

Many people make great contributions to the well being of the village. I would like to say thank you to our Community Warden Bob Priestly for all his hard work and commitment to the people of Eastry. To Sheila Broster and Malcolm who keep the village clean and tidy. To Richard Swain for keeping the Public Conveniences up to scratch and for his work at Buttsole pond. I would also like to thank Trevor Burton for his work at the pond. Another thank you to Richard and his team for there continued work with the Neighbourhood Watch group.

Thanks also to John Kemp who is always on hand when the Parish Council needs a job doing in a hurry! I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support during the past year. Thank you all.

The Annual Meeting is being held early this year because district and Parish elections are to be held in May. Anyone who wishes to stand for election to either will find details in the March issue of the Village News. You may also contact the Parish Clerk, Sarah Wells. Or DDC offices. Because the meeting is early this year there will not be a financial report, however the Parish Council's year end accounts and budget for 2007/08 will be published on the Parish Council Web-site and in a future copy of the Village News Letter.

One person who is not standing for re-election this year is Councillor Iris Mollart. Iris has been on Eastry Parish council for many years and has a wealth of local knowledge; she has also been a long standing school governor. Iris has, with her band of helpers, organised the very successful "Coffee Break" held in the Village Hall every Friday morning where people can come in for a chat and a "cuppa". She has also played an important role in the publication of Eastry Village News, which I and many others feel has been a great success. May I, on your behalf thank Iris for her long and outstanding contribution to Eastry Village life. I wonder what she is planning to do next?

Thank you.

5) ALLOTMENTS AND LEISURE FILEDS REPORT – Cllr Sandra Hooper

Gun Park.

Last year I reported that we now had a Teen Shelter for the young people in the village. We had difficulty in obtaining this, and were delighted when after many months it finally arrived. This appeared to be a popular venue near the Youth Club.

Sadly, one night it was set on fire, and is now in a very sad state. It is unlikely that we will be offered a replacement.

The skateboard has again suffered vandalism at various times during the past year, which is a pity as it is a popular area and used regularly. The fence behind it has also been damaged, I am not referring to the main Graffiti, this the Council agreed should be allowed. Unfortunately fences are not covered by our insurance, so this vandalism is a costly business.

Some good news about Gun Park. Those of you who walk it regularly will, we hope, have noticed new benches, 3 in Gun Park and 1 by the footpath near the Centenary Gardens play area.

A Contractor has be asked to carry out some work on damaged trees in Gun Park, but due to the very wet weather the ground is water logged, and it has proved impossible for him to get the equipment onto the grass, without causing damage.

Motor bikes have been ridden across the grass, and have left ruts due to the sodden grass. If you see anyone riding motor bikes, here, please report it to Bob Priestly. It has been reported that some one was seen driving golf balls here, this is not allowed, and again should be reported to Bob.

Pavilion.

Discussions have taken place between the Council and the Football Club with the view to the Club being granted a lease on the Pavilion.

An agreement has been reached and a lease for 21 years is being drawn up by Solicitors.

The Football Club will be responsible for service charges, and maintenance.

In our discussions it was felt by both parties, that granting a lease would help to secure the Clubs future, and allow them to apply for grants.

Allotments.

In spite of the hottest summer for years, a hose pipe ban, and the most rapid growth of brambles seen for a long time the Allotments, this year have been a hive of industry. For the first time for many years people are very interested in our Allotments. As some have been neglected for some time and are very overgrown we have a contractor who will clear the rampant brambles, and other rubbish, making it easier for the first time gardener to make a start.

Pond.

Buttshole Pond is owned by the Church Commissioners, and during a recent inspection, carried out for them, 2 trees were marked which need attention. One is the Willow which was damaged in recent gales, and the other is a dead, tree on the edge of the Pond. Discussions have also taken place with Paul Hadaway from The White Cliffs Countryside Project, Wayne Wright, our local Policeman, who is the Wild Life and Conservation officer for the area, and Bob Priestly, with the view to clearing the brambles, at the far edge of the Pond these have spread rapidly, over the past few years.

There is a lovely painting of the pond at the far end of the hall which you might to look at after the meeting. If there was a larger open area of water, hopefully, more wildlife could be encouraged.,

Bollards are also planned at the edge of the tarmac, to stop cars from parking on the grass near the picnic table.

Picnic Site.

This a popular and well used site managed by K.K.C for us, from Brockhill Country Park. We meet their representative twice a year to discuss grass cutting, maintenance, any problems that have arisen, and suggestions for improvements.

Annually a tree inspection is carried out by K.K.C, and it has been noted that some trees now have large red numbers on them. Contrary to comments made to me, it does not mean that they are to be felled, it means that remedial work is needed on them, some branches are dead, and some too low to the ground to mow effectively.

There is an increasing amount of rubbish being left at the entrance to the picnic site late at night when the gate is closed. We are trying to address this problem, and have also asked if a police patrol car could check this area.

6. REPORTS

DDC – Cllrs Steve Manion and Nick Kenton

It is a very exciting time for the Dover District, a number of initiatives that have been under development for the past four years are finally coming to fruition. The Plans for the Dover Town Investment Zone will be going before the planning committee this month. Falmeed Park will be opening this summer, the Connaught Barracks site is due to be developed for residential housing and Alysham expansion plans are in place. Development of this level attracts investment that can be used for even more improvements in the Dover District Area.

The work on the production of the Local Development Framework continues, however this has been delayed by Central Government. The content and scope of the LDF have been amended and the exact requirements of the document are still being determined.

Dover District Council is welcoming the news that it has been given the go ahead to invest a further £1.6m in private sector housing in the district to help those in most need. This important news follows the announcement last year that the district was awarded £1.8m from the Government's Regional Housing Pot to be spent on improving private sector housing for households receiving means tested benefit. Dover District residents will be able to apply for grants and interest free loans from this funding to improve their property.

Dover District Council is welcoming major news that its popular kerbside collection scheme is expanding - with an additional 7,000 households across the area receiving black boxes as the service grows to cover more than 80% of the district.

The kerbside scheme will now cover around 40,000 households across the district, with new rounds beginning from 5 March. Dover District Council is writing to all residents on the scheme to confirm collection days. For some households this will mean a change in collection days. Where possible days have been changed to be the same as refuse collections. Waste Services is now looking at ways to continue to expand the service to remaining properties in the district.

Mr Tim Halling – Head Teacher at Eastry School

Highlight of the Year at Eastry C of E school – We had a very successful OFSTED report “A GOOD SCHOOL WITH A STRONG CHRISTIAN ETHOS” was one of the comments made by the inspectors. Eastry is in the top 20 highest achieving primary schools in Kent and one of the top 5% of schools in the country for maths. Year 2 results are above the national average. School numbers are constantly rising. As Eastry becomes one of the most popular schools in the area.

We were visited by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent last year when he toured the Village following the success in the Village of the year Competition. Years 5 and 6 classrooms were refurbished last year. Successful open days are held every term and the school regularly features in the East Kent mercury. We have also been featured on Radio Kent for our tree planting and for our new school dinners. We have also trained our first graduate teacher.

Charity Events - The following events have taken place – Martha House Charity Faye raised over £500. Dance athon in aid of British heart foundation to support Mrs Smith in her trek across the Himalayas this raised over £1000. We have also taken part in the Blue Peter shoe appeal, Children's Society (Christingle) appeal and the Shoe Box appeal. The whole school also dressed up for Red Nose day.

Fun Days – For Roald Dahl day the children dressed up as their favourite book characters. The whole school took part in the world record reading of Dr Zeuss “Cat in a Hat”. We have had pancake races and made recycled creatures and held a dance festival at the summer fete.

Trips – The following places have been visited over the past year, Dover Lifeboat station, Dover Museum, Dover Castle, Ramsgate Synagog, Hall Place, Build a Bear, St Mary's Church, the East Kent ploughing match, Howletts and Azincourt in France. Also as you will probably remember we caused chaos in the High Street when the whole school and all staff went on the Tenterden Steam Railway to visit Bodiam Castle.

Clubs – the following clubs currently run during lunch breaks or after school. Golf, tennis, football, dance, conservation, gardening, chess, recorder and music ensemble.

Links with church – The school has strong links with St Mary’s Church, we hold Children Lead service in School and hold a prayer group that is open to parents. The Rev Kent or Pilcher leads worship every Wednesday morning.

PTA - We are lucky to have a strong and well supported PTA that run event to raise funds for the school. They have organised Bonfire night, Christmas feyer, Fun quiz, a ladies paper night and the Summer fete.

School ground – The following improvements have been made to the school grounds, New vegetable plots, new school gate onto the gun park, Gazebos, pergolas and Cycle shelter.

I would like to say thanks to my wholly committed and talented staff, wonderful children, extremely supportive Governors, PTA and parents. Without them the school would not be the great success that it is.

County Councillor Leyland Ridings

Cllr Ridings apologies for missing the start of the meeting, however he had been chairing a Citizenship ceremony at County Hall, he said that these ceremonies were held once a week with between 15 and 20 applicant attending each ceremony.

Cllr Ridings said he would like to congratulate Eastry School for its continued good results this year. There followed some questions from the floor on school admissions, there was concern that local children were unable to get places at Eastry School.

Cllr Ridings talked about the Local neighbourhood Forums and said that grant money was available for local community groups. The next forum is on 23rd May at Wingham Village Hall.

There followed some discussion on traffic calming and other highways matters. Cllr Kenton asked why KCC waste site were going to stop taking plastic for recycling from the end of this month. Cllr Ridings informed the meeting that only one plant in Europe processed plastic and this was situated in Germany. It was uneconomical to transport plastic to the site. Cllr Kenton asked if it would be possible to install chippers at waste sites so al least plastic could be chopped before it went into land fill.

Kevin Devison – Kent Fire and Rescue Service

10 Fire fighters from Eastry Fire Station are going to be trained as first responders to help the ambulance service. They will have a purpose build vehicle that will be located at Eastry. The fire service are planning an open evening so local residents can

Youth Club Report - Dick Lasslett

Please give my apologies for tonight’s meeting. I will be running the Youth Club.

Following the so sudden death of Teddy Birnburg I did consider, of course, not opening Youth Club tonight. But Teddy I know would have wanted me to open as usual.

Teddy rang me only yesterday to make sure that I knew of the Annual Parish meeting tonight and to make sure one of us attended. He said he was feeling quite a lot better, had been doing a little driving and would attend the meeting tonight.

He knew since Christmas I had been running Youth Club on my own on both Tuesday and Thursday evening and was going to make a plea to the meeting for more people to get involved with the Youth Club.

Teddy has been a huge support to me and the club over the past ten years he is going to be sorely missed.

The plea is still there – the young people deserve more support – Please.

7. POLICE ISSUES

PC Wayne Wright the community Police Officer outline the new strategy for community policing.

The principle behind neighbourhood policing is to provide dedicated, accessible and visible policing teams that are responsive to the needs of local communities. Neighbourhood policing teams are led by police officers but involve a number of roles including: special constables, police community support officers, council wardens, volunteers and others.

Police community support officers, or PCSOs, are professionally trained civilians working for Kent Police. In order to enhance our neighbourhood policing teams recruitment for more PCSOs is currently underway.

Our plans are well underway to roll-out neighbourhood policing across the county following pilots in Canterbury and North Kent. Our neighbourhood teams are already working closely with local people and organisations to address local problems such as anti-social behaviour and environmental nuisance.

By 2008 every neighbourhood in the county should have a dedicated uniformed officer. This will involve over doubling the numbers of officers working in neighbourhood policing roles. We recently bought three mobile police stations that are used to deliver a service to neighbourhoods without easy access to a police station.

PC Wright went through the crime figures for Eastry over the past year. Their followed some discussion on the importance of crime reporting.

A question was raised from the floor about a street light in the ally between Gore Road and Orchard Road, this light had not work for months. A cherry picker had tried to get up the ally so work could be carried out on the light, however it had been unable to get through because of the overhanging hedge. It was agreed that Clerk would contact the highways department. **Action Parish Council**

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and invited them to stay for refreshments. The meeting closed at 8.55pm.