



MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL



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MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCILLORS

The following are currently elected parish councillors to represent the respective wards.

Nurstead and Hook Green Ward

Cllr Gofton, Cllr Green, Cllr McTavish, Cllr Ogden DL

Camer & Meopham Green Ward

Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Dalby, Cllr Sims, Cllr Wade

Culverstone & Harvel Ward

Cllr D Bramer, Cllr M Bramer, Cllr Rose, Cllr Price



***The Parish Council wishes to express
solidarity with the people of Ukraine***

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

CLLR SHEILA BUCHANAN

This has been another difficult year with Covid 19 but we got through it! Many thanks must go to SUPERNEIGHBOURS who were proactive for those who needed help during that period. It is still with us and I would also like to thank all of you who looked out for your neighbours and we hope this community spirit continues.

In November 2021, our Clerk, Sarah Egglesden along with Assistant Clerk, Nicola Jerram and Clerical Assistant, Jo Barker all moved on to pastures new. We are very grateful to all of them for the excellent service they gave to the Parish over many years. We now have a new Clerk, Shaun Fishenden and Assistant Clerk, Clare Collings. They are both getting to grips with their roles and we are fortunate to have them both.

The Parish Council agreed to set the Parish precept for 2022/23 at £138,503. This is an increase of £6.35 per annum for the council taxpayer in a Band D property. Meopham is still well below the national Band D average for Parish Councils which is £74.94 per annum. Part of this increase is owing to the Parish now having to be responsible for maintenance of all 63 street lights from the 1st April 2022 – not a responsibility we asked for!

You will see from the reports of the various committees the extent of work undertaken by the Parish Council over the year. The cost of everything is rising and we are very careful to get value for money.

We now have a separate monthly Planning Applications Working Group as the number of requests has increased. The Parish Council is only a consultee and we urge residents who wish to make a comment to contact GBC directly.

We were delighted to finally, formally open the refurbished and extended Judsons Pavilion in October and were very pleased to welcome local girl, Kate French, gold medallist at Tokyo Olympics in Modern Pentathlon to do the honours. This refurbishment was funded by MPC, Football Foundation and Meopham Colts with further contributions from GBC and KCC.

We welcome two new councillors, Daren Sims and Cheryl Price. I would like to thank all councillors for their continued contributions to Parish Council business and especially the Chairmen of the Standing Committees, Jo McTavish, Dawn Bramer, and Max Bramer.

It has been an honour to serve as Chairman of the Council over the last year with the unstinting support of my Vice-Chairman, John Ogden.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (A&R)

CLLR MAX BRAMER

Responsibilities of the A&R Committee

The Administration & Resources Standing Committee is responsible for the Council's internal procedures and finances. It has delegated powers to act on behalf of the Council on internal procedures including Standing Orders, policies, risk management, the Emergency Plan, the financial accounts and audit arrangements, monitoring of all Standing Committee and Committee budgets and expenditure, contracts, administration costs, office equipment, systems and software (including the website), member and staff training and publications.

Committee Members

Cllr Max Bramer (Chairman), Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Graham Green (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Jo McTavish, Cllr John Ogden, Cllr Cheryl Price and Cllr Barbara Wade.

Policies

During the year, the council's policies for training, grants, harassment and recording meetings were all updated and a policy for memorial trees was adopted.

Contracts

A number of contracts were scrutinised and either approved directly by the Committee or forwarded to the Full Council for ratification. These included the renewal of the Council's insurance and its contracts for accounting software, payroll administration and the cleaning of the Parish Office and the public toilets on Pitfield Green.

Accounts and Financial Matters

The Committee oversees the budgets and ongoing expenditure of all the Council's committees. This includes advising the Council on the use of its Reserves. It is also responsible for ensuring that the Annual Audit is completed through an internal audit process, in order to satisfy the External Auditor that the public finances are accountable to public scrutiny. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee act as 'councillor auditors' with the remit of reviewing internal controls and risk management with the Council's Responsible Financial Officer.

The recently-introduced system of making online payments from our account with Unity Trust Bank has continued to work well, with additional signatories added during the course of the year. The use of online payments has greatly simplified the administration involved with no loss of security.

Risk and Asset Management

The Committee continues to review risk management and the Council's Risk and Asset Registers regularly.

Personnel Committee

The Chairman of the committee is an ex officio member of the Council's Personnel Committee, which during the year has overseen the appointment of a new Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk and the co-option of a new councillor for Culverstone and Harvel Ward.

Meopham Windmill Trust

During the year, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of A&R were elected as the Council's representatives on the Meopham Windmill Trust for a four-year term.

Parish Website and Corporate Email Addresses

As well as providing information about Meopham parish & local material, the website is regularly updated to show relevant news and events, including parish council meetings. The website is continually reviewed and is still being developed and populated. During the year it was updated with a statement relating to the effect of the UK leaving the European Union on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

An important change agreed during the year was to change the Council's Internet 'domain name' from meopham.org to meopham-pc.gov.uk, the change reflecting the Council's role as a tier of local government. There are two aspects to this:

(a) The www.meopham.org website will be moved to a new location, www.meopham-pc.gov.uk, in the near future. It will subsequently be replaced by a redesigned website with increased functionality, the details of which are currently under consideration.

(b) In the interest of giving the Council a more professional external image and to make it easier to handle Subject Access Requests under GDPR in future, councillors have been given 'corporate' email addresses and the addresses of the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk have been changed accordingly.

Parish Office

The Parish Office was closed for much of the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic but has now been reopened. A working group has been established to discuss the future of the office, but at the time of this report has yet to meet.

Social Networking

Parishioners can follow us on Twitter @MeophamPC and Facebook "Meopham Parish Council" and there are links to both these sites on our website.

Information given to the public

Monthly reports on the work of the Parish Council are placed in the Meopham Review and on noticeboards within the parish, together with reports in other press and media from time to time. All publications produced by the Parish Council can be viewed on the Parish website (currently at www.meopham.org).

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (E&A)

CLLR DAWN BRAMER

Responsibilities of the E&A Committee

The Environment & Amenities Committee has delegated responsibility to deal with issues associated with Recreation Facilities, Rights of Way, Village Greens, Allotments, Youth Organisations, Churches, Welfare & Retirement Groups, Community Woodland, Environmental Improvement, Upkeep of Public toilets and other Council Assets (except office equipment) and other tasks allocated by the Council.

Committee Members: Cllr Dawn Bramer (Chairman), Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Chris Dalby, Cllr Sue Gofton, Cllr Daren Sims and Cllr Barbara Wade (Vice-Chairman)

Street Lights

Last year we were uncertain about how to proceed in regard to street lights once they became the responsibility of the Parish Council on 1st April 2022 although we included money in our budget in anticipation of extra costs. After much discussion of the options available, the Council decided to take over all of the streetlights and appoint an external contractor to maintain them and update them on a rolling programme. We are pleased to announce that we have appointed a local Meopham based contractor, after a competitive tendering process. We welcome “Streetlights” and look forward to working with them in future.

Judson's Pavilion and Youth Provision

Judson's Pavilion was officially opened on 26th October 2021 by Olympic Gold medallist, and former resident, Kate French. The youth club was also restarted at the Pavilion by The Grand in September. Sadly, despite considerable advertising, the Club failed to attract sufficient numbers to remain viable and the arrangement was terminated in January. The Committee invited an experienced youth worker to its meeting in January to discuss the way forward. A survey of parents is planned and sources of grant funding for youth provision are being investigated.

The car park resurfacing was completed and a new noticeboard erected. Discussion is finally underway regarding the design of a plaque for the memorial trees donated to recognise the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, a project long delayed by the desire for building works to be completed first. Negotiations are also in place to arrange for a direction sign to be installed on the A227 to make it easier to locate the Pavilion.

Noticeboards

The notice board at Camer Parade has been replaced and that at Longfield Hill was removed as it was in a poor state of repair and rarely used.

Village Greens

Meopham Parish Council oversees 10 village greens and it is our responsibility to ensure they are kept clear, safe and well maintained to enable the public to use them. This is an ongoing responsibility and all Councillors are asked to check them annually and as and when necessary, specifically after heavy winds when the mature trees may be damaged. We also organise a professional tree survey biannually to identify any tree issues. We employ a service contractor to carry out many of the maintenance tasks on the greens and elsewhere in the parish, including maintaining benches and replacing missing boundary posts. The contract was extended this year for three years after a competitive bidding process. Our Tree Management Policy is an invaluable guide in determining the action we take in regard to trees. Projects this year have included replacing the pole supporting the village sign on Harvel Green, putting posts round one of our lesser-known Greens, Fowler's Stone, and overseeing the siting of a number of memorial trees. To aid those wishing to place a memorial tree in the Parish we have introduced a policy outlining eligibility and specification requirements. This supplements our existing memorial bench policy.

Sadly, our village greens in the past have been subject to several incidents of 'off road' vehicles and bikes accessing them and we have this year erected some nuisance bike posters to help combat this issue. We work closely with the police on such matters and welcome any information that will help identify offenders as renovation often proves expensive to the Council. A small amount of tree work was required on Harvel Pond this year due to storm damage. Our ongoing thanks to the Pond Warden Volunteer, Ian Carey. He monitors the pond admirably and we know its upkeep is in good hands.

We would ideally like to appoint a volunteer tree warden to help us monitor trees and promote tree related activities in the parish. If you would be interested in this role, please contact the Parish Office for more information.

Pitfield Green Toilets

The Parish Council took over the running of Pitfield Green toilets from GBC in April 2018 and has managed to keep them open during the pandemic. Expenditure here has included drain clearance and repairs to the guttering.

Recreational Facilities

The play area within Judson's Recreation Ground was installed in 2010. We were very pleased when all the equipment that had to be removed due to government pandemic restrictions was reinstated. During the year we replaced the wetpour surfacing which had deteriorated significantly, upgraded the entry areas to the MUGA and play area that had become muddy and carried out minor repairs to the roundabout and spring seat. We were also pleased that our grant bid to FCC Communites Foundation for replacement trim trail equipment was successful and the equipment was installed in February 2022. Both the trim trail and the rest of the play equipment are very popular and are regularly inspected by GBC to ensure safety standards are maintained. GBC's play facilities at Culverstone Recreation Ground are also well used.

Meopham Community Bus and the Meopham & District Footpaths Group

We were all saddened by the cessation of the community bus service after over 40 years' service to the community. The dedicated work of all those involved over the years is much appreciated.

At one point it was feared that another organisation, the Meopham & District Footpaths Group would also fold, but, luckily, new officers came forward and the group is to continue. Although the group will no longer have responsibility for clearing the footpaths in the Parish the regular use of the 38 miles of paths by its members will help ensure issues are identified and we can continue to work with them to get these addressed.

Grants

The Parish Council is pleased to assist local organisations with funding and the following grants were made in the 2021/2022 financial year:

Meopham Windmill Trust	Up to £1,000
Meopham Carers' support group	£400
Harvel Village Hall Management Committee	£500

Litter Picks and Volunteer activities

Sadly, our regular group litter picks had to be suspended during the pandemic and have not yet resumed but we hope to resume them soon. We look forward to welcoming you to our litter picks, whether you are part of the regular team or newcomers,

We are aware that across the parish the general public are independently carrying out their own litter picking. This is much appreciated both by the Council and, we are sure, by other residents.

During the year we obtained some dog fouling stickers from GBC which we have displayed around the parish to encourage dog owners to behave responsibly at all times.

This year volunteers have continued to maintain the rose bed in front of the toilets on Pitfield Green. This area had been sadly neglected for many years but now is a really attractive feature. The area has also been enhanced by a donation by the Gravesend and Meopham Rotary Club of Purple crocuses in aid of a polio charity. Volunteers also maintain the large planters at Culverstone, Pitfield Green and the Station. The changing displays of plants are a joy.

We value the work of all our volunteer helpers particularly those who served as super-neighbours during and after the pandemic period and have a volunteer policy to ensure their safety.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING & PROJECTS COMMITTEE (P&P)

CLLR JO MCTAVISH

Responsibilities of the P&P Committee

The Planning & Projects Committee has delegated responsibility to deal with issues associated with Planning, Housing, Highways, Parish Projects, Police & Crime reduction, Libraries, Medical Services, Parish/Neighbourhood Planning, Community Festivities and other matters agreed by the Council.

Committee Members: Cllr Jo McTavish (Chairman), Cllr Dawn Bramer, Cllr Sheila Buchanan, Cllr Max Bramer, Cllr Sue Gofton, Cllr Barbara Wade, Cllr Andy Rose (Vice Chairman).

Planning Applications

The Parish Council continues to scrutinise planning applications received from Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) who are the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Each application is considered by a Councillor and a recommendation made by them to a meeting of the Parish Council's Planning Applications Working Group. The meeting considers whether to oppose or not to oppose each application. The decision to permit or reject an application is taken by a GBC Planning Officer under delegated powers or by the GBC Regulatory Board which is made up by Members of the Council. We emphasise to applicants and residents who are interested in a particular application that the final decision regarding their planning application rests with Gravesham and not with the Parish Council. We are always vigilant when it comes to planning applications that do not comply with Green Belt regulations. We also judge whether an application is in keeping with the neighbourhood and will not cause a nuisance to the applicant's neighbours whilst recognising residents' wishes to improve their properties for themselves and their families.

The number of planning applications continues to increase with many residents wishing to extend and improve their homes rather than move house. A number of applications are complex and also controversial which sometimes makes it difficult for us to make a decision as to whether we should support or oppose an application as we are not qualified planners although Councillors do attend regular training courses. We continue to have a number of planning enforcement issues which we work through with GBC. Coronavirus restrictions caused delays in enforcement measures being dealt with which meant considerable frustration for Councillors and residents alike. Now that all Coronavirus measures have been lifted, we hope that the situation will improve and we will continue to work with GBC to try and

understand why long delays occur and what enforcement measures can be taken to resolve problems within a reasonable time frame.

In recent years we have had a separate Planning Applications Working Group to deal solely with planning applications and this continues to work well. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Planning Applications Working Group has met virtually on a monthly basis. All members of the Council are members of the Planning Applications Working Group and operate on a rotating chairmanship.

Highways and Transport

The Parish Council liaises closely with Kent Highway Services (KHS) on issues that require attention such as traffic problems, potholes, uneven pavements, damaged road signs etc. As in previous years KHS provided salt bags for the winter period in the car parks of St John's Church, Culverstone Community Centre, Harvel Village Hall and in other parts of the Parish. The Parish Council continues to monitor road safety in the parish and in particular the traffic on the A227 remains an ongoing concern, both in terms of volume and speeding, especially HGVs that exceed the speed limit and inconsiderate and illegal parking by many residents.

Four years ago, the Council set up a Working Group to look at parking issues particularly at Camer Parade and outside our schools in Meopham and Culverstone. This was in response to an ever-increasing number of complaints from parishioners regarding illegal parking at Camer Parade which is particularly bad outside the schools at school drop off and collection times, and on Friday and Saturday evenings. The Working Group was successful in attracting a small grant from KCC which enabled us to launch a campaign called 'Think before you Park'. We started by working with local schools, and the shopkeepers at Camer Parade, we also worked with local residents, GBC, KCC and the Police. The working group produced leaflets, banners and signs and spent a lot of time trying to encourage parents and carers to park more responsibly close to their children's schools. The campaign had limited success. People are still parking irresponsibly but GBC Parking Enforcement Officers have been a lot more active in Meopham and have issued a substantial number of on-the-spot fines.

When the campaign was relaunched in 2021 our remit increased to include traffic, speeding and parking issues. We meet regularly with Members and Officers from Kent Highways and Gravesham Borough Council and we now have a Highways Improvement Plan in place, Parish and Town Councils are being encouraged to develop these plans which are essentially a 'wish list' of highway improvements we would like to see in the Parish. Our top priority is to improve problems at Camer Parade and we are hopeful that money will be available for a modest scheme which KCC believe will help both safety and parking issues.

In March 2020 the Parish Council agreed to set up a Speedwatch Scheme in the village however we were not able to progress the project because of the coronavirus emergency. Speedwatch is a national initiative where in partnership with the Police members of the community use detection devices to monitor vehicle speeds on local roads. The volunteers report drivers exceeding the speed limit to the Police with the aim of educating drivers to slow down. These schemes have been proven to reduce the speed of vehicles to the speed limit, increase public awareness of inappropriate speed and reduce accidents.

Borough Cllr Frank Wardle is our Speedwatch Co-Ordinator. Since the Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, training for the volunteers has been completed and several sessions have taken place. A number of residents have volunteered to assist with the scheme but more are needed if the initiative is to continue and help reduce the number of motorists who persist in speeding along the A227.

The Local Plan

All local planning authorities must produce, adopt and maintain a Local Plan which talks about the growth and development of new homes in their area, it also looks at what infrastructure and services are required. Gravesham's most recent plan was adopted in September 2014 and as Local Planning Authorities are required to update their plan every five years GBC's plan has been in the process of being reviewed since 2020. Gravesham Borough Council has continued to work on various aspects of the Plan and we have been told that a further consultation will take place in the summer and a questionnaire will be delivered to every household in the Borough. This consultation will look at the Council's proposals for the development of new homes across the Borough; name the sites and the proposed number of new dwellings to be built on each site.

It should be noted that MPC submitted a response to the last consultation and commented on all the sites in the Parish that were identified in the documents. We considered all the sites to be unsuitable mainly in terms of the proposed size of the developments and the lack of essential infrastructure. We commented that the Parish Council was not against the proposed building of a small number of new homes to meet identified need but we didn't want to see any large-scale developments which would alter the character of the village and would cause difficulties with additional traffic and parking problems. A lot of extra homes would put an additional strain on an already busy medical centre and there was also likely to be a shortage of school places. We decided to set up Working Group to look at the need for further housing development in the village and identify the type and tenure of housing needed. We also thought we would try and identify possible small sites which might be suitable to meet the needs of particular groups of people and assess the viability of the various sites. In this regard we have looked at the needs of older people who want to downsize but still remain in the village and have recently discussed this issue with GBC.

Community Festivities

In 2021 because of Coronavirus restrictions, we were again unable to hold our annual Picnic on the Green. Due to the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Picnic will also not be held this summer but it will return in 2023.

In partnership with the WI the Parish Council is organising a Jubilee afternoon tea for our older residents. It's being held on Thursday 2nd June in Meopham Village Hall. Many organisations in the Parish are organising their own events but the main event in Meopham is being organised by Meopham Cricket Club, in conjunction with Meopham Parish Council on Saturday 4th June. The Platinum Party on Meopham Green runs from 1.00pm until late and promises to be a very special event with entertainment for all the family.

Last Christmas we again erected a very tall Christmas tree on the Green which was lit up over the festive season and fortunately the annual Carol Service was able to take place. It was well attended and the collection was given to the Sanctuary.

The Parish Council appreciates the help and support given by Meopham Cricket Club in assisting with our annual community events.

The Former Police Station, Wrotham Road

The Parish Council is delighted that when the nine three-bedroom houses currently being built on this site are completed they will be owned and managed by Gravesend Churches Housing Association (GCHA) who are a small local Housing Association. The houses will be let at an affordable rent to people who are registered on the GBC Housing Waiting List and who meet the allocation criteria agreed by GCHA and GBC.

The Parish Council in partnership with GBC and GCHA are organising an Open Day to be held between 3.30pm and 6.30pm on the 12th July at the Cricket Pavilion. All residents are welcome to attend the event to learn more about the development and the allocation of the new homes. A show house will be available for anyone to view and escorted visits will be arranged.

Supporting Meopham SUPERNEIGHBOURS

The Covid 19 volunteer support service formally ceased running in March although we know that many of our volunteers are continuing to support their neighbours and will carry on with this support as long as their help is needed.

The number of parishioners who volunteered to help support members of their community was truly amazing and the work they did was inspiring and made a difference to so many lives. Without the support of our volunteers many of the most vulnerable members of our community would have struggled to cope during the Pandemic.

A lot of unmet need was discovered with residents of all ages living alone and suffering from loneliness and isolation. A regular visit or even a regular phone call can provide a much-needed lifeline for these neighbours and we hope that volunteers will continue with this support in the months and years ahead.

The volunteer support service has been a partnership with local residents, with our Medical Centres, our Pharmacies and with the Local Authority but we couldn't have done it without our great super neighbours and especially our Co-ordinators and the rest of the team who came together to support our community during the Pandemic. A huge thank you to everyone involved with the project and congratulations on receiving the 2021 KALC Community Award.

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES 2021/2022

Action with Communities in Rural Kent (Kent Rural Community Council)	Cllr Wade
Age UK	Cllr Gofton
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Cllr Luxford (until Nov 2021) <i>Vacant</i> (Nov 2021 onwards)
Culverstone Community Association	Cllr D Bramer
Flagmaster	Keith Savage
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee	Cllr Luxford (until Nov 2021) <i>Vacant</i> (Nov 2021 onwards)
Gravesham Joint Transportation Board	Cllr M Bramer
Harvel Village Hall Management Committee	Cllrs M Bramer Cllr Luxford (until Nov 2021)
Kent Association of Local Councils – Voting members at AGM and Gravesham Area Committee	Cllrs Buchanan and Ogden
Lower Thames Crossing	Cllr Luxford (until Nov 2021) <i>Vacant</i> (Nov 2021 onwards)
Judsons Pavilion Management Committee	Cllrs M Bramer and Ogden
Meopham Sports & Leisure Association	Cllr Wade
Meopham Village Hall Management Committee	Cllrs Buchanan and Gofton
Meopham Windmill Trust	Cllr M Bramer and Cllr Green
NHS Darent Valley Hospital Briefings	Cllr McTavish
Pond Warden (Harvel Pond)	Ian Carey

Not all the Parish Representatives are members of Meopham Parish Council.

SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2021/2022

June 2021	1	Environment & Amenities
	15	Administration & Resources
	22	Planning Applications
	29	Planning & Projects
July 2021	13	FULL COUNCIL
	20	Planning Applications Committee
August 2021		RECESS
	24	Provisional Planning Applications Committee – only if required
September 2021	7	Environment and Amenities Committee
	21	Administration and Resources Committee
	28	Planning Applications Committee
October 2021	5	Planning & Projects Committee (Budget)
	19	FULL COUNCIL
	26	Planning Applications Committee
November 2021	2	Environment and Amenities Committee (Budget)
	16	Administration & Resources Committee (Budget)
	23	Planning Applications Committee
December 2021	7	FULL COUNCIL – (final budget approval)
	14	Planning Applications Committee
January 2022	18	Planning Applications Committee
	25	Environment and Amenities Committee
February 2022	8	Administration and Resources Committee
	15	Planning Applications Committee
March 2022	1	Planning and Projects Committee
	15	Planning Applications Committee
	29	FULL COUNCIL
April 2022	12	Planning Applications Committee
	26	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
May 2022	10	Planning Applications Committee
	17	ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL
BUDGET FOR 2021-22

PLANNING & PROJECTS COMMITTEE

2021-22

Parish Plan	£	-
Festivities	£	1,500.00
Parking Safety Campaign	£	150.00
Defibrillator Project	£	500.00
Venue Hire for consultations	£	250.00
Over 60's Guide	£	-
Local Council Award Scheme	£	-
Supporting Meopham	£	-
Health & Wellbeing Agenda	£	1,000.00
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	£	-
TOTAL P&P COMMITTEE	£	3,400.00

**ENVIRONMENT &
AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

2021-22

Service Contract	£	8,200.00
Litter Collection	£	-
Southdown Shaw, Maintenance	£	500.00
Notice boards	£	-
Village Greens & Judson's Recreation Ground	£	2,000.00
Benches - Maintenance	£	-
Trees	£	3,000.00
Judson's Play Area - Maintenance	£	1,000.00
Judson's Play Area - sinking fund	£	2,000.00
Grants	£	3,000.00
Youth Provision	£	-
Harvel Pond	£	250.00
Pitfield Green Toilets	£	12,000.00
Pitfield Green Toilets - sinking fund	£	-
Bus Shelter Repairs & Renewals	£	500.00
Bus Shelter Cleaning	£	1,200.00
Village Sign & Flagpole	£	-
streetlight	£	5,000.00
Judson's Pavilion	£	-
TOTAL E&A COMMITTEE	£	38,650.00

**ADMINISTRATION &
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

2021-22

Staff Salaries, Tax & NIC	£	48,820.00
Staff Pension	£	8,170.00
Cllr and Clerk Expenses	£	400.00
Prof Fees	£	-

Subscriptions	£	2,485.00
Chairman's Allowance	£	100.00
Training	£	1,000.00
General Administration	£	6,650.00
MPC Accounts Management and Audit	£	3,118.00
Printing & Copying	£	800.00
Communications & IT	£	3,050.00
Elections sinking fund	£	2,000.00
Contingencies	£	2,000.00
TOTAL A&R COMMITTEE	£	78,593.00

TOTAL ALL COMMITTEES	£	120,643.00
Income (see below)	£	1,576.00
Receipts (transfer from General Reserves)		
PRECEPT (less receipts)	£	119,067.00

TAX BASE 2021-22 (figure received from GBC on 17.11.20)	£	3,059.59
Allocation of Provisional Grant	£	-
Amount Levied upon taxbase (Parish Precept Amount)	£	119,067.00
Amount Payable per Band D Household for the previous year	£	34.94
Amount Payable per Band D Household for the year shown	£	38.92
Increase/(Decrease) per Household (£.p per annum)	£	3.98
Increase/(Decrease) per Household (% per annum)		11.38%

Estimated Income

Income source	Amount
Allotments	£385.00
Football Club	£200.00
Wayleave - EDF	£170.00
Cricket Club rent	£1.00
Bank Interest	£20.00
Youth Club fees	£0.00
Community Toilet Scheme	£800.00
Total	£1,576.00

CULVERSTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE 2021/2022

The Centre has continued to function over the last few months by adhering to the Governments Covid 19 guidelines, and gradually we have been able to get back to near normality. All our regular activity groups are using the hall again, and we have been inundated with children's parties over the weekends. It seems everybody is pleased to get out and about to resume their social activities, albeit with a little caution.

Culverstone Community Association has been continuing with its regular committee meetings over the last couple of years. During the summer months we have sat outside in the sunshine, which has been rather pleasant, and we may continue to do so if the weather is fine.

We are always hoping to find community minded residents who may be interested in helping us manage the Centre, and this year we have two people who are interested in joining the committee. We also need somebody who is experienced in maintenance to join our team.

For more details on this please contact Chris Simms on 07502 198243.

A rather large maintenance project will be taking place at the premises within the next few weeks, which is the renewal of our windows and fire doors at the front of the property. The forty-year-old wooden frames are starting to rot, and the windows are draughty, so we are looking forward to being more comfortable and saving some energy.

Please note our new website: - www.culverstonecommunity.co.uk
Culverstone Community Centre can also be found on facebook

SAYING GOODBYE TO MEOPHAM WELFARE COMMITTEE

CLLR J OGDEN DL

The once familiar sight of the Meopham community bus is no longer with us. We cannot let its absence to go un-remarked.

Many years ago, we on the Committee were delighted to be granted the award of a Certificate as the first ever registered official Community bus in the country following the stalwart efforts of the late Councillor John Palfreman. The first bus on the road was a converted ex-ambulance which had been generously provided (with a second one for spares) by a local resident, Jens Holm. The first actual specifically designed minibus was later purchased with local donations including a substantial one from Northfleet & District Round Table, now also sadly no longer in existence.

Over the intervening years until last New Year's Eve, the bus has provided a means for Meopham, Cobham and other local residents to shop in Gravesend, Bluewater and elsewhere, and to be available for private hire to residents when available.

Unfortunately, vehicle age and compliance, and legal requirements, very much exacerbated by the impact of Covid 19 on the usually more senior citizen bus passengers, has meant that its continued viability was in question.

The service has been overseen and controlled by the Welfare Committee very ably led by Phil King and his hard-working committee members, who have faced a very difficult time throughout the pandemic when they were reduced, when actually able to run, to just 2 regular passengers.

The inevitable implication of the facts, involving either the purchase of a new replacement vehicle or the major refurbishment of the existing bus, for a much-reduced clientele many of whom are now more used to internet purchases, meant that the decision was taken, by all the members of the Committee to close the service with effect from the end of 2021, and in accordance with their Trust Deed dispose of their limited assets after that date.

As a Parish Council, we felt that we could not let this moment pass without expressing our very grateful thanks to Phil King, his predecessors and Committee members, as well of course the numerous volunteer drivers for their unstinting service to the locality over very many years, and to wish them all well in their well-earned release from their responsibilities, very well carried out independently for so long. They are a brilliant example of local community service at its most beneficial.

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

PCSO KIRSTY LOWE 58959

My name is Kirsty, your current serving Police Community Support Officer as part of the Gravesham Community Safety Unit. It is a privilege to be able to include a small article in the Annual Parish Newsletter. I report from North Kent Police Station, and I am currently responsible for rural Gravesham, including Meopham. As part of the Kent Police front line officer family, I work closely with communities and local businesses to promote community safety. We work with the public, putting victims at the heart of everything we do, thriving to identify and support vulnerable people through local engagement and working with partner agencies such as the local council, Kent County council and schools. We have specialist officers within the department including youth engagement officers and vulnerable adult intervention officers that compliment us with these specific needs.

I support the community by providing reassurance, utilising my designated powers to deal with antisocial behaviour and problem solve, along with alcohol and licensing offences and traffic management. It is paramount to build excellent working relationships with local businesses, partner agencies and the public in order to work with them on longer term projects to tackle local problems.

I think we can all agree that with the better weather coming and Meopham being the beautiful village that it is, this sometimes comes with local issues – such as off road bikes and vehicles being used inconsiderately, being ridden dangerously at times. I would like to assure you that we are in the process of arranging some pre planned operations throughout the summer to tackle these issues, utilising powers and providing some heavy presence in hot spot locations.

We urge everybody to please contact us when there is a crime in progress using the emergency 999 facility. Alternatively, if there is a low level incident we need to know about and still needs to be recorded we have the 101 facility, along with the online reporting service which can be easily accessed on the Kent Police website. Please follow the below link.

<https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

Please note, Kent Police do not monitor social media so it is vital we know about local issues so we can tackle them effectively!

REPORT BY KENT COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE

MANDY CASON

Contact Number: 07977981931

I have various community engagement within my role.

I engage with the youth to address behaviours when necessary and encourage and support residents to report ongoing incidents that effect their wellbeing.

In regard to the misuse of quads and motorbikes that may have resulted in causing damage to community green areas, I engaged with residents to collate intelligence and assist them in reporting to the relevant agencies.

Residential parking of abandoned or untaxed vehicles that have been identified as effecting highway visibility; I have reported to the local authority to action.

I am a member of Meopham Parish Council Parking and Traffic Working Group. I assist with advice and support in addressing road safety issues. When applicable I engage with families to advise on road safety and I will be organising a workshop for young people prior to the autumn term.

I engage with dogwalkers in Camer Park to raise awareness of dog theft and personal safety when out walking i.e., the use of leads and safety apps such as Hollie Guard and provided carabiners for extra security for lease clips.

www.hollieguard.com

17th to 20th February I volunteered to be on Emergency Standby for storms Dudley, Eunice, and Franklin.

Kent Community Warden Future Events I will be attending and supporting:

- Weekly St Johns Centre, Meopham Community Cafe 2-4pm – come along, have a cuppa and a slice of cake and a catch up with old friends like new.
- 29th April, Harvel Village Hall, Community Café 10.30-12.30 – come along, have a cuppa and a slice of cake and catch up with old friends like new.
- 2nd May, Meopham Community Academy, May Fayre.
- 26th June, Trosley Country Parks, Open Day.
- 4th June, Meopham Cricket Club – Queens Jubilee Celebration Event in conjunction with Meopham Parish Council and Kent Community Foundation.
- 23rd August, Camer Park, Gravesham Borough Councils Park Life Event

KCC COMMUNITY WARDEN'S GOOD NEWS STORY



OUR JOURNEY

When listening to the news reels from the Ukraine, you couldn't but question, how was this awful tragedy going to affect our communities.

It wasn't long before the voice of our residents could be heard, residents shared their felt fears and concerns over the evolving war and their need to be doing something, to help!

The solidarity and empathy from our residents, inspired us as a KCW team to create an initiative to bring us all together in support of the wellbeing of our community.

.....and this is how we did it!

We attended local groups/clubs delivering talks on how to donate safely, raising awareness on Scams from bogus charity collections.



We approached local churches and shops requesting support with venues for the residents to use as a drop off point for donations.



We organised volunteers from local clubs and support groups to help with the sorting of substantial amount of clothing and coats donated.



A local charity The Community Cupboard, donated essential baby products and toiletries.

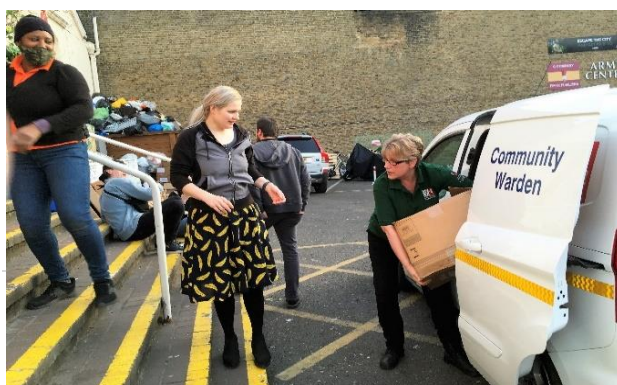


After numerous days of collating and sorting of donations, The big day had arrived

AM - We were ready for our first delivery of donations to Mathew James removals who had kindly donated their vehicle to deliver our aid to Open Krakow Project, one of the largest Polish initiatives delivering aid to Ukraine refugees called The Szafa Dobra, [Wardrobe of Good] who are providing safe accommodation, medical aid, meals, and activities for the children.



PM, Our second delivery of the day, White Eagle, Polish social club, in Balham High street London



A chain of volunteers assisted in the unloading of donations of clothing, toiletries, baby food ,3000 plus nappies, medical supplies and hand knitted hats and scarves knitted by local residents.



Mandy and I volunteered for the evening shift on the sorting tables, each bag or box donated required to be organised into size and gender.

When required for a task, Mandy and I would hear echoing through the hall
"Ladies of Kent this way ..."



Once the volunteers have completed boxing up the donations, they are placed on pallets ready for transportation to the Hub Stalowa Wola, a sanctuary for 15,000 unaccompanied children from Ukraine.

To continue on our journey, we have encouraged youth clubs and groups to become involved with the initiative by providing a box that the children can decorate, requesting toothbrushes or toothpaste for donation to the children of Stalowa Wola

Pronouns: [she/her/hers](#)

Jacqueline Fuller | Dartford/Gravesham Team Leader - Kent Community Warden Service | Growth, Environment & Transport | Office 03000 413392

MEOPHAM WINDMILL TRUST

Volunteers Wanted

Meopham Windmill Trust is currently looking for volunteers to “man” the mill on Sunday afternoons from April to September 2pm to 4.30pm.

You do not have to be an expert on windmills as there is plenty of information available to all our visitors. You just need to be in attendance and collect any money for purchase of souvenir badges, books, pencils etc. Entry to the mill will be free, but we welcome donations.

Also, if you would like to become a volunteer to help out with any other duties in keeping our Windmill going. We would love to hear from you.

Please contact us via the Parish Office at the Windmill (01474 813779) or by email to: meophamwindmill@gmail.com

Restoration Project

Meopham Parish Council does not own either the mill or the land in front of it. The mill is owned by Kent County Council but that Authority has granted a long lease of it to the Meopham Windmill Trust which is a separate body independent of the Parish Council. The Trust owns the grounds in front of the mill. Notwithstanding this Meopham Parish Council is concerned about the condition of the mill not just because it has an office in the mill but also because it is keenly interested in ensuring that this important part of the local heritage is preserved and maintained.

The Parish Council is aware from KCC's Conservation Officer that KCC has completed phases 1 and 2 of the restoration work at the mill. This involved restoring the reefing stage and adding a second layer of weather boarding on the tower to give it extra protection. It cost KCC £130K which included a grant of £24,984 from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Emergency Fund.

The Parish Council is now pleased to learn that KCC has put finance in place for phases 3 and 4 of the work. This involves repair to the curb sitting on the tower on which the cap rotates and the associated mechanism. The curb has become out of level. The timber frame of the cap has broken and the cap is seized in position. The back of the frame has dropped pulling out the mechanism of the cap. The necessary repairs cannot be undertaken in situ. Therefore, the cap will be removed as will, if necessary, the curb. They will be taken to the contractor's workshop and repaired. A temporary wooden roof will be placed on the mill to protect it in the interim. This work will cost about £150K. Once the mill has been fully restored, KCC will institute a monthly oiling of the curb and other relevant mechanism and general maintenance check to maintain it in good condition.

A crane and a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) or 'cherry picker' will have to come on to the land in front of the mill for the removal work and in due course the reinstatement of the parts, along with a flat backed lorry which will be used to carry the removed items to the workshop and return them after repairs. This equipment is likely to be on site for a week during the removal process and another week for the reinstatement process. To facilitate these movements the existing hedges to the south of the driveway will have to be removed. A temporary hardcore strip approximately 2m wide will be installed in place of the hedge, to widen the existing

track. At the windmill end of the track, temporary load-bearing road plates 7m wide and 12m long will be installed, for the crane to stand on. Additional road plates will be provided for the MEWP to stand on. The Parish Council understands that the Trust is liaising closely with KCC about this work and is certain that the Trustees will ensure that the land in front of the mill will be properly reinstated at the completion of the work.

There is no fixed time period for the workshop repair. The most likely scenario is that the said parts will be removed in Autumn 2022 and reinstated late Spring or Summer 2023 (or later).

