

# Meopham Mercury

The Meopham Parish Council Newsletter No 4

Winter 2011/2012

*We would appreciate feedback on our newsletter. If you wish to receive The Mercury via e-mail please let us know (contact details on page 4).*

The Chairman, Councillors and Clerks of Meopham Parish Council (MPC) would like to offer all parishioners good wishes for 2012.

## **Precept 2012/2013**

The budget for the next financial year was set at a meeting of Full Council on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011. The precept was agreed in the sum of £68,240.00. A full breakdown of the budget can be viewed on our website and is available from the Parish Office.

## **Co-option of Councillor for the Ward of Culverstone & Harvel**

The Parish Council is pleased to announce that Mrs Gillian Bateman has been co-opted to serve as a Councillor for the Ward of Culverstone and Harvel. We now have a full complement of twelve Councillors serving our three Wards.

## **The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations – June 2012**

A Jubilee Committee has been set up including members of the Parish Council and local organisations to arrange some of the festivities that will take place to celebrate the 60 year reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II over the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend between Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

A parade and a sun clock/human sundial are just two of the events under discussion. It is also hoped that

Meopham will join the nation in the lighting of one of the national celebratory Beacons at the culmination of the celebrations.

There will be activities at Meopham Fitness and Tennis Centre, the churches, Meopham village hall and Country Club, and the Windmill will be open for visits. Meopham Historical Society will be putting together an exhibition in the library and it is intended to publish a small commemorative book.

As part of the celebrations, MPC plan to plant six native trees (one for each decade of the Queen's reign). The trees will include a Copper Beech, Hornbeam, Rowan, Weeping Silver Birch, Whitebeam and an English Oak.

The Meopham Historical Society wishes to sponsor one of these trees (the English Oak) and it is hoped that it will be planted on Hook Green in memory of Mr Jim Carley, who lived opposite the Green. The remaining five trees will be planted at Judson's Recreation Ground. Four of them will replace trees which are in very poor condition and need to be removed.

We have received offers of sponsorship for two of these trees. We are seeking further sponsors for the remaining trees and hope that they may be welcomed as a living memorial for a small number of Meopham families. Anyone who might be interested in sponsoring a tree should contact the Parish Office as soon as possible, please, so that arrangements can be made.

If you would like to help with planning any of the events, please contact the Chairman of the Jubilee Committee Doug Powell on 01474 813929.

## Local Development Framework (LDF) – Progress on the Core Strategy

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**GBC statement issued on 26 January can be found on [www.meopham.org](http://www.meopham.org)**

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Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) launched an important consultation in October 2011 on rules relating to local planning. We held a well-attended public meeting in November 2011 to invite views from parishioners. We would like to thank all residents for their views at this meeting and in writing. Feedback was an overwhelming rejection of the GBC plans.

### MPC Response to GBC on the Proposals

A copy of our full response to GBC can be found on our website and is also available from the Parish Office.

In summary, we felt strongly that all brownfield sites had to be fully redeveloped before a case was made for the erosion of our greenbelt. Failure to do so not only would deprive the area of large sections of its greenbelt, but also would represent a missed opportunity to regenerate brownfield sites.

A number of specific issues, not solely their current greenbelt status, made proposed developments in Meopham unsustainable. We noted that developing individual sites on such a large scale was unprecedented. The current level of infrastructure in Meopham was struggling to cope with the current population.

All proposed sites in the parish form part of the greenbelt and play a key role in protecting Meopham from urban sprawl. Building on these would be ribbon development. All sites are good agricultural land which is a diminishing resource in the UK.

We believe that the LDF should show that GBC had put economic growth and social well-being at the forefront of their planning by concentrating on regeneration and employment.

We believed that GBC had not sufficiently demonstrated the "exceptional circumstances" under which it was permissible to declassify greenbelt land. The consultation process with residents of Meopham parish resulted in an overwhelming consensus that the current plans to build on greenbelt land should be completely opposed. On behalf of the residents of Meopham parish, MPC requested that GBC submit the figure of 4,600 dwellings, with a credible supporting plan, which grasps the opportunity to redevelop brownfield sites (including those in Meopham), while completely retaining the "green lung" for the benefit of all Gravesham residents.

### The Way Forward

Officers at GBC are currently considering the responses received to this consultation. Members will decide on the level of growth that should be accommodated in the Borough over the next 20 years and which strategic sites should be allocated for development to meet this level of growth.

There will then be a fresh public consultation before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination. A Planning Inspector will examine the soundness of the document and recommend changes, as necessary, before the Core Strategy is adopted.

Kent County Council was also consulted on the LDF. They do not support the claimed need to build on any greenbelt land and question some of the assumptions made.

## Grants to Parish Organisations

The Parish Council made the following grants in December 2011:

- Meopham Over 60s: £120 for Christmas Lunch
- Meopham Tennis Club: £1,000 for sports equipment and/or tree surgery
- Meopham & District Footpaths Group: £332 for path clearance equipment
- St Mildred's Church, Nurstead: £500 for roof repairs
- St John's Church, Meopham: £500 for lighting renewal repairs

## Village Greens and Trees

Managing the 11 parish-owned village greens is a major activity to ensure that trees and boundaries are properly maintained and benches are in good condition. In the near future, MPC will be commissioning a full assessment of all trees on our village greens by an Arboricultural Consultant.

## Vandalism

In November 2011 the birds nest swing at Judson's play area was completely destroyed in an arson attack. Repairs will cost more than £1,500. If you have any information about this crime, please contact Kent Police (details on page 4).

## The Meopham Digital Archive

The Meopham Historical Society is building up its Digital Archive to preserve Meopham's heritage for future generations. If you have any old postcards, pictures, documents or stories to tell, please, contact the Archivist: Dr Ann Kneif, Hilton House, Norwood Lane, Meopham, Kent DA13 0YE. Tel: 01474 812171. Email: [archivist@meophamhistorical.org.uk](mailto:archivist@meophamhistorical.org.uk).

## Gravesham Neighbourhood Forum

These meetings are an opportunity to have your say on issues that matter to you. The forum meets four times a year and is attended by councillors from Kent County, Gravesham Borough and the Parish Councils from Gravesham. The area covered by the rural forum includes Vigo, Harvel, Culverstone, Meopham, Cobham, Luddesdown, Shorne, Higham and Istead Rise. There are pre-arranged agenda items for discussion at each meeting. The next meeting is on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March at Vigo Village Hall, on the subject of local libraries and youth services. Both these services are facing changes and your input is important at this stage. The meeting starts at 7.00 p.m. (doors open 6.30 p.m. for refreshments).

For more information please call Mr Will Farmer at Kent County Council on 01622 694032.

## The New non-emergency number for Kent Police - 101

Kent Police have launched a new number (101) to report non-urgent crime, to speak to your local officers or to make an enquiry. Calls to 101 will never cost more than 15p even from mobiles. Anyone requiring immediate help if a life is in danger or a crime is in progress should still dial 999.

## Farewell to PC Lamb

MPC would like to pay tribute to PC Helen Lamb who resigned from Kent Police at the end of 2011. She served the parish for over five years and was a popular neighbourhood officer and was greatly appreciated by many residents. We extend our best wishes to her for the future.

## How to Contact Meopham Parish Council:

If you have any concerns or issues you wish to raise, the Parish Office at the Windmill, Wrotham Road, Meopham Green DA13 0QA is usually open from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, Monday to Friday. You may telephone us on 01474 813779 (answering machine available outside the above hours).  
E-mail: [mpccclerk@btconnect.com](mailto:mpccclerk@btconnect.com).

## Your Parish Council Members are:

### Hook Green & Nurstead Ward:

Alison Aitken  
Mark Everson (Treasurer)  
Ken Kemsley  
Jo McTavish

### Camer & Meopham Green Ward:

Sheila Buchanan  
Peter Hasler  
Douglas Powell (Chairman)  
Barbara Wade (Vice Chairman)

### Culverstone & Harvel Ward:

Gillian Bateman  
Max Bramer  
Ceri Courtney  
Hugh Marshall

## Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are due to take place as follows (in the Windmill unless stated otherwise):

### 14 February 2012

Administration and Resources Committee

### 28 February 2012

FULL COUNCIL (Cricket Pavilion)

### 13 March 2012

Full Council (Planning)

### 27 March 2012

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (St John's Centre)

### 17 April 2012

Planning and Projects Committee

### 1 May 2012

Environment and Amenities Committee

### 15 May 2012

FULL COUNCIL MEETING (AGM)

## Other useful contacts

### Neighbourhood Team:

PCSO Dave Brooker 07989 992423  
PCSO Jo Hartley 07772 226070  
[or 01474 366011]

E-mail:

[gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:gravesham.neighbourhood@kent.pnn.police.uk)

### Community Wardens:

Jacquie Fuller 07813 713036  
Mandy Cason 07977 981931

Kent Police Crime Reporting 101 or  
01622 690690  
Crimestoppers (anonymous) 0800 555111  
Victim Support 08453 899527  
Antisocial behaviour 01474 337400  
Community Safety Unit 01474 337528

Racial Equality Commission 01474 369329  
Women's Aid 01322 384792  
Samaritans 01634 730981

Consumer Direct 08454 040506  
Trading Standards Hotline 08453 450210  
Citizens' Advice Bureau 01474 361239

Kent Highway Services 08458 247800  
Gravesham Borough Council 01474 564422  
Flytipping 0845 345 0210  
Graffiti Hotline 01474 337328  
Floodline 08459 881188

## Noticeboards in the Parish

Please would residents not remove meeting dates, agendas or other MPC information posters from our noticeboards.

This information is published for the benefit of all residents. These details can also be found on our website and are available from the Parish Office. Thank you.

*If you wish to make a contribution to this publication, then please contact the Parish Office.*