

**Minutes of the Littlebourne Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 25 MAY 2022, at Littlebourne War Memorial Hall at 7.30pm**

Present

- Parish Councillors; Cllr Peter Farrow, Cllr Mick Giles, Cllr Brian Hurlow, Cllr Cate Reid, Cllr Andy Fraser, Cllr Eloise Maxted, Cllr Ken Shaw
- County Cllr Mike Sole
- Community Warden Susan Beeney
- Clerk Mrs Gail Hubbard
- 8 members of the public

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chairman, Cllr Farrow welcomed everyone to the first APM since 2019. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Melanie Moore (holiday).

2. CHAIRMANS REPORT

Chairman, Cllr Peter Farrow read his report as follows:

Welcome to everyone.

This is our first Annual Parish Meeting since 2019 because of Covid concerns. Normally we would hold it a little earlier in the year, but we have delayed it as much as possible to allow infection rates to drop for a safer community meeting. Despite the hardships of the last few years, it hasn't all been bad news. A lot of people in the village selflessly stepped up to help neighbours during the COVID lock down periods and this is reflected in the great Littlebourne tradition of volunteering across its many many clubs and organisations.

Your parish council of volunteer councillors has functioned throughout - initially meeting by Zoom videoconferencing then, at great relief to our eyestrain, by cautious direct meetings. On behalf of the village, my thanks to all those selfless people for making Littlebourne the great place it is to live and for the Parish councillors and our wonderful clerk Gail Hubbard for all their dedication.

Just a few words on the Parish Council membership.

I am very pleased that after many years we now have a full parish council with the final two places recently filled by co-opted new councillors Eloise Maxted and Andy Fraser. May 2023 will be your next democratic opportunity to vote for all your parish council members.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting, Mike Gallagher has retired as the Littlebourne Parish Council chair, and I want to thank him for all his work on behalf of Littlebourne over the years of his tenure and also for his advice to me on taking the Chair. Sadly, many of you will know that Betty Jeffrey, past chair of the council recently passed away. She will be remembered for many achievements amongst which are the fascinating historic booklets on Littlebourne she painstakingly researched and produced. If you haven't seen them, buy, beg or borrow copies. They are well worth a read.

Tonight, you will receive reports from several organisations in the village. Also, from several of the Parish councillors on key areas of Littlebourne Parish Council work: on Highways, Planning and on the prospect of a new Littlebourne Neighbourhood Plan, and on the impending Jubilee Celebration Big Picnic.

You will have opportunity to raise a few *general* questions at the end of each section. Because of time, we won't be able to respond to specific *individual* householder

issues tonight, but Gail will take notes and we will follow up as necessary outside the meeting.

Are there any residents here tonight from the new Laurels estate? We wish you a very warm welcome to the village and hope you will join in with all the many community facilities that Littlebourne has to offer. I'm sure you will bring much to the community here. You are now Littlebourners!

I want to say a few words on the contentious subject of housing developments. Many of the longer-term residents either actively campaigned against the Laurels development or at least *wished* it had not been allowed. For those now in the Laurels, your right to live here is as great as for any of us and you are one of us. But our natural tendency to prefer the status quo - what we know and value - versus a huge national need for new housing is the tension affecting planning in all parts of our country. Most of you will be aware of the recent planning application by Gladmans (who are a national development company) to build over 100 new houses on the south side of the Hill with an access road onto the Hill. Your parish council polled you the village on your views for or against this and 96% of villagers were against the plan, wishing Littlebourne Parish Council to try and oppose it and as needed to spend your village tax for the defence.

A Parish Council Action group was established consisting of villagers Richard Andrew, Tim Bostock, Julian Petley, Councillor Mick Giles, Councillor Cate Reid, Parish Clerk Gail Hubbard and myself with support from Viv Spratt. A very detailed defence was formulated by this Action Group and submitted by the parish council to Canterbury City Council. In addition, almost 200 further objections were submitted by individual village residents and organisations.

And the plans were subsequently refused by the planning authority last September citing many of our detailed objections almost word for word. I particularly recall the morning after a call by the Gazette for a photo to be published in that week's paper and the scramble to find at least a few people to make the point of village objection. Well, a few did indeed come out – actually more like over 100 villagers! I don't think the paper had ever seen such a response. I want to give *special* thanks to the Action Group members who put a lot of their time in and gave their expertise to the village - there are some extraordinary, able people around us in Littlebourne.

What's happened on this developer's plan since? Two key things: firstly, on the *good* side, over six months has passed without Gladman appealing the refusal which theoretically means now that any plan for that land to be developed would have to be by an entirely new application. But, on the *concerning* side, Gladman is not known for giving up easily especially after the big investment they made in constructing their initial application – so they may come back. Also, the pressure on Canterbury City Council to approve new developments has ratcheted up because they have fallen way short of housing targets set for Canterbury by central government. The City Council will now have to view new applications for development under the framework of initial presumed approval.

Your parish council believes that we are likely to face more such attempts to grow our village not least because of its many advantages: - school, churches, shop, bus service, surgery, and the many great community facilities and societies it has. We are seen rather simplistically as somewhere that a housing development could be easily 'bolted' on.

So, in case of any larger scale, inappropriate plans coming up again, your Littlebourne Parish Council approved a small rise in the village precept so that we could fund professional help to support our village interests if it becomes necessary.

But, realistically, and due to central government pressure, neither your Parish Council nor even the statutory local planning authority at Canterbury City Council can stop all development - even if that were the right thing to do. And, even if we could stop all development, many people might view this as self-serving when there is such a need for houses. It's stating the obvious perhaps but virtually every house in our village that we live in is on what was once open farmland and probably someone in the village wasn't happy about it. We may or may not wish it, but we cannot remain the same.

So, our real issue is how we can achieve and maintain the *best* village and parish area for existing and future residents. It is for this reason that Councillor Lee Castle will later talk on whether we should have a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a formal, regulated, and substantial piece of work resulting in an approved document to guide any responses to future development proposals (not just housing) in our parish. This would be an attempt to ensure we are part of the decisions on how our village should evolve. More on this later from Lee.

So, what else has been going on? I'll mention a few things that might not be covered in presentations tonight.

The public toilet project spearheaded by our Councillor Melanie Moore has been approved, and, together with grants from Canterbury City Council, Littlebourne Parish Council and the kind promise of support of builders from Quinn Estates, means that this long-term wish will go ahead – we hope this year.

Littlebourne Parish Council has now received ownership of land at the top of the new Laurels estate. This area will be landscaped and planted by Jenner when the building work at the Laurels concludes and formally opened to the public in a few years' time. This is part of the agreed S106 process between the City Council, developers Moat House and the Littlebourne Parish Council. It is going to be planted as a green area with local and specialist trees to provide a pleasant park environment and maintained by Littlebourne Parish Council for everyone.

3. MILLENNIUM AWARD 2022

Each year the parish council votes a Millennium Award to someone who has contributed significantly to the village. This year the following people were proposed by villagers with these citations:

LISA & STEPH TWYMAN @ The Ivy Barn-We have long needed somewhere in Littlebourne to meet friends for coffee, but Lisa and Steph really make you feel welcome. It was such a gift for many people in the village when it opened, especially the older residents. Apart from the great coffee & cakes they are always pleased to see you and if not too busy will sit and chat.

NIKKI MAXTED- Who is working very hard to put new life into the village. She is constantly organising activities for the children – Halloween, Easter and Christmas. She together with her team run The Littlebourne Residents Facebook page and organised the Village calendar 2022. Any spare funds left after events are donated to local groups/charities.

CAROL CHILDS- Has run Ladybirds Pre School (a registered Charity) for many years, she works hard to ensure every child matters, and is very aware of each child's

personal, social, and emotional needs. Pre-school continuing through Covid was very challenging, but Carol rose to the challenge and continues to persevere whatever is thrown at her.

VIV SPRATT – Who has done a marvellous job as Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator for Littlebourne. Her constant and intelligent way of communicating issues to the village has been wonderful.

This year the winner of the Millennium Award is Nikki Maxted, Congratulations and our thanks to you on behalf of the village.

Nikki was then presented with a certificate and cheque for £100. Her name will also be added to the Millennium Award Board in the hall.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Mike Sole gave his report as follows:

It is now approaching a year since I was elected as the county councillor for Canterbury South, so I would like to present this report to you.

Firstly, some thanks. My predecessor, Michael Northey was extremely gracious when I replaced him and provided me with some helpful handover information and advice. I would also like to thank Kent County Councillor and City Councillor Rob Thomas. We may represent different political parties, but I know that we share a similar desire to get things done for the adjoining areas that we represent, and his assistance, advice and friendship are much appreciated.

I would also like to thank the parish councillors and clerks of all 16 parishes in my county division for their warm welcomes. Shortly after being elected, I took tours around all of the 11 parishes that were new to me (I already covered 5 as Canterbury City Councillor for Nailbourne ward) and I am grateful for the time taken to introduce me to the areas.

Canterbury South is a large county division, stretching from Waltham in the west to Grove Ferry in the east. It also includes a large part of urban Wincheap that is not parished. I enjoy walking and cycling around all of the area. I try to be pro-active and get things done. You'll often see me reporting potholes, worn white lines, fly-tipping, overgrown footpaths and many other things. I want us to live in an area that we are proud of, is well maintained, kept clean and safe.

As one of six Liberal Democrat councillors as KCC, out of a total of 81 councillors, I know that I may have little impact of on the direction of KCC, but that doesn't stop me trying by raising items at committees and council. Where I believe that I am achieving things though is by working with councillor officers, cabinet chairs and other councillors of all parties to make the improvements that we need locally.

In particular I have done a lot of work with the local highways officers. By working with them and parish councils, often assisted with grant money from my KCC members fund, we have seen a reduction in the speed limit at Bramling, with another reduction coming at Stone Street, Petham as well as improvements to road surfaces and road and drainage maintenance.

We are making headway with a 30mph limit in Woolage Village and have had meetings about a potential 20mph limit in Bridge and an additional crossing in Thanington, although budgetary issues are an issue there.

On school issues I have helped families with the recent chaotic Special Education Needs home to school transport changes and helped where possible with school places appeals.

I have particularly enjoyed getting to know so many of the local community groups and through those I have been able to support grants through my Covid Recovery Grant, which has now unfortunately finished, and Combined Members Grant which is also used on highway projects.

In addition to Highways grants, I have been able to support the following organisations:

Love Hambrook Marshes – benches

Little Stour & Nailbourne River Group – publicity and education project

Fifth Trust – redevelopment of skills centre

Barham Football Club – defibrillator

Petham Primary School PFTA – bounce back to school project

Adisham Village Hall – dishwasher

Ashford Road Community Centre – outdoor furniture

Bridge Village Playgroup – literacy and outdoor equipment

Littlebourne Youth Cricket – indoor training

Hilltop Community Association – defibrillator

If there are any local organisations in the area that would benefit from some grant assistance, please ask them to get in touch.

At KCC I sit on the Growth & Economic Development committee and the Flood Risk Management Committee. I also represent Canterbury City Council on the River Stour Internal Drainage Board.

At Canterbury City Council I sit on the Community Committee and Regeneration Committee, although as we move away from a committee system to a leader and cabinet role I do not yet know what role I may have in the future.

I try to attend as many parish council meetings as possible and usually manage about 4 or 5 a month. I am also happy to meet up with residents and parish councillors outside of the formal parish meeting to discuss issues.

As I am also the Canterbury City Councillor for Nailbourne ward I have also dealt with many issues for residents including bin collections, litter, council housing and fly-tipping. I take the lead for the Lib Dem group on Climate Change and Finance at the City Council.

We have a lot going on in the next year at Canterbury City Council. There is the controversial move away from the committee system of governance to a cabinet system and of course the continued development of the local plan that could see up to 17,000 additional homes in the district on top of those already in the current plan but not yet built, like the 4,000 at Mountfield Park between the city and Bridge. We have a difficult time ahead of us with rising costs which will put huge pressures on council services and families' income and wellbeing. I know that many local

families are looking to host Ukrainian refugees in their homes. There will be huge demands for support services and I will do all I can to assist and share relevant information.

I have very much enjoyed my first year as a Kent County Councillor and my continuing term as a Canterbury City Councillor, the highlight so far was being invited to be Father Christmas in Adisham, visiting children with gifts on Christmas morning in a sleigh pulled by a vintage tractor.

Please do continue to get in touch if I can help with anything.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- **Sloyden & Durrant Charities**

Cllr Mick Giles read out his annual report as follows:

The Charity exists to help residents in need or hardship and relies on such cases being brought to our attention and since our last Annual Parish Meeting in 2019 it did just that by making payments totaling £790 leaving a balance as at the 28th Feb 22 of £951.58

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

- **LPC Community fund**

Cllr Mick Giles read out his report as follows:

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 our last Annual Parish Meeting in 2019 we have approved requests totaling £11,570 from

Littlebourne Art Group.

Littlebourne Cricket Club.

The War Memorial Hall Roof.

Stay and Sing at the Chapple.

Awake from Covid.

Providing a New Flagpole and Flags.

A Christmas Tree *including a permanent ground socket lighting etc to enable an annual Village tree to be provided.*

Funding the Queen`s Platinum Jubilee Celebration Day.

Since the fund was set up in March 2013 we have been able to fund projects and events totaling £27,188 leaving a current balance of £6051 and last year`s rental payment of approximately £3800 is due later this year.

As we are now returning to retuning to some kind of normality after Covid may I urge Village organizations and others to consider organizing events or projects they feel would benefit the community and take advantage of this fund.

Applications to the chairman Cllr Mick Giles Tel 728228 or email cllr.giles@littlebournepc.org, the committee 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.

- **Littlebourne Horticultural Society**

Helen Howard the Chair read her report as follows:

Over the last two years 27 new families have joined the allotment membership, many occupying newly created plots. It has been very encouraging to see so many families enjoying getting active outdoors and growing their own food. We have a good mix from complete beginners to seasoned gardeners, flat dwellers with no outside space, people in new houses with tiny gardens, and those who grow plants in their gardens at home but want to be more ambitious.

Last year we decided to invest in some machinery for members to borrow: a mower and a rotovator and they have proved to be very popular. Often members have equipment like this to use in their own gardens but don't want to carry it backwards and forwards. A members' work party also put up a lovely new weatherproof shed to house the equipment, next to the cabin, which is more central. It has been great to have so many members willing to help out with site maintenance such as keeping the grass cut, and big tasks like cutting the hedges in the Autumn. The next item on the agenda is to clear the area called the compound, which was historically was used for storage, but could eventually become more plots.

After a very dry mild April and hot mainly dry early May, we look forward to seeing what the weather will bring us this year. Will we get good potato and tomato crops this time, or will we all get blight again like last year? But whatever happens, with a bit of luck we should be able to fill our fridges and freezers, pickling, fermenting and jam jars, or sheds with crops to see us through the seasons till next year.

- **Community Warden Susan Beeney**

Susan introduced herself as the new warden who will be covering Littlebourne, she has been working in the village for 6 months now and has been involved in various issues in the village including flytipping removals, KCC fault reporting, referrals to fire brigade for assessments, cannabis use in the youth shelter, parking issues outside the school and the youth bus. She has also done a presentation on scams at the Afternoon Club and visited the school.

Susan is available to contact on 07811 271257

- **Traffic Action and Highways**

Cllr Mick Giles read out his report as follows:

It has been very difficult to get responses from the KCC Highways for some time but especially during the pandemic. However after yet another change of Highway officer we finally managed a meeting with Sebastian Burs where our Highway improvement plan was discussed, as we went through our plan there were once again those items

KCC could support and those it could not and those it could support would require a significant or total contribution by the PC or others.

KCC Highways comments on our Highway improvement Plan from this and previous meeting

Not in priority order

1. We are limited on what we can do on the A257
as it's an 'A' Road

2. We can't have 30 MPH repeater signs on the Hill/High Street
However we could put up "Remember you are still in a 30 sign" if it's off the Highway on private property.

3. 20 MPH speed limit on the the Hill and the High Street.
Traffic speed surveys on the Hill do not fall within the criteria for the 20mph trial, so this section of road is not suitable for a reduced speed limit, speeds too high.
A 20mph limit may be possible along the High Street subject to a traffic survey to ascertain the existing speeds.

4. 20 MPH on all village side roads
Speeds need to be down already otherwise calming measures will be needed, and with traffic surveys and traffic orders the cost is estimated to be about £5,000 +signage.
Highway's view is that 20mph limits do not work, i challenged Sebastian Burs to provide alternative solutions but he has yet to do so.

5. KCC are unwilling to support buffer zones on the approaches to Littlebourne from Wingham and Canterbury as speeds are too high. The KCC policy can't have a lower speed limit due to speeds being too high. is absolutely ridiculous

6. A pedestrian crossing at the Evenhill
This would be possible but expensive, £40,000 as it would involve a new bus stop and a length of foot path.

7. A signalled Junction on The Hill into the Laurels
We don't have one into Jubilee Road or Nargate Street which have more vehicle movements so would not be Justified.

8. Village Gateways on Court Hill and Nargate Street
Possible at a cost of about £5000

9. 7.5 Ton weight restriction on Jubilee Road, Court Hill Church Road and the lower end of Nargate Street
Cost to the Parish £9000 but only possible if there was a more suitable alternative route!!!

10. Move Gateway and Speed Limit Further Back around the Bend and Add Additional Speed Bump in Bekesbourne Lane

Possible but would be expensive for little gain, additional street lighting and tree removal would be required estimated at £7,000, alternatively the 30mph sign could be moved further out, not possible to have Dragons Teeth markings on the road but could possibly have a roundel marking.

11. Reduce the Speed Limit to 40 MPH between Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux KCC could look at this stretch of road and would probably be able to fund a traffic count, estimate £9000 to complete.

12. On a more positive note.

The moving of The 30 MPH limit 100m towards Canterbury financed by our previous County Councillor Michael Northey has finally been done. However this measure has not been completed to the specification we believed to have been agreed on, the large original 30 MPH yellow backed roundels having been replaced by what can only be described as lollipop sticks, and without white gates does not create the significant visual impact required for a village gateway. We immediately contacted KCC who informed us the it was policy not to use yellow but grey backed signs unless it was an accident black spot (*surely this is*) and as they did not own the grass verge on the pine wood side it was not possible to install a white gate, we also received a copy of the detailed drawing for this installation on which we had never been consulted or had any opportunity to comment on.

We have ascertained the ownership of the grass verge and been given written permission from the owner to install a gate.

We requested a site meeting with Highways to discuss the provision of white gates on both sides of the road (which we will offer to pay for) and larger 30mph signs with the village name on, *yellow or grey backed*. This meeting asked for more than a month ago has only just received a response advising that a meeting will be arranged as soon as (here we go again) the new highway officer for this area is appointed.

In view of the current financial constraints and some of the prevailing attitudes of the KCC is somewhat difficult at times to be positive, and although it goes against all my principals it seem that the only way any of our highway issues can be resolved is if the village is prepared to pay for them. This is unfair, the residents of Canterbury and the other towns pay no extra for any highway improvement measures, especially as we in the villages are supporting through our council tax any highway measures financed by Canterbury City Council.

I believe that at some point in time we will need support from you all in one form or another to highlight these traffic issues and its effects, we all want to see improvements to the environment and quality of life in our village but meetings and emails can only achieve so much.

The A257 Group

The A257 group is comprised of representatives from all the villages and other groups directly and indirectly affected by the A257 along with our Dover and Canterbury Councillors, County Councillors and MPs.

We have produced The A257 Plan which highlights all of the problems along the whole length of the road.

The group were successful in getting the speed limit reduced to

50 MPH on the A257.

40MPH at Bramling.

20MPH at Wingham, only possible as (quote from Wingham) *it's not that we have a serious speeding problem in the village otherwise Kent Highways would not have approved a 20MPH zone, and other measures would be needed.*

20MPH on A257 in Littlebourne, *speeds are too high.*

- **Littlebourne CEP School**

The Clerk read out the report from Headteacher Sam Killick as follows:

Littlebourne has seen many changes over the last couple of years and it will continue to do so over the coming. We have a new governing body and they are committed to driving the school vision forward to allow us to become an integral part of the community. We are keen to develop our links locally and support as many local families as possible.

I started the role here in January 2021, led the school for a day then was forced to close it after the second large wave of COVID hit the country. We remained open to critical and key workers and we were able to support our most vulnerable pupils and families. All of the staff continued to work throughout this period and we provided remote learning for those able to work from home and opened our doors for those that couldn't. On average, we housed 40 – 50 children each day.

The school has proudly taken part in a range of fundraising events. Some to support charities and others to allow us to raise some much-needed funds for our own school. Our open coffee morning to support Macmillan was a great success. We raised an incredible £290. Our fundraising efforts for the Royal British Legion were also impressive. We raised £243.83 for their appeal. We also put together a cake sale to show our support for Ukraine and sold merchandise to support Children in Need. It was lovely to welcome so many of our friends and parents to the school for our Christmas fair and Nativity production. We hope to be in a position to open this up to the community this Christmas.

In July, despite COVID restrictions still looming, we managed to send our Year 6 children off with a fun filled local activity week. The children went to Canoe Wild, took part in forest days and agility training sessions. It was great to use our local environment for this. Despite not being able to go away, the children had a lovely time using what we have on our doorstep.

We were oversubscribed in Sept 2021. It was a heavy year for siblings (14) which meant there were limited places (1) for new families that live in Littlebourne. We understand that this wasn't ideal for many families but school places are offered according to the Local Authority ranking system. We want to be able to offer school places to our local children so this is something for us as a school to reflect upon.

We were very lucky to receive some funding from the 4VPO. We have used some of this money to invest in some bikes for our youngest children. They took delivery of these a few weeks back and have thoroughly enjoyed using them. We plan to use the remainder of the money to develop a prayer labyrinth for all of the children to enjoy. This will be built over the coming months.

Our new intake for September 2022 sees our 15 places fully accounted for and we once again have a waiting list. This year we have taken 8 siblings and we will welcome 7 new families to our school. All 7 of our new families live in or very near to Littlebourne. We are very pleased to be able to offer school places to those local to us. This is excellent news for us as a school.

All in all, it has been a very full and exciting year. I am very proud of how well the school pupils and staff have pulled together over the last year and I believe the school continues to go from strength to strength. We have much to offer here and I welcome visitors with open arms.

- **Littlebourne War Memorial Hall**

Chair Sue Bull read her report as follows:

It is pleasing to report that whilst it took some time get back to near normal following the lifting of the pandemic rules we have seen a return to the Hall of those groups who are our regular hirers. Not only that, but we have attracted several new groups including dance classes and "mini" war board games, so the range of activities using the Hall is increasing.

At the beginning of November 2021, we were in a position to have the front elevation of the roof stripped back and completely re-roofed. It has meant that we have not suffered the roof leaking during the winter months for which we are very grateful.

We were able to replace the Christmas lights and they were much appreciated by the village as a bright landmark during the dark winter evenings.

We have been also been able to replace the two doors leading to the Lounge and the door leading from the Main Hall to the Recreation Ground with doors made from more cleanable and sustainable materials. Not only are these easier to be keep clean but the doors are wider making access easier and helping to allow a better flow of air when opened. They are also double glazed which helps with heat retention that is going to be appreciated with rising fuel costs. Many groups are also pleased with the fact that when both the Hall and the Lounge are in use they promote better

privacy and lessen sound. We have also been able to have blinds fitted in the Lounge to replace some of the curtains as these are also easier to keep clean.

We would not have been able to achieve any of these projects without the much-appreciated support the Committee has been given and we would like to thank the Parish Council, the Community Fund, Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council and a private donation in memory of a good friend, that has enabled us to do this.

I think it has become more obvious that the Hall is an important and integral part of village life and was much missed during the pandemic. The Committee is determined that the Hall will go from strength to strength in order to provide an amenity that is much needed within our community and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and support in getting the Hall back up and running.

6. A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR LITTLEBOURNE

Cllr Castle spoke on this subject; his report is as follows:

Good evening, everyone

Firstly, let me briefly explain what a neighbourhood plan is.

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area

They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops, and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

That is the government definition which as expected is very wordy!

So, what does this mean for Littlebourne?

Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. This is because unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared in the past, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan (which Canterbury City Council are currently developing) and the neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15, 20 years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. We can then put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development we want to see.

But housing is a divisive issue, the ultimate is zero new homes but with a growing population, desirable location and lifestyle, demand within Littlebourne will continue to grow.

Peter mentioned the phenomenal work the action group which fought the Gladman development undertook on all our behalf's. If a neighbourhood plan can be developed and agreed, it would mean the village has a document in place that would hopefully avoid the expensive and time-consuming battles that have taken place previously and most probably will take place again in the future. This would mean developers approach the local area knowing the mindset and position of villagers from an approved planning document.

One area within the neighbourhood planning process is a housing needs assessment to determine size and pricing of new homes required. Which I believe is invaluable given the diverse demographic of people residing in Littlebourne.

As a parish council Alison Eardly who is the Kent Association of local council's head of training and also a local neighbourhood plan developer came and gave a talk and answered our questions at a recent parish council meeting.

It became clear the focus from central government and local government is on housing, but our neighbourhood plan can be developed with the focus on more positive areas.

As mentioned previously and I cannot stress enough

Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan and the neighbourhood plan.

But the neighbourhood plan is not just about homes

Some other core elements include

- Protection of the local environment
- Walking and cycling networks
- Engagement with other bodies such as highways to shape future investment
- Climate change regarding forward planning for elements such as solar energy and car charging points.
- Biodiversity opportunities incorporating protection of green spaces. Not limited to just village greens and recreation grounds but all areas which fall within the remit at planning stage. Such as woodlands or the wildlife habitats such as the river or hedgerows
- Community facilities - needs and requirements in the coming years for all residents of all ages.

Anyone would be foolish to think a neighbourhood plan will stop every single potential expansion but the detailed policies that would be outlined, mean the village will have done everything it can formally to protect the things everyone enjoys about living in Littlebourne

It can take up to 12 to 18 months but currently there are government grants of eighteen thousand pounds which would cover most of the technical and professional support.

But everyone in the village will be involved through consultation and discussion. As the plan progresses.

At this stage tonight I am hoping that as with all these types of projects. We need volunteers, with expertise, time, or both to come forward to be involved in the process. If there is enough support in terms of numbers, then as a council on behalf of the village we can start to move through the process

If I could ask if anyone would be keen to get involved to develop the vision for the village, please come and see me after the meeting or come and speak to me with any questions you may have.

I would like to end on a key phrase from Peter our chairs speech

how we can achieve and maintain the best village and parish area for existing and future residents.

Hopefully with a detailed neighbourhood plan we can contribute towards that goal.

Many thanks for listening.

7. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Maxted reminded everyone of the upcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations on 5th June being held on the Rec. This will be Cllr Maxted's first event as parish Councillor.

Activities arranged for Sunday include lives music, kids corner, bouncy castles, cream teas, Bake off competition, hot food.

11-5pm Sunday 5th June

Some volunteers to help setup and take down still required.

Thanks to the LPC Community Fund for funding this event.

8. MINUTES FROM THE LAST HELD APM IN 2019

Cllr Reid proposed the minutes from the last meeting in 2019, these were seconded by Cllr Castle and AGREED. The minutes were then duly signed by the Chairman.

9. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

There were no questions as such but Helen Howard wanted to mention The Repair Café in Canterbury, in which she is involved. This is based opposite Waitrose and offers repairs to electrical equipment, encouraging this over buying new items. There is also a sewing corner encouraging people to repair their clothes (environmental fashion).

The Chairman finished by thanking Diane Hoare and Sue Bull for doing the refreshments this evening.

The Chairman then thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....