

Centre Piece for November Keys

A wet and windy month with beautiful sunny interludes brought home the need to have the Hildenborough Emergency Plan brought completely up to date and this has been achieved. This Plan outlines who is responsible for what when dealing with emergencies of all types as well as providing a local chain of volunteers, including all Parish Councillors, who will support the community in any emergency. Of course flooding is always central to this Plan as we have experienced this so many times in the past and lessons were learnt by all agencies on the need to be prepared during and following the Christmas 2013 flooding emergency. Of course we are all hoping that the promised Hildenborough embankment and increased storage capacity of the Leigh Barrier will not be too distant in the future which will provide more protection.

There is now a Flood Warden Scheme in operation in Hildenborough as you will know, but we are in need of more volunteers following three needing to leave or who have moved away. Please contact me if you can help (contact details at the foot of this).

It was with great regret that the Parish Council received the resignation of their past chair, Claire Sheldon, due to pressures of work and family. She is hopeful that she may be able to return in the future to support the work of the Council. The Parish Council thank her for her contribution to the Council over the past few years.

Also leaving us is our valued caretaker, Peter Richardson, who too has to resign due to pressure of work. The Council thank him for his contribution to the community in maintaining many of its facilities.

The Council has, as you will have noticed, advertised for a new caretaker and although early days as I write this have received some interest in the vacancy but have not had any applications. So if you have missed the advertisement the first time round, do ring me to check whether we have filled the vacancy.

This seems to be a month of farewells as, not only do we lose Claire Sheldon and Peter Richardson, but Nigel Simpkins and his wife are to be moving away shortly. They are both going to be greatly missed in the community for their contributions and caring attitudes. Nigel has supported the Parish Council in a number of ways from checking the lighting is working, litter clearing on a regular basis, raising the flag and joining with his wife maintaining the borders of the war memorial, not to mention winding the clock for the church. Fortunately we have managed to find replacement volunteers for the flag and clock duties as well as maintaining the war memorial border.

There is some positive news – a new defibrillator has been installed. Residents in the Hilden/Brookmead area had been requesting such a facility and we were fortunate to have received an offer made to the Council through London Heart by West Kent Freemasons of this equipment. Hilden Park Accountants



have been very helpful in allowing this to be installed on the front of their building. The photograph shows the new equipment together with a representative from West Kent Freemasons, Hilden Park Accountants and our chair.

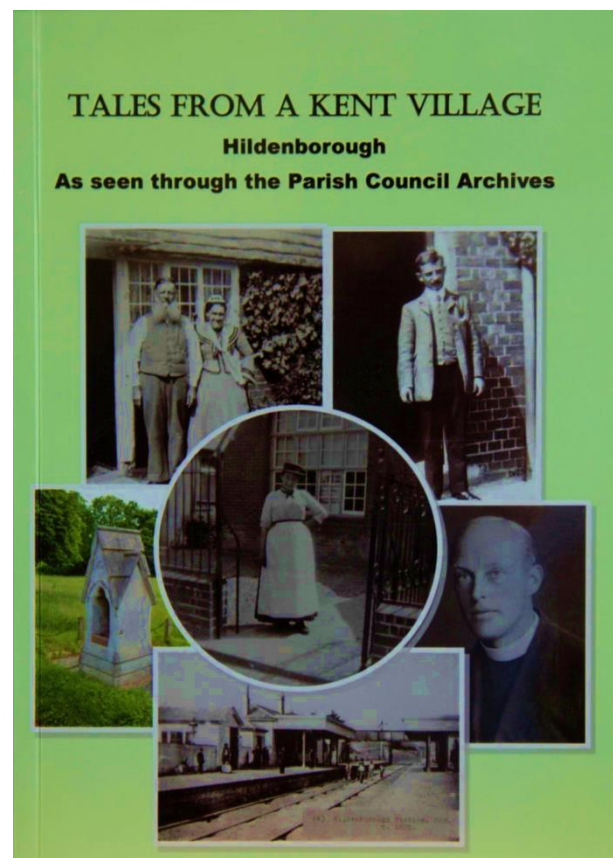
It is good to report that three groups have got together to clear litter. They have used the equipment provided by grant to Hildenborough Conservation Group to clear West Wood and the Recreation Ground. So the Council would like to thank the scouts and guides as well as one of its members for organising this.

Our local MP, KCC Councillor and Borough Councillors together with members of the Parish Council got together with SE Water to discuss the recurrent problem of water main bursts and leaks. They provided detailed accounts of what they had done to stop this happening which included testing the water main, which looked to be in good condition. The problem seems to have been traced to unexpected rapid increases in pressure, the source of which has not yet been detected and faulty equipment. This equipment has been replaced and they continue to continually monitor the pressure. The Parish Council will also be looking closely at any future problems with water supply. Currently there are three minor leaks, the source of which, SE Water seem unable to trace.

There have been a number of issues raised concerning safety issues for pedestrians in the village. In particular the safety of using the zebra crossing on Tonbridge Road near to Riding Lane, and children crossing London Road after school to Mill Lane. Also of concern was the speed of vehicles using Coldharbour Lane and the lack of signage. All these issues, including a petition organised by a Sackville pupil, have been passed to our KCC Councillor, Harry Rayner. Fortunately in some ways these problems do not meet KCC criteria for urgent action as there have been no serious accidents/fatalities to date in these areas. However I feel their criteria is somewhat flawed that someone has to meet a life changing accident to get any action to avoid future accidents!

Two benches for the play area in West Wood have been delivered and hopefully installed by the time you read this. The Council is looking into surrounding these seat and the picnic table within the play area with artificial surfaces in order that they can be used year round without getting muddy or wet feet for the users and consequently transferred onto the equipment.

Had you forgotten Christmas is just around the corner? Don't forget, for that extra special present for local people or those who have moved away would be a copy of the Parish Council's recently published book of Tales from a Kent Village, see below:



Copies can be obtained direct from me or at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month. A member will be present on 12 November between 9.30am and 10.30am. It costs just £10, good value for money.

Don't forget to make contact with us if you have any comments, ideas or queries on 01732 832367 or by email clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com PLEASE DO NOT USE THE OLD EMAIL ADDRESS – WE WILL NOT RECEIVE IT.