

Newsletter



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New Beginnings

This Newsletter is the first of the Parish Council's regular Newsletters to keep you in the picture with what's happening in the parish. It replaces the Villager's Life magazine and we hope will better reflect St Mary's.

Allhallows Parish Council took the decision they wanted to edit and control the magazine and your parish councillors' view was that it was an opportune

moment for each parish to go its own separate way.

The Parish Council itself also has a new look to it, since Maureen Stanney did not seek re-election at the local council elections last May.

Cllr Bill Budd was elected Chairman at the Parish Council's first meeting and Cllr Bob Beckey became the Vice-chairman.

Only four people (all existing councillors) put themselves up for election, thereby

creating a vacancy. However, Paul Hassell contacted the Clerk when he heard about the vacancy and was duly co-opted on 1st October. Welcome to him.

A list of Councillors with their details and details of the Clerk can be found opposite.

The website has also been re-vamped. Do check it out—you will find it at www.stmaryhoo-pc.gov.uk.

Eric Woodards

It is with great sadness we report the death of former Clerk to the Council, Eric Woodards. Eric had been Clerk for 51 years and only retired in July 2006. He had been an accountant and had worked for Strood Rural and then Rochester City Councils. He had also

worked on polling days for Gravesham Borough Council. Eric's health had not been all that good, especially after the death of his wife Irene, but there didn't appear to be anything seriously wrong. However, when he went into hospital at the beginning of August lung cancer

was diagnosed and he died on 18th August. His funeral was attended by family and many friends and former colleagues, including members of the Parish Council. He was a real gentleman and will be much missed.

Our condolences go to his family.

Biffa have set up a Liaison Group and the Parish Council is represented by Cllr Bill Khatkar and the Clerk. Representations have been made about uncovered lorries and as far as possible this and other complaints have been addressed. Works are on schedule and the site should be finished and capped by July 2009.

Signpost

You will probably have noticed the new signpost opposite St Mary's Cottages.

The Parish Council had asked the Highways Authority, Medway Council, to replace the old signpost, but with a wooden one in keeping with the area. There was no dispute that the post needed replacing, but Medway Council was only prepared to use one of their standard metal signposts.

Residents Kathy MacLean and Andrew Laphorn came to our rescue, resulting in the



splendid new fingerpost, pictured here.

The Parish Council found the money for the cost of the materials and for the carving and signwriting through a "Rural Liaison" grant from Medway Council.

The Parish Council would like to thank Kathy and Andrew most sincerely for organising the manufacture and installation of the fingerpost and for the delightful "St Mary Hoo" sign that appeared at the same time above the Hall Road name sign.

Village Pond

The pond in the centre of the village has become overgrown and is being choked by weeds. The surrounding trees and undergrowth are now overhanging and shading the water.

The Parish Council commissioned a report on the pond from a pond specialist, who made certain recommendations and also quoted to undertake the work deemed essential to restore the pond. He also recommended an annual regime for its future

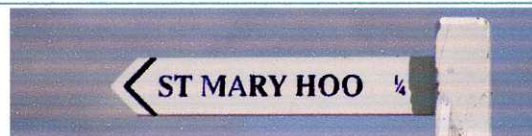
maintenance.

Unfortunately the initial cost was more than the Parish Council precept (the amount raised from residents to cover this year's normal anticipated expenditure). The projected cost of annual maintenance would also make a significant impact on any future annual budget and therefore precept.

Consequently we are applying for grants from outside bodies to do the work, possibly over 2 years.

In support of our applications, we need letters of support from you the residents, requesting us to undertake work on the pond and telling us how much the pond means both to you and the village. An eco emphasis would be helpful.

For those of you who have never visited the pond, go up Hall Road and it is just past the church on the left. We think you will be shocked at the state of the pond and we hope you will help us to ensure its future.



We are aiming to produce this *Newsletter* about 4 times a year. Articles, pictures, comments and ideas are welcome. Please submit anything to the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council will retain the right to select items for publication and to exercise editorial control.