

Centre Piece for August Keys

It is reassuring that, as I write this, there are fewer restrictions on what we should or shouldn't do. Let us hope that it remains that way. As I write this, Leicester is experiencing a second lockdown due to too many new cases of COVID-19 so we hope that everyone will respect the safety measures in order that we all can continue to enjoy the lifting of some restrictions.

The Parish Council met, virtually, on Wednesday 8 July and welcomed two new members who were co-opted during the June meeting and reported in Centre Piece last month. It is to be welcomed that such virtual meetings can be used for the Parish Council to continue with its work.

Prior to the business of the meeting, the chair, Margaret Coles, sadly informed members of the news of the death of Terry Barton, who has not only been a Borough Councillor for Hildendenborough for many years, but also a member for many years prior to becoming chair of the Parish Council from 2006 until his retirement in 2011. He was a familiar figure around the village and served the community well for many years. He had been instrumental in providing many new facilities and improvements in the village for residents.

The business of the evening mainly centred around planning issues and the opening up our play and leisure facilities. Disappointment was expressed regarding the approval of the planning application for the Volvo site because the points of concern raised by the Parish Council and a number of local residents had been totally ignored by the planning officers of the Borough Council.

Another point of interest was the proposals circulated by Berkeley Homes regarding the re-development of the Fidelity site into residential use. These proposals, it is understood, will be taken forward and plans prepared to be submitted to the Borough Council late in the Summer. When these are available the Parish Council will consider them along with all the points and comments made and received from local residents to formulate their comments.

The other planning issue was that of the Borough Council's decision to adhere rigidly to the 21 day time allocation for comments on planning applications. This will not in itself impact on the Parish Council as the Planning Committee meets every 2 weeks but the withdrawal of sending out hard copies of plans will. In order to make comment the Parish Council will need to obtain internet connection and a large screen to view plans in the Village Hall once meetings are permitted again. Discussions are already underway with the Management of the Village Hall.

The other area for much discussion was the opening up of the Council's play areas for children to use once again. Unfortunately many people wondered why they remained closed after the date on which the Government allowed them to open again. This was because there had been unauthorised use of the play areas which had been vandalised and the safety surface strewn with broken glass bottles. However, it didn't go without notice, that following the 4th of July a number of parents didn't read the closed signs with directions to our website for more information on what was happening, but endangered their children by either climbing under the tape or taking it down to enter and use the unsafe areas. The Council can appreciate that Tonbridge play areas were open but they have a fully trained maintenance and ground staff whereas Hildendenborough only has one contractor undertaking work on one day a week which made it impossible, given the Government's

short notice to get safety instructions agreed and printed as well as the above mentioned work on making the areas safe to use.

We are sure that everyone appreciated the seriousness of the COVID-19 infection even though some people are not badly affected by it, some have serious with long lasting side effects or even fatal results from it. It is with that in mind that the Council is doing everything it can to make its leisure facilities safe. Rules have been fixed to or near the entrance to the playgrounds, fitness area, ball court and cycle track.

Rules for using the children's play area

- ✓ These rules are **in addition** to the normal rules of the play area
- ✓ Please ensure you **maintain social distancing** in line with the current government guidance
- ✓ **If the play area is busy, please come back another time or use the field area**
- ✓ **Only one child/household group on any piece of equipment at any one time** – Please wait your turn keeping off the safety surfacing.
- ✓ **Parents/adults should wipe down equipment before and after use**
- ✓ **Parents/adults should wipe down any gates/benches/picnic tables before and after use**
- ✓ Please ensure **only one adult enters the play area with their child/children**
- ✓ Please be considerate in the amount of time spent on equipment so others can use it
- ✓ If a piece of play equipment is being used that you wish to use, please queue whilst maintaining current social distancing
- ✓ **Please ensure you and your child/children do not touch your face, put your mouths on equipment or your hands in your mouth**
- ✓ If you have to sneeze, please sneeze into a tissue or arm when a tissue is not available
- ✓ Please **use hand sanitiser before and after using each separate piece of play equipment**
- ✓ **No food or drink should be consumed within the play area**
- ✓ Please **sanitise your hands after using the play equipment**
- ✓ Please **place litter in the bins provided. If a bin is full please take your litter home**

The Council did receive the good news that the Village Hall is making plans to make some of its facilities available once again to clubs and associations. They, like the Parish Council, have undertaken rigorous risk assessments and are putting in place systems to respond to them. They, we know, are in the process of contacting regular users to see if they are prepared to abide by the new rules and provide the Management Committee with their own risk assessments.

It is sad to have to report that our usual sports clubs are not able to use the Recreation Ground this year although both the Cricket Club and Stoolball Club hope for a resumption in 2021. The tennis club as you have probably noticed is able to operate following strict social distancing, hand cleansing etc.

The Council was very pleased to receive the news that the Farmers' Market is now able to operate in the car park of the Church Centre and it will send two members to the Market on 14th July in the hope that they can now resume their regular monthly appearance.

Don't forget to visit our new website www.hildenboroughpc.org.uk The latest news on playgrounds will be found there. As usual do contact us with concerns, ideas or enquiries by email to clerkhildnboroughpc@gmail.com or by phone 01732 832367 (do leave a message if I cannot answer your call and I will get back to you as soon as possible but please leave a phone number) or by post.

If you are able to get away for a holiday or take a break during the Summer do stay safe and have an enjoyable time. I will report again in October Keys following the Summer break in August of the Parish Council.

Pam Gow