

Localism in Action

Our Village Caretaker Pilot

Cllr. John Rivers
Wittersham Parish Council

The Pilot

- ❑ **Localism ~ How can we be smarter?**
- ❑ **How can we use limited finances effectively?**
- ❑ **How can we improve our control over work done?**
- ❑ **Size of individual parishes**
- ❑ **How can we attract enough funding?**
- ❑ **Economies of scale?**

Pilot

- ❑ **Can smaller parishes work together in a 'cluster'?**
- ❑ **Funding sources:**
 - ❑ **Ashford Borough Council (ABC)**
 - ❑ **Kent County Council (KCC)**
 - ❑ **Individual Parish Precepts**

Scope of the Pilot

- ❑ To enhance the general appearance and cleanliness of each village - including grass & hedge cutting, litter and dog bin emptying on behalf of ABC.
- ❑ To improve and maintain the routine cyclical highway vegetation clearance, cutting & strimming, and to clean road signs. To inspect gullies & 'grits' and to report defects to KCC Highways through a liaison officer.

Specific examples

- ❑ **Safety inspections and cleaning of the play areas and outdoor fitness area in the village.**
- ❑ **General cleanliness of the cemetery, churchyard, war memorial, village 'triangle', The Green, Coronation Field and the Village Hall front car park**
- ❑ **Inspecting footways, the bus shelter and other public areas.**
- ❑ **Gardening.**
- ❑ **General maintenance and occasional seasonal tasks**

Prerequisites

- ❑ **Time.**
- ❑ **A Clerk willing to take on extra workload ~ especially in the early stages.**
- ❑ **Councillor expertise ~ or a willingness to train and/or co-opt where possible.**
- ❑ **Interest in wanting to be 'smarter' with money.**
- ❑ **Desire to be more effective in the work carried out locally ~ currently done 'to' you & not 'by' you.**
- ❑ **Willingness to work with neighbouring parishes!**

Stage One

- **Discussed and negotiated with neighbouring parishes:**
 - **Wittersham ~ lead parish**
 - **Kenardington**
 - **Stone**
 - **Warehorne**

- **Partnered with Ashford Borough Council:**
 - **Services to be covered**
 - **Money generated from current expenditure of those services by ABC**

Stage One

- **Discussed with KCC Highways:**
 - **Example list of suitable jobs**
 - **Not fixed or exhaustive list**
 - **No working on the carriageway!**
 - **Liaison with Highways Steward**
- **Parish representatives met to discuss Pilot.**
- **Parishes agreed with ABC to go ahead from May 1st 2012.**

Stage One

- **Timetable for adverts / shortlisting applications / interview panel / interview day / format of interview, etc.**

WITTERSHAM VILLAGE CARETAKER

New full-time appointment for one year (may be extended) for a Caretaker to look after the amenity and appearance of Wittersham and surrounding villages.

Duties will include: grass cutting, brush and weed clearance, minor gardening, managing litter bins, maintaining drains and street furniture, minor building maintenance, etc.

Van, equipment and any specialist training will be provided. Would suit energetic, flexible and experienced individual who can work on own initiative.

Seasonal hours, average 35 hours per week. Contract start date: 1st May 2012.

Apply as soon as possible by calling Wittersham Parish Clerk on 07944 183798 or send your CV to wittershampc@googlemail.com

Closing date for applications: 9th April 2012

Stage One

- Finances**
- Seasonal workable hours per month**
- Application form**
- Rest of application pack**
- Contract**
- Job Description**
- Health & Safety Statement & Policy**
- Risk Assessments**

Stage One

- Purchasing equipment ~ mowers, hedge trimmer, strimmer, air blower, small tools, gloves, rubbish bags, etc.**
- Check liability insurance**
- Check tool insurance**
- Purchasing van**
- Purchasing trailer**
- Van insurance**
- Van tax**

Stage Two

Helpers clear away overgrown vegetation

A CLEAR-up by volunteers means parishioners have an easier walk to church at Stone-in-Oxney.

The footpath leading to St Mary the Virgin has been cleared of vegetation.

Volunteers who took shears and garden tools to the job also cut back the hedge in Church Hill which was growing over the road.

Kent County Council community warden Lee Kidd and village caretaker Alf Mather rallied the troops to get the job done.

Mr Kidd said: "The footpath was overgrown with shrubs and vegetation and the hedge was hanging into the road.

"It was getting to a dangerous condition and nothing had been done."

Mr Kidd put a volunteers wanted poster in the church and village shop, asking people to bring along garden shears and other tools.

He and Mr Mather were joined by three adults and a 12-year-old boy and they completed the task last Wednesday.

"There was a road safety issue in Church Hill and the footpath is the only one leading to the church," added Mr Kidd.



CLEAN TEAM: Villagers George Beckingham and mum Sue Cowrie with Chris Bonsall, KCC community warden Lee Kidd and village caretaker Alf Mather

Picture: Wayne McCabe 03/09/2012 FM2218945

Stage Two

- ❑ **Monitor the effectiveness of the Village Caretaker within our Parish Cluster - monthly VC meetings, with delegated powers - including the quality & flexibility of work**
- ❑ **Collect regular oral feedback from residents**
- ❑ **Continue to review the Village Caretaker's job role regularly throughout the year**
- ❑ **Continue to meet regularly with Cluster Parishes**
- ❑ **Considered possible need to increase precept if the Cluster wishes this to develop beyond the pilot year**

Stage Two



Stage Two



Questions



Our Support To You

- ❑ **Advice & a friendly ear!**
- ❑ **A list of what you need before your Caretaker can start:**
 - ❑ **Materials & Equipment**
 - ❑ **Job Description**
 - ❑ **Village Caretaker Application Form**
 - ❑ **Contract for Cluster Village Caretaker**
 - ❑ **Probation Letter**
 - ❑ **Grievance Procedure**

Our Support To You

- **A list of what you need before your Caretaker can start (Contd.):**
 - **Health & Safety Policy**
 - **Risk Assessment Document**
 - **General Safe Working Practice**
 - **Manual Cleanse & Litter**

Thank-you for listening

johnrivers@lavabit.com