

ST MARY HOO PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 28th May in the function room at the Fenn Bell Inn. All are welcome and a 20 minute period will be available for members of the public to report on local activities or comment on Parish issues. This meeting will then be followed immediately by the Annual Parish Council meeting.

The longstanding vacancy for councillor was filled by Terry Ballard of the Fenn Bell and we welcome his very useful local knowledge and involvement. Another resident, Mike Windsor, volunteered as Footpaths Officer and we thank him for his time and energy in walking the paths and reporting problems. Thanks are also given for our volunteers who assist with magazine distribution.

Ward Cllr Tony Watson and Village Voices editor Michael Pearce are planning to produce a magazine for the St Mary Hoo and Stoke areas in the near future. This will provide the ideal media for exchange of information and for local advertising. We also hope to distribute the Hoo Village Voices magazine which will give a wider overview on activities, events and services.

Medway Highways Dept recently joined the south and north ditches at Fenn Street by pipeline to alleviate the road flooding problem. Road closure and traffic diversion was essential to allow machinery to operate in the narrow area and to avoid delays and tailbacks due to temporary closure for slinging, lifting and resurfacing work. Apologies are extended for the inconvenience caused. A decision is also awaited on our request to reduce speed limits on the Ratcliffe Highway from Fenn corner to Allhallows where high volumes of fast traffic are often experienced.

Now that the weather has improved significantly we have recommenced maintenance on the Parish amenity areas and we hope to progress the provision of a pathway within the Newlands Farm Road nature reserve. This will be subject to suitable quotes and successful application for funding from Rural Liaison.

The Lodge Hill development proposals for 5000 homes and associated infrastructure at Chattenden have been set back by 'Natural England' extending the boundaries of the existing Site of Special Scientific Interest 'SSSI' to include the development area. This follows a survey which identified rare nightingales, ancient woodland and meadow grasses in the location. Medway Council Planners and Land Security Development are expected to respond by appeal and to forward alternative proposals.

Network Rail have announced their intention to submit a planning application to build a new Rail Station at Corporation Street in Rochester. This is to cater for increased passenger numbers and to provide closer access to the town centre. It is hoped that their design will be in sympathy with the 'Historic Rochester' theme.

This report would not be complete without mention of the ongoing consultations regarding a hub airport in the South East. Mark Reckless, MP for Rochester and Strood , and Medway Council are strongly opposed to any proposals that include the Hoo peninsula and Thames Estuary and will continue to petition and campaign as necessary.

Finally my thanks go to Roxana ,our clerk, for her service and support, to Clive, our webmaster, for his quiet efficiency and to my fellow councillors for all their interest and work to improve local conditions for all.

Wishing everyone a good and happy summer season.

Bill Budd - Chair of St Mary Hoo PC.

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