

CENTRE PIECE FOR FEBRUARY 2024 KEYS MAGAZINE

The Farmers' Market opened its doors again on Tuesday 9th January following the Christmas break. It was business as usual, with the Church Hall packed with stalls selling crafts and produce and the cheerful team of volunteers keeping everyone supplied with hot refreshments. I had a quick chat with Cllr. Michael Connor, who was attending the Market for the first time as our latest new parish councillor. It was a great opportunity for Michael to introduce himself to local residents and get a feel for any concerns people may have about living in Hildenborough, to feed back to his colleagues on the parish council. A representative from the Parish Council is always available to speak to at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of every month.

Highways

The Kent Highways Planning and Advice Team went to visit the BP garage on the B245 recently, as promised, but concluded that a STOP sign for motorists exiting the garage would not be appropriate. They have said they will refresh the lining on the pavement surface when required and make sure the hedge to the left of the exit is cut back so that it does not obstruct the view for those driving out of the garage. Kent Highways have also confirmed that the designs and costings for the installation of bollards in front of The Flying Dutchman have now been completed and they will be raising the job with their contractors as soon as possible. At the time of writing, the Parish Council has been notified that "wigwag" traffic warning signs are being installed close to Hildenborough Primary School in Riding Lane later in January.

After my visit to the Farmers' Market I went to inspect the fallen tree on the footpath opposite the Half Moon Pub that has been awaiting removal for several weeks. It is indeed a very large, old tree for the council to remove but I have asked Hildenborough's Highways Steward if he can try and expedite things. He told me that the Public Rights of Way team at KCC is very small and they have been exceptionally busy attending to pathways that have been washed away by flooding in several locations in Kent, therefore posing a real danger to the public. I hope we will all see the removal of the offending tree very soon.

Flooding

The drains in Hildenborough were put firmly to the test during Storm Henk, which brought gales and heavy rain to the area over the course of several days soon after Christmas. However, the village's drainage infrastructure seemed to cope comparatively well and there were no reports of flooding in Elm Grove and its neighbouring roads this time. The residents are pleased and relieved that the work carried out last year to clear the drain and culverts in Elm Grove appears to have resolved matters in what was one of the village's worst affected areas.

Police

Early in the New Year I had the pleasure of meeting our local PC, Ollie Evans and his colleague, the Officer for Hadlow and East Peckham, PC Caruana who Ollie teams up with regularly to patrol their local areas. Ollie said that he is trying to get along to the Farmers' Market when his shifts permit, so some readers may already have met him there. He was happy to report that things had been quiet in Hildenborough over the Christmas period but he is keen to hear of any concerns around policing matters that he may be able to assist with. Recently, inconsiderate parking has been endangering the lives of pedestrians who have to step out onto the busy highway to get round the vehicles. Ollie said that offenders will be prosecuted if the problem persists and said it would be helpful if people

can supply photographic evidence if they come across the problem. Photos can be sent to me at the e-mail address below and I will be happy to forward them to Ollie.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting is taking place on Thursday 14th March in the Village Hall, Riding Lane. Refreshments will be served by members of the Parish Council from 7pm and residents will have the opportunity to find out more about local organisations who will be manning stalls at the event. The keynote speaker this year will be Ian Nunn, Area Operations Manager at the Environment Agency who will be updating residents on the Leigh Embankment and Hildenborough Expansion Scheme to alleviate flooding in the area, and taking questions from the audience. A "Drop-In" event will take place in the Village Hall on the same evening from 6.30pm to enable residents to speak to representatives of the Environment Agency before the commencement of Parish Council business at 7.30pm.

To report any concerns you believe the Parish Council may be able to assist with, please e-mail me at clerk@hildenboroughpc.org.uk or call me on 07818 329029.

Julia Church

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