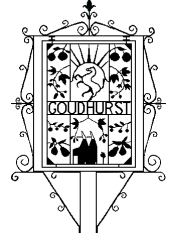


Goudhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF KILNDOWN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
on Thursday 30 March 2023 at 7.30 pm in Kilndown Village Hall

PARTICIPANTS

Present: Cllrs Jill Andrew, Craig Broom, Antony Harris (Chairman), David Knight, Geoff Mason, Guy Sutton. Borough Cllr Dr Linda Hall. 21 Members of the public. Claire Reed, Clerk.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Were received from Cllr David Boniface (holiday) Cllr Alison Webster (working) and Mrs Angela Westmacott.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR LINDA HALL

Local Government Boundary Commission. From 2024 there will only be 39 Tunbridge Wells Borough councillors. This was an officer decision and not that of the council. In December TWBC voted to retain voting by thirds for borough elections.

Safety on the A21. Cllr Hall has raised the issue of driving at night on the A21. White lines have been renewed in some sections of the road.

Elections in 2024

Cllr Dr Hall will not be standing as a Borough Councillor in 2024 after 21 years on the council; 17 years representing Benenden and Cranbrook and 4 years representing Goudhurst & Lamberhurst.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR DAVID KNIGHT

Local Government Boundary Commission. The commission will publish its final recommendations in May 2023. Goudhurst Parish Council has written again to the commission lobbying to keep Kilndown and Goudhurst together in one ward. A public consultation late last year showed a majority were in favour of all out elections. Whilst the majority of members voted to change to all out elections at the TWBC meeting in December, it was not the two-thirds required for a constitutional change and therefore the system of voting by thirds will be retained.

Budget. There is forecast to be a £380k budget surplus for 2022-23. This is in part due to 34 officer vacancies, return on reserves with the increased interest rates and an increase in parking revenue.

Co-working at the Town Hall. Two thirds of the Town Hall is now leased for co-working with council officers filling the remaining space.

Fibre Broadband. Most of Goudhurst now has access to super-fast broadband with approximately 900 properties connected.

PRESENTATION FROM JOHN MUSGROVE, MANAGER OF THE SCOTNEY ESTATE

Mr Musgrove briefed those present on the submitted planning application for improved parking and a new visitor centre.

PLANNING APPEAL - APPLICATION 22/01066 SMITHS LANE

The meeting was briefed on the appeal and timescales for submitting representations.

REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS

GK Church – Rev. Rachel Robertson

The church is a parish church and is for everyone. There are 4 regular services and 6 groups for young people including Blend on a Wednesday after school and Café Toddler on a Friday morning. The church continues to run the Community Cupboard and support the work of the Weald Family Hub that provides mental health support in 11 local schools. A pilot scheme will shortly be launched in conjunction with the Old Parsonage Surgery to provide mental health support for teenagers. Christ Church continues to fundraise for the new toilet!

Goudhurst & Kilndown Local History Society – Jane Davidson

The group now meets in the back room of Goudhurst Club and has a good range of speakers and exhibitions. Details of upcoming talks and events can be found on the group's website or posters around the parish.

Kilndown Community Choir - Julian Wells, choral director

The choir has a strong membership and has been very active over the past 12 months. The choir performed during the Jubilee celebrations and hosted a Christmas concert. In 2023 the choir will be singing at the Coronation event on the Sunday morning and will hold a 10th anniversary concert later in the year.

Kilndown Educational Trust – Report

The trust promotes the education of persons under the age of 25 who live, or whose parents live, in Kilndown. The trust continues to support the two local schools although the majority of children from Kilndown now attend Lamberhurst Primary School as it is closer. Over the past 12 months, 44 grants were made which was a substantial increase on the 30 made in 2022.

Kilndown Village Hall Trust – Tracy Roberts

The hall is now fully open for business. New acoustic panels have been added to the walls and the hall is now connected to broadband. A legacy from the late Marie Beaman has enabled the fitting of solar panels on the hall roof. These charge a battery which can be used to provide a community hub in the event of a power cut.

Kilndown Millennium Green Trust – Tracy Roberts

The play equipment gets lots of use and has recently been repaired. There will be a Coronation street party on the green at 3pm on Sunday 06 May with complementary tea and cake.

The meeting thanked Tracy and the bookings clerk.

High Weald Swifts – Cheryl Mason

The group aims to halt the decline in swifts (red list) and other native birds such as sparrows and starlings. They carry out surveys which are recorded on RSPB mapping to track the movement of the birds and also comment on local plans. High Weald Swifts has a website with further information and also attend events and open days to give advice and raise awareness.

Goudhurst for Ukraine – Jill Andrew

A Working Party was established a year ago to support families who offered to host refugees and the families who arrived in the parish. It has supported 120 hosts and 250 guests across the borough over the past 12 months with 60 guests now in new accommodation. TWBC provided good support to host and guests and most have been able to find employment and school places for their children. The group provided English classes and a successful WhatsApp group to support hosts. Cultural/ language differences and traumatised guests have led to approximately a third of the arrangements breaking down however the community should be proud of the support it has shown.

The meeting thanked Jill for her hard work.

CORONATION BASH MAY 2023

This is an ambitious event over 3 days. It will be fully funded by ticket sales and donations/ sponsorship. Other than the Friday Ball, all events will be free for families to enjoy. Details can be found on the dedicated website – Goudhurst.org.uk.

REPORT FROM GOUDHURST PARISH COUNCIL – CLLR ANTONY HARRIS

- The Council continues to be proactive and aims to leave the parish better than when it started.
- The Council's term comes to an end in May, thank you to all councillors who work hard for the residents – it is much more work than some realised!
- There have been changes in the parish office, Anthony Farnfield retired in September and a new Assistant Clerk, Rebecca Bardon, has been appointed. Panetta Horn continues as Council's Responsible Finance Officer and Claire Reed as Clerk.
- Thank you to everyone involved in the various events over the past 12 months. We all look forward to the Coronation Bash in May.
- There is lots going on in the parish but the same people seem to do everything. Ideas welcome on how to attract more volunteers for all groups.
- Don't forget to sign up for the e-newsletter and encourage friends and neighbours to do the same.

The meeting thanked Anthony Farnfield for his long service to the council and the parish.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The number of councillors representing wards in Tunbridge Wells Borough is being reduced to 39 from 2024. As a result, the borough will need to be rewarded. In 2022, TWBC voted to retain the system of electing councillors by thirds and this decision was confirmed in a vote in December 2022; although a majority voted to change to all out, it was not the two thirds mandated for

constitutional change. Therefore, each ward will need to have three councillors. The current proposals would see Kilndown and Goudhurst split with Goudhurst joining the 'Rural Tunbridge Wells' ward and Kilndown (known as South Goudhurst) warded with Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden. GPC believe that an all-out system of electing borough councillors would allow more flexibility and maintain the link between representatives and their communities. Goudhurst and Kilndown have been linked since pre-Saxon times and GPC continue to lobby to keep the parish together.

The meeting closed at 9.14 pm

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting