



August 2011
Issue No. 61



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Editor's note to contributors

Some articles have been edited to fit in the space available, so apologies to those contributors.

Are you creative?

Friends of The Centre are working on a pilot study for a NAG ARTS FESTIVAL. If you paint, draw, play music, dance, perform, film, sing, read poetry or anything else creative in arts please contact Stuart at fogavc@hotmail.com or 01474 874140

Village Association Contribution Rate Frozen for Another Year

The Village Association AGM agreed that the present contribution rate should remain unchanged for the year July 2011 to June 2012. We all know that everyone's costs are rising, and the Village Association is no exception. Despite that, it was felt that the rate should be unchanged for the third successive year in recognition of the particularly difficult economic circumstances at this time.

The income and expense figures below have been extracted from the Village Association's accounts for the calendar year 2010. More detailed figures can be seen on the VA website. Copies of the accounts are available on request from the VA Office.

Total income in 2010 increased slightly (0.7%). Operating costs and Administration expenses were £8,335 higher (3%) reducing the surplus before tax by £8,239. Despite holding residents' contributions level, we were able to reward our staff with modest pay increases to so Greenland maintenance and Administration

2010 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			
	2010 (£)	2009 (£)	Inc/(Dec) (£)
Total Income	406,384	403,051	3,333
Operating Costs			
Village Hall	14,333	15,416	-1,083
Greenland	152,261	146,260	6,001
Hardland	61,171	59,844	1,327
Other Costs	35,958	33,868	2,090
Total	263,723	255,388	8,335
Administration expenses	104,010	100,719	3,291
Total Expenses	367,733	356,107	11,626
Surplus before Tax	38,651	46,944	-8,293
Tax	224	35	189
Surplus after tax	38,427	46,909	-8,482

accounted for the main part of the increase, reflecting also the higher rate of inflation and rises in vehicle running costs and information technology expenses.

Contribution income not only has to meet current expenses. Provision also has to be made for future maintenance costs such as paths and lighting as well as for buying the equipment needed for Greenland maintenance or amenities such as play areas for children. The surplus for the year is set

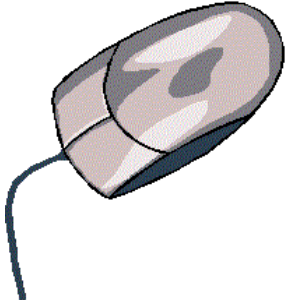
aside in specific funds to ensure that the VA has the resources to meet these needs.

Costs will continue to rise and it is inevitable that contribution rates will have to increase at some time to maintain the service the VA provides to residents. However, we will continue to look for cost savings and efficiency improvements to ensure that residents get the best value from their contributions.

Mike Rose
Treasurer

Visit:

www.nagval.com



New Ash Green Website

The New Ash Green website has been set up by the Village Association to provide up-to-date information about New Ash Green for residents and others who want to know more about the village and its unique structure. It should be of particular help to people wanting to buy property here and we hope that the website will answer many of the questions raised by prospective purchasers

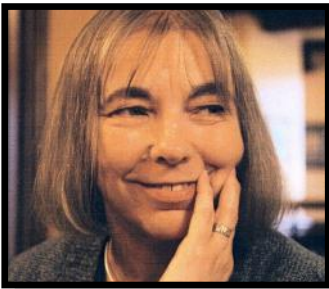
and their solicitors. Another objective is to provide news about issues that affect residents including road closures or new facilities.

Any information that we provide is, however, only as good as that which is given to us. Some we can pick up from regular mailings from Sevenoaks District and Kent County Councils but for much of the rest we depend on Residents' Societies and

local clubs and organisations sending us their news and latest information.

We should like to improve the coverage of local facilities with links to websites and other basic information so please send us your details using the "Contact Us" page of the website – we will be very happy to publicise your group or services.

www.nagval.com



Christine Gates 1949–2011

Christine Ferris was born on 3 August 1949 and grew up in Catford. On 28 March 1970, she married Brian Gates and moved straight into a brand new Span House at New Ash Green. Christine soon became an active and leading member of the local community. For some 30 years she was either a member, secretary or chairman of the Village Social Committee. She organised hundreds of social and cultural events, including Village Week and Village Day, discos, pop and classical concerts, walks, talks, quizzes, the yearly Buckets and Spades trip to Broadstairs, Firework Night and much more. The Social Committee raised sufficient funds to finance, with other grants, the Youth Centre which bears her name on the foundation stone she unveiled in 1979.

Separately from this, she also ran for many years the Annual Summer Scheme which provided children of

the village with sporting and creative activities during the long summer holidays.

In 1986 Christine was so dismayed at the potential closure of the village Bookshop that she drew together a group of other like-minded people. They eventually purchased the Bookshop and have run it on a co-operative basis for the past 25 years. During this time the Bookshop became one of the main things in her life. She spent many hours in the shop and at home working on Bookshop matters.

Christine was also concerned about the village environment. She was an active member of the original Foresters Group which augmented the planting and woodland management of the village. She was later a co-opted member of the VA Greenland Committee and of Knights Croft Landscape Advisory Committee and, more recently, she was an active member of the

Orchard Group until it became too dangerous for her to participate. She was also a member of the Friends of New Ash Green Village Centre.

Some ten years ago the beginnings of Alzheimer's disease appeared. Her progressive deterioration was slow at first, but accelerated in the last two years. After moving to a Nursing Home last September she was admitted to hospital on 19 March and died peacefully on 3 April.

Christine loved socialising and organising. Everyone liked her, though some may have hidden when she approached them to help in yet another project. She is a great loss to the village but most of all she is the loss of a loving mother to Emma and Benjamin and wife to Brian. She will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her.

New Ash Green Bookshop

The Bookshop in New Ash Green has been celebrating its 25th anniversary. In 1986 a group of villagers pooled their time and money to buy the shop from its previous owner and to ensure the existence of a bookshop in New Ash Green. Since then, it has become known for its expertise, personalised customer service and wide range of stock. Situated in the centre of the village, The Bookshop is also a mine of local information and advice and regularly acts as a box office for village events. There is a

lot to celebrate! Remarkably, only one of its founding members had any experience of working in a bookshop but people learned fast. There were tasks for everyone — from window dressing and customer service to accounts and meeting with publishers' reps. From the very beginning the decision was made to stock music and music accessories, items which were not easily available anywhere else in the area: it is this sort of response to local needs which makes The Bookshop so special. Most customers are from New

Ash Green and the surrounding villages, but some come from Dartford, Gravesend, and even further afield. They include a number of local schools, choirs, and businesses.

Throughout its 25 years The Bookshop has been run by the community for the benefit of the community. New people from that community are now needed to take it forward into the next 25 years. Could you be one of them?

Get in touch (see the box on the right) if you would like to be part of this unique shop's future.



Photo: Stuart Richardson

ASH GREEN BOOK CO.

7 The Row

New Ash Green

Longfield DA3 8JB

01474 874194

ashgreenbooks@btconnect.com

NAG Film Society

Following recent maintenance and inspection work on the projection and screen systems, NAG Film Society has now returned to the Village Hall.

NAG Film Society ran from the very early days of New Ash Green in 1968, with a borrowed school projector the old Village Hall (now the shop next to Oxfam). The society became very popular, winning a new 16mm Elf projector as "1973 Film Society of The Year". The peak season was 1976/77 with 210 members.

With the success of the Society, Bovis added a purpose built projection room to their plans for the new Village Hall. On its completion in 1975 the Society installed a 5m wide drop down cinema screen and upgraded the projectors.

Following our re-launch we are operating a programme of continuous improvements, and have visited other local community cinemas in Kent to see their equipment, what films they show and how they operate. We have now obtained a professional digital projector which will be used from the start of the October 2011-July 2012 season. This will enormously increase our choice of films, including films on general release.

We intend to show a mixed programme of classic features/art films and shorts with the evenings being presented as a social meeting place, perhaps in some instances with discussion on the films seen.

Our current intention is to open on the first Saturday of every month. Future shows will be advertised on posters, on our web site www.fonagvc.co.uk or by e-mail on request to fonagvc@hotmail.com.

Anyone who would like to help to make this a successful and truly local community cinema with technical, admin or front of house work should please contact Gill Lockett by phone at 01474 871381 or by e-mail to fonagvc@hotmail.com.

We particularly need help with publicity and all can help by spreading the word or offering to deliver some of next year's programme leaflets in September this year. Next Season starts 1 October 2011 and we will have a week's film festival in 2012.

NAG FILM SOCIETY

1st Saturday of every month. Details will be displayed in the Village Centre or you can visit www.fonagvc.co.uk





Goodbye to the Rector of Ash—for ever?

For over 10 years the Revd. John Peal has been Rector of Ash and Ridley. He has been ably assisted in his work by Jacquie, his wife, as Honorary Curate. In October they leave Ash and retire to Sussex. Our Rector is the only full-time social worker in our parish who cares for all who live here, whatever their age, beliefs or background. Many can attest to help in bereavement or other difficulties. There is a strong chance that for financial reasons he will not be replaced by another full time rector.

The Parochial Church Council is working with the Diocesan authorities to secure the best outcome for the parish but if the funds are not there, the whole community will lose out. Is there an alternative? A fulltime Rector costs about £7 a year for each person in the parish. Should the cost be borne only by the present church members? If you want to help or find out more please contact the PCC at pcc@ash-church.org.uk or on 01474 874526.

The Hedge

Following comments about the overgrown hedge along the path to the school between the car park and doctors' surgery, the Village Association would like to make it clear that they do not own or maintain this hedge which is the responsibility of Richmond Lodge, the agents for the owners of the shopping centre and car park.

To contact our local Police:

PC Karen Perkins
07870 252616

PCSO Rachel Rowbottom
07969 584203

PCSO Steven Vincent
07772 226159

New Ash Green Calendar

In the past, a village calendar had always been produced for our residents. First by the Village Social Committee (independently from the VA) and then by a local printer who has now retired.

By the New Year, it was increasingly evident that the calendar and its contact list was popular and had been missed.

The Village Association, in association with its printers, Darenth Print & Design Ltd, therefore decided to take on this project and we were pleased to provide you with a 2011 Calendar at no cost to the VA.

We are extremely grateful to the support received from local advertisers which has enabled this to be successfully progressed. These companies are all local and are providing a service to people in the area—please support them.

Girls Join the Boys' Brigade

The 1st Ash Green Boys' Brigade has, for nearly 30 years, given boys in the area an outlet for their energies and helped them to develop their skills in many different areas. Now girls can join in because the Boys' Brigade has set up a Girls' Association which gives girls exactly the same opportunities that have been available for the boys. Our local Girls' Brigade company has merged with the BB which means their resources can be better used to enable the girls and boys to share equally in the activities on

offer such as camps, canoeing, participation in the D of E Award Scheme and the weekly term-time Company Nights. The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association meet on Fridays during school terms in Ash Village Hall at the following times:

- 5:30 – 6:30pm for ages 5 to 8
- 6:30 – 8:00pm for ages 8 to 11
- 8:00 – 9:30pm for ages 11 to 18

For more information see:

www.1stashgreenbb.org.uk

email: info@1stashgreenbb.org.uk

or ring James Clark on 01474 879675.



New Ash Green Junior Football

New Ash Green Junior Football Club requires players for new Under 10 and Under 11 teams for the next (Autumn 2011) season **now**. If you are interested in joining one of these teams please call one of the following people:

Under 11s:
Martin Watson 07789 272724
Gary Webber 07904 707081

Under 10s:
Andy Larcombe 07860381618

If you are interested in another age level or know someone who might be interested then please call the club secretary:

Bob Hamshare 07850 168290
Email: roberthamshare@aol.com



Children's Centre

In April 2011, New Ash Green Children's Centre moved from the Dartford District over to Sevenoaks District. The team works in partnership with the Health Visiting team at the New Ash Green Health Clinic. It has recently been refurbished and new signs are now in place on the building.

Our overall aim is to provide access and support with a range of services that will enable parents and carers of children under the age of 5 to feel supported and informed. Being a parent can sometimes feel overwhelming, but by working together as part of an integrated team with health and other organisations, we offer advice, information, and ongoing support.

Current services include a weekly drop-in, called *Little Stars*, for parents and carers of children aged 0 - 5. *Little Stars* is held on Wednesday mornings 10:00-12:00 at the Village Hall. We provide a range of

toys, crafts, messy play, a healthy snack for the children and refreshments for parents! Our *Baby Group* caters for 0-12 months, meeting weekly at the Children's Centre (Health Clinic) on Thursday mornings 10:00-11:30, and gives the opportunity for new mums/carers to socialise in an informal setting and discuss issues that arise with a new baby, as well as sharing information and advice.

Activities planned for September include Community and Family Learning Courses that are provided free of charge by Kent Adult Education. We will provide a free crèche if required and courses will take place in the Children's Centre. The first course *You and Your Child* starts on Monday 19th September and will run for 5 weeks, followed by *Parents Towards Employment* another 5 week course starting on Monday 31 October.

Also planned is *Little*

Shooterz a football programme especially developed for pre-school children 2-5 years old, run by a professional coach. It will start on Saturday 10 September at New Ash Green Village Hall from 1:00-1:45pm. The cost will be £4.50 per child; spaces will be limited, so book early. We anticipate that it will run termly.

Further information on all our activities and services will be in our Summer Newsletter, but please note that families need to register with the Children's Centre in order to access any of our services and activities.

Registration forms are available from the Children's Centre and *Little Stars* drop-in at the Village Hall. Please telephone us if you require any further information or help with the form.

Wishing all of you a Happy, Healthy and Safe Summer – Naresh, Bubbly, Jo and Shelley – Children's Centre Staff.

Sure Start
Children's Centres
New Ash Green, Sevenoaks



NAG Children's Centre
Meadow Lane
New Ash Green
Longfield DA3 8JH
01474 872411



Chairman's Report 2011

The village of New Ash Green and the Village Association have been established for over 40 years now. Over this period, there have been substantial changes in legislation, legal responsibilities and social attitudes. New Ash Green was intended to be a village for villagers and run by villagers. It is increasingly challenging to find people who are prepared to commit to this aspiration.

Throughout the life of an organisation, it is prudent to look at how things are done and ask if the right things are being done, the current way of doing things is effective and whether it offers value for money. The VA is undertaking such an exercise at the moment.

Amongst others, there are two important issues that need to be addressed. One is the reliance of existing village structures on volunteers for the management committees, whether on Residents' Societies or VA. The other is whether the role of the VA should be interpreted narrowly as a land management company or whether it should act in other ways as well. This might include such things as political lobbying and external promotion or the marketing of the village and its virtues.

Residents will be aware that many Residents' Societies now have to pay people to undertake some of the tasks on their management committees (done by unpaid volunteers in earlier times), and that there is a reluctance currently for villagers to get involved in running their own neighbourhoods. It is increasingly rare for there to be elections for Residents' Society committees, probably indicating a lack of interest.

The VA struggles to find people for its sub-committees as well, for which no particular qualification is required. Enthusiasm and interest are the principal attributes. Rarely does an appeal for volunteers bring any enquiries.

Is it time for the principal of management by volunteer villagers envisaged when the village was established to be replaced by a paid professional, or professionals?

I have already observed on the age of the village. Much of our hardland infrastructure suffers with age and use, or the weather. Paths, in particular, break-up or become misaligned. Paths are expensive to replace, so a balance has to be struck between the need to achieve a safe surface, the desirability of a well-maintained appearance and the cost of replacement.

An unwelcome and increasingly prevalent blight on our environment is that of graffiti, which is costly to remove and an unnecessary drain upon funds, villagers' contributions. One night's activity by one misguided person can take a lot of money and time to remove.

One piece of good news is the imminent adoption of all private sewers by Thames Water (October 2011) which should mean that villagers will no longer have to pay for foul sewer clearance and repair through their VA and RS fees. There is likely to be small increase in the sewage charge on the part of Thames Water (over the whole of the Thames Water area), but this should be much less than the money currently paid out by villagers to VA and RS. (Villagers already pay for such repairs to most of the rest of the Thames Water area, where sewers are already adopted.)

The village grounds continue to look extremely good, thanks to the high quality of work achieved by the Greenlands workforce. Favourable comment has been made by a number of villagers, appreciating what a major contribution the landscaping makes towards making New Ash Green such a special place.

Although a distant memory now, the last winter brought heavy snow falls and prolonged low temperatures. As with the year before, the Greenlands work force performed over and above the call of duty in attempting to maintain free passage throughout the village. The limited amount of salt provided free by KCC proved insufficient and replacement material was more sand than salt, so ineffective. Additional salt had to be sourced by the VA to facilitate clearance.



We owe a big ‘Thank you’ to the workforce for all aspects of their work.

The Orchard/Woodlands group continues to do good things in rejuvenating the village Orchard, as well as undertaking work in the woodlands, voluntarily. This is an excellent example of a win-win activity, with the village grounds being improved and the volunteers getting the double benefit of exercise in the fresh air plus the reward of seeing the positive outcome of their work. It is also a valuable learning experience for the young people that go along with their parents.

Village woodlands offer a tremendous amenity for people of all ages. The downside is that they require maintenance both for the sake of the safety of the public and for the health of the woodland itself. Much of our woodland is ‘coppice wood’. This is a form of woodland management that has been practised since prehistory and involves cutting down the trees every few years and leaving them to regenerate naturally. It does *not* kill the trees and is a better way of managing trees than leaving them to evolve into ‘high forest’ in terms of environmental benefit. e.g. there will be more birds, bugs and butterflies. However, there are areas of coppice woodland that have been neglected for too many years (‘over stood coppice’) which require urgent and costly attention, principally on the grounds of public safety, but also for the health and well-being of the woodland. Much of this work is undertaken ‘in house’ by our experienced and well-qualified Greenland personnel, but there is a capacity issue which means that outside

contractors may have to be engaged at some cost.

The Village Hall has had mixed fortunes over the last few years with its level of usage, but is now used much of the time once again. This means that it is now operating at about break-even, rather than having to be supported through villagers’ contributions. Ideally, it would generate a surplus so that money is available internally for the proper maintenance of the building, with more funds for developing and improving facilities to meet the higher expectations of villagers and other users, in common with all other facilities.

The village Newsletter continues to develop and is well received, and the New Ash Green website is now ‘live’ – www.nagval.com.

Although an area of work currently being marginalised by cost cutters elsewhere, our office staff continues to play an important part in supporting residents and the VA in delivering our services, and provide the face of the VA. My thanks to them for the effective way in which they do this, often under trying circumstances.

Finally, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all of the volunteers who give so freely and generously of their time and knowledge serving on Council of Management and its sub-committees. It is their energy and wisdom that makes this village work and what continues to make this such a special place to live. I am indebted to them for their support.

Alan Pett
Chairman



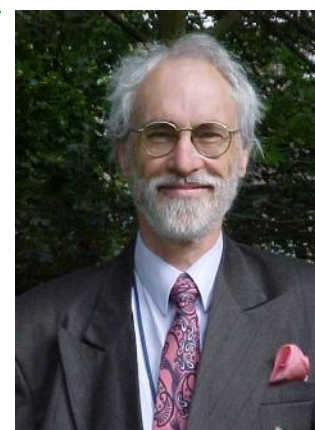
in NAG Village Hall

Mondays at 8:00pm
Contact Jodie 07763 712004
jodietolhurst@yahoo.co.uk

From September:
Tuesdays at 10:00am
Wednesdays at 8:15pm
Contact Alison 07980 409531
dajach@tiscali.co.uk

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

- Alan Pett** (Consultant Member)Chairman
- Mike Rose** (Capelands).....Treasurer/Finance & Strategies Committee
- Brian Hardcastle** (Over Minnis and Consultant).....Amenity Committee
- Colin Garratt** (Consultant Member).....Greenland Committee
- Terry Vivian** (Consultant Member).....Hardland Committee
- Keith Wale** (Consultant Member).....Village Hall Committee
- Cameron Clark** (Chapel Wood).....Communications
- Susan Heads** (Consultant Member).....NAGSPL
- Stuart Richardson** (Consultant Member)



Alan Pett—Chairman

June 2011

New Ash Green Village Association Limited

Centre Road
New Ash Green
Longfield
Kent DA3 8HH
Tel: 01474 872691
Fax: 01474 872409
E-mail: admin@nagval.com Website: www.nagval.com

VA OFFICE OPENING HOURS

The VA Office is open to residents from

9.00am-4.00pm Monday to Thursdays

Closed to residents on Fridays

The office is closed for all statutory holidays

If you would like to write an article for our next Newsletter, either as a member of a Club or Society or to write an article of local interest, please contact the VA Office and provide it no later than 14 November 2011.

Nuisance Motorbikes & Quad Bikes

Kent Police are clamping down on nuisance motorbikes and quad bikes in this area. Not only are they a menace to society, but they pose numerous dangers to the general public. If anyone is found riding a motorbike illegally, it may be seized and crushed. **The Police would like your help.** If you know anyone who has an off-road bike, or someone who is using one where they shouldn't be, please contact **01322 42502** and leave a

message (which will be treated in confidence) or contact our local officers, PC Karen Perkins and PCSOs Rachel Rowbottom and Steve Vincent (see box on page 4). In an emergency, dial **999**.

Together we can combat this anti-social activity



**Kent
Police**

Village Day 2011

Village Day was held on Saturday 2 July, not quite as sunny as last year but a great day out for one and all. The events this year included a dancing dog show, Battersea dog talk and a fancy dress competition. The fancy dress competition, which was sponsored by Hartley Estates, was won by a bumble bee, with an Egyptian princess coming second and Ronald McDonald coming third, a big well done to everyone who entered.

The village would like to say a big thank you to the Pets Pantry for their sponsorship of the majority of arena events and the free children's entertainment put on

during the afternoon.

New Ash Green Social Committee is a very small group of volunteers who live in the village and have nothing to do with us here at the VA. They gather together for two hours each month to organise events such as Village Day, Firework Night (5 November) and Children's Christmas Crafts early in December. However, they desperately need more volunteers to help out, bring new ideas to the Committee so that they can make events such as Village Day bigger and better than ever before.

If you are able to spare some time and join the Social Committee they would appreciate hearing from you either by e-mail at committee@nagsocial.co.uk, visiting their website www.nagsocial.co.uk or why not pop along and have a chat with Trevor in Pets Pantry to find out what it's all about.

Diamond Jubilee

5 June 2012 is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. NAG Social is willing to co-ordinate village-wide celebrations if there is a commitment from other groups and people to help. They are thinking of moving Village Day to that weekend with a 4-day event. Suggestions include a children's fancy dress party, a tea party for older people, inter-neighbourhood sports or quiz competitions, a live band or disco. You may have others. If you can help, contact Barry Tomlin at barry-barbara@hotmail.co.uk.



The Hartley Ash and West Kingsdown youth project is looking for volunteers to help run youth clubs in the area. If you have something to offer please contact Matthew Burt on 07512 371497 or email hawk youth@live.co.uk