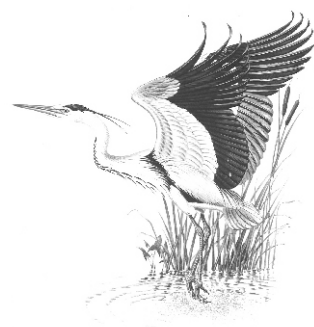




High Halstow TIMES

Home of the Heron
The Newsletter for High Halstow



May 2021

For Those who dont use Facebook please see the supportive letter from Kelly Tolhurst below .

Dear Cllr Atkinson

Thank you for your recent email regarding Medway Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and development on the Hoo Peninsula.

Since the consultation was launched on these plans earlier in the year, I have received over 100 emails from residents who are concerned about the impact that the HIF will have on the Hoo Peninsula and the surrounding area. Most of the email correspondence to me has been regarding one of four issues – the construction of the flyover across the A289 in Wainscott, the proposed railway station near Sharnal Street, the pressures on local infrastructure and how the HIF will not address them, and the conduct of the Leader of Medway Council.

I deeply appreciate the strength of feeling on this issue and am now writing to you to set out my position on the HIF as clearly and as in much detail as possible.

When Medway Council first applied to the government's HIF programme in 2017, along with my colleagues Rehman Chishti MP and Tracey Crouch MP, I signed a letter of support at the expression of interest stage of the bid. I must stress that this was at a very early stage when the Council did not have any formal plans and nor did they have a firm indication of the funding that Medway Council would apply for. I knew that the Peninsula was long overdue for funding to help improve the road infrastructure and it would be a dereliction of my responsibility as a Member of Parliament had I not supported the expression of interest as I always want the best for my constituency and for my residents to benefit from Government funding to deliver the much-needed infrastructure and investment we desperately need in Medway.

Since this time, over the course of the past 4 years, I have been raising my concerns with Medway Council regarding the progress of the Local Plan and the HIF. This has been in the form of meetings and correspondence with senior council officials. Since March 2018, I have sent a total of 15 letters to either the Leader of the Council or senior officers of the council pertaining to my ongoing concerns with the Local Plan, the HIF bid, or general development in and around my constituency.

I have not signed subsequent letters of support due to the serious concerns which I have held regarding the delivery of the project. At every opportunity, I have always made my worries clear to the Council about the project and the impact it would have on my constituency.

Despite the countless hours of meetings and reams of correspondence with the Council over the past few years, I have learned very little about the Council's intentions within the Local Plan and the HIF bid. I therefore still share grave concerns about the impact that these projects will have on my constituency and am extremely disappointed that important detail has been withheld from me as the Member of Parliament.

At the end of last year, I also approached the Leader of Medway Council, Cllr Alan Jarrett, with a request to join the HIF Members Advisory Board which oversees the progress of the project. I thought that this would help to

allay my concerns and I would also be able to directly speak up for my constituents on this forum who I know are also desperate to know what is going to happen to their villages and roads. I have asked to join this board twice, but sadly my requests have been declined on both occasions.

I have long held that Medway Council will struggle to deliver all of their plans for the road, rail and environmental improvements with the £170 million which they originally requested from central government. I cannot understate the scale of this project and the impact that it will have on the Medway Towns. It has been worrying to see recently that key parts of the project have already started to fall apart – particularly, the rail scheme which will now not include a Medway link to other local stations, and will therefore not benefit local residents or our own economy.

Moreover, fundamental parts of the Local Plan remain unfinished, including the Strategic Transport Assessment and the environmental assessment, and it is baffling that we are still continuing with a major infrastructure project without having completed key elements of the Local Plan's evidence base first. The HIF project is vital to the successful implementation of the Local Plan, but it would appear that the planning and HIF teams are not working in unison with each other.

I know that I am not alone with my concerns. I would encourage you to view the latest Medway Council Regeneration, Culture, and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting where a number of councillors, from both sides of the political divide, explain their concern as they hold the Head of Regeneration to account.

For the reasons outlined above, I have little confidence that Medway Council can deliver their plans outlined in the HIF to time or to budget and cannot in all good faith support the HIF project in its current state. Please be assured that I will do everything I can to make sure that the voices of my constituents are heard loud and clear by ministers who are keeping a close eye on Medway's progress. I will do all I can to work with and support the number of stakeholder groups on the Peninsula who all share my concerns.

It is a very sad situation that we have the opportunity to invest with infrastructure that could benefit the area, but we are being presented with incomplete proposals, and with many questions or details left unanswered. It's very disappointing that the Council have decided to take this forward without the involvement of the community, locally elected councillors, the Member of Parliament and the residents who will be affected.

I do hope that this has helped to outline my position on the HIF project. I will continue to keep you updated with any important developments, but please do contact me if I can provide any further assistance to you in the meantime.

Yours sincerely
Kelly

Thanking Kelly

I have written to Kelly and thanked her for her supportive stance on facebook and in correspondence with other residents. I have also asked for her response to some questions. Even though the consultation period for the HIF bid is over I think its important that we continue to make our voices heard through our elected ward and constituency representatives.

For me there are questions and considerations that are not being asked and properly answered.

Do we need the number and type of houses proposed here in High Halstow, on the Hoo Peninsula and across Medway?

- According to the Office of National Statistics Medway's population is declining and indicates that half the number of houses being proposed are needed. In their recent response to a consultation on the white paper "Planning for the Future" central government accepted the figures that are used for assessing the number of

houses required uses outdated statistics. They decided to keep with those figures in order to “prevent uncertainty”

Many of the houses likely to be built in High Halstow and other areas of the Hoo Peninsula will fall into Band D for council tax purposes i.e. they will provide significant income for the council. Most of the houses built will not meet the needs of those most in need.

- Medway Council claim that they have to comply with central governments housing targets or face “repercussions”. In their response to the consultation on the white paper “Planning for the Future” the government state that the numbers suggested to local authorities are not a target but a starting point in determining need alongside other constraints areas face such as green belt and land available for development. It is up to local authorities to determine precisely how many homes to plan for.

Are Medway Council's plans in keeping with the government's pledge to “build the right homes in the right places?”

- The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England suggests that there are enough brown field sites to meet the government's housing targets for the duration of this parliament. Central government state that they have a brownfield first policy. Unfortunately, brownfield sites are less attractive to the large volume house builders as they are more expensive to develop.
- In light of Brexit and the insecurity of our food supply due to climate change should grade 1 agricultural land ever be considered for housing development?

Green Party Parish Councillor Marilyn Stone

End of Lockdown Celebration

After coming up for 18 months it looks like the COVID restrictions we’ve all been living with are finally going to be ending for good. The suggestion has been made that the village should do something to celebrate the end of lockdown so, with that in mind, we are thinking of staging an event on August Bank Holiday Monday. Planning is in its infancy but we would like to invite any village organisations or individuals to join the planning team.

Please contact Councillor Tim Munday to register your interest.

Tel: 07730477017

Email: tim.munday@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

High Halstow Environment Group Virtual Meeting TO BE HELD VIA ZOOM

**on
Tuesday 25th May
at 7.00pm**

**Meeting ID
85497623841
Password henviro**

**Contact details below if you
have any queries, items for
the agenda or would like to
see the action points from
our April's Meeting.
Everyone is welcome.**

**Marilyn's mobile number is
07944490903
Alternatively use Marilyn's
Parish Councillor email
address
marilyn.stone@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk**

High Halstow Village Hall Re-Opening

After such a long time the Village Hall Committee is pleased to announce a phased reopening of the Village Hall. As from 1st May some of the regular hirers of the hall will be able to resume their bookings. At the time of going to press we are unable to confirm which ones will be present so will keep regular updates on the main entrance door.

This approach will enable the Hall Committee to review the whether the procedures in place are working with a view for all new adhoc bookings to resume 1st July.

We thank you for your patience and look forward to welcoming you all back.

Village Hall Committee

Memorial Hall Re-Opening

It has been decided by the Memorial Hall Committee, alongside Government Guidelines to open up the Memorial Hall for use once more from Monday 21st June. There will be stringent rules to abide by and all regular users will be issued with a Covid Safe Contract to be drawn up by the Committee in line with government guidelines on the reopening. There will be posters to remind all users of Hand, Face, Space. Hand sanitiser placed at entrance and exits of the hall as well as kitchen and toilets. It will be necessary to restrict numbers to a maximum of 20 people per group and there will be no birthday parties allowed for the rest of this year. The committee will do all they can to ensure the safe use of the hall but each group will also have responsibility to ensure the hall is used in a safe and socially distanced way.

Over the past year our village has grown with the new estate welcoming new members to the village who may be unaware of the Memorial Hall and its long history in the village- indeed 2020 should have seen the 100 year celebrations of the hall which sadly had to be cancelled but if anyone would like to know more about the running or history of the hall or indeed an interest in becoming a committee member then please contact either Angela Forward- chairman on 01634 251756 or myself on 01634 254428. If you are interested in booking the hall then please contact Cora Macfarlane booking clerk on 01634 252587 or 07801892664.

Jeanette Dowsett Secretary of the Memorial Hall

The Friends of St Margaret's

ANNUAL SCARECROW FESTIVAL

Make a scarecrow and display it in your front garden.

From May through to the end of August.



Let's make 2021 the best year yet.

If you would like to make a donation when visiting the village shop it would be appreciated. Our ancient Church needs your help to fund much needed roof, window and stonework restoration.

Follow us on [facebook](#) - "High Halstow Scarecrow Festival"

Christian Aid Week 10th to 16th May 2021

This year it's all about **CLIMATE CHANGE** because everybody needs clean water to survive and thrive. People living in poverty are on the frontline of **climate chaos**. They are affected by extremes of weather like severe flooding and drought. Now people face a double threat as **Coronavirus** stalks the land and they can't even get soap and water to wash their hands. Christian Aid uses practical solutions like sending soap and water to the most vulnerable communities. Christian Aid also helps rural villages to construct dams providing a reliable source of water that will help families withstand long droughts. Most importantly Christian Aid tackles the root causes of poverty by fighting injustice, campaigning for change and responding to humanitarian emergencies. Collecting tins for Christian Aid Week can be found at High Halstow Post Office, The Red Dog and Homeleigh Garden Centre. Money can also be left at The Vicarage, 2 Cooling Road or 32 Longfield Ave, High Halstow.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY. THANK YOU.

High Halstow Primary Academy is Going Green!

During the craziness of the past year, we have all become more and more aware of the need to be environmentally friendly. The children have been engaging with some really thought provoking lessons on the environment both locally and in the world around us and have shown a huge interest in it. In all year groups there is a real desire to make a difference and look after our planet. The children's voices were heard and to that ends we have started our "Eco-Warriors" Group (Name TBC)

The aim of the group is to have representatives from each year group champion environmental issues and be innovative with ideas and plans to help us make HHPA a greener school.

We will meet frequently and rotas of 'green' jobs will play an important role in day to day school with the hope that the process of being 'eco friendly' becomes second nature to us all. Some of the ideas that we would like to implement include:

- Compost Bins- topped up daily from daily fruit and vegetables. To be used (in time) for gardening.
- Designing a 'nature space' for bug hotels, bee friendly gardens and bird houses and feeders.
- A sensory garden- In memory of Mrs Chick
- A school allotment (to include raised beds and pots) to grow our own fruit and vegetables.
- Fruit tree Corner

So with all these wonderful ideas in our minds we need your help! If you are able to support us in our green ventures in any way?

We are looking for support from local businesses who may be able to help us obtain what we need:

- Raised beds for the allotments
- We will also need help building this area
- Large colourful plant pots
- Water Butts
- Compost Bins- large and small
- Compost
- Black weed control material
- Fruit Trees
- Seeds of all types- vegetables, fruit, flowers
- Bulbs & Bedding Plants
- Child friendly bark chippings
- Bee Garden Flower Bombs
- Screening for the bee garden to be cordoned off

Please support us to help make a difference! No matter how small a contribution- all are welcome. If you feel you are able to offer your support please contact me at:

office@highhalstowprimaryacademy.org.uk

We could use this as an opportunity for you to be our eco-sponsors! This could involve us advertising your business in publications from the school and around school!

We are so grateful for all your support and look forward to making a great school into a great 'green' school with your help!

Mrs [Gemma Stangroom](#)

Principal

We are looking for volunteers willing to support people on the **Hoo Peninsula** with transport to medical appointments, shopping and prescription collection.



Full Training provided * Flexible hours * Generous mileage rate paid

01634 272138

volunteer@whoo cares.org.uk

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DRIVERS NEEDED
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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

High Halstow Parish Council

Halstow Edge Thriller in National Village Cup!

Cricket is back at Rayner's Meadow. In spite of temperatures more suitable for skiing, the 2021 season got underway on 10th April. COVID restrictions have meant that our winter and pre-season training has been severely disrupted so it's not surprising that everyone was rusty. Unsurprisingly, results and performances in our opening friendlies have been patchy at best, but, more importantly, these games gave everyone a chance to blow the cobwebs away ahead of the start of competitive cricket.

That competitive cricket got underway with a home tie against Bidborough CC in the 1st round of the National Village Cup on 25th April. The NVC is a prestigious competition that gives village cricketers the opportunity to play at the home of cricket – Lords. The club has a proud tradition in the competition- having reached the last 8 nationally on 2 occasions – so we were keen to perform well.

Asked to bat on a bowler friendly pitch (typical for April) our

batsmen found scoring runs and building partnerships difficult and we were bowled out for a disappointing 128 in the 36th over. The consensus was that we were 20-30 runs short of a competitive total, but, if we could pick up early wickets, we would be in with a chance. Chris Whatman duly obliged, picking up the first wicket with only 11 on the board but from there Bidborough's batsmen seemed to be taking the game away as score progressed to 46 in good time & without incident. Two wickets in two balls from Clark Dockwray put the brakes on & switched momentum back our way. From there the game ebbed and flowed. For a long time, it was hard to pick a winner until a flurry of wickets meant that Bidborough were 9 down with 25 still needed. In a nail biting finish Bidborough's last pair inched towards the target as our bowlers strove to get the wicket that would see them through to the next round. As the runs required got below 10 it began to look like Bidborough might sneak over the line until stand-in Captain Jamie Maguire

turned to Rob O'Hara to try to get the breakthrough. After 3 good balls Rob bowled a loose delivery. Seeing the opportunity to get within 3 runs of victory Bidborough's captain – who had played a watchful innings until that point – tried to smash the ball through the covers to the boundary, but he only succeeded in hitting the ball straight to Archie Lally who gratefully took the catch that put us into the next round by the slenderest of margins.

The next round of the NVC sees us take on Leeds and Broomfield on 9th May. If we are still in the competition by the time the next edition of the High Halstow Times comes out, we will be preparing for the County final so wish us luck.



To advertise in this publication:
£88 Whole Page,
£44 Half Page,
£22 Quarter Page,
£11 Eighth Page.
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 Willlowbank Drive	01634 252 604
Tamsin Stowers		
Natasha Turner	12 Marsh Crescent	
Office email	office.hhrin@gmail.com	

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



Permanent Makeup
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Eyeliner
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Removal of permanent makeup

Fibroblast – non surgical face lift for hooded eyelids, under eyes, crows feet, lip lines, neck lift

Dermapen – Skin needling to improve stretch marks, scarring, acne, acne scars, fine lines and wrinkles & pigmentation

www.thejaderooms.com
www.facebook.com/thejaderooms

Call Jade on 07708 394979 for your
FREE consultation

Your Parish Councillors
George Crozer, Chair
07711 432598
e.mail: George.crozer@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk
Christine Watson, Vice Chair
01634 256529
Linda Atkinson 07825 619353
Marc Buckland 07979 751431
Ray Collins 01634 250105
Gary Jerreat 07880 697657
Cora MacFarlane 07801 892664
Tim Munday 07730 477017
Marilyn Stone 07944 490903

Your councillors may also be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Jenny Allen 01634 710086
email: clerk@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

HH Village Website

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



Christian Aid Week
10-16 May 2021



Quiz for
Christian Aid

Join us on Zoom for an online Quiz

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86539094530?pwd=Z3Fva0Z0N2lqLzdqd3lNb1B0WVFXUT09>

Meeting ID: 865 3909 4530
Passcode: CAquizz

Friday 14th May @ 7PM

**Invite your friends and family
Have fun and help raise some money for Christian Aid**

Your gift can change lives! Find out more at
caid.org.uk or christianaid.ie

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Contact:
louisekennett@yahoo.com
for more information

Or donate at:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Louise-Mason20>

Readers Letters & Emails

Good to see Jack recently, along with one of his helpers, keeping our lovely village looking clean and tidy. I asked him how long he has been performing this service and was surprised to hear that he has been doing it for twenty-three years now! He may be out in all weathers, but it hasn't affected his sense of humour. He told me, after letting me take this photograph,

'Mind how cross that road, you've got a very valuable picture on your phone!'

Thanks, Jack, from a grateful villager.



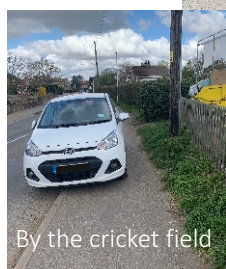
Hedges & Bushes

Please trim back any hedges, bushes or trees which are overhanging footpaths as they can cause an obstruction.



Dear HHT,
I wanted to send you these pictures of the appalling parking that is increasingly occurring on the pavements in the high Halstow village.

Unfortunately I believe a lot of this to be due to people being extremely lazy and wanting to park close to the pub. I think the pub and



By the cricket field

village hall should have some form of agreement for weekend

overflow parking at the village hall and the pub should communicate this to customers by posters etc. It is unfair and dangerous for my mum who has lived in the village for 26 years to have to walk in the middle of the road as our pavements have become parking spaces. And another directly opposite the pub and fully blocking footpath.



Parking both sides of roads on both footpaths.

Unable to see clearly right when pulling out of Christmas Lane. Accident waiting to happen. Pedestrian or vehicular.

K. Clark

Address Supplied

Comment from High Halstow Parish Council

The Parish Council has raised the issue of parking close to the junction of Christmas Lane and the Street with Medway Council. It is hoped that some progress can be made during this financial year.

Parking in the Village Hall car park is not restricted to users of either of the Halls and can be used by members of the public.

HHPC

George Crozer

Village Theatre Trips

Like many others I have enjoyed the London Theatre Trips that Margaret Church organised until recently with the able help of John Pink. A sincere thank you to Margaret for transporting us by luxury coach from the village to some excellent West End shows usually at less than half the ticket price. John and I are hoping to reinstate the trips as soon as the Theatres reopen. If you would like to be informed as and when we are offered a block booking then please let John know by email at- johnpink078@gmail.com



Next edition June 2021; Contributions for June should be sent by 24th May to:

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