

The Annual Assembly took place at Seal Pavilion on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr Penn

Mrs Stiasny

Mr Haslam (Chairman)

Mr Boorman

Mrs Talbot

Mr Ratcliffe

Mr Kay

Also in attendance: 4 Parishioners,

Rev Serena Willoughby – St Margarets and St Lawrence Church

Mr Robert Talbot – Underriver Village Association

Mrs Marion Gilchrist – Know Your Neighbours

Mr George Kup – Public and Engagements Team, Meeting Place

Ms Michaela's Kekerri – Project Team, Tarmac,

Councillor Hogarth – Sevenoaks District Councillor

Absence: Mr Michaelides, Mr Bourne, Mr Bulleid and Councillor Thornton

1 Welcome by Chairman – Chris Haslam

The Chairman expressed gratitude and thanked all volunteers and organisations in the Parish, who contributed to the well-being of our community and especially our County Councillor, District Councillors, Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

2 Apologies: Mr Bourne, Mr Bulleid and Councillor Thornton

3 Chairman's Report - Chris Haslam

The Chairman reported that one of the concerns in our Parish is the condition of our roads, which can be reported on KCC website. All new improvements are collected and discussed with Kent Highways through our Highway Improvement plan.

The key projects the Parish Council have been working on are:

- Speed reduction in Childsbridge Lane to/from Kemsing to 40mph approaching Railway Bridge.
- A25 western side of Seal to the Greatness Cemetery reduced to 30mph.
- Reduction from Ash Platt Road and Highlands Park reduced to 20mph.
- New SID Pole east of Seal High Street, which is rotated between 6 poles at difference sites around the Parish which helps to monitor traffic.
- Sevenoaks Quarry Site - The Parish Council attend the Steering Group which provides feedback on information from Tarmac.
- Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP), SDC have started discussion for route 6 which will go through Seal into Kemsing going to Otford to provide a circular route to Sevenoaks.
- Last year 6 homes were built in Foxbury Farm and work has started on Mills Crescent development which will provide more affordable housing and social housing in our Parish.

Various other projects we have also been working on is Godden Green Pond, Wildflowers which now has a KCC Annual Maintenance Plan and Japanese Knotweed. We welcome 2 new Councillors Mr Ratcliffe and Mr Kay and we have 2 vacancies available.

4 Planning – Rebecca Stiasny – Planning Chairman

The focus of the Committee is to support and help facilitate the development and preserve and protect the area. We have had 75 planning applications over the last year, ranging from full scale projects to small alterations and from residential dwellings to agricultural buildings and a few applications on Public Rights of Way.

The Committee has contributed to Plan 2024, a new local plan for Sevenoaks District, this sets out the development strategy for the next 15-20 years.

The largest project within this plan is the Sevenoaks Quarry site which we have recently had a planning meeting where 10 to 12 Parishioners attended.

5 Finance – Andrew Michaelides, Finance Chairman – Not in attendance, the Finance Report will be published on our Website.

6 District and County Council Report- Councillor Hogarth report.

Councillor Hogarth continues to respond to the needs of the community by working on issues raised with the Parish Council and District Council. On the planning, we recently worked on Foxbury Farm, which provided 6 homes for people who have a strong connection to the area. SDC has a unique 10-year budget, compared to other authorities who are under immense pressure. Their planned budget 2024/25 is balanced and fully funded for the next 10 years, during which they can maintain their services. There are changes in the National Government Recycling and there is plenty of communication around recycling. We are very interested to hear residents' views and would like to provide solutions that work for all residents. We work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Councillor Gough report – KCC

It has been a very challenging year, Councillor Gough is a Leader of Kent County Council, as well as a Member for Sevenoaks North and Darent Valley.

Councillor Gough expressed his pleasure at working with the Chairman, Parish Council and Clerk, as well as Councillor Thornton and Councillor Hogarth.

- Last year, the speed limit reduction on Childsbridge Lane between Seal and Kemsing from National speed limited to 40 mph was installed.
- We delivered on the reduction of 40mph to 30mph on A25 where the boundary lies between Sevenoaks Town and Seal.
- A25 road closures – this is mainly due to utility companies who have statutory power on highways in emergency. KCC are looking to increase their inspectors.
- Reinstatement of double yellow lines around Knole
- Potholes April – December, resurfacing and patching works have been completed with substantial patching in Childsbridge Lane.
- Carters Hill, Underriver there were reports of flooding and the grips on the verge have been reinstated and gulleys cleansed.
- We have been involved in the Wildflowers verges.

Transport - Bus services are still under pressure, between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. There are financial pressures facing all local government, where spending is up across adult social care, children's services placement, home to school transport and children with Special Education Needs, these areas make up two thirds of the cost budget and continue to grow. This puts pressure on our financial position, which limits other key areas such as road maintenance.

7 Mr George Kup – Public and Engagements Team, Ms Michaela Kekeri - Project Team Tarmac

The site will gain 800 homes, 40% affordable housing, 150 Care Homes, a Lakeside Centre, the Oast House and barn will be maintained building, Primary School, Park Lakes, Cycle Pedestrian paths, and West East Cycle Pedestrian Route from Childsbridge Lane, existing PROW improvements, and access from Bat and Ball junction.

Concerns were raised regarding:

- 1) An access roundabout out of Bat and Ball junction.
- 2) A potential Primary School and Secondary School places.
- 3) Sevenoaks Campus – whether they can cater for 300/400 secondary school places out of the 800 homes.
- 4) GP surgeries are currently oversubscribed, and Parishioners discussed whether this could be included in the initial plans. Tarmac could accommodate but confirmed that they are not in the proposals for this 10-year plan.
- 5) Tarmac is going to place a priority walkway at the side of the Railway Bridge which will cater for pedestrian and cycle path and there will be a give way along the railway bridge to slow traffic down.

There website for the outline planning application can be found here
<https://sevenoaks.tarmac.com/>

8 Informal update from Seal and St Lawrence schools – Not present

Rev Serena Willoughby, St Lawrence Church and St Margaret's Church report

It has been a good year, still rebuilding since covid, there has been lot of community involvement, and she was pleased with Foxbury Development and the housing needs. There is a pop-up pub on a Friday each week and there is a lot of community involvement.

Underriver Village Association – Mr Robert Talbot

UVA have had a quiet year this year, last year it was reported of the work that went on in the hall. But it has a busy committee and lots of social activities.

Know Your Neighbours – Mrs Marion Gilchrist

KYN has sent out 327 household newsletters, the library has been involved in getting new families joining the scheme. The 100 club is drawing around 72 numbers £180 each month goes to Seal Village Fund this pays for Xmas Lights and at the AGM distributes awards to Seal Over 60's, Seal Eco, Garden Safari, Allotment Society and Scarecrow festival which accounts to £1250 in awards.

KYN have two new volunteers from the Parish Council, Mr Ratcliffe and Mr Kay who are involved in the Christmas Lighting and look forward to working with them in future.

KYN have had to promote the village hall as there was threat of closure and are fortunate to have friends from the village hall and we are working towards the pop-up cinema and seem to have lots of help, and it's been a good year.

Seal Over 60's - Mrs Pat Turner

Mrs Turner reported that she has regular numbers between 26 and 28 on a Saturday. There were funds from KYN and the club is doing well and is being promoted in the village. There are a few that are isolated in the village and we do encourage them to come along.

Beavers & Cubs Mrs Helen Davies was not present but her report was read out.

Any other Questions from Parishioners – no further questions

Parish Presentation – Community Award – this will be presented later in the year.

Mr Haslam thanked volunteers in the community for all their support.

Meeting closed 9pm