

Luddesdown Parish Council Newsletter 2015

Luddesdown Parish Council would like to invite you to the Annual Assembly which will be held in Luddesdown Village Hall at 7.30 pm on Monday, 16th March. We look forward to seeing you there. We would like to welcome all new parishioners who have joined our community recently and hope you will be able to come to the meeting. It is a good opportunity to meet your parish councillors and to learn more about what goes on in Luddesdown from local organisations who report at the meeting on their activities over the past year. It is also a chance to start getting involved, for those who wish to, with local social events run by The Luddesdown Society.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Throughout the year your Parish Council holds regular public meetings to which all parishioners are very welcome to attend. At each meeting parishioners do have the opportunity to raise any issues that they would like discussed although it has been rare for any matters to be raised in this way. Still, we would like to remind everyone that this facility is available. You will find the meetings advertised on your local Parish Notice Board and also on the Parish Council's website at <http://www.luddesdownpc.kentparishes.gov.uk>.

Very sadly, Nick Rogers, one of our councillors, died last year. We miss him greatly and his passing was a big loss to the Council.

On a happier note, we are pleased to welcome Anne Moorhouse who has been co-opted in Nick's place. She has lived in the Parish for many years and we are delighted to have her on board.

The Chairmen of the six parish councils in Gravesham are continuing to meet periodically with the leader of Gravesham Borough Council to discuss matters that are of concern to the parishes. We are able to add things to the agenda for each meeting so if there is a topic you would like raised at any time please let your local parish councillor know.

PARISH COUNCIL EVENTS

In December last year the Luddesdown Rights of Way Group celebrated a very significant event for the area as it was the 30th Anniversary of what has been called the "Battle of Luddesdown". In the early 1980s the Ministry of Defence bought two farms in Luddesdown and put in a planning application to use these farms as a mine laying/shooting practice range. Such activities, had they been allowed to persist, would have desecrated this beautiful area. The residents of Luddesdown at that time resolved to fight the MOD's proposed scheme and after a hard fought campaign were victorious at the public enquiry held to adjudicate the matter. Sadly a number of the campaigners are no longer with us but survivors of the campaign were joined by current members of the Luddesdown Rights of Way Group, parish councillors and others for an afternoon tea celebration at Luddesdown Village Hall on 7th December to share memories and unveil a plaque to commemorate the event. It was a good reminder of the debt of gratitude owed by the current inhabitants of Luddesdown to the dogged campaigners who, against the odds, saved the tranquillity of the Luddesdown valley to be enjoyed by us and future generations.

Once again we provided refreshments at Luddesdown Village Hall for the walkers who joined the Mayor of Gravesham to undertake the annual Beating of the Bounds event last October. Many thanks to everyone who provided their help on the day.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

We continue to do our best to keep the Parish Council's expenditure as low as we can so as to minimise any increase to the precept. There will just be a small rise in the precept this year.

LOCAL ISSUES

Unfortunately, fly tipping continues to be a serious problem in the Parish. We encourage you to report any fly tipping you find to Gravesham Borough Council either by telephone (01474 337533) or by email (waste.management@gravesham.gov.uk) or on its website at

<http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/flytipping>.

Gravesham will respond quickly to collect the rubbish and do appreciate any information that may help them prosecute the offenders.

Although Kent County Council has carried out repairs to various roads in the Parish over the past year, including some resurfacing, potholes remain a problem on some roads. We hope you will make use of the link on the KCC website to report problems with roads to tell KCC about any pothole you find in order to initiate getting it fixed. The link is at the following address

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>.

Parishioners who are not part of Gravesham Borough Council's wheelie bin recycling scheme may like to know that they can request further clear recycling sacks on GBC's website at

<http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/recycling-collections>.

On the matter of planning, one issue that is of particular concern to the Council at the moment is Gravesham Borough Council's intention to carry out a review of the boundaries of Green Belt land in the borough. A review of the Green Belt boundaries could see some land taken out of Green Belt protection making it easier to obtain planning permission for it to be built on. Your Parish Council does not think this should be allowed, as it is not fair to the inhabitants of the villages in the borough and will spoil our valuable countryside and the character of our villages. The parish councils in Gravesham together with Gravesham Rural Residents' Forum, Istead Rise Action Group, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and our local MP, Adam Holloway are campaigning to persuade GBC to abandon its proposed review. At the beginning of last February we met with the Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis, at the Houses of Parliament to find out what the Government's attitude is to protecting the Green Belt. We were very encouraged by what the minister told us and came away with the knowledge that the Government places high value on the need to retain and protect the Green Belt. Neither the Government nor the Planning Inspectorate are able to insist on a Green Belt review nor are they able to encourage such a review. It is therefore solely the decision of GBC whether or not it carries out the review. We will therefore be continuing to press GBC to withdraw its Green Belt review plan.

As usual we have received a number of planning applications which we have been invited to comment on this year. Most of these have received our support.

Finally, on behalf of all members of Luddesdown Parish Council I would like to offer you our best wishes for the next year and we hope that you are able to join us at the Annual Assembly.

Chris Mileson
Chairman, Luddesdown Parish Council

Your Parish Councillors:

Sally Stanier – Brookers Farm – tel: 01474 814476

Paul Gillard – Yew Trees – Vice Chairman – tel: 01474 813247

Mandie Jones – 81 Timber Bank, Vigo – tel: 01732 823404

Anne Moorhouse – Leywood School House – tel: 01474 813242

Chris Mileson – Winnats Farm – Chairman – tel: 01474 816517

Clerk to the Council: Roxana Brammer – 53 Capelands, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent, DA3 8LQ – 01474 872729