



RYARSH PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council January Meeting

- Gallagher, who own the verge where the Village Sign is located, have kindly agreed to the Parish Council planting wildflowers. The Parish Council will purchase and sow seeds which will greatly improve the appearance at the junction
- Plans to arrange another Litter Picking collection in the village have been delayed by the new lockdown
- Problems of flooding on Birling Road outside the school and at the new junction layout on Roughetts Road are being reported to KCC
- Cllrs were pleased to note that footpath MR126 behind Ryarsh Oast House has been cleared for walkers
- The Parish Council congratulated Wayne and Patrick Oliver for clearing the footpath of leaves on Birling Road near the Village Hall
- Logs from the pollarding of the Willow Tree in the Village Hall Car Park, can be taken free of charge by anyone who is able to cut them to size and transport them
- Regular inspections of the Play Area are being carried out, but anyone using it is reminded of current Government Guidance on Social Separation, good hand hygiene etc.
- The Parish Council approved its budget for 2020-2021. It was agreed that there would be no increase in the amount payable per household. The precept will be kept the same per household as it is this year, which is £69.62 pa per Band D property. The Parish Council will continue to pay for streetlights in the Village, maintain and update the play area, donate towards the Village Hall, pay for grass cutting on the Recreation Ground, donate towards the grass cutting of the burial ground at St Martins Church, pay for Highways Improvements, maintain the defibrillator and book box and contribute towards the cost of the Christmas Tree and Lights.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

- TMBC is doing all it can to help during the pandemic, including grants to small businesses
- The loss of income this year has had a huge impact on TMBC. Government have made generous grants, but there will need to be an increase in Council Tax
- The new website should be live in July

Kent County Council

- County Councillor Hohler reported that there are staff shortages due to Covid-19. 25% of Waste Collections Staff are unable to work which has impacted refuse collections. Residents are asked to be patient while the backlog is cleared
- KCC have announced that older and disabled people will be able to use their bus passes before 9.30am to support them during the ongoing pandemic
- Residents are encouraged to report anti-social HGV parking (eg in laybys and on verges) using the Country Eye App where you can download photos or the vehicle registration

number. You can also report fly tipping on the app. Lorries can be clamped and will be fined £150 to be released.

- If anyone is having problems of any kind due to the pandemic, there is help available through Kent Together available on the Kent County Council Website (<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/protect-kent-and-medway/help-and-advice-for-residents/kent-together>) and a helpline **0300 41 92 92**
- Symptom Free testing sites are being set up around Kent. The nearest to Ryarsh is at Larkfield Library, Martin Square, ME20 6QW. You can book an appointment through the KCC website (<https://kcc.healthit.org.uk/covbook/home>). Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 have no symptoms, so you can get tested regularly to make sure you are not unknowingly spreading the virus
- The KCC draft Budget has been published and a press release is at the end of this newsletter. The budget has been incredibly difficult with income lost and costs increasing. Spending for Adult Social Services has been ringfenced. Council Tax will be going up
- Direct Debit payments for the Kent Travel Saver Card and its 16+ equivalent will be cancelled in January and February due to the national lockdown

Kent Police

Please be aware of a number of incidents in Ryarsh and nearby villages recently:

East Street - Between 1:00pm on Wednesday 23rd of December and 2:30pm on Saturday 26th of December. Somebody broke into a shed at a residential property. They stole several items including a generator, chop saw, petrol generator and other tools. They smashed a window to get inside.

Woodgate Road - On Thursday 31st of December between 12:01am and 11:52am. Somebody stole a BMX bicycle from a garden. Between 12:01am on Tuesday 1st December and 11:52am on Thursday 31st of December somebody stole a trimmer from a residential garden.

The Police are warning people to be alert about coronavirus scams:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/coronavirus-vaccine-scams-warning>

Next Parish Council meeting

The next meeting is by zoom on Monday 8 February 2021.

You can contact the Clerk by email at clerk@ryarsh-pc.gov.uk.

For more information please go to our website www.ryarshpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Public messages about the vaccine roll out

The NHS is working hard to deliver what is the largest vaccination programme in its history and to do so as fast as possible. We understand there is a high expectation for vaccination services to be available in all areas and this will soon be the case.

- People will be contacted when the vaccine is available for them.
- Please be patient and wait to be contacted. Please do not phone GP surgeries, the CCG, or other NHS services with general queries about when you will be able to get the vaccine.

The latest position for sites that have started vaccinating and a range of frequently asked questions about the programme are being maintained at www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/covid19vaccine

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

The impact of COVID-19 has led to enormous uncertainty and an unprecedented challenge for Kent County Council as it prepares its budget for the next financial year.

Responding to the pandemic has required a huge increase in spending and has come at the same time as reductions in income from council tax, business rates and funding generated by the authority's own services, all of which have been affected by the pandemic.

KCC has had to take this uncertainty into account as it prepares its draft budget for 2021-22, which is published today. This follows a public consultation in the autumn which produced the highest response rate to any similar consultation.

The budget proposals will be voted on at the full County Council meeting in February.

The council needs to spend around £1.128bn on day-to-day services, which equates to about £720 for every person living in the county. This is an increase of £64.7m (6.1%) on the approved budget for 2020-21.

To meet these costs and in line with the government's expectation, it is proposed that council tax is increased by 1.99% plus 3% which is ring-fenced for adult social care services. These increases will protect frontline services, particularly for social care, which continue to be prioritised by residents in their responses to the council's budget consultations.

The increase equates to £67.50 a year for band D households, equivalent to £1.30 a week, and low-income households can still claim discounts on their council tax bills under schemes operated by each district.

In order to balance the budget, the council has also had to find savings and make some difficult choices. This was the main focus of its budget consultation in which residents were asked which services were a priority and where they were prepared to see funding reduced. Taking resident feedback into account, the council has identified a number of savings that will close the budget gap while protecting, as far as possible, essential services.

KCC Leader Roger Gough said: "The government's financial settlement in December was very welcome indeed, but much of that is one-off funding for COVID-19, and it is very clear from our budget forecasting that it is not enough to meet the projected shortfall for next year.

"The continued financial pressure in delivering social care, coupled with the massive financial challenges of responding to COVID-19, has brought about a situation of unprecedented risk and uncertainty.

"COVID-19 has exacerbated what was already a very challenging financial future for local authorities. I am immensely proud that, throughout the pandemic, we have continued to provide essential services and ensured that all those who have needed extra support have received it."

KCC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Peter Oakford said: "The impact of COVID-19 means the current financial picture is enormously complicated, and in balancing this budget we need to take into account not just the short but long-term impact of the pandemic, in addition to the financial pressures we were already facing.

"Thanks to the financial settlement from the government and in particular the £50.2m one-off COVID grants, we are able to propose a budget for next year that maintains all the essential services that our residents told us matter to them most in our recent budget consultation and strengthen our financial resilience for the future.

"However, we predict that the outlook will significantly deteriorate in the future. Year on year, the pressures on social care budgets, the growing number of older and vulnerable people, coupled with the sudden, huge costs and consequences of the virus, will undoubtedly be a massive financial challenge for Kent County Council."

Roger Gough added: “Some may ask why we have, in these difficult times, increased our reserves. The fact is that the demands on our budget and the financial impact of COVID-19 next year and in the future, is even more uncertain. We are not only required to balance our budget for next year, we also have to ensure that we are financially resilient in the medium term and can respond to increased risks.

“We have worked hard to produce a budget that protects the services that are most important to our residents, as well as taking a financially responsible approach.”

Other key points from the draft budget:

- The council proposes a £96.7m increase in spending on council services, including £5.5m for adult social care packages, £2.8m for home-to-school transport for SEN pupils, £3.2m to cover increased demand for children’s social work and disabled children’s services and a net increase in council reserves.
- This increase in spending is offset by £64.7m which includes savings from efficiencies, transformation and policy choices, additional income; as well as £22m from reserves.
- The council will increase its reserves by a net figure of £9.2m to reflect increased risks and uncertainties.
- There is proposed capital investment of £1.056bn on infrastructure over the next 3 years 2021-22 to 2023-24, mainly on roads and schools. This includes £19m of new schemes, £54m of schemes that have been removed, and £168m of spending that has been rephased within the three-year period.
- The budget has been prepared against the backdrop of an unprecedented level of uncertainty and risk. This stems from a one-year settlement from government for 2020-21 followed by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which hit soon after the 2020-21 budget was agreed last February.
- The pandemic has had a profound impact on the council’s budget and its ability to deliver services and, as a consequence, on its financial planning assumptions.
- KCC has received a total of £131m in one-off grants which should be enough to meet the costs of dealing with the COVID pandemic in the current financial year.
- However, these costs do not include the impact of the latest national lockdown and the latest wave of infections we are now experiencing. We have therefore included in the budget for 2021-22 a £32.9m un-ringfenced emergency grant and a COVID-19 Local Council Tax Support grant of £14.3m.
- The council is experiencing a rise in demand and extreme pressure on services as well as seeing increased levels of financial hardship for residents and businesses.
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already stated that, once the pandemic has subsided and economic recovery is secured, the government is committed to ensuring that borrowing and debt are on a sustainable path, which is likely to impact future funding levels for local councils.
- Consequently, the draft budget proposals focus on the council’s plans for the forthcoming year, with the potential for significant budget adjustments in future years.
- The council is under a legal duty to set a balanced and sustainable budget and maintain adequate reserves such that it can deliver its statutory responsibilities and priorities and be considered financially resilient.

Mental health support in Kent

Kent and Medway Safe Havens

Are you feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or that things are too much for you? Don't know where to turn to get mental health support?

The Kent and Medway Safe Havens are run by Mental Health Matters and offer face to face mental health support for those living in Kent and Medway to anyone aged 16+. No appointment or referral needed.

The Safe Havens will remain open every day 6pm – 11pm despite Kent now being in Tier 4 and will only be closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day. They will also now be offering virtual consultations via “One consultation”.

If you are attending any one of the Safe Havens below please ensure you are following government guidelines and attend wearing a face covering.

Canterbury

- Email Canterbury.mhm@nhs.net
- Visit: Age UK, The Centre, Castle Row, Canterbury, CT1 2QY

Maidstone

- Email Maidstone.mhm@nhs.net
- Visit: Mid Kent Mind, 23 College Road, Maidstone, ME15 6YH

Medway

- Email Medway.mhm@nhs.net
- Visit: Age UK, MacKenney Centre, Woodlands Road, Gillingham, ME7 2BX

Thanet

- Email Thanet.mhm@nhs.net
- Visit: Thanet Safe Haven, Holy Trinity Church, St Mary's Avenue, Dane Valley, Margate, CT9 3TN

Folkestone and Hythe

Hestia offers an open access walk in service for residents of Folkestone and Hythe who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

The Folkestone Haven is open from 6pm – 11pm weekdays and 12pm – 11pm weekends and Bank Holidays, 365 days a year for anyone aged 18+.

Contact the Folkestone haven:

- Email Folkestone.haven@hestia.org
- Facebook message [@hestiafolkestonehaven](https://www.facebook.com/hestiafolkestonehaven)
- Visit: Rainbow Centre, 69 Sandgate Rd, Folkestone CT20 2AF

Mental Health Matters

The Mental Health Matters phone line is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service is provided by an independent charity. Call **0800 107 0160** to speak to someone in their highly trained and experienced Mental Health Matters team.

Visit <https://www.mhm.org.uk/>

Release the Pressure

Call **0800 107 0160** to release the pressure if you're feeling stressed for free confidential support at any time. You can also text **Kent** to **85258** for 24 hour mental health crisis support via text from trained volunteers.

This service is provided by SHOUT and you can visit their website here <https://www.giveusashout.org/>

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

For adults of Kent and Medway, call the 24 hour helpline on **0800 783 9111** if you need urgent mental health support, advice and guidance.

For under 18s and residents of Kent and Medway call the 24 hour **Single Point of Access** on **0800 011 3474** (select option one, then option three).

If you are a KMPT patient and you need urgent help Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, contact your Community Mental Health Team (CMHT).

At other times, contact your local crisis team, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

- *Dartford Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team - 01322 622222*
- *Medway and Swale Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team - 01634 968460*
- *North East Kent Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team - 07554 050 242*
- *South East Kent Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team - 07553 814499*
- *West Kent Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team - 01622 725000*

*No access to a computer? Call **01322 622222** and ask for the team you need. If you cannot remember your team's name call the 24 hour helpline on **0800 783 9111**.*

NHS 111 online

Help and support available online <https://111.nhs.uk/>

NHS talking therapies

NHS talking therapies services are also known as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services. Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help with common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression.

A GP can refer you, or you can refer yourself directly to an NHS psychological therapies service (IAPT) without a referral from a GP.

For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/free-therapy-or-counselling/>

Kent Together

A 24 hour helpline has been set up to support vulnerable people in Kent who need urgent help, supplies or medication. It provides a single, convenient point of contact for anyone in the county who is in urgent need of help during the Coronavirus outbreak. If you are vulnerable and have an urgent need that cannot be met through existing support networks, you can contact the Kent Together helpline at www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether or by calling on **03000 41 92 92**.

Children and young people's mental health services

Contact North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) children's Single Point of Access on **0800 011 3474** if you need to get help for a child or young person.

The Single Point of Access (SPA) is a team of clinicians who review your emotional and mental health concerns and help establish the best way to support you.

Visit <https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-mental-health>

Live Well Kent

Live Well Kent can support you with:

- Managing your money, including debt and benefits
- Housing support and guidance
- Improving your relationships
- Accessing counselling.
- Basic advice on healthy living and helping you set some goals to make positive lifestyle changes
- Supporting you to access a range of free resources including apps and things that are happening in your local community
- Putting you in touch with support to help you quit smoking, lose weight reduce your drinking or drugs intake and look after your sexual health.
- Volunteering
- Community projects
- Arts, music, culture or sporting groups
- Finding IAPT psychological therapies in your area

You can contact Live Well Kent by phoning **0800 567 7699** or visiting <https://livewellkent.org.uk/>

Mind

Wellbeing Line is now open if you need to talk to please call **0808 196 3898**. Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday 6-10pm.

Samaritans

Call the Samaritans for free on **116 123** or email jo@samaritans.org for 24 hour support. They also offer support by email, letter and face-to-face. Visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/>