

Centre Piece for May 2022

As I write this just prior to the Easter Holiday I guess many of you will be preparing to make the most of the beautiful weather to get out and about to enjoy it in some way. I hope not too many of you will have been caught up in the great M20 traffic jam. I know the Kent Resilience Team is working very hard to provide solutions to this but the sheer volume of lorries and lack of transportation methods to the continent proves extremely challenging.

Parish Council Meeting: A very depleted Parish Council met on 13 April 2021 in the Village Hall, this was as a result mainly of illness of members and the recent resignation of two valued members, Emily Simons (as reported last month) and Wayne Allingham both of whom have increased work commitments. The Council accepted Wayne's resignation with reluctance and thanked him for his commitment which will be greatly missed.

Co-opting members: The Council at this time of writing has been given the go-ahead to co-opt one member and is awaiting the outcome of the second vacancy advertisement to be declared. The Council has been very fortunate in already receiving two expressions of interest in being co-opted to fill these vacancies. Co-option will be high on the May agenda in the hope that two new members will be able to participate in the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 11 May.

Financial Matters: The Meeting was a very busy one on the 13th as the end of year accounts were presented and approved as well as all the paper work for the external auditors signed ready to be submitted. As expected the 2021/22 accounts showed a slightly overspent budget compared to that set. This was mainly because of increased staffing costs. It has been a particularly successful year with the completion of several important projects such as the purchase and installation of the new storage area, the resurfacing of the service road, highways projects and of course some steps towards addressing the ash die-back problem in West Wood.

Projects for 2022/23: There has already been some movement on projects planned for the coming year. These will, hopefully, include lighting on the Rings Hill railway bridge, the installation of the enhanced belisha beacons on the zebra crossing near to the Tonbridge Road/Riding Lane junction, repairs plus resurfacing of the ball court and lighting the car park in the Recreation Ground.

Village Green: Many of you may have noticed the black acer tree planted on the village green to replace the Mountain Ash which was sadly destroyed in a storm in 2021. By the time you read this you will be able to see the tree planted to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It is a *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Goldrush which should grow to between 3-4m and together with the black acer will give some colour and interest to compliment the established Mountain Ash and the picnic area.



Highways: There are, as usual, no shortage of highways related issues. This month the Highways Improvement Plan was again discussed. There are a number of important issues which the Council is keen to pursue. Three issues from last year are slowly making progress, that of Riding Lane (moving the white lines to the carriageway edge, the enhanced belisha beacons and a way of addressing the issue of parking on the footways). Issues still requiring investigation or development include 20mph speed limit in Riding Lane around the school entrance, the problem of vehicles mounting the footway to avoid waiting at

the Leigh Road/Tonbridge Road junction and crossing the busy road at Watts Cross to and from Mill Lane.

Parking investigation: The Council has been informed that the very long awaited investigation into parking in the Village will be communicated to them before the end of May. This is restricted in its coverage due to the effects of the pandemic on commuter related parking.

West Wood: It has been very pleasing to see so many more residents enjoying and appreciating the new surface on the service road. There have been many compliments and the Council believes this has been money well spent which has benefited a large number of local people. Approval was given by the Council for a new notice board to be erected in the cycle track. The current one has, sadly, been vandalized and needs to be replaced. The new one will be slightly larger but it was agreed to keep the same green colour.

Don't forget we still have copies of 'Tales from a Kent Village, Hildenborough, as seen through the Parish Council Archives'. If you are looking for a summer read, copies are available from me, or at the Farmers' Market on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, priced at just £10.

Members of the Parish Council who will be present on 10 May at the Farmers' Market will be happy to take your comment, ideas or queries as will I if you either call on 01732 832367 or email on clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk

Pam Gow

