

Centre Piece for April Keys Magazine 2022



At last Spring is here and it is such a joy to see all the beautiful flowers and blossom. However, nothing can brighten the international situation at the time of writing, the only hope is that by the time you read this some suitable resolution has been found.



Annual Parish Meeting

The meeting commenced with a tribute to Mike Dobson, who sadly passed away recently and who was chair of the Parish Council for 5 years following many years as a borough councillor.

A lot has happened during the past year and the Parish Council's part in this was reported to a small gathering of residents in the Jim England Room of the Village Hall on 9 March 2022. Last year the meeting was held virtually, and attracted a wider and more numerous audience. As usual the evening consisted of the Parish Council's report on their work during the past year. It was said that it has, once again, been a difficult year due to the pandemic with the need to close or restrict leisure facilities from time to time. However progress had been made on some projects, and there was a lot more interest in using the Recreation Ground for sporting pursuits. During the coming summer there will be two cricket clubs using the ground and Tonbridge Athletic Club has been using the area for training two evenings a week. There had been the possibility of a football club using the ground but this had met with difficulties with wet ground and the siting of the pitches. This is still under negotiation. Projects completed included the replacement storage facility in the Recreation Ground and the resurfacing of the service road in West Wood. Full details of the report can be found in the draft minutes on our website www.hildenboroughpc.org.uk/ under minutes for 9 March 2022.

Displays at the Annual Parish Meeting

There were a number of organisations showing what they have on offer and these included the scouts with an interesting and attractive display of their work, Hildenborough Conservation Group whose work in West Wood is greatly appreciated by users as well as the Parish Council, Hildenborough History Society who brought along copies of 'Hildenborough Our Village', and St John's Church with an informative display of their work in the community. As well as all this Mr Pat King brought along a wide selection of photographs of the village and of course, the Council's publication 'Tales from a Kent Village, Hildenborough' was also available.

Highlight of the Evening

The highlight of the evening was the speaker, a retired crown jeweller, who brought along a presentation on the history and content of the Crown Jewels. They are even more beautiful than I remember from years ago on a visit to the Tower of London which is their home. He told us about the various crowns and who they were made for as well as their design and the range of different gems set in them. The collection also contains many different objects that are used for parliamentary occasions and coronation ceremonies, such as maces, swords, orb and scepter and materials used.

Looking to the future

A number of projects are now moving forward, some very slowly because of red tape, but the enhanced belisha beacons at the junction of Riding Lane with Tonbridge Road should soon be in place and the new signage, hopefully not far behind. The quotations for the renewal of the ball court surface are ready to be presented to the Council, as is the design for lighting the car park.

Play Areas

Hopefully you all will have noted the beautifully cleaned surfaces in the Recreation Ground and West Wood. They have all been power washed as the algae, weeds and moss has been flourishing in the damp weather which made the surfaces slippery.



Cleaning the play area surface



Finance

The end of 2021/22 financial year approaches as I write and it looks that in spite of all the problems of the past year, the books will balance and the Council's reserves will not need to be used. The Council keeps approximately 10 months of the year's funding in reserve for emergencies which includes a sum specifically set aside to deal with ash-dieback. The cost of this, at the moment, is an unknown figure but the Council will be looking to having the area surveyed and obtaining estimated costs of felling diseased trees and replacing with a different native species. This can then be taken into account for the future but of course everyone realizes this is likely to be very expensive.

Council member

It is with regret that we learnt that Emily Simons, one of our members, had needed to resign because of increasing work commitments. She is going to be a great loss to the Council. If you are interested in becoming a member do please make contact with me. When the Council has been informed that it can appoint a new member it will only be for 1 year as elections are due in May 2023 so it's a good opportunity to try helping the community for this short time before needing to put yourself forward for the 4-year term in May 2023.

Do look out for our member at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month between 10am and 11am. If you have any ideas, comments or questions do ask them or just email or phone me on clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk of 01732 832367

Pam