

TONGHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023

As we look enjoy Spring and warmer weather we can reflect on the past few months and the trials brought with them for members of our community. We continue to look forward and hope that the future will get better for all.

There has not been a great deal to report on recently although plans are moving forward for the repair of the trampoline and the installation of a teen shelter in The Rec. There has been a problem with the telephone box and defibrillator and this was closed off until investigations had been carried out. Everything is back up and running correctly now.

There will be Borough and Parish elections held on Thursday 4th May. Your local polling place is Tongham Community Centre, Poyle Road. Please remember you now need to take photographic identity proof in order to place your vote.

One of the main events this year will be the Coronation of King George III and many of you will be arranging our own street parties and celebrations. The village event is being led this year by Tongham Community Association and will take place on the afternoon of Saturday May 6. Please see noticeboards and the [Tongham Parish Council](https://www.tonghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/) website for further details.

Surrey Hills AONB Consultation

Following on from the evidence gathering exercise last year there is now a consultation open for comments. Please follow this link <https://surreyhills.org/surrey-hills-boundary-review/> to the site and add your comments. We will be arranging a meeting to advise people how they can participate in this during May.



Kathy Atkinson, Chair of the Surrey Hills Board says

“Whether you are a resident or a visitor to the Surrey Hills, you will know just what an incredible landscape this is. By extending the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty we will be protecting it by law for the future, and it could unlock additional resources to help the Surrey Hills thrive, in a way that is good for nature and for people.

This is – literally – a once in a lifetime opportunity to tell the government how important this area is for all of us, and to ensure as much of it as possible is protected for future generations. I would encourage anyone who cares about this precious natural environment to get involved in the consultation and make their voice count.”

New ward boundaries

Following a review from 1 April Guildford Borough Council will implement new ward boundaries and Tongham will now fall under The Pilgrims. This means that Borough Councillors Paul Spooner and Graham Eyre will no longer be able to provide direct support and impart their knowledge to the Parish Council and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for all their help over recent years. We look forward to receiving similar support from the Pilgrim councillors.

Parishes in Bloom

Once again the village has entered this competition. This year’s theme is The Coronation and it would be great to see some front garden displays following this subject. Judging will take place in early Summer.

Road improvements

Plans for road and safety improvements in the village are moving forward with the first phase due to be implemented this Spring/Summer. This will include restrictions to pavement parking, tables to reduce speeding and alterations to the entrance to the village on Oxenden Road and Poyle Road. The second phase is under review.

Section 137 Grants

The Parish Council has a fund to allocate to local non-profit making organisations and applications can be made through our website at <http://tonghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

Reports from Recipients 2022 -2023

Over the past year the Parish Council have made several contributions towards groups in the village and some of their reports on how they used the money follow here.

The Hoppa bus service



We have used the Tongham Grant primarily to support our services on the Farnham Demand Responsive Transport which covers the Tongham area. It is our busiest Dial-a-ride service and operates 3 buses from Monday to Friday and carries over 700 passengers each month in and around Farnham and surrounding villages, including Tongham.

The grant from Tongham has allowed us to keep the service running at a time when operating costs are spiralling, such as fuel for the buses and wage costs. We are also starting our journey to Carbon Neutral and now have our first Electric Minibus in service which can be seen on the Farnham service every day!

The Tongham grant will help us on our journey to Net Zero as we are raising funds for our second electric minibus.

Tongham Woods Improvement Group



We have used part of the funds to purchase the materials to replace an old derelict bridge across a ditch on one of the desire paths - this was also partially funded by the Blackwater Valley Trust. We installed the new bridge at our monthly task recently.

It is planned that the remaining funds will pay for our insurance when it is due, contribute to the purchase of scalplings for path repair and the balance to go towards the purchase of a new bench. Again many thanks for the Parish Council's support

Tongham Community Association

It is always useful for the Tongham Community Association to obtain funds for Capital Equipment from the Parish Council, as this allows us to keep our fees for regular hirers and residential functions as low as possible.

These funds were used to purchase two round tables, which are used in our Main Hall for meetings, weddings and other functions.

The TCA would like to thank the Parish Council for its support.

4th Farnham (Tongham & Ash) Scout Group

Our new scout HQ is coming on nicely. We have a small group of retired volunteers that meet every Tuesday morning, saving us costs employing companies to do the work, some work we've had to pay for, so we are eating into our savings.

We spent the money awarded on fire compliant door frames. We are still in need of funds to complete the project and will be following up potential sources. We are so close, the Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts are excited and looking forward to using the new building.



St Paul's Church

Community Garden

Thank you for the support for the community garden project. We are wanting an area at the back of the Old School carpark to be a peaceful place to sit, a place for the community to grow produce giving access to gardening for all ages and food to add to the Food Shed. The grant has enabled us to start with some raised beds, following lots of clearing of the site! We have the bench and arbour ready to put up (the weather hasn't helped!) and hope to complete the structure of the garden this year.



Animal Nativity



Thank you for the support for this community event with Mill Cottage Farm. We were able to give over a 100 children access to the farm animals at St Paul's Infant School and Tongham Daycare, bringing the Christmas story to life and enabling them to meet the animals afterwards. And then as the farm moved to outside the church anyone from the community could share in the experience, including young families from our toddler group (Coffee Plus) and

our baby group (Baby Plus). It was a bit wet and cold, but a great opportunity for all.



Tongham Football Club



"We cannot thank the Parish Council enough for their support this season! As a community club, we rely on Grants such as the Section 137 Grant to enable us to grow and run on a week by week basis. This season, we were able to use our Grant to contribute towards new portable goals for our Football Pitch! By doing so, we have a more professional looking set up and an easier match day preparation for our players and volunteers.

Our season has been the most successful since the resurrection of Tongham FC in 2019 and we have a League Cup Final to attend on 3rd May 2023 at Westfield FC

where you are all invited as we continue to put Tongham back on the footballing map! Thank you to the 120 that filled the Rec in our semi-final; fantastic support from our community.



Two Georges and a new hero

Many of you will know the story of our local heroes the "The Two Georges" who were awarded the George medal for their brave actions in preventing a catastrophe when Tongham railway station was bombed in World War II. New information has recently come to light to confirm that two more George medals were awarded for the same incident. The recipients were military personnel and we have received information about one of them, Major Alfred Harrison, from his grandson. On secondment from the Corps of Military Police and holding the rank of RSM WO1 at the time, his report below sets out the sequence of events on that August 1940 night. You will see our local heroes mentioned as Two Civilians. Blandford Cottage is now known as 30/32 The Street and the incendiary device crashed through the attic roof of No. 32.

The brave actions of those involved prevented this incident becoming much more serious than it was, potentially saving lives, in particular those of nearby residents in Grange Road. You can read the story of The Two Georges here <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/15/a4420315.shtml>

Further enquiries are being undertaken to identify and learn more about the fourth recipient. We will be looking at recognising the actions of these brave men in due course.

