



Hello!

It's been a busy month, and I am optimistic that after the Parish Council meeting on March 11th we will be able to announce some changes to the way we deliver services to the village that will benefit everyone in Hawkhurst.

I am really pleased that some of you have been in touch with Richard, our clerk, to find out more about being a parish councillor. Please keep the enquiries coming. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Richard Lusty to the Parish Council. Richard, who joined us in February, has considerable experience, having previously been a councillor in Maidstone and Tenterden. Personally, I am convinced that his background in retail will also prove to be a real benefit in terms of helping us in our aim of improving the services we deliver to the village. We still have three vacancies, so please do give some thought to whether you might be able to join us.

As you may have noticed, I have mentioned a couple of times that as a Parish Council we are keen to improve the services that we deliver to the village. This month we have started to review how we work and the changes we need to make in order to improve our effectiveness. It is still early days, but I feel this has been a really positive process and one that we will be able to build on.

I don't imagine it will come as much of a surprise to learn that one key area we have identified as needing attention is communication! Work has already started on this. A new website is currently being designed, and I would like to thank Cllr Martin Taylor-Smith and Richard for their hard work on this. In terms of timing, we are hoping to be able to launch this at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

Another aspect of communication that we have been working on this month is our working relationship with our colleagues at the Borough and County Councils. We have had positive meetings looking at how we can work together to best address issues affecting Hawkhurst. This is particularly important because many of the issues that cause us most concern as residents (traffic, road conditions, pressure on infrastructure and facilities) are not in the control of the Parish Council, so we need to find ways to make our voices heard.

Thinking about working with others, we are hoping to make a few changes for the Annual Parish Meeting this year. This meeting is supposed to be a meeting for the Parish, rather than a Parish Council meeting even though we organise it. Therefore, we are inviting representatives from other Hawkhurst groups to provide you with updates at this year's meeting. We are hoping that some will be able to give a presentation and others will be available to chat with you over refreshments. It's the first Annual Parish Meeting that Richard and I have organised and it's coming up fairly quickly, so we're keeping our fingers crossed.

From the Parish Council's perspective, our intention is to share with you some of our aims for the future. We would love to see you there, so please make a note of the date April 29th at Hawkhurst Primary School at 7:30 pm (doors open from 7:00 pm). We'll be issuing reminders closer to the time.

Clare Escombe
Chairman, Hawkhurst Parish Council
March 2019