

WEST KINGSDOWN
PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT



2021/22

The Parish Council is responsible for the civil parish which includes West Kingsdown, Woodlands, Knatts Valley and East Hill.

We have 11 Councillors who make up the Parish Council.
They serve a four year term which expires May 2023.

This report provides an opportunity for the Parish Council to account to local residents on the way it has discharged its responsibilities and Managed the Council's assets in the previous twelve months.

Chairman's Report 2021/22

The year started in May 2021 with the Covid restrictions in force and therefore meetings took place via Zoom. When restrictions were eased the Parish Council held meeting in the Village Hall in order to be socially distanced, and the moved back to the Old School when all restrictions were removed and regular monthly meetings have taken place.

Parish Council meetings are preceded with the opportunity for members of the public to ask raise issues and ask questions. The General Purposes Committee meets monthly and often looks are matters in detail and then making recommendations to the full Council. Both meetings are preceded by a Planning Committee Meetings where Members consider the planning applications made to the Sevenoaks District Council based on planning considerations. The Parish Council's comments are then forwarded to the District Council. The Council's precept was considered and set at a Finance Committee Meeting in January and this will provide the finances to run the Council for the following year without having to raise the level of the precept. All of the meetings are open to the public, but they are not public meetings.

The Council works closely with the Old School Management Committee, the Church Woods Management Committee and the Village Hall Management Committee. Each of these is an independent registered charity and your Council is represented on them. They perform an important role in looking after village assets and the work put into them by their volunteer committee members is of considerable value to our community. Managing these assets in this way enables them to apply for grants which the Parish Council will not be eligible for. Reports from each of the Committees are included in this document. One of the more onerous roles for a Councillor is to be Chairman of the Planning Committee and Mrs Josie Watchorn has continued in this office for the past year. Her knowledge and expertise in planning matters and the history of planning applications in the village has been invaluable to the Council.

Roy Barry has ably assisted us in the consideration of the village footpaths and regularly walks them drawing our attention to matters of concern for which he is thanked.

Jackie West our KCC Community Warden plays a valuable role in our community which is very much appreciated by parishioners and Councillors alike.

The Parish Council works closely with our District Councillors, in particular Ms Lynda Harrison who is not only a District Councillor but also our Parish Clerk, assisting us in matters relating to the functions of the District Council.

Our Kent County Councillor David Brazier attends Parish Council meetings and is always responsive to queries from the Council, individual Councillors and parishioners. If you have concerns about aspects of the County Council's functions which you might not wish to raise via the Parish Council then do not hesitate to contact him directly.

It was a huge loss to the community when David Diboll died last year. He worked tirelessly for the Council and the local community and his talents and knowledge will be greatly missed. We welcome Pamela and Warren as our new litter pickers, a job they carry out with enthusiasm and reliability.

Lynda Harrison, our Clerk plays an invaluable role as the public face of the Council and looks after day to day business and our finances in an effective and efficient way.

As we come to the end of the third year of the 4-year term of this Council may I record my thanks to my fellow councillors for their time and commitment, serving this community as volunteers for the benefit of all who live here.

I look forward to continuing to work to serve you all and hopefully bringing to fruition during the next year, projects we are currently working on.

Cllr Pat Bosley, Chairman

Councillors

Mrs Pat Bosley	Chairman of the Parish Council and Finance Committee
Mr Graham Christie	Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, Chairman of General Purpose Committee.
Mrs Margaret Richards	Vice Chairman of the General Purpose Committee
Mrs Josie Watchorn	Chairman of Planning Committee
Mrs Ian Bosley	Vice Chairman of the Planning
Miss Jodie Holdstock	
Mr David Land	
Mr Steve Gray	
Mr Dave king	
Mr Ricky Spiller	
Mrs Lin Spencer	

Full Parish Council Meetings are held monthly, with the exception of August due to holidays, and the General Purposes Committee meet on the second Monday of each month. These meetings continued to be open to the public and press to attend.

Minutes of all the meeting are available from the Parish Office, published on the Parish Council's new website www.westkingsdownparishcouncil.org.uk.

In April of each year the Annual Parish Meeting is held which is an opportunity for the Parish Council to report on its activities and for local electors to speak on local issues.

Parish Office

The Parish Office is located at the Pavilion London road and is open Three days a week Monday Tuesday and Fridays and open to the public between 11-1pm

Code of Conduct

In accordance with legislation the Councillors conduct the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Code of Conduct set out by the Sevenoaks District Council Standards Committee. Councillors receive regular updates regarding changes in legislations. 2019*20 saw elections which happen every 4 years and some Councillors retiring and not re standing and some new faces to the Parish Council.

Publicity

The Parish website continues to be maintained and updated with information for the community. The Parish Council also continues to provide information to parishioners with its regular newsletters printed in SEKAM, the St Edmund's Parish magazine. Notice boards are also used to publish dates of meetings. The Clerk also posts items of interest on the West Kingsdown residents Facebook page, although not run by the Council, residents have found the information useful. Notice boards are Hever Road, Gamecock Meadow, East Hill and Knatts Valley, as well as a notice board in the entrance hall of the library.

Kent County Community Warden Scheme

We continue to share our Community Warden Jackie West with Fawkham and Hartley and value the contribution that Jackie makes to this community, she regularly engages with local community groups and helping the elderly and vulnerable with welfare issues.

Jackie has become a great asset to West Kingsdown, providing a visible presence within our community and liaising with groups and organisations and at the local school. Jackie always goes that extra mile to help where she can, she has certainly been called to this in the pandemic and has supported many families and residents and has had close links with the Community Cupboard and other agencies. She is always very efficient in her role.

Hever Road Shops

The Parish Council continues to maintain this important central area in the local community. It is regularly litter picked by Sevenoaks District Council. The Parish Council This year removed the iron grids from the trees and has carried out tree works to keep the area looking nice Parish Council added to the Christmas lights this year all of which has been well received by residents. The Parish Council as landowners has an agreement and permission has been granted for Freda and her meat stall to park and sell in the access road on a Saturday morning, each week.

Allotments

The Parish Council manages 26 allotment plots at two locations, the Recreation Ground and by Beacon Row, London Road. We have seen some holders retiring from their allotments due to various reasons but all the plots have now been filled and currently there are no vacant plots, although the Parish Office do hold a waiting list if you're interested in putting your name on the list for the future.

Land owned by Parish Council

The Parish Council continues to maintain land it owns in Millfield, Meadowbank, Thornbank, Oakland's Close, Chancel Close, Hever Avenue Recreation Ground, Gamecock Meadow, School Lane and the Burial ground. The grounds contracts were awarded in January for 2022-2025 we look forward to continuing to work with Kent Grasslands who have also taken on the maintenance of the Gamecock Meadow following the retirement of Abel Landscapes who have been our contractor for a number of years, and we wish Richard and his team a very happy and well deserved retirement.

This year the Parish have carried out extensive tree works in Millfield Road

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, under the Chairmanship of Cllr Mrs Pat Bosley, meets to set the budgets and the precept for the forthcoming year in January. This year they agreed there would be no increase to the precept. In July the committee met to carry out the annual review of employee's salaries, due to national increase in the minimum hourly rate. Parish met again in November to consider grant applications made to local organisation for financial assistance from the Parish Council.

The Finance Committee also monitors the Council's accounts which are managed on a day to day basis by the Clerk, to ensure that expenditure is in line with budgeted allocations.

Regular internal audits are carried out and annual external audit as well. Finally the accounts are submitted to the Audit Commission in June of each year.

The Council has increased wages in-line with legislation to meet the minimum living wage hourly rate.

Future Projects

The Council has begun to look into affordable housing scheme to help the needs of residents, English rural have consulted locally and are near to submitting a planning application for the scheme.

Burial Ground

The Burial Ground is inspected regularly and general maintenance and tree works have been carried out. The Council are looking to extend the burial Ground as in approximately 10 years there will be a need for more space. The Parish Council have a local landowner who is in discussion with the Council in the hope to purchase some land to be used as a burial ground

General Purpose Committee

The main business of the Committee covers public footpaths, maintenance of the Parish Council's Burial Ground, the Gamecock Meadow, the Recreation Ground (Hever Avenue) and the various open spaces in Millfield Road, Meadowbank, Chancel Close, Oaklands Close, Thornbank, the School Lane Garden and the land at the bottom of Neal Road.

The grounds and gardening contract for the Parish were tendered and let to new suppliers. Regular inspections of the Recreation Ground in Hever Avenue were undertaken, and all identified maintenance has been completed. However the Council have worked with a contractor and carried out local surveys, following this consultation a new recreation ground have been designed and ordered and is due to be installed late April, This will replace the existing recreation ground and has been paid for with CIL money (Community infrastructure levy money – which has a restricted use) also grant received by SDC for £15,000

Inspections of the Skatepark and Adizone Gym have been undertaken on a regular basis. No major problems but minor points identified in the course of these inspections have been rectified.

The defibrillator at the Pavilion and Hever Road shops are regularly checked and recorded online both are registered with the ambulance service for the use of the community in the event of a medical emergency.

The Pavilion has seen a revamp with new windows and doors that have been fitted, with KCC grant funding, also the room benefits from new sound reduction panels a new cooker and fridge making the room next door to the Parish Office a more inviting room for community use.

As part of the Queens canopy for the platinum Jubilee a tree will be planted in front of the library and again with funded recycled plastic picnic bench will also be installed at the front for the enjoyment of users of the site.

In conclusion I would like to thank Mr Roy Barry our voluntary Footpaths Officer for their hard work during the past year.

Graham Christie – Chairman of General Purpose Committee

Old School, School Lane

This community site, owned by the Parish Council, is leased to and managed on a day to day basis by the Old School Management Committee [Registered Charity No. 1088339].

The buildings are used by Pre-School, Kings Church and The Dance Conservatoire. The Old School building is used by Pre-School and local organisations, including a Gardening Group, Railway Club and a Camera Club and is available for meetings and parties.

During the year windows and doors have been replaced in the Main Building and a further area of the car park renewed with tarmac, part of the Management Committee's commitment in maintaining the site in a good condition.

The Management Committee meets regularly to oversee the site and carry out day to day maintenance.

My thanks go to the members of the Management Committee for their time and efforts in assisting to maintain this community site in good order for the benefit of the local community.

Mrs Pat Bosley, Chairman of the Trustees

Village Hall report

This community site, owned by the Parish Council, is leased to and managed on a day to day basis by the Village Hall Management Committee [Registered Charity No. 302776]. The Village Hall report is given to the public at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Parish Council.

The last year has seen the hall open once all covid restrictions were lifted in May 2021. During the year new outside lighting has been installed along the access road to the hall. Problems with the heating system have been resolved with the installation of a new gas boiler and room thermostats. The flood protection barriers are now stored in the hall and can be put in place if and when flood warnings are given.

The hall continues to be well used by the local community for a variety of classes, meetings and social events. Currently children's parties are very popular as these could not take place during the two years of covid restrictions.

The trustees recognise the very valuable job carried out by the dedicated caretakers, Graham & Robin and currently Lyn following the departure of Robin..

During the year George Smith took over the role of Chairman, and thanks is expressed to him and members of the Management Committee and for the time they give in helping with odd jobs, gardening, rubbish clearing and hall maintenance.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in July and the date will be publicised.
Ian Bosley, Trustee Treasurer.

Brands Hatch Liaison Group

The Liaison Group has restarted meeting face to face after the lockdown and look forward to the new season. The Firework and truck event in November was well received by residents and was a sold out event.

Lynda Harrison and Steve Gray
Parish Council nominee to the group.

Sevenoaks District Councillor For Fawkham and West Kingsdown Ward.

I continue to work for the benefit of residents and the villages of West Kingsdown and Fawkham.

I have helped residents with planning matters and other community issues, I have campaigned for dog owners to clear up after their dogs and been out litter picking. I like to try and make a difference. I continue to keep residents informed on Facebook of events or matters of interest.

I have had several meetings with KCC hoping to improve the safety of the junction of Fawkham Road, London Road and School Lane and have arranged for a traffic survey of the local roads to help reduce the speed of cars locally.

I have helped with the Community Cupboard a foodbank to help the community and the wider areas and continue to actively support them and the brilliant work they have done and look forward to the new extension that has started as sadly the need for food banks increases.

I continue to sit on Health and Housing committee, Housing liaison group, Finance and Governance Committees. I have also attended various training sessions relating to planning which have been provide virtually by SDC and have been very informative.

I am always contactable and happy to help if I can
Cllr Lynda Harrison

Cllr.Harrison@sevenoaks.gov.uk

The Community Cupboard

'Everyone needs a little help sometimes' started as our ethos and has never been truer word

Originally providing support from the boots of our cars and with minimal donations, we were extremely fortunate to have been offered the premises by West Kingsdown Parish Council and The Community Cupboard has quickly become a fixed and welcomed asset to the community. We have rapidly grown, over the last 18 months into a community support hub, which is located in the garage next to the village hall in West Kingsdown.

As a Foodbank, we offer a non judgemental and friendly welcome to those who contact us. Working not only with referring agencies but also with individuals and families that self refer, we aim to retain the dignity that people are entitled to. As an independent service, we do not operate on a voucher scheme and our users are not numbers, they are people that need support.

During the period April 2020 to March 2021, we received donations totalling 36,687 kilos of which 34,075 kilos were distributed in our support parcels. These horrendous figures not only demonstrate the level of support that we have been able to provide during Covid-19 but also account for many families and individuals who struggled behind closed doors, unable to receive help because they didn't fit the criteria of other support services. Having supported 551 families during this 12 month period covering a wider area of Sevenoaks, we are pleased that we have been able to increase our donation points to villages and locations further afield to support this.

Many people wrongly assume that such an affluent area would not require a food bank. With the vast majority of our users in employment, struggling to make ends meet, this assumption could never be further from the truth. As an independent Food bank and signposting service, we are able to adapt to our community and the demand and needs that present.

The appearance of Covid brought further challenges. Rather than closing our hub when the pandemic started, we instantly increased our opening days and provided support 5 days a week. We have built fantastic relationships with the community, local and national businesses and are extremely proud to have forged secure and trusted relationships with other support services, charities and government bodies.

With 2020 now firmly behind us and unprecedented figures reported for the past year, we yearn to see a reduction in our statistics, this has however not been the case.

With an additional 78 families registered already in 2021 (totalling 319 individuals), we are preparing for the continuation of required support levels and as a team are working tirelessly to meet demands.

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With space at a minimum inside the building (due to the increase of users), we are delighted that we have now been granted planning permission to extend the building. This will provide additional storage areas for the products required to continue to meet demand.

Community support has been outstanding throughout and we were delighted to be named as Community Heros by Laura Trott MP MBE within her weekly awards. We were also chosen for The Community Award by DA3 magazine. Having featured in The Kent

Messenger, The village Advertiser, The DA3 magazine and various other publications, we are confident that we have significantly raised our profile across the Sevenoaks District.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank West Kingsdown Parish Council and the community for their continued support and to acknowledge the difference that this support makes to an extensive amount of local residents. Tracy, Vee, David & Helen The Community Cupboard Team

Kent Community Warden Service: Annual Report



The over-riding objective of the Kent Community Warden Service is 'to create safer and stronger communities'. The role of the Community Warden is ever evolving, prompted by the changing needs of our communities and other strategic requirements placed upon our Service.

Community Wardens' activities are defined by the KCC Community Safety Business Plan:

- Delivery of **core Community Warden Service Priorities** - Providing a reassuring presence / support for our residents; responding to community needs; facilitating solutions to local concerns; and addressing issues of loneliness & social isolation.
- Undertake **CSU tasks** with / on behalf of partners to address local issues and concerns (inc. supporting community hubs during the Covid-19 response and recovery period).
- Deliver the Trading Standards **scams project** through support of individual scam victims; and strengthening communities' resilience to scams.
- Working with partners, inc. Adult Social Care, to **safeguard and support vulnerable individuals**, enabling them to live safely and independently in their own homes.
- Provide an **operational and welfare response** for communities in the event of an **emergency** e.g., surge testing in response to a Covid variant, and Storm Eunice.

Notable Community-Based Activities

I have continued to support my communities in a visible and proactive fashion this past year. The focus of my work has inevitably involved extending support to those most in need. This has been a challenging time as residents have required a greater degree of specialized support, compassion, and sensitivity.



Examples of activities include:

- I have led / supported the return of community-based initiatives (e.g., Community Hub and Memory / Carers Café). These have been very well attended and moving forward partners have been invited to share their expertise with residents inc. Hi-Kent (Hearing) and Jubilee Medical Practise (for support around digital inclusion).
- Given that a number of my visits involve vulnerable individuals with complex issues, it has been necessary to signpost or refer to specialist service providers e.g., assisting a frail lady who lives alone who finds it difficult managing day-to-day tasks to explore supported housing options; and work alongside GP Paramedic Practitioner to monitor welfare.
- Share Intel Reports with relevant Community Safety partners e.g., vulnerable resident, living with dementia, targeted by unsolicited doorstep callers.

- Assisted families facing financial hardship e.g., signposting to Porchlight's various strands of support; West Kingsdown's Community Cupboard and SDC's Teams inc. Better Care Fund Coordinator and Private Sector Housing Officer.

On a positive note, it has been very rewarding to see residents working together, and experience closer working with partner agencies to collectively support our residents.

Jackie West | Kent Community Warden Service | Sevenoaks - Tunbridge Wells Team |
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