

Centre Piece for October Keys Magazine

The Autumnal weather seems to suddenly be here resulting in a shock to the system after all the lovely hot sunny days. The misty mornings this week were beautiful with an amazing array of dew covered cobwebs on fences and hedges. All this means we need to relegate holidays to memory and concentrate on the business ahead.

The Parish Council returned after the Summer break on Wednesday 11 September to a lengthy Agenda to consider. Many important matters were discussed covering developments in our Open Spaces and highways.

As I mentioned in August Keys Magazine the Parish Council is considering extending the car park in the Recreation Ground. This, as I am sure you can appreciate, would be a major development. Several options have been considered but before deciding whether any of these would greatly benefit residents the Council has decided firstly to obtain firm quotations for the various options, take into account the Investigation into Parking in Hildenborough currently being carried out by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and to ask residents if they consider there would be any other large value improvement which would benefit the village they would like to see as an alternative.

So please get in touch with me if you have a preferred improvement of benefit to the Village you would like to see taken forward. Don't forget you can contact me by phone 01732 832367 or by email clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com (please do not use the old email because it will not be received) or just send a letter.

The Annual Safety Inspection of our play equipment was undertaken recently. There were no matters of immediate concern but a few comments were made for improvements which the Council may like to make and one or two areas to monitor. Some replacement fixings to some equipment have already been undertaken and the rest of the items will be considered at the next Open Space Committee meeting, so watch this space for the outcome.

The Scouts, as we reported last year, now lease a section of the Recreation Ground behind the Hildenborough Gardeners store and are about to have it securely fenced off. This will enable them to undertake, safely, more outdoor activities.

An approach has been made for a memorial seat in the Recreation Ground which the Council has accepted subject to design and agreed location. This set the Council thinking whether other residents may like an opportunity to remember their loved one. They are currently considering installing seating on the Village Green. Please get in touch if this is of interest to you.

Our County Councillor, Harry Rayner, is a regular attender of Parish Council meetings updating us with developments county wide. This month he reported that funding is available for fibre connection direct to homes where broadband is extremely slow or difficult. Although we have not recently been contacted over difficult connections to broadband in the village, if there is a problem in any area we would like to hear of it in order to assess whether it would be an option to benefit us.

There was quite a lot to discussion on finance at this month's meeting. It was reported that the External Auditor was happy with the Council's accounts for 2018/19 and that this had been posted on the notice board and on the website. Agreement was reached on reinvestment of the Council's reserves with a change of account on this occasion. The Council's bankers had also been in touch with us to carry out their Safeguarding Procedure which involved giving information proving that our income was legitimate and our expenditure was for services or goods for the Council.

This Council, as is well known, is always looking to support improvements to the local environment and maintains and guards its open spaces to best of their ability. Currently the Conservation Group has organised two litter picks at the end of September and the Parish Council is giving some support to the planting of trees which is being organised by Hildenborough CEP School PTA.

There have, of course, been set backs during the break, not least the damage sustained to the basket swing in the Recreation Ground. The replacement for this is extremely costly so the Council is looking to see if safe repairs can be undertaken. In order to address the recent vandalism sustained to Parish Council property they have upgraded the CCTV.

I am sure that many of you have been concerned over the number of burst water mains resulting in loss or very reduced supply over the past year as well as the numerous leaks which run for many months before they are repaired. The Council is to meet with SE Water, our MP and KCC Councillor to try to get some resolution to these problems. On a map I have plotted over 15 incidents of burst water mains and leaks all approximately in the last 18 months.

The Council agreed to fund the enhanced belisha beacons on the zebra crossing by the Medical Centre last July and an order was placed immediately following the meeting. However, these have clearly not yet been installed. The Council is anxious to have these in place as soon as possible. Hopefully by the time you read this they will be up and working!

Parking on the footway opposite the Harvest Garage continued to be a problem resulting in pedestrians and those with pushchairs or wheelchair having to step into the extremely busy B245. Our local PCSO has visited the area and requested that this practice ceases. For a while this seemed to be working but as soon as the schools returned the practice of completely blocking the footway returned. The Council is continuing to pursue this.

On the subject of highways, the Parish Council has now developed a Highways Development Plan which will be submitted to KCC in an effort to get some improvements for all road users. This includes the current investigation in the parking in many areas of the village, the enhanced belisha beacons as well as improvements for the Leigh Road/Tonbridge Road junction.

It was with many thanks that the Parish Council received a volunteer to take on the role of flag raising for the village. Mr Simpkins has undertaken this role for many years but is

moving away from the area. We would like to thank him very much for carrying out this service so reliably and wish him every happiness in his new surroundings.

As usual do get in touch if you have any concerns, queries or ideas in the usual way by phone (01732 832367) or email clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com (please do not use the old email address as your message will not be received). Don't forget members will be attending the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 8 October between 9.30 and 10.30am (please note the revised time) and will be pleased to receive your comments, concerns or ideas.

Pam Gow