



## **CHAIRMAN**

Firstly, a very happy New Year to you all.

The closing weeks of 2016 saw a couple of events that show that Pluckley is an increasingly vibrant community: the launch of an on-line app Pluckley Nextdoor quickly attracted lots of Pluckley residents who are now able to share local information (see Communications below); and the annual Carols around the Tree celebration, which attracted more residents than ever (our thanks to Paul and Sarah, and new landlords Kelly and Jack at The Black Horse for supplying the electricity).

Such community interaction is to be encouraged and the parish shaped the way that we, its residents, choose. The Neighbourhood Plan is now at an advanced stage (see below) and offers us the chance to control how Pluckley develops. In a few weeks, there will be a referendum in Pluckley asking for support for our Plan and, hopefully, you will give your support to the Plan to which many of you have contributed.

Your Parish Council has seen a few changes. We have recently co-opted Debbie Breach, Gavin Russell and Mark Taylor to fill the three vacancies. We now have another as Paul Smith resigned just before Christmas, having given invaluable support on planning matters. Finally, Chris Housman has stood down as Chairman and I have been elected to replace him. Many thanks to Chris for leading us over the past two to three years. Happily, he is staying on as a councillor.

*Martin Newman*

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Plan has been reviewed by the Examiner and he has just submitted his report. Subject to a number of modifications, he has advised that the Plan is fit to go forward to referendum. We will shortly be discussing these modifications with Ashford BC planners, who will then decide whether the Plan is ready for its referendum. This will be within the parish and all eligible residents will have the chance to say whether or not they support the Plan. If you do,

then the Plan will go forward to Ashford's Planning Committee to be adopted. Once it is adopted, the Plan becomes binding and will govern all planning applications within the parish until 2031.

The Pluckley stores/sub PO and the Black Horse have been registered as Assets of Community Value. This means that, before they can be sold, the community has an opportunity to step in to preserve their existing use.

## ***TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS***

The Egerton Road bus shelter has been repaired and Highways asked to repair the dip in the road in front of it which leads to splashing. We are grateful to Borough Councillor Clair Bell for contributing half of the repair costs. Highways have also marked potholes in The Street, Station Road and Lambden Road for repair, while the steps in front of Shipland Houses have already been repaired.

Parking at the station remains an issue. There are no easy solutions but, when the Brickworks planning application comes in, we will be discussing it with Highways and the planners, and agreeing parking restrictions then to afford adequate sight lines. We shall take advantage of this to look at the whole approach on Station Road.

Five years ago, the Parish Council conducted a speed review in the parish and submitted a report to KCC Highways making recommendations. These recommendations were accepted and implemented except for the most significant one – a reduction in the 40mph limit to 30mph. Pluckley more than meets the national guidelines for this and it will offer the benefit of there being a single limit throughout the village.

After much lobbying, Highways have now agreed that the reduction can be made – provided that the Parish Council funds the necessary paperwork and the engineering. Knowing how important speeding is as an issue to residents, the PC has agreed to this. County Councillor Charlie Simpkins has also offered funding support. We are currently in discussion with Highways to agree the implementation. The aim is to achieve effective calming measures with as little visual intrusion as possible to preserve the rural nature of our village. We anticipate that the new limit will be installed in the Spring.

## ***VILLAGE HALL***

Under the terms of the original lease granted by the Parish Council (PC) in 1960, the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) is responsible for all aspects of the hall's management. In 2001, the VHMC folded leaving debts and the PC had to step in, clear the debts and take over the running of the hall. The improvements to the hall, effected by the PC some five years ago, encouraged volunteers to join a reformed VHMC and this has been handling the day to day running of the hall since then, while the PC has been covering exceptional costs of the building and its insurance. Bookings have increased and the annual operating loss reduced.

The VHMC now feels confident enough to take on the full management of the hall as the original lease requires. This includes carrying out the further improvements to the hall that residents have agreed and for which planning approval has been obtained. The PC has already raised much of the funding for this and will, as planned, vote money towards this but additional grant money will be needed before the work can be commissioned.

## ***PLANNING***

The most significant planning issue resolved is that the Brickworks site has finally had its outline planning permission granted. A section 106 agreement requires the developer to make contributions towards certain community costs and some of this money will come directly to the village, most notably for the village hall. We now await the formal application.

## ***COMMUNICATIONS***

The Parish Council is concerned at the poor service offered in parts of the parish by mobile telephone and broadband suppliers. We are currently in discussion with operators about improving the service.

For the last few weeks, the parish has had the benefit of an on-line community network. Nextdoor.co.uk is a secure and private network for Pluckley residents. We currently have 240 members representing 40% of the households in Pluckley. This has grown quickly in the past three months and is proving to be very popular.

Nextdoor provides the ability to report issues on Crime and Safety, Lost and Found items (including pets), as well as a Recommendations section for local tradesmen and women plus an events calendar. Please contact Martin Chambers for more information at [NHW@pluckley.net](mailto:NHW@pluckley.net) or on 840029.

## ***NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH***

The need for us all to remain vigilant and aware of our area, including our neighbours, is as great as it ever was. So this is an appeal to all Pluckley residents to keep your eyes open and to report anything suspicious to the Police.

Please check your outbuildings and make sure they are securely locked – please do not make it easy for the thieves. Please check your security lights regularly and make sure they are working. Thieves absolutely hate security lights.

Please do not assume that someone wondering round your property is as innocent as they may seem. Please make a note of their description as well as vehicle details and registration numbers. Don't assume and be suspicious.

**CALL THE POLICE ON 999 OR 112 IF A CRIME IS IN PROGRESS, 101 IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS OR TO REPORT A CRIME THAT IS NOT IN PROGRESS.**

OR CONTACT CRIMESTOPPERS ANONYMOUSLY WITH INFORMATION ABOUT CRIME ON **0800 555 111**.

Many people decide not to call the police for a variety of reasons. But the more we report on incidents in our villages, the more this will tell the police that we do have issues in this area and that we need more of a police presence.

Martin Chambers is our Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator and provides information on local incidents in Pluckley's Community network, Nextdoor.co.uk. He also sends out NHW email bulletins on a regular basis, updates the Pluckley NHW Facebook Group as well as the Twitter feed at @PluckleyNHW. Please email [NHW@pluckley.net](mailto:NHW@pluckley.net) for details or call Martin on 840029.

### **RESIDENT OF THE YEAR**

The Resident of the Year is Martin Chambers. As well as volunteer driving for Wealden Wheels, Martin runs the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. He has also established and manages the Pluckley Nextdoor app which is offering a useful social network for residents. Martin has selected the Alzheimers Society as the beneficiary of his award.

### **PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

Following the resignation of Paul Smith, the PC has a vacancy. Would anyone interested in working for the community please contact the Clerk?

### **YOUR PARISH COUNCIL**

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

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