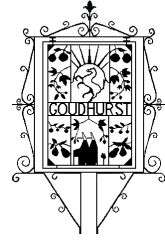


Goudhurst Parish Council



BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE **Minutes of a Meeting held on 19 October 2020 at 19.30 via Zoom**

Present: Cllrs Craig Broom (Chairman), Antony Harris, David Knight, Barry Noakes and Guy Sutton. Mr Ed Bates – advisor to the Committee. Anthony Farnfield as Clerk.

Apologies: David Boniface (attending a meeting at the Town Hall), Chris Ditton (work commitments) and Peter Wood.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Questions and Statements from the Public: There were none.

2.1. Matters relating to the Open Reach Fibre Broadband project for Kilndown

Cllr David Knight briefed the Committee on the up to date situation. There are now only 2 schemes under consideration by Openreach. They are a) Goudhurst with Curtisden Green and b) Kilndown. The Goudhurst 'demand project' is to be negotiated directly with Openreach. A provisional proposal is for GPC to contract with Openreach on the Kilndown project. There are 185 properties in this scheme including a small number from Lamberhurst. The Openreach quote for providing fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) is £182,040 (nil VAT?). To date, £130,000 has been pledged by the property owners covered by this project. Council is of the opinion that the shortfall of £52,000 can be covered by the Government/KCC 'voucher' scheme (£1,500 per private dwelling and £2,500 for business premises) as more property owners pledge their vouchers. It was unanimously **agreed** to recommend to Council that Goudhurst Parish Council agree, in principle, to enter into a contract with Open Reach for Fibre to the Premises to be installed in Kilndown, ref no. CFP37358 as detailed. This is conditional on the community pledging the necessary number of Government vouchers to cover the cost and Clerks confirmation of the legal status of this transaction. The Deputy Clerk raised two issues. Firstly, Council needs to check under which legislative power GPC can enter into the proposed contract with Openreach and secondly, the degree of risk involved in signing such a contract. Deputy Clerk will take advice on these points and report back to Council. However, some Members pointed out that BT will not start work on this project until the financial aspects are in place. **Action: The Clerks are to check on Council's powers relative to this proposal and to consider the degree of risk involved.** It was **agreed** that Lamberhurst Parish Council will be informed about this project. It was **noted** that 'everybody' has 4G in Kilndown.

2.2. e-Newsletter

Following Parish Council Minute 256/20 of 12 October 2020. It was **noted** that Cllr Craig Broom and the Clerk had attended a Zoom meeting with Breakthrough Communications who are able to help the Council create an e-newsletter and a central email distribution list. Some committee members believe that Council will have difficulty in producing enough quality content over time. All committee chairmen will be asked to contribute material monthly. The use of standard headings may help. It was **agreed to recommend** to Council that we go ahead and work with Breakthrough Communications with a delegated expenditure budget of £350.00 in the first year. The target is to get the first e-newsletter out before Christmas 2020. **Action:** The Chairman of the Business & Communications Committee will ask the Clerks about editing each edition. The Clerks will consult David Denton about using his Parish Magazine material in the e-newsletter

2.3. Business engagement. Mr Ed Bates expressed the view that forming a committee of Goudhurst High Street traders will not succeed. It has been tried before.

Christmas lights. It was **noted** that the committee had consulted a leading provider of Christmas and other exterior lighting. Members took the view that the quoted costs are too high to be justified and there are practical difficulties in implementation, particularly in Goudhurst High St. An alternative suggestion was to consult Cllr Phil Kirkby.

Farmers' Market. Such a project needs some hard standing in a prominent position in the centre of Goudhurst. One suggestion was to create hardstanding on the grass area between the front of the Parish Hall and the Pond. A quote from one contractor was between £28k and £31k. Members considered that was too high and that a further quote should be obtained from a known local contractor. It was **noted** that the trustees of Goudhurst Parish Hall will need to be consulted.

Christmas Tree. It was **noted** with appreciation that Cllr Barry Noakes organises annually at Council's expense the Christmas tree in St Mary's Churchyard at the top of the High Street. Committee members supported the proposal that a good sized tree should be established in front of the Parish Hall to be viewed across the Pond. **Action points:** There was no agreement as to who will action outstanding points.

2.4. Destination Goudhurst. There was no progress to report in the past month

2.5. Parking in Goudhurst. The Chairman of the Parish Council reported that the Old Parsonage site is yet again up for sale. It means that no progress can be made on establishing further public parking on that site. The Lower Glebe and Tattlebury Triangle are the only sites left to develop extra parking places. It was **agreed to recommend** to Council that a consultant with experience of highways and parking matters be engaged to advise. It was **noted** that Council had some meetings with Monson, East Sussex in 2019.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Anthony Farnfield
Deputy Clerk