

Bobbing Parish Council – Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 2nd May 2007

Parish Council Chairmans report

During the past year the parish council held 12 regular meetings plus the Parish Council AGM. These meetings were held in the Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month.

Bobbing Parish council serves the communities of Bobbing Village, Bobbing Hill, The Grove, The Meads, Howt Green and Keycol plus the surrounding rural areas. Residents are always interested and enthusiastic about their neighbourhood and frequently contact the Parish Clerk to know what is happening and impacting on their lives. Falling within Thames Gateway and on the edge of Sittingbourne there is always something going on whether we like it or not. As such residents have the right to expect high standards of accountability from their representatives for the delivery of parish council services and the Parish Council endeavours to take as much care and pride in resolving parish matters as resources, bureaucracy and time will allow.

Looking back over the past year the parish council spent a lot of time trying to resolve the ongoing traveller problems in Bobbing Hill. The parish council has been in consultation with KCC Highways, KCC travellers dept, landowners, the Police, Swale Borough Council and local residents, however it appears staying within the law is a very protracted process. We have discussed Stopping up, ditches, bunds and land purchase but thanks must go the Police and the KCC travellers dept for attending a meeting and provoking an interesting discussion.

Another time consuming issue has been the recent planning permissions at the Meads, On the north side of Staplehurst Rd (Local centre and shops) where the number of high rise residential blocks were eventually reduced in height. The south side of Staplehurst Road (Business Park) where road ways have been laid but nothing built. We understand the site has changed hands, been renamed and revised planning applications indicate dropping the hotel but increasing the office buildings.

The biggest shock of the year was the completion of the footpath between the bottom of Bobbing Hill and the Sheppey Way. SBC have promised this for many years and eventually it has happened. Other positive things during the year include the reintroduction of the 'Bobbing Reporter' newsletter, albeit in small way but nevertheless we are trying to disseminate information so residents are aware of the main issues. However residents could always look at the parish web site and inform us of issues or concerns. If we don't know we cannot help. Another positive initiative this year has been the front garden competition. Front gardens will be judged in July by parish councillors who will be out walking the roads and streets parish in search of the best presented front garden.

Finally Councillor Nita Elbourn resigned in September, and we thank her for time and contribution at meetings during the years she has spent on the council. In November we held interviews for a replacement Councillor and Nick Stowe who lives in Parsonage Lane was elected to the council. Parish Council meetings have been very well supported by Mike Baldock (prospective Labour Ward councillor) and Gareth Randall (Conservative Ward councillor) however once again we were disappointed at the non-attendance of Liberal Democrats Ward Councillors at any Parish Council meeting, and the lack of action by Kent Highways and Swale

Borough Council to make traffic and highway improvements that are frequently discussed & promised but rarely delivered.

However looking forward we have plans to refresh the village sign and improve the footpath at Bobbing Hill and hopefully finally resolve the traveller issue. We also have the Swale Borough Local Plan to look forward to, which should be published soon; this will possibly impact on the parish. We will also continue to help and support the village hall in its aim of providing disabled facilities and the parish council will generally support any proposals that would enhance Bobbing's social facilities by pulling the community together (eg additional clubs, groups and organisations).

Planning

During the year the Parish council considered 24 planning applications, 4 more than last year.

Year	2006/7	2005/6	2004/5	2003/4	2002/3
Appns	24 appns	20 appns	39 appns	31 appns	24 appns

Most were for small householder alterations and extensions. However the final parcels of land on the Meads (north of Staplehurst Rd) continue to be redesigned (local shops, community services and residential) as does the business park south of Staplehurst Rd.

Regular issues :

1. Key Street roundabout, pedestrian safety/traffic speed.
2. Key Street roundabout, badly sighted / difficult to see road signs / white lines / railing repairs
3. Bobbing Hill, parking issues.
4. Bobbing Hill move speed limit signs to end of houses.
5. Bobbing Village, reduce speed limit past village school.
6. Bobbing Village, grass cutting opposite Bobbing Apple.
7. Keycol Hill, Traffic calming
8. Keycol Hill, White lining.
9. Car parking (Non residents) Bobbing Hill, Key Street, Keycol Hill.
10. Car parking Hilton Drive (Grove Park School pickup).
11. Everywhere, Litter, fly tipping, and wrappers by food shops.
12. Everywhere, Noise, train horns, radios, car radios
13. Everywhere, Overgrown hedgerows especially where footpaths and roads are concerned

Attendance at Council Meetings (May 2006 to April 2007)

Bobbing Parish Council (9 Councillors)	Attendance (12 meetings)	Expenses £.p
Ken Bullen	10/12	Nil
Robert Ball	12/12	Nil
Duncan Dewar-Whalley	10/12	Nil

Gill Edwards	8/12	Nil
Nita Elbourn (Resigned Sept)	3/5	Nil
Graham Herbert (Chairman)	12/12	Nil
Elaine Nappey	12/12	Nil
Larry Major	12/12	Nil
Bob Wileman	10/12	Nil
Nick Stowe (New Cllr Dec)	3/5	Nil

Ward Councillors attending Parish Council meetings during 2006/07

Cllr Randall (Conservative) attended 5 meetings

Cllr Manning (Lib Dem) attended 0 meetings

Cllr Lowe (Lib Dem) attended 0 meetings

Bobbing Parish Precept

Year	Parish Precept £	£ Band D property (Annual per household)
1997/98	4,777	8.72
1998/99	4,833	8.73
1999/00	3,888	7.03
2000/01	2,944	7.03
2001/02	4,500	7.82
2002/03	4,500	6.61
2003/04	3,500	4.99
2004/05	3,900	5.56 (Lowest in Swale District)
2005/06	5,000	7.12 (2 nd lowest in Swale District)
2005/06	5,750	8.05 (3 rd lowest in Swale District)
2006-07	9,420	12.60 (5 th lowest in Swale District)