

Centre Piece for May Keys Magazine

I suppose it was no surprise when the news came of a 'Lockdown' in an effort to save as many lives as possible. Sadly to date there are many thousands who have not survived. Our thoughts are very much with their families. However, it is very encouraging that the majority of residents in Hildenborough are adhering to the advice and guidelines of only leaving home for necessary food items, essential work, medical reasons or a short burst of exercise. Hopefully, as a result, by the time you read this, restrictions may have been lifted to some extent.

It is a very strange quiet world, little traffic, few people in the street – just queues at the supermarket! This has brought the very best out of the community with rapid responses to calls for help and systems set up to respond. Hopefully no one has been missed. Systems are changing rapidly in response to need so I won't bore you with the current situation as by the time you read this it will no longer be relevant. Sufficient to say the Parish Council has done its part, both as a body and as individuals in supporting vulnerable members of our community and serving the country by providing services of national importance.

It has been heart-warming to see the response by local businesses, particularly our local chemist who has, right from the very beginning, provided a service which is exemplary. Those of us who have been required to 'stay at home' have done our best to support those who have been out and about shopping, collecting necessary items, or providing vital services. Those working in the NHS, supermarkets, chemists, and delivering vital supplies are to be greatly thanked not only for their service but for the risks they are taking with their own health. This virus seems to be no respecter of who it infects. Many residents have joined in the Thursday 'thank you' for health workers using various methods of clapping and improvised instruments as well as producing brightly coloured rainbows.

The Council had, you will be pleased to know, been forward thinking in agreeing delegated powers to the chair, vice chair and chair of finance committee to take decisions on behalf of the Council during this time. Fortunately to date there has not been a local emergency unlike the previous month when the sewer in Byrneside became blocked and threatened to flood houses. This provided an insight into the way the community in Hildenborough does pull together to help residents in need. Many people criticise social media for the thoughtless and downright abusive comments posted, but in our present situation it has been a fast and responsive way to address the needs of many. Sadly it is the very vulnerable who do not have the skills to use this vast facility and it has been down to relatives and neighbours to alert those who can help with the various situations.

The Council have had to close the play areas, cycle track and fitness area in the Recreation Ground and West Wood. This is because of the need for 2m social distancing and cross contamination of those who might use the play equipment. We do know that the coronavirus has the ability to live for some considerable time, up to at least 3 days on some hard surfaces. However, as usual, a very small minority of residents have not respected this and as a consequence may well have endangered the lives of others. The ball court on the Recreation Ground had the closure removed as did the cycle track which portrays just two instances.

HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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RECREATION GROUND AND WESTWOOD PLAY AREAS, FITNESS AREA, BALL COURT AND
CYCLE TRACK

CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

DUE TO CORONAVIRUS REGULATIONS



On the bright side, our lone contractor, has managed to get some repairs completed including the removal of bench supports in West Wood and some painting on the Pavilion as well as our grounds contractor mowing the grass areas.

The biggest gripe has been thoughtless residents lighting bonfires making the lives of neighbours very difficult. This may be as the result of the Borough Council's decision to rest the brown bin collections during this time but they have said that some garden rubbish can be deposited in the black bin provided the lid closes. The best option though, if it is possible, to compost it. So please, think of others before you light a bonfire.

The Parish Council urges everyone to stay safe, follow the official guidance and advice, support each other and stay positive. We all look forward to a time in the future when we can socialize again face to face but in the meantime do stay in contact in safe ways.

Just a reminder, the Parish Council or its Committees have not met since lockdown and will not do so until restrictions are lift and it is safe to do so. There may be virtual meetings arranged and these will be advertised on the website (www.hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk) well in advance when residents might like to attend.

If you need any help or support there is plenty available, KCC, Tonbridge & Malling and our Council all has information on their websites. If you do not have access to use of a website do call me on 01732 832367 and I will do what I can to find help for you.

Keep safe,

Pam Gow