

CENTRE PIECE FOR KEYS MAGAZINE MARCH EDITION

So the snow has finally arrived! It is very cold as I write this, currently -2C, but with the sun glinting on the fallen snow, very beautiful. I think sunshine always encourages everyone to smile and be more positive during this current period of lockdown. The Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 10 February, 2021 was a very positive and busy meeting with much business completed and many decisions taken.

Probably the most important for all residents of Hildenborough was the launching of the Hildenborough Neighbourhood Plan. This Plan, once completed, will enable the village to have a meaningful voice on important developments in the Village on such things as highways, infrastructure, the environment and planning. It is going to take some time to formulate, an estimate of 3 to 4 years has been given. This is necessary as an enormous amount of information will need to be gathered from around the whole area, from published sources and statistics as well as maps and from this future plans developed. If you have a keen interest or skill on one of the aspects mentioned above do please get in touch. The Annual Parish Meeting to be held via Zoom on Wednesday 10 March, 2021 at 7.30 pm will be devoted to this subject so the Council is anxious to get as many residents as possible to come along and hear what is involved with the hope that some will join the Steering Committee to move the project forward. An invitation will be at the end of the published Agenda on our website or can be requested direct from me (email address etc at the foot of this).

The Council is very pleased that a number of local residents attended the February remote meeting. One resident was concerned, as is the Council, over the ponding on the Village Green. I am sure most of you will know this is, and always seems to have been, a perennial problem. The Council will seek, once again, to find an acceptable solution. In the past many resolutions have been put forward but on each occasion there has been some reason for not pursuing it further for reasons of effectiveness and finance. This time they have agreed, once again, to try to find a resolution with KCC which would allow them to discharge the excess water into the drainage system. This seems to be the only route out since there are no nearby streams. In the past the Council has not been allowed to do this but it is hoped that on this occasion, together with additional measures, it will be acceptable.

The good news was that Hildenborough Football Team representatives attended the meeting with a view to establishing the team base on the Recreation Ground. Members are very positive about the prospect of welcoming back to the Village a lively football interest and are awaiting the team's request in terms of when, how long, numbers etc.

Another local resident expressed concerns over the proposal for a dog exercise area in West Wood on the site currently not included in the other facilities of play area, field, cycle track and woodland walks, beside the B245. Notice will be taken of these concerns should the proposal be taken forward. It is necessary to identify the planning regulations first to establish that a project of this nature is suitable for this site.

The ongoing problem of train hooter noise was again raised. However, this has moved a stage further with a meeting arranged before the end of February to try to get the rail company to address the problem. This problem badly affects a number of residents in this area and others along the main line.

A remote meeting with the Environment Agency has also established the current plan for the expansion of the Leigh Flood barrier and the building of an embankment to protect Hildenborough.

It is hoped this will be completed by 2023 but there are legal points to overcome as well as the addressing of issues raised by residents in Stacey Road where the embankment ends.

Residents in Nizels Lane have again raised concerns on safety aspects of the Lane to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders as well as vehicles using it. They have requested a number of improvements which currently KCC have not included in the current plans for work along the lane. The Parish Council debated this at length during the February meeting but decided in the end that the best way for them to pursue this would be to wait until the current planned improvements were in place and then assess the improvement these made. If it was still considered necessary to pursue more improvements, the Council would then consider including them in their Highways Development Plan.

The plan was reviewed in the light of the improvements achieved last year, namely the work along Nizels Lane, signage to deter HGVs using Foxbush, and enhanced belisha beacons at Coldharbour Lane, to bring higher up the list, which is long, the conclusion of measures to address the problem of footway parking opposite the Harvester Filling Station, signage to assist the safe crossing of school pupils at Watts Cross and improvements to the zebra crossing near to Riding Lane. The Parish Council will be providing funding towards these during the coming financial year.

An additional volunteer has been added to the number of litter pickers in the village. Equipment and training has been provided to the young person concerned. The litter problem simply does not go away. Our maintenance contractor gets very disheartened when the day after clearing West Wood and the Recreation Ground there are accumulations, particularly around the car park in the Recreation Ground the next day. Any other volunteers would be most welcome.

Finally, a warning to watch out for fraudulent offers. The police are frequently circulating us with details of the latest scam. So often these seem very attractive and genuine and it so easy to be duped into investigating further. The warning is to take care and never give your bank details or other personal details to accept offers. The message below is from Kent Police:

- ***If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number 7726 which is free of charge.***
- ***If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft, you should report this directly to Action Fraud either online; actionfraud.police.uk or via phone 0300 123 2040.***
- ***If you have any information relating to vaccine fraud you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers COVID Fraud Hotline online; covidfraudhotline.***

As ever, if you would like to make comment, suggestions or make an enquiry do contact me by phone 01732 832367 or by email: clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com . Do leave a message if I do not answer as I will return your call as soon as I can (providing you leave your phone number). Members are not able to attend the Farmers' Market due to restrictions during Lockdown but will hopefully be back later in the Spring. Our website for zoom invitations: www.hildenboroughpc.org.uk/

Keep safe, and if this weather persists -keep warm!

Pam Gow

David: is it possible to put this text underneath the Power Point Slide ?

This is a chance for you to find out more and get involved in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Hildenborough!

This is a fantastic opportunity for the village to inform future planning for the area in all aspects.

- Help us to become more environmentally friendly
- Help us to plan the way forward to improve the infrastructure in the village to address changing local needs
- Do you think the roads, footways and cycle track could be improved?
- How can we support and encourage local businesses?
- How can we help our village become one of the best places to live in Kent?

We are hoping that representatives from local clubs and societies will join us and any other residents who are interested in helping us shape Hildenborough for the future. We want to hear from you!