

HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Richard Griffiths, Clerk

Office Hours: Mon 9:30am – 11am Hawkhurst Library

Tues - Fri 10:00am -12:00 noon

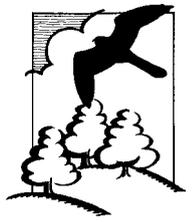
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MEDIA RELEASE

Hawkhurst Parish Council - our community beating the virus together

- stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives -

Hawkhurst residents are pulling together and creating a model for community support that is spreading across the county.



Commenting on the establishment of a community support group, Councillor Clare Escombe, chairman, Hawkhurst Parish Council said:

"In Hawkhurst, as elsewhere, there has been a wonderful community response to the coronavirus crisis from people eager to help their neighbours and recognising that we are all in this together. Given the scale of the support needed over the coming weeks, it was important to establish robust systems to

ensure that everyone in Hawkhurst can access the support they require and that volunteers are co-ordinated and properly supported. The Parish Council, working with local volunteers, set up Hawkhurst Community Support Group."

Clare explained:

"The Community Support Group matches volunteers with people needing support - whether that is shopping, collecting prescriptions, or simply arranging telephone calls to check on people and combat loneliness.

Hawkhurst is a traditional village, yet is fully utilising digital technology in order to support the residents. An on-line form enables people to register as a volunteer; and, those who need support can nominate themselves or you can suggest someone who might need support who will then be contacted."

The Group's co-ordination team have access to the bespoke online database, which is automatically populated when help is requested or offered through the online platform. This form can be found on the new HCSG website www.hawkhurstcommunitysupport.com and from links in our Parish website and community social media pages.

There is also a dedicated telephone line 01580 453015 which is answered between 9am and 6pm with messages taken out of hours. To ensure no-one is left out the Council has produced leaflets that are being delivered by volunteers to houses in the Parish.

As well as the registered volunteers we know that many people are informally helping neighbours. This is great, but it is important for them to register with the Community Scheme to ensure that the person they are helping is supported if anything happens to the volunteer.

Cllr Escombe concluded:

"Hawkhurst is blessed with goodwill, enthusiasm and talent and we have been incredibly fortunate with the offers of help. We have amazing local talent - our operating procedures were written by a resident with experience in emergency planning and our on-line system created by a leading tech-entrepreneur. This model has been shared locally with the other parish councils and with the National Association of Local Councils.

As well as responding to local needs, HCSG will also deliver support to residents by acting as the Hawkhurst hub for the county-wide response. HCSG's Co-ordination Group have worked tirelessly over the past week to get HCSG up and running.

We already have more than 100 volunteers and I want to pay tribute to this community spirit, which we very are proud to support.

ENDS.

For further information, please contact Richard the Parish Clerk on 01580 752058 or

Email parish.clerk@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk