

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Penshurst Parish Council held on 14 April 2025 at 7.00 pm in Penshurst Village Hall**

**1. PRESENT:** Cllrs A Campbell (Chairman), Mrs D Broad, D Howard, N Furnell, B Townsend, J Horsford, PC John Donegan (Part)

**2. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs R Rees, S Jolly, R Gerard-Sharp, KCCLlr Mrs Margot McArthur

**In Attendance:** SDCLlr R Streatfeild, 3 Parishioners.

**3. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 3 March 2025,** having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Declarations of interests in agenda items:** None

**5. OPEN SESSION:** No issues raised.

**a. Village Hall:** The continuing leak by the village hall gate was raised.

**b. Footpaths:** The practice by some farmers to reduce the width of footpaths when refencing was raised, Salmans Farm was given as an example plus the Warren over the bridge although there were others. The issue was particularly problematic where electric fencing was used.

**c. Bus Shelters:** The shingles on the shelter opposite the Penshurst Village Hall were loose, ED to report to contractor plus request other units also be checked.

**6. KCCLlr Mrs Margot McArthur:** ED advised that Cllr Mrs McArthur would not be standing again at the May 2025 elections, the PC recorded their thanks and best wishes to her for the future.

**7. SDCLlr Richard Streatfeild:** Cllr Streatfeild raised issues relating to settlement and village designations, housing in relation to current parliamentary requirements and the impact of green field or grey designated land to provide same; the call for sites ended on 28 April 2025. Net Zero had been scrapped, central procurement focus, building development in central Sevenoaks, impact of Gatwick, the change of council structure, refuse service being under review in relation to recycling, bottle banks and glass collection plus separation of items plus regularity of collections.

The Operators Licence application for the Spring Hill business was raised; although both SDC and KCC were entitled to submit a response to the authority in Leeds they had chosen not to, ED confirmed the PC were not permitted to submit a response on behalf of parishioners. Cllr Horsford confirmed the site would and licence would be used for parking lorries overnight and would not involve using the site as a transfer site or for the acceptance and storage/transfer of goods/materials.

The Chafford Lane wall had not been repaired even though SDC had accepted responsibility; they could offer ownership to the adjacent landowner if they wished this; it was anticipated they would not wish to be responsible for the repairs and costs involved, a date for the work to be undertaken had not been advised at date of meeting.

An Enforcement file had been opened in relation to Kingdom, it was reported sound checking system had been installed.

**8. PC 30366 John Donegan:** PC Donegan had undertaken a Speedwatch session in the parish. The speeding problem on Rogues Hill was raised by a parishioner as the PC had requested this site be checked. PC Donegan confirmed the Kent Police Authority strictly controlled the sites identified in the parish.

Rural crime was reducing in the area, one current issue involved the sale of cars by members of the public who were persuaded not to report the details to the DVLA. Checks had been made on heavily used routes with 4x4s and vehicles with trailers being targeted. Orpington remained the delivery point for quadbikes and similar with chain saws, bikes, motor crossers and Husqvarna.

**9. Tom Tugendhat Report - Access for phone signal and internet use:** Many people across the community experience problems with mobile phone service and reception. Parishioners are invited to help

with a survey to establish as much information as possible about the areas with poor signal, the survey is available on [www.tomtugendhat.org/mobile-phone-survey](http://www.tomtugendhat.org/mobile-phone-survey).

**10. Neighbourhood Watch:** Cllr Furnell reported that not so long ago in a meeting in the Village Hall Cllr Townsend spoke about the amount of crime that took place in the parish which was met with derision by some in the audience who clearly did not share that view. Indeed, we might take the view that we live in something of a 'crime free' bubble surrounded by criminality going on around us.

In recent months a Hildenborough drug dealer was given a 5½ year sentence for supplying cocaine across West Kent; the discovery of a huge cannabis farm in TW with a value estimated as £3 million pounds. A man was found guilty of murder in Edenbridge and a TW man was charged with murder. Three criminals were given jail terms between 3 and 5 years for running brothels including one in TW. In another incident a Rusthall allotment holder died following an altercation with teenagers.

In reality, crime within the parish is all too common. Farms in particular, are frequently the target of criminals who steal anything and everything including a £20 000 cattle handling system, all terrain vehicles, quadbikes, chainsaws and other tools. Last year burglar who stole £55,000 pounds worth of agricultural equipment from farms across Kent was jailed for two and a half years.

When thieves in the act are challenged by farmers they make threats like setting your home on fire or respond by firing steel ball bearings using catapults.

Last November a barn fire at Ashour completely destroyed a barn full of hay and straw. The cause of the fire was suspicious after several fires had been started in previous months. It is now being rebuilt at a huge cost and is only just being completed.

To help counter so much crime, farmers now use Farmwatch, a community network, to share information about criminal activity with one another and with the Rural Task Force police. Unfortunately, the police may be the other side of the county when a crime is being committed in our parish. So criminality continues....

Other less fortunate residents have their homes and sheds broken into or their cars stolen – keyless entry car theft is increasingly used to take high end vehicles.

Finally, all of us are vulnerable to scams and our senior residents in particular are especially at risk. So the crime free bubble of Penshurst is not so crime free after all.

**11. Matters Arising: Affordable Housing:** Chairman advised discussions were ongoing in relation to issues which required attention but were not the responsibility of the Estate, when the issues had been dealt with it was anticipated plans could be drawn up soon afterwards.

## **12. PLANNING: Planning Applications:**

**25/00677/CONVAR: King Meadows, Fordcombe Road, Fordcombe:** New landscaping. Install new swimming pool, pool house and associated landscaping. Demolish existing detached garage and store. with amendment to change the timescale for demolition of the garage and shed.

**25/00655/HOUSE: 10 Paddock Close, Fordcombe:** Demolition of single storey side addition and entrance porch, erection of a two storey side extension and single storey front extension. PC have no comment with regard to this application.

**25/00372/FUL: Westover Farm, The Lane, Fordcombe:** Change of Use of Residential and Agricultural Land and the installation of an Equestrian American Barn with Hardstanding and Track Connecting to Existing Facilities, and Removal of Existing Stable Building and yard. Penshurst PC have no objections to this application. **APPLICATION WITHDRAWN**

**25/00084/5/LBCALT: The Oast House, Ashcombe Priory, Chafford Lane, Fordcombe:** Internal alterations, alterations to fenestration and replacement of existing windows and doors. Conversion of garage to habitable rooms. **GRANTED**

**25/00085/LBCALT: The Oast House, Ashcombe Priory, Chafford Lane:** Internal alterations, alterations to fenestration and replacement of existing windows and doors. Conversion of garage to habitable rooms. Application now been amended, original PC comments will be considered.

**25/00084: Amended plans and Heritage/Design and Access Statement.** Any comments made on the original application will be considered when the decision is made.

**22/02983/& SE/22/02984/HOUSE: The Village House, High Street, Penshurst:** Proposed demolition of the existing single storey rear projection, shed and garage and the erection of a replacement

single storey rear extension, a new outbuilding and double garage, together with associated landscaping works.

**22/03007/HOUSE: Redwood, Penshurst Road, Penshurst:** Alterations and improvements to elevations and roof comprising: enlargement of existing window openings, new window openings to existing lower ground floor, new railings to windows new roof lights to existing east wing. External safety balustrades to west elevation and rear.

**22/03024/FUL: Land Southeast Of Redwood, Penshurst Road, Penshurst:** Conversion of outbuilding to dwelling.

**22/03058/HOUSE: Gardeners Annexe, Little Chart, Smarts Hill, Penshurst:** New dormers, additional fenestration to annexe.

**25/00145/FUL: Birches, Fordcombe Road, Penshurst:** Refurbishment and alteration works throughout the existing property, including the conversion of the existing basement to provide additional habitable accommodation. Construction of an orangery extension to the west-facing elevation. Removal of the existing shed outbuilding and outdoor swimming pool. Construction of a replacement outdoor swimming pool with new detached outbuilding. Removal of the existing greenhouse structure. Construction of a detached garage and storage building with new driveway and parking area, served by new vehicular access. New gates to serve the existing driveway. Associated hard and soft landscaping works in the vicinity of the proposed extension and swimming pool. Sunken area for Air Source Heat Pump units and below ground LPG tanks. Further information has been requested, sections of proposed sunken area for Air Source Heat Pump, below ground LPG tanks and noise assessment report.

**24/03428/LBCALT: Springs Cottage, Bullingstone Lane, Penshurst:** Raising of roof area and eaves over the external door openings and slightly extended either side. Raising of the ceiling to the living area including a central fully vaulted area. Raising of ground floor by approximately 50mm allow for raising the existing floor level by approximately 50mm. Removal of 20th century? / modern? brick drylining skin to internal face of original solid external wall and replacement with timber stud insulated drylining with plasterboard and skim coat as internal finish including formation of recess to wood burner on north wall.

**Minor description change added 12 February 2025. GRANTED**

**24/03327/HOUSE: Yeomans, Walters Green Road, Penshurst:** Demolition of existing garage, summerhouse and single storey extension. Erection of linked single storey extension. Internal alterations. Alteration to fenestration. Associated landscaping. **GRANTED (24/03328/LBCALT Refused)**

**SE/24/03041/FUL: Lake House, Poundsbridge Lane, Poundsbridge, Penshurst:** New dwelling with outbuildings, including self-contained guest accommodation, and swimming pool. Associated hard and soft landscaping works.

**SE/24/03017/24/03016/HOUSE/LBCALT: 1 Rectory Cottages, High Street, Penshurst:** Replacement central heating with a new external oil boiler and oil tank. Install a new hot water cylinder and add 4 radiators to the existing 3. Possible alterations to pipework. **GRANTED**

**SE/24/02520/FUL: Fordcombe Village Recreation Ground Fordcombe Road Fordcombe:** Existing single storey storage building 36 sqm and one 15 sqm shipping container to be removed, and to be replaced by storage building of 56 sqm, for storing equipment for charitable functions. **GRANTED**

**SE/24/02585/FUL: Barn North of Little Chafford, Spring Hill, Fordcombe:** Conversion of existing agricultural buildings to residential use. Penshurst Parish Council note the reasons for the refusal of the previous application (23/02304) and consider that these have been fully addressed in the current application. We therefore support the proposed development. **The applicant has provided a BNG metric and BNG report. GRANTED**

**SE/25/00637/LDCEX: Westfield House, Nunnery Lane:** Confirmation the existing building on site and surrounding land have been in ancillary residential use for a sufficient period of time that these are now lawful.

#### **Tree Surgery:**

**24/02738/WTCA: Rogues Hill House, Rogues Hill, Penshurst:** Various works to trees.

**24/02722/WTCA: Garden Cottage Fordcombe Road Penshurst:** Various works to trees

**24/02803/WTCA: Rogues House, Rogues Hill, Penshurst:** Beech Tree - Cut back 20% of tree canopy.

**25/00181/WTPO: Daneby Hall, The Lane, Fordcombe: Proposal (T1 & T2) Oaks - reduce lower lateral spread over garage by 30% (G1) group of Oaks - reduce by 30%. GRANTED**

### **13. HIGHWAYS**

**SMARTS HILL, PENSURST: 17 JULY 2025 FOR 1 DAY:** From Saints Hill to Nunnery Lane B2188 Saints Hill, Sandfield Road and Nunnery Lane (And vice versa)

**TRUGGERS LANE TO GROVE ROAD, CHIDDINGSTONE HOATH 17 JULY 2025 FOR 1 DAY:** From Chiddingstone Hoath to Grove Road Alternative route via Hoath Corner to Oakenden Lane, Ryewell Hill, Wellers Town Road, Hampkins Hill Road, B2027 Tonbridge Road, B2176 Moorden Lane, B2176 Station Hill, B2176 Penshurst Road, B2176 High Street Penshurst, B2188 Fordcombe Road and Grove Road, and vice versa **Openreach - Temporary Road Closure - Broad Lane, Fordcombe & Ashurst - 25th April 2025 for 1 day between 09.30hrs and 15.30hrs** The road will be closed for the entire length. The alternative route is via Chafford Lane, B2188 Fordcombe Road, A264 Ashurst Road and vice versa. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works.

**871609: Poundsbridge Lane:** Drainage and Flooding, blocked drain/gulley

**854466: Spring Hill: Public House and Village Hall:** Issue reported again, report on information relating to work carried out and further work to be done requested. Flooding reported to KCC Highways, confirmation received regarding problem with pipework serving the area, Southern Water responsible for work required to rectify.

**826354/755185: Finches, Fordcombe Road:** Flooding due to blocked Drain/Gulley. Gulley scheduled for cleaning.

**826364: Blocked Drains - Rogues Hill:** originally promised for clearance in July 2023, reported on 20.8.24 that cleaning was scheduled.

**832672: Flooding of property and problems with drainage at another submitted 24.9.24:** Reported to Kent Highways, SE Water and Southern. Checks carried out by water companies and highways; currently Southern Water approached to deal with issue.

**PROW: 822853: SR465 – Walters Green Road/Weavers Cottage:** Poor surfacing with possible septic tank issue; **240712840: - Coach Road, SR 546:** Overhanging trees. *Footpath repairs delayed.*

**823784: Extension of yellow lines to The Lane in Fordcombe:** To improve safety for the septic tanker whilst working. PC advised to include on HIP. Reported again under 844790 for update on current situation.

**835121: White/Yellow Lines:** Request for road markings to be reinstated adjacent to hedging from new rectory area down towards entrance to Leicester Square. Application plus photographs provided by Cllr Furnell submitted to SDC together with request for reinstatement. **Work agreed with SDC, date for work to be carried out awaited, dependant on weather conditions.**

**842230: Poundsbridge Manor:** White lines require reinstatement; Poundsbridge Manor – fault reported again under reference **873739.**

**839558: Cleave House:** Multiple potholes. **Works being programmed – 1.11.24**

**Chafford Lane Wall:** Notification received that SDC responsible for area, confirmation awaited on way forward with regard to clearance of materials in road and further repair works. ED advised by KCC Highways that SDC liable for reporting problem for action.

**PROW Report 250225697/241097018:** Inadequate drainage on footpath SR465 – Allocated, awaiting inspection.

**862579:** Overhanging Branch between Little Chart and Spotted Dog (Reported by others). Issue under investigation 21.2.25

**864529: Rogues Hill:** Report of Gulley clearance lorry attending site at 1.30am 28.2.2025 for approximately 10 minutes but no visible work carried out.

**Road Closure: Chafford Lane, Fordcombe - 21st March 2025 for 1 day:** The road will be closed from the river to entrance to The Drive. The alternative route is via Chafford Lane, B2188 Spring Hill, Sandfield Road, Walters Green Road and vice versa. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while drainage improvement works are undertaken by Kent.

**Urgent Road Closure - Poundsbridge Lane, Penshurst - 24th February 2025:** It will be necessary to close Poundsbridge Lane, Penshurst from 24th February 2025 for up to 4 days. The road will be closed outside Honey Field Cottage. The alternative route is via Poundsbridge, Poundsbridge Hill, Poundsbridge Lane, The Lane, B2188 Fordcombe Road, B2188 Spring Hill, B2188 Saints Hill, B2188 New Road, B2188 Fordcombe Road, B2188 High Street, B2176 Rogues Hill. B2176 Penshurst Road. This is to enable drainage investigation works to be carried out by Kent County Council.

## **South East Water - Temporary Road Closure - Coldharbour Road, Penshurst - 29th April**

**2025 for 3 days:** The road will be closed outside The Bottle House Inn. The alternative route is via Coldharbour Road, Smarts Hill, B2188 New Road/Fordcombe Road, Grove Road, Finch Green and vice versa. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by South East Water. For the most up to date information on these works please visit: <https://one.network/?tm=142846586>

**Fly tipping:** This had been reported near South Park Farm and Cold Harbour Farm, to be reported.

### **14. Finance/Accounts:**

- a. BLACK HAWK SECURITY SYSTEM:** ED had checked options for the management of the system and advised that the PC would need to provide a new/updated policy covering the use of the system, this would include stipulations relating to (GDPR) Data Protection as required. In order to ensure security/privacy in relation to the use of the CCTV system a dedicated mobile phone would be prudent to be provided for the Parish Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Parish Council. In the absence of the Clerk during illness/holidays it would then become the responsibility of the Chairman to deal with the CCTV. The current clerk was retiring and the provision of a new mobile phone unit would also be suitable for use as a new dedicated Parish Council phone line for the new clerk as they would be responsible for the CCTV system. Quality of recording to be checked with the contractor prior to purchase of a mobile phone to ensure unit is operating to satisfactory level.
- b. GACC:** A request for a contribution towards the costs incurred by GACC in relation to the objections to the expansion of Gatwick had been received. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Horsford and unanimously agreed that the sum of £500 be approved towards the campaign. ED prepared cheque for signature at meeting, item added to cheque list.
- c. Section 137 Expenditure:** Confirmation from KALC that limit increased from £10.81 to £11.10 per parishioner for the year 2024/2025.
- d. Banking:** ED reported Lloyds Bank had introduced charges for Parish Councils, these were minimal but were incurred if money was paid in with possible costs for cheque payments. Only Registered Charities were awarded non-fee accounts, PCs being considered under the Community Accounts designation. In view of the imminent appointment of a new clerk it was agreed that an alternative bank be selected to hold excess funds above the guaranteed bank limit as a priority. It was noted that Santander guaranteed the sum of £100K on deposit.
- e. VAT Claim:** ED confirmed the claim for the period September 2024 – March 2025 had been submitted, confirmation had been obtained of receipt by Customs and Excise and approval for payment which was being actioned. Sum reclaimed: £629.35
- f. Castle Water:** ED asked if the water meter at the allotment site could be read, she had attempted to get a photo of the unit with a mobile but the meter had too much mud over it to get a clear picture. Castle Water had confirmed the PC Account No. was 2486762 and the meter serial number was 18M489144. When ED had complained about the siting of the meter and the subsequent difficulty in being able to obtain an accurate reading Castle Water advised it was not their responsibility but that of the PC to provide readings, if Castle Water were asked to do so the PC would be charged. Chairman would check the meter for the current reading. Invoices for the allotment would be prepared and despatched when the new Clerk was appointed.
- g. Annual Accounts:** ED confirmed the paperwork for the annual accounts was being actioned, this would be finalised when the new clerk was appointed in order that the External Audit requirements could be complied with and the new clerk would be aware of the financial requirements for the PC.
- h. The following accounts were received and unanimously approved for payment:**

|                        |  |        |
|------------------------|--|--------|
| Kompan Ltd             | Aerial Ropeway Inspection, reassembly & tensioning | 385.71 |
| Graham Wickens         | Bottle House Allotment Water Supply Repairs        | 175.00 |
| HMRC                   | Clerk National Insurance                           | 141.60 |
| KAPC                   | Annual PC Subscription                             | 884.32 |
| Lucy Ruller Rowell     | Lengthsman   | 100.00 |
| Penshurst Village Hall | Hall Hire May – December 2025/Interviews           | 176.00 |
| GACC                   | Gatwick Fighting Fund Donation                     | 500.00 |

## **15. Any Other Business:**

**Easter waste collections:** Following the Easter bank holiday, there may be changes to residents' rubbish, recycling, and garden waste collection days. Good Friday, 18 April – no change - collections will take place as usual on this day. Easter Monday, 21 April – all collections this week will be one day later than usual until Saturday 26 April.

# PENSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 14 April 2025.

**Present:** Cllrs A Campbell, Mrs D Broad, D Howard, N Furnell, B Townsend, J Horsford, PC John Donegan (Part)

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Jolly, Rees and R Gerard- Sharp
- 2. The Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting,** having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 3. Chairman's Report: Andy Campbell**

Overall, the past year has been relatively uneventful from a Parish council point of view.

Planning applications are at the lowest number I can remember, there being only around 30 in the past year.

Highways issues continue at a high number, the vast majority of problems being caused by water damage from blocked drains and ditches. This is only going to get worse as Kent Highways policy of dealing with drainage on a cyclical basis means that they are only prioritising drainage issues where there is damage to property or a risk to highway safety.

The issue with the incorrect connection of the sewage drain to the surface water drain in the middle of Fordcombe has still to be corrected. Supposedly this will be dealt with this year – I find it beyond belief that the water company have allowed this situation to continue for so many months, with raw sewage flowing over the road through the village each time there is heavy rain. If this happened in a town or larger village, it would have been dealt with long ago. Also in Fordcombe, the collapsed wall and bank in Chafford Lane has still not been dealt with. Admittedly it took quite a lot of work from a resident and the Parish Council to establish ownership, but now that has been resolved I fail to see why the District Council and Kent Highways have taken absolutely no action – the debris in the road hasn't been cleared, let alone any action taken to prevent further slippage.

Perhaps all of the above reflects changes in the Planning Hierarchy which downgraded Fordcombe and Penshurst from "villages" to "settlements".

As I stated in my reports for the last two years, the Local Affordable Housing project grinds very slowly forward. Last year I reported that potential sites had been narrowed down to 2. For various reasons, one site has proved not to be viable, leaving us with the site near New Road. Legal and financial arrangements are being finalised between English Rural Housing and Penshurst Place Estate, following which we should see some draft plans. Any affordable local housing project is a lengthy process, so it is likely to be some considerable time before we see anything actually being built. Our other preferred housing provider remains the Becket Trust. Already a Registered Social Landlord, they have now been added to Sevenoaks District Council's register of preferred partners for development of Affordable Local Housing. Considering that others on the register are much larger organisations, such as West Kent Housing and Moat Housing, this is an important achievement for a small local organisation. Following complaints to the Parish Council about the selling off, rather than re-letting of some of their properties, West Kent Housing Association have agreed to let us know of any impending sales and to give Becket Trust the chance to buy them before they are put on the open market. Although unlikely to be significant in number, this could provide the opportunity for existing housing to be used for local families.

Moving on to something completely different, we are soon to see the demise of Kent County Council and Sevenoaks District Council. KCC have recently produced some draft options as to what the new structure might be. I am far from convinced that it will be good for small rural parishes like ours if Sevenoaks,

Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling, and Maidstone are merged into a single "West Kent" authority. The abolition of a layer of local government i.e the District Council means that the Parish Council and residents will be dealing directly with a no doubt Maidstone-centric super-authority. What are the chances of them paying much attention to anything we say? There is also the possibility that Parish Councils will be given more responsibilities. That's all very well, but the Parish Councillors already give significant amounts of their time, without being paid, and might not be in a position to take on any more responsibilities. If we end up needing to employ more staff than just a Clerk, the cost would probably have to be paid for by residents from the precept. No doubt there are challenging times ahead.

As always, I close with my thanks to all the councillors and particularly to Evelyn, our clerk, who after many years will be retiring this year.

Andy Campbell - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025

#### **4. The Retreat Charity – Penshurst – Reg. No. 211028 – Report from the Committee for 2025:**

The resident of No 2 became unwell, and taken to hospital in December, where he passed on within a few days. The accommodation was redecorated and new carpets were fitted. The vacancy was advertised and on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, a couple from the village took the tenancy. This change took place during a time of difficulty for the chair, and Ms Mars took the post of Acting Chair. At a meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>, it was decided that Ms Mars would continue as Chair.

#### **Maintenance and repairs.**

Three estimates were obtained for the work at No 2, but there have been no other repairs necessary.

**Christine Rose**

Hon Secretary - 24.3.2025.

#### **5. Penshurst School Governors' Report: March 2025**

I am pleased to report that over the last twelve months the school has gone from strength to strength. One of the things that I pride myself on, as Headteacher, is the part the school plays in the local community.

We like to think that we add something special to the community – as a rural small school it is very important that we have these links, as they are so beneficial to both our pupils and the local residents. We have a number of groups who support the school and these too are an important part of school life. The Friends of Penshurst School have supported the school for a number of years through events as well as financial contributions. This year they will merge with our PTA to create a Parent Teacher & Friends Association. During the time I have been the Headteacher they have made significant financial contributions including an extensive refurbishment of our 'growing garden'. They have also supported a number of initiatives that benefit all pupils such as our bespoke wellbeing initiative 'Relax Kids'. We also have an excellent PTA, the chair of which, Georgina Stober, has been relentless in her work to raise funds for the school. The PTA run a number of fundraising events including the annual Firework and Bonfire Night in November. This is very much a community event. The PTA have funded new laptops for teachers and enrichment days for pupils to name just a few. In the coming months they will fund the replacement of our classroom 'interactive whiteboards as well as a new screen and speakers for our hall. These items are essential to enable us to deliver the very best teaching to our pupils.

As a Church of England School we have strong links with the Church in Penshurst. Reverend Lisa Cornell is our current Chair of Governors and is a great support to the school. She is always there to support us and lend a listening ear. Rev'd Lisa visits the school each week to deliver Collective Worship; we also attend Church and use this special space as a place to come together as a school with our parents and carers. In November 2024 we had an inspection by SIAMs (a body who inspect Church schools) which went extremely well, the inspectors were complimentary; they captured much of the nature of our school in their



inspection report. I have included their report with this document – it is an easy read – it focuses very much on all the great things that happen in school.

Last year we were very lucky to receive a wonderful banner created by Penshurst Knit and Natter group. They took my initial ideas and created what I would describe as a creative masterpiece. The banner is used when we visit other schools or attend services at Rochester Cathedral.

I am very lucky to have a strong staff team who work incredibly hard to make Penshurst CE Primary School the success that it is. In March we had our annual World Book Day – a truly inclusive event that was inspired by a poetry workshop (funded by our PTA) from the Word Guerrilla – it was an excellent day that was enjoyed by all.

Leading a small rural primary school can present challenges however, but I like to think that although we are a small school we think big.

If any members of the Parish Council would like a tour of the school, we always have a team of 'ambassadors' from Year 6 who would be very pleased to be a guide.

**With kind regards,  
Sue Elliott, Headteacher.**

- 6. Fordcombe School Governors' Report:** Awaited
  - 7. Sevenoaks District Councillor Mr Richard Streatfeild:** Provided for April PC meeting
  - 8. PC 30366 John Donegan:** Provided for April PC meeting
  - 10. Neighbourhood Report** – Provided for April PC meeting
-