

## **Centre Piece for June Keys Magazine**

I said last time that hopefully some restrictions of Lockdown would have been lifted by the time I wrote again, and they have as a result of the majority of the population behaving responsibly. However, this loosening of restrictions has been very marginal, with guidelines being somewhat confusing. The Parish Council does, at this time, need to keep its play and exercise equipment closed because of the fear of contamination but has been able to open up the basket ball court as it is deemed safe to play basket ball whilst maintaining the 2m social distance.

However we do continue to have problems with young people completely disregarding any restrictions put in place for the safety of us all. There are reports of social meetings in West Wood and of camp building. This in spite of it being dismantled continues to be used as well as groups of youngsters climbing into the play area. In the Recreation Ground it has been gatherings within the grounds and in the car park. Of course, these have been reported to the police who have been very responsive. In particular our new PSCO James Billson has been extremely supportive and has been seen in the village on many occasions.

Since I last wrote the Parish Council has met remotely twice and has finally caught up with itself. They first met on 29 April when there was a lot to discuss on the Council's finances. The Annual Accounts were agreed as was the return to the External Auditor. An internal audit had been successfully undertaken remotely. It was a strange experience and took much longer to complete as, for example, documents needed to be scanned to send instead of just being accessed directly from the files. The Council also took the decision to look into changing their bank accounts in order to start internet banking. This was brought to the fore because of the difficulty in paying accounts during the Lockdown.

The other notable discussion took place on the Highways Improvement Plan. There were many areas raised by the Council for improvement by KCC and they had reported on all aspects. The junction of Leigh Road and Tonbridge Road is being investigated to see if it is feasible to widen it to allow a filter left hand lane but it is thought this will be far too expensive. Currently they are investigating the cost of removing to a different position the cabinets containing all the broadband and phone connections. It is thought this would amount to tens of thousands of pounds and consequently be untenable.

Many complaints, prior to Lockdown, were continually being received about parking on the footways opposite the Harvester filling station. KCC will monitor this once we are back to 'normal'.

The problem of HGVs using Foxbush as a turning bay was also considered. KCC have offered to put up signage of 'unsuitable for HGVS' which the Council has accepted. Let us hope this does deter them.

The installation of a footway along Stocks Green Road to Rings Hill was also looked into. This has raised more questions on acquisition of land and the costs involved. However, the Council is seeking to get this reviewed at the Joint Transportation Board's meeting with the support of our Borough and County Councillors.

The good news was the installation of the enhanced belisha beacons on the zebra crossing by the Medical Centre. Although its effectiveness has not been completely tested since Lockdown, it does make the crossing considerably more visible.

Two other places of concern to residents and school pupils are the zebra crossing near Riding Lane and the B245 at Watts X to Mill Lane. These are both in the process of planning the best way forward. KCC is looking at improved signage and the Council has suggested enhanced belisha beacons at the zebra crossing.

Of major concern has been speed through the village during Lockdown. It seems that many have seen the lack of vehicles on the roads as an opportunity to test out how fast they can drive along the B245. It is highly dangerous since those taking their daily exercise would stand no chance of escaping their wheels should they be crossing the road, or should they lose control of their vehicles. We are not the only village to be affected and the police are aware. With their current huge workload I am sure that speeding is not high on the list of priorities.

The Council continues to wait for the parking investigation suggestions from the Borough Council. They had been told they would be with the Council in January but, in spite of continued requests these are not yet to hand.

The second meeting this month was held on 13 May when the chair for the following year was elected. There is no change in chair, vice chair or on any of the committees. However we are now able to co-opt a member to fill the vacancy. If you are interested in supporting the community, have ideas for improvement or have a specialist knowledge of value to the Council please do consider contacting me. I can give you further details of duties, which are not too onerous. The Council meets on the second Wednesday of the month and asks that each member supports one of its committees.

At the meeting on 13 May, the new website was discussed and a decision made on the way ahead. This should not be too long in coming as it is expected to be able to go live before July, so watch this space for more details.

The picnic area on the Village Green was approved at the meeting and quotations discussed. One was accepted for the installation of a small area containing a picnic table and seating area in the vicinity of the fountain. This will give some shade, not impede mowing, not become flooded in winter as did the old seating, and should provide a restful area for those working in the nearby during their lunch break.

As ever do contact me if you are willing to be co-opted to the Parish Council, have a query, idea or comment on the usual phone number of 01732 832367 (please leave a message if I do not answer and I will return the call), or by email [clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com) and of course you can always send a letter to the Council's address.

Keep Safe,