

Pluckley Parish Council

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2006

Janet Gwillim's

Chairman's report

The year has disappeared and we are round to the Annual Parish Assembly again.

By now the entire village will have heard the good news that the Environment Agency refused the Recycling plant planned at the old brickworks site, the hard work the parish council and sub-committee put into fighting the recycling for two and a half years have been successful.

Throughout the year the full council has met on 12 occasions and the plans committee have met during the month when plans need to be dealt with prior to the full meetings.

The council surgeries have met every month during the year when the parish clerk and one or two councillors have been present. While the minutes and current planning applications are always available, anyone wanting to view other files should contact the clerk prior to the surgery and they are brought to the village hall.

**Annual Parish
Assembly
Monday 15 May
8pm
Pluckley
Village Hall**

The speed management is now in place. The parish council will still be fighting for further speed reduction on some of the roads.

An open meeting held to discuss plans for the junction with Forge Hill and the Street and the junction of The Pinnock with Smarden Road resulted in the parish council rejecting both proposals, but the footway from the Thorne to the village has been improved.

The Hog Fair and Halloween celebrations were a success and funds were made for the sports pavilion and village hall.

The Halloween event was held to try and make the occasion more of a family affair. In 2004, although the village benefited to some degree by the closure of the Black Horse, it was realised that visitors to the village did not know where to go beyond touring the roads and visiting the pubs. A public meeting was held at the beginning of September 2005 to which the whole village was invited to discuss whether a Halloween event should be held. There were no objectors, so

the project went ahead and raised nearly £2,000 for the village hall.

There are several committees parish councillors and the clerk attend during the year and these are reported at the monthly meetings.

Parish council meetings are open to the public and ten minutes is allocated to the public at the beginning of each meeting to have their say.

Finally, I would like to thank Jackie Grebby as clerk to the council, without whom the parish council would not be as efficient. Jackie puts in a lot of work but is not always appreciated!

Freeman of Pluckley

Pluckley Parish Council wishes to grant an Honorary Freedom of Pluckley to a resident whose contribution to the village has been outstanding.

The award confers no material honours, or special privileges, nor does it entitle the person to participate in the proceedings of the council meetings or in any ceremonial events. It is purely and simply for merit. It is open to any village inhabitant, except for parish and district councillors, and paid employees of the parish council. They must be nominated by an elector.

There is a nomination form in this newsletter.

**Pluckley
Hog Fair
22
July**



A website for the village.

Since its conception in 2002, Pluckley website (www.pluckley.net) has brought you not only the latest news from the parish council, but information about local clubs and village activities. The events page is updated weekly and all Pluckley events can be found there (as long as the parish council is told about them).

Also updated, as soon as the information comes in, is the Neighbourhood Watch page. It can be found via the Council pages.

New to the website is a photo gallery of village events, and another of village scenes – if you have a photograph you feel may be suitable do please email it to clerk@pluckley.net together with details of who took it and what it is about.

The classified pages have also had a new look – not only is there ‘for sale’ and ‘wanted’ but also ‘situations vacant’ and now a ‘property for sale or hire’ section.

Although designed by Chrysalis Computer Solutions, the Clerk to the Council, Jackie Grebby, who only occasionally needs to call on them for help, now updates the site!

The cost of the site is minimal (approximately £160 p.a.) but gives invaluable information, with an average of 1,788 hits a day from around the world. It is hoped that, with local businesses paying a small charge for either a page on the site, a link to their own site, or both, the website may eventually become self funding.



Rutting on the Rec

A short review from the Recreation Committee

The Recreation Committee is a new addition to the Parish Council, and meets approximately every two months, or more frequently if there are specific events being planned, for example Hog Fairs, Boot Fairs, Halloween, or others.

Our watching brief is to try to ensure that the recreation ground is kept safe, clean and tidy, that general maintenance is carried out, and also that events are co-ordinated carefully and cause minimum disruption to the village, whilst raising the maximum funds possible for village needs.

Recently, we have thoroughly rolled the recreation ground to repair the worst of the damage caused to the main entrance by heavy vehicles after the Halloween event, and contractors’ vehicles both after removal of the trees by the tennis courts, and by vehicles concerned with maintenance of the cricket square. Reseeding of parts of the ground has also taken place to reinstate the area where the bonfire was held. A number of other items, for example hedge improvements, have also been completed.

Further actions to make good the last mini-ruts left after Halloween, and improvements to the entrance are in abeyance until builders’ access routes onto the recreation ground have been formalised since ABC refused planning permission for a separate (temporary) access road onto the recreation ground further up by the tennis courts.

As part of the required annual inspection by RoSPA of the play equipment, we also hold regular site meetings to inspect the equipment and arrange planned maintenance as required.

James Ashby

Recreation Ground

Please take note:

The practising of golf is not permitted on the recreation ground.

- also prohibited are all unauthorised;
- motor vehicles, including go-karts and scooters, with the exception of wheelchairs;
- overnight camping;
- metal detecting;
- the flying of model aircraft; and
- horse riding

Dog owners are expected to clear up after their pets.

The entrance to the recreation ground is to be kept clear at all times to allow access for emergency vehicles.

Hopeful Appeal:

If anyone has a tractor mounted transport box that is no longer required, and or a small, mounted grass harrow that they would be prepared to part with for almost no money at all, please would they contact James Ashby (840519). Both would be extremely useful additions for ground upkeep.

Thank you.

Local Development Framework.

Pluckley Parish Council has been carefully following the course of the Local Development Framework and, following a meeting on 3 March 2006 between Ian Grundy (ABC Planning), Andrew Wickham, Ann Murray, and the Clerk to the Council, the parish council wrote formerly to Richard Alderton of Ashford Borough Council requesting that a clause be included within the Ashford Borough Council LDF document, prior to its submission to the government in May, to the effect that "rural villages should not be precluded from future development if such development included proven needed village amenities."

Any such areas within those villages will not be earmarked until the final details are put out for public consultation in January or February 2007 and those areas will be determined by Ashford Borough Council.

The parish council cannot enter into any consultation with interested landowners if the parish council are desirous to make representations to Ashford Borough Council as to preferred sites as the parish council would be compromised.

Does Pluckley need affordable housing for local people?

Pluckley Parish Council is working with the Rural Housing Trust to conduct a survey to assess the need for affordable housing for local people in Pluckley. You are encouraged to complete the survey when it arrives and return it as directed – this is your chance to make your views known.

The aim of such a scheme would be to give local people, who have strong connections with the parish and who cannot afford open market housing, a chance to stay or return.

Village Meeting Place

This pop-in coffee morning, once a month, was started to encourage people in Pluckley to meet, chat, and get to know each other. Pluckley is a diverse mixture, a long, spread-out village. To work well as a community, village members need to get to know others, especially newcomers to Pluckley.

The Village Meeting Place is separately funded by several charities but is quite independent of the church for its running costs. The church was chosen as a centre as it is warm, has a small kitchen and, very importantly, a toilet and is near the shops. The cost of a real cup of coffee and a homemade piece of cake is just 50p!

An organiser is needed to run this enterprise – a job estimated to take 4 hours a week and is paid a modest sum of £7 per hour. The supporting finance also allows Wealden Wheels to go round the village to pick up anyone who needs a lift.

In May and June, the meeting takes place on the first Tuesday of the month. Toddlers, mothers, and grandparents of the preschool children being picked up at noon are most welcome. Dogs coming back from their walk with their owners often visit.

Do come, you will be made most welcome.

Ann Murray

Rubbish:

The parish council are concerned about the amount of rubbish not only scattered from passing cars and people just disregarding litter etiquette but also grass cuttings and hedge clippings dumped in farmers' fields and in hedgerows opposite households. This is a dirty habit, grass cuttings can be dealt in peoples' own gardens and can make good compost, or taken to the council depot in Brunswick Road, Ashford, for disposal. Anyone seen dumping grass cuttings will be reported to Ashford Borough Council.

There are bottle banks for recycling glass and a waste paper recycling bin at the village hall. The parish benefits by approximately £1,200 a year from these. A further skip, which takes not only paper, but cardboard and magazines, may be found at Pluckley Thorne and the proceeds go to Riding for the Disabled. There are no facilities for recycling cans or clothing in the parish. Dumping such items only results in a reduction of recycling credits paid to the parish.



Rubbish collected during Annual village Spring Clean on 1 April 2006 by parish councillors and local residents.

Bonfires – how we love them

Village life is to be enjoyed by all, and one of the many advantages of living in a rural village is the peace and quite, the far reaching views, and the respect that our neighbours give us.

Being part of a close community means that everyone has to play their part in ensuring that as far as possible they do not interfere with the enjoyment of others living in the village.

One thing that affects ‘everyone’ that lives in the village is when one selfish person decides to have a bonfire during the day when:

- The children are in the school and playing in the playground covered in smoke
- The parents taking the children to school have to cover their mouths and smell of smoke for the rest of the day.
- At home, no washing can be dried as it has to be kept in doors due to the smoke in the air, yet you have to do more washing to get rid of the smoke from your everyday clothes.
- Families cannot enjoy their garden due to billowing smoke blowing across it all through the day and children, if at weekends either have to play indoors or pressurise their poor parents to drive them somewhere better than Pluckley so that they can actually enjoy themselves.

Those that light a bonfire during the day please spare a thought for others in the village; think what it would be like for you the other way round if you have invited guests for the day, can’t see out of your windows, have to keep all windows closed however hot, and however lovely your garden is, your guests have to stay indoors because of one selfish person in the village affecting everyone’s day.

If you go to a restaurant, do you like the person sitting next to you to light up their cigarette while you are eating and blow it all over you? Then don’t do the same when you are at home to those in the village.

Ode to Bonfires

The fire roars the flames rise high
The smoke it gets into your eyes
It’s OK though the wind it blows
The other way from my abode.

It looks just right, it’s smoking well
I’ll go out now and leave this hell
To others who can stay inside
While I drive round the countryside
When I come home, from clean
fresh air

I’ll stoke again, I must be fair
To let the village smell my smoke
It brings a lump into my throat
To know that everyone can choke
Upon my ‘fragrant’ smelling smoke

Keep Pluckley a smoke free zone
during the day – bonfires should be
lit with consideration for all others
in the village.

Russell Keep



Pluckley Village Hall

The village hall car park is for patrons of the village hall only unless by prior arrangement with the booking clerk (01233 840575) when a donation towards funds would be appreciated.

Note: all vehicles are left at the owners’ risk.

Speed Watch

Walkers, cyclists, pram pushers, parents with toddlers, riders of horses, going up and down Station Road and Forge Hill know how unnerving, unpleasant, frightening, and occasionally terrifying it is to be passed by cars doing 35mph or 45mph in the speed limit areas. For this reason, Speed Watch was started to educate drivers to keep to the speed limits in the villages.

The equipment used is a Speed Indicating Device (SID), which shows the drivers the speed they are doing. The speed first noted by SID, is recorded by volunteer recorders, along with the time, number, make, and colour of the vehicle if the speed is over the speed limit. The list of vehicles exceeding the limit is sent to the police. If this vehicle has exceeded the speed limit twice, over the weeks of recording, then a letter is sent by the police to point this out. This is therefore a reminder to the driver to slow down in the future.

The cost of the equipment is £1,925 (plus vat) and in order to fund this the parish council has contacted Egerton and Hothfield. Our county councillor, Richard King, has agreed with KCC to fund this operation with a grant of £1,000. Egerton has offered £300, and we are waiting for an official reply from Hothfield. Meantime, the police have loaned the parish the equipment for three months.

There are several volunteers living in the village but anyone who would like to become a speed recorder, just once a week for half an hour, would be most welcome.

Ann Murray

[please contact Ann on 01233 840166 if you would like to help]

Pluckley Sports Pavilion

It is now over eight years since fund raising started for a new sports pavilion for the village on the recreation ground and, at last, we are in a position to start building it this year. While our village hall is spacious, it is quite far from the centre of the village, and from our recreation ground.

The new pavilion will be a village resource in a central location. It will be available for all village groups, cricket, tennis, football, netball, for the local school and as a meeting place for senior citizens and other village groups.

We have seen a lot of fund raising for it over the last two years and we now have sufficient money to construct a building with all the necessary services attached. We haven't got enough to provide such final luxuries as a kitchen yet, but this year's Hog Fair will be the last one dedicated to this project and we hope it will help to complete our fund raising.

At the time of writing this we are looking at how to get access to the site in order to start the construction given current weather and soil conditions. When these details are finalised we can get our builders on site and get going.

We will keep you up to date on progress through the Parish magazine, but if you want to help further then come and help us make the Hog Fair on 22 July the most successful one yet!

Alan Davies

Wealden Wheels

It is now two years since Pluckley joined together with Egerton, Charing, and Smarden to form a Community Transport Company to serve the four villages. The original aim of this project was to provide a comfortable 9-seat people carrier for village organisations to use at an affordable rate. When the project was conceived it was expected that about 20 organisations would join, and an operating budget was set for three years, with about half of the costs being underwritten by a number of grants, the largest single contributor being the European Communities Rural Development Fund (through the Leader+ funding scheme).

When the four villages realised the benefits of the scheme, our target of 20 members was quickly met. Within the first six months Charing's neighbour, Challock, saw the benefits of the scheme, and asked to join us. As a result of these two encouraging signs, Leader+ recognised that there was a significant transport need here and agreed to fund a second vehicle equipped with wheelchair access. This arrived in time for the start of our second year of activity.



During this second year membership passed the 100 mark and we were struggling to meet the demands. When a similar transport scheme elsewhere in Kent was not successful we were offered their vehicle and readily accepted it at the end of last year (with a little more grant funding to support it and to keep our charges reasonable!).

The newly installed High Sheriff of Kent, Amanda Cottrell, who is also Challock's representative on Wealden Wheels, recently launched our third vehicle and the start of our third year of operation at Smarden Parish Hall. We now have a very flexible fleet of three vehicles of 7, 9, and 15 seats respectively available at very competitive rates to our 128 members, together with an operation run by a combination of paid staff and village volunteers.



The grant funding which helped us set up Wealden Wheels so quickly will start running down during 2007/8 and we will need an increasing number of volunteers, both for occasional driving and for office support to keep it going. We would like to thank all the volunteers who've helped us to get to this stage but if you can afford to contribute even half a day a week then

come and join the current team and help ensure that Wealden Wheels will serve our villages for many years to come.

To get in touch ring 01233 713613 or look at our web site at www.wealdenwheels.org.uk

Alan Davies

Your representatives at Ashford Borough Council write...

Andrew Wickham & Robert Taylor

Since being elected in 2003 we have worked hard to support the villages we represent. We believe that one of the most important elements of our work is keeping in contact with our parish councils.

At least one of us tries to attend all parish council meetings – in fact we have attended more than 80% over the last 3 years – so that we are aware of your local issues. In this way we have been able to help with specific problems, such as planning applications or refuse collection.

Andrew has been actively involved in the campaign to prevent the waste recycling plant at the former Brickworks at Pluckley and we are pleased that the application has been refused by the Environment Agency on numerous grounds, all of which had been carefully pointed out by the Brickworks sub-committee of Pluckley Parish Council of which he is a member.

We both sit on committees and other bodies which contribute to the work of the borough council. Andrew sits on two main committees; one dealing with the redevelopment of Ashford including proposed changes of the ring road to a two-way system, provision of parking in the town centre and a proposed 'Park and Ride' for the future. The other committee has

reviewed the whole problem of how best to deal with rubbish including recycling provision.

Robert chairs a policy committee which works on the council tax, and over the last 3 years has secured more than £3 million of efficiency savings to keep tax rises down to a minimum in spite of government cuts in our funding. He also chairs an informal group that has speeded up communications via emails and produced over £10,000 annual savings in postage.

During the last year, Andrew has been involved with approving guidelines for the required standards expected for all councillors, be they parish or borough, for Ashford. Robert has chaired a group of parish councillors which produced guidelines on Rural Local Needs Housing, which have been accepted by the borough. He has also worked with a select committee looking into the whole problem of Gypsy and Traveller sites to work out how best to apply the new government rules and procedures in Kent.

Although our villages are involved directly in The Greater Ashford Development Plan (GADF), it is important that we follow progress carefully. The consultation is over and officers are examining the responses which will be presented to councillors

during April for final approval by the council in May. There have been many constructive responses and comments which have been invaluable. We can assure you that we, the councillors, do listen and have listened to all residents who have responded.

Regarding the bids to government for infrastructure funds: we have just been awarded £20m to spend as follows: £8m on the ring road towards making it 2-way and therefore more friendly; £5.5m on the new building for South Kent Further Education campus opposite the station; £2.5m on a park and ride system near the Drovers Roundabout; and just over £2m for altering the Newtown bridge allowing for a decent bus route.

When we take into account the £8m improvement to Junction 10 on the M20 you will see that things are beginning to move in the right direction in Ashford. The downside is that money coming through to support the Olympics coming to East London seems to be being siphoned off from funds originally designated for the growth areas.

In the meantime, we are still both here to help you – so don't hesitate to contact us if you think we can help, either by telephone or email.

Freeman of Pluckley (Honorary Award) Nomination Form

I would like to nominate: _____ to become an Honorary Freeman of Pluckley

Because: (no more than 50 words)

Signed _____ Print Name _____

Only one vote per resident. In the event of no suitable names being forwarded, Pluckley Parish Council reserves the right not to grant the award in any given year. Please forward all forms to the Clerk to the Council (address on back page) no later than Monday 8 May.

The award will be made at the Annual Parish Assembly on Monday 15 May, 8pm in Pluckley Village Hall.

The Parish Council Budget...

The parish council meets in October or November each year to discuss the council budget for the following year and the precept they will need from Ashford Borough Council. It was agreed to increase the budget by just 3% to cover expected inflation.

So why has the precept jumped from £16,000 in 2005/6 to £22,256 in 2006/7?

Quite simply, the parish council started 2005 with a balance of £11,292. Of this, £3,000 was earmarked for the New Sports Pavilion Fund, £1,835 in the Brickworks Fighting Fund, and £70 held for the Friends of Pluckley Station. The remainder was the council's working capital and they went into the 2005 financial year with a healthy balance. But,

those funds were needed and by 31 March 2006 the balance, after deducting the earmarked funds, was just £786.

In November 2005, the parish council considered long and hard over the 2006 budget and reduced expenditure as much as possible. The precept of £22,256 is the result and the projected end of year balance for March 2007 is just £874.

This does not take into account any emergency expenditure that may arise during the year – in fact one such emergency had already arisen – the village sign at the Tollgate crossroads. This has deteriorated so badly that it needs replacing. The council has had an initial quote of £900! A situation that had not arisen at the time of setting the budget.



The full details of parish council accounts are available for inspection, on written request, but an outline of the 2006/7 budget is given below:

Income	2006/7 budget
Balance b/f.....	£786
Precept & Concurrent Functions.....	£23,522
VAT refund	£1,600
Recycling credits	£1,200
Bank interest	£200
ABC Road sweeping grant.....	£755
Recreation Ground	£260
Village Hall income	£2,400
Hog Fair.....	£0
Misc income	£150
Total Income	£30,873
Expenditure	2006/7 budget
Salaries	£8,450
Admin.....	£4,746
Training	£200
Highways.....	£1,585
Donations	£300
Free Resource.....	£100
Recreation Ground	£1,413
Village Hall	£7,625
Wealden Wheels.....	£500
Website	£180
Capital Expenditure:	£1,400
Sports Pavilion	£1,500
Village Hall Improvements	£0
Hog fair.....	£0
Playground & Skate park	£2,000
Total Expenses	£29,999
Income over expenditure	£874

Pluckley C E Primary School

Pluckley, like everywhere else in the UK, is experiencing falling primary school rolls. At present there are 105 pupils on the roll, however the preschool on site has a significant impact on pupils entering the school, and most children come from the local area.

The school has 6 permanent teaching staff with 7 others coming into the school to provide specialist support. 5 Learning Support Assistants are employed for varying periods during the week. The teaching staff take part in Professional Development, attending specialist courses on a range of topics. The school's PTFA is well supported both by parents and the community.

During the summer holidays the original part of the school buildings is due to have the roof completely stripped and refurbished. This work should leave the school fabric in very good order and no more major building work should be necessary for some years to come.

In February, the School Improvement Partner (SIP) visited the school to assess how well the school is performing against the criteria outlined in the last Ofsted Inspection and identifies improvements. One strength mentioned by the SIP was the strong emphasis on the use of 'Personal, Social and Health Education'.

The school maintains its strong links with the church. A team of church members regularly visit and take part in school assemblies; these, as well as end of term services, are held in the church.

Trevor Oliver, (Foundation Governor)

Pluckley Parish Council Meetings and Committees

Details of meetings will be published on the Pluckley website (www.pluckley.net) as soon as they are available. You will need Acrobat Reader® to access them. All meetings are held in the village hall unless announced on the parish noticeboard 5 days before the meeting.

May 2006

Parish Council AGM
Monday 8th, 8pm
Annual Parish Assembly
Monday 15th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 22nd, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 22nd, 8:30pm

June 2006

Parish Council
Monday 12th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 26th, 8pm
Recreation Committee
Monday 26th, 8:30pm

July 2006

Parish Council
Monday 10th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 24th, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 24th, 8:30pm

August 2006

Parish Council
Monday 14th, 8pm
Plans Committee
TBA
Recreation Committee
TBA

September 2006

Parish Council
Monday 11th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 25th, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 25th, 8:30pm

October 2006

Parish Council
Monday 9th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 23rd, 8pm
Recreation Committee
Monday 23rd, 8:30pm

November 2006

Parish Council
Monday 13th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 27th, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 27th, 8:30pm

December 2006

Parish Council
Monday 11th, 8pm
Plans Committee
TBA
Recreation Committee
TBA

January 2007

Parish Council
Monday 8th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 22nd, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 22nd, 8:30pm

February 2007

Parish Council
Monday 12th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 26th, 8pm
Recreation Committee
Monday 26th, 8:30pm

March 2007

Parish Council
Monday 12th, 8pm
Plans Committee
Monday 26th, 8pm
Village Hall Committee
Monday 26th, 8:30pm

Contacts

Parish Clerk:

Jackie Grebby, Giles Farm,
Pluckley, TN27 0SY Tel: 01233
840575, Fax: 01233 840087
clerk@pluckley.net

Pluckley Parish Councillors

James Ashby
Andrew Buchanan
Peter Campbell
Alan Davies
Janet Gwillim (Chairman)
Russell Keep
Ann Murray
Trevor Oliver
Andrew Wickham

Member of Parliament

Damian Green Tel: 01233 820911
email: greend@parliament.uk
website: www.damiangreen.org.uk

Kent County Councillor:

Richard King 01233 756592
richard.king@kent.gov.uk

Ashford Borough

Councillors:

Andrew Wickham
01580 879601 (office hours)
andrew@pluckley.net
Robert Taylor 01233 850994
robert@pluckley.net

The parish council holds an open morning (9:30 to 10:30am) on the fourth Saturday each month in the village hall.

Council minutes and current planning application are available for inspection. Other documents within the public domain may also be viewed if an application is made in writing to the Clerk to the Council at least 5 days before the surgery. All residents are invited to attend.