

Centre Piece for December 2019

I am sure that many residents in Hildenborough will have great empathy with those affected by the severe flooding being experienced in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire at this time. Many, I know, have experienced the difficulties with cleaning up after such an event. Our Flood Wardens will know that there was a warning that flood alerts or warnings could result from the current weather system passing over the South East, hopefully this was not the case. I know our Wardens do keep abreast of any potential problems with blockages along the roads, streams and ditches in the area. KCC has promised to attend to any potential problems on the roads. However, we continue to still be short of three flood wardens – if you can help do please contact me.

The Parish Council meeting held on 13 November proved to be very long, not finishing until just before 10pm. There was a very lengthy discussion on the implementation of the new refuse collection arrangements. It seems that many problems have been encountered by the new contractors, Urbaser, who have had problems with vehicles and staff not knowing their routes and the volume of refuse/recycling to be collected. That is no reassurance for those who have been regularly neglected by the contractors. The contractors and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council are working together to ensure these vital services problems are addressed as quickly as possible. Hopefully by the time you read this it will have been achieved.

Following Claire Sheldon's resignation, the Parish Council was given the go ahead by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council to co-opt a replacement member at its meeting this month. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Ioannis Sklelaventis who has for the past year given great support to the Council as well as attending most of our meetings in the capacity of a resident. The Council is very pleased to welcome him and feel sure his contribution will be very valuable.

High on the Agenda this month were financial matters as it is at this time of year the budget for the next is considered. There will need to be an increase in the precept resulting in Band D properties experiencing an increase of around £3 per annum. This will be to enable the Council to not only meet increased costs of maintaining the Open Spaces of West Wood, Recreation Ground and the Village Green but also to contribute towards improvements to the highways. They also would like to improve the Village Green to make a good place to relax and enjoy the environment, if only to have a picnic lunch. If you have any views on this please do contact me.

The proposal to extend the car park in the Recreation Ground has been put on hold until the long awaited (since 2015) proposals for parking around the village are received from the Borough Council.

Many decisions were taken on financial matters which included management of reserves. These were raised by £10,000 as the Council is well aware of the dangers and associated costs of ash die back hitting West Wood or the Recreation Ground. Club rents are to remain at the same level and financial regulations and risk assessments were updated, considered and approved and donations agreed. The internal auditor also inspected the financial arrangements this month. His report is awaited.

Those of you who use the Recreation Ground will have noticed the vandalism to the Pavilion. The Council was very disappointed to notice that this mindless activity has once again emerged. Fortunately there is CCTV coverage and the actions have been captured and passed to the police for them to take action. Hopefully the perpetrators will be identified.



It was with regret that the Council received the resignation of our handyperson/caretaker a few weeks ago and you will have noticed our appeal for applicants to take on this role. The Council received three applications and, at their meeting, on 13th agreed to offer this on a contract basis to one of the applicants. There will be more of this in the next Centre Piece following the completion of the formalities.

The Parish Council has been notified that its website is to become obsolete as it does not conform to Accessibility criteria. This will, of course, come at a cost but every effort will be made to make it user friendly with information and publicising events of interest as well as providing links to the Village's history. This will be a major undertaking so a few members have agreed to join a sub committee to look at the various possibilities, to update its content and costings. There will be more information on this in the New Year. Have you got any views on what would be useful to include on this site? If you have please do let me know.

Finally, Christmas, by the time you read this will almost be upon us so if you have forgotten to buy that important present do consider our latest publication which will be of interest to anyone who has lived or is living here now – a copy of Tales from a Kent Village. This is available direct from me either to be collected or posted (cost £1.70). The price of the book is £10 and contains many historic photographs, perhaps some of your relations are included!

Don't forget you can contact me on 01732 832367, or by email clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com (please do not use the old email address THIS WILL NOT BE RECEIVED). One of our members will be at the Farmers' Market on 10 December 2019 between 10am and 11am.

All that is left is for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas and good New Year.

