

East Farleigh Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2017

This year has been a defining one as far as Parish Councils in Kent and particularly Maidstone have been concerned. There is currently debate and discussion on devolution of powers to local Authorities which will include those passed down to Parish Councils – watch this space!

The Maidstone Local Plan has moved on and is now waiting for the final decision from the Inspector, but its effects on traffic locally following the major housing developments in Hermitage Lane, Coxheath and elsewhere have been enormous. Your Parish Council, under the auspices of the Kent Association of Local Councils, has been fighting against this development or for the necessary infrastructure required to support it and will continue to do so.

We gave evidence at the appeal hearing for the development of 225 houses at Fant Farm which was successful in having the plan rejected by the Inspector.

The problems with the size, volume and speed of traffic in the village have continued and we have taken several routes to try and alleviate them:

- A meeting was held with Helen Grant MP, Network Rail and KCC Highways to discuss possible solutions for improving the traffic flow on Farleigh Bridge.
- KCC Highways were commissioned to produce a report on improvements to the junctions of Lower Road with the Green/ Lower Road and Station Hill along with traffic calming options for Lower Road.
- DHA transport Consultants have been commissioned to produce a Strategy for East Farleigh Bridge to include physical barriers to prevent HGVs access, and the final report is about to be published to include costed solutions.
- We continue to carry out speed checks via our Speedwatch initiative, but volunteers are still in short supply which impedes the frequency of these checks. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you are able to help out.

We are aware that the strength of the Broadband signal in our area is very weak and we continue to press for delivery of the requisite fibre cabling which we are assured will be delivered 'in the next few months'!

On a lighter note, the book 'East Farleigh – A brief history' by Cllr David Hussein was published and launched at a party attended by Ann Widdecombe, who wrote the foreword and signed copies on the night. Copies are still available through the Clerk at the nominal price of £2.50.

Parish Council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and all are welcome to come along and speak in the public session if they have any views they wish to share, and if you really want to be involved in the affairs of your village, we currently have two vacancies on the Council.

John Wilson
April 2017