

Pluckley Parish Council

Annual Report 2002 to 2003

Pluckley Parish Council has pleasure in presenting a report of its activities for the year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003.

Since the last Annual Parish Assembly on 16 April 2002, Pluckley Parish Council met on 11 occasions, including its annual general meeting last May when Mrs Janet Gwillim was re-elected as chairman.

Annual Parish Assembly – Monday 7 April, 8pm

Once a year, parishes must hold a public meeting sometime between 1 March and 1 June. All electors in the parish are entitled to speak and vote. This year this annual parish assembly is on Monday 7 April at 8pm in Pluckley Village Hall.

Since this is an opportunity for the village to meet and express concerns and views, and get an update on how issues are progressing, various clubs and groups in the area are being asked to come along and give a short presentation or chat about their news.

As there are borough council elections on 1 May this year, the parish council will be inviting all candidates to meet residents. It is hoped that all prospective parish councillors will also attend. This will give electors the opportunity to discuss issues with all candidates after the meeting while drinks and light refreshment are being served.

Local Elections 1 May

This year Pluckley becomes part of a larger ward of the borough council and will have two representatives at Ashford. Now called Weald Central, the ward consists of five parishes grouping Pluckley with Charing Heath, Bethersden, and High Halden, as well as long-standing partner, Little Chart.

The polling station is, as usual, in the village hall, which will be open from 8am until 9pm.

Around the village:

As a direct result of the annual safety inspection of the play areas on the recreation ground: a new 'springer' for the playground replaced the one vandalised; the other 'springer' was moved and that area had new safety tiling; and the broken cradle seats were also replaced – all this cost over £2,450, although some was claimed from the insurers for the vandalised item. Further repairs will have to be made next year if the council is to keep the playground and skateboard arena open. Fortunately a grant from Ashford Borough Council will help.

Vandalism: this time in one of the bus shelters, meant another bill for £150.

Village Map: a map of the village showing the footpaths was due to be in place by the end of March. This can be seen outside the school and has been set up by Kent County Council.

Westfields: a working party of councillors and residents pruned and cut back the overgrowing shrubs bordering the estate.

Hedges around the tennis courts are being cut back and the weeds cleared.

The Christmas tree purchased by the parish council was vandalised within six hours of setting it up in the village square! Do we buy one next Christmas? Contact the Clerk to Pluckley Parish Council with your views.

***Annual Parish Assembly
Monday 7 April, 8pm, Pluckley Village Hall.***

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What does your council do?

All meetings of Pluckley Parish Council are open to the public. Everyone is welcome to come along. The full council meeting is on the second Monday of each month at 8pm in the village hall. The plans committee meets at 7:45pm on the fourth Monday of each month when there are planning applications that have to be considered before the next full council meeting.

An agenda is displayed in the village a minimum of three working days before each meeting. At the time of writing, this was on the parish council notice board outside the school, but Kent County Council is donating a village map, which will be displayed there and the council will be erecting a new notice board nearby.

Members regularly attend meetings of Ashford Borough Council's Parish Forum, Weald Police Forum, Kent Association of Parish Councils, the Rural Transport Initiative, Parish Platforms (FOPS group).

- At the beginning of the year Pluckley Parish Council formally adopted the Code of Conduct for Councillors.
- A regular 'public session' was adopted for all council meetings – this lasts up to 15 minutes and allows any residents to address the meeting.
- Station parking: following constant pressure by the council on Ashford Borough Council, a plan for parking restrictions has been drawn up and should be implemented shortly.
- Lambden Road: the council continues to make representations to Ashford Borough Council with regard to the unsightly vehicles parked on the verges.
- The council noted the requirements to take into consideration the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (Sec 17) when making decisions.

- Race Relations Act (amendment) Act 2000: the council acknowledged its duty placed upon it by the Act.
- Freedom of Information Act: the council resolved to comply with the requirements and have adopted the recommendations.
- Data Protection Act: the council resolved to register in compliance with the Act
- A new lease was drawn up with Pluckley Cricket Club
- Halloween: the council requested the usual police presence for the evening. This passed off without causing too many problems.
- Support given to the Friends of Pluckley Station (FOPS) group
- Support given to the Parish Design Statement group
- Support given to the Sports Pavilion Fund

Reports reviewed

- Police Authority: consultation with community representatives
- Ashford Borough Council Local Needs Housing consultation document
- Ashford's Future: consultation documents
- Kent County Council: Kent & Medway Draft Structure Plan
- Kent County Council: local transport plan 2002 report
- South East Kent Community Health Council: report

Golden Jubilee

Mugs:

As the time of going to press, there were approximately 56 bone china Golden Jubilee Mugs left. These are available from Cass's Stores or on application to any parish councillor and priced at £6.50 each.

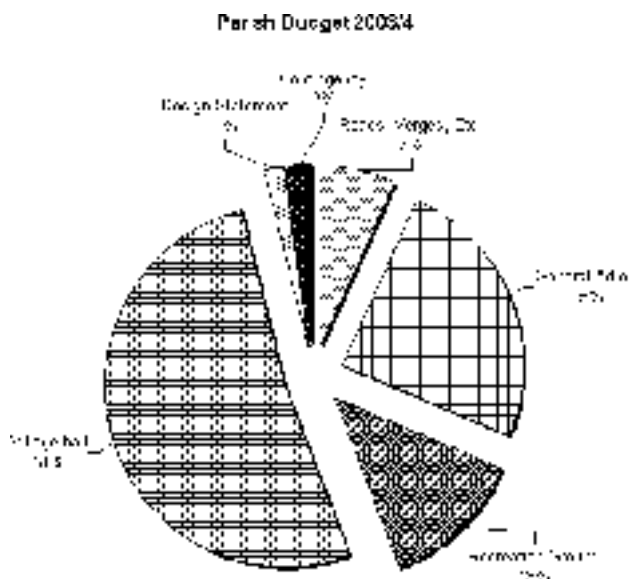
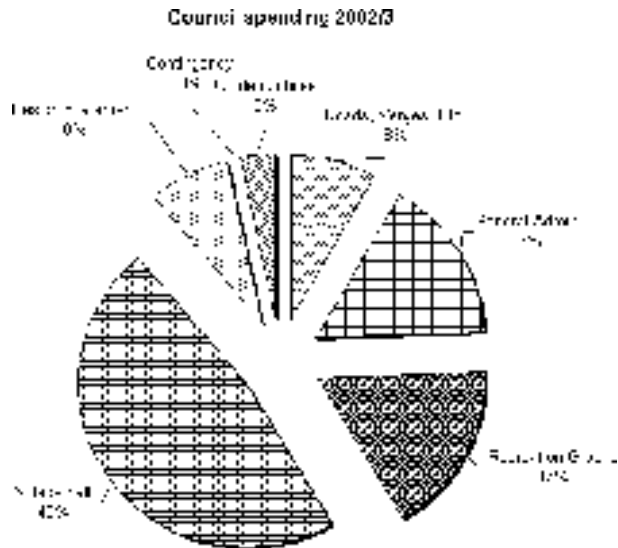
Trees:

Ten Scots Pines have been planted along the ridge near the existing pines. Funding for these came from private donations and from Ashford Borough Council's Jubilee Fund.

Seat:

This can be seen on the recreation ground. Once again funding came from Ashford Borough Council.

Council Spending



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Freedom of Information Act

Pluckley Parish Council's publication scheme has been agreed by the Information Commissioner and all the information published by the parish council is available for inspection on application to the clerk. Copies may be made and the cost for these is 5p per single A4 sheet.

In addition, Pluckley's Village Appraisal for the Millennium may be purchased from Cass's Convenience Stores or from the clerk.

As soon as it is available the Parish Design Statement will also be made available through these outlets.

All agendas are displayed on the parish notice board. It is intended that the minutes, once approved, will be made available on the parish website (www.pluckley.net)



Pluckley Hog Fair 2004

Plans are well underway for the best village fête in Kent – if not the country. Book Saturday 3 July next year now so you don't miss it!

All profits will be shared between Pluckley Village Hall, the New Sports Pavilion Fund, and the Dering Organ Fund.

The Hog Fair group next meets on Wednesday 4 June at 8:15pm in the village hall. If you would like to contribute please come along.

Sponsors are also needed, especially for the Grand Raffle, which will have some of the best prizes available.

Your Village Hall

Following a break-in, the hall has new main doors. During the year, the electrical system was upgraded and wall lights fitted. On the agenda for the future are new emergency doors together with a disabled access ramp; replacement windows; a coat of paint – both inside and out; and, more urgently, the resurfacing of the floor. Much of these work has been grant-funded, with donations coming from Ashford Borough Council, Brett Environment Trust Ltd. Congratulations to Ann Murray for her success in applying for these grants and others.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on 7 April, a new group called the Friends of Pluckley Village Hall is to be set up. This is intended to be a group raising money to fund improvements and repairs to the village hall. Hopefully this will make applying for grants far easier.

FOPS

(Or the Friends of Pluckley Station)

Is Pluckley Station, built in 1842, the oldest surviving station in almost entirely its original form? It's more than likely. The group, set up to preserve this historic building, is undertaking a massive tidying-up operation and doing as much as possible to promote interest. A heritage board and an up-to-date information board are planned and, hopefully, the building will be repainted in its original South Eastern colours. Representatives from Connex, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, and the Countryside Agency are all lending their support.

The next meeting has been arranged for Saturday 10 May, 10am in the station waiting room.

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Roads

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.

Recycling

During this financial year over £820 has been received in credits from the paper and bottle banks at the village hall. If anyone arrives to find one of these banks full could they contact Ashford Borough Council on 01233 330343 who will make arrangements to have them emptied.

The parish council was asked if they wished to consider the new 'blue box' scheme that allows residents to sort their recyclable materials and leave for doorstep collection. The council felt that, since this scheme is only available within built-up areas of villages and the recycling banks at the village hall would be taken away, thereby removing the financial benefit to the community of up to £1,000 per year, the scheme was not suitable for this village.

Larger items

If you have anything that will not fit on the regular dustcart (fridge, washing machine, television, etc.), then call Ashford Borough Council's refuse department (01233 330331) and arrange a personal collection. These tend to be on a Friday and are, generally, free.

Planning

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. In all but one case, Ashford Borough Council, who also refused an application that the parish council favoured, supported these objections.