

## **Centre Piece for Key June Magazine 2021**

Hopefully by the time you read this it will be somewhat warmer. I write this huddled beside the radiator! It has been an unusually cold Spring but nonetheless there have been some wonderful displays of bulbs and blossom. Talking of beautiful flowers, that is what we hope to see on the Village Green soon. Planters and compost are shortly to arrive and with a number of members' willing hands they will both be filled with compost and planted with summer flowering plants.

As you probably know the May Annual Parish Council meeting was brought forward by a week in order that it could be held remotely. Unfortunately the Government could not find time to review and extend the expiry date of lawful remote meetings. These have proved to be very successful as many more residents have been able to attend the meeting to put forward their ideas or concerns and has, of course, enabled the Council to function relatively normally since March 2020.

Unfortunately going back to face to face meetings is, at the present time, very difficult because of the amount of space (2m distant from each other), the communications issues with not being able to face one another and during cold weather (as of now!) having doors and windows open as required to make the area safe. With all this in mind the Council decided to defer the June meeting until 23<sup>rd</sup> in the hope that some of these regulations are no longer in force or at the very least it is a bit warmer.

On Wednesday it was the Annual Parish Council meeting when a chair and vice chair are elected for the forthcoming year. We are again fortunate to continue with Margaret Coles as chair and David Haugh as vice chair. The committee members stay much the same but with two members opting to join an additional committee each. Hildenborough is very fortunate indeed to have such a committed enthusiastic council who have the interests of the community as their first priority.

It seems most months there are residents much concerned about speeding vehicles along the village's lanes and main roads. We were thankful to note that Speedwatch was once again in action. They are looking for some new recruits, so if you can help please contact me and I will pass your name on to the organiser. It was a sad reflection on the way vehicles are driven through built up areas recently since they measured 21 vehicles exceeding 35mph in a 30 mph area. The Council have great concerns about safety in a number of areas. These have been raised with the police and include the junctions of B245/Noble Tree Road, B245/ Riding Lane, Riding Lane/Riding Park, Leigh Road/B245 and Brookmead/B245, all these junctions being approached in both directions by straight sections of the B245 and Riding Lane.

Other concerns raised on this subject is the speed of vehicles along Mill Lane (an overturned vehicle was reported recently) and Nizels Lane. Nizels Lane was the subject of an inspection by KCC officers on issues raised by residents and the Parish Council on flooding along the lane as a result of blocked ditches and culverts. KCC has agreed to take action so we hope the problem will shortly be resolved.

On the positive side the litter pick was a great success organised by members of the Parish Council on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Many sacks of litter were collected using equipment provided in order that every participant could feel safe and prevent injuries. The next meeting will be on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June and we hope we will again get a good response. It makes such a difference to the environment in and around the village. The Council would like to say a big thank you to all those who gave up 2hrs of their Saturday to help.

The Parish Council had been very anxious to get the Neighbourhood Plan underway but have now been advised to put this on hold for a short time. The problem is the proposed reforms to the

planning law. The Government are, among other major changes, looking into the future role of Neighbourhood Plans and what they should cover and after taking advice from several sources the Council agreed that it would be sensible to wait for clarification as they did not want to undertake unnecessary or inappropriate work. All those who have made contact with Council to volunteer in a variety of ways will be kept informed as and when the Council receives information on the way forward.

The Council is also looking to increase its visibility to residents and has a small sub committee working on the best way to do this. Social media seems to play a very important role in everyone's lives today so the Council believes this should form another avenue of communication to residents. It seems the pandemic has brought IT skills to the fore and been a life-saver to many, enabling them to have some social interaction during lockdowns.

The pandemic has brought with it many extra tasks for the Council to undertake to keep residents safe, not least 9 page risk assessments and the necessity to implement and equip as required. This is just one example which has resulted in much extra administrative work to be completed, so much so, that they now need to employ a second part time member of staff. They are now looking to recruit a Responsible Financial Officer to manage the finance and associated work of the Council – see the advertisement elsewhere in Keys Magazine and if you think you have the right skills and could undertake the work do get in touch with me. We will be looking to interview sometime around mid June.

As ever do please make contact if you have ideas, concerns or queries. The best way is by email [clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com) or by phone 01732832367 (do please leave a message if I cannot answer and return phone number then I will get back to you) or by letter. Once again members will be attending the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month – so do look out for them. They are always happy to make a note of any problems which need to be resolved or your ideas for improvements, or just a friendly chat.

*Pam Gow*