

St Mary Hoo Parish Council. Chairman's report May 2014.

Since last May the Parish Council has initiated or undertaken various projects and initiatives to help make St Mary Hoo a pleasant and safe place to live, work or visit. Some have been concluded successfully and others are still works in progress. We will continue to take every opportunity to resolve all issues as soon as possible.

There was success in the campaign to impose lower speed limits to our village roads and improve signage and road markings. Thanks to Chris Rogers, Medway Road Safety Engineer and his team for achieving this. Enforcement is difficult but we hope that responsible motorists will comply and help us by driving safely.

The Bus Stops at the Fenn Bell Public House have been considerably updated by moving the inbound stop to a safer location with appropriate marking and signs and providing a bigger waiting area and a rest barrier at the outbound stop. Special thanks are due to Rob Carmen, Transport Planner at Medway Council for managing this important enhancement.

A more effective ditch has been excavated within the Newlands farm Road Nature Reserve to direct heavy rainfall to the existing culvert and thereby avoid water from draining off on to adjacent properties. Provision of a defined path through the Reserve is to be completed later this year when conditions are favourable and when disruption to wild life is minimised.

The Parish Clerk contacted Jason Molloy of Medway Highways Dept. regarding the flooding of roads and ditches during heavy rain during the winter. A site visit was organised and Jason committed to have problem areas surveyed, to prepare a plan and to have essential work carried out immediately. Following allocation of budget funding this year further ditch and culvert clearance should take place. We will continue to liaise with Highways on this.

Our contract tree surgeon was requested to survey and make safe the willow trees at the village pond following damage caused during stormy weather. He carried out remedial work and contacted Medway Council to outline plans for further work on the trees as they are within a conservation area. An environmental planning officer from Medway Council visited the site and gave further advice which resulted in some dilution of the original plan and submission of a revised application. Hopefully the new work will be approved and then completed by mid summer. The problem with overflowing of the pond in heavy rain has been noted and provision for effective overflow being piped to ditches is being investigated. I hope to contact Complete Mowing Services in the near future for their advice and quotation for any solution.

We are hoping for an update soon from Ward Councillor Phil Filmer and Andy McGrath of Medway's Front Line Services who are considering ways to enhance the appearance of the Fenn Corner Roundabout and to better control the run off of surface water to prevent flooding of adjacent private land. They are also looking into the reinstatement of the demolished Fenn Corner post box facility with Royal Mail following our request to have it

installed at or near the Fenn Bell where it is safer for users and postal staff alike. Clearly it cannot be safely rebuilt at the busy road junction.

We were approached on several occasions regarding the lay by which was created by 'Biffa' when they filled in their works entrance at the Land Fill site on Ratcliffe Highway. This lay by is reported as being abused by some motorists who stop there to discard rubbish and even use the area as a toilet stop in full view of residents immediately opposite. After discussion Phil and Andy agreed to discuss the issue with Biffa management and will hopefully advise us of the outcome soon.

With regard to ongoing representations and discussions on the proposals for development at Lodge Hill in Chattenden and a hub airport at the Isle of Grain we have been kept up to date by Ward Councillor Tony Watson as well as through articles in the 'Village Voices' magazines and local press. On March 18th myself and Cllr Hassell were present at a very well attended presentation on Lodge Hill by 'Land Securities' who had refreshed their outline planning application with their proposals to mitigate concerns by Natural England who have declared part of the site an SSSI 'site of special scientific interest'. Tony Watson will attend the Annual Parish Meeting and further update and advise us on these and other major items.

During 2013 a vacancy arose for a Councillor and we were pleased to co-opt and welcome Pat Kelly to our team.

My sincere thanks are hereby given to the Parish Councillors Paul Hassell, Terry Ballard, Carol Heyburn and Pat Kelly, the clerk Roxana Brammer, the webmaster Clive Stanley, our footpaths officer Mike Windsor, Michael Pearce who edits and publishes the 'Village Voices' magazines, Darren and Julie Summerfield and Martin and Lynne Botney who help with distribution, and thanks to Ward Councillors Tony Watson and Phil Filmer for their help and advice to the Parish.

FOOTNOTE

At the Parish Council meeting on 27th May 2014 it was agreed to adopt the Kent Air Ambulance as our chosen charity for the year and to donate £150 to this extremely worthy organisation.

The next meeting has been provisionally scheduled for 22nd July but this may change to 29th July depending on availability of the clerk.

Bill Budd Chair St Mary Hoo PC