MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN: The past year has been a year like no other. I am proud how the Town Council has adapted its working practices in order to meet the challenges and ensure continuation of services to residents, whilst helping nearly 400 residents who were shielding. I am looking forward to this new Council year, as some kind of “normal” returns to our community. We hope that many projects which have been on “hold” can get going as the summer arrives as well as some new ones. The March CIL Board meeting awarded funds to refurbish and upgrade the Recreation Ground playground; additional facilities at Blossoms Park Skate Park; a new bus shelter for Swan Lane; potential additional streetlights for Westways; and new fencing at Stangrove Park playground. The Cricket Club was also awarded funding for a new artificial pitch.

Thank you to my fellow councillors, volunteers and residents who help make Edenbridge the lovely place it is to live.

www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk / or find us on Facebook
OTHER COUNCIL NEWS

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY WARDEN: I have been busy starting to make contact with groups and planning for the resumption of activities in our new ‘normal’. We will be re-starting litter picking in small groups adhering to the current Covid-19 guidelines. I know that community spirited people have been doing this purposefully whilst taking their daily exercise and we thank you for keeping Edenbridge beautiful. We will also be resuming Speed Watch activities as soon as allowed. We welcome new volunteers to add to our teams of litter pickers and speed watchers. Please contact the Council office if you are interested in volunteering, or you can email me at communitywarden@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk.

I have also been out and about cleaning off graffiti which has increased during lockdown. Please report this to the police as a crime when you see it, as it is anti-social behaviour and costs money to remove. Support for some vulnerable people continues as lockdown is eased, and appreciate that it has been a very difficult year for many people in a variety of ways.

STAFF CHANGES: Firstly we extend a warm welcome to Lorraine Ganney who joined the office team in February. Lorraine is replacing Daphne Slater who is retiring after 12 years as The Responsible Finance Officer. Daphne will be greatly missed and we wish her well with her retirement. Georgina Vagg-Stockdale is also leaving as she would like to spend more time with her three lovely children, the youngest of whom is only six months old. We wish her well for the future with her young family. Our Best wishes also go to Charlotte Ford, who joined the Council for a one-year maternity cover, but who is now herself expecting her third child in June. Charlotte was a great asset to the team and will be missed.

Congratulations to Debbie Bond, who has been with the Council for a year and has recently, passed her Introduction to Local Council Administration.

RICKARDS HALL AND WI HALL: Both halls are available for bookings and are ideal for meetings, children’s birthday parties, dance or fitness classes, events and more. Rickards Hall now has visual display facilities available for booking with meetings. For more details visit the Town Council’s website https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/what-we-do-2/community-centres-and-village-halls-2/ or contact the office on 01732 865368.

FROM LOCKDOWN TO RELAXATION OF COVID RULES

Restrictions are easing across the country, and brings for many of us longed opportunities to see friends and family, play sports and get out and about. However, it is important that we all continue to follow the stay safe guidance. The vaccine programme has had a great start. The infection rates in the Sevenoaks district are coming down because people have been adhering to the guidelines. Let’s hope this continues, and we can all enjoy a freer 2021. For information on the roadmap out of lockdown in England, details are on the .gov.uk website https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home

Mental Health: For many, and especially those more vulnerable to the virus, the prospect of coming out of lockdown could be as hard coming out of lockdown as it was to start and could impact on mental health. Fear and anxiety are possibly the most common emotional responses and finding a way to pull ourselves through lockdown took a lot of our emotional energy. It is important to realise these feelings are reasonable and to take things at your own pace, but to try and challenge yourself to try something different each day. For mental health tips visit https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/mental-health-tips.

TOWN AMBASSADORS COME TO EDENBRIDGE

Watch out for two new faces in Edenbridge, the Town Ambassadors appointed under the Sevenoaks District Council scheme. They can be spotted wearing the distinctive a “Happy To Help” tabard rather than a uniform. You may have already seen them in town, and their role is to offer help and advice for businesses and residents.

BUS ROUTE AROUND TOWN - Ride the Edenbridge E1 Yellow bus for £1: Go-Coach in conjunction with KCC has introduced an Edenbridge Town service. It runs every half hour Monday to Friday from Edenbridge Post Office, then stopping at the Leisure Centre - Farmstead Drive – Lidl - Swan Lane - Hilders Lane - Crouch House Road St. Brelades - Crouch House Road - Pine Grove - Waitrose Car Park - Edenbridge Hospital - Edenbridge Post Office. Passengers can also hail and ride the buses from Hilders Lane, Little Browns Lane, and Crouch House Road.

Reporting anti-social behaviour and crime: Should you see any anti-social or suspicious behaviour or be concerned that a crime may have been committed, contact the Police using telephone number 101; alternatively contact Kent Police via their web-site at www.kent.police.uk. 999 (or 112) should be used if a crime is being committed or if you feel that you are under a threat of harm. This includes fast bikes, cars, quad bikes, which have increased in Edenbridge during the recent lockdown - if you witness any of these, and think there is an immediate danger call 999, alternatively report this on 101.

GO-COACH IN CONJUNCTION WITH KCC