



Meopham Mercury

The Meopham Parish Council Newsletter July 2021

SUPPORTING MEOPHAM SUPERNEIGHBOURS

We continued to run the volunteer service throughout the last COVID 19 lockdown. Requests for help from residents are much reduced from the previous two lockdowns but we have found that there are still older and vulnerable residents in Meopham who appreciate assistance from our volunteers.

Meopham superneighbours have provided a wide range of support to their neighbours during the pandemic. This includes shopping, collection of prescriptions, walking the dog, a regular friendly chat and advice on a wide range of issues.

Even though the Government have lifted the majority of restrictions, the number of COVID cases is on the increase, so we have decided to continue the volunteer service as there may be more people who need assistance as the number of cases rises.

If you or anyone you know needs help or support in any way, please get in touch on 07908 155669 or email at superneighbour@mail.meopham.org

The Parish Council is looking at whether we should continue to support a long term volunteer service in Meopham. The pandemic has engendered a huge amount of community spirit or as our MP Adam Holloway calls it 'Super Neighbourliness' which would be a pity to lose. If you have any thoughts on this or ideas about what kind of support service you think is needed in Meopham we would love to hear from you. Please e-mail the parish office at mpc@mail.meopham.org.

The Parish Council recommended all of the Meopham Super Neighbour Volunteers for the KALC Community Award Scheme earlier this year. It had been intended to present the award at our Annual Parish Meeting but due to Covid this has not been possible. We hope to make the presentation later on when we return to face to face meetings.



SPEEDWATCH VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The Parish Council was planning to set up a Meopham Speedwatch scheme in early 2020 and had even started training our volunteers. Unfortunately, the first Lockdown prevented us from completing the training and getting the scheme up and running but we have recently been informed by Kent Police that Speedwatch schemes can now start running again. We are anxious to restart the training and start operating the scheme in Meopham which we hope will help to reduce the number of cars speeding through the village and cut down the number of potentially serious accidents.



Speedwatch is a community-based scheme where volunteers record the speed of passing vehicles and is a partnership between Kent Police and local residents. Around 90% of vehicles observed once by Speedwatch volunteers are not seen speeding again in the next 12 months within Kent, so it is something which is certainly worth doing.

For personal reasons several of our volunteers are no longer able to help with the scheme so we are looking for several more people who can spare a few hours a month on this very worthwhile initiative we would love to hear from you. Please register your interest with Nicki Jerram at assistantclerk@meopham.org.

MEOPHAM SECONDARY SCHOOL PLANNING APPLICATION

Meopham Secondary School recently submitted a planning application for proposed two form entry expansion which would have involved the erection of a new free standing two storey school building plus parking and landscaping works.

Meopham Parish Council objected strongly to this application predominately on the grounds of the additional volume of traffic from outside the area that the proposed expansion would generate. The Council backed up its objection with an independent traffic report. We are pleased to report that this application has now been withdrawn. We would like to thank County Councillor Bryan Sweetland for his support regarding the council's objections to this application.

KCC BUS CONSULTATION

KCC would like to know what would make bus travel more attractive to you. Follow the link to answer the two quick questions to tell them your thoughts on this and subscribe for further updates - <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/busfuture>

INFORMATION FROM VOLUNTEER GROUP, MEOPHAM FEEDING THE HOMELESS



Meopham Feeding the Homeless (MFH) are a group of local volunteers from Meopham and the surrounding areas who cook, bake and supply food and essential items to rough sleepers and vulnerable people in Gravesend. This is done via The Daytime Hub and The Table in Gravesend.

The Hub is based at the Methodist Church in

Gravesend and as well as providing food it also helps with advice, showers, laundry and clothing. They have recently launched a crowdfunding page to help the Hub buy a much needed new cooker.

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/meopham-feedinghomeless?utm_term=7bw

Any help residents can give towards this worthy cause would be much appreciated. If you would prefer to donate by cheque, please send a cheque made out to 'The Daytime Hub Gravesend Methodist Church' to the Parish office at the Windmill and we will arrange for it to be forwarded to MFH.

The Table is run entirely by volunteers and operates several nights a week outside Greggs in Gravesend.



MFH was set up at the start of the pandemic as a group of local people were concerned for the welfare of rough sleepers and vulnerable people during these unprecedented times.

MFH have also arranged for items to be donated, including tents, sleeping bags and essential items of clothing. Costcutters in Meopham regularly donate food, as does Glovers Butchers. At Christmas last year over 40 individually prepared gift boxes were donated to the guests who were extremely grateful. A similar exercise will be carried out this year. All of this wouldn't be possible without the support and kind donations from the wider community.

The MFH volunteers are to be congratulated on their generosity and their dedication to supporting the homeless and vulnerable in Gravesend. They are truly an inspirational group of people.

MEOPHAM TENNIS CLUB – NOW OPEN TO NON-MEMBERS



Meopham lawn tennis club has been a central part of the village since 1913 and has seen many changes since then. The latest addition has been the resurfacing of the 2 rear courts to artificial clay which is safer to use when damp and the

imminent addition of floodlights to those courts to allow for winter play on dark evenings. The club also now runs an outreach program into local schools and has started a pay and play option so that you can book courts and play even as a non-member. Non-members can also join in our friendly social sessions and group coaching lessons, details of which are on the club website under member info.

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/MeophamLTC>

All are welcome to pop down, make new friends and have fun getting fit.

MEOPHAM WINDMILL

You may have noticed the scaffolding on Meopham Windmill! KCC, owners of the Windmill, are carrying out urgent health and safety repair work to the platform area around the windmill. Work on this is due to be completed in late summer. This however, is just the first stage of the proposed work to be carried out. The next stage of restoration will be to lower the cap and sails to repair them. We are hoping to be able to share further details and plans from KCC with you all shortly.

As we get nearer to being able to open the Windmill to the public, the Windmill Trust, the charitable trust who manage it on behalf of KCC, would welcome new members to assist in their work. If you are interested, please contact Malcolm Wanmer on 01474 812004 or email: malcwanmer@icloud.com

NOTICEBOARDS IN THE PARISH

We have installed the new 3 bay noticeboard at Judson's Pavilion. We are now in the process of purchasing another noticeboard to replace the old one at Camer Parade. This should be installed on site in September.

Don't forget that if you wish to display a notice, please contact the Clerk for a noticeboard number to display your A5 poster. Please ensure you display notices in the correct public section on all the noticeboards. Commercial notices are **not** permitted.

JUDSON'S RECREATION GROUND – TRIM TRAIL EQUIPMENT

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our survey on Trim Trail equipment for the play area. Following the positive response received for the new equipment, the results from this were used to support our grant application to FCC Communities Foundation. The grant was submitted in June for 3 pieces of trim trail equipment suitable for children up to 13 years of age. We will know if

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our application has been successful in mid-September.



NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME FOR MEOPHAM

Residents will have noticed that the former Police Houses in Wrotham Road near to the Windmill have recently been demolished and building work has commenced. The Parish Council is very pleased to announce that a new affordable housing scheme is being built on the site. Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) have selected Gravesend Churches Housing Association (GCHA) to develop, own and manage the houses. GCHA are a small local Housing Association providing social and affordable housing in Gravesend, Dartford and Maidstone. For more information about GCHA please visit their website gcha.org.uk

Nine three-bedroom houses with gardens are being built together with parking spaces. The houses will be built and ready for letting in early Spring 2022 and let at affordable rents. More details about the rents will be available later on this year. The properties will be allocated to people who have a local connection with Meopham either through living, working or having relatives who live in the Parish. If you or someone you know would like to be considered for a house you must be registered on the GBC housing waiting list. Please contact GBC at The Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA11 1AU for further details of the scheme and for information about how to register on the Council housing waiting list.

The Parish Council will give residents updates on the progress of this housing scheme and is looking forward to working in partnership with GBC and GCHA on this much needed development of rented affordable homes in Meopham for local people.

LOWER THAMES CROSSING CONSULTATION

Highways England have announced an upcoming Community Impacts Consultation which will run from **14 July to 23.59 on 8**

September 2021. To get permission to build and operate the new crossing, HE must follow a specific planning process and seek a Development Consent Order (DCO).

In October 2020 they submitted an application for a DCO which was later withdrawn. Following feedback from the Planning Inspectorate, they are seeking the public's views on:-

- The plans to build and operate the Lower Thames Crossing and how we will mitigate its impact
- Changes to the project since the design refinement consultation in 2020
- How responses received at each of our previous consultations have informed the development of the project

This consultation is an important opportunity for you to have your say before HE finalise the proposals and prepare to submit an application later this year.

Further information on this can be found at: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/lower-thames-crossing/latest-news/new-consultation/>

LinkedIn: @LowerThames

Facebook: @LowerThames

Twitter: @LowerThames

YouTube: Lower Thames Crossing

LIBRARIES TO RE-OPEN THIS SUMMER



Good news for book lovers! KCC have announced that Meopham Library is due to open in the week commencing 26th July 2021. Any items on loan before the first lock-down are now due back on 30 September 2021. There are no fines from when the library was closed.

PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY AT MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meopham Parish Council is looking to co-opt a new Councillor for the Camer and Meopham Green ward due to the resignation of Cllr Tony Bourke. Parish Councillors play an important

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role in shaping their community. Any parishioner who might be interested is invited to provide to the Parish Clerk a short statement detailing why they wish to join Meopham Parish Council, including any skills and/or experience that they can bring to the council plus brief details about themselves along with any community involvement experience that they may have had.

Closing date for applications is noon on Friday 6th August 2021. Interviews will take place on the morning of the 13th August 2021, virtually via zoom

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Hook Green & Nurstead Ward

Sue Gofton, Graham Green, Jo McTavish and John Ogden (Vice Chairman)

Camer & Meopham Green Ward

Sheila Buchanan (Chairman), Barbara Wade, Chris Dalby, 1 x vacancy

Culverstone & Harvel Ward

Max Bramer, Dawn Bramer, Pat Luxford and Andy Rose

Parish Office Staff

Sarah Eggesden (Clerk) Nicki Jerram (Assistant Clerk) and Jo Barker (Clerical Assistant)

WAYS TO CONTACT US

The Parish office remains closed to members of the public and staff are working from home. We can be contacted via the following methods: -

- E-mail at mpc@mail.meopham.org
- Leave a message on our answerphone – 01474 813779
- www.meopham.org
- Facebook 'Meopham Parish Council'
- Twitter @meophamPC

2021 Meeting Dates (currently planned as virtual meetings via Zoom)

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|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 24 th Aug | Planning Applications Cttee |
| 7 th Sept | Environment & Amenities Cttee |
| 21 st Sept | Administration & Resources Cttee |
| 28 th Sept | Planning Applications Cttee |
| 5 th Oct | Planning & Projects Cttee |
| 19 th Oct | Full Council |
| 26 th Oct | Planning Applications Cttee |

