

# Willesborough Community Forum



## **Open Meeting and AGM – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

### **Willesborough Baptist Church – Hythe Road**

The doors opened at 6.30 with a display of various items of local interest.

The councillors George Kowaree and Kate Hooker were on hand for any questions/problems.

Councillor Jeremy Adby sent his apologies. Councillor Gerald White did not make an appearance.

The meeting was opened at 7.30 pm by Chairman of the Willesborough Community Forum, Ian Stevenson (ICS).

### **PCSO Report**

It was announced that the area had another new PCSO, Katie Scott, who could not be present. A report had, however, been received, and was on the display boards. Concerns or questions, should be directed to Katie at the following email address : [katie.scott2@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:katie.scott2@kent.pnn.police.uk), or call 101.

### **AGM Matters**

John Micklethwaite (Treasurer) presented the Treasurer's Report. ICS explained that the committee had vacancies for Secretary and Treasurer. He explained that the vacancy for Treasurer was because John Micklethwaite was leaving both the Forum and Kent and requested that the assembly showed their appreciation for all the time and hard work he had put into the Forum, which they duly did. We wish John, and his family, all the very best in their new life.

### **Community Council Campaign Update**

ICS outlined the current position regarding the Community Governance Review being conducted by Ashford Borough Council:

- The Draft Recommendations document had been published on 1<sup>st</sup> August, as scheduled. This covered all parished areas and those seeking to become parishes, complete with any relevant boundary changes maps. Part of the recommendations for the unparished areas is that they become parished.
- Publication of the Draft Recommendations document marks the beginning of the three month public consultation phase, where any interested parties (residents, business owners etc.) can comment on the recommendations for their area. This would continue until the 31<sup>st</sup> October.
- There would be some sort of referendum of the residents. The exact form had not yet been decided and it would probably not be conducted until after the middle of September. It was known, however, that it was unlikely to take the form of a one-day vote, as per elections. WCF Steering Group would keep residents informed.
- Details of the Draft Recommendations for North Willesborough would be posted on the North-Willesborough.org.uk and in the September Pilgrim - details of the complete Draft Recommendations document could be found on the Ashford Borough Council website.

### **Local News and Updates**

The following were covered:

#### **Hythe Road Pedestrian Crossing**

John Goodman, of Earls Avenue, described how he and fellow residents had discussed the need for a pedestrian crossing on Hythe Road, preferably between Hunter Road and Albemarle Road. A quick poll of the assembly showed that a large majority of the attendees were in favour of such a crossing. It was observed that, if Hythe Road were to be built today, there likely would be more crossings. It was also observed that, with the transfer of Post Office facilities from Albemarle Road to Foxglove Road, more folk would be needing to cross Hythe Road.

George Kowaree, speaking with his KCC hat on, explained that, following a study two years previously, KCC had concluded that there was no need for such a crossing. He further explained that to restart the (possibly abortive) process would require funding which, given the previous conclusion, he was reluctant to provide, given that he had other parts of Ashford to consider. He did, however, say that "People Power" might yield a better outcome.

It was decided, therefore, that an action group be established, initially with John Goodman as head, supported by WCF, to lobby the relevant parties to provide the crossing. Volunteers for the action group were asked to sign up after the meeting.

#### Kennington Road Chicane/S-Bend

George Kowaree was asked for a n update. He advised that the required land had been purchased but he was not sure when the work could be done. He also advised that the road might have to be closed during the alterations. He promised to revert with further information.

It was observed that this bend had created lengthy delays during Operation Stack when it had become totally jammed every time two lorries met there.

It was suggested that, until the modifications had been made, temporary traffic lights be installed to prevent total gridlock.

(Post meeting note - GK advised that the modifications would be made during 2016)

#### Quiz

It was announced that WCF would be holding another quiz, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Details would follow.

#### Albemarle Road Post Office

It was announced that Albemarle Road Post Office would be closing and that its Post Office functions would be moving to the Premier shop in Foxglove Road - date TBA.

#### Speedwatch

Patrols were ongoing and volunteers were always welcome. Results would be posted on the website.

#### Planning

The following was reported:

M20 Junction 10a	The Community Consultation was supposed to run from end June to 21 <sup>st</sup> August but had not started. No new dates have been given.
Sevington Development (U19)	Resubmission awaited.
Blackwall Road South (U5)	Stalled, apparently, by lack of sewage pumping capacity.
White Horse pub	Application for three houses approved - work about to start.
Rear of Waltham Close	Plan for 26 houses - nothing since 26 <sup>th</sup> May.
Highmead House (Part of U14)	Plans rejected by ABC - now gone to appeal.
Conningbrook	There were rumours that Brett might have pulled out of the deal to build the houses on the site (Post meeting note - GK advised that Brett had NOT pulled out and that the houses would be built as planned).

#### Councillor Reports

##### Kate Hooker - Aylesford Green

KH introduced herself and advised that she was finding her feet as a new councillor and that most of her workload concerned the part of her ward south of the railway, in the South Willesborough and Newtown area, where there were many planned and ongoing building developments.

##### George Koowaree - North Willesborough and KCC

George (GK) gave the following updates:

- Plans for double yellow lines on Lees Road under the M20 had been stalled by ABC who want to make the road completely one-way. Feedback from the assembly indicated that this would be an unpopular option, and GK informed the meeting that it would more expensive. Residents would be consulted but, in the meantime, nothing would happen.
- Following the recent accident on Hunter Road GK would set in motion the process for getting 20 MPH signs painted on the road surface.

## **Talk on Footpaths and Pavements - by Guy Wilson**

Guy introduced himself and described his roles and responsibilities as a Countryside Access Warden (Volunteer). Guy is also a resident of North Willesborough. His talk covered the following:

### Definitions

Public Rights of Way (PROW): For walking on - they are commonly known as Public Footpaths.

Pavements: Surfaced areas to walk on alongside roads or through built up areas.

### Public Rights of Way

These are usually historic routes which have been commonly used by the public & workers over time, often through what is or was the countryside.

They are part of the Public Highway and count as the same as roads.

They have Rules of Use & Care

### PROW - Who looks after what

Kent County Council (PROW Department):

- Designation & signposting
- Keep pathways clear and gateways working

KCC use contractors and volunteers. KCC's Volunteer Countryside Access Wardens help by checking paths, reporting faults, clearing vegetation and maintaining signage.

Landowner:

- Repairs to gates, stiles & bridges
- Maintenance of the path surface

KCC will help with costs. KCC will do the work and charge the landowner if repairs are delayed.

Ashford Borough Council:

- Litter (As for any other public highway)

### PROW Online

Search for one of the following:

- Public Footpaths Kent
- PROW Kent

The site shows:

- Maps of PROWs
- Rules of use
- How to report a fault

Reporting Faults and problems:

- Online (as above)
- Email the details to PROW@kent.gov.uk
- Phone 03000 417171
- Contact WCF

## Pavements

To Report problems such as:

- Overgrowing vegetation
- Lighting not working
- Broken fences
- Broken pavements
- etc.

Do one of the following:

- Contact KCC:
- Online – search for “Fix My Street”
- Phone – 03000 418181
- Contact WCF

Under questions the following points were raised:

Motorcycles - The legality concerning the riding of motorcycles on footpaths was questioned. GUY responded that it was illegal and that the only wheeled passenger vehicles allowed on footpaths (PROW) were wheelchairs and prams/pushchairs. The meeting was advised to contact the police (101) with registration plate details if possible, but not to take direct action.

General - An observation was made about the general standard of maintenance. GUY advised residents to report problems using the channels described in his talk. ICS re-iterated that WCF could also be contacted.

## AOB

Potholes - The definition of “pothole” was requested. GK responded that KCC’s definition is that the hole must be at least 50mm (2 inches) deep. He also advised that a crack (i.e. between two sections of road surface) was not a pothole, no matter how deep. An attendee reported that he had been advised, following damage to his cycle, that a hole was a pothole if you could fit a tennis ball in it.

The meeting concluded at 9pm. The next Open Meeting will be on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.