



NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 4

Summer 2007

Do you have something you want to say about your group?

We are happy to try to publicise it for you - send to the Clerk or Chairman

Dates for your diary 2007

Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	9th July
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	9th August
Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	10th September
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	11th October

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 if required.

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.

Robertsbridge Bonfire Society Annual Event - Saturday 17th November

Election Results - Elections for District and Parish Councils were held on 3rd May and we now have new members on the Parish Council, full details are on the back page.

A number of residents have complained that they had a choice of 9 out of 10 candidates but that no information was available about them. This is a valid criticism but it is the responsibility of the candidate to publish this information (one candidate did put out some information). However, it has to be remembered that Parish Councillors are not standing as party political candidates and therefore do not have any financial backing, any expenditure has to be from their own pocket and they have to find a way of distributing the information.

One suggestion has been that the Parish Council puts out information on behalf of all the candidates (perhaps in the form of an 'Election Special' Newslet-

ter) which our volunteers might deliver. This has some attraction but would have to be paid for by the PC otherwise some candidates might refuse to contribute and then what? - leave them off?

Would residents be willing to fund this from the precept? - cost about £150.

Also, the timetable for the election process is very short. Candidates do not have to let the PC know they are standing and the first we know of the final list is when the Notice of Poll is published, which gives us under 3 weeks to get the information from candidates, put together the Newsletter, get it printed and distributed—not impossible but difficult. Another idea is that we put the information on the PC notice boards and web site—easier but not everyone reads those but better perhaps than nothing.

We would welcome any comments or suggestions on this matter

David Allen, Chairman

Robertsbridge Enterprise Group

Robertsbridge Enterprise Group was formed in 2006 because it was felt that the economic life of the village and its surrounding community needed a boost, and a voice to argue its cause. Membership is open to all who have a wish to see the community benefit from a vibrant and sustainable local economy. In REG we see the economy as meaning not only the traders on the High Street but all the other, very often small, and even part-time businesses in the community, as well as not-for-profit organisations such as schools and churches. We all are consumers.

We believe very simply that if you all know what businesses and services are available on your doorstep, whether you are in business yourself or just an individual resident, then you will use them in preference to trekking into Hastings or Tunbridge Wells. That then benefits everybody in our community.

If you are interested in getting involved in any way with this exciting idea, please get in touch with Stephen Hardy the Chairman on 01580881309 or stephen@stephenhardy.org.uk

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

Bishop's Meadow - this lies on the edge of the village, adjacent to Mill Rise and bordering the land of the Darvell Community. It was formerly part of the sawmills and woodyard that stood on the land now occupied by the Mill Rise estate, the land having been given to the village, to be maintained as a public open space, as one of the planning conditions attached to the development of the estate. Although originally owned and managed by Rother District Council, Bishop's Meadow has for several years been under the control of the Parish Council. On taking on the management of the meadow the Parish Council decided that it should fulfil three key objectives: a place for quiet relaxation and dog-walking; a place for safe children's play and a place that can be managed to encourage wildlife. To meet these objectives an informal path system is mown through and around the meadow (and a dog-waste bin provided); play equipment and a kick-around area is maintained in the bottom corner of the meadow. The majority of the meadow is set aside for hay which is cut once a year in late summer to allow the grasses and wildflowers to bloom and set seed.

England has lost over 90% of its wildflower meadows over the last 50 years. Although we are fortunate enough to live in a part of the country which is still relatively wooded and hedged, the majority of the fields have been converted to agricultural leys (highly productive pasture consisting of only a few grass species), arable, or tightly cropped by sheep by farmers trying to make a living on ever tighter margins. Although not a traditional or ancient site, Bishop's Meadow has provided an opportunity to begin to redress this loss. It currently provides a refuge for species which are slowly disappearing from the wider countryside; wildflowers and grasses such as black knapweed and crested dogs-tail and butterflies like common skipper and small copper. The profusion of insect life generated by the meadow provides rich pickings for the house martins which nest under the eaves of houses on Mill Rise, and an early morning stroll in spring is rewarded by the songs of blackcap, whitethroat and yellowhammer. If you tread quietly and look keenly you will spot common lizards

(and the occasional grass snake) basking on logs at the margins of the meadow.

The management of the meadow for wildlife is an important consideration; not only because we have a moral duty to conserve our natural heritage but also because contact with nature is good for you. A stroll through a meadow

enlivened by the buzzing of bees and seasonally coloured by a variety of wildflowers is more uplifting, more interesting than walking through fields of monoculture, mono-



*Grass Snake—Photo by Peter Wakely
Courtesy English Nature*

tone short-cropped grass. And if the prospect of seeing or hearing some of the special wildlife on your doorstep gets you out in the fresh air more often it's good for your health too. And why not use Bishop's Meadow as your gateway to the Darwell Valley? The footpath network allows you to explore a typically charming Wealden valley complete with bluebell woods, beautiful views and wildlife that many might be surprised to encounter. There are barn owls, kingfishers, nightingales, glow worms and orchids within a mile or two of your back door.

We hope to enhance the meadow for wildlife by tweaking the existing management (after consultation) and help people to explore and enjoy the meadow more by participating in management activities, attending small-scale events (bat walks, for example) or recording the wildlife of the meadow and beyond. If you're interested in helping or being kept up-to-date with what's happening in Bishop's Meadow please email petemassini@btinternet.com For those without email, keep an eye on the notice board at the entrance to the meadow.

Peter Massini
Christine Kimberley (Parish Councillor)

The **Extend Exercise Group for Men & Women** over 60 meets at the Youth Centre, High Street on Thursday afternoons from 2 pm to 3 pm.

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 would be very welcome.

For further information tel: 01424 882304 or just come along and join us on a Thursday afternoon.

Chairman's Report - April 2007

After drought conditions and a hose pipe ban in the summer we experienced a much wetter winter than for many years and at times we were concerned about flooding. But although the 'stop logs' were installed at the Grey Nicolls site briefly they were not necessary. However it was good to see that the Environment Agency plans worked well and we are grateful for their efforts. The wet winter should ensure we avoid a hose pipe ban – at least for a few months!

I am grateful to the small group of volunteers who deliver the Parish Newsletter to almost every household in the parish. It continues to be well received and I hope that the newly elected Council will agree to continue publication.

Roads & Footpaths– The re-surfacing of the High Street was carried out on one of the hottest days of the year; a number of problems occurred and are still needing resolution which the Clerk is pursuing.

After some delay repairs to the brick wall in the High Street are now complete. The work inevitably caused traffic disruption but it is good to have the work done at last. Despite various myths that have arisen, the bricks are new and were chosen in consultation with the Rother Conservation Officer to match as closely as possible to others in the area.

The footbridge connecting Bishop's Meadow with the Glottenham paths was replaced by volunteers using a bridge kit supplied by ESCC. I am grateful to all for their help and support.

Parking problems continue to arise, mostly by commuters in the Mill Rise and Bellhurst Road areas; we continue to press for a resolution to these problems but we are reliant on ESCC who are the highway authority.

Recreation Ground – In July a return visit was arranged for the Showtime Amusements fun fair. This was essentially aimed at family entertainment and was deemed a great success. It is hoped to have a visit this year.

Following the adverse annual safety inspection of the children's play equipment the Council replaced the slide unit, the roundabout, the small climbing frame and the safety matting with the help of a generous grant from the Darvell Community. The total cost of this was in excess of £37,000. We also had to replace the see-saw which the inspection decided this year needed to be done.

Dog Control Order - Rother DC are consulting on the introduction of a Dog Control order which would have the effect of re-

quiring dog owners to clear up after their dog in all areas and to keep on leads in all open spaces other than those especially exempted. The Parish Council has asked for an exemption for Bishop's Meadow; Piper's Field and the Pocket Park from the requirement to keep dogs on leads. Rother is now considering all the responses and will consult on the final proposals later in the year.

Crime & Disorder –The Community Support Officers have continued their good work and the increased visible presence has resulted in a decrease in the amount of petty crime and vandalism in the village.

There have been suggestions I understand that the PCSOs should be rotated around the villages but this would I believe be counter-productive and I hope would be resisted by all parishes. We already have the problem of our Inspectors and Sergeants being moved to other areas on a regular 2 year cycle, just as they are getting to know the areas and the one area of continuity that we have is the PCSOs who contribute enormously by their local knowledge. I hope that our County Councillor on the Police Committee will use their influence to stop this proposal.

Traveller's site – the fly-tipping at the entrance to the traveller's site has been cleared by inter-agency efforts between the parish; District, ESCC, the Environment Agency and NOVAS and I should especially like to thank Derek Stevens, Chief Executive of Rother for his help in breaking the 'log jam' over this.

From April 1st, ESCC took back 'in-house' the management of all of their traveller's sites and the contract with NOVAS has been terminated.

Donations – The Council made donations to a number of organisations that it felt were of benefit to the community: St Michael's Hospice; Playgroup – for the 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.

This is the last meeting for this parish council and a new council will take office in May. We are losing two Councillors, John Stokoe and Brian Brazier, who have decided not to stand again and I thank them for their efforts on behalf of the Parish over the years.

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

Robertsbridge Twinning Association are holding their annual Boule & Barbecue event on Sunday 8th July at Robertsbridge Hall from 12.30pm. Adults £6 Child £3.50 to include barbecue and boule. Bring your own drinks! They have changed to an afternoon to avoid playing boule in the dark! Tickets available soon in the village.

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



A LIGHT QUIZ! If you notice that a street light is not working do you report it a) to the Parish Council; b) to Rother; c) to East Sussex or d) the Highways dept.? The answer, of course, is a) – the Parish Council but despite our efforts it seems some residents are still not getting the message and are reporting to b), c) or d) – and sometimes all three!

So, let's remind you – with the exception of those on the bypass, **ALL** the street lights in the parish are owned by the Parish Council and reporting to anyone else just delays things. You can report to the Clerk by 'phone, e-mail or in person or to Cllr. Gillian Smith at Belle Flowers in the High Street.

We try to get lights repaired as quickly as possible but we are reliant on EDF Energy and the engineer only visits every 2 weeks so the sooner reported the sooner fixed.!

There have been a number of 'distraction burglaries' in the Rother area recently—one of them in Robertsbridge where an elderly resident allowed into their home a bogus 'water official'. Please, before allowing anyone into your home check their identity—all utility companies provide their staff with this—and if unsure call the company. No genuine caller will mind waiting—if they do, call the police! And please make sure that any vulnerable neighbours know about this.

Your Councillors

Parish Councillors

	Tel:	e-mail address
Cllr David Allen (Chairman)	881056	chairman@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Michael Rix (vice-Chairman)	880795	michael.rix@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Neil Barden	880457	neil.barden@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Dicky Clymo	881563	dicky.clymo@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Christine Kimberley	880490	christine.kimberley@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Simon Longhurst	880469	simon.longhurst@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Gillian Smith	880810	shop: 882265
Cllr Jack Smith	880680	jack.smith@salehurst-pc.org.uk
Cllr Tamara Strapp	881291	tamara.strapp@salehurst-pc.org.uk

East Sussex County Councillor

Cllr Peter Jones 01797 226243 cllr.peter.jones@eastsussex.gov.uk

Rother District Councillors

Cllr George Hearn 819233 cllr.george.hearn@rother.gov.uk
Cllr Susan Prochak 881309 cllr.susan.prochak@rother.gov.uk