

# HACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Parish Plan 2013 - 2018

### INTRODUCTION

The use of a website on which to conduct the Appraisal was a great success and will be used in future. But hard copies of all documents will be provided to those who do not have internet access.

#### Memorial Hall and Recreation ground

Many respondents offered commentary and advice concerning the Memorial Hall and the recreation ground. The Memorial Hall and recreation ground is managed by a committee quite separately from the Parish Council. The Parish Council has a close and good working relationship with the committee. (two members of the Council sit on the committee), and the Council will pass on all those comments received about the Hall and the recreation ground for the committee to consider. Commentary and proposals to include such responses in the Plan are summarised later.

#### Within or outside our remit ?

Some respondents mentioned matters which are not part of the Parish Council's remit and those comments will be drawn to the attention of the relevant responsible bodies

#### Responsibilities of the Parish Council

Some respondents bemoaned their idea that the Parish Council has no powers and appeared to believe that 'nothing could be done' by the Parish Council to alleviate their particular complaints. It is appropriate to say here then that though the Council has no executive powers it has responsibilities which include ensuring that the electors' views and opinions, their requests for change and their input to decision-making are properly represented to the relevant authorities. Parish Councils are the grass roots of democracy, they can and do listen to residents, they can and do co-ordinate opinion and they can and do lobby on behalf of the community. Parish Council members talk directly with Officers of the City Council and the County Council and the Parish Council has, as ex-officio members, the District Councillors for our ward, (Blean Forest Ward), and the County Councillor for our area.

#### The context of the Parish Council's work

What has to be remembered is that we have to compete for funding for any schemes we propose with all other 26 parishes in the District and with all other 13 Districts in the county. We have to establish our bids as having priority over other schemes and it therefore often takes much longer than we would wish for our schemes to get into an Active list.

It took more than 20 years for us to obtain a listing for the footpaths on Canterbury Hill and on Wood Hill, not because we were not putting the case every year, but because other schemes had priority against a limited budget.

**Gaining a listing can be a wearisome business, but your Parish Council does it and eventually, through rational argument and persistence, we succeed.**

The Council does make progress and we mention some of our recent achievements below

It has taken more than 10 years for us to gain a listing for the positioning of a speed indicator sign on Hackington Road (and only then with the support of our County Councillor, through his dedicated budget).

The responses to the Parish Appraisal, which was undertaken during the autumn of 2012, have been analysed and the Council's proposals which will form our Plan are summarised below against the headings provided in the Appraisal document.

The headings are as follows

1. Membership of organisations in the village  
Parish amenities
2. Parish Design Statement  
The built environment and types of development to be supported
3. Speed and volume of traffic through the village  
Condition of roads and pavements
4. Footpaths  
Natural environment
5. Sense of security  
Preparation for emergencies
6. Catering for the student population  
Student households
7. Other miscellaneous issues.

## **1. Village Organisations and other Parish Amenities.**

The Tyler Hill Memorial Hall and recreation ground do not come under the control of the Parish Council. These facilities are held in trust for the benefit of the village community and are managed by trustees, some of whom are elected annually at a public meeting held in March, with others nominated by the clubs who use the hall and field.

The parish council has a representative on the Hall Management Committee and currently there is a second councillor who is also a hall trustee. Any matters raised to the council which relate to hall matters will therefore always be passed on for consideration to the Management Committee. All comments mentioned in the Appraisal questionnaire responses are commented on below and will be passed on to the Hall Management Committee

Both the Hall Committee and the Parish Council are keen to promote community activities and free hiring of the hall is often given to a new local club which is being set up. However for any new club to be successful there must be a strong core of local people who wish to involve themselves. All Tyler Hill clubs have been created in this way, with a number of residents getting together in a group and then asking for a slot in the hall timetable.

Sadly, over the years, some of the clubs which started with a healthy membership had to disband or suspend activities because of falling numbers. Others such as the Youth Club had to close because of the lack of an organiser or leader. The playgroup closed, partially due to falling numbers and partially due to the onus of new legislation. All the clubs who use the hall welcome new local members and full contact details can be found on the web site –[tylerhillmemorialhall.co.uk](http://tylerhillmemorialhall.co.uk) and in the Community Magazine

Three respondents to the Appraisal identified the lack of a youth club as something which should be remedied. The parish council and hall committee strongly agree with this, but there are many obstacles to overcome. The most important of these is the need for a group of adult volunteers to come forward who are prepared to give up their time to supervise and run such a club. On the plus side, whilst there may be no youth club, Tyler Hill does have a large and very well run youth football club which caters for all age ranges and both sexes.

The Hall Committee's main function is to maintain the facilities in good order and improve them where possible. The Committee does not itself run regular activities in the hall although it is substantially comprised of representatives of the clubs who do this. It does however organise fund raising events, such as the annual bonfire nights, and the success of these over the years has enabled Tyler Hill to have hall and recreation facilities which are the envy of many much larger villages.

It also organises special events such as the 2012 Royal Jubilee and Royal wedding celebrations and much of the funding for these resulted from the bonfire night profits. This is money raised in the community by community volunteers and demonstrates what can be achieved by those who are prepared to help.

One respondent asked for a tennis and/or netball court. The Parish Council has no land which could be used for this and such a provision is not in its capacity. The request will be passed on to the Hall Committee although cost and lack of space on the field would make this difficult to achieve. There are however some private tennis courts in the village and perhaps one of the owners might be generous enough to allow a small group of players to use their facilities. Clubs grow from such small seeds and if there were a strong demand, it might be possible to create new courts in the future.

There was a single request for allotments and whilst this may well be a facility for which there is more general demand, the questionnaires did not reflect this. If more local residents supported this idea, it is possible that the Parish Council could take this further.

There was a request for a petanque court. Whilst it may be fashionable to have a formally laid out court, this is a game which from its origins, can be played on almost surface without formal setup. It is a game which could be played on the recreation ground or possibly the gravel car park. If there is a group of people in the village who would like to band together to try the game they should contact the Hall booking secretary.

The Memorial Hall web site shows the daily diary. Most of the regular activities are available to local people. The web site shows contact details. Notices both in and outside the hall, provide all this information. The Hall Committee endeavour to give priority to local users, but cannot cancel previously booked events to accommodate a request at short notice.

It is unfortunate if anyone feels "alienated" by events at the hall, although inevitably irritation will occur if users fail to show reasonable consideration to local residents. Some inconvenience of this nature is the price that has to be paid in a village like Tyler Hill, where community activities are highly valued by the great majority. For example, youth football generates a lot of traffic, which may cause some annoyance, yet most people are tolerant because they believe in the value of encouraging youngsters in sporting activity.

The Hall is expensive to run and hire charges for outside lets supplement the charges to local users.

Play equipment on the field is also the responsibility of the Hall Committee rather than the Parish Council. It is the subject of a number of comments in the questionnaires, with most suggesting that there should be additional items. The Hall Committee are sympathetic to this view, but there are a number of constraints.

Outside play equipment and its safety surface are very expensive capital purchases. It is costly to inspect and maintain in compliance with safety standards and an accident could leave the trustees liable to prosecution. Whilst play areas like St Stephens and Chestfield are often cited as examples that Tyler Hill should follow, these are funded from public money and the local authority bears all the responsibility for their condition.

These factors and the relatively small number of local children who use the existing equipment does tend to deter the Committee from extending the play area beyond the basic items already provided. However, a recent very generous donation in the memory of Alice & Terry Dawkins who died recently has provided the funds to purchase a new, large piece of play equipment for children in the form of a boat. It has been called 'The Good Ship Dawkins'.

Some respondents mourned the fact that there is no village shop and that the Ivy House pub is again under threat.

It has recently been announced that the pub has been purchased by two residents of the village who plan to renovate the building. They intend to hold a meeting for all village residents to attend in order to ascertain what sort of provision and activities they would like to see offered in the pub. The Parish Council values this initiative and will offer whatever support is can to the venture.

## 2. Parish Design Statement

The built environment and development to be supported.

The Parish is protected by its designation as a Conservation Area, granted in 1995.

The Council will always use the designation in support of its consideration of planning proposals in the Parish.

The Parish Design Statement will be reviewed annually. It will be publicised and used in consideration of any planning proposals in the parish

Twenty-two respondents had read The Parish Design Statement and agreed with it. One respondent had read it, but did not agree with it, without saying why.

The Statement has been available on the Parish web-site for three years now. It was therefore disappointing that of those who responded to the Appraisal electronically, almost half had not read the Statement. Perhaps this has something to do with the way the Parish Council publicises its web-based information. That said, the Council would urge all electors to read the Statement and to use it when assessing the merits of any planning application.

The support for the listed different types of development was as follows:

37 would support or permit Affordable housing, whilst 6 would oppose it

42 would support or permit Family homes to be built, whilst 2 would not.

9 would support Houses in Multiple Occupancy whilst 33 would oppose them, some vigorously.

The Parish Council notes the outcomes of the questions on types of housing to be supported.

The Parish Council has campaigned for a District-wide policy to be adopted on HMOs which would contain provision for the limitation on HMOs in Tyler Hill village to be less than 10% of the total accommodation in the village. We await a policy statement from the City Council on the matter.

Other types of development did not feature in the responses.

Following a policy being pursued by the District Council and recommendations made in the responses, the Parish Council will adopt a carbon-neutral policy for development within the parish.

Reference was made to two major developments in the village at Sunnyside and at 40 Hackington Road which had occurred in the period of the last Parish Plan, both of which had been vigorously opposed by the Parish Council and which had nevertheless, regrettably, been approved by the City Council's Development Control Committee.

The Parish Council believes that the Village Design Statement would now militate against similar applications being approved in future.

Following suggestions in the responses the WW2 Pill box in the Sarre Penn valley, (now overgrown), and the buried tile kiln under land off St Stephen's Hill, the Council will ask to have these features recorded as Assets of the Community.

The question was asked what would the Parish Council's view be about the Recycling and landfill area at Broadoak (which is wholly in the parish) when it has been filled ?.

The landfill facility has a limited lifespan.

The Parish Council's views are always sought on all development on the site, including temporary diversion of footpaths. There is a published long-term plan for the site and its conversion, eventually, to a country park. The Parish Council will be consulted at each stage of the conversion process and electors will be able to have their input into responses made to the consultation process.

Commentary was made about the state of drainage ditches, especially those on the west side of the village.

The Council will seek assurances from the District Council on the maintenance of all drainage channels in the parish.

Some respondents expressed the view that the village is large enough already and that there should not be any expansion as part of the District Council's plans to create more accommodation across the district.

These views accord with the Parish Council's Parish Design Statement.

The maintenance of the 'green gap' between the University and the village is strongly supported.

### 3. Managing Traffic Speeds

The most frequently expressed request was for better signage/interactive signage to reduce the incidence of speeding through the village.

As a result of continuous campaigning by the Council coupled with a petition raised by village residents and the very unfortunate death of a student crossing St Stephen's Hill (which is in our parish) our County Councillor has been able to secure funding to provide an interactive sign at the north end of the village on Hackington Road which is intended to moderate the speed of traffic travelling towards the City.

Whilst the Council is pleased to have secured this improvement, it will continue to press for a similar provision to moderate the speed of traffic travelling away from the City on Hackington Road and for there to be more frequent Police monitoring of speeds on both Hackington Road and Tyler Hill Road/Calais Hill..

#### Volume of traffic

57% of respondents felt that the volume of traffic was acceptable. Of those that didn't, many suggested traffic calming be introduced as part of a speeding and traffic volume solution, deterring motorists from passing through the village and/or encouraging them to take alternative routes.

The Parish Council has been informed by the Highway Authority that given the width of Hackington Road and it being a bus route, traffic calming measures cannot be introduced on the road.

The Parish Council will continue to campaign for continuous monitoring and improvement to the control of traffic through the village.

#### Pavement condition

57% of respondents felt that the condition of foot ways, (or pavements), was acceptable. Of those that didn't, comments included the narrow nature of the foot way up to the University on Canterbury Hill; the lack of foot way on Tyler Hill Road (including right through to Blean), and foot ways overgrown with vegetation. There were also mentions of foot ways in need of minor repair.

Those who have lived in the village for several years will know that it took more than 20 years of continuous campaigning to obtain the priority to have the footways on Wood Hill and Canterbury Hill created. At present there is no prospect of having the footpath on Canterbury Hill widened because of the prohibitive costs of buying the strips of the gardens of properties on the west side of the road or buying land to widen the road on the east side of the road.

The road to Blean is recognised as being hazardous for pedestrians because of its narrowness and because of the blind bends on it.

The Council proposes to campaign with Blean Parish Council for better and more frequent maintenance of the verges beside the road along its whole length and for there to be better signage about the hazards to pedestrians on the road. Pedestrians will be encouraged to walk facing the oncoming traffic (as recommended in the Highway Code).

### Road condition

Almost 62% of respondents felt that the condition of roads in the village was acceptable. Unsurprisingly potholes were mentioned frequently. Overgrowing vegetation affecting visibility was commented upon. Generally speaking, however, whilst there is need for particular attention to some matters, there was a reasonable level of satisfaction.

The Highway Authority for Kent roads have a Highway Steward based in Canterbury. Residents with complaints about aspects to road conditions can bring them to the attention of the Steward on [Canterbury@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Canterbury@kent.gov.uk).

### Other notes

The Parish Council will continue to campaign for :  
Improvement to the safe crossing of Hackington Road close to the Ivy House pub and the bus stops;

The consideration of 20mph zone(s); reductions of 40 mph speed limits to 30mph;

Increased vegetation cutting;

A review of foot way widths; and the general availability of foot ways

## 4. Footpaths

### The Natural environment

It should be mentioned that footpaths and foot ways are not the same. Footpaths permit walking in the countryside and have a designated number, whilst foot ways are beside roads. However we have responded to the points raised, whether about footpaths or foot ways, in this section

The great majority of respondents were satisfied with the footpath network and the way it is maintained. Several commented favourably on the monitoring of the system and the recent improvement in signage and marker posts..

Of those who were not satisfied with the condition of the footpath network, including stiles, bridges and signage, the following points were made:

\*All stiles should be dog-friendly, including small dog-friendly.

\*Owners should not allow their dogs to foul the footpaths.

\*At least some of the paths should be made hard-surfaced so that they are easy to run on and take push-chairs along. But this contrasts with others who say that ours are woodland paths, not rural or even semi-rural like in the paths near Rough Common, and those using the woods should go prepared to walk on wet surfaces. The latter wish to keep the environment as natural as possible.

The Parish Council will continue to keep the environment as natural as possible.

\*There is some misunderstanding amongst respondents about what is a Right of Way and what is a permitted footpath. All the Rights of Way in the parish are shown on the large illustrated map attached to the Memorial Hall. The public (including cyclists now) have unimpeded access to these paths. There are other well-used paths in the woods which are not Rights of Way but which are used regularly by walkers, on a permitted basis only. The permission, whether stated or merely tolerated, comes from the land owner.

\* A couple of people ask if a foot way could be created between the village and Blean. The point is made that the foot way does not need to be a hard surface but could be a simple smooth geotextile surface which would allow pedestrians to be off the road surface of what has become a hazardous road for them.

The Parish Council will liaise with Blean Parish Council on this issue.

\* Muddy Lane [CB 36] is a Bridleway rather than a footpath and as such is likely to get churned up by horses and farm machinery using it. Nevertheless the council has had surface drainage works done on the Bridleway

The great majority of respondents were satisfied with the Council's efforts to promote the natural environment of the parish. Of those who had concerns or reservations the following points were made:

\* The Tyler Hill Meadow Local Nature Reserve does not receive sufficient publicity and the Community Magazine should be used more to promote it.

Agreed

\* The restrictions on some activities in the Reserve (picnicking for instance) are too severe.

Not agreed

\* The Water Board, which owns much of the farmland south of the village and along the Sarre Penn valley, is a very poor manager of some of this land, leaving some untidy and overgrown and the footpath by the stream [CB 42] completely impassable, through lack of maintenance.

The Parish Council is dissatisfied with the response it has received to requests for the proper maintenance of footpaths and the cutting back of hedges.

The Parish Council will continue to press for a proper maintenance programme.

\* Residents in the Alcroft Grange area complain of unregistered gun use in their locality.

The Police are the only authority to deal with this matter.

\* The suggestion is made that a clear-up litter exercise should be undertaken, particularly along Calais Hill and Tyler Hill Road to our boundary with Blean, perhaps quarterly.

The proposal will be put to the Blean, Hackington & Tyler Hill Society.

\*The suggestion is made that the parking areas outside the flats in Tyler Hill Road and around the car park at St John's Crescent should have flower boxes installed to make them as attractive as those observed in parts of France.

This proposal will be pursued with the City Council and with the Blean, Hackington & Tyler Hill Society.

Praise is given for the recent installation of Information Boards by the Blean Project which recount the history of their immediate location and the industrial activities that have taken place there

## 5. Sense of Security and Preparation for Emergencies

### Sense of security

In general, of the 47 questionnaires completed, the majority indicate a reasonable satisfaction with the matter of security within the village. However, there are areas of concern and they are chiefly about the lack of regular police presence in the village.

There's a request that good Neighbourhood Watch Area signs should be reinstated.

The term 'Sense of Security' is considered by some residents to be rather vague and in general terms respondents indicate that what would give a better sense of security would be a more visible and active local police presence in the village.

Residents are invited to consider the announcements within the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's website on proposed increased numbers of officers and their roles.

It was suggested that a presentation by an Officer of Kent Police who could tell residents what the Force is doing to prevent crime in our area and advise on who or what to look out for to prevent crime would be useful.

The Police and Crime Commissioner proposes to meet with all representatives of communities in East Kent on a regular six-monthly basis.

The PCSO Mike Bradbury, visits the village regularly and is available on 07772225942 email: [mike.bradbury@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:mike.bradbury@kent.pnn.police.uk))

#### Preparation for Emergencies:

14 residents have said they would volunteer to join a group that would become co-ordinators of various services in the event of an emergency

The Parish Council is grateful to these residents and will contact them directly when the District Council has formulated its plans.

## **7. Catering for student population**

Most people responding to the questionnaire commented to some extent on the student population in the parish. Responses were mixed.

About two thirds of respondents thought that enough is being done to cater for students. This often seemed to imply 'enough' in terms of housing, but a number of residents wondered how best students can be encouraged to integrate or indeed whether they want to integrate as they are here on only a temporary basis.

There were suggestions about the need to provide more information regarding local activities to students and the possibility of asking them to volunteer to help with activities such as bonfire night. Some people asked what was currently being done to help students integrate. Others commented that students are well catered for in terms of sports and social facilities on the University campus and therefore don't look for activities in the village.

Several residents felt that a lively and viable pub in the village would be the best way of meeting the student population and getting to know them.

A few respondents complained that students leave a lot of rubbish, particularly at the end of term, are noisy and inconsiderate and have been causing problems by parking on verges. Others felt that students could be a valuable part of the community if encouraged to integrate.

One respondent ,(new to the area), was disgusted at the attitude of residents to students and felt that dislike of students had been very obvious in the pub and in the community.

#### Student Households

Regarding student housing, about three quarters of respondents felt that there was the right number of student households. Ten respondents felt that there were too many and two felt there were not enough.

A large majority of people opposed HMO's, with only one respondent wanting to encourage HMO's .

Reasons given for opposition were mainly:-

- a) that housing stock traditionally used by young families tended to be used as HMOs for student accommodation, denying affordable housing for local young families.
- b) the character of the village would be changed if more student accommodation were allowed by impacting upon its traditional balanced make up.
- c) concern that landlords tend to come from outside the parish and are less likely to keep student houses well maintained, which could be detrimental to their neighbours.

Some residents wanted a strict limit on the number of students living in the village and one person suggested a defined proportion of student accommodation e.g. 1:20

## 7. Miscellaneous

Litter is considered to be a major and worsening problem. Overgrowing vegetation and rubbish, including dog mess, along the foot ways and public footpaths around the village causes offence to many.

Two residents have commented that they do not think 'our councillors' do enough about dog noise, especially in some flats where dogs are left in all day and disturb other neighbours.

These respondents are perhaps forgetting that a remedy lies in their own hands by reporting such instances to the Environmental Health section of the City Council directly

### Finally.....

Several respondents said that the Parish Council should better publicise and promote what it does as very little is known of the role Councillors have within local government.

The Parish Council respectfully invites all residents to view its website where all of the information requested is available.

[www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk).

It was suggested that the Community Magazine could be a better platform for village information and issues and thus increase awareness of what is actively being done regarding all the issues of concern within the community. It could promote solutions to issues that have been raised in the Appraisal questionnaire such issues as highlighting the need for hedges and overhanging trees and vegetation to be cut back

The Parish Council will review the role of the Community magazine and its relationship with the Council's website information.

March 2013