

Valley Conservation Society



doing nothing is not an option

Members' newsletter No 195

We are a non-political organisation

August 2025

Join us for a quiz night

Question: How long is it since the Society held a quiz night?

Answer: Too long.

To remedy this, we will be holding a Quiz Night at the King George V Pavilion in Loose on

Saturday, October 11

John Robertson will be asking the questions, and the evening will follow the familiar format with eight rounds of questions, plus a table round, and the opportunity to play a joker for double points. We are looking for teams of four to six people. We start at 7pm.

There will be bottles of wine for the winners and perhaps some surprises along the way.

We will also hold a Chinese Raffle. Please bring your own snacks and drinks.

Tickets are £5 per person.

Numbers at the KGV are limited, so best secure your tickets ASAP by phoning the secretary, Alan Smith, on **07860 909903**, or emailing **a128smith@btinternet.com** Please include your address.

Summer picnic

Our summer picnic on July 12 was well received and blessed by good weather. It was attended by 46 adults and around a dozen children. Our thanks to Jane Holman for hosting us at Hayle Place.



The Summer Picnic with dancing to DJ Palvo

Work Party



Dennis Usmar and David Hill at work

The Tuesday work party remain very busy. In recent weeks, they have brush-cut regrowth around the weir and Crisbrook Pond, tidied up the Cabin, painted the top of the metal rails by Reeds Pond, brush-cut along the lower part of Treacle Wood and replaced missing stones from the ragstone wall around the meadow. Plus dealing with this dead tree.

The work party also hosted a useful visit from a wildflower expert. The work party are in the process of drawing up a long-term management plan for Crisbrook Meadow to encourage more wildflowers.

Our night at the Opera



Our night at the opera to celebrate the Society's 25th anniversary was a huge success.

Tenor Yuri Sabatini (left) won over the entire audience with his superb voice and charming manner.

There were immediate requests that we book him again next year to celebrate our 26th anniversary!

We limited the audience to 60, because of the size of the venue (the King George V Pavilion), but we could easily have sold more tickets.

The evening was enhanced by some delicious food, all supplied free of charge by our volunteers.



Some of the guests

Traffic calming

When the Valley Conservation Society was founded 25 years ago, it was initially by a group of Loose Valley residents concerned about traffic on the local lanes.

Following our experiences earlier this year, when the Loose Road was closed and a journey through the Valley became a nightmare, we have decided to take another look.

The very minimal concessions that we were able to gain from KCC two decades ago have now largely vanished, and the traffic is as bad as ever, if not worse.

The Society is going to have another go at getting something done – but first we need to know what sort of measures residents would support.

Various ideas have been floated over the years, including making Hayle Mill Road one way, or closing the road altogether as a through-route by blocking it off, perhaps at Teasaucer Hill.

Other ideas have included putting in a physical width restriction, so as to at least deter HGVs from entering the Valley.

Perhaps we could campaign for a 20mph speed limit, with more warning signs?

Every idea has its supporters - and its opponents. So we would like to hear what you think.

Please email your thoughts to a128smith@btinternet.com and you can help shape our approach.

It would be just as useful to hear which ideas you would strongly oppose, as those you would support.

Aile Homes at Postley Road

Aile Homes is the latest developer to submit a planning application for the land between Saxon Way, Richmond Way and the Hayle Park estate, known as Smiths Field or the Horse Field.

Those with longer memories will recall that over a decade ago, the Society fought against this land being included in Maidstone council's 2017 Local Plan, but nevertheless, it was included and allocated for 62 homes.

Subsequently, a planning application was submitted by Chailey Homes for 62 homes, which was granted full planning permission by the council in December 2019. For various reasons, that company never acted on its planning permission and that permission has now lapsed.

A new company, Aile Homes, has now submitted a fresh application to Maidstone for the same site, but for only 34 homes.

We would rather see no building at all on this greenfield site, which lies adjacent to the Hayle Park Nature Reserve and borders the Loose Valley Conservation Area, but obviously we would prefer 34 homes to 62.

The company also seems to have taken some trouble over its application – keeping the large oak tree on the site as a feature in its new development, proposing significant planting along the western border that will help screen it from the listed buildings at Hayle Place and promising to upgrade the footpath (which is not in their control) that leads from The Lodge to one of the Hayle Park Reserve entrances.



How the new homes would fit in the surroundings. Image: On Architecture

All traffic to the site would be from the existing access by The Lodge, off Postley Road.

The plan involves the demolition of a small section of the ragstone wall at the gated entrance by The Lodge, and the moving of one of the gate pillars, so that the entrance could be widened. The Lodge itself would also be demolished.

The Society is inclined to look favourably on the application as being the best of a bad job.

However, there will of course be disruption for residents during the construction with noise and dust, and some neighbours may have concerns about privacy and overlooking.

If you will be affected, we would urge you to examine the two relevant planning applications for yourselves and reach your own conclusions. You should make your representations directly to the borough council, using their planning portal.

The relevant planning numbers are:
and listed building consent application (for the gate)

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25/502492