

WPC NEWS

At the time of writing some of you will have noticed the strange sight of two streetlight lanterns hanging off the same pole. This is because our contractors have been busy installing new LED equipment but only UKPN can transfer the power to the new fused spurs. All our 56 units are in the process of being replaced and will be completed shortly.

WPC has also now replaced all internal lighting in the Pavilion and the Village Hall, where the elderly fluorescents that hang from chains from the tall ceiling are now LED Batons. The new lighting reduces CO² emissions, is cheaper to run and relatively maintenance free.

A close examination of the Church wall revealed decades of patching of various quality and types of cement.

It was also apparent that it was potentially dangerous and needed substantial repairs. In consultation with Paul Hunt, a professional with years of experience, he suggested the top capping layer be removed and bricks salvaged where possible.

These bricks were then used to rebuild the top four courses with a lime-based mortar mix. New imperial capping bricks were sourced as a 'soft red' to match the existing.

New bricks will have to weather to take on the mottled patina of age but overall, a pleasing repair.



The May election came and went but this time with some significant differences. Boundary changes reduced the overall number of seats and changed wards such that Wrotham became part of Pilgrims Ward along with Ightham, Stansted, Fairseat and Addington.

Cllr Betts and Coffin retained their seats in Pilgrims Ward but overall, the Conservatives lost their majority to the Greens in the south and Lib Dems and Labour elsewhere. The Independent Alliance (IAK) retained Borough Green. We now have a ruling coalition with the narrowest of margins which is predominately Conservative but with two IAK Members with key positions of power. Cllr Taylor of Borough Green is now the Cabinet Member for Planning and I leave it to readers to speculate on the ramifications. Suffice to say as long as this situation continues, we can expect rigorous enforcement of planning constraints in line with government policies.

WPC has commissioned expert evidential reports on the impact the Moto 24/7 Truckstop proposals will have on our AONB designated landscape and on our busy local highways. These reports are now being considered by Dr Ashley Bowes, our barrister.



Sevington Truck Stop near Ashford

We should be able to submit our considered comments on the proposal in the coming week. TMBC is the local planning authority (LPA) and the first time this application was submitted, they refused it. If that happens again then it is almost certain that Moto will appeal and will move to a Planning Hearing conducted by an independent Planning Inspector. It is in those circumstances that independent evidence presented by a renowned Planning Barrister will be crucial.

Cllr Pete Gillin