

## **CENTRE PIECE FOR JANUARY 2024 KEYS MAGAZINE**

I hope readers had an enjoyable Christmas and on behalf of Hildenborough Parish Council I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year!

### **Flooding**

I am pleased to report that Southern Water have been working in Elm Grove to clear the drain blockage that is believed to have been the main cause of the flooding in that area. Recent downpours have not resulted in the usual flooding in Elm Grove so residents are hopeful that the issue has been resolved. Southern Water have also cleared a blockage in the main drain that serves the buildings between the Recreation Ground and the B245 and beyond. It was blocked, mainly with baby wipes and paper hand towels, causing flooding adjacent to the playground in Riding Lane Recreation Ground.

### **Highways**

I am afraid I have no update regarding the installation of the bollards outside The Flying Dutchman but hopefully I will have good news to report soon. The Parish Council have recently contacted Kent County Council with regard to the exit from the BP garage on Tonbridge Road. Residents have expressed concern that motorists leaving the garage are not giving way to pedestrians and cyclists using the cycleway. KCC is therefore looking to upgrade the pavement markings at the garage exit to signal to motorists to stop and check for pavement and cycleway users before driving out onto the road.

I sometimes receive reports of issues affecting our highways in Hildenborough, or footpaths, for example potholes, or fallen trees. Before Kent County Council can take any action they need to be made aware of the issue and this can be done by reporting the problem on their website. To report anything affecting the highway, e.g. overgrown obstructive hedges, blocked drains, potholes, etc. please visit [kcc.gov.uk](http://kcc.gov.uk) and search for "Report a problem on a road or pavement." This will generate a reference number and enable you to track the progress of your report. Where issues are not resolved in a timely manner, please let me know and I can speak to the local Highways Steward who will investigate the matter but he needs the reference number that identifies it. If multiple reports have been made about the same problem, KCC will be able to see this.

Where the problem has occurred on a pathway, for example a fallen tree causing an obstruction, please go to [kcc.gov.uk](http://kcc.gov.uk) and search for "Report a problem on a right of way" Unfortunately, issues affecting public rights of way can take longer to resolve because they often involve working in partnership with private landowners to resolve the issue which can prolong the process.

### **Police**

Our local PC, Ollie Evans, has said that December was almost identical to November with 16 crimes reported in Hildenborough, most of them thefts. He said they are seeing a spate of vehicle thefts in the area - in particular Ford Fiesta STs, Land/Range Rovers and Lexus's are being targeted. He advises residents with these types of vehicles to ensure they are secured, fitted with trackers/immobilisers where possible and that the keys are being kept in Faraday boxes overnight. Moped and bike thefts are still a county-wide issue. Sadly, one particularly upsetting crime in Hildenborough in December was the theft of a mobility scooter belonging to a 91 year old resident. She parked the scooter in the Leigh Road service entrance to West Wood for a short while and when she returned it had been taken. The good news is that CCTV on a nearby building caught the thief on camera, who was known by police, and he was arrested soon afterwards. Fortunately the mobility scooter was recovered in

full working order, and the resident was delighted to be reunited with her mobility scooter less than a week after it was stolen.

### **Open Spaces**

Visitors to West Wood will no doubt have noticed the appearance of 40 new trees that have been planted recently to replace the Ash trees, stricken with Ash Dieback, that had to be felled earlier this year. The new trees, mostly Hazel with a few Field Maple and Oaks, were donated by Richard Vallis of Silva Woodland Management whose company felled the diseased Ash trees. They were planted by Dick Sharp from the Hildenborough Conservation Group and Colin Cope and his team of scouts so thank you very much to all for your hard work. Seven more trees will be planted in January on the B245 side of the service road by pupils from Hildenborough Primary School.

A member of the Parish Council will be at the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January so please say "hello" if you are planning to go along. If you have any issues you wish to report to the council please e-mail me at or call me on 07818 329029.

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