



BADGERS MOUNT

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

Hello and welcome to the Spring 2021 edition of the Badgers Mount Community Newsletter, created jointly by your Parish Council and Residents Association. We aim to provide a single source of updates from now on all things Badgers Mount related and what is happening in the wider local community. We also intend to post on Facebook and WhatsApp where a quick response is needed.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Parish Council meetings are being held via Zoom on the first Thursday of each month from 19:30 hours. The Zoom ID and password are on the agendas posted on the Notice Boards and Parish Council website prior to each meeting or ask the clerk or any of the councillors for details. It is hoped that normal meetings in the Memorial Hall can resume in June.

If you have any issues you wish to raise with the Council, please contact the Clerk of Badgers Mount Parish Council (see contacts at the end for email address) or any of the Councillors.

PLANNING

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications for new buildings and extensions to existing properties. The plans are carefully examined, and comments submitted to Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), incorporating, where appropriate, neighbours' comments.

Recent applications outside Badgers Mount which will have a significant effect on us include: -

Bluebell Cemetery, Old London Road – Extension to the chapel to become a crematorium. Along with many residents of Badgers Mount and Halstead we objected to this on several grounds including change of use and the statement from the owners of the Oak Tree Farm site saying that they are about to start construction of their crematorium in accordance with the earlier approval and there is no necessity for two only about a mile apart. Because SDC did not determine the application in time, which they were going to refuse, the applicant appealed to the Planning Inspectorate who allowed the appeal, so now there is the prospect of two crematoriums within about a mile, possibly the only such situation in the country!!

Broke Hill Golf Course – SDC has refused Planning Permission for the outline development proposal, but we understand that the applicant will start an appeal shortly to the Planning Inspectorate, which will probably be heard at a public inquiry.

Skip site near Polhill roundabout – The recent application for a Lawful Development Certificate was refused. Activities on the site are monitored by Halstead and Badgers Mount Parish Councils and SDC.

Chevening House – A recent application to raise the landscape of the south east area of the parkland around Chevening House to screen the M25 near junction 5 by creating earth bunds would result in up to 200 HGV movements along

the Orpington Bypass each day for 5½ years. Because the Parish Council boundary does not adjoin the site, the Council was not consulted but have sent in a strong objection to SDC.

Land off Wheatsheaf Hill – There are currently no planning applications for the significant earthworks under way on this site, which is in Bromley but borders Badgers Mount and Halstead Parishes.

Briefly, the site has passed through several different owners. The current owner has stated that he is returning the land to its original use, i.e., agricultural. The observable work does not appear to support this aim, and Planning Enforcement Officers have stated they will attend the site for first-hand investigation. Kent Highways have been informed about the mud and rubble dropped on the local roads by vehicles going to and from the site and will also be attending. We have been advised that the Environment Agency (EA) has de-registered the permitted registration that was granted on the site. This means that no further vehicles should enter the site carrying any type of soil. If you see any lorries making deliveries of this sort please contact the EA via their central complaint line (0800 807060) as soon as possible quoting the site address as Land at junction of Sevenoaks Road and Wheatsheaf Hill, Halstead.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP UPDATE

Previous work has produced several ideas for future improvements including a Village Centre with a playground, shop, and meeting place such as a café. It is understood that F M Conway may not be moving from their site for many years, as it is convenient for their offices in Otford, and they are currently unable to find a larger site with similar road connections anywhere in this area.

It might be possible to create a Village Centre in the vicinity of the Memorial Hall, for example using land between the Hall and Conway's inner working area. Although currently wooded, this area was cultivated until the late 1950s and is therefore not classified as Ancient Woodland although it is in the Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Any development here would be subject to negotiations with SDC and would require agreement to include significant local low-cost housing under the rural housing initiative before Green Belt and AONB status could be waived. It is by no means certain that such agreement would be given, and even if it were, it could prove unattractive to developers because of the constraints. The recent Housing Needs survey requests could be part of any development; thank you all who completed it. Results from the Housing Needs survey were presented to the Parish Council meeting on April 1st and the report is now on the Parish Council website for you to read. We are working closely with SDC so that the NP will enhance the SDC Local Plan, including local evidence and the views of the Badgers Mount Community to get the best possible outcome.

When we have a clearer idea of the various possibilities, we will be presenting them to you all so that you can have your say and the final plan is fully representative of the community. This could include drop-in meetings during the Summer in the Memorial Hall, suitably socially distanced as necessary, where possible concepts could be viewed and discussed.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group normally meets via Zoom on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Memorial Hall after the Parish Council Planning Meeting from 7:30 pm. See the BMPC website for Zoom ID and Password. Your ideas are welcomed; come and talk to us.

BADGERS MOUNT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWS

It has been an incredibly challenging and strange 2020 but I hope that you have all managed to keep well and stay safe. The Badgers Mount Residents' Association only met four times in 2020 being January, March, July and October. At the moment we only have seven committee members, and we haven't had a Chairman or Vice Chairman for almost three years!! At each meeting we must appoint a Chairman for the evening which is not an ideal situation. When things return to normal, and we can hold physical meetings it is proposed that we invite all the residents of Badgers Mount to attend an open meeting to discuss the future of the Badgers Mount Residents' Association. The Association was started almost fifty-seven years ago to be a voice for the people of Badgers Mount. I believe my late father, Bert Smith, was one of the founder members. The numbers of people attending AGM's (not in 2020!!) has dwindled and if it is to continue it needs to be supported by the community. Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Roger King (a former BMRA committee member) recently moved to Nottingham after living in Milton Avenue for 53 years. He served the community of Badgers Mount on many committees and councils, most recently as Chairman of the Badgers Mount Road Maintenance Fund (BMRMF). During that time, he was personally responsible for convincing KCC Highways to improve the Badgers Road entrance and to resurface the continuation of Badgers Road down towards the M25. Best wishes Roger – you will be sorely missed.

Gill Johnston
Secretary

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Staying Safe in Badgers Mount

The Badgers Mount Facebook group gives local information. Nextdoor Halstead is an online tool for a wider area of the locality, which gives information, updates as well as things for sale. There is a WhatsApp group Badgers Mount I.C.E. (In Case of Emergency). As well as a WhatsApp Badgers Mount social group.

Some nefarious activities have occurred in the last year and residents have been made aware of these, when possible.

Hopefully more social events can be arranged to bring us all together as a community.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Arthur Evans via ae.bmra@gmail.com or bmnwcoord@gmail.com.

BADGERS MOUNT MEMORIAL HALL

The Memorial Hall is the only community facility we have in Badgers Mount. Before lockdown, there were various regular activities in the hall including yoga, dance and ballet classes for children and adults, dog training, weekly Thursday coffee morning including the fortnightly visit by the KCC mobile library (currently this is every four weeks for click and collect only but should be returning to fortnightly when the Covid-19 restrictions are eased), Women's Institute, Badgers Sett, meetings of the Parish Council and Residents Association committees. Occasional social activities organised by the Residents Association are held in the hall.

Following the death last year of Pierre Fox who was the longstanding chairman of the hall management committee, and the imminent departure from Badgers Mount of another committee member, new members will need to

be appointed at an AGM to be held when permissible under the Covid-19 regulations.

Under the recently issued Government Roadmap, halls can reopen from Step 3 – not earlier than 17th May with many restrictions on what can be done (mainly children’s activities), occupancy etc until step 4 – not earlier than 21st June when all restrictions should end. The hall will then be available for all normal uses. This is all subject to satisfactory progress with fighting Covid-19

Details of hire rates etc are available on the Memorial Hall page of the Badgers Mount website.

BADGERS MOUNT ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND

The Road Maintenance Fund maintains the surfaces of Badgers Road, Highland Road, Johnsons Avenue and Milton Avenue. The Fund has just had the roads swept by SDC prior to carrying out essential repairs. The roads now look a lot better. Apologies to those who were disturbed by the early start of the sweeping by SDC – they said it would start at 8.00am!! Last October Johnsons Avenue was completely resurfaced with tarmac, which should last for many years.

With the departure of Roger King, the Fund needs a new chairman. An AGM will be held when lockdown restrictions allow, and residents on the unadopted roads will be notified in due course. If anyone is interested in starting to get involved before the AGM, please contact Gordon Plumb 07752 128965 (treasurer) or Dianne Wills (secretary).

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social events are unlikely to resume until the lockdown is lifted. There are tentative plans for a social gathering perhaps around July, maybe a

Clean-Up litter pick around the community. The Parish Council is looking into ways of brightening up Badgers Mount and is preparing to add flower beds around the Parish Name signs (gates). Possible future suggestions include hanging baskets on the lampposts on the Orpington Bypass and Old London Road, and maybe a crocus-planting session next Autumn. If you have any ideas or suggestions for events, please e-mail socialevents.bmra@gmail.com

CONTACTS

Parish Council website:

www.badgers-mountpc.co.uk

Council Clerk:

clerk@badgers-mountpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Residents Association:

Secretary.bmra@gmail.com

Community website:

The Community website has recently been updated to make it more user-friendly when used on smart phones and tablets. Amongst other information, it contains a house name locator map which includes old and new House names where appropriate.

www.badgersmount.net

Badgers Mount I.C.E. WhatsApp Group:

The BM In Case of Emergency is intended for rapid sharing of important information.

Contact [+44 7768 490576](tel:+447768490576)

Badgers Mount Social WhatsApp Group:

Contact [+44 7528 780791](tel:+447528780791)

Neighbourhood Watch:

bmnwcoord@gmail.com.

Badgers Mount Facebook Page:

Look for the Badgers Mount Group on Facebook