

Centre Piece for December Keys Magazine 2022

With the darker mornings and evenings, we suddenly realise that another year is drawing to a close. It was quite a shock after the prolonged period of hot and dry weather to be alerted to the possibility of flooding at the beginning of November. Once again blocked drains resulted in accumulations of water across roads and in one place narrowly missed flooding houses. Once again the sewer overspilt due to the run-off water being diverted into it, but thankfully only into the road on this occasion. Alert flood wardens raised the alarms and the support services were informed and asked to respond.

Flooding The flood wardens are very valuable residents who help to keep residents well informed in the floodable areas within the village, but we are currently short of 3. Can you help (for more information see further in this magazine). Please call or email me if you can help and I will answer any questions you may have. You do not have to live in the floodable area to be flood warden.

Budget for 2023/24: The Parish Council met this month on 9 November and had much to discuss, including the level of Council Tax for Hildenborough for 2023/24. They took into account the current financial situation as well as the fact that next year you will elect a new Council in May and they may see different priorities for the Village, as well as the need to cover the inflationary rises in the Council's expenditure on maintaining the open spaces, fuel costs etc. Following much discussion they needed to make an increase of 9% which is currently below inflation. The details of the budget will be finalized in December.

Other financial matters: Along with setting the budget level for 2023/24 came other financial matters to agree. They agreed to make a small increase in the amount charged for the use of the Recreation Ground, the projects to be completed during this year which includes the replacement of the large junior climbing frame in West Wood, due mainly to vandalism issues. Quotations for this will be considered at the December Parish Council meeting with the aim of getting it installed by the Spring, 2023. There were also some other expensive maintenance issues to address.

Ball court in Recreation Ground: Have you seen the newly resurfaced ball court? The Council is very pleased with this and with the replaced backboards for basket ball which has given the whole area a lift. Permanent games lines will be laid in the Spring. The only outstanding improvement for this now is the fencing around the perimeter. It has been identified as in need of attention (if you look closely you will notice extensive rust). It is not dangerous and so that is one project that can be put on hold for the new Council to consider next year.

Guides replant war memorial borders: The Parish Council were very impressed and grateful to Hildenborough guides for the work on replanting the border around the war memorial in readiness for Remembrance Day. It has given the whole area a big lift and I am sure you will agree a great improvement.

Vehicle damage and theft: Concern was raised by the September/October police report on Hildenborough that of vehicle damage and theft,



particularly along Lower Street and Stocks Green Road. If you have a vehicle left in these areas please make sure that all valuables are not visible and that you have securely locked the vehicle when leaving it. Do make sure you report any problems to the police.

Local Plan: The Parish Council made a contribution to the Section 18 Consultation from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council on the Local Plan and also sent in comments on how they see the village fits into the Local Plan up to 2040. Everyone's response and comments will be taken into account in the Section 19 Local Plan to be published at the end of next year. Comments will be able to be made on this too but they will not alter the Plan presented to the Inspectorate but will be sent with it to be consider along with the Plan.

Action against Ash dieback: The Council agreed at this meeting the contractor to be awarded the contract to remove all the diseased ash trees between the service road and the B245 as well as those on the edge of West Wood beside the service road and behind the play area as well as the Recreation Ground boundary. The work is expected to be undertaken during December and/or January. This will mean that the service road will need to be closed off for several days. Access to the Medical Centre will need to be via the entrance from the B245 (Tonbridge Road).

Good news: We have just been informed that the gas main renewal along Riding Lane has been completed. The contractors have worked hard to cause as little disruption as possible and have completed the work well within the expected timescale. I am sure residents in the locality will benefit from this work and there will be no more 'unpleasant and concerning smells' in Riding Lane and the Recreation Ground.

Don't forget we still have copies of 'Tales from a Kent Village' for sale at a cost of £10. They will be available at the Farmers' Market on 13 December or from me at any time. Anyone with an interest in local history will be fascinated by the interesting stories of the early development of the Parish Council. How times have changed!

As usual if you have any comments, questions or ideas do contact me on 01732 832367, by email clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk or by contact form on our website www.hildenboroughpc.org.uk On the website you will find news, information and minutes of all the Parish Council's committees.

We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Pam Gow

