



High Halstow TIMES



Home of the Heron
The Newsletter for High Halstow

May 2020



HELP THE NHS
Save Lives
STAY AT HOME

NEED HELP SHOPPING ?

CALL ROAD REPS

01634 250509.

MARILYN

01634 250286.

GEORGE

TO ARRANGE HELP NOW

HIGH HALSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

HH Village Websites

Please visit the Parish Council website for everything about our village. You can see the minutes of your Parish Council or look up local groups in the village, past copies of the High Halstow Times, and pictures of recent events.
www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

High Halstow Parish Council Monthly Surgeries

Owing to the current situation, we apologise for the fact that the monthly Parish Council Surgeries will not take place at Kings Kitchen until further notice. You can of course contact any of your parish councillors if you have an urgent problem. Their telephone numbers are contained in the High Halstow Times.

Cllrs Chris Watson and Gary Jerreat

Village Hall

Like everything else we are closed during this time. The exception is the Doctors Surgery and it will be open as follows:

For patients to drop off and collect their medication.

Mondays - 2pm - 3pm

Thursday - 9am - 10 am.

During the present crisis, it will remain closed on a Friday.

The dispensary at the main branch is open from 9am to 12 noon and 3pm to 6pm if patients would prefer to pick up their medication from there.

Church Services

All regular church services have had to cease with the exception of funerals, but then with very limited attendance.



Had a new Baby?
Small Grants available
from Relief in Need
The High Halstow Relief in
Need charity has small

grants available to anyone living in the village that has a new baby who is under six months old. All you need to do to qualify is live in the village and have a new born baby. To request a grant email the charity at:
office.hhrin@gmail.com

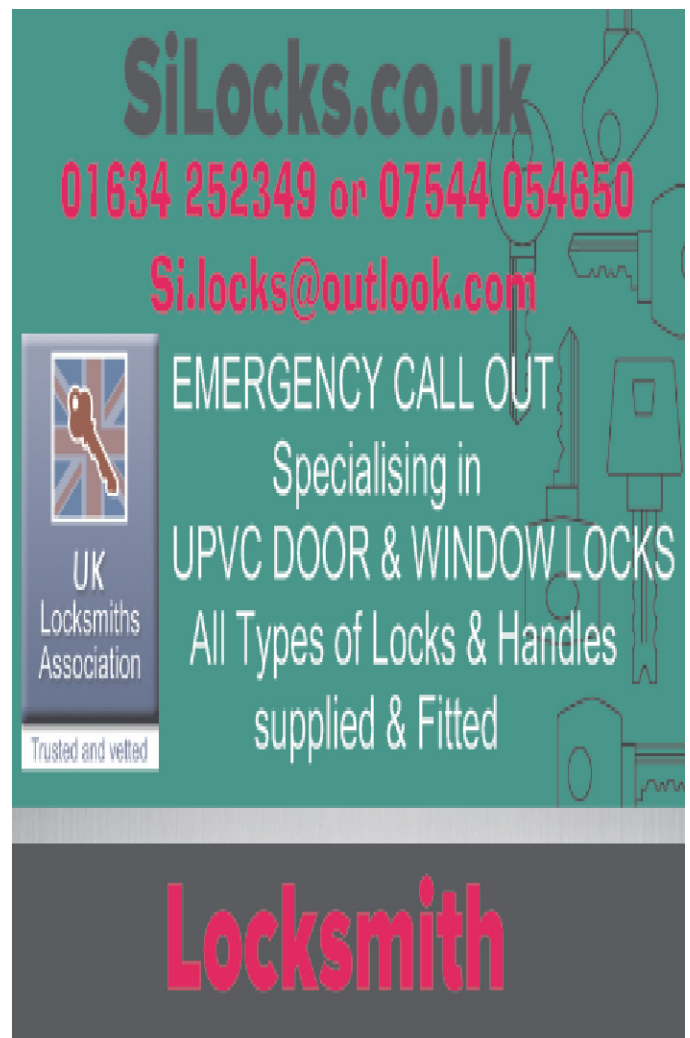
“The Coronavirus “Lock In” – Scarecrows!

It would be a great shame if we lost our annual Scarecrow Festival to this dreaded Virus. The display in front gardens, then on to the Rectory Garden Party and subsequently into the Churchyard has been a much talked about feature of High Halstow's summer. It could be again this year. One thing most households have now is captive time at home and making the scarecrows could be a great family project. Even if we do not have a Garden Party I believe we should keep the tradition alive by exhibiting in our gardens. Only time will tell how the Emergency progresses but a focus that supports pride in our village community must be a good thing. Viewing the displays will definitely count as a family exercise. This is not primarily a money making event, its focus is community, but I will be asking Bob to accept donations in the Village Shop. Posters will be printed and Facebook activated. Scarecrows can be displayed as soon as you like and stay on display until the “Lock in” is over and we might try to show them as a group, perhaps in the Churchyard before Autumn is upon us!

Tell your friends!

Mike Meredith

The Friends of St Margaret's



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ROAD REPS IN HIGH HALSTOW

IF YOU ARE SELF-ISOLATING YOUR COMMUNITY IS HERE TO HELP!

What is Road Reps?

Road Reps is a voluntary community initiative set up by High Halstow Parish Council and St. Margaret's Church in reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic.

What do Road Reps do?

In short, we are here to help those within our community that are either at risk, because they may have the virus, or are at high risk of complications, should they be exposed to the virus. Road Reps are on call to help. We are able to collect shopping, pick up urgent supplies, have a friendly telephone chat or even post mail.

How much does it cost?

Nothing, Road Reps is a free community based programme. We do not charge or pay anyone for helping.

What if I need shopping?

If you are unable to do an online shop for collection by a Road Rep or a direct home delivery, we advise the Road Rep to contact you to discuss payment for the shopping. Further advice for Road Reps will be available when they sign up. **For reasons of security, recipients are advised not to give anyone their bank details and Road Reps are advised not to accept bank details.**

What if I can't afford shopping?

Please contact Medway food bank on 01634 757057. They will advise. The Road Rep should be able to pick up supplies on your behalf. Or Contact Rev Stephen Gwilt on 01634 250637 to access the **High Halstow Food Bank**. (Donations welcome please call Rev Stephen Gwilt for advice on what is needed).

Can the Road Rep help to put my shopping away?

No, the Road Rep will not enter your home. They will deliver the shopping to your door.

I need medication collecting, can Road Reps collect?

I'm afraid not, however most GP surgeries and Pharmacies now offer a prescription delivery service, we therefore advise you to contact the surgery to make arrangements.

What is involved in becoming a Road Rep?

Quite simply volunteering to being available to help. If you are willing to be a Road Rep please contact Cllr Marilyn Stone (details below).

Will you pass my address on to others?

Your personal details will be stored to provide Road Rep support during the COVID 19 outbreak and may be shared with other groups to facilitate that support. It will not be shared with unrelated third parties.

Health & Safety...

The safety of Road Reps and self isolators is a priority. The Road rep should not enter your home for any reason. All correspondence should take place over the phone or face to face on the door step at a distance of 2 meters. If at any time you feel you are infected with COVID 19, contact your co-ordinator (see below) and they will co-ordinate your needs.

How do I get in touch?

If you would like the support of your community please contact Rev Stephen Gwilt on 01634 250637 or Cllr George Crozier on 07711432598.

If you are interested in becoming a High Halstow Road Rep please email Parish Councillor Marilyn Stone on Marilyn.Stone@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk or call 01634 250509.

This leaflet has been printed by **High Halstow Parish Council** and acknowledge that the original idea and template documents were designed by

kate@belmontecreative.co.uk

A walk through our local countryside with great views and history thrown in

The HH Hikers are for obvious reasons not taking their group walks during the COVID-19 pandemic and like others are having to take their exercise and entertainment in a non-communal manner. For many this means socially-distanced walking rather than their usual exercise with football, cricket, swimming, golf, the gym or, non-forgetting the children, in playparks. It is clear that many from the village have walked more than usual over the last few weeks yet lack the confidence to take on some routes that they think might be unsuited to them or might lead to them losing themselves.

So as promised in last month's HH Times I have put together a mapped walk from High Halstow village and, if the lockdown continues, may provide other routes in future months. If you choose to follow one of these PLEASE OBSERVE THE SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES – be the one that moves to one side of the path rather than waiting for others to do so. Also, although the route described below is generally considered leisurely, footpaths can be uneven so please wear suitable footwear.

The full route is 7.4km (4.6 miles). Some may prefer to take a shorter walk of about 4.0km (2.5 miles) by taking the drive to Cooling (5 min and permitted by the government guidelines for exercise) and take advantage of limited parking in the village by the church. This route is marked in green on the map. During the Covid lockdown Kevin also happy for you to park in the car park of the pub (www.horseshoeandcastle.com) in Cooling. The details are correct as of 25 April 2020.

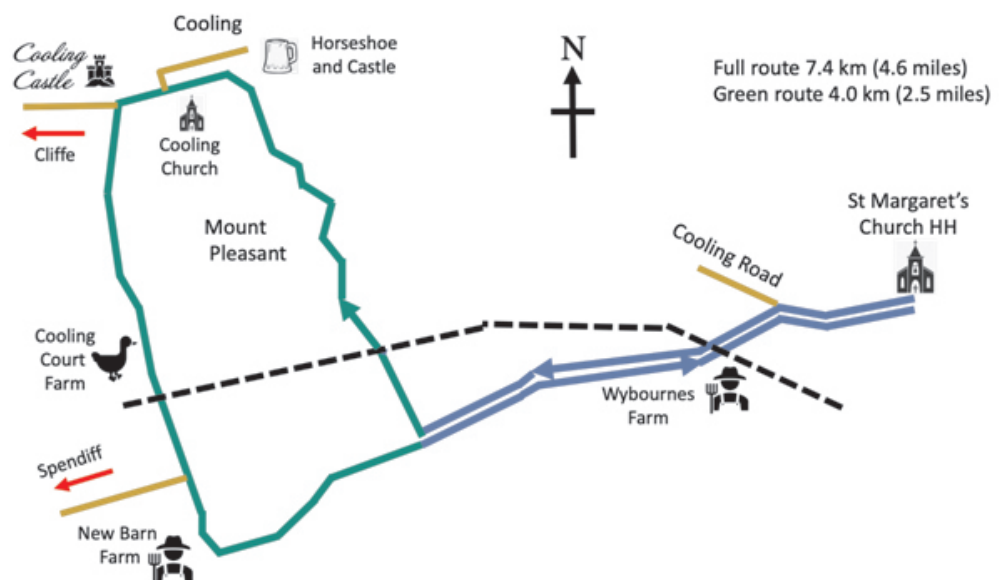
From St Margaret's Church walk down Cooling Road (staying on the left as sight lines are better) and turn left at the bottom of the road along Wybournes Lane. Cross the unmanned level crossing, walk through Wybournes Farm and continue along the farm track. This is a permissive bridleway. As the overhead wires cross the path after about 600 yards turn right along a footpath that runs beside an orchard on your left. At the end of this, you can take some steps down towards the path by the railway cutting or follow a short hairpin in the path to the right. Cross the bridge and follow the track between fields to a rise where there is a terrific view to the left over Cooling Court towards Spendiff and in front towards Higham and the River Thames in the distance. To the right is Cliffe and further round to your right you will almost certainly see at least on large container ship at Thames Gateway. Continue straight as the footpath drops down towards Cooling through a quite narrow passage and the wooded area of Mount Pleasant on your left. After wet weather this passage of about 150 yards can get heavy with mud but is generally fit for walking. This is the only place on the walk where if somebody is coming towards you it will be difficult to stay distanced from them.

As you walk on towards Cooling you pass through some of the best strawberry producing fields anywhere but at the moment they seem to be planted with seed crop. Just before you get to the houses, turn left along the footpath toward the church. In non-Covid times you might wish talk a short detour to visit the Horseshoe and Castle by walking on at this point and turning right at the road. The churchyard is worth a visit to see the 13 lozenge-shaped graves of young children that died in the 19th century and that Dickens famously talks of in *Great Expectations*; he actually reduced the number to five as he thought that 13 was too many for people to believe. The church itself has several interesting features and is also worth a visit.

Walk on and then turn left along the road before you get to 14th century Cooling Castle with its impressive gatehouse. Walk along the narrow road or along the edge of the field on your left. Pass Cooling Court Farm with its lovely pond and attractive farm house that was built in 1700 and continue under the railway bridge. Continue on towards New Barn Farm past the right-hand turn that would otherwise take you to Spendiff via Cooling Street. Your path passes to the left of a pair of white-painted semi-detached houses and the large barn that has been converted to domestic use. You quickly reach the other end of the permissive path that you started at Wybournes. Shortly after you pass to the left of the gate you will see another gate on the right with a sign stating that "any person who omits to shut and fasten this gate is liable to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings". Follow the track round to the left and up the hill where you will pass the turning you made earlier towards Cooling. Continue to follow this route back to High Halstow village.

The hill back into the village can be unwelcome at the end of the walk but hopefully you will have enjoyed one of my all-time favourites and this will make the final challenge worthwhile.

Mitchell Dowsett



Development in High Halstow

We are sure that many of you are anxious about the emerging Local Plan and the talk of massive development in Hoo and High Halstow. Medway Council has been granted a Housing Infrastructure (HIF) grant to improve infrastructure which will help bring development forward and they expect to submit a final draft plan in the summer of 2020. Work for this has **not** stopped because of the Coronavirus.

The Parish Council have strong concerns about the current Local Plan on the grounds that the number of new homes proposed – 800 – would double the size of the village, far more than needed to sustain the community.

The Parish Council also support Councillor Ron Sands' Bid to register the Peninsula as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which will have certain restrictions to development:

“Recognition is growing that the estuary is a place worth investing in, but there is a perception that it is an empty, meaningless wasteland in need of development. Nothing could be further from the truth; this is a rich, varied and historic landscape. It's just waiting to be appreciated.”

“The Way to the Sea – The forgotten histories of the Thames Estuary” by Caroline Crampton. Published 2019 .

In response, to mitigate the Parish Council decided to introduce a Neighbourhood Plan so that if the Local Plan was adopted in its present form, we the community of High Halstow, would have a say in the way that development was delivered. The Neighbourhood Plan gives us the opportunity to influence many aspects of development. This you will see evident from the consultations and surveys we have and are undertaking.

Further to this we are seeing developers bring forward pre-empted applications for Planning Permission before any new Plan is in place. A meeting with Medway Council planned for the 17 March was cancelled because of the COVID 19 virus. Please go to www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk and view the Neighbourhood Plan tab to see the questions we have sent to the Medway Planning Office.

Agents for developers are seeking to develop up to 790 homes on the land between Britannia Road and Christmas Lane and have asked Medway Council for a Scoping Opinion to establish the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment required to support their application. This is a process they have to go through before bringing forward an application for Planning Permission.

A Scoping Opinion is what is required prior to development to assess the Environment Impacts. For example, the Council may want to see an ecological study into the effect on the rich wildlife which we enjoy in or such matters as air quality, noise, or landscape at Northwood Hill.

Medway council will **not** know exactly what special features of natural cultural or historic heritage High Halstow has and holds dear, so we must therefore make sure that we ask in strong terms to be involved in the Scoping Opinion.

We have already identified below many of our assets and aspects of life that we would like surveyed. Do you have any further suggestions or experience or specific knowledge we can use? If so, please contact Ray.Collins@HighHalstow-pc.gov.uk.

You may be aware that Medway Council is currently consulting on a document “Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula”. We urge you to go to Medway Council's website, search for “Hoo Peninsula Consultation”, and respond with your comments.

Assets requiring Survey

Wildlife * Bats * Birds * Reptiles * SACS * SSSI's * Archaeology heritage * Cultural heritage * Heronry
* Rookery * Nightingales * Shrill carder bees * Pipistrelle bat

Social

Air quality * Carbon emissions * Climate Change * Traffic and transport * Relationship to goods and services

Other

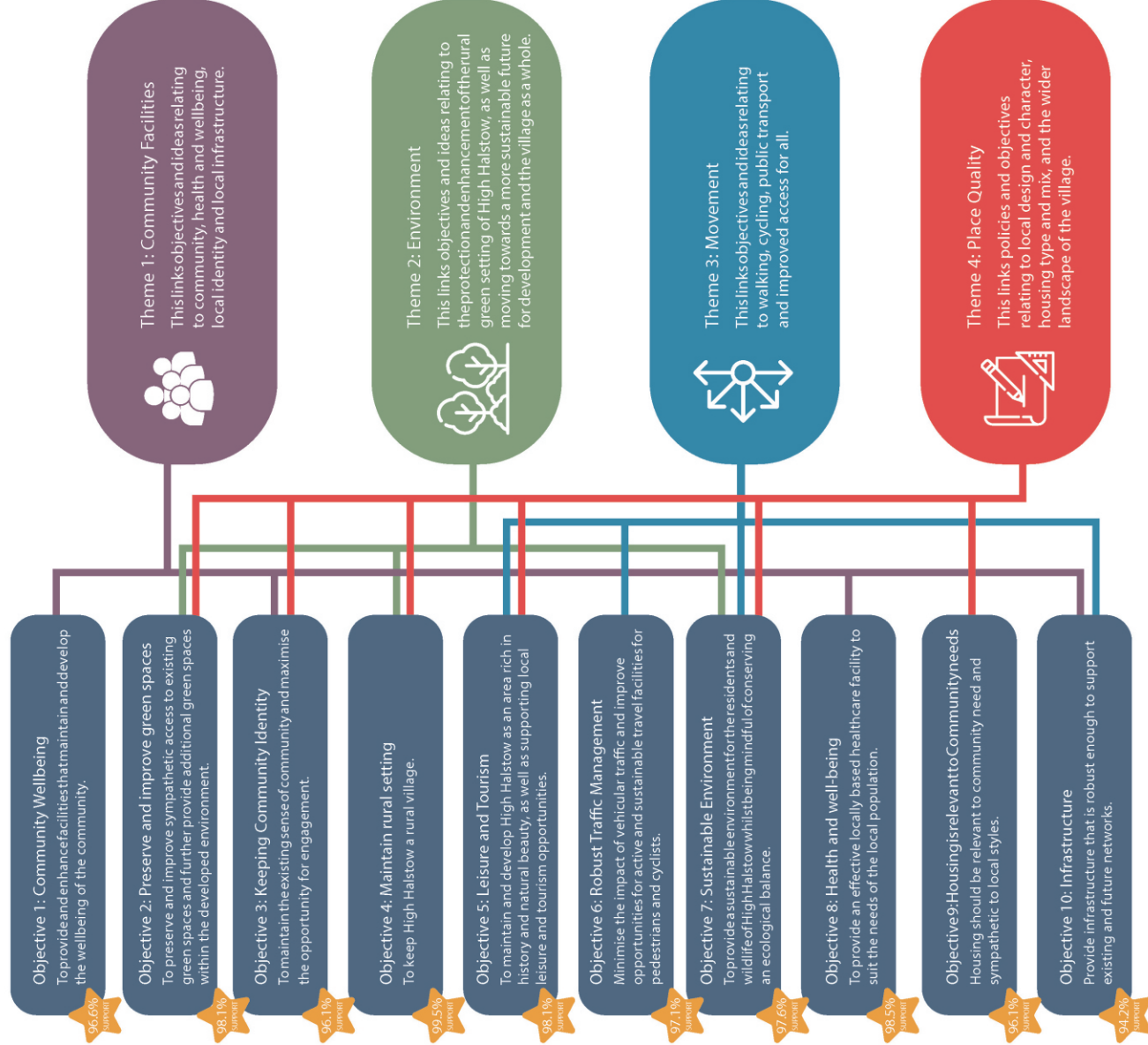
Agricultural land * Drainage and sewage * Visual and landscape

The Parish Council

OBJECTIVES

THEMES

POLICY IDEAS



High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Residents Survey Consultation on ‘Policy Ideas’

Overview and update

Last autumn we asked for your thoughts on the draft objectives for the NP. We had an excellent response and the percentage support is starred on the flowchart in the Halstow Times. Based on your comments we are now presenting our initial ideas for potential policies in the NP. These are linked back to the objectives and grouped around four key themes:

1. Community
2. Environment
3. Movement
4. Place Quality

We would now like your feedback on whether you agree or disagree with these policies. We'd also like to know whether you have any other ideas or suggestions that should be included in our **NP**.

You may be aware that, since our last consultation, Medway Council has secured Central Government funding to improve infrastructure on the Hoo Peninsula, including passenger train services on the existing freight line and a relief road for the A228. This will enable more new homes to be built.

Medway Council is preparing a new **Local Plan**. This will establish the scale of growth across the Hoo Peninsula, including High Halstow, and what infrastructure is required to support that.

What we are seeking to do through the NP is to influence the shape and form of any new development, such that it can be the very best it can be for High Halstow. We hope to influence the design and layout of any development, mix and type of uses, how we can improve community facilities and protect green spaces, and how we can make it easier for people, of all ages, to move around. The NP is a very real opportunity to steer the future of High Halstow, so that we can plan the best for our community. It is therefore really important that you are involved and let us know what you think – your thoughts will help shape the NP.

Local Green Spaces

A key message coming out of the previous consultation was the importance of protecting green spaces. Through the NP we have the ability to designate “Local Green Spaces”, which have strong protection in national planning policy. We need to be able to demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:

- it should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- it should be demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
- it should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

We have mapped what we believe to be important Local Green Spaces in High Halstow that should be protected through the NP, for example the Recreation/cricket ground, Forge Common, recreation area off Topley Drive. These are in addition to the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), RAMSAR (designated of international environment importance) and other nationally protected sites. Please let us know what other areas you think should be protected. For more information about recommended green spaces please go to www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

Please help us by completing the following

House Number/Name	Post Code
-------------------	-----------

Each house occupant is invited to comment so please indicate the number who agree/disagree/unsure in the relevant box

Based on your comments these are our initial ideas for potential policies in the NP. These are linked back to the objectives and grouped around four key themes:

Theme 1: Community Facilities

This links the objectives and ideas relating to community, health and wellbeing, local identity and local infrastructure.

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
1.	Reinforcing and strengthening the heart of the village by protecting existing facilities and delivering new and improved community facilities in this area.			
2.	A new health facility, potentially integrated within an expanded and improved village hall, as well as space for a café and meeting place.			
3.	Improved Changing Facilities for sports and recreation which might be integrated with community toilets.			
4.	Delivery of a new primary school as part of a major new development that is well integrated into the village.			
5.	Improved broadband speeds and mobile reception.			

Theme 2: Environment

This links objectives and ideas relating to the protection and enforcement of the rural green setting of High Halstow, as well as moving towards a more sustainable future for development and the village as a whole.

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
6.	Promoting a zero carbon future including delivery of electric vehicle fast charging points and new zero carbon buildings.			
7.	Designate areas as local green spaces for long term protection.			
8.	Require delivery of new green space in any new proposed development that is well designed and accessible for use by all.			
9.	Integrating flood management into any new developments.			
10.	Protecting key views, valued landscapes, natural areas and places of importance for biodiversity			

Theme 3: Movement

This links objective and ideas relating to walking, cycling, public transport and improved access for all.

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
11.	Promote walking and cycling for all and ensure regular low carbon affordable bus service.			
12.	Improve access to the countryside and Coastal Path.			
13.	Ensure any new development is fully integrated with the existing village and that all community facilities are easily accessible for all.			
14.	Ensure good walking, cycling and public transport links are provided to the expected new railway station.			
15.	Introduce traffic management measures that slow traffic speeds and make streets safer for all.			
16.	Explore how new technologies can be used to future proof development, using ideas such as car sharing and "Mobility as a Service" (MaaS).			

Theme 4: Place Quality

This links policies and objectives relating to local design and character, housing type and mix, and the wider landscape of the village.

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
17.	To prepare design policies that deliver a high quality new development that reflect the best qualities of High Halstow, in terms of the scale of development, materials used, provision, planting and arrangement of open space.			
18.	Require independent design review of major schemes to maintain the highest standards of design. High quality of design would require developers to demonstrate (i) excellent access by sustainable modes (foot, cycle, public transport) to infrastructure, jobs and services; (ii) a high standard of build quality to deliver net zero carbon development on new buildings.			
19	Require a wide range of housing types to be provided through new development including affordable homes, self-build and flexible housing types that can be adapted for changing lifestyles, and accommodation for older people.			

Comments

Comments cont'd.

Policy ideas/suggestions

Green space suggestions

You can complete this form online at
www.highhalstowneighbourhoodplan.co.uk
or please return your completed form to High Halstow Village Shop

Your Parish Councillors

George Crozer, Chair 01634 250286
e.mail: george.crozer@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk
Christine Watson, Vice Chair 01634 256529
Linda Atkinson 07825 619353
Adrian Catchpole 07788 721226
Ray Collins 01634 250105
Gary Jerreat 07880 697657
Tim Munday 07730 477017
Marilyn Stone 07944 490903

Your councillors may also be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Jenny Allen 01634 710086



Inconsiderate Parking

Please be aware of where and how you are parking around the village. It has been brought to the attention of the Parish Council that people are parking on or across pavements, which is forcing pedestrians and children to walk in the road. Also some parking is creating pinch-points which limits access for emergency vehicles or can cause collisions with oncoming vehicles.

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editor@highhalstow.org.uk

High Halstow Relief in Need

The charity has existed in High Halstow for many years and is an amalgamation of smaller charities/private trusts, the oldest of which dates from 1716 and exists to help the residents of the Parish of High Halstow who are going through a time of need or hardship. This could include not only widows and widowers but also to help people of all ages and from all walks of life. Requests can also be made by organisations or groups in the Parish.

Requests for financial assistance can be made at any time of year, in writing, email or in person to any one of the Trustees. A resident can apply on behalf of someone else in the village—but their permission must be obtained first of all. All requests are dealt with in the strictest confidence. If you are not sure about a request and think it may be rejected, do not be afraid to speak to any of the Trustees listed below about it. These funds are there for villagers who need help.

Rev. Stephen Gwilt	The Rectory	01634 250637
Stuart Bailey	27 Cooling Road	07976 760 844
June Collins	6 Marsh Crescent	01634 250105
John Myatt	Decoy Hill Road	01634 256 185
Chris Peek	2 Willowbank Drive	01634 252 604
Tamsin Stowers		
Natasha Turner	12 Marsh Crescent	
Office email	office.hhrin@gmail.com	

The Friends of St Margaret's

ANNUAL SCARECROW FESTIVAL

Don't let coronavirus stop our Scarecrow Festival.

Use your time at home making a scarecrow to exhibit in your front garden for the duration of the summer.



It will make an added interest to your daily exercise walk, especially the children.

Let's make it the best year yet.

If you would like to make a donation when visiting the village shop it would be appreciated as we are currently unable to run our planned programme of other fund raising events.

Next edition June 2020; Contributions for June should be sent
by 26th May to:

Carl Mitchell, 8 Marsh Crescent, High Halstow ME3 8TJ
or e.mail to editor@highhalstow.org.uk