



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring 2005

## Can you help?

We want to distribute the newsletters as widely as possible. We have already had offers from some residents to deliver in their own roads—would you be prepared to deliver future issues in your road? Or part of it?

If so, please contact the parish office.  
See back page for contact details.

## Dates for your diary 2005

Parish Council Meeting  
14th March  
Robertsbridge Hall

Planning Meeting  
7th April  
Youth Centre

Parish Assembly  
11th April  
Robertsbridge Hall

Parish Council Meeting  
9th May

Dates of meetings for the next year are set at the Parish Meeting in May

All meetings start at 7.30pm and a period of up to 15 minutes is allowed at the start of the meeting for public comment or questions.

Agendas for meetings are posted on the parish notice boards and web site at least 3 days before the meeting—planning applications are available for inspection at the parish office during normal opening times or on the Rother District Council web site.

## Welcome—to the first issue of the Parish Council Newsletter

Why are we publishing a newsletter?—to keep you informed about what is happening in the village and in particular what the parish council is doing.

We have parish council meetings in public; we have notice boards (one at the entrance to the car park in Station Road and another outside the church), we have our award winning web site and we have our office which is open to the public twice a week but, still it seems many residents don't know what is going on!

Perhaps it means that everyone is happy with what is happening! But, there is still a fair amount of misinformation about and by adding a newsletter to our communication methods

perhaps we can lay some of that to rest.

We hope to publish the newsletter 3 or 4 times a year and we want to open it up for local community groups to let residents know what they are doing! The village hall and the Twinning association are featured in this issue.

So, if you are planning a special event or just want to attract new members, send us the details either by post, by fax or by e-mail or drop it into the parish office.

See back page for contact details.

We hope that you find the newsletter useful and interesting and we would welcome any comments you may have and news items or suggestions for future issues.

## Twinning Association News

Last October we had a most enjoyable weekend in France when 27 adults and 7 children travelled by coach to visit our friends in St Brice. As usual we were treated to first class hospitality; they arranged visits to a champagne cooperative in Villedomange and a wine museum in Verzenay. We were pleased that several new members joined us.

This year it is the turn of St Brice to visit us and this will take place over the weekend of 14th/15th May.

Membership of the Association is open to all and costs just £5 per adult and £10 per family—if you would like to join, contact Tony Brooks on 880781 or Joan Grantham on 881442.

Some dates for this year:

14th April - AGM 8pm at Youth Centre  
9th July - Boules & Barbecue  
14th October - Quiz Night  
All welcome!

Coming soon:

[www.robertsbridgetwinning.co.uk](http://www.robertsbridgetwinning.co.uk)

Tony Brooks

## Loading Bay in High Street

Unfortunately, a number of drivers still see this as a convenient parking spot! It's not. It is solely for the use of commercial vehicles and is there to help prevent congestion when loading or unloading. It is an offence to park in it, even for 'Just a couple of minutes' - how do you know a vehicle might not want to unload in that time? Please don't do it - the police and CSOs will issue tickets to offenders!

**What is the Parish Council doing about.....?** In each issue of the newsletter will try to focus on one aspect of the parish council responsibilities.

**Planning** - perhaps not surprisingly, produces many comments to the council - it can be an emotive subject!

*Why did you turn down my application?* Why did you allow them to build another house next to mine? are typical of the sort of comments we get - although they are not always phrased so politely! The simple answer would be that we didn't because we are not the planning authority, final decisions are made by Rother District Council. However, we are a statutory consultee and as such receive all planning applications for the parish and can comment on applications anywhere in the District and Rother will always consider our views. However, they may not always agree with us or, it may be that planning laws do not allow refusal or granting of permission on the grounds that we have raised.

*Why ask us then?* - because they want to know the views of the parish because we are closer to the situation and may have local knowledge that they are not aware of.

They also want to know what the parish feelings are about various planning matters, for example, at an exhibition and public consultation on the proposal to build more houses in Robertsbridge, the majority of people said that they would prefer to see 'infilling' rather than 'green field' sites devel-

oped and we have borne that in mind when considering subsequent applications - but that doesn't mean we will support approval for all such applications! We have to have regard for the area and whether it is already a relatively high density area or rural in aspect - and Rother does the same. In order to speed up decisions on planning applications, Rother DC now imposes a strict time limit for return of our comments.

Applications are considered either at full council meetings or at planning meetings which are held on alternate months; but if time does not allow this then they are considered under delegated powers by the Chairman or vice-Chairman together with the Clerk.

We always take into consideration any comments made to us; we can't always support an application but we try to be fair and consistent in our decisions and most of the time our views and Rother coincide. If they don't, we have to remember that Rother has to consider whether, if a refusal goes to appeal, will they win? Currently, appeals are taking some 50 weeks for a decision!

You can always view planning applications for the parish at the parish office during opening times or on the Rother District web site.

### Do you want your village hall?

For some years now the Robertsbridge Hall has struggled to find new members for its management committee. It is not a particularly time consuming com-



mitment but, as a registered charity and to ensure that the hall continues to run smoothly, it needs to have more new mem-

bers coming along.

Last year a couple of new members were recruited but this year more are needed as both the Chairman and the Treasurer have indicated that they will be standing down at the AGM in June. Gail Amies, the Chairman, has been on the committee since it was trying to raise funds to build the hall—over 25 years and not unreasonably feels it is time for a break! Our Treasurer, David Allen, has been doing the job for nearly 14 years and is of a like mind.

We have been without a Secretary for some time but without a Chairman or Treasurer we simply cannot continue.

If no volunteers come forward to fill these posts then

we shall be obliged to contact the Charity Commissioners and ask them to take over the responsibility for the hall; if they cannot find anyone to fill the posts they will have to consider how best to dispose of the property—is that what you want to happen?

If you would like to help, contact Gail on 880544 or David on 881056 or e-mail: [info@robertsbridgehall.co.uk](mailto:info@robertsbridgehall.co.uk)

### The Millennium Wood

On Valentine's day 1999, scores of villagers joined forces to start the planting of Springfield Wood, 12 acres of new woodland on the northern edge of the village planted to commemorate the new Millennium. The wood was made possible by a major fund raising effort in the village and grants from various bodies. In all some 20,000 trees were eventually planted on the land. Now after 5 years of growth, the area is becoming a real wood and is in the care of the Woodland Trust - there are some superb views over the village.

The wood lies behind Rother View and Coronation Cottages and there is unrestricted access.

### Annual Assembly

This year the Parish Annual Assembly will be held on Monday 11th April, 7.30pm at Robertsbridge Hall.

In the past this has been mainly the annual report from the Chairman of the Parish Council and the County and District Councillors and the occasional guest speaker. We would like to broaden this and make it much more of a village event and therefore would like to extend an invitation to all voluntary organisations in the parish to report on their activities during the last year. These reports will then be used in a future issue of the Newsletter. Please note that if you include a contact telephone number in your report we will assume that this is written authority to publish that number in the Newsletter.

We hope that as many organisations as possible will be able to attend to give their reports personally and would be grateful if you are intending to come to please let the Clerk know so that we can schedule the meeting. If you are unable to attend then please send your report to the Clerk and we will read it out on your behalf.

If you have any questions please contact the Clerk.

### Broadband is coming!

May is the scheduled date for BT to provide broadband coverage in the village. We are amongst the last to be connected but better late than never!

### Buy with confidence

ESCC Trading Standards recently awarded a further 28 businesses from across the County 'Buy with Confidence' status taking the total number to 57. Consumers now have access to a growing list of traders which includes plumbers, electricians, financial advisers, chimney sweeps and domestic appliance repairers etc.

The scheme aims to provide the public with details of traders they can trust to provide a good service.

You can access the Approved Trader List at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/buywithconfidence](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/buywithconfidence) or call 01273 418201 (Option 1)

*Info from Rother DC Members Bulletin*

### Recycling

The waste management site on the Battle Road at Mountfield now collects a much wider range of material including garden waste for composting, cardboard and metal. Do your bit for the environment—they are open 7 days a week normally from 9am to 5pm.

### Safer Villages Forum

Two years ago following a public meeting we set up the Robertsbridge Safer Village Forum formed from a number of concerned residents in cooperation with Rother DC, the Police, the Youth Service and the Community College. This multi-agency approach has enabled us to tackle some of the problems that we face in the village although it often takes longer to solve these problems than it does to identify, or talk about them!

Our efforts have resulted in more police presence in the village either in the form of the Community Support Officers (CSOs), backed up by the police, or by targeted police activity and we are also working closely with the Rother Antisocial Behaviour Officer. With the help of the CSOs, we have circulated Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) forms to many parts of the village and many of these have been returned. However, magistrates require a compelling case to be made for serving an order which does not comply with the usual rules of evidence; we are now close to getting ASBOs on some of the main trouble-makers – your form could make the difference! Further copies of the forms are avail-

able from the Parish Office.

We have through the Forum raised the issue of availability of alcohol to under age youths and we are pleased that One Stop has instituted a policy of no alcohol sales to anyone who appears to be under 21 without proof of age.

So we are trying but it's a slow process. At the public meeting 2 years ago, we asked for volunteers to come forward, in confidence, to help and over 30 people put their names forward. However, after the initial enthusiasm, this dwindled and now we have only 4 or 5 residents actively taking part and this limits what we can do. Everyone seems to be 'too busy'!. We would welcome help even if you can spare only a little time. Together we can achieve so much more and the local police inspector has said that he wants to keep the SVF going and roll out the model to other villages. If you can help, get in touch. You can contact us in person at the parish office or by 'phone or e-mail. Remember, we keep your identity confidential and we meet outside the village (not too far!) so you need not be concerned about being identified by being seen going to meetings with the police.

## SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:  
Mrs Karen Ripley

The Parish Office  
Robertsbridge Youth Centre  
The Grove, George Hill  
Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5AP

Phone: 01580 882066  
Fax: 01580 882066  
Email: [clerk@salehurst-pc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@salehurst-pc.org.uk)

Web address:  
[www.salehurst-pc.org.uk](http://www.salehurst-pc.org.uk) or  
[www.robertsbridge-pc.org.uk](http://www.robertsbridge-pc.org.uk)

The Parish Office is open to the public at the following times:

Tuesday 9am to 11am  
Thursday 2pm to 4pm

Rother District Council  
Web address:  
[www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

## Are you on the Internet?

Did you know that in 2003 the parish web site won the Web Site of the Year Award run by the National Association of Local Councils just a few months after we launched it? On the site you can access a great deal of information about the parish and the parish council—including minutes, planning applications considered and to be considered, meetings etc. as well as news about items of parish and general interest to the village.

## Not on the Internet?

Did you know that you can access the parish web site and many other sites including District and County Councils, national Government, travel, Police, schools, social services etc. by using the kiosk shown here.

The kiosk is part of a joint initiative by central Government, East Sussex CC and Rother DC. It is installed on the ground floor of the Youth Centre, near the parish office, and can be used at anytime the building is open.



There is no charge for its use!

## Your Councillors

### Parish Councillors

Mr David Allen (Chairman)

**Tel:**

881056

**e-mail address**

[chairman@salehurst-pc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@salehurst-pc.org.uk)

Ms Christine Kimberley (vice-Chairman)

880490

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Mr Neil Barden

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Mr Michael Rix

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### East Sussex County Councillor

Mr John Barnes

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### Rother District Councillors

Mr George Hearn

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Mrs Susan Prochak

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