

Centre Piece for December Keys Magazine

With the sun shining on the beech and oak leaves at the moment there are magnificent shades of green, yellow, gold and brown that it hardly seems possible that December is almost upon us. The December Parish Council Meeting sees the start of meetings being held on the second Wednesday of the month so if you are wanting to raise an issue, put forward ideas or just come to hear how decisions are made, please take note or you could miss us by a week!

This month's meeting was short in comparison with recent meetings but nonetheless a great deal was discussed and decided. Firstly, members were most pleased to note the installation of the very long awaited replacement bus shelter in front of the vicarage. I know many residents, who have in recent months, been suffering a 'soaking' from heavy rain whilst waiting, quite often, for delayed buses will be rejoicing.



Following on from last month's Parish Council Meeting action was taken to try to resolve the flooding issues along Stocks Green Road. The following week a meeting was arranged with our Highways Steward who inspected the problems with the help of photographs supplied by local residents. He could see that one of two matters needed investigation and arranged for Kent Highways Drainage Engineer to visit. This happened the following week when ditches were dug out to allow water to pass through culverts. The culverts themselves were tested and cleared where necessary. Concern over one privately owned culvert was expressed as it is a smaller bore than the others but it was decided to monitor what happens during the next heavy rain episode and take further action if necessary.

Members remarked on the beautiful display of poppies around the War Memorial provided by the scouts. They really do make a difference. However, once again, some vehicle drivers were too impatient to adhere to the road closed signs, obviously thinking it didn't apply to them. It is very sad to think they cannot wait a few minutes to show respect to those who gave their lives to make their life what it is today.

The good news is that the Parish Council is to improve the play area in West Wood and replace the roundabout in the Recreation Ground. It has finally been established that the roundabout is not repairable because of warping of the frame. The Parish Council thanked the engineer who has spent a lot of time trying to resolve this. The decision was taken to find out what children would like in the roundabout's place and what additional equipment they would like in West Wood. The budget is restricted but affordable pieces of equipment will be identified and presented to children to express

their preferences in January. It is hoped to have the consequent installations during the early Summer 2018.

As I am sure most of you know, two members are present at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month (next time is 12 December between 10 and 11am in the foyer of the Church Centre) and during the November attendance there were a number of residents expressing concerns about the mounting speeding through the village in spite of the 30mph limit. The Parish Council has, since its implementation, been seeking ways to make it more obvious and remind drivers of this speed limit without success. Currently they are investigating a speed monitor which is extremely expensive. Ideally four would be needed but this is well beyond the Parish Council budget. The other option of signage attached to the lighting columns as erected in other counties. This is now being costed and permission being sought for its erection.

Another issue raised was concern over the proposed charge for the collection of garden waste by the Borough Council in the new contract to be introduced in 2019 would lead to nuisance bonfires and fly tipping of waste. Always popular is the availability of bus and train timetables which seem to be very frequently changed and updated. Several residents have been caught out by the discontinuing 204 bus service on a Wednesday and Saturday. Bus passes will be up for renewal soon, reminders should be sent out nearer the time and those who have not used theirs will be contacted to see if they wish to renew.

More good news is that it has been confirmed by KCC that, before Christmas, all the necessary equipment will be available for the conversion to LED of the Parish Council's lighting columns in Noble Tree Road and Rings Hill.

A reminder to everyone who uses the Library that the opening times have now changed (the board outside the Library hasn't at the time of writing this). Some of us have had notification by leaflet through our doors but this has not extended to everyone in the village. Please check this edition of Keys as the detail is printed elsewhere.

There have been some shocking reports recently on news items regarding the killing of sheep by dogs which have either not been on a lead or have run away from their owners. I am sure that dog owners in this area are much more vigilant and keep their dogs on leads when passing through fields on public rights of way where animals, not only sheep, but cows, horses etc., are grazing. It is true that it is not the dog's fault, it is the owners when animal worrying occurs.

On a similar vein, dog owners in this area are very much more vigilant to clean up after their dog than a few years ago. Unfortunately a few fail to dispose of the bags in the bins provided. This too can be a danger to other animals who may curiously investigate these bags and ingest the plastic bags causing a danger to them.

Don't forget you can make contact with us in the usual ways, by email clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk by phone 01732 832367 (leave a message and I will get back to you if I do not answer – I only work part time) or by writing to the usual address.

This being the last Centre Piece in 2017, I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and send best wishes for 2018.