

## **Parish Council Matters for July 2015**

### **Kent County Divisional Boundary Review – Have Your Say**

Did you know that in addition to local Parish Councillors and Borough Councillors, Shorne is also served by a County Councillor?

Shorne is currently part of the Gravesham Rural division of KCC, which covers all the rural areas of the Borough. Our KCC Councillor is Bryan Sweetland, who as many of you know is a good friend to the village of Shorne and the other villages in Gravesham, and does his best to make sure we get our proper share of attention at KCC.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently carrying out a review of the electoral divisions in Kent. The stated aims of the review are to:-

1. Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents;
2. Reflect community identity;
3. Provide for effective and convenient local government.

In order to balance the numbers of electors served by each of Gravesham's five County Councillors, one of its recommendations is to remove Lower Shorne from the KCC Gravesham Rural division, together with Higham and all the area north of the A226, and to place them in a new "Gravesham North" division which would also include Chalk, Denton, and all of Gravesend riverside as far west as Asda. At the same time, the Gravesham Rural division would be extended to include half of Riverview Park.

The recommendations also impact on the electoral ward arrangements for Shorne Parish Council. The proposal recommends the removal of Lower Shorne from the "Shorne Village" ward and establishing a new "Shorne North" ward to cover Lower Shorne and the area north of the A226. The current "Shorne West" ward would be discontinued and merged with the remaining part of the Shorne Village ward.

The Parish Council believes that the proposed changes to the county divisional boundaries and to the parish electoral wards are flawed and misguided.

We consider that the arbitrary exclusion of Lower Shorne and Higham from the Gravesham Rural county division and placing them in a new division which includes Denton and Gravesend riverside does NOT reflect the community identity, nor does it make geographical or electoral sense.

We also consider that the proposal to create a new Shorne North parish ward, and to discontinue and merge Shorne West parish ward with the remnants of Shorne Village parish ward, would not represent the wishes of the local communities and would not be reflective of the community identities or the distinct characteristics of the areas.

The period for consultation on the recommendations closes on 6 July 2015. Shorne Parish Council intends to make its views known to LGBCE, and we would encourage parishioners to

make their own submissions to the Kent electoral review by sending an e-mail to [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk), or by writing to:

*The Review Officer (Kent)  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
14th Floor Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP*

Further information on the review can be found online at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/kent/kent-county-council>

### **Footpaths in Shorne**

Last year, the Parish Council appealed for volunteers to help keep the 13 miles of footpaths and bridleways in Shorne open and clear of soft vegetation, in view of the severe cutbacks in the services provided by the KCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) teams. Unfortunately this appeal for volunteers met with only limited success, not enough to continue to operate as an independent team.

Dartford & Gravesham Ramblers have offered to step into the breach and to help keep the footpaths and bridleways open in those instances where KCC are unable to provide the service. Perhaps the best way we can help is for our volunteers to support the Ramblers' efforts.

Are you a regular user of the footpaths or bridleways in Shorne, and consider it important that they are kept open for the enjoyment of those who use them? If so, you might want to volunteer to help with the vegetation clearance by supporting the Ramblers during their forays into Shorne.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or would like more information, please ring me, as Chairman of the Parish Council's Footpaths, Properties and Green Committee, on 01474 822680 (mobile 07927 956983) or contact me by email at [bob.lane@gmx.co.uk](mailto:bob.lane@gmx.co.uk). Alternatively, Mike Hickmott at Dartford & Gravesham Ramblers can be contacted direct on 07711 536005 or by email at [mike.hickmott@fsmail.net](mailto:mike.hickmott@fsmail.net).

Bob Lane  
Shorne Parish Council