

# SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012

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## Chairman's Report

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The last year has presented challenges and difficult times for many of our parishioners with the problems the economy's impact has had on our family lives. The Parish Council has seen some of our allies and colleagues at Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council reshuffled or losing their jobs, after budgets had been cut. This has led to the Parish Council having to take over roles previously performed by the Borough and County - bus shelter cleaning, additional vegetation clearance, etc. All that having been said, some of the efficiency measures taken at Borough or County level have led to a positive impact, with different personnel at the helm improving the response to road repairs, snow clearance and fly tipping removal. This was greatly welcomed by parishioners, I hope, especially with the much better response to ice and snow removal this last winter.

Many challenges have been faced this year, with the Council and our parishioners leading the opposition to threats to our village way of life, with the Local Development Framework changes to Planning Law and the implications of building on our Green Belt. We have also led the fight against a Lower Thames Crossing given its severe implications for our village and surrounding parishes. Whilst both fights in the short term have gone well we cannot afford to be complacent and I will continue to be ever watchful of this in the coming months and years. The recurrence of the prospect of an Airport in the estuary, referred to as Boris Island, reignited by the recent re-election campaign by the Mayor of London's office, also needs to be watched very closely.

The Parish Council has been busy securing the public right of way at the opening of Shornemead Crossing. My colleague and chair of our Planning Committee, Robin Theobald, has delivered a very strong case to the railways and County Council, backed by legal opinion, which should secure its reopening. I would like to thank all those in our parish and beyond who went on record as witnesses and signed affidavits to show regular use of this much loved 'right of way'. The Council have made improvements to our recently acquired ancient woodland at Lower Crabbles Bottom and continue to work to make this a much improved amenity for all to enjoy walks and rides.

We are pleased to see progress on our initiative for a footway extension in Forge Lane, Shorne, and I would like to pay special thanks to Hilary Shove for the donation of her land to achieve this and for her tireless efforts to see a great improvement to the safety of our parishioners in this area. I would also like to personally thank Mike Snelling and his office at Kent CC for their Grant towards this project.

We have helped to fund a joint venture with the police and Shorne School using the talented children there to design their own "safer and more considerate" parking posters to be placed around the school in Cob Drive and The Street. With the children talking to and involving their parents and guardians, the message is hopefully already getting through. I recently had the great pleasure of handing out prizes at a very well behaved Assembly, alongside our local police officers, for all the winning entries.

I, like many others around the country, enjoyed this summer's celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. On 4 June, the date of the Jubilee Holiday, the Council arranged with Shorne School to hold a Fancy Dress Parade for the children through the village led by piper Mr Dave Pullen and culminating in a prize giving high tea in the village hall. We also offered all of Shorne's young children a Diamond Jubilee Celebratory China Mug to mark this wonderful occasion. I hope this will give our future generations, along with all the other celebrations, something to tell their grandchildren.

I hope, in my second year as your Chairman, that I and the Council have served you well and to the best of our ability. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the tireless efforts of my Vice-Chairman, Brian Wilkinson, the Clerk, Theresa Martin and all my colleagues on the Council. I look forward to working hard on your behalf to face the many challenges this next year brings.

**Mark Brett**



**Chairman, Shorne Parish Council**

# Footpaths, Properties and Greens



## Shorne Woods in summer

In the Parish of Shorne we are extremely fortunate to have our many footpaths sited among numerous species of trees, shrubs and grassland. These all need periodic maintenance, which includes removal of fallen trees, pruning, grass cutting and general clearance and upkeep of paths.

Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council Services perform many of these routine tasks for us, which helps to keep our countryside safe. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, they have reduced the amount of maintenance they can now perform for us. This will generate more work that the Parish Council will have to pay for.

### **Land South of Crabbles Wood - now known as Crabbles Bottom**

Since acquiring this piece of land, which is sited between the bottom of Bowesden Lane and Crutches Lane, we have begun to secure this site by having the broken fencing replaced. Gates in the fence will eventually be installed to enable access for landscape gardeners to this wood for general site maintenance. The end of the bridal path at this point will be modified accordingly.

### **Playgrounds**

Our two play areas (Mill Hill Lane, Shorne and Michael Gardens in Shorne West) continue to be well used by the younger people in these areas, providing safe off road areas to play. These are inspected each week.

### **Fly-Tipping**

This continues to be an ongoing problem especially in Shorne Ifield Road, Crutches Lane and Shorne Common Rough. We will continue to seek ways of reducing this annoying issue. Your vigilance and that of the general public could make all the difference in identifying the culprits who have little or no regard for our countryside.

### **Replacement bench on Post Office Green**

Gravesham BC Parks and Amenities have given us a used park bench in good condition which was gratefully received to replace the existing one, which had served as a place to rest for many years before becoming unsafe.

### **Mill Hill Lane Car Park**

A timber fence and gate were installed in this car park area to try and reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour late at night. This gate is locked at sunset and opened again in the morning. This installation appears to have solved the problems previously encountered.

### **New Footpaths Map**

After a long wait we have managed to purchase and have installed a new footpaths map and case at the top of Butchers Hill junction of Mill Hill Lane.

### **Brian Wilkinson**



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

## **Council Committee on Planning and Highways**

### **Thanks to John Bugg**

My thanks are due to my Vice-Chairman John Bugg for his help and support throughout the year.

### **Planning Applications**

During the last year the Parish Council has been consulted on 54 planning applications affecting the parish. The Council registered an objection to five of these applications.

Looking back to the 2011 report, the Grain Store on the Rochester Road has now been erected, and a number of people have remarked on its size.

The erection of sheds and fences in Court Wood has been permitted on a temporary basis subject to management agreements.

Methodist Chapel & Hall – The Street Planning Consent for the conversion of the Chapel to residential accommodation, with a small extension on the back, was granted. The Parish Council supported the application. The conversion of the Hall was refused because of "overlooking", based on the Borough Council's Residential Layout Standards. The Parish Council considers the Chapel to be an important building in the history of the village and would wish to see it retained.

The Council objected to a very long extension on the rear of 1 Park Cottages. This was refused by Gravesham BC and the subsequent appeal has been dismissed.

The Council objected to a further application for conversion of the 'Apple Store' on Warren Farm. The application has been refused by Gravesham BC.

The Council objected to an application in Coutts Avenue to demolish a Bungalow and to erect two Chalet Bungalows in its place. It was considered this was over-development of the site. The application has been refused by Gravesham BC.

The Council objected to a side extension in Cob Drive because of a fear of creating a terrace appearance. Following discussion with Gravesham BC, consent was granted

The Council objected to a side extension constructed on one of the houses adjacent to Shorne Cross Roads. These houses were built at high density on the old filling station site and the extension was very cramped.

## Forward Planning

In October 2011 the **Gravesham Local Development Framework Core Strategy** was published for consultation. The Council made representations objecting to the possible release of Green Belt in Shorne West, south of Astra Drive, and land at the north end of Thong Lane. The Borough Council has withdrawn all its proposals to release Green Belt land. After re-examining the need and the land supply the Council considers this will not be necessary. A further stage of consultation is now due before an Inquiry in the autumn. Landowners may still want to pursue building on some of these sites when the plan goes to Inquiry.

**Draft National Planning Guidance** was published in July 2011. This was viewed as a Developer's Charter and the Council made representations. New Guidance is better but still not good and a number of areas are open to misinterpretation.

## Highways

We all welcomed the resurfacing of the roads in the parish earlier this year.

The Council received a petition complaining of speeding traffic on the Ridgeway. Kent County Council, as the Highway Authority, has agreed to replace the 30mph signs with larger ones. The Parish Council is attempting to get an interactive sign erected to warn drivers when they are exceeding the speed limit.

Some months ago the railings on Post Office Green were damaged when a car hit them. The Council has been seeking to get them repaired and we have to thank KCC for organising this for us. The Council is attempting to recover the cost from the motorist who damaged them

The raised footway in The Street was damaged when a car hit it. This has been repaired by KCC.

A new footway has been provided in Forge Lane and we have to thank Hilary Shove for donating the land. We currently have a problem with the width which is narrower than was agreed.

We are still suffering from flooding at Shorne Cross Roads whenever there is heavy rain. The Council will continue to press for improvements to the drainage.

## Lower Thames Crossing

The Government has commissioned further studies and we have to wait until the reports from these are published before we can decide what to do next.

## Estuary Airports

Government Consultation on an estuary airport is expected this summer. The Council will have to wait to see what is proposed before it can comment. At this stage members are very sceptical.

## Robin Theobald



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

# County Councillor's Annual Report

The national financial situation has again dominated Kent County Council in that Local Government has been hit harder than other Departments with Budget cuts. 10% has had to be taken out of this year's Budget, another 10% next year, and a further 10% for the following two years - about £320 million in total.

In spite of this, we have frozen Council Tax for the second year running, and we are preserving front line services as far as possible. I do believe we can deliver more for less.

The cash deposited with Icelandic Banks will now all (we believe) be returned.

Highways issues, although still continuing to dominate my postbag, have abated. The new management arrangements in our Highways Department, involving a complete restructuring and new contractors, are showing, I am told by the public, a vast improvement.

The refurbishment of four of Gravesham's secondary schools is still a matter of doubt following the cancellation of the "Building Schools for the Future" (BSF) programme. I am pursuing this.

The contribution by KCC to Gravesham capital projects (when I was Council Leader) are now paying dividends. The magnificent new Gravesend Town Centre Library is complete [cost £2 million). Cyclopark opened this spring – a £10 million project. The Town Pier Pontoon, a £2million project, which is designed to bring visitors and cash to Gravesham, is now operational, in time for the arrival of Olympics visitors.

The Lower Thames Crossing issue remains, and will become increasingly emotive as we approach the KCC "election season". My firm views on this are well known - it must not go through East Gravesend. I remain convinced that the Government, which now have sole responsibility for the project, will opt for more capacity at Dartford after introducing cashless tolls.

KCC is reviewing how it provides its Youth and Library Services and what is needed for the future in both urban and rural areas. I have been charged with leading this debate in Gravesham (and getting answers!).

The Government's Health Reform Agenda is in the news and KCC has a role here. We believe we can reduce unnecessary hospitalisation by 50/60% for patients with long term illnesses. I have just been asked to take over the Chairmanship of the KCC Health Overview Scrutiny Committee - holding local health providers to account - which will be a challenging task!

Other issues of importance include:-

- KCC are putting £10 million into the provision of Super Fast broadband for Kent businesses and residents.
- in April KCC launched a big campaign to encourage employers to take on more young people aged 16-24 years.

In conclusion, and as ever, I congratulate Shorne Parish Council on the great job it does for its residents - "Localism" at its very best!

**Mike Snelling, KCC Councillor, Gravesham Rural**

## Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

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

At the end of the autumn term we had our usual Christmas disco for the younger pupils. A good time was had by all - a lot of noise, much food consumed, and lots of games and dancing.

In December 2011, we organised our annual trip to the theatre to see the Birmingham Royal Ballet's performance of The Nutcracker, at the 02. It was a magical performance and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

The summer term was particularly busy, as in May we had two days of I.S.T.D. Modern and Tap examinations and in June we had two days of R.A.D. Ballet examinations. We also have school Assessments next term.

Toby Robson, a former pupil who commenced training at White Lodge, The Royal Ballet Lower School, in September 2011, 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 2011 to watch Toby in action in his classes. This was a wonderful experience as I also had the opportunity to watch the more senior students in action in their classes.

In the summer term we will be commencing work on our show, which is to be in November this year at the Woodville Halls.

## Shorne Woods Country Park

The major project at the Park over the last year has been the construction of a new amenity building. This was in response to feedback from the public on the need for more toilet facilities on the site. The building was constructed on a small part of the car park so as not to damage the Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI]. This has reduced the number of spaces by eight cars but doubled the number of toilets. The rainwater from the woodchip barn and workshops is being harvested as part of this project to flush the new toilets. There will be a small kiosk serving ice creams and drinks at peak periods.

The sluice at the dog pond was raised by one foot last autumn to try and enable us to hold water for longer so dogs can enjoy swimming for longer. This involved creating a whole new sluice and channel as the previous one was in a state of collapse and leaked beyond repair.

The sluice in the pond nearest to the café has also been repaired which should potentially raise the water level of that pond by over a foot. The aim of this is to hold water in the pond system for longer and prevent the ponds from completely drying out.

Over winter we cut another 1.5 hectares of sycamore which we stump treat to prevent re-growth. The previously cleared areas are abundant with life, with wild flowers and elder bursting through where they used to be suppressed by the dense canopy of the sycamores. The timber cut is sold from the visitor centre as logs and kindling, or used to heat the pizza oven at weekends and holidays.

The ride network is now thriving with grasses and herbs growing along the edges all 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 archaeologist volunteers continue to explore the park to discover its history. The annual dig at Randall Manor took place for three weeks in early July.

Volunteers made a massive contribution to the management of the park with archaeological volunteers contributing 6,656 hours over the year and the countryside volunteers 2,762 hours. The Park could not be managed without their help and support.

If you have any questions regarding the Park please call 01474 823800.



**Shorne Woods Country Park Visitor Centre**

## Shorne Church of England Primary School

Shorne Church of England Primary School continues to be a popular and thriving school. We are once again over subscribed for our September 2012 new intake.

As part of our desire to form closer links with the Parish church and raise our identity as a distinctively Christian school, we decided to change our school badge. Having launched a competition with the children to design the badge, we now have four symbols – a Bible, the key of St Peter and the sword of St Paul (crossed over each other), a tree and the Kent Invicta Horse. Together these reflect our church, rural and county connections.

As part of our community links, a new event took place in St Peter and St Paul's Church on 8th December, entitled 'Carols and Cakes'. This brought the school and the parish together (inspired by June Wilkins) for an informal and entertaining celebration of Christmas.

We are delighted to say that our school football team became the Gravesham 7-a-side football champions in September, which is an enormous achievement for such a small school. We then went on to represent Gravesham in the Kent finals in Dover in November.

After reaching the tough criteria for assessment, we have once again achieved Eco School status.

We have been involved in many opportunities as part of Gravesham's Olympic Big Events Programme. The school took part in a Gravesham wide competition to design an original flag based on the Olympic and Paralympic values. I am pleased to say that Shorne School had two out of a possible five winners. The children who designed the flags for 'friendship' and 'determination and courage' had their designs made into real flags that are proudly flying on the flag poles outside the Civic Centre. They will remain there until shortly before the Olympic flame passes through Gravesham on 20 July.

In April the school was involved in a campaign to promote safe and courteous parking in the village during the school drop off and pick up times. Our local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Peter Hylands asked the children to design posters to highlight the need for safer and more considerate parking. This raised awareness for our parents and children about the concerns that our local residents have with regard to parking at these key times in the day. This campaign was backed by Shorne Parish Council to whom we are grateful for funding the prizes for the winning designs which are currently being printed and will be displayed in the village.

We have continued to receive wonderful financial support from FOSS which enables us to provide additional resources and exciting opportunities for learning for the children.

We very much enjoyed the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and we are now looking forward to the Olympic Torch arriving in Gravesham to signify that the London 2012 Games are almost upon us.



**Winners of Shorne School's safe parking campaign with their successful entries - Isabelle, Hannah, Lauren and Zara - accompanied by Police Community Support Officer Peter Hylands**

## Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]

FOSS had another successful and enjoyable fundraising year with our main events being the Summer Fete, Christmas Bazaar, Candlelit Ball and our Evening at Little Hermitage. Other fund raising events included cake sales, discos, the Smartie Fundraiser, Bags to School, our Easter Egg Hunt and a Christmas Gift Evening.

The money raised was used to fund the purchase of 30 new laptop computers, supporting the school's emphasis on modern technology and IT in education. This allows a more flexible, varied and exciting approach to learning. We have also developed the outside play area for Class R to support the six areas of learning in the foundation stage. The area includes a sensory garden, sandpit and raised beds for growing vegetables and flowers. In addition, we have purchased a canopy and seating area which will enable classes to be held outside on sunny days and to provide shelter during playtime.

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 and generosity.

## Early Retirement Club

The year has been a good one with all the usual functions of the Club running like clockwork thanks to a most helpful and efficient committee team.

Keith Saunderson, our speaker Secretary, in spite of a transport problem, has continued to provide us with a varied choice of excellent speakers. Not an easy task, many thanks, Keith.

Roger Endean, our Treasurer, has ably looked after our finances with other tasks which have kept us on a steady course. His continued position as Treasurer for the coming year is greatly appreciated.

The summer lunch held on 29 July 2011 was a most enjoyable one, in spite of the numbers being less than expected, no doubt due to the national financial situation. A Christmas evening meal was held on 9 December 2011 but was very poorly attended and money was lost by providing entertainment. It was decided not to plan for a summer lunch this year as numbers responding were too low.

Like many other clubs, our major problem has been maintaining the number of members. Several of our members have died during the last two years and only a few new members have joined. We carried out a big recruitment drive this year but did not have any success. Our average turnout at each meeting is around 43

Philip Mansfield, our next Chairman, must be thanked for opening the hall on each club day at 9am, organising the setting up of chairs and equipment, welcoming the speakers and storing gear after each meeting.

Thanks must be given to Peter Goodchild, our Minutes Secretary, John Jones for organising the wine and John Lunn for arranging the coffee makers for every meeting. In spite of medical problems both Stan Hannogan and Charles Oliver continue to provide help in many ways.

The lunches provided by Gloria Ashby conclude our meeting in a very friendly and convivial manner and are much appreciated.

Lastly, many thanks to Tony Farnham for his continued help as Past Chairman and to all other members who have supported the chair.

## Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

This has been a busy year for the Institute which celebrated its 90th Anniversary in February with an afternoon gathering in Shorne Village Hall.

Throughout the year, we have had some splendid speakers, whose topics have included:-

- some historic remains of how people lived in a few old houses
- unravelling the story of a true romance in the First World War
- structure of the ear, causes of deafness and the importance of lip-reading
- preparing the Olympics Site and its legacy for London and the British Red Cross.

We held a Strawberry Tea, a Garden Party and a December Lunch. We were also responsible for organising this year's District Carol Service in Shorne Church. There is also a very busy Craft group.

All main meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month. Members also meet to play Darts and Whist, and compete in the District Quiz and District Pancake Races.

## Shorne Football Clubs

It was another busy season, with three football teams now using the facilities at Shorne recreation ground, where some work was carried out last summer to improve the clubhouse by fixing the showers and painting the changing rooms.

**The Rose and Crown** had a disappointing season in the premier division and were unfortunately relegated. This was due to the loss last summer of many key players to other teams. However the team has been rebuilt with local players from Shorne and Higham and next season will play in the first division as **Shorne-Higham RC**. Hopefully they will win promotion back to the premier division and will still be sponsored by Steve at the local Rose and Crown pub.

**A & Z Sports** had a good season, finishing fourth in the premier league. They also reached the semi-finals of the Reporter Cup. They have added some players from Gravesend and are hoping to go for the title next year with a stronger squad.

**Viewpoint** were the most successful team to play at the ground last season. In a tough Kent Saturday League they finished in second place, just missing out on the title in the last few games. They also reached a cup final, again just missing out on the trophy.

With three teams and over 60 players now registered to use the village pitch again in the coming season, some investment is going to be made improving the pitch over the summer. All three teams start training again in July. If there are any local players of a good standard who wish to come and play please contact Dave Cater, Shorne-Higham RC Manager, on 01474 822129.

## Shorne Local History Group

The group has met monthly from October to April and heard an interesting variety of speakers - on Randall Manor at Shorne, doodlebugs, schooling in Shorne (from our member Ian Craig), hall houses (with examples from Southfleet), the early days of aviation on Sheppey (where the aviation industry was born) and local buses. There was a social meeting in December.

The meetings in the Village Hall were well attended. There was an average attendance of 29 and the membership stands at over 40. At the AGM a new chairman and vice chairman were elected - Andrew Moffat and John Grace respectively

## Ist Shorne Scout Group

The group is flourishing and full with waiting lists for all sections. This is entirely due to our enthusiastic, dedicated and very active leadership team. We are indeed, a flagship group in the Gravesham District.

The Group attended the Shorne Civic Service and Remembrance Parade and Service and our district St Georges Day parade in Gravesend . We also provided a drinks station for the North Downs Run.

Beavers (six to eight years) have enjoyed another active year with a visit to Howletts to see what conservation is really about and help them complete their Global challenge award. They all had a great time taking part in the big Beaver 25 year birthday district celebrations at Hopehill, where they enjoyed line dancing, circus skills, crafts and a big balloon launch. The Beavers completed their creative challenge with great spooky crafts for Halloween, culminating in a fantastic performance of "'Twas the Night before Christmas", enjoyed by the parents and other guests. In the New Year, the Beavers learned about healthy eating and exercise, tried badminton and enjoyed an evening getting their swimmer stage 1 badges.

Cubs (eight to ten and half years) have had another busy year. Activities have included canoeing, exploring the riverside heritage of Gravesend, laser warfare, a hedgerow safari (we found five voles), a day out in Dover (including the Grand Shaft and a boat ride), making reindeers from logs, a visit to the lifeboat and trips to the panto and the Imperial War Museum. We have travelled by foot, minibus, train, double-decker, ferry, boat and bicycle and camped and slept over at the hut and at campsites in Kent and Essex. The Cubs have worked hard to achieve many badges, from the Athlete through DIY and Navigator to Scientist and Water Activities, as well as completing the Creative, Community and Outdoor challenges.

Last year has seen a growth in the number of Scouts (ten and half to 14½ years] to 26, with nearly 50% girls. Summer term was as always full of outdoor activities. A successful Early May Bank holiday camp was held at Hopehill.

In mid-May Shorne won its class section in the District Hike. This is a hike of around 26kms over two days with an overnight camp, with the Scouts carrying large rucksacks containing all their own kit, including tents, cooking equipment and food.

In early June, at the District Water activity day at Leybourne, our scouts came second in the "raft build and race" and several individuals were placed in the kayak races. In the District camping and campcraft completion in late May we retained the winning trophy for third year in a row despite fielding a smaller team than usual.

14 members attended a summer camp held in Ashdown Forest. Despite raining for long periods every day (except arrival and departure days), the campers participated in a large number of activities from High Ropes, swimming, monkey tree climbing, grass and sledging while still having time to improve their cooking skills on open fires.

The autumn programme focused on following the scout progress scheme which included challenges on international scouting and faith. Activities included tidying up the churchyard and developing basic scouting skills such as first aid, knots and fire lighting under damp conditions, cooking and activity food menus for lightweight camping.

The spring programme included camping in the snow at Hopehill in February with temperatures well below zero and a 6km night hike in the Cobham area. In the hut, large quantities of pancakes were cooked and consumed with other activities including a craft evening, knotting sessions and a film animation evening.

Our Hut development is continuing with shower and utility rooms. We have been fortunate to receive a grant from the Gravesham Neighbourhood Forum which will help us to improve the driveway and boundary fencing. We received another grant from the Police fund for new tents.

The whole group took part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee District Camp at Hopehill in June. The Beacon was lit at 10.10 pm on 5th June. This was featured in the Gravesend Reporter.

Our long serving (25 years) Group Scout Leader Geoff Busbridge retired as Head of the Group at our annual BBQ on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July.



**Scout Group parading along The Street in Shorne on Remembrance Day 2011**

## Shorne Active Retirement Association [ShornAra]

Our objective at ShornAra is to encourage our members to keep active in retirement and we certainly have continued to achieve that over the past twelve months.

We organise a well supported programme of physical activities throughout the year. These are attended by a large proportion of our members which include:

- monthly Tea Dances which are extremely popular and very well attended
- Ten Pin Bowling sessions which are held twice a month and provide exercise and fun for all concerned. Numbers of those attending have swelled over the past year.
- weekly Short Mat Bowling sessions which are very well attended and continue to be one of our most successful activities.
- monthly or twice monthly Walks exploring the very pleasant countryside in the North Kent area.

ShornAra's monthly meetings, held in the Village Hall, are well attended. We have had many diverse speakers and listened to some very interesting talks over the past year - such as "Village Signs", "The Story of Tea", "The Police at War" and "Royal Visits to Kent". At these meetings, members also have an opportunity to see what trips and events on offer, and sign up for outings of their choice.

Our trips have included the Brighton Ice Show, a Northumbrian Holiday, a Cruise on Thames Barge, a trip to Worthing, Tinsel & Turkey in Bournemouth, theatre trips, themed suppers and lunches.

We have also had two thoroughly enjoyable Quiz nights.

We are always looking to stimulate the interest and widen the horizons of all our members through our current range of activities and new initiatives.



**ShornAra members pictured during their visit to Powderham Castle, Devon in May**

## Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club

The club enjoyed a full membership of 35 members for 2011.

We are a very friendly club and meet every Wednesday evening for a "roll up". Internal competitions are held, and twice a year we have an all day internal competition usually held on a Sunday. We also enter the Maidstone Triples Competition each year. We were winners of our division in 2011.

The AGM in March was followed by cheese and wine and we enjoyed our usual Spring Lunch with partners in Meopham. Also we had our regular home and away social matches with Cobham Golf Club accompanied by an evening meal. Our Annual Presentation Dinner and Dance was held in October at Shorne Village Hall, followed by our Christmas Party in December.

## Northfleet & District Probus Club

We meet at Shorne Village Hall every other Tuesday from 10am until 12 midday. The membership comprises retired or partially retired professional men or businessmen aged 60 years or over. The club has 74 members, which is slightly lower than previous years, due to members getting older, infirm and unable to attend, as well as those who have been called by a greater power.

The members pay an annual fee of £10 plus £2 per meeting which includes 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 for a wide range of interesting speakers covering all subjects and once a year we have a morning especially for our ladies. For the ladies we try to arrange a special speaker. This year the speaker was Paul Harris who regaled us with tales of "Theatrical Landladies".

The club has its own Almoner who contacts and visits any members or their wives/partners who are unwell.

The club also has a Social Team which arranges for day trips and an off peak four day break. This year we went to Weymouth, which the members enjoyed apart from the awful weather.

## STAGES

Another STAGES year has flown past as we celebrate our fourth birthday! And another successful and busy year it has been.

We ended the year with 238 members, up from 227 in 2010 and we already have over 100 signed up for 2012.

We organised 64 events during 2011, exactly the same number as in 2010! These included 11 Main Meetings, 11 London plays/shows, two quizzes, four concerts, nine visits to places of interest including the Sikh Temple in Gravesend, Windsor Castle and Wimpole Estate in Cambourne, six restaurant visits, five day tours, four visits to art galleries as well as the odd sporting event! 1549 attended events other than Main Meetings, up from 1304 in 2010, suggesting an average of 29 per event and that the average STAGES member (if there is such a person!) took part in 6.5 events during the year, again up from last year. So although there was an increase in membership, members are also taking part in more events.

Attendance at the 11 monthly Main Meetings was also good. The average was 82 per meeting with the largest number being 101 at the January 2011 meeting.

All the events are overseen by a Committee member and again we thank our hard working committee and other members who aided and abetted during the year to make this programme possible.

## Dickens Country Protection Society

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

During the past year there have continued to be many newspaper articles about possible Thames Estuary and Hoo Peninsula airports, additional river crossings, a new Thames Flood Barrier etc. which we have kept under continuous review. These articles have now crystallised into formal Government Department for Transport reviews. The Society will submit comments as soon as this becomes possible.

Other items which have received particular attention include:

- Chattenden and Lodge Hill redevelopment projects
- restoration of Upnor Pond which was driven forward by the Society
- ongoing action against Network Rail to reopen the pedestrian crossing point at Queen's Farm [DCPS is providing support to the Parish Council]
- draft National Planning Policy Framework and local equivalents.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Society on February 1 1972. The Society was formed in response to one of many previous serious threats to the local environment. It goes almost without saying that this work will continue in the face of the many present day threats.

## Shorne Village Hall

The past year has proved to be a very expensive one. Ignoring the sums achieved through fundraising, donations and a grant from Kent County Council, the hall's income for the year from lettings and investments was £23,475, the lowest since 2005.

This year, due to its age and unreliability, it was necessary to replace the boiler, renew the gas convectors and carry out repairs to the pumping valves. To conserve heat, we also insulated the loft and cavity walls of the hall, and introduced a centralised computing system to regulate the heating. All these items were essential to ensure that the hall has a future. Without the prudent management of past committees, together with a grant of £7,206 obtained from Kent County Council, it would not have been possible to carry out this refurbishment. However these costs have exhausted our capital and we now have no funds to fall back on. It follows that should our income for 2012 turn out to be similar to that of 2011 there will be a shortfall of some £7,800 which will have to be met through a combination of fundraising, donations and increased charges before we can consider building up the capital fund.

Running expenses for the hall have been cut to a bare minimum. The telephone bills provider has been changed to ensure that the cost is some £200 less per annum and the insurance provider changed with a reduction of £1,200 in our costs.

We believe that the heating costs should reduce in future, but since the whole system was not fully operative until February 2012, we will need a year to monitor its use before commenting. Most organisations using the hall understand the need for the new centralised heating in order to control costs.

Our thanks to the clubs and organisations who continue to use the facilities at the hall.

## Shorne Cottage Garden Society

The AGM was held on 1 February and was well attended with an increase in numbers to report. Once again the snowdrops competition was very successful.

At our social event in March Russell Williams spoke on designing gardens including some he had worked on for English Heritage.

The spring show provided an excellent display in all classes, earning complements from all the judges for the quality and presentation of all the exhibits.

In April we visited the Spalding Flower Festival. The main parade was quite spectacular, with many of the floats decorated with tulips. Following the parade there was a street display with hundreds of children taking part in maypole dancing.

Our summer show was again successful although entries were low because of the inclement weather.

Once more this year, John and Pauline Grace organised a visit to three national garden schemes, which were enjoyed in perfect weather by all who went.

The autumn show, our first for three years, was well supported. We presented Cups for best exhibits of chrysanthemums and dahlias. The plant stall was a great success as ever

The annual supper and presentation of trophies was again very successful and enjoyed by all who attended.

The Society entered the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies show and won third prize at our first attempt in the "members' choice" class.

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

## Shorne Flower Arrangers

We had a very successful year in 2011. Our membership has remained fairly steady with some losses and some gains.

During the year we held a number of workshops on various subjects and also a number of mini demonstrations. We held two large demonstrations, one in September by Jeannette Lane and one in November by Robin White, which were open to other clubs and enjoyed by all.

In June we enjoyed our 45th Anniversary - Sapphire- and along with in-house celebrations we also arranged flowers in the Parish Church.

Our club also arranged flowers in the Church for the Harvest Festival, Easter and Christmas.

In October we held a Club Dinner at the Cascades Leisure Centre. Again, the theme was our Sapphire Anniversary. This was a new venture for our club and was well attended by both members and their husbands / partners. This social evening proved very popular and plans are in place to make this an annual event. We are in the main a new Committee this year and enjoying the challenge set by the previous Committee.

Our thanks must go for the cooperation we have received from the Village Hall Committee.

## Shorne Village Pre-school

The Village Pre-school is proving as popular as ever and has begun the summer with a full register. Not only have the children been busy on their learning journey but our staff have also been active attending various training courses to add to their skills and expertise in providing a great environment where each individual child can thrive and have a lovely learning experience through play. Ofsted have judged us to be making Outstanding provision. Our team of dedicated staff are all enthusiastic to maintain a very high standard of care and education.

This summer term is a busy one getting our older children ready for the transition to their new schools. We are arranging visits for our new children who will be starting in September. The autumn term brings more curriculum changes, and in readiness for these, our staff will be busy over the next few months training up on the new format of the Early Years Framework.

Each day is different at pre-school, from hunting dinosaurs in the sand pit to going for a walk to discover the first signs of spring, from watching the tadpoles grow from little black blobs to tiny frogs to laughing at the antics of three day old chicks chirping on their first visit to pre-school, from listening to a story with all your friends to singing and dancing to your favourite song and to being a superhero and rescuing a princess from her pop up tent ----- every day is a discovery day and that's just a little glimpse of life at pre-school. Happy times!

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

County Councillor for Shorne	Mike Snelling	01474 812404
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing	Sheila Theobald	01474 534659
Shorne Church of England Primary School	Caroline Conroy	01474 822312
Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]	Lisa Sewell	07812 060946
Early Retirement Club	Philip Mansfield	01634 717823
Shorne and Thong Women's Institute	Avril Roots	01474 564230
Shorne Football Clubs	Dave Cater	01474 822129
Shorne Woods Country Park	Tim Bell	01474 823800
Shorne Local History Group	Andrew Moffat	01474 822280
1st Shorne Scout Group	Geoff Busbridge	01474 569512
Shorne Active Retirement Association (ShornAra)	Bryan Smith	01474 357678
Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club	Peter Curtis	01474 822605
Northfleet & District Probus Club	Tony Weller	01474 560230
STAGES	Dr John Grace	01474 822647
Dickens Country Protection Society	Susan Lindley	01474 823179
Shorne Village Hall	Gloria Ashby	01474 822874
Shorne Cottage Garden Society	David Baker	01634 710169
Shorne Flower Arrangers	Sheila Williams	01474 353405
Shorne Village Pre-School	Jenny Bennett	01474 357872
	Sharon Wightwick	01634 311461

## Shorne Parish Council 2012

Chairman	Mark Brett	01474 356163	markbrett@blueyonder.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Brian Wilkinson	01474 536131	brian.wilkinson@blueyonder.co.uk
Members	John Bugg	01474 823462	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	
	Robin Theobald	01474 823674	robin.theobald@btoopenworld.com

The date of the next **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** is **Thursday, 16 May 2013** 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 2013. Copy of more than 250 words in length may be edited to fit available space.