



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

Summer 2005

We are very grateful to the small band of volunteers who delivered the last newsletter and we did have a couple of offers from others. But, we still need some help, particularly in Rother View/Andrews Close/Heathfield Gardens areas. Can you help?

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

Dates for your diary 2005

Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	8th July
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	4th August
Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	12th September
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	6th October
Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	14th November

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.

It seems that we did the right thing! - we have had quite a lot of favourable comments about the concept and the content of the first issue of the Newsletter - thank you for that, it is always good to get feed-back, more so if it is favourable!

We also had some effect, as the village hall committee had a very good response to their appeal for new members and it now seems set to go forward with a new committee after their AGM in June.

There was a very good response to our invitation to village groups to report on their activities at the Parish Annual As-

sembly. More than 15 groups took up this offer and we had an interesting and enjoyable evening. We will try to feature the various groups over the coming issues.

This was a first for our parish and the general consensus was to make it an annual event.

This issue contains the Chairman's Annual Report which we hope you find interesting and useful.

We are always willing to include items of general interest to the village—so, if you want us to feature your organisations' activities, get in touch!

Loading Bay in High Street

The consultation period for the experimental order for the bay has now passed and there being no objections, the order has now been made permanent!

PCSOs - more Police Community Support Officers have been introduced and we are seeing a greater uniformed presence in the area. Their powers are decided by the Chief Constable and ours has given them a fairly wide brief. They work shift periods usually covering until midnight but they can work longer if the local commander requires. They also work as a team covering several villages.

Broadband— BT did make the connection as promised on May 4th and the parish arranged for the ESCC Broadband Bus to be in the village on May 5th - election day - so people could vote and surf at the same time if they wished.

Elections - apart from the national elections, there were county council

elections. Because of boundary changes, our previous County Councillor, John Barnes, did not stand for this ward. Our District Councillor Sue Prochak, contested the seat against Peter Jones who had previously been a county councillor for another area. In the event, Peter was the successful candidate and we look forward to him serving our community. Sue remains as our district councillor.

Shops - sadly since the last issue we have lost both our bread shop and newsagent. We also said goodbye to Phyllis, Sally and Janice at Hair Fayre, when Phyllis decided to take a well-earned retirement.

Friends and past customers held a surprise farewell party for them in the village hall.

Sally has started a mobile hair styling business - Saffron Hair Design - and can be contacted on 01580 830922 or 079767 355442.

The shop has been taken over by Scissors and will open as Scissors II.

Winston, our butcher, has also retired (partly!) but we now have Mark, who is 'fitting in' very well!

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.

The children's play ground - unfortunately, recently we have been forced to close both the see-saw and the roundabout for safety reasons.

The see-saw was repaired at the end of last year but we had been waiting for the safety matting to be replaced with a 'wet-pour' material to replace the old rubber tiles. The advantage of the 'wet-pour' system is that it is much more robust and less prone to lifting. However, both systems require some dry weather to lay and this caused some delay but the see-saw is now back in use.

The roundabout was found to have a fault in the speed governor which meant that it could get up to unsafe speeds. It has been difficult to find replace-

ment parts but we think that we have now done that and we hope by the time you read this it will be back in action.

On a general note, we have begun a general up-grading of the equipment starting with the swings and the 'wet-pour' system and we will, within the next few years, have to consider replacing the large and small climbing frames. A major investment of around £35,000! Where will this money come from? Some grant money may be available and we are investigating that. However, the bulk of it will probably have to be raised by means of a loan paid back over a number of years out of the parish pre-cept.

The Local Plan - Robertsbridge

Rother District Council made the following proposals for Robertsbridge in their Local Plan, which, once adopted, will provide the planning framework for Rother District until 2011:

- 27 new homes on the greenfield site between George Hill and the by-pass, with a new roundabout on George Hill.
- 14 new homes and business use behind Culverwells on land owned by Glyndebourne Estates. This site had already been zoned for employment use but never developed. The development proposal includes a new access road across Culverwells' land.

Rother District Council chose Robertsbridge for development because of easy access to the A21, a mainline station and a number of services and shops other villages don't have. Before the Inquiry a consultation was organised for the village in the Youth Centre. This was well attended and as a result of residents' objections, Rother reduced the proposal for 55 houses on Grove Farm to 27. At the Inquiry, agents for Grove Farm argued for 70 new houses.

The Inquiry: The Inquiry started in November and concluded on 20 May. The Inspector will report in the autumn. Residents had the opportunity to object to the proposals and give evidence at the Inquiry. The Parish Council and a number of residents did object. On 8 February, District Cllr Sue Prochak and four other residents gave evidence objecting to the development proposals. The Inspector visited the sites with objectors. Cllr Prochak argued that it was unneces-

sary to build on greenfield sites as the recently closed Mill site could be used. As a brownfield site, it should take preference over greenfield sites. Cllr Prochak said, "The Local Plan is the one opportunity to get the right kind of development in the right place at the right time. The real problem is not in the proposal for new homes - we need homes for our elderly and for our young people who can't afford to stay in the village - but these new homes should not be on greenfield sites. The Mill building should be retained and the site used for a mix of housing and employment purposes."

What happens next: When RDC receive the Inspector's report, officers and members can respond to his recommendations. His recommendations are not binding. The public will have a six-week period to comment on any modifications to the Local Plan.

Rother is the last Council in the country to produce an adopted Local Plan. Work has already started on the Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan and which is designed to involve the community much more closely in planning development after 2011. Parish Councils are being urged to lead the community in producing their own Parish Plans.

District Councillor Sue Prochak

Editor's note: The parish council will be inviting a speaker from Action in Rural Sussex to a meeting to talk about Parish Plans. They can be very helpful to a community but, they require some work and volunteers will be needed! Any offers to the Parish Clerk.

Chairman's Report 2004/2005 - This year saw the official completion of the flood defences with the formal handing over of the scheme to the Environment Agency. Some minor modifications to the road plates has been made to try to make them quieter but otherwise all systems are working.

In September, the Council were asked to participate in a Flood Fair organised by the EA in Maidstone which was aimed at showing people at risk of flooding how they could help themselves and work with other agencies to minimise the effects of flooding. The Chairman and Clerk manned the parish stand giving a presentation and answering questions on our village experiences.

The Bawl Transfer Scheme was also finished before Christmas and increased the capacity of water that can be transferred between Bawl and Darwell reservoirs. Work is now in hand to reinstate the land disturbed by the pipeline works but we were pleased that apart from two small trees being removed, no disturbance to Bishop's Meadow occurred as had been originally planned.

The Council were pleased that as part of their landscape mitigation projects that Southern Water and South East Water chose our Jubilee Garden. This rather neglected corner of Willow bank has been landscaped into an attractive garden. Some further work will be done by the Council to complete the project before a formal opening in the early summer.

The Council added a newsletter to our means of communication. It is intended to publish this quarterly and the first issue has been well received. I am grateful to the small band of volunteers who have enabled us to deliver it to almost every household in the parish.

Roads – The traffic calming scheme for Heathfield Gardens paid for by the parish council was finally completed early in the year.

The Council agreed to fund the refurbishment of the traditional finger-posts in the parish but in the event ESCC found the funds, for which we are grateful.

The Preferred Route for the A21 Hurst Green bypass was finally published after consideration of objections to the original proposals. The new route is now the subject of further objections but the improvements are now not possible until 2011 at the earliest and are probably much further away than that.

Cemetery – Much work has been done, particularly by the Clerk, in marking plots and organising the records. Also, a risk assessment was carried out into the safety of the memorial stones and several were found to be in need of some attention. The Council agreed to bear the cost of remedial work where relatives could not be traced but in the event all but a few were contacted and agreed to pay for the work. The Council were thanked by several families for the sensitive manner in which this matter was handled.

Recreation Ground – Further work has been done, and is planned, for repairs and refurbishment of the children's play equipment.

We were sorry to lose the services of Mr Owen Butler, who died in October, who for some years had diligently cared for this area. Mr John Pennells, who took on the role of caretaker for the pavilion, also agreed to take on Mr Butler's former role as well and we are grateful for that.

Several willow tree were removed from the river bank because they were in a dangerous condition.

Planning – The new procedure for handling planning applications is working well and this year the Council responded to nearly 90 applications.

The Council submitted written evidence to the public inquiry into the Rother Draft Local Plan objecting to Rother's proposals for development within the parish.

Crime & Disorder – The Safer Village Forum set up 2 years ago continues to meet but progress is hampered by lack of volunteers. However, there has been more visible presence by police and Community Support Officers and this is welcome. Also, the Rother Anti-Social Behaviour Officer continues to receive reports and is working towards ASBO orders on some of the more persistent offenders.

Donations – The Council again made donations to a number of organisations that it felt were of benefit to the community: St Michael's Hospice; Rascals – for the children's summer play scheme; Rural Rother Trust; Relate; Sussex Lowland Search & Rescue; Battle Area Community Transport; Robertsbridge Bonfire Society; South East Regional Play Association and the local history group towards their planned public exhibition later in the year.

Finally, I should like to thank the Clerk for her continuing hard work on behalf of the parish and our Councillors and District and County Councillors.

Correction - a small error found its way into the piece about the Twinning Group in the last edition- the web site address should have had the suffix **.org** not **.co.uk**– our apologies if you have been searching in vain

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

Web address:

www.salehurst-pc.org.uk or
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

East Sussex Cycle & Walks Festival— in and around the South Downs - 9th & 10th July—Firle Place, near Lewes. Cycling and walking are amongst the most popular leisure activities in the UK. This Festival is a celebration of their contribution to health, environment and tourism.

There will be a route, site or terrain for every ability. You can join the weekend's race programme organised by British Cycling, explore the quiet lanes of the Low Weald or head over the South Downs with an experienced leader. There will be numerous other attractions at Firle including grass track racing, stunt rider demos. and skill development for younger riders. Full details are available from www.eastsussex.gov.uk/cyclewalksfestival or 01273 481848.

Info from ESCC

A CAB at the door! Did you know that the Citizen's Advice Bureau has a representative available for consultation in the village every Friday between 10am and 12 noon in the Committee Room of Robertsbridge Hall? You can get free, confidential help and advice on almost any problem—debt, housing, filling in a form, family and relationships etc. The CAB are here to help and support YOU! You can just turn up or 'phone 01424 215055 for an appointment

Your Councillors and their Responsibilities

Planning Committee - Chairman or vice-Chairman, Cllr. Gillian Smith, Cllr. John Stokoe

Cemetery Committee - Chairman or vice-Chairman, Cllr. Neil Barden, Cllr. Gillian Smith

Lead Councillors

General Purposes (mainly financial matters) - Chairman, vice-Chairman, Cllr J. Stokoe, Cllr J. Smith

Recreation Ground & Pavilion - Cllr. B. Brazier, Cllr. J. Smith

Bishop's Meadow - Cllr. D. Allen, Cllr. N. Barden, Cllr. C. Kimberley (tree wardens when appropriate)

Pocket Park - Cllr. D. Allen, Cllr. N. Barden, Cllr. C. Kimberley (tree wardens when appropriate)

Footpaths - Cllr. D. Allen, Cllr. T. Strapp

Lighting - Cllr. N. Barden, Cllr. G. Smith

Tree wardens - Cllr. T. Strapp & Mrs J. Woodgate

East Sussex County Councillor

Mr Peter Jones

cllr.peter.jones@eastsussex.gov.uk

Rother District Councillors

Mr George Hearn

819233

cllr.george.hearn@rother.gov.uk

Mrs Susan Prochak

881309

cllr.susan.prochak@rother.gov.uk