

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
OF TROTTISCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, TROTTISCLIFFE  
ON THURSDAY 3 APRIL 2025 at 7pm**

**1) Apologies for Absence:** None received.

**2) Minutes of the 2024 meeting:** Signed.

**3) Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council**

Mr David Gaunt presented the Chairman's report for 2024/25 (copy attached).

**4) Report of the County Councillor**

County Councillor Sarah Hohler (SH) explained that the roads have always been a priority and will continue to be a priority. Andy Watson (KCC) and SH are looking into the ownership of Green Lane to see where this ownership lies and will provide an update once available.

SH understood that the road closures are frustrating for residents and KCC try to give as much notice as possible when it comes to closing a road however utility providers can sometimes issues late notice of a road closure and this is out of KCC's control. SH asked to keep reporting the potholes via the KCC website.

In relation to the Highways Improvement Plan, Andy Watson is happy to have a meeting to walk around Trottiscliffe to address the issues that residents are facing.

SH was happy to receive a great report from the school and is impressed with how the school is performing. SH also advised of her pending retirement and expressed what a pleasure it has been to serve KCC residents.

**5) Report of the Borough Councillors**

A report from Borough Councillors' was read out (copy attached).

**6) Financial report for 2024/25**

The Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer, reported on an unaudited statement of accounts for 2024/2025 which had previously been circulated.

**7) Report of the Village Hall Committee**

Attached is a report from the Village Hall Committee which had previously been circulated.

**8) Report of the School representative**

Attached is a report from the Headteacher of Trottiscliffe Primary School.

**9) Report of the Community Farm**

Attached is a report from the Community Farm which had previously been circulated.

**10) Report from Trottiscliffe Tennis Club**

Attached is a report from the Tennis Club which had previously been circulated.

**11) KALC Award**

David Goodworth was the nomination of the KALC Community Award 2025.

**12) Questions from members of the public**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.02pm

Chairman..... Date.....

DRAFT

## CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Some may say we've had a relatively quiet year; but the challenges for the Parish Council and to the Councillors over the last year have been met conscientiously and dealt with in a timely fashion!

Potholes; potholes; potholes! I remember starting last year's report like this!

Taylor's Lane being used as a 'rat run' continues; combined with the detritus washed down the hill and the state of the 'traffic calming humps'; has created multiple potholes which are proving to be a severe hazard which are reported constantly.

Pilgrims' way has its own issues, primarily caused by delivery vans and our friendly badger sets! The badgers seem to be at odds with everyone: but at least some of the bigger potholes and issues are being dealt with.

Slowing down through the village and adhering to the 20 MPH speed limit, would certainly help! Even though Pilgrims Way is still set to 50 MPH!

Kent Highways, through their Highways Improvement Plan, have still to paint in the speed roundels! Although we have had some positive 'appeasement and good faith' response re Green Lane!! On a positive note, KCC have plans to re-surface Taylor's Lane and some of Vigo Hill during the summer!

One of the bigger issues in the village is the lack of co-ordinated road closures, which in some cases are dropped on us without notice by the various utility companies, which don't seem to coordinate with each other! We are trying to address this in the future; but time will tell if they take notice from the people who 'pay for their services!'

We lost the regular 58 bus service which changed to a Friday only service. Discussions are ongoing to try to redress the cuts with a cross-parish alliance, which seems to be working well.

2024 marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

Guess what, we had another party to which the turnout was fantastic!

As well as everyone having a great time, the charitable side of Trottiscliffe came out to increase the Church fund for the planned new facilities.

Now we can look forward to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day!

The Village school is thriving and boasts a full complement of 84 pupils with excellent results in all subjects and extracurricular activities.

To compliment the thriving Tennis Club the new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is well used by the school and just about everyone around! I only wish the gates were close after its use (or am I just being grumpy?).

These extra facilities which complement the existing school playground requirements, provide Netball and '5 a side' and an additional safe open play area.

Another little extra on the recreation field is the addition of the exercise equipment, which we some questioned at the time; but has proved to being used by a wide range of villagers and walkers too.

*We're passionate about the village we live in and want it to remain the beautiful village we all love.*

Our next challenge going forward will be the upgrading of the children's play area, for which discussions are well advanced.

We appreciate the activities of our Borough and County Councillors, Robin, Martin and Sarah, who work solidly behind the scenes to deal with ongoing aspects of village life and support us in a variety of sometimes sensitive planning applications and are fully involved in 'The Local Plan' (for the second time) but with the upheaval of the English Councils through the introduction of various initiatives by government, TMBC now has new guidance (impositions) on planning and housing requirements!

As the eyes and ears of the village, the Parish Council is just a consultee, but we aim to best represent residents in our responses to planning proposals.

Finally, our waste collection has settled into a routine! The new and updated! TMBC app is improving(?)

The changes to the Parish Wards within TMBC seemed to transition fairly simply and now Trottiscliffe is combined with Wrotham, Addington and Igtham and Stansted to become 'Pilgrims & Igtham' and our borough council representatives are Robin and Martin as noted earlier.

David Gaunt

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As always there has been a tremendous amount of work and development at the Council's Leisure Facilities this year in partnership with the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust.

Strongly linked to the Council's aim of a sustainable future and caring for the environment, as well as the priorities of being innovative, cost effective and efficient service delivery, the following large scale projects have taken place:

- The 189 solar panels installed at Larkfield Leisure Centre last year have already generated in excess of 121,000kWh of renewable energy.
- The carbon reduction and energy saving schemes continue, including the installation of an additional 278 additional solar panels on the remaining roof space, due to complete this week, bringing the total to 470 which will reduce carbon emissions by 63 tonnes each year and produce a total of around 330,000kWh of clean energy every year.
- They will complement those on the Eco Café at Leybourne Lakes Country Park, and the 149 solar panels in place at Tonbridge swimming pool, which have generated 53kWh of clean energy, saving 11 tonnes of CO2 since their installation last March.

There has been further expansion of the LED lighting at the Leisure facilities, together with movement sensors and timers in outside areas.

- Work is due to start next month on the installation of air source heat pumps for Larkfield Leisure Centre replacing the existing fossil fuel-based boilers and
- Replacement of the chemical cleaning system at Tonbridge Swimming pool from Chlorine to a salt based system offering additional resilience against supply issues.

These will markedly contribute to the priority of being a carbon neutral council by 2030, together with the proposals for the replacement Angel Leisure Centre in Tonbridge. Detailed work throughout the year has taken place to ensure that the future facility will be fit for purpose and carbon neutral.

TMBC has worked in partnership with local organisations, including Kent County Councils Plan Tree team and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership,

to utilise a combination of revenue budgets, external funding and tree whip donations, to plant 2865 young native trees across the Borough in 2024. This hugely exceeds the Council's commitment of planting 1000 trees per year, through the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan.

Planting has not only taken place at large sites including Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground, Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, Haysden Country Park and Basted Mill but also in smaller open spaces in Aylesford, East Malling, Kings Hill, Leybourne and Snodland.

Robin is Chairman of the Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration Project Board. This is a huge initiative which is vital in helping the borough's main town to thrive, and we cannot underestimate the level of effort required by all involved in bringing this together.

The first commitment we have made is to build a new Angel Centre which promises to be at the leading edge of leisure facilities. Robin will of course ensure we deliver as carbon efficient a building as possible with the resource we have.

There is a thermal imaging camera that has been loaned to Parish councils or directly to residents helping to identify areas of heat loss in homes enabling works to reduce heat loss.

The council has recently agreed a grant scheme to many different organisations with grants from £750 -£1500 totalling £50,000. These enabling grants are very popular, helping unlock a number of projects in the Borough.

TMBC are supporting the entrepreneurial spirit with the West Kent Rural Grants Scheme creating sustainable growth and prosperity, with that supporting jobs for local people.

The Green Business Grant sits alongside this, and in fact both of these grants contribute towards making our businesses more efficient, sustainable and reducing CO2 emissions, thereby making them more resilient to the ever increasing volatile energy markets.

To date another £40,000 of grant funding has been delivered in this current round, with the new tranche open for applications.

Since the General Election there has been a large change in both planning law and in the future shape of Local Government. Of significance is the increased

requirement to build yet more houses coupled with the new definition of 'Grey Belt' land. There will now be greater pressure on our green fields to turn them into building sites. There have been two appeals to the planning inspectorate recently where permission was granted based upon the definition of Grey Belt land vs Green Belt land. We are beginning to see more 'speculative' applications coming forward exploiting the new definitions.

It is intended that by the end of this term of Government local Government in Kent will be re-organised. Essentially the KCC and locally TMBC will be abolished to form a 'unitary' authority with about half a million residents within its boundary. This could be an area that covers Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and maybe Maidstone Councils. This new authority will combine most of the functions of the former councils. The details are yet to be agreed, and we await more decisions from the Government on this. Tonbridge and Malling is one of the very few authorities to remain debt free during its term, paying no interest charges to anyone. However, it has been confirmed that any debt brought forward from KCC will remain with the new authority meaning the new unitary will be paying interest from day one. Needless to say we are challenging this idea and wish to see the debt paid off before the start of a new entity.

As a result of this re-organisation both Robin and Martin see a more active role for the parishes. The parish councils will need a stronger voice in the face of a less local unitary authority. As more details emerge from the process, we will keep parishes informed of opportunities as they arise.

Robin Betts

Martin Coffin

2024/2025 Trottiscliffe Parish Council			Total Unaudited Spend	2024/2025 Budget	Variation
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
		Precept	30,000.00	30,000.00	-
		VAT Refund	6,468.11	3,300.00	3,168.11
		Allotment rent	125.00	160.00	- 35.00
		Other Receipts/Interest NS&I	1,601.15		1,601.15
		S106 Grant for Outdoor Gym	30,000.00	30,000.00	-
		<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>68,194.26</b>	<b>63,460.00</b>	<b>4,734.26</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
<b>STAFF AND SALARIES</b>					
		Clerk's Salary & Tax	8,702.04	8,500.00	202.04
		Clerk's Expenses	200.03	250.00	- 49.97
		<b>TOTAL STAFF &amp; SALARIES</b>	<b>8,902.07</b>	<b>8,750.00</b>	<b>152.07</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>					
		Legal	2,725.00	1,500.00	1,225.00
		Audit	560.00	350.00	210.00
		Unity Trust	83.40	150.00	- 66.60
		Insurance	878.35	1,500.00	- 621.65
		Election Costs	-	-	-
		<b>TOTAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>	<b>4,246.75</b>	<b>3,500.00</b>	<b>746.75</b>
<b>OFFICE COSTS &amp; ADMINISTRATION</b>					
		Sundries/mileage	731.60	1,100.00	- 368.40
		Home/Office Allowance/Expenses	730.28	650.00	80.28
		IT support & repairs / Email/Payroll	1,328.26	1,000.00	328.26
		Website	1,400.00	1,500.00	- 100.00
		Meeting Room Hire	-	150.00	- 150.00
		Christmas Tree	150.00	150.00	-
		Training	175.00	300.00	- 125.00
		Donations S137	-	200.00	- 200.00
		<b>TOTAL OFFICE COSTS &amp; ADMIN</b>	<b>4,515.14</b>	<b>5,050.00</b>	<b>- 534.86</b>

2024/2025 Trottiscliffe Parish Council			Total Unaudited Spend	2024/2025 Budget	Variation
		<b>MEMBERSHIP FEES</b>			
		Subscriptions	535.39	500.00	35.39
		Satswana	180.00	200.00	- 20.00
		ICO	35.00	40.00	- 5.00
		<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FEES</b>	<b>750.39</b>	<b>740.00</b>	<b>10.39</b>
		<b>PROPERTY, RECREATION, AMENITIES</b>			
		Grounds maintenance	5,903.30	3,500.00	2,403.30
		Hedge Cutting/Repairs	1,475.00	1,000.00	475.00
		Play Area/Car Park Repairs	1,792.55	3,000.00	- 1,207.45
		Allotment Water	668.81	600.00	68.81
		Play Area Safety Report	180.00	200.00	- 20.00
		Contingency/Projects	3,305.19	4,000.00	- 694.81
		Highways Improvement Plan	-	1,000.00	- 1,000.00
		Outdoor Gym	30,000.00	30,000.00	-
		<b>TOTAL RECREATION &amp; AMENITIES</b>	<b>43,324.85</b>	<b>43,300.00</b>	<b>24.85</b>
		<b>VAT</b>	<b>9,036.11</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>7,036.11</b>

2024/2025 Trottiscliffe Parish Council		2024/2025 Total Unaudited Spend	2024/2025 Budget
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
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	VAT Refund	6,468.11	3,300.00
	Allotment rent	125.00	160.00
	Other Receipts/Interest NS&I	1,601.15	
	S106 Grant for Outdoor Gym	30,000.00	30,000.00
	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>68,194.26</b>	<b>63,460.00</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
<b>STAFF AND SALARIES</b>			
	Clerk's Salary & Tax	8,702.04	8,500.00
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	Highways Improvement Plan	-	1,000.00
	Outdoor Gym	30,000.00	30,000.00
	<b>TOTAL RECREATION &amp; AMENITIES</b>	<b>43,324.85</b>	<b>43,300.00</b>
	<b>VAT</b>	<b>9,036.11</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70,775.31</b>	<b>63,340.00</b>



Trottiscliffe Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 302866

## **Report for Parish Council – April 2025**

This has been a year of adjustment for the Village Hall, post the exit of the Montessori last July.

Whilst the revenue was of benefit, rising costs and the 'cost' to the hall was outstripping. An initial rental per hour of £8 that had been in existence for over 8 years was cost negative, when the hall and full heating was being set up from as early as 7am. The restrictions on the hall's use, availability and the negative attitude toward any other user wasn't conducive to a good partnership.

A £3000 redecoration programme less than 18 months ago, and we are having to revisit this locally as the wear and tear from the Nursery was substantial.

We are now rebuilding our hall funds through a variety of differing 'styles' of entertainment, use and this is making the hall far more of a community event.

The Monday monthly coffee mornings are a huge success, we have had up to 50 villagers attend for a free coffee morning, with many of the locals bringing along some amazing cakes and pastries. The cost is minimal, and the client base is ever changing, but importantly we are seeing new faces to the village each week, and alongside them a host of familiar faces dropping in to say hello to friends. The generous donations at each event has made it self-funding.

Fireworks night continues to grow, with phenomenal attendances, the whole team both contribute and enjoy the evening. An event that is gaining great press, both within the village, and locally. Each year we take learnings from the prior to improve the next!

There is planning underway for a Summer Fete type event, as we have held previously, in these we are keen to work in conjunction with the school. Always a popular event.

The Christmas 'Bash' is our annual end of year celebration and this continues to be very well subscribed. Our date is set for 8<sup>th</sup> December and we are already securing caterers, and bands now.

We have trialed a few new events, 'Drag Bingo' was a terrific success, enjoyed by all who attended, and again for a Thursday ('school') night it was sold out. All enjoyed the evening with the Bingo element based around correctly identifying songs.

All of these differing events are being designed to bring all elements of the community into the village hall. We continue to support the Mermaid Theatre group with a heavily subsidised rate to ensure its continued time in the hall. We also host the Table Tennis Club who have quietly occupied their slot for a decade now.

In the immediate locality we are supporting the Trottiscliffe Farm pigs with a monthly donation we see that as important that we are playing our part quietly in the background.

We also continue to regularly fund the issues of 'The Tatler' news magazine.

We are also supporting the production of a series of Music Events at the hall, this combines an opportunity for local talent, alongside those artists booked by Anne Gough – all have been heavily subscribed to, and a successful bar helps increase the success for the VH funds.

Our face book page is now at an all time high for members and we are active on all social media local sites. We are not only promoting village hall events, but supporting The Plough, The George, Harvell Farm Cafe, and any local events we are made aware of. The *Trottiscliffe Ladies Group* are also an incredible source of support.

We have been joined by two terrific new committee members, Natalie Williams and Nikki Ball. Natalie is taking over the Hall bookings diary, and Nikki is focusing on grants and bursaries that we can claim for, both have made a substantial contribution already.

Ian Turner has taken on the role of maintenance, alongside long term committee member Anne Gough, the external roof programme is the start of an effort to bring the standards in the hall back up to our prior levels.

In closing, it only leaves me to thank an incredible team of supporters who not only make events possible, but absolutely support our efforts to bring a warm welcome to all of the villagers, and friends and families.

- Anne Gough
- Elizabeth Smith
- Miranda Turner
- Ann Gillet
- Natalie Williams
- Richard Mc Grand
- Nikki Ball
- Janice Smith
- Patrick Carty

*Additionally*

- Ian Turner
- Ian Mills
- Alison Prountzos
- Noel Williams

Regards

Darren Smith

# **Trottiscliffe Church of England Primary School**

## **Annual Report for Parish Council March 2025**



Trottiscliffe CEP School has continued to go from strength to strength this year and, as always, this school is an exciting place to be.

### **Number on roll: 84**

The school roll is consistently now at capacity. We have spaces in just two of year groups but are oversubscribed in four years to offset this. For September we had 49 applications for the 12 spaces we offer, quite an achievement considering many local schools were under subscribed. This means we are able to maintain the current school structure of four classes: 14 pupils in Early Years, 19 pupils in Years 1 and 2, 29 in Years 3 and 4 and 22 in Years 5 and 6.

Our staffing has remained consistent again this year and this leads to a positive atmosphere at the school with parents and pupils being familiar with school personnel.

Attainment at the school continues to be well above county and national levels despite our ever increasing proportion of SEND pupils. Our Year 1 pupils again achieved 100% pass rate in their Phonics Screening in June and our end of key stage data and academic progress recorded across the school is evidence of the high standards expected and achieved at the school. Our Governing Body visit for termly monitoring days and report that the children enjoy being at school and enjoy learning, we couldn't really ask for much more than that.

### **School Activity**

In school we have continued adding to our calendar to ensure all pupils leave in Year 6 with a wealth of cultural capital as well as the necessary skills to follow their chosen future paths. We have had visiting speakers to teach road safety and fire safety, training for cycling in Balanceability and Bikeability, Year 6 pupils took part in the Mayors debate at the council offices in Kings Hill last term and recently a local audiologist from Kent Hearing came to talk to the children about how we hear on World Hearing Day which was a fantastic opportunity for the children. As a school we have celebrated and supported Children in Need, World Book Day and Comic Relief in school and have activities planned for celebrating the VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next term.

Our Eco Committee is always very active and we again received the well-respected Green Flag Award for the school through the environmental activity undertaken throughout the year. Last Easter saw improvements to the school grounds including the installation of large raised beds which enabled us to grow mini cucumbers, runner beans, courgettes and tomatoes in school as well as flowers to aid our pollinators.

We have been able to enhance the curriculum in the past 12 months with a variety of experiences including the residential trip for Year 6, a World War One sleepover, trips to Matilda the Musical, Gardening trips to Spadework, Church Schools Year 6 Celebration, Young Voices at the O2, Rochester Cathedral, the pantomime at Woodville Halls and the Gurdwara in Gravesend! We already have summer trips booked for Kew Gardens, Lambing, Wingham Wildlife Park, and a residential trip to Dorset will again take place in June.

This year we have expanded our extra-curricular provision with clubs available every night of the week after school. So far this year we have offered choir, football, netball, multi-skills, athletics, tennis, arts and crafts, sewing, reading, Lego, Dance, Ballet, Board Games, nature and gardening. They are all well-supported and it's lovely to see the children taking an interest in this additional experiences. We have also now been able to offer wraparound care with a breakfast club operating from 8am and after school childcare available at the school until 6pm each day.

As always the school also involved all pupils in a nativity play at Christmas, as well as the annual leavers' production last summer of A Midsummer Night's Dream. In the past fortnight we have hosted a Spring Showcase of performing arts and an iRock concert featuring the five 'bands' in the school. It is great to be able to encourage the performing arts and give every child the opportunity to have their moment on the stage.

Our commitment to sport and healthy lifestyles was recognised last summer with the award of the prestigious Gold Sports Mark. We were very proud to receive this as it demonstrates the dedication of our staff to develop this aspect of school life. Our netballers have continued to enthusiastically play and compete and have just qualified for the Maidstone Schools league play-offs. We have approximately 20 children registered to participate in the Mini London Marathon next month and have just heard that two of our footballers have been selected for the district football team so we continue to look for further sporting opportunities for our pupils.

Our TSA continues to actively support all we do in school. They have organised some fantastic events this year including the school marathon last summer. They raised money to support the school's refurbishment of an outbuilding into the new school library. Recently the TSA have purchased an extra set of iPads for the school children to use.

A highlight of the year was the return of our School Summer Fair last July. This was a lovely event and well supported by the local community. We have had several requests for us to organise one this summer so we shall hopefully be able to get this organised.

On behalf of the school may we thank the parish for the continual support offered to the school for events such as our Summer Fair and Sports Day on the parish field and we hope we can continue to work in partnership in the coming year.

Lucy Henderson  
Headteacher

# **TROTTISLCIFFE COMMUNITY FARM REPORT**

**January 2023 – December 2024**

In April 2024 the TCF was registered as a charity (No. 1208016).

The current trustees remain the same, with the exception of Deborah Lawton who left in September 2024 and replaced by Patrick Carty who has also taken over the Treasury role.

## **Animal Welfare**

We are now registered with West Point Farm Vets in Sevenoaks and have signed up to a monthly payment of £15 which covers us for an annual health check on all animals and worming.

All livestock now have individual enclosures with shelters. A working party was organised last Autumn to build an Alpaca shelter from pallets, and the old horse trailer has been converted into a home for the sheep. Peter, who we were given as an underweight bottle fed lamb, is now a very healthy adult sheep.

The donkeys have fared very well since moving to the top paddock with their own stable. The farrier attends regularly and they've been checked by an equine dentist.

## **Finance**

Finances are healthy, with a current balance of £4340. In August we will be holding our first AGM and will be presenting to the members our accounts.

Kathy Palmer has agreed to help with a membership drive. The idea is someone can become a member for £5.00pm or £7pm per household and that a monthly payment means we have a guaranteed monthly financial stream which helps with financial planning.

Several fund raisers have brought in approximately £4,000 in the last year as well as £500 in calendar sales.

The George have been very generous with a donation of £1,600 from their Beer Festival in September.

Adele donates the money raised from her bi-monthly quizzes at the Plough which on average give us at least £100.

We are always amazed at how generous and supportive the villagers are so a big thanks to them.

We have also applied for a grant from TMBC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant and the Delamere Dairy Foundation.

### **Going Forward**

We are currently looking to bring a few hens back and are considering all options for housing and fox proofing. The plan is that the school will hatch some chicks as part of their curriculum. A new pig arc is being sourced.

Planning is still awaiting approval for an educational barn to be erected at TCF. The Shelby Trust has funded the application. Shelby are organising a quiz at the George to raise funds for the project on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

### **Grange Park (local secondary school providing for students with an autism spectrum condition)**

Currently, during term time, 3 groups (8 students and 2 Teach Assistants) visit the farm twice a week. The students feed and look after livestock and undertake farm maintenance, fencing, repairing, building enclosures, feeding, grooming and moving the animals. A TCF volunteer works with the students on a weekly basis.

We could attract similar schools in the area to use the farm but the stumbling block is always the lack of toilet facilities and we are looking at options to overcome this.

### **Maintenance**

The track through the allotments to the farm caused a few problems last winter but Ferns generously not only donate the material to fill the track but also a group of men to lay the track which is so far holding up nicely.

Thanks to financing from the George we have now installed underground water pipes. The winter months have been much easier as we've not had any issues with frozen water pipes.

# Trottiscliffe Tennis Club

## Report to the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 3 April 2025

### 1. Governance

A sublease for the court facilities has been arranged between the Parish Council and the Tennis Club and is due to be officially signed in the next few weeks. The club is an unincorporated association, so it cannot hold a lease. Consequently, a Deed of Trust has been developed, and two trustees, Dick Hogbin and Colin Harding, have been appointed. These trustees will hold the lease on behalf of the club.

Holding a lease for the facilities will make the club liable to pay business rates to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. To mitigate these additional costs, the Club has successfully applied to HMRC for Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) status. This provides an automatic relief of 80% for annual business rates. The rateable value has yet to be determined.

Under the terms of the new lease, the Club will continue to organise routine maintenance of the facilities but will now also be responsible for long-term repair and renewal, which was previously the responsibility of the Parish Council. The financial implications of this obligation are noted under the Finance section of this report.

The Club continues to operate without a Chairperson and is finding it difficult to find suitable volunteers to fill this post.

The Club President is Tony Piper, and the management committee currently comprises the following members: Dick Hogbin (Treasurer), Colin Harding, and Tommy Verrall. Under the terms of the new lease, a nominated Parish Councillor is proposed to attend committee meetings in the future.

### 2. Regulatory Compliance

The Club continues to maintain appropriate policies to meet national Health and Safety regulations and privacy standards as defined by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Club also continues to maintain its status as a registered club of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and, as such, maintains various policies and guidelines regarding coach accreditation, coaching standards, safeguarding procedures, and diversity and inclusion principles.

### 3. Finance

Income for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 was £16,976.27, with operating expenditure of £10,037.62. £5,250 was transferred to the club's capital account (sinking fund), and the resulting annual surplus of £1,688.65 was carried forward to the current financial year.

Projected income for the current financial year ending 31 March 2025 is expected to be around £21,000, which is a significant increase on last year and mainly due to the rise in membership numbers, together with a contribution from coaching activity. Operating costs have increased significantly due to inflation and expenditure on services that have historically been provided on a voluntary basis.

Capital expenditure in 2024/25 on replacing the clubhouse decking with long-life composite materials and replacing the court fencing with heavy-duty posts amounted to £23,031.72 (including VAT), consequently depleting the club's capital reserves. Due to increased operational costs and the need to increase contributions to the Club's sinking fund, the committee proposes substantially increasing subscription fees for the membership year beginning 1 May 2025.

#### **4. Facilities Management**

The Club continues to maintain the facilities to a high standard to appeal to members, prospective members and visitors, and to ensure the courts and surroundings match the appeal of the location in Trottiscliffe village. Under the terms of the new lease, the tennis club is responsible for the area within the outer fencing, and the Parish Council is responsible for the car parking area. The Parish Council has agreed to clear the weeds and moss growth in the car park and to empty the main drain.

During the past 12 months, the club has invested heavily in new composite decking and substructure, replacing all the timber decking, 2.75m high fencing at both ends of the courts, and externally refurbishing the clubhouse.

The Club has an ongoing contract with ETC Sports Surfaces, maintaining the court playing surface to a high standard with four quarterly visits. The courts are serviced during these visits, including cleaning, sanding, and treating and clearing moss and algae. In 2026, a rejuvenation programme is proposed to extend the courts' life, subject to use.

The Club has employed a local maintenance company to upkeep and maintain the condition of the courts and the surrounding areas. Works include general gardening duties, including grass cutting, weeding, bush trimming, and general ad hoc duties as they arise, i.e., clearing the leaves from the court primarily during the autumn, maintaining the clubhouse, clearing the gutters, and maintaining the biodigester-based waste disposal system.

#### **5. Membership**

As part of the Club's growth strategy, significant progress has been made in marketing the facilities and services, and general awareness of the club has improved considerably. The Club's new social media presence, which has developed over the past year, has significantly contributed.

The past year has seen a substantial increase in membership, with the addition of some 36 new adult members and 26 junior members. The regular coaching sessions and junior events provided by Frankie's Tennis have significantly contributed to the club's growth and popularity, particularly in developing a thriving junior section.

Current membership numbers are 138 adults and 83 juniors, making an overall total of 221 members. As a two-court club, an adult membership cap of 150 is under consideration to avoid court contention issues. Continued efforts to grow junior membership numbers are planned.

Due to the increased costs of running the Club and the need to fund long-term repair and renewal activities, including future court surface renewal, the Committee are considering a substantial increase in membership subscriptions for the membership year beginning 1 May 2025.

#### **6. Kent LTA**

The Club continues to be a subscribed member of the Kent LTA and actively participates in the Kent HEAD Inter-Club Leagues.

#### **7. School Use**

The Club continues to provide free access to the courts for the local school for after-school sessions on Tuesdays and curricular sessions on Thursday mornings during the summer term.

#### **8. Public Access**

The Club continues to provide access to the courts for residents who are not club members.

Tony Piper  
Club President  
30 March 2025