

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

2015



The village would have grown very slowly based on agriculture. Big changes took place after the Second World War with the building of Racefield Close, Court Lodge, Warren View, Hollands Close, Manor Field, Cob Drive and Crown Green. At the same time, the rapid expansion of Gravesend saw development cross the parish boundary to form Shorne West. It's not surprising therefore, that the Green Belt was introduced to control further growth.

We still have open farm land and woods and we are lucky to have a village that is still a village. Villages are communities and the annual report gives that community a voice enabling the Council and all the village organisations to report on their activities.

Chairman's Report

I suspect some of you may be wondering why I am chairing the meeting. Last year Brian Wilkinson, our Vice-Chairman, resigned for health reasons. Mark Brett, as Chairman, nominated me as Vice-Chairman. I received an e-mail from the Clerk informing me that Mark was in hospital under observation. As a result I became Acting Chairman and since Mark was unable to return to the Council within six months, I became Chairman.

It is with regret that I have to report to you the death of Frank Gibson, our former Borough and County Councillor. He led Gravesham Borough when it was formed in 1974 and was a member for Shorne, Cobham and Luddesdown. At one stage he was Chairman of the County Council.

I also have to report the death of a former member of the Parish Council, Peter Hornby, who served for a number of years including as Vice-Chairman of our Planning Committee.

Personnel

2014 was an eventful year for the Parish Council with a lot of changes in personnel. With an election pending we were anticipating changes. The Council has 9 seats, 3 in Shorne West and 6 in Shorne Village. For the election there were two nominations for Shorne West and 5 for Shorne Village so the people who stood for election were elected unopposed. That is, it was not necessary to hold an election.

As I have already mentioned **Brian Wilkinson** resigned last year. Brian joined the Council in 2003 and served for 11 years becoming Chairman of the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee in 2007. He also served as Vice-Chairman and is due our thanks.

Hilary Shove also resigned last year partly due to ill health. She served for 20 years and was Vice-chair of the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee. She gave the land for the footway in Forge Lane.

In a matter of months the Council had lost the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the Footpaths and Greens Committee.

The Council also lost **John Pooley** - John joined the Parish Council in 19 May 1999 and served the Council for 15 years. He was Chairman for 10 years until August 2010. John died in service on 19 September 2014.

At one point the Council had three vacancies and the Chairman in hospital and we were down to five members.

Roy Dinnis agreed to take over as Chairman of the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee and quickly took control of the position. I was very disappointed when Roy Dennis announced that he would not stand for election. Roy joined the Council in 2011 and did a splendid job of producing the annual report and chairing the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee.

I would like to thank Roy on behalf of the Council and the community which we serve for all that he has done for us and hope that he may rejoin the Council in the future.

Mark Brett joined the Parish Council in 2007 and became Chairman in 2010. He did not stand for election and is now living outside the parish. The Council is very sorry to have lost Mark.

New Members

We advertised the casual vacancies and were pleased to co-opt **George Dent** to represent Shorne West and **Susan Lindley** to represent Shorne Village at the meeting on 25 September 2014. On 8 January 2015 **Robert (Bob) Lane** was co-opted onto the Council to represent the Shorne Village. After the Elections of May 2015, all three were elected unopposed.

Other Matters

As has been reported in the parish magazine, the County Council refused the Parish Council's application for a Definitive Map Modification Order in connection with the Shornemead Level Crossing. The Parish Council has lodged an appeal with the Secretary of State. Susan Lindley has done a great deal of research for the appeal with some support from Leanne Hornby and will report in more detail later in the meeting. We have also had help from the Ramblers Association on legal matters.

When the County Council gave the Parish the land we now refer to as Crabbles Bottom they also gave as a commuted sum for its maintenance. Roy Dinnis has arranged for this to be invested to give us the best return.



Park Pale motorcycle noise nuisance has been taken up by Bob Lane who will report later in the meeting. Thanks are also due to Bob Lane for organising the Village Clear Up.

A copy of the draft Balance Sheet for the Parish Council, which has not yet been formally agreed, has been distributed.

Robin Theobald
Chairman Shorne Parish Council

Thanks to my Vice-Chairman, John Bugg

Council Committee on Planning and Highways

The Parish Council has been consulted on 46 planning applications affecting the Parish. The Council registered an objection to 12 of the applications.

Land at the See Ho – an application was made to develop the land next to the See Ho car park. This is in the Green Belt and the Council registered an objection. The application was refused by Gravesham and the subsequent appeal against the refusal, was dismissed. The applicant obtained a judicial review of the decision. There were important issues regarding the Green Belt turning on the outcome of the review. Judgment was given in favour of the Borough Council. The applicant then appealed against the judgement and the Court of Appeal referred the application back to the Planning Inspectorate.

Warren Farm – On 17 January 2015 members of the Council met on site at the owner's request to discuss the proposed use the building as a nursery school. The Council advised that they could not support the proposal. Some of the site would need to be given over to car parking. Local roads can already be very busy at school times and the prospect of more traffic is not welcome. The owner attended the meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 12 March 2015 with his planning consultant to discuss the future of the site.

Chalk Memorial Park – There was some concern from the Health and Safety Executive regarding the proximity of the trunk gas mains. The layout has been modified. Details have now been agreed with Gravesham and work is about to start on site.

General Observations - The number of applications the Council has objected to has risen from 18 to 27 percent. Two of these related to the redevelopment of sites in Pear Tree Lane. It seems to the Council that people appear to want to live in the countryside but do not seem to respect it.

It is also noticeable that some applications are the result of enforcement action - works having taken place without the benefit of planning consent.

Gravesham Local Plan

The Gravesham Local Plan has been given interim approval by the Planning Inspectorate conditional on the Council carrying out a Green Belt review. The Plan has been adopted by Gravesham. In its present form it is valid until 2019 when it will be reviewed to extend its life to 15 years. In 2019 there will be another examination in public.

Shorne has written to Gravesham objecting to the proposed Green Belt Review. This is on the basis that the existing green belt should not be regarded as a land bank to accommodate growth within the Borough.

My view, having spent over forty years involved in planning, is that in the current circumstances, without the Review, it will be practically impossible to defend the Green Belt.

Lower Thames Crossing

Further engineering work has been done on the crossings and was published in May 2014.

A Comparative Air Quality Assessment has been carried out and a report on this was published.

A report was also published scoping the cost and potential environmental mitigation of Option C, following suggestions by Kent County Council during the 2013 consultation. This is the route immediately east of Gravesend originally promoted by KCC in 2011. Engineering drawings have been produced to the same standard as those based on the Brinkerhoff route through Shorne Woods published in 2013.

The KCC route proposes a junction where the Little Chef used to be, with the new road crossing Thong Lane, north of the Baylis site, before heading to the river. The route would require moving the A2 south locally, to fit in some slip roads between the A2 and the Channel Tunnel railway. These would have a very tight radius. Traffic wishing to leave the London bound carriageway for Gravesend East would have to leave the A2 using the Shorne exit, go round the roundabout and use a westward extension to the road connecting to the Thong Lane bridge to reach Marling Cross and Valley Drive. The drawings assume the river crossing would be in tunnel.

One route damages Shorne Village, the other damages Shorne West. A further round of consultation is expected after the election.

Estuary Airports

The Airports Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davies, published its final report in June 2014. The Commission favours expansion of Heathrow and Gatwick over an airport in the Thames Estuary. In July 2014 an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Surface Access Impact Study were published. These demonstrated that the environmental impact of an estuary airport on Kent would be devastating with new roads and infrastructure.

Paramount Resort

I was part of the Borough Council fact finding visit to Orlando Florida, last Easter. Since then, the Paramount proposals have been published and there have been a number of exhibitions and workshops. The application is being dealt with as a major infrastructure project (under the Planning Act 2008) and will be determined by the Secretary of State through the planning inspectorate. It will offer many opportunities for employment but there is concern at the traffic implications. It will add the equivalent of another Bluewater to the traffic on the A2. Most of it will not be at peak times.

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

Some of you may remember the Docklands Development Co-operation. The new body will handle the development of the Ebbsfleet Garden City and will take control of some of the riverside sites in Northfleet. The Corporation will be the planning authority in the area they control. They will be bound by the policies in the Local Plan but Gravesham will be reduced to the status of a consultee.

Highways

We continue to report problems on Shorne's roads. The County Council has been doing a lot of work and the general condition of the roads in the area is improving.

Following our request **Forge Lane** has been re-surfaced. As a result we lost some of the white lining - notably on the bend south of Shorne Crossroad. Within days there was an accident. The County Council cite the Traffic Signs Manual which states that centre white lines should not be provided where the road is less than 5.5m wide (Chapter 5. page 14, paragraph 4.6). We wrote to ask for the bank to be cut back to provide the minimum width. Following an inspection our request was denied by the County Council.

The bank has been eroding and encroaching onto the footway and the Parish Council has taken measures to get it cleared.

Blocked gullies are a problem - It is taking a long time to get them cleared. It has taken several months to get the gullies at the junction of Crown Lane and Mill Hill Lane cleared. A drawing giving their location and photographs were sent to the County Council.

The surfacing of the carriageway in Woodlands Lane still needs attention.

Shorne Crossroads - The Council was pleased to note that the A226 at Shorne Crossroads has been resurfaced and re-marked and is now in good condition. We still have a problem with flooding at Shorne Crossroads.

Street Lighting - the County Council has stated that they would reinstate the street lights. Opinion on the Gravesend Road was recently canvassed and the majority of residents would like the lights back on (only one household wanted them to remain off). Most residents cite road safety and difficulty of getting off a busy road in the dark.

Green Farm Lane - The Council has written to the County Council regarding the condition of Green Farm Lane where the carriageway edges need attention. There is also a flooding problem. There is no road drainage.

Marling Way - There is a problem with flooding in Marling Way. Because the properties on the west side of the road are lower than the road they are at risk of flooding. The situation is under review and we are gathering evidence. Marling Way is soon to be re-surfaced.

Butchers Hill - Following an approach from a resident we have asked to meet a representative of the County Council to see if anything can be done to improve the condition of Butchers Hill where it crosses the common.

Robin Theobald

Chairman

Shorne Parish Council

Planning and Highways Committee

Thanks to the Committee and my Vice-Chairman John Bugg.

Council Committee on Footpaths, Properties and Greens

This past year has turned out to be particularly challenging in trying to ensure that our 13 miles of footpaths and bridleways have been in good order given the cutbacks in KCC activity in this area.

State of footpaths

We dealt with an increasing number of complaints from parishioners about the state of some of the paths including a few which became impassable. KCC have been highly cooperative in dealing with these complaints but their own shortage of resources has limited their capacity to act promptly on every occasion.

Local initiative under way to clear footpaths

Conscious that the level of KCC activity is not going to increase, we have now created our own team of volunteers, drawn from the parish, to tackle pathways of concern this year. Their work is about to get under way now that the growing season has arrived. We shall be reporting on our activities to the KCC Public Rights of Way team who have provided us with equipment and training. We shall also keep in touch with the Gravesham Ramblers in order to ensure close liaison between their own clearance programme and our own.

Notice boards

We continue to ensure that our six notice boards across the parish are well maintained and kept in good order. Having installed two new notice boards in 2014 we are now looking to replace the board

in Thong Lane which is no longer usable, being in a poor state of repair and located precariously near to fast traffic. Finding a safe and accessible location for the new board is proving to be quite a challenge given the safety issues on this road. We are continuing to consult with local people on the best option.

Crabbles Bottom

Some four years ago the Council acquired ownership from KCC of 27 acres of meadow and woodland, which we have named Crabbles Bottom, located to the south of Great Crabbles Wood and between Bowesden Lane on the west and Crutches Lane on the east. The KCC made available a sum of money of over £100,000 to invest in order to meet maintenance costs. We have this year engaged two sets of contractors to clear a footpath and bridleway and separately to carry out a cutback of the meadow areas. Such is the state of the sadly neglected meadows that two cuts – this spring and autumn – will be required in order to get these back into reasonable order. There will be a need for the Parish Council to meet with these contractors in the autumn to agree ongoing maintenance plans. There will also be a need for advice from specialists in woodland maintenance such as the North West Kent Countryside Partnership, with whom we are already in touch, on managing the many apple and pear trees on the property. Finally we have engaged a new investment company, recommended by the Kent Association of Local Councils, through which we have reinvested the bulk of the sum transferred to us at an attractive rate of interest required in order to finance ongoing maintenance.

Playing fields

We actively monitor the upkeep of the two playing fields in Mill Hill Lane and Michael Gardens which continue to provide a range of playground equipment in a safe environment.

Recreation Ground at The Ridgeway – extension of lease to Shorne Football Club

The Parish Council owns the Recreation Ground and Pavilion at The Ridgeway the leasehold of which was granted to Shorne Football Club in 1989. A new 15 years' lease was granted to the football club this year. The club has been working hard to improve the changing and shower facilities in the pavilion to a high standard for players and officials. The Parish Council strongly commends the hard work and dedication of the football club's management team in undertaking this important work. The finance required for this project has been obtained by fund raising and grants to the club including from Gravesham Borough Council and £500 from the Parish Council.

Parish Council opposes Gravesham Borough Council Green Belt Review

The Parish Council has joined with other local Parish Councils in opposing the Green Belt Review currently being undertaken by Gravesham Borough Council [GBC]. According to GBC, the purpose of the Review will be to "provide land for existing and future development", leading Parish Councils already to conclude that serious intrusions into Green Belt land are on the cards. GBC have already



received proposals from developers for over 9,000 properties within the Borough. 80% of these would be on Green Belt land including parts of Shorne parish. In response to the Parish Council's representations against proceeding with the Review, GBC have said there is no turning back. The Parish Council, in conjunction with the other Parish Councils, is now pressing for GBC to concentrate their development on "brownfield" sites such as derelict and previously developed land in the urban areas of the Borough, rather than adopting the soft option, predictably favoured by developers, of advancing into our precious countryside which once sacrificed will be lost forever.

Roy Dinnis

Chairman [to May 2015]

Parish Council Committee on Footpaths, Properties and Greens

County Councillor's Annual Report

Marling Way - Will be resurfaced. KCC obtained extra cash from the Government for the resurfacing of roads.

Lower Thames Crossing - Nothing further to report on this.

Estuary Airport - Still up in the air. It is noted that the fly path from Gatwick goes over West Kent with more noise for residents.

Flooding - The worst flooding being on the A227 to Meopham and at Sole Street. The A227 (Istead Rise) has been dealt with and is fine now. Sole Street is being dealt with.

Grants - As a County Councillor, there is access to a small amount of grant money. With a grant from these funds, the Interactive Sign at The Ridgeway in Shorne was erected last year. The Rural Neighbourhood Forum has £10,000 for grants.

Budget - The County Council budget is just under £2million

Community Wardens - It was decided not to reduce the number of Community Wardens.

Adult Social Services, Public Health, Schools, Libraries - These services continue to be provided by Kent County Council. It had been decided not to put the 19 libraries in Trust.

Environment Planning, Children's Centre and Flood Protection - Cllr Sweetland reported on these items.

Limited Companies - These continue to do well generating £400million a year with a profit of £6million last year so quite successful. There are now 631 people employed in Kent with an opportunity to grow.

Legal Services - KCC has a joint venture with a private firm selling services to others.

Waste & Recycling - 700,000 tons a year needs to be recycled.

Buses - Continue to subsidise about 200 bus services with Freedom Passes for school children, older people and children.

Green Belt Review - Have to be cautious about this.

KCC - Employs about 11,000 people. There is a need to transform some services for example, older people.

Cllr Sweetland can be contacted at Kent County Council (07976 309171) or email at: bryan.sweetland@kent.gov.uk

Bryan Sweetland
KCC Councillor
Gravesham Rural

Shorne Active Retirement Association (ShornAra)

ShornARA has continued to offer a wide range of activities and entertainment to our 150 plus members.

Well over half of our members regularly take part in the Short Mat bowling events, Ten Pin Bowling sessions and Tea Dances which we run throughout the year.

It was necessary last year to introduce an additional session of Short Mat bowling into our weekly programme to cope with the increased interest. This means that over 40 members now enjoy playing in Shorne Village Hall every Wednesday afternoon.

Up to 30 highly enthusiastic Ten Pin bowlers participate in the fortnightly sessions held at the AMF Bowling Centre in Gravesend. The climax to these is our annual Christmas lunch and prize giving event

As popular as ever are our Tea Dances where more than 40 participants take to the floor in the Village Hall every month.

There is also a programme of local walks to which our members are invited.

We hold monthly meetings in the Village Hall for all members. These gatherings usually feature outside speakers on such diverse subjects as, during the past year, the life of an auctioneer, travelling around the world in a double decker bus and the story of Gravesend Airport during the second World War. On these occasions members are also brought up to date on, and get the chance to sign up for, organised events and trips.

We organised half a dozen visits to a number of top shows including, in the West End, "Memphis" and "Phantom of the Opera", and arranged trips to various notable locations such as Windsor and Kew Gardens.

Our programme also featured holiday breaks in the Isle of Wight and Hayling Island and lunches to selected local restaurants. Last year's highly enjoyable Christmas lunch was held, for the second successive year, at the Mid Kent Golf Club in Gravesend.

All these events were planned and organised by our hard working committee.

So ShornARA keeps up to its active name and will hopefully provide an interesting programme throughout the coming year.

Visit our website shornara.org.uk for further information about ShornARA's programme. New members are welcome. Our Membership Secretary, Doreen Neighbour on 01474 324323 will be pleased to answer any enquiries and advise on how to join.

Maureen Horsham
Chair
Shorne Active Retirement Association

Dickens Country Protection Society

The Society has been very busy as usual this year, continuing the basic work of monitoring, and commenting on when considered appropriate, the various local planning applications being submitted to both Gravesham and Medway councils.

During the past year there has continued to be much national and local publicity about possible major projects in or affecting our area:

We are pleased to report that the various "Thames Estuary Airport" concepts were in the end rejected by the Government appointed Davies Commission Aviation Strategy Review, DCPS having

previously contributed to evidence submissions and local meetings. This does not unfortunately mean though that the subject cannot be resurrected again in the future.

The proposal for there to be a major river crossing East of Gravesend, which would be extremely destructive to our area, remains under consideration, now by the Highways Authority and also a Parliamentary Select Committee in which Gravesham have not been invited to participate. Kent County Council are strong advocates of the crossing, as are Essex, but Thurrock are opposed to both continuing schemes and would like option D (near High Halstow) to be reconsidered. A decision will not be made until after the national elections. The Society made detailed representations earlier in the processes but awaits an actual proposal by the Department for Transport, now likely to be late in 2015 at the earliest.

The Society continually keeps all these major plans under review and makes input and representations as and when possible. Detailed analysis can be found in our latest Newsletter which is sent out to Society members.

Other items that are particularly worth mentioning are:

The Chattenden/Lodge Hill redevelopment projects. These have been affected by the site being classified as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and we have very recently heard that the proposal has been "called-in" for a Ministerial review.

Shornemead crossing. The Society recently heard that Kent County Council have rejected the application by Shorne Parish Council to have the crossing officially recorded as a Right of Way, which local residents believe it already to be. A formal appeal has been submitted.

"Stoke Harbour" concept housing proposal. The charity Shelter submitted an entry to a competition (they won a runner-up prize) that discussed a possible housing development of 15,000-60,000 homes to start around Hoo/Stoke saltings then spread inland. While not a genuine plan it is unfortunately the kind of idea that developers may pick up and try to take further forward. There were other competition entries also for other areas on the Peninsula.

On lighter matters:

The Society was active at several local exhibitions, fetes and fairs over the summer and will be holding its annual Barn Dance later in the year.

Susan Lindley
Committee Member
Dickens Country Protection Society

Northfleet and District Probus Club



Chairman Jim Hamilton, with our President, Alan Hendrson right, congratulating him at the AGM.

The Northfleet & District Probus Club meet at Shorne Village Hall, Shorne every other Tuesday morning from 10.00hrs until 12.00mid day. The membership comprises of retired or partially retired Professional or Businessmen aged of 60 years or over, hence the name PROfessional and BUSInessmen. The club has 64 members which includes two Honorary Members. An Honorary Member is selected by the Committee in appreciation of the many years of dedicated work for the good of the Club. He is awarded the certificate at the Annual General Meeting and is free from paying his annual subscription.

The Northfleet & District PROBUS Club is currently investigating ways of recruiting members in to the club to replace those who, for various reasons are now unable to attend. The drive for new members has been reasonably successful, we have gained five new members, but unfortunately, this gain has been offset slightly with the loss of four members through death. As in every case when any of our members "Pass Away", there always is a strong contingent of Probus Members led by the President and Chairman present at the funeral.

The Annual Membership Fee and the £2 per meeting remains unaltered. All members are expected to wear the Club tie at the meetings. They are encouraged to purchase a name badge, this we find makes it easier for other members to know to whom they are speaking.

Each July the Club holds an Annual General Meeting and appoints a new President and Chairman and the members of the club select the Committee for the ensuing year. The President this year is Mr. Alan HENDERSON and the Chairman is Mr. Jim HENDERSON.

The Club holds four Luncheons during the year for the members and their Wives/partners, and are very well attended.

The Speaker Secretary, Mr Mike FITZSIMONS, arranges for a wide range of interesting speakers covering all subjects and once a year we have a morning especially for our ladies. For the ladies we try to arrange a special speaker, this year the speaker was Mr. Jonathan FRANKLIN who presented a talk on "The last Dornier".

The club has a Social Team who try to arrange some day trips, due to lack of support, trips are limited. The team still arranges an off peak five day break. This year, 12 members of the Probus Club had a five day break from 16th to 20th, March at Tenby, Wales the weather was excellent for the whole week.

The Club has an Almoner, Mr Colin FOOKS, who looks after the welfare of our members, he also doubles as our PR man getting to grips with the local press, and making good use of the Shorne Village Hall Web Site which is a great advantage to the users of the hall, and to the public in general.

A.J.O. Weller
Secretary

Shorne Church of England Primary School

Shorne Church of England Primary School has had another enjoyable and successful year.

There have been some exciting changes made by the school this year. In December 2014 the school converted to academy status in partnership with St George's Secondary School in Gravesend and St Botolph's Primary School in Northfleet, to form a multi academy trust called Aletheia. We all share the same ethos, as we are all Anglican, Church of England Schools and we will be working collaboratively to raise standards across the schools. We will not be changing the name of our school and we will not be expanding our intake. Working with other schools in this formal way means that we can share our expertise and benefit from economies of scale with service providers and resources.



Year 5 children on BBC Radio Kent

In September we completed the refurbishment of our

computer suite and in February we opened a new facility for therapeutic play. Both of these were possible thanks to major financial contributions from FOSS.

There were exciting trips organised for the children, such as, a sleep over in the Natural History Museum

and residential at Swattenden and the New Forest. One class were invited to the Sky News studios and got to experience different roles when they filmed their own news report about endangered animals. Other trips have included, the Arethusa Venture Centre, Chatham Dockyard, the Museum of Kent Life and Wildwood Park. In January, three children were invited to the BBC Radio Kent studios and took part in a 'live' interview with Julia George to review the book 'Prankenstein'. The author of the book Andy Seed, was at another radio station and he was able to link up with the children to answer their questions about the book. The whole school listened to the broadcast on the radio.

Participation in sporting events remained high on our agenda and we took part in many festivals and tournaments. We qualified to represent Gravesham at the Kent School Games at hockey and tag rugby and our school football team won the Sullivan Shield.

The School Choir were invited to sing Carols at the Shorne and Thong WI Christmas lunch and returned in the summer to sing a selection of songs from their forthcoming medieval production of 'What a Knight!'

In June our Eco Committee were invited to Cobham Hall School to find out about Bee Keeping. They enjoyed wearing the white suits and masks and eating the honey!

We continue to look for opportunities to take part in community events in the Parish to broaden our experiences and learn new skills and thank all those who have been part of our learning journey this year.

Caroline Conroy
Headteacher
Shorne Church of England Primary School

Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]

The team of parent and friend volunteers from our school community have had another successful year of fundraising. FOSS aim to hold a variety of events throughout the year so that every family can find something that will appeal to their interests.

Yet again we joined forces with our friends at Cobham Hall, holding the ever-popular Candlelit Ball. It's lovely to see so many friendly faces from Shorne and Cobham villages at the ball and it is extremely profitable for both schools as well as immensely enjoyable!

The children always look forward to the Easter Egg hunt - which is always supported with a cake sale, that sells out in minutes! A great way to welcome Spring before we realise the Summer Fete is soon upon us and we need to get planning! The Fete our biggest event each year, and we are always grateful to the Village Hall Management Committee and the Doctor's Surgery for their support with overflow car parking.

As well as school discos, cinema evenings, family BBQs, Krispy Kreme Donut sales and so much more, there is always something planned for the school children to enjoy.



Children enjoying the Summer Fete

FOSS regularly meet with the School Leadership team to discuss how the funds raised could best

be spent. We are very proud to report that this year we completely refurbished the Computer Suite with furniture and upgraded the computers. Furthermore, the school were trying to find a new facility for children to have therapeutic play. FOSS rose to the challenge and a brand new garden office, known as the 'Cabin', has been installed at the front of the school and is already proving very beneficial.

Finally, our 2015 fete will soon be here. We welcome all of you to come along and enjoy what we hope will be a sunny afternoon, on Saturday 27th June 2015 from 11.45am.

Kaye Bettey
Friends of Shorne School

Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

As usual it has been a very busy year for the dancing school.

In the September to December term 2014 we had Royal Academy of Dance Ballet examinations, plus School Assessments, all candidates I am pleased to say passed with excellent results.

We also now have in Gravesend on a Monday evening a flourishing Adults exercise and dance class where participants can exercise safely within their own capabilities and enjoy learning a simple dance routine at the end of each class. This class is in addition to our Adult tap dance class on a Thursday evening.

In December we organised our usual Christmas theatre trip for our older groups, which was to see 'Cats' at the Palladium, whilst our younger pupils enjoyed their traditional Christmas party. The end of term saw our senior students enjoying our annual Christmas meals together.

The summer term will again be particularly busy, as in May we have I.S.T.D. Modern and Tap examinations and in late June we have R.A.D. Ballet examinations. We also have school Assessments this term.

In the summer term we will be holding our 'Open Days' once again. Our open days give parents the chance to come into the school and watch their children's classes so that they can see the progress the children are making and also view the syllabus content of each particular genre and the standards we have to achieve for the examining boards.

In November this year we are producing our school show at the Woodville Halls in Gravesend. This is to be a 2 night performance and work for this will begin during next term.

Sheila Theobald
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

Shorne Village Pre-school

Summer Term 2014

The summer term was a busy time and the children really enjoyed their outside play during this period. We had a lovely sunny day in July for our annual Teddy Bears Picnic at Shorne Country Park. Staff, Mums and Dads and children all enjoyed a picnic with fun and games in the woods and in the adventure playground. At the end of July we had a leavers assembly, and said goodbye to all of our children leaving us for 'big school'.

Autumn Term 2014

We welcomed in nearly 40 new children and families to the Pre-school at the start of the term. We opened a Tuesday morning session and it has proved to be very popular.

At xmas the children made turtles and snowmen decorations to put on a Xmas tree to be displayed in the church. What a lovely display it was with the whole community taking part.

We had a wonderful xmas party and the children really enjoyed our Santa's Grotto filled with lots of sparkly lights and with a visit from the man himself with presents for everyone.

Spring Term 2015

The children planted sunflower seeds ready for planting later in the year around the carpark. We celebrated World Book Day and Red Nose Day and with many more events and activities during the term.

Jenny Bennett

Shorne Village Pre-school

Shorne Village Hall

The maintenance programme for the hall has continued in 2014. The roof was inspected and replacement tiles fitted as was a new hopper to the downpipe at the front of the building and repairs made to the leaking guttering to the north side of the building. The wooden soffits and lintels to the roof were also painted with preservative. Strip lighting in the kitchen was found to be in a dangerous condition and needed replacement. The lighting in the main hall had also been repaired.



Main entrance Shorne Village Hall

The Appliance Service Agreement with L W Burt for the heating fan convectors and cooker expired in September 2014 and a quotation from Cube Plumbing & Heating Ltd resulted in them being selected as favoured contractor for a one year period.

The committee has again been very supportive with their help over the year. Special thanks must be given to Ali Meherali, Mike Fitzsimons and Mick Carlill for the amount of time and effort which they have put in at the hall to ensure that we are able to operate for the benefit of the

public. There have been occasions when things have not run as smoothly as I would like and it has been very frustrating for me as well as the users of the hall waiting for parts to arrive from abroad for fitting to the boiler. I am very grateful to those organisations who appreciated our position and were patient.

There have been some difficulties with users of the hall clashing with the public over use of the car park. Booked events at the hall have priority use of the car park and we hope that the public have become more aware of this through notices displayed by users at the time of their booked function. The hall is now more popular than it has been for some years and consequently there is an increasing number of vehicles wishing to use the facility of the car park.

I would like to thank all those who have given their support to the various fund raising events over the year held to benefit the hall such as the Take That Experience in November 2014 and the Quiz in February 2015. Giving your help towards the fund raising events ensures that the charges for the hall are kept to an absolute minimum.



Cutting the cake at wedding reception

My thanks also to my Committee members, Andrea Butcher our Booking Secretary, Helen and Peter Lee and my Treasurer for their efforts over the past 12 months.

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TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2014

In 2014 a gradual improvement in the economy of the country was reflected in an increase in bookings for the hall. Word of mouth and the additional publicity provided by the village hall website together with a Facebook page have all been important contributory factors in selling the benefits of a first class village hall to the public. Additionally, the web pages of various organisations which were used and updated in 2013 to publicise the benefits of the hall for specific events are now producing further bookings on a regular basis. The hiring of



"The Take That Experience"

the hall by Slimming World and NWK Craft Fair has also helped towards producing a small profit for the hall for 2014. This is the first such profit since the recession began in 2009.

Last year a wide variety of uses were made of the hall including Quiz nights, Murder Mystery events and adult parties, although children's parties still remain the favourite with as many as 12 a month taking place. After allowing for costs an income of over £500 was derived from advertisers to the website over the year. The website itself is now chalking up 400 to 500 hits per month and has been upgraded to take into account that users of modern

technology live online and run their social world accordingly. They need to be able to see their choices of venue in the easiest possible way and without too much effort on their part.

In November 2014 performed at the hall once more and their attendance together with proceeds from the in-house raffle produced a profit of £490. This event was held at popular request, was very enjoyable and well attended by some 100 persons.

Caring for a building which is nearly 40 years old requires a programme of consistent ongoing maintenance and invariably unforeseen contingencies arise which are outside the anticipated budget. In 2014 as an example two new fire doors in the main hall had to be made as accidental damage sustained by hirers revealed that the doors themselves were in a poor condition and needed immediate replacement.

It is with some satisfaction and positive resolve that we can look forward to another year at the hall believing that we are on the correct path towards maintaining its viability in the community.

Gloria Ashby
Chairperson
Shorne Village Hall

Shorne Local History Group

This group meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm beginning in October and finishing in April. New members are very welcome. Each year we try to ensure that our programme of talks covers a wide variety of subject matter that will appeal to the community and last year was no exception.

October 2014 - How Clean is your House?

Following the History Group AGM we had a completely different sort of lecture from Gary Enstone. As a conservation expert with the National Trust based at Batemans he described the techniques used by the Trust in coping with damage caused by dust, humidity, light and insects to their property objects. The procedure used in putting houses to bed for the winter was also discussed.

November 2014 - The Revolting English

We may think of ourselves as a calm and tolerant people but Maureen Clayton shattered this image in describing events that have induced the English to band together on occasions to protest about poverty, male and female suffrage and industrial disputes. Kent has always been recognised as a county that will take action more quickly than others. Maureen's talk covered the period from the 1381 Peasants' Revolt up to the Women's Suffrage Movement and the industrial disputes of the early 20th century.

December 2014 - The Origin and History of Nursery Rhymes

This was a delightful lecture on the origins of some nursery rhymes going back some hundreds of years. Dr John Reuter explained the hidden meanings of many of the rhymes based upon political agendas or people in public life.

January 2015 - A Royal Interlude and the Traditions of Royal Maundy

Our speaker, Peter Hartley from Cobham, was on the staff of the Royal Household until his retirement and is still involved in the organisation of the Royal Maundy services. As well as telling us about the Royal Household he outlined the history of the Maundy ceremony and its organisation. Samples of the Maundy money were shown.

February 2015 - Hospitals and Almshouses

In his talk David Carder examined the origins and development of medieval hospitals and their successors the almshouses giving examples from Kent. By 1400 there were about 700 in England and Wales and many are still in use.

March 2015 - The Medway Queen

An illustrative and moving account of the Medway Queen as a paddle steamer was given by Mark Bathurst and his wife with special emphasis upon the role of the ship in the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk during World War 2.

April 2015 - The Darenth Hospitals

Francine Payne related the history of three hospitals. Darenth Park started as a home and training establishment for children then called "imbeciles" from the London boroughs. So they did not have to return to a general asylum at 16 an asylum for adults was built next door. These establishments pioneered more enlightened treatment for those born with mental disabilities. Mabledon and Southern hospitals were built in the 1880s and 1890s. They were for people with infectious diseases but developed other uses. Mabledon ended up accommodating former Polish soldiers and airmen who had developed mental problems and the Southern became the second largest general hospital in the country with around 2,000 beds.

Leanne Hornby
Shorne Local History Group

STAGES

Stages have had another successful year with our members enjoying our varied selection of days and evenings out.

During 2014 we held 62 events these included 11 members meetings in Shorne Village Hall with either speakers or social events with cream teas or cheese and wine.

13 plays and musical theatre visits 11 concerts, 8 restaurant meals, 8 visits to stately homes, museums and art galleries, 8 various days out, poppies at Tower of London, horse racing, city and village tours, 1 quiz night, a holiday on the Marco Polo cruise ship, and a Christmas dinner and dance.

All of our events are managed by one of our hard working committee members, who attend the monthly members meetings to take bookings for the events we have on offer.

We also hold a committee meeting each month to discuss future events and previously held ones.

We have already started 2015 with many more events of the above type and are planing many more throughout the year. For membership enquiries to e-mail to: stagesofshorne@gmail.com

John Grace

STAGES

Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

At our AGM in May 2014 Julie Aspinall was voted in as President and Maggie Harris and Catrin Board Joint Secretaries. Ros Barden became Treasurer. Kitty Downs, Sheila Bailey, Betty Lennard, Beryl Wharton, Anita Bridger and Sylvia Pettman were voted in as committee members. Beryl Wharton became Vice President.

Our Strawberry Tea in the Village Hall was very well attended and we all enjoyed the entertainment provided by Shorne School choir.

We ventured to the Rose and Crown for a Ploughman's Lunch for our informal August meeting .

In September we hosted the District Conference and were presented with trophies for darts, whist and the pancake race.

In November we held a Coffee morning at the Village hall and raised approximately £400 of much needed funds.

We enjoyed at delicious Christmas Lunch in the Village hall and were once again entertained by the school choir.

We participated in the Spectacle of Christmas Trees held in Shorne Church. A tree was kindly donated and decorations made. Our tree took pride of place in The Randall Chapel.

We have enjoyed a varied range of speakers this year.

We have continued to knit for the Special Care Baby Unit at Darent Valley Hospital and also for the elderly.

Shorne WI faces an uncertain future. We are not attracting new membership in the quantity that ensures future people come forward for official positions of our Institute.

The committee would be very grateful for any suggestions you may have for ensuring the continuity of Shorne and Thong WI.

Julie Aspinall
President
Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

Shorne Woods Country Park

The park has seen record numbers of visitors over Christmas, Easter and on the weekends which has helped the park cover 100% of its running costs this year for the first time.

Volunteers made a massive contribution to the management of the park with archaeological and countryside volunteers contributing over 10,500 hours through the year. The park could not be managed without their help and support. Countryside volunteers meet on Tuesdays if anyone is interested in helping out at the park.

4338 schoolchildren have taken part in education programmes at the park in 2014/2015, this is a record number for the park.

Over the last year 1.5km of paths in Brewers Wood were surfaced to allow all year access. This HLF funded project has made the woodland much more accessible and the tracks are also well used by the woodland wildlife. In addition we have widened the woodland rides and linked them to the Randall Wood rides using a forest mulcher to

create the grass and herb layer that wildlife needs to thrive. 1 hectare of coppicing was carried out and already this is full of bluebells and a stoat was spotted playing in the deadwood stacks. All coppiced wood is sold as firewood or kindling from the visitor centre or used to heat the visitor centre in the biomass boiler.



Shorne Woods Country Park

The Knoll/Randall Heath was grazed with cattle for the first time in over 100 years in summer 2014. The cattle did an excellent job crushing bracken and grazing off the grass. This area of the park is the rarest habitat called acid grassland and the cattle's efforts meant only a tiny area had to be cut with the tractor and flail this year.

The amenity block that opened last year is now also an ice cream parlour selling Ice Cream cones and on weekends and through the summer the stone baked pizza oven will be firing up to offer a more unusual country park picnic option.

The park won a Gold award and group winner in the South and South East in Bloom awards and retained its Green Flag Award for the seventh consecutive year.

If you have any questions regarding the park please call 03000 414747

Tim Bell
Head Ranger
North Kent Area team
Shorne Woods Country Park

1st Shorne Scout Group

The Group continues to follow a highly active and diverse programme in all three sections to 60 young persons with one third of the current membership being girls. All sections are currently fully

subscribed. The leadership team has been well supported by a number of parents. Without their valuable assistance, we could not offer the diverse sectional programmes, teaching skills and enabling our members to have fun. We continue to have the challenge of finding new adults to join our highly committed leadership team and would be pleased to hear from any adult interested in assisting with the Group.



Scout Group with the Mayor and Mayoress

the history of Gravesham. They visited the local police station followed by a visit from our PCSO talking about personal safety. Another outing to Cobtree Manor Park in Maidstone was lots of fun. Activities at the Hut included a talk by the RNLI on water safety, completing challenge badges on fitness, animal friendship with hens and reptiles (including visit to Pets at Home), space and communications. Higham Beavers joined the colony for Halloween as part of the friendship badge and they also had a sleepover at the Hut (a first for many!). The Beavers and Cubs had a chef cookery class during the Easter holidays, kindly hosted by the Toby Carvery in Gravesend.

The cubs at Shorne had another busy and adventurous year. They camped at Buckmore Park, Hopehill and at the Scout Hut. Activities have included tobogganing, cycling, canoeing, archery, climbing and the cubs favourite – laser tag. They visited Howletts Zoo, the Imperial War Museum, attended a Panto in Maidstone, and watched the Scout's puppet shows. District events included a treasure hunt around Gravesend, making and racing block cars, five-a-side football and a Scientist Badge day. At weekly meetings they have played conkers, made stick puppets, learnt first aid, practiced tent pitching and explored Shorne on a communicators trail, as well as chasing the Easter Bunny through Shorne Country Park. The cubs have worked for their Naturalist, Athletics, Road Safety, Swimmer, DIY, Map Reader and Water Activities badges as well as their Creative and Outdoor Challenges.



Cubs gaining their Map Reader Badges

The Scouts again won the prestigious District JP Bond Camping and Cooking Trophy for the second year in a row, a great achievement for the 6 scouts in the team given the stiff competition. They had a fantastic summer camp at Tolmers Activity Centre near Cheshunt enjoying a wide range of activities from life-size table football, day hikes and water slides plus mixing with scouts from all over the UK and Europe. They spent the winter term getting creative with shadow puppet theatres with final performances given to the Cubs. More basic skill learning included sessions on map reading and navigation. The scouts nearly enjoyed a night out in bivouac shelters but they decided at 4am that it was time to bail out to warmer conditions! An evening of Karate was enjoyed by all especially the sparring when the scouts got to practice on the punch bags held by leaders! Some excellent menu planning to a budget, followed by shopping for the items and cooking on wood fires, was undertaken by 18 scouts in March. They all successfully obtained the Camp Masterchef badges.

Some of the older scouts travelled up to the Lake District over Easter to enjoy hill-walking over the fells. The scouts are looking forward to climbing, dinghy sailing and a Summer Camp in the New Forest.

Chris Zgoda
Group Scout Leader
1st Shorne Scout Group

Early Retirement Club

The Early Retirement Club has continued to meet at Shorne Village Hall, on a fortnightly basis, over the past year. Our membership has remained fairly constant over this period, however an influx of new members would be very welcome. Anyone interested in joining or attending a meeting as a guest, please contact our Membership Secretary, Mr Jim Pearce (01474 355816)

We have been both entertained and educated, by visiting speakers, covering a wide range of subjects. Local history is always a popular subject, but we have also had a number of talks ranging from much further afield. A recent highlight was a talk by the former Chairman of the engineering company that owned the floating crane used to raise the "Mary Rose". The less well known background details of the operation, were of great interest. Our Speakers Secretary is kept very busy trying to find affordable speakers with new material.

Despite the fact that we put out notices to deter non members from using the car park on our meeting days, we are often asked to move cars during our meetings, because someone visiting the shops, school or church have found themselves to be trapped at the back of the car park. This is a great inconvenience, local users please note!

Don Wiltshire
Chairman Early Retirement Club

Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club

Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club meet every Wednesday Evening between 7p.m. – 10p.m. for a "roll-up". We are a very friendly club and new members are welcome. No equipment is needed as everything is provided to have-a-go.



Short Mat Bowls in the Village Hall

We hold social events such as our Annual Dinner held in the spring and Christmas festivities. We also have our home & away match against Cobham Golf Club followed by an evening meal.

This year we are celebrating our 30th Anniversary and are holding our Annual Dinner & Dance and Presentation on 24th October 2015 in the Village Hall.

Internal competitions are held within the club and we also take part in external competitions. This year we competed in the Maidstone & District Short Mat Bowls Triples League and came 2nd in Division 2 just missing promotion. Bill Burchell, Eddie Holden & Linda Newton made the finals of Kent Triples but narrowly lost to the eventual winners.

People and Organisations contributing to this Report.

County Councillor for Shorne	Bryan Sweetland	07976 309171
Cottage Garden Society	Mr D Baker	01634 710169
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing	Ms Sheila Theobald	01474 534659
Dickens Country Protection Society	Mrs Pat Lippiatt	01322 275389
Early Retirement Club	Mr P Mansfield	01634 717823
Shorne Flower Arrangers	Mrs Linda Hutcheon	01634 325540
Friends of Shorne School	Ms Lisa Sewell	01474 740538
Shorne History Group	Mrs L Hornby	01474 822272
Shorne Pre Shcool	Mrs J Bennett	01474 357872
Probus of Northfleet	Mr A Weller	01474 560230
Shorne ARA	Mrs M Horsham	01474 363285.
Shorne Wood Country Park	Mr Tim Bell	01474 823800
Shorne Football Club	Mr D Cater	01474 822129
Shorne School	Miss C Conroy	01474 822312
Shorne Scouts	Mr Chris Zgoda	01474 815331
Short Mat Bowls	Mr Dave Coppock	01474 322164
STAGES	Mr R A Moore	01474 823384
Women's Institute	Julie Aspinall	01474 825046
Shorne Village Hall	Mrs G Ashby	01474 822874

Shorne Parish Council 2015

Chairman: Robin Theobald	01474 823674	robin.theobald@btinternet.com
Vice Chairman: John Bugg	01474 823642	jrbugg@hotmail.com
Members		
Russell Cooper	01474 823377	russell.cooper1@btinternet.com
David Hart	01474 352481	hart485@btinternet.com
George Dent	01474 334095	gdent1@virginmedia.com
Susan Lindley	01474 823179	susan.bragman@btinternet.com
Bob Lane	01474 822680	bob.lane@gmx.co.uk
Clerk		
Theresa Martin	01474 320824	shorne.parish@yahoo.co.uk

The date of the next **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** is **Thursday 12 May 2016** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All village organisations are most welcome to present their annual report at this meeting. All reports will form the basis of contributions to the Annual Parish Report for 2016. Copy of more than 250 words in length may be edited to fit available space.

Other information on Parish Council matters

Monthly reports on Parish Council issues feature every month in the Parish Council Matters page of the Shorne Parish Magazine