

## Who is Your Community Star?

*Holly Ivaldi, Clerk*

Eynsford Parish Council is delighted to be participating in the Kent Association for Local Councils Community Award scheme again. The KALC Community Award is to acknowledge and give recognition to those that have made a significant contribution to their local community.

Residents are invited to nominate a person or group who has made a difference to Eynsford's community. Parish councillors will then choose who will receive the award from those nominated. Past winners have been Ken Baker, Pauline Penney, Margaret Newbold, Sally Coston and Ed & Iris Holbrook.

Nominees must live or work within Eynsford parish. Examples of possible contribution could be: Long and sustained service to the community or part of it; achievements or actions of an inspiring nature to the local community; activities which have brought benefit or credit to the parish.

The award is a certificate signed by the KALC Chairman and the High Sheriff of Kent and will be presented at our Annual Parish Meeting in 2021.

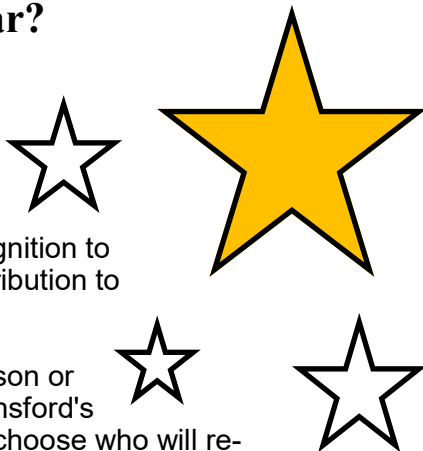
Please use this form to make your nomination or send an email to [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Name of person or group:**

**Reason for nomination:**

**Your name:**

**Please return to: Eynsford Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford DA4 0AY by 10th January 2021.**



## Autumn News 2020

*from*  
**EYNSFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter from your parish council.

After a few months of semi-normality, we are now into a second national lockdown. We are delighted that many of our volunteers are willing and able to help out again. If you are shielding or isolating for other reasons and cannot access online deliveries, then our volunteers can help out with shopping, collection of prescriptions and other small errands. Contact the parish council, or call your volunteer directly if you need a hand with something.

The parish office will be closed to the public during lockdown, but we will continue to work and keep services going.

We would like to welcome Wendy Gee to the parish council as a new councillor. You will see an article from her inside.

This is also the time to nominate someone in the community who has made a difference. See the back page for info on how to make a nomination.

Also enclosed is a survey about Green Issues in the village. Please could you complete and return this. Thank you.

*Holly Ivaldi, Clerk*

Eynsford Parish Council, Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford DA4 0AY;  
01322 865320; [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)  
Find 'Eynsford Parish Council' on Facebook and Twitter.  
[www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)



## Meet Your New Councillor: Wendy Gee

My name is Wendy Gee and I moved to the village in 2002 after meeting my husband who is part of the fourth generation of his family to live in Eynsford.

I have always taken a great interest in what goes on here and enjoy being part of the local community, attending various events and supporting our local shops, pubs and other facilities.

I believe in making life better for the village and its residents so when I heard Eynsford Parish Council were looking for a new parish councillor, I applied for the position and am delighted to have been co-opted onto the council.

I hope to use some of the experience I have gained in my 30+ years professional life as a qualified accountant and some of the skills I have learnt from the various voluntary roles I have carried out over the past 20 years to offer a valuable contribution to the Parish Council. I am looking forward to getting more involved and working closely with your other councillors to make improvements, support residents and hopefully succeed in making Eynsford a better place to live socially, economically and environmentally.

My other interests include being a member of Eynsford Gardeners Club, the Monday morning walking group and helping Eynsford in Bloom. You will also find me walking around the village (a lot), gardening and doing Pilates (to ensure I can still do the walking and gardening!).



**For a large print newsletter call  
01322 865320**

## New Developments at the Allotments

*Cllr Alan Cooke*

A number of allotment tenants have expressed an interest in forming an Allotment Society, so a zoom meeting was held between the parish council and representatives from some allotment holders. The council outlined that the society would first need to elect a committee of at least six tenants and appoint a secretary, treasurer and chair who would then liaise with the parish council.

The parish council's prime responsibility is to protect their asset and would continue to prepare and update tenancy agreements, management plan and set and collect the rents. In addition the council would pay the water bill, advise a tenant when a plot shows little evidence of cultivation and where necessary give notice.

It is considered that a Society is better placed to organise work parties and advise the council where maintenance work may be required.



These informal societies have no legal status as such, but often perform a very useful purpose both in the interests of the parish council and the allotment holders themselves. Individual members of the Society may become a member of National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, formed in 1930, so have a wealth of experience to draw on for technical advice. This Society also operates an insurance scheme covering sheds, greenhouses, tools and public liability insurance. It can also supply seeds and other garden products at discounted prices.

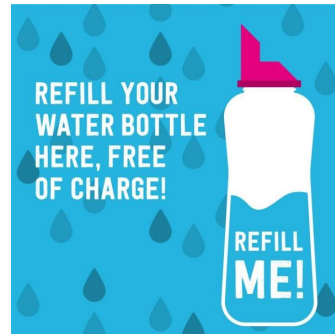
The parish council remains responsible for maintaining a waiting list, based on the name at the top of the list then has the first option when a plot becomes available. Currently there are 12 names on the waiting list.

Due to the demand for plots, the parish council has agreed expenditure to form seven additional plots at the southern end. Once work is completed on clearing the undergrowth, the council will review extending the water system as it recognises there was a significant demand during the summer just gone.

arrangements, whole school projects are “on hold” but something might be progressed with individual classes. Probably quite tricky for teachers at present. This might be something for the future.

**Trees and hedges:** The UK currently has approximately 13% tree cover, the governments committee on climate change recommends that we should have 17-19% woodland cover so we are looking at areas where we could plant some. Areas have been identified, including in parts of Millfield, as well as larger areas where discussion with the landowner will be necessary.

The group would like to promote publicly accessible drinking water in the village through the installation of a drinking fountain and through water refills. Sites around the village e.g. the station, are being considered.



**Vehicle charging points:** it is reported that some people are put off buying electric vehicles by the lack of public charging points. We think that there should be publicly available charging points in the village but feel that the most promising site is the car park of the new village hall so this project will probably have to wait until then.

Jane has created a questionnaire for circulation to residents asking what are their green priorities. This is included with your newsletter. Please take the time to complete and return it, thank you.

It was suggested that after lockdown we could organise an event in the village to celebrate and to disseminate news and ideas about green projects. All thought this was a good idea to be developed over the next few months in the expectation that we could move forward more purposefully when the end of the pandemic is in sight.

Finally, we have recruited four new members to our committee: Erica Russell and Paul Cooper have agreed to bring their great knowledge and enthusiasm to the group and will attend the next meeting in November, as will Chris Lewington and Anne Marie Fereday who will be representing Eynsford in Bloom to ensure that both groups are pulling in the same direction.

Do send your ideas and thoughts to [info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk), and return your questionnaire!

## Government White Paper: Planning for the Future

*Cllr Malcolm Richardson, Chair of Planning*

In August, the Government published its White Paper on ‘Planning for the Future’, which put forward proposals to radically reform England’s current planning system. The plans envisage the creation of zonal planning, centralised decisions and new local design codes.

Local Plans would be simplified and would be required to identify three types of land – ‘Growth’ areas, ‘Renewal’ areas and areas that are ‘Protected’. Growth areas would have automatic outline consent for development, Renewal areas would be suitable for some development and Protected areas would justify more stringent development controls to ensure sustainability. This would include areas included in the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and similar.

The designation of such areas however would be primarily centralised although there would be locally prepared design codes which would apply to planning decisions. However the role of Local Authority planning committees would be significantly reduced as in many cases, the principle of development would have already been established.

When and how the public would engage in the planning process would also change, with planning being digitised although the majority of public involvement would be at the Local Plan stage rather than when an individual planning application is made.

There would also be firm deadlines for the grant of planning with a proposal for deemed consent if a decision is not made within set timeframes.

Developer contributions would also be changed – at present developers contribute to infrastructure and other projects via either the Community Infrastructure Levy or through section 106 Agreements. These would be replaced with reference to a value of the development which is nationally set.

Automatic permission could also be granted for developments deemed to be of high quality that reflect local character (so-called ‘Fast Track for Beauty’).

A much more centralised planning system is envisaged with a single set of planning policies for England and a reduced role for elected councillors.

The proposals essentially focus on streamlining Local Plans and providing shortcuts for planning permission in certain situations. However the White Paper is only applicable to residential development with the current planning system dealing with all other types.

There is little in the White Paper about sustainable development, energy efficient building, carbon neutral homes or infrastructure project to support greener forms of transport.

The primary reason for these proposals are, according to the Government, to streamline the planning process and thus deliver more housing.

However many questions have to be answered, the main one being that a 'one size fits all' approach handed down to local communities from a central authority may not work. Local community input is likely to be reduced, and local authorities would have less control over development proposals. Central guidelines on developer contributions also risk local influences not being taken into account, with the danger that some developments might take place without sufficient contributions to the required infrastructure.

It is a debatable point as to whether the current planning system is hindering new residential development and thus it remains to be seen whether these proposals would actually lead to an increase in the housing stock. Only in the last year a report from the Campaign for Rural England claimed that there is the capacity for over one million new homes on existing 'brownfield' sites (the current Government target is 300,000 per annum). In addition the Local Government Association has highlighted that nine out of ten planning applications are approved with more than one million homes given planning permission over the last decade yet to be built.

While it is generally recognised by planners and other professionals that the current planning process undoubtedly has its flaws, there has been much opposition to these proposals from both Local Authorities and other planning bodies. There are undoubtedly some good ideas in the proposals (streamlining the Local Plan process for instance), and Eynsford Parish Council has responded to the consultation, with an overall emphasis that there must be no diminution in both Local Authority or community involvement or consultations on such issues.

raining down on our heads!! This caused great merriment but overall, the girls filled nearly seven bags of leaves which were then taken to the allotment area in the village. They were emptied in the compost area to make valuable leaf mold for either next year or the year after. This is used to cultivate flowers, throughout the village and also supply our allotment holders with valuable nutrients for their vegetables.

We were very happy to help the girls in their studies and would like to wish them every success with their studies as they complete their final year and move on to university.

## **Greener Eynsford Working Group.**

*Cllr Michael Barker*

Ferne Haxby has stepped down from the role of chair of this group and has handed over to me to steer the group forward at this challenging time. All our meetings are still being conducted via a video conferencing service. Theresa Durrant and Kirstie MacMillan have left the group for new challenges and we are grateful for their contributions.

Current projects: Crisp packet recycling: we continue to collect crisp packets for charity and have plenty of them but the air ambulance is no longer accepting them. Eight bin bags full have recently been taken to the Eco pantry in Seal where they collect a range of items to be recycled in aid of the charity Kent Baby Matters.

We'd like to minimise the carbon footprint of the parish council office and are looking into the possibility of having an energy efficiency survey and converting to a renewable energy supplier. We have already changed supplier for the football changing rooms. Solar panels might also be an option.

Many insects and other invertebrates are declining in areas where they used to flourish, so we would like to create or restore areas where insects can thrive. The village has various grassy areas that could be allowed to grow wilder and support more wild flowers that would be attractive to pollinators. A first step could be to reduce the frequency of grass cutting in selected areas and see what grows. This would have to be negotiated with KCC, who commission the cutting. We would anticipate liaison with the Eynsford in Bloom over this project.

We have contacted Anthony Roper Primary School about combined projects developing wildlife friendly areas at the school. Because of bubbling



## Young Volunteers Help With Leaf Clearance

*Cllr Ferne Haxby*

The Parish Council was approached by three delightful students from Tonbridge Grammar School, Olivia Sherry, Ella Thompson and Emma Hall, enquiring as to whether they could come to the village to complete a task to help them with their environmental studies which, we understand, is part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

After speaking with Olivia, Emma and Ella on what was important to them and how they could help local people, we also spoke with Eynsford in Bloom to talk through how their work could benefit the village.

Eynsford in Bloom is very successful and work tirelessly looking after the flora and fauna around the village. They have secured 'Gold' in the Best Village in Kent, for many years so are very passionate in the work they do.



Pauline Penney, who leads Eynsford in Bloom explained that leaves can cause problems when they fall, in that pavements can become slippery for people to walk on, they can clog up car parks and also block access to buildings. It was decided that two areas could be tackled for leaf clearing by the girls; the car park in Eynsford and also the walk way by Olive Seal Hall, both used by residents and a lot of the more elderly villagers.

After making sure that risk assessments were in place to protect the girls and keep everyone safe, Olivia, Emma and Ella and myself joined Pauline Penney and Chris Lewington of Eynsford in Bloom to tackle the leaf clearing.

Not the nicest of days as it was overcast but thankfully it was dry and mild. Clearing leaves is very satisfying but it does seem like painting the forth bridge in that as fast as we were clearing away the leaves, so more were

## Eynsford in Bloom Win Gold Again!

*Chris Lewington, Eynsford in Bloom*



Gold! Yes we won Gold again for the sixth year running. So well done everybody on the Eynsford in Bloom team and all those in the wider village that have kept their gardens, hanging baskets and displays looking fantastic through out the year. This year due to Covid restrictions the judging by South and South East in Bloom was mostly down to an electronic entry. We sent in a desktop publication and power point slide show detailing and illustrating our work over the last year from July 2019 - July

### Follow us Online



Eynsford Parish Council's website is the best place for you to find useful information about the council and its services. There are also areas dedicated to the village and community groups with the option for you to add your own events for listing. Have a look at [www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk)



We are also on **Facebook** and **Twitter** (search for Eynsford Parish Council) where we post up to date news and share useful information. We love to hear your views and to see your pictures too. Do follow us to keep up to date! Let us know what you

2020. At some point during the summer the judges made a discreet visit to the village to see for themselves so it was vital everything was looking at its best during those months but of course we are judged all through the seasons so the photographic evidence was there to show the work through out the year.

Judging is in a number of categories so while getting all the flowers out is essential so too is our evidence of composting and recycling, maintaining village signs and street architecture, no littering, rubbish or dog fouling and getting the involvement of the wider community and local businesses. We were particularly praised for our good links with the local authority and Kent Wildlife Trust as well as getting new volunteers involved especially some young members. Even so our 88 out of 100 score similar to last year puts us just in the top award section. So we will be striving to push that number higher next year.

As with everyone the lockdown in the spring presented its challenges. From the end of March until early May the Eynsford in Bloom team were not meeting and working our usual Tuesday morning and first Saturday of the month sessions. The village of course still looked wonderful with all its' spring bulbs and blossom. Why wouldn't it? The work went into planting for spring the previous autumn at key sites like the war memorial. When restrictions started to ease and we were back on the job we certainly had our work cut out though pulling up the weeds and cutting back the brambles all of who were grateful for our enforced rest and had made good use of the spring sunshine to make their appearance known!

Covid rules have meant some changes to our way of working. Obviously we have to keep our 2m distances and some members prefer to wear masks when working even though we are outdoors. We mostly bring our own hand tools to work with and coffee and biscuits at the end of our labours has mostly been outdoors at various members' houses and gardens.

As we head into the second half of autumn one of our main tasks is to remove the summer bedding from the War Memorial and put in the winter planting and next spring's bulbs. There's been a fantastic display of Begonias and Salvias these recent months forming our red, white and blue colour scheme to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE/VJ Day. These will now be removed and replaced with Primrose ready in time for the annual Remembrance Day service.

## Housing Needs Survey

*Cllr Phil Ward*

You will have received or should soon receive a Housing Needs Survey from 'Action with Communities in Rural Kent'. The survey is sponsored by Sevenoaks District Council, and aims to better inform the strategy for local housing; Eynsford Parish Council is supporting this initiative.

In 2003, the Rural Housing Trust completed the low-cost housing development at Knights Field, with Princess Anne attending to formally present the scheme to the community. The Parish Council was instrumental in the success of this project in spite of some opposition from within the community. We fully understand the difficult balance of providing new housing against the protection of the Green Belt, but these houses have allowed people with strong local connections to remain or return to the village; they will do so for many years to come.

Eynsford is a wonderful place for families to live and grow, but as children look to leave the family home they are often forced to move away due to unaffordable local house prices. This survey will capture information about the current needs within our community, but not just of young people indeed for anyone who may find it difficult to afford to live or rent in Eynsford.

There is no escaping the fact that the availability of suitable development land in the parish is very limited. Our village is set in an AONB bordered on all sides by the Green Belt, both designed in part to constrain development. That said, if there is sufficient demand locally, we may look to engage with local land owners, developers and planners to try and identify more suitable sites for new low-cost housing.



Please do take the time to complete and return the survey, it could be important for you or your family members.

If you have lost your copy, you can download a form from the parish council website.