



Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2006

Village Tidy up Day

Thanks to those residents who turned up to help on April 22nd. We were given a lovely spring day for this.

We are particularly grateful to the young people, including the Guides, who helped. Our young people come in for a lot of criticism sometimes but it is often overlooked that it is a small minority who behave anti-socially. Also thanks to the Darvell Community who not only helped but provide very welcome drinks and super cookies for the helpers at the end!

Dates for your diary 2006

Planning Meeting 8th June
Youth Centre

Council Meeting 10th July
Robertsbridge
Hall

Planning Meeting 10th
Youth Centre August

Council Meeting 11th
Robertsbridge September
Hall

Planning Meeting 12th
Youth Centre October

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.

In this issue we mark the imminent retirement of three important influences on the village - the vicar, the G.P. and the Headteacher. Between them they must have touched on the life of virtually everyone in the village at some point. We send them best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

The Reverend John Lambourne will be retiring at the end of June after 30 years as Vicar of St. Mary's Salehurst.

During this time there can be few Salehurst and Robertsbridge people whose lives he has not touched, whether at a baptism, a wedding or a funeral, at church services, village events or over a drink at a local pub. He has been wonderfully supported throughout by his wife Lorna and his family.

After doing his National Service, John started on a career in banking, working for Coutts & Co. Later, he attended Chichester Theological College, and was ordained in Canterbury Cathedral in 1965. He then served as a curate in Canterbury, Romney Marsh, East Grinstead and Storrington, before being inducted at St Mary's Church, Salehurst, in 1976. During his incumbency here John has had a number of other appointments. In particular, he has been the Chaplain of Agriculture for the County of East Sussex, and he was a Territorial Army Chaplain from 1987 to 1997. He is also Chaplain to a number of Rugby clubs.

It is anticipated that many people in the village will want to be involved in marking John's retirement, and a presentation is being planned for Sunday, 25th June. It is hoped that people will be willing to contribute generously towards gifts which he and Lorna can take with them to their new home in Battle. Please send donations to Roger

Cowap, "Cherra", Langham Road, Robertsbridge, TN32 5DT. Cheques should be made payable to "**The John Lambourne Retirement Fund**". A farewell party is also being planned. Details are on notices around the village.

Peter Greenfield

Dr Elizabeth Elliot-Pyle retires July 3rd 2006.

Lizzie first became a GP in Robertsbridge when she joined Dr Robert Elliot-Pyle in the practice in 1981. The practice at that time was situated at 23a High Street, in premises with just one consulting room, a waiting room and a 'cupboard' for the records AND the staff. General practice at that time was very different to today's multi-disciplinary, highly technological, target-driven and prevention-based NHS. The changes to the practice have been widespread, and from a team of 3 (including GP's) the Primary Health Care Team for which Lizzie has been the Senior Partner, now numbers 20.

Through all these changes, Lizzie has managed to adapt and change, and has even embraced the new technology! Her efficient way of 'getting things done' will be much missed by staff and patients alike.

Pam Golding

See back page for a tribute to Brian Hartley, Ed.

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.

Street Lighting – this is perhaps one of the least known of the parish council responsibilities. Usually, this is the responsibility of the highway authority, in our case ESCC, but in the 1940s our then parish council became so fed up waiting for ‘our turn to come’ that they used their powers to install their own. The effect was to send us further down the list of priorities so we are probably saddled with it forever!

The Council owns and maintains all of the streetlights in the parish with the exception of those on the A21, which are the responsibility of the Highways Agency. Currently we have 95 and apart from the cost of electricity we have to pay for maintenance and repairs and any upgrading. We upgrade lights as the lanterns become obsolete; the new lanterns are more directional and use less energy.

This is costing us £7000 this year, more than 15% of our total budget and all of it has to come from the Precept raised from your Council Tax!

Why aren't there more lights? – is a question we are often asked, mostly by people who have moved here from an urban area. Part of the reason is cost but mainly it is because when we have done surveys we find that most residents don't want more – usually

there is a 3-way split: some want more, some think it's just right and some think that all should be taken away so we can become a real village again.

Occasionally we install an additional light but not often, each light can cost over £1500, more if it is some distance from the cable source. When a new development such as Mill Rise or Willow Bank takes place, the developer pays to install the lights but once the highway authority adopts the road then the parish becomes responsible for the lights.

Why has the light near me been out for weeks? – there might be several reasons but most often it is because no one has reported it; we do not have staff to monitor lights on a daily basis and rely on residents to report. You can do this direct to the Clerk by 'phone, e-mail or in person during office opening hours or, to our Lead Councillor Gillian Smith at Belle Flowers. Even so it might take several days to get fixed; we contract with EDF Energy for lighting maintenance and the engineer only visits the village once a fortnight. Of course, if something more than just a bulb is required, for example parts are no longer available and an upgrade is required then it could take longer. Now that we have lighting, we do our best to keep it working!

ACROBAT - latest news.

At their AGM, ACROBAT – Access for Children in Robertsbridge Action Team - agreed to go ahead with a planning application for a dedicated Children's Centre. There is more urgency as next year our very successful pre-school has to offer full sessions to get Ofsted registration. This is not possible in the Village Hall.

The proposed new building will have two main spaces, one for pre-school and one for after-school. There will also be a baby room for four babies, a kitchen, office and meeting room. The services will be delivered by a newly-formed charity, *Robertsbridge Children's Services*, so playgroup, toddler group, childcare, holiday clubs and crechè will be under one roof. The building will be on the land adjacent to the Guide Hut. This land is owned by a Trust and the Trustees are the County Council. The land was given, with the present Youth Club building, to the children of the village and can only be used for their benefit. The location needs to be close to the Primary School. Most of the users will be children who are at or will go on to the Primary School. Other sites available in the village are not as suitable or are unaffordable.

ACROBAT have met with the Guides and Brownies and will make sure they are kept up to date with the plans and will seek to work together with them.

A local charity has made an amazingly generous offer to fund the building. This will be set back to retain as much green space as possible. It will be lower than the Guide Hut with the roofline about level with the guttering of the Guide Hut. It will be made of wood and will be painted to match in with the Guide hut. It is being built by Homelodge Buildings Ltd, a company with experience and a successful track record in building nurseries and children's centres. In 2005 they won a design award from Runnymede Borough Council for a new nursery at a school in Surrey.

The skate ramp will remain behind the building and users will have a new path to it. The basketball net will be relocated to the front. (Young people say they would like a space somewhere in the village for riding their bikes.)

ACROBAT are now working on a planning application. It is hoped that the new building will be ready in January!

Sue Prochak

Chairman's Report 2005/06

In June the the Managing Director of South East Water, Margaret Devlin, officially opened the Jubilee Garden and this rather neglected corner of Willow Bank has been landscaped into an attractive garden that is much appreciated by residents; I am grateful to the volunteers who tended the planters and watered them and the trees throughout the dry summer. In Piper's Field several willow trees were harvested by Gray-Nicolls by agreement with the Council. These have now been replaced by Black Poplars that were donated by Wakehurst Place. Gradually as the willows are removed they will be replaced by non-crop trees to ensure a longer future. The Newsletter, which we launched last year, is published quarterly and judging by much positive feedback 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. ESCC has carried out a number of small improvements to the drainage in Station Road and the High Street that has enabled surface water to drain away more quickly. Preparations for the re-surfacing of the High Street have now been carried out and re-surfacing will take place in May or June after the patching work has settled.

As part of their 'Paths to Prosperity' programme designed to attract visitors to the area, ESCC designated two of the footpaths that are in our parish and the immediate result was that we have obtained new stiles and a new footbridge on these paths.

The cemetery continues to be credit to the parish thanks to the work of the Clerk and Councillors and the contractors. A tidy-up day was organised earlier in the year and several volunteers turned up to help for which we are grateful.

In July a visit was arranged for a Family Fun Fair to visit and was a popular event. It is intended to have a return visit this year.

Unfortunately, the annual safety inspection of the children's play equipment recorded the large slide as being 'high risk' and as a result our insurers required us to take it out of service within 28 days. When installed 12 years or so ago the equipment met all the relevant regulations but these have changed and the original suppliers had gone out of business so it has proved impossible to get anyone to modify the equipment. The Council took the decision to raise a loan – paid for through the precept – to replace the slide

unit and the roundabout, which was beyond repair, and to try to raise grants to replace the small climbing frame and the safety matting. The total cost of this was to be in excess of £37,000. We are pleased that a generous contribution from the Darvell Community has enabled us to place an order for all the work and this will be done as soon as the area is dry enough to lay the safety matting.

The Inspector's report into the Rother Local Plan was received just before Christmas and we were pleased to see that the Inspector had taken on board the objections raised by the Council and our District Councillor and suggested modifications to Rother's proposals. The proposed development at Grove Farm will now only take place if Rother does not achieve its quota for housing in other areas. The area to the rear of Culverwell's was agreed but the Inspector pointed out the difficulties with the site. A proposal by the Mill owners to include the site for housing was recommended by the Inspector for refusal until it had been demonstrated that it was not viable for either commercial or mixed development and a proposal by Devine Homes to include the fields between Willow Bank and Bishop's Lane within the development boundaries was recommended for refusal. The Inspector's recommendations are not binding on Rother but they have agreed to accept them.

An important consequence of the adoption of the Local Plan is that the development boundaries for the village are set and planning applications for development outside the boundaries will not be allowed.

There has been more visible presence by police and Community Support Officers and this has resulted in some reduction in problems in the village and some convictions. The police are working towards setting up a base in the village that can be used by police and Community Support Officers.

The Council 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; Battle Area Community Transport; Robertsbridge Bonfire Society; South East Regional Play Association and the Late Night Shopping Event. We also supported the Trafalgar Day commemoration event that raised nearly £200 for the Seamen's Charity.

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

The **EXTEND EXERCISE GROUP** for men and women over 60 meets at the Youth Centre, High Street, Robertsbridge on Thursday afternoons from 2.00 - 3.00pm.

With movement to music we aim to retain our fitness by exercising joints and muscles to achieve as much

mobility and strength as possible.

Some seated exercise is included and simple line and barn dances make it an enjoyable social occasion.

New members welcome—for further information tel: 01424 882304 or just come along on Thursday afternoons.

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

Brian Hartley, the Headteacher of Robertsbridge Community College retires at the end of the summer term.

He has been at the College for over 10 years and in his time has turned the College into a successful over-subscribed school. The Governors have just completed the lengthy process of appointing Brian's successor. Out of a number of very strong candidates, they have appointed Karen Roberts. At present Karen is Deputy Head at Angley School in Cranbook. Already Karen is getting to know the College and visiting Robertsbridge to meet key people in the community. The Governors and staff look forward to Karen formally starting at Robertsbridge and are confident she will build on Brian's work and take the College from strength to strength.

Sue Prochak, Chair of Governors

Family Fun Fair

Many residents enjoyed the family fun fair that visited the village last summer so we have arranged a return visit this year. The fair will be open at the recreation ground from **Thursday 13th to Sunday 16th July**.

The Allotment Association

The allotments are thriving - without water! Our application to RDC was rejected.

Willing volunteers to form a management committee with a formal constitution have come forward.

All plots are taken, as I have said, by locals with 2 new tenants replacing 2 departing ones (both from the village) at the turn around in September. The waiting list has 4 names on it at present- usual number.

No problems to report, such as vandalism or theft. Rather some of the holders do a job of keeping an eye open for Culverwells intruders and have disturbed such on one recent occasion and gently warded off unlikely characters on another.

An Invitation is extended to everyone to see what goes on and recognise a wildlife oasis and a place of tranquility.

Stephen Hardy

Dogs Trust

Many people wonder "What would happen to my dog if I were to die suddenly?" Registering with the free Canine Care Card scheme means that Dogs Trust will take responsibility for finding a new home for your four-legged friend. They will look after the dog until a responsible new home can be found.

Every year they care for 12,000 dogs at a nationwide

network of re-homing centres and, they never destroy a healthy dog.

For more information call them on 020 7837 0006 or www.dogstrust.org.uk

Home Safety Visits

The Fire Service are offering home safety visits for elderly and/or vulnerable people. A qualified fire fighter will visit the home and if necessary fit a free 10 year smoke alarm. If you would like a visit or if you know someone who would benefit from a visit please phone the Home Safety Visit Line on 0845 230 0252 and leave a message and they will contact you to arrange a visit.

Editor's footnote

How many of you remember that the popular radio programme 'Down Your Way'? visited Robertsbridge in 1980? At the time, the Courier had a full page article about the programmes' visit and had interviews and photos of various village characters including one of a very trendy looking vicar! If you would like to have a look at the article, call in to the Parish Office during opening times - Tuesday 9-11am and Thursday 2- 4pm.