

News Letter Contents / Council committees

Chairs Report, Finance, Current Council business/projects. Highways, Open Spaces, Cemetery, Environment, Parish Hall, Charing Heath, Miscellaneous.

Chair's Report

2024 is now well and truly underway and the Parish Council (PC) still face problems on a continuing basis. Whether it be a lack of action or commitment from Ashford Borough Council (ABC) or the inquiry into the 5 to 10,000 homes that Maidstone Borough Council are trying to build right on the boundary of the Charing Parish, which we are actively supporting Lenham Parish Council in their bid to overturn this proposal.

As you may be aware housing development in the parish is still on hold due to the "Stodmarsh SSI" becoming contaminated, i.e. water run off from the surrounding land that feeds into the Stour, no solution, mitigating circumstances or exemptions have been approved so far. The relevant councillor's, who have been doing a sterling job, are remaining vigilant with the emerging policies.

Charing Heath has been suffering from a plethora of breaches to the planning system with one that has been going on for at least 20 years. During this time ABC has had ample opportunities to end this woeful situation. The PC will continue to make strong representations to the planning officers to support the PC in bringing these breaches to a satisfactory conclusion.

"Anti-social behaviour" is still causing problems in and around Charing Heath and Charing. If you see anything "Anti-Social," please report it to the police on 999 if urgent and happening in real time, or 101 and their web site reporting portal. One of the main concerns is that youths are riding motorbikes with no tax, no insurance, or any regard for the safety of the residents or indeed themselves."

Chris Prinn

*****Urgent Public Meeting (re: The Oak)*****

Charing Parish Council has just received notification that the owner of "The Oak" has submitted on the 29th January, notice under "Section 95 (2) of the localism act 2011 (the Act) " that the owner wishes to enter into a relevant disposal of the building / Land.



The "Oak" is subject to an "Asset of community Value" and therefore the following process will apply; A 6 week Interim Moratorium ending 11th March 2024, Full Moratorium ending 29th July 2024 and a Protected Period ending on the 25th July 2025.

Community group/s have within the (Interim Moratorium) i.e. a six week period to make a written request to be treated as a potential bidder. A written request will then trigger the (Full Moratorium and subsequent processes.

A Public meeting is to be held for any interested parties wishing to submit a "Community bid" and to gauge the level of interest and support.

Friday 16th February 1900hrs at the Parish Hall, Station Rd, Charing

Finance Finance report 2024

It's that time of year again and I have to present this years precept to the residents. As last year the Finance Committee have been ever mindful of the financial burdens that residents are facing with the continued cost of living increases. Many councils are facing budget shortfalls that put their residents under threat of serious increases, you may have read or seen this on the news.



We must balance this with the statutory duties a Parish Council has along with the needs of maintaining services and assets. We have been able to keep the increase to 12.5%. This we feel will enable us to continue to maintain the community as you would wish and keep us financially sound. This increase amounts to £1 per month increase on average to your council tax bill.

Please do not confuse the precept with your Council Tax Bill, the precept forms a small part of your Council Tax. A Parish Council gets its money from several sources, the main one is the Precept, this is money collected by the unitary authority i.e. Ashford Borough Council as part of your Council Tax. We get income from community assets like the Parish Hall being rented by groups and individuals and from the Cemetery. We get a small amount from interest on the reserves we hold at the bank. We are always looking to increase the amount we can generate ourselves as this would reduce the demand from taxpayers but we have to be very careful that we do not inflict residents with more financial burdens if these initiatives do not bear fruit.

David Bennett Chair of Finance Committee

Snapshot of current and ongoing Council Business/Projects

1. CCTV implementation. 2. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) 3. The Oak. 4. Post Office. 5. Community Hall. 6. Charing Heath re Possible renaming and Village Green. **Dawne Austen - Clerk to the Council**

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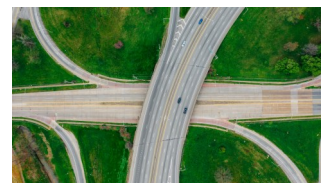
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Snapshot of Current Council Business/Projects

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Highways Working Group (HWG) (Sub committee of CPC)

Charing Parish Council (CPC) carried out an "Approved survey" (CCTV) of the Cross-roads (A20 Station Road) to establish the amount of (if any) violations to the Traffic Order for the new road layout implemented by KCC. The survey was carried out as many verbal and written accounts had been reported to the Council in relation to the above.



The Survey took place over a 7 day period (24hrs a day) in November 2023 monitoring the two possible violation areas of

1. Traffic turning right from Station Road towards Ashford on the A20 violating the "Left Turn only" Instruction.
2. Traffic entering the Lower High Street from Station Road i.e. driving straight across violating the "Left Turn only" Instruction.

CPC has a detailed breakdown but please find a summary of the results below:

Day (7 days)	Station Rd. (Turning Right A20)	Station Rd (Straight across to High Street)	Total traffic order violations
Wednesday	129	90	219
Thursday	178	84	262
Friday	111	72	183
Saturday	108	78	186
Sunday	96	71	167
Monday	127	56	183
Tuesday	120	89	209

These results (Quite Shocking!) have been passed onto KCC to Analyse, along with other data and reports.

HWG/CPC

Environment

Bag up your old electricals and bring them to our E-Cycle Revival Event which is taking place in Charing!

Charing Parish Council will also be holding a surgery during this event. Talk to your local councillors, re any issues, ideas and feedback etc between 10am—12noon

Date: Saturday 2nd March at Charing Parish Hall

Time: 10am - 4pm

Location: Charing Parish Hall, TN270JA

Find out more: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/environmental-concerns/climate-change/recycle-your-electricals>



Cont:

Environment cont:

Introducing your new waste & recycling service (Information from Ashford Borough Council)



The new service begins at the end of March 2024 and will bring in new technology and industry improvements, whilst retaining large parts of the existing service, which helped make Ashford one of the best recycling local authorities in Kent, and beyond.

Fortnightly collections of waste and recycling will continue across the borough, with one green wheeled bin for recycling, alongside the regular weekly food waste collections.

The new contract offers the chance to increase recycling rates, more efficient routes, lower emission vehicles and better technology to keep residents up to date on collections.

The new vehicles are being funded directly by the council to help save costs and will be more modern vehicles that use electric bin lifts. This will help reduce the consumption of diesel dramatically, helping lower the services' carbon footprint.

Our street cleansing service will also be delivered by our new contractor Suez. The new contract includes proposed improvements to the level of cleansing in rural and residential areas, as well as quicker response times on removing fly-tipping,

Answering your key questions about the new service

What will the service look like? Waste and recycling collections in the borough consist of: A weekly food waste collection, A fortnightly recycling collection, A fortnightly general waste collection and an OPTIONAL paid-for fortnightly garden recycling collection.

When will the new contract start? From Sunday 24 March.

Will the frequency of collections change? **No.** The frequency of collections will be staying the same, with fortnightly recycling and waste collections, and an optional fortnightly garden waste collection. Food waste will be collected weekly.

Will my collection day change? Although the frequency of collections will be staying the same, it is likely that after Sunday 24 March 2024, your collection day will alter. We will notify residents of any changes well in advance of the new contract start date.

Why are collection days changing? The changes are being made to make a more efficient collection schedule. Half the borough will have their recycling bins collected while the other half of the borough will have their refuse bins collected.

This will be easier to process at the waste processing centre and will also mean it is easier to catch up on any missed collections.

Will the items collected for recycling change? **No.** The same recyclable items will still be collected, in your green wheeled bin.

Will the collection crew staff change? **No.** There is a requirement for staff to move from one contractor to the next. The majority of staff are local residents and know the area well.

Who is our new contractor? Our new contractor is Suez. They employ more than 5,000 people in the UK and have been managing waste contracts for local authorities since 1988.

What if I forget what day will my bin be emptied? Unsure which day your bin will be emptied, or which collection week it is? Use our look up calendar online at www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-and-bins/bin-collection-calendars/

Recycling collection (fortnightly) Together we can recycle more.

Please use your green wheeled bin to put all your loose recyclable materials in.

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Environment Cont:

Top tip - Please flatten cardboard boxes and plastic bottles to maximise space in your bin. Where possible, please rinse clean your recycling to avoid food contamination.

Yes please: Paper, magazines & cardboard, Plastic bottles, tubs & containers, Tins & cans, including; sweet & biscuit tins, Glass bottles & jars, Kitchen foil & foil trays, Plastic meat trays, ready meal trays, Fruit/veg punnets, Yoghurt pots, Empty aerosol cans.

No thanks: Plastic or black bags, Light bulbs, Textiles, Food waste, General waste, Nappies or sanitary products, Pet waste, Garden waste, Polystyrene, Electrical items.

What happens to your recycling?

Almost all recyclable waste collected is processed and separated into individual materials for recycling at local Materials Recycling Facilities.

Contamination usual suspects

Don't let our recycling go to waste. These bad guys, contaminate our good work on recycling; Plastic bags, Black bags, Nappies, Dirty packaging, Food waste, Nappies, dirty packaging, plastic and black bags go in your general waste bin. Food waste goes in your food caddy.



When you place the wrong items in your recycling, your bin might not be collected, and the whole bin contents might not be recycled at the Material Recovery Facility. **This costs Ashford Borough Council and local taxpayers.**

General Waste collections (fortnightly)

Please use your grey wheeled bin for general waste that cannot be recycled. You will be surprised just how little general waste you have left after you separate your recycling and food waste.

Place the items in your bin loose or you can use black sacks or carrier bags if you wish. The bin lid must be closed, and we will not collect ANY side or extra waste not placed inside the closed bin.

Yes please: Any waste that does not go into your recycling bin or food caddy. Nappies, Pet waste, Polystyrene Used Tissues, General waste from your household.

No thanks: Food waste, Electrical items, Paint tins, Garden waste, DIY waste, Hazardous materials, Clinical waste & needles.

What happens to your general waste? It is not sent to landfill. Our household general waste is sent to an Energy from Waste Plant to be used to generate electricity.

Feed your food caddy – every week

Empty your food waste into the black/orange collection caddy when required, which should be placed outside for collection. The orange lid can be locked with the handle to prevent pests or animals accessing it..

If you wish, you can line your caddy with newspaper or special compostable liners or bags.

Yes please: All cooked & raw food including;; Meat, fish & bones, Fruit & veg, including peelings, Teabags & coffee grounds, Bread pasta & pulses, Eggshells, Dairy products, Solid butter & lards, Leftovers from meals, Foods past their sell by date.

No thanks: Plastic bags, Liquids or oils, Any packaging, Pet waste or litter, Garden waste or clippings.

What happens to Food Waste?

All food waste is taken to an anaerobic digester in Kent to be turned into biogas. The biogas is fed to the national grid as well as powering the plant itself.

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Environment Cont:

Large item collections:

Large item collections will be re-used where possible, with Suez partnering with the charity Demelza, so that items that can be re-used rather than go to waste.

We will collect large household items such as: furniture, white goods and electrical appliances. Items need to be put out by 6am on the day of collection on the boundary of your property and be clearly visible for the crews collecting. White goods are collected separately to your other large items.

Alternatively, you can take your waste free of charge to Kent County Council's Household Waste and Recycling Centre or visit our website for some re-use ideas.

To book a large item collection at www.ashford.gov.uk www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-and-bins/large-item-collection/ or call 01233 331111.

Textiles & small electrical items

Textiles and small electrical items (WEEE) will no longer be collected at the kerbside. Instead, you can take them to our roadshow events, recycle them elsewhere, or take them to the household waste centre.

You will be able to book a collection of textiles or your small electrical items free of charge when booking a paid for large item collection. Batteries need to be placed in a separate clear tied bag.

Garden waste service (fortnightly)

You can register for our subscription fortnightly garden recycling collection. When you sign up, you will receive a separate collection calendar and a 240-litre brown wheeled bin.

The garden waste service operates on a rolling year basis. This means you will renew your service annually exactly one year from the date of joining. Register at: www.ashford.gov.uk/garden-waste

The service is entirely optional so that people who do not have gardens do not have to pay for the service. You can pay for more than one bin or share one with neighbours. We will only collect from properties that have paid for the service.

Garden waste can also be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre on the Cobbs Wood Industrial Estate or alternatively, you can try home composting.

What happens to Garden Waste?

All garden waste is composted down to be used as an agricultural soil improver.

For further information about the new service visit our website or follow us on social media.
www.ashford.gov.uk/waste

Parish Hall

"Coffee Mornings at the Parish Hall"

There are coffee mornings held at Charing Parish Hall on Wednesday mornings. Come and join us and keep warm! These are free events for all. Donations will be welcome to assist with running costs. Wednesdays 10.00 am to 12.00 noon. We look forward to seeing you there. A Community Warden event in conjunction with Charing Parish Council. **Dawne Austen**



Food Bank (Changing to a fortnightly Service)

The food bank is changing to a fortnightly service from the 31/01/2024. It's available for anyone in need to use and is open during the above coffee morning between 10 and 11.30am.

Donations for the foodbank can be left at the Church or brought to the hall on a Wednesday morning.

Dawne Austen.

Charing Heath

Possible Parish Name Change?

The question has been raised as to the feasibility of the Parish name being changed to “Charing with Charing Heath.”

We are currently investigating the required legal hoops and possible expenses that this would entail but we're looking for some feedback from residents as to your views (For or Against) the idea, before we commit to any expense.

If you could email, phone or write to the Clerk with a simple Yes or No to the idea that would be great.

E: cpclerk@charingkent.org **Phone:** 01233713599. or 07340557785

Post: Parish Clerk 6 Haffenden Meadow Charing Ashford kent TN270JR

Miscellaneous



Kids' Clothes:

Everything free; everyone welcome. Kids Clothes available in Charing Parish Hall on Thursday 22nd February. Doors open at 3.15 p.m. until 4.45 p.m.

Charing in Bloom

It may be odd to talk about summer flowers in February! However, this is exactly the right time to get planning and planting!

The Parish Council is intending to enter Charing for the annual South and South East in Bloom in 2024. Our village always looks good but, with your help, we are aiming to be particularly impressive this year – grass cut, flowers blooming and everything trimmed to perfection.



Each year judges visit the villages that choose to enter and we could expect to see them in June or July for a visit that would last for a couple of hours. With so many excellent gardeners in the village we are hopeful of a good outcome. For more information about the work in progress, contact the Clerk to the Council. **Janet White**

An Arts Society for Charing? Meeting on Tuesday March 19th

In Charing we are fortunate to have some first-class societies for gardeners, historians and the St Cecilia Concerts in the Church have given a boost to our musical life. However, there may be scope for more arts events both for the visual arts and music in the village. If there is support from others, I am proposing that we create an Arts Society, to sponsor exhibitions, concerts, workshops, lectures and other relevant events.

At this early stage, I have had a lot of positive comments about the idea, but it would be interesting to know if we have enough real commitment to make it work. There is unlikely to be much overlap with existing societies although there may be some scope for collaboration. Maybe we could even envisage a Charing Festival at some future point?

If you are interested in this proposal and would like to know more, or contribute ideas and become more involved, please come to the Charing Arts Society meeting to consider the proposal. **Janet White**

Charing Parish Hall (Top Room) on Tuesday 19th March at 7.30 p.m. And if you can't make that date but would like to talk to me, do email me on Janet@charingkent.org.

******Job Alert / Vacancy******

CPC have a vacancy for an additional Roadsweeper. 10hrs Per Week. During Monday to Friday. Hrs to be discussed upon application. **Please contact the Clerk for more details and an application form if applicable.**

Community & Youth Award 2024

The Annual Community & Youth award is presented to residents of Charing or Charing Heath who have given outstanding service to their village over a period of years. If you know of any candidates who have given this sort of service please do nominate them. The Youth element of this award is for 11—18 year olds.

The Community & Youth award 2024 will be presented at our Annual Parish Open Meeting on Tuesday 7th May. A nomination form is printed below. All Charing / Charing Heath residents are invited to submit a nomination. Only one nomination per category, per resident, but all adult members of a family may submit a nomination form. Just photocopy the form or phone the Clerk, Dawne Austen, on 713599 for extra forms.

Completed forms, in a sealed envelope, should be sent to the Clerk at 6 Haffenden Meadow Charing TN27 OJR, or given to any councillor. The closing date for receiving voting forms will be 31st March 2024.

Community & Youth Award 2024 / Nomination Form

I would like to nominate for the Community* / Youth* Award (*Delete as appropriate)

.....Signed.....

Print Name.....

Only one vote per resident. In the event of a tie the award may be given to more than one person. For details of returning this form see above.

<p>Parish Councillors - Charing</p> <p>Lady Corry Bain Smith (vice chair) 712594 Ms Carrie Allen carrie@charingkent.org Mr Dennis Gudge 07957432104 Mr Terry Hayward terry@charingkent.org Mrs Julia Strike 07855064707 Mr Tylden Reed 713136 or 07767861003 Mrs Janet White Janet@charingkent.org Mr Stephen Woodbridge stephen@charingkent.org</p> <p>Rural Community Warden Carol Coveney 07977981990</p> <p>PCSO TBA 101</p>	<p>Parish Councillors Charing Heath</p> <p>Mr Chris Prinn (Chair) 07872190187 Mr D Bennett (vice chair) 712054</p> <p>Borough Councillors Mrs Y Roden (Charing) Yvonne.Roden@ashford.gov.uk Mrs C Bell (C/Heath) 07970885065</p> <p>County Councillor Mr C Simkins (County Cllr) 756705</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Mrs Dawne Austen 713599</p> <p>Burial Clerk</p> <p>Mrs Hilary Evers 632671</p>	<p>Charing Parish Newsletter</p> <p>Editor: Dawne Austen</p> <p>Contributions or correspondence for upcoming Newsletters should be sent to:</p> <p>6 Haffenden Meadow Charing Kent TN27 OJR Tel: 01233 713599 Email: cpclerk@charingkent.org</p>
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