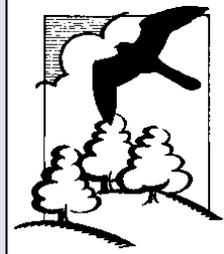


HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL



Summer Newsletter 2020



Hello!

We have all had to adjust to a different way of life over the past few months, and that includes the Parish Council. We have had to get used to remote working and virtual meetings. The Parish Office has had to close, but the staff are working from home. However, you can still contact us by phone or email. All our contact details are on the final page of this newsletter.

As many of you will be aware, HPC set up Hawkhurst Community Support Group (HCSG) in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Thanks to all of our amazing volunteers, HCSG has been a huge success and is now established as a separate community group. I am extremely proud to be the chair of such an incredible organisation, and HPC is continuing to work closely with and support HCSG. Thank you to everyone who responded to my plea in April to sign up for support from HCSG. I am delighted to announce that Deric Wood was the winner of the prize draw.

We have produced this newsletter to share information that was due to be presented at the Annual Parish Assembly in April, as well as bringing you up-to-date with what we've been up to since then. Overleaf, Cllr Taylor-Smith provides a 2019/2020 summary for Strategy, Administration and Projects. The financial report for 2019/2020 is presented on page 3.

Turning to current projects, the coronavirus has made things a little more difficult, but we are still moving forward with these. Cllr Fitzpatrick reports on the upgrade of the tennis courts to a multi-use games area (MUGA) and Cllr Whittle provides an update on the new Community Centre.

One thing that coronavirus doesn't appear to have slowed down is planning! Page 5 provides a brief round-up of planning matters. Speeding traffic is something else that shows little sign of slowing down! Thank you to everyone who responded to our request for information on speeding. I would like to thank Cllr Cory for her detailed report looking at ways to make our village safer.

It sometimes feels like our concerns fall on deaf ears. But if we keep making the case, eventually we will be heard. For example, we finally have evidence that air quality in Hawkhurst is an issue. Obviously, we would prefer this not to be the case, but at least now TWBC and KCC need to take this into account, see page 6 for more details.

As lockdown restrictions are easing, we are now turning our attention to how we can help businesses in the village through the challenging process of adjusting to the "new normal". We have drafted a business recovery plan, which aims to provide support through working in partnership with our local businesses and the Economic Development team at TWBC. In the meantime, we can show our support as individuals by continuing to buy locally.

Stay safe.

Clare Escombe

Chairman, Hawkhurst Parish Council

“Martin's musings” Strategy, Administration and Projects

Hello, as Vice Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Strategy, Administration and



Projects Committee we have been at forefront of the streamlining of the Council's organisation, processes and finances to improve the services that we deliver to our residents and businesses.

As a result, in 2019/20 we have:

- Revised and increased the community grants from £1,500 to £5,000 to support more community groups within the Village
- Developed an “Active Hawkhurst Policy” in supporting activity such as the new upgraded tennis courts, playgrounds and general activity
- Updated planning to help lever in

more funding from developers for Village infrastructure such as £36,000 for Heartenook Playground

- Revised Tree and Hedgerow policy – leading to improvements in management of trees, particularly KGV this year and rolling out next year across the Parish
- Reviewed cemetery – started a restoration project to improve and expand the Hawkhurst Cemetery
- Revised communications policy which has led to improvement of our website, press releases and social media
- Overseen finances – paid off long standing KCC pension debt, claimed back Business Rates Rebate and been more active in obtaining grants
- Commissioned reports on demographics to help inform future work and investment

In summary, a strong blend of solid finances and staff and Councillors' experience has enabled us to adopt a more robust approach to overdevelopment in the Village. As our recent usage of the 'Judicial Review' process has demonstrated.

As always; “Listening to the voice that counts - Yours”.

Financial report 2019/20

2019/2020 Financial summary

	Budget	Actual
General income	£35,019	£99,690
Local tax - Precept	£149,265	£149,265
Expenditure	£184,284	£189,732
Transfer to reserves	-	£59,223

Where we spent the money

- We repaired the zip wire at Hartenoak Playground, £10,647
- We spent £14,360 on fees developing the community centre. We have ring fenced £55,244 for further work on Community Centre project – see report
- We started the £52,150 upgrade of KGV Tennis courts – see Facilities and Services Report
- We paid off a long standing debt of £41,000
- We spent £2,406 on hanging baskets and litter picks to enhance the area
- We spent £838 on renewing the Neighbourhood Plan
- Total Reserves £292,551

Where we got the money from

- We drew down £65,550 from HCT, to cover professional fees for the community centre
- We recovered a one off payment of £7,519 for business rates rebate
- We were successful in being awarded £10,500 from grants towards the upgrade of the tennis courts with another £1,000 agreed
- We received £149,265 from the local tax, Precept
- In addition, the Copt Hall income was £4,977 and the KGV Sports Pavilion income was £5,382

The full budget report is available at
www.hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk/finance-reports/

Facilities and Services Report



Upgrade of KGV Tennis Court to Multi Use Games Area

The £52,150 upgrade of the tennis courts at KGV have been a long-term project that came to fruition this year. We were successful in getting £11,500 funding and would like to thank KCC, Kent Playing Fields Association and Cllr Sean Holden for their contributions. This complement the £40,650 we had built up in reserves over a number of years. The work commenced in March 2020 but was held up by COVID 19. It was completed and opened in June 2020. Cllr Fitzpatrick said "This has been an aspiration of the Council for many years, and finally we are there. It is free to use for informal use and clubs can reserve a slot by hiring the facility. That will typically be in the winter months when clubs want to train under lights and protect the grass areas". If you are interested in

hiring the area, please Email office@hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk or phone 01580 752058

Community Centre project makes steady progress

Many of you attended the consultation events or commented on the initial designs. We are currently working on the 193 design points and 17 comments on the business plan.



Cllr Whittle, Chairman of the Working Group said "COVID 19 has delayed progress but we are hoping to meet with TWBC for a second pre-application meeting and then report back to Council and the wider public on the way forward."

The aim is to submit a planning application in the early autumn 2020.

Playground consultation

Working with HCT 2018 we have been consulting with young people on what they want for the new playground – the consultation closes on 31st July 2020 so this is children's chance to have a say on the design. The questionnaire is on www.hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk/consultation

Reply to: hawkhurstcommunitycentre@gmail.com

Closing date 31st July 2020

Planning Update

The government set an expectation that the planning process should continue as normal throughout the coronavirus crisis. Consequently, TWBC has continued to process planning applications and HPC has continued to submit a response on behalf of the Parish. Inevitably, there have had to be some changes to procedures. Planning Committee meetings are now held remotely. You still have the opportunity to speak, but this is done either over the phone or by submitting a written statement, which is read out by an officer.

Updated Neighbourhood Development Plan Adopted by TWBC

On April 16th 2020 TWBC adopted the latest version of the NDP. This means that Hawkhurst's NDP is one of the most up-to-date of all of TWBC's planning policy documents and it must be taken into account in all planning decisions within Hawkhurst.

White House Planning Application Judicial Review



The Judicial Review of the White House planning application will be decided in the High Court on 28th July 2020.

This will be an important day for Hawkhurst and its residents. HPC brought this case because we do not believe that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council have properly considered the cumulative impact of traffic from approved developments on the Hawkhurst crossroads.

The High Court Judicial Review will be heard virtually. We will update our website and social media to keep you informed.

HPC would have preferred not to have had to apply for a Judicial Review, but none of our efforts to get TWBC and KCC to address the congestion at the crossroads were making a difference.

Hawkhurst Crossroads

The lockdown brought some respite from the queues at the crossroads. But as lockdown has eased, the queues are starting to build again. However, we are cautiously encouraged that, since starting the Judicial Review process, Kent County Council have indicated that they will be carrying out a proper cumulative assessment in order to inform their position on planning applications.

Moreover, KCC Highways are now requiring some developments in Cranbrook, such as the application for 168 new dwellings at Turnden, to evaluate the impact on the Hawkhurst Crossroads. These may be small steps, but we are heading in the right direction.

KALC Community Award 2020

As a village we are blessed with numerous generous people who help in our community. The Council considered a number of nominations in January 2020 including: Mrs Pat Westgate, Mrs Lisa Ridley, Mr Sedge and it was decided to award the KALC Community Award to Valerie Manser.

Valerie has lived in Hawkhurst all her life supporting local people at coffee mornings in Dunks Hall and at the Church. She'd also sell her beautiful handmade cards at various village charities.



Air Quality Matters

It will come as no surprise to those of us who live in Hawkhurst to learn that there is a problem with Air Quality in the village centre. Finally, after residents, the Parish Council, and our Borough Councillors have spent years raising concerns about the impact of congestion on air quality, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has gathered sufficient evidence to agree that there is an issue.

TWBC now recognises the need to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Cranbrook Road near the crossroads.

This is due to monitoring showing that the level of nitrogen dioxide in some

locations exceeded the national annual mean objective. TWBC should have already written to those of you who live in the affected properties. TWBC officers emphasised that levels in Hawkhurst were only a little higher than the acceptable level and that Hawkhurst residents should not worry unduly. HPC is still working with TWBC to understand the implications of this.

Thankfully, one advantage of COVID-19 has been a temporary reduction in traffic levels, which has resulted in a short-term improvement in air quality.

Air quality is a material planning matter. This means that all applications for 10+ dwellings in Hawkhurst, Cranbrook or Sandhurst have to have an air quality assessment plan. Whilst this will not prevent development, it should strengthen our arguments against inappropriate development.

TWBC has the legal responsibility to declare an Air Quality Management Area and take action to improve the quality of air in Hawkhurst. They are in the process of starting to consult on what needs to be included in the AQMA Action Plan. Of course, the Parish Council will be contributing to this, but we ask **all** of you to take part as well. This is your opportunity to help make a positive change.

One action that HPC will be pushing for is a change in the designated HGV route away from the A229. We believe that just this one action would result in a significant improvement in air quality.

We value the quality of life of our residents and air quality matters. Congestion in the centre of the village is significant and already adversely affects the quality of life for those who live, work and visit our Parish. With your help we can make it better

Hawkhurst Community Fridge

The Council supported the Hawkhurst Community Fridge project with a grant of £250 and it opened in June 2020 at the Green Shop. It is part of a nationwide network of authorised food outlets aimed at reducing food waste, connecting communities and tackling silent hunger in our village. Anyone can take and contribute to the fridge. It is not means tested. There is no shame and everyone is welcome.

Hawkhurst Community Trust 2018 has been through the process of rigorous checks and has Public Liability Insurance in place. We have local volunteers already but we could always do with more. If you would like to be part of the project in any capacity, please email Ellen: hawkhurstcommunityfridge@gmail.com

In addition, if any of the allotment holders have spare produce they want to donate please contact Ellen on hawkhurstcommunityfridge@gmail.com



Registered Charity # 1180085

www.hawkhurstcommunitycentre.co.uk

Hawkhurst Village Magazine Wanted - New team for the future

The long standing editor Mike Appelbe has decided to hand over the reins as soon as a new editorial team can be found.

The magazine is a successful, monthly community-led magazine which is well-liked in the village and the intention is for it to remain in its current form, although improvements could always be made. It will retain its historical connection with St Laurence Church and will welcome articles from all community groups, churches, business and the Parish Council to reflect village life in Hawkhurst.

It is an independent, community non-profit making business with publishing and printing costs covered by advertisers. Due to the COVID 19 lockdown the last publication was April 2020 but the hope is for it to start publishing again in Autumn 2020.

A new "Hawkhurst Village Magazine team" is required – editor, finance, sales and publishing. Enquiries should be made to:

Father Rodney on rodneydryer@sky.com

Mike Appelbe 01580 752367 or mike.appelbe@barrettsgreen.co.uk

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	barbra.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 were deferred until May 2021 due to COVID 19

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.