



FROM THE CHAIRMAN
(Chris Housman)

Welcome to the autumn edition of 'Communicate', keeping you informed about what is going on in your village. To keep fully up-to-date on Parish Council activities please look at our web site (www.pluckley.net), and our '[Pluckley Village](#)' page on Facebook. You can also 'follow' the Council on Twitter ([@pluckleycouncil](#)), where you can receive breaking news stories and other items of interest and add your comments.

Planning matters inevitably constitute much of the PC's current workload, and we are pleased to support our residents in developing their properties whenever possible. However, we believe that the 'Brickworks' proposal (see below) is an unwelcome intrusion on our village life and environment, and hope that you agree.

The village sign, which was removed for renovation, will shortly be back in situ opposite the Recreation Ground (by Egerton Road). Our thanks go to Rob Swift, who has kindly repaired it and provided a new oak post free of charge.

If you do have any comments or issues please don't hesitate to contact me, or one of my fellow Councillors. In this respect, every Councillor has one (or more!) roles in the Council, and we've added the appropriate name to each item in this newsletter so you can see who to contact.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
(Paul Smith)

Solar Farm: We still have no news on this. We are awaiting a site visit from the Government's Planning Inspector as the next step of his review of the Developer's appeal. However, we have had some disappointing news that a Planning Inspector has overruled Parish and Borough Council objections and permitted the development of a large solar farm in Kenardington.

Brickworks Site: An outline Planning application has now been submitted to redevelop the Brickworks and Station Garage sites near the station by building 52 houses along with a small commercial facility and a public car park.



All homes in the village should have received a letter from BDB Design about the application, and a subsequent invitation to their exhibition that took place on 24th September. However, it seems that some households did not receive either or both of these letters.

Your Parish Council's position is to object to these proposals, and we are currently collating our response to send to the Borough Council. This will be published on our web site as soon as it has been submitted. **We urge you to inspect the plans (online via the ABC Planning website under reference 14/01116/AS) and send your comments (positive or negative) to the Planning Officer via the website, email or letter by the closing date of 10th OCTOBER.** We hope that you will support the Parish Council by firmly objecting to the proposals. In order to assist you, some of our key reasons for objecting are as follows:

- a) Any development proposal within Pluckley Parish will be assessed against policies in the Ashford Local Plan and the Pluckley Parish Design Statement that has been adopted as part of the Ashford Local Plan. This Plan seeks to protect and where possible enhance the countryside for its landscape, heritage, nature conservation and recreational value whilst allowing minor development within the smaller villages, including Pluckley. Our Plan identifies that *small scale* residential development up to 5 units could be supported but nothing greater. Pluckley is not earmarked for development beyond such small-scale infill within the village.
- b) The Local Plan also states that there should not be any development outside the village core (and clearly the brickworks site is just that), as this increases pressure on the present countryside setting that would become urbanised with highway improvements, possible street lighting, pavements and a pedestrian crossing on Station Road.
- c) The area covered by the planning application is the 'brownfield' area of the brickworks site, along with the Station Garage. However, the landowners also own the two adjacent fields. If planning permission is granted for the brownfield site there is a real possibility that a subsequent application could be made to develop these 'greenfield' areas (although the Applicants have made some statements about giving up these areas).
- d) We believe that any local housing need can be met through small scale infill as stated in the Parish Plan, which is in keeping with the 'localism' agenda from Central Government. However, following increased housing targets for the South-East, ABC is updating its Local Plan. It put out a call for potential housing sites and its position will be to have as much housing approved as possible, so it may wish to see sites like the Brickworks developed for housing, but this is not based on evidence of a need.
- e) The offer of up to 50 free parking spaces may sound attractive. However, far from remedying the current parking problems, we believe that provision of free, off-street parking will in fact attract more cars, potentially leaving the road as congested with cars as now.
- f) BDB Design implies that if housing development is not approved, then some less desirable development might occur that could *mean 'significant HGV traffic through the local roads and villages'*. Our response is that we will take each development proposal as it comes and subject it to rigorous scrutiny.

The Parish Council is therefore mandated to object to this proposed application through the fully transparent, democratic consultation process carried out a few years ago involving all villagers and resulting in the Pluckley Parish Plan.



LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING

(Chris Housman)

Good progress is being made on the construction of four new homes (2 x 2 bed and 2 x 1 bed) at Westfields. These will be released to Ashford Borough Council at the end of September and should be ready for occupancy in November. If you are interested in one of these homes you must first be registered on ABC's housing list and then 'bid' for one when they are released. Priority will be given to applicants with a clear Pluckley connection

VILLAGE HALL

(Martin Newman or Chris Housman)

The recent Quilting & Craft Exhibition held in the Hall was a huge success, thanks to Judy Pool and her team of volunteers. Over £1,000 was raised for Village Hall funds, and the success of the event is likely to lead to more use of the Hall.

We have now secured planning approval for the proposed hall extension and are now in the process of applying for Building Control approval. The drawings necessary for this have been professionally prepared which will enable potential builders to provide accurate quotes so we can then investigate Grant funding.

QEII RECREATION GROUND

(Chris Warricker)

Following the attempted break-in at the pavilion a few months ago, the Parish Council has installed security lighting and an alarm system. This move is regretted but seen as a necessary deterrent. The vehicle gates to the field are also now padlocked. Requests for access should be made to Chris Warricker.

The Petanque practice got off to a fine start on Tuesday 19th August with four teams of four turning out. We managed two full matches for each team with a refreshment break for French Wine and Olives. The surface played very well and augers well for the future. Further evening games will not be possible this year but we may manage weekend sessions before the weather gets too bad. The Pitch is of course available for play at any time and indeed will only get better with more use – just turn up and play (or contact **Paul Ellard**).

TRAFFIC

(Martin Newman)

We have asked KCC if the remaining work required to the drainage on Forge Hill can be tackled in advance of the winter. This, hopefully, would avoid the accidents that we have seen in this location in recent years.

Careless parking in Station Road continues to cause concern, with severe damage being done to verges. We are working with KCC to see if anything can be done to address this. There are also several areas where the road and verge width is being reduced by overhanging and untrimmed hedging. Landowners are reminded that it is your responsibility to keep hedges under control where they edge the highway.

ENVIRONMENT

(Carol Washer)

The recent spreading of paper waste has given rise to complaints of the unpleasant nauseous smell. Unfortunately the spreading of this waste is unregulated, but farmers do make an undertaking to minimize the impact by ploughing it in as soon as possible.



RECYCLING AT THE VILLAGE HALL

(Chris Housman)

Due to the success of the kerb-side waste and recycling collections, ABC have advised us that the glass, paper and can recycling facilities in the Hall car park will be removed at the end of October. Please use your household recycling bins for glass and cans. However, you might like to continue to use the clothing and shoe facilities at the Hall, and the paper and cardboard recycling facility at the Thorne, as income from these go to support various good causes.

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

(Tim O'Connor)

There has been a regrettable rise in the number of thefts in rural areas recently, particularly burglaries from sheds and outbuildings and from parked vehicles. Please make sure that your outbuildings are kept secured, and don't leave valuable items visible in unattended cars.

The Parish Council, Neighbourhood Watch and Kent Police continue to work together to ensure that all information relating to crime and community safety gets to all Pluckley residents as fast as possible. For up-to-date information please look at the Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PluckleyNHW01), or use the link from the www.pluckley.net website.

Pluckley has also been suffering from some issues of vandalism and 'anti-social behaviour' in recent months. You should report instances to the Police if possible, but if you would like to discuss any ASB issues involving Council properties please contact our Borough Councillor, Clair Bell (clairbell@solutionprovider.co.uk).

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

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The Council meets in Pluckley Village Hall at 7.30pm on the third Monday of each month, except August. All residents are welcome to attend.

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