

Valley Conservation Society



doing nothing is not an option

Members' newsletter No 164

We are a non-political organisation

March 2019

Tree work done just in time

*Complimentary copy
for your interest*

The Society engaged Hood Tree Services Ltd to coppice a number of trees in Treacle Wood that were close to Hays Mill Road and which had been assessed as being in danger of going over in high winds. With volunteers from the Tuesday work party assisting with traffic marshalling, the work was completed just in time, before the arrival of the gale force winds earlier this month.



VALLEY CONSERVATION PRESENTS

The Runaways



Playing the music of the 1960s

Friday, May 3

8pm

**Boughton Monchelsea
Village Hall**

Parking and disabled toilet

Admission £15

with

Fish and Chip Supper

Orders to Alan Smith on 01622 751926

email: a128smith@btinternet.com

Bring your own drinks!

www.valleyconservation.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

The Society held its annual general meeting on Saturday, February 16, at Eling Court day room. Around 50 members attended and heard reports from the Society's executive committee on activities during the past year.

The notable points were:

Grants and Funding: Donations from Tovil Parish Council, Tesco, Golding Homes, A-Plant and others had brought in £6,490.

Treasurer's Report: The Society ended the year with a balance of £17,775.

Membership: Membership reached 534 – a new record since the Society's foundation in the year 2000.

Social media: The society's website had been updated and we were making more use of social media, with one Facebook post reaching 2,082 people.

Land Management: The list of tasks carried out by the Tuesday work party over the year extended to two pages and are too numerous to mention here. Suffice it to say that the work party leader Bryn Cornwell was very pleased with progress and thanked his volunteers for their dedication. *(Anyone can join the work party. Just turn up at the Conservation Cabin in Cave Hill at 10am on any Tuesday.)*

Hayle Park Nature Reserve: The trust's chairman, Paul Wilby, was unable to attend, but trustee and local councillor Brian Clark delivered a report on progress at the reserve in his place. The trustees were hopeful of soon adding a second large piece of land to the reserve: the former tip site at the top of Farleigh Hill, currently owned by MBC.

Social events: A music night had been organised for Friday, May 3, at Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall with The Runaways. (see opposite page)

Tickets for the summer barbecue on Saturday, July 20, could now be ordered from Alan on **01622 751926** at £10 each. Music this year will be from a new band: The Swinging Sixties

Elections: The new executive committee for 2019 sees just one change. Colin Holman stood down and his place has been taken by John Robertson. We thank Colin for his loyal service over many years and welcome John to the team.

Housing targets

Barely 18 months after it finally adopted its Local Plan that was supposed to direct development until 2031, Maidstone Borough Council has embarked on its Local Plan Review.

To be fair to the council, this is a new Government requirement that Local Plans are reviewed every five years – and Maidstone will need to publish its reviewed plan in 2022.

It reflects the Government's ambition to build 300,000 new homes across the UK each year. It is telling local authorities they must meet a housing target calculated by a "standardized method" which takes into account the Ministry of Housing's projections for "household" growth and is adjusted by the local "affordability ratio" - a measure of the average house price in the area compared with the average income.

When the Local Plan was adopted, it was determined that Maidstone needed to build 883 homes a year. You will not be surprised to learn the new calculations give a much higher figure.

For Maidstone, it equates to 1,244 homes per year.

However, the Government has said that any increase in housing requirement would be capped at 40% of the figure in a made Local Plan – for Maidstone that equates to $1.4 \times 883 = 1,236$ new homes per year.

That is the figure that MBC is now telling councillors and parish councils that it needs to find land for. The council will have to allocate development sites for the difference between the new yearly target and the existing target for each of the nine years left to run in the Local Plan (3,177 homes) plus the new plan will run for an additional six years for which the full yearly allocation must be found (7,416) giving a new target of 10,593 extra homes to be found.

If members are disbelieving about why Maidstone's population should be expanding so much, you need to look at the assumptions made in the Government's population forecasts. It predicts that Maidstone's population will rise by 11.9% in the 10 years from 2014. Of that, an increase of 3.2% will be the "natural" rise in population (births over deaths), an increase of 5.8% will be migration into the area from other parts of the UK (Londoners moving out and Northerners moving South), and an increase of 2.9% is the result of net immigration.

That means that 2,581 of the extra new homes to be built on our green fields in Maidstone are for people who are not yet even in the country.

Membership

At the point of writing this newsletter, 188 of last year's members had still not yet renewed their subscription for 2019, which became due on January 1. If you receive a membership application with this newsletter it is because we believe you are one of the 188 (unless you have renewed within the last 10 days). If so, please send in your subscription ASAP. Any queries to the Membership Secretary, Tony Day, on 01622 676810.

VALLEY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019

I/We should like to (re)join the Society: *(Please include your title and first name)*

Names:

.....

Address:

.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone: E-mail:

Mobile:

Would you prefer to receive newsletters by e-mail? Yes / No

Signature(s)

Membership is £2 per person year (or 50p for young people aged 14 to 18). Send your application form and your cheque made payable to Valley Conservation Society to:

**Tony Day, Membership Secretary,
57 Mayfair Avenue, Maidstone, ME15 6BY**

I enclose a cheque/cash for £..... (Donations welcome)

General Data Protection Regulations

Please tick the box if you consent to the Valley Conservation Society retaining the details on this form

Our legal basis for holding and processing the data you provide is our legitimate interest as a membership organisation and we will use it to send you newsletters and other information we consider relevant and useful. We will not disclose it to any third party

Office use only:

Issued:

Donation: £

Membership Nos

