



SOUTH
WILLESBOROUGH
and NEWTOWN
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SWAN NEWS

Autumn 2020

In association with
Fixings Warehouse



Find us inside the New
Ashford Market,
Orbital Park, Ashford,
TN24 0HB
Tel: 0333 404 777

REMINDER

Full Council meetings take place on the first Monday of each month at 7pm. At present, meetings are held virtually via Zoom.

Residents are able to join the meeting so keep an eye out on the noticeboards and also our website

www.swancc.org.uk to access our Community Calendar, Committee meeting dates, Minutes of meetings, newsletters and much more.

If you are aware of a resident(s) celebrating special moments / occasions e.g. 100th birthday etc please write to us so we can feature them in our next newsletter!

Dear SWAN residents,

One impact of Covid was that we could only produce our last newsletter in digital format which you can still find on our website – www.swancc.org.uk Thankfully, we are now able to distribute them again door to door to let you know what is happening in the SWAN area.

During the pandemic it was not only the newsletter that was affected. Our office had to be closed to the public and a change of law allowed us to shift to virtual Council meetings. As a new Council, these restrictions were untimely but, like every other Council in the land, we supported the Government; putting public safety and the caring professions before our local communication needs.

Although our office is now open again by appointment, it is unlikely we will return to holding physical Council meetings for several months. However, the public may attend our virtual (Zoom) meetings but will need to contact the Clerk a minimum of one hour before the meeting start time.

At the height of the pandemic, a lot of excellent work was being undertaken by voluntary organisations working with Ashford Borough Council to support the community. We decided we would not try to replicate those support services and that it would be more beneficial to provide financial assistance to those organisations instead. In April 2020, we gave a maximum grant of £2000 to the Salvation Army to support its food preparation, distribution and drop-in service at their Cudworth Road premises.

One concern I have is the ongoing impact of the pandemic on small businesses in our area. In addition to the 'visible' businesses there are a significant number of micro-businesses and sole traders within the Borough. The need for the community to support local, small businesses has never been greater so, in this edition, we are highlighting our two pubs – The Alfred Arms and the Albion and the improvements they have made during the lockdown to entice you back.

We hope to continue this feature in the future and I hope you find the newsletter informative.

Stay safe.

*Sue Mullan,
Chair,
SWAN Community Council*

Please access our website to read which committees and working groups our councillors are involved in!

www.swancc.org.uk

Parking and Traffic Survey - Facts, figures and results

We thank everyone who responded to our parking and traffic survey:

Total responses - 239

Return rate - 11.5%

35 of 43 roads in the SWAN (81%) area covered

Half of the residents who responded added additional comments/suggestions

15% of the responses were from households with disabled residents

Overall Results

54% felt that Parking is of greatest concern for residents **NOW**, followed by Safety. Pollution caused by increased traffic was considered least important.

When asked about the future, 51% felt that parking would still be the highest concern, but residents elevated pollution to equal second position with safety.

What are we doing with this information?

We alerted Ashford Borough Council to the findings when it considered the proposals for the Newtown Railway works, requesting an holistic, long-term, multi-agency review of traffic and parking issues in the area. Your survey responses supported the Planning Officer's proposals for a parking assessment in nearby streets, improvements to the Crowbridge Road bridge and some traffic calming initiatives on Newtown Road. They have also helped us to prepare our response to Ashford Borough Council on its draft cycling and walking strategy to 2030.

One of our key concerns is excessive overspill parking when the development is under construction and eventually completed. Councillor Gerry Clarkson, Leader of Ashford Borough Council, informed the Planning Committee that with sufficient parking spaces within the boundary of the development, there would be no negative impact on SWAN residents.

We have sent a copy to the Police with a request to increase enforcement for inconsiderate parkers who obstruct roads and footpaths. The dialogue with the Police will continue. A copy has also been sent to Kent County Council and we have started a discussion with them on Highways improvements. We have received quotations from Kent County Council on different types of speed indicator devices we might employ on their street light columns as an alternative or addition to the existing Speedwatch scheme which is managed by the Police.

As a Community Council we have limited highways and parking powers but we will, over time, consider residents' comments on a street by street basis to examine any opportunities to make improvements within the powers we have or to influence action by the Parking and Highways Authorities (Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council respectively).

If residents would like to see a copy of the final report, please contact the Clerk.

Cllr Andy Rogers Message

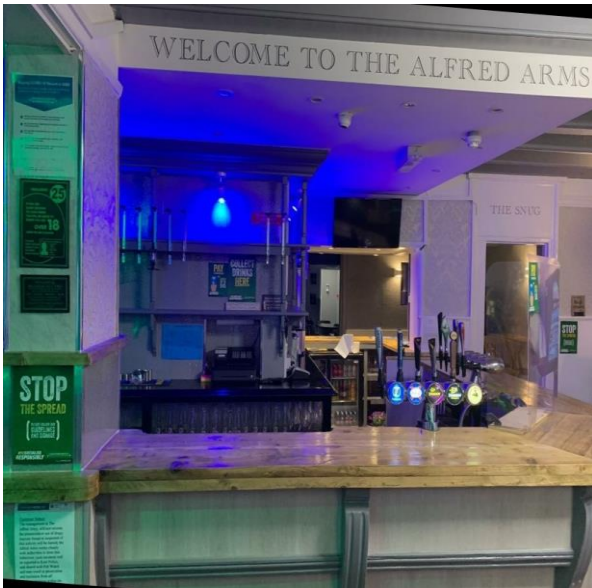
"In these strange times, I am still enjoying looking into resident's requests and issues. Unfortunately, in the area we have been suffering from a lot of vandalism such as waste bins being burnt out multiple times and damage to outdoor activities and play parks. Between the SWAN CC and I, we are reporting these issues and Ashford Borough Council and Aspire respond in a terrific way. As a move forwards, working with Aspire, bins being replaced are now made of metal in the hope that they cannot be damaged.

If residents have any questions or concerns with anything in the ward they would like to raise, please get in touch. Councillor David Smith and I are more than happy to assist. We do not always have the answers or outcome that some residents feel they require but if residents have any in this case we will give reasons behind actions of ABC. These have recently come up with issues surrounding parking and fly tipping.

As each New Year begins we as Councillors are given a sum of money to use as grants for various causes. If you feel that you have a local need and it fits the criteria set out to us, we may be able to help. If this is the case, please get in touch."

Andy Rogers
Ashford Borough Councillor
Aylesford & East Stour Ward

Lockdown creates business opportunities for two pubs within the SWAN area



Whilst the country was on lockdown, two pubs took this as an opportunity to give their places a complete makeover. The Alfred Arms (pictured left) is located on Newtown Green. Landlords, Tracey and Gary who took over the pub in 2017. They say *"During lockdown we took the decision to refurbish the pub. We have given the grand old building a modern facelift on both the interior and exterior. We are a family and dog friendly pub and look forward to welcoming you all the next 100 years"*.

**Website alfredarms.co.uk
07818 416 429**

The Albion (pictured right) is located on Mead Road and owned by Donna, who took over just three weeks before lockdown commenced. Donna says, *"Since the lockdown; which was only three weeks after we opened, it gave us a chance to revamp the interior pub including the beautiful garden. New blinds painted right the way through and we revamped the bar"*.

**Website- under development
01233 622795**

**Think Local – Buy Local!
Show your support for our
local businesses.**



If you have any questions you wish to put forward to the Council or are aware of a local resident/business that has made an exceptional contribution during this pandemic, please contact our Clerks on clerk@swancc.org.uk so we can feature them in our next newsletter. You can also write to us: **Unit 10, Invicta Business Centre, Orbital Park, TN24 0HB.** We are also pleased to announce that we have been getting busier and involved in local projects, that recently we have hired another Clerk, Sarah Evans to job share. Between the two Clerks, they will be dividing their time of 40 hours per week. Sarah has lived in South Willesborough for 20 years, raising a family here and has been able to be involved in many local community activities.

SWAN SNIPPETS

We are pleased to hear that the SWAN Centre will be reopening albeit with limited facilities, subject to government guidelines. For further information, please contact their Secretary Mrs Jan Masters on 01233 642087.

The allotments in Gashouse fields will shortly be transferred from Ashford Borough Council to the SWAN Community Council. The legal position regarding allotments is that where a borough council and local council exists in the same area, the local council takes priority and responsibility for ownership and management. We look forward to working with the allotment holders and providing a sustainable future and maintaining the ongoing support of ABC.

A reminder to residents of the SWAN area that SWAN CC audited accounts and paperwork is available for inspection (appointment only) until 12 October 2020.

We are happy to announce that plans are in place to manage and prune the overgrown vegetation at the Spinney / Amanda's path.

BT has made an application to remove several BT public phone boxes in Ashford, including the box on Newtown Green. From figures we have been given in 2019, 586 calls were made from that box which equates to around 2 per day on average. If you have any thoughts / comments please write to Ashford Borough Council Planning Portal (Reference: 20/1064/AS).

We are waging war on litter – Councillors Bohill and Cane have joined the regular litter picking group which runs every first Wednesday. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us for further information. Our Councillors have also agreed to undertake walkabouts in South Willesborough and Newtown to catalogue and report serious cases of fly tipping and street litter.

Just a reminder to charities and local organisations that grants are still available to you if required, please contact our clerks for further information on whether you meet the requirements.

We have a new football team in the area - South Willesborough Rangers FC. If anyone is interested in joining, call James Burnett on 07917362715.

You may already be aware that we also have Bromley Green FC in the SWAN area. Check out www.bromleygreen.co.uk for further details.

We would like to wish a warm welcome to all the children who have gone back to school this month!

Kent County Council will be partnering with interested Parish, Community and Town Councils to install extra electric vehicle (EV) charge-points across Kent. The chargers will be located on land owned by the community, such as village hall car parks, and it is hoped that they can then be used by local residents and businesses that do not have off-street parking. The chargers will be owned and operated by KCC for public use. Any financial surplus generated by the charge points will be shared with the hosting council.

We have received feedback that some residents in the SWAN area are failing to be considerate when parking their vehicles. Please ensure that you park safely and keep in mind residents who are more vulnerable than others. Let's keep up the community spirit!

On that same note, a huge thank you to local convenience stores for supporting our residents during this difficult period, namely Mike at Costcutter and Shivajani at Londis and Earlsworth store and Michael at Newtown Post Office.

We are pleased to welcome our new PCSO – Isabel Smith



At a recent meeting, we spoke with Izzy about parking, speeding and drug crimes amongst other matters. She has given us information about frauds and scams which we feel you need to know about.

We'd like to highlight TV licence scams – phishing emails. If you are contacted and asked to pay for your TV licence using a different phone number, website or by posting your details to a different address than the one shown below, this is a scam.

TV Licensing, PO Box 578, Darlington DL98 1AN

TV Licensing will not come to your doorstep to collect the licence fee if you are over 75, so anyone who claims to do so is also a scammer!

There have been several reports of youths drinking and setting fire to shopping trolleys in the play area park by Bulleid Place and the recreation ground by Hamilton Road in the early hours of the morning. If anyone sees any fires, please call the Fire Service in the first instance. All the areas are being patrolled regularly to help deter these issues and for reassurance.

Car crimes – Keep your car locked. An unlocked vehicle parked on Herbert Roads has had money taken from inside. Report willful damage. A vehicle parked on Curtis Road has recently had its wing mirror pulled off.