Shorne Parish Council

Borough of Gravesham

Parish Council Matters for October 2015

Shornemead Railway Crossing Appeal

In 2009, Network Rail closed Shornemead railway crossing without any consultation with the Parish Council, by welding the pedestrian gate shut on the south side of the crossing. This arbitrary act blocked the footpath, denying residents direct access to approximately one fifth of the Parish.

Subsequent investigations showed that the footpath was not recorded as a right of way on the Definitive Map. Inclusion of a route on the Definitive Map is legal proof that it is a right of way. It appears that the Parish Council had applied in 1965 to have the crossing shown on the Map as a bridle way. This was disputed, but it was acknowledged to be a footpath. However, due to an administrative error, it was not then added to the Map as a footpath.

In February 2012 the Parish Council made an application to KCC for a Definitive Map Modification Order to include the route across the railway as a right of way. In February 2015, KCC published their decision, which was to refuse to make the necessary order to modify the Map.

The Parish Council then appealed to the Secretary of State against KCC's decision. Appeals are handled by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

As part of the appeal, the Parish Council collected further evidence including an abstract from a map which shows the that route dates back to before 1694. The route has been used for centuries to access the River Thames, the marshes, the Fort and the former Blockhouse (once used as a Poor House). When the canal was built a road bridge was provided, and when the railway was built a level crossing was provided.

The Parish Council has now been informed by the Planning Inspectorate that our appeal against KCC's decision not to amend the Definitive Map to include the crossing has been allowed.

The Planning Inspector's decision will mean that KCC will be instructed to publish a draft order. If this is unopposed, it should receive the Secretary of State's approval. If there are objections, it is likely that a public enquiry will be held to determine the issue.

The Council's Chairman, Robin Theobald, said, "We were very disappointed in February when the Council's application to Kent County Council for a Definitive Map Modification Order was turned down. The Council appealed to the Secretary of State and we are pleased our appeal

has been allowed. This is the first step to getting the Crossing re-opened. There could still be a public enquiry and if there is, we will continue the fight on behalf of our residents as the crossing should never have been closed."

Park Pale Disturbances

A follow-up meeting was held on 1st September between local residents and businesses, the Parish Council, and representatives of the Police, to review the situation regarding disturbances caused by motorcycles and cars in Park Pale.

The general consensus was that although there are still occasional disturbances, there is a marked improvement compared to last year, and the frequency and duration of disturbances is significantly less than last year. This is largely as a result of increased Police presence and activity, particularly since 1st July, and the Police were thanked for their efforts.

Police will continue to patrol and monitor the situation, and residents are encouraged to continue to report any disturbances to the Police by telephoning 101.

Thong Notice Board

A new parish notice board has been installed in Thong. The old one was in poor condition, and in a dangerous location, so the new one has been sited on the verge adjacent to the Post Office letter box.

Highway Safety

With nights drawing in and bearing in mind that some roads in the village don't have footways, pedestrians are advised to walk on the right hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic, and to wear something light or fluorescent to make themselves visible.

Volunteer Litter Patrol, Saturday 10th October

A volunteer litter picking patrol will take place on Saturday 10th October. If you would like to join our team of volunteers, or would like further information, please contact Bob Lane on 01474 822680, or email shorne.volunteers@gmx.co.uk.

Website

Further details and useful information can be found on the Shorne Parish Council website at www.shornepc.kentparishes.gov.uk and on our Facebook page, which can be found at www.facebook.com/shorneparishcouncil.

Bob Lane

Shorne Parish Council