This is an Evening of Celebration, for SWAN and its community. It’s a positive opportunity to share the successes of our Community coming together, working together and enjoying life together. It is a chance to review all the work of both the Council and Community Groups over the last year and how together we have enhanced South Willesborough and Newtown for the benefit of its residents. It is also a wonderful opportunity to reward Outstanding Contributions to this Community.

In review of SWANCC over 2023 and early 2024 the Council has worked tirelessly on the following objectives and projects under its own budget for the benefit of residents.

At the start of the year, SWANCC set up the Litter Picker service in SWAN.

Litter Picker hire training equipping and resourcing

Managing and meeting any matters arising with timely action and full involvement of the Council

Setting up rounds and regular collections and collection of waste from Ashford Borough Council (ABC).

Over 300 large collection bags have been filled and safely disposed of by ABC.

SWANCC Great British Spring Clean in March 24 has received such positive support from the community and the Council is grateful to everyone who contributes to litter picking in the area.

Rising Costs

* Rising costs has been hard on our Community SWANCC worked with KALC and KCC to secure funding for Rising Costs Support. This was only possible because of the fantastic work on Rising Costs Support by Cllr Andy Hodges and his working group meant SWANCC were able to deliver meaningful hygiene support at a time of rising costs crisis.
* The analysis from this event has very much influenced the budget and plans of SWANCC for 2024 2025 as 99% of roads in Newtown and 66% of roads in South Willesborough had households who needed access to rising costs support.
* A Rising Costs Champion has been agreed at the May Annual Meeting of the Council, and SWANCC will be reviewing what further supportive measures it can contribute with a correlating budget to SWAN.
* The Allotment Living Workshop has worked well for the benefit of all residents and over 200kgs of fresh organic local produce was given to the Foodbank. This has been planted on again for 2024 2025 and it is hoped it will again be a productive resource for the Community. This is done entirely voluntarily.

Community Safety

* **Crime Prevention and Neighbourhood Watch**
* Ever with an eye to the vulnerable of its area, SWANCC have laboured unceasingly with Neighbourhood Watch to be UpToDate on crime risks in the area. The unswerving work of Peter New to deliver a real service to SWANCC has meant schemes are set up in every area of SWAN. It is worth noting that the number of Parishes that now have regular reports from Neighbourhood Watch has meant an Ashford Wide crime prevention which started in SWANCC during COVID.

Peters recent national award is testament to his hard work and commitment to the Borough. He embodies the character and spirit of the Free Person of the Parish awarded by SWANCC.

* **Community Defibrillators**
* Defibrillators at The Albion Pub and The Alfred Arms Pub have been used for Community safety and due to real need, a further Defib has been installed at the Salvation Army Hall with training planned for July 24. This was kindly funded by Cllr Al Arnold through his Ward Grant, and has already been needed.

Railway Vintage Festival

* The Railway Event was an enormous 12 month project for the Council and the reason for it being so Successful was that it involved all SWANCC Members in the key organisation and delivery of the Event and wide community of SWAN. Support in funding and the involvement of AIDC and ABC opened up a real opportunity to bring a high-end Event into SWAN. With professional dance and music acts from London and Brighton bringing a real Vintage Railway Festival to Newtown. It is an excellent example of collaborative working. Involving ABC, Ashford Museum, Tales on the Tracks AIMREC Ashford Guide Dogs and the Salvation Army, vintage car clubs, and 20 local businesses to be able to make the Event so successful – along with many residents who helped immensely with setup, clean up and safe marshalling for the Event.

Allotments

* Has progressed well over the year and will continue to develop. The review of the tenancies and the new onboarding of Scribe Allotments Programme will make managing the Allotments smoother and more cost effective. The disabled access works were completed and new parking facilities put in place which will make the Allotments much more accessible for all residents and help relieve the flooding issues.
* S106 funding has been secured and this has been used to install new internal fencing for the Allotments

The new Book a Bed Scheme with 1m beds and the expansion of the Community Allotment Project planned for late 2024 will hopefully allow more residents opportunity to benefit from the Allotments.

A further 5000 spring bulbs were planted across SWAN by the Planting and Biodiversity Group.

A new Community Orchard is planned for Bushy Royds due to be planted at the end of 2024. As part of the Kings Coronation Living Heritage Project.

Planning and Highways

Cllrs for the Planning and Highways Committee are the backbone of this work and its membership is core to the functions over the next year

P&H Is growing and will become the forefront of the work for SWANCC in 2024 2025. As it works on delivering the Highways Improvement plan, Parking management in Newtown and Speeding Management.

Challenges with the new portal by ABC have been overcome and the review of Planning Applications will become easier as the year progresses.

P&H have worked hard to review the motorbike inhibitors which were installed with a completely different design than it was consulted on. Residents had a lot of accessibility issues because of them. The PROW team at KCC reviewed them and no further nuisance behaviour has been reported, so the barriers are being removed.

Finance and General Purposes

This Committee underpins every step of SWANCC and the Councillors have worked tirelessly to monitor the budget and timely management of Finances and the Health and Safety of the Council. The new Scribe Accounting Package is providing immeasurable help for Staff with the monitoring of the Budget and its support service has been fantastic.

Grants and Donations

The Council has been able to provide donations to the Ashford Guide Dogs with Scarlett now reaching £15,000 in fundraising.

The Council has also provided a grant for the SWAN Litter Pickers and a plot on the Allotments to have a Shed for storage and facilitating their volunteering.

Communications Working Committee.

Has been an excellent committee, with newsletters flyers and advertising for events all being delivered on time and on budget

In conclusion it has been an Immense year for SWANCC and a fantastic start to its second term as a Community Council. This work has only happened because of the commitment, time and knowledge of the Councillors who have worked so hard throughout the year to deliver these objectives, and the many volunteers from the Community who support the Council in so many practical projects.

SWANCC has a harmonious spirit as a Council which allows it to focus on its objectives and be efficient and effective for the benefit of all of SWAN.

On behalf of all the residents of SWAN I would like to thank all the Councillors and the Volunteers and partners to this Council for your time hard work and available spirit for delivering this year of SWANCC.

SWANCC is a vibrant Council working hard to enhance the community and area of South Willesborough and Newtown. SWANCC does have vacancies for Parish Councillors and welcomes all ages and backgrounds to its Community.

It is an A political organisation and does not align itself with Political Parties to ensure that it is local matters and local residents interests put first in all that the Council does. If you would be interested in joining SWANCC please contact the Community Council Manager.