

## Hackington Parish Council

### **The Chairman of the Parish Council's report to the Parish Assembly, 17th March 2016**

In the Parish Council elections held in May 2015 six candidates stood for the five places available. Those elected to serve were Cllrs Annie Cover, Nigel Cronin, Ray Evison, Ben Fitter and Trish Hulks.

The Council has met on its customary six occasions over the past year, managing particular matters pertaining to the parish as well as its usual business of oversight of the highways, footpaths, street lighting, safety and security, and the conservation area. It continues to enjoy good working relationships with other bodies serving the community in the parish.

The Council's intention to commemorate Hazel McCabe's great contribution to the parish and to record the high regard in which she was held, by creating a suitable memorial to her has been realised by the installation of a bus shelter. Our efforts to purchase land on which to create allotments proved impossible and the provision of a bus shelter outside the Tyler's Kiln pub, for those waiting for buses travelling towards the city, was agreed to be a wholly appropriate one in which to remember Hazel. Our purchase of the shelter was greatly assisted by a generous donation from Blean Parochial Church Council following their sale of our former mission church of St Francis.

The Council is appalled at the recent application by those who purchased the former church to turn it into 'holiday let' accommodation. We responded to the request for support from the family that bought the building positively, expecting the building to be used as a children's play room and continue as a family room. If we had known that so soon after its purchase it was planned to be used commercially I doubt that the Council would have given its support.

The District Council's decision to bring in an Article 4 Direction has only recently been introduced. The Council waits to be convinced that it will have any effect on accommodation patterns in the parish. During the year more family homes have been converted to student accommodation. By and large the students resident in the village cause no nuisance but they do not participate in or contribute to the community.

The Council, responding to a KALC request, has set up a training budget in order that the Clerk and at least one councillor each year can attend a development or updating training course. In the year the Clerk and Cllr Cronin have attended such courses.

The Council is always represented at the Canterbury Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils and at the recently re-constituted Rural Area Members Panel meetings of the City Council.

As ever Highways and road traffic featured prominently in the Council's work. The proposed Speed Watch scheme was introduced under the leadership of Cllr Fitter and several watches have been held on both Hackington Road and Tyler Hill Road. The speed of vehicles changed notably when the watches were in progress and though there are still many instances of speeding through the village it is thought worthwhile to hold the watches as a reminder to motorists that they are travelling in a restricted area. The Council purchased A4 sized stickers to attach to the wheely-

bins that are placed outside properties each week as an additional reminder to motorists to keep their speed below 30 mph.

The Parish has again enjoyed a year in which there were very few crimes committed and the Council is grateful to Robin Whiting for his continuing work as Neighbourhood Watch reporter for the village. The Council have raised their concerns with Kent Police at the failure of our P C S O to attend or report to the meetings of the Parish Council. At a meeting with the Canterbury Area Commander we were promised a better liaison than has occurred lately.

The Parish Council has considered several planning applications during the year. Most of the applications were processed in a straight-forward, uncontentious manner but two matters caused some concern.

The resubmission of a planning application for one dwelling to replace Hillside Cottage was granted but subsequently another application has been made for a semi-detached building rather than a single accommodation. This latter submission has been opposed by the Council on the grounds of over intensification.

The Council had no objection to the out-building at Tyler Hill House being converted into living accommodation. Though the Planning authorities at the District Council had no objection it was refused on 'heritage' grounds. A new application has the support of the Parish Council.

We continue to revise and strengthen those elements in our Design Statement which summarise our expectations of those who are seeking to change buildings, add to buildings or created new buildings in the parish.

The Council continues to welcome commentary on the Design Statement. The text is available on the Parish Council's website [www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk).

The Council has been informed that along with all other areas designated as Conservation Areas in the district it will have its status reviewed and has been provisionally been placed in a category that questions whether it should continue to have such status. The Council will mount a vigorous defence of the justification for retaining such status.

The Council has monitored the incidence of parking by those enjoying the facilities of the now well established Tyler's Kiln pub. Although there have been instances of inconsiderate parking at times, by and large the clientele use the main road and Link Road without causing much inconvenience. And there is the minor benefit of cars parked on Hackington Road causing through traffic to slow down.

There continues to be real concern at the incidence of serious accidents between the north end of the village and in the woods close to our boundary with Chestfield parish. The Council understands that Kent C C review the incidence of accidents on all rural roads hopes that the B290 will be made less hazardous than at present

The Tyler Hill Meadow Local Nature Reserve has again benefited from the voluntary efforts of the management team and some of their families who have tidied the Reserve. There continues to be regular surveys of birds, butterflies and moths, flowers and grasses, trees, dormice and the pond. The grassed area of the Reserve has not been cut in the last two seasons so it is proposed to undertake a cut and clear back of some brambles this coming autumn.

Footpaths in and across the parish continue to be very well used. The footpaths to the east, which are mainly in our woods, have been flooded in parts by the very heavy rainfall which has occurred in the first two months of this year but have been passable and well walked by locals and by visiting parties of walkers.

The Council has placed the following documents on its website:

The Parish Design Statement is available for scrutiny and commentary.  
A document called 'Who we are and what we do' is a statement about the Parish Council's constitution and activities.  
Agendas and Minutes of all Parish Council meetings  
Minutes of the management committee for the Tyler Hill Meadow Reserve.  
The Annual Report to the Parish Assembly.

The Council undertakes an annual assessment of the Risks to which it might be vulnerable and it confirms that the necessary insurance it has obtained covers the eventualities that might have to be met.

Members of the Council again wish to record their thanks to the Clerk, Mrs Denise Horswell, for the efficient, considerate and very pleasant way she continues to deal with all her responsibilities.

The Council again wishes to thank and congratulate all those members of the community who have generously given their time and efforts to enhance the appearance of the village in the flower beds at the junction of Hackington Road and Summer Lane, on the 'village green' near the village sign, around the entrance to the Memorial hall and in the attractive 'Greening' projects.

During the year the Parish Councillors have taken the following lead responsibilities

Footpaths	Ray Evison
Highways	Ben Fitter
Street Lighting + Security	Nigel Cronin
Liaison with KALC and Memorial Hall	Annie Cover
Conservation	Trish Hulks

The Council is grateful for the advice it receives from the Chairman of B, H & T H Society, Penny Reilly, and from the Tree and Pond Warden, Lynne Evison

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15<sup>th</sup> March 2016