



December 2016

Your Parish

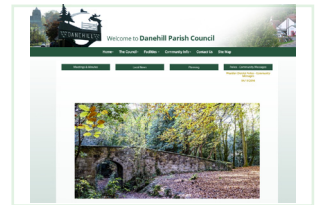
Danehill Parish Council Newsletter

New Parish Council Elected

Thank you to everyone who voted in the Parish Council election held on 28th July 2016. There was a strong turn out with 601 parishioners voting - just under 40% of the electorate and a relatively high number for a local PC election. The newly elected councillors are shown opposite with their responsibilities detailed on page 4.

New Website

There is a new more intuitive website designed to help you find things easily. All important information will be included such as meeting agendas & minutes. You'll also have the option to opt for a digital newsletter - see below.



Key Decisions Made At First Three Meetings

An emergency meeting was held on the 18th August to progress the hiring of a new clerk following the resignation of C. Gooders.

On 29th September, the first full meeting was held. Discussions concerned how best to serve the community and maximise the use of the precept (PC budget) whilst minimising any additional costs for parishioners.

Mindful that any important PC decisions need to have the full support of the community, the need for establishing effective communication and dialogue with parishioners was agreed.

Agreement was reached on the following:

- Appointment of new clerk
- Responsibilities allocated by councillor
- Meeting calendar
- Purchase of 2 Defibrillators (see Page3)

Key decisions were taken on 3 initiatives:

- Proposed Parish Warden - rejected
- Proposed Solar Farm - rejected
- Nursery Planning Application - withdrawn (see page 2 for details)

IN THIS ISSUE	
Key Decisions	1
emails & consultation	1
Solar Farm	2
Parish Warden	2
Emergency Planning	2
New Councillors	4
Precept/Budget	3
Calendar	4
Danehill School	3
Defibrillators	3
Nursery	2
Ashdown Forest Liason	3
Wealdlink	3
PC Surgery	3

eMails

We are committed to regular communication and have therefore decided to issue the Newsletters quarterly instead of every 6 months. It is important to be as cost effective as possible and we are exploring ways of minimising the costs of distribution whilst increasing frequency of engagement.

We will continue to mail the Newsletter and also post it on noticeboards and the Parish website. However, mail costs more and we would ask parishioners to consider receiving the Newsletter via eMail instead. This would save the PC money and ensure you get information on time.

We promise we will not bombard you with eMail, only the Newsletter, although we will give you the option of signing up to be contacted for your opinion on important issues e.g. speed limits and any large spending initiatives.

We will not provide your email address to any other party.

Contact clerk@danehill-pc.org to sign up or visit www.danehill-pc.org



Important Decisions Taken

The most important decisions taken in recent meetings are summarised below. Full details are contained in the meeting minutes which can be accessed via the Danehill PC website www.danehill-pc.org or ask the clerk for a hard copy if you do not have access to the internet.

Proposed New Nursery – Planning Application Withdrawn

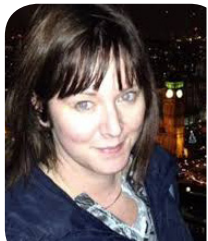
The importance of the nursery is clear to the entire council who is fully supportive of ensuring a sustainable long-term solution. The situation regarding the Nursery needs to be reviewed, understood correctly and separated from any planning application. The first step is to remove the planning application for the current 'POD'. The current proposal was done in good faith but is probably not ideal so a rethink is necessary.

Proposed Parish Warden – Rejected

Previous council had looked at the use of a parish/community warden in response to the loss of a PCSO. The subject had been controversial not only because of cost, but also because of the perceived need and effectiveness. There were 247 signatories against the proposal and none for. It was considered that there would be no benefits because of no formal power, making the role ineffective. Anecdotal evidence points to similar issues in Forest Row. The PC will keep an eye on progress in Forest Row and other parishes as well as investigating other ways of maintaining vigilance and reporting suspicious activity.

Proposed Solar Farm – Rejected

The Solar farm proposal was an interesting idea to generate incremental funds for the Parish. However, although created in good faith, it was a high cost, high risk proposal with an investment of over £2.7 million and 23 year payback with no revenue generated for the parish prior to 2028. A feasibility study commissioned by the previous PC concluded that "The high grid connection cost and recent significant degeneration in subsidy support mean that the financial appraisal does not return a positive cash flow and therefore does not fulfil the overriding objective of securing a future annuity income for the community".



Emma
Fulham

New Parish Clerk

Emma joined in October and has a wealth of experience being a fully qualified clerk and responsible financial officer. In addition to Danehill she also serves as Hartfield Parish Clerk.

Chairman's Message

Your new Parish Council has now been in place for four months and we are all committed to improving the lifestyle of our two villages and listening to the views of parishioners. We are currently on a fast learning curve as none of us has served on a Parish Council before, and as a consequence, it is unlikely that you will notice any significant changes in the community during our first year. However, I am pleased that we have been able to recruit Emma Fulham, who as an experienced Parish Clerk, will be able to provide us with the guidance we need.

Our Parish is probably in one of the most beautiful parts of the UK and in an environment that is perfect for bringing up a family. As we approach the festive period, we can all reflect on how privileged we are to live in Danehill and Chelwood Gate.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Andrew Goodburn

Community Emergency Plan

We are in the process of preparing a basic emergency plan, so that as a community we can help ourselves if something were to happen in our parish. For example this could be severe flooding, a major traffic accident and/or hazardous material spillage.

Checking on vulnerable people, collecting provisions and prescriptions, helping move property and furniture, clearing snow and providing shelter, warmth and food and drinks are the kind of things that we can do to help those affected by such incidents.

We are therefore looking for volunteers who would be willing to help out during an emergency. Do you have any particular skills or equipment that you think might be of use? Do you belong to a community group that might be able to help such as luncheon groups or crèches?

If the answer is yes we would very much like to hear from you. Please call or email the clerk (Tel: 01342 822404 or clerk@danehill-pc.org). There are no obligations on anyone that volunteers – it will just mean that we may call you in an emergency to ask if you are free to help.

Danehill School

Danehill Primary, is a fantastic village school and has been a great asset to our community for over 150 years. It is currently facing some financial difficulty due to normal fluctuations in the number of pupils and the postponement of the introduction of the new funding formula by the Government which was due to boost budgets for small schools like Danehill. The school has been developing an impressive plan to increase the pupil intake and ensure it is financially viable for the future.



However, in the short term the school needs help for the financial year 2017/18 and has asked the Parish Council for a £10,000 donation as part of its wider fund raising initiatives. Your Council does have significant reserves and could afford to donate this amount and would like to make a decision at its meeting on 26th January. This is an important decision for the community. In order to help the Council in its deliberations, we would like to hear whether you, as the parishioners, consider this an appropriate use of Council Funds. Please could you let us know by sending an email, a letter or phone call to the Parish Clerk and stating 'yes - support' or 'no - against'.

Wealdlink Bus Service

Available to all in the Parish, Wealdlink Community Transport provides an easy to use, door-to-door, way of getting to Crowborough for shopping, coffee, lunch etc. Thursday is the designated day and the cost of a return trip is heavily subsidised.

Community trips are also available. Therefore, if there is a group of you who are looking for transport outside the normal Thursday shopping trips, why not ring them?



Not everyone wants to drive, especially at this time of the year! This is an invaluable service to the Parish, the more we use it, the less likely we are to lose it. Call 01892 771332 for more information or to register your interest.

Defibrillators Available

After the idea was raised independently by several parishioners, the PC decided to approve spending for 2 defibrillators (with an additional device for children) for public use in the Parish.



The 2 main defibrillators are to be located on or near the respective Village Halls for Chelwood Gate and Danehill (with the child device near the nursery), and the devices will be fully automatic in that they guide the user through the process of administering shocks.

Whilst the devices can be used without training, it is always preferable that users have been given some formal guidance, and so the council also approved spending for a professional trainer to come to the area to give a class for up to 20 people.

Parish Council Surgery

The first two parish Council Surgeries took place on the 17th September and the 19th October at the Village markets. The idea is to give parishioners the chance to meet their Parish Councillors and raise any concerns. The general reaction has been positive; a number of concerns have been noted and passed on to councillors for consideration.

Ashdown Forest Liaison Panel

Meetings are held quarterly with the Ashdown Forest Conservators by all Parishes that abut the Ashdown Forest. Discussions vary and have included information on grazing stock, speeding, funding, thefts from cars etc. Should you have a concern then please call or email the clerk (tel: 01342 822404 or clerk@danehill-pc.org).

Precept/Budget

"Should we decrease the precept" is always a good way to get anyone reading. For those new (like me) to the work of a local council, precept is the term used to describe the Parish Council (PC) budget collected as part of the council tax.

The PC must approve the precept by February for the April 2017/18 fiscal year (FY). This will cover a large period of the new councils term and it is important we get it right.

Since the last council resigned we have only had expenditure logged on paper. Now, after investing in new reporting software (and a new clerk!), we have a full financial picture.

Due to the cancellation of some major projects the council has around £230,000 to last until April. Some funds must be kept in reserve to cover emergencies but clearly we will start the new fiscal year with a large surplus.

So to our dilemma. We are a new council trying to understand local needs, do we reduce the precept and if so how far? Do we just maintain current facilities or hold on to reserves for new major projects that have the support of the majority of parishioners? Government funding is reducing, how far does the PC go in support of local facilities?

Finally, government may cap future precept increases to 2% unless a referendum is held. A good thing you may say but this may cost us almost £4,000 to administer.

We are listening. If you have any views on the precept then email us this month to clerk@danehill-pc.org

Andrew Pattison, Chair Finance Committee

Danehill Parish Council Office

Chelwood Gate Village Hall
Beaconsfield Road
Chelwood Gate
E. Sussex RH17 7LF

Emma Fulham
Parish Clerk & RFO
clerk@danehill-pc.org
www.danehill-pc.org

Tel: 01342 822404

Councillors & Responsibilities

Prime Responsibility

Andrew Goodburn	Chairman & Burial Ground & Memorial
Dee Birchall	Chelwood Gate Village Hall
Tony Blake	Chairman of Planning Committee
Catherine Crouch	Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison Panel, Emergency Planning & Wealdlink
Rhodri Lewis	Danehill Rec & Jubilee Green (including Chelwood Gate Village Green)
Neil Macleod	Highways & Footpaths
Adrian Martorana	Communications
Emma Mills	Danehill Village Hall & Primary School
Andrew Patisson	Chairman of Finance Committee

What Does The Parish Council Do?

County Council, District Council, Parish Council? It can be very confusing to understand who has what responsibility. This is a simple guide (www.gov.uk) to what responsibilities the various councils hold.

County Council

Responsible for services across the whole of a county:

- education
- transport
- planning
- fire and public safety
- social care
- libraries
- waste management
- trading standards

District Council

Covers a smaller area than county councils. Usually responsible for services like:

- rubbish collection
- recycling
- Council Tax collections
- housing
- planning applications
- environmental health including noise pollution

Parish Council

Operates below district and county level. They're elected and can help on a number of local issues including:

- allotments
- trees on parish grounds
- bus shelters
- burial grounds
- community centres
- play areas and play equipment
- grants to help local organisations
- consultation on neighbourhood planning

**POST
OFFICE**

Services are available every Friday

Chelwood Gate Village Hall:
10.00 - 12.00 (10am to Noon)

Danehill Social Club:
14.30 - 16.30 (2.30pm to 4.30pm)

Useful Contact Details

WEALDLINK PASSENGER SERVICE
01892 771332

PARISH BOOKINGS
Chelwood Gate Village Hall
01825 740562
Danehill Village Hall
01825 790797
Recreation Ground
01825 740731

Calendar

26th Jan 2017	PC Meeting 19:30 (7.30pm) DS
23rd Feb 2017	PC Meeting 19:30 (7.30pm) CGVH
30th Mar 2017	PC Meeting 19:30 (7.30pm) DS

DS=Danehill School CGVH = Chelwood Gate Village Hall