

Birchington News

News and Information from Birchington Parish Council : Issue 13 : January '10

The Parish Precept

This is the time of the year that town and parish councils draw up their budgets for the next twelve months. These funds, called the Precept, are added on to the council tax by the district council – in our case Thanet District Council. In other words whatever Birchington Parish Council decides to spend comes out of the pockets of villagers.

Whilst Birchington Parish Council is audited by the National Audit Commission it is not capped by central government. It therefore falls to a parish council to provide, within reason, those things that the district council are, for whatever cause, unable to provide. A parish council that meets regularly but does nothing is quite clearly not much good for the community. On the other hand, a parish council that spends indiscriminately is also not acting in the best interests of villagers.

Here in Birchington the council takes its financial responsibilities seriously. Proposed projects are seriously researched and costed before any decisions are made. Public consultation is often carried out. Funds are sourced from third parties wherever possible.

There is an impressive list of projects carried out by BPC over the last few years in the village which attest to the impact of BPC on the fabric of village life. Crispe Park Playground, The Lychgate Scheme, Station Rd Improvement, Peter Francis Memorial Playground, Re-siting of Fountain, Renovation of War Memorial, Provision of Public Seating.

Last year the precept for Birchington Parish Council was the lowest per band D house in Thanet at £7.65. This year it will be raised by 2%. It is a concern that over 50% of this charge is overhead but, in these days of litigation, it is not possible to reduce this figure without incurring unacceptable risk. In addition councillors spend quite a large percentage of their time examining, and sometimes fighting, planning applications though this does not cost the electorate anything.

It is, however, a fact that we receive very little feed back from Birchingtonians on whether we are doing too little or too much – or whether the quality of our projects is acceptable. Please take a little time to tell us what you think. Call a councillor or use the web site – we look forward to hearing from you.

Contact your councillor

One of the easiest ways to have your views heard is to contact your local councillor. To make an appointment, telephone the Clerk to the Parish Council on 01227 742 822 and leave a message with name and telephone number or address so that return contact may be made – alternatively, telephone any Parish Councillor direct.

Chairman

Brian White, 26 Alpha Road,
Birchington CT7 9EQ (Tel: 843334)

Vice Chairman

John Garland, 1 Daryngton Avenue,
Birchington CT7 9PS (Tel: 845576)

Members

Iris Bedwell, 1, College Farm
Cottages, Crispe Road, Birchington
CT7 0JH (Tel:841906)

Jack Cohen, 2 Leslie Road,
Birchington CT7 9HG (Tel: 847421)

Dennis Cooper, Chesapeake, Cliff
Road, Birchington CT7 9LS (Tel:
845933)

Jean Fleming, 3 Edward Drive,
Birchington CT7 9BY (Tel: 842267)

Julie Francis, 7 Kent Gardens,
Birchington CT7 9RS (Tel: 841796)

Roger Latchford, 10 Seaview Road,
Birchington CT7 9LB (Tel : 846458)

Margaret Sheldrick, Walnut Tree
Cottage, 16A Grenham Road,
Birchington CT7 9JH (Tel: 841545)

John Worrow, 16 Ingoldsby Road,
Birchington CT7 9PL
(Tel:07847 303256)

Clerk to Parish Council

Colette Coleman

All enquiries and correspondence to
the Council Office, Rear of 34 The
Square, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9AA
Tel: 01227 742 822

BRIAN WHITE

A profile of the Chairman of Birchington Parish Council

Brian was born in Eastry and was educated in Sandwich. He spent 22 years in the Army serving in hot spots such as Aden, Brunei and Sarawak. He is married with two children – both now grown up. After life in the Army, Brian worked in a number management positions with transport companies and completed his working life with the police at Margate involved again in transport.



Brian White

Since retirement he has travelled the world visiting one son and grandson in Canada and taken in Hong Kong and Singapore. His interests are gardening, football and charity work. He is Chair of the local branch of the Royal British Legion and a member of the Birchington Residents Association, Birchington Twinning Association and the Birchington Horticultural Society. In his spare time he enjoys a game of snooker

If you need help from the Police or Community Support Officers

The telephone number for N. Birchington Community Support Officer is 0796 958 3919 and for S. Birchington Community Support Officer 07772 226 230

VISITOR CENTRE PLANNED FOR THANET EARTH

Thanet Earth is now a year old and claims to have achieved all of the goals set out in the original plan to produce high-quality vegetable salad crops in a



unit that is almost carbon-neutral. Current work includes clearing and replanting the pepper and tomato plants

Winter tomato production is in full swing and light levels are generally well contained. The lights are on between midnight and dawn and on darker winter days. Consideration is being given to a second pepper greenhouse for Spring 2010.

There have been many requests to tour the facility, which Thanet Earth has regrettably had to deny due to the closed environment and the potential for plants to become diseased with contact from outside.

Plans for a dedicated visitor centre are however being drawn up and in due course it is expected that it will be a popular destination.

Any questions regarding Thanet Earth can be directed to the company

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF BIRCHINGTON

Volume 1 by Jennie Burgess

The first version of this book began about four years ago, but as a large 'tome' of a book, which tramped through the centuries as it told Birchington's long history. Then, in June this year, a suggestion was made that it would be much wiser to do what people had first asked me for – which was to write down the gist of what each of my talks contained. The new format was to have ten topics, with roughly ten pages on each topic, consisting of half text and half pictures. I rejected this at first, saying "It will kill my 'muse'!" It was pointed out in no uncertain terms that the majority of the text was already in my computer – gathered over the last ten years!

The new idea was eventually achieved, with the subjects being chosen at random from the 40 or more talks I do or the displays I have put on in the middle Newsagent's side windows. It was the sense of medley that we tried to convey when we chose the title of the book. A kaleidoscope has such a wonderful variety of patterns as the tube is rotated – and the village of Birchington never ceases to amaze its residents in the way it is constantly changing and adapting, and yet still retaining its warmth, beauty and caring heart.

The topics we have covered in this first volume are – The Church, The Churchyard, Farms & Barns, Quex Park, Windmills in Birchington, Hall, Law & Order, The Fire Brigade, Medieval & Tudor Birchington and The Railway & Seaside.

In working on the first ten topics, others kept nudging at my elbow, demanding to be included – so the second volume was soon beginning to take form. The topics it will cover are – The Square & Fountain, Schools & Education, The First Bungalows, 17th (& possibly 18th) Century Birchington, The Curate & The Queen, Lost Buildings in Birchington, The Catholic Church, The Three

Village Centres and Birchington in the First World War. There will also be a short section on the birth of the Birchington Heritage Trust and its Museum, which is the beneficiary for all the profits from the books.

The trust members and I all hope that readers of the books will continue to add their own memories to our archives – and let me know of any mistakes that they notice in what is said. These will be such a help if we need to do a reprint of any volume in the future.

The book is on sale at £10, plus £2.50 p & p if outside Birchington. To order a copy send a cheque and your details to Jennie Burgess, 6 Alpha Road, Birchington, CT7 9EQ

CHRISTMAS FAIR A GREAT SUCCESS



Santa's Toy Shed outside Somerfields



Children enjoying the ice rink outside the Powell Arms

Birchington was buzzing for the Christmas Fair on the 28th and 29th November. The Fair was organised along with the switching on of the Christmas lights in the town

Just a minute...

A summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2009. The full minutes are available on the council website

Mrs Pam Vilton, Chairman of the Events Committee gave her thanks to the District and Parish Councillors for their help and financial support towards the Christmas Event. Mrs Vilton also thanked the Clerk for her assistance.

Mr la Roche, a member of the public gave his congratulations on the event and stated that his objection raised previously was under investigation, having been told by the Standards Board that it is a matter for a solicitor and not them.

POLICE AND WARDEN REPORT

Warden Liam Doogan gave his year-end report commenting that crime and anti social behaviour has declined in the Village this year helped by the provision of more activities for the Youth including the youth club and improved sports facilities at KES and the primary school. Reported incidents of rogue traders have also fallen following an awareness campaign. Purse theft however is currently a problem.

REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr J Roberts attended several events with her husband as Vice Chairman, promoting Thanet and Birchington in particular.

Cllr Sheldrick had attended 12 civic functions as Chairman of TDC including the Remembrance Day Parade.

Cllr Latchford has attended a number of conferences across Kent and the Kent Partnership meeting. DEFRA is about to grant a licence for the Thanet wind farm project, and a public consultation will be launched soon on the night flying strategy. Cllr Latchford has also had continued meetings with Port of Boulogne and Euroferries regarding the service from Ramsgate.

CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk reported on items of correspondence including; an invitation for the Chairman to attend the Civic Service next April, and replies regarding BPC concern over irregular car parking charges.

MEMBERS REPORTS

Cllr Sheldrick has dealt with a couple of housing issues including a boundary dispute.

Cllr Fleming Is to attend a Youth Club meeting on December 2nd.

Cllr Latchford spoke at the TDC Planning meeting regarding the Berkeley Road application and dealt with other planning issues.

Cllr Cooper reported that here had been an attempted burglary at the Post Office with the offender arrested following the provision of CCTV footage.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

The list of payments was circulated and **agreed**. There were 15 payments totalling £23,222.07 including the payment for new play equipment.

A £50 donation was received from Quex Park. At the last Finance meeting various procedures were agreed in preparation for next year's audit. A budget meeting has been called for December 9th to agree next year's precept requirement. PPP Committee

Parks: The new play equipment has been installed and stones placed at the entrances and under benches.

Projects: The Christmas lights are now on for the season. The Committee has the longer term responsibility of finding new premises for the PC as the current lease expires in 3 years.

Publicity: Cllr Garland attended the public surgery and the website continues to attract visitors.

The Chairman of
Birchington Parish
Council and all
Councillors wish
everyone a
Prosperous and
Happy
New Year