

HILDENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

60 Knowsley Way Hildenborough Tonbridge Kent TN11 9LQ

Telephone: 01732 832367

clerk@thisishildenborough.co.uk

The Annual Parish Meeting

***held in the Main Hall at the Village Hall, Riding Lane, on Wednesday 17
March 2010 at 8pm***

MINUTES

Mr T Barton, Chairman of the Parish Council, was in the chair. He thanked the exhibitors who were from the Sunday Bowls Club, Hildenborough Village Preservation Association, St John's Church, Hildenborough Gardeners' Society, Hildenborough Tennis Club, the police, Hildenborough Farmer's Market and the Stoolball Club. Approximately 70 people attended.

1. Chairman's Welcome

The chairman welcomed everyone and directed attention to the photographs of 'old Hildenborough' hung around the hall and asked for copies anyone might have of Hildenborough since the first war.

2. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Angela Scally, Chris Smith, Geoff Watts, Bryan Winter, Paul Lane, Valerie Dagger

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 18 March 2009

It was agreed to take them as read since a précis was read by the clerk and copies were available throughout the hall. They were agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

4. Matters Arising

There were none

5. Chairman's Address and Report

5.1 The Chairman said that this was the third year of office of a four year term and that next year several members would retire, consequently new members would be sought. He urged those present to consider standing, directing them for further information on the Parish Council's activities to members, the surgeries at the Farmers' Market, the Clerk, the notice boards and website.

5.2 During the year there had been just as many planning applications as in the previous year.

5.3 There had been several outbreaks of vandalism on the Recreation Ground and various suggestions had been put forward to counter this, including taking the car park out of use overnight.

5.4 The Tennis Club had requested support for installing floodlighting the tennis courts. Their task was now to find funding.

5.5 The West Wood play area had been opened at the beginning of this year and the area was now completed with the refurbishment of the slide. There continued to be problems with the closures on the gates of the play area.

5.6 The Conservation Society had once again coppiced an area in West Wood during the Autumn and a section had been undertaken between the service road and the B.245 by a member and a group of volunteers. Three trees had been planted by a member for the Breathing Spaces Tree O'Clock project.

5.7 The proposed car park in Mount Pleasant continued to be on hold.

5.8 A youth project for the Recreation Ground was being worked on by PCSO Toni Matthew to find out what facilities they would like.

5.9 Last year KCC, the trustees, had improved the War Memorial from a trust set up when the Memorial was donated in 1920. The Parish Council had considered taking this over but had decided to leave arrangements as they are.

6.0 The Parish Council was to have organized a Housing Needs Survey but because the developers of Oakhurst, Bank Lane had a private survey undertaken this had not been progressed.

6.1 An appraisal was being undertaken of the Hildenborough Conservation Area and a Hildenborough Character Area Assessment. Attempts to consult with everyone did not appear to have been very energetic but there will be an exhibition in the Village Hall in June.

6.2 There is a Speed Watch scheme managed by the police and manned by volunteers to monitor and report the vehicles travelling over the speed limit. The volunteers monitor the speed of vehicles, one week in four, during rush hours, probably between 7am-8am and 4pm-6pm at the least. Any prospective volunteers were requested to contact the clerk.

6. Questions from the Floor

6.1 A statement was made from the floor on how excellent and appreciated it is having the Parish Council Surgery at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month.

6.2 A questioner wonder if the Parish Council could achieve more continuity if half the Council was elected every two years.

Answer: That would be a matter for those responsible for determining the electoral arrangements.

7. Presentation by Mr Chris Rowley on the Excavations of the Powder Mills

Mr Rowley said the excavations were made possible by a Heritage Lottery Grant of £20,000 and from this they were able to excavate the site, make a documentary and write and publish two books. The work was all undertaken by The Leigh Historical Society and additional volunteers. It took three and a half years to complete. He then showed the DVD which told the story of its development and gave details of what was found.

8. Questions from the floor

8.1 Is it going to be possible for anyone to see it?

The path to the site crosses private property and therefore access is not easy as permission needs to be obtained from the owner. Mr Rowley would not recommend visiting the area unaccompanied as dangers were not obvious now as the area was gradually being overtaken by vegetation in spite of treatment last year, Early on consideration was given to connecting it to Haysden Country Park but this had not been possible. It would be too costly to open the site and Mr Rowley suggested visiting the Faversham Mills which includes a model and would be very similar. There were two books an historical book which was in its third edition and there was also a site Gazetteer with ground plans.

The chairman thanked Mr Rowley and welcomed Fidelity International representatives, Mr Trevor Barden, Project Director and Mr Richard Wotton, Executive Director, Head of Real Estate.

9. Presentation by Fidelity International

Mr Trevor Barden, gave a presentation on the Phase Three development of Oakhill House.

He explained that Fidelity International had its roots in the USA and was set up by Edward C Johnson II and was currently managed by Edward C Johnson III. It was established in the UK in the 1970s and has grown to be one of the largest UK companies. They work from three locations Hildenborough, Kingswood in Surrey and London.

The company moved to Hildenborough to Oakhill House, a large Georgian house with planning consent to expand its industrial use. Fidelity's development was in place of it. Their two previous developments enlarged the site in stages.

The current project included office accommodation and an underground car park on three levels. The site now provides 576 parking spaces but the company encourages its staff to cycle where feasible.

Environmental considerations had high priority with enlargements of ponds, protecting great crested newts, and landscaping with evergreen and deciduous trees.

The new building utilized a number of energy efficient systems including fresh air free cooling, shading over windows and energy efficient roofing materials and insulation, as well as water harvesting systems.

The Phase III project was projected to be complete in June.

10. Questions from the Floor

10.1 When you dug down for the car park was it into weald clay?

The site investigation went down between 40m and 50m. which proved to be blue clay all the way. Springs were expected to be found but it was dry.

10.2 How do you keep it free of water?

The basement forms a box and is insulated with three or four layers of water proofing.

10.3 What did you do with the clay spoil?

It was used for land infill capping in the Sevenoaks area.

10.4 Are there likely to be any further developments of the site?

It is impossible to say, but a substantial part is in Green Belt and development of the Grade II listed building is heavily controlled.

10.5 The light from the windows is very obtrusive in Coldharbour Lane, could blinds be installed?

They do have solar space blinds and the lights are out when unoccupied. Boundary planting will help to obscure light but it will take time to establish.

10.6 We have had to live through dust and noise, can we come and see the new development?

A visit can be arranged for people living adjacent to the site.

10.7 At the beginning of the project local residents were kept informed by a Newsletter of progress but there have been no communications recently.

A newsletter had not been sent out since the principal contractor had finished, but there will be another one in the future.

10.8 Will the planting screen the building?

Yes, a fence was being erected together with planting of evergreens and deciduous trees.

10.9 When it rains heavily my garden in Woodfield Avenue gets flooded, should a ditch be dug?

This would be taken up with the corporate service team. The questioner was asked to discuss the matter after the meeting.

Mr Barton thanked Mr Barden and Mr Wootton for their presentation.

He closed the meeting by thanking the Parish Council members, the clerk and Mr Pat King for their work throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm when refreshments were served.