

CENTRE PIECE FOR JANUARY 2023

The Parish Council met on a cold and very icy evening on Wednesday 14 December, fortunately the Village Hall was warm and inviting. The agenda, for a change, was fortunately fairly short, but nonetheless the meeting did not close until after 9pm.

The budget for 2023/24 was high on the agenda. The draft budget presented had been discussed at length and it had been decided to keep the increase, bearing in mind the current inflationary rises in the cost of living, as small as possible. They ended by agreeing a below inflation increase of just 7%. This would enable the Council to cover its expenditure for the year but resulted in a cutback of major projects. The increase to Band D properties would be just £3.57 or £58.34 for the whole year.

2024 will be an election year and so current members and anyone else interested in joining the Council will be encouraged to be nominated for the election due at the beginning of May. Further details will be given in January Keys so do watch out for them.

Play equipment West Wood One of the important items on the Agenda was the replacement of the junior play equipment in West Wood. There were three quotations to consider. They had provided a variety of ideas and so the Council decided the type of equipment they thought would be suitable and will formulate a specification to get final quotations to move the project forward. It is hoped to get is completed during this financial year but it is dependent on delivery dates and contractor's commitments.

Ground contracts were under discussion for 2023 and this year the Council decided to award a split contract and have one company managing West Wood and another the Recreation Ground. They will monitor this throughout the year to establish whether this is the future way forward.

Flooding During the last heavy rain period early in November it, once again, proved too difficult for the water and foul water sewer in Byrneside to cope with and began to flood over onto the road. Fortunately on this occasion that is where it stayed but in Elm Grove the drainage system was blocked and two houses had a very narrow escape from being flooded. Fortunately the plastic sheeting and sandbags kept it at bay. KCC and Southern Water have both inspected the area and some blockage in the system was identified. Unfortunately this has yet to be dealt with. The Parish Council together with our County Councillor are taking it forward with KCC Highways.

We are pleased to welcome a new flood warden to the team but we still do need two more. Do make contact with me if you are able to help.

Street lighting The good news is the lighting is to be installed on the Rings Hill rail bridge during January (weather permitting I assume) as will the low level lighting in the Council's Recreation Ground car park. A further highways issue is the concern which has been raised over vehicles mounting the footway to by-pass vehicles turning right into Leigh Road from Tonbridge Road in front of the Flying Dutchman. Again this is another issue to raise with KCC on Hildenborough's Highway's Improvement Plan. On a third issue, that of the safety of children and their parents leaving Hildenborough CEP School, the Parish Council has been asked by KCC to



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Kent Resilience Forum

make a donation toward the cost of installing wigwags to warn drivers of children leaving or arriving at school and at the December meeting agreed to this.

As I write, **2022 is drawing to a close**, and what a challenging and mixed emotions year it has been. If we cast our minds back to January we had problems meeting due to COVID infections and restrictions. The January meeting was cancelled due to COVID infections and for legal reasons we were unable to meet virtually. Again in September the meeting was cancelled, this time because it would have been held during the mourning period for Queen Elizabeth. Fortunately the Council was able to meet 'normally' during the rest of the year and as a result managed to arrange for the service road in West Wood to be resurfaced also the ball court on Recreation Grounds resurfaced as well as the basket ball boards and rings replaced. Sadly we had to have a large number of ash trees felled as a result of ash dieback but Stocks Green Pre School children came along and planted a number of new trees provided by a local tree surgeon.

The Annual Parish Meeting gave residents the opportunity to review the Parish Council's work over the previous year as well as a very interesting and enjoyable evening hearing how the crown jeweller looks after the Crown Jewels. This meeting was not attended by as many residents as usual due to many taking precautions again contracting COVID. The Recreation Ground proved to be a popular venue for sports organisations with two cricket clubs using the square during the summer as well as the stoolball club and during the winter Tonbridge Athletic Club.

And do you remember that hot summer? a distant memory now, particularly with the fall of snow currently refusing to melt due to the cold temperatures. Many took advantage of the open spaces and enjoyed the sunshine, however they did leave a lot of litter!

Members had set up a litter picking group and many concerned residents have joined in to help keep the village tidy.

They meet on the 1st Saturday of the month in West Wood and the Recreation Group. Equipment is provided for whoever needs it. Do think of joining in during 2023.

Do not forget if you have any ideas or queries you can make contact with me on 01732 832367 (do leave a message if I am not able to answer and I will get back to you as soon as I can provided you leave you phone number) or just email me on clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk

I send good wishes for 2023 to you all.



Hildenborough Parish Council

MONTHLY Litter Pick

Help keep our village tidy

Date: The First Saturday of the Month
Time: 10am - 12pm
Meet: REC or Westwood

All welcome
Equipment provided if you haven't got your own :)
Contact: ioannisklaven@ishpc@gmail.com

The poster features a green header with the text 'MONTHLY Litter Pick' in a white, hand-drawn font. Below this is a speech bubble containing the text 'Help keep our village tidy'. The background of the poster shows a grassy field with trees and two smiling figures. At the bottom, there is a list of details: Date, Time, and Meet location, followed by the phrase 'All welcome' and contact information.