

**PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015 AT IGHTHAM VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J C Edwards (Chair), County Cllr Mrs Valerie Dagger, Borough Cllr Mr F R D Chartres, and 29 parishioners including seven Parish Councillors.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Paul Hicks, Regional Development Director, Circle Housing gave a talk about the Local Plan and the recent Housing Needs Survey which was jointly commissioned by Ightham Parish Council and Circle Housing. Circle Housing help local people access affordable housing in rural areas. Local Government Policy is that sites should be released close to the village boundary for affordable housing.

The Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by Action with Communities in Rural Kent in October 2014. 804 surveys were distributed and 229 were returned, a 28% response rate which is about average. 95% respondents were owners occupiers and 64% had lived in the Parish for 10 years or more. The point of the survey was to identify housing needs. At the time of the survey only 2 properties were available to rent in Ightham, the cheapest being £2,700 per month for a 4 bedroomed property. Numbers expressing a need for affordable housing totalled 9 but a further 13 households outside the area expressed an interest in returning. The survey ran in parallel with the Borough Council call for sites. Ightham Parish Council put forward 3 potential sites for development including Dark Hill, Plasterite and the Paddock. Even if there is a perceived need for affordable sites, development doesn't necessarily take place. Usually only a third to half of needs get fulfilled and they are prioritised with families and couples taking priority. As Ightham has such a small need, Circle are looking at the possibility of using the Hazelbourne development, Phase II in Borough Green to address those needs.

Cllr Edwards reported that the redevelopment of the bungalows in Fen Pond Road had produced a small number of affordable homes in Ightham although unfortunately they couldn't be restricted to Ightham residents.

If the Parish Council were to proceed with a scheme for affordable housing, the survey would need to be updated at that time.

The Chairman thanked Paul for his presentation.

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on 24th April 2014 were agreed. Copies were available for Parishioners.

**THE CHAIRMAN** gave his report to the meeting. This included:

**Planning**

During the financial year, 65 planning applications were considered and objections were made to 3.

**Highways**

We continue to press Kent Highways to repair potholes promptly and regularly give them a list of potholes in the Parish to fill.

### **Recreation Ground**

The Car Park is often at capacity during school drop off and collection times and the Parish Council is looking to increase the number of spaces by around 25. This has provided invaluable parking for the school and various sports clubs and has helped to alleviate the parking issues in the surrounding residential areas.

We are having some extensive repairs carried out to the Playground and are looking into replacing some of the larger items with some more modern equipment.

The Planning Application for the new new Scout Hut/Pavilion has been approved and the Scouts and Football Club are busy raising funds for the Building project.

We received funding towards a Defibrillator from our County Councillor, which was installed on the outside wall of the Village Hall in November 2014. Several members of the Parish and some Councillors attended a training session run by SECAMB and a further training session will be arranged this year for members of the public.

We cleared Old Lane so that it can be used as a footpath again and The Paddock so that it can be rented as an allotment again.

### **Local Plan & Housing Needs Survey**

We carried out a Local Housing Needs Survey in 2014 as part of our requirement to propose sites that would be suitable for the development of affordable homes. The results of the survey will be published in the Parish Magazine.

### **Finances**

We decided not to increase our precept for 2014/15. We still have funds in the Reserve account which have been earmarked to assist with projects such as the new Scout Hut/Pavilion, levelling of the playing fields, some new playground equipment and renovations to the Village Hall including a new kitchen.

The accounts for 2013/4 were inspected by our internal auditor, signed and forwarded to the District Auditor, who approved them with a recommendation that we carry out a Risk Assessment and Annual Review which we have done. Our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations have also been reviewed and adopted.

A member of public asked whether it would be possible to have a sign at either end of Ismays Road saying "Not suitable for HGV's". It was agreed that this would be a good idea.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** An Income and Expenditure Account for 2013/2014 was circulated at the meeting.

### **COUNTY REPORT**

Cllr Dagger gave her report on the last year which is attached.

### **BOROUGH REPORT**

Borough Councillor Rodney Chartres gave his report on the past year. He reported that he would be standing down as Borough Councillor but would continue to serve on the Parish Council. There is a new Head Teacher at Ightham Primary School and a new Rector at St Peter's Church. Cllr Chartres thanked Cllr Dagger for her help and support during his term of

office and Cllr John Edwards. During his term of office Cllr Chartres felt that he had achieved his objectives and that one particular coup was securing KCC financing for the new classrooms at Ightham Primary School. The school have c. £150 k towards the £500k project and KCC have offered to fund the rest.

Cllr Chartres congratulated the Parish Council on their re-election for the next four years but felt that it was a shame that no Ightham candidate had come forward for the new local ward of Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted and suggested that we address this in time for the next election. Other achievements from his manifesto have included undergrounding of EDF cables, the new car park in the recreation ground, an ever improving Primary school and an active church family.

With regard to planning, we have some lovely new houses in Ightham which have enhanced the village.

We are very proud of our football team.

There have been a number of new employment opportunities in the area; Cricketts Farm has a number of small units for local professionals and all local nurseries now have local housing.

KCC did a great job with potholes until last year and we have had the recent disaster with A227 which took longer than necessary to repair. Drainage issues have now been resolved in Redwell Lane and Styants Bottom.

Cllr Chartres wished his successor the best of luck and gave thanks to Cllr Cracknell and Julia Banbury.

Cllr Edwards said that it had been a pleasure and a privilege working with Cllr Chartres who had contributed a lot and his expertise had been essential.

A question was raised about the Scout Hut project. The Parish Council have paid for the surveys but the Scouts are still waiting for final costings on the build.

**REPORTS FROM PARISH ORGANISATIONS** Reports were received from various village organisations on their activities over the past year.

**AOB**

None

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which closed at 9.38pm