

Shorne Parish Council

— Borough of Gravesham —



PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

October 2016

Lower Thames Crossing

At the time of writing, there has been no announcement regarding the decision on the location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, following the consultation earlier this year. Representatives from Shorne Parish Council recently met with the barrister to provide further information and to seek clarification of the advice received. However, there was no change to his earlier legal opinion in that a legal challenge at this stage, particularly one based on the consultation process, is unlikely to be successful.

Volunteers Litter Patrol, Saturday 17th September

22 volunteers turned out for the fourth of our 6-monthly litter patrols on Saturday 17th September, which was a great turn-out considering a number of our regulars were unable to participate due to other commitments.

After seeing temperatures in the high 20s and low 30s during the week, we woke up to a cool, grey, and rainy Saturday morning, but luckily the rain cleared and we were able to get on with the job without getting wet.

Split into six teams, the 'Ridgeway Ramblers' tackled Tanyard Hill, The Ridgeway, and Brewers Road, while 'Woodlands Wanderers' made a good job of cleaning Woodlands Lane and Shorne Common Rough parking area. 'Mill Hill Marauders' focused on The Street and Mill Hill Lane area, while the 'Forge Lane Foragers' cleared the village down to Shorne Crossroads. The 'Gravesend Road Gatherers' cleaned up most of the verges in Gravesend Road as well as the whole length of Green Farm Lane, while as usual the 'Ifield Independents' got stuck into Shorne Ifield Road.

There was a general feeling that there wasn't quite as much litter as on previous occasions – perhaps we have cleared the worst of the backlog that had accumulated in the past, and now it is more a matter of keeping on top of it. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to see the number of cans and plastic bottles that continue to be thrown on the verges for someone else to pick up. It was also noticeable that many of the pavements, kerbs, and verges appear to be in a sorry state, with weeds, bushes, and other detritus encroaching onto our roads and footpaths.

Thank you to everyone who took part – it was a great job! The next litter patrol is likely to take place in March next year. Let us know if you would like to join in.

KCC Soft Landscape Maintenance

Kent County Council is responsible for the day to day management of the soft landscaping in Gravesham, including grass verge cutting, maintenance of shrub beds, cutting of hedges, etc. The current level of service is 8 cuts per year on verges and a once a year cut back of shrubs and hedges. In Shorne, this includes the verges through the village. This maintenance is carried out on behalf of KCC by Gravesham Borough Council under a service contract.

As a result of previous reductions in Government funding, the amount of money KCC has provided for this service has been reduced, along with the associated service levels. This has resulted in Gravesham subsidising this contract to the tune of £20,000 a year.

In order to make further savings, KCC proposes to reduce the amount paid to Gravesham Borough Council by a further 45% from April 2017, from £73,755 to £40,000 per year. This would reduce the number of times verges are cut from eight to four times a year.

At the Cabinet Meeting on 5th September, the Borough Council decided to discontinue the contract arrangements from 31st March 2017. This means that Gravesham Borough Council will no longer cut the verges in Shorne on behalf of KCC. Responsibility for soft landscape maintenance will revert to KCC with a significantly reduced budget.

Shorne Parish Council is concerned about the potential impact this may have on the village, and will monitor the situation carefully. The Parish Council undertook some supplementary grass cutting earlier this year, on those greens and verges where bulbs are planted, and it is possible that the Parish Council may have to consider extending these supplementary cuts to other areas and throughout the season. This would however result in additional cost.

Parish Council Meetings in October

Thursday 6th October – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting.

Thursday 27th October – Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

The meetings will start at 7.45pm in the Committee Room in Shorne Village Hall.

Bob Lane

Shorne Parish Council