

## **Parish Council Matters for September 2014**

### **Lower Thames Crossing**

The Government has announced that, whilst they are still considering the remaining two Options for a new Thames Crossing, including Option C to place the link near to Shorne, they have accepted the arguments of this Parish Council and others to wait and see how far the removal of the tolls at Dartford will reduce congestion.

It appears that, regardless of these results, the Government is still convinced of the need for increased transport capacity owing to the large scale development expected in the area over the coming years.

The Department of Transport will therefore develop both these Options in greater detail to enable a decision to be made. No information is available on when an announcement will be forthcoming, but given the need to analyse the data arising from the closing of the tolls, as well as to obtain the results of the further research, it seems most unlikely that an announcement will be made until the New Year at the earliest.

Whatever the timing of this decision the Parish Council will continue at every opportunity to fight against Option C which would be massively expensive, presenting very serious engineering problems resulting in a blight on the countryside.

### **Gravesham Borough Council Local Plan for meeting additional housing requirement over the next 15 years**

In my Parish Council Matters article in the last magazine, I reported that an independent Government Inspector was due to give his verdict on Gravesham BC's target to build 6,170 homes in the Borough between now and March 2028.

The Inspector has now formally agreed this figure. He regards this as the lowest number which the Borough Council should be expected to build. One of the factors which the Inspector took into account in his response was Gravesham BC's decision to undertake a review of Green Belt boundaries in drawing up its strategic plan for meeting new housing needs.

It is understood that the review could propose some revisions to Green Belt boundaries which might be minor, for example, smoothing out any anomalies, or major, entailing sweeping changes.

The Parish Council is acutely concerned about this review. We do not believe that any intrusion into the Green Belt is required. There is in our view no need to abandon the principle of "brownfield first" in considering where to site new homes in Gravesham. If Gravesham BC does break this principle, possibly as a soft option and spurred on by some landowners and developers, they will damage the countryside further and divert badly needed investment away from the Borough's increasingly neglected urban and suburban centres.

At the Council's next full meeting on 25 September we shall be considering how best to defend the interests of our parishioners in the face of this unnecessary threat.

### **Forthcoming Council meetings**

The next meeting of the Parish Council's Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee will take place on Thursday 11 September 2014 at 7.45pm.

The next full meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 25 September 2014 at 7.45pm

Both meetings will take place in the Committee Room at Shorne Village Hall.

Parishioners are warmly invited to attend these meetings.

### **Police Contact Visits**

Police officers will next be visiting Shorne Country Park to give advice and assistance to the public on Wednesday 24 September and Wednesday 22 October from 2pm to 3pm.

Roy Dinnis  
Shorne Parish Council