

WOULDHAM PARISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS DELIVERING IN THE AREA



YEAR ENDING MARCH 2023

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report for 2022/2023

The year started with the usual speculation from Councillors about the areas of their responsibilities, and it was agreed that whilst there were a number of issues we would like to be involved in without assistance from TMBC, KCC and the respective officers, it would be a long drawn out process.

No meeting was held in June 2022 due to the late Queen's Jubilee celebrations. The weekend started with the lighting of beacons at the riverside and on the esplanade, with Councillor Marr and Rose Bell lighting one and Councillor Rimmington lighting the other. Stella Wingate, and her trusty crew supplying us with hot beverages on the night. The festivities followed with the Royal Proclamation being read out in the Church. A history of Wouldham was displayed in picture form in the Village Hall along with the pictures coloured by our younger residents. All this concluding with a fantastic party on the Parish Recreation Ground.

All of the weekend would not have happened if it had not been for The Clerk's tireless efforts in arranging it all, and obtaining finances from the National Lottery. A small party of volunteers also helped in the preceding months with the Clerk to reach the successful conclusion of the celebrations.

At the July meeting various aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour were discussed and it was agreed various pressures should be applied to those organisations with enforcement powers i.e. P.C.S.O and other departments of TMBC

Regulation 18, Re: What do you want from TMBC with regard to planning, parking etc...? Unfortunately, despite a good amount of publicity very few residents filled the document out, and we hope that does not "bite us in the bum" later.

At our December meeting, a number of residents asked questions about a One-Way system as they had noticed an item on the agenda. This item had been on all the agendas for the previous 15 months. The Chairman explained that he had attended several meetings with KCC Highways Officers, 2 of which he attended via TEAMS whilst on holidays, about the "one way" systems and on each occasion the Officers were different, as were the designs. An Experimental "No Entry" system has now been agreed upon, and the Parish Council voted to agree to commence this scheme week commencing 29th May 2023. With regard to the "missing" item, this brought to the Councillors attention that residents did not read our website. It was therefore decided that in future our agendas would be posted on Facebook.

The New Year saw the Council vote for a further decrease of the Parish Precept, the third one in three years. This means a 10% decrease over this period.

Unfortunately, due to personal problems, the editor of the Community Magazine had to resign from her post but after much coercing a team of volunteers have now agreed to publish a quarterly magazine both online and hard copy, but it is only in Wouldham Parish.

The Coronation work party was set up and it was decided to hold 2 tea parties which will be paid for out of Parish Funds. It should be remembered that the Jubilee celebrations were funded by the National Lottery.

The question of when the medical centre would be built was raised several times during the year and so, when a specific answer was received in February, many of the “answers” which had been received prior provided to be less than straightforward.

The main reason why most of the S106 agreements were not being pressurised by KCC/TMBC was that the wording of the agreements appear to favour the developer and time limits could be reached with nothing happening and the resulting monies being returned.

The lack of a bus service in the Parish prompted a meeting with Nu-Venture buses, it was agreed to run a small service 2 days a week to Maidstone, but this only gave the users 60 minutes in town. However, after intervention by a resident it was agreed to extend the Thursday time in Maidstone to 2 hours. Later in the year we were advised by our Kent County Councillor Kennedy that we could apply for a grant to set up our own service. After a meeting with KCC Officers and the Clerk, the Chairman of Burham Parish Council, and myself we obtained a grant. We are now in discussions with Nu-Venture on how to provide the best service with the funds available.

During the year, the Council approved a new Volunteer Policy and it has been heartening to see so many people doing things around the Parish to make where they live better. This includes, litter picking, clearing paths, helping neighbours and providing ‘dog poo’ bags to name just a few. These actions are very much appreciated and hope it sets an example to others.



Roads, Footpaths, and Lighting Report 2022/2023

The Councillors with responsibility for this working group regularly bring the same problems to the meetings, potholes, overhanging vegetation on pathways, the collapsing Keepers Cottage Lane, and better bollards in Hall Road and outside the school in School Lane. We have managed to get the bollards replaced on Knowle Road with the better ‘Flectra’ ones. It is hoped others will be replaced soon.

Another meeting with KCC Highways and yet another scheme. This experimental traffic system will be put into place in late May 2023. Residents will be sent information at the beginning of the experiment with information on how to respond. The scheme will mean that there will be ‘No Entry’ to the High Street from School Lane and it will be one-way up School Lane from the junction with Oldfield. If the experiment is deemed successful, further work will be undertaken to upgrade street features.

It has been agreed to provide salt bins for Peters Village, but await confirmation from Trenport/KCC as to where they can be located.

White Lines have been re-done around the Village. However, it is noted that some people are still not driving to the line, causing a delay at the traffic lights.

Signage is still an issue around Peters Village and we continue to request meetings with KCC to ‘tidy-up’ the area.



Open Spaces Report 2022/2023

The report on the play equipment was received from ROSPA and a “handyman” was a proposal brought forward to deal with some of the smaller issues, but eventually voted down. So, we had to find a new contractor to carry out this work. Under the conditions of the S106 funding held for the play area, it was determined that funding could only be used for repairs, not replacement. The main issue was the Zip Line which was highlighted as a risk. Whilst a new item would be more cost effective and many companies would not quote for repair, this would have to be paid by council funds. We have therefore found a contractor who will replace the damaged items, so we will be able to claim the cost from the TMBC S106 fund.

A tyre appeared hanging from a tree in the recreation ground and the Chairman left it up but pointed out on Facebook that the Parish Council could not take responsibility for any children hurt. Firstly, the Chair was told that he should not be telling parents how to look after their children, secondly, he was instructed to remove it by ROSPA so it was taken down. Rant over. Oh, the tyre is in the Chairman’s garage if you want it!

A new piece of equipment was purchased to replace an unrepairable item. This has been well received and is constantly being used.

The grass cutting started with a new contractor in place and it was obvious that they required the Council’s direction with regard to the frequency of maintenance. It was proposed that the Council should have some equipment of its own. A strimmer set was purchased and used by the Clerk, Cllr Rimmington and a volunteer.

Lighting for the car park and Recreation path were discussed with costs and type. Unfortunately, the quotes received were felt to be too expensive for the benefit received. Alternative solutions will continue to be looked at.

The fire pit was built (by volunteers) on Wouldham Common only to be vandalised 2 months later. It amazes the Chair that residents continue to try to improve the Village when their efforts are treated in this manner.

Money has been put aside for more benches in Peters Village to replace those destroyed, but Councillors were reluctant to spend the money again as the benches were only in place a couple of months before being vandalised. These will be look at again once Trenport have fulfilled their obligations in delivering the play areas.

After inspecting the lifebuoys in the Parish every month for 4 years we have now established that only the 2 on the esplanade are our responsibility. TMBC check the others in the village

After requests from residents, it was decided to re-line some of the Wouldham Car Park to see if making more spaces would make it easier for residents to park their cars, especially at weekends. 8 additional spaces have been provided. These are around the outside and allocated for residents. Further options are then available should the situation continue to be an issue and will be monitored over the coming months. Funding for this came from donations from the food vans using the car park.



Village Hall Report 2022/2023

This Committee is made up of residents and Trustees from the Village Hall Charity who are doing an excellent job.



Over the year they have...

- Ensured H & S has been met. Emergency lights installed and the electrical certificate issued.
- Cleared out the basement
- Replaced the damp proofing around the front of the building and cleared the air bricks.
- Replaced the front door
- Cladded and insulated the back of the building
- Repaired the toilets and cracks in the toilet block.
- Installed heavy duty shelving for the use of hirers
- Re-located the gate to make it safer for users to access the building
- Painted the Hall, inside and outside.
- Undertaken the maintenance of the garden.
- Started a bi-monthly Coffee Morning with 20-25 people attending each time.
- Increased usage with most evenings now being booked. Regular users over the year include:
 - Rainbows
 - Brownies
 - Yoga
 - Karate
 - Keep Fit

Quotes have been sought and plans drawn up for a disabled toilet by reducing the size of the kitchen. This will make the Hall more attractive to potential users.

The Charity still wish to return the responsibility for the Hall to the Parish Council and dissolve the Charity. This will be finalised once they have completed the dilapidations required.

Rainbow and Brownie Report - Ashley Crowdrey

The Rainbow and Brownie units are going great.

I now have 13 Rainbows and 12 Brownies. I am in the process of starting a Guide unit for older Girls ages 10-14 years.

I would love to have more volunteers, meaning I can have more girls in the unit, especially for Rainbows.

Coffee Club

Coffee Club is run on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in the Village Hall. It is open to all age groups, but is mainly attended by those over 50. With around 30 members and 20 regular attending each week, the group continues to provide an informal setting to make new friends and find out what's going on in the village. The Club is also developing links with support organisations to help residents with a range of issues including a free Health Check on Friday 19th May.

PCSO Report - Kim McGowan

I have looked at the crime reports for the last month and it appears that the area could benefit from some crime prevention. CCTV, Ring doorbells, extra lighting and Anti-tamper screws for number plates. This is quite common practise at the moment for numberplate thefts.

11/3 Theft of number plates

21/3 theft/undelivered parcel

28/3 criminal damage to patio doors, catapult

7/4 Theft of moped

19/3 a mobile phone was reported lost/stolen at St Marys Church

5/4 A disturbance in Trafalgar Close was reported whereby damage to property and a vehicle was caused. If this is ongoing causing harassment, alarm and distress to neighbours, it should be reported to Police for the attention of the Community Safety Unit.

I have been advised this morning of a found motorbike under the Peters Bridge which I am going out to check for a chassis number as there are no plates on it.

Rural crime has quietened down since I have sent a lot of letters to vehicles unloading motorbikes into Bushy Woods. This has been reported from St Marys Church and the bridleway and a motorbike was seized by Police.

The owner of the horses at this location has reported nitrous oxide cannisters found at the entrance to the field. Youths are believed to have been using the cow sheds and a Shetland pony was found with a dog collar on and believed to have been ridden. Crime prevention advise given and CCTV, signage and fencing reinforced. This is occurring from 1600 hours. Any vehicles parked unauthorised on the bridleway will be issued Section 59 warnings.

Fly tipping remains intolerable across the region and Rural Task Force are working with Local Authority on various checks of waste carriers and commercial vehicles.

I will be leaving Kent Police on June 6th and handing back my uniform after 14 years as a PCSO. I have loved working rurally and can't emphasise enough to residents, the importance of reporting to ensure a patrol of the area. The Kent Police Website is ideal for reporting incidents which do not need an immediate response from patrol and will create a log of events happening in the village, no matter how small.

Wouldham Crime Trends (information from crimerate.co.uk)

Crime	Crime Rate Per 1,000 Residents				Trend
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Anti-Social Behaviour	11	16	17	10	Getting worse
Burglary	4.3	3.8	1.6	2.2	Safer
Criminal Damage and Arson	5	7	11	15	Getting worse
Drugs	1.1	4.3	1.1	1.6	Getting worse
Other Crime	1.6	2.7	1.1	2.7	Getting worse
Other Theft	7	3.2	9	9	Getting worse
Possession of Weapons	-	1.6	0.54	0.54	No change
Public Order	3.2	8	3.2	7	Getting worse

Crime	Crime Rate Per 1,000 Residents				Trend
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Robbery (inc. mugging)	2.2	1.6	-	0.54	Safer
Vehicle Crime	19	10	8	10	Safer
Violence and Sexual Offences	41	45	44	50	Getting worse

KCC Community Warden Report

Since my appointment to the area a I have started to make connections with local residents and groups offering advice and signposting to relevant external services. I am currently supporting some local residents within the village and carrying out welfare checks when required.

I am planning to continue a proactive approach and visible presence to help improve quality of life, well-being and safety in the community.

Henry Peters Charity Report

This charity was started many years ago by Henry Peters for the residents of Wouldham to use for medical care.

It has recently been run by the Parish Church and then by the Parish Council, now there are 2 trustees, myself and Catherine Gore.

Most recently it has been used by residents to pay for taxis for medical appointments but due to the lack of anywhere to advertise this service we have recently offered some to All Saints School for their special needs department, they used it to purchase some specialised equipment.

There is approximately £1800 left in the charity and Catherine and I are looking at other ways to use this money for the benefit of Wouldham Residents.

Nicky Grimes – Trustee

Wouldham Mammoths Touch Rugby Club

Touch Rugby is run on the recreation ground each Sunday at 10am. There is no cost and suitable for all abilities. It's a great way to keep fit and make new friends, currently there are around 15 people attending each week, but newcomers are always welcome. Also, the Club get involved in other village activities and were pleased to win the Tug-o-war at the Jubilee celebrations.



Wouldham Over 60's Club

The Club meets every Tuesday in the Watermans Arms from 2 -4pm. Money is raised through subs of £2.5 per week and a raffle. This money then pays for the outings. Money raised from bingo is given as prizes. There are around 20 members and is a good way to reduce isolation and make new friends and new members are always welcome.

Annual Report 2022/23 All Saints Church



1. Worship and attendance.

During this year our in-person attendance at services has almost returned to pre-covid levels but with less children. We have offered zoom on most Sundays though only a handful of people now use it.

The Choir continues to lead our singing every Sunday, our thanks to them and to Douglas who directs. There are vacancies in all voices. The Junior Choir helps to lead music in church once a month in term time, our thanks to Hannah who directs and Stella who assists.

Toddler church continues every Friday in term time with good attendances. Messy Church now takes place on special occasions with unpredictable attendances, sometimes large numbers other times very few, but some good and memorable times of worship and celebration. Thanks to the team, Anne, Rod, Tonia, Marie, and Cathy.

We live streamed the late Queen's Jubilee Service in church.

Services in Winchester House are happening monthly again though with smaller attendances.

Extra service - Ecumenical worship takes place quarterly at Burham Methodist Church. Church in school on Sunday afternoons restarted but stopped again with the prospect of Carl Fitter leaving. We don't yet know if this will resume.

The Candle Time prayer group continues to receive requests and meets weekly.

2. Occasional Offices.

Previous year numbers in brackets:

Baptisms 4 (5)

Weddings 5 (4)

Funerals 9 (9) of which 1 was held in church. Plus 5 more in 2023

No confirmations this year

3. Christian Education/Nurture

We followed a Lent course on mission with the Methodist Church last year, and this year a course on Paul's letter to the Colossians.

4. Other Activities.

The prescription delivery service continues, thank you to Rachael.

School governors are Mike, Jennifer and Ngaire for Burham and Chris and Helen for Wouldham.

Mike has led school Eucharists and worship in schools.

Coffee mornings have returned but with smaller numbers.

We had a Flower Festival with a Wind Quintet Concert, thanks to Gwen for organising, and to all who took part.

The Bell Ringing team continues to ring under the able leadership of Tina Miles, thanks to all of them. And thanks to clock winder Martin.

The old community magazine for Burham & Wouldham has come to an end.

Our thanks to Pamla for all her work. Thanks to Ashley for taking on the Wouldham magazine

Church cleaners, brass cleaners and flower arrangers continue to do a great job for which much thanks.

5. Clergy and Clergy Support.

Mike and Chris attend clergy chapter meetings and deanery synods. They each receive spiritual accompaniment regularly. Mike has a monthly clergy reflective practice group.

6. Mission.

We opened the church to receive a huge number of donations for the Ukraine. We now work in partnership with the East Malling Community Supermarket (Foodbank)

7. Safeguarding.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

8. Looking ahead.

This will be my last report as I retire on May 16th, and I leave you in the able hands of Rev. Chris and our hard-working church officers, Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC secretary, Electoral Roll officer and Gift Aid Secretary, to whom my lasting thanks and enduring affectionate memory. I will miss all of the church members and parishioners with whom I have connected and I will always continue to pray for the parish.

9. The Building

We have just received our 5 yearly architect report which has nothing in the 'urgent repairs' category which is good news. Following the collapse of the west wall of the churchyard in 2022 we replaced it with a wooden fence which opens out that entrance area and gives a better view. We have also done roof repairs following high winds. We will be drawing up a list of repairs that we do need to do in priority order soon. We will have to pay some attention to other churchyard walls.

During the vacancy, please get in touch via the contact form on the church website www.wouldhamchurch.org.uk and your enquiry will be directed to the person best able to assist you. Alternatively leave a message on the church phone 01634 393936 and churchwardens will call you back.

Mike Hayes (Rector of Burham and Wouldham)

Note: Jellybeans, Medway Green School, All Saints Wouldham School, Wouldham Community Initiative, Medway Inn and Watermans were asked for a contribution, but did not reply.