



## **BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

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### **OBITUARY**

#### **COUNCILLOR EILEEN CANSDALE 17 February 1939 - 11 September 2021**

Cllr Eileen Cansdale represented the residents of Biddenden on the Parish Council from her election in 1999 until she passed away on 11 September 2021. She served as Chairman from 2003 – 2005 and was one of the longest serving councillors on the Parish Council. She was a well-liked and respected lady and there were few that could compete with her local knowledge.

She represented the interests of Biddenden's residents with fairness and kindness, but Eileen had not just chosen to serve her community as a Parish Councillor, as she had also been a Special Police Constable for several years and she maintained an interest in policing matters whilst on the Parish Council.

She was born in Biddenden at her parents' home at 20 High Street and, as she told The Bald Explorer in an interview in 2019, she had played in every house in the High Street during her childhood and lived in the High Street until she was 21.

Eileen married her husband Derek on 1 August 1959 at All Saints Parish Church, and became the proud mother of five children, and Granny to eleven grandchildren four great grandchildren and knew about the exciting news of two further great grandchildren.

A well-known figure in the village, Eileen had helped with grape picking at Biddenden Vineyards for many years, and was the Receptionist, dealing with prescriptions, when Headcorn Surgery used Biddenden Village Hall as a surgery. In recent years she could often be seen walking with her dog Pollyanna around the village and on the Millennium Field.

However, Eileen also had a bit of a daredevil side to her. Aged around 10 Eileen and a friend, aged 7, had gone to catch tadpoles in the Lion Pond, which then was just behind the Red Lion Pub. Having been forbidden to go, the girls went off, but her friend fell into the pond and couldn't swim. Eileen had to fish her out, saving her life. They stayed lifelong friends and often laughed about this over the years. Going forward, Eileen was a member of the 'Ton Up' club for doing a 100mph on the back of a motorcycle between Headcorn and Biddenden. She had also wanted to do wing-walking as a birthday present, but Headcorn aerodrome weren't too keen on that so she had to settle for something a little more sedate in her seventies, a parachute jump!

Eileen stayed community minded to the end. A few days before her death, Eileen stopped for a chat with a friend. She noticed that The Meadows road sign was looking sad and dirty and wanted to go and get a bucket of soapy water and a cloth so she could clean it. Her friend said she would do it as she lived nearest. That evening, Eileen attended her last Parish Council meeting on 7 September 2021.

She will be sorely missed by her friends and colleagues in the village as she was part of its fabric. At her funeral, the last piece of music played was "Rocking All Over The World". She had loved to dance to this, and it was a fitting tribute to a lady who was so full of life.