

News from the Parish Council



Oh, for a crystal ball.

Hopefully, we will be coming out of Lockdown as you are reading this and the prospect of sensibly meeting up with loved ones over the Christmas period is exciting and joyful. If the restrictions have not been lifted, then all we can do is stay positive, take delight in this wonderful, friendly, and beautiful village we live in and try and make sure that no-one is forgotten. What I can say for certain is that some form of festive preparations will be well underway.

The Christmas tree should once again be standing proudly at Post Office Corner. Our thanks go to John and Hilary Stone, VJ and Peter Killin who allow us to plug the lights in every year; to Michael Lyons and his lifter for the lifting part of the operation and the traffic marshals for keeping everyone safe. This will be the last Tree supervised by Dusty who is handing the baton over to our new village maintenance man Ross Purchase. The Parish seems to have done very well out of this new arrangement, as Ross regularly brings along his brother, mum, and dad to help (Team Purchase), all of whom are in the same bubble. No breaking of social distancing rules here!

I am delighted that the Village Hall committee has decided to carry on their new tradition, which only started last year and are also having a tree outside the hall on Reach Road. Team Purchase will have put this one up too, with the help of Nigel Claringbould and his lifter for the lifting and under Dave Hart's exact instruction.

There is no turning on lights celebration this year. Last year the villagers were given so much by our local establishments and other kind residents and were fed and entertained. This year's plan to "Give a gift" focusing on Giving rather than Receiving seems therefore particularly poignant and apt. I have been assured that Sandy with her big stick will ensure that it is very safe too, (assuming it is allowed to go ahead – crystal ball please)

If you pop down to Post Office Corner, you should see something different. John Ford has carved one of his special sculptures to mark this festive occasion, and I am hoping we can get a few lights around that too. Thank you, John. Speaking of lights and festivities we have a special plan lined up for Christmas 2021, but I will not spoil the surprise yet.

I understand there have been discussions with Santa this year and there is hope, but no guarantee, that the Santa Express will be touring the village complete with sleigh, Snowman, Reindeer, and very loud Christmas music. The details and route would be posted on Facebook and families will be invited to cheer them on and wave loudly from their doorsteps. No Presents, no sweets, and no contact. This year is simply different!

We are offering Christmas tree recycling again - please leave your old trees on the grass near the toilet block in the carpark Wed 6th or Thurs 7th Jan. Dusty & Ross will take them to the Cemetery where they will get shredded and then used on local footpaths.

What is happening on the Parish Council?

Well, we are a full contingent for the first time in a long while. We are happy to welcome Terry Gilham who has hit the road running, already has started work on our Reach Road pond (we know

it is a road run-off really) and with his background in construction and his local knowledge he will be a huge asset to the community.

We are still trying to gain ownership of the telephone kiosk for the community project. Typical bureaucracy, the lease should be weighed rather than read. We are signing our life away – for a phone box!

Do not forgot our wonderful South Foreland Valley, when a good walk is the highlight of the day, we are lucky to have 25.5 hectares of village green on our doorstep to ramble on. There are currently 3 horses and 12 Dexter cattle keeping the scrub down by grazing docilely. Best to walk there, ideally via the footpath at the back of Reach close.

I trust you have all noticed the “Dangerous bends” and “keep our village clean” road signs. Your Council just paid for the materials. The idea, design, the management, and the installation were all provided free by some very special residents. Aren’t we lucky to have so many people in the village who just want to make it better?

Our playground is still open, and we are still providing hand sanitizer for our children. It was a shame we had to shut the tennis courts for the 4-week lockdown, hopefully they are open again now...

Please do not leave everything 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 but what we do not have is a magic wand - ***Feel empowered***

I was disappointed that we had no responses or feedback regarding play equipment or the future of the Football Pavilion. i.e. - what needs replacing and what would we like? suggestions how to fundraise or apply for grants. Maybe, it is just the wrong time to think about such mundane matters, but we are now looking at expensive repairs and we do need to have a long-term plan.

Public Space Protection Orders PSPO

The Parish Council has been considering asking DDC to place the Alexander (cricket field) and King George Vth field (football) with a **Public Space Protection Order – PSPO** where dogs need to be kept on lead. Like that placed on the green in the Bay and the church graveyard. These are enforced by DDC with fines.

It does however seem wrong that the good dog-owners suffer because of irresponsible ones. The real issue is not picking up after dog mess and that is already against the law. The fields are used by all our villagers and the implications of dog fouling where kids are playing football, cricketers are fielding or even where the ramblers are walking is horrible and potentially dangerous.

In the meantime, please watch your dogs and pickup their mess anywhere but particularly where people may step in it, say something if you see something and report dog fouling online. Go to our website and search for **Dog**. There is also a map showing the current local PSPOs.

It is indeed a surreal world we are living in but despite this or maybe even because of this, the Parish Council and I wish you and yours an extra special Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2021.

