



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I was elected as chairman of this Parish Council at the AGM of the Parish Council in May 2009. It has been a challenging year. I would like to thank Helen Munro for accepting the role of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and joining us last September. Helen's previous experience as Clerk at Offham has been invaluable and without Helen, my role and those of fellow councillors would have been very difficult. I would also like to thank the Vice Chair, Sue Woodcock, and the Chairs of Community Centre, Graham Hall, and Finance and Audit, Dave Waller and all councillors for the time they have given to the Parish Council during my year as Chair. Also part of the Parish Council team are Assistant Clerk Hanje Martin, Community Centre Manager Hilary Wren with two part time caretakers and two cleaners and our PCSO's Wendy Stanley and Anne Roots.

Over the last The Parish Council has held quarterly meetings with Liberty Property Trust to raise and discuss issues of concern.

Communication from the Parish Council

Last June the council agreed to fund the new format of The View from the Hill. There have been 3 issues since then and the next edition will be delivered by mid June As compiler of the magazine articles it is very pleasing to see the end results My thanks go to Councillor Hall and the office staff who check and double check the spelling and grammatical errors that I miss ! The new Parish Council website is live. We will be adding to it over the next few months.

Cllr Sarah Barker – Chair of the Parish Council

COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE REPORT

This year has been most successful in terms of staffing, number of hirers and the appearance of the centre. The following have been major contributors to this success:

- A year ago we appointed a Centre Manager, Hilary Wren. She has proved to be a most effective manager bringing in more hirers and arranging events which has seen the centre buzz with activity. In addition, she is committed to improving and developing the facilities available for the people of Kings Hill.
- We now have two part time caretakers who work as a team to provide support for the many hirers who use the centre.
- From April this year, we have employed our own cleaners in place of the outside contractor. You can actually smell the cleanliness and many improvements have happened already.
- Together with the committee, we now have in place a group of people who can ensure that the Community Centre reflects the high standards required from our hirers.
- From April this year, the Parish Council has had to register for VAT. This has meant some increase in charges for hirers and we thank them all for their understanding and support. We continue to strive to improve the facilities and to give value for money. The Committee and Centre Manager are always open to suggestions and requests for any improvements.
- The Future: improvements already agreed by committee and waiting approval and contracts are as follows:
 - Installing CCTV to cover all areas of the Community Centre.
 - Updating the craft room into a meeting room, redecorating and new flooring. Also, making a new access door into the main hall in preparation for repositioning the bar area.
 - Improving the fire alarm system.

- Plans to enlarge the downstairs meeting room in the Youth Centre and improving the storage arrangements.

As Chair of the Community Centre Committee, may I sincerely thank all the staff and Councillors on the Committee for their support and commitment to ensuring the continued success and development of the centre.

Cllr Graham Hall – Chairman of the Community Centre Committee

AMENITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Pedestrian Crossing In Discovery Drive

Following a meeting with Kent Highways Services (KHS) and representatives of KHPC, KHS agreed to arrange a survey of vehicles and pedestrian movement surveys in Discovery Drive, Alexander Grove and Crispin Way. The report was published in January this year and it recommended that a Pedestrian Crossing was needed in Discovery Drive. As, there is no money available from KHS in the financial year, KHPC will be looking elsewhere for funding and initiating the surveys and planning to get this crossing built.

Allotments Site on Kings Hill

In the plans for Heath Farm Leisure Facilities, Liberty Property Trust (LPT) have kindly offered land for allotments. Full details will be available when the plans are submitted for approval at T&MBC. The current waiting list stands at 68 and rising. KHPC will keep residents fully informed of any developments.

Kings Hill Skate Park

A working group was set up in January and gave a presentation to the Amenities Committee in March. I would like to thank Mike Pilbeam for an excellent presentation. Mike and two young people are meeting with Liberty to explore the possibility of where land could be made available for the skate park.

Speedwatch

The Parish Council are investigating the possibility of operating this system in Kings Hill. More information will be available over the next few months.

PACT

The first meeting was held in October 2009. The meeting was attended by 22 residents and representatives from Police and the Borough and Parish Council. The top three issues were:

- Anti-Social Behaviour in Liberty Square, particularly in relation to young people riding their bikes in the square and gathering in large groups outside Asda. This is predominantly in the evenings and at weekends.
- Speeding Vehicles along Tower View, Discovery Drive and Gibson Drive.
- Parking, including along Milton Lane, Hazen Road and Outside Discovery School at school times.

A PACT Panel was subsequently set up and have met in November and January. The Next panel meeting will be held shortly.

Cllr Sarah Barker – Chair of the Amenities Committee

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Established when Kings Hill was a few houses on a hill, by 2009 the Council had become overwhelmed by the size of the Parish that had grown around it. On April 2nd 2009 a Finance committee was established under the Chairmanship of Cllr Waller with the task of establishing new systems and financial controls to meet the needs of the Council in 2010 and beyond. With many loose ends to tie up and issues to resolve, the Committee had to meet weekly with meetings often ending after midnight. A year down the line Cllr Waller is pleased to report that the Committee has made tremendous progress and has almost finished that task.

So what has been done?

- In August the Council's purchased its first software package for financial management and hall booking.
- Responsibilities of every Committee have been formalised and budget processes established.
- The Council recruited Helen Munro, an excellent Clerk with financial skills that are an asset to the Council and the Finance and Audit Committee.
- In October KCC Technical Services was awarded the contract to supply and maintain new computers and IT systems.
- In November the Audit Commission gave the Council a clean bill of health.
- Following months of deliberation, the Council agreed to become VAT registered from April 2010.

Where are we now?

- Committees now have clarity of purpose that has re-invigorated them.
- Finance Committee meetings are monthly and often finish before 10:00pm.
- The Council has staff and systems that are up to the task of serving the parishioners of Kings Hill.

In conclusion the Council has matured and grown in confidence, and is ready to face the challenges both now and in the future as our Parish continues to grow.

Cllr Dave Waller – Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Apart from a large volume of applications from residents to extend, convert and attach to their properties, the main focus for the Planning Committee this year has been:

- Heath Farm and the recreational planning – this has gone through several phases of planning drafts and is close to finalisation.
- Blaise Farm and the application to extend – the recent application to extend was rejected in 2009 following appeal at County level. Since that time a further appeal has been granted
- The development of the central area including the Control Tower – this is in embryonic stages but initial draft ideas look promising.

The committee looks forward to the coming year when main planning items should be realised.

Cllr Sue Woodcock – Chair of the Planning Committee

KINGS HILL YOUTH CLUB

The club has been operating for just over 2 years and is proving to be a great success. We open Tuesday and Friday evenings for young people from year 7 upwards. Children leaving the local schools here can attend in the summer before they move onto their senior school.

Tuesday evenings finds us very busy with up to 35-40 young people, meeting up with friends, playing pool, games and any other project currently on the go. In the summer, the club spends most evenings outside playing football, cricket or other fun games. Friday evening is our dedicated project evening. The young people of our club are learning to make their own music, record and cut their own discs on our wonderful equipment. Friday also sees us either keeping fit or boot camping – not for the faint hearted!! Each year our summer programme gets more and more exciting and has proved to be a yearly highlight. Sailing at Bewl water, paintballing, and, of course, the mandatory day at a theme park.

I feel now that the club has become part of Kings Hill, and while working within the government guides lines of "every child matters", our club provides a safe environment for our young people of Kings Hill to grow and develop. The ownership of the club by our young people is clear to see.

Lindsay Sharp – Chair of the Youth Club Trustees

County Council Report

2009 and early 2010 have been dominated by two issues affecting families in Kings Hill:

1. The Planning Application by Liberty for sporting facilities at Heath Farm: As many will know Liberty has been preparing a planning application for these facilities that is more ambitious than the planning consent already granted several years ago. Charlton Athletic Community Trust (not the football club itself) was providing additional money to make this possible. Although on one level better sporting facilities are good, some features of this gave rise to concerns:
 - a. There were too many football pitches (as opposed to facilities for other sports)
 - b. The sports pavilion appeared to be larger and potentially noisier than before (and too close to housing)
 - c. There was inadequate provision for allotments
 - d. There was reason to believe that the pitches and facilities generally would be widely used by sports clubs outside the immediate locality with consequent extra traffic etc.
 - e. Some features of the 'County Park' appeared to have disappeared in favour of football

The application itself will be made to the Borough Council, so the County is not directly involved. However I have been active with the Parish Council and residents in making sure that accurate information was available to everyone and Liberty consulted properly with residents. Meetings held were attended by a good many people. Many of the concerns appear to have been heard, up to a point, and some changes have been made to the application. However we await the application itself before any final judgement is made.

2. A Shortage of places at Kings Hill Primary Schools: I heard in late March that a number of families living in Kings Hill, including some living close to one or other of the schools, had not been given a place for their child at either school, but had been allocated to other schools including East Malling and Waterringbury. It soon became apparent that there were around 30 families in this position and that County education planners had not expected this many. Working with the group of families affected by the shortage, I had a series of rapid meetings with the senior County education decision makers and, I am glad to say, we secured a decision within three weeks of the problem becoming apparent to make another 30 places available at the Discovery School this September.
3. Buses: there was also a problem last September with the capacity of buses taking children from Kings Hill to both Maidstone and Tonbridge. Although the County does not run these buses, we do have a line of communication to the bus companies, and so I took this up. Larger buses were allocated to the routes and the problem appears to be much alleviated.

I am available to all Kings Hill residents to help them with any problems with County Services. My telephone number is: 01732 360895 and my email address is richard.long1@kent.gov.uk.

County Councillor Richard Long

Kings Hill Parish Councillors

Cllr Sarah Barker	Cllr Dave Murray
Cllr Brian Pearson	Cllr Tony Petty
Cllr Tony Carlton	Cllr Julie Pilbeam
Cllr Graham Hall	Cllr Sue Woodcock
Cllr James MacMahon	Cllr Dave Waller

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