

THE
Downswood
DPC
Parish
Council
Newsletter

Spring
2011



www.downswoodpc.org

The Official Voice of Downswood

NEW SALT BINS

Additional Salt Bins! Many thanks to KCC Councillor Gary Cooke for providing three salt bins from his Devolved Budget; two in Murrain Drive and one in Mallards Way. We are pleased to report that a further three bins will be coming soon to Grampian Way, Willow Rise & Cotswold Gardens.

News just received. News just received. Cllr Cooke has confirmed that he's secured an agreement to have the bottom of Mallards Way resurfaced. Not only that, but the work should be done later this month (March). This will probably entail an emergency road closure for one day but hopefully residents will appreciate the improvement this should provide.

More Tea Vicar?

TEA PARTIES at St. Nicholas Church are proving to be very popular! Whether you go to church or not, these are for the whole community to enjoy. Bring a neighbour for a cup of tea, some home-made cakes, sandwiches, biscuits and a good chat. The next party will be held on the 21st April at 3 pm - everyone is welcome. For more details contact Joan Palmer on; 01622 202239

Hunt for Garden Judge.

A judge is currently being approached for this year's **GARDEN COMPETITION**. All front gardens in Downswood are automatically entered into the competition, with an impartial judge selecting the winning three gardens from a shortlist drawn up by councillors. As in previous years, prizes will be awarded at the Christmas Carols & Lights Ceremony.

Strange Fruit in Otham field.

When clearing up after your dog, please use the bins specifically designed to take this waste or take it home with you. Do not use other resident's household bins for this purpose (even if in bags).

Please do not hang your bag of dog waste on a **tree!** It has been noticed that dog owners too lazy to carry their waste to the proper disposal sites have been **carefully** picking up after their dogs, then tying their bags to bushes or trees from the exit from Otham field to the entrance to Murrain Drive.

The site of these "strange fruit" beggars belief!

If you are conscientious enough to pick up after your dog, please go the extra yard and dispose of your bags in the correct and proper manner.

As reported previously, if you don't clear up after your dog you could be issued with a **£50** fixed penalty ticket or fined up to **£2,500**.

To report a known offender contact the Dog Warden on 01622 602117.

Parish Council Elections will be held on 5 May 2011

If you are interested in becoming a Councillor, please contact the Clerk who will give you further information or, alternatively, contact the Returning Officer at Maidstone Borough Council directly. Completed forms must be returned by Monday 4 April 2011.

Spring Clean!

We look forward to seeing you at the **SPRING CLEAN** which will be held on Saturday, 9th April at 10.00 am. Starting from the Community Centre Lounge & meeting there again at 11.30 am for the finish, when refreshments will be provided. Equipment will be provided to enable your group to tackle specific areas identified as 'hot spots'.



The 2010 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS CEREMONY

was extremely well attended, despite the snow meaning those from further a field were unable to be present. Father Christmas looked very smart in his new costume; taking time out of his busy schedule to distribute sweets to the children, whilst adults enjoyed mulled wine. **2011 CHRISTMAS CEREMONY** will take place on Friday, 2 December at 7.00 pm.

LOOK OUT FOR NEW ILLUMINATIONS!

Meet the Councillors

DPC Chairman - Cllr Roz Cheesman

I moved to Downswood in May 1981 with husband; daughter aged 10 & son aged 7. The family now includes 6 wonderful grandchildren. Unfortunately (for me!) they live some distance away - Midlands and W Sussex. After the house move, recovering from a bad MS session, when I began to walk and drive again, I attended OPC meetings (which included Downswood). Subsequently, in 1985 I became a co-opted councillor.



Following a decision by the Boundary Commission, in 1987, the area of Downswood was detached from Otham. There was an exciting and historic first election - 13 candidates for 9 places. Bill (Arthur) Maynard, John Dixon, and I, all former OP Cllrs, were successful -

Downswood Parish Council was formed. Clerk for Otham PC, Heulwen Savage (then Downswood resident) also became DPC's Clerk.

Current Working Life: Medical Secretary/PA for the private practices of a consultant ophthalmic surgeon and a consultant ENT surgeon

Interests (apart from Parish Council): Family; Croquet; WI (numerous activities & opportunities); Music (Jazz, Opera; Classical; Latin; R&B; Soul; Rock; Musicals; Easy Listening++); Travel; Ballet; Theatre; Photography; Countryside; Learning to Salsa (unfortunately no longer at Downswood) & to Fence. Faults: Too numerous to mention, but certainly include a failure to keep in touch with friends.

Downswood's Annual Parish Meeting

will commence at 7.30 in the Community Centre lounge on Tuesday, 3 May and will be immediately followed by the Parish Council Meeting at 8 pm. The **PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING** of 10 May will commence at 8 pm when councillors elected on 5 May will be asked to join working committees. Members of the Public are welcome to attend.



A statement from our ward member David Marchant

It has been a great pleasure looking after the interests of Downswood for over five years. I have, however, decided not to seek re-election in May. There are many happy memories of Christmas lights as the Mayor's magician, as raffle box spinner at the fetes, and of parish cleanups. But far more importantly is the tremendous goodwill from you all which has helped me in the ward. It is the many small contacts which are so important in a vibrant community. I delayed my announcement until I had finished helping on the steering committee for the council's latest version of the core strategy. This will go out to public consultation after the elections, since ward members may not take part in discussions during April! Keep up the good work. Make certain Downswood thrives. I shall watch you from up the hill.



May we take this opportunity on behalf of the Downswood residents to thank you David for all your hard work on our behalf. Best of luck for the future.

A Message from the Head Teacher at Madginford Park Infants School



Hello from Madginford Park Infant School. I cannot believe that we are half way through our school year, my first at the school! We have lots of news to share, and are planning for an equally exciting spring and summer to come.

A double Harvest enabled the children to explore local and global thanksgiving. Linking with the Salvation Army helped the children see how their donations would help local people in need. A cake sale organised by Year 1 and 2 raised money for the flood victims in Pakistan.

Our School Council have been using their budget to plan and organise new playground markings. The money has come from funds raised at our Parent, Teachers and Friends association (PTA) Fireworks extravaganza. We are so grateful to the fantastic community support at this event!

Remembrance saw the whole school reflect on the real impact of war on our soldiers in Afghanistan, and we were able to draw on first hand experiences of families at the school.

Christmas was truly special, with three performances and many visitors, including some from Barty House residents, with whom we hope to establish further links. The snow made everything very magical for the children, and we were so thankful that there was minimal disruption to our festivities.

The New Year has started with lots of parent involvement; as volunteers, visiting Governors, guests to our celebration assemblies and information evenings and even coming into school dressed as pirates!

(Year 2 held a very successful Pirate Family Learning day.)

As signs of spring finally emerge, our Eco-Warrior group have supported the completion of an Eco-Green Flag application. If we achieve this prestigious environmental award we will be one of few infant schools to do so – cross your fingers!

Next is Easter, our annual involvement at the Spring Sing-a-long AND the Royal Wedding to look forward to!

I really look forward to developing further links with you.

Do contact me at Madginford if you have any requests or ideas to share.

Kind regards

Steph Guthrie – Headteacher

Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Sunday ~ 24th April. 12-2pm
Downswood community centre
£1.50 per child ~ refreshments available.
(Bring your own basket or container)
Finder of the 'Golden Egg' wins a special prize!

More details:
www.downswood.co.uk
(01622) 862730

A Special Visitor to Madginford Park.

Madginford Park Junior School will be having a visitor soon – a teacher from Malawi. The Junior school support a school in the African country through the charity Starfish Malawi and, following a visit for some of our teachers over there last year, the charity has been able to support a 'return' leg of the exchange. This is very exciting for the children who are currently working on a Great British History performance including dance, drama and singing, to give a potted history of Britain in a fun

Food waste Liners for Sale!
The Spires convenience store has taken delivery of the MBC bin liners for food waste. These liners need to be compostable not bio-degradable so make sure you buy the correct liners that are acceptable to MBC.



YOUR PARISH COUNCIL



Not happy with the parish?

Think things could be done to improve the environment in which you live?
Then let the parish council know.

We are here to liaise with the relevant authorities to improve matters.

So please, if you would like some action taken contact:

Parish Clerk – Teresa Irving, 7 Firs Close, Greenacres, Aylesford, Kent. ME20 7LH.
01622 717466. Email: teresa.irving@btinternet.com

Your parish councillors are:

Roz Cheesman (chairman), Robin Bevan (vice-chairman),
Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Anne Marie Butler,
Simon Roberts, Maggie Chainey and Martin Weeks.

PC Lee Talon & PCSO James Stevens 07772226100 or 01622 604392

Downswood & Otham Borough Councillor – David Marchant, The Old School, Otham Street,
Otham ME15 8RN. 01622 863526 Email: davidmarchant@maidstone.gov.uk

Kent County Councillor – Gary Cooke c/o Member's Desk, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone ME14 1XQ. Tel: 01622 880686 or 07803 007031(Mobile) Email: Gary.cooke@kent.gov.uk

Hugh Robertson MP – 01622 851616. Email: staintonjamesa@parliament.uk

Residents are invited to attend parish council meetings.

Full council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month,
except August, in the Community Centre at 8 p.m.

Dates of Meetings. 5th April, 3rd May and 7th June



Police Message

Message from PCSO Stevens and PC Tallon
PCSO Jim Stevens and PC Lee Tallon are your Neighbourhood
Police Officers for Downswood, Otham and Bearsted and we are
here to serve you, if you have any concerns or issues that you
need to talk to us about we can be contacted on 01622 604390.
Downswood is a very beautiful and safe place in which to live,
and as your local offices, and along with our partner agencies,
and your help we will strive to keep it that way.
Remember if you see a crime or criminal damage in progress,
or if there is a threat to life or limb, or if your call is an emergency
call 999 straight away.
You can also Call Kent Police single non-emergency number
on 01622 690690

Neighbourhood Watch

Being part of Neighbourhood Watch scheme encourages
community spirit and is a good tool to help protect the more
vulnerable people. All Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators
receive up to date messages from the Police and Trading
Standards of any unwanted callers in your area. If you are
interested in becoming part of Neighbourhood Watch or require
more information please call 01622 604395

Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Celebrations -

Next year, 2012, will see Queen Elizabeth II celebrate 60 years reign. We'd love to hear your views of how the Parish could mark this event? One idea that has been suggested is to landscape the triangle of land at the bottom of Old Spot Lane. It's thought a stone can be engraved with images of Downswood from 2011/12 that would last a thousand years. The triangle would be planted with various woodland species of plants, contained by native ragstone rocks. The bin would be moved to the edge of the area developed. Please let the Clerk hear your views!

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WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS...

Fundraising Collection Days The Heart of Kent Hospice is looking for willing/enthusiastic volunteers to help us with Fundraising Collection Days in 2011. If you can spare just a few hours to help raise vital funds for your local Hospice we would love to hear from you.

The following collections are booked at various Tesco Supermarket's in the local area on the following dates:

Thursday 31 st March 2011 – Grove Green, Wednesday 13 th April 2011 – Lunsford, Thursday 14 th April 2011 – Lunsford, Thursday 30 th June 2011 – Farleigh Hill

To register your support, please telephone Karen Dockwray (Volunteer Services Development Officer) on 01622 792200 or email karen.dockwray@hokh.co.uk

Bluebell Walk – Sunday 1 st May 2011

Volunteer Marshals are needed to help at our 24 th year of the Bluebell Walk, starting at Harrietsham Village Hall. This is an 8 ½ mile walk and Marshals are required at certain points of the course and to man the walkers car park, not only to ensure peoples' safety but to give walkers that much needed encouragement.

Marshals will be required from 8.30am to approximately 1pm.

This is one of The Heart of Kent Hospice's biggest fundraising events of the year and we want you to be involved in the fun. To register, please telephone Karen Dockwray (Volunteer Services Development Officer) on 01622 792200 or email karen.dockwray@hokh.co.uk

The Moonlit Walk – Saturday 16 th July 2011

This is the biggest Fundraising event of the year for The Heart of Kent Hospice with nearly £90,000 raised in 2010. The Hospice is hoping this year's event will be an even greater success but none of this is possible without... VOLUNTEERS!

We are looking for 100 people to help us with this event and are counting on you to fill one of these spaces. From registration, drink stops to marshals, there are loads of ways you can get involved. Starting and finishing at David Lloyd Fitness Centre, Kings Hill – walkers have the opportunity to complete either 6 or 10 miles. Fancy dress is encouraged!

If you can stay awake (you will have no option with this party atmosphere!) from 10pm to approximately 2am, we would love you to sign up to join our volunteering extravaganza! To register to volunteer, please telephone Karen Dockwray (Volunteer Services Development Officer) on 01622 792200 or email karen.dockwray@hokh.co.uk

1st May 2011- Bluebell Walk - Harrietsham

In its 24th year, an 8 1/2 miles sponsored family walk through beautiful private woodland. Registration fees are £8 for an adult, £3 for a child, and £20 for a family of two adults and two children. Pre-registration is advisable due to the number of walkers on the day.

For more information or to book any of the events above, please visit www.hokh.org or call Fundraising and Marketing on 01622 790195."

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friends of

OTHAM CHURCH

ROMANTIC ORGAN MUSIC
played by TREVOR BREARLEY
AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, OTHAM
Sunday 20th March 2011 at 3pm
Including music by
César Franck Joseph Jongen Max Reger
Josef Rheinberger
Felix Mendelssohn & Louis Vierne
Retiring collection for the Open Church
Project and the Friends
of Otham Church

Marmalade Morning!

Saturday 9th April 9.30am to midday
St. Nicholas Church, Otham

Come for breakfast-toast a selection of marmalade, coffee or tea before making your purchases.

Marmalade, pickles, jam etc..

All proceeds to the Open Church Project.
For more details contact Joan Palmer 202239

TABLE TOP SALE

Saturday 26th March

St. Nicholas Church Otham

10am to 1pm Table hire £10

(Limited no.)

To hire a table please contact
Dot Hooker 746571 or
Diane Mitchell 739129
Proceeds to Open Church Appeal

2011 Downswood Summer Fete

Saturday 4th June - from 1pm.

Downswood community centre
Chiltern Close, Maidstone, ME15 8XG.

Under 8's fancy dress
competition
many stalls
various attractions
bar b. q.
licensed bar
teas + cake stall
childrens races
crockery smashing
tug o' war
coconut shy
+ much much more!



The Spitfires

An afternoon of fun for all the family.

More details: 01622 862730
www.downswood.co.uk

