

## **Selling Annual Parish Meeting 27 April 2023**

### ***Chairman's Report***

This past year year has been dominated by all things to do with roads:

- a 30 mph speed limit
- flooding
- pot holes and road damage
- Community Speedwatch
- And a certain advertising van

More of that later.

This was the first full year of parish council meetings held in person in our beloved village hall following the restrictions necessarily put in place under the COVID pandemic. It seems a whole age ago. This Selling PC has never wavered in its commitment to the residents of the village to continue to hold its scheduled monthly, and of course some extraordinary, meetings – at all of these there have been just a tiny handful of councillor absences, due always to very good reason. This year we completed 14 meetings, which is in keeping with recent busy years.

As we are in purdah and fast approaching local elections, including that for the parish council (the only parish council in Swale to require an election), I am limited to what I can say about our borough and county councillors. Because he is not standing for re-election I can refer you to the minutes of our April meeting where we said goodbye with thanks and grateful appreciation to our erstwhile Swale Borough Councillor.

We are grateful as ever to the Village Hall Committee for their unfailing devotion to maintaining what I hope you will agree is the jewel in the crown of our village. We are all fortunate to have such a beautiful building and it is usually always a pleasure to hold our monthly meetings here. I say usually, because sometimes even the pluckiest of heating systems would struggle to match the sub zero temperatures of mid-Winter. We tend to call these 'coat' meetings. Those of you who have joined us on such occasions will know exactly what I mean. Very soon, there will be a plaque sited underneath the wall clock you can see, which will commemorate the reign of her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The council is proud to have organised such a tribute and there is no finer place for it to be.

Looking forward, we are excited about the imminent Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla and a celebration showcase of our marvellous village groups, organisations and societies on the Big Help Out Day. That's Bank Holiday Monday 8 May from midday at the home of Selling Cavaliers Cricket Club, Cadman's Meadow. If you haven't seen the posters around the village, on the council's three notice boards, on our website or Facebook page...or read about it in

the Parish Magazine, then we have failed. You are all very welcome and we have one or two interesting surprises for young and old. We are delighted to be involved with the Big Lunch that follows the Showcase and we pay tribute to those who so modestly take time to organise such a community event. It will be a wonderful day to remember, and let's hope at the very least it's because the sun shone.

Not everyone in Selling has access to, or wants, the internet. We have always been mindful of the profile of the village, where despite recent delivery of improved internet connections and the promise of ultra-fast 1 gigabit broadband in the next 2 years, there are many households that still depend on the printed word. To that end, the Parish Magazine is a lifeline for residents who want to know what is going locally. We thank the editors and all those concerned with the Parish Magazine for enabling the minutes of our meetings to be published.

Safety and the quality of life of parishioners are foremost in the action plan of the Council. We now have three defibrillators sited in the village and as you have seen from our excellent Kent First Responders, these are vital in helping to preserve life in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. We have also bought defib preparation kits for each of our locations. These details are often overlooked, but can literally shave seconds or minutes off the time it takes to use the defib. We also have registered each of our defibs (at Perry Wood, Selling School and now The Sondes) with The Circuit, the national defibrillator network. This allows 999 call handlers to quickly identify the location of the nearest defib. The council is currently investigating a secure location to place a 4<sup>th</sup> defibrillator in the vicinity of Hogbens's Hill. This will give us a strong strategic coverage across Selling. Network Rail this year installed a defib on Selling station London bound platform. This is part of their community stations programme.

Planning applications can have a huge impact on the lives of villagers and this year is no exception. Although the parish council has no statutory powers to formally decline applications, (which as you know lies with Swale Borough Council) it does have a potent role in expressing its views and those of residents. We are able to state our objections within the confines of defined criteria and nothing is more powerful than when parishioners are able to articulate their concerns and lend weight to this. We have encouraged those affected to come to parish council meetings and during the open public session make known their views. This they have done, both in person and also by written submission. The quality and helpfulness of these submissions has been extremely high. We have been fortunate to have a great deal of experience and procedural know-how in the form of one of our councillors. Taken together, the council's robust resolve to ensure fairness and to remain proactive, and the clarity of community and individual concern, we have been able to influence planning decisions to the good in both a lawful and just manner.

Village identity is something dear to all residents. Our comprehensive traffic and highways survey across Selling last year highlighted that a whopping 93% of survey respondents (102 residents) were in favour of a village sign. This is far from a straightforward undertaking, and that's before we ask residents where it should be and what it should look like. Councillors have however been on the case, including many a reconnaissance visit to other villages and communities across the county and enquiries into likely costs, suppliers and time frames. We are making headway and are trying to tentatively identify potential sites, one of which is adjacent to the large village car park. We hope to be able to consult villagers very soon.

The national Civility and Respect Pledge was introduced to enable councils across the country to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across the sector and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct. For councils to take the Pledge, they are required to show they have:

- put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- have signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors
- will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens

Selling Parish Council will do this and reaffirm its commitment to civility and respect, one of now 1400 councils to do so.

The Council has also hit another high this year with the achievement of The Foundation Award for the national Local Council Award Scheme. The award scheme has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the challenging standards set and are assessed by a panel of members of other councils. We are one of only seven parish councils in Kent to receive the Foundation Award. This means that residents of Selling can be assured that the council is now operating at an effective and proper high level.

The improvements of the Council can not be achieved without the knowledge, guidance and expertise of a professional and qualified Clerk. This year we were delighted that our Clerk and Responsible Financial officer, Wendy Gregory, reached the pinnacle of her profession after three years study and assessment by attaining the Certificate in Local Administration, with the catchy name of CILCA. This assures the council and its parishioners of the very best service as a clerk.



Wendy also won an award from Kent Association of Local Councils for 2023 International Womens Day in recognition of her inspirational work and achievements with Selling Parish Council. Wendy, now is your time and I now you are modest to the core, but it gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Council to present you with your award certificate and prize of an Amazon voucher from KALC. Other commercial online delivery businesses are available.



And now to those roads as promised...

It is no exaggeration to say that for decades previous councils have tried to challenge the national speed limit of 60 mph that applies to the station area of Selling. Although reported road collisions are mercifully rare, the inappropriate and or disproportionate speeds of cars, HGVs including container lorries, buses, coaches, motorbikes and even farm machinery have at time terrorised local people. As we all know, this is exacerbated at times of disruption to the strategic road network of nearby A roads and motorways. Finally, this year, thanks to a tumultuous effort in getting an agreed traffic regulation order, we are on the cusp of having a 30 mph speed limit in place and hopefully in time for the late Summer months.

We will be able to support Kent Police and ourselves tin enforcing the new speed limit through our new Community Speedwatch group, which we have set up. We have trained councillors, we have a speed gun and we have branded hi viz jacket. And we have the willingness to deploy Community Speedwatcg in our roads with a 30 mph speed limit. Police advice for Purdah again prevents me saying more, but you too can be a part of looking after your community in a practical way.

Again, election purdah and modesty forbids me to identify individual councillors who have distinguished themselves in their roles this year. Often under the radar, and quietly going about their council business with determination and dignity and always with respect for the corporate body that is the parish council, they have reached the Heineken effect and gone where no others have. You can see and experience this in the vastly improved road engineering, with new kerbs, soakaways and structures only a qualified engineer would understand, at the infamous almost always flooded Gushmere bend, and at no expense to the Selling precept. It has taken many months this year of persistence and negotiation, but finally KCC listened to us and we hope have installed a permanent solution.

A permanent solution to the regular catastrophe that is the flooding under and either side of Fox Lane is a bit harder to come by. Councillors have been constantly on the case and with great dedication in their communication with all the authorities you can shake a stick at. They report all instances, take photographs, make reports and have more robust phone calls than is polite to mention. This has taken massive amounts of their own time and personal effort on behalf of residents (and those poor individuals who sadly misjudge the advice and signage about driving into unknown water on the road). Our levels of empathy are high for these road users and councillors have been the first on scene to help stuck vehicles and their distressed occupiers as well as call the blue light services. We remain realistic, positive and committed to working with KCC in resolving this perennial blight on our roads.

And to end with, to that thorn in the side of road users that was the advertising van on the bridge over the M2. Even though it was technically 10m the other side of our parish boundary – and through a long story cut short you will be glad to know - it was your Selling parish council who solved the problem and provided the right ammunition for Swale to approach Kent Police. Armed with our know-how, the vehicle disappeared and has not returned.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Kevin Hobson  
Chairman  
Selling Parish Council



## 1st SELLING BROWNIES

## 2022` Report

Three new Brownies started in January and during the month we played many 'getting to know you' games. We learnt about British Sign Language, Phonetic Alphabet and Emoji's as part of a badge syllabus. Chinese New Year was in February and we made Lucky Fish posters using Chinese characters. For Valentine's Day Marzipan and icing hearts. As a half term treat we held a film night joined by three new Brownies, in our onesies with popcorn and juice. In March we made Pancakes, had a visit from a Vet to learn about animal care and made Easter cards and cloth square Rabbits, with a cream egg. Also an Easter egg hunt and fun in the orchard. April was Easter holidays but we held a Saturday Charity Tea for funds with Brownies making cakes as part of the Baking badge. Also planted the seeds given by Selling Parish Council for the Queen's Jubilee village event and took part in the Faversham Division St Georges day parade. In May, as part of earlier badge work, we welcomed Jamie, a 'Hearing Dog for Deaf people' with Maggie his owner to hear about his work everyone enjoyed it and were happy to receive a thank you from Jamie for the small donation given to the charity. We made tissue flowers in Selling churchyard on a warm evening for the church 'Celebration of Flowers' and were able to try out Bell ringing with everyone chiming a bell. At the end of the evening we held an outdoors enrolment at the church. After half term we held a Red, White & Blue Jubilee party in June and started working on part of another badge learning about Jobs adults do, or did, and what Brownies might like to do. All badges have three parts with some to be completed at home. We learnt about local Birds and played games on the subject. The pack were grateful to be allowed to run a stall at our village fete making £140 for our funds. We ended the month with a cook out making Bacon rolls and 'S'mores'. Roasted Marshmallows squashed between 2 chocolate digestive biscuits. Great fun but we did lose some marshmallows into the fire! We raised some more funds at Sheldwich fete in July on a very hot day. The term ended with a treat to a local Stud Farm seeing the horses and Shetland pony foals, just a few weeks old. We had ice creams and juice followed by another enrolment ceremony.

We started a week later than planned in September due to the mourning of the Queen. Our first evening was held at Grove Ferry Paddle boarding instead of the planned Kayaking due to ages. Great fun was had by all with some getting wetter than others! Six Brownies and leaders spent the night joining Canterbury division at Mystole Guiding campsite on an outdoor sleepover, in cardboard boxes, for Porchlight charity. We raised £150 for the fund. In October we made flower arrangements for the Harvest lunch, took part in Faversham Carnival gaining 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Pedestrian class. Before half term we handmade kit Poppies for family donations. In November we made Bird feeders with pine cones, lard and fruits plus Lavender bags for Christmas gifts thanks to local resident's donations of Lavender. We also took part in the village Remembrance service. St Andrews day was celebrated with Scottish dancing. In December before ending for Christmas we went to Faversham Police museum, carols under the Market Christmas tree, chips, an enrolment and Christmas gifts for all.

What will we achieve on 2023?

Sue Smart

Assistant Brownie Guider

## **The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Selling**

### **Part of Shepherds Lees Benefice**

#### **Notes for the Selling Parish Annual Meeting - 2023**

It is good to note that things are now much more normal, I say more rather than completely normal as it is clear that some elements from the period of the pandemic continue to affect life. The infection is still with us and remains a concern for those who are particularly vulnerable. There are still occasions when all our plans need to be modified to cater for news of a positive test. Like many churches across the country, we discovered online worship and the computer program 'Zoom'. We might have assumed that this would only be of use to us for a limited period, but time has proved otherwise as we continue to offer regular opportunities to worship online each month with a small number of regular users, it caters for others who are unable to attend in person on a particular occasion.

The 'Gem' youth trailer continued to visit the village in term time fortnightly through until July, and again through part of the autumn term. Unfortunately, changes in the circumstances of those who run the trailer have meant that it has not visited us since Christmas. We are very grateful for the work of the trailer, as it has proved popular with children and parents, enabling us to raise the profile of the church through an informal and approachable forum.

In March, we were delighted that a choir from the school were able to sing during the service for Mothering Sunday. It is always a delight to hear the children sing and we are grateful to the Head Teacher, parents and school staff who made this possible.

On Palm Sunday we held the first 'Afternoon Church'. This is an informal gathering for worship particularly designed to cater for families with younger children. Our theme on this occasion was Jesus riding into Jerusalem and as well as craft activities, songs and story all were delighted by Bonnie the Shetland Pony who led us all in procession at the end (standing in for the donkey).

In 2021, to accommodate concerns over the Covid infection, we held the whole service on Remembrance Sunday in the churchyard at the War Memorial. As getting together in this way proved popular with many who attended, we decided to do something similar in 2022. As the service was longer having been abbreviated of necessity in 2021 this has raised some concerns, which will be part of our review prior to arranging the service for this November. Following the highly atmospheric Carol Service in the churchyard in 2021, as the weather

proved to be even more challenging, we were pleased that the decision had been taken to hold the Carol Service in church for 2022.

As normal in person services resumed from autumn 2021, our aim was to be as accommodating as possible. After reviewing this across the four churches in our benefice, from October last year, the timing for the main Sunday service was moved to 9.30am (as before the pandemic) with a second service on the first Sunday in St Mary's at 11am.

We are currently looking forward to the upcoming festivities surrounding the Coronation of HM Charles III. We are coming together from all three parishes in our benefice to celebrate the occasion on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 11am. The service will be in St James Church in Sheldwich and will be followed, rather than the usual coffee and biscuits, by 'fizz and cakes' to toast His Majesty. All are invited.

We pray that God will continue to bless this village and its community and will foster the good work of the Parish Council.

Rev Peter Newell

Priest in Charge



## Report from Selling Gardeners Association for the Annual Parish meeting on 27 April, 2023

The Selling Gardeners Association hold meetings on the first Tuesday of the month in the village hall. Membership is £10 per year and there are currently 40 members. Visitors are always welcome and details of each meeting can be found in the Parish Magazine.

In the past year we have enjoyed talks on Wartime Secrets, Meadows, Belmont House and Rewilding. Three shows are held each year when members can exhibit vegetables, flowers and plants they have grown. Shows are well supported by members but it would be nice to see more villagers visiting.

During the summer we visit local gardens where we can admire planting on a larger scale than most of us can achieve and pick up ideas we can adapt for our own gardens

A big thank you to everyone who supports our plant sales held in May and at the Summer Show in June which raise valuable funds to enable us to continue to provide a valuable forum for likeminded people in the village and surrounding area. The association has been in existence since November 1955 and we hope it continues for years to come.

## **Selling Village Hall**

## **Report 2022**

More bookings have been made at the hall now Covid restrictions have been lifted.

There were 25 Adult / children parties. 60+ School sessions for Assemblies, Governors meetings, Class R Health checks, Sats tests, Kent test days, 150th Anniversary, whole school Christmas dinners and Disco. Plus an enjoyable Year 6 leavers play and Class R Nativity. This is expected to be far less for 2023 following a new joint School trust.

There are Monthly meetings of a Photographic group, Gardeners, Film evenings and Parish Council, from March to October we host Afternoon Tea and cake charity events. Weekly meetings are held for Brownies, Art classes and Post Office. In addition a Benefice Harvest lunch, Antiques valuation day, Plant sale and depot for this year's fete stall items. Two Businesses held three day training sessions.

Selling Parish Council is thanked for the replacement hall clock to mark Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee and continued support of the weekly Community Post Office Outreach service. Also the village play area with s106 agreement funding. Bark replenishment was carried out again this year and we were lucky to have help from Mathew and his Fork lift equipment as the company had left the bulk bags in the car park at the bottom of the hill!

The annual ROSPA report was carried out with only a couple of small items requiring attention this year. PAT testing and Health and Safety inspections took place and all items passed.

The new 'Wild Flower meadow' project looked great this year and we hope that it will have self-seeded for a continued display.

We thank Alan for voluntarily mowing the play area grass and hedge tidying, when time allows. Members of the committee are thanked very much for the hard work in and around the hall especially the installation of three useful Picnic tables which were well used during the good weather. The Village car park and play area is under the care of the hall not the school as often thought and also takes time to maintain.

Sheran and Ashley are thanked for their continued excellent care cleaning the hall.

**Thank you to all who use and respect the hall and for your continued support**

**SUE SMART**

**CHAIRMAN**