



Newsletter November 2023

Website: www.downswoodpc.org



Don't forget to check the DPC Facebook page. As well as regular updates on our website, the latest happenings in Downswood are posted on Facebook too - If you haven't already done so just "like" the official Downswood page so the latest info is always in your newsfeed

Your Parish Council. We are here to represent all residents, so if there's something you think we could help with, why not tell us?
Parish Clerk—Teresa Irving. 7 Firs Close, Aylesford, ME20 7LH. Tele: 01622 717466 Email: clerk@downswoodpc.org
Your Parish Councillors are: Roz Cheesman (Chairman), John Cottis (Vice-Chairman), Anne-Marie Butler, Gordon Newton, Kate Alden-Morris, Barbara Cottis, Jennifer Tournay and Richard Wingett.
We currently have a Cllr vacancy (a voluntary position). This is an ideal opportunity to make a difference, and become involved in shaping the future of your local Community. Please contact the Clerk for more information.
Full council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Community Centre at 8pm (Aug & Jan meetings are subject to confirmation). The next meeting will be held on 5 December '23.

Garden Competition 2023. Congratulations to this year's winners: **1st PRIZE: 27 Reinden Grove, 2nd PRIZE: 35 Horton Downs and 3rd PRIZE: 34 Reinden Grove (Hanging Basket).** Special thanks to the judge: Dan Stevens: Snr Plant Mgr of Millbrook Garden Centre, Staplehurst.

Look out for hedgehogs hibernating! Typically here in the South East, hedgehogs will be hibernating from late December to early January until late March. Males will emerge a few weeks earlier than females: it all depends on the weather. If the winter is mild some may not hibernate at all. Even when hibernating their deep sleep may not be constant and they may occasionally wake for food and water. Never feed hedgehogs bread & milk as they are lactose intolerant and this will cause them a very "upset stomach". Just give them water and maybe a few dry chicken or duck cat biscuits. Best of all, you can buy specially formulated hedgehog food from Garden Centres and Pet Stores. A good tip is to put the food under an old upturned bucket or other plastic container with a 13x13 cm hole and place a log or stone on top to prevent cats or foxes getting the food. In late autumn please be aware that when gathering leaves, you may disturb a hedgehog as they prefer to use dry medium sized leaves for their nests. Don't think that your garden here in Downswood is too small for a hedgehog, as a few years ago I had a female give birth and raise 3 hoglets in mine. For more information - The British Hedgehog Preservation Society email: info@britishhedgehogs.org.uk tel : 01584 890801

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Community Centre—For all enquiries regarding booking the Community Centre please contact the Booking Sec on 0771 563 2684 or email: bookings@downswood.co.uk

Downswood & Otham Borough Cllr, Gordon Newton: Tel 07769 676238 /email: gordonnewton@maidstone.gov.uk

Kent County Councillor, Gary Cooke. Tel: 07803 007031 (mob) or email: gary.cooke@kent.gov.uk

Local Beat Officer: PC Mitch Hunt. Emergencies ring 999. Non urgent, ring 101 or report via the online report system on Kent Police website and mention 'PC 15334 Hunt'

MP Helen Whately. Westminster Office: 020 7219 6472 or email: helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk

Cllr Roz Cheesman was delighted to represent DPC at the unveiling of John Leaf's bench in Mallards Park on 21 Oct. Sadly missed, John was a truly inspirational role model for very many local MPE footballing youngsters.

Church Rd. DPC is currently liaising re white lining possibility, plus means of reducing traffic speed. Although not in agreed plans, KCCllr Gary Cook is investigating possibility of rerouting traffic via Parsonage Place.

Coming soon. Coronation mini orchard planned adj to the O/Spot roundabout

We welcome Kinnari & Krunal Vyas—the new owners of The Spires Pharmacy - to the community. Please support the valuable services they provide. Did you know that your Prescriptions can be sent directly from your doctor to the Pharmacy? All the Travel Vaccines are available with your essential travel needs + much more!

Thank you for your help in picking up litter in the parish (in addition to that by DPC's official litter picker - partly funded by Caxtons, DCA & Spires Med Centre).

Also, for your help in reporting ASB incidents directly to the Police. Please continue to do so!

KCC has asked for tree planting locations in the parish to be identified (to be funded by S106 contributions that KCC hold re. Parsonage Place, Otham). Suggestions so far include: **Deringwood Drive:** A substantial Fir Tree (to be decorated with lighting during the festive period), Flowering Cherry, Rowan, Hawthorn.

Public Open Space to the rear of Murrain Drive: A mix of Fruit Trees.

Mallards Park (subject to agmt by Maidstone Borough Council): Aspen & Hornbeam.

We would like to hear from you if you have more location/tree suggestions for planting on public land

A resident's memories: When I first moved into Downswood, it was before the age of internet & services going online – I'm sure I'm not the only one who can remember those days! Reporting an issue meant looking up a phone number in the heavy BT phone directory, ringing up and explaining it all and hopefully it would be sorted out within 28 days. Whilst the 28 days bit may not have changed, being able to report issues online has made everything so much easier. I noticed a small water leak on a footpath some months ago, reported it online and the works were complete within one week – fantastic service! If anyone spots anything which is not quite right, or behaviour they find unacceptable, I urge everyone to report the issue directly. There are many agencies that will help – RSPCA, RSPB, KCC, MBC, NHS, Kent Police, Kent Fire Service, Kent Trading Standards – if you are not sure who to contact, an online search engine will help. If you're not online, have a quick chat with any other witnesses or a family member. If an agency doesn't know something is wrong, they can't fix it. Let's keep Downswood in order!



Christmas
Carols &
Lights Ceremony

DOWNSWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

SATURDAY 2ND

DECEMBER 2023

4PM

The Fabulous
Dulcettes
& Santa will be there!



Free
Admission
Mulled Wine &
Mince Pies