

Centre Piece – December 2016

We were all so lucky on Monday, 31 October, that the day proved to be warm and dry, contributing to the celebratory atmosphere at the opening of the long awaited Activity Zone. After the chairman, Claire Sheldon, welcomed everyone, all seemed to be absorbed in the festive mood and enjoyed Dame Kelly Holmes' speech to officially open the Activity Zone as well as her demonstrations on some of the fitness equipment to encourage others to have a go. Many of our sponsors and those so kindly giving donations towards the equipment and its installation were able to come along and admire both the play area and fitness equipment. To add to the event Lauren Barber and her husband helped to demonstrate the fitness equipment and give advice.

All those attending were able to enjoy light refreshments supplied by Café 1809 and a chat with Kelly as well as friends and sponsors. At end of school the whole area became alive with children who had persuaded their parents to be diverted to the Recreation Ground so all the new equipment could be tested. The verdict was 'brilliant'. The young children were happy to receive balloons from the festive decorations to take home if they so wished. One generous resident, (who we would like to thank) had decorated the side of the play area with bunting which greatly enhanced the atmosphere.

Currently there are a few snagging issues but hopefully these will be quickly resolved, the most important being the recumbent cycle's pedals are extremely stiff. This coming week will see the erection of the official 'thank you board' and the seat in the new play area for parents supervising the younger children. It is hoped that another bench or similar can be provided the other end for youngsters who have exhausted themselves on the zip wire or climbing cone and need a 'breather'.

The Parish Council met on the 16th November and among other topics for discussion was that of the draft Local Plan out for consultation by the Borough Council.

A number of local residents attended the meeting to express their concerns about an area in Stocks Green which has been identified by the Borough Council as a possible site for development to be included in the Local Plan.

Central to the issue was that any development in Stocks Green could increase the risk of flooding due in particular to changes in the local landscape, as well as additional pressure on the local infrastructure. A more detailed description of the issues is included in the Minutes of the meeting - available on the Parish Council's website.

The Parish Council will be considering all concerns as they draw up their response to the consultation on the Local Plan by the Borough Council. It is hoped that by the time you read this, the response will also be available to read on our website.

The Parish Council had a very nasty shock when they received their bills for electricity and water this month. The electricity bill was over 5 times bigger than usual. After further investigation it was discovered that the meter had recorded a usage of over 250 units a day during one week in August. After detective work to ascertain how this could have happened there seemed to be no answer other than the meter had developed a fault during that week since no one was using the Pavilion at all at that time and it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to have used this large number of units even with every appliance left on 24 hrs a day. The matter is still being investigated

by means of a check meter. The other shock was the water bill – we were aware that someone had entered the Pavilion and left a tap running which was discovered by another user. Because the Pavilion is not in daily use, even a dripping tap can cause a large amount of water being used and in this case it was 50 cubic meters! So our plea to all users is please, please make sure you turn all taps off very securely when you have used them. The Parish Council does like to provide these facilities for groups who use the Recreation Ground but they are unable to sustain bills as large as this.

At the risk of ending with yet another moan – dog fouling on the Recreation Ground near to the tennis courts is getting to be an enormous problem. One very kind resident cleaned up this mess for us before the mowers could spread it throughout the field. Please be vigilant and let me know if you see someone not clearing up after their dog and better still if you know their identity we can involve the dog warden. The Parish Council is very grateful to the majority of dog walkers who do clean up after their dogs and also let us know when something needs our attention.

Tales from a Kent Village – Hildenborough as seen through the Parish Council Archives will be available early in 2017. There is an opportunity for you to become a subscriber with your name published in the book, as was the case with Hildenborough from A to Z, if you order before publication. So watch out for the leaflet in January Keys which will give you information on how to be included, price etc. and a form to return to us to be included.

One last message to bus users, one of our members has new timetables which will be available at the Farmers' Market on Tuesday 6 December, but has asked that we let you know that the Underriver bus has now been withdrawn on Wednesdays and Saturdays. There are other minor changes to routes, for instance the 204 which travelled via Brookmead no longer does so but service 202 does. So please do check before you try to travel by bus.

As always do contact us if you have ideas, comments, or queries either at the Farmers' Market on 2nd Tuesday of the month, or email us on clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk or phone me on 01732 832378.