

Newsletter Contents / Council committees

Chair's Report, Current Council business/projects (including finance, highways etc.), Key Contact Details, Parish News, Neighbourhood Watch, Notice board

Chair's Report

Writing this newsletter in early September with the rain beating down it seems a far cry from summer which I hope you all enjoyed.

During the last few months, the Parish Council have had meetings with Matthew Scott Kent Police and Crime Commissioner where we discussed local issues including the unlawful use of catapults anti-social behaviour within the parish and he assured us that they were endeavouring to stamp these types of problems out. There will be a dedicated local officer appointed to the parish shortly so that we have a direct contact number. The constable will attend several parish council meetings over the year where we hope to pass on any concerns the parishioners have highlighted.

Also, our local MP Katie Lam paid us a visit and several points were discussed including the A20 junction with Station Road as the solution from Kent Highways doesn't fit the bill as people ignore the turn left only signs.

A second meeting with Katie was a joint Westwell, Sandyhurst Lane residents' association and ourselves with reference to the motorway noise. Katie is now on the transport committee at Westminster and has promised to delve into the noise issue again for us all, but lack of money will probably be the answer.

The position may have changed with the housing developments that have been on hold for some considerable time may be able to mitigate their impact on the environment by exchanging environmental credits with other developments that have an excess of environmental criteria, this is a scheme that is being run with ABC in conjunction with Canterbury City Council.

A polite reminder that **ALL** the cameras in and around Charing are now active.

My thanks go to Dawne Austen for keeping us up to date with current goings on within ABC and financially to Jo Munro who keeps us on the straight and narrow and always in credit. Also my CPC colleagues for all their work and input it's great to work with you all.

With kind regards

Chris Prinn

Chair of Charing Parish Council

Snapshot of current and ongoing Council Business and Community Projects

1. Finance; 2. Highways; 3. Key Contacts; 4. Parish news

.....

Finance Report

We are pleased to report that a grant for £26,000 was secured to facilitate the installation and ongoing maintenance of the Covid Snake in Clewards Meadow, this work has started and should be finished by the end of September.

A refund was granted to CPC for CCTV maintenance that was not carried out due to the delay in getting the CCTV system up and running. The system is now fully working and monitoring is being undertaken.

We are waiting to see what the outcome of the governments "Devolution" plans will mean to parish councils, there are differing theories as to the cost savings or otherwise that may be realised, but we can only wait and see. It may be that CPC has to purchase ex County or Borough council assets as they will no longer be part of the new authorities.

We hope to have some more detailed answers for you later in the year and we shall bring these to you as soon as we can.

We have replaced the councillors' computers as they were coming to the end of their time and the new ones should last for the next 5 years or so. Unfortunately, grants were not available to fund this but we had put aside monies in the budgets to pay for them.

David Bennett

Chair, Finance Committee

.....

Highways

The extension of the 40 mph limit in Faversham Road to the Wagon and Horses was installed at the end of June.

Many thanks to those who replied to the informal survey on painting double yellow lines on the High Street at the junction with the A20. There was strong support for the double yellows from most respondents coupled with some concern over the impact of effectively reducing parking on the shops, particularly Charing Stores. All comments have been forwarded to KCC with names removed. In due course there will be a formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) proposed which will give everyone a chance to express their views again.

We are also hoping that the TRO will be combined with one for the top end of The Hill. Parking on the pavement side of the Hill forces traffic travelling uphill into the opposite carriageway. When that parking is close to the junction there is a risk of collision with traffic turning into The Hill from the A252. There will be a stretch of double yellow lines opposite the entrance to the new development behind Millgarth to enable the bin lorry and other large vehicles to enter and exit but if those are installed on their own it will leave a gap just where parking is most undesirable.

KCC have promised to install signs on Stonestile Road indicating that it is unsuitable for HGVs. We do not know when.

The Parish Council is commissioning some new traffic surveys. Surveys were last done four years ago in 2021. So at some point in the Autumn - during school term times - you may notice pneumatic tubes appearing in a number of places in the Parish. These surveys give us data about speeds and traffic volumes not just informing us but enabling better discussion and negotiation with KCC Highways. They are also helpful in assessing planning applications. If you notice the tubes please drive exactly as you would normally, resisting any temptation to go faster or slower than your usual speed or to make additional or fewer journeys.

Jill Leyland, Highways Committee

Key contact details

Parish Councillors - Charing

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
Mr Olly Worsfold olly@charingkent.org
Mr Jonathan Bignell
jonathan@charingkent.org
PCSO TBA 101
Community Warden
Sally Williams 07813 712105

Parish Councillors Charing Heath

Mr Chris Prinn (Chair) 07872190187
Mr D Bennett (vice chair) 712054

Borough Councillors

Mrs Y Roden (Charing)
Yvonne.Roden@ashford.gov.uk
Mrs C Bell (C/Heath) 07970885065

KCC Councillor

Jeremy Eustace
Jeremy.Eustace@kent.gov.uk

Parish Clerk

Mrs Dawne Austen 713599

Burial Clerk

Mrs Hilary Evers 632671

Charing Parish Newsletter

**Editors: Dawne Austen
(clerk) and Olly Worsfold
(councillor)**

Contributions or correspondence
for upcoming newsletters should
be sent to:

6 Haffenden Meadow Charing

Kent TN27 0JR

Tel: 01233 713599

Email: cpclerk@charingkent.org /
olly@charingkent.org

Parish news

Ashford Dementia Forum – Make Our Town Dementia-Friendly

Dementia touches the lives of many families in Ashford. But together, we can make a real difference. The Ashford Dementia Forum is a welcoming group of local people, charities, businesses, and professionals, all working towards one shared goal: creating a dementia-friendly environment where those living with dementia, and those who care for them, feel supported, respected, and included.

Why It Matters - For someone living with dementia, small changes in the community can make a big difference, from clear signage and dementia-aware staff in shops and cafés, to social opportunities that bring joy and reduce isolation.

The Forum provides a space where we share opportunities for people living with dementia and their carers, exchange information and advice, and, most importantly, listen directly to those with lived experience. By putting their voices at the centre of our work, we can make Ashford a place where people with dementia continue to live well and with dignity.

What We Do

- Create a dementia-friendly environment by encouraging inclusive practices across the town.
- Share opportunities for people with dementia and their carers to stay active, connected, and supported.
- Provide information and resources to help families find the right support.
- Listen to and amplify the voices of those living with dementia and their carers.
- Plan practical initiatives, from dementia-awareness training for businesses

Every meeting is a chance to take positive action and work together for a kinder, more supportive Ashford.

When We Meet - We meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 11:00 am. Venues vary to keep the Forum accessible to all, and everyone is welcome.

How You Can Help - The Forum thrives on the energy and ideas of its members. You don't need special skills or experience, just a willingness to listen, share, and be part of making change happen.

If you'd like to learn more, join our meetings, or be added to our mailing list, please contact:

Cleo Smith BEM
Age UK Ashford
co@ageukhla.org.uk

Parish news (cont.)

Scarecrow Competition

Come along to a fun day out and visit Hector & Fleur's Scarecrow competition Saturday 18th October from 10am until 5pm. Prize giving at 4.30pm. We will be serving food all day in the Church Barn. There will be a Tombola, Raffle and the chance to win Izzy's wonderful cake! Don't miss out!

The following weekend on Sunday 26th October we will be hosting the Pumpkin Carving and Decorating Contest from 1pm until 6pm. Lunch will be available along with Tea, Coffee and Cakes! The public get to vote for their favourite designs and prize giving will be held at 4.30pm.

All the proceeds from these fantastic events will go to The Charing Christmas Lights. We look forward to seeing you and the scarecrows.



Royal British Legion Coffee Morning

The parish Council will be holding a Coffee Morning between 10am-12 noon on Saturday 8th November. The laying of the Remembrance Wreaths will take place at 11am. All money raised will go to the RBL Appeal.

Parish news (cont.)

Clewards Meadow

As parishioners may have seen work has commenced in the permanent installation of “Charlie” the snake, in the corner of Clewards Meadow.

Additional landscaping work is also being undertaken to enhance the area, make it accessible providing a lasting tribute for the village.

The area will be planted with sensory and aesthetically pleasing plants providing a natural look with low maintenance.

This has been achieved by S106 funding (grant) from ABC. We are hoping to have an official opening of the area once completed.



Charing Primary School

It has been wonderful to welcome everyone back to Charing Church of England Primary School for what promises to be an exciting and productive year ahead. The children have returned with remarkable positivity and enthusiasm, demonstrating the resilience and joy that makes our school community so special.

During the summer break, we were fortunate to operate a week-long summer school programme in August, made possible through the generous donation of a valued member of our village community. This initiative exemplifies the collaborative spirit that defines our relationship with Charing village, and we remain deeply grateful for such meaningful support.

Significant building work has been completed over the holidays, specifically designed to enhance the learning environment for our children. As part of these improvements, our school office has been relocated to the church end of the building. I would like to remind all visitors that access to the school should now be via our pedestrian gate, rather than the larger automatic gate situated near the cemetery.

We continue to have places available at our school for new families considering joining our community. Those interested in discovering what Charing Church of England Primary School can offer are encouraged to contact our office at office@charing.kent.sch.uk to arrange a comprehensive tour of our facilities and discuss our educational provision.

Our commitment to working closely with the village remains unwavering, as we recognise the vital importance of this partnership in supporting our children's development and success.

Tom Bird
Head Teacher

Neighbourhood Watch

As we move from summer into autumn and then towards winter one constant problem arises in communities.

ROGUE TRADERS

Please please never ever agree to any unsolicited work on your doorstep no matter how attractive and cheap the price quoted it.

"Clean your gutters for £50" becomes £250 and then these criminals loosen a tile or two and sprinkle water from a bottle in their pocket to panic the householder into needless roof repairs. These criminals are pure evil and will look for our vulnerable, disabled and elderly especially if they live alone. These criminals often become very pushy and can become aggressive.

Refuse politely and close your door. Call 999 immediately giving as much a description of the persons and any vehicles. The smallest detail will help. Do not shout out "Do not trouble Mary at number 7 because she is partially blind" You may think you are helping Mary you are not. The only certain thing is on Mary's doorstep the conversation will start "Hello Mary your neighbour at 3 says you will need help due to your poor eyesight. We do a special rate for the disabled" And BANG they are in!!

As I write this, I can see the faces of the people I have sat with who have been taken and paid hundreds even thousands to these criminals. If they clear rubbish or trees they have pruned, they will dump the waste nearby and that is fly tipping and that will come back to you!

Stay safe, secure, alert and vigilant

Peter

Peter New. (peternew1@aol.com) Community Neighbourhood Watch

To join CHARING NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (all free) just email me

Noticeboard

Help Keep an Older Person Safer in 2025

Did you know? While cold calling itself is allowed, traders must respect "No Cold Callers" notices - it's actually against the law if they don't! As a dedicated home care provider since 1980, we've made it our mission to help protect older and disabled people in our community. We're proud to have distributed over 250,000 of these protective stickers since 2019.

Do you know of someone who would like to receive one of these? If so, simply email us at info@ablecommunitycare.com. Rest assured, we keep privacy in mind - we don't store any personal information or share it with others. If you have a Newsletter, Magazine or FB page and would like to mention this offer, we are happy for you to do so.

With warm wishes from Able Community Care your live-in care specialists, based in Norfolk, but supporting families across the UK since 1980.

www.ablecommunitycare.com



Noticeboard

Is Heathlands a 'done deal'?

It's probably the most frequently asked question of us and the simple answer is **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

The clever marketing and PR that is going on - at taxpayers' expense - is to create a perception to local people that this massive development is going ahead whether we like it or not.

Do not fall into the trap of Maidstone Borough Council.

The amount of flaws in the project mean it will be very hard, if at all, to actually deliver it. Here's 7 (of many) reasons why Heathlands is not a done deal:

- (1) Major landowners are still not signed up after over 6 years of trying. We know from one of the largest that they are simply not interested in signing up. Without land there is no 'new town'. Simple as that.
- (2) MBC and Homes England won't admit it to you but we have heard it on good authority from a source at Network Rail that they will not entertain a new rail station in the development for all the reasons SOHL have pointed out to MBC over the last few years.
- (3) Major objectors include the likes of Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). Do not underestimate the influence these types of organisations have, despite what MBC may claim.
- (4) Lenham falls within the Stodmarsh catchment area where a moratorium is currently in place restricting all new development without sufficient nutrient neutrality mitigation. Heathlands still can not demonstrate acceptable mitigation for protecting watercourses from pollution.
- (5) There will be no motorway junction. Without a new junction the A20 simply can not cope with the additional volumes. It's simple maths. We've seen what happens with increased flows every time the M20 closes. No upgrade of the A20 can cope with such huge volumes. No proper highway modelling has been undertaken to date to truly understand the impact act of Heathlands.
- (6) The financial viability of the Heathlands proposal is questionable and has major omissions which would quickly render the project unviable. MBC and Homes England are intentionally manipulating the figures to make it look more viable than it is.
- (7) Finally, PEOPLE POWER does work, believe it or not. We've got to remain resolute in our opposition to this proposal. MBC will be wanting there to be splits in our community. Don't let them divide us!

Next time someone says to you it's a done deal, remind them of these points!

.....

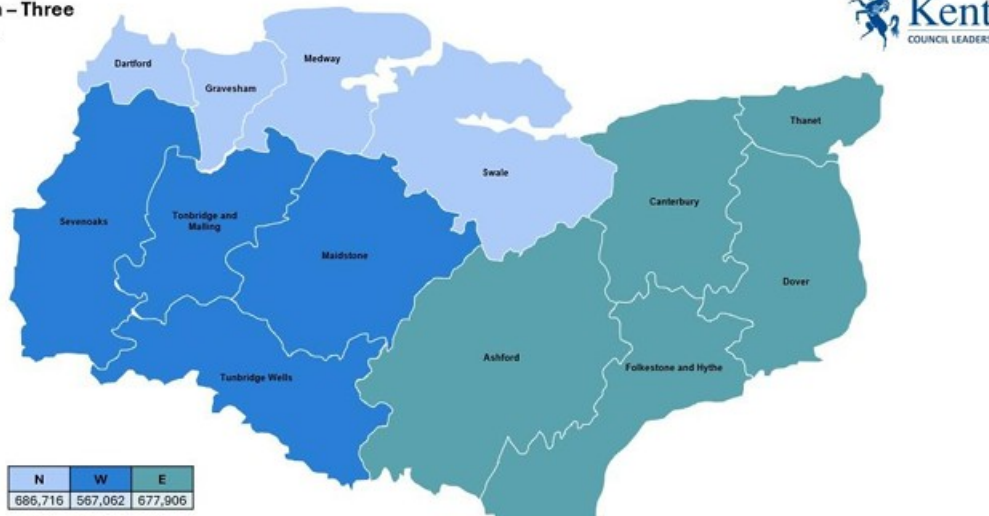
Latest update on Local Government Reorganisation from Ashford Borough Council

At yesterday's Kent Council Leaders meeting, Leaders and Chief Executives were asked to consider which options our strategic partner KPMG should proceed working up full business cases for ahead of submitting them to Government later this year. Following a detailed discussion Kent's Leaders asked them to look in more detail at two options for the number of unitary councils needed and the areas they should cover. They are:

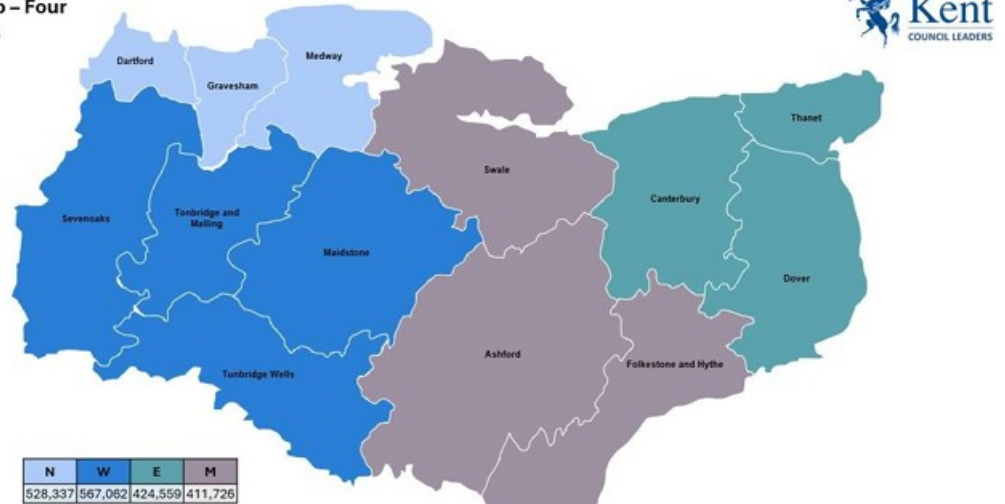
1. Three unitary councils consisting of Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west and Ashford, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover and Folkestone and Hythe in the east (upper left image overleaf).
2. Four unitary councils consisting of Dartford, Gravesham and Medway in the north; Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells in the west; Ashford, Swale, Maidstone and Folkestone and Hythe in the middle of Kent and Canterbury, Thanet and Dover in the east (lower right image overleaf)

Noticeboard

Option 3a – Three Unitaries



Option 4b – Four Unitaries



Individual councils can also choose to commission and submit business plans for other options.

Once KPMG and council officers have worked together to draw up business cases for each of the options, each council will go through its own decision-making process to decide which option it supports. Business plans need to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 28 November and the final decision rests with ministers.

Stakeholder and public engagement

There is a clear expectation that we need to engage with stakeholders and the public in the development of the LGR business case by the government. Kent's leaders have also expressed a desire to engage with the public. MHCLG state the extent of that engagement is down to councils to determine.

The 'Change is coming' awareness raising campaign launched last month. Next week letters will be sent to stakeholders providing them with more details on the process and a survey for residents will be launched. Its contents are based on best practice from other areas that have been through LGR, input from the cross-Kent comms group and feedback from chiefs and leaders.

It deliberately doesn't ask for views on the various geographies, but centres around the principles the public might think are important considerations to help inform the business case. It is important to note this is not designed to be extensive public consultation that reaches a large number of people, but rather early engagement to shape this stage of the process. It is envisaged that more comprehensive consultation will be undertaken later in the process when there is clarity about the new unitaries and when we are looking at more detail on how they will operate.