

Centre Piece for April Keys Magazine

Another month seems to have flashed past bringing with it all the beautiful spring flowers and blossom. The whole area seems to be bursting into colour and, at the moment, the warm sunshine is casting a definite glow everywhere. It certainly make me feel better and it seems to bring a smile to people's faces.

Yesterday evening, 15 March, 2017 saw the Annual Parish Meeting which was held in the Jim England Hall at the Village Hall. It was lovely to see many local residents coming along and it was particularly pleasing to see a number of new faces. Hildenborough Gardeners and Hildenborough Conservation Group both put up displays of interest to residents.

We had three interesting speakers as well as the Parish Council annual report. The Parish Council report reflected on the achievements of the year, which on this occasion were many and varied.

They were pleased to welcome Cllr Valerie Dagger to the meeting and she was thanked for the great support she had been to the Parish Council during the past year. She has been very active on three different matters. Firstly she made a contribution from her Combined Members Grant Scheme towards seating in the Activity Zone. She also has been instrumental in obtaining the 30mph speed limit through the village, the 40mph speed limit along Stocks Green Road and the improvements outside Stocks Green School in Leigh Road. Without her Members Grant these would not have been possible.

On a more active role she has pressed KCC into action over the repairs to the War Memorial which have now been agreed and which the Parish Council will oversee in due course. The Parish Council were instrumental in getting this listed with Historic England as a building of Special Historic Interest, Grade II.

On a historic note, Tales from a Kent Village, was published this week and copies to subscribers were available for collection at the Farmers' Market and at the Annual Parish Meeting, those which were not collected will probably have been delivered by the time you read this.

**TALES FROM A KENT VILLAGE
HILDENBOROUGH
As seen through the Parish Council Archives**

Price £10

(cheques payable to Hildenborough Parish Council)

These can be obtained from the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 11 April 2017 between 10am and 11am.

or

by collecting from the Parish Council office

(please ring (01732 832367) or email before hand as the office is only open part time)

Among the achievements highlighted in the Annual Report were, what must be considered the biggest achievement of the year, the development of the Activity Zone which is proving to be very

popular with children and adults alike. There are many groups and organisations now using the Recreation Ground as well as planned special events. The regular users include Hildenborough CEP School and their PTA, fitness groups, and of course, Hildenborough Stoolball and Cricket clubs. To look forward to the year ahead, the Hildenborough Road Race will commence and finish in the Recreation Ground on 1st May, on 24th June the scouts will be holding their Music Festival and on 14th July it will be a stopping off point for the Great Kent Cycle Ride.

Comment was made by the Finance Committee Chairman on the Parish Council's financial position. Currently, he reported, the budget is on target for the 2016/17. The income had amounted to over £125,400 which is greatly enhanced due to the Activity Zone development and expenditure to date amounted to just over £121,000, although there is still some outstanding expenditure it is expected to remain within the target budget.

Setting next year's (2017/18) budget had been difficult as the Borough Council reviewed its Financial Arrangements with parishes as it was experiencing cutbacks and the need for equitable arrangements between parished and unparished areas. This all resulted in the removal of the allowances previously given to parishes, which in our case amounted to over £10,000. The net result to your Council Tax bill for 2017/18 is that you will pay less for the portion belonging to the Borough Council and more to cover the withdrawn allowances of £10,000 for the Parish Council, as well as KCC, Kent Fire and Rescue and the Police. For band D properties the total amounts to £1,621.32, a rise of £46.11 over the previous year.

The evening was concluded with three speakers, Sgt Mark Ginsberg on behalf of Kent Police, David Briggs from Hospice in the Weald and Cllr Mark Rhodes on his year as Mayor of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

Sgt Ginsberg reported that crime was up by 14.4% in this area with the biggest increase being in violent crime. He said this was as a result of an increase in the reported domestic and online violence. House burglaries were down but there remained a problem with vehicles being damaged or stolen around the station. He reported that they had undertaken speed enforcement in the area, giving out 40 penalty notices, mainly to local residents.

Mr David Briggs from Hospice in the Weald gave us all an insight into the services and support given by the Hospice in the Weald and outlined their future developments of Cottage Hospices units. He said they only received 11% of their funding from central government and the rest they had to raise themselves.

Cllr Rhodes gave us a glimpse of all the events, activities and charity work the Mayor undertakes during their year of office. To date he has attended in excess of 130 of these, mainly in the Tonbridge & Malling area, but many county wide with some national events.

As ever if you have any comments, enquiries or ideas do make contact with the Council either at the Farmers' Market on 14 April (10.00-11.00am), or by phone (01732 832367) or via email clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Pam Gow