

CENTRE PIECE FOR APRIL 2023

We woke to snow on 8th March, the day of the Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting. Fortunately this turned to rain later in the day but in spite of this there were almost 60 local residents attending the meeting to find out what the Parish Council had achieved during the past year and to hear about the plans of the Environment Agency to protect over 150 homes from flooding in Hildenborough.

Projects completed: It was reported that a surprising number of outstanding and new projects had been completed this year. At the beginning of the year the **service road in West Wood** had been resurfaced and everyone was delighted to see the improvement, most particularly for wheelchair users and pushchairs. At last the bumps and ruts had disappeared!

This was followed by the **resurfacing of the ball court** in the



Recreation Ground. It had drainage installed and a new surface, shortly followed by replacement backboards and basketball hoops. All that is outstanding are permanent sports lines which will require warm weather.



Permission was granted by the Forestry Commission to fell the **diseased ash trees in West Wood and the Recreation Ground** and this took place earlier this year. It was sad to see so many mature trees removed but it has opened up opportunities to replant with historic and native species, namely oak and hazel. Hildenborough Conservation Group has volunteered to undertake the replanting and it may well have happened before you read this. The Council is extremely appreciative of their help and support over this.



Two other projects have been completed, the **lighting of the railway bridge in Rings Hill and the car park in Riding Lane**. These two projects should increase the safety of pedestrians as well as discourage nuisance use of the car park. The lighting in both instances is tied to the street lighting times and managed by KCC. The Council has been very fortunate in receiving a donation from Hildenborough Tennis Club and our County Councillor's members grant towards the projects.

Shortly, maybe even before you read this article, **the replacement play equipment** will be installed in West Wood following the demise of the climbing frame by vandals who not only set light to the structure but covered it in offensive graffiti, some of which could not be successfully removed.

Thanks were given at the Annual Parish Meeting to Hildenborough Conservation Group's work in West Wood, the SpeedWatch Team for monitoring the traffic along the B245 and Stocks Green Road and also the many volunteers who take part in the monthly litter pick. Just a reminder the next meeting will be on Saturday 1st April, meeting in West Wood and the Recreation Ground at 10am. Equipment is provided if you do not have your own.

The evening concluded with a team from the **Environment Agency updating us all on the flood defenses for Hildenborough**. The expansion of the Leigh Barrier is underway with the strengthening of the embankments surrounding the barrier itself and work is beginning on the installation of 3 new gates raising the storage capacity by half a meter. Reassurances were given on back up systems should power fail or mechanical failure. The Leigh Barrier is always manned when the weather forecast is predicting that flooding may occur. Work on the Hildenborough embankment will shortly be underway now the plans have been approved. This is designed to work in conjunction with the Leigh Barrier. The Leigh Barrier expansion itself will not provide any extra benefit to Hildenborough without the new embankment being in place. It is all expected to be completed by 2025.

As I am sure you are aware, there is to be a Council election at the beginning of May when Borough and Parish Councillors will be elected. By the time you read this you will be too late to put in a nomination to stand for election but you can vote as the election is the beginning of May. Do not forget you will need photo ID to vote this time. If you do not have any form of passport or photo ID this can be obtained from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

As ever don't forget if you have a query, idea or concern do contact me on 01732 832367 or email clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk or talk to a member who will be present at the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 11 April

Pam Gow

