

Parish Council News

January 2021

As we start the new year Covid-19 continues and full Brexit may have arrived. Many changes, known and unknown are before us with worrying uncertainties. Two of our lovely pubs have fallen victim to the pandemic and are currently closed and for sale; as is one of our shops. We hope they find new owners or tenants in the coming months. One way we can help our parish to survive is by **shopping locally** in the village by using our wonderful bakery, newsagents & village stores, pharmacy and fashion emporium and our farm shops in Curtisden Green, Goudhurst and Kilndown and hairdressers and pubs when next allowed. Survival is the name of the game in the coming months and it's very much up to us all to support our businesses through this difficult period, so that our village and facilities are still there to use and enjoy in coming years. **Use it or lose it** could not be more apt.

As reported in December your parish council launched an **e-newsletter** version of this Parish News partly featured in this GK Parish Magazine. This will enable Council to communicate details of other parish information directly to the majority of the community in the parish on a monthly basis. Please sign up. This can be done through our website www.goudhurst-pc.gov.uk or through direct link using <http://eepurl.com/hh4bBH>, It is also possible via our **Facebook page** or by simple email to clerk@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk.

The roll out of **Broadband** throughout the parish is now well underway. Because of the size of the scheme and to comply with government financial support limits our parish has been split into three. There has been an excellent initial sign-up of household and businesses pledging their grant vouchers with the result that the Kilndown & Lamberhurst scheme has already reached its target. Goudhurst area A (central & north) is already over 85% but Goudhurst area B (central & south) is lagging at around 40%. It has been a long wait and huge effort by many people to get us this far, so it is essential that all schemes reach their 100% targets as soon as possible so that the implementation is not delayed. **To pledge your voucher to this scheme**, please follow this link - <https://www.openreach.com/connect-my-community> where you will be asked a few simple questions... to confirm you are not already receiving high speed broadband, then asked to enter your postcode, name, address and contact details and confirm if a business is being run from the address. (if a business is being run from that address this will pledge a bigger voucher sum towards the total, and you will need to enter the company registration number). You will then have signed up, the process could not be simpler.

To encourage Broadband registration council is sponsoring a mailing to all houses that have not yet registered, and councillors will, within the limit of covid restrictions, try to support it on the ground. However, you can do your part by checking with neighbours, family and friends if they have done so, and if not, encourage them to register. If they have queries, contact councillor Knight. <https://www.david-knight.org> or 07973 729096. It is in all our interests to see that our local schemes reach target and get going; so that we can all have superfast fibre broadband direct to the house within the next 9 to 15 months. There are a variety of qualifying providers including BT, TalkTalk, Sky, Vodafone, and many others, so competitive deals are possible and depending on who you are with currently a simple switch of contract should be possible as well.

Since the Parish Magazine goes to print before the date of December **Parish Council**. we cannot report on decisions though we have a long agenda including:

- Setting the **Precept (rate)** for the coming financial year 2021/22, upgrading the **CCTV** in the centre of Goudhurst to better cover the Plain, High Street and upper North Road and considering what action council should take relating to the proposed sale of the **Mary Day's Garages** by Town & Country. Council became aware of the sales through tenants on the estate receiving notes to quit the garages. Any loss of parking that might have occurred would have been serious for everyone in view of the serious parking congestion already existing. Following a call to the Chief Executive of Town and Country Housing we are pleased that they have temporarily withdrawn the garages from auction in December, so that we can look for a solution that is in the interest of our community. Goudhurst Council will be in discussion in January with T&C and local residents, more information next month.

Finally, what do we want to achieve for our parish as we look to 2021 and beyond? Parish Council has initiated the **Destination Goudhurst** project well reported in recent months including proposals for brightening up our village to make it even more attractive for residents and to encourage visitors to stop, shop and enjoy. But there is much more to our parish that makes it a great place, the many clubs, societies, Social Club, U3A, St Mary's Church (with Corona Kindness and The Community Cupboard) & Café Toddler and many more. So, a major initiative during 2021 will be to establish what the people of Goudhurst are willing and interested to support by not just using them but giving their time so that what we may enjoy continues. All these things do not just happen, we have to make them happen. So please let us know what you want from your community and what you would like to do to help. This will be a continuing

theme during the year and we will run events in the Parish Hall to work that out together.

As noted above, the Parish Council are keen to improve **communication with the community**, especially during these restricted times. To ensure you, family, friends and neighbours keep up to date on Parish and Council News sign up or contact clerk@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk and we will ensure you receive a copy by email monthly.

Best wishes and good health for the, New Year and into 2021 with hope.

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.

Clerk to the Council: Claire Reed, 01580 212552 or clerk@goudhurst-PC.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings in January (via Zoom):

Tuesday 05 - Planning Committee, 6.30 pm

Monday 11 – Parish Council, 7.30 pm

Tuesday 12 – Business & Communications Committee, 7.30pm

Tuesday 26 – Planning Committee, 6.30pm, Amenities Committee, 7.30pm

If you would like to join any of the ‘virtual’ meetings listed please email Clerk@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk who will send you the joining details.