

## Centre Piece for January 2018 Keys Magazine

I hope everyone has had a good Christmas holiday and is now ready for another busy and, hopefully, exciting year ahead. We have already had our first taste of snow in the area, fortunately, not very much in Hildenborough to cause difficulties travelling or walking along the footways. There is advice on our noticeboards and website for those who use the grit/salt mix in our and the Borough Council bins in Riding Lane, near to One Stop and in Brookmead.

I write this just after the final Parish Council Meeting in 2017. 2017 has been a busy year for the Parish Council and much has been achieved or is in the process of being achieved. Many residents, schools and other organisations helped with the 'Spring Clean' earlier in the year, collecting numerous sacks of rubbish. The residents who took part also undertake litter clearance on a regular basis. Their work was recognised in an award received by a representative at a recent ceremony in the Castle, presented by the Mayor. The Parish Council would like to thank all the residents who help in this way to make the Village a more attractive place to live.

In partnership with Hildenborough Conservation Group, the Council worked with KCC on a flood alleviation scheme, just started in West Wood. The aim is to build up brush bunds which the Conservation Group have begun during their November coppicing sessions and later peak flow barriers will be inserted in the streams which cross the woodland in order to slow down the run off after heavy rain. Other measures are being taken further upstream also to help protect the houses subject to flooding in the area.

Another issue which is causing concern to a number of residents is the proposal by KCC to reduce the budget allocated for bus subsidies. Although the services to be affected are not yet known, threats hang over a number of subsidised routes passing through Hildenborough or those used by residents from Tonbridge or Sevenoaks. Some of the subsidised routes which we believe could be affected are 204 to Underriver, 210 to Leigh, 235 via Weald to Sevenoaks and the commuter bus, 200. KCC is to consult on this in the New Year, starting on 17 January and finishing on 20 March. If you, or someone you know, will be affected please do make response through the official channel (the consultation will be available on KCC website) and do please let the Parish Council know your views so they can frame their response as a true reflection of residents' views.

At this time of year in particular no one wants to be the victim of a house break-in or burglary so this could be a timely reminder to make sure you protect your property as best you can. Kent Police recommend that you:

- keep keys, cash and expensive items out of view
- use timer switches on lights and radios to make your home look occupied
- keep gates locked and boundaries secure

- lock away bikes, tools and garden items which could be stolen or used to break into your home

Don't forget you can take similar steps to keep your car safe (remove expensive items, lock and alarm it, store keys out of sight and safely)

Other measures you could take are: security mark items such as bikes, mobiles and laptops; keep a note of serial numbers, receipts; photograph expensive or unique items; install a safe bolted to the ground or similar; register important items for free on the national Immobilise-data base.

Be warned, recently burglars/house breakers have been active in Hildenborough.

Talking about safety, speed was again to the forefront of discussions at the Parish Council Meeting in December. The Speedwatch volunteers have now been trained and will begin monitoring speed at specified points in the Village in the New Year. (They can always do with more volunteers, so please contact me if you can help – contact details at the foot of this Centre Piece.)

The Parish Council is also investigating some more signage to remind drivers of the 30mph limit along the B245 and are seeking permission from KCC to have these erected at critical points. They are also looking into similar signage for Stocks Green Road. It is felt that the reduction in the speed limits both along the B245 and Stocks Green Road has been effective but there continue to be a number of drivers who ignore the speed limit or just forget it is there.

We have been chasing, frequently, the Belisha beacon failure near to Coldharbour Lane. This has not been working for many weeks and could lead to drivers not being aware of the crossing. Currently an engineer has been on site but failed to get the beacon alight. We are awaiting an explanation!

Members agreed to make a donation towards the erection of a plaque to commemorate Sqn.Ldr Brian Goodale DFC who took part in the Dambusters Raid during World War II. This is in response to an appeal by Hildenborough Historical Society who is keen to erect a blue plaque on the house where he lived during the year of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the raid.

Work has begun on identifying suitable play equipment to extend West Wood play area and replace the roundabout in the Recreation Ground. Local children will be consulted on the final selection early next year. Talking of play equipment the toddler swings in the Recreation Ground have been removed as they leech a black substance in wet weather. These will soon be replaced.

Have you noticed the additional Rowan tree recently on the Village Green? This was planted on 5 December and the other Rowan tree was professional secured following gales

which destroyed its original fixing. Fortunately the tree seems to have survived this battering.

What a difference the LED lighting has made along Noble Tree Road and Rings Hill. Hopefully this will result in less frequent failures in that area as well as providing a brighter, clear light.

Confirmation has been received by the Parish Council that the extension to the Leigh Flood Barrier and Hildenborough bund are going ahead and should be completed by 2022. This will give added protection to a number of houses in Hildenborough, but please be aware that currently there continues to be a risk of flooding following heavy rain. Make sure, if you are at risk, you have signed up for warnings/alerts from the Environment Agency.

One final plea – responsible dog owners are using the dog waste bins throughout the village but it has been noticed that one (or maybe more than one) is bagging up the waste deposits from their dog(s) and then throwing the bags into the woodland in West Wood. If you know who this is please let us know as this practice may well endanger wildlife and is not at all pleasant for residents using the area.

Don't forget we still have a few copies of the Parish Council's publication 'Hildenborough from A to Z' at a cost of £9.50 and copies are available of our latest publication 'Tales from a Kent Village, Hildenborough, as seen through the Parish Archives' at a cost of £10. These are available from me or at the Farmers' Market.

As always, you can contact me on 01732 832367 (leave a message if I do not answer and I will get back to you as soon as possible), by email [clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hildenboroughpc.kentparishes.gov.uk) or by letter to the usual address. Two members will be attending the Farmers' Market on Tuesday, 9 January 2018. They will have copies of the publications, timetables and other information leaflets as well as noting any queries, problems or ideas for the Council to address.

I wish everyone a happy and successful 2018.

*Pam Gow*