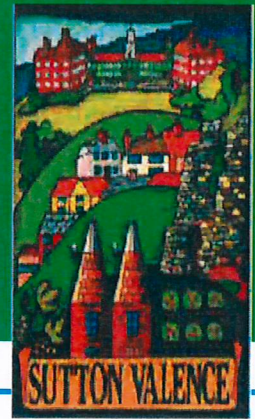


SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023



New Councillors needed

We have vacancies on the Parish Council, and we are looking for new Councillors. This next year we are barely quorate as three of our Councillors have decided to step back from the Parish Council. Councillor Gary Ward who has been a Councillor and Vice Chairman for nearly 7 years has work commitments, Derek Eagle, has been a member for 9 years and you may know, is standing for the Green Party this year; and Giri Ramchandran is moving out of the area.

Concern about numbers

I have a concern, that having only three Councillors means that they will require a considerable amount of commitment to keep the Parish Council functioning. If there are less than three Councillors, decisions cannot be made. Also if one is absent, the decision will have to be postponed until the next meeting. We are becoming very close to Maidstone Borough Council sending in people to act for us. This gives grave concern as the decisions may not be in our favour. We will do our best to avoid this but ...

Being a Parish Councillor means that you are here to represent and help the parishioners, to listen to their concerns and views and take action where appropriate and possible. You will have regular contact with the other Councillors, the local authority, KCC and residents.

Election year

This year is an election year. We will only be holding an election if there are more than nine nominees. It has been a long time since there has been an election as we have so few people wishing to stand.

At this year's Annual General Meeting in May, I will be stepping down as Chairman. For me, this has been a great experience of local government. I had not been in employment for many years and lost confidence as there have been many changes in technology and working arrangements. I had quite a few volunteering jobs as well as the Parish Council. I was interested in how the

Parish was run, who organised the grass cutting, who repaired the streetlights etc. What I found so lovely when I first moved here was the tea party for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. We attended a marvellously organised street party on the green which was free for all the children in the Parish. I kept a keen interest and was able to join in 2010. I have to admit it was a bit stuffy but over the years we have managed to make it more friendly and inclusive.

Read minutes on Facebook

If you ever read our minutes that are on the notice boards and now on our website and linked to Facebook, you will see that we have a lot to do. However, this is not onerous if you have many interested, active Councillors. Our new climate team is working well and are making connections with other parishes. We have had an excellent open space Councillor who is responsible for keeping the open spaces in good condition. We have so many projects that we would like to get going, for example, our Jubilee Committee is "asleep" (and was "asleep" for the Platinum Jubilee – due to lack of volunteers). The Jubilee Committee was a good group of Councillors and non-Councillors who joined together to put on a free children's Christmas party, organise Parish wide social events, like our Jubilee Street Party in 2002 and the Wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton now the Prince and Princess of Wales. Sadly, due to lack of volunteers, events like this cannot take place.

It can be fun and rewarding

As mentioned above, the Parish Council is very different from when I first joined, it was very formal, and I felt that some Councillors were aloof from the residents they served. We enjoy having parishioners come to the meeting, air their views and I hope that they have felt listened to and that we have been open and honest on our abilities to help, which we always try to our best, for our parishioners, who are our neighbours. The meetings are formal, but we have tried to make people feel at

Join Sutton Valence Parish Council

Do you want to make a difference in your local community?

Do you enjoy being part of a team?

No experience necessary as full training will be given.

If you care about where you live and are interested in your community, we need you!

To find out more, contact Emma Hull, Parish Clerk
Email: clerks@suttonvalence.org.uk or telephone on 01622 844135

ease and speak informally. I feel that after five years as Chairman, which is longer than I anticipated, there needs to be a new direction, with someone with fresh ideas. The other reason is that I am now working four days a week and cannot give the Parish the Chairman it needs. Hopefully, I will stay on as a Councillor to support our incoming chair. That person will need new recruits

New recruits wanted

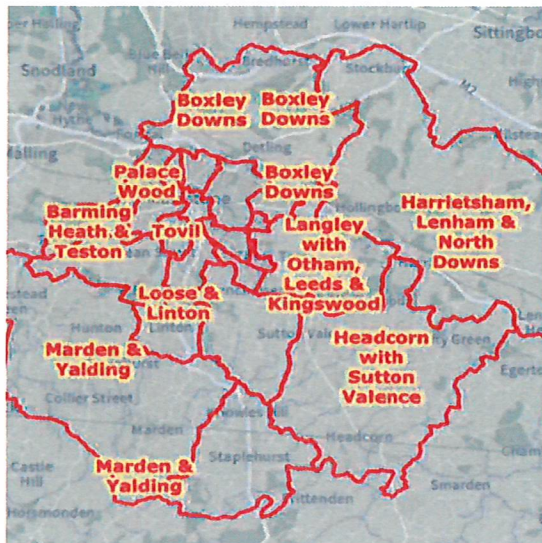
Ideally, early retired or, like me, a mum (or dad) who works part-time or not at all. The reason I say this is because, there are meetings that are held during the day and which I am missing. There is one Parish meeting a month, and sometimes an extraordinary meeting, especially if there is a planning application that needs a response. There are emails that need to be responded to, but you will have guidance by Emma, our clerk about what is urgent.

If you would like to consider yourself as a Councillor, please contact Emma on 01622 844135 and she will take you through the process. If you would like to talk to me, please email chairman@suttonvalence.org.uk with your phone number and I will call you back, as I am unable to make calls at work.

New Ward Boundary

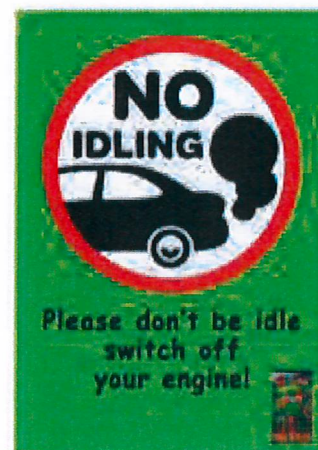
The boundary review has been completed and the result is that Sutton Valence will be in a ward with Headcorn. We have broken ward links with Langley who will be in ward with Leeds.

There are elections this year, and those Ward members voted in will serve for one year and in 2024 elections will take place under again with the new boundaries. Other Parishes in the Ward of Headcorn and Sutton Valence are East Sutton, Ulcombe, and Boughton Monchelsea.



No Idling Poster

You may have seen this image strategically placed around the Parish. Please take note to avoid air pollution. Although our air quality is not the worst in the borough, we do have an issue with school pick up and drop off times.



Working with schools to achieve climate change

Cllrs Mel Flint and Lesley Flint met with teaching staff from the Primary School, Senior School, and Prep School with responsibility for covering Eco and Environment issues (the teacher from the Senior School also covering the Prep School). These teachers shared our enthusiasm, and their ideas were so encouraging for us Councillors. They discussed the aims of the project and how the three schools could work together. The Councillors have been hugely impressed by what these schools

have already achieved. We now want to put all this work to even better use by impressing the public with their knowledge and concerns about the planet in various ways. Hopefully, when the pupils hear about the project very soon, they will lead, with their own ideas on how it could develop. This will involve students from ages 5 to 18. This should bring in quite a wide range of suggestions! Their first task is to decide what to call themselves.

Lesley Flint

Allotments are in good shape says retiring Councillor Gary Ward

Many of you will know by now that I have decided not to stand for re-election for the Parish Council. Work commitments have overtaken my free time, and something had to give. I have been a Parish Councillor for 7 years and throughout this time I have met many people mostly around the allotments on Bowhalls and the Harbour. I am pleased to report that both sites are now full and there is still a healthy waiting list of people wanting plots. It has been very encouraging watching the plots develop and all kinds of vegetable and fruit being grown.

Despite the inclement weather it is the ideal time to chit and plant second early potatoes in the first half of April and plant the main crop potatoes later in the month. It is also time to start sowing seeds outdoors such as beetroot, carrots, summer cauliflower, lettuce, leeks peas etc. together with onion and shallot sets. If you haven't done so already, it's the last chance to plant garlic but be quick! Most importantly if you haven't already done so, now is the time to prepare your beds for the rest of the year.

2000 Trees Planted

You may have noticed that the field once used for horses just off South Lane, The Harbour, now has just under two thousand trees planted on it. This came about with an incentive from Maidstone Council, and we were able to obtain a grant to do so. The trees consist of mixed broad leaf varieties with a single English oak central to the field. The Parish Council have decided to keep this area fenced off so the trees can establish themselves. When the trees have matured, the field will be open to the public for all to enjoy. If anyone would like to help with the allotments or join the Parish Council, please contact the clerk on 01622 844135. Happy growing! Gary Ward



John Davis, Eve Poulter, and Gary Ward

Platinum Jubilee Meadow Development Project

Tree planting started on 5 December 2022 with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) arriving with their vehicles and a good selection of tools, trees, tree guards and canes. Several of their full-time staff and some of their regular volunteers.

They started by marking out part of the site in 2m x 2m (approx. 6.6 x 6.6 feet) squares and planting the small trees (each about 0.6 m, 2 feet tall known as whips) by making a slit or tee slot in the soil and pushing the tree roots into the soil and firming them in with their feet before fitting the tree guards and pushing in the supporting canes. The tree guards are made of cardboard and will bio-degrade in 2 – 3 years, this saves using plastic tree guards and is therefore better for the environment. The only problem with the cardboard guards is that they are tricky to assemble, each one takes at least 1 minute to assemble and more if they are assembled in the field or if damp. Many thanks to Iain Morris who assembled hundreds of the guards.



The MVCP Team and volunteers continued planting all the week and were joined on the Wednesday afternoon by a group of eight students from Sutton Valence School. On Saturday 10th December several families from South Lane helped plant more trees many thanks to them for their help on what was a bright but very cold morning. Snow came on Sunday 11th December which held up work for most of the next week, the weather remained unhelpful with several very wet days before and after Christmas, so progress was slow, and planting was completed on 4th January 2023.

In total approximately two thousand trees were planted all native species including Oak, Silver Birch, Beech, Acer, Rowan, and Cherry. MVCP will be maintaining the site for the next 3 years this will be grass cutting and weed control. Hopefully weather conditions will improve in the spring and the trees will show signs of growth, we can expect that there will be some losses (up to 25%) but with the number of trees planted this will hardly be noticed and will lead to a more natural development of the area.

The Parish Council is deeply indebted to John Davis for his work on this project

Students of Sutton Valence School can be seen helping to plant some of the 2000 trees in the Platinum Jubilee Meadow



Gardeners Association seek younger members

The Sutton Valence Gardeners Association are trying to encourage younger people to join the association and help on the Committee. They have two annual shows and many gardening talks throughout the year.

There they have trips to various, RHS Gardens. Anybody with an interest in gardening or even allotment holders would be welcome to join. There is a small annual fee of £5.

FETE AND FUN DAY

To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III



**At Sutton Valence Village Hall
Sunday 7th May 2023**

From 12 noon to 5 pm

**Open to all residents from Sutton Valence,
East Sutton and Langley Parishes**

More volunteers and stall holders needed

Events so far ...

Live Music from The Harry Evans Band
BBQ, Bar, Refreshments
Ice creams, Children's entertainment
Face Painting, Dog Show

Please contact the clerk at clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk
or leave a message on 01622 844135

Organised by QHOF and Sutton Valence, East Sutton and
Langley Parish Councils

Kings Coronation Event with QHOF, Sutton and Langley Parish Councils

To celebrate the King's Coronation, it has been decided to hold a joint event with East Sutton and Langley Parish Council on Sunday 7th May. The event will be a family fun day we are hoping that members of groups and societies within the area would like to take part fundraising for their own groups. This will be a free entry event and, so far, QHOF have arranged for live music, a bar, children's activities. Full details will be confirmed nearer the time

SUTTON VALENCE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**May 10th at 7 pm
The Village Hall**

Everyone in the Parish welcome

Your opportunity to meet your
Parish Councillors and hear
from local groups, clubs and
community organisations.
Followed by wine and nibbles.



Fine English Oak for Queens Green Canopy

As part of the Queen's green canopy, the Parish Council made the decision to plant an English Oak in the middle of the Meadow. We now have a plaque and Emma has added our name to the official register.

Gary and Jane Ward, Eve Poulter and Lorraine Cook planted the Tree on 4 March 2023

Councillor Derek Eagle retires from Haven Farm Post Office

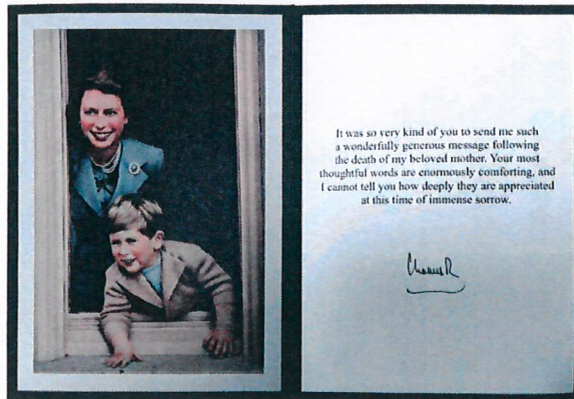
Parish Councillor Derek Eagle has retired from the Village Post Office and Haven Farm Shop, which he built up to be a thriving and successful business. For those that used Haven Farm it was far more than a shop, for many it became a social hub, a community shop with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, which was why many villagers were eager to show their appreciation by making a collection to give Derek a parting gift. Although Derek is no longer active at Haven Farm it remains open as a Post Office and shop.



Councillor Derek Eagle and Councillor Lesley Flint

King Charles III message to Sutton Valence

The Parish Council received this kind reply from King Charles III in reply to our letter of condolence sent to him on the death of his Mother Queen Elizabeth II



Haven Farm planning meeting

We had many parishioners attend the meeting. We heard from the doctors and their reasons why a new surgery is needed. Many people spoke about the volume of houses and how it will change the dynamic of the Parish and change the centre of the village. Others spoke about the amount of traffic. Air pollution was discussed. The Parish Council refused the application on those grounds, and we await the outcome. You can view and comment on all planning applications at:

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/search-and-comment-on-planning-applications>

What's on in Maidstone

Maidstone Fringe Festival
Wed 26 Apr - 1 May

May Day Celebrations
Kent Life Heritage Farm
29 Apr

BHP Performance Show
Kent Event Centre Detling
1 May

Maidstone Cocktail Week
1 - 14 May

King Charles III's
Coronation House Party
7 May

Coronation Fete & Fun Day
Sutton Valence Village Hall
7 May

Glitterbomb in the Park
Mote Park Fri 26 May

Proms in the Park
Mote Park Sat 27 May

Rock the Mote
Mote Park Sat 5 Aug

For further information visit
www.visitmaidstone.com/whats-on

CLEANER REQUIRED

For Parish Council

For further information please call or email the Parish Office

CONTACT US

For further information regarding Sutton Valence Parish Council and its work for the Parish Community please contact The Clerk, Emma Hull on 01622 844135 or email clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk