

Centre Piece for June Keys Magazine

It has rained at last! The effects of the dry weather have been felt in the Recreations Ground, not least in front of the new benches in the Activity Zone play area. This was the result of the inability of the newly grass seeded area to germinate. The area looked as if it had been crazy paved! This was removed for safety reasons and is to be replaced with some artificial grass matting, similar to that in West Wood by the slide. It was thought by members at their annual meeting on Wednesday 17 May that as the area receives heavy use this would be the best way forward, rather than turfing the area and having it out of action whilst it bedded in during the busiest time of the year.

As mentioned above, it was the Parish Council's Annual Meeting at which the chairman, vice chairman and committee members are voted in or agree to stand. Claire Sheldon has agreed to continue as chairman for a further year as has Margaret Coles as vice chairman. All other members have agreed to stand on the same committee as last year or to be representatives for the Council. Details of these can be found on our website www.hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

It was a very productive and busy meeting on the 17th although there were no local residents present to ask questions, put forward ideas or make comments. Most matters considered concerned the Council's open spaces.

A decision was taken on how to spend the receipts to date from the sale of the recently published Tales from a Kent Village. It was very gratifying to find that not only could a second Rowan tree for the Village Green be afforded but also a second seat provided in the Activity Zone new play area. These are now on order, the tree being planted in the late autumn and the seat will be installed as soon as it can be delivered.

Talking about the Activity Zone play area, there has been quite a problem with litter within the area in spite of two litter bins being available beside the Pavilion. As a consequence the Council decided to purchase a further bin to be installed within the area in an effort to persuade users not to drop litter and spoil the area.

After few incidents for two or three years, recently there has been three of vandalism to the fencing around the play areas in the Activity Zone. These incidents have been recorded on the cctv coverage and are now in the hands of the police for action. It is very surprising that the latest incident happened during the late afternoon when others were present in the Recreation Ground. It would be very helpful if you are in the area and notice anything untoward happening you could alert us (usual number 01732 832367) or the police. At least one incident happened fairly late in the evening so if you see anything suspicious, particularly at the weekend (Friday-Sunday), please also let us know.

The upgrade of the kitchen in the Pavilion is now well underway and hopefully by the time you read this it should be finished, complete with the new flooring in place. It really is looking so much better and we hope that users will benefit from this, particularly as the new cricket and stoolball season is in progress and there are, as reported last month, a number of events planned during the summer.

The Scouts had asked the Parish Council if they could extend the area they currently use and at the May meeting it was agreed to let them have a section of the land next to their current premises. The Scout movement is currently under pressure to provide more opportunities for more young

people and the Council hope this will enable them to offer more places to those on their waiting list. This is all, of course, subject to legal agreements being drawn up and agreed.

A working roundabout in the Recreation Ground Activity Zone is now nearer to being a fact. The Council agreed at the May meeting to look into replacing this. They had received advice and quotations for draining the current equipment but this was to prove almost as expensive as provision of a new roundabout so members thought it would be more cost effective to replace it.

Have you noticed how beautiful the border is around the War Memorial? This is thanks to the effort of one of the Parish Council members and his wife. You may also have noticed that the Memorial has now been cleaned and repaired. It is now a true reflection of showing the Village's respect to those named.

The Parish Council have for many years had an agreement with St John's Church to help maintain the churchyard, but following the revision of the Financial Arrangements with the Borough Council this April, fulfilling this agreement became illegal. After discussions with St John's the agreement has been annulled. However, the Parish Council has agreed to make a donation to St John's this year to help them with the maintenance of the churchyard.

Some other good news is that the Parish Council has agreed to have its lighting columns in Noble Tree Road, Rings Hill and the footpath opposite the BP garage upgraded to LED lighting, in line with the other lighting in the Village in the process of being converted. This will be more cost effective and provide more reliable lighting. Recently there have been a number of lantern and bulb failures which has led to 'dark' patches on journeys to or from the station.

As always you can contact me on 01732 832367 or by email on clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk or, of course, by post to our address. Members will be present at the Farmer's Market on Tuesday 13 June between 10 and 11am. They will have copies of our publications, Tales from a Kent Village, Hildenborough (£10) and Hildenborough from A to Z (£9.50) for sale and copies of current bus and train timetables as well as other useful information.

Pam Gow