

CENTRE PIECE FOR JUNE 2024 KEYS MAGAZINE

The Parish Council held its Annual Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 8th May, when Cllr Ioannis Sklavenitis was appointed as the new Chair and Cllr Karen Dobson was appointed as Vice-Chair. Other members of the council were appointed to various committees.

West Wood

Sarah from Medway Countryside Partnership visited the pond in West Wood last month, to carry out her three-month check to see how the pond was faring following its renovation. The project is primarily to create a suitable habitat for the endangered Great Crested Newt, but, as Sarah found, a wide variety of other pond creatures are also benefiting from the project.

After her inspection, Sarah said: "The pond is full of life at last, whereas before there was none after a pond dip. Today I found: pond slater, water beetle and water beetle larvae, phantom midge larvae, daphnia, water shrimp, bloodworm, water boatman and backswimmer. There is also some marsh marigold growing around the edges".

Sarah said that the orange fencing at the pond should stay in place for at least another couple of months as the silt is still very wet in places and the site in general is very muddy. A professional Risk Assessment was undertaken recently to see whether or not safety measures are necessary. Once the warm summer sunshine has dried out the silt, the pond will be a delightful place to visit later this year.

The Recreation Ground

The grass has been cut and sporting activities are finally resuming at the Recreation Ground, following the wettest spring on record. The pounding of hundreds of feet during the Hildenborough Road Race on 6th May churned the ground up in places as it was pouring with rain for the event, but the field is recovering quickly now the warmer weather is here. In spite of the weather, there was still a record-breaking turn out of runners for the Road Race and the organisers were delighted with the success of this year's event.

At last month's Annual Parish Council Meeting, councillors decided to seek a qualified consultant to assist with putting together a specification for the proposed new footpath around the perimeter of the Rec. The footpath will be funded by S106 monies from Berkeley Homes and the investment in professional advice should ensure the footpath will be cost-effective but at the same time, long-lasting for future generations to enjoy. It is a major project for the Parish Council, who is always mindful of using its budget wisely on behalf of Hildenborough residents.

Police

Hildenborough's local Beat Officer, PC Ollie Evans, has reported that from 3rd April to 3rd May there were 12 crimes reported in Hildenborough, six of them related to theft. Ollie stopped two males who were in the process of stealing motorbikes and he arrested both of them for going equipped for theft and it is expected they will be charged. Ollie said that four of the crimes were very much opportunistic and he would like to remind residents to keep property out of sight and secure. He said residents would be wise not to leave vehicles unattended in very rural locations overnight. He would also like to encourage residents to continue to report any suspicious behaviour/vehicles to Kent Police and/or the Parish Council. There was a previous issue with motorbikes being stolen from the railway station but after multiple arrests this appears to have

calmed. Ollie said he is working with the Neighbourhood Task Force to continue to tackle any drug use in the area but any reports of drug use at the Recreation Ground are few and far between.

Highways

As of Friday 10th May, the “wigwags” (flashing warning lights) in Riding Lane are being programmed to operate at the start and end of the school day to help slow traffic down as it approaches Hildenborough CE Primary School.

The obstructive parking across the pavement on London Road, opposite the Harvester Garage, is forcing pedestrians into the busy road. The Parish Council has been liaising with the police, landowner, borough and county council to try and resolve the issue and at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May, it was agreed that the painting of double yellow lines onto the highway to prevent parking would be explored with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Kent County Council.

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. You can follow us on Facebook @hildenboroughparishcouncil.

Julia Church

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Photo captions:

The planters on the Village Green have been filled with a mix of summer perennials and annuals purchased from the Farmers' Market plant stall for visitors to enjoy this summer.

West Wood pond, three months on from its renovation.