



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 4

Winter 2006

Is this your last delivered issue?

We still need some help in Rother View/Coronation Cottages/Andrews Close areas. These areas are currently delivered by a volunteer who doesn't live there and if we don't get an offer from someone from the area we may not be able to continue delivery. Can you help?

If so, please contact the parish office.

Dates for your diary 2006

<i>Planning Meeting</i>	<i>6th April</i>
<i>Youth Centre</i>	
<i>Parish Assembly</i>	<i>10th</i>
<i>Robertsbridge</i>	<i>April</i>
<i>Hall</i>	
<i>Council Meeting</i>	<i>8th May</i>
<i>Robertsbridge</i>	
<i>Hall</i>	
<i>Planning Meeting</i>	<i>8th June</i>
<i>Youth Centre</i>	<i>(to be confirmed)</i>
<i>Council Meeting</i>	<i>10th July</i>
<i>Robertsbridge</i>	<i>(to be confirmed)</i>
<i>Hall</i>	

All meetings start at 7.30 pm 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.

One year on - with this issue we mark the 1st anniversary of the Newsletter publication and we are pleased that the amount of positive feedback we have had suggests it has been well received. Our aim in publishing was to add to our means of communication - meetings; notice boards, public opening times for the parish office and our award winning web site. But, of course, communication is better if it is two-way so let us know what you want to see in the Newsletter and remember that we

include not only parish council matters but reports from other village organisations.

Special thanks are due to the small number of volunteers who deliver the Newsletter to almost every household in the parish—but, we need more help please - see panel opposite!

You will see in the report from Cllr. Jack Smith later that we will be seeking your responses for a Local Action Plan which will be helpful in seeing how you want the village to develop.

Establishing a Local Action Plan Project Group

A number of Parish Councillors attended County- and District-wide meetings last year to examine ways that rural villages such as Robertsbridge and Salehurst could improve what their village provided in the way of business enterprise, services, education, health etc. for all sections of their community in the light of their community's needs. This was to consider ways of stimulating development and growth by including as many people as possible in the process of planning improvements and devising projects that might attract funding to the area.

At the Parish Council meeting in January it was resolved that a Local Action Plan Project Group would be set up with myself as the Chair and with Councillor Rix and Councillor Strapp as members of the Group. The LAPPG would meet in partnership with Robertsbridge Enterprise and work out a modus operandi for the process of producing a whole-village Action Plan. It would consult with residents and businesses as well as chil-

dren and young people and their schools.

The initial meeting took place on 7th February and it was agreed that there should be 10 topic areas for our village:

- Health
- Housing
- Transport and traffic
- Learning, education and skill-
- Community safety and fear of crime
- Job creation and business enterprise
- Culture, leisure and sport
- Communication
- The environment including waste and recycling
- Access

We assumed that elderly people and young people would feature strongly in all of these topics - what are their needs? - how do we meet them?. The next meeting will look at how we involve the whole village in consultation. Events, questionnaires, interviews, the Parish website will all be used to ensure participation and involvement. Anyone who lives or works in the village can have their say! Roll on the Action Plan.

Jack Smith,

Lead councillor for Economic Development.

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

The Children's Play equipment

The bulk of the play equipment was installed in 1992 by a company called Levercrest and when installed, met the required legal standards. However, over the years these have changed and the slide on the junior climbing frame no longer meets the requirements. This resulted in the slide being classed as 'high risk' in the statutory annual safety inspection. Although the council feels the category is too severe (there have never been any accidents or injuries associated with the slide during the fourteen years it has been in place) our insurers insist that the slide must be replaced or removed from service. Unfortunately, Levercrest went out of business a number of years ago, so it has been impossible to obtain servicing and replacement parts. Several other suppliers have been approached, but all refuse, for liability reasons, to 'modify' another manufacturer's equipment. This means that replacement of the equipment has become high priority.

The roundabout has also been out of service for some time, as parts of the mechanism, including the required speed restrictor, have failed (due to normal wear and tear). Again, replacement parts are not available. The toddler climbing frame has elements that no longer meet the legal requirements, although these have so far been classified as 'medium risk', which means they have to be replaced 'when funds are available'.

The safety surfacing (tiles) installed by Levercrest around the infant swings, two climbing units and the

roundabout, is now past its best and classed as 'medium risk'. The council began a programme of replacement two years ago with a more suitable and durable type of surfacing called Wet Pour. The areas around the junior swings and the see-saw (which was refurbished last year) have been very satisfactorily completed. These items of equipment do not need to be replaced in the foreseeable future.

After considerable research, by the Clerk and Lead Councillors, the Council has obtained quotes from 3 companies for replacement of the junior climbing frame and the roundabout and also for the toddler climbing frame and replacement matting around the toddler swings - these last two items are not immediately necessary but could become listed as 'high risk' at any future annual inspection. The total cost of the proposed work is £37,471 from our favoured contractor.

The council decided to try to raise at least some of the money from grants sources and agreed, if necessary, to obtain a loan which would have to be repaid over a period of years with the repayment costs being included in the parish precept.

We are most grateful to the Darvell Community who have decided, as part of their commitment to the village, to make a substantial contribution to the work and we are now in a position to place the order. However, any work will have to be done in the spring and summer because the 'wet pour' safety matting needs dry conditions to be installed.

Rother District Local Plan

Rother District Council has now received the Inspector's report on the Local Plan. The report is available to read on the Rother web site at www.rother.gov.uk/inspectorsreport. It is over 600 pages long and the pdf file size is 1.5mb. The relevant pages for Robertsbridge are 319-328 and 359-526. A hard copy can be seen at the Battle Community Help Point and a copy is available to consult in the Parish Office.

In brief, the recommendations for Robertsbridge are that the Grove Farm site should be included but only used as a reserve site if RDC are unable to meet their allocations towards the end of the plan (2011). The site to the rear of Culverwell's could be used as mixed development—housing & commercial—but he acknowledged the potential problems with access etc. The mill site, which the owners had wanted included

for housing, he said could be used for mixed development but only if the site had been investigated for employment use and shown to be not feasible. The land to the east of Darwell stream between Willow Bank and Bishop's Lane, had been proposed by the owners for inclusion in the plan but the Inspector recommended that it should not. He felt it was not necessary to meet RDC allocations and would not be beneficial for the village.

The Inspector also recommended that the Rother Valley Railway be retained in the plan but he recognised the serious technical and financial obstacles that would have to be overcome.

The report is not binding on Rother. They will consider it and if any modifications are made, will publish them during March/April for a six week consultation period.

If music be the food of love...

Robertsbridge is rightly regarded as an historic village, and one or two “firsts” (such as the oldest post office in England and the first Cub Scout pack in the land) have been claimed in a reasonably recent publicity leaflet. However, one truly remarkable “first”, and arguably the most important, rarely receives any publicity - probably because very few people are aware of it. This is that Robertsbridge is the birthplace of written keyboard music.

The music in question is contained in a manuscript called the Robertsbridge Codex, which is currently housed in the British Library (reference “additional 28550”). The Cistercian monks of Robertsbridge Abbey committed it to paper – probably in the 1330s. While most of the Codex consists of part of a chronicle of Robertsbridge Abbey (1308 – 1333), there are within it two pages of music containing six unique musical compositions. Three of these are vocal compositions, and three are dances, called “estampies” - the earliest keyboard works known in western civilisation. The pieces are unique because of the way they are written down. Without getting too technical, the upper part is written in the form of notes on five-line staves, while the lower part is notated in letters.

(For those wanting more detail, a photograph of a page of music from the Robertsbridge Codex appears in the 1990 edition of the New Oxford Companion to Music, under the subject heading “tablature”. More detail on the Codex itself can be found on the Internet, in the British Library’s Archive of Medieval Music, at www.diamm.ac.uk)

The importance of the Robertsbridge Codex in the history of music is acknowledged by musical historians, and confirmed by the fact that there are now more than 100 references for it on the Internet. For those with a taste for medieval music (and it is very much an acquired taste), there are at least 2 CDs available containing a track from the estampies, one of which, by a group called the Dufay Collective, can be obtained online from Messrs Tesco for a very modest sum! (You can also hear a selection on the internet at [www. Geocities.com/austy72/Early.html](http://www.Geocities.com/austy72/Early.html) Ed.)

Peter Greenfield

The Parish Council would be interested to hear if any one has ideas as to how the village’s importance in musical history might be made more widely known and appreciated - Ed.

Living Well

Living Well is a self-management course developed for people who live with a long-term condition such as heart disease, ME, back pain, arthritis, MS and any other condition.

Bexhill & Rother and Hastings & St Leonard’s Primary Care Trusts believe that Living Well encourages people who live with chronic illness to use the skills and knowledge they already have to improve their quality of life.

The **Living Well Programme** is led by experienced tutors - who live with chronic illness - for two and a half hours a week and it is free.

A course will run every Thursday 20 April - 25 May, 2—4.30 pm at Robertsbridge Community Hall, Station Road. For more information, or to book a place contact Maggie Cornish 01424 735623 or The Expert Patients Co-ordinator, 01424 735600 (Bexhill) Or 01424 457100 (Hastings).

More health matters!

If you are planning to travel in Europe then you should be aware that the old E111 form is no longer

valid and has been replaced by the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Having an EHIC means you can get reduced cost, sometimes free, medical treatment whilst in most European countries. This does not replace the need for travel insurance but, by itself travel insurance may not be enough to cover your medical care and some insurance policies aren’t valid without an EHIC.

You can get an EHIC by picking up a form from the post office; by calling 0845 606 2030 (have your National Insurance number ready!); or online at www.dh.gov.uk/travellers - the card is issued free of charge.

On your bike!

National Bike week runs from 17th June to 25th June and is a UK campaign to get more people cycling more often! Bike 2 Work is a similar campaign to encourage people to cycle to work where possible.

For more information contact:
www.bikeweek.org.uk or www.bike2work.info
or e-mail HQ@bikeweek.org.uk

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

Invitation

Last year we extended an invitation to local groups to give a short presentation about their activities at the Parish Assembly meeting. Quite a number took up the offer and this proved so interesting and successful that we are extending the invitation again this year.

The Annual Assembly will be held on Monday April 10th and we invite groups to contact the Clerk if they would like to take part. A short - 5 minutes or less - update on your activities could help you get new members or even dispel some of the myths that surround your activities!

Cheers!

It is good to see that after a period of uncertainty the Salehurst Halt is to continue as a village pub. We wish the new owners success in their new enterprise. We hope too that we may soon see the renaissance of 'The George'.

Water Shortages

We have had another very dry winter so far and whilst this is good from the flooding point of view it may cause serious problems for next summer. We have now had over 15 months of below average rainfall and there is already a hose pipe ban in force in our area. Southern Water and South East Water have a number of schemes and suggestions as to how you can help to save water and money if you are metered.

Emergency Relief Fund

Following the notice in the last Newsletter about some funds being still available in the Emergency Fund, one or two residents wondered why this money had not been distributed.

After the flooding of the village in October 2000, the Council agreed to set up an appeal to help the victims – and in order to get help to the victims as quickly as possible a separate account was set up in the Parish Council name.

The appeal was launched on 17th October and the Parish Council pledged £2000. Collecting boxes were distributed around the village and publicity given to the appeal in the press as well. We had thought that we might raise a few thousand pounds over and above the parish contribution. In the event the fund went on to raise over £28,000! but, it did not all come in at once. Not only were funds received by donations from the village but also from individuals and groups outside the village and from events staged to raise money for the flood appeal.

The distribution of funds started on 18th November 2000 with a second distribution in December in time for Christmas. At this point the fund had raised

£18,948.24p and £18,850 had been distributed to over 45 households. Some affected households were unwilling or did not feel the necessity to accept any of the funds.

The fund continued to attract contributions well into the summer of 2001 and additional distributions were made but, some funds (a little over £2000) were held back as there was the possibility of further flooding and help being needed by new victims (or further help for existing). There was also the possibility that there might be claims from the few victims we had not been able to contact. Posters were displayed in the village and letters sent to all affected households to let them know more help was available. Over the next 2 years a number of small, localised flooding instances did occur and help was requested from a couple of victims but despite regular reminders, no further requests have been made since 2004. The fund has been audited by an independent auditor.

We now have a little over £2200 in hand and at the parish meeting in January, Councillors considered a number of options for dealing with this. In the end it was decided to keep the funds for use in the event of possible future emergencies – which need not be flooding. Anyone needing help can approach the Council through the Clerk.