

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2013



Shorne's beautiful countryside above, leading northwards to the Thames. We will fight against its desecration by those who wish, regardless of the environmental consequences, to concrete it over for the sake of a new and unnecessary bridge and linked roads.

Chairman's Report

It has been quite a year for the whole country, with the Diamond Jubilee and the wonderful spectacle provided in the summer Olympics. The country needed the celebrations more than ever to lift us, all but briefly, out of the gloom of recession. Central Government cuts have dominated the headlines away from these celebrations and at County, Borough and Parish Council levels we have had to make major adjustments. More strain is always felt the further down the food chain in which you are placed. Our Parish Council has been no different. As Brian Wilkinson will allude to in his report on Footpaths, Properties and Greens, we have had to find extra funding for maintenance and provision previously supplied by our colleagues in the Gravesham Borough and Kent County Councils. That being said, I have been very pleased with some of the changes, especially in relation to the maintenance of highways, where there have been much better response times and greatly improved quality of performance. More than in previous years, last winter was long and difficult, but the management by KCC, with the usual prompts and reminders from us, did much better than in previous hard winters.

We will be facing down any threat that an option for a new Thames crossing located to the East of Gravesend, with a link road running close to Shorne Village and right through the middle of Shorne Woods, would present to our environment and way of life. This option C, which has been one of three presented by the Government for consultation this summer, has been fiercely opposed by the Parish Council. More than 150 parishioners packed into Shorne Village Hall in June this year to hear and discuss the parish's response. We are grateful for the interest and passion shown by parishioners who we believe have responded to the consultation in large numbers. We await the Government's response in October I would not rule out us having to consult and rally our parishioners further to fight this threat in the coming year.

We will also continue to pay close attention to any continuing 'pie in the sky' plans for a Hub airport in the Thames Estuary.

The Council has worked hard to complete two major projects this year. If you haven't yet been down to visit the newly cleared land we have acquired at Crabbles Bottom, next to Bowesden Lane, please take the opportunity to visit this ancient woodland and orchard on the edge of our boundary. The extension of the footway in Forge Lane is proving to be highly beneficial, and I would like once again to thank the generosity of Hilary Shove, my fellow Councillor, who gifted the village some of her land for this purpose. We are also grateful to the late Mike Snelling for his Kent County Council grant fund allocation without which this would not have been possible.

The sudden death last year of Mike Snelling, the parish's KCC representative, has been felt throughout Kent and our thoughts are with his family who miss him terribly. It is fair to say that a lot of politics happens behind closed doors in stuffy committee meetings and debates, but Mike seemed to bring a respect to politics with his tireless hard work, especially in Gravesham. And here in Shorne, the Parish Council will miss his support which had been ever present for two decades.

I mentioned last year that I and the Parish Council will always try and protect our village way of life and our beautiful surroundings from the scourge of unwanted development. We seem to have been successful in stopping some of the threat from the Local Development Framework which had highlighted a huge area of our parish's Greenbelt for urban sprawl housing. We do need housing for our village's younger people, however, and perhaps the supply of affordable housing that we as a parish would be more in control of will represent a future opportunity for the Parish Council.

I would personally like to close by thanking all my hard working colleagues on the Parish Council and to our newest Councillors, Roy Dinnis and Russell Cooper, a special thanks for their valued contributions this year. I would like to express a special thank you to my Vice Chairman, Brian Wilkinson, who has had a huge year and worked tirelessly for us all.

I hope to have the honour of working on your behalf in the future and consider it a true privilege to hold this position of trust.

Mark James Brett



**Chairman
Shorne Parish Council**

Council Committee on Planning and Highways

Thanks to John Bugg

Special thanks to my Vice Chairman John Bugg.

Planning Applications

The Parish Council has been consulted on 40 planning applications affecting the parish. The Council registered an objection to four of these applications as follows.

- 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 and an appeal against the refusal was lodged. The Council made representations on the appeal and the appeal was dismissed.
- Warren Farm - there was an appeal against the refusal to allow a change of use of the Warren Farm Apple Store. The Council made representations on the appeal and the appeal was dismissed.
- 25 Coutts Avenue – the Council objected to an application to demolish the bungalow on the site and build two chalet bungalows. The site is on relatively high ground; new two storey dwellings close to the boundaries on each side would have been overbearing. The application was refused. The Council suggested a pair of semi-detached bungalows instead. A new application was made for a pair of semi-detached chalet bungalows. Again the Council objected, because these would still be two storey dwellings.
- Clearways, Shorne Ridgeway – the Council objected to what was considered to be an excessively large extension to the dwelling resulting in the conversion of a bungalow into a house. The plans were scaled down and Gravesham BC were minded to grant consent.

There are some other matters which may be of particular interest as follows.

- Hartshill Nurseries - Some development was proposed at Hartshill Nurseries in Thong Lane (known as the Baylis site). Council members visited the site and raised no objection to the application. Some new buildings were needed to handle artificial turf, the use of which is understood to be on the increase.
- Park Pale Farm – Council members made a visit to Harlex yard at Park Pale Farm. There was a proposal for redevelopment to improve the facilities together with a plan to restore one of the old Barns. The Council considered the application reasonable and did not lodge an objection.
- Warren Farm – Whilst not a planning matter, the Council was concerned to learn of a proposal to permit part of Warren Farm to be used as a caravan park. An approach was made to the Camping and Caravanning Club to use part of the site for up to five caravans or motorised caravans. The Club did not need planning consent. The Council objected to the proposal and after consideration, the Club has decided not to proceed with the application.

Forward Planning

Gravesham Local Plan

The Gravesham Local Development Framework has become a Local Plan which has been submitted to the Secretary of State. This will lead to a public inquiry where objections will be heard. The Council did not make further comments following the most recent round of consultations.

Estuary Airport

The Government has set up an independent commission, under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davies, to identify and recommend options for maintaining the UK's status as a global aviation hub. There are a number of proposals including two new runways at Heathrow.

Lower Thames Crossing

The Chairman has already mentioned the Parish Council's opposition to the Government's option C for a new road-based river crossing in the Lower Thames area. This would entail connecting the M2 with the A13 and M25 in Essex via a roadway which would pass through the heart of the parish of Shorne and across the river via Chalk. This costly option would have a severe environmental impact on the parish, affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and devastating ancient woodlands and protected marshes, as well as bisecting Shorne Country Park. In response to the Government consultation paper the Parish Council has made out a strong case for option A to be adopted - entailing a further bridge crossing at Dartford - on cost, environmental and health grounds.

Highways

We have continued to get good service from KCC including these recent examples.

- Tanyard Hill – The drain outside 'Inis Coillite' was cleared immediately following a meeting with the KCC contractors.
- Forge Lane – Part of the carriageway near Shorne Crossroads has been resurfaced but we still have a flooding problem.
- Shorne Ridgeway – Funding from the Council, matched by support from Kent County Council, has been obtained for the installation of an interactive sign on Shorne Ridgeway. Discussions continue over the proposed siting.
- Hayes Terrace – Chicanes have been marked at both ends of this road in order to reduce the speed of traffic using it.

General

The Council continues to report potholes and blocked gullies as soon as we become aware of them.

Robin Theobald



Chairman
Shorne Parish Council
Planning and Highways Committee

Council Committee on Footpaths, Properties and Greens

Despite the continuing Council cuts, life goes on, with footpaths becoming overgrown, and trees and bushes showing off their new growth. The Parish Council will need to pay for extra maintenance issues connected to our very green countryside. We will always welcome your comments as you walk our many footpaths so we can keep abreast of potential problems.

Crabbles Wood

Maintenance has commenced on our recently acquired piece of land now known as Crabbles Bottom. The existing footpath which runs from Bowesden Lane to Crutches Lane has been re-established and is now user friendly for its walkers. Vehicle access to these woods for maintenance has been resolved by the installation of new timber field gates in both the inner and outer perimeter fences. These sandwich the bridle path which has also been modified to terminate at right angles. The treatment of the ragwort plants will be undertaken as soon as new shoots appear which can then be killed off to contain the spread.

Notice Boards

Two new Notice Boards have been installed in Vigilant Way - by the bus stop - and Michael Gardens - by the play park - to replace those which had become badly weathered over the past years.

Support for Football Teams

The Parish Council has made a contribution towards the cost of upgrading the shower and washroom facilities at the Shorne Recreation Ground to support the ongoing maintenance programme being carried out on behalf of our two football teams who play there.

Playgrounds

Our two playgrounds in Mill Hill Lane and Michael Gardens are still popular locations for the young people of the parish to use. These continue to be inspected weekly.

Village Hall

The problem of the pebbles coming loose in the Village Hall car park surround has been rectified.

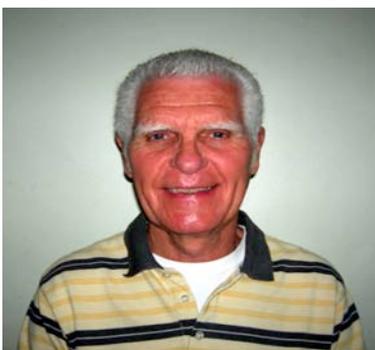
Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping continues to be an ongoing problem especially along Shorne Ifield Road, Shorne Common Rough and Crutches Lane. Your continued vigilance will go a long way to reducing this problem. Fortunately Gravesham Borough Council normally removes waste dumped very promptly. The Police tell us that if the perpetrators can be identified prosecutions will go ahead.

Daffodils

Our thanks must go to one of our parishioners, Leanne Hornby, for planting many hundreds of daffodil bulbs down both sides of the lower part of Tanyard Hill. Perhaps we can invest in more bulbs this autumn to brighten up the grass verges as each new spring arrives.

Brian Wilkinson



**Chairman, Shorne Parish Council
Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee**

County Councillor's Annual Report

Kent County Council has pledged to invest an extra £6.2million of Government money in further increasing the standard of the county's roads. This cash injection of another £4million for the current financial year and £2.2million for 2014/15 was announced by Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin as part of a funding package to extend the life of roads in England. This will reinforce KCC's proactive approach to maintenance which has been backed by the Automobile Association.

Head teachers who have improved their schools and achieved a good or outstanding Ofsted Inspection are being recognised by KCC at celebration events being held in the county. There are 60 schools in Kent, including Shorne Church of England Primary School, which have improved their school's performance from their previous Ofsted inspection or have maintained their good or outstanding grade since September 2012.

It is so important to recognise the hard work and dedication of the head teachers in Kent who have managed to improve their schools and achieved a good inspection outcome from Ofsted. The aim of these events is to encourage head teachers to share their good practice and experience with others. We will then capture these ideas and share them more widely in order to help move all schools in the county forward towards gaining at least a 'good' Ofsted rating.

Our vision is for Kent to be the most forward looking area in England for education and learning so that we are the best place for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve. We want Kent to be a place where families thrive and all children learn and develop well from the earliest years so that they are ready to succeed at school, have excellent foundations for learning and are equipped for achievement in life, no matter what their background. Achieving this ambition is not possible without the hard work of school leaders, governors and school staff, and schools such as Shorne are great examples of what that looks like in practice.

Thousands of Kent residents could benefit from more health care in their own community with less reliance on district hospitals, according to new ideas presented by Kent County Council. The approach would not only be better for patients, but could also save up to £60m of public money each year.

The proposals put forward by KCC would see more of the clinical work that is currently assumed by many to be the role of acute hospitals becoming a mainstream part of what local health practices and community hospitals provide. Community-based nurses and GPs with specialist interests would allow local practitioners to do more – from day surgery to fracture clinics. And a combination of savings and new investment will also help improve prevention and keep more people from needing treatment at all.

KCC's new role in community health is about leadership and accountability – sharing the responsibility for deciding how and where services should be delivered in Kent. This comes as the council also takes on responsibility for public health in the county – delivering information and education about healthy lifestyles and the choices that can help prevent the need for clinical treatment at all.

Bryan Sweetland, KCC Councillor, Gravesham Rural

Dickens Country Protection Society

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

During the past year there have continued to be many newspaper articles about possible major projects in or affecting our area. The various "Thames Estuary Airport" concepts are being broadly examined by the Government appointed Davies Commission Aviation Strategy Review and the Society contributed to evidence submissions and local meetings.

The Society has campaigned strongly against the Government's "Option C" for a new Lower Thames Crossing on the grounds that this would be an environmental disaster in Shorne and the surrounding areas. There would be a massive intrusion into the Green Belt, with the threat of the cherished strategic gap between Gravesend and the Medway Towns being seriously eroded, resulting in developed areas running almost all the way from the latter to the London Metropolitan area. There would also be serious impacts on six Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a highly damaging effect on the local road network. Government Ministers are due to reach a decision this autumn on which of the three Options to adopt. The Society will be ready to resume its campaign to protect our local environment should Option C be announced as the preferred way forward.

Other items which have received particular attention include

- The on-going Chattenden and Lodge Hill redevelopment projects
- The restoration/condition of Upnor pond
- A significant amount of detailed research undertaken to provide evidence to Kent County Council in order to reverse the regrettable action by Network Rail to close the pedestrian crossing point at Queen's Farm.
- A working relationship with Council for the Protection of Rural England [CPRE]
- Particular planning applications locally where the land or properties concerned are outside Village Envelopes such as Chequers Street in Lower Higham.

On lighter matters

- The Society was active at several local exhibitions, fetes and fairs, eg. those of Royal Society for the Protection of Birds [RSPB] at Bromley, Cliffe Woods and St. Helen's Church at Cliffe.
- The Society's annual Barn Dance held at Buckland Farm continues to be very popular. The 2013 event was held on Saturday 27th April
- Updated merchandise is available with a new design on notelets, tea-towels and shopping bags

Northfleet & District Probus Club

The club meets at Shorne Village Hall every other Tuesday morning from 10.00am until 12.00pm. The membership comprises retired or partially retired Professional men or Businessmen aged 60 years and over.

The club has 74 members including two honorary members.

The members pay an annual fee of £10 plus £2 per meeting. For their £2 they enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. All club members are expected to wear the Club tie at the meetings.

The Speaker Secretary arranges a wide range of interesting speakers covering all subjects. Once a year we have a morning especially for our ladies for whom we try to arrange a special speaker. This year our guest was Mr Martyn Harrison who presented "Jubilee at the Music Halls" singing, with a very fine voice, well known songs from the music hall era. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

The club has a Social Team which arranges day trips and an off peak five day break. This year it was at Weston Super Mare, Somerset, which the members enjoyed apart from the cold wind which persisted for the whole week.

The club also holds four luncheons a year for the members and their wives and partners.

Shorne Active Retirement Association (ShornAra)

For more than 12 years ShornAra has played an important part in enhancing the lives of many retired residents in this area.

We have continued to offer a wide range of physical activities involving groups such as Ten Pin Bowling, Short Mat Bowls, Tea Dances and Walking.

The Ten Pin Bowling group meets twice monthly and has more than 30 keen bowlers thoroughly enjoying this activity. End of year trophies are awarded annually at a celebratory Christmas lunch.

The Short Mat Bowls group, also with around 30 bowlers, meets weekly. As well as running their own inter group competition they enter two teams in the KentAra Short Mat Bowls competition.

More than 40 dancers take to the floor once a month at our very popular Tea Dances. Over 70 attended the Christmas Special Dance,

We held two excellent Quiz nights during the year which hopefully keeps our brains active too.

We averaged 120 members at our 11 Main Meetings. We had speakers on varied topics including Police Dogs, Zeppelins over Gravesend, Calendar Girls, Murder Investigations, Archaeology, Chickens and Magic. Members have an opportunity at the Meetings to select which events they would like to attend and provide suggestions and ideas for future trips.

Apart from the activities already mentioned the Committee organised 32 other events which included holidays, day trips, meals out and theatre trips.

So, all in all, another very successful year for ShornAra.



ShornAra members enjoying their fortnightly ten pin bowling session at the AMF Bowling Centre, Gravesend

Shorne Church of England Primary School

The year has been an extremely successful one for Shorne Church of England Primary School.

The summer of 2012 was marked by two memorable national events, the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games. The school made sure that the children took part in numerous activities to celebrate these historic occasions. We held a street party for the Diamond Jubilee and thanks to FOSS, the children were presented with a special medal as a keepsake. The Parish Council bought every child a commemorative mug and these were presented to them by the Chair of the Parish Council in a special assembly.

The school took part in many events leading up to the Olympic Games, such as a district torch relay, designing winning flags in a competition relating to the Olympic values and hosting an ex-Olympian swimmer at the school. After a wonderful summer of sport, we are determined to carry on the legacy of the games, through continued participation in sporting and cultural events.

In October we had a full Ofsted inspection and we were all delighted with being graded a GOOD school. Ofsted recognised that the school had effectively improved in all aspects of its work since the last inspection and said that 'pupils make good progress throughout the school from their starting point in reception, so that their attainment in the Key Stage 2 tests is above average.'

In January 2013 we had a church schools' inspection from the Diocese of Rochester. We have worked hard to raise our profile as a church (Anglican) school and this was recognised in the inspection report which stated that 'much positive development has taken place in the three years since the last inspection, with the result that Shorne Church of England Primary School is now an OUTSTANDING Church school with the capacity to improve further.'

Overall, we have had a fantastic year.



Shorne Primary School children enjoying the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at their street party

Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]

FOSS have had a successful and enjoyable fund-raising year. We raised an amazing £12,500 from our Summer Fete, Christmas Bazaar, Candlelit Ball, cakes sales, discos, quiz night and tuck shop.

We held a special event in June last year, the Jubilee Street Party, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The children and teachers dressed up as either a member of 'Royalty Through the Ages' or wore red, white and blue. Each child took home a commemorative medal, which FOSS helped to purchase. As the children enjoyed the event so much, we plan to hold another themed party this year.

FOSS have helped fund various class outings, including a Year 6 trip to see Matilda at the Cambridge Theatre, which was a memorable event for their last year at the school. We also paid towards the upgrade for a Junior Librarian. This is now linked to the internet, so all information on books is upgraded automatically. Eventually, parents will be able to access their child's reading history and see what books are available in the library. This will enable them to assist in their child's choice of reading material.

We now have an exciting new website (<http://fosschool.co.uk>), that will provide the latest information of our events and activities. In the future, an advertising page for local businesses will be added.

FOSS would like to thank everybody in the parish for all their continued help and support. We could not achieve what we do without your enthusiasm.



Shorne School teachers with some of the produce to be sold at the Christmas Bazaar organised by FOSS

Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

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

In November 2012 we produced our show at the Woodville Halls entitled 'In Search of Santa'. All children were included in the performances which were held over two nights. It was a lot of hard work for everyone, both pupils and teachers, but worth it as the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience of performing in a large theatre. It is the policy of our school when we produce shows to support, when possible, a charity connected to children. This time we were able to give a donation to Clic Sargent, a charity which is primarily for children and young people suffering from cancer.

On Friday January 25 some of our senior and junior pupils danced at the Burns Night celebrations held at Shorne Village Hall. The girls enjoyed performing in a cabaret setting and also thoroughly enjoyed the refreshments kindly provided for them by Mrs Gloria Ashby.

This summer term was particularly busy, as in June we had ISTD Modern and Tap examinations and in late June we had RAD Ballet examinations. We also had school Assessments this term.

Toby Robson, a former pupil who commenced training in September 2011 at White Lodge, The Royal Ballet Lower School, continues to do well and appeared in The Nutcracker at the Royal Opera House last Christmas. Sheila was privileged to be invited as his former teacher to attend a day at White Lodge in October 2012 to watch Toby in action in his classes. This was a wonderful experience. Sheila also had the opportunity to watch the more senior students in action in their classes.

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

Shorne Village Pre-School

So what has been happening at pre-school this year

S is for Singing and dancing, learning new Songs and rhymes
H is for Having Happy times, playing with friends in the Home corner
O is for OUTSTANDING provision from OFSTED - Yippee!
R is for Running and Realising fast and slow
N is for Nothing is impossible with a little help from my teachers
E is for Exciting activities and Encouragement to try and discover new things

V is for Very healthy snacks at break times
I is for Independence and Investigating why and how things work
L is for Loving Learning through play
L is for Laughter during the day
A is for Acting out Adventures in clothes from the dressing up box
G is for Great big blocks to make tall towers
E is for Easter Egg hunts and colouring Easter chicks

P is for Painting Pictures of mummy and me
R is for Recognising letters and shapes
E is for Exercising, balancing on beams and jumping through hoops
S is for being a Superhero Saving the world
C is for Celebrating Christmas, Chinese New Year and using Chopsticks
H is for Helping at tidy up time to put away the toys
O is for Outside play finding dinosaurs in the sand tray and jumping in puddles
O is for Opportunities to play with messy gloop and squashy playdough
L is for Looking at books and Loving to Listen to wonderful stories

Quite a busy time we are sure you will agree!

Shorne Village Hall

With the receipt of a £10,000 grant from the Parish Council this year, the hall management has been able to look to the future with greater confidence. This grant has helped secure the hall's future.

In July 2012 the www.shornevillagehall.org website was set up, and this has provided additional income for the use of the hall. The advantage of the website was quickly seen, since not only does it provide local advertisers with publicity at a minimum cost but the website, with plenty of photographs, is used as a selling point to would be users of the hall. The usefulness of this publicity has induced other clubs and organisations associated with the hall to develop their own websites.

The economic refurbishment of the hall continued throughout the year with the replacement of new LDS lights in the foyer and committee room providing a 50% reduction in cost. The general upkeep of the hall has been maintained to ensure that it is one of the best kept halls in Kent.

The refurbishment of the heating system has been completed. For the first quarter we have been able to compare the kwhs used this year as against those last year and the cost thereof. In 2012 the kwhs used for the gas heating were 47,069 at a financial cost of £2664.27 whilst the first quarter for 2013 shows that 42069 kwhs have been used at a cost of £2380.48. Bearing in mind that the winter just past has been very severe the downward figures show the effectiveness of the centralised computer control system in saving costs for the hall.

There has been some increase in our lettings and investments income from £26,348 in 2011 to £28,648 in 2012. In addition, in each year, over £2000 was provided through fund raising which was essential in helping with the refurbishment of the hall.

We would like to thank the clubs and organisations representing the management committee for their work and assistance throughout the year. Special thanks are due to Helen Lee our cleaner who has covered some of the caretaking duties, as well as her own role, and to Andrea Butcher, the booking secretary who has given time and effort towards promoting the hall over and above what is expected.

For the management, it is rewarding to know that there are still sufficient residents in the area who understand the benefit of promoting and using their village community hall.

Shorne Flower Arrangers

2012 was another busy year for Shorne Flower Arrangers, with church flowers, workshops and demonstrations to organise. On Thursday 31st May we held a competition themed around the Queen's Jubilee. This was followed by an open day on the 1st June, with a raffle and plant stall and the sale of teas and coffee with a variety of home-made cakes. All this was to raise funds for the Village Hall. We were disappointed by the local response to it, but still managed to give £400 to the hall. As a club with only 25 members this was a good effort by all concerned.

We ended 2012 with a demonstration by Charles Barnard entitled "White is a Winter's Night", which was much enjoyed by all who saw it, and set us in the mood for Christmas.

We are looking forward to another successful year in 2013.



Shorne Flower Arrangers' depiction of one of Olympic Games premier athletics events

Shorne Local History Group

The group meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm commencing in October and finishing in April. We always welcome new members. Each year we have a wide variety of speakers and last year was no exception:

October 2012: Images of Shorne from the Air

Following the History Group AGM we had an excellent lecture from Andrew Mayfield. Andrew is the archaeologist with Kent County Council and his talk was on "Images of Shorne from the Air". Examples were shown of what could be seen by Light Detection and Ranging [LIDAR] cameras revealing the hidden landscape beneath the trees and exposing former building lines.

November 2012: Gravesend Shops

Sandra Soder (Secretary of the Gravesend Historical Society) showed a variety of old slides of shops that have since disappeared. The audience enjoyed participating in harking back to former times by remembering the shops shown and questioning Sandra about many others long since gone.

December 2012: Christmas Meeting

Roy Winter showed many old pictures of Shorne some of which he could not identify and asked for a response from those present. This talk was followed by wine and mince pies.

January 2013: Medway Cement Industry

Jim Preston talked about the various cement works which only a hundred years ago were located on both sides of the river. Jim has held talks and written extensively on the industrial archaeology of the Medway area.

February 2013: Medieval Chantry to Modern Almshouses

Dr James Gibson, Archivist to the Rochester Bridge Trust, spoke about Cobham College, hidden behind Cobham Church. The College was originally a medieval college for priests but after the reformation was converted to almshouses.

March 2013: Hazards of the Journey: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Middle Ages

Dr Imogen Corrigan explored the reasons why people go on pilgrimages and questioned whether the journey was for a spiritual purpose or simply medieval tourism. Organising pilgrimages and the hazards which travellers faced on the journey were discussed.

April 2013: Reformers & Martyrs in Kent

Kent has had plenty of both - from Thomas Becket to John Fisher, the Lollards and Thomas Wyatt's rebellion. Norman Hopkins has studied religious movements in Kent and covered several characters involved in these organisations.

Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club

The club, which currently consists of 36 members, meets every Wednesday evening for friendly matches. It also competes throughout the year with other clubs in the Maidstone and District Short Mat Triples League.

Once again our activities throughout 2012 included a spring lunch, our trophy presentation dinner in October and friendly matches held twice yearly with Cobham Golf Club. Our usual pre-Christmas gathering including partners was also enjoyed by all.



Short Mat Bowls members in action at one of their busy weekly sessions

Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

In May 2012 a new President, Avril Roots, took over, and Maggie Harris and Julie Aspinall jointly took on the role of Secretary.

Wendy Windiate, our recent President, was the District Representative at the Women's Institute's AGM at the Royal Albert Hall – a wonderful experience for her.

June heralded the Jubilee celebrations. Members prepared and served teas for 60 people at the Shorne Jubilee Fancy Dress Parade. Our annual Strawberry tea took place in a marquee at Dairy Farm, Higham by kind invitation of Valerie Martin's son. This had a Jubilee theme with bunting, table centres and favour bags. Members were asked to write an account of "where I was and what was I doing in 1952 - well most members since there were a few of us who weren't even a twinkle in our parents' eyes then! These accounts are now in the scrapbooks! Despite the rain we managed as usual to have a really enjoyable afternoon.

Our garden party took place in August by kind invitation of Lillian Stewart. Although the weather did defeat us this time we decamped indoors to admire Lillian's garden from afar!

Valerie Martin won the District Press Cup in October for one of her contributions to the Parish Magazine.

In December, we enjoyed a Christmas lunch for 9 members and guests in the Village Hall, the cold weather failing to dampen our spirits. We also attended the District Carol Concert held in Cobham Church.

In January, 113 items knitted by our members were donated to the Special Baby Unit at Darent Valley Hospital.

We have participated in boot fairs and coffee mornings to raise funds. We continue to take part in the District whist and darts tournaments and the annual Pancake Race which this year was held in Cobham. We also still continue to hold monthly craft meetings in the Village Hall to which non-WI members are most welcome to join us. As usual quality tea and cake are available.

We have joined with Chalk WI for visits to Chelsea Barracks, the Bank of England and the Cold War Bunker in Gravesend.

We enjoyed the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes' 95th Anniversary in June for which we have been working on 95 challenges including walking 95 miles, swimming 95 lengths, reading 95 books and knitting 95 blanket squares.

Shorne Woods Country Park

The main achievement at the park this year was the opening of a new toddler play area for our younger visitors. This was in response to customer feedback and has proved very popular. Park staff extended the easy access paths in the play areas to ensure visitors no longer have to wade through mud in the wintertime. At the same time as doing this the areas under the large slide and cradle swings were resurfaced to provide year round play without the mud of previous years.

In conservation work, over one hectare of Sycamore was cut from the park. A further 1.5 hectares of Sweet Chestnut along the woodland ride network was cut in Randall Wood. These areas will be left to regenerate naturally as woodland. The timber from this essential conservation work is then sold as firewood from the visitor centre. These corridors through the woodlands have allowed butterflies such as the White Admiral to move all through the woodlands in the park as opposed to being fragmented in just one area. We have also had regular visits from a buzzard throughout the early spring.

Other new activities available at the park include new 'run England' sponsored run 1-2-3 routes being created. These are way marked routes for runners starting from outside the visitor centre and guide you on a 1,2 or 3km route around the flattest areas of the park. In addition to this every Saturday at 9am we have a 'Park Run' which is a fixed 5km run for people who don't want to run on their own.

We are in the second year of our Lottery funded archaeology project. This project followed on from the original community archaeology project in the Park. We are continuing to make some fascinating discoveries about the Park's prehistoric past and are displaying worked flints from the park in our display cases upstairs.

Volunteers made a massive contribution to the management of the park. The combined total of hours for archaeological volunteers and countryside volunteers for 2012/2013 was 8,018. The park could not be managed without their help and support. If you wish to volunteer please contact the park.

Due to customer demand, the visitor centre managed to get funding for an additional Trampler (multi terrain mobility vehicle). Shorne now has over 400 registered Trampler users.

If you have any questions regarding the park please call 0300 333 6488.

Andrew Mayfield - Community Archaeologist andrew.mayfield@kent.co.uk

Tim Bell - Head Ranger timothy.bell@kent.gov.uk

Clare Collings/Helen Page - Visitor Services Managers shorne.venue@kent.gov.uk



Just two of the various activities being enjoyed by youngsters in the Country Park's new toddler play area

1st Shorne Scout Group

The group continues to flourish, and is full in all three sections with some 60 young members, making it one of the largest groups in Gravesham. This is only possible with the enthusiastic and active leadership team together with the welcome support of a number of parents which enables a diverse and interesting programme to be followed by each section.

Over the past year there have been a number of challenges in maintaining the leadership team, with some key members stepping down due to other commitments, and the need to obtain replacements to ensure the sections can continue to operate. The scout section in particular is still actively seeking another adult to support the Scout Leader. Geoff Busbridge stepped down in July from heading the group. However he is still involved in leading the maintenance of the Hut and grounds. The current Group Scout Leader is Chris Zgoda who has been involved with the group for 15 years.

The group was represented at the Shorne Civic service and attended the Remembrance service in Shorne and also the District St. George's Day Parade in Gravesend.

The beaver section (6-8 years) with an all new leadership team from September, experienced another busy year. Their programme included completing global and friendship challenges and at present they are focussed on fitness with a recent football training evening and hoping for good weather for archery. The vicar and the local PCSO have visited the meetings. Some of the beavers went on a District Beaver trip to Hendon RAF Museum where they completed their air activities badge. Higham Beavers joined the Shorne colony for an Easter party where good fun and lots of egg hunting was had by all!!

It has been another busy year for the 24 cubs (aged 8-10½) in Shorne. They took part in a Jubilee camp at Hopehill, camped at the Hut whilst making block cars and slept over to gain their Astronomer badge. Over the past year they have visited Chatham Dockyard, been locked up in a Police cell, played Pirate Golf, roller skated and been to a panto. On Wednesday nights they celebrated Burns Night, found out about Shelterbox, cooked pancakes and played wide games. The cubs have worked towards their cyclist, athletes, water activities, communicator and Emergency Aid badges (amongst others) with a total of 193 badges awarded in the year.

The scouts (aged 10½-14½) have enjoyed another energetic year. They camped with the group at Jubilee camp in June where the scouts built and painted a giant lantern which was lit as part of a countrywide tribute to the Queen. The troop tried power kiting for the first time and despite low winds had a great day. In fact they liked it so much we went back in the autumn to do it again and also tried buggying. They have enjoyed a variety of sleepovers, raising money for Shelter by sleeping in cardboard boxes on the floor and ice skating as well. The scouts have brushed up on their knife skills with some whittling and carving, learnt map reading, cooking and camping skills as well as proving that scouts can make fire without matches (using fire steels and pistons). A team of four scouts won the Novice District Hike trophy on a two-day competition. In the Kontiki water contest at Leybourne, our traditional raft team came third. Our team of novelty racers didn't sink, but weren't novel enough to win! January brought the Fitness Challenge and a range of activities from kick boxing to Zumba. Eight scouts camped in the cold of February at Winter Camp and one took his skills to the Lake District at Easter along with leaders from the Group and enjoyed some real winter mountaineering. Six scouts are kayaking this year. 19 scouts are looking forward to taking part in the Kent International Jamboree this summer, an action packed camp, which is sure to be amazing.

The group also hosts the District organised Phoenix Explorer Unit (14-18 year olds). Although not directly part of group, they meet at the Hut with an average attendance of ten to twelve. Their key programme is centred around the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme in addition to undertaking a wide range of scouting activities.

New gates and fencing have now been installed at the Hut with the assistance of a grant from the Gravesham Neighbourhood Forum. The programme of refurbishment, replacement and upgrading of the Hut continues.

The group looks forward to another active year and especially the celebration of its 75th Anniversary in 2014.

Shorne Football Clubs

Shorne Higham finished in the bottom half of Division 1 of the North Kent Sunday League having hoped for better things at the start of last season. However we did reach the semi-final of the League Cup losing 2-1 to Guru Nanak despite playing very well. We are hoping to strengthen for next season by signing up two or three new players.

A-Z Sports have now disbanded. We have taken on a new team to play on Sundays, which is currently known as Thamesfleet. This team, previously called Istead FC, achieved enormous success three years ago in the North Kent Sunday League by winning four trophies in one season. This team will now be renamed Shorne, in keeping with their new location. The management team are very passionate about having a well run football club. Their Manager Lee Boyson says "I've been involved in local football for the last 30 years. Shorne Recreational Ground must come at the top for facilities, to have your own pitch and be able to train and play when you want, and to be able to offer home and away supporters refreshments on match days is brilliant and something really worth looking after and improving." Wendy and Nigel from the See Ho have kindly offered to support the team.

Lee is a local businessman who has owned Boyson Butchers in Istead Rise for the last 30 years. He owns a Children's Home in Gravesend for youngsters aged 8 to 17 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home has just received an "Outstanding" rating for quality of care. Under Lee's and a colleague's supervision, the boys from the home have completely repainted the outside of the building, incidentally giving them focus, a will to work and the chance to earn a bit of pocket money. As a result, the clubhouse is looking fantastic at the moment.

The intention next is to improve the facilities and pitch by way of improvement grants and maybe sponsorship. In the meantime £700 has just been spent on de-compacting, re-seeding and fertilising the pitch.

So hopefully with our existing Shorne Higham team and the new Shorne team it's looking good for the coming season and beyond.

Early Retirement Club

It is with much regret that we have to report that our active club membership is at its lowest level ever, at 34. We have held 25 regular fortnightly meetings, and have good quality speakers, but our average turnout has been only 25 to 30 per session. The reasons for this are that some of our older members have passed on, one has resigned and another member, who was our Speaker Secretary, has retired. We have made a great effort to attract new members by advertising and word of mouth but the results have been minimal. Several other Club Chairmen have reported similar problems.

Through lack of interest from members, our summer lunch was cancelled. We did however join up with the League of Friends to hold a Christmas dinner together in Shorne Village Hall.

Excellent meals are provided after each main meeting where the members who stay are able to relax and enjoy a friendly time together. Our continued thanks to Gloria and her team for the meals and service provided.

We hope that following a plan agreed at our AGM for moving the club forward our membership levels will now start to improve. We have always been a relaxed and happy club and we very much wish that we can continue that way into the future.

People & Organisations contributing to this Report in the order shown below

County Councillor for Shorne	Bryan Sweetland	01474 833208
Dickens Country Protection Society	Susan Lindley	01474 823179
Northfleet & District Probus Club	Tony Weller	01474 560230
Shorne Active Retirement Association[ShornAra]	Bryan Smith	01474 357678
Shorne Church of England Primary School	Caroline Conroy	01474 822312
Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]	Lisa Sewell	07969 326411
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing	Sheila Theobald	01474 534659
Shorne Village Pre-School	Jenny Bennett	01474 357872
	Sharon Wightwick	01634 311461
Shorne Village Hall	Gloria Ashby	01474 822874
Shorne Flower Arrangers	Sheila Williams	01474 353405
Shorne Local History Group	Leanne Hornby	01474 822280
Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club	Dave Coppock	01474 322164
Shorne and Thong Women's Institute	Julie Aspinall	01474 825046
Shorne Woods Country Park	Clare Collings	07710 452800
1st Shorne Scout Group	Chris Zgoda	01474 815331
Shorne Football Clubs	Dave Cater	01474 822129
Early Retirement Club	Tony Farnham	01622 753566

Shorne Parish Council 2013

Chairman	Mark Brett	01474 356163	markjbrett@blueyonder.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Brian Wilkinson	01474 536131	brian.wilkinson@blueyonder.co.uk
Members	John Bugg	01474 823642	jrbugg@hotmail.com
	Russell Cooper	01474 823377	russell.cooper1@btinternet.com
	Roy Dinnis	01474 824006	roydinnis@aol.com
	David Hart	01474 352481	hart485@btinternet.com
	John Pooley	01474 822049	barb.and.john@btinternet.com
	Hilary Shove	01474 822937	
Clerk	Robin Theobald	01474 823674	robin.theobald@btinternet.com
	Theresa Martin	01474 320824	shorne.parish@yahoo.co.uk

The date of the next **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** is **Thursday, 15 May 2014** 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 2014. Copy of more than 250 words in length may be edited to fit available space.

Other sources of information on Parish Council matters

Monthly reports on Parish Council activity will in future feature in the Parish Council Matters page of the Shorne Parish Magazine

The Council's website <http://www.shornepc.kentparishes.gov.uk/> also contains regular updates.