



SANDGATE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Date: 17th May 2021 Time: 6.30pm

Present: **Chairman Cllr Tim Prater**
Councillors Nina Bliss, Michael Fitch, Gary Fuller, Vanessa Reay,
Tracy Stephens, Guy Valentine- Neale, Adrian Watts and Lewis
Whitnall,

Parish Clerk: Mrs Julie Tugwood

A number of other residents of the Parish.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Vicki Parsons

2. Chairman’s Welcome and Yearly Overview

Firstly, many thanks for coming to our first “in person” Parish Meeting since, unbelievably, 2019. For those that I haven’t met in person before, I’m Tim Prater, and I’ve had the honour of being the Chair of Sandgate Parish Council since May 2020. This is therefore my first Town Meeting in the Chair: please be gentle with me.

So much as happened since then its impossible in a few minutes to cover everything that has happened within the Parish, even at the speed I talk. I’d like to focus therefore on news and events from the last year, celebrating some of those achievements, and a look forward at some of the things that are planned for the coming year. Even so, this will take a while!

As you will know, Sandgate beach has had the distinction of holding the Seaside Award for the quality of the beach and services available for 8 consecutive years from 2013 to 2021 – an unbroken run of 8 years. The awards for 2022 were announced last week, and as they say, all good things must come to an end.

However, I’m delighted to say, not that run, not in Sandgate, and not this year. We’ve received the award for the ninth year running. [DISPLAY POSTER]

That’s thanks to the efforts of the Beach Management Committee led by Councillor Nabin Siwa who make the application, and the hard work of all those that clean, improve and make our beach a great place to be, including David and Claire at the Boat House. In 2022, this award is one of only 128 nationally, and only 21 in the South East Region. It’s a real achievement, and not one held by either Folkestone or Hythe for example, and a huge credit to Sunny Sandgate.

To ensure we keep making sure the seafront is the best possible place to be, the Parish will be having the Boathouse on Granville Parade redecorated externally over the course of the next few months, and

the toilets steam cleaned within an inch of their lives. We're proud to have brought free public toilets back to Sandgate some years ago after the District tried charging, and know they are a massively appreciated asset for beach users and visitors alike.

Another big project over the coming year will be refurbishment in this library which will aim to make getting in and out easier, make the toilet public and accessible to all, improve storage and space use, and allow us to offer an even better service to an even larger group of people. The works now planned have been made possible through a District Council High Street Fund Award of almost £15,000, and Section 106 funding from the development at Shorncliffe. There will therefore be a variety of works starting soon, which although I'm sure will cause some short-term disruption will lead us to having a library we are even more proud of for the future.

On the subject of our pride in the library, this remains the only community led library in Kent. Sandgate Parish actively take the lead on running and staffing the library working in agreement with Kent County Council. I couldn't be more proud of the service they have delivered to our village and residents through not only normal times, but especially during the Covid period when Sandgate was one of the first libraries to reopen in Kent and were trying to offer whatever service we could under regulations at the time, from collection only services to deliveries and more. But it's not just me that is hugely proud and grateful to our clerks, staff, volunteers and Library Committee that made, and continue to make this happen. I'm proud to present the 2022 KALC Community Award to Sandgate's Library Volunteers, Staff and Committee. [DISPLAY KALC POSTER]

Thank you to everyone, and this certificate will be proudly, and rightly on display in the library soon.

In early June, the country will be celebrating the Jubilee and Sandgate will be playing our part. I should also mention that there are a host of activities including parties on The Leas in both Folkestone and Hythe too, and maybe a few street parties locally I don't have details of.

Our starting event in Sandgate will be the lighting of the Sandgate Beacon by the Sir John Moore Memorial at 9.45pm on Thursday June 2nd. We have a piper and bugle player beforehand, and, if my secret plan comes off, some special guests.

The beacon has been painted and ready to go, there are new information panels in the area courtesy of the Sandgate Society, with help from me in art working and arranging production, and from the Shorncliffe Trust in fact checking the information. And in the next couple of weeks, we will be enhancing that area with a new permanent feature: the "Imperial" cannon. That's a 1790 / 1800 cannon that has for many years been resident at the Hythe Imperial and would have been EXACTLY the sort of cannon used by Sir John Moore as he martialled the defence of the coast from Dover to Dungeness. We thought that was a fitting addition to the area, and will be in place for the 2nd June, transport willing!

On the afternoon Friday 3rd there will be a party in the Golden Valley car park in front of the Golden Arrow, with plenty of families to enjoy.

A key focus of the Jubilee celebrations nationally has been the planting of the Queens Green Canopy – a huge tree planting exercise across the country. The Parish Council have been delighted to work with the Sandgate Community Garden team led by Leonie Wootton, and have planted two new orchards in Sandgate over the last few months: 12 fruit trees in both Sandgate Park and Fremantle Park. We'll be dedicating those areas as formal "Green Canopy" orchards over the weekend by erecting plaques marking them as official sites. [DISPLAY PLAQUE]

And in the afternoon of Sunday 5th June there will be a street and beach party along Granville Parade, with the Sandgate society organising some tables and seating along the front for those that want it, but all more than welcome to come along, join us there or on the beach, have a beach picnic or maybe a drink or two from our great local businesses and enjoy the music from the Rowing Club balcony. For safety reasons, we've applied for a road closure of Granville Parade for the afternoon: with lots of people moving around it seems much the safest way. However, there is free parking from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th by the Saga building, for which we thank them, and any resident is more than welcome to park there, all day, for free. We hope all residents have a great day. [DISPLAY JUBILEE POSTER]

This year also marks an important event for Sandgate. The first "Sandgate Chapel" was built by the Earl of Darnley and consecrated on May 28th, 1822. Although that building was demolished in 1848 to make way for the present church which was completed in 1849, we are therefore days away from marking 200 years of a place of worship on that site. St Pauls have a varied programme to celebrate, including the beautiful knitted "wall of flowers" in place at the foot of the steps leading to the Church now, to an evening with Terry Waite on 9th June, to the 200th anniversary service at the church on Sunday 12th June. [DISPLAY ST PAUL'S POSTER]

And later this year, again for the first time since 2019 we will see the return of the 2-day Sandgate Sea and Food Festival, with fireworks display from Granville Parade on Saturday 24th August, and the full seafront market, bands and entertainment during the day on Sunday 25th. Watch this space for more information.

On a few non-event subjects, over the last few years we've tried each summer to enhance the facilities at Sandgate Park by adding portaloos for the use of park users during the summer. Sadly, in both 2020 and again this year the toilets have been vandalised. This year one of the toilets has been attacked, then repaired, then attacked again and broken so badly it is irreparable, causing what is effectively thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Sadly, the group of people that did this didn't notice that we had positioned the toilets under the CCTV installed there, and we have really good footage of the incidents, including identifiable footage of those involved, which the Police will be using in their investigation of the criminal damage. We're pleased the other toilet is still on site, and if left alone, will remain there and be serviced throughout the summer. We cannot, however, afford to replace the vandalised one this year.

Gaye and myself have both in the last year qualified in ILCA, The Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA). This is often a first step to going on getting the much more involved Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification. Gaye aiming to achieve CiLCA with the Council's support in the next year. Qualification as CiLCA will make Gaye not just one of the most qualified librarians in the country but give her that status as a Parish Clerk too and give this Council the General Power of Competence. Despite sounding like the world's worst superpower, that gives the Parish some additional freedoms to work to improve the Parish as we see fit.

And finally on some infrastructure changes:

We hope you've noticed the new ramp from Castle Road Car Park giving step free access to the seafront, a project we've been asked for and sought for years, and which we were finally able to make possible using District Council Ward grant funding from Gary Fuller and myself and the long-sought help of the District Council. Similarly, a new cycle ramp should be coming soon by the steps leading from Pelham Gardens to Coolinge Lane, making it much easier to push a bike either up or down!

The Wave Wall in front of Riviera Court is complete, and really lifts the look of the centre of the village. That's a project initiated by a bid from the Sandgate Society, funded by a District Council grant, and made to happen through support from the Parish Council: a real team effort. And even over the last two days, Kent Highways have spent some hours releveling the slabs around the war memorial to make for a rather smoother walking surface.

This spring's beach works are also pretty much complete: vital work every 6 months to protect Sandgate by reprofiling the beach to create a shape that breaks waves before they arrive at the sea wall, rather than on the sea wall. The scheme is funded by the Environment Agency, managed and made to happen by the District Council, and is designed to secure the beach and keep us dry.

Finally, Sandgate is what it is due to the groups and volunteers that give so much to our community. In no particular order, I want to acknowledge and thank all those who do so, including the Sandgate Community Garden team, the Sandgate Society, Sandgate Heritage Trust, the Chichester Memorial Hall team, Second Sandgate Scouts, St Pauls Church, our very own Library volunteers, and group delivering much needed support for our Ukrainian guests who have arrived, and are continuing to arrive, and need help, support and somewhere to meet.

That's it, I promise. After this meeting and the subsequent Annual Parish Council meeting there will be a little reception for all present: please join us for a glass of wine and a few nibbles. Now I'll hand over to Sal Kenward of the Sandgate Society who is going to update on the plan for the merger of the Sandgate Society and Sandgate Heritage Trust, then an opportunity for any resident to ask a question on anything I've said, anything Sal says, or any other topic. Thank you for coming this evening.

3. Merger of Sandgate Heritage Trust & Sandgate Society – Q & A with Sal Kenward

Sal Kenward gave a talk on the Merger of Sandgate Heritage Trust and Sandgate Society. She explained the history of the Heritage Trust and the Sandgate Society and how the merger will benefit all concerned.

4. Public Questions

One resident stated that they had had no information stating the road closure for the Jubilee Tea Party, the council were to check this and get information out.

One resident asked if anyone else had seen some scum in the sea and if they knew what it was?

The Chairman stated that he had been informed that this was an algae that will disappear.

One resident asked if the Seaside Award was like the Blue Flag Award?

It is similar but the Blue Flag Award you must have a lifeguard on the beach.

<https://www.theseasideawards.org/blueflagawardcriteria/2128>

<https://www.theseasideawards.org/seasideawardcriteria/2130>

One resident asked if the bins were going to be collected much better during the summer this year?

The Chairman stated that this was being monitored and that extra bins had already been made available.

One resident asked if anything could be done in the case of people leaving rubbish bags by Sandgate Park and seagulls get in them?

Unfortunately, there was nothing that the council can do in that instance: the CCTV does not cover the road, and even getting footage would then likely go to waste as neither Police nor FHDC likely to prosecute.

5. Any information items - There were none

6. Date of the next Annual Parish Meeting – 16th May 2023