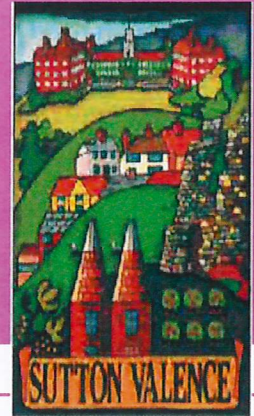


SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2024



Parish Council commence Speedwatch sessions

The problem of speeding traffic through the village is becoming a major concern for parishioners. The Parish Council is taking action by introducing a new Speedwatch initiative to highlight the speed of traffic passing through the village at various locations. The Parish Council is looking to recruit volunteers to help with a series of Speedwatch sessions planned at various locations in the village. On-site training will be given in the use of the speed recording equipment supplied, and high-visibility clothing will also be provided for use by the volunteers. If you would like to volunteer as a helper in the scheme, please contact the Parish Clerk for further details.



Sutton Valence Parish Councilors carrying out a Speedwatch session in North Street

Work starts on new Haven Farm housing development

With planning and conditions of planning entering their final phases, Fernham Homes Operations Limited has offered an update for the residents of Sutton Valence with regards to proposed timelines to commence their work on the Haven Farm site, a project that will construct 105 new dwellings accompanied by a retail space, doctor's surgery, open space and natural play area (application 22/504692/HYBRID on the MBC Planning Portal). In addition, the plans will also include allocation for 5 self-build plots.

In their recent update to the Parish Council, Fernham Homes detailed that the archaeology investigation prior to construction is currently being carried out and they expect construction work to begin on-site in August 2024. Fernham Homes has also confirmed that residents living near to the project will receive a letter from them giving details of key project dates and contacts should residents need to get in touch. The Parish Council has also received assurances that all visitors to site, trade and public, will access the site via the existing access point to the Haven Farm site until the new site access is formed. All sub-contractor parking will be located on-site and will remain on-site throughout the duration of the project.

The construction of the new site entrance is currently scheduled for October 2024, with Fernham Homes looking to minimise impact by carrying this out during school holidays. Fernham Homes has assured the Sutton Valence Parish Council that they will advise of road closure proposals ahead of any planned works, which we will subsequently keep residents updated via our website (www.suttonvalencepc.org.uk). Away from the impact of works on the road of

North Street, Fernham Homes has also advised that work to widen the footpath to include a cycle lane and Toucan crossing on the East side of the road will require a partial road closure. Work is anticipated to get underway in the Easter holidays 2025, but an exact date is yet to be confirmed. The Parish Council will continue to work with Fernham Homes to ensure that the residents of Sutton Valence are kept informed of any important developments.



The site of the entrance to the new Haven Farm Development in North Street

Encouraging biodiversity to fight climate change

Enhancing and protecting the natural environment is a key part of sustainability and crucially important in countering the significant threat to biodiversity from climate change. In recent years there has been a better understanding of the types of habitats and actions that are most valuable for wildlife and a sustainable environment. Five examples in the Sutton Valence Parish are:

1. Platinum Meadow

At the end of 2022, Maidstone Borough Council partnered with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to create a new woodland in the Sutton Valence parish. A total of 1,600 trees were planted. This is a long-term project and extremes of weather have presented challenges for the maintenance of these young saplings in their early years. It is hoped in the future this woodland will promote biodiversity and help combat climate change, for example through natural flood management and soil improvements.



Young trees in Platinum Meadow



Community Orchard

2. Green spaces

The parish is lucky to have a range of green open spaces where, alongside traditionally mowed areas, there are also dedicated patches of grass have been left unmown to encourage wildflowers to set seed. This helps insects and pollinators such as hover flies, beetles, bees and grasshoppers to thrive.

3. Community Orchard

The small community apple orchard near Bowhalls is great for both pollinators and us as it is starting to regularly produce crops of delicious apples.

Why not try one of the apples this Autumn!

4. Hedgerows, trees and birdlife

Ongoing maintenance of hedgerows and the more mature native woodland, provides vital nesting environments for the wide diversity of bird life in our parish. In addition, the parish council have in the past year, introduced a number of bug boxes provided by Sutton Valence School at different sites in the parish.



Bug Boxes



Hedgerows, trees and birdlife

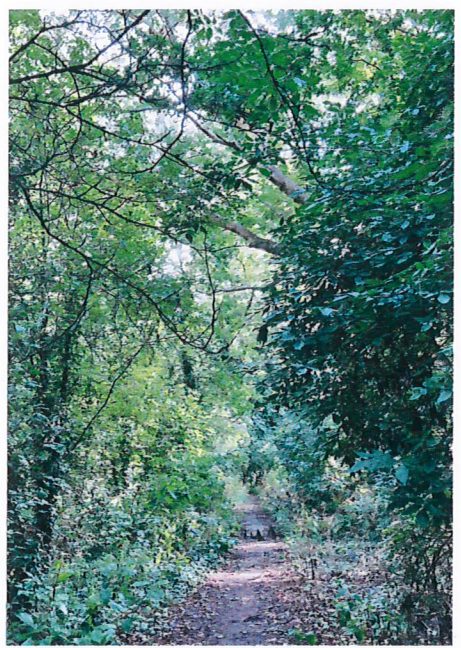
5. Public Footpaths

Footpaths benefit our environment and our health. The parish has a network of footpaths providing nature-based recreational alternatives to the car within the village. They also provide important green habitats and highways for wildlife.

How you can get involved

The Parish Council is looking for help to develop and manage open spaces and climate change projects.

Get in contact if you would like to volunteer, or if you simply have ideas for how we can continue to promote biodiversity and combat climate change within the parish.



Public footpaths

Another year's rent paid for the village green

Continuing with its yearly tradition, the Parish Council presented one red rose to the Headmaster of Sutton Valence School as payment of the annual rent of Sutton Valence Village Green. The Rose Ceremony took place on Midsummer's Day, as it has done so since 1957. The Guild of Fraternity of Clothworkers as Governors of the then Free Grammar School of William Lambe, granted a 99 year lease on the village green for the princely sum of one red rose to be paid yearly on Midsummer's Day. This annual event celebrates the excellent relationship between the village and Sutton Valence School.



The single red rose given as rent for the village green

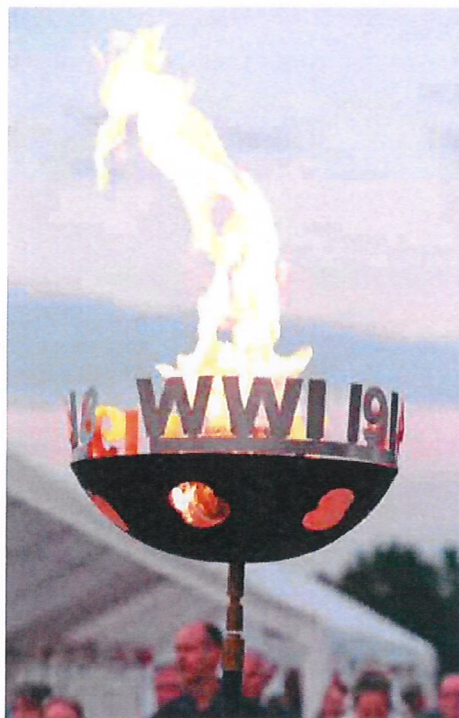
Three Parish Councils join to commemorate an historic day

On the 6th June, the three Parish Councils of Chart Sutton, Sutton Valence, and East Sutton combined to commemorate and celebrate D-Day 80.

The event was held on the Sutton Valence Memorial Playing Fields. This was part of a national and international commemoration of the heroic events that took place on the D-Day landing beaches of France 80 years ago to the day.

The event was well attended by the local community and the principle guest of honour was The Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, Nicholas Marden LVO DL, who presided over the commemoration ceremony.

The Sutton Valence School CCF were on hand to perform the Flag Lowering Ceremony, and the D-Day Beacon was lit at 9:15pm to coincide with other beacons that were lit across the nation.



The Beacon was lit at 9:15pm, timed to coincide with the lighting of many other beacons across the Nation.



The honoured guests: Rev Fiona Haskett, Chris Webb (Chart Sutton PC), Nicholas Marden LVO DL (Deputy Lieutenant of Kent), Martin Round (Deputy Mayor of Maidstone)



Sutton Valence School CCF were on parade to take part in the Flag Raising and Lowering Ceremony



The event was well attended by an appreciative audience who entered into the spirit of the commemoration.



Can you be a volunteer for your village?

Your Parish Council are exploring the idea of setting up a Village Volunteer Scheme to recruit the help of parishioners with tasks and projects around the village.

We are asking parishioners to become "Village Volunteers" to help out with the many tasks that help the parish run smoothly.

If you are interested in helping out, and want to build a greater sense of community in the Parish, please contact the Clerk by email or phone.

Your PC needs help with the following tasks

- SVPC Newsletter distribution.
- Litter picking.
- Speedwatch sessions.
- Special events.
- Open spaces management.
- Woodland areas management.
- Environmental & bio-diversity action.
- Allotment management.
- Play areas maintenance.



Helping hands in the parish

How to report a problem in the parish

The Parish Council receive many reports of problems from parishioners concerned about various issues in the parish. We do, of course, pass all these reports on to the relevant authority or department to deal with.

The Parish Council does not have responsibility for many essential services such as roads and planning issues for example. Parishioners should be aware that they can report problems themselves, directly to the relevant local authority department responsible for dealing with the report. Both Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council have websites that parishioners can access to report problems directly, saving valuable time in getting the problem solved.

For Kent County Council go to: www.kent.gov.uk when reporting problems about the following

- Street light faults.
- Pot holes.
- Drainage.
- Traffic signal faults.
- Damage to bus stops.
- Overgrown vegetation.
- Information about roadworks.

For Maidstone Borough Council go to: www.maidstone.gov.uk when reporting problems about the following

- Planning applications.
- Bins and recycling.
- Building control.
- Parking and streets.
- Reporting fly tipping.
- Location of council services.

Introducing our new MBC Borough Councillors and new Member of Parliament

Following the recent local and parliamentary elections, we now have two new MBC Councillors and new Member of Parliament. As we are now part of an enlarged ward, which joins Sutton Valence with Headcorn, we have two Ward Councillors. We look forward to working closely with our new representatives.



MBC Councillor, Martin Round



MBC Councillor, Ziggy Trzebinski



Katie Lam, MP for Weald of Kent

Maidstone Ward Cluster Meetings, a collaborative approach to community safety



The Maidstone Ward Cluster Meetings are pivotal engagement sessions that bring together elected members of the Maidstone Borough Council, the Community Protection Team, and Maidstone Police. These meetings focus on enhancing community safety within designed Ward Clusters, which consists of up to four wards sharing similar geography, demographics, and safety concerns. The objectives of these meetings are:

- To foster increased engagement and understanding among all stakeholders regarding community safety issues, including anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisances.
- To adopt an evidence-based approach for addressing community concerns effectively.
- To exchange initiatives and operational information that are pertinent to each cluster.
- To encourage collaborative efforts among members, officers, and police to proactively challenge report and prevent crime.

Local Beat Officers: A cornerstone of Maidstone's community safety. Maidstone stands out for its unique

assignment of local Beat Officers to Ward Clusters, reflecting our commitment to collaborative community safety. These officers are more than law enforcers; they are visible, proactive community partners who engage with residents and collaborate with various agencies to address local safety concerns. Their intergration with specialised teams like the Child-Centred Policing Unit and the Neighbourhood Task Force ensure a comprehensive approach to safety. Sutton Valence is part of Ward Cluster 6, along with Headcorn.

Meetings and Frequency

Two meetings will be held per Cluster within a 12 month period, with additional meetings where required being organised should there be sufficient reason to do so.

The Community Protection Team will facilitate the organising of the meetings and the distribution of meeting notifications and papers etc. Once agreed following the first round of meetings, notification of the next meeting date will be published on relevant local websites.

Contact the Parish Council

For further information regarding Sutton Valence Parish Council and its work for the parish community, please contact the Clerk, Emma Hull on 01622 844135 or email: clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk or visit our website on www.suttonvalence.org.uk

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A new notice board has been placed at Warmlake crossroads, this board was originally sited at the Haven Farm Post Office, but has been recycled to replace the the board that was lost, when the supporting wall behind it collapsed.