



NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 2

Autumn 2006

We need a new volunteer for Willow Bank area. Can you help?

Does your group have anything they would like to put into the next Newsletter which should be out before Christmas??

If you can answer yes to either, or both, of these questions please contact the parish office.

See back page for contact details.

Dates for your diary 2006-07

Planning Meeting Youth Centre	12th October
Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	13th November
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	14th December
Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	15th January
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	8th February

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.

Autumn already! - and after the hottest and driest summer on record (forget August!) it seems difficult to think about flooding but, fortunately for us, someone is. The EA have made changes to the defences by replacing the sliding gates with stop log defences similar to those in place at the Gray-Nicolls works. These are quicker and easier to put in place in the event of an emergency.

This is also the start a new season of things to do in the autumn and winter months now that there is less to do in

RoCoCo, our Community Choir, finished last season with a concert in the United Reformed Church which raised over £190 for Demelza House, the children's hospice. We sing all sorts of songs, pop, classics, folk, African, gospel, Maori – you name it, we'll give it a whirl. Most of the time the choir sings unaccompanied, although we have occasionally joined forces with local super-group Lumpy and the Lumpettes to do a few blockbusting numbers.

The great thing about a community choir is that you don't have to have any particular musical background, you just have to like singing. You never have to sing on your own, but always with several other people singing the same

the garden! In this issue you will find details of various events and activities that you can take part in.

For a village our size there is a remarkable variety of activities - you can find out information from the contacts in 'The Villager' and on the new 'Community Contacts' page on the parish web site.

Many of our organisations rely on just a few volunteers to run them and would welcome new members - how about getting involved?

part, so you can blend into the background if you want to. (Or you can be a star, of course.)

After the summer break, we will be starting again on Wednesday, September 27th, at 7.30 in the United Reformed Church in the High Street, next to the Seven Stars. If you would like to join us, please do give it a try – no obligation to buy! Incidentally, it's £3 per session – you pay as you go, and don't have to commit yourself to a particular number of weeks. If you have holidays or other commitments, you just miss those particular ones. Just come along, or if that seems a bit daunting, have a chat first – Sheila Brazier on 880740, or e-mail: brianandsheilab@googlemail.com.

The **Adult College for Rural East Sussex** (ACRES) was formed in August 2005, bringing together the Adult Learning provision in the seven constituent Community Colleges - **Beacon, Hailsham, Heathfield, Ringmer and Robertsbridge** Community Colleges and **Uckfield and Uplands** Community Technology Colleges.

Robertsbridge Community college runs a full programme of day and evening courses.

Details can be obtained from the programme brochure available in shops around the village and also in the Youth Centre. Or, direct from the College by calling 01580 881406.

Details of the courses available can also be found on the ACRES web site at: www.acreslearning.org.uk.

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 - hopefully, most residents will have seen the super new play equipment installed recently. This is being enjoyed very much by the young people and we are grateful to the Darvell Community for their generous contribution which enabled this work to be completed so quickly.



Despite having spent a lot of money repairing the see-saw last year, this year the safety inspector has decided that it doesn't comply with new regulations!! In view of the age of this piece of equipment we are considering now whether to simply remove it and replace with a more modern piece.



Unfortunately, the regulations are continually changing and the play equipment will be an ongoing demand on our resources.

New Headteacher at Robertsbridge Community College: Karen Roberts

Starting the new term this September, Robertsbridge Community College welcomed a new Headteacher, Karen Roberts. Karen was unanimously chosen from among a strong field of candidates as the best person to take Robertsbridge Community College forward. Coming from Angley School in Cranbrook where she was sole Deputy, Governors decided she had the qualities needed to take the College forward. She impressed the appointment panel, not only with a proven track record in leadership skills, but in that she has the vision and drive to be an inspirational headteacher.

Although her appointment officially began on 1 September, Karen had already been busy visiting the local primary feeder schools for the College, attending several village events and meeting key people in the community. Whilst her priorities are to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and achieving the highest standards of behaviour at the College, she already has started planning ways to extend community activities.

Karen is a keen sportswoman participating in golf, running and stoolball - and already has plans for the College to work together with our village sports clubs. We are looking forward to Karen driving the College forward and making links with the village a reality.

WEA - is the largest independent provider of adult education in the country and is funded by central and local governments. The Robertsbridge Branch has been in existence for over 20 years and this year will be running 2 courses again. Each course runs for 10 weeks on Tuesday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Robertsbridge Hall.

All Aspects of Opera - this is a continuation of the very enjoyable course run by Ken Roberts last year but you do not need to have attended the previous course to enjoy this. **Starts September 26th.**

The Making of England by Charles Harding explores the way the nation developed from the so-called Dark Ages. **Starts 9th January.**

The classes are friendly and informal and you need no special or previous knowledge to enjoy them.

For more details contact Margaret Allen 01580 881056 or WEA@davidallen.idps.co.uk or the WEA web site at www.wea.org.uk

Update on Local Action Plan

SEEDA (SE Economic Development Agency) and SRTP (Small Rural Towns Programme) made funding available over 7 years. This period started several years ago and Rye, Hailsham, Battle, and Newhaven have already had money for development. Currently in East Sussex there is £590 000 available over the next 5 years for 16 eligible towns including Robertsbridge.

Why a Local Action Plan for Robertsbridge? Small rural towns have realised that without Parish Plans, or economic 'healthchecks', or partnership arrangements between the social community and the business community it would be very difficult to attract funding and investment for projects, job creation, business enterprise etc. Without a coherent all-village plan it is hard to justify why additional money should be spent and what it should be spent on.

What has happened so far? At an East Sussex Economic Partnership meeting on 7/12/05 it was said about Robertsbridge: 'At present there is no Partnership or Healthcheck in place.....they may get some assistance with a Plan from Action in Rural Sussex'. Since then we have been successful in obtaining £2000 from AiRS for the production of a Local Action Plan and a programme of events to stimulate the involvement of the village in the planning process. We have a Partnership between the Parish Council and the Robertsbridge Enterprise Group. We have had a Business Fair. We will soon have a new Website{SARLAP}. We have obtained extra funding for a Video Project during the summer involving young people interviewing older residents and creating a DVD. We have a Village Meeting planned for 16/9/06 and another enterprise fair on 14/10/06.

The ongoing action planning An Action Plan, however we go about it, is a means by which the whole village voices its opinion on what action it wishes to see taken in the future which will improve and strengthen the community. This means that the village needs to be consulted on a whole range of vital topics such as learning, education and skills; rural housing ; culture, leisure, and sport and the environ-

ment etc. The LAPPG will continue to collect ideas and the completed plan will highlight actions for our village.

Jack Smith

The Video Project

The Local Action Plan group applied to the Community Champions Fund administered by the Scarman Trust in Brighton. Funding has been successfully obtained and a number of events for young people took place during August in Robertsbridge at the Youth Centre. The programme of workshops organised by Debi Carr, the Youth Leader based at the Youth Centre opposite the war memorial, gave our youngsters something to do and somewhere to go during the summer. The workshops included drumming, street dancing, and graffiti. It was planned to be dynamically interesting!

The video project itself was designed to be absorbing and fascinating not just because it involved producing, shooting and editing a video but because the resulting DVD will be used as evidence for our Local Action Plan. Young people interviewed older residents of our village (chosen by Age Concern) so that they could express their views about changes in the village and their wishes for the future. The young people themselves commented and their aspirations will also be recorded. This project was enjoyed by all who took part.

The DVD will be shown to the kids and their families and to elders who participated. This will be an event at the Community Hall. We would like to have an awards ceremony perhaps at a local restaurant hosted by Jack our chairman and Sue our local councillor so that we can celebrate the production of the video. Producing an Action Plan for the village is far from boring!

Let the buyer beware - It seems that despite all the warnings people are still being conned into paying vastly inflated prices for work done, particularly in gardening etc. and mostly by people 'cold calling'. If you agree to someone doing work without agreeing the price first you will be liable for whatever they finally charge.

The best advice is not to agree to work without an agreed price, preferably in writing if you don't know the person(s) and, best of all, don't let 'cold callers' do work, find a reputable tradesperson, ask friends and neighbours etc. for recommendations - there are lots of reputable traders about!

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:
Mrs Karen Ripley

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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

.Do you need information? - Try the Access East Sussex Information Point.

Rother District Council has installed a new, upgraded information kiosk at the Youth Centre which is available free of charge whenever the centre is open (see opposite for Parish Office opening times).

Here you can get information on:

Local Services - information on your local council, health, education, community safety, support services, leisure and travel.

Tourism - find out what's on, what to see, where to stay and where to eat.

Digital photos - print your photos with the latest high quality printing technology.

E-mail - send an e-mail even if you don't have an e-mail address.

And more!! - East Sussex County Council Mobile Office will be visiting Robertsbridge every Tuesday 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Recreation Ground for the next year (as long as it is used!)

Services offered include: Free internet access; e-mail facility; library services; help with local council enquires; adult learning opportunities and basic IT courses

They started in 1949 and there are 41 of them. We all live in one. What are they?

If you haven't guessed already they are **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. All together the 41 areas amount to a mere 15.6% of the total land area of England and Wales.

The High Weald was designated an ANOB in 1983 and contains 52 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI'S), 57 medieval parish churches, 85 Scheduled Monuments and at least 16.8% of it is covered by Ancient Woodland.

In 1949 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act legislated for the designation of ANOB's and National Parks. The primary purpose of designation as defined by a Countryside Commission statement in 1991 and restated in 2001 is "to conserve and enhance natural beauty."

Living with natural beauty as a backdrop to our daily lives it's easy to forget how privileged we are to live in this special, protected 15.6 percent.

Christine Kimberley

Protecting The Beauty of The South Downs

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill received Royal Assent on 30 March, and brought the reality of a National Park for the South Downs a step closer after a campaign lasting over 50 years. If the new park is finally announced, it will give added importance to the work of protecting the natural beauty of the South Downs, which has been the prime purpose of The South Downs Society (SDS) since its formation in 1923.

While the Downs are occasionally threatened by major strategic development proposals, equally important is the impact of a large number of small planning applications. The Society is keen to work closely with Parish and Town Councils and with the local representatives of organisations like The Ramblers Association and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) to keep this under review and to take appropriate action where there is conflict with maintaining the beauty and amenities of the South Downs. The Society currently monitors planning applications across Sussex through its team of 12 District Officers. It also keeps an eye on Rights of Way through a volunteer team of Area Access Officers and liaises with local people on all developments affecting public access to the Downs.

To find out more about the Society, visit their website, www.southdownssociety.org.uk, email downsmen-m@btconnect.com or phone Ken Davies on 01798 875073