



August 2015
Issue No. 69



Get Fit for Free!

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New Ash Green residents can now enjoy a new free outdoor gym located on the Sportsfield (adjacent to The Pavilion), Punch Croft, thanks to receiving funding of £11,040. The funding was awarded from the *Big Lottery Fund 'Awards For All'* (£6,040), *Kent County Council* (£3,500) and *Sevenoaks District Council* (£1,500).

A proposal for an outdoor gym had been under consideration for many years, but the cost was considered to be unaffordable from VA funds. Office staff then undertook to identify sources of external funding. An initial application to the Big Lottery Fund was rejected but, after part funding was secured from KCC (Members' Fund) and Sevenoaks District Council, a later application to the Big Lottery Fund was successful. Instrumental in securing lottery funding was the support of the Jubilee Medical Practice and the favourable responses to a consultation of residents.

The equipment

will hopefully encourage people of all ages, abilities and fitness levels to exercise, free of charge whilst getting some fresh air at the same time! It will allow users to have a full workout including toning, cardio or chill-out exercises. Many gyms can be intimidating, not to mention expensive, the outdoor gym is perfect for beginners, experienced athletes or friends to work out together.

The gym features six pieces of fitness equipment including a Double Air Walker, Seated Leg Press, Double Cross Country Skier, Double Rower, Combined Pull Down Challenger/Seated Leg Press, and a Push-up & Dip Station. Refreshments can also be obtained nearby in

the Pavilion during opening hours.

The VA would like to thank the *Big Lottery Fund's 'Awards For All'* scheme, *Kent County Council* and *Sevenoaks District Council*, the *Jubilee Medical Group* and everyone else who supported this bid. The outdoor gym is now up and running, be sure to check it out!!

FREE OUTDOOR GYM

Located on the sports field adjacent to the Pavilion—
Open 24-7



VA Open Meeting

Council of Management (CoM) called an Open Meeting (7th July) to discuss ways of attracting villagers to stand for election to CoM. Notwithstanding a change in the rules for eligibility for consideration some years ago, such that virtually all owners of property within the village are now able to participate, none had come forward!



About 100 villagers attended what turned out to be a very lively meeting. As Chairman, I set out the reason for calling the meeting and the need to recruit "new blood" to CoM, particularly those younger householders who would be able to shape the future of their village, for the benefit of themselves and their children.

There followed a number of contributions from the floor on both how to get new people interested, what had been done wrong in the past and what people felt should

be done in the future. In particular, there was a strong sense that there should be better communication from CoM to villagers (and that this needed to be two way), that CoM needed to take on a stronger village leadership role, rather than simply focus on the land management of the village, and that action should be taken actively to promote the benefits of the village, with a view to enhancing property values. Many expressed negative views, but there were some who were quite upbeat.

Refreshingly, a number of people expressed an interest in being considered for a role on CoM, whilst an even greater number wished to join a working group proposed from the floor, purpose yet to be crystallised, but essentially considering how villagers wanted to see their village moving forward.

I concluded by inviting those who had expressed an interest in joining CoM to a crash course teach-in on the duties and powers of the VA, which took place on 18th July. At the scheduled CoM meeting on 20th July, a number of people were co opted onto CoM.

Given the enthusiasm generated, I felt that now was the right time for me to stand down as Chairman of the VA, so I have now left CoM and wish the new management a hugely successful future. I add to this my heartfelt thanks to all those villagers who have served with me on CoM since I started in 1984, without whose support and critical views the village would not be what it is today. I also extend my thanks to our paid staff, past and present, who have served the village well, both in the office and the greenland workforce.

Alan Pett

A new Working Party has now been formed to discuss ways of improving communication, marketing and rekindling the original community spirit for future generations.

Thinking of Building?

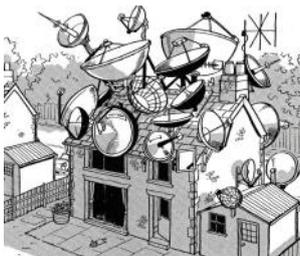
Are you thinking of having building work done?

Due to the covenants in the Village you will know that to change the external appearance of your property in any way at all (extension, conservatory, doors, windows etc) you need to obtain approval in writing from the Village Association before starting work.

The Amenity Committee that considers such applications meets throughout the year at around 6 weekly intervals. However on the first Saturday of each month members

of the committee are at the VA offices from 10.30am until noon to give anyone informal guidance on their proposed works. It always pays to talk first before finalising your designs!

Although these sessions cannot grant approval they can steer you away from solutions that are unlikely to be accepted and towards those that are. So why not come along and talk to us!



DESIGN GUIDANCE WORKSHOPS - 2015/16	
FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH - 10.30am - 12.00 midday	
Saturday 5 September 2015	Saturday 5 March 2016
Saturday 3 October 2015	Saturday 2 April 2016
Saturday 7 November 2015	Saturday 7 May 2016
Saturday 5 December 2015	Saturday 4 June 2016
Saturday 2 January 2016	Saturday 2 July 2016
Saturday 6 February 2016	Saturday 6 August 2016

Focus on Crime

Sevenoaks District is one of the most crime free areas in Kent. Of course that does not mean there is no crime and, realistically, some crimes will always occur as new villains come along to take over from those who have been caught. But it is little consolation to anyone who has been the victim of a crime to know it is a rare occurrence – indeed it is perhaps worse to know you have been singled out for unwanted attention.

The New Ash Green Focus Group meets regularly, involving the Parish Council, Village Association, Community Warden, Police, Neighbourhood Watch, the Sevenoaks District Council's Community Safety Unit and other local organisations. This highlights the work that is being done to prevent crime and to deal with those that have been committed, ensuring all the relevant people know who has to respond to the issues and where problems are

likely to occur. The Community Safety Unit has the same role across Sevenoaks District, making sure that resources are targeted to where the need is greatest on a daily basis.

It is worth looking at the overall figures and comparing them with the number of people and properties in this area. In New Ash Green there are some 2,340 houses and about 50 commercial and community premises. Around 6,000 people live in the village. In the past year, crimes of all types have averaged just 25 to 30 per month – less than one a day. The chance of being a victim is very small and a significant number of the reported crimes, particularly violent or sexual offences, are not random attacks but occur in the home – by people known to the victim.

The chart with the comparison of crime types helps us to see what the main issues

are. Perhaps it is not surprising to see that burglary, anti-social behaviour and vehicle crimes are most prevalent but the graphs show that where spikes occur, the Police have responded with extra resources and they have been able to target the offenders to prevent the problem escalating.

The key to all this is information. Any crimes must always be reported as soon as possible to the Police, phoning 999 if a crime is in progress or 101 at other times, and to your neighbourhood watch co-ordinator. Make sure you get a crime reference number from the Police. The response of the Police will be determined by the number of reports they receive. You can also contact the Community Safety Unit direct to report crimes such as anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, or graffiti – ring them on 01732 227000 or email:

community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk



If you are a victim of a crime, please ensure that it is reported to Police.

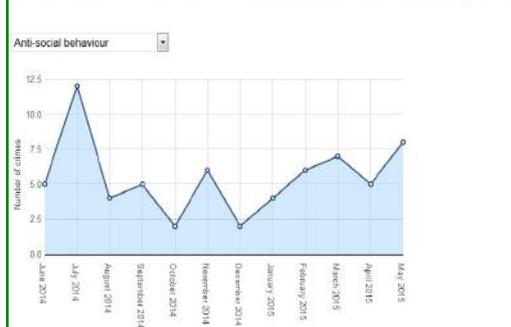
Phone 101 non-urgent matters

999 for Emergency

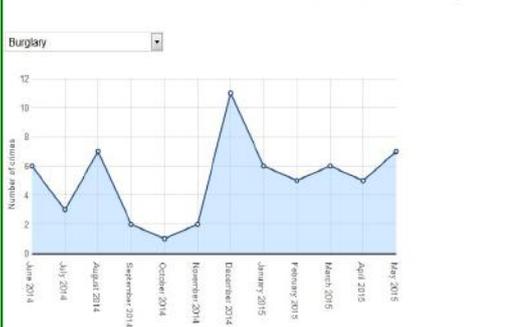
Crime levels in this area between June 2014 and May 2015



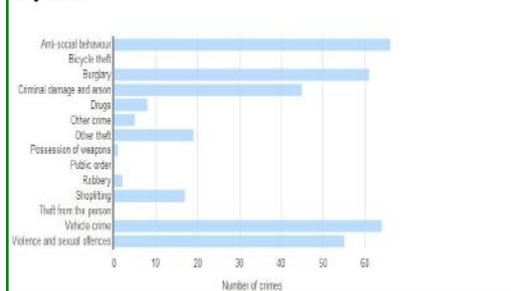
Crime levels in this area between June 2014 and May 2015



Crime levels in this area between June 2014 and May 2015



Comparison of crime types in this area between June 2014 and May 2015



New Ash Green Town Team – 3 years on



Originally set up in 2012 to bid for Government money in the Portas Pilot regeneration scheme, the Town Team consists of parish, district and county councillors with representatives of New Ash Green Village Association, local businesses and residents. Sevenoaks District Council provides assistance from its economic development team.

Although unsuccessful in the main Portas Pilot competition, a consolation award of £10,000 was received and the Town Team has since been making use of that money to promote the use of the shopping centre and carry out some enhancements to make it more attractive for people to use.

Built in 1969 and extended in 1983, New Ash Green's shopping centre once had over 50 shops on two levels, but a gradual change in trading patterns coupled with the failure by the landowners to keep up with maintenance of the buildings led to many of them closing. Some have been converted to other purposes, most notably the upper level which now boasts a thriving gym, but many others lie empty and look derelict.

Residents are all too aware that the shopping centre as a whole

is now in a sad state of disrepair, hence the continuing efforts of the Town Team to find ways to rejuvenate and invigorate this focal point of our village.

Cameron Clark, the Chairman of the Town Team, says, "A thriving shopping centre is vital for everyone who lives or works in New Ash Green. The neglect by its owners has led to a sad decline which must now be reversed. Support from the people of the village is essential if we are to make the improvements we want. We must all work together to do as much as we can while supporting the Council's attempts to engage with the landowners to develop permanent, long-term regeneration of the centre. Victoria Barnard's recent petition to the Council is one such example of the strength of feeling and desire for action."

Here are some examples of the Town Team's activities so far:

- Replacement of roadside signs;
- New planting within the centre and proposals for more;
- Anti-dog fouling measures;
- Pigeon deterrents;

- The 2014 'Christmas Magic' and ice skating event;

- Provision of new Christmas lights

Future event: 'A Village on the Hill' – celebrating community life in New Ash Green – Saturday September 5th, 11am-3pm, Village Centre. [See page 7]

While some may see these small initiatives as simply papering over the cracks, the Town Team members are committed to carrying out those things which are achievable and make a noticeable difference now. Much as we'd love to refurbish the centre from top to bottom, this is simply not within our power, so our aim is to continue to enhance and promote the shopping area as a focal and essential part of New Ash Green, in the hope that more may be possible as time goes by.

The buildings may be sadly neglected, but it's the people who bring life to a village, so please support your shopping centre in any and every way possible.

If you have ideas or suggestions, please send them to us via Cameron Clark:

01474 874526 (landline),
07801 561405 (mobile), or
email cameron@cclark.me.uk

'A Village on the Hill'

*Celebrating community life in
New Ash Green*

Saturday 5th September

11am-3pm—Village Centre

Are you a Monet in the Making?

New Ash Green Art Club meets in the Village Association Meeting Room every Wednesday between 2.00 and 4.00pm.

This small, friendly group welcomes novice, intermediate and experienced artists in all mediums.

If you are interested in joining us when we resume after the summer break please call either John on 01474 873034 or Margaret on 01732 822145. We look forward to hearing from you.



Village Centre Petition

In April this year Victoria Barnard, a resident of NAG since 2007, started a petition for the regeneration of our Village Centre. The petition attracted over 1600 signatures and was put before Sevenoaks District Council on 21st July.

Victoria was given five minutes to put her points of concern across and in making her presentation Victoria described how over the last eight years the village centre has declined year on year.

Victoria described how she had spoken to 2 out of 3 of the landowners on numerous occasions since 2007. Each time, Richmond Lodge (managing agent for the principal landowner, Piperton Finance) and the Co-operative each blame the other and advise that they are aware of some issues and are trying to resolve them. This has been the answer to questions on the regeneration of the centre since proposals were made public in 2007; eight

years later still no response.

With the majority of the units empty and in such a bad state of disrepair with excessive water damage and other issues that they are clearly not using the centre as it was originally intended. The landowners need to invest a substantial amount of money to bring it back to a reasonable standard so the units can be rented out and the centre improved overall. Which they themselves have admitted they are not prepared to do.

Victoria asked for the Councils to pull together: -

- Environmental Health - to deal with the major issues highlighted in the petition;
- Planning - to enforce work to deal with the current dereliction and to work with the landowners for long-term regeneration;
- Housing - to achieve a vibrant community in any regeneration proposals;

- Community Safety - to make the centre a safer and more attractive place to visit and help to plan for regeneration;
- Business support - to encourage more businesses to start up and improve the viability of the centre;
- Economic Development - to develop a regeneration plan that will give New Ash Green a modern, attractive centre that will serve the needs of the people from the village and further a field, as it was originally intended.

Victoria received applause from the gallery on her concise and eloquent presentation.

Councillors were then given 15 minutes to debate all the concerns raised, it was unanimously agreed that Councillor Peter Fleming would now take the matter to the Cabinet and will report back within six months.



Yeeeeee Haaaaa - Fancy getting into the swing of things!!

Then come along and join the

**B & J STOMPERS
LINE DANCING GROUP**

Every Thursday 1pm-3pm

Village Hall, New Ash Green

What Is Line Dancing?

Line dancing is exactly what its name implies: people dancing in lines to music. Line dances are choreographed dances with a repeating series of steps that are performed in unison by a group of people in lines or rows. All of the dancers performing a line dance face the same direction and perform the steps at exactly the same time. Although there are usually several lines of dancers, small groups may only form one line.

It is lots of fun, keeps you fit and you get to make new friends as well. Friendly non-competitive atmosphere. Come along and try, the first week is free! All ages welcome!

For more information please telephone **01474 707376**.

Feel free to don your Stetson!



*B & J Line Dancing Group
meet every Thursday in the
Village Hall 1pm-3pm*

*Come along, have fun and
join in!*

All ages welcome!

Village Day—Another Roaring Success

We hope you will agree that The central Village Day 2015 was another cracking NAGsocial event. This year we were joined by Ash Fete, which made the day even more special, with a bigger grand draw and a number of new stalls.

The occasion was opened by May Queen, Zoe Lee, and May King Dylan Catley, who rode into the arena in one of the immaculate classic cars from the display. They were of course escorted by their trusty attendants Harry, Noah, Kate and Lucy.

The arena welcomed our ever popular Sylvera School of Dancing, followed by the voice of Shane Hampsher. The circus

workshop got the younger visitors to learning new skills, and later gave a cracking display to the arena audience. Reintroduced this year was the “a tug-o-war competition”, which con-



cluded in a boys vs girls “pull-off”, which, (contrary to Ash Fete tradition), concluded with a win for the boys this year, “all bragging rights conferred”.

We hope you enjoyed the day, which would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of a small group of volunteers “the NAGsocial team” Our thanks also go to the support of our generous sponsors, In particular Pets Pantry, Ash Tyres, Hartley Estates, the Pavilion, Blaze Scaffolding and Sapphire taxi’s to name but a few. Our thanks also to all the stall holders and visitors, who make this such a great event.

J Gorton, Chair NAGsocial



*Date for the diary-
24th September 2015
8pm in the Pavilion
NAGsocial AGM
Please support NAG social
by attending;*

Celebrate Village Life in NAG

Come and join us for a memorable experience and celebrate the best of Village life in New Ash Green. All welcome.

If you are a shop, club, society or group of any kind and would like to be represented at this event please fill in the slip and return it as soon as possible.

This event has been organised by the NAG Town Team and it is hoped that everyone will come along and support this great event.

5TH SEPTEMBER 2015 11-3



A Village on the Hill
An event to celebrate the best of village life in New Ash Green
Saturday 5 September 2015
The Row (village centre) 11am – 3pm – free entry

Shops, societies, clubs, and local organisations are invited to take part
Free to stall holders

Advertise your club / society / group – raise money for your organisation – publicise your business – demonstrate your skills – sell your produce

Interested? Book your spot now – contact Sarah at the Oxfam Shop, on 01474 874141, email oxfamshop14351@oxfam.org.uk, or drop reply slip in

www.fonagvc.co.uk/history-promovideo - link to 'A Village on the Hill', the early years of New Ash Green

REPLY SLIP – YES! COUNT US IN!

ORGANISATION

NAME

TELEPHONE NUMBER EMAIL

Did you know.....

Bus Service Cuts -

Arriva will be making significant cuts to the buses in New Ash Green from 9th August 2015. Both the 433 service to Darent Valley Hospital and Bluewater and the 489 service to Gravesend will be reduced to one bus every two hours. This has been done without any consultation with local councils or other representatives of residents.

No details of the new timetables have been released yet and the only information is at:

www.arrivabus.co.uk

Cameron Clark has made efforts to get Arriva to say more but at the time of print no update had been received. The management of Darent Valley Hospital is also very concerned and will be contacting Arriva.

Ultimately, of course, the only way to stop Arriva reducing the bus service even more is to use them!

Communication-

The VA Office is always trying to provide information to residents, of course the easiest way to do this is via email. Should you like any newsletter or other communication via email please provide us with your contact details (name, address, telephone, email) so you can be added to our database for communications. Please send to admin@nagval.com or contact the office on 01474 872691.

Car Parking -

Car Parking is at a premium in NAG, with many households owning more than one vehicle. This impacts greatly on the car spaces available for use by resi-

dents and their families. We have recently received many complaints within the VA Office regarding parking and this is a polite request for people to be considerate to others i.e. don't block access to garages etc.

Dogs in VA Foyer

Due to an unfortunate incident in the foyer, dogs are no longer welcome in the building (*with the exception of Guide dogs*). We have provided facilities outside for dogs to be *parked*.

Free Dog 'Scoop the Poop' Bags

The VA provides free 'Scoop the Poop' bags and is committed to providing dog bins in areas where most dog walkers pass. Dogs 'muck' contains diseases damaging to health. It is against the law for your dog to foul a public place, 'The Dog (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 applies.



Arts Community

We meet on the first Sunday of every month at the Village Association Meeting Room, Centre Road, New Ash Green DA3 8HH, 2-4pm.

Open to everyone with an interest in the visual arts. Varied program of talks, discussions, demonstrations and practical work.

Entry £4 Visitors

£2 Members

(£12 pa membership)

For further information email:

nagartscomm@gmail.com or call 01474 874273

Dates for Diary:

Evening art talks in the Autumn: 17 Sept; 15 Oct; 12 Nov. Annual exhibition 31st Oct and 1st Nov. Contact as above for details.

New Ash Green Arts Community

ARTS EXHIBITION

'ONE YEAR ON'

Saturday 31 Oct & Sunday 1 Nov 2015 10am-4pm
At the New Ash Green Youth Centre DA3 8JY

Live guitar music by Jeff Smith and refreshments available both Saturday and Sunday afternoons

FREE ADMISSION

Arts Community
Meets 1st Sunday of every month, in the VA Meeting Room 2-4pm
All Welcome!



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

VA OFFICE OPENING HOURS
 The VA Office is open to residents
 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 provide it to VA Office no later than **30th October 2015**

A DREAM FROM THE SIXTIES

Where is it?
 Know Longfield? Brands Hatch? Well...
 Up in the clouds, under the snow.
 Basking in sun. Our own micro-climate,
 Atop of the Downs; the rest is downhill.
 A dream from the sixties;
 A seventies' compromise.
 A maze, a labyrinth to fox the stranger.
 A fence, a house wall hiding behind trees.
 A path to the woods, the Meadow,
 wild flowers.
 Villagers strolling, ambling, lingering.
 A runner – gone.
 Birds warbling, leaves rustling, squirrels
 scuttling.
 A dog barks – hush.
 Schools and surgeies, socials and sports.
 Village Day and Bonfire Night.
 Clubs and committees; consensus and
 community.
 New Ash Green, DA3.

A prose from a local resident.

Keep your tools safe



Can **you** afford to lose them?

Theft from vans and cars can be devastating, particularly if the tools of your trade are stolen.

Reduce the risk:

- Remove tools and other equipment from your vehicle when it is left unattended.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle overnight.



Useful Contact Numbers

Sevenoaks District Community Safety Unit

Police, Council and partners working together for a safe district.

To report or receive advice on:
 anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, graffiti,
 issues about licensed premises, abandoned vehicles, environmental and noise
 nuisance,
 crime reduction advice, neighbourhood watch and other community safety issues.

(Mon – Thurs 8.45am – 5.00pm &
 Fri 8.45am – 4.45pm)

Call: **01732 227000**

Email: community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Residents can sign up to Twitter on SDC_CSP



Other useful contacts...



Sevenoaks District Council	Trading Standards	08454 040506
01732 227000	West Kent Mediation	01322 615774
Kent Police	Racial Incidents	0800 1381624
Emergency Calls 999	Homophobic/Hate Crime	0800 3289162
Non Emergency Calls 101	Domestic Abuse	0808 2000247
Swanley Police Station 01322 422502	West Kent Victim Support	0845 389 9527
Edenbridge Police Station 01732 379361	West Kent Housing Assoc	01732 749400
Sevenoaks Police Station 01732 379371	Moat Housing	0845 359 6300
Kent County Council Highways	Fire Safety	01732 369429
including:	KCC Wardens	07813 713356
Street Lighting 08458 247800		
General Enquiries 08458 247247		

You can contact Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on freephone 0800 555 111

