



chilham parish council

serving chilham, old wives lees and shottenden

PO Box 983, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 9EA Email: clerk@chilhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

13 October 2016

Dear Parishioner:

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2018 - INTRODUCTION FROM PAUL LULHAM, CHAIRMAN OF CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL

It gives me great pleasure to present Chilham Parish Council's first Strategic Plan. This plan and the Consultation Report from the Parish Question community engagement exercise follow this letter. The Strategic Plan identifies the projects and work streams that the Parish Council will prioritise over the remaining three years of its current term of office. It represents the culmination of a full year's worth of engagement and consultation with the residents of Chilham, Old Wives Lees and Shottenden, during which we have sought to establish the issues that are of greatest interest and/or concern to Parishioners. Now that these have been identified, we have prioritised those over which the Parish Council - working with other statutory bodies and community groups - can wield the most influence and achieve the greatest impact. These items are set out over the course of the following pages and, importantly, are structured according to the extent to which the Parish Council can directly contribute to their advancement.

In response to the feedback we received from the recent Parish Question Time sessions and household questionnaires, we will organise annual consultation events during which we will review our performance against this Plan and update it as necessary to reflect the progress we have made and any new issues or priorities that might arise.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who participated in this year's consultation exercise and to encourage all Parishioners to engage with the work of the Parish Council going forward, either by attending our monthly meetings, logging on to our website or making contact with us to raise any issues or questions that you might have about our community and its future development.

This consultation exercise would not have been possible without the help of the parishioners who form the Parish Distribution Network and took responsibility for distributing the questionnaire to each household in the parish. The parish council is very grateful for the continued support of these volunteers as they provide a speedy and efficient method of distributing information to parishioners.

Sincerely,

Paul Lulham

Chairman, Chilham Parish Council



STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2018

1. MATTERS FOR WHICH THE COUNCIL IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE

1.1 Refurbishment of Taylors Hill Toilets

A working group will be set up to scope, plan and implement a refurbishment project to be completed by March 2018.

1.2 Community Engagement

Council will conduct an engagement event in March each year to review its strategic plan and report on progress made.

A Strategic Plan update as a result of this engagement will be distributed to all households in the parish.

1.3 Communication with parishioners

Council will communicate with its parishioners through parish noticeboards, website, emails to parish contacts, monthly items in Chilham Parish News and the quarterly newsletter PC Tips.

2. MATTERS WHICH THE COUNCIL WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE

2.1 Allocation of Section 106 monies from the Bagham Place development

Council will work in partnership with Ashford Borough Council and scheme promoters to maximise the benefits to parishioners from the monies available from the Bagham Place development.

2.2 The Chilham Square Project

Council will work with Chilham's Future Development Board (CFDB) and push for firm cost estimates and funding streams to be identified before March 2018.

Council will encourage CFDB to provide an annual report for consideration at the March council meeting each year.

2.3 Promoting tourism in the parish

Council will work in partnership with local organisations to establish the feasibility of an annual summer event in the parish.



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2.4 Improving quality of life in the parish

Council will strengthen relationships with local organisations with the aim of enhancing the benefits they provide in the parish.

Council will work in partnership with the borough and county councils where it can add value to specific services that they provide (eg vegetation clearance, cleaning signs).

3. MATTERS ON WHICH THE COUNCIL WILL INFLUENCE OTHER BODIES

3.1 Planning policy

Significant parts of the parish are protected by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding National Beauty and Great Stour flood plains.

Council will forge good working relationships with the borough council. It believes a combination of these environment constraints and strengthened relationships with neighbouring parish councils and the borough council puts it in a good position to positively influence local planning policy.

3.2 Crime Prevention Measures

Council will engage with local neighbourhood watch schemes to identify schemes with the potential of improving crime prevention in the parish.

3.3 Road Safety

Council will engage with Kent Highways to ensure the crash cluster study underway in response to increased road traffic incidents on main roads in the parish identifies suitable solutions.

Chilham Parish Council (September 2016)



PARISH QUESTION TIME CONSULTATION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the Parish Question Time consultation exercise earlier this year, the Parish Council undertook to use the feedback received from parishioners to inform its Strategic Plan to 2019 and an accompanying Consultation Report.

This report should be read alongside the Strategic Plan, which sets out the priority actions that the Parish Council will take over the remainder of its current term of office.

The report is structured according to the questions asked of parishioners in the household questionnaires (see feedback summary on final page). It also addresses the additional feedback received on specific matters from both the household questionnaires and the public consultation events at Chilham and Old Wives Lees Village Halls.

It should be noted, however, that issues and/or questions requiring a personal response will be responded to by email or letter on an individual basis.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

Q1) Influencing borough council planning policy regarding the parish:

It is clear that parishioners want the Parish Council to take a more active role in influencing Borough Council planning policy where it affects Chilham. The Strategic Plan consequently sets out how the Parish Council intends to achieve this objective.

Q2) Chilham's Future Delivery Board and its project to improve Chilham Square:

A clear majority of parishioners want the Parish Council to take a more active role in Chilham's Future Delivery Board and its project to improve Chilham Square. The Strategic Plan therefore identifies this as a priority project for the remainder of the Council's current term of office.

Q3) to Q10) Sawmills site developers contributions:

All eight projects put forward by parish organisations for funding support from the Sawmills site developer contributions received support from parishioners. The Strategic Plan identifies the award of funding to priority projects as a key area of work for the Parish Council going forward. We have established from Ashford Borough Council that all eight projects are eligible for funding under the terms of the agreement with the developer and therefore we will shortly rank them internally using agreed criteria to establish which projects can proceed immediately and which require further refinement and/or third party funding support.



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Q11) Taylors Hill toilet refurbishment:

There is clear support from parishioners for the Parish Council to use a portion of its toilet maintenance reserve budget to refurbish Taylors Hill Toilets. The Strategic Plan therefore commits us to forming a working group to progress this matter within the next two years.

Q12) Maintenance duties devolved by ABC and KCC:

Parishioners strongly support the proposal to allow the Parish Council to take on certain maintenance duties devolved by Kent County Council and/or Ashford Borough Council. Such duties might include sign cleaning, verge maintenance and drain clearance. The Strategic Plan sets out how we intend to act upon this matter over the remainder of our current term and to involve local volunteers wherever possible.

Q13) Providing allotments:

There is overall support for increasing the precept by a modest amount to provide allotments in the Parish. We remain open to this concept, although recent proposals by Ashford Borough Council to create new allotments in Felborough Close, Chilham, were opposed by the majority of residents who responded to a local consultation.

Q14) Community transport schemes:

Funding support to community transport schemes was backed by a clear majority of respondents. The Parish Council already supports the Wealden Wheels community transport scheme financially and will therefore continue to do so in the medium term.

Q15) Maintaining borough and highway assets (eg grass cutting, cleaning signs):

Parishioners confirmed that they would support an increase in funding for maintaining Borough and Highway assets, as per Question 12 above.

Q16) Promoting tourism in the parish:

There is overall support for the Parish Council providing funding to promote tourism in the parish. The Strategic Plan commits us to investigating the potential for a new annual parish event similar to the previous May Fayre and work has commenced with local businesses and organisations to this end.

Q17) Crime prevention measures:

The delivery of crime prevention measures was supported by the majority of respondents. Whilst the Parish Council has limited powers and resources in this area, the Strategic Plan confirms that it will work closely with our local Police Community Support Officer and Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator to identify where it can add value to their work going forward.



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Q18 and Q19) Parish Council funding policy:

The funding of trading entities in the parish run by volunteers (e.g. village halls) and entirely voluntary groups (e.g. clubs for the young or elderly) was backed by parishioners. The Parish Council will continue to promote grant opportunities to these organisations, including those which it administers and those offered by third parties (e.g. the Borough and County Council Ward Members grants).

Q20) Replacing the bus shelter in Old Wives Lees:

Respondents narrowly supported the replacement of the bus shelter in Old Wives Lees and as such, the Parish Council is currently investigating the potential to apply for Kent County Council match funding for this project.

Q21 to Q26) Parish Council communication:

It is clear that parishioners use Parish Council noticeboards, the Parish News and the village news columns in local newspapers to access information about the Parish Council in the main. The Parish Council website, email network and newsletter (PC Tips) are less well used, although a reasonable number of people subscribe to these media. We will seek to promote this information more readily in response to this feedback and investigate the potential to use social media in addition.

Q27) Community Engagement frequency:

The majority of respondents indicated that they would like the Parish Council to hold a community engagement exercise on an annual basis and we will therefore undertake to do so.

Q28) Attending a Parish Council meeting:

Whilst it is evident that relatively few parishioners attend Parish Council meetings in person, we are aware that many access meeting agendas, reports and minutes via our website and we will continue to promote this facility.

We will also explore alternative means of making face-to-face contact with local people via local events and activities.

3. OTHER ISSUES

Many of the free text comments made by respondents to the household questionnaires have been addressed in the preceding analysis. However, the following issues warrant an additional response:-

Road safety - following the recent injury accidents on main roads in the parish, the Parish Council raised concerns with Kent County Council, who have since undertaken to complete a Crash Cluster Study of the A252 and A28 between Charing and Chartham. We will ensure that the outcomes of this study are transmitted to parishioners.



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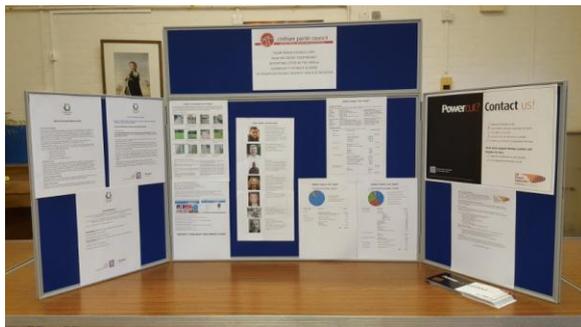
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Local facilities - whilst the range of everyday retail facilities available in Chilham is relatively limited, we are very fortunate to have a well provisioned Post Office and Shop which is becoming a rarity in communities of our size. We also benefit from good public transport links to Ashford and Canterbury.

Dog fouling - we are aware of local incidents of dog fouling in Chilham and Old Wives Lees and will be taking these up with Ashford Borough Council's new enforcement contractor to address.

Litter/Potholes - we will promote Ashford Borough Council's litter reporting service and Kent County Council's pothole reporting service and seek to instigate a network of local people who will take ownership of this duty in their part of the parish, as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Pictures from the Parish Question Time engagement events



Parish Councillors: Paul Hardisty; Lindsay Heasman; Paul Lulham (Chairman); Steve Linter; Doug Marriott; Allan Rooke-James; Gill Schofield; Yve White; Mike Whiting



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PARISH QUESTION TIME FEEDBACK SUMMARY					
	strongly agree	agree	don't know	disagree	strongly disagree
The Parish Council should take a more active role in:					
(1) influencing borough council planning policy regarding the parish	47	27	4	2	1
(2) Chilham's Future Delivery Board and its project to improve Chilham Square	31	26	11	7	5
The Parish Council should support the use of Sawmills site developers contributions for:-					
(3) Recreation Ground Trust - Football pitch drainage	18	34	18	6	3
(4) Recreation Ground Trust - 3G pitch (40m x 20m) with floodlights	16	22	17	16	7
(5) Recreation Ground Trust - Play area improvements	32	36	5	3	2
(6) Tennis Club - Courtside facility with kitchen and disable toilet.	9	21	14	15	17
(7) Third court with markings for 2 mini-tennis courts	14	23	15	12	13
(8) Tennis Club - 2 standalone mini-tennis courts	10	17	15	19	17
(9) Parish Council - Relay wetpour surface at Old Wives Lees play area	31	30	10	7	2
(10) Little Owls Preschool - Improve and increase outdoor play facility.	33	26	13	8	0
The Parish Council should:					
(11) use up to £5,000 of its £23,360 Toilet maintenance reserve to refurbish the toilets	23	36	8	5	6
(12) take on maintenance duties devolved by ABC and KCC	16	28	19	5	6
Please tick one box for each of the proposals below to indicate the level of funding you would consider reasonable (£500 is equivalent to an extra 70p per year on the Band D precept charge)					
How much should the Parish Council increase its annual precept in order to spend money on:					
	None	Under £500	£500 to £1000	£1000 to £1500	Over £1500
(13) providing allotments	31	19	16	5	4
(14) community transport schemes	12	19	25	12	8
(15) maintaining borough and highway assets (eg grass cutting, cleaning signs)	14	18	22	18	6
(16) promoting tourism in the parish	28	21	23	4	3
(17) crime prevention measures	18	21	18	15	8
(18) funding trading entities in the parish run by volunteers (eg village halls)	17	23	23	7	6
(19) funding entirely voluntary groups in the parish (eg clubs for the young or the elderly)	10	20	26	11	12
(20) replacing the bus shelter in Old Wives Lees	37	21	11	4	4
How many times a month on average do you use the following:					
	Never	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 10	Over 10
(21) Parish Council noticeboards	14	19	43	2	2
(22) Parish Council pages in Parish News	10	12	46	8	3
(23) village news column in local press	24	13	33	6	5
(24) Parish Council website	37	23	21	0	0
(25) Parish Contact emails	41	15	18	4	0
(26) Parish Council newsletter (PC Tips)	26	19	28	3	1
Please tick one box for each of the questions below regarding your engagement with the Parish Council.					
	Never	Once	Twice	4 times	5 times or more
(27) How often during its 4 year term should the Parish Council hold a community engagement	0	3	21	45	10
(28) How often during a typical year do you attend a Parish Council meeting	57	12	6	4	2

Chilham Parish Council (September 2016)

Parish Councillors: Paul Hardisty; Lindsay Heasman; Paul Lulham (Chairman); Steve Linter; Doug Marriott; Allan Rooke-James; Gill Schofield; Yve White; Mike Whiting