

**Minutes of the Littlebourne Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 5th March 2014, at Littlebourne War Memorial Hall at 7.30pm**

1. Present

- Parish Councillors Viv Spratt, Geoffrey Barrett, Betty Jeffries, Mike Gallagher, Geof Welch, Cate Reid, Ken Shaw and Pamela Evans.
- City Councillor Brian Staley and Kent County Councillor Michael Northey.
- Guest Speakers, Richard Knight and Shuan McManus from the Environment Agency
- 48 Residents and 2 Non-residents

2. Welcome and Apologies

Cllr Spratt welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for attending, adding it is important to get feedback from the local community. Cllr Spratt went on to welcome and thank our Guest Speakers Richard Knight and Shuan McManus from E.A who will speak shortly.

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Cllr Mick Giles (recuperating), Community Warden Gary Moore and residents Reverend Chris Wilkinson and Alan Legge. The Chairman added a get well soon for Cllr Giles, who is recovering from a large operation.

3. 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.

We see that our LPC News is doing its job in keeping people informed and bringing you here tonight. We have just introduced colour to our LPC News now and are aiming to improve it further to supply even more information to our residents. We will be looking for more advertisers to allow us to do this in an economic way. You are no doubt aware of the introduction of our own new website as well, for which, I would like to thank our clerk Gail who has done a splendid job putting it all together and keeping it up to date. We are always happy to include anything of interest to our village, as we want to provide you with as much information as possible. We will also be introducing advertising to this media in the near future as well.

Thanks

Some thanks are now in order.....I would like to give thanks to my colleagues, who put in many voluntary hours, carrying out difficult tasks, which are not always popular, but endeavouring to do what is right within our powers for the village and its inhabitants.

More thanks our Clerk Gail, who has been with us for a year now, doing a splendid job in an efficient and cheerful manner, in fact going the extra mile doing other jobs outside of what is required of her. Another person who does this in our village, is Mrs Clayson, who does such a good job in trying to keep Littlebourne clean and clear of litter.

Thanks go to all our volunteers in the village, there are so many, who run groups and organise clubs, making Littlebourne such a delightful place to live. In particular, I must mention all the help we have received from Volunteers during the recent and ongoing floods, they are too numerous to mention, but, I must congratulate Cllrs Mick Giles and Ken Shaw who have co-ordinated and been part of such a successful campaign in holding back the flood waters and where some water has breached the defences have arranged all sorts of help. We have received grateful thanks from CCC for our entire organisation in assisting them, leaving them free to help in other areas.

The emergency Plan that we put into place sometime ago was utilised and found to be very useful at this time. We are still looking for more volunteers to be added to the plan as we regularly update the contents. If anyone wishes to volunteer it would be much appreciated.

Among those helping out was our community Warden Gary Moore, who has had a successful year in Littlebourne in so many tasks he has been set, throughout the year. He is actually due to collect an award

from KCC for all his help in the flooding activity, mainly outside of Littlebourne, but patrolling here to seek our needs and help out every day.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank Cllr Michael Northey who has been such a help to Littlebourne, not only by funding projects but by getting things done for us whenever possible. His support is much appreciated.

Years Activities

Finance

Now moving onto the years report, our finances have been stretched but very well managed by the finance committee, who keep a diligent eye to every penny spent. We received an excellent report from the Audit Commission.

Finance is ever more difficult, but through good management and some cuts we are able to keep the precept at the same level as last year, so NO INCREASE to the village.

We take every opportunity in applying for outside funds that become available for different projects; it is an onerous task with much form filling.

We were successful in receiving a grant towards replacing some safety surfacing in the play area, which is a very expensive, but necessary item. We continue to make applications, but money is much tighter and many more people chasing what funds are available.

Planning

Planning in the village is an emotive subject, the worry last year was the proposals for large development on The Hill and The List, however, this was not included on the district plan, but this plan will be up for review on a regular basis so we must always be aware and remain vigilant.

There have been many extensions and some new properties built in the village, we do keep a careful eye to try and retain the character of the village whilst being sympathetic to the needs of residents.

The planning application for the Solar Farm has been passed; Littlebourne PC had several meetings with regards to this to get the best possible outcome for the village. A public consultation also took place in the village hall.

When the solar farm is completed it will generate enough power for 4,500 properties through the national grid. There will be a funding grant available of around £21,000 for green and renewable projects; this is of course, will be subject to suitable funding applications and approval by the company. The P C have asked the residents for suggestions on this so as to be ready when the time comes.

The filling in of the Oldridge Woods Lagoons in Swanton Lane, has caused some concern, this together, with the generated traffic has been another issue dealt with, which has thrown up a considerable amount of work. We have sent representations and spoken at the Guildhall on several occasions not only for planning but on C C C new housing Policies, where we were able to effect a change on allocations to Ellen Court, so that the 8 persons that were already registered on their current housing list will be given the first opportunity if they meet the CCC criteria. After this, and for a limited time, it will be only every other resident that gets this option, unless, they are the person with greatest need of course.

I do not intend to speak on allotments, Housing, Nature Reserve or Traffic and Safety as these will have their own place on the Agenda.

Children's Centre

We were very sorry to lose the Children's Centre, but have negotiated some of the services to remain using the village Hall here although the centre has covered all of the Little Stour area so some services will go to other areas where there is greater need. I have today attended the last Children Centre meeting at Little Bees in Littlebourne and have been told that we will be under the umbrella of 'Sure Start' at Riverside in Canterbury who will be taking over our area. They have asked me to go onto the Board at Riverside, which I

will do for the time being to protect the interest of Littlebourne Families. Riverside have only got the contract for one year initially.

There have been negotiations going on with KCC in hopes that The Children's Centre Building could be used to the advantage of youngsters in the village, however the rent is a prohibitive amount at the moment, so negotiations continue. I appreciate the support from KCC Cabinet member Cllr Jenny Whittle and KCC Councillor Michael Northey in assisting us with our efforts here.

Village Green Application

The update on the Village Green Application is that it is still proceeding; there are a lot of hoops to jump through, which is being done very efficiently by Solicitor Mr Duncan Milne who is a village resident and doing this for the Parish Council on a pro bona basis for which we sincerely thank him.

Hedges

Hedges have been a big problem in the village, we are always having to request residents that are on Public Footpaths on the highways or abutting footpaths to cut back their vegetation, this has got worse as PROW have now even cut back cutting on Public Footpaths, so we either have to seek help from volunteers or find money from our budget to get it done where possible.

New Bin Scheme

The new bin scheme in Littlebourne has had its teething problems, however, overall it has been quite successful, Serco are no longer taking tied up bags of paper, but if you have a lot of paper waste they are happy to provide you with a red lidded bin free of charge and take away your small bin insert, which leaves more space for your recycling materials as well.

New Electoral Boundaries Proposals

New electoral boundaries are being considered, to reduce the number of district councillors. We have made suggestions for consideration as we feel that the rural areas may be stretched with the reduction of councillors.

Basket and Tubs competition

The Basket and Tubs competition came to a halt this year, as we felt it had run its course for the time being. We do hope that all the participants will continue with their lovely displays.

Fire Hydrants

We were charged with yet another extra job this year, in monitoring our Fire Hydrants and reporting back to Kent Fire Brigade, so have asked for help if there is one close to you. With money getting short, more and more work is sent down to the voluntary sector so from time to time we do ask for some help as it is impossible to do everything ourselves. As finances get worse, no doubt this will happen more frequently.

Proposed Caravan Club Site

The proposed Caravan Club site with access off of The Hill has caused a great deal of consternation among residents, with many contacting us and the Caravan Club direct. The concern the Parish Council had was the access, due to the volume of Traffic etc. We have today heard from the Caravan Club that this application will go to their committee for deliberation next month.

The chairman's address was interrupted at this point by a resident Mr Maynard, who accused the Chair and Clerk as being liars and the chair as a bully, he stated that we had mislead KCC into giving a negative response to the Caravan Club with regard to the access to his proposed caravan club site, the error being that we had said the address as 3 School Path, which was confused as the access, but immediately put right and a caravan club site map provided to KCC who strongly oppose the access, as do the Parish Council for safety, not personal reasons. He was advised by a Council member to modify his tone.

He stated that he had not owned a caravan site before and the P.C. had recorded he had, this information had been given by a resident who had a conversation with him, where he had allegedly said he was an experienced owner and had a site before. We had documented what had been said. This would not make any difference to his application in regard to Site access that the Parish Council are objecting too. We cannot verify every statement that is made to us, we take these statements in good faith. Mr Maynard would like it stated in the paper that he has not owned caravan sites, as we had previously put in that he had.

Doctors Surgery, Court Hill

Yesterday I checked with Cardy's to see if any progress was being made with regard to the Doctor's Surgery being developed in Littlebourne. I am afraid the situation is exactly as before, which is that, Cardy's are ready to develop it as soon as the NHS are in a position to pay the rent.

Fracking

Fracking has been discussed and is an ongoing issue, as licences have been issued in Kent, some fairly close by. We will be following this with interest.

Christmas lights

The Christmas lights that the PC provide in the tree outside of the Post Office have now seen their life span out. We apologise for the one string of lights that were operational this year, we will endeavour to improve this in future.

Southern Water

Southern Water have been in touch today to say they will be changing their operations in Littlebourne, they will be installing a biological treatment in Nargate Street, which will help with the over pumping. It is designed to support the sewer network by taking excess volumes through the unit and then releasing the water into the water course, improving the quality of the water discharged. LPC to make further enquiries into the details of this.

Twinning with Wimille.

Twinning with Wimille is very successful, in the past 12 months, Wimille school children have visited Littlebourne Primary School and Ladybirds Pre-School, and next week Ladybirds will be visiting Wimille, who are very keen to forge strong links between all groups of children. Wimille are also hoping to bring a group of youngsters to a scout camp this year that Derek Whittaker is trying to arrange, they would hope for a reciprocal visit from our youngsters to them in France.

They also joined in our St Georges Day celebrations last year bringing a Majorettes group to entertain us. They visited us to play 'Boule' which was kindly hosted by Ickham; They now await a return match to Wimille.

The Christmas Tea we hosted in December for them was a great success, the cakes provided by Littlebourne ladies have always been such a success, they have even requested recipes! and Doug Inkpens music is always enjoyed.

There are plans a foot this year for a number of events the first being our 'Open Gardens' on 14th June which is open to everyone, but Wimille are invited, this will be followed by Tea for everyone in the hall. Tickets for this will be available shortly. We are also seeking to run an outing from Littlebourne to Nausica Sea life Centre and shopping in Boulogne followed by tea in Wimille this to be on 30th August if we can generate sufficient interest to hire a coach.

4. GUEST SPEAKERS: Richard Knight and Shuan McManus from The Environment Agency to speak on future works to the Little Stour

Cllr Spratt gave a welcome to the guest speakers:

Richard explained they were going to be speaking about a modelling project that was started a couple of years ago to map the Greater and Little Stour Rivers.

Richard said current flow levels and groundwater levels are slowing down and receding, giving an improved picture. He also gave his regards to Cllr Giles.

Little Stour strategic overview and future flood defense work

Shaun now spoke

- Stour catchment, flood management plan provides an overview of flood risk across the whole catchment
- Recommends ways of managing those risks now and over the next 50-100yrs
- Most recent (2009) identified the Nailbourne and Little Stour area as a Policy 4

Securing funding was the first obstacle, the application was based on number of properties flooded and the frequency of the watercourse flowing, so the EA decided to tag the Greater Stour onto the project to enable funding. This funding was eventually granted in 2011/12. The project costs were between £60-70K for the Greater Stour, and Little Stour this included data collecting, modelling and outputs.

After carrying out a detailed survey along the Little Stour and Nailbourne during 2011/12 flood modelling could begin. Brand new equipment was used to survey this area, from a plane owned by the EA, with a lazer that can check levels of the ground and floodwater. All this information has been used to build a model, and update the flood map(which can be seen on the EA website).

National Flood Risk Assessment (NAFRA), uses this data too, and give % as to whether a property is likely to flood in a given year. The Association of British Insurers use this plus their own data. Shaun did mention that if you are having problems with a particular insurer contact the EA and they can give you data on your property to give to the insurers.

A resident asked the question about the effect the alleviation channel has had on Ickham. Richard said that in 2000/01 Nargate Street badly flooded, hence why the relief channel was dug. Its has worked well to protect Littlebourne. The main aim is to divert the water away from flooding people and properties, it has worked well to do this.

Cllr Shaw asked why the boards in the alleviation channel are at an unnatural height. Richard explained this was to allow the channel to remain dry when not needed and keep the main river flowing. The main riverbed would silt up if the alleviation channel flowed, there would not be enough flow in the main.

Mapping outputs – we were shown an animation of Littlebourne, in flood, this is used to identify the low points, such as scoutands (this is why sandbags were brought in here to protect Nargate Street). The map can also be used to look at different flood defence options, Structures (bridges & culverts), storage(holding water back)and operations (in terms of EA channel modification, usage of alleviation channel) and the overall effect these would have on the flooded areas. It has helped;

- Understand the interactions between potential options
- What options work best together
- Discover cost savings for potential schemes

Moving forward the most promising scheme incorporates three components;

- A new defence that cuts out numerous low spots in the villages
- Changes to structures to increase conveyance through the village
- Looking at operation of relief channel and when it is operated

The details of the scheme cannot be revealed yet as the EA need to consult with the landowners first.

The future program in Littlebourne;

- Spring 2014 – talks with landowners and PCs
- Summer – public consultation
- Confirm funding sources
- Bid for funding
- Detailed efficient scheme design

Although the scheme looks downstream of Bridge, it does take into consideration the source of the Nailbourne and what occurs before reaching Bridge. On the Greater Stour they don't yet understand the effect of the ground water but on the Little Stour they are confident they do.

Maintenance Review

Will examine our current maintenance programme and determine the best maintenance procedures for flood risk management.

Weed cut plans have been brought up to date. They have tested the extremes of maintenance compared to current, they have tested 100% weed cut and 0% weed cut. These were tested to understand the sensitivity of flood risk to changes in maintenance activity; the results are as follows;

100% weed cut caused small constriction in flood extents (in 5yr,20yr and 100yr floods)

0% weed cut caused increases in all flood extents.

These results did not suggest significant change in maintenance through Littlebourne is urgently required. Our current program is 3 cuts a year to take out 30% of weed minimum. No one present was aware of any recent cuts even though many complaints had been passed on.

The dredging of the river was suggested by residents, as this would give more of a storage area, but Richard explained there would still be constrictions at the mills. Structures are our greatest flood risk here, rather than weed, money needs to be spent on these works. Alteration to mill structures is feasible, not removal of mills.

Cllr Spratt thanked the Richard and Shuan on behalf of Littlebourne Parish Council, for their interesting and informative talk, they then departed.

5. Reports from local organisations:

Sloyden and Durrant Charities Report – Cllr Mick Giles

The following report was read out by the Clerk:

A report by Cllr M Giles given in his absence at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Littlebourne War Memorial Hall on Wednesday 5th March 2014 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 5th March 214 is **£1204-94** 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

The following report was read out by the clerk:

PURPOSE:

To facilitate the distribution of the rent received from the Parish Council funded extension to the 4 Villages Store, by providing finance for 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. Consideration to make up any shortfall in the Parish Council budget would only be given in extreme and exceptional circumstances.

All information relating to this fund will be circulated to the community by the Parish Council.

CONSTITUTION:

The Committee of 4 Parish Councillors consists of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer.

Accounts and minutes of all meetings and decisions are recorded and the Parish Council is kept informed of all decisions made by the Committee.

The rent from the 4 Villages Store is paid into a bank account set up by the Parish Council to which all 4 Committee members are signatories, any two of which are required to sign all cheques.

A majority agreement by the Committee is required to authorise any payment, if not it will be referred to the Parish Council, otherwise the decision of the Committee shall be final.

A meeting to be held soon after the annual rent from the 4 Villages Store is received to determine any known funding requests for the year, other meetings as required subject to applications for funding etc?

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.

We were able to support the St Georges day/ Wimille visit event last year and the refurbishment of the Ladybirds Pre-School kitchen, there are already several other projects that we are expecting to consider in the next financial year.

Littlebourne Horticultural Society – Report on Allotments – Colin Higgenbottom

Colin read the report as follows:

Roger Weaver sends his apologies. We have 67 allotments which are located between The List and Court Hill. They are owned by LPC but managed by LHS. The LPC and LHS value the current allotments in the community and aim to provide a thriving, low cost, secure allotments facility for members and their families within the parish. The site incorporates environmental areas, communal areas and of course the plots which range from traditional 10 square perch to a fraction of this.

The committee includes the following volunteers: Ashley Mount, John Pollard, Tony Blofield, Colin Higgenbottom, Sadie Austin, Chris Cox, Alan Jones and Roger Weaver.

LHS has been in operation for over ten years and in this time has;

- Developed an organizational 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, offered support etc)
- Conducted day to day maintenance
- Increased overall number of plots rented from 32 in 2002 to 67 in 2014

So what's been happening?

Diversification continues: fruit vegetables, hens, bees and a fresh crop of polytunnels. There has been a continued interest in the allotments from old to young, male, female and from beginner to enthusiastic and experts.

The Best Plot competition was run again with independent judges David Fuller and Peter Whitcombe from St Dunstons Horticultural Society to determine the 'best small plot' and the 'best plot'.

1st prizes went to Peter Francis (large plot) & Don & Linda Parry (small plot)

2nd prizes went to David Waters (large plot) & Andrew Dudko (small plot)

3rd prizes went to Ashley Mount/Ray Furr (large plot) & Ian & Gill Laker/ Carol Hitchcock (small plots)

The produce stall – fantastic, a special thanks to John and Sadie and everyone else who pitched in either as helpers or suppliers of veg. This is an important source of income for us.

However it has not all been fun....

- Quite a few issues with bonfires, missing crops, water and foxes
- More work to be done than volunteer support available
- Generally busier allotments requiring more attention
- Significant work associated with recovery of returned allotments
- Foxes we have seen an increase in 2013 and we have tried to deter them to help those who want to keep chickens
- Water – to reduce the water bill of £300 we have recycled 25 broken wheelie bins from serco and are using them as water butts. These are helping save water, and saves the wheelie bins being sent to landfill.

Our plans for this year include:

- Clearing the burning area to make more plots – we have received £300 from the 4VPO fund towards the £1200 plus necessary to clear the area.
- Social events, seed scheme, produce stall and other fund raisers
- We plan to purchase equipment to fit onto our tractor to help maintain the plots and the site as a whole. It has been our vision for over 12 years and we are excited we are so close to accomplishing it.

St Vincent's Church – report from the Reverend Chris Wilkinson

The following report was read by Church warden Cllr Mike Gallagher:

My apologies for not being with you this evening. As some of you will be aware today is Ash Wednesday and I shall be leading a service in church to mark the beginning of Lent while your meeting is taking place. However I'm pleased to be able to send a brief piece for Churchwarden Mike Gallagher of St Vincents to read on my behalf.

The last year has been one in which the church has continued to play its part in the community in many ways. We continue to keep the churches open during the daytime – and offer a warm welcome to visitors at all times. The churches website has been running for almost a year now and provides information about all the church activities. We look forward to continuing to serve the community around us and to care for the people of these villages.

This time last year I spoke of Bridge Benefice being in vacancy and the search for a new priest. It's good to be able to announce that the Reverend Canon Jonathan LLoyd has been appointed Priest-in-Charge of the Bridge and Littlebourne Benefices and will be licensed to begin his ministry at the end of this month. Canon

Jonathan and his wife Sue will live in the Bridge Vicarage. His day to day ministry will be mainly within the Bridge group of parishes – and there are five parishes working together there. I shall continue to work in the four parishes here with Canon Jonathan providing oversight. It will be good to have a clergy colleague again and I hope that I shall be able to invite Canon Jonathan to take some of the services here in a few months time so that people here can meet him.

Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve – Cllr Betty Jeffries

The following report was read out by the clerk:

There have been further successful 'Art in Nature' classes by Wendy, useful not only for getting children interested in Nature and Art but also for introducing the Reserve to a wider audience of parents and friends. We hope Wendy will continue these this year.

The bluebells, wild Kentish daffodils, and tulips all flowered well in their first year.

The damp area has been extended and planted as planned.

The first meadow area has been sown and will be left to grow this year.

The Brownies visited the site as part of their Nature Badge' they also returned in the autumn to help plant the extended bluebell area

Members of The Garden Society came on a very successful visit and an enjoyable open day was held with children's activities

A 'Bee' themed meeting was held for the Beavers then a 'reptile and amphibian 'meeting for the Cubs

The Scouts and Explorers built the log pile habitat bench

A whole Nature Day was held on site for the Beavers,, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers. Everyone who attended gained their nature badges.

Early in the year Isabelle sowed various wild flower seeds and these were kept in pots until planted out in the different meadow areas.

Concern was expressed about the Horse Chestnut tree , this was pronounced alright in the summer but we must keep a watchful eye on it. The plum tree unfortunately partly blew down and had to be removed by Anne and Andrew. We shall miss the fruit for jam to sell. The old cherry tree was re- shaped and dead wood removed to revitalise it and lengthen its life .

Pamela has organised some special signs to illustrate plants and animals to look for on the site.

By far the most time consuming task has been the keeping down of weeds. Grateful thanks are due to the trusty Sunday morning volunteers Anne., Isabel, Angela and Helen and others who faithfully appeared each week to carry out this task. The rain did not help

The Reserve will be open on May 5th(Barn Fun Day) and June 14th (Open Gardens) Watch the board and the Web site for times.

Social Housing in Littlebourne and how to apply for it – The Clerk

The clerk gave the following report:

Social Housing in Littlebourne

Canterbury City Council have properties in Littlebourne at St Vincent's Close, The Elders, The Maltings, Court Hill and the bungalows at Ellen Court. To apply for these properties you must complete a Choice Based Lettings Application form (which you can now only do online) either by direct link from CCC's website www.canterbury.gov.uk or at Kent Home Choices website www.kenthomechoice.org.uk. If you wish to make an online application but have no computer access, you can call CCC and they will send someone out with a computer to you to enable you to do so.

The properties at Court Meadows and List Meadows are operated by Sanctuary and Southern Housing Groups, to apply for these properties you still have to complete the Choice Based Lettings Application form but in addition there are extra requirements that need to be met for you to be eligible for one of these properties. These requirements are set out in agreements between Littlebourne Parish Council and either Southern Housing Group or Sanctuary Housing Group.

In order for an applicant to qualify they must meet one of the following criteria and provide written evidence from a vicar/justice of peace or Doctor;

1. Applicant shall currently be resident in the parish of Littlebourne (including Lackenden or Lee Priory) having been so for a minimum of 10 years
2. Applicant has previously been resident in the parish for a minimum of 10 years but moved away from the parish to secure affordable/appropriate accommodation.
3. Applicant is the mother or father, son or daughter, the brother or sister of a family which meets the criteria above in the first two points and whose application is evidenced by proof that continuing care to or for members of the family is necessary.
4. Applicants who have resided away from the parish of Littlebourne (including Lackenden and Lee Priory) for a period exceeding 20 years shall not be considered eligible unless the application meets the criteria set out in point 3 above.

If there are insufficient applicants who fulfil the requirements above then applications can be considered from existing residents within the Littlebourne Parish. Preference would be given to those who have lived in Littlebourne the longest. If no one meets the Littlebourne connection criteria then applications can be considered from those residing in Ickham, Wickhambreaux, Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne but applying the same local connection criteria.

If you qualify for Social housing and have been given a Choice Based Lettings number (following the completion of an application form), and are interested in registering your interest for the properties at Court & List Meadows. Please pop into the office for a local Connection form or you can download one from our website at www.littlebourne-parish-council.co.uk. LPC maintain a list of those eligible applicants, with the aim to speed up the allocation process when a property becomes available.

Mutual Exchanges

This is the Transfers between the two housing association properties

This process is managed through the city council's mutual exchange scheme and on the Kent Home Choice mutual exchange website. Therefore any residents wanting to exchange:

- must register on the Kent Home Choice mutual exchange website pages
- may contact the Clerk so that their details may be advertised locally on the parish council noticeboard and that they want an exchange

If this meant a move into either Court or List Meadows the incoming tenant would have to meet the same local connection criteria for the exchange to go ahead.

Village Traffic & Safety sub-committee – Cllr Mike Gallagher

Cllr Gallagher read his report to the meeting as follows:

Highways SubCommittee: Year 2013/14

Why do we need a Highways committee?

I make no apology for repeating what I said last year when I gave this report. The Parish Council Highways Sub Committee is concerned about three things:

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

Those are still our overriding concerns. As well as these we had the threat during the year of projected large development in the Village that we knew might place some of those areas at greater risk.

We continue to hear of cuts, or threats of cuts, 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.

What are Our Priorities?

There are three main areas:

1) enforcement of existing speed limits for all traffic, mainly through our own Speedwatch activities. Last year we appealed for help to maintain our Speedwatch sessions, but I have to say that the response was not good and, as a result, our activities were curtailed. Things were not helped by the poor weather conditions for parts of the year either, but it is imperative that we maintain a presence on this valuable work if we are to help control the excessive speed exhibited by some drivers through the Village. This is not only on the A257 but can be seen in places like Church Road where parked cars and poor sightlines make any speed above the limit highly dangerous.

2) ensuring the safety of people and property remains a top priority. Application has been made to KCC to have an HGV ban placed on the part of Nargate Street from the A257 to the Church Road junction. Bollards have been placed on three of the corners of Jubilee Road and, apart from one being demolished within hours of installation seem to have done their job. There are considerably fewer examples of tyre tracks on the pavements.

3) continuing to build up a picture of what is happening on the ground in the Village. Time and again people in other Villages complain to the authorities about highway problems and, they claim, with little or no result. Our attitude has been that we need to present facts and use these to develop our case. In our relationships with other local groups we also advise that rather than rely on official data it is imperative to find out yourself what is happening on the ground.

What progress has been made?

The year has seen some improvements, but shortage of volunteers has sometimes meant that work has not been done.

There are two major problems that we and many other Villages in the nation face:

- a) the pressure to develop, resulting in more car traffic
- b) the increasing number and size of all vehicles, both private and commercial

Our Villages were built around historic routes that are often narrow and winding. No money is available to build replacement roads and very often there is no land anyway. Yet we continue to expect that the biggest vehicle built has a perfect right to try to get through irrespective of pedestrians or other road users. We have all seen on television news cases where vehicles have become physically stuck between buildings. Such a state of affairs cannot be allowed to develop.

We said last year that we would formally apply to Kent Highways for a ban on HGVs greater than 7.5 tonnes in Nargate Street and, with the backing of our KCC member, Michael Northey, that has been done. We are awaiting a response from Kent Highways.

Jubilee Road is another area that is at times congested. The pavements and kerbs at either end have been repaired and replaced where they have been damaged by HGVs running over them and bollards placed to protect pedestrians, again with many thanks to Michael Northey for all of his support and financial help through his KCC Member's Highway Fund.

The Parish Council has also looked at the District Council's proposals to provide double yellow lines so as to free up the junction with The Hill. At times cars have to reverse back out into the A257, whilst traffic coming from the Church Road end cannot see any car turning into Jubilee Road from the A257. These have been revised to meet the current needs of some residents in Jubilee Road, but the fact remains that we are fast running out of usable road for Villagers to park. These double yellow lines will be marked shortly.

We are members of the A257 Group which comprises other Parish Councils along the route from Canterbury to Sandwich, their relevant District Councillors as well as KCC Members and our two local MPs. Here we look at the more strategic problems associated with the whole road. The problems, however, are almost identical with all of us – speeding traffic, HGVs trying to get into places too small for them, areas that should have speed restrictions in place and also the strategic effects of government policy.

Two issues that have been of particular concern and which have been actively pursued by Laura Sandys MP, namely the government consultations on raising the HGV speed limit from 40mph to 50mph on rural roads and another on ensuring that all HGVs are equipped with satnav devices specifically for HGVs and that these are updated regularly, have now been pending for nearly two years and there is still no action. At our recent meeting Laura apologised and said that both pieces of work had disappeared within the government system.

We are putting forward suggestions for further speed restriction areas. We will be pressing for 40mph areas to be created between the general 50mph on the A257 and the Village 30mph area.

As well as these we have responded to two other consultation papers, one on parking in towns and cities and the other on KCC's strategy to reduce death and serious injury on the County's roads. Our main concern with the latter is that data on these accidents and more minor ones that have the potential to be serious is flawed since it is often not recorded.

I spoke last year about the new Kent Highways initiative to set up a Lorrywatch programme. There has been a trial in the Village of Leeds, just outside Maidstone, and we were planning to be the second. Lack of volunteer power has made this impossible so far. This programme is again aimed at getting data so that we can present problems and suggest solutions based on facts.

This time last year we were all concerned with the proposed Rydon Development on land behind The Hill and the impact this would have on traffic flows on and off the A257. This proposal was part of the general work being done by the City Council on its District Development Plan and was subsequently not adopted as

part of it. The levels of population increase shown in other parts of the Plan, however, will add significantly to all major roads leading in to Canterbury, none of which are being scheduled for any upgrading.

What can You do?

It is important that we in Littlebourne are seen to know and be able to quantify the problems in our Village. To achieve that we have to have more help to carry out the Speedwatch (and shortly Lorrywatch) activities – so please consider helping. The work is not onerous, perhaps a couple of sessions of a couple of hours a month. I would ask you tonight to put yourselves forward to help in this valuable task. We will give you the basic training and have organised one for the afternoon of this coming Saturday 8 March . We have to do these things ourselves, we can no longer rely on public sector employees to do these jobs and have to be prepared to argue our corner whenever and wherever necessary and often at short notice. Please let Cllr Cate Reid know tonight if you can help us, whether or not you can come to the training session on Saturday.

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. Surprisingly most accidents are not recorded in traffic statistics by the Police or other emergency services. Because Kent Highways only get their figures from these agencies it is not surprising that they do not have an accurate view of what is happening on the ground. If you can tell us we can ensure that Kent Highways know. Very often the A257 is closed for a couple of hours and Kent know nothing about it.

Please help us to help you get better services.

Concerns were raised over the bollards planned for the final corner on Jubilee Road by Mr Twyman, he said the transport companies, that deliver to/from local businesses are having trouble turning into the road and this would make it harder. Cllr Gallagher thanked Mr Twyman for his comments and said this is to be discussed further at a meeting already arranged for next week between LPC and these businesses concerned.

6. Minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting of 7 March 2013

This item had been overlooked on the agenda so was dealt with at this point. Cllr Spratt advised copies had been made available to the meeting and had been published on the parish council's website. Resident Wendy Giles proposed and resident Nancy White seconded that the minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting held on the 7 March 2013 were a true record of that meeting.

Littlebourne Youth Club – Cllr Vivienne Spratt

Cllr Spratt read the following report:

I have now been involved with Youth provision in Littlebourne for 10 years, during that time, I have been able to obtain funding from many sources, which has provided a Youth Shelter, and Lighting, the BMX Track and gardens surrounding the track, these were done at NO COST to the village.

I trained with KCC to become a qualified Youth Leader, which enabled Littlebourne to become one of the most respected Groups in Kent.

At the moment we have the honor of having 3 youngsters from our group selected to work with Young Kent on a voluntary basis on a special project organised by them. We feel very proud of them.

The Littlebourne Youth Group has a membership of around 25 at present; this fluctuates with the number of children in the village. We do offer the facility to 4 villages, but only have few attend from outside of Littlebourne. The session fee is just 50p, so we have to seek funding to pay for hire of hall and any expertise that will educate and entertain the young people together with funding for equipment required. I have a

wonderful band of 10 volunteers, who, without their help and support the group couldn't run as we are tied to such strict rules for protection of the children, where we can only operate with the correct numbers of adults to children etc.

I have to take this opportunity to thank my lead volunteer Laura Furr who turns out every session to keep continuity of the group. The Group couldn't function without her. The paper work, is down to me, these include registers, rotas and Child Safety certificates, together with first aiders and arranging training for anyone who wants to take youth work more seriously. I thought I was quite the expert now, but I seem to be learning something new every week!

Littlebourne Youth Group have an outstanding record with Young Kent Youth, some of our projects, papers and policies have been marked as outstanding, to the point of us being asked to speak at Seminars for Young Kent at other Groups and meetings. We look forward to Littlebourne Youth Group being in this enviable position in 10 years time, but not with me as leader, fundraiser, pen pusher or anything else! We are always looking for volunteers who could be present at a session to assist or provide entertainment or fun education for a session.

Littlebourne Scouts - Derek Whittaker

Derek reported scouting numbers are up and more are becoming involved. They have recently been abseiling and water zorbing. Last year Littlebourne Scouts celebrated their 60th birthday. This year Derek was pleased to announce that one of their scouts has been selected to represent Great Britain at the 2014 World Jamboree in Japan, there will be lots of fund raising required for this trip.

7. County and City Cllr reports:

i) Cllr Michael Northey - Kent County Council

Cllr Northey read his report as follows:

Time again to say hello to everyone at the APM. Thanks for your usual warm welcome.

So what's been going on at Kent County Council, and more to the point how does it affect you? Yet again, for about the seventh year running, KCC has to make savings, this time of around £81 million. Efficiency savings have long ago been made, so now we have to transform the way KCC does things. You will not notice much difference in the services, but in the way they are brought to you. The Children's Centre for example – I tried to save it from closure, but the Council had to make savings of £1.5 million on its centres. However, negotiations are still going on about the future use of the building to benefit pre-school children – and the existing range of services will continue in the Village Hall. Viv deserves huge credit here, for here tireless work with Jenny Whittle the Cabinet Member and others – Jenny came down to see the situation in person and Viv and I were there with others to show her how the children's work is so invaluable and necessary.

Sadly, for the first time in four years KCC has had to raise council tax, by just under 2%. This will raise ten million pounds.

One thing you may notice is that from this April, each local County Councillor will have a reduction of about £20,000 in available grants. There will still be some, but it will be harder to share them out fairly and widely. So if you need a cash injection for a worthy cause, make a good case and apply early!

I do all I can to raise Littlebourne's profile and needs at KCC. It is correct to say that the name Littlebourne is very well known at Maidstone! I am still working with Highways and the parish council and others to find a solution to the question of a fourth bollard in Jubilee Road, to improve access and safety. The new three bollards seem to be doing a good job.

The days are long gone when 'The Council' did everything. These days there is huge partnership working – which was seen well during the recent floods. No wonder they hit us so hard – the weather people say the winter rains were the worst for 248 years. This is a huge time in history – 248 years ago, Jane Austin had not yet been born, we still owned America, John Wesley was still roaming England on his horse. None the less, the response of local communities was impressive. Littlebourne was not hit so hard as many other villages in my area, but the City Council has done a wonderful job in co-ordinating everything. I have seen on my travels, reps of the City Council, KCC Highways, the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Serco, the Police, the Ambulance Service, the Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, the Army, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service, community wardens, many parish councillors and chairmen. It was good to be able to come along with Julian Brazier and Mick Giles to inspect work at the residential home in the High Street. We even met the odd journalist and TV crew!

So it is a continuing story of great co-operation and understanding of what can and can't be done. This is a great community and you are lucky to have such a brilliant parish council, led so beautifully by Viv, and joined by her merry team. The village societies are a great tribute to the wonderful life of the village. It is a privilege to be your representative on Kent County Council.

ii) Cllr Brian Staley – Canterbury City Council

Cllr Staley began by saying he had been away in Nepal when the flooding was occurring, he was involved in a Gurka Human rights presentation. In the aftermath he has seen many emails from Cllr Giles, Cllr Shaw, Cllr Welch and Martin Twyman – all due praise for their works in Littlebourne.

Cllr Staley said he was saddened by the fact we may lose two secondary schools in Canterbury, it will affect many children in this area. Yes the coast needs another school but Canterbury can't afford to lose them either. The loss of Little Bees is also a great loss to the village.

The Commissioner's report on the Electoral Role Review of Canterbury is due out very soon but the drop from 50 to 38 councillors does not make sense, decision making policy will be done by paid officers rather than those elected.

The Barn volunteers do so much work with little recognition. The Barn is owned by CCC but local volunteers do an awful lot. There are plans to extend the coffee shop.

Cllr Welch wanted to record his thanks to CCC's Ted Edwards, it was good to know he was around during the flooding this time. He had been very helpful in 2000/01.

8. Presentation of Millennium Award 2013

Cllr Spratt advised she was very pleased to present the award this year to Mick Lonergan, for all his hard work in the village, especially in Turners Orchard. Mick is not present this evening so we will present the cheque at a later date.

NHW – David Smith

David wanted to remind residents not to leave their cars running on a frosty morning, and return back inside the house. Also some current scam callers are claiming to be calling from your bank and asking for details, don't give any out, if they are your bank they already have these details!

The Chairman then thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 10.20pm.
Please note these minutes will remain unapproved until the APM meeting in 2015.

