

## **Hildenborough Parish Council Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Tonbridge and Malling Boundary Review**

### **Effective and Convenient Local Government**

**Hildenborough** is a busy and growing village and rural parish on the outskirts of Tonbridge. It is located 2 miles (3.2 km) north-west of Tonbridge and 5 miles (8 km) south-east of Sevenoaks. The village lies in the River Medway valley and is separated from Sevenoaks by the steep River Hill.

There is one main road that runs through the village, the B245, which is by-passed by the A21. The boundary to Tonbridge lies just after the Hilden Manor restaurant and just before the sports fields of Tonbridge School. The railway line and busy A21 separates Hildenborough from Leigh (Sevenoaks DC) and the village of Shipbourne is separated from Hildenborough by the extensive farm and woodlands of the Fairlawn Estate.

These create natural boundaries on the ground and clearly identify the boundary between Hildenborough and Tonbridge town, as well as the neighbouring parishes of Shipbourne and Leigh. The boundaries of the village therefore make sense and Hildenborough PC does not feel that change is required to current warding arrangements.

### **The Community**

The village benefits from a large 11-acre recreation ground with play equipment, a ball court and tennis courts, and the Westwood, a largely wooded area also with play equipment for younger children and a well-used bike track. The village green, situated in the village conservation area, is a relaxing space with seating. In recent years the Victorian village water fountain was moved there from the busy B245.

As Tonbridge grew in the 1840's a new church was built for the people living in the Hildenborough district. Dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, the church was consecrated on 9 July 1844. There is also a small Gospel Hall in the centre of the village, established around 1850.

Hildenborough has a large village hall and the Church Centre is located next to St Johns. Both facilities are well used by local groups. Hildenborough has a weekly farmers' market which is held every Tuesday morning at the Church Centre. The farmers' market opened in 2008.

There is a local café situated on Riding Lane and a number of shops in the village. These include the One Stop convenience store and Post Office; a chemist; hairdresser and two estate agents. In addition, there are two petrol garages with attached convenience stores. The village has two pubs; the Half Moon and Flying Dutchman.

There is one private primary school in the village, Fosse Bank, one private secondary, Sackville, and two state primaries, Stocks Green school and Hildenborough CEP school. Hildenborough CEP was the first school in the village, and is over 150 years old. Both schools are popular and oversubscribed. There are also a number of pre-school facilities in the village.

The railway station, opened in 1868, was situated close to the existing houses at the time, which is now about one mile (one and a half kilometres) from the village centre.

The village's GP practice can be traced back to 1879. The Hildenborough and Tonbridge Medical Group now has a large, purpose-built medical centre in Westwood which also houses a dispensary. The practice has over 16,000 patients, with branch surgeries in the villages of Leigh and Weald, as well as the Trenchwood Medical Centre in north Tonbridge.

The Raphael Medical Centre in Coldharbour Lane offers Speech Therapy, Art & Music Therapy to help patients regain mental and physical abilities lost through serious illness or accidents.

There are several activities for children and teenagers in the village, including those run by Hildenborough Church. This includes Cubs, Beavers, Scouts, Brownies and Guides. There are also a number of sports clubs offering Badminton, Short Mat Bowls, Stoolball, Cricket and Tennis. Hildenborough Sports Association holds an annual running race. Riding Farm Equestrian Centre on Riding Lane offers horse riding lessons, livery facilities and school holiday activities.

Other clubs and activities include Hildenborough WI, the Gardeners Society, a Conservation Group and local History Society.

Parts of the village are low-lying and unfortunately often subject to flooding. This is an ongoing issue for the Parish Council and TMBC members. There are a number of volunteer flood wardens who work together when flooding is threatened to help protect homes that may be affected, and a store of sandbags etc. are kept in a container at Westwood. However, with the effects of climate change and increased rainfall in recent years this has become an all too frequent worry for a number of residents.

### **Electoral Equality**

Hildenborough has an active Parish Council [Hildenborough Parish Council – All About Hildenborough Parish Council \(hildenboroughpc.org.uk\)](http://hildenboroughpc.org.uk) and is represented on Tonbridge and Malling BC by two local members. The number of registered electors in the village in 2021 is 3,756 and is estimated to rise to 4,000 by 2027. This is fewer than the number of electors required to support two council members, however it needs to be noted that as one of the largest parishes in the Tonbridge and Malling district, Hildenborough is a popular village with a growing number of residents. It is therefore likely that the number of electors in 2027 will be higher than the estimated figure.

A new housing development has recently been granted planning permission for the development of 165 homes (27 houses and 138 apartments) on a large redundant office site in the centre of the village (Oakhill House). Work is about to commence with an anticipated completion date of 2023. Already begun is the development of a 75-bed nursing home on the old Volvo garage site. There are also a number of smaller developments underway including 3 houses on the site of the old Cock Horse Pub, and a new house is being built on Riding Lane.

The Tonbridge Local Plan includes a proposal for the development of 105 new homes on a green field site on Stocks Green Road and a consultation has begun regarding planning proposals for a residential development on the Fosse Bank school site. It is unclear at present as to whether either of these developments will be progressed. However, should this happen, along with the other housing developments already underway in the village, the number of electors in Hildenborough is likely to increase beyond the estimated figure by 2027.

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