

# Goudhurst Parish Council



## BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting held on 12 January 2021 at 19.30 via Zoom

**Present:** Cllrs Craig Broom (Chairman), David Boniface, Chris Ditton, David Knight, and Guy Sutton. Mrs Claire Reed Clerk. Cllr Antony Harris arrived at 20.00 following the KALC area Committee meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Barry Noakes (TWBC meeting).

2. **Declarations of interest:** None declared.

### 3. Update on Open Reach Fibre Broadband project

Cllr David Knight briefed the Committee on the current situation.

*Kilndown:* Cllrs David Knight and Guy Sutton have signed a contract with openreach on behalf of the Kilndown Community Interest Company for £182,000 for the Kilndown ultrafast broadband scheme. This will now move into delivery stage, and should be complete within 12 months. The scheme includes the village hall, quarry centre and Christ church.

*Goudhurst:* Previously openreach needed both Goudhurst projects to be 100% pledged before any build could start. Project A hit 100% in February 2021 and B sits at 60%. On 19 February, after much negotiating, openreach agreed that Project A can proceed on its own and that the gigabit vouchers should have been emailed out to residents in the last week of February; unfortunately, this has still not happened. The vouchers need to be returned by 31 March 2021 so Cllr Knight has again written to Greg Clark MP asking him to urgently contact the DCMS to see what can be done to expedite this. The email was copied to the Chairman, Cllr Craig Broom and a resident who is now working with us on the project to keep everyone informed. Project B needs community support and more pledges to take it over the line. Cllr Knight will be leafleting Lurkins Rise in the coming weeks and will try to gain some more pledges. It was agreed that a Facebook post encouraging Project B residents to pledge and including the postcodes where vouchers have not been pledged will be put on the GPC page and Goudhurst village group. **Action: Clerk**

Going forward, openreach have confirmed that all the Goudhurst postcodes have been approved for the new Government voucher scheme which starts from 1st April 2021; there is no detail on the voucher value as yet. It was noted that the Rural Community Fibre Project scheme that the Government has required the Parish to take part in to try and bring ultrafast broadband to our residents seems to be unfit for purpose. Cllr Knight has been working solidly on this project since May 2019 and is very disappointed that we have not been able to achieve more success. Cllr Knight was thanked by the Committee for all of his work on this project.

### 4. Destination Goudhurst.

Discussions centred around how Council can stimulate the recovery of the Parish and support bushiness through publicity (including the new website) and funding. It was **agreed** that groups needed to be established to focus on different areas of 'Destination Goudhurst' and that emails should be sent to the *Movers and Shakers* of the villages inviting them to join a Zoom meeting to generate ideas and establish the working groups. **Action: ? Clerks**

It was further agreed to contact the volunteers who help to run the annual Goudhurst in Bloom competition to see if they would be willing and able to help with the competition again this year and also to contact the new owner of the shop on West Road to see if they would be willing to get involved. **Action: Clerk**

#### **Parking Update**

Clerk wrote to Mr Hulme, land agent of the Old Parsonage site, on 12 February 2021 to try and organise a meeting with the landowner to discuss parking but has not received a response. It was agreed that Cllr Craig Broom would follow up with Mr Hulme. **Action: Cllr Craig Broom**

5. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 13 April 2021, 7.30pm via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm