

# Upper Hardres Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting

**Tuesday 17 May 2022, 7pm at Bossingham Village Hall**

### Minutes

**1. Chairman welcomed those present and recorded attendance and apologies**

Attending: Chairman Robert Quincey, Cllrs Angela Waldron, Mick Broughton, Nick Waldron, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, Footpath Warden Rob Veltman, Tree Warden John Pitcher and 10 parishioners. Apologies: KCC Councillor Mike Sole, CCC Councillor Robert Thomas.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2019 were accepted and signed**

**3. Chairman's Report**

see Reports

**4. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and Clerk's report**

see Reports

**5. Reports from KCC Councillor Mike Sole and CCC Councillor Robert Thomas**

see Reports

**6. Public discussion on allocation of the CIL funds**

Following some housing development in the parish, CIL funds of £31,000 are due from Canterbury City Council in October and parishioners were invited to share suggestions for consideration, these included: EV charging point, repairs to CB378 (opposite VH) to prevent further flooding, new benches, new safety surfacing on playing field, new playing field equipment (consult with school and scouts for preferred equipment), picnic tables on playing field, extra litter and dog bin on Mans Hill, new curtains for BVH.

**7. Any other information**

- Chairman presented a UHPC Community Award to Anne and Nobby Bennett in thanks for their voluntary litter picking and keeping Bossingham and Upper Hardres clean and tidy
- A parishioner highlighted that paper and recycling is not being collected properly, inserts are not replaced, and waste is regularly left strewn across parish roads. Chairman will raise this with CCC.
- On CB376 south, adjacent to Stars, a parishioner report of Japanese Knotweed and ash die back has been reported to KCC/CCC by footpath warden, Rob Veltman. Also, the footpath line has been queried with KCC/PRoW as it has gained considerable width in parts. Fly-tipping also reported on this path: FLT006334.

Refreshments were available and parishioners took the opportunity to chat with Parish Councillors.

Signed .....Nick Waldron *Chairman*, 06 June 2023

# Reports

## Chairman's report 2022

### New chairman introduction – Cllr Robert Quincey

At our Annual Meeting of the Council held here two weeks ago, Paul Gordon stood down as Chairman and Councillor, and I'd like to thank him for his work with the parish council since 2015. I was elected Chairman, and Nick Waldron as Vice Chairman, and we now have a vacancy for a councillor.

If you would like to apply to join the parish council, we'd be very happy to talk to you about what's involved. You need to apply directly to Canterbury City Council and information on how to do that is available from Clare, our clerk.

### Planning applications

Since April last year, the parish council has commented on 14 planning applications. Work is now well underway on the four dwellings on The Street and at Great Bossingham Farm where there will be a workshop and five dwellings.

Poor water quality levels at the internationally-important nature reserve in Stodmarsh have stalled housing developments across east Kent. The wetlands at Stodmarsh outside Canterbury, which are a haven for wildlife, are deemed to be suffering from high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous. Locally, this has delayed planning applications for Two Acres on Hardres Court Road, Homeside Farmhouse on The Street, and Court Lodge on Manns Hill. We wait to hear from Canterbury City Council with any progress.

### CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) payment

Due to these new dwellings in the village, the parish council is due a CIL payment from Canterbury City Council of £31,000. We welcome your suggestions as to how it will be best spent to improve and enhance village facilities.

### Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Mick Broughton outlined the Steering Group's purpose, and notes on the Group's meetings are published on the parish council website.

### Bossingham Village Hall

The Village Hall Committee continues to make welcome improvements to the building. Capital Grants were obtained from Canterbury City Council for the new double doors and the new patio which are a great addition and improve potential hiring of the hall for weddings in particular. The Village Hall Committee communicates openly with the parish council and the parish council supports their endeavours. I would like to extend the thanks of the councillors and parishioners to the Committee for their sterling work.

### Roads

I continue to report potholes to KCC and I encourage all of you to do so. It is easy to report faults online, and the more complaints KCC receives, the more likely we are to get the problems repaired.

Upper Hardres parish shares a boundary along Stone Street with Petham Parish Council and they are working with KCC Highways to lower the Stone Street speed limit to 40mph from Thompson's garden centre to south of Hogg Lane. Those of you on our Email List will have received a link to the consultation Highways are running on this.

### Playing Field

Equipment has had a spruce up and the grass should be cut all ready for the Jubilee weekend picnic on 5 June.

### Parish Grant Fund Awards 2022

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 3 May, it was agreed to donate £250 to the Friends of Stelling Minnis Primary School towards renovations of the school library, and £125 to the School's Gardening Project.

We only have grant funds remaining for one, possibly two more years, so if your local group needs funds, don't forget to apply before the end of April next year.

### Footpath Warden

Thank you to Rob Veltman, our parish footpath warden. Thanks to Rob, footpath issues do get dealt with by the authorities, even if it takes some time.

### **Tree Warden**

Thank you again to John Pitcher for his role as parish tree warden and his dedicated work on the war memorial garden and village hall flowerbed. John has planted a Molus crab apple tree and has arranged for a commemorative Platinum Jubilee plaque.

The memorial is a fitting tribute to those villagers who gave their lives in the great wars.

### **Email List**

Clare sends out meeting Agendas and Minutes, notices of Planning Applications, Highways information, and any other useful information relating to the parish, to people registered on our Parish Email List. Requests to join the List can be made via a Consent Form or by email to Clare.

### **Conclusion**

We are very fortunate to live in a fantastic area which is enhanced by everything we do as a community. The more involvement we all have, the greater we can achieve. Do consider joining as a parish councillor.

## **Parish Clerk/RFO**

End of year figures on 31 March stood at **£10,695** in the deposit account and **£1,898** in the current account.

The Precept, funded by a small charge on each household's Council Tax bill, increases slightly year-on-year. This is to cover increased costs for grounds maintenance and uncertainty over future funding from Canterbury City Council.

Annual Concurrent Functions Funding of £1,750 is received from Canterbury City Council which contributes to the cost of Grounds Maintenance for the playing field and village hall, and the annual playing field safety inspection. This funding has been under review for some time, we're still uncertain how much we will receive after 2023.

In January this year, we received a £500 grant from the Kent County Council 'Contain Outbreak Management Fund'. These funds have been assigned to the upkeep and maintenance of the playing field equipment, some of which was in need of some TLC, as highlighted in last summer's safety inspection.

If you are not already on the Parish Email List and would like to be included to receive Agendas and Minutes of meetings, and news on items such as local planning applications and road works, please fill in a Consent Form and hand it to myself or to a councillor, or email me and ask to be added.

Balance sheet for the financial year 2021/22 attached -

# Upper Hardres Parish Council Balance Sheet for year ended 31 March 2022

	£	£	Budget 21.22	note
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
CCC: Precept	6,043.00		6,043.00	
CCC: Concurrent Functions Funding	1,750.00		1,750.00	
CCC: Capital Grant for Village Hall	1,100.00		0.00	
HMRC: VAT repayment	945.60		650.00	1
Barclays: Interest on deposit account	1.09		30.00	
Planning Portal: Part refund	114.00		0.00	
KCC Contain Outbreak Management Fund	500.00		0.00	
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>10,453.69</b>			
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
from Precept:				
Clerk's salary	3,645.50		3,600.00	2
Clerk's annual expenses	354.21		370.00	3
Training/literature	16.80		38.00	
Subscription to KALC	222.94		250.00	
Insurance premium	386.28		430.00	
BVH defib. electricity	25.00		25.00	
Annual website domain name renewal	14.39		15.00	
PCC donation (s.137)	150.00		150.00	
Contingency Fund:	197.00		200.00	
Marker post engraving (£55)				
Gate post replacement (£142)				
Newsletter printing	0.00		40.00	
Village Hall hire	0.00		125.00	
Meeting costs	0.00		30.00	
other payments:				
Planning Portal	259.00			4
BVH Capital Grant from CCC	1,100.00			5
from Concurrent Functions Funding:				
Grounds maintenance	3,837.60			
Playing Field annual inspection	186.00		186.00	
from Reserves:				
Parish Grant Fund Award 2021 (s.137)	250.00		500.00	6
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£10,644.72</b>			
Receipts less payments	-£191.03			
Balance brought forward	£12,784.55			
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>£12,593.52</b>			
<i>Represented by:</i>				
Barclays deposit acc	£10,695.03			7
Santander current acc	£1,898.49			8
<b>Total carried forward</b>	<b>£12,593.52</b>			

## **KCC Councillor Mike Sole** *Kent County Council*

May 2022 (an update on what I have been doing in April)

It's the time of year when parish councils have their Annual Parish Meetings (APM). It is always good to go to these to find out more about what the parish council and the many varied community groups have been up to. It's also an opportunity to meet up when many residents and talk about issues of concern as well as presenting my own report.

In April I was able to visit the APMs in Lower Hardres & Nackington, Barham, Waltham and Bridge. In May I will beat the APMs of Bishopsbourne, Womenswold, Ickham & Well, Wickhambreaux and Littlebourne so I look forward to meeting residents then. Unfortunately, diary clashes mean that I have only been able to attend 9 out of the 16 parishes this year, but I also attended Kingston Parish Council in April.

Getting out and about, discussing issues and looking for solutions is what I most enjoy about being a councillor. This month I met with residents in St Vincent's Close, Littlebourne to discuss parking issues. I was good to hear everyone's views and by working with both the City and County Council I am hopeful that we will be able to see some small improvements coming forward.

I had a very good morning in Thanington and Wincheap discussing issues with the city councillors and this included a visit to the Thanington Resource Centre where I was able to catch up with the local PCSO and the Bishop of Dover for some interesting conversations.

As the City Council moves from the Committee system to the Leader & Cabinet model, I have had briefings on how this will work in practice. The Community Committee and Regeneration Committee that I used to sit on will no longer exist but I looking forward to holding the council to account with a position on the new Scrutiny Committee amongst others.

I attended the AGM of the Little Stour & Nailbourne Flood Management Committee in Littlebourne.

As the Lib Dem group spokesperson for Climate Change and Finance I have had update briefings from Canterbury City Council.

I was very pleased to be invited to attend the opening of Kent Mining Museum at Betteshanger Park which I highly recommend.

I have continued to chase up National Highways to repair the fence over the bridge in Kingston and also for an update of the long-awaited repairs to the south bound bumps on the A2 between Canterbury and Bridge.

I have also followed up with KCC a number of drain clearance issues, the ford improvements at Out Elmstead Lane and public rights of way.

At Canterbury City Council, as usual there have been some bin collection issues to deal with!

## **CCC Councillor Robert Thomas** *Chartham and Stone Street Ward, Canterbury City Council*

Below is a summary of activity from Canterbury City Council in the past year or two and my own roles serving the community. I hope you find this of interest and if you have any follow up questions do feel free to get in touch.

Robert Thomas, 07740347419 [Robert.thomas@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.thomas@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk)

**COVID-19** Needless to say, the past two years have been hugely challenging. I'm sure you, like me, will have your own personal story to tell. Looking back to March 2020 the role of public sector in the emergency response has been remarkable. Much of this work locally has been done through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which includes many partner organisations. The LRF is the body for emergencies in Kent. Historically they may have been dealing with issues such as flooding but in the past five years or so it's included Brexit Preparedness, COVID-19, refugees and the ongoing challenges our county has seen in these areas such as operation Brock.

Working from home became the norm, however, as you'll know government didn't extend regulations for decision making committees and so the city council are now back up and running with all meetings in person.

During the COVID emergency the council were required to issue several grants to businesses to the tune of tens of millions of pounds. As an authority that is used to collecting money from businesses and residents it was an interesting challenge to ensure that monies were distributed on a timely basis.

This extends to the £150 rebate on council tax for those in A-D council tax bands, and the discretionary fund for those outside of these bands, which was paid to households on the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> April or 5<sup>th</sup> May (for those on direct debit).

On the subject of finances, the city council's strategy of increasing property and parking income over time has allowed for greater provision of services. However, with the impact COVID-19 has had the unfortunate effect of meaning greater savings to be found as these have, at least in the short term, reduced. The council is currently marketing four of its city centre car parks.

**Homelessness** At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic the government required that all homeless people were taken off the streets and placed in accommodation. Canterbury City Council used a city centre hotel to house the homeless. It was a great opportunity for the housing team to provide a huge number of services and wrap around care during this time. There were some success stories of individuals being placed into housing and assisted with job opportunities. Needless to say, the issues faced by homeless people is far more complex than simply requiring a house or a job. Unfortunately, a few people left this accommodation for a variety of reasons. However, recent statistics highlight the improving trend in the overall number of homeless in the district. With the latest challenge of cost of living it may throw up new challenges.

**Refugees** The city council has been providing support to a handful of Syrian refugees for many years. However, in the past year the city council, along with others such as Kent County Council, has been providing support for Afghan refugees since last summer and in more recent weeks and months the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Kent. The latter is a "live" situation it is throwing up some interesting challenges. It will be interesting to see what cumulative learning there is, both locally and nationally, when Kent provides this type of support in future.

**Local Plan** Canterbury City Council adopted its Local Plan in July 2017. The Government requires the city council to have a five-year review of this plan. While it won't be ready by July 2022 work is well underway for the next iteration of the plan (for development through to at least 2040). In the past couple of years the council has considered "the issues" of development such as the environment, transport and so on. It then issues an Options consultation to see how development should progress for example should the previous priority of extending urban areas rather than increasing rural communities continue? Should there be new settlements? The preferred option should be put out for consultation in the summer. Challenges include open spaces, transport and other infrastructure etc. The government require the city council to provide at least 9k homes. The city council are considering almost double this number. This will be on top of previous allocations such as the Mountfield Park (4k homes).

Additionally, the "Stodmarsh issue" with regards to wastewater which is affecting around 30,000 homes across East Kent. Means that permissions are currently limited to self-mitigating schemes or a small area of the district, essentially in the Whitstable area, where there is no impact on the Stodmarsh nature reserve. This has been ongoing for around 18 months. It perhaps comes as no surprise that the council's Housing Delivery Test came back unfavourably, with approximately only 75% of the houses required to be built across the whole district. As such when considering new planning applications local planning policies are now essentially set aside in favour of "sustainable development" notwithstanding the "Stodmarsh issue". We have already seen additional housing in Whitstable approved outside of Local Plan allocations.

**Transport** While Transport is a county council function the city council provides several transport related services. This includes on-street and off-street parking and associated permits and enforcement activities. No profit can be made from on-street parking, but monies reinvested in transport activities. You will have seen the e-scooter trial in Canterbury, which has been extended to November 2022, has been supported by both city and county councils. The city council will also be coordinating the revised Transport Strategy to support the Local Plan. An interesting recent development is that the city council will cease operations at the Sturry Road Park and Ride with the site mothballed for two years.

**Bin collection and grounds maintenance** In February 2021 the city council took back the bin collection service in all but name as its wholly owned company Canterbury Environmental Company (known as Canenco) took over the service from Serco. A number of teething problems have occurred, and it has taken a while to get to a relatively stable service. In addition, the grounds maintenance contract, which was also previously overseen by Serco, was brought

back in to Canenco early. If you have any problems with the service reporting online is helpful or contacting Councillor Andrew Cook who as Lead Member, and possibly Cabinet member, for waste.

**Housing** About a decade or so ago the council decided to put its social housing into an arms-length management organisation (ALMO), known as East Kent Housing. However, after years of management issues matters came to a head when a number of legal requirements were not being met. As such the council took the decision to break up the ALMO and bring housing back in house. For the past 18 months the council has been working to ensure the service has the right level of staffing, technological solutions and management to not just survive but hopefully thrive.

**Office Move** Prior to the pandemic the city council had announced it was moving offices to Wincheap Industrial Estate. However, with the shift of working from home sped up as well as financial challenges the council has rescinded its previous decision. It is now progressing a move to various vacant spaces within Whitefriars.

**Management Changes** The new Leader, Cllr Fitter-Harding and his administration, decided to restructure the management team at the city council in conjunction with a number of other changes including the Chief Executive's resignation. We now have three new statutory offices at the council. They are Tricia Marshall (Head of Paid Service), Jan Guyler (Monitoring Officer) and Nikki Mills (S151 Officer) in addition to newly appointed directors for People and Place.

**Governance Changes** The new Leader and his administration decided that after 7 years of making council decisions through the committee system, where all councillors and parties are involved in taking major decisions through the service committees, that "accountability should be improved" by moving to a cabinet system. Six councillors will be given areas of responsibility and collectively they will take the major decisions for the council.

**Parish Matters** The review of the concurrent functions funding has been back and forth over the years. This is the funding to reimburse parish councils for the expenditure on activities such as grass cutting that the city council spends in urban areas. A short-term two-year deal has been struck with a review pending and councillors on a working group will examine future proposals.

The Parish Charter, an agreement between the city council and parishes with regards to rights and responsibilities, has been delayed for a significant period of time. The exact date for the revised charter to be agreed is still yet to be agreed.

**Local Improvements** While much of the above has taken up the much energy of the council there have been some additional items to note. These include new Changing Places toilets coming to Reculver and within the city centre with three additions recently announced.

**Personal Role** As you may be aware after the local elections in May 2019 I became Leader of the council. That was relatively short-lived and I was replaced in September 2020. The pandemic was also a particularly difficult time personally due to family tragedies. Upon some soul searching I have reached the conclusion that I must step down from the council in May 2023.

With that said I have been throwing myself into many initiatives not just as a city councillor but also at Kent County Council following a by-election after John Simmonds sad passing. My duties have included:

- Chairing a Select Committee on Affordable Housing
- Appointed Chair of Policy and Resources Committee
- Appointed Chair of Kent Pension Board
- The city council's representative on East Kent Spatial Development Company, a local authority regeneration company providing offices and industrial units.
- A member of the cross party Kent Plan Bee Members Group
- And working with colleagues to support the Wilder Blean project
- A trustee of Active Life, which oversees the council's leisure provision in Canterbury
- A trustee at Canterbury Relief in Need, a charity that provides financial assistance.

Moving forward I shall be doing my best to fulfil my duties to the best of my abilities. I am also grateful for the way that your new Kent County Councillor, Mike Sole, has thrown himself into the role. While no stranger to local government I know his division covers 16 parish councils and so it must take a lot of dedication and organisation to ensure all the communities are well served. I was delighted to hear that Mike has managed to work with Kent Highways to potentially find a way to reduce the speed limit on a section of Stone Street.



Finally, a well done to all the community groups, the parish councillors and of course the clerk on all the achievements in the past year or so and I wish you all success in the year to come. Also a big "thank you" to Paul Gordon for his time on the council and as chairman.

**Useful links** Kent Local Resilience Forum [www.kentprepared.org.uk](http://www.kentprepared.org.uk)  
Local Plan [www.canterbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building/new-local-plan-2040](http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building/new-local-plan-2040)

## **UHPC Footpath Warden** *Rob Veltman*

I have walked almost all the footpaths & bridleways (except CB373) in the parish since the last APM, reporting faults on Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) (i.e. footpaths & bridleways) to KCC/PRoW, and Unclassified County Roads (UCCRs) to KCC Highways.

As Local Footpath Officer (LFO) for South Canterbury (11 parishes including UH), I have attended meetings of the East Kent group of LFOs both online and in person at Brabourne, headquarters of KCC/PRoW, where I have raised issues relating to paths in UH. The problems on which I have focused on these occasions and/or in my reports to KCC/PRoW and KCC Highways relate to:

- a) the massive treefall obstruction in CB375 in Burstled Wood;
- b) the perennial flooding near the Bossingham Street termination of CB378 (see below);
- c) the missing fingerpost at the termination in Lime Kiln Lane of CB379; and,
- d) the obstructive rutting by agri-vehicles of a stretch of CB376 (north) near Mann's Hill
- e) Japanese knotweed & ash die-back on CB376 (North) close to termination at Mann's Hill.

I have most recently (12/5/22) notified KCC/PRoW of these two serious issues communicated to me by Clare, UHPC, reported to her by a parish resident: I conducted a site visit on 13<sup>th</sup> May, and was shown by the resident the knotweed growth, and 5 tall trees afflicted with ash die-back, at least one of which threatens to collapse. I have reported (14/5/22) these problems to the East Kent LFO convenor, Roger King, to expedite action on them. The resident pointed out evidence of fly-tipping near this site, reported to Canterbury City Council (14/5/22 Ref: FLT003664).

f) Crop overgrowth on CB362 (0.625km Stone Street to Great Catt's Farm). CB362 is entirely overgrown by crops. Reported to KCC/PRoW on 14<sup>th</sup> May (Ref: 220585038)

g) Outflow of water onto UCCR U11610. I have communicated KCC/Highways about the outflow of water from a pipe extruding from the side embankment near the Lime Kiln Lane termination.

Three of the above problems have happily been resolved, namely a), c) and g) above:

a) Having notified KCC/PRoW since early 2019 at least of this obstructive and hazardous treefall and having received a phone call on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 from the landowner who agreed to but did not remove this obstruction, I received, with immense relief, the news in early December 2021 from a resident of Stelling Minnis that her son-in-law, also of SM, had removed this obstruction, using a chainsaw which he is qualified to handle, with the landowner's permission. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 I visited the site of the treefall and was much impressed by the results. The parish council has formally thanked and congratulated this gentleman on his private and publicly helpful initiative. There remains the problem of *liability* for such individual actions. KCC/PRoW takes the view, communicated to me at the most recent LFO meeting at Brabourne on 11<sup>th</sup> March, that they do not cover such actions. Sad to say, I revisited Burstled Wood on 18<sup>th</sup> April and found further significant obstruction through fall of three trees of large girth, each separated by several metres, thus not constituting such an obstruction or hazard as the previous one, now cleared, where the fallen trees were clustered. I reported this, more recent, obstruction to KCC/PRoW on 18/4/22 (Ref: 220437544).

c) The fingerpost at the termination of CB379 has been re-instated (noted 14<sup>th</sup> May).

g) Thankfully, KCC Highways latest action to stem the outflow from the pipe down the rocky surface of the path has stopped it. It is hoped that this action will have a permanent outcome.

Further:

CB378 (b above): Flooding at the termination of CB378, an important and well-used right of way, opposite the Village Hall, close to the Primary School, and leading to the Church. A large pool collects in rainier periods hampering access to and along the short section of CB378 affected. A smaller pool or none remains at dryer times. But the depression which collects water remains. The problem is to eliminate the flooding, the source of which is not clear: is there a spring beneath, for instance? A written statement of December 2020 on this matter from the manager of KCC/PRoW said, in summary: The landowner is responsible for managing the flooding. However, management, maintenance and repair of the *surface* of the PRoW itself falls to KCC/PRoW ('the surface is 'vested' in the Highway Authority'). Any improvements by other agencies e.g the landowner, to the surface itself needs the permission of KCC/PRoW. An offer



to lay '10 tonnes of compacted type 1" to improve could be welcomed, but not concrete slabs. Parish Councils have the power to undertake maintenance and improvements to footpaths and bridleways. (Highways Act 1980 s43).

On Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 10a.m. I will be leading a walk in the Canterbury Festival Programme from Bossingham Village Hall. The name of the walk, a little over 5.5 miles (9.25kms) is 'Bossingham Ways'. My thanks to Nikki Gordon for permission for participants to park at The Village Hall.

Finally, I wish to thank the parish clerk, Clare, the parish council, its former and present chairs, Paul and Rob, and parish residents and other members of the public for their support and actions over the last year.

## **UHPC Tree Warden** *John Pitcher*

There have been matters of interest concerning the subject of trees. With the Nation being asked to plant trees across the land as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to celebrate her platinum years of service as our Queen, we have focused on this with the children from the local school, planting 55 saplings on some private land in the area. There is very little Parish Council land available for this purpose and only one land owner responded to an article in the local Parish monthly magazine featuring this subject. Stelling Minnis of course does have more land for this purpose and I understand that there is a project involving the local school children.

To celebrate our Queen's platinum of service, I have planted a molus ornamental crab apple tree in the garden at the village hall as a mark of our respect for her magnificent dedication as our Queen. An appropriate plaque will be placed there in the near future.

A case of IPS Typographus European Spruce Bark Beetle was discovered at Westwood's, Pett Bottom, in the winter months in Norway Spruce woodland. There have been similar cases in Kent and East Sussex and it is being monitored by Forest England to prevent it becoming a serious problem nationwide.

Ash Dieback is common in most areas and continues to be a problem nationally.

The storms in February that hit the South East caused many fallen tree and damage to power lines and property but fortunately no serious injuries locally as far as I am aware.

There are of course regulations in place requiring land owners particularly in a conservation area, to apply to their local council for permission to fell trees but it seems that this regulation is often ignored on a widespread scale nationally and very little if any enforcement of breaches ever takes place. In a year when the Nation is encouraging a big effort to plant tree across the land, it is a bit ironic that so many are being felled! However, trees with diseases such as Ash Dieback or a danger to the public, obviously are an exception and need to be dealt with.

The overall beauty of trees, particularly at present with their fresh canopies of leaves, cannot be over stated.

## **Hardres & Stelling News** *Nick Smith, Editor*

Firstly, a big thank you to all who have written articles for inclusion in the Villages Community Magazine for without you there would not be a magazine. I know that many readers look forward to the regular contributions and the occasional letters from readers.

Contributions regularly include community news from County, District/City, and Parish Councils together with the two Parish Churches and a message from the Parish Priest; as well as those from SM Primary School Headteacher's, Bossingham Pre-School, History Group, Gardening Society, Helen the Vet, Johns Haffenden's Farmers notebook, Minnis Managers, Vivste quiz, thoughts from Steve Hardman, a brief weather report as well as information on the mobile library dates and tea & natter afternoon. With occasional articles from other clubs, societies and individuals these all go to make what I hope is an interesting and informative Community Magazine with something for everybody. Helen the Vet has now retired and her article in the April issue was her last after 14 years.

The magazine was entered into the National Parish Magazine of the Year competition and gained 24th place out of 330 entries in the A5 category for 2021.

The Children's front cover art competition has not been run since 2019 because of Covid restrictions. The 2020 front cover was a montage of previous winners and the 2021 was a lovely painting by Jenny Maxted from Stelling Minnis Art Group.

A big thank you to Bruce & Margaret Crawford and their band of delivery agents for getting the magazine to you; to Ann Day for handling the finances and selling all the advertising spaces, not forgetting Xinyang and Sijia at Stelling Minnis Stores for willingly continuing to allow some readers to collect their magazine from the shop. Advertising spaces for 2022 were reduced to 23 pages to allow for the increasing demands of the regular contributors and a limitation on magazine size placed by the printer of a total of 64 pages because of machinery capacity.

Any photos for the front cover should to be in Portrait format, please.