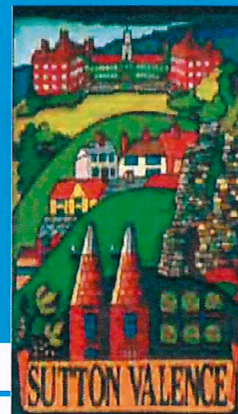


# SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER 2022



## Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II

Sutton Valence Parish Council would like to express their deep sadness at the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

She was loved and respected world-wide for her sage wisdom, steadfast dedication to service, and her great sense of humour, as displayed by the many messages received from heads of state around the world. She was a consummate professional, with the air of an approachable granny, and was never happier than when in the country with her dogs, horses and beloved Phillip. How fitting that her final months were spent in one of the places she loved most, entertaining friends and family, what marvellous memories those days will have made.



## Parish Boundary Review

Maidstone Borough Council is in the process of a boundary review. This is carried out, to even the electorate across MBC Wards. Each Ward member having the same number of electorates. The reason for this is because of the development and expansion of villages. The Commission have decided that the number of councillors in Maidstone should be 49 - losing 6 members. The change does affect Sutton Valence in that we will no longer be in the "Sutton Valence and Langley Ward". The Boundary Review has recommended that we are to be joined with Headcorn and its surrounding parishes. The parish council did appeal this at the Democracy and General Purposes committee on the grounds that Sutton

Valence, as a larger village, has a different agenda to that of Headcorn and that we did not share common interests.

We asked to be part of a small ward with Chart Sutton and East Sutton.

Even though we share common interests, MBC were not prepared to support our proposals.

The Review has been submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission; their final report will be submitted on 29 November. We have been told that the parish boundaries are also to be reviewed. This topic will no doubt be hotly debated amongst the Borough's residents.

## HAVEN FARM DEVELOPMENT OPEN MEETING

**Saturday 29 Oct  
10am to 12 Noon  
at the Village Hall  
Committee room.**

**Local residents  
invited to view and  
comment on the  
recent planning  
application for**

Hybrid Planning Application consisting of application for the erection of 104 dwellings, retail space, access of North Street and site infrastructure works, following demolition/removal of the existing structures. Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for the development of a doctors' surgery with associated car parking and a phased development of 5 x self-build plots.



# Parish Traffic problems

We have had complaints about traffic in the parish and in the surrounding areas. One of the worst situations was the gas leak between Warmlake and The Plough. This caused severe traffic problems in the area. Added to that, there was also an emergency along the Leeds Road which closed that road as well. This caused drivers to use all the country lanes – many of them single track and the result was chaos.

A resident said he took over an hour to drive home from the A20 to Sutton Valence, a journey usually taking 10 minutes. The parish council have recently met with other parish councils that are also affected and made the decision to speak to KCC at the parish seminar on 11 October. KCC are aware of the problems when there is an emergency and are speaking to the utility companies.

We have asked that the parishes be consulted about the best roads to use for diversion but cannot guarantee they will consult us in emergencies.

## Residents worried

There are a number of residents worried about the speed of the traffic in the parish. Our concerns are the junctions at the Plough, Warmlake and the Kings Head. There are also issues with the speed of traffic along Chartway Street, Chart Road and Warmlake Road. We have received an email from a parishioner who is concerned about the speed in the centre of the village, especially along the High Street and Lower Road.

## Car ownership increased

The village, as you know, has been here pre-Norman times and therefore the road layout is from that period with some changes. We agree that the village is delightful, and no changes should be made to it. It is also a conservation area. However, car ownership has increased dramatically, with most householders in the area owning two, if not three cars. There is also the Primary School drop off and collection adding to the amount of traffic in the area. Residents living along Warmlake Road have asked for an extension of the 30-mph speed limit to be extended 100 meters. KCC carried out an investigation but refused to take action as they did

not consider the junction imminently dangerous.

The parish council is also aware of the problems with car parking and traffic in the High Street and Lower Road and we are at a loss as to how we should tackle this. The parish council have been discussing ways to solve these problems in the village and the parish for some time.

## KCC restricted funds

We have raised these issues with KCC. They tell us that they are restricted by funds, the Kent Highways budget has, with all other budgets, been reduced. We questioned the cost and were told that it was not the manpower that was expensive, it was the bureaucracy behind a change in traffic orders that is expensive.

We are again short of councillors to take this further; we would welcome residents' help to push this matter further and find a solution to the parking and speed in the High Street and Broad Street.

## Identifying needs

Following on from this, we can look at the 20s Plenty Initiative. Our first step is to identify need. We all can say that driving in the village is too fast, but KCC wants proof. To do this, they will conduct a speed survey, KCC does not pay for this - the parish council pays. They will also need to see that over 15% of drivers are speeding to act. If this is the case, KCC will still not pay for the change in speed limit, the parish will have to pay for it. They may be able to help with some of the funding but not all. We will be looking at five areas in the parish – High Street, Lower Road, South Lane, Chart Road, and Broad Street.

It has been suggested that we put in traffic calming measures like speed bumps

We could, but this may change the look and feel of the area. This would entail more signage and would narrow the roads. It may not be popular with some residents who are not having their recycling bins emptied because the road is currently too narrow.

We would appreciate comments, suggestions and help.



*Eve Poulter SVPC Chair and Michael Beaman*

## Kent Community Awards

The parish council nominated Michael Beaman for the KALC Community Awards and we were delighted to present him with a certificate at this year's Annual Parish Assembly in May of this year. Michael was awarded for voluntary work undertaken to maintain the parish archives and organising the monthly exhibitions.

## Climate Emergency

Councillors Flint and Eagle have joined Parish Council Environment Group. A group of local, rural parish councils set up to share ideas and challenges to hold MBC to account, raise the profile of environmental issues. We have adopted the Group's decision to add the following paragraph to all new planning applications for new build properties and all major extensions: If MBC are minded to approve the application the Parish Council would ask that conditions are included to cover :

- Provision of renewable energy sources such as air/ground source heat pumps or photo voltaics
- Provision of EV charging points
- Exclusively native planting within any landscape plan
- Provision of swift and bee bricks, bat and bird boxes
- Wildlife friendly boundaries
- Encourage high levels of thermal insulation and airtightness
- Permeable parking and footway surfaces
- Avoidance of light pollution as much as possible in external lighting design



# Platinum Jubilee Meadow Development 2022

The Platinum Jubilee Meadow is part of the Harbour Field on the eastern side of the stream

## Background

The Harbour Field was acquired by the Parish Council for a “nominal sum” in the late 1940’s and can only be used for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture, allotments and recreation.

The area to the east of the stream was used for allotments for many years and for approximately 25 years has been let to Southfields Stables for exercising and grazing horses. Southfield Stables was sold in early 2022, and the land returned to the direct control of the Parish Council. The Harbour Field to the west of the stream is protected by “Fields in Trust” an organisation that provides legal protection from development, it is hoped that the Platinum Jubilee Meadow can also be included in this protection at a later date.

## The Future

The Parish Council decided that the best use for land would be to eventually open it as a public space and to include tree planting, and other environmental schemes designed to enhance biodiversity.

A Parish Council “working group” has been set up to oversee the project. This type of project takes time and money to achieve, planting and maintenance of the area will cost several thousand pounds. Fortunately, help is available from various sources including Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, The Woodland Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust.

Grants from our KCC Councillor, Lottie Parfitt Reid were obtained to install an access bridge and gate across the stream to allow machinery to access the site to cut back the vegetation, this work was carried out in early September. Small areas of invasive weeds have been cut back over the summer to reduce the amount of seed spread.

It has been encouraging over the summer to see how the field has recovered from heavy grazing, a wide range of grass species are present, also red and white clover, vetches, common knapweed, self-heal and many other native plants. A good range of butterflies and insects have been seen during the summer, foxes, badgers, owls and buzzards are also regular visitors.

## The working group

had a meeting in late September with James Wilderspin from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) who explained how the scheme would work and the support that MBC and various organisation would be able to provide, the aim will be to plant around 2000 native trees, the species and locations to be decided.

Over the next few months, it is hoped to carry out the following work:

- \* cut and clear the grass and other foliage from the site
- \* carry out site and environmental surveys
- \* prepare for tree planting, marking out the site
- \* plant and protect trees (tree guards) over the winter depending on weather conditions
- \* other planting to be decided
- \* continued maintenance, grass cutting, control of invasive plants
- \* watering (if required)

## Drop in sessions

We will aim to hold some “drop in” sessions in Spring 2023 to see how the work is progressing, there will also be opportunities to help with planting and maintenance if you have some time and energy. If you would like to be involved with this project, please contact the Parish Clerk.

### PLEASE NOTE

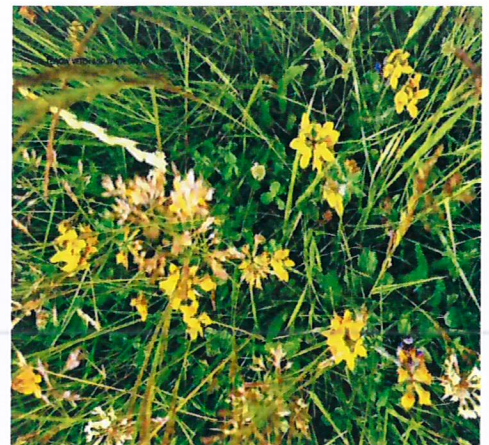
During the establishment period of the trees and meadow this area will not be open for public access



Platinum Jubilee Meadow



General view of Meadow



Yellow Vetch and White Clover



# The Jubilee Committee

Due to a lack of parish councillors, helpers and supporters, we made the decision not to hold a parish event during The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. An incredibly sad regret. The parish council decided to plant a tree in the meadow at the Harbour as part of the Queen Elizabeth Green Canopy. Although the Jubilee Committee is "asleep" at the moment, we would like to wake it up and organise a parish event for the coronation next year. The King says he would like a scaled down event, but we think we should celebrate. We would like volunteers to get together to help decide what form this should take. The date for the coronation is 6th May, we would like to start making plans at the beginning of January. If you are interested, please can you contact Emma on 01622 844135. Many volunteers would lighten the load.

## Parish Council Vacancies

We have two vacancies for parish councillors. Do you have an interest in your community, have a project you may want to put forward, want to do more for your community and have some spare time – approximately 7 hours per week - why not consider becoming a Parish Councillor? If you are interested in applying, please come to our parish council meetings. Our next full parish meeting is on 9 November at 7 pm. For more information please contact the Parish Clerk

## War Memorial Playing Fields Pavilion

Following on from the decision to remove the pavilion, we have looked at the cost of removal and this would cost several hundred, if not thousands, to remove. The parish council have decided to sell the Pavilion – some people may have noticed a for sale sign on it. So far, we have had no takers. We will shortly be putting it on eBay (buyer collects) unless a local buyer is found. The money from the sale will be put towards our new project, once decided.

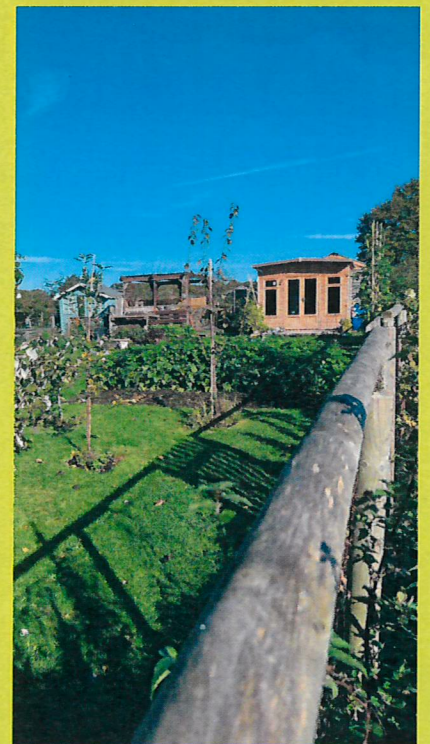
**The Remembrance Service and Parade will take place on Sunday 13 November 2022 starting at 10.30 am.**

Members of QHOF have kindly offered their services again to marshal the event



# ALLOTMENT HOLDERS MEETING

A meeting for all Allotment Holders will be held in the Village Hall on 9 Nov 2022 at 6.15 pm



## 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](mailto:clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk)**

