

Luddesdown Parish Council

Email: clerk@luddesdown-pc.gov.uk Website: www.luddesdown-pc.gov.uk



Luddesdown Parish Council Annual Newsletter - 2022

Luddesdown Parish Council will be holding the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm on Monday 21 March 2022 in Luddesdown Village Hall. You are duly invited to attend to hear reports from local organisations and Councillors and ask any questions that you may have.

During two years of Pandemic driven regulation the Luddesdown community has grown closer together, helped by the Luddesdown Residents' WhatsApp, for which we must thank Becky Newnes. Local problems such as reporting fly-tipping and criminal behaviour and clearing roads of fallen trees have been swiftly dealt with by Luddesdown neighbours. Particular thanks are due to Richard Gagg and his team for reporting and dealing with fly-tipping and Neil Dewale and his guys for clearing the roads of fallen trees after the recent storms. We have enjoyed the new tradition of decorating a Christmas tree on the village green and on May 2nd the Luddesdown Society are bringing back the Mayfair – another event that brings us all together.

The Parish Council represent Luddesdown to bring local issues to the attention of Gravesham Borough Council, Kent County Council, MP Adam Holloway and the local policing team. If we are not able to deal with your problem, we can put you in touch with someone who can.

We have gained from the regular attendance at our meetings of our Borough Councillor, Tony Rice who has advised us on wider issues that might affect Luddesdown. The Boundary Commission review of the Gravesham Wards will become law later this year. With Tony we argued the case for keeping Luddesdown and Cobham together and they will be in a ward with Istead Rise. Shorne and Higham will be a separate ward. We also have regular meetings with the other Gravesham Rural Parishes and the Kent Association of Local Councils provide training and advice.

We have worked to keep the precept affordable in this age of added expenditure such as data protection and continue to provide a grant for the maintenance of the churchyard, war memorial and village green. This year we have been fortunate to be joined by a new Clerk, Shaun Fishenden. He has since been appointed as Clerk to Meopham Parish Council, which allows us to share his experience and training costs.

Councillors Noel Clark and Matt Newnes have co-ordinated the implementation of CCTV to help with the constant blight of fly-tipping. We had good news and bad. A fly-tipper was caught on camera in Wrangling Lane and is due in court but two other cameras have been stolen. The new Gravesham Environmental Enforcement Team have increased powers to bring fly-tippers to court and we will continue to work closely with them.

Councillors Chris Mileson and Matt Newnes have surveyed the signage in Luddesdown and Chris is negotiating with Kent County Council (KCC) to repair existing signs and to draw up a Highways Improvement Plan to remove, replace or upgrade other local signage. We will need to finance any new signs as KCC will only fund repairs.

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The Parish Council responded to the Community impacts consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) in September, highlighting the effects on our village and the local environment (a copy is on our website). We remain engaged with the LTC team to monitor developments and seek the best outcome for Luddesdown and surrounding parishes. This project is expected to submit its final Development Consent Order for inspection later this year, which we will attend.

The planning application for the Kentish Wine Vault has recently been refused by Medway Council. Gary Smith, Chief Executive of Vineyard Farms is quoted as saying that they will review the planning options and consider their next steps. Luddesdown Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

The London Theme Park Development Consent Order has been serially delayed. A new examination will begin at the end of this month and is likely to last six months. All these developments risk more traffic using the narrow lanes of Luddesdown as a cut through when the A2/M2 is blocked and we continue to bring these concerns to the attention of the Planning Departments.

A consultation on the Local Plan Core Strategy, which sets out Gravesham's long-term vision for the future of the borough, took place in January 2021 (see website for our response). This plan includes 3000 houses to be built on green belt land, which we strongly oppose. We are continuing to monitor the development of the plan and await the final submission at the beginning of next year.

We would like to thank the Village Hall Committee for hosting the Defibrillator. The access code 'C159X' is on the door, which is normally left open. Switch it on and it is fully automatic and will tell you what to do.

As I write there is growing economic pressure on the cost of living, the price of energy and inflation, which will be further exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. All the more reason to be grateful for our community of Luddesdown.

If you have any queries or comments do not hesitate to contact our Clerk, Shaun Fishenden, or any of your Parish Councillors. Please keep an eye on the notice boards for information and dates of Parish Council Meetings. These and finance reports can also be found on the website (www.luddesdown-pc.gov.uk).

Cllr. Anne Moorhouse
Chairman of Luddesdown Parish Council