

## Shadoxhurst Village Forum

### Notes from the 9<sup>th</sup> Village Forum meeting of 2017 held in the Pavilion on Thursday 16th November 2017

- To maintain the quality of life for all in the village
- To generate issues that could be put to the Parish Council
- To re-kindle community spirit and engender friendship
- To build a social feeling in the village
- To suggest things that will bring people together
- **With a vision to create and develop a positive community spirit.**

#### 1) Welcome and Introductions

26 people attended the meeting.

Cheryl welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2) Guest Speakers

##### 2.1 PCSO Oliver Welch

PCSO Welch is Shadoxhurst's PCSO. He covers a large area, including Hamstreet, Pluckley, Smarden, not just our parish, and he will focus his attentions on the areas where the crime is happening. This is because reduced police staffing means that allocations have to be based on actual crime statistics.

PCSO Welch will try his best to attend Parish Council meetings, listen to local issues and do what he can to help us. He feels that Neighbourhood Watch is useful, as is sharing news on the Next Door app, but as the police don't look at the Next Door site, he reminds us to use Neighbourhood Watch as well.

##### 2.2 Andrew Judd, Liaison Officer for South Kent Police

Mr Judd is the Volunteer and Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for Ashford, Folkestone and Dover. Gaps in government funding mean that more and more PCSOs are having to do PCs work, so the resulting reductions in PCSOs makes Neighbourhood Watch very useful.

Mr Judd presented a slide show to explain the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Ashford is the lowest crime rate district in Kent, and Shadoxhurst has a very low level of crime.

Country Eye is a free app you can use on your smart phone. It's a useful tool, for example you can take a photo of fly tipping or a vehicle fire, and when you send it, it automatically gives the GPS location to Kent police.

If you're a victim of crime, you **must** report it, because these statistics dictate where policing is focused. Full reporting also helps to maintain the number of PCSOs in Kent. In an emergency, dial 999. For other crime dial 101 - there can be delays of 20 minutes or so to answer 101 calls, but please be patient, the call

will only cost you 15p, no matter how long it takes. When you report the crime, quote that you are part of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. This means that your information will also be passed to Mr Judd, who will contact you later as part of the Quality Assurance scheme. If you are able to report online to Kent Police, this will be quicker than dialling 101.

The more people join Neighbourhood Watch, the more intelligence is gathered. It may also be possible to get some discount on your home insurance.

If anyone is interested in volunteering with Kent police, please let Mr Judd know. He is based at Tufton Street, Ashford, and can be contacted on 01233 896151.

Questions and comments from forum members were then discussed:

Some people weren't sure whether or not they should report 'minor crime'. Mr Judd reiterated that **all** crime should be reported, the police would decide on the action to take.

Shadoxhurst's speed limit will soon be reduced from 40mph to 30mph. When this happens, Speedwatch may be helpful, but it's mainly about self-enforcement.

The police have no parking powers. This area is the responsibility of Ashford Borough Council.

The Forum felt that as a community we need to consider how we include older people and those who don't have internet access given that so many things are now done online.

PCSO Welch and Mr Judd were thanked for their presentations.

### **3) Neighbourhood Watch**

Peter Webb is our coordinator and shares information around the village. His contact number is 732901.

### **4) Notes from Previous Meeting**

There were no changes required to the notes from the meeting on 14/9/17.

### **5) Matters Arising**

#### **5.1 Local Plan, Planning Issues, Housing.**

David Ledger informed us that Ashford Borough Council (ABC) will submit the Local plan to the Planning Inspectorate on 22/12/17. More omission sites have been released in the borough, these came through in the earlier August consultation, but have only recently been made public. One that comes within our border at Bromley Green Crossroads is back in the mix. Our Parish Council

has written to the Leader at ABC for more information. We don't know yet if any more sites will be put back in by ABC.

A grass roots movement is developing of people who are fed up with poor planning and large scale development being imposed across the Borough. There is no doubt that the villages are stronger together, several local campaigns are starting and people can get involved if they feel that something needs to be done.

Comments from Forum members:

We need to speak now, don't wait; yes, we need to make our mark.

We need an honest conversation about what is coming our way; ABC is being dragged kicking and screaming to work with us or tell us what's going on.

To keep our village identity, we need a green buffer around the village; there's supposed to be a new strategy to separate settlements, but at the rate fields are being developed there'll be no options left.

The Parish Council has set up a sub-committee to look at the provision and capacity of Utilities in the Parish. If anyone feels willing and able to contribute or simply help and join in, please let David know on 733540. Discussions have already been held with Southern Water about the foul sewage capacity and answers to a number of questions is presently awaited.

Aileen said that developers need to be aware in advance of capacity, so they can take full development costs into account.

## **5.2 Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

There are 2 public rights of way crossing the pub field site. The developer wants to extinguish one and divert the other across residents' drives. The Parish wants to keep both these ancient PROWs and divert them round the edge of the field. There are discussions ongoing with the Public Rights of Way Officer and the Rambler's Association. We hope there'll be a sensible outcome, if not, we will object and take the issue to a public Inquiry.

## **5.3 Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

Cheryl updated the Forum. Responses have been patchy, there is a lack of transparency because only email copies have been sent. Information is incomplete because there are no notes of meetings, site meetings, or file notes of conversations with other officers, line managers or councillors. Planner Mark Chaplin said they are too busy to take notes at meetings. As far as ABC are concerned they've closed down the FOI because they've sent everything they've got. Cheryl is of the view that either there is an abuse of process (not keeping records) or they're not complying fully with our request. A complaint has been sent to the Information Commissioner, and we hope to hear something soon.

## **5.4 Shadoxhurst Harvest Fete**

Ian showed some slides from the lovely (sunny) harvest fete we had held on September 30th. A big thank you to the many people who helped organise

everything, and who had volunteered on the day. Thanks also for the generous donations of raffle prizes and very tasty homemade cakes. The fete had been a fun day out with something for all ages, it was great to see so many families from in and around the village enjoying themselves. Because the fete was so well received, we aim to organise another one for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September next year. These events do need people to help though, so please offer to volunteer if you can, even a small amount of time can make a big difference. Contact Ian on 732084 if you can help.

### **5.5 Murder Mystery Night**

What a treat! Great fun and we'd like to do it again next year. The performers, including our very own Lis, raise money for charity, and on this occasion, they kindly donated all proceeds to our village. Thank you!

### **5.6 Upcoming Events & Fund Raising**

So far this year we have raised about £1000 for village funds. Please consider what you want to spend it on and we can discuss our ideas at the next meeting.

Karen and Ron are organising a Quiz night on Saturday January 13<sup>th</sup> at the Village hall. If you can organise yourselves into a table of six, then contact Karen for tickets on 732276, first come, first served. Is someone willing to step forward & organise a raffle for the quiz evening?

If anyone has any ideas for other social events, please contact Cheryl (733124).

### **5.7 Village Clubs**

#### **5.7.1 History Club**

This is a new venture – and you don't need to know anything about history (I don't). We're an informal and lively group who are enjoying getting together to share and find out about all sorts of things to do with Shadoxhurst's history. It's already proving to be interesting, at times quite moving, and also fun. The more the merrier, and the better we can start to build up a people's history of Shadoxhurst's past. So if you're interested, contact Carol on 732084 or just turn up. Next meeting is Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November in the Pavilion, 10.30am – 12 noon. Cost is £1 per person, and that includes tea & biscuits. You'll be very welcome.

#### **5.7.2 Sewing Club**

You don't have to be a competent sewer – you just need to enjoy it! It's basically a self help group, we do little projects. We've made bags for reindeer food, and we're currently working on creating a map of the village and will put this together like a patchwork quilt. If you're interested, please come along and join us, you'll be very welcome. Contact Sheila for more information 733540. The next meeting is on Thursday evening 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 7 – 9pm in the Village Hall.

## **6 Defibrillator**

The football club have one which is located in the Pavilion garage. The parish council still intend to get one for the Village Hall.

## **7) Showcasing Shadoxhurst for Business.**

Cheryl intends to organise this event in April 2018. It will be a great way to link locals with local businesses. If you know of any businesses who may be interested, please let Cheryl know 733124.

## **8) Super Fast Broadband**

Carol updated the Forum. There are still problems that BTOR are trying to sort out. The cabinet down Church Lane is supposed to be live, but it's still not trouble free. It is hoped that other cabinets will be ready by the end of December, but again this depends on no more problems cropping up. Our champions at Kent County Council and our Parish Council are keeping this on the agenda every week and we are doing everything possible to get this sorted.

## **9) AOB**

### **9.1 Village Newsletter & Parish Website**

At present the village newsletter is 2 sides of A4 and goes out bi-monthly. As there are a lot of things going on, and some news items need sharing quite quickly, we'd really like it to be every month. However, this would cost more money and impact on the volunteers who deliver the newsletters. We have tried to encourage people to sign up for an e-newsletter, but there has been a disappointing take up. To help cover costs we could take adverts, but this relies on finding a volunteer to deal with the extra admin involved, but we could then keep the newsletter bi-monthly and have 4 sides of A4.

Sheila and Martin now have some access to the Parish Council website and so are able to change information regarding village events quicker. It's a work in progress.

### **9.2 Request for Public Relations help**

Is anyone in the village willing and able to step in and be a volunteer 'reporter' on a fairly regular basis for the Parish Council? Tasks would include feeding information to Facebook and local magazines and newspapers. Please call David if you are interested on 733540.

### **9.3 Terms of Reference for the Forum**

The forum requires Terms of Reference to be created and approved because it operates under the umbrella of Shadoxhurst Parish Council.

### **9.4 End of Year Events**

The Wine Circle meet on Friday evening 8<sup>th</sup> December. Contact Colin for details 732784.

Coffee Club Christmas party in the Pavilion, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December at the earlier time of 1pm – 4pm. Everyone is welcome but please let Val know if you are coming 732784.

### **9.5 Events for 2018**

In June there will be a Weald of Kent and Wildlife Trust event in the area around Moat Farm.

The Methodist church will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday next July.

November 11<sup>th</sup> will be a big event across the country, being the centenary of the Armistice. Perhaps we can raise funds for a memorial in our village.

### **10) Dates of Next Forum Meetings**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm in the Pavilion (please note this has changed from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December)

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018, 7pm in the Pavilion

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 7pm in the Pavilion

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 7pm in the Pavilion