

Minutes of the Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024 in Aldington Village Hall at 7:30pm.

Present: Councillors; L Harman (Chair), R Boulding, L Guy, P Hannabuss, H Stebbings, G Taylor and S Wagstaff.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk.

Also present: P New (Neighbourhood Watch) and 8 members of the public.

1349. Apologies for absence:

Cllr J Weatherall.

1350. Declarations of interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1351. Synchronous Condenser project, Church Lane:

Meeting was attended by Tom Miller, Project Manager, Welsh Power, who updated the Parish Council on contact with other operators in Church Lane, namely EDF, Pivot Power, and National Grid. He reported that works are now anticipated to be delayed until mid to late April, though the timeline for works remains the same. An attendee in the audience was a person from National Grid, who said he was not aware of any conversations with Welsh Power. It was established that local National Power connections were from a different division in the business. The Chair requested that the local representative and Tom Miller exchanged details. A member of the PC asked about the recent drainage discussions to check that the Welsh Power project team were aware of localised flooding. A resident stated that KCC Highways were responsible for those drains and the flooding was caused by water run off from the motorway. The National Grid representative said KCC Highways had recently carried out some flushing of road drains but they were probably not fully cleared of shingle. The parish clerk was requested by the Chair to ask KCC Highways to prepare a drainage report. The Chair requested Tom Miller to attend the March meeting of the Parish Council to appraise the community of the most up to date information ahead of works starting in April.

1352. Public participation:

There were no public submissions.

1353. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

I start by wishing everyone a peaceful and productive New Year. It will be another busy and challenging one. The process of budget scrutiny is now underway prior to the setting of council tax in the February Council meeting. I saw today that KCC will be raising their element by the full 5% allowed and proposing cuts to some services. ABC's ceiling is 2.99%, with savings made by relocating from the Civic Centre to International House. Further savings will need to be made during the year. Government allocates its funding to local authorities based upon the assumption that councils will levy the maximum allowed.

In other news, this parish council, along with all others in the borough, will shortly learn which sites have been put forward by land owners for potential inclusion in the Local Plan 2041 as the list of submissions will go public during February or early March.

The importance of the development of the next iteration of the Ashford Local Plan was underlined in the week prior to the festive shut down of Parliament, when Michael Gove announced the changes to National Planning Policy that included the fact that having a Local Plan in place that is less than 5 years old will remove the need for LPAs to provide evidence of their 5 Year Land Supply. This is a major pressure on our Planning teams and an incentive to get our Ashford Local Plan review over the line as quickly as possible. The new NPPF also mentions Neighbourhood Plans specifically, and states that neighbourhood plans will in future be protected from speculative development from two to five years, where those plans allocate at least one housing site. Something for Aldington & Bonnington to think about for the future.

1354. Minutes:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th December 2023 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1355. Chairman's Report:

I'm afraid that I have to start with the regrettable and shocking destruction of the Children's Library Kiosk. As stated to the press and on social media – it is extremely disappointing to know that we have someone in our midst who takes pleasure in such destruction. On the bright side; I did receive two extremely supportive emails from residents and I hope that, when we repair and bring the Kiosk back into use, people will be on the look out for any suspicious activity. There have also been other, less visible examples of vandalism so I ask everyone to be on alert.

I continue with another rather down beat theme in that I observe that parking issues in Aldington continue to manifest. I have mentioned this subject in my last two Reports. We even appear to have residents putting 'no – parking' cones outside their own homes... I have written to the parking team in Ashford Borough Council to ask them how we can better manage parking within the village. Unfortunately, it seems that common sense no longer prevails.

Trees have also been a theme over recent weeks. The remnants of the Gardeners Society would like to plant a trio of blossoming trees outside the village hall. I met with representatives. We suggest the trees are planted in a triangle just to the right of the hall, as their blossom display will then be visible from Roman Road. They will make a decorative feature amongst our native trees. I hope you will agree. I was also contacted by Lord Aldington with the offer of a tree, a Gingko Biloba which is 2m high – and I'd like your comments regarding whether we should accept this tree and if so – where should we put it? It grows to 25 m, is deciduous and turns a wonderful golden yellow in Autumn.

1356. Solar:

The Chairman recently visited the Graveney site along with representatives of CPRE to gain an insight to the development. As yet there has been no indication from the applicant as to when the DCO application will be submitted.

1357. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
G Taylor	Reimbursement Xmas expenses	£112.10
Enter Digital	Village Hall CCTV	£877.50
Staff costs		£2,642.83
Harmer & Sons	Grounds maintenance	£990.00
RSK ADAS Ltd	ALC Review	£2,995.20
Aldington Village Hall	Room Hire	£67.50

Resolved:

1. To receive and authorise the payment of the items of expenditure.
2. To authorise the transfer of £8,000.00 from deposit account to current account.
3. To transfer the balance of the NatWest Current account to the Unity Trust Deposit account.

1358. Planning Committee:

Three applications were considered by the committee:

Strandhurst, Giggers Green Road installation of 24 ground mounted PV Solar panels it was questioned about the number of panels being proposed and the lack of information on the stack of batteries proposed.

Bank Farm, Bank Road change of use of agricultural unit to provide 14 self-storage units no objection .

Summer Hill, Mill Lane extension to side and rear of property. Concern has been expressed about the scale of the extension and the proximity to the neighbouring single storey dwelling.

1359. Neighbourhood Plan:

The Plan is currently out for statutory consultation, it has been brought to the attention of the team that a map has been left in the document that should have been deleted. As the document has already been published a comment will be submitted advising of the error which will form part of the submission to the Planning Inspector in due course.

1360. Events Committee:

A bingo evening with proceeds to the village hall is planned for the 17th February. It has been suggested that the fete should be held in early August, the committee will

consider a date for this. On 27th January in conjunction with Ashford Borough Council and the Ashford Repair Shop a recycling day for electrical equipment will be held in the Village Hall.

1361. Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 2034 Consultation:

The link to the consultation papers is to be resent to Councillors who are requested to submit comments to the Parish Clerk by the end of the week to enable a submission to be made,

1362. Quarry Wood:

The tree felling licence has been approved, the surveys are currently awaited before any works are undertaken.

1363. Quarry Field and Pond:

Nothing to report.

1364. Aldington Meadows:

A start date for the clearance of the old tennis court is currently awaited.

1365. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1366. Any items for information:

Cllr Boulding reported that the Village Hall CCTV has been upgraded and covers a wider area.

1367. Exclusion of the Public:

Resolved: that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

1368. Solar Support Group:

The Solar campaign group verbally presented their case for financial support in order to seek legal advice on a 60 page document that outlines their case for contesting the adequacy of Evolution Power's consultation on the Stone Street Green Solar proposal. The Parish Council were asked to provide £1,500 + VAT to engage Brendan Brett, of FTB Chambers. The campaign group were already committed to working with FTB Chambers and would not permit Parish Councillors sight of the document. After robust discussion to explore the validity of the challenge presented and its likelihood of success, the Parish Council offered a one-off donation towards legal costs of £900. It was agreed that the Parish Council will have sight of the document after presentation to the barrister, on Friday 12th January and would also have sight of the barrister's report when available.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:20pm

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

2024

For

**91725 Peter New B.E.M.
Kent Police Volunteer & Community NHW.**

January 1st 2024

JANUARY 2024.

By 91725 Peter New Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch

Dear Council

I do not for one moment anticipate that 2024 will in anyway slow down on crime challenges from what we faced in 2023, in fact I expect an increase.

Most of my report is my personal action plan to tackle crime in 2024.

This is my planned statement about how I will work. This report is my scene setter for 2024.

Kent Police have launched their police plan for communities that gives areas, albeit very large areas, a named **BEAT OFFICER POLICE CONSTABLE**. A clear point of contact. The model was launched with Ashford at only 50% officer strength, but it is hoped in early 2024 more officers will be added in. I am hopeful it will provide 2 officers for each area.

In the words of Matthew Scott, the Kent Crime commissioner,

“The defining features of neighbourhood policing can be traced back to Peelian principles. The clear emphasis being on prevention.” (Sir Robert Peel 1829 established the Met Police)

This fits exactly into the role of Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) This is my bread-and-butter work.

NHW working together, looking at crime trends and crimes in the wider district we can keep communities as crime free as possible and the residents free from being a victim of crime.

Equally as important to keep residents, especially the vulnerable and elderly, free from the fear of being a victim of crime also. Criminals will target those groups!

Never ever has there been a mandate to be organised and responsive to crime activity, but every step of the way we have the most proactive crime prevention plans and strategies we can.

It will allow us to set out to other partners and the police “this is all we are doing in the locality and the community. Our partnership will now be developed still further with your support, and we head into the 2024 in good shape with clear objectives.

In 2024 my plan will work as follows.

I will bring/or send a report to each council meeting.

I will attend as many meetings as I possibly can.

I will attend, if possible, your Annual meeting of Electors and make a presentation.

I will continue to build yours and surrounding areas NHW Membership

I will continue to engage with residents.

I will continue to use the Facebook facility across all groups I contribute to.

I will look to explore other communication platforms during 2024.

I will look to use the councils Websites for crime prevention advice.

I will contribute to Council and Councillors Newsletters with any space granted.

Peter

Peter New

91725 Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PLAN for 2024

By 91725 Peter New B.E.M. Kent Police Volunteer & Community NHW.



This will be the plan that I work to during 2024. I will present this to my Neighbourhood Watch Members and to partners especially the following.

1. Individual councillors
2. Community and Parish Councils across the District
3. Ashford Borough councillors
4. Kent County Council councillors
5. Any agency that helps to provide support to the Community.

I will look to work as closely as possible with Kent Police especially the newly appointed Beat Officers to help keep the communities safe and secure.

To keep residents as crime free as possible and, also as important, free from the fear of being a victim of crime.

That will be achieved by:

1. To provide as much crime prevention and safety advice to prevent crime occurring in the first instance.
2. When a crime has occurred to prevent a similar crime nearby and then prevent a crime trend developing across the wider district, whilst at the same

time support front line officers to obtain evidence, witnesses, and information to assist in investigations whilst supporting the victims of crime.

3. To re issue crime prevention and advice from the information learnt from crime investigations.

IN SIMPLE TERMS

Can we prevent crimes in the first place? if they occur can we provide as much support to the Police as we can and support the victims. Can we learn from those crimes and issue better more informed and targeted crime prevention from those “lessons learned”.

HOW WILL I ACHIEVE THAT?

1. Recruiting, growing and developing an email data base of residents in NHW
2. By building a data base of telephone contacts for those residents who are not on the internet and only have landline telephone contact.
3. By developing my Facebook groups to reach communities which at present stands at 200 groups.
4. By exploring and developing other media platforms to communicate quickly with communities e.g. Nextdoor, WhatsApp, X (Twitter).
5. By writing and contributing to Community magazines.
6. By writing and contributing to Council Newsletters and Magazines.
7. By writing and contributing to Individual Councillors newsletters.
8. By contributing when requested by local and national media platforms.
9. To make presentations at the Annual Electors meeting of Parish and Community Councils
10. By holding public Engagement meetings.

Items 2,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 above are essential to address the concerns that Kent Police rely heavily on internet platforms to communicate, many residents especially the elderly and vulnerable in communities only have a landline telephone. My plan will not and must not leave them behind.

I make no comment on the effectiveness or how Kent Police communications platform MY COMMUNITY VOICE has worked to date or is working. That assessment will be made by the end users, the people in communities! I have a proven track record with NHW over 5 years, it will be for MCV to try to match those. The public will judge. Our residents are not actually too concerned how they are told, they just want to be told!

Residents and councils will decide on performance and effectiveness, and I am very confident that my work with Neighbourhood Watch in communities has stood the test of time and my performance and will continue to grow and develop very strongly.

My continued goal is to lobby and seek a root and branch review of communications in Kent Police with very simple terms of reference.

‘How does Kent Police want to communicate with residents in the years 2025 to 2030’.

'How are current communications working and their effectiveness'.

'What are the approved methods for use in the communications process and are they still right and effective in 2024.



This year my own personal 10-point approach which will be:

1. To carry out proactive **CRIME PREVENTION** with special attention to the elderly, and vulnerable residents who will always be targeted by criminals. Special groups will require special attention.
2. To target **PREVENTABLE** and **AVOIDABLE** crimes
3. **IF CRIMES OCCUR:**
Try to prevent further crimes in the direct area.
To support victims of crimes.
To support and assist operational colleagues and make appeals/collect evidence, especially any form of CCTV.
To go again into the community with crime prevention from lessons learnt.
To look and act quickly where crime trends occur in the wider Kent areas.
4. To target **ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/ CRIMINAL DAMAGE/ FLY TIPPING & RURALCRIMES**
5. To target **DRUG ACTIVITIES that drive so much other crime.**
6. To target **KNIFE CRIME**
7. To target **VIOLENT CRIME** and especially support the **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS CAMPAIGN**
8. To try to stay ahead of the **SCAMS/BOGUS CALLERS/ROGUE TRADER EVENTS**
9. To continue to build a strong **NHW MEMBERSHIP** across the District and to **ENSURE ALL CRIMES** are reported and crime numbers obtained so that the progress can be followed up on and the police can be held to account on lack of perceived response/shortfall in performance and then raise concerns in the correct manner to try to improve.
10. **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT** To hold regular Public Engagement meetings using many of the Community Hubs that now operate. These events will allow face to face dialogue with residents and will require the operation of that most underused skill we have.

'LISTEN TO RESIDENTS CONCERNS AND WORRIES'

That also will be a major factor in shaping ongoing crime prevention from myself and to provide vital intelligence, especially to Beat officers to help shape and plan proactive patrols and interventions on hot spot issues.



WHAT WILL BE THE ACTIONS TO DELIVER MY PERSONAL 2024 PLAN

1. CRIME PREVENTION

Again, working with Neighbourhood Watch to put as much crime prevention out into the community via all methods available. Especially council newsletters and community magazines delivered door to door that will reach the members of the community who are not online.

Ensuring our vulnerable and especially the elderly, are not missed with the police drive to report and communicate everything online.

Many of our elderly and vulnerable are not online, I must ensure I reach them.

Special groups will require special attention.

I have developed OPERATION GUARDIAN ANGEL whereby a vulnerable person's address can be located and badged up with signs like '*no unwanted callers*' but the email contact for a relative can be linked to the address so they can help with warnings and alerts.

I have developed OPERATION EVEREST to assist in alerting the Nepalese community to crimes where their community and culture are especially vulnerable to be targeted by criminals.

I have developed OPERATION HORIZON to recruit at source the growing population on new build sites across the district. To help build community cohesion and alert people from outside East Kent to the type of crime trends to be alert to. This has proved essential as many come from overseas arriving in the UK due to a whole series of issues.

2. PREVENTABLE and AVOIDABLE CRIMES

Exactly what they say they are. If we are careful and we keep our properties and vehicles as secure as we can. If we can ensure we leave absolutely nothing on show in a vehicle we can reduce the risk of being a victim of crime.

Vehicles, sheds, garages, barns, stables, outbuildings, and any external storage are vulnerable. Theft of vehicles and motorbikes can be prevented.

Theft of internet shopping parcels off doorsteps is a rising trend with delivery vans now followed. Safe arrangements can prevent this.

Importantly, if the police do not reduce demand on their resources by the prevention of avoidable and preventable crimes they will continue to be overloaded and unable to meet public expectations.

3. IF CRIMES OCCUR

As soon as possible send out alerts and crime reports to try to prevent further crimes in the area.

To assist operational colleagues in ensuring any evidence is not lost to the investigating officers. This is especially the case with the public posting on media outlets like Facebook ensuring vital CCTV evidence is not lost.

Of all the many faults of the police, they are not clairvoyant they must be informed. Promulgate any lessons learned from a crime investigation and reports as soon as possible.

Then to go into the community again with new crime prevention from the outcomes of crimes.

At all times support victims along the way.

4. TARGET RURAL CRIME, ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIMINAL DAMAGE and FLY TIPPING.

These are crimes that blight communities and cause upset and distress.

To again ensure every incident is reported so the full extent of the problems is known. Feed into the Beat officers who can plan actions in the areas of concern.

I am developing a very strong working partnership with EAST KENT RURAL POLICE TEAM and have had some encouraging results to date.

Catapults are a problem to be targeted also.

Anti-Social behaviour and criminal damage, these crimes are often very closely linked, and cause upset and distress in communities.

Many residents suffer in silence, the need to report every and each incident must be part of the 2024 NHW Plan. Beat officers can only plan and act if they know!

5. DRUG ACTIVITY

This is an important part of my plans as this issue drives so much other crime as persons with no funds steal from vehicles, sheds and garages etc to fund the habit. It is also a grave danger to our youth who can get into issues that pose the most grave of outcomes.

It can also bring a level of violence to a community. Recent excellent work by officers in the area have intercepted knives, weapons and in one case a machete.

All drug activity must be reported.

6. KNIFE CRIME.


This is a Pete's 'cloud on the horizon' warning. The dreadful national cases and activities in nearby London are a warning. It does not have to happen in East Kent for us to be front foot proactive in our prevention and education. I will build this issue into my work. Also see item 5 drug activity.

Throughout 2024 there will be a number of Kent Police campaigns but I feel there is a need to build this crime concern into a more wider crime prevention programme.

7. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS POLICE CAMPAIGN (VAWAGs)

This issue has been built into police plans since several very high-profile incidents across the country including Kent.

The police have a model.



Tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The term VAWG covers a range of crimes, the common theme is that they disproportionately affect women and girls. Although we use the term 'violence against women and girls', our approach refers to all victims of any of these offences.

Leave this site

Crimes and behaviour covered by the term Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) include:

- rape and other sexual offences
- domestic abuse
- stalking
- 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings)
- as well as many others, including offences committed online

We are committed to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls and have a strong approach to actively pursue violent perpetrators. We want women and girls who live, work and socialise in our communities to feel safe. To achieve this we will be focussing on five key areas:

1. [holding offenders to account](#)
2. [support victims](#)
3. [keeping you safe](#)
4. [our culture](#)
5. [strengthening the system](#)

I have challenged the police to have **PREVENTION** as its number one on its key issues.

As an ex senior fire officer, I would not have written a plan that said our key principles were, 'If your property catches fire, we will put it out!!'

NO! Holding offenders to account almost accepts that there will always be offenders. We must and I will strive to drive **PREVENTION** as the number one principle and my plan would read as follows.

- I. PREVENTION
- II. KEEPING YOU SAFE
- III. SUPPORT VICTIMS
- IV. OUR CULTURE
- V. HOLD OFFENDERS TO ACCOUNT (debrief lessons learnt from cases)
- VI. STRENGTHEN OUR SYSTEMS (constant review, where can we be better)
- 8. SCAMS, ROGUE TRADERS, and BOGUS CALLERS

There is a SCAM for anything and everything and always a risk of BOGUS CALLERS, ROGUE TRADERS

These crimes will look to target our most vulnerable in the community, many of which will not be on the internet or mobile phones and thereby miss many of the alerts that are poured out into the community.

These crimes can come from 3, 30, 300 or 3000 miles away.

They can come from landline phones, mobile phones, computers, tablets, laptops, letters and even face to face on the doorsteps.

These criminals rely on us acting quickly and in haste, AND in a hurry with no time to think.

We must take our time and check. If in doubt, **do nothing!**

It worries me that some old age pensioners when scammed are so embarrassed that they do not tell even their family. Some never ever recover their confidence!!

We must encourage all incidents to be reported and may rely on relatives to help us with this issue.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH MEMBERSHIP

I will look to increase and build my NHW Membership.

Crime alerts will be posted on as many Facebook Groups throughout Kent and Local Communities.

Targeted emails will be sent to NHW members in areas where there have been crimes or crime prevention is to be issued.

Telephone warnings in some instances where a person is at risk and has no other warning platform.

If we can get every property into NHW, we can help prevent crime. The more we are the stronger we are.

Our work together must be:

TO KEEP RESIDENTS CRIME FREE and KEEP RESIDENTS FREE FROM THE FEAR OF BEING A VICTIM OF CRIME.

In 2024 I enjoyed incredible support from Parish Councils and Community Councils, and I look to build on that and develop still further those partnerships.

I link in and have been supported by ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS and KENT COUNTY COUNCILLORS

The work with NHW must be to get the REPORTING OF ALL CRIMES.

It is only with understanding the full extent of all crimes that crime prevention can be targeted and Beat Officers allowed to shape patrols and intervention. The police are not clairvoyant, they must be informed.

Once a crime is reported and a crime number issued:

- ✓ We have an idea of the range and extent of the crimes
- ✓ We may have a trend building
- ✓ We have a crime number to add further information to
- ✓ We have a crime number to follow up progress on

The real important issue is you will have a number where if you feel you did not get the correct response from the police and or outcomes you have a crime number to go back to them with and seek an explanation.

Again, not ranting and swearing on Facebook but a polite and reasonable request made as per the published procedure for complaints.

To challenge ourselves, and that's all of us, to try and improve and be better.

Quite simply to try and be better because we will need to be better in 2024.

10. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Exactly that. To carry out as much public engagement as I can. To talk to the communities about crime prevention and crime trends. Importantly though is to listen and reassure. Seek venues to achieve this, bookings already taking shape.

To pick up information and intelligence to assist the Beat Officer team.

To support councils with their events. Especially their annual meeting of electors.

To attend special groups

To attend and speak at Women's Institutes (VAWAGs Campaign)

To attend Community Hubs

RISK ASSESSMENT

These are common 'risk areas', this is where 'you could' be vulnerable to crime:

- Property to be secure at all times
- Garages, sheds, barns, stables, outbuildings, and any form of External storage
- Isolated village halls and sports clubhouses and changing rooms
- Vehicles if you leave items on show when parked
- Vans/Lorries carrying tools/equipment and supplies especially parked overnight.

- Internet shopping parcels stolen from doorsteps; vans now followed
- Theft of number plates for other crimes
- Thefts of number plates for drive off fuel thefts
- Theft of domestic heating oil from external storage tanks
- Catalytic Converter thefts
- Thefts from horse establishments.
- Theft of fuel from vehicles.
- Theft on farms and of farm machinery
- Thefts on building sites/developments of construction items and then from properties finished and ready for occupation, items like the white goods etc.
- Rural crimes
- Animal crimes, dog attacks and attacks on cattle especially sheep.

The above list gives headings of crimes which occur on a regular basis.

My thoughts are to warn and prepare not scare and frighten.

Please consider joining Neighbourhood Watch if you are not a member. It is free.
Just read and stay safe.

Contact me:

peternew1@aol.com

Remember "CRIME CANNOT FLOURISH IN COMMUNITIES THAT CARE AND WHO ARE ALERT AND VIGILANT"

Thank you for your support

Peter

Peter New

91725 Kent Police Volunteer & Community Neighbourhood Watch



I will always carry my Police I.D. when working on Neighbourhood Watch