

## News from The Parish Council – March 2024

All Acol village homes should by now have had an Acol 2024 Household Survey document (Acol Village Appraisal) delivered. This survey is a vital first step in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for our community, which is the means by which we will be able to maximise our influence on any development affecting our parish. It is no small undertaking, particularly for a community as small as ours with only the correspondingly small budget and resource available, but your Parish Council considers it to be an urgent requirement. At present, Acol is the only Thanet village that does not have development planned or underway, but we should not assume that will remain the case. To minimise expense we are utilising, so far as possible, work already undertaken locally, especially in Birchington, to inform our planning but we will inevitably need to commission additional professional help as the Neighbourhood Plan development process progresses, and we will seek to obtain grant funding to support this work. The Neighbourhood Planning website - [Make a neighbourhood plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-a-neighbourhood-plan) – has more information about the process but, for now, the most important point to stress is that neighbourhood planning must exemplify community consultation and involvement. Other communities have tried, and failed, to develop their Neighbourhood Plans through insufficient community participation and support, thereby ceding power to external bodies and developers. It is essential, therefore, that we gain a good response to the Household Survey. Data from the survey will not be associated with individual respondents but anonymised and used only for the purposes of gaining a greater understanding of the needs and views of our community as a whole. Addresses will be used only to monitor survey responses, ensuring, for example, that we do not duplicate household responses. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to any Parish Councillor, or contact us via the PC website - [Contact - Acol Parish Council, Acol, Birchington](#)

Gavin Winpenny (Planning & Development)

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February are now on the PC website.

As ever, Highways matters featured. By the time of our next Council meeting (and Annual General Meeting) an updated Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) should be in-place and our expectations are that it will be possible to commit to reducing the speed limit along The Street to 20 mph, and that on Acol Hill to 50 mph. (Still too fast, in our view, but it appears, under current KCC and Police guidance, unrealistic to expect to achieve any greater reduction.) The village CCTV is being upgraded and it is anticipated that it can play greater roles in monitoring the village centre and deterrence of traffic regulation infringements. Convex traffic mirrors have been situated at some village junctions to help overcome obstructed visibility.

The ambition for our village 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day commemoration has been downgraded but we still plan to mark the occasion with a weekend event, to include participation in a best kept village competition with other Thanet villages.

Richard Steel (Chair)