

CENTRE PIECE FOR KEYS MAY EDITION 2016

It was back to normal this month with the Parish Council meeting being held in the Finzi Room on 20 April. Members were pleased with number of residents who attended the Annual Parish Meeting in March and generally thought the meeting to be entertaining and useful although it was thought that two speakers on matters of interest would be better than three as we had this year. However, this was left in abeyance until discussions on what to include next year arise. If you attended and have any comments please do let me have them.

The April meeting was important from the financial point of view as the end of year accounts were presented which the internal auditor had audited. It was reported that the financial position was more or less as predicted in the set budget. There was, of course, unexpected expenditure such as a considerable amount of tree surgery but allowance for this type of occurrence is generally offset by savings in others and this proved to be the case this year. The accounts will be open for inspection by residents between 6 June and 15 July – there will be a reminder notice of this on the notice board by One Stop during that time with instructions on how to do this. All the relevant forms were duly signed by the Chairman.

The Council was alerted to proposals for new financial arrangements with the Borough Council in future years. These are unlikely to benefit the Parish Council due to the Borough Council's funding being severely cut back. The Council will, of course, do everything in its power to ensure the best possible solution for residents.

I expect you will have seen reports in the local press of the outsourcing of the Borough Council's summer leisure programme for children. The Parish Council always have supported one week of the play scheme run at Stock's Green School and the Borough Council had asked whether they would continue to give some financial support to the new company providing this, Premier Education Group. Members felt this to be of great value to children and their parents and have agreed to support the play scheme, which will run for a longer daily timespan, at the same rate as last year.

Preparations for the refurbishment of the play area and installation of exercise equipment in the Recreation Ground continue to move forward with the Parish Council agreeing what should be included in the play area. The exercise equipment is still under investigation but this should be settled in the next few weeks. Fund raising has begun with some promising leads – don't forget if you know someone or corporate body who might be prepared to sponsor a piece of equipment (costs between approximately £800 and £10,000) do please let us know. Without sufficient funding from the Parish Council, grants, donations and sponsorship the project will not be able to go ahead.

Flood protection for Hildenborough was again on the agenda. Talks have taken place, organised by our local MP, Tom Tugendhat, between Parish and Borough Councillors, Environment Agency, Southern Water and members of the Technical Group which includes local residents. Planning is at a critical stage now following investigations into the effects of building a bund to protect Hildenborough and the raising of the Leigh Flood Barrier and obtaining commitment of funding for any proposals. The Environment Agency will be answering questions you like to raise with us and giving news via Keys Magazine, so watch out for their section and further information.

Proposals were also received from KCC on a flood management programme for West Wood. This is to help protect houses adjacent to West Wood, who have, in the past been flooded as a result of run-off water following heavy rain. The proposals will be looked at in detail at the next Open Spaces Meeting.

Residents who use the Recreation Ground will be pleased to see the fallen willow trees have finally been dealt with by contractors for the church. It had been very difficult to access the site as the ground has been waterlogged following the heavy rains during recent months. There were two tree casualties during storm Katie, one in the Recreation Ground and one near to the cycle track in West Wood.

Plastic recycling was again discussed. There is an obvious conflict between the notice by the plastic recycling centre in the town and the leaflet distributed to residents. When pointed out to the Borough Council we were informed that the leaflet was written and distributed by KCC but Tonbridge & Malling recycling facilities did not conform to that in other boroughs. It was not cost effective to write a special leaflet for our Borough! Consequently we are all left confused. The advice is to look at the Borough Council website for correct information.

Again we have received concerns over parking. Some residents find it very difficult to park near to their own homes and are keen to see some type of permit scheme implemented. The Parish Council has asked the Borough Council (who are responsible for parking) to look into parking throughout the Parish as this is of concern in many areas and this is currently being undertaken. The time scale will be rather protracted as any proposals made (expected later this year) need to go out to consultation as any proposals for restrictions will have a knock on effect for other areas and will need to be taken into account. The Borough Council expect that any amendments to the present parking arrangements in the Village will not be implemented until later in 2017.

There is review of KCC funded bus services and a consultation exercise is underway which closes on 15 May. It only affects the amendment of two services in Hildenborough, 204 Tonbridge/Underriver the cessation of the Wednesday service and 402 removal of the Saturday 17:03 service between Tonbridge and Hildenborough. If you wish to comment go to the website kent.gov.uk/busreview

Don't forget if you would like to discuss any matter members will be present at the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 10 May between 10am and 11am, or you can make contact by email clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk or phone 01732 832367.