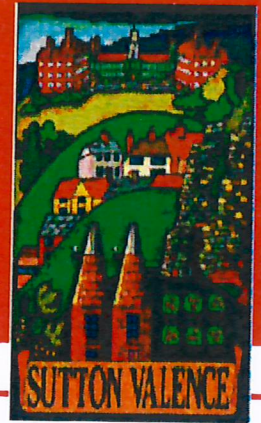


SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023



Haven Farm development gets the go-ahead

Maidstone Borough Council Planning Committee has granted planning permission for the Haven Farm development comprising of 105 houses plus a new doctors' surgery and a retail unit with associated car parking. Fernham Homes, the developers, were granted planning permission at the planning committee meeting on 19th Oct. MBC planning officials recommended Councillors to back the plans. The Committee voted to approve the plans by seven votes in favour, to three against with one abstention.

The developers say it will take a least three years from planning permission until the doctors' surgery is constructed and operational. The doctors' surgery was pivotal to the decision to allow planning permission. Planning officers revealed that siting a large medical facility south of Maidstone had been on their priority list for a number of years. The developers linking the Haven Farm site to the provision of a large medical facility, by gifting the site free of charge, was a major factor in the success of this application.



Above: Plan view of the Haven Farm development

Left: Entrance to the site onto the A274 North Street

Why the Parish Council objected to the development

The Haven Farm development will have a huge impact on our Parish and it will alter the whole dynamic of Sutton Valence village centre. We are dismayed at the size of this development. Sutton Valence as a larger village has been allocated more new houses than any other larger village in the area. The Parish Council are in favour of a new upgraded medical facility, but we have misgivings regarding the planning, financing and staffing going forward. Parish Councillors are also concerned that our village primary school will be over subscribed, and local residents have expressed concern about the present sewage system being able to cope with the number of new houses. Councillors feel that there are too many unresolved questions and grey areas in this application and that it is totally out of scale with the village.

Will the village be able to keep its Post Office?

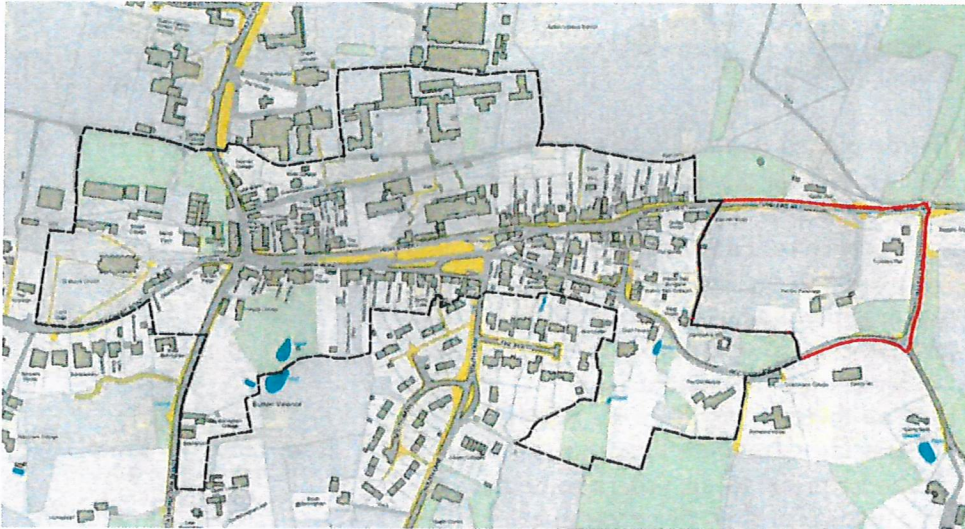
The Parish Council welcome plans for a retail unit as part of the new Haven Farm development, but are concerned about the lack of detailed information available following the granting of planning permission. There are many unanswered questions regarding the new retail unit. Who is going to be the end operator? What kind of shop will it be? Most importantly will it include a Post Office counter?

Sutton Valence Conservation Area extension proposed to include Castle environs

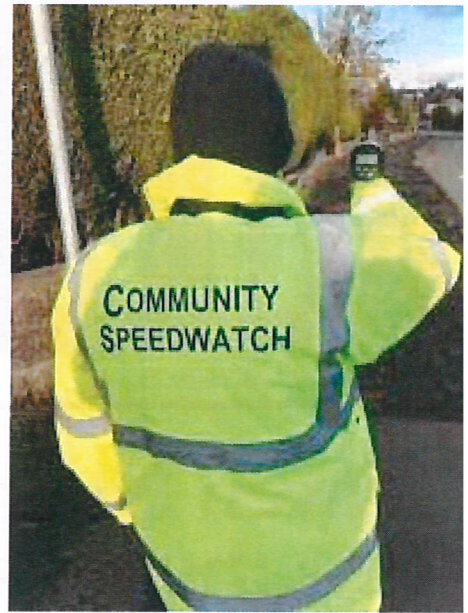
Our village Conservation Area is to be extended to the east of the village to further protect the Sutton Valence Castle environs, following a request by the Parish Council. The castle ruins currently lie within the existing Conservation Area, but it is believed much of the castle's historic precincts are outside the boundary. Following an eight week consultation period,

Maidstone Borough Council has proposed a two hectare extension to protect any archaeology yet to be discovered, this is under Section 71 of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990.

Any proposed future development in the area would need to have special regard for the character of the area and possible impact on any undiscovered archaeology.



Extended Sutton Valence Conservation Area boundary shown in red



Speed Watch equipment in action

Speed Watch volunteers wanted

The Parish Council would like to re-start the "Speed Watch" survey to gather traffic speed data in the parish.

The Speed Survey would be used to show the extent of the traffic speed problem in the parish. If you would like to volunteer as a helper in the scheme, please contact the Parish Clerk for further details.

Full training will be given on the equipment operation, and safety high-visibility clothing will be supplied.

Climate change group working to improve our environment

Since our last Parish Newsletter went out we have been joined by new and enthusiastic members, at least two of whom are keen to work within the Climate Change Group.

I have been very impressed by what the Sutton Valence schools have produced, including the bug boxes which have been very kindly "installed" by John Davis in various suitable spots, which you may have spotted.

The Primary School produced some great posters, which, hopefully could be made suitable for displaying around the village as reminders of what we should all be considering in our day to day lives in our efforts to limit our carbon footprints.



Bug boxes made by Sutton Valence School students and placed around the village



Litter is a constant problem in the Parish

Let's get litter picking!

Litter is a constant problem throughout the parish. The Parish Council want to organise a series of "Litter Picking" sessions. Parishioners are asked to volunteer to help collect the rubbish around the parish. Litter picker grabs and black sacks will be provided. The Parish Council will soon be announcing dates for the "Litter Picking" sessions. Please keep an eye on the parish notice boards for further information. The more volunteers we get, the smaller the litter problem becomes.

Lesley Flint,
Climate Change Group

New Highways Improvement Plan

In discussions with Kent County Council, your Parish Council is preparing an updated version of the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). Local residents are worried about the high speeds of traffic on the parish roads. We have received many comments from parishioners concerned about the high traffic speeds in the centre of the village, especially along the High Street and Lower Road. Parts of the A274 are also a major concern as it passes through the village. The new Highways Improvement Plan will identify the "hot spot" issues regarding traffic speed and danger to pedestrians and drivers alike. This will form the basis of our discussions with the KCC traffic management team. As always we have to work within KCC budget constraints that are under pressure at the moment, but the HIP will allow Parish Councillors to establish a priority order for proposed changes to our village traffic system.



Village centre traffic and parking problems



The now unused and unsafe Sutton Valence sports pavilion

Say goodbye to the old village pavilion

The Parish Council are making plans to demolish the old pavilion building which stands in the Memorial Playing Field near the Village Hall. The structure has become unsafe, is in a dangerous condition and has not been used for some time. It was formerly used as changing rooms for the football pitches, but the building failed to meet the standards required by the Football Association (FA) that brought an end to senior football being

played on the site. The parish council have experienced problems insuring the unsafe structure, and attempts to arrange a "Buy and Remove" method of disposing of the ageing building proved unworkable. The Parish Council had no option but to employ a professional demolition company to remove the pavilion, and planning permission has been obtained to enable the work to go ahead.

The historic Rose Ceremony

On Mid-Summer's Day June 23, Melvyn Flint, Chairman of Sutton Valence Parish Council, presented one red rose to James Thomas, Headmaster of Sutton Valence School, as payment for rental of the Village Green for another year. Dating back to 1957 when the Wardens of the Guild of Fraternity of Clothworkers, as Governors of this Free Grammar School of William Lamb and owners of the village green, granted a 99 year lease to the village in return for the payment of one red rose. This annual event celebrates the happy relationship between Sutton Valence School and the village.

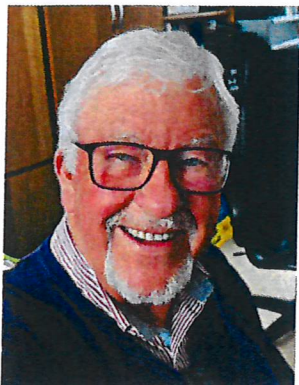


Melvyn Flint (left), Chairman of Sutton Valence Parish Council, presents a rose to the Headmaster of Sutton Valence School, James Thomas, in payment of a year's rent on the village green

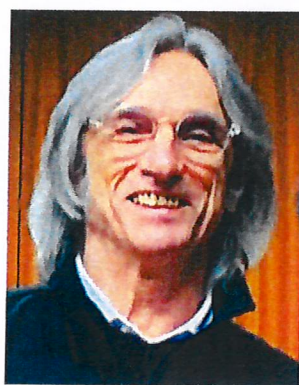
Introducing your new Parish Councillors

As a result of retirements and some Parish Councillors moving out of the area, we have a new look to the Sutton Valence Parish Council. Melvyn Flint has taken over as Chairman and we now have an enthusiastic group of village residents who will take on the running of affairs for the parish.

The full compliment of councillors for the parish should be nine, but we currently have seven, so we are looking to recruit another two volunteers to come onto the Parish Council and give their time and energy to serving the local community. **If you are interested in becoming a councillor please contact our Parish Clerk.**



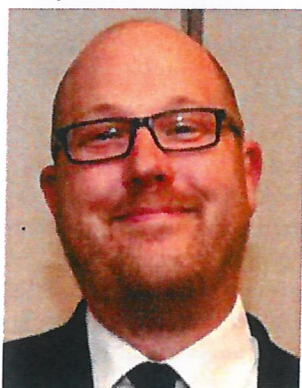
Melvyn Flint, Chairman



Derek Eagle, Vice Chairman



Lesley Flint, Councillor



Mike Gammon, Councillor



Sally Annereau, Councillor



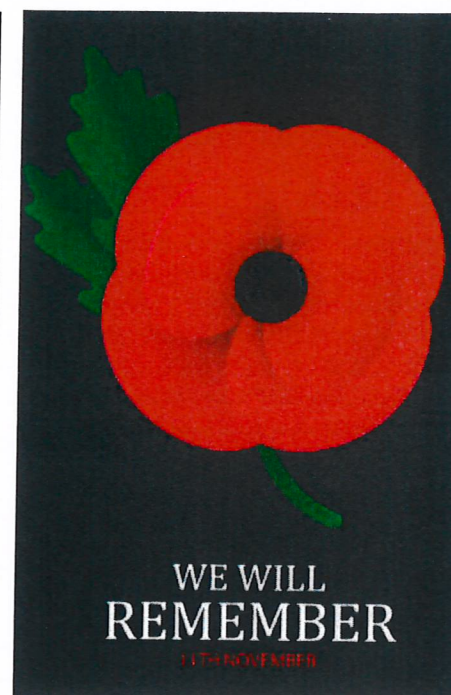
Melanie Dawber, Councillor



Nicola Alsop, Councillor



Emma Hull, Parish Clerk



Remembrance Day Ceremony

Sutton Valence remembered its fallen heroes at the annual Remembrance Day Ceremony, 12th November 2023. The Royal British Legion, The Parish Council, Sutton Valence School, QHOF and other village organisations combined to hold the ceremony at the Sutton Valence War Memorial. Wreaths were laid in remembrance of the many that gave their lives in two World Wars.

Eve Poulter retires from Sutton Valence Parish Council

After seven years as Chair of the Parish Council, Eve Poulter has retired from the Council. We thank her for her long and distinguished service to the parish community.

Read all about it !

Parish news is important and your Parish Council are always looking for ways to get the SVPC Newsletter out to the widest readership possible.

We are always looking for volunteers to help distribute the newsletter, if you have time to spare please contact the parish office if you are able to assist.



Could you be a new member of our team? Contact our Clerk for full details

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 www.suttonvalence.org.uk