

**LUDESDOWN PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 25 MARCH 2019  
IN LUDESDOWN VILLAGE HALL, LUDESDOWN ROAD, LUDESDOWN AT 7.30 PM**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Noel Clark, Chairman;, Cllrs Chris Mileson, Mrs Anne Moorhouse, Mrs Sally Stanier and Matt Newnes  
Mrs Roxana Brammer, Parish Clerk; 7 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from PCSO Joanne Hartley and Mr Colin Dickens, Luddesdown Village Hall Committee Chairman; Mrs Anne Waugh, Luddesdown Rights of Way Group and the Rev Angela Walker, Rector.

**2 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2018**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2018 having been circulated, it was proposed by Cllr Clark, seconded by Cllr Mileson and agreed they were a true record of that meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**3 ACCOUNTS**

The Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 00 was received.

No questions were asked.

**4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman's Report had been circulated to all residents prior to the meeting. A copy is appended to these minutes. The Chairman then gave an update:

We are your Parish Council.

We don't fix roads, empty bins or control the police force.

We do review and comment on all new planning matters in the parish.

We support the maintenance of the churchyard and some local groups and communicate with the Borough and County on issues you feel are important.

We opposed the Borough Council's review of the core plan, which proposed building 2,000 homes on the Green Belt. The review is ongoing and will be taking place during the next Borough councillors' term.

We opposed the Option C route of the Lower Thames Crossing and have continued to present our concerns to Highways England following the decision to proceed with that option.

We monitor the maintenance of the Recreation Ground and request additional work when required.

We are involved in monitoring fly tipping and are seeking to work with other councils in the area to combat this menace.

We are proactive in clearing litter from our parish.

We get involved in new plans for the transport network affecting this area.

We represent the parish at the area meeting of the Kent Association of Local Councils.

I would like to pay tribute to my fellow councillors for their time and efforts carrying out all these things.

Councillor Mrs Anne Moorhouse who is our Vice-Chairman and represents the Council on the Kent Association of Local Councils.

Councillor Mrs Sally Stanier for monitoring the Recreation Ground, acting as liaison for the Valley of Visions byways access scheme and for working with Kent Wildlife Trust as the warden for the roadside nature reserve in the parish and for helping to organise the Spring Clean for many years.

Councillor Matt Newnes for his lead in tackling fly tipping and for organising the recent Spring and Autumn Clean events and for representing us on the Kent Association of Local Councils.

Councillor Chris Mileson for representing us on transportation issues and for his experience and guidance over the year.

And to our Clerk of many years Roxana Brammer for long service and long suffering! She administers our meetings and finances very efficiently as well as keeping us on the straight and narrow.

I should like to say in conclusion that we exist to present your issues to those in authority. This is grass roots democracy in action, although it does not involve politics, it does involve a great deal of committee work. Your opinion is very important to us, please take the opportunity at the end of this meeting to raise any issues of concern and to meet with your councillors.

## **5 COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

In the absence of the County and Borough Councillors, Councillor Bob Lane's written report was read:

There have been few meetings of any significance in the period since the previous Parish Council meeting although training and familiarisation continued until the end of July.

An application to build a block of flats in the garden at the rear of the former Whitehill Tavern, now Tesco Express, together with the establishment of a car park on green space in Whitehill Road Gravesend was referred to the Regulatory Board on 24 July. This was from the same applicant who is applying to build 64 flats at Cobham Lodge, Valley Drive. It was again proposed that this should be deferred to a later meeting of the Regulatory Board to enable

concerns to be addressed. However, on this occasion, members voted to refuse permission. At the Regulatory Board on 4 September there was a further instance where the Board overturned officer's recommendations to refuse retrospective planning permission for unsuitable new PVC windows in a Conservation Area.

The recent judicial ruling which resulted in the quashing of planning permission for the proposed petrol filling station at Tollgate was reviewed. This is now for determination by the Planning Inspectorate.

The application to build 64 flats at Cobham Lodge Valley Drive which had been deferred until the Regulatory Board on 4<sup>th</sup> September was not included on the agenda.

Councillor Tony Rice and I attended a meeting with the Highways England Lower Thames Crossing Team on 8 August. This focused on traffic forecasts and rat-runs through villages.

## **6 REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

### **a Luddesdown Society**

The Society's report was given:

The May Fair on 7 May 2018 was held on the hottest May Day Bank Holiday on record, ensuring a bumper turnout of around 700 people. They all enjoyed the many stalls refreshments, games, the Bird of Prey display, fun dog show and a very keenly contested tug-of-war tournament. The total profit for the day was over £3,100 and I'd like to record our sincere thanks to the many volunteers involved in the Fair.

The Summer Walk and barbecue on 14 July 2018 was again very popular and has now become established as a regular event.

Unfortunately, our Christmas Party on 14 December 2018 had to be cancelled as not enough people were interested maybe it clashed with too many works do's etc.

New Year's Day 2019 was fine and relatively mild for our annual walk. Over 60 people (plus dogs) turned out and the Village Hall was packed afterwards for warming soup and baked potatoes.

As a result of funds raised at these events, , we were able to deliver our traditional Christmas hampers to elderly local residents and also make donations to Kent Air Ambulance, Ellenor Lions Hospice, Luddesdown Church, Luddesdown Village Hall, Cobham Pre-school, Cobham Brownies, Medway Hedgehog Rescue and Luddesdown Rights of Way Group.

We are now looking forward to the May Fair on 6 May 2019. After initial concerns about the availability of parking, the new Farm owners have been very helpful they are keen actively to support the Fair.

### **b Luddesdown Rights of Way Group**

The Group's report was given:

We are very pleased with the state of the rights of way in Luddesdown Parish. They are well waymarked and seem to be being used.

We have had two conversations with the new owners of Luddesdown Farm and they have been most helpful.

We are going to install a new bench on Henley Down to commemorate 50 years of the club being around. Obviously, we asked the new owners if they minded us replacing the old rotting bench. They have even offered to help carry the bench up their hill if they have staff available. They have asked if we would walk round the farm with them to install further benches

## **c Church**

The Rev Angela Walker's report was read:

We have renewed the lighting system with a complete new layout of LED light fittings which has enhanced and lit up the whole area beautifully. The lights are also now dimmable which allows for different levels of lighting and ambience. With the ceiling in the chancel now lit, it is lovely to see the painting of the stars and angels clearly.

We are a small faithful worshipping community on a Sunday with an average of about 16 regular worshippers. Over several years the ministry within Sole Street has increased with the introduction of a new monthly "New Covenant" service which is a far more informal affair and the growing bi-monthly "Messy Church". Although we do not have a Sunday School at Luddesdown or Cobham we have at least 14 children with a parent or carer attending at the "Messy Church".

The worshipping congregation is ageing and therefore there are fewer people able to take on various roles within the church. For example, following the death of our treasurer we have been unable so far to find a new treasurer. The role has therefore fallen to our already overloaded Churchwarden Janet who has admirably kept us afloat but we would dearly love to find someone who is able to take on this role for us, so if you know of anyone that could possibly be approached, do let us know.

Mainly due to the age of the existing congregation and the effort required in putting on social events we have found it more difficult to provide these, however we do have Margaret Watson, the harpist giving a concert on 1<sup>st</sup> June .

We have been conscious of our carbon footprint too, although there is not much we can do we have as mentioned earlier changed to LED bulbs. We are also in the process of changing our electricity supplier to Ecotricity and we continue to leave an area of the churchyard uncut to provide a habitat for wild flowers and wildlife to increase.

Remembrance last year saw us recalling the end of World War I with its 100 year anniversary. The church was decorated with poppies and the service well attended.

The church is mostly in good repair with further water damage needing to be addressed within the vestry and the north wall. The trees outside the vestry will be trimmed back and attention given to the roof and guttering on the vestry will soon take place. We have recently had all the gutters and downpipes serviced to ensure no further damage.

A small but hardworking band of volunteers ensure the Church always looks clean and well cared for, a fact which is often commented on by visitors. Apart from when a service is taking place, the Church is open on May Fair and Saturday afternoons during August and September, but this will change to August and September only in 2019.

We are always grateful to Rosemary Dymond for her hard work cycling and raising funds for the church through the Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride and as always the Church is most appreciative of the Parish Council's contribution towards the upkeep and maintenance of the churchyard. Many walkers and ramblers, dog walkers and visitors continue to enjoy the peace and beauty of this tranquil place.

Meanwhile we hope to continue our tradition of being a warm and friendly Church. We are always pleased to welcome newcomers and hope that with God's blessing we will remain a living reminder of His presence in this village.

**d Recreation Ground**

Cllr Mrs Stanier said she would like to thank Gravesham Borough Council and Cobham Colts for cutting the grass. The road drain by Hays Mead had finally been dug out by the County Council and the pitch had experienced less flooding. There had been no problem with vehicles on the pitch. The Under 12s had won their league and the Under 14s had done well.

**e Police Community Support Officer**

PCSO Joanne Hartley's report was read:

I am the Police Community Support Officer for the wards of Shorne, Cobham, Luddesdown, Chalk and Higham. I have been a PCSO in Kent for over 11 years and thoroughly enjoy my role as it gives me the opportunity to get out and about and work within the local community. I'm based at Northfleet Police Station and work with other PCSO colleagues. My shifts are either 8 am to 5 pm or 1 pm to 10 pm. I will change my shift if it is required to attend certain events or if there is a particular operational need, for example providing reassurance outside a school.

My typical shift will start with a briefing with my team and my Sergeant. The briefing will include details about significant incidents which have affected the community and any crimes of note. I will also be provided with the names and faces of people who I am required to collect intelligence on to disrupt their criminal behaviour. After briefing I then log onto a computer and research the incidents that have been reported on my ward since my last shift. I am particularly interested in any reports where vulnerable people have been victimised or exploited. I use this information to plan my shift to ensure that I am highly visible in the areas where I am needed the most.

During a typical shift I will visit any resident who has been a victim of a residential burglary, I use this as an opportunity to provide reassurance that being a victim of a burglary is still rare. I will provide crime prevention advice and even provide crime prevention merchandise such as shed alarms or light timers if needed. I will also visit any person who has been identified as a potential victim of financial fraud to ensure that they are supported if they have any vulnerabilities and signpost them to other agencies who can provide help. I work alongside colleagues from schools, health trusts and the Borough Council.

I do have a variety of police powers, the most commonly used ones are the power to require a person committing anti-social behaviour to provide their name and address and the power to deal with vehicles being used in an anti-social manner. In addition to my routine patrolling I will also support local policing operations during peak periods such as local truancy sweeps or anti-social behaviour patrols during school holidays or Hallowe'en.

I will respond to calls from the force control room that are in my ward, responding to anti-social behaviour and nuisance calls. I will also support local police officers in searches for missing people or assisting at the scene of an incident if I am nearby.

It is fair to say that no two days are the same, I think that on average I walk approximately 2 miles a day around my wards and speak to lots of different people. I really enjoy the opportunity to attend local support centres, surgeries, coffee mornings, youth clubs and adult pop-in centres locally on my wards. I look forward to continue working within the local community.

**f Luddesdown Village Hall Committee**

The Village Hall Committee's report was given:

Having completed the last major project to the interior of the hall, the refurbishment of the kitchen in January 2018, the year from March 2018 has been a relatively quiet one.

We received a number of comments relating to hirers finding it difficult to access the hall and, as a result, have installed a keypad on the front door. This has done away with the need for a key, making it easy for hirers to gain entry to the hall and has also reduced the number of visits which need to be made by committee members allowing hirers into the hall.

As in previous years we have received a number of generous donations from various sources. This year we would like to express our gratitude to Luddesdown Parish Council; Luddesdown Society and ExxonMobil. We are also extremely grateful to the Trustees of the hall who have kindly taken over financial responsibility for the building's insurance, the gardening and the emptying of the septic tank, thus relieving the committee of the need to raise funds for these items.

No major projects are likely in the coming year. The floor in the main hall is in need of re-varnishing and we will look to get this done. Resurfacing the car park remains a long term aim and we will continue to seek the funding to enable this work to be done.

**g Luddesdown Vineyard**

Holly Dewale reported that they were planting 400 acres. The vines were mostly champagne varieties. The public footpaths would not be moved and they were working with the Rights of Way Group to provide benches and dog waste bins. The permanent pastures would remain with sheep. Harvesting would take place in 3 or 4 years' time and would be a community event.

**7 OTHER BUSINESS AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION**

No matters were raised

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting at 8.15 pm

Signed .....Chairman

On the .....day of .....2020