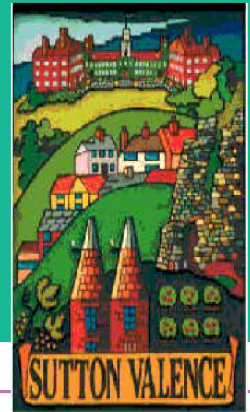


SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



QHOF Family Fun Day enjoyed by all

On Sunday 6th July the QHOF put on a Family Fun Day in the Village. The Queens Head Odd Fellows are a group of like minded individuals who volunteer to organise fundraising events within (but not strictly) the Three Suttions of Sutton Valence, Chart Sutton and East Sutton.

QHOF's vision is to bring the community together for enjoyable events whilst raising money for charity. Their dedicated charity this year was the Heart Of Kent Hospice due to their fond personal connection to villager Rob McCann.

The Family Fun Day was a traditional summer event where all family members could get involved with Wellie Wanging, Coconut Shy, Tug of War and Tombola to name a few.

Children could get their faces painted for free and there was a very popular Strawberries and Champagne stand. Smiles and entertainment came from our furry canine friends from the dogs show - Leave the Sausage on the Plate was quite amusing!

QHOF would like to thank all the volunteers and donors who enabled the day to go ahead. The community spirit and appreciation of the event makes all the effort worthwhile, whilst supporting such a great cause. They raised just over £1000 for Heart Of Kent Hospice and put on a fun event for the local community.

QHOF are open to suggestions and volunteers for further events.

Please email hellyarsa@outlook.com with comments and suggestions.



Mike Gammon, Parish Council Chairman found himself in the stocks



The Family Fun Day was well supported by the local community



Many different stalls and events were on show

Platinum Meadow Volunteer Day

Platinum Meadow is a field overlooking the Harbour, which was once grazing for horses. A 2022/23 joint project with Maidstone Borough Council, saw the first steps towards creating a new native woodland here, with hundreds of whips planted by volunteers. Almost three years later, on 29th August, it was time to take stock on progress of these young trees, with volunteers once again stepping in to help – to begin to map out the surviving saplings. Huge thanks to neighbours, John and Iain, along with Ross and Tikki from the Sutton Valence Gardeners Association, who joined Councillors and MBC for the day. Some follow-up sessions are planned, so please contact the Clerk to register your interest.



Volunteer action helps regenerate the Platinum Meadow project



The Remembrance Service and Parade will take place on Sunday 9th November 2025 starting at 10.30 am.

Members of QHOF have kindly offered their services again to marshall the event.

Parish consultation survey results help plan for the future

by Cllr Leighton Castle

In our last newsletter, the Sutton Valence Parish Council (SVPC) invited residents to complete a survey covering nine topics: community, roads, anti-social behaviour, sports, youth, amenities, open spaces, and housing. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their feedback. As a new member of the parish council, I found the views invaluable and we wanted to highlight the positive views shared and outline the actions that we are taking on areas of concern. Additionally, I will address items where parish council control is limited and how we can work together as residents of Sutton Valence to escalate issues with the relevant authorities. The response rate was just under 10%. While we aim to improve participation in future surveys, nearly 60% of feedback received was positive with almost 90% of respondents feeling 'connected to the community' and praising groups like the Sutton Valence Gardeners Association and The Queens Head Oddfellows (QHOF) for their organised events. Results also indicate parishioners appreciate our open spaces. Sutton Valence parish boasts wonderful green spaces with spectacular views across the Weald and be assured SVPC are looking to improve on these, with a review of how we are managing these spaces currently being undertaken.

New Sutton Valence open spaces group

We're launching a Sutton Valence open spaces volunteer group to further improve both community engagement and support our efforts in managing our beautiful village. You can read more about the open spaces volunteer group in another article in this newsletter.

The responses also highlighted where we can improve and your responses showed that many people are unaware of all the community groups and clubs that currently run within the parish. The parish council do promote local community activities on our website and Facebook page and Facebook will be one of our readily accessible communication tools where we can promote non-profit community activities and events, so please do follow us there and if you have any news you'd like to add please message clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk

Feedback about sporting facilities was positive

Overall, feedback about the parish's sporting facilities was positive. Many commented that the football pitch is used for junior matches and highlighted that the tennis courts are accessible to the public through both the tennis club and ad-hoc hire via the Kings Head.

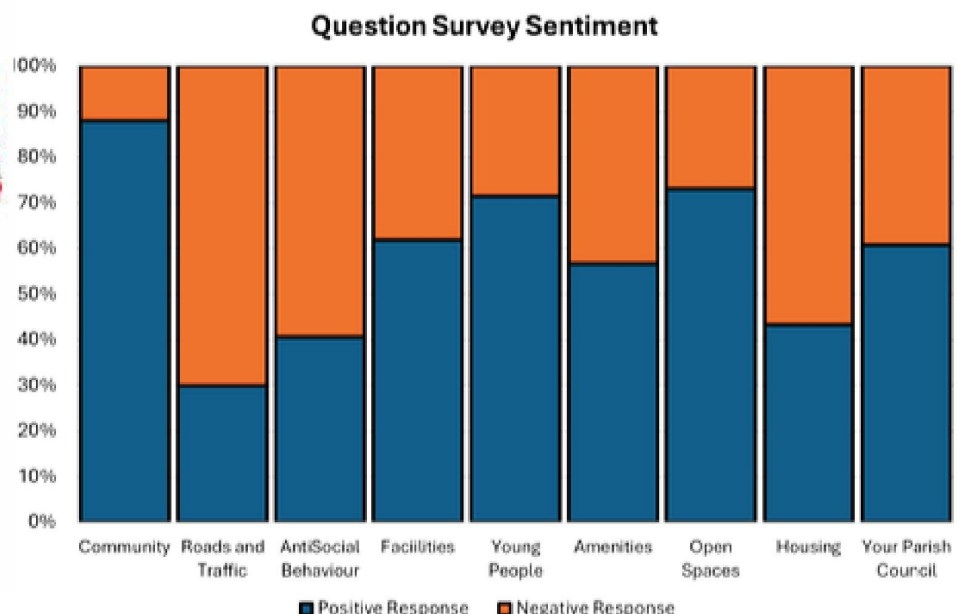
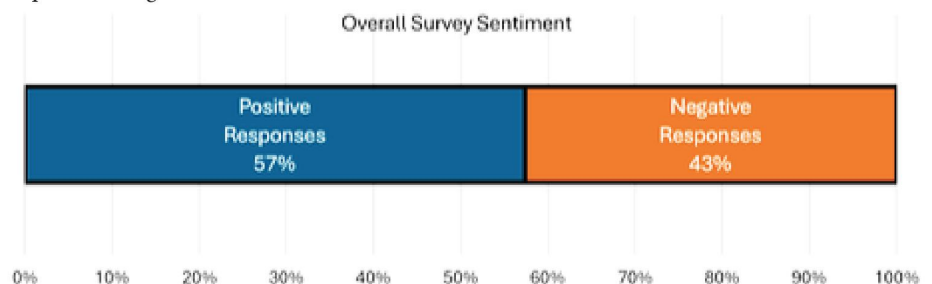
The council are always looking to improve, and we aim to trial 'open days' at the tennis courts during school holidays and we are talking to the Sutton Valence School, to see if we can build mutually beneficial community links.

Less positive response to housing

Housing received a less positive response, and planning is one of the council's most considered responsibilities. All planning applications in the parish are put on the agenda of the next monthly council meeting and are independently reviewed by each councillor. Each councillor then has an independent vote on whether or not the council provide comment to MBC planning authorities. There is time given at the beginning of each meeting at which the public have opportunity to share opinion on planning or indeed any parish matter. Please review the council agenda on our website or parish noticeboards. Meetings are usually on the second Wednesday each month, with extra meetings scheduled if planning submissions require it.

Concerns about road conditions and traffic

Survey feedback also highlighted concerns about road conditions and traffic. While the council will report issues we notice, highways are managed by other authorities. Parishioners should report any concerns, such as potholes, or signage damage, directly to MBC, KCC, or Highways as appropriate. Reporting details are provided at the end of this newsletter and on our website. We look forward to hearing more of your views in our 2026/27 survey which will be out next year.



New look Annual Assembly a success

On Tuesday 3rd June 2025, Sutton Valence Parish Council welcomed parishioners and organisations to the Annual Parish Assembly. The format of the assembly was different this year, where the parish council opted for a "tabletop exhibition" style to encourage direct dialogue and engagement as opposed to the speech-led assemblies of previous years. Sutton Valence Parish Council were delighted at the turnout for this new style of assembly and the feedback we have received, has been excellent with regards to the more personable approach. Parishioners and organisations will be pleased to hear that we anticipate that this will be the preferred format for future events. We would like to give our sincerest thanks to the following organisations for their participation in making the event a success;

Sutton Valence Care Home - Barchester Healthcare
Kent County Council
Patient Participation Group (Sutton Valence Group Practice)
QHOF - Queens Head Oddfellows Fund
Royal British Legion
St Mary's Church
Sutton Valence School
Sutton Valence Gardeners Association
The Sutton Valence Choral Society
Sutton Valence Women's Institute
Sutton Valence Village Hall
The Three Suttons Helpline



The new format Parish Assembly encouraged direct dialogue



Flag Raising service remembers the brave

A VE Day Commemoration was held on the Sutton Valence Village Hall playing field with the occasion including a small parade of School Cadets to represent the armed forces. The Last Post was played by one of the students and readings were made by the Headmaster of SV School Mr Thomas and the School Chaplin, Mr Davis, along with members of the British Legion. The event was well supported by residents, students and staff in act of Remembrance

The Annual Rose Ceremony held on the Village Green

Following the yearly tradition on Midsummer's Day the parish council presented one red rose to the Headmaster of Sutton Valence School as payment of the annual rent of the Village Green. The ceremony took place on the Village green, as it has done since 1957. The Guild of the Fraternity of Clothworkers, as Governors of the then Free Grammar School of William Lambe, as owners of the green, granted a 99 year lease on the Village Green for the princely sum of one red rose, to be paid on Midsummer's Day.



Left to right, G.A. Davies, Chaplain of Sutton Valence School, Headmaster James Thomas, Councillor Mel Flint and Lesley Flint, representing Sutton Valence Parish Council

Receive your PC Newsletter by email

In an effort towards sustainability and green efficiency, The Sutton Valence Parish Council's newsletter will be moving to a mainly digital format going forward. If you would like to continue to receive our newsletter by email, please email clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk to register your interest.

Hard copies can be made available by special request for those who have little or no access to our digital methods of communication. If you require such assistance, please call the parish office on 01622 844135 to leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.





The War Memorial playground, is now reaching the end of its safe life, and requires replacements

War Memorial Playground - your views

Following an inspection of the war memorial playground (behind the village hall), the Parish Council took the sad but necessary step to remove the wooden triple-tower and slide.

The play tower and slide had been a feature of the playground for over 15 years, providing entertainment to a generation of Sutton Valence children, however it had reached the end of its safe life.

The Parish Council is currently considering options for a replacement playground feature and would very much welcome the views of parents and children in the parish as to what they would like to see. Would local children like another tower/slide replacement and/or

would they prefer playground equipment that has other features? The Parish Council is also consulting with Sutton Valence Primary School to get the thoughts of pupils.

Alternative equipment could include, for example, scramble nets, climb boards, wobble walkways or a fireman's pole alongside other options. Any new feature would need to roughly fit the same footprint in the playground as the existing towers and slide and cost will inevitably also be a factor. That said, the Parish Council is keen to receive suggestions as to what today's children love the most from playground equipment so that the war memorial playground continues to be relevant and fun today and for the next generation of users.

COULD YOU BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR ?

We are currently short of two councillors on the Parish Council. If you feel you could do this important work for your community contact our Clerk on this number

01622 844135

Summer 2025 update from your Maidstone Borough Councillors, MBC Mayor Martin Round and Ziggy Trzebinski.

It has been a busy year so far with one or two upsets from our perspective. A major one is that MBC are behind on housing targets and five year land supply.

This is the result of a scaling down in numbers of existing housing units on one or two sites as well as the current economic situation, making developers loathe to start developments which either they may not be able to sell, or make little profit. The knock-on effect is that even though MBC may refuse unsuitable applications, the Building Inspectorate may agree them just to get the numbers up.

The council has also, much against our own wishes, agreed to pump £7.5m into the de-carbonisation of Maidstone House, when its value is currently only £4m. With only two years remaining for Maidstone Borough Council to run, this is a folly, as no-one knows what will happen to the building after local government re-organisation. to the meetings.

Additionally, 3 Independent Councillors have resigned from Lenham which will lead to a by-election costing the council in excess of £50k. It would seem that the current administration have some challenges!

The good news? Well, our Mayor, Martin Round, has been busy promoting Maidstone to businesses, supporting local charities and generally attending many civic events. The VJ day celebration in Headcorn was well attended and a very good afternoons entertainment after the serious matter of remembering our fallen war heroes. Ziggy has been involved in a fair number of planning matters and ward casework. Positive news is that there is now a project to alleviate the effects of flooding in both Headcorn and Ulcombe, in which he has been involved. It is hoped that the many properties in the area will be protected sufficiently to withstand flash floods within the next 18 to 24 months.

Both Martin and Ziggy have attended as many parish council meetings as possible and contributed positively.

LOCAL INFORMATION AND REPORTING PROBLEMS

Report a missed bin collection

Maidstone Borough council is responsible for emptying litter bins and recycling collections <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/bins-and-recycling/report-a-missed-bin-collection>

Report fly-tipping

Problems with fly-tipping can be reported to Maidstone Borough Council <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/street-care-and-cleaning/report-fly-tipping>

Report a problem on the road or pavement

Kent County Council is responsible for the county's public roads and pavements. This includes pot-holes, drainage and bus shelter damage <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>

Report a problem with right-of-way

Kent County Council is responsible for the county's rights-of-way. This includes broken stiles, missing or damaged footpath signposts, overgrown vegetation and fallen trees or damaged or dangerous path surfaces <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-on-a-right-of-way>

Kent Police

Dial 101 to report crime and other concerns that don't need an emergency response, (such as car theft, property damage, minor traffic collisions, neighbourhood antisocial behaviour concerns.

Contact the Parish Council

For further information regarding Sutton Valence Parish Council and its work for the parish community, please contact the Clerk, Emma Hull on 01622 844135 or email: clerk@suttonvalence.org.uk or visit our website on www.suttonvalence.org.uk

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