

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter

October 2014

Dear All,

As we write, the Summer Break has just ended. Suitcases put away, children back at school, and of course the Council has begun its autumn programme in earnest. With this in mind, we should remind you that the 2015 Elections are rapidly approaching.

We have been trying to address the flooding issues and the significant shortcomings in the village surface water drainage systems. Did you know that grants are being provided of up to £5,000 for domestic properties to cover the future flooding mitigation; information is available on the website <https://www.gov.uk>.

Thanks go to those thoughtful residents who pick litter up around the village. We are going to try and organise a Village Clean Up to take place in spring 2015. Hopefully it will be a community event with everyone working together to keep our village beautiful. Please note that the village litter bins are for general rubbish and not household waste. Remember not only is it illegal to dump rubbish it is also selfish and anti-social. If you spot fly tipping please call Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

We hope you have noticed the planters at various locations in the village. We have received many compliments and would like to thank Jenny Macdonald for her work. One of our planned projects for 2015 is to create more planting in the village, ideas being considered include tubs of flowers by our new fingerposts, small flower gardens in each of our hamlets or having hanging baskets. We would really like your thoughts and would especially like to hear from you if you would be interested in volunteering to look after a part of the village which is either near or special to you. A project like this will help raise a feeling of pride in the village.

We are pleased to confirm that our Auditors have completed the audit for the year ended 31 March 2014. The Annual Return has been displayed on our noticeboard which is on the wall by the Village Stores; copies are available at £5.00 each on request to our office.

Kent County Council has supplied the Parish Council with a Definitive Map and a Statement of Public Rights of Way for the parish of East Peckham; these are held in the Parish Office. If you wish to view them, please contact Karen Bell by email to admin@eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk or telephone 01622 871309. These maps are not for copying or distribution although they may be purchased from Kent County Council at £20.00 for each copy. Any further queries can be directed to Laura Wilkins, Definitive Map Team Leader at KCC on 0622 221517 or laura.wikins@kent.gov.uk.

The War Memorial has been cleaned and the lettering renewed; it did look pristine in time for the 04 August 2014 when the WW1 Commemorations took place. The full renovations have been delayed; this is because some of the work requires the skills of a craftsman who is able to work with bronze. We are hoping that the work will have been completed for Remembrance Day which brings us onto a request we have received from the Scout Group who are looking for marshals to help with this year's Remembrance Parade. If you can help in any way please contact the Parrish Office and we will put you in touch with the Group Scout Leader.

After a slow start the Street Snooker Workshop held on 06 August 2014 was a great success with about 15 children attending who all enjoyed the taster session

We love seeing you all in our office and look forward to your visits. If you have an important matter which you wish to discuss, please make an appointment so that we can make sure we are available. We would hate any of you to make the effort to come to the office only to find it closed. An email or a phone call will suffice. Karen is sometimes at external meetings and therefore not always available, so ring or email first.

Following the resignation of Holly Carey there is currently a Parish Councillor vacancy. If you are interested in joining the council please contact the Parish Office for more information or visit our website www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk where there is more information regarding the role of a Parish Councillor.

Don't forget to visit www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk for regular updates and for details of all Parish Council meetings and links to agendas, consultations and other information relevant to the whole village. Facebook will be coming soon, click on it and become a friend. You can also view this newsletter on the website.

Kind regards
Chairman, Councillors & Clerk

HOW THE PARISH COUNCIL OPERATES

We are continually striving to improve our working methods and encourage more involvement from residents. In the near future we will be considering how we operate and how the Council is structured; one of the aims of this process will be to generate greater public involvement at Council meetings and improve the speed of decision making. One of the things we will be considering is the expansion of our portfolio system giving individual councillors specific responsibilities. We believe the portfolios should reflect the needs of the Parish. The use of portfolios was implemented alongside additions to our monthly agendas to give more feedback and comment on Parish issues, with regular reports from the Police, our community warden and our borough and county Councillors. The public's first port of call for any issues should be to our Parish Clerk, who if not in a position to give an answer or decision immediately will be able to bring the matter to the attention of the portfolio holder. Should consultation with the full council be required (as with many decisions) the portfolio holder and Clerk will be able to research an issue and therefore make a recommendation.

WHAT DOES EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL (EPPC) DO?

EPPC is responsible for the following:

- *Running of the Jubilee Hall complex
- *Maintenance of the East Peckham Playing Fields and outdoor equipment
- *Maintenance of churchyards at Holy Trinity and St Michaels
- *Maintenance of other open spaces in the village
- *The maintenance of some bus shelters
- *Running of the Pippin Road allotment site
- *Consulted on all planning applications in the parish
- *Acting as a liaison between the community and other local organisations and Councils
- *Community Notice Board
- *Produces a monthly newsletter and an annual report
- *Nominates representatives to serve on local voluntary, public and community organisations
- *Footway lighting

CUSTOMER PANEL

We would like to set up a Customer Panel which will provide the opportunity for you to comment on our activities and on budget proposals. If you would like to be invited to participate, please let us know.

WELCOME PACK

Please look out for our Welcome Pack which will be available shortly. We hope the pack will be useful whether you are new to the village or if you have lived here most of your life. It is inevitable that some information will change, so we'll try to keep the important items up-to-date via our newsletter and our website. We have tried to gather as much useful local information as possible, but would be pleased to hear any suggestions you might have about what should be included in the pack.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS

The next phase of the village environmental enhancements will shortly be completed with the refurbishment of the fingerpost at the junction of Bush Road and Church and the installation of five new fingerposts. Please look out for them and do let us know what you think. The fingerposts have been designed to attract traffic to the village centre and amenities, but to discourage through traffic.

COMMUNITY DEFIBRILATOR

The community defibrillator is housed in a secure box attached to the wall of the Parish Office. This allows the defibrillator to be stored securely but enabling access by all residents. The defibrillator is considered vital to the village and an ongoing training programme is offered to anyone who wants to learn how to use it. There is no charge for this training so do please if you are interested let us know.

JUBILEE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS

We own and manage the Pippin Road Jubilee Hall complex which comprises of the Playing Fields, Sports Hall and Meeting Room with kitchen, changing rooms and toilet facilities. These are your facilities and we want you to enjoy using them. Activities include keep fit, Zumba, gym, badminton, bowls, Toddlers and carers groups, Children's Centre, goalkeeping school and coming soon Bloco Fogo Samba Band. If you are looking for a venue for an event or meeting, please contact us for details of availability and hire charges. Our latest programme of activities and the contact details of the activity organisers can be found on our website

The playing fields are a beautiful village open space and are open to all residents. We want them to be a safe haven for residents to enjoy the peace and quiet and for children to play safely, families to picnic, joggers to run securely, play rounder's, kick a football, fly a kite or just a place to sit and contemplate. We will continue to develop the facilities over a period of time so that the village is well equipped with leisure facilities for everyone to enjoy. Subject to funds being available we are considering installing a new youth shelter and maybe a play trail. We would be pleased to receive your comments on these proposals and would be particularly pleased to receive letters or emails in favour or against the new equipment.

The Annual Safety Inspection of the outdoor equipment has been carried out and all of the equipment has been certified as being in good order. The Playing Fields have a Youth meeting point, street snooker, multi sports pitch, outdoor gym equipment and play equipment for children of all ages. The playing fields are also used by the North Kent goalkeeper's school and by East Peckham football teams for practice and matches. We do not allow teams from outside the village to play football on our pitches.

There has been some vandalism and anti-social behaviour on the playing fields and we are collecting sacks full of litter on a daily basis from the car park. The incidents have been referred to Kent Police and CCTV footage is being examined. It is a great shame that time and money has to be spent on dealing with the aftermath of anti-social behaviour and carrying out repairs. If you know or witness anything please either let us know, report it to the police on 101 or to our Community Warden on 07969 584183.

ALLOTMENTS

Allotments are provided on land adjacent to the Playing Fields. The allotment rents are currently being renewed and it is at this time of the year that some plots might become available. If you would like an allotment and would like to join the waiting list please contact the Parish Office. The annual rents are very reasonable at £15.00 for a small plot and £20.00 for a large plot.

TWINNING

East Peckham is twinned with Chereng in the Nord de Pas de Calais. The Twinning is administered independently of the Parish Council and activities are funded by those taking part and by fund-raising with no use of parish funds. For information on Twinning please send an email to colin_plus@hotmail.co.uk.

PLANNING

PLANNING APPLICATIONS: We have recently considered the following planning applications:

TM/14/02353/FL New front porch at 61 Old Road, East Peckham **NO OBJECTION**

TM/14/02405/FL Loft conversion including velux windows, pitched dormers at South Hale, 7 Hale Street **NO OBJECTION**

TM/14/02574/FL Side extension, changing exterior cladding and changes to fenestration at 238 Bush Rd **NO OBJECTION**

TM/14/02088/FL Single storey rear extensions at 117 Snoll Hatch Road, East Peckham **NO OBJECTION**

TW/14/00870/FL Solar park for generation of low carbon renewable electricity to the local distribution network at Land off Sherenden Road, Tudeley, Tonbridge, **NOTED, however if permission was granted then conditions should be in place to maximise benefits to the wildlife and to minimise visual impact to the nearby community**

PLANNING DECISIONS: TMBC HAS **GRANTED PERMISSION** for the following:

TM/14/01310/FL Erection of ancillary office/play room building in rear garden of 287 Hale Street, East Peckham

TM/14/01849/FL First floor side extension at 5 Medway Meadows, East Peckham

TM/14/02051/FL Wood pellet storage hopper and installation of a flue to be located on existing garage (amended scheme to that approved under planning reference TM/14/00063/FL) at Grove House, Maidstone Road, Hadlow

UPDATE – CARAVAN ADJACENT TO THE ROSE & CROWN, BRANBRIDGES ROAD

TMBC has advised that the position remains unchanged until the Courts have reached a view on the SoS's national policy and practice. You may recall that a local case elsewhere in the Borough was subject to High Court challenge with regard to its Green Belt aspects. While the High Court challenge failed there is now a bid for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal. As the challenge goes to the heart of the SoS's policy TMBC are loathe to embark on further action until they are clear what the Courts consider to be the proper approach to Green Belt matters in such cases. As soon as TMBC have some clarity they will address this case and a number of others. What they can't yet say is when the Court of Appeal will reach its conclusions.

PARISH PLAN

Thank you to everyone who returned one of the Parish Plan questionnaires. We have analysed the responses and feedback was included in our August/September newsletter. 28 questionnaires were returned out of at least 1,350 and with the exception of one volunteer there was no other interest. Regrettably therefore we have decided that we will not spend any more time or resources on the Parish Plan. Some years ago we received a grant of £2,131 and as a legacy to the Parish Plan the grant will be allocated towards 2 projects which have been identified from amongst the returned questionnaires.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

In our budget for 2014/2015 we allocated a provision of £1,000. If your group or organisation would like to apply for a small grant please visit the website www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk where you will find details of our grants policy plus the application form, alternatively you may contact the Parish Office for more information.

EAST PECKHAM BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The Borough Council has approved our funding bid for £7,500 towards a Business Forum, a visitor's leaflet, litter bins and signage. We would like to see East Peckham have a business forum and would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to be involved.

BULKY REFUSE

The fortnightly bulky refuse service now has separate collections of Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment and scrap metal. Items collected will be stripped down into their component materials and recycled.

DOG FOULING

Sadly we still have the ongoing disgusting problem of dog fouling particularly on the Playing Fields where our caretaker regularly has to collect and bag up deposits. Dog deposits provided it is bagged up can be put into any bin in the village. If you spot anyone failing to clear up after their dog please contact the Community or Dog Wardens. We have a supply of dog bags which are available free of charge from either the Village Stores or the Parish Office. Please be aware that failing to clear up after your dog is an offence and the Borough Council enforces dog fouling through the Dogs Fouling of Land Act 1996 which applies to all land within the borough which is in the open and to which the public have access. If you have a dog fouling complaint try and obtain as much information as possible as it will assist the Dog Warden. There have also been reports from residents about dogs off leads and our Community and Dog Wardens are seeing what can be done. Contact information is as follows:

- For a found, lost or straying dog telephone 01732 876181 (also out of hours service), or
- For fouling, dangerous dog, a dog on dog attack or anything else telephone 01732 876147 or
- Email: dog.warden@tmbc.gov.uk.
- If a person had been bitten then the incident is to be reported to the Police on 101

LITTERING

Litter does not clear itself away. The cost of clearing up litter runs into hundreds of pounds. It is an offence to leave litter and a person is guilty of an offence if they throw down, drop or otherwise deposit and then leave it in a public place. The Borough Council will respond to complaints and have the power to demand a person's name and address in order to issue fixed penalty notices.

PARKING ON PAVEMENTS

With the problem in the village of inappropriately parked vehicles on pavements, we have registered our interest with 'Guide Dogs for the Blind' who are campaigning against pavement parking. It is being proposed that motorists should be banned from parking on pavements because the practice forces vulnerable pedestrians to walk in the road and blocking the pavement, is inconsiderate and dangerous. There is already a ban on parking on footways on most London streets and a recent poll suggests that most people want restrictions for the rest of the country. If you spot a vehicle wrongly parked, please call 101 and our PCSO's will try and attend, contact the owner and get the vehicle moved on. Whilst the PCSO's cannot issue tickets they can issue advice notices.

HIGHWAYS

Did you know that the preferred way to let highways know about faults such as potholes or overgrown vegetation is through the website www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults where details can be easily uploaded and locations pinpointed on an interactive map. Providing this information will help speed up the rate of repairs. In the event of an emergency or if you don't have access to the internet you should call 03000 41 81 81. There is no need for the Parish Council to refer highways issues direct to Kent Highways as this often gives the impression to customers that they need to come back to the Parish Council in the future. You might be interested in the roadworks.org website which gives details of all planned works for the village, on this website, type in the web address it will come up with a map, in the search field type in the location and it will zoom in on all the works for the area. With regard to some current issues, the yellow road markings near the bus stops in Old Road will be repainted shortly and our request for double yellow lines at Chidley Cross Road and the junction of Pound Road/Church Lane to ease parking problems around the Primary School has been included in Phase 8 of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils Local Parking Plan which investigates new parking restrictions.

PUBIC RIGHTS OF WAY

We have been concerned with our overgrown village footpaths; however, it is not the Parish Council but Kent County Council who is responsible for their maintenance. Regardless of the growing season the majority of the rights of ways will be cut twice each year. The second cut should have been carried out by the end of September. Please report any problems to Kent County Council by telephoning 0845 345 0210, or report the fault online at <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/issues/default.aspx>

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

Village Christmas Lighting: We have been considering ways to improve the Christmas lights; with this in mind we have agreed to rent 25 solar powered Christmas trees which will be attached to the lamp and BT posts in Old Road and Pound Road, subject to budgetary provisions we also want to install strings of white lights between them. We are also looking at how we can install a Christmas tree and how we can use our existing lights for maximum effect.

Village Christmas Event: The Street Singers and Silver Band have joined forces and will be entertaining residents with Christmas Carols and Songs in the village centre. Please look out for further information.

EAST PECKHAM POLICE CONTACT POINT

This is your opportunity to discuss policing issues with a neighbourhood officer, get crime prevention advice, have your say on Kent Policing and pick up a free crime prevention item. The Contact Point will be at the Co-op, Branbridges Road, East Peckham, TN12 5WH between 4.30pm – 5.30pm on 01.10.14. For Further information; visit the Kent Police Website www.kent.police.uk, follow Kent Police on twitter @kentpoliceton, find Kent Police on Facebook, call 999 in an emergency, if you are deaf or speech-impaired, text 'Police' and your message to 60066 or you can call 101 to report a non-urgent crime or contact your local officer.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND POLICING ACT 2014: COMMUNITY TRIGGER

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 overhauls the existing powers and tools that are available to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour. There is also a new element allowing the public to request a review of the actions taken around Anti-Social Behaviour complaints, referred to as the Community Trigger. Victims will be able to use Community Trigger to demand action by requesting a review of their case. Agencies including councils, the police, local health teams and registered providers of social housing will have a duty to undertake a case review when someone requests one and the case meets a locally defined threshold. The Community Trigger can also be used by any person on behalf of a victim, for example a family member, friend, carer, councillor, Member of Parliament or other professional person. This is intended to ensure that all victims are able to use the Community Trigger. However, the victim's consent should be sought by the person using the Community Trigger on their behalf. The Community Trigger can be used by a person of any age, and agencies should make it as accessible as possible to all victims

THE LEADER PROGRAMME 2014-2020

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) LEADER Programme is a European Union rural funding approach, with grant funds available from January 2015 to December 2020. The programme is a way of spending money on local issues, identified by people living in that area. The money is locally controlled, with decisions about which projects are funded being made by the Local Action Group (**LAG**) for the LEADER area. Each LAG develops a Local Development Strategy (**LDS**) for its area and this describes what the LAG aims to achieve based on locally identified priorities and actions. Funding under Leader is available to rural businesses, farmers, foresters, growers, landowners, environmental organisations, cultural, heritage and community providers, as well as voluntary and charitable organisations to develop projects that will assist, strengthen and develop themselves and their local area. The Leader group will be involved in a competitive process with other groups across England. The emphasis of the strategy will be on providing **Jobs and Growth**. This is an important opportunity for business and communities to access funding over the next seven years. Therefore, they would like to hear from businesses and organisations that have potential projects in the pipeline that are in need of funding. They would also like to hear from you if you feel your business or organisation could help shape the emerging strategies with any ideas, thoughts or opinions, or if you would like to become part of the LAG in your Leader area and have a say on how your Programme is run. Please contact with any queries caroline.lingham@sevenoaks.gov.uk tel; 01732 227282

OCTOBER 2014 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

06 October 2014	Planning & Transportation Committee. Proceedings commence at 7.30 p.m.
07 October 2014	Carers Group, 12.00 p.m. in the Meeting Room at the Jubilee Hall
11 October 2014	Bulky Refuse freighter, Jubilee Hall Car Park 8.00 a.m. – 9.00 a.m.
15 October 2014	Surgery, 10.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. in the library.
20 October 2014	Planning & Transportation Committee followed by a meeting of the full Parish Council. Proceedings commence at 7.15 p.m.
25 October 2014	Bulky Refuse freighter, Jubilee Hall Car Park 8.00 a.m. – 9.00 a.m.

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council, Karen Bell, The Parish Office, East Peckham Jubilee Hall, Pippin Road, East Peckham, TN12 5BT, Telephone/answerphone: 01622 871309, Email: admin@eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk. The Parish Office is open weekday mornings during term time except Wednesdays. If you would like to speak to a Councillor please write, phone or email and a Councillor will contact you; alternatively you may contact a Councillor via our website www.eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

Parish Emergency Plan: A document is being prepared which will be going to print shortly. Part of our emergency plan includes the acquisition of Hi Vis Jackets for our flood wardens.

Flood Warden Scheme: If you would like to become a flood warden or find out more please let the Parish Office know. Free training is available via Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and all attendees will be given a flood preparedness kit.

Letter from the EA

Following feedback from the winter floods, we are making changes to the Flood Warning service to help communities prepare for flooding. We are changing the Flood Warning Area boundaries for communities at risk of flooding from the Rivers Medway, Beult and Teise. The improvements will make Flood Warnings more specific to local communities, allowing individuals to understand their risk and the developing situation and to take action.



What does this mean for the Parish of East Peckham?

Within the Parish of East Peckham, there is a risk of flooding from the River Medway and River Bourne. Currently, some people in East Peckham receive multiple Flood Warnings for these rivers. From Autumn 2014, people living within the area shown in the map titled **East Peckham and Hale Street** will receive ONE Flood Warning when there is a risk of flooding from either the River Medway and/or River Bourne. Our Warning message will contain information on the river causing flood risk.

Currently, some properties at risk from the River Bourne also receive a Flood Warning for the River Medway. From autumn, people who are at risk from the River Bourne only, shown in the map titled **Properties on the Bourne at Hadlow and Golden Green** will receive ONE Flood Warning when there is a risk of flooding.

When there is a risk of flooding to properties within Beltring and the Hop Farm Family Park, a Flood Warning will be issued to the area shown in the map titled **Paddock Wood and Laddingford**. These properties are issued a different Flood Warning as they are not at risk from the River Bourne. As the situation changes, we will update the information on Floodline and on our website.

When receiving a Flood Warning, you should take immediate action. You should not wait for a Severe Flood Warning to take action as this may be too late. We will continue to use our three stage Flood Warning service – Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning. People will receive Flood Alerts and Warnings in the same way – through telephone, text, email, fax and/or pager. Information on the situation will be displayed on our website, through social media and by calling Floodline. For those who are currently registered to receive a Flood Warning, their service will be automatically changed to the new Flood Warning area. If you wish to register to receive Flood Warnings, please get in touch.

Thank you in advance for passing this information on to your community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Tim Norton

Kent & South London, Team Leader Flood Resilience

ARE YOU AT RISK?



Flood Reinsurance Scheme: Flood Re is being taken forward to help households at the highest risk of flooding with the cost of the part of their home insurance which relates to flood risk. Affected households are more likely than in the past to be charged a premium that reflects their risk of making a claim. While in the long-term this will help build greater awareness of flood risk, and encourage appropriate steps to be taken to reduce the risk of flooding, in the shorter term many households might have struggled to afford ongoing cover. Flood Re will provide transitional support over a 25 year period; this will provide time for choices to be made and risk management action to be taken. More information is available via the website https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292353/water-bill-flood-insurance-scope-flood-re.pdf

Message from East Peckham Flood Group

Previously (until June 2013) we were protected by a gentleman's agreement between the government and the insurance industry – the Statement of Principles. Flood Re will establish a fund which will receive contributions from all insurance premiums – this will then be used to subsidise those with a high risk of flooding. Coincidentally, a member of our group who lives at Little Mill has been in touch about her insurance premium – it has risen from £386 to £811 for buildings and contents for a small terraced cottage and the excess is now £3500 and £2000 respectively instead of £1000 for both. She would like to warn everyone about this and also wants to bring this to the government's attention - and will be approaching the BBC about this. If you would like to contribute to her campaign with information or just to assist in some way, please let the Flood Group know and they will put you in touch. If you are having problems with insurance, the National Flood Forum can be very helpful and are worth approaching. Their website is: <http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>

Is your community prepared for an emergency?

Preparing for emergencies is at the very heart of our business and is something that Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is well rehearsed in, but, with winter on the way, we want to know how prepared your community is?

The first step local parishes and communities can take is to make sure they have plans in place and know what to do in an emergency, so that they are properly prepared for the unexpected things that can cause disruption to daily lives.

Last winter saw some of the worst flooding in a decade to hit Kent and Medway. Alongside other partner agencies, KFRS worked relentlessly using specialist water rescue equipment and training to help evacuate people from their homes or trapped in vehicles on flooded roads.

Flood, fire, high winds, snow and extreme cold are just some of the emergency situations that could have a significant affect on your community. By identifying local hazards and making plans now you can help protect your community.

The Kent Resilience Team (KRT) is a countywide integrated emergency planning team based at KFRS's headquarters in Tovil, near Maidstone. The team brings together emergency planning officers from Kent County Council, Kent Police and KFRS, who are responsible for developing and reviewing key emergency plans for the county.

This specialist team can help your parish prepare an emergency plan for your area, call 01622 212409 for advice. Your parish can also order free copies of a handbook that could save lives - "What should I do in an emergency" - email: KRF@kent.fire-uk.org if you can help with distribution. It gives important information so that you know how local people can help themselves in an emergency situation and be properly prepared.

Find out how the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) works – Message from the Environment Agency

The Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA), sometimes known as the Leigh Barrier, played an important part in our response to the winter 2013/14 floods, however there has always been a lot of misunderstanding around how it works and how it is operated.

At the beginning of October, we're hosting a series of public open days at the Leigh FSA to explain how the flood defence asset protects homes and businesses in Tonbridge, and we'd be delighted if you could attend. Each session will last 2 hours and include a presentation, question and answer session, details of future proposals for managing flood risk in the area, and a site visit to the storage area and control structure. Details of the open days are:

Dates and times: 10am – 12pm or 2pm – 4pm on 1,2,4,5 October 2014.

Location: Environment Agency, Medway House, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh, Tonbridge, TN11 9AS.

You can book your space by visiting www.eventbrite.co.uk and searching for 'Leigh FSA Open Days' – please note that places are limited and will be on a first-come-first-served basis.



Macmillan Volunteers are ready to help those living with cancer in your area...

The Macmillan Volunteer Service West Kent, is a project run in collaboration between Voluntary Action Maidstone and Macmillan Cancer Support. The service looks to help people affected by all types of cancer, focusing on needs arising around the time of diagnosis, treatment and discharge, all at no cost all to the individual.

They use trained, supervised volunteers to provide emotional and practical support to people living with cancer. This could also mean their family and carers too, if this is thought to have a beneficial effect on the person with cancer.

The assistance provided may include providing the individual with someone to talk to or help with lifts to hospital appointments, help with running errands, or perhaps information and advice. They can also arrange for practical support to be given to those in need, whether this includes DIY in the house or gardening.

Often the person with cancer might really value the support from someone who isn't a family member, someone one step removed. They aim to provide information and guidance to ensure that relevant support and services are being accessed.

Project Coordinator Jane Pantony is also a qualified Soul Midwife, a service which provides a holistic and spiritual approach to supporting an individual and their family end of life. The process looks to switch the focus from cure and medication to giving loving care with a very human touch, supporting and recognising the individual needs of the dying person to enable a tranquil death.

All of the volunteers are DBS checked accordingly. If you would like to speak to the Project Coordinator directly, please call Jane Pantony on 01622 677337 or send an email to jane.pantony@vam-online.org.uk

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE KENT IN WW1 FILM

This Autumn, Kent in WW1; a Heritage Lottery Fund supported project; will be filming the First World War history of the Kent Coast from Lydd to Rochester. Do you have some First World War images and information you would like to promote to a wider audience? The Kent in WW1 film aims to commemorate those from Kent who served in all forces around the world, during the First World War, whether they fell or survived. It could be that your club or society have held an exhibition during the initial centenary period and by contributing to the Kent in WW1 film, your work will have a permanent, fully attributed record.

Your club or society can also help reflect and record the stories of those on the Home Front during the First World War. The Kent in WW1 film will provide an insight into the impact of this first global war upon civilians around the coast of Kent. Do you have film or images concerning nurses, ambulance drivers or ammunition workers? Are there images to share of farming and the Women's' Land Army? Have you a photographic record of local homes damaged in Zeppelin or air raids? Are there records of local airfields, air defences, or naval batteries which are in one of your clubs or societies archives – the Kent in WW1 film will provide you with a platform to allow access to these images or oral memories.

Please help to capture these memories and more, however brief, to ensure the complete story of the remarkable men and women who lived in Kent during the First World War is not forgotten. To find out how to contribute to the film please contact Kent in WW1 at info@kentww1.com or call 01303 259777 to speak to one of the Kent in WW1 team.

THE ACCESIBLE BRITAIN CHALLENGE

Background: We know that many disabled people face barriers in their everyday lives that prevent them from being full and active members of their community. We also know that significant progress has been made in some communities to make them inclusive and accessible. But, there is evidence to show that progress is patchy and this challenge is for all communities to do more.

Vision of the Challenge: The vision is for communities to become more inclusive and accessible by engaging and working with disabled people to remove barriers that get in the way of them being full and active contributors in their community.

What is an inclusive and accessible community?: We consider an inclusive and accessible community as one that:

- engages with disabled people and includes them equally
- recognises the positive contribution, in terms of employment and vibrant local economies, that 12.2¹ million disabled people across the UK can provide
- recognises physical, hidden and mental health conditions and has the means in place to be fully accessible to all conditions
- encourages collaboration and co-production between disabled people and local organisations including local businesses, employers and service providers.

Aims

- motivate local communities to do more to be inclusive and accessible for disabled people
- contribute towards building and maintaining strong and sustainable economic growth by harnessing the potential of disabled people, supporting them to be active members of their communities
- increase awareness and understanding of
 - how a community can be inclusive and accessible for disabled people
 - potential benefits for local businesses and organisations of engaging with disabled people as employers or customers
 - barriers disabled people face every day which prevent them from being full and active participants in their community
- bring about a change in attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people by local businesses, employers, service providers and voluntary and community organisations.
- encourage collaboration and co-production between disabled people and local organisations including local businesses, employers and service providers.

Who is the Challenge aimed at? Government has a key role to play in helping to make communities inclusive and accessible. But, communities are built by individuals, groups and organisations working together at a local level. In this respect engaging with disabled people and working with them to design solutions is key to making a difference to their everyday lives. The Challenge is therefore aimed at all parts of communities, organisations and individuals alike.

Practical support for the Challenge: There is a growing recognition of the very positive contribution that nearly 12.2² million disabled people provide in terms of employment and vibrant local economies.

¹ Family Resources Survey, 2012/13

Accessible Britain Challenge online resource tool: To support the Challenge and exemplify and showcase good practice, the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) has created and will promote an online resource bringing together guidance, case studies, toolkits and good practice on inclusive and accessible communities. This has been published on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/accessiblebritain to coincide with the launch of the Challenge.

Recognising success: We believe that it is important to publicly recognise those organisations in communities that are making a difference in the form of awards. The Office for Disability Issues is developing arrangements for these, which are likely to be under the broad categories of:

Improved mobility

- Innovative use of buildings, places and spaces
- Safer neighbourhoods, and
- Inclusive social activities.

Details of the awards process and to make how nominations will be circulated in the autumn. We hope that by raising the profile of the positive contribution that disabled people make to communities we will all make a positive contribution to changing attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people. In the meantime if you have any questions please contact, Brian Keating or Peter Anderson at the Office for Disability Issues, using the following email address fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.