

Annual Parish Assembly Minutes

Held on Thursday 26th May 2022, 7.00 pm at Hever Village Hall

1. Chairman's Report from Angela Haydon (AH) for 2021-2022. * Please see separate report.
2. To hear apologies for absence and complete attendance register. Apologies received from Stephen Lark, Nick Roberts, Margot McArthur, Tom Tugendhat and Angie Connolly. 23 members of the public attended the Assembly.
3. To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 23rd May 2019 – approved.
4. To hear report from Tom Tugendhat MP. Tom sent his apologies as he was required elsewhere and his report was read by AH. *"I am sorry that I cannot be with you tonight, unfortunately commitments in Parliament mean I have to stay up here and vote. There is quite a lot going on at the moment and I wanted to cover as much as possible in this piece.*

First, our thoughts are with all those in Ukraine and the terrible scenes there do show just how lucky we are to live in a stable democracy here in Britain. I know so many are concerned at what we are seeing in the country and I am continuing to do everything I can to help.

Closer to home I've been working on a number of local improvements in recent months. As our economy recovers from Covid19 I've been visiting a number of local businesses to best understand how the future looks for them given the pandemic. It is fair to say that so much has changed over the past couple of years and as an economy, locally, we have to adapt to that. The support offered by Sevenoaks District Council has been fantastic and without their efficient use of resources, I suspect many local businesses would have struggled to survive.

We've seen an increasing threat to our future though in the form of surprising decisions from the Planning Inspectorate, not least at the Kent and Surrey Golf Club in Edenbridge and some more local development in our parish. These decisions show that we need a Local Plan in place as soon as possible and I will continue to work with SDC to secure that.

There have unfortunately been some delays with the new Edenbridge Memorial Hospital but these have been overcome and a couple of weeks ago I helped marked the start of

construction on these new and improved facilities which will benefit all patients at the practice, which I know includes the majority of our parish.

I also want to highlight the work Margot McArthur has been doing as our new County Councillor this year, especially as she has her work cut out with some of the changes to bus subsidies that KCC wish to introduce. We also continue to have the situation with many neighbouring villages being unable to get into town by bus. I hope everyone was able to respond to the consultation to keep bus services at the level they currently are.

Once again, I am sorry I am not here tonight but if you have any questions please be in touch. My number is 01732 441563 or e-mail tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk.

5. To hear report from Cllr. Margot McArthur – Kent County Council. Margot sent her apologies and her report was read out by AH. * Please see separate report.
6. Ten minute presentations from local groups and services:
 - 6.1. John Adkins – Hever Residents Association (HRA)
HRA was set up 32 years ago and is a non-profit voluntary organisation. HRA organise events for the community and aim to preserve, protect and improve the environment. They keep an eye on planning applications and local building works.

Recently they have been involved in the review of Hever Station resulting in improvements including a covered shelter and seating. In conjunction with HPC, they have arranged events such as the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, which proved very popular. They arranged for the event to be sponsored by local businesses and used accumulated funds from HRA and some from HPC to fund the event.

HRA had supported the campaign against Gatwick that planned to increase air traffic.

AH commented that HPC had just received notification of a new Gatwick consultation phase starting on 14th June. The link for the consultation will be placed on the HPC website. AH urged those present to comment on the consultation.

- 6.2. Amanda Johnson (AJ) – Fibre Project. AJ had been working on a Community Open Reach project to help improve the internet speeds. So far the project had taken one year and was started by leaflet drops to 83 properties in the Parish that had been identified as having very slow internet speeds. Approval had been received from KCC for further funding to make the project viable. Residents had to pledge to sign up to a one year wi-fi contract as a term to get vouchers to fund the project. The team have set up a Community Interest Company as a base for the contract but no personal financial input was required. They are hoping the build will be completed this year. The wi-fi will be brought in via overhead cables.

Question 1 : How can other households get fibre? AJ advised they needed to contact Tim Clarkson from BT Open Reach.

Question 2: Why was the project limited to 83 properties? AJ reported internet speeds had to be very low.

Edward De Ryckman commented there were people in Four Elms interested and that he will contact AJ for further information.

6.3. Dave Dutton (DD) – Hever Rose and Horticultural Society

DD reported this was a very friendly society who meet in Hever Hall and have 4 talks a year. They offer free entry and everyone is welcome. They advertise events in The Link magazine and on the website (hever.org). They run 3 shows a year which include sections for photography, arts and crafts too. Currently there are 75 members. New members are welcome too. Recently a plant sale was run which was a sell out!

A garden visit will be arranged in June/July and again is open to all. Annual membership costs just £10 for a joint membership and £6 for single.

Please feel free to contact Dave for more information

6.4. Joanna Wade (JW) - The Link Magazine and Hever Village Hall rebuild

JW introduced the Link Magazine which is just £5 a year for hard copies or free on www.hever.org . JW reminded all about the Four Elms Fete on 9th July 2022.

With regards to the proposed new Village Hall, this would be funded by grants, trusts and sponsorship. The plan is to move the hall, have more functionality with more room, proper storage, a better kitchen and 2 electric car charging points.

The Hall had been well loved but is need of replacing. Currently it is 103 square metres and looking to increase to 210 square metres. The new design will have a decking area and will be safe for children and ideal for a wide range of uses. Parking will be increased and the Hall will be more environmentally friendly.

A model of the proposed hall was available to view.

Question 1: Will the hall be funded by the Parish Council?

Answer: Some money will come from the PC but will mainly come from other funding.

6.5 Councillor Matthew Dickins (MD) – Sevenoaks District Council

MD commented that there was strong evidence of teamwork present and thanked everyone for their contribution. There were two things that stood out to him after the

Pandemic. Firstly was evidence of community. This was well represented and time and expertise was evident. A good example was the Hever Village Hall rebuild. Secondly was the environment. Throughout the Pandemic MD had got to know the landscape more like many others. Thanks went to Councillor Margot McArthur for her work. Some of the impact of her work was the increased fly tipping team and improved bin collections, her work with Public Rights of Way resulting in funding and improvements for footpaths and her work with Children's services.

7. To hear questions from members of the public and any matters for reporting

Question 1: What has happened to the dog poo bin in Hever?

Answer: The bin was knocked over and will be repositioned soon. Clerk to arrange.

Question 2: Road Closures. Residents are supposed to be informed in advance. This has not happened, for example, with Pigdown Lane.

Answer: The community are usually informed by notice sent to home address. In addition the Clerk puts notification on the website and Facebook pages plus sends an email to those who are signed up to receive notifications. MD commented the closure referred to was in fact an emergency, hence no prior notification had been given. A good website to subscribe to is roadworks.org that will show planned roadworks in a selected area.

It was acknowledged that better signage was required for diversions. The PC has requested this from Highways.

Questions 3: Step free access is required at Edenbridge and Hever stations. Comment to be referred to Edenbridge Town Council and Railways to ask what the plans for step free access are.

Question 4: Are there Secondary School plans for Edenbridge?

Answer: It is believed the plan is to build new houses and a secondary school by the new Medical Centre.

Question 5: Litter Pick – The Hever one was on Good Friday when it is very busy in the village. Could it be planned for a different day? There was a near miss reported.

Answer: It may be able to be organised on a different day in the future.

Question 6: Litter Pick – Could they be arranged earlier in the year, perhaps in March?
In Markbeech it was difficult as the growth makes it hard to access some litter.

Question 7: Could a bench be placed to rest on somewhere down the main walkway to the village as many people cannot walk too far?

Answer: Clerk to investigate

Question 8: Cyclists are coming down the road very fast when people are walking. There are no footpaths meaning walkers are on the narrow roads and often don't hear cyclists coming. It is dangerous. Is there anything that can be done?

Answer: To be investigated.

As the community Jubilee celebration tickets had all gone and had left some residents without tickets, the Clerk requested if anyone found they had spare tickets for any reason please could they email her so they could be reallocated to those on the waiting list.

8.35 pm meeting closed. Everyone was thanked for attending and refreshments continued to be available.