

## **CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1010-11.**

The year 2010- 11 has been another busy one for the Parish Council.

### **Tony Bent.**

I am sorry to report that Tony Bent died at the start of the year. He had been a parish councillor for about 20 years and also served as a district councillor for 4 years between 1995 and 1999. We will all miss his commitment to the village and the amount of work he undertook on our behalf. During the last year he was still chairing the Parish Working Party concerned with the proposed development at Fort Halstead. Tony had a vast amount of knowledge and expertise on planning issues, which he had built up over his 20 years as a councillor, and the parish council will be the worse off for losing that. He will be a tough act to follow.

The PC have had some successes as a council throughout the year.

### **Fort Halstead.**

In October, as part of the LDF process, Sevenoak's plans for housing in the district were assessed by a government planning inspector. The proposed 1,000 new homes at Fort Halstead were part of that process. An afternoon was devoted to Fort Halstead alone, and 4 parish councillors attended the session. SDC made the case that the government housing targets could be reached, and exceeded, without the need to build any houses at the Fort. They also maintained that the site was relatively unsustainable, because it was in such an isolated location. This was a view which the PC agreed with.

In January the inspector reported back that she considered SDC's plans were sound and that there was therefore no need to build the additional homes at the Fort.

We shall wait to see what the future brings on this matter.

### **Halstead Place.**

During the year Ward's also submitted a planning application for an additional 3 homes at Halstead Place. The Parish Council objected strongly to this application, and SDC also refused it. Wards took it to appeal, but lost the appeal, so they will have to continue with the same number of houses as in their original application.

### **Community Led Plan.**

During the year we agreed to set up a Community Led Plan Committee, to find out what issues village residents felt needed addressing in the future. The committee has now met on a number of occasions, and it is now planning a community event in early June. Chris Ford, the committee chairman, is here tonight and will be giving a more detailed report on the committee's progress.

### **Allotments.**

The saga of the allotments continues. After over 3 years of waiting to have the land at Beldam Haw handed over to us, we still do not have a definitive date for the transfer of the land. At long last SDC have sent a letter to all the current users of the land to tell them that they must vacate the site and that in the future they will need to pay rent to the Parish Council. So at least there has been some small amount of progress. There will still be a considerable amount of work for the PC to do, in setting up the individual plots, making sure the site is secure, and providing parking for allotmenters.

### **Knockholt Station.**

There has been some recent progress on the issue of parking at Knockholt Station. In the last fortnight Kent Highways have put in yellow lines around the junctions of Wheatsheaf Hill and Cadlocks Hill, to improve the sightlines for traffic emerging onto London Road.

However, the more important issue of preventing cars parking on both sides of the road has still to be addressed. SDC have plans to deal with the matter, which include the introduction of parking meters. The plans will once again be going out to public consultation, so it is likely to be some time before the matter is resolved. It is a matter of regret that we are another year further on and we are yet again having to go through a second public consultation process. The Parish Council are completely against the introduction of parking meters, and would prefer to see either yellow lines or notices preventing parking in the middle of the day. We shall see whether SDC are prepared to listen.

**Finance.**

Following a 1% increase in the parish precept last year, this year we have agreed a budget with no increase at all. No doubt Councillor Blundell will have more detail on this matter.

**Thanks.**

I would like to thank Linda Hogan Trust for their sponsorship of the flowerbeds around the village during the last year. Also the Council's thanks must go to Peter and Jean Morgan who have agreed to sponsor the flowerbeds throughout the coming year.

I'd also like to thank everyone who took part in the Village Clean Up Day in 2010, and remind you all that we will be repeating the exercise this coming Saturday morning. So I hope that many of you will be able to give up an hour or so on Saturday to help keep the village tidy. We will be meeting here at the Pavilion at 9.30 a.m.

Also thanks to our County Councillor Richard Pary for his assistance throughout the year, and for making money available to the Community Led Plan Committee. Thanks also to our District Councillors for their work on our behalf during the year.

Thanks also to the Clerk for her work throughout the year. *This year's report and accounts have already been accepted by the Internal Auditor.*

Thanks also to all the Councillors for their work on behalf of the Parish over the last 4 years, and I note that many of them are foolhardy enough to have put themselves up for election for another 4 years. Thanks to Christine Halliday for her work over the last 4 years particularly on the Planning Committee. Christine is not standing at the forthcoming election.