

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————



PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

July 2016

Shornemead Level Crossing Re-Opened

After seven years of work, including gathering evidence, appealing against the decision, and finally getting the Definitive Map amended and the crossing recognised as a Public Right of Way, we are pleased to report that the crossing has been reopened. There is a new signpost at the crossing, the gate on the south side has a new latch, and there is a new white painted wooden gate on the north side. The Parish Council has also received confirmation of the modification order from Kent County Council.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation

Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) is inviting borough residents and other key stakeholders to take part in a Public Consultation.

Until April 2013, any Council Tax benefit payments made by the Borough Council were funded by the Government and therefore carried no cost to the Council. The Government abolished the Council Tax Benefit scheme from 1 April 2013 and made local Councils responsible for setting up their own local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (CTRS) for working age people. The Government also reduced the amount of funding given to Councils to pay for the schemes.

The amount of grant received from Government to pay for CTRS is no longer separately identified in the general grant. Therefore any decrease in the general grant means there is less money to pay for all Council services, including the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

GBC has a difficult financial situation to manage over the coming years and will need to make savings and increase income. Part of these savings could come from reducing the amount of financial help provided to residents on low incomes through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. If these savings are not made from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, other savings will have to be found from somewhere else within the Council's overall budget.

The Council needs to set its Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2017/2018. Whilst this is a challenging financial situation to manage, this is not the only reason that the Council is consulting. Central Government has made welfare changes, and the Council would like to know if you consider the Council should reflect these changes at a local level. This is a complex issue, so they have provided a video and some background information alongside the questionnaire on their website which should fully explain the survey to you.

If you would like to take part in the consultation, please respond to the survey at <http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/consultations>. If you require a printed copy of the survey to complete, please email the Council at cts@gravesham.gov.uk or telephone 01474 337000. The consultation closes on 4 September 2016.

Parish Council Chairman

At the Annual General Meeting on 26th May, Robin Theobald was re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council. John Bugg will continue as Vice Chairman.

Susan Lindley was re-elected as Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee, and Bob Lane was re-elected to Chair of the Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee.

Parish Council Meetings in July

Thursday 7th July - Parish Council Meeting.

Thursday 21st July - Planning & Highways Committee Meeting.

The meetings will start at 7.45pm in the Committee Room in Shorne Village Hall.

No meetings will be held in August.

Litter Patrol

It is disheartening to see litter starting to accumulate again after the excellent clear-up carried out by volunteers in March. It is planned to carry out another litter patrol on Saturday 17th September, so please make a note in your diary. We have 20 litter pickers, and it would be good if we can find a pair of willing hands for each one. Our litter patrols last about 2 hours, and participants find them very enjoyable, or "strangely therapeutic" as one of the volunteers described it last time out. If you would like to join our team of volunteers, please email Bob at shorne.volunteers@gmx.co.uk or give him a call on 01474 822680.

Correction

Last month, we incorrectly reported that the Annual Civic Service would be held at 10.00am on Sunday 16th June. This should have said 26th June. Apologies for the mistake, and we hope nobody turned up on the wrong day!

Bob Lane

Shorne Parish Council