

Shorne Parish Council Annual Report 2014



Shorne residents are fortunate to enjoy more than 13 miles of footpaths and bridleways in their parish. With the Kent County Council maintenance budget having been halved over the past two years, the condition of many of these byways is worsening, as the picture above shows of an almost impassable footpath near to Shorne Ifield Road. Over the coming year and beyond Shorne Parish Council will be promoting local task forces of residents in the area to remedy this worsening situation.

Chairman's Report

This has been, for many people, another difficult year financially, with the recession only just beginning to be overtaken by the "green shoots" of recovery. This has happened alongside huge reductions to Borough and County Council budgets which have resulted in many job losses for their staff and cuts to local services. That said, some of these Councils' improvements and efficiencies, especially in Kent County Council's Highways Dept during the last financial year, have resulted in a better service and quicker response to reports about the state of highways, especially to our complaints about potholes.

It has to be said that the major challenge this year, following the Local Development Framework consultation, has been the Government Inspectorate's decision that the recommendation for an additional 4,600 new homes to be built in Gravesham over the next 15 years was unsound because it did not include enough new homes as required by national government policy. This recommendation would have required no incursion into the Green Belt. The Government's estimate was for initially 7,000 new

homes. After further consultation, the figure proposed by Gravesham Borough Council became 6,170, which the Inspector has now endorsed. This reflects the Government's revised migration assumptions. This outcome will inevitably lead to the erosion of our Green Belt or, as Gravesham BC has put it, a realignment of our Green Belt boundaries. This realignment has come about as the result of a reassessment over recent years of Gravesham's net migration levels following the movement of more people than expected to our county. I have never been shy in putting it plainly - some of this migration is as a result of agreements between Kent County Council and Lewisham and Tower Hamlets Councils to house some of these London Boroughs' homeless in this county. This certainly seems to have contributed to the increase in housing numbers proposed by the Inspectorate for Gravesham. I have broached this subject at Borough and County levels. I have also written to our MP and to the Home Office Ministers citing my displeasure at this.

I am conscious of veering into national politics, but I believe it only right to protect our national heritage and the green spaces that we enjoy in Shorne. I will continue to campaign, as will all my fellow Councillors, for the right for our generation and those which follow to breathe unpolluted air and enjoy the open spaces not blighted by unwanted and unnecessary development.

We will also continue to be vigilant in the face of the continuing threat of a new Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend and Boris Johnson's "pie in the sky" plan for a major new international airport in the Thames Estuary.

As Chairman, I would like to thank personally, and on behalf of the full Council and the whole of the Parish, Hilary Shove for her dedication and commitment to us for over 24 years as Parish Councillor and Vice-Chair of our Footpaths Committee. Hilary has just stood down from the Parish Council to pursue other commitments and community work. She will be greatly missed. Hilary very kindly donated land to extend a footway in Forge Lane thereby providing a much needed safer passage for pedestrians, and especially mothers and children walking to and from school. This act was typical of her generosity as was her Parish Council representation on the Board of Governors at Shorne School.

I would also like to offer my thanks and those of all the Parish Council to Brian Wilkinson who has decided to step down as Vice-Chair of the Council and Chair of the Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee. Brian has worked very hard this and every year in these roles, and his commitment and dedication are second to none. Brian, I am pleased to announce, is still committed to staying on the Council. We have all benefited from his expertise and knowledge and we will continue to seek his guidance in the future. His remaining on the Council is in all our best interests.

I would personally like to close by thanking all my hard working colleagues on the Parish Council. Once again my thanks to Brian and Hilary who have 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 continue to hold this position of trust.

Mark James Brett



**Chairman
Shorne Parish Council**

Council Committee on Planning and Highways

Thanks to John Bugg

Thanks to my Vice-Chairman, John Bugg.

Planning Applications

The Parish Council has been consulted on 37 planning applications affecting the parish. The Council registered an objection to seven of the applications.

The following may be matters of particular interest to parishioners.

- 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 BC 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. I am pleased to report judgment was given in favour of the Borough Council.
- Warren Farm – there was a proposal to use a building for bed and breakfast accommodation. The Council objected to this and it was subsequently refused. A proposal was made on behalf of the Caravan Club to use the site for camping. The Council objected on traffic grounds and in part because of the proximity of the site to the Primary School. The Club did not pursue the use of the site. More recently a letter has been circulated in the village proposing to use the building as a Day Nursery. A significant number of local residents have objected to this proposal as have the Village Hall Committee and the Primary School. Local roads are already very busy at school times and the prospect of more traffic is not welcome.

- Park Pale Farm – there was a proposal for industrial use at Park Pale Farm to which the Council objected. Gravesham BC advised that such use was already permitted.
- Chalk Memorial Park – this has received planning consent from Gravesham BC but the decision has not yet been issued. As reported to the special meeting of the Council on 7 November 2003, there is a shortage of burial sites in Gravesham and the demand for cremations has to be met from outside the Borough. The places where such facilities can be located are limited by the water catchment areas and this site was regarded as the best available. We are fortunate that Shorne Churchyard is outside the catchment area. The Health and Safety Executive has expressed some concern regarding the proximity of the proposed development to the two trunk gas mains which run under the site and discussions with the applicants are ongoing.
- The Council has objected to proposals for two large two storey rear extensions in Shorne West. The properties are close together and have small back gardens. In one case the extension would have taken up more than half of the back garden. Gravesham BC has subsequently refused planning consent.
- More recently we objected to a proposal to demolish the existing house at 'Brackenside' in Pear Tree Lane and replace it with a building totally out of character with the area. We also objected to more urbanisation. It was proposed to grub up the front hedge and replace it with a wall. There have been a number of recent changes to the regulations made under the Planning Acts. In general these have not been helpful. The controls on the change of use of agricultural buildings have been relaxed. Large extensions are now permitted to residential property. There has been a loss of local control and the countryside is at risk as a result.

Forward Planning

Gravesham Local Plan

The Gravesham Local Plan had its examination in public in September 2013. The main conclusion reached by the Inspector was that the plan did not provide enough housing land. The plan proposed some 4,800 new homes and the Inspector concluded that some 7,000 should be provided. Gravesham Borough Council have reassessed the need and proposed an increased number to 6,170, which the Inspector has approved. The trends revealed by the most recent census indicate that Gravesham is currently subject to net inward migration.

Gravesham has a number of brown field sites mainly located along the banks of the Thames. Even if all these are built on, there will not be enough land for the number of dwellings planned. All of the so called 'white land' which formed Gravesham's land bank has been allocated including the green wedge of land west of Wrotham Road which was identified by the Inspector for development.

Gravesham's revised interim plan, to cover the next five years, will be followed immediately by the preparation of a fifteen year plan. One of the first actions to be anticipated in the next stage is a review of the Green Belt.

Lower Thames Crossing

On 12 December 2013 the Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin made a statement that the Department had received over 5,700 responses to the consultation and has carefully considered each of them. He announced that the Government was dropping Option B, the Swanscombe Peninsula option. He also stated that the Government is carrying out further work in the light of the consultation feedback to understand the possible impacts on the local areas of the remaining options. This work will also consider improvements to the surrounding routes and look at how the impact on the environment may be mitigated.

Estuary Airports

In May last year the Commons Transport Committee came out in favour of expanding Heathrow. The Airports Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davies published its interim report in December 2013. The Commission favours expansion of Heathrow and Gatwick over an airport in the Thames Estuary. Under pressure from the London Mayor, the Commission has agreed to undertake further examination of the estuary option.

Rural Housing

In October last year a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken on behalf of the Borough Council. The Parish Council has now received copies of the report. The survey identified a total of 17 adults and 3 children having housing needs within the parish. The report needs further analysis and raises a number of issues. The Parish Council is considering its response.

Highways

We continue to report to Kent County Council problems on Shorne's roads

- Tanyard Hill - The drain outside 'Inis Coillite', cleared last year, is again blocked and water is running down the gutter.
- Forge Lane – The large pothole in Forge Lane was repaired promptly after we reported it.
- The interactive sign for Shorne Ridgeway is up and working. Our thanks are due to the County Council - through the late Mike Snelling and Brian Sweetland - for helping us to achieve this.
- Blocked gullies continue to be a problem. It is still taking a long time to get some of these cleared.

- The surfacing in Woodlands Lane still needs attention.
- We continue to have problems with flooding at Shorne Crossroads despite work which has been carried out to improve drainage.
- Street lighting - the County Council are experimenting with switching off street lights to save money and some have been switched off on the Gravesend Road. To date we have not received any adverse comments from residents.

Robin Theobald



**Chairman
Shorne Parish Council
Planning and Highways Committee**

Council Committee on Footpaths, Properties and Greens

Notice Boards

Two notice boards have been installed in the parish to replace those which were becoming badly weathered. These have been sited at the bottom of Marling Way, Shorne West, and on the outside of the wall of the bus shelter at Shorne Crossroads. The Parish Council are grateful to Mr Ron Bardoe, a Shorne parishioner, who used his expertise to make these two boards for us and also saved the Parish Council money.

Fly Tipping

This illegal action is still being carried out by persons unknown creating an unsightly appearance to our countryside. Your continued vigilance is essential if we are to identify the perpetrators. Recently a large amount of fly tipping was deposited on Shorne Common Rough. Fortunately our local scouts volunteered to collect all this refuse for Gravesham Borough Council to take away the following day. Three large chestnut butts have since been installed vertically in the ground to close down this unauthorised entrance to the Rough in the hope that this will avoid a similar occurrence.

Criminal Damage

Several private gardens in the parish were recently vandalised as a result of someone driving a small four wheel drive all terrain vehicle onto the lawns and causing deep off road tyre tracks. Please be watchful and try to identify and report anyone whom you see carrying out such acts, which have now been happened several times over the past five years. The police have been informed.

Voluntary Courses for those who wish to help with vegetation clearance

These courses are being arranged with KCC, with health and safety a foremost issue, for those parishioners prepared to spend a little time helping to keep our footpaths and countryside tidy. Willing participants should contact the Parish Council on 01474 320824 and speak to our Clerk. These courses are expected to last no more than half a day.

Ragwort treatment

Treatment to this toxic plant in some of the lower fields which are part of Crabbles Bottom appears to have been successful in controlling this potentially hazardous plant. Both the bridlepath and footpath, which are the means of traversing Crabbles Bottom, have been cleared for the 2014 season but will need ongoing maintenance. These costs will be borne by the Parish Council.

Brian Wilkinson



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

County Councillor's Annual Report

The last year seems to have flown by and what an eventful year it has been.

Last summer I chaired the Forum meeting on the Lower Thames Crossing. The Department of Transport were present and gave an overview of their plans. They also committed to decide on a route option by last autumn. It has now been decided to wait

and see how far the removal of tolls at the Dartford crossing this autumn will reduce congestion.

The plans for an Estuary Airport are (excuse the pun) still up in the air. Boris Island seems to have been dismissed and the smart money is on an expansion of Heathrow and probably Gatwick airport.

We had more than our fair share of rain earlier this year (the wettest year since records began) which has caused havoc with the county's roads, the worse being the A227 to Meopham and at Sole Street. Kent Highways responded well with pumps and sandbags and fortunately, no properties were damaged. As you would have seen on the news, other parts of Kent were not so lucky. Kent's 'Find and Fix', pothole repair campaign has been given an £8.6million boost by the government after the county council lobbied for funding to repair weather damaged roads.

The County Council budget continues to be reduced and this is the fourth year in a row that we are being asked to do more with less money. Despite this, over the last three years the council tax has not increased. This year however, the council tax will increase by two percent. That equates to around £18 per household per year.

I would like to finish by saying well done to the Parish Council, who work very hard to represent the views of local residents, and they do it extremely well.

Bryan Sweetland
KCC Councillor
Gravesham Rural

Shorne Active Retirement Association (ShornAra)

ShornARA has had a fully packed programme in the past year, providing varied and diverse events for the enjoyment of our members.

Such has been the success of our Short Mat Bowls group which meets weekly that it has been necessary to instigate an additional session following the initial one. This is proving to be very popular and going from strength to strength.



ShornARA members enjoying one of their Short Mat Bowls weekly sessions at Shorne Village Hall.

Our fortnightly Ten Pin Bowling Group has also increased its numbers. Over six new members have joined over the past year. We regularly need six lanes to accommodate all the bowlers aiming for those elusive strikes!

Our Tea Dances continue to be really popular. Over 40 forty dancers take to the floor on the last Thursday of each month.

We have had numerous events and outings throughout the year. For example some of our members visited Bletchley Park, Camden Market and Little Venice, toured Suffolk and enjoyed a wonderful holiday to the Forest of Dean. We organised many shows including Save the Last Dance for Me, Top Hat, Military Wives, Ukulele Orchestra and We'll Meet Again, just to name a few, all of which were well attended. We held two quizzes, went out for lunches and rounded off the year with a delightful Christmas lunch at Mid Kent Golf Club.

We have had interesting speakers at our monthly meetings and also enjoyed social afternoons with cream teas.

ShornARA now has a web site (shornara.org.uk). It is felt that this innovation will not only benefit its existing members, who can instantly keep up to date with our exciting programme of events at the touch of a button, but also entice any prospective members looking to make new friends and enjoy a satisfying active retirement in the area.

Maureen Horsham
Chair
Shorne Active Retirement Association

Dickens Country Protection Society

The Society has been very busy again this year, continuing the basic work of monitoring, and commenting when considered appropriate on 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 -

- The various “Thames Estuary Airport” concepts have been broadly examined by the Government appointed Davies Commission Aviation Strategy Review. The Society contributed to evidence submissions and local meetings. The first report was published just before Christmas and, although fairly negative about the possibilities, the proposal for an estuary airport was regrettably still included in the next part of the review.
- The proposal for there to be a major river crossing East of Gravesend, which would be extremely destructive to our area, is still under consideration by the Department for Transport. DCPS and individual Committee members submitted representations/comments during the consultation. The report on this consultation was also published just before Christmas. The Swanscombe option was removed. The Government has announced that it will consider the impact of removing the tolls this autumn before considering the two remaining options further.

The Society continually keeps all these proposals 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 have received particular attention include -

- The Chattenden / Lodge Hill redevelopment projects. These have been affected by the site being classified as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) but were recently resubmitted.
- The Gravesham Local Development Framework which will put significant pressure for green areas (including Green Belt designated land) to be sacrificed for housing development. In Medway the planners consider there is enough land already designated.
- The Society made objections to a proposal to site a Crematorium in Chalk. This was subsequently approved by Gravesham Council but may be compromised/modified due to a gas pipeline.

- The Society continues to be concerned at the lack of progress to re-open the pedestrian crossing of the railway at Shornemead.

On lighter matters -

- The Society was active at several local exhibitions, fetes and fairs, eg. RSPB at Bromhey, Cliffe Woods and St. Helen's Church at Cliffe.
- The Society's annual Barn Dance, held this year on 26 April at Buckland Farm, continues to be very popular.

Susan Lindley
Committee Member
Dickens Country Protection Society

Northfleet and District Probus Club

The Northfleet & District Probus Club meets at Shorne Village Hall, Shorne every other Tuesday morning from 10am until 12pm midday. The membership comprises retired or partially retired professional men or businessmen aged 60 years or over, hence the name PROfessional and BUSInessmen .

The Northfleet & District Probus Club has 61 members including one honorary member. With membership having dropped slightly in the last year, the club is currently investigating ways of recruiting members to replace those who, for various reasons, are now unable to attend.

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.

Each July the club holds an Annual General Meeting and appoints a new President and Chairman, and the members select the Committee for the ensuing year.

The Speaker Secretary arranges for 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 the speaker was Mr. Paul Harris who presented "History of Seaside Entertainment".

The club has a Social Team which used to arrange day trips, but due to lack of support, no longer does so. The team still arranges an off peak five day break. This year it was to the Isle of Wight, which the members thoroughly enjoyed. In March 2015 there will be a short break holiday in Tenby, Wales.

The club also holds four luncheons a year for the members and their wives and partners, which is thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Tony Weller

Secretary

Shorne Church of England Primary School

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

It has been a relief not to have the pressures of an Ofsted inspection or a Church Schools' Inspection. We have been able to continue to do the things that work well for our children, as well as focus on the aspects that need improvement in order to make the school even better. We are aiming to be an outstanding school at our next inspection, so there is no room for complacency!

I am delighted to say that we were assessed as fulfilling all the requirements we needed to in order to retain our Eco Schools' status. This is a very important aspect of our school identity, as it teaches children to be responsible and caring for the world around them.

Taking children on residential trips is a vital part of our curriculum, because it plays a huge part in fostering independence and building confidence in young people. For many years our oldest children have participated in a five day visit to Avon Tyrrell in Hampshire, where they have taken part in adventurous outdoor activities. We have now started a three day residential trip for our Year 5 children to the Swattenden Centre near Cranbrook. This year, the trip had a particular focus on team building activities and problem solving, most of which took part in mud, due to heavy rain!



Shorne Primary School Year 5 pupils enjoying the mud at the Swattenden Outdoor Centre

In January our Year 4 children had a sleepover at the Natural History Museum .The sight of hundreds of children, including those from other schools, sleeping underneath the dinosaur skeleton in the giant entrance hall of the museum was magic.

We are keen to participate in local community activities through the church or other organisations in and around the parish. This year our school choir sang at the Christingle Service and performed for the Shorne WI in June . We continue to benefit from the excellent outdoor learning opportunities offered by Shorne Country Park, through their Forest Schools' project and archaeological dig.

Participation in a variety of sports has always been high on our agenda. This year we have taken part in many competitions and festivals. Reaching the finals of the Kent School Games in basketball was a major achievement. We have also taken part in football, tag rugby, dodgeball, athletics, netball and, in recognition of Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow this August, a mini Highland Games.

As school budgets become tighter, we are more reliant on fund raising, voluntary contributions and grants. Enormous thanks go to Friends of Shorne School [FOSS] who continue to raise money regularly for the school through a variety of events. This year we also received a donation from a social event held at Shorne Village Hall and we were kindly alerted by a member of the community to bid for a grant to purchase resources for science. This bid was successful and we appreciated the help that we received and continue to receive from the community.

From September 2014 all primary schools will have to follow a new national curriculum. Our aim is to ensure that learning and fun can still go together.

Caroline Conroy
Headteacher
Shorne Church of England Primary School

Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]

FOSS, once again, have had a very enjoyable and productive year. We raised an astounding £4,351. Our main contribution to school funds is for our ICT Suite, which should be completed by the end of this summer. We also contributed to the cost of class trips, a valuable educational resource for our pupils which helps learning come to life. This means that these experiences are available to all children regardless of finances.

We like to incorporate our events where possible to coincide with those that are occurring nationally or internationally. For example, we have had Commonwealth Day this year, where each year group wore the national colours of their nominated countries.

FOSS has continued to fund various class outings, including our annual Year 6 theatre trip, along with subsidising other trips for various year groups. For instance Year 3 have been on an educational trip to Dover Castle and Year 1 to Wildwood to learn about wildlife. FOSS have recently funded some much needed play equipment for our Early Years outdoor area, in line with Ofsted recommendations. We will also be replacing our sports kits for our football and netball teams for when they are representing our school in matches.

As well as our successful cake sales we are now incorporating Krispy Kreme Doughnut sales into our fundraising, an event which always goes down well with parents and teachers alike!

We have organised many other events through to the end of this school year including our glorious summer fete, school disco, fashion show and a school BBQ to welcome our new reception parents to school.

FOSS would like to thank all those in the parish who continue to support and nurture our school. We are proud of our achievements and our school, and we could not achieve our success without your continued support. Thank you!

Caroline Conroy
Trustee
Friends of Shorne School

Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

Once more it has been a very busy year for the dancing school.

The September to December term was particularly hectic as we had four days of examinations with the Royal Academy of Dance, the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing and the International Dance Teachers Association. In total we had 102 examination entrants all of whom, we are pleased to say, were successful.

Just before Christmas our senior girls performed in cabaret at the Brands Hatch Thistle Hotel for the Annual Dinner Dance of the Master Upholsters Association.



Dancers from the Sheila Theobald School who performed at the dinner dance of the Master Upholsterers Association last Christmas

We organised our usual Christmas theatre trip for our older groups, to see Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Meanwhile our younger pupils enjoyed their traditional Christmas party.

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 the The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) Modern and Tap examinations, and in late June we had Royal Academy of Dance [RAD] examinations.

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. I 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. I 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.

Sheila Theobald
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

Shorne Village Pre-school

At Shorne Village Pre-school we believe that childhood is a time for children to explore and make meaning of the world around them. We build a sense of trust and belonging and respect for others. We encourage children to follow their interests within a safe, caring and supportive learning environment developing an eagerness to learn and acquire skills needed for more formal learning later on.

This poem by Anita Schlaht sums up life at Shorne Village Pre-school.

Just Playing

When I'm building towers and castles with my bricks
Please don't say I'm "Just playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play,
About balance, I may be an architect someday.
When I'm getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, cooking dinner, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."
I may be a mummy or a daddy someday.
When you see me up to my elbows in paint,
Or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping playdough,
Please don't say, "He is Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I just might be a teacher someday.
When you see me engrossed in a puzzle
or laughing with my friends at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.

I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.
When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play."
I'm learning to follow directions and see the differences.
I may be a cook someday.
When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body,
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.
When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, "I just played."
Please don't misunderstand me.
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work.
I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

Karen Jarvis
Manager
Shorne Village Pre-school

Shorne Village Hall

With the introduction last year of a Shorne Village Hall website, which was well supported by local advertisers, 2013 also saw the development of a Facebook page for the Hall as another means of self-publicity. Both these forms of advertising have resulted in a widening interest from organisations booking the hall. We now have NWK Craft Fair using the hall once a month for a year and Slimming World also making use of the building every Monday night for the next 12 months. Should their events prove to be a long term success these organisations may well become regular users of the hall and contribute towards the long term viability of our community success.

A constant eye on the maintenance of the building continued during the year, with substantial works carried out to the roof in January, including replacing damaged tiles, re-felting and battening the section of roof above the box gutter behind the kitchen, cleaning gutters and downpipes, and checking all drains and fitting bird combs to the eaves where these were missing. In the middle of the year there was a substantial blockage to both the gents and ladies toilets which had come about through wear and tear over the years and inadequate maintenance. A substantial cost was involved in these works and we have to thank several of our Trustees and volunteers for their help in dealing with these problems. Looking after a sizeable building and ensuring that it is in a pristine condition with reducing income and limited resources is no mean feat. Without the fund raising which takes place by the community the hall would not be in its present state. This year pulling together to keep going has been an important community experience. Most recently, Gravesham Borough Council have provided us

with a grant of £765 towards the cost of redecorating the interior of the building, for which we are most grateful.

We would like to thank the clubs and organisations for their assistance throughout the year. Special thanks to our cleaner Helen Lee, to our booking secretary Andrea Butcher for all her hard work in ensuring that the hall remains a desirable venue, and to Shorne Parish Council for all their help over the past years. And thank you to all the clubs for using our Village Hall.

Gloria Ashby
Chairperson
Shorne Village Hall

Shorne Flower Arrangers

The past year has been a busy and successful year for Shorne Flower Arrangers with competitions, demonstrations and workshops to keep us busy and entertained. In June we were visited by a National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies (NAFAS) National Demonstrator. This proved to be a wonderful evening enjoyed by all those came. In October we had a club dinner organised by our treasurer Marion Healey. All the ladies were presented with a beautiful corsage on arrival, made by our secretary, Jean Cooke. A wonderful evening was had by all. In November we had a demonstration to put us in the mood for Christmas at which we held a silent auction of a hand made quilt made by the sister of one of our Committee members. The money raised by this, plus a donation from our club, went to the Air Ambulance.



One of the winning entries in Shorne Flower Arrangers' annual club competition.

We meet on the last Thursday of the month except in December. Visitors are always welcome to attend the meeting and workshops with an entry cost of £3, which includes tea and biscuits.

Sheila Williams
Chairperson
Shorne Flower Arrangers

Shorne Local History Group

From October to April we listened to speakers talking on a wide variety of subjects. Some of the content matter, like the Northcourt Social History Project and the

Tradescant family of Meopham were very locally based. Other talks on Frosts Freezes and Fairs, the Green Man in English Churches, Hops and Hop Picking, History of Seaside Resorts and the Kaiser's War were more widely based. All the talks were in their own way of considerable interest, well supported by the community and represented an enjoyable way to spend the evening.

Leanne Hornby
Shorne Local History Group

STAGES

Another successful STAGES year has passed during which we celebrated our seventh birthday! We ended the year with 240 members, two up on 2012.

We organised 66 events during 2013, exactly the same as in 2012 – over five events each month!. These included 11 Main Meetings, six London plays or shows, nine concerts, 21 visits to places of interest, seven restaurant visits, eight visits to art galleries and exhibitions and a four day holiday to Paris.

All the events are overseen by a Committee member and our thanks should go to all these selfless souls who also attend a monthly committee meeting as well as manning the tables at the Main Meetings.

Some changes occurred at the top this year with Richard Moore taking over as Chairman and Ali Meherali as vice-Chairman.

John Grace
STAGES

Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

Ssh ----- if you listen very carefully you might just hear the clickety click of knitting needles. This past year has certainly been the Great Knit Off for Shorne and Thong WI. We have knitted over 325 items of baby clothing, which have been donated to the Special Care Baby Unit at Darent Valley Hospital.

At our 2013 AGM Avril Roots was voted in once again as President. Maggie Harris and Julie Aspinall continue to be joint secretaries. Beryl Wharton has retired as Treasurer after eight years. Marjorie Clark, at the grand old age of 93, has decided it is time to take life a little more easily, and has retired from our committee. We thank both Beryl and Marjorie for their tremendous contribution to our continued running of the WI.

The weather has certainly been our friend this year, shining gloriously for our annual Strawberry Tea at the Dairy Farm House, Higham and also for the summer garden party.

As with most organisations, we are struggling to fund monthly speakers, so we all cleared out our unwanted treasures recently and took a stall at a local boot fair. This proved to be a very useful way to raise much wanted funds.

One of our members won the District Pancake race at Istead Rise. Some members have continued to play whist and darts regularly. Two of our ladies, together with others from the Federation, recently cycled at the Cyclopark. How lucky we are to have this facility on the doorstep.

We have enjoyed a variety of speakers this year including Christoph Bull with his very informative "Armchair Guide to Shorne Parish", a representative of The Rochester Bridge Trust who gave a fascinating talk, and Rita Sylvester who gave an amusing talk entitled "A Laugh at True Humorous Verse".

Sadly, our monthly "Krafty Ladies" club has had to cease due to the departure of our President to pastures new.

Visitors are always welcome at our monthly meetings. We have recruited three new members this year bringing our membership to 33. Always room for a few more!

Julie Aspinall
Joint Secretary
Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

Shorne Woods Country Park

The park survived one of the stormiest winters in recent years with flooding and tree damage a common occurrence. Over 100 dangerous trees were removed by park staff.

This year the park successfully gained £130,000 of Heritage Lottery Fund and Forestry Commission grants to purchase four acres of woodland in Brewers Wood and integrate the area into the main park. Over the winter the staff and volunteers have coppiced over 1½ hectares of Sweet Chestnut in the area. This will be used in the biomass boiler to heat the visitor centre. The area will be opened to the public next spring when works are completed.

The ride network is now thriving with grasses and herbs growing all along the edges through the park. This woodland edge habitat is crucial for birds and bats to feed and for butterflies and reptiles to bask in the sunspots. The final section of the 4km network was created in Randall Wood this winter so all the woodland compartments are now connected by wildlife corridors.



This rare Purple Emperor butterfly is the first ever to be recorded at Shorne Woods Country Park.

Volunteers made a massive contribution to the management of the park with archaeological and countryside volunteers contributing over 11,000 hours through the year. The park could not be managed without their help and support.

Nearly 3,000 schoolchildren have taken part in education programmes at the park and the Education team now offer nationally accredited Forest School training and school inset training days.

The oldest play equipment has been upgraded with all the oldest pieces renewed and surfacing replaced where necessary. The new amenity block is now fully opened and this has doubled the number of toilets and provided an additional kiosk.



Freshly coppiced timber in Randall Wood, Shorne Woods. Regular cutting of the trees maintains valuable habitat in which small mammals, flowers and insects can thrive.

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

If you have any questions regarding the park please call 0300 3336488.

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

1st Shorne Scout Group

The group achieved its 75th Anniversary in March. It continues to follow a highly active and diverse programme in all three sections for nearly 60 young persons. The Scout and Cub Sections are currently fully subscribed. The leadership team has been well supported by a number of parents without whose valuable assistance we could not continue to offer the programmes in all of the sections. The group will be losing our Cub-Scout Leader (Akela) Fraser Patrick in September as he takes on a role with Gravesham District Scouts. So we currently have the difficult challenge of finding his replacement in order to keep the section running. We always welcome any volunteers

to help or train for leader roles with any section. Please contact any leader if anyone is at all interested.

After over 15 years of fund raising and hard work, over the past year we have nearly completed the refurbishing of our 60 year-old Scout Hut with the re-cladding and insulation of the end wall, which also included much unexpected structural work. Nearly all this work was undertaken through the scores, if not hundreds, of voluntary hours of skilled hard labour undertaken by our President, former Group Scout Leader Geoff Busbridge, with the assistance of former leader Bob Duebel. Their terrific efforts and sacrifice of time are highly appreciated and provide us with premises which should hold good for at least another 60 years.

The group was represented at the Shorne Civic Service and the Remembrance Service in Shorne Parish Church. It also participated in the District Scout and Guide St. George's Day Parade in Gravesend.

The **Scout** troop (aged 10½-14½) has 22 members, of which half are girls. A number of high points occurred over the past year. Shorne Scout teams won both the District 2-day hike completion and District Cooking and Campcraft competition (ninth time over the last 15 years!). One of the members, against stiff competition, has been chosen as one of three District representatives to attend the 23rd World Scout Jamboree in Japan in July 2015, as part of the UK contingent. She is currently busily fund raising towards the cost of travelling to the event.

For 20 of our scouts, participation in the Kent International Jamboree one week camp last July was an awesome experience, but utterly exhausting. They took part in numerous activities every day with around 5,000 youngsters from all over the world.

During the year, our scouts joined in hill walking activities in the Peak District and the Lake District, testing navigation skills in wild country. They also participated in canoe training courses on the Medway.

One group of scouts spent a chilly February morning gathering several loads of industrial power cable sleeves, car parts, tyres and other waste which had been fly tipped on Shorne Rough Common. They filled 12 bulk bags and over 20 black sacks. This action was recognised as a contribution towards their Community Challenge. We also very much appreciated the thank you donation from Shorne Parish Council.



Shorne scouts standing on the large pile of dumped rubbish which they had collected from Rough Common, ready for collection by Gravesham Borough Council.

It has been another active year for the 24 **Cubs** (aged 8-10½), including five cubs who moved from the Chalk Pack which closed. During the summer the cubs took part in laser warfare, kayaked at Leybourne Lakes, visited the Maidstone Gang Show and joined over 100 cubs for a District Cub Camp weekend during which they ran, jumped and threw their way to their athletes' badges.

In the autumn, the cubs worked on their fitness challenge, carrying out their own version of the Royal Navy Gun Run, complete with guns to be dragged, carried over walls, disassembled, squeezed through a gap, swung across a chasm and reassembled before firing. With practice the run time fell from nearly ten minutes to under three.

Recent activities have included swimming to gain their swimmer badges, first aid, handling snakes and pancake making. A trip to Biggin Hill as part of gaining the Air Activities badge included a visit to the RAF Chapel there. The older cubs walked and trained from Shorne to Buckmore Park via Higham and Aylesford to camp for the night before tobogganing and snow-tubing.

The **Beaver** section (6-8 years) followed a busy programme pursuing Challenge badges. The Faith badge included visiting both the Parish Church in Shorne and the Gurdwara in Gravesend.

Activities under the Outdoor badge included trails around Rochester and Shorne Country Park and learning to put up tents. Work on their Creative Challenge badge culminated in an evening talent show of singing, dancing, hula-hooping and standing on one leg and also a visit from a magician! Currently the beavers are working on the Safety Activity badge which will include a visit from the RNLI with an inflatable boat and doing their Cyclist badge.

The Group also hosts the District organised Phoenix Explorer Scout Unit (for 14-18 year olds), with some 15 members with their key programme following the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Although not directly part of the Group, many of our scouts move up to join the unit and they often assist in providing help and support to our sections.

Chris Zgoda
Group Scout Leader
1st Shorne Scout Group

Shorne Football Clubs

The 2013-2014 season was a successful one at the Shorne recreation ground.

Rose and Crown Shorne FC were promoted in the North Kent Sunday League. They finished in second place and will now be in the Senior Division this season. Many local players from the Shorne and Higham villages now play in this team which is sponsored by the local Rose and Crown pub. They also got to the semi-finals of the Gravesend Reporter Cup.

Shorne FC also had a good season, consolidating their status in Division Two of the North Kent Sunday League. The squad trains at the recreation ground on Tuesday evenings and is actively looking for new players to join the squad. So if any players over the age of 16 are interested in joining please attend one of these training sessions.

The two clubs have also raised money to make improvements to the recreation ground. The clubhouse has had maintenance work carried out and the changing rooms are soon going to be extended. Also money has been spent improving the drainage and turf of the football pitch. Both clubs look forward to the 2014-2015 season and continuing development of the recreation ground.

Dave Cater
Secretary
Rose and Crown Shorne Football Club

Early Retirement Club

The Early Retirement Club (ERC 82) has continued to meet fortnightly at the Shorne Village Hall, as it has done for the last 32 years. The Club was founded in 1982, originally for workers at APCM factories who were taking early retirement due to the shrinking of the cement manufacturing industry. However as most of the original members have either passed on, or left on health grounds, they have been steadily replaced over the years by members from many other professions, industries and trades.

The purpose of the Club, is to provide a convivial atmosphere, for a morning meeting, with a guest speaker, followed by lunch. Historically, whether by accident or design, it has been a club for men. In recent years, despite one or two initiatives, it has been difficult to attract new members to the club, and the membership now stands at 38.

A ballot was held at the last AGM, on a proposal to actively encourage female membership in an attempt to increase numbers, but this was rejected by the membership, by just two votes. It seems that none of the wives of existing members wished to join the club, and other members, who were also members of local Active Retirement Associations, felt that we could not compete with their astonishing growth and the depth of activities that are available in these organisations. It was however agreed that members could invite their wives, or in fact any ladies, to talks that might be of interest to them. This initiative has not resulted in any substantial response so far.

Our Speaker Secretary, Mike Fitzsimons has continued to find a regular supply of interesting speakers, often with a strong local emphasis. We have within our own membership, speakers who themselves are regulars on the speaking circuit, and they are sometimes called upon. Our outgoing chairman Tony Farnham is well known in Kent, for his talks on Thames sailing barges, on which he served his apprenticeship at Everards of Greenhithe. He also gave a fascinating talk on tracing his family history. Roy Winter, our keen photographer, has given us some very interesting slide shows. In contrast, Alf Cole has given us a slide show illustrating his contribution, while in the navy, to winning the Korean war, where he served on HMS Kenya, bombarding the North Korean Army and rescuing downed American airmen from the sea.

Holding a joint Christmas Dinner with the Gravesend Hospital League of Friends, has been a continuing success, and is proving to very popular with both groups.

We are grateful for the use of the Shorne Village Hall. It is always impeccably kept and meets our requirements admirably. The reduced membership has necessitated us moving our meetings to the small hall, which as well as being cosier, has harder seats, which prevents some members from falling asleep, when the lights go out for a slide show. Gloria and her team have continued to provide us with an excellent lunch.

Don Wiltshire

ER Early Retirement Club Chairman (Elect)

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

County Councillor for Shorne	Bryan Sweetland	01474 833208
Shorne Active Retirement Association [ShornAra]	Maureen Horsham	01474 363285
Dickens Country Protection Society	Susan Lindley	01474 823179
Northfleet & District Probus Club	Tony Weller	01474 560230
Shorne Church of England Primary School	Caroline Conroy	01474 822312
Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]	Caroline Conroy [Trustee]	01474 822312
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing	Sheila Theobald	01474 534659
Shorne Village Pre-school	Karen Jarvis	01474 357872

Shorne Village Hall	Gloria Ashby	01474 822874
Shorne Flower Arrangers	Sheila Williams	01474 353405
Shorne Local History Group	Leanne Hornby	01474 822272
STAGES	John Grace	01474 822647
Shorne and Thong Women's Institute	Julie Aspinall	01474 825046
Shorne Woods Country Park	Tim Bell	0300 333 6488
1st Shorne Scout Group	Chris Zgoda	01474 815331
Shorne Football Clubs	Dave Cater	01474 822129
Early Retirement Club	Don Wiltshire	01474 363709

Shorne Parish Council 2014

Chairman	Mark Brett	01474 356163	markjbrett@blueyonder.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Brian Wilkinson	01474 536131	brian.wilkinson@blueyonder.co.uk
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	John Pooley	01474 822049	barb.and.john@btinternet.com
	Robin Theobald	01474 823674	robin.theobald@btinternet.com
Clerk	Theresa Martin	01474 320824	shorne.parish@yahoo.co.uk

The date of the next **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** is **Thursday 14 May 2015** 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 2015. 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