

Shorne Parish Matters for October 2013

Footpaths and Bridleways

Shorne Parish Council is responsible for the oversight of the 25 footpaths and bridleways in this parish. Any issues or concerns raised by the Council about the condition of these public rights of way are presented to Kent County Council which has responsibility for their upkeep and maintenance.

There are more than 13 miles of footpaths and bridleways in the parish, including just over one mile of bridleways. KCC runs an annual maintenance programme, setting priorities which take account of the Parish Council's comments on where the need is greatest.

The condition of these paths has in general worsened this year because of the reduced service provided by KCC resulting from their budget cuts and also on account of the weather conditions promoting more active growth.

Inevitably, with so much territory to cover, Parish Councillors cannot monitor the state of the all the footpaths themselves, and look to parishioners to let them know of any problems within their locality. Parishioners are asked to contact the Parish Clerk, Theresa Martin, on 01474 320824 or by email on shorne.parish@yahoo.co.uk with any concerns.

Given that the KCC service is unlikely to expand in the foreseeable future, the Council has been considering whether it would be possible for local residents to play some part in keeping the paths clear, with appropriate support. KCC have informed us that, following recent pilot events organised in partnership with the Ramblers, they would be pleased to run a training event, lasting up to one day, for Shorne parish volunteers. These would deal with such issues as health and safety, use of equipment and insurance. After attending one of these sessions parishioners would be free to choose when and how often they would like to get involved.

The Parish Council will meet the expenses of all those attending these training sessions, which will be an essential requirement for those undertaking this Council supported activity. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact Brian Wilkinson, Chair of the Council's Committee on Footpath, Properties and Greens, on 01474 536131 or by email on brian.wilkinson@blueyonder.co.uk for further information and advice.

Fire Brigades Union Strike on Wednesday 25 September

A strike involving members of the Fire Brigades Union [FBU], as part of a national dispute between the union and the Government over fire fighters' pension arrangements, is due to take place on Wednesday 25 September from midday to 4pm. It is not known precisely how many fire fighters will choose to go out on strike. The strike will be national so will affect all fire and rescue services in England and Wales.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS) say that they have robust contingency plans in place to provide an emergency service for Kent and Medway during this period of industrial action, and are encouraging the public and businesses to take extra precautions during the strike period to keep themselves safe. They will still be responding to 999 calls but are asking the public to avoid making unnecessary calls.

KFRS have offered the following advice about how to keep safe during the strike period.

- Check your smoke alarm
- Do not leave any cooking unattended, especially if you have been drinking alcohol or you are on medication
- Go round your home and unplug any unused electrical items before you go to work or leave home on Wednesday, and don't overload electric sockets which can cause fires
- If you are planning a bonfire, don't do it on Wednesday
- Avoid using candles and certainly do not leave them burning if you're not in the room
- Drive carefully and wear a seatbelt – speed limits aren't targets
- If you are out hiking or walking the dog, stick to safe areas and avoid water and deep ground where you may get into difficulties

Roy Dinnis
Shorne Parish Council

01474 824006
roydinnis@aol.com