



Eastry Parish Council

**Annual Parish Meeting
Wed 26th May 2010**

**Eastry Village Hall
7.00pm**

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Last Annual Meeting 25-5-09
3. Matters Arising
4. Sean Furey
Deputy Director KENT - Campaign to Protect Rural England
5. Carol Reeves
Dover District Council – Community Development Officer
6. Chairman's Report – Including Finance Report
7. Reports
KCC – Kent County Councillor Leyland Ridings
DDC – Cllr Steven Manion & Cllr Nick Kenton
Rev Deer – Church Report
Mr Tim Halling – Head Teacher at Eastry School
Mr John Waring – Greville Homes
Mr Terry James – Village Sign Committee
8. Police Issues

Questions will be invited from the floor after each speaker

The allotments now extremely popular and are all let, the Council may now have to consider if additional allotment land can be made available.

Since last year we have a new PCSO Annemarie Benson who will be talking to you later, and a new priest the Rev Diane Deer. As she has not been in the Parish long we will not expect a report, but she is here if any one wishes to speak to her. On behalf of the parish I would like to welcome you both.

2009 Grant Applications now being accepted, full details can be found on the Web site and in June's Village News.

I will now come on to the thank you section of my speech, Pond work continues and you may have noticed you can see water in the pond when you drive past for the first time in a long time. I would like to thank our Pond Warden Simon Dundas, and Trevor Burton and other volunteers that helped with this work.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and support over the past year. My special thanks to Sandra and Margaret for running Coffee Break, this is still very well attended please drop in if you have not already – every Friday Morning in the Village Hall. You may be lucky and get a piece of Margaret's Apple Pie. Still at Coffee Break I would like to thank Iris Mollart, who also helps every Friday even though she is no longer on the Council, she also represents the PC on the Village News committee.

A big thank you goes to David Carr, former Chairman of the Parish Council, who still continues to run the Council's web site, I hope you agree with me that this is a superb site, if you have not done so please take a look, it contains a lot of useful information.

Thanks must also go to the Broster's for keeping the place clean and tidy, we have recently obtained a new strimmer and this will be put to good use very soon.

My thanks go to Richard Swain for all his work on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch, it was with sadness that the Council heard of his resignation earlier this year. We must also thank Richard for his work in keeping the toilets clean.

We are lucky in this village to have a Community Warden and PCSO: I would like to thank Bob and Annemarie for their hard work on behalf of the people of Eastry.

One person I have not mentioned is Sarah Wells our Clerk, she keeps us on track and her work is very much appreciated.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Finance Report – Sarah Wells Clerk and responsible Finance Officer

A complete set of the Councils accounts for the past year had been included in the report pack for the meeting; the RFO went through the figures.

6) REPORTS

KCC Cllr Ridings – was unable to attend but had sent a written report that was read by the Chairman.

Education

- When Kent pupils received their GCSE results in August 2008, we continued the year on year increase in attainment, maintained since 1995. Across Kent, 67.1% of students achieved five or more A*-C grades - an increase of approximately 2.2% on 2007.
- For the two secondary schools near Eastry, which are Sandwich Technology School and Sir Roger Manwood's School, there was also good news. 99% of Sir Roger Manwood's pupils and 67% of Sandwich Technology School's pupils achieved 5A*-C GCSEs. The pupils' strong performance at Sir Roger Manwood's School means that this school is now the (joint) ninth best secondary school in the entire county based on GCSE attainment. The Government also deem that Sandwich Technology School is performing well, having given the school a Contextual Value Added Score of 1013.3, which is above the national average of 1000.
- In the sixth form, the 'Average Point Score Per Student' at Sir Roger Manwood was 992.7 points; to make this more understandable, this is equivalent to a each student achieving 2 As, 1B and 1C at A-level. Sandwich Technology School had an average point score per student of 610.6, which is equivalent to each student achieving 3 Cs at A-level.
- In 2008, Key Stage Two (i.e. Primary School) results across the county improved from 2007: An extra 2% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in English; an extra 2% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in Maths; and finally an extra 1% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in Science.

- At Eastry Church of England Primary School, 87% of pupils achieved level 4 or above in English, 87% achieved Level 4 or above in Maths and finally, 90% achieved level 4 or above in Science. Their results are significantly above the national average.
- As Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, I was delighted when a recent external inspection of children's services (called the Joint Area Review) described KCC's management of children's services as outstanding.

Roads

- We have allocated £15.9 million pounds increase over 2009/10 to repair Kent's roads and highway. This includes £25,000 allocated to each county councillor to spend on improvements as agreed with the local parishes.

Adult Social Care

- We have allocated an additional £9 million into the budget to improve Adult Social Care.

Council Tax

- We have set Kent's council tax increase at 2.44%, which is the lowest ever.

Local Investment

- I have made a number of investments into Eastry this year, which include a £250 investment given to the Eastry Twinning Association and £1,500 given to Eastry Parish Council for the Parade Revitalisation.

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT – Cllr Nick Kenton

Last year I spoke about the introduction of green waste, plastic and card collections. These are now in place and I hope most of the teething problems have been ironed out. We have now covered the majority of areas, although I know there are some areas not covered by the scheme, we are currently renegotiating the contact and hope to add other areas soon.

Most of our recycled paper goes to make news print and our cardboard makes new cardboard. I know some of you are concerned that the tins, glass and plastic all go into the collection vehicles together. This mixture is very easy to sort once it gets to the plant and the three streams then go their separate ways to be recycled.

Canterbury City Council – the leader in recycling in the area – are now looking to adopt the recycling scheme used in Dover, as are other Councils, this could lead to shared contracts that could reduce costs.

The DTIZ – Dover Town Investment Zone are still going ahead, although the current economic climate had slowed down the process, but we will get there in the end. ASDA are still interested in moving into Dover,

Cllr Kenton asked if anyone had any questions, one parishioner said he wished to congratulate DDC on the recycling scheme, and asked if it was possible to visit the recycling plant and see the plastic, glass and cans being separated. Cllr Kenton said he would look into this possibility.

Action Cllr Kenton

Eastry Church of England Primary School - – Mr Tim Halling had sent his apologies and a written report, a copy of which had been included in the meeting pack.

The school has enjoyed another very successful and busy year. We were all saddened by the untimely and tragic death of Christine Gibb who fought a courageous battle with cancer. We have really missed Christine's cheery face around the school.

Debbie Smith was granted early retirement on ill health grounds. Many of you will have had children taught by Debbie and will remember how she taught children to achieve their potential.

The children have had a huge range of activities to benefit from with many visits and visitors to enhance their education. Children have visited Dover Museum on numerous occasions. Dover Fire Station, White Mill, Walmer Castle, Dover College, Pfizers, Wingham Wildlife Park, The East Kent Ploughing Match, The Marlowe Theatre, The Odeon Cinema, Dover College, The Roman Painted House, Richborough Fort, the Ecole Saint Genevieve in Lille. The South Foreland Lighthouse, St Margaret's Bay, St Mary's Church and the Houses of Parliament. Year 6 spent 3 days at Bewl Water with John O'Gorman, Cath Marchbanks, Marcelle Kemp and Ryan Hayes and had a fantastic time. We were also featured as Radio Kent's School of the Week on the Pat Marsh show

We have also had many visitors come into school to supplement our curriculum. These have included authors, musicians, artists, actors, Pfizer scientists, Howletts, an international gymnast, sports coaches and 60 children and staff and parents from the Ecole Saint Genevieve in Lille. Bob Priestley, Reverend Jennifer Pilcher and Father Philip Clements visit the school regularly and we are grateful for all that they do for the school.

The children have raised large amounts of money for charity including over £600 for Keep Fit Kids, £282 for The Viking Day Care Centre at QEQM (in memory of Christine Gibb), £142 for the Children's Society, £102 for Red Nose Day, £72 for Walmer Lifeboat £81.41 for the Marie Curie Foundation and £100 for CLIC Sargeant.

The PTA have been very active raising money by organising our summer BBQ and dance festival, fun afternoons, our Christmas Bazaar, discos, present wrapping and the ever popular Easter Egg Hunts.

We have extended the choice of clubs, both at lunchtime and afterschool thanks to parents and friends volunteering to give up their time. Clubs include football, netball, fencing, tennis, hip hop dance, golf, cookery, crafts (thanks to Woodnesborough WI), conservation, gardening (both flowers and vegetables), chess and recorder. We have recently formed a school orchestra thanks to All Sorts of Music, and we have just started a school choir. How can you help us?Volunteer to run a club or come and help at the school and hear readers, help children with their work, all of which is very enjoyable. Please do give us a ring (611360). We look forward to hearing from you!

Greville Homes Report – Mr John Waring Chairman of the Trustees had sent his apologies and written report, a copy of which had been included in the meeting pack

Greville Fulke Greville, a retired Naval Captain and former Member of Parliament, came to live at Statenborough in the 1820's. In September 1834, aged 83 years, he generously offered to provide a terrace of Almshouses for needy Eastry Residents if the Parish would find a suitable site. The offer was accepted, the land purchased, the houses built and the first residents moved in during April 1935.

Bathroom extensions with an indoor toilet were added in 1954, and in 1984 a scheme was drawn up for their modernisation and for the building of three new two bedroomed bungalows at a total cost of £320,790.

Although the criteria for qualifying for a residence has changed somewhat over the years, the 9 homes are very much enjoyed by the present occupants. It is now almost 20 years since the refurbishment and new buildings were completed, the Trustees hope they will provide the comfort to the Eastry older residents for many years to come.

In order to ensure this comfort and that the properties are maintained to a high and safe standard, the Trustees meet several times a year to discuss the residents welfare, the necessary maintenance and control the financial budget. So much so, during the past 12 months there has been An Energy Performance Check for each property, a Fixed Wiring Check with the resulting work of some minor upgrading of the electrical systems.

7) POLICE ISSUES

PCSO Annemarie Benson went through the crime figures for the past year, she informed the meeting that the current Policing priorities for Eastry are Speeding and Dog fouling. She asked if these were the correct priorities. Did any other items need adding? Annemarie then went on to answer questions from the floor.

8) FORMER EASTRY HOSPITAL SITE - PLANNING APPLICATION

The Chairman introduce Mr Matt Whitby on behalf of Runnymede Investments Ltd. There followed a lengthy debate on the proposals for the Hospital site and the implications this would have on the village, both visually and concerning highways matters. There were also concerns about the ability of the School and the Dr Surgery to cope with 81 additional households in the village. As the debate drew to a close the Chairman reminded everyone that they have until Fri 29th May to get their comments to DDC.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending as invited them to stay for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

6. 2009/10 FINANCE REPORT

Receipts and Payments 2009/10

RECEIPTS

Current Account

	Budget	Actual
Precept	44,888.00	44,888.00
Rents		
Parish Room	250.00	245.00
Allotments	250.00	611.70
Burials	600.00	4,011.00
Grants	0.00	0.00
Interest Current Account	750.00	23.10
VAT	0.00	1,757.98
Other	0.00	274.21
	46,738.00	51,810.99
Brought Forward	21,598.81	21,598.81
Current Account		
Total Current Account funds for year	68,336.81	73,409.80

PAYMENTS - CURRENT ACCOUNT

	Budget	Actual
<i>Admin</i>		
Clerks Salary	10,104.00	10,079.84
PC national Insurance Contribution	372.00	649.02
Pension Contribution	1,145.00	860.40
	11,621.00	11,589.26
Clerk Telephone Rental & Internet Access	300.00	247.25
Office Allowance	270.00	270.00
Stationery	350.00	227.24
Petty Cash	400.00	399.00
Audit Fees	400.00	400.00
Internal Auditor	225.00	195.00
Insurance	3,000.00	2,406.12
Training	300.00	0.00
Travelling/Cllrs Expenses	300.00	0.00
Annual Meeting	120.00	44.06
Web-Site	175.00	95.04
Wreath - remembrance Sunday	22.00	19.00
	17,483.00	15,891.97
<i>Parish Room</i>		
Rates	55.00	65.96
Gas	130.00	304.94
Electric	130.00	152.18
Fire Extinguishers Check	130.00	45.65
Boiler Service	60.00	60.00
maintenance/improvements	1,760.00	395.26
	2,265.00	1,023.99
<i>Pavilion</i>		
Fire Extinguisher Checks	130.00	48.55
<i>Ground Work</i>		
Church Yard & Cemetery	3,868.00	3,868.00
Recreation Ground	710.00	593.00
Gun Park	1,759.00	1,392.00
Allotments	1,079.00	1,179.50
Land Behind Bus Shelter	200.00	225.00

	Cut Hedges/Overhanging Verges	1,000.00	90.00
	Tree Work all areas	3,500.00	0.00
	Additional Work	750.00	1,120.00
	Work to Football Pitch	2,000.00	0.00
	Mow Pond	480.00	480.00
	Parade	200.00	200.00
		15,546.00	9,147.50
Church Yard Maintenance/works		1,000.00	0.00
	Church yard Wall	2,000.00	0.00
	Monument Safety	500.00	0.00
Grave Excavation		0.00	1,745.00
		3,500.00	1,745.00
<i>Allotments & Leisure</i>	Maintenance	2,000.00	662.92
	Vandalism Repairs	1,000.00	10.00
	Bins & Dog Loos	350.00	264.50
	Pooper Scoopers	400.00	416.00
	Water	150.00	161.80
	Pond	1,000.00	1,114.40
	Play Equipment Inspection	420.00	213.00
		5,320.00	2,842.62
<i>Toilets</i>	Cleaning	1,680.00	1,675.00
	Supplies	80.00	90.46
		1,760.00	1,765.46
Grants	Grants	1,400.00	1,068.67
	Parish Magazine	600.00	500.00
	Coffee Break	900.00	965.71
		2,900.00	2,534.38
<i>Highways</i>	Horse Trough	50.00	0.00
	Cleaning Footways/Footpaths labour	3,800.00	3,686.00
	Cleaners Tools	105.00	30.63
	Petrol/Oil - service/new strimmer	450.00	2.61
	Traffic Calming	6,000.00	0.00
		10,405.00	3,719.24
<i>Membership</i>	KAPC	550.00	525.07
	Publications	150.00	0.00
	SLCC	85.00	75.50
	Action Communities Rural Kent	45.00	0.00
	Kent Playing Field Ass	35.00	20.00
	Ass of Burial Authorities	95.00	90.00
		960.00	710.57
Contingency/Section 137		3,067.81	107.60
	Parade - Electricity	1,000.00	17.55
	Other Projects	4,000.00	0.00
	VAT	0.00	1,823.23
		68,336.81	41,377.66

Budget 2010/2011**RECEIPTS****Current Account**

	Budget
Precept	46,212.00
Rents	
Parish	
Room	250.00
Allotments	525.00
Burials	1,500.00
Grants	0.00
Interest Current Account	25.00
VAT	0.00
Other	0.00
	48,512.00
Brought Forward	
Current Account	32,050.46
Total Current Account funds for year	80,562.46

PAYMENTS - CURRENT ACCOUNT

	Budget
<i>Admin</i>	
Clerks Salary	10,357.00
PC national Insurance Contribution	480.00
Pension Contribution	1,200.00
	12,037.00
Telephone Rental & Internet Access	300.00
Office Allowance	270.00
Stationery	350.00
Petty Cash	375.00
Audit Fees	400.00
Internal Auditor	225.00
Insurance	3,100.00
Training	275.00
Travelling/Cllrs Expenses	275.00
Annual Meeting	120.00
Web-Site	175.00
Wreath - remembrance Sunday	22.00
	17,924.00
<i>Parish Room</i>	
Rates	75.00
Gas	300.00
Electric	175.00
Fire Extinguishers Check	100.00
Boiler Service	75.00
maintenance/improvements	1,760.00
	2,485.00
<i>Pavilion</i>	
Fire Extinguisher Checks	100.00
<i>Ground Work</i>	
Chch Yard & Cemetery	3,575.00
Recreation Ground	725.00
Gun Park	1,308.00
Allotments	1,160.00
Land Behind Bus Shelter	170.00

	Cut Hedges/Overhanging Verges	1,000.00
	Tree Work all areas	4,000.00
	Additional Work	750.00
	Work to Football Pitch	2,000.00
	Mow Pond & Cut Hedge	420.00
	Parade	93.00
		15,201.00
Church Yard Maintenance/works		1,000.00
	Church yard Wall	2,000.00
	Monument Safety	500.00
Grave Excavation		0.00
		3,500.00
<i>Allotments & Leisure</i>	Maintenance	2,000.00
	Vandalism Repairs	1,000.00
	Bins & Dog Loos	500.00
	Pooper Scoopers	500.00
	Water	250.00
	Pond	1,200.00
	Play Equipment Inspection	420.00
		5,870.00
<i>Toilets</i>	Cleaning	1,740.00
	Supplies	120.00
		1,860.00
Grants	Grants	1,400.00
	Parish Magazine	600.00
	Coffee Break	1,300.00
		3,300.00
<i>Highways</i>	Horse Trough	50.00
	Cleaning Footways/Footpaths labour	3,800.00
	Cleaners Tools	105.00
	Petrol/Oil - service/new strimmer	450.00
	Traffic Calming	6,000.00
		10,405.00
<i>Membership</i>	KAPC	575.00
	Publications	150.00
	SLCC	85.00
	Action Communities Rural Kent	45.00
	Kent Playing Field Ass	35.00
	Ass of Burial Authorities	95.00
		985.00
Contingency/Section 137		2,932.46
	Parade - Electricity	1,000.00
	Other Projects	3,000.00
	Chapel	12,000.00
	VAT	0.00
		80,562.46

7. REPORTS

Kent County Councillor Leyland Ridings

Children's Social Services and Education

In my position as Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, I am delighted that this has been another successful year for Kent's students. In the summer of 2009, 52% of GCSE students achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths, a 2% increase from the year before. It has also been another record year for A-level results in Kent schools with the number of students achieving two A to E passes three percent higher than in 2008.

This year's Kent School Games were officially launched on 1st October 2009 by Dame Kelly Holmes, along with Hugh Robertson M.P. and KCC Leader Paul Carter at Hayesbrook School, Tonbridge, Bower Grove Special School, Maidstone and Allington Primary School, Maidstone. This event has turned into a great success and has resulted in many children participating in competitive sport on a regular basis: there were 900 children and young people at the opening.

The Children, Families and Education directorate is currently being restructured so we are better organised to meet the service demands of the community whilst making necessary efficiency savings. There will be a slim strategic centre, improved frontline service delivery and increased efficiency.

Audit Commission Inspection

In December 2009, the Audit Commission published the league table for the performance of all local authorities in England. There are two inspection reports. One report covers Kent County Council as an organisation. The second report covers Kent, the county, in partnership with the public sector, voluntary organisations and the business community. Kent excels in both reports. Kent County Council is joint top among all county councils in England - it is one of only three county councils that are "performing excellently". So, for the eighth year running, Kent County Council has scored the highest possible overall rating. The county is also singled out for exceptional achievement. In the partnership assessment, Kent gets two exceptional accreditations for improving young people's education and skills, for providing job opportunities to match Kent's growing economy and for the Gateways, which bring a wide range of public, community and voluntary services under one roof.

Transport and travel

This year, we have rolled out the Kent Freedom Pass across the entire county of Kent. We have also agreed to extend the scheme to those students who live in Kent but attend schools in other local authority areas, such as Medway. The Pass, which costs £50 currently, allows students to travel on any public bus at any time, including weekends and school holidays.

The heavy snowfall is likely to have damaged pavements and roads to some degree and I would ask you to report any damage and potholes to Kent County Council. This can be done by telephoning 08458 247 800. The road repair crews are working across the county and fixed over 10,000 potholes on Kent's roads in January 2010 alone. The repairs have been carried out ahead of more permanent work which Kent County Council is preparing to spend an extra £1million on from March onwards.

A new initiative this year was to give each County Councillor £25,000 to spend on Highways work in their division – If you have any suggestions for road improvements please let me know.

Roadworks should also be more streamlined in 2010 as we have introduced the Kent Permit Scheme, which means a company planning to dig up a road must apply for a permit from Kent Highway Services. This will allow Kent Highway Services to better co-ordinate the timing of roadworks, so that gas, water, telecoms, electricity companies and our own crews work on the same part of the road at the same time, reducing the number and duration of roadworks – and minimising their impact on motorists and other road users.

Adult Social Services and Community Safety

Managed by Help the Aged/Age Concern, but funded by our Community Safety Unit, we have provided five 'Handy Vans' to work across the county to provide advice and guidance and fit a range of safety and security products for people over the age of 60. Some of the products currently installed include smoke alarms, window locks, door chains, door viewers, mortice locks and mortice bolts. The free service is available to anyone aged 60 years or over, who has disposable savings/assets not exceeding £20,000 (not including the value of their home) and lives in an area where Handy Vans operate. To make a referral please phone 0845 026 1055 or email communitysafetyunit@kent.gov.uk.

Health

For those with health concerns we have established, in partnership with the NHS, 'Kent Health Watch', a service to help local residents express their views about health and social care in the county and get through to the right people. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In February 2010, we ran a 'Health Watch' road-show to talk face to face with people to see what issues are important and where. This information will help Kent County Council and the NHS work together to improve the health services.

Communities

KCC is building of the largest new art gallery in the South East called Turner Contemporary. The construction work is currently on budget and on schedule to be completed by the end of 2010, opening the following spring. It is designed by David Chipperfield, an internationally renowned architect.

Council Tax for 2010 - 2011

On 18th February 2010, Paul Carter announced the lowest ever Council Tax increase (since Council Tax began 17 years ago) of 2.1%. The rise of 2.1% means that a Band D property will increase from £1,026.27 to £1,047.78, an extra payment of 41 pence a week. It is expected that this will give Kent the 9th lowest Band D rate of any comparable authority.

Kent County Council will provide an additional £6.5million to support vulnerable adults, £5.3million to strengthen children's social services, mostly to meet the 21.2% increase in referrals in the wake of the tragic Baby Peter case, plus £10m to meet the additional costs in 2010/11 of supporting a £1.5billion capital programme.

Member Community Grant

This year, I have given: £600 to the Eastry Twinning Association to enable them to make an official visit to Longpre-les-Corps-Saints; £549 to Sandwich Technology School to pay for the internal roof to their restaurant extension; £1,000 to Walmer Cricket Club for the refurbishment of the artificial pitch; £200 to Sandwich Town Council for the Sandwich Festival portable toilets; £500 to Preston and Elmstone Village Society to help them rebuild the village hall; £2,000 to Ash Village Hall Management Committee for the Ash Heritage Centre; £500 towards the 2010 visit of the Sandwich – Honfleur Twinning Association; £2,000 for the Sandwich Community Christmas Lights and Carnival; £1,129 to Sandwich Town Cricket Club for the installation of lighting and security system at the Butts Recreation Group; and finally £1,522 to Eastry Village Hall Management Committee for the refurbishment of the kit

Dover District Council Report – Cllrs Steve Manion and Nick Kenton

Regeneration remains the Council's main priority in both the longer term and Interim Corporate Plans. The Council can and does take the role of both delivery agent and an advocate and enabler of change and development in the District, facilitating both ourselves and partners to move forward with the means to address the current and projected challenges presented in this report.

Regeneration is the lynch pin that seeks to address the demographic projections, the housing needs and developments, health inequalities, the skills and learning agenda, economic projections and needs of our communities. Physical regeneration is however, one of the hardest to promote as delivery of an end product does take time.

However, for the reasons outlined, it is the main ambition of the longer term Corporate Plan. The Interim Plan remains committed to these ambitions but also recognises the full impact of the economic downturn and uncertain financial climate. It makes clear the Council is still working hard to turn aspirations into real delivery, and, with all partners facing budget pressures, it recognises the importance of working together and enabling others, setting out clearly what the Council is committed to doing and what we will support and enable partners to undertake – all for the benefit of the District and residents.

The backward look in the Interim Plan demonstrates how the efforts of the Council and partners are addressing the challenges faced by the District, ensuring effort is co-ordinated and targeted to those areas most in need, whilst proving benefits to all.

Allotments and Leisure Committee Report - Cllr Sandra Hooper- Chairman

Allotments.

Although we have had one of the coldest Winters and Springs for many years there is a hive of activity on the Allotments. Allotment holders working hard to plant and sow now the weather is a little warmer. After a period when Allotments stood unused for several years we now have all the Allotments rented. Even very overgrown and neglected ones have now been restored and cultivated.

Gun Park.

With hopefully the chance of a long hot summer to come this area hopefully will be used by our Children as a play and picnic area. We now have a new Contractor for Grass Cutting and the area should be looking very nice. Unfortunately this has been spoilt lately by Dogs being allowed to foul the area. Its fun playing on the grass, sitting on it, or having a picnic, but not if you are having to dodge the dog mess. There are free Poop Scoop bags available from the Newsagents and the Chemists, so please make use of them. Thank you to the businesses concerned for issuing them

The Graffiti wall has had some very colourful paintings on it during the year, we have some very good Artists in the village.

Picnic Site.

This is a very popular amenity for the village. The usual Tree inspection has taken place with no work required. The Grass Mowing programme will be starting soon. At our recent meeting with the Head Ranger from KCC we were disappointed to see that there was quite a lot of Dog mess here on the pathways. Please clear up after your dog. Reminder signs will be placed here by KCC warning of the Health Hazards to children from Dog Mess. Thank you to all the Volunteer Key Holders who open and close the Picnic Site through out the year sometimes in atrocious weather conditions.

Pond.

Work was carried out during the winter clearing more of the overgrown shrubs and trees. It is an improvement to see open water now after a heavy downpour of rain. We have had several Ducks swimming about the first visit for a long time. Unfortunately as the water dries up the Ducks fly away.

Simon Dundas our Pond Warden and Trevor Burton have worked hard with the Contractors to improve this amenity for us, and we offer them our Thanks.

Greville Homes – Mr John Waring Chairman of the Trustees

In 1834, William Fulke Greville, a retired Naval Captain, living at Statenborough, offered to provide a Terrace of 6 Almshouses for the needy Eastry Residents, if the Parish would find a suitable site.

The offer was accepted, the houses built, and the first residents moved in in April 1835.[Since then in 1990 those houses were completely refurbished and 3 bungalows built on the site].

The reason that I am relating this is that you will possibly have gathered that the homes are 175 years old this year and the Trustees intend to celebrate and commemorate this by holding a Garden Party on the site on 6th August next.

They are hoping to have a tree planted by a Special Guest in the grounds and to invite other guests who have a special connection with the Charity.

The 7 Trustees, consisting of 4 representatives of this Parish Council, will be applying to the Parish Council for the consideration of a grant towards the cost of this Celebratory Garden Party.

I hope this will meet with your general approval.

Eastry Horticultural Society Report - Colin Coulson, Chairman

2009 was a ‘Special Year’ in which the Society celebrated its 130th Anniversary, a unique event amongst Horticultural Societies this being recognised by the “Royal Horticultural Society” in a special article published by them and circulated nation-wide.

The Village Hall was transformed into an Aladdin’s Cave of memorabilia on Sunday 30th July when the Society proudly staged their “130th Anniversary Exhibition”. This remarkable event attracted visitors from all parts of the County and beyond. Members ‘old and new’ mingled with the visitors to make them welcome and answer many, many questions. A brief history of the Society was produced and many visitors took advantage of purchasing copies.

Three very successful Flower Shows were held in the Village Hall which once again attracts visitors from near and far. The long-weekend holiday was spent in the Oxfordshire area where 49 members and friends visited various attractive gardens in gorgeous weather.

Members were entertained each month with a variety of Speakers and although the influx of new members has slowed down, we are hoping that some of the new allotment holders may now join us, which we feel will be advantageous to both ourselves and the Parish Council.

After many years of dedicated service our Secretary Sheila Smith stood down at the 2009 A.G.M. and this was recognised in the Chairman’s Report. This position has not been filled and we are still searching for a volunteer.

The Annual Long Weekend Holiday that the Society organises is becoming more and more popular, and this year a coach of 49 will be off to Chester, we will be visiting the Birmingham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses, Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Estate, RHS Tatton Park Flower Show and Ryton Organic Gardens in Coventry.

For a very modest Annual Subscription please come and join us, you will be made most welcome