

Doddington Parish Council. Chairman's Report 2009

It has been another busy year with many happenings, a very large post bag and an epidemic of emails. Despite that as I set out to research from the last year's minutes I thought that this could be the briefest of reports so far.

This last year will be remembered by the shocking news we received on the 23rd of February, of Mary Chasteneys's death in a road accident. Mary was a well respected Parish councillor, past Chairman who was actively involved with almost all village organisations and an active helper at most events.

Our Parish Clerk Wendy has had a very busy year, she has coped extremely well with the huge diversity of tasks she has undertaken, thanks Wendy for that bit extra you always put in.

Parish Councillor Amicia Oldfield resigned last September, life was getting too busy for her with her husband Richard as the High Sherriff of Kent and her family in Suffolk needing more help from her. With two applicants we held a secret ballot, Mark Sherwood was the successful applicant and has quickly become a valuable member of the council.

The War Memorial was finally completed, thanks to Johnathon Butcher, Kevin Attwood and Mike Johnson, Wendy Gaze and of course Mary Chasteneys for pushing for the improvements at the start, it was all worthwhile, on November 9th at the Memorial Service there were 65 who attended, the largest attendance for many years. All managed to assemble around the memorial at the top of the slope, two in wheelchairs were also able to be part of the congregation. Many thanks to Colin Gaze and I think Wendy for taking over the maintenance of the memorial.

It has been a busy year for planning with applications at High Court and Hillcrest on Dully Hill, Yew Tree House, Swale View, Woodbank and a second one for a garage, The Oast at Homestall Farm, EDF power lines at Greet, Sharsted Lodge, Doughty's the Butchers, Coach House Church Hill, Doddington Service Station, Swale Folly, Southdowns, 6 West End Cottages, Solomons Cottage, coppicing at Temple Farm, Number 5 The Retreat and an appeal over Whitelines, a second appeal this time for Southdowns was followed by a second planning application to SBC which proved successful. We were also asked for our comments on a new forestry centre in Endings Wood just beyond the western edge of our parish.

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I believe that Highways think the traffic calming matters have been resolved, I personally don't agree, there are still far too many signs and the shoddy workmanship is more evident daily. Thanks to Sara for all her badgering, her phone calls and emails.

Neighbourhood watch is still active so thank you to Ian for your monthly reports.

Doddington in Bloom is flourishing, very successfully. Doddington has not only won the village class for two years running but it has been asked to enter the inter-regional Champion of Champions competing with Orsett in Essex. I must thank Dave and Sallie Shaw who organise the scheme and help immensely in the village, also the committee, Carol Wood, Jan West, Annette & Ian McMullen, Barbara Roberts, Anne Whiting, and of course me, Anne Jarret has recently resigned for health reasons. Others who also help with the planted areas of the traffic calming through the village and the churchyard maintenance group are Mike Jarret, Kathy Friend, Richard Moyse and possibly others, I apologise if I have forgotten anyone. Also a thank you for Blenwood Grounds Maintenance, who donated and delivered woodchips for use as ground cover in the beds.

The Fun Day was a great success with good summer weather, it is now an organisation in its own right and not now a sub-committee of the PC.

Month by month there has been plenty to discuss, in June, our Clerk reported on her attendance at a Clerk's Information Day, we were asked by allotment holders to consider allowing apex roofs as well as pent roofs and we were asking for a review of the Doddington Conservation Area. In July it was reported that the War Memorial was completed, there was a request for an extra bus service for school children going to Canterbury and we were moaning about road closures, one on Lenham hill with no warning and Lynsted Lane was closed with just a few days warning. In September we had two parents complaining about the playing field gates which led to new signs on playing field fence, and a request to alter signs on Church Hill. In October we heard that footpath ZR 219 was now going to be moved to the right place and we were in the middle between Rospa and Wicksteed trying to sort out whether the roundabout had been installed correctly. In November it was the War

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Memorial Armistice Day Service, in December a request to help pay for repairs to a large stained glass window in the church. In January we were busy discussing the Freedom of Information Act. February we were told by Highways about "Jet Patching", and Plough Monday went ahead with no hitches. In March we learned that we wouldn't get a freighter for our clean up day and Wendy reported on her day at the Kent Highways Roadshow. In April the case of Ringlestone road had been rumbling on for well over a year, or at least cars driving along it were, some sustaining damage to wheels and tyres. The only other issue to compete with this long running saga is that of litter bins inside the playing field. We hope we can get this sorted out in this next year.

Finally I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for their good attendance and hard work, all donated, thank you Mike for the playing field reports and inspections. Thanks also to Colin Gaze for kindly pressure washing the safety tiles in the playing field, you have done a great job.

Thanks to the members of public who attend our meetings and bring many matters to our attention.

Finally thank you to Councillor Colin Prescott our Ward Councillor and Councillor Andrew Bowles our County Councillor for all of their help and attendances at our meetings.