

Parish Council News

May 2020

Zoom, the new noise for 2020. What a difference a month makes! When writing the April newsletter in mid-March, Covid-19 meant something but not the impact it was going to make on all our lives. It was happening, it was from China, and the government were making plans for its containment. Then zoom it was upon us, governments changed plans almost daily and we are all locked down, locked in but so far, not locked up. So, our previous lifestyle came to a halt. Now we must work together to survive this scourge, survive the lockdown and help our neighbours. In our parish that meant 70 people volunteering to help with “**Corona Kindness**” the umbrella for much that is being organised for our community: bringing together the combined efforts of our churches, parish council, councillors, volunteers and community. Focusing on practical help, Corona Kindness volunteers have widely leafleted most households in the parish with information on how to get help. It is being co-ordinated by Louise Vickerman on phone 0790 333 2014 email: gkccovid19help@gmail.com or our Community Cupboard (food bank) coordinated by Goudhurst and Kilndown Church, contact: Ali Williams on 07944 76008 email: aliwilliams@gkchurch.org Contributions of food to St Mary’s porch will be greatly welcomed as will financial donations. Corona Kindness volunteers working with Ready Call and also other Community Action Groups are there to help with all manner of issues, picking up shopping and urgent supplies, posting mail, collecting prescriptions from our pharmacy, and most importantly a friendly chat during the lock down.

Tunbridge Wells rural parishes made up of Benenden, Bidborough, Brenchley, Capel, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, Frittenden, Goudhurst, Hawkhurst, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Paddock Wood, Rusthall, Sandhurst, Southborough and Speldhurst held a ‘zoom’ conference call meeting for our chairmen or Clerks to coordinate our various activities that are supporting rural communities outside Tunbridge Wells town. Thus, we have people and neighbours, parishes, town and country working together, as one, to fight our invisible common enemy.

Our supermarkets in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook are stepping up to the mark with home deliveries as are our wonderful local shops; Burgess Stores, Newsagents and Post Office, the Pharmacy, Taywell & Ladysden Farm Shops. Goudhurst Surgery is open for business which just takes a phone

call and we are attended to by doctor and nurse in our very own drive through surgery.

Our Annual Parish Meetings in Goudhurst & Kilndown are postponed and our Parish Council cannot meet in person. But after a short period of adjustment we have devolved powers to our Clerk and committee chairmen so that council can continue its work since at that time government had not passed regulations to allow councils to operate other than in person (now so permitted). Indeed, a 'zoom' meeting combined with our on-screen documents can be surprisingly effective. Your council is proactive and remains at the end of the phone 01580 212552 for Clerk or our new email address clerk@goudhurst-PC.gov.uk.

On a zooming Parish Council meeting Wednesday evening May 15th we agreed that in view of the fantastic fundraising response by the community for the **Goudhurst play area** we could release the parish allocated funds thus enabling the first stage of the project (the new equipment) to be contracted from our selected supplier. Stage two, the resurfacing of the area, will have to wait till we all return to normal when fund raising can resume. Most other projects before your council are progressing as best they can and those that will need to wait post corona are being carefully logged so we can get going again as soon as we can. We are informed that the **2020 Fete** has now been cancelled for this year though the organisers hope to arrange a celebration in the autumn when hopefully we re-emerge. The 2020 **Goudhurst in Bloom** has also been cancelled not least because spring plants cannot be easily obtained. So far, the daffodils have made 2020 a memorable early spring.

During the TW Area meeting, referred to earlier, it was confirmed that the government has decided that all elections are postponed until next year including our Borough Councillor election which should have been held in May this year. The pending referendum on our **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)** has also been delayed and so our NDP will be considered as approved (made). From now it needs to be the reference for borough officers judging planning applications within our parish. This should be good news and give force to all the recommendations and reward all the work put into the project by so many people over the past two years. Thank you Colin Willis, NDP Chairman and Craig Broom our most capable NDP secretary/ administrator and everyone who took part. However, there are a number of planning issues that give us and our neighbouring parishes concern for the future, especially that the lockdown should not be used by developers to circumvent proper process and that planning enforcement must not be neglected.

As reported last month, our internet service provider notified us last year that because of the increased volume of work he did not wish to continue to host the council emails beyond March 2020. Your parish council has registered **new email addresses** for all councillors (now ending in ...@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk) and a **new website** (goudhurst-pc.gov.uk) all of which went live on 1st April despite the corona hiatus. Although there much work still to do on the new website, a huge thanks is due to the hard work of our clerks and some councillors, largely in their own time, who made this possible.

Finally, may we wish all parishioners in Goudhurst, Kilndown and Curtisden Green all the very best in these exceptional times. Take precautions, wash hands, stay well and **see you soon.**

Your Parish Councillors ... David Boniface, Craig Broom, Chris Ditton, Alan Foster, Antony Harris (Chairman), Phil Kirkby, David Knight, Barry Noakes, Caroline Richards, Jayne Russell, Guy Sutton and Peter Wood.