



Paddock Wood Town Council – Quarterly Update Feb 2020

Chairman's Update

This is a very exciting time for the Council as we start to focus on the new projects we are planning for the next financial year. Alongside this we are preparing our budget and hope that we will be able to include all these projects without submitting a significantly increased precept to TWBC. It is always sad when we have to remove something that we wish to do for Paddock Wood residents from our plans.

The Town Council continues to work hard on your behalf. A lot of time has been spent on examining and discussing the draft local plan particularly by the Planning Committee. A Consultant was employed to help us undertake this mammoth task. Tunbridge Wells Council received a lot of comments from across the Borough and they have only just finished processing them all. We hope they will take note.

There is a revised Churchill Homes application with TWBC and an appeal against the rejection of their first planning application is still in process.

Both the Community Centre project and the Neighbourhood Plan continue to move forward albeit slowly.

Please see the Town Council website for further details of Town Councillors and their responsibilities. You can find out more about the Town Council by visiting the website <http://paddockwoodtc.kentparishes.gov.uk>

or following the Council on Facebook and Twitter. Or try to attend one of our many meetings most of which are held on Monday evenings at the Day Centre (See website for details)

Cllr Meryl Flashman

Clerk's update

...

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Town Council's newsletter.

The Town Council has now set its budget for the coming financial year. There will be an increase of 2.3% on last year's budget which will equate to an increase of £3.47 per year for a band D property.

The budget for 2020/2021 will be £461,642. Next year the Town Council will increase its spending on Foal Hurst Wood and has included in the budget the costs of installing water fountains at St Andrews and the Memorial Play areas. £1500 has been set aside for additional tree planting around the town and a sum to install Wi-Fi in the Day Centre. The budgeted sum for the Community Centre has been increased to £60,000 a year to allow for additional professional support for the project. An update on the community centre project can be found in the newsletter.

The Town Council will be updating its website later this year, in the meantime all details of the budget can be found at www.paddockwood.kent.parishes.gov.uk.

The council's email addresses have been changed, and all councillors have been issued with official Paddock Wood Town Council email addresses. The details can be found on the website.

The new office addresses are as follows:
Nichola Reay (Town Clerk)
clerk@paddockwoodtc.co.uk

For all planning and cemetery queries:
Claire Reilly (Deputy Clerk)
deputyclerk@paddockwoodtc.co.uk

For pitches or Day Centre bookings:
Teresa Maxwell (Admin assistant)
admin@paddockwoodtc.co.uk

Nichola Reay
Town Clerk



Estates committee

The last quarter has been a busy time for the committee and the estates staff and here is a summary of key projects that we have been working on:

- Through a Facebook poll, residents identified a Rocking Horse as the most popular equipment to be installed in St Andrews Park. This has now been ordered.
- New fencing has been installed around the Fitness and Play area in St Andrews Park to reduce vandalism.
- As mentioned further on in the newsletter, we have installed an additional 2 defibrillators in town and replaced the box for a third.
- Looking forward to the Summer months, we are looking into replacing the old wooden planters in the Town Centre.
- The New Baby Plots area at the Cemetery has been planted with hedging aiming to achieve a calm and peaceful environment.
- The Estates team have redecorated the much used Day Centre.
- A ramp has been installed at the Church Road entrance to St Andrews field to improve wheelchair access to the park.
- The parking bays in St. Andrews field car park have now been marked out and include disabled parking spaces. This will improve the parking experience for all users.
- The new Christmas lights chosen brightened up Commercial Road and the surrounding area during Paddock Wood Lights Up and the Christmas period.



Cllr Derek Boyle, Chair of Estates Committee

Planning and Environment Committee

The regular work of the Planning and Environment Committee continues, with twice monthly meetings to review planning applications and send comments to the Borough. Applications of note include the plans by Churchill to build flats for older people in the centre of the town, the proposal by Berkeley Homes to add an additional 117 homes to the 309 already planned off Badsell Road and the two smaller developments at 13 and 15 Church Road. We are expecting the planning application for the development of around 300 homes at Church Farm to come to us in the next month. We will post on the Town Council Facebook page when we receive this.



The Planning Committee are also working on a Highways Improvement Plan for Paddock Wood for Kent County Council. If anyone is interested in contributing to this, please contact Councillor Williams via the Council Office. We are also looking for volunteers to train as flood wardens and to work with a Councillor to undertake speed checks across the town. If you would like to learn more, please contact the Deputy Clerk in the Town Council Offices.

Kent County Council has established a Select Committee to investigate availability of affordable housing in Kent. Information can be found at: <https://kccmediahub.net/kcc-launches-new-select-committee-on-affordable-housing745>. The date for comments has now closed and we await the results with interest.

Carol Williams, Chairman Planning & Environment Committee



Youth Council

In November, the Youth Council were very pleased to select Morgan Reeves as Paddock Wood's Young Person of 2019. Morgan was nominated by three separate people for her voluntary work with the Fair Trade Shop and community activities run by the school. Among the words used to describe her were 'helpful, cheerful, hardworking and an invaluable asset'. Our congratulations go to Morgan.

The Youth Council has since been planning its activities for this year, which will involve fund raising, supporting town litter picks and investigating how we can improve the skate park on Putlands Field. The next meeting will be held at the Skate Park on February 10th at 16.45 to consider options for this area. If any young people who use the skate park would like to join us, please come along and tell us your ideas. Youth Council continues to look for interested 11 to 18 year olds who would like to join the Council. If you know someone who might be interested, please contact Councillor Carol Williams via the Council Office.

Carol Williams, Supporter to PWYC



Community Centre update

The signing of RIBA stage 3 has been delayed but there is a meeting to further discuss the project on Monday 24th February when it is hoped to sign off the remainder of the documents for RIBA Stage 3.

It is understood that the application to seek village green status was not successful.

A leaflet will be shortly be distributed to all residents to update them with progress of the project.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Steering Group needs to decide whether to push ahead with the Neighbourhood Plan or wait until the master planning process has been completed before taking any further steps. A lot of research has been done over the last few months into what other parishes are doing in this respect and we have been seeking advice from other people.



We have decided to appoint a different consultant to take us through the next stages of producing the draft Neighbourhood Plan. It may be difficult to find someone suitable as this is a very specialist field. Even Fera, the Consultants with whom we have been working are now focussing on design and masterplanning rather than Neighbourhood Planning. We are very grateful for all the work they have done for Paddock Wood but both sides feel that this is an appropriate time to part company.

To keep up to date with what is going on with all aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan you are welcome to join the Steering Group at their meetings which take place in the Wesley Centre on the third Wednesday of each month at 8pm. We are still looking for people to join our Group at this critical time now that we have a good idea as to what TWBC are planning for the future.

You can also follow the Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page. Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan and its draft policies can also be found on the Town Council website.

Meryl Flashman, Chairman of the Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



Foil Hurst Woods



The rain in the middle of December filled the wetland to the brim. The ditches flowed well showing the importance of cutting them during our midweek summer sessions. I happened to be working in Foil Hurst Wood on the 18th and it was very muddy and quite treacherous under foot. I spent three hours there. Those conditions had not changed by the 29th December when seven volunteers went into Foil Hurst Wood for the December volunteer's day.

The aim was to cut posts and make bindings for the hedges we are to lay this spring, starting next volunteer's day. Ray continued cutting the trees in the first coppice area but, there not being much hazel in that space the rest of us were not in his way. The second coppice area is full of hazel, so we started clearing them almost down to ground level in order to provide the stocks we need. The posts need to be about five feet long and the bindings should be anything over eight feet long.

We made good progress ending up with a substantial pile of both stakes and whips though the stakes still need to have points made on the ends. I am hoping to have that done by the time the next volunteer's day starts.

The next volunteer's day is on Sunday 23rd Feb. at 9.30. We will be hedge laying along the path to the south of the Orchard Meadow so bring good gloves and I suggest you dress warmly as it may be cold and is exposed. See you then in the Badsell Road car park, bring your family and friends.

Sunday Date	Planned activity	Exercise involved
February 23rd	Hedge laying	Lopping, sawing, weaving
March 29th	General work on paths and hedgerows	Bramble bashing, hedge trimming etc.

Peter Prince – Honorary Warden of Foil Hurst Woods

If you would like to volunteer to help at Foil Hurst Woods, please contact the Town Council Office.



Allotments



Did you know that Paddock Wood Town Council have 3 allotment sites; at Badsell Road, Kent Close & Ringden Avenue.

Cost of hire for the year starts at £10 for a half plot to £20 for a full plot with a 50% discount for those receiving a state pension.

If this interests you, please contact the Town Council on 01892 837373 for further information.



Defibrillators

The Town Council has recently installed 2 new defibrillators, one at the Day Centre and one at the Green Lane Pavilion.

The casing for the one outside the town council office in St Andrews Field has also been replaced.

These defibrillators have been registered with SECAM and Community Heartbeat, so in the event of an emergency callers can be directed to the nearest one.

All three are publicly available and are for anyone to use. Whilst the reported incidence of tampering with defibrillators is low, if you think one of them has been tampered with PLEASE contact the town council as soon as possible.

Other organisations and companies also make defibrillators available and a complete list can be found on the Town Council website.





The Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership



This is our local action group whose aim is to promote and safeguard the rail services between Tonbridge and Strood. It is just one of many such groups across the country working hard to keep their local and often rural lines running by investing time and money, often as volunteers.

Representatives from all sectors of the community can be members of such a group. Ours has Parish, Borough and County Councillors providing the local knowledge from towns and villages along the line, transport planners and providers such as Southeastern and Network Rail, charities like Sustrans to promote the line's environmental values, and, not least, the Community Rail Partnership committee itself who work tirelessly to bring our many ideas and concerns together, obtaining funding and informing politicians and central government of our needs.

Much has been achieved over the last few years. Stations have been tidied up with better facilities for passengers. There have been planting schemes. Artwork has been commissioned from local schools. Local communities can adopt their own station. Stations are used as starting and finishing points for walking and cycling routes and there are leaflets to promote them. Leisure activities, enjoyment of the lineside scenery are all part of the scheme, as well as themed trains offering on board entertainment and refreshments. We try to cater for everybody.

Our meetings are also an opportunity for feedback from communities along the line and have resulted in improved services such as a High Speed Link to London from Maidstone West, which has now been running for some years, and improved safety on trains and platforms. Money is always a constraint and our pleas for more frequent and longer trains to serve the rapidly growing towns and villages, and a through link to Gatwick will remain on our wishlist.

So, what can you do? Use the train! Twenty minutes to Maidstone and back for a few pounds with great scenery on the way. Go further, to the Medway Towns and look at the contrasting landscapes. Hop on and off the train and walk along the Medway. Attend Town Council meetings with your complaints, suggestions and ideas and I'll pass them on at our next meeting. The future of the line is in your hands!

Borough, County Councillors & MP



These are the updated Borough, County Councillors and MP for Paddock Wood following the elections in May.

Borough Councillors

Paddock Wood East

Cllr Rodney Atkins – Independent Email: Rodney.Atkins@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk
Cllr Sarah Hamilton – Conservative Email: Sarah.Hamilton@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk

Paddock Wood West

Cllr Matthew Bailey – Conservative Email: Matthew.Bailey@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk
Cllr Elizabeth Thomas – Conservative Email: Elizabeth.Thomas@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk

County Councillors

Paddock Wood

County Cllr Sarah Hamilton – Conservative Email: sarah.hamilton@kent.gov.uk

MP

Tunbridge Wells MP

Greg Clarke – Conservative Email: gregclarkmp@parliament.uk

Upcoming meeting dates

3 rd February	Planning	7.45pm
10 th February	Estates	7.45pm
17 th February	Planning	7.15pm
17 th February	Full Council	7.45pm

Meet your Councillors

Come and meet some of your local town councillors and ask questions about any local issue that you would like them to take to the Town Council or to pass on to the appropriate Councillors at Borough or County level. Please see website for details of times and locations.

If you have any suggestions about what you would like to read about in our next Quarterly update which we are going to publish in April, please contact either the Town Clerk or Cllr Derek Boyle via the contact details below.

Paddock Wood Town Council, The Podmore Building, St Andrews Field, St Andrews Road, Paddock Wood, TN12 6HT Tel:01892 837373 email: clerk@paddockwoodtc.co.uk