

Parish Council Of Guston
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Tuesday 29th April 2025 at Guston Village Hall

PRESENT: Parish Cllrs: Mrs Tracey Creed (Chair), Mr. Keith Gowland, Mr. Matthew Sweetman, Mrs Claire Gurraj, Cllr Steve Manion, Cllr Martin Bates

Lauren Baker(Fort Burgoyne),

Parish Clerk: Mrs Glynis Farthing.

ABSENT:

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

7

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Angela Surendorff, Cllr O. Richardson, Mrs. D. Day (Guston School) Mr. Matthew Huntley (Land Trust) Mrs. Sharon Kidd, Mrs Amanda Bibby (Burgoyne Heights Pre School), Mr. Stephen King (DOYRMS), Rev Sean Sheffield, Mrs Jacqui Chapman

The meeting began at 6.30pm

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes from 21/05/24. Proposed Cllr. Gowland, seconded Cllr. Sweetman

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of 21.05.2024 be accepted and signed by the Chairman

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

WELCOME ADDRESS FROM CHAIRMAN

Tracey Creed BEM - Chairman.

Chairman Report – April 25

As with every year, the parish councillors and I are dedicated to improving the lives and well-being of the residents in the Guston parish. We will always endeavour to help as best we can, with what we can, but this is not always an easy task.

Partly due to the village being so spread out, but also because the parish does not own much of the land that surrounds the many properties, especially at Burgoyne Heights. This means that our hands are tied for most issues that are presented to us. Where we cannot help, we always at least try our best to keep communication flowing.

We have a close relationship with our representatives from DDC, Cllr Martin Bates and Cllr Oliver Richardson who always have a sharp ear to the ground and attend many meetings that we hold. They are always available to support us with enquiries and the bigger issues that absorb our village. For this we are always grateful.

Cllr Gowland as our representative of KALC (Kent Area of Local Councils) attends many external meetings outside the parish and always provides a comprehensive report on issues in the area.

The annual parish meeting is always a good time to highlight our achievements for the year, so I thought I would highlight some of our accomplishments.

- Defibrillator purchased and installed at Burgoyne Heights
- 2 x King Charles III Coronation benches purchased and installed, 1 at Burgoyne Heights and 1 in the village centre

- Commemorative silhouettes installed on the village green
- Garry Skeggs memorial plaque positioned in the village centre
- New handrail on the steps that lead to Guston church
- Overgrown D of T owned field by St Martin's Road now being cleared and mowed
- Endless potholes being reported, and re-reported, repairs do not last

Apart from the improvements above we have also worked tirelessly on various planning applications not to mention the Dover Fastrack, which has, and continues to have, an impact on our village and residents. The whole project has not been thought through well enough for our village, we have been used as a through road. The route only supports a section of the village and has left the rest of the village feeling cut off and forgotten. We have no pathways from the village centre and the road speed remains at 60 mph which concerns many of our residents.

We have been discussing a Highways Development Plan, and we will start to look at how we build this with the support of the residents.

Many thanks to everyone who helps to support the parish, we will see what this year throws at us.

REPORTS:

- Guston Primary School

No report available at this time.

Mrs Deby Day - Headteacher

- Guston Village Hall Trust

The hall bookings remain reasonably steady and Charley Ashmore is doing an amazing job of keeping the bookings on-track and dealing with showing people around and overseeing the smooth running of the hall. Both Charley and Glynis have to filter the booking requests in order to maintain the smooth running of the facility.

The costs of heating the hall remain high and we continue to urge hirers to be mindful of using the heating when it is unnecessary. Any additional heaters are not allowed – this has recently caused a big problem and resulted in having to call in electricians to deal with the issues caused.

There are regular hirers, these include a training group and a table tennis club.

Thanks to all who ensure that this lovely village facility continues to thrive – hopefully 2025/6 will see bookings continue to increase. The income stream is steady but does not always cover the associated running costs which continue to increase.

Some hirers need to be reminded about ensuring they leave the facility in a clean and tidy state. Sadly this has not always been done.

This year we will need to have the hall redecorated and some running repairs completed.

Thanks to Claire Gurraj for the weekly cleaning and to Mscape for maintaining the grounds and of course to Charley for her diligent work.

Mrs Glynis Farthing -Treasurer – Guston Village Hall Trust

- Burgoyne Heights Pre-school

As we write this email, we have just started Term 5 and the Pre – School has limited spaces available, so we are extremely busy. The government offers our normal funding plus 30 hours for - & 4-year-old children with whom both parents are working. Also 15-hour funding for two-year-old children with both parents working. (many children have taken this up) and from September 2025, 2 year old children with both parents working can then claim 30 hours.

Ofsted: We had our Ofsted visit in July 2024; We were graded Good over all areas. please see below a couple of comments from our Ofsted report.

Partnerships with parents are a strength of the setting.

The setting takes pride in its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Staff are passionate about teaching children about the culture, festivals and religions that are represented in the setting.

Children have positive attitudes towards learning.

Children behave well. They are kind and show care towards each other.

Staff act as positive role models.

New Equipment: We have purchased some new outside water equipment, large connect 4 game for the garden, new reading books and we are in the process of updating our website.

Events: July 2024 we went to Wingham Wild life park and a trip to the beach, going on the local bus.

12th December 2024 we held our Christmas Fete after school.

On Monday 31st March 2025 after pre – school we had a wonderful Mother's day Tea Party with our loved ones, it was a great success.

April 2nd 2025 we had a trip to visit the Lambs.

The children still enjoy Jo & Danny coming in from Dynamic Sports, this happens fortnightly.

We are planning a trip to use the Fast Track service.

Many Thanks

Amanda Bibby

Assistant Manager

Burgoyne Heights Pre-School

Email – office@burgoynepreschool.co.uk

- Burgoyne Heights Residents Report

Burgoyne Heights have had additional Afghan families move onto the estate over the past year and are now part of the multi-cultural community we are.

There will be movement of our military families this summer as there is a Battalion change as 2RGR move over to Brunei and 1RGR return to the UK. Burgoyne Heights houses the overflow of family accommodation from Shorncliffe, Folkestone.

Guston Parish Council kindly donated a second bench, this time commemorating the Kings Coronation.

It has been sited at a popular look out point across the channel for all residents to enjoy.

We have endured a year of several road closures with diversions in place due to the Fast Track road improvements but now we are benefiting from the new bus route which is used by residents.

There has, unfortunately, been several cases of vandalism on the estate. Mainly located at the entrance to the estate with residents cars being damaged. Hopefully this was just a spree of crime and will not continue.

With that said, Burgoyne Heights remains a sort after area to reside, its location to Dover Port for channel crossings, offering families vast areas of open grounds around the estate and historical sites to visit on our doorstep.

Cllr. Angela Surendorff

- The Land Trust

Fort Burgoyne (The Land Trust & White Cliffs Countryside Partnership)

Annual Report for 2024/25

Introductions & team re-structure.

WCCP had a re-structure in 24/25- Matt Huntley former site manager is now Head of Engagement-Lauren's line manager. Lauren has moved from being 2.5 days a week education & events ranger to full time Community Engagement Manager which includes 3 days as Site Manager at Fort Burgoyne. Jasmine Beveridge has joined WCCP as Community Engagement Ranger which includes the 2.5 days as education & events at Fort plus wider WCCP work. Matt Weiss continues as site ranger.

The Land Trust have also seen some changes with Chris Valdus moving to a new role as Interim Head of Business Development. Mark Huntley will be joining the Land Trust in May as the new Project Manager for Fort Burgoyne on behalf of the Land Trust. Chris will be his line manager.

New tenants at Fort Burgoyne

January 2025 saw the arrival of new tenants to Fort Burgoyne – Academy CIC. Boxing and Muay Thai. Running sessions every evening during the week for variety of age groups plus sessions at weekends. Excellent to see the renovated casemates being used.

General site update

Successful in getting Green Flag for the Fort Burgoyne Estate in 2024. Huge achievement for everyone who has worked and continues to support the Fort (staff, volunteers, contractors). Have re-entered for 2025.

Contractors completed work to reconstruct wall sections either side of the entrance bridge in summer 2024.

Unfortunately due to Land Trust logo and branding changes, the interpretation project has been pushed back and the first phase was not delivered in 2024 as hoped. However we now have the new branding for the Land Trust and will be working on delivering the interpretation across the estate through 2025 into 2026 in phases. The aim of the project is to clearly define site ownership and to improve how people are welcomed to the site.

Volunteering

257 volunteers attended 40 tasks at Fort Burgoyne, Coombe Hole, Recreation Ground and the West Wing. Tasks include habitat management for wildlife, general site maintenance, wildlife monitoring and event assistance.

Alongside our regular volunteer tasks we have also received additional support from Dover Police & RAF cadets at our larger events. Whilst students from Canterbury College & Portal House & Youth Justice have helped the site on several occasions with habitat management tasks We have also provided a corporate volunteering day for staff from Lee Evans.

Events

12 events have been hosted at the Fort attracting 1036 people. This is less events and slightly less people attending these events compared to previous year but we made some changes to what we offered. Whilst we continue to host WCCP's family friendly events (previously referred to as Green Gang) including Lively Lizards, Meet the Mammals and Bird Bingo, we swapped out the guided walks & history tours for Open Days. Our Open Days provided the public an opportunity to explore some of the site at their leisure and to book on guided tours to restricted access to areas. These were very popular and we received excellent feedback regarding the opportunity to explore at own pace. We will be repeating these in 2025 with our first on Friday 30th May.

We also hosted Sunday Funday again at the Fort, unfortunately the weather was rather warm- nearly 30 degrees- which we feel had an impact on visitor numbers (300 people).

We also provided 6 bat walks for local scouts, cubs and cadets totalling 115 people.

Education & training

In March 2024 we launched the Fort Burgoyne Outdoor Learning Programme. This was received very well and resulted in 13 sessions for 339 pupils from local schools. Popular programmes were our bug hunts (Fort Bug-oyne) & bridge building. The latter was popular thanks to its team building activities and this feedback has led to the creation of Team Tactics for 2025.

Deal Fire and Rescue used the site for training purposes and Dover District Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team complete trailer training on the Fort's parade ground.

52 trainees attended 5 Green Angels (adult) training courses, including introduction to botany, A beginner's guide to bee keeping, habitat management & scything.

Wildlife and the environment

A programme of work to restore and enhance chalk grassland on Coombe Hole and to create and improve habitat for wildlife across the site continues.

Wildlife surveys took place across the estate including orchis, small mammal, reptile and butterfly surveys. Reptile surveys are still providing excellent results with one survey in June resulting in 174 slow worms and 25 lizards being found. 9 butterfly surveys carried out at Fort Burgoyne with 19 different species observed, 2 of which are BAP Species, and 427 individuals recorded in total.

Work continues to transform 0.8 hectare (approximately 2 acres) of amenity grassland to meadow on the recreation ground. As updated last year, the process can take up to 3 to 5 years for it to transform into a wildflower meadow, but flowering pyramidal orchids have already been recorded.

Anti-social behaviour

We have experienced another incident of unauthorised access to the Fort in late March although this was a targeted break in- till in tenants casemates smashed but only £10 taken. No wider site damage.

Small number of teenagers had to be freed from the West Wing in December 2024. Unclear how teenagers gained access to the site.

Urban Explorers have also been posting on social media about their visits to the East Wing- no public access and they would have trespassed on private land to have reached it. Lauren has had a meeting with PSCO Ian Norton regarding this and other crimes affecting our heritage sites and will continue to liaise with Ian.

Looking ahead and dates for your diary

Our 2025 outdoor learning programme has been shared to the Folkestone & Hythe District schools as well as Dover and has been very popular. 12 schools are booked in with at least another 2 finalising their visit dates in next few days.

Fort Burgoyne Open Days: Friday 30th May & Saturday 13th September, 10am-3pm with last entry at 2:30pm.

Allowing visitors to explore and discover more about the fort's history and diverse range of wildlife.

Plenty of parking is available. No booking required.

Sunday Funday: 3rd August 11am-3pm.

Continuing to build on momentum created over the last 3 years of running the event. If any local community groups, food outlets, or businesses are interested in having a stand at the event, please email fortburgoyne@dover.gov.uk

Chris Valdus

Fort Burgoyne Heritage Project Manager
chrisvaldus@thelandtrust.org.uk

Lauren Baker

WCCP Community Engagement Manager
lauren.baker@dover.gov.uk

- St. Martin Of Tours Church

2024 was a good year!

We continue to benefit from being part of Bewsborough Parish benefice. A huge thank you to Rev. Sean for his tireless support. Although funds continue to be a cause for concern we do our best to fulfil our financial obligations.

Alongside Rev Sean, Rev. Christopher Dent has continued his Ministry with us in Guston during 2024 and they are supported by Rev Sebastian Lundberg (Assistant Curate).

The Remembrance Day Service was quite well supported. Thanks to Rev Christopher for presiding over this service. The food donated at the Harvest Service was collected by the foodbank team for distribution to those in need. The Carol Service was once again a popular event. The church looked lovely and we were able to share singing and experience the joy of being together at Christmas. Sadly the Easter Day service was poorly attended, though it is difficult to see how this can be made any more accessible to the community. We are always happy to hear when residents would like services and to adapt our times if it improves access and inclusion opportunities for everyone.

The fabric of the church is generally in good order, though the Quinquennial is now overdue. We have experienced damage to the ceiling due to squirrels accessing the belfry tower. Our thanks to Martin Edwards and Edmond Rube for dealing with this.

Mrs Farthing and Rev Sean have continued as a Governors of Guston CoE Primary school and during 2024 As ever we are indebted to Guston Parish Council for continuing to maintain the grass cutting of the churchyard for which the PCC is very grateful. Thanks are also due to Jacqui Chapman for her amazing work clearing the ivy from the gravestones – what a difference it has made!

Mrs Julie Ransley joined the PCC and we are grateful for her support. Mrs Farthing is the church representative Trustee for the Guston Village Hall Trust .

Since joining Bewsborough church information is sent electronically and the weekly bulletin is available on the Parish website.

This summer we will be holding two fundraising events – a Summer Concert in conjunction with Duke of York's School and a quiz in the Village Hall . Hopefully both of these will be well attended.

Our thanks also to Mr Martin Edwards, Mrs Cynthia Sampson, Mrs Margaret Saunders and Mrs Julie Ransley for their continued involvement with the running of the church and PCC.

Churchwarden: Mrs Glynis Farthing

- Duke of York's School

The School continues to thrive, with at present 459 students on roll.

Our summer 2024 examination results were exceptional: 70% of Year 11 students achieved grades 9-5 at GCSE, placing us within the top 5% of non-selective schools throughout the country. On average, students achieved a +0.67 grade improvement from their Key Stage 2 predictions, again ranking highly both locally and nationally.

In 6th Form, our Year 13 students produced an 85% mark of A* to C, with the BTEC average a remarkable Distinction* level. 95% of Year 13 have moved on to university, with 74% gaining admittance to their first choice. 40% have enrolled at Oxbridge or a leading Russell Group university. We have also placed students on degree apprenticeships in nuclear engineering, and with BAE systems, and a number have joined the armed forces.

From September of this year, we will be accepting applications from students joining years 7-12 on a "flexi-boarding" basis. Flexi students will be full members of a boarding house, and will be expected to take part in most extra-curricular activities, including regular parades. There will be no minimum number of overnight stays required: however, they will be allowed to sleep in their boarding house for a maximum of 10 nights per year (additional nights can be booked), and our School fee has been set competitively for this new category of student, thus opening up possibilities for local, east Kent based children. For further details of this exciting development, please contact our Admissions department.

The School is happy to report that the Chapel now has a strong relationship with Rev'd Sean Sheffield, and we look forward to developing links with our local community in the future.

Stephen A King

Stephen King, MA (Lib), MCDI, PGDip PastCH
School Librarian, Careers Leader & School Chaplain
stephen.king@doyrms.com

- KCC- Annual Report

Cllr Steve Manion

1. KCC annual Report covering the
Interim plan for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent

Introduction

Kent is a dynamic and ambitious region at the UK's gateway to continental Europe. As the country's primary trade link with Europe, Kent plays a crucial role in the national economy, benefiting from business, employment and population growth. With strong connections to London and the wider South East, Kent is home to key science and innovation assets, thriving sectors in food, life sciences, and manufacturing, and a vibrant cultural and creative economy. As a place where people want to live and businesses want to invest, the county is at the forefront of regeneration and economic development.

Against this backdrop of growth and opportunity, we are putting forward an Interim Plan for local government reorganisation that ensures Kent's governance structures are fit for the future. Our vision is to create a more effective, responsive, and sustainable system that maximises our county's potential while delivering the best outcomes for our communities and businesses.

We have a strong and productive history of working together as a large, complex group of 14 Authorities and have already had initial engagement with a wide range of partners as we work towards a single proposition for Kent, which not only addresses Local Government Reorganisation but also responds to the wider agenda of public service transformation. We recognise that there remains much more to do,

including prioritising time to engage meaningfully with our residents, but we are confident, with our strong foundation of joint working built over many years, that we can formulate and deliver a solution that responds positively to all the criteria.

We are keen to explore how our submission for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) can be aligned with an accelerated timetable for devolution (ideally to align with the timetable for LGR to facilitate local service transformation), providing expected delivery and financial efficiencies. Because Kent was not chosen to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), Kent County Council (KCC) elections are due to take place on the 1 May and KCC's position will obviously be subject to the views of any administration taking office once the election has taken place.

The structure of our submission follows the criteria set out in the Ministerial letter of 5 February 2025, but it has not been possible in the time available to engage as meaningfully as we would otherwise have hoped or to provide a detailed assessment against all of the criteria. In then submission that follows, 'Kent' is used to describe the geographical area covered by Kent County Council, Medway Unitary Council and all 12 District and Borough Councils.

Barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful. Kent Council Leaders are keen to raise the following issues and challenges where we would appreciate either further clarity or support:

Geography

Kent occupies a strategic position as the Gateway to Europe and is home to the Channel Tunnel in Folkestone and the Port of Dover – one of the busiest maritime passenger ports in the world – as well as the inland border facility at Sevington, near Ashford. Its geographical position between the continent and the rest of the UK mainland brings with it a range of unique and significant challenges including managing transport disruption (including requirements to stand up 'Operation Brock') and the new Entry/Exit Scheme. We would want reassurance that any new unitary structures – particularly those responsible for the major points of entry – have sufficient financial resources to manage these challenges. Consideration would also need to be prioritised around how the major ports of entry (and associated infrastructure and statutory responsibilities) should be included within one or more unitary structure.

Similarly, Kent's position as the 'frontline county' also presents challenges and costs associated with the logistical, financial and other consequences of small boats and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. We would want to ensure that any future local government structures are designed and equipped with the capability to deal with the exceptional challenges we face and that our new Local Authorities are adequately supported as well as having sufficient financial resources to manage these challenges.

Some areas of the county are subject to widespread and significant planning constraints (either through designated protections, viability gaps or nutrient neutrality and coastal constraints). We would want government to ensure that any agreed geographies take account of such planning constraints in the context of planning delivery targets and to work proactively with the government and Homes England and Natural England to agree an approach to addressing issues of viability and nutrient neutrality which act as impediments to housing delivery.

Finances

Like all areas of the country, some of our Local Authorities including our upper-tier Councils have levels of debt consistent with the sector as a whole whilst some of our District Councils are debt-free. As we determine our new geographies, our priority is to ensure that any of our new entities will have stable financial foundations and as a result the best opportunity to be economically viable. We would therefore want a discussion with government to agree how legacy debt is managed, apportioned and reassurance that the new Unitary Authorities have the financial headroom to manage the associated debt interest payments.

There is significant variation in levels of Council Tax, taxbase and potential for generating income across the county. Any LGR would need to be preceded by a thorough financial analysis (which, for Kent, will be complex given the number of Local Authorities involved). We will use this analysis (which is underway) to inform both our preferred structure and innovation in service delivery.

Many Kent Councils face exceptional issues relating to both cost and demand pressures with some arising specifically from our geography – in particular, associated with unaccompanied asylum-seeking

children, adult social care, children's services (including 4home to school transport), homelessness and contract inflation. Whilst we will do all we can to deliver efficiency savings and value for the taxpayer from any process of local government reorganisation we are concerned that any new Unitary Authorities should be financially resilient and self-sufficient. We would want to discuss additional opportunities for fiscal devolution to support this. There is an absence of agreed government funding to support the work required to develop proposals and move towards new Unitary Councils. We would be looking for government to fund the cost of working up and implementing proposals for moving to new unitary structures (including those set out below) and the significant restructuring and disaggregation costs for existing upper tier responsibilities such as adults and children's services and would emphasise the New Burdens Doctrine (the requirement that any new burdens should be properly assessed and fully funded by the relevant department).

There are areas of Kent in receipt of significant government funding from multiple departments associated with challenges including town centre and coastal deprivation and transformation, highways, public health interventions, border-related issues, and many more. There will be understandable concern that this funding should remain in the areas to which it was allocated. We would appreciate a discussion to understand whether and how this can be achieved.

There are eight Councils with Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) across Kent, all are at different positions regarding financial stability and investments. Advice is sought about how the housing regulator expects the amalgamation of these accounts will ensure that tenants are treated fairly.

Representation and Localism

Kent is a large and diverse county with significant differences across the county in terms of geography, deprivation, rurality, economic growth, unemployment, benefits uptake and more. We are keen that staff and elected officials of any new Councils would be sufficiently representative of our diverse communities and would be keen to engage with government to understand whether any support can be given to develop mechanisms to promote local representation and accountability.

Councillors are clear of the need to ensure strong democratic representation for the new Unitary Councils that reflects the diversity and make-up of its residents. Councillors are concerned about the specified minimum population thresholds and the maximum suggested Councillor numbers and what this might mean for the ratio of elected Councillors to population. We would want the government to consider the diversity of Kent's population and geography in determining any unitary geographies and to support local identity as expressed by residents alongside financial viability.

Planning and the NPPF

Kent Councils fully recognise the government's stated intention (and firm commitment) to deliver 1.5 million homes within the lifetime of the Parliament and the majority of Kent Councils have seen increases in housing delivery targets (some of them are very significant increases). There are major housing sites across the county and ensuring delivery momentum is maintained is a critical consideration through LGR. Councils are at various stages of developing and adopting their local plans and we would be keen to discuss with government how we manage the transition from existing Local Planning Authorities to new Local Planning Authorities and from existing local plans to new local plans with a view to maximising delivery and minimising abortive costs and work. Maintaining the momentum of the Collaboration Agreement with Homes England in delivering the Garden Town at Otterpool Park and Heathlands Garden Community in Maidstone, while unblocking nutrient neutrality across Ashford and Canterbury, will be key considerations of a new Unitary Council.

Devolution

Whilst Kent was not prioritised for the Devolution Priority Programme both the Minister and officials have suggested that it might be possible for Kent to be considered as part of any future 'waves' of devolution. There are a number of critical economic development functions that sit most appropriately at a county-wide level and which we would be looking to be subsumed into any Combined County

Authority (CCA)/Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA)/Established Mayoral Strategic Authority (ESA) (e.g. 'Visit Kent', 'Locate in Kent') and we would appreciate support to ensure that we can align the delivery of new unitary structures with a devolution deal to protect these important place-based pan-county services.

- DDC- Annual Report

Cllrs. Martin Bates/Oliver Richardson

1. KCC ELECTIONS

During the period leading up to Polling Day the District Council along with all other local authorities must observe a state of purdah whereby they cannot be seen to make any statements or undertake any actions which would indicate the support of a political party. Hence the number of statements and initiatives which will be taking place over the next few weeks will reflect that position. This state of purdah also relates to the activities of both District and County Councillors who can only report on activities being undertaken by the council and must avoid anything that could be construed as a political statement. Consequently, my report can only contain information this month which complies with these constraints.

2. ROADSIDE LITTERING CAMPAIGN

Dover District Council (DDC), Veolia UK, National Highways, Port of Dover, DFDS and P&O Ferries are working together to help address the huge amounts of litter discarded on one of the main routes into Dover - with a joint awareness campaign being piloted for the first time. In 2024, Veolia, on behalf of DDC, cleared over 23,000kgs (2.3 tonnes) of litter and debris from the dual carriageway between the Duke of York and Whitfield roundabouts. The Port of Dover attracts 2 million freight vehicles and 1.3 million tourist vehicles each year, all of which use the district's high-speed roads to access the port, and the clearance cost of roadside litter (and related road closures) has a big impact on residents, visitors and taxpayers. Not only does it look unsightly, discarded rubbish can endanger motorists and wildlife too. Any high-speed road clean-up requires detailed planning to minimise the disruption of road closures and delays to traffic - while ensuring the safety of operatives undertaking this work. The 'We care' campaign - targeting drivers who use the A2 route - will take place over the summer, following a planned clean-up in March.

The six-month campaign will include:

- Planned installation of new 'compactor style' bins with associated signage in the laybys between the Whitfield roundabout and the port.
- Use of National Highways yellow and black signage for litter warnings along the route.
- Displaying posters onboard the ferries and at service stations/fast food restaurants close by.
- Adding the anti-littering campaign messaging to relevant emails and paperwork with ferry passengers who have booked a crossing.
- Including the anti-littering campaign messaging on the information and digital display boards at Dover Port.
- Sharing the campaign messaging through partners' social media channels.
- Providing posters to display for local retailers who would also like to offer

3. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER REVIEW (PSPO)

Dover District Council is looking to review rules on dog control and anti-social behaviour in a new Public Spaces Protection Order – and your views are sought. The current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) covers dog control and anti-social behaviour. It is proposed that a new PSPO is made with amendments to locations where restrictions apply.

PSPOs specify an area where activities take place that are or may be detrimental to the local community's quality of life. This includes proposals on where people can walk their dogs, where dogs need to be on leads, and restrictions on alcohol consumption in public places. Proposed changes are for minor adjustments regarding dog control, and a change in the designated areas for restrictions on alcohol consumption in public places.

The PSPO does not make it illegal to carry alcohol or to drink alcohol in a public place, so long as drinking is done responsibly. A PSPO will only be used to tackle potential alcohol related anti-social behaviour. Under these circumstances, Police and designated Council officers will have the power to require an individual not to consume alcohol or anything believed to be alcohol in the restricted area. The consultation started on 15th April and the deadline for comments is 13 May. For more detailed information, or to have your say, please see www.dover.gov.uk/pspo

4. LOCAL WALKING AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A range of proposals to improve walking and cycling across the district is being geared up to help the district move forward for the future – and your views are sought. The district council is currently consulting on the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, (LCWIP), which is a strategic plan aiming to encourage walking and cycling by improving safety and providing better travel connections.

As well as an online consultation, the team is set to listen to views and answer questions with the Community Roots Van at: St James Retail and Leisure Park on Thursday 8 May; Deal High Street on Thursday 15 May; and Sandwich Age Concern on Thursday 22 May.

In 2024, Dover District Council was offered funding to deliver a walking and cycling plan through colleagues at Kent County Council's Active Travel Team, following a grant from Central Government. Sustrans worked with DDC to develop the draft LCWIP, including drop-in events and an online consultation asking people to identify routes of preferred travel and to share views on how to improve walking and cycling routes to connect people and places.

The latest consultation will allow the council to bring together four audits created by Sustrans in 2020, covering Dover, Deal & Walmer, Sandwich and Aylesham, and the draft LCWIP for public comment. The LCWIP aims to help identify key routes giving people of all abilities the opportunity to walk and cycle with confidence. This will also help to improve health and wellbeing and decrease air pollution and congestion, whilst boosting the local economy. The LCWIP will enable future funding requests, and routes and opportunities for improved cycling and walking for residents, businesses and tourists. The consultation started on 15th April and the deadline for comments is 27 May. For more details, or to have your say on local routes and proposals in the LCWIP, please see www.dover.gov.uk/planning-policy-news.

5. CONNAUGHT PARK TENNIS COURTS

Dover District Council and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have renovated two tennis courts at Connaught Park in Dover, as part of a nationwide investment by the UK Government and LTA Tennis Foundation – with the courts fully reopen for public booking from Saturday, (19 April).

A range of key works at Connaught Park have included a complete refurbishment of the courts with new coloured surfacing, fencing, nets and permanent court markings. This local investment is part of a national programme of improvements funded through the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) that has brought thousands of existing park tennis courts back to life for the benefit of communities across the country. Renovations in Dover were fully funded by a grant of £57,800 from the LTA.

An access-controlled entry gate with an online booking system, now standard at many other tennis courts, will ensure residents and groups can reserve their slots online before they turn up to play. This will benefit players at peak times, maximise court use and help to keep the ongoing maintenance of the courts to a high standard.

The Deal and Dover Park Tennis Community Interest Company (CIC), previously named The Marke Wood Tennis Hub, which successfully runs the operation and maintenance of Marke Wood Tennis Courts, itself a beneficiary of the nationwide investment, will also manage the courts at Connaught Park. The CIC will work closely with the LTA to ensure a range of activities are in place for the local community. This will include organised, free weekly park tennis sessions for all ages, playing levels and experiences with equipment provided starting in July. Season tickets are available for regular tennis enthusiasts at £40, providing a family of four use of the courts all year round. The ticket can also be used to make bookings at Marke Wood Tennis Courts, as well as providing existing ticket holders for Marke Wood the opportunity to book courts at Connaught Park.

For more information on a variety of communal coaching sessions, including free parks tennis, and information on how to book a court and how to sign up for a season ticket, please see <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/DoverDealParksTennis>

REOPENING OF MAISON DIEU

DDC will be opening the doors of the Maison Dieu to the public from 10 May - including a special opening weekend on 10/11 May. This is the first time it will be permanently open to the public in its 800-year history, and residents are warmly invited to come and see the painstaking restoration work that has brought this building's historic features back to their original glory.

Visitors can admire the stunning interiors first created by architect William Burges, view the beautifully restored paintings and armoury on the walls, and appreciate the carefully preserved stained glass windows as they change colour in the light. Nine brand new touch screen interactive displays, films and audio points highlight the colourful history of visitors from times gone by, and younger residents can take part in a variety of fun activities as they enjoy exploring the building.

Volunteer guides will be ready and waiting to proudly show off the Connaught Hall, Stone Hall and Council Chamber – all of which will host a range of community events and be available to hire for private occasions, such as a conference, meeting, party or a wedding. The new building can accommodate small groups through to large occasions. Going forward, we'll be offering guided tours and a packed events programme, with live music, festivals and even wrestling. Importantly, the Maison Dieu (Dover Town Hall) is now more accessible, with a new street-level entrance on Biggin Street and a lift inside.

The £10 million project has been funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and made possible thanks to National Lottery players. It has also been funded by DDC, Dover Town Council, The Dover Society and the Wolfson Foundation.

The Maison Dieu's opening times will be:

- Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm
- Saturdays and Sunday 10am to 4pm

For all enquiries, please email maison.dieu@dover.gov.uk or visit the website www.maisondieudover.org.uk

LOCAL ISSUES

DOVER FAST TRACK

Following on from the last PC meeting I wrote to Barry Stiff and Ian Dudding requesting permission for the dog warden to place warning stickers on the wooden fencing at Farmstead Way, an exemption for Veolia to enable them to empty bins and a further request to Waste Services for bins to be installed. KCC confirmed that they have already authorised the dog warden to place notices on the fencing and has asked waste services to complete the form for Veolia authorisation. DDC however remain reluctant to provide the necessary bins on both parts of the new DFT roads on the basis that the need has not been properly assessed and that KCC/DDC also must reach agreement as to who is responsible for this Highway. I have been chasing for an update on this and received the following from Emma Allen today: "DDC and KCC are working together towards dedicating the new road as highway. As previously discussed, this will clarify the position regarding responsibility for street cleaning, which will take place under the DDC's contract with Veolia. Unfortunately, I can't provide an expected date yet because we

are still resolving the precise highway boundaries (including verges). These were agreed in general terms between KCC and DDC in an early phase of the project, we are now reviewing in light of land ownership changes that occurred during the project, e.g. the DfT land purchase, and incorporating “as built” information.”

With respect to Stagecoach performance on the route the DDC Local Bus Group met for the first time yesterday. I was not invited but Ollie was. Stagecoach were very upbeat on the performance of the bus service with 15,384 journeys undertaken by individuals in March. I have put in request to be invited to these meetings in the future.

Dover District Councillors

- Council Representatives
Annual KALC Report for 2024/25

I'm still very much involved with KALC in various roles, decision making roles including the Executive, F&GP and other Advisory Committees and Working Groups including KALC Vice Chairman.

24/25 has been an interesting and busy year for KALC with much of the CEO's time devoted to the Devolution issue which will eventually result in Kent having maybe three or four Unitary Authorities within it.

There will be an EGM in June to give the Local Councils an opportunity to have an input into the suggestions with KALC and KCC working together.

The Deputy CEO Alison Stevens has settled in well in her first year in the role with liaising with Area Committees and overseeing Training and L&D which will become even more important when Devolution etc. takes place with Councillors and Clerks needing more knowledge about the sectors.

Can I conclude by thanking Glynis and Tracey for their ongoing involvement in Fastrack where they did become 'a bit of a thorn' in the procedures. Guston should be proud of the contribution these two 'feisty ladies' made to this scheme!!

Fastrack patronage is now rising every month heading towards the targets.

Keith Gowland – Vice Chair -Kent Association of Local Council , Dover Area Chair,

- Public comments/concerns
None

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The 2023/24 year started with a balance of £70,222 and finished with a balance of £73,600.

The 2024/25 year started with a balance of £73,600 and finished with a balance of £82,549.

The reserves reflect the need to address parish issues to ensure the community is maintained in good order.

Our 2023/2024 audit was successfully undertaken; the accounts were passed and submitted to the external auditor.

These were approved, with no issues raised.

The 2024/2025 internal audit, took place on 14th April 2025. The completed accounts will be submitted for approval by the PC on 29th April 2025.

Monthly bank reconciliations continue to be available for review on the parish website. The accounts and related documents for 2024/25 will be available for inspection from Tuesday 3rd June 2025.

All accounts will continue to be published on the Parish website.

The Parish Council are now using internet banking for financial transactions. As set out in the mandate the payments require dual authorization.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING –April /May 2026, date to be agreed and published on the Parish website.

This meeting closed at 7.25pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE

DRAFT