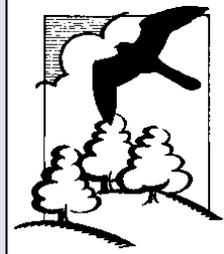


HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL



**Happy Christmas and
a healthy, prosperous New Year**



Hello!

With 2020 drawing to a close, I am sure that most of us will be pleased to see the back of it. There is no doubt it has been an immensely challenging year for so many reasons. Whilst it has been a shared global experience, this pandemic has impacted every one of us uniquely.

The Parish Council is no different as 2020 brought many unexpected challenges. When I became Chairman of HPC, I thought my biggest challenge was going to be TWBC's Local Plan. Little did I know! It is fair to say it has been a difficult year: we had to dramatically adjust our priorities in order to focus on keeping our community safe; our income plummeted while our costs soared; the Parish Office had to close and staff worked from home.

Despite all this, there have also been positives. We have had the pleasure of working alongside some incredible people to establish HCSG (see page 2 for a review of their year). We delivered the MUGA at KGV, which has proved to be a very popular facility. Work is proceeding on the cemetery restoration project. HPC secured agreement from TWBC to install additional air quality monitoring tubes on the Rye Road and the High Street. The Community Centre project continues to progress with some very positive pre-application meetings with TWBC planning officers.

For me, Christmas is a time of hope. And looking ahead, there are certainly signs that we should all be hopeful about 2021. Now that the coronavirus vaccination programme is underway, hopefully, we will regain the things that we have missed in 2020. Personally, I would like to think that we will also retain some of the positives we have experienced such as community spirit, an even greater appreciation of the nature that surrounds us, and more opportunities for working at home rather than facing a time-consuming commute.

This year, Hawkhurst has been amazing at pulling together and looking out for each other. Let's continue to do so over what will no doubt be a very different festive period without the occasions that would normally bring us together.

Please look out for your neighbours, young and old. Loneliness and financial worries know no boundaries. A little kindness, a warm smile and a cheery hello could make the world of difference to someone.

Thank you all for everything you have done in the face of such unprecedented challenges this year.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and all the very best wishes for 2021.

Stay safe.

Clare Escombe

Chairman, Hawkhurst Parish Council

Hawkhurst Community Support Group

The Hawkhurst Community Support Group (HCSG) was established on 27 March 2020 to help Hawkhurst residents requiring assistance during the coronavirus pandemic by collecting and delivering groceries, essential supplies and prescription medicines. The Group also offers dog-walking and telephone companionship services. HCSG is, formally, a "Community Group" separate from, but with close links to, the Parish Council and is managed and staffed entirely by local volunteers.

At its peak, during the first lockdown, HCSG had nearly 140 clients and 190 volunteers on its books. Currently, we are looking after 58 clients, and 84 volunteers are either actively engaged in our work or ready to answer the call.

We have also delivered a number of community projects. These included operations to distribute apples, chocolate Easter eggs and fresh vegetables to our clients; collecting PPE for local surgeries and care homes and running a children's art competition to mark VE Day.

On 19 April, we launched "Food4Families" ("F4F") to help local families struggling financially as a result of the pandemic. Our public appeal to raise £1,000 raised twice that amount within the first week! This enabled our volunteers to start shopping for essentials and we established a "free shop" for local families in need, initially at the Primary School and later at the KGV Centre on the Moor. The project proved to be highly successful and, as the need remained undiminished after the first lockdown, we decided to continue raising funds to keep the scheme going. We found ways to make the money go further by partnering with generous local providers including the Hastings foodbank, St. Laurence Church and our local food growing charity, Hands of Hope.

F4F is still going strong: we have raised about £8,000 to date and are helping as many as 27 local families.

We have many people to thank for the success of our work in the community.

We'd like to thank our generous financial donors. So many private individuals contributed to F4F: they might not like us to name them here, but we know who they are, and we thank them for their generosity. We can, though, mention the following organisations:

Communities Aid Foundation; Delmatic Ltd.; Dunks Charities; Hawkhurst Baptist Church; Hawkhurst Parish Council; Howdens Joinery; Park Farm Butchers; St. Laurence Church; The Thomas Iddenden Trust; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and our local supermarkets, Tesco and Waitrose.

We thank **Stevens Farm** for the consignments of fresh apples; **Park Farm Butchers** for the loan of their van and **Phil** for acting as driver. **Tesco** and **Waitrose** for contributing to the great Easter Egg Run, our Prize Draw hamper and Christmas dinners for local families in need. **Hands of Hope** for supplying quantities of fresh vegetables for our community distribution project and for F4F. **Marlborough House School** for their big Harvest Festival donation of food and their Christmas run to raise funds for F4F. And the parishioners of **St. Laurence Church** for their ongoing contributions to F4F.

Most of all, we thank the many local people who joined us to volunteer their services in many capacities: managing the organisation; shopping for those staying at home; working for F4F; walking dogs; being "phone buddies"; delivering apples, Easter eggs, vegetables and leaflets etc. etc.

So many people to thank. Every one has played a part in this great community venture. We thank them all and wish them the merriest of Christmases.

Kent Community Award Scheme 2021

The Kent Community Award Scheme aims to recognise those who have done outstanding service to their local community. The Award Winners receive a Framed Certificate.

Please visit the Hawkhurst Parish Council website www.hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk for a Nomination Form for residents to send to the Parish Council, - **closing date 31st January 2021**

Community Heroes

The last 9 months has been a very difficult period for many in our area. We were all amazed by those who volunteered to help our community or who bravely kept working through the depths of the Covid-19 crisis, and continue to do so

It was not only the dedicated people working in the NHS or social care, but also those working in local food shops and supermarkets, on public transport, for utility companies, delivery drivers as well as our police and fire services and our armed forces who performed essential work for the healthcare system.

We would like to hear about, and recognise volunteers and those who put their own safety at risk working to keep our community running.

So if you know someone who is your 'Community Hero', please visit

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-heroes

Make a Change become a Councillor

Are you passionate about your community? Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the council? Do you have concerns about a specific issue and want to do something about it? If this is you, then we need you.

We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect their community to put themselves forward for the **Parish election, 6th May 2021**

Here, you will find everything you need to know. It explains what local councils and councillors do, how you can become a councillor, details of the role and what to expect. Please see below

www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections

Hawkhurst Parish Council

Chairman	Ms	Clare	Escombe	clare.escombe@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Vice Chairman	Mr	Martin	Taylor-Smith	martin.taylor-smith@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Brian	Fitzpatrick	brian.fitzpatrick@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Paul	Whittle	paul.whittle@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Mike	Appelbe	mike.appelbe@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Phil	Jones	phil.jones@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	John	Hunt	john.hunt@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mrs	Ros	Cory	ros.cory@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mrs	Barbara	Weeden	barbara.weeden@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mrs	Jane	Pyne	jane.pyne@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Richard	Lusty	richard.lusty@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	Paul	Green	paul.green@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Cllr	Mr	David	Blake	david.blake@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk

Parish Office - The staff are working from home

Parish Clerk	Mr	Richard	Griffiths	parish.clerk@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk
Deputy Clerk RFO	Ms	Anita	Maxwell	deputy.clerk@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk

Office Phone 01580 752580 Mobile Phone 07907 022914

Note the Parish Elections are due on 6th May 2021.

HCSG

For all local information on COVID 19 and volunteering
www.hawkhurstcommunitysupport.com or phone 01580 43015 or
 email hawkhurstcommunity@gmail.com

The Parish Summer Newsletter is available in: Tesco, Waitrose,
 Pharmacy, Doctors and local shops and pubs.