

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS - November 2014

Anti-social behaviour in Park Pale

The Parish Council has received a number of complaints from local residents about the behaviour of motor cyclists involved in "speed trials" and "road racing" late at night in Park Pale, the road leading from Brewers Road to the Rochester and Cobham Golf Course. Their actions were considered both dangerous and extremely noisy, with disturbances sometimes lasting until 1.30am.

At the Parish Council's meeting on 25 September, residents' representatives attended to report on the matter and to press for urgent action to be taken in view of the aggravation which was being caused. Representatives were also present from Harlex Ltd, whose premises are located in this road, and the Rochester and Cobham Golf Club.

Since this was essentially a public order matter, the Council arranged for Police Sergeant Carlie Deacon and our PCSO Dilpreet Gosal to attend the meeting together with our KCC Community Warden Steve Gray. Also present at the meeting was KCC Councillor Bryan Sweetland.

There was a full discussion of what options might be available to remedy what was reported to have become a worsening situation with the local residents feeling frustrated by the bikers' behaviour and their unwillingness to cooperate.

The police officers present explained that, following many telephone calls to their office, they had become well aware of this problem. Six warnings under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 had already been given to individual bikers following evidence being obtained of their behaviour. Should these individuals get any further warning their bikes are liable to be confiscated.

The police advised that they would further increase their presence on the scene and would highlight to all their traffic officers that this had become a problem area requiring vigilance on their part whenever they were in the area.

One of the factors which some of the residents who attended the Parish Council meeting thought might have contributed to this public nuisance had been the poor condition of Park Pale and the adjoining roads. It was pointed out that this area had become badly run down with weeds not having been cleared, verges not attended to and litter everywhere. Through the good offices of Bryan Sweetland, officials from Gravesham Borough Council [responsible for street cleaning and litter clearance] and Kent Highways [KCC] have since been getting involved with rubbish clearance and cutting back vegetation, but there is still more to do.

Since the Parish Council meeting, the police have advised us that there is now an increasingly frequent presence on their part in Park Pale. There is said to be a constructive dialogue ongoing between the police and the bikers. The police say that, as a result, there has already been a "big improvement" in the situation. The number of telephone complaints to them has reduced, in the main, to no more than one and sometimes none each week. The police have undertaken to continue patrolling the site closely in order to ensure that the situation remains under control with, it is hoped, an end of the presence of the bikers on this road before long.

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Shorne Parish Council