

Shorne Parish Council

— Borough of Gravesham —



PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

February 2016

(The following news went to print before the Lower Thames Consultation was launched and the routes published on 26th January 2016. It was supplemented by a stop-press edition – please see below)

LOWER THAMES CROSSING – DECISION TIME LOOMING

In July last year, the Secretary of State for Transport instructed Highways England to develop and assess the route options at the two remaining locations, Option A at Dartford, and Option C east of Gravesend, before recommending the preferred site of the new Thames crossing. Their decision is due to be announced imminently, followed by a short consultation period.

Option A is for another bridge at Dartford, adjacent to the existing crossing. This is by far the cheapest and simplest option.

The original plan for Option C (C1) is for a dual carriageway running from a new interchange stretching from the A2 just east of the Inn on the Lake to the M2. The western link roads would run through Shorne Woods Country Park and parallel to Brewers Road. The eastern link roads would run through Brewers Wood, crossing Brewers Road near the junction with Woodlands Lane, before joining up with the western link roads on the site of the fields just south of Shorne Church. The dual carriageway would then cross Shorne Ifield Road between Shorne Hill and Ifield Farm, through farmland alongside Muggins Lane, before crossing the A226 just to the west of Chalk Church, and on to a new bridge or tunnels at Eastcourt Marshes.

KCC has proposed an alternate route for Option C, designated Option C2, which moves the interchange further west along the A2, extending from Halfpence Lane to Gravesend East. The link roads would merge behind Cheney's Farm and Westwood Farm in Thong, crossing Thong Lane at the site of Hartshill Nursery, then across farmland and Southern Valley Golf Course, before crossing the A226 just to the west of Chalk Church. The KCC variant provides for longer tunnels at Eastcourt Marshes.

Maps of both the Option C routes can be found on the Parish Council website. Either of these routes would have a devastating impact on Shorne, particularly the original proposed route.

As soon as the recommendations are published, the Parish Council intends to call a public meeting to review the implications to Shorne.

We would call on all residents of the Parish to respond to the consultation, whichever option is chosen. Even if the recommendation is for a bridge at Dartford, we will be up against strong opposition from KCC, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, the Freight Transport Association, and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, all of which will be campaigning to reverse the decision and to build the new crossing in our neighbourhood.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

It was intended to report on the outcome of the Local Government Electoral Boundary Review for Kent, and how this impacts on Shorne, in this edition of the parish magazine. However, publication of the report has been put back a week until 26th January, after the magazine goes to print. A summary of the report will therefore be included in the March edition.

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN – SATURDAY 5th MARCH

Last year, volunteers collected over 50 sacks of litter from the streets of Shorne. This year, we will be carrying out another Volunteer Litter Patrol on **Saturday 5th March**, to coincide with the national “Clean for the Queen” campaign taking place throughout the UK over that weekend, in preparation for the Queen’s 90th birthday.

Litter Patrols are not hard work, in fact most participants find them very enjoyable. Our Litter Patrols generally last about 2 hours, working in small teams of 2 to 4 people, and where possible we try to allocate you to a team in your own neighbourhood.

We will meet at the Village Hall Car Park from 09.45, ready for a 10.00 start, and we expect to be finished by midday. Hi-Viz vests, litter pickers, and rubbish sacks will be provided, but please bring your own gloves.

If you are interested in joining us for our ‘Clean for the Queen’ litter patrol, please contact Bob Lane on 01474 822680, or email shorne.volunteers@gmx.co.uk for further information.

GET INVOLVED AT CRABBLES BOTTOM – 13th FEBRUARY and 19th MARCH

Did you know that the Parish owns about 27 acres of woodland and open meadow between Crutches Lane and the end of Bowesden Lane, bounded by Footpath NS321 and the bridleway beside the Wainscott Bypass? It includes some ancient but rather neglected Bramley apple trees, some mixed hazel coppice, and some meadow areas.

The area has a footpath running through it, and the Parish Council has already cleared the path and the area beneath the apple trees. We would like to develop the area as an amenity for the Parish, perhaps pruning the old apple trees and planting new ones, and clearing gaps to connect the meadows so that they too can be mown. To this end we need some energetic volunteers!

The first task will be to clear some small trees and bushes to provide easy access between the meadows and, weather permitting, it is proposed to do this on Saturday February 13th, meeting at the layby in Crutches lane at 10:30am. Tools will be provided, but please bring thick gloves, boots, and old, warm clothes.

The second task will be to do some work on the orchard, perhaps planting some new trees, so bring a spade! This will start at 10.30am on Saturday March 19th, again weather permitting.

If you would like to join in, or would like some further information, please contact Martin Redfern at meredfern@btinternet.com.

CHESTNUT GREEN CHOPPED

In November 2015, KCC were requested to cut back the basal growth, ie the bushy growth at the base of some of the chestnut trees at Chestnut Green, and remove any dead wood. However, we were shocked to discover that they have severely lopped one of the trees. The Parish Council has asked KCC for an urgent explanation for this apparent transgression.

STOP PRESS – UPDATED ON LOWER THAMES CROSSING ISSUED WITH PARISH MAGAZINE

LATEST NEWS: LOWER THAMES CROSSING CONSULTATION

Highways England published their Lower Thames Crossing Consultation on Tuesday 26th January 2016. They have dismissed Option A at Dartford and have recommended a crossing east of Gravesend.

They have published two proposed routes for the link road south of the Thames which impact on Shorne. Both routes emerge from tunnels by Lower Higham Road in Chalk before crossing the A226 just west of Chalk Church.

One of the routes aligns closely with the KCC proposed route, across the fields and part of Southern Valley Golf Course, before crossing Thong Lane near the junction with Shorne Ifield Road, and then on to an interchange centred on the site of the former Esso service station on the A2. This is known as the Western Southern Link (WSL).

However, Highways England have expressed concern regarding the tightness of the bends on the interchange, necessitating speed restrictions, and not providing "motorway-to-motorway" connection. **They have therefore selected a new 'preferred' route known as the Eastern Southern Link (ESL).**

From Chalk Church, the ESL would cross the A226 and run parallel with it, before crossing Forge Lane very close to the bend just up from Shorne Crossroads. The link road would then cross part of Smiths Farm, cut across The Warren, before crossing Pear Tree Lane in a deep cutting very close to Danver Lodge and Merrievale. It would then go through Great Crabbles Wood, where it would split. The western fork would cross Bowesden Lane near Boysden Shaw before joining the A2 near Park Pale. The eastern forks would join the M2 near junction 1.

This would be a 70mph motorway-standard dual carriageway cutting through some of the most beautiful parts of Shorne. Both routes include an interchange junction with the A226, which would result in a large increase in traffic on the A226. The ESL junction would be opposite the entrance to the new crematorium.

The full consultation document can be accessed at: <http://www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk/>

Bob Lane

Shorne Parish Council