# Spring Newsletter 2024

*from*

# EYNSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the parish council. Do have a read to find out about recent activities and news. The parish council has been busy with lots of projects.

Come along to our Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 26th April in Eynsford Village Hall 6.30-8.30pm. All are welcome and there is no charge. Find out more about the council, meet your parish councillors. You can also speak to the local police, other service providers, charities and local groups about current issues or concerns. We will be serving wine and cheese.

In March we installed 3 bike stands at Riverside. These are for use by everyone and we hope it will make using local businesses easier for cyclists with somewhere secure to leave their bikes. You have also probably seen news about our work at Harrow Meadow which is detailed later in this newsletter.

A note from Eynsford in Bloom who are preparing for this years entry: *We will find out the date for judging in the next few weeks, but it will be sometime between 24th June to 12th July 2024. Residents are encouraged to adopt the Eynsford in Bloom colour scheme in their front gardens, hanging baskets and containers to make the village even more attractive. The RHS are celebrating 60 years of 'Bloom' and their theme for this milestone is 'Friendship'. Friendship provides the inspiration for our planting scheme and we have chosen associated colours which are Blue (trust), Green (growth and harmony) and White (honesty). The RHS is encouraging us all to grow flowers that can be picked and given to our friends. Help us to do even more in the Village – volunteer with us! This could be on a regular basis (every Tuesday morning from 9.30 to 11.15) or when you can spare a couple of hours. Bloomingeysnford@gmail.com*

*Holly Ivaldi, Clerk*
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# Pedham Place

*Cllr Vince Robson*

As you know we, Eynsford Parish Council, and a small team of volunteers from all the local villages, known as Protect our Greenbelt Together, have been challenging Sevenoaks District Council on their inclusion of Pedham Place in the 2040 Local Plan. This culminated in around 50 brave souls from surrounding villages attending the DCAC (Development and Conservation Advisory committee) meeting of the council on 26th March. Brave because it was a shocking night weatherwise! We listened to the SDC update and were very disappointed that they are still progressing with the build of 2500 homes at Pedham, which is Greenbelt/AONB. They are ignoring their own information and still claim the land is adjacent to Swanley. I am not sure how that's the case with 6 lanes of motorway and 4 lanes of slip road cutting the area off. Furthermore, the land is within the Parishes of Eynsford and Farningham!

This could be an extensive article as we have so many problems with the Consultation, however I think it prudent to share some of the issues we are dealing with:

Gladman's, the Developer, produced an assessment of Pedham Place and concluded it is poorly performing. They omitted a key assessment, namely, to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. SDC undertook an independent assessment, which included this point, and concluded Pedham is HIGH PERFORMING Greenbelt. SDC's comment is that it is open and transparent, however did you know there were 5 points? I did not until looking into this!

The Consultation had 4 options: 1 and 3 specifically mention Greenbelt/ AONB in the wording. 4 was none of the above. 2 (Pedham Place) makes no mention of it being Greenbelt/AONB in the wording of the option. They say the instructions were clear - that choosing an option was in conjunction with reading the Plan 2040 document. So why did they feel the need to mention it on the other options wording, but not in Pedham's option?

SDC Education assessment is population is not growing and there is no need for school investment in the area. How does that play out in terms of housing needs by 2040?

The Census, published by the Government late last year, puts Sevenoaks District growth at 4.5%, this is much lower than the projection SDC have

used to create the number of houses required in the 2040 Plan. Taking out Pedham Place would mean they still make the targets required.

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) was effectively scrapped by the Government last year, this means Districts DO NOT have targets to meet anymore. SDC have decided that this came out too late and they will continue with the housing numbers as planned.

Please do not expect this small band of people to stop Pedham. They are brilliant, but not as powerful as … YOU! We need you all to voice your concerns, complain, ask questions. Share, bring people on board who do not want any Greenbelt spoilt. Sevenoaks will continue with their plan unless there is an overwhelming reaction from you all.

You can keep up to date with progress on the plan by signing up to SDC's mailing list via this link:
https://engagement.sevenoaks.gov.uk/strategic-planning/mailing-list/

# Green Team Update

*Cllr Jane Laird, member of the Green Team.*

Tree and Hedge Planting

We have been helping the Parish Council with satisfying the landscaping and biodiversity planning conditions for the new football pitch and village hall. These conditions included the planting of new hedgerows and trees together with creating log piles and putting up bird boxes to enhance biodiversity. Thanks to a generous donation from a local villager we were able to purchase six mature native trees which we planted at the end of February. The type of trees had to be approved by Sevenoaks District Council and had to be native and good for wildlife; we planted a whitebeam, a walnut, two crab apples, a hornbeam and a wild cherry. We are also going to plant an oak, currently a sapling in a pot grown by a member of the Green Team. It was a beautiful crisp morning and we were helped by friends of the Green Team and particular thanks to Clive Curtis for his planting knowledge and help transporting the trees. Thankfully that evening it poured down so the trees had a good start.

Early in March we were back on site planting 400 hedge saplings which we had ordered for free from the Woodland Trust. Again it was a requirement from Sevenoaks District Council that the hedge had to be native plants and we planted a wide range of plants including hawthorn, hazel, field maple, elm, blackthorn, birch, field rose, guelder rose and holly. It was hard work but again we had extra help from villagers, so a big thank you to all those that helped. We have used sheep fleece to mulch around each sapling

and to stop the growth of the grass and weeds. Again since planting we have had lots of rain to help bed the saplings in. We will be setting up a watering rota for the summer.

Our next job is to make some log piles, bug habitats and put up bird boxes. If you have any bird boxes you wish to donate or make for us, please do get in touch via the parish office email address, info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk

Repair Cafe

The Green Team led by Holly hosted another successful repair café in the beginning of February which was well attended. We have some excellent repair helpers and it is very satisfying to know items in the village are being repaired and used rather than thrown away in to landfill. Thank you to all who came along to either help or bring items. The next repair café will be on 15th June, see below.

Litter Pick

At the end of March we ran a community litter pick, led by Michael. We invited any villagers who wished to join us to come along and we had a team of about 20 people. The Parish Council have recently purchased 5 of their own litter pickers and we borrowed some from Sevenoaks District Council so we were well equipped. We collected litter in the A225 recycling layby, along each side of the road towards Shoreham, down Castle Lane and along the footpath past New Barn Farm. It was quite shocking how much litter there was to collect, (including bits of cars and motorbikes), but it was very satisfying to bag it all up. We collected 30 bags which was a fantastic effort and thank you to everyone that helped. Olivia, a member of the Green Team also carries out a weekly litter pick in varying locations around the village as part of her Duke of Edinburgh volunteering commitment, for which we are very grateful.

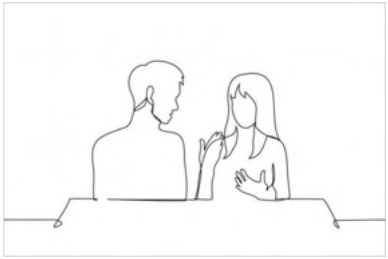
Kent Wilder Awards

We are currently working on the Kent Wilder Awards, a scheme to help

connect people with nature and protect wildlife. Completing the application for this scheme is proving to be a useful exercise to get us thinking about what else we can do in the village, so watch this space!

Big Green Week 8th -16th June
The national event, the Great Big Green Week, (www.greatbiggreeweek.com) takes place in June and is a week to celebrate community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. We would love the village to be part of this celebration and we are currently working on our plans. We hope to run a guided walk in Austin Lodge on 8th June, have a nature led art event on 9th June, a repair café held alongside the Eynsford Gardening club summer show on 15th June and a Community Litter pick on 16th June. Please do save the dates and look out for more information on posters that will go up soon.

# How to get Help and Advice.



The parish council can help you with many issues or questions about services and amenities in Eynsford. If we cannot help you directly we should be able to point you in the right direction to get the support or information you need.

The parish clerks will be able to help with most queries, you can call on 01322 865320, email info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk, or pop into the parish office during opening hours (8.30- 2.30 Mon - Thurs).

If you would prefer to speak to a councillor, please make an appointment with the Clerk. We will aim to meet with you at a time that suits you. Councillors often attend events in the village and surrounding areas, please feel free to speak to one of us then.

## Photocopying/Printing

We can help with your group or personal printing. We can print A4 and A3 in black and white and colour. We can also print booklets, but need a little notice. If your file is digital you can bring it on a memory stick or email the parish office. Current costs are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Community groups (A4) | Black & white 6p | Colour 10p |
| Personal (A4) | Black & white 10p | Colour 15p |

# Meet your new Councillor

*Cllr Oliver Young*

I moved to Eynsford with my Wife and daughter during the pandemic which was a stressful but ultimately enjoyable time, we had beautiful countryside on our doorstep and finally some time to enjoy it. Prior to this we would visit Eynsford and the Darent Valley coming down from Peckham on the train for hiking, cycling, or just a Sunday roast.

I really do think Eynsford is unique in its location, sitting in the North Downs but close to London, almost like a gateway to the countryside and the Darent Valley. It's a location that has continued to grow in terms of its importance as an iconic part of the Kent countryside.

All of this makes Sevenoaks's decision to include a large portion of Greenbelt and the North Downs in its Local Plan 2040 all the more baffling. Obviously housing is a contentious issue in this country and no one is disputing the need for development, there are always going to be competing ideas on what is acceptable. However this development will result in a significant loss of Green Belt and National Landscape and will contribute to the continuing urban sprawl of London to the detriment of rural Kent.

If anything Sevenoaks should be proposing more protection for such beautiful villages and countryside.

It's this proposed development that inspired me to join the Parish Council as I believe we should use all legal means to oppose it, protect the Green Belt and our place in it. I'd love to see an Eynsford that continues becoming a real gem for outdoor enthusiasts and tourists alike whilst keeping the village special for those that live here.

## Parish Office

You are welcome to pop into the parish office to get bin bags, garden sacks, do photocopying and to ask for information and advice. We are usually open Monday to Thursday 8.30am—2.30pm.

# Millfield Update to Villagers

*Bjorn Ramell, Chairman*

It is now 20 years since Millfield was acquired. The object of Eynsford Millfield Trust is “to preserve in perpetuity the green space between Eynsford & Farningham”. To this end, a charity was established, and the ownership of the land is with the Charity Commission.

The trustees´ initial focus was to improve pedestrian safety. The roadside path was so narrow that two could not walk side-by-side, and meeting pedestrians had to step out into the busy road! The footpath was widened and the barbed wire fence was replaced with a wooden handrail.

We ae grateful to Kent County Council, who covered the cost of the “new” gravel footpath further into in the field that is used by 100 walkers every day, or a cumulative 700,000 over 20 years! The improvement in pedestrian safety from this, in particular during the school run, cannot be overestimated.

Work has also been done in improving the appearance. You have probably noticed that we have finally found someone who is able to mow in between the 28 fruit trees that were planted 10 years ago and sponsored by villagers. In future, the main field will be cut twice yearly, as will the grass around the gravel footpath in the field. The grass in the main field is unfortunately not useable for animal feed due to the presence of faecal matter from dogs. Therefore, the grass cuttings will have to decompose in the field. All hedges ae cut in the winter by Robert Alexander, which is greatly appreciated.

We have regular work parties for general tidying, and volunteers are most welcome to join! The dates will be posted in the Trident and on the Millfield noticeboard.

# Village Hall Project Update

*Cllr Alan Cooke*

Since last reporting, much work has been going on in the background but little to show on Harrow Meadow, the site of the new hall. The new football pitch has received its initial dressing of fertiliser and the first cut is due in the next couple of weeks when it has dried out sufficiently to use the ride on mower. There are patches where the seed has not taken so well and some local areas are dominated by weeds rather than grass. The repair work and the first five cuts are all part of the contractor's contracted work.

The parish council's Green Team have been busy planting a number of trees along with hedging whips around the top of the steep embankments. The intension is to incorporate bird boxes, a bug hotel and a number of log piles. The team are currently discussing creating a landscaped footpath along the top of the chalk hill, to link up with the path that has been cut through the wilding area of the allotments and then join up with the footpath out onto the High Street.

As to the construction of the new hall, it is still the intention to start building work towards the end of this year. We have the opportunity to apply for another sizable grant, and if successful, would put us in touching distance of our target. The development committee have agreed that if the funds raised is not sufficient to build the hall and car park, then the car park could be deferred to allow more time to raise the remaining funds.

In January's article we reported that two estate agents had valued the existing site more than we had shown in our financial section of the Business Plan. We have also discussed the disposal of the existing hall site with a firm of auctioneers who have unfortunately valued the site back to our original estimate.

However, in order to make the start a possibility this year, we are NOW asking for your DONTIONS. A flyer will be distributed to each household and businesses in the village which will show you how that donation can be made. Two events in the village hall, the Charity Auction and Film Night have already taken place raising a combined total of about £2000.The next event is a Beatles Tribute band on the 3rd May, followed by the Riverside Watch's May Day Fayre on Common Meadow.

Please, Please, make our new hall happen by donating !!

# Parish Council Allotments

*Cllr Michael Barker*

Allotments, in their current form, largely originated in the nineteenth century when land was given over to the labouring poor to cultivate food for their own consumption. In 1908 the smallholdings and allotments act were introduced, placing a duty on local authorities to provide allotments if there was demand. Then came the allotments act of 1925 which established statutory allotments that the local authority could not sell without ministerial assent.

Allotments are traditionally measured in poles, with the average allotment being 10 poles, which is approximately the size of a tennis court. The parish council provides allotment gardens which are not a specified size.

Eynsford Parish Council has recently increased the number of allotments that it provides to 42, not all exactly the same size.

Each allotment holder has an agreement with the parish council spelling out what each expects from the other, there is also a handbook that explains more about allotment management, and which is given to every new allotment holder. Further copies are available from the parish council office.

The handbook states that only one building is permitted per allotment but that it can be either a greenhouse or a shed so allotment holders will be made aware that this is the case. That rule might change in the future but at present only one building is allowed. The maximum size of building allowed is 6 ft x 4 ft and no building can be erected without the permission of the parish council.

A recent allotment inspection highlighted a few issues, although it is obvious that most allotment holders work hard to make their allotments productive and to keep them tidy. There is a certain amount of debris lying around but the parish council is hiring a skip shortly and allotment holders are encouraged to bring unwanted items to put in it.

Keeping an allotment is very popular and rewarding the rent is minimal £30 per annum and there is a deposit also, just in case the site has to be cleared.

There is a short waiting list, but allotments become free quite regularly.

# Community Award - Adrian Elms

This year councillors chose Adrian Elms to receive the KALC community award for Eynsford for the work he, and his team, have undertaken setting up The Space - a fantastic community facility offering free food, company and activities once a week.

Adrian says: I have been married to Liz for 39 years and we have 4 daughters and 4 grandchildren plus 2 dogs! I trained as an electronics engineer with the MOD and then spent most of my secular career in technical sales and marketing. I also spent 17 years as part of the leadership team at Green St Green Baptist Church. In October of 2018 I was called to become pastor of DVCC whilst still living at Well Hill , Chelsfield . We loved Eynsford so much that we downsized and moved to Station Road in June 2021. What I love about Eynsford is that is actually a true village with real community . I never felt like an outsider and was warmly welcomed by all.

DVCC calls itself a “Community” Church and as such we value and want to support local community . Our strap line is “ Sharing God’s Love” and that is exactly what we try to do in the community, showing God’s love in real and practical ways. In addition to normal Church services we regularly walk in the community to meet and help people. Our warm space and community hub “The Space” was launched in December 2022 and has been wildly more successful than we ever imagined . Helping to glue community back together after Covid. I regularly support assemblies and other activities at Anthony Roper School. We are now exploring what can be done to help local transport particularly for the elderly and disabled , so watch this space ! I have to say that without the support of all the folk at DVCC I could not do what I do and really this award should be for everyone involved.

Eynsford Parish Council

# Annual Parish Meeting

## Friday 26th April 2024

### 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Eynsford Village Hall

- Come and meet your parish councillors
- Find out what we have been doing
- Ask questions & give your views
- Speak to other agencies & community groups
- The Space will be presented with a Community Award
- Drinks & Light Refreshments will be served

**Free Entry**

**All Welcome!**