

### **Winter Fuel Payment**

As I am sure you will have heard, the Government is stopping the Winter Fuel Payment for any pensioner who is not in receipt of Pension Credit. If you are of pensionable age you are being urged to check if you can apply for Pension Credit to boost your income and give you access to the Winter Fuel Payment of £300. Many pensioners may be unaware of the payments which could provide much-needed cash. If you have reached state pension age and are on a low weekly income (below £218.15 for a single person and £332.95 for a couple) you may be eligible for pension credit. If you are in receipt of a benefit, you will be automatically eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment and may also be able to get help with your council tax. The application form is available on the Council's website and can either be filled in online or downloaded, filled in and returned by post. Friends and families can help by checking with relatives and helping with filling in the application form. The deadline to apply for Pension Credit and be able to receive the Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.

### **Call for sites**

F&HDC are inviting land to be submitted by a wide range of people, such as landowners, planning agents, public bodies, town and parish councils, local community groups and individuals. They are seeking sites for several uses, the main one being for housing but also for employment and community uses as well as sites for green infrastructure. The Call for Sites exercise will start on the 7th October and will run for 6 weeks, closing at 5pm on the 18th November 2024.

### **Winter Well event**

The District is facilitating the Winter Well Event again this year. The Winter Well Event is being held on 27th November at South Kent Community Church, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone CT20 2QR between 10am and 1 pm. These events are a one stop shop morning providing advice and help from a range of agencies.

### **MyAccount**

Please can I encourage you to sign up for the F&HDC's MyAccount service. With almost 40,000 registered users, more than three quarters of our residents have already signed up to the service. MyAccount is an online service to help people transact quickly and easily with the Council and enables it to deal with enquiries more speedily. On MyAccount you can see council information relevant to you all in one place. The things you can do are: Set up a Direct Debit, reporting missed bin collections, viewing the online licensing register, and find the contact details of your local Councillor and MP. If you haven't done so already, visit the MyAccount section of the council's website for more information and to register. If you don't have online access, the Customer Access Point at the Civic Centre in Folkestone remains open.

### **District Council Meeting**

For the first time ever, the October meeting of the full District council was successfully held outside of Folkestone. The Marsh Academy, New Romney was a fitting venue for this first meeting. Members of the public were able to meet some of the district council's elected members before the meeting. It is hoped that the full District Council meeting will continue to move around to various locations throughout the District to encourage more members of the public to attend.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Southern Water, the Environment Agency, Kent County Council and the Romney Marsh Area of the Internal Drainage Board all sent representatives to the recent Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting. The district's potential risk of inland flooding and the quality of the coastal bathing water were all discussed in detail. Councillors cross examined the work of each of these agencies. The aim of the meeting was to publicly shine a light on the problems of inland drainage and flooding risks and the pollution found on our beaches.

### **Decarbonisation Award**

The F&HDC Asset and Social Housing Decarbonisation staff were judged to be a top team at the recent Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards winning the Asset Management category. The F&HDC team led the multi-million pound project to help keep tenants warm in winter and cool in the summer. Ross House, a

previous commercial property in Folkestone, is part of a 425 works programme, and had installation of cavity walls, under floor and loft insulation, ventilation, double-glazed windows, new external doors, high heat retention storage heaters, as well as the installation of air source heat pumps and solar PV panels. The work that has been carried out is already making a difference for tenants who are seeing their bills reduce and their homes warmer. The work has also reduced the tenants carbon emissions which benefits us all.

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