

News from the Parish Council



Delighted that the Parish Mag is back in business.

It is great to be communicating with you again this way. It indicates that some form of normality is returning.

I hope you appreciated the Parish Council leaflets. We managed to get 6 issues out and delivered to every household in the Parish, to explain what was happening locally and how to get help in these unprecedented times. *

Your Parish Council hit the road running, conducting our first Skype meetings back in March. This month's September meeting may have been from the comfort of our own homes, but we were joined virtually by a representative from the Cricket Club, the adult's Football Club, 2 representatives from the South Foreland Valley, one district councillor and one county councillor. Most importantly of all we welcomed and co-opted 2 new Parish Councillors. I would like to introduce Simon Creed and George Simcox. I am sure they will be real assets to the community. We still have one vacancy, but potentially an applicant. If you are interested in future, please do still come forward and attend our meetings to experience what we get up to. One or two of us might have to retire one day and it would be good for the village to have someone ready in the wings.

Public questions are still being dealt with and the public is invited to attend our meetings too and one person - you know who you are - normally does. Our minutes and agendas are on the website. Use the search bar – it is easiest way to find anything

[Search Website](#)

To search type and hit e

We have been busy, I will touch on just a few items here. The threat of parking charges in the Reach Road village carpark is still ominous and we are keeping a very close eye. The deferral we got back in January (it seems an exceptionally long time ago now – pre-Covid) was just that - a deferral – despite the 210 submissions and our consistently clear message – NO!

I think we were the first playground to be re-opened in Kent. We took the decision to block the tunnels (confined spaces) and remove some of the swings (2m rule). We also provided hand sanitizer and wipes as a start-up gesture. We decided this week to continue both these measures. There is so much uncertainty still and the sanitizer has been appreciated and not misused.

Planning doesn't stop! There are the normal new applications where the Parish Council is invited to comment, but now it seems developers are trying to use Non-Material Amendments NMAs to make major changes without consultation. We have had successes but do let us know if you are affected.

You do not need to be a Councillor to make a difference. We are lucky in the village to have:

- The Gridlock Group who is looking at improving traffic flow.
- A new community group has emerged to adopt the telephone box on Reach Road. We have submitted the formal request on their behalf.
- Enthusiastic residents who thought we could do with some "keep St Margaret's beautiful and take your litter home" signs, created some great graphics, coordinated with printers and these posts should be going up in October. Look out for them!
- Volunteer litter picking groups - We can provide pickers and hi-vis vests.
- Two wonderful volunteers with diggers who would like to renovate the Reach Road pond.

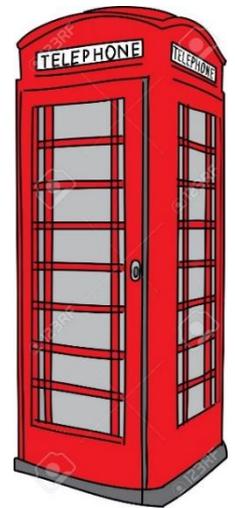
- A volunteer mum watching over our play area and keeping the hand sanitizer topped up.
- A local builder offering to clear some overgrown bushes from the King George Vth field.

Feel empowered!

Don't leave it to the Parish Council. We can help, support, offer advice, keep it legal, grant permission, point in the direction of grants, maybe even provide some money (we don't have much, but what we have is for the village) but what we don't have is a magic wand.

Areas we need help for:

- Looking after our Village Green – all 23.5 hectares of the **South Foreland Valley**. – *volunteers to drive tractors, rake, cut down scrub etc. generally fresh air and fun.*
- The swings in the King George Vth play area needs replacing and more **play equipment** up at the Alexander Field (football field) has been proposed and wouldn't it be great to have some adult gym equipment too? - *looking at what we have, what we would like, consulting with the villagers, costing, accessing grants, fundraising etc.*
- More **defibs** in the village. – particularly Nelson Park and the Bay (ones that can be accessed 24/7) – *investigate sites, accessing grants* - Well done to the Cricket Club who has just installed one with just a little bit of help from us.
- Medium term – **replacing/upgrading the Alexander Pavilion** – football club. - ££££
- **Footpaths** – *walking them, checking signposts and access*



Maybe something else to think about?

- A memorial to the Lockdown (not another bench – we currently maintain 34 😊)
- Something for the kids to do e.g. skateboard park

Our Community Warden Stephen Noddings is proving invaluable. Please involve him in your problems. We also have links on our website for reporting common issues and this is the fastest way to get things done – remember the search bar. Good key words are “report, problem, fly tipping, warden, pot hole, development, traffic, vegetation”

A final simple request from me. Be kind! We look after each other in our village. Everyone is suffering in their own individual way and there are so many unintended consequences in these difficult times. The lonely elderly person sitting at home with no luncheon club to look forward to, the school child coping with this brave new world of school; the cold, wet, and scared man/women/young child/baby dripping their way through our village, having risked their lives to get here. All are real people, with real problems, regardless of any politics.

It is indeed a surreal world we now live in.



* We were questioned about the cost of the 6 communications and after obtaining a £300 grant towards our VE day celebration leaflet, the total cost per household, including delivery was £1.05. (and a priceless amount of volunteer blood, sweat & tears – a bit like this good publication too)

[www.https://www.stmargaretspc.co.uk/](https://www.stmargaretspc.co.uk/)

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Rebecca Simcox

The Hub is still up and running

The Parish Council had initially intended to disband The Hub in September and return the contact details of the 100 incredible volunteers who put themselves forward. We had no calls in July and August and just one in September. However, given the uncertainty now, with the volunteers' permission, we will keep it going for a while yet.

If you need help, or even just would like to talk to someone – give the number a ring – or send an email. We will try and connect you to the best local volunteer for your needs.



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