

**Minutes of the Littlebourne Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 21 MARCH 2018, at Littlebourne War Memorial Hall at 7.30pm**

Present

- Parish Councillors; Cllr Mike Gallagher, Cllr Cate Reid, Cllr Brian Hurlow, Cllr Pamela Evans, Cllr Sylvia Wilson, Cllr Peter Farrow and Cllr Melanie Moore.
- City Cllr Stuart Walker
- Clerk Mrs Gail Hubbard
- 21 residents

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman, Cllr Gallagher welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He also explained that there would be no guest speaker this evening; LPC had done their best to get word out to villagers of this situation, via Facebook, the website and the NHW email circulation.

Darren Welch of Leath Park Developments had given the following statement to LPC, which the Chairman read out;

“As discussed the legal arrangements and board approval process have unfortunately been delayed. I therefore feel that as we will not be in ownership of the site for a few weeks, I would rather organise a special meeting with the village residents to discuss our proposals when we have more to report. I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you on Wednesday but look forward to meeting with you soon when the site is in our ownership.”

What was reported by LPC in the latest LPC News still stands and we will seek to arrange a village meeting for residents as soon as possible.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mick Giles (unwell), County Cllr Michael Northey (KCC meeting), Community Warden Gary Moore (on leave), Head teacher Stella Byrne (parent consultations), Viv Spratt (recuperating) and Roz Arman.

Thanks were given to Wendy Giles, Nancy White and Maggi Shaw for doing the refreshments this evening.

2. Minutes approval from 2017 APM

The minutes from last year were proposed by Mrs Anne Rigden, seconded by Mr Bright and approved by the council. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

3. Millennium Award 2018 presentation

The Chairman read out the list of nominees as follows;

DAPHNE KELK – over many years always helped the community mainly by organising and baking many wonderful cakes for the Barn and all its events that take place for the village. She tirelessly helps other people in need by giving them lifts to doctors' appointments or other appointments needed. Daphne is still putting others first and finding time to bake the most wonderful cakes! all for our community (having tasted these cakes she would be competition for Paul Hollywood) . All in all she deserves recognition please.

ANNE RIGDEN – For her dedication and commitment to the village and those that live here. She works in a very unassuming way, not looking for accolades or reward, other than improving the lives of others and the

village amenities. She annually collects for a local Hospice, regularly cares and attends for an elderly neighbour, helps with village functions in WMH and organises working parties in Turners Orchard (where she is joint Chairman) and also now serves as School Governor at Littlebourne CEP. Also Anne was on the Fete committee for a number of years and Brown Owl at Littlebourne Brownies.

VIV SPRATT – For all she continues to do for the village, especially in terms of NHW co-ordinating, being a Trustee for Ladybirds pre-school and making herself available when LPC have needed to consult with her.

MARGARET HARRISON – For her commitment to the village. She is Vice-Chairman of LWMH and coordinates U3A activities in the village, which many villages take part in and enjoy, such as patchwork and music.

CATE REID – unstinting work in managing the Hall Trust and running a booking service. Especially over recent times where it has proved a very challenging job, where Cate has risen to the challenge in organising the help to obtain funding work needed. Congratulations to the whole team who have supported her and done such a splendid job.

He then presented the award to this year's winner Anne Rigden, who was present to accept the award.

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

Cllr Mike Gallagher - Councillor Gallagher read his Chairman's report below to the meeting;

In my report last year there was considerable apprehension about the Brexit decision and its effect on the UK's economic prospects and how that might in turn affect our affairs in the Village. We knew that The List development might be sold on and there were indications then that the housing market appeared to be slowing down in the face of reduced levels of investment across the economy. We were also facing the developing business of local government devolution where there was no blueprint but a wish from Central Government that a tier of administration should be removed with considerable savings. The precise method for achieving this was to be decided locally.

On 29 March last year, one week after our last Annual Meeting Britain invoked Article 50 and began the process of withdrawal from the EU, due to become effective from 29 March 2019. The real negotiations then began and still continue. Amid claims of lack of clarity, the economic outlook has remained unclear and austerity is still the watchword.

There was a snap General Election on 8 June which resulted in the Government losing some of its majority. This has led, among other things, to the putting aside of the devolution issue, at least for the time being. The Austerity Agenda continues to affect funding at all levels with results now apparent in many areas, such as the NHS, Policing and the Public Sector.

Council Funding

I have explained over the last couple of years that the funding that keeps the Village going is currently derived from two sources; concurrent funding and precept. The concurrent funding is for that work which the City Council organises itself in the urban areas of the District. It has been a number of years since that money covered the full cost of doing the work in our Village (our annual budget for this is £19,487 – the amount awarded is £13,348). This is now a deficit of £6,139 which is covered by the remaining source, the precept, which is the amount raised directly from Villagers. This deficit is effectively double taxation and has been the source of complaint between the Parish and City Council for the last seven years.

All of us have benefitted from a further rebate which is passed down from Central Government to each District, this is called the Council Tax Support Grant. This has now reduced by a further £1,000 this year to stand at £600. In all probability it will disappear entirely next year. This reduction, together with the increased deficit of £500 in concurrent support means that we need to raise a further £2.50 per annum at Band D, with no increase in spending for the seventh year by the Parish Council.

Our major concern is that in two years' time we know that the concurrent funding of £13,000 will disappear entirely with no information about how that gap will be closed. There is little doubt that the current Government strategy is to pass all the revenue raising responsibility for local government down to the users – us, with no further support. This means that not only will your precept rise but also the Community Charge will rise with it, so that we could see some considerable increases in future.

Actions for 2017 – 18

We planned last year to provide more lighting along the Rec Path from the Club to the Youth Shelter and also upgrade the lighting to supplement the new CCTV system being installed. Both of these were achieved as was the replacement of three of the planters on The Hill which help to indicate to drivers that the kerb extensions are in place to slow down traffic. These were painted a brighter colour so as to make them more obvious at night.

The CCTV upgrade has cost over £6,000, although this has been shared between the Club, Shop, Hall and Parish Council. We now look for a better availability and much greater clarity of image.

The money for the bus shelters has been allocated, but not yet spent, because of the myriad problems of discovering actual land ownership of some of the verges and trying to settle whether planning permission is required and if so, from whom. It is anticipated that they should be in place during the year.

Alongside this we have spent around £2,000 establishing our legal position as well as having a survey of our actual land holding of The List track. This was in connection with our objection to the four properties proposed to be built at the rear of the Newing's Farmhouse development. The track, currently a well used footpath between the Rec and St Vincent's and Court Meadows estates, was granted a right of way in 1920 by the then owner, Mr Herbert Phelps, in favour of Mr Newing for access to his smallholding (now The List field). The track and the land now comprising the allotments was given to the Parish Council at some stage, but when The List was sold to Rydon recently the right of way continued in existence in their favour. They were then able to apply for planning permission. In order to represent the Village's interests, it was necessary to take legal advice and also to establish our actual landholding since it appeared that some of it was being taken. Planning permission can be sought and granted without the applicant being the owner.

We also carried our play area repairs costing over £1,000.

Plans for 2018 – 19

We are budgeting for further replacements of playground equipment to the value of £5,000 and will seek opinions from the users as to what they might want to see. The play area safety surface needs replacing in some places and this will also mean the substructure might need attention.

We are also allocating an amount for legal fees on the 'just in case' principle.

You will have read in LPC News that we are conducting a Youth Survey and my colleagues Cllr Moore and Cllr Wilson will be following this up to see what we can achieve this year.

We are one of the founder members of the A257 Group, now comprising ten Parish Councils and Community Groups concerned about safety on that road and the effects of traffic on our Villages. We also

have the MPs for Canterbury and also Thanet South as well as the relevant KCC Members and District Councillors from Canterbury and Dover as regular members of the enlarged group. One of the Group's wishes has been to see the increased use of 20mph zones in our Villages and, with the help of KALC, we were able to get the agreement of the whole of the County to meet with KCC Highways to facilitate the speedier introduction of these. Wingham is to be a pilot site as part of a new streamlined implementation process. Work has also been done in each Village to identify particular problem spots on the road and also to take a longer term look at the pattern of development in each of the Villages in order to demonstrate the long term cumulative effect of the current explosion in housebuilding (the barracks site, BT site, St Martins site, Preston, all of which will access the A257.) All of this is now being collected together to produce an A257 Plan which will be available to every Village to drive the improvement agenda for the future.

The reduction in budgets has also led to reductions in services in many public arenas. Our KCC Warden service has dwindled over the last few years and our own Warden Gary Moore, has had to serve a number of additional Villages apart from our own. There is to be a recruitment programme, with interviews already happening, that should see Gary being able to spend more time with us – it can't come too soon.

Kent Police have also borne their proportion of cuts and we have noted that the PCSO force is being increasingly stretched. There is to be a new policing initiative in Kent which we are hoping will be explained to us in more detail when the Divisional Commander comes to the next District KALC meeting in a few weeks' time.

Devolution

As I have already said, work on this front appears to have stalled. By April 2017 the idea that there would be a coalition of five District Councils to form a type of unitary authority without a union but sharing some office functions had changed, with two of the authorities, Ashford and Shepway, pulling out. Canterbury withdrew subsequently and everything is now quiet.

There has continued to be activity on the reorganisation front with Canterbury, in July, deciding to complete a Community Governance Review. This would encompass the whole District and would include questions about whether boundaries between areas were reasonable and whether those areas not served by a Parish Council would wish to have one created – specifically this was aimed at those towns within the district that prior to 1974 had their own Council. A District wide appeal for evidence was made with respondents urged to complete a pre-printed form, answer online or to write to the District. This exercise began in July 2017, had witness sessions in October and has produced an interim report. Littlebourne Parish Council responded that it was happy with its boundaries, had a long established name and identity, and was able to run its own affairs. The finding of the City Councillors agreed with us and no change is proposed. All of this has consumed time and effort.

Planning

This topic is the most fraught in Village affairs. We have, in conjunction with our District colleagues in the Kent Association of Local Councils, proposed changes to the Parish Charter between Canterbury and the Parishes, mostly around the subject of our relationships with the City Council but significantly in our dealings with the Planning function. At the root of our problems is a feeling that we should be able to add more to the dialogue between their process needs and our future with whatever is being proposed. We can, and occasionally do, object to particular planning applications in the interests of the Village as a whole and our Councillors on our own little planning team take great care in establishing what can and can't be done and in viewing, sometimes visiting and discussing proposals. Our City Councillor, Stuart Walker, has taken a prime part in liaising with the Planning Department of the City Council when we feel particularly strongly and we

are grateful for all of his efforts to bridge the gap between our view and that of the department, but often to no avail.

The Rydon List site, is now in the process of changing hands and we hope that our relationships with the new Developer will be better than with the former owners. We also look forward to recovering some of the benefits initially promised by Rydon but never to be delivered.

The second List site of four properties, to be accessed from our List Public Footpath, was passed in spite of all of our arguments and I'd like to thank Cllr Moore for presenting our arguments so well to the Planning Committee – but alas to no avail. Neither KCC nor Canterbury saw fit to protect our interests, namely the public footpath. Rydon, we are now told, have sold that site to another developer. A cynic might say that they are only in it for the money and, in spite of all the promises to the contrary, we were never destined to get anything out of their dealings with our Village.

Last year I mentioned that we had discovered that Wickhambreaux School had made a planning application to extend its buildings in order to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers. I repeat what I said at the time, that we did not object to the planning application itself – we could not because it is in another Parish – but we were concerned that we had not been informed of the expansion of pupil numbers that would result in increased traffic using our already congested roads. Moreover, to add insult to injury, the expansion was to be financed by the Developer contribution of over £200,000 arising from our List development. That Planning application was withdrawn on the basis that it did not meet the criteria of the Canterbury Local Plan. Littlebourne is deemed to be a 'Service Centre' hence should be developed, Wickhambreaux is not. The Area Education Officer wrote to KCC Planners on 11 March 2017 to say that 'we will not be proceeding with the formal expansion of Wickhambreaux School'.

We were astonished a couple of months ago to see on the KCC Planning Portal that another planning application has appeared for 'existing Staff and Pupils'. Again we cannot comment on the building proposals, but when we enquired of Wickhambreaux Residents they all said that they believed the numbers had again increased since last year. We have provided evidence to our KCC Member, Michael Northey and copied this to both the KCC Cabinet Member for Education and the Area Education Officer asking for an explanation and reiterating our concern both that money destined for Littlebourne should have been appropriated in this way and that arrangements to consult neighbouring Parish Councils in matters such as this have still not been communicated to us.

Lastly.....

I would like to thank my Fellow Parish Councillors some of whom will give their reports during the rest of the evening. All of them deserve my thanks for everything they have done in the past year both in their respective responsibilities and as a Council.

None of us, though, could begin to function without the ceaseless efforts of our Parish Clerk, Gail. There is always something that needs doing, crops up unexpectedly or is something we've never come across before. Gail invariably knows what to do, or who to ask, to keep us all on the straight and narrow. Although each of us has learnt through life how to cope with the unexpected, we are all volunteers who have the interests of the Village at heart and who are prepared to put ourselves out to make things better. Gail is the one who keeps us all in order – thanks so much!

5. County and City Cllr reports:

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

The Clerk read out Cllr Northey's report as follows:

It was a pleasure to be re-elected for my fourth term as your County Council representative in last May's election. However the boundaries have changed. The Division no longer contains most of the southern, urban part of Canterbury. Instead I now have parts of Wincheap, all of Thanington and as far as St Augustine's Chartham. The Division has more or less moved westwards and is more rural. There are now 17 parishes, plus other associations, compared with the 10 parishes previously. It does make it more difficult to stay in touch with everyone.

Each parish has its own needs and qualities. The main common worry is traffic. Here at Littlebourne we have particular issues. Over the years I have managed to get the build-outs in the Hill and High Street, which have helped a great deal, the 7.5 tonne lorry restriction in Nargate Street, the widening of the ends of Jubilee Road, various bollards at the bottom end of High Street, and most of the road from Littlebourne to Bifrons Hill has been well resurfaced.

Sadly accidents still persist at the Canterbury side of the A257 and we are working on trying to find mitigations and solutions. This includes the A257 Group, the parish council, myself and various Highways officers.

On a happier note, Littlebourne continues to be one of the strongest communities in my area, for its fine facilities, a good school, a lovely church, excellent pub, great village shop and post office, a surgery, superb recreation green with many sports and games, plus an outdoor gym, lots of societies The Hall seems full of activity every time I see it. No wonder so many people want to live here.

KCC continues to provide a huge range of services, in spite of the difficulties posed by endless cuts in government grants, plus rising demand as the population ages, and inflation costs. 40% of the KCC budget goes for Adult Social Services including care of the elderly. KCC is a great champion of young people and children. The proportion of Kent young people not in education employment or training (NEET) is now at 2.8%, which is below national levels. Though schools are now mostly out of local authority control, KCC is still held responsible for school standards and for providing enough school places. Standards continue to rise in Ofsted terms with 92% of Kent schools now rated as good or outstanding.

The recent weather caused many more pot-holes all over the country and the county. KCC has now found an extra £8.1 million from various sources, including some government grant. The various teams are working hard to clear the back-log of pot-holes.

The Highways crews worked non-stop and heroically round the clock during the recent snow and we are very pleased to see that overall the county continued to function well.

There were proposals in the recent KCC Budget to reduce subsidies for otherwise uneconomic rural bus routes, of £2 million, but a way was found to bring this down to a £455,000 reduction. None of this affects our own area. Paul Carter and others at KCC continue to negotiate with travel providers to find more efficient and customised ways to provide rural transport, such as call a taxi or minibus schemes.

KCC still provides over 300 services. I recommend the KCC website to see the wealth of activities. This is also valuable for reporting problems, or finding out how to access help, such as social services needs. So many thanks to them and especially yourselves, not only councils, but people and clubs etc, for all you do

make Littlebourne an even better place.

ii) Cllr Stuart Walker – Canterbury City Council

Cllr Walker read his report as follows;

It seems incredible that this time last year I unfortunately missed the Littlebourne Annual Parish Meeting as I was at The Guildhall discussing the possibility of joining together with Ashford, Thanet and Shepway to form a 'super Council' which never came to fruition, and also maybe more incredible that this series of Annual Meetings marks the end of my 3rd year and next May my 4 year term will be up and I might be asking you all to lend me your support again!

It has been another year full of hard work and achievements some of which I will be sharing with you this evening. If you would like any more detail on any of them or anything else please get in touch.

In our ward it has been another year of helping with planning applications, rubbish bin collections dealing with waste issues including fly tipping and other local issues such as road surfaces and gritting. All of which I have been able to draw on some fantastic support from Mike and the rest of the Parish Council. I thank you for that.

Across the District there's also been a lot to do;

We have passed another balanced budget. It gets harder every year but this year we will be able to continue to deliver the services that you expect even with the cut to funding from central government. This is going to be a challenge for the foreseeable future so any ideas that you may have please let me or Simon know.

At the end of last year, the council asked whether town councils should be created in Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable and whether any changes are needed to the way some parish council's work. This is known as a community governance review, or CGR. "It was clear there is a desire for local people and local councillors to have a greater say about decisions affecting their area. "They also felt this council could do more to welcome members of the public to its meetings and encourage them to take part. We're keen to hear people's views on how we can do this. "This process leaves the door open to the creation of town councils, especially if there is a groundswell of support for them in the future, but recognises that now is not the right time. Some might see local councillors having a greater say about decisions affecting their area as the next step on that journey." The council already has the Canterbury, the Herne Bay, the Whitstable and the Rural Area Member Panel. The latter represents the interests of the district's villages. Here the public can attend meetings and have their say on issues affecting the area they live in. This helps councillors make informed recommendations to other council committees. "We genuinely want to help local people get more involved in our decision making in a way that works for them and ensures their views are taken into account. "As well as improving local democracy and engagement, the arrangements need to pass the test of being 'effective and convenient'. This means they should be easily understood and shouldn't unreasonably add to the bureaucracy involved in council decision making." Officers and Councillors are now going through all the information including all of the comments from our highly engaged residents

Enforcement. All the pieces of our enforcement strategy are now coming together and it showed some success with the news of 4 people being fined for littering and another for urination in a public place this week. We are getting recognition for the hard work that's going on with fly-tipping and this should continue over the next 12 months. Parish Councils will be offered the opportunity to 'borrow' covert cameras for periods of time and place them where fly tipping occurs to try to catch more people in the act.

Litter. The joint working between the Council and residents on litter-picks is continuing to be a massive success story and one we should all be very proud of. There are some issues with litter picking on Village Roads that have a national speed limit but it is hoped that should be addressed this year.

There have been issues with Serco over the past 2-3 months with the service that they have provided, caused by the bad weather of the recent weeks or the issues over Christmas and New Year. But we are working very closely with them to ensure that as a Partnership we can do everything we can to minimise any disruption to residents in the future.

Parking. Across the city the ANPR scheme will start to bed in and give fairer charges for residents. As well as making parking easier and more seamless, it will also provide us with by-the-second data which will be key for understanding traffic movements. We want to put up signage that will tell you exactly what spaces are available in what car parks and guide you there
“We don’t want everyone queueing up at Watling Street when there are loads of spaces at Pound Lane. It would help us manage traffic flows, get data out to sat-navs and help us get it on the council website.”

The Station Road West multi-storey preparations are going well and it is hoped that there should be more details soon.

There has been a shift in how we deliver cultural services in the district, deciding on putting the Marlowe into a trust to allow it to continue to carry out its fantastic work and bring first class shows to the City. In having charitable status, the theatre will be able to bid for funding from an increased range of funding streams, and it is also hoped that the change in management will have benefits for the theatre’s work in the community. In addition, the move is expected to save taxpayers in Canterbury £238,000 over the first two years and £111,000 each year after that.

The completion of the purchase of Whitefriars has been a real retail opportunity for the District which should allow residents to reap the benefits of a thriving shopping destination and the reward of the financial return that it will bring. "Retailers at Whitefriars are thriving and there is huge potential for growth especially as it is an attractive destination for shoppers and tourists who want a first-class shopping experience. It is one of the top 100 shopping centres in the country. As councils come to rely less on the money given to them by central government, we need to find ways to pay for essential services. The income we generate from this deal is another step towards us becoming self-sufficient."

Whether it’s been work done in the planning and licensing committees; looking after the day to day business through the service committees; or dealing with all our residents’ queries and problems we have always put you first. The coming year brings its own challenges - and opportunities as well.

6. Reports from local organisations:

Sloyden and Durrant Charities – Cllr Mick Giles (read by Cllr Shaw)

A report by Cllr M Giles at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the War Memorial Hall on 21st March 2018 to which all residents were invited.

The Sloyden & Durrant Charity exists to help residents in need or hardship and this year a £200 was made leaving a balance of £1312.71.

We are of course reliant on cases of hardship and need being brought to our attention and can assure that any help given is absolutely confidential.

The account book is available tonight to anyone wishing to see it, or at any other reasonable by written application to the Parish Council Clerk.

Littlebourne Community Fund – Cllr Mick Giles (read by Cllr Shaw)

A report by Cllr M Giles at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the War Memorial Hall on the 21st March 2018 to which all residents were invited.

Purpose:

To facilitate the distribution of the rent received from the Parish Council funded extension to the 4 Villages Store, by providing finance for community events and projects in the Parish of Littlebourne through the village organizations and / or others and where funding from any other source is not available or is incomplete.

Since the fund was set up in March 2013 we have been able to fund projects and events by grants totaling £10,612.81, during last year we supported the Littlebourne Art Group with £100 for the production of calendars and Littlebourne Horticultural Society with £368 for raised Planters for use by anyone on the allotments with mobility problems.

The current financial balance is £4216.19 and after April 5th we will receive the 2017 rent from the 4VPO which subject to a proportion of expenses should be approximately £3500 plus a sum for a previous underpayment.

May I remind all village organizations and others wishing to organize events or projects they feel would benefit the community and where funding is not available to make their applications to the chairman Cllr Mick Giles Tel 728228 or email crr.giles@littlebournepc.org where we will give all applications careful consideration.

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.

Afternoon Club – Roz Arman (read by Cllr Moore)

Cllr Moore began by reading out a short report from Roz Arman of The Afternoon Club;

Littlebourne Afternoon is nine years old this September and is still going strong with 60-65 members. We have a speaker each month with different topics ranging from The Paddle Steamer, “The Medway Queen” heroine of Dunkirk to “Behind the scenes of TV Golden Years” to “Royal visits to Kent.” Last year we had two wonderful days out in part subsidised by an LPC grant.

1. RHS Wisley Surrey
2. Milestones Museum in Basingstoke Hampshire

We thank you for your generous and continuing support.

Media & Communications – Cllr Melanie Moore

My name is Melanie Moore and I am responsible for Media and Communications for the Council – one of my many hats.

I am delighted that we are increasing our reach you via Facebook – over the last year we have increased our followers by 30% and it is growing daily. We now reach up to 500 people when we post information – particularly on subjects such as rubbish collection and road closures.

Working with other local organisations such as the Neighbourhood Watch Community we are able to provide swift answers and information so we would encourage you to send us local information via the Facebook page so we can post it out there for the village to see – the instant nature of this means that road accidents, lost cats and other lost property incidents can be brought to people’s attention almost immediately.

We appreciate that not all of the village gain their news via the internet and so we continue to put news and events in the Kent Messenger and we will continue to publish the LPC News in the Church & Village to communicate.

So what do we have planned?

- We now have a new logo and shortly you will see this on signage and projects.
- Last year we anticipated holding a village survey this year. We have, in fact decided to split this into two and have one for the youth of the village and one for the more mature residents. We launched the youth survey with a talk at the school and we are already having some very interesting responses and some great ideas. If you know of any young people (2-22) who would like their voices heard, please point them in the direction of the shop or council offices or on our website where they can pick up a survey
- The next step is a village survey to gain an insight into residents’ needs and how best to communicate to you. As a parish council, we have the obligation and duty to provide you a service and a council that is fit for purpose and an asset and value to all villagers and we can’t do this without firstly finding out what you need and communicating what we can deliver – hopefully meeting somewhere in the middle.

The aims of the Media and communication team will always be to answer your queries (the best we can) as swiftly and effectively as we can, spread news and ensure the all residents know what is going on and know where to go if they need support or assistance or just to know how to book the hall!

Please follow us on facebook by searching for Littlebourne Parish Council and then clicking “like”

Littlebourne War Memorial Hall – Committee Chairman Cllr Cate Reid

Firstly, I want to thank everybody who gave us donations towards repairs to the Hall roof and various refurbishments that were needed. I was really touched at the response – people showed that they are genuinely determined to help keep our Hall in a good state.

We also had volunteers doing some spring-cleaning, and I thank them very much. We were lucky enough to have kind and energetic folk who organised two Quizzes, a Coffee morning, a Boot Fair, Raffle of a beautiful Quilt, thanks to Margaret Harrison for donating it. Jenny Anderson was the lucky winner of the quilt. Sylvia Wilson and her Team have been amazing, and so energetic!

We've also been lucky enough to have Sylvia Wilson take over the Treasurer role from Mike Gallagher, as really he is too busy, being the Chair of the Parish Council. We thank him very much indeed for having been our Treasurer for the last few years. Another very good bit of news is that Laura Furr is now our Secretary. She is a great asset and very helpful and knowledgeable. What a little gem! I am particularly delighted to have also had Phil Wilson volunteer to do some maintenance jobs – he is very knowledgeable and energetic. How lucky we are!!! Thank you all so much!

Bookings remain fairly good, although I would remind you to consider booking family parties in the Hall. Also, do consider attending the classes that are held here: - Keep Fit, Zumba, Pilates, Bridge, Singing and Yoga, plus of course all the children's groups. Make the most of this wonderful village asset.

I want to remind everyone that there is CCTV in operation around the Shop and Hall complex - please contact the Parish Clerk if you see anything untoward being carried out - as soon as possible and giving the time accurately – It can then be passed on to one of those that check the CCTV !

Something that I want to clarify is that the Parish Council has nothing to do with the running of the Hall Trust, despite a rumour that someone tried to start. The Trustees run the Hall Trust, which includes some Cllrs as we don't have enough people prepared to volunteer and become a Trustee. It does not involve any financial responsibility, you just need to be ready to give a few hours every month or so. Our AGM is coming up soon, so watch the Notice Boards for the date, so that you come along.

Turner's Orchard comes under the auspices of the Hall Trust, and we are so fortunate to have a lot of volunteers who work there. Anne and Geoff Rigden are wonderful joint Chairs of the Orchard Committee, which organises events in the Orchard for both children and adults, plus doing a lot of maintenance, with help from their team and I thank them all very much.

Lastly, I would like to thank each Hall Trustee for all their wonderful support this year – it makes a huge difference – I do appreciate it, as it has been a trying time! Thank you.

Littlebourne Primary School – Head Teacher Stella Byrne (read by Cllr Sylvia Wilson)

After a period of transition where the school was supported in its development through a partnership with Bridge and Patricbourne Primary, overseen by an Executive Headteacher, it is now operating as a standalone school under its own Headteacher. We intend to maintain strong informal links with Bridge and other local primary schools collaborating on areas such as staff development and curriculum opportunities for the pupils.

The school has continued to grow and thrive over the last year; we currently have 96 pupils meaning we are at 91% capacity, a definite improvement on the 62% capacity three years ago. The school now employs 5 teachers and 7 teaching assistants and external validation from the Local Authority indicates that the school has maintained and developed the 'good' rating awarded by Ofsted two and a half years ago. There has been a year on year increase in the applications for places in our Reception Class and families are opting to travel from Canterbury and surrounding villages to attend the school. Pupils leaving the school at age 11 are transferring mainly to secondary schools in Canterbury including Langton Boys and Girls schools, Barton Court, St Anselm's, Canterbury Academy, Archbishops and Spires.

A new development in September 2017 was the establishment of a Breakfast Club for pupils to attend from 7.30am. This was a request from parents and while the numbers of children attending is small, it has steadily grown in popularity over the year and will continue into the next academic year. We were very grateful to the 4Villages Fund whose initial grant enabled us to set-up the Breakfast Club – it now operates as a self-funding venture. We also offer a variety of after-school activities for pupils from 3.15 – 4.15pm on four days each week. These range from sports and outdoor clubs to art and craft opportunities as well as computing and traditional board games.

In order to engage and inform pupils about opportunities in their local area; classes have made regular visits into Canterbury using public transport to visit the Cathedral, the chapel at ChristChurch University, Canterbury Mosque and the Beaney museum. We have also organised whole school trips to Quex Park, Broadstairs and Brockhill country Park in Hythe. We are keen to maintain links with the primary school in Wimille and, thanks to a grant from the Parish Council, 52 of the older children were able to spend a day in Wimille in October experiencing lessons in a French classroom as well as a glorious afternoon on the sandy beach exploring rock pools and spotting the English coast from the other side of the Channel. We write to and receive letters from the pupils in France which gives a great boost and purpose to the learning of French within our curriculum. In April, year 5 and 6 will go on a three-day residential trip to the Kingswood centre near Ashford to experience outdoor adventure activities.

We are keen to maintain and develop links within the local community and are grateful to the members of the church congregation who have supported us in continuing to use St Vincent's for worship services with the children. We are looking forward to taking the children to the 'Easter Experience' prayer stations on Friday. The oldest children have rehearsed regularly with the 4Villages Sing choir and performed two musical routines at the recent Village Extravaganza. The residents from Littlebourne House have visited the school for the Christmas and Summer fairs as well as for 'Afternoon Tea' prepared and hosted by the children.

We are open to members of the community volunteering at the school and would welcome more support in this way. The school is able to carry out the necessary Safeguarding checks and training and support is given to new volunteers. Currently we have two regular volunteers; one of whom plays maths games with a set of children to improve their knowledge of their tables, the other is developing simple French conversational skills with children who will transfer to secondary school in September. The commitment would be for an hour or two each week or fortnight, areas in which we would particularly welcome support are in gardening, supervision of the library and playing educational games with groups of children. Please contact the school office if you would like to become involved in this way.

Our PTA has remained very active, both in raising money to support additional opportunities for the children but also in organising social events to build the community of the school. This Saturday (24th) there will be an 'Easter Event' from 11am – 1pm to which everyone is welcome. This includes stalls, games and refreshments inside as well as an outdoor Easter Trail around the school grounds.

Currently, our main way of communicating with parents and the community remains our school website where information on forthcoming events is available as well as photographs and reports on school events. The noticeboard at the front gate displays the latest newsletter for those passing the school. We are usually

happy to display posters for village events at school and promote them with our families. Again, contact can be made through the school office.

Our longer term aims are; to continue to increase the number of pupils to reach our full capacity of 105, to further improve the quality and diversity of the educational experiences offered to all pupils and to build further mutually beneficial links with the community.

Village Traffic & Safety sub-committee – Cllr Cate Reid

Last year we told you that we had been discussing with KCC Highways the possibility of moving some of the Village Gateways further out of the village, particularly on The Hill as you come from Canterbury and also in Bekesbourne Lane, before the bend entering Littlebourne. We have also discussed 'buffer zones' to cause vehicles to slow before they arrive at the 30mph zone. Simple you might think, but no, there are various rules and regs that have to be adhered to – KCC are not keen to make certain changes, plus they always plead poverty. It all takes an inordinate length of time, which is most frustrating.

HOWEVER, you will be aware that in one of the recent accidents by Pine Wood, there were several people taken to hospital, and, very sadly, one fatality - so distressing. A young man of 19, who used to live in LB, who was much liked and still involved in sport played on the Recreation Ground. The very, very sad thing, that I don't really want to mention, is that KCC Highways MIGHT listen to us, now that there has been a fatality.

Then there was another bad accident the very next day, near the one on the Monday, again causing the road to be closed for several hours. It is probable that most accidents along the A257 are caused by people speeding, although we do not know this for sure.

Our County Cllr Michael Northey, is supportive of both moving the village gateway further towards Canterbury and creating a buffer zone. He has kindly promised to help with the cost, from his Member's Fund in the next financial year, but we still have to persuade KCC Highways that it would be a good thing to do.

Now, moving on to something different, can you help us, please? We need volunteers to participate in Speed Watch sessions, who are fit and able, and who have reasonable eye sight. Some of us (like me!) are struggling to help with this these days, but at least I can do the paperwork involved!!! If anyone fits the bill and is willing to train (we can make it 'on the job training'), please make yourself known to me at the end of the meeting, or call me on 721 831.

Unfortunately, I have to repeat something that I told you about last year - there are still problems in some of our streets with inconsiderate parking. Inconsiderate is one thing, but also it may be that this is endangering lives, as a Fire Engine or an Ambulance would not always be able to get through to the end of a street, and there may be no other access. There is also inconvenience to the Serco Waste trucks if they can't get through, which in turn is inconvenient to residents, whose rubbish does not get collected. Please decide RIGHT NOW not to park thoughtlessly in future. You surely would not forgive yourself if a life or lives were put at risk???

We have had a trying time to do with white lines along the middle of the road. About a year ago, during the late evening, KCC started burning off the white lines on the High Street, with no warning nor thought of

consultation. It could have been quite dangerous, as there were the usual cars parked, and damage could have been caused to them. To cut a long story a bit shorter, Highways eventually put some white lines back, re-surfaced some of the road and eventually put white lines back on the new surface. From this you will understand that removing the white lines was simply a waste of time and money.

Many thanks, to our Highways and Safety Committee for their work and support this year. I'd also like to thank our Speed Watch folk for their time and commitment in getting out there in, what is often, cold weather. It can seem a rather thankless task but we really do see traffic travelling slower through Littlebourne for a while after we've done a session or two of Speed Watch.

Onwards and upwards in our efforts with KCC Highways!

Littlebourne Horticultural Society- Alan Jones (read by Cllr Brian Hurlow)

We have over 65 families currently renting allotments which are located between The List and Court Hill. They are owned by the Parish and managed by the Littlebourne Horticultural Society. The LPC and LHS value the current allotments in the community and aim to provide a thriving, low cost, secure allotment facility for members and their families within the Parish and the Four Villages Community.

The committee includes the following volunteers:

- Ashley Mount; Diane Hoare; Colin Higenbottam; John Dartnell; Carol Hitchcock; Brian Hurlow; Alan Jones

I wish to record my heartfelt thanks to the committee for their continued hard work throughout the last twelve months. What this committee has achieved is outstanding (especially as they are all volunteers).

The LHS has been in operation for nearly 16 years and in this time has:

- Developed an organisational framework, structure and established a routine
- Established a network of volunteers and paid for other work to be done
- Cleared and cultivated overgrown plots
- Diversified plots (sizes, support offered, etc)
- Conducted day-to-day maintenance
- Recovered returned plots, ready for new tenants
- Increased the overall number of plots rented from 62 in 2014 to over 90 projected in 2019

So what has been happening?

Land Clearance – As a result of a grant from the LPC Community Fund a community plot of raised beds will be established on the site.

Workshops – The LHS continued to provide these for new tenants

Society Building – The use of the donated cabin goes from strength to strength

Our plans for this year include:

- To continue to provide new good quality allotments for use by the 4 villages community

- Social events, seed scheme and other fund raisers
- To develop a plot as a training and educational facility
- To expand the use of the Society building as a resource centre and community centre for allotment holders.

Cllr Hurlow wanted to minute LPC's thanks to the LHS for running this great facility.

7. Questions from residents

A resident asked the latest on the Court Hill Surgery development, the Chairman responded to say works are running to schedule and it is targeted to be completed this summer.

Another resident raised the future of the Anchor Public House, as it is looking in a poor state as you drive into the village, with all the windows boarded up. The Chairman reported that we had been warned by City Cllr Walker that a planning application for conversion to residential had been submitted to CCC. LPC have not received details of this through yet but it is obviously imminent. Cllr Moore did query if we could perhaps try and save it by setting up a community pub, via the CAMRA scheme. The cellar boarding was reported to be dangerous, LPC to advise owners.

The road system in and around Canterbury was raised, are there any plans to make changes. LPC keep being told that the road capacity is fine, even though the city centre is regularly gridlocked. The recent speed survey on the A257 gave an average speed of 32/33mph – except cars don't drive at an average speed! Cllr Walker added that when planning applications are considered for new developments, KCC work out capacity on the roads but every planning application is considered in isolation.

The roots pushing through the village footpaths was mentioned, with specific reference to the path alongside the school. The Clerk reported that the footpath from the centre of the Rec up to Jubilee Road was to be resurfaced by KCC due to the roots very soon. Once this has been done pressure can be applied to get the other path done.

The PC was asked when purchasing new play equipment for the playarea to ensure that the item couldn't be used as a football goal for safety reasons, the old monkey bars were used for this purpose with the ball regularly going onto the road in Jubilee and kids climbing the fence to retrieve the ball from the road.

The Chairman then thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....