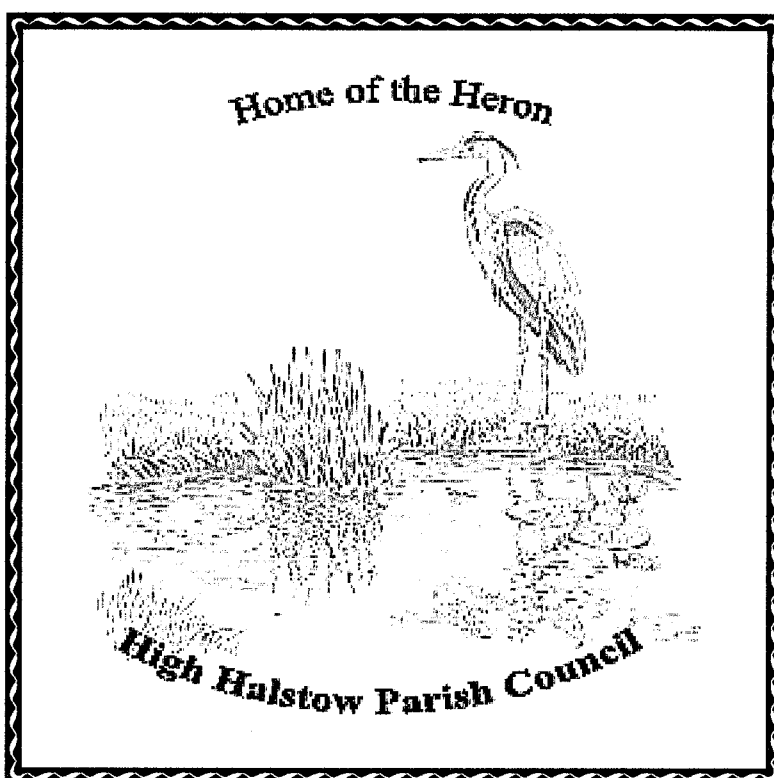


High Halstow Parish Council

Annual Report

2006



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COUNCILLORS 2005/6

David Allsop
David Duncombe
David Harris
Steve Joyce
Margaret Shuter

resigned July 2005
resigned May 2005

appointed July 2005

George Crozer
Jim Gibb
Pat Hillman
Tony Riddle
Gary Thomas

appointed September 2005

CHAIRMAN
George Crozer

CLERK
Roxana Brammer

HERON AWARDS & ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2006 with PRESENTATION ON RURAL TOURISM

**RECREATION HALL, HIGH HALSTOW
TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2006**

7.00 pm

PRESENTATION OF THE HERON AWARDS

BUFFET

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 April 2005**
- 3 To receive the Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2005**
- 4 Chairman's Annual Report**
- 5 Reports from Local Organisations**
- 6 Other business at the Chairman's discretion**
- 7 Talk on Rural Tourism**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13
APRIL 2005 AT HIGH HALSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL, HARRISON DRIVE,
HIGH HALSTOW AT 8.00 pm**

PRESENT:

Cllr G Crozer, Chairman; Cllr G Thomas, Vice-Chairman; Cllrs D Allsop, D Harris, Mrs P Hillman, S Joyce, P Paige and T Riddle; Rev S Gwilt; Mr Martin Hall, Medway Council and 39 parishioners.

Mrs Roxana Brammer, Parish Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Duncombe and from Cllrs C Buckwell and P Filmer, Medway Council.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2004

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2004 were agreed and signed as a true record.

ACCOUNTS

The Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2004 was received.

FORGE COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Chairman introduced Martin Hall of Medway Council and invited him to give his presentation on the Forge Common Management Plan.

Mr Hall gave an illustrated overview of the Plan. The next step was for the Friends of Forge Common to consider the Plan and to undertake a consultation exercise before it was adopted and put into practice.

A question was asked about the possibility of a ditch. Mr Hall said he was in favour of one but there was a question of responsibility should adjacent properties be affected by flooding and also there were Health and Safety implications.

Concern was expressed about the Common's vulnerability to illegal occupation by travellers. The Chairman said that it was understood that it was unlikely travellers would want to occupy the land as it was quite far from town centres and there was no water source.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Hall for his presentation.

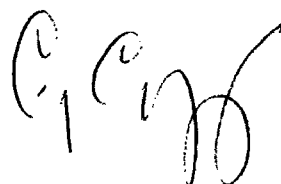
The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.15 pm

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2005

	2004/5	2003/4
RECEIPTS		
Precept	23170.00	18700.00
Bank interest	804.66	202.34
Rural Liaison Grant	2185.00	0.00
Magazine income	435.00	756.00
Street cleaning	11183.64	8200.77
Other income	8553.61	10059.65
VAT repaid	737.96	949.64
TOTAL	<u><u>47069.87</u></u>	<u><u>38868.40</u></u>
PAYMENTS		
Clerk's salary	3377.07	3054.82
Clerk's reimbursable expenses	801.62	617.99
Street cleaner	5094.75	4927.98
Handyman	265.42	329.34
Handyman expenses	50.42	8.85
Tax & NI	1738.54	1642.80
Section 137	450.00	565.00
Rural Liaison Grant	0.00	2246.23
Magazine expenses	2767.40	4408.35
Administration	2871.83	2721.37
Recreation Ground/Forge Common	1532.58	179.00
Street Cleaning expenses	51.00	25.50
Other expenses	5139.32	3237.43
Heron Centre	4400.33	13786.12
VAT paid	1064.99	3688.36
TOTAL	<u><u>29,605.27</u></u>	<u><u>41,439.14</u></u>
 Excess income over expenditure	 17464.60	 -2570.74
BANK BALANCES		
NatWest Current Account	7363	-478
NatWest Reserve Account	18417	8793
Medway Council Deposit	16000	16000
TOTAL CASH ASSETS	<u><u>41780</u></u>	<u><u>24315</u></u>
FIXED ASSETS	<u><u>nil</u></u>	<u><u>nil</u></u>

Approved by the Council on 11 May 2005

George Crozer
Chairman



Roxana Brammer
Responsible Financial Officer

REPORTS 2005/6

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It does not seem possible that I am again writing my annual report. How time flies!! Perhaps it's because I am out to work more now due to personal circumstances. This being the case I have had less quality time to spend on community matters than I would have liked, especially during the day.

This year it was with a little trepidation that I sat down to write this report as I had the feeling that I would not have much to comment on and that it would appear rather negative. However having sat down and collected my thoughts this is not the case. There has been plenty happening in the village worthy of celebration.

Firstly on behalf of the whole village may I extend a warm welcome to all new residents this year, the folks in Britannia Road now realise that they have not only moved into a great village but have bought ringside seats to our Christmas spectacular!!

Dramarama has continued to entertain us with three sell out shows this year, their normal review and Panto as well as an adaptation of the book of Esther by Mrs Hazel Beringer.

Work on the Forge Common Management plan is forging ahead with the continued cutting and improvement to the grass, planting of trees and erection of a new kissing gate.

The Wildlife and Countryside Fair with its record attendance along with the involvement in all things conservation has attracted increased interest this year and is beginning to establish the North Kent Marshes and High Halstow as a quality destination worth visiting.

We have also seen the opening of the new A228, which I pray will reduce the accidents on this treacherous stretch of road. However its wide open spaces have sadly meant a dramatic increase in the amount of litter on its verges. It has also resulted in increase of traffic along Dux Court both as an entrance and exit to the village. The road has been highlighted in many places for much needed repair and the increase in use means that the project day volunteers need to visit Dux Court every month to try to keep the road as tidy as possible.

The Surgery in the Village Hall has now had a face lift and has guaranteed the continued presence of Hoo Medical Practice in the village, which is very welcome.

Many of you will now be aware that John and Marty in the Post Office intend to take their retirement and so have put the Post Office up for

sale. I thank them for all their hard work and for being such an essential part of our community. We are keen as a Parish Council to promote the retention of a Post Office and shop as it is at the heart of village life and would be sadly missed.

Sound Hole has gone from strength to strength this year, having been awarded several grants to purchase much needed equipment. The various bodies have seen the necessity of providing some sort of haven for our youth and an outlet for their musical talent. Sound Hole in fact has probably outgrown the Village Hall and could do with the Heron Centre now!! The events are continually sold out weeks in advance, it's a cool place to be and thanks must go to the army of helpers who continue to give their time and enthusiasm freely.

Sound Hole is not the only music success story for High Halstow. Matthew Crane, the young singing phenonmenon has won many singing competitions including 'Star for Medway'. Well done Matthew!!

Special mention must be made of our village Cricket Club who have gained promotion this year due mainly to the efforts of its second eleven and perhaps equally important there has been an exponential increase in the numbers of junior players. Much needed improvements will have to be made to the grounds to secure their new found status. Parish Council are pleased to be supporting their efforts.

I would have liked to announce that the HUGH fund had reached £100,000 this year; instead I have to report £93,500 although I guess a £10,000 increase on last year is no mean feat. "Where are we then" I hear you ask! Committed as ever but with the realisation that co-ordinating the effort to submit effective grant applications is a job for an expert. Efforts must be concentrated on getting the right person for the job. If you are that expert and you will know you are because you will have done it before. We need you!!

To those organisation and individuals I have not mentioned who contribute unfailingly to this community. May I simply say thank you!

Lastly may I congratulate all those who have been nominated for a 'Heron Award' Please continue to strive to make this village a nice place to live and work, promote good community and inspire others to follow in your foot steps?

George Crozer

MEDWAY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

From Councillor Chris Buckwell:

I have continued to handle a variety of ward-related issues over the last year, and on village matters, I am grateful, as ever, to the Parish Council and its Clerk, for keeping me informed of current activities and concerns.

On Medway Council I have been a Chairman of the new Licensing Panel, replacing the former role exercised by Medway Magistrates. We have heard evidence related to pub and club licence applications from across the borough. Where there have been solid objection reasons, applicants have not always succeeded in gaining very late opening hours. However, we have not had controversial cases in this ward. Indeed—and sensibly—we are not permitted to sit on cases from our own wards.

This year saw the conclusion of the A228 improvements, to the very border of your parish. If only we had the funds to improve the whole length of the road, from Chattenden to Grain!

Defending our substantial green spaces is close to the hearts of the three of us who represent this large, rural ward. We scrutinise applications and are always ready to speak at meetings of the planning committee.

I have chaired the Rural Liaison Committee again. We started to take the Committee out to the parishes for every other meeting and I am grateful to High Halstow PC for hosting one such meeting. We continue to have an annual open meeting, when all parish councillors attend. The Committee is a vital link between the elected first tier of Medway government—the 11 parish councils—and the Unitary authority. I shall conclude my chairmanship this municipal year.

I look forward to representing the parish during the last year of the current term for Medway Council, 2006/7. For a variety of reasons, I have not put myself forward to my party as a candidate for next year's elections.

From Councillors Janice Bamber and Phil Filmer:

As Councillors of Medway Council we are Members of the Cabinet. Janice Bamber has the portfolio for Customer First and Corporate Services; Phil Filmer has the portfolio for Front Line Task Force. As well as the work

undertaken for Peninsula Ward residents Cabinet Members also have to take a strategic view and make decisions that affect the residents in the whole of Medway.

You may be aware that because of the Children's Act Medway Council has had to undertake a major reorganisation. Previously Education and Children's Social Services were two distinct departments. Now, everything that affects children must come under one enormous department.

Janice is also a Member of Hoo Parish Council and a Governor at Hoo Primary School. She serves on the Admiralty Court, Rural Liaison Committee, the National Association of Councillors, Medway Merit Awards Panel, Hands Volunteer Bureau Board and Grain Foreshore and Smithfield Marsh Management Committee.

Her present portfolio deals with the internal administration of the Council and covers Chief Executives Department, IT, Personnel, Building Maintenance, Performance Review, Government targets, Telecommunications, Members Services, Staff Training etc. The outward facing parts of the portfolio are elections, the Local Strategic Partnership and Customer First (previously First Point of Contact). Customer First deals with residents contact with the Council whether by telephone, email, face-to-face or correspondence. In 2005 the new Contact Centre opened. During January 06 the centre received over 47,000 telephone calls. The first Contact Point in Rainham also opened. Residents can go to a Contact Point office to enquire about any Council service and make payments. There will be a Contact Point in each of the five towns and two of these, Rainham and Strood, will also be a police office. Contact Points will shortly be opening in Gillingham and Rochester. In the rural area the Council has installed kiosks for residents to contact the Council and other services.

Phil is Chairman of Transport for Medway, Chairman of Merit, and Chairman of the Waste Management Partnering Board. He also sits on the Kent Transport Board, Kent and Medway Road Safety Forum, Local Development Framework Advisory Group, Medway Transport Partnership and the National Parking Adjudication Panel. His portfolio covers highways, road safety, parking, refuse collection and disposal,

recycling, street cleansing as well as public and school transport. He has just overseen the introduction of the popular Blue Bag Scheme and the strategic waste review and is working to increase recycling to 40%.

Much painful effort was spent on working out next years budget, closing the £8 million gap left by the difference between the cost of providing services and the very poor Government settlement received by Medway. As Medway starts from a low base, our Council Tax is £140 below other Councils; we get less return on the percentage of Council Tax charged.

Each Councillor gets £3000 to spend in their Ward. This year Janice spent hers installing seats at the bus stop near retirement flats at the request of the residents, paying part of the cost of the Community Policeman and installing a kickwall in Kingshill Recreation Ground, Fourwents Road, Hoo.

Phil's Ward Improvement Fund went towards the cost of the Community Policeman, CCTV in Hoo village and the Doctor's surgery in Stoke.

Work is ongoing in several areas. Central Government have instigated a review of Local Strategic Partnerships and wants to change the way they work and to introduce Local Area Agreements. We are consulting with all of our partners on the changes.

Medway Council are negotiating their second Public Service agreement with Government. Having agreed the targets with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister we now have to agree the detail with the various departments. This is proving somewhat problematic and the deadline is the end of March.

For the future the Tour de France cycle race, the alterations to the roads and traffic flow in Chatham, regeneration of the waterside sites and the Olympics will keep us all busy.

Major Government inspections take place this spring. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment – The Harder Test (CPA) and the Joint Area Review (JAR) will examine every aspect of the Councils work. We want to improve on last year's assessment, which was a Good Council Improving Well. We want to become an Excellent Council. The Harder Test means exactly that and this year will concentrate on what the Council with its partners have achieved in various areas. The result will not be known until December.

REPORTS from VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

FRIENDS OF FORGE COMMON

2005 has seen some progress with our plans to improve Forge Common. We are attempting where possible to follow the guidelines detailed in the Management Plan publicised at last year's meeting.

Last year we did manage to keep on top of the grass cutting but the problem of the removal of the cut grass still exists. We cannot find anyone who can make use of it and the cost of transport and disposal is prohibitive.

The selective spraying we had carried out last year appears to have worked at preventing the brambles taking over from the grass. We will repeat this again this year if it is deemed necessary.

Other than managing the grass, a group of volunteers installed a kissing gate on the North East side along the route of the Saxon Shore Way, another gate was repaired on the same day. We still have to install one more kissing gate in the South Eastern corner, next to the houses.

Towards the end of 2005 saw the planting of 12 young trees on the Western side of the common.

This year we hope to continue the work needed to meet our objectives, cutting the grass at differing heights in designated areas, to provide the required habitats for birds and insects whilst retaining large areas for walking and enjoying the common.

It is anticipated that a 'dog bin' will be installed shortly at the entrance to the common to allow the responsible people who clear up after their pets, to dispose of the offending 'scooped poop'.

The common is a lovely place to walk and play, with your dogs and with your children. By clearing up any mess created will make it a better place for all to enjoy.

Steve Joyce

HIGH HALSTOW MOTHER & TODDLER GROUP

It has been another very busy year for the Mother & Toddler group. Since September we have welcomed many new mums and their lovely babies.

The children were extremely lucky to have a visit from Father Christmas at our Christmas party which they all thoroughly enjoyed. At the beginning of March we were given a brand new shed at the back of the Memorial Hall to store all our toys in.

We always welcome new mums (and new dads!) and their babies, it's a great place to meet up, have a coffee and a chat to other mums in the same situation, the children love the socialising as well.

Just to remind everyone the toddler group meets every Thursday morning 0930-1130 (term times only).

Clare Harris

RELIEF IN NEED

The Charity is an independent one registered with and regulated by the Charity Commissioners. Under the original articles of the Charity and which are still relevant the Vicar of St. Margaret's Church and the two churchwardens automatically become Trustees of the Charity together with other nominated persons living in the village. The Trustees have held regular meetings throughout the past year in order to consider any requests received for help. All such requests and any help given is treated in strict confidence.

Mrs C Malcolm, a churchwarden has completed her time as a churchwarden and will no longer be a Trustee of the Charity. Very many thanks to her for her help. The current Trustees are :-

Chairman: Rev S Gwilt; Mrs M King; Mrs M Bufford; Mrs L Munday; Mr J Myatt; Mrs D West. The Clerk to the Charity is Mrs S Ahmad.

Any person who requires help can approach the Charity either directly by speaking or by writing to a Trustee. These requests can be made at any time throughout the year.

Doreen West

HIGH HALSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

The past 12 months has seen many developments within the school and these include: Grounds development to incorporate a pupil's garden, an outside classroom and a mural depicting the seasons; having a cycle shelter available to support pupils who wish to

cycle to school after they gain the Cycling Proficiency Award; the opening of an Art Studio to raise the profile of all the arts; funding to support extended school activities; interactive whiteboards in 2 communal teaching areas; the re-formation of the PTA; successful bid to the DfES to support collaborative networking for staff in schools in Stoke, Cliffe Woods, Cliffe and us; A successful bid to become part of an Early Year's Partnership Project that has allowed developments in the partnership with the Pre School. This has included running 4 workshops for parents from Pre School in the school in conjunction with the Pre School.

Curriculum development has centred around enriching the curriculum and to work in a more cross curricular way to motivate and inspire pupils. The school has invited theatre groups, RSPB and a writer to work alongside pupils and we have been more obvious in the village taking as many opportunities as possible to link the curriculum as possible. For example our Year 4 class (Cricket) visited the church to get ideas to describe the setting it is in and the Year 1 class (Dragonflies) visited the church as an introduction to Christianity. The school sees this enrichment as so important that visits from professional groups such as artists and writers are not charged to parents.

The School Council continues to support local and national charities as part of their role in school. This year we collected for RNIB, Multiple Sclerosis, the National Epilepsy Association and Demelza House. The pupils have worn red and yellow; non school uniform; brought a bear to show we care and doodled for a day in order to support the charities.

The Literacy Week was, as always, well received and a Book Fair in the school took £700 and gave the school over £400 in commission in books. As we all love to dress up a day was spent as our favourite book character. There was Mary Poppins, Hiawatha and Pooh Bear in our school that day as well as Harry Potter and Dorothy.

Another year has raced on and I look forward to sharing our news again this time next year.

Pat Sanford, Head Teacher

HIGH HALSTOW WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We continue to be a well supported and busy Institute. Our activities this year have

included Ten Pin Bowling, Craft classes, Belly dancing, Theatre visits, Tai Chi, Guided Walks, Weekends away at home and abroad, a visit to the Houses of Parliament, Folkestone Races and much, much more. Speakers have covered a wide variety of subjects from a fantastic talk on the work of St Dunstan's, the charity for blind ex-service men and women, to a Yeoman of the Tower of London. We held a Spring Fair, had a coffee morning in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis, made cakes for the RSPB open day, ran a stall at the Winter Wonderland. We have also had quiz evenings and entered our District Darts competition where we are about to play in the semi-final.

We meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30 in the Memorial Hall and would be pleased to welcome any visitors and of course new members. Just turn up on the night.

Marion Cooper, Honorary Secretary

MEMORIAL HALL

The Memorial Hall was built by the men of the village who returned from WW1 and was opened in February 1920, since then it has been in constant use.

It is ideal for Club meetings, Committee meetings, Children's parties and a variety of other events. Details on hiring the hall call Pat Hillman on 251064; the hall is also wheelchair friendly.

Over the past few years it has undergone major improvements, it is very warm in winter with very efficient heaters, and fans to keep cool in summer, the improvements are ongoing, we are always looking to see where the next improvement can be, All monies raised for the hall is put into the next project.

Pat Hillman, Trustee

GARDEN CLUB

The club continues to flourish, at our Annual Show last August, we had the largest number of exhibits ever, 434, and this year at our Spring show, again exhibits were up on previous years, although most of our members are from High Halstow, we do accept members from anywhere on the peninsula.

We have Monthly meetings, on the second Tuesday of each month from 8 – 10pm, and each month we have a specialist speaker on a variety of garden subjects. Our Annual Dinner

in December is always very well attended and for many, it sets the atmosphere for Christmas.

We have two outings each year, this year they are to Borde Hill on 22 April and the second outing is to Hyde Hall on 29 July, members are given details of these nearer the time.

Pat Hillman

FRIENDLY CLUB

The Friendly Club has celebrated its 6th birthday, we had special tea, and cake, after which there was entertainment, and each member received a Birthday gift. We are pleased to say that our numbers are still increasing. We invite anyone over 40 years of age, but strictly no children.

We meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 2 – 4 when members can play cards, dominoes, draughts, scrabble, or do a jigsaw, etc. During the second half of the afternoon we have a variety of activities from entertainment, to a talk from Age Concern, a flower demonstration that tells a story, belly dancing, Bring & Buy. We even arrange with the Nurse to come and give members their flu jabs on our club day.

We went to a pantomime this January, and we are going on holiday to Tenby in Wales in September, we try to arrange 2 outings each year.

Each member receives a Birthday card, and a Christmas card with the next year's programme.

Pat Hillman

HIGH HALSTOW CRICKET CLUB

HHCC had an indifferent year in 2004-2005, from a cricket club point of view the club has shown signs that it is starting to thrive.

In 2 years HHCC has gone from running 3 teams, 2 on a Saturday and 1 on a Sunday, to running six teams; 2 on a Saturday, 2 men's teams on a Sunday and 2 colts teams on a Sunday. In 2006 this will increase again to 3 men's teams on a Saturday and 3 colts teams.

On the pitch there was a mixture of success, the 1st XI have a poor season only managing to finish mid table when such high prospects were expected. The team was inconsistent on the pitch and very inconsistent in the line up each week.

However the 2nd XI was a different story, congratulations to them for a fantastic season. If it wasn't for Sevenoaks scrambling to maximum points on the last day of the season we would have been crowned champions.

Darren Peake took over as Captain of the 2nd XI this season, Darren managed to score a total of 350 league runs this year and was only beaten by Tony Wallace in the 2nd XI run scorers, who managed 380 runs and finished in the top five run scorers for the league

The 2nd XI had two exceptional bowlers in Ryan Weaver and Stuart Crow both bowlers had a tremendous season with Stuart bagging 35 wickets and Ryan 25. Stuart took three five-wicket hauls which was the most in the league.

There was also steady support from old timer Nigel Copleston who produced some good bowling performances when it really counted.

The Major disappointment for the 2nd XI was the news that they would not be promoted into the Kent League as they felt HHCC ground was not up to the acceptable standard for the Kent League.

Colts Section

Under 15's

High Halstow started up an under 15's colts team this year and were entered into the Medway News League. Even the greatest optimist knew we would be up against it entering into an under 15's league that was well established with only two experienced cricketers. Peter Bucknell (captain) and Jamie Trigg they led from the front, bowling and batting well in a number of fixtures. This was topped-off by Peter and Jamie scoring there maiden fifties for the club.

The entire team showed vast improvement from game to game. Andrew Dowsett and James Simpson showed promising signs with the ball and Luke Marchant with the bat and ball. The improvement the team made was magnificent. They really had gelled as a team by the end of the season and all players were longing for the season to continue. The team as a whole began to understand and accept the importance of teamwork, and at times looked as if they could have passed on their knowledge to some of the men.

Under 13's

Not only did we have a Under 15's team to boast about, but we also managed to produce

an under 13's team (against most people's expectations). Very few people thought we would be able to field two colts teams, but fortunately we were able to prove them wrong.

This really was the highlight of the summer, after the first two weeks when we struggled to field two teams; suddenly the colts really had strength in depth.

However, this meant a number of younger players missed out on playing due to an influx of under 13's joining the club. The side did well and ensured they did not end up bottom of the league (which is often expected of teams in their first season).

With promising performances from Captain Ashley Trigg, as well as Jamie Taylor, Jake Barrett and Ryan Stickins (who will be playing for the under 15's next year), the colts teams look to have a successful future.

2006 will see the increase of the club again and we have high hopes that more and more local children and adults will become involved in the cricket club. We have managed to raise a reasonable sum of money through fund raising and sponsorship and hope to really improve our facilities in 2006, I would just like to say a thank you to the parish council in the support they have given us.

Carl Dockwray, Chairman

HIGH HALSTOW YOUTH CLUB

The Youth Club is happy to report that it has had another very successful year.

There have been some significant changes over the last 12 months as the Club has developed and continued to improve its facilities and resources. During the last year we have bought a new pool table, basketball nets, and some very sturdy "arcade style" Dance Mats, all of which are proving very popular. We now have a Roster for the adult helpers so that we can ensure that we have sufficient cover to supervise the young people (we regularly get between 40 and 50 of them attending each week). We aim to have at least 7 adults in attendance each week plus our two young helpers who run the Tuck Shop.

For the first time ever the Club had to close its "doors" to new members and visitors in October 2005. This was done for the children's safety, to ensure that the Club did not become overcrowded. Membership reached the limit of 60 young people and a Waiting List system has been in operation ever since (see below).

Other new developments include the formation of a Steering Group and the introduction of a Child Protection Policy (as recommended by Kent Youth, the body that the Youth Club is affiliated to). We also have formed a Members' Committee so that the young people themselves can have a say in how the Club is run.

Finally, here is a message for the young people who read this report. If you think you might want to join the Youth Club ask your parents to let me know. You need to be at least 9 years old to join, but you can add your name to the waiting list while you are still 8. Your parents can contact me by telephone 01634 252604, or at 2 Willowbank Drive, or by email chris.peek@lineone.net. I will need your name, address, telephone number and date of birth. I will then contact your parents when there is a place for you.

Mrs Chris Peek, Membership Secretary

SOUND HOLE

Background

The Sound Hole has now been running for over 2 years. Each Sound Hole event takes place in High Halstow Village Hall, from 7pm until around 10.45pm. It is a forum for young, unsigned, bands to play in front of their peers. On Sound Hole evening, 7 bands perform and each band has around 30 minutes on stage. There are over 12 adult helpers involved with the event and it continues to attract large crowds and new bands. There are over 40 bands on the register.

Sound Hole attracts between 200 to 300 youths in one session. The bands vary and so does the types of music played. At each and every Sound Hole there has been no behavioural problems inside the building. All audiences have enjoyed themselves and all bands have enjoyed themselves too.

Sound Hole has a place on the High Halstow website. Photographs and reviews are often on the website within 2-3 days of the event itself. There is also some video footage available. During the Sound Hole evening, the bands are filmed and a large screen projector portrays their performance, thus adding to the 'professional' feel of the evening. DVDs of individual bands are also available.

Medway Youth help out at the event now. Kent Youth continue to support us, and recently organised a cheque for £400 from the

Variety Club of Great Britain. Anyone who visits the Sound Hole always has positive things to say about the event.

Sound Hole featured at the 2005 Underpass event in Chatham High Street, with 6 bands playing on stage in an open air forum. This was attended by over 800 people during the day. The day was very successful, with no problems and a lot of happy people in the audience.

It is the hope of the Sound Hole that a large number of Youth in the bands achieve a positive and enriching experience that will help give them confidence for the future. Who knows, Sound Hole may also help some future band on the road to success! It is also the Sound Hole's objective to provide large audiences of mainly youths, with a good value for money evening (tickets only £1 each!- and the bands play for free).

The Future of Sound Hole

Sound Hole has become very successful without meaning to be. Youth have flocked to the events in an unexpected and surprising fashion. There is no plan to change the format, as the current one is clearly a winning formula. Equipment is constantly being reviewed and George Crozer recently attended a Sound Engineering course.

There are some further plans on the periphery of Sound Hole. One idea is to organise visits to London music scenes for band members, to give them a taste of what is happening in the 'higher leagues'. A further idea is to hold a 'taster session' in the afternoon of the Sound Hole, to allow would-be bands to practice and gain some experience prior to the main event- this is again somewhat the original aim of Sound Hole and it is good that it has remembered its roots and still looks to encourage less confident individuals who have untapped potential.

A sincere word of thanks is necessary to George Crozer, the founder and originator of the Sound Hole. Without his vision, drive and enthusiasm, this project would never have got off the ground.

Mark Skudder