

OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

digital edition

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No. 35

SUMMER IS UPON US—FAREWELL TO SPRING!

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In this edition you will find a water report (more foul than fresh), some feedback, total triage – and a book review. I apologise to those expecting to receive an expanded account of the *Hub Community Fridge and Cafe*, as promised in the spring edition, but this has been postponed – partly in favour of bringing the plight of Old Park to your attention. At short notice, I am very grateful to OHSCA member Pat Edwards, together with Jan Pahl and Sian Pettman, for their account of the *Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood* registered charity – faced, as the charity now is, by the Ministry of Defence's peremptory decision to sell Old Park on the open market. The area, which makes up most of Canterbury's NE quadrant, is of exceptional archaeological and ecological value – as you can appreciate from their article on page 7, and from the Friend's website: <https://canterburyoldpark.org.uk/>. So — the campaign to save this land for the whole community is now well and truly on!



Dick Vane-Wright, Editor (editor@ohsca.org)

THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF CHURCHILL ROAD WAS TAKEN BY MARION BELL IN LATE MARCH 2025 (see p. 2)



MEMBERSHIP

Most of us who wished to keep their membership going have now paid their £5 subscription for the year. If you are not sure whether you have done so, a panel at the top of page 8 of the printed copy should inform you.

Thank you to all who responded to their reminder in the Spring edition – all cheques and cash received at 41B Dover Street have now been banked. Many members pay into the account online, referencing their name and address. The bank details for this method are as follows: OHSCA, Sort code 60-04-27, A/C no. 90612094.

OHSCA very much belongs to its members, not just those with committee responsibilities. As well as reporting on activities and airing public concerns, we want the newsletter also to contain news of the wider membership and our many interests – so, if you have an idea to share, can I encourage you to contact me, other OHSCA committee members, or the Editor?

Peter Whisson, Membership Secretary
membership@ohsca.org

WEBSITE AND EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

Just to remind all members that OHSCA has a website <http://www.ohsca.org> which acts as a back-up to the newsletter. The website is always available and it is especially useful if you lose your paper newsletter or the digital version gets lost in the deluge of emails we each receive every day! The website is updated monthly. At <http://www.ohsca.org/events.html> you can find an events diary, and pictures. If you take any photographs of events, please do send them to me. It is always good to keep the web site fresh.

OHSCA also sends out email alerts, usually reminders of specific activities, but also any changes in previously published activity information. You can sign up to these by including your email address on the membership form and agreeing to its use, or you can send an email to me directly (see my email address below) asking to be subscribed. You can unsubscribe from receiving the emails at any time by taking the 'unsubscribe' option at the bottom of the email but, please note, this does not mean that you have resigned from OHSCA. For that, a resignation note or email should be sent to the Membership Secretary.

Lucy Fletcher-Jones, OHSCA Website and Events Bulletins; website@ohsca.org

CHURCHILL ROAD'S FLOWERING TREES

From time to time, the residents of Churchill Road club together to help replace old trees with new. OHSCA member Mike Avery organises a local whip-round when necessary.

A few years ago KCC councillor Michael Northey provided for a replacement cherry from his tree fund (together with money for several other trees in the New Dover Road area). More recently, at Sophie Scott's suggestion, OHSCA made a £250 contribution from our Tree Fund.

In springtime, quite a lot of people visit Churchill Road just to photograph the spectacular blossom (see page 1). Some flower slightly later – perhaps these 'farewell to spring' trees are older, or just a different variety.

Marion Bell

GREEN TEAM NEWS



Yet more green bags from St George's Garden – but this time mostly garden pruning but with the odd vodka bottle and beer can thrown in. This was a few weeks ago and already it needs another go, but that's just gardening!

The Green Team would like to issue a disclaimer: we are not responsible for the spraying of weed killer on the bed outside Subway. They removed some shrubs and a jasmine climber to make way for their new Subway sign. It is their land and of course they can do what they like with it. But the weed or wildflower they removed was the one with small pretty blue flowers loved by bees. We will watch to see what happens.

A working party has been organised by Alison Culverwell on Wednesday 11th June, to tackle Milton Road, the cutting between Cromwell Road and South Canterbury Road. This will have been done by the time this Newsletter is printed. A big thank you to everyone involved.

Deirdre Hawkes

PUTTING THE BONFIRES OUT

Local residents are very grateful to Chris Woodnough, manager of the Pilgrims' Way Allotment Association, for introducing a ban on all bonfires. This followed a particularly bad day in March when acrid smoke from one of five bonfires on the allotments spread over Pilgrims' Way School and the surrounding area.

Chris confirmed that all green waste can be composted on site; nothing should be burned. His speedy response and action is greatly appreciated. [There is a 'Gov.UK' website concerning smoke that offers guidance as to what is permissible, and what is not: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nuisance-smoke-how-councils-deal-with-complaints>.]

Marion Bell

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP (LHG)

A sub-group of the Local History Group is concentrating on our sole current project – researching the history of the Kent & Canterbury Club – with some urgency.

The scheduled LHG meeting on 8th July is cancelled. The next meeting of the wider group will be the AGM on 9th September, 2.00 pm, at *The Phoenix* public house, 67 Old Dover Rd, CT1 3DB.

Mike Brain (Secretary LHG, history@ohsca.org)

PLANNING MATTERS

From the *South Canterbury Development Corporation* (SCDC; previously known as the Mountfield Park project), here is the latest news from Alice Seller of GummerLeathes (<https://www.gummerleathes.com/>).

- “We [SCDC] held our first community walk on Friday, 23rd May, and also hosted our second Coffee and Conversations event on the 27th. Both were really well attended and well received. The walk was fully booked, with a waiting list, and there was lots of positive feedback overall. We’ve published short journals about the events on the SCDC website (www.southcanterbury.co.uk).
- There was a lot of interest in the *Via Francigena*, so we’re planning a couple of workshops to explore how we might celebrate and engage with this route – we hope to have these live on the website soon (but not quite there yet!).
- Looking ahead, SCDC’s next major event will be on Monday, 23rd Sept. – an Engineering Event running from 5–9 pm. More information will be available soon on our website, but people can already register here (you have to register to secure your space – go to [Engineering Insights and Update – with SCDC’s Head of Delivery, Nick Bromell](#)).
- I’ll also be adding some drop-in sessions over the summer to the website. These will be opportunities for members of the community to book time with me [Alice Seller] directly to talk through the project or ask any questions. I hope to have these dates live in the next couple of weeks.”

Received from *David J. Kemsley*, 4 June 2025

CONNECTED CANTERBURY

Connected Canterbury (full information can be accessed via the City Council website – see also p. 11) is the collective title of the various individual projects now well underway across the city, funded with the help of a £20 m levelling up grant from central government.

Perhaps the most prominent examples currently are the ongoing work at Westgate Towers to provide an event space and better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, the renovation of Canterbury Castle, and improvements to Dane John. In the pipeline are changes in the bus station area to create a more pleasant environment for passengers (disappointingly far short of the major upgrades this writer feels are urgently needed there, particularly in relation to digital information display boards) and, most pleasingly, planting of shrubs and trees at the Longport car park.

One question that has yet to be answered is whether the city council has or is planning for the money and resources which will be needed in order to maintain these developments in pristine condition after completion. Sadly, evidence based on the state of St George’s St is not promising. The relatively new paving is covered in dropped chewing gum residue, and the planters are littered with cigarette ends and assorted rubbish. Various well-meaning attempts to plant small shrubs end in abject failure after a few weeks.

This neglect presents a very poor first impression for our visitors who not unreasonably expect far better from

a World Heritage Site. It is something that needs to be addressed urgently by the powers that be.

On a brighter note, and one which confirms a perception that there are far fewer graffiti of late across the city, it was encouraging recently to see the (presumably CCC funded) ‘Report Graffiti’ van out and about, with the two very proactive operatives hunting down and cleaning off offensive moronic scribbles!

David Kemsley

SEWAGE TREATMENT

Earlier this year, Southern Water extended an invitation to Canterbury Society members to visit the Sturry Road Waste Water Treatment Plant. I was able to join the group on their visit in early March. We started our tour at the sewer inlet point and ended two hours later at the outlet open stream where, what was on the day properly treated crystal clear water, was flowing into the Great Stour. It was a highly instructive visit. Here are some of the things I learned:

- An impressively detailed waste water management plan and operational risk analysis for the plant are easily accessible via Google search. Worth a read if you are so inclined.
- All of our questions about the *operation* of the plant were answered by front-line competent staff who are clearly working very hard in a high risk environment.
- They are regularly called upon to do a lot of juggling with the flow between the various treatment tanks. I salute them for their dedication to the task. Incidentally, questions I would have wanted to put to Senior Managers/Directors about the governance and performance of the company had to be deferred to another day, as no one of that pay-grade was available.
- The maximum capacity of the plant is an inflow from the sewer of 457 litres per second. Average inflow in an extended period of dry weather is 350 litres per second. Quite a relatively small margin of difference, with a high degree of overflow risk, given the volatility of weather patterns in recent years
- Prolonged periods of rainfall and especially heavy bursts do cause real problems. On those occasions two huge storm tanks are brought into use. The aforementioned juggling ensures that, if it proves impossible to avoid untreated water being discharged into the river, priority will be given to the foul water which has been filtered, to cause least harm.
- There has been no noticeable expansion of capacity for decades, although behind the scenes modern technology is used within the limitations of aging site infrastructure.
- I was appalled at the inexcusable abuse of the sewage system by the general public. Again my utmost respect for the staff who have the horribly unpleasant task of sorting it out. Clearly a major programme of public education is needed to make people aware of three Ps only for the toilet [<https://flush3p.org/>]. Cooking oil and fat must not be discarded via the kitchen sink. This is a major

problem for society and has to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

- A belated and inexplicable realisation on my part that sewage plants can only treat the foul water they receive from the sewers. Apart from unacceptable discharges from the waste water treatment plants, river pollution is caused by agricultural runoff, and other illegal discharges. River water polluted in these ways flows unhindered into the Stodmarsh lakes.
- Responsibility for restoring the health of the River Stour rests fairly and squarely with the Environment Agency. It needs to be fully transparent about its action plan.

In my view, Southern Water needs to be equally transparent with the public about how it intends to invest the additional income received from the 47% increase in customer bills this year. There is no doubt that substantial investment is needed in treatment plants and sewers. Along with predictions of the country not having sufficient fresh water by 2035, water supply and treatment has to be a top priority for our politicians.

David Kemsley

SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES GROUP (SEA)

SEA organises social activities and events to bring the community together. Reminders are sent out by mailchimp to those members who have provided their email address to Peter Whisson (see p. 2). We welcome offers to help with activities, to join the SEA sub-committee, or any suggestions for future events. Please contact the SEA Convenor, [Lorna Durrani](#), at social@ohsca.org.

Response to the results of Questionnaires sent out in the Spring Newsletter and by mailchimp in April

We are very grateful to the many members who responded to the questionnaire. The responses were very informative and will help us in planning future events and activities.

Those members who responded attended some or all of the events/activities we provided, including evening talks, coffee mornings, the evening Spring Party and the Summer Garden Lunch, organised nature walks, GIG visits to gardens, seed swap and gardeners' question time, and plant share. Most members were positive about these activities, finding them enjoyable and enabling social contact. They particularly enjoyed informal, open-air activities, such as the walks culminating in a pub lunch, and the summer lunch in members' gardens.

Some people found it difficult to attend events on Fridays or Sundays, because of existing commitments or family time, and suggested events should be held during the week. As this can be difficult for others, we will need to provide a variety of days chosen for events. Some members commented that OHSCA activities clashed with the many other events available locally or with planned holidays.

One person commented that the stairs to the upstairs room at the Canterbury Club limited their participation. In all the reminder mailchimps, I have made it clear that the downstairs room can be booked if

a member requests it. As the upstairs room is more suitable for talks, especially if accompanied by a slide show, we prefer it, but we can use the ground floor if requested. The Club are investigating the possibility of installing a lift, but require listed building permission and considerable funds to do this.

Some members are not interested in gardening so do not attend any of the GIG events. Others particularly enjoyed the GIG events, as gardening is a particular interest. On one occasion it was felt that the talk at Gardeners' Question Time went on for too long, though the talk was interesting and well-delivered.

There were different views about the Kent and Canterbury Club as a venue for talks and the Spring Party. One person found it old-fashioned and stuffy but had not been recently. The Club has made a real effort over the past two years to improve their premises. It has been redecorated and there are new catering staff. One person preferred the hot meal provided at the Spring Party in the past to the current hot and cold buffet, even though this would mean increasing the cost of the event, and another felt the recent buffets were not up to their expectations and suggested an outside caterer or bringing our own food. We will look into the possibility of using outside caterers or improving the buffet provided by the Club's catering staff.

It was felt by some that the buffet was served too late and should be before the talk, rather than after. We will consider changing the timing to allow for the buffet to be served first. One person mentioned they did not like the "impossible quizzes" (noted, but something of a tradition going back to OHDS days!). We will also rearrange the timing of the talks to allow for socialising before and after the talk, as suggested by one member. However, if this means everyone disappears after the talk, we will revert to the previous timing!

Most concerning to me was the comment made by one member that they felt events were geared towards retired members and felt left out at events they attended or did not have much in common with them, as they were still working. We do have a number of people who, though elderly, are still working part- or full-time or work as volunteers for a variety of organisations. I have asked members of SEA to make a more conscious effort to include everyone and to introduce people to each other at events. There is a tendency in most societies for people to gather in groups and talk to people they know already and not realise how uncomfortable it can be for new members or infrequent attenders to feel unwelcome or excluded. This is certainly not the intention of SEA, and we hope this will not be anyone's experience in future. We will also look into ensuring there are a variety of events, geared to those still working and those retired.

Suggestions for future events included: Guided walks in our area, possibly organised by the Local History Group; Visits to members' gardens; Open-air informal events; Gardeners' Question Time; Safari Sale; Bring and Share lunches; Meeting for lunch; Self-drive visits; Information about KCC and CCC.

In response to the responses in the questionnaires, we will be arranging a Safari Sale at three sites on Saturday 16 August. We are arranging a Guided Walk in Westgate Parks on 22 July. We are also arranging an

informal lunch at The Old Gate Inn on Tuesday 5 August. Contact social@ohsca.org if you are interested in taking part. We have contacted someone to talk about KCC & CCC. One suggestion was visiting elderly people in residential care homes. If anyone is interested in this suggestion, Kent County Council welcome volunteers for a variety of activities and Kent and Canterbury Hospital also welcome volunteers to visit patients on the wards. There may be a requirement for visitors to undergo police checks (DBS checking: <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>) as they could be visiting vulnerable adults.

SEA activities in 2025 – another busy year!

- **Monthly coffee mornings** continue every fourth Wednesday of the month, at the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 7 St Margaret's Street, 11.00–12.00. The next gatherings will be on Wednesday 25 June, 23 July, 27 August, 24 September and 22 October.
- **The Spring Party** was held on 14 March 2025 at the Kent & Canterbury Club. Martin Latham was unable to give the talk as planned, but has offered to give his talk at a future date. We were very fortunate, as Doreen Rosman, the well-known Canterbury historian, took his place at very short notice, and talked about her book *Canterbury: A History Since 1500* (see 'Book Review' below). A picture quiz, raffle and buffet also took place. It was a very enjoyable evening, though poorly attended.
- **Special Walks:** A visit to see the Snowdrops at Goodnestone Park took place on 23 February, followed by tea in the Teashop; and a Bluebell Walk on 26 April at Whitehill Wood, Lower Hardres (see pp. 12–13), followed by lunch in The Granville. Dick Vane-Wright will lead a Guided Walk of Westgate Parks on Tuesday 22 July, meeting at 11 am outside Canterbury East Station, then via Tannery Field, Bingley Island, Toddler's Cove and Westgate Gardens, to finish at 1 pm, at Westgate Towers (see p. 15). There are a number of restaurants and cafés nearby for those wishing to have lunch after the walk. A guided walk to see the rare and elusive Purple Emperor butterfly has been planned for 30th June – but all arrangements had to be made prior to distribution of this Newsletter.
- **The Weekly Walk** takes place on Fridays, meeting 9.30 am at the old entrance gate to the Kent & Canterbury Hospital, Ethelbert Rd. Please check in advance on WhatsApp to see if anyone is planning to join the walk.
- **Summer Lunch Party** (bring and share) will be held on Saturday 19 July 2025 at the home of Peter Taylor-Gooby and Sue Lakeman. Details by mailchimp.
- **The Gardening Interest Group (GIG)** held a Seed Share and Gardeners' Question Time at the Phoenix Pub on 27 February, which was well attended. A Plant and Produce Share took place on Monday 26 May at the home of Dick & Hazel Vane-Wright (see p. 14). This was not well attended, possibly because it was on a Bank Holiday Monday. A visit to see the delphiniums at Godinton House, near Ashford, was made on Friday 20 June. Signed-up members of GIG are informed of local gardening

events and can make use of the network for sharing information and getting gardening advice by contacting Alison Culverwell, Helly Langley, or Sue Hodge.

- **Talks & Literary Events:** Peter Taylor-Gooby's talk about *Aspasia, The Immigrant Queen*, on Tuesday 28 January was very popular. Peter Donaldson's presentation about *And the Winner Is: the BBC Sports Personality of the Year and British Sport*, on Tuesday 29 April, generated a lot of discussion. Pat Marsh will talk about her book about *Aphra Behn*, whose statue was recently unveiled by Queen Camilla, on Tuesday 30 September. A talk and visit to the Eastbridge Hospital and Franciscan Gardens led by Reverend Perry Butler and Dr Nigel Fletcher-Jones is planned, possibly in July. A talk by Bob Hayward about St Augustine's Hospital is planned for November. A talk and book launch about the history of The Elms and the Kent and Canterbury Club by the Local History Group is also planned, date to be arranged. A talk about the structure and workings of Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council is in the process of being arranged, a suggestion from a member in their response to the recent questionnaire.
- We are planning a **Safari Sale** on Saturday 16 August, based at three sites: Lorna Durrani's front garden in Ethelbert Road, Susi Brain's space in Puckle Lane, and Marion Bell's front garden in Wells Avenue (off New Dover Road). Members wishing to book a stall on one of these three sites should contact social@ohsca.org.
- An **informal Open Lunch** will take place on Tuesday 5 August at 12.00 for 12.30 at The Old Gate Inn. If successful, further lunch meetings will be arranged. Those interested should contact social@ohsca.org. A table will be booked. **Please remember to sign in with your car registration at the welcome desk to avoid being charged a fine.**
- As usual, SEA will provide **refreshments at the AGM** on Friday 24 October.

Lorna Durrani (SEA Convenor (social@ohsca.org))
SEA sub-cttee: **Susi Brain, Alison Culverwell, Lorna, Helly Langley, Margot Leslie, Hazel & Dick Vane-Wright**

BOOKS AND BEADS SALE

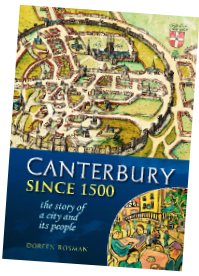
Saturday 28 June, 2 pm, at 13 Wells Avenue CT1 3YB
Marion Bell is hosting a sale of donated books and costume jewellery. Refreshments will be available – but all is cash only. The event is weather dependent. Money raised will go to OHSCA; the Committee will decide later how it is to be used.

BOOK REVIEW

Canterbury: A History Since 1500 by Doreen Rosman (Palatine Books)

This book came to my attention through the OHSCA Spring Party, at which the author was invited to speak. Published in 2022, it can be treated as a reference book (this was the reason I bought my copy), or enjoyed as a continuous narrative down the centuries (as I found when starting to dip in).

Each chapter is a self-contained essay on a period of the city's development, explained as a response to changes – religious, political, economic – in wider society. Chapter 10, for example, *James Simmons and the Remodelling of Canterbury*, opens as the end of the 18th Century approaches. A visitor in the 1780s brands the city as 'a very dirty old fashioned ill paved place'.



However, a major transformation, guided by Simmons – and to a considerable extent financed by him – is about to get under way. Rosman concisely describes the full scope of the redevelopment – paving of streets, creating of public gardens, demolition (sadly) of the medieval St George's gate, and the building of the first hospital (in the modern sense).

She also notes the remarkable speed with which it occurred, and how, meanwhile, all was being reported in the weekly *Kentish Gazette*, founded by Simmons himself. She tells us the same paper made a scoop in 1793, being the first in the country to report the guillotining of Louis XVI. The chapter ends with the sequel to events in France, the building of the barracks as preparation for defence against Napoleon.

The book's strength resides as much in Rosman's choices of illustration and illustrative quotation as in the easy, readable style. I hope *Canterbury: A History Since 1500* finds its way into school libraries here. If local history is included in the curriculum, the book would make a great resource, and provide a much more satisfying reading experience than pages from websites.

If you sometimes have the feeling that Canterbury, for all its special status and wealth of history is a somewhat messy, slightly under-fulfilled city, which has lost (not only through air raids) a lot of fine physical heritage, this book greatly helps to explain why. Many citizens have had their ambitions – but time and again these come up against financial constraints or social objections. Finally, if you are inclined to sigh or wince at the workings of Canterbury City Council, then reading of the proceedings of its predecessor, the burghmote, over several centuries, could be conducive to philosophy.

For lovers of the city this book will be a precious possession.

O. Hill

OHC (OHSCA HEALTH CARE GROUP)

Health & Care Matters

Health and Care pronouncements are too frequent now for a quarterly commentary to remain valid for long, but following the 6 May Integrated Care Board meeting, I offer my own general impression:

The Board addressed wide-ranging matters, from relations with Healthwatch and a 'Gender Incongruence' issue, to mainstream services (from Primary to Trust level), financial/organisational matters, and 'Risk.' In many ways, the Kent & Medway System is not performing badly; though (for example) MRSA incidents do occur, and NHS dentists remain hard to access, many Integrated Care Systems around England are worse on various counts; while (for another example) Emergency Department waits, and ambulance turn-

around, here are among the best. And the ICB rightly keeps reviewing and aiming to improve.

But service improvement is hard to reconcile with financial stress; and coupled with an instruction to halve the running costs of all ICBs, there is currently great uncertainty about future service and organisational requirements. We know that NHS England has to close down within a year, and no-one knows how such necessary functions as it now serves will be spread between Whitehall and the ICBs. While much of the ICB officers' attention is on reconciling staff morale with 50% cuts, the Board members are showing serious distress at having to approve a budget containing neither a Contingency figure, nor any source for redundancy costs.

And Health provision depends on Social Care (this is where we came in, in 2016.) My impression is that the Partnership Joint Committee of ICB, KCC and Medway Unitary (next meetings: 2 June* and 10 December) has not achieved leadership in the integration of Care with Health; while the County election will doubtless change KCC's membership and aims on the Joint Committee.

And who knows what impact the Unitary/Mayoral reorganisation will have on Care and Health.

**Stop Press: Since this note was written, when I checked on-line for the link to join the meeting and download the papers, only the following was available: "Please note this meeting has been postponed. A substitute date will be added to this page once confirmed." As at 31 May, no substitute date or explanation has yet appeared.*

Denis Linfoot 31 May 2025

Total Triage

On 16 June, Canterbury Medical Practice (Ethelbert Rd) introduced a new way for accessing healthcare: *Total Triage* — an NHS-recommended system already adopted by many GP practices across England.

All requests are now reviewed by a clinician, who will direct you to the most appropriate care, with the most appropriate person, in the best timeframe possible. Every request will be assessed on clinical need. Depending on your situation, you may receive:

- A face-to-face or telephone appointment with a GP
- A consultation with another clinical team member (physiotherapist, pharmacist, nurse, etc. etc.)
- A direct referral to community services (such as Pharmacy First or Minor Eye Conditions Service)
- A prescription, medical certificate or advice without needing an appointment
- A direct referral to a specialist service, if needed

All requests will be treated equally, regardless of how you make contact – which you can do in three ways:

- Online through eConsult – the existing online consultation system
- By telephone – reception staff will collect the necessary information
- In person at reception – speak directly with the receptionists at the Practice.

On pp. 16–17 you can see the two page 'handout' made available at a public consultation held by Canterbury Medical Practice on 8 May, giving further information.

Dick Vane-Wright

THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE OLD PARK

The Campaign to Save Old Park sprang into action when the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which owns much of the area, put its holding up for sale. The MoD sales brochure suggests that parts of Old Park are suitable for 'Battery storage, solar panels and housing development'. All of these would destroy the integrity and special qualities of a wonderful open space located within easy walking distance of Canterbury city centre.

The Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood (OPCW)

The Campaign is being led by the Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood. This is a community-based organisation which was set up in 2022, partly in response to what was then just a threat that the MoD might sell its holding. The Friends of OPCW include local residents and members of community organisations, as well as councillors and representatives of local youth groups, schools and universities, together with walkers, cyclists, naturalists, archaeologists and many others. When it was set up, the aims of the Friends of OPCW were to:

- Secure the long term protection and ecological integrity of the area, which includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Raise awareness of the site's significant ecological, archaeological and historical heritage
- Promote the site's use for academic research, environmental education, health and public recreation

The Friends of OPCW has grown into an established and widely respected organisation with an energetic committee and a large number of members. It is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO, with charity number 1209838). It has recruited a team of scientists to document the wildlife of the area and is using the results of their research in an application to extend the SSSI. It has successfully applied to Kent Wildlife Trust to designate the area outside the SSSI as a Local Wildlife Site and has set up an Expert Advisory Group to guide its work. And for its members it runs a programme of talks and walks and other events, as well as organising regular litter picks.

The aim of the Friends of OPCW is to work with the City Council, and with the local community, to acquire the site and to ensure that it is managed for the protection of the wildlife and for the enjoyment of local people.

Why is Old Park so special?

Old Park and Chequers Wood is a unique and diverse open space, featuring ancient woodland, acid grassland and floodplain meadows. It is located on the eastern

outskirts of the city but is undiscovered by many local residents, despite being of international, national and local importance.

Its international importance reflects the fact that excavations have produced evidence that this is the oldest excavatable archaeological site in the UK, and one of the oldest in Europe. Hand axes discovered in Old Park have been dated to 700,000 BC, making them the oldest human artefacts ever found in this country.

The national importance of Old Park reflects the wealth of wildlife found in the area, which has led to its designation as an SSSI. The Friends of OPCW organise walks to hear the nightingales singing and the turtle doves purring, while naturalists have identified many rare plants and invertebrates.

The local importance of the area was underlined when 200 local people wrote to support the Campaign. They described the enjoyment they got from cycling through Old Park, walking their dogs, listening to the birds singing, exploring the woods with their children, or simply relaxing in a tranquil open space. It provides a wonderful natural environment in which people can improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

The Campaign

The Campaign was launched in March 2025 after the announcement of the sale by the MoD. It is being led by the Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood, supported by many local residents and organisations. The Campaign currently has three different strands of action. These include:

- Raising awareness of the threat to Old Park, via social media, leaflets, talks, walks and other events. Around 14,000 leaflets have been distributed by volunteers
- Working with partners to protect this unique area, its habitats, wildlife and landscapes
- Raising funds to run the campaign and to assist partners in the acquisition and future management of the site

The sale of the site represents a huge opportunity for the people of Canterbury to save this land for future generations. Donations for the Campaign Fund will help to achieve this goal.

To donate, go to:

www.canterburyoldpark.org.uk/donate.

To find out more, go to:

<https://canterburyoldpark.org.uk/>.

To follow the Campaign, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofoldpark>.

Pat Edwards, Jan Pahl and Sian Pettman



OHSCA COMMITTEE 2024–2025 AND CONTACTS LIST

Chair and Vice Chair	Vacant (currently the Committee operates a rotating Chair)
Marion Bell	Hon. Secretary/main OHSCA Contact: 13 Wells Avenue, CT1 3YB; Tel. 01227 459 949; secretary@ohsca.org
Jane Pollok	Honorary Treasurer: treasurer@ohsca.org
Peter Whisson	Membership Secretary: 41B Dover Street CT1 3HQ (Tuition Canterbury); Tel. 01227 785 549 or mobile 07950 259 845; membership@ohsca.org
Lucy Fletcher-Jones	Website Coordinator/events bulletin alerts: website@ohsca.org
David Kemsley	ACRA rep./OHC subcommittee/Press Liaison: press@ohsca.org
Helly Langley	Committee Member
Sophie Scott	Committee Member
Planning	We are grateful to Keith Rishworth, who has kindly taken on the preparation of the regular planning application alerts.
Local History Group	Chair LHG: Maggie Bower, maggie_bower18@icloud.com Secretary LHG: Michael Brain, tel. 01227 767 343; history@ohsca.org For information about Local History publications, email: history@ohsca.org – or go to OHSCA website: https://www.ohsca.org/history.html
SEA convenor	<i>Lorna Durrani</i> : social@ohsca.org (current members listed on p. 5)
OHC	<i>David Kemsley, Alison Culverwell, Denis Linfoot</i> (convenor), <i>Dick Vane-Wright</i>
Newsletter distribution	<i>Deirdre Hawkes</i>
Tree champion	<i>Helly Langley</i>
Newsletter editor	<i>Dick Vane-Wright</i> : editor@ohsca.org

If you are uncertain who to contact, please direct your enquiry to the Honorary Secretary (contact details above).

- ACRA Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations
- OHC OHSCA HealthCare subcommittee
- SEA Social Events and Activities subcommittee

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Some useful contacts (many more were listed in Spring 2025 edn: <https://www.ohsca.org/publications.html>)

- For problems with University of Kent student neighbours contact student community liaison officer: 01227 816 156 or email communityliaison@kent.ac.uk; <https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentservices/community/index.html>
- For problems with Canterbury Christ Church University student neighbours contact student community liaison officer: 01227 925 367 or email communityliaison@canterbury.ac.uk
- If you are concerned about security or have an urgent query and need to talk to the Canterbury City Council 'Out of Hours' team, their number is 01227 781 879. This redirects to CCC Control Room staff on duty 24/7.
- To report problems with noise or other antisocial behaviour, contact CCC's Environmental Health Team: envhealth@canterbury.gov.uk, or telephone 01227 862 429
- For recycling enquiries, or to report missed bin collections, go to <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/bins-and-waste>
- To report illegal parking: <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/parking-and-roads/report-illegal-parking/>, email parking.enforcement@canterbury.gov.uk, or telephone 01227 862 429
- To report graffiti (with possibility of removal depending on circumstances) <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/environmental-problems/report-graffiti>

OHSCA 2025 dates, end June – October		5 August	Lunch at Old Gate Inn (p. 5)
28 June	Books & Beads (p. 5)	16 August	Safari Sale (p. 5)
30 June (tbc)	Purple Emperor walk (p. 5)	27 August	Coffee morning (p. 5)
8 July	LHG – CANCELLED (p. 2)	9 September	LHG AGM (p. 2)
19 July	Summer Lunch party (p. 5)	24 September	Coffee morning (p. 5)
22 July	Westgate Parks walk (p. 5)	30 September	Talk: Pat Marsh (p. 5)
23 July	Coffee morning (p. 5)	22 October	Coffee morning (p. 5)
July? (tbc)	Eastbridge visit (p. 5)	24 October	AGM (details in autumn edn)

DIGITAL EXTRA

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OHSCA St George's Garden: "the roses we pruned hard earlier this year are flowering beautifully. Photo doesn't do them justice" (Deirdre Hawkes).

OUR LOCAL (OHSCA area) COUNCILLORS



Congratulations to OHSCA member Connie Nolan who, on 1 May 2025, was successfully elected as KCC Councillor for Canterbury City South (<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgElectionAreaResults.aspx?ID=707>). Connie, who spoke about the *Via Francigena* at our AGM last year, also continues as one of the councillors representing Barton Ward on Canterbury City Council – the other two being Paul Prentice – and OHSCA member (and Old Park champion) Pat Edwards. The councillors for Wincheap Ward, which also covers a significant part of OHSCA territory, are Dane Buckman and Roben Franklin. (<https://democracy.canterbury.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&VW=LIST&PIC=0>)

Editor

DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE for all OHSCA Members:



As you may know, Canterbury City Council is revising the District Local Plan, and is expected to publish a new draft for consultation in the autumn. The City Council is required by Central Government to ensure that, over the next 15 years, an average of 1200 new homes are built in the district *per annum*.

The current version of the plan includes proposals for some major new developments across the wider South Canterbury area, stretching from Merton Farm to Thanington. Ahead of the consultation, on behalf of ACRA (the Alliance of Canterbury Residents Associations), I invite you to share your opinions about the housing development and

linked policies to be set out in the Plan. Your help with this will enable us to make certain that ACRA's eventual formal submission to the consultation is explicitly drawn from members' opinions and preferences. Here are four key questions about which we particularly need your views:

- Where in and around Canterbury do you think new homes should be built, and where not?
- What kind of housing is needed?
- How should our environment, local landscapes and heritage be safeguarded when development sites are allocated?
- Which measures in provision for transport and in traffic management are important to you?

Please message me by email to acra.canterbury@gmail.com. We will keep any views you express anonymous, if you so prefer.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you

David Kemsley



Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations

NEW WEBSITE: CANTERBURY CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

David Kemsley reports that 'CCAP' (Canterbury Climate Action Partnership) has been dissolved. In its place, with a clearer and more specific role of information sharing, a new climate focussed network has been set up – the Canterbury Climate Action Network. A new website has already been established: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/engagement/canterbury-climate-action-network>.

CONNECTED CANTERBURY UPDATE

On page 3, David Kemsley presented his thoughts on the aims and progress of the Connected Canterbury programme. Matters now seem to be moving fast (although perhaps not fast enough at Westgate Square!) – notably for the OHSCA area, with commencement of work at Longport. As it says in the *Connected Canterbury* newsletter for June, “there's lots to sink your teeth into” in this latest update: <https://mailchi.mp/2b1840eb4d2d/levelling-up-fund-connected-canterbury-3288904>.

Connected Canterbury: June 2025 update



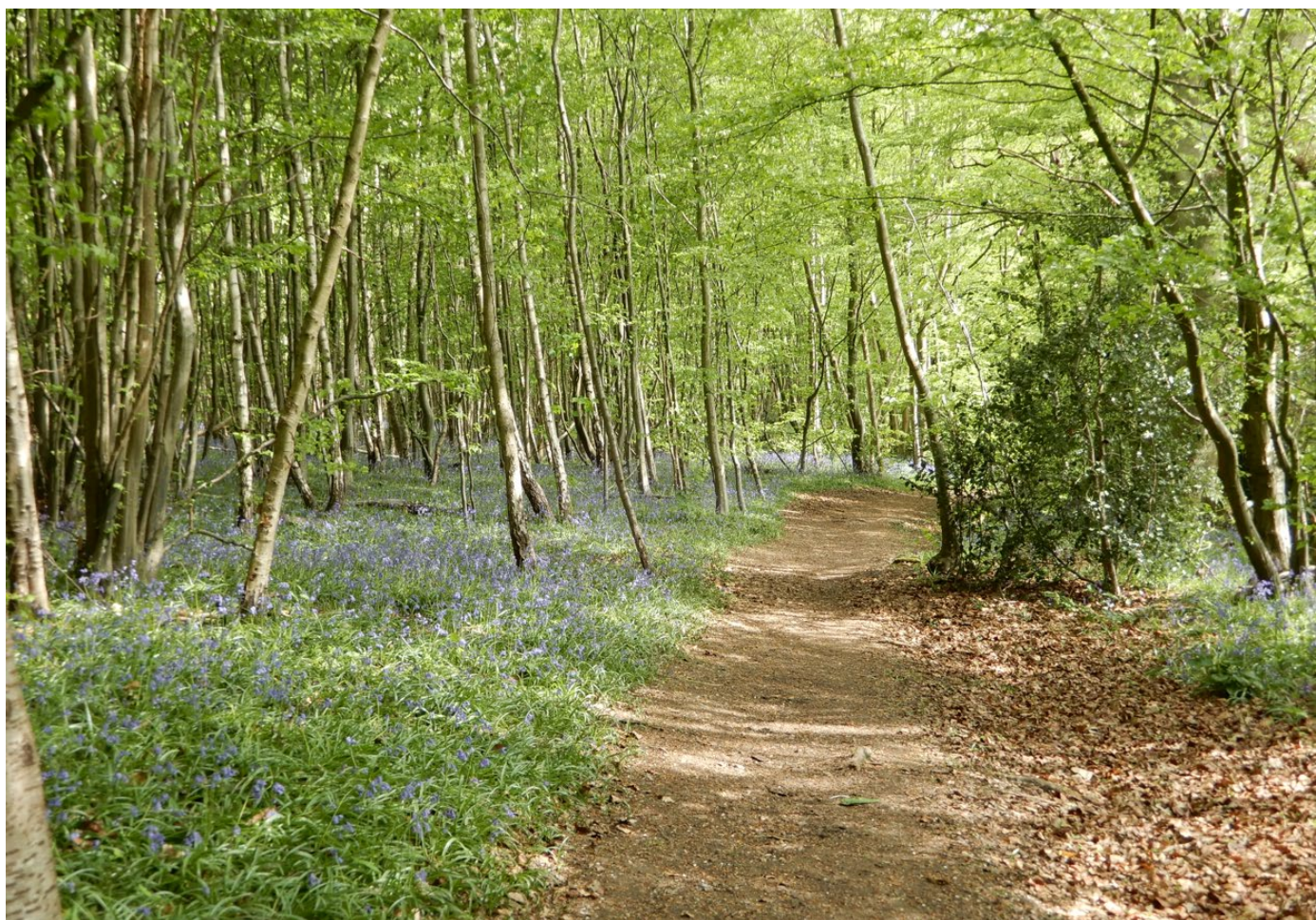
An artist's impression of what the new kiosk in Dane John Gardens could look like

There's lots to sink your teeth into in this latest [Connected Canterbury](#) update, including:

- 🔑 The Poor Priests' Hospital roof and masonry repairs completed
- 🔑 Planning permission submitted for Canterbury Castle walkway and platforms
- 🔑 Westgate Square works uncover historic foundations
- 🔑 Contractor appointed for St George's Lane bus station work
- 🔑 Longport car park refurbishment to start
- 🔑 New bike storage lockers being installed
- 🔑 Celebrity architect to design Greyfriars Garden playground

OHSCA SEA EVENTS

Bluebell Walk 26 April 2025 (Whitehill Wood, Lower Hardres)





Plant & Produce Share 26 May 2025

Steve contemplates a hard shift at the free tea and coffee table . . .



. . . but turnout for free plants was disappointing this year . . . needs rethink? (see page 5)

Guided Walk through Westgate Parks, Tuesday 22nd July

See p. 5. From the meeting point at Canterbury East station, the walk will go past the second Canterbury Castle (ca 1086; currently included in the Connected Canterbury improvement programme), via a Rheims Way underpass, to enter Tannery Field. Formerly a slurry tip for St Mildred's Tannery, which only closed in 2002, the field is now home to flower meadows and the iconic Tannery Bull. Then, via Bingley Island (an urban nature reserve), Toddler's Cove (an adventure playground), and a visit to the site of London Gate (ca 270 AD), the walk will end at the now world-celebrated riverside flower beds in Westgate Gardens – Connected Canterbury's Westgate Square permitting! Lunch in St Dunstan's, perhaps?



Friday 13 June 2025: a view of the river in Westgate Gardens, and installation of the new London Gate way-finding stone

Total Triage: Improving Access to Care at Canterbury Medical Practice

A new approach to accessing your GP practice from June 2025

What is changing?

We're introducing a new system called **Total Triage** to improve how you access care at our practice. This NHS-recommended approach is already being successfully used in many GP practices across the country.

What is Total Triage?

Total Triage ensures all requests for care are reviewed by an experienced clinician, who will direct you to the most appropriate care, with the most appropriate person, in the most appropriate timeframe.

How will it work?

Every request for care-whether made online, by phone, or in person-will be assessed based on clinical need. Depending on your situation, you may receive:

- A face-to-face or telephone appointment with a GP
- A consultation with another clinical team member (physiotherapist, pharmacist, mental health practitioner, or nurse)
- A direct referral to community services (such as Pharmacy First or Minor Eye Conditions Service)
- A prescription, medical certificate or advice without needing an appointment
- A direct referral to a specialist service if needed

How do I access care?

You can request care in several ways:

1. **Online through eConsult** - our existing online consultation tool
2. **By telephone** - our team will collect the necessary information
3. **In person at reception** - speak directly with our reception team

- All requests will be treated equally, regardless of how you contact us.

Why are we making this change?

We've heard from patients that:

- It's difficult to get through on the phone, especially in the morning
- Appointments get booked up quickly, regardless of urgency
- Some patients cannot call at 8am due to work or other commitments
- Some requests don't always need an appointment

Benefits of Total Triage

- More timely care for urgent issues
- Patients matched with the most expert clinician for their problem
- More flexibility and fairer access for all patients
- Safer clinical decisions made earlier in the process

Have your say

Join us at one of our patient engagement sessions to find out more and ask questions:

- **Ethelbert Road Surgery** - Thursday 8th May | 7-8pm
- **Littlebourne - Ivy Barn** - Thursday 15th May | 7-8pm
- **Bridge Village Hall** - Thursday 29th May | 7-8pm

We're committed to making it easier, safer, and fairer for everyone to access the care they need. Thank you for your continued support.

Need help with eConsult? Visit our website for a step-by-step guide or ask at reception.