

Parish Council News

September 2020

At time of writing I am sitting in a pleasant 23c environment, having endured 30-35 and no rain here for weeks. All is becoming brown, the grass, the leaves and even the weeds. Rain is promised, lots of it and has been for days, but none falls here. Black clouds, deluges in Maidstone and south and north and west but none here. Hopefully, by the time you read this, it will have come to Goudhurst or the environmental cost will be high.

Like waiting for the rain, we have been waiting for **Broadband**, but not for days and weeks but three years and still it does not come. But perhaps that at least may change or, so we are told, indeed assured. Finally, an installation team has been allocated and our project is to be signed off in the next few weeks. We must have hope, like we hope also for the rain. If that happens, what happens next? A Goudhurst broadband website will be set up by Openreach where everyone must sign up for their property to be included in the scheme and pledge their Government and county vouchers (subsidy) to the project. If enough of us sign up the project will go ahead, and we are advised we will have superfast fibre broadband by the spring – Spring 2021 apparently. “Pigs will fly” one resident has commented. However, pig or not, if our project does move forward in the next few weeks then we will all need to pledge our voucher online and if sufficient sign up the project will then move forward and deliver our promised superfast broadband free of charge. So, if/when we have systems go, it will be up to all of us **(YOU!)** to sign up. Apart from the letter you should receive from Openreach, we will try to let everyone know, when and how to sign. Cllr David Knight has been pushing relentlessly over recent months to move the project forward, if you have any questions, check with David.knight@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk.

As reported last month, every effort is being made by your Parish Council to ensure the village and parish of Goudhurst remains a thriving place to live and shop and eat. A place of beauty to enliven the heart beyond just the place we call home. Our first High Street Project Zoom meeting was held on July 30th. A follow up with most our retailers and businesses will take place at the end of August, all of whom have signed up to the idea of making the most of the village. Many of our plans and ideas will have to wait for 2021 for implementation because of Covid. The project has a new name “**Destination Goudhurst**” and we

are hoping that those of us who live in the parish will also make full use of what we have where we live, making it **our** destination too.

As a parish, town and county we will now have to digest the latest bright idea from our Central Government. Just as their previous bright idea was a veritable Developers and liars charter it's now - throw away the rule book and build, build, build, ...without planning permission. Because **planning regulations** and scrutiny (to protect facilities, the environment, neighbours, communities and design) allegedly takes too long and holds up the developers. But wasn't it the whole point of their last big idea, power to the communities to be more in control of their own lives and prepare their own Neighbourhood Development Plan? Plans which we and many thousands of parishes have devoted the last 3-5 years preparing. So even before the ink is dry and those plans ratified, it seems that they too may be swept away to build, build, build anything, anywhere. Your Parish Council, your neighbouring parishes, towns and county representatives, councillors and we believe MPs too, are appalled. Are we right to be concerned? Together with our Borough Council and Kent Association of Local Government we will scrutinise carefully the proposals and their potential effect. We will then report back and consult on how to respond.

This summer our Parish Council has been very busy. By the end of August the new **Children's Play Area** by the Church Rooms should be nearly completed (thanks to the fund raising efforts of the community and some hugely generous donations) and CCTV installed to keep a quiet eye on it; **the Lower Glebe** will have been triple mown as the first step in its journey and the ragwort, the scourge of 2020, will have been treated. The newly re-laid grass by the Kilndown **Quarry Pond** thrives and the pondweed has been cleared (four times). Dog fouling **bag dispensers** will be provided to help the forgetful in Kilndown and Goudhurst, and a **Duck House** will be installed on the Goudhurst pond, for the enjoyment of the children and pleasure for all.

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.

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