

CUXTON NOTICEBOARD



The Newsletter by and for the people of Cuxton

February 2020

Parish Council News in Brief

December and January have been very busy times for Cuxton Parish Council. It is the time when finance has to be scrutinised and decisions made about how much money will be needed to manage village affairs for 2020/21.

The Precept

Your next Council Tax bill will contain a contribution to Cuxton Parish Council known as the precept. Currently this amounts to approximately £60 per band D household each year (equivalent to approximately £1,15 a week). This year the precept will increase by 1% to take account of increasing utility bills and staff training costs. Another additional expense will be for a new website provider as this service will no longer be provided for free by Kent County Council. The Parish Council have recently changed electricity provider to reduce costs of heating and lighting the Pavilion and are looking at ways in which the water bills for the allotments can be reduced. New accounting software has been introduced that should pay for itself over the next 2 years by reducing staff time needed to manage council finances and generating detailed budget reports.

Next year it is likely that the precept will have to increase again as Medway Council have informed parish councils that they will no longer be providing an annual 'rural liaison' grant of £3,300. The loss of this grant results from the reduction in the funding that Medway Council receive from central government. Most other Councils/Unitary Authorities stopped this grant when the government started their programme of austerity some years ago, so in some respects we have been more fortunate than other Parish Councils in this regard. The rural liaison grant represents approximately 5% of Cuxton Parish income.

Cuxton Parish Council continues to seek grants and other opportunities to keep the precept as low as they can.

Highways Issues

At the December CPC meeting it was agreed to write to Cllr Phil Filmer who has overall responsibility for the Medway Highways team. The letter expressed our growing concern over the continued delays and lack of progress on, and information about plans for the A228/Bush Road traffic lights. We also raised concerns about 5 other highways issues that have not been addressed over the last 18 months.

In his response Cllr Filmer stated that the current proposal for the next traffic light trial was to re-programme the pedestrian crossing lights to recreate the 'fault' that occurred over a year ago. It is not normal practice to use pedestrian lights to control traffic flow and so engineers have needed time to explore how pedestrian lights have been used in other areas in the UK and to undertake a safety audit of the site. The safety audit has identified a need for improvement in the road surface at the approach to the pedestrian lights. This resurfacing work cannot take place until March/April.

The Parish Council have asked for a copy of the Safety Audit and are hoping the other highways issues will be addressed in a timely manner.

Parish Council Infrastructure Audit

As part of Medway Local Plan development Cuxton Parish have responded to a request to participate in an audit of Cuxton Parish community facilities (infrastructure audit) that includes pubs, post office, cafes, restaurants and public open spaces. It also requested information on access to public transport, broadband and employment opportunities within Cuxton. The final section referred to Community/village Halls. The Parish Council were unable to complete this section as Cuxton does not have a community/village hall which could provide other service not currently available to residents e.g. a café, hall and public toilets.

Homestead Planning Application

The Cuxton Parish Council response to this planning application is available on the Parish Council website and noticeboards and in Cuxton library. It is anticipated that the application will be brought before Medway Planning Committee on February 5th. If this is the case objections can still be lodged with Medway Council up until 12 noon on February 4th. Confirmation of the time, date and venue for the Medway Planning meeting will be circulated on social media once the information is received from Medway Council.

Cllr Kay Hutchfield, Chair Cuxton Parish

Cuxton 91 Charity Football Match

Cuxton 91 held a charity game on Friday 27th December in aid of Demelza House, Sittingbourne. It was a game between Cuxton 91 vets and Rest of World Vets. This is an annual game we organise every Christmas with the money always going to Demelza House. This year we raised £5,000 and in the last four years we have raised more than £20,000.

The main organisers are Ronnie O'Connor and Lee Cooksey and the event is supported by Cuxton Village, it's football community and Cuxton Social Club. The lady in the photo second from the left is Claire Battersby from Demelza House who came to Cuxton Social Club for the after match get together and raffle/auction to give a little speech and except the money raised.



The money raised came from a just giving page, a raffle, an auction and the players paying subs to play. Many thanks to all involved, and well done.

Frans Thorley, Treasurer Cuxton

Hedgerow Planting in Cuxton

The Cuxton Countryside Group is affiliated to the "The Conservation Volunteers" movement, who are supporting a nationwide scheme, run by the Ovo energy supply company under the "I Dig Trees" banner, to plant a million trees in 5 years, by the end of 2019. We requested the delivery of 250 saplings, consisting of a mix of hawthorn, goat willow, dogwood, blackthorn and guelder rose, so that we could fill in a Bush Valley native hedgerow, which had many "holes" in it. On a rainy day in December, our hardy Thursday group of volunteers ventured out, with their trusty spades, to successfully plant all of these trees.



Each tree may well remove 0.5 of a ton of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere during its' lifetime, so the planting of trees throughout Britain will be of immense benefit to our world. Our December planting will also helps small mammals to move around, under enough cover, to prevent predation. It will also provide some welcome protection from the howling winter winds, when you go out for a walk!

Ovo has now achieved its target figure, thanks to its customers, who paid an extra premium so that these million trees could be planted by volunteer groups

Ian Gray, Chairman Cuxton Countryside Group

VE Day Celebrations

This year's May Bank Holiday has been moved to Friday May 8th to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The occasion will remember the contribution of British, Commonwealth and Allied armed forces personnel as well as those who contributed to the war effort and safeguarded the Home Front.

In addition to marking the Allies' victory in 1945, the Bank Holiday will serve as an opportunity to pay tribute to those who have served and continue to serve in the UK Armed Forces and their families.

There will be many national and local events planned over this Bank Holiday, and we already know there will be a church service and probably the ringing of the church bell. Cuxton Parish Council would welcome suggestions from Cuxton residents on how else Cuxton should mark this important event. Please sent your ideas via email, the Parish Council Facebook Page or website.



Let's Party!

2020 will mark the 10th Anniversary of the

The Cuxton Big Lunch

A working group has been formed, so if you have ideas on how we could make the 2020 Cuxton Big Lunch really special then let us know via the Parish Council Facebook page or by email or phone call to the Parish Office.

Cuxton Litter Bins are for Litter



Recently Bill, our street cleaner, has reported that someone is using Cuxton Litter bins in Charles Drive to dispose of their empty wine bottles. Please can we remind residents that public litter bins are not for use for household rubbish or recycling. Empty wine bottles left beside the bins are unsightly and also quickly fill the bins up leaving no space for street litter. It also makes the bins difficult for Bill to empty as it increases the weight enormously.

If glass bottles are placed in the correct recycling bag they will be collected on Thursdays alongside the weekly household rubbish collections. Recycling bags can be obtained from Cuxton Library, free of charge. (Library opening times are on the back page of this newsletter).

Thanking you in advance for your consideration.

Josie Griffiths, Assistant

Police Surgery in Cuxton

In December a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) surgery was held at The Pavilion focusing on 'Crime Prevention'. 12 members of the public attended and 3 parish councillors along with 2 PCSO's. How to report crime was clarified and the PCSO's confirmed that it **is vital that incidents are reported** so that police can identify trends or areas of concern. Incidents can be reported either via 999 or 101 or online <https://beta.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> The 'live chat' facility online can also be used to report incidents to the police.

When reporting incidents on the website, a form needs to be completed with details. Currently there is no option to attach photos/video footage, but when using the form please add in text if you have additional information to share. The PCSO will then follow up with you directly via email or telephone and provide you with his email address to share additional footage/photos.

There was a real emphasis on the need to report incidents in Cuxton as otherwise there will not be a true record of alleged incidents and the police may then focus on another area.

I am working with the PCSO to arrange more evening surgeries in January/February and hopefully monthly. As soon as dates are confirmed I will share them via Cuxton Noticeboard, Cuxton Parish Council website, Facebook page and the social media platforms in the village, Cuxton Village Facebook page and Next Door. Please come along to the surgeries and meet the police and ask any questions you may have and thank you to all those villagers who came to this surgery and I hope you found it useful.

Councillor Tracy Thorley

Litter Picking

As a resident you may well have seen the enormous amount of litter on the M2 slip roads and roads leading from the slip roads to the roundabout at the top of Sundridge Hill. Cuxton Parish Councillors are working with Matt Fearn the Ward Councillor to gain permission to litter pick in these areas. Other Council have been refused permission from Highways England because of the risk posed by traffic. If the litter disappears in January you will know we have been successful!

2019 Christmas Tree Event

Many thanks to all those residents who joined the Parish Council to enjoy the Christmas Tree Lighting and Carol Event. This year the Fresh Expressions of Churches provided a tableau nativity scene that provided an appropriate focus for the event. (If there are any seamstress out there who could provide the King with a new outfit for next year we would be really grateful). In addition to the sharing the carols, mince pies and mulled wine with friends and neighbours, the event raised £100 for the local homeless peoples' charity Medway Street Angels who are based in Rochester.

This event would not have happened without help of Gordon and Brian Chitty, Jason, Brian, Steve and Richard in installing the tree, putting on the lights and removing the tree in January. Sincere thanks goes to them all.

PG Platforms Ltd, Snodland kindly lent us a platform lift **for free** so we could put the lights on the tree and Matt Fearn paid for the Christmas tree. Mulled wine and mince pies were donated by Morrisons, Cuxton Co-op and Marks & Spencer.



Boundary Consultation

Medway Council have requested an increase of 4 in the number of Medway Councillors (55-59). The Local Government Boundary Commission is carrying out an electoral review of Medway Council. The aim of the electoral review is to recommend ward boundaries that mean each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters. Please participate in this consultation as it *could* result in Halling having a ward councillor and Cuxton being joined with part of Strood potentially undermining our rural status. <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/19557>

What's On In Cuxton

Thursday
20th
February

Halling Historical Society "Trackway to Motorway": Thursday 20th February, Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling. Admission £2.50. Refreshments 50p.



the CuxTones

Community Choir

ARE RECRUITING!

Based at Cuxton Community Junior School
and now in its
10TH YEAR!

NO AUDITIONS!

JOIN A WARM AND FRIENDLY GROUP
MEET WEDNESDAY EVENINGS TERM TIME



Sing songs from Pop, Rock & the Musicals!

To register your interest, contact Sarah Starkey on

07969 542579

Or check out our website at

www.brockstarproductions.com/communitychoirs

Report Fly Tipping

Medway Council on **01634 333 333**,

Gravesham Council **01474 337 000**

Parking & Abandoned Vehicles

Contact Emma Patching on 07508 846937 or email Emma.Patching@medway.gov.uk to discuss general or specific parking and abandoned vehicles enquiries.

Graffiti

The council will remove graffiti for free (even on private property) as long as the owner of the property signs an indemnity form. Email Emma.Patching@medway.gov.uk to schedule an appointment.

Stray dogs

Report to Medway Council on 01634 333 333 and follow on

Co-editors: Cllr Hutchfield & Josie Griffiths, Assistant Parish Clerk. Articles to be submitted by 15th each month. No publication in August or January. Unless otherwise attributed, the content of this newsletter is developed by the editors. Views contained are not necessarily those of the Parish Council. Every effort is made to check the accuracy of items produced and submitted. The Parish Council and newsletter editors accept no liability for other contributions, which remain the copyright of the contributors.

Next Parish Council Meeting:
7.30pm, on Thursday, 13th Feb. 2020 at
Cuxton Library, Cuxton, **All Welcome.**

Cuxton Parish Councillors

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The Parish Office:

The Pavilion, Cuxton Recreation Ground,

Bush Road, Cuxton, ME2 1EZ

Parish Office Opening Hours:

Mon & Wed 0930am-1230pm or by appointment

Term Dates: Academy of Cuxton Schools

Monday, 6th Jan. 2020 to 14th Feb. - Spring Term

Friday, 14th Feb. Inset day, **no children to attend**

Half term: 17th to 21st February 2020

Monday, 20th April to 22nd May

Cuxton Library's opening hours

Tuesday 9 am to 1pm.

Thursday 2 pm to 6pm

Friday 2pm to 6pm

Saturday 10am. to 4pm.

Closed: Monday, Wednesday and Sunday

Doctor out of hours: 111

Police: 101 for non urgent crime or to talk to local police.