****Goudhurst Parish Council****

MINUTES OF GOUDHURST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

on Tuesday 05 April 2022 at 7.30 pm in Goudhurst Village Hall

# PARTICIPANTS

Councillors Antony Harris (Chairman), David Boniface, Chris Ditton, Alan Foster, David Knight, Mrs Caroline Richards, Mrs Jayne Russell and Mrs Alison Webster. 27 local residents.

Claire Reed, Clerk and Anthony Farnfield, Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer.

# APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

 Were received from Cllr Craig Broom (family illness), Cllr Phil Kirkby (COVID), Lynette Edwards, Paul Gaston, Tim Nicholson (COVID), Rev Rachel Robertson (St Mary’s PCC meeting), Peter Rolington (COVID) and Cllr Guy Sutton (holiday).

Cllr Barry Noakes was absent.

# Report from Borough Councillor David Knight

 Refugees from the Ukraine. There is a dedicated TWBC web page with information to support sponsoring families and refugees when they arrive. The government has indicated that 1,500 refugees will be homed in the borough. <https://twhelpsukraine.info/>

Amelia Scott. The new centre for arts and heritage opens on 28 April 2022 and replaces the former Adult Education Centre.

The Town Hall. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have agreed to repurpose the Town Hall building. TWBC will occupy some of the space and the rest we be let as co-working space for businesses and individuals.

Goudhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan. Following the referendum earlier in the year, the plan was formally approved by the Borough Council at their meeting in February 2022.

Old Cinema Site. The site has once again been sold. There are plans to use the site for retirement flats and shops. A meanwhile use motion was approved by TWBC at their meeting in February 2022 which will allow temporary use of the site whilst awaiting planning/ development.

Local elections in May 2022. There are 16 seats on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to be contested.

Local Government Boundary Commission. There is a review of boundaries for Borough Council elections currently taking place. The Commission has decided that the number of councillors will be reduced from 48 to 39. The consultation has closed, and the draft recommendations are expected in the coming months. The next consultation will open in July 2022.

Crime. Recorded crime in the borough is down by 2% making Tunbridge Wells the safest borough in Kent!

# Report from Borough Councillor Dr Linda Hall

Signage for Accessible Toilets. Cllr Hall thanked the local resident who alerted her to lack of adequate signage on accessible toilets in the borough. New signage with the words, ‘not all disabilities are viable’ was added to Town Centre toilets and the Parish Council, who own the public toilets in Goudhurst, had signage made for the facilities.

Boundary Commission. Cllr Hall briefed the meeting on her objections to the proposals; particularly the reduction in the number of councillors from 48 to 39 with an additional 17,000 homes due to be built in the Borough. Cllr Hall also objects to the merging of some wards, including Goudhurst and Lamberhurst with local villages.

Planning. Cllr Hall thanked residents who have contacted her regarding planning concerns and encouraged others to contact her about any planning matter, either their own planning applications or a neighbour’s.

Single use plastics. Prior to COVID, Cllr Hall proposed a motion to encourage supermarkets in the borough to cut down on their use of single use plastics. This was scuppered somewhat by COVID and PPE. However, there are already some favourable signs that supermarkets have begun the process.

# REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS

## 1st Goudhurst Scouts - Report

The group is working well and sections have returned to meeting in person. The number of young people engaged in the group is increasing. This success inevitably means there is a need for additional leaders. The group is also in desperate need of a treasurer. Anyone interested should contact the Clerk who will be happy to put you in touch with the group. There is a Jumble Sale in the Scout Hut on Saturday at 12 noon – all welcome.

St Georges Day will not be a district event this year as in previous years. Instead groups will celebrate individually. There will be an event in the Scout Hut on the afternoon of on 24 April.

## Friends of Goudhurst Village Green – Report

Goudhurst Parish Council has allocated £500 towards a *Goudhurst Village Green* sign to be erected at the main entrance to the Village Green (Glebe Field). Cllr Jayne Russell, the Council’s representative on the FGVG Committee, undertook to obtain quotes. Several designs have been considered by members of the committee and by the Council’s Amenities Committee. A clear decision has not yet been agreed. The Friends have also been involved in the Glebe Fields Working Group.

## GADS - Adrian Smith

After some years of relative quiet, theatre returned to Goudhurst last midsummer with the production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream involving many new people, nearly all of whom were younger than the average age of the society’s members beforehand! Enormous thanks to the creative efforts of all involved – steered by local professionals – and support from the community in two sell out performances. We were delighted to send nearly £6,000 to two local charities.

We were also pleased to be involved in the Christmas shopping evening when no fewer than six Ebenezer Scrooge’s appeared in sites from the Church to the pond, with stops in between. We hope to repeat that experience with something different at this year’s shopping evening.

We have ideas for other activities this year – and hope to put on another classic play, this time in the Autumn – extending the jubilee celebrations by bringing the 50s back to Goudhurst later in the year. Keep your eyes open for further teasers as we proceed – and for information on other activities. We are open to all and welcome new members both on stage and behind the scenes. We’re particularly keen to attract expert support from anyone who has it to offer on the technical side of productions or on improving our social media and internet presence.

## Goudhurst Dynamos – Steve Hope

The club celebrates its 10th season this year and now has over 100 players from Goudhurst and the surrounding villages. Players are between 8 and 17 years old and play in 6 teams on the Village Green and Chequer Field. The club is grateful to the Parish Council for its support.

## Goudhurst & Kilndown Local History Society – Report

We started our season in October 2021 with some trepidation having not met since March 2020. We had a good attendance who listened to a talk by Gill Joye about the history of Goudhurst Postal Service from the 17th century. We were also able to accommodate the much delayed AGMs from 2019 & 2020. Luckily we were able to re-book most of the cancelled speakers whose subjects varied from Hop Picking, Mrs Beeton’s Christmas and the Suffragettes of Kent. Tonight we will be listening to Neville Gallagher recounting the story of the Beresfords of Bedgebury. We try to stick to our own local history, which can include Kent with Goudhurst interest. Occasionally we have a talk on general historical interest.

We have a very well regarded website, which I urge you to take a look at (<http://www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org/> ). During ‘lock-downs’ we dealt with many local or outside enquiries often with reference to our extensive archive collection. These can be viewed by appointment by anyone, details on the website.

At the last AGM, several members of the Committee stepped down as they had moved away which left a much depleted group. However, we have managed to continue with the programme despite low attendances on occasions because of virus worries. The remaining Committee members are determined to push forward with new initiatives, including a change of venue next season from the Church Rooms to the newly renovated back room of Goudhurst Club. Of course we always welcome new members.

## Goudhurst Social Club – Cllr Alison Webster

The Club has a new Chairman, Gary Taylor, who recently travelled to Ukraine with medical supplies funded by donations from club members. The club is also supporting the family of a local DPD driver whose family are trapped in the Ukraine.

The Club host regular events including live music monthly. For the Jubilee, the club will be selling drinks at 1950s prices for an hour on the Sunday morning!

During storm Eunice, the roof of the club sustained £20,000 of damage, immediate repairs have been carried out and fundraising is taking place.

New members are welcome to join the club and annual membership rates are £22 for adults and £12 for seniors. The club is not for profit so provides good value for its members. The current opening hours are: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 5-10pm, Saturday 12-10pm and Sunday 12-5pm.

## Goudhurst Tennis Club at Brandfold - Report

Goudhurst Tennis Club at Brandfold (to give it its full name), located behind the red door at Brandfold on North Road, was established back in the 1950’s and has grown from a club of just a few players to where we are today, with a current membership approaching 180 members (adults, students and juniors/minis).

Naturally there have been some ups and downs in nearly 70 years, but despite various challenges the club has managed to keep growing, mainly thanks to small bands of volunteers over the years who have given up their time for free to assist the club and help it become the club it is today.

The club is completely self-funding, receiving its revenue from annual subscriptions and also from the fund raising events and activities that are organised throughout the year by the committee.

Today the club consists of two tarmac hard courts with floodlights and a small clubhouse. Our coaching is provided by the company Breakpoint Tennis who have been teaching tennis at the club for over 20 years! They provide coaching to all ages and abilities, as well as offering private lessons.

The club competes in three different leagues with men’s teams in the Kent and Maidstone & District Leagues, a ladies’ team in the Maidstone & District League and mixed teams in the Wealden League. This season our first team were runners up in the Wealden League, our highest position in over 25 years!

During the year the committee organise various ‘playing’ events at the club or fundraisers such a Quiz Nights etc.

In spite of the challenges thrown up by the COVID pandemic over the past two years, when the club was forced to close at certain times or had to adhere to various restrictions, last August/September we managed to have the two courts at the club resurfaced. This provides players with a great playing surface in surroundings that are often described as some of the most beautiful one could think of to play tennis!

The club remains an integral part of the local community and a facility enjoyed by many in and around the village. We maintain strong links with the local primary school and indeed with other clubs in the area.

The club is open to everyone and we encourage players of all abilities, from beginners to club players to join. This year we have managed to keep our membership fees at pre-COVID levels, at £150 for a family membership, £85 for an adult single and £30 for students/juniors (with under 8’s free).

If anyone would like to know more about the club or are interested in joining then please visit our website at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/GoudhurstTennisClub>. Finally, a date for our Open Day will be published soon on our website and on social media when we invite people to come and take a look at the club and its facilities.

## Goudhurst Village Hall Charity – Cllr Alan Foster

Grants from TWBC helped to keep the Hall going during the COVID lockdowns. Urgent repairs and restoration of the Hall are needed with costs likely to exceed £50,000, there are various fundraising projects including a recent Jumble Sale which raised £700. A cake sale raised £200 for Ukraine.

The committee are in the process of changing the charity into a new Village Hall Trust which is mostly complete. There have been changes to the committee with Shiona Gardiner and the Booking Officer Nichola Osgood both stepping down. A new booking officer, Ellie Owens, has been appointed from 01 April. Cllr Foster thanked Richard Bushrod, Pamela Boniface and Jacqui Clark.

There are many events planned including over the Jubilee weekend, 02 – 05 June; jumble sales on 15 June and 05 November, Goudhurst Open Day in July and the Christmas Shopping Event on Saturday 26 November.

## Goudhurst for Ukraine – Jill Andrew

A Working Party has been established to support families who have offered to host refugees and the families who arrive. There are representatives/ stakeholders from various village organisations including the Parish Council, doctor’s surgery, GK Church. The group is co-ordinating with other local villages and are a contact point for KCC and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). TWBC have set up weekly teams meeting for the working groups which Jill, as Chair, attends. The group has received a lot of publicity including appearing on BBC South East Today, BBC Radio Kent and in the Kent Messenger. 22 families in the Parish have offered to host refuges but the Visa process is proving difficult. Greg Clark’s office are supporting. There have been may offers of support from those who can’t offer accommodation such as money, passes, ballet lessons, tennis membership etc. The meeting thanked Jill for her hard work.

Facebook page: GoudhurstforUkraine@gmail.com.

## Royal British Legion, Goudhurst Branch – Ed Bates

The Goudhurst Branch of the Royal British Legion has resumed face to face meetings, once more at the Star and Eagle, who have always been most helpful hosts to the Village’s British Legion. The Team is Tim Nicholson as Chairman, Ed Bates as Secretary and Peter Rolington as Treasurer. The Goudhurst Poppy Appeal Organiser is Brian Ferdinando.

Despite the on/off phases of COVID and lockdown at the end of last year, the poppy Appeal did really well, despite deciding against making house to house calls and instead standing in the High Street. A very generous village resident kindly purchased a blood red gazebo for the branch’s use, and this was set up on the Plain and did excellent business. It proved to be an excellent focal Point for a chat as well as for making donations. The final Poppy Appeal figure is £6,561.11. We are still awaiting Gift aid figures from HMRC for the last two years! An excellent total. Thank you everyone**.**The public’s generosity towards our serving and ex-servicemen continues to be very humbling and the Legion is very grateful. The kind of support servicemen and their families need can be so very expensive to provide, and problems can keep surfacing many years after the person concerned has laid aside his or her uniform. Thank you all who contributed.

There was, as ever, an excellent turnout on Thursday 8th November and on parade and in St Mary’s for the traditional Remembrance Day Service on the 11th. We did not march up the hill last year, but just walked in procession, and unless we all somehow get much younger that will be the pattern for the future. I swear that hill gets steeper! As ever we were supported by the various levels of scouts in the procession, and indeed anyone who wants to is always welcome to tag along at the back!

The Branch has two trips planned for this year, both of which had to be postponed from two years ago.

Friday 6 May – Battle of Britain Memorial: Cat and Custard Pot pub: Kent Battle of Britain Museum.

Friday 9 September – The Dunkirk Battle and “Great Escape” May/June 1940 – French coast.

These should of course be the other way round, as the Battle of Britain followed Dunkirk in 1940, but we thought it prudent to defer crossing the Channel until a Bit later. Both are one day trips, and the Dunkirk one will be a long day. Legion members get priority but anyone can come and be welcome if there is room.

Finally, do consider joining the Legion. The sub is a modest £18 a year, and membership makes no unwanted demands and requires no military experience of any kind, but at base just means a continuing desire to show support to our serving soldiers, sailors and airmen, veterans and all the families involved.

# Broadband Update – Cllr David Knight

Cllr Knight reminded the meeting of his 2019 election pledge to bring fibre broadband to the Parish. He did not realise what a long winded project it would be! The original Goudhurst Demand Led Project was split into separate parts which are progressing at different rates:

* Kilndown & Slade – this project went live last week.
* Project A - covering 400 houses needed £415,000 in Gigabit vouchers. This project is now in delivery and due to go live this summer.
* Project B1 – covering 174 houses is in delivery and should complete late summer 2022.
* Project B2 - covering 50 houses has been approved for funding and top up from KCC of £120,000 (Gigabit vouchers). Vouchers are yet to be sent out.

Once the four projects are complete, 800 households will be connected to superfast fibre broadband (4GB per second). The project has cost over £1 million. Cllr David Knight was thanked by the meeting for his tenacity.

# Report from Goudhurst Parish Council – Cllr Antony Harris

* We sadly lost Cllr Peter Wood from council after a long illness, during which he continued to attend our zoom meetings and fight for the issues he believed in.
* We co-opted Alison Webster to fill the council vacancy.
* Your council mastered Zoom for our remote meetings with good participation from councillors and the community (clearly better than venturing out on a cold winter evening!) A very efficient way to conduct business in the 21st century.

## What did your Council achieve in 2021?

* We sponsored the Parish Open Day in July and the Christmas Fair and late night shopping in November.
* We completed our NDP confirmed with a successful referendum in February this year.
* We completed on the purchase of the garages at Mary Days (occupied by nine continuing or new tenants).
* The transfer of the Chequer Field into the ownership of the parish (after ten years of legal delays from the borough and county legal black hole).
* Sign-up to the superfast fibre Broadband for 2/3 of parish completed
* We thought we had made progress with KCC on various highways issues, but perhaps not, as projects allegedly signed off, were suddenly not so when personnel changed at KCC.
* We upgraded our Banking and accounting system.
* Clerk developed the council e-Newsletter (now reaching an ever growing mailing list).
* Approved the outline budget for 22-23 and precept.

## What is still to do 2022?

## Finance Committee

* + - To decide which projects to fund and when, from the limited funds available.
		- Alternatively, which projects better covered by fundraising or donations from the community

## Glebe Field Working Group

to improve our upper and lower glebes by (suggestions):

* Proper provision of benches;
* A picnic area overlooking the southerly views;
* Better access to the lower glebe from the Church Rooms;
* “Natural” play equipment for all ages
* Outdoor gym and trim trail,
* Climbing frames etc;
* Petanque/boules court;
* A shelter;
* Wildflower meadow and nature reserve and finally
* An amphitheatre utilising the natural contours of the lower glebe for performances and events.

The Events Working Group are making progress planning our 2022 events:

* The Queen’s **Jubilee** from 02 - 05 June;
* Goudhurst **Open Day** on The Plain - Saturday 06 July;
* Goudhurst **Village Fete** and Dog Show - Saturday 24 September;
* **Christmas Shopping** E**vent** from The Plain up the High Street to St Mary’s - Saturday 26 November (changed from Friday 25th!)

## Emergency Plan Working Group

Cllr David Knight is leading on the project, please send any ideas to the Clerk (Clerk@goudhrust-pc.gov.uk) or Cllr Knight (David.Knight@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk).

To ensure that we are spending our time on the right things, **your councillors** plan to hold a **brainstorming** around the questions “are we trying to do too much / too little” and “what should be our priorities?” It will hopefully be an interesting event and achieve consensus.

The Chairman thanked all **councillors** and c**lerks** for their hard work and commitment during COVID in 2021.

# Questions for the Parish Council

1. How is the Parish celebrating the Jubilee, residents don’t know what’s going on.
* There will be a special e-newsletter detailing all events, an invitation will be mailed to every house during May and there is a dedicated page on the Council website (<https://goudhurst-pc.gov.uk/hm-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-2022/>). Posters are also being placed around the Parish. Updates will also be posted on the Council’s Facebook page.
1. Will the charging points be replaced? Will there be extra points added?
* Yes, the points will be replaced with those that charge the user for the electricity used. Council are currently awaiting quotes from a number of contractors. There are no plans to add additional points at this time owing to limited access to the electricity supply.
1. What is Lorry Watch?
* Goudhurst Traffic Action Group are monitoring lorries in Goudhurst village. They are taking photographs of lorries and writing to the hauliers asking them to use alternative routes.
1. Will the Annual Litter Pick take place this year?
* No, the event will recommence next year. The Chairman noted that there are restrictions on picking on roads over 30mph.
1. What is happening to the former allotment site?
* The site is privately owned. Planning Permission for two 4-bed houses was refused in 2017.
1. There is currently a campaign to prevent the loss of public footpaths, with a time limit to register them (2026). Are there any in the Parish that need to be registered?
* The deadline has been abolished in England allowing more time for paths to be identified and added to the public rights of way network.

 The chairman reminded the meeting that the monthly Parish Council e-newsletter is being distributed to nearly 700 people across the Parish. E-mail clerk@goudhurst-pc.gov.uk or call 01580 212552 if you would like to be on the mailing list. Lastly, he praised and thanked the volunteers across the Parish who do so much work, quietly and unobtrusively, to make the Parish such a wonderful place to live and work.

 The meeting closed at 9.18 pm

## Minutes are subject to approve at the next meeting