



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am very pleased to be able to report that two long-held ambitions for our village are about to be realised.

The first will be the reduction in the 40mph speed limit area to 30mph. Traffic through the Parish remains the main concern of most residents and this measure should improve safety, noise, road wear and improve the quality of our life. The work is due to start in September.

The second major project is the extension of the Village Hall. The Trustees are about to appoint the builder, the funds are in place, and this project too should be completed this Autumn.

With the adoption of our Neighbourhood Plan earlier this year, 2017 is proving a very positive one for the village. This summer too, there are several social events being run by various clubs and organizations – all evidence that our community is buzzing.

Your Parish Council will continue to push for those improvements you have identified, and which are included in the Community Projects section of the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan. We are, though, short of a member as Chris Housman has resigned. Chris has been a Parish Councillor for several years, including a couple as Chairman, and we are grateful to him for the time he has put in on behalf of the village.

Martin Newman

PLANNING

Among the planning applications considered by the Parish Council in the last quarter, the three sites supported in the Neighbourhood Plan have all come forward as formal applications. These are the Brickworks site, Thorne Yard and off Lambden Road. All three were faithful to the requirements set in the Neighbourhood Plan and were therefore supported by the Parish Council. All currently await approval by Ashford Borough Council.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

All homes should by now have received their copy of the Neighbourhood Plan. This becomes part of, and has the status of, Ashford's Local Plan. It sets out the agreed approach to development in the Parish to 2031. Your Parish Council's duty is now to ensure that the aims of the Plan are followed. As covered under Planning above, the three developments identified for the Parish have all progressed to application and await approval from Ashford .

The Parish Council has undertaken to review the Plan every five years so this process should commence in 2020. As before, the community will be encouraged to contribute.

TRAFFIC AND ROADS

The long-awaited reduction in the 40mph speed limit area to 30mph has finally received formal approval. We have, in the meantime, sought further quotes for the work necessary to implement the change and have secured a lower quote. The work will be undertaken by contractors appointed by KCC Highways and will happen in September/October. This will complete the adoption of the recommendations we made to Kent CC in our Speed Review as long ago as 2012.

We are grateful to County Councillor Charlie Simkins for his support during the project, and to both him and Borough Councillor Clair Bell for funding assistance. The project has been made possible because your Parish Council has undertaken to meet the costs. Apart from the funding assistance referred to above, the cost to the Parish will be around £25,000.

While we anticipate that most motorists will respect the new limit, it is inevitable that some will choose to ignore it. This is disrespectful to the village and we are minded to set up a Speed Watch operation once the new limit is in place, to encourage motorists to observe it. We will be calling for volunteers in due course.

QEII RECREATION GROUND

Repairs have been made to the pavilion, particularly the guttering. Within two days, it had again been damaged by footballs being kicked against it, and this has now to be remedied. There has also been some vandalism to the old pavilion and the security fencing, and this will necessitate further repairs and expenditure.

FINANCE

The finances are very healthy for the moment but large expenditure is anticipated. As well as the speed limit change mentioned above, it is expected that the grant to the Village Hall Trustees will be made shortly to enable the extension of the village hall. This will reduce our funds significantly but leave enough to carry out our normal responsibilities, and with a small contingency.

COMMUNICATIONS

The installation of high speed broadband for the homes beyond the station is progressing. Gavin Russell has secured a full grant per household, though the residents involved will still be meeting the bulk of the cost.

We have continued to lobby the mobile phone service suppliers. The only ones to react so far are O2, who are looking at the possibility of boosting the signal from the nearest masts.

Pluckley's social media app Nextdoor continues to grow, both in terms of members and usage. With more than half the households in the Parish now using it, it is proving a valuable communication tool for the parish. Apparently, Pluckley is one of the most active sites worldwide, proof if needed that our community is flourishing.

VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall is about to undergo the next phase of its improvement programme. This will be the addition to the southern end of the building of a new entrance foyer with toilets, including a disabled facility. The Trustees have selected the builder and secured the necessary grant funding. This is coming from Kent County Council (£41,800), Ashford Borough Council (£8,000) and the Parish Council (£44,000).

Work should be starting in a few weeks and the project finished before the winter. There will be minimal disruption to the hall and it is remaining open throughout.

The final phase of the improvement programme will be to extend the hall forwards to a regular frontage, allowing a new lounge/meeting room to be created. This will enable additional usage of the hall. At that stage, the new roof line will be installed and exterior cladding added. This will require additional funding, although good progress has already been made towards it as the Parish Council asked for the Brickworks development to make a contribution, and that has been made a condition of the planning approval.

PLUCKLEY WAR MEMORIAL

The war memorial in the churchyard is the responsibility of the Parish Council. At present, the memorial commemorates only those who died in the Great War. We have now commissioned the addition of the names of Pluckley people who perished in subsequent conflicts i.e. the 1939-45 War and Iraq. The families concerned are fully aware and very supportive.

DEFIBRILLATORS

A very successful training session was held in June, showing how the defibrillators installed in the village are to be used. Twenty nine residents turned up to hear Police Training Instructor, Jamie Hughes take us through the advised procedure. One defibrillator is located at the Pluckley Stores in the centre of the village, and a second will be at the Village Hall. Further training sessions can be organised if people wish. In the meantime, if you are faced with an emergency, the equipment is there to be used and will take you through the appropriate procedure.

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Sue Beattie	sue.beattie@pluckley.net	01233 840029
Debbie Breach	debbie.breach@pluckley.net	01233 840765
Martin Newman(Chmn)	martin.newman@pluckley.net	01233 840231
Nick McNally	njmca@btinternet.com	01233 841860
Tim O'Connor (Vice Chair)	tim.o'connor@pluckley.net	01233 840843
Gavin Russell	gavin.russell@pluckley.net	01233 820426
Mark Taylor	mark.taylor@pluckley.net	01233 840447
Mike Whatman	mike.whatman@pluckley.net	01233 840044
Clerk: Caroline Levett	pluckleyparishclerk@gmail.com	01233 770739

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

Published by Pluckley Parish Council, 9 Ashenden, Smarden, Kent TN27 8RT.