

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Pluckley Parish Meeting held on Monday 7 April 2003 at 8pm in Pluckley Village Hall

Present:- Janet Gwillim in the chair, Eileen English, Trevor Oliver, Rosemary Davies, Ann Murray, Paul Cornwell, Simon Crookston – Pluckley Parish Councillors

Parish residents: Mesdames R Rowan, A Littledale, C Linzey, J Heathcote, E Bloom, C Maddrell, A Bates, J D Grebby, Messrs A Wickham (ABC Candidate), A Davies, R L Keep, I Mills, G L Warner, N Mengham, A Buchanan, D Galloway, R A Rowan, T Maddrell, P Walker, J Underhill

By invitation:

Other Ashford Borough Councillor Candidates: Messrs K Brannan, J Heuch, Dr R J Taylor
Messrs G Dawes & M Cowdry representing Pluckley Cricket Club

Clerk to Pluckley Parish Council: Mrs J D Grebby.

- 1 **Apologies for absence:** these were received from Mr G English, Bruce MacDonald, Richard King (County Councillor) and Mr J Moriarty (ABC candidate)
- 2 **Minutes of the annual assembly of the Parish Meeting held on 16 April 2002.**
These having been circulated prior to the meeting, these were agreed as correct (proposed, Simon Crookston, seconded Elizabeth Bloom and resolved unanimously) and signed by the chairman.
- 3 **Matters arising from the minutes:**
There were no matters arising.
- 4 **Hills & Unknown Donors Charity.**
Mr Geof Warner reported that £500 had been distributed between 11 people. The accounts were available for inspection.
- 5 **Election of representatives to Pluckley Village Hall Committee:**
The existing representatives (Cyril Hoad, Rosemary Davies, Michael Barton, Judy Pool, and Jackie Grebby) having declared their willingness to continue were duly re-elected. Proposed Ros Rowan, seconded Paul Cornwell. The parish council were requested, at their next meeting, to nominate two council representatives to sit on the committee.
- 6 **Presentations from members of local organisations.**
 - a. **Pluckley Parish Council:** the chairman gave a summarised version of the annual report that had been distributed throughout the village. She commented that in the past 12 months, there were 38 planning applications, 15 of which the council sent in their objections. Many of these were of a routine nature and, in all but one case, Ashford Borough Council, who also refused an application that the parish council favoured, supported these objections.
Mrs Gwillim reminded residents that all meetings of Pluckley Parish Council are open to the public and everyone is welcome. A regular 'public session' has been adopted for all council meetings – this lasts up to 15 minutes and allows any residents to address the meeting.
In May 2002, Pluckley Parish Council formally adopted the Code of Conduct for Councillors as required by law.
Following constant pressure by the council on Ashford Borough Council, a plan for parking restrictions at the station has been drawn up and should be implemented shortly. The council continues to make representations to Ashford Borough Council with regard to the unsightly vehicles parked on the verges in Lambden Road. In addition, the council constantly keeps a eye out for potholes, broken signs, etc. and reports them to Ashford. With the temporary closure of the bridge at the station, representations have been made to Ashford regarding the deterioration of the verges along the diversion. Pressure will be kept up to ensure that all repairs are done. The promised Speed Management Survey by ABC is still awaited.
The council noted the requirements to take into consideration the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (Sec 17) when making decisions. The council acknowledged its duty placed upon it by the Race Relations Act (amendment) Act 2000; the council resolved to comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and have adopted the recommendations; the council resolved to register in compliance with the Data Protection Act.
During the year a new lease was drawn up with Pluckley Cricket Club to enable them to apply for grant funding.
Halloween: the council requested the usual police presence for the evening. This passed off

without causing too many problems.

Support by the council has been given to the Friends of Pluckley Station (FOPS) group; the Parish Design Statement group; the Sports Pavilion Fund.

- b. **Pluckley Cricket Club:** George Dawes gave a short update on the club, which reformed in 1975 and joined the junior village league in 1976. The club is currently in Division 5 and had 46 players last year. The cricket square on the Recreation Ground is highly regarded by visiting teams.
The club is actively fund-raising for a sports pavilion on the Recreation Ground with the help of the Pluckley Sports Association. The pavilion will benefit the Tennis Club, village school, and anyone who would like to use it. Currently the amount raised is approximately £8,000 and the parish council has made a commitment to grant £3,000 towards the cost, which is estimated to be in the region of £40,000. It is hoped that the pavilion will attract younger local players to join village sports clubs.
- c. **Dering Woodlanders:** Angela Bates introduced this small group who meet on the first Sunday each month at 10am in Dering Woods. The aim of the group is to keep the paths clear and tidy for walkers. More help is always needed.
- d. **FOPS:** (Friends of Pluckley Station) Eileen English introduced this new group, set up last autumn to protect and enhance what is believed to be the oldest remaining wayside station. A heritage board and information board would be erected at the station and the group of volunteers is currently tidying up the area and planting up tubs, etc. Cycle lockers were being donated by Connex. Grants were being applied for and the parish council was holding donations in a restricted fund for the group.
- e. **Friends of St Nicholas':** Elizabeth Bloom reported that the Friends was formed in 1990 as a separate entity to the parochial church council and exists just to raise money for the fabric of the church building. They have raised a total of about £64,000 and spent in the region of £47,000 on major repairs, recently doing the churchyard walls. Last year the West Gate was designed, built, and installed and provides a safer entrance to the church. The groups' AGM takes place in April in the school when light refreshments are offered.
- f. **Pluckley Gardening Society:** Jenny Heathcote reported on the club, which is in its 52nd year and has 180 members. Currently there are two shows held each year. The spring show includes an art exhibition by Pluckley Primary School children and the autumn show has classes for cooked items. In 2003 the club would be holding a talk on lavender and a visit to a lavender nursery, a coach trip to Hyde Hall, and the usual spring plant sale and autumn plant swap. The club produces three newsletters a year in addition to their schedule. Membership is £2 per annum and allows discounts at many garden outlets.
- g. **Grapevine:** Janet Gwillim reported that this self-help group was started in the 1970's and is operated by a small committee and helpers. It moved on to include a tablet run, where a rota of helpers collect prescriptions from Charing Surgery on Thursdays and drop them off at Hothfield and Pluckley Post Offices for collection. There is also a list of volunteers who can also take people to the William Harvey Hospital if they have no one else to help them – but this service does at times get abused. Patients are asked for a contribution towards the cost of car fuel.
- h. **Royal British Legion – Pluckley and Little Chart Branch:** Peter Walker, secretary of the branch, reported that the Legion had been going since 1921 and he gave a brief résumé of the work it undertakes. The local, Pluckley & Little Chart, branch currently has 50 members. They maintain the War Memorial and war graves garden with the help of Pluckley Gardening Society who keep it neat and tidy. The branch also organise the local Poppy Collection in November, which has raised £1,200 to £1,500 between Pluckley and Little Chart.
The branch is always ready to welcome new members – they do not have to be service men or women. Anyone can be an associate member. The AGM is in October and anyone interested should contact Peter Walker in 01233 840475. The membership fee is £10.
- i. **Pluckley Senior Citizens' Club:** Chairman, Cyril Hoad, reported that the club was formed in the 1950's by Mrs Knox-White. There are 22 Pluckley members, but others have joined from Lenham Heath, Charing, etc. The club meets once a month on the first Monday, at 2pm in the village hall and has 5 outings a year. Twice a year they visit a theatre in Margate that puts on a show for senior citizens at £5.50 per person. The club welcomes new members.

- j. **TROT [Toll Rides (off-road) Trust]:** Ros Rowan reported on this horse-riding track that is available to horse owners for an annual subscription, two-thirds of which goes to the landowner and one-third to the organisation to provide safe horse-riding away from dangerous roads. The Pluckley group opened as part of the South-East Toll Rides in 1991 with 17 riders and 15 miles of track. The idea blossomed and TROT became nation-wide going beyond the scope of volunteers. Offices have been set up in Ulcombe. Currently the Pluckley section has 22 miles of track, 170 members, and 17 landowners.
- k. **Surrenden Tennis Club:** The club has recently been undergoing management problems and the tennis courts have reverted back to the parish council. They have undertaken to have the hedges cut and some weed killing done while a new committee is set up. Other work needed includes killing the moss on the courts, and repairing the netting. Fortunately there are funds remaining in the tennis club account to pay for this work without it coming from the council precept.
It is planned to have tennis coaching for children during the summer. This will be sponsored by the Green Health Club. A meeting is being held to form a new committee
- l. **Tree Warden – Nick Mengham:** Mr Mengham reported that he had undertaken several training seminars and was currently surveying the trees in the parish.
- m. **Parish Design Statement:** this is presently at Ashford Borough Council for their comments on the second draft. They had returned the first draft with two pages of comments. Once Ashford's reply has been received and their recommendations agreed, a third draft will be put together. This will be presented to the village for their comments before it is adopted as part of supplementary planning guidance in the Ashford Borough Local Plan.
- n. **Neighbourhood Watch:** Simon Crookston reported that the scheme was still running in the village, although the telephone system seems to have failed. All notices are now emailed out. There are approximately 54 people on the email list. Anyone wishing to be included should contact nhw@pluckley.net Recently there has been very little to report.
- o. **Website:** The site has been upgraded and all village organisations asked for updates. At present there are about 50 visits a day to the site.
- p. **Ashford Borough Council:** Retiring Councillor Eileen English thanked everyone for their good wishes. She had enjoyed her years on both the borough and parish councils enormously, but was looking forward to more time in her garden and to seeing her grandchildren more often.

7 Any other business

- a. Elizabeth Bloom asked what was being done about the speed limit, in view of the meeting held last year that promised a survey.
Mrs English reported that ABC was overworked and there was not enough money available, so the survey had not been carried out.
The meeting asked that the danger spot on Station Road at the Lambden Road/Fir Toll junction be noted. It was also suggested that a campaign be started with a slogan, etc. to make the public and councils aware of the situation.
Nick Mengham said that even with speed limits, drivers continue to be inconsiderate. It is more important to educate them. Also there is no footway down Station Road.
Russell Keep suggested that road calming might be the answer.
Cynthia Linzey said that the problem was enforcement.
The meeting requested that another public meeting be held, inviting senior officials of the Police and borough and county councils.
Eileen English said that ABC was aware of the parish's concerns. Road calming created noise problems. The majority of vehicles travelled at 30 to 35mph – there were just a few doing 80mph.
Ann Littledale suggested speed cameras.
- b. John Underhill requested that the parish council do something about the many hedges that are currently overhanging the highways.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:12pm.

All present were invited to stay for light refreshments.