

FRINDSBURY EXTRA PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

It's time once more to review the Parish Council's activities over the last year. The main project continues to be the Lower Upnor Riverside Project. This time last year we were waiting for the outcome of the outline planning application for the whole scheme. This was granted. One of the conditions was that landscape designs must be agreed. A design for the first phase, the village green, was commissioned and after comments by members of the Partnership, it was finalised and submitted. We are now in the position that during consultation, the Planning Authority's Landscape Architect has asked for changes – effectively re-designing the whole thing- and we will either have to withdraw and start again or submit revised drawings. Which we do will depend on timing. I also said last year we would be applying to E-on for a community grant for this work. They will not consider the application until planning consent is obtained and we only have two more opportunities for this, either in July or in October. It now looks unlikely we will make the July date and we are hoping the grant funds haven't run out by October.

The village sign for Wainscott has been made and is awaiting installation, as are new noticeboards. These have been funded from Medway Council's rural liaison grant.

The boot fair mentioned last year finally began, not on the original site but on a field the other side of the tunnel approach road. (This used to be part of Anthony's Way but had to be re-named to distinguish this section from the main part of the road which lies within the Medway City Estate. Everybody finds it difficult to remember the new name!) The entrance to the boot fair is in Upnor Road which on the face of it looks to be rather unsuitable, but after the first week, when there were the inevitable teething troubles, it seems to be working well.

Last year I said "Two future developments that will affect the parish is the restoration of the Tithe barn and surrounding buildings and the major development at Chattenden." To this we can now add proposals for a park-and-ride facility and Sainsbury's store close to Macdonald's on the Medway City Estate. The Parish Council has had pre-application presentations on all these developments but the formal planning applications are yet to be made. The Parish Council has accepted the offer of the assignment of land as a village green on the Manor Farm site and expects eventually to work with the developer on the provision of new allotments.

During the year the parish council considered about 40 planning applications. This was again fewer than the previous year and only half the number the Council was regularly considering a few years ago. Two smaller developments received consent in spite of objections from the parish council. One was for 35 houses on the site of "Sandacres" in Lower Upnor and construction has started. The other is for 15 dwellings on the site of the garage in Cooling Road. The Crest Nicholson Liberty Park development is ongoing and plans have recently been approved for the second half of the development, the other side of Hoo Road, behind the shops.

Grants were made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, St Dunstan's, Kent BCTV Tree warden scheme, Victim Support, Dickens Country Protection Society, Arethusa Old Boys' Association, Wisdom Hospice, Kent County Playing Fields Association and the Memorial

Hall. As usual, a ceremony for laying of the poppy wreath was held in the hall foyer on Armistice Day.

Our PCSO, Sean Brooks has moved on to a busier life in Hoo. Our beat officer remains PC John Fallon and Sean has been replaced by PCSO Mandeep Clare. Cllr Miller has continued to attend the police liaison meetings, neighbourhood watch meetings and has reported back. His deputy is Cllr Archer.

Cllr Moore is Chairman of the local area committee of the KALC and sits on the executive committee. Cllr Hicks with his Medway Councillor hat on is chairman of Medway's Rural Liaison Committee and Cllr Coomber is the parish representative and also the committee vice-chairman. The Parish Council's interests are well represented at both KALC and rural liaison meetings. The rural liaison grant continued on the usual formula basis but last year a sum of additional money was available that had to be bid for. We bid for £5,000 to renew the noticeboards in Wainscott Road, Leigh Road and Upnor and to provide new ones at the hall and on the "Liberty Park" development. The existing board at Lower Upnor will be replaced as part of the Lower Upnor Riverside Project. The village sign for Wainscott has been made and will be installed shortly.

Rochester Rangers continue to play football on the recreation ground and were joined by Borstal 88. Nick Hunt of Borstal 88 is organising a football festival which will take place on 3 July and he has offered to make good the goal mouths at no expense to the parish council, for which we are grateful.

The Dickens Country Protection Society has formed a group to organise restoration of the Frog Island pond. Cllr Mrs Revell represents the parish council on this group. Grants from the parish council and from the E-on community fund have enabled them to commission the Kent Wildlife Trust to undertake a survey and to write a management plan. Pond work can only be done in autumn and winter and the group was hoping work could start later this year but their application to Veolia for a grant was turned down and they must seek funding elsewhere. This will inevitably delay the project. The DCPS restored the pond about 15 years ago, following which it was just left and not managed. It is to be hoped that if they succeed in restoring it again, protocols are put into place to ensure its continued management, so that in another 15 years they aren't looking for funds to restore it for a third time.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to former Vice-chairman Gordon Bird. Gordon had a rare medical condition that made walking difficult. He did once tell me what it was – I had never heard of it and it was unpronounceable. It was progressive and it got to the point that writing and even holding a cup of tea was difficult. He did not stand at the parish elections three years ago as the stairs to the meeting room were defeating him. He continued however with the WI market – he was often teased about the cakes he baked – and as a governor of Hilltop School, latterly the Chairman. In May 2009 he was diagnosed with leukaemia and sadly died in July. He was very supportive of the Council and the Chairman and I was especially grateful for his encouragement. He is much missed.

Roxana Brammer
Parish Clerk