

Hackington Parish Council

The Chairman of the Parish Council's report to the Parish Assembly, 9th March 2017

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.

During the year there have been continuing discussions over the prospect of devolution of services following a potential re-organisation of the two levels of governance above parish councils in the county. KALC has conducted preliminary discussions with the Leader of the County Council and representatives of District Councils but are waiting on decisions to be made by these bodies. In preparation for any possible change the Council has held discussions with neighbouring parish council representatives to assess whether any of the services which we provide could be done jointly. Until the form of any new governance has been approved by the Government any proposals from our discussions will remain 'under consideration'.

The Council has used its training budget to send the Clerk to training and updating conference and Cllr Hulks to a conference dealing with Resilience planning. The Council is always represented at the Canterbury Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils and at the Rural Area Members Panel meetings of the City Council. At the latter, parish councillors are now permitted to speak. The Council awaits the publication of the revised version of the Parish Charter.

As ever, Highways and road traffic featured prominently in the Council's work. Thanks to the generous support of our County Councillor, John Simmonds, the Council had installed three poles or masts upon which a speed indicator device can be hung in four different positions. Two of the posts are on Hackington Road and one on Tyler Hill Road. Whilst the device does not record speeds it has been noticed that vehicles do slow down when the indicator flashes the vehicle's speed. Thus we are able to influence the speed of vehicles in the village without the need for Speedwatch operative teams being called out.

Parking close to the Tyler's Kiln pub has on occasions caused nuisance and inconvenience. As a result some residents have asked if yellow lines could be installed. The Council has applied for yellow lines to be installed appropriately and the District Council has proposed they be installed on the north side of Link Road from the junction with Hackington Road to the western boundary of No 5 Link Road.

The financing of all the services that the parish council offers to our electors has come under increasing pressure due to the Government imposed reductions in funding as part of its austerity plan. The reductions so far, together with the projected decreases in funding in the years up to 2020 have caused the Council to consider very carefully how the present services can be maintained. The Council has concluded that our annual precept on ratepayers will have to increase by slightly more than it has in the past; In fact by 7% in the coming financial year, which is approximately 60p/ week for a Band D property. The council has always been

prudent in its management of our finances and it will continue to be so, but will need to be realistic if it is to continue to serve our residents properly.

Litter, especially beside Calais Hill, but also on the other roadsides of Hackington Road, Canterbury Hill and Tyler Hill Road continues to cause us concern. It has been noticed that litter is particularly evident close to properties with absentee landlords and student occupation. The Council will take up this issue with the City Council. As part of a county-wide clear up the Council was recently involved in bringing the village into good order again and will invest in notices promoting the taking home of all litter and keeping our neighbourhood tidy.

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. Our PCSO meets with our Clerk regularly and is pleased to note that his active service has not been required in the village.

The Parish Council has considered several planning applications during the year. Most of the applications were processed in a straight-forward, uncontentious manner but one matter continues to cause some concern. The resubmission of a planning application at Hillside Cottage for a semi-detached building rather than a single accommodation was opposed by the Council on the grounds of over intensification more than a year ago but no decision has yet been received on this matter.

We are pleased to note that planning applications refer to our Design Statement which summarises our expectations of those who are seeking to change buildings, add to buildings, or create new buildings in the parish. In almost all instances the applications acknowledge the importance of our Conservation Area status and the advice in the Design Statement

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. The Council was last year informed that along with all other areas designated as Conservation Areas in the district it will have its status reviewed and has been provisionally placed in a category that questions whether it should continue to have such status. Nothing further has been heard of the review

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. During the year a team from the Kentish Stour Project returned to the Reserve to undertake a substantial clear-up of all parts of the Reserve which is now restored to its former appearance. There continues to be regular surveys of birds, butterflies and moths, flowers and grasses, trees, dormice and the pond. The Management Team continue to look for local people to join in the maintenance of the Reserve.

Footpaths in and across the parish continue to be very well used. The footpaths to the east, which are mainly in our woods, continue to be well used and are in a good condition. The bridge over the Sarre Penn on footpath CB37 has been replaced and several trees downed in high winds have been removed. The Footpath system is in good shape overall.

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

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

RE

8th March 2017