

CENTRE PIECE FOR JULY KEYS MAGAZINE

I am sure everyone has been making the most of the lovely weather we have been lucky enough to have had recently. It makes such a nice change to be able to go out and about without macs and umbrellas. Let us hope this is a good omen for the rest of the Summer.

The Parish Council met on 13th June and had a busy schedule to complete. The first item on the Agenda was received with great regret as this was the resignation of two members. Sadly Mr Maurice Nairne felt unable to continue. The Council is certainly going to miss his great contribution to its work. He has, as I am sure most of you are aware, championed the use of public transport and the development and preservation of the environment of the open spaces owned by the Parish Council. Members expressed their thanks and appreciation for this work as well as his work on researching and writing 'Tales of a Kent Village, Hildenborough...'. The other resignation was that of Mrs Lisa Homewood who, due to other commitments, felt unable to continue. Her contribution was also greatly appreciated, particularly expressing the views and needs of the younger residents of Hildenborough.

This, of course, leaves two vacancies for members and a Casual Vacancy Notice will have been posted on our notice boards before you read this. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in developing and maintaining facilities in the village and supporting the interests of the community do please get in touch with me to find out what this would involve. This would only be, in the first instance, for a short time as elections are due in May 2019 for the next Parish Council.

A number of residents attended the Parish Council Meeting on the 13th, mainly regarding two particular issues but also on three others. The first issue raised was that of the consultation on a proposal to see if a footway was needed along Stocks Green Road. Many responded to my request in last month's Centre Piece from the wider area and those living along Stocks Green Road were invited to send their comments in by letter. Of the responses received 86% were positive saying they would use the footway, of the other responses 10% were against and 4% said they would not, or rarely use the footway. At the meeting (and in the written responses) views were expressed that it would be better and cheaper to put more traffic calming measures in along the road and get the hedges cut back to their original position. One resident said that the noise levels were too high from the traffic, due to the high speeds, for those living beside the road. Measurements indicated an average level of 65 decibels which is higher than that recommended. In the end it was agreed to discuss the matter further with our County Councillor, Harry Rayner to try to find a satisfactory way forward – so watch this space for what is decided.

The other issue which many residents were concerned about was the possible inclusion of land to the south of Stocks Green Road for housing development in the draft Local Plan. This Plan is due to go before the Borough Council in early September and if ratified a consultation process will be opened to take comments to put before the Planning Inspector who will be taking the final decision on whether the plan is accepted or not during 2019. Of most concern to residents living in the area would appear to be the threat of flooding from the drainage system backing up. The Parish Council will be looking at greater detail into the inclusion of this area in land available for development when and if it is ratified by the Council and during the consultation period.

Other areas of concern frequently expressed to the Council is that of cars parking on footways. In particular this month it has been along the B245 where it was impossible for pushchairs or wheelchairs to pass without going onto this very busy road. The police have been looking into this and hopefully have resolved the problem. It is realised that nowadays many cars park on the footways but it would be very helpful if they would take into consideration that pedestrians, some with pushchairs or in wheelchairs really do need to use these pathways and park in a considerate way.

Other issues which have been causing upset to neighbours are barking dogs, bonfires and overhanging hedges. It seems that when most of us are enjoying our gardens during the lovely weather some are unable to due to inconsiderate neighbours lighting bonfires which not only produce volumes of smoke but give off choking smells. Should you have a problem with dogs continuously barking do contact the dog warden at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council who may be able to assist and finally a plea to ask you to check that your hedge is not overhanging the footways and if it is to cut it back.

Good news is that the order has been placed for the extension to the West Wood play area along with that to replace the roundabout in the Recreation Ground. Hopefully by the time of the next Centre Piece construction will have begun or a date of its construction notified to us.

There has been much publicity recently on waste water from leaks. Here in Hildenborough the Parish Council was aware of four – two the Tonbridge end of Tonbridge Road, one along Noble Tree Road (following the burst there a few weeks back) and one in London Road near to Nizels Lane. The Parish Council has contacted S E Water who are in the next few days going to attend to the two leaks in Tonbridge Road. The leak in Noble Tree Road is awaiting a road closure permit and hopefully by the time you read this, repairs will at least be underway. The other leak which has been running since last Autumn is more problematical since they are unable to trace the source of the problem. They are about to undertake some borings to try to trace it through sound bearings.

Don't forget you can still obtain the Council's publications direct from me or at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month. A few copies are still available of This is Hildenborough from A to Z (£9.50) and, of course, we do have copies of our latest publication Tales from a Kent Village, Hildenborough (£10).

As usual you can contact me in the usual ways, by email at clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk by phone on 01732 832367 or by letter at the usual address. Members will be at the Farmers' Market on 10 July.