

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19



*Vista and popular footpaths to be destroyed forever by the Lower Thames Crossing
(Photo May 2019, courtesy of Jo Agg)*

As a Parish Council, we are required to hold an Annual Parish Assembly once a year, to report to our parishioners on what we have been doing over the past year, and to answer your questions.

This year the Assembly was held on Thursday 18th April, 2019.

The assembly also provides an opportunity for parish organisations to report on their activities and to encourage people to join them.

The Annual Report is based on the reports from the Council and the parish organisations.

We hope that you will find this 2018-19 report interesting and informative.

Chairman's Report



A Parish Council is the first tier in local government. In addition to our formal Parish Council meetings and Committee meetings where business is conducted, we are required by law to hold an Annual Parish Meeting or Assembly between 1st March and 1st June. This is where we report on our activities over the past year and it is also an opportunity for parishioners to raise issues and ask questions. We also provide an opportunity for other organisations to report on their activities.

This is my first report as Chairman of the Parish Council. This year's Parish Assembly is a little earlier in the year than in the past. This is partly because we were scheduled to have Parish Council elections in two weeks' time, followed by our AGM where Members will be elected to the Committees and it is appropriate that the report on our activities over the past year is presented by the Members who were responsible for the activities, whilst they are still in post.

I am pleased to report that the Parish Council election was uncontested and the existing Councillors have been re-elected.

I'd like to thank my Vice-Chairman, Robin Theobald, for the valuable advice and support he has provided me over the past year. I would like to congratulate Robin for achieving admission as Honorary Freedom of the Borough, in recognition of his eminent services to the Borough of Gravesham.

My thanks also go to my fellow Councillors for their good work over the past year. I would like to give my particular thanks to Lisa McCluskey, who took over from me as Chair of the Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee last year, and to Susan Lindley, who continues to chair the Planning & Highways Committee, keeping a close eye on planning issues affecting the parish, and making sure that KCC gives proper attention to our roads. I would like to commend Susan on the excellent response to the Lower Thames Crossing consultation she submitted on behalf of the parish.

With elections this year, there was no guarantee that any of us would continue as Parish Councillors. But it is with particular sadness that I have to announce that Russell Cooper decided not to stand for re-election. Russell was an active member of the Parish Council for seven years, and we shall miss his valued input and pragmatic advice. This means that we have vacancy on the Parish Council, which we shall endeavour to fill by co-opting a suitable volunteer.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to our Clerk, Theresa Martin, who has decided to retire after 33 years of faithful service with the Parish Council. In that time, Theresa has seen many Councillors come and go, and has brought a sense of continuity to the Parish Council. Loyal to the end, Theresa has agreed to

continue until we have found a suitable replacement and to help her successor settle into the role. I am sure that all Councillors, past and present, will join me in wishing Theresa a long and happy retirement.

Grant to Shorne C of E Primary School: In April last year we made a grant of £1,448 to Shorne Primary School for the replacement of much-needed extractor fans in the toilets. This need had been identified earlier in the year by Cllr John Bugg, who is the Parish Council's nominated member on the Board of Governors. John has also undertaken important work helping to supervise the contract to replace the school roof.

GDPR: On 25th May last year, the General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR) came into force, and there was considerably conflicting advice about how this would impact the Parish Council. Since most of the information we deal with is already in the public domain, we decided to apply a light touch with regards to GDPR, but it made us think about, and document, how we deal with the storage and sharing of data. It also encouraged us to adopt a dedicated email domain for Parish Council correspondence, rather than use our own personal email addresses. This makes it easier to keep track of correspondence and to recover information if we receive a data request. It also makes it simpler for parishioners to get in touch with us, since all our email addresses are now just our names @shorneparishcouncil.org.

CCTV: Last year we reported on the installation of a CCTV system in the village, which was funded via a KCC Members' Grant sponsored by Cllr Bryan Sweetland. I am pleased to report that it has proved useful on several occasions, and images have been shared with the Police from time to time. I am particularly pleased to report that it was used to make a full recovery of costs after a vehicle struck the window of the Village Hall, causing £1,880 worth of damage.

AED: Just before Christmas, we installed an AED, an automated external defibrillator, outside the Village Hall. This was jointly funded by the Parish Council and the Village Hall, and again supported by a KCC Members' Grant sponsored by Cllr Sweetland. The AED is easy to use, with clear audio and visual instructions provided. It is accessible 24 hours a day via a code which is provided by the 999 operator in an emergency. This is one facility which we hope never has to be called upon, but it is comforting to know that it is there if ever the need arises.

SID: I am also pleased to report that the Parish Council has recently agreed to invest in a community operated speed indicator device, or SID, which monitors and displays the speed of passing vehicles. This will be similar to the unit in use in Cobham and Sole Street, and it is planned that our unit will be moved periodically between posts that will be installed in Pear Tree Lane, Tanyard Hill, and Thong. In addition to educating drivers and slowing traffic, the SID will gather valuable data regarding traffic volumes and vehicle speeds through the village, and can be used by our local Speedwatch volunteers.

Mobile Phone Masts: On perhaps a less positive note, following the withdrawal of the proposal to install mobile phone equipment in the Church tower, the Parish Council has received two enquiries from mobile phone infrastructure providers investigating the possibility of installing a mast on Parish Council-owned land near Mill Hill Lane. Whilst the first enquirer felt that the site was unsuitable and withdrew their interest, the second company has been more persistent.

Whilst the Parish Council has not initiated either of these approaches, we are aware of recent changes to legislation that gives infrastructure providers legal rights to compulsorily acquire the land under certain circumstances, and to claim compensation from local authorities that obstruct them. We have therefore granted them permission to survey the site for suitability, so that we can obtain further information without prejudice.

My own view is that there is a certain degree of inevitability that some form of mobile phone mast will be installed somewhere close to the village centre at some time in the future. We need to consider whether it is in the best interests of the Parish that it should be on Parish Council-owned land, where we may have some

influence on its design and appearance, or whether it should go on private land, or land owned by Gravesham Borough Council or KCC, such as the roadside verges and greens in the village. In these circumstances, any influence we may have on the location or design would be limited, and the Parish would not benefit from any payments from the infrastructure company.

Website: I would like to once again draw your attention to the Parish Council website at <https://www.shornepc.kentparishes.gov.uk> – This is where we publish our programme of meetings, agendas, and minutes of meetings, as well as official notices, news items and our monthly newsletter. It also includes our contact details, and useful links to report fly tipping, potholes, footpath problems, etc. Please do not rely on our notice boards, as we cannot guarantee that these are always up to date, and important information may be covered up or removed. And for those who use social media, we also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/shorneparishcouncil> which includes more news items and news of local road closures.

Local Plan: I cannot conclude my report without mentioning the potential threat to the parish from the latest housing targets for the Gravesham Local Plan. As reported in the 2014 Annual Report, Gravesham's original target of 4,600 new homes between 2011 and 2028 was considered unsound, and the target was increased to 6,170 new homes in order to obtain endorsement by the Planning Inspector. However, in 2018 this housing target was increased to 8,000, and Gravesham Borough Council has said that this target cannot be met without allowing up to 2,000 new homes to be built on what is currently classified as Green Belt land. The Parish Council will oppose any proposals which impact on the strategic gap between the built-up areas of Gravesend and the Medway Towns.

Bob Lane
Chairman of Shorne Parish Council



Council Committee on Planning and Highways

This is my fourth year as Chair of the Committee, and first of all I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman, John Bugg for his assistance, Theresa Martin and all the members of the Committee and specifically Robin Theobald for all his help and advice.

Planning

This year the Parish Council has reviewed and made representations on 87 planning applications of various kinds affecting the Parish (including three outside our boundary). This is an increase of 26% on the previous year (69 applications), which itself was up by over 60% on the year before that (43 applications). It's been an interesting year! The three applications outside our boundary were for a storage and distribution facility for ready-mix concrete lorries at Scalers Hill, an estate of 300 houses near Strood Fire Station and a four-storey block of 64 flats at Marling Cross. We objected to all of these. Thirteen applications were non-residential, of which four related to the Country Park and other woodlands, two were for change of use of existing agricultural barns (which cause concern over increased traffic) and two were in connection with a large new barn at what is now going to be New Green Farm apple orchards - you can watch that being built presently. One was hoping to increase land values prior to the Lower Thames Crossing, the Crematorium are wanting a more impressive entrance and someone wanted to put another 30 metre high telecoms mast at the Inn on the Lake but that application was withdrawn. There was a very complex application at the Nuralite Industrial Estate (entered via Higham) to create a large business park that would greatly increase traffic through

Higham, and we objected to that. We had sympathy for but have had to object to a proposed garden centre at Hartshill Nursery, again because of consequent increase in traffic.

That leaves 71 applications on 47 domestic properties, compared to 61 applications on 53 domestic properties last year. That statistic doesn't take account of repeat applications across the year ends but does begin to convey some of the difficulties of playing "spot the difference" with what are sometimes very complex and difficult to read building plans.

All applications are examined very carefully, and generally some kind of comments, of varying levels of detail, have to be submitted. All comments sent in by SPC can be viewed on the GBC website plus are recorded in the Planning and Highways Committee minutes, as is information about individual planning problems. The detailed analysis will be published in the minutes of the next Planning and Highways Committee meeting. Some areas of the Parish cause a lot more difficulties than others. Most applications are reasonable and proportionate but some are "over-the-top", very inconsiderate to neighbours and the rural environment and to the Parish as a whole.

Over the last few years there had been a temporary relaxation of planning rules (e.g. eight-metre deep rear single-storey extensions permitted without full consultation) but happily this is coming to an end soon. Since last year I can also say that it is now quite rare for us not to be consulted by the Borough Council, who do I think value our input.

Planning matters particularly worth mentioning:

Lower Thames Crossing: The Lower Thames Crossing is our biggest "Planning matter". After the "non-statutory" route consultation in 2016, we knew that a "statutory" consultation would follow at some point. The months leading up to the end of September were relatively quiet with not really a lot happening (the "calm before the storm" perhaps?), and no further information coming from or meetings held with Highways England (HE) – at least, not with the Parish Council. We were aware of meetings HE held with business groups, a KCC + Medway + GBC meeting in May and a briefing to MP's in July (which Bob Lane had been kindly invited to by Adam Holloway MP). HE were meanwhile undertaking some wildlife surveys and aerial surveys of utilities (cables, drains, gas pipes etc) locally. During this time however, joint working/meetings started happening between the Lower Thames Crossing Association (of which Bob Lane and Susan Lindley are both members) and GBC, and that group also met with HE early in July. The meeting was very frustrating though as HE stuck to their old script even over items where we had heard confidentially through other means that changes had already been made, and they refused to show us any updated plans. As an example, only a few days after the meeting a revised (enlarged) "red line boundary" (borders of land required to build or operate the LTC) was published without it having been previously mentioned as being imminent, which made a mockery of the supposed collaboration.

By 4th October, there had been no new information or meetings since early July, but HE published the official notices announcing that there would be a 10 week statutory consultation between 10th October and 20th December 2018. As with the 2016 consultation, about 1500 pages of information and a variety of maps and charts were published as multiple documents and all of it had to be read through in conjunction with the 2016 documents to try and work out what had changed. Confusingly, the information on important matters like traffic volume and air quality changes etc, both of which will deteriorate, was presented completely differently so comparisons could not be made with previous figures. Some information was published with a superficial overview, which in some cases had very misleading charts, accompanied by other documents so detailed that average readers would not have a hope of understanding what read like somebody's university PhD thesis.

As regards changes since the previous consultation, we had already been told that the junction with the A226 had been removed, and rumours that the tunnel entrance had been moved 600m further south were proved correct. However there were many aspects where modifications that we had previously advised as essential had not been adopted, such as a very wide “green bridge” being needed at Thong Lane. There was a fly-through video released though which helped understand, and reveal the design deficiencies of, the vastly complicated and greatly enlarged junction with the A2 and the new feature of having side service roads. These changes greatly increase the loss of Green Belt land and woodlands.

HE held various consultation events in the area. Parish Councillors attended the nearest (Cascades 1st November, Shorne Village Hall 3rd November) and the mobile exhibition located at the Village Hall on 26th November to assist parishioners and ascertain their opinions. The Parish Council website and various Facebook groups were used to publicise the consultation locally.

We waded through the documents to the best of our abilities and our response is available for you to read on the Parish Council website at <https://www.shornepc.kentparishes.gov.uk/lower-thames-crossing-consultation-response/>. It focused on themes rather than going into minute detail. We also met with officers at KCC and GBC to ensure that the Parish viewpoint was incorporated into their highly detailed official submissions.

Overall there were 28,000 responses submitted to the consultation but nothing has been heard since. We understand that the analysis of and response to the points everyone made in their responses will not be published until the next stage in the process which relates to HE applying for a “Development Consent Order” as the proposals are classed as a “Nationally Significant Infrastructure” project. The date for this is unclear at the moment but when it happens there will only be 6 weeks available in which to read all the documents, analyse them and respond. Rest assured that we will again do our best to liaise with GBC and KCC and to ensure that all salient points are put across, to cast as much doubt as possible on the project and to achieve the most improvements that we can. We will continue to press for increased tunnelled/cut-and-cover length, wider “green bridges” and greater environmental mitigation for severely affected residents.

Recently we were informed that HE are taking over their previously closed lorry park at Marling Cross (fencing has already been erected) as a works compound for on-going geological and other ground investigation and environmental studies and they may also be again using the smaller compound at Queens Farm that they used previously.

Fence erected across Burdett Avenue: At approximately this time last year a householder at the end of Burdett Avenue erected a fence that would have enclosed part of the adjacent field and also fenced completely across the end of Burdett Avenue so blocking residents from directly accessing Footpath NS156. The field owner promptly took legal action and that fencing was removed very rapidly. It was easily established that the highway runs right up to the field fence but still took several months for KCC to achieve removal of the fence by the householder, and it was only eventually removed on 12th September.

A visitor from the frozen north: Parishioners may not all be aware, but the Shorne Parish northern boundary is in the middle of the River Thames – this was highlighted last Autumn when “Benny” the Beluga whale took up residence for several months particularly in Shorne Parish waters near Shornemead Fort.

Highways

It has overall been quite a successful year for resolving Highways issues.

New local managers (again!): Last year I reported that we had a new KCC local Highways Steward and new KCC Highways Managers for Gravesham. Unfortunately, this year I am doing the same – the rapid changes of personnel are unhelpful in getting highways matters progressed.

The KCC on-line reporting tool: I make no apology for mentioning this again as it is the best way of reporting highways (and footpaths too) problems and getting them fixed. We strongly encourage residents to use it – you can pinpoint the fault on a map, see if it has already been reported, describe where and what it is, and upload photographs so that there is evidence and no doubt about the severity of the problem. See <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Highways matters particularly worth mentioning:

Resurfacing of Cob Drive: I was very pleased that, having photographed all the potholes and reported the problem to KCC, the whole road was resurfaced in the summer (unfortunately they didn't repair the footways as well but that is a different matter!). It was a good quality job done in only two days and the contractors came back only a few days later and reinstated all the school entrance markings.

“Stream” surfacing on Tanyard Hill: This was mentioned last year and since then it's been a see-sawing time for this again currently on-going problem. Thanks to the persistence of a householder, KCC were eventually nagged into investigating the soggy verge on Tanyard Hill. They said that water was flowing along the BT ducting and leaking out of it. Something that they did resolved the problem.....we thought! Since a few months ago it had however been observed that water was draining off from the woodland and going into a drain but then coming back out of the next drain down, so KCC were asked to clear the drains. They came and did that, which seemed to work but then the gremlin struck again and the soggy verge has reappeared. Pressure is being put on KCC again to resolve the problem definitively (we hope).

Traffic speed and calming on Brewers Road, The Ridgeway, Pear Tree Lane: This was also mentioned last year. We were generously provided with £2000 of funding from County Councillor Bryan Sweetland's Member Grant funding, and this was used to pay for traffic volume and speed surveys, which were done in October 2018. We are hopeful that the results mean that it will be possible to get the speed limit reduced along Pear Tree Lane. We presently await responses from KCC experts.

Yellow lines proposals: After having discussed our parking problems in Shorne with KCC for several years now I am pleased to report that we have been able to make some progress. Consultations were held recently over installing yellow lines at the corners where Bowesden Lane joins Pear Tree Lane, which should help with parking associated with the See Ho, and on the two straight sides of Chestnut Green, which will improve sightlines on leaving Tanyard Hill. This coming year we intend to focus attention on the area around the Country Park and the junctions with Forge Lane near the school.

Susan Lindley
Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee



Council Committee on Footpaths, Properties and Greens

I have just completed my first year on the Parish Council and also my first year as Chair of the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee. I would like to thank Bob Lane; Vice-Chair of the Footpaths, Properties and Greens Committee and my fellow Councillors for the advice and support they have given me in my efforts to maintain and improve our environment.

Footpaths

There are 13 miles of Public Rights of Way or Footpaths as they are sometimes called within the Parish. Most of the Footpaths and bridleways in Shorne are maintained by Kent County Council. Unfortunately, KCC are

suffering more severe cutbacks in Government funding, resulting in a negative impact on the maintenance and cutting back of the vegetation along the footpaths. It's down to us all to make sure any problems with accessibility to the footpaths is reported to KCC before they become impassable. There is a link to the KCC reporting page on our website.

KCC Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan: I am pleased to inform you that KCC has adopted the revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). I contributed to this back in September and the final version was effective from 15th December 2018 until the end of 2028 and available to view on their website.

Properties

The Parish Council does not own a great deal of property. We have a couple of brick- built bus shelters on the Gravesend Road which are now over 60 years old and showing their age. These will need to be replaced sometime in the future and could prove costly.

Greens

KCC have been responsible for the maintenance of our roadside greens and verges since 2017. KCC is only responsible for cutting the 'urban' grass and this only happens 6 times a season and means that they can become overgrown during periods of excessive growth. The Parish Council considered taking over the maintenance of the verges from KCC, however the money offered was not sufficient to cover our costs and we do not have the capability of taking it on ourselves. The Parish Council continues to carry out supplementary Spring cutting of the verges where bulbs are growing and helps in keeping on top of the growth.

Our supplementary verge cutting (where bulbs are planted) has been increased from 4 cuts to 5 cuts this year, with an extra cut in June. We do this because KCC will not cut these verges (in Tanyard Hill, Post Office Green, and Chestnut Green) until the flowers have died back in June, by which time the verges are very long and untidy. The work we carry out helps keep the village centre looking neat and tidy.

There are 4 areas of common land that the Parish Council owns and is responsible for maintaining. These are the Recreation Ground, Shorne Common Rough between the Ridgeway and Woodlands Lane, Shorne Common (by the Scout Hut) in Mill Hill Lane and Crabbles Bottom between Crutches Lane and Bowesden Lane.

The Recreation Ground is leased by Shorne Football Club and the grass is maintained by Gravesham Borough Council. However, the entrance to the recreation ground has been suffering in the recent winter months and in need of repair. Harlex Haulage very kindly came to our rescue and offered to do the repairs for us and thus now reducing the many puddles so huge thanks to them. The padlock on the gate was also replaced this year after the previous one broke. A tree survey was carried out here in November 2018 and has shown that essential remedial tree work is needed on four trees within the recreation ground. We are currently awaiting final quotes for this work.

Shorne Common Rough had a new sign installed at the end of December last year however by the end of February, the sign, not the posts had been taken by someone. A very kind non- parishioner from Riverview Park has replaced the sign for us free of charge. One of the chestnut butts is missing and will be replaced in the next few weeks.

Shorne Common in Mill Hill Lane has had the play equipment refurbished to comply with the results of a safety inspection which had been carried out earlier in the year. The annual maintenance and bark spreading will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Crabbles Bottom is an area of 27 acres of woodland, meadow and ancient orchard between Crutches Lane, Bowesden Lane and the Wainscott Bypass owned and maintained by the Parish Council. We employ various contractors to cut back the footpaths and bridleway to make easy passage for visitors to walk through. We also have the grass in the orchards cut to prevent the brambles and nettles taking over completely. Again, this year we have had to replace more of the fencing alongside the bridleway as well as the wooden gate at the entrance. Hopefully if the weather is kind to us over the next 12 months; repairs to the fencing may not be necessary. We also added 3 metal signs to the entrances this year; to put a spotlight on this beautiful area and encourage visitors to walk, ride, bring their dogs and if they wish pick some of our lovely apples from the orchards and blackberries from our bushes.

We have added vegetation control in Bowesden Lane, so access to Crabbles Bottom is maintained for horses and walkers.

Telephone Boxes: It was brought to our attention earlier this year that the two red telephone boxes in the village were looking a little tatty. I contacted BT and asked if they could come and repair the broken glass panels and give them a little spruce up, which they did very quickly after my initial request. BT are looking to sell off old red telephone boxes and in the future if we want to keep these little pieces of our heritage, it may be that the village and its parishioners may have to take responsibility for them.

Litter Patrols: During the last year numerous litter patrols have taken place in all areas of Shorne. Over 100 volunteers gave up their time to attend no less than 4 litter picks and collecting in excess of 150 bags of rubbish.

In March, Shorne's litter patrol was co-ordinated with another 42 litter pickers from Cobham and Chalk, and we joined hands with them at Halfpence Lane and at the Crematorium, making a clean sweep from Sole Street right through Shorne village and Pear Tree Lane to the Lion Garage.

Michael Gardens Play Area: The play area in Michael Gardens, Shorne West has been given a small refurbishment by Gravesham Borough Council (the owners). The baby swing has been replaced and the toddler climbing frame and slide has been repaired and repainted. There are now also two benches located within the play area which have been installed after pressure from the Parish Council to Gravesham Borough Council.

Lisa McCluskey
Chairman of Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee



The GBC owned play area at Michael Gardens



Shorne Litter Patrol March 2019



Mowing in progress at Crabbles Bottom



Replacement new sign at Shorne Common Rough



Gravesham Borough Councillor's Annual Report

There are a number of issues affecting the Borough Council. Firstly, in order to keep the Council running it needs to be on a sound financial footing. The funding the Council receives from central government out of general taxation has been cut by over 40% and is still being reduced. In the first instance, the Council looked to increase efficiency and reviewed its services with a view to increasing revenue and reducing costs. There are, however, limits to what can be reasonably achieved before services to the public begin to suffer. You may have noticed public toilets being closed.

The Borough Council has been receiving a 'new homes bonus' - a payment made from central government tied to the number of houses built. This is being phased out.

The Council holds balances, some of which it has invested in property which is giving a reasonable return to boost its income. With continued low interest rates, cash in the bank is not giving a good return.

The Thatcher government centralised the collection of business rates and redistributed funds. Areas with a lot of industry like Gravesham tended to lose out. The Government is now returning business rates to local authorities to compensate for some of the lost revenue but it is also clawing back a proportion.

The Council has also been looking for savings by sharing services with other authorities. Gravesham has some joint back-office services with Tonbridge and Malling and joined with Medway to share their legal services.

The Government limits how much local authorities can increase the council tax each year before holding a referendum on the increase. This year the limit is 3% and Gravesham's tax increase is 2.97%.

On the planning front, the Borough Council consulted last year on revision to the local plan. The current plan was adopted in 2014 and has interim approval until 2019, conditional on the Council undertaking a Green Belt review to identify land to be released for future housing. The approval was also conditional on the immediate release of the land off Coldharbour Road for housing. After the election, the new Council will need to produce a revised plan to be placed before a government inspector at an examination in public. It is important that the plan is approved if the Council is to be able control development in the future.

This document, entitled Site Allocations: Issues and Options, is the subject of consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Robin Theobald
GBC Councillor for Shorne, Cobham and Luddesdown



County Councillor's Annual Report

It continues to be a very busy year at Kent county council. At the moment we are just about to agree our budgets for 2019/20 and the council tax will be increased by just under 5% this year. That sounds like a big increase, but the council tax element is just under 3% and then there's the 2% adult social services care charge which the government introduced a couple of years ago.

Again this year our funding from central government has been reduced by around £50M.

Over the last few months I have had a number of meetings with Highways England, Kent County Council Highways and the Borough Council on the plans to build the Lower Thames Crossing. Together with our MP, Adam Holloway and Bob Lane, I met with Tim Jones from Highways England – he is the Project Director for the LTC. We had a fairly positive meeting and he explained some of their plans which included the enormous construction site that will be built adjacent to Thong and close to the Southern Valley Golf Course, which will close, probably within the next two years, if not sooner. The site will be the base for around 2000 construction workers and this is quite worrying for local people. The only positive I can see, and something that I have been pushing for, is that these new jobs should be offered to local people. There is also an opportunity for dozens of new apprenticeships to be created for local young people.

However, I don't think local people really realise the extent and size of the construction site at the moment. Together with representatives from the Parish and Borough Council, I will continue to protect the interests of local people as much as we possibly can.

Over the last 12 months I have been asked by several Parish Councils to fund quite a lot of traffic monitoring on local roads which may be useful to provide statistics as to the direction of traffic, the speed of traffic and whether the vehicles are cars or lorries. We can use this when challenging some of the Highways England assumptions.

We must not forget that KCC has many other responsibilities, such as services for young people and older people, social services, schools, libraries, trading standards, planning, recycling, responsibilities for flood risk and so on. My role as a county councillor is also changing. I am more and more involved with school appeals, school transport appeals and planning issues. I am always happy to meet with local groups and parishioners to discuss any issue concerning the County Council and when necessary I will attend Parish Council meetings if there is a specific issue that I can help with. Recently I facilitated a number of events hosted by Matthew Scott, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner. I hope that these events have proved useful.

I have also been involved in the fight to protect our precious greenbelt. I am disappointed that the Borough Council hasn't pushed back on some of the housing targets handed down by central government. I'm also concerned that the necessary infrastructure funding is not going to be there to support the new houses that are being planned. I also don't think it's necessary to build on huge areas of our greenbelt. For example, if

Gravesham agrees to the house build targets the government would like to see, there will not be enough senior school places in the Gravesham Rural areas. The same will apply for other important public services as well.

On a positive note, our local schools in Gravesham Rural are all improving with many achieving OFSTED ratings of good or excellent. This is been largely down to the hard work of the teaching staff and governors supported by Kent County Council.

My job is made so much easier by having six excellent Parish Councils and several Community Associations.

As a County Councillor I am in Maidstone for about 2 days a week. I chair two committees, covering Policy and Resources, and Property. I also serve on several other committees including Personal and the Kent Fire and Rescue Authority.

I am always available for any parishioners who need help or advice with any of KCC services and my contact details are at the bottom of this report.

As a KCC Member, I have a discretionary grant available which next year is being reduced from £20,000 to £15,000. Wherever possible, I discuss with local groups or Parish Councils where best to allocate the funding which is usually spent on community projects or small-scale Highways work that might need doing.

Over the last year, I have used the grant funding to:

- Help fund an educational summer camp for 1st Higham Scouts
- Funded various traffic surveys across Gravesham Rural (including the A227)
- Helped with the renovation of Harvel Village Pond
- Sponsored "Picnic on the Green2 at Meopham
- Refurbished the Memorial Hall kitchen at Istead Rise
- Provide a number of public access Defibrillators / AEDs around our villages.
- Provide road signs (No HGVs etc.), Yellow Salt /Grit road side bins, Verge posts etc.

To contact me Tel. 07976 309171 but email is best: bryan.sweetland@kent.gov.uk

Bryan Sweetland
KCC Councillor, Gravesham Rural

CHURCH, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul



The parish church continues to sit quietly in the heart of the village - the church has been there for hundreds of years, each generation looking after the building with repairs and renovations, ready to hand on to the next generation.

By the time you read this report, you will have noticed that we have started work on some urgent repairs to the roof - this is just a small part of a major repair and refurbishment programme, for which we need to raise half a million pounds (in round figures) to complete, in order for the church to remain safe, usable and fit for purpose in the twenty first century.

While the work goes on it will be business as usual, as far as that is possible - most things continue as usual: weekly services; meetings; coffee mornings; church cleaning; brass polishing and general cleaning; and the things of everyday life such as baptisms, Weddings and funerals.

We will also be continuing our programme of events and fundraising activities. I would like to record special thanks to all the people who are working so hard to keep the church open in the heart of our community, and also to those who are supporting us practically and financially. Any further help and support, and suggestions for more fundraising events and activities would be most welcome.

A review of our spiritual life reveals many well attended events and services over this past year. One event that I must specifically mention was our service marking the centenary of the end of "The 1914 – 1918 Great War" at which we saw a marvellous attendance from local people, both young and old.

With your continued help and support, we look forward to being here to serve this community for many more years to come.

May God bless you all

Reverend Ted Hurst,
Vicar

Shorne Bell Ringers

Shorne Bell Ringers presumably existed at the beginning of the 16th century when the “nu bell” and “Great Bell” were added to the tower. There has certainly been a band since 1803, when the full ring was recast to make today's bells.

Peal boards in the tower and competition certificates proclaim past accomplishment and, although not so glorious, our situation today is much better than it was a year ago. We are active in both ringing and socialising. It is pleasing to record that the band now numbers eight regular ringers, six of whom have achieved membership of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers.

With the benefit of welcome visitors, we ran a useful practice every Wednesday evening over the past year and can now ring to an acceptable standard with an entirely home band. Sundays remain a challenge, but we ring for at least one service every month and all principal church events. Remembrance Day was notable in 2018, with 100 parishioners chiming the bells, and New Year, when we resurrected the tradition of ringing out the old and ringing in the new and shared a glass with family and friends in the tower at midnight.

Individuals have attended regional training and events including the Association AGM and ringing at Rochester Cathedral. Collectively we enjoyed our, now annual, tower night out, sherry and mince pies at Christmas and two successful tower outings with other local bands, sharing a pub lunch and a traditional ringers' tea. Shorne has a reputation as a friendly teaching tower with a lot going on. Anyone wanting to try bell ringing or to find out more is always welcome.

Richard Farmer
Member



Shorne Village Pre-school

We are happy to report on another busy, successful and enjoyable year for Shorne Village Pre-school.

SUMMER TERM 2018: We had a very emotional leavers assembly for all our parents of children that were leaving for school. As music played in the background “Time to say goodbye”, Parents were shown photographs on a large screen of their children at play during their time with us. Not a dry eye in the room! The children were presented with certificates and their own learning journey folder. It was a very emotional day for us all. We finished our summer term with our annual Teddy Bears Picnic at Shorne Country Park for children, parents, Teddies and staff.

AUTUMN TERM 2018: We welcomed in a lot of new children and their families to Shorne Village Pre-school. We had an enjoyable Christmas Party for the children, and they loved our ‘Santa’s Grotto’ that had lots of sparkly lights and a visit from the man in red with presents for the children. We also held our annual Nativity at our local church with Father Ted. The story of Jesus’s birth was told through music and song and the children took part in creating the nativity scene with the knitted characters.

SPRING TERM 2019: We had our visit from Ofsted and are very happy to report we have kept our “Good” status. The children have enjoyed planting and watering our plant pots in the garden. We have had our annual sponsored bike ride to raise some money to buy some much needed new equipment for the children to enjoy.

Jenny Bennett, *Owner/Manager of Shorne Village Pre-school*

Friends of Shorne School [FOSS]

FOSS has continued to hold a variety of events to raise additional funds for the benefit of pupils of Shorne Primary School. These have included a Father's Day gift sale, a very hot but successful and enjoyable summer fete in July last year, the Great Shorne Bake Off (entries from the children of the school), donut sale, a wonderful Christmas Bazaar, Christmas Wreath making evening, a school disco, Mother's Day gift sale, non-uniform days, cake sales and an Easter Egg hunt.

In addition to paying for or contributing to a number of school trips and visits, the school eco-committee, the children's Christmas parties and other small-scale activities or educational tools required by the school, last year FOSS was delighted to raise sufficient funds to purchase a new interactive white board for one classroom, to match the school's purchase of 15 I-pads to provide a full classroom set for KS2 and to furnish the library with a wider selection of Senco Books and some well needed updated non-fiction books. We are currently in the process of purchasing further I-pads for use in KS1 and renewing the school's license for the very successful Accelerated Reader programme which is being used by all children in the school.

Our next key fundraising event is the summer fete on Saturday 29th June. This is always a great event supported by parents of the school but also by local businesses and friends within the local community. It is a very enjoyable day which raises a lot of money for the school and we very much hope that many of those within the parish will come along and enjoy the day with us. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the parishioners of Shorne for their continued support, particularly those at Shorne Village Hall and the residents of Cob Drive and Swillers Lane.

Our next AGM will be held in mid-July. I have attached a small selection of images taken from the recent events which may be of interest.

Victoria Turner
Chairman





Shorne Church of England Primary School

The first half of our summer term was very busy, especially with Classes 2 and 6 having sat their annual statutory tests, the SATs. As a school we were extremely proud of how hard the children in Class 6, in particular, have worked towards these. Of course they continued to focus on the curriculum for the rest of the academic year as well as looking ahead to starting secondary school. However, they were then able to enjoy the exciting things that happened during their remaining weeks at Shorne, which included the annual residential trip to Avon Tyrrell and the end of year production "Olivia!".

During this last year we have run a number of parent workshops, such as Visions and Values, Home Learning, Behaviour and a Growth Mindset workshop. All workshops were successful enabling us to share and work collaboratively with parents. Steve Carey (CEO) of the Academy attended the Vision and Values presentation and he shared information regarding the Vision of Aletheia Academy. This workshop was an opportunity to share how we, as a school, will provide an outstanding education inspired by the Christian faith for the children and to develop them into honest, caring citizens. It is also imperative that we work together and that we work collaboratively with governors and staff to continually strive for excellence.

In September, we appointed a new Deputy Head, Mr Mallinson, who is also our Class 3 teacher and we welcomed back Miss Carter and Mrs Doerr who had both been on maternity leave.

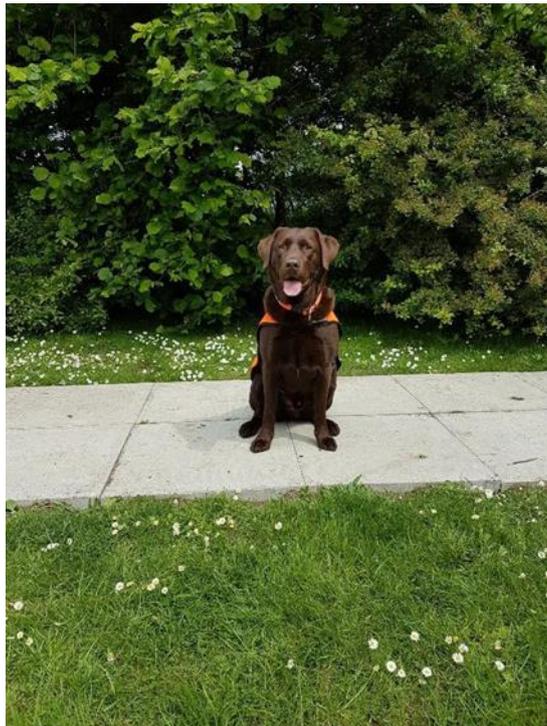
At the end of the summer term we said goodbye to Ian Craig who resigned as our Chair of Governors and we welcomed Luke Steggles as our new Chair. We are always very appreciative of our whole governing body, who give up their time to support and work closely with the leadership to bring about continual improvements.

Back in October, major building works were started as we had a completely new roof put on the school. We are now pleased to announce that this work has been successfully completed which will hopefully last the school for a very long time to come!

During this last year each class has continued to take part in regular Sunday morning church services at Shorne church with Father Ted. Also, in July, Mrs Taylor was extremely proud of four of our Class 6 children as they were confirmed by the Archbishop of Rochester at Shorne Church. They all received their first Holy Communion, and they even had dinner with the Archbishop himself!

Children at Shorne School have been very lucky to go on some amazing trips during the year with visits to a London theatre, a Science Night sleepover, residential trips to Kingswood Activity Residential Centre in Ashford and Avon Tyrrell Activity Centre in the New Forest, a visit to Dover Castle and the Gurdwara. Not to mention lots of people coming in to school to visit the children too – those in KS1 received a visit from the Bug Roadshow where they were able to hold and touch some amazing insects like sun beetles, grasshoppers, scorpions, katydids and silk moths. The Choir also took part in a choir festival as part of The Thameside Schools Music Association.

During the course of this year our Head of School, Miss Hewett, has been bringing in her 4-year old Chocolate Labrador, Harley. Harley has been spending a lot of time in school as a progressive program to introduce Harley to the school and vice versa. Harley has been receiving the correct Dog Mentor training to ensure that he has the right temperament to take on the role as a therapy dog and we are now very pleased to inform you that he has recently passed his assessment.



Harley

We would like to say a big thank you to all members of FOSS this year who work extremely hard to fund projects for the school. Amongst other things FOSS have funded new I-Pads for the children this year and their hard work is always greatly appreciated by all members of the school.

The children and school have been involved in many different fund-raising events: Back in October, lots of food was very kindly donated for our Harvest Festival, which was then delivered to the Gravesham Food

Bank; Shoeboxes were filled for the Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal; we had a whole school 'Dancethon' to raise money for the NSPCC; we raised funds for the Ellenor; and then at the end of last year collected money for the annual Poppy Appeal, held Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children and collected money for our Children in Need appeal.

Finally, the sporting calendar has been extremely busy over the last year with the children taking part in netball and football matches and tournaments, a dodgeball tournament, athletics tournaments and our Class 6 sports ambassadors attended Cobham Hall for an Active Health Conference.

Tara Hewett
Head of School



1st Shorne Scout Group

Shorne Scouts is celebrating its 80th anniversary and continues to thrive with over 60 young members, supported by a committed adult leader team of some 13 adults, and a number of young, under-18 leaders. We also share our facilities with the Gravesham District Explorer Scout Unit Phoenix (14-18 year olds). Other Gravesham scout and guide groups have also used our facilities over a number of weekends.

The Beaver section (6-8 year olds) meets on Mondays, Cubs (8-11 year olds) on Wednesdays and Scouts (11-14 year olds) on Thursday evenings. All three sections are currently fully subscribed and, unfortunately, we are running section waiting lists. Although varying across the sections, our membership currently comprises around one third girls and two thirds boys.

All the sections follow the Scout Association's varied and active programme centred around three main themes (Outdoor and Adventure, the World and Skills) involving both individual and teamwork challenges, offering diverse experiences and, importantly, having fun doing it. The group participated in the Remembrance Day Service at the Parish church in November along with the poignant ringing of the 100 bell tolls, and also had representatives at the Civic Service. All sections also joined the St. George's Day parade in Gravesend town centre. Excitingly, two of our young members gained places in the Kent County contingent to attend the 24th World Scout Jamboree which is being held in West Virginia, USA in July 2019. After the 12-day Jamboree, they will also spend time in other parts of the USA, including New York.

The Beaver section's activities included visiting a garden centre and planting sunflower seeds as part of their Gardening Badge, visiting the police station and talking about stranger-danger as part of the Safety Badge and doing Stage 1 Skiing badge at Gillingham dry ski slope. They participated in a fun water day at Leybourne Lakes, had treasure hunts around the community and followed a nature trail at Bluewater. The section currently has 16 members with two young leaders. One of the young leaders provides invaluable support to a Beaver with special needs.

The Cubs section has 23 members (9 girls and 14 boys). It continues to have an active and adventurous programme with activities including camping, archery, bell boating, climbing, laser tag, pedal karts, fires, korfbal, shelter building and hikes. They have camped at the Scout Hut and at Hopehill, taken part in a Treasure Hunt activity day and Astronomer camp, and re-enacted the Royal Navy gun run. The Cubs also learnt first aid (including how to use a defibrillator), visited the Chantry and New Tavern Fort and kayaked at Leybourne Lakes. Eight cubs have gained their Chief Scout's Silver award, the highest award in Cubs, and two of their young leaders achieved their Young Leader belt after completing training and putting it into practice running meetings and camps.

After a couple of years, the Scout section is now up to full strength, with 22 members including 6 girls. With a recent large influx of 11-year olds, the leaders are having the challenge to adapt the programme and manage the section to reflect the current younger age range. A summer camp was held at Thriftwood, Essex and attended by 18 young members. Fun activities there included rafting, other water activities, axe throwing and climbing. They also won the District "best built raft" competition in June. Other activities included suffering night hikes in torrential rain, on-water activities and undertaking open-fire cooking, pancake making and craft activities.

The Phoenix Explorer Unit numbers have sadly reduced to 6 members, 5 of which are girls. However, numbers are expected to increase with new intakes from local scout sections and a new leader team is now in place which will bring new ideas to the unit. In addition to following the section programme based on the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the unit has had night hikes over the Thames marshes, caving, cycling and outdoor cooking.

Chris Zgoda
Group Scout Leader



*Ringing the church bells
on Remembrance Sunday*



Cubs on a climbing wall



Scouts on their winning raft



Scouts at Summer Camp



Beavers with guide dog puppy



Dancing: Sheila Theobald School of Dancing

As usual it has been a very busy year for the dancing school.

In the September to December term 2018, we had Royal Academy of Dance Ballet examinations, Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing Modern and Tap examinations, plus School Assessments.

We are organised our usual theatre trip for our older groups, whilst our younger pupils enjoyed their traditional Christmas party. The end of term saw our senior students and adult pupils enjoying our annual Christmas meals together.

On Friday January 26th 2019, some of our younger members of the school performed at the Burn's Night celebrations in the village hall. This was the first time the children had performed in a cabaret setting rather than on a stage at the Woodville Halls, but they thoroughly enjoyed the experience, as I hope did the audience.

We also had R.A.D. ballet examinations in March 2019.

We also now have a flourishing Adults exercise and dance class in Gravesend on a Monday evening where participants can exercise within their own capabilities and enjoy learning a simple dance routine at the end of each class. This class is in addition to our Adult tap dance class on a Thursday evening.

Several of our students are now in full time dance training, and in September Esther Shelton, our current Head Girl commenced her second year of full time training. Two more of our students commenced full time Musical Theatre training in September 2018.

The summer term will again be particularly busy, as in May we have I.S.T.D. Modern and Tap examinations and in July we have R.A.D. Ballet examinations. We also have school Assessments this term.

In the summer term we will be holding our “Open Days” once again. Our open days give parents the chance to come into the school and watch their children’s classes so that they can see the progress the children are making and also view the syllabus content of each particular genre and the standards we have to achieve for the examining boards.

At present this concludes our list of activities.

Sheila Theobald,
Principal



LOCAL AMENITIES/SOCIETIES

Country Park: Shorne Woods Country Park

This year we have completed the annual one-hectare of coppicing in Randall Wood. All timber we cut is seasoned for at least two years and then chipped to provide sustainable heating for the main visitor centre or processed for sale as firewood to help offset the site’s running costs. The coppice coupe is adjacent to the 4km ride network that connects all parts of the woodland and all old coppice coupes together.



Due to the affordable rates & variety of catering options, the Chestnut room for hire has seen an increase in meetings & private events including birthday parties, wakes & wedding receptions.

Every week the Saturday Park Run regularly has over 300 runners peaking to 528 runners on New Year’s day.

This year Shorne Woods offset its entire running costs so was managed at no cost to the taxpayer, the Country Parks service as a whole offset 74% of their running costs.

The new Wyvern sculpture was installed by local Higham sculptor Steve Portchmouth in July – Steve designed the original Dragon sculpture in the early-90’s and which now sits behind the new Wyvern.

New raised flower beds were built in the volunteer garden with new sensory flowers planted and the path uprated to allow wheelchair access. More work is planned on the Volunteer garden this year.

A lot of work has been done on our pond network last year, clearing tree regeneration around the edges and removing reeds to will allow more sunlight into the ponds, which helps increase the health of the water.

This spring we will be repairing damaged paths in Randall Wood and replacing sections of path edging in the claypit area of the site along with vegetation control along the footpaths ongoing throughout the summer.

Our annual grazing of the knoll area of the park is due to start in May. Having more cattle for a shorter period last year worked well so we will be doing the same again this year.



The park was awarded the Green Flag Award again last year for the 9th consecutive year.

We have had a successful programme of fun, educational & seasonal events through the year. Half term trails have been popular giving children the opportunity to discover and learn about the park and its wildlife. 2996 children came and enjoyed education visits to the park this year, getting involved in pond dipping, forest school activities, den building.

Our volunteers contributed 865 days of their time to help us manage the park this year totalling 5189 hours. Volunteers help us carry out conservation tasks every Tuesday from 9:30am until 3:30 pm. We also have volunteers who help run the park run every weekend and volunteers who help us to manage the Volunteer garden. Archaeological volunteers continue to meet weekly at the park and carry out activities all over the local area focusing on Cobham. If you want to get involved in volunteering, please call 03000 414747.

You can keep up to date with all the work the team do and upcoming events on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ShorneWoods/>

If you have any questions or queries, please call 03000 414747 and one of the team will be happy to help you or alternatively come and find us at the visitor centre.

Michael Shulver
Senior Ranger



Dicken's Country Protection Society

The Society has been very busy as usual this year, continuing the basic work of monitoring and commenting on (when considered appropriate), the various local planning applications being submitted to both Gravesham and Medway councils. The Society also continually keeps under review major plans affecting our area of interest and makes input and representations as and when possible. Detailed analysis can be found in our latest Newsletter which is sent out to Society members.

The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) consultation: After a gap of a year, Highways England published more (but not enough) details of their proposed Lower Thames Crossing in the statutory Consultation which

ended on 20th December 2018. Significant negative changes included a greatly expanded junction with the A2 and two-lane service roads on both sides of the A2 which both mean that even more Green Belt land and Ancient Woodland will be consumed by the project. The previously announced dropping of the proposed A226 junction and the slight increase to the tunnel length were welcomed but the latter change in particular still does not go far enough. Much more protection is needed for Chalk, Riverview and Thong. The present design prevents Gravesend East residents from accessing the A2 eastbound easily, as they do now. The proposals will greatly increase traffic on the M2, adding badly to congestion eastbound in the afternoon/evening commuting period, and on all interconnecting routes between the A2/M2 and M20. There will consequently also be increased traffic on local roads. DCPS, along with affected local Parish Councils, submitted representations and now awaits the analysis and responses. The next step in the process is for Highways England to apply for a Development Consent Order as this project is regarded as Nationally Significant Infrastructure.

Other items that are particularly worth mentioning are:

- Increasingly, planning applications that have been refused are being taken to Appeal. Three recent cases concerning development in the Green Belt, where DCPS made representations, have all been dismissed.
- The Government's National Planning Policy Guidance was revised last year. In general, the rules are still being relaxed in favour of the land speculators and developers. A lot of land is being granted planning consent for housing but only half of it is being developed.
- During 2018 Gravesham Borough Council consulted on updating key parts of its Local Plan. DCPS submitted representations seeking to protect the Green Belt in general and particularly the strategic gap between Gravesend and the Medway towns. The outcome has not yet been published and there will be a second phase later this year.
- Medway Council have also continued to work on their Local Plan. This has to go through multiple consultations, to which DCPS has responded, and then pass formal inspections. The Draft Plan stage was originally planned for early 2019 but delayed to June/July while they await hearing about additional central Government funding for housing previously applied for, which will affect proposed timescales. Once published we will all know where Medway intend to locate building development, which could have direct impact on Shorne being close to Medway areas, and then there will be another consultation stage.
- DCPS objected to two nearby Medway planning applications on Green Belt land: 135 houses north of Brompton Farm Road and 300 west of Rede Court Road and also an application for a four-storey block of flats at Marling Cross..

On lighter matters:

- The Society held its annual Barn Dance on Saturday 11th May this year.
- Society contact details: Mrs P Lippiatt, 01322 275389

Susan Lindley
Committee Member



DCPS Barn Dance 2019

VILLAGE HALL AND HOSTED ORGANISATIONS

Village Hall

2018 has had its ups and downs this year, with the heating not working and being difficult and costly to repair, which kept us very busy with various workmen attending.

The last 4 months we didn't have a Caretaker leading to additional work opening a closing the Hall sometimes late at night. Fortunately many of the events had also booked a cleaner for afterwards. I am grateful to the Booking secretary for help in achieving this.

Looking on the positive side of things, we have had a Defibrillator fitted outside of the Hall – our thanks go to Shorne Parish Council, Kent county councillor Bryan Sweetland, the Pre-school and to all who bought ticket for the Raffle at our Quiz night in 2019.

I would like to thank: the Treasurer for all her book keeping and hard work; The Booking Secretary for showing people round the hall – sometimes she is at the hall six times a week; My vice Chairman for his support; The halls cleaner for keeping the hall to a high standard; And the Committee for all their support in 2018

The hall bookings are looking good for 2019 and we hope that 2019 will be even better now that we have a new Caretaker.

Gloria Ashby
Chairperson, Village Hall Management Committee



Early Retirement Club

The club was started in 1982 with a grant from the Personnel Department of Blue Circle for their "Early Retirees" and has continued to meet fortnightly ever since. The age profile may have changed but we still have among our members some who worked at Blue Circle. We meet fortnightly at Shorne Village Hall.

About three times a year, ladies attend the talks and join with us for lunch, as shown on the photo.



Thanks to our Speakers Secretary, Mike Fitzimmons, we have enjoyed speakers on a range of topics, e.g. "The Krays", "The Romance of London's Rivers" and "A Schoolgirls War".

Our Social and Membership Secretary, Jim Pearce (01474 355816) arranged for a pleasant Christmas Dinner with entertainment. He also made the arrangements for us to visit the Royal Engineers Museum at Gillingham and the newly opened Spitfire Memorial exhibition and chapel at Biggin Hill.

Anyone interested in joining us or attending our meetings will be made most welcome and this can be arranged by contacting Jim Pearce at the number given above.

Bill Woolley
Chairman



Local History Group

The Group meets on the third Thursday of the month, from October to April, at the Village Hall to hear talks on, mostly, our local history. The meetings start at 7.30 and usually finish by 9 pm. New members and visitors are welcome, just turn up to receive a warm welcome.

These are the talks we heard this year:

- October: Gravesend Airport by Frank Turner. Now covered by Riverview Park, it was a civil airport and some aircraft were built there. In WW2 it became an RAF fighter station.
- November: Cobham parish – A Kentish Gem by Christoff Bull. A talk on aspects of Cobham's history delivered in the speakers usual entertaining way.
- December: King Richard & the Peasants' Revolt by James Dickinson. Kent was very involved in the peasants' revolt led by Wat Tyler. This was followed by wine and mince pies.
- January: A Schoolgirls' War by Mary Smith. The speaker found an album of watercolours of Maidstone Grammar School for Girls in WW2 painted by a teacher. This led her to research that period for this talk illustrated by the paintings.
- February: Tugs on the Thames by Brian Biggs who worked on tugs after leaving school and worked his way to being a tug master before starting his own company.
- March: The Siren Sea by Imogen Corrigan. We always look forward to Ms Corrigan's lucid and entertaining talks. This time we heard about seafaring in the medieval period.
- April: From Trackway to Motorway by Mike Bundock. We heard how most roads have humble origins in the distant past and that the road network developed rapidly in the early 20th century.

For more information and our next programme, contact Mike Jenkins mcj866@gmail.com or 01474 822787.

Andrew Moffat
Chairman



Probus (Northfleet and District)

PROBUS (Northfleet and District) was formed in 1967 for retired and semi-retired, professional and business men, hence the name PROBUS and is the oldest Probus club in Kent.

We meet on alternate Tuesdays in the morning at Shorne Village Hall from 10.15am to 12.00. The Annual fee is £12.00 plus £3 per meeting. There is tea/coffee and biscuits, a free raffle for a bottle of wine and a Guest Speaker. There is a Social Team who arrange Day Trips and an annual Five-Day Break.

Last year we made a trip to Capel-le-Ferne Battle of Britain Memorial site and then on to Westwood Cross Shopping Centre. The Five-Day Break this year is Scotland Lochs and Glens and more One-Day trips are in the pipeline.

The Club has four luncheons a year. Members invite wives, partners and guests and is held at the Village Hall. At the moment, we have 50 members, with a new member inducted this year. Two members who celebrated their 90th birthdays within the last year, are both still very active – one of them is Roy Winter, a resident of the Shorne Village and also well-known for his slide show presentations. I believe he is still singing in the church choir.

We are a very friendly group. If you are retired or semi-retired, come along and see if you like us, by arrangement with our Club Secretary, Robin Friday: Tel 01474 363135 for general Probus information including meeting dates, topics, or visit www.shornevillagehall.org.

Trevor Ault
Chairman



Gay at Spring Lunch



Shorne Active Retirement Association (ShornAra)

ShornARA 50+ is for Men & Women. We meet on the last Tuesday of every month, in the afternoon. We have enjoyed another successful year packed with activities.

In 2018 we enjoyed holidays to Potters, The Isle of Man, Western Super Mare and an overnight stay to visit Highclere Castle.

We had days out to: Bewl Water with a Boat Trip and Fish & Chips; The Strand Hotel for Lunch then onto Westminster Abbey for a tour with a Guide; A tour around Cobham Hall with afternoon tea; and ending 2018 with a trip to Winchester Christmas Market.

Also during the year we enjoyed theatre trips to see Tina Turner the Musical and the King & I.

In February 2019 we ended with a New Year Party at the Knowle in Higham.

Charities: The Short Mat Bowls and our Ten Pin Bowling raised money for the Lions Hospice. The idea was instead of exchanging Christmas Cards to one another we gave a £1 each. We raised £50 for the Lions Hospice. Also, in our meeting we raised money for SSAFA. A charity for service men and women in the Dartford and Gravesend Area who need help when leaving the forces.

Maureen Horsham
Chair



4.2018 Isle-of-Man, Castletown



DSC_0893.JPG

Short Mat Bowls Club

Shorne Short Mat Bowls Club have had another very successful year by winning the Second Division of the Medway Triples, against stiff competition, and are now in the First Division which will mean a challenging year for us in 2019.

We had an annual dinner and dance in October with a live band which proved very popular and which we will be repeating this year. We also had a Christmas party where competition trophies were handed out. We meet every Wednesday evening at the Village Hall from 7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. with a break for tea and biscuits and a chat.

We continue to have a reasonable number of members but are always looking for new people to join us as we are a friendly social club with different events throughout the year. We hold internal competitions for any members who might wish to take part. All equipment can be provided for newcomers who will receive any tuition they may require.

Nick Trice
Chairman



STAGES (Shorne Theatre Appreciation & Group Entertainment Society)

2018 Was another successful year for Stages.

The Committee was very active in organising 60 events during the year, which included the following:

- 12 Members meetings in the Village Hall - these included entertainers and speakers plus 2 cheese & wine evenings and 2 cream teas. (The main purpose of our monthly meetings is for members to see what we have available for the future and to sign up for events already agreed at previous meetings).
- 18 Theatre visits either at London theatres or The Orchard at Dartford, The Marlowe at Canterbury or The Churchill at Bromley.
- 8 Classical Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall or Cadogan Hall in London.
- 6 Diners' Clubs in various restaurants.
- 6 Stately Homes & Gardens including Frogmore House and Windsor
- 6 Guided Tours of Various Locations.
- 4 Museums in London.
- 2 Horse Racing days at Kempton Park together with a meal.
- 1 Christmas dinner dance.
- An eight-day holiday in the Alsace region of France.

To end the year we had arranged Lunch on the Columbus Cruise ship in Tilbury. The ship had technical problems and had to go to Dover for repairs and they invited us to stay on the ship for the trip which was an all-inclusive day, enjoyed by everyone.

We do our best to offer something for all members, the suggestions for our trips come from members and our dedicated committee who run, and accompany members on, the trips.

Our 2019 programme is already going ahead with many new events.

Our membership is open to residents of Shorne, Higham, Chalk and Cobham. If you are interested in joining please ring our membership secretary Adrienne on 01474 822875.

Richard Moore
Chairman



Cottage Garden Society

Shorne Cottage Garden Society has been running for approximately 68 years and is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society and the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies.

Our regular annual programme of events in Shorne Village Hall comprises three Speaker Evenings (March, July and October), three Shows (Spring, Summer and Autumn) and an Annual Supper and Presentation of Trophies in November.

Speaker subjects for 2019 include: All Things Nutty by Kentish Nut Tree Growers; The Fascinating Life of the Mole by Chris Stewart; and Radio Kent's Steve Bradley talking about Making the Most of Bulbs and answering general questions. Visitors are welcome at these evenings – entrance is just £3.00. Both our Speaker Evenings and Garden Shows have been well supported throughout 2018.

Exhibits in the three Shows are open to members of the Society, residents of the Parish of Shorne and children attending Shorne Primary School who compete in categories with cookery, flowers and vegetables from the garden, flower arranging, craft and photographs. Members are eligible to win trophies which are presented at the Annual Supper. Once entries have been judged at each Show, the doors are opened to the public (entrance free). There is also a very healthy Plant Stall, a raffle and delicious tea and cakes. As a bonus at the Summer Show, we also put on a display of any artwork that exhibitors have created. Together with our committee and kind help from other members we continue to be successful and hopefully will thrive into the future.

We unfortunately lost Sylvia Newton who was our President for a short time. Our new President is Jim Buttress, holder of an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour, winner of 8 gold medals at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, famous for BBC 2s The Big Allotment challenge, judge for Britain in Bloom for 25 years and Superintendent for the Royal Parks for over 10 years. Jim has a wealth of horticultural knowledge and experience.

The society is very friendly and new members are always welcome. We think our annual subscription is good value for money at a fee of £7.50 and including receipt of our schedule giving details of show classes and events. We have a New Members' Trophy specifically awarded to the new member with the most accumulated points from all three shows.

Maureen Morten,
Chairperson

WI: Shorne and Thong Women's Institute

It has been another very busy year for Shorne and Thong WI.

In May, we held our AGM and welcomed new committee members. The AGM was attended by our WI Advisor, Sue Hollings, as well as a trainee advisor who both gave us good advice about the running of our club.

We have welcomed several new members: Helen, Debbie, Ruth, Lesley, Celia and Sarah. They are all very welcome. Unfortunately, some members decided not to renew their membership for various reasons, and we were all saddened to hear that our friend and fellow member Una had died. She was funny and determined, even a few weeks before she died, she spoke eloquently about looking after our planet. We now have 33 members – 32 full members and 1 dual member.

Members have enjoyed some varied and entertaining speakers again this year. We learned about the benefits of herbal medicine, what life is like for prisoners in jail today, about the work of ACWW, the history of puddings (with samples!), the sad life of Eva Braun and how to make our gardens wildlife friendly.

We entertained members from other WIs at our strawberry tea, enjoyed an enormous Ploughman's Lunch in Luddesdown and a delicious Christmas Lunch in the village hall. We played BINGO! and raised money with a Bring and Buy sale, a coffee morning and by participating in the table-top sale in the village hall.

As well as attending our monthly meetings, members have organized a boat trip along the River Medway, coffee mornings at Millbrook Garden Centre, a book club and the knitting of items for the baby unit at Darent Valley Hospital as well as throws for a residential home. We also submitted items for the celebration of the centenary of the West Kent Federation held in Aylesford and attended events organized by other WIs in the area.

Members have attended craft workshops as well as the Art and Craft Annual Days at Ditton and the Home Economic Days also at Ditton. Two members attended the Annual Council Meeting in Tunbridge Wells in March. Four members are about to attend a flower arranging workshop weekend at Denman.

As you can see, Shorne & Thong Women's Institute is a busy and active club that is looking forward to another successful year. Come and join us.

Sue Muckley
President

Shorne Flower Arrangers

Our meetings at the Shorne Village Hall are on the last Thursday of each month, except December at 7.30pm for a 7.45 pm start.

Our club presents a programme of workshops and demonstrations in a very informal and friendly atmosphere. Visitors are always made very welcome, entry £3 to cover costs if visitors wish to take part in any of our activities, with tea/coffee for free. The club provides an opportunity for people to be creative and make friends. You don't have to have any previous knowledge of flower arranging, there is always someone who will guide you along the way. Annual subscription is just £20.

Further information about any of our events can be obtained from our Chairman, Linda Clatworthy, 01322 220282 or the club secretary, Mavis Jones on 01474 355386.

The work carried out by the club is advertised on a monthly basis in the Shorne Parish News, as well as magazines in Rochester, Dartford, and NAFAS Kent Area web page. The club also has a Facebook page where photos of our events and work can be seen.

2018 was a busy year with our usual mix of workshops and mini demonstrations. This was enjoyed with the company of several new ladies who were welcomed as new members.

Our Members are regularly called upon to "do the flowers" for Shorne Church, for the benefit of the Parishioners

The Big demonstration in June was not the success that we had hoped for despite a considerable amount of advertising.

The highlight of our year was the club competition in September. "A Night at the Theatre" was a great success with everyone rising to the challenge. Such an amazing range of ideas and designs from miniature through to pedestal, each one being a work of imagination and artistic scope. There were almost as many different designs as there are disciplines within the theatre. I am sure that the villagers who came along to see what we were up to enjoyed it immensely, watching a bucket of flowers slowly becoming an art form.

Currently over 60% of our member are from Shorne village, or the surrounding DA12 area. We would dearly love to see more of the village residents at our club.

Linda Clatworthy
Shorne Flower Arrangers Chairman.

The Shorne Parish Council Annual Report 2018-19 was edited by Susan Lindley.

Please contact 01474 823179 or susan.lindley@shorneparishcouncil.org if you have any questions about the content.

Contact details of People and Organisations contributing to this Report:

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Shorne Bell Ringers	Stuart King	01474 823804
Shorne Pre School	Jenny Bennett	07895 981423
Friends of Shorne School	Lisa Sewell	01474 740538
Shorne School	Tara Hewett	01474 822312
Shorne Scouts	Chris Zgoda	07921 106122
Sheila Theobald School of Dancing (Shorne Football Club)	Sheila Theobald	01634 388218
Shorne Woods Country Park	David Cater	01474 822129
Dickens Country Protection Society	Tim Bell	01474 823800
Shorne Village Hall	Pat Lippiatt	01322 275389
Early Retirement Club	Gloria Ashby	01474 822874
Local History Group	Jim Pearce	01474 355816
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Shorne ARA	Robin Friday	01474 363135
Short Mat Bowls	Andrea Brickell	01474 746606
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Cottage Garden Society	Adrienne	01474 822875
Women's Institute	Maureen Morten	01474 822522
Shorne Flower Arrangers	Julie Aspinall	01474 825046
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Shorne Parish Council 2018-19: (see website for latest personnel information)

<i>Chairman:</i> Bob Lane	01474 822680	bob.lane@shorneparishcouncil.org
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Clerk:

Theresa Martin (Retiring 30/6/2019)		
Sarah Poole (from 1/7/19)	(TBA, see website)	clerk@shorneparishcouncil.org

The next ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY will be held on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, date TBA, see website. All village organisations are most welcome to present their annual report at this meeting. All reports will form the basis of contributions to the Annual Parish Report for 2019-2020. Copy of more than 250 words in length may be edited to fit available space.

Other information on Parish Council matters:

Parish Council Website: <http://www.shornepc.kentparishes.gov.uk>

Parish Council Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shorneparishcouncil>

Reports on Parish Council issues also feature in every issue of the Shorne Parish Magazine.