

St MARY HOO PC ~ CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017/18

- LOCAL PLAN

Another year has passed and we have been mainly involved with reviewing and consulting on the issues, options and proposals documents forming Medway Council's Local Plan. As all four of Medway's proposals include the expansion of Hoo Village to create a rural town there are serious concerns regarding infrastructure, transport, loss of amenity areas and changes to the rural way of life. I have joined forces with other Parish Councils and Kelly Tolhurst MP to voice these concerns and hopefully encourage amendment of the proposals to a fairer and more proportionate solution involving the whole of the Medway areas.

- COUNCIL'S LAND AND AMENITY AREAS

The management plans for the Nature Reserve and for the Pond area have continued to be applied and both are improving well. The reserve has matured nicely and has become a natural habitat for birds and small wild animals. New fencing and gates are complete, the pathway defined, wild flowers planted and trees attended to. I have recently contacted Laverock's tree care services who will inspect the area again in July and identify any dead or unwanted trees for removal to ensure safety and keep a balance between shelter and light. The Willows at the pond have been finally reduced to allow more light and less pollution for the pond. This will be the subject of a long term strategy to maintain a pleasant environment. As the area is designated as Conservation planning applications have to be raised and approved before any work on the trees can be carried out. The provision of the new overflow pipe and drainage ditch has proved successful and the memorial Rowan tree is growing well. Despite the wet and cold weather over the winter Grassroots Maintenance has maintained the areas and we have completed all works either by grant or minimal impact on our budget.

- HIGHWAYS

Despite our earlier meeting with Medway Council's Highways and Safety officials little has been done to allay our concerns regarding the speeding vehicles through the Parish or to improve safety at the junction of Fenn Street and the Fenn Corner roundabout. We still await extension to the Armco barrier at Fenn House Farm, a meaningful check on speeding, and a strategy for keeping the concrete roundabout free of weeds and other growth. Another new threat to road safety is the establishment of the Zoo at The Fenn Bell and the high season need for visitors to park elsewhere and negotiate the journey on foot with children and buggies where there are no foot paths.

- LOCAL TRADES

This year has seen the further establishment of the Zoo at The Fenn Bell and it's successful licence application and the provision of a smart new premises for Cliff's Auto Repairs, both are wished success in their business and in providing a service to local residents and beyond. Also Mansfield Vehicle Recovery has settled in at the industrial area and there have been no traffic or noise complaints that I know of.

- PRECEPT

It was considered necessary to increase the precept for 2018 to reflect the rises in maintenance costs, wages, and administrations such as training and insurances. The increase is minimal and was necessary since we have kept the precept unchanged for several years.

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks are given to my fellow Councillors, the Clerks – outgoing and incoming, our Webmaster, our maintenance contractor and all others who have given their time and services to keep St. Mary Hoo a pleasant place to live.

Bill Budd, Chairman St Mary Hoo PC

May 2018