

Chevening Parish Council

Annual Report for the Year to 31st March 2016

- At last we have been told that Kent Highways are doing a study to see how the junction of Westerham Road and the A25 can be improved. It is good news as we have always been told in the past that it was too expensive.

There is a study being done on the commercial benefits of having east facing slip roads on the M25. Rather than just assume they would be at junction 5 this study is looking also at having an interchange at Westerham or Otford as well. The study is being funded by some local councils and KCC. It is hard to see any commercial benefits for this parish but there may be some social ones depending where you live. Cleaner air and less traffic would be desirable but where exactly this would be and whether some areas would end up worse off can only be determined when a full traffic survey has been completed. This is something we have been requesting for some time. Whatever the outcome with current government financial restraints it will be many years before anything is actually built.

We continue to press for highway improvements and are in the process of getting a residents parking scheme for Bessels Green and trying to get yellow lines for Springshaw Close. We are looking to gather evidence of consistent unsocial parking outside the Sunrise Home to try and get some restrictions on the parking there.

We are currently trying to get a 20 mph limit in Chipstead Village. This we now understand is possible if we pay for it ourselves.

- Our thanks again to the volunteers who set up our community speed checks (Speed Watch) together with the Lorry Watch scheme to discourage HGVs coming through the Village. It has been running for a couple of years now and we think it has had a positive effect. We have now bought our own equipment rather than relying on borrowing SDC's.
- As we reported last year potholes remain a continual problem and we are far from satisfied with the quality of repairs carried out. Some seem to last just a few months. We still continue to press Kent CC for improvements and hope to have the opportunity to make the point again to Richard Parry our Kent County Councillor.
- Chipstead Lake
We were not able to find the finance from our local community to make a credible offer for the Lake within the six month time limit the "Asset of Community Value" status allowed us before others could bid. The seller would not be bound to accept our bid anyway. However we know of no other bid around and a new organisation set up outside the Parish Council, the Chipstead Lake Association, is working to see if

further funds can be raised. We hope to know how much they think is possible by the time of the meeting.

- Kent County Council started a consultation to see what the community thought of them selling Dryhill. Before we could formerly respond they withdrew it but we must expect they will return with an amended version soon. Your Council was minded to oppose it but cannot officially do until we see the exact wording of the consultation. We can suggest in the first place that they shouldn't sell it at all and then if they insist on a sale they should try and get a suitable organisation such as the National Trust to buy it. If no suitable organisation comes forward then we must consider buying it ourselves. In that case it will probably be sold for a nominal sum but we would have to pay for the upkeep.
- The local primary school, as they are obliged to do by law, have consulted the public, including ourselves, as to whether we think the current admissions policy is correct. We replied in exactly the same way as we wrote to them in 2013 that putting a church going Christian family however far away they live above a very local family was not in our view good for the cohesiveness of the community and some change was desirable. We have received a reply from the chairman of governors saying they will again not be adopting our proposal. This was because they had tried to maximise feedback from the local community and other interested parties and ours was the only response suggesting a change. As we are elected to represent the local parish community this is somewhat disappointing.
- We have reviewed our policy as to who can be buried in our burial ground next to the Church. It was confirmed that this is only for people who have lived in the parish and very occasionally for someone who has worked for a significant period of time in the Parish.
- The new playground equipment is up and running and seems very popular. The field has also had land drains installed which should help the sports clubs in the wet weather.
- Your flood prevention committee still continues to work well. Despite very heavy rain in December and January the river levels have not been as high as two years ago. This is the result of them taking early action in keeping waterways clear.

Again we need to keep things up in the future so we will always need volunteers to do the work. It is often easier to get help when the images of water very nearly getting into people's homes are fresh in our memories but we must maintain our vigilance and work over the years to come.