

**Minutes of the Chestfield Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 20 March 2023 at 7pm
at the Women's Institute Hall, Chestfield Road, Chestfield**

1. Present

Parish Cllr Steve Bailey (Chairman)
Parish Cllr Chris Brealy (Vice Chairman)
Parish Cllr Anne Loder
Parish Cllr Bob Todd
Parish Cllr Tricia Chapman
Parish Cllr David Fitzpatrick
Parish Cllr Mike Poole
Parish Clerk, Amanda Sparkes
Cllr Pat Todd – Canterbury City Council
Cllr Robert Thomas – Canterbury City Cllr and KCC Cllr for Chestfield
Plus 14 residents/organisations' representatives.

2. Apologies for absence.

Parish Cllr Lorraine East
Parish Cllr Pat Gibson
Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding – Canterbury City Council
Rev Simon Tillotson, Team Vicar, All Saints Whitstable and St John's Swalecliffe in the Whitstable
Team Ministry (but represented at the meeting by Jane Mayhill, Children and Families Minister, St
John's Swalecliffe and Chestfield.)
PCSO Jack Roy
Neal Fowler, Chairman, Canterbury and District neighbourhood watch
The Rotary Club of Chestfield Joint Presidents Pat McFarlane and Nick Robinson.
Michael Clarke, Chairman, Maydowns Road Residents Association
Paul Gibson, Chestfield Cricket club

3. Welcome from Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Steve Bailey

Cllr Bailey gave a warm welcome.

4. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 March 2022

Last year's meeting Minutes may be read on the parish council's website at
<https://chestfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ANNUAL-PARISH-MEETING-MINUTES-2022.pdf>

There were some paper copies available at the meeting.

Resident David Mann Proposed, and Parish Cllr Todd seconded that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting.

5. Chairman's report of 2022-2023 (Chairman, Councillor Steve Bailey)

My annual report always gives the opportunity to look back on our achievements over the last 12 months and this allows me to advise you of some of our memorable ones for various reasons.

In May 2022 the old Whitstable Improvement Trust noticeboard was improved with fresh artwork and bespoke maps, and The Rotary Club continue to share one side of it for their use.

On Sunday 05 June 2022 we held a hugely successful event at the cricket club to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event and I would thank the cricket club for all of their assistance both before, at, and after the day.

In July we placed an order for five new trees at the play park – these have now taken well. Our contractor also took over the upkeep and replanting of the village Planters at the play park – and we have been very pleased with their appearance.

We also offered hedgehog highway surrounds to residents to help address the nationwide dwindling hedgehog population – and this initiative was well received. Thank you to those that supported it.

July 2022 was also the first time we became aware of an application actually in Greenhill for 450 new homes to have foul drainage connecting into the top of Maydowns Road. Foul drainage capacity here, and for the village as a whole, is a primary concern, and dialogue with Canterbury City Council and Southern Water has been intense and remains ongoing. You can follow the full detail in our meeting Minutes (CA/21/01430 refers). I would thank Maydowns Road residents, our city Councillor Ben Fitter-Harding and our clerk for their hard work on this issue.

We also adopted our own Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategy. CIL is a charge on most new development within the local authority area. The money is used to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. This infrastructure can be wide-ranging, including schools, road schemes, health facilities and sports and leisure facilities. CCC charges and collects CIL and the 15% Neighbourhood Portion is passed to parish councils. The first CIL payment for April-October 2022 of £3,744.68 was subsequently received in November 2022. We checked our CIL strategy before adoption with a CCC Planning manager who said it was the best of its type he had ever seen and asked that we share it as a best practice example with all of the Canterbury district parish councils, which we did.

In August with the Women's Institute permission, we resolved to provide another defibrillator – and this is now installed in a cabinet on the side of the WI Hall.

We were saddened by the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 08 September 2022. As Chairman I sent a letter of condolence to the private secretary of HM King Charles III.

As every year I would also thank our army of volunteers in various spheres for their efforts on behalf of the village this year, and for making this the special village that is Chestfield! We were very pleased to offer our usual annual thank you buffets for them in September. We gained some new volunteers this year who have planted crocus and daffodil bulbs in the verges of various roads including Lodgefield Road, Kendal Meadow, Cherry Orchard, The Paddocks and Birkdale Close.

In October 2022 we resolved the replacement of the two wooden benches on footpath CW69 with recycled material benches, and also the replacement of the noticeboard on the footpath leading to Sainsburys.

We have also updated our Climate change and biodiversity strategy and action plan. This can be viewed on the parish council's website. Our Clerk was asked to be a guest speaker about this at the October meeting of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Network.

We were pleased to offer a community Quiz in October 2022 – and are planning another one for 21 April next month – please contact the Clerk for details and to book a table.

In November I used some of my Chairman's allowance to purchase a commemorative wreath and attended the St John's Church Service of Remembrance on 13 November to lay it on behalf of the Parish. I was again honoured to be asked to read out the names of the fallen from the Memorial Board.

We have previously requested an extension to the yellow lines in the entrances to both Plantation Road and Share and Coulter on safety grounds which the Joint Transportation Board refused but with support from our Kent County Councillor Robert Thomas I am pleased to advise that our repeat request did not receive any objections during public consultation and these lines have now been put in place – yet another example of how we can all work together to achieve an ultimate goal.

October and November were busy months in terms of planning – we focussed on the draft Canterbury District Local Plan consultation and our response can be viewed on our website. We also responded to the CCC Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan. Our main concerns remain infrastructure - or lack of it – namely both foul and surface water drainage capacity, and highways constraints. Stodmarsh nature reserve water quality constraints are also being watched closely. The Greenhill development connecting its foul drainage to Maydowns Road issue remained ongoing and we learned a lesson about Grampian

conditions – whereby new development is conditioned and phased to align with drainage capacity.

We considered our precept for 2023-2024 in November. Although the anticipated budget spend is projected to increase to £70,582, the councillors were mindful of the cost of living affecting everyone now, and resolved to set a precept of £64,673, the same level as last year's. The difference will be met through the use of unrestricted reserves and potentially successful grant application(s).

On 21 December 2022 we held our Christmas Carols event – this saw a record turn out of residents attending and was a very enjoyable occasion. Our Christmas lights competition was also undertaken.

We organised one of our twice-yearly litter picks in December – and our next one is now organised for Sunday 26 March from 11am at the play park, if any of you would like to help for an hour or so, please just come up to the playpark where we would be delighted to see you.

After interviewing 3 candidates for the vacancy created by Chris Ellis moving out of the area, we were very pleased to co-opt Mike Poole at our January 2023 meeting. In this regard and whilst welcoming Mike to the parish council, I would also like to extend my thanks to the other two worthy applicants.

Further to CCC encouragement we resolved over a year ago to informally engage early with the developer teams looking to develop two strategic housing/mixed use sites for Chestfield: Firstly, Brooklands Farm with a proposal for 1,300 dwellings, a primary school and a Special Educational Needs school, and two slip roads.

And secondly, Bodkin Farm for a secondary school with sixth form, and 300 houses, and with two points of access off the Old Thanet Way. The agent has advised us they are planning to hold public consultation in two forms (online webinar and in-person event) in June 2023, then an outline application is anticipated in September/October 2023.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking every committee member for their efforts over the past year. And thanks too, to our city and county councillors. Although we do sometimes fail to see exactly eye to eye, I must just emphasise that we are all one big happy family with our wonderful village always at heart.

Looking to the future, we are planning another Fun Day event on bank holiday Monday 28 August 2023 from 12pm at the cricket club – this will be free to attend and more details will follow in the June magazine. If anyone would like a stall or to volunteer assistance on the day please speak to our Clerk.

We are also shortly going to replant the rosebed at the entrance to the village by Maydowns Road, and to plant and replenish our very popular herb garden.

We are also exploring options for more trees and/or planting at Radfall Recreation ground - and following residents' concerns about parking for Radfall Recreation Ground we are about to hold talks with CCC about a possible car park extension, although obviously this is dependant on availability of funding and CCC agreement.

Lastly – but in no way the least – I would like to personally thank our Clerk Amanda for her continued hard work throughout the past year.

Please join me in a round of applause for everyone who has helped keep the village of Chestfield such a wonderful place to live.

Steve
Steve Bailey, Chairman, Chestfield Parish Council

6. Parish Councillors' Yearly Paragraphs

The parish councillors' 'paragraphs' had been printed as a handout for everyone at the meeting.

Cllr Chris Brealy – Vice Chairman

This year there has been a lot of work preparing important consultation responses to the draft Canterbury Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy. I have helped with this where possible. In particular trying to improve cycle links in the area particularly to the Crab and Winkle line. Environmental improvements have been ongoing and we met KCC in April to agree more planting of trees in the verge at the Play Park. These trees have now been planted and all have new stakes and tree ties. Unfortunately, one of the Cherry trees was pushed over and hopefully it will survive after I rebudded and staked it. The trees should help stop the recurrence of the motorhome incursion which happened.

We celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a successful event at Chestfield Cricket Club on Sunday June 5th which I helped with. The Chestfield Rotary Club kindly mowed the grass area and tidied the rose bed next to the roundabout next to the Shell Petrol station. I removed the grass cuttings. Unfortunately, the roses were vandalised subsequently and we have resolved to plant bulbs here instead. We have installed a seed swap box at the W.I hall (made by Cllr Bob Todd) on a post which I installed in March.

Cllr Tricia Chapman

How wonderful it is to see trees and shrubs coming back to life in readiness for the Spring which brings the village back to life especially, when the cherry blossom trees are in full flower.

Trees are so important, not just for their beauty but also, for the habitats and food sources which they provide for wildlife. There has been a gradual decline in many of the birds we are used to seeing on our bird feeders including sparrows, starlings and song thrushes. In order to try to address the issue of habitat decline due to housing development or an ageing tree population the Parish Council in conjunction with residents of the village have initiated the planting of new trees in the play park and along road side verges which enhances the village for residents and for those passing through.

It is recommended that trees, hedgerow and shrubbery cutting or removal should be avoided during the bird nesting season time which is between March and August.

Cllr Patricia Gibson

I have helped with catering for the Quiz Nights, involved in various litter picks and wildflower planting and help out with watering the community herb boxes.

Once again, I would like to thank Amanda, our Clerk, and Steve our Chairman for their hard work throughout the year.

Cllr Anne Loder

I have now been on the Parish Council for 6 years and feel that I am much better informed not only about the Parish Council and its functions but also about Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council.

My main areas of responsibility are Traffic matters, and acting as liaison with the WI for initiatives like the new defibrillator and the seed swap box. I am also interested in Footpaths and Public Rights of way etc., rather more passively as I am not as mobile as I used to be! I am no longer a member of the Speedwatch Team as I found I was unable to either sit or stand outside for an hour. I would like to add that I am happy that Parishioners do approach me about any concerns they have.

Cllr Lorraine East

As flood wardens Bob and I continue to monitor Chestfield flood plans. We continue to improve bio-diversity and are very pleased with the bulb planting, seed swap, tree planting and residents' efforts to improve our community. The hedgehog crossings were received very well and I have offered myself up for adopting injured hedgehogs and giving them respite in my garden by purchasing some hedgehog houses for protection. Looking forward to more challenges and improvements to be made in the coming year, including bulb planting in the Maydowns Road previous rose garden area at the entrance to the village.

Cllr David Fitzpatrick

I have now been on the Parish Council for 5 years and I have spent most of my time reviewing and commenting on planning applications.

There have been 47 applications validated between April 2022 and March 2023 which I have scrutinised alongside Cllr Todd and the Clerk.

My other focuses are the flooding concerns in the Chestfield area due to climate change, together with surface water and foul drainage and plus car parking issues in Chestfield Road, which may be exacerbated by new developments without mitigation.

We anticipate a further bumper year in terms of planning applications and developments ahead.

Cllr Robert (Bob) Todd

This year saw me assist in the preparation and running of the Queen's Jubilee Party at the cricket ground which was very well attended despite the potential of the weather. Otherwise, it has been mostly business as usual with me continuing to be "apprentice" to Cllr D Fitzpatrick on planning issues. The parish is fortunate to have someone familiar with the planning process. There has been a lot of effort in reviewing and commenting on the draft Canterbury Local Plan 2045. The lack of robust infrastructure (eg drainage) is a major focus for the Parish.

Despite having had a fair bit of rain, as flood warden, things have been quiet. A reminder that should you see flooding in the Parish, do photograph and report it. We need good evidence if anything is going to be done.

Hopefully you will have seen that the sad wooden benches on footpath between Share and Coulter Road and Polo Way have been replaced with recycled (and recyclable) plastic ones that require little maintenance.

Cllr Mike Poole

I have recently joined the Council, having been co-opted on in January 2023.

It is my intention to work with the other Councillors supporting the Parish Council in their work for the good of the residents of Chestfield Village.

I can see there will be many interesting topics to discuss during the coming year with the recently published Canterbury District Local Plan, and the new developments that are taking place in our area.

7. Report from Kent County Cllr, Cllr Robert Thomas

KCC Cllr Robert Thomas commented that it was great to see so many residents at the meeting and gave his report :

He has been working for 12 years with parish councils and 5 years with Chestfield.

It's been another difficult year.

For Global/National issues – councils had a role in the passing of the Queen last year; the war in Ukraine, the mini-budget, inflation, change of prime ministers all have a significant impact on councils.

Demand is up on all services, partly due to the increase in demographics balanced against finite resources. Adult Social Care takes 35% of the KCC budget. KCC also manages education, youth services, school meals, libraries, highways and potholes.

It has been a tricky year for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with issues around transportation – a review and subsequent report has now been completed.

For Education, KCC secured an agreement with national government last week – 'The Safety Valve' Agreement – which gives a government grant towards the shortfall of places, budget, etc. KCC operations may change in the future although a possible unity council is probably a long way off.

For local affairs, Cllr Thomas commented that he has worked with the parish council, on items such as public rights of way, lighting, road closures etc, and it is a pleasure to work with an efficient Clerk and council as a whole.

Cllr Thomas explained his the Chairman of the Kent Pension Board, and he sits on other committees. He sat on or chaired two short-focus enquiries on Section 106 developer contributions, and also the Highways Improvement Plan templates. He also sits on the cross party committees for Kent Plan Bee, and has successfully overseen 900 trees planted at Neals Place Meadow in Rough Common as part of Kent Plan Tree.

Cllr Thomas sits on the World Heritage Site management committee – they are working on the World Heritage Site strategy/management plan which is due to be finalised this year.

KCC has a Levelling Up Bid to improve the highways at Dover Docks.

There are local elections in May but not for Kent County Council – Cllr Thomas will work with the new parish council and city councillors when known.

There are challenges ahead, but he is looking forward to them.

8. Reports from Canterbury City Councillors, Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding

CCC Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding had given apologies for the meeting but provided a report which CCC Cllr Pat Todd read to the meeting, as follows:

Chestfield Annual Report 20/03/2023

When I delivered my last report the district council had just transferred Grounds Maintenance (and associated works) to its publicly-owned contractor, Canenco. After a couple of months of finding its feet, what followed was one of the cleanest summers for the coast that many of us can remember, with new ideas being tried to empty the rapidly-filling coastal litter bins, some of which were emptied up to 10 times a day.

As we go into year two of the enlarged Canenco, we look forward to further improvements to the management of our open spaces, with focuses on litter picking, mowing (where the district owns the land) and play area maintenance.

Canenco itself is now three, and very much the envy of our neighbours across Kent. Agency staff have been reduced to a bare minimum with the organisation favouring a permanent workforce, and all of its drivers are employed directly. Missed bin numbers have plummeted, and continuous improvements to technology have resulted in long-standing issues being resolved and customer services improving.

Elsewhere in the district I'm pleased to report business as usual. The introduction of Cabinet has created direct elected-representative oversight and accountability, driving improvements forward. Decision making has been decisive, and the council's restructure has streamlined operational matters. A large recruitment drive is now underway to fill empty posts, as everyone prepares to leave the dilapidated Military Road offices at the end of the year and move into new, better but cheaper office space above the shops in Whitefriars.

Whilst Local Plans will always be controversial beasts, I remain resigned to the fact that a good Local Plan is far, far better for residents than no plan at all. There are NO shortcuts. To those who rally against those of us who try to plan for the future I say only this; short term thinking may produce popular opinion now, but the payback is to take control away from those whom we represent and have decisions thrust upon us. For an example, you need look no further than the former Grasmere Pastures.

Councillors will take decisions on a new Local Plan for the district after May.

Thank you all for your continued hard work to protect and enhance the beautiful parish of Chestfield and your support in ensuring our residents and businesses receive the level of district services that they deserve. In particular, many thanks for your detailed work on Planning matters, and for championing your residents at every turn, such as your recent work following up on Southern Water assurances given to the district council regarding sewerage at Maydowns Road to ensure that full details are provided to local people.

As this is the last annual report I will give to the Parish Council before the May elections, I am pleased to communicate that the district council sits secure, well financed and optimistic - flush with the excitement of delivering the £22m dream of its Canterbury's Tales of England Levelling Up Fund win for Canterbury. The changes of the last few years will give our post-May district council every opportunity of building upon its successes and continuing to put residents and businesses first.

CCC Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding

9. CCC Cllr Pat Todd

CCC Cllr Pat Todd had nothing to report.

10. Reports from local organisations:

The Rotary Club of Chestfield

Resident and Club Secretary David Mann read the report of the Joint Presidents this year Pat McFarlane and Nick Robinson:

At last, we are mainly out of pandemic, and starting to get back to some sort of 'normality' The Rotary year is as busy as it's ever been. Our two charities for this year are Crossroads and Red Zebra, both are local charities that help people in need to get to the people that can help them and they sometimes join us for a breakfast meeting to keep us in the loop of what they are doing. We continue to support local food banks as well as overseas projects and charities i.e. Polio eradication, Opening Your Hearts to Bhutan and most importantly due to war and recent earthquakes disasters in Ukraine and Turkey/Syria we have made many donations to Shelterbox and Aid in Ukraine.

Fundraising activities include a very successful year so far marshalling car parking at Whitstable Junior School. A Golf day at Chestfield Golf Club, a quiz night in November, a Xmas collection in Chestfield for which we are extremely grateful to the residents of Chestfield for their generosity.

Yet to come is W4W at the University in Canterbury when local primary school children walk 6km with 6 litres of water on their back, replicating the children in Africa fetching water for their families. Another quiz night in April and TWAM also in April.

As a club we have been able to commence having social evenings and get together.

During the Rotary year we invite members from other charities or from local interest societies to give us talks about the work they are doing. And we have also had a few life story talks from our members.

We will always welcome any Chestfield residents to join us at our meetings, in mind that they might like to join our very eclectic club...

www.chestfieldrotaryclub.org.uk

www.facebook.com/ChestfieldRotaryClub

We meet every Thursday at 7.45am for 8.00am and conclude around 9am at The Plough Inn, 100 St. Johns Road, Swalecliffe, Whitstable, Kent. CT5 2RN

Maydowns Road Residents' Association

Mike Poole as vice chairman of the Maydowns Road Residents Association read his report, as follows:

ROAD:

I am pleased to report we have had a trouble-free year as far as the maintenance of the road is concerned, no remedial works were required, despite the road having to endure the tremendous heat of the summer, where the tarmac on some roads melted. However, there are a few cracks appearing and the Committee are concerned that in the not-too-distant future we will need to get them repaired. We will be discussing finance a little later but I would like to put on record that the condition of the road will deteriorate over time and it is essential that our funds are sufficient to carry out repairs and another "Surface Dressing" at some point in the future. If you recall we were able to "surface dress" the complete road 4 years ago without any resident having to make any payment.

One of the issues the committee are concerned about currently is the boundary fence with the Shell Garage. I think many of us assumed it would be upgraded when the Costa Coffee building works were carried out. I have been discussing this with the site foreman and this is **not** the case.

Consequently, I have been in touch with MFG who own the site to see what they are going to do about the fence and to try and convince them a replacement is required. I am currently awaiting their response.

FOOTPATH:

The committee members have identified some areas along the footpath that flood in exceptional rainfall and they are monitoring these and getting quotes to raise them up to make them less prone to flooding.

PAST YEAR:

During the year we had the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The Committee arranged to purchase, using money from a grant received from the Parish Council, Union Jack Bunting to run the length of the road. This was erected by members of the Committee for the celebrations. This certainly brought some colour to the road and helped enhance the parties held by some residents in the road on "Jubilee Day" Two members of the Committee then spent time up the poles removing all the bunting !!.

Our competition for the tallest sunflower, this year had to be cancelled as there were no entries. I think this was due to the exceptionally dry and hot weather.

TREES:

The trees at the bottom of the road are "problematic" There are some that are growing well others are dead and some are struggling to keep going! Residents have been generous in the past and we have been able to replace some trees. The issue is really "water" either too much or not enough. We have very kindly had an offer to replace two trees from our Chairman in memory of his late wife, so we shall be able to fill in the gaps when the weather conditions are right. What is needed is for some residents to "adopt a tree" and keep it watered and cared for – Going forward we need to keep this area looking smart. There are a few gaps where trees have died so if you would like to "donate a tree" please have a word with me or a committee member.

Just to be clear the road subscriptions cover the maintenance of the road and footpath, not the trees. We have a separate account fund for these.

SOCIAL:

I think mainly due to Covid and the meeting restrictions we did not have much support for a quiz night so this was unfortunately cancelled.

COMMITTEE:

Your committee have been in place for some time and as time goes by some of us are feeling our age and wish to pass our duties on to other perhaps younger residents in the road.

We would love some more help to do the odd job and to maintain the Maydowns Road Residents Association. Please if you can spare a little time to help our community, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Finally, on behalf of Mick I would like to thank the Committee Members for their work during the year, this is all voluntary so thanks to you for giving your time and expertise.

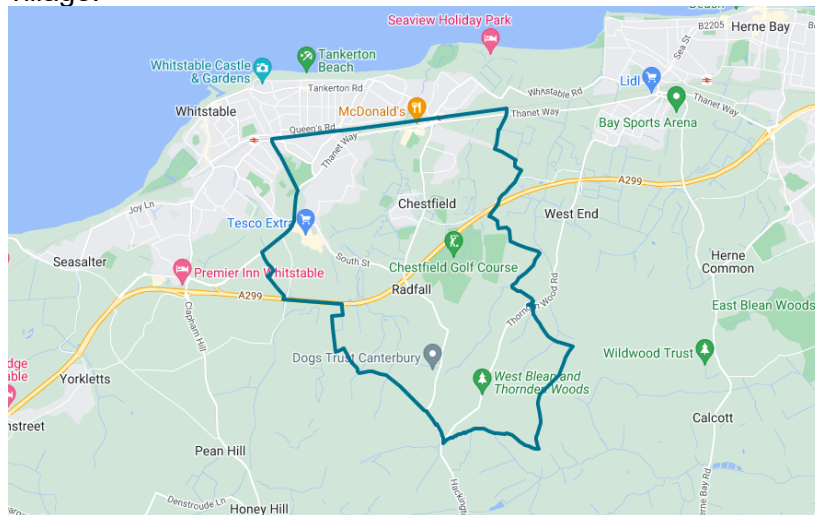
Mike Poole, vice chairman, Maydowns Road Residents Association

Cllr Bailey thanked Mike for his report. He advised of the sad news on the passing of Linda Clarke, a very active member of the Road Association; she will be greatly missed.

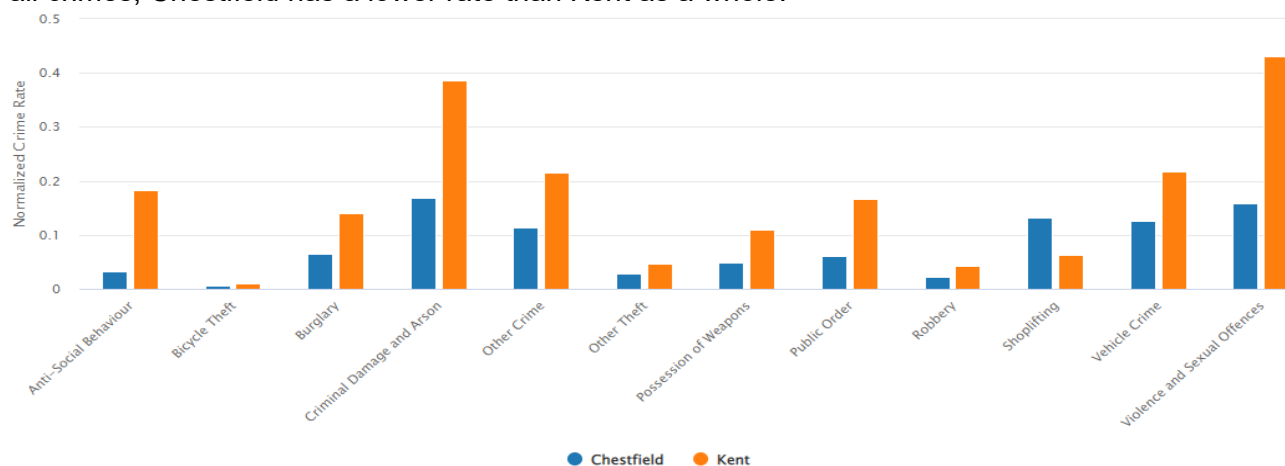
PCSO Report

The following Information was provided by PCSO Jack Roy, CSU, Herne Bay Police Station.

ACTION: Cllr Bailey advised he will put a copy of the report/statistics on a noticeboard in the village.



Crime in Chestfield compared to Kent: data taken from Kent – Chestfield / Crime rate.co.uk
For all crimes, Chestfield has a lower rate than Kent as a whole.



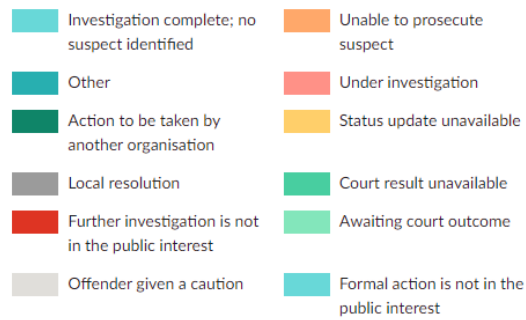
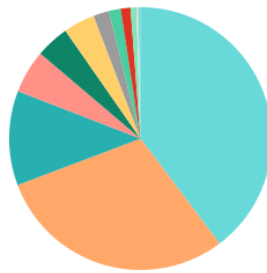
Crimes by outcomes

for the last 12 months (from Jan 2022 to Dec 2022)

Latest month

Last 12 months

Last 3 years



Outcomes	Total	Percentage
Other	48	11.6%
Investigation complete; no suspect identified	164	39.7%
Court result unavailable	6	1.5%
Unable to prosecute suspect	122	29.5%
Action to be taken by another organisation	17	4.1%
Status update unavailable	16	3.9%
Offender given a caution	1	0.2%
Local resolution	8	1.9%
Awaiting court outcome	3	0.7%
Further investigation is not in the public interest	5	1.2%
Formal action is not in the public interest	1	0.2%
Under investigation	22	5.3%

Type	Total	Percentage
Anti-social behaviour	3	13.6%
Burglary	1	4.5%
Criminal damage and arson	3	13.6%
Other theft	2	9.1%
Public order	4	18.2%
Shoplifting	2	9.1%
Vehicle crime	1	4.5%
Violence and sexual offences	5	22.7%
Other crime	1	4.5%

For more information about policing in your area, visit www.kent.police.uk

To report a non-urgent crime online, visit www.kent.police.uk/contactus

Report from Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Association – March 2023

Cllr Bob Todd read the report from the Chairman of the Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Association as follows:

The Association has previously noticed a steady decline in the number of NHW coordinators across the area and the commitment that they are able to give post Covid. In Chestfield schemes in Blackberry Way and at the top end of Grasmere Road have closed in the past 12 months - but fortunately another one in Laxton Way/Ellison Close was saved as a new person took over when the longstanding coordinator retired from the post. No new schemes have been opened in our village area for some years now. Residents in this area, as in so many others, seem reluctant to put themselves forward as coordinators for their communities, and sadly support by residents in existing NHW schemes seems to be in decline now that information is so widely available on social media and online sites. The availability of online information is, of course, a positive – but it excludes those not able to embrace it, and doesn't encourage as much social cohesion as a well-run NHW scheme in which residents meet, talk and get to know each other.

A full member survey was therefore conducted during the second half of the 2022 provided data to assist a detailed analysis of trends – see item 4e below. The survey has, for the first time, provided more accurate confirmed figures in respect of the number of households actually receiving NHW messages. Formerly indicative theoretical data (ITD) was used (i.e. the total number of households within schemes' catchment areas). Whilst the survey has afforded a more accurate figure, on which analysis can be undertaken, it also indicates a significant reduction in NHW coverage. At year end we can report:

- New schemes opened: 5 (275 households ITD)
- Existing schemes enlarged: 0 (0 households)
- New coordinators found for existing schemes: 5
- Schemes closed: 21 (with a loss of 1463 households ITD)
- Total schemes at 30 Dec 22: 129 (15,716 households ITD – with actual confirmed NHW coverage of just 5,663 Households). This represents households in schemes where the coordinator confirmed that NHW information was being distributed to scheme members.
- Net change to households covered: Minus 1945 ITD – but actual confirmed figures show a reduction of 11,998 compared to last year's ITD.
- Possible on-going inquiries for creation of new schemes: Just one

The survey results

Analysis of the results has provided the following information.

- i. The state of NHW across the District is considerably less healthy than it was even last year, with membership reduced and activity in substantial decline.
- ii. The national Ourwatch system, whilst not widely used by coordinators, does seem to be providing some benefit to a small number of schemes and members.
- iii. Interest and uptake of the new Kent Police messaging system (MCV) is disappointing, to say the least, given the considerable publicity that C&DNHWA has afforded it via monthly newsletters during the past 13 months. At the present time it seems evident that NHW membership would reduce further, quite significantly so, if MCV were to imminently replace the current email crime reporting system operated by Kent Police.
- iv. Previous surveys conducted by C&DNHWA have exposed the high age profile of the NHW coordinator population. The results of this survey serve to further highlight the fragility of scheme tenure as coordinators become older and less able/willing to cope with workload, and change, (especially changes to IT systems and technical procedures). Within the next 3 years it seems highly likely that the number of NHW schemes could reduce by almost 50%. In the last year alone 21 schemes (14.2%) have closed, with at least another 29 now reporting inactivity. Only 5 new schemes have commenced during the same period.
- v. When asked for views about the likely longevity of their scheme, if/when they had to retire, only 9 coordinators (6.4%) were very confident that their scheme would survive, a further 37 (26.1%) were fairly confident of it doing so but 48 (34%) were not confident that it would continue. The remainder did not give a view.

This worrying long-term trend of coordinator losses, coupled with a continuing difficulty in attracting members to fill vacant places on the Association's Committee, has prompted the Trustees to programme a full review of the association's longer term viability. This will take place during 2023, with a view to presenting considered options for a way forward to members no later than the AGM in 2024. In the interim members will be kept informed in the hope that a revival of interest and support can be achieved.

Neal Fowler, Chair, Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Association

Chestfield Women's Institute

Rita McGill read her report as follows. She explained she has just stepped down as President of Chestfield WI having served over three years.

We received a request from the Parish Council asking if we would consider the instillation of a defibrillator to one of the outside walls of our hall. The members voted on this proposal and it was agreed this would be an asset to the village. A defibrillator is now in place with the appropriate signs giving clear directions to this.

This year, WiFi has been installed in our hall and due to the generosity of a member's husband, we have acquired a screen. We plan to purchase a projector which will enable us to offer our members films, lectures, presentations and even the opportunity to book speakers from around the country without having the expense of travel costs. This should also prove an asset to hirers of our hall.

The hall is like any other building and has to be maintained. This year we are hoping to arrange for the outside of the hall to be decorated which will enhance the appearance of the building. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month except August which is the month we hold our charity fundraiser. The president selects the charity and last year I choose 'The Rising Sun Women's Refuge' which is based in Canterbury but does serve most of Kent. The lockdown during the covid pandemic highlighted the plight of many women and sometimes men who are trapped in violent or controlling situations with nowhere to go. This refuge does valuable work in local communities and is a safe place from which families can start to rebuild their lives once they have left their homes – sometimes with only the clothes they are wearing. I was delighted with the response from our members who gave generously with donations of cash, toiletries for both women and children together with baby and children's clothing and toys. A representative from the charity came along to give a talk on the work of the charity.

We offer several groups within our WI. Craft, Keep Fit, Book Club, Table Table, Games Afternoon and the Walking Group. We are hoping to restart the Art Group very soon. We have speakers who come along to give talks on a variety of subjects for our members and we hold afternoon teas and coffee mornings.

Once a year we organise a theatre outing to the Marlowe. This year, we have organised a day out at Hever Castle. We also hold a fish/chip/quiz evening to which members friends and family members are invited. We have also in recent years held events which were open to villagers and these were well supported. We hope to organise further events of this kind in the future.

It is essential for us to ensure all the necessary certificates covering Health & Safety and legal aspects are in place whilst working within the parameters set by the Charities Commission.

We have been a presence in the village for nearly 92 years and we hope the villagers feel our WI is an important asset to the village.

The WI is of course of particular importance to those members who live alone. It is a welcoming place where friendships are formed and companionship can be found and long may it continue.

Rita McGill, Chestfield WI

Chestfield History Society

Mrs Patricia Simpson explained that she is acting as secretary for the Chestfield History Society. They were sorry to lose the Chairman Chris Ellis (who moved away).

The Society has received active support and grants from the parish council over 7 years.

The Society is down to 5 members who now meet informally monthly, as a group of friends. They continue contact with Whitstable Museum.

They held an exhibition of old postcards and photos in 2022 – which ran as a social event and was enjoyed by all visitors.

There will be no Calendar for 2024 as these were previously coordinated by Chris Ellis.

Most History Society publications have now sold out.

Cllr Bailey thanked Mrs Simpson for her report. He commented that Chris Ellis must be highly missed – he was very dedicated to the Chestfield History Society.

Saint John's Swalecliffe Church

Rev Simon Tillotson had given apologies but Jane Mayhill, Children and Families Minister, St John's Swalecliffe and Chestfield read his following report:

During the last year we have much to be thankful for as well as much to look forward to in the future.

We start with our thanks to you all at Chestfield Parish Council who gave a very generous grant which enabled us to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee in style. A wonderful day of music, games, food and even Royal bingo was enjoyed by many people across our community who also had the opportunity to visit the church. Our thanks too for the space given to us in the Chestfield parish magazine, we are very grateful, thank you.

Our Sunday worship continues with a more traditional style of worship in the church which includes Holy Communion twice a month as well as a more informal group in the centre which is attended predominantly by families with children. On Wednesdays we also have a Holy Communion service in the centre as well as an evening service once a month. Having an option of worship choices seems to be working well as it provides a choice and means people can slip in wherever they feel most comfortable. We retain our excellent relationship with the 6th Whitstable Scout group who attend a number of our church services over the year for which we are very grateful as these types of partnerships between uniformed organisations and their local church are not as common as they used to be.

While there has been a significant decrease in weddings and baptisms at St John's over the last couple of years since the pandemic, we are slowly starting to see an increase in enquiries for baptisms and hope this continues. The churchyard is still open for interments of ashes and the occasional burial of a coffin in an existing grave and continues to play an important role for many in our community.

Jane, our Children and Families Minister now works full time and runs an afterschool club on Wednesdays for primary aged children as well as our baby and toddler group, Chatterbox. Other activities within the centre include Coffee Break which is our weekly coffee morning on Tuesdays in the centre which anyone is welcome to attend, Warm Space has been running fortnightly through the colder months serving hot soup and drinks to those who come along. Numbers have been

variable but it is welcomed by those who attend and we are often shocked by the stories we hear of people having to turn off their heating at home due to the increases in gas and electricity prices or people choosing between food or heating. We do our best to help point those struggling towards as many options for help as we can, for example Fareshare (fresh produce such as bread, vegetables, salad and fruit) which is going out of date) which is available on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 9am outside the centre. We also continue to support Whitstable Community Wardrobe which provides families with school age children access to preloved school uniforms as well as Whitstable Toys which rehomes children's books, toys, puzzles and games to many families in the community, all free of charge.

Undoubtedly one of the highlights each month is the Saturday Market on the first Saturday of the month where there is a wide range of things to purchase from homemade cakes to jewellery, clothes, books, DVD's ~ all for bargain prices. You really should come along and see what you are missing if you haven't been before!

The church centre continues to be an important community resource in other ways hosting many local groups (NCT [National Childbirth Trust], WARA [Whitstable Active Retirement Association], WI groups, keep fit groups etc) and some children's Birthday parties.

Rev Simon Tillotson

Team Vicar

All Saints Whitstable and St John's Swalecliffe

in the Whitstable Team Ministry

01227 272308

07833 448287

Cllr Bailey thanked Jane for all of the Church's efforts. Jane confirmed that they see several Chestfield residents as well as Swalecliffe residents.

Grasmere Village Residents' Association's (GVRA)

Dr Robert Jackson, Secretary, Grasmere Village Residents Association read his report as follows:

The Grasmere Village Residents' Association (GVRA) was set up in 2014 with the help and some funding arranged by our then Kent County Council (KCC) Councillor, Mike Harrison.

The Association represents the interests of the 43 houses situated on or off the privately-owned and unadopted section of Grasmere Road running between the bridge over the Swalecliffe Brook to the junction with Blackberry Way.

General public use of this unadopted and privately-owned section of Grasmere Road is limited solely to that of a public bridleway, namely pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders only.

GVRA has a formal written constitution and is run by an elected committee of eight residents. The Association holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year at the Chestfield Cricket Club pavilion. We endeavour to work in close cooperation with the Cricket Club and are grateful to the Club for allowing us to hold our AGM at the Cricket Club pavilion each year (other than the Covid years).

The Committee's main task is to maintain the surface of the privately-owned section of Grasmere Road to keep it in an acceptable state for the benefit of its members. With KCC agreement and approval, the Association also funded the re-decking of the bridge over the Swalecliffe Brook several years ago.

Funding of our work is on the basis of voluntary annual contributions to GVRA from its resident members.

Finally, suffice it to say at this point, GVRA has major concerns about the emerging draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2045 and its potential impacts on Chestfield and its residents.

Dr Robert Jackson, Secretary, Grasmere Village Residents Association

Chestfield Cricket Club

Cllr Brealy read Paul Gibson, Chairman of Chestfield Cricket Club's report to the meeting, as follows:

2022 into 2023 was another good period for the club.

Playing numbers are at record numbers, 165 Juniors with a waiting list, and a newly formed ladies playing group has been very successful. Also 4 Petanque teams using and practising at the club.

The U3A Netballers and Petanque attend weekly, and various small community groups are hiring and using the hall.

Walk in members of the public to play Petanque is becoming popular also.

This year we will be entertaining a Bat and Trap team on a Wednesday evening to help continue a dying traditional Kentish game .

Although the refurbishment and extension had planning permission granted following COVID , the large community sport infrastructure grants were withdrawn. The building costs have risen by a third thus putting the project out of financial reach.

As we had some monies raised and saved for the new build we decided to revamp and improve what we had for the cricketers and the community .

I wanted to achieve and improve the ladies toilets into disabled facilities, create a ladies changing room and address the safeguarding toilet access issues, - we have achieved this. There were a few nightmares found and it was very difficult to set a budget but I wanted to spend no more than £60k. The total cost to the club after grants was £53k.

We also had some small grants totalling £7.8k - £4,950 of which was from yourselves the parish council. On behalf of the club can I say how grateful we are to you for the grant. We believe we have spent it wisely to benefit local people.

I look forward to working in some partnership again this year with the community day in August.

Hopefully you will be able to come visit and inspect at your quiz night.

We are striving to make our club at the heart of the community and for the community to be proud of club as a facility. Many thanks again for your support.

Best wishes Paul Gibson, Chestfield Cricket Club Chair

Cllr Bailey thanked Cllr Brealy for reading the report and confirmed that the grant the parish council gave to the club was to provide the disabled toilet.

11. Community Fun Day / Big Lunch event

The parish council is organising a Community Fun Day / Big Lunch event at the Chestfield Cricket Club on Bank Holiday Monday 28 August 2023 – this will be free for residents to attend. Cllr Bailey explained it will be similar to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event last year, which was very well attended.

12. Residents' participation – questions from residents at the meeting

A resident questioned the restricted potholes budget. KCC Cllr Robert Thomas advised there has been government funding of £6.5m but whilst certain routine inspections are programmed in, if potholes are not reported on the KCC Portal they are not likely to be dealt with.

A resident commented that he felt the condition of Molehill Road was unacceptable on the stretch from Chestfield Road to The Drove – it has deteriorated over 30 years. KCC Cllr Robert Thomas advised he was happy to take this up with the resident outside of the meeting.

A resident commented on the problem of ongoing rubbish and fly-tipping in Molehill Road. Cllr Bailey agreed but commented that this is a nationwide issue.

A resident commented on the amount of rubbish at Swalecliffe Train Station. Cllr Bailey advised this is an unmanned station, and without a ticket machine now – as many rural stations are.

A resident asked if the Bodkin Farm development proposal could include an upgrade to the train station. Cllr Bailey explained that the parish council has picked this up, and he was also asked the question by the Kentish Gazette last week. He confirmed that there has been a CCC assurance that housing development at Bodkin Farm will only go ahead if the secondary school goes ahead – although the decision on a school is down to KCC. He commented that new development puts pressure on infrastructure – not just roads but hidden infrastructure, such as foul drainage, and this is the parish council's biggest concern. He mentioned again about the foul

drainage connection going into Maydowns Road as detailed in his Chairman's message above. The parish council's freedom of information request should be responded to by 06 April 2023 – Cllr Bailey felt Southern Water should be invited to a meeting – and CCC and KCC representatives also invited.

A resident commented that new development adds pressure to doctors, hospitals and schools, and it was a shame that CCC Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding was not present. Cllr Bailey explained he is in regular contact with Cllr Fitter-Harding and had his report as detailed in these Minutes.

A resident also drew attention to the Sturry level crossing (barrier down-time) and commented that all the new development in the area is going to make congestion and delays there worse.

A resident had concerns about the Chestfield roundabout and mini-roundabout by the train station to which it is linked – he feels the loading on these, flow to capacity, from the Grasmere Gardens development will cause major problems. The secondary school proposal at Bodkin Farm will overload these roundabouts.

He is going to make a representation to the Canterbury District Local Plan inspector at examination. He supports wholeheartedly the parish council's concern that drainage must be resolved prior to development. The fact that Southern Water must provide a connection within 28 days of a formal request is a concern. Cllr Bailey thanked him for his support.

A resident commented that the problem is the current planning system which needs changing – CCC determine applications on planning criteria – not on building regulations or capacity of infrastructure, and Surface water and Foul drainage capabilities, and furthermore Section 106 allocations are not necessarily spent locally.

Cllr Bailey advised the parish council made the decision to engage as early as possible with the developers for the two potential new developments to set out what is needed. Chestfield is fortunate to have a parish council – Herne Bay and Whitstable do not have one, although Whitstable is trying to get a town council. He commented that in his view every community needs that third tier or government.

KCC Cllr Thomas commented that the Canterbury District Local Plan and planning applications are down to CCC. He commented that Chestfield Parish Council is very active and ambitious, working on behalf of the village. Whilst things can be a challenge in terms of available resource, he said he is happy to help/work with the parish council.

A resident commented that he appreciated the government requirements for a set number of homes. The parish council will win some small gains, but the government need to make changes to its mechanisms and give forward funding. New standalone developments over a certain size are now providing their own waste water treatment works on-site.

A resident commented that Foul and Surface water must be mentioned to the Canterbury District Local Plan inspector – Cllr Bailey agreed and felt we should say what doesn't work as it is now, and prove that we are wrong.

A resident explained some white lines were put into The Ridings into Polo Way but some junctions were not done. Cllr Bailey offered to take a look and speak to Parking Services at CCC.

13. For anyone unable to attend the meeting, reports and paragraphs will be published in the June edition of the Chestfield magazine and Minutes will also be uploaded to the parish council's website shortly after the meeting.
14. The meeting closed at 9pm and light refreshments were then served.