

6) SKATE PARK UPDATE

The Community Warden –gave an update on the skate ramp project. The Consultation period has now closed and the responses collated. A meeting had been held with the project team, local resident and other interested parties. Several matters had been agreed:- The youth club to move the gate towards the road to prevent unauthorised parking, trees would be planted by the Youth Club to provide screening from houses and the existing basket ball hoop will be relocated onto Youth Club land.

Quotes for the preferred option, option 2 were now being obtained. The next steps would be to ascertain if Planning permission was needed, agree the exact plans with the Parish Council and find funding for the project.

7) MANDY PILE – DDC WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Mandy Pile from DDC waste management team gave an informative talk on the New recycling and waste services.

The new service will see the introduction of a separate weekly collection of food waste, together with the provision of new containers by the Council for your recycling and waste. This includes:

The use of wheeled bins, wherever possible, for the collection of recyclable materials. This will enable you to recycle a wider range of materials, and ensure that the materials are properly contained to stop them from escaping on windy days. The black box will be used for paper and cardboard. This will maintain its quality and value by keeping it clean from food and drink residue.

A smaller lockable food waste bin being provided, so that a separate weekly collection of food waste can be introduced, allowing it to be recycled. A kitchen caddie will also be provided for the home to make it easier to move food waste from the kitchen. Collections will be weekly to ensure that there is no risk of smelly food waste causing concerns in warm weather, as has been the case elsewhere when Councils have introduced fortnightly collections.

A wheeled bin provided for the fortnightly collection of the waste that you are unable to recycle. Due to the improved recycling service it is anticipated that once we are all recycling our food waste, along with a wider range of recyclables, there would not be much left to throw away. The bin will contain the waste to stop it being attacked by seagulls and foxes.

Although the new contract is set to start in January, changes in the collection service are not likely to start until September 2011. Full details of the new services will be given to all customers as the new services are rolled out, and collections will continue as they currently are in the meantime.

An number of questions were asked from the floor.

Will everyone get wheeled bins?

NO, some people won't be able to have wheeled bins. Properties will be assessed on an individual property basis for whether they can have a wheeled bin (or not). This will be undertaken in partnership with the appointed contractor prior to the changes being made.

What is the criteria for assessing if a wheeled bin is suitable?

The criteria will be set once the preferred bidder is appointed later this year. The contractor will have experience in 'rolling out' wheeled bins in other authorities and have a wealth of knowledge regarding where bins will and will not work.

Will flats be issued larger bins for waste collection?

Yes where suitable, flats and multi occupied properties will be issued with larger bins (where required). This will be for the collection of refuse, recycling and in some cases food waste.

Will Dover district residents have to pay annually for garden waste collections as in Shepway?

NO, Dover residents will still receive a free green waste collection service.

Will we receive a wheeled bin for the collection of garden waste?

A wheeled bin will not be issued, the garden waste service will continue as it currently is, with up to 15 bags being put out for collection.

If my property is suitable for a wheeled bin, will I have to use it?

YES, if your property is suitable your waste will only be collected if put out in the wheeled bin.

I will not be able to manage to put a wheeled bin out for collection, if issued would I have to use it?

If your property is assessed as suitable for a wheeled bin but you are unable to manage to put it out for collection due to restricted mobility or similar, arrangements will be made for the contractor to collect it from an agreed point of storage.

Who does the bin belong to?

The bin remains the property of Dover District Council, however we would like you to give it a good home and care for it accordingly.

Can I use pedal bin liners or plastic bags in my food waste bin?

No, only compostable liners (or newspaper) can be used.

The Chairman thanked Mandy for attending.

8) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed every one and explained why the meeting was being held early this year, he went on to say that as we have not reached the end of the financial year there would be no finance report at this meeting. Once the accounts for 2010/11 have been completed they will be published in the Village News and on the Parish Council web-site.

During the past years Cllrs West and Bury have left the Council and their places have been taken by Cllrs Bridget Reed and Kathryn Davenport. We welcome them and look forward to working with them.

There has been little progress at the Hospital site since last year, a planning application has been submitted for the internal alterations necessary to turn the Chapel into a community centre. This centre will be given to the Parish Council to be used as offices, a public computer suit and offices for the PCSO and Community warden. In addition to the building the developer will also be giving some money to help with the refurbishment and equipping of the building.

Following last years Annual Parish Meeting the Council decided to go ahead and fund a village gateway on Sandwich Road. This is in addition to the one paid for from The KCC members Grant on Dover Road. Some of the work on these gateways has been undertaken; we hope the rest will be completed very soon. The Council would like to thank County Councilor Ridings for his support. We now hope to look into providing schemes for other areas in the village.

Major works were undertaken this winter to clear vacant allotments behind Mill green, fencing work will be completed early in April and the allotments will then be available to let. There are currently 10 people on the waiting list for allotments, the new area should clear this list.

To help with future budgeting and to keep costs down the Ground work contractor has been let for the next five years. We are still receiving lots of complements, especially about the Church Yard and Cemetery. Eastry is very lucky to have a lot of community land; however this does come at a cost.

The work to add additional names to the War memorial was completed and a dedication service took place Nov 2010. Donations towards the work were received from the PCC and the Eastry Joint services club, we would like to thank them for their support. This project was lead by Cllr Shevde and I would like to thank him for his hard work. The Council felt it was very important that the names of those that had died in the service of their county since WWII, or serving their community should be remembered.

In October we did a beating of the bounds, this was very successful. It turned out to be a lovely day and we had 64 people walking the 14 miles. We met at the Five Bells for registration and bacon rolls kindly provided by Mary. Not everyone made it all the way round but I think everyone enjoyed the day.

Last year grants were given to Eastry Village Hall, Eastry Neighbourhood Watch, Eastry Cricket Club, Greville Almshouse Charity, Village Signs Committee, Humpty Dumpty Mother and Toddler Group. Please look out for the 2011 grant invitation; this will be published in the Village News.

The Queens Diamond Jubilee will take place in 2012. This will mark 60 years of the Queen's reign. The Parish Council would like to form a committee made up of Parish Councilors and local residents to make arrangements for this historic celebration. If you would like to be involved, please contact Sarah Wells Clerk to the Parish Council 01304 614320

Finally I would like to thank the following people for there continued support over the past year. Richard Swain for his continued hard work at the toilets, this is not the most glamorous job in the world but very important and his continued service is very much appreciated. Shelia and Malcolm Broster for keeping the Village looking clean and tidy, again not a glamorous job but essential to our local community. Iris Mollart and Chris McMeakin for continuing to help Cllrs Hooper and Pemble at Coffee Break. David Carr, former Chairman of the Parish Council, who still continues to run the Council's web site. The volunteers that open and close the picnic site every day. Bob Priestly our community Warden, PCSO Annemarie Benson our local police representative and last but by no means least our Clerk Sarah Wells for keeping us on track.

Some questions were raised from the floor and the Parish Council promised to investigate the following:-

- a) John Reeves Lorries operation outside there operating conditions.
- b) Traffic issues – parking and speeding.

Action Parish Council

9) PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

a) Election Timetable

Mrs Sarah Wells, Clerk to the Parish Council explained the election process and highlighted the key dates.

b) Being a Parish Councillor – Cllr Shevde

There are around 10,000 community, parish and town councils in England and Wales; they are corporate bodies and local authorities. They have a powerful voice to represent local people.

What do these councils do?

Community, parish and town councils are the part of local government closest to the people. They serve the smallest area and are responsible for the most local of matters. Very importantly, these councils can "precept" - raising a sum collected with the council tax each year to improve facilities and services for local people.

In England they are called parish councils or town councils, if they cover a largely urban area. In Wales they are known as community councils. In both England and Wales they are elected units of local government whose activities are controlled by Acts of Parliament. There are 10,000 community, parish and town councils in England and Wales.

Parish, town and community councils in England and Wales have a number of basic responsibilities in making the lives of local communities more comfortable, many of which are often taken for granted. Essentially these powers fall within three main categories: representing the whole electorate within the parish; delivering services to meet local needs; and striving to improve quality of life in the parish.

Individual powers include the provision and maintenance of community transport schemes, traffic calming measures, local youth projects, tourism activities, leisure facilities, car parks, village greens, public lavatories, litter bins, street lighting, street cleaning, burial grounds, allotments, bus shelters, commons, opens spaces, footpaths, bridleways, and crime reduction measures.

Community, parish and town councils can also comment on planning applications - they are statutory consultees (they have to be consulted if they so wish) and can be represented at public inquiries.

Parish, town and community councils may soon be granted more powers, especially as part of Quality Status. When councils are awarded this status they are allowed to negotiate with the local principal authorities (the district or county council or unitary authority) that certain responsibilities get devolved to the parish. This is part of the government's initiative to revitalise local democracy.

What do elected representatives do for me?

Community, parish and town councillors represent the people living in their local area at the closest level to the community. When decisions are being made they are there to put your views across.

What is a councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward or - mainly in smaller parishes - the entire parish or town council area. They are generally elected by the public every four years.

What do councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. *Decision making* - Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.

2. *Monitoring* - Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

3. *Getting involved locally* - As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:

- Going to meetings of local organisations such as tenants' associations.
- Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community.
- Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public.
- Running a surgery for residents to bring up issues.
- Meeting with individual residents in their own homes.

Visiting your council is the best way to find out what happens there. Give the council a call and find out when its next public meeting happens. By law, ordinary people are allowed to be present at most council business.

How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about three hours a week. Obviously there are some councillors who spend more time than this - and some less, but in the main, being a community, parish and town councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community, and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

Am I Qualified

Yes - most people are. However there are a few rules.

You have to be:

- a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union;
- and
- on the "relevant date" (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over;
- and additionally:
- on the "relevant day" a local government elector for the council area for which you want to stand;

or

- have during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the council area;

or

- have during that same period had your principal or only place of work in the council area;

or

- during that 12 month period resided in the council area.

In the case of a sitting member of a parish or community council you can also satisfy the criteria to be elected if you have lived in the council area or within 3 miles of it for the whole of the 12 months preceding the “relevant day”.

You cannot stand for election if you

- are subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order.
- have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine.
- you work for the council you want to become a councillor for (but you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area).

10) REPORTS

KCC Cllr Leyland Ridings – The budget cuts and reorganisation being made by KCC were outlined. The budget is being cut by 28% over the next 4 years. This would lead to job losses of 1500-2000. The County Council is also to be restructured to make savings. A joint task force has been set up to try and minimise the impact of the Pfizer closure. Potholes are still a priority, members highways grant has been extended for 2011/12.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Ridings for attending and for the contributing towards the traffic calming being installed on the Dover road.

DDC – Cllr Steven Manion & Cllr Nick Kenton

Cllrs Kenton and Manion gave a report including details of the LDF site allocation and core strategy, the new waste collection plans, staff reductions and budget saving being made by working with other authorities. The impact of the Pfizer closure was also mentioned. They then answered question from the floor.

Pond Report – Simon Dundas – Pond Warden

Buttsole pond is a valuable asset to Eastry although at first glance you may not think so. Despite it drying out in the summer almost completely it provides homes and food and water for many animals and a site for many species of plants. In addition it provides amenity and educational value. Following a talk I gave to Eastry primary school on ponds we had an exciting pond dipping session at Buttsole and hopefully this will be repeated. As pond warden, together with the parish council, we are seeking to enhance the value to the benefit of wildlife and the community.

How are we doing this you might ask:

1. increase the diversity of plants and trees using native species.
2. control the growth of invasive pond plants – particularly common reedmace (often mistakenly called bulrush) and the non-native Australian swamp stoncrop and parrot’s feather.
3. Planting trees to reduce the strong winds coming from the field so people can sit and enjoy the pond more comfortably.

Much of this is being done with reference to a management plan created for us by the White Cliffs Countryside project.

Increase the diversity of plants and trees using native species

The dredging work used to control the reedmace has itself encouraged a wider variety of plants as the seeds in the mud have been disturbed and germinate. I was pleased to see several clumps of the beautiful flowering rush which has an umbrella of pink flowers.

In the spring I planted some marsh marigold and water iris which have taken hold and plan to plant more marsh marigolds as they provide such a dazzling yellow display in spring.

With the help of Trevor Burton we planted 13 small native trees and bushes around the pond area. These will provide interest for people as well as nesting sites for birds and food for a variety of animals.

Control the growth of invasive pond plants

The 2 lots of dredging work done by Owendens has helped reduce the reedmace but this will be a constant battle and later in the year I hope to find some student volunteers to help (a small amount of cash is available). The non-native Australian swamp stonecrop and parrot's feather are possibly more of a threat as trying to dig these out leaves lots of pieces that can spread round the pond and root. Careful chemical treatment may also be the only solution but if so will be carried out by licensed experienced personnel so as not to impact other wildlife.

Planting trees to reduce the strong winds coming from the field

2 rowan trees have been planted behind the seating area

Other

2 pairs of moorhens had chicks last year and there was a pair of mallards. I spotted a large number of elephant hawk moth caterpillars on the willow herb and what I believe to be vapourer moth caterpillars (red white and black with bristly tufts). There were a large number of damsel and dragonflies. I have been keeping a photographic record of the wildlife and changes to the pond and am considering setting up a blog where folk can register sightings. I am also considering having an official survey performed.

There is a fair size rat population at the pond and although quite amusing to watch I feel need to be controlled due to the risk of Weil's disease and as they may eat any duck eggs. I need to get advice on this.

It is not recommended that members of the public add plants and animals to the pond without first asking for advice (they can call me on 01304 611320) as it is easy to accidentally also introduce non-native species that upset the balance in the pond. Frogs and frogspawn should not be transferred to stop the spread of the disease 'red leg'.

Head Teacher at Eastry School - Mr Tim Halling

Eastry C of E School is in the top 10% of highest achieving primary schools in the UK and in the top 3% of schools for achievements in maths. Pupil numbers have risen and we are one of the most popular schools in the area, our reception class is seriously oversubscribed and we have a waiting list in most year groups. Over the past few years we have trained four graduate teachers and are currently training a fifth. We have achieved advanced status as an extended school with the 52 schools in the Dover district the first district in the country to accomplish this.

Judy Pegg retired after 17 years as a teaching assistant and our caretaker Mr Chris Gibb beat throat cancer and has returned to work.

We have raised money for a number of charities this year and the PTA continues to support the school running events to raise money for the school. The children have been on numerous trips this year including a whole school outing to the East Kent Ploughing Match. We have had a number of visitor at the school including the Fire Brigade, theatre groups and a WWII air raid warden. We have a variety of dinnertime and after schools clubs but are always willing to run more, so if you are skilled in knitting sewing or crafts and have the time to volunteer at the school then please contact me.

KCC have finally agreed to replace the roof of the original school building, the first phase of this work was undertaken during half term and the rest will be completed during the Easter break.

We continue to have strong links with the Church, father Philip leads our worship every 2 weeks and we have a prayer group lead by Rosemary Barwick. We also attend church for children led services.

I would like to close by saying that the schools success would not be possible were it not for a team of wholly committed and talented staff, wonderful children, extremely supportive governors, PTA and parents.

Greville Homes - Mr John Waring

Last year I told you a bit about the history of the Greville Homes and that we would be celebrating our 175 anniversary. I'm pleased to say that the celebration took place with a garden party on the 6th August and we had a fantastic time, Lady Pender came as a representative of the Lord Lieutenant of Kent and helped with the planting of a criminative Rowan tree. The Parish Council kindly gave us a grant to help pay for the tree. Following the celebrations we had an article published in national Almshouse Gazette, which is seen by Almshouse charities all over the country.

Church Report

Unfortunately as the meeting was taking place on Ash Wednesday there were no members of the local Clergy in attendance, however a report had been sent that had been published in the report pack available at the meeting.

Mr Terry James – Village Sign Committee

The 2nd AGM of the Village sign committee is now upon us, I had hoped that the project would be complete by now but is was not to be. A competition for a Village sign design had taken place last year and the winning design had now been turned into a format suitable for use as a template for production of a sign. We have raised £1500.00 so far which should be enough to provide one sign although we have identified positions for two. We are continuing with our fundraising and have rescheduled the "Trek and Check" that was rained off in February.

Mr Terry James - 30th Anniversary Twinning Association

The twinning association was formed in May 1981 and was marked with a signing ceremony in the local church. This 20-22 May we intend to mark the 30th anniversary with a weekend of celebrations including a church service and a "Tug of War competition" in the Recreation Ground. We have invited representatives from all the village organisations and I'm pleased to say the school choir have agreed to come and sing for us. The Consol General of France has agreed to attend and we see this as a great honour. I hope to see you all at the celebrations.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited them to remain for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm