

Centre Piece for October Keys Magazine

What a lovely Summer we have had and how refreshing it has been to be able to go out unimpeded with umbrellas and waterproofs. However, the downside has been the 'brown' countryside. I notice some of the trees are starting to change colour to indicate that Autumn has arrived and with this it is back to work with only memories of holidays to enjoy.

The Parish Council met for the first time since July on 12 September 2018. It was good, once again, to welcome a number of local residents to the meeting in order that they could express their views on subjects of particular relevance to them and others at their location or same situation – more about this later.

Members welcomed a new co-opted member to the September meeting, Mr David Cuss who they are sure is going to be a great asset to the Council. At the same meeting they were able to co-opt a further new member Mr Gregory Elliott. There is one vacancy still outstanding so please do make contact with me if you feel you could contribute to community matters either with new ideas, some expertise or just local knowledge. There are few qualifications necessary being over 18, living locally and enthusiastic are the main ones.

Two local parents came to the meeting to alert the Parish Council to the perennial problem of school bus transport. Once again Arriva have failed to provide the right number of seats on buses for young people attending secondary schools in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Many arrive full in the village or on leaving school in the afternoon not enough space for all to be accommodated. This results in parents who have paid for transport for their offspring having to reorganise their work to take them to school. Our local County Councillor and MP have been made aware of this problem which needs to be resolved now. It must be most unsettling for students not knowing if and when they will get to school, thus often missing important teaching input.

The usual traffic issues were covered, they included that of the problems of speeding along Nizels Lane which were of concern to a number of local residents attending the meeting. A technical assessment has been undertaken of possible improvements and currently the area is being looked at by KCC. The feeling is that residents would like the road to remain a rural road and be categorised as such allowing for speed limits to be imposed but there are a number of other issues which need to be dealt with, not least, the cutting back of vegetation to improve visibility, road maintenance and drainage problems. The Parish Council will be asking for this to be considered at the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board.

Another traffic issue is that along Stocks Green Road. Following the questionnaire given to all residents it became clear that the vast majority favoured the construction of a footway along the road. A technical assessment had agreed this was possible so the Parish Council is now seeking a quotation from an appropriate professional to draw up an outline planning application for this as well as suggesting further traffic calming measures.

The third traffic issue is along the B245. The quotation for roundels to be painted on the road has now been withdrawn as KCC now say it is illegal in a lit area. The Council is now looking into providing an interactive reminder sign. The Speedwatch Team were at work last week and in an hour found 25 speeding vehicles near to Foxbush, details of which the police have been made aware.

They have unfortunately lost two members and urgently need some more volunteers to help with this. Please contact me if you are able to help and I can pass your contact details on to the Team.

Whilst on the subject of volunteers there are two more opportunities to volunteer your skills. Firstly we are in urgent need of more Volunteer Flood Wardens. This is not normally an onerous job but would be of vital importance should we, once again, be in a flooding situation. The last occasion was, of course in 2013/14 Christmas/New Year flooding. Volunteers are normally asked to cover a small area together with another volunteer to keep in contact, give out information etc to residents. There is a training session planned for 6 October to be held in Tonbridge and it would be great if you are able to help if you could attend this.

The final opportunity for volunteering is for someone who is interested in promoting public rights of way. It would be good if someone who uses the footpaths in the area regularly could alert the Parish Council to problems such as overgrown vegetation, broken gates/stiles etc. and who could promote the use of our extensive network of public rights of way in Hildenborough. Please get in touch if you think this could be you.

It is such a shame that our Village sign is not often noticed by visitors or anyone else entering the village so when the Open Spaces Committee met they discussed what could be done about this. It was agreed it would be taken down and painted and then re-erected at a lower level where everyone can admire it.

Currently the Council is awaiting the final sections of fencing for the extension to the play area in West Wood which is looking very inviting in spite of the unsightly Heras fencing currently in place. The new fencing should be in place by the time you read this as it is promised for the week beginning 17 September. There will also be another seat provided although this may take a while to organise. It will be installed on the blank concrete base where we assume there once was a seat!

The new replacement roundabout is now installed in the Recreation Ground with only the wet pour surrounding it to be repaired. The rowler which was installed when it was replaced in the exercise area has now been re-erected in the correct position. At last the whole area is, or will shortly, be complete.

After a great deal of effort over many months, if not years, KCC have agreed to repair the Library fence on 1st October, so this should be a great improvement to Riding Lane.

As ever do let us have your ideas, suggestions or any query you wish to raise by email to clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk or ring 01732 832367 (please leave a message with your contact details if I cannot answer at that time) or by letter to the usual address. A member will be present at the Farmers' Market on 9 October between 10 and 11 am. The usual bus and train timetables will be available and an opportunity to discuss matters with them.