

Centre Piece for May Keys

The Easter holiday seems to be rapidly disappearing into the past but memories of the beautiful spring flowers this year, unspoiled by weather conditions, remain prominent in my memory as sadly the blossom fades. Have you seen the magnificent display of bluebells in West Wood? They really are an amazing sight this year. One worrying concern though, is that of the lack of rain.

The Parish Council met on 19 April, the first meeting since February as the Annual Parish Meeting was held in March, so there was a lot to catch up on. Several members, because of the closeness of the Easter Bank holiday to the meeting were still away so it was a relatively quiet affair.

However, there were some important issues to discuss. As usual during the April meeting the accounts for the previous year were included for approval as were all the various end of year returns to our external auditors. Our internal auditor had visited the week prior to the Parish Council meeting and although his report has yet to be received, signed the Annual Return to the external auditors as 'no significant issues to report'. By the time you read this you will be able to see copies of these returns on our website and they will be displayed on the Parish Council notice board at One Stop later on.

Most of the time was spent in discussing matters associated with the Council's open spaces, West Wood and the Recreation Ground. Most matters are in the process of being resolved but the success of the Great British Spring Clean was reported. Two local schools, Sackville and Fosse Bank joined in helping to tidy up the Recreation Ground and Noble Tree Road, and the cubs collected litter from West Wood while other volunteers completed sections along the B245 from Mill Lane to our boundary with Tonbridge as well as some residential areas. Our grateful thanks has been sent to all concerned.

Good news for users of the Pavilion is that an upgrade for the kitchen has been approved and will hopefully be completed by the time you read this. This includes new equipment in the kitchen as well as renewed floor covering throughout.

Currently the Parish Council is searching for an answer to a problem with the surface in the new play area in front of the two new benches. Unfortunately these were in use before the seeded grass area had chance to germinate and grow which has resulted in a bare soil area which has become compacted and cracked. Various options of artificial grass and surface protection are being investigated.

A request for better all-weather surface in parts of the play area in West Wood has been received. This is to be considered by the Open Spaces Committee at its May meeting. This Committee is going to consider all future developments, such as this suggestion, in order to produce a prioritised list to cost and set target dates for completion.

By the time you read this you should notice a significant difference to the War Memorial. KCC have finally approved the repairs and cleaning and the contractor has been commissioned. At the moment cleaning should be undertaken on 21 April with the repairs a little later.

The extended cctv should be in operation shortly, with a further camera being installed to give a clearer and more detailed coverage of the new play area in the Recreation Ground. It seems this

may be just in time, since part of the old play area fencing, which is covered by CCTV, was vandalised during the Easter holidays.

The Council is continuing to seek a resolution to the static roundabout problem in the Recreation Ground. Although, currently, this roundabout provides an attractive seat it does not serve its purpose of a roundabout. This is because the bearings regularly rust due to the accumulation of water under the mechanism. They have been advised that a drainage channel should be installed to keep this mechanism dry and that an easier system of greasing should be sought. Currently it takes two people to take the whole roundabout apart in order to grease the moving parts.

The Council has been contacted by the National Flood Forum who are keen to “support all current flood resilience measures and to support and help with all aspects and issues regarding floods”. They would like to meet with interested residents and I have been advised by the Environment Agency they provide a supportive service. If you are interested please either let your volunteer flood warden know or contact me directly when I will arrange a meeting. Please contact me to let me know whether or not you are interested before Wednesday 17 May (the date of the next Parish Council meeting).

There were several transport issues discussed. Firstly, those of you who regularly use the train service from Hildenborough may be interested to know that the next franchise is to be awarded from December 2018. There is a consultation out at the moment from the Department of Transport entitled South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation, Shaping the Future. It would be well worth your while if you are a regular user to read this and send in your comments, or alternatively let the Parish Council have them before the next meeting on 17 May.

Secondly, at the beginning of April Arriva introduced significant changes to bus timetables in the area. There is now a much improved 402 service during much of the day with up to four buses an hour on the Tunbridge Wells to Sevenoaks route. One bus, which now runs via Weald, continues on to Bromley. If you use the service a copy of the new timetable is essential. It can be obtained at Libraries, the Castle and from the Farmers’ Market on the second Tuesday of the month between 10am and 11am.

It is important that our local buses are well supported as it is a case of ‘use them or lose them’!



PUBLICATIONS


Tales from a Kent Village – Hildenborough
As seen through the Parish Council Archives

206 pages (illustrated) published March 2017 price £10

This is Hildenborough from A to Z

96 pages (illustrated) – a few copies remain, price £9.50

Copies available from the Parish Council (order by email or phone) or from the Farmers’ Market on Tuesday 9 May between 10.00 and 11.00 am.



Kent Police are organising a bike security marking session at Hildenborough Railway Station on Tuesday 9 May 17:30 to 20:30. Further details are available on www.kent.police.uk or see the posters on our notice boards.

As usual you can contact the Parish Council on 01732 832367 or by email: clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk or by letter direct to our address to give us any comments, raise any queries or make suggestions. Members will be present at the Farmers' Market, as usual, the second Tuesday of the month, 9 May, between 10-11am.