



Working with the community

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**APRIL 2014 - MARCH 2015**

## FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN

I have over the past four years tried to highlight the changes in local government. One of the changes relates to Village and Community Assets which was highlighted at our recent Annual Parish Assembly (April 2015). We are going to need to be a lot more responsible for the quality of life in our village. Things that we have taken for granted in the past are no longer going to happen due to the way central government are funding local councils and we are going to have to look after ourselves much more. This cannot be done by nine people so the Council needs the help, skills and involvement of the Wingham community to make this possible.

**MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL** At the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2014 Cllr Curtis was re-elected as Chairman and Cllr Pethick was elected as Vice-Chair. Cllrs Abbott, Baker, M Brice, and Catt were elected as members of the Planning Committee. Following the resignation of Cllr Hudson in May 2014, the vacancy was filled by the co-option of Sharon Addis at the meeting in June 2014.

Throughout the year, 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 Councils, the A257 traffic group and other local organisations. Conferences and training were also attended by Councillors and the Clerk in order to keep abreast of changing legislation. Cllr Prebble made regular safety inspections of the Recreation Ground children's play area as well as property maintenance and allotment checks. Cllr Pethick represented the council regarding the Aylesham Development and emergency planning. Cllr M Brice led the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) Committee. Cllr Baker chaired the Planning Committee and represented the council on the Recreation Ground committee. Cllr E Brice represented the council on the Dover area KALC committee, the Village Hall Management Committee and emergency planning. Cllr Catt also represented the council on the Dover Area KALC Committee, and carried out audit checks in his role of Internal Financial Control Officer. Cllr Addis made investigations into speed signs for the village and represented the council in emergency planning.

**MEETINGS** Parish Council meetings were held every month, with the exception of August. A public session was held at each meeting to enable questions from members of the public. In addition, a public budget meeting was held on 1 December.

The Annual Parish Assembly was held on 28 April 2014. Following the Annual Report given by the Chairman, presentation of Community Awards and questions regarding displayed reports, Cllr Curtis introduced the topic for discussion: The Future of Rural Emergency Services. Three presentations were made by senior members of the blue-light services, highlighting the major issues affecting them. Chief Inspector Steve Barlow, Dover District Commander, showed a short video presentation on the services provided by the police and their objectives, followed by a summary of the local situation. Group Manager Nick James, EK Group of the Kent Fire & Rescue Service, spoke to residents about matters affecting the fire service locally and nationally with useful advice on how to stay safe. Clinical Operations Manager Andy Burton of the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing services locally and nationally. Robin Kenworthy, Public Governor for SECAmb, then spoke to residents about governor responsibilities.

**ACHIEVEMENTS** The Jack Jolly Award was created in 2014 and first presented to two very worthy recipients at the Annual Parish Assembly in April 2015. Working with the Primary School, our 'Welcome to Wingham' poster competition was held again, and the successful entry has been printed and displayed on the commemorative wooden planter. The A257 traffic group continued to meet regularly and is proof of successful working in

partnership. The council's proposal to Government under the Sustainable Communities Act that town and parish councils should be made statutory consultees in the application process for Vehicle Operator Licence Applications and Renewals was partially accepted but is still to be reviewed. Elgar's Field was nominated as a Centenary Field through Fields in Trust and a WW1 commemorative bench has been purchased to mark the event.

**LAND AND PROPERTY** In addition to Elgar's Field and the Recreation Ground, 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. The Remembrance Garden was tidied in October 2014 with shrubs pruned, weeds removed.

Following the Annual Safety inspection and Risk Assessment of the equipment in the play area in March 2015, several non-urgent works were suggested, some of which are to be carried out, others to be monitored at the weekly inspections. Repairs were made to the play area fence and a new sign added in February 2015.

During the year, the youth shelter and glass bus shelter were cleaned; the bench outside the newsagents repaired; maintenance of High Street rose plants carried out; new plants added to the commemorative planter; and geraniums purchased for pedestrian crossing.

A new computer for the clerk was purchased in October 2014. A new notice board, purchased the previous financial year was erected in Staple Road and a new twinning sign erected. Poles for the new Speed Indicator Device were paid for (to be erected 2015/16), as was the move of the existing Vehicle Activated Sign.

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES** Members of the Parish Council took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and Service in November. During the service the Chairman of the Council, on behalf of the village, laid a wreath at the war memorial. The Community Carols in the High Street were supported by members of The Salvation Army band.

**FINANCE** The Precept for 2014/15 showed a decrease of £14,391 from the previous year. 2014/15 expenditure was within the amount budgeted for the year. The budget included money for earmarked funds for future projects: the Youth Development Fund for provision of a MUGA at the Recreation Ground; the Play Area Fund for future maintenance and new equipment; and to the IT fund.

During the year financial support towards running costs was given to the Recreation Ground, the Village Hall, Community Newsletter, to the Twinning Association for their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 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 for outdoor equipment, St Mary's Church for a projector, Wingham Tennis Club for a net, and Twinning Association towards a phone box for Vert-le-Grand.

All Members of the Council declined to take the Councillors' Basic Allowance. The Chairman's Allowance to defray the expenses of office was used to purchase a wreath for Remembrance Day and public event refreshments.

The Internal Auditor of Accounts report stated, "There is a robust framework of controls and appropriate actions are taken to manage risks within all areas reviewed. Controls are applied consistently and I found no significant risks to the achievement of parish council objectives."

The public budget meeting held on 1 December 2014 unfortunately was not well attended, but residents were asked for their ideas for future village projects and given the opportunity to comment on the council's budget plans.

**SUMMARY OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2014/2015**

<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>£</b>
Balance in hand at 1 April 2014 <i>including earmarked funds at 31.3.14</i>	99650
Precept <i>(incl. £1647 DDC Grant)</i>	53838
Interest on savings account	830
VAT Refund 2013-14	1979
Allotment Rents	176
Recreation Ground Rent	1
Miscellaneous <i>(Returned chq)</i>	216
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>156690</b>

<b>Administration (detail)</b>	<b>£</b>
Clerk's salary & expenses	7604
Annual subscriptions	741
Insurance	1219
Audit	360
Office supplies	491
Post and telephone	308
Hire of Village Hall	189
Water allotments	54
Tax Payments	0
Reference books	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10966</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>
Administration <i>(as detailed above)</i>	10966
Grants to village organisations	7470
Land maintenance	3166
Property maintenance <i>(inc. shelter cleaning, bus shelter roof, WC maintenance, benches, play area maintenance)</i>	7809
Councillor's allowances	0
Chairman's allowance	47
Training and conferences	529
Trees and verges	0
Capital expenditure <i>(inc. SID trial &amp; moving VAS, play area sign)</i>	3808
Contingencies & Section 137	102
Miscellaneous	0
<i>NB. These totals include £1569 VAT - to be reclaimed</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33897</b>

<b>Earmarked Funds at 31.3.15</b>	<b>£</b>
Reserve for contingencies	20583
Pension Fund	3275
Partnership Funding	9663
Youth Development	53159
Village Organisations	0
Election Fund	1772
Play Area	26091
IT Fund	4350
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118893</b>

<b>END OF YEAR BALANCE</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>122793</b>
<i>(total receipts minus total expenditure)</i>		

NB. This total includes the earmarked funds noted above