



Eynsford Parish Council

PARISH NEWS

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the parish council. Please do read through for lots of new and information relevant to you!

Annual Parish Meeting

You are all invited to the Annual Parish Meeting on **Friday 29th May**, 6.30 – 8.30pm at St Martin's Church. As well as an opportunity to meet and speak to councillors, there will be a variety of local clubs and societies represented together with local agencies and service providers. If you are an Eynsford society and would like to be involved, get in touch! Light refreshments will be on offer.

Councillor Vacancy

We are delighted to welcome Ferne Haxby onto the council. She is replacing Jane Laird who stepped down in January. We were also sorry to say goodbye to Jim Griffiths recently and there is a current vacancy. We would love to see some local people put themselves forward for this role as parish councillor. This is an opportunity for you to contribute to our village and community and to help to make a difference! The current deadline is 10th May. Please contact clerk@eynsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk for more information.

For our latest news, please follow us on facebook or keep an eye on our website www.eynsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk You can purchase garden sacks for the parish office and we offer a printing service.

Eynsford Parish Council, Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford DA4 0AY
clerk@eynsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk www.eynsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

MEET YOUR NEW COUNCILLOR!



Hello Everyone. I am pleased to be rejoining Eynsford Parish Council, having previously served as a parish councillor. It is a role I valued greatly, and I remain committed to supporting our village and representing the views of local residents.

I have lived in Eynsford for around 50 years, with only a small gap away. Eynsford is a wonderful village, and its community has a warm and friendly atmosphere which I believe we would all want to nurture and protect.

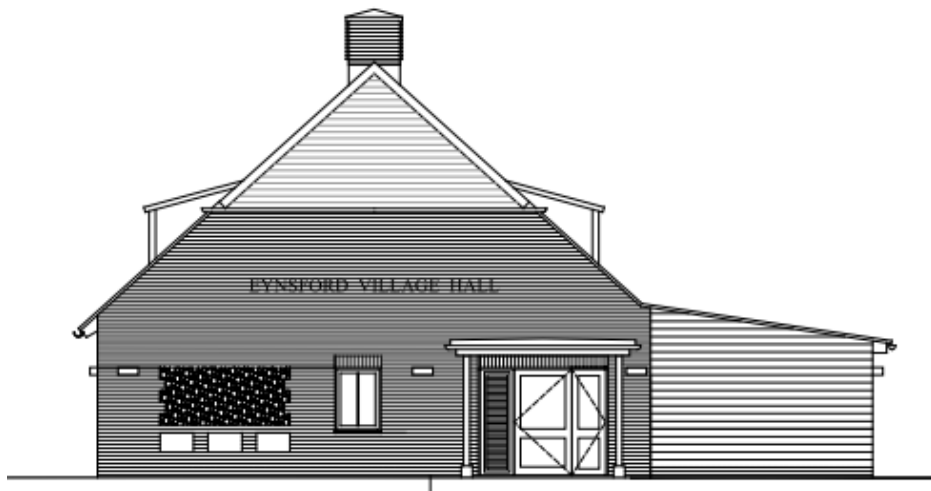
I work as a Learning and Development Manager, training carer support staff, a role I greatly enjoy. Communication is a key strength of mine, and I am keen to bring this experience to council activities, helping to support open dialogue, constructive discussion, and clear engagement with residents.

Alongside my professional role, I am an active member of Riverside Players and this year am producing their outdoor production of My Fair Lady. I strongly value local arts and community events and the positive role they play in bringing people together and enriching village life.

It is an honour to represent the village, and I warmly welcome the input of residents and the wider community so that, together, we can help improve and support Eynsford. I look forward to working with fellow councillors and residents to help the parish continue to thrive.

Ferne Haxby

NEW VILLAGE HALL – UPDATE



In January, the trustees made some minor adjustments to the internal layout of the hall, principally to the location of the kitchen. The final design was then completed by mid-March and that gave our main contractor a week to send all the packages of work to sub-contractors for pricing.

April should see all the tenders returned at which point we will have a more accurate figure for the total cost of the building work.

Part of these works consist of forming a new access junction from Bower Lane into the proposed car park. It is a requirement of the planning conditions that we obtain Highways approval before construction commences on the new hall. A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) requires us to notify local residents that there will now be a break in the existing double yellow lines across the width of the new entrance.

Access to Harrow Meadow and the play area during construction may be restricted at times and the play area may even be closed when a lot

of deliveries are scheduled. For a period of about a year, the parish council will keep locked the gate to the play area nearest to the main gate and ask residents to use the gate on the far side.

For a time, there will be construction traffic using the five-bar gate at the top end of Harrow Meadow, so again residents are asked to take care when walking to and from Chalk Hill.

Alan Cooken Cooke

EYNSFORD'S BIG GREEN WEEK

Look out for activities for all the family happening in the village during this year's Great Big Green Week (June 6th-June 14th). The Parish Green Team have adopted the theme of 'Chalk '! Our landscape, plants and animals are shaped by the rocks beneath our feet and we thought it would be great to celebrate the uniqueness of our valley.



We have some ideas already planned out such as:

A family art workshop on Saturday 6th June, with each person helping to build up a map of the village, using collage, paint and locally found materials.

A litter pick (7th June) and repair cafe (13th June) are already booked and there will be an exciting evening event on Friday 12th June with music, geopoetry and talks, including a short update on the UNESCO Geopark. We are also hoping to offer a guided walk along the valley and a trip to a rarely opened local building.

We will be providing much more detail and booking information on the Parish Council Website – www.eynsfordparishcouncil.gov.uk and leaflet reminders will be sent out soon. *Erica Russell*

NEW FOOTPATH A225

A long-standing project for the Parish Council is finally coming to fruition this autumn. We are delighted to announce that the footpath running alongside the A225—currently a narrow verge route from beneath the railway bridge up to the start of footpath SD197—will be upgraded into a fully constructed pavement suitable for all users.

This scheme has been a key priority on our Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) for several years and has taken many a meeting and site visit with KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group to reach this stage. Progress has only been made



possible thanks to the support of two generous funding contributions: one from the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership (DVCRP) and another from Southeastern Railway. We extend our sincere thanks to both organisations and KCC, whose support has been instrumental in bringing this project to life and enabling it to move forward to the construction stage.

Once completed, the new pavement will provide a significantly safer and more accessible route for pedestrians, families, and visitors. It will improve connectivity to local attractions, including the Roman Villa, Lullingstone Castle, World Gardens and the surrounding countryside, as well as the well-known lavender fields that are so popular during the summer. By creating a proper, clearly defined walkway, the scheme will reduce the need for pedestrians to walk so close to the traffic, enhancing safety for all.

As with many infrastructure projects, delivery takes time due to planning requirements, design considerations, and coordination with relevant authorities. While some disruption may occur during construction, every effort will be made to minimise inconvenience to residents and road users.

We are hopeful that work will be completed during the autumn period, and we look forward to delivering a lasting improvement that will benefit both the local community, visitors to our lovely village and the Darent Valley

Oliver Young

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS COMMUNITY AWARD

I am very happy to have been nominated for the Community Award for Eynsford. This was “for a lifetime of working for the community of Eynsford and its environment, in particular for the W.I. and the Local History Society.” The presentation took place in the former brewery store with old inn signs on the walls at the Shepherd



Neame Brewery in Faversham, the certificates being presented by Jonathan Neame, the retiring High Sheriff of Kent. There were people from about 30 communities there, and it was heartening to hear the dedication of so many volunteers in Kent.

I have been an active member of Eynsford W.I. for nearly 50 years and on the committee for over 20 years, mainly as treasurer and a few years as president. I have also had fun taking part in drama sketches, and have given a couple of talks. I have represented Eynsford W.I. at

the annual meetings of the West Kent Federation of W.I.s on several occasions and the National Federation of W.I.s on two occasions, including in 2015 at the 100th anniversary of the first W.I. in Britain, when the late Queen, a W.I. member, came to the Royal Albert Hall.

I have been a member of Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society from the society's beginning in 1985 and have served on the committee as chair and speakers' secretary. I researched and wrote two history books for the society, one on Eynsford W.I. and one on the Eynsford schools. More recently, for a Kent publisher in association with the society I researched the history of the Farningham schools and, combined with an update of Anthony Roper School, I wrote a new history of the schools in both villages as Anthony Roper School celebrated 50 years. I have always found the research very interesting and enjoyed handling the archives.

Over the years I have helped at jumble sales, scouts' fetes (mainly with serving teas) and when my children were at primary school with P.T.A. events. At all those events I enjoyed meeting people.

I have enjoyed helping the community and I look forward to continuing to help.

Diana Beamish.

EYNSFORD IN BLOOM

Eynsford in Bloom volunteers are delighted to announce that Eynsford Village was awarded Gold at the 2025 national RHS Britain in Bloom Awards (in addition to the regional South and Southeast in Bloom Gold awards mentioned in the previous PC newsletter).



The judges "were delighted to see the ribbon of colour through this linear village which was further enhanced by the overall cleanliness of the village. This embraces pride of place throughout." Thank you to all our volunteers, donors and supporters who made this possible. Here's to our continued success in 2026!

Kaz Langridge

EYNSFORD VILLAGE SOCIETY: WE NEED YOU!

For 80 years, Eynsford Village Society (EVS) has helped protect the character of our village and strengthen its community spirit – from supporting Eynsford in Bloom (EIB) and helping secure Millfield, to welcoming new residents, arranging and running village events and celebrating our shared history.

The Society now needs energy and new officers to carry this work forward. If you can offer time, ideas, or skills, please consider joining us at the **AGM on Friday 01 May** which will be held at Farningham Village Hall at 6.30pm.

To express interest or share suggestions contact our Secretary, Sally Pennington, at sally_linc@hotmail.com. Help shape the next chapter of Eynsford's story.

Sally Pennington

PEDHAM PLACE UPDATE

Quick check on how you are feeling before reading this article – Calm, Happy, Intrigued, Upset, Angry or something else. I would like you to re-check your feelings after reading this....

This is more of a general update on what's happening at Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) following on from the Regulation 18 –

Consultation that we all took part in last year. Pedham Place is part of that plan, so it matters.

Let's start with the results of the Consultation:

Option 1 – 11,500 new houses - 5% voted in favour

Option 2 – Option 1 plus Pedham Place - 24% voted in favour

Option 3 – None of the Above - 71% voted for this option

Option 3 won by a clear margin and this is due to you who took the trouble to respond, and action groups across the District working together to bring awareness and help on responding to the Consultation. Last time different areas voted to move the housing away from their Parish. This time we worked together to tell SDC to protect the Greenbelt.

Did you know the result? Have you been made aware of it? Last time the In-Shape magazine presented the results in detail, this time the article only talks about the number of respondents! Please try and find the Consultation results on the SDC website, good luck with that! This is an outrageous suppression and suggests they do not want the public to know. I spent ages trying to find them and resorted to writing to SDC for advice. I will post how to see the result in more detail on the Facebook massive.



Let me explain a bit on the housing target. It is more complex than I present here, but this is part of the basis of the housing target! Please note SDC have changed their wording from "Housing Target" to

“Housing Need”. Let me dispel that. The Government use an algorithm to project Housing targets across the Country. Two key components are the average value of properties and the housing density in the area. Take Sevenoaks District, our “target” is distorted by the fact that 93% of the District is Greenbelt, lower house density, and that we are in a London commuter area, creating higher house prices. The Government then inflated this number to create the “housing target” SDC currently have. Now if you look at the last 2 census, and use an approved projected population growth percentage. Then this number is circa 8,000 houses, which is the District’s “housing need” by 2040/2. (Please note this is an approximation to make the point) The difference is stark and suggests we can protect Greenbelt. It is not easy to get the information on brownfield, but if you consider there are around 1,000 houses empty in Sevenoaks and then really look for genuine brownfield then, I would argue, we do not need to pave over the greenbelt much, if at all. They have not tried to protect the Greenbelt, they have pandered to the Government, and then tried to find landowners willing to develop their land.

Housing is needed, but the “need” is at a national level. If they proceed with Option 2 in Sevenoaks then who will live in the extra houses? Then you must question how likely are developers going to prepare the infrastructure/doctors/transport/water/roads/air quality/schools before they build.

Here is the kicker: At the DIAC meeting on the 5th March, they thanked all those involved in taking the trouble to respond to the Consultation, and despite the 71% vote against this plan, they intend to press on! Leaving the question on what was the point of the Consultation? A tick box exercise? The clear mandate of residents of Sevenoaks is to be ignored. The saying “Once it’s gone, it’s gone” really is appropriate to the Greenbelt! It will not be there for future generations. SDC’s attempts to define Greybelt and their approach to creating this Plan means losing a lot of Greenbelt. This will be the start! So many areas

will be under threat in the future. Basically, if they build on Pedham you will be able to justify building anywhere! It will set a precedent.

I have written to SDC Planning, Hannah Gooden in particular, reminding them that we pay their wages through the Council Tax, that residents have told them that we do not support the plan (71% said no to Option 1 and 2), and that they should listen to us and protect the Greenbelt! I suggest that anyone reading this should also write to SDC and remind them that they act on our behalf and that we have told them to protect the Greenbelt.

We must fight to protect our voice, we must ensure future generations have greenbelt to explore and play on. Otford Society have some £60k in their "fighting fund", Eynsford does not. We have access to a network of like-minded groups but we need more, we need YOU. More money and more people to protect the Greenbelt! Are you one of those individuals? Some of you will think this is going to happen no matter what we do, some of you will think that some other group of people can stop this. Some of you will think 'what can I do?'. Well, what you can do is make a difference! Stand up to protect your village. To press home the need to act - here is a "Fun" fact: The new "Leader of the Council" represents Westerham and that Wards housing target has reduced to zero in the plan, yes SDC decided that it was too difficult to build in that area.

The strength is in numbers, can you give some time to this? If you cannot, then can you donate to the cause? If this resonates with you then we can follow up with details on how and where. Look out on Facebook, spread the word, share your feelings.

Please go back to my first sentence and gauge how you feel now knowing what is going on in your area!

Vince Robson

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – UPDATE

Following the departure of Jim Griffiths I have now stepped in to take the chair of the neighborhood plan steering group. We are working closely with very experienced consultants Urban Vision Enterprise to develop a neighborhood plan that will contain a vision for the future of the village that fits alongside the emerging local plan for Sevenoaks District.

One aspect of the plan will be a list of designated green spaces in and around the village that residents would like see given extra protection from development, often in addition to the protection already provided by green belt and/or National Landscapes (previously AONB) designation. Residents of the village have had a chance to have their say and the responses are being pored over by members of the steering group to pick out the main themes. Most responses were received via the parish council website but email submissions have also been received and hard copy submissions mostly from the clientele of "the space".

A further space has been added to the original list by popular demand and will be consulted on before a definitive list is incorporated into the plan.

Meanwhile work continues on all aspects of the plan and we will be keeping an eye on the development of the local plan for Sevenoaks in order not to be in conflict.

Readers might be interested to know that 17 parishes in Sevenoaks District have been formally designated as Neighborhood Areas, of which three have been "made" (adopted) and four Neighborhood Planning groups (including Eynsford and Farningham) were actively preparing Neighborhood Plans.

Michael Barker