



## *Manston Parish Council*

Chairman: Mr John Dearing

Parish Clerk – Miss Ashley Jackson, 3 Rossetti Road, Birchington, Kent CT7 9ER

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### Alternative Minutes

Due to the current situation regarding Covid-19, Manston Parish Council are currently unable to meet. However, the Councillors are continuing to work within the Parish.

Chairman, Cllr John Dearing has prepared the following update.

On March 3rd, I handed over a cheque for £2,000 to Karen of the village hall committee to improve the heating in the village hall. The money covered the cost of removing the old radiators, that had been installed about 8 ft above the floor, replacing them with 7 modern radiators at floor level, and adapting the plumbing to feed those radiators. Immediately after the order was given to the plumber, he fell sick and was off work for a couple of weeks but, on returning, he completed the work and on Saturday, the 18th of April, I met up with Karen and took photographs of the new improved heating system. See attached photos of 5 of the radiators.

In February we had a small section of the park fence moved to provide a space for the residents of the Leys to park their large communal waste bins. This freed up car parking spaces and it was hoped it would reduce the number of cars parked on Preston Road. The exposed grass was replaced with a concrete pad to facilitate the easy movement of the heavy wheeled waste bins.

In early March, I paid a visit to Premier signs at Nicholas at Wade, to explain the sign that I needed to put up on the Manston Park fence, bordering the Leys. I opted for an aluminium backed, weatherproof sign and gave them the wording and the size of the sign. I paid a second visit to pay for the work and, on the 20th of March, collected the sign. I mounted the sign on a varnished pad of plywood, and secured it to the fence. The sign is to inform residents of the Leys that they are allowed to use that small section of the park that has been made available to them, but that it remains part of the park and the property of the parish council.

In January, Rob, of CR Steel, had rehung the two refurbished Parish Shields on the beacon pole. (see attached photo) On Sunday, the 15th of March, the reverend Peter Bone, a good friend of the parish, performed the blessing of the signs. Cllr Robin Tritton and I represented the parish council at the service, and several members of St. Catherine's congregation also attended. Many thanks to the Reverend Bone for his time and support in helping us honour the young men who flew from Manston during world war II.

On March 18th, in keeping with national policy, I suspended all monthly Parish council meetings until further notice.

On March 24th, the Thanet District council hosted a phone conference of representatives of local parish councils. Because of the uniqueness of the problems facing local council authorities, this is very much a case of adjusting accepted practices to match and meet the issues raised when dealing with this virus. In many cases, new rules are having to be written up to deal with the crisis and no solutions are perfect! This is very obvious from just listening to the discussions.

A second phone conference took place on the 24th of March and we heard how one department, dealing with waste collection, had lost 30% of its workforce due to self isolation on presenting symptoms of the virus. The local dumps are closed to ordinary members of the public because of the shortage of staff and also to comply with the social distancing rules.

A third phone conference took place on the 7th of April. It became apparent, from reports, that fly-tipping was becoming a serious problem. With the local dumps closed to the public, that was no surprise to anybody. Councillor Penny Gimes, of Minster Parish, asked if large waste bins could be provided at certain points in different parishes to allow people to dump rubbish they would normally take up to the dump. It was accepted that enforced furloughing meant many people were carrying out d.i.y work at home and creating more waste than normal. Gavin Waite, waste manager, explained that as the cost would come out of a different project, the idea wasn't viable. I thought Cllr Gimes suggestion made sense and I would have thought the council would have had to adapt to meet the new challenges, not stick by the old rulebook.

Since then, we have had another phone conference on the 28th of April. I have made a suggestion, in an e-mail to Gavin, that the dumps open to the public using the same rules that control people using the supermarkets. If they don't do something to reduced the rate of fly tipping, the cost of dealing with the problem, once the virus abates, will be enormous and very costly! I have copied Gavin's response, and my answer, to MPC members. There was a subsequent phone conference on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

On a separate note, as you all know, Friday, 8th of May, was the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Before lockdown, a memorial service was to have been held at 11am, at the Spitfire and Hurricane museum, this was cancelled. And I had considered, at the start of the Year, having a beacon lighting on Friday night. If the VE celebrations are postponed to a date, later in the year, perhaps we can include an evening beacon lighting in the celebrations. Opinions on this idea welcomed. As soon as the Parish Council meetings can take place again, I will let you all know.

Cllr John Dearing  
Chairman, Manston Parish Council



