

# Reports from Parish Clubs & Organisations



for the

## Annual Parish Meeting

held in

## Grafty Green Village Hall

on

## Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019

# **Chairman's Report to the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council for the year 2018/2019**

Whilst preparing to write my report I looked at the reports for previous years. With the exception of people; those moving out and those arriving; the issues of our small parish does not differ enormously from year to year.

One thing that has changed is that the work level for both the Parish Council and its members increases each year. I must say here that our Parish Clerk Chris Hume does a great job in filtering out the enormous amount of time wasting emails that come through.

It is amazing how the Parish Council no sooner gets over one set of problems and another arises .The development of Boughton Park was a long issue. Now people are slowly moving in and the place is looking less like a "bomb site ", our problems with this site should ease. However the Parish Council hears that it is possible that Quinn's may wish to re-develop the office blocks to become housing. We need to watch this issue.

## **The New Big issues**

**1 The potential Lorry Park.** Should this be developed it would be a savage blow to our parish, to our countryside and to our residents. In my view it would be state vandalism of the first order. We were promised information from Highways England on this issue by Christmas 2018 BUT surprisingly nothing has been heard

**2 The development of Lenham.** This could pose a problem for our parish. An extra 1000 houses are to be built between now and 2030(estimated as 2450 people). This will bring extra traffic to our small unsuitable roads. One had hoped that a new Ashford, Lenham, Maidstone, London Bridge rail journey might be installed to take some weight off the Headcorn route and commuting traffic off our roads. But now it appears that this may not happen so more cars to Headcorn through Boughton Malherbe morning and evening.

**3 Traffic levels are on the increase both cars and lorries.** Listening to both KALC and MBC it appears that it is impossible to stop lorry "rat runs" even on roads as narrow as ours Liverton Hill, Platts Heath and Sandway.

These points are major issues facing our Parish

What has happened over the past year ?

**Liverton Hill** has been repaired at the Stream Farm end. This caused chaos for a few weeks especially with indifferent diversion signage.

**Woodcock Lane**, following a lengthy site meeting, has a new and effective drainage system by the footpath. Sadly only 2/3 of the work was completed by KCC contractors and we wait for the work to be finished.

We had the trees on the Green surveyed and the necessary tree surgery was completed for safety reasons.

**Surveys** have been done and final plans are being drawn up for speed controls to be introduced in Grafty Green. These potential plans will be put to the village as soon as KCC and our consultants reach agreement.

There was a party on the Green masterminded by Councillor Allum and her team of Elves for the lighting up of the Christmas tree. An excellent function much enjoyed by all attendees.

**Gypsy Site Enquiries.** These were due to have taken place over the year relating to planning breaches at Green Acres, the Meadows, Acers Place and the Willows - Eastwood road. The enquiries have been delayed or cancelled. Not a satisfactory situation .

### **Quinn Money Expenditure.**

A sum of money was donated to the school at Platts Heath for computer equipment The surveys and the potential development of speed restrictions in the village have been funded by Quinn Monies As will the work to complete the installation.

The directional stone (provided it is given land owners approval) will also benefit from Quinn money.

In addition new lighting has been installed in the Passageway on the North Side of the pub.

As you will see from Richard Pilborough's report the Hall has organised several events in the year. The Fete, Harvest Supper, The Christmas Quiz, the Pantomime, The Pancake evening and the forthcoming Country and Western evening.

### **Planning Applications**

There have been 12 applications most of which were approved.

So who says that nothing happens in our Parish !!!!!

### **The Parish Council**

Last Summer Tony King resigned from the Parish Council and moved to Ireland. I must indeed thank him for his years of contribution in numerous roles to the Parish Council.

However in October Kathy Brown was co-opted on to the Council to fill the vacancy left by Tony King. I thank Kathy for joining us and wish her luck and many years of contribution to the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council.

Parish Councillors do attend meetings outside the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings. These outside meetings are an effort to remain fully informed with the ever changing regulations that beset us. Over the past year councillors have attended approximately 38 meetings

Over the past year Council meetings have taken 24 hours of councillors time which is given freely to the parish.

Within the Parish Council and outside the council many people contribute their time for the well being of the Parish

Our Parish Clerk Chris Hume is the hub of the Parish Council in his role as Proper Officer. Without him nothing would happen and as a council we are very reliant upon Chris for organisation and advice. We have given him a hard time these past few months and I would like to thank him for all that he has done.

Last year I forgot to thank Ron Galton for all his hard work with numerous Planning issues and for serving as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. So if Ron will forgive me I would like to thank him for all his support and labours in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Thank you to John Collins who Chairs the Finance and Staffing Committee. In addition John also attends the MBC Transport group which keeps our busses running or otherwise.

Annie Allum has responsibility for highway issues as well as the potential speed restriction venture. In addition the Christmas tree event falls into her portfolio; thank you for your help and support .

Kathy Brown is learning the ropes and I know that we can count on her support and involvement in the coming years. Thank you

Other helpers in the village

Michael and Rosemary Smith. Thank you for looking after the Green. Rosemary we wish you a speedy recovery after your recent operation.

Mike Hitchins. Thank you for producing the Malherbe Monthly. A very useful publication

Mike Davidson and David Chantler. Thank you for representing the Parish on the Honywood and Douglas Trust

Joan Drury. Thank you for your weekly column in the Kent Messenger

Richard Pilborough. Thank you for Chairing and running the Village Hall. Incidentally in 2021 the hall will have been in Grafty Green for 100 years

John Boyd is our PCSO. He is always willing to help with a problem; Thank you

Rob and Nick in the shop. A very valuable village entity. Thank you for your support to the Parish.

Our Borough Councillors have an unenviable task, Our thanks to Martin Round and Karen Chappel-Tay We enjoy and benefit from your support; Thank you Shellina Prendergast our KCC member. Thank you for all your help and support, much Valued.

Looking to the future for our Parish we need to be aware and involved in the following:

- 1 Elections next year
- 2 The potential lorry park
- 3 The Lenham development
- 4 The Gypsy and Traveller issues
- 5 Inter Parish Liaison
- 6 A parish steward/Lengthsman

**Robert Turner**

# Shellina Prendergast - Member For Maidstone Rural East

## Annual Report 2018/2019

It is two years since I came to represent residents of Maidstone Rural East at Kent County Council – and it continues to be an honour and a privilege to represent one of the very best parts of our County.

Kent County Council (KCC) approached the start of yet another financial year facing an immense challenge in setting the budget. After producing savings of some £640 million over the last eight years, the Council has risen to the challenge of finding another £73 million to fund rising spending pressures during 2019/2020. In line with most other Councils across the country, KCC has raised council tax by 2.99%, plus the 2% specifically allocated for social care – Councillors very much regretted that this proved necessary, but budget consultations indicated that residents were mostly accepting of a rise that would be “ring-fenced” for protecting front line services for our increasing aging population. The following are some examples of how the £988 million budget will be used to maintain, improve and enhance the services that will benefit our 1.5 million residents in Kent:

- Biggest ever investment in highways – from £70 million in 2017/2018 to £89 million in the current year and rising next year to £95.7 million. This is in addition to the £28 million recently received from the Department of Transport for highways improvements to mitigate against the impact of Brexit.
- Subsidised bus services – £6.2 million to ensure that many of those living in our most isolated rural communities have access to the services they need.
- Housing related support for the most vulnerable - £7.1 million
- £6.5 million on community services including community wardens, arts and culture, country parks
- Children in need of family support - £9.8 million
- Young Person’s Travel Pass - £8.1 million on this non-statutory service.

**Brexit** – as part of the Kent Resilience Forum, KCC is committed to preparing for the country’s anticipated withdrawal and extensive work has taken place to keep Kent moving and open for business. This includes working with Highways England to keep the M20 open in both directions, minimising disruption for local communities and implementing welfare plans for those who may be affected by delays. Extra Trading Standards Officers have been recruited to address the issue of illegal or unsafe goods entering the County. On resilience, KCC has been overhauling its business continuity plans, providing advice to other businesses and working to minimise disruptions on our schools, hospitals and vulnerable residents. KCC will continue to liaise with central government, fine tune our plans and keep our communities informed over the coming months.

As well as attending meetings of the Council, I am also a member of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, the Regulations Committee and the Corporate Parenting Panel – like all of us at KCC, I am very proud to be a corporate parent to Kent’s looked after children and care leavers. Appointments to outside bodies include the **Red Hill Trust** – a registered charity offering support to children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The welfare of our children and young people is one of the Council’s key priorities and my work as a Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education includes

responsibilities for commissioning of school places, special educational needs and disability assessment and placement, youth and youth justice, Children in Care services, adolescent support and the fostering and adoption service.

During my time at KCC, I have worked with residents, parish councils/meetings and Helen Whately MP to address the pledges I made to you when elected, and these include:

### **Transport and Highways**

- Speeding, rat running, volume of traffic and inconsiderate parking are a problem for all of us. I have worked with Kent Highways, the Police, Cabinet Members and our MP to improve highway safety not only in our rural villages but also the strategic road networks which impact on residents of Maidstone Rural East - most notably the A20, A249 and the A274.
- Lorry Park – I have worked closely with residents and parish councils on the speculated lorry park between J8-9 of the M20. Helen Whately MP and I have worked closely on this and are both in regular contact with Highways England. We both spoke at a recent and very well attended public meeting and hopefully were able to reassure concerned residents that we are doing everything possible to leave the decision makers in no doubt that the proposal in this area is completely unacceptable to our residents and would cause severe damage to the built and natural environment.
- Access for All – Over the last 12 months, I have worked with our MP, Headcorn parish council and the community to secure step free access to Headcorn station for some of our most vulnerable users. Although unsuccessful in the first round, we are all committed to launching a further bid for the soon to be announced mid-tier programme where accessibility can be delivered for under £1m – which Headcorn would undoubtedly qualify for.
- Rural Transport – Many of our rural parishes are poorly served by public transport and I have worked with commercial bus operators and KCC public transport officers to ensure that good levels of service are maintained where possible. I was particularly delighted, following some considerable lobbying on my part, when it was revealed earlier this year that the bus pilots launched in Kent would include enhanced services to many of the rural villages I represent. The pilot schemes are due to commence in June 2019 and will run for 12 months. I very much hope that the service will be popular and that increased usage will lead to a more permanent service.
- Many of our children are facing unacceptably long daily journeys to school and back – and I am in constant dialogue with bus operators on how these journeys can be shortened and to ensure our children have access to a high quality and reliable service to enable them to get to school on time.

### **Education**

- The unprecedented population growth in Maidstone has put some significant pressure on early years settings and primary schools. I have worked with my Cabinet colleagues and Education Officers to ensure a sufficiency of places and was delighted that my work on the nursery school provision in Headcorn paid off – Juniors Nursery opened in January this year on a temporary two-year basis on the Headcorn primary school site – and I'm continuing with my efforts to secure a long-term solution. I am also working with other areas facing a similar shortfall – I firmly believe it is important to give our children the best start in life and give

their parents/carers the opportunity to fulfil work and other commitments.

- With primary schools, I continue to work with Cabinet colleagues, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Maidstone Borough Council and our MP to ensure that every child has access to a good or outstanding school within proximity of their local area.

### **Planning and Infrastructure**

- My well-established record in fighting decision makers on inappropriate development within our rural areas has continued at a pace. I am particularly concerned with housing developments where vital infrastructure such as schools, transport links and medical and community facilities have not been properly considered. I have worked very closely with Lenham Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Group in ensuring that highways and education provision are sustainable for both current and future residents.

### **Communications**

- Kent County Council is working with the Government's broadband agency, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) to improve access to superfast broadband services. To date, this work has already brought superfast broadband to over 134,000 homes and businesses, who would otherwise have been left with no, or slow broadband. This means that 95% of properties across Kent and Medway can now access a superfast broadband service of at least 24mbps. I am working with residents in many of our communities – Hucking, Hollingbourne and Ulcombe – to secure a better service and more information can be found on <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/broadband/making-kent-quicker>

I attend as many of the local parish council meetings within my Division as I can – sometimes two in one evening – as well as the annual parish meetings. My most important role however is to help and support residents with their individual problems. The case work is varied - ranging from school appeals to care packages for our elderly residents, potholes to hedges etc – and it is always very rewarding to see positive outcomes. I am always happy to listen and help and can be contacted by either email or telephone – [Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk) or 07970 461160.

I am always very keen to support local community projects with my KCC Members Grant. Beneficiaries this past year include improvements to Filmer Hall in East Sutton, play equipment in Ulcombe and at Hollingbourne primary school, improved facilities at Headcorn Tennis Club, Five Acre Wood School, various highway schemes, Age UK Maidstone, Involve Kent, a youth project led by the Salvation Army and a memorial stone in Boughton Malherbe. I have several worthy projects in the pipeline for 2019/20 but please do let me know if there is anything within your community that I can help with.

Thank you again and my very best wishes to you all.

Shellina

## **Maidstone Borough Councillors' Report to Parish Annual Meeting, 2019**

The last year has seen two election for your members of Maidstone Borough Council. Firstly, Martin Round was re-elected as one of your Councillors in May 2018, and secondly, Karen Chappell-Tay was elected in a by-election in September 2018, when the previous member stood down. This means that the Headcorn, Ulcombe, Grafty Green and East Sutton Ward now has two members who have lived here and even grew up here, for over fifty years, and have strong views on the importance of village life and continuity.

Since May 2018 there have been a number of changes at MBC. Firstly, and most importantly, last October a new and stronger Enforcement Policy for Planning Infringements was adopted. It will take time for the effects of this to show, but we are already seeing more Planning Enforcement issues being reported, and Notices being issued. In order not to prejudice the Council's case, we cannot discuss these in public, but if you do see any potential infringements, please report them immediately.

Secondly, we saw MBC issue a Judicial Review case against Kent County Council, over the use of Section 106 monies, to carry out a viability assessment for the Leeds/Langley bypass. Fortunately, this was resolved before the final showdown, but in my view, and the view of my fellow Ward Member Martin, this was a waste of public money on legal fees over what the Judge in the case described as a "disagreement over transport policy". Unfortunately, this legal action was not signed off by the full Council, but by an Urgency Committee, which was not politically balanced, and therefore the Conservatives were outvoted.

Which leads me on to my next point. A review of how the committees work at MBC has concluded that we have too many and their purpose is not always clear. So in the next year we are reducing the number by two and ensuring that ALL committees will in future be politically balanced, and the Urgency Committee will be scrapped.

Another key change is that as a result of pushing by the Conservative Group, MBC is now reviewing whether to hold elections once every four years, instead of on a rolling basis. This would save the Council £80,000 a year, and so I am very keen to see that passed.

The Council is currently led by a coalition of Lib-Dems and Independents, but the Conservatives are the largest group. 69% of rural seats are held by the Conservatives, but if we are outvoted, it is not always possible for us to pursue policies which are good for the villages. If you don't live in a village, you don't always appreciate that the needs of a village can be different to those of a town. Fortunately, every single member of staff at the Council that I have met is helpful, friendly, diligent and hard-working.

Many residents write to me about Planning concerns, or fly-tipping. Fly-tipping is on the increase, and numerous incidents have been reported. Please continue to report these: MBC has a mobile team who can set up cameras at hotspots, and have successfully impounded vehicles, and even scrapped one, as a result.

On Planning, I cannot always help as much as I would like. The laws for Planning are not



set by MBC but by Central Government, and as a result, sometimes we have to sign off a Planning Application with which we disagree: because if we reject it, and the Applicant wins on Appeal, not only do they get their permission, but MBC has to pay their costs as well. So if you disagree with an Application, I urge Residents not just to write to me, or Martin, but to formally object on the Planning Portal, and use legal Planning reasons. Likewise, although we cannot always prevent Planning Applications that we think are wrong, you can at least benefit. If your Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan in place, then the Parish will receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy, so at least there are financial compensations for the downsides.

I will finish my report by mentioning the Ward Member's Grant. Each Council Member has a grant of up to £1,000 to be made available to support community projects and activities. This year, Martin and I were able to grant £500 to each Ward. Ulcombe used theirs to contribute towards the renovation and installation of the old Parish Pump. Grafty Green used theirs to install some safety lighting in the passage past the King's Head. Headcorn are using theirs to pay for the renovation of the old wooden fingerpost at the beginning of Ulcombe Road, and East Sutton used theirs to contribute towards the cost of installing heat pumps to help heat the Filmer Hall. We invite each Parish to apply for the grant for this new Financial year again. This year we would like to encourage the Village Halls to apply, to support community activities.

Finally, I would like to thank both the Chair and Clerk of each Parish Council, for their support and help over the last six months. All Parish Councillors have been very helpful to us, and you all give up a considerable amount of your time and effort. We are very aware that without you all, our work would be considerably more difficult. So thank you to you all, and we wish you all a successful and fruitful year of work ahead.

**Karen Chappell-Tay and Martin Round**  
**Ward Members for Headcorn, Boughton Malherbe, East Sutton, Grafty Green and Ulcombe.**

## **Grafty Green Gardening Club – Sue Burch**

A local club that has met every month since January 1998 - just had our 257th gathering of keen gardeners.

During the summer months we explore gardens near and far; about 74 different gardens visited and occasionally meeting in a member's garden for a social barbecue. Then there's our plant sale which has been a regular on the first Saturday in May since 2004.

We have organised a weekend away since 2003 and have one trip to France. Our membership averages around 40 each year with around half of them being founder members. We have more recently had a stall at the village fete to raise funds for the group.

The club also manages the planters in the village and the border at the village hall.

# **KCC Community Warden and Deputy Team Leader for Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling Areas**

## **Focusing Primarily on Headcorn and the surrounding areas**

### **Community Warden – Stuart Ellesmere**

With regards to the Grafty Area I have still received very few calls to my phone or emails from residents about issues or concerns they may have. I believe that calls that have come in, will probably fall more into John Boyd's domain and the Police.

I have been coming into Grafty Green on a weekly basis to visit a vulnerable gentleman. (vulnerable due to illness) This came via a referral from Maidstone Borough Council and KCC Social Services. I will continue to visit this gentleman for the foreseeable future.

The KCC Community Wardens are now moving towards Welfare issues as their main spectrum of work, we are getting more and more referrals from the likes of Maidstone Borough Council, Social Services and other partnering agencies. This is becoming more prominent due to the funding cuts in other areas and an increasing older population. With regards to ASB and low level crime we still are involved in an "eyes and ears" community role and often link up with our PCSO's and Kent Police for more targeted work. Individually I will continue to report Fly tipping, abandoned motor vehicles and dog fouling.

We are also continuing to move forward working with individuals who have been victims of phone and mail scams across the county and work with Police with regards to victims of rogue traders.

We will also be involved in local resilience – e.g.; Brexit. The Wardens are part of the Kent Resilience Forum along with other agencies if the need arises, then we may be called out.

If you know of anyone in the area that you are worried about and may require then please do not hesitate to get in touch using my contact details below

**Stuart Ellesmere**  
**07969583923**

**Email: [stuart.ellesmere@kent.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.ellesmere@kent.gov.uk)**

### **Yoga Classes – Sue Burch**

Yoga classes continue in the village hall on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings. These classes have been running since 2003 with some present students being there at the first class.

## Short Mat Bowls Group – Robert Turner

The Club continues to flourish, thanks to a regular core of members .Sadly however the numbers attending the Club on a Tuesday afternoon are slowly declining, simply because of facts beyond our control.

We have had a good year. We call ourselves "the friendly Club " as everyone is welcome. Every now and again the competition becomes very determined!! but this makes for a good game.

During the past year we have had four matches with other village clubs and I am glad to report that we have managed to hold our own - Won 2 lost 2

Yet again I would make a plea for new members either with or without bowling experience. For those who have not bowled before we can lend you a set of bowls and provide tuition to get you started.

For more senior potential members it is good fun ,good company , a good cup of tea and above all good exercise. Contact Joan Marriott 01622 858100 or Robert Turner 01622 850325

## Grafty Green Village Hall Chairman's report for the year 2018/19

**Management** - The Hall Management Committee for the year under review has remained myself, Sue Burch (Committee Secretary), Carol Hulm (Booking Secretary), Robert Turner (Treasurer), Liz Burgess, Stefi Graziola, Sandra Pilborough, Jacky Simmons, Jacqui Thompson and John & Angela Thompson. My sincere thanks go to them for their continued hard work on behalf of the community this year.

**Hirers** - The regular hirers of the Hall continue to be Headcorn Morris, Grafty Green Gardening Club, The "Dazzle" drama group for children, Sue Burch's Yoga class, the Bowls Club, the Parish Council and the Church. But a table-tennis table has recently been gifted to the Hall via a committee member who aims to form a table tennis club. We hope this club becomes a regular hirer of the Hall in future, providing further income for the Hall as well as an additional facility for villagers of all ages.

**Events** - Annual events organised by the Hall committee again this year were:

- a summer fete which, for 2018, commemorated centennial events;
- a pre-Christmas quiz night;
- a Christmas craft fair, with seasonal refreshments;
- a Shrove Tuesday evening of pancake eating and tossing (newly introduced last year, but more popular this year and likely to be a regular event in the future);

Additionally, the Hall committee again helped to organise the annual Harvest Supper in the Hall and produced the Parish calendar.

In a new venture this year, we hired-in a professional pantomime troupe to perform for us in the Christmas-New Year break. Although the concept was well received, comments were mixed as to the standard of the performance and we are currently unsure whether to repeat the exercise - which, sadly, lost money.

As to the future, planning is well advanced for a Country & Western themed meal, to be held in May, and for this year's fete - which is to have an 'Alice in Wonderland' or 'Mad Hatter's tea-party' theme.

**Hall improvements** - Our P.A. system, newly installed last year, has recently been supplemented with a wireless microphone system (part-funded by the Gardening Club, whose visiting speakers will be the most frequent users).

I reported last year that we were investigating the feasibility of providing a Wi-Fi facility in the Hall but, sadly, we have concluded that the cost could not be justified.

The major improvement planned for 2019 is a completely new kitchen with a quite different layout. This would include dispensing with the replace the kitchen floor, which for years has suffered a damp problem which has been tackled piecemeal and not been resolved.

**Finances** - We made a small loss in 2018/19. This was due to our incurring an exceptional item of expenditure (£1414 to transfer custodianship of the Hall to 'The Official Custodian' and to register the Hall land with the Land Registry) and also due to Headcorn Morris cutting their Hall bookings from twice-weekly to weekly.

However, Headcorn Morris have now resumed twice-weekly bookings, Dazzle have increased their use of the Hall to twice-a-week and, with the prospect of a table tennis club being formed, letting income should increase in 2019/20.

We are, therefore, hopeful that our finances will improve, although we have concerns that major work may be required to the Hall roof soon. Plans to improve the toilets are on hold pending this & the kitchen project (the cost of which can only be estimated until the floor is lifted).

**Richard Pilborough, Hall Committee Chairman**

## **A Year In The Life Of The 59 Bus Service – John Collins**

I have continued as the Parish Council's representative on the East of Maidstone Bus Group, and apart from changes to the start time from Grafty Green of the morning schooldays journey, the service, operated by Arriva, has not changed since 2014.

However, big changes are due to be implemented in 2019 following the launch of the 'Big Conversation' last summer by KCC to explore "innovative and sustainable ways of providing transport to rural communities in Kent", and the subsequent selection of the 59 service as part of one of five pilot schemes which will provide more off-peak

services on Mondays to Fridays and on Saturdays. The current infrequent services which operate to and from Maidstone Town Centre will be replaced with a more frequent feeder service terminating at Park Wood Morrisons to connect with the high frequency services from there (at least every 10 minutes) to and from the Town Centre.

The revised service is due to start on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, but as the final timetable has yet to be released or the changes registered, the actual start date looks likely to be delayed.

The Service 14 schooldays service between Grafty Green and Cornwallis Academy, operated by Nu-Venture, has continued, the only change from last September being a later start time of 07.30 from Grafty Green and a much shorter journey time.

As ever, the message is:- **USE IT OR YOU ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL LOSE IT!**

## **Police And Crime – PCSO John Boyd**

Boughton Malherbe has maintained a fairly low level of crime during the past year.

Crime levels throughout the year have their peaks and troughs but I am pleased to say that we are sustaining the reduced level of crime overall that we have benefited from over the past few years. This thankfully has been possible through the support of the community and the Parish Council.

We have dealt with a number of issues throughout the year, which have included the following:

- Provide a visible presence in my wards and surrounding areas.
- Follow ups on the victims of burglaries/breaks to give crime prevention advice and information booklets.
- Helping neighbours to try to sort out their disputes, this on most occasions means linking in with the housing associations where applicable.
- Linking in with the Kent County Council Wardens and other agencies to help out with many problems that arise.
- Speed enforcement checks and speed monitoring checks throughout the area.
- Patrols of outlying areas to deter and stop vehicles known for scrap metal thefts. This has been backed up with pre-arranged Policing Operations County wide involving numerous authorities and scrap yard inspections.

We are always trying to keep on top of any nuisance youth issues in the village. As with the previous year this has also not been a major issue this year and any incidents of this type of behaviour have been swiftly dealt with to good effect. We encourage residents to call in any incidents of this type of nuisance behaviour.

As with most areas in life the police have changing priorities and budgets, I am pleased to say that my area hasn't changed this last year which continues to be the Headcorn ward with Lenham and Harrietsham.

I have and will continue to provide the visible presence and first class service that the Kent Police is renowned for.

Anyone wishing to contact me about any issues or crime prevention advice can call the non-emergency Police number 101.

Thank you for your continued support in making Boughton Malherbe safe.

## **Malherbe Monthly Magazine**

The magazine continues to be produced to inform its readers of upcoming events and other news that is hopefully of interest. 465 copies are produced each month, averaging 36 pages and is distributed to all households in the Parish of Boughton Malherbe and to Platts Heath, Liverton Street and selected shops in Lenham. It is also posted on the Boughton Malherbe Parish Council website.

The magazine is distributed free of charge, its cost being met by means of paid adverts within the magazine. Without these adverts the magazine would not be able to be produced and I would like to thank all our advertisers, especially the loyal ones who have placed their adverts with us for several years.

Also thanks should be noted to the regular contributors of articles to the magazine that keep the readers informed of events and services available within and near to the Parish.

The magazine does produce a cash surplus but this year, unlike in previous years, we have not donated any money to worthy causes. If any parishioners have any ideas for projects or know of any needy causes within the parish that may benefit from a donation please contact the undersigned.

Special mention and thanks should be made to Silva Close without whom the magazine would never be read by anyone. Even though Silvia had moved from Grafty Green to Headcorn she continues to oversee the batching up and distribution of the magazine to the volunteers, who then hand deliver the magazine to the individual households. Though I do not personally know all these volunteers I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their efforts.

Also, I would like to thank John Collins who acts as treasurer for the magazine, paying the bills and banking the advertising money.

**Mike Hitchins Editor**

## **Honywood and Douglas Almshouses**

The Honywood and Douglas Trust has had another successful Year. All the almshouses are occupied at present. When there is a vacancy it will be advertised in Malherbe Monthly, the Church and the Post Office. The Parish representatives are David Chantler and Mike Davidson

### **Headcorn Morris - John Bentley**

This practice season has now finished and the use of the village hall will be curtailed until the autumn later this year. WE will again review the use of the hall at our AGM, to discuss next seasons programme and practice location

The facilities given within the hall have been good and the benefit of the new heating units was very much appreciated during the early parts of the practice season. Once we get dancing, the heating was gradually reduce down, except for the areas where the musicians stand.

The hall suits our particular requirements as the floor is great for our type of dancing and does not give too much of a jarring to our joints when we are dancing high

The toilets are always clean and fresh and the kitchen again, is clean and fresh. The loft storage facility is suitable for our sticks and our new music box.

Our only issue is with the external key lock, the light fails to assist the person opening the key lock as it's too bright and does not allow easy seeing of the numbers required to open the key lock.

On one occasion, the key lock could not be opened easily because the key inside the lock had become lodged in the closing mechanism and a quick call to the registered key holder meant that care should have been taken to ensure the key was hung up properly within the key lock.

Overall Headcorn feel that the hall has served its purpose well and provided us with a good place to hold our practices 2 nights a week from last October to April

### **The Church Wardens'/Secretary's report**

Since the last church warden's report, we have very sadly lost Joan Davidson who had served as churchwarden for so very many years at St Nicholas. Her funeral and a cream tea held in her memory gave our community the opportunity to remember her life and service. A considerable amount of money was raised in order to commemorate Joan within the church and discussions are now being held as to how to spend this money. The most popular idea is to commission a wrought iron flower stand as Joan was very fond of church flowers.

I have been very privileged to become the new church warden, but it will be a long time until I can fill Joan's shoes and I thank the Parish council and especially the senior church warden Kenneth Alexander for their trust, support and patience.

We have lost other long-standing member from our congregation but also welcomed new members into our community as well as rejoicing at some family members returning to the parish after living abroad.

John Huggins has now been our parish priest for one and a half years and we thank him for his service and for fitting so well into our parish. His new ideas and encouragement as well as his willingness to listen to parish concerns are much appreciated. The next challenge for the parish will be the retirement of Rev Millie Hart this coming September. Plans are being made to celebrate her great contribution and we hope to continue to have her frequently in our midst in the future.

Spring in our parish saw a return of the popular lent lunches in which different families opened their doors to a communal lent soup every Wednesday during Lent.

A small charity contribution and the opportunity to share a meal is a lovely way to celebrate lent and bring the community closer at this sacred time of preparing for Easter.

It would not be summer in Boughton without the Cream teas for which St Nicholas is well known beyond parish borders. Hundreds of visitors flock to Boughton over the summer. Every Sunday afternoon the cream tea ladies serve delicious, home-made scones, jam and tea. They all deserve our immense gratitude for their hard work and generosity of time, money and labour. Sally Alexander frequently bakes hundreds of scones every Saturday night and occasionally they still almost run out. Sylvia Close, famous for her cheese scones, started the cream teas many years ago and has maintained a low cost of £2.50 so that coming for a cream tea remains an affordable outing even with little means. Despite the low cost of each tea, the cream teas are Boughton's greatest source of income. Thank you.

The autumn was marked by Harvest Festival and a Harvest supper, both of which are firm favourites in the church calendar. We thank Sandra Pilborough for her magnificent church decorations and all the flower ladies who help to make the church look its best. Kenneth Alexander raised a considerable amount for charity during the Harvest auction and we thank the choir who at this and many other occasions continue to enrich our services with their beautiful song.

Work was undertaken in the church in that the organ and clock have recently been serviced and a large Yew tree which lost a significant branch was assessed and dealt with by Maidstone Borough Council.

Finally, our thanks go not only to the flower ladies, the Cream tea crew, the choir and the vicar, but also the volunteers who continue to clean our beautiful ancient church and help fill it with life and preserve it for future generations.