



WINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2011 - MARCH 2012**

Foreword by the Chairman

Last year I noted that the new Localism Bill will bring changes for the Parish Council and for the Community of Wingham and we are now beginning to get an understanding of what this will mean in reality. As a community, it is important to embrace the forthcoming changes in the way local services are requested and delivered and as your Parish Council we will be keeping a close eye on developments.

Members of the Council

At the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2011 Cllr Curtis was re-elected as Chairman and Cllr Goaten was re-elected as Vice-Chair. Cllrs Catt, Jolly, Marsh and Pethick were elected as members of the Planning Committee.

In December 2011, Cllr Cook tendered his resignation having represented the Council on the Recreation Ground Committee and acted as Internal Financial Control officer. Notice of Casual Vacancy was given and as ten electors did not request an election in the given time period, the vacancy was to be filled by co-option. This Councillor position remained vacant at the end of March 2012.

In addition to his Chairmanship of the Parish Council, Cllr Curtis was also the parish representative on the Dover Local Development Framework Committee and on the Dover District Standards Committee. Throughout the year other members of the Council were able to further the interests of the Wingham community at meetings of the Dover District Towns and Parishes, the Kent Association of Local Parish Councils, Kent County Council Forums and the A257 group. Cllr Jolly made regular inspections to ensure the safety of the equipment in the children's play area at the Recreation Ground, Cllr Pethick has kept a close eye on the progress of the Aylesham Development and Cllr Baker chaired the Jubilee Committee to take forward arrangements for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. Councillors also attended training sessions on Chairmanship, being a Councillor and Planning.

After nearly 26 years dedicated service, Margaret Richards retired as Clerk to the Parish Council in October 2011. To give thanks and to mark her retirement, a small gathering took place at the Village Hall on 5 November 2011.

Meetings

Parish Council meetings were held every month, with the exception of August. A public session was held prior to each meeting to enable members of the public to express their opinion and/or ask questions.

The Annual Parish Assembly was held on 20 April 2011 and was well attended by members of the public. Following the Annual Report given by the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Curtis then gave a resumé of the main points of the new legislation on The Localism Bill and how it would affect local communities. An introduction to Cold Calling Zones was then given as both the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Watch Group felt this would be a way to tackle the issue of unsolicited visits by people selling goods and representatives of energy companies. Residents would be consulted as to whether they wished to establish this in Wingham. This was followed by reports from the Community Police Officer, District Councillors and representatives of the Recreation Ground, Village Hall, St Mary's Church, Environmental Group and St Mary's Minors and Scarecrows.

Achievements

Following the formation of the A257 consortium group in November 2010, involving other neighbouring Parish Councillors, County Councillors, District Councillors, the MP Laura Sandys, and other local interested parties, the group were very pleased to have played a part in the reduction of the National Speed Limit along most of the A257 to 50mph.

The Deed of Dedication for our Recreation Ground being designated as a Queen Elizabeth II Field to mark the Diamond Jubilee was signed by the Parish Council, the Recreation Ground Committee and Fields in Trust in September 2011. This designation ensures that the Recreation Ground will always be an area for outdoor recreational activities.

In the Kent Men of the Trees 2011 'Trees in the Village' Competition, Wingham Village was judged to be outstanding and was awarded the Chairman's prize of a tree of our choice. A Weeping Copper Beech tree was planted in the High Street during a small ceremony on 2 March 2012.

Land and Property

In addition to the Recreation Ground and Elgars Field, both of which are owned by the Parish Council, the Council continued to arrange for the grass to be cut at Wingham Green and in the Garden of Remembrance in the High Street.

In partnership with Kent Highways, Newtown pathway, which runs from the High Street to Oxenden Crescent, was resurfaced in June 2011.

A catch was added to the service gate in the children's play area at the Recreation Ground as well as some resurfacing under the swings and a new covered waste bin added. Following the Annual Safety inspection and Risk Assessment of the equipment in the play area in February 2012, all was found to be in order with only minor works suggested for the horse and fire engine mobiles as well as some surface patching.

In December, a contract was awarded to a local business to refurbish all seats, benches, notice boards and other parish furniture in the following Spring/Summer 2012.

Community Activities

Members of the Parish Council took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and Service in November. During the service at St Mary's Church the Chairman of the Council, on behalf of the village community, laid a wreath at the war memorial. In December the Parish Council and St Mary's Church again hosted the Community Carols in the High Street to which Cllr Sue Nicholas, Chairman of Dover District Council, attended. Royal Wedding commemorative mugs were purchased and given to village children under the age of 11.

Finance

The Precept for 2011/12 showed a decrease of £3,351 compared to the previous year.

The expenditure for 2011/12 was within the amount budgeted for the year. The budget for the year also included money to be added to funds earmarked for future projects: the Youth Development Fund for the provision of facilities at the Recreation Ground for young people; the Play Area Fund for future maintenance and new equipment; and the Election Fund to cover election costs.

During the year financial support towards running costs was given to the Recreation Ground, the Village Hall, the Community News and to Dover District Council for the Public Conveniences in St Mary's Meadow. A grant was given to St Mary's Church for the upkeep of the burial ground and small capital grants were given to the Wingham Scout Group, the Tennis Club and the Village Hall.

All Members of the Council declined to take the Councillors' Basic Allowance. Travel expenses for Councillors attending meetings on behalf of the Council were reimbursed. The Chairman's Allowance to defray the expenses of office was used to purchase a wreath for Remembrance Day and to provide refreshments for the Community Carols and tree planting ceremony.

The Internal Auditor of Accounts report stated that the quality of the accounts is at a substantial level indicating the operation of consistent controls to meet council objectives.

SUMMARY OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2011/2012

RECEIPTS	£
Balance in hand at 1 April 2011	56744
Precept	36706
Interest on accounts	163
VAT Refund 2010-11	1393
Allotment Rents	242
Rent Recreation Ground	1
Welcome to Wingham	3
Refunds & cheque not banked	132
Kent Men of Trees prize	35
Donation for Jubilee Fund	1000
Sale of wedding mugs	15
TOTAL	96434

Administration (detail)	£
Clerk's salary & expenses	4837
Annual subscriptions	624
Insurance	1243
Audit	285
Office supplies	166
Post and telephone	390
Hire of Village Hall	219
Water allotments	80
Tax Payments	580
Election Costs	139
Land Registry Fee	100
TOTAL	8663

EXPENDITURE	£
Administration	8663
Grants to village organisations	6976
Land maintenance	1720
Property maintenance	11715
Councillor's allowances	54
Chairman's allowance	176
Training and conferences	420
Commemorative mugs	317
Committee Name Badges	33
Newtown Footway Repairs	1797
Bin, Play Area	117
Tree Planting	17
Miscellaneous	114
VAT (refundable)	1155
TOTAL	33274

Earmarked Funds	£
Reserve for contingencies	10583
Gratuity Fund	4196
Partnership Funding	11103
Youth Development	23940
Village Organisations	890
Election Fund	1622
Play Area	1386
Jubilee Fund	1863
TOTAL	55583

END OF YEAR BALANCE	£63160
including earmarked funds	