

WEST KINGSDOWN  
PARISH COUNCIL  
REPORT



2023/24

The Parish Council is responsible for the civil parish which includes West Kingsdown, Woodlands, Knatts Valley and East Hill.

We have 11 Councillors who make up the Parish Council.  
They serve a four year term which expires May 2027.

This report provides an opportunity for the Parish Council to account to local residents on the way it has discharged its responsibilities and Managed the Council's assets in the previous twelve months.

## **Chairman's Report 2023/24**

The year began in May 2023 with a new Council, following the elections held at the beginning of the month, regular meetings taking place with the opportunity for members of the public to attend and raise issues at the monthly Parish council meetings. The General Purposes Committee meets monthly and often looks at matters in detail and then making recommendations to the full Council. Both meetings are preceded by a Planning Committee Meetings where Members consider the planning applications made to the Sevenoaks District Council based on planning considerations. The Parish Council's comments are then forwarded to the District Council. The Council's precept was considered and set at a Finance Committee Meeting in January and this will provide the finances to run the Council for the following year. All of the meetings are open to the public, but they are not public meetings. The three vacancies on the Council following the elections were filled by co-option in accordance with legislation.

During the year the Council has renewed the fencing in the Recreation Ground in Hever Avenue; carried out routine maintenance the skatepark; repair work in the summer to the goal areas of the football pitches and trimmed the boundary hedges on the Gamecock Meadow. Tree safety work was carried out in the Burial Ground and treework outside the shops in Hever Road, with the removal of two trees, one dead and one in decline.

The application to build 4 houses at the rear of the shops in Hever Road was allowed by SDC despite strong reorientations made by the Parish Council. Representations were also made, along with District Councillors, regarding the parking on the corner of Hever Road/Hever Avenue outside the new Co-Op. The District Council sought local views on the 2040 Plan and the Parish Council responded in opposition to any large scale development in the village.

We continue to work with English Rural Housing Association to bring a small rural exception site of local housing for local people which we now hope will start in this present year.

The Council has begun a project to refurbish the tennis courts on the Gamecock Meadow Looking at providing a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and awaits the results of a condition survey with recommendations and budget costs. A survey of potential use/users and interested persons has been carried out to identify uses that will be supported.

A new Website for the Council is now live and the proposal to have a Parish Council Facebook page was not supported by the majority of Members.

The Council works closely with the Old School Management Committee, the Church Woods Management Committee and the Village Hall Management Committee. Each of these is an independent registered charity and your Council is represented on them. They perform an important role in looking after village assets and the work put into them by their volunteer committee members is of considerable value to our community. Managing these assets in this way enables them to apply for grants which the Parish Council will not be eligible for. Reports from each of the Committees are included in this document.

One of the more onerous roles for a Councillor is to be Chairman of the Planning Committee and Mrs Josie Watchorn has continued in this office for the past year. Her knowledge and expertise in planning matters and the history of planning applications in the village has been invaluable to the Council.

Roy Barry has ably assisted us in the consideration of the village footpaths and regularly walks them drawing our attention to matters of concern for which he is thanked.

Jackie West our KCC Community Warden plays a valuable role in our community which is very much appreciated by parishioners and Councillors alike.

The Parish Council works closely with our District Councillors, in particular Ms Lynda Harrison who is not only a District Councillor but also our Parish Clerk, assisting us in matters relating to the functions of the District Council.

Our Kent County Councillor David Brazier attends Parish Council meetings and is always

responsive to queries from the Council, individual Councillors and parishioners. If you have concerns about aspects of the County Council's functions which you might not wish to raise via the Parish Council then do not hesitate to contact him directly.

Ms Lynda Harrison, our Clerk plays an invaluable role as the public face of the Council and looks after day to day business and our finances in an effective and efficient way.

I record my thanks to my fellow councillors for their time and commitment, serving this community as volunteers for the benefit of all who live here. One Councillor has recently resigned and there is currently a vacancy to be filled.

Cllr Pat Bosley, Chairman

### **Councillors**

Mrs Pat Bosley

Mr Dave King

Mrs Margaret Richards

Mrs Josie Watchorn

Mrs Ian Bosley

Mr Graham Christie

Mrs Victoria Bennett

Rudi McCarthy

Roy Seal

Steve Gray

Vacancy

Chairman of the Parish Council and Finance Committee

Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

Chairman of the General Purpose Committee

Chairman of Planning Committee

Vice Chairman of the Planning

Full Parish Council Meetings are held monthly, and are now held at a new location of the St Edmunds Centre School Lane. with the exception of August due to holidays, and the General Purposes Committee meet on the second Monday of each month at the Pavilion London Road. These meetings continued to be open to the public and press to attend.

Minutes of all the meeting are available from the Parish Office, published on the Parish Council's new website [www.westkingsdownparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.westkingsdownparishcouncil.org.uk).

In April of each year the Annual Parish Meeting is held which is an opportunity for the Parish Council to report on its activities and for local electors to speak on local issues.

### **Parish Office**

The Parish Office is located at the Pavilion London road and is open Monday, Tuesday and Fridays and open to the public between 11-1pm

### **Code of Conduct**

In accordance with legislation the Councillors conduct the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Code of Conduct set out by the Sevenoaks District Council Standards Committee. Councillors receive regular updates regarding changes in legislations. 2023 saw elections which happen every 4 years

### **Publicity**

The Parish website continues to be maintained and updated with information for the community. The Parish Council also continues to provide information to parishioners with its regular newsletters printed in SEKAM, the St Edmund's Parish magazine. Notice boards are also used to publish dates of meetings. The Clerk also posts items of interest on the West Kingsdown residents and Knatts Valley Facebook pages, although not run by the Council, residents have found the information useful. Notice boards are Hever Road, Gamecock Meadow, East Hill and Knatts Valley, as well as a notice board in the entrance hall of the library.

### **Kent County Community Warden Scheme**

KCC held a consultation regarding the future of the warden scheme given the budget reductions the County Council are looking to make. The scheme will be greatly reduced, and we hope but it's not guaranteed that we will retain our Warden Jackie West. In these uncertain times the Parish Council are in talks with Hartley and New Ash Green about possibility of employing Jackie independently to maintain the level of service and the great works she does in the communities, She is an asset providing a visible presence within our community and liaising with groups and organisations and at the local school. Jackie always goes that extra mile to help where she can. She is always very efficient in her role.

### **Hever Road Shops**

The Parish Council continues to maintain this area. We had trees trimmed back and found sadly that three of the trees had died. We have appointed a contractor to repave those spaces rather than replating. We have two dedicated litters pickers and thanks goes to Pam and Warren who litter pick weekly for the Parish Council. The bins are emptied daily by Sevenoaks District Council. The Parish have reported anti-social parking to Parking enforcement and have met with the Community Safety unit from Sevenoaks and Kent Highways to try and improve the parking at the crossroads, especially as additional parking at the rear of the shops was lost to development when permission was granted by Sevenoaks. Parish and District Councillors objected due to loss of parking. New shops were granted where the old Co op. The defibrillator situated in the telephone box is regularly Checked by the Clerk.

### **Allotments**

The Parish Council manages 26 allotment plots at two locations, the Recreation Ground and by Beacon Row, London Road. All plots are being used and we do hold a waiting list for residents who may be interested in the future.

### **Land owned by Parish Council**

The Parish Council continues to maintain land it owns in Millfield, Meadowbank, Thornbank, Oakland's Close, Chancel Close, Hever Avenue Recreation Ground, Gamecock Meadow, School Lane and the Burial ground. The grounds contracts were awarded in January 2022 to Kent Grasslands for a period of 3 years. As well as grass maintenance the Parish Council has also accepted quotes for tree works to take place in Millfield Road and at the Burial Ground site this year.

The Parish Council purchased an additional defibrillator and its located at Esat Hill Farm. We have one on the phone box at Hever Road. Both outside in cabinets accessible 24/7. A further defib is available in Gamecock Pavilion when the building is in use. The Community Cupboard also purchased a defib located on the outside of the food bank available 24/7 .

### **Future Projects**

A working group has been set up to start exploring the refurbishment of the tennis courts at The Gamecock, a report has been commissioned and costings given to improve the facilities and make it a Multi-Use Games Area ( MUGA for short ) . Residents and local sports groups have been contacted and invited to complete a survey. The next meeting of the working group will now look at those responses to find out people's views. The Parish Council at the very early stages of this exciting project.

### **Burial Ground**

The Burial Ground is inspected regularly, and general maintenance and tree works have been carried out. The Council is still looking for new land as in approximately 10 years there will be a need for more space. Local land owners have been approached but to date no new land has been identified.

### **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee, under the Chairmanship of Cllr Mrs Pat Bosley, meets to set the budgets and the precept for the forthcoming year in January. This year they agreed there would be an increase of 5% to the precept. In July the committee met to carry out the annual review of employee's salaries. The Parish Council has had to find the increase in salary costs for those employed at the minimum wage scale due to national increase in the minimum hourly rate. Parish met again in November to consider grant applications made to local organisation for financial assistance from the Parish Council.

The Finance Committee also monitors the Council's accounts which are managed on a day to day basis by the Clerk, to ensure that expenditure is in line with budgeted allocations. Regular internal audits are carried out and annual external audit as well. Finally the accounts are submitted to the Audit Commission in June of each year. The Council has increased wages in-line with legislation to meet the minimum living wage hourly rate.

### **Planning Committee**

During the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 the Parish Council were invited to comment on 75 planning applications. This represented a decrease on last year's figure when we commented on 94 plans. 41 of the applications were for properties within the Village Envelope and 34 were for those in the Green Belt. Surprisingly, this indicates an increase in the proportion of applications on dwellings in the Village Envelope compared to those in the Green Belt.

The main reason for the fall in the number of applications is due to changes in planning legislation whereby more and more proposals do not require planning permission, although most need to comply with building regulations.

There is also a worrying trend whereby SDC planning officers now seem to take little or no notice of the effects of planning applications on the occupants of neighbouring properties, even when it involves loss of light.

Over the year 32 planning applications were determined by Sevenoaks District Council – 9 fewer than the 41 determined in 2023/24. Of these 23 were approved, 8 refused and 1 declared invalid.

17 of the decisions related to the Village Envelope. Of these 15 were approved and 2 refused. Within the Green Belt 14 proposals were determined. Of these 8 were approved and 6 refused.

The difference between the number of applications commented upon and the number determined by Sevenoaks District Council is due mainly to the re-submission of applications that were refused and also applicants changing their minds, withdrawing and then re- applying for something else.

There were 3 Appeal decisions during the year, 1 Village Envelope and 2 Green Belt. All were dismissed. The figures once again demonstrate the pressures there are on the Green Belt.

Regulation 18 of the Sevenoaks Local Plan was published on 23 rd November 2023 and allowed seven weeks for comment instead of six. (Normally SDC allows eight weeks when the period includes Christmas.) This gave 3 Options, all of which provided for a massive increase in new housing for West Kingsdown.

The community responded to the Parish Council's open day on the subject in droves, with many turning their verbal responses into written objections. We now await the publication of Regulation 19 to see how much notice SDC have taken of them.

J Watchorn

### **General Purpose Committee**

The General Purposes Committee meetings are held on the second Monday of the month if there are any matters raised to be dealt with before the publication of the agenda for the main monthly Parish Council meeting, where any decisions taken will be ratified.

Topics covered over the past twelve months included safety for pedestrians and vehicles at the entrance to the Gamecock Car Park and speeding cars using the Village Hall Road; the new steps leading to the Community Cupboard and Gamecock Field; improving the single entrance near the bus stop; the safety of the skatepark and outdoor gym equipment. The provision of a multi user games area on the Field itself was also discussed as well as football use of the Field.

Ways of disposing used Christmas trees for free were notified.

Obstructions, on the footpath by lorries at the entrance to Flagstones, and on the grass verges in Rushetts and Kingsingfield Roads, were also discussed.

The Local Government Boundary Commission of England (LGBCE) gave advance notice that they will be undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for Sevenoaks District Council this year through to 2025.

The Sevenoaks 2040 Local Plan proposing to have nearly 400 houses built in West Kingsdown and 2,500 at Pedham Place and a rugby stadium there too, and the effect it would have on the village, was also discussed and the Parish Council's objections were made on line on 10th January.

A complaint regarding the Parish Council's transparency was discussed at length and the new website is now available, replacing the previous one which had been out of action since October 2023.

An update on the progress of the Affordable Housing Scheme in School Lane was received and the Library lease is due for renewal.

Margaret Richards  
Chairman General Purposes Committee

### **Old School, School Lane**

This community site, owned by the Parish Council, is leased to and managed on a day to day basis by the Old School Management Committee [Registered Charity No. 1088339]. The buildings are used by Pre-School, St Edmund's Church and The Dance Conservatoire. The Old School building is used by Pre-School and local organisations, including a Gardening Group, Railway Club and a Camera Club and is available for meetings and parties.

During the year routine maintenance has been carried out along with repairs to the roof window of the craft room used by the Railway club and removal of ivy and gutter repairs to

the main building. . Humane one way bird doors have been fitted to the roof area of the Old School Building to prevent pigeons from nesting in there.

The Management Committee meets regularly to oversee the site and carry out day to day maintenance.

My thanks go to the members of the Management Committee for their time and efforts in assisting to maintain this community site in good order for the benefit of the local community.

Mrs Pat Bosley, Chairman of the Trustees

### **Church Wood Report**

For anyone who is not aware, the Church Wood Management Committee was set up to remove the conifers planted by the Forestry Commission and return the wood to its former native broadleaf state. This in turn benefits the planet by locking up more carbon than if it were allowed to remain as a conifer plantation, that was beginning to fail anyway due to the trees becoming post mature. It is also pleasing to see native broadleaves appearing amongst the remaining conifers

Rotational coppice is an ancient form of woodland management that is still the most beneficial to wild life. The regrowing broadleaves allow light in during the Winter months that is encouraging the re-establishment of bluebells and other spring flowers.

Once again there has been interference by persons unknown. This time they inked out some of the spots that indicated where safety work was needed and in one case a tree was missed when the work was done. Another anonymous note was left on the morning of a meeting. As this made some Committee Members feel vulnerable it was passed on to the Police.

This year again the chain saw course has proved its worth. Not only has the Committee Member been working on the necessary coppicing but he has also coped with an unusual number of trees that have fallen across paths. The latest was a large oak tree that fell on Maundy Thursday, blocking two paths. Thanks to those Members of the Committee who turned out to help, the paths were cleared and fully open within five days.

The problem of motorcycles in the wood is still with us and it seems they have been joined by those riding quad bikes. Apart from the fact that they are not insured and tear up the paths, they pose a risk to walkers and their dogs alike.

Tasks undertaken by the Committee's weekly work parties were tree tagging, coppicing and clearing footpaths and fallen trees. The annual rubbish clearance was much lighter than usual and on the last day had a timely finish just as the dustmen came along and took it away.

The pile of rubble near the Westfield Gate has been used to reinforce this area and the very soft area where the fire-ride is crossed by the restricted byway.

Dormouse numbers were slightly higher than last year but still disappointing. The Committee is grateful to Mr E Letchford who has made 25 new boxes and refurbished another 2 so lets hope the dormice show their appreciation.

J Watchorn



### **Brands Hatch Liaison Group**

The Liaison Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis .All the major events held in the 2024 season appeared to have been well supported and it is hoped this will continue in the forthcoming season. The Villagers Day held on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was successful and raised approximately £6,500 this year for St Edmunds Church, Kingsdown Scout Group, West Kingsdown Pre School and St Edmunds Primary School.

Steve Gray and Lynda Harrison, Group Representatives.

### **Village Hall report**

This community site, owned by the Parish Council, is leased to and managed on a day to day basis by the Village Hall Management Committee [Registered Charity No. 302776].

The Village Hall report is given to the public at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Parish Council.

The hall continues to be well used by the local community for a variety of classes, meetings and social events. Children's parties continue to be very popular.

The hall is now 10 years old and the need to carry out high level cleaning was identified.

This was carried out by a specialist company in February.

The trustees recognise the very valuable job carried out by the dedicated caretakers, Graham & Lyn and thanks is recorded for all their work.

Thanks is expressed to the members of the Management Committee for the time they give in helping with odd jobs, gardening, rubbish clearing and hall maintenance.

The project for the refurbishment of the car park area has progressed and it is now hoped that this will be completed in the Spring of 2024.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the hall on Tuesday 16th July at 7.30pm.

Dave King, Chairman of the Trustees

### **District Councillors Report to West Kingsdown Parish Council**

We are delighted to be writing our District Councillors' report following our successful election in May 2023.

Cllr Harrison sits on and is Deputy Chair of Housing and Health Advisory Committee, and is Chair of the Health Liaison Board, also sitting on Development Management Committee, the Homelessness Review Board. Additionally, she is a Sevenoaks District Council representative on the Sevenoaks District Access Group and the Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust Stakeholder Council.

Cllr Bulford sits on and is Deputy Chair of People and Places Advisory Committee and sits on Housing & Health Advisory Committee. She is a Sevenoaks District Council representative on the Sevenoaks District Arts Council

Cllr Malone sits on the Development & Conservation, Finance & Investment, Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committees and the Audit and Development Management Committees. Cllrs Harrison and Bulford both attend Brand Hatch liaison meetings.

At least one of us endeavours to attend all Fawkham and West Kingsdown Parish Council meetings, though sometimes this can be problematic if they clash with Sevenoaks District Council meeting commitments.

First and foremost to that we are committed to being active in the community of Fawkham and West Kingsdown, helping residents in the past year with local planning matters, neighbour disputes, dog fouling, potholes, housing association problems, lawful planning and more.

One particular area of focus for us this year has been enforcement matters. Working hand-in-hand with West Kingsdown Parish Council we have helped to resolve such matters and been in contact with the relevant officer at Sevenoaks Council to ensure that enforcement cases remain on their radar and are appropriately dealt with.

Where West Kingsdown PC has had objections to planning applications we have worked with them to understand their concerns and either have these addressed by the Sevenoaks District Council Planning Officers or object to them. Whilst we haven't always been successful in arguing the case, we've consistently done our best to do so.

We continue to work with KCC to help improve traffic speed and improve the road surfaces including the potholes which are constant, due to poor road surface patching and volume of traffic. Several residents have required sign posting to other agencies - the Community Cupboard food bank being one of them as residents struggling with inflation and cost of living increases - this service has been even busier in the last year and continue to support residents in Fawkham, West Kingsdown and further afield.

At the broader District level the two principal focus areas in recent months have been the Council Budget and the Local Plan.

Whilst Sevenoaks is undoubtedly in a far better financial position than many Councils around the UK we have still had to make some cuts in services to ensure a balanced budget. At all times our focus is on ensuring that the services that matter most to West Kingsdown residents are maintained to the fullest extent possible.

The Local Plan which will set out how Sevenoaks intends to meet its housing needs in the period to

2040 is currently in the midst of its consultation process. We remain conscious of the need to protect West Kingsdown from the impacts of over-development both locally and further afield. In the months ahead we look forward to continuing to support West Kingsdown PC and its residents.

The next Council elections are not until May 2027, so we look forward to continuing to work for residents of West Kingsdown and with the Parish Council for the next three years at least.

Lynda Harrison - [Cllr.Harrison@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Harrison@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

Emily Bulford - [Cllr.Bulford@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Bulford@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

Sean Malone - [Cllr.Malone@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Malone@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

Sevenoaks District Councillors For Fawkham and West Kingsdown Ward.

### **The Community Cupboard**

The Premises:

The Community Cupboard proudly operates from its premises which is provided by West Kingsdown Parish Council.

This past year has seen the installation of a new patio area at the entrance of the hub and a retractable awning. A defibrillator is now also situated to the front elevation, registered with emergency services and readily available to the community.

These projects were funded by The Community Cupboards extension and renovation fundraising efforts.

Support:

As a community led project, we continue to offer a non-judgemental and friendly welcome to anyone who attends our hub or requires support.

Collaborating with over 30 referring agencies, Kent Police and KCC Community Wardens, we continue to support the most vulnerable in our community with not just food, but direction to supporting services, helping to address and resolve their current needs.

During 2023, we distributed 63,482 kilos of support to local families and individuals who were struggling to support themselves, an astonishing 29% increase on the previous year. A total of 2044 support parcels were distributed.

We continue to be fully supported by residents, with individuals and local businesses.

donating

66,912 kilos of donations, an increase of 31% on the previous year.

We continue to address the issue that most of these families were unable to access support from other establishments due to working or not 'fitting their criteria'.

During 2023, our main area of support remained within 5-10 miles of our premises, with only agency referrals receiving support in other areas.

We have continued to actively engage with other food banks to ensure that service users are being supported by their local food bank, where possible and appropriate.

We were delighted to attend the Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards, being recognised for our 'outstanding commitment and dedication to supporting the wellbeing of others'.

Not only was this a huge achievement, being our first award focused on mental health but we were the ONLY winner from the Sevenoaks district for the whole event.

Our second nomination of the year was for 'Foodbank of the year' in the Kent and Medway Food and Drink Awards. Whilst we did not win this award, being placed in the top 3 in the whole of Kent and Medway, was an outstanding achievement for our charity.

To ensure that we can provide the best service to our community, we are undertaking and providing regular training for our team members.

Our latest training course has now provided our charity with 2 fully trained mental health first aiders to assist those who may be requiring support.

We continue to be supported by our local Co-op stores, Sainsburys Supermarkets and John Lewis Bluewater, who all collect customer donations on our behalf.

We continue to work closely with local organisations including The London Golf Club & Brands Hatch, whilst continuing to collaborate with multiple smaller businesses locally who also provide support.

We continue to focus on providing educational placements for many D of E students, work experience students and continue to regularly facilitate both Scouting and multiple school visits to the hub. These community interactions continue to raise awareness and help to educate hundreds of our local students.

Since opening (as of Jan 2024), The Community Cupboard had provided support and understanding to 1579 different families, demonstrating just how needed the service was required.

We are extremely proud of the safe space that has been created and the strong and dedicated 40+ member volunteer team that we have.

Changes:

2024 has already seen changes within our structure, with Trustee Helen retiring due to promotion in her Church role. Helen remains an integral part of the team in a pastoral capacity, and we wish her every success in her new Deanery position.

The Community Cupboard team:

Trustees: Veronica McGannon, Lynda Harrison, Amy Eley, Adrian Wenn, Rudi McCarthy.

Manager: Tracy Wood

Once again, we would like to take this opportunity to thank West Kingsdown Parish Council and the wider community, for their continued support.

Your championing of our service has led to thousands of people receiving support when they needed it most, thank you.

Tracy and Vee

The Community Cupboard

## The KCC Community Warden

### Purpose

Providing a proactive and visible presence in Kent's communities to improve residents' quality of life and promote stronger and safer communities.

### Vision

To be a trusted community-based service that identifies and addresses local concerns by implementing preventative and early intervention measures. Collaborating with partners to deliver solutions which will allow Kent's residents and communities to thrive.

#### Objective 1

##### **Strengthen community resilience (Stronger, Safer Communities)**

Wardens will equip residents to prevent and recover from being victims to scams. They will address low level crime and antisocial behaviour through deterrence, prevention and partnership working. They will support communities in challenging times, from floods to pandemics.

#### Objective 2

##### **Support the elderly and vulnerable**

Wardens will work with those most vulnerable in their communities with the aim of improving wellbeing, supporting independent living and reducing social isolation and loneliness by facilitating access to care and services.

#### Objective 3

##### **Foster community cohesion and wellbeing**

Wardens will improve community wellbeing by working in a range of environments and across all age groups (as is appropriate for the location), setting up new groups and events where needed through community development projects.

#### Objective 4

##### **Assist with navigating public services**

Wardens will work closely with internal and external partners, maintaining knowledge in order to support residents. Wardens are a KCC front line service and will embody the 'one council' and no wrong door approach.



My work within the communities I cover has continued to be very varied. I continue to work with a variety of stakeholders and agencies to foster a holistic approach to community matters.

Situations which involve peoples' welfare and safety change rapidly, so, being able to engage with the right people quickly has been vital.

I am committed to improving the lives of others and follow the Esther Philosophy throughout.

Some examples of me seeing a need and reacting to this are highlighted below.

Example

I am an active member of the local Dementia Friendly Community Group and in 2023 hosted an event in the community with Crossroads Care to promote Dementia Awareness. I sourced a free venue, free refreshments and advertised to all local stake holders and community members who were living with Dementia.

I liaised with other agencies I work with locally to provide a Marketplace Event. Included in this event was the opportunity to take part in the Dementia Experience Bus to give an

insight for attendees into the virtual simulated effects of Dementia felt by those living with the condition.

Example

On the 2 nd June myself and volunteers launched a new initiative in New Ash Green for those living with social isolation and loneliness.

The event was hosted at the Pavilion a facility in New Ash Green with an area to purchase refreshments, play pool, darts and enjoy tabletop games.

The event had been planned for many months to ensure the target audience would be reached.

This initiative has been attended by resident in all local villages.

In our roles as Community Wardens, we are often meeting community members who feel lonely due sometimes life events or being new to the area and not yet forming friendship groups.

One lady in attendance expressed the fact it was her first time of meeting people away from the home since experiencing loss and having the confidence to return to a social gathering of people was a huge step forward for her.

To see interactions with those attending with some not having met previously was testimony

to the fact events like these are worth their weight in gold.

I recently had contact from the local Community Cupboard to refer a couple to me new to area who were looking for local support networks.

I made an appointment and visited the couple to look at what support was needed and how I could directly help and signpost to other agencies.

I conducted several home visits whereby we discussed their needs.

I managed to book an appointment for an optician to visit their home, an Imago assessment, assistance from their housing provider and details of local Days Out organised by the Cottage Community who offer a door-to-door service for those looking to visit places when they don't have their own transport.

On one of my visits, we discussed a mobility scooter for the gentleman with mobility needs to allow him to access local amenities, as since moving he has been unable to leave the house.

I explained I will keep my eye open for one as sometimes they are donated to the community.

During a subsequent visit to the Cupboard I was asked if I knew of anyone in need of a scooter which I explained I did.

It was a lovely surprise for the couple.

While with them I managed to contact a mobility servicing company who came to conduct a home visit to ensure the scooter was safe to use.

Hopefully this now allows for a greater level of independence to alleviate isolation and loneliness.

#### Example

On the 14 th July I had the pleasure of being invited to Roundash Nursery Hartley to meet staff and children and deliver a Road Safety input to 25 children in attendance.

The session was pitched at raising awareness of staying safe near to and crossing roads, ensuring young people hold hands with an adult when out and about.

The session was well received, and the children took an active part in listening, singing and asking questions throughout.

I liaised with Hartley library before the visit to borrow an appropriate book to share a story.

The children also sang a Road Safety Song and were left colouring sheets as a reminder to hold hands and stay safe near to roads.

I used resources from Brake The Road Safety Charity who work with communities and organisations across the UK to stop the tragedy of road deaths and injuries, make streets and communities safe for everyone, and support people bereaved and seriously injured on roads.

All the variations of my work and the flexible approach I foster ensures I am willing to accept change and embrace the next chapter within the warden service.

I believe I can deal with changes as they manifest and continue to engage with and support the communities I represent.



April 2024