Bat Boxes plus new trees planted. There is to be Bat Monitoring on April 13th in the orchard. Thanks also to Mick Lonergan for all the work he carries out in the orchard and to Heather Inkpen for setting up Turners Orchard Face Book page and of course the other volunteers who help. However we do have a constant problem with dog owners not clearing up after their animals, not only here but in Littlebourne in general. Please report it if you see this happening.

### **London Plane Tree**

Some of you may have noticed that the London plane tree situated outside of the 4VPO Stores is lifting the bricks with its roots, causing a trip hazard; the roots are also moving towards the post office stores, we have therefore reluctantly applied for its removal. We will however, replace it nearby, with a more suitable tree for the area and repair the brickwork.

### **Flooding and River Management**

We are very fortunate to have Cllrs. Shaw and Giles overseeing the river management, both have attended the flood warning training and are always first out to assist and make sure anyone who needs help gets it. A big thank you came via CCC after their help last time, its without saying that our thanks go out to them as well.

A considerable amount of work has been carried out by the E.A. in 'Scoutlands' and other parts of the river up and down its length to try to alleviate further risks in the future.

### **The Ford High Street**

It was brought to our attention by residents that the Ford on the bridge when exiting Littlebourne towards Wingham had been fenced off illegally. We are seeking to remedy the situation and have forms available here for anyone who wishes to complete one.

## **Play Equipment**

Our play equipment on the Recreation Ground is second to none, it is checked on a regular basis, our ROSPA report reflects the care that is taken by us. We have updated pieces through the years and have achieved more funding this year allowing us to provide new safety surface for the multi-play area and two more pieces of equipment, which have been ordered and will be fitted shortly. Thanks to our clerk for being so vigilant

## **Maltings Play Area**

We were very impressed to receive a young lady accompanied by her Father who had put together a presentation for improving The Maltings Play area, she had already lobbied both KCC and CCC with no response, we took up the case with CCC who are the owners of the area, unfortunately the outcome was that they would not be upgrading the play area as they now have only one property that is owned by them in The Maltings. Thanks to Miss Batty for her tenacity a future councillor in the making.

## **Housing in List and Court Meadows**

We are constantly advising villagers to register with us if they wish to be considered for these properties so that we can check that they meet the criteria. C C C deal with the allocations for the housing associations through Choice Base Lettings on a bidding system, a registration number from CCC has to be obtained to allow you to do so, they then select applicants with the correct housing needs, after which they check with us as to the applicants eligibility against the Littlebourne criteria , if we already have the applicant registered and checked it is easy for us to answer immediately rather than keep anyone waiting whilst this is confirmed. The criteria application forms are on our website or can be obtained from our office.

## **Planning Applications**

We have received numerous complaints with regard to advertising boards, in the first instance we send an advisory letter asking the person to remove the offending board, if this doesn't happen we pass the detail to CCC who look at the problem, advise the owner of the advertising board and then instigate enforcement action as necessary.

The planning applications have been coming thick and fast this year, some quite contentious, which usually result in residents making their views known to the Parish Council, we can only judge planning applications on planning law, which we do diligently, however the planning authority is Canterbury and it is them that will always make the final decisions.

The planning application for the Drs Surgery on Court Hill will be heard later this month. The P C have been searching every avenue over the last 5 years at least to get Littlebourne the surgery they deserve, the previous application together with 12 properties failed purely due to the farm buildings still being in active use.

We were hoping that funding would be obtained through health service but in the current climate this will never happen so we and the Drs. were happy to support the best option available which was for the 9 properties as enabling development.

## **The Village Green application and Rydon's Proposals**

We briefly reported that we had applied to register The List Field as a Village Green, we actually got as far as a tribunal in Sessions House Maidstone, Rydon's employed a Q C who was an expert in the field, however we stood our ground and simply lost the case on the point that the land had been cultivated during the necessary time frame that was required, this was a lot of work, but it would have protected the field forever, so worth the effort that we put in together with a local solicitor Duncan Milne who helped us free of charge. For which we thank him most sincerely as it was a great deal of work.

We have since received another planning application from Rydon Homes and have put in a tremendous amount of work together with a planning consultant to object to their proposals in accordance with the majority wishes of villagers who attended the Rydon Presentation the previous year. We await further news on this.

### **Canterbury and District Plan Proposals**

The Districts proposals were submitted in June for consultation, some good, some not so good, however their plans have protected most of the villagers where possible, Littlebourne was not in the development zone, however it doesn't stop a site coming forward and indeed it being considered a 'wind fall site' so vigilance on checking all proposals is necessary and will continue.

The Howe Barracks schemes have since come on line which we have been examining to see how it might affect Littlebourne as we also have the new development on the old BT site as well.

### **Electoral Review**

In the electoral review that has been carried out Littlebourne is part of Little Stour along with Adisham, Bekesbourne and Patribourne.

### **Concurrent Funding**

A major debate with Canterbury City Council ensued after we were informed that the concurrent funding for 15/16 was to be considerably reduced, the suggestion being to fund only 53.6% this is for reimbursement of work that we carry out for CCC, Obviously, this was totally unacceptable, we therefore lobbied CCC and two meetings in the Guildhall followed as it had been suggested that we add the difference to our Precept bill! Which we wouldn't accept, as this in fact would have been double taxation! Totally unfair, as overall funding to urban areas was to be cut by 1% and that to P C's 26% which was not fair or acceptable. After much debate it was agreed to fund at the previous years level, which had already been cut previously, but due to the economic climate we are currently experiencing, we felt that this was a more acceptable outcome.

### **Wimille Twinning**

The twinning is still going on, but it is extremely difficult to get villagers to return visits to Wimille, they have invited several groups and residents to visit, we have tried to arrange return trips without much response, however the education part of the exchange is doing well, the Wimille pre-school is coming on April 21st on a return visit as our pre-school went to them last year. We are currently setting up another trip for the primary school returning to Wimille after the Summer holidays. On April 11th we welcome 14 from Wimille who are coming here to walk, there will be coffee then a walk around Littlebourne and Nature Reserve in the morning, then pub lunch at Goodnestone, followed by a walk in that area and back here for tea and cake, if anyone wants to join in for any part of the day please speak to me. Thanks go to Jane Rice for leading the walk. To Cllrs Reid, Barrett and Gallagher who are on the Twinning Team.

### **Scams and Fraud's NHW**

Unfortunately the number of scams and fraud's are increasing, a very bad one recently occurred in the village costing thousands. The Community Warden is always working on these on our behalf. I have at least 150 members on my NHW list that I send out regular details too. If you wish to be included in these emails then please let me have your email address. This is all free of charge there are no membership fees.

### **Defibrillator**

A resident attended our May meeting last year giving us a presentation, suggesting that it would be advantageous to have a public defibrillator situated on the hall building, which after some discussion we agreed would be good, especially to the users of the recreation ground. This would obviously need funding! Over the last few months funding has been obtained from several sources ie. 4VPO Fund, a grant

from CCC and LPC to allow this to be happen. After a good deal of research all round the machine has now been purchased we are now awaiting the fitting and additional lighting by an electrician which should take place shortly. We intend to have an open event to show it off and how easy it is to use in an emergency. The open event will be advertised as soon as its practicable with the recreation club providing refreshments. The First Responders will be demonstrating the machine. We hope that as many people as possible will come to see how easy this is to operate as it could be a life saver. Thanks to James McCrossan for bringing this to our attention and helping to make it happen.

### **First Responders**

The First Responders have agreed to do this demonstration for Littlebourne free of charge, as we are fortunate enough to have one of our residents who has completed their course and qualified to become a First Responder, now being part of a team who are called by emergency services to respond in the various areas that are covered by these volunteers, often reaching a patient before the ambulance arrives.

The start up kit for each responder is almost £5000 the P C made a donation of £500 towards the kit and the collection that will be made after the open event will go towards the kit. So we, in Littlebourne, will be well looked after, as long as we get plenty of volunteers to use the defibrillator when necessary. Thanks to Paddy Mount for undertaking this training.

### **Heritage Collection**

Cllr. Betty Jeffries, lifelong collection of historic Littlebourne and Parish Records is now in the hands of The Heritage Group, it is being collated by experts and stored in protective materials in the hall, funding has been obtained by the Group to enable this to happen. This will be an ongoing work for the group for many years to come. Thanks to Betty the history will go on.

### **Afternoon Club**

Congratulations were passed onto the afternoon club on reaching their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a celebration they held in the hall. Thanks to Roz Arman and her committee for the continuation of this successful club. Thanks to Cllr. Geof Welch for keep the PC up with their events.

### **Retiring Chairman Cllr. Vivienne Spratt MBE APM 2015 10 year review**

As this is my last year on the Parish Council, after 13 years, 10 of them being your chairman, I would like to do a short review to name some of the notable achievements during that time. Shortly after becoming Chairman, our clerk unfortunately was off sick for a while. I took on the job of doing the clerk's work, so as to keep his job open for him..... that really threw me in at the deep end! It was a steep learning curve; however it did teach me that we had to get an electronic accounts system in place! I also learnt that if you wanted things in the village you had to look for funding streams for the various items required, which was no easy task, as there were a lot of people after the same money, so a good case had to be established. Over the years there were many disappointments, but my motto is if you don't at first succeed try, try, again! I managed to get the funding for the Youth shelter and lighting, several pieces of play equipment and the outdoor Gym, the BMX Track, Gardens, trees and shrubs through the High Street and copse, then part funding for lighting along the School Pathway and The List, plus quite a number of seats around the village. I also got funding for the lift in the hall complex. I think the most major achievement, with the help of the vice Chair Mick Giles, was to get the shop extension with an extra room off of the Ground, this was paid for by funds that the Parish Council had invested, however, I wanted a return for our investment, this was the hardest task I faced, it took two years to overcome all the problems that arose, but with the support of the PC and the cooperation of the Shop Committee, we got there in the end. A management agreement was put into place with the shop committee to pay us a portion of the rent that covered our third of the premises. We agreed a management and maintenance fee and now receive this rent

into our own 'Good Causes' community fund, which is distributed solely in Littlebourne, although, we rightly, remain part of the original joint arrangement as well.

The fight to get Ellen Court to remain as housing for the elderly was huge and didn't finish at achieving this as with the change in the CCC housing policy we were to lose our rights to Littlebourne residents having first options. The negotiations on this were hard including Guildhall Meetings again. The concession we got, was for all our residents on current housing waiting list to get first rights over next 5 years. I became quite well known in the Guildhall over the last few years!

We have seen the transfer of the allotments management to The Littlebourne Horticultural Society, which is helping the workload, as we only have a part time clerk.

The twinning with Wimille has proved good for the children and going strong but the children's centre which I negotiated to get here in Littlebourne, rather than in another village, this came..... and went, due to the financial climate, however, we have been able to retain the building for Ladybirds Pre-School where I am a Trustee.

The Youth Group is still running strongly, I had lead this group from offset, training to be a Youth Leader with KCC to make sure it would flourish. I have raised sufficient funds to keep this enterprise going for some time, thanks go to Laura Furr for now taking over the lead role, with myself just keeping a watching brief!

During these years, through some of our events, the chairman's charity has raised money for The Cancer Care Club who assists local sufferers and their families and provides much needed equipment to Cathedral Day Centre at KCH. I have also been able to personally raise with the help of my granddaughters in excess of £20,000 for Breast Cancer.

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There is one item however, that I was disappointed not to get off of the ground..... that being the Patient Driver Scheme, I tried extremely hard to get drivers but very little response..... So I had to count that as a failure, maybe the next Council would take it forward?

I will miss the challenges that council life has brought, but now is the time to take a back seat and for someone else to bring energy to the role of Chairman for the next session. We know we have some very capable residents standing.

Cllr Giles gave thanks to the Chairman for all her work over her time on the council.

### **3. Minutes approval from 2014 APM**

The minutes from last year were proposed by Bob Anderson and seconded by Cllr Cate Reid. The minutes were duly signed.

### **4. GUEST SPEAKER – Ray Evison Chairman of KALC Canterbury Area Committee**

Cllr Spratt gave a welcome to Ray.

Ray began by complimenting the PC on being very active and successful. Ray explained how he also sits on the Standards Committee for Canterbury City Council and they have recently been discussing the process at planning committee meetings. The issue of PC's only being able to speak once on a planning matter, has been highlighted, as they do not have the opportunity to speak against once everyone else has spoken. The PC speaks for a much wider group than an amenity body, as they have a statutory responsibility to take everyone's views to consideration.

Ray talked about the importance of a training budget for a parish council, he recommended that at least £100, or more for larger councils, should be allocated each year for clerk or councillor training. Training is vital as finance and planning amongst other things is changing. Ray confirmed that he had spoken with the clerk and Littlebourne already allows for an ample training budget. Any new councilors, after the election will be offered a free training session from KALC.

Ray talked about the appalling state of lorry parking in Kent, that operation stack is not good enough, proper parking needs providing. This is one of the biggest issues for KALC, which continues to crop up again and again.

Ray also mentioned the Parish Charter which has been drawn up between CCC, KALC and the PC's in the district. He emphasized the importance of having a representative from PC's to attend the KALC Canterbury area meetings. This is something which Littlebourne has always done.

The Chairman thanked Ray for his informative speech.  
Ray departed at 8.10pm

The Chairman also welcomed our PCSO Lisa Williams and her replacement Toby Coburn.

## **5. Reports from local organisations:**

### **Sloyden and Durrant Charities Report – Cllr Mick Giles**

A report by Cllr M Giles at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Littlebourne War Memorial Hall on Wed April 1st to which all residents are invited. The Sloyden & Durrant charity exists to help residents in cases of need or hardship. We are reliant and grateful to anyone bringing such cases to our attention and assure you that any help given is strictly confidential. The financial balance as at the 1st April 2015 is £1 342.72, no payments were made in the last year. The account book as always is available tonight for anyone wishing to see it, or at any other reasonable time by written application to the Parish Council Clerk

### **Littlebourne Community Fund Report – Cllr Mick Giles**

Due to a complicated legal issue over the footpath between the List & Court/ List Meadows, where, despite the efforts of the PC, Sanctuary and Southern Housing will not accept responsibility for the footpath, even though they created it. With the PC having no available funding for this path or any legal action the Community Fund will, for the safety and wellbeing of residents finance the provision of a concrete surfaced foot path, this work is due to start on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April.

The Community fund was set up to distribute the rent from the Parish Council funded 4 Villages shop extension by providing finance for events and projects in the Parish of Littlebourne through the village organizations and / others where no other funding is available. Since the fund was set up it has financed the St Georges day events held on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2013 and the refurbishment of the Ladybirds kitchen in Nov 2013

All applications for funding to the chairman Cllr Mick Giles Tel 728228 or email mickandwendy1@btinternet.com.

Full details including written estimates and quotations are required as is the production of final invoices and detailed expenditure on completion of the event or project

### **Littlebourne War Memorial Hall – Cllr Cate Reid (Hall Chairman)**

As I hope you'll agree, we are fortunate to have this Village Hall. It's a wonderful asset for the Village. We continue to try to boost bookings and to keep it running as cost-efficiently as possible, particularly as Grants from Canterbury City Council are reducing. Villagers benefit from paying a reduced rental, while non-villagers pay a slightly higher charge, which we feel is right. So please think about hiring one of the rooms here if you are having a family party. However, I would remind all Hirers to remember to check everywhere has been left in good order before locking up – this is part of the deal!

To update you, a new Water Heater has been installed in the kitchen, which will make life a lot easier when catering for larger numbers. Unfortunately, it was delivered missing a vital button, so could not be used tonight !!!

We are also in the process of improving the lighting, particularly in this Main Hall, so that it can be adjusted according to the type of event taking place. Birthday parties will probably want more subdued lighting than a sewing class or a music class, where good lighting will be needed. Following on from this, we will be redecorating room by room, paying particular attention to the water damage that has in part been caused by vandalism – youngsters have been getting onto the roof, not only causing damage but also endangering their lives by the route they take. The access that they have used is being attended to, so hopefully this sort of behaviour will be prevented in future. There is CCTV in operation around the Shop and Hall complex, which has proven to be very successful in identifying miscreants.

The Hall Trustees are very fortunate to have Mick Lonergan as Chairman of Turner's Orchard Sub-Committee. He has organised events in the Orchard for both children and adults, plus doing a lot of maintenance, with help from his team and I thank them all very much. Anyone who would like to Volunteer to give a little time to be involved with the Orchard would always be most welcome, so please ask Mick or call me.

I particularly want to thank Margaret and Mike:- Margaret Harrison, our Vice Chairman, is such a help and support – she is always there to help me, which I appreciate enormously – and also Mike Gallagher, who does a fantastic job as our Treasurer – he has negotiated good deals with our gas and electrical suppliers, Insurers, as well as roofers and suchlike, plus dealing with the CCC Grant process.

Lastly, I would like to thank each Hall Trustee for all their support this year – it has been invaluable – I always say 'Onwards and Upwards', so that is the thought for this year !

### **Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve – Cllr Betty Jeffries**

Grateful thanks are due to the volunteers, (more are always welcome) They continue to meet every Sunday morning after 10 am, to mulch paths, continue planting and general maintenance, prune and continue development of the site. Some of the paths have been sown with grass seed so we can maintain them by mowing .Bark chippings have also been used thanks to Sean Bishop.

Brian Prescott very kindly mended all the bird nesting boxes which had been damaged by squirrels and woodpeckers. He also put metal plates on them to prevent further damage and made another bat box.

Cowslips & wild Kent daffodils were planted in the Spring meadow. The annual meadow will be planted soon. The Yellow Rattle was successful in reducing the vigour of the grass in the 3 meadows. Birds foot trefoil, knapweeds, wild carrot and grass vetchling were added to the summer meadows. We are gradually increasing the ground cover across the site including wild arum (Lords and Ladies), Gladwyn Iris, wild garlic in the more shady areas.

Visitors to the site included;

- Beavers who visited for one of their meetings where they built toad and insect hibernation dens and did minibeast crafts.
- Cubs who had a bird evening, planting plugs to attract insects for bird food, doing bird puzzles, making a nest and learning about bird skeletons
- Scouts who had 2 meetings on site to build hedgehog hibernation boxes.
- Explorers who Built 2 pyramids from hazel rods for wild hops which will attract comma butterflies.
- 4 Art Classes were held over the year' These included printing, painting identifying bird feathers and drawing a heron's skull.

Banners and explanatory boards have been purchased for the site  
French Visitors from Wimlle visited us on Gardens Open Day

We have applied for a grant from the Solar Panels. If successful this will be used to create a chalk area  
We are also going to apply to 4 VPO for a grant towards art and craft materials for the children.  
Most recently the PC have replaced the broken fence and the gorse hedge has been planted.

Tentative Open Dates Mon 4th May Spring Flowers Bluebells 2pm -4 pm  
Children's' Art Fri and Sat 29th and 30th May

### **Heritage – Cllr Betty Jeffries**

A small group has been sorting the material in the Green Room. Several other people have offered to help in various ways. We hope to have another meeting soon. We are grateful to the Hall Committee for allowing us to use the Green Room and to the 4 VPO for a grant to get us started. Thanks are also due to Mike Gallagher and Geoffrey Barrett for donations of office furniture. The locks in the room have now been attended to.

Alison and Linda have sorted and listed the contents of the 2 cupboards.. Alison is an archivist who fortunately lives in the village and has been a valuable source of advice on suitable storage materials which have now been ordered, She is also advising us on how best to catalogue things.

Ash Heritage Group was set up some years ago. Linda and Pamela have visited them to build on their experiences of running their group and on raising funds

Jenny Anderson has offered to put information at present on floppy discs onto DVD R .with a view to keeping it on line.

Names of volunteers

Alison Cable, Linda Parry, Pamela Evans, Jenny Anderson, Nancy White, Barbara Hunt Betty Jeffries Families We have been contacted by LB descendants in Canada, Australia, Tasmania, and America.as well as UK.

There are Ring Binders on;

History of Church, Barn, School, The Green, the Rec, the W M Hall, Turners Orchard,  
Old Parish Registers, Wills and inventories, Old village houses  
Old photos

### **Village Traffic & Safety sub-committee – Cllr Mike Gallagher (read by Cllr Mick Giles)**

As you will know from previous reports, we have three principal aims:

- a) people safety
- b) property safety
- c) quality of life in Littlebourne

As well as these we have had to deal with the formal application made by Rydon Homes to Canterbury City Council to develop the List field by building 87 houses and a Surgery.

We continue to hear, as we approach the General Election, of yet greater cuts to come in the next Parliament, to all public service budgets. We therefore have to continue fighting to get our views and wishes across and to ensure that our Village problems are at least being considered.

So our work is not yet done – in some cases it is barely started.

### **The Past Year**

The chief priorities for the Village have been;

- a) Enforcement of Speed Limits through our Speedwatch activities. We have been able to gain a few further volunteers to join our team so that efforts have been increased over last year.

- b) Ensuring that the roads in the Village are clear for service, emergency and commercial vehicles and reviewing CCC plans for parking restrictions where appropriate
- c) Ensuring that the safety of pedestrians and property remains our top priority
- d) Continuing to provide traffic and incident information to KCC and CCC so that their policies meet our needs.
- e) Reviewing Planning applications such as that submitted by Rydon Homes, so that appropriate comments can be made to the relevant planning authority.

### **Speeding**

We have been able to mount a significant number of Speedwatch sessions and have given many car details to Kent Police for them to follow up. Their usual course of action is to write to the registered owners of vehicles. A further report on the same vehicle will see stronger action and ultimately prosecution. Kent Police have also undertaken some support action in Littlebourne at our request. There have been a number of major accidents and in some cases significant property damage in and just outside the village over the past year and the majority of these have been photographed and details supplied to the relevant authority. The vast majority of these incidents have been caused by excessive speed and driver error. We have joined our voice to that of Kent Police to move the 30mph speed limit at the top of The Hill towards Canterbury so that it does not sit immediately before the bend into the Village.

### **Parking**

We said last year that we were fast running out of road space in Littlebourne for residents to park cars and each year this position gets worse. The extended double yellow lines in Jubilee Road at the junction with the A257 have helped to keep the junction clear and also reduced the need for traffic to reverse back out of Jubilee on to the A257 with all the attendant risks.

Further along Jubilee Road, however, there are increasing instances of vehicles being parked either side of the road, sometimes directly opposite each other thus preventing all but the narrowest of vehicles to pass between them. Such practices are not only downright anti-social but also liable to increase driver frustration, cause delays and, if emergency vehicles are stopped, could cause loss of life. The message is simple, when parking be aware that other vehicles must have safe passage past your vehicle at all times. Drivers deliberately parking opposite another car so that the road is effectively blocked to other types of traffic will be inviting more double yellow lines and greater parking restrictions. Other roads that are in a similar position are Roseacre Road, The Maltings and St Vincent's Close.

### **Pedestrians and Property**

As you may remember from previous years, we have requested that an HGV ban should be imposed on Nargate Street from the A257 junction to the Church Road junction. This request has been backed by our KCC Member Michael Northey. KCC Highways have placed a number of signs around the two junctions indicating that this section of the road is not suitable for HGVs. These signs have been regularly ignored by HGV drivers and the Police say that they cannot take action if a driver chooses to pass them because they are only advisory and not mandatory. There have been many examples of damage to houses and other vehicles over the recent years and, most recently, a property and protective bollards in this area were damaged by a large HGV, the driver of which had ignored the advisory signs.

We are very concerned that pedestrians will be injured, or worse, if this ban is not imposed and then enforced. We have now carried out a number of Lorrywatch sessions and will continue to identify vehicles and their owners who break the existing ban on Bekesbourne Lane.

### **Providing Information to KCC and other Authorities**

Financial cutbacks have meant that data that was historically collected by some agencies is now no longer being done, so we and our colleagues in the A257 Group are now collecting details of accidents (together with photographs) so that all Authorities are aware of what is really happening on the ground. Through the efforts of our Member, Michael Northey, KCC are running a pilot scheme to assemble this data and use it to improve their knowledge of day to day problems so that they can propose solutions. We have also responded to consultations from Government on Canterbury City Council Parking arrangements and whether to give Parish Councils the statutory right to being consulted during the Vehicle Operators Licensing process. We are working with our fellow A257 Organisations to have a 'buffer zone' speed limit of 40mph between the general 50 or 60mph limit and those covering the 30mph village and built up areas, a 30 mph limit for Bramling and taking forward a joint approach on the issue of large HGVs in our villages.

### **Planning Applications**

Time has been spent, again, on the proposal of Rydon Homes to build 87 properties and a Surgery on The List field. This is in spite of the Village's strong objections and also the decision of Canterbury City Council again not to include this land in the designated Local Plan area. We have had meetings and site visits involving Kent Highways and have reinforced our objections to the increased traffic level and congestion that will undoubtedly result from this development. We await the decision of the City Council who are the Planning Authority. We also dealt with proposals for infilling the former Oldridge settlement lagoons. This operation is environmentally necessary and we worked with KCC Highways to ensure that the increased use of Swanton Lane by HGVs will be done safely. The whole job will take approximately two years to complete.

### **Extra help**

As you would have gathered by now, the work of monitoring Highways in our Village takes time. We have been fortunate to have some additional volunteers this year, but can always do with more help. We also need information about our roads. Please let us know of any incidents, or accidents around or in the vicinity of the Village, either to our Secretary Cllr Cate Reid on 01227 721831 or to the Parish Council Clerk by telephone on 01227 721500 or by a note put into the Parish Letter Box on the wall outside the Parish Office. Please help us to help you get better services. Finally, we have been able to move the Littlebourne profile up the agenda and this has only been done by the constant hard work of the members of our Team. Thank you all very much.

Resident Alan Jones highlighted the incident in which a building was damaged on Nargate Street by a HGV and the problem with the HGV's using this road, he mentioned the safety of those using the footpath at this narrow stretch of road also. Cllr Giles said that we will hear further on the full ban for HGV vehicles in Cllr Northey's report later. Another resident, from Bekesbourne Lane expressed his concern over the approaching traffic, coming from the Howletts direction, not slowing when entering the Littlebourne village gates, he would like to see them moved further around the corner. The Chairman asked the resident to copy LPC in on any letters written to KCC Highways.

### **Littlebourne Horticultural Society – Report on Allotments – Alan Jones**

Alan read the report as follows:

*During the last year the society has;*

- Cleared neglected areas of the site to provide more plots
- Increased the number of plots to 75
- Acquired more equipment to enable more efficient preparation of new plots
- Realigned plots and they are continuing to add new numbered marker posts
- Provide a new noticeboard at each entrance to the site

- Ensured all relevant insurances are in place
- Instigated new fiscal controls
- Instigated a system of electronic bulletins to keep tenants fully informed
- Assisted in the creation of new tenancy agreements
- Begun a system of inspections working with LPC
- Installed new locks and created a keyholder register

*During the next year the society will strive to;*

- Clear a disused area to provide 6 more plots
- Develop a plot to create a society area and workshop/educational plots
- Begin a program of workshops
- Continue to keep tenants fully informed of all developments
- Seek grant funding for proposed developments.

Colin Higgenbottam also mentioned that Ladybirds Pre-school have taken over a plot for the children to tend.

## **6. County and City Cllr reports:**

### **i) Cllr Michael Northey - Kent County Council (read by the Clerk)**

Cllr Northey's report was as follows:

Here we are at the last APM of the four year term. I want to pay special tribute to the parish council, as it disbands before the elections. This has been a terrific council to work with and every one of its members deserves special praise. So to prevent any embarrassment, I will just pick out Viv, for all her enormous energy, skill and dedication to the village. We have been truly lucky to have such a great Chairman. I look forward to working with the new parish council.

Every year it seems that I have to say that KCC has had to make savings yet again – this year it is around £86 million. Even so there is a lot of good news.

Locally we can do a lot. I pioneered with Highways the new reporting system whereby any damage to vehicles or property, or any event which should not happen, such as vehicles coming off the road, is reported to Highways and not only damage to people. Littlebourne has been specially commended for its clear and valuable reporting – many thanks especially to Cate in this. We are asked to continue to report events as the Highways team work on making the forms easier to use.

Nargate Street has long been a matter of concern as HGVs try to get along there. After much discussion, I will be using my Member's Highways Fund to finance a total HGV ban over 7.5 tonnes along the stretch of Nargate Street between the junctions with High Street and Church Road. This will need approval from the JTB and others after consultation, but I am fairly confident it will happen.

Every so often someone will complain that they receive 'nothing' or 'very little' for their council tax. A good response might be to simply list the 300+ services Kent County Council provides. Of course not everyone uses all the services – there's no compulsion to visit a library, download an e-book or visit a country park. But there are other services that everyone uses such as our roads and disposal of your waste (and paying the government landfill tax of £80 a tonne on that waste). Some services might be considered more as 'insurance' such as emergency planning, gritting the roads and provision of salt bins.

Much of Kent County Council's budget (and your council tax) is spent on school buildings and transporting children to and from school. If children are at their nearest appropriate school then KCC is obliged to pay for

this but we also provide a £9m annual subsidy to make a deeply discounted bus pass available to all 11 – 16 year olds. If you don't have children you may think it unfair that you are expected to fund this through your council tax. And if you never travel by bus yourself you may baulk at the subsidy to many of the bus services. These and other transport services cost around £70m a year. Other services include the coroner's court, trading standards, help to those fleeing domestic abuse and youngsters needing help to get off drink and drugs. KCC's biggest area of expenditure (over £400m) is on social care for adults – the elderly, the mentally ill, the disabled and those with learning disabilities and for children – keeping them safe from abuse, arranging adoption or care. You personally may get very little of these services but we would surely be appalled if they weren't provided.

This year our Budget Day at Kent County Council was on 12 February. The district/city council, Kent Police, Kent and Medway Fire Authority and the parish/town council also set their precepts and the district/city council then sends out the council tax bills on behalf of them. This year KCC agreed a rise of 1.99% (just under the referendum level) and I do hope that local residents feel that it is worth it.

**ii) Cllr Brian Staley – Canterbury City Council**

Cllr Staley began by thanking the Chairman and parish council on doing an excellent job.

Cllr Staley mentioned the A257 Group in particular when he talked about PC's working together with a collective voice, which was good to see.

He gave thanks to The Barn Committee for all their great work, thanking them for doing a splendid job.

Cllr Staley mentioned several projects that we was pleased to have been part of;  
The saving of Ellen Court and the community room that was being made good use of.  
The proposed creation of 'Age wise' which he had managed to get through  
The case of a Gurka widow with her two children being allowed back into the country.

Also more recently Cllr Staley had been involved in the concurrent function debate with CCC and PC's, fighting for an 100% reimbursement.

CCC meetings are now to be sound recorded.

Cllr Staley feels that the committee system to come into place after the elections will be an improvement over the current executive one.

PCSO's Lisa Williams and Toby Coburn left the meeting at 9.05pm

Cllr Staley finished by thanking all those that have worked with him over the last eight years.

Cllr Geof Welch thanked Cllr Staley for all his work in Littlebourne.

The Chairman then introduced Graham Duplock (Liberal candidate) and Stuart Walker (Conservative candidate) for City Councillor for Little Stour Ward.

**iii) Gary Moore – KCC Community Warden (read by the Clerk)**

The clerk read the report as follows;

My apologies for not being there this evening but my duties have increased recently and I now cover the Chartham area as well on a temporary basis until a new warden is appointed so makes it difficult to attend evening meetings for the next few weeks. I am still totally committed to Littlebourne and spend as much time here as I can.

This last year has been one full of activity with a large range of problems around the village having been dealt with in a timely and friendly way including recently the troublesome skip on the high street, dog fouling issues and keeping the roads safer near the school .

This year also saw the KCC public consultation for the future of the warden service and thanks to the efforts of all those who wrote in and supported us, we are now assured of another 2 years of funding for us to keep on with the service we provide to the communities we serve. Good news indeed.

Much of my time has been spent on welfare visits, keeping watch on the river states in case of flooding, dealing with plenty of youth related problems and helping out with the increasing number of scams and doorstep traders that have been plaguing the villages.

I am presently working on a presentation that will encourage community awareness of villainous persons in our villages by reporting this when something seems odd and I hope to roll this out in Littlebourne first, with the parish council's approval when completed.

I must also say a big Thank you to you all for making my job here a joy.

### **7. Research project by Kings College London**

Cllr Pam Evans explained about a study being carried out by Kings College London on those facing flooding. They are looking for volunteers to take part in focus groups on facing flooding. They want participants from Kent and surrounding areas, who have been flooded before or who might be at risk of flooding. These would be local sessions and would last 90minutes. They will give £30 to cover your time and expenses, input will be anonymous and confidential. For further details contact [sonny.patel@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:sonny.patel@kcl.ac.uk)

### **8. Presentation of Honorary Freeman of Littlebourne**

The Chairman presented Cllr Betty Jeffries with a scroll awarding her Honorary Freeman of Littlebourne on her retirement after serving on The Parish Council for 45 years. Cllr Jeffries was previously chair of the parish council, was one of the team who started the community shop, she has a lifelong collection of village history that is now be collated into a collection and will be available at a later date to view through the heritage group which she has formed. She has a great interest in the environment and our local nature reserve.

Cllr Jeffries responded with the following words;

First I would like to thank everyone for making me a Freeman of Littlebourne. I did not think such a thing was possible and very much appreciate it. It is difficult to realise that almost 50 years have gone by. The PC has achieved much in that time. I am particularly glad to have been involved with several projects from their beginnings--- Saving the river, LB Barn and the PO, the Lounge extension to the WMH, The doctors' surgeries in Nargate St and then in Court Hill, the 4 VPO Store, the Nature Reserve , and LB Design Statement and Heritage. All of these took a great deal of time and effort on the part of many people in the village and elsewhere. On the other side it is sad that some organisations which played such a large part in those projects have not survived ----The Conservation Society and LB WI, along with Individual village shops, ----2 butchers, 3 grocers, Newsagents, all with local deliveries, a garage, and Hair Design which has now closed after 40 years at 30 High St..

I shall miss being on LB PC and wish every success to the new PC who will be fortunate in having Gail, our clerk, as a guiding star. I will be kept busy finishing the next Pamphlet on Littlebourne history and helping Linda, Alison and Pamela organise the Heritage Room so that the information is more available to everyone. Thank you everyone once more.

The Chairman also presented the other Cllrs and the Clerk with a token of her thanks for all their work and support over the years.

**9. Presentation of Millennium Award 2014**

Cllr Spratt advised she was very pleased to present the award this year to David and Jean Smith, for all their hard work in the village with the elderly in particular. They are not present this evening so we will present the cheque at a later date.

The Chairman then thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....