



High Halstow TIMES

Home of the Heron
The Newsletter for High Halstow



July 2020



Development of High Halstow

Coming Forward

Developers are stepping up efforts to bring forward development in High Halstow ahead of the Local plan and our Neighbourhood plan.

Esquire Estates has now presented proposals to The Neighbourhood Plan Committee for 30 new homes at Sharnal Street. Although we like the design we have serious concerns about sustainability and reliance on the emerging Local Plan and HIF.

Redrow is beginning to engage with Medway Council ahead of an application for around 760 homes on the land East of the village between Christmas Lane and Britannia Road.

Medway Council have been given a target from Government to build 38,000 new homes by 2039. Medway Council are planning to build around 12,500 of these new homes on the Hoo Peninsula in Hoo and High Halstow.

However, It is not a done deal!

The new homes cannot be built unless they are sustainable, and that means: Sustainable road access, sustainable public transport and sustainable ecology. Medway Council plan to do this with the help of the Housing Infrastructure Fund HIF. The fund (£170M) will have to bring forward that sustainability by 2024 before new home can be built.

Continued...

We do not believe the proposals are sustainable.

- We **do not** believe they have done it correctly!
- We **do not** believe that any assessment has been carried out to assess the effect of 12,500 homes on our Peninsula's internationally protected ecology.
- We **do not** believe the proposals take an account of the Paris Accord on Climate Change.
- We **do** believe that Medway Plans for the Hoo Peninsula are ignoring The National Planning Policy Framework.

How has Development benefited the Peninsula

In the meantime, because Medway have failed to produce a Local Plan there is no longer any specified allocation of building land. This leaves us vulnerable to developers.

During the past two decades we are at a loss to name any net gain in amenity or sustainability that new development has provided. In fact, all we have gained is the loss of our much loved and used Deangate Ridge golf course.

Commitment

The Parish Councils of High Halstow and Hoo are united in their attempt to curtail the development of the Hoo Peninsula and ensure that whatever development is brought forward is the very best it can be and provides real sustainability.

We have been delighted with the response you have already made to our call to action and are encouraged by the response to that call from our MP Kelly Tolhurst.

Keeping up the pressure

We must keep up the pressure though and ask you to write again to Kelly Tolhurst, to Medway Council and/or to our Ward Councillors. For more information and ideas for your letters please see other pages for our letter of objection to the Sharnal Street proposals and letter to our MP Kelly Tolhurst. Further material and question are in the article in last month's High Halstow Times.

Please comment to proposed developments by:

- Writing to Dave Harris, Head of Planning at Medway Council or email Dave.Harris@Medway.gov.uk
- Writing to Kelly Tolhurst, MP for Medway or email Kelly.Tolhurst.mp@parliament.uk; and/or
- To make comments or objections on planning application go to www.HighHalstow-pc.gov.uk click on the [Planning Tracker](#) tab

Letter to Kelly Tolhurst re Proposed High Halstow development

High Halstow Parish Council

50 Pepys Way • Strood • Rochester • Kent • ME2 3LL

Tel: 01634 710086 • e-mail: clerk@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

Website : www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk

Rt Hon Kelly Tolhurst MP
Bellerophon House
Doust Way
Rochester
Kent
ME1 1FG
20 June 2020

Dear Kelly Tolhurst

Encouraged by your recent letter in response to our colleague Councillor Linda Atkinson, I have been asked to write to you on behalf of the High Halstow Parish Council and its Neighbourhood Forum, to seek your assistance in relation to Medway Council's approach to development on the Hoo Peninsula and, in particular, their refusal to disclose to us or to discuss with us the details of the proposals for transport infrastructure on the Peninsula. We write to you as our local MP, but with the pride of knowing that you are also Minister for Transport in the Government.

The High Halstow Neighbourhood Forum is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of High Halstow under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. This is likely to include identifying substantial areas of land for new housing. As you may be aware, the most recent draft of the emerging Medway Local Plan seeks to allocate land for about 12,000 new homes on greenfield land on the Hoo Peninsula, with about 800 new homes proposed for High Halstow, more than doubling the population within the plan period and in addition to substantial development already permitted.

The Peninsula has only one serious road access; the A228 Peninsula Way. Serious congestion occurs, particularly at Four Elms junction and roundabout in both the morning and evening peak hours and the Four Elms area suffers from serious air quality problems as a result. When the A228 is closed, as happens regularly, by a serious accident or other obstruction, the Peninsula is effectively blocked off from the outside world. High Halstow itself is served by narrow rural roads with passing places and no facilities for pedestrians or cyclists. High Halstow is poorly served by public transport. Development in the villages of High Halstow and Hoo in recent years has been opportunist, taking the form of individual applications with no overall masterplan or framework for development. The result is piecemeal planning with poor quality development. In a recent answer, planning and regeneration officers were unable to identify a single example of good design on the Peninsula, despite the rash of permissions in recent years. A large part of the problem is the absence of an up to date Local Plan, and no masterplan or design guide. The Regulation 19 draft Local Plan is continuously delayed and is entirely contingent on a Housing Infrastructure Fund grant of £170 million

principally to provide new or improved roads and other transport links including a rail link to Gravesend and the Medway towns with onward connections to London. However, the prediction is that the new rail link will provide a modal shift from use of the car to rail of only 8%. The Parish Council are well aware of the need for new housing in Medway and for improvement to transport infrastructure. We are also aware that this must be balanced with need to protect and enhance the exceptional biodiversity, heritage and landscape resources that the Peninsula contains.

We recognise that it is a central plank of Government Policy to include people and communities in decisions about their future, rather than to exclude them as the planning process has tended to do in the past. The Localism Act was passed by Parliament with that express objective in mind and it is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework.

With this background in mind, the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Forum had hoped to be able to participate fully in the preparation and planning of proposals for development and transport infrastructure on the Hoo Peninsula, together with and alongside its neighbouring Parish of Hoo St Werburgh, which bears the brunt of the Medway housing proposals in a proposed new "Rural Town".

To inform our participation in the process, we both had sought information from Medway Council, and, to a lesser extent, Homes England, about the specific proposals and the environmental impacts of those proposals in the HIF bid that would most affect our communities.

Instead of providing information to assist our involvement, we have been dismayed to be met with a wall of what we can only describe as direct obstruction and hostility from Medway Council, together with the publication of a document called "Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula" which is most remarkable for its failure to provide any information of substance about what the Council is proposing.

In particular Medway Council have directly refused to answer our questions about the details of the HIF funded infrastructure and their environmental impacts, claiming, as an exemption, that to do so would affect their ability to make decisions. It is their clear and stated intention to ensure that the details of the transport infrastructure proposals and their environmental effects are not disclosed to us until after the HIF agreement with Homes England is signed, presumably to ensure that we are not put in a position to be able to question any of the proposals subsequently. Not only is such behaviour contrary to the objectives behind Localism and the legislation that Parliament and the Government has put in place to secure local community involvement in the planning process, but it is also directly frustrating the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Forum in preparing our Neighbourhood Plan. We have been astonished to find the leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, describing the very limited responses we have had from the Council as "clear and continued engagement with the local community". He has had no engagement with the Parish Council and the officers' engagement has been limited, slow and largely unhelpful, being mainly directed to ensuring that we are not informed about details of the HIF proposals and their impacts.

Of course, the statutory procedures that will accompany the Local Plan will allow for the statutory public consultation and participation in that exercise, in due course, but all the indications are that Medway Council does not intend to open up the content of the HIF programme to public discussion at any point prior to its final agreement with Homes England. The content of the HIF programme will therefore dictate and severely limit the

options available at the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan. The HIF programme for Hoo has been drawn up to provide the transport infrastructure that would support a Regulation 19 plan which has yet to be published and whose environmental impacts have not yet been assessed. Yet it will inevitably pre-determine and severely limit the scope of any modifications that the Inspector will be able to make in order to ensure the Plan is “sound”.

The proposals for the Peninsula are to be largely fixed by the HIF agreement and we, and the Inspector, will be faced with a stark choice between going along with the HIF proposals (whatever they turn out to be) or having no Local Plan at all. The results of years of failure to deliver a Local Plan have already disfigured the Hoo Peninsula with inappropriate and poor quality development unsupported by essential adequate infrastructure in terms of education, medical facilities and the availability of local and accessible jobs, services and facilities.

We have suggested that this would best be achieved by the provision of a detailed masterplan incorporated into the statutory process as an Area Action Plan for the Hoo Peninsula, so that we can see exactly what is proposed and how it will affect our local communities. That suggestion has been met only with silence from Medway Council.

As things stand, the behaviour of Medway Council, who continue to treat the inhabitants of the Peninsula as some kind of backward indigenous colony incapable of participating seriously in the planning of our own future, and the Peninsula as a derelict wasteland, crying out for new development, is raising fear and disillusionment in the democratic process.

We therefore respectfully request that you intervene to assist us by ensuring that the HIF agreement between Medway Council and Homes England is not signed until the Parish Council and the local communities most affected by the proposals are consulted fully on the details of the HIF Infrastructure programme and its environmental effects have been assessed and published.

Yours sincerely

George Crozer
High Halstow Parish Council

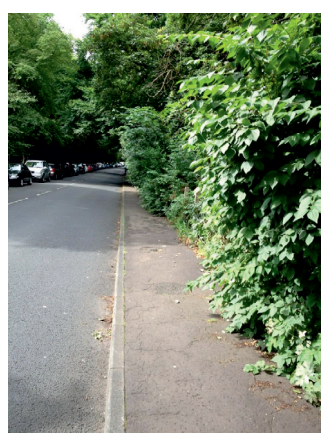
PS. The Neighbourhood Forums hold regular combined virtual meetings. I have been asked to invite you to join us, even if only for a few minutes, to discuss these issues.

Boundary Hedges

At this time of the year with the profusion of summer growth many boundary hedges are protruding onto pavements. This makes it difficult for pedestrians and disabled access.

Please check your hedge and cut where necessary.
Thank you for your co-operation.

High Halstow Parish Council.



High Halstow Parish Council Letter of objection to Medway Council

Dear Mr Harris

Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings and erection of 30 residential dwellings including affordable housing. Creation of a new access from Sharnal Street, associated car parking, hard standing, landscaping, open spaces, infrastructure including drainage and earthworks.

The Hollies Sharnal Street High Halstow Rochester Medway ME3 8QR

Ref. No: MC/20/1237



The High Halstow Parish Council would be grateful if you would take account of the following objections to the above development.

The site is not in a sustainable location for this kind of residential development. The school and village of High Halstow are too distant and most of the services and facilities for day to

day living are too far away and would only be accessible by car. There are no pedestrian links to bus stops and even the limited facilities in High Halstow.

The proposals are likely to add to an already very poor road safety record in the vicinity of the site. Accesses to and from the garage, which has a small shop which would provide the only retail facility within walking distance, are already dangerous and we believe that the new access would exacerbate that problem. The Parish Council asks you to note that 2 people have been killed in road traffic accidents in recent years on that stretch of the A228 and that the development would add traffic to a road that already has a very high record of fatal accidents – 38 in recent years.

The development would add to the poor air quality problem within the air quality action zone at Four Elms and although permission is sought for the development in advance of the proposals for transport in the HIF programme and the Local Plan the improvement of its sustainability is reliant on those proposals which are by no means certain to take place.

The development would not follow the local pattern of linear development but would be a backland cul de sac more suburban in character than rural, with a single highway access, creating an isolated enclave of residential development unrelated to its surroundings. Although the Parish Council recognises the efforts made by the applicants to create buildings that respect the local rural vernacular and note that the applicants even claim to create a farmstead character, the overall layout is, in fact, unconvincing and not characteristic of the area with 30 dwellings plus garages, car parking and service roads packed onto the site of only 1.09 hectares, and only a small play area as the sole public facility on the site. The current average of DPH (dwellings per hectare) in High Halstow is 20.

The Parish Council urges Medway Council to refuse planning permission.

High Halstow Parish Council

High Halstow Community Lottery

WINNERS

May Game, June draw 2020

1st prize £1,250 ME3 8TD

2nd Prize £200 ME3 8EZ

High Halstow Community Lottery continues to support local groups in High Halstow

If you are interested in signing up, please visit www.highhalstowCLuk for details.

HH Primary School PTA recently applied for funding and have been awarded £5,000 towards an outdoor classroom. We have now ringfenced funding of more than £101,000 for the school.

Disclaimer: This lottery has a private Medway Council licence and is in no way connected or administered by HIGH HALSTOW PARISH COUNCIL. This lottery is administered by High Halstow residents.

Play Park Closure

You may have noticed that the Play Park on the recreation ground is locked and the equipment chained up. The Parish Council is responsible for ensuring the Play Park complies with COVID-19 Secure guidelines to help avoid risks of transmission. We do not feel that we in a position to enforce the prerequisite social distancing and hygiene standards so we have no choice but to keep the Play Park closed until government guidelines are relaxed further.

Cllr Tim Munday
High Halstow Parish Council



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

High Halstow Allotments

REMINDER

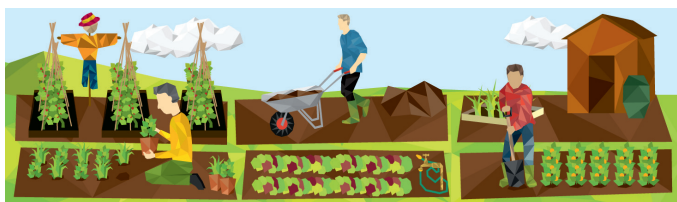
Allotment plots are all in use at the present time but if you have been considering working an allotment plot and would like to place your name on our waiting lists, please let the Parish Council know by contacting Linda.Atkinson@HighHalstow-pc.gov.uk

Linda can also be contacted on 07825 619 353.

Thank you.

Cllr Linda Atkinson

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
High Halstow Parish Council

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***St Werburgh Medical Practise.
Statement from Care Quality Commission.***

CQC inspectors visited St Werburgh Medical Practice in Hoo on Friday, 19 June 2020. As a result of this inspection, the CQC took urgent enforcement action at 5pm on Wednesday, 24 June to protect patients using services there, and also in their branch surgeries of Stoke Village Hall and Balmoral Gardens Healthy Living Centre.

Wilf Williams, Accountable Officer at NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "Patients do not need to take any action. The CCG is working hard to ensure services are maintained as usual and any disruption to patient care is kept to a minimum. "The provider has been in place at St Werburgh Medical Practice and its branch surgeries in Stoke and Balmoral Gardens Healthy Living Centre since 1 September 2018, providing care for some 11,000 patients.

"The CQC's decision means patients will be seen by an alternative healthcare professional in the immediate future but they can still ring their surgery as usual. Patients will be directed to an appointment with the Improved Access Primary Care Hub service which provides additional capacity to our GP practices, including in the evenings and at weekends. Due to Covid-19, most appointments are currently being conducted remotely but if patients need a face-to-face appointment, this will be arranged.

"We have been supporting the provider for some time, focussing on putting the correct governance, policies and procedures in place to enable staff to transform the services offered to patients. Unfortunately, insufficient progress was made but we will continue to work with them, while also ensuring temporary arrangements are in place for patients."

Patients should soon expect to receive a text message informing them of the current situation.

For now, patients should continue to ring their surgery as usual, patients will then be directed to an alternative healthcare professional for an appointment. I have been told by the surgery that repeat prescriptions are continuing to go ahead exactly as normal.

The CCG are aware that some people have been struggling to get through as the phone lines are very busy, but they intend to put more staff in very shortly to improve the situation.

Work is ongoing to put in place further arrangements from next week, and I am hopeful that patients will soon be able to be seen at their usual surgery. Plans are yet to be finalised but I will provide another update once these plans become clear.

Statement from Kelly Tolhurst

I have been informed that the services at St Werburgh Medical Practice on Bells Lane, and their partner surgeries at Stoke Village Hall, and the Balmoral Gardens Healthy Living Centre in Gillingham, have been suspended with immediate effect.

Following urgent concerns with the performance, the decision has been taken by the Care Quality Commission to immediately suspend these surgeries.

The phone line is still working and calls are being taken but there is currently a longer than usual waiting time. I advise only contacting the practice if your concerns are urgent, in which case they will be able to refer you on to an alternative practice. It is my understanding they are still able to issue urgent repeat prescriptions.

Late yesterday evening I spoke to the local Clinical Commissioning Group who are currently working to put in place temporary measures for patients. I expressed to them my disappointment with DMC Healthcare who run the practice; I have been liaising with DMC over several months now regarding the quality of their practices and I had been assured that they were on track to meet their targets for improvement.

I will continue to work with those involved to ensure that appropriate provisions are put in place as soon as possible and I will endeavour to keep you updated.



Join the High Halstow Community Lottery

Your money goes back into the community

Since it started in 2016 we have given away over **£64,000** in prize money!!

We have up to March 2020 provided **£11,000** towards community projects which include;

- High Halstow Primary School £5,250
- High Halstow Cricket Club over £1,000
- Part funded the new WI Sign £1,000
- New Memorial Hall Shed £830
- Funded the Armistice Day poppies £1,200
- Part funded restoration of Church windows £1,000
- Funded start-up costs for toddler Stay & Play group £500
- Part funded a new Heronsbank foot bridge £500

The cost to play is £10 per ticket per month. However, more than one ticket can be bought by requesting the bank to set up the standing order for £20 for two tickets or £30 for three tickets etc.

Alternatively, you can buy a one-off ticket or set up a monthly standing order payment as follows;

Use YOUR post code and house number as your reference i.e. ME9 9ZZ-99 or if you have a house name ME9 9ZZ-Lucky.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. YOUR REFERENCE WILL BE YOUR TICKET NUMBER.

Payment must reach our account by the last working day of the month. Players usually pay on or before 27th of each month.

High Halstow Community Lottery
Account Number: 21507826
Sort Code: 40 43 44

Stop Press....We have just (June 2020) allocated £5,000 to the school PTA towards a new Outdoor Classroom.

Visit us at www.highhalstowCL.uk

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
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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	

Readers Emails & Letters

(No emails or letters will be published without the name and address being supplied to the Editor, which can be withheld on request)

SOS - Wool Please

The Cooling Road Home Group continue to receive lovely blankets on route (eventually!!) for Starfish Malawi. Our loyal knitters have continued to keep the needles clicking all through lockdown. However our wool supply is disappearing fast! We are therefore calling on YOU, our equally loyal band of supporters, to pass on to us any wool you may have left over.

We use all sorts but would be particularly grateful if anyone can find any really vibrant colours.

If you can help please ring me on 251135, or drop into 25 Cooling Road.

Thank you all very much for your past help

Hazel Beringer.

Dear All,

You will know from the June HHT that our lovely village has only one street cleaner at the moment. The Parish Council has discussed this and decided to have a Village Volunteering event on Saturday 18th July from 9am meeting outside the Village Hall. Please come and join in.



This will be a bit like the old Project Day, that was renamed Project 90 because it tended to last for about 90 minutes. We will concentrate on the village, rather than the access roads and we will do whatever cleaning, sweeping, litter picking or tidying needs to be done. Please come and join us at

9am on Saturday 18th July. Bring some gloves, wear old clothes and bring your own bottle of water. Unfortunately it will not be possible to provide refreshments on this occasion because the Village Hall will be closed.

Hope to see you there. The more the merrier as "many hands make light work". Let's help to keep our village looking great.

Chris Peek, on behalf of the Parish Council.

High Halstow Times Delivery

Our August High Halstow Times will be delivered by our much appreciated Regular Team of 20 volunteers.

Many thanks to the teams of 4 who delivered during May, June and July

If for any reason you are part of the "Regular Team" and cannot deliver during August please text or call Marilyn on 07944 490903

Off to University?

The High Halstow Relief in Need charity (Reg. No. 250996) has a limited number of small bursaries available to students going to University for the first time.

Students who started last year and were able to apply for a bursary may also apply.

The scheme is available only to students living in the parish of High Halstow at the time of application.

Closing date is Friday 25th September 2020 and applications received after that date will not be considered. In your letter of application please state your name, address, telephone number and email address, the universities you have applied for and the length of your course. A copy of your placement offer will be required before the bursary can be given. No appeal is available for unsuccessful applicants.

Please apply in writing to any of the Trustees, or to the Clerk:

Mrs Margot Sturt, 32 Willowbank Drive, High Halstow ME3 8TW

PLEASE mark 'Bursary Application' on the front of the envelope.

Next edition August 2020; Contributions for August should be sent by 26th July to:

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