

Faversham Town Council Newsletter

Summer 2020 Edition

Faversham Town Council Offices

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**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THIS NEWSLETTER WAS PREPARED FOR PRINT IN MID
MAY - ALL INFORMATION CORRECT AT THE TIME OF PRINT**

Mayor's Update

Cllr Alison Reynolds, Mayor of Faversham

A New Year 2020 started so fantastically, our temporary Creek Bridge was installed allowing pedestrians safer access across it and some improvements were made to Flood Lane. I and my Consort were privileged to attend the production of 'Our Beautiful Town' the story in music, words and pictures celebrating 50 years of the Faversham Society, which was instrumental in saving and preserving so much of the Town's history and heritage. This was beautifully written and performed and if you were unable to see one of the showings, hopefully this will be available on DVD.

In April we launched the VE75 Anniversary campaign in preparation for Celebrations on the 8th May 2020, by encouraging people to produce a piece of bunting to represent a person who had lost their lives during the WW2 conflicts in Europe. Approximately 170 of these were completed and these will hopefully be exhibited later in the year.

The Faversham Literary Festival was an amazing weekend and my thanks to all of those who organised this event, which brought a number popular speakers and writers to our Town and most events were sold out well in advance. In February I enjoyed a unique collaboration bringing together local choirs, to explore the unique heritage of the Town and its people in St Mary of Charity Parish Church entitled Waterways. This was a new large scale project, a 'son et lumiere' arranged by Faversham Music Club. I also enjoyed my first visit to Faversham Golf Club, such a beautiful setting with amazing facilities.

On the 6th March 2020 I was able to welcome my sister, Claire Murdoch, NHS England's National Mental Health Director, to my International Women's Day Coffee Morning in The Guildhall. I was so grateful to her, she made us cry and laugh in equal measure, and my thanks to the ladies of the Gunpowder WI who provided delicious refreshments. Unfortunately the Mayor's Ball on the 20th March was the first event to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. My thanks to all those who donated to the Mayor's Charity 2019/2020.

I am writing to you at the end of April, a letter that you will not see until June. Right now we are still in lockdown and who knows where we will be by June. I am unable to predict the future so I will start with the here and now.

First of all I want to give heartfelt thanks to all those people and organisations helping us get through this really difficult time. The NHS and all those brave and committed front line staff who are looking after us come first, together with the staff in care homes caring for those who need care. But let's also not forget the Biffa staff who keep on getting rid of our rubbish; the Police who have to enforce the lockdown as well as continuing to tackle crime; the Postal workers who continue to deal with mail and an ever increasing number of parcels; West Faversham Community Centre Hub; Faversham Foodbank; Age UK; The Carriage Restaurant; Ossies Fish Bar; not forgetting the supermarkets and small local food shops who are all working hard to provide meals and essential provisions. Then we

should thank all those in our community of Faversham who are helping in so many ways, from shopping to keeping in contact and running errands for those vulnerable and at risk.

Faversham Town Council is busy playing its part. We spent the early part of the year developing exciting plans for Faversham in 2020 – festivals, markets and events of all kinds. These have not been cancelled, just postponed – some hopefully until later in the year, some until next year.

That's where we are today. Where will we be by the time you read this in June? It appears that quite soon the lockdown will gradually start to be lifted. We hope to see town shops reopening, some businesses restarting, parks and open spaces in use again. But this will all be based on maintaining social distancing to keep us all safe. One key event which I personally hope will happen soon is the completion of the renovation project of the recreation ground. I often take my daily exercise there and as it nears completion it looks set to become a real star for the Town.

I can't forecast much more than that. If the entire might of central government is still debating our future, what can little old Faversham do? Well, we can keep on doing what Faversham does so well - act as a community and help all those who need help. We will get through this and come out as a stronger community.

Council Helpline Update

During the Covid-19 crisis the Town Council's Helpline handled an average of 25 calls a week from residents seeking support, information and assistance with shopping and prescription collection. Many of the Town's councillors helped out with these deliveries ably directed by Brooke Williams, who manned the Council's Helpline throughout the crisis.

Adam Andrews, the Town Council's Facilities Manager and a well known face around the Town, reacted to town centre issues as they arose while the rest of the Council staff worked from offices set up in their homes to keep the work of the Council going during the crisis.

Swale Borough Council set up the Community Help Hub at West Faversham Community Centre and made an average of 280 calls a week, delivering an average of over 1500 meals a week to residents who were either shielding or self isolating.

Biodiversity Loss and Why We Need to Act

Cllr Chris Williams

Biodiversity is "The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable."

Encouraging wildlife into our gardens is a really great way to enhance our outside space. By doing this, we are also helping to protect and increase in population, a wide range of important and rare species into our environment. Combined, our gardens are the link between our public green spaces and the wider countryside. This is what is often called a 'wildlife corridor'. Quite often, urban areas can be rich in habitat for a wide range of insects, birds and mammals because of the diversity in plant life.

Here are a couple of tips to help wildlife at this time of year:

- Birds need a regular supply of water to drink. Provide a shallow container with clean water for birds to drink and bathe from.
- Relax your lawn and hold off mowing to allow for habitat creation. Mow round the edges and pathways to keep it managed. Introduce some wildflower plants to enhance the diversity.
- Plant nectar rich flowering plants for pollinators including moths which become more active during early summer.

Faversham Town Council are working with the Borough and County Councils to find ways that public spaces such as parks and grass verges can be enhanced, and the maintenance changed to increase the different species present and to slow down biodiversity loss. This forms part of our Climate and Biodiversity emergency action plan which can be found on the website.

Faversham 2040 – What Next for the Neighbourhood Plan?

Cllrs John Irwin and Kris Barker on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The development of the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan has started in earnest and is being led by a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group ably supported by a group of active technical volunteers working on behalf of Faversham Town Council and the community it serves. To date we have:

- Started the process of area designation with Swale Borough Council, a small but essential first step in ensuring the legal foundation for the plan.
- Developed an evidence base which will provide the foundation for the plan and inform the activities required to meet the needs uncovered during the community engagement.
- Developed a communication strategy and the elements required to ensure that the needs and desires of the community are well understood before we start development of the plan policies to address these needs.

What activities will we be undertaking over the course of 2020?

The key activities include:

- **Holding a Town Hall exhibition and multiple outdoor 'place check' activities in the community.**
These activities are designed to give residents and visitors an opportunity to describe what makes Faversham special and should be treasured, as well as what could be improved to make it a better place to live, work and play.
- **Surveying residents, businesses, community groups and young people.**
Surveys will be used to get a detailed understanding of the needs and desires for the future development of Faversham from the people who live and work here.
- **Conducting a Housing Needs Assessment**
This activity will be conducted by the Faversham Community Land Trust. A Housing Needs Assessment is a critical piece of work as its results will inform us of the numbers and types of housing needed to meet the needs of the existing community and our future neighbours (including for example really affordable housing and housing for older people) and not just the needs of developers.

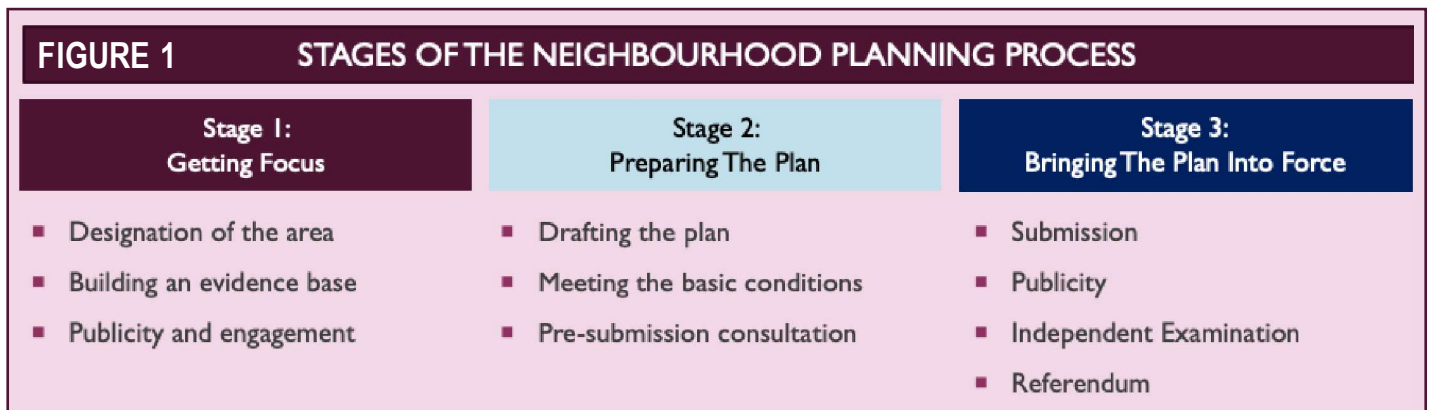
What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- A Neighbourhood Plan is a way in which we, as a community, can influence the future development of the town in which we live and work.
- A plan will enable us to develop a shared vision for future development by choosing where new homes, shops, offices, industrial sites and other development should be built. It allows us to identify and protect important local green spaces and even influence what new buildings should look like.
- Importantly our Neighbourhood Plan won't just be about housing. It will enable us to understand and better communicate our critical need for improved health services, schools, transport, sport and leisure facilities and green spaces.
- Once approved the Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory (legal) document and must be considered when Swale Borough Council decide whether or not to approve planning applications.
- Development of the plan progresses in three stages (see figure 1). We are currently in stage 1 which is likely to continue through to Winter 2020.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

- We already have one. In 2017 Faversham adopted a neighbourhood plan for Faversham Creek following a referendum.
- We feel that we need to extend the area we can influence to the whole of Faversham Port and Town.
- Currently our town is vulnerable to speculative planning applications for future development. Swale Borough Council has to consider each new application on its individual merit.
- This increases the risk that development is piecemeal, with little consideration given to the cumulative impact of individual housing developments on the Town's infrastructure and services.
- Once approved the Neighbourhood Plan will be in place until 2040.

A note on timing: 2020 has proven to be an exceptional year for our town and country. Covid 19 has impacted on each and every one of us, unfortunately, some more than others. It has also made planning activities through the year difficult as there is much uncertainty as to when and how the lockdown will be lifted. Consequently, dates for community engagement events have yet to be confirmed. All events will, however, be promoted through print and social media as well as through frequent updates on the Town Council website.



Can the plan be used to block development in Faversham?

- No. Housing allocations are made by Swale Borough Council in line with house building targets issued by Central Government.
- In addition, many sites in Faversham have already been either (a) approved for housing development or (b) have been identified in the Swale Local Plan as potential development sites by the previous council administrations.
- Housing is needed to meet the needs of those who already live in Faversham and those who wish to come here and make Faversham their home.
- Although the plan cannot stop development, it can empower us as a community to shape future development. We can influence what is built where and be less vulnerable to the developers.

How are housing targets allocated?

- Local Authorities, such as Swale Borough Council, are expected to have a Local Plan which meets the housing targets set by Central Government. This is calculated in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and is driven by a national view of the overall housing requirement.
- The existing Local Plan at Swale is currently being revised but has an annual target of an additional 722 homes a year. It is possible that this annual target will have to increase to anywhere between 1,025 and 1,500.

- Failure to comply with these targets can result in fines, or worse that the planning authority will be taken over by Central Government. This would lead to little or no say in what type of housing is developed and where it is located.
- One of the risks is that developers secure planning permission and then fail to build the houses resulting in Swale failing to meet the Ministry's targets and being required to allocate more land for development.

Who is on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group?

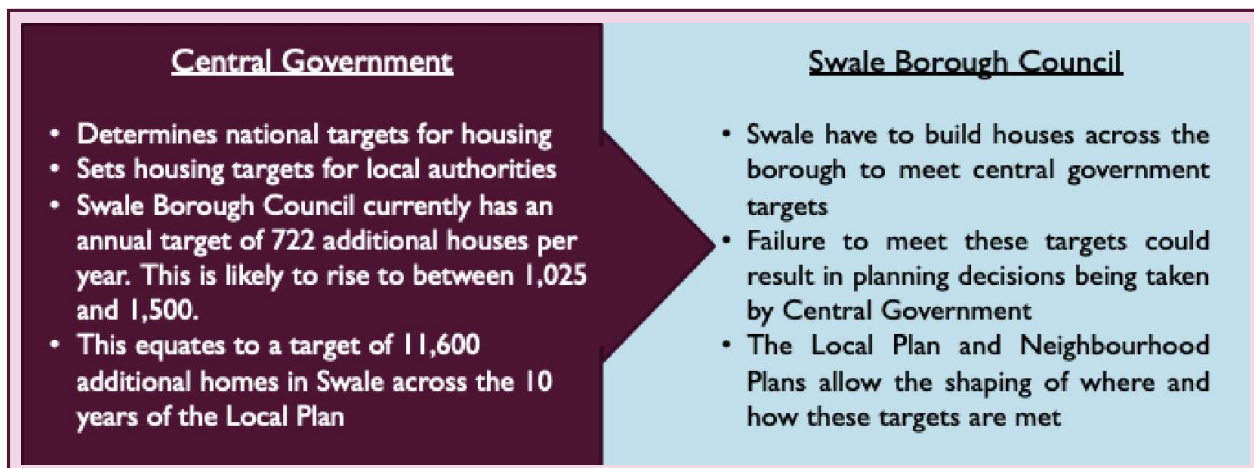
- The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been appointed by Faversham Town Council to manage and guide the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and to assist with community engagement. It consists of the Mayor, three councillors and two members of the group of technical volunteers.
- The membership is as follows: Cllr John Irwin (Chair), Geoff Wade (Vice Chair), The Mayor - Cllr Alison Reynolds, Harold Goodwin, Cllr Kris Barker, Cllr Antony Hook.
- The steering group meets at 7pm on 3rd Monday of the Month. The group can be contacted via the Deputy Town Clerk, Adrienne Begent.
- Contact via adrienne.begent@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Technical volunteers working on the evidence base

- Over the last few months technical volunteers have given freely of their time and expertise to support the first stages in the development of the evidence base which will underpin the plan.
- The Evidence Base is essential to the plan and to inform the community consultation. It will be published on the website and amended as the plan is developed through community consultation.
- The evidence base covers: Built Environment; Creek Regeneration, Economic Development & Tourism; Education; Natural Heritage; Health & Community Care; Housing Needs, Sports, Leisure & Recreation; Transport & Air Pollution; Water & Sewerage and Youth.
- The Housing Needs Assessment has been contracted with a specialist consultancy.

How do I get involved?

- The Neighbourhood Plan will belong to the people of Faversham and it can only come into force following a positive referendum. We hope to be in a position to hold the referendum on the plan in May 2021 but this may be subject to change.
- We have planned a series of engagement and consultation activities that will be open to all residents and businesses. These will be promoted through print and social media and we will also post frequent updates on the Town Council website.
- We have developed a dedicated section within the Faversham Town Council website that will host everything you need to know about the FNP as it develops. This site will also host online versions of the surveys as well as details of how to get involved in other ways.



Slowing Down Plans Speed Up!

Cllrs Eddie Thomas and Julian Saunders, Chair and Vice Chair of 20s Plenty Committee

The Town Council has supported the 20's Plenty for Faversham Campaign for over five years. In this year's budget we have demonstrated our commitment to implementing a 20 mph speed limit across Faversham by setting aside a specific budget to contribute to the development of a scheme.

Many residents are concerned at the speed of vehicles in town. There is evidence that slower moving traffic encourages more people to walk and cycle, leading to less use of cars, cleaner air, a healthier and more active local population and an improved local environment. In addition research has shown that a 20 mile an hour limit would contribute to fewer road traffic accidents.

Over the past year we have been working closely with transport experts, who specialise in improving public spaces, and Kent County Council (KCC). Together we have agreed a design and costs for a town wide scheme. KCC, who have to take the final decision on the details and implementation of the scheme, have supported the project with staff time and will make a financial contribution from their transport budget. As ours will be the first town wide scheme in Kent, KCC are keen to learn from our experience in Faversham, for future initiatives in other Kent towns.

Providing we can agree a viable budget and project plan with KCC, the next stage will be a public consultation on the plans, managed by the County Council. In the meantime the Town Council and the community campaign, which promotes the concept, are planning a range of engagement activities to give local residents a clearer understanding of the benefits of the scheme.

If you want more information on our plans please contact the Town Clerk - louise.bareham@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Faversham Town Council Meeting Calendar 2020-21

	Start Time	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Full Council (1st Monday)	7pm		1 st	6 th		7 th	5 th	2 nd	7 th	4 th	1 st	1 st	5 th
Annual Finance Meeting	7pm									11 th			
Annual Council Meeting	7pm	11 th											
Mayor Making	7pm	TBC											
Youth Council													
Committees													
Planning Committee (1 st and 3 rd Monday)	6pm	4 th , 18 th	1 st , 15 th	6 th , 20 th	3 rd	7 th , 21 st	5 th , 19 th	2 nd , 16 th	7 th , 21 st	4 th , 18 th	1 st , 15 th	1 st , 15 th	5 th , 19 th
Policy and Finance (4 th Monday)	7:30pm	24 th	22 nd	27 th		28 th	26 th	23 rd		25 th	22 nd	22 nd	26 th
Climate and Biodiversity Committee (2 nd Monday)	7:30pm	25 th		13 th		14 th		9 th		11 th		8 th	
20's Plenty Committee (1 st Thursday)	7:30pm	7 th	4 th	2 nd		3 rd	1 st	5 th		7 th	4 th	4 th	1 st
Public Spaces (4 th Thursday)	9:30am	28 th		23 rd		24 th		26 th		28 th		25 th	
Staffing Committee (4 th Monday)	7:30pm		22 nd				26 th				22 nd		26 th
Complaints Committee	As required												
Working groups	Microsoft teams												
Equality and Diversity (reports to P&F /Staffing/ Full Council)													
Youth Working Group (report to P&F/ Full Council)													
Heritage Working Group (report to P&F/ Full Council)													
Town Marketing Working Group (report to P&F/ Full Council)													
Other													
Faversham Future Forum	7pm												
Local Engagement Forum	7pm			9 th			13 th			12 th			13 th
Annual Town Meeting	7pm												
Neighbourhood Plan Steering group (3 rd Monday)	7pm	18 th	15 th	20 th		21 st	19 th	16 th		18 th	22 nd	15 th	19 th

Mental Health Support

Cllr Antony Hook

Weeks of lockdown has been hard for many of us - the mental strain can affect anyone. People have felt isolated, lonely or worried about the health of themselves and loved ones.

The financial impact of Covid-19 has meant real money worries for many people. Some people have lost loved one. Bereavement is never easy and being bereaved during the Covid-19 restrictions has been especially hard. During the restrictions of lockdown, relationship strains, substance abuse and depression has all been worsened for some people.

There is a lot of support available for anyone who feels they need it.

Residents can text the word Kent to 85258 or phone 0800 107 0160 for free confidential support at any time about any mental health concern.

Live Well Kent has a lot of resources to help with all kinds of physical and mental health, visit their website at: livewellkent.org.uk/.

For young people, Young Minds give specialist help, visit: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>.

If you are not able to access these online resources, please call the Town Council for assistance.

The Spirit of Faversham

Cllr Hannah Perkin

There is no doubt that for the Covid-19 lockdown has been stressful, lonely and sad for so many of our community. I wanted to take a moment to recognise those that are doing such an amazing job of helping the vulnerable, caring for their neighbours, creating viral 'pick me up' videos and doing all they can to keep spirits up. There have been so many examples of human kindness through this challenging time and it's been so heart warming to watch Faversham pull together.

Firstly thank you to our key workers, each and every one of you. To all the volunteers in Faversham that are helping to support the community response. There have been hundreds of people, delivering shopping, prescriptions, offering a listening ear and a kind word. Whether this be through established national charities or local aid groups, you are all incredible.

Thank you to all those who put rainbows up in their windows or posters and pictures for their key workers; others put teddy bears in their windows for children to spot on their walks. When play parks were closed everyone that joined in with these activities made the daily walks a little more enjoyable creating a visible community spirit, when we could not physically be together.

Thank you to those that set up social media support groups. In the past weeks I have seen people sharing skills, creating drawing challenges, recreating famous paintings, the brilliant Marsh family and their Les Mis tribute and group of Faversham residents performing 'don't stop me now' by Queen, virtual pub quizzes and zoom music

concerts. Local businesses collected Easter eggs and hand creams for NHS staff and created and delivered home cooked meals and fruit and veg to our doors. The Faversham repair café created scrubs and kit bags for frontline workers and others made face masks for volunteers.

I was also contacted by someone who had been shopping in Tesco and had left their wallet at home; a complete stranger paid for his shopping and they swapped details so that he could be paid back later in the day - a completely trusting act of kindness towards another. So in amongst all of the hardship and adjusting to what has become an often lonely new normal, there have been lots of examples of community support, friendship and giving and every single one of them has helped to get through this together.

Faversham Town Council Staff

Louise Bareham	Town Clerk	louise.bareham@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk
Adrienne Begent	Deputy Town Clerk	adrienne.begent@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk
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Emma Powell	Finance Assistant	emma.powell@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk
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Brooke Williams	Business Apprentice	brooke.williams@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk

The entrance to Faversham Town Council offices is in Back Lane, please ring the call button to be admitted.

Town Council opening hours are Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm.

Your Town Councillors & their Contact Details

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Cllr Eddie Thomas* (Watling Ward)

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* Swale Borough Councillor

** Kent County Councillor